



*The writing of this essay was funded as part of The Kurna Project 2017-8 (coordinator Rob Amery) by the Commonwealth of Australia Ministry for the Arts through its Indigenous Languages and Arts (Languages) program.*

*This and other essays may be downloaded free of charge from  
<https://www.adelaide.edu.au/kwp/placenames/research-publ/>*

## Place Name SUMMARY (PNS) 9/04

### KARRAWADLUNGA

(last edited: 20.8.2018)

**with some more thoughts on the 'Wirra tribe'.**

#### NOTE AND DISCLAIMER:

*This essay has not been peer-reviewed or culturally endorsed in detail.*

*The spellings and interpretations contained in it (linguistic, historical and geographical) are my own, and do not necessarily represent the views of KWP/KWK or its members or any other group.*

*I have studied history at tertiary level. Though not a linguist, for 30 years I have learned much about the Kurna, Ramindjeri-Ngarrindjeri and Narungga languages while working with KWP, Rob Amery, and other local culture-reclamation groups; and from primary documents I have learned much about the Aboriginal history of the Adelaide-Fleurieu region.*

*My explorations of 'language on the land' through the Southern Kurna Place Names Project are part of an ongoing effort to correct the record about Aboriginal place-names in this region (which has abounded in confusions and errors), and to add reliable new material into the public domain.*

*I hope upcoming generations will continue this work and improve it. My interpretations should be amplified, re-considered and if necessary modified by KWP or other linguists, and by others engaged in cultural mapping: Aboriginal people, archaeologists, geographers, ecologists and historians.*

*Chester Schultz, [date].*



## Place Name SUMMARY (PNS) 9/04

## KARRAWADLUNGA

(last edited: 20.8.2018)

with some more thoughts on the 'Wirra tribe'.

## Abstract

In 1839 William Williams (Colonial Storekeeper in Adelaide) recorded "Cur-ra-ud-lon-ga" as the name of "Lyndoch valley" (presumably a site somewhere within it, between the town of Lyndoch and the end of the valley near Williamstown). He almost certainly obtained it while interpreting for a police expedition in April 1839 which was tracking members of the 'Wirra tribe' who had murdered shepherd Duffield at Teatree Gully.

It is a Kurna word, using the standard Locative *ngga*; but its meaning is uncertain, especially because the interpretation of Williams' written letter 'o' is ambiguous. It might very likely be *Karrawadlungga*, 'place of underbrush and shrubs', i.e. low understorey in a forest. But it could also be *Karra-wadlangga*, 'place of fallen redgum trees' or 'place of high deadwood'; or *Karra-wadlhangga*, 'place of redgums and wallabies'.

However, it was probably not a genuine place-name of the occupants of that territory, the 'Wirra tribe', who were not necessarily Kurna speakers. It was probably a Kurna generic name for that kind of country, given by trackers including Kadlitpinna ('Captain Jack'), who belonged to country further south.

Although the Kurna term *putpa-yarta* has been gazetted as the Kurna name of Lyndoch Valley, this simply means 'fertile land' and was described by the linguists as "a general name". There is no reason to suppose that it referred to Lyndoch Valley in particular.

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| Coordinates | Lat. -34.624520°, Long. 138.888340° (GDA 94)<br>[current gazetted location for Lyndoch Valley] |
|-------------|--|

## Language Information

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Meaning               | 1. probably 'place of underbrush and shrubs' (i.e. low understorey).<br>OR 2. probably 'place of fallen redgums' OR 'place of high deadwood'<br>OR perhaps 3. 'place of redgum and wallabies'.                            |
| Etymology             | 1. <i>karrawadlu</i> 'brush or shrub in general' + <i>ngga</i> 'at, place of';<br>OR 2. <i>karra</i> 'high' or 'redgum tree' + <i>wadla</i> 'fallen trees' OR 3. <i>wadlha</i> 'wallaby';<br>+ <i>ngga</i> 'at, place of' |
| Notes                 | The distinction between Alternatives 1 and 2 depends on what vowel Williams heard which he represented by the letter 'o' in his record "Cur-ra-ud-lon-ga"; but we have no certain way of knowing this.                    |
| Language Family       | Thura-Yura: 'Kurna'   |
| KWP Former Spelling   | 1. Karra-wadlongga; OR 2 & 3: Karra-wadlangga   |
| KWP New Spelling 2010 | 1. Karra-wadlungga OR 2. Karra-wadlangga OR 3. Karra-wadlhangga   |



|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Phonemic Spelling  | /karrawadLVngga/  |
| Syllabification    | 1. “Karra – wadlungga” OR 2. “ <u>K</u> arra – <u>w</u> adlangga” OR 3. “ <u>K</u> arra – <u>w</u> adlhangga”                                 |
| Pronunciation tips | Stress the first and third syllables.<br>Every a as in Maori ‘haka’.<br>u as in ‘put’.<br>In 3, /h is an / with the tongue between the teeth. |

