STRANDED ON THE BEACH
The naming of Collaroy

How a popular suburb on Sydney's northern beaches comes to have the name of a sheep station in the Upper Hunter region, via a l9th century steamship, is a fascinating question.

According to a graphic account in *The Illustrated Sydney News* of 19th February, l881 the steamship *Collaroy,* a hitherto reliable vessel owned by the Newcastle Steam Navigation Company which had been extensively overhauled only four months earlier, ran aground in heavy fog near Long Reef, a scenic area well known to visitors from nearby Manly. When the news reached Sydney it was 'at first received with expressions of incredulity' as the vessel had, for the previous twenty-five years, been regarded as a trustworthy sea-going craft which had done much to enhance the reputation and the profits of the Australasian Steam Navigation Company, her previous owners. It was fortunate that the vessel did not hit the coast 100 yards further south or it is thought that she would have broken up very quickly. As it was she was stranded in a sheltered part of the coast, although the incoming tide drove her further up the beach with the result that she was within a short distance of the Queen's highway. The nearness to shore enabled those on board to be landed successfully, and a sketch accompanying the press report shows a team of men hauling to safety a small boat laden with passengers.[1] A gangplank was fixed between the ship and the beach.[2]

A slightly different version of the accident appeared in *The Daily Telegraph Sun Pictorial* of 23 October l927 which stated that the officer on the watch lost sight of the South Head light, but that at low tide all hands walked ashore. However, when help was requested from the nearest resident, the castaways were ordered off the premises by the owner and threatened with dogs when they asked for milk 'to help make a better pot of tea for the lady passengers'.[3]

In spite of concerted and expensive efforts on the part

S.S. Collaroy Beached near Narrabeen - watercolour by George Podmore, l904. Reproduced by kind permission of Bonhams and Goodman

of several tugs, it was not possible to haul the steamer off the beach and the *Collaroy* remained abandoned for more than three years.[4] A poignant contemporary photograph shows a lone figure in a bowler hat standing on the rocks gazing at the marooned ship which is listing to port[5]. Eventually on l9th September

Placenames in the news

As part of a long-running discussion on US placenaming habits (which for reasons unclear to us included reports of male/female population balance), the *Sydney Morning Herald* noted (8 August) that not only was there a Mars, Pennsylvania and a Venus, Texas, there was also Earth, also in Texas. The columnist announced "we were right – women outnumber men in Earth, too, but not by as much as they do in Mars. There's a Saturn in Texas as well, and a Gravity in Iowa, but our favourite is Looneyville, West Virginia. No breakdown on gender balance is available. This is probably a good thing."

A local newspaper in Sydney (*North Shore Times*, 27 June) noted that an upgrade by the online Yellow Pages had been prompted by the inability of customers to find phone numbers because they couldn't spell suburb names correctly. Leichhardt was Sydney's most misspelt suburb—mostly because people forgot to add the second 'h'. Double consonants were a continual problem. The North Shore suburbs of Naremburn, Woolwich and Warrawee all featured on the problem list, either because customers forgot a double consonant or added one that shouldn't have been there—thus producing forms such as 'Narremburn', 'Woollwich' and 'Warawee'. Longueville apparently is not an intuitive placename: it got the prize for the number of different ways it was spelt, seven in all.

Who's Who…

on the *Placenames Australia* committee

We've promised to feature, in each issue of our newsletter, a member of the PA committee. This issue, it's…

Jan Tent, Secretary (and Director of the Survey): Dr Jan Tent is these days Senior Lecturer in Linguistics at Macquarie University, after teaching posts at Sydney University and the University of the South Pacific in Fiji. He was appointed Director of the Survey at the beginning of 2007. Jan's research interests lie in the broad area of general linguistics. He has previously been involved in projects that have looked at: early Dutch loanwords in Pacific languages, linguistic borrowing, Fiji English (its features and use), symmetry in language systems, lexicography, and language teaching.

