

## Survey to take on international focus as APIT

We're not quite sure how to tell you this – but our Survey has a new home. Or perhaps we should say the ANPS has a new big brother. No, we haven't moved from our location at Macquarie, and we haven't been adopted out. But the news is just as exciting.

Earlier this year we saw the potential benefit in the ANPS finding its place within a structure that has a wider brief and a more secure future. We put a proposal to Macquarie University, and thanks to the generosity of Vice-Chancellor Di Yerbury, our proposal for an *Asia Pacific Institute of Toponymy* has now been accepted and will receive 5-year funding of \$600,000.

In our submission to the University, we said:

*The Institute is designed to provide support and training for toponymic work in Australasia and South-East Asia. In particular, the Institute will: in Australia, provide a sound basis to expand the work and interests of the Australian National Placenames Survey (ANPS); and in the region, assist the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) in its mission to provide the toponymic training essential to regional development.*

We see the Institute (acronymically, APIT) as having three distinct objectives. Firstly, it will be the central resource for studies in Australian toponymy. Secondly, it will be a provider of training in toponymy. And thirdly, we want the Institute to establish Australia and the region as significant contributors to the work which is being done internationally in technical and cultural toponymic research.

Where does ANPS fit in this grand initiative? We believe that all three goals of the Institute will involve the Survey.

The Survey will be the primary instrument by which the Institute achieves its first goal, that of maintaining a resource base for the study of Australian placenames.

The second goal of APIT, the education and training function, will include two different aspects. One involves government agencies which are interested in standardisation and the assigning of placenames. The other relates to those who are investigating placenames from historical, linguistic and sociological viewpoints. ANPS, of course, serves this second group; and through the structure of the Institute we will be able to provide training in placenames fieldwork and research within Australia.

The third goal of APIT, that of being a significant player on the international toponymic scene, will require us to provide models of technical innovation and best practice. The Survey, always likely to be the major project within the Institute, will be the primary means of demonstrating that we have a role to play in international placenames research.

We are very grateful for this expression of confidence in the future of toponymic work given by the Vice-Chancellor Professor Di Yerbury, and for her support which will enable the Survey to find a secure home within the new Institute.



□ David Blair

# Welcome!

Dear Friend of the ANPS,

Welcome to our revamped bulletin. First thanks go to Bill Noble who has produced the bulletin in his own time, for over five years now. His tireless efforts have enabled us to keep readers up-to-date with the progress of the ANPS and we plan to continue this tradition in our new format.

People who have been receiving the ANPS bulletin for some time will notice the difference and that we have given the bulletin a name – Placenames Australia. Thanks to Greg Welsh and Alice Coltheart in the Public Relations and Marketing Unit at Macquarie University for their hard work on the design and layout.

Quite a lot has happened since our last issue and this one is full of news and announcements. We are also trying to establish some regular columns and hope that you can have some input into the contents of future issues.

□ The ANPS team

## In this issue

Asia Pacific Institute of Toponymy...1
NSW Geographical Names Board and ANPS Collaborative Project.....2
Placename in focus .....3
CGNA Meeting 2001, Darwin .....4
WA State Committee .....5
Darling Downs News.....5
Visualising our database .....5
ANPS Research Friends.....6
Visits to Historical Societies .....7
New Publications.....7
Placenames in the News.....8
On the Web .....8
Placenames Quotes.....8
Mailing List and Volunteer Research.....8

# NSW Geographical Names Board and ANPS Collaborative Project

The GNB NSW and the ANPS have a common interest in documenting the history, origin and meaning of placenames in the Board's Geographical Names Register (GNR), and in making the information widely available.

In August 1999 David Blair, director of the ANPS and head of Macquarie University's Division of Humanities, applied for a Macquarie University External Collaborative Research Grant to carry out "A survey of documentation relating to placenames in New South Wales". The proposal was backed by a commitment from the GNB to contribute \$5,000 in cash and at least an equal amount in kind. This application was successful, and Macquarie University granted a sum of \$10,000. Both amounts were allocated to the part-time employment of a research associate, Susan Poetsch, to carry out the main research activities under the direction of David Blair and ANPS manager Flavia Hodges.

The aims of the collaborative project were to investigate primary and secondary sources of information on the history, origin and meaning of NSW placenames, evaluate the volume and value of information to be derived from them and determine how such data should be structured in the ANPS database while also being compatible with the evolving format of the GNR.

