



## Cornish Placenames in Victoria

The county of Cornwall is located in the south-west corner of Britain, occupying the area from the River Tamar in the east, to Lands End and the Scilly Isles in the west. Cornwall was able to withstand the Anglo-Saxon invasion of Britain until the ninth and tenth centuries. This resistance enabled the Cornish to preserve much of their Celtic heritage, including the Cornish language and placenames. However, with the Anglo-Saxons came the English language and placenames. Cornwall now has a mix of placenames derived mostly from Cornish and English, including some names with elements drawn from both languages.

During the age of British exploration and settlement of Australia, those in the vanguard were able to label their discoveries in ways relevant to their perception of the land; this was obviously influenced by their past experiences in Britain. Where people had a Cornish heritage or experiences of this county, references to Cornwall began to appear in the namescape. For example, Captain James Cook named Rame Head in East Gippsland after Rame Head in Cornwall (near the entrance to Plymouth Sound), from whence the Endeavour left England to explore the South Seas (refer *Placenames Australia*, June 2002).

A combination of depressed economic conditions in Cornwall and opportunities overseas, particularly in mining, led many Cornish people to emigrate in the nineteenth century. During the 1840s many Cousin Jacks and Jennies came to South Australia in response to the discovery of minerals; firstly silver-lead in the Adelaide Hills, and then copper at Kapunda and Burra. Major copper finds were subsequently made in the 'Copper Triangle' of Kadina, Wallaroo and Moonta. Amongst



*St. Just Point, a locality in the city of Bendigo.  
Photo: Chris Richards*

the numerous reminders of the substantial impact that the Cornish had on the early development of South Australia, are the placenames of that State, which include Helston, Redruth and Truro (named after places in Cornwall).

With the discovery of gold in New South Wales and Victoria in 1851, large numbers of people in the South Australian mining communities, including the Cornish, left to pursue what they thought were better opportunities panning for gold. While many of the Cornish continued to move in response to subsequent mineral discoveries in other States, a significant number stayed in the Victorian mining towns, or settled in Melbourne with the growth of that metropolis. Emigration direct from Cornwall to Australia continued during that period.

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# Welcome to New Subscribers

Once again it has been wonderful to hear from a variety of organisations and individuals around Australia that are interested in the study of placenames and the ANPS. Thanks for your interest and support! A very warm welcome to the following organisations:

Bothwell Historical Society  
Braidwood Historical Society  
Bundaberg & District Historical Society  
Burnie Historical Society  
Cairns Historical Society  
Capricorn Coast Historical Society  
Casey-Cardinia Library Corporation  
Castlemaine Historical Society  
City of Greater Dandenong Libraries  
Clarence Regional Library  
Coburg Historical Society  
Cooktown Library  
Cummins Area School  
Donald History-Natural History Group  
Eacham Historical Society  
East Gippsland Shire Library  
East Torrens Historical Society  
Frankston Library Service  
Gawler Public Library  
Gosford City Library  
Hastings Library Service

Hervey Bay Library  
Historical Society of Cockburn  
Historical Society of Mooroopna  
Holdfast Bay History Centre  
Hurstville City Library  
Johnstone Shire Library  
Kingston Community School Library  
Knox Historical Society  
Koo-wee-rup Swamp Historical Society  
Lakes Entrance Historical Society  
Learmonth Historical Society  
Leichhardt Local History Group  
Logan City Council Libraries  
Maclean District Historical Society  
Merriwa Historical Society  
Moranbah Town Library  
Mosman Library  
Mt Crosby Historical Society  
Newstead & District Historical Society  
Parramatta Heritage Centre  
Penrith City Library

Phillip Island District Historical Society  
Pahran Mechanics' Institute Victoria  
Queanbeyan City Council  
Richmond River Historical Society  
Ryde Library Services  
Shoalhaven Historical Society  
Singleton Historical Society & Museum  
Toowoomba City Library  
Traralgon & District Historical Society  
Trentham & District Historical Society  
Tweed River Historical Society  
Victor Harbor Public Library  
Victoria Park Library  
Waverley Historical Society  
West Torrens District Historical Society  
Whitton Historical Society  
Woollahra Library  
Wollongong City Library  
Woodend & District Heritage Society  
Woy Woy Local History Research Group  
Wynnum Manly Historical Society

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## News in Brief

### Farewell to Keith Bell

Keith Bell, former Registrar of Geographic Names in Victoria, resigned on 7 July 2003. The ANPS would like to thank Keith for his support of our work and we wish him well for his future endeavours. John Tulloch, Acting Surveyor General Victoria and Registrar of Geographic Names, will maintain the link with the ANPS through the support provided by his office to the Victorian State Committee of the ANPS.

### Aboriginal Names Committee

The NSW/ACT Aboriginal Names Subcommittee has met three times since the inauguration of the ANPS NSW/ACT State Committee. This very active working party is currently focusing its energies on the Aboriginal Naming Strategy and dual naming, in particular the proposal to dual name a number of features on Sydney Harbour. The next issue of *Placenames Australia* will contain further reports on this work.

### On the Web: APIT

<http://www.apit.mq.edu.com.au>

As many of you know the ANPS project has found a home within the Asia-Pacific Institute for Toponymy's (APIT) division for Historical and Cultural Toponymy. The APIT finally has its own website, so update your favourites!

The APIT site is linked to the ANPS site but also includes additional material on the specific mission and goals of the Institute as well as on the APIT divisions of Technical Toponymy and Education and Training, including preliminary information on the International Training Course in Toponymy to be hosted by APIT in 2004.

