December, 2009

Placenames Australia

ANPS

NEWSLETTER OF THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL PLACENAMES SURVEY

# 'THE' PLACENAMES OF AUSTRALIA

Placename research can be undertaken using two broad approaches. The first, and most common method is (for want of a better term) the qualitative approach; the emphasis being on discovering the meaning of a placename, who named it, when and why. The second method takes a quantitative approach, and concentrates on looking for patterns of place-naming by calculating the frequencies of certain types of placenames. These methods are not mutually exclusive and should be seen as complementing each other.

Like most articles in our Newsletter, Joyce Miles' article in the September 2009 issue, *And they all begin with "The"*, takes a qualitative approach. The approach I take in this piece is quantitative.

*The Basin*, Rottnest Island
Photo courtesy of Denis Glennon, Iconic Images International, Peppermint Grove, WA

As part of our work on developing an effective typology for classifying placenames, David Blair and I have recently started work on the syntax (grammatical structure) of placenames. Placenames starting with the definite article, *The*, is one category that I have been doing some preliminary research on. Joyce's timely article has prompted me to write this article, and is intended as a supplement to her interesting exposé.

Placenames typically consist of a 'generic' element and/or a 'specific' (or 'unique') element where, for instance, in *Botany Bay*, 'Botany' (the specific element), explicitly identifies the 'Bay' (the generic element), which in turn identifies the type of geographic feature named. The generic element is akin to a family name, whilst the specific element is like a given name. Many placenames consist of a specific element only, for example, *Brisbane*, *Orange*, *Geelong*, *Launceston*, *Gawler*, *Broome, Jabiru* etc. You don't find placenames that consist of solely of generic elements **Point*, **Harbour*, **Mount*, **Basin* etc. However, placing the definite article before such elements allows you to have placenames whose headword is a generic, e.g. *The Canyon*, *The Bluff*, *The Gulf*, *The Bay*, *The Bight*, *The Peninsula*, *The Plain*, *The Point* etc. The function of the definite article is to give uniqueness and identifiability to nouns. This identifiability comes from speakers' and listeners' shared contextual knowledge. So, when someone refers to *The Rocks*, its referent can be immediately identified. However, this cannot be taken for granted—not all such placenames are so transparent. For example there are two instances of *The Gulf* in NSW which are not 'gulfs' at all. One is a creek, and the other refers to a set of hills. Both have alternative official names—*Gulf Creek* and *Gulf Hills* respectively.

As Joyce notes, there are numerous '*The*' placenames—in fact, they number in the thousands! The 2006 Gazetteer of Australian Placenames contains over 322,000 names. Of these 4440 (or 1.4%) have the definite article as their first element.

Table 1 shows the national distribution of all placenames per State and Territory, their distribution *within* each State and Territory, and the national distribution of '*The*' placenames per State and Territory. Note that I am deliberately limiting my discussion of the definite article to its occurrence as a part of a legal or gazetted placename. By way of contrast, mountain ranges, rivers, regions and seas often take the article, as in *the Snowy Mountains*, *the Murray*, *the Pilbara*, *the Tasman* etc. However, this usage has a grammatical/semantic function rather than a strictly toponymic one. Atlases and gazetteers show that in geographical use, these articles are omitted.

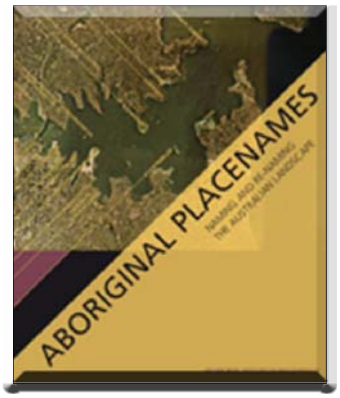
**Table 1**

| State/ Territory | Proportion of *all* placenames in Australia | *'The'* placenames as a proportion of *all* placenames in each State/ Territory | Proportion of *all* *'The'* placenames in Australia |
|---|---|---|---|
| NSW | 25.5% | 2.5% | 45.7% |
| QLD | 19.5% | .8% | 10.8% |
| SA | 16.4% | 1.4% | 16.8% |
| WA | 15.9% | .6% | 7.2% |
| VIC | 12.5% | 1.3% | 12.1% |
| TAS | 6.2% | 1.4% | 6.1% |
| NT | 3.9% | .4% | 1.1% |
| ACT | .3% | .9% | .2% |

*(Continued on Page 3)*

# Aboriginal Placenames

## Just published!




Readers will remember *The Land is a Map*, published as a result of ANPS workshops on Aboriginal placenames issues. The good news is that a second volume, *Aboriginal Placenames*, has just been released by ANU E Press. Check out the details at http://epress.anu.edu.au/placenames_citation.html—and then you can either buy a copy, or download it as a PDF for free!

