



Place Name SUMMARY (PNS) 7.01/07

'TJIRBUKI' or 'TJIRBUK' (Blowhole Beach)

(last edited: 11.5.2016)

See also PNS 7.01/06 'Konggaratingga'

Abstract

THE PLACE-NAME:

'Tjirbuk' or 'Tjirbuki', as recorded by RM Berndt from the Yaraldi-Ngarrindjeri man Albert Karlowan around 1940, was the Ngarrindjeri name of a small wetland site at Blowhole Creek, probably the one at the mouth.

In Karlowan's version of the Dreaming story, this place is named after the ancestral being who created the coastal springs from Kingston Park south to the Wirrina cliffs. He could be seen here at 'Tjirbuk' as a bird catching fish, after emerging nearby from his long underground journey: see PNS 7.01/06 'Konggaratingga' (Blowhole Creek).

The meaning is uncertain, possibly (in this spelling) 'wing' + 'cave' (but see the Complete version of this document for an alternative spelling and meaning).

The name can refer to

(a) a species of wading bird (see Complete version of this document).

(b) the mythical emu hunter known as "Tjelbruke" or "Tjirbuki", who bore the name of this bird: who avenged the murder of his beloved nephew; created beach springs from his tears of mourning as he carried the body along the coastline south of Adelaide; and was transformed into a wader at a site in southern Fleurieu Peninsula. This site differs in the three known versions of the story. In Unaipon (as published by Ramsay Smith) it is on unspecified Ramindjeri land; in Karlowan (as told to Berndt) it is at Blowhole Beach; in Milerum (as recorded by Tindale) it is somewhere near Mount Hayfield and Parawa.¹

The place-name merely uses the name of the hero, unchanged except for an optional abridgement which omits the final *i*.

No evidence for this place-name is known from early settlement times, and no valid Kurna name for the place is known.

In the 1840s the missionary linguist Meyer knew a man at Encounter Bay called Tjirbuki. He was presumably named after the bird and may have belonged to its totem.

¹ See also PNS 5.03/04 Wataraparringga.



A Ngarrindjeri name for Blowhole Creek was recorded by the mid-19th century: “Rarkang” (?*Nragangk*). Blowhole Beach is also the location recorded from Karlowan as the site where Ngurunduri called up the sea to drown his wives as they were fleeing to Kangaroo Island (one of several locations for this event recorded from Ngarrindjeri informants: see discussion of ‘Rarkang’ in PNS 7.01/06 ‘Konggaratingga’).

The password-protected Data File of this place-name contains a history and analysis of (1) the names given to the ancestral bird-man, and (2) the contested identity of the bird.

<i>Coordinates</i>	Latitude -35.65401°, Longitude 138.155715°
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Language Information

<i>Meaning</i>	Uncertain, possibly ‘wing cave’
<i>Etymology</i>	Probably <i>tjirli</i> ‘wing of bird’ + <i>puki</i> ‘hole, cave’ > <i>tjirl-puki</i> ‘wing-cave’
<i>Notes</i>	In <i>tjirli</i> the retroflex <i>rl</i> was hard for all the collectors to understand. Karlowan and the anonymous informant in Ramsay Smith both appear to have underemphasized it, or adapted it to what the collectors heard (most of the time) as a sounded <i>r</i> . From Karlowan’s pronunciation Berndt usually recorded “-irb-”, and also recorded “-irlb-” and “-ilb-”. In the second morpheme, neither Berndt nor Tindale ever recorded Karlowan as including an <i>r</i> after the <i>b</i> (i.e. it was always <i>buki</i> not <i>bruki</i>). Milerum gave Tindale a slightly different name for the hero: “Tjelbruke”, which has a different second morpheme and so a different possible meaning in Ngarrindjeri, ‘wing + fire’. Late in his career, Tindale needlessly combined both of these forms into a single ‘correct’ one, “Tjirbruki”; this form of the name was therefore his own invention.
<i>Language Family</i>	Yaraldic: ‘Ngarrindjeri’
<i>KWP Former Spelling</i>	1. <i>tjirbuki</i> OR 2. <i>tjirlbuki</i>
<i>KWP New Spelling 2010</i>	
<i>Phonemic Spelling</i>	
<i>Syllables</i>	1. “Tjir – buki”:OR 2. “Tjirl – buki”:
<i>Pronunciation tips</i>	Stress the first syllable. Secondary stress on the 2 nd syllable. ‘Tj’ as in English ‘ch’ or ‘j’. Every ‘i’ as in ‘chin’. ‘u’ as in ‘put’, or as ‘oo’ in ‘book’. 1. ‘ir’ as ‘eer’ in ‘jeer’ with an American-style sounded <i>r</i> – <i>not</i> as in ‘shirt’; OR 2. ‘rl’ is a retroflex l (tongue curled back), a sound not used in English.