*Do you have a favourite placenames website you'd like to recommend to fellow readers? Send the URL address to Clair Hill at [chill@hmn.mq.edu.au](mailto:chill@hmn.mq.edu.au) for inclusion in a future issue.*

# CGNA Spot: Placenames in the Nation's Capital

## Canberra ACT - Ngun(n)awal Country

It is well known that Canberra is a planned city, but what may not be so well known is that the scheme for the naming of public places in Canberra was also planned from its very beginning.

The National Memorials Committee presented a report to the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia on 14 December 1927. This report outlined the unique scheme by which Canberra's public places and thoroughfares were to be named.

*'...Every name that has been used commemorates a name famous in the annals of Australian exploration, navigation, pioneering, colonisation, administration, politics, science and letters. Every name on the plan approved by the Committee is believed to be thoroughly characteristic of Australia and the Australians. All have been considered from a national viewpoint rather than a parochial one. Every state has been taken into account in the selection of names, and Australian national sentiments have been carefully studied.'*

This dictum (outlined further below) has been followed to this day resulting in a naming system that quietly displays all aspects of Australia's history, including its Indigenous heritage and aspects of Australian life past and present.

The Public Place Names Act 1989 is the governing legislation which allows the Minister for Planning to name public places and roads in the ACT, the Minister delegates this role to the Chief Planning Executive of the ACT Planning and Land Authority. The ACT Place Names Committee Chaired by Professor Ken Taylor AM is appointed by the Minister to advise him on new suburb names, geographical naming and controversial placename issues.

Most of Canberra's suburbs are named after famous Australians who have contributed to the existence of Australia as a nation. Each suburb has a 'theme' by which its streets are named. The theme may include people, places, flora,

fauna or things of relevance and importance to the history of Australia. The historical research undertaken by the Place Names Officer makes an important contribution to the commemoration of Australian history and the process of place naming in Canberra allows this history to be woven into the fabric of the ACT. This research is ongoing and varied and presently includes: Australian journalists, inventors, industrialists, mayors, Gungahlin pioneers, Aboriginal words, judges and the Heidelberg school.

In 1992 the ACT Government adopted the Committee for Geographical Names of Australasia's (CGNA) Guidelines for the Recording and Use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Place Names. In 2001 Chief Minister, Mr Jon Stanhope MLA, announced his government would acknowledge the traditional owners of the ACT by dual signing sites of significance to the Ngun(n)awal community with their original names alongside their European names.

This has led to the need for a policy and guideline to be developed to provide a method by which to introduce 'dual naming'. The methodology of each state has been examined. For practical reasons the ACT Policy and Guidelines on Dual Naming have been drafted in accord with those of the NSW Government. The ACT is an island within NSW, the Indigenous communities overlap, as do the geographical features.



*Canberra - showing Parliament House, Lake Burley Griffin and Black Mountain. The roads radiating from Parliament House are named after Australian capital cities and the Commonwealth.*

As the ACT Place Names Officer I have gratefully accepted membership on the NSW/ACT ANPS Working Group. This group is presently investigating the dual naming of places within Sydney Harbour. This will provide ACT with an insight to a method of examining proposed dual names and carrying out effective consultation with the Indigenous communities. It will also provide an excellent opportunity to draw on the knowledge and expertise of this Group.

If you are interested in finding out more about Canberra's placenames you can visit the ACT Place Names Website at: <http://www.actpla.act.gov.au/actlic/index.htm>. This site provides general information on placenames. There is also a suburb and street name search where you can find out the origin and meaning of these places in the ACT.

□ Lorraine Bayliss

For more information about Canberra's placenames activities please phone Lorraine on (02) 62050057 or email her at [lorraine.bayliss@act.gov.au](mailto:lorraine.bayliss@act.gov.au).

# Cornish Placenames in Victoria

## ❑ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Many moved from mining into other occupations. The descendants of these people form the nucleus of very active Cornish associations that exist today in Melbourne and in regional centres, such as, Bendigo, Ballarat and Geelong.

Like South Australia, evidence of the Cornish presence can be found by a study of Victorian placenames and maps. In addition to places with names derived from similarly named places in Cornwall, there are also places bearing the names of people with a Cornish heritage. Furthermore, there are places bearing the names of Cornish Saints and names directly linked with Cornish mining terminology.

With the establishment of the Victorian State Committee of the ANPS in 2002, each committee member undertook to carry out a pilot project, to identify the origin of placenames in a particular geographic area, or names based on a particular theme. The choice of the undersigned was Cornish names. An approach was made to the Cornish Association of Victoria, which readily agreed to establish a Cornish Placenames Special Interest Group. This well attended Group now meets on a monthly basis to help identify names that can be linked to Cornwall. As with most things, the more you look the more you find. By the end of this year, the names identified to date will be posted on the Cornish Association's web page, with an invitation for comment and suggested additions and deletions.

Once the web page is completed to the satisfaction of the Cornish Association, the Victorian State Committee of the ANPS plans to seek assistance from the relevant state government department, in an approach to other community groups in this State, with a suggestion that they might like to follow the example/model process of the Cornish Association in promoting this aspect of immigration history.

Some examples of the Cornish placenames located to date in Victoria are outlined below, under the categories identified above:

1. Named after Cornwall & the Cornish  
With the discovery of gold, people from many lands rushed to the gold bearing regions. Many of these people congregated with those from the same background, giving rise to various Caledonian Diggings, Canadian Gullies and Tipperary Points. A number of 'Cornishtowns' appeared on the gold-fields, until use of this name faded (with the itinerant Cornish miners). However, one locality so named has survived to the present time near Chiltern in the north-east. The words 'cornwall' and 'cornish' also commonly featured in the names of gold mines and gold mining companies, such as, the Cornish Company that worked the Cornish Hill in Daylesford.

