



Photos showing some of the landscape that John Howe would have seen in 1819 taken in recent times.



Submission  
Not registered speaker.

Ian & Robyn Moore,



14<sup>th</sup> November, 2016

Mr Paul Forward (chair)

Ms Annabelle Pegrum AM

Mr John Hann

Planning Assessment Commission,

GPO 3415,

Sydney.NSW.2001.

Dear Commissioners,

**Re: Objection Drayton South Coal Project**

We are writing as concerned landowners and residents from the Jerry's Plains area to voice our objection to Anglo American's Drayton South Open Cut Coal Project.

We are farmers, not anti-coal mining activists. We believe this country needs mining, however it should not be allowed to destroy and impact on high quality agricultural land and our most precious resource of all, our water, without water this country will be doomed.

Our families have been continuously farming in this Valley, for the past 170 years. We operate a successful mixed farming enterprise where we produce top quality Vealers for the Butcher shop market, with the main crop/fodder grown on our properties is Lucerne to produce top quality Lucerne Hay for the Equine and Cattle Industries.

Our Properties are in close proximity to the Drayton South Coal Project (especially as the crow flies). As we look out over our Apple Tree Flat Property where I (Ian) has lived for over 60 years, of which 43 of those years were spent Dairying, we stop and think of the dust and the noise pollution, that we will have to endure from the prevailing North Westley winds that this area is known for, if this mine is allowed to proceed.

Our major objection is the huge amount of high quality agricultural land that is endangered of being lost forever to the coal industry, either by been destroyed by mining, locked up by mining companies, and not used to its full potential, or by Agricultural Enterprises and Thoroughbred Studs like Coolmore and Darley who realize that it will be impossible for them to continue in the area, if this Coal Project is allowed to proceed.

The agricultural land that is been affected one way or another by mining, has always been greatly sort after for a wide range of agricultural uses, dairying, beef, sheep, fodder and vegetable for the nation's food and fibre chain. Not forgetting the Viticulture with their gold metal wines and the Thoroughbred Industry including the Coolmore and Darley studs, two of the most prominent and most successful Studs in the world. These properties have been producing world class thoroughbreds for many years longer than these massive and destructive open cut mines. The 1920 Melbourne Cup winner Poitrel, bred and owned by the Mosses brothers of Arrowfield, the original name of the Coolmore property.

The Jerry's Plains area has long been known for horse racing, it has been documented back in the 1850's that a horse named "New Warrior" was advertised as standing at the "Horse and Jockey Inn" in Jerry's Plains. "New Warrior" sired Melbourne Cup winners "Warrior" (1869) and "The Pearl" (1871).

The Hunter Valley was built on agriculture, **NOT mining** as the Minerals council has stated recently.

The Hunter Valley is one of the finest agricultural valleys in the world.

John Howe first discovered the Upper Hunter in 1819, when he and his exploration party travelled via an inland route from the Windsor area. Howe looked out over an expanse of land that he described in his journal as **the finest sheep land I have seen since I left England**. The next morning the exploration party continued downstream passing over an expanse of land that is now known as the properties of Darley, Coolmore and Plashett just to name a few.

Howe also wrote after following the Hunter River downstream from the Doyles Creek junction, towards the historic village of Jerry's Plains. **The land on both sides very fine, and a great part of it may be cultivated without felling a tree. ....The grass on the low ground equals a meadow in England, and will throw as good a swath, and is like that native pasture grass which is found where old stockyards have been**. These quotes from Howe's journals have been documented in the history files of Bert Howard.<sup>1</sup>

This same information from Howe's journals has been highlighted in a book entitled People Property Power Plashett Jerry's Plains published by Anglo American.

Apparently this book has been compiled so as to strengthen the significance of Plashett, to the communities of the Hunter, it also highlights the significance of Agriculture and of the high quality agricultural land that we have here in the Hunter Valley.

When we look back on those journals from 1819, we cannot understand how it is possible that this precious section of the Hunter Valley is now been debated upon to decide whether or not to allow an open cut mine to destroy what our early European explorers and settlers spoke so highly of.

