

Placenames Australia

Newsletter of the Australian National Placenames Survey

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



The spelling of 'New Zealand'

No—this is *not* about how people spell in New Zealand! We're interested in why *New Zealand* is spelled *New Zealand*. There seems to be hardly any discussion about this spelling; the literature on New Zealand's history simply glosses over it, or declares it to be an anglicisation. True enough—but why then not *Sealand*?

The name ultimately derives from Joan Blaeu's 1645-46 revision of his father's (Willem Janszoon Blaeu) map of 1619 *Nova et Accvrata Totivs Terrarvm Orbis Tabvla*. This map (right) shows the name *Zeelandia Nova* used for the first time.



However, this was not the country's original appellation. When Abel Tasman sailed along part of the western littorals of New Zealand's South and North Islands in 1642, he conferred the name *Staete landt* ['States (General) land'].¹ Tasman thought he had stumbled across the western extremity of Jacob Le Maire's *Staten landt*, mapped at the southern tip of South America. Le Maire had believed his *Staten landt* to be part of the fabled Great Southland.

A year after Tasman's charting of *Staete landt* another Dutch explorer, Hendrik Brouwer, discovered that Le Maire's *Staten landt* was in fact a small island (Brouwer, 1646). After this news reached Amsterdam, Tasman's *Staete lant* was renamed *Zeelandia Nova* (with variants

Nova et Accvrata Totivs Terrarvm Orbis Tabvla (detail) (Source: courtesy of Collecties Maritiem Museum 'Prins Hendrik', Rotterdam, K259)

Nova Zeelandia-Nieuw Zeeland), honouring the Dutch province of Zeeland, one of the two provinces (Holland being the other) from which the governing body of the VOC ['Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie', United (Dutch) East India Company] was drawn.²

Until the late-18th century, the English spelling of *New Zealand* varied. As the popular New Zealand historian Michael King (2003, p. 100) notes, the variants *New Zealand* and *New Zeland* competed with the *New Zealand* form. All of these were a little odd, King observes, since the calquing of the Dutch *Nieuw Zeeland* into English should actually have been *New Sealand*.

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From the Editor



I'm totally unsurprised by the media report below, on the sense of identity (or lack of it) in NSW residents. The only thing I'd add is that it's even more true of Sydney-siders in particular! It does remind me, though, that I'd promised to devote one of our 2022 issues to the naming of our states and territories. I've

put the hard word on Jan Tent to be guest editor for the occasion—he's seeking contributions, so don't hesitate to put your hands up!

While we're on the topic of the states, and NSW in particular, don't miss the item on page 11—it could be your opportunity to share something you know with the rest of the world!

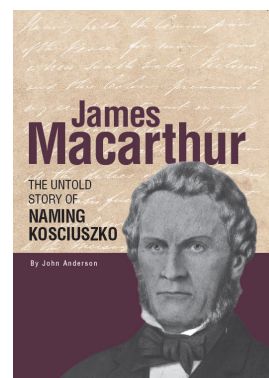
David Blair
<editor@anps.org.au>

James Macarthur and Kosciuszko

This new book by John Anderson is the story of the 1840 expedition to the Australian Alps, initiated by James Macarthur, that culminated in Paul Edmund de Strzelecki naming Australia's highest mainland mountain—Kosciuszko.

The book follows their journey through colonial New South Wales outside the Governor's approved settled districts into the Waste Lands occupied by squatters, convicts and the occasional innkeeper selling grog.

The book is available through the [Busheplorers website](#) for \$50, with free delivery.



Placenames in the Media

'NSW and me'

This was the title of a fascinating item by **Ben Groundwater** in the Travel pages of *The Age* and the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 23 October:

'...NSW didn't have an assumed identity – and it still doesn't. It doesn't have characteristics everyone else in Australia can pinpoint or send up. Most other states seem to: we were the banana benders up north, the rum-guzzling bogans, different to the latte-sippers of Victoria and the posh-accented South Australians. But NSW was a blank slate.

'Even its residents now would seem to agree with that.

A study done by the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age* earlier this year found that NSW had the weakest sense of state identity in Australia. Victoria had the strongest. The people of NSW tend not to think of themselves as the people of NSW. They're Australians. That's it.'

Rotterdam street names

A recent [item](#) in the news site DutchNews.pl alerted us to the fact that Rotterdam City Council is setting up a street history database. To boost awareness of the city's heritage, each of the 6402 roads will have a detailed explanation of where its name came from.

Puzzle answers - (from page 16)

- | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Orange | 6. Mandarin Caps | 11. Cherry Point | 16. Fig Islands |
| 2. Berry | 7. Mango Creek | 12. Peach Valley | 17. Melon Ridge |
| 3. Banana | 8. Strawberry | 13. Plum Creek | 18. Coconut Bay |
| 4. The Pineapple | 9. Blackberry Bight | 14. Tomato Island | 19. Passionfruit Creek |
| 5. Lemon Bight, etc. | 10. Gooseberry Island | 15. Grapetree | 20. Lime Hill |

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...The spelling of 'New Zealand'

He also reports that the *Zealand* spelling led to the peculiar belief there was an historical connection between New Zealand and Denmark (2003, p. 100 fn.) and that the name must have been derived from the main Danish island of *Sjælland*, which does have the English exonymic form *Zealand*.

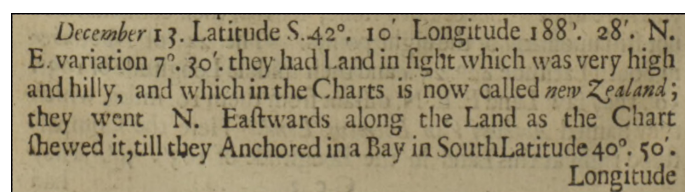
The *Zeland* spelling appeared in the Admiralty's secret instructions to James Cook for his first voyage of discovery to the purported Great South Land:

[...] if you shall fail of discovering the Continent beforementioned [the Great South Land], you will with upon falling in with New Zeland carefully observe the Latitude and Longitude in which that Land is situated and explore as much of the Coast as the Condition of the Bark, the health of her Crew, and the State of your Provisions will admit of having always great Attention to reserve as much of the latter as will enable you to reach some known Port where you may procure a Sufficiency to carry You to England either round the Cape of Good Hope, or Cape Horn as from Circumstances you may judge the Most Eligible way of returning home.

