

Place Name SUMMARY (PNS) 4.3.3/03

KANYANYAPILLA

(last edited: 25/2/2013)

Abstract

Kanyanyapilla is the Kurna name of a campsite on the rising ground south of Maslin Creek, on the east side of California Road near the California Road Wetland.

The name was recorded by the first surveyors in 1839 and used for a few years by the first settlers for the inland reaches of Maslin Creek.

It is clearly a Kurna word, but there are several possibilities for its meaning, with no way of choosing between them (see Discussion).

Karlowan's Ngarrindjeri interpretation of this name, as recorded by Tindale in the 1930s, is demonstrably wrong in both language and location (see Discussion below; also PNS 4.3.2/8 'Kunanjapilba').

<i>Coordinates</i>	-35.25007° Latitude, 138.523264° Longitude.
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Language Information

<i>Meaning</i>	Uncertain
<i>Etymology</i>	Uncertain
<i>Notes</i>	There are several possibilities for its derivation, all conjectural (see Discussion). In all these cases, the pronunciation would probably be " <u>Kan</u> -yanya-p <u>ill</u> -a".
<i>Language Family</i>	Thura-Yura: 'Kurna'.
<i>KWP Former Spelling</i>	Kanyanyapilla
<i>KWP New Spelling 2010</i>	(i) Kanyanyapirla (matching the two Dual options in Discussion); OR (ii) Kanyanyapilla (matching the Locative option in Discussion); OR (iii) Kanyanyapila (matching the 'eagle' option in Discussion).
<i>Phonemic Spelling</i>	(matching the options in New Spelling above): (i) /kanyanyapirla/ OR (ii) /kanyanyapila/ OR (iii) /kanyanyapiLa/
<i>Pronunciation</i>	probably " <u>Kanyanya</u> -p <u>ill</u> -a"
<i>Pronunciation tips</i>	Stress the 1 st syllable; Secondary stress on 4 th syllable; Pronounce every 'a' as in Maori 'haka'.

Main source evidence

Date	July 1839
Original source text	“24 th July... We came to the pier at Ngankiparringa, where we were kindly welcomed by Mr McLaren, as he was about to leave for Kanjanjapilla . We put our bundles on his cart, which helped us for the next 7 miles. From Kanjanjapilla we should have reached Willanga on the same day, where the Governor had set up his tent...” [Note: Schürmann uses the Continental ‘j’ to represent a consonantal ‘y’].
Reference	CW Schürmann (tr. H Spoeri), <i>Journal</i> , Lutheran Archives, Adelaide: 90-1.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	Wauwitpinna

Date	Oct 1839
Original source text	“Can-yan-ya-pel-la – section 203, district C.”
Reference	Louis Piesse, letter 18 Oct 1839, in <i>SA Colonist</i> Vol. 1 No.19, 1840: 296.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	Kaurna survey guides 1839.

Date	1840
Original source text	“[Section, District C] 193 – Canyauapella [sic] – Thomas Alex. Waters – [water] From a tea-tree swamp in abundance.” “191 – Somerset House – Michael Martin - [water] From a tea-tree swamp in abundance.”
Reference	‘Statement of the Extent and Cultivation... for 1840’, in <i>British Parliamentary Papers: Colonies: Australia: Vol. 7 (1841-4): 118-9.</i>
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	

Date	1840
Original source text	“(Onkaparinga and Neighbourhood)... Martin, Michael, Cananapella [sic]. ”
Reference	Bennett, <i>SA Almanac for 1841</i> , Country Directory: 127.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	

Date	1841
Original source text	“(Willunga)... Martin, Michael, Cananyapella [sic]. ”
Reference	Bennett, <i>SA Almanac for 1842</i> , Country Directory: 127.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	

Date	[1839] / 1844
Original source text	[Travelling northward from Aldinga Scrub] "... Keeping along the plain four miles brings us to the grassy gully called Tartarchilla... The next gully is Cunyunyapella , in which the large tea tree (<i>Melaleuca linariifolia</i>) and reeds at once show that the water is permanent. There is some very good land in this gully... Proceeding onwards we arrive at the next gully called Turneeyundingga.... surface water may be had... by Turneeyundingga and Cunyanyapella"
Reference	'L.P.' [Louis Piesse], 'Descriptive Tours through Part of District C', <i>Observer</i> 13/4/1844: 8a-b.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	Kurna survey guides 1839.

