

Place Name SUMMARY (PNS) 4.4.3/03

KURTANDILLA

(last edited: 24/1/17)

Abstract

The Kurna name of the campsite and waterhole on Sellick's Creek at the mouth of Old Sellick's Hill Road.

It was first recorded in 1831 as "Cutandilla" by Collet Barker's search party, probably from the Aboriginal woman 'Sally' (Kalinga or 'Sarah', later known as Sally Walker) and her father 'Condoy', whom they met at Cape Jervis after Barker's death at the Murray Mouth.

In 1839 Louis Piesse recorded it as 'Coortandillah' from Kurna guides during the first surveys of the area (later respelling it 'Kurtandilla').

The suffix *-illa* is the Kurna locative 'at'; but the meaning of the root *KurtandV* is unknown.

It was a strategic waterhole site near the main Kurna travel route across the range at Mt Terrible Gully into Myponga Valley.

Other place-names given to Capt Barker's search party probably by George Bates and Sally were 'Ponkepurringa' (see PNS 4.2/5); Wangkondilla (see PNS 4.4.1/3).

<i>Coordinates</i>	-35.329972° Latitude, 138.473032° Longitude.
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Language Information

<i>Meaning</i>	Unknown: 'at <i>KurtandV</i> , place of <i>kurtandV</i> '
<i>Etymology</i>	<i>KurtandV</i> [last vowel unknown, meaning unknown] + <i>-illa</i> 'at'
<i>Notes</i>	
<i>Language Family</i>	Thura-Yura: 'Kurna'.
<i>KWP Former Spelling</i>	Kurtandilla
<i>KWP New Spelling 2010</i>	Kurtantilla
<i>Phonemic Spelling</i>	/kurtaNTila/
<i>Pronunciation</i>	"Ku-rtan-dilla":
<i>Pronunciation tips</i>	Stress the 1 st syllable; secondary stress on the 3 rd ; 'u' as in 'put' (not 'ur' as in 'curt'); sound the 'r' slightly ('rt' is probably a retroflex t with the tongue curled back); every 'a' as in Maori 'haka'.

Main source evidence

Date	1833
Original source text	“ Cutandilla ” [valley leading into ‘Hay’s Range’].
Reference	maps in Charles Sturt 1833, <i>Two Expeditions into the Interior of Southern Australia</i> 1833: Vol. 1 ‘Map of the Discoveries’, and Vol.2: 228.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	Kalinga (Sally), George Bates, John Kent 1831

Date	Oct 1839
Original source text	“Camp, Coortandillah , near Aldinga”.
Reference	Louis Piesse letter 18/10/1839, <i>Adelaide Guardian</i> , reprinted in the <i>SA Colonist</i> Vol. 1 No.19, 1840: 296.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	Kurna survey guides

Date	Oct 1839
Original source text	“ camp ”, “gully” [on Sections 668 and 666 on Sellick’s Creek]; “Present track from Adelaide to Encounter Bay / October 23 rd 1839” [on Section 675 at Mt Terrible Gully].
Reference	Sketch map in Richard Counsel 1839, Field Book 102, GNU: 42-4.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	

Date	1844
Original source text	“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.... Keeping still along the foot of the range from Mr Colville’s, the following [rivulets] are the most important:– 1 st . The glen Perreminkamin-kungga. 2dly. Wilyahowkingga; 3dly. Mullawerungga; 4thly. Kurtandilla ; and 5thly. Mt Terrible Gully”.
Reference	‘L.P.’ [Louis Piesse], <i>Observer</i> 13/4/1844: 7a, 7c.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	Kurna survey guides 1839

Discussion: THE CAMPSITE AT THE PASS:

BARKER and STURT: 'CUTANDILLA'.

