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Place Name SUMMARY (PNS) 4.04.02/03

PURKAPURKARRILLA

(last edited: 8.8.2022)

NOTE AND DISCLAIMER:

This essay has not been peer-reviewed or culturally endorsed in detail.

The spellings and interpretations contained in it (linguistic, historical and geographical) are my own, and do not necessarily represent the views of KWP/KWK or its members or any other group.

I have studied history at tertiary level. Though not a linguist, for 30 years I have learned much about the Kurna, Ramindjeri-Ngarrindjeri and Narungga languages while working with KWP, Rob Amery, and other local culture-reclamation groups; and from primary documents I have learned much about the Aboriginal history of the Adelaide-Fleurieu region.

My explorations of 'language on the land' through the Southern Kurna Place Names Project are part of an ongoing effort to correct the record about Aboriginal place-names in this region (which has abounded in confusions and errors), and to add reliable new material into the public domain.

I hope upcoming generations will continue this work and improve it. My interpretations should be amplified, re-considered and if necessary modified by KWP or other linguists, and by others engaged in cultural mapping: i.e. Aboriginal researchers who are linking their oral traditions with other up-to-date and best available knowledge, and associated archaeologists, geographers, ecologists, anthropologists and historians.

Chester Schultz [10/7/2020].

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PURKAPURKARRILLA

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Abstract

Purkapurkarilla (Old Spelling *Burkaburkarrilla*) is the 'Kurna'-Miyurna name for an area of land around the small creek gully which begins on Section 700, Hundred of Willunga¹ (immediately south of St Johns Tce, Willunga South) and continues northwest across 267-266.

The word *purka* (O.Sp. *burka*) can mean either 'old person' in general, or 'senior knowledgeable person after the final stage of initiation'. The place-name ends with the common Locative *illa*, 'at, place of'. It also adds both a Reduplicative *purkapurka* ('many, very, notable, etc') and an implied verb particle *rri* which can be Reflexive ('oneself') or Reciprocal ('each other'). Both of these forms can have variable meanings, or in some cases no apparent meaning. In this case we cannot be sure what extra significance they add, if any.

The location has no outstanding geographical virtues to recommend it as a campsite, especially since it is between and within about half a km of two other prime sites, 'Wyecarey-windererilla' and *Pirltangga*.² Its importance was therefore probably cultural in some way associated with old or senior people, or perhaps in an unrecorded Dreaming story, or both.

Coordinates	Lat. -35.2827°, Long. 138.5509° [nominal centre of area: main tributary crossing St Johns Tce at No.29]
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Language Information

Meaning	'place where people are old or senior' (POSSIBLY 'many of them' or 'very old' or 'very senior' or 'notable seniors' or 'a notable place for them')
Etymology	<i>purka</i> 'old person, senior person (in final stage of ceremonial growth)', > Reduplicative <i>purkapurka</i> 'senior person [emphasized in some way: 'many', 'very', 'notable', etc] + <i>rri</i> Reflexive ('oneself') or Reciprocal 'each other') + <i>illa</i> 'at, place of)
Notes	It is not clear what extra significances (if any) the Reduplicative and Reflexive/Reciprocal might carry in this case.

¹ Unless otherwise stated, all Sections in this essay are in the Hundred of Willunga.

² See PNS 4.04.02/04 Wyecarey-windererilla and 4.04.02/01 Pirltangga.

Language Family	Thura-Yura: 'Kaurna'-Miyurna
KWP Former Spelling	Burkaburkarilla
KWP New Spelling 2010	Purkapurkarrilla
Phonemic Spelling	/purkapurkarrila/
Syllabification	" Purkapurkarrilla ":
Pronunciation tips	Stress the 1 st syllable; secondary stress on 3 rd syllable. Every <i>p</i> is softened towards <i>b</i> (no puff of air). <i>ur</i> is two separate sounds, <i>u-r</i> : i.e. <i>u</i> as in 'put', + a sounded <i>r</i> (so that - <i>urka</i> is similar to the American pronunciation of 'tour-ca(r)', sounding the first 'r' only); <i>not</i> as in 'lurk'. <i>rr</i> is rolled as in Scottish.

Main source evidence

Date	1844
Original source text	"The quarry is not properly at Willunga; the glen in which it is situate is called Piltongga. It is in this glen that many of the so-called Willunga settlers reside, several of the quarrymen having built themselves neat little cottages... Next to Piltongga is Burka-burkarilla , adjoining which is Mr Colville's, called Wykera-wonjurilla."
Reference	'L.P.' [Louis Piesse], 'Descriptive tour through part of District "C."', <i>Observer</i> 13/4/1844: 7c, http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/page/18834087 .
Informants credited	Piesse
Informants uncredited	Kaurna guides during first surveys of District C in 1839.

Discussion: 'A PLACE FOR OLD PEOPLE' OR 'A PLACE OF SENIOR KNOWLEDGE HOLDERS':

OBTAINING THE NAME:

The 'District C' surveys in 1839 made the first detailed on-the-ground paper records of the country south of Adelaide to Sellicks Hill. They employed Kaurna-Miyurna men,³ and the colonists employed on their teams had months of isolation in what was then 'the bush', with evenings to fill with talk around their campfires. One of these men was Louis Piesse, whose letter from one of their camps in October 1839 was published by a newspaper. It displayed his newly-acquired knowledge of Kaurna place-names and their precise locations in the Sections which the team had

³ "Several of them are also employed in the Survey Department at Yankalilla and Aldingha (Aldinga), who receive rations and pay the same as white laborers" (SA Register 10/8/1839: 6a, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/27440703/2049497>).

been surveying, and included a short Kurna wordlist.⁴ In April 1844 he wrote for publication a tour guide of District C, in which he gave a number of Kurna place-names, many of them otherwise unrecorded. In his imaginary tour, he leaves Willunga, then presents a list of Kurna place-names along the Willunga-Sellicks scarp:⁵

