A Dangerous Point

Fingal Head and Point Danger

Cook Island, with Fingal Head behind and Mt Warning in the distance—taken from Danger Reefs. Photo: Ken Gold

from the coast (Danger Reefs), as well as an island 650 metres from the shore (Cook Island). On the day in question Cook recorded in the *Endeavour*'s journal:

We now saw the breakers again within us which we past [sic] at the distance of 1 League, they lay in the Lat^{de} 38^0 8' [sic - 28^0 8'] & ~~lay~~ stretch off East two Leagues from a point under which is a small ~~low~~ Island, there [sic] situation may always be found by the peaked mountain before mentioned which bears $^{SW}_{BW}$ from them this [sic] ~~mountain or hill~~ and on this account I have named Mount Warning it lies 7 or 8 Leagues inland in the Latitude of 28^0 22' the land is high and hilly about it but it is conspicuous enough to be distinguished from everything else. The point off which these shoals lay I have named Point Danger to the northward of it the land which is low trends $^{NW}_{BN}$ ....^{4}

This innocent matter-of-fact entry has, however, set in train an enduring controversy, the subject of a brief report in *Placenames Australia* in 2002:[5] where exactly was Point Danger as nominated by Cook?

In 1766 the Royal Society of London commissioned Lt. (later Captain) James Cook to embark upon a voyage of exploration in the Pacific Ocean. During that voyage, on 19 April 1770, he became, as far as we know, the first European to sight and explore the eastern coastline of Australia. After naming Rame Head, now known as Little Rame Head,[1] Cook sailed north in the *Endeavour*, famously landing at Botany Bay, before continuing up Australia's east coast. On 16 May 1770, after nearly running aground on a reef, he noted a distinctive extinct volcanic massif nearby, which he named Mount Warning,[2] inland of a point in northern New South Wales now known as Fingal Head.[3] A lava flow from Mount Warning had created a five kilometre long series of reefs, extending out

In 1823 the New South Wales Surveyor General John Oxley set out in the *Mermaid* to explore Port Curtis,

From the Editor

One of my current research projects is to track Captain James Cook as he sailed the *Endeavour* up the eastern coast of the continent. I'm interested in documenting his naming of places: when and why he named them as he did. So we're delighted to have Rupert Gerritsen's article on Point Danger as our lead paper this month. Rupert is the Chair of the Australia on the Map Division of the Australasian Hydrographic Society, and is well qualified to assess the confusing and conflicting stories that have long been promulgated about this feature on the NSW/QLD border. Our next issue will also feature a Cook problem: is current Rame Head (VIC) really the point that Cook gave the name to?

Christmas Island is always in the news these days, for reasons non-toponymic. But our ANPS Director, Jan Tent, has searched charts and early documents to solve the mystery of its multiple names and locations. His article begins on the opposite page.

Several readers have asked us whether there's an index to past issues of *Placenames Australia*. We do have a list of contents for each issue, ordered chronologically and searchable; we'll make that available on the ANPS website shortly. In the meantime, we'd recommend using Google searches as a de facto index. A search with the format <"Placenames Australia" +placename> usually retrieves any article we've published on that toponym, and does so within the first 10 hits on the screen.

David Blair
editor@anps.org.au

Reminders

Supporting Members

Our thanks to those of our readers who have supported us in the past year. We're about to begin our new financial year, and there's an inserted reminder with this issue for those Supporters. The back page, as usual, provides details and a return-mail cutout. For those with web browsers,

www.anps.org.au/treasurer.html

will be useful for this purpose.

Placenames Australia $1000 Award

There's still time for History Societies and similar organisations to submit grant proposals for the 2013 Award. Hornsby Shire Historical Society are now working on their 2012 winning proposal—we're keen to find another project to support this year. See the ad in our March issue, or go to

www.anps.org.au/currentactivities2.html

for information and application forms.

Annual General Meeting
and Placenames Workshop

The 2013 AGM of *Placenames Australia* will be held in Canberra on 4th September. We anticipate that the meeting will begin at 2.00 p.m. at Dame Pattie Menzies House, Challis St, Dickson. All supporting members are cordially invited to attend. Nominations for the Management Committee (President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and up to five other members) are invited. Please email nominations to the President <pa@anps.org.au> by 1st August 2013.

The meeting will be preceded by a Workshop on Canberra's placenames, starting at 9 a.m. Offers of papers are welcome. For catering purposes, it would be useful if you let the President know if you're planning to attend.