2. Named after a place in Cornwall  
The town of Newlyn in the Central Highlands between Ballarat and Daylesford is considered by the descendants of several former goldmining families to be named after the village of St. Newlyn East in Cornwall. The names of Cornish towns and villages can also be found in the names that the Cornish gave to their houses. In Ruth Hopkins book *Cousin Jack, Man for the Times – A History of the Cornish People in Victoria* (1994), she identifies a number of these names, including Camborne House, Penryn and St. Austell.

3. Named after a Cornish person  
The famous English harbour engineer Sir John Coode, who was born in Bodmin, Cornwall, visited Victoria in 1878 to investigate and report upon Melbourne's port facilities. He recommended that a new channel for the river be cut through Fishermens Bend, this channel becoming known as the Coode Canal. The land between the old river course (since reclaimed) and the 'new cut' was called Coode Island.

## 4. Cornish Saints

A number of towns and villages in Cornwall bear the names of the saints who helped convert the Cornish to Christianity, for example, St. Erth, St. Ives, St. Neot. In naming places in Australia after these towns and villages, the names of the Saints were transferred to locations far removed from the areas in which they carried out their missionary work. St. Just Point in Bendigo, where many Cornish goldminers congregated, is named after the famous mining area, St. Just in Penwith, Cornwall.

## 5. Cornish Mining Terminology

In Cornwall many of the mine names are prefixed with the word 'wheal', which is said to be derived from the word 'hwel', meaning a mine. With so many Cornish emigrating to the mines of South Australia, it is not surprising to find that this practice continued in that State, where over fifty mines were given this prefix, for example, Wheal Gawler, Wheal Prosper, Wheal Rose. However, the practice did not follow into Victoria to the same extent. The only 'wheal' mine names located to date in Victoria, are the former Great Wheal Clunes Company (Clunes), Wheal Dory (Daylesford), Wheal Fortune (Sebastopol), Wheal Kitty (Smythesdale), Wheal Margery (Castlemaine), Wheal Owl (Bendigo) and Wheal Terrill (Fryerstown).

The process of collecting Cornish names is a very rewarding experience, and an example of the way that name origins can be studied, based on patterns of exploration, migration, settlement and economic development, rather than geographical area. The undersigned would be pleased to communicate with people already undertaking or contemplating similar projects.

❑ Chris Richards

For more information please contact Chris Richards at Unit 5, 65-67 George St, Doncaster East, 3109.

# ANPS Research Friend: Val Attenbrow

In each issue of *Placenames Australia*, we try and keep up to date with the work of a current Research Friend. This issue it is Val Attenbrow.

Like most Australians I grew up learning that the names of many places in Australia were, or were based on, Aboriginal names. However, it was only relatively recently that I realised the complexities involved – how names have been changed to suit non-Aboriginal voices and ears, how names have been borrowed from one part of the country to another, how many names no longer used are being replaced by a European one, and how many names must have been lost.

My interest in Aboriginal placenames around Port Jackson (Sydney Harbour) was first aroused during 1982 when I was undertaking a consulting project on the pre-colonial Aboriginal heritage of Hunters Hill – a harbourside municipality in Sydney. It was only later in 1989 when I began my research project into the Aboriginal occupation of Port Jackson that I began tracking down references to Aboriginal placenames around and between Port Jackson and Botany Bay.

As an archaeologist, my projects naturally focus on archaeological sites, but my specific interest in investigating these sites is to discover the way people related to country and to the resources available in the past

– the raw materials used for making tools and weapons, and the plants and animals used as food sources. Aboriginal placenames are another way that relationships to country can be revealed. Early on I began to build a database for the placenames which enabled me, not only to compile the list of names and what places were recorded, but also to see who recorded them, when they were recorded, how the spellings of names for the same place varied over time, and where they were published. Although relatively few names were recorded in the earliest years of the colony, it is fortunate that the recording of Aboriginal placenames around Sydney continued particularly by surveyors but also by pioneer anthropologists/linguists and philanthropically motivated people during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is also fortunate that such information was published in magazines and scientific journals of the time, and also by the Australian Museum in small booklets in the early 18<sup>th</sup> Century.

The enquiries I receive as part of my work at the Australian Museum indicate that people today are still interested in the names that Aboriginal people gave to places around Sydney. Where I can, I include Aboriginal placenames in my work to portray a fuller view of Aboriginal life and culture and their relationship to the land - in my book *Sydney's Aborigi-*



Val Attenbrow

*nal Past* and for the Museum's current *Living Harbour* website, and a recent exhibition *Catching the Harbour*. The dual naming policy which the NSW Geographic Names Board is proposing to implement around Sydney Harbour will also bring fuller recognition to the names used by Aboriginal people.

□ Dr Val Attenbrow

*If you are interested in becoming an ANPS Research Friend, we can send you an information package. Just fill in the form on the back page of this issue and send it in.*

## Horses: Clifton's Morass

In the days before motor vehicles, explorers and pioneers rode on horseback or used shank's pony. Many places during this era of European exploration were named in honour of friends and politicians, the travellers obviously having an eye to the benefits that this would provide on returning to civilisation. But some also took the opportunity to name places after their trusty steeds. This recognised the

important role that horses played in making these trips possible. When Burke and Wills were struggling through to the Gulf of Carpentaria, they made the effort to name Billy's Creek after Burke's favourite horse Billy. Like Burke and Wills, Billy perished in the outback. When Angus McMillan explored the Gippsland Lakes region early in 1840, he came upon a large swamp. In a letter written in 1853, McMillan recorded that

on 18<sup>th</sup> January 1840, 'we followed this river up (the Mitchell River) until we came to a large morass, to which I gave the name of Clifton's Morass, from the circumstances of my having nearly lost in it, from its boggy nature, my favourite horse Clifton'. It was hazardous being an explorer's horse but at least a few gained a little recognition.

