The poetry of placenames

C. J. Dennis (1876-1938) was one of Australia's most prominent poets of the early 20th century. So how did he come to write a verse about obscure Victorian placenames based on the normally dry and dull reports of a government road construction authority?

Dennis—or 'Den' as he often signed his work—is less well remembered today than his contemporaries Henry Lawson and A.B.(Banjo) Paterson, although he was phenomenally popular in his day. Best known for *The Songs of the Sentimental Bloke*, which sold 65,000 copies in its first edition in 1915, he published 11 volumes of verse between 1913 and 1935. *The Sentimental Bloke* became a play, films (both silent and, later, sound) and a musical. It ran to 57 editions in the 50 years after it first appeared. Having sold more than 300,000 copies, it still remains Australia's best-selling book of verse.

C. J. Dennis [from the collection of the State Library of Victoria]

Born in South Australia, Dennis had modest success as a journalist and poet in Adelaide before moving to Melbourne in 1907. The years immediately following—interspersed with bouts of heavy drinking and depression—were to be his most successful as laureate of the larrikin and the Anzacs. Dennis enjoyed the mountain country on the outskirts of Melbourne. He spent time in the Dandenong Ranges (where much of *The Sentimental Bloke* was written) but his great love

was Toolangi, a tiny timber settlement high above the Yarra Valley, where he lived much of his life from 1908 onwards.

From 1922 until his death, Dennis was employed on and off at the Melbourne *Herald* newspaper, contributing a range of journalism, including columns and verse based on the issues of the day. Beyond creating the character Ben Bowyang, a 'bush philosopher' and later subject of a long-running comic strip, his work never attained the heights of 1915-16. Much of his output in these later years—estimated to be over 3000 works—is long forgotten.

'Roads to Romance' (an annotated copy of which appears below) falls squarely into this category, appearing in the *Herald* on 7 July 1932. It is a tribute to oddly named places in Victoria, gleaned from the roads and bridges reports of the Country Roads Board (CRB). That C. J. Dennis might be scouring such unlikely literature for inspiration makes more sense in light of his close friendship with W. T. B. McCormack (1879-1938), engineer and, from 1928, chairman of the CRB until his death. McCormack earlier supervised the construction of Victoria's iconic Great Ocean Road.

All but one of these placenames are still in use.

From the Editor

Our travel is rather resticted these days, even within Australia, so I hope that this March issue will at least take your imagination to various places around our nation (and to Fiji too).

In our next issue we'll be revisiting the epic story of Eliza Fraser and, with the help of Tony Dawson, answering the question 'on which reef did the *Stirling Castle* really end its days?' Jan Tent will continue his 'New & Old' article; and we'll deal with the River Murray. (Or is it the Murray River?)

Jan and I also recommend some light-hearted toponymic education: try this YouTube clip...

https://youtu.be/uYNzqgU7na4

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

We recommend...

... Phillip Simpson's *Historical Guide to New South Wales*. Just published after more than thirty years of detailed research, the Guide provides a place-by-place chronology of the settlement, history and development of NSW.

The Guide contains entries for almost 10,000 places in the state beyond Sydney and its suburbs, and has already proved itself invaluable for ANPS investigation of NSW placenames.

Our next issue will include a fuller introduction to the Guide, in the form of an interview with its author.

Simpson, P. (2020). *Historical guide to New South Wales*. xiii, 835 pages. North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing
ISBN 9781922454003
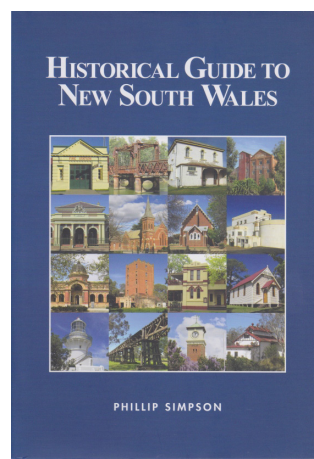
Can you help?

Diane Solomon Westerhuis is continuing her work with the history of the Camden Haven area in NSW. She is currently trying to find the origins of the name **Johns River**, a village situated in Greater Taree and Hastings LGA, on the Pacific Highway 347km north of Sydney.

Diane reports that 'I cannot locate a river named *Johns River*, although Stewarts River flows alongside the village and into Watson Taylor Lake at Camden Haven, on the northern side of the parish/locality. The Camden Haven River also flows into Watson Taylor Lake; the two rivers are separated by Middle Brother mountain.'

However, Diane notes that on a 1827 map the present-day Camden Haven River was named *Johns River*. Stewarts River was in its correct place.

If anyone can help explain how the village on Stewarts River came to be named after non-existent Johns River, Diane would appreciate the advice! Email the Editor, or direct to her at <dwesterh@myune.edu.au>

Puzzle answers - (from page 14)

1. Wedding Cake Rock
2. Lion Island
3. Wineglass Bay
4. Lake Leg of Mutton
5. Devils Marbles
6. The Three Sisters
7. Judgement Rock(s)
8. Box Head
9. Wave Rock
10. The Nut
11. Mount Buffalo
12. Glass House Mts
13. Hippo's Yawn
14. Pigeon House
15. Sugarloaf Rock
16. Heart Reef
17. The Breadknife
18. Mount Dromedary
19. The Three Brothers
20. Cape Pillar

...the poetry of placenames

For a detailed recent biography of C. J. Dennis, see Butterss (2014). A comprehensive guide to his works compiled by Perry Middlemiss can be found at

http://www.middlemiss.org/lit/authors/denniscj/denniscj.html

John Schauble

The Herald, Melbourne, 7 July 1932, p.10

ROADS TO ROMANCE — By 'Den'

The following Victorian place-names are all mentioned in the various roads and bridges reports of the Victorian Country Roads Board.

