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## Place Name SUMMARY (PNS) 5.01/05

### MAITPANGGA

(last edited: 8.8.2017)

#### 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*This essay has not been peer-reviewed or culturally endorsed in detail.*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, 21/7/2017.*



## Place Name SUMMARY (PNS) 5.01/05

### MAITPANGGA

(last edited: 25.6.2017)

#### Abstract

*Maitpangga* is the Aboriginal name for part of the main valley of the Myponga River. It is almost certainly in Kaurna language, using the common Locative *ngga* ('at, place of'); but there is no other known meaning, since no *maitpa* was recorded in any of the local languages. In any case, a place-name need not have a dictionary meaning.

It was first obtained as 'Mipunga' in September 1837 by Protector Wyatt during a journey to Encounter Bay with Mullawirraburka's family. Its meaning (if any) is unknown. Probably it referred especially to the area from today's Myponga township to the intersection of Old Sellicks Hill Rd 4 km northeast (i.e. around Sections 540 along to 705), centred on the river crossing at what was once known as Black Bridge (on Section 502).

In this area the valley is wide enough to be called a plain. This was a travel hub where four traditional routes converged, following the necessities of the landscape:

- from the northwest plains over the scarp of Sellicks Hill (probably via Old Sellicks Hill Rd or its surrounding ridges);
- from the northeast down Pages Flat;
- from the southeast (via Hindmarsh Tiers from Currency Creek or Encounter Bay);
- and from the southwest (via Wattle Flat from either Encounter Bay or Yankalilla).

However, the Valley was not on any normal direct route to Myponga *Beach*, a different location with a different Kaurna name,<sup>1</sup> much used in post-contact times and no doubt pre-contact as well.

Being high, wet, and very cold and swampy in winter, it is unlikely that Aboriginal people often stayed long in Maitpangga; it was mainly a way-stop. There is at least one 'canoe tree' on the eastern margin of the town, possibly for a raft used in negotiating the swamps in winter. A painting by ST Gill in 1842 shows that low rolling downs somewhere "near Mipunga" were used for funeral platforms, and it is also likely that the margins of the swamps were used for final interments.

<sup>1</sup> See PNS 5.01/02 Kauwayarlungga.

Maitpangga was part of the country of Mullawirraburka ('senior man of the dry forest', 'King John' of the Adelaide tribe). He may have been buried here, about 9 km away from his 'dry forest' which was on the other side of Sellicks Hill.

Tindale writes that this valley or plain is the southern extremity of the hills country of the Peramangk. But the transit hub described above was on a borderland, and much used by all local groups including also the Ramindjeri, Ngarrindjeri and Kurna. No other name for the location was recorded.

Since Peramangk language was probably mutually intelligible with Kurna, it is possible (though unlikely) that the name is Peramangk, or part of a vocabulary shared with Peramangk. But (1) there is no direct evidence for this; (2) the cluster *tp/db* is common in Kurna but very rare in other known Peramangk vocabulary; and (3) the first informant who gave the name was almost certainly Mullawirraburka, a Kurna speaker of the 'Adelaide tribe', and Maitpangga was said to be "his own country".

There is no linguistic or historical credibility, nor Aboriginal authority, in any of the folk etymologies given by Tindale ('vegetable food place') or found in other place-names literature ('high cliffs', 'divorced wife', 'standing water', 'lookout place', 'autumn food place') (see Discussion).

<i>Coordinates</i>	Latitude -35.376349°, Longitude 138.483009° [Black Bridge, nominal centre of the area]
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## Language Information

<i>Meaning</i>	'place of <i>maitpa</i> ' [meaning unknown, if any]
<i>Etymology</i>	<i>maitpa</i> [meaning unknown] + <i>ngga</i> 'at, place of'
<i>Notes</i>	It is <i>possible</i> that the name was shared in Kurna and Peramangk languages, as the location is a borderland.
<i>Language Family</i>	Probably Thura-Yura: 'Kurna'.
<i>KWP Former Spelling</i>	Maitpangga
<i>KWP New Spelling 2010</i>	Maitpangga
<i>Phonemic Spelling</i>	/maitpangka/ or /mayitpangka/
<i>Syllabification</i>	"Mait-pangga":
<i>Pronunciation tips</i>	Stress the first syllable. 'ai' as in 'I' or 'my'. Every 'a' as in Maori 'haka'.



## Main source evidence

Date	Sep 1837
Original source text	“Throughout the whole journey [from Adelaide to Encounter Bay], almost the only waste land we crossed was about ten miles of bog between <b>Mipunga</b> and Encounter Bay... When at <b>Mipunga</b> , at the close of our third day’s journey, and after we had settled down for the night, we were visited by forty of the Aborigines, about two thirds of them fine athletic-looking men, the remainder women. Their approach exhibited a degree of cautiousness, if not timidity; but the elder men of the party, together with the females were soon induced to seat themselves around our large fire, while the young men exhibited their not-ungraceful forms in a corrobory, for our especial gratification. I then supplied them severally with a portion of our biscuit, which seemed to please them much; and a shower of rain coming, they all retired to their encampment at some distance, except two, who, being relatives of Cooper’s woman, were accommodated with a lodging near us. Among the women was the one belonging to the prisoner [Reppindjeri] whom we afterwards examined...”
Reference	William Wyatt to Governor Hindmarsh 22 Sep 1837, GRG 24/1/372: 5, 7.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	Probably Mullawirraburka (‘King John’); possibly William Cooper or ‘Doughboy’.

Date	Sep 1837 / Aug 1838
Original source text	“7th. [Sep 1837] – ... bivouaced at <b>Missunga</b> [sic: mistranscription of ‘Mipunga’] in a bush-hut, made on a former occasion by Cooper, under a fallen tree. Here we were visited by forty natives, one-third women, and the rest fine athletic men, richly bedaubed with red ochre and whale blubber from the crown to the waist. They gave us a grand corrobory, and I gave each of them a handful of biscuit. 8th.–Traversed several very rich meadows and nearly ten miles of boggy swamp, almost the only bad land we fell in with during the journey.”
Reference	Wyatt to J.C. Mathews 2 Aug 1838, in <i>The South Australian Record</i> Vol.1 No.8 (8 Aug 1838): 83c.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	Probably Mullawirraburka (‘King John’); possibly William Cooper or ‘Doughboy’.

Date	[7 Sep] 1837
Original source text	“7 Sept’... Deception Bay {Aldinga Bay} to the S.S.E. and a range of beautifully wooded acclivities stretched along, height about 5 or 600 feet. Before us stood Koolta Kourga, a very high hill, over which our track lay. The descent was rather steep but not so much so, as to alarm the horses. At the bottom of the range, a small rill ran – on every side round hills – steep & clothed



	<p>with the most beautiful herbage – Hills break into rounded acclivities at the East End, prettily wooded. When at the top of Koolta Kourga, the air bracing – the Scenery Superb. Fatigue utterly put to flight. The whole country as in a Map before us. Green Plains dotted with forest trees – On gaining the S.E. end of Koolta Kourga, the eye ranges over a [?new] &amp; [?regular] scene – High Hills to the Southward of a dense colour – met with about 40 natives – they commenced a Corrobera (a native dance) which the rain fortunately terminated - &amp; we were left alone.</p> <p>8 Sept<sup>f</sup>. The first place was a complete marsh for nearly 5 miles. We had occasionally to wade ankle deep. The Plain &amp; Hills to the Southward had a quantity of Brushwood &amp; the Grass tree was very plentiful —crossed into a ravine filled with Brushwood &amp; various flowers. The Hills surrounded us in a Basin-like form – We were frequently up to our instep in water [?Lovely Valley] – after about 3 miles walk, we crossed another sett of hills about 500 feet high – came into a plain of some extent [?Wattle Flat], as usual surrounded with hills. Many Stringy Bark &amp; fine Eucalyptus trees – after passing this plain ascended a high hill [?up Wild Dog Creek to range near Barn Hill]. At the top of which the scene became truly magnificent – an immense Ravine was before us, the descent probably upwards of a Thousand feet...”</p>
Reference	Charles Mann 1837, ‘General Description of The Country from Adelaide to Encounter Bay South Australia: Memoranda extracted from a Journal by Hon. C. Mann, Sept.’, BRG 42/52, SLSA [Mann 1837b]: 2-3.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	

Date	[7 Sep] / 20 Sep 1837
Original source text	“Mr. Wyatt and myself were crossed in our path to Encounter Bay by upwards of 40 of the Parangacka or Murray River Tribe;– men singularly warlike, inimical, and likely to intercept and rescue the prisoner, under any circumstances which would give them a possible chance of success. I do not think that a special commission to try the prisoner on the spot would give him a fair trial, & I see no other way of having the trial here, than by the conveyance of the prisoner and the witnesses to Adelaide by sea...”
Reference	Mann to Hindmarsh 20 Sep 1837, GRG 24/1/1837/365 [Mann 1837c]: 6-7.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	

Date	[Sep 1837] / 1879
Original source text	“ <b>Maippunga</b> - Myponga.”
Reference	Wyatt [?1837], in JD Woods 1879, <i>Native Tribes of SA</i> :179.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	Probably Mullawirraburka (‘King John’), Sep 1837; possibly William Cooper or ‘Doughboy’.





