

# Placenames Australia

Newsletter of the Australian National Placenames Survey

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



## Coads Tank —

### A pioneer contractor remembered

The name *Coads Tank* has been applied four times within a New South Wales locality 40 km north of Corowa:

- A stock water dam on a Crown Water Reserve [Lot 240 in DP 753738 Crown Plan 3595.1668] which was originally on part of Coreen Station.<sup>1</sup>
- A road which branches off the Daysdale to Berrigan Road just west of the village of Daysdale, runs south past the reserve and ends at its junction with the Emu Park Road.
- A nearby school which was open from 1912-1969 [Portion 252 Plan 4063].<sup>2</sup>
- A 'rural place'; that is, an unbounded locality registered by the NSW Geographical Names Board.<sup>3</sup>

Coreen Pastoral Holding [Resumed Leasehold Area Number 507] was declared following the land tenure reforms incorporated in the Crown Lands Act 1884, and was made up of the Coreen and Billybong Forest Runs.<sup>4</sup> In November 1909, part of the Coreen Pastoral Holding was subdivided into farming blocks under the Coreen and Back Paddock Closer Settlement Subdivision. Initially these smaller blocks were used for wheat growing.<sup>5</sup> Today they are part of a mixed farming district. Coads Tank Dam, the road, the school site and the locality are all situated in this district.

Coreen Station, first stocked in 1841,<sup>6</sup> shared a common boundary with Goonambil Station to its north which was purchased by the Wilson family in the early 1870s. Goonambil Station has connections with the

development of the iconic breed of Australian working dogs, the kelpies. In the early 1870s, Jack Gleeson, widely acknowledged as a key player in the development of the kelpie, was given a black Rutherford-type dog by Mark Tully, manager of Goonambil Station. Gleeson stayed briefly on Goonambil station on his way to a new position in the Lachlan Valley where he mated Tully's dog, Moss, to some of his own dogs to consolidate the kelpie strain.<sup>7</sup>



*Coads Tank School, c. November 1963 (photo: Col Kohlhausen)*

Evidence suggests that members of the Wilson family later occupied Coreen Station,<sup>8</sup> possibly before it was absorbed into Resumed Leasehold Area Number 507. A report from the Melbourne Live Stock Market in December 1880 records that William Wilson had

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## From the Editor



Some time ago we received a request from Col Kohlhagen: could we tell him anything about how the NSW locality of Coads Tank got its name? We couldn't, as it happened; so Col (who in the years 1962-63 had been Teacher-in-Charge at the Coads Tank Public School) undertook to do some historical research, and promised to let us know how he fared. Our lead article for this issue shows the results of his search.

The lure of microtoponymy has proved to be irresistible again. We have the promised third instalment of Jan Tent's series on these minor local features; and on page 10 Jan has extended an attempt to define what

we mean by 'microtoponym'; you'll find an article which uses Russian *matryoshka* dolls as a metaphor. He's certainly kept his promise to keep writing on placenames while in Snowy Mountains retirement—he's already sent us material for our next issue!

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](http://www.anps.org.au/treasurer.html)

will be useful for this purpose.

**David Blair**  
<editor@anps.org.au>

## We recommend...

...not strictly a book on toponymy, we admit—more a book of *topophilia*, as the author describes it. Alastair Bonnett's *Off the Map* (Aurum Press) is a world tour of the bizarre, forgotten, tenuous and improbable places that illustrate the fact that we are 'a place-making and place-loving species.'

*Off the Map* charts the hidden corners of our planet; the stories 'illustrate our need for a geography that understands our hunger for the fantastic and the unexpected.'



## A new Director for ANPS



We welcome Dr Dymphna Lonergan, from the English Department at Flinders University, as the Survey's Director. The Placenames Australia management committee, at its first meeting for this year, was pleased to be able to appoint Dr Lonergan as ANPS Director for 2015.

Although born in Dublin, Dymphna has been in Australia since 1972. She is now the acknowledged expert on the Irish language in Australia, and continues to research the Irish influence on Australian English.

It goes without saying that her linguistic interests extend to placenaming. Dymphna's recent publications, 'Australia's Irish place names' and 'Place names: a tool

for finding the Irish in South Australia' have been significant in our understanding of the way in which toponymy can inform historical research into our culture and development.

At our 2011 ANPS Workshop in Adelaide, Dymphna introduced her software on digitising Irish placenames in Australia, which enables web-based interactive searching for those toponyms. In September this year, she will host the ANPS Symposium *Places and Place Names* in Adelaide, to be held in conjunction with our 2015 AGM (see page 9). We invite all our readers to make the journey to Flinders for this occasion.

On our facing page, you'll see Dymphna's introduction to Joshua Nash's article on some Norfolk Island naming.