THE PLACE:

Piesse left no doubt about where 'Burkaburkarilla' was located:

*The [slate] quarry is not properly at Willunga; the glen in which it is situate is called Piltongga. It is in this glen that many of the so-called Willunga settlers reside, several of the quarrymen having built themselves neat little cottages... Next to Piltongga is Burka-burkarilla, adjoining which is Mr Colville's, called Wykera-wonjurilla.*⁶

'Piltongga' (N.Sp. *Pirltangga*, O.Sp. *Piltangga*, 'possum place') is on Section 700 around Quarry Rd, and the south-western corner of 268 around St Johns Tce. It comprises the three creek tributaries (#16 in my catalogue) which include Beltunga Gully,⁷ and join on 268. *Pirltangga* has a large catchment (165 hectares),⁸ but in 1839 Counsel marked only a very short watercourse on the plain, petering out on 267 in a "Tea Tree Scrub" which was "Marshy" but had "good water".⁹

The Colville property 'Wykera-wonjurilla' was on Section 276, south of Colville Rd and west of Longbottom Rd, and focussed on Creek #14.¹⁰ This has the largest catchment of any on the scarp between Willunga and Sellicks Hill (219 ha),¹¹ and today is classified as part of the main course of Willunga Creek. In 1839 it flowed above ground all the way to Aldinga Rd (1.7 km), with "good water" marked along it on 276.¹²

Piesse places 'Burkaburkarilla' "next to" the 'glen Piltongga' and "adjoining Mr. Colville's". This can only mean the square bounded by Longbottom Rd, St Johns Tce, and (roughly) Bangor Rd. This

⁴ Louis Piesse, letter to *Adelaide Guardian* from 'Camp Coortandillah 18 Oct 1839', reprinted in *SA Colonist* 1(19), 1840: 296, <http://www.nla.gov.au/ferguson/1461426X/18400714/00010019/7-9.pdf>.

⁵ 'L.P.' [Louis Piesse], 'Descriptive tour through part of District "C."', *Adelaide Observer* 13/4/1844: 7a-8b, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/page/18834087>.

⁶ Piesse 1844: 7c.

⁷ See Counsel 1839a: 38 (Map 1); also PNS 4.04.02/01 Piltangga.

⁸ See Map 6.

⁹ Creek #16 (Pirtangga) flowed north-west across 267 for only a short distance (down to today's Victor Harbor Rd overpass) before going underground. See Maps 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. Today built drains extend it 2.7 km further to Little Rd, where Willunga Creek re-appeared above ground in 1839.

¹⁰ See PNS 4.04.02/04 'Wyecarey-windererilla'.

¹¹ See Map 6.

¹² See Maps 1 to 5.

Section was surveyed in 1839 but not numbered by Counsel; it now incorporates several smaller Sections.¹³

In the scarp area Piesse identifies most of his Aboriginal place-names with creeks or 'glens'. But he does not identify 'Burkiburkarilla' as a creek, a gully, or anything else, nor does he describe it in any way; he merely locates it. Here in a wide shallow gully between two low ridges, open to winds from any direction except south, Creek #15 was visible in late January 2022 as a very minor watercourse, completely dry. It has a tiny catchment of only 5.7 hectares.¹⁴ Counsel's field map shows it as three faintly-drawn tributaries, emerging from minor gullies just south of St Johns Tce, running northwest and ending less than 200m north of the road.¹⁵

Today from St Johns Tce only a very shallow dry gully is visible, but downstream it supports a long line of tall gumtrees, probably watered by underground seepage from the scarp's fractured basement rocks. This tree-line was present in 1839, with plenty of trees upstream on the hillsides. Before settlement #15 may have been scarce in water, but it did have shade, with some open space nearby.¹⁶

THE NAME:

'Burkiburkarilla' has a fairly easy etymology in Kurna language, but the cultural significance of this is much harder to assess.

When the word occurs as a simple noun, a *purka* (O.Sp. *burka*)¹⁷ is an 'old person, ceremonially adult'. It *can* refer more specifically to "a complete tattooed Aborigine, being now a full grown man and admissible to all secrets & privileges".¹⁸

It is also used often as a suffix added onto many other nouns and adjectives. Sometimes this usage can be very particular: notably, "If affixed to a district of country, it implies that the individual is the proprietor and inhabitant: *mullawirraburka* dry-forest-man (King John's native name)".¹⁹ Also

¹³ i.e. Sections 277, 278, 279A, 591 and part of 755: see these Sections on Map 1 of PNS 4.04.03/01 (Pari) Mingkamingkangga.

¹⁴ See Map 6.

¹⁵ Counsel 1839a: 38. On this sketch map there is another curved line which suggests that it might have turned north along Martin and Giles Roads; but this line is possibly a later accident. The other earliest maps based on his work suggest that it was slightly longer above ground; but it makes no difference to the assessment. See also Map 7.

¹⁶ See Counsel 1839b (Map 2) and Burslem's map (Map 4). Burslem is earlier than the well-known published version McLaren 1840, and much more reliable in its depiction of trees. It shows a coherent tree-line continuing northwest along the downstream drainage of #15 across Section 256 into 244 just north of Aldinga Rd.

¹⁷ Pronunciation: Wyatt's English spelling is helpful: "*Boorka*". In the phonetic spelling *purka*, the 'ur' must not be interpreted as the flat vowel in English 'lurk' or 'Burke'. It represents two separate sounds, *u* (as in 'put') plus a sounded *r*. The result is similar to an American pronunciation of 'tour ca(r)', with the first 'r' sounded.

¹⁸ Teichelmann MS Dictionary 1857.