(Secret Instructions for Lieutenant James Cook [...])

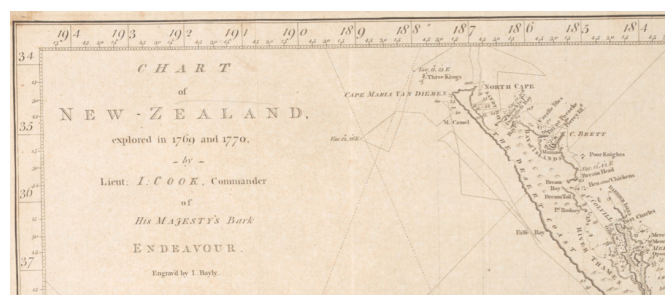
Cook avoids giving the country a name in his journal during his circumnavigation of the two islands, referring to it as 'this country' or 'this land'. Then on 31/3/1770, using the Admiralty's spelling, he writes: 'Part of the East [sic, i.e. the West] coast of this Country was first discover'd by Abel Tasman in 1642 and by him called New Zeland [sic] ...' (Beaglehole, 1955, p. 274). On the same date he refers to the 'natives' as 'New Zealanders' (p. 288), 'the east Coast of New-Zeland' (p. 290), and again, on 1/4/1770 'our quitting [sic] New-Zeland' (p. 294).

However, unlike the *Zeland* spelling, *Zealand* was used as early as 1682, in Robert Hooke's translation of Dirk Rembrantszoon van Nierop's 1669-74 rendition of Tasman's journal (below).



Robert Hooke's (1682) 'A short relation out of the Journal of Captain Abel Jansen Tasman, upon the Discovery of the South Terra incognita; not long since published in the Low Dutch by Dirk Rembrantse' (detail).

The *Zealand* spelling appears in 1772, on John Bayly's famous engraving of Cook's map of New Zealand, *Chart of New Zealand explored in 1769 and 1770 by Lieut. I. Cook Commander of His Majesty's bark Endeavour* (extract below). In the following year, when John Hawkesworth's version of Cook's *Endeavour* journal appears, the *Zealand* spelling was also used. Sydney Parkinson, the botanical illustrator and natural history artist employed by Joseph Banks to travel with him on Cook's first voyage, also spelled it *New Zealand* in his journal and on his illustrations (Parkinson, 1773). I suspect that the popularity of these publications at the time firmly cemented that spelling as the country's preferred name in English.



Detail from: Bayly's (1772) Chart of New Zealand explored in 1769 and 1770 by Lieut. I. Cook Commander of His Majesty's bark Endeavour

The various spellings of *New Zealand* no doubt had their origins in the English exonymic form for the Dutch province of Zeeland. We can only go as far back as the late 15th century to investigate the various ways the name of the province was spelled, because it was not until 1476, when William Caxton is said to have introduced the printing press into England, that printed references to it can be found. Any earlier references in English manuscript texts are elusive.

A small survey of texts and maps from the late 15th to 17th centuries will show the variation in the spelling of the province. The Early English Books Online-Text Creation Partnership (EEBO-TCP) website proved to be an invaluable source for unearthing publications from this period.³

A search was conducted for the items *Zeeland*, *Zealand*, *Zeland* and *Sealand*. The results are as follows:

- There were 42 publications using the *Zeeland* spelling, dating from Hall (1548) to D'Auvergne (1698).⁴

continued next page

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- Another 416 publications used the *Zealand* spelling dating from Holinshed (1577) to Brady (1700).
- The *Zeland* spelling was used in 337 publications dating from Lefèvre (1473/74) to Brady (1700).⁵
- And finally, the *Sealand* spelling was used in 32 publications dating from Lanquet (1559) to Pufendorf (1695).⁶ [It should be noted that many of these referred to Denmark's Sealand]

One publication worth drawing attention to is that of the English bookseller, publisher, mapmaker, globemaker and engraver, Robert Morden, who in 1693 published his marvellous *Geography rectified; or, A description of the world, in all its kingdoms, provinces, countries ...* (<https://archive.org/details/geographyrectifi00mord>). He mentions the Dutch province on various occasions:

- On page 158 in the section entitled 'Of Germany', Morden refers to certain Dukedoms in the low countries and who rules them. He mentions the province twice, spelling it *Zeland* and *Zealand* respectively.
- The chapter on the 'United Provinces or Dutch Republic' (p.160) contains a map which shows the spelling *Zeeland*. However on the ensuing pages it is spelled *Zeland*, and on one occasion he offers the alternative *Zelandia* (p.167). But on pages 167-168 Morden writes: 'North Beveland, once termed Zeeland's Garden of Delights...'
- Page 458 contains a map of the Molucca Islands, which shows a region named *New Zeland* on Nova Guinea.
- Page 624 contains a paragraph devoted to New Holland and *New Zealand*, as he spells it.
- And finally, on page 12, Morden's 'A General Map of the Earth' shows the western littoral of New Zealand, as charted by Tasman, which is labelled *New Zeland*.⁷

Despite the noted variations, it is fair to say that Morden is generally consistent in his *New Zeland* spelling.

Another useful source is early English maps that show the Dutch province. For instance, the *Zeeland* spelling is found on Dunn (1774), Rowe (1809), Smith (1817), and Bowen [1747], and the *Zealand* spelling is on Playfair (1808) and Pinkerton (1811).⁸

In summary, the literature and cartographic evidence makes it clear that variation in the English exonym for the Dutch province was very common. This is hardly surprising given the non-standardised spelling at the time. It is interesting to see that of the 827 instances of the province Zeeland being mentioned in the literature between 1473 and 1700, 50.3% (416) of publications

used the *Zealand* spelling, compared to only 5.1% (42) using *Zeeland*. The *Zeland* spelling, used by the Admiralty and Cook, was surprisingly used in 40.7% (337) of publications. Given the apparent popularity of the *Zealand* spelling for the Dutch province, it seems reasonable to assume that this was the operative factor when it came to fixing upon a spelling for 'New Zealand'. Ultimately, though, it was an arbitrary choice.

