Shelley: anything to do with Romantic poetry?

Just off the Murray Valley Highway in north-east Victoria, between Koetong and Corryong, is a locality with the name *Shelley* (Fig. 1). It's the location of a former small settlement and railway station on the Wodonga-Cudgewa line (the highest railway station in Victoria, at 781 m). The station opened on 13 June 1916 and closed on 1 March 1981. The line was initially used to transport farmers' livestock from the Upper Murray to Wodonga. From the 1950s it was used to transport heavy equipment and machinery for the Snowy Mountains Hydro Electric Scheme. After the Scheme was completed in 1974, and after several years of low-level use, the railway was closed. Some remnants of the Shelley Station passenger platform still exist. The site now forms part of the High Country Rail Trail.

On my frequent trips to Albury, I have pondered the origin of the name. The chances were that it was an eponymous toponym, 'Shelley' being quite a common family name. Only question was: Who was 'Shelley'?

A quick search through various local histories held at the Corryong library reveals Shelley was named not so much after an individual, but after a family who in the early nineteenth century squatted on properties in the Corryong district. The Shelleys hailed from Parramatta. Three brothers, George, William and Rowland, moved from there to take up runs in the Tumut district, before moving to the Corryong and Shelley environs.

In 1877, a James Shelley established a hotel and post office

Figure 1. Map of the Shelley district at the Koetong Hotel. (photo: the author)

near the erstwhile railway station. Although the pub was officially named the Victoria Hotel, it was always referred to as 'Shelley's'. In the coaching days, it was recognised as a welcome stopover for the exchange of horse teams on the journey between Tallangatta and Corryong. The pub burned down in 1926. Next to the pub, James also established a general store (Fig. 2). Shelleys also lived in the nearby Koetong, with Honora Shelley running its Cambourne Hotel in 1899.

And to answer the question of this article's title: Yes, the Shelley family was directly related to the Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley.

Jan Tent

From the Editor

Life has been interesting in the editorial suite here lately. For some weeks we thought we were on the frontline of a new COVID epidemic or something. However, we've finally emerged from the darkness, in time to give all our readers our greetings for the 2025 Christmas season and to wish you all the best for the New Year.

It so happens that we have two completions in this issue: Jan Tent's excursion into the Gulf of Carpentaria (Part 2 on p. 4), and Paul Geraghty's answer to Qamea (Part 3 on p. 10). And our investigations of *Cullerin* and *Glenorie* continue. New is *Shelley* (front page) from Jan Tent—an example of the kind of local placename history that we're always delighted to receive.

David Blair
<editor@anps.org.au>

From our readers...

Lilyfield (NSW)

Robyn Hogan was inspired by readers' previous recollections to add her great grandmother's memories of the Sydney suburb **Lilyfield**:

> Sometime around the really early 1900's the Keaty family bought a property in Cecily Street, Lilyfield. Maggie Keaty said 'it reminded her of Ireland, with lilies running down the hill to the river'. Unfortunately, that 'river' became a train line! However the road parallel to the river/train line, is now Lilyfield Road - originally, Bullock Road, then Abbatoir Road - at least as my families' memories have passed the story down.

Lilyfield is one of those familiar suburbs with names that are of unknown origin. We do know that its existence was officially documented as early as the 1890s, but without any indication of how it was named. The family recollections that Robyn reports, though, match one of the few theories that have been suggested.

Mount Pomany

What are we working on this month? A most intriguing query has come from our colleague Michael Keats. (You'll recall that Michael is working with Brian Fox and Yuri Bolotin on the grand Bush Explorers project.) Michael and the team have been trying to establish where the toponym *Pomany* came from. It's now used as an element of the name **Mount Pomany** in the Wollomi National Park, although they have established that it was in use as early as 1833.

We have checked our ANPS records, and chased up a few other possible leads—so far, to no avail. Together, we think we've ruled out an Indigenous origin and an Irish source. If you can find any clues that we might have missed, we'd be delighted! Email Michael or the ANPS team.

