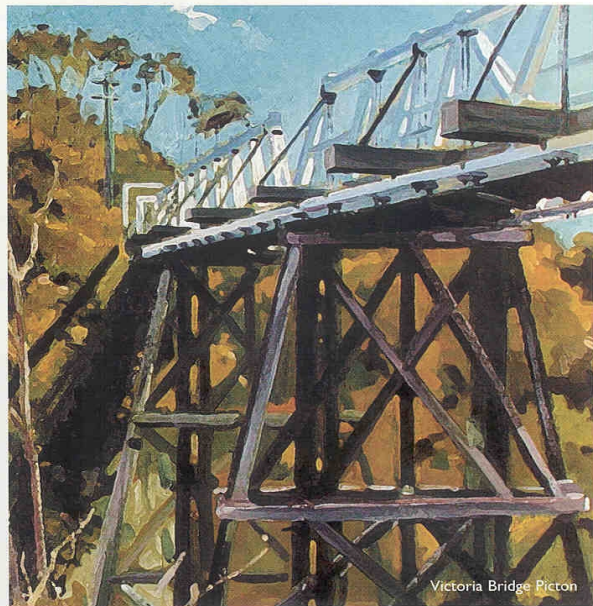




Southern Highlands

Heritage Drives

SELF- GUIDED TOURS



Victoria Bridge Picton

Self-guided Tour

The Roads and Traffic Authority of NSW (RTA) and Berrima District Historical and Family History Society Inc. (BDH&FHS) have developed this self-guided Heritage Tour. It supports the National Trust Heritage Festival for 2003 with the theme "freshwater, water, waves and wanderings".

The tour features transportation history and visits to key historic sites in the Southern Highlands and includes major waterways and some historical society's museums and archives. On Sunday 6 April 2003 The Institution of Engineers, Australia, plaqued the Victoria Bridge, Picton as a Historic Engineering Marker.

Roads and bridges noted in this guide are used for traffic. You should only view them from safe locations.

Paintings and drawings: Ulf Kaiser



SOUTHERN
highlands indulgence
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For further enquiries:



02 8837 0151
8.30am - 4.30pm Mon-Fri



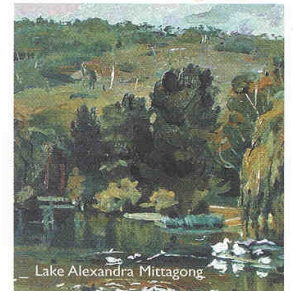
www.rta.nsw.gov.au

Roads and Traffic Authority

March 03
RTA/Pub. 03.048



BDH&FHS Museum



Lake Alexandra Mittagong

→ Southern Highlands Heritage Drives

Historical overview

Soon after Sydney Cove was settled in 1788, the colony's small but precious cattle stock consisting of two bulls and four cows strayed and were lost.

In 1795 the cattle, now numbering 60 head, were found to the south of Sydney near Camden. They were protected by order of the Government and no settlement was allowed beyond this point.

By 1802 some 600 cattle were sighted near what is now Picton. Increasing herds of better-bred cattle were placing pressure on the carrying capacity of the Cumberland Plain. In search of more pasture for their stock a number of settlers brought their cattle beyond the Cowpastures, until in 1820 Governor Macquarie officially sanctioned settlement in the area now known as the Southern Highlands.

The first Government town sites were at Stonequarry (later Picton), Bong Bong near present day Moss Vale and further to the south, Goulburn.

The earliest road from Sydney to the Southern Highlands via Picton (Stonequarry) led through Campbelltown, over Menangle ford and skirted the Nepean River all the way, and became known as the Old South Road.

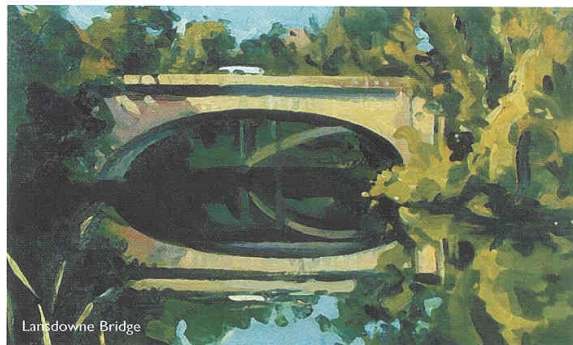
Surveyor Harper first marked a road over the Razorback in 1821. It was cleared in 1825 and was much used. In 1829 it was reported as the most direct route but the Macarthur family objected to it passing through their property.

In 1830 Surveyor White marked a more direct route via Cawdor over the Razorback. In 1832 Mitchell was instructed by Governor Bourke to construct the Great Southern Road on that line.

Finance for road building was assisted by tolls collected from travellers at toll bars along the way including Picton, Bargo, Berrima and Paddys River. Convict gangs and later Government gangs did road maintenance work.

By 1865 the wet weather was looked upon with dread as it was not uncommon to see gigs, spring carts and the bullock drays "all stuck fast or buried in numerous sloughs, for road would not be the name for water filled holes that looked level and deceived even the wary traveller".