Main source evidence

Date	[1924-5] / 2001
Original source text	- [in 'Narroondarie's Wives'] "Now the maidens arrived in the afternoon opposite to Kangaroo] Island. And at the time of the story the island was connected with the mainland but during a severe southerly storm the sea would cover the connecting strip of land. And the maidens, instead of going across that afternoon, spent the time in collecting honey, with the intention of crossing on the morrow. And another reason: there was a keeper on this strip of land on the mainland side who was in charge, and he was known as the Krowallie (Blue Crane) and no one would attempt to cross without his permission. He was a very austere person and a very dangerous one to dispute with, because he always had beside him on his person a very sharp-bladed spear that would cause a very nasty and severe wound..." - [Next day] "... They came to the Krowallie and asked his permission to cross, which he willingly gave, and the maidens began laughing and chatting..."
Reference	David Unaipon [1924-5], ed. S Muecke & A Shoemaker 2001, <i>Legendary Tales of the Australian Aborigines</i> , Melbourne, Miegunyah Press: 131, 132. In 1930 this story was edited and published (without credit to Unaipon) as 'The Wives of Nurunderi' in William Ramsay Smith 1930, <i>Myths and Legends of the Australian Aborigines</i> , George Harrap, London: see pp.328-330.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	Original Ngarrindjeri informant (unknown)

Date	[?1920s] / 1930
Original source text	['Chirr-bookie, the Blue Crane'] [at the end of his travels] "When Chirr-bookie reached his home he took the remains of Koolatowie into a cave and placed them upon a ledge, and stretched himself out beside them. He prayed to the Father of All Spirits to come and transform him into a blue crane, and to call back the wandering spirit of Koolatowie and command it also to become a crane. The spirit came and sang a song that belonged to the Spirit World, and the body of Chirr-bookie became a stone man, which is still to be seen, and his spirit entered into the body of the blue crane".
Reference	William Ramsay Smith 1930, <i>Myths and Legends of the Australian Aborigines</i> , George Harrap, London: 331, 340-1. This text was presumably edited from an original MS written by Unaipon, but since (along with many others found in Smith 1930) it was not included in the 2001 publication of Unaipon's <i>Legendary Tales</i> , we may presume that the original MS has not been found.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	Original informant (unknown, probably Ramindjeri) / collector probably David Unaipon.

Date	1934
Original source text	"[He] became the tjelbruke bird (found anywhere along coast on stones beak like blue cranes)".
Reference	Milerum (Clarence Long), Feb. 1934 'Story of Tjelbruke', in Tindale 'South-East of SA Journal Vol. 2', AA338/1/33/2: 52.
Informants credited	Milerum
Informants uncredited	

Date	1936
Original source text	" tji:rbuki ibis ".
Reference	Tindale MS, 'Series of words from Karlowan Jan 1936 when showing him animals etc in Museum', 'South-East of SA Journal Vol. 2', AA338/1/33/2: 277.
Informants credited	Albert Karlowan
Informants uncredited	

Date	1936
Original source text	"The story of ' Tji:rbuki (Tjilbruke, Tjelbruke, Tj`erbruke) from Karlowan and notes from Milerum, published in 1936. / A story of the people of Rapid Bay".
Reference	Title of Tindale MS 1935-6, in 'Notes on the Kurna', AA 338/1/35: 79.
Informants credited	Karlowan, Milerum
Informants uncredited	

