# Is Cook's Cape Dromedary really an island?

Over the past few years a number of articles on misplaced land features named by Lt James Cook in 1770 on the coasts of Victoria and New South Wales have appeared in the pages of *Placenames Australia*. Of the 28 land features named by Cook on these coasts six are in the wrong place on today's maps—Point Hicks (September 2014), Ram Head (September 2013 and March 2020), Cape St George and Long Nose (June 2017), Broken Bay (March 2019), and Point Danger (June 2013). Three more are where Cook intended them to be but are believed by some to be elsewhere—Cape Howe (March 2018), Cape Dromedary (this issue) and Red Point. Black Head does not appear on today's maps. This article continues the series which explains how these errors occurred. The research on which these articles, and others published elsewhere, are based was undertaken by members of Australia on the Map, the history and heritage division of the Australasian Hydrographic Society. Now, for the first time in 250 years we have an accurate record of what Cook saw and named on these coasts in 1770. Brief details of this research are brought together in one place at www.jamescookheritagetrail.com.au.

Cape Dromedary, on the south-east coast of Australia, appears on today's maps where Cook placed it, but most sources proclaim, and it is generally accepted locally, that what Cook saw and named as *Cape Dromedary* was in fact nearby Montague Island. How has all this confusion arisen?

Following the naming of Ram Head, Cook rounded and named Cape Howe, then sailed northwards up Australia's east coast. On the morning of 21 April:
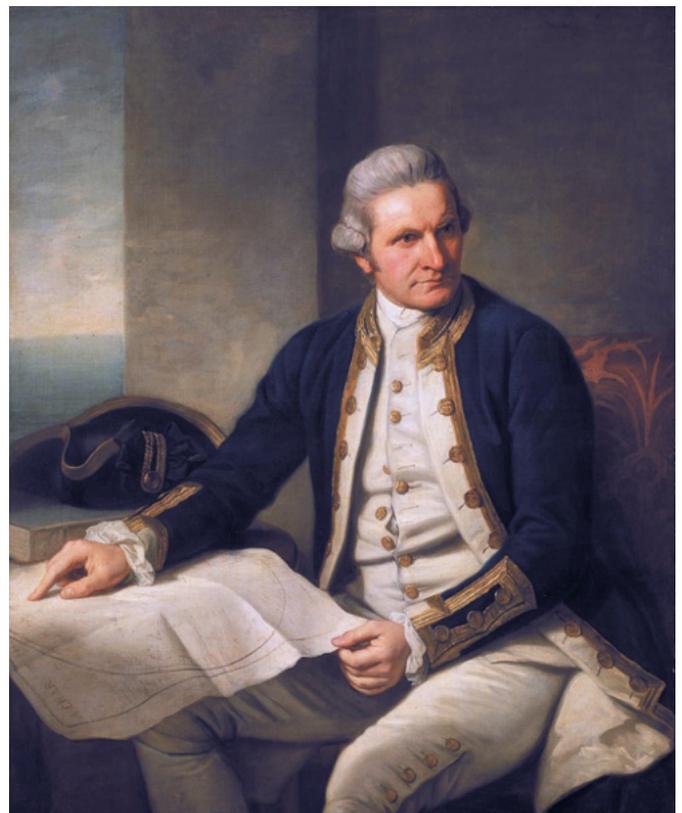
James Cook: portrait by Nathaniel Dance (National Maritime Museum, Greenwich

At 6 oClock we were a breast of a pretty high mountain laying near the shore which on account of its figure I have named Mount Dromedary (Latde. 36.18S, Longde. 209.55W). The shore under the foot of this Mountain forms a point which I have named Cape Dromedary over which is a peaked hillick.[1]

Cook describes these two features clearly and they appear on his charts.[2] Both appear on today's maps where Cook placed them and are the current official names on the Geographical Name Register of New South Wales.

From the Editor

James Cook is again the star of *Placenames Australia*—fittingly so in this 250th anniversary year. Trevor Lipscombe's analysis of Cape Dromedary's naming completes the trilogy of Cook toponyms. We're hoping, too, to persuade Trevor to write something for us soon about what Cook meant by *New South Wales*—the syntax of the placename is ambiguous, we've always felt.

The COVID19 virus finds its niche here too, in Joshua Nash's lighthearted piece. In our next issue, we'll have something with a wider application: Jan Tent has written an article for us about virus names more generally.

Two items of business are on my mind too... We're almost at what people refer to as EOFY—the end of the financial year. So we encourage our supporters to renew their annual donation for the work of the Survey (details on the back page). And we're planning for the Annual General Meeting of Placenames Australia: it'll be held in Melbourne this year, on 9th October or thereabouts. More details next issue—we'd love to see you there.

David Blair
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We recommend...

Etymology map of London place names

We rather like this web page:

https://londonist.com/london/maps/etymology-map-of-london-place-names

It shows significant places all over London, with the generally accepted origin of the name. Many of the names, of course, are now attached to Australian places. A great 'quiz' page to while away those long evening hours!

London Etymology Map
Boroughs in red, other places in black

Readers say...

Bill Forrest continues to be intrigued by the inappropriateness of our placenames. He points out what Sydney-siders well know: that **Circular Quay** is not circular, more square if anything; that **Australia Square** is not square but circular. As for the country, he notes that there are no bananas growing in **Banana** (QLD), nor oranges grown in **Orange** (NSW), and the demographic of **Young** (NSW) is not!

Jack Hammer recalls the difficulties in getting mail delivered to **Nhill** (VIC). Mail often ended up in the Melbourne suburb of Notting Hill, on the assumption that an abbreviation *N'Hill* must have been intended. Jack also reports that he once built a motel there and named it *Zero Inn*—a bit of linguistic adventurism that pleased the ANPS workroom greatly when we heard of it!

Puzzle answers - *(from page 16)*

However Cook's Cape Dromedary is widely regarded as being Montague Island, as an internet search for the island will reveal. Matthew Flinders was the first to conclude that this was the case, reported this in *A voyage to Terra Australis*, and omitted Cape Dromedary from his charts. Flinders' erroneous conclusion still dominates, and historians have continued to accept Flinders' version of events.[3]

Twenty years after Cook, in June 1790, Nicholas Anstis the captain of *Surprize*, a convict transport in the Second Fleet, reported an island offshore just to the north of Mount Dromedary and named it *Montagu Island*. This island had not been recorded by Cook. The island was later recorded, on 3 February 1798, by Matthew Flinders, sailing southward as a passenger in the sloop *Francis*:

> We were surprised to find an island lying near two leagues off the coast: none being noticed by Captain Cook, who passed this part on a fine morning, as appears by his getting lunar observations; which circumstance indeed, from engaging his attention, might have been the reason he did not see it. From the number of seals about, we termed it Seal Island.[4]

It was not until later that Flinders discovered that his Seal Island had earlier been named by Captain Anstis as *Montagu Island*.