From the 1860s, stronger road bases made some improvement, but it was not until the Main Roads Board was established that the highway was placed in trafficable order. The road still remains a monument to the genius of the great surveyor and road builder, Sir Thomas Mitchell. Today we know the road as the Hume Highway.

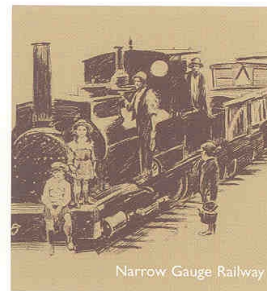
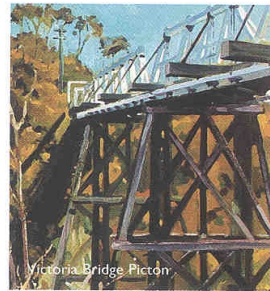


→ Your tour begins in Picton

1. **Picton** (named after Sir Thomas Picton) was first called Stonequarry Rivulet by Governor Phillip Gidley King in 1804.

If you have time to spend in Picton call into the Visitor Information Centre in the main street and pick up a walking map showing points of interest around the town. On the left after passing over the Stonequarry Creek is the 'George Inn' one of the first to be built in Picton. It was licensed in 1839.

Continue up and over the next ridge and turn left into Prince Street, and drive over the **2. Victoria Bridge**. It is the second oldest Allan truss bridge built in NSW, one of the largest of its type. The 60-foot (18 metres) high timber trestles are the tallest in NSW.



→ After Crossing Victoria Bridge

After crossing Victoria Bridge pay a visit to the railway station and marvel at the **3. Sandstone railway viaduct** built in 1862. It has five 40-foot (12 metres) arches, is 276 feet (82.8 metres) long and 78 feet (23.4 metres) above the creek bed. It is now the oldest stone archway over water in NSW.

Drive back to the Hume Highway and continue through to Tahmoor and on to **4. Bargo**.

To the left of the road near Bargo Railway Station are three monuments recording the first sighting of the lyrebird and koala by Europeans on the 24th January 1798.

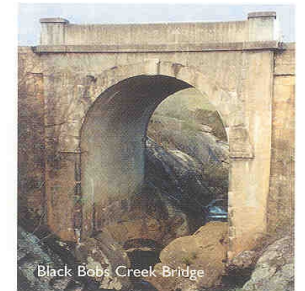
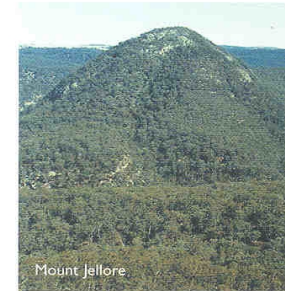
It was also in the Bargo Brush that Mr Upton built an inn during the 1820s where travellers could rest after their journey and shelter from gangs of bushrangers who frequented the area.

Lots to see and enjoy on this easy to follow, self-guided tour through the beautiful Southern Highlands.

After passing through the main street of Bargo, turn left over the railway, then right into Avon Road. Follow this road to the **5. Avon dam** built in 1921, and **6. Nepean dam** built in 1925. Both dams are part of the Sydney Water Catchment and are open to the public.

After returning to the Hume Highway drive through the railway villages of Yanderra and Yerrinbool, well known for their orchards and fruit.

Catherine Hill is south of Yerrinbool. About 1km up its slope turn left, and enter **7. Old South Road**, part of the first road into the Southern Highlands (also known as the Argyle Road).



→ On the road to Mittagong

Travel approximately 7kms passing the airstrip on your left. Opposite is the site of **8. George Cutter's Inn**, the first to be built in Mittagong. Cutter also built a windmill in 1830. John Oxley named the **9. Mittagong Range** that you now cross. It was over this range that Oxley's stockman drove a large herd of cattle in 1816 to graze on land today known as Bowral.

Follow the Old South Road through the eastern part of Bowral and Burradoo, and continue to Moss Vale Road and turn left. Before crossing the Wingecarribee River is the site of **10. Bong Bong**, the first township to be established in 1820 as the civil and military centre of the Southern Highlands. This site was abandoned because of regular flooding.

A walking and cycling track along the banks of the Wingecarribee River has been established, beginning at the monument commemorating the Bong Bong site.

After driving through Moss Vale you will pass on the left the entrance to **11. 'Hillview'**, the country residence of NSW Governors from 1883 to 1956.

On entering Sutton Forest to the right is **12. All Saint's Sutton Forest**, the first church and burial ground in the district, established in 1829.

On the right in front of the Royal Hotel is a monument commemorating the visit of the first European exploration party through the Southern Highlands in 1798.

After leaving Sutton Forest follow the Illawarra Highway until you reach its junction with the Hume Highway (Hoddles Crossroads). Just before this point, **13. Old Argyle Road** on the left follows the line of the original Old South Road to Marulan, Bungonia and beyond.