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# Fiddling on the roof —

## Norfolk Island house names

*Island communities by their very nature are often closed to outside influences which can lead to hyper-creativity in areas of daily life. Up until the nineteenth century the rural Irish seldom travelled more than thirty miles. We can see this evidence in maps of family names: the O'Sullivans in County Kerry, the O'Donnells in County Donegal, the Joyces in County Galway. Even today, the local Irish postie must be able to distinguish between families when there is no road name available. There's an old Irish joke of a chap named Maher who came into some money and built two enormous and ornate gates leading into his property. He became known as 'Maher of the Gates'. Some years later he fell on hard times and had to sell the gates. Thereafter, he was known as 'Maher without the Gates'. Joshua Nash has been researching placenames on Norfolk Island, and has discovered the same type of hyper-creativity for placenames there in a place called Cascade Road. Here is his account. (Dymphna Loneragan)*

Cascade Road is a one-kilometre stretch between the Norfolk Island Central School and its junction with New Cascade Road. In 2007 a Cascade Road resident erected a sign on another resident's fence that read 'Orange Roof', a reference to the colour of the house's roof. This name sparked a creative outburst which focused on the word *roof*. Soon there was an 'Orange Roof', a 'Blue Roof', a 'Red Roof' and a 'Redder Roof'. The residents of Cascade Road then took a new direction: from naming the roof colour they moved to naming some other aspect of the house or house occupants: 'Hipster Roof', 'Holy Roof', 'Rented Roof', 'Jazzy Roof'. The naming soon moved on again to a movie reference, 'Hot Tin Roof', a declaration of proud ownership, 'Leslie's Green Roof', and no doubt from the doggy sound sense, 'Roof Roof'.

demonstration of the prevailing motivator of this kind of placenaming: humour, including irony.



Establishing whether the 'No Roof' house on Cascade Road now lives up to its title will no doubt require another field trip. Of special linguistic interest is the Norf'k spelling in two other roof names, 'Nuffka Roof' and 'Kaa Sii da Roof'. *Nuffka* is the Norf'k word for the Norfolk Sacred Kingfisher. *Kaa Sii da Roof* is a good

The process of naming roofs on Cascade Road involves both residents who are Pitcairn descendants (Norfolk Islanders) and those who are not. By adhering to this house-naming template, the householders affirm their loyalty to a group membership that bridges ethnic boundaries. Following the template also marks out the individual and the group as being distinct from the rest of Norfolk Island.

Some residents have even suggested that Cascade Road be changed to 'Roof Road'. If this were to happen, it would reflect a similar pattern to the unofficial naming nearby of 'House Road' and 'Store Road'. They are not official road names but illustrate how a road name can describe its surrounding environment. For the residents of Cascade Road roof-ness is what makes their place.

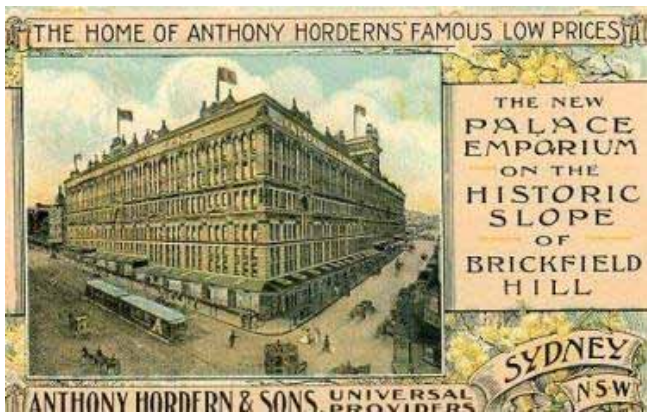
**Joshua Nash**  
**University of New England, Armidale**



# Microtoponymy 3

*This is the third instalment of my three-part series on microtoponyms. These names constitute a very important part of our toponymic history, and ought to feature more prominently in our toponymic literature. I hope my three contributions will inspire some of you to record ones occurring in your local area. In this piece, I highlight a few more of Sydney's microtoponyms—some well-known, others somewhat obscure.*

The first microtoponym refers to a small hill in the inner city of Sydney, *Brickfield Hill*. The name was used for the surrounding area in the early days of settlement because it was used for brickmaking. The hill subsequently developed into a commercial area, home to Sydney's Anthony Horderns department store, and remained a distinct locality until the 1970s. Today it is part of the suburb of Surry Hills. An official post office, Brickfield Hill Post Office, is situated in Pitt Street.