For the purpose of this collaborative project, it was decided to select one rural and one urban location. These were, respectively, Mudgee and Botany. Placenames of each location were extracted from the GNR, giving a working dataset of 617 placenames in the Mudgee LGA and 387 placenames in the Botany area.

Over a period of several months, research was performed in the Royal

Australian Historical Society Library, Macquarie University library and the Mitchell Wing of the State Library of New South Wales. In addition to the GNR, materials used included a range of maps; primary sources (letters, diaries, journals); secondary sources (local history books, placenames dictionaries, gazetteers, published periodicals, early editions of local and regional newspapers); and sources specific to indigenous languages (dictionaries, grammars, 19<sup>th</sup> century word lists). Due to practical constraints, the project was confined to documentary sources, with no reference to oral history.

Approximately 160 pieces of documentation have been collected for 11 per cent of the Mudgee dataset and 127 pieces of documentation for 14 per cent of the Botany dataset. Some placenames have several pieces of documentation but many others have none.

Research results related not only to the specific locations of Mudgee and Botany but also to findings related to the types of sources available for cultural toponymic research, the information which can be derived from them and the procedures required to uncover such material.

Some placenames have several pieces of documentation, the sources of which agree on the etymology. For example, all seven pieces of documentation collected thus far on Point Sutherland agree that it is named after the seaman Forby Sutherland. However, other placenames have conflicting etymologies, stated with equal authority in different sources. For example, Kogarah is said to mean 'the name of the porcupine (*Echidna hystrix*)' in one source, and 'place of the bullrushes' in another. Such contradictory etymologies are true not only of

**CONTINUED NEXT PAGE**

# Placename in focus - Crows Nest, Queensland

Here is the story of a popular etymology from one of our subscribers, Bernie Turvey, from Crows Nest (Qld), who wrote the following letter to the editor of the local paper:

Dear Editor,

I was recently visiting a long-time resident of Crows Nest and he showed me a dictionary dating back to the 1930s, which gave the Aboriginal placenames for Australian towns and the meaning of those names. The dictionary was the Modern Standard English Dictionary and Atlas, published by Odbams Press. The publication date is a guess, and is based on a frontispiece photo of Princess (now Queen) Elizabeth looking to be about 15-years-old, with the royal family.

Perhaps this will lay to rest the ongoing debate over crows, Jimmy, hollow logs and teamsters. Or perhaps it will just add another facet to the debate.

The Aboriginal name for the Crows Nest (Queensland) area was "Tookoogandan-nab". According to the dictionary, it means (wait for it!) "home of crows". It would be nice if there were any Aborigines left from the local tribe who

could confirm this meaning, but I would be surprised if there are. Perhaps there are records in museums or universities which may confirm this.

This does not remove the possibility of the legendary Jimmy Crow's existence – in fact I think it makes it more likely. I suspect, though, that he was named for the area, not the other way around.

Since this letter was published, Bernie has told the ANPS:

I have been approached by a number of people – elderly folk, mostly – who have commented positively on the content. One told me that she had been on the town committee back in the 40s or 50s which "invented" the legend of Jimmy Crow for tourism purposes. Jimmy is a supposed Aborigine who lived in a hollow tree which still stands in the town centre, in spite of the old rail sidings and pig yards that were there until the 60s. He is supposed to have guided the bullockies and cedar getters and acted as a mail drop. Yet other members of that same committee staunchly defend this invention as "fact". Supposedly, the bullockies named him Jimmy Crow because he was black, and hence Jimmy Crow's Nest – the hollow tree, and thence Crows

Nest. (The place is still alive with crows...but that has nothing to do with it!) Doesn't take long for fiction to become "fact", does it?

Bernie's is a neat illustration of how wildly conflicting etymologies can be found for a given placename, of how each such etymology can be stated with absolute conviction, of how hearsay leads to popular etymology and of just how much work ANPS Research Friends have ahead of them.

A lot more documentation from various sources, needs to be collected on Crows Nest (Qld), including the expertise of local Aboriginal groups, historians and linguists, primary as well as secondary sources and written as well as oral sources, in order to unravel the mystery and arrive at a scholarly interpretation of the history, origin and meaning of this placename.

placenames of indigenous origin but also, less expectedly, of introduced placenames. For example, one source says Mount Frome is named after a ticket-of-leave man, Tom Froome, and one that it is named after a town of the same name in Somerset, England.

