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Place Name SUMMARY (PNS) 4.04.01/06

KAUWI NGALTINGGA

(last edited: 11.6.2015)

SEE ALSO:

PNS 4.04.01/01 Ngaltingga

PNS 4.04.01/03 Wakondilla

PNS 4.04.01/04 Witawali (Sellicks Beach).

NOTE AND DISCLAIMER:

This essay has not been peer-reviewed or culturally endorsed in detail.

The spellings and interpretations contained in it (linguistic, historical and geographical) are my own, and do not necessarily represent the views of KWP/KWK or its members or any other group.

I have studied history at tertiary level. Though not a linguist, for 30 years I have learned much about the Kurna, Ramindjeri-Ngarrindjeri and Narungga languages while working with KWP, Rob Amery, and other local culture-reclamation groups; and from primary documents I have learned much about the Aboriginal history of the Adelaide-Fleurieu region.

My explorations of 'language on the land' through the Southern Kurna Place Names Project are part of an ongoing effort to correct the record about Aboriginal place-names in this region (which has abounded in confusions and errors), and to add reliable new material into the public domain.

I hope upcoming generations will continue this work and improve it. My interpretations should be amplified, re-considered and if necessary modified by KWP or other linguists, and by others engaged in cultural mapping: Aboriginal people, archaeologists, geographers, ecologists and historians.

Chester Schultz, 21 July 2017.

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KAUWI NGALTINGGA

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Abstract

Kauwi Ngaltingga is probably the Kurna name for some kind of water source on the western side of Aldinga Plain.

The most probable sites for it (though still conjectural) are the springs and waterholes which once existed in the coastal dunes on the southwestern fringes of Aldinga Scrub (from Section 742 south to 808 and 639).

The name means 'water at *Ngalti*', but no meaning is known for *ngalti*.

<i>Coordinates</i>	Latitude -35.305635°, Longitude 138.448377° (at Clarry Eatts Reserve, approximate centre of a surrounding area containing old waterholes)
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Language Information

<i>Meaning</i>	' <i>Ngaltingga</i> water' or 'water at <i>Ngalti</i> ' or 'place of <i>ngalti</i> water'
<i>Etymology</i>	<i>Kauwi</i> 'water' + <i>Ngalti</i> [meaning unknown] + <i>ngga</i> 'at, place of'
<i>Notes</i>	
<i>Language Family</i>	Thura-Yura: 'Kurna'
<i>KWP Former Spelling</i>	Kauwi Ngaltingga
<i>KWP New Spelling 2010</i>	Kauwi Ngaltingga
<i>Phonemic Spelling</i>	/kawi ngaLTingga/
<i>Pronunciation</i>	Ka-wi Ngal-ti-ngga:
<i>Pronunciation tips</i>	Stress only the first syllable of each word. Every 'a' as in 'Maori 'haka'. 1 st 'ng' as in 'singer' (practise this by first saying "singalti", then dropping the 'si'). 'ngg' as in 'finger'. 't' unvoiced (no puff of air).

Main source evidence

<i>Date</i>	[Sep 1837?] / 1879
<i>Original source text</i>	" Auldingga – Aldinga ". "Koue Auldinga - Deception Bay".
<i>Reference</i>	W Wyatt [1837-9] / 1879, 'Vocabulary of the Adelaide and Encounter Bay Tribes', in JD Woods 1879, <i>Native Tribes of SA</i> : 179.
<i>Informants credited</i>	
<i>Informants uncredited</i>	Mullawirraburka and family, Sep 1837

Discussion: 'THE WATER AT ALDINGA':

Aldinga Bay was known briefly by the name which Colonel Light gave it, 'Deception Bay'.¹

It had a Kurna name – at least Dr William Wyatt thought so, Protector from 1837 to 1839. He wrote that 'Deception Bay' was '*Koue Auldinga*'² (in our spelling *Kauwi Ngaltingga*), which means 'water at *Ngalti*' or 'water at Aldinga'.

