

Placenames Australia

Newsletter of the Australian National Placenames Survey

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The Five Corners of inland Australia

Australia with its six states and two territories has five named inland state/territory corners. From the west and heading east and then south, these are:

- the Surveyor Generals Corner (WA, NT and SA)
- Poeppel Corner (NT, SA and Qld)
- Haddon Corner (Qld and SA)
- Cameron Corner (Qld, NSW and SA)
- MacCabe Corner (NSW, Victoria and SA).

Of these, the **Surveyor Generals Corner** has by far the most intriguing history. This opinion, however, by no means seeks to downplay the intrepid work, dedication and contribution of the surveyors, Poeppel, Cameron and MacCabe, and the fortitude of the Howie brothers on Haddon Downs run.

The British Home Secretary, Lord Sydney (Thomas Townshend), in 1786 appointed Captain Arthur Phillip as Governor of the British territory of New South Wales, which had been previously appropriated by Captain Cook for Britain in 1770. Lord Sydney commanded Phillip to take possession of the east coast of the continent 'westward as far as the one hundred and thirty-fifth degree of longitude'.¹ That line of longitude runs just west of Port Lincoln and Oodnadatta and just east of Alice Springs.

The land west of this line of longitude was considered by the British at the time to be poor and not worth their trying to settle it. However, during the next four decades, interest by the French and Dutch irritated the British, and Captain Gordon Bremer was despatched to establish a settlement on the Cobourg Peninsula near (now) Darwin. The ensuing settlement was named *Fort Dundas*. Then, when it was realised that the settlement lay outside the formally-annexed land of NSW, the western boundary of NSW was moved westward to the



A group of surveyors at Surveyor-Generals Corner in June 2018. Left to right: Former Northern Territory Surveyor General Garry West, David Chudleigh, Roland Maddocks, current Northern Territory Surveyor General Rob Sarib, Barry Allwright and New Zealand surveyor Alan Radcliffe.

(Photo: Wikimedia Commons)

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From the Editor



Have you been missing our occasional column 'Reports from the Trenches'? You'll find it in this issue, but heavily disguised. David McDonald of the Wamboin Community Association in southern NSW reports on how

Wamboin got its name—but it's much more than a column, so we haven't given it the usual header! (Next time, *Smiths Gap* will be David's topic: we'll have to see whether that fits into a column or not!)

You've probably noticed already that Diana Beal's lead article takes us on a guided tour across most of

the state boundaries of Australia. Unsurprisingly, it honours surveyors; but in another sense it's about measuring the ground. We've asked Diana to follow this up in our June issue, too: not only do we live on a moving continent, but the methods of measurement have changed over the years. So she'll pose the question 'Where are we now?'

One other thing: we love to hear about your local placenames—always happy to hear more reports from the trenches! And see the somewhat-related invitation at the bottom of page 11.

David Blair
<editor@anps.org.au>

In the media - They love our placenames

You mightn't think that the letters to such an august journal as the *Sydney Morning Herald* would produce much in the way of toponymic gold nuggets—but hey, life is full of surprises. In a recent issue, the colourfully named Joan Brown of **Orange** wrote that 'an item in Herald letters last Saturday from a resident of **Crooked Corner** sent me to Google Maps. On the road to **Crookwell** (where else?), this hamlet is also not far from the equally whimsical **Funny Hill** and **Lost River**. Someone had fun when it came to naming localities', she said.

This was followed by a deadpan contribution from Lyn Savage of Coogee: 'I had to get out my book of maps to find **Bowling Alley Point** following a letter from a resident. For your information, the town has approximately 30 inhabitants and is in the Tamworth region. It is 26 kilometres to the **Dag Sheep Station** and 30 kilometres to the **Drunken Trout Cafe**. Worth a visit.'

And they used to say that the English had taken all the best placenames...

The AGM for Placenames Australia

Early February saw the 2021-2022 Annual General Meeting take place (virtually, as is now usual). We did some heavy lifting. The Constitution was updated (there are actually other ways of paying bills than by cheque these days; and you can maintain formal records digitally, not just on bits of paper). And we elected a new management committee: Susan Birtles

(President), Dale Lehner (V-P), Brian Lehner (Sec.), Charlie Koch (Treas.), with Glenn Christie, Stuart Duncan and Helen Slatyer as members. And we committed to getting AGMs back to a less-confusing schedule now that Covid-disruption is receding; we hope the 2022-23 AGM will actually be held *this* year instead of in 2024.