**Aboriginal Placenames**

**Naming and re-naming the Australian landscape**

Edited by Harold Koch and Luise Hercus

ISBN 9781921666087 $29.95 (GST inclusive)
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# 'THE' UPDATES…

## MORE ON *THE BUCKETS*

Jim Wafer has added some useful information to Joyce Miles' article on "THE..." placenames (September 2009 issue). Jim notes that the name of the mountains called the *Gloucester Buckets* appears to incorporate a variant form of the Lower North Coast language *bagan* 'stone', 'iron'. The variation between word—final nasal and stop at the same point of articulation (in this case, *n* and *t*) is common in this language, and the etymology is supported by the quote from J. D. Lang in Joyce's article ('Buccans' ~ 'Buckets').

This information from Jim comes from a major publication which Jim recently co-authored with Amanda Lissarrague—see our notice right.

## AND MORE ON *THE RISK*

Our informant Bryson Wilson has added considerably to our knowledge of *The Risk*. Bryson writes that in September 1850, Scots migrants John and Mary Wilson arrived in Sydney on the barque *Emily*. After years of working in various capacities in various parts of NSW, in 1859 the couple ended up at Roseberry Station on the Upper Richmond River, where John took up the position of overseer. Ten years later the Wilsons selected land nearby, and they called their selection *Risk* after the cottage where Mary had spent her childhood years near Borgue, in SW Scotland. While early references describe the homestead as *Risk*, common usage later added the definite article so the area became known as *The Risk*. It would seem that Mary had naming rights on their land acquisitions, because their next property they called *Wigton*—and Wigtown Bay is visible from the ruins of *Risk* cottage in Scotland. As for why Mary's childhood cottage bore that name, we can say that *risk* is a Scots word meaning "light rain, drizzle"—and we all know what Scottish weather is like!

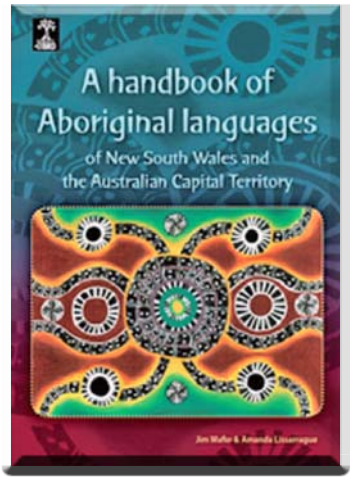
## In this issue



# A Handbook of Aboriginal Languages

## An invaluable resource on NSW languages

Those of our readers who are interested in Aboriginal languages of the east coast may already be aware of this significant publication. But if not—here's an outstanding work of scholarship from three staunch friends of the Survey, which we're delighted to bring to your attention.




**A Handbook of Aboriginal Languages of New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory**

Jim Wafer and Amanda Lissarrague. With a chapter on contact languages by Jean Harkins.

Muurrbay Aboriginal Language & Cultural Co-operative, 2008 [xiv, 844pp]

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Table 2 Documents the most common '*The*' placenames in the Gazetteer and the number of instances they appear. (Names marked with ***** indicate existence of singular and plural forms in the table.)

