



The Shoebridge Track *PF photograph 2004*

**THE SHOEBRIDGE TRACK
DEUA & MONGA NATIONAL PARKS**

**HERITAGE ASSESSMENT
PREPARED FOR THE
NATIONAL PARKS & WILDLIFE SERVICE**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The National Parks and Wildlife Service [NPWS] has sought the preparation of a Heritage Assessment to determine the significance and help guide the management of the Shoebridge Track within Monga and Deua National Parks. The Shoebridge Track was constructed in the 1860s as an alternative dry weather pack horse route out of the Lower Araluen area to the coastal areas of Nelligen, Moruya and Broulee. This report provides a heritage assessment and a basis for management of the track, which in part traverses the Buckenbowra Wilderness Area.

1.2 REPORT OBJECTIVES

The brief for the work indicates that:

'... The preparation of a Heritage Assessment for the Shoebridge Track is required to assess the significance of the track and assist in the management of historic heritage assets within Deua and Monga National Parks and the wider Far South Coast Region. The heritage assessment should also aim to analysis the importance of the track in the context of other historic bridle trails in the Far South Coast Region

'The Heritage Assessment was to undertake appropriate historical, construction and fabric research and analysis in order to evaluate the cultural heritage significance of the track within its immediate context of Monga and Deua National Parks and wider regional and state context.

'The preparation of this Heritage Assessment will rely partly on the review and use of existing materials collected by the NPWS and stakeholders on the place and the Monga and Deua National Park, as well as additional research undertaken as part of this project.

'The Heritage Assessment will form the basis for determining the future management of this track.'

1.3 REPORT STRUCTURE

The report outlines the historical context for the settlement of the Araluen Valley, the construction of the Shoebridge Track, and its subsequent use and abandonment. The physical characteristics of the track are described, and a comparative assessment undertaken addressing historical and social significance and track construction.

The significance of the track is then assessed against the NSW State Criteria, and a summary statement of significance given.

The final section of the report makes recommendations about the conservation and management of the Shoebridge Track, and proposes guidelines for that process.



1.4 OVERALL LOCATION PLAN AND SITE IDENTIFICATION AND CURTILAGE

Figures 1 and 2 show the location of the Shoebridge Track in a regional context and the route it follows through Deua and Monga National Parks. This report concentrates on the sections of the track that pass through the national park areas, and immediately adjacent Vacant Crown Land, but the survey did not extend to the eastern section of the track through what is now a mixture of private and other land tenures.



Figure 1
Location of the Shoebridge
Track.
NPWS

For the purposes of reference, the surviving sections of the Track are numbered 1 to 8, Section 1 being in the west and Section 8 in the east, refer **Figure 3** below. Section 1 runs from the Araluen Road at Araluen Lower, up to the Gollarabee Fire Trail. Deua National Park and Buckenbowra Wilderness Area are entered

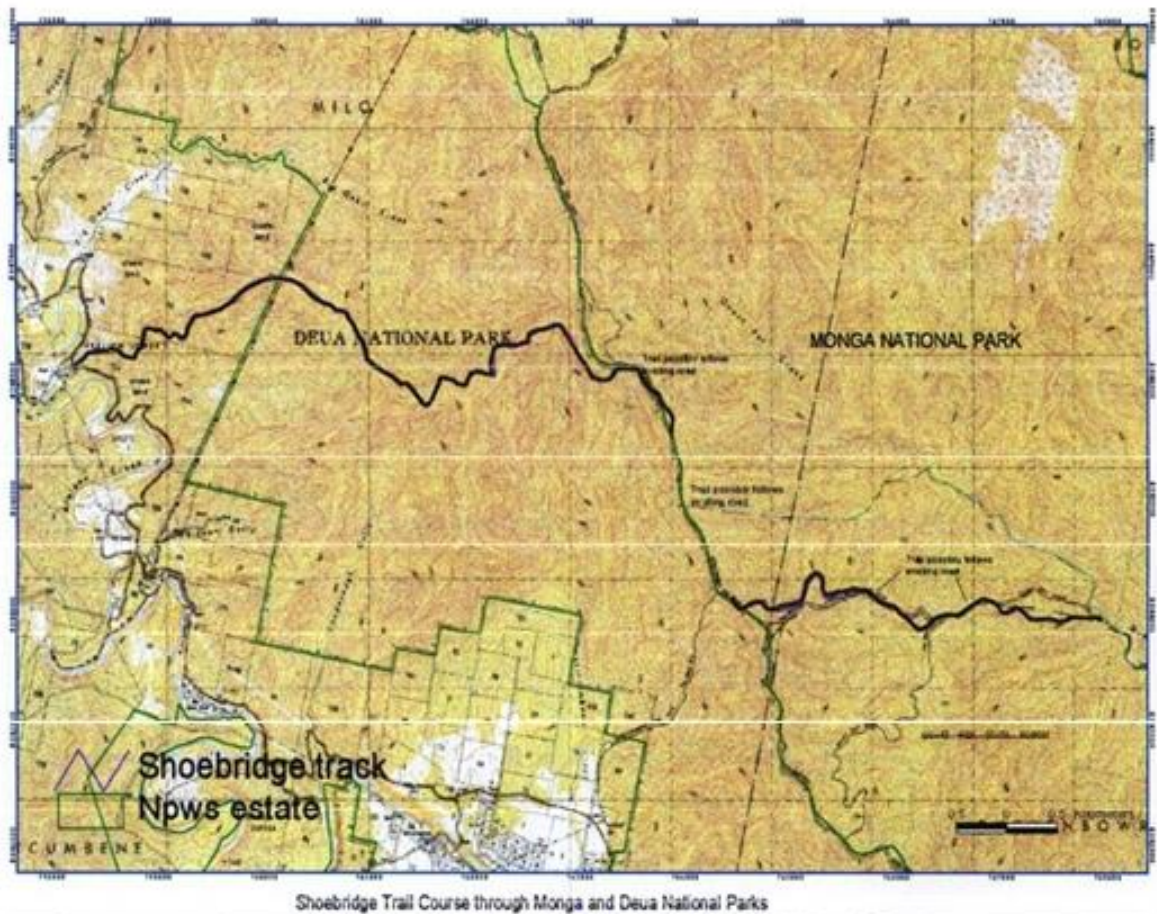


Figure 2
Map of the Shoebriidge Track
NPWS

approximately 2.8 km east of the Araluen Road. The next c.4.4 km is through the Wilderness Area to the Gollarrabee Fire Trail. The route of the Track then follows generally the alignment of the Gollarrabee Fire Trail south-east for 2.6 km, with three identified track sections [Sections 2, 3 and 4] diverting to the east of the road then rejoining it, for a total length of about 800m. The Wilderness Area ends at the eastern end of Section 4, and the Gollarrabee Fire Trail is the boundary between Deua and Monga National Parks.

300m west of the Fire Break Fire Trail junction, **Section 5** of the track leaves the Gollarrabee trail and heads eastwards along the contour. This section is approximately 1.6 km long, then rejoins the Fire Break Fire Trail about 800 m east of its junction with Gollarrabee Fire Trail. **Section 6** of the track heads off south of the fire trail a further 700 m to the east, rejoining it another 600 m east, just before a saddle that has been identified by local riders as the possible site of the Halfway Hut described in the accounts of the track.

Section 7 of the track leaves the Fire Trail approximately 550 m east of the end of Section 6, and heads south of the ridge, and parallels the fire trail before rejoining it [as the Quart Pot Road] approx 1.3 km to the east, on the side of the Quart Pot Creek. A further short **Section 8** of track is located approximately 2.4 km



east [by road] of the end of Section 7 [at map reference 700 439], at the top of a side creek of Quart Pot Creek, and apparently allowing a low-grade access from the creek bank up to the ridge along which the current Quart Pot Road runs to the north-east, the most likely route of the Shoebridge Track continuing to the east out of the Park.

The Track runs through rugged country, with steep valleys falling away from it and ridges above it. While the curtilage in a visual sense is the extent of the vista, for management purposes the curtilage is limited to a corridor through which the track passes. A corridor width of 15 metres each side of the track is likely to encompass all physical remains relating to the track. The broader visual curtilage, which also gives the track its historical context by emphasising the difficulties of supplying the Araluen Valley, is protected by the Wilderness Area zoning of the surrounding land. Section 5-8, which are outside the Wilderness Area, have their visual curtilage protected by either overlooking the Wilderness Area [Section 5] or the Monga National Park [Sections 6-8].