¹⁹ T&S 1840 2:4 (N.Sp. *Murlawirra-purka*).

the suffix is very often used with an extremely general meaning something like ‘-er’ in English (‘to go’ > ‘goer’; ‘to lie’ > ‘liar’; etc).²⁰

The extra consonant ‘r’ in the recorded place-name tells us that the simple noun has been converted into a verb *purka-rrintheta* (*burka-rendi*) which uses the particle *rri*,²¹ which is otherwise unrecorded. This particle has two different functions: Reflexive (‘oneself, itself’) and Reciprocal (‘each other’).²² In some cases it is hard to see that the recorded glosses of the *rri* verbs add any meaning extra to that of the original verb.²³ In this case it is hard to imagine what that extra might be: is it Reflexive, ‘to be old [or fully initiated] together’? or Reciprocal, ‘to be mutually old [or fully initiated]’? Linguist Rob Amery says: “In some verbs and in some contexts the Reciprocal or Reflexive meaning/function is clear. In others it is opaque. *Purkarrintheta* might simply be ‘being in the state of an elder’”.²⁴ Or it might mean simply ‘being old’.

In this place-name the primary noun is not in a Compound Noun but alone, and here it is duplicated as ‘burkaburka’ (N.Sp. *purkapurka*). The Reduplicative is common in Aboriginal languages, and its significance is variable and often unclear. It can simply emphasize the noun or verb Root in some way; or it can add meanings like ‘many, lots of’, or ‘very, much’, or ‘often’. Sometimes – as far as we can tell now – it seems to add very little extra meaning to the simple noun. Sometimes it changes the meaning of the simple root in unpredictable ways.²⁵ Doubtless people in the living culture learned how it was used in a case-by-case process. In this case there are no other records of Reduplicative *purkapurka* whose gloss might have enlightened us. So *purkapurka* could mean ‘many old people’, or ‘very old people’, or ‘many senior custodians’, or ‘very senior knowledgeable people’, or ‘notable seniors’, or a variety of other possibilities.

²⁰ e.g. *Pidnarrintheta* (O.Sp. *pinnarendi*) ‘to loiter’ > *pidnarripurka* (*pinnariburka*) ‘a [habitual] loiterer’; *wardli* (*wodli*) ‘house’ > *wardlipurka* (*wodliburka*) ‘an inhabitant of the house’; *mitirrintheta* (*metterendi*) ‘to steal’ > *mitirripurka* (*metteriburka*) ‘a [habitual] thief’; *kararrintheta* (*karrarendi*) ‘to rise over, be proud’ > *kararripurka* (*karrariburka*) ‘a haughty fellow’.

²¹ There are only two recorded examples of *burka* converted into a verb: *purkarrintheta* (*burkarendi*) ‘to be or become old’ (-*rri*- Inchoative, used for transformations); and *purkalayintheta* (*burkarlaiendi*), ‘to grow old’ (-*layi*- is a verbaliser whose function is unclear).

²² Recorded examples using *rri* include: *yudluntheta* ‘to push’ > *yudlurrintheta* ‘to push each other’; *pakintheta* ‘to cut’ > *pakirrintheta* ‘to cut oneself’; *martintheta* ‘to embrace’ > *martirrintheta* ‘to embrace each other’; *patintheta* ‘to throw [something]’ > *patirrintheta* ‘to throw oneself OR ‘to throw each other’ [onto the ground]. (O.Sp. *yudlontheta*, *yudlorendi*, *bakkendi*, *martendi*, *battendi*, etc).

²³ e.g. *kampantheta* (*kambandi*) and *kamparrintheta* (*kambarendi*) are both glossed as ‘to roast; to boil’ (T&S 1840); *pidnantheta* (*bidnandi*) ‘to stay, delay, hesitate’ and *pidna-pidnarrintheta* (*bidna-bidnarendi*) ‘to stay, delay, walk slowly instead of quick, loiter’ are identical despite adding the Reduplicative as well as *rri* (Teichelmann MS Dictionary 1857).

²⁴ Rob Amery p.c. (email 29/6/22).

²⁵ The linguists wrestled with Kaurra Reduplicatives: “*The reduplicatives, ... frequently express an intensity of the primitive verb... the meaning of the primitive is sometimes altered in the translation* [i.e. transformation]” (Teichelmann & Schürmann 1840 1:15). Examples quoted to illustrate this complexity include: *kutpantheta* (*kutpandi*) ‘to shake’ > *kutpa-kutpantheta* (*kutpa-kutpandi*) ‘to shake vehemently or quickly’; *pakantheta* (*bakkandi*) ‘to dig with the *katta* [digging stick]’ > *paka-pakantheta* (*bakka-bakkandi*) ‘to trot, as a horse’ (which tells us much about their view of this hoofed animal whose primary function, like that of sheep, was to dig up the ground).

After this Reduplicative has been converted into a Reflexive verb *purkapurka-rr-inthi* (*burkaburka-r-endi*), and then into a place-name *Purkapurka-rr-illa* (*Burkaburka-r-illa*),²⁶ the layers of ambiguity become almost impenetrable. Could it be ‘a place where lots of old people [gather]’? or ‘the place where lots of fully initiated people [gather]’? or ‘a place for very old people (or very knowledgeable initiates) [doing something with each other]’? or ‘the [notable] place for such people’? Does the use of *rri* add no extra layer of meaning, so that the name has the same meaning as *Purkapurkangga* (*Burkaburkangga*), or even simple *Purkangga* (*Burkangga*),²⁷ ‘place of old person(s)’?

CONNOTATIONS:

This place was important enough in Kurna society and culture for it to have a name of its own, even though it is only about half a km away from other two other major sites: the lush *Waikari-winturrilla* on the west, and the favoured gathering place *Pirtangga* on the east.²⁸ We can be sure it was not noted for its water, nor for its shelter. It is much less sheltered than those places. Its importance had something to do with old or senior people, either in cultural practice or perhaps in an unrecorded Dreaming story, or both. Beyond that we just can’t tell at this stage.

