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4 Placenames evidence for NSW Pidgin[1,2]

Abstract: NSW Pidgin is documented from fragmentary source material, and evidence is sparse for its probable nineteenth century spread through Queensland to northern Australia. I adduce another source of data bearing on NSW Pidgin's formation and spread, that found in placenames. I argue that NSW, and northern Australia too, there are 'Pidgin placenames': ones that are neither purely of Indigenous origin, nor entirely imposed by the incoming colonists and settlers.

The study considers a NSW Pidgin landform word widely incorporated into placenames (*balga* 'hill'), the NSW Pidgin words *gabun* 'big', *ngarang* 'little', *budjari* and *merrijig* 'good', *yarraman* 'horse', *piccaninny* 'child', *blackgin* and *lubra* 'Aboriginal woman'. The study also covers some words derived from English, such as *blackfellow* 'Aboriginal person' and *sugarbag* 'native honey'. Unlike a lot of introduced placenames, the Pidgin placenames were likely formed by local residents, and show a mix of the formal and semantic patterns of Indigenous versus introduced placenames. The study shows how the limited corpus of NSW Pidgin can be somewhat augmented, and throws a little more light on the geographic and temporal extent of NSW Pidgin.

1 Introduction

The pattern in the distribution some official Australian placenames provides a perspective on the propagation of nineteenth century Pidgin, from its entry at

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1 This study relates two long held interests of Patrick McConvell's: contact languages, and how languages preserve traces of layers of (pre)history. More particularly, Patrick has shown how placenames can illuminate these domains: McConvell 2002 considered contrasts between Aboriginal and European ways of assigning placenames, and McConvell 2009: 387–390 showed how placename analysis can contribute 'evidence of previous occupation'.

2 The initial version of this paper received (jointly) the NSW Geographic Names Board's Murray Chapman Award for 2013. An earlier version was presented to the 12th Australian Languages Workshop, 8–10 March 2013, The University of Queensland's Moreton Bay Research Station, North Stradbroke Island. I am grateful for comments there, for anonymous reviewers' comments, and for further discussion of the topic with Denise Angelo, Harold Koch, Jen Munro, Petter Næssan, Jeff Siegel, and Jane Simpson. I have made appreciative use of Steele's (2005) lexical database for NSW. Figures 1 and 6 are reproduced with permission. The maps have been made with QGIS 1.8.0, and Natural Earth (free vector and raster map data from natural-earthdata.com).

Sydney the capital of the first state, New South Wales (NSW). This paper investigates some limited aspects of the spread of NSW Pidgin through placenames presumably formed within it. After setting out the scope of the study, and the difficulties with the available data, I consider first words which did not spread beyond NSW, and then words which did spread through Queensland and to northern Australia. I conclude with less numerous examples found in other parts of the mainland. The dating of the spread of NSW Pidgin is not addressed, because the date of bestowal of the relevant placenames has not been collated and often proves to be unobtainable in any detail. Also the study does not cover other interlanguage placenames, such as conscious portmanteau combinations, 'blended loans', or coinages during language reclamation in recent years.

2 Pidgin placenames

The starting point for distinguishing types of modern Australian placenames is the framework established by Hercus & Simpson (2002: 1):

> In Australia we have two sets of placenames, one superimposed over the other. These are the set of networks of placenames that Indigenous Australians developed to refer to places (the Indigenous placename networks), and the set of placenames that Europeans developed to refer to places (the introduced placename system).

Table 1: Australian placename sets after European Contact (primary sets shaded)

L1: Lexifier	Indigenous Australian	European: English etc.
Australian		
English etc.		

The cells of Table 1 on the main diagonal represent the two main sets identified by Hercus & Simpson (2002: 1). Speakers of Australian languages typically named places according to various patterns which contrast in a number of ways with those of English and other European languages.

> The two systems of placenames differ in a number of ways, for example, whether the placenames form networks, how they act as mnemonics, what uses are made of the land, and what counts as a significant feature. (Hercus & Simpson 2002: 10)

With respect to the third aspect, as the authors put it,

> In fact, it is exceedingly difficult to find Indigenous placenames that make explicit reference to habitation. That is, we do not find names of the form 'X Camp' (Hercus & Simpson 2002: 13)

In Australia the Indigenous placenames contrast formally with those of colonial origin. External modification with a descriptive adjective, compounding, commemoration of a distant person or other entity, or incorporation of a landform generic in the placename are patterns rarely found in Australian Indigenous placenames, while being commonplace in the placenames introduced with European settlement (Hercus & Simpson 2002). These contrasting tendencies can be brought to bear on the study of those placenames that are candidates for having arisen where an Indigenous language has been in contact with English.

In contrast, the introduced placenames commonly show other strategies of coinage: commemoration (of a named person or a placename from Europe), topographic descriptors (such as *Mount Remarkable*), and relative location (*East Arm*) Hercus & Simpson (2002: 14–18). This last European-style strategy uses a modifier (such as a cardinal direction, or relative elevation or age or size) to relate two nearby distinct places. This pattern is commonplace with English placenames (especially in England, e.g. *Great Haseley* and *Little Haseley* in Oxfordshire) but is rarely found with Australian Indigenous placenames. For example, the use of an external modifier indicating size is to be contrasted with what can be called the internal diminutive, as occurs in the *-dool* placenames of central north NSW (Nash 2014a).

The situation of Table 1 increased in complexity as soon as the English colonists adopted placenames from an Aboriginal language, populating the upper right cell of Table 1, that is, representing placenames borrowed from an Australian language into colonial English. The remaining cell (bottom left) represents imported (European) placenames some of which would have been adopted by Aboriginal people and thus borrowed into their languages.[3] However, none of these four sets is the subject of the present study. Rather, I turn attention to

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3 The earliest borrowings we are now aware of from outside Australia into an Australian language would have been Macassan placenames (MacKnight 1976) borrowed into Top End languages. The first borrowing from a European language would have been after the establishment of the English colony at Port Jackson in 1788, where the first borrowed placename may well have been the very name *England*, as witness the Sydney Language reply P. & W. *Englánda* 'In England.' recorded by Dawes (Dawes & Anonymous 2009: Notebook B, 33) (compare *Beriwàl* 'England' (Dawes & Anonymous 2009: Notebook B, 4)) from the sense 'a great distance off' (Dawes & Anonymous 2009: Notebook C, 9).

another possible source of placenames in nineteenth century NSW, namely the kind of language used between the NSW Aboriginal people and the incoming colonists. This variety of talk, not in itself a full language, has been termed NSW Pidgin, and 'was the vehicle by which many words from NSW Aboriginal languages entered Australian English . . .' (Harkins 2008: 405). I draw on the descriptions of NSW Pidgin by Troy (1993, 1990, 1994) and Amery & Mühlhäusler (1996). A vocabulary extracted from Troy (1994) by Amanda Lissarrague (Harkins 2008: 405) has been published by Wafer et al. (2008).