The ghosts of Christmas Island past

Christmas Island,[1] charted on numerous maps from the late-sixteenth century onwards, is in the Indian Ocean some 350km south of the southern entrance to the Sunda Strait, Java. Initially, it appeared without a name on various maps, but after some twenty years the island was variously labelled *Moni, Monij, Mony, Mouni, Mounis,* or *Selam, Selan, Celan,* as well as remaining unlabelled on some maps.[2] Then, in 1643, Captain William Mynors, master of the British East Indiaman *Royal Mary*, named the island *Christmas Island* when he sailed past it on Christmas Day.[3] After 1671, maps started appearing with the appellation *Christmas* (or *Noël, Christmat* [sic], *Weihnachten*), but it was not until after the mid-nineteenth century that this name became its established designation.

The first recorded landing on Christmas Island was on 28 March 1688 by the British privateer William Dampier, aboard the *Cygnet*. He landed at The Dales (on the west coast), and found the island unoccupied.[4] Due to its relative inaccessibility, it remained uninhabited until 1888 when it was annexed by Britain after the discovery of phosphate in the previous year. A settlement was established at Flying Fish Cove by George Clunies-Ross. The island became an Australian Territory in 1957.

The Maps

In all, I studied 66 early maps depicting Java and the Indian Ocean south of Java. The maps were of Portuguese, Dutch, French, German and British origin. I noted their dates of publication (ranging from ca. 1540 to 1875), the number of islands depicted in the region of Christmas Island, and how it or they are labelled. Looking at the maps chronologically and noting the charting of *Moni* and/or *Selam*, a clear chronicle becomes apparent showing how these two names were slowly abandoned during the latter part of nineteenth century in favour of *Christmas Island*.

Literature on the history of Christmas Island does not recognise *Selam* as a potential early name; only *Moni* is acknowledged as its previous name,[5] while the earliest map to identify the island as *Moni* is said to be that of Pieter Goos of 1666. However, an 1899 facsimile of a 1618 map showing the islands of Indonesia, as well as the western and southern coasts of Australia charted by the Dutch, shows the island of *Monij*. The earliest map

that assigns the name *Christmas* to the island is that of John Seller in 1671.

Many maps from the late-seventeenth to the mid-eighteenth century depict two or three adjacent islands, either named or unnamed. Why are two, even three, islands depicted in such close proximity when in fact there is only one? Three separate factors gave rise to the confusion:
- the inability to calculate longitude accurately during this era, leading to uncertainty about the island's location
- conflicting physical descriptions of the island
- the use of three separate appellations for the island.

The position of *Selam* on maps seems to vary much more than that of *Moni*. Sometimes it appears close to the southern entrance to Sunda Straight, where it might be confused with Prinsen Eiland (currently known as *Panaitan Pulau*). Indeed this confusion is voiced by none other than the master navigator James Cook on the return leg of his first voyage:

> Some few days after we left Java we saw, for 3 or 4 evenings succeeding one another, boobies fly about the ship. Now, as these birds are known to roost every night on land they seem'd to indicate that some Island was in our neighbourhood; probably it might be the Island Selam, which Island I find differently laid down in different Charts, both in Name and Situation.

Joseph Banks also remarks on the problem, and provides further evidence for the enigma of *Selam*:

> Princes Island as it is calld by the English, in Malay Pulo Selan, and in the language of its inhabitants Pulo paneitan, is a small Island situated in the Western mouth of the streights of Sunday; it is woody, and has no remarkable hill upon it, tho the English call the small one which is just over the anchoring place the Pike.

> We enquird much for the Island of Anabao or Anamabao mentiond by Dampier. He [Mr Lange] assurd us that he knew of no Island of that name any where in these seas. I since have observd that it is laid down in several charts by the name of Selam which is probably the real name of it.

The next matter to determine is the origin and meaning of *Moni* and *Selam*.

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the site of Gladstone. Oxley also explored Moreton Bay and the Brisbane River, as well as exploring and naming the Tweed River. It was during this voyage that Oxley encountered what is now known as Fingal Head (28⁰ 12' S, 153⁰ 34' E) and reported it as being Point Danger as named by Captain Cook.[6] Subsequently, in August 1828, HMS *Rainbow*, under the command of Henry John Rous, charted a river which he initially named the Clarence River, apparently unaware at the time that Oxley had previously charted the same river and named it the Tweed River.[7] A chart of the area, drawn up by William Johns, the Master of HMS *Rainbow*, was published in 1831. It shows Point Danger in its currently designated location (28⁰ 10' S, 153⁰ 33' E).[8]

A survey was later carried out in the area in July 1840 under the direction of Senior Assistant Surveyor Robert Dixon. Dixon acknowledged in his report on the survey's progress at that time that they were 'unacquainted with the coast.'[9] Point Danger is mentioned several times, however, in terms of its position in relation to the local geography and distances from other landmarks. On each occasion it clearly pointed to Point Danger as being located at the mouth of the Tweed River, the currently designated site of Point Danger. A plan, prepared by Assistant Surveyor James Warner on 5 November 1840, also showing Point Danger in the currently designated location, was then passed on to the Surveyor General on