Puzzle answers - (from page 12)

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Sea Lake | 5. Lake Mountain | 10. The Dry Swamp | 15. Lost Flat Mountain |
| 2. Ups'n Downs, Upson Downs | 6. Valley Heights | 11. Flat Hill | 16. Dry River |
| 3. Long Nose Flat | 7. Dry Dam | 12. Crookwell | 17. Burnt Down Creek |
| 4. Valley Lake | 8. Ocean Grove | 13. Round Hill Plain | |
| | 9. Ocean Hill | 14. Mount Field | |

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Editor: David Blair
PO Box 5160
SOUTH TURRAMURRA NSW 2074

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129th degree of longitude in 1825 to ensure Fort Dundas lay on British soil.

By 1828, interest in the southern part of the western half of the Great South Land had become much stronger. In November, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Sir George Murray, ordered that a ship be despatched from the Cape of Good Hope to take formal possession of the western coast of New Holland immediately. Thomas Peel, with others, submitted to Murray a detailed settlement plan of the Swan River area which emphasised its suitability as a port, a strategic location and a supplier of all manner of agricultural produce. Murray subsequently issued instructions on 30 December 1828 to Captain Stirling to sail, as Lieutenant Governor, to the area in the provided naval vessel to establish the necessary infrastructure—civil, legislative, judicial and financial—to ensure successful settlement.² The initial instructions were silent on the matter of the extent of the new colony, but extending it to the east to the 129th degree of longitude made pragmatic and geographical sense. The border was not formally settled, however, until the *Queensland Legislation and South Australian Land Extension Act* of 1861 was passed by the NSW Parliament on 22 July of that year.

Having settled the interstate border legally was not, of course, the end of the matter. It was important to mark it also on the ground, and several attempts were made to do so between 1866 and 1922, with each coming up with slightly different positions. In 1922 after an agreement was made between the Commonwealth, SA and WA, a marker, the Deakin Obelisk, was set up with the instruments of the day. (Today, the site of the marker is accepted as being at 129°00'01".8584E, which is 49.8 metres east of the correct alignment.) In the north, a similar undertaking led to the erection of the Austral Pillar in the Kimberleys, which is now considered to be at 128°59'57".2933E, which is 79.1 m west of 129°E.³

The clauses of the 1922 agreement were open to interpretation. The Board appointed to oversee the marking of the border consisted of the WA, SA and NT surveyors general. As a practical on-ground process, they decided essentially to run lines due south from the northern marker and due north from the southern marker on the basis that the two markers were fairly

accurately placed, and offsets could be made along the lines as necessary. During the next 40 years, only a small part of the border line was marked on the ground and that was at the northern end.

The next development in the saga was the need to locate the latitude 26°S border between NT and SA. This work commenced in June 1963 and was to end in the west at longitude 129°E. The Board of Surveyors General overseeing this work, aware by then that the north and south markers of longitude 129°E were not in alignment, decided that the line of the 26°S latitude would intersect with the longitude line in two different places, one due north and one due south of their respective 1920s markers.⁴

Two concrete pillars were placed at the points of intersection. The western pillar is 75.3m west of the true longitudinal line and the eastern pillar is 52.1m east of the line, thus making the dog leg in the eastern boundary of WA 127.4m long.⁵ This then is the **Surveyor Generals Corner**. With the better technology now available, it would be easy to take the dog-leg out of the WA border, but the political and social issue of where it might be placed is a much bigger problem, as a small shift in the border could easily produce winners and losers.

The next corner to the east is the south-east corner of the NT where the NT-Qld border meets the SA border—**Poeppel Corner**. The son of Friedrich Daniel and Doris Friedriche Poeppel, Augustus Poeppel (1839-1891) came to SA from Hamburg in the *Steinwaerder* with his parents and six siblings, of whom four were classed at the time as adults. They arrived on 12 January 1849. Friedrich was a carpenter on the shipping list, but he practised here as an architect. In 1857, at least some of the family including Augustus moved to Victoria and he was naturalised there in 1859. In September 1858 he was appointed by the government as mining surveyor for Fryer's Creek near Castlemaine, about 100km from Melbourne. (Robert Brough Smyth, the first government meteorologist, had urged the government to appoint a qualified surveyor to each goldfield, and these appointees were handsomely paid for the period.) Augustus resigned from that position in mid-1860.

Poeppel then went to New Zealand in 1861 in the rush

continued next page

of men from Australia and elsewhere to that country to try their luck at gold mining. From his published letters home, it was not a successful enterprise and he returned to Australia in early 1866. He returned to surveying and gained contract employment with the Victorian Government. On 20 October 1866, he married Mary Ann Kelly at Castlemaine and they had three children.