Date	April-May 1838
Original source text	“I have the honor to report to you the result of my Journey to Encounter Bay, whither I proceeded on the 17 <sup>th</sup> ulti. [17 April 1838] ... we came to the foot of the hills forming the termination of the Mt Lofty range to the southward [Sellicks Hill]. We had considerable difficulty in getting the cart over this range, which may be about 900 feet above the level of the sea, and we descended then into <b>Mipunga Plains</b> , which are about a mile in breadth, consisting of rich land watered by a stream which appeared to find its way to the sea through a ravine between Deception Bay and Yanka Lilla. The road from this was through a swampy sterile track of country for several miles [Hindmarsh Tiers]. There was a patch of good land near the source of a stream which ran on our left;– this stream after spreading into swamps appeared to collect again, and I think eventually reaches Encounter Bay, supplying the rivulet west of Granite Island...”
Reference	BT Finniss to William Light 5 May 1838, SA Company BRG 42/53: 3.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	

Date	3 May 1838
Original source text	“Thurs 3 <sup>rd</sup> May [1838]... Found Mt Terrible so steep that we were obliged to leave the Bullock Cart half-way up the hill – Met Captain Hart & friend with a native guide going to Adelaide, persuaded them to return with us to <b>Mipinga Vale</b> [sic] where we all slept under a breakwind very comfortably. This is a delightful spot destined some future day to be the abode of civilised man, in this well-watered valley there were numbers of Kangaroos, Emus, &c.... Sunday morning 6 May... returned towards Adelaide, about 20 miles arrived rather late at <b>Miponga Valley</b> , where we had bivouacked with Capt Hart on Thursday night...”
Reference	William Giles journal of expedition to Encounter Bay with Finlayson and Randall in May 1838, microfilm PRG 174/1, reel 3: 1179-1180 SLSA.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	

Date	June 1838
Original source text	“I also travelled overland south-east from Adelaide to Encounter Bay, visited Rapid Bay, Unkaparinga, <b>Mussunga</b> [sic: mistranscription of ‘Mipunga’ or ‘Mybunga’] and Hurtle Vale Districts; in these vicinities, found a beautiful black mould in the low grounds from two to three feet in depth, and on the hills the finest sheep-runs.”
Reference	William Giles letter 6 June 1838, in J Stephens 1839, <i>The Land of Promise</i> : 49.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	



Date	Dec 1838 / Jan 1839 ‘
Original source text	“... visited Yankahlillah, and returned by the source of the Hindmarsh, the valley of <b>Miponga</b> , Aldinga, and Onkaparinga, to Adelaide.”
Reference	George Gawler 1839a, ‘Notes Of An Excursion By His Excellency The Governor’, <i>SA Gazette and Colonial Register</i> Sat 5 Jan 1839, p2c, <a href="http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/31750326/2052584">http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/31750326/2052584</a> .
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	

Date	Dec 1838 / Jan 1839
Original source text	“... the rich valleys of the <b>Miponga</b> , the Upper Finniss, and other streams...”
Reference	George Gawler 1839b, ‘Notes Made During A Journey Into The Interior By His Excellency The Governor’ <i>SA Gazette</i> 18/1/1839: 2.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	

Date	Jan 1840
Original source text	“ <b>Mympunga Plain</b> , nearly 40 miles from Adelaide...”
Reference	Moorhouse 2 <sup>nd</sup> Protector’s Report 14 Jan 1840, <i>BPP; Colonies: Australia</i> Vol.7: 352.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	

Date	July 1840
Original source text	“Occasionally one family will barter their territory for a district belonging to another family, as in the case of King John, who formerly belonged to the districts of Adelaide, Glenelg, Sturt River, and Hurtle Vale, and he exchanged them for Ugaldinga [ <i>mistranscription of ‘Ngaldinga’, i.e. Aldinga Plain</i> ] and <b>Maitpunga Plains</b> .”
Reference	Moorhouse Report 27 July 1840, in <i>BPP; Colonies: Australia</i> Vol.7: 355.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	Mullawirraburka and Kadlitpinna

Date	1840
Original source text	“ <b>Maitpa-ngga - Matpunga Plain</b> [ <i>‘Matpunga’ sic: probably mistranscription of ‘Maipunga’</i> ].”
Reference	Teichelmann & Schürmann 1840, <i>Outline of a Grammar...</i>
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	Mullawirraburka (‘King John’), Kadlitpinna (‘Captain Jack’), Ityamaitpinna (‘Rodney’), etc 1838-40.



Date	Sep 1840
Original source text	" <b>Miponga R.</b> " <i>[along the river]</i>
Reference	Arrowsmith map, 'Part of South Australia to the eastward of the Gulf of St. Vincent, London. Sept <sup>r</sup> 1 <sup>st</sup> 1840', C 218, SLSA.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	

Date	Dec 1840
Original source text	"the Vallies of <b>the Myponga</b> ".
Reference	Henry Ide, 'Plan of 268 secs in the Vallies of the Myponga, District D, surveyed by Corpls Ide & Baker RS&M / Dec 1840 / Drawn by ?H Ide Corpl RS&M', Plan 6/20, GNU.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	

Date	May 1842
Original source text	" <b>Missunga Plains</b> , South Australia" <i>[sic: mistranscription, probably of 'Mipunga']</i>
Reference	ST Gill watercolour, 'Native Sepulchre, Near Missunga Plains, South Australia', "8 May 1842", Private Collection, Melbourne; for sale 2017, see <a href="http://www.menziesartbrands.com/items/native-sepulchre-near-missunga-plains-south-australia">http://www.menziesartbrands.com/items/native-sepulchre-near-missunga-plains-south-australia</a> (5/5/17).
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	

Date	1843
Original source text	"20 <sup>th</sup> [Nov 1843]... Crossed over the range which divides Yankalilla from <b>Myponga</b> . The soil of any worth in this locality seems to be a stony vegetable deposit. 21 <sup>st</sup> . At one of the stations there are seven springs, as clear as it is possible; there is a great stream always running from them into the <b>Myponga River</b> , which passes out to sea near Rapid Bay. The land in the winter months is dreadfully overflowed, so that in crossing at the Black Bridge travellers are often bogged. The soil here varies from a white clay to a very black deposit..."
Reference	Daniel George Brock 1843, (ed. K Peake-Jones 1981), <i>Recollections of DGB 1843</i> , Adelaide, Royal Geographical Society of Australasia, SA Branch: 48-9.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	





Date	Jan 1845
Original source text	"Wednesday, 1 January 1845... King John, one of the natives is dead. His bier is stuck round with spears and he is going to be carried down to his own country ' <b>Myponga</b> '. One has gone to call up the other tribe. He is lamented by whites and blacks."
Reference	WA Cawthorne, ed. Robert Foster 1991, 'Sketch of the Aborigines of South Australia: References in the Cawthorne Papers', Aboriginal Heritage Branch, SA Dept of Environment & Planning: 57.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	

Date	Nov 1850
Original source text	<p>[Nov 18<sup>th</sup> 1850] <i>[after descending from Mt Terrible]</i> "... we alighted in the vale of <b>Myponga</b>, called by the settlers, 'the lovely valley.' A stream here, if stream it can be called, is crossed by three rude bridges in the road, near the inn. The name given to this part of it is '<b>the Myponga Water-holes.</b>' But a mile below it rises a spring, with the waters of which the upper waters unite. This, then, becomes <b>the Myponga river</b>...</p> <p>In winter the flat, almost to the inn-door, is flooded after heavy rains, and is ankle deep in water; it then bears the general name of <b>the 'Myponga Swamps.'</b>...</p> <p>We have called the house here an inn: it is not so, having no licence as a public-house to sell beer or spirits. It is called 'Grant's boarding-house'... One of Grant's dogs bore some cruel -looking scars, the results of kangaroo hunting. At the landlord's suggestion we made a two-mile excursion into the woods to get a peep at such large live game, now driven from the settled districts, but we were not successful...</p> <p>The land here is, we believe, the property of Mr. Duval, under whom Mr. Grant is a leaseholder. Plovers, wild ducks, and pigeons in particular, abound; the plovers seemed to be a variety of that bird found on the Adelaide plains. The trees below are the gum, the wattle, the shea oak, the blackwood, the so-called peppermint, and the dwarf tea-tree.</p> <p>From Grant's boarding-house, on the following morning we pursued our road to the south, crossing the Myponga water and 'Hubback Bridge,' over a rather extensive swamp, into the Yankalilla ranges. After six miles we passed 'Clark's Wayside House...' "</p>
Reference	"Sketches Of The Present State Of South Australia, No.V. Willunga', SA Register 26/3/1851: 3, <a href="http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/38449176/3933547">http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/38449176/3933547</a> ; reprinted in 'Old Colonist' [Henry Jones?] (ed. EM Yelland 1970, <i>Colonists, Copper and Corn in the colony of South Australia 1850-51</i> , Melbourne, Hawthorn Press: 41-2.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	