15 December.[10]

In 1970, as a result of attempts to re-enact Cook's voyage, the location of Point Danger came into question. Consequently a committee, the Counsellors' Committee, was established by the New South Wales Geographical Names Board to investigate and report on the matter. The Counsellors' Committee duly reported on 3 February 1971, concluding that, 'it is the opinion of the Counsellors that the name Point Danger was intended by Captain Cook to be applied to that point now designated Fingal Head'.[11]

The Geographical Names Board considered this report and declared:

> *little doubt exists that the feature named Point Danger by Captain Cook was in actual fact the feature now known as Fingal Head. However, as the name has been known in its present position for over 130 years and having in mind the wording of the letters Patent of 6 June, 1859, in which the position of the QLD-New South Wales border is linked with the position of Point Danger, the Board is not prepared to assign the name to any feature or position other than that to which it is currently located.*[12]

Despite this pronouncement, the question of Point Danger continued to be raised. In November 1989 the Geographical Names Board approved a historical re-enactment of Cook's voyage. After undertaking further research, Acting Chief Surveyor Ron Benjamin found that:

> *From the re-enactment voyage, I now have no doubt that Captain Cook's, 'point of land under which lies a small island', was intended to be today's Fingal Head.*[13]

However, in 1998, following another review, the Geographical Names Board, concluded, in part:

> *From an analysis of Cook's Private Log, the Official Log of the 'Endeavour', Cook's Journal and the journals of Cook's Officers, and relating the analysis to modern nautical charts and maps of the area, it is suggested that the following conclusions be drawn:*
>
> *Pt. 4 However, even if the wider interpretation of Cook's Point Danger … … is accepted, it still comes down to the fact that the present Point Danger is only part of Cook's Point Danger on the coastline.*
>
> *Pt. 5. It is the opinion of the Geographical Names Board Committee therefore that the present Point Danger is correctly designated.*[14]

...Fingal Head and Point Danger

In effect this report was arguing that Captain Cook may have not been able to distinguish Fingal Head from the current Point Danger and may have seen that part of the coast as a single headland, and that Point Danger was therefore correctly designated. This is a dubious proposition.
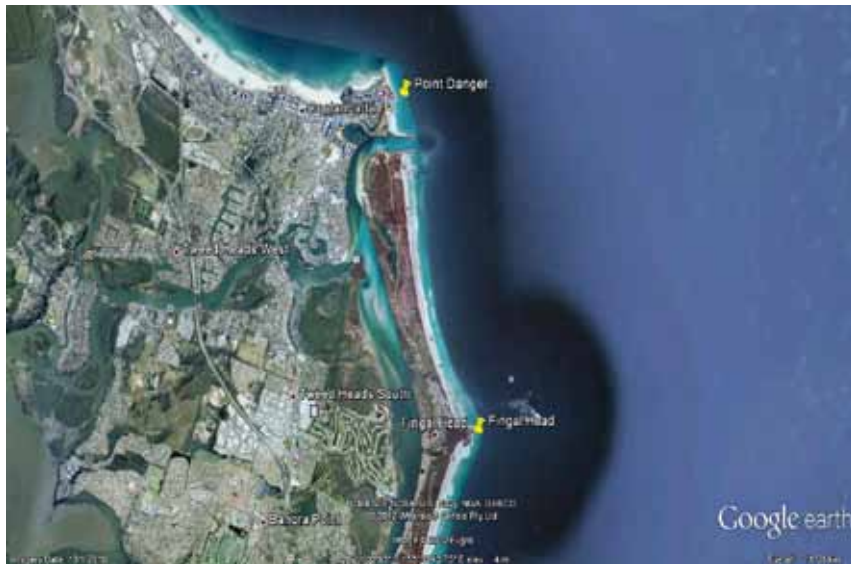