Later that year, on 8 October 1798, sailing south in the sloop *Norfolk*, Flinders again saw the island:

> At 8 a.m. hauled up and passed between Montague Island and the coast under Mount Dromedary… It lays NEbE ¼ E from Mount Dromedary. No observation at noon. Supposed latitude 36.28, Dromedary NW by N 4 leagues.[5]

Neither of Flinders' two sightings, recorded in his journals at the time, mention his conclusion, recorded some years later in *A voyage to Terra Australis*, that Cook's Cape Dromedary is actually Montague Island:

> Soon after noon [3 February 1798], land was in sight to the S. S. E., supposed to be the Point Dromedary of captain Cook's chart; but, to my surprise, it proved to be an island not laid down, though lying near two leagues from the coast. The whole length of this island is about one mile and a quarter, north and south; the two ends are a little elevated, and produce small trees; but the sea appeared to break occasionally over the middle part. It is probably frequented by seals, since many were seen in the water whilst passing at the distance of two miles. This little island, I was afterwards informed, had been

seen in the ship Surprise, and honoured with the name of Montague.

> When captain Cook passed this part of the coast his distance from it was five leagues, and too great for its form to be accurately distinguished. There is little doubt that Montague Island was then seen, and mistaken for a point running out from under Mount Dromedary; for its distance from the mount, and bearing of about N. 75° E., will place it in 36° 17', or within one minute of the latitude assigned to the point in captain Cook's chart.[6]

This passage has been, and still is, accepted by historians as an accurate correction by Flinders of Cook's placement of Cape Dromedary.

Flinders produced three charts of this coast. The first (Figure 1, next page), published in 1801 just three years after the two voyages, shows Mount Dromedary and Montague Island together with Cook's soundings, indicating *Endeavour's* track. There is no mention of Cape Dromedary.[7]

Flinders' *Chart of Terra Australis*, Sheet 1, East Coast, published in 1814, shows the same two features, but Montague Island is now marked 'Pt. Dromedary of Cap. Cook'.[8] Flinders' *General Chart of Terra Australis or Australia*, also of 1814, but a much smaller scale, shows only Montague Island.

It seems that Flinders did not immediately come to the conclusion that Montague Island was Cook's Cape Dromedary as there is no mention of this in the two journals of 1798. However, by 1801 his chart records Montague Island and Mount Dromedary but not Cape (or Point) Dromedary. The omission of the Cape is probably deliberate. None of Flinders' charts show Point Hicks. It seems that where he had doubts about what Cook had actually seen he did not put the feature on his charts.

Flinders' later chart, included in *A voyage to Terra Australis*, makes his conclusion clear, as does his more detailed description in that book of his passage through the area, quoted above. So where did Flinders go wrong?

As will be seen from Figure 1, on both occasions Flinders was approaching the area from the north whereas Cook was approaching from the south. From this northern perspective Mount Dromedary would appear behind the island, perhaps causing Flinders to suppose that this was

Cape Dromedary...

Figure 1. A section of Flinders' 1801 Chart of part of the coast of NSW. *National Library of Australia nla.obj-230726807*
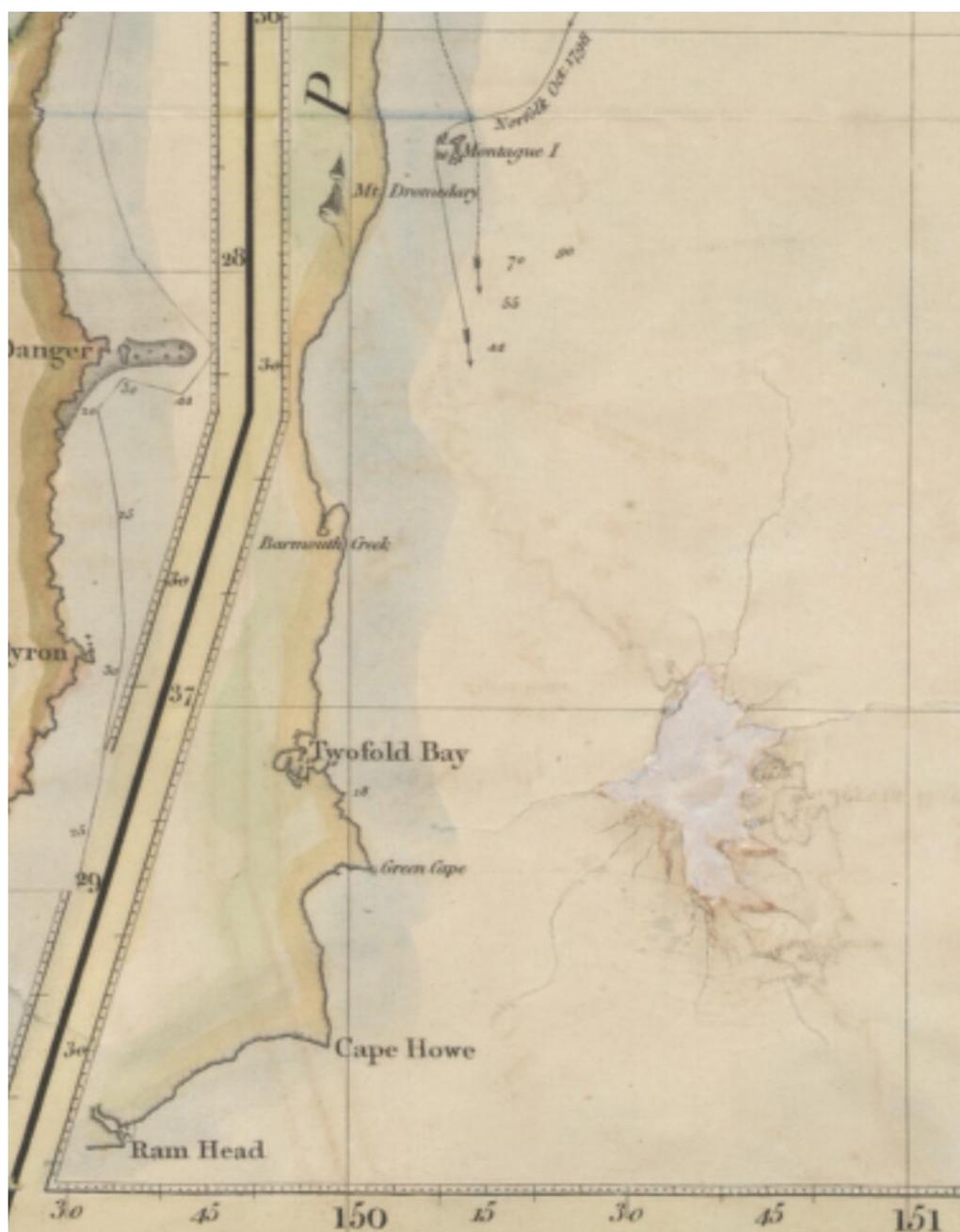
The weather was clear and Cook would have had good views of Mount Dromedary as he approached it from the south in the afternoon and evening of 21 April (the ship-time day having commenced at noon). From *Endeavour's* log, at 5 p.m. he would have been about 6 leagues south-east of Cape Dromedary. Sunset was around 5.30 p.m. At 6 p.m. he reports that he was 2 to 3 leagues from the shore and made the 44 fathom sounding, the most southerly of those shown in Figure 1. *Endeavour's* log records 'The no'ermost land in sight No.[rth].' Because of the north-east trend of the coast this land would have been Cape Dromedary. He would have had clear views of the mountain, 'peaked hillick' and cape from the south-east from 5 to 6 leagues away from Cape Dromedary before nightfall.