Once NSW Pidgin arose, first around Sydney and other early European settlements, the possibilities for placename origin widened from Table 1 to those of Table 2.

Table 2: Australian placename sets with Pidgin placename sets shaded light grey (primary sets dark shaded)

L1: Lexifier	Indigenous Australian	European: English etc.
Australian		
Pidgin		
English etc.		

This study focusses on placenames which likely arose in the common way of talking used by Aborigines and the English-speaking colonists to communicate with each other. There is little previous literature on placenames as part of pidgin (or creole) lexicons (just J. Nash 2014b and two references there cited). Pidgin placenames are likely to have been co-constructed and arose in interaction between speakers of an Australian language and speakers of the colonial English. We can expect that the co-construction would have been mediated partly by NSW Pidgin in regions where it was the *lingua franca*.[4]

2.1 Example of origin

A rare glimpse of how some placenames would have arisen in the nineteenth century pastoral context is afforded by this reminiscence of Surveyor A. H. Chesterman.

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4 Such a scenario has been argued for as the likely origin of the English word *budgerigar* (Nash 2013).

As showing how the aboriginals occasionally coined words the name of an old outstation on the Lachlan can be cited. In the very early days the hutkeeper there had a wooden leg – '*Waddy*' being the aboriginal word for 'stick' the blacks called the place '*Waddy-man*', a combination of an aboriginal word and an English word. This name was subsequently corrupted into '*Waddy-mandow*'.

Strangely enough, some years after I first heard of the above, a very old aboriginal of the Upper Murray (now, I believe, dead), in supplying me with about two hundred native words for *simple* and *ordinary terms*, upon being asked what a *blackfellow* would call a wooden leg replied '*Waddy-mundoh*'.

– A. H. Chesterman's letter, Tumut, 6 January 1900, pp. 1–2 (Royal Anthropological Society of Australia 2004: 420–5)

Clearly the expression compounded NSW Pidgin **mandowi** 'foot' (Wafer et al. 2008: 813) and the even more common *waddy* (**wadi** 'piece of wood' adopted into Australian English). Chesterman's version 'Waddy-man' would have been a shortening of 'Waddy-mandow' (rather than the reverse). Both words **wadi** and **mandowi** originated in the Sydney Language, but the compound apparently arose in the colonial period.[5]

The origin of *Waddy Mandoe Crossing* (28°49′S 151°02′E) and *Waddy Mundoey Creek* (28°47′S 151°03′E) (just over the Queensland border, hundreds of kilometres north of the Lachlan River) presumably had something in common with Chesterman's account: 'Reportedly an Aboriginal term, language and dialect not recorded, given to describe a European man with a wooden leg. Information provided by H. Bracker (–) pastoralist?.'[6]

The people who were bestowing placenames across Australia in the nineteenth century were typically English speakers whose work took them to the areas less well-known to the colonists. Whether they were explorers, prospectors, pastoral workers, teamsters or surveyors, they engaged in various ways with local Aboriginal people and had the opportunity to more or less jointly arrive at a name for a place of mutual interest. This option appears not have been taken as often as the alternatives of adopting an Indigenous placename, or imposing a name from English, but it is nevertheless the focus of this study.

2.2 Some difficulties with the data

Research on placenames bestowed in colonial Australia has to contend with scarcity and unreliability of information available about the origin of the names.

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5 I use these conventions: **bold** for reconstituted spellings and *italics* for quoted spellings and for modern spellings. The cover symbol **N** is used for an indeterminate nasal consonant.
6 The State of Queensland (Department of Natural Resources and Mines) https://www.dnrm. qld.gov.au/land/place-names/search/queensland-place-names-search

This even applies to introduced names where history records some of the circumstances of bestowal (such as explorers' commemorative names), and more so to Indigenous names adopted by the English-speaking settlers. For the latter type there is usually some uncertainty about the original reference of the placename, and about its phonetic and phonological form (usually transmitted through an *ad hoc* English-based spelling); and it is uncommon for any constituent morphology to have been recorded.

A complicating factor is that some placenames have been assigned as a copy of a name from a distant location. A placename putatively of pidgin origin (because it incorporates a word clearly from, say, NSW Pidgin) may actually have been assigned solely by standard English speakers, and origin information is usually no longer available to help us distinguish these instances. Despite this, there is a noticeable coherence to be seen in the overall geographic patterns in the occurrence of the placenames considered below, and so, assuming copy names are in the minority, we can have confidence in spatial and other generalisations about them.

Another aspect of variation in the data is more readily dealt with. As is common in a populous built environment, modern Australian placenames often share the same base name (usually in the same spelling) in the one locality. For instance, the city of *Brisbane* on the *Brisbane River* which rises in the *Brisbane Range*; the name has proliferated in the modern city and applies to railway stations, airports, a hospital, and so on. These placenames can be usefully grouped into 'toponymic sets': placenames which involve the same base name (usually in the same spelling) in the one locality (Nash 2014a: 39–40). Typically the places in such a set are differentiated by feature type, and/or by various derivations of the base name. From each toponymic set one representative has been selected for mention in this study; it has been chosen as much as possible to the earliest assignment of the placename. In the absence of definite historical information on which to base the choice, names referring to natural features are preferred to those referring to manmade features), so that, for example, for *Boree Creek* the creek would be chosen from the various other designations sharing the same name (Parish, Town Railway Station and School).

2.3 Scope of this study

The study began by matching some distinctive words of nineteenth century NSW Pidgin (in their conventional English spelling) with placenames in the official Australian gazetteer (Geoscience Australia 2010) and in the Geographical Names Register (GNR)(Geographical Names Board 2011). English-origin words in NSW

Pidgin also may well have been bestowed in a placename, but it would be more difficult, given the sparse nature of the records, to distinguish these from place-names derived directly from English.[7] Even so, it is likely that many placenames involving, say, *Blackfellow*, arose in the context of NSW Pidgin.

There are types of interlanguage placename which are outside the scope of this study. One type is placenames in Australia which, as far as we know, arose as conscious portmanteau combinations. These are few in number; examples where the two words were from the one language, or two Indigenous languages, include nineteenth century *Gungaderra* (*Gunghalin* and *Gininderra*) in southern NSW (now ACT, ACT Planning and Land Authority (ACTPLA) 2013), and, outside NSW, twentieth century *Yankaponga* (SA) and *Warrabri* (NT) (Hercus & Simpson 2002: 5–6). *Garawarra*, the name of a National Park south of Sydney, is said to be 'a combination of *Gara (Garie)* and *Illawarra*',[8] a coinage which has been claimed since its inception.[9]

Where an Indigenous stem has been combined with an ending from an introduced language, names were coined such as *Glenunga* (SA) (Hercus & Simpson 2002: 5–6), *Bundaberg* (Queensland, said to be the section term *Bunda* combined with the German *berg* 'mountain', though possibly after *Bunda* was already borrowed in to the local English).

