

Placenames Australia

Newsletter of the Australian National Placenames Survey

an initiative of the Australian Academy of Humanities, supported by the Geographical Names Board of NSW



Australia's Chinese placenames

Placenames are a valuable resource for all who are interested in researching the cultural landscape of Australia—historians, geographers, anthropologists, sociologists and linguists—because they can reveal much about a region's historical, geographical, social and linguistic background. They also offer insights into the belief and value systems of the name-givers, as well as the political and social circumstances at the time of naming (Tent & Slatyer, 2008a & b). And in many regions of the world, they reveal the chronology of exploration and settlement.

Bearing all this in mind, I thought it would be interesting to consider Australia's Chinese-related placenames. The Chinese have played a hugely significant role in the history and development of the continent. Some historians have even claimed northern Indigenous Australians may have had dealings with Chinese traders or have come across Chinese goods through the trepang (bêche-de-mer or sea cucumber) trade centuries before the arrival of the British. The documented presence of Chinese in Australia goes back to the early nineteenth century when the first officially recorded Chinese immigrant Mak Sai Ying (aka John Shying) arrived in 1818. However, it wasn't until the mid-nineteenth century that large numbers of Chinese (predominantly men) came to the country attracted by the gold rushes. They were not universally welcomed and in 1855 the first of many laws targeting Chinese immigration was passed. Nevertheless, the numbers of Chinese on the goldfields continued to increase. There were many violent anti-Chinese riots on the goldfields, not to mention general discrimination and

prejudice. Anti-Chinese sentiment was also a significant spur to the establishment of the Federation. After 1901, the Chinese population steadily declined due to the White Australia Policy which was one of the first Acts of the new Federal Parliament. This policy made it almost impossible for anyone new to emigrate from China.



photo: www.exploroz.com/places

Identifying Chinese-related names in Australia is no easy task. As with Aboriginal names, Chinese names have been anglicised and may have various spellings. Moreover, finding Chinese placenames in the Gazetteer of Australia is like looking for needles in a huge haystack. There are over 370,000 placenames in the Gazetteer and it would require going through every single one to extract them. None of the national or state gazetteers uses a

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From the Editor



The Chinese connection to some of Australia's placenames features in this issue: Jan Tent's lead article is followed by Judy Macdonald's update on **Howqua** (a toponym that Jan first raised 10 years ago).

Next issue: Our attention will switch to the Pacific Ocean. Jan will write about our 'Oceanic' toponyms; and Paul Geraghty will complete

the story of the Fijian island of **Koro**. We'll have an article by Victor Isaacs, too, on railway station names as a major source of our toponyms.

It's getting close to the time for the AGM of *Placenames Australia*—time and date are not yet set, but I'll send out the formal notice of meeting to our Supporting Members shortly.

David Blair
<editor@anps.org.au>

Placenames in the media

Readers of 'Column 8' in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in August will have enjoyed a tongue-in-cheek query from regular correspondent George Manojlovic: 'When Joan Brown of **Orange** is feeling blue does she occasionally paint the town red? Has anyone from **Broken Hill** ever tried to fix it? Should everyone carry a piece of string when visiting **Howlong**?' There were, of course, numerous clever replies in following days—but we'll leave you to dig up the archives if you can't resist.

Our informal placenames

It's well known that our placenames often have colloquial counterparts or nicknames. **Brisvegas, the Gong, the City of Churches, Deni, Freo...** the list is long. The Australian National Dictionary Centre is extending its records of these informal names, and we'd like to help. If your suburb/town/region has such a colloquial variant, let us know and we'll pass it on to our colleagues in Canberra. Send your email to

editor@anps.org.au

Notes and queries

Street names again

Bill Forrest has been searching for information on the street names of **Tamworth** (NSW), and the local Council has sent him a copy of a 40-page booklet entitled *Naming of streets in the City of Tamworth*. Bill says that the publication is not a recent one, and his copy has some handwritten annotations. The Council may be able to find another copy for anyone else interested; failing that, email the Editor for a viewing of Bill's copy.

Afghan Cameleers

Our colleague Joshua Nash has published an article in the online journal *Refract* - 'Linguistic spatial violence: the Muslim cameleers in the Australian outback'. He reports a surprising lack of a toponymic footprint from our outback Afghans. The article can be accessed here:

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/31w7t9f3>

Joshua would be happy to hear from you if you have some knowledge about the topic: email the Editor and we'll pass it on.

Puzzle answers - (from page 12)

- | | | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Mercury Passage | 6. Diamond Head | 11. Nickel Creek | 16. Jet Creek |
| 2. Gold Coast | 7. Quartz Rock | 12. Emerald | 17. Iron Cove |
| 3. Silverdale | 8. Marble Bar | 13. Basalt | 18. Flint Point |
| 4. Coal Point | 9. Limestone Bay | 14. Shale Island | 19. Jasper |
| 5. Opal Reef | 10. Bold Granite Range | 15. Copper Cove | 20. Sandstone Point |

This newsletter is published quarterly by
Placenames Australia Inc. ABN 39 652 752 594
ISSN: 1836-7976

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...Australia's Chinese placenames

designation 'Chinese' to make the job easier. So I have simply resorted to searching for obvious and well-known Chinese family names and placenames.