## Main source evidence

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Date                  | 26-27 April 1839   |
| Original source text  | <p>[Beginning from a waterhole somewhere in the hills north of Little Para Reservoir] “The following morning [Friday 26<sup>th</sup>], I told the natives what we intended doing, and immediately our brave-hearted Captain Jack, Bob, and Williamy volunteered to go with us. Mr. Shaw and Mr. Hardy expressed a wish to go; but, finding it would be necessary to have some one with the natives in charge of our provisions, Mr. Shaw and Mr. Hardy consented to remain; and, about half-past seven o'clock, we started. On arriving at the water hole, we found the natives had been there, but must have left about four o'clock on that day, the ashes of their fire being then quite warm. I asked Captain Jack where he thought they were gone to, and he stated they must have gone to another water hole about ten miles distant. Finding it too far to go that night, we determined on returning to our party, which we reached about half-past ten o'clock.</p> <p>“On the following morning, Saturday [27<sup>th</sup>], we started about seven o'clock, and reached the place after a fatiguing trip of about ten or twelve miles over some very stony gullies; but, on our arriving, we could not had any appearance of the blacks having been there. The natives with us wished to proceed to another water hole which took us in an almost direct line back from the last, being rather more to the east than the road we intended following. On arriving at the water hole, we found ourselves in <b>Lyndoch Valley</b>; but, much to our disappointment, found that the blacks we were in search of had not been there. The natives then state that the men we wanted, on leaving the other water hole, had proceeded to the Para River, and I immediately requested them to take us there, which they did. On the banks of this river we found Mr. Jacobs' tent [at the future site of Gawler town]; we enquired of the man in charge of it if he had seen any natives; he stated that he had seen two native men and two dogs the day before. They came to the tent and remained for about half an hour, and left for the other river, and would most likely remain at Mr. Reid's, about a mile from thence.”</p> |
| Reference             | William Williams, ‘Apprehension of the Native Murderers’, <i>South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register</i> 11/5/1839: 2c, <a href="http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/31750582">http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/31750582</a> .   |
| Informants credited   |  |
| Informants uncredited |  |



|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <i>Date</i>                  | 1839   |
| <i>Original source text</i>  | - "Cud-lie-tie-par-rey: Parra River".<br>- <b>"Cur-ra-ud-lon-ga: Lyndoch valley"</b> .<br>- "Moon-na: the second creek on the north of Adelaide"<br>- "Wad-lah, wallaby"   |
| <i>Reference</i>             | William Williams 1839, <i>A Vocabulary of the Language of the Aborigines of the Adelaide District and other friendly tribes of the Province of South Australia</i> , by William Williams of the Colonial Store Department, Adelaide, A MacDougall. |
| <i>Informants credited</i>   |  |
| <i>Informants uncredited</i> | Probably Kadlitpinna ('Captain Jack'), and perhaps 'Bob', 'Williamy' and other "Adelaide and Onkaparinga tribe" men who were hired on 22 April 1839 to track the murderers of Duffield in company with Williams and Inspector Inman.               |

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| <i>Date</i>                  | [May 1839] / 1879   |
| <i>Original source text</i>  | "Weera districts north of Adelaide:<br>Boora wongoarto<br>Mikka wummungga<br>Pootpa, pootpóbbëre<br>Pootpou weera and weerungga<br>Punggára...<br>? In the Weera districts:<br>Weereecha<br>Weertootpe...<br>MEN'S NAMES: ...<br>Nawálte – Tom of Weerawulla.<br>Wongoocha – Charley of Weerungga."   |
| <i>Reference</i>             | W Wyatt [1837-9] / 1879, 'Vocabulary of the Adelaide and Encounter Bay Tribes', in JD Woods 1879, <i>Native Tribes of SA</i> : 179-180.   |
| <i>Informants credited</i>   |   |
| <i>Informants uncredited</i> | Probably one or more of trackers Kadlitpinna, 'Bob' and 'Williamy'; and/or prisoners Bakkabarti Yarraitya ('George'), Paitya Kudnuitya (= Muliakkiburka = 'Tam O'Shanter'), 'Yumbena' ('Peter'), 'Parloobooka' ('Williamy'), Parutiya Wangutya ('Tommy Roundhead' ?= 'Tom of Weerawulla?'), and Tipa Warritya ('Bob'); possibly William Williams. |

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Date                  | 1840  |
| Original source text  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “Karra, s. height; sky; heaven”</li> <li>- “Karra, s. the red gum tree.”</li> <li>- “<b>Karrawādlo</b>, s. brush or shrub generally.”</li> <li>- “Wādla, a tree lying on the ground; block”</li> <li>- “Wādlo, <i>adv</i>, whereby; wherewith; from <i>wa</i>, where.”</li> <li>- “Wadloni <i>v.a.</i> to stare, as when angry; to glare”</li> <li>- “Putpa or Putpayerta, a general name for the fertile districts towards the north, including Lyndoch Valley, &amp;c.”</li> </ul> |
| Reference             | Teichelmann & Schürmann 1840, <i>Outlines of a Grammar...</i> 2:10, 50, 51, 75.   |
| Informants credited   |   |
| Informants uncredited | Kadlitpinna, Mullawirraburka, Ityamaitpinna, etc 1838-40  |

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Date                  | 1857   |
| Original source text  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “batta the red Gum tree.”</li> <li>- “kar,r,a high.”</li> <li>- “wadla a dead tree lying on the ground, block of wood.”</li> <li>- “wadlo, whereby? with what?”</li> <li>- “wadloni according to some to stare at, to glare; according to others to drive the smoke up from below into a hollow tree in order to expell &lt;sic&gt; the opossums.”</li> </ul> |
| Reference             | Teichelmann 1857, MS ‘Dictionary of the Adelaide dialect’; keyboarded by Jane Simpson.   |
| Informants credited   |  |
| Informants uncredited | Kadlitpinna, Mullawirraburka, Ityamaitpinna, etc 1838-45.  |

## Discussion: AN ‘UNDERBRUSH PLACE’ IN FOREIGN TERRITORY:

HOW THE NAME WAS OBTAINED FROM ABORIGINAL PEOPLE BY EUROPEANS:

The early colony’s Deputy Storekeeper, William Williams, took an active interest in the local people and their language from his first days in SA in December 1836. When one of the Adelaide printers published his wordlist 3½ years later, it contained eight place-names from around the city (as we would expect), and (as we might not expect) three from the ‘Para’ regions to the north including the following entry: “Cur-ra-ud-lon-ga: Lyndoch valley”.<sup>1</sup>

How did Williams obtain this place-name?

<sup>1</sup> William Williams 1839, *A Vocabulary of the Language of the Aborigines of the Adelaide District and other friendly tribes of the Province of South Australia*, by William Williams of the Colonial Store Department, Adelaide, A MacDougall.