WHEN next I take a country tour
By rustic hill and valley,
My way I'll seek by Fat Cow Creek[1]
Or round by Pretty Sally.[2]
To Break-o-day,[3] that leads by Yea,[4]
Or Whalebone Creek[5] I'll journey,
Or inch by inch up Devil's Pinch[6]
Seek pleasant roads and ferny.

The distant view by Cockatoo[7]
No bill-board here shall sully;
Or I may go by old Blind Joe[8]
Or down to Dead Horse Gully.[9]
By many a mile to Wait-a-While[10]
I'll wend, if here may car go,
Or double back Insolvent's Track[11]
That struggles down from Dargo.[12]

Thro' byways strange on Fainting Range,[13]
To Turnback[14] may I well go;
By vistas green at Seldom-Seen,[15]
Past many a Devil's Elbow.[16]
Or I may jog by Haden's Bog,[17]
And on to Flash Camp[18] follow,
To risk a fall at Bust-me-gall[19]
And end in Dirty Hollow.[20]

Endnotes

[1] Fat Cow Creek crosses the Princes Highway between Orbost and Cabbage Tree in East Gippsland.

[2] Pretty Sally (529m) is a well-known landmark between Wallan and Kilmore north of Melbourne. A dormant volcano, it is named for Sally Smith who ran an unlicensed hotel near there in the 1840s.

[3] Break O'Day is a locality near Flowerdale, between Whittlesea and Yea, about 60km north east of Melbourne. A local creek bears the same name. There was also a Victorian town called Break O'Day, renamed Corindhap in 1893, between Ballarat and Colac.

[4] Yea (pop.1170) is a town at the junction of the Melba and Goulburn Valley Highways, 110km north-east of Melbourne.

[5] Whalebone Creek is a short watercourse which empties into Bass Strait near Onion Bay east of Skenes Creek in south-west Victoria.

[6] Devils Pinch denotes a steep rise in many places in Victoria. Devils Pinch Road runs between Toora North and Wonyip in South Gippsland.

[7] Cockatoo (pop. 4,256) is a town in the Dandenong Ranges east of Melbourne. It was badly affected during the 1983 Ash Wednesday bushfires.

[8] Blind Joe Creek empties into the Latrobe River near Rosedale in central Gippsland

[9] There is more than one Dead Horse Gully in Victoria. Interestingly both Bendigo and Ballarat claim one, perhaps a reflection of the fate of overworked early neddies on the central goldfields.

[10] Wait A While Creek empties into the Ford River, south of Lavers Hill in the Otway Ranges in south west Victoria. The local area was sometimes referred to as 'Wait A While Country' because of the poor roads and access. (*Herald*, Melbourne 31.8.1910)

[11] Insolvent Track was the main route from Stockdale, near Briagolong, into the Gippsland high country goldfields near Dargo until bypassed by a formed road in 1918. It was reputedly named after a miner who fled the district, bills unpaid, after failing to make his fortune. However, an Anglican minister, Reverend E. F. Pelletier, claimed to have suggested the name while staying one night at the nearby Iguana Creek hotel (*Gippsland Mercury* 4.5.1915). Steep in many parts, the track is still accessible.

[12] Dargo (pop. 99), formerly known as Dargo Flat, is a small community 100km north of Sale in Gippsland.

[13] Fainting Range (-37.4868° / 147.0967°) is a locality to the north of Tambo Crossing in East Gippsland. An old mine site, track and state forest still bear the name.

[14] Turnback Creek (-36.7611° / 147.7689°) runs into the Gibbo River, north of Benambra in East Gippsland.

[15] Seldom Seen is a locality (-37.0971° / 148.1918°) and a mountain (1311m) north of Buchan in East Gippsland.

[16] There are indeed 'many a Devil's Elbow' in Victoria. The name is usually applied to hairpin bends in roads or rivers. There are nine registered bends or junctions called Devils Elbow in the Victorian Register of Geographic Names, plus a road. Beyond this are several locally named. For a time, there were two Devils Elbows in the Dandenong Ranges east of Melbourne, one at Tremont and another above Montrose at the opposite end of the main ridge. The one at Tremont is still known as such.

[17] Haydens Bog (-37.1065° / 148.8659°), rather than Haden's, is a location near Bendoc in East Gippsland.

[18] Flash Camp is the one place name that remains elusive, although it has since become a common alternative name for 'glamping' (glamorous camping)!

[19] Bust-Me-Gall Hill (near Break-Me-Neck Hill) is better known these days as a location on the Tasman Peninsula in Tasmania. But there was a locality of Bust-Me-Gall near Apollo Bay in the Otway Ranges in south-western Victoria, also known locally as 'Bustie' (*Colac Herald* 27.7.1907; *Argus* 19.8.1950).

[20] Dirty Hollow Creek is just to the north east of Sarsfield in East Gippsland.

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Australian Aboriginal toponyms...

Copying Indigenous-derived words and toponyms from one region to another is a well-known practice in Australia.[1] The practice dates back to the 19th century, when the colonists were highly mobile across the continent. A good example of the wide distribution of an Indigenous-derived name is *Kurrajong/Currajong* (< Dharuk *garradjun* 'fishing line'); borrowed into English, its meaning was extended to the tree from whose bark fishing lines were made (Dixon et al., 2006, p. 114). The word can be found in the name of some 160 places throughout Australia, at least a quarter of which are homesteads or rural properties.

It's also true, of course, that Australians travelled abroad in the 19th and early 20th centuries, establishing homes and plantations. The Pacific islands were common destinations, especially Fiji. Australians went to Fiji to work for the colonial government, to establish or work on cotton, sugarcane or copra plantations, or to work for the Colonial Sugar Refinery Company of Sydney, or the Polynesian Company Ltd of Melbourne. There are two Australian Indigenous-derived placenames in Fiji connected with these two companies.

