



Place Name SUMMARY (PNS) 4.01.02/01

TARRNANGGA (?)

(Christies Creek)

(last edited: 8/4/2013 12/3/2016)

Abstract

The Kurna name for part of Christie Creek, or a place near it, was recorded by the first surveyors from 1837 to 1840 in the forms 'Terrananga Creek', 'Tornanga Point', and 'Tornanga Cr.'.

The correct spelling is uncertain (perhaps *Tarrnangga* or *Tarnangga*), and the meaning unknown.

The Kurna locative suffix *-ngga* requires a two-syllable root such as 'Tarna-'. But Richard Counsel's form 'Terrananga' would appear to have a three-syllable root 'Terrana-', and would therefore require the other locative *-illa*, not *-ngga*. But it is possible that the original root was in two syllables (e.g. 'Tarna-'): e.g. if Counsel's recorded second vowel 'a' was imaginary, mis-heard by him between the 'rr' (probably rolled) and the 'n'.¹

If we take both records as equals, the first vowel could be any of the three available in Kurna language (*a*, *i*, *u*), and it is hard to account linguistically for the difference between the 'e' in Counsel's record and the 'o' in the other records. The second consonant 'r' (or cluster 'rn') could have taken any of three different forms. Perhaps there were two different names for two different sites with similar names: Counsel's on Christie Creek and beginning with *Ti* or *Ta*, and the other at the Point and beginning with *Tu*.

But a more likely explanation would involve historical accident. It is likely that the original site was on the Creek; then the surveyors transferred the name to the nearby Point for a trig station which they needed there; and finally someone in the Survey Department mis-copied the first vowel (which could happen most easily between *a* and *o*, e.g. 'Tarnanga' > 'Tornanga').

Initially (in 2009) KWP opted for the form *Tirrningga* (following Counsel, who at that date was our only primary source). To this KWP in 2011 added *Turnangga* as an alternative possibility (following the published maps). Subsequent discussion led us to conclude that, while we cannot be certain, *Tarnangga* is the most likely Kurna original.²

This name should not be confused with that of the recently-named Tarnmangga Reserve nearby (*tarnma* 'banksia flower' + *-ngga* 'at' > *Tarnmangga* 'place of banksia or banksia flower').

¹ Cp. "birrike birrike" (Wyatt) = *birki-birki* (Teichelmann & Schürmann).

² Minutes of KWP place-names meeting 25/4/11, and subsequent revisions.

Coordinates	-35.124823° Latitude, 138.523436° Longitude.
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Language Information

Meaning	Unknown
Etymology	probably <i>tarrna</i> [meaning unknown] + <i>ngga</i> 'place, at'
Notes	One source gives 'Terrenanga'; two others give 'Tornanga'. 'Terrananga' looks as if it has a 3-syllable root 'Terrana-'; but we would expect this to be followed by the suffix <i>-lla</i> used regularly on 3-syllable roots, not <i>-ngga</i> which operates only on 2-syllable roots (or double-2). The 1 st vowel could be <i>a</i> , <i>i</i> or <i>u</i> . The next consonant (or cluster) could be a retroflex nasal <i>m</i> ; OR a rolled <i>rr</i> + nasal <i>n</i> ; OR a retroflex <i>r</i> + nasal <i>n</i> ; but the <i>r</i> is more likely a rolled <i>rr</i> , despite the absence of any Nukunu precedent.
Language Family	Thura-Yura: 'Kaurna'
KWP Former Spelling	(most likely) Tarnangga
KWP New Spelling 2010	(most likely) Tarnangga
Phonemic Spelling	/tharnangka/
Syllables	"Tarr-nangga":
Pronunciation tips	Stress the 1 st syllable; 'T' with tongue between teeth (interdental). Every 'a' as in Maori 'haka'. Roll the 'rr' as in American or Scottish English.

Main source evidence

Date	March-June 1839
Original source text	" Terrananga Creek " [written twice along the path of Christie Creek in Morphett Vale West and East]
Reference	Richard Counsel 1839, Field Book No. 94 'Mr Counsel 1839', GNU: 104, 105b.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	Kaurna survey guides

Date	Aug 1839
Original source text	" Tornanga Point " [marked just north of] "Whitton Bluff".
Reference	'Plan of the country adjoining Adelaide forming the South Eastern portion of SA, compiled from the sketches of His Exc ^y Lt. Colonel Gawler, W ^m Light Esq. and BJ Finnis Esq. and the best authorities by Light Finnis and Co., Adelaide, August 1839' (Private Collection).
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	Kaurna survey guides