1.5 AUTHORSHIP

Historical research, synthesis of previous historical work, description of the track, survey, oral history interviews, and significance assessment was undertaken by Michael Pearson. Stakeholder liaison, report editing and project management was undertaken by Peter Freeman.

1.6 SOURCES

Much of the evidence for the construction of the Shoebridge track comes from newspapers, particularly the *Braidwood Observer and Miners' Advocate*. Newspaper research has been carried out previously by Patricia Grimshaw, and has been drawn upon substantially for this report.¹ Local historical context has come from a variety of published local historical sources. A limited number of oral history interviews provided local historical knowledge and direct evidence of the use of the track in later years.² Evidence for comparative assessment has come from a range of published materials and unpublished reports, individually referenced in the text.

1.7 REPORT LIMITATIONS

This report is a heritage assessment. While it makes recommendations for conservation and management, it is not a complete Conservation Management Plan.

The comparative assessment is limited by the small amount of research that describes in detail comparable tracks, but is supplemented by the knowledge of local people. It is often difficult to distinguish from most reports whether the track being

¹ Grimshaw 2001.

² Oral history interviews were carried out with Neil and Kathleen Waddell, Catherine Lawler, Bruce and Royden Reid.



described is a surveyed and graded pack track comparable with the Shoebridge, or is simply a bridle track with a mixture of grades and track condition. Oral evidence helps make this distinction in the south coast region. The most directly comparable examples for graded pack tracks are from New Zealand. There appears to have been little research of pack tracks in Australia, and this suggests itself as an area rich in research possibilities. Resources limited the comparative field observation of other southern NSW tracks [except the Corn Trail] as part of this project, but this shortcoming is lessened by the first hand observations available in the oral histories carried out.

1.8 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Fergus Hood	Araluen
Catherine Lawler	Bodalla [oral history interviewee]
Bruce & Royden Reid	Mogo [oral history interviewee]
George Sherriff	Braidwood
Neil & Kathleen Waddell	Araluen [oral history interviewee]



2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This assessment of heritage significance documents, records, assesses and provides recommendations for the management of, the Shoebridge Track which runs from Lower Araluen through the Deua and Monga National Parks to the Buckenbowra Valley to the east. The report is undertaken for the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, and the assessment and recommendations are largely restricted to the area of the national parks.

The assessment is supported by historical research into the track itself and the other bridle tracks in the region, and by comparative information on tracks from New Zealand, Tasmania, Victoria and NSW. It is also supported by oral history interviews undertaken with a small number of people with family associations with the tracks.

The report finds that the Shoebridge track has elements that are of local, regional and state significance, and makes recommendations for the appropriate conservation and management of those elements.



3.0 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

3.1 PREAMBLE

This historical overview of the Shoebridge Track has been prepared by Dr Michael Pearson. The overview relies heavily on the research of Mrs Patricia Grimshaw and on references provided by her to newspaper sources dealing with the Shoebridge Track. It also draws on oral history interviews conducted by Michael Pearson as part of the project.

3.2 THE EARLY EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT OF THE ARALUEN VALLEY

The Araluen Valley is the traditional land of Aboriginal people of the Walbanga language group, communities of which occupied a large belt of land stretching from the coast to the Great Dividing Range. An estimate of the Aboriginal population of 'Alleluen' in 1826-27, the first year of formal European settlement in the valley, was 110. However, this was given as evidence in 1841, so is therefore not necessarily an accurate census.¹ Araluen was identified in the post-settlement period as a place where meetings between different Aboriginal groups took place. One gathering of Monaro and coastal groups in 1853, according to the European observer held to resolve disputes, is said to have numbered 800 people.² Given that the Shoebridge Track follows a prominent ridge system linking the Araluen and Buckenbowra valleys, it is not unlikely that the route was used by Aboriginal people to attend such gatherings.

Early pastoral settlement of the Araluen Valley officially began when H.S. Badgery and Henry Clay Burnell occupied land there in 1827, the same year surveyor Robert Hoddle was sent to survey the valley of the Deua River. Hoddle, with surveyor Knapp and eight convict labourers, came down from the tablelands via Braidwood, and, from a base at Badgery's farm, undertook the survey down to the mouth of the Moruya River. He then surveyed the length of the Clyde River.³ It has been suggested locally that Burnell may have been responsible for cutting the Shoebridge Track in the 1830s or 40s, using convict labour, but this possibility seems unlikely based on the newspaper research of Patricia Grimshaw.⁴ However, it seems probable that there may have been an earlier bridle track and stock route linking Burnell's Araluen and Buckenbowra holdings, which may have followed the same ridges as the Shoebridge Track, or may have taken another route across the range.

¹ Ellis, N. 1989. *Braidwood, dear Braidwood*. N.N. and N.M. Ellis, Braidwood: 11-12.

² Ellis 1989: 13.

³ Gibbney, H.J. 1989. *Eurobodalla: History of the Moruya District*, Library of Australian History, Sydney: 18-19.

⁴ Grimshaw, P. 2001. *Araluen's Historical Shoebridge Track*, unpublished typescript.

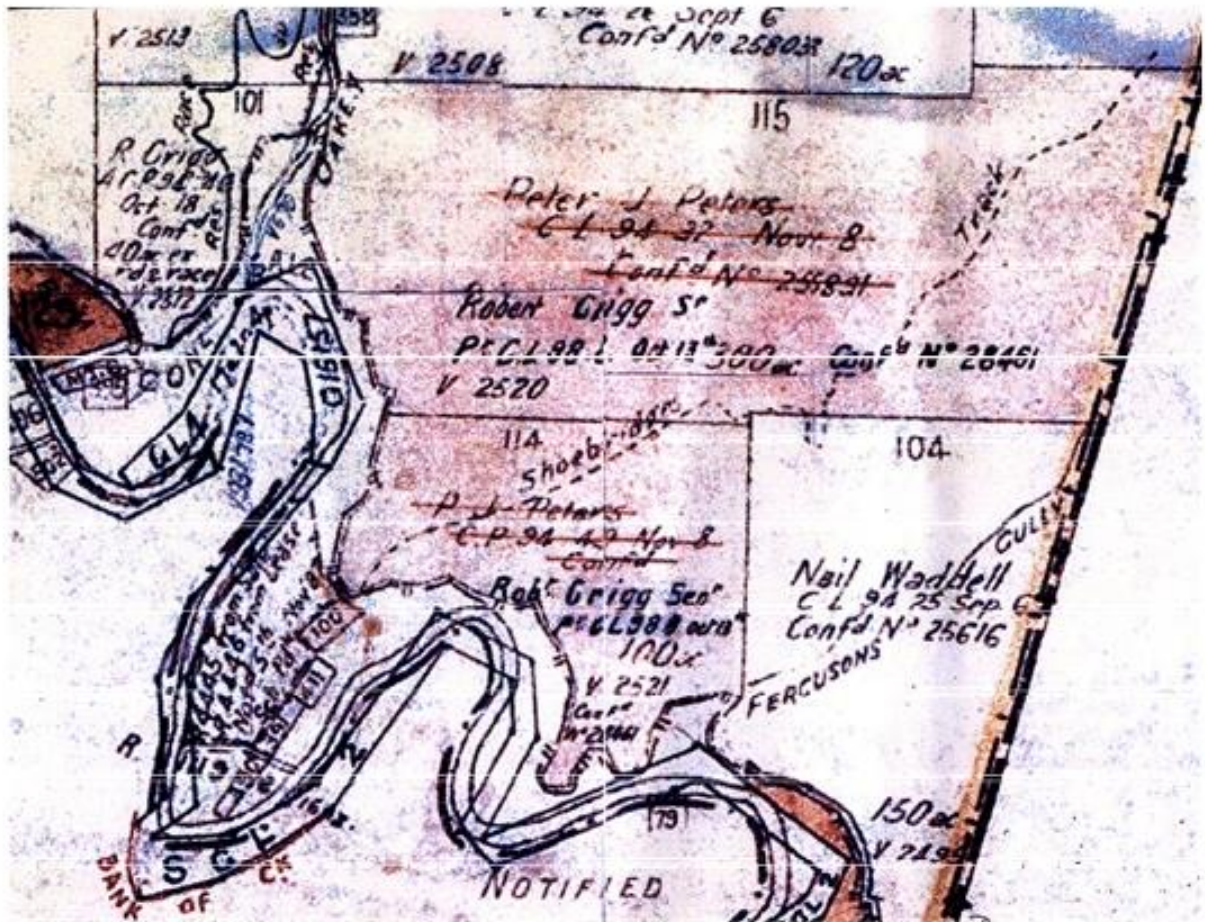


Figure 1: The Shoebridge Track at Mudmelong. Within the promontory on the Araluen River was located Shoebridge's Pack Saddle Store. 1897 Parish Plan Parish map 17/03/97. Parish: Milo, County of St Vincent. LPI image ID 10360001, Edition 4, Sheet 1