Jan Tent

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Paul Geraghty (University of the South Pacific, Suva) who looked up Cook's references to 'New Zeland' in Beaglehole (1955) for me; and to Chris Stephens (Advisor, New Zealand Geographic Board Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa, Office of the Surveyor-General) who alerted me to the Hawkesworth (1773) and Hooke (1682) references.

Endnotes

- ¹ Named after the *Staeten Generaal* ('States General'), the governing body of the Netherlands in the 17th century.
- ² Hooker (1972, p.106) disputes this and claims Brouwer's discovery had nothing to do with the renaming of *Staete landt*, saying it was renamed simply to honour the province of Zeeland, the second most important chamber of the VOC.
- ³ The EEBO-TCP is a partnership with ProQuest and more than 150 libraries around the world that has generated accurate, fully-searchable, SGML/XML-encoded texts corresponding to books from the EEBO Database. The database is accessible through the University of Michigan Library (<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebogroup/>), and contains texts from the first book printed in English in 1475 through to 1700.
- ⁴ I list only the earliest and latest of these publications.
- ⁵ Notice Brady (1700) uses both the *Zealand* and *Zeland* spellings in the same publication.
- ⁶ Although Pufendorf also offers the alternative spelling, *ZEeland* [sic].
- ⁷ Interestingly, Morden claims, 'New Zealand the Antipodes almost to England, discovered first by Fernando de Quier...'
- ⁸ There are numerous other early maps that depict the province of Zeeland; however, these are not online at the National Library of Australia.

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Reports from the trenches

Macksville, NSW

*Our report comes from Macksville on the NSW North Coast, where **Geoff Minett** is the historian and research officer of the Mary Boulton Pioneer Cottage and Museum. The nearby village of **Kinchela** has been a focus of his research, and he has deposited a considerable trove of information with the ANPS Database as we try to establish how the village got its name. The notes that follow are extracted from that material.*



The first mention of the *Kinchela* placename in official records appears in the Land Grant documentation for the settler William Sanders: a Conditional Purchase title for land near Kinchela Creek and Kinchela village was issued in August 1863. The licenced surveyor Ernest Herborn had begun marking out land along the Macleay River in 1859; one result of his work appeared in the Government Gazette of March 1865 where the boundaries of Kinchela were delineated. Herborn's maps of the following year included the name *Kinchela*, and it is generally believed that it was in 1886 that the formal naming of the village was notified.

Such documents can tell us when a place receives its official name. In most instances, however, they do not tell us whether the name is a new toponym imposed from on high or whether the naming recognises existing local practice. In the case of Kinchela Creek and the village that developed on its banks, it is generally assumed that the surveyor Herborn and the officials who approved land title documents were recording and recognising a local tradition. Evidence for this, however, is currently lacking. In fact, the three usual theories of how Kinchela got its name all vary in their implied view of this question.

The three etymologies for *Kinchela* can be characterised as **a ship, an Attorney-General or a cedar-getter**.

The first suggestion can easily be dismissed, since it gets the story back-to-front. The ship *Kinchela* (previously named *Tamban*) was a wooden vessel of 369 tons built in Sydney for the Macleay Farmers Co-operative Society. It was built in 1914 and, rather than being the source of the name for the town on the Macleay River, it was named after the town.

The second suggestion carries more weight. John Kinchela, born in the Irish town of Kilkenny in 1774, was attorney-general in NSW for several years from 1831. Colonial officials often were memorialised in placenames, so this theory is attractive (even though surveyors-general rather than attorneys were more likely to be so favoured). But John Kinchela was not always highly regarded by his peers, as his

entry in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* makes clear. Governor Bourke had reservations about his effectiveness, his colleagues found him difficult and unhelpful, and his career was affected by his continual debts. He had retired from public office by 1841, and died in 1845 almost two decades before the placename *Kinchela* began to appear in public records. Furthermore, there is no indication that John Kinchela had any official dealings with the Macleay River area or any personal connection that might have encouraged his name to be remembered in that region.

The third theory of origin is the one that depends most strongly on local tradition. It has long been held that a man named Kinchela lived in a slab hut at the junction of Kinchela Creek and the Macleay River. He was said to be a timber worker who made his living from the cedar cutting industry along the river. The area had not been available because it was Crown Land and was near the Port Macquarie penal settlement. In 1830 though, Governor Darling closed down the penal settlement and declared that 'all settlers and other free people could avail themselves of the opportunity of selection north of Port Macquarie'. The cedar trade was booming by 1835.

Many of the workers were ticket-of-leave men who probably made their way from the Manning or Hastings Rivers to set up camp near the flowing stream of the Macleay. There were no roads in the area, so the cedar logs were floated downstream before being shipped to Sydney. Documentation in 1841 lists three cedar merchants as then being active on the Macleay: William Scott, William Wright and Thomas Small. Although the name of Kinchela is not mentioned, absence of evidence is not evidence of absence in this case, since lone workers were unlikely to have been significant enough to rate a mention in the journals. The purported location of the slab hut at the junction of the Macleay and what is now known as Kinchela Creek would have been ideal for handling the logs; and the development of the village at or near the site bearing the Kinchela name might be seen as persuasive.

Walcha: Indigenous or Dutch?

Researching one toponym often leads you directly to the examination of another; and so it is with my article on *Bergen-op-Zoom* in our previous issue (September 2120). That article also mentioned the nearby town and parish of **Walcha** (pronounced /'wɒlkə/), east of Tamworth and south of Armidale in NSW. The traditional custodians of the land are the peoples of the Anaiwan/Nganyaywana and Dhanggati nations; but where the name *Walcha* (or *Wolka* and *Walca*, attested early spellings) comes from is a bit of a mystery.

The Register of the NSW Geographical Names Board declares the toponym to be a 'contraction [sic] of Wolka – Property name of Hamilton Collins Sempill, in 1832.' It credits Sommerlad (1922, p. 11) with that information, and notes that the well-known sources McCarthy (1963) and Appleton (1992) report it as 'said to be an Aboriginal term for the sun'. As is often the case, a supposed Indigenous origin is often labelled with the unhelpful and nebulous term 'Aboriginal', leaving researchers to uncover from which particular language the term is derived.