At the end of 1838 one of Governor Gawler's first moves in rescuing the colony's disastrous financial position was to open up Special Surveys for purchase in the newly-'discovered' region of the 'Para' (the general region of the Little Para, South Para, North Para and Gawler Rivers).<sup>2</sup> Capitalists and would-be landowners scrambled for land. Light visited the region again in January 1839 to produce data for a Special Survey at 'Lynedoch Valley' on behalf of the South Australian Company. When he returned he advised settlers to move onto the land there. But within three months there was resistance from the Aboriginal occupants of the area.

#### THE PLACE: WILLIAMS ON THE NORTHERN TRAIL:

It is very unlikely that Williams obtained his three 'Para' names from a distance in Adelaide, and almost certain that he obtained them from Aboriginal companions on the one occasion when he visited the north: as interpreter for a police expedition under Inspector Henry Inman in late April 1839, responding to the murder of shepherd Duffield on the banks of the Torrens near Teatree Gully. The story of this expedition – northeast from Adelaide across the Little Para, north to Lyndoch Valley, then west to Gawler and along the river to Port Gawler – is given in PNS 8/14 Muna, continues in 8/18 Kadlitiya and this essay, and concludes in 8/17 Murlayaki. Williams, as official interpreter for the expedition, published a lengthy account of it in the *Register*. Another of Inman's team was the survey labourer Arthur Hardy, in charge of the cart with supplies, and his diary records a second experience of the events.<sup>3</sup>

Williams had brought a number of his Adelaide Aboriginal contacts as trackers, including Kadlitpinna ('Captain Jack'), 'Bob' and 'Williamy'. These men (and others of the Adelaide tribe) had identified three visiting members of the northeastern 'We-re' or 'Wirra' tribe as the killers of

<sup>2</sup> For more on this confusing set of names and places, see PNS 8/20 'Para'.

<sup>3</sup> There are two main accounts of this expedition: Williams's, 'Apprehension of the Native Murderers', *SA Gazette and Colonial Register* 11/5/1839: 2b-d, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/31750582>; and the diary of Arthur Hardy (a survey labourer who joined the expedition), 21-29 April 1839, PRG 101/1/1, SLSA, [http://www.slsa.sa.gov.au/archivaldocs/prg/PRG101\\_1\\_1\\_Hardy\\_diary\\_1838-40\\_transcript.pdf](http://www.slsa.sa.gov.au/archivaldocs/prg/PRG101_1_1_Hardy_diary_1838-40_transcript.pdf). Extra details emerged in the court evidence: *SA Gazette and Colonial Register* 25/5/1839: 4d-5a, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/31750623>; *SA Gazette and Colonial Register* 29/5/1839: 1e, 2a, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/71685317>. Most of the primary information about this expedition is contained in my online document Background5murders1839expedition.pdf. As far as we know Williams did not travel north before then, when his book was already in the hands of the publishers. But the publication was delayed until at least the end of July, and we may deduce that he added the three northern place-names to his wordlist in early May, along with an addition to his Preface (see Williams 1839: vii, quoted in PNS 8/20 'Para').

Duffield.<sup>4</sup> Now they were pursuing these foreigners, enthusiastically “determined to find the murderers and take them back to Adelaide for the white men to hang them”.<sup>5</sup>

After camping on the night of 24<sup>th</sup> April at Fisher and Handcock’s sheep station on the upper reaches of the Little Para, they continued northeast on the 25<sup>th</sup> across the foothills as far as a waterhole in the vicinity of Yattalunga, where they lost the trail. The trackers said the fugitives were probably at another waterhole about eight miles further on, but they were tired and Inman decided to camp for the night.<sup>6</sup>

Next morning, the 26<sup>th</sup>, Williams “told the natives what we intended doing, and immediately our brave-hearted Captain Jack, Bob, and Williamy volunteered to go with us. Mr. Shaw and Mr. Hardy expressed a wish to go; but, finding it would be necessary to have some one with the natives in charge of our provisions, Mr. Shaw and Mr. Hardy consented to remain”. The advance party went ahead to try another waterhole known to the trackers, and there (probably somewhere in the vicinity of Sandy Creek or perhaps the north of Cockatoo Valley) they found evidence of the Wirra three’s camp on the previous afternoon; but again the trackers could not find any ongoing trail, and again they thought their quarry must have headed for another waterhole about ten miles further on. By this time it was night, and Inman turned back to join the others who (it seems likely) had been told to proceed in their own time to the Sandy Creek waterhole and so were not far away. He, Williams and the trackers did not arrive until 10.30 pm, and so missed a significant episode recorded by Hardy.

Hardy’s diary of the 26<sup>th</sup> tells us that his group had “pushed on at daylight to the place Inman had been to last night over a beautiful country of extensive grassy flats & some of the Valleys green left the cart there”, i.e. probably at the waterhole near Sandy Creek.<sup>7</sup> He and his companion Shaw that day made a quick independent run (probably on horseback) to Lyndoch Valley; “but the blacks were not there, saw some Emu, returned to the cart & staid there”. Night fell:

<sup>4</sup> Williams had begun his investigation on the 21<sup>st</sup> by consulting local Adelaide Aborigines, who “told me who the men were, their names, and gave me a full and satisfactory description of the fugitives”, amplified by “two friendly natives” who accompanied him to the scene of the crime and told him the culprits had headed “to the north to join their tribe”, 4-5 days’ journey away (Williams, ‘Apprehension’: 2b). One of these two informants was almost certainly Captain Jack.

<sup>5</sup> Williams ‘Apprehension’: 2d. The identification of these three men as ‘Wirra’ is perhaps debatable, and I discuss it later.