Some obvious placenames that I have found bearing Chinese personal names include: *Ah Chong Island* (WA); *Foochow Inlet* and *Maa Mon Chin Dam* (TAS), *Cheong Dam*, *Kong Meng Hill* and *Muchong Creek* (VIC); *Ah Fat Dam*, *Chang Creek*, *Chong Swamp* and *Chinghee Creek* (QLD); *Nom Chong Creek* (NSW); and *Peeching-ying* (SA).

One placename I have previously identified as being based on a Chinese name is *Howqua* in Victoria. It derives from John 'Howqua/Houqua' Hunter of the Watson & Hunter pastoral company, who established a pastoral run in the area. Hunter was a wealthy pastoralist, and derived his nickname from the famous nineteenth-century Canton Hong merchant, Wu Ping-Chien/Bingjian, aka 'Houqua (II)' (1769-1843). (See Judy Macdonald's following article in this issue, which expands and confirms the hypothesis of Tent, 2009).

There are fewer transferred Chinese placenames in the Gazetteer of Australia. However, they include: *Canton Beach* and *Hongkong Creek* (NSW); *Canton Creek*, *Canton Lagoon*, *Formosa Downs* and *Mount Canton* (QLD); and *Hong Kong Corner* and *Formosa Creek* (TAS).

No doubt there are more toponyms based on Chinese personal names and placenames; their overall number, however, would still be small. On the face of it, this is perhaps surprising given the longstanding Chinese presence in Australia as well as their social, cultural and economic contributions to the nation. Nonetheless, when we consider the anti-Chinese sentiments shown towards the Chinese throughout the nineteenth (and twentieth) centuries, it is perhaps not so surprising after all. If my supposition is correct, it may also explain the relative abundance of placenames we encounter that contain simply *China* or (more often) *Chinaman*. The Gazetteer records 325 placenames that contain these elements: 286 instances with *Chinaman*, 12 with *Chinamen* (total = 92% of the 325), and 27 with *China* (8%). No doubt many readers would have come across the ubiquitous *Chinamans Creek* in their travels. Indeed, 38.5% (125 of the 325 names) are streams (i.e. rivers, creeks, gullies and bends). The national statistics of this are summarised in Table 1.

State	Number of toponyms	Number of streams
NSW	113 (34.8%)	52 (46%)
NT	5 (1.5%)	3 (60%)
QLD	48 (14.8%)	36 (75%)
SA	47 (14.5%)	2 (4.3%)
TAS	16 (4.9%)	4 (25%)
VIC	60 (18.5%)	24 (54%)
WA	22 (6.7%)	2 (9%)
N/A	17 (5.2%)	2 (11.8%)
<i>Totals</i>	325	125 (38.5%)

Table 1. China/Chinaman toponyms in Australia

Since the gold rushes where Chinese miners were widespread occurred in NSW and Victoria, it is perhaps not surprising that the majority of such names occur in these two states and that the majority of the names are for streams—a common source for gold.



Chong Swamp, in Oyala Thumotang NP, Qld
(photo: Denise & Steve Fisher, <http://cruisinchronicles.com>)

The term *Chinaman*, although considered inappropriate and derogatory nowadays, was a perfectly acceptable term in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Using this generic term for Chinese people in placenames rather than personal names, I think, underscores the anti-Chinese sentiments of the time. The only other nationality name in placenames containing *-man* that has a relatively sizeable number is *Frenchman* with 101 placenames, followed by *Dutchman* with 16. Others such as *Englishman*, *Welshman*, *Irishman*, and *Scotsman* number less than ten each. It is my impression that places

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named after Europeans largely do not employ the *-man* suffix—rather, personal names are used. This is clearly not the case with places named for or after the Chinese.

There are only six placenames registered in the Gazetteer that bear the name *Chinese*: *Chinese Bend* (NSW), *Chinese Cairn* (SA), *Chinese Creek* (TAS), *Chinese Gully* (VIC), *Chinese Tunnel* (VIC), and *Chinese Walls* (WA). The last is probably inspired by the Great Wall of China.

Clearly, we need to do more research into Chinese and Chinese-based placenames to obtain a more comprehensive picture and understanding. If you know of any such names that haven't been mentioned or covered here, please let us know.

Jan Tent

References

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- (2017). Indigenous toponyms in the Antipodes: A gazetteer-based study. *Names: A Journal of Onomastics (Special issue on Indigenous toponyms)*, 65(4), 204-214.
- Tent, J. & Slatyer, H. (2008a). Early European place-naming practices in Australia, Part 1. *Placenames Australia*. March. 1, 3-4.
- (2008b). Early European place-naming practices in Australia, Part 2. *Placenames Australia*. June. 1, 4-6.