Date	1935-41
Original source text	" Kunanjapilba 'dung earth place' "; [general credit] "Details from Karlowan Dec. 1935. March 1939 / 1941". [Note: Tindale uses the Continental 'j' to represent a consonantal 'y'].
Reference	Tindale annotated map, Hundred of Willunga, AA 338/24/97.
Informants credited	Albert Karlowan (?Dec 1935).
Informants uncredited	

Date	1935-41 / n.d. [1980s]
Original source text	" Kunanja`pilba Kurna Tr., Adelaide, S.Aust. Port Willunga vicinity of Section 391, H of Willunga. Lit. 'Dung-like earth'. Deriv: ['kuna] excrement + ['pilba] earth. Also acceptable as Kunyanyapela. Tindale ms from Karlowan. Kunyanyapela Tindale. Cunyanyapella Adelaide Observer 13 April 1844."
Reference	Tindale, Kurna place-name card 548.
Informants credited	Karlowan (?Dec 1935).
Informants uncredited	

Discussion: A CAMPSITE BY A TEATREE WETLAND:

Louis Piesse achieved fame later after accompanying Sturt to Central Australia as Storeman, but in 1839 he was working in John McLaren's Aldinga survey team. From their camp near Sellick's Hill he wrote a letter to the newspaper.¹ He had been collecting a small Kurna wordlist and some place-names: the context was ideal because un-named Kurna guides were part of this team on

equal pay.² Presumably it was one of these guides who had given him the location and name of *Kanyanyapilla*, probably while camped there a few months earlier.

Because he was a surveyor he also knew the section number, “Can-yan-ya-pel-la – section 203, district C”: the higher ground immediately south of a reed swamp in Maslin Creek on the east side of California Road. We even know exactly where he was camped and when. We have meticulous evidence from a talented draughtsman on the team who was also an Assistant Surveyor: Richard Counsel, whose Field Books are marvels of pencilled craft which sometimes almost become artwork. His survey party had established a base there around June 24th 1839.³ and his books mark a “camp” on this section, and another on 193 just north across the swamp on a low bluff overlooking it.⁴

Over the next two years the early almanacs and land returns used this name several times. They gave farm names and locality names indiscriminately under the owner’s name, and one has to determine which is which.

At the end of 1840, the official land returns listed one Thomas Waters as owning a farm called, or at, ‘Canyauapella’ *{sic}* on section 193 (the spelling clearly includes a mistranscribed ‘n’).⁵ This section – which today includes the low bluff and a reed swamp – had been selected by the Union Sheep and Cattle Company according to the map arising from the McLaren surveys, drawn up a few months earlier.⁶ It is additionally labelled ‘Canyanapella’ on one rare version of the same map.⁷

In 1839 Michael Martin established his farm at section 191 on the creek about a mile downstream. It became the well-known ‘Somerset House’, as listed in the same 1840 land returns, with water “from a tea-tree swamp in abundance”. At about the same time the 1841 Bennett almanac listed his farm as ‘Somerset House, Cananapella’; the 1842 almanac simply said ‘Cananyapella’.⁸

These place-names are all clearly English variants of *Kanyanyapilla*, but appear to represent the locality rather than the individual farm. After 1842 the name does not reappear. Martin’s area was known by 1847 as ‘Bay of Biscay’.⁹

The erratic spellings might puzzle us linguistically but for Piesse’s more careful records. In a tour guide for the *Adelaide Observer* in 1844,¹⁰ he spelled it ‘Cunyunyapella’ and ‘Cunyanyapella’. Putting these spellings alongside the others, it is clear that the first two vowels are both *a*, and that *ny* occurs twice, not once; the correct spelling is therefore *Kanyanyapilla*,

