The history of Poeppel Corner

Poeppel Corner is the name of the junction of the Northern Territory/Queensland border with the northern border of South Australia. It is one of the best known of the State corners and certainly the remotest. The nearest town is Birdsville, population 120, which is 177 kilometres to the east.

Poeppel Corner is located in the heart of the Simpson Desert and is accessible only by four-wheel drive vehicles. The visitors' book shows that about 2000 tourists make the journey each year. These days the corner is marked by a concrete pipe, standing 1.8 metres high on a sand dune just above Lake Poeppel, which spreads across the Northern Territory and South Australia borders. A specially prepared plaque on top of the pipe shows the names of the states and territory and the title 'Poeppel Corner'.

In 1880, Augustus Poeppel, South Australian Government Surveyor, marked the corner with a coolibah Eucalyptus microtheca post, 2.1 metres long by 0.25 metres in diameter. The post was dragged 58 miles (92 kilometres) westward from the Mulligan River. Poeppel adzed it on three sides and chiseled into it the words 'South Australia, Northern Territory and Queensland'. Below the 'South Australia' inscription he carved LAT 26 LONG 138 for the latitude and longitude.

The post was placed by Poeppel to complete his survey of the South Australian/Queensland border along the 26th Parallel of Latitude between the 141st Meridian to the 138th Meridian of Longitude, a distance of 186 miles 49 chains (300.3 km). It represented the intersection of the 26th Parallel with the 138th Meridian. From this point, the South Australia/Northern Territory border ran east across the Simpson Desert and the

This plaque on a concrete pipe now marks the location of Poeppel Corner

Queensland/Northern Territory border ran due north to the Gulf of Carpenteria.

Poeppel returned to the corner in 1883 to commence the survey of the Queensland/Northern Territory border. The post was not seen again by a European until 1936, when Northern Territory grazier, Ted Colson, and his Aboriginal companion Peter Aims, completed the first east-west crossing

The history of Poeppel Corner

of the Simpson Desert with five camels. They photographed the post on their return journey from Birdsville. By then, the corner had become known as 'Poeppel Corner' after Augustus Poeppel.

Dr Reg Sprigg completed the first vehicular crossing of the Simpson Desert in 1962. He found the corner post lying flat on the ground, eaten through by white ants and riddled with dry rot. Dr Sprigg placed a temporary mark over the base and took the fallen post back to Birdsville and later to Adelaide. It was returned to the South Australian Surveyor General and is now held by the South Australian History Trust. The chiseled names are still legible. The concrete pipe was subsequently placed to mark Poeppel corner.

❑ Alan Middleton
Senior Surveyor
Department of Sustainability and Environment, Victoria

In this issue

Welcome to new subscribers

It has been wonderful to hear from historical societies around Australia that are interested in the study of placenames and the ANPS project. Many of those societies that responded to the mail-out of the March edition of *Placenames Australia* not only subscribed to the newsletter but have also become ANPS Research Friends. Thanks for your interest and support! A warm welcome to the following societies:

Augusta Historical Society
Bathurst District Historical Society
Bayswater Historical Society
Bendigo Historical Society
Berrima District Historical Society
Biggenden Historical Society
Blacktown and District Historical Society
Boorowa and District Historical Society
Brisbane City Council Heritage Unit
Brisbane Water Historical Society
Broome Historical Society
Buninyong and District Hist. Society
Camden Historical Society
Campbelltown and Airds Hist. Society
Cardwell Shire Museum and Hist. Soc.
Casino and District Historical Society
Channel Hist. and Folk Museum Assoc.
Clarence River Historical Society
Coasters Retreat Historical Society
Concord Heritage Society
Cooray-Noosa Genealogical and Historical Research Group
Cootamundra Local History Society
Crookwell and District Historical Society
Cundletown Historical Society
Daylesford and District Hist. Society
Dingley Village and District Hist. Society
Dubbo Museum and History Centre
Eastern Goldfields Historical Society
Emerald Shire Historical Association
Enfield and District Historical Society
Footscray Historical Society
Fremantle Local History Collection
Furneaux Hist. Research Association
Gatton and District Historical Society
Gloucester District Historical Society
Great Lakes Historical Society
Hamilton History Centre
Hargraves and District Historical Society

Hay Historical Society
Hist. Society of the Munic. of Sorell
Inverell District Family History Group
Ipswich Historical Society
Isis District Historical Society
Kilkivan and District Historical Society
Koroit and District Historical Society
Ku-ring-gai Historical Society and Family History Group
Lameroo District Historical Society
Lightning Ridge Historical Society Trust
Lower Burdekin Historical Society
Macksville and District History Group
Malvern Historical Society
Mansfield Historical Society
Mareeba Historical Society
Marrickville Heritage Society
Melville History Society
Mid Murraylands Local History Group
Milton-Ulladulla Historical Society
New Farm and Districts Hist. Society
Nundah and District Historical Society
Ororoo Historical Society
Paterson Historical Society
Queenscliffe Historical Museum
Queensland Women's Hist. Association
Redcliffe Historical Society
Sandgate and District Historical Society and Museum
Seymour and District Historical Society
Shoalhaven Family History Society
Springwood Historical Society
Sunshine Coast Historical and Genealogical Resource Centre
Tara and District Historical Society
Toowoomba Historical Society
Yarraman and District Historical Society
Yarrawonga – Mulwala Historical Society
Yorketown Historical Society

New subscribers after the time of going to press will be listed in the next issue

Electronic toponymic updates

The ANPS team would like to be able to contact Research Friends and *Placenames Australia* subscribers with items of interest not only through the quarterly release of the newsletter but during the whole year. If you would like to be on our email distribution list and receive occasional notices about toponymic events, please send your email address to Clair Hill at chill@hmn.mq.edu.au.