A well-known landmark and microtoponym in Redfern is *The Block* (below), the colloquial, descriptive, and universally applied name given to a block of terraced houses bounded by Eveleigh, Caroline, Louis, and Vine Streets. The block was purchased over a period of 30 years by the Aboriginal Housing Company (AHC) for use as a project in Aboriginal-managed housing. In 2004, the AHC decided to raze part of The Block that had deteriorated into a slum. Early 2010 saw the last 20 remaining houses on Eveleigh, Vine, Louis and Caroline Streets demolished to make way for replacement housing, commercial, retail and cultural spaces.



The project, dubbed the *Pemulwuy Project*, has ground to a halt and now The Block is the most valuable vacant lot in Sydney. Only two buildings still stand on The Block—the Tony Mundine Gym and the offices of the Aboriginal Housing Company, run by Mick, Tony's brother. A mural of the Aboriginal flag on the wall of the Tony Mundine Gym has become an iconic image for The Block. The area surrounding The Block has been a meeting place for Aboriginal people since long before the arrival of Europeans. In more recent times the area has become a focal point for the reconciliation movement. Because of its significance, The Block is regarded by many Aboriginal people as a modern-day sacred site.

It may well come as a surprise that the well-known Sydney placename *Top Ryde* is in fact an unofficial microtoponym. The name refers to an area bounded by Blaxland Road, Devlin Street, Pope Street and Tucker Street, in the City of Ryde, and is associated with a shopping centre that was established there in late 1957. The centre followed Brisbane's Chermside Drive-In Shopping Centre as the second open-air mall-type complex in Australia. The shopping centre was demolished in 2007 and underwent a complete redevelopment which was completed in 2010. The shopping centre is officially named *Top Ryde City Shopping Centre*. The name *Top Ryde* also appears in the official name of the reserve Top Ryde Park close to the shopping centre.

Many municipal playgrounds in Australia have a brightly painted old steam engine or steamroller in them for children to clamber over. Such parks are often affectionately known as 'Steamroller Parks'. These playgrounds often form part of larger parks incorporating sports ovals or picnic grounds. The Sydney suburbs of North Epping, Lane Cove, Oatley and Cambridge Park each have such a park. The steamroller at North Epping Oval was placed there in the late 1950s. The entire oval is referred to by locals as the *Steamroller Park*. The tiny steamroller park in Lane Cove is officially known as *Turrumburra Park*, and is situated on the corner of Epping Road and Centennial Avenue. The much larger Oatley Park is 45

## ...Microtoponymy

hectares on a promontory jutting into George's River, bounded by Lime Kiln Bay and Jewfish Bay. During the depression of the 1930s, considerable work was carried out there under the Unemployment Relief Scheme. A scenic road was constructed around the river foreshores as well as a kiosk and the iconic castellated tower. One of the park's attractions is the steamroller. The steamroller park in Cambridge Park is officially known as *Penrith Reserve*. Its steamroller dates back to pre-WWII, was run on crude oil, and was used by Penrith City Council for levelling roads. The steamroller park in Liverpool is officially known as *Liverpool Apex Park*.

Naturally, there are many more steamroller parks to be found around Australia. They include the *Steamroller Park* in the Adelaide Hills, the reserve officially known as *Glebe Park* in Bowral, and the steamroller park in Toowoomba officially known as *Queens Park*. We would be very interested in finding out about more steamroller parks in Australia. Please send us any information you may have on them. In fact, we are interested in



*The 'Steamroller Park' at North Epping Oval*

hearing about any other microtoponyms you may have knowledge of.

**Jan Tent**

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## Dual name for Mount Panorama

The number of dual names for geographical features in Australia is slowly but steadily increasing. The first and best-known is *Ayers Rock / Uluru* in the Northern Territory; the latest comes from a recent decision by the NSW Geographical Names Board to approve dual-naming of Bathurst's famous landmark, Mount Panorama. The hill, site of the famous Bathurst 1000 and Bathurst 12 Hour car races, now has the dual name *Mount Panorama / Wahluu*.



The effect of the decision is that each of the tandem names may be used separately, except on official maps where both parts of the name must be shown.

The proposal for dual-naming was submitted by the Bathurst Local Aboriginal Land Council, who reported that *wahluu* was a Wiradjuri word meaning 'young man's initiation place.'

Wiradjuri elder Bill Allen says that the story passed down through the generations is that Wahluu was the name of a young warrior killed by his older brother, Ganhabula, in a dispute over a young woman. When he fell, blood flowed over the ground and into the cracks of the earth. This caused a volcano to erupt, and the lava flowing over Wahluu's body made the shape that forms the hill today. Mr Allen says 'this is a story about jealousy and envy and how wrong it is to kill.'