Some background

In 1818 the New England region, where Walcha is situated, was explored by Surveyor General John Oxley, who wrote of this 'new found' country in his journal as being 'the finest open country, or rather park, imaginable; the general quality of the soil excellent, though of a strong and more tenacious description than farther westerly.' (Oxley, 1820). According to Walcha Council ['Walking tour', n.d.], he also reported this to his friend Magistrate Hamilton Collins Sempill of 'Belltrees' in the Hunter Valley (Figure 1). This account is also given by Campbell (1922, p. 253) who adds that Sempill obtained intelligence of this fine country from Oxley's journal. The latter may be true, but hearing about it from Oxley himself would not have been possible in person because Oxley had died in May 1828, two years before Sempill arrived in the colony.

Upon arrival in the colony, Sempill became manager of the 'Segenhoe' estate in the Hunter Valley, but soon after acquired a number of his own properties in the region (including the famous 'Belltrees' estate) before occupying land near the site of Oxley's camp on the Apsley River (a perennial stream of the Macleay River) in 1832, naming the run *Wolka*, later *Walcha*.

An Indigenous origin?

Most sources, as the GNB Register reports, claim *Walcha* is an Indigenous word meaning 'sun' (Aussie Towns; Walcha Council, 2020). The Aussie Towns website declares the name derives from the local Anaiwan/Nganyaywana or Dhanggati languages, *wolka-walcha*, while the Walcha Council website (2020) adds the possible meanings 'deep water' or 'water'. Other sources also declare *Walcha* means 'sun' (Irish, 1927, p. 139; Martin, 1943; Atchison, 1976, p. 21; Reed, 1974, p. 219; Reed, 1982, p. 225) without giving a language of origin other than 'Aboriginal'.

Atchison (1976, p. 21) offers perhaps the most comprehensive etymology (Figure 2, overleaf). His final comment, though, on *Walcha* being a good example of 'the Europeanising of the spelling of Aboriginal names' is rather naïve given all Indigenous names on the Australian map have been 'Europeanised' in that they have been spelled according to English speakers' perceptions. However, more on that below.



Figure 1: Portrait of Hamilton Collins Sempill, 1827/ drawn by Charles Rodius. (Source: State Library of NSW, image number110332274, call number P2/14)

continued next page

Walcha

Aboriginal, presumably Anaiwan. *Walcha News*, June 30, 1950, gives two possible Aboriginal meanings for Walcha: firstly "Sun", secondly "Water" or "Waterhole". Since the Anaiwan tribe and its language are now extinct, the derivation may never be solved. Walcha had several spellings in early references. These included *Wolka*, *Walcha*, *Woolka*, *Warka* (all used by Gardner, *Production and Resources of the Northern and Western Districts of New South Wales*, 1854); also *Walca* (*Sydney Morning Herald*, March 21, 1844).

It is suggested our form *Walcha* may reflect a European influence in the spelling, due to Jock McLean, the early squatter of the Bergen-op-Zoom run, named after Bergen-op-Zoom, near Walcheren in the Low Countries. If so, this is a good example of one influence on the form of our place-names: the Europeanising of the spelling of Aboriginal names.

Figure 2: The Walcha entry in Atchison (1976, p. 21)

In order to discover the origin and meaning of *Walcha*, we must first determine from which Aboriginal language it might be derived.

As I mentioned, some sources (such as Atchison) suggest it comes either from Anaiwan/Nganyaywana or from Dhanggati. However, Lissarrague (2007) does not cite any terms resembling /'wɒlkə/ in Dhanggati that match any of the purported meanings of the word. The closest would be *waka* 'gully'; and for 'sun' *dhunuwi*, 'water hole, spring' *gayayi*, and 'water' *ngaru*. Likewise Mathews (1903) lists the Anaiwan/Nganyaywana terms for 'sun' and 'water' as *nura* and *ukūnda* respectively. His limited word list contains no items resembling *wolka*. The evidence therefore suggests that Sempill's *Walcha* may not be a Anaiwan/Nganyaywana or Dhanggati word. So, what other language candidates might there be for the origin of the name?

Because Sempill first resided in the Hunter region, the languages of that area would seem to be a sensible starting point. Unfortunately, no potential candidates were found in any Hunter languages. However, if we look to Gamilaraay and Wiradjuri, the neighbouring languages of Anaiwan/Nganyaywana and Dhanggati, we find *wolgēr* 'high hill' (purportedly the origin for the toponym *Walgett*) (Ridley, 1875, p. 26; RASA, 2:13), and 'cracks in the ground' (RASA, 1:66).

Other languages that have phonologically similar words to /'wɒlkə/ include the Karnic languages (spoken in the north-eastern regions of South Australia and the south-western regions of Queensland). None of the extant

examples appear to be likely candidates for the name of the pastoral run. There is one intriguing example, though. The Karnic language Pitta-Pitta, from south-western Queensland, has *wolka* 'sun' (Field, 1898, p. 42). Blake (1979, p. 232) lists the term *walka* 'sun, day'.¹ Similar terms in Pitta-Pitta are found in Eglinton (1886, pp. 360-363) and in Machattie & Little (1886, pp. 366-370), both citing *walka* 'the sun'. Other, later, sources citing the term include Fenner (1955, p. 41) *walcha-wolka* 'the sun', and Breen (1971, p. 55) *walka* 'sun'. This then would appear to be the prime candidate for the source of the oft-cited meaning of *Walcha*, reported by Sommerlad and later promoted by McCarthy in the wordlists published by the Australian Museum.

However, it seems unlikely the Pitta-Pitta term could be the source of Sempill's *Wolka-Walcha*, given that the great circle distance between Walcha and Pitta-Pitta country is about 1700km. Moreover, the Pitta-Pitta country was not occupied by Europeans until 1876 (Machattie & Little, 1886), more than fifty years after Sempill named his run on the Apsley River.