Date	1936
Original source text	- " [Tji:rbuki] "*... * Also pronounced Tjilbruke, Tjelbruke, Tju`er bruke ". - [after entering the cave north of Cape Jervis] "He did not emerge from the cave but went on into the depths of the hill for a long way. He eventually came out on the top of the hills near a swamp lagoon. He could see the sun shining through a high crevice. He climbed up, and as he looked about, he said: 'Well, there is no use in my living like a man any more.' He therefore transformed himself into a bird, called [tji:rbuki] (a species of ibis) , and spent his time catching fish in the lagoon."
Reference	Tindale 1936, 'Story of [Tji:rbuki], a legend of the people of Rapid Bay', in Tindale and Mountford, 'Results of the Excavation of Kongarati Cave', <i>Records of SA Museum</i> Vol. 5 (4): 500-1.
Informants credited	Karlowan
Informants uncredited	Milerum



Date	1939-40
Original source text	<p>“The two women [<i>wives of Ngurunderi</i>] hurriedly walked down Tankalilla beach to Tjirbuk³⁹ (Blowhole Creek). From there they could see Kangaroo Island, the spirit-land... Ngurunderi hurried up to Tjirbuk, and could see them going across. When they had reached the centre, Ngurunderi called out in a voice of thunder, saying... ‘Fall waters-you’...”</p> <p>³⁹ <i>Tji:rbuk</i>, so named after <i>Tjirbuki</i> a man of the Kurna tribe, but whose wanderings were nevertheless known to the Ramindjeri and other peoples of the Narrinyeri group.”</p>
Reference	RM Berndt 1940, ‘Aspects of Jaralde Culture’, <i>Oceania</i> 11(2): 181 + note 39.
Informants credited	Karlowan and Mark Wilson 1939-40
Informants uncredited	

Date	[c.1940] / 1993
Original source text	<p>- [<i>in story ‘Ngurunderi and Nepeli’</i>] “The two women... began to walk rapidly along... Tankalilla Beach. They could see land in the distance (this was Kangaroo Island) and prepared to walk across... Ngurunderi followed them, walking down the beach to Tjirbuki (Tjirbuk), a place associated with the Dreaming man Blue Crane, on the coast at Blow Hole Creek. By then the two sisters were walking across the strait. By then the two sisters were walking quickly across the strait. When he saw them, Ngurunderi called out to them to return. They would not listen. He called out to the sea. When the two sisters were in the middle... he called again in a thunderous voice. The tide came rushing and fell upon them” (p226).</p> <p>- [<i>in story ‘Becoming Ngatji’</i>] “[<i>Tjirbuki</i>] looked up and began to climb, emerging from the cave to see that he had turned into a bird. This was at Konggaratingga (Blow Hole Creek). When people came there they saw Tjirbuki turned into a bird; they saw him catching fish nearby (at the place now called Tjirbuki). People saw that cave and said, ‘It’s him, because he came up there! That is why there are plenty of fish!’” (p234).</p> <p>- [<i>in Ramindjeri clans</i>] “Pariwarindjera: name from the place Pariwa (Cape Jervis). <i>Ngatji: tjirbuki, species of crane</i>” (p311).</p> <p>- [<i>in ‘Traditional Foods: B. Land, River and Sea birds’</i>]: -</p> <p>- “kroweli, blue crane... Along the shores of the Lakes and the banks of the River [Murray] where they fed on ...yabbies and ...sprats” (p557).</p> <p>- “<i>troperi</i>, black-and-white ibis, also the white ibis and spoonbilled ibis. No distinguishing term used for these three kinds of ibis, because they fed in the same way... Along the swamps...” (p559).</p> <p>- “tjirbuki or tjilbuki, blue crane; a black-and-white bird, larger than the common ibis... Found along the rocky southern coast and beaches where</p>



	they caught salt-water fish. Obtained mainly in Ramindjeri country. Men sometimes caught them, but usually the birds were too quick and cunning.” (p561). - ‘ puki: cave ’ (p446-7 text, and on map p330-1).
<i>Reference</i>	RM Berndt and CH Berndt with J Stanton 1993, <i>A World That Was: the Yaraldi of the Murray River and the Lakes, South Australia</i> , Melbourne University Press.
<i>Informants credited</i>	Albert Karlowan; perhaps also Pinkie Mack for some of Food items.
<i>Informants uncredited</i>	