Perhaps our interpretations can be amplified and clarified in future by new data from targeted studies of the local ecology, history, anthropology, or by new Aboriginal insights, a culturally creative joining of these particular dots; or perhaps we may be forever unable to retrieve this aspect of the cultural map of *Purkapurkarrilla*.

References to background documents

For background information and analysis relating to the creeks and gullies of the Willunga-Sellicks scarp, including Mt Terrible Gully, see my document ‘**BACKGROUND8_SellicksScarp.pdf**’, and my digital data folder ‘**pnf4-04-03_SellicksSCARP**’.

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SEE ALSO THE MAPS ON THE NEXT 8 PAGES:

²⁶ – using the Locative *illa* which is appropriate to a 3-syllable Root, here *purkarri-*.

²⁷ – using the Locative *ngga* which is appropriate to a 2-syllable Root, here *purka*.

²⁸ See PNS 4.04.02/04 Wyecarey-windererilla and 4.04.02/01 Pirtangga.

THE MAPS ON THE NEXT 7 PAGES:

p.9: MAP 1: Counsel 1839a, Field Book 102, p.38 (detail). (Annotated).

Base map: Richard Counsel 1839a, Field Book 102 p.38 (GNU).

p.10: MAP 2: Pre-colonial tree cover and creek gullies of Willunga South (1): detail from original Map 02.

Base map: Counsel 1839b, Diagram Book Hd of Willunga p.X4, SA Geographical Names Unit (GNU). Annotated with data from Counsel 1839a.

p.11: MAP 3: Pre-colonial tree cover and creeks of Willunga South (2).

Base map: Detail from Anon. [?1839], Diagram Book Hd of Willunga, p.X11 (GNU).

p.12: MAP 4: Burslem 1839, 'Plan of the country south of Adelaide...' State Library of SA C236 (detail): showing Creeks #13, #14, #15, #16, and #17.

Base map: FH Burslem [1839], 'Plan of the country south of Adelaide...', C236, State Library of SA.

p.13: MAP 5: McLaren 1840,'Country south of Adelaide...', London, Arrowsmith 1840: detail: showing Creeks #13, #14, #15, #16, and #17.

Base map: John McLaren map, 'Country South of Adelaide...', London, Arrowsmith 1 Sep 1840.

p.14: MAP 6: Scarp creeks: Catchment areas; Length of watercourses on plain in 1839.

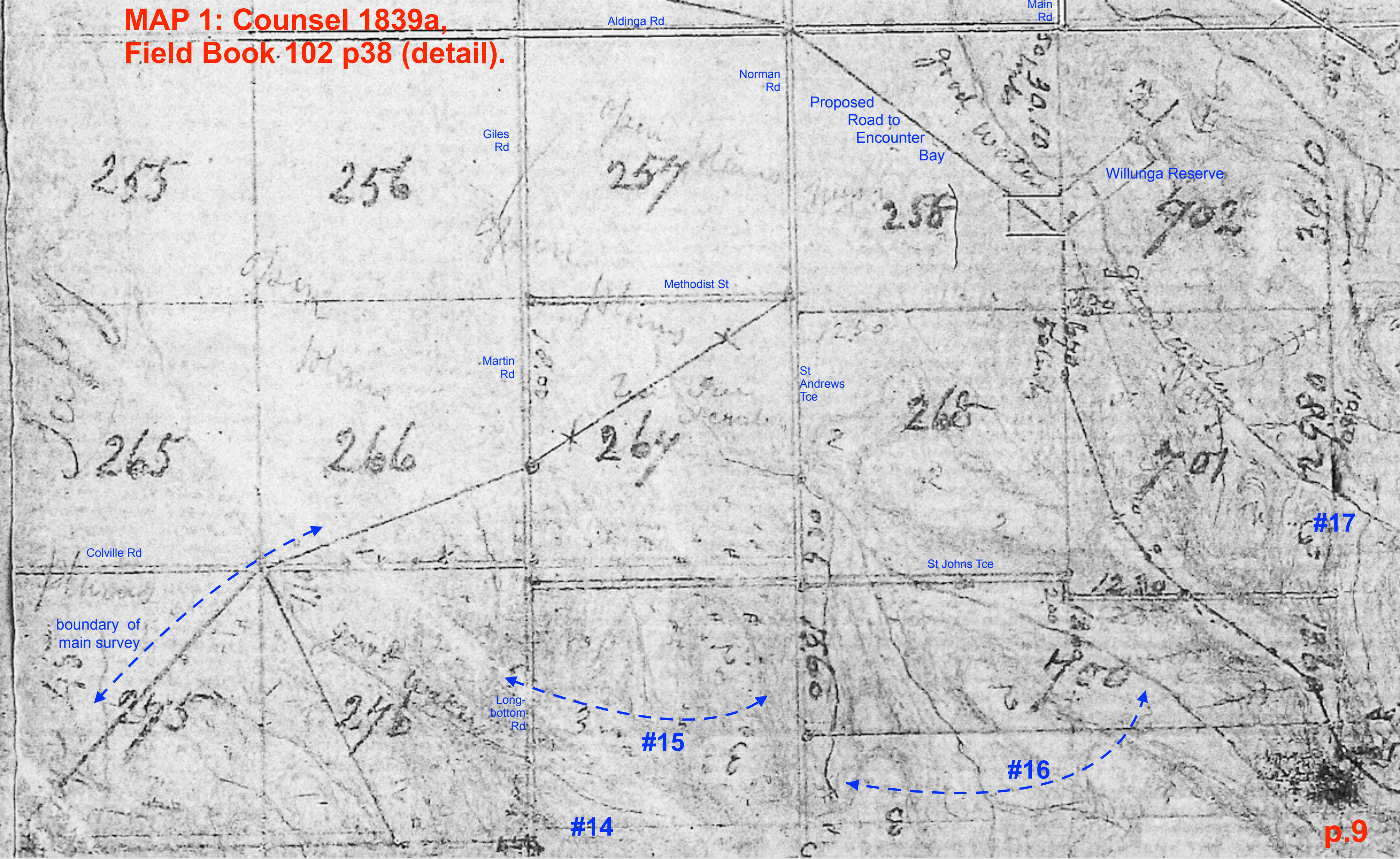
Base map: SA Government, NatureMaps website, <http://spatialwebapps.environment.sa.gov.au/naturemaps/?locale=en-us&viewer=naturemaps>, 1/3/22.

p.15: MAP 7: Willunga South: Length of watercourses on plain in 1839, with contours: shows variant lengths of #15 marked on earliest maps.