Puzzle answers - (from page 12)

1. *Broad Sound*
2. *Narrow Neck*
3. *High Island*
4. *Short Beach*
5. *Tall Trees*
6. *Steep Point*
7. *Long Island*
8. *Deep Bay*
9. *Shallow Inlet*
10. *Low Head*
11. *Wide Bay*
12. *Small Islet*
13. *Little Manly Beach/Cove*
14. *Big Bay*
15. *Lofty Ranges*
16. *Sharp Point*
17. *Large Island*
18. *Giant Rocks*
19. *Great Victoria Desert*
20. *Lake Petite*

Figure 2. J. Shelley's general store, probably next to where Shelley's Victoria Hotel once stood. (Source: At Work and Play – 00706. Ref. 388754. Item no. BCP 00706. IE 1689466. Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW)

References

Blake, Les. (1976). *Place names of Victoria.* Adelaide: Rigby.

Freame, William. (1929). Old Tumut: Where Parramattans blazed the trail. 23 May 1929. *The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate.* http://www.tumuthistory.com/Old_Tumut__23_May_1929_.htm

Holmes, Lloyd. (n.d.). *The branch line: A history of the Wodonga-Tallangatta-Cudgewa railway.* Albury: Specialty Press.

Miller, Royal R. (1934). *The Upper Murray: A centenary survey.* Melbourne: Spectator Publishing.

Mitchell, Thomas W. (1882). *Corryong and the 'Man from Snowy River' district.* Albury: Wilkinson Printers.

Snowden, H. E. (2004). *Pioneers of the Tumut Valley: The history of early settlement.* Tumut : Tumut and District Historical Society.

Glenorie, again...

Readers will recall that in our previous issue (September 2025), Jeremy Steele raised the interesting question of how the Sydney suburb of **Glenorie** got its name.

Jeremy had noticed that two different versions of its origin seemed to have wide currency. One story said it was from an Aboriginal word meaning 'much water'. The other said it was named after a town in Scotland.

Jeremy gave short shrift to the Scotland theory, since there's no record of any matching name in Scotland and it's likely that we have a folk etymology on our hands (arising from the *Glen-* initial syllable). He turned his attention to a possible Aboriginal origin, noting two variants mentioned in the relevant Wikipedia article: *Glendorie* and *Glenorie*. As a result, our colleague David Nash was stimulated to do a bit of detective work, and discovered that *Glendorie* was a furphy—it came from a typo in the Wiki article. (David has since made an editorial correction to that Wikipedia account.)

That, of course, simplifies the quest somewhat. David, one of our esteemed Australianists (an 'expert in Australian Aboriginal languages', for the non-linguists among us), has started a conversation with Jeremy about the details of phonology in the various languages that might be relevant to the origin. We shall leave these two experts to see what further progress can be made! Does *Glenorie* indeed mean 'much water'? We promise to let you know of any developments!

The Editor

The curious van Dijk map...

Two annotations on Ludovicus van Dijk's map are worthy of comment. The first concerns the cluster of 13 toponyms at the western end of Van Diemensland. All have question marks, and 12 of them are accompanied by the date 1705. The second refers to names bestowed by Marten van Delft during his three month voyage of exploration charting the coastlines of Melville Island and the Coburg Peninsula in 1705. The question marks indicate van Dijk is either unsure or ignorant of the toponyms' locations. At first reckoning, this seems somewhat strange given there is an anonymous manuscript chart dated 1705 which accurately shows the locations of van Delft's toponyms (Anon., 1705). However, as Leupe (1868, p. 198) explains, the 1705 manuscript chart of van Delft's voyage was not discovered until nearly a decade after van Dijk's book was published (a year after van Dijk's untimely death), so it is not surprising he did not know of van Delft's toponyms' locations. And yet, we are left wondering how van Dijk knew about these names in the first place, given van Delft's journal was lost in transit from the East Indies and Amsterdam, and that his chart was not discovered until after his death.

Secondly, the exclusion of the southern coast of the Gulf of Carpentaria seems slightly incongruous, whilst the eastern and western coastlines of the gulf, Torres Strait and that of northern Arnhem Land are depicted according to the cartographic knowledge of the time. Perhaps the map should be viewed in the light of the book's purpose: that is, to document Carstenszoon's and Gonzal's achievements; since they did not venture to the southern coast of the gulf, van Dijk may not have felt the need to depict this coastline. If the accurate depiction of the coastlines that are shown was intended to better orient his readers according to contemporary knowledge, then it seems curious not to include the southern coast; surely this would have achieved the same purpose. Moreover, it would have shown how close Carstenszoon was to its southern perimeter.

