

THE MILLSTONE

KURRAJONG ~ COMLEROI HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Society is dedicated to researching, recording, preserving and promoting the history of the district. Covering the area north and west of the Hawkesbury River – North Richmond, Kurmond, Kurrajong, Berambing, Bilpin, Grose Vale, Grose Wold, Bowen Mountain, Colo, Wilberforce, Ebenezer, Glossodia, Tennyson, Freemans Reach.

RACING UP THE COMLEROI *by Deborah Hallam*

On 7th June 1881 a group of gentlemen left Richmond on horseback for a day at the races.

The initial stretch was simple. A brisk canter brought them to Richmond Bridge from where they ambled gaily along, nerves tingling with delight. To their left stood Kurrajong Heights with its dark green orchards and dark blue sky, to the right the smiling Hawkesbury and thousand of acres of yellow maize.

Along the Comleroy Road, now walking, now racing and emptying the contents of a certain flask to the top of Wheeny.

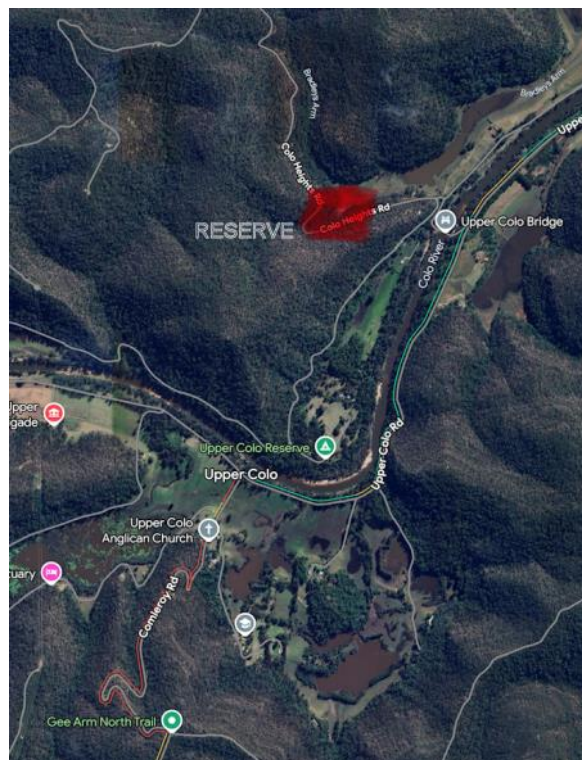
"A great gorge sinking suddenly from where we stand at the bottom, hiding in the shadows, lies sinuous, silent Wheeny; and on the other side as far as the eye can reach, tier upon tier, height above height – the great wooded ranges".

A zig-zag path leads to the bottom where Mr Surveyor Coleman has a camp for refreshments. Then away they head again over rough country till sighting the Colo River, *"stealing around the base of a beautiful spherical mountain. On the opposite side of the river Mr D. Hayman dispenses his wines and cordials; a little lower down is the race-course with an apple tree for a grandstand, and a ploughed field for a race track"*.

The races were closely contested as advertised prizes were supplemented by various donated items such as bridles and whips.

The race of the day was the donkey race, won by *Mopoke* in the very fast time of 23 minutes for half a mile!

The races being over, a lavish dinner was served at Haymans for the price of 2/-, accompanied no doubt by many a libation.



nate enough to secure a fair partner." One gentleman was heard to lament, sighing that *"the fair haired lassie was engaged four deep, and he would have to join the "buck set in the other room".*

Daylight arrived with the opportunity to go duck shooting. However, *"the ducks looked so happy that we did not like to disturb them, so we bade them, Mrs Hayman and the Colo River a long, sad farewell. We arrived at the "Horse and Jockey" [now Richmond Inn] at one o'clock on Friday, older wiser and sorer men."*

Notes. The full article is available on TROVE, *Hawkesbury Chronicle and Farmers Advocate. Sat 18 June 1881. COLO RACES.*

The area being referred to is now known as Upper Colo. It is most likely the races were held on what is now Upper Colo Reserve declared in 1896. The area still supports some orchards.

Mrs D. Hayman was the daughter of Charles Ivery/Ivory and Agnes Maria Gosper. John Thomas Gosper, father of Agnes had been the licensee of the "Travellers Rest" which passed to Ivery and then Hayman. The location is unknown.

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Supper was followed by a ball where it seems the majority of attendees were of the gentlemanly type. *"Words fail in describing the raptures of those who were fortu-*

President's Report

Hello everyone,

As we launch into 2026, I hope you all had a wonderful festive season.