Toorak

As well as being the name of the prestigious inner Melbourne suburb, *Toorak* is also the name of a Suva suburb. The name derives from the Victorian Boonwurrung language word /turrak/ 'reedy grass, weed in lagoon' (Clark & Heydon, 2002, p. 218). It was first used for the name of James Jackson's Italianate residence, 'Toorak House', built in 1849, which from 1854 to 1876 served as the residence of Victoria's Governors. During World War II it served as a Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force hostel. So, how did the name end up in Fiji?

In 1868, the Polynesian Company was established, along the lines of the practices and ideologies exercised in India by the East India Company, with the specific aim of purchasing land in Fiji for cotton growing (Anon.,

Figure 1. Street scene, Toorak, Suva (source: Bhaskar Rao, flickr)

1907, pp. 106-111; Brewster, 1937, pp. 63-65). In 1868, it acquired a large parcel of land including what was then the village of Suva, in a dodgy deal to pay off the American debts of Ratu Seru Epenisa Cakobau, the Vunivalu of Bau, the most powerful chief in Eastern Fiji, and self-styled 'King of Fiji'. The company planned to establish on this land a sugar mill and to develop the town of Suva. The original town plan included what would become the suburb of *Toorak*, its name being copied from the Melbourne suburb because it was then considered to be the most desirable residential area in the new town of Suva (Usher, 1987, p. 30; Moses, 1971, p. 65). Somebody will always find a competing etymology, of course: another account (Schütz, 1978, p. 22) asserted that Toorak meant 'where the chief is' in an unspecified Aboriginal language, and that the area was so-called by its owner, C. A. Huon, because he was the chief of that estate.

In 1877 the colonial authorities decided to move Fiji's capital from Levuka to Suva, and the move eventuated in 1882. Today, Suva's Toorak is quite the opposite of its former upmarket character, noted for its cheap rental properties, downmarket eateries and kava saloons. As Schütz (1978, p. 23) delicately puts it: 'Toorak did not live up to its planners' lofty ambitions; on the contrary, it occupies a place at the opposite end of the social scale.' Dr Samuela Baravilala, in his memoir of life in Suva in the 1920s, is more specific, recounting that when the bars closed at 10pm in Suva, gangs of men would descend on Toorak to drink kava, often resulting in brawling in the streets and, on at least one occasion, a fatal stabbing (Baravilala, 1993). Still, it does have a certain charm that its 19th century founders might be proud of: '[...] here and there are occasional bits of decayed elegance [...] some houses hint at earlier structures grander than the present ones. [...] Toorak, more than any other place in Suva, has the feeling of a neighbourhood that reflects the multi-racial composition of the population.' (Schütz, 1978, p. 23).

...in Fiji

Miegunyah

The second Aboriginal-derived toponym in Fiji refers to a place that was a sugarcane plantation and is now becoming a suburb of Nadi. It is situated a few kilometres east of the centre of Nadi, on the western side of the main island of Vitilevu. The name is *Miegunyah* (sometimes spelled *Meigunyah*). The road that runs along the suburb's perimeter also bears the name (Department of Town and Country Planning, 2105). A nearby mosque and primary school carry nativised versions of the name: *Maigania Masjid* and *Maigania Muslim Primary School*. The local Fijian community call the suburb *Maqania*, pronounced /maŋga'niə/, whilst the local Fiji Hindi pronunciation is /me'ŋenjə/, /meŋ'genjə/ or /meŋge'niə/

Miegunyah means 'my house/home' and derives from the Dharuk (Sydney Language) *gunyah/gunya* (/'gʌnjə/) 'a temporary shelter usually made of sheets of bark and/or branches; any makeshift shelter or dwelling' (Moore, 2016) + the prefix *mie-/mei-* (/mai/~/mi/), most likely from 19th century NSW Pidgin meaning 'I/my'.[2] *Miegunyah* has been used in QLD, NSW, VIC, SA and WA as the name of a homestead/rural property, a house, a vineyard, several residential estates and an imprint of Melbourne University Publishing.[3]   So how did this name find its way to Fiji?

In 1873 sugar production was established in Fiji. Initially, it consisted of a few small sugar mills that were badly managed and not profitable, many of them closing when the sugar prices fell in the 1890s. In 1879 a representative of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company arrived in Fiji to assess prospects for a sugar industry in the colony. Operations at its first mill in Nausori (close to Suva) started in 1882. In 1903, CSR established the Lautoka Sugar Mill (close to Nadi) (Moynagh, 1981). It is in connection with this mill that we find the first references to the name.

The CSR documents of 1906-07 (Colonial Sugar Refining Company Limited, 1905-1926) include the following:

• Documents concerning Mr Reginald Arthur Harricks' subleasing in 1905 the land parcels *Wasina* and *Ione* (which were CSR freehold) 108 acres in total; the whole 950 acres of *Nasau*, leased by CSR from the Crown; and a portion (25.5 acres) of CSR's

lease of *Na Buyagiyagi*, leased from the Misses Luks; comprising a total of 1083.5 acres. These parcels were subsequently named *Miegunyah* by Harricks in 1906.

• A document entitled *Valuation of cane crops, livestock, implements &c. on Mr. Harricks' plantation 'Miegunyah'* 1906.