Indigenous placenames initiative launched in Warrnambool, Victoria

Few people realise how many of Victoria's towns and cities have names of Indigenous origin. To address this, Victoria's Registrar of Geographic Names has launched a public awareness program about Indigenous placenames. This program has held a series of workshops to which representatives from Indigenous communities, local councils and other naming authorities have been invited to participate.

There are thousands of names with Indigenous origins in use, particularly in rural and regional Victoria. However, many years ago when these names were first given, surveyors had difficulty capturing Australian Aboriginal speech sounds and recording them using the English spelling system. As a result, some of the meanings and pronunciations of these names have been lost over time.

The state-wide series of workshops was aimed at providing a forum for Indigenous communities and placenaming authorities to discuss the new approach to naming, as well as trying to establish a consultation protocol that could be adopted by naming authorities when considering proposals for Indigenous placenames.

The first workshop was held in Warrnambool on the November 1, 2002. Mr Jeremy Clark, CEO of the Framlingham Aboriginal Trust, opened the Warrnambool workshop and launched the initiative's brochure: *Naming Victoria's Landscape - Respect and Recognition of Indigenous Culture*. Mr Clark welcomed the public awareness initiative, saying that the key to the process is consultation; "Without consultation with all the parties it wouldn't succeed".

Mr Clark acknowledged that many people are not aware of the Indigenous origins of placenames, such as, Warrnambool, Koroit and Terang. He went on to say that promoting recognition for the traditional Indigenous names

Left to right: Keith Bell (Registrar Geographic Place Names), Jeremy Clark (CEO Framlingham Aboriginal Trust) and Stephen Walsh (Department of Infrastructure) at the launch of the new Indigenous placenaming brochure. Photo: Diana Nolan.

of various landmarks and places in Victoria is a positive step.

As part of the program, a presentation was delivered by Stephen Walsh of the Department of Infrastructure (DoI) on the joint DoI-VicRoads Indigenous road naming project. This project is aimed at assigning Indigenous names to bridges and other road features and is being piloted in south-western Victoria.

Presentations were also delivered by Dr Ian D. Clark (Chair of the Victorian State Committee of the Australian National Placenames Survey) and Chris Richards (member of Victoria's Geographic Place Names Advisory Panel). Dr Clark's presentation was an overview of the *Dictionary and Database of Aboriginal Placenames of Victoria*, which he compiled together with Toby Heydon for the Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages.

As a result of the positive feedback received from participants at the workshop, the Registrar of Geographic Names scheduled a series of follow-up workshops on geographic placenames. To

date, five more successful workshops have been held in Hamilton, Ballarat, Benalla, Melbourne and Traralgon for representatives of local councils who are responsible for the placenaming process within their organisations.

While the main focus of the workshops is on the responsibilities of naming authorities under the Geographic Place Names Act 1998, as well as the implementation of the Guidelines for Geographic Names, the workshops are also aimed at increasing awareness of Victoria's Indigenous placenames.

The Victorian Registrar of Geographic Names recognises that the link between placenames, our Indigenous heritage and reconciliation is important. This initiative will hopefully raise awareness of Victoria's existing Indigenous placenames and encourage greater respect and recognition for Indigenous cultures.

❑ Anita Davids
For more information about Victoria's placenaming activities, please phone Anita on (03) 8636 2530 or email her at anita.davids@nre.vic.gov.au

Naming the place we live

As promised in *Placenames Australia* December 2002, here is a condensed version of a talk given by Dale Lehner for the History Council of NSW, History Week, September 2002, which had the theme 'Changing Landscapes'.

Why name the place we live? The basic answer is that we need identification simply for communication. Early settlers needed to be able to say something like, 'Move the stock to the Sandy Creek'. I am reminded of the old adage that if Sydney is ever invaded the first thing we should do is remove all the street signs! A city with no identified places would be utter confusion.

European naming of the Australian landscape can more correctly be described 'renaming'. The Aborigines had already named significant features like rivers, mountains and hills and no doubt important camping places too. What I am referring to here is the new set of names given by the European settlers. Most of my research has involved the Darling Downs district west of Brisbane where members of my family settled in the 1860s, thus many of the examples I use will be from Queensland.

The method of Australian placenaming can only be called ad hoc – there was no method. Much of the landscape had already been named when officials tried to take control. In Queensland it was the 1920s before an official placenames body was set up but it was really too late. Certainly most of the natural features had been named by the turn of the 20th Century, leaving little more than new settlements to be named.