But Wyatt's 'Bay' was almost certainly a mistake. Though he had been in the colony for six months and must have known the settlers' most important and commonly-used word in Pidgin Kurna, 'cowie' (*kauwi*), possibly he was still unaware that *kauwi* was rarely if ever used in this way for the sea or sea-water.³

If 'Koue Auldinga' was not Deception Bay, then which 'water' was this at 'Auldinga'?

Wyatt passed this way *en route* to Encounter Bay in early September 1837 with Advocate Charles Mann and Kurna guides including 'Onkaparinga Jack' (Mullawirraburka or 'King John'). It is extremely probable that he obtained the name then,⁴ along with "Auldinga", which he glossed as "Aldinga". By that date 'Aldinga' was already known to the earliest colonial explorers as the name of the Plain which lay south of the lightly wooded rolling downs from Pedler Creek to Maslin Creek, and extended to Sellicks Beach.⁵

It is possible to identify Wyatt's 1837 route fairly precisely, and some of the 'waters' that he must have passed in the vicinity of Aldinga. They were travelling south on a 'native track' which would soon become the standard southern route for settlers. It led down the open grassland between the

¹ A few years later another 'Deception Bay' was named at Coobowie on Yorke Peninsula. For the historical origin of Light's naming, see PNS 4.04.01/01 Ngaltingga.

² Wyatt 1879, in JD Woods, *Native Tribes of SA*: 179. His spelling 'Auldinga' here represents the same sounds as "*Auldinga*" in his previous place-name glossed as "*Aldinga*" in the same list.

³ It seems that *kauwi* normally refers to land-locked water whether fresh or brackish, still or running. In September 1837 Wyatt had only just been appointed Protector and had scarcely begun to learn the language. It was probably later that he recorded "*Kopoola*" (*kopurlo*) for 'salt water, all sapid drinks', and "*Kopoola koue*" (*kopurlo kauwi*) for 'the sea'. It is unlikely that the usage of *kauwi* alone could be extended to refer to part of the sea. In the authoritative German linguists, *kauwi* is the common word for 'water' in general; *yaitya kauwi* is 'fresh water' (i.e. good for drinking); *kitya* is 'bitter, brackish or salty water'; *kopurlo* and *tarni* are both 'seawater, salt water'; *kopurlo* is also used for 'grog'; there are the unrelated words *pudna*, *tarnanda* and *pangka* for 'waterhole', 'pool' and 'lake respectively; while 'the sea' is usually *yerlo* but might sometimes be *tarni*.

⁴ An account of this journey will appear in my forthcoming history *Feet On the Fleurieu*.

⁵ Today's terminology. However, the name 'Aldinga' was not applied to the specific site of today's town until this was laid out in the 1850s: see PNS 4.04.01/01 Ngaltingga.

eastern and western forested areas of the Plain, in the vicinity of today's main South Road.⁶ Within a few more kilometres they would reach Kurtandilla⁷ and the steep pass over the range at Sellicks Hill.

It seems that Wyatt was enthusiastically collecting place-names from his guides, for his published list reads from north to south, and includes six names between the Onkaparinga River and Deception Bay under the heading "Rodney's country".⁸ Some of these were off the track and must have been pointed out from a distance, such as "Willa willunga" five or six km east, and "Kerno" (*karnu* 'mountain') on the other side of it.

South of Willunga Creek, Mullawirraburka would have had a full view *Mullawirra*, one of the scrub patches to the east of this track, the 'dry forest' of which he was (or would soon become) traditional owner.⁹ Perhaps somewhere around here Wyatt might have turned, pointed west and asked 'What do you call that water?' With seafaring, map-making English eyes, he thought he was indicating the sea which he knew as Deception Bay, two or three km away.

His guide, looking westward, heard the key word 'water' which no doubt he had heard before from travelling Englishmen. Though this word was ambiguous for the seafaring English, for Aboriginal guides it had one normal and obvious referent. Using the land-bound eyes of one who had often travelled this route, and imaging his mental map of its drinkable waters, he replied 'Kauwi Ngaltingga: Aldinga Water'.

It would have been easy for Wyatt to assume that Mullawirraburka was giving him the answer to the question he thought he had asked.

But which water source did the guide really mean?