Date	n.d. [?1960s-80s]
Original source text	“ <b>Maitpanga</b> Kurna Tr. / Adelaide / S.Aust Myponga. Lit. vegetable food place [‘mai] + [‘pa] + [-ngga] pa is apparently a contraction of paru namely animal food...”
Reference	Tindale Kurna place-name card [557/1] in AA 338/7/1/12.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	

Date	n.d. [1987 or after]
Original source text	“ <b>Maitpaṅ`ga</b> → <b>Maipaṅka</b> Myponga. Probably name applies to much of the length of the creek from section 735 to beyond 740, Hundred of Myponga. Several versions of the name exist, the earliest being by Teichelmann an <i>[sic]</i> Schürmann as Maitpa and Maitpanga. But interpretation of the name probably is vegetable food place from [‘mai] and [‘paṅkara] a term applied to swamps and lagoons. Other versions and spellings exist...”
Reference	Tindale Kurna place-name card [557/2] in AA 338/7/1/12.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	

Date	1993
Original source text	- “Clan 75 (Jxii) Meiperinyera: place name from <b>Meipongga</b> (Myponga). No <i>ngatji</i> recorded.” - “ <b>Meipongga</b> ” <i>[mapped near location of Myponga Beach]</i> - “Myponga” <i>[for a ‘hill’ triangle mapped in vicinity of Myponga Hill]</i>
Reference	A place-name and Clan of the “dialectical unit J Ramindjeri”, as given in Berndt & Berndt 1993, <i>A World That Was</i> : 312, 330-1.
Informants credited	Albert Karlowan
Informants uncredited	

## Discussion: A BORDER PLACE OF TRANSIT AND BURIAL?

### 1. FIRST RECORDS OF THE PLACE AND NAME:

On 5 September 1837 the Advocate-General Charles Mann set out from Adelaide with Dr William Wyatt, recently appointed as the second Interim Protector. They were heading for Encounter Bay

to collect evidence about the murder of whaler Driscoll near the head of Hindmarsh Valley. A local tribesman Reppindjeri had been arrested and was being held on board a ship at Encounter Bay.<sup>2</sup>

Their guide, Kangaroo Island sealer William Cooper, expected that he would be able to interpret the language there (but he was proved wrong, because the language there “differs so essentially from that of the people residing in the vicinity of Adelaide”).<sup>3</sup> His wife ‘Doughboy’ was a Kurna speaker who had accompanied him to Adelaide and at least sometimes was helping him with his interpreting work there for the authorities.<sup>4</sup> We are not told that she was present with him on this journey, but the possibility is not ruled out, especially when we see what happened halfway.

Somewhere near Noarlunga the party picked up “a family of natives belonging to a well-known and excellent man, commonly called Onkaparinga Jack, and they went the remainder of the journey with us”.<sup>5</sup> This was the same man who became well known as ‘King John’; his real name was Mullawirra-burka, ‘senior man of the dry forest’, custodian of the small scrub site Mullawirra in the foothills near Sellick’s Hill.<sup>6</sup>

The white men still knew no place-names (even in English) between Aldinga and Encounter Bay. The rivers Myponga, Inman and Hindmarsh had not been named, nor mapped since Sturt’s second-hand attempt in 1833,<sup>7</sup> nor even visited by most colonists in Adelaide. The ranges were almost totally unknown.<sup>8</sup> Even to Mann and Wyatt who had heard evidence, ‘Mooteparinga’ (the murder site) was merely a new word for an unknown somewhere near the Bay.

The journey took four days. Beyond Sellick’s Hill they took a route which was not the more usual one via Hindmarsh Tiers; it was another which can be partially reconstructed from details in their travel diaries. It seems to have gone via Myponga valley, Wattle Flat, Wild Dog Creek, and the high range north of the upper Inman. Wyatt wrote home that the far side of Mt Terrible (Sellicks Hill) was “so steep and long, nearly half a mile, that we had to stop twice in the descent, and bivouaced at Missunga [*sic*] in a bush-hut, made on a former occasion by Cooper, under a fallen tree”.<sup>9</sup> Here (said Mann) “a small rill ran – on every side round hills – steep & clothed with the most beautiful

<sup>2</sup> The circumstances of the murder are set out more fully in PNS 7.02/04 Murtaparingga.

<sup>3</sup> Mann to Hindmarsh 20 Sep 1837, GRG 24/1/1837/365: 2.

<sup>4</sup> For a detailed discussion of ‘Doughboy’ see my history of first contact, *Feet On the Fleurieu* (in progress 2017).

<sup>5</sup> Wyatt to JC Mathews, in *The South Australian Record* Vol.1 No.8 (8 Aug 1838): 83b.

<sup>6</sup> See Tom Gara 1998, ‘The Life and Times of Mullawirraburka’, *History in Portraits*, Aboriginal History Monograph: 88-132.

<sup>7</sup> Sturt’s map, using information second-hand from Captain Barker’s team 1831, marked rather vaguely a “fine valley” with a creek, north of an “anchorage” which was (by deduction) at Carrickalinga (Sturt 1833, *Two Expeditions Into the Interior of Southern Australia* Vol.2: 228).

<sup>8</sup> Light and Fisher had led the first colonial expedition over these ranges in June 1837, also accompanied by Cooper, but reported nothing of them.

<sup>9</sup> Wyatt to Mathews, *SA Record* 1(8): 83c.



herbage – Hills break into rounded acclivities at the East End, prettily wooded.”<sup>10</sup> By the time Wyatt’s letter was published, local colonists knew that ‘Missunga’ was a publisher’s error: the place was in fact called “Mipunga”.<sup>11</sup> We may guess that it was probably Mullawirraburka (knowledgeable and ever-helpful) who told Wyatt this name – though it is not impossible that Cooper also knew it from his pre-colonial travels in company with Doughboy.

That night they had visitors. Wyatt described the occasion in a letter to Governor Hindmarsh:

*When at Mipunga... after we had settled down for the night, we were visited by forty of the Aborigines, about two thirds of them fine athletic-looking men, the remainder women. Their approach exhibited a degree of cautiousness, if not timidity; but the elder men of the party, together with the females were soon induced to seat themselves around our large fire, while the young men exhibited their not-ungraceful forms in a corrobory, for our especial gratification.*<sup>12</sup>

The group had reason to be cautious. No doubt they knew of the murder, and were apprehensive that these emissaries of the powerful new white hordes could bring indiscriminate payback. But it seems this hurdle was soon passed; and since all the men were “richly bedaubed with red ochre and whale blubber from the crown to the waist”,<sup>13</sup> colonists like Wyatt would have found it a gratifyingly new and exhilarating experience. He made the usual overtures of friendship:

*I then supplied them severally with a portion of our biscuit, which seemed to please them much; and a shower of rain coming, they all retired to their encampment at some distance, except two, who, being relatives of Cooper’s woman, were accommodated with a lodging near us.*<sup>14</sup>

So early in his role as Protector, Wyatt was quoting this experience as an outstanding example of “conduct of the natives... such as gives rise to the most favourable anticipations of a friendly intercourse between them and the colonists”.<sup>15</sup> But some of the party did not share his confidence. Mann was jittery and saw mainly a threat of violence. He wrote later to Governor Hindmarsh:

<sup>10</sup> Charles Mann 1837, ‘General Description of The Country from Adelaide to Encounter Bay South Australia: Memoranda extracted from a Journal by Hon. C. Mann, Sept.’, BRG 42/52, SLSA [Mann 1837b]: 3. The ‘east end’ was no doubt the pass into Hindmarsh Tiers.

<sup>11</sup> See below. The published spelling “*Missunga*” is clearly a mis-transcription of hand-written ‘Mipunga’. There was a shorthand way of writing ‘ss’ in cursive which looked very much like a tall ‘p’, & Wyatt used it often (see e.g. Wyatt to Hindmarsh 22/9/1837, GRG 24/1/372: 5, which includes “*passed*”, “*grasses*” and “*crossed*”, all with the ‘ss’ written this way; plus the word “*Mipunga*”).

<sup>12</sup> Wyatt to Hindmarsh 22 Sep 1837, GRG 24/1/372: 7.

