

SHIPPED ASHORE

The origins and deployment of mermaid place names in Australia and related visual representations

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ABSTRACT: Since European and, specifically, Anglo-Irish colonisation in the late 1700s, a number of Australian locations have been given the name ‘mermaid.’ This article examines the principal derivations of these place names – including those relating to the voyages of the *HMC Mermaid* around Australia’s coastline in the early 1800s – and some of the manners in which these names have been represented in signage, place branding, commercial applications and/or public discourse. In providing this critical survey, the article examines the inscription of a traditional European folkloric entity (and modern media representations of it) into Australian public culture and, in some instances, the related impact of these on destination branding.

KEYWORDS: Mermaid, place name, Australia

Introduction

Place name studies – also referred to as toponymy – is a well-established practice that is premised on a recognition of (predominantly terrestrial) place names as an important form of cultural heritage. As a result of this orientation the field has largely been preservative, focussed on the accumulation and cataloguing of place names together with details of their origins. In recent years place name studies has also been inflected and enriched by a ‘critical turn’ addressed to analysing various aspects of the politics and political effects of place naming. This ‘turn’ has been evident with regard to topics such as cultural landscapes (eg Alderman, Howard and Graham, 2008) and/or in colonial and/or urban settings (eg Rose-Redward, Alderman and Azaryahu, 2010 and Fleury and Raoulx, 2014). In recent years the field has also been diversified by increased work on hydronymy (the study of names of bodies of water), with regard to topics such as fishing grounds and diving sites (eg Nash, 2009; Nash and Chuk, 2012). While toponymy has been slow to address issues of signage, and of destination branding premised on place names, tourism researchers have begun to explore the topic. Referring to popular tourist destinations as *sights* (as in ‘sight-seeing’), Light has asserted that:

In some circumstances, toponyms can become tourist sights based on their extraordinary properties, their broader associations within popular culture, or

their role as metonyms for some other aspect of a place. Place names may be sights in their own right or 'markers' of a sight and, in some cases, the marker may be more significant than the sight to which it refers. (2013: 141)

This article draws on aspects of the above work, mixing orthodox toponymy and hydronymy with analyses of the visual signs associated with particular local place names, drawing on approaches that Lavrenova (2019) has outlined with regard to the “sign systems” that are one component of intangible cultural heritage contributing to the character and perception of lived landscapes.

The mixed nature of approaches outlined above, which might be considered as an expanded and/or applied form of toponymy, is appropriate for our address to uses of the term ‘mermaid’ to denote particular Australian locales.¹ As such, our focus is entirely Anglophonic, since – as far as we have been able to ascertain – the term ‘mermaid’ has not been deployed as a loan-word by any Australian Indigenous language cultures to refer to landscape features or waterways.² Similarly, we do not discuss any locales perceived by Indigenous Australian cultures to be associated with *mermaid-like* mythological entities (such as the *yawkyaw* of the Kuninjk people of West Arnhem Land), since such associations are more localised, complex and discrete³ than the national patterns of usage of the term ‘mermaid’ analysed in this article’s survey of European settler culture.

Primary research for this article comprised searches of Australian state and territory online place name data bases⁴ and a reading of Captain Phillip Parker King’s detailed account of the voyages of the *HMC Mermaid* in 1818-1822. This was followed by searches of Google, Google Maps and Google Earth undertaken to identify any locations that may have been omitted (and/or alternatively designated) in the previously mentioned databases⁵ and resulting information checked against the database of the Australian Place Names Survey⁶ to produce a data set of 38 locations (included as an Appendix to this article). All mermaid place names referred to in this article include the numerical designation given in the Appendix (due to repetition of particular names in various locations). This research was supplemented by visits to centres with particular clusters of mermaid associations, such as

¹ We initially also considered including discussion of places named after sirens in this article, but searches revealed only one such Australian place name, Sirens Song Creek, a short seasonal watercourse in the Snowy Mountains. The name appears to be recent and its origins are unknown.

² Although, as discussed in Section IV, Mermaid Pools (M25) in the Bargo River appears to have been named by (Euro-Australian) trail-makers in partial reference to an Indigenous legend.

³ Indeed, place naming – particular with regard to referent entities or beliefs – is more complex in Indigenous Australian culture than in settler society. With regard to the *yawkyaw*, for instance, Barkus has identified that “certain features of country are equated by the Kuninjk with body parts of *yawkyaw*, for example, a bend in a river or creek may be said to be the tail of the *yawkyaw* or a billabong may be said to be its head”. (2007: online).