Base map: NatureMaps, 2/3/22.

End of Summary

**MAP 1: Counsel 1839a,
Field Book 102 p38 (detail).**



Aldinga Rd

Main Rd

Norman Rd

Giles Rd

Proposed Road to Encounter Bay

Willunga Reserve

Methodist St

Martin Rd

St Andrews Tce

Colville Rd

St Johns Tce

Long-bottom Rd

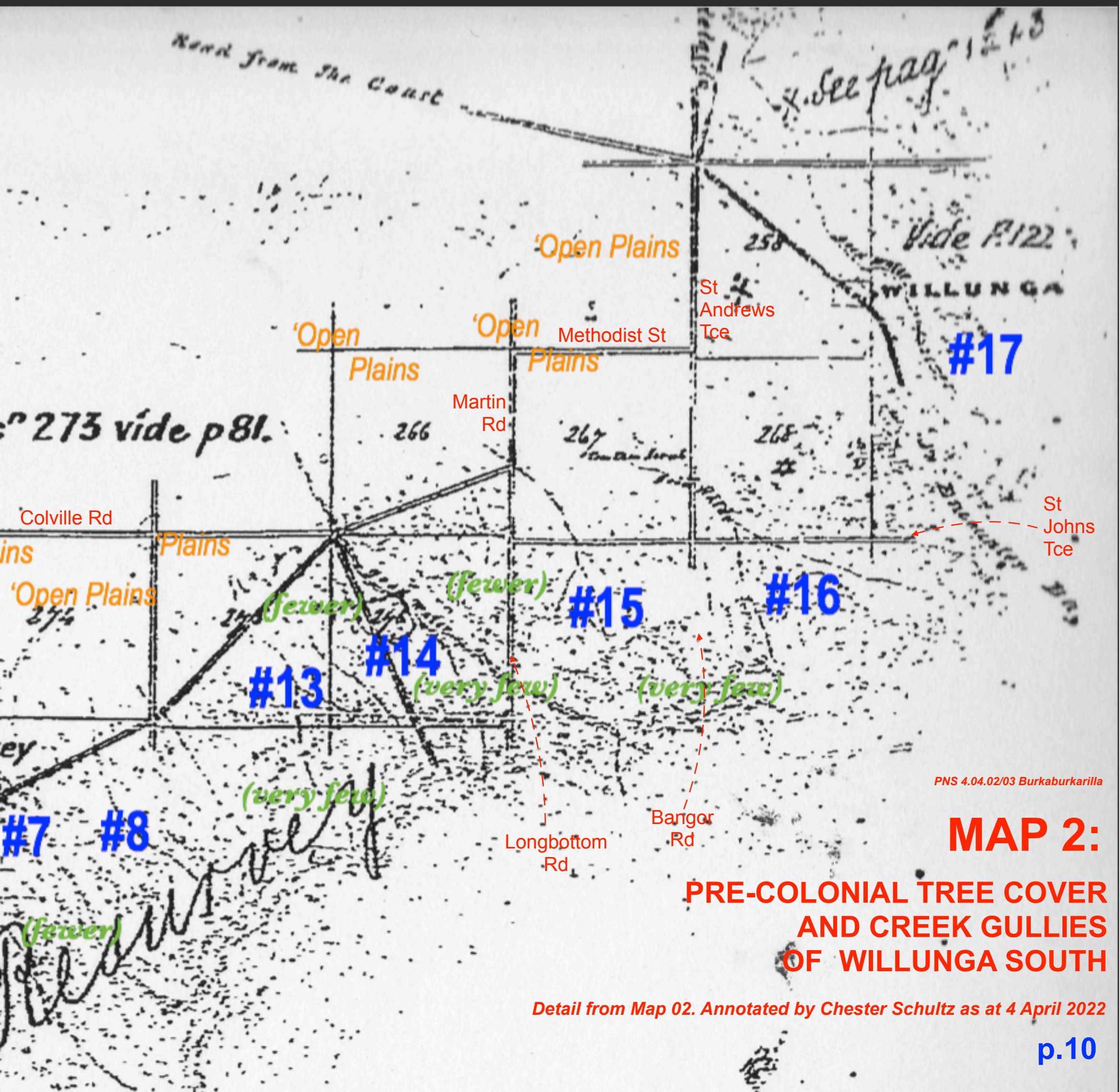
boundary of main survey

#14

#15

#16

#17



Road from the Coast

See page 1243

Vide P.122

WILLUNGA

'Open Plains

St Andrews Tce

#17

'Open Plains

'Open Plains

Methodist St

#273 vide p81.