These days in Queensland and probably elsewhere, when a new suburb is established there is a complex process to avoid duplication. Huge efforts are also made to ensure that the suggested name is culturally appropriate, particularly with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander names. The public is notified of all proposals in newspaper advertisements, and Ministerial approval is the final step.
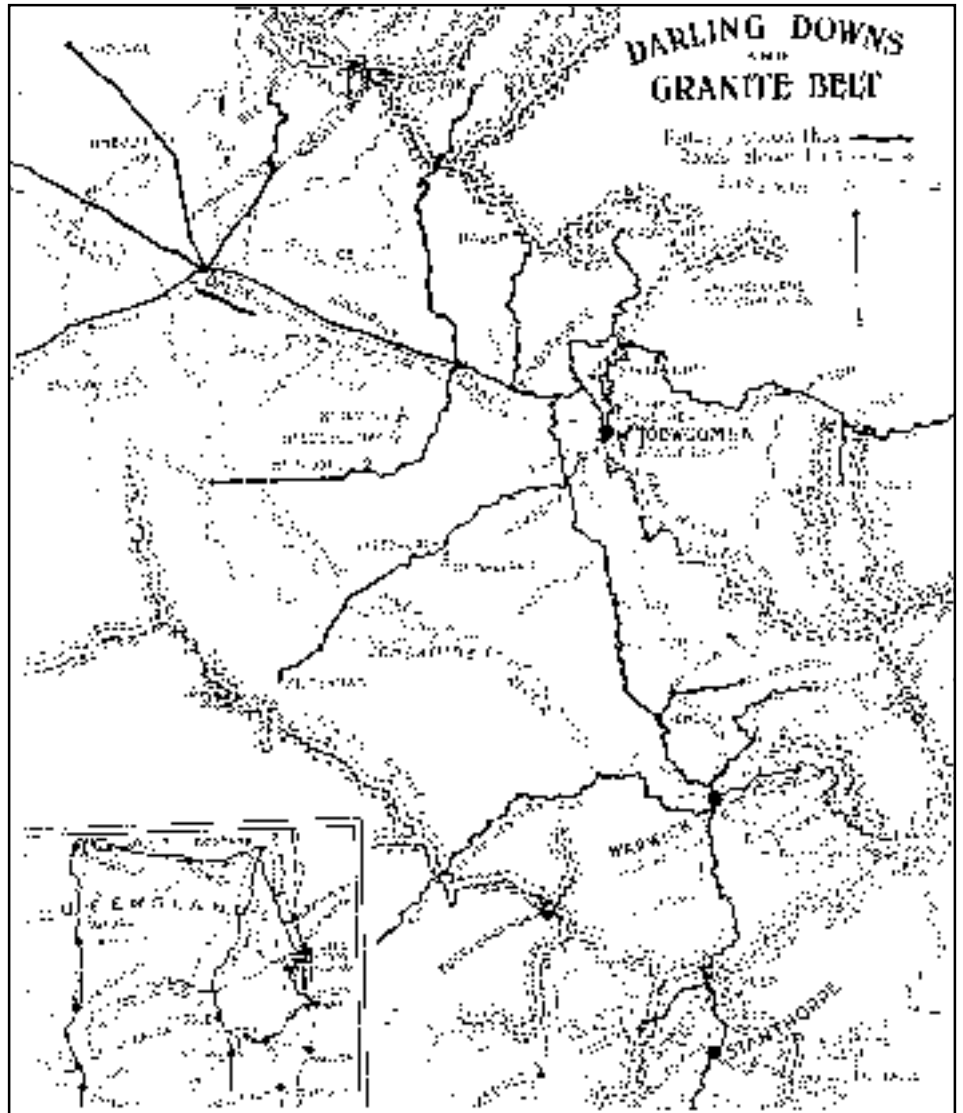
The early history of placenaming in Australia was a bit scrambled but, in essence, it was the domain of the explorers, then the squatters and finally the surveyors, with ordinary people filling in the gaps. Firstly, explorers named their discoveries. They noted them in their journals and on maps and largely the names have endured, although there were a few cases of the same place being accidentally renamed by another explorer (the Murray River was originally named the Hume). Our eastern coastline is littered with names given by Captain Cook and Matthew Flinders.

The most noticeable feature of the placenames chosen by inland explorers is that they often flattered influential people. For example, Allan Cunningham, who discovered the Darling Downs in 1827, honoured both Governor Darling

and his aide when he named the Darling Downs and the Condamine River.

Squatters spread out from the settled districts with their flocks and herds using the explorer's maps as references. It appears to have been compulsory to register a name for their pastoral run when they applied for the lease. And - an important point - that name needed to be unique because it was for identification. Avoiding duplication necessarily involved a lot of head scratching on the part of the squatters. Many of the names they chose have endured as Parish, Shire or town names, although the pastoral leases are no more. The most striking feature given to runs on the Darling Downs before 1859, is that half of them are Aboriginal words – Jondaryan, Jingi

Jingi, and Warra Warra are just a few. It is significant that European settlers in a land officially regarded as empty – *terra nullius* – were quite happy to use Aboriginal placenames. The settlers knew the land was not empty, and in their own way they acknowledged prior Aboriginal ownership.

Descriptive run names were also popular and give insights into the squatter's life. Some squatters took the same name as the local creek, and wildlife and plants were also popular themes, for example, Palmy Creek, Emu Creek, Dogwood Creek and the not very inviting Mosquito Creek. Other names, such as Starvation Camp, Vexation and Burning Thirst, reveal the trying aspects of life. On the other hand there are the more attractive Fairy Land and Gladfield.

I examined another sample of pre-1859 Darling Downs names for natural features, such as rivers, creeks, mountains and hills. As previously noted, I often discovered the name choice was made by an explorer to honour a patron, probably in the hope of more financial support. However, there are exceptions: Ludwig Leichhardt named Charley's Creek after his Aboriginal guide, and Allan Cunningham honoured a settler who had been very hospitable to his expedition with MacIntyre Brook. The second largest category for natural features was descriptive names like Sandy Creek (probably the most popular placename in Australia), Saddle Hill, Lookout Creek and the like.

After the explorers and squatters the next influential group were the surveyors. They were called upon to draw up plans for settlements, and are responsible for many of our beautifully laid out country towns. Often the plans of a likely spot were produced when there was little more than a bark hut or two in evidence. At the same time the surveyors were often required to name these settlements. A townsite on the Darling Downs that was unofficially known as 'Myall Crossing', 'Myall Creek' or 'The Crossing' was surveyed in 1853 by Captain Perry, the NSW Surveyor-General. He renamed it

'Dalby' after one of several towns in Britain. On a visit to the town I commented on the very wide streets. I was told that the roads had needed to be wide enough for a bullock team to turn around.

The explorers and squatters made their name choices and usually that was it – a unilateral decision! However, with the naming of settlements there were more people involved and disagreements occurred. A town near the Queensland/New South Wales border now known as Inglewood, was originally called 'Browne's Inn' after an establishment there. In 1862 a surveyor renamed the settlement 'Inglewood'. The Railway Department had a policy of using Aboriginal names where possible, so when the railway passed through in 1906 the station was named 'Parainga'. There was a local outcry and the citizens of the town removed the station sign before the grand opening. The Railway Department eventually complied with their wishes and the name 'Inglewood' was retained.