But it is the earliest evidence of all that clinches the spelling. The young missionary linguist Clamor Schürmann left a detailed diary in German which was translated recently for the Adelaide Lutheran Archives. In July 1839 – in the middle of McLaren’s surveys – Schürmann made a journey on foot from Adelaide to Encounter Bay with the new Protector Matthew Moorhouse. They were guided by two Kurna people, Wauwitpinna and a boy, who no doubt gave or confirmed the name while passing through or camping at the site:

24th July... We came to the pier at Ngankiparringa,¹¹ where we were kindly welcomed by Mr McLaren, as he was about to leave for Kanyanyapilla. We put our bundles on his cart, which helped us for the next 7 miles. From Kanyanyapilla we should have reached Willunga on the same day, where the Governor had set up his tent...

After a cold night which forced him out of the surveyors’ tent to the campfire, on 25th July

with our baggage on the horses, shortly after dawn we went on our way to Willunga. Had the natives not seen the smoke of the fires¹² in the distance, we would hardly have found the place. From here to Mt Terrible there was no path to follow, and we were guided by the natives. We had to admire their knowledge of the country, the waters, etc.

Wauwitpinna absconded later at Encounter Bay, being afraid to go with them to visit the *Parnkameyunna* (Lake people); but the boy stayed, and later guided them back from Currency Creek to Willunga via the swamps near what is now Mount Compass, and on to “the place where we spent our first night,¹³ thoroughly wet and exhausted”.¹⁴

Two months later Schürmann in Adelaide recorded that “Brother Teichelmann came back today from Kanyanyapilla”.¹⁵

From these details it appears that *Kanyanyapilla* was a well-established campsite on the southward route. Probably both Sections 203 south of the swamp, and 193 as a lookout, were part of the Kurna site. Piesse described it:

*The next gully is Cunyunyapella, in which the large tea tree (*Melaleuca linariifolia*) and reeds at once show that the water is permanent.¹⁶*

Fortunately some of this still survives today. On section 192 (between 191 and 193, half a km NW of 203) in the middle of farms and vines, we still have the California Road Wetland with dense tea-trees surrounded by dense reeds as well as a few gums further west. There was “good water” here in 1839, as shown on the earlier version of the McLaren map.¹⁷ We are justified in locating this precious little site here, one of the few on the McLaren Plains to survive (in part) the ecological disasters of the first 20 years of settlement.¹⁸ a well-watered Kurna campsite halfway between others named on Pedler Creek near McLaren Vale¹⁹ and at Willunga.²⁰

THE NAME:

No glosses or meanings were given for the name, but several possibilities exist:

1. *kanya*-[*ka*]*nyapp*[*a*] 'earth oven' REDUPLICATIVE + *-illa* LOCATIVE: 'place of many earth ovens'.

2. *kanyanya* 'crowd, multitude, heap' + *pilla* DUAL: 'two crowds or heaps'.

Both of these derivations might suggest that the site was a well-used camping place.

3. *kanya* 'rock' + [*ka*]*nya* REDUPLICATIVE + *pilla* DUAL: 'two lots of rocks'.

4. *kanyanya* 'crowd, multitude, heap' + *pilla* 'eagle': 'a multitude of eagles'.

Which is correct? – if any: a place-name need not have a known meaning. One of the glosses might be a once-familiar social or economic function of the site, or connected to an unknown Dreaming story, or both. Without explicit early Kurna testimony it is hard for us to predict or observe how a mythical event or person might be embodied in the local geography. We have no way of deciding except perhaps by deduction from the location and its ecology. Are there archaeological signs of campsites with earth ovens? or of frequent use by large numbers of people in two separate camps? Were there once two significant rock outcrops? Can the bird historians tell us whether this area was once inhabited by many eagles?²¹

Despite the ambiguity of the word, the facts of *Kanyanyapilla* as a name and a site are solidly established from this early evidence. Unfortunately they have been muddied by later claims from Tindale and Karlowan: these are removed to a separate discussion.