One other possible source should be mentioned. An identical toponym is cited in Brewarrina after the Lawson brothers arrived in that district from the Hunter region in 1839-40 (Mayoh, 1956, p. 4). One of the brothers established the 'Walcha' run, and the other the 'Moona' run. I have not been able to discover any more information regarding the brothers and the naming of their runs. Simpson (2020, p. 105) and the Brewarrina Visitor Information & Cultural Centre note that when the nearby township was established it was known as *Walcha Hut*, but was soon renamed to *Fishery* before being finally changed to *Brewarrina*. The *Fishery* name can be linked to the the *Ngunnhu* (ancient stone fish traps) on the Barwon River. The traditional custodians of the fish traps are the Ngemba Wayilwan (or Wailwan) people. The *Ngunnhu* was a great inter-tribal meeting site, where much inter-lingual exchange must have taken place. Perhaps the term was introduced into the region by speakers of another language, and the term may then have found its way to into Anaiwan/Nganyaywana and Dhanggati country. However, this is pure speculation. Without definitive evidence, it cannot be concluded that any of these languages are the source for Sempill's *Wolka-Walcha*, given the great distances involved.

...Indigenous or Dutch?

A Dutch origin?

Other possible explanations of *Walcha*'s origin look to the Netherlands and, specifically, to **Walcheren** (pronounced /'vɑlxərə(n)/ in Dutch), the largest island of the Zeeland islands; it lies west of (and nowadays attached to) the island of South Beveland in the province of Zeeland (Figure 3). Bergen op Zoom is 50km away, and both endured military campaigns against the French in 1747, 1809 and 1814. On all three occasions the British fought on the side of the Dutch.



Figure 3: Relative positions of Walcheren (A) and Bergen op Zoom (B)

It has been suggested (Walcha Council, 2020) that the 'Walcha' run was named to accord with the nearby 'Bergen-op-Zoom' run—'These places were well known to early settlers because of a major campaign in 1809 called the Walcheren Expedition fought during the British Wars with Napoleon'. As we have seen (Figure 2), Atchison (1976) noted a suggestion that the spelling of 'Walcha' may have been influenced by awareness of Walcheren and its connection with Bergen op Zoom. Sadly, although early settlers in NSW may have known of the Walcheren Expedition, we have no evidence that there was a consciously intended link between the two names.

Moreover, the Walcheren origin theory is spurious on at least two levels. Firstly, the *Wolka*-*Walcha* run was named at least two years before the arrival of John McLean and the establishment of his 'Bergen-op-Zoom' run, named in honour of his two relatives who fought there in 1747 against the French (see my previous article, September 2021). And the variation in spelling would not be unexpected: the /k/ sound in English is often represented by *-ch-*: *chord*, *orchid*, *monarch*. So any resort to an unsubstantiated theory about the contiguity

of the Dutch Bergen op Zoom and Walcheren in the Netherlands seems unnecessary.

Secondly, one may ask why would *Walcheren* (most likely pronounced in English as /'wɒlkərən/) undergo clipping (or apocope)?² A toponym undergoes clipping not at the time when it is first bestowed upon a place but later, after the full name has become well established.³ It makes no sense to use the truncated form *Walcha* as an associated name with *Bergen op Zoom* because that connection would be too opaque.

A highly speculative origin for *Walcha* might suggest that *Walcheren* could have been shortened to *Walcha* through being misunderstood as 'Walcha Run'. This, I suggest, is too imaginative to be pursued.

All things considered, we cannot reasonably entertain the notion that *Walcha* has a Dutch connection.

Conclusion

The initial spelling of *Walcha* as *Wolka* is strongly suggestive of an Australian Indigenous origin. However, determining its meaning and the actual language of origin is another matter. To begin with, the two alternative meanings 'deep water' or 'water' as given by Walcha Council and by Atchison (1976) appear to have no foundation, since the terms for these two senses in all the relevant Indigenous languages I have consulted bear no resemblance to any word that may have been pronounced /'wɒlkə/.

Secondly, I have not been able to find any Indigenous languages east of the Great Dividing Range that have any terms analogous to /'wɒlkə/. For those languages that do have an analogous form, they are all found west of the Range.

An investigation into the origin and meaning of 19th century Indigenous-based toponyms needs to start with examining early written records of potential Indigenous languages. These early records and descriptions are very limited in scope, and those individuals who did the recording had little or no training in linguistic field methods, and consequently often made errors of interpretation and transcription. Furthermore, many

continued next page

languages are now extinct (e.g. Wayilwan) or are on the verge of extinction, meaning we will never be able to appreciate the full nature and extent of these languages.

Ultimately, it cannot be claimed that any of the phonologically analogous words cited above are the source for the toponym *Walcha*. At best, they may be seen as a faint indication that there may have been an unrecorded cognate in Anaiwan/Nganyaywana or Dhanggati, or in a neighbouring language, which may have been the source.

Apart from its citing of unsubstantiated meanings for *Walcha*, the summary on the website history page for Walcha Council (2021) seems to me to be acceptable: *No one has conclusive evidence of the meaning of 'Wolka' but three Aboriginal meanings are 'Sun', 'Deep Water' and 'Water'.*

Jan Tent

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Endnotes

- ¹ I indicates a retroflex l, normally indicated in phonetics by [ɭ] (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Retroflexconsonant>)
- ² Clipping refers to the truncation of words by the deletion of initial or final syllables, whilst apocope (/ə'pɒkəpi/) is the loss of a word-final syllable (as in *sing* from Old English *singan*).
- ³ Ignoring hypocoristic forms such as *Paddo* < *Paddington* and *Brizzie* < *Brisbane* etc., the truncation or clipping of toponyms is commonplace in Australian English (e.g. *Girra* < *Girraween*, *Meeka* < *Meekatharra*, *Mullbuum* < *Mullumbimby*; *Parra* < *Parramatta*, *Shepp* < *Shepparton*, and *Wang* < *Wangaratta*), but whether such a practice was observed in the mid-19th century I do not know.

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photo: Walcha Council - 'Art, art everywhere'. (<https://walchansw.com.au/art-gallery-2/>)

...Indigenous or Dutch?