We had an enjoyable visit to the Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum in November. They have five buildings on site, all well presented, and dogs were welcome. We stopped at Mulgoa on the way back for a nice lunch.

Our Christmas Party was on December 6th and went very well. The numbers were a little down, but this made for more meaningful conversations. Everyone was very impressed by the catering by Sarah, and no-one left hungry :-). We had a slideshow of activities during the year. See the photos on Page 3.

We had a stall at the Comleroy Road Public School Christmas Fair. Despite very heavy rain in the early morning, the event went ahead and the sun came out. Thank you to Bryan Wyborn for again bringing the watermill to be an eye catcher for our stall.

We also had a bookstall in Kurrajong Village coinciding with the CWA Christmas Fair. The look-a-like twins were there (see below).

Our next function is our annual birthday bash on Australia Day at Bowen Mountain. We have an interesting speaker, Sue Buxton, whose topic is "I was there: Cyclone Tracy 1974". BYO breakfast (hotplate provided) starting at 09:00. No booking necessary.

Following that we have a visit to Scheyville on Wednesday 4th February at 10:00. First off is morning tea followed by a tour of the site. Self drive or car pool. I believe there is a lot to see! BYO morning tea.

The WB Clarke Geoscience Centre Londonderry tour will be on Monday March 9th 10:00.

The March General Meeting is Monday 23rd of March. Our speaker is from RAHS, topic to be confirmed. Venue is Kurrajong CWA Hall, 13:00 (1pm).

Our May General Meeting is a speaker from the Vietnam Veterans Association and will be held at the Radio Museum.

And getting well ahead, the speaker for the Mid Winter Lunch,



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HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.**

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on 27th July, will be Ron Ray from the National Maritime Museum speaking on 'Bass and Flinders'. It will be held at our favourite Bowling Club.

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Book stalls: CRPS Christmas Fair and Kurrajong Village Photos DG

Christmas Party 2025



Photos by Peta Smith and David Griffiths More photos on Page 7.

ROADS TO THE NORTH by Deborah Hallam

First grants north of the 1809 grants at Kurrajong and the Grose Vale grants leading from the river were to the small group of settlers, Thomas and Elizabeth Pitt, James Wilshire, Matthew Everingham, and John Howe. These grants were issued by Macquarie and documented variously between 1816 and 1820. The presence of the mills on Little Wheeny Creek would indicate some degree of cultivation of the land prior to 1816.

SINGLETON, 1817

According to Andy Macqueen, in around September 1817 Benjamin Singleton headed on an exploratory trip Northwards maybe reaching Putty Creek and the Mellong area. No verified maps remain although there is a sketch map drawn by Thomas William Parr showing exploration primarily in the Macdonald river area.

PARR, 1817

After Singleton's return William Parr, as he became known, set out on his own expedition. Parr's journey has been comprehensively mapped and reproduced by Andy Macqueen. Parr travelled from Windsor to the Kurrajong Mills and thence along the ridge that is now Comleroy Road to Blaxlands Ridge where they branched off. They then followed Ironbark Ridge and a steep descent to Wheeny Creek, which they followed to the junction with the Colo River.

From here Parr's route is shown heading upstream to the approximate location of the current Upper Colo Bridge. This route involved crossing the river five times. Having made a final crossing of the river at this point, the party headed up a steep ridge and followed much the current route of the Upper Colo Road to around the current site of Upper Colo and thence along the Mellong Range broadly following the current Putty Road alignment.

Following this route as far as Long Weeney Creek, time was spent exploring and mapping this area before returning on the same route to Colo Heights and diverting along Wheelbarrow Ridge down to the Colo and to Windsor via Sackville.

SINGLETON, 1818

Ben Singleton was a member of Parr's party until at a point in the Putty area, for reasons unknown, he left the group with another man, arriving in Kurrajong after about 6 days of travel. His route is unknown.

Approximately five months later Singleton set off again, with a party of four Europeans and one Aboriginal person, intending to explore beyond Putty. Although the party managed to travel beyond Putty it is the early part of the journey that is under discussion here.

Initially the party headed down to Wheeny Creek. Although Macqueen suggests they followed Parr's route via Iron Bark Ridge, Singleton records that they fol-

lowed Wheeny Creek for over 10 miles to the confluence with the Colo, rescuing a lost European on the way. This distance indicates they are far more likely to have used a similar track to that now followed by Comleroy Road all the way to the creek. After crossing the Colo River, Singleton records going up the hill, putting them on the earliest part of the current Putty Road at this time. They then proceeded along the Mellong (Putty Road) Ridge line before returning the same way.