266

Martin Rd

267

268

Colville Rd

'Plains

St Johns Tce

ins

'Open Plains

(fewer)

(fewer)

#15

#16

#13

#14

(very few)

(very few)

ey

(very few)

PNS 4.04.02/03 Burkaburkarilla

#7

#8

Longbottom Rd

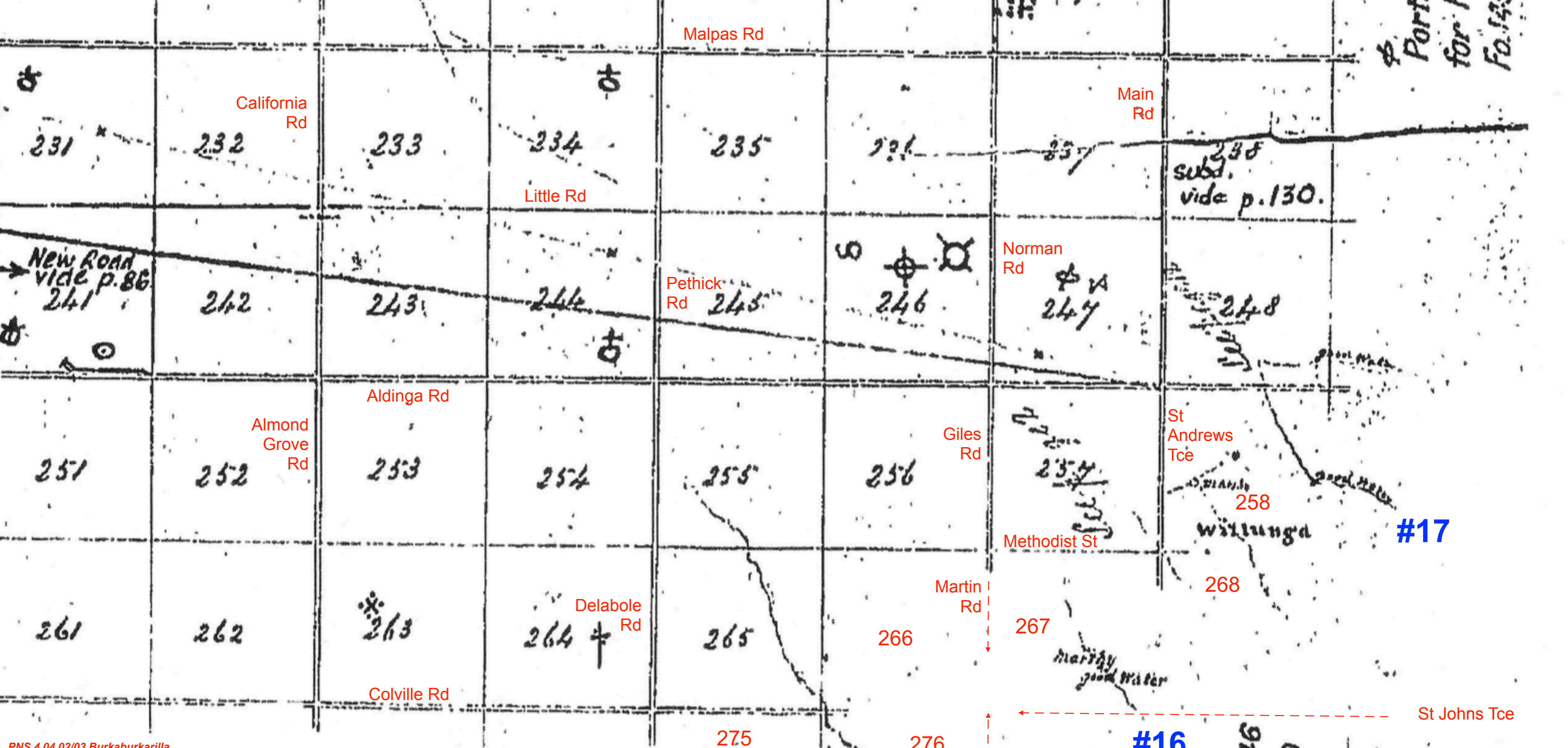
Bangor Rd

MAP 2:

PRE-COLONIAL TREE COVER AND CREEK GULLIES OF WILLUNGA SOUTH

(fewer)

Detail from Map 02. Annotated by Chester Schultz as at 4 April 2022



PNS 4.04.02/03 Burkaburkarilla

MAP 3: PRE-COLONIAL TREE COVER AND CREEKS OF WILLUNGA SOUTH (2).

Survey of Road vide p. 78.
resurvey Pt 263 vide p. 80

Base map: Detail from Anon. [?1839], Diagram Book Hd of Willunga, p.X12 (GNU)