□ Chris Richards

# From Brown Coal Mine to Yallourn North

Victoria has vast reserves of brown coal but very limited deposits of black coal. Traditionally, the state had been reliant on black coal imported from New South Wales for fuel and energy supplies, but this was often interrupted by strikes in the transport industry and on the coalfields. In 1889, the Great Morwell Coal Mining Com-

pany boldly began mining brown coal on the northern side of the Latrobe River in Gippsland. However, because of its higher moisture content, the coal was difficult to sell and the company failed to make a profit, going into liquidation ten years later. The mine lay abandoned until 1916, when the Mines Department re-opened it at a time of critical fuel

shortage. As people came to pitch their tents around the mine, the settlement was called Old Brown Coal Mine, or Brown Coal Mine, often shortened to BCM.

Plans were materialising for a giant new undertaking on the other side of the river. The State Electricity Commission had been formed to use the brown coal reserves to generate electricity for the state. This SEC enterprise was originally referred to as the Morwell scheme after the original mining works and nearby township but the Electricity Commissioners decided that a distinctive name should be given to the town and railway station about to be developed. Latrobe, the name of the river on which the works were situated, would have been an obvious choice if there hadn't already been a town bearing that name in Tasmania. The Water Commission engineer, A.S. Kenyon, suggested a suitable name might be derived from a combination of Indigenous terms, such as, *yalleen* 'brown', *lourn* 'fuel', and *yallanger* 'flame' (source language unknown). So the new undertaking was called Yallourn, described by the SEC as meaning 'brown fire' and in 1921, a model company town was designed to house the SEC employees coming to work at the new industrial enterprise.

With a new open cut developing south of the river and the town of Yallourn taking shape, the SEC expected that both the town and mining at Brown Coal Mine would be phased out. This was not the case. Although SEC employees were supposed to live in Yallourn, many moved to BCM because they couldn't afford the high house rents in the model town. Others wanted to escape SEC paternalism. Unlike the meticulously planned town below, Brown Coal Mine became an ad hoc settlement as the newcomers built huts out of bark, flattened kerosene tins and packing cases. SEC officials watched in conster-



*Huts at Brown Coal Mine c. 1926 (Centre for Gippsland Studies, Monash University)*



*Mine with township in distance c. 1926 (Centre for Gippsland Studies, Monash University)*

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nation as BCM's population grew. They began demolishing some of the huts but had to give this up when the Depression began to bite. The identity that developed at BCM contrasted with that of Yallourn. The people gained a reputation as battlers. They were independent.

Having survived the SEC's attempts to demolish the makeshift homes, Brown Coal Mine was destined for a makeover after the Second World War. The SEC needed new house sites as it was greatly expanding its operations throughout the Latrobe Valley. It finally sanctioned BCM by deciding to build new houses there. For some residents, though, the name Brown Coal Mine sat incongruously in the new postwar Latrobe Valley, pulsating with energy. A name change competition was held in 1947, with the winning entry Yallourn North. The town was destined to change.

But the most dramatic and symbolic end to BCM was a disaster in 1950 known as the 'Big Slip', when 250,000 tons of dirt, including part of the main street, fell into the old open cut. Shops were left swaying precariously on the edge. Remnants of battler BCM disappeared with the Big Slip and the redeveloped Yallourn North turned its back on the mine. It was now entrenched with a planning scheme, new shopping centre, housing estates and, importantly, a new name.

□ Meredith Fletcher

Director  
Centre for Gippsland Studies  
Monash University  
Gippsland Campus.

Sources:

W. R. Armstrong, *History of State Electricity Commission of Victoria*, Unpublished typescript, 1948.

Meredith Fletcher, *Digging People Up for Coal: a History of Yallourn*, Melbourne University Press, 2002.

Kath Ringin, *Old Brown Coal Mine*, Moe Historical Society, 1986.

## I Quote

As a Kurna person, I have grown up with oral traditions and understandings about places and their significance that do not necessarily appear in the historical record. As a child, I was in the presence of old people and my grandfather who shared the stories of the spirit beings. As a younger woman I travelled over the country with my dad to places on the Adelaide Plains and surrounding hills. He explained these things to me as he remembered stories which had been passed on to him.

The placenames that have survived in an Anglicised form are part of the story, law and lore of the land formations and places in which they are situated. These placenames are the 'skeletal remains' of the historical surviving reality of Kurna First Nation peoples, once a peaceful and intact body of lore/law of the land.

The word Yankalilla, derived from *yernkandi* 'to hang down, on; to join; impart; infect, as with a disease; to depend' (T&S 1840: 61) + *-lya* + *-illa* 'place' (i.e. 'place of the fallen bits' Manning 1986: 237; see Amery, this volume, for further details), is part of the law ceremony mortuary ritual and is of immense importance in reclaiming, through language recovery, the understanding of Kurna Aboriginal people's rightful place and function in the framework of one's identity with the law of the land, and the spiritual and custodial responsibilities in everyday life. Tjirbruki, carrying the remains of his dead nephew's deteriorating and flaking body falls to the ground at Yankalilla.

The word Onkaparinga derives from *ngankiparringga* (lit. 'woman river place' or 'women's river') which leads into deeper insider understandings that we won't go into here. Ngurlongga or Horseshoe Bend on the Onkaparinga River is probably derived from *nurlo* 'curvature, corner' + *-ngga* 'place'. From these pieces and fragments of the remains of a hunter-gatherer society can be seen the horrific effects of the dispossession process.