**Table 2**

| Number of instances | Placename(s) |
|---|---|
| 94 | *The Gap* |
| 72 | *The Bluff* |
| 65 | *The Pines* |
| 64 | *The Pinnacle** |
| 49 | *The Ranch* |
| 48 | *The Springs* |
| 47 | *The Sugarloaf/Sugar Loaf* |
| 46 | *The Glen* |
| 45 | *The Basin; The Sisters* |
| 44 | *The Brothers* |
| 38 | *The Willows* |
| 36 | *The Pinnacles*; The Oaks* |
| 34 | *The Gums* |
| 32 | *The Gorge* |
| 28 | *The Peak* |
| 27 | *The Knob*; The Twins; The Gulf; The Island* |
| 25 | *The Rocks* |
| 23 | *The Junction* |
| 22 | *The Meadows* |
| 21 | *The Narrows* |
| 18 | *The Lookout; The Lagoon; The Lake* |
| 17 | *The Three Sisters; The Valley; The Park; The Grange* |
| 14 | *The Big Hill; The Point* |
| 13 | *The Falls* |
| 12 | *The Broadwater/Broad Water; The Grove; The Needles; The Rock; The Range; The Spit* |
| 11 | *The Knoll; The Blow Hole; The Cottage; The Homestead* |
| 10 | *The Bald Hill; The Knobs*; The Long Swamp; The Plains; The Razorback; The Ridge; The Saddle; The Swamp* |

Joyce also correctly notes that many '*The*' placenames are named for their formation. Indeed, I discovered that the vast majority are (see below). These either have a generic as their headword or are given metaphorical names, such as: *The Knob, The Razorback, The Armchair, The Amphitheatre, The Beehive, The Organs, The Pulpit, The Cone, The Needles, The Pyramids, The Hummocks, The Hump, The Funnel, The Citadel, The Fortress, The Dipper, The Candlestick, The Cauldron, The Bubbler, The Chimney* etc.

One quite popular type of '*The*' placename is that featuring tree species: pines, willows, oaks and gums are the most popular, but other tree-species names also feature in the Gazetteer: *The Acacias, The Banyans, The Bangalows, The Beeches, The Birches, The Cabbage Trees, The Cedars, The Chestnuts, The Coolabahs, The Elms, The Firs, The Ironbarks, The Kurrajongs, The Linden, The Mulgas, The Myrtle, The Olives, The Palms, The Peach Trees, The Peppermints, The Poplars, The Wattles,* and *The Wilgas*.

There are other interesting names featuring kinship terms (*The Brothers*, *The Sisters*, *The Twins*, *The Cousins*, and *The Grandfathers*) and anatomical terms (*The Fingers, The Boobs, The Carbuncle, The Chin, The Elbow, The Eyebrows, The Heart, The Knuckle, The Neck, The Nipples, The Paps, The Pimple, The Teeth, The Thumb, The Toenail, The Tongue, The Wart, The Womb, The Gut, The Tonsil Spur,* and *The Fangs*), all of which are used as metaphorical descriptors.

There are also at least two humorous and clever linguistic innovations: *The Poley Bore* and *The Mod-Ell Stud*. Others are quite enigmatic: *The Buggery*, *The Mut Cut*, *The Red Herring*, *The Man in the Boat*, *The Occupation*, and *The Officer*. If you should know the origin and significance of any of these, we would love to hear from you.

Perhaps one of the most iconic '*The*' placenames in Australia is *The Overflow*, made famous by A.B. "Banjo" Patterson in his poems *Clancy of The Overflow* and *The Man from Snowy River*. Speaking of Australian iconic names, I was surprised to find 33 '*The*' placenames featuring *Meadow*, but only 10 with *Paddock*. I thought we had paddocks in Australia, not meadows.

Table 3. highlights the 10 most common topographic feature types with a '*The*' placename. It is not surprising that the majority of these (61.5%) are natural features, because as noted above, most '*The*' placenames figure a generic or are descriptive of formations. The most visible and prominent of natural formations are elevated relief features, such as mountains, hills, rocks, ridges and plateaux. It is not surprising, therefore, that these comprise 71% natural features listed in the table.