DRAFT 11 May 2016



Date	n.d. [1980s]
Original source text	<p>“tji:rbruki Kurna Tr. Adelaide area S.Aust. ibis, glossy Plegadis falcinellus peregrinus <i>[added]</i> tji:rbruki is probably correct since glossy = fire like reflections[?] <i>[illegible]</i> markings in legend Name of a Being of the Kurna. In the original story not tji:rbruke which is name <i>[added]</i> check Tindale ms Tindale in Tindale and Mountford RecSAustMus.”</p>
Reference	Tindale Kurna vocabulary cards in AA 338/7/1/12, SA Museum.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	

Date	n.d. [1980s]
Original source text	<p>“Tji:rbruki Peramangk Tr Adelaide Hills S.Aust. being, a male; associated with fire. Name is lit. ‘hidden fire’ from the hidden sheen in the feathers of his `ngaitji the Glossy ibis (Plegadis falcinella). He was of the Patpangga local group of the Kurna tribe. Tindale ms from Karlowan. Tjirbuki Tindale in Tind and Mountf 1936 :500 (in error for Tji:rbruki) NBT.”</p>
Reference	Tindale Peramangk vocabulary card in AA 338/7/1/43.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	

Date	n.d. [1980s]
Original source text	<p>“tjiranggabruki Peramangk Tr. Mt Lofty Ra. S.Aust. ‘hidden fire’; gloss on Glossy ibis feathers, also iron pyrites. Tindale ms from Karlowan (Jarildekald tribe).”</p>
Reference	Tindale Peramangk vocabulary card in AA 338/7/1/19.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	



Date	n.d. [1980s]
Original source text	“ thelbruke, tji:lbruki: Glossy ibis (<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>), also name of ancestral being Tjelbruke ”. - “tol:opori – royal spoonbill (<i>Platalea regia</i>); tor:op:ori – White ibis (<i>Threskiornis molucca</i>)”.
Reference	Tindale Tangani vocabulary cards, as quoted in M Gale 2009, <i>Ngarrindjeri Dictionary</i> : 147, 149.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	

Date	1987
Original source text	“As a [tji:rbruki], which white people today called the glossy ibis (<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>), his spirit still appears in bird form where there are swampy areas. His body became a... rocky outcrop at Barukungga... the place of ‘hidden fire’”. - “His body was turned into stone as a memorial when it became the hill of iron pyrites near Nairne... and the place which supplied the hidden fire held in its rock. We learn that his very name has the literal meaning of fire, [tjirangabruke] or ‘hidden fire’ which, according to informant Karlowan, was one of the terms used by the Jaralde for trade pieces of that stone. The Tangane term linked with the stone, as given by Milerum, is [bə`ruke] meaning ‘fire’.”
Reference	Tindale 1987, ‘The Wanderings of Tjirbruki: a tale of the Kaurna people of Adelaide’, <i>Records of SA Museum</i> 20: 9b, 11a.
Informants credited	
Informants uncredited	

Date	n.d. [1970s?]
Original source text	“Song of the Adelaide tribe relating to Tjilbuki ”.
Reference	Title as given for part of tape A2903, Track A, in typed audition sheets of Mountford gramophone disc recordings, prepared from his notes by Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Islander Studies (AIATSIS).
Informants credited	Charles Mountford 1938-9
Informants uncredited	Probably Diyari or other singers in the Flinders Ranges, 1938-9

Discussion Part A:

THE PLACE 'TJIRBUK':

WHERE NGURUNDURI CALLED OUT, AND TJIRBUKI FISHED:

SOURCES AND SPELLINGS:

Early in his career the anthropologist Ronald Berndt published an account of the Ngurunduri story given by two Yaraldi men, Albert Karlowan “assisted by *Thralrum (Mark Wilson)*” in 1939-40. In this essay “*Tjirbuk (Blowhole Creek)*” is the site the final wrath and judgement of Ngurunderi upon his two wives as they flee across the land bridge towards Kangaroo Island: “*Ngurunderi hurried up to Tjirbuk, and could see them going across. When they had reached the centre, Ngurunderi called out in a voice of thunder, saying... ‘Fall waters-you’*”. In a footnote Berndt observed that the place was “*named after `Tjirbuki a man of the Kurna tribe, but whose wanderings were nevertheless known to the Ramindjeri and other peoples of the Narrinyeri group*”.²

Blowhole Creek flows into Backstairs Passage – or rather, its lagoon seeps through the sand – in a tiny cove between high cliffs about 8 km southeast of Cape Jervis.