Date	Sep 1840
Original source text	“ Tornanga Cr. ” [at mouth of Christie Creek, which is marked “Morphett Vale” along its length].
Reference	Arrowsmith map 1/9/1840, ‘Part of South Australia to the eastward of the Gulf of St. Vincent... from documents in the Survey Office Adelaide’, C 218, SLSA; and variants, e.g. Arrowsmith 1/3/1841 ‘Map shewing the Special Surveys to the eastward of the Gulf of St. Vincent’, <i>British Parliamentary Papers: Colonies: Australia 2: Minutes of Evidence: 272, Plan B.</i>
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	Surveyors; Kurna survey guides

Discussion: CREEK or POINT: MORPHETT’S VALE BEFORE MORPHETT:

THE EVIDENCE:

The valley between the Hackham and Reynella spurs of the Mt Lofty Range was called ‘Morphett Vale’ by 1839 when John McLaren supervised the first surveys of ‘country south of Adelaide’. The creek which waters it had been called ‘Teal River’ during Finniss’s initial forays in 1837, and McLaren’s published maps still retained the name in 1840.³ Many decades later it acquired the name ‘Christie Creek’.

On a meticulous pencil-drawn map of sections, made at some time between early March and late June 1839⁴ by Richard Counsel, the first surveyor of this part of District B, the name ‘*Terrananga Creek*’ is written neatly along Christie Creek twice: first around today’s Brodie Road (near the Southern Expressway), and again on the main stream along Duval Drive from the Coast To Vines Rail Trail into the Wilfred Taylor reserve.⁵ In these first country surveys in the same year, formally-paid Aboriginal guides were being employed in the Aldinga and Yankalilla surveys,⁶ and it is almost certain that the surveyors in District B were using local Aboriginal guides too, and they would certainly have been Kurna. What we have here was written by Counsel in the field, presumably very soon after hearing it from his guide. He was probably mistaken in implying that it named the entire creek. The eastern marking is right next to *Parnangga*,⁷ and so probably the original site of ‘Terrananga’ was not there. The reaches marked are inland, between 4 and 7 km from the sea.

³ BT Finniss, Field Book 76: [40], GNU; maps C 236, C 274 and C 218, SLSA; Manning 2006: 96.

⁴ The Field Book gives these dates on pp.1a, 50, 56.

⁵ Richard Counsel 1839, Field Book 94, GNU: 105b; cp. 104.

⁶ *SA Register* 10/8/1839: 6.

⁷ See PNS 4.01.02/03.

In August of that year the new and independent Light, Finniss and Company produced a map of the newly-surveyed 'country adjoining Adelaide', on which was marked 'Tornanga Point' just north of 'Whitton Bluff'.⁸ It has to be one of the points north and south of O'Sullivan's Beach, but on the small-scale chart it is hard to tell which. A 'Point' is a marine landmark, and the most likely Point which would orient sailors at this location (other than Witton Bluff itself) is the little headland at today's Francis St, O'Sullivan Beach.⁹

Another series of Arrowsmith maps, published in London in 1840-1, drew upon early "documents in the Survey Office, Adelaide" and marked in "Tornanga Cr." at the mouth of the watercourse along which is written "Morphett Vale".¹⁰ i.e. Christie Creek.

In 1837 Finniss had been calling this creek 'Teal River', and Tornanga Point had been 'North Bluff',¹¹ suggesting that he was not then using Aboriginal guides. But by August 1839 when the 'Plan of the country adjoining Adelaide' was released, co-authors Finniss, Light and Gawler¹² would have had access also to the results of the other early surveys of the Christies Creek area, overseen first by Gawler and then by Sturt. This would imply that 'Tornanga' as well as 'Terrananga' came from these surveys of District B under the field leadership of John McLaren in early 1839.¹³ Gawler was a notable enthusiast for Aboriginal place-names and may have encouraged the publication of 'Tornanga' while he was in direct contact with the process; but few Aboriginal place-names appeared on the detailed 'Country South of Adelaide' a few months later under Sturt, who apparently was not interested in 'Terrananga'.

It looks very likely that different surveyors and perhaps different informants had been involved in the recording of the different spellings, and the different applications.

⁸ 'Plan of the country adjoining Adelaide... from the sketches of His Exc^y Lt. Colonel Gawler, W^m Light Esq. and BJ Finniss Esq. and the best authorities by Light Finniss and Co., Adelaide, August 1839' [Private Collection]: ref. exhibition catalogue: Tracey Lock-Weir 2006, 'Visions Of Adelaide', AGSA: 137.

⁹ It has a spot height of 49 metres near the sea: see mapsheet 1:50,000 Noarlunga, No. 6627-IV (1979). Curlew Point just to the north has a name, but is lower and less visible. The tiny low point at Christies Beach can be discounted.