Van Dijk also bemoans the arbitrary and unjustified replacement on official maps of many toponyms bestowed by Carstenszoon (and other Dutch explorers) by the British. And he laments that various toponyms bestowed by the Dutch, still surviving on contemporary maps, have been inaccurately placed. Such protests are quite undeserved given the inaccuracy and poor quality of the original Dutch charts in the first place, which were of course due to the limited navigation technology of the time. It is little wonder that even today the exact locations of many of the early recorded Dutch toponyms are in doubt. Many Dutch placenames were replaced by ones conferred by the British as a consequence of this, and as a result of pure ignorance of the existence of any Dutch name on a feature in the first place. The naming of places along the coast explored by van Delft is a prime example of this. His map was not discovered until 1868; in the interim all of his placenames had been superseded.

Figure 1. [detail of] van Dijk (1859) *Golf van Carpentaria of liever Pera's Golf.* Koninkle. lith. v. C.W. Mieling te 's-Gravenhage. Nat. Lib. of Australia, MAP RM 816. [https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-231314481/]

...of the Gulf of Carpentaria (2)

The replacing of Dutch names is also a direct corollary of colonisation by the British—to the coloniser goes the privilege of naming places. Flinders' naming of Cape Arnhem and Arnhem Bay are prime examples of this privilege.

Finally, I am not the first to be critical of van Dijk's ratiocinations. Leupe (1868, p. 71) too throws doubt on van Dijk's thesis and reasoning. In his introductory remarks on his narrative of van Delft's expedition, Leupe states: 'We shall also have the opportunity to give some improvements, which have crept—possibly by error—into the overview by Mr VAN DYK of this voyage.' On various other occasions Leupe comments upon van Dijk's faulty reasoning and poor scholarship.

If van Dijk was hoping to somehow influence and alter some of the toponymy of Australia's northern coastline, it was to be in vain. By the time he took it upon himself to 'rename' the Gulf of Carpentaria and the west coast of Cape York Peninsula, the name of the gulf had become well and truly entrenched. It had been in use for more than 150 years. Moreover, the naming of coastal regions of the Southland had also fallen out of favour by van Dijk's time, especially after the British colonised the continent and started to put their own toponymic mark upon the map, replacing most of the previous Dutch names. Thirdly, van Dijk's book and map were not published in Australia, and it would have had no local effect. The map does not form part of the canon of early maps appearing in the literature of Australia's exploration, thus eliminating any chance of effecting a change. His book, as far as I am aware, has not been translated into English, thus severely impeding any chance of having had any consequence in Australia. Even if it had been translated, it is inconceivable that any colonial administration in nineteenth century Australia would have taken the slightest bit of notice of an obscure Dutch historian's point of view.

Having said that, it would be unfair to be too harsh in condemning van Dijk's position. Even though he may have been biased and perhaps ill-informed, it should be noted that he was working without the knowledge of various resources available to Leupe and others.

In the end, van Dijk's map should not be viewed as a cartographic representation of Dutch geographic knowledge during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is simply a cartographic statement of his main thesis—that Carstenszoon is more deserving of toponymic recognition. In this sense, the map is an interesting and intriguing aberration in the history of Australian cartography and toponymy.

Jan Tent

*This is **Part 2** of an abridged version of Tent (2020). The first part appeared in our September 2025 issue.*

References

Anon. (1705). *Kaart van Hollandia - Nova, nader ontdeckt, Anno 1705, door het fluitschip Vossenbosch, de chialoup Wajer en de Phantialling Nova-Hollandia, den 2 Maart van Timor vertrocken.* Kaartcollectie Buitenland Leupe. The Hague: Nationaal Archief, MS Kaart No. 500. http://proxy.handle.net/10648/af997cf0-d0b4-102d-bcf8-003048976d84

Bogaerts, A. J. (1857). *Algemeene Land-en Zee-Kaart van de Nederlandsche Overzeesche Bezittingen, met het Koningrijk der Nederlanden in Europa.* Breda: A.J. Bogaerts. Nat. Library of Singapore http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/printheritage/detail/585abce5-7de2-4b2d-b299-764fce0d70c3.aspx

Flinders, M. (1814). *A voyage to Terra Australis; Undertaken for the purpose of completing the discovery of that vast country, and prosecuted in the years 1801, 1802, and 1803, in His Majesty's ship the Investigator, and subsequently in the armed vessel Porpoise and Cumberland schooner. […].* Vol. II. London: G. and W. Nicol, Pall-Mall.