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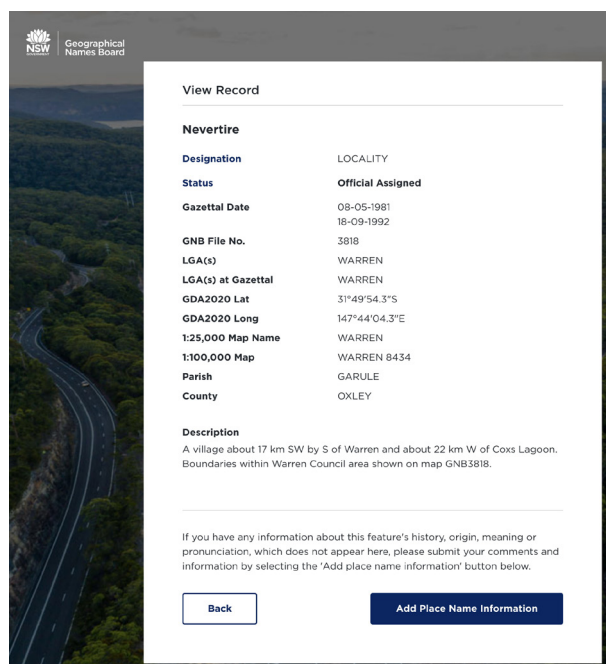
Do you know something

...that we don't?

Have you ever been part of a conversation where someone has said 'Nobody knows the answer to that!' and you've said to yourself 'But *I* know the answer'...? Or you've been looking at a website only to find there's a gap in the information that *you* could have supplied... if only they'd asked you?

Well, the NSW Geographical Names Board (GNB) is asking! The historical method of capturing placenames off hard copy maps has resulted in many records with minimal or no history, origin, meaning or pronunciation information. There may be stories or further information about a name that is missing. The GNB is looking to crowd source this data and wants to hear from you.

To be accepted as historically correct, information about placenames must be authoritatively referenced from verifiable original sources, such as notes by early surveyors or their field books; early maps and plans; evidence provided by early European settlers in letters or memoirs as well as a host of other potential sources. Secondary sources such as histories or newspaper articles published after the name was originally assigned may also be accepted if based upon a primary source. Unverified sources may be accepted pending approval from the Board.



The screenshot shows the 'View Record' page for the locality 'Nevertire' on the NSW Geographical Names Board website. The page includes a table with the following information:

Designation	LOCALITY
Status	Official Assigned
Gazettal Date	08-05-1981 18-09-1992
GNB File No.	3818
LGA(s)	WARREN
LGA(s) at Gazettal	WARREN
GDA2020 Lat	31°49'54.3"S
GDA2020 Long	147°44'04.3"E
1:25,000 Map Name	WARREN
1:100,000 Map	WARREN 8434
Parish	GARULE
County	OXLEY

Below the table is a 'Description' section:

Description
A village about 17 km SW by S of Warren and about 22 km W of Cox's Lagoon. Boundaries within Warren Council area shown on map GNB3818.

At the bottom, there is a note: 'If you have any information about this feature's history, origin, meaning or pronunciation, which does not appear here, please submit your comments and information by selecting the 'Add place name information' button below.' There are two buttons: 'Back' and 'Add Place Name Information'.

Adding historical information can be done through the Board's '[Place Name Search](#)' webpage. Click on the 'Add Place Name Information' button and add the information you'd like to share. Don't forget to add your source of information! For example, if you know the origin information for the locality of **Nevertire** you can search the record and add the information.

The other way to do it is via ANPS: go to our '[Contribute Information](#)' page, and we'd be very happy to pass on your information to our friends and colleagues at the GNB. Other States and Territories have similar gaps in their knowledge and similar ways of enabling you to contribute information about the history and origin of their placenames. So, for our readers in other areas of Australia, we'll no doubt be saying something about their website and feedback links in the months to come!

Enigmatic Rabe...

In our previous article on Fiji placenames we arrived at the end of what might be termed the second rank of Fijian islands, in terms of size. To recap, the first rank consists of the relatively enormous Vitilevu and Vanualevu, both over 5,000 square kilometres and containing hundreds of villages. The second rank consists of those between 100 and 500 square kilometres, namely Taveuni, Kadavu, Gau, Koro and Ovalau, all of which contain ten or more villages. We now drop down to the third rank, those islands under 100 square kilometres, only one of which (Vanuabalavu) is home to more than ten villages.

The honour of being the largest of the third rank, at 67 square kilometres, belongs to Rabe, situated east of the tip of south-eastern Vanualevu and north of Taveuni. It is a mountainous wooded island of irregular outline and has a number of claims to fame (of which more anon) but despite this, you won't find it on a map! This is because it is always spelt 'Rabi' (or 'Rambi' in the now rarely used anglicised spelling system), one of a number of erroneous placenames that have become 'standard' or 'official' (though there is no official placenaming board in Fiji) through long use by non-Fijian speakers.

There are two main reasons for these erroneous placenames. Historically prior is the fact that a number of islands in Lau were first recorded in the early nineteenth century by their Tongan names, since the earliest European visitors frequently came from Tonga and had Tongan speakers on board. The best known of these are Fulaga (Fijian *Vulaga*), Moala (*Muala*), Katafaga (*Katavaga*), Avea (*Yavea*) and Aiwa (*Yaiwa*).

The second reason is the mispronunciation of placenames by speakers of English, and this is what happened to Rabe. Speakers of English—any variety thereof—are notorious for their inability to pronounce 'e' at the end of a word. They usually change it to 'i' (ie the sound spelt 'ee' or 'y'), as in 'similee' from Latin *simile*, and countless others. Pacific Islander rugby players' names are regularly mangled in this fashion: for instance, *Ioane* being pronounced 'Yer-wah-ny' (rhymes with 'blarney'), or *Koroibete* 'Cora-bede'. So English-speakers pronounced the name of this island 'Ramby', and this was Fijianised as 'Rabi'.

Rabe was one of a small number of islands seen by Tasman in 1643 as he sailed from Tonga to the Solomon Islands

via the north-east of Fiji, but he recorded no names. The French explorer Dumont d'Urville, being a French-speaker, recorded the final vowel correctly in 1827, as did the United States Exploring Expedition in 1840, presumably thanks to the skills of Horatio Hale, the expedition's very able linguist-ethnographer. But when the missionary linguist David Hazlewood published the first dictionary of Fijian in 1850, including the first comprehensive gazetteer of Fiji, he recorded it as 'Rabi', and so it has remained to most non-speakers of Fijian ever since.