Figure 2: Setting off for the Shoebridge Track, April 2004. From L to R: Michael Pearson, Terry Hart, George Sherriff, Brian Clarke, Chris Howard [NPWS], Neil Waddell and Rob Bartell [NPWS]. In the background can be seen a small dwelling which may be located on the site of Shoebridge's Pack Saddle Store. PF 2004 photograph





Figure 3
Starting up the Shoebridge
Track, April 2004. Note the
steady incline. This area is
Crown Land [not National
Park].
PF 2004 photograph



Figure 4
The Shoebridge Track, eastern
end.
PF 2004 photograph



Figure 5
Remnant retaining wall,
eastern end, Shoebridge Track,
April 2004.
PF 2004 photograph





Gold was reported as being discovered from about 10 km up stream from the mouth of the Moruya River by Alexander Waddell and Henry Hicken in July 1851. The deposits were traced by the first small rush of miners up the Moruya and Deua Rivers to the junction with Araluen Creek, and mining activity reached Badgery and Burnell's farms by August. By September 1851 prospecting was taking place for about eight kilometres along the valley of Araluen Creek and Bells Creek to the mountain slopes. By late September between 250 and 400 men were working the field, and 400 miners licences were issued in October.⁵

Some would-be miners came to the Araluen Valley by way of a track from Braidwood, but most appear to have come up-stream along the bridle tracks from Moruya and Broulee, having shipped south from Sydney. The track up the river from Moruya can still be traced in a sections as it meanders up the valley, crossing the river numerous times.⁶ The main rush only lasted two or three months, with the peak population at Araluen reaching an estimated 1,600 in early 1852. However, steady mining was more long-lasting, 52,820 ounces of gold being sent out from Araluen by the official escort by September 1852.⁷

In March 1852 Braidwood landowners petitioned Surveyor General Mitchell for the survey of a route from Braidwood to the headwaters of the Clyde River, and on to Batemans Bay. Surveyor Larmer was given the task, and he included a route from the lower Clyde River across to Broulee. Work commenced on a dray road from Braidwood to Batemans Bay in October 1853, but the gold rushes created a labour shortage that slowed the work. The road was ready for traffic in 1856, and the village site of Nelligen was surveyed in 1859.⁸

This became the main route for goods going to Araluen—up the Clyde Mountain dray road to Monga and on to Braidwood, then down the Araluen valley from the west. By 1860 the original track to Araluen from Moruya up the bed of the Deua River was in a poor state of repair, to the point where Shoebridge's new packhorse route was able to establish a good trade between Moruya and Araluen. In October 1860 a public meeting in Braidwood formed a petition to government for the construction of a new dray road from Braidwood to Araluen, £1,000 was allocated by Government in May 1861, and work was completed in November 1861.⁹

The competition between Moruya and Braidwood for the supply of the Araluen valley continued until the collapse of the mining

⁵ Gibbney 1989: 52-54; McGowan, B. 2000. *The Golden South: a history of the Araluen, Bell's Creek and Major's Creek gold fields*. The author, Canberra: 34-35.

⁶ Oral history interviews, Neil Waddell, Bruce and Royden Reid, June 2004.

⁷ Gibbney 1989: 53-54.

⁸ Gibbney 1989: 55.

⁹ McGowan 2000: 63; *Braidwood Observer and Miners' Advocate*, 27 October 1860; 29 May 1861; 23 November 1861.



industry. However, Moruya continued to be disadvantaged by the poor communication between the coast and the valley, setting the context for the creation of the Shoebridge Track.

3.3 THE CREATION OF THE SHOEBRIDGE TRACK

Almost all of the evidence for the construction of the Shoebridge track comes from newspapers. Newspaper research has been carried out previously by Patricia Grimshaw, and has been drawn upon substantially for this report.¹⁰

Thomas Shoebridge was the owner of the Pack Saddle Store at Mudmelong, the first advertisement for which appeared in the newspaper in 1859. Shoebridge had emigrated from Kent in 1850 [per *Cornwall*], married Catherine McPherson at Araluen in 1857, and they were to raise a family of nine children. Shoebridge's store was badly affected by the floods in the Araluen Creek and Deua River in February 1860, when supplies were seriously disrupted. Another flood followed three months later. As a result Thomas Shoebridge decided to build a high-level access route in order to guarantee supplies to his store.¹¹ The Shoebridges left Araluen in 1866, moving to Bolaro area on Buckenbowra Creek to the east. Subsequently, the family moved to Shallow Crossing, where Catherine died in 1913, and Thomas in 1917. Both were buried at Nelligen cemetery.¹²

In August 1860 the *Braidwood Observer and Miners' Advocate* reported that:

*[Shoebridge] has succeeded in discovering a new line of road to the coast from Araluen, which not only answers the purpose of shortening the distance considerably, but of overcoming every difficulty which has been experienced in the way of obtaining supplies on the recurrence of the floods. The route marked out by Mr Showbridge [sic] is one that presents no obstacle to the obtaining of supplies at all seasons of the year. It has been suggested by a person who has traversed it that the Mullenderee mail should via the newly opened track, inasmuch as it would avoid the numerous crossing places of the Moruya River, from the passage of which at times considerable danger is incurred. The marked line which has been so marked at considerable expense, passes Mr McLeod's house at Buckinburra [sic] and is in the present formation admirably adapted to packing. Indeed, during the recent floods [May], Mr Showbridge, in his anxiety to procure an immediate supply of the necessaries of life for the inhabitants, used it, and found it to answer admirably. The distance is estimated at 27 miles and the line presents no difficulty where it crosses the Buckenburra ranges.*¹³

The 'coast' in this instance appears to have been Nelligen, where supplies brought in by ship appear to have been landed. Surveyed as a village on the new Clyde Road in 1859, Nelligen

¹⁰ Grimshaw 2001.

¹¹ Grimshaw 2001: 5; *Braidwood Observer and Miners' Advocate* Wednesday 14 February 1860.

¹² Grimshaw 2001: 15.

¹³ *Braidwood Observer and Miners' Advocate* 18 August 1860. background repeated on 27 October 1860.



was being visited by ships of the Illawarra Steam Navigation Company, and a hotel and store were established there, by the end of that year¹⁴ Tracks also ran to Broulee, Batemans Bay and Moruya from the lower Clyde, and the Shoebridge Track appears to have linked up with these as well at the eastern end of the Buckenbowra valley. It also linked up with the track that ran up the Bolero Valley to the Corn Trail.

Magistrate Mr H.C. Burnell travelled the new pack route and 'speaks highly of its practicability and gives credit to Mr Shoebridge for the discovery and laying out of such a route.'¹⁵ The fact that this report makes no mention of the reputed earlier laying out of the line by Burnell strongly suggests that the story that Burnell himself cut the Shoebridge Track route in the 1830s cannot be correct. It does not, however, discount the possibility that Burnell had an earlier bridle track route across the range to link his Araluen and Buckenbowra land holdings.