**Table 3**

| Feature Type | Number of instances & (% of sample) | |
|---|---|---|
| Hill | 503 | (12.5%) |
| Locality | 480 | (11.9%) |
| Homestead | 437 | (10.8%) |
| Stream | 332 | (8.2%) |
| Mountain | 269 | (6.7%) |
| Ridge | 155 | (3.8%) |
| Waterhole | 145 | (3.6%) |
| Rock | 128 | (3.2%) |
| Reserve | 112 | (2.8%) |
| Plateau | 110 | (2.7%) |

*The Three Sisters*, Blue Mountains
Photo: http://www.photoeverywhere.co.uk

Just over one third of '*The*' placenames in the gazetteer are listed with alternative official names, where the definite article is omitted. Many of these simply have the article omitted as in: *The Gums Creek → Gums Creek*, *The Hanging Rock → Hanging Rock*, *The Hangmans Creek → Hangmans Creek*. Others have completely different names or a specific element added, such as: *The Black Mountain → Hallorans Hill*, *The Yellow Swamp Creek → Browns Gully*, *The Valley Arm Creek → Cody Creek*, *The Rock → Halscott Rock*, *The Sugarloaf → Hayes Sugarloaf*, *The Pinnacle → Gumble Pinnacle*, *The Basin → Sandy Basin*, *The Cross Roads → Hoddles Cross Roads*. Often when the '*The*' name has no generic element, the alternate name contains one: *The Haystack → Haystack Mountain*, *The High And Mighty → Mount High and Mighty*, *The Horse Shoe → Horseshoe Lagoon*.

For the linguists among you, I include a short discussion on the grammatical structure of '*The*' placenames. All placenames are noun phrases and essentially consist of either a single noun

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or combinations of various nouns (*Batlow*, *Pebble Beach*, *Bullock Head Creek*), adjectives and nouns (*Blue Waterhole*, *Grassy Mountain*, *Big Bald Hill*, *Little Bandicoot Island*), or nouns with prepositional phrases (*Head of Long Creek*, *Village of Monia Gap*, *Woman in White*, *Nugget on the Fence Dam*) etc. Occasionally, placenames have the structure of many noun phrases we encounter in everyday language, that is, they begin with the definite article.

In all, I discovered 55 different grammatical structures for '*The*' placenames. The structural patterns range from the very simple, *The Pulpit* [*The* + noun], to quite complex ones, *The Long Arm of Fish River Creek* [*The* + adjective + noun + (preposition + noun + noun + noun)]. By far the most common structure in the data set is the basic [*The* + noun] structure. Table 4 outlines the eight most common grammatical structures in the data set. The other 47 structure types generally have a small handful of exemplars.

**Table 4**

| Structure | Examples | Number of instances & (% of sample) |
|---|---|---|
| *The* + noun | *The Breadknife; The Bend* | 2928 (65.9%) |
| *The* + noun + noun | *The Block Creek; The Fountain Spring* | 632 (14.2%) |
| *The* + adjective + noun | *The Quiet Corner; The Black Range* | 466 (10.5%) |
| *The* + numeral + noun | *The Three Sisters; The Twelve Apostles* | 66 (1.5%) |
| *The* + noun + (noun + noun) | *The Elbow Recreation Park; The Alkaowra Flood Flats* | 52 (1.2%) |
| *The* + (noun + noun) + noun | *The Bees Nest Arm; The Hog Bay River* | 46 (1.0%) |
| *The* + (adjective + noun) + noun | *The Old Pool Reserve; The Long Arm Creek* | 40 (.9%) |
| *The* + adjective + (noun + noun) | *The Reedy Water Hole; The Old Gum Tree* | 39 (.9%) |

There are many instances of nouns in either singular or plural form: *The Cascade* and *The Cascades, The Cathedral* and *The Cathedrals, The Channel* and *The Channels, The Cliff* and *The Cliffs, The Folly* and *the Follies, The Peak* and *the Peaks, The Rock* and *The Rocks* etc.

There are also numerous instances where there are variations in spelling or orthographic representation, but this is, of course, quite common among all placename types and normally does not create a problem in classification. One common example concerns names represented as either solid, hyphenated or open compound nouns, e.g. *The Long Waterhole* (solid compound) vs *The Long Water Hole* (open compound) and *The New Country Water-Holes* (hyphenated compound); *The Racecourse* vs *The Race Course; The Broadwater* vs *The Broad Water*; *The Sugarloaf* vs *The Sugar Loaf*; *The Razorback* vs *The Razor Back*; *The Key-Holes* vs *The Key Holes* etc.