Whilst several pieces of documentation were uncovered for some of the placenames in the data sets, as yet, no documentation was found for a surprising 89 per cent of placenames in the Mudgee data set and 86 per cent of placenames in the Botany data set. So there is still a lot of work to be done! More time, spent on more research, in more libraries, and including oral history sources, will no doubt uncover a greater number of sources, leading to a more complete set of documentation quotes for both Mudgee and Botany placenames.

Results and findings of this collaborative project indicate that it is unrealistic to progress to the interpretation of the history, origin and meaning of a given placename in the GNR until numerous pieces of documentation have been collected from several different sources for that placename. It is anticipated that users of the ANPS database and users of the history, origin and meaning fields of the GNR on the GNB website are more likely to be interested in what will become the interpretation module for each placename, rather than the unanalysed collection of pieces of documentation.

□ Susan Poetsch

The ANPS team would like to wish all of our readers the best for Christmas and the New Year.



Special thanks to the Research Friends who volunteered their time and enthusiasm to the ANPS in 2001.

# Committee for Geographical Names in Australasia

In early April, David Blair, Flavia Hodges and Susan Poetsch travelled to Darwin for the annual meeting of the Committee for Geographical Names in Australasia.

The CGNA is a coordinating body consisting of representatives from each of the authorities that maintain the register of official placenames in each state and territory of Australia — plus the Commonwealth, defence agencies, and New Zealand.

These bodies are primarily concerned with technical aspects of toponymy, i.e. the determination and recording of current official placenames and the location of the places referred to. The ANPS, on the other hand, is devoted to the cultural aspects of toponymy, i.e. the origin, history and meaning of placenames both current and historical, and since 1998 Macquarie University, as host institution of the ANPS, has been a full member of the CGNA.

One or more of the team has now attended the annual meetings in 1998 (Sydney), 1999 (Melbourne), 2000 (Adelaide) and now 2001 (Darwin), and we have found them to be extremely rewarding occasions for building mutually beneficial relationships.

Working closely with the nomenclature authorities is crucial to the success of the ANPS. Examples of successful links (both of which are reported in more detail elsewhere in this newsletter) are the collaboration of the Geographical Names Board of NSW in the model study of placenames in the Mudgee and Botany areas, and the chairing of the ANPS's WA State Committee by Brian Goodchild, Secretary of that state's Geographic Names Committee. The ANPS has also helped to produce a revised edition of the CGNA's *Guidelines for the Consistent Use of Placenames* (formerly *Toponymic Guidelines for Australia*), of which a final version was approved at the meeting.



*Attending the CGNA meeting in Darwin in April 2001 were: Back row: Keith Bell (Vic), Richard Broers (Australian Land Information Group), Vern O'Brien (NT), Bill Watt (SA), Ian Hutchings (QLD), Stuart Duncan (NT), Kevin Slade (Australian Hydrographic Office), Greg Windsor (NSW); Middle Row: Wendy Shaw (NZ), Lorraine Bayliss (ACT), Tony Naughton (Tas), David Blair (ANPS), Halina Scott (CGNA Executive Officer), Rowan Gillies (Defence Topographic Agency), Susan Poetsch (ANPS); Front row: Paul Harcombe (NSW), Flavia Hodges (ANPS), Brian Goodchild (WA; CGNA Chairman), Anita Jaroslowski (Vic), Leon Jackson (Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority). Photo: Wendy Shaw*

Other issues discussed in Darwin were the enhancement of the *Gazetteer of Australia* (available online at <http://www.auslig.gov.au/mapping/names/names.htm>) and progress on the National Placenames Data Model as part of the Australian Spatial Data Infrastructure.

The two days of official meetings were followed by a Saturday seminar on Aboriginal placenames, coordinated by David Ritchie of the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority and Bill Wilson of the Northern Territory Place Names Committee. Presentations were made by several speakers familiar with current issues relating to placenames in the Territory, including Richard Barnes Kulpinya and Banduk Marika, Elders of the Larrakia and Yolngu language groups; and Peter Carroll and Ursula Zaar who have investigated Kunwinjku placenames in West Arnhem Land and Indigenous names of water features in East Arnhem Land. The seminar was also attended by other interested parties such as Michael

Christie, the Northern Territory representative on the ANPS National Advisory Committee, and informal discussions covered a range of issues relating to the appropriate use of Aboriginal placenames in the wider community.