I believe that the placing of Kurna names to places today creates identity of a superficial nature unless they are relating to some source of relationship to the land and through this to the spirit of the land. The language of the Kurna, and all other Aboriginal language names, should stay true to the original nature of the land and spirit relationship or we are contributing to even further dispossession by putting anything anywhere because some people might think this is a 'nice' gesture of remembrance to a now extinct people to meet a fashionable and acceptable fetish of the day.

When we name a building, we draw on what the building might be used for. The same would apply to an organisation — the name would have meaning and relate to the purpose, function or place. For example, Yaitya Makkitura 'Indigenous mirror' for the new Indigenous film, screenwriters and multimedia incorporated body in South Australia, founded by David Wilson, a Kurna descendant/survivor. This has been how we have approached the way to best use the Kurna language for the purposes of being a part of our life and identity in the contemporary Nunga world today.

By using our language reclamation in this way, we identify with the purposes served by the language in the reconstruction of identity from the roots remaining. Naming activity that is not rooted in the land and in the people of the land runs the risk of being a shallow and meaningless activity that misappropriates our language and culture.

*Yambo Williams, Georgina. 2002. 'Conclusion'. Rob Amery and Georgina Yambo Williams 'Reclaiming through Renaming: The Reinstatement of Kurna Toponyms in Adelaide and the Adelaide Plains' in The Land is a Map: Placenames of Indigenous Origin in Australia, edited by Luise Hercus, Flavia Hodges and Jane Simpson. Canberra: Pandanus Books. p 267.*

# Shoalhaven Historical Society

Shoalhaven (NSW) is a somewhat unusual City Council area in that it extends from around Berry in the north, across to Kangaroo Valley in the west and beyond Ulladulla in the south. In the Shoalhaven region, there is said to be forty-nine towns and villages, four historical societies and several family history groups. Shoalhaven Historical Society is based at Nowra, but tries to keep in close contact with the other societies in the district.

The Shoalhaven Historical Society's key aims are to promote and encourage the study of local history, support the compilation of historical records, acquire and preserve relics and artifacts, printed and photographic records. Indeed it has been a Shoalhaven society policy over at least the last twenty five years to collect all available publications and documentation relating to the region, whether they are scholarly, indexed books or simple pieces written by a volunteer with one of the myriad of community organisations.

Individual society members have been involved in research in varying degrees and make the results of their research public in an attempt to foster the exchange of information among members of the society and community.

During the late 1980s I co-ordinated a project which became known as *500 Names and Places of Shoalhaven* [see some entries from this publication in box]. This project sought to make a list of places in the area covered by Shoalhaven City Council, together with origins and meanings where known. Physical features, parks and some properties have been added, with other interesting facts. It includes most current names and many obsolete names.

During this period a visit was made to the Geographical Names Board, but its filing system only occasionally had more information than that found in the societies' library of Shoalhaven's history books. So this project relied mostly on

the wide range of local source material the society had collected over the years. The other societies in the district assisted, and contact was made with many who had specialist knowledge, including developers and long-term residents. All available publications on Aboriginal placenames were also scanned for relevant names.

The Shoalhaven Tourism Board first published the manuscript in 1990, and the latest (third) edition was extended to fifty-two pages and published in 2000. The first edition of *500 Names and Places of Shoalhaven* was followed by a 'companion publication', *Villages of Shoalhaven* which includes a page of historical information on thirty-one towns and districts. This project again mostly relied on the expertise and knowledge of people from the four Shoalhaven region's historical societies.

*Villages of Shoalhaven* is now in its fourth edition, and both these booklets are consistent sellers at the tourist information centers, museums and local bookshops. Following on from these two, a third publication *Street Name Origins of Shoalhaven* was released in 2001, again by the Shoalhaven Tourism Board

Throughout these projects, assistance and encouragement has been forthcoming from several people from the Shoalhaven City Council, especially the planning department that is responsible for some of these names. Where an Aboriginal meaning has been established for a placename, the council has incorporated it in signposts in the region, for example, 'Nowra, meaning black cockatoo'. In some cases these have become talking points, with residents disputing the meaning – but such debate certainly enhances awareness.

□ Alan Clark

For more information on the Shoalhaven Historical Society:  
PO Box 301, Nowra NSW 2541  
<http://www.geocities.com/shoalhis/>

CAMBEWARRA – Formerly known as GOOD DOG or BULLAMIAH....The Aboriginal word 'Cambe' means fire, and 'Warra', a high place or mountain, hence the translation 'Mountain of fire'. Explanation is that both coachwood and the Illawarra Flame trees are common to the mountain, and when in bloom, they give a reddish appearance.

BOMADERRY – Township was laid out by Berry in 1859. From the Aboriginal word BUNBADERRA which means 'fighting ground'. An alternative meaning is given as 'running water'. The township's Post Office for the period 1874-85 had a datestamp spelt BOMADARY. (This was said to be an error, but as the stamp had been engraved, it went into use.) After 8 years closed, the Post Office re-opened on 16 August 1893 with spelling of BOMADERRY.

KANGAROO VALLEY – The aboriginal name for the area was PARRONRAH. It was referred to as KANGAROO GROUND by surveyor James Meehan in November 1819, because of the great number of Kangaroos there. However in 1840, rev William Clarke wrote that these animals had disappeared from the valley. Through the 1840s the name gradually changed to KANGAROO VALLEY, although for a time there was a move to name the township OSBORNE after the best known early settler.