<sup>6</sup> The exact route is unclear; but we must assume it followed the low western hills, because they were looking for the station of GA Anstey (on Tenafeate Creek, which runs south from the South Para), but failed to find it (Hardy diary 25 April). At this point the route and its chronology become puzzling until we realize that the only two first-hand accounts of the expedition are telling us the story from two different viewpoints. Williams tells us about the more mobile advance party, with Inman, Williams and the leading trackers, who made an independent journey forward late on the 25<sup>th</sup>, and again during most of the 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>, returning to the others only to sleep. The other account is by Hardy, who was in charge of the cart with supplies, and his diary tells about those left behind to follow with the bulk of the Aboriginal party.

<sup>7</sup> On the previous night Inman had not actually got that far, only “abo<sup>t</sup> 3 miles” following some “traces” of the fugitives in its direction. Either Hardy left the cart there (somewhere northwest of Para Wirra) or more likely pushed on by arrangement to the Sandy Creek waterhole where Inman was headed.



*Soon after dark all the horses at one instant started & broke their tether ropes & went off at a full gallop & we lost all trace of them, when the moon rose we saw 3 natives at a distance walking up & down in the moonlight.*

For the contingent from the Adelaide tribe this was a severe shock; they obviously took these figures to be the dreaded night beings, *nokunna* or *Kuinyo*.<sup>8</sup>

*Our blacks were dreadfully frightened & went thro' a variety of ceremonies, taking green boughs & walking backwards round the camp & putting water in their mouths & squirting it out over the boughs they called them 'wild man' they s<sup>d</sup> they were cannibals eating black or white men & that they were in the habit of stealing on their Worleys at night & killing them, the others shirked their watch.*<sup>9</sup>

The search party were on the limits of Kaurna-speaking territory.<sup>10</sup> It seems likely that somebody had decided to frighten off these Adelaide pursuers, who from the northern viewpoint were not only trespassing or about to trespass, but engaged in an act of war against three who were probably their kinsmen. Perhaps it was the three fugitives themselves. Did they decide to discourage their Adelaide pursuers by dramatizing their Wirra tribe's reputation as sorcerers? Or was it in fact a serious act of sorcery by 'clever men' of the Wirra, hastily brought onto the scene for that purpose? Perhaps both of these were part of the secret business that night.

We can be sure that the evening's moonlit business lost nothing in the telling when Kadlitpinna, Bob and William finally returned to camp.

On the 27<sup>th</sup> Hardy's group packed up and moved west to "the 'great river' the Upper Para where we arrived about 1 P.M. having passed thro' some heavy scrub<sup>11</sup> & afterw<sup>ds</sup> very good sheep runs but did not see any water. We found Jacobs camp & that we were at the Murray pass": the first surveyors at what would become the town of Gawler.

Meanwhile Kadlitpinna and his two colleagues, with Inman, Williams and Edwards, went through the first chapters of a very long and strenuous day. "After a fatiguing trip of about ten or twelve miles over some very stony gullies" they reached the desired waterhole ten miles further on. It

<sup>8</sup> See e.g. T&S 1840: 12, 28.

<sup>9</sup> Hardy diary 26 April.

<sup>10</sup> See below for a discussion of this area as borderland between three local 'tribes'.

<sup>11</sup> My Gawler correspondent Adrian Shackley tells me that originally there were "areas of dense woodland around Sandy Creek, Altona, Cockatoo Valley, Para Wirra, Mt Gawler, Kersbrook, Golden Grove etc where poorer soil types had thick heathy and sometimes stringybark scrub" (Shackley p.c. email 13/6/2011). A careful reading of Williams and Hardy's descriptions of vegetation, in the light of local and historical knowledge, might clarify both their route and the exact location of the incident (which I tell below) at the waterhole somewhere near Sandy Creek; this in turn could clarify what this incident meant in Aboriginal dynamics. The issue of original vegetation will re-surface again when we consider the possible meanings of "Cur-ra-ud-lon-ga", and the territory of the 'Wirra' (forest) tribe (see below).



must have been somewhere around Tanunda or perhaps even Nuriootpa, fully justifying any Wirra fears of an armed and hostile incursion:

*but, on our arriving, we could not had any appearance of the blacks having been there. The natives with us wished to proceed to another water hole which took us in an almost direct line back from the last, being rather more to the east than the road we intended following. On arriving at the water hole, we found ourselves in Lyndoch Valley; but, much to our disappointment, found that the blacks we were in search of had not been there.*<sup>12</sup>

Kadlitpinna and the other trackers now decided that “the men we wanted, on leaving the other water hole” – the one near Sandy Creek – “had proceeded to the Para River”. No solid reasons for this insight were given. It is possible that it arose from knowledge of the country and of the likely strategies of men on the run. But would the Wirra men really decide to turn away from their homeland just as they were entering it, and just after their tribe’s first show of resistance had been made? Was the decision a convenient excuse to get away from the sorcerers and their warrior backup as quickly as possible by heading in the opposite direction? Perhaps it was a canny combination of both lines of reasoning.

Williams did not argue, but “immediately requested them to take us there, which they did”.<sup>13</sup> The expedition headed west for the river junction at Murray Pass, where Gawler town now stands; and soon after that found themselves on tracking on the plains down the Gawler River, then pursuing a different set of offenders who had just murdered a different shepherd near Port Gawler.<sup>14</sup>

Lyndoch Valley is an expanse of about 7-by-3 km, and the records tell us only that Williams and his informants looked at a waterhole there on 27<sup>th</sup> April 1839, with no other precise information to help us. And although it is quite likely that “Cur-ra-ud-lon-ga” was the name of the waterhole, we cannot be sure that it did not refer to some other part or feature of the valley. People who know this part of the country well may be able to deduce a more precise likely location from the following discussion about possible meanings of the name; and I leave those details to them.<sup>15</sup>

#### THE WORD:

“Cur-ra-ud-lon-ga” is clearly a word in Kaurna language, ending with the standard Locative *ngga*, ‘at, place of’.