Other related types beyond the scope of this study are what might be termed 'blended loans' (such as NT Mongrel Downs < *Mangkururrpa*, Blue Sunday < *Puluthanti*, and other examples discussed by Koch (2009: 126)), or calqued pla-cenames. A NSW placename of this kind was *Warangesda* (Elphick & Elphick 2004), coined by the Rev. Gribble and his followers around 1880 when they established near Darlington Point on the Murrumbidgee a Mission with this name, which is a partial calque from Biblical Hebrew *beth hesda* 'house of mercy' with Wiradjuri *warang* 'camp' substituted for *beth*. Also beyond the scope of this study are modern coinages in the context of language reclamation, notably the Adelaide placenames discussed in detail by Amery & Williams (2009 [2002]).

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7 One example could be the southeastern Queensland city *Toowoomba* if its name was indeed an Aboriginal pronunciation of 'The Swamp' ('The naming of Toowoomba', http://www.toowoombarc.qld.gov.au/facilities-and-recreation/libraries/local-history-library/7871-the-naming-of-toowoomba).

8 *The Bush Club Newsletter*, Summer 2012, p. 4 http://www.bushclub.org.au/down/Newsletters/Summer_2012_Newsletter.pdf

9 J. V. T[urner], *The Sydney Bush Walker Annual* April 1934, p. 8 http://www.bushwalkermagazine.org/the-annuals/1934-SBW-annual-s.pdf (PDF page 13)

3 NSW examples

3.1 *Cabonne* and *Nyrang* placenames

Two well attested distinctive words of NSW Pidgin are *gabun 'big'* (Koch 2011: 507n26) and *ngarang 'small'*, both derived from the Sydney Language (Troy 1994: 708–789). These are found in only a few NSW placenames, concentrated in the central west of the state, as can be seen in Figure 1.

– *Boree Cabonne*, *Boree Nyrang*: adjacent homesteads, from the mid-nineteenth century on Boree Creek; compare the terms recorded for two similar tree species Boree 'Big Myall' and Boree Nyrang 'Yarran' (Royal Anthropological Society of Australia 2004: PDF p203), burri 'boree tree, or weeping myall, Acacia pendula' (Grant & Rudder 2010, Richards 1902–03: 102)

– *Gamboola Cabonne*, *Gamboola Nyrang*: adjacent nineteenth century homesteads)[10]

– *Cabonne* has also been adopted, in the twentieth century, as the name of a Local Government Area and Shire, based at Molong (and containing Boree Cabonne and Gamboola Cabonne)

– *Molong Nyrang*, previously near Molong (Molong Historical Society 2013)

– *Eurow Nyrang Mountain* (compare Mount Eurow ~ Eurow Mountains nearby)

– *Nerang Cowal*, a lake near the larger Lake Cowal

– *Nyrang Creek* (33°31′S 148°37′E), and another *Nyrang Creek* in the Clarence Valley (29°25′S 153°14′E)

– *Wowong Narang Lagoon* (previously Wowang Warang Lagoon, 34°34′S 145°52′E), near Wowong Lagoon (34°33′S 145°51′E) in the Parish of Wowong, near Carrathool

– *Nyrangi Tuppal Creek ~ Nerangi Tuppal Creek* (35°44′S 145°16′E, Native Dog Creek, previously *Nyrangi Creek ~ Nerangi Creek*) (compare Tuppal Creek, 35°45′S 145°30′E)

Note that in these names (except for *Nyrang Creek*), the sense of 'big' and 'small' provides what can be called an external modification. *Nyrang Creek* shows a pattern (literally 'little creek') not otherwise found with Australian Indigenous placenames, as mentioned above in the Introduction.

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10 Gamboola Nyrang had been part of Gamboola Cabonne, previously Tea-Tree Creek Station (Molong Historical Society 2013). J.P.M. Long suggested (p.c., 24 August 2005) that the Gamboola pair of names were a later imitation of the Boree ones; all the properties were at times owned by the Smith family (Mac. Smith 1976).

Figure 1: Distribution of Cabonne and Nyrang etc placenames

On the other hand, the head-modifier order within the *Cabonne* and *Nyrang* placenames is the opposite of the usual English sequence, while being a normal pattern for NSW languages. Thus the placenames involving *Cabonne* and *Nyrang* have the hallmark of having been formed by speakers of NSW Pidgin, combining properties drawn from the first languages of both settlers and Aborigines. Thus, unlike placenames imposed by explorers, the Pidgin placenames were likely formed by local residents, and show a mix of the formal and semantic patterns of Indigenous versus introduced placenames. Pidgin placenames variously show head-modifier or modifier-head order, from competing directions of functional transfer (Siegel 2012).

As it happens, we have a contemporary observation about the two possible orders:

A nice little point that would have afforded scope for a very pretty display of oratorical abilities, was raised in the Supreme Court on Thursday. A man was indicted for setting fire to a stack of wheat at Boree Nyrang, when it appeared in evidence that the name of the place was Nyrang Boree. The Chief Justice said it was a pity for the Attorney General to tie himself up by local description; the Court had extensive jurisdiction, and it would

have been sufficient to lay it in New South Wales. A gentleman having suggested to Mr Attorney General that Nyrang was the native word for little, and that it was only called Nyrang to distinguish it from another Boree, the learned gentleman contended that Boree Little and Little Boree were synonymous, and that it did not matter whether it was called one or the other. The Judge, however, was not satisfied, and said, that he might as well be called Dowling James, instead of James Dowling. Mr Attorney-General responded, by saying, that it would not matter whether he said James Dowling Chief Justice, or Chief Justice James Dowling. This view of the case seemed to be a poser to His Honor, who said the case had better go on, and as the prisoner was acquitted on the merits, the point of course fell to the ground. ('Jargon', *Sydney Herald*, 8 May 1837, page 2 http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article12862532)

3.2 *Bulga* placenames

The word **balga**, *bulga* 'hill' is listed as NSW Pidgin by Wafer et al. (2008: 814); it was first recorded c. 1824 as *bōlgăr ~ bōlgărăr* 'hill' by the Rev. LE Threlkeld (1824: 132) in his 'Karee' vocabulary from just north of Sydney, and then about 1834 in the Sydney Language as *balgah* 'a big hill' and *narrang balgah* 'a little hill'[11]; also as *bulga* 'hill' (also in *bulga-gíli* 'humpback' with *gíli* 'back') in a vocabulary mostly of the Sydney Language by Rowley in Ridley (1878: 259).

Figure 2 shows the distribution of the places formed with *bulga*.