Turn right onto the Hume Highway heading north, take the next right turn into the **14.VC Mackey Rest Area**, and continue down the road to inspect the Black Bobs Creek Bridge, designed by Lennox in 1834. The original stone and timber beam bridge was built in 1836-37. The Monier arch was constructed in 1896 to replace the timber span and was the first concrete arch bridge built in NSW.

→ Historical Berrima

Proceed to **15. Berrima** and pick up a map of this historic village from the Berrima District Historical & Family History Society Museum in Market Place. Whilst there take time to visit the Museum and learn about the early history of the Southern Highlands. Other historic buildings such as the courthouse are also open to the public.

Berrima replaced Bong Bong in 1831 and was almost the centre of the county as drawn by Thomas Mitchell in 1829, when he began his realignment of the road to the south to bypass the steep grades over the Mittagong Range. There are many walks around town and along the river banks.

On the second rise after leaving Berrima, look left and in the distance is the top of the dome shaped **16. Mount Jellore**. It was here Thomas Mitchell in May 1827, noted in his field book that with his theodolite he took in panoramic views of Mount Warrawolong, 170 km to the north, Mount Banks, Mount Hay and Mount Tomah in the Blue Mountains. All these sights, as well as Sydney's new gaol wall and the town's windmills, were seen with the naked eye. Whilst on Mount Jellore, Mitchell was notified that he was now the Surveyor General, following the death of John Oxley.

On the way to Mittagong there are two interesting day trips that can be made. Turn into Wombeyan Caves Road and travel 61kms to the beautiful **17. Wombeyan Caves**, which were discovered in 1826 by Surveyor John Oxley and have long been a popular tourist attraction.

Branching from the same road is the shale-mining ghost town of **18. Joadja Creek**, which produced in the 1800s products such as kerosene and candles. The town had its own narrow gauge railway line to Mittagong.

Information is available on both these local attractions at the Mittagong Visitor Information Centre. Also pick up a map of Mittagong and explore its early history. There are many walking tracks to enjoy, or relax with a picnic on the banks of Lake Alexandra almost in the centre of town.

Mittagong is also famous for having the first iron smelting works in Australia. The **19. Fitz Roy Iron Works site** is worth a visit, so take time out to see the monument and inspect the few remaining sandstone foundations that dot this early industrial site.

Next to the Mittagong RSL is the site of the famous 1800s 'Mineral Springs' that drew people to drink the water or attend the bathhouse to rejuvenate in the health giving waters. In 1884 when land was being sold in Mittagong it was advertised as being the "Sanatorium of the South". Although not used today, the spring still runs and can be seen from the Old Hume Highway (opposite the iron mines site) or visited from the car park of the RSL.

For those interested in local history a visit to the **20. Berrima District Historical and Family History Society Archives**, corner of Bowral Road and the Old Hume Highway, Mittagong (next to the clock) is a must.



Fitzroy Inn Mittagong

Opposite the Caravan Park north of Mittagong, turn right and cross over the railway bridge in front of the former Tooth's Malting building. The next building on the right is the **21. Fitzroy Inn**, one of the first on the New Line of Road in the 1830s.

Follow this old section of the road back to the Old Hume Highway, turn right at Balaclava and continue onto the Hume Highway. Take the next exit left off the Highway to **22. Colo Vale** and then right to **23. Hill Top**. Whilst travelling along this section of road to Hill Top you are driving on the bed of the earliest section of the rail line to be built to the Southern Highlands. Called the Loop Line, it carried passengers until the 1970s.

After passing through Hill Top, on the right is Stella Street, followed by a car park. A track takes you down to a **24. cave and waterfall**. (Details displayed in the parking area).



Thirlmere Railway Museum

After leaving this walk you cross the **25. deepest rail cutting in NSW**. A large concrete monument has been erected to honour those who worked and those who gave their lives to build the railway to the south.

→ Travel through railway villages

As you travel through the railway villages of Balmoral, Buxton and Couridjah you can feel the closeness of the bush that surrounded the first people who explored the area. Amongst the many wild flowers to be found in this part of the Southern Highlands is the Waratah. Robert Brown, a botanist who came to NSW under Sir Joseph Banks' patronage in 1801, named this beautiful flower the Waratah. It is the traditional flower of the Gundungurra people and is the floral emblem of NSW. Today it is used by the Wingecarribee Shire Council as its emblem. Also found in this area is the white Waratah.

Before entering the village of Thirlmere turn left into Slades Road and visit the **26. Thirlmere Lakes**, discovered in 1802 by French explorer Ensign Francis Barrallier. Because of the lakes' resemblance to the lakes district in the north of England the area was later named Thirlmere. It was in this area that Europeans first recorded the word 'Coo-ee' as being called out by the Aborigines.

The next stop is the **27. Thirlmere Rail Museum** on the right. This collection of trains dates back to the magnificent steam era and is a must for all ages. If time permits take time out to visit the **28. Burrangorang Valley Lookout**, where the township of Burrangorang was flooded to make way for the rising waters of Warragamba Dam which was completed in 1960.

After leaving Thirlmere return to Picton. Your return trip can be via the Old Hume Highway and Camden, or take the Picton Road and join the Hume Highway to Liverpool and Sydney.