In February 1869, he was appointed Clerk of the Court at Beaufort near Bendigo. This was to be a bittersweet experience. Four years later, he was suspended on the discovery of some irregularities in his accounts. He was eventually charged with two counts of fraud and embezzlement amounting to, in total, less than £5. He was found guilty on 20 August 1873 and sentenced to seven years hard labour.⁶ His friends and family considered the conviction and sentence to be unfair, and they mounted several protests and applications for his release during the next two years. Even nine members of the jury which had convicted him on one of the charges publicly said they were either astounded at the sentence or had believed that he was not guilty of the intention to steal. The government finally relented and released him on 14 October 1875.⁷

He soon returned to South Australia and obtained employment at first as Clerk of Works for the Council of Education and then in the Lands Department. By January 1880, he had joined the Queensland survey party. Poeppel and Wells with camels, requisite equipment and men took over the marking of the Qld-SA border at Cooper Creek about 90 miles north of the intersection of the 29°S latitude with the 141°E line of longitude (Cameron Corner). When they reached Haddon Corner at the intersection with 26°S, they turned west and marked the line to the 138°E longitude where the Queensland border headed due north. They reached there by the end of the year and then returned to Adelaide.

Severe drought afflicted the region for about three years, and the surveying could not be reasonably undertaken during that period. Poeppel and Wells returned to the area in December 1883 and continued to mark the border line to the north along the 138°E longitude. In the first year, the party managed to mark the line at the rate of about five miles (8km) per week. During the next year, the party advanced another 74 miles before

Poeppel had to give up by July due to health problems. He returned to Adelaide.

Augustus Poeppel later retired to Melbourne where his wife, Mary Ann, had owned and managed hotels for decades. He died there in the Yarrowonga Hotel in 1891 at the early age of 52 years.

Haddon Corner lies to the east of Poeppel Corner. It was named after Haddon Downs, a very large pastoral run established by William and John Howie in about 1877. The run was located in the north-east corner in SA with its boundaries mostly along the colonial borders to the north and east. In addition, stock was run on leases that were to form 'Arrabury' run over the eastern border in Queensland.⁸ The Howie brothers had grown up in Hadden, Roxburghshire, Scotland, and thus they had named their colonial venture. An excellent article on Haddon Corner by J. Pearn and W. Kitson can be found in a recent issue of the *Queensland History Journal*.⁹

South of Haddon lies **Cameron Corner**. Enter John Brewer Cameron (1843-1897). (*Scotlands People* birth records show simply 'John' with no 'Brewer' at his baptism.) John was born in Kilmonivaig, Inverness, Scotland, as the eldest of eight children of Ewen Cameron, a joiner, and Mary née Mactavish. In September 1853, the family emigrated to Victoria as unassisted emigrants on the *Hurricane* and settled initially in inner Melbourne and later at Glenwatts, Healesville.

John became a surveyor during the 1860s, and worked in Fiji and Victoria before joining the NSW Lands Department in 1875. In 1879, he was appointed as the NSW leader, with George Chale Watson as the Queensland leader, of a team to mark the NSW-Qld border along the 29°S latitude from the Barwon River crossing (Mungindi) west to the 141°E longitude, which point is now called Cameron Corner.

The team started at Barrington, which lies between Cunnamulla in Qld and Bourke in NSW on the Warrego River, and is thus somewhat east of the centre point of the task. The exact location of the border was found and a zero marker was placed on the line of 29°S. The team then measured an initial 5-mile chord to the west. (A chord is a straight line joining the two ends of an arc, like the string of a bow.) As the earth is curved, so then are the lines of latitude. Thus, the process of determining the

...of Inland Australia

border involved measuring chords, then placing mile-post markers offset from the chord to mark the exact position of the line of latitude. Measuring and marking then continued for the 500 or so kilometres west to South Australia. Watson then withdrew, and Cameron returned to the Warrego and proceeded east, measuring and marking until the team reached the Barwon River, which was the accepted border line east at that point. The task started in September 1879 and took more than two years to complete.

Cameron continued working for the NSW Government for another decade or so before taking up a position in New Guinea as a government surveyor and, initially, resident magistrate in the Western District. He also bought land and sought to develop plantations there. He travelled south to Melbourne and Brisbane in late 1897, and died unexpectedly whilst in transit at a Brisbane hotel. He did not ever marry, but leaves the legacy of 'his corner'.

It would be easy to assume that the final corner, **MacCabe Corner**, where the Murray River (the boundary between NSW and Victoria) crosses the SA border, would be the easiest of all five corners to locate. Possibly, but it is not an unqualified assumption.

The Geographical Names Board of NSW identifies the Corner as being exactly where the NSW-Victorian border (the southern high bank of the Murray River) meets an extension of the NSW-SA border. However, the SA-Victorian border at that point is officially the midline of the Murray. The difference between the two points is about 100m of the Murray River waters.

