

## Fullers Bridge (circa 1915) – a potted history

Club Members would be very familiar with the Fullers Bridge 'top turn' – in particular the finer points of the pylons and under water obstacles. Provided below are the results of some research that provide some insight into the history of the Bridge and surrounding area.

*"Built 1915-1918 originally to carry a tram to the 'Field of Mars.' Basically unchanged for nearly 90 years. This bridge crosses the Lane Cove River on the western boundary of the City. Contracts for the bridge were let in 1915. It was completed in 1918. It was originally intended to carry a tram to the "Field of Mars" cemetery, as the slope of Fullers Road was too steep for the horses to negotiate. In an article in the Sydney Morning Herald in 1932 it was referred to as the "Jenkins Bridge". The Jenkins family developed a farm on the river in about 1860, when the only other residents were timber getters living in huts along the river. Part of their original home can still be seen in the Lane Cove National Park buildings. The river was the main communication link used by large boats and private craft. The Jenkins alternative route to Sydney was to walk to Blues Point and cross the harbour in a waterman. The article mentions that it is "noted for its beautiful curve, or more technically camber". Photographs from the twenties show that the current bridge is basically the same as the one constructed in 1918, although a pedestrian crossing has been added."*

Source: The lighter side of Willoughby Water, Waves & Wanderings, Terry Fogarty, Chatswood 2003



Above: Fullers Bridge nearing completion circa 1918 (Source – City of Ryde Library ref 5095778)

*"Fullers Bridge has historic, technical and aesthetic significance and rarity value within NSW. The bridge constituted a long anticipated element of public infrastructure, shaping the history of the Willoughby and Lane Cove areas by providing permanent access across the Lane Cove River when road routes linking these areas were few and far between. It is one of the earlier extant examples of reinforced concrete bridge technology in the State, and of the concrete beam form in particular, and is identified as the first continuous reinforced concrete girder bridge in NSW. It is a comparatively large and ambitious structure, even by comparison with concrete beam bridges of later decades. It has pleasing lines with a general camber and curved beam soffits, forming a landmark on the Lane Cove River, Delhi Road and in the surrounding recreational landscape. The bridge has rarity value in NSW as a good, intact example of a continuous beam reinforced concrete bridge constructed prior to 1925.*

*The footbridge was added shortly after World War Two. Proposals to add expansion joints appear not to have been acted on. The line of road along Delhi, Millwood and Fullers Roads provides a link between the centre of Chatswood, on the Pacific Highway, and the North Shore Rail line at Chatswood with areas to the west. The joining of the route across the Lane Cove River appears to have taken place in the early twentieth century, with the construction of Fullers*

*Bridge in 1918. An 1899 Parish map shows that there was no crossing of the Lane Cove River in the vicinity of the current Fullers Bridge. Rather, in 1899 Millwood and Fullers Roads reached the river from the east on approximately their current alignment and a wharf was located at their joint terminus until 1918. The line of road approaching the river from the west (the present Delhi Road), however, is shown turning north as it approaches the river and meeting the river several hundred metres upstream of the current crossing. (Department of Lands website, Parish Map Willoughby 14019101; Russell, 1970 p. 140) A cutting and new road alignment on the western side of the river was most likely completed to convey traffic to the new bridge.*

*The Willoughby Mayor's Minute Book, records a meeting of the Willoughby and Lane Cove Councils on 5 September 1898 to discuss the provision of a bridges over the Lane Cove River to provide improved communication with the Field of Mars. The sites under consideration were Fullers Road, and Mowbray Road to the south. The final decision about the siting was to be made by the Minister of Works. Evidently the Fullers Road site was eventually selected. The first bridge on the Mowbray Road site was constructed in 1940. It appears that the reinforced concrete beam bridge at Fullers Road was designed by the Department of Public Works. Tenders for its construction were let in 1915 and Fullers Bridge was completed in 1918. The bridge was originally intended to carry a tram to the Field of Mars Cemetery, as the slope of Fullers Road was too steep for horses to negotiate. (Willoughby City Library: Willoughby City Facts, Fact Sheet no 17) It is not known whether a tram service eventuated.*