Figure 2: Google Earth - Point Danger and Fingal Head

It is evident from the entry in Cook's journal that, having almost run aground on the Danger Reefs, he was concerned about providing clear markers of their presence to any mariners who might follow. Hence he identifies Mount Warning and the 'point under which there is a small island' as signs of the presence of Danger Reefs.
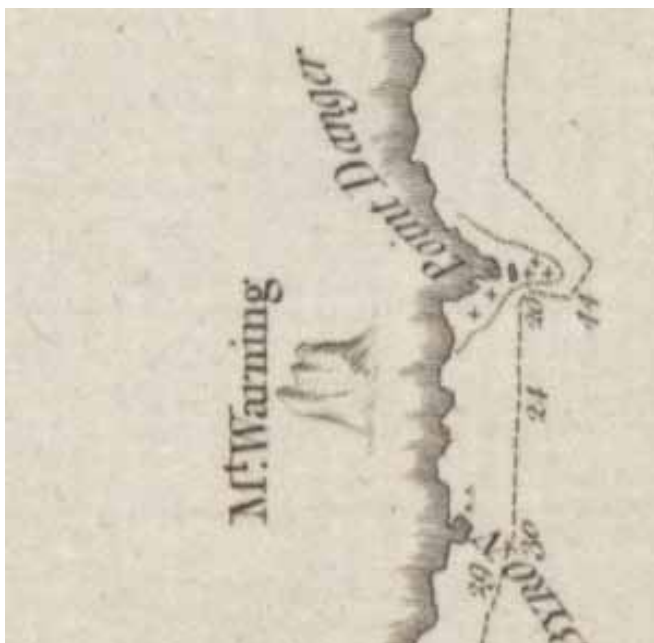
The island in question, Cook Island, is quite conspicuous and the only island of any significance along this part of the coast. Cook's description is therefore highly consistent with Fingal Head, but not so in regard to the present Point Danger. His chart of that part of the coast would appear to confirm that.

Because the resolution on Cook's chart is not high, it is not absolutely clear from this chart whether he considered the current Point Danger and Fingal Head to be forming a single headland. However, the point depicted is only as wide as the island lying off it, and Cook did not indicate any awareness of any other distinct landmark other than the 'point under which is a small island.' In passing within four nautical miles [7.4 km], Cook appears to have easily identified this island, presumably by observation, relying upon the masthead lookout and with the aid of a telescope.[15] The island is quite conspicuous and very close to Fingal Head, as can be seen in Figure 4 overleaf as well as in the photo on page 1.

Captain William Edwardson visited the locality in HMCC *Snapper* in 1822, and stated in a letter to Governor Brisbane that 'off Point Danger lies a small Island.'[16] As mentioned earlier, Oxley identified Fingal Head as Point Danger in 1823, and Phillip Parker King, in his *Narrative of a Survey of the Intertropical and Western Coasts of Australia*, published in 1827, clearly took what we now know as Fingal Head to be Cook's Point Danger.[17] From this one can conclude that there is a very clear association by other mariners between a point, not a headland, and an island. With Cook's observations focussed on a point and island, because they were distinctive markers for a dangerous set of reefs, one can only conclude that Fingal Head was the feature he was referring to as Point Danger, certainly not the current Point Danger. Therefore, if one accepts that Fingal Head was the landmark to which Cook was applying the appellation 'Point Danger', this would suggest that an error in naming has occurred, probably originating with Johns' chart of 1831.
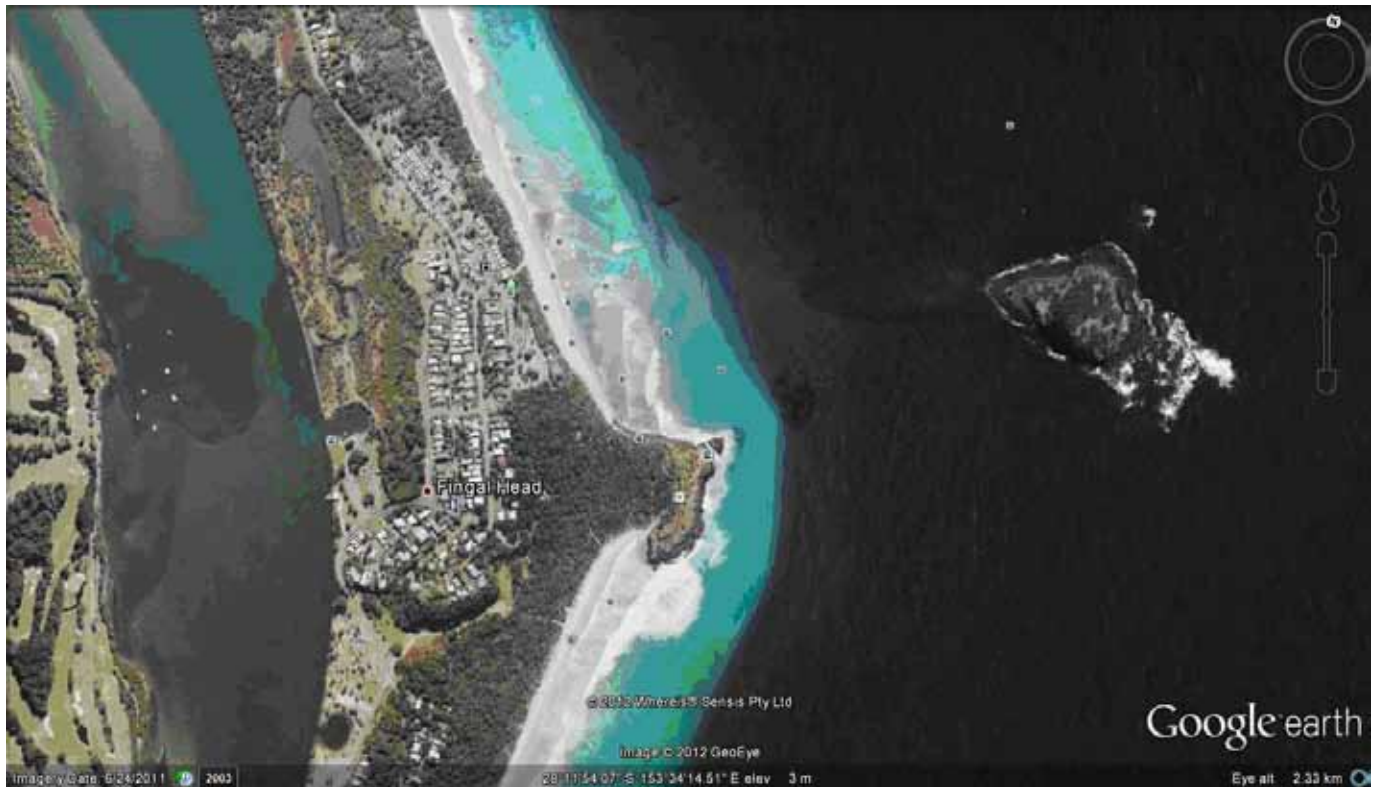