As well as by explorers, squatters and surveyors, much naming was done unofficially by ordinary people. The pastoral runs were huge, usually from 25 to 100 square miles, and names evolved for features on that land. Descriptive names, such as the Sandy Creek or the Bald Hill were common, and every run had a name like the Horse Paddock or Hill Paddock. In the Dalby Family History Society library I came across an old map of Bon Accord, a freehold station taken up in about 1870. I was immediately interested when I discovered one paddock was named Dale's Paddock. I was given the name Dale because it was my great-grandmother's maiden name – and sure enough I found that the paddock was originally the Dale family farm. It had been incorporated into Bon Accord. In fact after her husband died my great-great-grandmother worked on Bon Accord as the mid-wife and nurse, and was known locally as Granny Dale.

Many names given by ordinary people endured, although some were changed by officialdom. The name Sherry Gully

originated when a bullock wagon broke a wheel and a keg of sherry fell off and smashed. The Railway Department did not approve and later changed the name to Cherry Gully.

Introduced Australian placenames have evolved over the last 200 or so years, given in succession by explorers, squatters, surveyors and ordinary people, mostly before official control was gained. Now there are very tight controls when new names are proposed. However, it is evident that the placenames given before official intervention are the ones that can most enhance the knowledge of Australian history. They reflect the thoughts and experiences of our forebears in many ways. In addition we see that it is the Aboriginal influence which makes the map of Australia distinctive - nowhere else in the world will you find a Wagga Wagga or a Gundagai! The historical value and unique nature of these names is beginning to be recognised in the Australian community. Much discussion currently concerns the possibility of reinstating more Aboriginal names in a dual naming system like we see with Ayers Rock/Uluru. Such initiatives indicate an appreciation that placenames embody our history in a unique way.

❑   Dale Lehner

Media focus

Two Brisbanites, anthropologist Liz Dann and local historian and environmental educator Beryl Roberts, have completed a number of years researching Brisbane localities and will soon publish a book, *Origins of the Names of Brisbane's Suburbs and Localities*. Brisbane's ABC Radio 612 will be giving them about one minute of airtime each weekday morning with Paul Bonnington on the *Breakfast Show* to discuss and share ideas on the origins of Brisbane's suburb and locality names. All being well, this daily toponymic discussion will be broadcast throughout August and their book will be published in late August or early September.

Feedback: Everard of the Cape

I was recently sent a copy of the ANPS newsletter of September 2002 and believe I can throw some light on the identity of Mr Everard after whom the Cape was named. I believe it to be named after Mr John Everard who was a member of the first parliament of Victoria, representing Rodney, and afterward Collingwood and North Gippsland. I attach a copy of a leaflet concerning his son William H. Everard.

John Everard was born on February 20 1825 in Groby, Leicestershire, UK, the sixth son of Thomas Everard of Groby. He married Mary Moss on August 29 1857 (she died September 21 1872). He later married Faith Cann on July 19 1874 in Fitzroy, Melbourne. He died on August 29 1887 in South Yarra, Melbourne. He had seven children (six sons) by his first wife and four (all daughters) by his second wife. I have no record of when he went to Australia.

Obviously the leaflet may be incorrect about the naming of Cape Everard but one would have thought that his son would know.

I have done a little research via the Net into John Everard but have found very little except that there is mention of some of his family in several books published in Australia, including:

Painters & Pioneers - One Hundred Years of Eltham and its Shire by Alan Marshall (1971), *Warburton Ways* by Earle Parkinson (1984), *A History of Port Melbourne* by Nancy U'Ren and Noel Turnbull (1983), and *Healesville - History of the Hills* by Sally Symonds (1982).

Unfortunately, I haven't been able to obtain copies of any of the above books.

I also note that there is a Lake Everard in South Australia and also a mountain range called Everard Ranges - maybe they are also named after John?

Your sincerely,
Richard A. Everard (Quorn, Leics, UK)

The leaflet attached by Richard Everard is titled "The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly: Hon. W.H. EVERARD, M.L.A." and was authorised by W. Burnside, J.P., Chairman Evelyn Electrorate Committees on the 10th of September 1937. The relevant section is as follows: "Mr. Everard was born at east Melbourne in 1869, as son of Mr. John Everard, who was a member of the first Parliament of Victoria, representing Rodney, and afterwards Collingwood and North Gippsland, and after whom Cape Everard was named."

Thank you for forwarding on the e-mail by Richard Everard regarding the naming of Cape Everard (now Point Hicks). It's rewarding to see that the newsletter now has an international readership (and an interested one at that). My response to the comments made by Richard are as follows:

1. It would be great if we could locate a primary source document that unambiguously set out how Cape Everard was named. But unfortunately (as with many placenames) no such document has been located to date, although I did spend a number of days in the Victorian State Library and the Surveyor General's office hoping to uncover such a key reference.

2. The earliest references to Cape Everard that I could find are Arrowsmith's 1853 map of Victoria and the slightly earlier coastal survey maps of Gippsland upon which it is based.

3. To qualify as a candidate for being the "Everard of the Cape", the person would have had to have been reasonably prominent in Australia (extra attention obviously being given to any Victorian Everards), or Britain, by 1853.

4. John Everard arrived in Melbourne in May 1853, first becoming a merchant. He did not enter Victorian parliament until 1858. While biographical material indicates that he made a substantial contribution to the State, this occurred after the publication of Arrowsmith's map. Therefore, it is highly unlikely that he is the "Everard of the Cape". The arrival date of 1853 is given in *Men of the Time*, Victorian Series (1878) and in the entry for John Everard in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*.