⁴ The links for the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, Northern Territory, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia data bases are included in the Bibliography.

⁵ Small localities such Manly’s Mermaid Pool (NSW) (M20), Mermaid Lookout (M17), at Diamond Head (NSW) and Little Mermaid Lookout in the D’Aguilar Range (Queensland) (M02) are absent from their respective states’ databases. It should also be noted that one of the limitations of state and territory data bases and Google search engines is that they only record names that have persisted to the present. Footnote 15 identifies two Tasmanian mermaid themed place names that have slipped into disuse, for instance, and there may well be others.

⁶ For a history of Australian place name studies – and the development of the Australian Place Names survey, in particular – see Atchison, Hodges and Blair (2016).

the Gold Coast and Sydney, to gather contextual information and/or images. Additional searches were made of business and street names in cluster areas to ascertain the extents to which these may have reflected local place naming. Where associations of names with historical and/or cultural phenomena were ascertained, these associations were analysed so as to trace patterns of derivation. Unlike folklore related place name studies in European locations, Australian mermaid place names have been applied without any traditions of such creatures existing in the locations in question. Unlike some parts of North America, into which Western European migrants imported figures such as tommyknockers or fairies and with localised folklore developing around their activities (see, respectively, James, 1992 and Narvaez, 1987); neither mermaids nor other Anglo-Irish entities such as leprechauns or boggarts, have become established in Australian settler folklore.

I. The voyages of *HMC Mermaid* and related Australian place names

Anglo-Irish settlement of Australia began in 1788 with the establishment of Port Jackson, now known as Sydney. In its early phases, the colonists and their administrators concentrated on establishing a viable community in the face of hostile Indigenous clans and related food security issues (Gaps, 2018) but by the early 1800s, with the colony established, its administrators turned to exploring wider areas of the continent and its coastline. The *HMC Mermaid*⁷ was a small, single masted boat (known as a 'cutter') that was built in 1816 in Howrah, India (close to Kolkata) in a shipyard administered by the British East India Company. 'Mermaid' was a relatively common ship's name in the 1800s (Scribner, 2021), emphasising the prominence of the mermaid figure in maritime folklore. The British Royal Navy purchased the boat and sailed it to Port Jackson in 1817. Under the command of Admiral Phillip Parker King it was subsequently used to explore and survey the coast and fringing islands of the Australian continent until 1823, when it was redeployed for various purposes before being wrecked on Flora Reef, off the north east coast of Queensland, in 1829.

King kept detailed notes on his voyages that were published in London in 1827. His voluminous accounts give no indication of why he chose to affix the name 'mermaid' to particular locales nor what associations the term may have had for him (beyond it being the name of his vessel) but his repeated use of it suggests either a certain affection for the term and/or its use as a default descriptor for locations when another name did not suggest itself to him. King departed Port Jackson in late December 1817, travelling down the east coast and into the Bass Strait, separating Tasmania from the continental mainland, where he narrowly avoided being grounded on a reef that was later named Mermaid Rock (M35) in an area later named Mermaid Bay (Mo4). Two months later, while travelling north along the north-western coast of Western Australia, King explored a group of small islands to the north-west of the small, present-day town of Dampier, which he named the 'Intercourse Islands' (in commemoration of his friendly contact with local Indigenous peoples there) but which are now referred to as the Dampier archipelago. On February 28th he recorded the name of one passage between the islands as Mermaid's Strait (M36) (a term that has lost its possessive case in contemporary usage).⁸ The Western

⁷ *The Mermaid* has frequently been referred to as the HMS (His Majesty's Ship) but HMC (C = Cutter) is the correct designation.

⁸ This term is commemorated in the name of a contemporary supply vessel – *The Mermaid Strait* – built at Dampier in 2012. (See Australian Maritime Safety Authority registration information at:

Australian Landgate database also records a Mermaid Sound (M37) in the north of the Dampier archipelago. While his book makes no reference to it, a small island at the mouth of King Sound, to the east of the Dampier Peninsula, also became referred to as Mermaid Island (M14) around this time.⁹ By mid-March, King was exploring a group of reefs further north, some 260 kilometres west of the present-day town of Broome, that he named the Rowley Shoals (after their discoverer, Captain Rowley, who had an encounter with them in 1800). He named the northernmost as Mermaid Shoal on March 16th, although the shoal is now known as Mermaid Reef (M32) and the is included within the Mermaid Reef Marine Park.¹⁰ On the final leg of his circumnavigation of the continent, King also encountered a reef close to shore in Crowdy Bay, south of the present-day town of Port Macquarie (on the mid-north coast of NSW), that he also named as Mermaid Reef (M31).¹¹ In addition to mermaid place names that can be identified as directly arising from King's voyages, additional place names have been applied in reference to his voyages, such as Mermaid Bank (M03), off the north coast of Middle Island, to the south of Cape Arid (Western Australia), which John Stokes encountered on the survey ship *The Beagle* on December 5th 1838 and deemed to be an extension of a bank previously charted by King.¹² The origin of the naming of a promontory on the south-west coast of the (uninhabited) Raragala Island, in the Arafura Sea, as Mermaid Point (M28) is unknown. Similar ambiguity concerns another Mermaid Point (M29) in the Cambridge Gulf and another to the east of Albany (M28).