Leupe, P. A. (1868). *De reizen der Nederlanders naar het Zuidland of Nieuw-Holland in de 17e en 18e eeuw.* ['The voyages of the Dutch to the Southland or New Holland in the 17th and 18th centuries']. Amsterdam: Etablissement voor de Zeevaart van de Wed. G. Hulst van Keulen.

Stieler, A. (1826). *Australien nach Krusenstern u. A. in Mercators Projection entworfen u. gez. v. Ad. St. 1826.* Gotha: J. Perthes, [1847]. Nat. Lib. of Australia, MAP T 1203. https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-232643921/

Tent, J. (2019). The cartographic migration of Wesel(s) Eijland. *The Globe: Journal of the Australian and New Zealand Map Society, 85,* 13–34. https://dutchaustralianculturalcentre.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Wessel-Islands-copy-1.pdf

-----. (2020). The 1705 van Delft expedition to Northern Australia: A toponymic perspective. *International Journal of Cartography*, *7*(1), 6–37. https://doi.org/10.1080/23729333.2019.1699679

-----. (2022). Topographic descriptors on the early nautical charts of the antipodes. *International Journal of Cartography, 8*(3), 272–290. https://doi.org/10.1080/23729333.2020.1859937

van Dijk, L. C. D. (1859). *Mededelingingen van het Oost-Indisch Archief No.1. Twee togten naar de Golf van Carpentaria, J. Carstensz 1623, J.E. Gonzal 1756, benevens iets over den togt van G. Pool en Pieter Pietersz.* Amsterdam: J.H. Scheltema. State Lib. of NSW, 984.6/14A2. http://digital.sl.nsw.gov.au/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?embedded=true&toolbar=false&dps_pid=IE4232514

Recording placenames for the Survey

The Australian National Placenames Survey (ANPS) is a unique database which records all the different spelling combinations of a toponym as unique entries, covering all of Australia and its territories, as long as the toponyms are in the English language form.

In the ANPS, we record not only the placename but excerpts of its documentation and the source of that documentation.

Recently I've been entering toponyms recorded by Phillip Parker King during his survey of the north coast of Australia in 1818.[1] They were depicted on Chart 1044 North Coast of Australia,[2] produced in 1825 and revised (possibly in 1856) following Stokes' 1839 survey. This chart shows a number of toponyms as *Point _____*, whereas the later version of Chart 1044[3] (after numerous corrections and additions up to 1868, following surveys by Lieut. Chimmo, Fred Howard Master & MS Guy, 2nd Master RN) shows the toponyms as _____ *Point*. These later forms over time have become the official toponyms, and are recorded as such in the ANPS register.

Another interesting practice of King and other early explorers was to name prominent features after colleagues, friends and dignitaries, and to use the possessive form in the spelling of the placename where the generic was the first part of the toponym.

Cartographers varied in their approach in using the *'s*. Some dropped the apostrophe but kept the remnant *s* of the possessive. Others dropped the *s* also; and in the 1980s, with the advent of standardisation in toponyms across Australia, both the apostrophe and the possessive *s* were removed from placenames.

The table below shows the regular progression in these two cases.

King's journal	Original Chart of 1839	Later charts (1856+)
Lawson's Island	Lawsons Island	Lawson Island
Point Hall	Point Hall	Hall Point
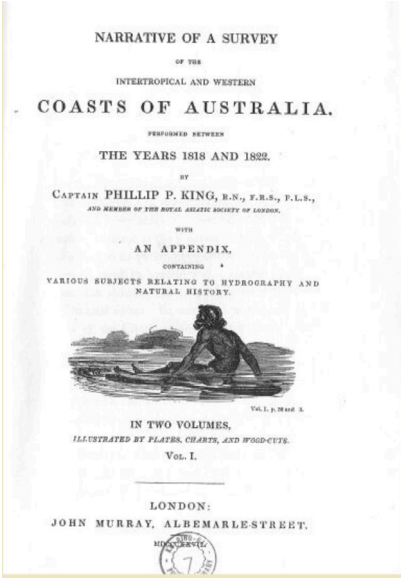
When the Survey enters the documentation of these toponyms, however, all such variants are regarded as significant and are properly recorded in the Database. So the entries for *Lawson Island* and *Hall Point* are accompanied by entries for *Lawson's Island* and *Lawsons Island*, and for *Point Hall*, all of which are treated as historical variants.