• 1905 and 1906 correspondence between R.A. Harricks and the General Manager of CSR in Sydney, regarding the subleasing of *Miegunyah* and the rental thereof, and the reimbursement of building materials for the estate. (Figure 2.)
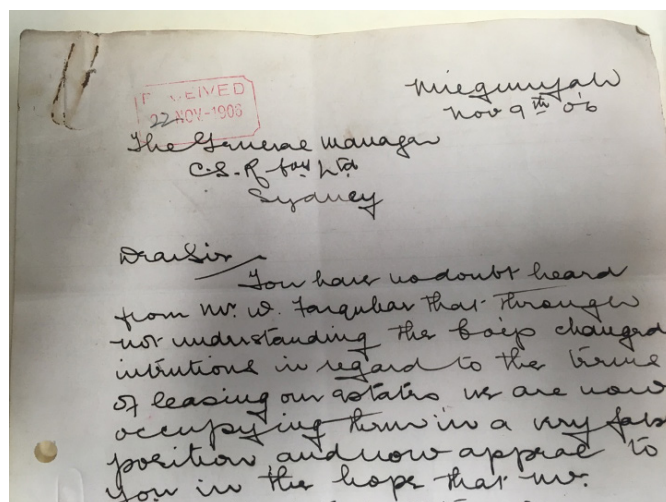

Figure 2. Correspondence from R.A. Harricks to the General Manager, CSR

The first public mention of *Miegunyah* is in T*he Fiji Times* of 16 June, 1909:

Nadi.
[...]
A week or so ago Mrs R.A. Harricks of "Miegunyah" entertained her many friends at a "pink tea". The guests all wore some pink favour, the decorations and almost all the dainty tea being pink. Not the least exciting was the picturesque arrival on horse back of two bachelor guests who were clothed from their helmets to their shoes in pink, they were preceded by two coolies also garbed in pink and waving branches of cane flowers.
[...]

We have been unable to ascertain why Reg Harricks named his sublease *Miegunyah*. Given he came from Maryborough, the most likely inspiration for his adoption of the name is the house name 'Miegunyah' in the Brisbane suburb of Bowen Hills. It was built by businessman William Perry, the founder of Perry Bros.

...Australian Aboriginal toponyms in Fiji

Ltd. hardware emporium. Perry built 'Miegunyah' on his estate in 1886 for his sons Herbert and George. It remained in the family until 1926, after which it had several changes of ownership up to 1966. During WWII the house was requisitioned by the Government and served as an officers' club and a safe house for the men of Z Special Unit commandos. In 1967, 'Miegunyah' was acquired by the Queensland Women's Historical Association, who refurbished it and opened it as a house museum dedicated to the pioneer women of Queensland. It is now known as *Miegunyah House Museum*.

Given Maryborough is only 250km north of Brisbane, and since the Perry Bros. business extended over the whole of Queensland (and most likely into the Pacific), Harricks may well have done business with them and heard of their house's name. Indeed, the building materials for which Harricks was seeking reimbursement could conceivably have come from the Perry Bros. hardware emporium.

Paul Geraghty & Jan Tent

Endnotes

[1] We use the term 'Indigenous-derived' rather than simply 'Indigenous' to highlight the fact that almost all Indigenous words were adopted and adapted by the English-based toponymy of Australia.

[2] See Troy (1994) for a full exposition of NSW Pidgin.

[3] See Tent & Geraghty (2020) for a more detailed account of the name's origin and use.

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News from QLD

By the time you're reading this, our AGM for **Placenames Australia (Inc)** will have taken place in Brisbane. Some members were able to attend in person; others participated by videoconference. Apart from the annual election for office bearers on the Placenames Australia Management Committee, the main item of business was a resolution to alter the Constitution to allow AGM attendance to be via teleconference in the future.

The meeting was hosted by the Department of Resources from their Museum of Lands, Mapping and Surveying, and facilitated by our colleague Susan Birtles, Senior Policy Advisor there. Many thanks to all our Brisbane friends for your hospitality!

Museum of Lands, Mapping and Surveying

The Department's museum has created a virtual museum for those who aren't local or whose travel to Brisbane is virus-disrupted. We invite you to take the tour!

https://www.qld.gov.au/recreation/arts/heritage/museum-of-lands

Historical maps for QLD are also accessible via that website.

The (non-virtual) Museum has reopened to visitors, and is working on making old titles records available. Queensland researchers are invited to explore the wealth of resources available through the museum.

Mitchell's placenaming mindset

Major Thomas Livingstone Mitchell, the NSW Surveyor General from 1828 to 1855, is renowned for advocating the adoption of Indigenous names for geographic features. Indeed, in his journals of his four exploratory expeditions through NSW, Victoria and Queensland (1831-32, 1835, 1836 and 1845-46), he notes on a number of occasions the importance and usefulness of adopting Indigenous placenames. The following are typical examples of his thoughts on this:

15th April, 1835

ADVANTAGE OF ABORIGINAL NAMES ON MAPS.

In this instance, as in many others, the great convenience of using native names is obvious. For instance, so long as any of the aborigines can be found in the neighbourhood of Tandogo, future travellers may verify my map. Whereas new names are of no use in this respect, especially when given to rivers or watercourses by travellers who have merely crossed them without ascertaining their course, or even their sources, or termination. […] (Mitchell, 1839)

22nd February, 1846

An instance occurred here of the uselessness of new names, and the necessity for preserving the native names of Rivers. I could refer, in communicating with our guide, to the Nammoy only, and to the hills which partly supplied the Castlereagh, whereof the native name was Wallambangle. […] The use of the aboriginal name of this river is indispensable amongst the squatters along its banks, who do not appear to know it to be the "Darling." It is most desirable to restore to such rivers their proper names as early as possible after they have been ascertained, were it only to enable strangers thereby to avail themselves of the intelligence and assistance of the natives, in identifying the country by means of the published maps. The river Castlereagh is known to the natives as the Barr; Morissett's Ponds, as the Wàwill; and the lower part of the Macquarie, as the Wammerawà. The squatting system of occupation requires still more that the native names of rivers should be known to commissioners empowered to parcel out unsurveyed regions of vast extent, whereof the western limits would be, indeed, beyond their reach or control, but for the line of an angry savage population, which line the squatter dares not to cross unsupported by an armed mounted police. (Mitchell, 1848)

13th September, 1846

I verily believed that THIS river would run to Carpentaria, and I called it the Nive, at least as a conventional name until the native name could be ascertained, in commemoration of Lord Wellington's action on the river of that name; and, to the tributary from the north, I gave the name of Nivelle. (Mitchell, 1848)

In this respect, Mitchell stands out from almost every other explorer of the Australian continent's inland. He often notes in his journals: 'The native name of this place was X'. The only other individuals in nineteenth century Australia who openly championed Indigenous names for toponyms were the Victorian parliamentarian and government minister (1870-1882) the Hon. Robert Ramsay and the western Victorian identity, James Dawson (see Clark, 2017).

