NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETING

The 8th General Meeting of the Society will be held at the Conservation Centre, 120 Wakefield Street Adelaide on

MONDAY 28th OCTOBER, 1985 AT 8.00 PM.

AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the Previous General Meeting:
   Minutes of the previous General Meeting held at the Conservation Centre on 23rd September, to be confirmed. A copy of these minutes is attached.
3. New Members:
   No new members were elected to the Society for this month.
4. Papers and Journals:
   Papers and journals received from other societies and organisations will be tabled at this meeting.
5. Business:
6. Speaker:
   Dr Peter Sutton, Head of the Division of Anthropology at the South Australian Museum will address the Society. The subject of his address will be:

   "The Proposed Lake Eyre Basin Project "

7. Supper will be served.

R. Allison,
Honorary Secretary
c/o The Conservation Centre
120 Wakefield Street
ADELAIDE SA 5000
LANGUAGE AS HERITAGE: FLORA IN PLACE NAMES
A record of survival in the Gammon Ranges

- Dorothy Tunbridge

Encoded in aboriginal place names is a record of what was significant to the people who lived out their life over the land bearing those names. In this paper I comment on the prominence of flora in Adnyamathanha place names, noting that those names are a record of plants which contributed to the survival of the people over centuries of living off the land, other plants being virtually disregarded in place naming.

The following comments relate to a recent study the author has undertaken, on place names in the Gammon Ranges National Park and immediate environs, in the Northern Flinders Ranges. The study aimed at being a complete record of all known (aboriginal) place names in the region, and the meanings of those names. There were about 200 recorded in all. About 15% of all different place names incorporated the name of a plant or a plant product, and in virtually every case, the plant concerned was significant to aboriginal survival, that significance being chiefly dietary.

The motivation for specific nomenclature incorporating plant names is not always apparent, especially today: the environment has been greatly altered by the introduction of exotic species of flora and fauna, and as well, oral tradition is losing the place it once had, with reference to history, mythology and other aspects of the culture. In most cases, the name appears to have arisen - as we would expect - simply because the plant is there. The name may refer to a single plant, as in the case of Iavurtu (see below), or it may refer to a clump as in the case of Marikawawawarrinha (see below). The plant (or plant product) indicated by the name may also have mythological significance, as in the case of Nguri-yandharlanha (see below).

Below we look at a number of plant terms in Yura Ngawarl (the language of the Adnyamathanha people), and discuss their inclusion in the inventory of place names in the Gammon Ranges National Park and environs. Map

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1 Some names are repeated. For instance, almost all creeks take their name(s) from the waterhole(s) through which they pass, hills may be named for an important nearby waterhole, and so on.
references are given at the end of the paper.

1. Wida: *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* (Red River Gum)

    By far the most spectacular tree in the northern Flinders Ranges is the Red River Gum. It stands above all the trees, and from the air, marks out the snakelike course of the creeks. Not unimportant is the shade these tall trees provide, particularly in the harsh summer of the region. Wida are very individual in their shape. Because of this and their size, they are ideal landmarks. One such landmark is Wida Murrumurru (= Rough or Crusty Gum Tree). Murrumurru refers to its rough surface. This beautiful tree stands on its own near Italowie Creek, and is thought to have been specially named simply because it is an obvious landmark. Varndapanha Wida is another such gum tree. It stands very tall, and is somewhat alone in the area where it is located. The derivation of the name is not certain. Varnda are small stones used in a ground oven. Generally they are white creek stones. These would be plentiful in the nearby creek. The affix -apa means 'young' or 'small', or it could be a contraction of yapa, 'way, road'. The name could also be related to Parnkarla 'parndanna': a kind of gum scrub (Schürmann 1844): although it is a single tree, there are lots of River Gums in the vicinity. The name 'Varndapanha' was also given to a soak not very far away. Varndapanha Wida is a significant place for Adnyamathanha people, and was a site for certain important ritual observances.