Figure 3: Part of 'A Chart of New South Wales or the east coast of New Holland' (James Cook, 1773). National Library of Australia, Map T 325

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Figure 4: Google Earth - Fingal Head

In spite of the Geographical Names Board's pronouncement in 1998, the debate has nevertheless persisted. Trevor Lipscombe, in closely tracking Cook's voyage and ground-truthing the places he had named, concluded in *On Austral Shores* in 2005, 'there can be little doubt that Fingal Head *is* [original emphasis] Cook's Point Danger.'[18] Following representations made by Ken Gold in 2007, which included the presentation of expert opinion from Dr Nigel Erskine of the Australian National Maritime Museum,[19] the Geographical Names Board considered the matter yet again and informed him that:

> The Board advised that the records for Point Danger and Fingal Head be changed to reflect both the historical versions of the naming of Cooks [sic] Point Danger. The Board stated that no change will be made to the legal status of either of these names nor the plaques at either headland.[20]

Shortly after, Mr Chris Hartcher informed the Parliament of New South Wales of this, on 9 April 2009.[21]

The New South Wales Geographical Names Register entry for Point Danger currently states:

Description: *A rocky point of land extending into the Coral Sea, on the border between New South Wales and Queensland.*

Origin: *Named by Lt. James Cook - who charted Point Danger on 16.5.1770. The Board acknowledges strong evidence & support for interpretation of Cook's Point Danger being applied to Point Danger or Fingal Head. The passage of time since Cook's voyage and differing opinions precludes a definitive view.*

History: *Whilst acknowledging 2 accepted origins the Board has resolved that the two landmark names should remain as they are currently named.*

The reason the designation of Point Danger has posed such a problem and prompted such an enduring and, at times heated, debate is its position on the border of New South Wales and Queensland. As alluded to earlier, it was named as one of the border's defining features in the Letters Patent issued by Queen Victoria in establishing the colony of Queensland in 1859. Consequently, an error in its locational designation is not just a question of an amendment to the names register, it has significant implications, constitutionally and administratively. In view of this it was recently proposed, as a compromise, that Fingal Head be renamed instead, to 'Fingal Head (Cook's Point Danger)'.[22] This proposal could resolve the matter and perhaps finally end the debate.

Rupert Gerritsen

...Fingal Head and Point Danger

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Endnotes

[1] See Lipscombe 2011.

[2] Called Wollumbin by the Bundjalung people.

[3] Called Minjungbal by the Bundjalung people.

[4] Cook, '16 May 1770'.

[5] Windsor 2002

[6] Oxley, 'Friday, 31 October, 1823'.

[7] Anon. 1828, p.352.

[8] Johns 1831.

[9] Dixon, 3 August 1840.

[10] Plan Catalogue No. M.2.1151; New South Wales Geographical Names Board, Counsellors' Committee 1971, p.3

[11] NSW Geographical Names Board, Counsellors' Committee 1971, p.5.

[12] Hansard.

[13] Hansard.

[14] Geographic Names Board of New South Wales, 2000: Section 7.