The following morning at 4 a.m. Cook records that he was 5 leagues offshore to the east of the Cape, and made the 90 fathom sounding, the most northerly of those shown in Figure 1. He sets a course of NNE, bringing him slightly closer to the shore by 6 a.m. when he reports his position as being abreast of Mount Dromedary. Shortly before 7 a.m. he reaches the point where Montague Island is between the ship and Mount Dromedary—the point where, if Flinders is right, he mistook the island, now only 3 or 4 miles from the *Endeavour*, for Cape Dromedary.[9]

how Cook had viewed the situation, and mistaken the island for part of the mainland. But Cook's perspective was quite different as he had approached from the south, with Montague Island lying beyond Mount and Cape Dromedary.

Flinders says that Cook was five leagues from the coast, a distance 'too great for its form to be accurately distinguished'. Cook had several opportunities to view the cape and the mountain, from the south in the afternoon and evening, and from the east and north-east the following morning.

Approached from the south, the 'peaked hillick' which

...Cape Dromedary

he refers to as being over Cape Dromedary would have been clearly seen to the east of the mountain. From the east it would be less visible against the slopes of Mount Dromedary.

Cook's description is precise: 'The shore under the foot of this Mountain forms a point which I have named Cape Dromedary over which is a peaked hillick'. The 'peaked hillick' is Little Mount Dromedary (140m), a distinctive peak, and the shore near the Cape has land up to 40m high. From 6 leagues, allowing for the curvature of the earth, and viewed from *Endeavour's* rigging at a height of 18m, land less than 26m high would not be visible. The Cape would have just been visible and the 'peaked hillick' would have appeared as a feature nearly 114m high.[10]

Elevated coastal features are visible from a surprising distance in clear weather. The following morning, at 7 a.m. on 21 April, Cook records the first sighting of Pigeon House mountain from a point just to the north of Montague Island. This 720m mountain is 17 leagues (97km) to the north from his viewpoint. Joseph Banks recorded:

> The hill like a pigeon house was also seen at a very great distance; the little dome on the top of it was first thought to be a rock standing up in the sea long before any other part was seen, and when we came up with it we found it to be several miles inland.[11]

Flinders' 1814 East Coast chart shows Mount Dromedary as 'visible 20 leagues'. A similar calculation reveals that the first 723m of that mountain's 800m would not be visible from that distance, and that Flinders' notation is correct. However his assumption that the coast from 5 leagues away was at a distance 'too great for its form to be accurately distinguished' proves to be incorrect.

Figure 2: Mount Dromedary, the 'peaked hillick' and Cape Dromedary from Bermagui, approximately 3 leagues to the south. Montague Island is just visible to the right. A telescope would give an even closer view. (Photo: Trevor Lipscombe)

Montague Island is north east of Mount Dromedary and more than 3 leagues (19km) from the mountain, hardly at its foot as Cook describes. Cook had seen and named both Mount Dromedary and the Cape well before he reached the area of Montague Island. If he had seen Montague Island and mistaken it for the Cape, the coastline on his chart would be much further out to sea than it is, as the island is 5 miles off the nearest coast. Further, the island at its highest point is 47m and does not meet Cook's description of his Cape 'over which is a peaked hillick'.

Flinders says:

> There is little doubt that Montague Island was then seen, and mistaken for a point running out from under Mount Dromedary; for its distance from the mount, and bearing of about N. 75° E., will place it in 36° 17', or within one minute of the latitude assigned to the point in captain Cook's chart.

Cook puts Mount Dromedary at 36.18 which accords with its current latitude and that of Cape Dromedary. Montague Island is at 36.15, to the north of the Mountain and Cape, not at 36.17 as Flinders states. Interestingly, the island is more or less correctly shown to the north

of these features on his 1801 chart but has conveniently migrated southward, and appears due east of them on the 1814 chart, substantiating his statement above.

All the evidence points to Cook having seen and named today's Cape Dromedary and not Montague Island. But how did Cook miss seeing Montague Island? Flinders himself provides a possible explanation in his journal entry for his first sighting:

> We were surprised to find an island lying near two leagues off the coast: none being noticed by Captain Cook, who passed this part on a fine morning, as appears by his getting lunar observations; which circumstance indeed, from engaging his attention, might have been the reason he did not see it.

The island is low lying and, from Cook's position to its seaward, would blend with the green hills of the coastal hinterland. Nevertheless it is strange that nobody on *Endeavour* on that clear morning spotted an island. It is equally strange that Flinders, who sailed inshore of the island and closer to the coast than Cook, did not see the 'peaked hillick', a prominent feature.

Admiralty charts for nearly 40 years after 1814 largely followed Flinders, omitting Cape Dromedary, with some showing his annotation to Montague Island, 'Pt Dromedary of Cap. Cook'. The maps of leading land map publisher John Arrowsmith published from 1832 to 1858 consistently show this notation. Joseph Cross, another land map publisher of this era, exhibits more uncertainty. In maps from 1827 to 1839 he shows the same notation, but also includes Point Dromedary where Cook places Cape Dromedary.[12]

In 1851 John Lort Stokes in Acheron was the next to chart this coast and appears to have recognised Flinders' error. His Admiralty chart, published in 1852, shows the names *Mount Dromedary* and *Montague Island* and includes contours showing elevations for these, and also for the unlabelled 'peaked hillick' at 650 feet, apparently the first chart to show this feature. Strangely, there are two copies of this chart in the National Library of Australia, both with the same date and details. Cape Dromedary is labelled on one (NLA Map T3), but not on the other (NLA Map British Admiralty Special Map Col./42).[13] It appears that NLA Map T3 is a revision of the second chart, as later editions in 1860 and 1865 include the cape.[14] Later nautical charts up to the present day show Cook's Cape Dromedary.

While hydrographers have recognised Flinders' error since the 1850s, historians have not yet caught up with this and continue to transmit Flinders' version of events.

Figure 3: Montague Island, looking south west, with Mount Dromedary beyond, the 'peaked hillick' to its left. (Photo: Courtesy of Eurobodalla Shire Council)

...Cape Dromedary

Endnotes

[1] Beaglehole, J.C. (1955). *The journals of Captain James Cook. The voyage of the Endeavour, 1768-1771* (p. 300). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press for the Hakluyt Society.

[2] Cook, J. (1789). *Chart of the east coast of New Holland*. London: A. Dalrymple. National Library of Australia (NLA) Map NK 5557A, accessed 24 August 2017. Also available online http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-230691973, accessed 24 August 2017. See also *Historical Records of NSW*. (Vol 1, Part 1, Chart No 3) 'Pt Hickes to Smoaky Cape'.