Following her voyages around Western Australia, the *Mermaid* was used to explore areas of south-east Queensland in an extended survey conducted by John Oxley in 1823. The first mermaid themed place name designated in Queensland was given by Oxley to a stretch of the Brisbane River. While exploring the area in a small whaling boat (which had been carried by the *Mermaid* to allow for exploration of shallow waters) he designated a bend in the river as Mermaid Reach (to the south of the peninsular suburb now known as Fig Tree Point) (M30). The designation of areas of rivers as 'reaches' by early navigators – and/or the recording of such terms in 19th and 20th Century maps – is unusual in Australia, with areas of the Brisbane River in the area now occupied by the city of Brisbane being the prime example.¹³ The term 'reach' refers to a small area of a river, often a straight section, that (in its original usage), could be sailed without tacking. While the names of such reaches are relatively archaic today and are not reflected in modern signage, place naming and/or in contemporary services such as Google Maps, they retain heritage associations that are occasionally commented on (see, for example, Dixon, nd). Mermaid Mountain (M18), a peak in the D'Aguilar Range, located 30 kms west of Brisbane's CBD, has also

<https://www.amsa.gov.au/vessels-operators/ship-registration/list-registered-ships/mermaid-strait> - accessed 14th August 2020).

⁹ See Holder (1935) for an argument that King may also have been influenced in his naming by the number of dugongs found in the area (the latter often being characterised as mermaid-like).

¹⁰ King and his boat's visit to north-west Australia is also commemorated in another form. In September 1820 the boat's voyages were interrupted while repairs were made at Careening Bay, in the Kimberly region, at which time the name of the boat was carved into a Boab Tree that has survived to the present. The tree is now known as the Mermaid Tree and has become a tourist attraction in its own right (see Coral Expeditions, 2020).

¹¹ The reef's name has subsequently been perpetuated by the designation of a coastal vantage point just to the north of Diamond Head (from which the reef is visible) being designated as Mermaid Lookout (M17) and being accessed by a path signposted as Mermaid Lookout trail.

¹² Log entry in Stokes (1846).

¹³ See Seto (2002) and Dixon (nd) for reference to other reaches in the Brisbane River (such as Quarantine Flats, Humbug, Lytton, Quarries, Bulimba, Shafston and South Brisbane reaches).

been posited as named after/in association with Mermaid Reach, seeming on the grounds that it is visible as a small feature on the horizon (20 kms distant) when looking north-west from the (elevated) south bank of Mermaid Reach (Queensland Place Name Register, nd). However, further research is required on this attribution as the association seems tenuous and the Little Mermaid Lookout (M02), located 1km south-west of Mermaid Mountain, is not a feature that is visible from the Brisbane River and appears to have been named after the opening-up and signage of trails around the D'Aguilar Range in the mid-late 20th Century.

II. South-Eastern Queensland's Mermaid Cluster

While awareness of Mermaid Reach and its connection to the *Mermaid* have faded as a modern city has developed around the area of the Brisbane River initially surveyed by Oxley, another location, Mermaid Beach (M05), seventy kilometres southeast, owes its name to Oxley's brief landing there in 1824 (Queensland Government, nd). Despite this, the appellation Mermaid Beach was only officially recognised by the state of Queensland in 1982, one year after the nearby Mermaid Waters area (M39), located 1 km inland from the beach, was recognised (Figure 1). As discussed by Hayward and Fleury (2017), Mermaid Waters is an aggregation of RNAs (road-networked artificial islands) and FICEs (finger-island canal estates) of a type that have been constructed in multiple locations around the lower reaches of the Nerang River since the mid-1950s. Despite the relative dates of their official recognitions, the beach area appears to have carried the designation 'mermaid' first, in the form of a "speculative land subdivision" being designated as the Mermaid Beach Estate in 1890 (Centre for the Government of Queensland, 2018) and with 70 coastal building lots advertised for sale under that name in 1924. Properties based on these lots formed the basis of the present-day suburb of Mermaid Beach, with the Mermaid Waters FICE development following in 1968-71 (Figure 1). While seldom referred to by name, the small island in the waterway that marks the north-western boundary of Mermaid Waters suburb, crossed by Surfers Avenue and comprising one central residential street (Orvieto Avenue), was officially recognised as Mermaid Island (M13) by the Queensland Government in 2010.