Just as with **gabun** 'big', **ngarang** 'small', the distribution of these *bulga* placenames shows that **balga** did not spread north into Queensland or beyond.[12] The instance *Bulgaback* in central Victoria was effectively identified as pidgin in origin by the anthropologist Howitt:

> Bulgurback Creek – Crung-grurk – This creek is shown on the maps between Castleburn and Cobbannah. The word *Bulgurback* is corrupt, being part native and part English. *Bulgur*, mountain back – behind – that is, behind the mountain. (Smyth 1878: 189)

Bulga still occurs in a few official placenames as a generic or feature type. The clearest example is *Oaky Bulga* (in the Holbrook district). Others are *The Bulga*, *Black Bulga*, and *Sappa Bulga* (see below), and we can surmise from the name *Cooba Bulga Stream* (in theUpper Hunter) there there was once an associated **Cooba Bulga* (possibly involving the Hunter River Language kuparr 'red ochre', Lissarrague 2006: 119). An unclear case is *Bolga* Parish in northern Victoria ('**Bolga** Native for "high hill."' Martin 1944: 15) with a *Mount Bolga*.

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11 The Rev. Richard Taylor, Notebook 1833–1835, page 150, 77-166-4/2, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, NZ.

12 The occurrences in Victoria, and in names such as *Murrumbulga*, may be irrelevant. The three outliers, all bores called *Bulga Well* in inland SA (30°41′S 134°21′S) and WA (27°40′S 121° 43′E, 23°01′S 115°21′E) are probably an accidental similarity.

Figure 2: Placenames involving bulga

The salience of Bulga as a feature type has diminished since the nineteenth century. *Bulga Mountain* and *Black Bulga Mountain* are versions of the name of a volcanic plug in the eastern Warrumbungles in north central NSW (31°13′S 149° 41′E, Figure 3) which has also been known as *The Bulga* and *Black Bulga*. The existence of the alternate distinctive name *Moolagundi*[13] supports the notion that *Bulga* was not its original name. Where placenames with *bulga* included another term, note that it was often a descriptive word (such as *Oaky*, *Black*). This would fit with these placenames having arisen as semi-generic or 'intermediate' names, along the lines of *Red Gum Creek* as categorised by Hercus (2002: 69). Hence it seems that *bulga* was set at one stage to be spread into general Australian English as a landform term, but this did not eventuate. Actually *billabong* is the about the only landform term from an Australian language borrowed into Australian English, and it figures in many introduced placenames; others partially adopted are *cowal* and *gibber*. Such words enter into placenames which may well have been formed within Australian English (that is, not in the context of direct contact with an Australian language) and have lost any trace of pidgin origin.

13 'Questions answered', *Australian Town and Country Journal* 7 Nov 1906, 23 http://nla.gov.au/ nla.news-article71542640

Figure 3: Looking south to The Bulga ~ Black Bulga ~ Bulga Mountain ~ Black Bulga Mountain ~ Moolagundi (photo: © 2013 David Nash)

3.2.1 Sappa Bulga

The placename *Sappa Bulga* in central NSW is curious because of the obscurity of the word *Sappa*. The earliest record I have found of it is the label *Sappa Bulgas* on the range southwest of Dubbo, at the western extent of a hand-drawn geology map (Stutchbury 1852b), and two mentions in the related newspaper account:

> The northern edge of the granite trends to the westward as far as, and including the great range denominated the Sappa Bulgas, and Harvey's Range, to the south-west.... Descending the mountain, the highest and principal point of the Sappas (Nambajong) to the plains, at a distance of five miles, the sandstone is again reached,... (Stutchbury 1852a)

(The variant *Sappa Bulgas* appears to be short for *Sappa Bulga Ranges*, and *Bulga Ranges* is another recorded variant.)

There are exotic occurrences of the name *Sappa*: a letter name from the ancient Semitic language Ge'ez, a species of tree of Northern Jamaica, a former Ethiopian capital city, and a Township across Nebraska and Kansas (USA). The last of these is a colonial placename in an English-speaking area, and as such invited further investigation. However it turns out that Sappa Township is named after the nearby Sappa Creek which was so-named by 1866 (Pattison 1934: 89), using a word for 'beaver' from the local language (Rogers 1967: 11).

Since we do not know the circumstances of the naming of *Sappa Bulga*, we can hardly choose any one of those possible origins. There is another closer possibility however, that the initial consonant was written as the alveolar fricative *s* but represented a pronunciation of the interdental (laminodental) stop **dh** in the local Aboriginal language. This leads us to the word which became the name of the nearby town of Dubbo, "a Wiradhuri Aboriginal word meaning 'cap' or 'head covering'. It refers to the red clay cap worn by Wiradhuri women when in mourning." (Appleton & Appleton 1992: 92). Grant & Rudder (2010) reconstitute the word as '**dhabu** a head covering, a cap, a net, a ceremonial helmet, a roof', with the first vowel **a** matching the modern pronunciation of the placename *Dubbo*. The relevant early records include:

– *Dabburang* 'pipe-clay' (Günther 1892: 78)
– *Dubo* 'a net cap' (Günther 1892: 81)
– *Dthoo' boo* 'a helmet (ceremonial); cover (on head)' (Richards 1902–03: 180)

from which the first vowel of the 'cap' word should be reconstituted as **u** rather than **a**, thus **dhubu**. The discrepancy in the vowel counts against **dhubu** as the source for *Sappa*, but a connection with *Dabburang* 'pipe-clay' (Günther 1892: 78) is a possibility. Nevertheless *Sappa Bulga* does appear to contain *Bulga* 'mountain'.

3.3 *Gullen* placenames

A few words from Australian languages denoting topographic features have been sufficiently adopted by Australian English as to recur as feature types in placenames. The officially recognised ones relevant to NSW are Billabong, Cowal (Nash 2008), and Warrambool (Nash 2011). There could be a few more generic feature terms from NSW languages discernible in recorded placenames of NSW, but which did not become more widely adopted.