In prehistoric times, Rabe may have been an island of some importance, because it is one of the few islands of Fiji that feature in Polynesian oral traditions, reflected in *Foilape*, the name of the ancestor god of Nukufetau in Tuvalu; and *Tuilape* (King of Rabe), a personal name in parts of eastern Samoa.

In the mid-nineteenth century, the islanders of Rabe rebelled against their chief, the Tui Cakau, resident at Somosomo on Taveuni, and were subdued at his request by an army from Tonga. Rabe was then sold by the Tui Cakau, along with a number of other islands near Taveuni that had rebelled against him, and the inhabitants moved to the village of Lovonivonu on Taveuni, where their descendants still live, and the title Tui Rabe (King of Rabe) is still passed on.

Various Europeans then operated Rabe as a copra plantation, until it was sold in 1942 to the inhabitants of Banaba (Ocean Island) in what is now Kiribati, as their island had become uninhabitable through phosphate mining. After the war, in December 1945, they began their move there, and their descendants remain there to this day, largely retaining their Banaban language and culture: they are famed throughout Fiji for their tradition of dancing. There are in addition certain habits they have acquired from the Fijians, notably kava drinking. One of the results of this migration is that practically all the placenames on Rabe are Banaban, the original Fijian placenames having been mostly long forgotten.

Regular readers of this column will have noted in this article an unusual preoccupation with history rather than etymology, and there are two reasons for this. One is that Rabe has an unusual history for a Fijian island, the vast majority of which are still inhabited by their original

...Placenames of Fiji - 18

occupants, and this explains the dearth of Fijian placenames on the island today. The second reason is that there is little to say about the etymology of *Rabe* because, for the first time in this series of articles, I honestly haven't a clue! There is simply no known reconstructed word that could have given Rabe its name.

Never loath to turn ignorance into opportunity, I offer this as an explanation. While it is not impossible that a reconstructed word may eventually be found that could have been the root of the placename *Rabe*, an alternative reason is that it was not derived from Proto Central Pacific, the language of the Lapita people who are believed by most prehistorians to be the first settlers of Fiji, some three thousand years ago. A number—admittedly quite a small number—of prehistorians, including myself, believe that Fiji may have been occupied, probably sparsely, before the arrival of the Lapita people. The language that these earlier occupants spoke can only be speculated on.

To take a broader Pacific perspective, it could be said that Polynesian placenames are relatively transparent in meaning, while those of Australia and Papua New Guinea

are not, and that this situation is a function of relative time depths. Eastern Polynesia has only been populated for at most one thousand years, while the western lands bordering the Pacific have histories of tens of thousands of years. Hence the likelihood that meanings of placenames will be difficult to discern, because the language in which the place was named has changed so much, or indeed is no longer spoken.



*Rabians are famed throughout Fiji for their dancing
(photo: George Toganivalu)*

Efate, Erromanga and Anejom/Aneityum all appear to be genuine indigenous names, but none has an obvious etymology. So it is not surprising to find also in Fiji that some island names are enigmatic, since they were coined long ago by speakers of a language that has changed drastically, or no longer exists.

Next time, to Moala! Or is it Muala?

In the western Pacific, while there are some relatively transparent island names—e.g. *Vanualava* in northern Vanuatu clearly means 'great land'—most are not. Island names such as *Mala* (*Malaita*), *Ulawu*, *Ndeni* (*Santa Cruz*), *Mota*, *Malakula*, *Maewo*, *Raga*, *Oba*,

Paul Geraghty

A Poet and our Places

A D Hope's poem 'Country Places' is, among other things, a celebration of Australian placenames. It begins with an exclamatory 'Hell, Hay and Booligal!' before traversing the landscape from Burrumbuttock to Yackandandah. More importantly, perhaps, the poem is an acerbic portrayal of a rural Australia spoiled by our worship of the golden calf. Here is his final stanza—the full poem can be found at [The Australian Poetry Library](#).

Coda

Alas! My beautiful, my prosperous, my careless country,

She destroys herself: the Lord will come too late!

They have cut down even their only tree at One Tree;

Dust has choked Honey Bugle and drifts over Creeper Gate;

The fires we lit ourselves on Mt Boothegandra

Have made more ruin than Heaven's consuming flame;

Even Sweet Water Creek at Mullengandra,

If I went there now, would it live up to its name?

Long Tunnel Creek...

One of our readers, Alex Allchin, recently wrote to us regarding a road sign he encountered whilst driving to Junee in regional NSW (right). The sign relates to a past Federal Government funded upgrade to the bridge over Long Tunnel Creek. The bridge is on the Nangus Road (MR 243), 12km west of Gundagai. Alex was intrigued by the name, wondering how a tunnel could relate to a creek.

Well, the answer to that question is quite simple. There are quite a few Tunnel Creeks in the English-speaking world. There are three of them in NSW alone (including Alex's Long Tunnel Creek), one in Tasmania, and three more in Western Australia. There is another one in New Zealand, along with a Long Tunnel Creek. Then there are 23 Tunnel Creeks in the US, and one other in Canada. So, it's not an uncommon toponym.

Given the structure and semantics of the name (Long) Tunnel [SPECIFIC] + Creek [GENERIC], it is in all likelihood a descriptive or associative toponym.¹ It is not uncommon for water to flow through old lava vents or to scour its way through limestone thereby forming tunnels, and tunnel creeks. Western Australia's Tunnel Creek (east of Derby) in the Dimalurru (Tunnel Creek) National Park is a prime example of this phenomenon (photo next page).

As David Blair points out, a less obvious question is whether 'Bridge' can be considered as part of the toponym, or whether the bridge is actually unnamed. 'If the latter, the signage would be merely incorporating an infrastructure label to identify the works in progress.'² A media release from the Gundagai Council of 26 October 2016 headed 'Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council Operations Update', verifies the latter. Among other notifications, it states: 'The road approaches to the bridge over Long Tunnel Creek on Nangus road have had major repair works due to the road breaking up.' Hence, 'Bridge' is not part of the toponym.