Wu Bingjian (Howqua)
(portrait: George Chinnery, 1830)

Our first mention of Howqua River in these pages, with its probable connection with John 'Howqua' Hunter, was in Jan Tent's article in March 2009. Historian Judy Macdonald took up the challenge: her comprehensive paper on Hunter was published in La Trobeana, November 2016 (see our link to the e-publication in our May 2018 issue). The briefer account that follows is an edited version of that paper.

Much of Victoria's high-country was once home to the pastoral runs of a company of Scottish overlanders, Watson and Hunter. The company was initiated by Alexander Hunter of Edinburgh, Writer to the Signet and solicitor to many wealthy families, including the Marquis of Ailsa, who provided backing. He made James Watson the Factor for the concern.¹ Five sons of Alexander Hunter came to Australia as well as their cousin John 'Howqua' Hunter, who arrived first. The company's subsequent rise and fall and the affairs of James Watson of 'Keilor' and 'Flemington' estates² are closely reported, yet Howqua has remained a shadowy figure, with the reason for his nickname previously unresolved.

Howqua—as I shall call him for clarity—was an overlander and horse fancier; he agreed to a partnership with James Watson, on Watson's arrival in Port Phillip with Howqua's cousin, Alexander Mclean Hunter, in June 1839. Howqua threw in his lot, and that of others, with the new company.

Howqua Hunter's is a fascinating story, even though some aspects still refuse to be teased out of available records. Born into the landed gentry on 19 September 1815 at 'Frankville' estate near Ayr in Scotland, he was the eldest son of Andrew Hunter of Bonnytown and Doonholm, and Helen Hunter née Campbell of Ormiston. Andrew Hunter had gone to sea at 12, joining the navy 18 months later, surviving shipwreck, pirates and many adventures against the French. Two of his other sons, Andrew jun. and William Francis, joined the East India Company military service at 17 or 18, serving in Bengal and Bombay.³

Howqua appears to have served in the Civil Department of the East India Company at Fort William, Calcutta, possibly as a clerk in the Customs Department. In late 1833 he was granted eight months furlough from a position as first deputy collector of customs, to go to China.⁴

...Howqua revisited

A single line from *History of Peeblesshire* claims Howqua became secretary to William John Napier, 9th Lord Napier, during his 1834 visit to China;⁵ the visit ended in confrontation with the Chinese and Napier's untimely death at Macao in October that year. In fact, Alexander Robert Johnstone was Napier's secretary. Johnstone, Napier and Hunter were all related,⁶ so Hunter may have been an under-secretary or clerk.

On the abolition in 1833 of the East India Company's monopoly of the China trade, Napier was sent to Canton to assume the post of Chief Superintendent of Trade.⁷ Napier took his wife and two daughters on the voyage, for what was to be a five-year appointment. Their ship *Andromache* arrived in the Bay of Macao on July 15, 1834, having left England in February.

The harrowing tale of the subsequently fraught months in Canton has appeared in several books—Viceroy Loo calling Napier the 'Barbarian Eye' and 'laboriously vile'; disputes with the influential Hong merchants, especially the fabulously wealthy Wu Bingjian (better known as How Qua or Howqua); cessation of Chinese trade with England on September 2, 1834, and the unfortunate death of Napier from fever on October 11. We can assume that it was this visit and being present at the English Factory in Canton, witnessing daily face-to-face dealings with the leading and most powerful Hong, Howqua, that led to Hunter's nickname within his family.

Howqua Hunter arrived back at Leith on May 19, 1835 on the tea clipper *Isabella*, which also carried 'the first teas to be sold [in Edinburgh] direct from China'.⁸ He may have been astute enough to import some highly valuable tea himself. A hiatus followed, during which Thomas Mitchell explored Australia Felix and his reports were read back in Scotland.

In 1838, Howqua Hunter, with his own finance as well as investments from others, set sail for Sydney on May 13 in the *William Roger* as a cabin passenger. His journal describes their arrival in Port Jackson on September 26, 1838. 'I was quite disappointed with the entrance to Port Jackson, the Heads and indeed the whole coast...' ⁹ Perhaps he was disenchanted because the *William Roger* had become a fever ship. Six adults and ten children died on the voyage and she was placed in quarantine. Howqua was delayed until December at the Quarantine Station, with 65 dying with typhus caught on the voyage.¹⁰

At the beginning of a new section of his journal dated December 2, 1838, Howqua relates how he equipped himself with horses and a cart and drove to Liverpool, Campbelltown, Cowpastures and the Razorback Mountains to Crisp's Inn. He then travelled on through Berrima, Sutton Forest and the Goulburn Plains to Yass and Green's Inn 'where Mr Rutledge found me'.¹¹ Together they continued to the 'crossing place' on the Murrumbidgee River.¹²

Frustratingly, Howqua's journal ends at this point, but we can pick him up again through the writings of Edward Bell, who fell in with the Company in 1839, overlanding and working on their stations.¹³ He records that Mr [John Howqua] Hunter took up a run 'Baroowa' on Seven Creeks above Templeton's before finding better pastures in the High Country. The Company, apart from James Watson, included many cousins from the Hunter, Arundell and Campbell families. *Barjarg*, to the east of Seven Creeks, was named after 'Barjarg Towers', the Dumfriesshire property of the Arundells' grandfather, John Hunter DD, and still exists as a Victorian placename.