Along with these designations of two suburbs and a tiny canal island, the folkloric figure's name was also adopted for the recreation area adjacent to the Pacific Highway, which has been known as Mermaid Park (M19) since the late 1960s. Reflecting this designation, the park featured a golden mermaid statue in a small pool (Figure 2) which deteriorated and was demolished around 2005 (and has not subsequently been replaced). Similar figures have since been adopted in signage and/or as logos for local businesses around Mermaid Beach in recent years (Figures 2-4). The nature of the mermaids represented in these range from those influenced by the Edvard Eriksen's famous, fin-footed mermaid statue that graces Copenhagen Harbour's Langelinie promenade (Figure 3) to figures that recall the design of Ariel, the mermaid featured in Disney's 1989 filmic adaptation of Andersen's story (Figures 4).¹⁴ These elements can be considered as vernacular destination branding for the location. By contrast, the residential area of Mermaid Waters lacks such obvious signage for various businesses named after its location, since their clientele predominantly comprises residents of the area for whom such destination branding is less necessary.

¹⁴ Showing an engagement with local history, the Montego Mermaid Beach Hotel also featured a stylised, art deco rendition of the golden mermaid from Mermaid Park on one of its promotional logos – see: <https://www.mermaidbeachmotel.com.au/home/> - accessed August 9th 2020.

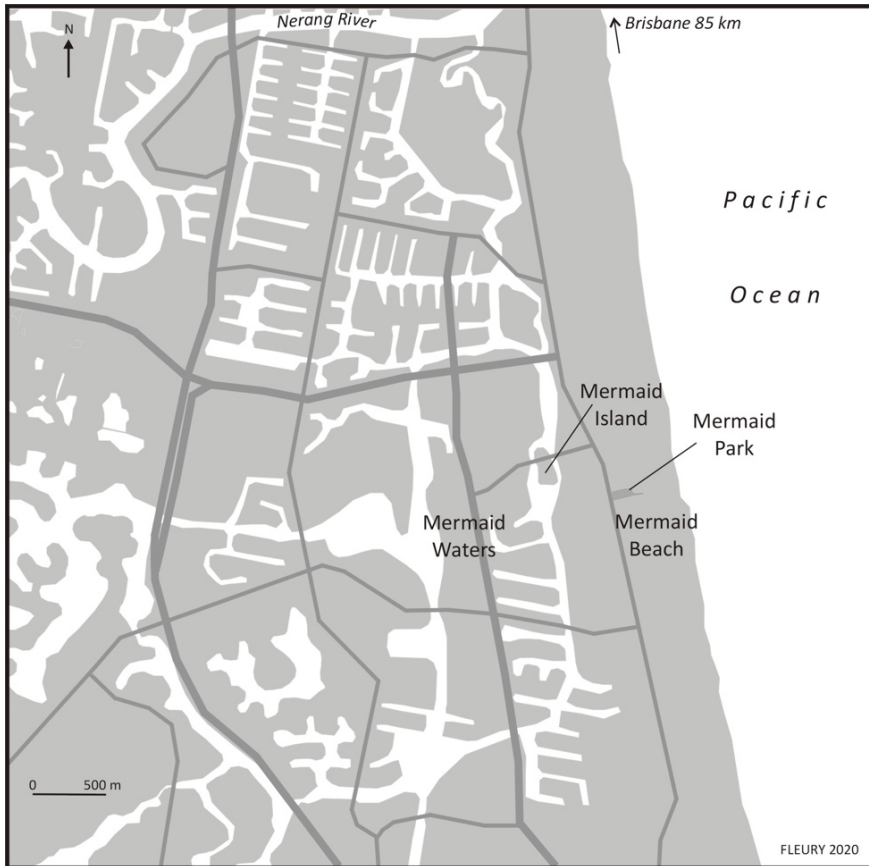


Figure 1 – Map of cluster of mermaid named places on southern Gold Coast (Queensland).