NOWRA – It was generally accepted that NOWRA comes from an ABORIGINAL word meaning either 'camping place' or 'black cockatoo'. Charles Thorsby probably wrote the word for the first time, when he travelled through the area in 1821, and his spelling was NOO-WOO-RO. In those early days it was also spelt NOORA.

JERVIS BAY – Named in 1791 by Lt. Richard Bowen of the transport 'Atlantic' after the British Admiral, Sir John JERVIS (1735 –1823) who later was in command of the British Fleet at the Battle of St. Vincent in 1797. After the battle he was created an earl, thus becoming Earl St. Vincent.

JERRY BAILEY – This was the name for SHOALHAVEN HEADS until 1955, when Shoalhaven Shire Council agreed to the change amidst some opposition. JERRY BAILEY was in use as early as 1830, and a decade later Alexander Berry wrote to the Surveyor Generals Department, and marked it on an accompanying map (writing it JERRYBAYLY). Was thought to be the name of one of Berrys convicts, but no record of such a man has been found by researchers.



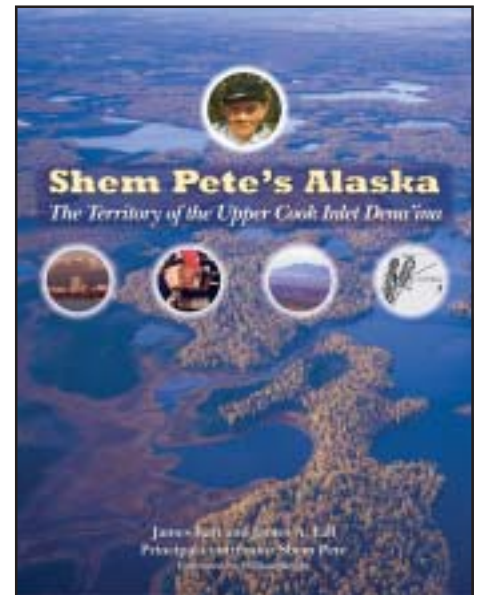
# New Publications: Shem Pete's Alaska

**S**hem Pete's *Alaska* makes a major contribution to Native American ethnogeography, Alaskan history, and onomastics and is the central reference on the Dena'ina people of Upper Cook Inlet. A gold mine for scholars of ethnogeography and Native American studies, this beautifully produced edition is also a treasure for Alaskans and for anyone interested in the 'personal connectedness to a beautiful land' voiced by Dena'ina elders.

Shem Pete (1896-1989), the principal contributor in *Shem Pete's Alaska*, was a colorful and brilliant raconteur from Susitna Station, Alaska who left a rich legacy of knowledge about the Upper Cook Inlet Dena'ina world. Shem was one of the most versatile storytellers and historians in twentieth century Alaska. His lifetime travel map of

approximately 13,500 sq. miles is one of the largest ever documented in this degree of detail anywhere in the world.

This expanded edition of the 1987 book presents 973 named places in sixteen drainage system based chapters. The names form a reconstructed placename network from the vantage points of the life experiences of Shem Pete and other Dena'ina and Ahtna speakers. The placenames are annotated with comments and stories by Shem Pete and more than fifty other contributors, and also by historic references, vignettes, numerous photographs, a selection of historic maps, and shaded-relief placename maps. In the introduction the authors provide perspective on Dena'ina language and culture, and a summary of Dena'ina geographic knowledge and placename research methodology.



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*Shem Pete's experience and wisdom as an elder of the Dena'ina Athabascan Indians shine through this work like the sun — as do the skill and devotion of James Kari, James Fall, and the other Dena'ina, Ahtna, Alaska Native and Anglo-American people who contributed to making the book a reality... We have a volume that offers a vivid picture of Native Alaskan culture, history, geography and language, with added glimpses of oral literature and music. It puts us there... All Native American peoples — indeed, all traditional communities in the world — would be fortunate and proud to have this kind of record of their life and culture. — from the Foreword by William Bright, Editor, Native American Place Names of the United States, University of Colorado, Boulder, November, 2001.*

## New to Nowra?

**F**inding Places? There are a few things that you will need to know when you move to Nowra in the Shoalhaven region (NSW).

Cambewarra is north-west of North Nowra but West Cambewarra is at the end of West Cambewarra Rd and is actually to the south-east of Cambewarra Village. It is called Tapitallee on topographic maps, Bangalee in the street directory and lists residents as Cambewarra in the telephone book. Locals call it Outer North Nowra.

Tapitallee Creek is nowhere near Tapitallee Mountain. They are at opposite ends of the Cambewarra Range. Browns Mountain is north of the Shoalhaven, Browns Creek is south.

Cambewarra Road is in Bomaderry and ends at the Princes Highway if you keep travelling up Cambewarra Rd towards Cambewarra you are actually on Moss Vale Rd (that road will take you to Mt Cambewarra and Kangaroo Valley before you get to Moss Vale). On a good map you can see that it is possible to turn left into West Cambewarra Rd but this road is just a track.

There are two Bells Lanes' they are less than 600m apart and one is off Moss Vale Rd (Cambewarra Rd) and the other is off Princess Hwy (called Abernethys Lane on some maps).

Shoalhaven Heads do not exist. The Shoalhaven River flows through Berry's Canal into the Crookhaven River then out to sea. The Crookhaven canal leaves

the Shoalhaven near Terara (pronounced Terera) becomes a creek then a river. The locals call Jervis Bay 'Jervis Bay'. Snotty nosed, stuck up (read 'ABC listening') Sydney people call it 'Jarvis Bay'. Real Estate Agents who have greater things on their mind, refer to it as 'J.B.' so as not to offend anyone (or can the sale). Property listed with a Berry Real Estate Agent will be \$50-\$100k more expensive presumably because their office is near the station - trains run two hourly if you are lucky.