Almost 200 years on, how proud John Howe would be, looking out over this fertile high quality agricultural land where he discovered the Upper Hunter for European settlement, to see the magnificent thoroughbred studs of Coolmore and Darley, and just downstream to cast his eyes over the supersized dairy that has continuously been in operation for four generations producing millions of litres of milk for the Sydney market.

Further downstream to the successful cattle and hay production farms of the Jerry's Plains area that supply hay and fodder to the equine and cattle industries.

Jerry's Plains was the home of one of the largest vegetable growers in the Upper Hunter, now it is home to one of the largest hay producing farms in the Valley.

Than as John Howe raises his eyes a little further to the north and east on the horizon, we believe he would be absolutely disgusted of the massive dust haze, the fumes from mine blasting and the moonscape of worthless manmade rocky hills, caused by mining that is gradually consuming agricultural land and approaching the Hunter River.

We believe that the future of the historic village of Jerry's Plains and surrounding agricultural area must be protected from the pollutions of dust and noise that will be greatly increased by this coal project. We have sat back and listened to all mining companies telling us that they are doing things better, better for the environment, less noise, less dust, less pollution of our river systems and underground aquifers. WHY is it that the dust, the noise, and everything that is adversely affected by mining is getting a whole lot worse and not better? It is impossible to control the dust and air pollution, owing to the grand scale of mining and the massive amount of disturbance to the area in the Hunter Valley.

We are disappointed of the lack of evidence, that appropriate rehabilitation is taking place and have no confidence that Anglo American will comply with its rehabilitation commitments in the future. All mining companies say that they are carrying out rehabilitation on mined land, however we believe this rehabilitation is unacceptable. If it was acceptable we would see thousands of head of cattle grazing on rehabilitated land. This does not happen. When you live in the area, you know what land is rehabilitated and what is not. At this stage there is no evidence that land can be returned to a viable agricultural use post mining, or to the former productivity that this land once produced in its natural state to produce food and fibre for the nation.

In the 60 years that I have lived in the area, I have witnessed many dryland crops been produced from this land that is earmarked to be mined, with previous owners growing and harvesting of grains and also Lucerne Seed, not many areas are capable of achieving this, along with the breeding of cattle and sheep for meat and wool. If this land is mined it will never be capable of doing this again post mining

The mines destroy the land forever.

Last year Anglo American said they were committed to this project and their employees. But now we know the truth. They are selling up and sacking their employees. You can't trust mining companies.

We keep hearing the same old story we must protect the miners jobs. We never hear about the jobs that have been lost in the area to mining. This area was a rural farming community where there was many, many families living and surviving quite well on the land and employing other families. Just in Muswellbrook and Singleton alone there were six agriculture businesses selling Tractors, now these two towns have none.

The combined impact on the Hunter River and the aquifers are at risk, our water is so precious it must be preserved for our future generations, along with our very fertile land.

This is why we are recommending that this open cut mine must not be approved. There is too much at stake. We cannot co-exist with mining in close proximity.

We respectfully ask that you register our objection to this proposal and seriously consider our objections when assessing the appropriateness of the Drayton South Coal Proposal.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Moore.

Robyn Moore.

Pages 1 & 2: Photos showing some of the landscape that John Howe would have seen in 1819 taken in recent times.

1 John Howe journals documented in the History Files of Bert Howard included.

Page 5: [Page 239] Friday, November 5 (section highlighted)

Following are excerpts from the original journal for the period Sunday 31 October 1819 (at Putty) to Saturday 6 November 1819 when they reached the Hunter River (although they did not know which river it was) and explored a short distance downstream before returning to Windsor via Doyles Creek.

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"Sunday.-Sent two natives out for a native guide, as we could proceed no further in the direction I wanted to go, for creeks, lagoons and rocks that are impassable. They returned about half-past 7 o'clock with two boys, having met with a guide that would wait for and go with us.