Figure 1. Major Sir Thomas Livingstone Mitchell (1792-1855). (Original held at the State Library of New South Wales)

A survey of the types of toponyms bestowed by inland explorers shows that over 85% were eponymous. Mitchell, however, was different; not only did he do his utmost to discover the Indigenous name for a geographic feature, record it and apply it to his charts, he also actively sought to bestow names that were descriptive:

15th July, 1836

ON THE APPLICATION OF NAMES.

[…] I have always gladly adopted aboriginal names and, in the absence of these, I have endeavoured to find some good reason for the application of others, considering descriptive names the best, such being in general the character of those used by the natives of this and other countries. Names of individuals seem eligible enough when at all connected with the history of the discovery or that of the nation by whom it was made. […]

Explorer(s)	Toponym type--percentage (*number*)					
	Descriptive	*Associative*	*Occurrent*	*Evaluative*	*Copy*	*Eponymous*
T.L. Mitchell	9.9% (15)	6.0% (9)	6.0% (9)	6.6% (10)	12.6% (19)	58.9% (89)
Others	4.3% (53)	3.2% (40)	3.5% (44)	2.2% (27)	1.3% (16)	85.5% (1059)

Table 1

He also assiduously recorded Indigenous words, as well as tribal and personal names of Indigenous people. His interests also extended to recording ethnographic observations of the Indigenous peoples he met, as well as making very detailed notes on the fauna and flora he encountered. For example: 'It is an Acacia (A. VARIANS), and I was informed by Yuranigh that it is the Upas of Australia; the natives call it "Goobang," and use a bough of it to poison the fish in waterholes.'(28 October, 1848). Mitchell also often gave the Indigenous name for a place that had already been bestowed with an Introduced name (e.g. *Callala* for the *Peel River*). At times he also recorded two or more Indigenous names for the same feature (e.g. *Bindango* and *Amby*, a river; *Balonne* and *Balongo*, a river; *Burrabidgin* and *Burrabadimba*, a lagoon).

Figure 2. Tracks of Mitchell's expeditions. (Source: Wikimedia Commons)

Table 1 compares[1] Mitchell's placenaming to that of other inland explorers.[2] Even though he favoured descriptive names, we find that just under 10% of his are descriptive and almost 60% are eponymous.[3] However, he may have considered associative, occurrent and evaluative names as descriptive, which gives us 43 (28.5%) such names, still less than one-third of his 151 Introduced toponyms. Moreover, most of the individuals he honoured with a toponym had no connection with the 'history' of the feature's discovery.

Type of toponym recorded	Number	Percent
Introduced	151	41.8
Indigenous	210	58.2
Total	**361**	**100**

Table 2

However, the figures in the table also show that Mitchell bestowed more (percentage-wise) non-eponymous toponyms than other explorers and, of course, considerably fewer eponymous names. There seems to be a very clear and established mindset among explorers of the nineteenth century—to honour associates, benefactors and prominent individuals with placenames. Time and time again we see statements like the following:

Stuart:

4/4/1860: The creek I have named the Finke, after William Finke, Esquire, of Adelaide, my sincere and tried friend, and one of the liberal supporters of the different explorations I have had the honour to lead. Wind south-east. Cloudy.

Forrest:

2/6/1874: Named the springs the Weld Springs, after his Excellency Governor Weld, who has always taken such great interest in exploration, and without whose influence and assistance this expedition would not have been organized.

Leichhardt:

2/4/1845. A very conspicuous hill, bearing E.N.E. from the junction of the rivers, received the name of Mount Graham, after R. Graham, Esq., who had most liberally contributed to my expedition.
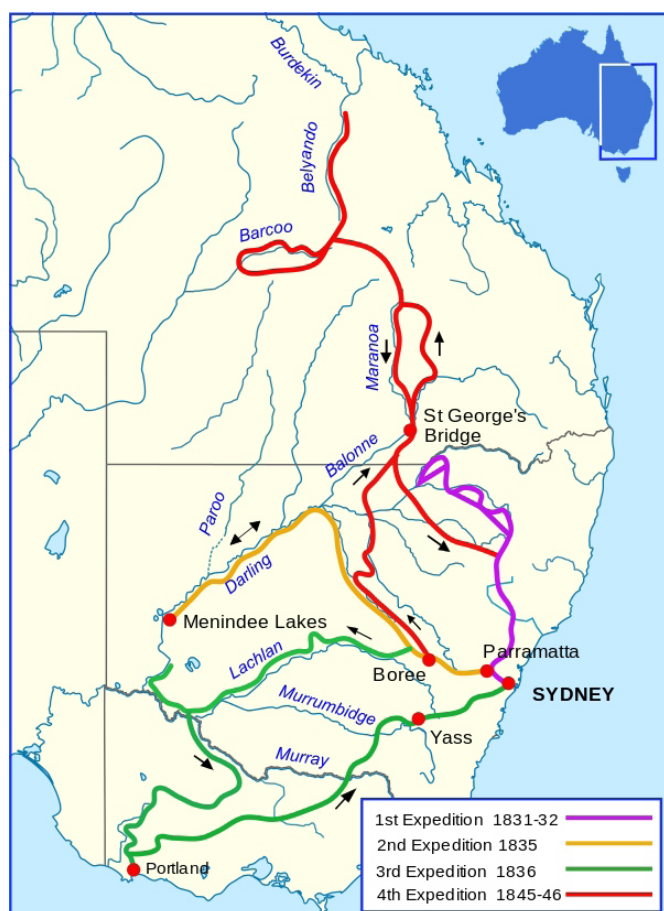
...placenaming mindset

Clearly, there was a desire among explorers to ingratiate themselves with prominent individuals and benefactors. Although Mitchell follows this practice, more than he himself seems to be aware, he commendably shows much more imagination and creativity than other explorers in bestowing placenames.