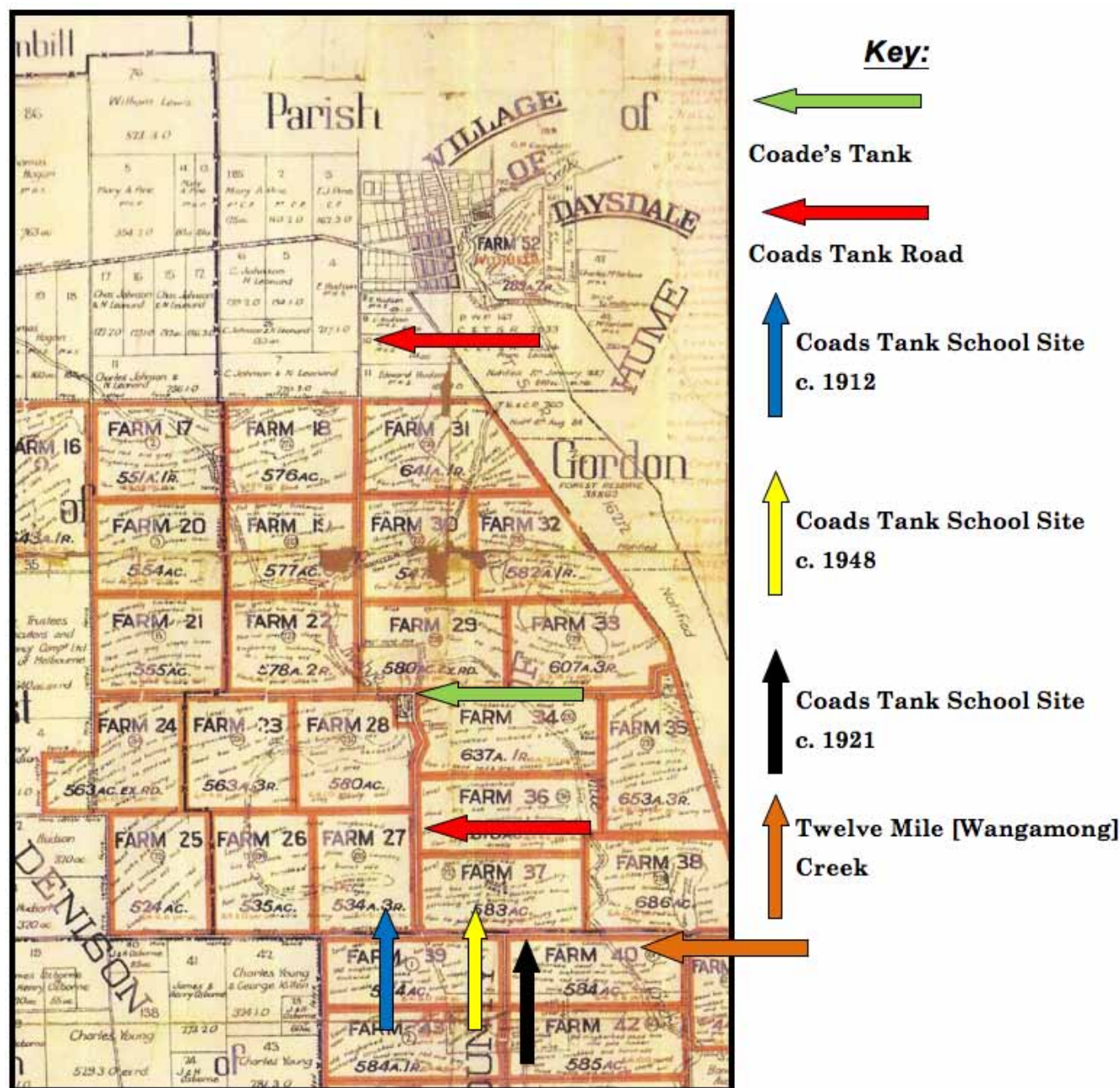
Most Australian naming authorities have now approved geographical features (as opposed to address localities) for dual-naming. After

beginning the process with *Dawes Point / Ta-ra* in 2002, the NSW GNB has now dual-named almost thirty such features.



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## Coads Tank...



Poster: Coreen and Back Paddock Subdivision Sale, November 1909 (detail). Mitchell Library, Sydney

recently sold 9000 merino wethers from Coreen Station.<sup>9</sup> With no permanent water sources on Coreen, and such a high stocking rate, it is almost certain that stock water dams would have been sunk on the property.<sup>10</sup>

It is generally accepted by descendants of the local pioneering families that the name 'Coad' almost certainly originated from the dam-sinking contractor, William Coad.<sup>11</sup> His obituary provides some supporting information:<sup>12</sup>

*The death of Mr. William Coad, a Central-Western pioneer, occurred at Emu Park, near Rockhampton,*