Cliff's Waterhole was (and still is) on Section 429 in the northeast corner of Aldinga Scrub,¹⁰ which then extended another half-km eastward to today's Main South Road. They skirted the edge of the Scrub east of our road, passing about 1.6 km away from the Waterhole.

⁶ For an account of how we know about this track and the forests, see PNS 4.04.01/01 Ngaltingga. The forested patches and the 'Present track' (sometimes marked 'native track') are shown especially on Diagram Book Hundred of Willunga, p.4-2 (SA Geographical Names Unit); which is based on the surveyor's Field books from 1839.

⁷ See PNS 4.04.03/03 Kurtandilla.

⁸ Wyatt 1879, in JD Woods, *Native Tribes of SA*: 179. 'Rodney' was Ityamaitpinna, one of the leaders of the 'Adelaide tribe' at first contact and one of the informants for Teichelmann and Schürmann's language work.

⁹ See PNS 4.04.03/04 Mullawirra. 'King John' acquired his Mullawirra by barter, according to Moorhouse. In 1837 he was still known as 'Onkaparinga Jack', and perhaps had not yet acquired Mullawirra; which may account for its absence from Wyatt's list.

¹⁰ For details about all these water sources, see E Wollaston (ed) 1978, *Aldinga-Sellicks Beach Scrub: a report*, Education Dept of SA.

It was early spring after a wet winter. About three km further on, as they passed our Norman Road east of Justs Road, there would have been plenty of very visible water in the Blue Lagoon on Sections 614-5, and then The Washpool on 614, both about one km west of them.¹¹

On the seaward side of the Scrub and the Lagoon were several invisible springs and waterholes in the coastal dunes, notably the one at the outlet of the Washpool in a hollow near the beach: the place which Reuben Walker in the 1930s knew as 'Witawali',¹² the spring which Albert Karlowan referred to as "big"¹³ and which then was probably permanent because it received the drainage of the whole Willunga Basin.

It is hard to decide which of all these might have been Mullawirraburka's *Kauwi Ngaltingga*, or whether he was referring to all of them collectively. But he would be more likely to interpret Wyatt's gestures towards the Bay as referring to those further west (such as the dune springs) than to those which were nearby, large and obvious (such as the Lagoon). If the travellers held any more discussion as they passed, he may even have defined those dune waters by mentioning the seacoast, and thus confirmed Wyatt in his error about the Bay.

IN CONCLUSION:

Certainly *Kauwi Ngaltingga* was somewhere near the coast of Aldinga Bay.

While we cannot be certain which water source it referred to, the most likely candidates are the beach springs.

The biggest of these was Tjirbuki's spring at the Washpool mouth, adjacent to a very useful base camp just to the south for salmon fishing on the beach, and for travelling to or from Sellicks Hill.¹⁴ But if Walker's 'Witawali' preserves anything like the original Kurna name (and this is quite uncertain), then this spring had a Kurna name quite *un-like* *Kauwi Ngaltingga*.

On the other hand, it is more likely that *Kauwi Ngaltingga* may have been one or more of those which served the campsites on the northern side of the Washpool, on the southern edges of Aldinga Scrub.¹⁵ In winter, flooding meant that this area was accessible only from the north. Thus it was oriented to the Plains rather than the hills, and its waters were more likely to attract the name of the Plain as their identifier.

¹¹ For accounts of the Blue Lagoon and Washpool, see PNS 4.04.01/03 Wakondilla. For their exact locations see Wollaston (ed) 1978: 10.

¹² See PNS 4.04.01/04 'Witawali' (Sellicks Beach).

¹³ Berndt and Berndt 1993: 234, 330-1.

¹⁴ For more on this spring site see PNS 4.04.01/04 Witawali.

¹⁵ See Wollaston (ed) 1978. Some of these soaks or waterholes were at Silver Sands on or near today's Clarry Eatts Reserve (on Section 818), which used to be a Government Water Reserve.

I emphasize that these are conjectures, and we cannot know for certain what Wyatt's guides were referring to, beyond some kind of water source on the western side of Aldinga Plain.

We cannot even be certain whether Mulla Wirraburka was citing a real place-name, or simply misunderstood the question altogether.

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End of Summary

draft 11 June 2015