"Monday. November 1. Passed the lagoon, leaving it to the left. E. by N. 1/2 mile. E.S.E. 1/4 mile. Cross a swamp. N.E. mile. Ascend a high rock. Wareng bears N.E. and Yengo east by south, two mountains so called by the natives, and continue the range northerly. N.N.E.- N.E. - E. by N. 1 mile. East 3/4 mile. N.E. 1/4 mile....

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Descend the rock to the N.W. Continue 1/2 mile to a swamp, cross it, and the horses sent round about two miles higher up, where they crossed it and came down to us to take up the loads. Ascend the rock to the N.N.E. 1/2 mile, cross it. E.N.E. 1/4 mile. Thro. a fine part of the country, very fine land with gentle hill and dale and thinly timbered. N.E. 3/4 mile, down a sappy bottom. The horses sent round the shirts of the hills. E. by N. 1/2 Mile, N.N.E. 1/2 mile. East 1/8 mile. E.S.E. 1/8 mile. East 1/2 mile, and fell in with a natives' camp, in number, about 60, many of whom had never seen a white man, and more had never seen a horse. Many young ones ran away, and others got up trees for fear. Stopped for dinner and distributed about seven or eight dozen biscuits among them. North 1 mile. N.E. 1 3/4 mile, N.E. by N. 3/4 mile. Enter a valley with a creek running through, the rocks nearly meet at each side of the creek. E.N.E. up the valley for one mile. Cross the Creek. North 1/2 Mile, to ascend a hill, cross it and descend down, N.E. 1 mile. East round a point of rock or between it and the creek. N. 1 mile. Stop for the night immediately abreast of Wareng Mountain and distant about one mile, bears due east. The creek called by the natives Wobbs Creek, and on inquiring how many days to get there, they answered, *never get there, starve half-way.* This evening vivid lightning and heavy thunder, but no rain with us. Wrapped up the muskets in a blanket

Tuesday, November 2. N.E. 1/2 mile. Cross Webb's Creek; obliged to unload the horses, to rise the hill. N.N.E. 2 1/2 miles. N. 1/2 mile. N.N.E. 1/4 mile. N. by W. 1/4 mile, over rocks to avoid a creek. E. by N. 1 mile. N.N.E. one mile. Cross a creek. N.E. 3/4 mile. Cross the creek again to stop to dinner. North 3/4 mile. N. by W. 1/4 mile. N.E. 3/4 mile. N.W. to the rock and then ascend it. Easterly 1/2 mile. N.N.W. and westerly to gain the top of the rock (on Main Range.). Wareng and Yango bears S. by W. Yango just visible from behind Wareng. North on the eastern side of the high rock, and N.W. on the western side of the next high rock, but on the same range. 3/4 mile northerly.

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N.E. by E. round the eastern side of the rock and ascend it. N.N.E. round to N.W. 1 mile. North-W.S.W.-W.N.W. round a large hollow. Descend the rock to the northward. W. 1/4 mile. W.N.W.-N.W.-West, then north to the bottom. Upwards of two hours, travelling over stupendous rocks that had the appearance of being impassable, many places to cut small trees down and send the guide forward to look out, as well as Mr. Loder and myself, and this in the afternoon of a very hot day, and scarcely made two miles with exceeding labour in two hours. N.W. down a valley two miles and stop for the night. This day's journey through a great deal of good land, well watered and mostly thin of timber to what it is in the neighbourhood of the Hawkesbury. The good land being mostly valleys between rocks, with good grass up the sides of the hills, as well as in the flats, and a creek generally running through them; all running to the east and south-east.