Besides *Bulga*, discussed above, a possible case is *Gullen*, where it can be related to NSW Pidgin **kalin** 'water' (Wafer et al. 2008: 813), in turn from the Wiradjuri and Wangaaybuwan word **galiN** 'water' (Austin 1997: 30).[14] There is a cluster of placenames involving *Gullen*, most in the Yass district, as shown on Figure 4. Two of these were associated with a water–related meaning in the nineteenth century:

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14 Note also the record *Bean Collen* 'Plenty of water' [Dubbo Police] (Royal Anthropological Society of Australia 2004: 418) (compare Wiradjuri **biyang** 'many, much, all' Grant & Rudder 2010, *Biang* 'many' Günther 1892: 73). It is unclear whether this was a placename; it could just show that the composite expression was used in NSW Pidgin.
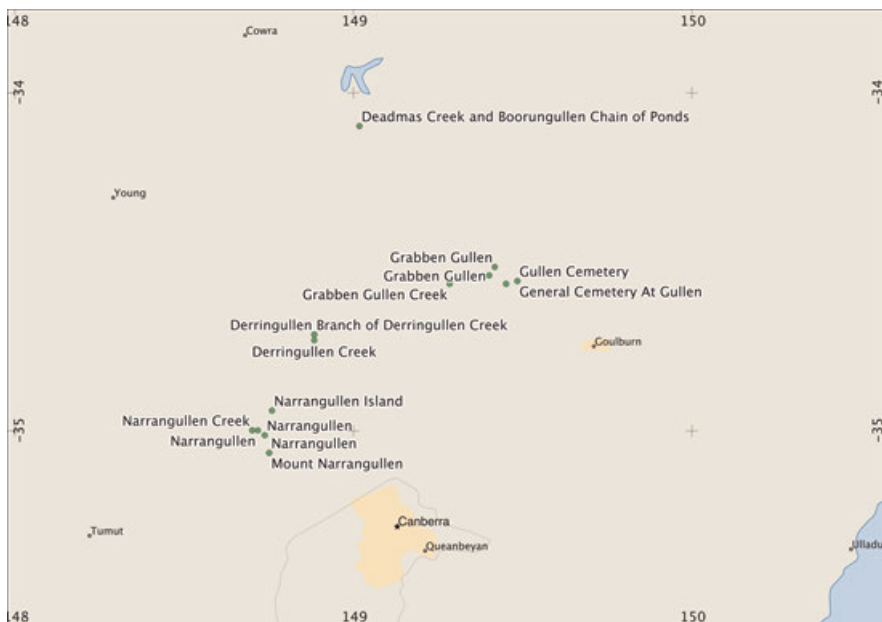
Figure 4: Gullen placenames

- *Grabben Gullen* ("Known to the locals as 'Grabby', the name Grabben Gullen comes from a Wiradjuri Aboriginal word meaning 'small water'." http://strlhistorymatters.blogspot.com.au/2009/01/grabben-gullen.html) I have not been able to elucidate the *Grabben* element.
- *Gullen Ridge* previously *The Gullen Range* (34°34′S 149°27′E), said to be from 'swamp' (McCarthy 1963)
- *Narrangullen Creek* (35°00′S 148°42′E, southwest of Yass), possibly involving **ngarang** 'small' (as in section 3.1).

Further possible examples and discussion are in the Appendix.

3.4 Other NSW examples

Two common words in NSW Pidgin were *baal* 'no, negative' (from the Sydney Language) and, later, *gammon* 'nonsense; pretence; 'humbug' ' (from British criminal cant) (*AND*), though neither is listed by Wafer et al. (2008: 812–815). The latter continues in north Australian Kriol as **geman** 'pretend, fake; falsely, lyingly, supposedly' (Lee 2014). *Gammon Creek* (31°49′S 150°26′E) is of unknown

origin but could reflect the same word.[15] The combination of the two was also a common expression, and was said to have become the placename *Beargamil* (33°01′S 148°17′E), though the changes involving *l* are not explained:

> Their stadium was at the Waterfall, and Bale Gammon Springs was their corroberee ground (now called Beargamil). ('Bunbury and the Billabong. In 1860' *Western Champion* (Parkes), Thursday 21 December 1916, page 22 http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article112321812)

4 Beyond NSW

NSW Pidgin arose in the period when NSW had a wider reference – the term New South Wales originally encompassed the eastern two-thirds of the Australian continent, and was reduced to its modern extent in the mid-nineteenth century. The study is extended in this section beyond the modern borders of NSW, along the spread of NSW Pidgin north through Queensland and on to the Top End (northern part of the Northern Territory) and the Kimberley region of Western Australia. The general route was summarised by Munro (2000) in her map (reproduced as Figure 5), which for Queensland focusses on an inland route. Other research proposed that inland Queensland was reached as offshoots from a main spread north along the Queensland coast (east of the Great Dividing Range) from the 1840s to the 1870s, as shown on 'Post-contact languages of Queensland 1800 to present' (Wurm et al. 1996: Map 8). This latter view is supported by the distribution of placenames, which can be seen on the maps in this section to predominate along the Queensland coastal belt.

The section begins with *budjari* and *merijig*, two words for 'good' attested also in what became Victoria and southern Queensland. Then we look at the spread of *yarraman* 'horse' across Queensland. Next we consider examples which extend further to northern Australia: first, placenames incorporating *lubra* and *black gin* (two words for 'Aboriginal woman') and *blackfellow* 'Aborigine', and then two examples which are also extend to northern Australia but are absent in inland southern Queensland: *piccaninny* 'child', *sugarbag* 'native honey'. Most of these (but not *budjari*, *merijig*, or *black gin*) are in use in Kriol in north Australia (as *yarraman*, *lubra*, *blekbala*, *biginini ~ pikanini*, *shugabeg*, respectively) (Lee 2014).

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15 Alternatively, the name could be like the Gammon Ranges in SA, and associated Gammon Hill and Gammon Creek, which were possibly named in "relation to gammon of bacon – Gammon Hill has a banded appearance not unlike a cut of bacon". http://maps.sa.gov.au/plb/
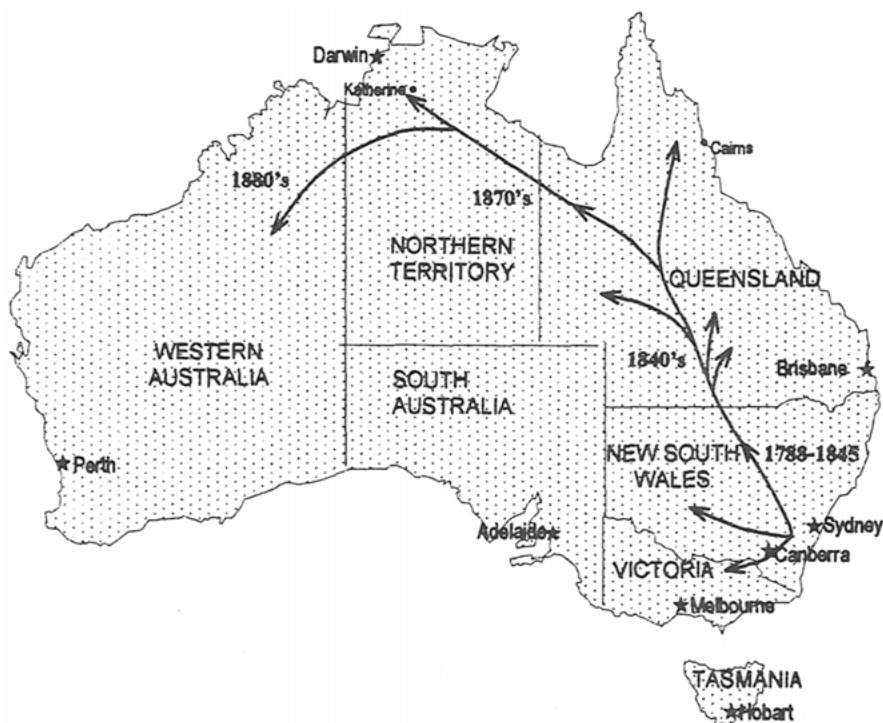
Figure 5: Path of pastoral industry and NSW Pidgin (Munro 2000: 260, Map 2)

4.1 *Budgery* and *Merrijig*

The two main words meaning 'good' in NSW Pidgin were *budjari* (from the Sydney Language) and *merijig* 'good' (from Wathawurrung, the language of the Geelong-Ballarat area in Victoria) (Wafer et al. 2008: 814). Placenames with *Budgery*, *Boodjerie* and similar spellings are found across NSW and southern Queensland, and one each in Victoria and far southeast SA, with two outliers in rural WA; see Figure 6.