'Cutandilla' was one of three Kurna place-names recorded on two maps published by Charles Sturt in 1833, even though at that time he had not visited any land west of the Murray lakes.¹

In this first book he was mainly concerned with his voyage down the River Murray; but, publishing only four years before official settlement in SA and looking to the burgeoning interest in Gulf St Vincent as a potential site for a colony, he added some extra material about that. It had been given to him in Sydney by the party under Kent and Davis which searched for Collet Barker in 1831 immediately after his death at the Murray Mouth. They had consulted with a group of Aboriginal people whom they found at Cape Jervis including 'Sally' and her father 'Condoy', later joined by Kangaroo Island sealer George Bates.²

All three of the place-names are located on the northwest of "*Hay's Range*", which sketchily represents our South Mt Lofty Ranges. There is not much detail on this small-scale map, but 'Cutandilla' is mapped as a valley leading deeply into the range ESE of "*Waccondilla Cr*" (The Washpool),³ and just across the hills from the headwaters of an "*extensive valley*" (the Hindmarsh River).

Barker's party had not visited 'Cutandilla' either. From their camp at 'Ponkepurringa' (the Onkaparinga River) they had explored north to Mt Lofty, then re-embarked and sailed south beyond the plains to anchor at Carrickalinga and cross the range there. Both 'Cutandilla' and the "*fine valley*" a little south of it⁴ could only have been hearsay to them, no doubt from Sally and Bates.

All three names are clearly Kurna in form. 'Cutandilla' fits the standard Kurna rule in which a three-syllable root word must take the locative *-illa* ('at') instead of the more common *-ngga*. Sturt's first syllable 'Cut-' might have represented the sound of the English word 'cut'; but later evidence shows that what he meant was *kut-* as in 'put', and that the vowel Barker's party heard was more like the one in 'lured' or the German pronunciation of the name 'Kurt'.

¹ Sturt 1833, *Two Expeditions into the Interior of Southern Australia* 1833: Vol. 1 'Map of the Discoveries', and Vol.2: 228.

² \For more of this story see PNS 4.02/05 'Ponkepurringa' and my history *Feet On the Fleurieu* (in progress). This Sally was later known as Sally Walker, wife of the Kangaroo Islander William Walker, but her real name was Kalinga.

³ See PNS 4.4.1/3 Wangkondilla.

⁴ Myponga valley.

THE 1839 SURVEYS: RICHARD COUNSEL and LOUIS PIESSE.

Louis Piesse was a member of John McLaren's team during their months in the bush doing the first surveys of 'District C' south of Adelaide. On October 18th 1839 he sat by the fire at a "camp, Coortandillah, near Aldinga"⁵ copying a Kurna vocabulary and place-names which he had been collecting from their guides, and addressed them with a covering letter to the editor of the *Adelaide Guardian*.⁶

Strangely he did not include a section number for 'Coortandillah' as he did for several other names. But five years later he published a tour guide in the *Observer* under the pen-name 'L.P.', and had this to say of the foothills leading southwest from Willunga:

*Surface water now becomes scarce; and, indeed, this is a great drawback to the Aldinga Plains which now lie before the traveller. In the winter almost every glen or ravine has water in it; but the little rivulets soon run to waste, and after a few warm days they dry up. Keeping still along the foot of the range from Mr Colville's, the following are the most important:— 1st. The glen Perreminkamin-kungga. 2dly. Wilyahowkingga; 3dly. Mullawerungga; 4thly. Kurtandilla; and 5thly. Mt Terrible Gully: Here the Ironstone Range strikes the Gulf at Aldinga Bay, but the range does not die away.... but continues along the coast forming steep cliffs; with such breakneck ravines and gullies that on my once attempting to coast it down, I found my courage cooled, and took over the range to follow it down on the other side in Myponga. We have now arrived at Aldinga Bay, or Deception Bay as it was called by Colonel Light.*⁷

His spelling of the name had changed; since 1839 he had clearly read with profit Teichelmann and Schürmann's Kurna vocabulary and grammar published in 1840.⁸

We have precise testimony from draughtsman Richard Counsel's detailed field sketch maps made during these surveys.⁹ Dating one page "Oct 23rd 1839" (five days after Piesse's letter), he marked a "camp" in Section 668 on the north side of a small creek as it emerges, briefly widening into a narrow lagoon, from a wooded gully in the scarp to the east; the creek then proceeds due west through a "gully" in "open plains" towards a "sandy beach" on 665. These details coincide exactly with today's Victory Hotel and the gully of Sellicks Creek running parallel to Sellick's Beach Road.¹⁰ Southward from Kurtandilla, Piesse's next water source was Mt Terrible Gully, which,

⁵ He meant 'Aldinga Plains', not the later site of the town: see PNS 4.4.1/1 Ngalingga.