    Beside its importance as a shade tree and as an obvious landmark, the wida yielded certain edible products. One such is madlyu, a gum. To obtain it, the bark was cut away, then a scraper (axe or flint knife, or indeed any suitably shaped rock) was used to scratch the tree. A white liquid came out, and this was scraped down into a dish. It thickened of its own accord, and was rolled into a ball. The ball was sucked, and when all the flavour was exhausted, the residue was spat out rather than swallowed. On the Arkaroooola road, just north of Balcanooona, there stands a Red River Gum which bears scars on two sides from having had gum removed in this way.

1 Parnkarla /p-/ corresponds to Yura Ngawarla /v-/. For example 'Parnkarla' in Yura Ngawarla is 'Varngarla'. Parnkarla was the language of Eyre Peninsula as far south as Port Lincoln, and was very closely related to the dialects of the northern Flinders Ranges region. Thus it is often a good guide to Yura Ngawarla etymology.

2 This tree was pointed out to the author by Lynch Ryan, who as a child had obtained gum from it – the origin of the scars on it which remain to this day.
Another useful product from the wida tree is warlpundi (or, according to some, warlpurndi, warlpinda). When the gum tree loses its bark, this honey is found underneath. It is the colour of bees' honey, and is very sweet. It drops down in lumps like beads. Apparently it is signalled by liquid dropping onto the rocks below a month or two beforehand. One of the crossings on McKinlay Creek between Nepabunna and Balcanoona is named after this product: Warlpundakunha.

There is another term, urdla, which is said to be 'honey' from the gum tree as well as from the mallee tree (madlha = Eucalyptus oleosa and E. socialis) and the bullock bush (minara = Heterodendrum oleifolium). It is incorporated in the name Wirtiurdla, known in English as 'Weetootla', applied to one of the most beautiful gorges in the Gammon Ranges National Park. The name is also given to a spring in the same area. 'Wirti' means 'tree'. The name may be pronounced 'wirti urdla', or (following the rule for compounding in Yura Ngawaria) as 'wirtuurdlia', that is, with a lengthened middle vowel - the motivation for the English pronunciation/spelling.

We note in passing that it is possible that the name of the town Oodla Wirra was correctly 'Urdla Wida', Honey (giving) Gum Tree. It is equally possible that it was 'Udlha Wida', Lone Gum Tree, however. Both the retroflexed 'dl' (i.e. 'rdl' in our orthography) and the lamino-dental 'dl' (i.e. 'dlh') would sound like the English 'dl' (i.e. 'dl' in our orthography) to the average (non-linguist) English speaker.

On the road bordering the western side of the Gammon Ranges National Park stand two gum trees, one on either side of the road. They, and the place around them, are called Vurdli Wida (= Star Gum Trees). Because of the individuality of gum trees, noted earlier, it is easy to personify them. Prior to the placing of the road between the Vurdli Wida, these two gum trees were thought of as a

1 The significance of -(a)ku- in this word is not known. -nha is the suffix occurring on most proper names in citation form.

2 I have not yet been able to determine the exact semantic relationship between warlpundi and urdla. One person has suggested they may have been synonymous. It is hoped that current research, to document all flora terms with the uses of the plants they refer to, will determine the semantic boundaries.

3 Cleland & Johnston (1939) point out that 'Wirra' of 'Oodla Wirra' refers to the Gum Tree, but offered no translation for 'Oodla'. I assume they obtained their information from an aboriginal informant.
couple (ardupa). The separating of the couple by the road was seen as symbolic of the breaking of marriage, and led to the giving of the name Vurdli Wida, for the reasons outlined below.

Vurdli in this name is understood to refer specifically to the morning star. It is said that if one looks at the morning star, one will separate from one's spouse. Looking at the morning star is symbolic of breaking it in two. When a man 'camps' with another man's wife it is said of him: 'Vurdli wakadinganyalu'. (= He is breaking the (morning) star). Persistence in such behaviour would lead to the throwing away of the firestick, the giving of which to a couple is the sign that they are married. (Note however that traditionally if a man camped with a woman whom he called 'artuna' (= designated wife), whether married to her or not, he was within the law.)