Estimates of the cost incurred by Shoebridge in clearing the route ranged from £200 [18 Aug], to \$307/6/6, consisting of £293/14/0 for labour and £13/12/6 for tools [9 Sept], to over £400 [27 October 1860].¹⁶ Application was made for the erection of a toll gate on the new track, which extended from Austin's Point [just downstream of the present bridge over Buckenbowra Creek at Runnyford] to Mudmelong [Araluen Lower], in order to defray the maintenance costs being born by Shoebridge.¹⁷ Another writer urged the Government to recognise Shoebridge's contribution and 'indemnify him for loss'.¹⁸ These concerns appear to have been well founded, as it seems likely that the expense of cutting the pack track contributed substantially to Shoebridge going into insolvency, and the sale of his Mudmelong property, which was reported in February 1861.¹⁹ Shoebridge's house was purchased by Eaton & Co, and was converted by Mr W.B. Bruce to become the Commercial Hotel.²⁰ There was also further lobbying for the track to be made into a road, to replace the hazardous and often impassable Deua River track,²¹ but none of these approaches was successful.

Concerns began to emerge during 1861 that Shoebridge's track required further work to make it safe for packing. Several accidents were reported in the press:

¹⁴ *Braidwood Observer and Miners' Advocate* 27 October 1860; Gibbney 1989: 55.

¹⁵ *Braidwood Observer and Miners' Advocate* 12 December 1860.

¹⁶ *Braidwood Observer and Miners' Advocate* 18 August 1860; 9 September 1860; 27 October 1860.

¹⁷ *Braidwood Observer and Miners' Advocate* 9 September 1860; 12 December 1860.

¹⁸ *Braidwood Observer and Miners' Advocate* 27 October 1860.

¹⁹ *Braidwood Observer and Miners' Advocate* 9 February and 25 February 1861.

²⁰ *Braidwood Observer and Miners' Advocate* 13 April 1861.

²¹ Eg *Braidwood Observer and Miners' Advocate* 18 August 1860; 12 September 1860; 19 September 1860; 27 October 1860.



*'A horse belonging to Mr McLeod, of Buckenbowra, went over a rocky sideling, and lost his load. The horse was saved by digging out on the next day, after a considerable amount of labour. The worst of the reported accidents, however, happened to a draught horse belonging to Mr Egan of Balara [sic] which went over within a few yards of the same place as the former, and was smashed to atoms, and everything lost. Both these accidents arose from the same cause, namely, the horses meeting men on foot and not seeing room to pass, trying to turn back and going over in consequence of the narrowness of the track.'*²²

As a result of these complaints, in May 1861 the Government allocated £1,000 [misreported as £1,500] for the widening of the track.²³ Progress of the work, however, was slow, leading to further local pressure. On 17 July 1861 it was pointed out in the press that Shoebridge's Track:

*'... is at present much used for packing—Mr McLeod and Mr Gunstan both being daily on the track with their pack horses, the former taking the Moruya end, and the latter the Araluen branch. Besides this amount of traffic, this track is extensively used by storekeepers—in fact there have been thirty eight horses on the road, the property of one firm alone. ...[and increased traffic is expected from the Gulph diggings]... The narrowness of the route renders it almost impossible, especially when the rivers are up, for parties to pass one another on the line, and if this is not remedied we fear we shall have to report some serious accidents.'*²⁴

The Editor noted that he had heard at the time of writing that Mr Webber, local Superintendent of Roads, was to visit the track the following Friday in company with Mr Shoebridge, to decide what works to carry out. However, Thomas Shoebridge himself wrote to the paper in November, complaining of the dangerous state of the track, 'especially so after fires which had made the track unfit for anyone to pass in safety'. He advised people to travel to Merricumbene and over Merricumbene Mountain until the track was made safe. He could see no evidence of works resulting from the recently granted £1,000, though tenders had been accepted.²⁵ The track over Merricumbene Mountain is west of the Deua River, and may be the route followed by the present Oulla Creek and Merricumbene Fire Trails.

Finally, at the end of January 1862, it was reported that the contracted works would be completed within a fortnight:

'The portion of the new road nearly finished, commences at Mudmelong, near the Commercial Inn and ends at Shoebridge's half-way hut. The roadway is perfectly passable and at intervals of 300 yards, proper passing places are constructed, sufficiently wide to allow a dozen or more horses to effect a transit without coming into contact—the width at these points being 10 feet and the length 30 yards. The Superintendent of Roads [Mr Webber] will in all probability visit the works next week and

²² *Braidwood Observer and Miners' Advocate* 18 May 1861.

²³ *Braidwood Observer and Miners' Advocate* 18 May 1861 [misreported]; 29 May 1861.

²⁴ *Braidwood Observer and Miners' Advocate* 17 July 1861.

²⁵ *Braidwood Observer and Miners' Advocate* November 1861.



*make final arrangements for the completion of the track to Austin's. Mr Wedekind, the contractor, has 26 men employed on the line and the works are executed in a manner which gives no ground for fault finding.*²⁶

Shoebridge's half-way hut was located on the eastern [Buckenbowra] side of the mountain, halfway down the ridge to Quart Pot Creek [see below].

The specifications for the work, published in the paper in February 1862, are particularly useful in interpreting the surviving evidence of the track:

*'We publish below the specifications of the new track to Araluen from Austin's on the Clyde River: Five and a half miles of cutting and two and a half clearing on the Shoebridge's track, between Clyde and Araluen, commencing at the hut on the eastern side of the Mountain and terminate at Mudmelong, cutting to be 6 feet wide, with the exception of those places which have to be 10 feet wide and 30 yards long, which must be made about every 300 yards in site of each other, all trees, stumps, or roots, have to be cut off 12 inches below surface of the roots, when completed all trees and stumps, that are near the road of track, and which might touch the saddles of horses, to be filled, the upper side of cutting to be sloped to one inch, the outer embankment have in no instance to be left up artificially, and about [a] mile of the track has to be cut in 6 feet in the solid surface of the road. Must be even, the contractor is bound to rectify the level of the present track in such a manner that each cutting is in itself properly graduated, most of the gradients are not to exceed 1 in 12, and to be approved of by the superintendent or overseer. Clearing: two and a half miles is to be cleared between different cuttings to the width of 15 feet, all trees or stumps to be grubbed and removed, and all stumps and roots within the same to be eradicated, all inequalities of surface rock stone to be removed and all stump holes filled up with stones or ground.'*²⁷

This work in 1862 seems to have resulted in the form of the track as it survives today. A number of the passing lane sections can still be identified, and sections at the western end of the track retain the six-foot wide benching, which has been eroded in other sections. [see the description section below]

3.4 THE LATER HISTORY OF THE SHOEBRIDGE TRACK

The use of the Shoebridge Track is intertwined with the history of the Araluen to Moruya route down the Deua River.

Before 1861 the route from Moruya to Araluen up the Moruya and Deua Rivers was supported by road only as far as Larry's Station, where roads from Kiora [SW of Moruya], and Mullenderree [Mullenderree, NE of Moruya] via Muckindurra [Mogendoura, NW of Moruya] had been cut in late 1860.²⁸ Beyond that point the Deua River route was only a pack horse track with many river

²⁶ *Braidwood Observer and Miners' Advocate* 29 January 1862.

²⁷ *Braidwood Observer and Miners' Advocate* 5 February 1862.