Note *Budgerydickeys Springs*[16] based on a man's Pidgin name, incorporating *budjari* as a prenominal modifier. Similarly for *Budgeree* in Gippsland (Victoria), "Also note there was an eastern Kulin man named 'Budgerry Tom' in the 1840s" (Clark & Heydon 2002). Placenames with *merrijig* (apparently the only spelling of *merijig* in placenames) turn up in three locations in Victoria, and one in

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16 Also spelled Budgery Dick Springs, *Sydney Morning Herald* 7 Sep 1888, page 9 http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article13695953

Figure 6: Placenames with budgery etc. and merrijig. Expanded in the east to show detail

central Queensland, also shown in Figure 6. Neither word made it to north Australian Kriol. The distribution of placenames with these two words conforms to the general picture of the spread of NSW Pidgin by the mid-nineteenth century (Figure 5).

4.2 *Yarraman*

The word *yarraman* 'horse' has been recorded in vocabularies of languages across the eastern Australian mainland, and into northeast NT, as we know from Walsh's (1989) comprehensive survey, as summarised on his map reproduced in Figure 7. The word originated near Sydney (*AND*) and spread with NSW Pidgin.

As we would expect, the distribution of placenames with *yarraman* (shown in Figure 8) conforms largely to the areas where the word has been recorded in a vocabulary. The main difference is that there are no *yarraman* placenames in the NT, despite the word being used in a number of languages there including Barunga and Ngukurr Kriol (Lee 2014): apparently the usage to coin placenames with *yarraman* ceased before the spread of NSW Pidgin beyond Queensland. By contrast, only one placename appears to involve *nanto* 'horse': *Nanto Waterhole* (28°25′S 136°30′E) on the west of Lake Eyre.
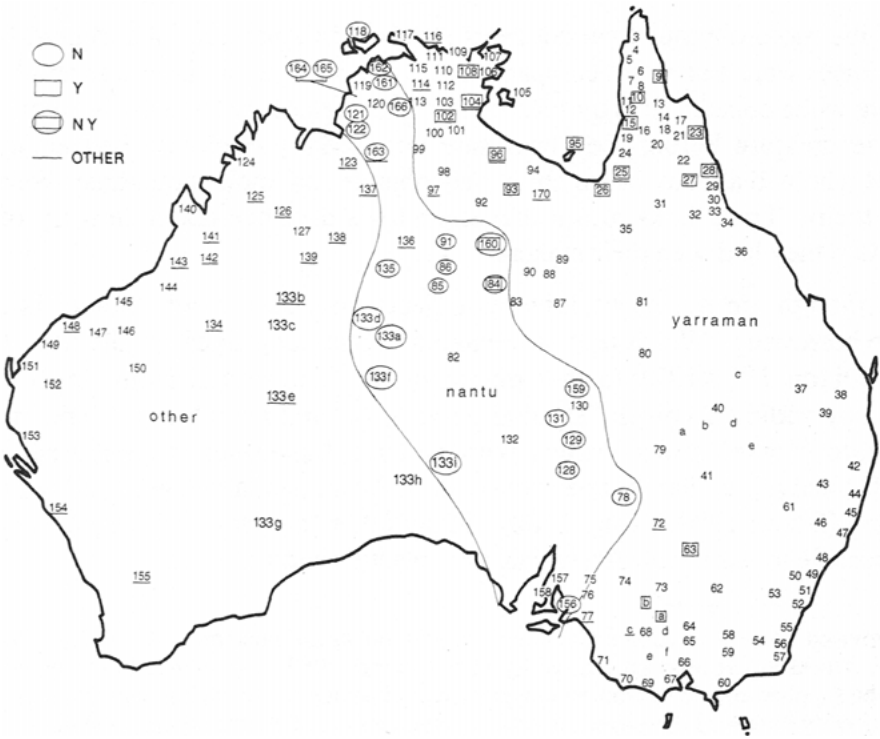
Figure 7: Distribution of yarraman and nantu 'horse' (Walsh 1989: 508)

The good fit between the distribution of placenames with *yarraman* (Figure 8) and the vocabulary records (Figure 7) adds confidence for the applicability of placename evidence in revealing contact language history.

4.3 Blackfellow

The word *blackfellow* 'Aborigine' originated in NSW Pidgin but has long been used more widely in Australian English (*AND*), and so placenames involving *blackfellow* (in various spellings) may not have been coined in the context of a pidgin. Nevertheless it is interesting note their distribution: of the 152 places shown in Figure 9, none are in Arnhem Land, and only one in WA south of the Kimberley.

Blackfellow contains the nominal suffix written *-fela* in the Pidgin and Kriol orthography, and has been studied by Baker (1996) and Koch (2011). Parallel to

Figure 8: Distribution of placenames with yarraman

the word English word *black*, in NSW Pidgin *blackfellow* has two possible readings: as a noun (denoting a person) and as an adjective (denoting the colour).

However, very few other nominals in *-fela* occur in Australian placenames. The clear examples are *Longfella Pass* in the NSW Shoalhaven,[17] in a couple of places in Victoria (*Wildfellow* and *Poor Fellow* mentioned in section 5.1), and a

17 *Longfella Pass* 35°21′S 150°15′E and *Longfella Ridge* 35°21′S 150°14′E; 'Pass in use by stockman and earliest record Townsend 1848. Also access for Aborigines en-route to hinterland. Longstanding name and in use by bushwalkers c 1940' (Geographical Names Board 2011).

Figure 9: Distribution of placenames with blackfellow (abbreviated Bf in labels), black fellow, blackfella, black fella

pair on the Northern Territory coast near Mandorah: *One Falla Creek* and *Two Fella Creek*. There is a tributary of the Robinson River in the NT Gulf district is *Koolfella Creek* of unknown origin, also written *Coolafella Creek* in 1933 court documents (Finnane & Paisley 2010: 28). So, adjectives in *-fela* are for some reason quite rare in recorded placenames. Hence we can assume that most if not all placenames with *blackfellow* most likely involve the noun not the adjective; that is, a name such as *Blackfellow Swamp* might have been meant as 'black swamp' but most likely was 'swamp associated with blackfellow(s)'. The distribution of placenames with *blackfellow* fits with the conclusion of Baker (1996: 535):

> The NSW innovations are *blackfellow, whitefellow* and *that fellow.* These spread northwards into QLD and clockwise to Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia.

except for the absence of evidence of spread from SA to WA.