<sup>13</sup> Wyatt to Mathews: 83c. At Encounter Bay it was still whaling season, when Aboriginal groups came from the whole surrounding area to feast on the blubber, sometimes for weeks at a time.

<sup>14</sup> Wyatt, GRG 24/1/372: 7.

<sup>15</sup> Wyatt, GRG 24/1/372: 6.





*Mr. Wyatt and myself were crossed in our path to Encounter Bay by upwards of 40 of the Parangacka or Murray River Tribe;— men singularly warlike, inimical, and likely to intercept and rescue the prisoner, under any circumstances which would give them a possible chance of success.*<sup>16</sup>

Mann's diary of the journey also betrays his fear: "they commenced a Corrobera (a native dance) which the rain fortunately terminated - & we were left alone".<sup>17</sup> In fact there had been no signs of war; a war party would not include women. Probably they were already painted up because they were preparing for a ceremony.

Mann, with his eye on the job, was no doubt keenly interested in the fact that one of the women among the visitors was the very person they wanted to examine, "the one belonging to the prisoner".<sup>18</sup>

Next morning the government's party travelled on towards Encounter Bay. They

*traversed several very rich meadows and nearly ten miles of boggy swamp, almost the only bad land we fell in with during the journey.*<sup>19</sup>

Mann's account reveals more about their route:

*8 Sept<sup>r</sup>. The first place was a complete marsh for nearly 5 miles. We had occasionally to wade ankle deep. The Plain & Hills to the Southward had a quantity of Brushwood & the Grass tree was very plentiful — crossed into a ravine filled with Brushwood & various flowers. The Hills surrounded us in a Basin-like form — We were frequently up to our instep in water — after about 3 miles walk, we crossed another sett of hills about 500 feet high — came into a plain of some extent, as usual surrounded with hills. Many Stringy Bark & fine Eucalyptus trees.*<sup>20</sup>

They had gone southwest into Lovely Valley and thence to Wattle Flat.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Mann to Hindmarsh 20 Sep 1837, GRG 24/1/1837/365 [Mann 1837c]: 6-7.

<sup>17</sup> Mann 1837a: 3.

<sup>18</sup> Wyatt, GRG 24/1/372: 7.

<sup>19</sup> Wyatt to Mathews *ibid*. 'Nearly ten miles' (16 km) has to be an over-estimate, whichever direction they took.

<sup>20</sup> Mann 1837b: 3.

<sup>21</sup> ROUTE: The distances *could* match either a southeasterly route to reach the pass into Hindmarsh Tiers, or a southwesterly one across the ridge and into Wattle Flat. But other factors rule out the Tiers route: (1) It would have taken them across the Hindmarsh ford, which (in the circumstances) would certainly have been identified by name as the murder site; but the name is not mentioned among the others on the journey. (2) The Tiers route would not include a 'ravine' in the position recorded. But why did they walk SW towards land which is now under the Reservoir? The winter of 1837 had been very wet, as Light and Fisher had found in June. Possibly the land towards the Tiers was still too swampy for such a large party; while the route towards Wattle Flat offered closer relatively high ground in the Valley.



## 1.1 – TRAVEL, MEETING, CEREMONY:

This was a chance meeting; yet it reveals as much about the Aboriginal relationship with Myponga Valley as most of the scanty references in later records.

Mann identified the entire southern group as “Parangacka or Murray River” people, by which (at this early date) he meant the western part of the Murray estuary around Goolwa and Currency Creek.<sup>22</sup> However, these ‘Lake people’ were only part of the group.

The woman Polpalbe and her late husband Reppindjeri were certainly both “Encounter Bay” people,<sup>23</sup> i.e. Ramindjeri.

The two ‘relatives’ who slept near Cooper could have been from either Encounter Bay or the southern Gulf coast (Yankalilla or Rapid Bay). The protocol of sleeping arrangements reveals that these two had a recognized relationship with Cooper through his wife.<sup>24</sup> It may imply that Doughboy was also present. It certainly tells us that Cooper was very much part of the family; his marriage with her was recognized by her tribe and he had been accepted as kin. Were these two ‘relatives’ Kurna speakers or Ramindjeri-Ngarrindjeri speakers, or (more likely) both? Doughboy’s two sons had been among the group of men who were brought in by her and Cooper a year before to help Colonel Light with his garden at Rapid Bay, a reunion after long absence.<sup>25</sup> The ‘relatives’ here at Myponga may even have been the same two men.<sup>26</sup>

There was also the contingent from Adelaide: Mullawirraburka and his family. He was familiar to settlers as ‘King John’, leader of the ‘Adelaide tribe’ at the Native Location; yet he had been ‘Onkaparinga Jack’ of Noarlunga, where many of his funeral rites were performed a few years

<sup>22</sup> “*Parrungka ungka (vulgo Parrangoeka), Land near the Goolwa*” (Wyatt [1837] / 1879: 179). ‘Vulgo’ is Latin for ‘in the common [tongue]’, i.e. vernacular. Survey worker Piesse in 1839 recorded “*Pa-ran-gac-ka: land near Lake Alexandrina*” (Piesse 1840, *SA Colonist* Vol. 1 No.19: 296). The Murray above the lake was not visited by South Australian colonists until late January 1838 (Imlay and Hill). In 1839-40 when Penney was working around Encounter Bay and the estuary, this western part was known as ‘Little Murray’ and the Coorong as ‘Big Murray’ (see PA Clarke 1991, ‘Penney as Ethnographer’, *J. Anthropological Society of SA* 29).

<sup>23</sup> Mann to Hindmarsh, GRG 24/1/1837/365 [Mann 1837c]: 2.

<sup>24</sup> cp. “*When friendly tribes come together, their huts are built as nearly as practicable together, each tribe locating themselves in the direction from whence they came. If they are eastern men, they will occupy the [64] eastern part of the encampment; if from the south, they will occupy the southern part etc. At these seasons one hut may contain two or three families, each having a separate fire*” (Moorhouse Protector’s Report 24 Nov 1842: 63). If Wyatt had noted the geographical disposition of the shelters at Myponga that night, we might know whether these two relatives were from southeast or northwest of the range. For more about the identity of ‘Doughboy’, see my history of first contact, *Feet On the Fleurieu* (in progress 2017).

<sup>25</sup> WG Field 1837, *Sydney Monitor* 13/3/1837: 3e, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/32155172/4259621>.

<sup>26</sup> Some records suggest that Doughboy’s tribe was “*Encounter Bay*” (e.g. William Hodges, *Observer* 26/4/1902: 4b); yet the only recorded language Cooper knew was Kurna, and she was with him and sometimes involved while he interpreted Kurna for 18 months in Adelaide.

later;<sup>27</sup> while at his death it was said that he would be “carried down to his own country” here at “Mypunga”.<sup>28</sup>

So the corroboree was held on or near Mullawirraburka’s land. Perhaps on September 7 he unexpectedly found himself hastily negotiating then hosting a night of celebration on ‘his own country’. Perhaps it included discussions with these parties from two or three other centres – all of whom were grappling with the early stages of colonial settlement, were already sharing the short-term benefits such as whale blubber, and knew they needed to cooperate. Mann need not have feared.

But no occupants or residents of ‘Mipunga’ itself are mentioned. The central part of this valley appeared “rich” to colonists over the next few years, looking for pasture and crop land which they would terraform to control unwanted features such as floods and swamps.<sup>29</sup> But I do not know any accounts of Aboriginal people staying in the valley for any extended time at any period. Not even Mullawirraburka is known to have *lived* here. “His chief place of abode, when in health, was the neighbourhood of Onkaparinga”;<sup>30</sup> and *Mullawirra* – a small forest somewhere in the foothills “on the east side of the Aldinga Plain” near Sellicks Hill – was the *pangkarra* (inherited land) of which this *burka* was “proprietor and inhabitant”.<sup>31</sup> We do not know whether his smoked body was ever carried down to ‘Mypunga’; but it seems that somewhere here was also ‘his own country’, perhaps part of the same *pangkarra* with the ‘dry forest’ over the range about 9 km away.

## 2. THE AREA: MYPONGA PLAIN, MYPONGA VALLEY:

The watercourse which we call the Myponga River flows through a high valley stretching along the back of the Willunga Range scarp 16 km from Pages Flat Rd in the northeast to the Myponga Reservoir in the southwest. Its width ranges from about one km in the northeast to about three in the vicinity of Myponga township. This makes it big enough to be called a ‘Plain’ almost as often as

<sup>27</sup> See Gara 1998: 121-4.

<sup>28</sup> WA Cawthorne diary 1 jan 1845, in Cawthorne (ed. Robert Foster) 1991, ‘Sketch of the Aborigines of South Australia: References in the Cawthorne Papers’, Aboriginal Heritage Branch, SA Dept of Environment & Planning: 57.