Figure 2 – detail from postcard sold in the early 1970s showing the mermaid fountain (and two unidentified females) in Mermaid Park



Figure 3 - Logo on front window of Mermaid Beach Tavern (2016).



Figure 4 - Mermaid Beach Surf Club official supporter's logo (nd).

The representation of mermaids around Mermaid Beach and the development of the extended Gold Coast strip as a centre for aquatic leisure (manifest in the name of one of its key locations, Surfers Paradise) has led to a more general association of the area with mermaids (Hayward, 2018: 184-186). This has been most obvious in the form, of the two, internationally popular mermaid-themed TV series, *H2O: Just Add Water* and *Mako Mermaids*, (see Hayward, 2017: 135-138) shot around the Gold Coast, which even feature a (fictional) mermaid island, named Mako, supposedly located some sixty kilometres east of the northern Gold Coast. Similarly, a range of other local events and organisations have adopted mermaid signage, themes and/or logos of various kinds (ibid).

III. Mermaid place name and associations around Sydney

While the *HMC Mermaid* was based in Sydney during her various trips along Australia's east coast, there is no record of her name being attached to any of landscape features along the New South Wales (NSW) coast or its inland waterways. While there is evidence that the name mermaid was applied to early establishments catering for sailors and port workers in the manner indicated by Scribner (2020), such as the Ship and Mermaid Hotel, which operated in Sydney's Rocks area in the early 1800s, NSW's mermaid named locales derive from more modern contexts. Two of the most notable, Mermaid Pool, in Manly (M20), and Mermaid Rock (M33), in Bondi Beach, reflect 20th Century cultural phenomena.

Located on the north-eastern tip of Sydney Harbour, Manly developed as a location for swimming, surfing, beach sports and promenading in the late 1800s and the figure of the mermaid became associated with Manly's public bathing culture in 1907-31 through its

representation in children's fiction (Stephens, 1909) and in pageants and John Suchomlin's sand sculptures (Hayward, 2018: 178-179). While no beachside locations adopted the name, a pool on Manly Creek, to the north-west of the beach, became known as Mermaid Pool (Figure 5) during the early 1930s, according to local oral folklore, when young, impoverished women living nearby took to bathing there (and were clandestinely observed by young men while doing so). The name persisted, although the pool is largely clogged with invasive weeds and is no longer used as a swimming hole. Given the lack of tourist (or other retail) amenities in the area near the pool able to capitalise on historical associations, the only notable visual imagery inspired by the pool's name is the logo used by the STEP organisation in north-eastern Sydney to promote restoration of habitat along Manly Creek (Figure 6).