It would appear, then, that the present name of this place, and specifically of the two trees, dates from the making of the road.

There is another interesting pair of gum trees in the Park. While the trees themselves do not appear to have been given a specific name, they were very significant for Adnyamathanha people. They are located at a waterhole called Milyaru Wayakanha (which name probably means 'dodging the wind' or 'wind X' where 'X' is a tabooed word). The gum trees stand just a few feet apart in the creek, and are pocked all over. It is said that if on a hot day one goes and hits them with a stick or a stone or something with which to cut the bark open, a cool change will come, often accompanied by a big dust storm. The marks on the trees indicate the number of times relief has been sought from the hot summer conditions often experienced in the Northern Flinders Ranges.

2. Urtil: Santalum acuminatum (Native Peach)

Two places in the Gammon Ranges National Park are named after the native peach, urti. One of these is Urtil Yarkku (= Peach tree standing straight up, Straight Peach). Presumably it was named after a particular urti tree. It is a spring, and is known in English as 'Peach Spring'. More recent maps have removed the name, presumably because (as we discovered) it was incorrectly located on earlier maps. The documenting of the Yura Ngawarla

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1 Ardupa is a married couple or a couple who have been designated as artuna-marni (wife-husband) to each other. Although I did not record it, the prior name of the trees and the place would probably have been Widaardupa.

2 Waya- = to dodge, go around. -ka? It may be that originally the name referred to the fact that at this place the wind was turned around, but grammatically it is difficult to extract this meaning given our present knowledge of the language.
name of the spring, and in particular of the creek which flows through it, which (as is usual) takes its name from the spring, enabled us to verify the proper location of the spring, which had been placed in the right position on the wrong creek, as it were.

The other location with a name incorporating urti is Urtinha Yukari, the north wall of Benbonyathe Hill. The name means 'Lone Peach Tree', and presumably refers to a particular single tree.

The urti tree was very significant for Adnyamathanha people, and is still popular today in the Flinders Ranges with both aboriginal people and Europeans, as a dessert fruit (particularly when made into a pie). Earlier the fruit was eaten raw—both the skin and the flesh. The kernel of the stone was also eaten. Urti stones were used for making necklaces. Urti fruit was dried, too, and stored for future use, when it was soaked in water for the purpose of making a refreshing drink. Presumably the reconstituted fruit was also eaten.

Even today when the knowledge of the location of food in the wild is not crucial to survival, people know where the urti trees are. It is not at all surprising the tree in the inventory of place names.

3. Iga: Capparis mitchelli (Native Orange)

One of the most significant fruit trees in the northern Flinders Ranges is the native orange, iga. The tree stands out from other trees and shrubs in the region because of its rich dark green colour. In the Flinders Ranges it is found to the north of Moolawatana, around Paralana Hot Springs and at a place called Yadhilinha (location) between Paralana and Parabana in Wooltana. In the Park it is found in Weetootla and Italowie Gorges, and southwards as far as Wirrealpa. (These locations were given as being the main ones for the region. There may also be iga in other locations in the area.) The iga tree is traditionally regarded by the Adnyamathanha as being locationally coextensive with themselves. Indeed, in mythology iga trees are the

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1 A creek takes the name of a spring from that spring downstream, until the next waterhole or other significant geographical feature, where it will pick up its next name.

2 I am uncertain as to whether there is today a single peach tree in either location named after the urti.
Adnymathanha people. The original home of the iga, it is said, is Italowie Gorge. At one time they went as far south as Baratta, according to the myth, but were sent back to live at Italowie.

Their western boundary - and presumably that of the Adnymathanha (= 'hills people') - is marked by one particular iga tree, after which lavurtu is named. The name means 'Shady Orange Tree'. Ia is an old word for iga!, and vurtu means 'shady tree'. This tree is located on the south side of Copley Road, up on the hill (see map reference). It is said that there are no iga trees west of this one - and that may well be the case, at least at this latitude. (There are Native Orange trees elsewhere in South Australia, both east of the Flinders Ranges and in the Eyre Peninsula region, but I do not know their distribution in these areas (Jessop 1984).)