HOWE, 1819

John Howe was one of the free settlers who had received the early grants at North Kurrajong in proximity to the Singleton Mills. Howe successfully lobbied Macquarie to support an expedition to the north. Howe's handwritten journal, including much of his survey data is kept at the State Library. Although it is referred to as a 'Journey from Windsor to the Hunter River' it begins at the crossing of the Colo River. Thus, it is unclear if the party of three free men, three convicts and two Aborigines travelled directly from Windsor or via the North Kurrajong Settlement.

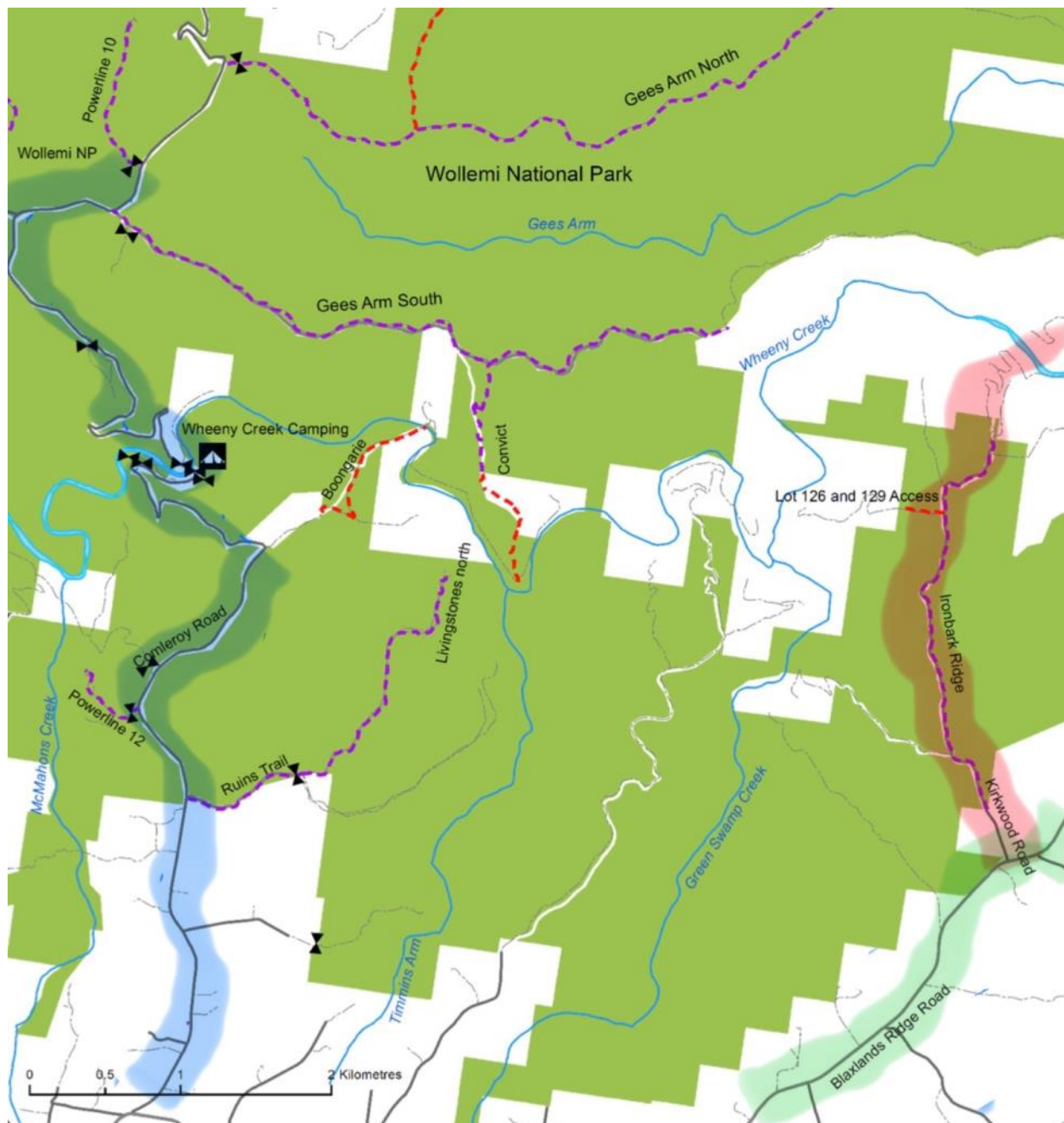
According to his journal, Howe arrived at the Colo/Wheeny Creek confluence and travelled upriver to Mr Turnbull's farm where they crossed heading up the ridge opposite. This crossing point is some fair way east of Parr's crossing and a more direct (and easier) line onto the Ridge. Following the ridge line close to what is now Putty Road, Howe intersected Parr's route in the area referred to as Parr's Brush and camped close to Parr's earlier campsite near the headwaters of New Blue Gum Creek.