Jan's current research projects focus on:

- Dutch and Dutch-related placenames in Australia;
- Language use and attitudes in Fiji;
- Indigenous loans in the Englishes of Australia, NZ and Fiji

Articles by Jan on Dutch naming practices in the Southern Hemisphere have appeared in our recent issues. Readers can follow up this aspect of Jan's research in *Geographical Research*, December 2006, **44**(4):372-385.
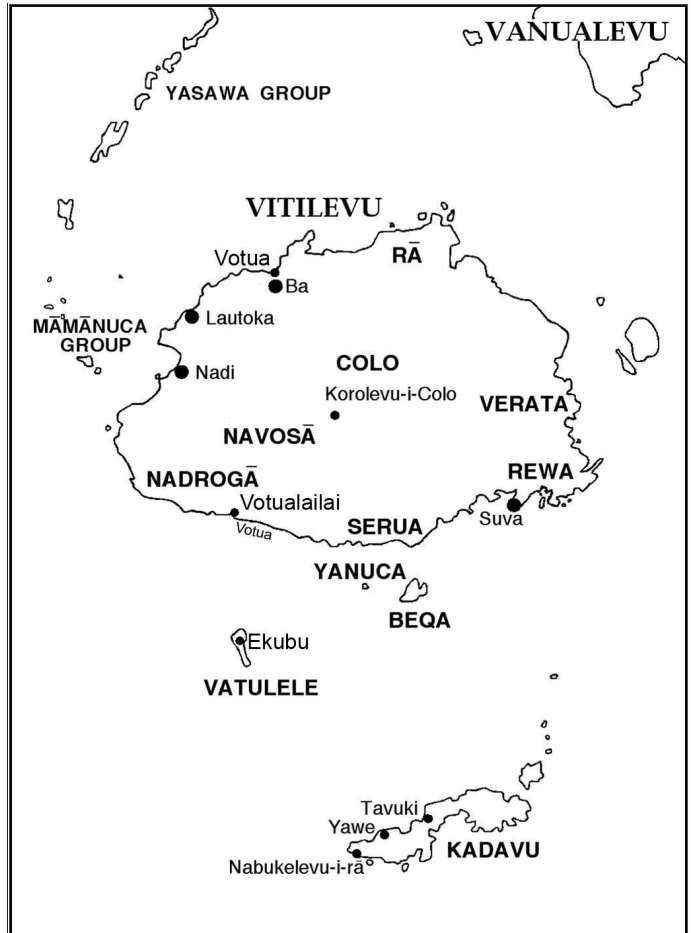
Placenames of Fiji

Part 7: Why Votua is smaller than 'Little Votua'

In the most recent instalment of this series, we looked at the Fijian place name Votua, which consists of *votu*, the Fijian word for 'emerge' or 'appear above the surface of the water', and the nominalising suffix –*a*, so means 'place which has emerged'. This is the name of a number of villages, including one at the mouth of the Gusunituba (Ba river), another at the mouth of the Lekutu river in Bua (Vanualevu), and a third on the coast of Nadroga in southwest Vitilevu – the coast now known to tourists as the Coral Coast.

For the first two, the likelihood is that they are lands which have recently 'emerged' from the sea, built up from sediment brought down by floods. The third, however, Votua on the coast of Nadroga, clearly wasn't formed from alluvial deposits, being situated at the mouth of a very modest stream with no alluvial plain, so its name indicates a different kind of 'emergence'. Much of what is now termed the Coral Coast is quite aptly named, since it consists of outcrops of coral reef that emerged within the last five thousand years – that is, probably while Fiji was occupied – as a result of earthquakes, so the emerging would have been quite dramatic. Votua, then, is as appropriate a name for land formed from an emerged reef as it appears to have been for land formed from alluvial deposits.

Next to Votua is another village, known to all, including all contemporary map-makers and officialdom, as Votualailai, literally 'small Votua'. There are some problems with this name. One is that it is, in fact, bigger than Votua. This is of course not an insurmountable problem, since it is always possible that Votua was the larger of the two villages when they were originally named, whenever that was, and that the positions have since been reversed.

The second problem is a little more serious: the

word *lailai* meaning 'small' is a Standard Fijian word that is also used in many parts of Eastern Fiji – but Votua is situated in Western Fiji, where the word *lailai* is not known. The word for 'small' in Votua and surrounds is *hewa*, and throughout Western Fiji it is only *hewa*, or its variant *sewa*, that is used in placenames, never *lailai*. Again, this is not an insurmountable objection, since languages do change and it is possible that *lailai* was used in Western Fijian many centuries ago, but the fact that *lailai* is not found in any other place-name in Western Fiji does argue against this suggestion.