Nevertheless, MacCabe Corner was named after Francis Peter MacCabe (1817-1897). MacCabe was born in Dublin, the son of Dr James MacCabe and Margaret née Russell. He trained as a surveyor in Ireland and, at the age of 24 years, emigrated unassisted to NSW on the *Florentia*, arriving in Sydney on 26 October 1841. MacCabe immediately gained employment with the Department of the Surveyor General as an assistant surveyor.¹⁰

Files at NSW State Records indicate that MacCabe worked in the Braidwood and Cooma area in the south-east, west along the Lachlan, Murrumbidgee and Murray

Rivers, and north in the Port Curtis and Gladstone areas during the next 14 years until the end of 1855, when he resigned from government service. MacCabe met Jane Osborne in Wollongong and they married on 28 November 1855 and settled there where he managed a coal mine. They had 13 children there until 1872, then moved to Berrima where they had another son. Francis MacCabe died in Bowral after a long illness in 1897.

MacCabe worked for the Department of the Surveyor General for a relatively short period. However, he obviously was a good bushman, and an active and effective surveyor. He was interested in the history of the land he measured, and he respected and made use of Aboriginal knowledge.

What conclusions can we draw about the naming of these significant geographical locations? Considering the story of the Surveyor Generals Corner, we may wonder if the name was appended with secret irony or with respect. Haddon Downs was a major outpost of civilisation at the time the surveyors came along the border line, with Cordillo Downs, the next stop on the route from Adelaide, about 50km to the south. No wonder the corner was so named. Indeed, if it had been named something else, then locally no doubt it would still have been referred to as Haddon. Finally, the naming of the other three corners after surveyors who made significant contributions to colonial and state administration is a fitting reminder of their work.

Diana Beal

Endnotes

¹ *Historical Records NSW*, 1(2), 24.

² *Historical Records of Australia*, III(6), 600-602.

³ Porter, J. R. (1990), Longitude 129 Degrees East, and Why it is not the Longest Straight Line in the World. Canberra: 32nd Australian Surveyors Congress.

⁴ Porter, op.cit.

⁵ Porter, op. cit.

⁶ *Argus*, 21 August 1873.

⁷ *Argus*, 15 October 1875.

⁸ Debney, L. (2018) *Arrabury*. Toowoomba, Qld.: Toowoomba and Darling Downs Family History Society.

⁹ Pearn, J., & Kitson, W. (2022). Haddon Corner. *Queensland History Journal*, 25(2), 87-103.

¹⁰ *New South Wales Government Gazette*, 17 December 1841.

Wamboin...

Wamboin is the name given to a parish and a locality in NSW, immediately east of the ACT, between the ACT border and Lake George. This form of the toponym is far from unique, readily confusable with other places in NSW, including:

- The property 'Wamboin' located on Marra Creek between Brewarrina and Nyngan
- The parish of Womboin near Brewarrina
- The parish of Womboin near Gloucester
- The parish of Wamboyne near West Wyalong
- The parish of Wonboyn and the village of Wonboyn Lake on the far south coast

There were some expectations regarding the creation and naming of NSW's parishes during the colonial era. The Surveyor General's Regulations of 1864 had some recommendations on the size of parishes and how their boundaries should be chosen,¹ (Marshall, 2006, p. 3), but the name of a parish did not need to have any relationship to the local topography. There were some exceptions to this, though: Bywong, the adjoining parish to Wamboin, is named after its encompassed feature Bywong Hill.

There was one other strong recommendation of the Surveyor General. 'Where euphonious aboriginal names can be ascertained, it is desirable that they should be suggested by the Surveyor for new parishes.' We may well feel that 'Wamboin' is a euphonious Aboriginal word, but as far as we can tell it has no direct connection to where Wamboin is located.



As far as I can ascertain, there are no historical documents or recorded oral history that exist to clarify what the traditional custodians of the area called themselves, nor what they called their language. We do know, however, from linguistic research covering the region more broadly (especially Koch 2009, 2010), that their language was similar to, if not identical to, that of the Monaro people: they referred to themselves as the Ngarigu/Ngarigo people speaking a language of that name. On the other hand, some Canberra-based Aboriginal leaders state that Wamboin is in the lands of the Ngambri and/or Ngunnawal peoples.

When was the parish of Wamboin determined?

The first thing to note is that the creation of parishes was not notified in the NSW Government Gazette, since they were developed for administrative (land management) purposes, and their boundaries could be changed from time-to-time without formal notification.

