

Survey and Assessment of Cox's (1814) Road Between Woodford Railway Station and Linden Railway Station March-October 1994

I once attended a luncheon and met Dr Robert Ballard (the man who found the Titanic). He told everyone in the room that his greatest regret was that he gave out the position of the sunken liner. I hope that I am not making a similar mistake. Some things are best left alone. William N Evans J.P. Engineering Surveyor Roads and Traffic Authority N.S.W.

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Section 1.0

Synopsis

This Survey was carried out by The Roads and Traffic Authority at the request of Springwood Historical Society. It was totally separate to the Woodford and Linden Bends Reconstruction Programme.

The main objectives of this work were to survey the remaining intact sections of Cox's road in the Woodford- Linden areas of the Blue Mountains and also locate and include any historic sites associated with the road. Some sections of the road were rediscovered on private property and these have been included also to try and give a better picture of the route of the road.

Only European historical features were requested in the survey brief however I instructed my field staff to call my attention to any Aboriginal sites of which I would include in my reports. Unfortunately we did not find any.

The survey itself was required to be placed onto the integrated survey grid to make relocation of the road and historical sites easier in the future and to provide a permanent record for archival purposes.

Many sections of "gutter" were found along the route of the survey, together with a number of convict quarries and other possible historic sites, some of which do not seem to be recorded in any earlier reports.

This report is based on my findings on the survey and I have omitted some of the technical material. It is mainly for the benefit of Springwood Historical Society and has been laid down as a base plan to build upon in the future as more sites are discovered. I intend to give a computer copy to Blue Mountains City Council for their heritage records.

All items have been given Intergrated Survey Grid Co-ordinates and can be refound at any time.

Section 2.0

Location

The townships of Woodford and Linden are situated in the Blue Mountains between 80 and 90 kilometres west of Sydney.

The survey area started at Woodford Railway Station and headed along Railway Parade on the southern side of the line in an easterly direction. It encompassed the area of road in the Appian Way Precinct and then headed East across the bushland area toward Taylor Road. From Taylor Road it headed north into Old Bathurst Road and followed this alignment for quite a distance passing just behind the Rockcorry Cottages and Woodford Trigonometrical Station along to where Hepburn Road meets the new alignment of the Great Western Highway. At this point the survey branched off the line of Cox's Road and- descended in to the valley to the East and located the stone fortresslike rock walls which overlook the highway and the lower mountains to the East.

Returning to Hepburn Road it crossed the Highway and continued just West of the railway overbridge at Tollgate Road. From here it followed the ridge through

Dawes Park and behind the row of houses in that area. It descended the ridge onto Glossop Road and followed its alignment down to Donohoes Gravestone. It branched off once again and included the extent of Kings Cave.

From here the survey traversed across to Linden Railway Station and the sandstone knoll immediately between the railway line and the highway.

This was to be the finish of the original survey however Linden Citizens Association formally requested that the Roads and Traffic Authority extend the survey to include the areas up to Linden water reservoir. This extension was granted and the survey finished on top of the rock outcrop that holds Linden water tank.

Section 3.0

Historical Sites Observed and Included in the Survey

What we found

The historical sites that we encountered during the survey span the entire history from the first road built by Mr Cox to the present day. This is due mainly to the fact that the ridge in this area on which the people and animals crossed is so narrow.

Working in an Easterly direction I believe that Cox's Road crossed somewhere through the buildings of Woodford Railway Station, rose up and followed Railway Parade to a point where it crossed through the cutting and onto what we call the Appian Way Precinct. I found a line of stones similar to the other convict walls underneath the railway fence at Railway Parade. (The Appian Way Precinct has been properly studied by others before me and it would be best if their papers were read in conjunction with my survey plan).

From the small brick railway bridge at Appian Way any trace of the road disappears. One possibility is that it crosses the rear garden of No 4 Appian Way. The other is that it follows Appian Way to the small laneway on the left just before the intersection with Parker Rd. Whichever way the line of the road took it

is certain that it followed the line of the high ground around the ridge and did not cut across the valley.