The biggest problem, however, is simply that the

(Continued from page 3)

local people do not call the village Votualailai! They may use this name when filling in official forms, writing down their address, requesting songs on the radio, or talking to tourists or non-Fijians or even Eastern Fijians, but among themselves they use a rather different name: Vajuolalai, a name which is truly Western Fijian, and translates as 'the stones of Lalai'. If you ask them why it is so called, they will tell you an interesting story, the gist of which is as follows.

From the Coral Coast of Nadroga, on a clear day and with a bit of elevation, you can make out to the south the outline of the island of Vatulele. It's an appropriate name, meaning 'slanting rock', because the island is basically a flat chunk of coral that has been raised far higher in the west than in the east. It is also, incidentally, the only island in Fiji that has different names in different parts of the country. Essentially, it's called Vatulele in eastern Fiji, Vakilele in the Serua area, and Vasilele in other parts of the west, which is in turn pronounced Vahilele in those parts of Nadroga where 's'has changed into '**h**', which includes Votua and Vatulele itself.

Once upon a time, there lived in Vatulele a beautiful princess, who had spurned suitors from all over Fiji. When Lalai, a prince of Busa, a short distance inland of Votua, came to hear of her beauty, he determined to win her hand. So he prepared a quantity of the finest food from his part of the country – cooked prawns, wrapped in a leaf as is the custom – and went a-wooing. To get to Vatulele, he built a causeway from near Votua all the way to Vatulele; but when he arrived there, he found that the Princess was no more impressed

Vatulele Island (photo by Dennis Sabo)

with his gift than she had been with all the other gifts she had received. She disdainfully threw the prawns away, and they came back to life in the pool where they landed, and remain there to this day, as the celebrated red prawns of Vatulele, which rise to the surface of the brackish rock pool they inhabit when called on to do so by the *bete* (traditional priest).

Lalai was so disappointed at the reception he was given that he tore up the causeway he had built, leaving only the ends; and the remains of this causeway can still be seen, one end in Vatulele, the other on the Coral Coast of Nadroga, near Votua. It is this rock formation that gives the village of Vajuolalai its name: 'the stones of Lalai'.

It seems possible that these remains are actually stretches of coral reef that were raised, perhaps as a result of an earthquake; and that this event may have been part of the same series of earthquakes that raised the western coast of Vatulele, to give it the name 'slanting rock', and also raised the coral reef along the 'Coral Coast', so giving Votua its name.

So, if the original name of the village is Vajuolalai – 'stones of Lalai', how and when and why did it become, for some people at least, and now officially, Votualailai – 'small Votua'? This is a question which I hope to explore, and maybe to answer, in the next instalment of *Placenames of Fiji*.

❑ **Paul Geraghty**
University of the South Pacific

(Continued from page 1)

l884 after four months of 'persistent effort and dogged determination', a Mr John Robertson succeeded in hauling off the vessel with his hydraulic machinery and, assisted by the steam tug Leveret, the *Collaroy* was successfully towed into Sydney Harbour at l0.30 p.m., cheered on its way by persons from Manly who lit bonfires in celebration [6]. A detailed account of the whole incident is contained in *Vigilant and Victorious,* by S. Brawley, l995.[7]

The vessel, of course, became a tourist attraction and when Mr Arthur Griffiths, the Minister for Works at the time, had the tram rails put down, **Collaroy** as a seaside resort came into prominence.[8] It is in Warringah Shire which was not incorporated until l906, but it is recorded in a document on the history of Warringah that **Collaroy** was named in l881 and it is assumed that it took its name from the vessel *S.S. Collaroy* which had created so much attention and drawn so many visitors to the area.[9]

But where the ship's name came from and what the connection was with the large sheep station in the Upper Hunter Valley after which it is said that the *Collaroy* was named is something of a puzzle[10]. In 1805 Walter Stevenson Davidson (1785-1869) who had been born in Aberdeenshire, Scotland, to a well-connected family, arrived in Sydney. Governor King, who regarded Davidson as a 'valuable acquisition', had been instructed from London to grant him 2000 acres of Crown Land and in 1829 he received a further grant of 5000 acres.[11] Davidson undertook a joint pastoral venture with Richard Jones, an English-born merchant and pastoralist, whom it is thought he met on a trip to China. Jones collected a flock of pure-bred Saxon sheep to import into Australia which became what was referred to as 'the nucleus of the great Collaroy station'.[12] Located in the Upper Hunter valley, in the l830s it was an influential stud which rose to become one of the major studs in NSW later in the l9th century.[13] It was near Cassilis in the Upper Hunter valley and early documentation refers to the station as *Collaroi*.[14] By now Davidson was an international import-exporter, eventually becoming a director of the Australian Agricultural Co., although it was many years since he had actually lived in Australia and in l836 he entrusted the management to his nephew Patrick Leslie. This was not a satisfactory arrangement and resulted in Davidson selling the property in 1840. This necessitated correspondence between Davidson and Leslie in the late 1830s and letters were headed *Carleroy* and the property was always referred

to by that name, although one valuation dated 18th May, 1840 referred to *Collaroi* and another to *Carleroy*.[15]