And of course, Comerong Island is not an island, it is connected to the mainland at Shoalhaven Heads. It is a nice walk or even a bicycle ride. Though, you can cross a ferry to get there.

☐ Chris Lake

# Placenames in the News

## 'Kanakas' derogatory

*The Australian* (Tuesday, April 8, 2003) reported that South Sea Islander Australians have urged people to stop describing them as 'Kanakas', saying the word is derogatory. This Polynesian term for man was originally used to describe the Islanders who were used as slave labour in Queensland during the 1800s. This term is still sometimes used, many not realising that it is offensive. 'All those slang words like, for example, Abo, dago, nigger, black gin, all those sort of things, they're derogatory' said Burdekin South Sea Islander Organisation spokeswoman Joyce Henaway. 'So Kanak is too' she explained.

Some islanders also want authorities to drop Kanaka as a placename. There are two Kanaka Creeks and one Kanakas Release Creek in northern Queensland. There's also an Abo Creek in Tasmania and eight Nigger Creeks in Queensland and nineteen Black Gin Creeks across Australia and several Blackfella Creeks (see below). Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Mines principal cartographer Ian Hutchings said people could apply to have a name changed. 'If it was considered derogatory by all people and everybody was agreeing that it was, then we would go ahead and change it,' Mr Hutchings said.

According to the *Geoscience National Gazetteer* (<http://www.ga.gov.au/map/names/>):

There are two Blackfella Creeks in QLD and a Blackfella Creek, Spring and Rockhole in NT.

Sixteen Black Gin Creeks are recorded QLD including a Big Black Gin Creek and a Little Black Gin Creek. There is also one Black Gin Creek, two Black Gin Gully's and one Black Gin Ridge in NSW and a Black Gin Rocks and Wells in WA.

There is a Black Boy Creek in WA, and a Black Boys Nob and Black Boy Opal Diggings in SA and also a Black Boys Plains in TAS.

Twenty-one placenames feature the word Nigger. Ten of these are Nigger Creeks situated in the NT and QLD - there is also a Mount Nigger in QLD. Seven names feature Nigger(s)head, including Niggerhead Creek, Niggerhead Rocks, and Mount Niggerhead. There is also a Nigger's Bounce in QLD, The Niggerheads in VIC, Nigger's Flat in TAS.

*The Sydney Morning Herald* (Saturday, May 17, 2003) published a query in Spectrum's 'Big Questions' from a reader musing about why so many placenames, especially country names, start and end with the letter 'a.' A response to this question was received from Jim Martyn of Mollymook who blames the Romans, the Latin language and the renaissance for this toponymic trend. He explains that the ancient Roman's in their conquest of the then-known world, named many country and settlements with either masculine names, ending in 'um', such as Londinium and Belguim, or feminine names ending in 'a', such as, Britannia, Tunisia, Libya, Syria, Romania, Bulgaria. Martyn then goes on to draw a connection between the emergence of European world exploration, the growing glorification of the Roman and Greek civilisations and the large numbers of new colonies and cities that were given names with 'a' endings, such as, America, Canada, Alaska, Argentina, Columbia, Venezuela, India, Malaya, and of course, Australia.

*The Sydney Morning Herald* (Saturday, June 14, 2003) published an article titled 'Brand Issues' discussing the effects of names on property values and the power of a name to enhance a suburb's image or to detract from it. For many years property developers have named subdivisions and developments in the hope of making them more enticing. For example, Sylvania Waters was chosen to conjure up images of an aquatic oasis and the streets in Pearl Beach were named after gemstones. Then there are names that are more likely to deter buyers than attract, such as, Bogan Place, Cockburn Crescent, Dick Street and Watanobbi Knoll. Taking advantage of a more exclusive and prestigious neighbouring suburb name is common. Several agents admit they are not adverse to being creative about boundaries between desirable and less desirable suburbs. One real estate agent warns, 'Never believe a real estate agent when he gives directions because you'll end up in the wrong suburb'.

*The (Sydney) Magazine* (Wednesday, June 18, 2003) featured a column recounting an historical anecdote about a name and a search for a herd of cows. Captain Arthur Phillip and his second, John Hunter sailed into Sydney with a nine-strong herd of cattle in 1788 and only five months after their arrival in Sydney the whole herd went missing. Seven years later news came from a convict that there were cattle wandering a considerable distance downstream from Parramatta. The now Governor John Hunter and company set out to investigate and on coming upon the remaining herd of around forty cattle feeding in a beautiful pasture in a valley. Governor Hunter named the site: 'This place I call Cow Pasture Plains. It lays from Sydney in SW direction 50 to 55 miles and from Parramatta about SSW from 32 to 34 miles. This part is really a beautiful country'.

*The Sydney Morning Herald* (Saturday, June 21, 2003) reviewed the recently published *The Default Country: A Lexical Cartography of 20th-Century Australia* written by J. M. Arthur. This book takes as its basic premise that the language we use to define Australia is formulated against the notion of a default or 'proper' country. Arthur makes 'word maps' of Australia, and through her process of 'lexical cartography' explores the relations between language and landscape. Readers are challenged to adjust and refine the infinitely flexible language Australians have inherited into something that better expresses the place. The review praises this work as an 'original and provoking analysis', going on to say that the author has ranged 'knowledgeably over wide stretches of linguistic terrain'.