[15] GNB NSW 1998 suggested Cook did not have a clear view, assuming that Cook's observations were based on an elevation of only 5 m above sea level, and that a telescope was not employed.

[16] Edmonson 1822.

[17] King 1827, vol. 1, pp.178-79; vol. 2, p.257.

[18] Lipscombe 2005, p.227.

[19] Erskine 2007.

[20] Windsor 2007.

[21] Hansard.

[22] Gerritsen 2012.

Signpost mismatches
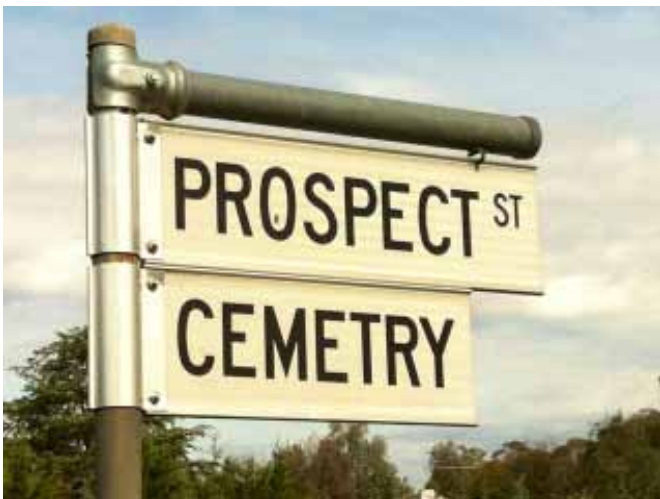
Our ANPS Director, Jan Tent, spotted this road sign near Tarcutta (NSW) recently. His interest was aroused not so much by the wonky spelling but by the incongruity of the messages provided.

We wonder how many other such road signs are out there. If you have evidence of a *Forest Way* set in a desert or a *Dry Creek* in the midst of a raging flood or a traffic jam at *Speed*, we'd be delighted to see it!

Figure 1: Ottens, Joachim (1663-1719). Le royaume de Siam: avec les royaumes qui luy font tributaires et les isles de Sumatra, Andemaon, etc. et les isles voisine. *Plate 80 from v. 3 of:* Nieuwe atlas inhoudende de vier gedeeltens der waereld ... versameldt van de beste autheuren. *Amsterdam : bij Johannes Covens & Cornelis Mortier, [1707-1741]. [NLA Ref: MAP RM 184]*

Moni

There are a number of languages that can be considered candidates for the origin of this name. All the maps studied showed Indigenous (e.g. Javanese), Dutch, Portuguese, Sanskrit, or Arabic toponyms, so it is highly likely that the name derives from one of these languages.

Indigenous language (unlikely candidates)
• *moni* = 'to watch' < Rongga language on the island of Flores
• *muni* = 'meaningful'; 'to produce a sound, to say something'; *muni-muni* 'to swear' < Javanese

Sanskrit (possible candidate)
• *muni* = 'sage, holy man, monk, hermit, ascetic', from Hindu/Buddhist occupation of the region.

In Hinduism and Buddhism, a wise ascetic, a renunciant, a hermit, a sage or sadhu, especially one who has taken a vow of silence, is known as a *muni*. The term is also used as an honorific title, and derives from the Sanskrit

muni, literally 'silent'. The relative isolation of Christmas Island makes it a suitable candidate for such a name.

Arabic (no candidates)

Portuguese (possible candidate)
• *múni* (rare) 'a pious or wise Indian man' < Sanskrit, from Portuguese occupation of the region.

Dutch (unlikely candidates)
• *moni* = 'money' < English
• *monnik / monik / monic / monec* = 'monk, hermit' < Latin < Greek < Sanskrit

If we accept, for now, that the Sanskrit word *muni* is the most likely candidate for the origin of Moni, how do we derive the <o> spelling from the Sanskrit *muni* [mʊni]? - ([ʊ] as in 'good'). Firstly, there are at least four populated places in Indonesia that bear the name *Muni*: three in Nusa Tenggara Timur, and one in Yogyakarta. This perhaps supports the case for Sanskrit word being the origin of *Moni*. However, stronger evidence may be found in two publications on early Dutch loanwords in Polynesia.[6] These explain the

Figure 2: enlarged section of the Ottens map

change of the close [ɔ] vowel in the Dutch donor words to /ʊ/ in the nativised Polynesian words.

In Dutch, before the mid to late nineteenth century, the phoneme /ɔ/ (spelled <o> in normal orthography) had two allophonic variants – an open [ɔ] and a close [ɔ].[7] The latter occurred after labial consonants (i.e. /p, b, m/ e.g. *bok* 'goat'); the open variety after all other consonants. The close variant [ɔ] also occurred before nasal consonants (/m, n, ŋ/ e.g. *kom* 'bowl, basin'). Given we have both these conditions in the Sanskrit *muni*, the vowel would have sounded very similar to the [ɔ] vowel variant in Dutch. The Dutch would therefore have spelled *muni* as 'moni'. Further evidence to support this contention can be seen in the French rendition of the island's name as *Mouni* or *Mounis*, which would have been pronounced with an /ʊ/.