*on Saturday. The late Mr. Coad, who was 77 years of age, was born in Cornwall, and came to Victoria when very young. Having put together a tank-sinking plant, he travelled overland from Victoria to Queensland in the early seventies, and carried out many tank-sinking contracts on Wellshot and other stations...*

A classified advertisement which appeared in the *Western Champion* [Barcaldine, Queensland] newspaper in 1896, states that Coad's business had access to eighteen McCaughey Scoops, numerous drays, wagons, water tanks and 200 horses.<sup>13</sup>

## ...A pioneer contractor remembered

The best estimate of the time when William Coade may have built dams on Goonambill Station and on the adjoining Coreen Station is between 1870 and 1875, during the early days of the Wilson family's occupation of these properties. Several large overflow dams and tanks had been sunk on Goonambill Station during the time when it was owned by William Wilson.<sup>14</sup> It can safely be assumed that similar stock watering points would have been created on neighbouring runs in the same period, especially if they were held by the same family and on pastoral lands which had no permanent water.

The 20 acre [8ha] Crown Water Reserve which surrounded 'Coade's tank' is not mentioned in the Lands Department Publication *Pastoral District of the Murrumbidgee 1877*<sup>15</sup> in which were listed designated Crown Reserves that had been withdrawn from sale. These reserves were on Crown Lands earmarked for the creation of future closer settlement subdivisions.

However, in the Coreen Pastoral Holding File, there is a map on which the tank is shown on Portion 172 but not as part of a designated water reserve. In the same file there is an Appraisal Form, dated 13 June 1885, with the following notation: 'The country is unnaturally watered and requires an artificial supply for eight months of the year.'<sup>16</sup> Appraisal forms were declarations made by an independent assessor and the owner or manager of the property in question. They were used to assess the value of the lease. This form contains a description of the earth works around the dam. The declaration stated that the dam had silted up badly and currently held a volume of water well below what it could hold when first constructed, which suggests it had been built some years earlier.

On the survey map for the Parish of Gordon, County of Hume, dated 9 June 1891 a 'tank' within the designated water reserve's boundary is clearly shown. The water reserve was situated near the north-eastern corner of Farm 28 as shown on the 1891 Survey Map.

This water reserve is now part of the West Corugan Private Irrigation Scheme which opened in April 1969,<sup>17</sup> and is shown as Reserve Number 244 in the Rural Lands Protection Board's inventory of Travelling Stock Routes and Reserves.<sup>18</sup>

The dam was placed strategically in a depression to trap

and hold run-off water which would spread out from the Wangamong Creek bed in wet years. This ephemeral watercourse, known originally as 12 Mile Creek, and a description of the dam later to be incorporated into a designated Crown Water Reserve, appears in a report submitted as part of a licence fee appraisal.<sup>19</sup> The size of the dam wall was stated as being 3400 yards, presumably cubic yards. Descendants of local families who were among the original settlers on the Coreen and Back Paddock Subdivision recall that from the early days of the subdivision, a communal sheep dip and a set of yards, which would have utilised the dam water, were in use on the water reserve.

The dam and nearby sheep dip continued to function as a community asset for many years. Lindsay Norman, a third-generation descendant of a pioneering family, recalls his father saying that it cost 'a penny per sheep' to use the sheep dip. The Coreen Shire Council was gazetted as the trustee for the reserve in February 1911<sup>20</sup> shortly after the subdivision was opened.

In 1878 the village of Daysdale, originally known as Coreen, was surveyed on part of Coreen Station.<sup>21</sup> The plan included half-acre building blocks which were put up for sale in November 1880.<sup>22</sup> Areas were designated for public use, such as churches and a cemetery. The village was subsequently declared in 1885<sup>23</sup> by which time several families had been living there for some years and several businesses were operating.

Daysdale Village families, some of whom later took up farming blocks on the Coreen and Back Paddock Closer Settlement Subdivision, formerly Leasehold Area Number 507, and families living on previously established closer settlement subdivisions to the south, would have known about the dam sunk by William Coade, and would have used the name *Coade's Tank* informally as a reference point for landmarks or properties close to the dam or the reserve.

In May 1911, Charles Selby, one of the new subdivision settlers, forwarded an application to the local State Member on behalf of the McKenzie, Dale, Whitechurch, Sutcliffe, O'Halloran, King and Selby families for the establishment of a school for their children. His application was successful and the school opened at the start of the 1912 school year.<sup>24</sup> Several of the applicants lived near the reserve and this was, in all likelihood, the

*continued next page*

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trigger for naming the school Coad's Tank Provisional School. This appears to be the first occasion that the name *Coads Tank* was used in any official document or on any map.