Wednesday, November 3. North 1/2 mile, on the east side of a small creek, and between it and the rocks, thro. on the side of the latter, continuing the vale from the mountains east 1/8 mile. Round a gully N.N.W. 1/8 mile, to gain the former course. North 1/2 mile. Cross the neck of a dry swamp. N. by E. 1 1/2 mile. N.N.E. 1/2 mile. East to pass a gully and N. by W. to gain the former course. N.N.E. 1 mile. E.S.E. 1/8 mile, to cross a gully. N.N.W. 1/4 mile. N.N.E. 3/4 mile. Cross the creek ("M" on map) which we had hitherto kept on our left. N. by E. and N.W. to ascend the rock 1/4 mile. West 1/2 mile, keeping the range. N.W. descending the hill. Ascend northerly 1/4 mile. N.W. 1/2 mile. W.N.W. 1/4 mile. Cross a small run of water and stop to dinner, being all much fatigued after crossing the creek and ascending the rock. Left half the flour secreted till our return, the bay mare being much fagged. North. W.N.W. and N.W. 1/2 mile, to gain the top of the rock. West 1/4 mile on the side of the rock, leaving the upper range of rocks on the north side. N.W. 1/2 mile. N.N.E. 1/2 mile, through very deep valley and to ascend the rock on the opposite side, as we could not pass round, which took up a great part of the afternoon. North 1/4 mile.



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Saw a valley with plenty of grass to our right, and finding water therein, stopped for the night. This day very hot, and tho. we did not travel far, the way being on the side of the rocks, both horses and men very much jaded. Had four fits of the ague during the night, tho. each fit not of long continuance.

Thursday, November 4. N.N.W. 1/2 mile. Ascended the top of a high range or rocks, see a heavy tog to the N.W. as though rising from a river. Fog appears to run nearly east and west. N.E. 1/8 mile. N.W. 1/8 mile, round the side of a hill to avoid crossing through the valley. N.N.E. down a grassy range. N.N.W., general course northerly 1 1/2 mile. Ascend a high rock. N.E. 1/4 mile, leaving the grassy range which runs W.N.W. A very heavy fog E.N.E. which the natives say is "Coomery Roy" and more farther a great way, and which appears very extensive, being seen as far as the eye can reach and has much the appearance of the boisterous ocean, only the fog is white and the ocean appears green. Over a range of rocks, N.N.E. 1/4 mile to a grassy range very like the Kurralong, with valleys on each side, of excellent ground. N.W. to W.N.W. 1/2 mile. Descend rocks to the northward 1/2 mile. N.W. 1/4 mile. N.N.W. 1/4 mile, through a brush on a round hill. Descend a rock through a partial hollow N. 1/2 mile. N.N.W. 1/2 mile, in which we ascend a hill of brush. Descend the hill, which is very rocky, on the north side, with great difficulty, which took us upwards of an hour. Northerly 3/4 mile to a creek called by the natives Coomery Roy Creek (branch or Doyle's Creek), which we crossed and keep the same, crossing it occasionally. North 1/2 mile. West 1/4 mile. N.W. 1/4 mile, stop to dinner. N.W. 1/2 mile. N.N.E. 1/4 mile. W.N.W. 1/4 mile. North 1/4 mile through a thick brush of pines on the banks of the creek, the trees seldom exceeding five or six inches through. Ascend the hill through the brush, cutting our way. N.N.E. 1/4 mile. East 1/8 mile. N.N.W. 1/8 mile. North 1/8 mile. N.N.E. 1/8 mile. W.N.W. 1/8 mile. N.E. 1/8 mile. N.N.E. 1/4 mile. Westerly 1/4 mile. North 1/2 mile to a forest hill thinly timbered, and said to be leading to Coomery Roy. Sundown, and rested for the night. Miles shot...

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...a rock kangaroo. We were all much fatigued and each had a glass of grog, which was very acceptable to all. The horses had a hard day's work, and very difficult travelling.