Fifty years later Berndt wrote up Karlowan’s version of the story of Tjirbuki under the title “*Becoming ngatji*”. In this account the ancestor emerges from his underground cave journey “*at Konggaratingga’ (Blow Hole Creek)*”, already in the shape of a bird: “*When people came there they saw Tjirbuki turned into a bird; they saw him catching fish nearby (at the place now called Tjirbuki)*”.³ A re-telling of Karlowan’s story of Ngurunderi in the same book reiterates that ‘Tjirbuk’ is a site “*on the coast at Blowhole Creek*”. It was a single place connected with both of the heroes.⁴

The location of both the cave and the fishing site cannot be upstream, but must be (broadly speaking) at Blowhole Beach. I am not aware of any source which identifies more exactly where this cave is.

Yet the cave site and the fishing site are distinguished from each other: Tjirbuk is ‘*nearby*’ and is probably a separate site. This is the name which identifies the locality in *both* stories, while ‘Konggaratingga’ is attached only to Tjirbuki and his cave. We may deduce that Tjirbuk was probably the fishing site.

Berndt tells us almost nothing to distinguish Mark Wilson’s contributions from Karlowan’s in the 1940 essay: certainly not at this end-point of the story. Researchers may discover more when they

² Berndt 1940, ‘Aspects of Jaralde culture’, *Oceania* 11(2): 181.

³ Berndt and Berndt 1993, *A World That Was*: 234.

⁴ Berndt and Berndt 1993: 226.

have access to the Berndt archives. But the 1993 book has the story of Tjirbuki from Karlowan alone, clarifying that it was he who gave the place-name 'Tjirbuk'. Significantly for our linguistic analysis, on some occasions Berndt includes an 'l' in the spelling:

"nitj mari p'rakung itji Tjirlbuki
there sisters came that Tjirbuki place";⁵

and in the list of edible birds, the "blue crane" is spelled "tjilbuki" as well as "tjirbuki".⁶

There is an audio recording made by ethnologist Charles Mountford in 1938 and catalogued as "Song of the Adelaide tribe relating to Tjilbuki" [sic].⁷ It occurs within a series recorded in the Flinders Ranges. Putting aside for the moment the other possible implications of the context far north of the lands covered in the known story, the spelling is the detail which is significant for the linguistics of the name. If it is an accurate transcription from Mountford's notes, it reads as though his informant said "Tjirl-buki" or "Tjil-buki" – just as Karlowan apparently did for Berndt.⁸

The name 'Konggaratingga' in Berndt's published account was probably a mistake, either by Berndt or by his informant. Perhaps it arose from Karlowan's previous discussions with Tindale, who had written up another account of Tjirbuki from Karlowan as an appendix to the 'results of the excavation of Kongarati cave near Second Valley'. There 'Congeratinga' has always been the name of a creek.⁹

THE PLACE AND ITS CULTURE:

Blowhole Creek spreads out into a tiny swamp as it enters the beach at the bottom of a steep gully. No doubt this little lagoon is (or was) often inhabited by ibises or blue cranes. It is probably the place Karlowan had in mind as 'Tjirbuk', while the cave exit itself is probably one of the many holes in the surrounding cliffs.

⁵ Karlowan's narrative text in Yaraldi, Berndt and Berndt 1993: 440.

⁶ Berndt and Berndt 1993: 561.

⁷ Title as given for tape A2903, Track A, in typed audition sheets of Mountford recordings, prepared from his notes by Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Islander Studies (AIATSIS).