On one occasion while at 'Baroowa', Howqua and Campbell Hunter climbed a high hill in the Strathbogies searching for some strayed cattle and spotted the distant high-country around Mount Buller. The Company soon took over much of the country surrounding the rivers which flowed from the Great Dividing Range near Mount Buller into the Goulburn River—the Delatite (which they first named *Devils River*), Broken and Howqua rivers. 'Howqua' run was to the south of the Howqua River. There were up to twelve other named runs that they operated there. A later subdivision proposal shows the 'Head Station' on the Howqua River. The surveyor's note says 'Sketch of the Howqua run, showing proposed subdivision. It is impossible until the country is burnt next summer to work one's way there (the scrub in some places for miles) to get there to make a correct survey. C.T.'¹⁴

Years later, Lake Eildon submerged much of the early pastoral kingdom of Watson and Hunter. The settlement of **Howqua** on its shores and Howqua Inlet sit where the river now enters the lake.

By 1842 the Company was in trouble and the Marquis of Ailsa, an original backer, was suing over wrongful sale of land and stock. Howqua Hunter moved down

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the Goulburn River to manage 'Cheviot Hills' run on Muddy Creek (now the Yea River). He wrote final journal entries at 'Cheviot Hills' in his Cattle Journal, 1843: 'Oct 30 killed a heifer calf. Nov 7 received from I. Campbell 230 heifers, 1 bullock, 1 cow, in all 232. Lost in scrub 6. Drowned crossing 1'.¹⁵

The personal estate of John 'Howqua' Hunter was placed into sequestration by order of Judge John Walpole Willis on 21 February 1843. In August of that year Howqua notified his creditors of his intention to apply for an insolvency certificate.¹⁶ Government Gazettes carry notices on his insolvency, his application for an insolvent's certificate in September 1843 and October 1844, and a plan of distribution of his assets to be viewed by creditors in December 1843. However, in 1844 he twice failed to appear in court to obtain his insolvent's certificate.

In May 1843 young Alex Hunter writes to his brother, Evan: 'Howqua has been very ill indeed and is not well yet. He is out at Hamilton's station at Mount Macedon. The smash has nearly killed him, but Watson stands it well. P.S. We are all well except Howqua.'¹⁷

By 1846, the disputed properties of the insolvent Watson and Hunter, assigned to Henry Ward Mason in August 1842, had finally been legally dealt with after many years of decisions and appeals, although echoes of the litigation continued in courts until the 1850s. Consequently, the *Geelong Advertiser* of 18 November 1846 advertised the sale of 700 head of cattle on 26th of that month followed



Howqua River

by the sale on December 2nd of 25,000 sheep. It included details of the remaining five of Watson and Hunter's vast high-country properties and the buildings, acreage and stock numbers: Broken River Creek, 40,000 acres; Mount Battery Station, 35,090 acres; Head Station, 38,000 acres; Maindample, 27,000 acres; Banumum

Station, 30,000 acres. On November 12, 1846, surveyor Robert Russell drew a field sketch of the properties prior to the sale. Those south of the Delatite River, such as

...Howqua revisited

'Howqua', had been relinquished earlier.

Three weeks after the above sale, on December 23 at Geelong, Howqua penned his last will and testament, before witness W. C. Thomson. He was 31 and was left with nothing but a watch, two horses at Buninyong, a saddle, a case of books and possibly enough cash for his funeral. He died a week later, from an unknown cause, and was buried at Geelong Eastern cemetery on New Year's Eve 1846.

It seems ironic that a man who took his nickname from the venerable Howqua, reputedly one of the world's richest men, should die so young and in virtual penury. His legacy, perhaps, was to leave an echo of the Oriental Howqua in the Victorian high-country.

Judy Macdonald

Endnotes

- 1 Factor: agent – buyer and seller.
- 2 See Judy Macdonald, 'James Watson and Flemington: a gentleman's estate', *La Trobeana*, 8(3), November 2009, 21-25.
- 3 Another son, Campbell, also came to Port Phillip taking up a run on the Plenty. He too died in 1846.
- 4 *Asiatic journal & monthly register for British India*, 3 March 1834. 'Furloughs'.
- 5 William Chambers, *History of Peeblesshire*. Edinburgh and London: W. & R. Chambers, 1864. 'Hunter of Bonnydoon & Doonholm'.
- 6 Samuel Johnstone married Hester Napier, daughter of Francis Scott, 6th Lord Napier (1702-1773). Hester's sister, Mary Shaw Scott (1756-1806) married Andrew Hunter DD of Barjarg.
- 7 G. B. Endacott, *Biographical sketch-book of early Hong Kong*. Singapore: Donald Moore for Eastern Universities Press, 1962
- 8 Christina Baird, *Liverpool China traders*. Bern: Verlag Peter Lang, 2007. p.38.
- 9 State Library of Victoria Manuscripts Collection. Hunter Papers, MS Box 58/4.
- 10 *Sydney gazette*, 30 October 1838.
- 11 Hunter Papers.
- 12 William Rutledge purchased land on the Molonglo River, Queanbeyan, in 1837. In 1838 he overlanded sheep to Port Phillip and had started a Sydney to Yass mail run.
- 13 *Letters from Victorian pioneers... edited by Thomas Francis Bride*. Melbourne: Government Printer, 1898.
- 14 Howqua. Run 742, Howqua [microform], State Library of Victoria, MAPMF Historical plans collection Run 742.
- 15 Hunter Papers.
- 16 New South Wales Government Gazette, 7 March 1843, no. 21, p. 349; 15 August 1843, no. 68, p.1057, Online archive 1836-1997, <http://gazette.slv.vic.gov.au>.
- 17 Hunter Papers.
- 18 *Field sketch of Watson & Hunter's Station* [cartographic material]: (near Mount Buller) / Robert Russell, November 12th. 1846. Last accessed online May 24, 2019.