The school was located at three different sites during its lifetime but they were all on Sanger [Siding] Road, now known as Emu Park Road, not far from Coade's tank.<sup>25</sup>

In the early correspondence to and from the NSW Department of Education, the spelling of Coads Tank School had deleted the *e* and included the apostrophe, as in *Coad's*.<sup>26</sup> However, by the 1960s the official spelling appears to have become *Coads*.<sup>27</sup>

## Summary

In summary, the story of Coads Tank runs as follows:

Coreen Station was stocked from 1841 onwards. A high stocking level by 1880 indicates the use of water storage—probably by the Wilson family of neighbouring Goonambil Station, who had also occupied Coreen by then. The local tank-sinking contractor at the time was William Coade, and he most likely built tanks for Goonambil and Coreen in the period 1870–1875. Documents dated 1885 and 1891 show the present tank, and reveal evidence that it had already been there for some years. Subdivision plans for farming blocks around the tank and its surrounding water reserve area were drawn up in the mid-1880s but were not made available until 1909. The name *Coade's Tank* would naturally have been used then as an informal reference point. Later written forms of the name dropped the *e* and the apostrophe.

## Acknowledgments

- Members of the Norman, Playford and Tomlinson families whose forbears were among the first landholders on the Coreen and Back Paddock Subdivision, for generously sharing their local knowledge and the oral history of the district.
- Kevin Herring for helping with the land title search process.
- Beth McLaren for her wonderful editing skills.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> [a] First Edition Survey Map for Parish of Gordon, County of Hume: 1891 [State Archives Office, Kingswood, NSW]

[b] Historical Title Search Number 67 on 10 September, 2014 [Land & Property Information Office, Sydney]

[c] Email from Margaret Playford, *Northrepps*, Coreen: 17 August, 2014 [Personal File]

[d] NSW GNB Reference No. 12814 [31 August 1991]

<sup>2</sup> [a] *Government Schools of NSW 1848–1993*, p. 50 [NSW Department of School Education, 1993]

[b] Survey Map for Parish of Gordon, County of Hume: 7th edition, 1961 [Mitchell Library, NSW]

<sup>3</sup> NSW GNB Reference No. 12813 [7 July 2006]

<sup>4</sup> *NSW Government Gazette* 11 July, 1885, p. 4871 [NSW State Library]

<sup>5</sup> Sale Poster, Coreen and Back Paddock Subdivision, November 1909 [Mitchell Library Collection]

<sup>6</sup> *Daysdale: A Brief History 1886–1986* [994.48/25 NSW State Library]

<sup>7</sup> Barbara Cooper [Research Paper for Working Kelpie Council of Australia 27 October, 1998]

<sup>8</sup> [a] *Daysdale: A Brief History 1886–1986* [994.48/25 NSW State Library]

[b] *Melbourne Argus*, 3 November 1923 [Trove]

[c] Pastoral Lease Application 13 June, 1885 [Coreen Pastoral Holding File 3/1299 State Archives, Kingswood, NSW]

<sup>9</sup> *The Maitland Mercury* 23 December 1880 [Trove]

<sup>10</sup> Pastoral Holding Appraisal 13 June, 1885 [Coreen Pastoral Holding File 3/1299 State Archives, Kingswood, NSW]

<sup>11</sup> Email from Margaret Playford, *Northrepps*, Coreen: 17 August 2014 [Personal File]

<sup>12</sup> *The Brisbane Courier* 19 April 1921 [Trove]

<sup>13</sup> *Western Champion*, Barcaldine. 21 January 1896 [Trove]

<sup>14</sup> *Melbourne Argus* 9 January 1924 [Trove]

<sup>15</sup> Pastoral District of the Murrumbidgee 1877 [Record 3/2407 State Archives, Kingswood, NSW]

<sup>16</sup> Pastoral Lease Application, 30 May 1885 [Coreen Pastoral Holding File 3/1299, State Archives, Kingswood, NSW]

<sup>17</sup> West Corugan Private Irrigation Scheme Website: 3 September, 2014

<sup>18</sup> *The Long Paddock: A Directory of Travelling Stock Routes and Reserves in NSW* [NQ333.74099/1 NSW State Library]

<sup>19</sup> Appraisal of Licence Fee 14 May, 1886 [Coreen Pastoral Holding File 3/1299 State Archives, Kingswood, NSW]

<sup>20</sup> *NSW Government Gazette* 22 February 1911 [NSW State Library]

<sup>21</sup> Surveyor's Notebook [Surveyor J.H. Wood, State Archives Office, Kingswood]

<sup>22</sup> *NSW Government Gazette* 20 March 1885 [NSW State Library]

<sup>23</sup> *Daysdale: A Brief History 1886–1986* [994.48/25 NSW State Library]