<sup>29</sup> “*Rich meadows*” (Wyatt to Mathews); “*rich land*” (Finniss 1838); “*a fine valley*” (Stephen Hack to Maria Hack 20 July 1838, PRG 456/1: 2); “*rich valleys of the Miponga*” (Gawler ‘Notes Made During A Journey Into The Interior’, *SA Gazette and Colonial Register* 18/1/1839: 2a); “*the narrow, but beautiful valley of Mypunga. This beautiful valley, which had scarcely been trodden by the European when I first encamped upon it, was then covered with Orchideous plants of every colour, amidst a profusion of richest vegetation. A sweet rippling stream passed within five yards of my tent-door, and found its way to the Gulf about a mile below me to the west*” (Sturt 1849, *Narrative of an Expedition to Central Australia*, Vol.2: 224-5); cp. John Wade in Gouger 1838, *SA in 1837*: 25.

<sup>30</sup> *SA Register* 6/1/1845: 3a, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/27448959/2285525#>.

<sup>31</sup> Teichelmann & Schürmann 1840 2: 4 ‘burka’, 36 ‘pangkarra’, 75. See also Gara 1998: 95-6.

a 'Vale' or 'Valley'.<sup>32</sup> The Reservoir occupies a low-lying area at the southwestern end which was called Lovely Valley until drowned in 1962.<sup>33</sup>

Below that is a steep and almost inaccessible gorge, leading to a sheltered wetland and cove which was called 'Myponga Jetty' in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but now 'Myponga Beach'. It is important to keep in mind something which too many ethnologists and place-name buffs have neglected or (in some cases) failed to realize: that Myponga Valley and Myponga Beach are two quite different places. They also have two quite different Kurna names, and are quite separate in their relationship to Aboriginal culture and history.<sup>34</sup> Even a knowledgeable Aboriginal informant of post-contact times such as Karlowan could sometimes contribute to this confusion.<sup>35</sup>

The Valley, 220 metres and more above sea level, is known as a cold wet place in winter.<sup>36</sup> In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the southwestern end of it was called 'the Myponga Swamps'.<sup>37</sup> After heavy rains the flat was regularly "ankle deep" in floodwaters "almost to the inn-door" of James Grant's inn or guest-house, which was built on Francis Duval's land, i.e. somewhere on the north side of the creek between today's turnoffs to Sellicks Hill and Hindmarsh Tiers.<sup>38</sup> Just north of the latter intersection, the Pages Flat Rd today crosses the river at the site of what was once called 'the Black Bridge'.<sup>39</sup>

This central area of the valley was called "the Myponga Water-holes".<sup>40</sup> In the earliest years of settlement it was the hub of travel and transport for every early excursion over the range (via a track up Mt Terrible Gully) and southward in any direction. This universal use was determined by topography. For many years it was only here that a colonist could hope to cross the steep scarp of the range with a vehicle.<sup>41</sup> Much the same was true for Aboriginal travellers, as we shall see.

<sup>32</sup> 'Plain': Mann 1837b; Wade in Gouger 1838: 26; Finnis 1838; Moorhouse Jan 1840, July 1840; T&S 1840; Gill 1842. 'Vale' / 'valley' / 'valleys': Giles 1838; Randell 1838; Stephen Hack 1838; Gawler 1839; Ide 1840 map; Angas 1847; Sturt 1849; 'Old Colonist' 1850.

<sup>33</sup> See Roy Williams 1986/1991, *To Find A Way: Yankalilla & District 1836-1986*, 3<sup>rd</sup> printing, Yankalilla & District Historical Society: 219-222.

<sup>34</sup> See below; also PNS 5.01/02 Kauwayarlunga.

<sup>35</sup> See the item from Berndt later in this essay.

<sup>36</sup> "Myponga, or Mipunga, means standing water, and those who know the cold, wet place it is in winter will appreciate the justice of its name" (Anon. [Lucy Webb], 'Yankalilla Yarns' No. 9, *Register* 10/2/1923: 14g). The unsourced folk etymology 'standing water' is impossible linguistically.

<sup>37</sup> 'Old Colonist' *ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> 'Old Colonist' (ed. EM Yelland 1970 [1<sup>st</sup> edition], *Colonists, Copper and Corn in the colony of South Australia 1850-51*, Melbourne, Hawthorn Press: 41-2; = *SA Register* 26/3/185: 3c, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/38449176/3933547>. In 1844 Francis Duval owned Sections 501-3 and 514, 'Myponga Farm' (Cotter *SA Almanack for 1844*: 168); 502 included the Black Bridge.

<sup>39</sup> The site of Black Bridge is marked at Section 502 on most of the earliest maps: e.g. H. Ide 1840, Field Book 5: [6b, 17b, 18b], GNU; Smilly 1841, 'Plan of 268 sections in the Vallies of the Myponga', Plan 6/19, GNU.

<sup>40</sup> 'Old Colonist' *ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> The preferred 'native pad' from the plains up the scarp was probably the Old Sellicks Hill Road, or the ridges around it; but colonists did not use this gully until it was excavated and opened for vehicle use in 1859 (see PNS 4.04.03/03 Kurtandilla). Even on foot with an Aboriginal guide, other routes were "rather worse" than the notorious one used by early

Almost all the earliest accounts of 'Myponga' refer to this small hub area northeast of today's town, only occasionally extending their sights to include Lovely Valley.

Even here at the main Black Bridge your coach could often be bogged;<sup>42</sup> but there was more: "A mile below [Myponga Water-holes] rises a spring, with the waters of which the upper waters unite. This, then, becomes the Myponga river". Travelling from here towards Yankalilla in 1850, you found yourself "crossing the Myponga water and 'Hubback Bridge,' over a rather extensive swamp"; then over the ridge and down to the "Wayside House" of John Clarke, the first settler of Wattle Flat.<sup>43</sup> The route was almost identical with today's Main South Road.

### 3. THE NAME:

We get no enlightenment about the location from analysing the name.

The language seems to be Kurna: firstly because it uses the common Locative suffix *ngga* ('at, place of'), and the probability reinforced by the consonant cluster *tp* (= *db*), which is common in the local Thura-Yura languages such as Kurna, but very rare in Ramindjeri-Ngarrindjeri and other Meru languages to the east.

However, there is no known meaning for the first morpheme *maitpa*, nor any credible version of the morpheme, in any of the local languages including Ngarrindjeri-Ramindjeri and Peramangk.<sup>44</sup> Either it is an unrecorded noun, or the name is 'just a name' with no dictionary meaning, like 'Rome' or 'Perth'.

Other groups may have had their own name for this place, but if so, it was not recorded.

The most reliable version of the name by far was recorded by the German missionary linguists Teichelmann and Schürmann: "Maitpa-ngga – Matpunga Plain". Their gloss 'Matpunga' is probably a misprint for 'Maipunga', no doubt their German version of the various English spellings still

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colonists up Mt Terrible Gully (see 30 Nov and 16 Dec 1837 in YB Hutchinson, 'A Hasty Account Of an expedition to Encounter Bay', PRG 1013/1/4/1: 3, 8). By 1850 another route was also being used via Loud's Hill Rd, nearer to Willunga (see e.g. 'Old Colonist' *ibid*: 39-40).

<sup>42</sup> "At one of the stations there are seven springs, as clear as it is possible; there is a great stream always running from them into the Myponga River, which passes out to sea near Rapid Bay. The land in the winter months is dreadfully overflowed, so that in crossing at the Black Bridge travellers are often bogged" (Daniel Brock 1843, ed. K Peake-Jones 1981, *Recollections of DGB 1843*, Adelaide, Royal Geographical Society of Australasia, SA Branch: 48-9.

<sup>43</sup> 'Old Colonist' *ibid*.