5. Manning's book on the placenames of South Australia lists some features bearing the Everard name – Mount Everard, Lake Everard, Hundred of Everard and Everard Creek (now the Diamantina River). Manning states that they are named after William Everard. While William arrived in that colony (as a youth) in 1836 on the ship Africaine, he did not enter the South Australian parliament until the 1860s, and most of his substantial public achievements were after 1853. In addition, there is the problem of explaining how a South Australian pioneer would have had his name placed on a prominent coastal feature in far East Gippsland, when the Cape Everard name was most likely applied by someone in the Victorian Surveyor General's office.

6. William Everard was the son of Doctor Charles Everard (they came to Adelaide together on the Africaine) who settled in Adelaide. While he was a prominent citizen of Adelaide before 1853, there is still the problem of explaining how his name would have been used by Victorian officials on a cape in Gippsland, far removed from the South Australian border.

In summary, I think it is fair to say the jury is still out on which particular Everard was honoured in the naming of Cape Everard.

Perhaps other newsletter readers may be able to shed further light on this fascinating toponymic puzzle. The South Australian options are worth further investigation, and there may be other Everards who have so far escaped our attention, including those who remained in England. Can anybody out there help?

Chris Richards (Vic)

ANPS NSW State Committee established

We are pleased to announce that a State committee of the ANPS has now been established in NSW. The foundation members of the committee are: David Blair and Flavia Hodges of the ANPS, Greg Windsor of the NSW Geographical Names Board, Jaky Troy of the newly established NSW Aboriginal Languages Research and Resource Centre, and academics John Hobson, Ian Jack and Michael Walsh of the University of Sydney and Peter Orlovich, formerly of the University of New South Wales — contributing between them expertise in history, linguistics, archives and information technology. An inaugural meeting of the Committee was held on 21 June, and further meetings are planned at frequent intervals.

We look forward to being able to publish news of the Committee's activities in future issues of *Placenames Australia*. It plans to work particularly closely with the NSW Geographical Names Board, of which it has been constituted as a Technical Scientific Sub-Committee, on a project to assign dual Indigenous and introduced names to many of the features of Sydney Harbour, and on an Aboriginal Geographical Naming Strategy to document and interpret placenames forming part of the traditional Indigenous network within NSW.

Other crucial links will be with the NSW Aboriginal Languages Research and Resource Centre and the NSW Office of the Board of Studies. Notices elsewhere in this issue, by Clair Hill on the establishment of ALRRC and by Susan Poetsch on the work of the OBoS in developing a new Aboriginal Languages Syllabus for schools, emphasise what an exciting time this is for the renewal of Indigenous languages in the State — and the study of placenames has an important role to play in increasing awareness of the languages and cultures of the state's original inhabitants.

Left to right: Greg Windsor, Michael Walsh, Jaky Troy and Gayle Caldwell at the inaugural State Committee meeting.

Minister opens NSW Language Centre

Before European settlement, the area that was to become New South Wales hosted around 70 Aboriginal languages. These traditional languages include: Ngiyampaa and Muruwari in the northwest; Mathi-mathi and Baakindji in the southwest; Kamilaroi, Wangkumara, and Wiradjuri in central NSW; Anewan (Nganyaywana), Bundjalung, Gumbaynggirr and Yaygirr in the northeast; Awabakal, Dharuk, Ngunawal, and Yorta Yorta in the southeast. The colonisation of Australia brought rapid changes to Indigenous Australian society and dramatically affected the ways Aboriginal people lived and communicated. Aboriginal languages have been badly affected by these sudden changes, and most are highly endangered with only a few elderly speakers surviving.

The NSW State government has developed a ground-breaking policy that will help to revive traditional Aboriginal languages, such as those listed. An Aboriginal Language Research and Resource Centre is at the core of this million-dollar plus plan and was officially launched on March 10 by the Deputy Premier and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Dr Andrew Refshauge.

At the opening, Dr Refshauge said the Centre would help to record and document the knowledge held by a limited number of Aboriginal Elders and custodians, as well as empower Aboriginal communities to implement local language revitalisation programs.

"Traditional language is at the heart of Aboriginal culture. It is vital to the cultural identity and the self-esteem of Aboriginal people.

"Already many Aboriginal languages are in danger of being lost or are spoken by just a handful of surviving Elders. Time is running out if we are not to lose this important part of our Indigenous culture," he said.

The NSW government has provided funding of $1.04 million over four years for the ALRRC. The Centre is located at Tranby Aboriginal College in Glebe and is staffed by linguist Dr Jakelin Troy and Gayle Caldwell. It aims to give technical advice, mentoring, training and research assistance to Aboriginal people and communities seeking to revive, maintain and teach traditional languages. It will also establish an Internet database linking information on Aboriginal languages Statewide, and provide seed funding for community language projects, including a grant of $20,000 for a Gumbaynggirr dictionary and a CD-ROM in the Kamilaroi language.

Reviving and teaching Aboriginal languages in New South Wales schools

The invasion and colonisation of Australia have had devastating effects on Aboriginal languages. In recent developments in NSW, the aspiration of Aboriginal communities to revive their languages, using living knowledge in conjunction with archival sources, is being supported by the formal (though non-mandatory) introduction of the study of Aboriginal languages into the NSW school curriculum. To this end the Aboriginal Curriculum Unit (ACU) in the Office of the Board of Studies NSW has been developing the *Aboriginal Languages K-10 Syllabus*. The aims of the syllabus are to enable students to gain language proficiency, focus on the study of languages as systems and understand the relationship between land, language, culture and identity.

The development of the syllabus has been managed by Kevin Lowe, Chief Education Officer in the ACU. Dr Jaky Troy has also been a driving force behind it. In the early phases of the project Jaky worked closely with a team of syllabus writers and coordinated extensive consultation with schools across NSW, Aboriginal community members and organisations and language owners and custodians – all of whom have informed the design of the syllabus. As the project developed further, subsequent State-wide consultation with similar groups was undertaken by Dr Michael Walsh of the Department of Linguistics at Sydney University, together with Tony Lonsdale, a Wiradjuri man from Mudgee. Jaky has since been appointed as manager of the NSW Aboriginal Languages Research and Resource Centre.