While looking for fence lines in the bush between Appian Way and Taylor Road I met a lady who was hosing her garden. I explained what we were doing and she showed me a moss covered gutter and flat shelf that crossed through her property. Her name was Mrs O'Brien. Assistant Surveyor Mr Cho and myself included this new section in the survey and this so far is the continuation of the road. Running in a diagonal line through Mrs O'Brien's property the road then enters the property next door of which the house is built on top of the road. A small section of "gutter" was located in the front garden near the Northern end of the house. Here the road actually crossed Taylor Rd and did not join it as earlier historians have stated. What follows is typical of the ignorance in regard to historic sites in the Blue Mountains.

In 1992 the Water Board decided to lay sewer lines through the Woodford area. The contractors set up a base camp in the flat area on the corner of Taylor Road and Old Bathurst Road.

In setting up their camp they firstly bulldozed the area to a flat site and pushed the debris into the low area at the back of the site. In doing so they destroyed a section of convict retaining wall and numerous "gutters". The land belongs to the Roads and Traffic Authority as does many other blocks along Old Bathurst Road however no request for the usage of the land as a depot has been found in R.T.A. records.

Proof of the alignment of Coxs Road can be seen on the plan where a retaining wall comes from the open ground and joins into the alignment of Old Bathurst Road.

The remaining intact section of the wall has since been removed by a resident without RTA permission to create a new driveway for himself across RTA land. We were very fortunate to survey the wall before it was totally destroyed. Coxs Road roughly follows Old Bathurst Rd with various retaining walls and gutters to mark the route.

In the rear garden of a house close to where the two roads merge is quite a large convict quarry. The stone from which was used in the building of the high retaining walls opposite the access lane to the railway line. I will not state the exact location of the quarry out of respect for the owners. Photos appear later in the report along with a name carved in the surface of the stone. This quarry I stumbled upon by accident and the owners were quite excited to be told what the markings and flat rock surfaces were in their garden. This quarry is very close to the old road and could not have been used by Mitchell in his roadworks or later by the railways. The style of the quarry matches those that we found later in the survey and also matches a quarry discovered by Surveyor Vanderburg during his surveys at Warrimoo in 1994.

Next door to number 8 Old Bathurst Road is a small block of land belonging to the RTA which has a small dirt road across it. Where this access road joins Old Bathurst Road at one time was a saddle in the hillside. I believe that another convict wall is under the intersection of these roads near the boundary of the RTA property. This would possibly form a small raised area of Cox's Road. This site must be taken into account if this block is to be sold in the future or if a road is to be built on it.

Along this section of the road I located sections of retaining wall in various lengths and I believe that further intact sections of wall are buried under the earth brought up from constant regrading of the road by Blue Mountains City Council over the years.

Toward the middle of this length of the road is a large flat rock area surrounded by thick dense bushland which is hard to penetrate. Although no proof exists this area could possibly have been an overnight holding pen for animals on the journey over the mountains. Cleaning the area may produce fence-post holes or some other proof of its use.

Going past the flat rock the road goes around the left of the high hill and behind the Rockcorry Cottages. Here a retaining wall was found but the gutters have been worn and eroded and do not show definite pick marks. At this point a note must be made about a line of pick chips on the rock surface on top of the hill. It is well known that Mr Cox went ahead of the road builders to locate the next

days area to be worked. He possibly chose this line for his road, marked it out and then changed his mind after discovering the rock shelf below the hill. Other lines of pick marks appear at Dawes Park, Linden in the vicinity of the road. Another road of more recent origin crosses the top of the hill but I believe that this is a maintenance track for the power poles upon it. The evidence to me indicates that it was made with a bulldozer.

Just off the road toward and next to the railway line can be found Captain Bulls Chair and part of a pathway that led eastwards before the railway destroyed the remaining sections in the 1920's. On top of the railway cut and a bit further East appears to be a flat area and a quarry site with, apart from the box drains of the railways, a strange drainage system. This is possibly the site of Captain Bulls Cottage. A distinct overgrown road leads from the quarry to the Rockcorry Cottages and was probably used to transport the stone to build them. As no trace of Captain Bulls Cottage is visible it may have been used to extend Woodford Academy or the Rockcorry Cottages themselves.