□ Flavia Hodges

## Visualising our database

The major task of the ANPS is to construct a huge database of Australia's placenames, past and present. But databases in themselves are notoriously opaque constructions, full of records, fields, codes and indecipherable symbols. Our task will be incomplete unless we can make the information available in a readily accessible form to everybody who needs to check a placename. And that means designing some kind of visual display that will be suitable for our Web site.

Placenames, of course, belong to places — they exist in geographic space. And that indicates to us that the method we choose to represent our data should also represent geographic space in some way. We therefore applied for funding from Macquarie University to integrate the database with Geographic Information Systems technology, and as a result we have \$6500 to begin the process this year.

But who to do the job? Rob Iverach was the obvious choice, since he was the Survey's computing specialist. But Rob moved to Curtin University of Technology early this year to complete his PhD. This was a huge loss, since Rob had been a surveyor in an earlier life, and his expertise included not only information technology but geographic information systems!

We are delighted, though, to announce that Rob has agreed to carry out the project for us from Perth, in his spare time. This will demonstrate that mere distance cannot conquer computing technology; and we hope that this will be the beginning of a productive partnership with the Computing Department at Curtin.

## Darling Downs News

The research into Darling Downs (Qld) placenames is progressing well. Ian Hutchings and Bill Kitson from the Department of Natural Resources in Brisbane have proffered invaluable information and advice. I am grateful for assistance from local historical societies in Dalby, Millmerran and Toowoomba and some individual researchers, particularly Ron Potter and John Eggleston.

Much information has been tabulated, and the result looks somewhat like a jigsaw puzzle with missing pieces. I am optimistic that many of these blanks will be filled in when our findings become available on line, and we can access the

wealth of knowledge in the community. We accept that the local residents are the experts on the area, and that they will want any information we record to be as precise as possible. Any additional help in that direction will be gratefully received.

Just for fun, here are a few of the placenames requiring origin information: Elliott Creek, Budgee Creek (Cambooya Shire), Tilgonda, The Hollows (Jondaryan Shire), Nicol Creek, and Nangway Gully (Millmerran Shire).

□ Dale Lehner



*The Crossing - Dalby's first settlement in 1841, where settlers crossed the Myall River.*

## WA the first State Committee

The Australian National Placenames Survey is pleased to announce that we have established our first state committee, especially pleased because it is in WA, which makes our national Survey truly span the continent. Its members are:

**Brian Goodchild** - Department of Lands Administration WA and chair of the Committee for Geographical Names in Australasia

**Penny Lee** - Graduate School of Education, University of WA

**David Trigger** - Department of Anthropology, University of WA and

**Robert Iverach** - Computer Science Department, Curtin University of Technology, former ANPS IT Officer.

In our next issue we hope to include a report on their first meeting.

# An ANPS Research Friend - Robert White

For the past few years the ANPS has been securing funding, establishing its operations and making contact with state and territory, national and international nomenclature authorities. We have now begun to move into the next phase of the Survey - to have more public input into placenames research.

So far, we have appealed for voluntary public assistance through David Blair's ABC radio interview (Dec 2000), Dale Lehner's contacts in her work on the Darling Downs, Qld (throughout 2000-2001), Bill Noble's presentations to Historical Society meetings in the Blue Mountains, NSW (March 2001) and an article by Flavia Hodges in *Ozwords* (May 2001).

In each issue of *Placenames Australia*, we'll try and keep you up to date with the work of a Research Friend. This issue it's Robert White.

The ANPS aims to have the work done by Research Friends entered onto our database via our website on the internet. We had hoped that the data-base would be ready in 2001, however lack of funds has meant that 2002 is a more realistic timeframe. Currently staff and students at the Computer Science Department at Curtin University in Perth (led by Robert Iverach) are enthusiastically beginning to grapple with the complexities of the database and the challenges involved in making it web accessible, with varying degrees of user accessibility.

In the meantime, ANPS Research Friends are going ahead with collecting information about placenames in their respective local areas and storing it for us until the database is ready for input.