*Have you seen an article about placenames in the media which you'd like to share with our subscribers? Send a photocopy of the article and/or email details of the publication, date and brief summary of the article to Clair Hill at [chill@hmn.mq.edu.au](mailto:chill@hmn.mq.edu.au) for inclusion in a future edition of Placenames Australia.*

# Gregory's Naming of the Hamersley Range

The Hamersley Range (WA) was named in 1861 by the explorer/surveyor Frank Gregory. Gregory's expedition to the north west was a highly acclaimed and significant event for the colony of Western Australia, and was the catalyst for the opening up of the region to the pastoral industry. One of the sponsors of the expedition was Mr Edward Hamersley, after whom Gregory named the range. Hamersley was a prominent Western Australian citizen, Cambridge University educated and a wealthy landowner, bank director and member of the Legislative Council.

Gregory was the first non-indigenous explorer to undertake a terrestrial expedition into the Pilbara region of Western Australia. Prior to his land exploration only features along the Pilbara coastline had been named and recorded in the introduced toponymic system. Gregory made little contact with the Aboriginal inhabitants of the Hamersley Range during his expedition, and did not record any of the pre-existing Aboriginal names for features in the range.

In his exploration Gregory named many of the main features of the Pilbara – the rivers De Grey, Oakover, Shaw, Strelley, Maitland, Fortescue, Sherlock, Harding, Hardey and the Ashburton. He also named a number of the prominent mountains in the area. The names he chose for these mountains and their origins are as follows:

Mount Bruce – named in honour of Colonel John Bruce, Commandant in charge of the troops supporting the expedition.

Mount Vigors – named in honour of Bartholomew Vigors, early settler and Perth Attorney and barrister. He was a shareholder in the Hamersley and Phillips Cattle Co. at Irwin. He died in 1854, seven years before the expedition.

Mount Pyrton – named after the Hamersley family property on the Swan River. Also the name of the



*The Hamersley Range and surrounding region, Western Australia.*

place in Oxfordshire in England where Edward Hamersley came from.

Mount Brockman – most likely named in honour of William Locke Brockman, wealthy pastoralist and stock breeder and prominent citizen of Swan River 1830-72. Married to Frances Hamersley, aunt of Edward Hamersley after whom the range was named. However, a son of Brockman's either Edward or Edmund, was with Gregory on his expedition.

Mount Lionel – named in honour of Lionel Samson, businessman and prominent citizen of the Colony from 1829 to 1878.

Mount Samson – named in honour of Lionel Samson.

Mount Turner – most likely named in honour of James Turner, a member of Gregory's expedition. Also a shipbuilder and sailing master.

Mount Wall – named in honour of John Wall Hardey, prominent citizen and landowner in colony 1830-1885.

Gregory's discoveries in the north-west led to the pastoral settlement of the district, the first settlers, and the Withnell's arriving in the Roebourne area in 1864. Pastoralists searching for land, discovered and named the Cane and Robe Rivers and a number of other features.

In 1876 the celebrated Australian explorer Ernest Giles touched on the south-eastern extremity of the Hamersley Range during his exploration from the Geraldton area to the overland telegraph. He named the Ophthalmia Range when he was temporarily blinded with ophthalmia there. He also named Mount Robinson and The Governor in honour of the Governor of Western Australia (1875-77, 1880-83, 1890-95), Sir William Cleaver Francis Robinson.

Other principle European explorers were H. W. Venn and party in 1866 and E. T. Hooley in the same year. However, none of these explorers named any of the mountains in the Hamersley Range.

□ Brain Goodchild  
Secretary, Geographic Names Committee

## Erratum

Column 2, paragraph 3 of Nigel Sinnott's 'Place and Pitfalls: Researching the Alexandra and Eildon area of Victoria' published in June 2003

*Placenames Australia* should have read:

'Les Blake suggested that Mount Torbreck (the highest place in the area I covered) might be derived from Welsh *twr* and either French *brèche* or Italian *breccia*, which sounded rather complex. I discovered that, if the first syllable were Welsh, so too could be the second

syllable (*brych*). However, further checking revealed that in Scotland, near Inverness, was a village of Torbreck, so Gaelic made more sense for the etymology of the whole word [*tòrr + bread*].'

Copies of Sinnott's book *Place-Names of the Alexandra, Lake Eildon and Big River Area of Victoria* are available from the Friends of the Library - Alexandra District Inc. (c/o Alexandra Library, Grant Street, Alexandra, Vic. 3714; tel. 03 5772 1757) for \$28.50.

# The Placenames Puzzle No. 7 Some Unusual Placenames

Example: VIC Crack of dawn...Break O Day

New South Wales

1. Completely out of money
2. A representative at a conference
3. A late evening farewell
4. Person employed to obtain tax, rents

Queensland

5. First letter in the Greek alphabet
6. Captain of HMS Bounty - twice
7. Making cakes, bread etc.; thin block of wood used for chopping

South Australia

8. Simon, the leader of revolt in South America
9. Ceremonial gown
10. Chair once used for carrying a passenger
11. Pebble or small rock; beach/bushwalker's small dwelling

Western Australia

12. Used to play billiards
13. Heroine of Beethoven's *Fidelio*
14. Author of *Don Quixote*

Northern Territory

15. Flap at rear of aeroplane's wingtip

Victoria

16. Roman goddess of agriculture
17. Form of 'yes'
18. Prolonged plaintive cry
19. Author of *The Thirty-Nine Steps*

Tasmania

20. Container holding earth for a plant to grow in

**Answers:** 1. Broke 2. Delegate  
3. Goodnight 4. Collector 5. Alpha  
6. Bill 7. Baking Board 8. Bolivar  
9. Robe 10. Sedan 11. Stone Hut  
12. Cue 13. Leonora 14. Cervantes  
15. Alleron 16. Ceres 17. Yea 18. Wall  
19. Buchan 20. Flowerpot

## Placenames Mailing List and ANPS Volunteer Research

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