<sup>44</sup> Few records of Peramangk or 'Mt Barker' language have survived. The consonant cluster *tp/db* does not occur at all in Moorhouse's Ngayawang wordlist, "the Murray River language... from Wellington on the Murray, as far as the Rufus" (1846), which he seems to have regarded as identical with the 'Mt Barker' language (Moorhouse Protector's Report 24 Nov 1842: 75). See also the passage below about Paul Simpson's essay on the Peramangk.



current in the 1840s. For instance Wyatt (probably after discussions with the two linguists) partially re-spelled his own 'Mipunga' as "Maippunga".<sup>45</sup>

Because the name 'Myponga' has been well-known to travellers around the Fleurieu since very early settlement, it has attracted a number of folk etymologies from anonymous settlers, place-name enthusiasts who have recycled whatever they saw in print, and authorities as eminent as GH Manning and NB Tindale. *All* of them are incorrect and linguistically impossible.<sup>46</sup>

#### 4. ABORIGINAL USES OF THE VALLEY: TRAVEL ROUTES AND RESIDENTIAL SITES: A PLACE OF TRANSIT?

Just over the majestic barrier of Sellicks Hill, Maitpangga was border country. Moorhouse noted in 1840 that the "Patpunga" tribe inhabited "the southern coast from Mt Terrible to Rapid Bay", which

<sup>45</sup> Wyatt [1837-9] / 1879, in Woods 1879, *Native tribes of SA*: 179. Cp. "Miponga" (Gawler in *SA Gazette and Colonial Register* Sat 5 Jan 1839, p2b-c). The modern spelling 'Myponga' first appeared as the name of the river on the well-known map "The maritime portion of SA... Flinders & of Col. Light / Arrowsmith Feb<sup>y</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> 1839). Protector Moorhouse had "Myponga Plain" (Moorhouse 2<sup>nd</sup> Report, 14/1/1840, BPP.... Vol. 7 :352) and "Maitpunga Plains" (Moorhouse 3<sup>rd</sup> Report [half-yearly] 27/7/1840, 'Papers Relative to SA... 1843', BPP Aust Vol. 7: 354).

<sup>46</sup> FOLK ETYMOLOGIES: We have at least the following, replete with mis-spelt quotations and bad guesses:

- "Myponga (*high cliffs by the sea*)", which confuses Myponga with Myponga Beach: see PNS 5.01/02 Kauwayarlungga (Anon, "one of the earliest residents of Maclaren Vale" [Faith Lockwood, nee Hewett], published by 'A Native' [EH Hallack] in *Evening Journal* 23/9/1893: 4c, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/198433414/22405986>).
- "Myponga is corrupted from Maippunga, which in one vocabulary is stated to mean divorced wife" (unsourced, in Cockburn 1908: 93).
- The SA Geographical Names Unit's History Book Vol.14 p.44 (in an entry probably written by HC Talbot) quotes Cockburn while mis-spelling the name as "Miappunga".
- Cockburn's gloss is probably derived from the same unknown West Australian source as this: "MYONGA (MALPUNGA) {sic} – A divorced wife. WA." (James Tyrrell 1933/1944, *Australian Aboriginal Place-names and their Meanings*, Simmons Ltd, Sydney: 37).
- "Myponga, or Mipunga, means standing water" (Lucy Webb 1923, 'Yankalilla Yarns' No. 9, *Register* 10/2/1923: 14g).
- "Mypolonga – Cliff lookout place", which succeeds in confusing the name with a place on the Murray River, and the gloss from Lockwood 1893 (HM Cooper 1949, *Australian Aboriginal Words*, SA Museum: 18).
- Other wordlists reproduce almost any combination of elements from the above.
- TINDALE: In his pursuit of possible etymologies for the name, Tindale offers only three more bad guesses. They are all his own, and despite their authoritative appearance have no linguistic credibility and no authority from his informants:
  - "Maitpanga / Lit. vegetable food place [mai] + [pa] + [-ngga] / pa is apparently a contraction of paru namely animal food" (Kaurna place-name card [557/1]). This guess does not account for the t, but he backs up by a bare assertion on another card: "Maipanga → 'Maitpanga'" [557/3].
  - Sometime in or after 1987 he makes another guess: "interpretation of the name probably is vegetable food place from [mai] and [pangkara] a term applied to swamps and lagoons" [557/2].
  - All of these divide up the single morpheme maitpa in order to eliminate the t and then guess at etymologies for the two remaining syllables. In 557/2 he is also confusing pangkarra ('district or tract of country belonging to an individual') with pangka ('lake, lagoon'): an astonishing slip, for the same card cites his recent 1987 essay on 'Tjirbruki', in which he had used pangkarra several times more or less correctly.
- GH Manning cites most of these folk etymologies (e.g. in *Place Names of Our Land*, 2011: 579).

Many of these are dealt with conclusively by Rob Amery & Vincent (Jack) Kanya Buckskin 2014, 'Pinning down Kaurna names: Linguistic issues arising in the development of the Kaurna Placenames Database', from Ian D. Clark, Luise Hercus and Laura Kostanski (eds) 2014, *Indigenous and Minority Placenames: Australian and International Perspectives*, Canberra, ANU Press: 197-8, <http://press-files.anu.edu.au/downloads/press/p286811/pdf/ch101.pdf>.



would include Myponga valley at its northern extremity; while the “Adelaide” tribe inhabited “a district of 10 miles north of Adelaide to the foot of Mount Terrible”.<sup>47</sup>

Mullawirraburka passed through “Myponga Plain” again on 18 October 1839 in the company of two other familiar leading men of the ‘Adelaide tribe’, Kadlitpinna (‘Captain Jack’) and Ityamaitpinna (‘Rodney’). We do not know what they were doing there – perhaps travelling south to Myponga Beach or Encounter Bay. It was there that they met two white men who were on the way back from the whale fishery to Adelaide. Ityamaitpinna “demanded flour from them in a very peremptory manner”; but Kadlitpinna and Mullawirraburka “blamed Rodney for demanding food”. Later in Adelaide Protector Moorhouse gave Rodney a warning, which was met with silence.<sup>48</sup>

But beyond those transient meetings in 1837 and 1839, we have (as far as I know in 2017) only three items for the Aboriginal occupation and use of Myponga Valley:

Firstly, one archaeological essay makes a brief reference to an unspecified Tindale card which mentions a “stone arrangement at Myponga”.<sup>49</sup> I leave it to the archaeologists to locate more about this if they can.

In recent years a correspondent then living in Myponga, in emails to the SA Museum and us in KWP, identified at least one canoe scar on the eastern margin of the town, carved out from a River Red gum. She reports preliminary inspection by an archaeologist to suggest that the bark from this scar would not have made a typical canoe, but “could have been used as a raft to cross the swampy terrain when flooded”.<sup>50</sup> Wide or deep swamplands might be found in winter in low-lying areas even here around what I have called the ‘hub’ of travel. Tom Gara’s recent unpublished research into canoes and scar trees leads him to believe that “bark canoes were occasionally used over a wide area of the Gulf coast including the Adelaide Plains and the Mid North”, though the evidence of it is rather scanty.<sup>51</sup> The new find at Maitpangga could therefore have been made either by locals or by visitors like Mann’s ‘Parangacka’ people from the Murray estuary, who were very familiar with the technology.<sup>52</sup> But again we seem to have transit rather than occupation.

<sup>47</sup> Moorhouse Quarterly Report 14 Jan 1840, *BPP Aust* Vol. 7: ‘Papers Relative to SA... 1843’: 352.

<sup>48</sup> Moorhouse 2<sup>nd</sup> Report, 14 Jan 1840, *BPP: Australia* Vol. 7: 352.

<sup>49</sup> Robin Radford & Valerie Campbell 1982, ‘Archaeology of the Southern Adelaide Region: Part 4 – material Culture’, *Journal of Anthropological Society of South Australia* 20(2): 7.

<sup>50</sup> Sharleen Weber-Smith p.c. emails 2012, 2017. She also reports several other scars in the same vicinity, but their status is so far unclear.

<sup>51</sup> Tom Gara p.c. emails 18-25/6/2017.

<sup>52</sup> What about Peramangk travellers from further north? This seems unlikely. According to Tindale, these hills people were distrusted by the Murray and Lake tribes (including Mann’s ‘Parangacka’), but nevertheless sometimes gave them access to suitable red-gums on Peramangk country, especially around Strathalbyn; however, they themselves were not manufacturers or users of the bark canoes so made (Tindale 1974: 60-1).

Thirdly, there are several versions of a well-known painting which depicts an “elevated tomb”. It was originally seen and painted by ST Gill somewhere “near” Myponga in 1842.<sup>53</sup> All the other versions, including his own in 1845, are re-workings and do not necessarily reflect what he actually saw.

It “clearly shows a wooden platform of the type constructed by the Ngarrindjeri people on which the smoked body was left to desiccate. Although it cannot be certain that the body at Myponga has been smoked, it seems likely that this was the case”.<sup>54</sup> Archaeologist James Knight writes, “On the Lakes and Coorong, the smoked body was placed on a ‘raft’ burial, an elevated triangular platform which recalled the raft”. He distinguishes this “smoke and bundle” process from “smoke and carry” as in the cases of Tjirbruki’s nephew and Rodney.<sup>55</sup> Neither of these was the final stage in rites of burial.

For the location we must stick with Gill (though perhaps some of the differing details in his 1845 version may have been remembered rather than invented for painterly purposes). His 1842 eyewitness original shows the background landscape with less clarity than other versions, and it is very hard to pick its location. Amid rolling grassland with a few wooded patches in the distance, the platform stands half-hidden by reeds beside a substantial small creek, which appears to flow in the general direction of lower land in the back right, with more heavily wooded hills behind that. Locals who are familiar with the country may be able to locate the place from these contours: perhaps somewhere in the northwestern margins of the valley, an area which still contains many small creeks around the river and towards Munetta.