Kojunup, Karinyup, Porongorup... all those WA *-ups*

Everyone who lives in Western Australia is already familiar with placenames ending in ‘-up’, but visitors often wonder if there is a meaning attached to them and why there are so many. One of the early recorders of language information for the south west, the Nyungar or Noongar area, G.F. Moore, explained it this way:¹

An affix used to denote a locality fit for, or used as, a resting-place; as *Mangaga ap*, the resting-place at Mangaga

Where else might we go to confirm Moore’s explanation? Many of us would head for Wikipedia—and when we do, we find that its entry accepts this origin. (The article also notes that the suffixes *-in* and *-ing* had similar significance, and remarks that the common perception that *-up* signifies ‘near water’ is wrong.) Wikipedia also helpfully provides a list of 100 examples. Unfortunately, the meaning for 56 of those is not given, and the meanings presented for the others cannot be completely relied upon.

At least one of these, however, is almost certainly correct: **Balgarup**: ‘place of the black boy trees (*Xanthorrhoea preissii*)’: over two dozen sources in the Bayala databases attest to *balga* meaning ‘grass tree’. There is one other common variant: nine other sources give *balag* for this plant. This may seem strange, but in fact these are examples of a normal linguistic process called ‘metathesis’ by which sounds or syllables are transposed: in this case, the final sounds are transposed so that *bal-ga* becomes *bal-ag*.

Languages across Australia have elements in common. Words for ‘eye’ and ‘foot’ are similar in many, for instance. So it is curious, but probably coincidental rather than metathesis, that the language of the Lake Macquarie area in NSW has a suffix *-ba*, the reversal of WA’s ‘-up’ (or *-ab*), also meaning ‘place of’. For example, the original name of Newcastle in the Hunter River language there was *mulubin-ba* ‘the place of the *mulubin* fern’.

The table (alongside) lists the placenames in the Wikipedia list for which no meanings were offered. The names have been respelt in the middle column, and tentative meanings for most of them have been offered, based on entries in the Bayala databases for the Nyungar language area.

Placename	Respelt	Meaning
Amelup	ngamilab yamilab	mullet-place “
Bailup	bayilab	
Balingup	balingab	
Banjup	bandyab	patient (tolerant)-place
Barragup	baragab	sore [?]-place
Beenup	binab	dig, navel, sharp-place
Binningup	biningab	resin [?]-place
Boranup	buranab	brother, swamp-place
Chinocup	dyinugab	white man [?]-place
Condingup	gandingab	mouse, mouth-place
Coodanup	gudanab	swamp, parrot-place
Coolbellup	gulbilab	
Culeenup	gulinab	fib, swamp, youth-place
Dalyellup	dalyilab	fungus-place
Dandalup	dandalab	
Dardanup	dadanab	shallow [?]-place
Dinninup	dininab	
Gelorup	dyilurab	mouse [?]-place
Gwindinup	gwindinab	bandicoot [?]-place
Jacup	dyagab	
Jerdacuttup	dyada gadab	white head [?]-place
Jingalup	dyingalab	horn-place
Joweelingup	dyawilingab	
Karnup	ganab	
Karrinyup	garinyab	barnacle, scrub, shrub, wattle-place
Kebaringup	gibaringab	canoe [?]-place
Kendenup	gindinab	
Kudardup	gudarab	bag, heart, rug-place
Kulikup	guligab	
Kundip	gandib	heavy [?]
Mandogalup	mandugalab	
Marbelup	mabilab	swan [?]-place
Marrinup	marinab	crayfish, grub, bread- place
Mayanup	mayanab	echo [?]-place
Metricup	midrigab	
Moodiarrup	mudyarab	
Morangup	marangab	root, wallaby-place
Mumballup	mambalab	
Mungalup	mangalab	

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Placename	Respelt	Meaning
Munglinup	mangalinab	
Muradup	muradab	pigeon, replete-place
Nambeelup	nambilab	
Needilup	nidilab	
Noggerup	nagarab	cold-place
Palgarup	balgarab	grass tree-place
Quigup	gwigab	bone-place
Wannanup	wananab	duck [?]-place
Warawarrup	wara-warab	
Wattleup	wadalab	whistle-place
Wokalup	wagalab	snake-place
Wonnerup	wanarab wunarab	yamstick-place; excrement, hair-place
Yallingup	yalingab	meat-place
Yalup Brook	yalab	paperbark-place
Yornup	yurnab	bobtail goanna-place

Endnote

1 Moore, George Fletcher. 1842. *A Descriptive Vocabulary of the Language in Common Use among the Aborigines of Western Australia; with Copious Meanings, embodying much interesting information regarding the Habits, Manners, and Customs of the Natives, and the Natural History of the Country.* London: Wm. S. Orr & Co., Paternoster Row.