*If you are interested in becoming a Research Friend of the ANPS, we can send you an information package. Just fill in the form on the back page of this issue and send it to Susan.*



*Aboriginal placenames piqued the interest of Robert White (pictured, above right).*

“

I became interested in the origin of placenames when travelling around Australia in 2000 and wondering why Aboriginal names were given to so many places while the indigenous inhabitants were ignored, alienated (or worse) by the white settlers. Obviously the adoption of Aboriginal names didn't reflect a commitment to preserve and honour the links the traditional owners had with the land, yet had the option of Aboriginal names not been used, every location and feature would have been named after the white settlers' hometowns in "the old county", or called something inspirational like "six mile creek".

When I got talking to Susan Poetsch at a party she got me interested in the ANPS project and I found that I could make a small contribution by trying to trace the origins of the names of State forests, through access to files in State Forests of NSW. Although not universally well documented, the files do reveal the origins of the names of many State Forests, especially those proclaimed since the 1950s. Older State Forests files

are in archives and not readily available to me for casual review during lunch breaks or before and after work.

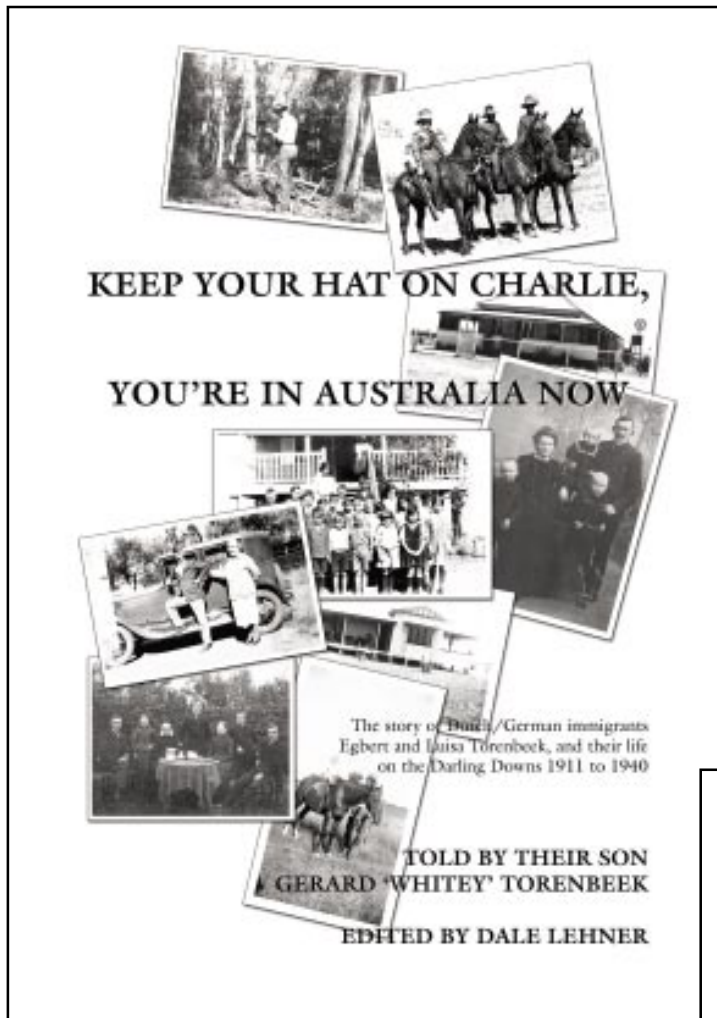
The names of the forests have normally been recommended by district foresters at the time when forests have been acquired or dedicated. To my disappointment, among the 30 forest names I have so far documented, I have been struck by the lack of imagination shown by the district foresters who have tended to use parish names or pre-existing local names.

I live in hope of more interesting revelations when I get time to research names such as Mistake State Forest, Ben Halls Gap State Forest, Berry Jerry State Forest, Blow Clear State Forest, Wilsons Downfall State Forest, Bulls Ground State Forest, Nulla Five Day State Forest, Pee Dee State Forest, Terrible Billy State Forest and the many State forests with Aboriginal origin names.