Employing a quantitative approach in toponymic research provides us with a different perspective to what we normally see in research articles. This approach helps us find patterns and practices in place-naming, and can suggest explanations for these. Besides, looking at distributions of placename types is interesting in its own right, I think.

In a future issue of the Newsletter, I plan to take the quantitative approach again when I report on the distributions of Indigenous versus introduced placenames in Australia, New Zealand and Fiji.

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## References


Geoscience Australia Place Name Search http://www.ga.gov.au/map/names/

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Van Langendonck, Willy (2007). *Theory and Typology of Proper Names*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

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# MEETINGS IN MELBOURNE

The Annual Forum of CGNA (the Committee for Geographical Names of Australasia) was held in Melbourne in early October this year, and the Survey was represented by Jan Tent and David Blair. We took the opportunity of this gathering to hold two meetings which were important in progressing the work of the Survey.

### *Placenames Australia—AGM*

The main business of the Annual General Meeting was the election of the Executive Committee for 2009-2010.

| | |
|---|---|
| President | Colin Yallop |
| Vice President | Joyce Miles |
| Secretary and Treasurer | Jan Tent |
| Other Members | Tricia Mack (Newletter Editor), Michael Walsh, Greg Windsor, Dale Lehner, David Blair |

### *Historical Information Workshop*

Laura Kostanski, the Secretary of the Victorian State Committee, organised an important workshop for us, jointly sponsored by Land Victoria (the home of the State's Register of Geographic Names) and ANPS. The half-day program was designed to give an overview of the Historical Information website and to report progress in attracting placename information from members of the public.

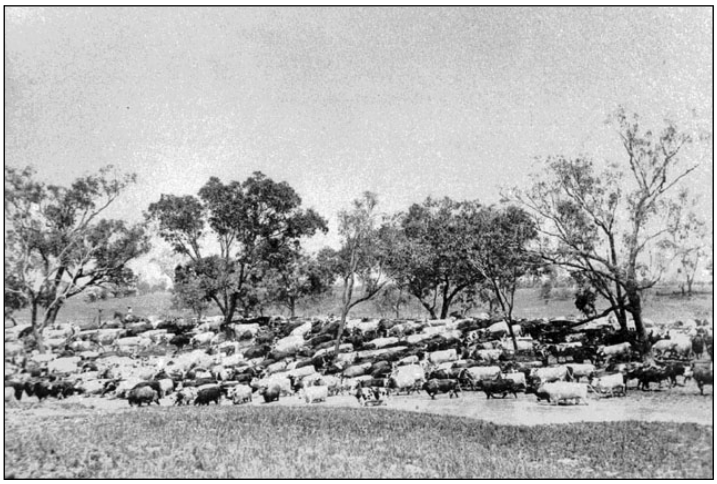
Readers can view the site first-hand at:
http://services.land.vic.gov.au/vicnames/historicalInformation.html?method=list

Participants at the workshop were unanimous that the site is a very impressive piece of design, which ought to make it easy for people to submit historical data on placenames in a form that is suitable for agencies such as ANPS and the various States and Territories to use. All were encouraged that this State initiative could be extended into a national program of community—based data collection. We are very grateful to John Tulloch, Surveyor-General and Registrar of Geographic Names, for hosting us; and to Laura for her planning and organisation of the workshop.

# ALL A BIT SPOOKY

Australia is haunted by ghosts, bogies, bunyips and devils —according to some of its placenames. There are, for example, a dozen or more **Ghosts** and nearly a hundred **Devils** apparently lurking in creeks, gullies, caves, glens and holes in New South Wales alone. Victoria has a town and a state park attributed to a **Bunyip—**an imaginary creature of Aboriginal legend, said to haunt swamps and billabongs. Who or what hides in **The Devil's Nest**—a mountain in Banana Shire? But trying to find out how such names originated is proving difficult. There must have been some very strong reasons to endow areas with names that, to some people, might seem a little scary. In some cases there is a perfectly logical explanation—mist, fog, a trick of the light or rather unusual atmospheric conditions; in other instances the name has become local folklore. But these are all names that have been recorded officially by the Geographical Names Board of NSW.