⁶ The letter has survived as a reprint in the *SA Colonist* Vol. 1 No.19. 1840: 296.

⁷ 'L.P.' [Piesse] in *Observer* 13/4/1844: 7c.

⁸ CG Teichelmann and CW Schürmann 1840, *Outlines of a Grammar, Vocabulary and Phraseology of the Aboriginal Language of SA*, Adelaide.

⁹ Counsel 1839, Field Book 102: 42-4; cp. Diagram Book, Hundred of Willunga, p.4 (derived from FB 102), GNU.

¹⁰ However, the gully today is probably much wider and steeper than in the 1830s. It was probably not the 'ravine' which so hindered the early drays (see 'The Bullockies' Barrier' below). It has been said that the current heavily-eroded gully

being 2½ km and a couple of steep gullies further south than Section 668, was not a candidate as a base camp for the Aldinga Plains. There can be no doubt that 668, the only camp marked by Counsel in the vicinity, and dated so close to the penning of the letter, was the ‘Coortandillah’ / ‘Kurtandilla’ from which Piesse wrote.

We associate the area now with a majesty of bald scarps and foothills, but it seems likely that in the 1830s this was much less prevalent. Perhaps the grassy hilltops were confined to areas where soils were formed over slate.¹¹ Probably there was a mosaic of grassland and forest managed and to some extent created by the Kurna people with fire.¹² In November 1837 Hutchinson recorded “*very fine grass on the top of the hills*” in this vicinity,¹³ and two years later Counsel marked “*bare hill*” twice on spurs immediately south of his camp; but his tree dots were almost continuous along the foothills for some distance northwest of it, where the neighbouring sections alternated large patches of “*forest*” or “*lightly wooded*” land with some “*open plain*”. This was no doubt *Mulla-wirra*, the ‘dry forest’ homeland of ‘King John’.¹⁴ All gone.

A KAURNA PASS.

What part did *Kurtandilla* play in the network of routes between the Kurna on the Aldinga-McLaren Plains, their southern Kurna neighbours from Myponga southward, and their Ramindjeri allies at Encounter Bay?

There is plentiful evidence that in the late 1830s many early foot travellers were taken by Aboriginal guides over the range near Sellick’s Hill using familiar routes.¹⁵

They knew several different passes. Gentleman surveyor Young Bingham Hutchinson complained:

*Saturday Dec.16 [1837]... Crossed the mountain range by a new pass pointed out by the natives, but which I consider rather worse than the one which we used when outward bound.*¹⁶

originated from a plough furrow (Gardiner in E Wollaston [ed.] 1978, *Aldinga-Sellick’s Beach Scrub: a report*, Nature Conservation Society of SA: 12). This is doubtful as an origin for the whole gully; but maybe the furrow contributed to the runoff and eventually merged with the pre-existing Kurtandilla gully.

¹¹ Governor Gawler travelled and assessed this at the beginning of 1839: “The surface above the slate is *always grassy* [italics sic]; extensive sheep pastures are upon it” (G Gawler 19/1/1839, ‘Notes made during a Journey into the Interior’, in Thomas *SA Almanac 1839*: 46).

¹² See Bill Gammage 2011, *The Biggest Estate on Earth: how Aborigines made Australia*, Allen & Unwin; Gammage 2012, ‘The Adelaide District in 1836’, in R Foster and P Sendziuk, *Turning Points: Chapters in South Australian History*, Adelaide: Wakefield Press. See also my PNS 1/01 Yarna (forthcoming 2013).

¹³ YB Hutchinson 1838, ‘*A hasty account of an expedition to Encounter Bay*’, PRG 1013/1/4/2: 3, SLSA.

¹⁴ See PNS 4.4.3/4 Mulla-wirra.

¹⁵ Some of the sealers from Kangaroo Island also knew the route. No doubt some of them had been shown it by their Aboriginal women or by negotiable men like Bates’ contact ‘Kondoy’.