<sup>12</sup> W Williams, ‘Apprehension of the Native Murderers’, *SA Gazette & Colonial Register* 11/5/1839: 2c, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/31750582>.

<sup>13</sup> Williams, ‘Apprehension’: 2c.

<sup>14</sup> See PNS 8/18 Kadlitiya and 8/17 Murlayaki.

<sup>15</sup> See my document ‘BACKGROUND5murders1839expedition’, which includes a tentative and approximate map of the expedition’s route, under the title ‘Williams1839route.pdf’.

Equally clearly, the first two syllables represent *karra*. This is a common noun-adjective, recorded as meaning ‘height; sky; heaven’ and also ‘the red gum tree’ (as in the name of a site near the CBD on the Torrens River, *Karrawirra-pari*, ‘redgum forest river’).

The second word is less obvious. “Ud-lo-” gives us a two-syllable root as required for the Locative *ngga*. For an Englishman, the written letters ‘ud’ represent the sounds as in ‘cud’ (phonetically spelled *ad*). But Kurna words never begin with the vowel *a*. In context we must assume that Williams heard the sound *w* as merely part of the transition from the first *a* to the second. Therefore, what Kadlitpinna had actually said was *Karra-wad-*.

In “-lon-”, the written ‘o’ can be ambiguous. Its pronunciation is variable in English (think ‘long’, ‘lone’, ‘one’, ‘nation’), and when 19<sup>th</sup>-century linguistic amateurs wrote down what they thought they heard an Aboriginal person say – unfamiliar pronunciations in a basically unknown language – the ambiguities multiply, especially in an unstressed vowel as here. Comparing Williams’s work alone with reliable records of the same words from the missionary linguists, we know that he represents the original sound *a* (as in Maori ‘haka’) variously by a written ‘o’, ‘u’, ‘a’, ‘er’ and ‘ah’; while an original *u* (as in ‘put’) might appear in his work as ‘oo’, ‘u’, ‘ou’, ‘o’ or ‘eu’.<sup>16</sup> However, in a reverse approach the confusion is less. When Williams writes ‘o’ elsewhere *in an unstressed syllable*, we find that in every case he had heard the sound *u*<sup>17</sup> (even though sometimes he *also* represented this sound by the relatively unambiguous ‘oo’). If this word follows his usual pattern, then, it is *wadlu*.

Tending to confirm that this is the true interpretation, we find a recorded Kurna noun which covers the entire double root: *karrawadlu*, “brush or shrub generally”.<sup>18</sup>

However, other colonists often wrote ‘o’ to represent the Kurna sound *a*: e.g. ‘Myponga / *Maitpangga*’; ‘Patawalonga’ / *Patha-wilyangga*’; ‘Dooronga’ / *Turrangga*. If Williams did that here (which is still quite possible), then we have something like *wadla*, and the name becomes a two-word compound *karra* + *wadla*. The known vocabulary includes *waadla*, ‘a tree lying on the ground; block of wood’ or ‘wood in general’ i.e. probably ‘any kind of dead wood’; and *wadlha*, wallaby’. Thus we may have a further choice between ‘fallen redgum’,<sup>19</sup> or ‘fallen high trees’, or ‘redgum + wallaby’, or ‘something high + wallaby’.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Cp. Amery 2000/2016, *Warraparna Kurna!*: 82.

<sup>17</sup> e.g. “Ad-ley-co” / *ngadluku*; “Nin-co” / *ninku*; “Pe-co” / *piku*; “Wah-ro-ne” / *warrundi*; “We-ro-ne” / *wirundi*.

<sup>18</sup> “*Karrawādo*”, Teichelmann & Schürmann 1840: 10. Kurna language does not distinguish between the sounds *o* and *u*. KWP’s New Spelling 2010 opts to use *u* consistently (unlike T&S).

<sup>19</sup> Tindale adopted this interpretation, “*Fallen gumtree place*”, when he noted the name from Williams, probably in the 1980s (Tindale Kurna place-name card [539] “Kor:awadlonga” in AA 338/7/1/12. Here the spelling “*Kor:a*”, despite its appearance, comes straight from Wyatt’s “*korra: redgum tree*”).

<sup>20</sup> But now we might also wonder whether we should reconsider *karrawadlu*, and consider dissociating *wadlu* from *karra*. Was there a separate noun *wadlu*? None was recorded; but there is a group of ‘*wadlu*’ words. *Wadlopomandi* means ‘to wrap up, cover’; *wadloworta* is ‘slow, lazy’ (Teichelmann & Schürmann 1840). *Wadloni* (says Teichelmann) is “according to some to stare at, to glare; according to others to drive the smoke up from below into a hollow tree in order to expell the opossums”; while *wadlo wadloni* is “to be loaden with, to carry a heavy weight or freight” (Teichelmann MS 1857). We may ignore the adverb “*wadlo*” (*waardlu*), ‘by what means?’ Collectively these seem to imply the possibility of one or more unrecorded noun-adjectives, with meaning(s) connected with ‘lying down’, ‘being slow’, ‘being



Did the trackers identify some part of the valley as a ‘place of brush or shrub’? i.e. (interpreting the eccentric English of the German linguists) probably ‘any kind of underbrush, undergrowth or low understorey’ in a forest; thick low scrub which would be hard to walk through but good for the Wirra fugitives to hide in – perhaps another excellent excuse to abandon the chase for which their enthusiasm had suddenly evaporated!

Or did they see it as a ‘place of fallen redgums’, perhaps ‘place of high deadwood’, or ‘fallen high wood’?