Figure 10: Placenames with black gin ~ blackgin, and lubra

4.4 *Blackgin* and *Lubra*

The word *gin* denoted a woman, from **dyiin** 'woman' in the Sydney Language. It was used in the earliest NSW Pidgin in combinations *white gin* and *black gin*; only in later times has it acquired pejorative connotations. The latter combination, sometimes written as one word, occurs in placenames along the main spread of NSW Pidgin in NSW and Queensland. There are also a few occurrences in placenames in the Victoria River District of the NT (but not in the Gulf or Top End), and rural WA: see Figure 10. Note the absence of the word in central Australia, SA, Victoria, and Tasmania. A synonymous word was *lubra*, thought to be from the language of southeast Tasmania, and recorded in English contexts from 1830 (*AND*). As well as the official placenames scattered across mainland Australia, there is an unofficial *Lubra Creek* on Kangaroo Island (SA) of which Taylor (2002: 91–100) presents the origin stories.[18] Placenames with *lubra* are absent from NSW and Tasmania, and while the word was used in contact between English and Aboriginal people in the nineteenth century, it also

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18 Thanks to Joshua Nash for this reference.

Figure 11: Placenames with piccaninny, piccaninnie, picaninny

became part of colonial English and we cannot be confident that placenames in *lubra* arose in the situation of a contact language. The same caveat would apply to some extent to placenames with *black gin*. The examples in the WA Goldfields are one focus of this uncertainty; note that southern WA generally lacks the other putative pidgin placenames considered in this study.

4.5 *Picaninny ~ Piccaninny* etc

The word *Piccaninny* denotes a child, and by extension was used as a modifier to mean 'young, small'; **pikanini** (Wafer et al. 2008: 814). This word is a key indicator of NSW Pidgin, and, as it came from South Seas Jargon (originally from Portuguese-based pidgin in the Atlantic, *OED*), it is not associated with any particular Australian language (Amery & Mühlhäusler 1996: 35). This word is the only one of the Pidgin words considered here which occurs in placenames in Tasmania (apart from *Blackfellows Crossing*). The placenames with *Piccaninny* or *Picaninny* are widely scattered across the mainland eastern states and the Kimberley, with one occurrence in the NT Gulf district (*Piccaninny Creek*, likely from Kriol); and in SA are some placenames with the spelling *Piccaninnie*, and a *Picaninnie Creek* in western NSW: see Figure 11.

Figure 12: Placenames with sugarbag

4.6 Sugarbag

The word *sugarbag* denotes wild honey, the hive, and has been extended to the bee itself (Arthur 1996: 61–62). Unlike all the examples considered above, *sugarbag* is simply from English, and apparently the word was not used in early NSW Pidgin; the first record in from 1830, after the spread north to Queensland. The distribution of placenames with *Sugarbag* avoids the southern Australia, and is along the Queensland coast, and from Cape York Peninsula to the Kimberley; see Figure 12. Of course, some of the *Sugarbag* placenames could be from standard Australian English, deriving from the term for the hessian bag used for bulk sugar, as one of the occurrences in NSW is known to be:

> *Sugarbag Creek* (Ku-Ring-Gai LGA): Named after 'The Sugarbag Gang'. A group of youngsters from the area in the 1930's. The name was derived from the sugar bags they wore on their heads, peaked in the front and hanging down their backs. This copied the headgear used by coal merchants. Geographical Names Board (2011)

Nevertheless I include *sugarbag* placenames in this study, if only to contrast the distribution of those placenames known to originate in NSW Pidgin.

5 Sporadic examples

The NSW Pidgin option suggests itself as the possible origin of various other placenames from the early contact situation in Australia, even though we otherwise lack good evidence of a pidgin or creole having been spoken in the locality. In turn this can add to the picture of the paths by which nineteenth century contact languages spread across Australia. The locations in this section are not on the paths indicated in Figure 5.

5.1 Victoria

There are just a few placenames tagged as derived from Pidgin among the more than 3300 in Clark and Heydon's (2002) *Dictionary of Aboriginal placenames of Victoria*. Some have been covered above under *Bulga* (including *Mount Bolga* in Victoria), *Budgery*, *Blackfellow*, *Piccaninny*, and *Lubra*. The other two are *Gabo Island* and *Kinnabulla*. Additionally, the names *Wildfellow Creek* (37°22′S 146°09′E) and *Poor Fellow Me Creek* (38°41′S 146°11′E) in southern Gippsland look to have been formed in Pidgin, although there is no extant source information.

5.1.1 Gabo Island

The one origin that has been proposed for the name *Gabo* is that it was an Aboriginal pronunciation of the prominent feature about 10km away, *Cape Howe*.

> Pidgin for 'Cape Howe'. According to Dent (Papers 2000: 4) "Gabo Island. Pidgin for Cape Howe, the original Aboriginal name was Werrenganno of unknown meaning" (Clark & Heydon 2002).

The nearest centre of population has been Mallacoota, and Gabo Island is visible from there and in the direction of Cape Howe (which had been named by Captain Cook when he passed by on 20 April 1770).

5.1.2 Kinnabulla

Kinnabulla is a locality name and a railway station (35°54′S 142°48′E) in northwest Victoria,

> purportedly derived from local Aboriginal people who would ask local land holder Stephen Laver to *kin-na-bulla* (Kill a bullock) for them; referring to wild cattle in their district (O'Callaghan 1918: 58, per Clark & Heydon 2002).

It strikes me that if the source was indeed (Pidgin) English, it is more likely to have been "skin a bullock".

5.2 South Australia

South Australia and Western Australia south of the Kimberley have been regarded as outside the corridors whereby NSW Pidgin flowed out of early NSW, and this is generally confirmed by most of the above placename distributions. There are a couple of exceptions, however, as can be seen on the maps for *piccaninny*, *lubra* and *blackfellow*: these have a sizeable fraction of their occurrences well inside SA. This could be the related to the wider (and unstigmatised) use of these three words in Australian English in the mid nineteenth century. Note also that the few instances of *lubra* and *black gin* in southern WA are clustered in the Eastern Goldfields (around Kalgoorlie), which were populated from eastern states in the 1890s gold rush.

