

Place Name SUMMARY (PNS) 4.01.02/03

MANDARRILLA (Mantharilla)

(last edited: 22/3/2016)

Abstract

Mandarilla (or *Mantharilla* in our New Spelling) is the Kaurna name for a surface water site somewhere on Christie Creek or one of its tributaries: probably in Morphett Vale East near *Parnangga*. It was recorded as 'Maundarilla' by Louis Piesse sometime before 1844, probably in 1839 when Piesse was a survey assistant in the first Country Surveys.

Its meaning is uncertain, but probably 'place of the handle or girdle string'.

The significance of the name at this location is unknown.

<i>Coordinates</i>	-35.122647° Latitude, 138.529471° Longitude.
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Language Information

<i>Meaning</i>	probably 'place of the handle or [girdle] string'.
<i>Etymology</i>	probably <i>mandarra</i> 'handle (of string or anything else)' + <i>-illa</i> 'at'
<i>Notes</i>	
<i>Language Family</i>	Thura-Yura: 'Kaurna'.
<i>KWP Former Spelling</i>	Mandarrilla
<i>KWP New Spelling 2010</i>	Mantharilla
<i>Phonemic Spelling</i>	/maNthaRila/
<i>Syllables</i>	"Man-dha-rilla":
<i>Pronunciation tips</i>	Stress the 1 st syllable; every 'a' as in Maori 'haka'. 'dh' with the tongue between teeth (interdental). secondary stress on the 3 rd syllable.

Main source evidence

<i>Date</i>	1844
<i>Original source text</i>	<p>"I think I could go from Adelaide to the Slate Quarry at Piltongga and obtain surface water on an average of four miles. Distances measured from Government-house, Adelaide.....</p> <p>3. Cowemanilla, Hurtle Vale - 13½ [<i>miles from Adelaide</i>]"</p> <p>4. Maundarilla, Morphett Vale - 16½</p> <p>5. Onkaparinga (Noarlunga) - 22.</p>
<i>Reference</i>	'L.P.' [Louis Piesse], <i>Observer</i> 13/4/1844: 8a-b.
<i>Informants credited</i>	
<i>Informants uncredited</i>	Kurna survey guides 1839

<i>Date</i>	1857
<i>Original source text</i>	<p>"<i>mandarra</i> and <i>mantarra</i> (<i>mandi</i> and <i>tarra</i>); 'handle, (be it of string or any thing)'. <i>mandi</i> to draw off; to pull off; to take off. <i>tarra</i> 1) that whereby two points are joined together; the handle of a basket, of a rush bag, etc. hadle [<i>sic</i>] of a kettle, etc."</p>
<i>Reference</i>	Teichelmann MS <i>Dictionary</i> 1857.
<i>Informants credited</i>	
<i>Informants uncredited</i>	Mullawirraburka, Kadlitpinna, Ityamaiitpinna, etc, 1838-44

Discussion: 'MAUNDARILLA':

Louis Piesse was a close observer of 'native pads' and water sites, which recur throughout his two 'descriptive tours' published in the *Observer* in 1844.¹ He knew these in the area from Happy Valley to Sellicks Hill because he had been one of McLaren's survey team there for most of 1839. During that year the Survey Department in Adelaide was employing Aboriginal men on equal wages in the teams both for District C (Onkaparinga River to Aldinga Plains) and around Yankalilla.²

At this early date these Kurna men were indispensable. Equipment and rations were scarce, as Hawker constantly bemoans in his memoir.³ The surveyors had to travel mostly on foot and very often live off the land, as close to an Aboriginal life-style as any settler was likely to get; and it was their Aboriginal guides who knew the waterholes, the best tracks between them, and the best ways

¹ 'L.P.' [Louis Piesse], *Observer* 16/3/1844: 7-8; 13/4/1844: 7-8.

² *Register* 10/8/1839: 6a.

³ Hawker 1899, *Early Experiences in SA*.

to obtain food. Place-names were the best short-hand with which to communicate about destinations which were otherwise unknown to the newcomers or newly 'discovered'.

Piesse's knowledge came directly from men who were still speaking their language daily in a living culture. Although his is the only record of this place-name, it is worth examining closely.

PIESSE and THE PLACE:

"Maundarilla, Morphett Vale" occurs as part of a precise list of surface drinking-water sites on the 'native track' from Adelaide to Willunga.⁴

Not only did Piesse write about this 'pad' in 1844, it was carefully mapped in 1839 by field surveyor Richard Counsel, and appears on the published plans which resulted from Counsel's work under John McLaren – the Senior Surveyor who gets the credit on the plans. It was the basis of the roads which the settlers then built across this part of the land.⁵

In his 'Tours' Piesse advocates enthusiastically that newcomers should get out and see this land of 'District C' which in 1844 was still 'rural' and to many Adelaide residents a 'terra incognita': "This is a country that only wants to be seen to be admired"⁶ – preferably on foot: "The Bush, Sir, the Bush is the place for health".⁷

His list is designed to help the touring walker in quite precise ways, with exact locations of drinking water and distances between the waterholes. In this he is close to an Aboriginal view of the land. He appreciates the nature and rationale of the 'native pads'; quite probably the Kurna guides had explained them to him during those long weeks in the bush:

The old road went as near as possible by the 'native pad' from Encounter Bay to the Onkaparinga. I think the predilection of the natives for their route may be accounted for by the fact that water can be more frequently obtained, and that they had not to pass so large a tract of scrub, and consequently could sooner fall on good country abounding in game, an object by no means unimportant to those who had both to travel and find food on the journey.