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KANYANYAPILLA AND 'KUNANYAPILBA': FURTHER DISCUSSION: -

On Tindale's annotated Hundred of Willunga map – which has been used as an authority by researchers such as Manning – what are we to make of this? – a place-name annotation, “Kunanjapilba²² ‘dung earth place’”, attached to a place on Willunga Creek near Port Willunga; a general credit for the whole map,

Details from Karlowan Dec. 1935. March 1939 / 1941;

and an unattached note,

Maundaril:a = / Cunyanyapella salt water creek / Ref. Adelaide Observer 13 Apr 1844.²³

This all looks authoritative. But it is not self-evident how many of the annotations on this map come from Karlowan, nor which they are. The reference to the *Observer* essay makes it quite unlikely that Karlowan volunteered this name unprompted, especially when we know that Tindale used published names on another map as a source for Milerum to interpret.²⁴ Karlowan was well able to read texts for himself (unlike Milerum,²⁵ but here and elsewhere it seems that he tended to misinterpret some of the vagaries of English spelling: notably the written ‘u’ which more often (e.g. in ‘but’) represents the sound *a* as in ‘haka’, not *u* as in ‘put’.²⁶

Tindale knew the two *Observer* essays by ‘L.P.’, one of which he quotes here; but he did not know Piesse’s 1839 letter, and therefore was unaware that a precise location on Maslin Creek had been given for “*Can-yan-ya-pel-la*”. And from the vocabulary card it seems clear that in the process of ‘correcting’ L.P.’s spelling ‘Cunyanyapella’, Karlowan and Tindale also re-pronounced it with an incorrect *u* as the first vowel.

‘Kunanyapilba’ could only be a foreign adaptation. Certainly ‘human excrement’ is *kudna* in Kurna and *kuna* in Ngarrindjeri; but as we have seen, the early sources clearly indicate *a* as the first vowel, not *u*; and the second consonant is *ny*, not *n*. The third syllable *nya* is not explained. *Pilbi*, not ‘pilba’, is ‘dirt’ in Ngarrindjeri, and ‘pilba’ is unknown in any other Kurna source, while there are two other words for ‘earth’ (*yerta*, *turto* – both of which Karlowan knew and cited elsewhere) and several other possible meanings for *pilla*. Karlowan did not know that *-illa* can be a Locative in Kurna.²⁷ He knew the Kurna word *kanyanya* ‘earth oven’,²⁸ but seems not to have connected it with this place-name.

According to Tindale and Karlowan, ‘Kunanyapilba’ is at “Port Willunga vicinity of Section 391, Hundred of Willunga”.²⁹ There is no other evidence for this name (or any other) at this location; and as we have seen above, solid evidence for what and where ‘Cunyanyapella’ really was.

It looks very much as if Tindale had shown Karlowan the name “Cunyanyapella” from Piesse’s 1844 newspaper essay, and then Karlowan invented his own explanation of it: not from any Kaurna knowledge but from his own Ngarrindjeri perspective, after the Kaurna had been absent from these sites for two generations. This is perhaps the best-documented example of such Ngarrindjeri reinvention, but not the only one.³⁰

However, the site which Karlowan gave is close to the real *Tartatyilla*.³¹ In partial defence of him, it is just possible that he may have drawn on some knowledge of that old well site about a kilometre away. We cannot know.

See also my account of *Kanyanyapilla* in C Schultz, ‘Ask the right question, then look everywhere...’, unpublished paper presented at Australian National Placenames Survey Conference, Adelaide 2/9/2011: 18-20.

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End of Summary

¹ Piesse letter 18/10/1839, in *SA Colonist* Vol. 1 No.19. 1840, :296.

² *Register* 10/8/1839 :6.

³ Counsel 1839, Field Book 94, :49.

⁴ Counsel 1839, Field Books 94 :52 and 102 :25, GNU.

⁵ ‘Statement of the Extent and Cultivation... for 1840’, in ‘Papers Relative to ... SA’, *British Parliamentary Papers: Colonies: Aust:* Vol. 7 (1841-4) :118-9.