This demarcation of Adnymathanha by the bounds of a particular species is not unique, as Tindale points out, citing as one example the fact that the Kaurna called the Ngadjuri 'peppermint gum forest people (Wir:meju), since their range largely coincided with the (main) distribution of the Eucalyptus odorata (Tindale 1974:135).

4. Marlka: Acacia aneura (Mulga)

The English name for this renowned Australian tree derives from the word in Yura Ngawarla (and also in Ngadjuri and Dieri (Berndt & Vogelsang 1941:7)). Note however that the Yura Ngawarla (and no doubt Ngadjuri and probably Dieri) term has a retroflexed 'l' (i.e. 'rl').

The marlka trees have had many uses. Today it is best known as the favoured wood for many tourist items! This is because it is both hard and attractive. It was used by the Adnymathanha (and many aboriginal people) for making weapons and digging implements such as the atha (digging stick), aya (small spear), wardlatha (large spear), wadna (boomerang), wirri mutyatya (wooden waddy) and mun-gu wirri (the 'killer' waddy).

Of the various tree seeds which were used by the Adnymathanha in the diet, the marlka seed is said to be 'the best'. The seeds were first of all placed in the

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1 This point is particularly interesting linguistically. Iga is one of the words in the language which manifests a contrastive [g] (iga contrasts with iga 'heap'), therefore necessitating the recognition of two distinct phonemes /g/ and /k/ - unusual in Australian languages. Although there are other instances of the cooccurrence of the two vowels /i/ and /a/ in the language, it is possible that /g/ may have been inserted here to prevent the existence of a purely vocalic word brought about by the loss of the initial consonant, probably /th/.
wooden dish, yarldu, with hot ash, in order to cook them. When they were cooked, the ash was blown out of the yarldu, and the seeds which remained were then ground between two grinding stones (wadla). The flour could then be used for making a damper.

The western arm of the Italowie Creek system commences at a saddle called Yurimbi Warldu (warldu = saddle), and is called Marlkarawawawarrinha Vari. The creek bears this name downstream as far as Italowie Gorge. It means:

marlka: 'mulga'
wawa-: reduplicated part of the word
wawarri: 'long'
-nha: suffix on names
vari: creek

The reduplication may either underline the height of the trees, or the number of trees which may have been there.

Another place in the region takes its name from this tree: Marlku warldu (= Mulga Saddle). It is located on the road from Mt Serle to Angepens homestead, a few metres past the turn-off towards Copley Road. Earlier this low saddle was called Madlha Warldu (= Mallee Saddle!) when there were mallee trees there. These are remembered because people used to obtain 'honey' from them. A change in vegetation has resulted in a change of name.

5. **Adlyu**: *Myoporum montanum* (Myrtle)

This tree bears edible fruit. Its name is incorporated into the place name Adlyuvundhu (Awi), meaning 'Full of Myrtles (Waterhole)'. 'Vundhu' means 'filled'.

6. **Arta**: *Xanthorrhoea quadrangulata* (Yacca. Also Grass Tree, Blackboy)

The name arta occurs in the name of the last (eastern) hill in the Campbell Bald Hill Range, Artawarlapnha (Vambata) (= Yacca Rubbish (Hill)). Warlpa is the term for dead wood, brush etc., the 'rubbish' which is falls on the ground - and which is often piled up in the creeks in times of flood; -nha is the suffix occurring on proper names.

The arta tree had a number of uses. The spine

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1 *Eucalyptus socialis* and *E. oleosa* are both known as madlha.
was used as a matchstick (ura). It was sharpened to a point, and a hole was made in another, larger spine. Powdered bark or a dry leaf was placed over the hole, and the point of the smaller spine was stuck into it. The smaller one was rotated round and back in the hole until the friction caused sparks which ignited the tinder.