Some of these names just refer to the land formation. **Devil's Elbow** in the Blue Mountains is a local usage name of long standing for a dangerous section of road and in the same area **The Devil's Wilderness** refers to an area only visited by the most experienced bushwalkers.[1] There are a number of tales of alleged ghosts wandering around in the Tamworth region. Not far from **The Murder Dog** (referred to in *Placenames Australia*, September 2009) the ghost of a Chinese woman can be seen, so it is said, crossing the road carrying her head under her arm at **Yellow Woman's Gully.** Unfortunately we do not know who she was or why she was decapitated. Nevertheless, she is remembered, even if it is in a somewhat macabre way.[2]



*H.B Lane at left, Head Stockman at Daandine Station, crossing the Barcoo at Isis Ford enroute from Buckingham Downs in north-western Queensland to Muswellbrook in NSW, 1882*

It is easy to see how myths arise. For instance, one **Ghost Gully** in the Inverell area runs from the Gwydir Highway down to Auburn Vale Creek and here the pine trees used to make strange noises when the wind blew through them. It is said the children were always scared when they played near the gully, naturally saying there were ghosts. Another local tale is that someone died near there and their ghost could be heard calling.[3] The Gwydir Highway has another **Ghost Gully** crossing it**.** This is a watercourse rising 3km E of Swan Vale. This was named by the grandson of the original settler. It became well known as a dangerous spot on the highway as it is the site of several fatal car accidents.[4] **Ghosties Beach,** a small beach located on the southern side of Flat Island between Flat Rocks and Timber Beach, Wyong was formerly known as Little Beach, but it changed ownership in 1991 and became a State Registered Area. It is now recorded by the GNB as **Ghosties Beach.** However, local residents say that even several decades ago it was known as **Ghosties Beach,** perhaps because there is an old church and a graveyard in the vicinity.[5] According to the GNB, **Wunda Gully** in the Gosford, NSW area is an Aboriginal name referring to 'spirits, ghosts, white people'.

There is a lovely Queensland story—**The Ghost of Range's Bridge**—told by Henry Bassett Lane, the Head Stockman on Daandine Station during the late l800s. In the early 1900s there was a lonely wooden bridge across the Condamine River, about eight miles west of Dalby, near a road which branched off to the township of Macalister. Nearby a settler's house was owned by the Range family—hence the bridge was known as Range's Bridge. There was hardly any traffic at night, but from time to time the occasional lone traveller's horse would refuse to cross the bridge – a ghostly white object was said to be lurking on the bridge. At first this was ridiculed, but as more late night travellers reported a "ghost" on the bridge and had been obliged to cross the river further down stream, the story gained credence. Most people travelled by daylight, but around one o'clock one night a lone horseman saw a white object at the end of the bridge. He tied up his horse and courageously investigated on foot. He called out. The "ghost" stood up and came towards him saying "It's only me—Granny Range". She was dressed in a full length white nightdress and had long white hair. She explained that sometimes she could not sleep so crept out and onto the bridge to be near the spirit of her husband who had drowned some years before in a flood. The ghost of the Range's Bridge was no more, but the name Ranges Bridge was officially gazetted for the locality in September 2001.[6]

The ghost of Frederick Fisher will be remembered in the Campbelltown area, not by a headstone in a graveyard for one was never erected, but by the names **Fishers Ghost Creek** and **Fishers Ghost Park**. His story has become part of the history of the area which has been recorded in detail by Carol Liston. Frederick George James Fisher was born in London in 1792. When he was in his early twenties he was convicted of possessing forged banknotes and transported to Australia, arriving in Sydney in l816 and was sent to Liverpool. Being one of the rare literate convicts, he was assigned to the Waterloo Flour Company, one of the most influential companies in NSW. He prospered and within nine years owned four farms and valuable property. Liston records Fisher's subsequent property dealings, his clashes with tradesmen and his court appearance over a knife attack on a carpenter who had disputed a payment. Fisher received a fine and a light sentence. He gave a power of attorney to a neighbour, William George Worrall, to manage his affairs during his imprisonment. On his release he returned to his building operations and as his farm had no house, he lodged with Worrall, along with other tradesmen.[7]