²⁸ *Braidwood Observer and Miners' Advocate* 12 September 1860 [note; most newspaper references collected by Patricia Grimshaw]



crossings, making it dangerous and inaccessible in times of flood. Sections of this track, defined by erosion due to use rather than by constructed remains, can still be seen on both sides of the river.²⁹

Funding was provided in April 1861 for the upgrade of the Deua River route, as part of a general repair of the road from Braidwood to Moruya. The 19-mile section from Araluen to the existing road-heads at Larry's Station was to receive £133, the contract going to Messrs J. Hawdon, J. Heffernan, and James Coman.³⁰ However, in December it was reported that Hawdon, Coman and Heffernan had discovered and built a 'capital road, available at all seasons of the year, and which is now used by most persons travelling to the coast on foot'—apparently a new foot and bridle track route, presumably at a higher level as it avoided crossings of the River. The new section extended from McTavish's Claim at the junction of the Araluen Creek and Moruya [Deua] River, to Moruya.³¹ This new route was not a dray road, and may not even have been adequate as a pack route, as is suggested by the granting of \$1,000 for the widening and provision of passing lanes on the rival Shoebridge Track in May of the same year.³²

In September 1864 a public meeting was held in Moruya to lobby for a dray road to Araluen. The meeting argued '...the advantages to both Araluen and Moruya by the construction of the dray road instead of being limited to the present inconvenient system of packing.' One Captain Crawford stated that 'he had met no less than sixty pack-horses from Moruya that morning, carrying produce to Araluen and with such extensive trade a more convenient arrangement was needed.' The petition to government on the issue, however, was not successful.³³

The population of the Araluen Valley may have reached a peak of about seven thousand in the mid 1860s, then began a slow decline. Five floods were experienced in 1868, and another on Christmas Day 1870, which finally led to the widened of the Deua River route into a road.³⁴ This new road was certainly in use by January 1875, when the Rev. Dr. Vaughan, Archbishop of Sydney, used it to tour the district.³⁵ However, while it was used by the Araluen Mail Coach, the Deua road was still a fairly basic track, as witnessed by the trip of Tom and Ann Williams from Weetangara, near Queanbeyan, to the coast in 1882. Their bullock dray failed to negotiate a turn, rolled over and slid down the bank until stopped by a tree.³⁶

²⁹ Oral History interviews; Neil Waddell, Bruce and Royden Reid, June 2004.

³⁰ *Braidwood Observer and Miners' Advocate* 10 April 1861

³¹ *Braidwood Observer and Miners' Advocate* 7 December 1861

³² *Braidwood Observer and Miners' Advocate* 29 May 1861

³³ *Braidwood News and General Advertiser* 21 September 1864; 2 October 1864.

³⁴ Gibbney 1989: 67-68.

³⁵ Grinshaw 2001: 10.

³⁶ Gibbney 1989: 112-113.



The floods that led to the upgrade of the Deua River road also destroyed many of the mines at Araluen, but mining continued, and by 1880 Araluen still had 20 stores, three butcher's shops, four hotels and a boot factory, together with 20 large mining companies employing 800 men. Decline had started, however, the town population dropping from 609 to 221 in the decade 1881-1891. Mining output fell from £65,000 in 1870 to £8,845 in 1880 and £92 in 1890.³⁷ The importance of Araluen to the development of Moruya had declined as a result, but the road infrastructure through the valley was now in place.

It seems highly likely that the opening of the all-weather road down the Deua River from Araluen to Moruya in the early 1870s, and the subsequent decline in the mining industry would have sealed the fate of the Shoebridge Track as a primary route. Packing goods was not economical when dray transport was available, and the track is likely to have been abandoned for commercial use during the 1870s. By the time of the gold dredging boom from 1900 to 1914, Shoebridge's Track was an irrelevancy as anything other than local communications.

While the commercial use of the track after the 1870s is extremely unlikely, it remained in use as a convenient link between the Araluen and Buckenbowra valleys, both for families maintaining social contact with members in the neighbouring valley, and for the mustering of stock from the surrounding hills and the movement of stock between the valleys. Knowledge of the track's route, and even its existence, faded from the memory of all but the local landowners and families.

Neil Waddell's family settled in Lower Araluen as miners in about 1850, and had mining leases in Ferguson Gully, below the Shoebridge Track, as had the Hinchcliffe and Blundell families. The mines were accessed by a track up to gully, and also by a link to the Shoebridge Track above. The Waddells also ran cattle on the western slopes of the range, 60 to 80 cows having to be mustered down from the hills as far away as Big Oaky creek after winter. While the country was more open due to regular burning, the track was used to access the back country, but was itself a bit of a problem when the cattle got onto it, as they were very difficult to turn around if going the wrong way. By the time Neil knew the track as a young man, parts of it were unusable due to slumping, and logs had to be cleared by burning from time to time.³⁸

The Waddell family and others in the area used the track from time-to-time to travel across to the Buckenbowra valley. The track up past the mines in Ferguson Gully was used as a short-cut on the western end of the track. Neil's father and auntie went across to visit family, as the crossing did not take long by horse. The Police also use the track for patrols. During the depression, one or two tramps a day would use the track to come into Araluen valley, seeking meals at the Waddells and other houses at Lower Araluen. Neil Waddell recalls going up the track in 1943 or 44 with

³⁷ Gibbney 1989: 68, 107; and see McGowan 2000: 90-104.

³⁸ Oral history interview: Neil Waddell, 18 June 2004.



Harcourt Reid to bait dingos and feral dogs, which were a constant problem. Reid took up an old horse, shot it and poisoned the carcass, a distressing experience for the young Neil, whose world was focussed on horses. Dogger Mal Cody also used this method.³⁹

As a young man Neil Waddell worked on Merricumbene property, and their cattle grazed over into the Buckenbowra valley. Neil could ride up a spur track which ran down from the Shoebridge Track in the vicinity of the current Merricumbene ridge fire trail, and was able to go over into Buckenbowra in the morning and be back at Merricumbene by 3.00 that afternoon. This track, which was far less steep than the current fire trail, was defined by the wear and tear of use rather than being a cut and filled track.⁴⁰

During World War Two the tracks through the coastal ranges attracted the attention of the armed forces, who saw their potential to both aid any Japanese invasion and to aid the Australian forces counter that invasion. The main roads from the coast to the tablelands were mined for blowing up if an invasion occurred, and Major Jim Sturgiss was sent in charge of a survey party of the Coastal Patrol to identify and survey the bridle tracks. Unfortunately, Sturgiss makes only passing reference to this in his memoirs, which also contain some photographs of the survey party.⁴¹ The Shoebridge Track probably received little attention from Sturgiss, as it did not provide access to the tablelands. Neil Waddell could not recollect Sturgiss being in the area.⁴² Cath Lawler, however, did recall Sturgiss, as he stayed at Wattlegrove [south of the Turross River] and her father showed him the tracks in the local area, while 'Super' Sutherland showed him those in the Cobargo, Yowie and Brogo areas. A meeting was held on the coast to prepare people for any invasion. Cath's father was to be in charge of the evacuation from their area, and a 'burnt earth' policy was to be pursued, removing everything including, for some unexplained reason, all gates. There was local rumour that a spy was in the region, but this was never confirmed. The Volunteer Defence Corps [VDC] camped on the Rankin property at Wattlegrove, and did some work on the tracks, but it was a bit 'hush-hush'. They were also responsible for the mining of the main roads, and cleared the trig sites for surveying and aircraft navigation.⁴³ Another WWII incident was the crash of an aircraft that went down near Merricumbene, south of the Shoebridge track, the engine being recovered by Freddy Barlow on a slide pulled by draught horses.⁴⁴

³⁹ Oral history interview: Neil Waddell, 18 June 2004; Bruce and Royden Reid, 17 June 2004.

⁴⁰ Oral history interview: Neil Waddell, 18 June 2004

⁴¹ Thomson, J. [ed] 1986. *The Man from the misty mountains: Memoirs and poems of James Henry Sturgiss, 1890-1983*. The Budawang Committee, Eastwood, NSW.

⁴² Oral history interview: Neil Waddell, 18 June 2004

⁴³ Oral history interview: Cath Lawler, 17 June 2004

⁴⁴ Oral history interview: Neil Waddell, 18 June 2004



The land through which the track passed was taken up for State Forest, and the construction of fire trails destroyed or cut across the Shoebridge Track, especially in the eastern section and in the far western section on what is now vacant Crown Land. The State Forests were subsequently converted to national park, the track passing through sections of Monga and Deua National Parks, partly through the Buckenbowra Wilderness Areas. A short section at the western end remains in Vacant Crown Land.

Interest in the track for recreational riding has increased in recent years, and some work has been done to clear overgrowing trees and reconstruct one section that had collapsed.

3.5 THEMATIC CONTEXT

The NSW Heritage Office uses the NSW Historical Themes as a framework within which to consider the possible aspects of significance of heritage places. There are also Australian Historic Themes developed by the Australian Heritage Commission, which can be related to the NSW themes.

The Shoebridge Track has a connection with the NSW Historical Themes and Australian Historic Themes as shown in the following table.

