CONSTRUCTION OF THE BRIDGE

The bidding for a bridge at Barham-Koondrook started in the 1890s and in June 1900 the Public Works Department engineer E.M. de Burgh took evidence at Kerang and Koondrook in reference to the "matter".

It was found that there were at least two 200 new section within a 50 mile radius of Barham and Koondrook as the area was an ideal location for production of wrought iron. The Kerang and Koondrook production was transported across the river about 80 kilometers by rail and the raw material was fabricated in Melbourne (now Ballarat).

Tenders for the construction of a 'steal lift bridge on the Murray River at Barham and Koondrook' were called for in the NSW Government Gazette on 10 March 1902. The bridge was under construction by June 1903, with funding provided jointly by NSW and Victoria.

The timber for the bridge was obtained from the east coast of NSW with the raw material for the wrought iron and steel coming from Scotland and structural members fabricated in Ballarat at the Gipps Iron Works.

The cost of the bridge was approximately £31,358 and the payment was covered by the New South Wales and Victorian Governments. On the 4 October 1904 the bridge was opened by a number of Federal and State members attending the event.

The opening ceremony and banquet were apparently well attended; the enthusiasm of the spectators was such that a crowd of people pressed across the lift span before it had completely closed, causing one of the girders in the lift bridge to break. The lift bridge was shut down for a number of days while repairs were carried out.

The Barham Bridge was designed by engineer E.M. de Burgh and construction completed in 1904. The design is on the principles of his previous design of Cobden Bridge and as with Cobden, the design incorporates further improvements on the Hinkley and Mundiburrum Bridge designs.

THE BRIDGE DURING CONSTRUCTION FROM THE NEW SOUTH WALES SIDE OF THE RIVER.

Source: Kerang New Times, 1904. The Barham-Koondrook Historical Society

The photograph above was apparently taken at the same time as the two photos next to it. The original obtained from the University of Melbourne Archive is slightly marked "September 1904" on the back. Taken from the Victoria side of the river. It is interesting to note the advance of development on the Barham side.

Source: Photo by Louis Adair, University of Melbourne Archive, BWI2354

THE BRIDGE DURING CONSTRUCTION FROM THE NEW SOUTH WALES SIDE OF THE RIVER.

Source: Kerang New Times, 1904. The Barham-Koondrook Historical Society

The photograph above is of the lift bridge, and was taken in 1904. It indicates that the bridge was not completed at that time.

Source: University of Melbourne Archive, BWI23584

BARHAM-KOONDROOK BRIDGE

The original settlement of Barham was typical of other towns along the Murray River. Their development is attributed to being those cities where deep river allowed for river ports and also the region where the river could be easily crossed.

Barham is the result of the first lease taken up in the western Murrumbidgee region. It was acquired by Edward Green, who named the property 'Barham' after his wife family.

Early settlers mainly consisted of squatters moving north from Victoria that primarily used the land for wool production and by 1860 most of the land over locations were occupied by these squatters. Gold rushes during the 1850s shifted the land usage from wool production to coal farming in order to meet the high demand from increased wool populations.

However this shift was short lived by the 1890s the wool industry dominated once again. The dominance of wool continued until the 1960s when production of wool increased dramatically. Finally in 1970 a shift for the town of Barham was surveyed and the first lots were sold.

South of the Murray River, Koondrook became important for timber production and the port was heavily reliant on the local saw mills. It was commented that the streets were paved with sawdust.

Due to the increase in economic activity and local population the passage at Barham became an important link between southern parts of New South Wales and northern Victoria. Prior to the construction of the bridge it was served as the only local crossing over the river.

The port was considered to be too inconvenient and unreliable due to its limited operating hours and old age, it was previously used at Echuca for 14 years before being moved to Barham. Also pastoralists would avoid the crossing as usage frequently decreased the value of stock due to 'inhospitable' stock.

Source: Volume 1: Vertical Lift Span Bridges - Movable Spans Bridge Study. - Project: 22/16156. GAD

THE BRIDGE DURING CONSTRUCTION FROM THE NEW SOUTH WALES SIDE OF THE RIVER.

Source: Kerang New Times, 1904. The Barham-Koondrook Historical Society

The above photograph has been widely circulated in the past as having been taken on opening day. Regardless, it is not possible to identify all persons in the photos, but it is believed that the first row includes Mr. Vains, D.W. Williamson, C. McKeown, P.J. O'Donnell, Donald McDonald and a Mr French. The rear row includes A.G. Allen, J. Cawthron, D.D. Raffrey, J.B. Charter, Martin Peascott and Mr Head.

Source: University of Melbourne Archive, BWI2483

THE BRIDGE DURING CONSTRUCTION FROM THE NEW SOUTH WALES SIDE OF THE RIVER.

Source: Kerang New Times, 1904. The Barham-Koondrook Historical Society

The above photograph is recently obtained and was clearly marked on the reverse "September, 1904", it indicates that the bridge was not completed at that time.

Source: University of Melbourne Archive, BWI23584

THE BRIDGE DURING CONSTRUCTION FROM THE NEW SOUTH WALES SIDE OF THE RIVER.

Source: Kerang New Times, 1904. The Barham-Koondrook Historical Society

The above photograph was taken by the late Roy Right and supplied by his grandson Chris Name. Among various occupations, Roy was at times a professional photographer, psychologist and road repairman.

Source: The Barham-Koondrook Historical Society

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