The spine had a medicinal purpose also: it could be burnt so that the smoke could be inhaled to get rid of a cold. The flowers yield a very tasty honey. A strong adhesive gum was also obtained from the arta tree. It was black and 'like putty'. Mountford described the mounting of an axehead in a split stick using this gum (artavuka): it was tied into the split with string, then stuck with yacca gum, the gum being heated in the fire and worked into place with the fingers.

7. Ilha: Maireana sedifolia (Blue bush)

Ilha is part of the name 'Ilhaurtunha' (ilha + urtu + -nha), which has somehow come to be known in English as 'Illinawortina' (acquiring an extra syllable)\(^2\), and is the site of some old ruins. (The latter form has also been adopted for the name of a map of the area.) Urtu means 'hole, hollow'. 'Ilhaurtunha', then, is 'Saltbush hollow'. There are few if any Ilha bushes growing there today, but it seems that there were in days gone by.

At this stage we know of no direct use of the ilha by aboriginal people. The berries were not eaten, but they were known to be good 'emu tucker', and of course the emu was eaten. The berries were also known to be a dye (termed ilha ary), and although to date I have no record of its use, the existence of the term suggests the possibility that it had some significance, as did several other plant dyes.

8. Ngandyu: Eremophila alternifolia (Eremophila)

Nepouie Range is named after this bush: Ngandyu-kunha. (The significance of -ku- is uncertain; -nha is the suffix on proper names.) Ngandyu flowers were sucked for their nectar. The term may also be equivalent of Cleland and Johnston's 'langdu' which they identified as E. sturtii, noting that the nectar was used (Cleland and Johnston 1939).\(^3\)

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1 The term artavuka, which clearly derived from arta, is also applied to gum extracted from the *Myoporum platycarpum*. 'Vuka' is not known outside this compound.

2 Taplin recorded the name as 'Illawortina' in 1879 (p.87). The mistake seems to have arisen since, among Europeans.

3 'Langdu' is inaccurate, since no Yura Ngawarl word (unless borrowed from English) commences with 'l'.

10.
Place names in the Park include several other plant-related products. One of these is nguri, a term covering the gum obtained from several species of wattle trees, *Acacia victoriae* (min-ga), *A. rivalis* (also called nguri) and *A. oswaldii* (ulka). This gum is picked off the tree and sucked. It may also be stored. The term is part of the place name Nguriyandharlanha, 'the special place (yandha) of nguri'. In mythology, a supply of nguri was stored in a cave at Nguriyandharlanha. (This place is also known as Davis Spring.)

The northernmost hill on Nepouie Range is known as Awadinha, and takes its name from awadi, 'lerp, manna'. The motivation for the name is uncertain. It is possible, however, that it came from the presence of awadi on the Red River Gums at Nipaawi, the spring at its foot.

The place known in English as Muckaloodna Well, on the Lake Frome side of the Park, derives its name from Makarldudannah Uدارندو, the name of the soak (udardnudu) over which the well was presumably made. Makarlu is mulga 'apple' - insect gall which appears on the mulga tree (marlka: see 4, above). I am uncertain as to the derivation of -udna-²; -nha of course is the proper name suffix. There are not many mulga in the area today, but there may well have been in earlier times. These 'apples' were a source of food to aboriginal people, probably including the Adnyamathanha (Cribb & Cribb 1975).

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It would be erroneous to conclude that the plants which are referred to in the place names of the Gammon Ranges National Park are those which were the most significant to the Adnyamathanha people and their forbears, although they would certainly be among them. What our data do seem to show is that plant terms used in place names refer to plants which were utilised. As we encounter other plant names in place names, we may well suspect that those plants had utilitarian value, even if knowledge of their utilisation is lost.

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1 The English term for the range, Nepouie, is taken from the name of the spring on its northern end, Nipaawi, meaning 'Flat Rock (nipa) Spring (awi)'. It is a permanent waterhole.