Language revival projects involving Aboriginal community members, linguists and schools have been in operation for several years in a number of locations in NSW, e.g. the Bundjalung, Gamilaraay-Yuwaalaraay, Gumbaynggirr, Baakindji-Ngiyampaa and Wiradjuri language programs. The experiences and models of these language programs have made a significant contribution to the design and development of the new *Aboriginal Languages K-10 Syllabus*, as have successful language revival programs in other parts of Australia (e.g. the Kaurna language program in Adelaide) and Indigenous language communities in other countries.

The syllabus is a key step in the revival of Aboriginal languages. The three overarching objectives of the syllabus – '*Using Language*', '*Making Linguistic Connections*' and '*Moving Between Cultures*' – acknowledge that acquiring communicative competence in an Aboriginal

❑   **CONTINUED NEXT PAGE**

Chief Education Officer in the Aboriginal Curriculum Unit, Kevin Lowe. Photo: James Deavin.

Uncle Stan Grant Snr is a Wiradjuri Elder. He established the Wiradjuri Language Development Centre and, for many years, has been instrumental in the revival of Wiradjuri language. He teaches Wiradjuri language classes to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in various towns and centres in Wiradjuri country. His work was featured on the ABC program *Message Sticks* on Sunday 18th May 2003.

What are some of your thoughts on the new syllabus?

SG: *The NSW Government is doing exactly the right thing by introducing Aboriginal languages into the schools. This will increase children's self-esteem and sense of identity and help them understand who they are and where they come from. Their language is their country. Language belongs to the land, it is who you are.*

Do you teach people about placenames in your language programs?

SG: *Yes, people in our classes are really interested in that. Learning about placenames gives non-Aboriginal people some idea of Aboriginal languages and shows which names come from the language of the area.*

New publications: Lost and Almost Forgotten Towns

Where there is now a herd of beef cattle quietly grazing in an open field, a bustling population of gold fossickers, trades people and young families once went about their daily tasks. The only visible trace of them is in the census results collected by the fledgling government of colonial Victoria.
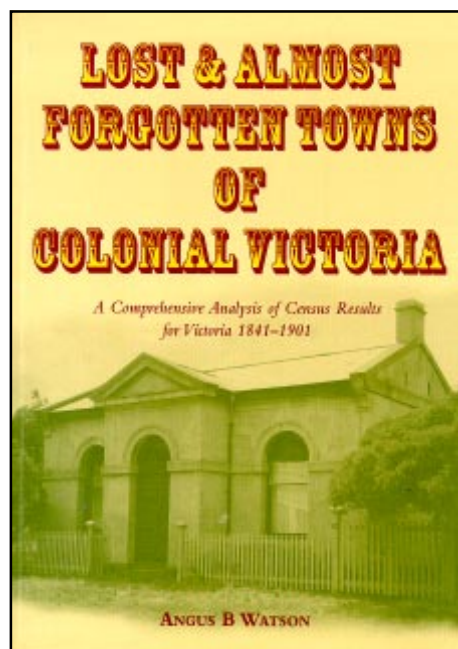
In other locations stand magnificent examples of colonial architecture or the chaotic remains of gold diggings. Some of the more than 1400 centres analysed in Angus Watson's book are now experiencing a renaissance as new communities take shape within old boundaries. The cover of this book depicts the former Majorca Municipal Hall restored after bushfire damage. After being a major nineteenth century goldfield town, Majorca was only a name on a map by the 1970s, but is now enjoying a revival as a burgeoning satellite suburb of Maryborough.

Lost & Almost Forgotten Towns of Colonial Victoria is the fruit of many years' meticulous research, driven by the author's passion for Victoria's colonial history. The author has been fascinated by history since early childhood and has deepened his knowledge of Victorian history through a great deal of travel and research over the last 20 years. His background in statistics and fascination with maps has enabled him to gather insights from diverse resources that are often overlooked in preparing histories of specific areas.

Useful to historians, researchers and all readers with a fascination for colonial history, this book's detailed assessment of the census results of 1841 to 1901 allows greater understanding of the ground upon which the current population of Victoria stands. For those who are touring Victoria, *Lost & Almost Forgotten Towns of Colonial Victoria* will open up new possibilities for exploration that are not suggested by the more commonly available resources.

This book of over 500 pages should form an invaluable reference guide to the urban composition of Victoria in the nineteenth century. Copies of *Lost & Almost Forgotten Towns of Colonial Victoria* may be obtained from the author and publisher at a cost of $23.00 plus postage and handling charge of $7.00.

Angus B. Watson
Unit 1, 13A Railway Road
Blackburn Victoria 3130
Tel/Fax (03) 9878 0174

---

language will occur in the context of language revitalisation. Students will develop skills to become active participants in language revival by being learners and users of language in daily interactions and by studying similarities and differences in the structure of Aboriginal languages. To achieve this process of language revival, students will engage with Aboriginal communities and their linguistic resources.

The syllabus outcomes and content focus on developing students' knowledge of, understandings about and skills in Aboriginal languages. In this way, it has been possible to cater for the approximately 70 languages in NSW with one syllabus. A copy of the draft syllabus is available at:
http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/writing_briefs

❑ Susan Poetsch

Aunty Beryl Carmichael, whose traditional name is Yungha-dhu, is a Ngiyampaa Elder. She is the Aboriginal Language Support Officer in the Broken Hill District Office of the NSW Department of Education and a teacher on the Ngiyampaa-Baakindji Language Program. She was awarded a Centenary of Federation Medal for devotion to cultural awareness and contribution to Australian society.

What are some of your thoughts on the new syllabus?