Some variation in original texts, though, is regarded by the Survey as being not significant enough to indicate a separate toponym.

The absence of **capitalisation** for a generic element is not treated as a significant variation: for example, 'Red point' for *Red Point*.

Neither is **abbreviation of the generic** ('C. Hawke' for *Cape Hawke*, or 'Murray R.' for *Murray River*).

Variations in the presentation of **numbers** are also not regarded as significant for the purpose of determining the appropriate form of the toponym. To give three examples from the Survey's Database: *Cape Three Points* is the entry style, not 'Cape 3 Points'; for *King George the Third Sound*, 'the Third' does not appear as 'III' or '3rd' in the entry form of the toponym; and *Seventeen Seventy* is the toponymic form for the Queensland town, not '1770').

So choosing the appropriate toponymic form of the main entry for these placenames, especially for those found in early historical sources, often requires careful navigation through the Survey's standard procedures. One consolation, though, is that the original form in the text is always captured by the documentation process—all those variants, 'significant' or not, are recorded in the ANPS Database.

Stuart Duncan

Endnotes

[1] https://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks/e00027.html

[2] https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-233812164/view

[3] https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-230055745/view

Cullerin, again...

In our previous issue we asked (on behalf of our reader Geoff Minett) if anyone could come up with information on the origin of **Cullerin**, a locality between Goulburn and Gunning in NSW. And in a nice piece of detective work David McDonald has tracked down an item in the *Canberra Times* from a few years ago (19 February 2022).

A well-known rural writer who goes by the name of Tim the Yowie Man had this to tell us:

> Cullerin is derived from "culls of Erin" which links to the area's Irish convict heritage where Erin means "from Ireland" and cull is thought to refer to the removal of "lower" quality elements of a group.

We are sceptical, to say the least—this has all the hallmarks of a classic piece of folk etymology. We'd be more persuaded if the name had been pronounced /kul-'E-ruhn/ instead of /'KUL-uh-ruhn/, and if the original spelling of the locality—like the range—hadn't been *Cullarin*. In fact, several variant spellings have been used over the years (including *Collarin* and *Cullorin*), all of them older than the current one.

The name in its earlier spellings was well-established by the mid-19th century. The Cullarin Range was referred to in NSW Parliamentary Papers in 1857, and in March 1865 the *Sydney Morning Herald* mentioned 'the Collarin toll-bar' in an article on local bushrangers.

So we should now start to think about an Indigenous origin for *Cullerin*; and here Jeremy Steele has an interesting suggestion. He's found, within his Bayala Databases of Aboriginal language material, an intriguing entry dating to the year 1875:

Aboriginal entry	Respelling	Gloss in the text	Meaning
'Kolorinbrai'	gulurin-barayi	'abounding in kolorin, the flowers of the kulaba tree'	flower-having

Jeremy notes that the language in question is actually Gamilaraay, rather than Wiradhuri (the language of the Cullerin area), but it's not far distant. And a citation such as this would lead us to the etymology of *Collarenabri*, 'having flowers', as well as *Cullerin* meaning 'flower (of a tree)'.

We hope, Geoff, that this is progress? We have one theory that we want to dismiss as folk etymology, and a second suggestion that looks much more likely. Perhaps we're close to finding the answer on *Cullerin*!

We're all volunteers...

...because we're keen to help in the great task of recording Australia's placenames and writing their stories.

Some of us are historians, linguists and toponymists. Others offer their skills in administration and finance, or in editing and publishing. All in all, we are a small community of people who enjoy making a significant contribution, however small, to Australia's cultural heritage.

Would you like to join in? Do you have experience in writing grant applications? in designing and refining web pages? in proofreading and editorial work? Are you a dab hand at finding historical information in Trove, and comfortable with entering that information in a spreadsheet or database?

If you'd like to get involved with our small team, with whatever skill or time you can offer—don't hold back! Drop the Editor a line now, at <editor@anps.org.au>.

And *thankyou* to those of you who've been financial supporters over the years with your $25 annual donation - details on how to help in this 2025-2026 year are on the back page, as usual.