At the common boundary between the two Rockcorry Cottages, Coxs road takes a sharp turn to the left and enters the private property of Mr and Mrs Goldsmid. It follows the top of the ridge and the best examples of gutters and the road width can be seen at various spots through the bush. The site immediately behind Woodford Trigonometrical Station is probably the best example of Coxs Road on the Blue Mountains. Also in this area are numerous old survey peg holes cut into the sandstone. As with all private property the owners permission must be obtained before entry onto any of the land.

Woodford Trig has been the subject of many an argument as to the location of Caley's Repulse. I believe that Caley's Pile of Stones mentioned by so many travellers lay somewhere near Glossop Rd at Linden. A survey of two public reserves (See Map 1 Linden Park and Bulls Camp) by Surveyor John Deering dated 20th July 1876 shows Caley's Repulse South-Southwest and a short distance from Kings Cave.

Following the old road down the hill toward Hepburn Road various "gutters" can be seen to show it's alignment. At Hepburn Road it takes a sharp turn to the left

and stops abruptly at the new Great Western Highway. In the bush below Hepburn Road we found a large sloping rock with parallel grooves on it that are very similar-to those at Bull's Camp. An old fireplace is close by to this site also.

Further investigation is needed in this regard but I wonder if another, or twin "Bull's Camp" once existed on the Eastern side of the ridge and has now grown over. It seems odd to me that another "store cave" and grooved rock would be built so far away from the other ones at Bull's Camp. A second camp-site may have something to do with the drystone walls lower down the ridge.

A number of short 1 metre high drystone walls overlook the valley to the East of the store cave and these have long had a curious effect on people as to why they were built in this spot.

Cox's Road starts once again on the Northern side of the highway on the ridge near Dawes Park. It follows the top of the ridge behind the houses in that area and appears to be just outside the rear fences of the properties in many cases, however it descends down from the ridge through Mrs Varna's property and appears to join up with Glossop Road. The site where it descends seems to be the only sloping ground in the area as a high bank and cliffs separate the ridge and the lower areas at Glossop Road.

A high "Northside" gutter in Mrs Varna's garden is the last remnant of Co~'s Road that we encountered until we reached the "knoll" above Linden Railway Station'. C? ,?Cs survey traverse descended down to Donohoes Gravestone and then to Kings Cave. I have stated earlier my thoughts as to the original location of "Caleys Repulse" in relation to Kings Cave and here I will go further to say that I believe "Caleys Repulse " is not the name of a pile of stones but the actual high bluff and cliff line that once overlooked Kings Cave and was "blown up" in the 1860's by the railways to fill in the valley between Linden village and Linden railway station. I believe that the true site of the cairn was destroyed at that time and now no longer exists.

On Linden knoll are many sites of interest. Cox's road followed over the top of the knoll and a lot of it is probably still intact but buried under fallen trees.

During the preliminary widening of the Linden bends near the Telecom compound in 1993 the Roads and Traffic Authority went to great lengths to preserve the "gutters" at the Western end of the knoll by fencing them off and even informing all the work crews of their importance and whereabouts. Unfortunately Prospect County Council placed a new power pole on top of the knoll and bulldozed an access road to the top, destroying the "gutters" and any other sites near them.

The old railway reservoir is intact and has not been damaged.

There is some argument as to the origins of a sloping trench running from the top of the knoll down toward the Telecom compound. Local people believe that this trench was a cattle and sheep race used for counting the animals and imposing a toll per head on them for using the road. I was shown a few fencepost holes near the site however any trace of the race has been destroyed.

A 1955 Dept. of Main Roads survey plan (See Map 2) shows a water pipeline in the vicinity of the trench so I can only conclude that this is what it was used for.

A small quarry was found in the Northwestern corner of the knoll and the quarrying methods used here match those at Warrimoo and others at Woodford.

On the Eastern end of the knoll is a definite "gutter" showing the alignment of the road but just close by was a remarkable find. A domed shaped rock is adjacent to the road and has a large groove carved into one end. Closer inspection revealed that the underside had been chipped away in readiness to prise the stone off the shelf. I am certain that this piece of ornate rock was to be used in the completion of the "Bluff Bridge", possibly as a cap for one of the supports and handrailing or to hold a timber beam in place to stop wheels going over the edge.