For colonial readers this image and its re-worked copies were separated from its place of origin to become an icon of the ‘fade-out’ of Aborigines from the colonial landscape in general, a symbol of lament which could be turned towards either decorative melancholy or gothic horror.<sup>56</sup>

Gill’s watercolour confirms that the area was used for this part of the funeral rites (the smoking). This was a procedure typical for all initiated men among the people of the Estuary and Encounter

<sup>53</sup> Gill’s original painting was “a small watercolour... dated by an unknown hand as 1842” (Ron Radford 1986, ‘Natives’, in Ron Appleyard, Barbara Fargher & Ron Radford 1986, *ST Gill: the South Australian Years 1839-1852*, Adelaide, Art Gallery of SA: 63). An advertisement for sale by its current private owner in Melbourne (2017) gives its title as “*Native Sepulchre, Near Missunga Plains, South Australia*” (<http://www.menziesartbrands.com/items/native-sepulchre-near-missunga-plains-south-australia>) (5/5/17, “image available on request”). Its date was inscribed as “8 May 1842”, according to an online art researcher (Shar Jones 1992, <https://www.daa0.org.au/bio/samuel-gill/biography/> [12/6/17]). Gill made a second version in 1845, inscribed (also by an unknown hand) “*Native Tomb / Myponga / T.S. Gill*” [sic], now held by the SA Museum (Appleyard *et al* 1986, *ibid*, which includes a small b/w reproduction of it).

<sup>54</sup> Tom Gara 1986, ‘Burial Customs of the Kurna’, *Journal of the Anthropological Society of South Australia* 24(8): 6, [http://www.anthropologysocietysa.com/home/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/JASSA-Volume-24\\_8-Gara.pdf](http://www.anthropologysocietysa.com/home/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/JASSA-Volume-24_8-Gara.pdf).

<sup>55</sup> James Knight 2003, ‘Testing Tindale Tribes: a re-assessment of Tindale’s work on the Aboriginal Tribes of Australia, with reference to the written records of the southeast of South Australia’, Ph.D. thesis, University of New England: 281-2.

<sup>56</sup> George French Angas appropriated it in 1847 as ‘Elevated Native Tomb, Myponga Vale, SA’ in his famous book *Savage Life and Scenes* (London, Smith, Elder & Co. Vol.1: 71). Even Gill himself re-worked it for Eyre’s book under the incorrect title “*Mode of disposing of the dead at the Lower Murray*” (Eyre 1845, ‘An account of the manners and customs of the Aborigines’, in *Journals of Expeditions of Discovery... Vol.2*, London, T&W Boone: 344); and another popular ethnographic book used it to illustrate the fascinating ‘savagery’ of ‘primitive man’ in general (see Paul Turnbull in C Fforde, J Hubert & P Turnbull 2003, *The Dead and Their Possessions: Repatriation in Principle, Policy and Practice*, London, Routledge: 76-9. Both of the versions reproduced there elevate the platform to three times its original height so that it luridly dominates the painting, and multiply the crows and dingoes).

Bay, but not at all on the coast north of Adelaide; and it was also done (sometimes at least) for important individuals among the peoples of the southern Fleurieu, such as Mullawirraburka and Ityamaitpinna ('Rodney'). However, Mullawirraburka was smoked not here but somewhere near Old Noarlunga.<sup>57</sup>

It is a fair guess that the margins of the swamps in the valley may have been used for final interments in a grave, as they were in other parts of the Gulf coast such as the Port River estuary and Dry Creek.<sup>58</sup>

Burial country is not normally in the same place as camping country; but one may certainly pass by not far from it. And in transit one will certainly make use of the resources which the place offers. Paul Simpson writes of the Peramangk, but he may be making a good point in the ecology of all the local tribes when he writes, "Myponga, on the trade route south to Putpangga territory[:]"<sup>59</sup> it was a place of plentiful water and food, particularly in autumn when the drying water holes allowed for access to freshwater mussels, turtles, and rush bulbs that were easily accessible in this otherwise boggy and marshy piece of country".<sup>60</sup>

#### TRAVEL ROUTES:

There is ample evidence that the part of Myponga Valley around Black Bridge was a travel hub in times of first contact. There are many records of Aboriginal guides leading colonists through this area and often camping on the way. But they were always in transit between other destinations, and the immediate northern destination was always the Aldinga Plains, on the way to Adelaide.

Most of these accounts make it clear that their route to Encounter Bay was via the Hindmarsh Tiers and down Nettle Hill into Hindmarsh valley. Their stay in Myponga valley was brief, their route transverse and relatively short.

However there are a few records, such as those of Mann and Wyatt in 1837, in which the route seems to have gone downstream to Lovely Valley and then over into Wattle Flat. The little we know of routes which Aboriginal people took when they were following their own established seasonal pattern implies that this longitudinal way through Lovely Valley was not one of them.

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<sup>57</sup> Gara 1998: 124.

<sup>58</sup> For thorough discussions of burial practices on the southern Fleurieu, including Gill's watercolour, see Gara 1986; Gara 1998, 'Life and Times of Mullawirraburka': 122-4; and James Knight 2003: 280-3. For Dry Creek google unisa\_mawson\_lakes\_ich\_study\_final\_report.pdf.

<sup>59</sup> See my PNS 1/03 Patpangga.

<sup>60</sup> Paul Simpson 2011: 8.

In the ordinary course of their lives Aboriginal people were far more interested in Myponga Beach. This is not far away from the Valley as the crow flies, but it is a separate place, much harder of access and not on the way to Encounter Bay. However, it was a well-used camping place, sheltered from the southwesterlies, with good fishing and a recorded 'Aboriginal site'.<sup>61</sup>

On three relatively small-scale maps Tindale roughly recorded a "native track" which went from Port Elliot across the range via Hindmarsh Valley, to Myponga Beach, and from there along the coast to Sellicks Beach. For our purposes in this essay we need to know whether this track went through or along Myponga Valley. Though the two later records (hand-copied from the original) have it using Myponga Valley, the original in fact does not; the approaches to Myponga Beach were a southerly one from Wattle Flat or Carrickalinga, and a northerly one from Sellicks Beach along the coast.<sup>62</sup>

There is ample evidence that Aboriginal people from Encounter Bay were often seen in the 19<sup>th</sup> century on the way to or from Myponga Beach via Wattle Flat, and camping on Section 411 at the junction of Wild Dog Creek as part of this journey.<sup>63</sup>

I conclude on this probability: that while Aboriginal guides did sometimes lead colonists down through Lovely Valley *en route* from Adelaide to Encounter Bay, in their own traditional lives they probably used it rarely; that they would normally bypass it altogether in favour of a route from Wattle Flat to Myponga Beach, the coastal plateau and Sellicks Beach, using lookout points such

<sup>61</sup> Unspecific site mapped in Betty Ross 1984, *Aboriginal and Historic Places Around Metropolitan Adelaide*, Anthropological Society of SA: 20.

<sup>62</sup> In the stretch from Hindmarsh Valley to Myponga Beach, his original record in the 1920s has it going *south* of Spring Mount, passing *south* of Myponga River near Wattle Flat, approaching 'Myponga Jetty' from the *south*, and reaching the coast a little west of it (Tindale annotated map AA 338/15/2). But his next record (hand-copying the original onto another map) has the track passing *north* of Spring Mount, through Myponga town and then *north* of Myponga River, to approach 'Myponga Jetty' from the *east* by a route approximating Sampson Rd (Tindale annotated map AA 338/16/2). This second route has the same title, "*Native track from Pt Elliot towards Adelaide*", and its route is otherwise mostly the same; almost certainly the differences are due not to a second source but merely to careless copying. His third record changes the description to "*old native track (short cut)*"; it bypasses Myponga Beach altogether, assimilates this part of the route completely into the standard track from the Tiers straight across the Valley to Sellicks Beach, where it joins a different track coming along the coast from Myponga Beach – one in which he was apparently trying to mark a "*track of Tjilbruke*" from Mt Hayfield to Brighton, credited to Karlowan (Tindale annotated map AA 338/16/8; cp. AA 338/24/64). In the light of this dubious copying long after the original record, the earliest maps (15/2 and 24/64) have the greatest credibility even though they lack a source credit.

In these developments Tindale neglected what Karlowan had also told him, that Tjilbruki in his final journey with the body of his nephew "*turned inland*" from Sellicks Beach but then "*kept Maitpangga on his left and climbed another high hill*". I take this to mean that he was no longer going along the beach, but in order to continue southward on high land along the coast, he first had to detour around Mt Terrible Gully, then negotiate the hills around Mt Jeffcott (see PNS 4.04.01/04 Witawali Sellicks Beach). In fact the other records suggest that something like this was a well-used Aboriginal route.