The route south from Willunga and across the scarp remained invisible to most settlers without an Aboriginal guide as late as 1839:

*25/7/1839... From [Willunga] 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.*¹⁷

Probably they were not following the Aboriginal routes on the Aldinga plains which utilized the resources of the land, but were trying to get from the Willunga police station to the pass by a straight line near the foothills, as outlined by Piesse.

Beyond the range the variation in route seems to have been less (at least by the end of a year's settlement), with a well-trodden path. Already in November 1837 Hutchinson found that "Ever since we passed the range we followed a beaten track which took us all the way to Encounter Bay".¹⁸

THE BULLOCKY'S BARRIER.

For Englishmen there were two memorable markers of this journey south.

First they universally complained of difficulties with their bullock drays on the steep grade of the pass. Light's deputy surveyor Finnis named the summit 'Mt Terrible' for this reason in April 1838:

*In travelling to Encounter Bay I passed over a spur of the Mt. Lofty range which I called Mt. Terrible, from the difficulty I experienced in getting a bullock dray across the range. While labouring to gain the summit the dray rolled over and scattered tents and stores on the steep, sloping ground. On this journey I was much interested in witnessing the skill of the bullock driver in crossing a narrow saddle of the range. It had rained all the morning and the necks of the pole bullocks got chafed, which rendered them impatient of the yoke. There was nothing for it but to change the bullocks. In a narrow pass, wide enough only for the dray to travel over, he stopped his team and then and there changed the leaders into polers, with scarcely room for a bullock to turn. He succeeded by dint of skill and temper in effecting his object. After re-loading our dray with its scattered cargo, we descended into the beautiful vale of the Myponga and travelled onwards through a stringy-bark forest.*¹⁹

Today Mt Terrible is usually called Sellick's Hill.²⁰

¹⁶ YB Hutchinson 1838, *ibid.*: 8.

¹⁷ Clamor Schürmann, *Diaries*, translated from German by Hans Spoeri; unpublished typescript, Lutheran Archives, Adelaide: 62.

¹⁸ Hutchinson 1838, *ibid.*: 3.

¹⁹ BT Finnis, 'Extracts from the Reminiscences of Hon. Boyle Travers Finnis', PRG 527/1, SLSA: 12. Cp. his official account in *Southern Australian* 2/6/1838 p.4b.

²⁰ – even though William Sellick lived on the plains 4 km away from it on sections 425 and 430; he obtained the land grants here in 1847 (Manning 2006, *From Aaron Creek to Zion Hill*: 385).

In several records²¹ they also lamented a deep ravine at the bottom before the ascent. William Giles, another gentleman explorer, had trouble with it when he and William Randell went south on behalf of the SA Company in May 1838:

“3rd May... Found Mount Terrible so steep that we were obliged to leave the Bullock Cart, half way up the Hill.... 7th May... found the Cart safe where we left it on Mount Terrible, had great difficulty in getting it over the Ravine into Aldinga Plains – where we found no water”²².

They were accompanied on this trip by the energetic Pastor William Finlayson, whose alternative account gives us a flavour of the strangely mixed society which was tackling these colonial wilds:

Our guide to Encounter Bay was a man named Wilkins²³, a good bushman, who had more than once before accomplished this long difficult journey alone... We had a bullock team and driver with us, but the poor bullocks got so knocked up that we had to leave them and the driver halfway. The driver was awfully afraid of the natives, declaring to Wilkins that if he had a rope he would hang himself rather than be left alone; but we found him safe on our return, with balls and pieces of lead of various kinds laid out ready to shoot any native who might come near. He was an old Van Diemenian, and had seen the fearful things there between the whites and natives. These journeys were very pleasant upon the whole, but we sometimes had rain day and night. Mr Randell proved himself a good bushman, but Mr Giles was not fitted for the work.²⁴

The ravine was probably Mt Terrible Gully.²⁵

For the Aboriginal travellers these landscape features were incidents on a familiar journey. The range was perhaps a clan boundary, but a busy one. Interaction across the Ironstone Range here had been important traditionally, and became even more so after the settlement in Adelaide became a new focus for the dispossessed people not only from Kurna land but from Encounter Bay and the Lakes.²⁶

²¹ Hutchinson 1837, Giles 1838, Piesse 1844.