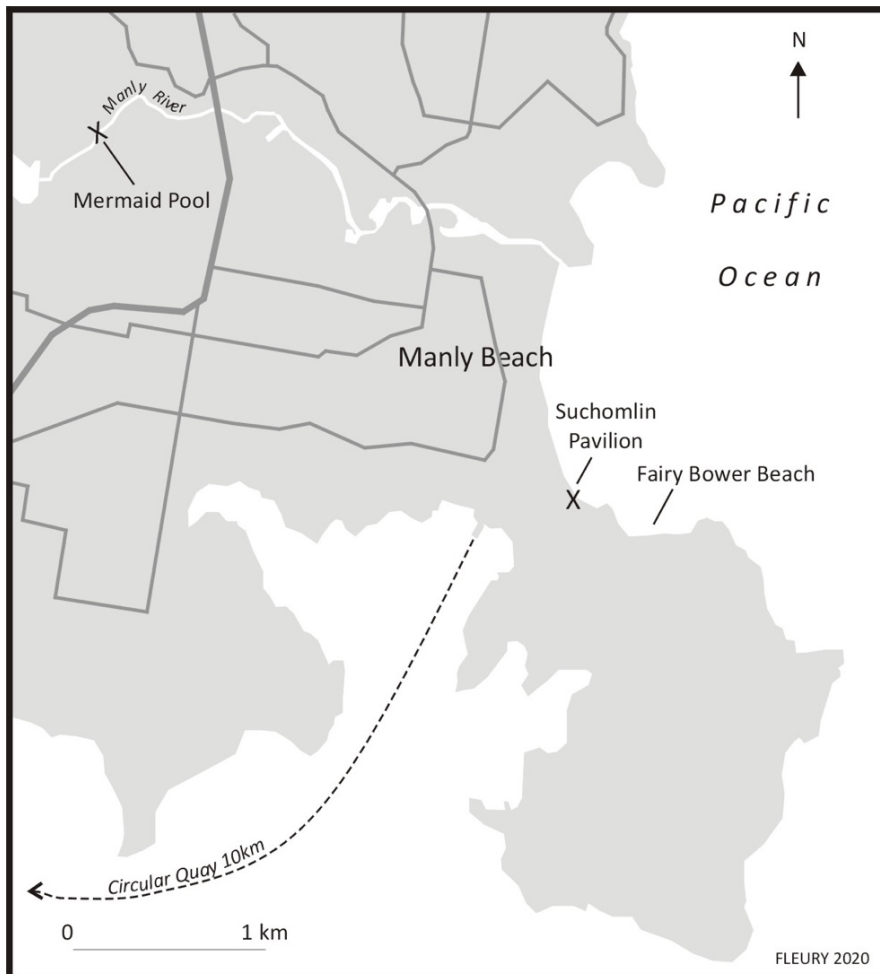


Figure 5 – Map of Manly area showing Mermaid Pool and Manly Beach



Figure 6 – Manly Creek restoration project logo (c2012)

Since the late 1800s, Manly's principal rival as a centre for beachside leisure has been Bondi Beach, located to the south of Sydney Harbour (Figure 7). Bondi Beach's association with mermaids developed at a later point, from the 1960s on, after an eccentric Sydney sculptor Lyall Randolph (Williams) erected two mermaid statues on a rock at the north-east corner of the beach in 1960. These proved controversial due to their representation of the upper female body in nude form. One was removed by students as a stunt in 1960, and later replaced, before both were battered by storms in 1976, one being swept away and the other being damaged and placed into storage (Hayward, 2018: 179-183). Despite the statues only being present for a brief, 16-year period, the rock (Figure 7) continues to be referred to as Mermaid Rock¹⁵ some 45 years after their removal.



Figure 7 – Mermaid Rock, Bondi Beach (Kim C 5, Coastal Watch, 2014)

¹⁵ And, occasionally - and erroneously - as Mermaid Rocks (in the plural).

IV. Other Mermaid named Locales around Australia

In addition to those locales discussed above, there are a number of coastal and river pools, mostly used for recreational swimming, which fall into five main types:

- in rivers – on the Bargo River (NSW) (M25) and in Kiew River at Mount Beauty (Victoria) (M22) (with the area around the latter being referred to as Mermaid Beach [Mo7])
- occurring as natural features on coastlines – at Arakoon National Park (NSW) (M24)
- a beach pool near Urquhart Bluff (Victoria) (M23)
- a small, sheltered coastal cove referred to as Mermaid's Pool at Bridport (Tasmania)¹⁶ (M26) with a nearby coastal area being named Mermaid Beach (Mo4)¹⁷
- a small coastal lake on Bribie Island (Queensland) named Mermaid Lagoon (M16).

With one exception, the designation of these pools evokes the general connection between mermaids and waterside bathing and leisure explored (in far more concentrated form) around the Gold Coast, rather than any more specific local heritage association. The exceptional case is Mermaid Pools (in the plural) (M25), a remote waterhole on the Bargo River, south-west of Sydney, only accessible by walking trails.¹⁸ The current designation of the site appears to be fairly recent, perhaps as late as the 1990s, and appears to derive from a local Indigenous D'harawal Dreaming (ie folklore) story concerning a fish-woman/mother of fish named Migadan.¹⁹ In this, Migadan lived in the river around the pools and killed and ate several young men who wastefully caught fish in the river back in the ancestral Dreamtime. When Migadan refused the Creator Spirit's command to return the souls of the young men to their families, the Creator Spirit summoned a storm that blasted a pool into the river where the fish-woman remains trapped to this day, waiting to devour men (Bodkin and Bodkin-Andrews, 2001; Free Range Media, 2011).²⁰ In recent years the pools have attracted attention for a substantial number of injuries and fatalities arising from walkers jumping into the shallow, rocky waters (Osborne, 2018).

In addition to the locations referred to above, the name mermaid has been applied to a pool (M21), cave area (Mo8) and associated gully (M10) in the Blue Mountains (NSW) near

¹⁶ See Pasmore (1926) for a poetic reflection on the pool.

¹⁷ An account of a "Parliamentary trip to Tasman's Peninsula" in Tasmania (Unattributed, 1869) also identifies a coastal rock pool near Eaglehawk Neck as "Mermaid's Pool" (and a nearby cave as "Neptune's Grotto") and 'Lx' (1925) identifies a "Mermaids Pool" at Victoria Harbour (South Australia). Both of these names appear to have fallen into disuse in the intervening years and their precise locations are unknown (and they are consequently omitted from the list of mermaid-named locations listed in Appendix 1).