BC: Aboriginal people feel that the time was ripe to produce such a document. It will give opportunities to a lot of people to learn their language, opportunities which they didn't have before; not only in schools but I hope also in adult colleges. It will be good for all people to know that it's a major part of our culture. There are a whole lot of important things that will come through the teaching of language — traditional stories, culture, songs and connection to land. It is the vital link that we need to maintain.

I notice that placenames are sprinkled throughout the content section of the syllabus. What do you think about placenames as part of learning language?

BC: Placenames are very important for kids to learn about and gives them the whole feeling for a place. A lot has been passed down but hasn't been written in official records. Places already have names but learners need to get the full story behind each name to really understand them. For example Keewong means 'place where the moon camped' and there is a story behind it.

Places and pitfalls: Researching the Alexandra and Eildon area of Victoria

In 1998 I decided to write an account of the placenames of the Alexandra and Lake Eildon area of Victoria. I began by putting information on index cards but soon gave away this idea as too cumbersome and slow. I waited until the following year when I had regular access to a personal computer and thereafter kept my work in electronic format, with plenty of back-up copies on diskettes.

At first my knowledge of the history of the area was rather basic but I was fortunate in a number of respects. I had been studying family history for years, so I knew where to find gazetteers and books on the meanings of placenames and surnames. I was keen on natural history and bush walking, and already had a good collection of 1:25000 survey maps of the area. As a boy I had learnt a bit of Latin and Ancient Greek, and as a young man I had acquired the rudiments of Irish; these languages were to be surprisingly useful in my task. I am an Englishman, with interests in Scottish and Irish history, so I had a reasonable knowledge of British and Irish geography. Also Alexandra had an excellent public library and its staff and the Friends of the Library were only too eager to help and encourage me. I appealed in the *Alexandra & Eildon Standard* for information, and subsequently received a lot of help from local residents and historical societies.

I began with obvious sources, such as looking through maps for places to list and trawling through local histories for information about placenames. I also looked around by car and on foot and discovered placenames that were signed but not marked on maps, and I sometimes came across a monument or plaque that explained the origin of a placename. I picked up several placenames from the verses of James McCrae Dunn, a local poet who had been assistant stationmaster at Cathkin.

I soon realised I had to take especial care not to create or perpetuate misinformation – of which there was a considerable amount – about placenames. My main problem, encountered by other researchers on Victoria, was Les Blake's *Place Names of Victoria* (1977). Blake is best known as editor of *Vision and Realisation* (1973), a most valuable and encyclopedic three-volume account of Victorian State schools. Probably on the strength of this work, Blake decided to tackle the State's placenames but he often seemed to lack a "feel" for the origin of placenames and (even more so) for linguistics.

Blake claimed, for example, that Knockwood and Barjarg were possibly of Aboriginal origin but I found a Knockwood in Kent (as I suspected) and two more in Scotland, and I found several Barjargs in Scotland. He wrote that Dropmore might be derived from Dromore, County Down, but there is a Dropmore in Buckinghamshire. I accepted his explanation that Dabyminga Creek (near Tallarook) was derived from Aboriginal *abminga*, "snake tracks", until Luise Hercus of the Australian National University warned me that *abminga* was from Lower Southern Aranda, a South Australian language!

Les Blake suggested that Mount Torbreck (the highest place in the area I covered) might be derived from Welsh *brwch* and either French *brèche* or Italian *breccia*, which sounded rather complex. I discovered that, if the first syllable were Welsh, so too could be the second syllable. However, further checking revealed that in Scotland, near Inverness, was a village of Torbreck, so Gaelic made more sense for the etymology of the whole word.

Another writer recounted, without questioning the story, that Monkey Gully near Mansfield was named because a monkey had escaped from a circus near there. She had apparently not heard that "monkey" was squatterese for koala, just as the squatters called echidnas "porcupines", lyre-birds "pheasants" and banksias "honeysuckles".

A booklet about Marysville claimed that when governor Sir Arthur Stanley and his wife visited Marysville in 1919, Mount Margaret nearby was named in honour of the governor's lady. However, when I went to the State Library of Victoria's map room I found a map from 1913 that already clearly displayed the locality as Mount Margaret. I thought little more about this mistaken claim until I discovered, almost by chance, that Sir Arthur's consort's maiden name was Margaret Evelyn Evans Gordon. Now a place near Marysville was known as Bald Hill until at least 1912 but on modern maps it appears as Mount Gordon! Was Bald Hill perhaps renamed to commemorate Lady Stanley's visit?

I was particularly intrigued by the name of Ault Beeac Creek, a tributary near Yea of the Murrindindi River. I had heard of Beeac near Colac (a long way from the Yea area), and Beeac was reputedly of Aboriginal origin (perhaps Colijan or Katubanuut), meaning "salt water" but Ault Beeac Creek's waters were distinctly fresh. I wondered if Ault Beeac might be Gaelic. Then I discovered *allt* in Gaelic can mean "cliff, brook, stream or wooded glen"; *biadhach* "nourishing"; and *buidheach* "pleasing". This sounded promising. A few months later I read that Duncan McLeish had run stock in the area in the 1840s, and had employed his brother Daniel as a shepherd there. The brothers hailed from Dunkeld, north of Perth, Scotland.

Quite a few places in the area I covered have names whose origins I have been unable to reveal. I was particularly frustrated with the lack of information about Mount Arnold, a large feature which must have been named in the goldrush period as it was a stopping place for miners taking the Yarra Track to the

Wood's Point and Jordan goldfields. However, I could not find a governor, politician, surveyor or grazier whose name might fit. Then I had a browse through *The Chronicles of Early Melbourne* (1888) by "Garryowen" (Edmund Finn) and discovered that a Thomas Arnold had attended the foundation meeting of the Pastoral and Agricultural Society of Australia Felix (Melbourne, 2 January 1840) and had been appointed a director. He had also attended the first meeting in Melbourne (13 May 1840) to agitate for the separation of Port Phillip from NSW. Present on both occasions was the grazier William Ryrie who held pastoral runs in the Lilydale and Healesville area.