[3] Ingleton, G.C. (1986). *Matthew Flinders: navigator and chartmaker* (p. 30). Guildford, UK: Genesis Publications; Mundle, R. (2012). *Flinders: The man who mapped Australia* (p. 168). Sydney: Hatchette Australia; Pacey, L. (2013). *The lure of Montague*. Narooma, NSW: Author.

[4] Rawson, G. (1946). *Matthew Flinders' narrative of his voyage in the schooner Francis*. London: Golden Cockerel Press.

[5] *Historical Records of NSW*. (Vol 3, Appendix B, p. 769). 'Matthew Flinders Narrative of an Expedition in the Colonial sloop Norfolk'.

[6] Flinders, M. (1966). *A voyage to Terra Australis*. Adelaide: Libraries Board of South Australia. (see 'Prior Discoveries in Australia', Section IV East Coast with Van Diemens Land, Part II).

[7] Flinders, M. (1801). *Chart of part of the coast of New South Wales from Ram Head to Northumberland Isles*. London: A Arrowsmith. NLA Map NK 10745. Also available online http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-230726807, accessed 24 August 2017.

[8] Flinders, M. (1814). *Chart of Terra Australis*. Sheet 1, [East Coast]. London: s.n. NLA Map RM 761. Also available online http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-231307436, accessed 24 August 2017.

[9] Parkin, R. (2003). *H.M.Bark Endeavour* (pp. 162-164). Carlton, Vic.:The Miegunyah Press.

[10] For calculations see www.cactus2000.de/uk/unit/masshor.shtml, accessed 24 August 2017.

[11] Brunton, P. (Ed). (1998). *Endeavour journal of Joseph Banks – the Australian journey,* Sydney: Angus and Robertson in association with State Library of New South Wales.

[12] See e.g. Arrowsmith, J. *Eastern Portion of Australia*. NLA Map T1441/2. Also available online http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-232668714, accessed 24 August 2017; Cross, J. (1839). *Chart of part of New South Wales.* NLA Map RM839. Also available online http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-231318059, accessed 24 August 2017

[13] Stokes, J.L. (1852). A*ustralian East Coast*. Sheet 2, 'Barriga Point to Jervis Bay'. Hydrographic Office of the Admiralty. NLA Map T3. Also available online http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-232531286, accessed 24 August 2017; and as NLA Map British Admiralty Special Map Col./42. Also available online http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-233813592, accessed 24 August 2017.

[14] National Library of Australia, personal communication, 4 September 2017. A copy of the 1865 edition is at https//www.geographicus.com/P/AntiqueMap/australiabarrigajervis-stokes-1865, accessed 4 September 2017.

Trevor Lipscombe

Cooking up a conspiracy?

Margaret Cameron-Ash (in our previous issue) wrote that, although Trevor Lipscombe was right in saying that James Cook misplaced Point Hicks on his chart, she believed that Cook's error was deliberate rather than accidental. Would Trevor be persuaded, we wondered?

Margaret Cameron-Ash would have us believe that, under Admiralty instructions, Cook deliberately placed Point Hicks out at sea in an effort to persuade the French that Bass Strait did not exist, thereby deterring them from colonising today's Tasmania. However, she is not able to present any firm evidence that Cook had received such instructions, claiming in her book that Cook's orders were secret, given verbally, and so, conveniently for her, there is no paper trail. In respect of Point Hicks, like the excellent lawyer that she is, she makes an eloquent and appealing case, but conveniently ignores vital evidence and alternative, more plausible, explanations which do not suit her argument. My verdict, below, is that Cook is not guilty as charged.

She tells us that by referring to Tasman's 1642 map, before his departure Cook had worked out that it was very likely that a strait did exist between Van Diemens Land and the continental coast of eastern Australia. Driven by the westerly Roaring Forties, Tasman had come upon the western coast of Tasmania. Following the coast south, then east, and then northward, upon reaching the north eastern extremity of Tasmania, Tasman then rejoined the Roaring Forties, which came rushing from the west through today's Bass Strait, and continued sailing east towards New Zealand. Cook was familiar with this map which was included in Banks' library aboard *Endeavour* and would have quickly guessed that a strait was highly likely. Any mariner examining this data, as Cook had done, would be likely to come to the same conclusion, and at the very least suspect a passage. The French had Tasman's map, so why wouldn't their mariners also have guessed that there was a strait? Cameron-Ash does not address this inconvenient possibility.
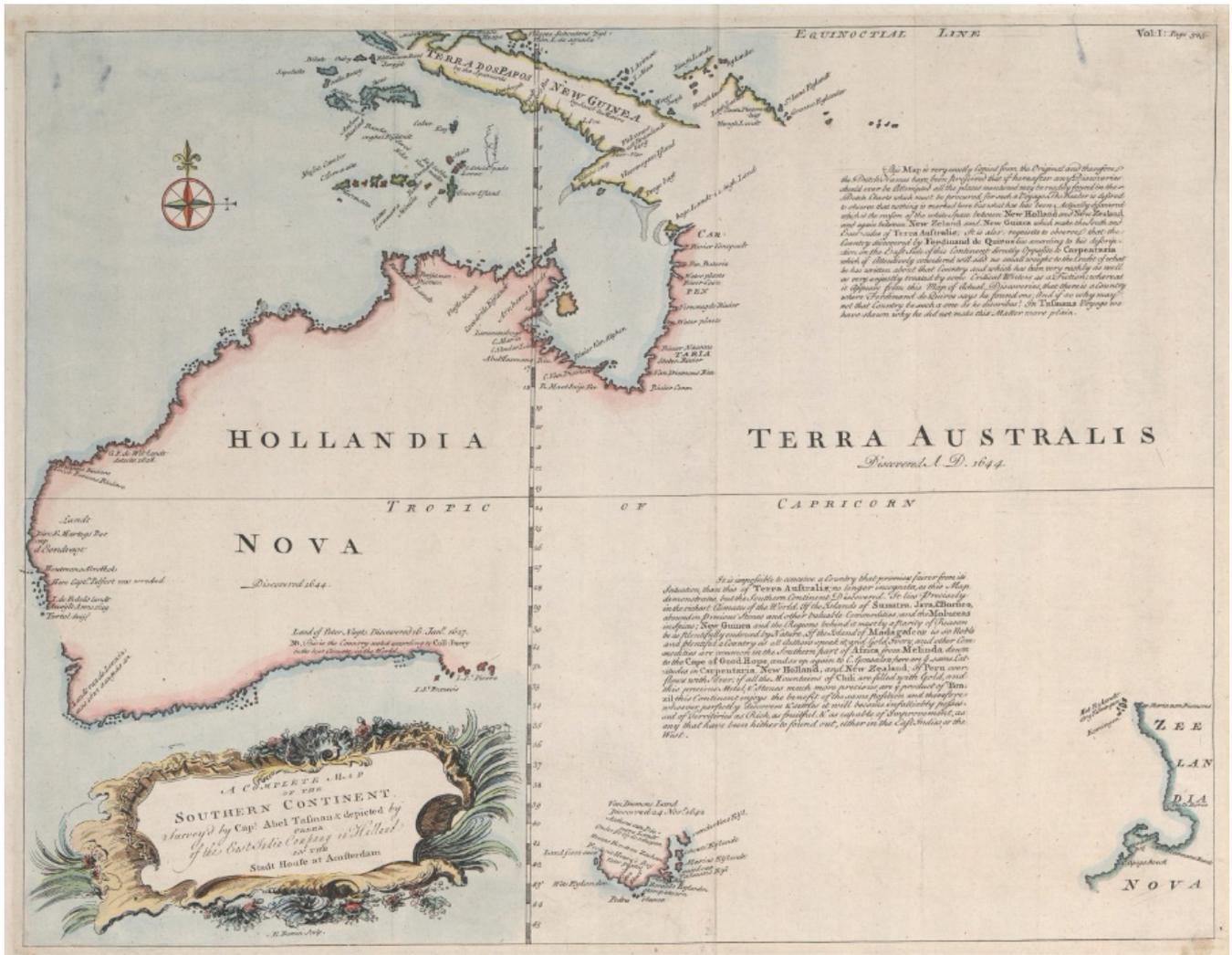
Bowen, Emanuel. & Harris, John. & Tasman, Abel Janszoon. & Thévenot, M. & Nederlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie. 1744, A Complete map of the Southern Continent [cartographic material] / survey'd by Capt. Abel Tasman & depicted by order of the East India Company in Holland in the Stadt House at Amsterdam ; E. Bowen, Sculp *<http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-163902730>*