A toponymic spelling challenge

A toponymic spelling challenge? Apparently—but one that Google Maps has already failed. Our rural correspondent David McDonald tells us that images of the signpost for **Poisoned Waterholes Creek**, near Narrandera (NSW), are often used to illustrate discussions about the Frontier Wars. (Our image, below, in fact reveals that the sign uses a non-official variant of the creek's name.)

David was surprised as he drove over the creek recently to notice that his **Google Maps** display had a rather different version of the name.
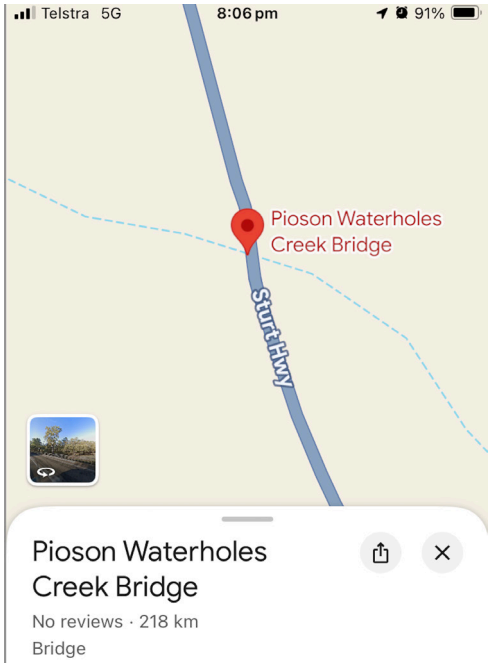
Now, we at the editor's desk are the last people who should feel superior about our spelling ability; after all, the proofreading team is continually pointing out our failures in that respect. But Google Maps certainly seems to have lost focus when reporting this particular feature.

We're glad to say that the ANPS Database entry for the creek shows the toponym accurately, as well as recording its variant name.

Register Table	
ANPS ID	57037
Placename*	Poisoned Waterholes Creek
State Code	NSW
State ID	46870
Feature Term	creek
Feature Code	STRM
Latitude	34°44'54.4"S
Longitude	146°31'04.5"E
LGA Name	NARRANDERA
Parish	GILLENBAH
Status	Official

|	
Description	A watercourse, indefinite in parts, overflowing from Sandy Creek about 9 km SE of Narrandera. It flows generally NW for about 18 km into the Murrumbidgee River.
Related Names	Poison Waterholes Creek
Discussion	
Other Data	NSW GNB: The name references a massacre of Aboriginal people that occurred at this site as a result of poison being added to the water source.

New Occasional Papers

Placenames Australia has published two new contributions to its Occasional Papers *series since September. One adds to our knowledge about how those (often ephemeral) micronations get their names. The other canvasses the question of whether the name-form* Ballengarra *might be Aboriginal or Irish. Details below!*

ANPS Occasional Paper 18
An analysis of Australia's micronation names
by Jan Tent
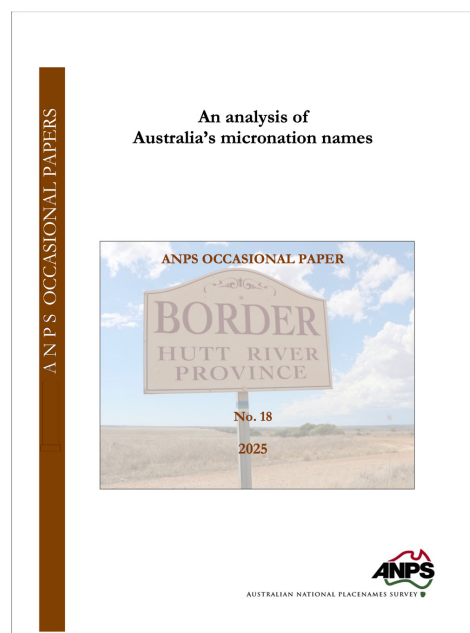
Anybody remember the Principality of Hutt River? It was Australia's oldest and most well-known micronation, founded by 'Prince Leonard' Casley in 1970. Set near Geraldon, WA, it lasted until 2020 when mounting debt and the COVID pandemic finally did for it.
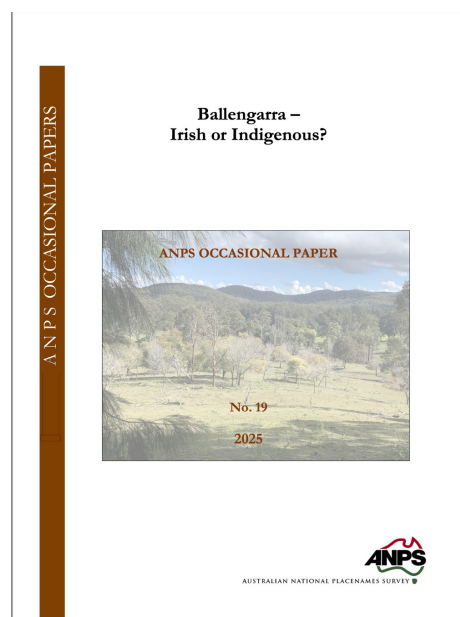
This is just one of 32 Australian micronations that Jan Tent has listed. But of course, not just listed: he has attempted to do what ANPS always does—answer the essential WH- questions about the 'feature'. What was it, who named it and when and why...