¹⁸ A map produced by walker/explorer Robert Sloss in 2018 (reproduced in Hathway, 2019) identifies a point about the pools as Mermaids Lookdown. I have not included this in the Appendix or otherwise allocated it a M Index number to this as I have not been able to find any use of the term elsewhere.

¹⁹ Bodkin and Bodkin-Andrews' modern (English-language) re-telling of the ancestral story identifies Migadan as "half fish, half woman... nowadays you would call her a mermaid" (2001: 3) but does not include a representation of her in any of its accompanying illustrations.

²⁰ Also see Urbis (2016) for reference to the area's broader cultural significance.

Blackheath. The name appears to have been in use since the early-mid 1800s and was colourfully commented on by a traveller in 1884 in the following terms:

There is a beautiful gully near Blackheath, leading from what is known as the Mermaid's Cave - why so called only those who named it can know: one thinks of a sandy beach with white-crested waves, a cavern decked with glistening shells, and a lady with a long tail combing her hair. There is nothing of that sort to be seen, but after scrambling down a stony path and jumping over rocks, where a tail would be most inconvenient, one comes upon a shining pool, which, fed by a stream trickling through a cleft in the over-arching nook, in its turn feeds another stream, which gurgling over a rocky path makes a deep gorge glorious with greenery. (Unattributed, 1884: 15)

Signage around the cave and pool (Figure 8) has been developed to emphasise the mermaid connection (as a point of attraction/micro-destination branding). This includes two notable features, the first (top right) being the designation and representation of a 'Little Mermaid Tree' (with the association with Andersen's fictional little mermaid being emphasised by an insert image of Eriksen's Copenhagen mermaid statue into the top right corner of a photo of the tree in question) and the second (bottom right), being the text below an image of a cut rock path designating it as "Posiden's Stairs" (the former word presumably being a misspelling of Poseidon, the Greek god of the Sea).



Figure 8 – Sign indicating walking trail around Mermaid Cave (Merson, 2015: online)

The intensive, if somewhat ‘strained’ cluster of mermaid-related designations and signage around Mermaid Cave contrasts to two other small locational clusters. Great Mermaid Beach (M01) on the mid-north coast of NSW, on the north side of the mouth of the Karuah River, is a lengthy and undeveloped coastal strip that appears to have inspired the names of a number of establishments on the south side of the river, including two residential amenities named Mermaids Rest and Mermaids Secret, and an establishment that has recently been renamed Mermaid Café. The beach is not signed with mermaid logos and the commercial establishments, similarly, do not stress this aspect in their marketing. In this manner, the nomenclature can be considered as weakly associative. Similarly, a related cluster of place name, the area on the Beecroft peninsula, near Jervis Bay (NSW), that includes Mermaid(s) Inlet (M11), Mermaid Gully (M10) and Mermaid Rock (M34) lacks any visual branding that exploits the association, despite being a popular walking trail that is widely promoted in social media (see, for instance, *Get Outdoors*, 2019). In addition to these established locales, new areas are also being designated with the name as a marketing hook, such as Mermaid Cove (M09), a small residential development/eponymous road at Jurien Bay, in south-western Western Australia.²¹

Conclusion

This article has identified various patterns in the origins of Australian mermaid-themed place names.²² The earliest set arose (directly or indirectly) from Admiral King’s exploration of the Australian coast in the HMC *Mermaid* in the early 1800s and reflects the name of that vessel. While some others, such as Mermaid Pool in the NSW Blue Mountains, were coined in the 19th Century in reference to the European folkloric figure, the majority of remaining terms originated in the 20th Century. These arose in association with cultural phenomena (such as at Manly or Bondi), as a conscious attempt at coastal/waterside suburban marketing (on the southern Gold Coast) or else represent other, weaker types of association. All of these represent impositions of settler names on territories wrestled from Indigenous cultures since 1788 and, as such, are evidence of this history and of cultural imperialism in contemporary Australian place naming – ie the rendering of places with reference to European cultural motifs and paradigms. Beyond this, such place names also represent the “internationalisation” of the mermaid (Hayward, 2018), involving the export of a western cultural figure to various parts of the globe and its establishment and localisation in different manners. In locations such as Manly and The Gold Coast, the figure and places named after it now have local heritage associations that are part of Australian settler cultural history. As the discussions of the southern Gold Coast and Mermaid Pool (Blue Mountains) have identified, the visual signs produced to indicate and/or capitalise on the mermaid as a figure have also been influenced by modern media forms such as literature and cinema. In such contexts, the linguistic practice of naming is extended and inflected by visual interpretation in a manner that represents the places’ designations as being ‘in play’ in contemporary culture.