⁸ Listening to the recording does not resolve the uncertainties (first item on Side 19 of a gramophone disc series held by the State Library of SA (Mountford papers PRG 1218/8/19; cp. PRG 1218/8/60–62, digital Audio Tapes of the same recordings). The catalogue quotes the recorded announcement, a rather polished woman's voice which precedes the performance; but when listening to this very old recording it is very hard to tell whether she is saying 'buki' or 'bruki', and no other documentation has been found yet. The language of the song is very hard to decipher in the absence of a text, and we get no other help with the pronunciation of the name as it does not seem to occur in the singing. There is no indication who the singer is. These mysteries could only be clarified from Mountford's documentation, if any.

⁹ Tindale 1936, 'Story of Tjirbuki', in 'Results of the excavation of Kongarati cave', *Rec. SA Museum* 5(2): 501. In this account Tjirbuki emerges vaguely "on top of the hills"; but this is probably Tindale merging Karlowan's account with Milerum's. See the discussion 'Karlowan and Blowhole Creek' in PNS 7.01/06 'Konggaratingga' (Blowhole Creek) and 5.02.02/03 Kungaratingga (Second Valley).

According to Berndt's Yaraldi information (doubtless Karlowan around 1940), the *tjirbuki* bird associated with this site was the *ngatji* (totemic 'friend') of the "Pariwarindjera" clan who were named after Pariwa ('Cape Jervis') and allegedly part of the Ramindjeri "dialectical unit".¹⁰

In the 1840s the missionary linguist Meyer knew a man at Encounter Bay called "Tjirbuke". He was presumably named after the bird, probably belonged to this totem, and so may have been one of the 'Pariwarindjera'. This man was one of those who joined the whaling workforce there. Meyer wrote that Tjirbuke, brother of Kalduke, was "one of the most noble natures I have hitherto encountered among the natives". For a while Meyer hoped that Tjirbuke and two others would be converted to Christianity, 'settle' in a house and become farmers; but none of these hopes were realized.¹¹

POSTSCRIPT:

In the password-protected Data File of this place-name¹² I give Part B of this discussion: a history and analysis of (1) the name of the ancestral bird-man, and (2) the contested identity of the bird.

References to background documents

For complete data and background analysis of related place-names, see also the password-protected background documents

'BACKGROUND3Tjilbruke.pdf' and 'BACKGROUND4TjilbrukiCavesHills.pdf'.

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End of Summary

¹⁰ Berndt and Berndt 1993: 311. Berndt's map (p.330) locates the 'Pariwarindjera' on the tip of the Peninsula from Tunkalilla around to Delamere, incorporating the Cape and Blowhole Beach. But his text (p.311) – presumably reflecting Karlowan's actual information – says merely "from the place *Pariwa (Cape Jervis)*": which probably means that what Karlowan said was much more open to different interpretations than the map suggests. It is necessary to remember that a reference to 'Cape Jervis' in 19th-century literature and memory is more likely to mean all of Fleurieu Peninsula (as on Flinders' map) than the Cape itself. My research suggests that 'Pariwa' was originally in the high range where the suburb Parawa is now (see PNS 7.01/02 Pariwarangg). Berndt's maps mark a Ramindjeri 'dialectical unit' northward to either Hallett's Cove (p.330) or perhaps Brighton (p.304), which are considerable extrapolations even from his own main text, in which he admits that information about the Ramindjeri was very sparse because they were dispersed before his informants grew up (cp. pp.23, 312, 320). Even if the maps accurately represent what Karlowan believed, it is a view of the social situation as it may have been in his late-19th-century youth, not at first contact. We do not know who identified themselves as Blowhole Creek people or 'Pariwa' people in 1836, nor what language(s) they spoke. However, Karlowan's evidence is good ground for the existence of a clan somewhere around Blowhole Beach and Parawa with the *tjirbuki* as its totem.

¹¹ Meyer to Dresden Missionary Society 25 July, 27 Aug, 7 Oct 1844, 27 Oct 1845, 4 Oct 1846, in HAE Meyer letters, tr. H Kneebone and C Rathjen, SA Lutheran Archives.

¹² See 7-01-07_TjirbukCOMPLETE.pdf.