²² William Giles Journal, in Angas Papers PRG 174/1, microfilm Reel 3, SLSA: 1179-1180.

²³ William Wilkins was one of the Kangaroo Island sealers, and oral history identifies him as the husband of Kurna woman Nellie Raminyemmerin (= Mary Manatto [Munato]) – see Chittleborough et al (eds.) 2002, *Alas, for the Pelicans*, Adelaide, Wakefield Press. Like Cooper, he too probably learned the route from his Kurna wife.

²⁴ ‘Extracts, Jottings and Memoranda of William Finlayson’, in *Finlayson: a Family History*, Finlayson Book Committee 1987: 19-20.

²⁵ – as suggested by Hutchinson’s account, in which the ravine appears to be right at the beginning of the steep ascent: “Nov. 30 [1837]... *The dogs killed a kangaroo at the foot of the hills. Cut down a tree to drag behind the cart in order to descend into a very steep and strong ravine. On arriving at the bottom the bullocks leapt, cart and all, over a watercourse. The hill was here so very steep, that we unloaded the cart, and even then the bullocks cd make nothing of it*” (YB Hutchinson 1838, ‘A hasty account of an expedition to Encounter Bay’, PRG 1013/1/4/2: 3, SLSA).

²⁶ By the 1860s the Willunga Hill route was preferred, with a ration station set up for some years at the Willunga police station.

But when the bullock drays followed in the footsteps of the Kurna, bringing settlers with their families and belongings, such strenuous foot routes became ‘*execrable*’, ‘*a formidable obstacle*’, a ‘*damnable*’ and ‘*terrible*’ barrier against their expansion to the south.

Surveyor James Hawker reminisced: “The original Encounter Bay road was an execrable one, where it crossed the range – the name previous to Colonel Gawler’s arrival was Mount Damnable, but after was altered as Mount Terrible”.²⁷

Charles Sturt, remembering when he had arrived in 1839 to take temporary command of the country surveys, noted “...a hill, called Mt Terrible, almost of a conical shape, over the very summit of this, in the early stages of the colony, the road led to Encounter Bay; and I shall not forget the surprise I experienced, when going to that place, on finding I could not by any possibility avoid this formidable obstacle”.²⁸

ROUTES OVER THE RANGE.

The perceptive surveyor Louis Piesse wrote by far the most informative account:

The road to the Bay previously was over Mount Terrible to what is now called the Black Bridge in Myponga and thence over a very hilly country to the head of the Hindmarsh Valley... The old road²⁹ 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” [as on the Mt Compass stretch of the ‘new road’ over Willunga Hill] “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. Mount Terrible, though terrible in name, conveys no idea what a terrible pass it was with a dray; but those who have experienced it consider the name as no misnomer. First there was the ravine to pass at the foot of the Mount, and after that, the Mountain itself, which was a long heavy pull with several stony pinches – the usual way of passing was to unload and carry up the luggage by hand and leave an almost empty dray for bullocks... To the pedestrian tourist to whom a few miles is no object, I should still recommend the old road, as there is not so much sand and scrub as by the new road, and also from water being obtainable three or four times on the road.”³⁰

The northern section of the ‘*native pad*’ known to Piesse can be seen on Counsel’s Field Books of the 1839 surveys, and on the maps derived from them. These also show that in 1839 this route,

²⁷ James Hawker 1899, *Early Experiences in SA*, 1:39.

²⁸ Sturt 1849, ‘A Notice of... SA in 1847’, in *Narrative of an Expedition to Central Aust*, 2:224.

²⁹ By ‘the old road’ Piesse means the Mt Terrible route, as opposed to the ‘new track’ suggested by Sturt: up Willunga Hill and through dense scrub and the Great Sandy Basin (today’s Victor Harbor road through Mt Compass).