THEMATIC CONTEXT OF SHOEBRIDGE TRACK

NSW Historical Theme	Australian Historic Theme	Relevance to Shoebridge Track
Transport	Developing local, regional and national economies	Use of packhorse track to supply Araluen settlement—evolution of transport infrastructure.
Agriculture	Developing local, regional and national economies	Use of packhorse track to supply agricultural and mining settlement
Mining	Developing local, regional and national economies	Use of packhorse track to supply agricultural and mining settlement
Commerce	Developing local, regional and national economies	Use of packhorse track to supply Araluen storekeeper—role of private investment in regional infrastructure
Technology	Developing local, regional and national economies	Involvement of surveyors in producing graded pack tracks.
Environment—cultural landscape	Developing local, regional and national economies	Track is a major cultural landscape feature through a natural and wilderness area.
Labour	Working	Packmen supplying isolated settlements
Persons	Marking the phases of life	Associations with named persons associated with the area.



4.0 PHYSICAL OVERVIEW

The Shoebridge Track varies greatly along its length in both condition and integrity. **Section 1** runs from the Araluen Road at Araluen Lower, up to the Gollarrabee Fire Trail. The western end of the track runs through Vacant Crown Land, and Deua National Park and the Buckenbowra Wilderness Area are entered approximately 2.8 km east of the Araluen Road. The next c.4.4 km is through the Wilderness Area, then the Gollarrabee Fire Trail is reached. The total change in elevation from Araluen Road to Gollarrabee Fire Trail is 490 m, giving a sector gradient of 1:14.6, close to the 1:12 required in the construction specifications, allowing for several level sections. The track along this section varies in condition. At the lower [western] end of the track the original construction is confused by later forestry track construction, but there appears to be a surviving section of the original track where the six foot wide cut-and-fill pathway is relatively clear. At the eastern end of the section is a very eroded section across rocky slopes, which runs for several kilometres before Gollarrabee Fire Trail is reached, where the track is narrowed to pathway as little as 30 cm wide. For much of the track's length the up-slope cutting is clear, though eroded, while the embankment on the lower side is eroded and indistinct in many places. Stone retaining wall sections are not extensive, and are comprised of random rubble stacking of stone, now much disturbed and showing no great skill in construction. A series of four passing-lane sections were observed along this section, at intervals approximating the 300 yards required in the specifications. Other passing lanes undoubtedly exist, but are either masked by eroded banks and vegetation, or took advantage of the occasional wider, flatter, sections, leaving no readily observable physical evidence. The creek crossings are all small, and the crossing was accomplished by cutting the track up to the creek line along the contour and laying a stone base across the watercourse. No evidence of culverts or formed embankments across the creeks were seen, but one at least, on a very steep section where the track had collapsed, has been subject of some degree of reconstruction in the recent revival of the track for horse riding.

The route of the Track then follows generally the alignment of the Gollarrabee Fire Trail for 2.6 km, with three identified sections [**Sections 2, 3 and 4**] where the track diverts to the east of the road, for a total of about 800m. These sections of track are not very distinct, with little cut-and-fill construction, and in parts may result from the recent clearing of a route rather than being the original track. The Wilderness Area ends at the eastern end of Section 4, and the Gollarrabee Fire Trail is the boundary between Deua and Monga National Parks.

300m west of the Fire Break Fire Trail junction, **Section 5** of the track leaves the Gollarrabee trail and heads eastwards along the contour. This section is approximately 1.6 km long, and has the greatest extent of stone retaining embankment supporting the track seen along the entire length. Towards the eastern end of the



section stone embankment supporting the down-slope side of the track extends over several hundred metres, with stone walling up to a metre high, constructed of un-coursed random rubble. The section rejoins the Fire Break Fire Trail about 800 m east of its junction with Gollarrabee Fire Trail.

The track is lost for 700 m along the Fire Break fire Trail, then **Section 6** of the track heads off south of the fire trail, rejoining it 600 m east, just before a saddle that has been identified as the possible site of the Halfway Hut described in the accounts of the track. An old Forestry map, unfortunately not dated, shows the 'Half Way Hut' clearly marked at this location, just to the south of what was now the fire trail alignment, on the eastern slope of the saddle.¹ Further ground survey would be required to try to identify any hut location.

Section 7 of the track leaves the Fire Trail approximately 550 m east, and heads south of the ridge, and parallels the fire trail before rejoining it [as the Quart Pot Road] approx 1.3 km to the east, on the side of the Quart Pot Creek. This section is across slopes with loose soils, and is eroded to a narrow path in most sections.

The climb of the range from Quart Pot Creek to where Section 5 hits the Gollarrabee Fire Trail is approximately 4.75 km, with a vertical rise of 380 m, giving a gradient of 1:12.5, very close to the required 1:12 gradient in the specifications. No passing lanes were observed in Sections 5-7, but the saddles and several ridge slopes would allow for a widening of the track at-grade [10 feet is specified in the documentation], rather than requiring separate diverging pathways as found on the western side, and these at-grade widenings would be much more difficult to observe due to soil movement and vegetation growth. However, further passing points might be located with more intensive survey.

Sections 5-7 run through Monga National Park, and are located south of the boundary of the Buckenbowra Wilderness area. The overall length of the traceable track from Araluen to Quart Pot Creek is approximately 14.5 km, or about 44% of the approximately 33km of the entire track to Austin's Point [the full distance to Nelligen is approximately 43 km [27 miles].

A further short **Section 8** of track is located at map reference 700 439, at the top of a side creek of Quart Pot Creek, and apparently allowing a low-grade access from the creek bank up to the ridge along which the current Quart Pot Road runs to the north-east, the most likely route of the Shoebridge Track.

The following table describes the major sections and features along the track.

FEATURES OF THE SHOEBRIDGE TRACK

[Map references are to the Araluen 1:25,000 map [8826-1S], and are based on GPS readings [WGS 84], Zone 55H.]

¹ Map held by Neil Waddell: June 2004.



Section	Feature	Map Reference	Description
1	Start of track	582 461	Track starts above Araluen road, opposite point on which Shoebridge's house and store were located.
1	Stone retaining wall	588 461	Section with stone retaining wall on down-slope side of track, up to 70 cm high. Six-foot width of track obvious, with 1 m cutting on up-slope side.
1	Passing-lane	598 463	Passing track on up-slope side of main track
1	Passing-lane	599 467	Passing track on up-slope side of main track, with stone packing supporting start of the embankment on the passing lane.
1	Passing-lane	602 467	Passing track on up-slope side of main track, located approximately on National Park boundary.
1	Passing-lane	604 466	Passing track on up-slope side of main track,
1	Blazed tree	608 466	Tree with large section of bark removed, and marks of axe in the lower exposed inner trunk. Near a distinct ridge saddle
1	Stone retaining wall	612 460	Rough stone retaining wall up to 80 cm high on down-slope side, cutting eroded reducing track to 50-80 cm wide.
1	Rest saddle	616 457	Saddle on ridge, the only major level area on Section 1 of track
1	Eroded section	624 462	Section of track across stony slopes, eroded cutting and fill reducing track to as little as 30cm wide.
1	Newly filled section	631 463	Section across extremely steep slope has collapsed and been recently re-built with stone rubble and wire. Section also has original stone packed embankments.
1	End of Section	637 461	Section meets Gollarabee Fire Trail
2	short section	639 459 to 640 454	Flat section east of fire trail.
3	short section	641 456 to 642 449	Flat section east of fire trail.
4	short section	643 446 to 644 445	Flat section east of fire trail.
5	Start of section	647 439	On east side of Gollarabee fire trail and north of Fire Break Fire Trail.
5	Stone retaining wall	655 441 to 656 440	Stone retaining wall 80 to 100 cm high.
5	End of section	657 440	Track meets Fire Break Fire Trail.
6	Short section	663 438 to 666 437	Track on southern side of fire trail and ridge.
	Possible Halfway Hut site?	668 438	Flat saddle possible location for Halfway Hut, as shown on Forestry map.
7	Long section	673 439 to 684 438	Track over southern slope of ridge, loose soil and eroded track cutting.
8	short section	700 439	Track rises out of Quart Pot Creek onto Quart Pot Road ridge.



Figure 1 : Getting ready to go at Mudmelong. L to R: Terry, George, Rob Bartell, Neil Waddell, Chris Howard. Note the building beyond.