2 The compound would have been makarlu + (C)udna where C is a consonant. The final vowel of markarlu and the initial consonant (C) of the second segment are lost in compounding.

3 In actual fact, the plants discussed in this paper represent only a small percentage of the inventory of utilised plants of the Gammon Ranges region.
A Postscript

The incorporation of plant terms in place names is of more than linguistic and ethnographic importance. Place names may encode ecological history. While the name of a place may have changed as the plant motivating the name has been replaced (see item 4. above), for the most part places retain their name long after the plant concerned has disappeared. In the Gammon Ranges region the introduction of exotic flora and fauna and subsequent grazing and digging for water have all contributed to alter markedly the nature of the ecosystem.

In place names we encounter evidence regarding the structure of the pre-European ecosystem of the region. Other aspects of ethnography also help to build up the picture of the environment in which aboriginal people lived out their lives - and very successfully at that!. The relationship between places mentioned in this study and the plants referred to in their names, has not yet been studied in great depth. It is mentioned here as a reminder that the recording of aboriginal place names is more than a linguistically and ethnographically interesting exercise: it may also open to us a window on our environment as it was, perhaps helping us to understand the processes which have shaped it, and those which could reshape parts of it to restore them to their earlier form.

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1 I recently completed a linguistic-ethnographic study of mammals of the Gammon Ranges which revealed a great deal about the pre-European mammal situation there. A similar study on flora is in train.
MAP REFERENCES

The references given are for 1:50,000 topographic series maps. References are given for place names in the order in which they are discussed in the text.

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A brief note on orthography: All underlined words in the text are in Yura Ngawarla orthography. Consonants or consonant clusters followed by 'h' are lamino-dental, followed by 'y' are lamino-palatal, and preceded by 'r' are retroflexed. When 'd' is between vowels it is pronounced like the Spanish 'r'; 'rr' is pronounced as in Spanish (trilled). 'U' is as in 'put', 'a' is as in the word 'a' except after 'v' when it is as in 'and'. 'I' is as in 'tin'. 'Ng' is pronounced as in English (e.g.'sing') and may occur word initially. When it is hyphenated as in 'min-ga' (Acacia victoriae), the two letters are pronounced separately. Other letters have much the same pronunciation as in English.

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13.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author was assisted by a number of Adnyamathanha people over a long period of time, when the data on which this paper is based were assembled. Some of that assistance was given during the research for the works 7, 8 and 9 below. The helpers were Annie Coulthard, Lynch Ryan, the late Morris Johnson, Gertie Johnson and Violet Wilton. The documentation of place names was carried out under contract to the (then) Heritage Conservation Branch, Department of Environment & Planning, SA and Australian National Parks & Wildlife Service. Other data were obtained with assistance from the SA Dept. of Education, the Australian National University and the Commonwealth Department of Education.

Written sources of information used were:

BERNDT, R.M. & VOGELSANG, T. (1941) 'Comparative Vocabularies of the Ngadjuri and Dieri Tribes, South Australia', TRSSA Vol. 65(1)


CORBETT, David (Gen.Ed.) (1980) A field guide to the Flinders Ranges, Rigby


MOUNTFORD-SHEARD COLLECTION, THE, Libraries Board of South Australia, Notebook 30. Used with permission. (Material collected 1937-1942)

SCHÜRMANN, C.W. (1844) Vocabulary of the Parnkalla language spoken by the natives inhabiting the western shores of Spencer's Gulf. Thomas, Adelaide

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS (Contd)


TUNBRIDGE, Dorothy (1985) *Artefacts of the Flinders Ranges, Pipa Wangka, Port Augusta*

TUNBRIDGE, Dorothy (1985) 'Language as Heritage: Vityurna (dried meat) and other stored food among the Adnyamathanha', *JASSA, Vol.23, No.7*


**TRSSA:** Transactions of the Royal Society of South Australia

**JASSA** Journal Anthropological Society of SA Inc. Adelaide