*In 1944 workers who were engaged on substantial but routine repairs of the bridge noted serious cracking in one of the girders. It was found that two of the timber piles supporting the piers of the bridge had been subject to serious teredo worm attack and parts of the bridge were sinking. Underpinning was immediately carried out by the DMR, to whom the responsibility for the bridge's maintenance had passed. The timber pile systems supporting two of the piers were replaced with new concrete piles, one of the piers was encased in a concrete cylinder, and substantial repairs were undertaken to the girders and deck of the bridge. Associated repair works continued into 1950 (RTA General File490.1609;1) Subsequently, only minor repairs have been necessary. From 1945 the replacement of the bridge with a wider, higher level bridge on an improved alignment was considered, but has not been carried out. (RTA File 'New Bridge over Lane Cove River near Fullers Bridge' 490.1197, 1945-73; RTA General File490.1609;2)"*

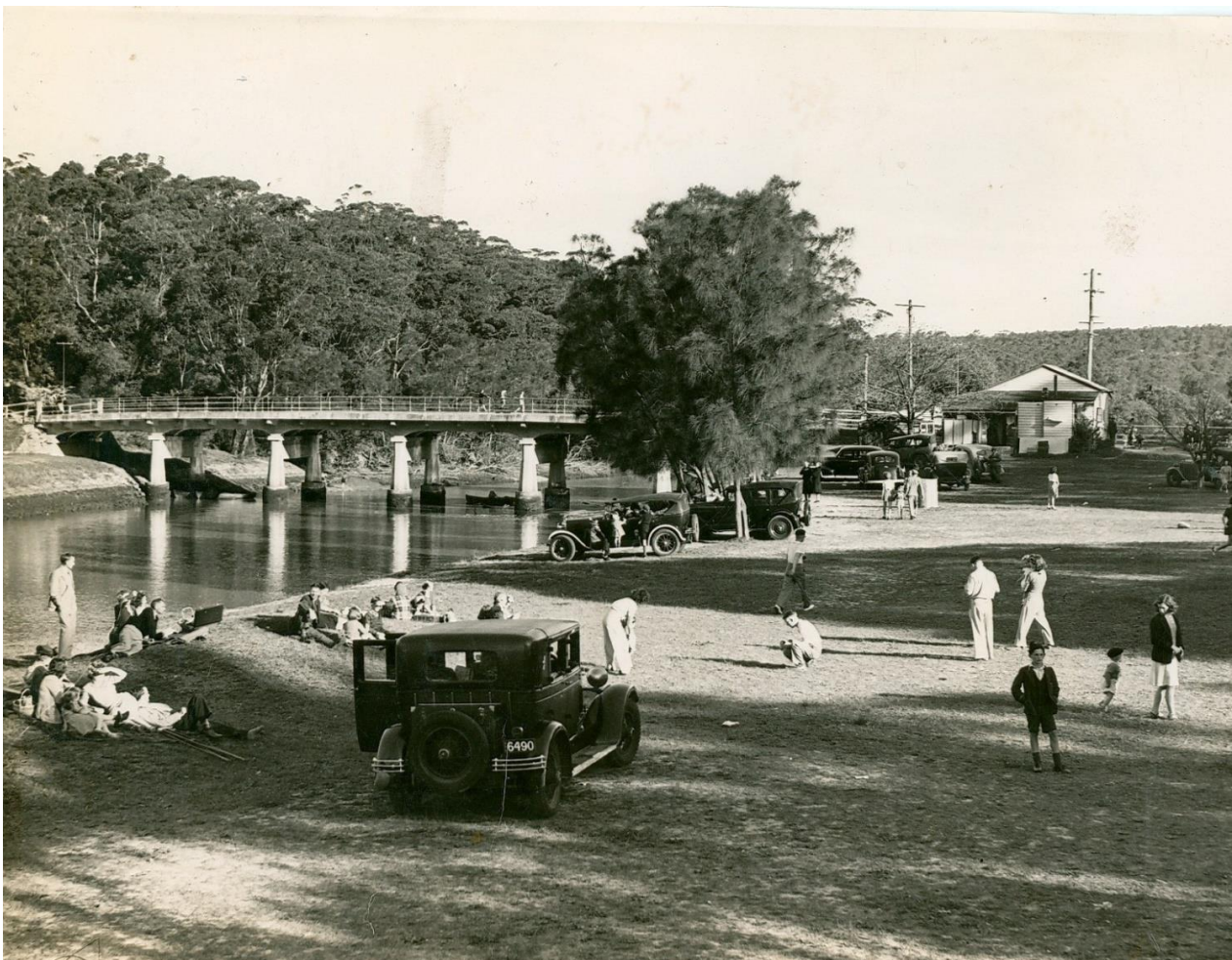
Source: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/ViewHeritageItemDetails.aspx?ID=4309576>