Figure 2: Terry Hart at Lower Araluen. Note the former Stockbridge Store site beyond.

Figures 3 & 4: Starting up the Shoebridge Track [Araluen end].

Figure 5: Stone retaining walls in poor condition, map ref. 588461.

Figure 6: The Shoebridge Track, western end.

PF 2004 photographs



Figures 7 & 8: Entry to the passing lane on the up-slope side of the main track.
Figures 9 & 10: Entry to the passing lane on the up-slope side of the main track.
Figures 11 & 12: Uncut section near the blazed tree.
MP 2004 photographs



Figures 13 & 14: Low stone retaining wall [map ref. 612 460]

Figures 15 & 16: Built up track on steep slope [map ref. 631 460].

Figure 17: Reaching the NPWS vehicle above lower Araluen at the end of the Section 1 track at Gollarabee Fire Trail.

Figure 18: End of the Section 1 track at Gollarabee Fire Trail. Terry Hart is standing with the horses. *PF 2004 photographs*



Figures 19 & 20: Retaining wall, map ref. 66 440.

Figures 21 & 22: Eroded wall and gentle slope [map ref. 655 441].

Figures 23 & 24: At the end of Section 5, Gollarribee Fire Trail. Map ref. 657 440. *MP 2004 photographs*



Figure 25 [above]
Mike Pearson, Chris Howard
and Duke Conroy.
MP 2004 photograph



Figure 26 [above right]
Section 8, up to Quart Pot
Road [map ref. 700 439].
MP 2004 photographs

The construction of the track appears to have been relatively simple, though the surveying of the steady grade was a skilful bit of work. The sections of track built on steep slopes were formed by simply cutting a face into the hill slope and using the cut earth to form a bank below it, sometimes supported by a roughly-built stone retaining wall. The up-slope cuts were not deep, the deepest being approximately 1.5 m high, and the down-slope fill could be supported by retaining walls up to 1 m high, but usually less than this. Over the years many of the cuttings have been eroded by rain and soil slumping, and the fill has also been eroded and retaining wall have collapsed, resulting in a less distinct cut-and-fill formation and a narrow pathway around the slope. Figure 27 shows the construction technique and the process of erosion.

The eastern section of the track beyond the bottom of the descent at Quart Pot Creek has not been traced, though Section 8 suggests that it ran up onto the ridge along which the current Quart Pot Road now runs, out of the Park, and this is supported by the undated Forestry map of the track.² The track then may have followed roughly the same alignment as the current road along the northern side of Buckenbowra Creek before swinging north-east to Austin's Point [the current Runnyford], though Neil Waddell thinks it is off the road, possibly to the south.³

² Map held by Neil Waddell: June 2004.

³ Oral history interview, Neil Waddell, 18 June 2004.



5.0 ASSESSMENT AND STATEMENT OF CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

5.1 COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT

While detailed descriptions are limited, there are many other bridle and pack tracks in Australia and New Zealand. The available published and report information, and oral history interviews, are drawn upon for this comparative assessment. Coming out of this analysis there is a clear indication that there was a significant difference between graded pack tracks like the Shoebridge, and other bridle tracks in the region.

There are varying opinions about the way in which strings or trains of pack horses were managed, and it is probable that there was no set method. The New Zealand evidence suggests that graded pack tracks were built to allow the safe operation of many horses, perhaps in trains where the animals were tied one to another in a string. Ordinary bridle tracks, however, were also used for packing, either by one rider with one pack horse, or by a string of pack horses trained to follow-the-leader without being tied together. The latter system appears to have been used on the tracks south of Araluen, around Bendethera.¹ The reason for building the Shoebridge Track as a graded pack track was to encourage its use by commercial carriers, whereas the other tracks in the region were largely created to allow access for horses and stock to isolated valleys, and were formed by use rather than being constructed.

5.1.1 COMPARISON OF HISTORICAL USE

Like many other tracks in NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and New Zealand, the Shoebridge Track was built to serve a specific function and was superseded by better constructed roads or by better routes over time. Many of the bridle and pack tracks were built to service mining ventures, or small isolated rural communities. In the case of the Shoebridge Track, it was to service Shoebridge's store, and coincidentally the wider Araluen community, and its target users were commercial rather than local families. While Shoebridge built the track at his own expense, it went through vacant Crown Land so he could not legally restrict its use by others. It can be implied from the press reports that Shoebridge intended to charge tolls, and perhaps he saw this as the commercial advantage he would get.

In most cases, as with Shoebridge's Track, the use of pack tracks for that purpose was generally relatively short-lived. The eastern section of Shoebridge's Track, outside the National Park, may have been upgraded for dray traffic, and absorbed into the current road up Buckenbowra Creek to Bolero Valley. The extension of this route up the Bolero Valley linked up with the Corn Trail, providing access to the tableland to the west, but this route was

¹ See Oral history interviews, Neil Waddell, 18 June 2004; Catherine Lawler 17 June 2004.



probably made largely redundant by the construction of the Clyde Mountain road in 1856, before the completion of the Shoebridge Track. From the eastern end of the Buckenbowra valley tracks ran to Nelligen, Broulee and Moruya, probably taking advantage of links to the new Clyde Mountain Road, and coincidentally linking also to the Showbridge Track. Most of these link roads to the coast appear to have been subsumed into the modern pattern of roads.

In the case of the western sections through the National Park, Shoebridge's Track was superseded by a more convenient road route, in this case the Deua River Road to Moruya in the 1870s. Other pack tracks shared these fates, or were simply abandoned as their purpose [such as supplying a mine or farm] became redundant. In the case of the tracks into Bendethera, while slides and bullocks were used on occasion to transport large items into the valley², the first bulldozer did not cut a vehicle track in until the 1960s.³

Like most other pack tracks, the Shoebridge is associated with locally historically significant people and families—the Shoebridges, Waddells, Hinchcliffes, Reids and others—and is part of their heritage.

Shoebridge Track has a level of local historical significance that is similar to many other tracks. It was important to development of the local community and economy at the time of its construction and active use, but was only used by a small number of families used when made commercially obsolete by better transport routes.

However, as part of a wider collection of bridle and pack tracks in southern NSW, it can be argued that the Shoebridge Track is an important part of the set of such tracks, which collectively characterise the isolated settlement and transportation problems facing the coastal range country throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries. This collection of track is potentially of state level significance, though more historical research and ground survey would be necessary to test that proposition.

5.1.2 COMPARISON OF SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

Some tracks, such as those in Tasmania and New Zealand that have been walking tracks for many years, are recognised as socially significant to local, regional and sometimes national communities. While the Shoebridge Track has always been known to a number of local families, only recently has interest in it widened and a broader group of individuals and organizations come to value the track. The track has significance to the families who have had a continued association with the track,, though the level of that significance has to be put into the context of valuing what is seen as being an ordinary and familiar part of the local environment and sense of place. As Neil Waddell sees it, he has

² Thomson, J. [ed] 1986. *The Man from the misty mountains: Memoirs and poems of James Henry Sturgiss, 1890-1983*. The Budawang Committee, Eastwood, NSW: 158-160.

³ Oral history interview, Catherine Lawler 17 June 2004.



always known about the track, and simply sees it as part of his home territory and past. It is important, but no more significant to him than the other tracks in the region that his family used, and in terms of pioneering effort, Neil thinks that the miles of water races built to support gold mining are probably more significant as well-built stone relics of the past representing a huge expenditure of human effort.⁴

The broader community now has some limited knowledge of the place. The primary focus of interest of the most active community groups appears to be recreational use rather than social significance based on 'strong and special associations'.

It should be expected that a growing recognition and related social value of the Shoebridge Track will develop within the local and regional communities over time, especially if NPWS makes information about the place accessible to the community and visitors to the area. If knowledge and access remains limited, social significance may remain limited to those families with long association with the place.