A view of Wheeny Creek which flows into the Colo River, looking down from Ironbark Ridge. Image 035109

After following this route for two days they diverted west towards Long Weeney Creek, thereafter turning east across the Putty Ridge and north through the Hunter and Doyle Ranges.

The return journey follows much the same route other than the crossing of the Colo using Parr's route on what is now Upper Colo Road and downstream to the Wheeny Creek confluence and thence to Windsor. Howe notes that this route is difficult, presumably compared to his outward route.



From environment.nsw.gov.au Authorised horse riding trails Wheeny Creek precinct.

Howe has realised the route he had taken was not suitable for a permanent road. His solution was to recruit one of the Aboriginal members of his party to find a more practical way. Macquarie organised supplies including firearms to a group of around half a dozen Aboriginal men to explore an easier route. The leader of this group, Myles, was to guide Howe on his next exploration.

HOWE, 1820

In 1820, never to be defeated, or perhaps searching glory, John Howe persuaded Governor Macquarie to fund an expedition guided by the Aboriginal man, Myles. The group consisted of no fewer than sixteen people with six pack horses.

This group headed due north from Windsor rather than via Kurrajong meeting the Colo River in the vicinity of Wheeny Creek. From here they seem to have more or

less followed the initial part of Howe's earlier route although with diversions and guidance from Myles.

Once over the Colo, for the most part, the track as blazed by the party followed much of the route of the current Putty Road alignment.

AND AFTER

Once the track had been blazed northwards it was obviously going to become a temptation to all and sundry. The first of these may have been WILLIAM BELL, son of Archibald Bell of Belmont, Richmond Hill, (now North Richmond). There is no record of his 1820 route other than a mention of its occurrence by Archibald, Snr.

Given the location of Belmont, the most direct route is via Comleroy Road either to Wheeny Creek or via Blaxlands Ridge and thence to a crossing of the Colo.

Kurrajong's Limestone Millstones – an even deeper understanding!

By Les and Anne Dollin

In the July–August 2025 issue of *The Millstone*, we announced the astonishing discoveries that we had made about the Kurrajong millstones. We found that they:

- were made from limestone from a prehistoric coral reef, and
- almost certainly were manufactured on Norfolk Island in the early 1800s.

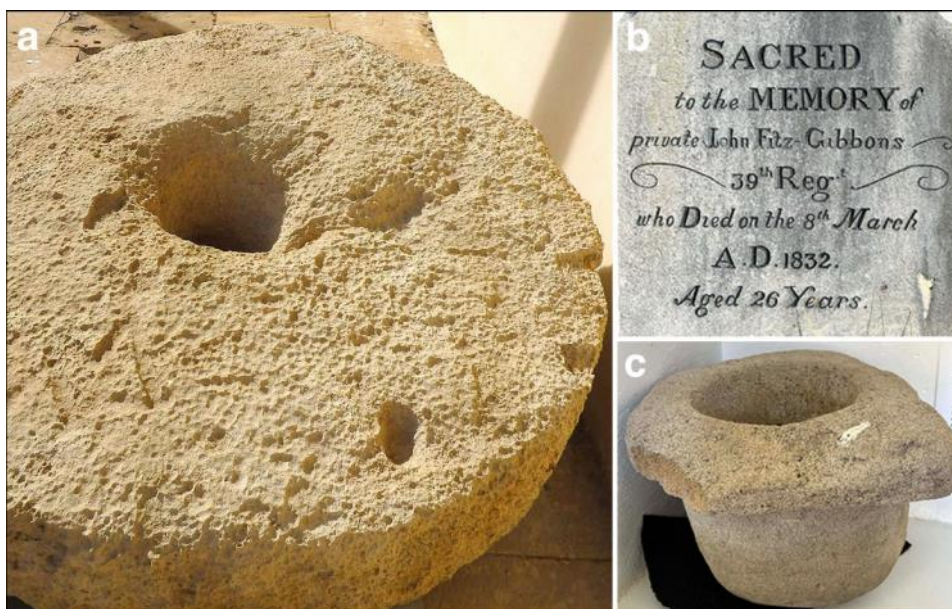
It had taken us seven months to research all the questions that arose from these discoveries. These results are presented on our Singleton Mills website in a PDF eBook: *Limestone Millstones at Kurrajong, NSW – linked with Norfolk Island's First Settlement*.