The parish is not mentioned in Wells' *A geographical dictionary, or, Gazetteer of the Australian colonies...* (1848), nor is it mentioned in Bailliere's 1866 *New South Wales Gazetteer and Road Guide*. This latter source mentions other parishes in the area, such as 'the parish of Nerriga' and 'the parish of Collector'. That said, apparently the first grant of land in what became the parish of Wamboin was made on 12 April 1837 to James Anlezark (c. 1806–1874), 640 acres purchased at auction. (Some sources—including some early editions of the parish map—incorrectly show his brother John (1812–1889) as the grantee.) Most of the land of the parish was taken up as small selections in the 1870s and 1880s.

Notices of land for sale by auction, published in the Gazette on 16 March 1841 (p. 4), refer to a block in a 'parish unnamed near Bungendore' in what is now Wamboin. From then until the mid-1860s other blocks in 'parish unnamed', in the vicinity of what would become Wamboin, were notified.

From 1866, though, several parishes neighbouring Wamboin found their first references in the Gazette:

- Parish of Majura (to the south-east of the parish of Wamboin): 1 February 1866

...a Wiradjuri word all over the place

- Parish of Currandooly (to the east): 1 February 1866
- Parish of Gorooyarroo (to the west): 2 February 1866
- Parish of Amungula (to the south-west): 8 October 1866
- Parish of Bywong (to the north): 19 June 1868.

It is possible that some of these parishes were created at the same time, since they shared, and still share, some common boundaries. So it comes as no surprise that Wamboin parish itself belongs on that same list.

The first mention of 'Wamboin' in the Gazette was in the issue dated 1 February 1866 (No. 33 (Supplement)), p. 333: 'Department of Lands, Sydney, 31st January, 1866. APPROVED CLAIMS FOR PRE-EMPTIVE LEASES'. It was a notification of claims for three leases, situated in the 'Parish of Wamboin', by John Murphy whose address was given as 'Creekborough'.

A week later, on 8 February 1866, the *Queanbeyan Age and General Advertiser* (p. 2), included the same information. The next mention of Wamboin occurred the following year: *Queanbeyan Age* 12 July 1867, p. 5, the auction (owing to the insolvency of the land owner) of 'A Free Selection of 40 acres of Land, situate [sic] in the parish of Wamboin, between Bungendore and Cohen, well known as SMITHGROVE'. Numerous mentions of the parish in the Gazette, the *Queanbeyan Age*, and other sources, followed.

From this we can conclude (with a degree of confidence) that the parish of Wamboin was created, along with several others, not long before February 1866.

The locality of Wamboin

In NSW, a 'locality' is the rural equivalent of a 'suburb' in an urban area.

The initial subdivisions of the land that became known as the locality of Wamboin were called (by the developers and estate agents) 'Majura Heights' and then 'Canberra Country Estate'. The main initial developer was Norton Towers Estate Pty Ltd. The first advertisement for the land was published in the *Canberra Times* newspaper in the issue dated 2 December 1972 (p. 31). It was the land along Norton Road from Sutton Road to Fernloff Road.

On 24 April 1980 Captain D. G. (David) Robertson OBE, RN, one of the first residents of Wamboin and the first person from Wamboin to serve as a Yarrowlumla Shire Councillor, wrote to Council explaining that, on 20 April 1980, a meeting of local resident and non-resident landowners was held to discuss the locality's toponym. Some 60 people participated. Robertson wrote:

Geographical Names – 'Canberra Country Estate'

For some time residents have been complaining that the name 'Canberra Country Estate' is both inelegant and inappropriate for an area of New South Wales. Furthermore it is understood that this name has no official status whatsoever.

This matter has been mentioned to Mr R. E. Guy as a representative of the present developers of the area. The present developers apparently have no particular liking for the name 'Canberra Country Estate' and would probably prefer a name which has some historical association with the area, for example 'Amungula' or 'Wamboin' which are the names of the two parishes covered by the development area.

... After considerable discussion and a series of votes I was asked to suggest to the Shire Council the following names, which are given in order of preference:

Kowen Hills;
Kowen;
Wamboin;
Wamboin Hills;
Amungula Hills;
Amungula;
Mount Poppet;
Poppet Hills.

It is requested that the Shire Council take such steps as may be necessary to have one of these names officially bestowed on the area.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Mr R. E. Guy so that the present developers may have an opportunity to comment (letter reproduced in *The Wamboin Whisper*, November 1987, p. 17).

The minutes of a Special Meeting of Yarrowlumla Shire Council, held in Queanbeyan on 5 September 1980, record Council's response to this request:

524. CAPTAIN D.G. ROBERTSON, (G3/1): Advising that for some time residents have been complaining that the name 'Canberra Country Estate' is both inelegant and inappropriate for an area of New South Wales and stating that at a recent meeting, it was decided to submit possible names for Council's consideration.

It was resolved that the area commonly known as 'Canberra Country Estate' be officially known as 'Wamboin'.

