

## PLACE NAMES AND MEANINGS IN MANNINGHAM

There are many Aboriginal place names in our municipality. Creeks, parks, streets, roads and suburbs bear Aboriginal names, but we are often unaware of their historical meaning.

However, some of our Aboriginal street names are not local, but have been imported from other Aboriginal languages. One example of this was a street named 'Mundarra' that I happened to notice near Park Orchards. It means 'mighty fist' in a Sydney language. I only know this because a friend of mine from Sydney gave his son that name.

So I will try to restrict myself to names that are from the local Woiwurung language. The first name to be disqualified under this criterion is therefore the Yarra, which forms the northern boundary of our municipality. As explained in a previous article, this is a Sydney word meaning 'waterfall' and it came from two of John Batman's Sydney guides in September 1835, when they saw the Queen Street falls.

We start at the southwest corner of our municipality where Koonung Creek meets the Yarra. I have a document from 1858 that gives a different name for the creek of 'Kooniniong', but I do not know what that means. However any Woiwurrung person will tell you what Koonung means. It refers to that mythical creek you are up in a barbwire canoe without a paddle, and it is not Ship Creek.

The story, for which I have not yet found any documentary evidence, is that Chinese market gardeners began operating in Box Hill North in the 1850's. They used septic water to grow the vegetables and the run-off polluted the creek so badly that it was called 'Koonung' by local Aboriginal people. It is still today the most polluted creek in Melbourne, even though it is barrelled and runs under the Eastern Freeway.

The suburb of Bulleen gets its name from a story of two Ancestor Heroes, Barwool and Yan Yin, who rested there after they had cut the Warrantyte and Plenty gorges to free their land from water. They then continued on to cut the Kew gorge and the water flowed out to form Port Phillip Bay.

Bulleen therefore means resting place'. The nearby Bolin-Bolin Billabong also derives its name from this story. This was the site of large inter-tribal gatherings so Bolin-Bolin means 'long resting place'.

It has alternatively been suggested that Bolin-Bolin means lyre-bird, but this is only because it sounds somewhat like Buln-Buln, the word for lyre-bird. However the lyre-bird is ground dwelling and its habitat is alpine rain forests. Bulleen is certainly not an alpine rain forest and the river flats were also subject to annual flooding, so ground-dwelling birds could not have survived there.

Warringal Park is on the other side of the river from Heide Museum in Bulleen and the meaning of this name is often quoted as meaning 'jumping dog'. However Warringal means 'dog jumped up' which denotes a particular use of English by Aboriginal people.

The term 'jumped up' in fact means coming back to life after being seemingly dead. This makes even more sense when you know that to 'tumble down' means to die. In other words Aboriginal people often died on their feet, but sometimes they then revived, 'jumped up' and kept going.

Along Templestowe Road opposite Finns Reserve, there is a little park on the side of the hill with a most appropriate name of Bimbadeen, which means 'side of the hill'. At the junction of the Mullum-Mullum Creek and the Yarra is Tikilara Park which means 'spirit of place'. As far as I know, Mullum-Mullum means 'many white butterflies'.

I have often written before about my admiration for Simon Wonga, so I will only briefly mention that Wonga Park was named after him in the mid 1850's. This was in recognition of his skill as a leader of men and a horse whisperer. So finally we come to Warrantdyte, which is often given as an Aboriginal name that derives from a story about Bunjil being angry with his people, then hurling a star at the ground that blocked the river and flooded the land.

Unfortunately this does not ring true to me at all. The story is more redolent of a vengeful and interventionist Old Testament Jehovah, not Booriel, the Woiwurrung name for God. According to William Barak Booriel was an infinite being, far beyond the capacity of human beings to comprehend. Talking about him would just make you look stupid.

Being sceptical of this seemingly latter day biblical story on the meaning of Warrantdyte I have searched the available documentation and have found many meanings for the word 'warran'. It can mean red, small hills, salt water, young man and wombat, but not throwing. I could also find no reference to 'dyte' which seems suspiciously like a Celtic word. Coincidentally it was the Scotsman Jimmy Dawson who called his property 'Warrantdyte' on arriving in 1840. So if anybody can shed any further light, please let me know.