As for recording Indigenous names, Mitchell outshines other explorers. Table 2 shows the number of Indigenous names he recorded compared to the Introduced names he bestowed (58.2% to 41.8% respectively). These figures prove that Mitchell was true to his belief in acknowledging Indigenous names for places.

I use the term 'recorded' Indigenous names, because he very often does not make it clear that he was actually adopting the Indigenous names for a geographic feature. I looked up all the Indigenous placenames Mitchell recorded in the Gazetteer of Australia,[4] and found that only 70 (33.3%) of them are listed there. Interestingly, this figure is comparable to the total percentage of toponyms in the Gazetteer of Australia that have an Indigenous element, viz. 28.2% (see Tent, 2011).

Some of Mitchell's Indigenous name forms appear in the Gazetteer, but are not anywhere in the regions he surveyed, e.g. *Bellaringa, Callala*, and *Congo*, so these cannot be counted among his names. Others have changed their spelling slightly, e.g. *Buckenba > Buckenbah, Coodradigbee > Goodradigbee, Meei* (river) *> Mehi River*. Others have changed their spelling considerably and may be somewhat more difficult to recognise, e.g. *Waagan > Wagga* (*Wagga*) and the anglicised *Carrabobbila > Terrible Billy*.[5] There are also instances of a change of feature type, e.g. Mitchell records a *Meei* (a river), but today this name form designates a parish; likewise his *Muluerindie* (river) now designates a parish. Then there are those Indigenous names recorded by Mitchell for geographic features that have extended their feature designations, e.g. *Nangar* originally designated a hill, now also designates a parish, national park and a settlement; and *Nangeela*, for Mitchell a river name, now also designates a location and a parish.

A comparative study of other explorers' recording of Indigenous placenames would be an interesting endeavour—a future article for *Placenames Australia* perhaps!

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Figure 3. The River Balonne. *(Source: Mitchell, 1848)*

Toponyms 'New' and 'Old'…

Copying a placename by conferring it on another location is one of the most common types of placenaming. The motivation is, in a sense, nostalgic: to commemorate one's place of origin or to signal that a 'new' location is reminiscent of a place previously known. Most often the placename is simply copied (e.g. *Perth, Como, Heidelberg*), but sometimes the adjective *New* is added. This can result in a solid compound name such as *Newbury*, or an open compound such as *New Holland*.[1] This article (to be continued in our next issue) will look into toponyms in Australia and New Zealand that contain the adjectives *New* and *Old*.

European explorers and colonisers had a real penchant for naming 'newly discovered' and colonised lands and places with the neoteric adjective. Numerous well-known examples exist: *New Amsterdam* (which became *New York*), *New Orleans, New England, Nova Scotia, New Zealand, New Caledonia, New Guinea, New Hebrides, New South Wales*; the list is extensive. Often, these *New* names became more well-known than the original. Such names were part of the process of taking possession of foreign territories and showing an overt link to the Old World. One interesting extension of this trend was that of *New Australia* (aka *Colonia Nueva Australia*), the utopian settlement established in Paraguay in 1893 by the socialist movement called the New Australia Co-operative Settlement Association.

I shall exclude names in which the adjectives form part of a solid compound name (e.g. *Newcastle*), and also two types of toponyms where the *New* element does not play its usual role:

•   examples such as *New Year Well, New Moon Inlet* and *New Chum Creek*, because the syntax of these is [(New Year) Well], and not *[(New) (Year Well)]—in other words, the *New* does not denote a new location for an old toponym;

•   examples such as *New Zealand Point* or *New Haven Railway Station* because these are simple cases of copied toponyms that already contain the adjective *New*—it's not *[(New) (Haven Railway Station)], but [(New Haven) (Railway Station)].

Some examples, however, are ambiguous and it is difficult to discern the intended syntax. For example, is it [(New House) (Dam)] or [(New) (House Dam)]? In such cases,

I have decided to err on the safe side and omit them from the analysis.

Australia has 394 open compound *New* toponyms, whilst New Zealand has 17 (excluding the country's name itself) (see Tables 1 and 2). There is a wide variety of geographic features with this characteristic, most of which only have one or two examples, so I have included in Table 1 only those that have five or more examples.

Table 1
New toponyms in Australia

Feature type	Number
BORE	154
LOCALITY	50
DAM	49
STREAM	26
HOMESTEAD	23
TANK	14
MINE	12
RESERVE	11
TRIG STATION	11
YARD	6
HILL	5

Table 2
New toponyms in New Zealand

Feature type	Number
LOCALITY	3
STREAM	3
SUBURB	2
TOWN	2
HILL	2
BAY	1
ESTUARY	1
GLACIER	1
LOCAL GOVT AUTHORITY	1
TRIG STATION	1

The most interesting characteristic of these figures is that 39% of Australia's toponyms that have the *New* adjective are bores. Of the 154, 45 of them have the uninspiring name of *New Bore*, and 29 simply *New Well*. There are also 19 *New Dams*, six *New Tanks*, two *New Lakes*, one *New Island*, one *New Lagoon*, and one *New Yard*. There are also two homesteads and a locality bearing the name

...Part 1

New Bore. It is also worth noting that nine out of the 11 features listed in Table 1 and five of the 10 in Table 2 are non-natural features.

There are also a number of other interesting outcomes of the analysis. These are discussed below.