On the evening of 17th June 1826 Fisher disappeared and Worrall said that he had sailed for England to escape a charge of forgery. Within weeks Worrall began to sell Fisher's horses and his personal belongings and made attempts to obtain the title to his farm. Suspicions were aroused over the validity of the documents involved and the Attorney General was alerted. It was thought unlikely that Fisher would return to England as he was still under sentence and had made no attempt to sell his considerable property holding before departing, nor had he informed his brother of his intention. Worrall was arrested on suspicion of Fisher's murder. He alleged Fisher had been murdered by four men. They were arrested but no body could be found. Eventually Fisher's remains were discovered in a

*(Continued on Page 6)*

## All a Bit Spooky . . .

*(Continued from Page 5)*

shallow grave on Worrall's land. Worrall was arrested, found guilty and executed in 1827.[8] The case was well documented and aroused considerable interest. A poem was written based on the Fisher murder in which a 'ghost' was introduced. Subsequent stories alleged that the ghost of Fisher had been encountered sitting on a fence in the moonlight. Charles Dickens included a version in one of his magazines and one was included in a French publication. In 1902 the then Attorney—General for NSW defended the story to an Oxford audience and as late as l960 the playwright Douglas Stewart based a comedy on *Fisher's Ghost.*[9]

It is said that some local residents believe that the ghost of Frederick Fisher haunts the Campbelltown Town Hall.[10] It has become entrenched as one of Australia's best-known ghost stories to the extent that the Geographical Names Board has incorporated it in two placenames: **Fishers Ghost Creek** and **Fishers Ghost Park** assigned in April 1976.[11]

There still remain dozens of ghostly, spooky names which enliven the landscape and lead us to wonder how such names arose. If there is a ghost in your area with a story to tell we shall be delighted to hear of it.



**References:**


1 Brian Fox, *Blue Mountains Geographical Dictionary*, 2006, p.93
2 Nundle Customer Service Centre
3 Inverell District Family History Group
4 Geographical Names Board of NSW
5 Wyong Shire Library Service
6 Gerard 'Whitey' Torenbeek, employee of Henry Bassett Lane in the l930s (oral information); http:www.nrw.qld.gov.au/property/placenames/detail.php?id=42767
7 Carol Liston, *Campbelltown, The Bicentennial History,* Council of the City of Campbelltown, l988, pp 59-61
8 Carol Liston, *op.cit.* p.62
9 For a full list see Carol Liston, *op.cit.* p.66
10 http://www.campbelltown.nsw.gov.au/default.asp?DocID=3161&iNavCatID=1407&i…
11 Geographical Names Board of NSW


## I QUOTE

We have already alluded to one striking difference between Adnyamathanha [in SA] and European naming systems—the system of naming creeks. As in the European system, a single creek flowing into a Lake may have had several names en route, due to its having had many branches upstream. The Adnyamathanha, however, divide the creek even further because creeks for the most part take their name from the last place through which they passed. That is to say, as well as relinquishing its name at a junction, a creek also relinquishes its name *at a named place*, generally a waterhole. This means that a creek on its way down to Lake Frome, for instance, changes its name a number of times en route. In fact, speaking from an Adnyamathanha viewpoint it is more correct to talk not of *a creek* which "changes its name" but of (a series of) *creeks*. This makes more sense in the Northern Flinders Ranges, since after rain stops, the only creeks (in the Adnyamathanha sense) which continue to flow are those downstream from a spring, and even these generally flow only a short distance. Water may also remain in some waterholes. *Vari* (=creek), then, is a part of a watercourse, demarcated by two "places", and mostly (but not always) taking its name from the one upstream. (page 6).

*The Flinders Ranges, SA*

Tunbridge, Dorothy 'Aboriginal place names' *Australian Aboriginal Studies, Journal of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies*, 1987, number 2, 2-13. Edited text of an address delivered by Tunbridge on August 21, 1986, in Adelaide, to the Second National Nomenclature Conference (now the Committee for Geographical Names in Australasia).

## Can you help?

I am interested in recording all Polynesian placenames in Australia. One likely contender is Malua Bay, just south of Batemans Bay on the south coast of NSW. If anyone knows the origin of this name, we would love to hear from you. It could be named after the village Malua in Western Sāmoa on the island of Upolu. It is the location of the Malua Theological College which was the first theological college to be established in the South Pacific in 1848 by London Missionary Society. It could also be named after Malua, the famous Tasmanian racehorse of the late 19th century, or simply the Fijian word *mālua* which means 'go slowly; by-and-by; to linger'. It would be nice to discover which of these (if any) is the source of the name.