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Consequently, the geographical name *Wamboin* was assigned and gazetted as a feature within the parishes of Amungula, Goorooyarroo and Wamboin on 4 September 1981, with the co-ordinates 35° 15' S, 149° 17' E. These co-ordinates placed the locality centre between Fernloff Road and Canning Close. The current NSW Register entry gives the GDA2020 lat/long as 35°15'24.3"S, 149°17'04.3"E, and NSW mapping (<https://maps.six.nsw.gov.au/>) locates Wamboin at the junction of Norton Road and Poppet Road.

The first issue of the local community's monthly newsletter *Wamboin Whisper* is dated July 1981 (<http://wamboincommunity.asn.au/thewhisper>). Its title, its mentions of the Wamboin Community Association and of the Wamboin Sub-Committee of the Sutton Bushfire Brigade, all suggest that the community had embraced the name *Wamboin* by that point.

The Register of the NSW Geographical Names Board indicates that the name *Wamboin* was gazetted as a 'Rural Place' on 4 September 1981 and as a 'Locality' on 5 January 2001.¹

We know, then, that the name *Wamboin* was given to the parish in the 19th century, either early in 1866 or shortly beforehand. And we know that the locality's name finally followed that of its parish in 1980-81. But why was the parish originally called *Wamboin*? Where did the name come from?

The Wiradjuri word 'wamboin/womboin'

'Wamboin' is a Wiradjuri word for one or more species of kangaroo (Koch, 2009, p. 133). But Wiradjuri country is some hundreds of kilometres west and north of Wamboin. What was the connection? Strange as it may seem, the only connection was apparent 'euphony'. The 19th century surveyors who determined the boundaries of the NSW parishes and named them were not required to use names that had any local connection. It was merely recommended that they use 'euphonious aboriginal names'. The fact that 'wamboin' is a Wiradjuri word does not indicate that Wamboin is on Wiradjuri country.

Wiradjuri word lists collected by Curr and published in 1886 (at exactly the time when the parish was determined and named) contain a number of references to 'wamboin',

'wamboine' and 'womboin', all meaning 'kangaroo'. Subsequent word lists give similar meanings, including Mathews (1904, p. 300): 'Kangaroo womboin'. More recent reconstructions of the Wiradjuri word include 'wambuuwayn' and 'wambuwany' (Wafer & Lissarrague 2008, p. 699) and 'wambuny' (Koch 2009, p. 133).

Let's give the last word to Mark Saddler, a Wiradjuri man who runs cultural tours on his traditional lands. Mark explains to his tour guests that 'There are certain Wiradjuri words for individual items, kangaroo is Wamboin ... which is like the noise of the kangaroo, Wamboin, Wamboin' (Tungandame, 2017). Presumably the 'noise' referred to comes from the kangaroos' hopping, not from their vocalisations!

David McDonald

Endnote

¹ <https://proposals.gnb.nsw.gov.au/public/geonames/search>

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There are maps~and then there are maps...

We've recently been digging around in the *Placenames Australia* filing cabinet, and came across this unusual cartographic picture of our world. There are many similar versions of it, we know, but the origin of this particular representation is obscure—and it's a mystery how it got into our magic store.

It's based on the famous Peters projection, and by using the office microscope we see that some of the country names are a little outdated. Turkey, for instance, is there in its time-hallowed exonym, bowing not to President Erdogan's *Türkiye*.



What happened to the first Wamboin parish map?

Has the first edition of the Wamboin parish map been irretrievably lost, as some have suggested?

David McDonald has investigated—and says ‘not true!’

Many of the NSW parish maps are believed to have been destroyed when the Garden Palace Exhibition Building (in Sydney's Royal Botanic Gardens) burned down in 1882. Most of colony's official maps were indeed stored there while the Lands Department's building on Bridge Street was being constructed. But two copies of the maps had been made, with one held in Sydney at the Lands Department and the other in the Department's relevant regional office—in the case of the Wamboin parish map, at Goulburn.

The confusion about the first edition of the parish of Wamboin map stems from its mis-labelling by the former NSW Department of Lands in their Historical Land Records Viewer (HLRV)

<http://hlrv.nswlrs.com.au/>

What is labelled there as the second edition of the parish of Wamboin map is actually the first edition, dated 1881. The map contains the following annotations:

TRIGONOMETRICAL COMPILATION

Reserves charted and examined 13 Sep. 81

Compiled by C.G. Ireland 20th Oct. 81

Furthermore, in the following year the Gazette of 7 February 1882 (No. 52), p. 684, included a notice:

PARISH MAPS FOR SALE.