<sup>24</sup> Letter from Charles Selby to Hon. R.T. Ball on 3 May 1911 [Coads Tank School File, State Archives, Kingswood, NSW]

<sup>25</sup> Various sketch maps [Coads Tank School File, State Archives, Kingswood, NSW]

<sup>26</sup> Letter from Samuel Hoskin, Teacher-in-Charge, to District Inspector A. Smith, Albury on 20 April 1912 [Coads Tank School File, State Archives, Kingswood, NSW]

<sup>27</sup> Appointment Notice for C. Kohlhausen from Department of Education on 19 January 1962 [Personal File]

**Col Kohlhausen  
Bowral, NSW**



# SYMPOSIUM: PLACES AND PLACE NAMES

FRIDAY 25 SEPTEMBER 2015

10am to 3pm

Council Chambers

Flinders University, Adelaide

**Guest Speaker: Dr Alice Gorman**

**'Place names in Outer Space'**

## Call for Papers

Please email abstracts of short (15 minute) papers or creative responses on places or placenames by Friday 25 July 2015. Postgraduate and community submissions are especially welcome

Submission and further enquiries:

Dr Dymphna Lonergan, Director ANPS  
(08 8201 2079)  
<dymphna.lonergan@flinders.edu.au>

The Symposium will be followed by:

the Annual General Meeting of  
Placenames Australia (Inc)

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## Bogan Shire hits back

Many moons ago (September 2011, to be exact) we noted that residents of some Australian towns were less than pleased with the way their place had been named. We rejoiced with the householders of *Bogan Place* in the Sydney suburb of Wahroonga, for instance, that their local council had agreed that henceforth they should be known as living in *Rainforest Close*.

Why the fuss? Well, as the *Macquarie Dictionary* tells us, **bogan** is a derogatory term for someone 'generally from an outer suburb or town and from a lower socioeconomic background, viewed as uncultured', or 'a stupid person.' We are glad to say that Bogan Shire Council has gone onto the front foot in this matter. The local mayor, Ray Donald, says 'we want to get on the positive side of it and get any benefit we can for local tourism.'

How, you ask? By building a 'big bogan' statue. Says the mayor, 'it'd be a bloke wearing shorts and a singlet with a fishing rod and a tuckerbox, which people could sit on and take photographs.' The cost would be about \$8000—cheap at the price, we say!



*The Bogan River at Nyngan (photo: Wikipedia)*

# Toponyms are like *matryoshka* dolls

*In David's editorial in the March 2015 Newsletter, he comments on the difficulty of defining the 'microtoponym'. He asks: is it a name for a small feature? A placename of a local area? Or, an unofficial placename that hardly anybody knows of? It is important to define accurately and consistently toponymic terms in order for toponymists, geographers and cartographers to be able to talk with accuracy and consistency about placenames, their designations, and the various types of placename. In this little article I propose a tentative definition for 'microtoponym'.*

But first a bit of history. Julien Cooper, a PhD candidate at Macquarie University in Ancient History, notes that in Ancient Egypt, toponyms had 'classifiers placed at the end of the toponym to indicate in which spatial category a toponym was situated. This system was originally binary, delineating a toponym as either within (⊗) or outside (☰) the Nile Valley.' (Cooper, 2015:2).

Microtoponyms, on the other hand, 'particularly of buildings and temples, were not classified with the typical toponym classifier ⊗, so at least in Egyptian culture, they were not considered as placenames.' (p. 7). This is most interesting. Egyptians appear to have had quite a clear idea of what a microtoponym was and indicated this in the actual linguistic form of the name. We are not so sophisticated, it seems.



Back to the present. I see systems of placenames being structurally like Russian nesting dolls (aka *matryoshka* 'little matron' dolls or *babushka* dolls). A set of *matryoshkas* consist of a wooden figure which separates, top from bottom, to reveal a smaller figure of the same sort inside, which has, in turn, another figure inside it, and so on. This nesting principle is also a concept used in design, known as the 'matryoshka principle', and refers to a recursive relationship of 'entity-within-similar-smaller-entity' which appears in many natural and

manufactured objects. For example: onions, cabbages, iceberg lettuce; nested plastic food storage containers, nested plastic building blocks, etc. Taxonomies (of flora, fauna, corporate structure etc.) also employ a 'matryoshka principle', as do certain types of grammatical/syntactic hierarchies.