Copied foreign toponyms

The vast majority of copied foreign toponyms were conferred without modification: Australia and New Zealand seem to have very few copied foreign toponyms to which *New* has been added. I have only been able to discover 28 with the neoteric adjective in Australia and four in New Zealand. Some of these include: *New Aberdeen, New Brighton* (AUS & NZ), *New Cornwell, New Devon, New England, New Hamburg* (now *Willyaroo*), *New Italy, New Luxemburg, New Mecklenburg, New Mexico, New Norcia,*[2] *New Plymouth* (AUS & NZ), *New Windsor,* and of course *New South Wales.* All the other toponyms were copied unchanged from foreign ones.

Position of adjective

In English, the adjective is normally prenominal (i.e. it precedes the noun or pronoun it is modifying). In French and other Romance languages, however, the adjectives are generally postnominal (i.e. they follow nouns or pronouns). Postnominal adjectives can occur in English, but are mostly confined to archaic and poetic uses, expressions copied from Romance languages, and in certain specific grammatical constructions.[3] We have previously noted (Tent, 2018a, 2018b) that the vast majority of toponyms with Cardinal Compass Points (CCP) have the CCP preceding the specific element (e.g. *North Sydney*), but in certain situations it follows the specific (especially with school names).

Intriguingly, there are 14 toponyms in the National Gazetteer in which adjective *New* is postnominal—12 cases in NSW, all of which are trig stations (viz. *Ballina New, Breeza New, Brunswick New, Burrawang New, Comboyne New, Coocook New, Eckersley New, John New, Madden New,*[4] *Middle Camp New, Mirannie New,* and *Red Hill New*). In addition there is an unbounded locality (a subdivision in the City of Marion) in SA named *Darlington New,* and a homestead in QLD, 'Glengallan New' (inland from the Gold Coast).

The story of the latter name is worth relating. The 'Glengallan' run was established in 1844 and became one of the most prosperous runs on the Darling Downs. In 1867 the construction of an ambitious new homestead was commenced but was never completed because the owner went bankrupt. It was later gifted to the Anglican Church but was left empty for nearly 80 years and suffered severe damage through pillaging. As part of the Heritage Trails Network program, funding was received for the conservation of its exterior, the repair of its staircase and upgrading of its fire protection. Because much of the structure had collapsed, extensive research was carried out to determine how exactly it was built and to ensure that its reconstruction was accurate. After completion of the work, the site has been opened regularly and sustained by continuous use for a wide range of events. 'Glengallan' has subsequently become known as 'Glengallan New', in the sense of 'Glengallan restored'. In syntactic terms the structure of such toponyms is [(Glengallan) (New)]. So the postnominal *New* is probably for stylistic reasons.

'Glengallen New'
(photo: Queensland Govt. https://apps.des.qld.gov.au/

The question remains as to why NSW trig stations in particular should have a postnominal adjective. Is it for some stylistic reason, to emulate French for example, or to avoid confusion? As with school names and CCPs, the latter seems most feasible. For instance, if the Ballina New trig were named *New Ballina*, it could be interpreted as the name of a new town or location because *Ballina* is already the name of a town on the far north coast of NSW; it would seem to be a pair like the existing *Mapoon* and *New Mapoon*. But it's more likely that the postnominal *New* functions like 'Glengallan restored'.

Trig stations are very important survey points. Over time many trigs have become derelict or have disappeared. From the early 1970s a program of maintenance, repair and replacement of ruined trigs commenced. Wherever possible, the old-style cairn and pole stations were replaced by a concrete pillar with demountable mast and vane, allowing constrained centring of theodolite and distance measuring equipment (Gowans et al., 2015). It is vital that the position of the trig be accurately determined and that the trig remain in exactly the same location. The restoration of a trig could be denoted by the postnominal *New*. If a prenominal *New* were applied, it could be interpreted as a new location, as all prenominal *New* toponyms are. The current GNB policy when replacing a trig structure is not to name it *X New*, but simply to retain the original name, and give it a new ID number (p.c. Les Gardner, GNB, 2/6/2020).

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In Part 2 of this survey (next issue), we shall look at toponyms with the antediluvian adjective 'Old'

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Endnotes

[1] For a discussion on the structure of toponyms see: Toponymy 101 B: The structure of toponyms. *Placenames Australia*. March, pp. 6-7. http://anps.org.au/upload/March_2016.pdf

[2] Unlike the Italian *Norcia*, from which this toponym is copied, and which is pronounced /nor-cha/, *New Norcia* is pronounced /nor-sia/ like 'nausea'.

[3] For an excellent discussion on postnominal adjectives see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Postpositive_adjective

[4] Also known as *New Madden*.

Beware of 'facts'

One of the perils of toponymic research is distinguishing between facts and 'facts'. Perhaps, in the now infamous, widely mocked and Orwellian words of Kellyanne Conway, the latter could be termed 'alternative facts'. Unfortunately, the competition between facts and 'alternative facts' exists not only in US politics but also in historical studies and toponymy.

I am not talking about alternative interpretations of data, historical events, or even alternative perceptions of the world around us.

What I am talking about is verifiable facts or truths. For example, that 2+2=4; that James Cook charted the east coast of Australia in 1770, and so on. Such facts can be tested and verified.

There are other so-called 'facts' in the literature (both print and online) that are presented as accurate or truthful, but are actually not. We often find examples in placename dictionaries or in Wikipedia entries for placenames when trying to discover the answers to the standard WH- questions: WHO named the feature? WHEN was it named? WHERE is the feature located? WHAT is the name's meaning? And WHY was it named thus? Apart from, perhaps, 'WHERE is it?', not all of these are always verifiable, especially the WHY question.

The popular literature (and, indeed, academic literature) sometimes gets the answers to these questions wrong. Placename dictionaries, such as Reed (1974), or dictionaries of places, such as Appleton & Appleton (1992), regularly contain such 'alternative facts'. And Wikipedia, where entries are not necessarily written by experts, can be a minefield for the enquirer.