Now, we would like to tell you what we have learned about the Kurrajong limestone millstones since then!

An exciting opportunity

Frank and Valerie Holland told us they were going to Norfolk Island in August 2025, and they kindly offered to take any photographs that we would like. What an opportunity this was for us, to explore the history of limestone millstones on Norfolk Island further! We sent them a detailed list of our requests and looked forward to their return.

Amongst the treasure trove of resources that they brought home were over 200 photographs that revealed much about the background history of our Kurrajong millstones. Frank and Valerie generously gave us full permission to use their images for our research.



Historical artefacts on Norfolk Island: (a) the last-known limestone millstone, (b) a limestone headstone, (c) a limestone dripstone. Photographs by Frank Holland.

What did we learn?

More than 400 hours of intensive research followed, as we analysed the photographs and explored all the insights they provided. Then we were able to:

- write an in-depth description of the only limestone millstone known to still exist on Norfolk Island, and compare it with our two Kurrajong limestone millstones;
- investigate the colouring of these three millstones, by comparing them to limestone headstones and dripstones that were quarried on Norfolk Island during the same period;
- digitally reconstruct the fasci-

inating ruins of the convict-built 1828 watermill on Norfolk Island, where limestone millstones would have been used;

– and much more!

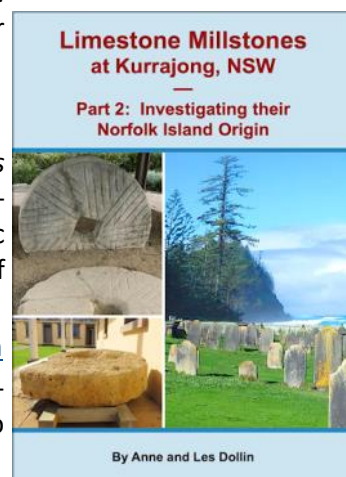
A deeper understanding of our Kurrajong millstones was gained by investigating these new resources, and we do warmly thank Frank and Valerie for their contribution to our research!

Read Part 2 of our millstone investigation

We have written up our latest findings in a 37-page PDF eBook, *Limestone Millstones at Kurrajong, NSW – Part 2: Investigating their Norfolk Island Origin*. This eBook showcases many of the Hollands' photographs, along with the LiDAR scans, and historic maps and paintings that we analysed in our study – as well as our reconstruction of the historic Norfolk Island watermill.

To download this free eBook, please visit our website: <https://www.singletonmills.com>

The last 14 months have been such a rollercoaster for us, and so much new information has come to light about our Kurrajong limestone millstones. Where do we go from here?



More photos



Wollondilly Heritage Centre Photo DG



Annika, Lichelle & Sarah at the Christmas Party

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Dates for Your DIARY

Birthday Breakfast Australia Day at Bowen Mountain Park

BYO Breakfast—hotplate provided.

Starts at 09:00 Speaker Sue Buxton:

"I was there : Cyclone Tracy 1974"

WB CLARKE GEOSCIENCE CENTRE

947-953 Londonderry Rd, Londonderry

This little known facility, right on our doorstep, will be giving us a private tour. Date Mon 9th March.

Let me know if you are interested.

Among other things, the centre keeps core drilling samples from all drilling in NSW.

Scheyville National Park

Wednesday 4th February at 10:00. It has a long history as a Migrant Camp and an Army Base. Military Vehicle restoration and much more to see. BYO Morning tea. Email me if coming please.

March General Meeting

Monday 23rd March. Our speaker is from RAHS, topic to be confirmed. Venue is Kurrajong CWA Hall, 13:00 (1pm).

Optional lunch at Village Kitchen.



Off for a Picnic c1940.

A group of people are about to set off for a picnic on the back of Jim Ryan's truck. No seatbelts in the 1940s!

Jim Ryan lived at Grose Vale.

Image 031730



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