5.2.1 Coober Pedy

Næssan (2010) covers in detail the evidence about the origin of the placename *Coober Pedy*, an opal mining locality in central SA dating from 1915. The earliest newspaper mention with an explanation of the name is:

> *Coobe*r Pedy, the name given to this 'dugout' village, was chosen because in aboriginal lingo it signifies 'white man living in a hole'. (COOBER PEDY! *The Register* (Adelaide) 29 Nov 1921, page 5 http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article63348165)

Considering that the original miners were in contact with the local Aboriginal people, who spoke the Kukata language, Næssan (2010: 229) concludes

> the name is a Kukata lexical 'loan blend' composed of Parnkalla-originating *kupa* (as 'whitefella') and Kukata (Western Desert) *piti* ('quarry')

The evidence is open to a slightly different interpretation, whereby the name *kupa piti* was coined jointly by some Kukata and some of the opal miners. While it may be inferred that there was a pidgin in use in this contact situation, little evidence of it has survived: six documents for the Far North West region according to Wurm et al. (1996: Map 10).

6 Conclusion

As well as the recognised two sets of placenames in Australia, there is another less common kind. These are neither wholly Indigenous, nor wholly introduced, but likely arose in the contact language situation in nineteenth century NSW. We have investigated some of the likely candidates, and conclude that NSW Pidgin was the likely context for the formation of the dozens of placenames involving *Cabonne*, *Nyrang*, *Bulga*, *Piccaninny*, *Yarraman*, and so on. The study shows how the limited corpus of NSW Pidgin can be augmented. The various geographic ranges of these placenames conforms more or less to the historical spread as studied by Wurm et al. (1996) and Munro (2000), and add evidence of spatial and temporal detail. The correlations between the distribution of these place-names and the historically known spread paths of NSW Pidgin supports the relevance of placename evidence. In particular, there is some indication that a pidgin was in use also in Victoria and SA, and the WA Goldfields.

Appendix: Other *gullen* placenames

Further to the examples in subsection 3.3, there are other placenames involving *gullen* in the Wiradjuri area.

– *Boorungullen Chain of Ponds*, also *Deadmas Creek* (34°06′S 149°01′E, north of Yass)
– *Derringullen Creek* (34°44′S 148°53′E, west of Yass), possibly from a Wiradjuri stem meaning 'red', cf. *Dirrundirrung* 'red, evening red, applied to Europeans on account of their rosy cheeks' Günther (1839: 45)[19] While we can no longer ascertain whether 'red water' is the correct gloss for the *Derringullen* name, the applicability of this gloss can be ascribed to the soil erosion instigated by the nineteenth century pastoral expansion, as with many other colonial placenames of water features in southern Australia involving *Red* or *Yellow*, including the nearby *Yellow Creek* (34°46′S 148°58′E).
– *Craigengullen* on the lower Lachlan River, in Gelam Parish (34°22′S 144°11′E) (Hanson 1889: 252)[20]

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19 Apparently garbled when published as *Diren-direng* 'red', *Dironbirong* 'the red streams of clouds in the evening; adj., red, said of white men' (Günther 1892: 80–81).
20 Also mentioned in 'News & Notes', *The Courier* (Brisbane), 23 January 1864, page 3 http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article3168164 and as "Darlot H., Craigengullen (Cregingelong) £130." in 'List of Runs and Rents for the Year 1871', *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 14 January 1871, page 10 http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article70464215.

None of these placenames have any recorded analysis, but **galiN** 'water' is likely to be involved. An alternative candidate for the *gullen* element is a Wiradjuri plural suffix -**galang** (Günther 1892: 57; Grant & Rudder 2010),[21] or the stem **ngalan** 'a light' (Günther 1892: 90) (noting the *n* preceding the element *gullen* in all the examples). While the circumstances of the assignment of these names is not recorded,[22] the *gullen* placenames names are all in the southern part of Wiradjuri territory, and four or five are clustered in the Yass district. This, together with the fact that the *gullen* element is spelled the same way (while galiN 'water' received various other spellings elsewhere), suggests there was a local convention favouring these names. The proposed structure of these placenames is similar to a set in SA of compound placenames where the second element is the generic word for 'water', *kawi*, *kapi* were often reduced to *awi* (Hercus & Potezny 1999).

Further north in Wiradjuri territory there are other placenames where however the **galiN** 'water' occurs first:

– *Cullen Bullen* 'lyre birds. Also claimed to be the place of many waters' (Reed 1970: 33). Appleton & Appleton (1992: 81) state "[1st *u* as in 'pup'; 2nd *u* as in 'bull']". The *Bullen* element may have been erroneously glossed from **bulen-bulen** 'lyre bird' ("a nineteenth century form '*bulln-bulln*'") in Woiwuru, a language of Victoria (Hercus 1969 per Blake 1981: 89).
– *Cullengoen*, near Curban on the Castlereagh River downstream from Gilgandra, presumably a version of placenames *Cullengoengoen* 'red water' *Cullen-goin* 'blood and water' (Royal Anthropological Society of Australia 2004: 40,153), involving Wiradjuri **guwaN** 'blood'. On the meaning compare *Derringullen* above.
– *Cullenbone* (32°29½′E 149°30½′E, in the Gulgong area) 'meeting of waters' (McCarthy 1963), apparently involving the Ngiyampaa Comitative suffix -**buwan**

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21 The plural -**galang** is evident in *Wambangalong* (32°28′S 148°32′E) 'grey kangaroo in numbers' (McCarthy 1963) based on **wambuwuny** 'grey kangaroo' (Grant & Rudder 2010), and perhaps in the name *Cadiangullong Creek* (33°23′S 149°00′E) near *Cadia Creek* (33°26′S 149°0′′E, a tributary of the Belubula River).

22 The Senior Constable at Yass sent 'the attached lists of places and there [sic] meaning given by Aborigines. The lists consist of the whole of the information that could be collected by the Police in the Yass Sub District. There are a great many places in the District, which have been named by Aborigines, but the oldest blacks are unable give any reason why the names were given.' (Letter to Superintendent of Police, Goulburn, 2 October 1899) (Royal Anthropological Society of Australia 2004: PDF page 413)

   –   two forms of the same word: *Cullengoral* 'the meeting place of waters in the Gulgong district' (Reed 1970: 33); and *Cullingral* 'a deep water hole in the Merriwa district'[23] (Reed 1970: 33)

That a generic word such as 'water' is the base of these placenames could be an indication that they are not ancient, but formed during the early period of European settlement. However the suffixal elements are not recorded as NSW Pidgin, and these combinations would appear to have been formed within the Wiradjuri (or Ngiyampaa) language.

Abbreviations

AND   Ransom (1988)   OED   *Oxford English Dictionary*

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23 'The first runs were taken up in the late 1820s. An early pastoralist was Charles Blaxland (son of explorer Gregory Blaxland) who established Cullingral station to the immediate south and south-west of town.' ('Merriwa', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 February 2004 http://www.smh.com.au/news/New-South-Wales/Merriwa/2005/02/17/1108500197645.html)

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