Selam

The matter of Selam is perhaps a little simpler, with only two possible contenders.

Indigenous language (unlikely candidate)

- *selam* 'to dive' < Indonesian, Malay (There is no indigenous Javanese candidate.)

Arabic (possible candidate)

- *selam* 'peace, greeting', 'Islam'; and an element in many words (e.g. *selamat/ salam*) and Indonesian toponyms (e.g. *Selamanik, Selamanja, Selametan, Selamat, Selat Selamo, Selamben*).

Conclusion

Once again, this research has not secured any definitive answers: such, unfortunately, is often the lot of the resolute but luckless toponymist.

Cartographic evidence tells us that the island was variously named *Moni* or *Selam* prior to 1643 when it gained the appellation *Christmas Island*. We know the answers to all the usual five **wh-** questions for this name because we have a record of its naming: **when?** December 25, 1643; **who?** William Mynors; **why?** because it was Christmas Day (thus making it a commemorative toponym);[8] **what?** it refers to the day it was named; and **from where?** from English.

Answers to the **wh-** questions for *Moni* and *Selam* are not yet available. More cartographic and linguistic research is necessary. Late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth century Dutch and Portuguese mariners' accounts of sailing in the region of Christmas Island may provide further clues. Any progress will be reported in *Placenames Australia*.

Jan Tent

Endnotes

1 Acknowledgements: I should like to thank Dr Brendan Whyte, National Library of Australia, for his assistance in obtaining images of maps; my old friend, mentor and teacher, David Blair for comments on an earlier draft of this paper; and Mr Richard Lorin my intrepid 'linguistic detective' on the ground in Moni, Flores. This is an abridged version of a paper presented to the 2013 ANZMAPS conference held in Melbourne in April, 2013. An unabridged version of this article will hopefully appear in *Imago Mundi* in the not too distant future.

2 Regarding the issue of the *-ij* spelling of *Monij* on Dutch maps: from the Middle Dutch period (1100-1500 AD), [i:] was represented as *ij* (the *j* orthographically indicating the lengthening of the vowel). This convention continued in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In the course of time, *ij* became confused with the letter *y* because the digraph *ij* was deemed by many writers to be a single letter (i.e. a letter, or ligature, *y* written with the dots – *ÿ*). In time, digraph *ij* became the representation for the diphthong [ei] (as in 'bay').

3 Mynors, William. *Journal of a Voyage from Bantam to England (1643-44)*. MSS Library of the Commonwealth Relations Office. [n.d.]

4 Dampier's account of his visit can be found in chapter 17 of his *A New Voyage around the World*. <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks05/0500461h.html>.

5 See for example: Andrews, Charles. W. 'A Description of Christmas Island (Indian Ocean)'. *The Geographical Journal* 13, 1 (1839), 17-35; Andrews Charles. W. *A monograph of Christmas Island (Indian Ocean)*. London: British Museum of Natural History, 1900; Ellis, Albert F. 'Christmas Island Phosphate Deposits'. *New Zealand Geographer* 8, 1 (1952), 15-29; Foster, William. 'The Discovery of Christmas Island'. *The Geographical Journal* 37, 3 (1911), 281-282; Gibson-Hill, C.A. 'The Early History of Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean'. *Royal Asiatic Society of Britain and Ireland. Malaysian Branch Journal* 22, 1 (1949), 67-93; Gray, H.S. (revised Clark, Rod). *Christmas Island Naturally. The Natural History of an Isolated Island the Australian Territory of Christmas Island Indian Ocean.* 2nd Ed. Christmas Island Natural History Association, 1995; Robidé van der Aa, P.J.B.C. 'Een Nieuwe Atlas van Nederlandsch-Indië'. *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land-en Volkenkunde* 35, 1 (1886), 102-126; Wharton, W.J.L. 'Account of Christmas Island, Indian Ocean'. *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography* 10, 10 (1888), 613-624.

6 Geraghty, Paul & Jan Tent. 'Early Dutch loanwords in Polynesia'. *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 106, 2 (1997), 131-160; Geraghty, Paul & Jan Tent. 'More early Dutch loanwords in Polynesia'. *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 106, 4 (1997), 395-408.

7 [ɔ] sounding somewhat like the <o> in 'mod'; and [ɔ] sounding somewhat like [ʊ] as in 'good'.