It is easy to see how the pronunciation of *Carleroy* became *Collaroy*, but why was the vessel named after a sheep station? Richard Jones, one of the original

Collaroy today (Photo: D O'Neill)

joint owners of **Collaroy,** was a ship owner, but he was declared insolvent in November l843[16] and the *S.S. Collaroy* , according to a press report did not arrive from England until l854.[17] By this time the other joint owner of the sheep station, W.S. Davidson, had sold it to E.W.T. Hamilton and George Clive.[18]

According to records in the Australian National Maritime Museum, the *S.S. Collaroy* was already named when it first arrived in Sydney on 1 May, 1854. It had been built for Thacker and Co in the UK.[19] E.W. Hamilton, who ran **Collaroy** station for 15 years from 1840, had married Ann, daughter of John Thacker of UK and NSW in 1844.[20] If John Thacker was connected with Thacker & Co, the ship's owners, then it is quite likely that the name of his daughter's famous sheep station – **Collaroy** – would be given to one of the company's cargo ships bound for NSW, but extensive research into maritime records in both NSW and the UK has not been able to establish a link – yet.

❑ **Joyce Miles**
Australian National Placenames Survey

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19 Australian National Maritime Museum – *Collaroy 32279*

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On the Web…

Mount Nameless no longer

Jane Simpson reports in her blog (you'll find it at http://blogs.usyd.edu.au/elac/) that Mount Nameless has got its name back. Apparently this name was bestowed by a Hamersley Iron survey team in the early 1960s.The government of Western Australian has now adopted dual-naming guidelines (see below), and the Shire of Ashburton has agreed to the mountain being called both **Mount Nameless** and **Jarndunmunha**, the name used by the Eastern Guruma people.

Dual naming in WA

The Geographic Naming Committee in Western Australia has now adopted a dual naming policy. "The main objective of these guidelines is to ensure that Aboriginal place names are recognised by all Western Australians as a fundamental part of our State's heritage and the need for them to be preserved," said the Land Information Minister, Michelle Roberts.
The Guidelines are available on the Web:
http://www.landgate.wa.gov.au/corporate.nsf/web/Proposed+Guideline+Amendments

Our new Website

And since we're talking about the Web, it would be very remiss of us not to tell you that we have a new Web address! Our new URL is:
http://www.anps.org.au
You'll discover there our familiar site design, but now with updated content.

The naming of Inverell, NSW

William Wilberforce Fraser, the son-in-law of Alexander Campbell, who was also the former Police Magistrate of Inverell, married Margaret Campbell in 1859 at Sydney. Recorded in a letter from William published in 1901 are the reasons Alexander Campbell gave for naming the town Inverell. In that published letter he wrote:

It is a Gaelic word and its English translation is "The mouth or junction of the swan". Many years ago the late Alexander Campbell of Inverell Station took up Byron and Inverell stations. The creek which flows through the latter run he named Swanbrook. *He fixed his head station at the junction of Swanbrook with the Macintyre River and named the station Inverell after the creek: 'Inver' the Junction and 'Ell' of the Swan. His father Major Campbell owned Inverawe Estate at the mouth of the Awe River with Loch Etive in Argyllshire Scotland. Hence the idea of naming his station at Inverell. I arrived in this district in 1853 when I first made his acquaintance and from Mr Campbell I received this information. The greater part of Inverell township formed part of Inverell Station and the government adopted the name Inverell for their new township.*

From the newsletter of the *Inverell Genealogical & Historical Society*

Get well, Bill!

PA Committee member Bill Noble has had to step down from his Treasurer role because of recent continuing ill-health. Bill was instrumental in bringing ANPS to life a few years ago, and his contribution to the Survey is invaluable. An old Fremantle lad, he's still interested in digging around the history of WA placenames. Best wishes from all of us, Bill!