<sup>63</sup> "*Natives from Encounter Bay were reported journeying up the valley of the Inman River, following the Yankalilla River to the Gorge and going through Wattle Flat to Myponga Beach. This most likely occurred when there was a plentiful supply of yabbies in the fresh waters of the rivers and when fish and shellfish were available at the Gorge and Myponga beaches*" (Roy Williams 1986/1991, *To Find A Way: Yankalilla & District 1836-1986*, Yankalilla & District Historical Society: 19). cp. "*Natives used to meet at a large burnt out tree, which would provide some shelter, on Section 411, Myponga Wild Dog Creek*" (Roy Williams 1982, 'History of Parawa, p.11 Aborigines', CD 1782, Yankalilla & District Historical Society Archives).



as 'Warabari' to follow the movements of salmon and mulloway;<sup>64</sup> or else they would go from Hindmarsh Valley through the Tiers and straight across the hub of Myponga Valley to Sellicks Hill (roughly Tindale's 'short cut'): a route which might have originated when trips to Adelaide for rations became an annual event.

Berndt gives this an ambiguous confirmation. His whole book seems to confuse Myponga with Myponga Beach, so that when he writes that there was a trade route which "ran from Encounter Bay up the Inman River... to Yankalilla... and continuing to Myponga (Meipongga), to Aldinga", we must assume (in the light of all the other evidence) that he actually means Myponga Beach. It is quite possible that this confusion came partly from his informant Karlowan, whose people may have abridged the *English* name 'Myponga Beach' while ignoring its origin at Myponga valley, because the latter had not featured in their Aboriginal life.<sup>65</sup>

## 5. MAITPANGGA AND THE PERAMANGK PEOPLE OF THE HILLS:

Tindale believed that Myponga was the southern extremity of Peramangk territory.<sup>66</sup> As it is a raised valley surrounded by high hills of the Mt Lofty Range, this seems a fair guess. The Peramangk were "the people way back on the hills", the timber i.e. scrub people", as Yaraldi man Frank Blackmore described those in the Whale myth who called for a big celebration at Murtaparingga, 10 km southeast of Myponga.<sup>67</sup>

Paul Simpson<sup>68</sup> tries to confirm a case that *Maitpangga* is Peramangk both in place and name. This deserves some consideration, since (as Amery believes) the Kurna and Peramangk languages were "mutually intelligible".<sup>69</sup> Simpson claims that a Peramangk word *maitpa* means "plant food", and that *Maitpangga* means 'autumn food'; and that another name in Peramangk territory, "Maitpana-littya" at Mt Barker, means "Food for Them";<sup>70</sup> and he also cites the etymology of 'Mypolonga' as "Maitpa-langga: Flooding food place". However, his essay is heavily and unavoidably dependent on Tindale's published and unpublished work, including the Place Name

<sup>64</sup> See PNS 5.01/06 Warabari.

<sup>65</sup> Berndt's map, though very small-scale and therefore very approximate with locations, does show a track which approaches Myponga Beach from the southwest and leaves it northward along the coast. This corresponds with Tindale's records of a "track of Tjilbruke" (maps AA 338/24/64 and 338/16/8); unsurprisingly, since the informant was Karlowan in both cases. See Berndt & Berndt 1993, *A World That Was*: 20, 312, 330-1.

<sup>66</sup> Tindale 1974, *Aboriginal Tribes of Australia*: 217.

<sup>67</sup> Tindale AA 338/1/33/2: 181-2; see PNS 7-02-04 Murtaparingga.

<sup>68</sup> Paul Simpson 2011, *Peramangk: A Social History of the Aboriginal People of the Southern Mount Lofty Ranges*, <http://phasai.deviantart.com/art/Peramangk-Second-Edition-2011-203140763>.

<sup>69</sup> Amery 2000/2016, *Warraparna Kurna!*: 6.

<sup>70</sup> Simpson's spelling is clearly derived partly from "*Mightpanaleekya*" in the May family papers (PRG 131/4, Volume II: 3; but the record is second-hand, the suffix as given is not intelligible in any local language, and I have not found an original MS source from which to check the spelling), and partly from Teichelmann & Schürmann 1840 (*parnalitya* 'to them; for them').



cards, and in the light of Tindale's frequent carelessness with language I am even more sceptical of Simpson's linguistics.<sup>71</sup> In any case the Kurna Locative *ngga* would still need explanation. Did the Peramangk language also use this suffix? We do not know anything certain about Peramangk Locatives.<sup>72</sup>

## 6. AN EXACT SITE FOR MAITPANGGA?

The meeting and corroboree of 7 September 1837 defines for us the location of the Aboriginal place which carried this name, as closely as we can go. All later references to the name are merely colonial extensions of its usage to the wider extent of the valley, to the whole length of the river, to the river mouth, to the town.

*Maitpangga* is the place where Aboriginal travellers from the Estuary and Encounter Bay camped and held ceremony in the presence of their relatives Cooper and perhaps 'Doughboy', and of Mullawirraburka's family and the colonists from Adelaide on 7 September 1837. It was possibly on part of Mullawirraburka's land. Where exactly was it?

When Mann and Wyatt reached this campsite on the 7<sup>th</sup>, the day must have been fairly late, and it could not have been very far from the long descent of Mt Terrible.

It is clear that it was upstream from the swampland of the lower part of the valley before the ridge leading to Wattle Flat. Here on the 8<sup>th</sup> they crossed a stretch of 'bog', sometimes "anle deep", whose length Wyatt gives as "nearly ten miles" and "about ten miles" (both of which must be a gross over-estimate). Mann says that the "first place was a complete marsh for nearly 5 miles". If he measured this from their campsite onward, the camp is placed some distance north of the Hindmarsh Tiers Rd intersection. But perhaps he meant 'around their campsite', which leaves the possibility that it was nearer to the town site.

It must have been a place above flood level, sheltered enough to allow camping during a 'shower of rain', clear and flat enough nearby to allow for a small dance floor.

<sup>71</sup> Tindale was often careless in using and hybridizing the local languages. The items above suggest to me that either Tindale or Simpson may have taken the former's quite untenable idea – that *Maitpangga* in Kurna means 'place of vegetable-food' (from *mai*) – and with some help from T&S 1840, extended it into other Peramangk place-names with similar first morphemes. (I have not seen Tindale's Peramangk index cards).

<sup>72</sup> If the place-name 'Laratinga' (creek at Mt Barker in Peramangk territory) was recorded more or less accurately, it may suggest that the Peramangk language did sometimes use *ngga* as a Locative, but did not follow the Kurna rule about using *illa* when the root has three syllables. (In Kurna it would have been 'Laratilla'). A few other records such as 'Yaktanga' (Mt Barker) do seem to follow the Kurna rule. The matter has not yet been seriously studied by linguists, as far as I know (2017). Paul Simpson (p.13, 18) cites Tindale's view that the Peramangk language included elements of Kurna as well as of the Meru languages to the east. But in his list of allegedly Peramangk place-names (all unsourced) most of the names are re-spelled without notice or explanation. They often include morphemes such as *parri* which (I suspect) were not recorded in the original but added from Kurna sources by Simpson or other authors. Some are on the coastal plains, such as "Parnalartangga" (Panalatinga Creek at Reynella) and "Pilyara-ngga" ('Billyarunga' at Sturt).

More than this I cannot pursue here. Close attention to local knowledge, topography, archaeology and Aboriginal requirements for such a place might perhaps allow us in the future to pin down the location more exactly than the 4-km ‘hub’ area which I am suggesting.

It is also *possible* that the name referred to the whole valley (much as *Ngatlingga* applied to the whole plain there, as far as we know). But since probably only the hub area was in common use, a wider referent for the name is less likely.

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POSTSCRIPT: TINDALE ON THE LOCATION OF MAITPANGGA:

Tindale tells us nothing of substance about the location. In one of his cards it is the “Myponga township area”.<sup>73</sup> In another he writes, “Probably name applies to much of the length of the creek from section 735 to beyond 740, Hundred of Myponga”:<sup>74</sup> i.e. a 3-km stretch along Pages Flat Rd from Dodd Rd to beyond the Louds Hill Rd intersection, which is 4.5 km away from the Black Bridge and ‘hub’ area. I cannot think of any reason why he would identify this particular stretch of the valley as the location, and he cites no authority for it; it looks like an unsubstantiated guess.

.....

*End of Summary*

DRAFT

8 AUG 2017

<sup>73</sup> Tindale Kurna place-name card [557/3] `Maipanga`.

<sup>74</sup> Tindale Kurna place-name card [557/2] `Maitpaŋ`ga.