8 See Tent, Jan & Blair, David. 'Motivations for Naming: The Development of a Toponymic Typology for Australian Placenames.' *Names* 59, 2 (2011), 67-89. Naming places after the feast or holy day on which it was 'discovered' is a common practice, e.g. *Easter Island*, the *Whitsunday Islands*, *Pentecost Island* (Vanuatu), *Christmas Island* (Kiribati), *Ascension Island* (South Atlantic Ocean), *Michaelmas Island* (King George Sound, WA), *Thursday Island* etc.

The Mutchilba story

In our previous issue we noted an odd report from ABC Radio that the town of Mutchilba in Queensland was about to 'get back its identity and will now be added to the place name database'—despite the fact that Queensland's Department of Natural Resources & Mines already records the name as 'approved and current', as does the ANPS Database. As promised, we've gone undercover and done an investigation.

We hear that the story arises from a confusion between *towns* and *address localities*. Mutchilba is a town within the locality of Dimbulah. In 1999, the new locality of Dimbulah was created with the approval of the then Shire of Mareeba in response to the federal initiative to officially identify all localities and suburbs throughout Australia to assist in the provision of services, both emergency or otherwise. So for addressing purposes (both for receipt of mail services and for calling of emergency services) *Dimbulah* is the name used.

Local people, however, tend to use the town name instead of the locality name, and some felt that when the various services used 'Dimbulah' their town had disappeared from view. So they approached the government to 'restore' the town to maps and to the database, even though nothing had changed in that respect.

So where did the ABC report come from? The relevant Minister, we imagine, made appropriate noises in Parliament as a result of those local complaints; and the people rejoiced. The press, having picked up the parliamentary statement, interviewed happy locals but did no background check on the facts.

So nothing has changed, but everyone is happy: the Minister got to do his thing, the locals heard what they wanted to hear, and the press got a feel-good story. You can't complain about that, can you!

A new bridge for Kempsey

Kempsey (NSW) is getting a new bypass, and the longest bridge in Australia, at 3.2km, is now under construction to cross the Macleay floodplain.

The Dhanggati Language Group is working towards the revitalisation of the Dhanggati language. They hope that a proposal for a new name for the bridge will encourage the wider community to participate in that revitalisation and will be a step towards reconciliation.

The elders from the Group have proposed a very long name in both English and their mother tongue, as a way of highlighting the nature of the bridge:

Yapang Gurraarrbang Gayandugayigu : Very Long Track to the Other Side

Thanks to our local informant Amanda Lissarague for alerting us to this innovative proposal!

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Placenames Puzzle Number 46

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Exotic animals II:

The clues reveal names of exotic animals that hide out in Australian toponyms. The 'what' clues identify the animal; the 'where' clues indicate where they hide out. e.g. What*: We complain a lot about this species introduced into our streams and rivers;* Where*: At a bay in Tasmania … Carp Bay.*

1. *What*: This animal could be considered hirsute, especially in March.
   Where: At a bay on the north shore of Jervis Bay (NSW).
2. *What*: A beige vessel of the wasteland.
   Where: In a flowery suburb next to another flowery suburb in the west of Sydney.
3. *What*: This animal is good at outwitting and confusing those who pursue it.
   Where: In a very salubrious valley with a sanatorium in a northern Sydney suburb.
4. *What*: You could say this one persistently rummages about.
   Where: In WA you will need to look below the surface to find this animal.
5. *What*: This animal flies around like a juvenile Hollywood luminary.
   Where: The creature has given its name to a creek hill and pass (i.e. a gap) along the Upper Yarra Walking Track, East Warburton (Vic).
6. *What*: The one who killed cock Robin.
   Where: At a hill near Queanbeyan along the Kings Highway used for mountain biking.
7. *What*: This haughty animal doesn't like messing about in boats but prefers to drive fast cars.
   Where: Very few places want this in their name, but one is a rock near Pelion West, Cradle Mountain (TAS).
8. *What*: Without this type of snitch police would have trouble catching these birds.
   Where: At a distinctly-shaped mountain in Morton National Park on the south coast of NSW.
9. *What*: A very gluttonous, brutish and churlish animal.
   Where: At a scenic reserve in the Nariel Valley (VIC) between Mitta Mitta and Thredbo.
10. *What*: A creature catholic by nature though not by name, spiteful, irascible, and easily irritated.
    Where: At a tiny island just off the coast of South Durras on the south coast of NSW.

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1. Hare Bay 2. Camellia 3. Fox Valley 4. Ferret Reef 5. Starling Creek/Hill/Gap 6. Sparrow Hill 7. Toad Rock 8. Pigeon House 9. Wild Boar Range 10. Wasp Island

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Supporting photographs or other illustrations are greatly appreciated.

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