²¹ Showing an awareness of the area’s name as a marketing hook, a Real Estate company advertised a plot at Mermaid Cove with a montage of the lot sign and an image of Ariel from Disney’s *Little Mermaid* film holding the fish Nemo (from the film *Finding Nemo*): <https://www.domain.com.au/9-mermaid-cove-jurien-bay-wa-6516-2016574057>

²² It should be noted that the research presented also includes some ‘dead leads.’ We have for example, been unable to ascertain the origins of the name of Mermaid Rock in Victoria (M36).

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Appendix – Mermaid place names in Australia (and ID numbers used in article)

ID	Location name	State	Coordinates
M01	Great Mermaid Beach	NSW	32° 41' 40" S - 152° 10' 28" E
M02	Little Mermaid Lookout	Queensland	27° 29' 25" S - 152° 49' 17" E
M03	Mermaid Bank	WA	34° 03' 34" S - 123° 12' 27" E
M04	Mermaid Bay	Tasmania	40° 24' 02" S - 144° 55' 55" E
M05	Mermaid Beach	Queensland	28° 05' 03" S - 153° 24' 14" E
M06	Mermaid Beach	Tasmania	40° 58' 46" S - 147° 22' 10" E
M07	Mermaid Beach	Victoria	36° 44' 07" S - 147° 11' 05" E
M08	Mermaid's Cave	NSW	33° 39' 55" S - 150° 14' 33"
M09	Mermaid Cove	WA	30° 17' 42" S - 115° 02' 13"
M10	Mermaid Gully	NSW	33° 39' 55" S - 150° 14' 33"
M11	Mermaid Inlet	NSW	33° 46' 44" S - 151° 15' 13" E
M12	Mermaid Island	NT	11° 20' 26" S - 136° 38' 54" E
M13	Mermaid Island	Queensland	28° 02' 37" S - 153° 25' 22" E
M14	Mermaid Island	WA	16° 40' 02" S - 122° 57' 45" E
M15	Mermaid Island	WA	28° 04' 55" S - 153° 24' 01" E
M16	Mermaid Lagoon	Queensland	27° 00' 16" S - 153° 09' 39" E
M17	Mermaid Lookout	NSW	31° 42' 56" S - 153° 24' 14" E
M18	Mermaid Mountain	Queensland	27° 28' 43" S - 152° 48' 01" E
M19	Mermaid Park	Queensland	28° 02' 46" S - 153° 25' 54" E
M20	Mermaid Pool	NSW	33° 46' 46" S - 151° 15' 46" E
M21	Mermaid Pool	NSW	33° 39' 55" S - 150° 14' 33" E
M22	Mermaid Pool	Vic	36° 44' 22" S - 147° 11' 22" E
M23	Mermaid Pool	Vic	38° 26' 11" S - 144° 08' 03" E
M24	Mermaid Pools	NSW	30° 52' 46" S - 153° 04' 34" E
M25	Mermaid's Pool	NSW	34° 14' 22" S - 150° 36' 07" E
M26	Mermaid's Pool	Tasmania	40° 59' 19" S - 147° 23' 21" E
M27	Mermaid Point	NT	11° 43' 59" S - 136° 03' 21" E
M28	Mermaid Point	WA	34° 53' 58" S - 118° 24' 43" E
M29	Mermaid Point	NT	15° 09' 37" S - 128° 14' 00" E
M30	Mermaid Reach	Queensland	27° 32' 48" S - 152° 57' 46" E
M31	Mermaid Reef	NSW	31° 48' 03" S - 152° 47' 31" E
M32	Mermaid Reef*	WA	11° 12' 32" S - 130° 05' 40" E
M33	Mermaid Rock	NSW	33° 54' 40" S - 151° 15' 18" E
M34	Mermaid Rock	NSW	33° 46' 44" S - 151° 15' 13" E
M35	Mermaid Rock	Tasmania	40° 22' 29" S - 144° 56' 01" E
M36	Mermaid Rock	Victoria	38° 20' 34" S - 141° 37' 17" E

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M ₃₇	Mermaid Sound	WA	20° 32' 23" S - 116° 44' 17" E
M ₃₈	Mermaid Strait	WA	20° 40' 33" S - 116° 28' 55" E
M ₃₉	Mermaid Waters	Queensland	28° 05' 03" S - 153° 24' 01" E

* Formerly known as Mermaid Shoal