ON SALE at the Surveyor General's Office, Sydney, and at the respective Land Offices hereunder mentioned, the following Lithographs of PARISH MAPS: Price One Shilling each:—

...Parishes of Amungula, Wamboin, and Majura,
county of Murray—Land Office, Queanbeyan.

The parish of Wamboin map referenced in this notice is almost certainly the first edition, 1881.

The second edition of the map was published in 1891, still at the price of one shilling. It is available online from the State Library of NSW:

<https://collection.sl.nsw.gov.au/record/74Vv7GMMLaMl>.

The first official map of the County of Murray is dated 1888. It shows the parish of Wamboin:

<http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-233902109>

The first editions of the maps of the parishes of Majura and Amungula, also part of the current locality of Wamboin, are dated October 1881, the same month that the parish of Wamboin map was compiled. At the HLRV, as with the Wamboin parish map, these first editions are incorrectly labelled as the second editions.

David McDonald

Cherbourg (Qld)...

Cherbourg is a populated place some 169km north-west of Brisbane and 34km north-east of Kingaroy. The traditional owners of the region are the Wakka Wakka people. It was formerly known as *Barambah* (in full, *Barambah Aboriginal Settlement*). The name *Barambah* is purported to come from the Wakka Wakka language word *boyemba* ‘westerly wind’ or ‘windy place’ (Steele, 1983, p.241), and was originally the name of a pastoral run in the 1840s. The community’s name was changed to *Cherbourg* in 1932, apparently because of confusion with mail deliveries to the nearby ‘Barambah’ pastoral run (Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council, 2021). The Barambah Aboriginal Settlement had been established under the Aborigines Protection Act of 1897 as a resettlement centre for First Nations peoples swept up by government policy. At the time of the 2016 census Cherbourg had a population of 1,269 people, 98.7% of whom identified as First Nations Australians (ABS, 2017).

The Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Mines (Queensland Government, 2021) confirms that the name *Cherbourg* derives from the name of a nearby pastoral run. The run was leased by Richard Jones in the 1840-50s. He was born in the Shropshire town of Chirbury in England (Shineberg, 1967). According to an article and correspondence in the *Courier-Mail* (1949 and 1950) by J.E. Murphy of Brisbane, and confirmed by Jones’s great-grandson Alister Archer in the *Morning Bulletin* (1951), Jones intended naming part of his



Source: Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council

‘Barambah’ run after his place of birth. However, due to his untidy handwriting, *Chirbury* was interpreted first as *Cherburg* by the Surveyor-General’s Department in Sydney, and then ‘corrected’ to *Cherbourg*, most likely to conform to the spelling of the French town on the coast of Normandy.

It is easy to understand how this interpretation arose. Compared to the town of Cherbourg, Chirbury was (and still is) much less known. This is reflected in the number of entries in the National Library of Australia’s Trove database, which has only 47 mentions of Chirbury in newspapers and gazettes between 1850 and 1999, whereas the French Cherbourg has more than 70,000 mentions between 1810 and 2019.

However, this is not entirely the end of the story. According to some linguists, there is a connection between the etymologies of the English *Chirbury* and the French *Cherbourg*. First, let’s start with *Chirbury*. Ekwall (1951) provides the following etymology: *Cyricbyrig* 915 (as mentioned in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*), *Cireberie* 1086 (as mentioned in the *Domesday Book*), and *Chiresbir* 1226-8 (as mentioned in *The Book of Fees rolls Ser. 1920-310*); it means ‘burg or fort with a church’. Mills (2003) has a similar etymology: Old English *cirice* + *burh* (dative *byrig*) meaning ‘fortified place or manor with or near a church’.

Since I do not have access to any French placename dictionaries, I shall have to reluctantly rely on information from French Wikipedia entries. The entry for *Cherbourg-Octeville* (which, by the way, looks to be well researched and referenced, and hence probably reliable), reports several possible etymologies for *Cherbourg* (Wikipédia L’encyclopédie libre, 2021).



Source: National Library of Australia.
<https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-137024947/view?searchTerm=Cherbourg#search/Cherbourg>

...A false origin saved by etymology?

It tells us that a form of the name first appeared around 747, as *Coriovall[inse]* (< Celtic *corio* ‘army, troop’ + *vallo*—cf. Latin *vallum*—‘rampart, fortification’). It then changed to *Carusburg* [*Castellum*] in 1026-1027, then *Carisburg* in 1056-1066. The form *Coriallo* + *-burg* does not appear until the 11th century.

During the occupations of the city by the English during the 14th and 15th centuries, the name *Chirburg* was apparently introduced. The most convincing theory of its derivation is that this form was of Saxon origin. The first element, *chier*, would represent Old English *chiriche* ‘church’ (as in the name of the English town *Chirbury*). The overall meaning would therefore be ‘church village’ (de Beaurepaire, 1986).