Download this Occasional Paper here.

ANPS Occasional Paper 19
Ballengarra - Irish or Indigenous?
by Tony Dawson

Ballengarra is a locality (and a parish name) in northern NSW. Can you not hear the name spoken in a soft Irish lilt, now? No? Well, perhaps it reminds you of those many other Australian placenames which have an Aboriginal language as their origin?

The conundrum piqued Tony Dawson's interest; and fine historian that he is, he couldn't resist setting off on this research quest. Is Ballengarra Irish? Is it Indigenous? Do we know? Can we *ever* know...?

Download this Occasional Paper here.

In the June (2025) issue of *Placenames Australia*, we continued the overview of **Qamea** (34.5 km^2), an island to the northeast of Taveuni and west of Laucala.

We discussed the annual rising of the seaworm *balolo* (*Eunice viridis*, the same as Samoan *palolo*), which indeed occurred on cue on 13th November this year, opposite the village of Dreketi on the east coast of Qamea and near the smaller islands of Matagi and Laucala.

We also looked at the remarkable rising of the land crabs (*lairo, Cardisoma* spp) that migrate in their millions to the sea to release their eggs every November to December, like the red crabs on Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean. Qamea is unusual in that the crabs are said to carry a snake in their claws and offer it to their 'king'. This remarkable event was recorded by a Tongan resident of Vanuabalavu in the nineteenth century, and published by Adolph B. Brewster in his 1937 book, *King of the cannibal isles: a tale of early life and adventure in the Fiji Islands*.

It is perhaps no coincidence that the largest land crab in Fiji, with one claw much bigger than the other, is known in Qamea and elsewhere as *lairo tui*, literally 'king land crab'.

We also noted that natives of Qamea are referred to affectionately by some neighbours as *batipaileve* 'paileve eaters', this being a kind of snack food made of cassava (*tavioka, manioke, Manihot esculenta*) pounded, flavoured with sugar or grated coconut, wrapped in leaves and boiled.

Strangely, while residents of Qamea are used to being addressed as *batipaileve*, very few of them know what *paileve* is. The reason for this is connected to the history of pre-colonial land sales in northeast Fiji, which differs from what occurred elsewhere in Fiji.

Essentially, the chief of most of northeast Fiji, including Taveuni, Qamea, much of eastern Vanualevu and parts of northern Lau, was Rātū Golea, who ruled as Tui Cakau from 1862 to 1879. He was what we might term a despot (as indeed were most of the chiefs in those days), and sold land willy-nilly to foreigners, mostly Europeans from Australia looking to buy land to plant cotton or sugar cane in the 1860s, after the gold rush there had subsided. Long-suffering readers of this column may recall that his predecessor as Tui Cakau sold the island of Rabe as punishment for insubordination. Rātū Golea then sold a number of other islands near Taveuni as punishment for their joining the Tongan Wainiqolo in an unsuccessful attack on his fortress in Wairiki. These sales were scrutinised by the colonial Land Claims Commission and permitted because the Tui Cakau was deemed to have had the traditional authority to sell them and they were occupied by the purchaser.

Qamea, with the larger island of Taveuni to its west. (Google Maps).