Colour

The clues reveal placenames connected with colour (disregard spelling)

e.g. (NT/TAS) Poet who wrote a rural elegy … Gray

1. (SA) Carpet for the famous, the slopes on either side of a river
2. (SA) A two-layer chocolate gateau with cherry filling
3. (SA) Nicknamed "Capability", not high
4. (VIC) Fortieth wedding anniversary
5. (VIC) A Duke Ellington mood
6. (VIC) A shrinking one is shy; large settlement
7. (VIC) Sharp citrus fruit; very small streams
8. (VIC/QLD) Poetic reference to the Isle of Ireland
9. (QLD) To abandon on a desolate island
10. (QLD) Yellow fossil resin used in jewellery, land temporarily under grass
11. (QLD) Elvis's suede shoes, H2O
12. (QLD) Author of 'The Eye of the Storm'; piece of material used to mend a hole
13. (QLD) CaO used in cement – can be quick, poetic term for valley
14. (QLD) The bars in Fort Knox; border of land next to the seashore
15. (TAS) Deep glossy black, one's male child + 'ville'
16. (TAS) Ophelia warns of this 'path of dalliance'; beaches
17. (WA) The envious colour, cluster of small shrubs
18. (NSW) William who became King of Great Britain in 1689
19. (NSW) This submarine was where they lived; … and roll
20. (NSW) Expensive cutlery, 20cwt

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POSITIONS VACANT

Do you have the time and the skills to help the Australian National Placenames Survey? **Placenames Australia** provides the backroom support for ANPS researchers—but some of those researchers are currently spending much of their time with those administrative tasks.

The PA committee would be delighted to hear from anyone who could help in any capacity, but especially as:

- secretary
- treasurer, or
- newsletter editor.

Living in or near Sydney would be useful but not essential. For the newsletter, the ability to work with software such as Microsoft Publisher would be essential.

Got some time to assist? Email Jan Tent <director@anps.org.au> today! The pay's absolutely nothing but the satisfaction is wonderful!

Annual General Meeting

of Placenames Australia (Inc)

Our first AGM is to be held at the
 TRENDS IN TOPONYMY conference
in Ballarat, on Thursday 29th November at 5 p.m.

Nominations for all positions on the Executive are called for (President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasure, Committee Members). Email or post your nomination to Dr Jan Tent—contact details on the back page of this issue—by 1 November 2007.

Not yet a Member of PA? See our back page!

Not yet registered for the Conference? See our previous issue for details—or go direct to:
http://www.ballarat.edu.au/business/placenames2007

Answers: 1. Redbanks 2. Black Forest 3. Brownlow 4. Ruby 5. Indigo 6. Violet Town 7. Lemon Springs 8. Emerald 9. Maroon 10. Amberley 11. Bluewater 12. White Patch 13. Limevale 14. Gold Coast 15. Jetsonville 16. Primrose Sands 17. Greenbushes 18. Orange 19. Yellow Rock 20. Silverton

Placenames Australia...

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 by posting to you a printed copy of this quarterly newsletter.

The Survey has no funding of its own—it relies on the generosity of its supporters, both corporate and individual. We will try to maintain our current mailing list, as long as we can; in the long term, priority will be given to Supporting Members of the association, to our volunteer Research Friends, to public libraries and history societies, and to media organizations.

Please consider carefully this invitation. If you wish to become a Member, write a cheque to *Placenames Australia Inc,* or arrange a bank transfer, and post this page to the Secretary at the address below.

To ensure your continued receipt of the Newsletter, even if you are unable at this time to support ANPS by becoming a Member, please take time to tick the appropriate box below and return this form to the Secretary.

Dr Jan Tent, *Placenames Australia*
Linguistics Department
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY NSW 2109
Fax: (02) 9850 9199   Email: director@anps.org.au

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We say thankyou to...

our corporate sponsor, the Geographical Names Board of NSW—and to the Secretary of the Board, Greg Windsor. This year's newsletters could not have been published without the support of the GNB.

Contributions

Contributions for *Placenames Australia* are welcome.
Please send all contributions to the Editor, David Blair, by fax to (+612) 9403 0944 or by email: <David.Blair@mq.edu.au>
Electronic submissions are preferred, and photographic or other illustrations are greatly appreciated.
Closing dates for submission are:

31 January for the March issue	31 July for the September issue
30 April for the June issue	31 October for the December issue