While ‘brush’ has a slight lead on ‘fallen wood’ linguistically, this is not sufficient to let us dismiss the latter entirely. There is only one record of “karrawadlo”, but many of *karra* and *wadla*; and though there might be contradiction between ‘brush, shrub’ on one hand and ‘high’ in *karra wadla*, the recorded meanings both refer to something ‘down’ or ‘low’: close enough that we cannot help wondering whether the two expressions are related, or even variants of the same word.<sup>21</sup> In that case we might have to refine the gloss of Williams’ “(w)ud-lo” with a bushman’s eye and careful attention to all the known uses of *wadla* in sentences. Did it always refer to dead wood? Was the ‘brush or shrub’ in *karrawadlu* dead or alive? Can ‘wood in general’ (Wyatt’s gloss for *wadla*) include live bushes?

If the linguistics here could be made clearer, they might help us to locate the place. Somewhere in Lyndoch Valley, was there a notable waterhole with thick underbrush or big fallen redgums?

Likewise, if lovers of the Barossa can first identify the notable waterhole in Lyndoch Valley – from local knowledge of the terrain and its condition before settlement – then this might help us assess the nuances of the meaning of *wadla*, *karra*, *karra wadla*, *karrawadlu*, and even some other words.<sup>22</sup>

Meanwhile, we must live with this collection of likely but uncertain possibilities.

WAS IT A PLACE-NAME? IF SO, WHOSE? FURTHER THOUGHTS ON THE ‘WIRRA TRIBE’:

There are two more levels of doubt.

1. Was “Cur-ra-ud-lon-ga” really a place-name? Any of the possible meanings could apply to many places; so many that we must doubt whether it was even a generic name for a select number of

---

covered’ or ‘applying mental or physical pressure’. We simply don’t know enough to pursue these linguistic speculations any further.

<sup>21</sup> A rather similar *karradla*, ‘far away’, was also recorded reliably as “karradlo” = *karradlu* (Teichelmann MS 1857). This word cannot be part of an etymology for “Cur-ra-ud-lon-ga”. Being an adverb not a noun, it cannot be the root of any place-name. Even if it were, the Kaurna rules for Locatives forbid it to use *ngga*; it would have to be *Karadlilla*.

<sup>22</sup> See previous footnote on *wadlu* words.

places known for their underbrush or fallen redgums. Did they not mean ‘this is *The* underbrush place’, but merely that ‘This place is surrounded by underbrush’?

2. For Williams’ informants – Kadlitpinna and his fellow trackers affiliated with the Adelaide tribe<sup>23</sup> – this place was near or just over the border of foreign territory, and they were engaging in an act of war against the occupants. The people here were recorded by settlers at the time as the “We-re” / “Weree” / “Wiera” / “Wiere” / “Weera” or “Wirra” tribe (probably the Kurna word *wirra*, ‘forest’). They probably spoke a significantly different language; they may have been some of those whom we now call the Peramangk.<sup>24</sup> The Adelaide tribe regarded them as dangerous sorcerers: if not previously, then certainly in the aftermath of the frightening incident on the night of 26 April 1839. A contingent of them came to Adelaide advertising their intention to use sorcery on the Europeans there and poison the water supply. The Adelaide aborigines were terrified, and only some quick diplomacy by Kadlitpinna averted the threat. The missionary linguists recorded how he and his Adelaide confederates defended their case: “This was the charge of the Adelaide to the *Wirra* tribe, who came to town with the intention of charming the river, to revenge themselves of their countrymen, who were hanged”; it is given word-for-word with this translation: “No charm; it is now enough. The white man has, and distributes, food. Enough, that those two men have been hanged – we are other men”.<sup>25</sup>

In the light of all this, it is reasonably clear that if “Cur-ra-ad-lon-ga” was a place-name at all, being in Kurna language it was at best an outsider name, from an Adelaide viewpoint. The Wirra people

<sup>23</sup> Kadlitpinna, though aligned closely with the Adelaide tribe, originated from a rather mysterious “*Koubanda (northern tribe)*”, and so may have had closer connections than the other trackers with the Wirra people. This may be why he was able to negotiate with the Wirra sorcerers a few months later. See PNS 8/18 Kadlitiya.

<sup>24</sup> Lyndoch Valley lies in borderland between country where Kurna was certainly spoken and the territory now known as Peramangk. It is by no means clear what the main affiliations of this area were in 1839. A little further north is Ngadjuri land. According to Tindale’s ‘authorized identities’, the southern border of the Ngadjuri was at “*Angaston and Freeling*”, while the northern border of the Peramangk was at “*Gawler and Angaston*” (Tindale 1974, *Aboriginal Tribes of Australia*: 214, 217) – which leaves in limbo the triangular area outlined by those three towns, including the part from Sandy Creek to Tanunda or Nuriootpa through which Inman travelled on 27<sup>th</sup> April 1839. Tindale incorporated the term ‘Wirra tribe’ into his idea of the Ngadjuri (Knight comments, “*it is not clear why he did so*”); and he seems to have partially invented the term ‘Peramangk’. In fact the language identity of the ‘Wirra tribe’ is still an open question. On the Tindale identities ‘Ngadjuri’ and ‘Peramangk’, see James Knight 2003, *Testing Tindale tribes*, Ph.D thesis in Archaeology, University of New England: 199, 262-271, 290-3. For a summary of Tindale’s thoughts on the ‘Wirra tribe’ see Knight p.342. These involve a linguistic confusion hitherto unremarked by commentators including Knight. The Kurna word *wirra* actually means ‘[any kind of] forest’; and *wita* actually means ‘peppermint gumtree’ (whatever that was in the SA nomenclature of 1840). Tindale incorrectly says that *wirra* means ‘peppermint gumtree’ [p.134] or ‘gumtree’ [p.214], and on the basis of that error builds the following theory about Ngadjuri territory: “*their territory almost exactly matches, on the east, south, and west, the limits of distribution of the Eucapypthus odorata (peppermint gum) association of botanists. This fact the men of the Kurna tribe had recognized when they named their Ngadjuri neighbours [Wir:ameju], the “peppermint forest people”*” (p.134). But (1) *Wirra-meyu* means ‘forest people’ in general, not ‘peppermint forest’ which would be *wita-wirra*. (2) He cites no source for the alleged distribution of *Euc. odorata*; and (3) since the 1970s, historians of native vegetation have told us that many of the old records of *Euc. odorata* are mis-identifications of either Grey Box, *Euc. microcarpa*, or Mallee Box, *Euc. porosa*. The former was typical of the Black Forest in Adelaide; the latter of the plains north from the Torrens (see my online documents PNS 2/21 Witawattingga (Seacliff Park), and Background1\_Trees). Thus Tindale’s identification of the ‘Wirra Tribe’ with the Ngadjuri must be reconsidered from the primary sources.