⁶ Burslem 1840, ‘Plan of the country south of Adelaide from O’Halloran Hill to Mt. Terrible... as surveyed by J. McLaren... 1840’, Survey Office, Adelaide, ‘FH Burslem Draftsman’, C 236, SLSA; cp. the versions published in London by Arrowsmith, C 274, C 803.

⁷ McLaren 1840, ‘Country South of Adelaide from O’Halloran Hill to Mt Terrible’, London, John Arrowsmith 1/9/1840: “Sold by J Wyld, Geographer to Her Majesty” and “Pres. by SA Company”, BRG 42/120/28 SLSA.

⁸ SA almanacs: Bennett 1841, Country Directory :127; and Bennett 1842, Country Directory :127.

⁹ Stephens 1847, *SA Almanac* :130.

¹⁰ ‘L.P.’ [Louis Piesse], *Observer* 13/4/1844, :8A-B.

¹¹ Sic: *Ngangk-parringga* = Onkaparinga River at the ford.

¹² The campfires at the Governor’s camp.

¹³ i.e. Kanyanyapilla.

- ¹⁴ Schürmann Diary, 24-5 July, 1-2 Aug 1839.
- ¹⁵ Schürmann diary, 1 Oct 1839.
- ¹⁶ 'L.P.' [Piesse], *Observer* 13/4/1844, :8A. Like the almanacs, here he seems to generalize the name to the whole length of the creek ("*the next gully*"), even though his ecological detail suggests something more particular.
- ¹⁷ Burslem 1840, *ibid*.
- ¹⁸ For the disasters see Rob Linn, 1991, 1991, *Cradle of Adversity: a history of the Willunga district*, Cherry Gardens, SA: Historical Consultants Pty Ltd, :78-80, 100, 108, 168n1-2.
- ¹⁹ See PNS 4.3.3/1 Tarniyandingga.
- ²⁰ See PNS 4.4.2/2 Willangga and 4.4.2/1 Piltangga.
- ²¹ The gloss 'eagle' is ambiguous. *Wilto* and *pilla* are both given as 'a species of eagle', but *pilla* is given by only one source, while *wilto* is given by three sources and may have been the more common species around Adelaide, whichever that was. And common bird-names change: which species were likely to be called 'eagle' in SA around 1840? James Hawker in the 1890s recalled his time working for McLaren's 1839 surveys, camping at the Horseshoe of Onkaparinga River (about 6 km north of Kanyanyapilla): "*Some distance down the river there was a little cliff, and this used to be frequented by two fine eagles – or, as they are now called, eaglehawks. Mr Gould was most anxious to get one or both for specimens, but the birds were too wary for a gun*" (Hawker 1899, *Early Experiences in SA*, Part 1, :45; cp. :38). Modern Australian bird books tell us that 'eaglehawk' is (now?) an alternative name for the Wedgetailed eagle; but American sources refer it to medium-sized tropical raptors.
- ²² Tindale's Continental 'j' represents a consonant 'y'.
- ²³ Tindale annotated map Hundred of Willunga, AA 338/24/97. Later (probably 50 years later) Tindale transferred this information to a card (Kurna place-name card 548).
- ²⁴ Tindale, 'Placenames: drafts for text', AA338/10/2, :114.
- ²⁵ Milerum could not read (Tindale, 'Vanished Tribal Life of Coorong Blacks', *Advertiser* 7/4/1934, :5). Tindale must have spoken the names for him.
- ²⁶ Karlowan or Tindale made the same mistake in 'Bungala' (see PNS 5.2.1/1 Pangkarla) and 'Turneeyundinga' (see PNS 4.3.3/1 Tarniyandingga).
- ²⁷ See PNS 4.3.2/4 *Tartatyilla*.
- ²⁸ Tindale Kurna vocabulary card "kanjanja".
- ²⁹ Kurna place-name card 548.
- ³⁰ Compare e.g. 'Turtotalangga' in PNS 4.3.3/4, 'Tarniyundingga' in PNS 4.3.4/1, 'Ka`reildung' in PNS 3/10, and 'Bungalaparringga' in PNS 5.2.1/1; and Robert Mason's spin on 'Yatala' in PNS 8/1.
- ³¹ See PNS 4.3.2/4.