Placenames follow the 'matryoshka principle' in that one layer is nested within another, and each toponym is a taxon. Let's take an example from one of my earlier articles on microtoponyms—*The Blinking Light*. This was found at the intersection of Warringah Road and Wakehurst Parkway in northern Sydney. The intersection is in *Frenchs Forest*, which is a suburb in the LGA *Warringah Council*, within the parish of *Manly Cove* (within the *Hundred of Pakenham*), which is found in the *County of Cumberland* (in which most of the Sydney metropolitan area is located), in the State of *New South Wales*, which is in the *Commonwealth of Australia*, which in turn can be found on *Earth*,<sup>1</sup> which is located in the *Solar System* (third planet from the *Sun*), which is located in the *Local Interstellar Cloud*, within the *Local Bubble*, within the *Orion-Cygnus Arm* of the *Milky Way* (or *via lactea* or γαλαξίας κύκλος 'galaxías kýklos'), in the *Cosmos* or *Universe*.<sup>2</sup> We've all played this little game based on the 'matryoshka principle' when we were in primary school and were asked where we lived. Nevertheless, the little game serves as a nice method of illustrating how a microtoponym might be viewed. We can

now conceive of a microtoponym as the smallest or final name in the structure of naming a place. And precisely because it is the smallest (or final) element in that system, it has to be by its very nature extremely localised. And because of this, it is perhaps not a significant name of feature to outsiders, and hence microtoponyms are not gazetted. So, perhaps, we may define a microtoponym as *the smallest (or final) name (of a place or object occupying space or a place) in a toponymic 'matryoshka' system*.

The Canadian Geographical Names Board has a specific



## ...matryoshka dolls

principle and procedure for microtoponyms (although it does not name them as such. Under Principle 14, Names of Small Features (GNBC, 2011: 20) it states:

**Except where local and historic usage dictates, the official approval of a name of a minor feature should be guided by the relative significance of the feature, the familiarity with the name and the scale of mapping available.**

**Notes:** 1. Where features are extremely small (e.g., a two-metre pillar on a mountainside), their names are not usually adopted for inclusion in gazetteers or for portrayal on maps. Such names, however, may be considered approved or unapproved, depending on the status given by toponymic authorities to these types of features, and are all recorded in the Canadian Geographical Names Data Base.

Whilst not providing a very transparent or workable definition, the principle does provide some advice to naming authorities on how to deal with microtoponyms.

Perhaps we should let the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) have the final word on this, given they are the official international body tasked with providing technical recommendations on standardising geographical names at the national and international levels. In addition, its role is to develop and maintain toponymic guidelines and a glossary of

toponymic terminology. Its 2011 *Report of the Working Group on Toponymic Terminology* (Nyström, 2011) gives notice of the addition of the term microtoponym to its glossary. It is defined as follows: 'microtoponym —> **proper noun** referring to smaller or more insignificant objects like fields, pastures, fences, stones, marshes, bogs, ditches etc., and in general used locally by only a limited group of people; alternatively called —> **minor name**'.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Notice the change in preposition from *in* or *within* to *on*. Also, I shall write a piece about our planet's name in a future issue of the Newsletter.

<sup>2</sup> There are other possible, and perfectly legitimate, toponymic matryoshka sequences for *The Blinking Light*.

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Jan Tent

## Placenames Puzzle Number 54

### Multiword 'The' toponyms

*Further to Georgia May's article on 'The' toponyms in the December issue, our clues reveal placenames with more than one element following 'The'. Clues refer only to the elements following the 'The', and those marked with (?) have a cryptic element. Disregard spelling. e.g. (NSW) Inundate a game park... The Flood Reserve*

*Compiled by:*

Fun with Words Group  
Westleigh Probus Club

1. (VIC) A dozen disciples
2. (NSW, SA) Satan's funny bone
3. (NT) William Tell's quads
4. (SA) Where Old Nick has fun
5. (QLD) Eat from glass container in the bogs (?)
6. (NSW) Where square pegs won't fit
7. (VIC) A century of land areas
8. (WA) Where to drop a line
9. (TAS) We lived there (?)

10. (NSW, QLD) The ABC's long-running current affairs program
11. (NSW, QLD, SA, VIC) Trio of female siblings
12. (NSW, VIC) Where dromedaries store water
13. (NT) Ebony heights
14. (TAS) Avoid this pool
15. (WA) High suits of cards (?)
16. (NSW) Straggler's field
17. (QLD) Double speed retarders
18. (SA) Be careful within this distance
19. (QLD) Small eating utensils
20. (NSW) Dear, hang around the heights (?)

16. The Lagers Paddock
17. The Twin Humps
18. The Lookout Range
19. The Little Forks
20. The Sugarloaf Mtn
11. The Three Sisters
12. The Camels Hump
13. The Black Hills
14. The Duck Pond
15. The Diamonds Hill

1. The Twelve Apostles
2. The Devils Elbow
3. The Four Archers
4. The Devils Playground
5. The Jardine Swamps
6. The Round Hole
7. The 100 Acres
8. The Fishing Place
9. The Never Never
10. The Four Corners

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