³⁰ *Observer* 16/3/1844: 7a.

and some version of its continuation south up Mt Terrible Gully to Myponga Valley, had been considered as part of a 'Proposed Road to Encounter Bay via Mt Terrible'. This was never built, but its northern approach – a diagonal from the bend of Main South Rd at Colville Rd, down across Justs Road at Sellick's Beach – was not abandoned until 1856.³¹

The '*Proposed Road*' ('to Encounter Bay', sometimes 'to Adelaide') is marked as a continuous line on the maps and field sketches. Close alongside it there is often the dotted line of a '*Present Track*' which a few times is described as a '*Native Track*'.³² More precise details are in Counsel's Field Books³³ and early maps of the adjacent area in the Hundred of Myponga.³⁴ Comparing these with the remnant road lines still visible on Google Earth images,³⁵ we see that the track stayed west of Justs Road, crossing Sellick's Creek but avoiding other steep gullies southwest of Kurtandilla where today's road uses embankments; then turned up Mt Terrible Gully on its north face in the vicinity of the modern bridge, crossing it about ½ km upstream; climbed either of two spurs of the next ridge south (above the parking bay on the main road), and descended towards the Black Bridge crossing of the Myponga River (at the Hindmarsh Tiers Rd intersection). We may assume that this was chosen as the nearest dray-able route to the '*native pad*' over the Kurtandilla pass.

There is a hint in the records that the original route 'native pad' may have been close to or even identical with what we now call the Old Sellicks Hill Road, which begins at Kurtandilla itself and joins Loud's Hill Rd near the summit of Mt Terrible; but proof of this would involve searching through old land titles.³⁶

Before the Willunga Hill road was properly made and even for some time after, some settlers beyond the scarp were using at least three other routes³⁷ – most likely also developed from other passes demonstrated by Kurna guides in the 1830s – which from their particular properties made shorter journeys. One climbed the ridge of Willunga Hill³⁸ up to 'The Crossroads' and into Pages

³¹ This road from Section 430 to 675/529 was closed on 17th April 1856, as marked on the 1909 Surveyor-General's map of the Hundred of Willunga used by Tindale (AA338/24/97).

³² See the McLaren map, 'Country South of Adelaide from O'Halloran Hill to Mt Terrible', London, Arrowsmith 1/9/1840, (C274, C803, and BRG 42/120/28, SLSA); and its Adelaide prototypes: Plan 6/11 and 6/13 (1839) (GNU), and C256 (1839) and C236 (1840) (SLSA). Also Diagram Book Hd Willunga pp.2-2 and 4-2 (GNU).

³³ FB 94: 52, 56, 58; and FB 102: 23, ?37, 42.

³⁴ Plans 6/12 [untitled]; and Ide/Baker 1840, 'Plan of 268 secs in the Vallies of the Myponga', 6/20 (GNU).

³⁵ e.g. on kaurnaplacenames.com.

³⁶ This road, with spectacular views at its summit near Mt Terrible, was opened in 1859 after a long political battle by John Norman; it was known to local supporters as the 'Victory Road' and Norman's victory was commemorated by the Victory Hotel at Kurtandilla. The road was finally closed to traffic in 2016. At the opening celebrations in 1859, John Norman said that as part of his labours in proposing this line to the Aldinga Council he had showed them that "*it was the old native track to Encounter Bay, which had been acknowledged by Colonel Gawler, and which was so marked in the first land grant taken out at Normanville by himself and his brother-in-law, Mr. [Septimane] Herbert*" (SA Register 17/3/1859: 2e, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/49901295>; thanks to Des Gubbin for showing me this reference). I leave it to others to follow up what may be discovered about Gawler's 'native track' in the maps of the original Normanville land grant of John Norman and Septimane Herbert.

³⁷ See Register 19/5/1856 p3f, and 24/5/1856: 3h.

³⁸ – prompting Piesse to remonstrate about Willunga Hill in 1844: "*The road is very imperfect on the range and but temporary; it is on the ridge of the spur whereas if the road was laid off on the side of the spur, proper levels being taken,*

Flat Road at what was then called Honeysuckle Flat. Another mounted the spur at Loud's Hill Road (where it is still prominently visible today from the plains) and approached Mt Terrible along the top of the range from the north.³⁹ Another with a gentler gradient came through McRae's property above the end of Culley Road, between Loud's Hill and Sellick's Hill.⁴⁰ Before the land was cleared these routes would all have involved much longer stretches of stringybark scrub behind the crest than the pass at Mt Terrible Gully, which circled around Counsel's two '*bare hills*'.