<sup>25</sup> Teichelmann & Schürmann 1840 2:67. Cp. Schürmann diary 16 and 18 June 1839; cp. Gara 1998: 106. See Appendix in PNS 8/17 Murlayaki.

no doubt had their own names for sites in the Lyndoch Valley, unknown (as far as I am aware) and probably quite different from this one; but they had probably not been asked.

#### POSTLUDE: LANGUAGES:

The colonial authorities in 1839 knew that the shepherd Duffield had been murdered by 'Wirra' men. The difficulties of interpreting and communicating about evidence did not prevent the court from hanging a man who was deemed to be one of them, Bakka-barti Yarraitya or 'George'. Or perhaps anyone in the vicinity at the time would do to allay the panic of the settlers. As well as Yarraitya, two Adelaide men were also arrested for this murder but later acquitted. All three men had names which appear to be Kurna; e.g. *Yarraitya* is 'second-born son' (a dialect alternative to *Warritya*), and *Bakka-barti* is 'dry-bark grub'. It is doubtful whether any of them were actually members of the Wirra group at all, and only Yarraitya (who was arrested at Gawler) could be linked with the murder party.<sup>26</sup>

Some of the facts of the original manhunt for the Wirra fugitives (as laid out in my essays) seem to have been forgotten or neglected in the trial, though already reported in detail in the newspaper. In the heat of colonists' fear, it seems that any vaguely northern suspect would do, and corners would be cut in the legal process, in order to teach the necessary 'lesson' to the blacks. Did Williams and Wyatt ask Yarraitya whether he had been at "Cur-ra-ud-lon-ga" on that witching night of 27<sup>th</sup> April? Or did they use him to satisfy their curiosity about a place-name as well as gather evidence for his capital trial? Probably not. It is very doubtful that Yarraitya understood much of what they said to him, and it is much more likely that the name was volunteered by Kadlitpinna. According to the *Register's* court report, "*It was a painful feature of the present case that, however desirable it might be to make the prisoners thoroughly understand the proceedings, this could only be done through the medium of interpretation, in a broken language of which the interpreters themselves had only a limited knowledge; and the same disadvantage applied to the confessions made by the prisoners*".<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> For more on this story see PNS 8/14 Muna; 8/18 Kadlitiya; 8/17 Murlayaki, in that order. As we saw above, Williams and Kadlitpinna's expedition at Lyndoch Valley abandoned the trail of the actual murderers, and they were never arrested. Yarraitya was arrested at Gawler, and condemned from his own "*confessions or admissions*", the most significant being apparently that he owned some dogs which the victim had seen in the company of the murderers during their attack near Adelaide, and had confessed to killing some sheep around the same time and place (court report, *SA Gazette & Colonial Register* 25/5/1839: 3c-4, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/31750623>). Yarraitya, however, had maintained that the man who stabbed Duffield was "*Wiera..., who was away to the north*"; by which he may have meant 'it was a Wirra man from the north'; but he had also accused 'Peter' of the deed (both on p.4b).

<sup>27</sup> *Register* *ibid*: 4c. The court interpreters were certainly Williams and Cronk, and the earlier interrogations may have included Kadlitpinna (we don't know). Might this 'broken language' which the interpreters scarcely knew be the Wirra language? More likely it was Kurna language and applied to everything Williams and Cronk ever translated in court.

APPENDIX: *PUTPA-YARTA*, 'THE FERTILE DISTRICTS TOWARDS THE NORTH':

In 2011, on advice from "Kurna Peoples", the SA government gazetted the Dual Name "Lyndoch Valley / Putpayerta" (corrected from a previous Dual Name declared in 1998, "Lyndoch Valley / Putpa").<sup>28</sup>

This name was clearly taken from Teichelmann & Schürmann 1840: "Putpa or Putpayerta, a general name for the fertile districts towards the north, including Lyndoch Valley, &c".<sup>29</sup>

Wyatt's list of "Weera districts north of Adelaide"<sup>30</sup> – brought to his attention no doubt during the Adelaide aftermath of those events of April 1839, and by one or more of the same informants<sup>31</sup> – has the following five items, to which I add preliminary comments, pending further study:

"Boora wongoarto": possibly *purdi-wangkarta* 'western stone', as suggested by Tindale from Milerum.<sup>32</sup>

"Mikka wummungga": = T&S's "Mikawomma, the plain between Adelaide and Port Adelaide" (in the vicinity of Woodville and Kilkeny).<sup>33</sup>

"Pootpa, pootpóbbëre": = *putpa, putpa-pari* ('fertile river').<sup>34</sup>

"Pootpou weera and weerungga": = *putpa-wirra* 'fertile forest'; with Locative *putpa-wirrangga* 'fertile forest place'.

"Punggára": language and location not identified so far.

We must note first that Wyatt's *wirra* districts include Woodville, which cannot by any stretch of imagination be described as a territory of the 'Wirra tribe' men whom Inman and Williams were pursuing. If Woodville-Kilkeny was a "Weera" district, it could only be on the grounds that it included a significant *forest* (which we know it did).<sup>35</sup> The same must be said of "Boora

<sup>28</sup> SA Land Services Group website <http://maps.sa.gov.au/plb/>, printout 'Lyndoch Valley' 29/6/18.