Jeremy Steele



photo: Wikimedia Commons
(by Andrew D MBarker)

We recommend...

The UNGEGN Bulletin

The United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names produces a regular Bulletin—the June 2019 issue is one that will particularly interest our readers. It features ‘Curiosities of geographical names’, and is available for everyone to download.

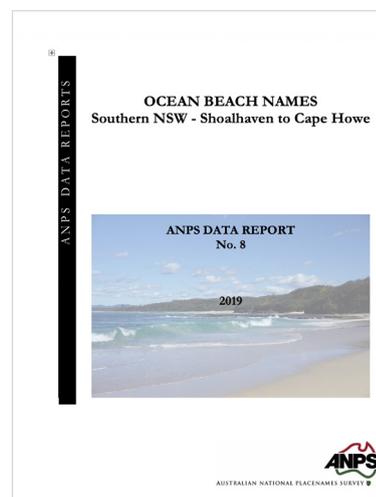
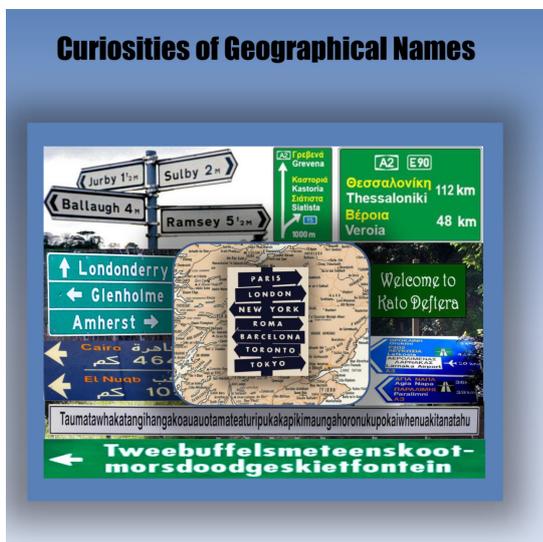
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New from ANPS...

ANPS Data Report No 8

Our third Report on the names of NSW coastal beaches covers beaches from the Shoalhaven south to the Victorian border, and completes the set. The series lists all the known beaches from the Queensland border southwards, recording all names (official or otherwise) that appear in state or local government sources or in the catalogue of the Surf Life Saving Association.

anps.org.au/upload/ANPSDataReport8.pdf



Koetong~~the case of an interlingual homograph

Have you ever come across a placename that is spelled exactly the same as a word (or phrase) in a different language where it has a totally different referent and meaning? There's one such placename not too far from where I live. It's **Koetong** ['kouˈɪtɒŋ] (**koh-ee-tong**), a locality on the Murray Valley Highway between Tallangatta and Corryong, 394km north-east of Melbourne. It's a Waywuru-derived name (Clarke & Heydon 2002:118), purportedly meaning 'place of echoes' (Towong Shire Council).¹ However, according to another source (O'Callaghan 1918) cited by VICNAMES, 'the place took its name from a pastoral station called "Koetong." Traditional meaning: "Frost, cold". The district is noted for its heavy frosts.'

Whatever its meaning, the point is that the name in its English rendition, is identical to a noun phrase in Dutch—*koe tong* or *ketong* ['ku tɔŋ] (**koo tong**) meaning 'cow tongue'. In my mind, I always refer to the location as 'Cow Tongue' when I drive through.



Such cases are known as 'interlingual homographs'. In other words, they are orthographically identical in both languages, but have different meanings and pronunciations. They occur quite frequently with ordinary words between languages, but rarely with toponyms. Some examples between ordinary English and Dutch words include: *geld* Du. 'money'; *vet* Du. 'fat'; *brood* Du. 'bread'; *boot* Du. 'boat'; *link* Du. 'dangerous' and *loop* Du. 'walk'. The last two bring me to another toponymic interlingual homograph: **Link Loop** (VIC), a walking track in the Mount Stirling Alpine Resort, close to Mount Buller. With a name like that, not many Dutch people will be tempted to walk this track, I presume.



A 'homograph', by the way, is a word that is written the same as another word, but which (usually) has a different meaning and etymology or origin, e.g. *bank* (of a river) and *bank* (where you put your money). In many instances, the identical spelling of a word in two or more different languages is quite coincidental; in other instances, it is because they are derived from the same ancestor word (cognate).

Do you have any other examples of toponymic interlingual homographs? Please do let us know.