Even these settler routes tended to go 'straight up' the ridges and contain extremely steep stretches, such as the '*stony pinch*' near the crest of Loud's Hill; arousing long and bitter complaints from dray-loaders. Journalists were still mocking the hapless surveyors 90 years later for having taken these roads "*straight up over the hills with out any attempt being made to find an easy grade*".⁴¹ not realizing that the original surveyors were those who had little use for scrubby gullies as transit routes, the light-footed Kurna and Ramindjeri guides who had been entirely deleted from the story within about three years.

The same cultural disjunction – about the land and how to travel on it – had imprisoned the first settlers of Sydney behind the walls of the Blue Mountains until Blaxland and Wentworth realized that ridges not gullies were the way across.

KURTANDILLA IN CONTEXT.

On Sturt's map the little sketch of places on the range and west of it looks very much like an attempt to represent from hearsay a basic oral guide to southern routes between the Gulf coast and Encounter Bay (for Barker and Sturt, the approach to the Murray mouth).

The two routes which Barker's party had taken from Carrickalinga to the mouth and back were oriented around the Inman valley. They are represented on the map by a "flat and beautiful valley" marked right across the peninsula.

'Cutandilla' marks a large valley or gully leading into the range. This is part of the route from further north: for the purposes of Barker's search party, probably the answer to inquiries about how to cross from 'Ponkepurunga Cr' (the flood plain of the Onkaparinga River, with which Barker's party was familiar). On this route – the 'present track' recorded by Counsel and Piesse 8 years later – 'Waccondilla Cr' (The Washpool and Blue Lagoon) was not only an important place in its own

the rise would be so gradual as to be scarcely perceptible; but the cost would be such as we cannot at present afford" ('L.P.', *Observer*, 16/3/1844: 7b).

³⁹ The Loud's Hill route was described in detail by 'Old Colonist' 1851, reprinted in Yelland (ed.) 1983, *Colonists, Copper and Corn* (2nd Ed.): 26-7. Cp. Plan 6/20, and Diagram Books Hd Willunga Map 1 and Hd Myponga Map 1 (GNU).

⁴⁰ Both McRae's and Loud's routes are shown on Plan 12/10 [n.d., 1840s?] (GNU). The McRae road (between sections 542 and 544) is not visible on maps today.

⁴¹ *Chronicle* 8/6/1933: 47.

right⁴² but a lagoon landmark: very visible from a passing ship and no doubt observed by Barker as he sailed past the Aldinga Plains. It would also serve to orient the newcomer to the 'Cutandilla' gully and the other 'fine valley' of Myponga, strategic sites on his route which were less visible from the sea and not likely to be found accidentally.

This 'Cutandilla' might have been Mt Terrible Gully but for Piesse's evidence that Kurtandilla was a watered campsite north of it; and it is not impossible that the name could have applied to the whole area, or to a different feature nearby.

Mt Terrible was a tribal boundary according to Moorhouse: possibly the divide between the 'north country' and 'south country' of the Kurna-speaking people.⁴³

There is no known Kurna morpheme to fit the root of *Kurtandilla*. It is tempting to cite the verb *kurtandi*, 'to leave behind',⁴⁴ as a possible root which might also fit the location, a 'place of leaving behind' the homeland or clan as one crosses the range. But there are no other examples of a verb keeping its present-tense particle *-ndi* when used as a place-name; so that this gloss is not likely, and the meaning remains unknown.

If one was not proposing to head for the coast to camp and fish at the spring site on Sellick's Beach,⁴⁵ Kurtandilla was probably the most useful watered campsite at this geographical junction, only 1½ km east of the recorded track as it headed SSW straight up the lower slope towards Mt Terrible Gully at Section 675. On the Aldinga Plains in the 1830s, notoriously dry in summer, it was the last water before the big climb, as Samuel Stephens wrote to John Morphett in 1838:

*After passing Aldinga plains, there is a small waterhole [probably Kurtandilla campsite] to the left of the gully [Mt Terrible Gully] at which we usually cross, previous to ascending Mount Terrible, and this (with the exception of a small hole on the beach and before reaching the Salt Lagoon [the Washpool]) is the only water we have for many miles of Aldinga plains themselves, and the breadth of land thence to the Hills.*⁴⁶

The intermittent creeks listed by Piesse southwest from Willunga might be useful in winter but would involve a longer journey if one was coming from the Onkaparinga.