"Friday, November 5. Breakfasted and got ready for travelling. North to N.N.E. 3/4 mile. N.E. 1/8 mile to pass a gully. North 1/4 mile. N.W. 1/8 mile. Went down a gully to make the creek, which we left yesterday afternoon ( ) and with much difficulty obtained it. N.N.W. 1/2 mile. Cross the creek, where we found a fine valley and thinly timbered about 1/4 mile over it, but widening as we get down. W.N.W. 1 1/2 mile. N.W. 1/2 mile, cross the creek. North 1 1/2 mile. Valley nearly a mile over and fine ground. I think it equal to Richmond, but not one half the timber. N.N.W. 3/4 mile. North 1 1/2 mile. The valley not so wide as before, the mountains coming closer in one place. N.E. 3/4 mile. North 2 1/4 miles to a fine fresh water river (the Hunter River). The last two hours through a fine country thinly timbered, and for the last hour many acres without a tree on it. One I think, exceeds 50 acres with not 20 trees on it, and very fine ground. It is evidently flooded, it having left the rubbish where the bushes were about breast high, but there is sufficient high land for stock and buildings. It is the finest sheep land I have seen since I left England The tide makes in the river, though it does not appear to flow so high as when we made it. Resolved to follow it down till to-morrow night, if not longer. Stop to dinner. Caught a few perch. A great number in the river. The land on both sides very fine, and a great part of it may be cultivated without felling a tree. Even the high land is well clothed with grass and lightly timbered, though mostly thicker than the low ground. The grass on the low ground equals a meadow in England, and will throw as good a swath, and is like that native grass which is found where old stockyards have been. In the afternoon, though much fatigued, we took our course down the river. E.S.E. 1/2 mile. N.N.E. 1/2 mile. At the bottom of the reach a large bank or beach of gravel, pebbles and sand. The river widens to near the width of the Hawkesbury...

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...at Windsor, and is very deep. North 1 mile. A rock on the east side of the river and high land, nearly a mile, gradually sloping to the river. Back ground very fine and little timber, only a few trees to an acre, and some patches without. Opposite side of the river, land more level and what timber is on is of no object. It may be said to be clear. The high land appears to be about 3/4 of a mile back, and that very little timber on it, and the grass very green. As we get lower down the river appears to have a fall, so that what we took to be high water mark was only the height of a fresh that we now found to be in it, for in this reach we found it had fallen about three or four feet from a day or two before, and after you leave the fall the river gets contracted by a large pebbly, sandy and gravelly beach in many places to about four rods with a rapid current. The beach in some places is from 30 to 40 rods wide, and extend to the bottom of the reach which continues.

North 1 1/2 mile. S.E. 1 1/2 mile. The river widens to about the width of the river at Windsor but it has sand shoals in it. Stop for the night, and before we could unload the horses we are surprised by a strange native who, before I could get the one we had, and knew their tongue, to speak to him, disappeared, and with all our searching we could not find him. Our natives were much alarmed, and notwithstanding all I could say or do, would have shot the poor creature had they found him. About half an hour afterwards we saw five cross the river about half a mile below and come nearly opposite to us to watch us, and left about night-fall. Our natives threatened to leave, and I detained two till morning, relying on Miles, but even he, poor fellow, was much alarmed. We kept a strict watch, and after getting an early breakfast started.

"Saturday. November 6. S.E. 1 mile. Another fall over a pebbly ford, came across the track of the natives which we suppose to be the five seen the night before, and the natives will proceed no further down the river; we agreed to go the next reach, and then cross the back of the country to our entrance into Coomery Roy, the land increasing and the river widening...

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...The land does not appear to be high flooded; the highest place I saw did not exceed twelve feet, and that on low land. The high land, now about one mile back, gradually sloping to the low land, and the reaches of the river, as they open, appears on the banks as clear farms. I regret very much we could not go further down the river, but being very poorly in health, consider it more prudent to cross the land backwards, as by that means we shall see more of the country generally. E.S.E. about 1/2 mile, and then appears to run north..."

The original List<sup>1</sup> of persons accompanying Mr. Howe is in records of Chief Secretary's Office, Sydney, in the handwriting of Governor Macquarie. There were two horses, and each man had a gun and three weeks' provisions.

1. George Loder. Junr Free
2. John Milward do.
3. John Eggleton Convict.
4. Charles Berry do.
5. Nicholas Connolly do.
6. Miles, native guide; and another native who left the party the second day after it marched from Windsor.

<sup>1</sup> As best can be deciphered from the scrawled handwriting. "On the back of a letter dated 17-11-1819. C.S.I.L., 1819, bundle 13, N.75/764, 4/1743, p.120"