As in a lot of sites, in particular the quarries, it appears that whoever was

working on it was told to move on and it was left "as is".

Just off the road toward and next to the railway line can be found Captain Bulls Chair and part of a pathway that led eastwards before the railway destroyed the remaining sections in the 1920's. On top of the railway cut and a bit further East appears to be a flat area and a quarry site with, apart from the box drains of the railways, a strange drainage system. This is possibly the site of Captain Bulls Cottage. A distinct overgrown road leads from the quarry to the Rockcorry Cottages and was probably used to transport the stone to build them. As no trace of Captain Bulls Cottage is visible it may have been used to extend Woodford Academy or the Rockcorry Cottages themselves.

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From Linden knoll Cox's Road curved around and passed directly in front of Linden House then to the small valley where I believe that the "Bluff Bridge" was erected. This valley was filled in by Mitchell in the 1830's. The road then climbs up toward Linden, Water Tank where the last convict retaining wall that we encountered can be seen, and down the other side toward Numantia and the highway.

The survey ended here.



A handwritten signature, possibly "Dennis", is written in dark ink. Below the signature, the date "15/23" and the word "copie" are written in a similar cursive hand.

Section 4.0

Report on Objects Found

Four objects of interest were found during the survey.

I do not expect these items to be of great significance and I am not sure of their historical value but I found them during my survey so I hope they may be studied by another person.

The metal detector was not used over the entire survey but only through random areas.

1. Top of Wash Jug

Found at the point marked on the plan "OBJECT 1"

We found the top of a washjug approx 15m north of the edge of the road. The pattern on the neck shows an ear of wheat and a daisy flower.

2. Broken Bottle

Found at the point marked on the plan "OBJECT 2"

Pieces of a broken bottle were found among the fortresslike walls below the southern convict cave.

Two very rusty shovel blades were observed on one of the walls at the same time however these were missing on our return a week later.

3. Large Nail

Found at the point marked on the plan "OBJECT 3"

A large nail was discovered using a metal detector on the ridge near Dawes Park Linden.

4. Tip of Wagon Axle

Found at the point marked on the plan "OBJECT 4"

We found this item with a metal detector buried next to the "gutter" on the Eastern end of the knoll at Linden railway station. It appears to be the tip of a wagon axle and shows a hole drilled through the point, possibly for a split pin.

Section 5.0

Authorship and Acknowledgements

The survey project was carried out by William Neil Evans as the Surveyor in Charge. The fieldwork was executed by Surveyor Evans, Surveyor Tony Mitchell and Assistant Surveyor William Cho.

The computer work and processing of the fieldwork was achieved by Surveyor Paul Pemberton.

I would especially like to thank Historian Mr Jack Austin of Woodford who accompanied me on the survey and gave his precious time and knowledge free of charge so that more time could be spent in the field.

The author also wishes to thank the following:

Mr Geoff Mobbs (President of the Blue Mountains Branch of the National Trust and Secretary of Linden Citizens Association)

Mr Keith Edwards (Blue Mountains Historical Society)

Mr and Mrs Goldsmid of Rockcorry 2 without whom the best examples of Cox's Road would not be included in this survey.

The residents of Woodford and Linden who are fortunate enough to have such historical treasures in their own gardens and allowed me to include them in my survey.

A special thankyou to Mrs Varna of Glossop Road for her knowledge of the Linden area. Kathi, my wife, and son Peter who both put up with a great deal

of old plans and lost time while I did my research.

Section 6.0 Recommendations

The remaining sections of Cox's Road are suffering considerable damage from motor vehicles and the effects of time. The original road across the Blue Mountains has also suffered badly from the various Government Utility Authorities. Prospect County Council has placed power poles along the route, Telecom and the Water Board have laid trenches and pipelines along it also. I strongly recommend that the road be closed off to all traffic except hikers. Gates should be placed at intervals to discourage trailbikers and horseriders from damaging the road any further and the entire length of the survey site should be turned into a Heritage walk. By approaching the required Authorities a full heritage study should be undertaken by qualified archeologists to assess the different sites and their merit for preservation.

A steel walkway may be possible (timber would burn in a bushfire) to keep walkers from damaging the road any further.