The area had been occupied in very ancient times. Tindale's map records a "Kartan implement found by FE Zeuner and NB Tindale 8 Dec 1961" just downstream on the Kurtandilla gully; a campsite near the mouth of the same gully at Sellick's Beach; and another on Section 655

⁴² See PNS 4.4.1/3 Wangkondilla.

⁴³ See PNS 1/2 Kawandilla and 1/3 Patpangga.

⁴⁴ – or 'to lie on the side'.

⁴⁵ For the beach spring site see PNS 4.04.01/04 'Witawali' and 4.04.01/06 Kauwi Ngalingga.

⁴⁶ Samuel Stephens letter to John Morphett 14/5/1838, in 'Reports Of Country Lands', BRG 42/51, SLSA. There were a couple of other waterholes further north: see PNS 4.4.1/1 Ngalingga.

immediately north of Kurtandilla.⁴⁷ A quartz quarry was found in the new Sellick's Hill road cuttings in 1969.⁴⁸

From the crest of this crossing one could go east to the Myponga valley and so towards Encounter Bay via the Hindmarsh Tiers (or possibly other routes) to the lower Hindmarsh Valley.⁴⁹

One could also go southwest to Myponga Beach⁵⁰ on a route which was used by Ngarrindjeri people as late as the 1930s: they "came from the Lakes and Point McLeay across to Normanville then along the coast to Sellicks Beach, where they stayed a while spearing strongfish, mulloway and other fish of the reef", and camped in Aldinga Scrub "on their way to obtain rations of blankets, food and so on from Adelaide."⁵¹

LATER.

Water or no water, there were plentiful supplies of a harder fluid in March 1859, when John Norman and his southern supporters toasted the long-awaited achievement of gentler grades for their bullock drays, opening the Victory Road with "a public holiday, a public procession and, it is scarcely needful to say, a public dinner" at a "new hostelry", the Norman's Victory hotel – after the wind had demolished their marquee.⁵²

It still stands at Kurtandilla, at the entrance to what we now call Old Sellick's Hill Road. Today only a few of the cars which speed over Mt Terrible Gully – a moment on the highway barely noticeable but for the utilitarian warning 'Cross Wind' – might stay a while to absorb the 'savage grandeur'⁵³ of this landscape.

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End of Summary

⁴⁷ Tindale map Hd Willunga, AA338/24/97. 'Kartan' refers to an alleged previous Aboriginal culture which had inhabited Kangaroo Island as well as the mainland before the rising sea cut off the island.

⁴⁸ M Nobbs 1971, 'A Description and survey of archaeological evidence at Aldinga - Sellicks Beach Scrub', *Friends of SA Museum Newsletter* 2(1), Jan 1971: 6.

⁴⁹ See Schultz 1999, in *Kurna Paltinna: a Kurna Song Book*, Kurna Plains School: 103. Tjirbruki took the eastward course while following the track of his emu: see Tindale 1987, 'Wanderings of Tjirbruki', *Records of SA Museum* 20: 7. Cp. discussion in PNS 4.4.1/4 'Witawali' (Sellick's Beach).

⁵⁰ See PNS 5.1/6 'Warabari' (Myponga cliffs) for a discussion of this route.

⁵¹ G Gardiner 'History', in E Wollaston (ed) 1978, *Aldinga-Sellicks Beach Scrub: a report*, Education Dept of SA: 11-12.

⁵² See *SA Advertiser*, 14/3/1859: 2e-f; Rob Linn 1991, *Cradle of Adversity: a history of the Willunga district*, Cherry Gardens, SA: Historical Consultants Pty Ltd: 75-6.

⁵³ *Cyclopedia of SA*, 1907-9, Vol.2: 851.