So it may be that *Chirbury* and *Cherbourg* share a common etymology. If so, the apparently-broken links between the misinterpreted *Cherbourg* of Queensland, the town of *Chirbury* in Shropshire, and *Cherbourg* in Normandy, may strangely have been restored.

Jan Tent

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Placenames and the natural environment

We are interested to hear that the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) is expanding its focus a little. The group was originally established to address communication challenges that arose from inconsistency in placenames, and to encourage the development of national names authorities.



For some time now, it's been a promoter of the cultural value inherent in names and naming practices (something core to establishment of the Survey and this newsletter!), and now the group has decided that consideration should also be given to exploring the current and potential connections between placenames and the natural environment.

Whether it be researching the environmental themes or motivations behind our places names, delving into the effect of contemporary naming trends, or looking at links to global movements like the Sustainable Development Goals, we expect there's quite a few things to think about.

We commend UNGEGN on broadening its focus in this way and welcome insight from you, our readers, on where you see such connections.

At Placenames Australia our President, Susan Birtles, has already set the ball rolling with an [article](#) in a recent *UNGEGN*

Information Bulletin. It describes how Australia's unique environment has led to the use of new generic feature terms in the creation of our placenames.

So we welcome contributions from our many committed readers. We've reported recently on the relationship between placenames and space on Norfolk Island; on the way Fiji placenames reflect island topography and location; and how the work of surveyors on the land gets memorialised in placenames. Do you or your community group have something to share about how your local placenames respond to their context and environment?

The [Editor](#) is always happy to see your contributions arrive in his inbox!

Placenames Puzzle Number 85

Oxymoronic toponyms - again

It's time to revisit oxymorons with a follow-up to Puzzle 60 in 2016. There's a bit of poetic licence again, but this time we've added lat/long so you can test your spatial data expertise. Example: (NSW, geofeature: -35.96512° / 147.93457°) It can't decide whether it's a large knoll or a plain. Answer: Big Hill Flat Creek

1. (VIC, locality: -35.48684° / 142.91325°) A large marine pond
2. (Various States, homesteads) they have names that are an obsolete bipolar word for hills
3. (NSW, geofeature: -34.29010° / 149.44285°) Plain as the nose on your face, as they say
4. (SA, geofeature: -37.84013° / 140.76676°) An inland lagoon that thinks it's a dell
5. (TAS, geofeature: -43.50406° / 146.69672°) A mount of water?
6. (NSW, locality: -33.70899° / 150.58478°) A dell elevated indeed
7. (SA, hydro feature at various locations) A waterless weir
8. (VIC, locality: -38.26064° / 144.53753°) A marine copse
9. (WA, geofeature: -29.83210° / 115.33451°) A marine hummock
10. (QLD, geofeature: -21.25000° / 145.71667°) The parched fen
11. (SA, geofeature: -29.78031° / 137.75273°) A smooth horizontal knoll
12. (NSW, locality: -34.45677° / 149.46786°) It can't decide if it's sick or healthy
13. (NSW, geofeature: -30.01513° / 145.25121°) A flatland rotund knoll
14. (TAS, locality: -42.66415° / 146.60546°) A massif that is a paddock
15. (NSW, geofeature: -33.45676° / 150.42616°) A misplaced level alp
16. (QLD, NT, NSW, VIC) A parched stream
17. (NSW, SA, geofeature: -29.29842° / 152.48442°, -32.41839° / 138.13233°) A stream destroyed by fire?

[Compiled by Jan Tent]

Become a Supporting Member!

We realise that not everyone who wishes to support the Australian National Placenames Survey can do so by carrying out toponymic research and supplying information for our database. There *is* another way — become a supporting member of Placenames Australia! In doing so, you'll help the Survey and its volunteer researchers by providing infrastructure support. In return, you'll have the assurance that you'll be helping ensure the continued existence of this prestige national project, and we'll guarantee to keep you in touch with our progress.

Please consider carefully this invitation. If you wish to become a Member

- ☐ arrange a bank transfer for \$25 to BSB 032089 a/c 275989
- ☐ or send a cheque for \$25 to *Placenames Australia Inc.*

Please advise our Treasurer of the transfer by one of the following methods:

Email: treasurer@anps.org.au

Mail: PO Box 5160, SOUTH TURRAMURRA NSW 2074

Website: www.anps.org.au

Articles for *Placenames Australia*

Material for publication in *Placenames Australia* is always welcome. Please send all contributions to the Editor, David Blair, by email: <editor@anps.org.au>

Supporting photographs or other illustrations are greatly appreciated.

Closing dates for submissions are:

March Issue: 15 January

June Issue: 15 April

September Issue: 15 July

December Issue: 15 October