<sup>29</sup> T&S 1840 2:75. KWP's New Spelling 2010 would be *Putpayarta*.

<sup>30</sup> Wyatt [1837-9] / 1879, in JD Woods 1879, *Native tribes of SA*: 179.

<sup>31</sup> Again Kadlitpinna, that enthusiastic friend of curious whitefellas, is far the most likely informant.

<sup>32</sup> "*Purəwoŋkarta – rocks western – so called from there being the most westerly rocks in these parts of the Adelaide plains – data from Milerum*", marked at 'Stockade' (Tindale annotated map AA 338/16/6). In the word for 'stone' the 'r' is a tapped *rd*.

<sup>33</sup> T&S 1840 2:75. See also PNS 8/04 Mikawomma.

<sup>34</sup> The spelling "Pootpobberrie" in the story retold by CH Harris from memories of James Cronk (after Cronk's death) was obviously adopted from this record by Wyatt ('CHH' 1913, 'Pootpobberrie: an Aboriginal legend', *Public Service Review*, Feb 1913; reprinted in *J Anthropol Soc SA* 21/2 (1983): 3-4).

<sup>35</sup> Light marked the Woodville forest clearly on Sections 405-7, 409-412 and 398-9, Hundred of Yatala (Light 1838, 'Plan of the District of Adelaide South Australia showing the property of the South Australian Company', BRG 42/120/17, State Library of SA); and on the same map, forested areas south and east of the Yatala quarry.

When considering Wyatt's other 'Weera' place-names, data about pre-European vegetation will become crucial. Shackley provides this summary as a beginning: "*My research on pre-euro landscape has shown that maps such as those in popular books such as Darrell Krahenbuehl (and repeated in books such as Chris Daniels Adelaide Nature of a City) with their reports of massive woodlands between Gawler and Adelaide and into the foothills, are wrong about the Adelaide Plains and foothills and that doesn't help when related to wirra references. The mallee scrub on the Adelaide*

wongoarto”, if it is indeed at the site of the quarry behind Yatala Prison as Milerum claimed. These places are less than 10 km from the Adelaide CBD, and so not eligible as districts of the historical Wirra tribe.<sup>36</sup>

From these, the only primary sources of the “general name” *Putpayarta*, it is fairly clear that this is not a place-name at all, merely a *description* of some areas of country to the north of Adelaide which happened to be also forested. And these ‘Weera districts’ could include anything from the dry mallee of the plains around Gawler, to the well-watered bush of the hills around the South Para River. The fact that those ‘fertile districts’ included Lyndoch Valley does not make this *the name* of Lyndoch Valley or of any of these other ‘districts’, not even from the viewpoint of the Kurna-speaking men who told it to Wyatt. Lyndoch was mentioned in the context of *Putpayarta* only because in mid-to-late 1839 when the latter was recorded, Lyndoch Valley was the first English place-name available to pinpoint an arable place in the then-remote ‘Para’ region.

## References to background documents

See also my document ‘BACKGROUND5murders1839expedition’, accessible to researchers through Management of this website (contact KWP).

*End of Summary*

*Plains was in a belt about 3 miles wide by say 6 miles long south from just below Angle Vale to about Penfield. The foothills were lightly wooded with mostly open grassy woodland. The general area from Gawler to Gepps Cross either side of Main North Road was straight grassland except where the Little Para crossed the plain. Then north of Gawler River there was scrub ranging from dense to fairly open west of about Main North Road from Willaston to Templers and beyond and north of a line from about Willaston to Lewiston to Two Wells and then north to about Mallala and further north. These areas of plains wirra would generally have lacked any readily available water (esp the Angle Vale/Penfield area) and hence likely to have mainly been used by Kurna on a seasonal basis although the Roseworthy Reeves Plains area with its sand dunes and areas of River Box wetlands would have been good areas in the wetter months and after floods with Gosse’s lagoon and other places holding water for quite long periods. Similarly the foothills east of Gawler were generally open grassland and grassy woodland with the exception of the areas of dense woodland around Sandy Creek, Altona, Cockatoo Valley, Para Wirra, Mt Gawler, Kersbrook, Golden Grove etc where poorer soil types had thick heathy and sometimes stringybark scrub. So describing Kurna people living around Gawler as wirra tribe is not a very accurate description. If anyone was accurately a wirra tribe it would be closer for Peramangk” (Shackley p.c. email 13/6/2011).*

<sup>36</sup> This Wyatt-induced confusion between the ‘Wirra tribe’ in particular and ‘forest land’ in general has led to the perpetuation of some unsupportable claims about ‘Wirra tribe’ territory. For instance, Melvin wrote that “Lucas identifies the Port Adelaide Kurna as traditionally belonging to the Wirra (Forest) Clan, although it is significant his study area (being the MFP Australia site at Gillman) is not on the Le Fevre Peninsula and that the Wirra Clan land at Port Adelaide ‘was the western extremity of the territory belonging to the Wirra local group of the Kurna. Tindale and Sheard (1926) record that this group ranged over all the country between Angaston, Lyndoch, Port Adelaide, Yatala and Tea Tree Gully’ (Sheridah Melvin 1991, ‘Kudlyo the Black Swan Dreaming’, research Report prepared for the Lartelare Homeland Association: 2-3; here she quotes R Lucas 1991, *MFP-Australia EIS Project*, Report to PPK Consultants Pty Ltd: 6; who cites Tindale & Sheard 1927, ‘Aboriginal Rock paintings, South Para River, SA’, *Transactions of the Royal Society of South Australia* 51: 14-17). Note that a few years after this 1927 essay Tindale changed his mind about the territory of the Wirra tribe, relocating it as the equivalent of ‘Ngadjuri’ (see my previous footnote on Ngadjuri); but (typically) each of his changing opinions is presented as fact rather than argued with sources cited.