”

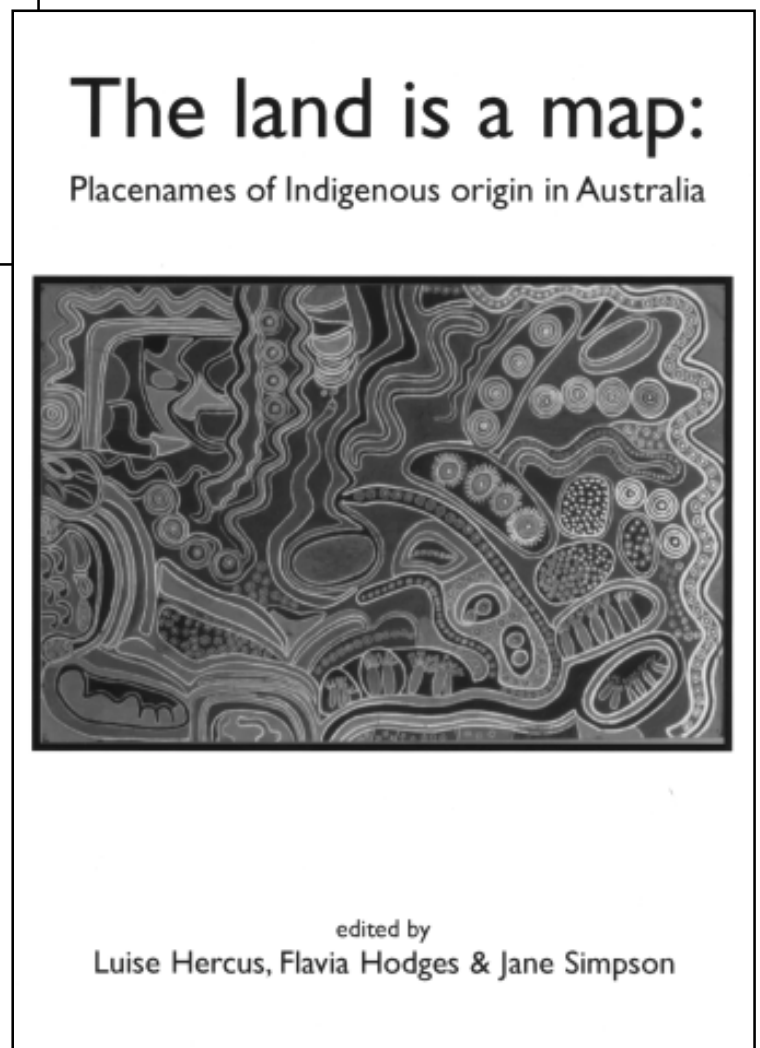
□ Bob White

# New Publications..New Publications..New Publications



*Keep Your Hat on Charlie You're in Australia Now* is a story of European migrants in rural Australia during the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is presented as an A4 size book of 140 pages, including over 20 pages of photographs. Edited by ANPS Research Associate Dale Lehner, copies are available for \$12.50 including postage and handling. Write to Dale at 11 Vernon St Turramurra, NSW 2074.

Published by Pacific Linguistics, Canberra, and edited by Luise Hercus, Flavia Hodges and Jane Simpson, *The Land is a Map: placenames of indigenous origin in Australia* is a volume of papers from 19 contributors with expertise in linguistics, history or anthropology. Most of the papers were presented at one of two colloquiums on placenames of indigenous origin, held in Canberra in 1999 and in Adelaide in 2000. *The Land is a Map* will be available early in 2002.



## Historical Societies

In the first half of this year, I spoke to a number of local Historical Societies in the Blue Mountains area of New South Wales. The aims of the talks were to acquaint people with the objectives and strategies of the Australian National Placenames Survey, to recruit interested persons for the Survey, and to unearth works already underway by independent researchers.

Although the ANPS database is still in the process of being built, Research Friends have already begun to collect the information to add to the Survey database. In order to accomplish such a massive effort in a standard manner, the ANPS has developed a standard data input form.

If your local history group would like me to visit as a guest speaker, contact me at [bnoble@hmn.mq.edu.au](mailto:bnoble@hmn.mq.edu.au) to see if I am available to travel to you or can organise someone to speak in my place.