**Jan Tent**

## Placenames puzzle no. 32

### A Miscellany of Unusual Placenames

The clues reveal some unusual placenames (disregard spelling)

E.g. (SA) A system of signalling by hand held flags……. Semaphore

1. (QLD) A long-distance race
2. (NSW) Army slang for dear old England
3. (NSW) Unlikely ever to become weary
4. (NSW) Woollen bed cover; UK term for a unit
5. (NSW) Representative sent to a conference
6. (TAS) Description of the highly flammable bush on a very hot day
7. (TAS) A North American light axe
8. (VIC) A sheep, originally from Spain, valuable for fine wool
9. (VIC) Mineral from which plaster of Paris is made
10. (VIC) In law, a Latin warning (particularly to buyers)
11. (VIC) An official government journal confirming, for example, a placename
12. (VIC) Caesar crossed it in 49BC to begin a war with Pompey
13. (VIC) Rapidity in moving, especially by vehicles
14. (VIC) An affirmative reply or vote
15. (VIC) A high-pitched lamentation
16. (SA) Colloquial – work (often hard)
17. (SA) Sometimes metaphorically put before the horse
18. (SA) Garment worn at graduation or by a judge
19. (SA) An ordinary car – not tourer
20. (SA) This always needs a key



# THEORY MEETS INCONVENIENT FACT

Alert readers will recall the theoretical problem in the Survey's database which I alluded to in a previous issue: how to label the relationship between a disused toponym and a non-existent one! In the article "The Bay with no Name" (June 2009), I described how James Cook originally named the eastern side of Moreton Island as *Moreton Bay;* the placename has now been appropriated by the western side of the island, leaving the east coast with no name at all.

The current rules for the ANPS database do not allow us to say simply that toponym X is "disused"; the best we can do is to say that X is a "former name"—or more specifically "X is the previously-used, though never legislated, form of the currently assigned or preferred name Y". In the case under discussion, it was clear that Cook's no-longer-used *Moreton Bay* has no "Y". I suggested (in the hope that this might be a unique or rare case) that we could probably ignore this gap in the database rules, unless and until other examples were unearthed.

A similar instance has, in fact, come to light—and again, it's one of Captain Cook's toponyms. Standing off Cape York on 21st August 1770, he named a small group of islands *York Isles*. These islands no longer bear a group name—at least, none that is officially recorded and approved. There is one difference, however, from the Moreton Bay case which has enabled us to tag our *York Isles* entry with a relationship (tenuous and possibly unsustainable, we grant). We are aware of a suggestion by J.C. Beaglehole, the distinguished editor of Cook's journal, that the islands were later known as the Mount Adolphus Islands. For the time being, we have chosen to accept that *Mount Adolphus Islands* has survived informally as the preferred toponym, even though it is not currently assigned; this has enabled us to tag *York Isles* as a "former" name for the Mount Adolphus Islands. We shall continue our enquiries; and if Beaglehole's suggestion turns out to be out-of-date or wrong, we'll have one more reason to review the relationship tags in our database.

Cook, James. *The voyage of the Endeavour 1768-1771*. Edited by J.C. Beaglehole. Cambridge: CUP, 1968. p. 386.

❑ *David Blair*


**Answers:**
1. Marathon 2. Blighty 3. Nevertire 4. Blanket Flat 5. Delegate 6. Tinderbox 7. Tomahawk 8. Merino 9. Gypsum 10. Caveat 11. Gazette 12. Rubicon 13. Speed 14. Yea 15. Wail 16. Yacka 17. Karte 18. Robe 19. Sedan 20. Lock

# Placenames Australia...

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## Contributions

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Please send all contributions to the Editor, Tricia Mack, by email: editor@anps.org.au
Electronic submissions and photographic or other illustrations are greatly appreciated.
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| 31 January for the March issue | 31 July for the September issue |
| 30 April for the June issue | 31 October for the December issue |