Jan Tent

Endnote

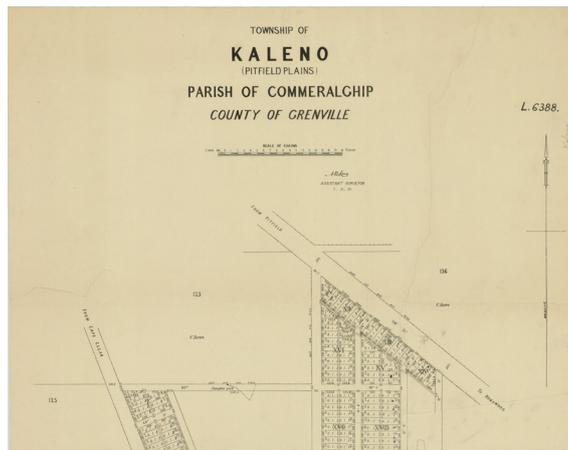
¹ Clarke & Heydon transcribe the original Waywuru name as *Coo-ye-dong*.

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Kaleno -- where is it?

In early June 1879 the residents of Moonee Ponds, Parish of Dousta Galla, County of Bourke, Victoria learnt they were now living in **Kaleno**. Quickly, and with little consultation, the locality had been officially renamed. A small notice in *The Argus* on 14 May 1879 advised of a meeting the following night 'to consider the advisability of altering the name of the locality.' The newspaper later reported that 'between twenty and thirty of the most influential inhabitants attended' and these were 'unanimous in the opinion that the name should be changed and that a native name should be substituted and after some discussion *Kaleno* was adopted as being the most appropriate.' A corresponding Lands Department directive was signed on 29 May, approved by the Governor-in-Council on 3 June and gazetted on 6 June. However, three months of delegations, letters, petitions and meetings followed, and on 29 September a Gazette Notice was issued rescinding the first and Kaleno was renamed *Moonee Ponds*.



Kaleno survey map, 1897 (detail). State Library Victoria.
<http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/95235>

In 1879 Moonee Ponds was a Ward of the Borough of Essendon and Flemington, about five miles north-west of Melbourne. The name was derived from Surveyor Robert Hoddle's 1837 description of one of the locality's waterways as the 'Monee Monee Creek, a chain of ponds running into an adjoining saltwater swamp.' The main route to the Mount Alexander goldfields bisected the district and it was a well-known locality. It had been primarily an agricultural community, interspersed with large mansion estates but was increasingly being occupied by the professional and middle classes. By 1879 the Borough was an area of 5000 acres with a population approaching 4000 in 768 households.

In orchestrating this name change the prominent residents may have been influenced by their experience of living in Moonee Ponds and looking to the potential of their locality. Some may have resented a persistent but erroneous belief from outsiders that the place was in thrall to a powerful Mr Mooney, arising from confusion between the surname 'Mooney' and *Moonee*. The name also lent itself to ribald and insulting variants such as

'Looney Ponds' or 'Muddy Ponds'. The 'Pondsmen' demonym applied to residents may also not have been appreciated by influential men. The generic 'Ponds' suggested that the area was characterised by areas of standing water, the land swampy and insect ridden. Influential landowners, looking to capitalise on their holdings, possibly wished to rebrand the district to disassociate from suggestions that it was an unhealthy bog. Several large estates were on the cusp of subdivision and plans were afoot for the grand Essendon-Flemington Institute which was, despite its name, to be located in Moonee Ponds.

Many wheels were turned to achieve this name exchange. The Kalenonites had their case introduced by the newly elected member for West Bourke, Alfred Deakin, a 22 year old protégé of powerful *Age* Editor David Syme. Deakin had a surprise victory in the February 1879 election. The win was narrow and disputed because of irregularities at a polling place. The Returning Officer Charles

Shuter declared in Deakin's favour. Police Magistrate Shuter was a prominent Moonee Ponds resident and Chair of the May 1879 meeting.

When Deakin was taking part in the Kaleno discussions, he was only being given 'the courtesy and anticipation of a Member' as he was not yet sworn in. Deakin (1957) described how he was 'thrust into prominence' with his unexpected win and found 'there were crowds of suitors and public movements seeking patronage, introductions and advice. I escorted deputations to public offices or waited upon Ministers.' The government of Graham Berry certainly wished to secure Deakin's support in the Assembly. Charles Langtree, who was called into the discussions to represent Kaleno's cause, was not only a local resident and Chief Draughtsman in the Department of Mines and Water Supply but a son-in-law of the prominent Essendon brewing family, the McCrackens. Deakin's surprise resignation in July 1879 and loss of the subsequent August re-election removed his influence from governmental considerations. With the name *Moonee Ponds* restored, the issue then rested

...Kaleno

and no further protest made. However in the 1880 and subsequent editions of the Municipal Directory the description of the district was rewritten emphasising that it was 'beautiful undulating country, 137 feet above sea level... a remarkable healthy spot induced by the good drainage and other natural advantages... the views are unsurpassed being a succession of charming little valleys.'