...Placenames of Fiji 27

One of the islands thus sold was Laucala, and the inhabitants moved to Dreketi and Togo in Qamea, where they still live. Another was Naitauba, to the east of Taveuni, whose inhabitants moved to Kocoma in Qamea. So it was that when British anthropologist Arthur Hocart came to record oral traditions of Qamea around 1915, he discovered to his astonishment that the people of Korovatu, living in the village of Naiviivi, were (as they still are) the only indigenous people of Qamea, comprising only about a quarter of the population of the island. The majority are descendants of immigrants, so perhaps ignorance of the traditional food of the island is not surprising.

So now to the name! There is no obvious etymology of *Qamea*, but there is at least one that is plausible, and it requires us to return to the etymologies of Muala and Cicia. Both involve the nominalising suffix *–(C)a*, a suffix of the form either of *-a* or of *-a* preceded by a consonant. This is no longer an active process of word or name formation, but clearly it was in the past, and it meant 'place of'. We suggested that Muala was previously Moala, meaning 'place of chickens or jungle fowl', while Cicia meant 'place of gastropods', both appropriate names. So it seems likely that Qamea was a place famous for its *qame*—but unfortunately there is no such thing in any Fijian language today!

Nothing daunted, we search for plausible sources in reconstructed vocabulary—that is, words that are no longer in use—and we find that Proto Central Pacific *kave can be reconstructed as the name of a kind of crab. It has cognates in Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands, usually meaning something like 'rock crab'; and its cognate in Rotuman, which is very closely related to Fijian, is ʔahe, meaning 'a type of reddish crab with very flat back, found in rocks and coral on the sea bottom'.

This etymology requires two sound changes which are unusual but not totally irregular. The first is that Proto Central Pacific *k, which usually becomes simply *k* in Fijian languages, change to its prenasalised counterpart, *q*, sounding like the 'ng' in English finger. Although not a regular change, it has parallels in *t changing to its prenasalised counterpart in common nouns in eastern Fiji, for example *tuna 'eel' changing to *duna*. The old term for 'mangrove crab' was *kaka and this has similarly changed to *qaka* in parts of eastern Fiji, including Qamea. The other change required is for *v to change to *m*, and this likewise is not regular, but it does have some parallels. To give just one example: *vutia meaning 'sea-grass' changes to *mutia* in far eastern Fiji, then changes its meaning slightly to any kind of grass in Polynesian languages.

I think it is reasonable therefore to tentatively propose that **Qamea** originally meant 'place of crabs'. I'd want to note, though, that these were not necessarily land crabs, since all kinds of crabs are common on and around Qamea.

Next time in our overview of the Fiji islands, we'll swing from northeast to northwest, to the long spindly island of Yasawa, far to the north of western Vitilevu.

Paul Geraghty

Placenames Puzzle Number 96

Scope & Dimensions toponyms. *In this quiz we look at places that indicate in their name something of their scope or dimensions. For example*: (VIC) A stream east-south-east of Warburton. Answer: *Tiny Creek*

1. (QLD) A sound at the entrance to Port of St Lawrence
2. (QLD) An isthmus directly to the north of Surfers Paradise
3. (QLD) A small island just off the coast between Innisfail and Cairns
4. (TAS) A small beach just south of Battery Point, Hobart
5. (NSW) A location in Royal National Park, south-west of Bundeena
6. (WA) Australia's most westerly point
7. (QLD) An island at the east margin of #1
8. (WA) A bay within Napier Broome Bay
9. (VIC) An inlet on the north-western boundary of Wilsons Promontory
10. (TAS) A headland and location at the entrance to the Tamar River
11. (QLD) A cove south of Fraser Island and Rainbow Beach
12. (NT) A diminutive island off the south-west coast of Vanderlin Island
13. (NSW) A beach and a cove on the eastern fringe of Sydney Harbour
14. (TAS) A diminutive bay with pretentions between Robbins Island and the state's mainland ,
15. (SA) A range of mountains east of Adelaide
16. (WA) A narrow point south of Shoal Bay near Albany
17. (WA) A small island also with an ambitious name, in the Mary Anne Passage, south of Barrow Island
18. (WA) Rocks sou-sou-west of Esperance
19. (WA/SA) A desert
20. (NSW) A tiny lake linked to the western shore of Lake Macquarie

[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 ʙsʙ 032089 a/c 275989
❑ or pay $25 by secure credit card at https://placenames.org.au/supporting-pa/
If you're using a bank transfer, please advise our Treasurer of the transfer by one of the following methods:
Email: treasurer@anps.org.au
Website: https://placenames.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