Instead of Tasman's map, Cameron-Ash draws attention to Vaugondy's chart, apparently showing Van Diemens Land joined to the mainland. What she doesn't point out is that this map shows the known coast with a bold line (i.e. the coast westward from Cape York to the centre of the Great Australian Bight, and part of Tasmania), while the remainder of the unexplored coastline is traced less prominently (as was the convention of the day), indicating that it was speculative. She knows this to be the case, telling us on page 106 of her book that 'Vaugondy imagines an east coast'. But she tells us 'Like everyone else, the French cabinet assumed that New Holland's east coast continued south to Van Diemen's Land, just as it did on Vaugondy's map'. She wants us to believe that the French (and everyone else) were quite sure that this was the case. Why? Because her argument

about Cook having deliberately cut off his chart at 38°S depends on this. Her argument is that by inventing land, Point Hicks, 28km off the real coast, and placing it at the edge of the map, the French might assume that the coast continued southward and joined with Tasman's Van Diemens Land, nearly 400km to the south.

Cameron-Ash tells us: 'Lipscombe says that Cook's placing of the phantom Point Hicks (in Victoria) so far distant from Eddystone Point (in Tasmania) was unlikely to disguise Bass Strait. This is true, if you're looking at a modern atlas. But when King Louis XVI (acceded 1774) and his ministers read the authorised version of the *Endeavour* voyage, they couldn't see Eddystone Point on the chart. This is because the Admiralty, following Cook's lead, had chopped it off. In fact, everything below 38°S

...a conspiracy?

was chopped off'. This ruse would only be effective if the French really believed that there was a coast between Cook's 38°S and Eddystone Point nearly 400kms further south. Tasman's map and the reasoning of experienced mariners suggested otherwise, while the Vaugondy map clearly shows that this was pure speculation.

Even if the French cabinet had been taken in by Vaugondy's map, had they read John Hawkesworth's 1773 edition of the *Endeavour* Journal closely they would have learned that Cook observed not land but open water to the south of his Point Hicks:

> The southermost point of land in sight, which bore from us W. ¼ S. I judged to lie in latitude 38°, longitude 211° 7', and gave it the name of POINT HICKS, because Mr. Hicks, the First Lieutenant, was the first who discovered it. To the southward of this Point no land was to be seen, though it was very clear in that quarter, and by our longitude, compared with that of Tasman, not as it is laid down in the printed charts, but in the extracts from Tasman's journal, published by Rembrantse, the body of Van Diemen's land ought to have borne due south; and indeed, from the sudden falling of the sea after the wind abated, I had reason to think it did; yet as I did not see it, and as I found this coast trend N.E. and S.W. or rather more to the eastward, I cannot determine whether it joins to Van Diemen's land or not.

> (http://southseas.nla.gov.au/journals/hv23/486.html)

Besides seeing no land to the south of his Point Hicks, Cook tells us that he is not sure whether Van Diemens Land is attached to the mainland. What would the French have made of this? Surely if Cameron-Ash is right and Cook was under orders to fox the French, he would have omitted the fact that he could see no land to the south of his Point Hicks and offered his opinion that the two land masses were joined? But he does neither. In the face of this evidence Cameron-Ash wants us to believe that 'Cook had resolved the question of the insularity of Van Diemens Land', telling us that 'in his Journal he dodged the issue by writing some waffle'.

There is no evidence that, as Cameron-Ash would have us believe, in 1770 Cook was certain that Bass Strait existed, or that he set out to invent Point Hicks to deceive the French into thinking that Van Diemens Land was contiguous with the mainland. On the contrary, Cook clearly states in the *Endeavour* Journal that he is not sure about the strait's existence, and that there was no land south of the position of his Point Hicks. There is substantial recently published evidence which examines the long running controversy about the whereabouts of Cook's Point Hicks (Lipscombe, in *Placenames Australia* September 2014 and December 2019). There is compelling evidence from Cook's own journal entries, and the records of many experienced mariners, that Cook and those aboard *Endeavour* were deceived by cloudbanks from 6a.m until at least noon on the day that Point Hicks was named. Cook's Point Hicks was the southernmost extent of this meteorological phenomenon, sighted well out to sea to the west of the ship's 8a.m. position.

So much of what Cameron-Ash attributes to Cook is completely out of character—concluding that a strait existed on limited evidence, fudging the Journal entry in such an unconvincing manner, and inventing a mythical Point Hicks, to hide Bass Strait. Cook was thorough, and would have scoffed at the notion that placing Point Hicks where he did would do anything to persuade the French that there was no strait. If Cook had been under secret Admiralty orders to mislead the French about the existence of Bass Strait we can be sure he would have made a far better job of it.

Trevor Lipscombe

Cook trumps Banks

*We are greatly indebted to columnist, historian, biographer and icon of Australian rugby, **Peter Fitzsimons**, for the following revelation. Fitz gave the heading 'Joke of the Week' to this article in his* Sydney Morning Herald *column recently, but we can't imagine why...*

During the *Endeavour's* great voyage up the east coast of Australia in 1770, James Cook has been naming everything after himself: *Cooktown, Cooks River, Cook Reef*. The list goes on and on, much to the chagrin of the aristocratic botanist on the voyage, Joseph Banks. One day, the two are ashore, marvelling at the strange wildlife, when they see and hear a previously unknown bird. It's a bit like a kingfisher but with a strong beak and a strangely magnetic, laughing cry. Banks, as ever, wants to name it a 'Banksoburra' but Cook, as ever, overrules him.