Alex also seemed to be intrigued by the length of the name, and wondered if readers of the Newsletter could cite longer ones. Well, *Long Tunnel Creek* isn't really an unusually long name: in NSW alone you can find the following analogous toponyms: *Long Creek Falls*, *Long*



photo: Alex Allchin

Flat Creek, Long Angle Creek, Long Arm Creek, Long Bight Swamp, Long Corner Creek, Long Cove Creek, Long Hole Lagoon, Long Hollow Creek, Long Mile Range Creek, Long Plain Cowal, Long Plain Creek, Long Rocky Creek, and Long Swamp Creek, to name but a few.

But what of the origin of Alex's Long Tunnel Creek? As it happens, it is not descriptive, but an associative name taking its name from a mine, the Long Tunnel Mine.³ It may also be counted as an eponymous toponym.⁴ The mine was located on Kimo Station (now Kimo Estate); the creek runs through the property. The website of the Kimo Estate, a farm-stay accommodation and wedding and reception venue, (<https://www.kimoestate.com>), provides the following explanation for the origin of the name:

The oldest building on the property, which was built at around that time is the original slab hut on this part of Kimo, it is debated as to whether this hut was the hut that housed another set of custodians in the Thompsons who are rumoured to have occupied a slab hut near Nargoon (before the great flood). Nevertheless the hut (circa 1835) which has been lovingly restored was active operating the dairy that was set up on Dairy Creek (now known as the long tunnel creek [sic] – named after the future gold mine). This charming piece of history is now used as the office of Kimo Estate.

...Bridge?



Tunnel Creek, Tunnel Creek National Park, WA. (photo: <https://perthisok.com/best-of-wa/tunnel-creek-national-park-everything-you-need-to-know/>)

Gold was discovered on Kimo in 1896 by George Rice, who teamed up with the owner of the property, James Robinson, to establish the Long Tunnel Mine. The discovery of gold saw a gold rush in the area, with more

than 4000 people living up the back of Kimo in the goldfields. The mine became the second most profitable goldmine after the Broken Hill mine at the time.

The name of the mine, *Long Tunnel*, is not unusual either. There are two mines near Adelong (NSW) bearing the name, as well as two in Victoria: one at Metcalfe East (just north of Kyneton), and the other in Walhalla (130km east of Melbourne).

Jan Tent

Notes

- ¹ *Descriptive* 'using a name denoting an inherent characteristic of the feature'; *Associative* 'using a name denoting something associated with the feature or its context' (see Blair & Tent, 2020).
- ² The sign photographed by Alex relates to the 2006 upgrade to the bridge.
- ³ Specifically, toponym category 2.3 Structure: 'denoting a manufactured structure associated with the feature' (see Blair & Tent, 2020).
- ⁴ Specifically, toponym category 6.3.2 Named concrete entity: 'using the name of an entity', in this case the name of a mine.

References

- Blair, D. & Tent, J. (2020). *Toponym types: A revised typology of placenaming*. ANPS Technical Paper No. 5. South Turrumurra: Placenames Australia. www.anps.org.au/upload/ANPSTechPaper5.pdf
- Gundagai Council. (2017). Media Release: Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council Operations Update. <https://www.cgrc.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/COOTAMUNDRA-GUNDAGAI-REGIONAL-COUNCIL-OPERATIONS-UPDATE-261016.pdf>

Our reading recommendations

Mermaids and other fancies

Our colleague Professor Philip Hayward has drawn our attention to some toponymically-relevant reading that will be of interest.

- the [latest issue](#) of the journal *Shima* has four articles about 'mermaid' placenames, the last of which (co-authored by Phil himself) has particular Australian relevance.
- the [current issue](#) of the *Island Studies Journal* looks at international placenames that pay homage to the Arthurian isle of **Avalon**. There are many 'Avalon' feature names in Australia, and Phil's article looks specifically at two of those. (You may recall Jan Tent's article in our September 2018 issue, 'From Avalon to Xanadu: fictional places'.)

More clues on how James Cook named things

Our esteemed colleague Professor John Pearn has let us know of an excellent article in the October 2021 issue of *Cook's Log*, the journal of the Captain Cook Society. It's by David Nicandri, and after preliminary remarks on Cook's naming practices it focuses on his use of the liturgical calendar for many feature names.: 'On Cook, Providence and the Liturgical Calendar'. The issue (October 2021) is not yet online but is available from the Society via its website (www.captaincooksociety.com).

And finally...

An article outlining our current ANPS naming typology has just been published in *Names: a Journal of Onomastics*. '[A revised typology of place-naming](#)' is a development of our Technical Paper No. 5.

Placenames Puzzle Number 80

Fruit

These placenames have a fruit as their specific element.

Example—(stream, NSW) Daily it's said to be doctor repelling. Answer: Apple Creek

1. (town, NSW) A Dutch royal
2. (town in the Shoalhaven, NSW) Some species are sweet, some sour, some even poisonous
3. (town near Gladstone, QLD) A working bullock with a yellow hide is honoured here
4. (island, SW TAS) A tropical fruit that features on a Hawaiian pizza
5. (Freycinet bight, bay & rock, TAS) An acerbic fruit
6. (range, SA) An oriental language.
7. (stream near Mossman, QLD) A large tropical stone fruit
8. (locality on the Irwin River, WA) Popular with cream at Wimbledon
9. (bight near Port Albert, VIC) The bane of farmers
10. (isle in Lake Illawarra, NSW) Take a gander at this berry
11. (mountain peak in Yarra Ranges, VIC) These blossoms make us think of Japan
12. (locality south of Lake Cargelligo, NSW) A stony heart within a fuzzy exterior
13. (stream near Sussex Inlet, NSW) Maybe you'll have it as dessert or as a jam or as a pudding
14. (island in Burnett River, near Bundaberg, QLD) It's a fruit but it makes great soup
15. (locality north of Toowoomba, QLD) Viticulture might be hard, because this one's on a tree
16. (island west of Karratha, WA) An ancient fruit most often dried or in jams
17. (locality near Boggabilla, NSW) Various large fruits of the gourd family
18. (cove on Dunk Island, QLD) This fruit got its name from Spanish/Portuguese 'head, skull'
19. (stream in Middle Brother NP, NSW) The name of its flower was inspired by Christ's crucifixion
20. (hill east of Hopetoun, WA) The name inspired the Americans' moniker for the English

[Compiled by Jan Tent
Answers on page 2]

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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>](mailto: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