Before 1879 *Kaleno* had not apparently been used as a colonial placename, but now a number of instances appeared. In 1883 a large pastoral station near Cobar was given this name. Interestingly a Langtree brother ran the adjoining property and the McCracken family had holdings in this district. Its quality woolbales stamped 'Kaleno' were sought out at auctions. The term also started to come into use as a house name, being applied in particular, by 1897, to a landmark Balwyn mansion. It is not clear whether this then influenced the naming of a new Victorian goldmining township; however, the name *Kaleno* was in use by 1898 for the settlement in the Shire of Grenville, 124 miles west of Melbourne (see map, previous page). It was gazetted by this name in March 1900, becoming a thriving township with over 1000 residents, churches, school, post office and newspaper *The Kaleno Banner*. Again the name *Kaleno* did not find favour with all local residents. Shire Minute books show that by June 1900 the Town Progress Committee was petitioning the Council asking the town be renamed *Pitfield Plains*. The Council voted against this, but the controversy continued. The two names *Kaleno* and *Pitfield Plains* were used side by side for the period of the town's existence. By 1913 the rush had ended and *Kaleno* literally disappeared, as after the Great War the houses were transported to soldier settlements. (Watson 2003, 214) However the Andrews family had established a cordial factory in the town and the bottles embossed with the name 'Kaleno' still surface today. Curiously in 1901 Deakin became Federal member for the electorate of Ballarat which took in *Kaleno*. How many politicians would have represented two places with the same, but now extinct, name in different locales?

The 'rename Moonee Ponds' lobby stressed that the name they had chosen was a 'native name'. The subject of Aboriginal life was one at the forefront of public mind in 1879. In August 1878 the Government Printer published Robert Brough Smyth's two-volume 1000-page work *The Aborigines of Victoria*. Smyth had for 16 years served

also on the Board for the Protection of Aborigines, collecting information on Victorian Aboriginal cultures, collaborating with some sixty others engaged in this area. The work was well received and would have been known to Essendon ratepayers as Smyth was a local, residing at Flemington Hill. The work may also have been a motivator for change. *Moonee*, according to Smyth's sources (Smyth 1878, 113) corresponded only with the male personal pronoun 'he'. Perhaps understanding this and being already aware of the drawback of 'Ponds', did the land owners determine on a change to something more euphonious? Smyth's work is also likely to be the source for the word *Kaleno*. It appears in the same contribution by John Green, Inspector of Aboriginal Stations and Superintendent of Coranderk, listing the 'vocabulary of the language of the tribe of inhabiting the River Yarra.' What does this native name mean? Well, Green's transcription of this indigenous word has *Kaleno* signifying 'There it is!'

Marilyn Kenny

Endnotes

- 1 This material is held in the Public Record Office of Victoria
- 2 From 1847-1853 John Mooney owned an acreage fronting the Moonee Ponds Creek close to the current location of the Moonee Valley racecourse (Chalmers 2014).
- 3 This splendid building designed by renowned architect J J Clark opened in 1880. In 1884 it was acquired by the Essendon Council as the Municipal Chambers and now survives as The Clocktower Centre.
- 4 Deakin became Commissioner for Public Works and Water Supply in 1883 and Langtree Secretary for Mines and Water Supply in 1884, hence the parallel Deakin and Langtree Avenues in The Mildura Irrigation Colony.

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Placenames Puzzle Number 71

Geological toponyms

This time we test your knowledge of rocks and minerals. For example: (NSW, mountain N of the Warrumbungles) a soft pure white limestone. Chalk Mountain

1. (TAS, strait west of Maria Is) quicksilver
2. (QLD, coastal hotspot) all that glisters it is not
3. (NSW, Sydney suburb) precious metal prone to tarnish
4. (TAS, promontory on Bruny Is) black carbon-based sedimentary rock with a bad name these days
5. (QLD, reef NE of Port Douglas) semiprecious gemstone of various colours
6. (NSW, headland and locality S of Port Macquarie) the hardest natural substance on earth
7. (QLD, marine rock in Keppel Bay) crystal used in timepieces
8. (WA, hot township in the Pilbara) sculptors love this stuff
9. (TAS, cove on Flinders Is) calcium carbonate
10. (NSW, range W of Eden) daring, audacious hard igneous rock
11. (TAS, stream W of Waratah) US 5c
12. (QLD, town W of Rockhampton) green gemstone
13. (VIC, locality NW of Daylesford) a lava-flow rock
14. (WA, Collier Bay island) laminated rock formed by consolidation of clay
15. (TAS, bay NW of Beaconsfield) a malleable reddish-brown ductile metal element
16. (QLD, stream near Bowen) polishable black lignite used for making jewellery, beads etc.
17. (NSW, bay in Sydney's harbour) ductile malleable metal used for making tools etc.
18. (SA, small peninsula in Discovery Bay, also known as Stony Point) chert used for igniting
19. (WA, south coast locality, lake and beach) coloured quartz used in decorative carvings
20. (QLD, locality and promontory W of Bribie Is) sedimentary rock composed of particles of quartz or feldspar

[Compiled by **Jan Tent**
Answers on page 2]

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