Timaru...

What do the Māori words *Kauri, Manuka, Kia ora, Timaru* and *Maori* have in common with Australia? All feature as street names throughout Australia. Māori names have surfaced in *Placenames Australia* before: Jan Tent has explored placenames like *Waitui Waterfalls* and *Waiwera*. Our focus in this article is on street names. As Māori scholars we're interested in the presence of Māori language on landscapes outside of Aotearoa New Zealand, partly because of the history behind their naming and partly because of the contemporary urban linguistic landscape they occupy and enrich.

We've now built a comprehensive database, with more than 460 occurrences of Māori street names across Australia, representing more than 100 unique Māori words.

We have found that *Timaru*, with 18 instances in Australia, is one of the five most common Māori street names in our database (the others being *Kauri, Manuka, Kia ora* and *Maori*). *Timaru* streets were found in New South Wales (6), then Queensland (4), Western Australia (3), Victoria (4) and South Australia (1). While a prevalence of *Kauri* and *Manuka* streets is quite understandable, as are *Kia ora* (the Māori greeting 'be well') and *Maori*, we naturally had to ask why does *Timaru* grace so many Australian streets?

Figure 1. Timaru Ave, Melbourne, VIC 3057. Photo: Ocean Mercier

Timaru is most commonly known as a small city situated on the east coast of New Zealand's South Island, located 160km south of Christchurch. With a modest population of 22,900, this South Canterbury settlement remains significant for its physical attributes as a port city.[1] Timaru was briefly a popular whaling spot between 1836 and 1840 but it was abandoned as such after whaling became less profitable.[2] European settlement increased in the period that followed, and the establishment of a port to satisfy maritime needs of the region put Timaru 'on the map'. The port was considered to be cost-effective and competitive in comparison to other New Zealand ports at the time,[3] and became a key contributor to exports of wool and wheat in the later part of the 19th century.[4] It is not clear when the name *Timaru* began to be used for the port itself, but there are references to the whaling destination in 1839 and 1840 newspaper articles.[5]

The exact Māori origin of 'Timaru' is somewhat contested, with two main theories of the etymology. The more common explanation relates to *maru*, 'shelter'. The first syllable *Ti* in this case could be due to a mispronunciation of *Te*, a definitive article equivalent to *the*. Alternatively, *Ti* may be a misspelling of *Tī* (elongated vowel) 'cabbage tree': this would produce the meaning 'sheltered by cabbage trees'.[6] The alternative explanation, however, is that the word is a shortening of the much longer *Te Tihi o Maru*, 'the peak of Maru'—Maru was a famous Kai Tahu ancestor. If such is the case, the name would match nearby toponyms that have similarly been shortened; e.g. *Te Umu Kaha* became *Temuka*, and T*e Oha a Maru* became *Ōamaru*. This pattern suggests that *Te Tihi o Maru* could indeed have been the traditional name for the location.

Our first encounter of *Timaru* in Australia is Timaru Avenue in East Brunswick, Melbourne (VIC 3057), where a cluster of Māori street names can be found. Here you will find not just Timaru Ave, but also Waihi Ave, Taranaki Ave, Temuka Ave, Orari Ave, Pareora Ave and the precarious Akeroa Ave—likely to be a misspelling of *Akaroa*, a small town in the South Island. (In an 1858 newspaper, Akeroa is referred to as a location in Canterbury, encouraging this thought, but no Akeroa exists there today.) This collection of streets contains the most concentrated group of Māori street names in one location, and conforms to Melbourne's well-known phenomenon of street names clustered according to a theme.

We contacted the Moreland City Council for information on why these Māori words were chosen. Their records showed that the use of these names is due to the 'ANZAC relationship', with the area of housing being established post-World War I for returning veterans.[7] A Council heritage report explains that 'the new streets were given Māori names after New Zealand towns or districts'.[8] This checks out in all cases except that of *Akeroa*, confirming the likelihood that it is a misspelling of *Akaroa*.

The word 'Timaru' has a history within maritime culture. Many iterations of a *Timaru* ship can be traced over time including migrant ships, sailing ships[9] and tug-dredgers.[10]

...a 'top 5' Māori street name in Australia

Several ships advertised trans-Tasman travel stopping at Timaru. A consistent record of Timaru-related shipping affairs in Australian newspapers shows a significant correspondence between Australia and Timaru during the 19th century. In fact, several other street names from our database correspond with ship names from the time period including *Maori, Te Anau, Tarawera, Maheno* and *Marama*. Could a maritime history be influence enough for the memorialisation of *Timaru* throughout Australia?

Some mystery still surrounds the choice of these towns and districts. Pareora, Orari and Temuka are in close proximity to Timaru (within 30km). Akaroa is also in the same province, signifying a strong influence from the Canterbury region. The outliers are Taranaki, a west coast province of the North Island, and Waihi, a township in the Hauraki district. Taranaki makes a few appearances in other street names, but the rest are mostly isolated to a couple of instances and certainly none of these are in our 'top 5' most common Māori street names. What makes Canterbury so memorable in Australian street names?
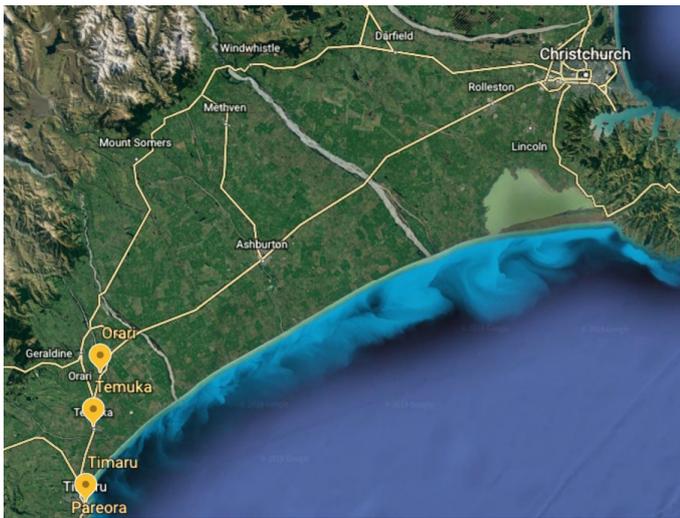
Figure 2. Map of Canterbury, NZ, showing the names represented in the East Brunswick cluster. Layer credit: Symon Palmer in Google Earth

Most of the eighteen iterations of *Timaru* street names have no publicly recorded history. One example can be found at Timaru Close, Sorrento, Victoria. Unlike the previous example, this street does not co-locate with other Māori names. Despite enquiries with the shire authority and two historical societies in the area, no records could be located.

An example of council archiving can be seen in the case of Timaru Close in Port Kennedy, WA. The City of Rockingham were one of the few councils we contacted who had some recorded history on our street of interest, Timaru Close having been approved in relatively recent 1989. The subdivision had a nautical theme, and *Timaru* was explained as being selected 'in reference to the South Island port'.[11] The nearby Endeavour Drive and Cook Court could well support this origin, but might equally support the notion that the name is linked to one of the ships named *Timaru*.