□ Bill Noble

# Placenames in the News

*The Mercury* (29/4/2000) reported on a raft of placenames in Tasmania, which were bestowed by early settlers and reflect, in addition to Aboriginal phrases and European history, diverse influences including the Bible (e.g. Walls of Jerusalem), Greek mythology (e.g. Mt Olympus), Egyptian mythology (e.g. Isis River), Roman history (Rubicon Hill) and Scandanavian mythology (Vallhalla). There are also more earthly influences (e.g. Bust Me Gall Hill)!

*The Adelaide Advertiser* (28/3/2001) reported on a plan approved by Adelaide City Council's Reconciliation Advisory Group in which unnamed parks and sporting fields will be given Kurna language names. The River Torrens will also be known as Karrawirraparri.

*The Sun-Herald* (25/3/2001) reported on nine towns in NSW, (Adelong, Bulgonia, East Molong, Glen Davis, Kirketon, Mathoura, O'Connelltown, West Cobborah, West Molong), the names of which have been 'discontinued' from the gazette of official towns in the Geographic Names Register of NSW. For example, Glen Davis, formerly a mining town, is no longer gazetted as a town under the Geographical Names Act.

*The Dalby Herald* (8/5/2001) reported on one of Dale Lehner's recent visits to the Darling Downs (Qld) area, seeking the assistance of local residents in collecting information on settlement and placenames, as part of her thesis research. The article also mentions that, whilst there, Dale was promoting the recently published *Keep Your Hat on Charlie, You're in Australia Now*, by Gerard "Whitey" Torenbeek.

*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 a brief summary of the article to [spoetsch@hmn.mq.edu.au](mailto:spoetsch@hmn.mq.edu.au) for inclusion in a future issue of Placenames Australia.*

## I Quote...

"The study of place names stands to history, political or social, historical geography, exploration and many other fields in somewhat the same relation as the study of fossils does to geology."  
- J.S. Ryan, (1963) *Australian Place Names: a Neglected Study*.

*The Sydney Morning Herald* (7/6/2001) reported on the New South Wales Geographic Names Board dual naming policy, which means that, like Ayres Rock, a feature can have an indigenous as well as a non-indigenous name. The policy applies to natural features only. There must be historic evidence that the feature has two names and a new name cannot be assigned for the purpose of a tribute.

*The Sydney Morning Herald* (11/7/2001) reported that the NSW Heritage Office has identified 38 places along the coast which owe their names to shipping disasters, including Mimosa Rocks, which the paddle-steamer Mimosa hit in 1863, and Summer Cloud Cove, where, in 1870, the barque Summer Cloud was caught in a gale and washed ashore.

*The Sydney Morning Herald* (18/8/2001) reported that, 231 years after Cook recorded its name, the state of New South Wales has been officially registered as a placename under the Geographical Names Act. Mr Yeadon, Minister for Information Technology, was quoted as describing this event as correcting 'an historical peculiarity'.

*The Sydney Morning Herald* (19/8/2001) and *The Weekend Australian Magazine* (29-30/9/2001) reported on a bicentenary exhibition about Matthew Flinders, which opened in Sydney in October 2001 and will tour Australia until 2003. Flinders circumnavigated Tasmania and the Australian mainland and named many coastal features in all states, and is also responsible for the name 'Australia'.

"The origins of many names were incorrectly recorded in the literature. These errors have been faithfully cited and used in more recent works."

- Hodes, Jeremy (2000) *Far North Queensland Place and Street Names* <http://sites.netscape.net/jeremyhodes/Place.htm> page 1; Site visited 15/10/2001.

# On the Web

<http://geonames.ncran.gc.ca/english/> will take you to the Canadian Geographical Names site and illustrates how much Canada and Australia have in common in terms of patterns of naming influenced by indigenous people, colonisers and migrants.

*Do you have a favourite placenames website you'd like to recommend to fellow readers? Send details of the address and a summary of its contents to [spoetsch@hmn.mq.edu.au](mailto:spoetsch@hmn.mq.edu.au) for inclusion in a future issue.*

## Mailing List and Volunteer Research

If you'd like to receive the ANPS *Placenames Australia* newsletter and/or 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:

Susan Poetsch  
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Macquarie University  
North Ryde,  
Sydney NSW 2109  
Fax: (02) 9850 8240  
email: [spoetsch@hmn.mq.edu.au](mailto:spoetsch@hmn.mq.edu.au)

Name and/or organisation: .....

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Please add me to the ANPS mailing list

Please send me an information package about how to become an ANPS Research Friend