Above: Looking up Fullers Road from the Delhi Rd side of the Bridge ~1936 (Source - File: 005/005240 - Copyright Willoughby City Library)



Above: Looking downstream from Fullers Bridge – with paddlers approaching the top turn! (Source - File: 005/005841 - Copyright Willoughby City Library)



Above: Fullers Bridge from upstream on the Delhi Rd side of the bridge (Source: State Records NSW)



Above: Fullers bridge from the 'wharf' next to the Steakhouse Restaurant. Date unknown (Source: Environment NSW Copyright NSW RTA)

And finally below are details of an early 1920's subdivision of land downstream of the Bridge on the Chatswood side of the river – including a panoramic picture of the river complete with a rowing boat – a sign of things to come!

**LOXTON ESTATE**  
CHATSWOOD

VENDOR AND REGISTERED PROPRIETOR  
**CLIFFORD PEACOCK**  
Bonding Road, Armadale  
VICTORIA

**TITLE WILL BE TORRENS**

**H.P. MULLICAN & COMPANY**  
Vendors Surveyors  
67 Castlereagh St Sydney.

**LOCAL SKETCH**

VIEW OF LOXTON ESTATE FROM LANE COVE RIVER.

**STAMP DUTY ON CONTRACTS**  
In accordance with the Stamp Duty Act 1910 every agreement for the sale of land made after the 1st day of January 1911 and every contract for the sale of land made after the 1st day of January 1911 and every contract for the sale of land made after the 1st day of January 1911 and every contract for the sale of land made after the 1st day of January 1911 shall be subject to a duty of stamp duty of 10s. for each acre or fraction of an acre and of 5s. for each other portion of an acre.

**Text on map:**  
LOXTON ESTATE is unique in situation as it overlooks and has a half-mile frontage to the beautiful Lane Cove River which is noted for its scenery.  
The river is very popular with launch parties as it affords a very pleasant run through its beautiful wooded hills, gardens and fern ground and reserves, amongst them being the famous "Fairy land" all of which are easily reached from the Estate.  
LOXTON ESTATE offers an excellent investment as it is a new Estate, really an extension of Chatswood forced by natural expansion.  
The Unimproved Values of the local Municipality have increased from £168,378 in 1911 to £1,750,784 in 1921.  
The population has jumped from 12,000 in 1911 to 30,000 in 1922.  
Land adjoining the Estate is rated at £5 per foot and land recently at £5 and £7 per foot which is a 10% increase in value in what it was purchased a few years ago.  
Bungalows around the Estate have been built costing from about £1,000 to £2,500 each.  
Fuller's Road has been given a second foundation in anticipation of the extension of the present estate from this extension has been applied for by the residents for some time and it is only a matter of a little time when the necessary will demand the extension to the districts beyond the Estate.  
The actual location for the tram to run is past the Estate, as the bridge crosses the river at the end of Fuller's Road.  
LOXTON ESTATE is convenient being reached in six minutes from Chatswood Railway Station by a Motor Bus Service, Chatswood is only 8 or 9 miles from the G.P.O. Sydney. It has an excellent Train Service to Milsons Point, during the business hours the through Train Service does the journey in 12 minutes and with the Fast Ferry Service makes the journey to Sydney only 20 minutes.  
The approaches to the Estate are by the finest Macadamized roads.  
The Estate is within easy reach of the shopping centre of Chatswood which is the shopping centre of the North Shore Line. There are Churches of every denomination, Public and High Schools with many other high class Private Schools.  
There is also a large very well fitted picture show near the Station as will be seen by the Plan. Water, Gas and Electric Light are within a few yards of the Estate.

Source: <http://acms.sl.nsw.gov.au/album/>