¹⁰ Arrowsmith 1/3/1841, 'Map shewing the Special Surveys to the eastward of the Gulf of St. Vincent', *BPP: Colonies: Aust, Vol. 2: Minutes of Evidence: 272, Plan B.*

¹¹ Finniss in 1837 was taking bearings towards the "End of Ancaporinga Range" (probably the later Witton Bluff: named after the 'David Witton' which was not wrecked there until March 1839) and "North Bluff Teal River" (Field Book 76, 'Bases and Angles, Journal by BT Finniss': [40]).

¹² Light and most of his team had resigned from the government survey department in July 1838. Governor Gawler took over the running of the Country Surveys until Sturt became available to replace the incompetent Kingston. Meanwhile Light and Finniss had started an independent survey and mapping business (see G Dutton, *Founder of a City: 272-6*).

¹³ They were based at Happy Valley in Jan and Feb 1839, and moved to the Onkaparinga in March, Sturt was appointed officially on Feb 2nd (Hawker 1899: 36-9).



The location of 'Tornanga' is problematic. Was it a point or a creek? Did the point or the creek come first? This is hard to decide from the internal evidence, but it is very likely that these surveyors followed a common process in which they obtained the name of a specific site on a creek, immediately applied it to the whole creek, and soon used it also as a convenient label for a nearby trig station on high ground.¹⁴

The map saying 'Tornanga Ck' was compiled in London and so had more scope for error: it had passed through more hands and pens than the one produced by the Adelaide independents a year earlier applying the same word to a 'Point'. How did Arrowsmith come to apply it to the creek? The answer might be that Light's map had drawn upon unpublished observations by Finniss or the earliest surveys under Gawler, while Arrowsmith used only what he was given by the Survey Office, which may not have included Light's work. Yet these unspecific government 'documents' must have relied on a surveyor (or at least a map draughtsman) other than Counsel, who presumably would have written 'Terrananga'. Counsel's onsite field book remains the earliest, the strongest, the most immediate and specific evidence for both the name and the place; and the Arrowsmith's later alteration from 'point' to 'creek' could reflect a departmental review of their data. Perhaps the Office rejected the name 'Terrananga' because they already had 'Tornanga' and the surveyors regarded it as the same place. They could let the name revert to the creek especially because (it seems) no trig station requiring a name was mounted at the O'Sullivan Beach point.¹⁵

Unless we find other original Adelaide maps which mark versions of the name, we cannot know the answers for sure.

THE WORD:

One can imagine that these men were finding it hard to know how to record the pronunciations they heard. But all the sources agree about the locative *-ngga* and its preceding morpheme *-na-*.

'Tornanga' teases us by seeming both similar to and incompatible with 'Terrananga'. The originals must have been even more alike:

1. The 'two-syllable root' rule:

The word 'Terrananga' appears to have four syllables. But if so it should be 'Terranilla': by using *-ngga* it breaks the Kaurna rule that three-syllable root words must add the locative *-illa*, not *-ngga*

¹⁴ Trigonometrical stations are basic reference points for surveyors to use in taking accurate bearings over miles of country. Exactly the same process happened to 'Tartachilla' on Willunga Creek: the name was transferred to a trig station on the neighbouring cliffs, then later mis-copied as 'Tortachilla' (see PNS 4.03.02/04 Tartatyilla).

¹⁵ Witton Bluff was a better site only 2.5 km away.

as for two- or four-syllable roots. This is why we have on one hand *Willa* > *Willangga* and *Ngangki-parri* > *Ngangki-parringga*, but on the other *Kawanda* > *Kawandilla* and *Yarnkalya* > *Yarnkalyilla*.

Although *Tarra-nangko*, *Tirra-nangko*¹⁶ and *Turra-nangko* are possible words (respectively ‘back from the string/girdle’, ‘back from the obstacle’ and ‘back from the shadow’), they are possible interpretations of ‘Terrananga’ only if Counsel mistook a final *o* or *u* for *a*, and the suffix *-anangko* instead of a Locative is linguistically unlikely.¹⁷

2. An imaginary vowel:

There is a possible explanation for Counsel’s four syllables. A consonant-cluster *-rr-n* (a rolled *rr* followed by *n*) could easily cause an English speaker to imagine a non-existent vowel in the middle,¹⁸ ‘-rən-’: as Wyatt and Williams did with *birki* ‘peas’, writing it “birrike” and “pere-kie”. Deferring the question of the first vowel, there is some probability that what Counsel had heard was actually three syllables with a heavily-rolled *rr*, ‘tV-rr-nanga’.¹⁹

3. A three-syllable name:

‘Tornanga’ is evidence for a similar three-syllable name of Christie Creek. Perhaps on that occasion the Kurna informant did not emphasize the *rr*, so that the surveyor did not add the imaginary extra vowel.