Some of my previous *Placenames Australia* articles have sought to correct 'facts' about *Vrilya Point*, *Yo Yo Creek*, and *Groote Eylandt*; no doubt future issues will include more articles inspired by 'alternative facts'.

Misattributions and 'alternative facts' are perpetuated when authors and researchers unquestioningly rely on the works of previous writers or secondary (indirect) sources. That's why ANPS relies on accurate documentaion of placename histories, and why our researchers assiduously look for primary sources wherever possible.

Jan Tent

Don't rush to conclusions

Many toponyms have specific elements that appear to be quite transparent in their meanings or their designations, especially those that seem designed to be descriptive. A good example is *Gorilla Head Rock* at Macquarie Island, part of the Australian Antarctic Division (AAD) (Fig. 1).

Figure 1. Gorilla Head Rock
*(photo: Paul Helleman, AAD[1])*

However, it is easy to be mistaken in the meaning of an apparently descriptive specific. *Erratic Point* on Heard Island (AAD) is a case in point (Figure 2). It lies on the north-west coast of the island on the shore of South West Bay, at the foot of Vashel Glacier.

At first sight, one might be forgiven for concluding the name derives from the adjective **erratic** meaning 'wandering; prone to wander; irregular or eccentric in conduct, habit, or opinion' (OED), or 'deviating from the proper or usual course in conduct' (Macq. Dict.), perhaps in reference to the prevailing erratic weather conditions or coastal currents experienced at the location. But one would be wrong. The location of the point gives us a clue as to the origin of the name—it derives from the geological term *erratic block* or *erratic boulder*, referring to 'a stray mass of rock, foreign to the surrounding strata, that has been transported from its original site, apparently by glacial action' (OED), or boulders and rocks 'transported from the original sight to an unusual location, as by glacial action' (Macq. Dict.).

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) provides details of the point's naming:

> Description:
> A small, moss-covered point at the head of South West Bay, 1.3 mi NE of Cape Gazert, on the W side of Heard Island. The German Antarctic Expedition (GerAE) in 1902 charted a cape in this vicinity, from the summit of Mount Drygalski, and applied the name "Kap Lerche." In November 1929 the British Australian and New Zealand Antarctic Research Expedition (BANZARE) under Mawson charted a small point in this position and applied the name Erractic [sic] Point because of the large number of massive erractic [sic] boulders encountered there. The Australian National Antarctic Research Expeditions (ANARE) was unable to find any significant feature in this immediate area during their 1948 survey of the island, hence the name Erratic Point was retained by them for this small point.
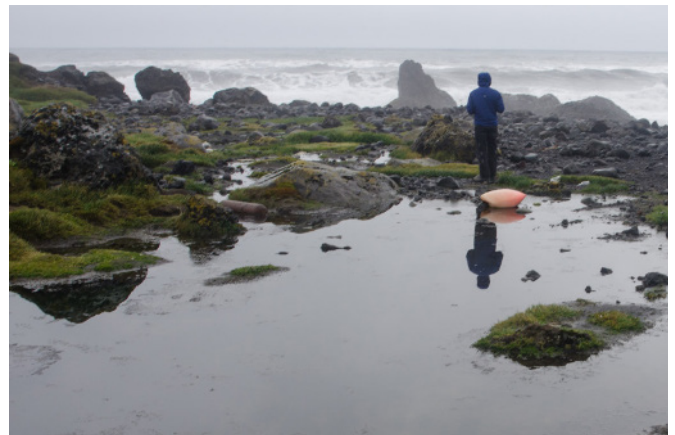
Figure 2. Erratic Point (with marine debris)
(photo: Gavin Marshall, 'What a waste—marine debris to Heard Island'[2])

Unsurprisingly, the moral of the story is: don't rush to conclusions regarding the origin of a toponym or its meaning. Documentary evidence is always required.

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[1] http://www.antarctica.gov.au/living-and-working/stations/macquarie-island/this-week-at-macquarie-island/2016/this-week-at-macquarie-island-5-february-2016/looking-for-cape-petrel-chicks)

[2] https://trackmyadventures.co/category/heard-island/

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Placenames Puzzle Number 77

Metaphor toponyms

Many toponyms use a metaphor to describe the appearance of the feature. Can you work out each toponym from the clue? Example—(NSW, reef in Sydney Harbour) a porker and its family: Sow and Pigs Reef

1. (NSW, rock in Royal National Park) like a matrimonial torte
2. (NSW, Broken Bay island) leonine
3. (TAS, cove in Freycinet NP) chalice-shaped
4. (SA, Mt Gambier lake) your Sunday roast, maybe
5. (NT, rocks) satanic playthings
6. (NSW, Blue Mountains rock formation) a sorority trio
7. (TAS, islet) Flinders said it was like 'an elevated seat'
8. (NSW, promontory in Bouddi NP) a quadrangular container
9. (WA, rock face at Hyden, 350km from Perth) a breaker
10. (TAS, hill at Stanley) kernel in a shell, or threaded block of metal, or just your head?
11. (VIC, mountain near Bright) Hume and Hovell thought it looked bovine
12. (QLD, peaks in Sunshine Coast hinterland) they reminded Cook of furnaces fusing silica in Yorkshire
13. (WA, cave formation near #9) sleepy 'river horse' inhales
14. (NSW, South Coast mountain) reminded Cook of a columbid abode
15. (WA, rock near Cape Naturaliste) a sweet cone indeed
16. (QLD, reef in the Whitsundays) symbol of love
17. (NSW, column in the Warrumbungles) a domestic blade
18. (NSW, south coast mount) Cook, from his ship, saw a ship of the desert
19. (NSW, mountains near Crowdy Bay) a fraternal trio to match #6
20. (TAS, promontory in Tasman NP) pilaster-like

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

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