In the one Māori word, *Timaru* has come to represent eighteen streets of residence in Australia with a multitude of meanings. *Timaru* as an Australian street name represents a history of trans-Tasman maritime history, ANZAC relationships, and a port city. Based on these histories, we believe there are likely to be more unique narratives behind the other *Timaru* examples and in the extensive database of street names we have collected. We look forward to sharing our discussion of other examples of popular Māori street names in Australia in subsequent issues of *Placenames Australia*.

Symon Palmer and O. Ripeka Mercier
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Endnotes

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[3] Hassal, C. E. op.cit., p. 67.

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Are you COVIDover it?

Coronavirus-related placenames

We have watched the world change linguistically over these last months. Concepts like *COVID clusters, COVID hot spots, tracking the virus, now is not the time (to take a holiday), stay at home, stay safe and save lives, we're flattening the curve, keeping to essential services, stopping the spread, social distancing, self-isolation, acquiring or contracting* versus *transmitting or infecting, when we get through this, on the other side of this, the new normal...* these phrases and many others now occur in common parlance and have all taken on their own new and possibly improved meaning. Then there are the names of the cruise ships like *Diamond Princess* and *Celebrity Solstice,* and the now infamous *Ruby Princess* which is associated with the rampant spread of the coronavirus in Australia.

This disease has been dubbed the Boomer Remover. People who are not adept at using the Zoom conferencing program to teach online or to hold meetings are called Baby Zoomers. A 'case of corona' now could easily confuse a lover of a particular Mexican beer who has just bought 24 bottles of their well-loved poison. But how will COVID-19 and its connected discourse and physical realities affect the world in terms of placenames, placename signs, and signs in general in Australia and elsewhere?

The most obvious toponymic changes are the number of times in the recent past we have heard the following largely previously unheard of placenames: *Wuhan, Hubei Province* (China); *Bergamo* (Italy). City and country names *New York, Italy* and *Spain* have taken on new meanings now that they've been splattered across the media because of their vast number of coronavirus cases. The already iconic name *Bondi Beach* became a byword throughout the world for the flouting of social distancing rules, and later emerged as an infamous virus hotspot. There have been COVID-19 signs on playgrounds, dog parks and community centres that told us it was government regulation for such facilities to be closed. Is there a chance that, just as 'Adolf ' as a boy's name

dropped out of use after World War II, the placenames associated with the cruise ship names of Holland America lines will also flounder: *Amsterdam, Noordam, Rotterdam, Volendam* and *Zuiderdam.* What will happen at the borders of Australian states now in terms of COVID-19 signs? In a time when the world's borders are closing and Australian state premiers are urging people to 'stay in your suburb', demonyms (words that identify the place a person comes from) may become more important. 'Western Australians' in other states are urged to return home; the mayor of the Gold Coast expresses love for 'Brisbane people, Logan people', but kindly asks them not to visit his region's beaches.

Regarding the name *COVID-19* itself, the name was announced by the World Health Organisation (WHO) on 12 February 2020. *COVID* is an abbreviation for 'coronavirus disease' and the *19* identifies 2019 as the year it was first identified. It is not just 'the coronavirus', because *coronavirus* is the name for a family of viruses including SARS, MERS and several other viruses which cause the common cold.

It does not have *Wuhan* in the name, because nobody wants their hometown to be known for a disease. How would you feel telling people you live along the Ebola River? WHO established guidelines for naming new diseases a few years ago. These guidelines eliminate a lot of the more obvious but tendentious options, such as naming diseases after places, people or animals (like 'swine flu'). These options were not only stigmatising, they could be misleading: some people assumed you could avoid 'swine flu' by avoiding pigs.

So we have the name *COVID-19*, an appropriately scientific and descriptive moniker which is also pronounceable. It is catchy, and at the same time it sounds a little like a name you would expect to hear in a thriller movie or as the name of a military operation. The name has already gone viral. Hopefully the virus is less rapid!

Joshua Nash

I quote...

Some names of places yodel; others click or sing. Gladly would I go from Grand-Bassam to Tabou along the coast of the Côte d'Ivoire, if only to say so out loud.

Dava Sobel (from her foreword to Simon Garfield's *On the Map*)

Woop Woop

Woop Woop has to be one of Australia's most celebrated fictional placenames. Others include *Bullamakanka, Oodnagalahbi, Oodnawoopwoop* and *Kickastickalong*, all of which are intended to be jocular imitations of Australian Indigenous names or words. And all refer to a 'remote and supposedly backward rural town or district' (*Australian National Dictionary*). The form *Woop Woop*, or a close variant, also occurs in New Zealand. The *New Zealand Oxford Dictionary* has two similar entries and senses:

> **woop-woops** (also **woop-woop** *sing.*) *colloq.* 1 *Aust.* a jocular name for a remote outback town or district. 2 *NZ.* var. of **wop-wops** [ORIGIN: joc. use of reduplication, a characteristic of Aboriginal languages.]

> **wop-wops** (also **wops**) (prec. by *the*) *NZ colloq.* remote rural areas; the backblocks (*went hunting out in the wop-wops*).

There is actually an unbounded location in WA, several kilometres from the little town of Wilga in the state's south-west, named *Woop Woop*. Mack (1985) says the name was given to a timber mill set up at that location by The Adelaide Timber Company in 1925 (Figure 1). The 'Unusual place names' website of WA's Landgate provides the following information:

> The place name Woop Woop takes its name from an abandoned mill town of the same name located in this area, which came into existence in 1925. […] It has also been suggested (no definitive reference) that the name is derived from the sound made by frogs in the locality.

There is also an *Oona-Woop-Woop* homestead south-east of Adelaide, and Arnold (1989, p. 95) mentions a location at Holder on the Murray River (west of Renmark) SA named *Woop Woop*.

The origin of the name *Woop Woop* is enigmatic, with various alleged etymologies espoused. The *OED* suggests the name is perhaps 'derived from the "geelorious town o' Whoop-Up" in E.L. Wheeler's *Deadwood Dick on Deck* (1878), where "Whoop-Up" is the name of a back-country U.S. goldmining town.'[1] The *AND,* on the other hand, declares it to be a jocular formation, 'probably influenced by the use of reduplication in Aboriginal languages to indicate plurality or intensity. See also WOP-WOP'. The 1 September 1904 *Bulletin* citation for **wop-wop** in the *AND* provides another theory: 'A new name now given

to the rouseabout or loppy is "wop-wop". The term is said to have originated in the peculiar sound ("wop-wop, wop-wop") caused by the picker-up running up and down the shearing board carrying fleeces to the wool tables during sheering time.' The *AND* gives the first citation of its (apparently jocular) use occurring in 1897 in SPORTING NEWS. CYCLING NOTES. BY "SORCEROR AND CO." in Melbourne's *Oakleigh Leader* of Saturday 4 December, p. 3: 'Everyone declared the day's outing had been thoroughly enjoyable, and the next place to be visited is Woopwoop.'