It is possible that amateur spellings as similar as ‘Ternanga’ and ‘Tornanga’, distinguished only by one vowel, could be different names for different places near each other; but it is more likely in principle that they are versions of the same word. This proves to be explainable:

4. The first vowel:

4a. Counsel’s ‘Terr-’:

Counsel obviously meant this spelling, writing it very clearly three times on two separate pages. But what *sound* did he mean by ‘Terr-’? Written with a following ‘a’, it seems natural for us to pronounce it like the Latin word ‘terra’, using the English *e* as in ‘get’; however, this does not occur

¹⁶ *Tirranangko* seems to have been recorded as a place-name at Port Willunga: see PNS 4.03.03/02.

¹⁷ Only two Kurna place-names are known with this form, ‘Wangkondanangko’ and ‘Terenangu’ (see PNS 4.04.01/03 Wakundilla, 4.03.02/02 Tirranangko). Both were given by Ngarrindjeri speakers decades after contact, and both have known alternatives in correct Kurna form. The universal Kurna place-name suffixes are *ngga* and *illa*.

¹⁸ The technical name is ‘liminal vowel’.

¹⁹ Rob Amery considers that the *r* is likely to be a rolled *rr*, despite the absence of any Nukunu precedent (KWP Minutes 25/4/11). The capital V represents (for the moment) an unknown vowel.



in Kurna and 'e' might be said to represent the sound *i*,²⁰ though this is a stretch. Counsel may have meant something different: the 'er' sound as in 'certain', or his own English dialect pronunciation of this (cp. 'sartin'). Kurna vowels which the German linguists heard as *a* were often recorded by Wyatt and Williams as 'er' or 'ur': for example, 'perlte' = *palti*, and 'Turn-darn-yung-gah' = *Tarndanyangga*. If this was so with Counsel, then what he heard was *Ta-*.

4b. Light's 'Tor-':

Wyatt also occasionally used the English spelling 'or' where the linguists heard an *a*: e.g. 'worlabbate' = *wadlaparti*; 'korla pinde' = *karlapindi*; 'korre' = *kari*; 'korra' = *karra*. If the same applies here, then 'Tor-' could also represent *Ta-*.

Another conjecture is that the surveyor had written 'Ter-' in cursive, but the map draughtsman mis-transcribed it as 'Tor-'. This would also imply an original *Ta-*. Perhaps the name was spelled 'Tarnanga' on another in-house document which is now lost; in cursive it is very easy to confuse an 'a' with an 'o'.

5. Trying to harmonize the evidence:

Explanations which involve *u* for Light's 'o', or *i* for Counsel's 'e', do not allow a harmonization of all the evidence; but Kurna language specialist Rob Amery considers these vowels to be still possible here.

There is no known Kurna morpheme *tirna*, but this is not conclusive because place-names do not necessarily have a meaning.

Tarna-ngga means 'at the back, behind, on the other side'. *Turna-ngga* means 'place of the big toe'. Even if one of these derivations was correct, and present in the minds of Kurna people then, we have no way of knowing what it signified to them. And a name does not always carry the meaning of a morpheme which it resembles.

In view of the multiple uncertainties, we cannot be sure of either the sound or the meaning of this place-name. Yet *Tarmangga* seems the most likely of the possibilities.

²⁰ In Kurna there is no semantic difference between the sounds *i* and *e*.

THE PLACE:

Despite the uncertainties surrounding ‘Tornanga’, we may accept Counsel’s strong on-site evidence that the name probably applied somewhere on the creek, rather than to a coastal point.

Aboriginal naming processes do not usually perceive a watercourse as one thing with one name, ‘a single creek’, as we do.²¹ This notion causes endless trouble to the Geographical Names Unit in deciding which of several tributaries is ‘the main course’. Christie Creek was never a permanently flowing river; not even the Torrens was ever that. Probably Counsel heard the name applied somewhere on the creek and applied it to the whole, either automatically and at once, or by generalization later, as we see also in Piesse with *Tarniyandingga*.²² There is not enough evidence to show which part of the creek had this name from the Kurna ‘old people’. Counsel’s positioning of the words, along two different reaches of the creek, prevents us from taking them as specific locations. But Kurna descendants in recent times have been happy to use one name for the whole length of a watercourse if no multiple names are known: as with *Karrawirra-parri* ‘Torrens River’.

It is conceivable that these records actually represent two different sites on the Creek with similar names: for ‘Tornanga’ a name beginning with *Tu*, and for ‘Terrananga’ a name beginning with *Ti* or *Ta*. But this seems a little unlikely, because all the known records of these very similar names originated in a short time during surveys involving many of the same people.

The most likely interpretation is *Tarrnangga* somewhere on Christie Creek, with subsequent transfer of the location and mis-copying of the name by the surveyors.

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End of Summary

²¹ Tindale would add ‘except for permanently flowing streams’ (Tindale: ‘Place Names: Drafts For Text’ AA338/10/2: 18, 49).

²² See PNS 4.3.3/01.