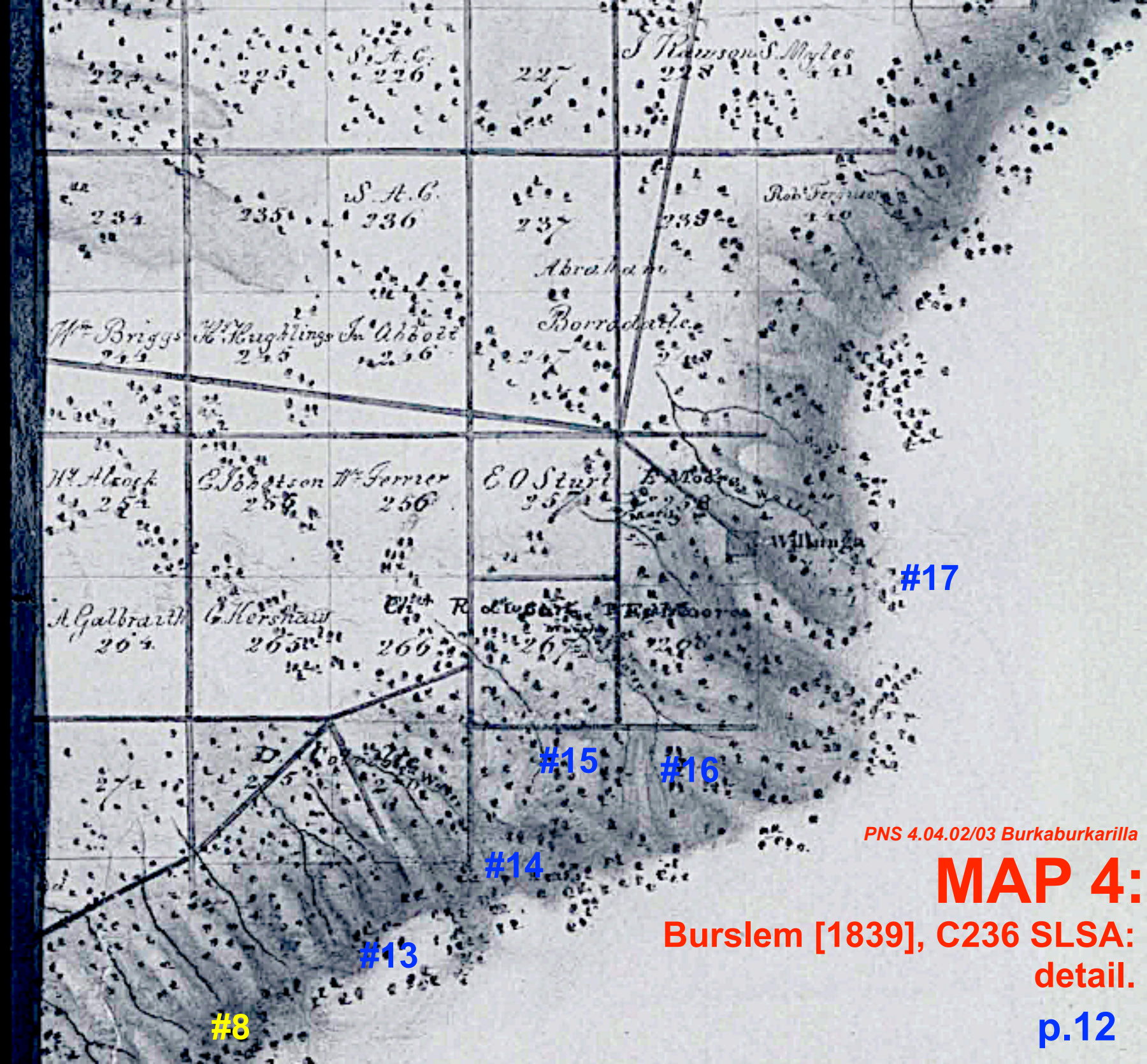
#14

#15 not shown

#16

#17

Pt. Sec. 246
T. 2146/70

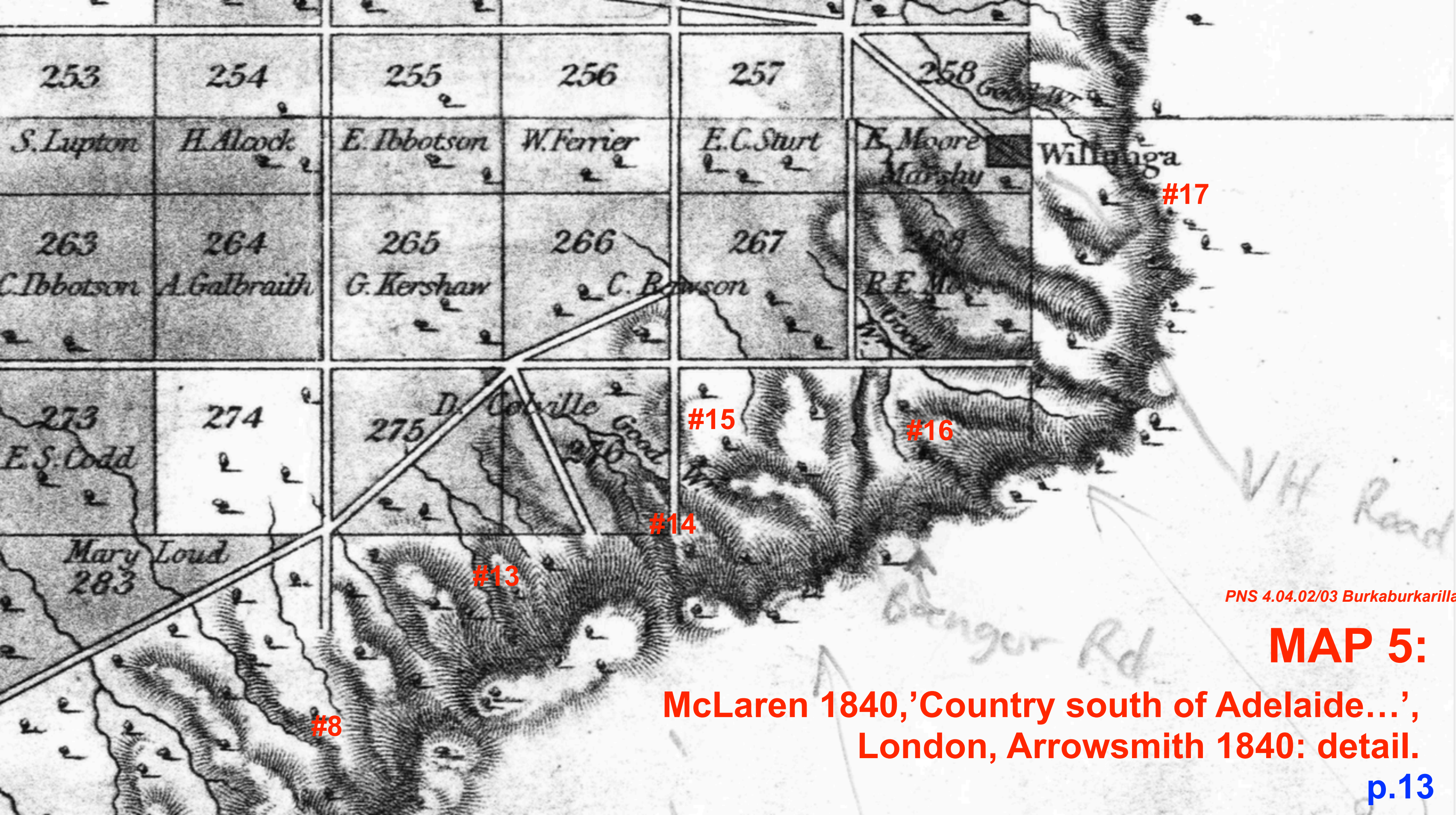


PNS 4.04.02/03 Burkaburkarilla

MAP 4:

Burslem [1839], C236 SLSA:
detail.

p.12



253

254

255

256

257

258

S. Lupton

H. Alcock

E. Ibbotson

W. Ferrier

E. C. Sturt

E. Moore

Willingaga

#17

263

264

265

266

267

268

C. Ibbotson

A. Galbraith

G. Kershaw

C. Brownson

R. E. Moore

273

274

275

#15

#16

E. S. Codd

D. Colville

Good

#14

#13

Mary Loud
283

PNS 4.04.02/03 Burkaburkarilla

MAP 5:

**McLaren 1840, 'Country south of Adelaide...',
London, Arrowsmith 1840: detail.**

#8

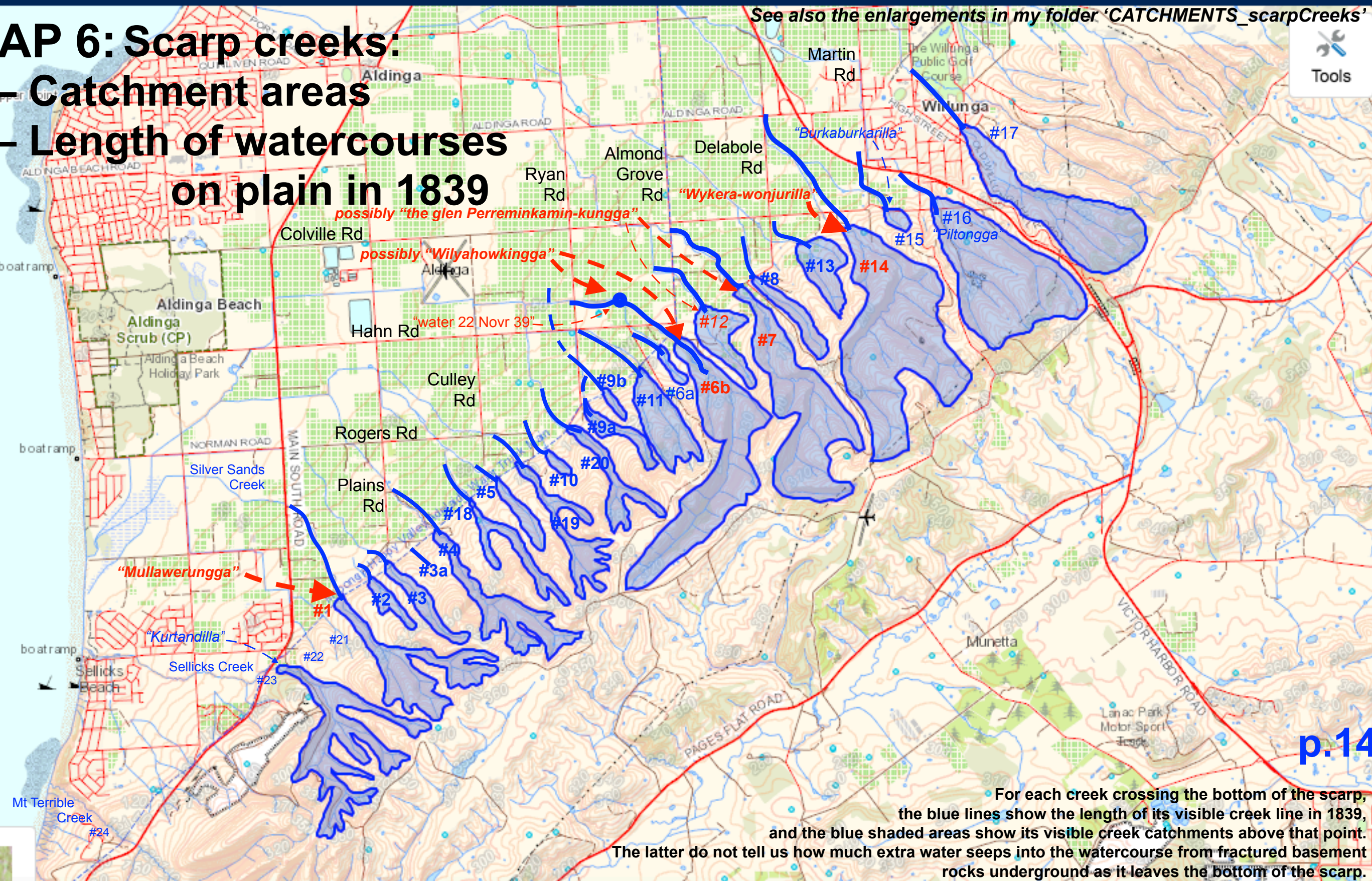
p.13



MAP 6: Scarp creeks:

- Catchment areas
- Length of watercourses on plain in 1839

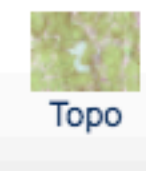
See also the enlargements in my folder 'CATCHMENTS_scarpCreeks'



p.14

For each creek crossing the bottom of the scarp, the blue lines show the length of its visible creek line in 1839, and the blue shaded areas show its visible creek catchments above that point. The latter do not tell us how much extra water seeps into the watercourse from fractured basement rocks underground as it leaves the bottom of the scarp, and also the visible length of the creek on the plain in 1839 as mapped by Counsel.

Such extra inflow could affect the likelihood of finding surface water at the bottom of the scarp, and also the visible length of the creek on the plain in 1839 as mapped by Counsel.



Web Mercator ▲ X 15428291.51 Y -4206542.42



1:500