As with so many other placenames in Australia, the origin of *Woop Woop* remains uncertain. However, the flippant reduplication mocking an Indigenous name seems to fit the Australian character and predilection for inventing such names, especially for house and property names.

Jan Tent

Figure 1. Woop Woop Timber Mill, ca. 1926.
(Source: BMW Motorcycle Club of WA
<http://forum.bmwmccwa.asn.au/viewtopic.php?f=3&t=2773>)

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Endnote

[1] The full title of Wheeler's book is *Deadwood Dick on Deck: Or, Calamity Jane, The Heroine of Whoop-Up.* (See: <https://dimenovels.lib.niu.edu/islandora/object/dimenovels%3A22037#page/1/mode/1up>).

Norfolk Island house names

At the heart of the large placenaming tapestry of Norfolk Island, some aspects of which I have reported in *Placenames Australia*, the island's almost 400 house names present a snapshot of the society, its architectural practices, and how irony, humour and memory are used toponymically. This is as true of Norfolk Island as it is of any Australian community. House names provide a canvas on which is displayed the sociology, architectural practices and social memory of a community. House name signs in both English and Norfolk (the Norfolk Island language) pepper the island's lush green landscape. A cartographic representation of a large number of house names and locations on Norfolk Island is provided in Figure 1:

appearance of proper nouns. That is, in the absence of common Norfolk function words like *ar, dar* and *fer* and Norfolk pronouns (e.g. *auwas*), there are no criteria to establish whether proper nouns in the island's house names are English or Norfolk. This ambiguity cannot be solved using structural criteria.

My observations of significant patterns are therefore restricted to names that are historically salient and statistically prevalent, i.e. names which take the typical form of mono- and bi-lexemic proper nouns + possessive, e.g. *Hookys, Girlies, Everetts, Burrells, Dickies, Willie Boys, Lili Oodoos, Tom Baileys, Gus Allens* and *Funny Bills*. These represent typical house naming practices on Norfolk

Figure 1 – Norfolk Island house names (source: compiled from Edgecombe 1999, Varman 1984 and the author 2013)

The brief comments below show something of the grammar and ethnography of Norfolk house names. (A fuller analysis can be found in Nash, 2013.)

A review of the 398 house names in the data set reveals considerable structural ambiguity, particularly in the

Island. A subset of the data corresponds structurally to this pattern but incorporates name status nouns in house names, e.g. *Auntys, Mumma Norns, Uncle Joes, Pa Collies* and *Ma Nobbys*. This key cultural meme functions as an honorific marker. Such a meme emphasises the localised,

Wagga Wagga

The crows have gone...

One of the few things that Australians have always known about our placename origins is that

Wagga Wagga means 'place of many crows'

Well, not any longer. Local elder and Wiradjuri lexicographer Stan Grant has finally convinced Wagga Wagga City Council to adopt a different definition: 'many dances and celebrations'.

It may take some time for the good citizens of this NSW city to come to terms with this new understanding. After all, clubs and pubs and football teams have long used the crow as an icon and nickname.

The city itself has a stylised image of a crow as part of its logo. But the mayor doesn't expect much resistance to the shift; and Stan Grant says that while it may take 50 years, you've got to start somewhere.

We applaud Stan's advocacy for the change; our ANPS records have always cast doubt on the 'many crows' story. We know, for instance, that as long ago as 1951 *wagga wagga* was recorded with the meaning 'reeling' or 'to dance, slide'. It was only much later that we find a suggestion that it meant 'many crows' because it was an imitation of their call. Maybe Riverina crows have their own dialect, but most Australians (thanks to the late Graham Kennedy) have a quite different impression of what crows sound like!

Current Wiradjuri wordlists give

crow *wandyu* and **dance** *wagadyi, waganha.*

The latter seems to be the more obvious source of the form 'wagga', which is then reduplicated to indicate plurality or intensity.

In the interests of transparency, we should also point out that the word for **raven** in Wiradjuri is *waagan*. We have not so far heard of anyone who's keen for that etymology to be made the official one!

...Norfolk Island house names

small scale and insider nature of Norfolk house names as embedded cultural ephemera.

The following house name patterns are prevalent on Norfolk:

1. House names can be a single uninflected proper noun, e.g. *Lindisfarne, Palmerston.*

2. Houses can be named using either a single English compound or a single Norfolk lexeme, e.g. *Bedrock* and *Hettae.*

3. House names can consist of Norfolk words, e.g. *Auwas Hoem*, or a combination of English and Norfolk words, e.g. *Auwas Paradise Roof, Truly Auwas, Dar Shed, Kettle se Boil* (English: 'the kettle has boiled').

4. Norfolk house names can be named after people, proper noun + possessive, e.g. *Girlies, Ben Fishers, Dick Bens.*

5. Norfolk house names can be exclamations, e.g. *Hassette!!*

6. Island house names can use the common Norfolk double possessive form, e.g. *Dar Side fer Beras.*

7. Homophony and analogy are productive in Norfolk house names, e.g. *Tern Corner* and *Ternwood* (alluding to a wooded area with tern seabirds and wood-turning).

8. Nicknames as house names are productive, e.g. *Cuppa Teas.* This house name was named after 'Cup a Tea' Buffett who lived in the Red Road area on the north coast of Norfolk. He received his nickname due to his dark skin colour. Others islanders say he always welcomed people to his house for a cup of tea, hence his nickname.

Joshua Nash

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Placenames Puzzle Number 74

Avian toponyms

The names of birds sometimes feature as an element in our placenames. Can you find them in these toponyms?
Example—(NSW, harbour island) a type of parrot:
Cockatoo Island

1. (QLD, Channel Country settlement) generic avian
2. (NSW, Sydney suburb) the Australian 'ostrich' on the range
3. (NSW, Sydney suburb) gave its name to an iconic broad-tailed parrot
4. (NT, Kakadu town) black-necked stork
5. (NSW, coastal tourist town) raptor's residence
6. (NSW, town west of Cessnock) this bird is noted for its tintinnabulation
7. (WA, river) large long-necked elegant water fowl
8. (QLD, locality near Port Douglas) this ratite is looking a bit blue
9. (NSW, north Sydney suburb) look out for this corvid's incubator
10. (WA, cove on Cape Naturaliste) large raptor
11. (QLD, cove at Cooktown) a colourful passerine with a stout conical bill
12. (QLD, coral cay north-east of Gladstone) a long-legged coastal bird that flies with its neck retracted
13. (TAS, beach on Bruny Island) a royal piscator
14. (VIC, cove on Lake Victoria) its bill was said to hold more than its belly can
15. (VIC, headland near Cape Everard) an oceanic seabird
16. (TAS, township) ambulatory seabird at home under the water
17. (NSW, peak on the Budawang Range) a home for Columba
18. (QLD, bay at Weipa) the ancient mariner's curse
19. (SA, headland in Spencer Gulf) a wader with a downcurved bill
20. (WA, shoal near Geraldton) a columbid that's not quite tortoise-like

[Compiled by **Jan Tent**
Answers on page 2]

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