My younger daughter thinks I was very naïve for not working out the derivation of S Creek in the Black Range State Forest, particularly as it joins Bull Creek before flowing into the Murrindindi River. Local cartographer Robin Rishworth informed me that S was the sanitised version of a popular Anglo-Saxon expletive!

I was amused to find that the Germanophobes were not thorough enough when they renamed Mount Bismarck Mount Kitchener during the First World War. They forgot to rename the Bismarck Track that lurks around near the foot of the mountain.

My research has expanded my knowledge not only of Australian history but also of places like England, Scotland, and Ireland. My interest in the American Civil War came in handy for Alabama Gully, a name quite likely derived from a spectacular naval engagement off the French coast in 1864.

I also acquired a healthy respect for 19th century surveyors and mapmakers. I had access to two splendid maps by S. Shillinglaw of the shires of Euroa (1884) and Mansfield (1888). They were not only beautifully drafted, but were packed with details of landowners that may be of considerable value to genealogists and local historians.

❑   Nigel Sinnott

The Placenames Puzzle No.6

Ringing the changes on the popular word puzzles regularly contributed by Research Associate Joyce Miles, this issue's challenge comes in picture form. Snapped by ANPS Director David Blair on a recent holiday, this signpost points the way to some far-flung locations. Can you guess from the directions and distances where it is? Answer on the bottom of the next page. Joyce's puzzle will return next issue.

Bill Bright visits Sydney

The ANPS team had the great pleasure of meeting eminent US linguist and toponymist Bill Bright on his recent visit to Australia.

Bill is the Emeritus Professor of Linguistics and Anthropology at UCLA, and Professor Adjoint of Linguistics at the University of Colorado, Boulder. His specialties include toponymy, anthropological linguistics, sociolinguistics, and American Indian languages.

In the field of toponymy, he has authored a book on *Colorado Place Names* (1993), edited a special issue of the journal *Names* on American Indian placenames (1996), revised E.G. Gudde's *California Place Names* (1998), and currently under production by the University of Oklahoma Press is the NAPUS (Native American Placenames of the United States) dictionary. This up-and-coming publication is a comprehensive reference book in dictionary format on US placenames that have American Indian origins.

Part of Bill's itinerary in Sydney was a fascinating seminar, *What is a name? Reflections on onomastics* held on May 2 at the Linguistics Department at the University of Sydney. His paper took the viewpoint of anthropological linguistics, as applied especially to personal names and placenames among North American Indians. He raised the question as to whether terms which embody a description can be considered proper names; for example, whether a term meaning literally 'man living by the stream' can be a personal name, or whether a term meaning 'rock standing by the stream' can be a placename. Grammatical peculiarities of placenames were also considered, and examples were given from Karuk (California), Creek (Oklahoma), and Nahuatl (Mexico).

There are already exciting plans being made for Bill's return to Sydney, this time for a longer stay as a visiting fellow at the ANPS project. Hope to see you soon, Bill!

On the Web

The Australian Museum has a very nice site titled *Living Harbour – Aboriginal People of Coastal Sydney*. ANPS Research Friend Val Attenbrow (Research Scientist, Archaeologist) has done much of the research for the content of this site. This site features information on Sydney's Indigenous peoples including materials on Indigenous placenames for localities around Sydney Harbour. Particularly valuable are the user-friendly charts and interactive maps on Indigenous languages, clan groups and placenames. The site is completely searchable so make your way directly to the object of your query or simply browse.

Do you have a favourite placenames website you'd like to recommend to fellow readers? Send details of the URL address and a summary of its contents to Clair Hill at chill@hmn.mq.edu.au for inclusion in a future issue.

Placenames Mailing List and ANPS Volunteer Research

If you'd like to join the newsletter mailing list and/or receive information about how to become a Research Friend of the ANPS, please complete the form below and send it by post or fax, or email the details to:

Clair Hill
ANPS
Division of Humanities
Macquarie University
North Ryde
Sydney NSW 2109
Fax: (02) 9850 8240
email: chill@hmn.mq.edu.au

Name and/or organisation:...
....
....
Address: ....
....
....
Phone: ....
Fax:...
email:..

❑ Please add me to the ANPS mailing list
❑ Please send me an information package about how to become an ANPS Research Friend
❑ Please note my change of address (as above)
❑ Please remove me from the mailing list

Placenames in the news

The Canberra Times (Saturday, Feburary15, 2003) reviewed the newly published *The Land is a Map: Placenames of Indigenous Origin in Australia* edited by Luise Hercus, Jane Simpson and the ANPS's own Flavia Hodges. The review praises this as a "valuable text", describing it as "another torpedo through the idea of *terra nullius*, replete as it is with evidence of the depth of the landscape meanings and attachments…held in aboriginal societies".

The Sydney Morning Herald (Saturday, April 5, 2003) reported on historian Keith Smith's discovery of a list of 60 words collected by three men from Cook's *HM Bark Endeavour* 233 years ago. These records represent the first Indigenous Australian languages recorded by the English. Smith believes the existence of these wordlists contradicts the usual description of threatening interactions between Cook's sailors and Sydney's Indigenous peoples, instead implying some friendly meetings in those first six days of contact.

The NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs issued a press release on the 10th of March 2003 to announce the launch of the newly established Aboriginal Language Research and Resource Centre. Dr Andrew Refshauge said he hoped this would mark the empowerment of Aboriginal communities to implement local language programs and the beginning of a very strong resurrection of Indigenous languages.

Have you seen an article about placenames in the media which you'd like to share with our subscribers? Send a photocopy of the article and/or email details of the publication, date and brief summary of the article to Clair Hill at chill@hmn.mq.edu.au for inclusion in a future edition of Placenames Australia.

Answer to puzzle on previous page: The signpost is located on Norfolk Island.