⁴ 'L.P.' [Louis Piesse], *Observer* 13/4/1844: 8a-b.

⁵ Field Books 94 and 102, GNU; maps 'Country south of Adelaide' C 274, and variants, SLSA.

⁶ *Observer* 16/3/1844: 7a.

⁷ *Observer* 13/4/1844: 7b.

Having been a survey worker, Piesse was probably also fairly reliable in his measurements. He criticized the first Encounter Bay survey for its inaccuracy.

At this early date 'Morphett Vale' meant 'anywhere in the valley of Christie Creek'; but his figures usefully tell us that 'Maundarilla' is 3 miles from 'Cowemanilla, Hurtle Vale', and 5½ miles from 'Onkaparinga (Noarlunga)', presumably the ford: both being water sources.

'Hurtle Vale' probably meant the valley of today's Panalatinga Creek through Reynella, and the 'Cowemanilla' water probably meant the waterhole site which John Reynell bought at Old Reynella where the creek crosses Old South Road.⁸

At Old Noarlunga you found water 'at the pools above', in the Gorge mouth next to the ford.⁹

If we assume that the 'Maundarilla' water was at Christie Creek on the main road in Section 639, Piesse's measurements fit well for 'Cowemanilla', but not for Onkaparinga which is ¾ of a mile nearer by the road than he says.

Looking more closely at the records of 639, we find that no water site was marked there by the surveyors. The waterholes two km downstream are the only 'water' marked for miles around. Alleyne on 639 had to dig 18 feet to get it. Immediately downstream the south side of the creek was "marshy", while upstream the terrain was more hilly.¹⁰ This site was good not for surface water but as a ford on a fairly level route.

The distances are explained if 'Maundarilla' was further upstream near the big campsite at Parnangga. This must have been near drinking-water. Tindale's map of a Morphett Vale campsite which is probably Parnangga shows 'water' by its unlocalized creek.¹¹

From 'Cowemanilla' to Christies Creek at Parnangga was three miles if you followed the main road almost to the creek to avoid the hills, and then veered east. From Parnangga via the crossing at 639 to the ford at Old Noarlunga is about 5½ miles, matching Piesse's figure exactly.

We can therefore say that 'Maundarilla' was probably the water supply for Parnangga. We do not know exactly where, nor on which creek or tributary (there are or were several tributaries in the

⁸ It might originally have meant one of the waterholes a mile further north in Happy Valley; but by 1844 it seems to have been used by settlers only for places in the Panalatinga valley (see PNS 4.01.01/03 Kauwi-marnilla).

⁹ Piesse, *Observer* 13/4/1844: 7a.

¹⁰ 'Statement 1840', *BPP: Aust.* Vol. 7: 116; Field Book 94: [105b], [108b].

¹¹ Tindale 1974, *Aboriginal Tribes of Australia*: 56-7. Elsewhere he seems to refer to this site as "Cooper's 74 site" (see PNS 4.01.02/04 Parnangga).

immediate vicinity). But if we follow Tindale’s sketch map of the campsite, and take its unspecified location to be where I have deduced,¹² then its marked ‘water’ site was on the main stream of Christie Creek between the Morphett Vale East school oval and Christine St. Until someone finds Tindale’s or Cooper’s detailed notes on the campsite, or does a targeted hydrological study, this is as close as we can get.

THE NAME:

‘Maundarilla’ is in standard Kurna form, a place-name with the Locative suffix *-illa*, added onto a 3-syllable root word ‘Maundar-’ with its final vowel omitted. This is almost certainly *mandarra*, which is glossed by the missionary linguists in 1840 as ‘string’, but with later analysis as “*mandarra* and *mantarra* (*mandi* and *tarra*), handle, (be it of string or any thing)”. So *mandarilla* is ‘place of the string or handle’.

This seems fairly obscure, but we can learn more from Teichelmann’s later comments. It is a compound word built from two others: *tarra* is a noun ‘string; girdle; that whereby two points are joined together; the handle of a basket... etc’, and is related to the verb *tarrandi* ‘to equip; put on (as a bag, net etc)’; *mandi* is a verb ‘to draw off; to pull off; to take off’, and is a variant of *marendi* ‘(belonging to mandi), to put off, undress; to slip off, glide off; to separate oneself’. So their combination would signify a ‘pull-off string-handle’.

To understand what this might refer to when used as a place-name for a water source near an autumn star site possibly related to men’s business,¹³ we must await more insights from history and anthropology. It could of course refer to a Dreaming story which has left no other record.

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End of Summary

¹² See PNS 4.01.02/04 Parnangga.

¹³ See PNS 4.02.01/04 Parnangga.