Many if not most early Australian transportation routes followed Aboriginal paths and routes, intentionally or by accident—finding the best route through a landscape is based on assessments of topography and water resources that are shared by both Aboriginal and European cultures, and knowledge was often borrowed by the latter from the former. The Shoebridge Track follows a prominent ridge system to cross from the catchment of the Araluen/Deua River to that of Buckenbowra Creek, and this route is likely to have been used by Aboriginal people. It is understood that chance finds of Aboriginal artefacts have been made in some saddles and ridges, and this would support the assumption that this was a traditional Aboriginal route. In finer detail, the Shoebridge Track runs along the crest of the ridge for only very short distances, being mainly off the ridge tops to maintain a constant grade, and as such the Track is not likely to overly Aboriginal routes or sites except at saddles and ridge crossings. Closer association of track location with Aboriginal sites might occur in the eastern section of the track, along Quart Pot Creek and out of the park into the Buckenbowra valley, where flatter land and water resources are more readily available.

5.1.3 Track Construction : the Evidence

The most useful study of graded pack tracks is that by Paul Mahony, who inspected 22 graded pack tracks in New Zealand, mostly built between the 1840s and 1920. These were built for a variety of reasons, including prospecting, mining, droving, farming, tourism and general communications. They were financed by central government, local government or private industries.⁵

⁴ Oral history interviews, Neil Waddell, 18 June 2004

⁵ Mahoney, P.J. 1991. 'Graded pack tracks: an unappreciated historic resource', *Australian Journal of Historical Archaeology*, 9: pp 76-78: 76.



New Zealand

Many of the routes inspected by Mahony were abandoned and had become overgrown, some had become road routes, and others became walking tracks [such as the Milford and Heaphy Tracks]. However, Mahony was able to record the principal characteristics of the pack tracks. The key characteristic is steady grade. As Mahony points out:

*'Horses are prone to totally lose control when they panic. If this happens in difficult terrain, the result can be death to horse and packman. Therefore one objective when working horses is to maintain a minimum stress level by working at a steady pace and having as few changes of pace as possible. This is even more important when working groups of horses. Complex group dynamics come into play and must be controlled.'*⁶

As a result excessively steep grades are avoided, and a constant grade is maintained over long distances. The maximum grade in the Heaphy Track [built 1886, now a walking track], for example, is 1 in 16, and a pace of from 2 to 6 km per hour can be maintained by horses, depending on local grade, and 30 km is a good day's travel for a pack team on easy country.⁷

Mahoney found in New Zealand that creeks were crossed with stone benches built to avoid having to drop into and climb out of creek banks, and to form an even bottom for horses to walk on. Pack tracks have distinctive alignments that meander in and out of side gullies to maintain steady grade, and use zig-zags to climb steep terrain. Pack tracks were usually specified in contracts to be six feet wide [1.82m, though some are as narrow as 4 feet [1.2m]], giving sufficient clearance from vegetation and side-cuts for loaded pack-saddles and animal sway. An even surface is specified in contracts, to allow for steady progress. Huts were built along the way for travellers and pack men, sometimes with yards adjacent to them for horses. Mahoney makes no mention of passing lanes or bays.⁸

Many of these characteristics are also noted on tracks in Australia, though the degree to which they maintained a constant grade is usually not mentioned. The historical contexts of most of these tracks suggests they were not built at constant grade, but were ordinary bridle tracks with variable and sometimes steep grades.

Tasmania

A number of tracks have been recorded in Tasmania, including the:

- Black Bluff [c. 1860], which includes zig-zags;⁹

⁶ Mahoney 1991: 76.

⁷ Mahoney 1991: 76-77.

⁸ Mahoney 1991: 77.

⁹ Haygarth, N. 1994. *On the road to Cradle: historic day walks of Moina, Middlesex and Black Bluff*. Tiger Plains Books: 34; Pearson, M. & Young, D. 1996. 'Regional Forest Agreement, Tasmania—Cultural Heritage Identification and Assessment: Stage 2&3—Study 4: Transportation



- Linda Track [1883 walking track upgraded to pack track 1886], with cuttings on slopes to expose solid quartz gravel pavement beneath the overlying peat, log bridges over major streams, sections of corduroy surfacing, and zig-zags;¹⁰
- Port Davey Track [1898], benching was dug up to two metres deep through quartzite to give a firm and even base for pack horses. Huts and Bridges were built, the work being completed between 1899 and 1901;¹¹
- Poimena-Welldborough Track [1870s or 80s], route onto the Blue Tier plateau, to carry goods and tin ore to and from St Helens on the east coast. Parts are now a road, but some sections of the pack track survive.¹²
- Three Notch Track [1875], a 2m wide track benched into the hillside. Trees beside the track are blazed with three notches [hence the name], and some sections have corduroy surfacing.¹³ Surviving sections have been converted to a walking track.
- Balfour Track [1910], track 1.5 to 2 m wide, benched on rising ground with some corduroy surfacing. Surviving sections have been converted to a walking track.¹⁴
- Adamsfield Track [1926], a reported 50 horses a day used the track in 1926. The track is in poor condition, corduroying decayed and raised sections collapsed.¹⁵
- Overland Track [1935], for some of its length, the Overland Track [Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair] was upgraded as a pack track in 1935, and for its entire length in 1937, the use of pack horses continuing to about 1950. Much of the track has been recut or rerouted, but sections survive.¹⁶
- Kermandie Track [1896], 2m wide and benched and corded where necessary. From 1939 used as a walking track to access the Hartz Mountains, and is in good condition.¹⁷

Some bridle tracks in the rugged Tasmanian terrain certainly do not appear to have complied with the ideal of steady progress and firm footing, as a description of a track in the north-eastern tin fields in the 1870s demonstrates:

*'The road was all pack track, and this track had to be seen to be believed, for mile after mile it was knee and belly deep for the horses.'*¹⁸

Routes', report for Tasmanian RFA Environment and Heritage Technical Committee.

¹⁰ Binks, C.J. 1988. *Pioneers of Tasmania's west coast*. Blubber Head Press, Hobart: 125.

¹¹ Pearson et al 1996; Binks, C.J. 1989. *Explorers of Western Tasmania*. Taswegia, Richmond Printers, Devonport: 78; Gowlland, R. & Gowlland, K. 1986. *Trampled Wilderness: The history of South-West Tasmania*. Richmond Printers, Devonport: 140-145.

¹² Pearson et al 1996.

¹³ Pearson et al 1996.

¹⁴ Pearson et al 1996; Brown, B. 1993. *Tarkine trails: A guide to bushwalking and rafting in Tasmania's grand northwest wilderness*, Wilderness Society, Hobart.

¹⁵ Pearson et al 1996; Gowlland & Gowlland 1986: 198-214. ¹⁶ Pearson et al 1996.

¹⁷ Pearson et al 1996; Gowlland & Gowlland 1986.



A number of historic photographs show similar conditions, but these were tracks that usually had a short existence, and ran through boggy or steep terrain where better-built tracks were not economically feasible. A large number of the early tracks, especially through western Tasmania, were so rugged that they could only be used as foot tracks, and packers carried supplies on their backs.

Northern Territory

In the Northern Territory, Bradshaw's Packhorse Cutting has been entered in the Northern Territory Heritage Register. The pack track runs through a gap in the Yambarran Range, and has been cut into the hillside in a zigzag manner for some distance down the slope. The lower side of the track has often been built up and supported with a number of roughly made stone retaining walls. The cutting was constructed in order to provide more direct access to the northern part of the station.¹⁹

Victoria

Bridle tracks are also known to exist in Victoria, though few have been described in detail in the literature, and it is difficult to determine if they were graded pack tracks or more basic bridle tracks. Some of those identified include:

- Mansfield to Woods Point Road [1863]—a pack track later converted into a road;²⁰
- McEvoy's Track [1862]—a pack track from Sale to Jericho, described in 1862 as being cut 3 feet wide mostly through dense scrub, with 50 packhorses a day, and two hundred cattle and 150 miners a week using it;²¹
- McMahan's Track [1877]—Reefton Diggings to Jordan track, described as a 'bridle track' on its 1865 map.²²
- Snowy River Road [Ingeegoodbee Track]—a route used by Aborigines, then as a stock route from the 1830s. While pack horses were used along the route, it does not appear to have had a constructed pack track along it before the development of a dray track.²³
- Eden Benambra track—a track described as not being accessible to bullocks its full length, and hence used by pack horses, probably largely overlain by roads in at least the NSW sector,

¹⁸ Bird, C. 1994. *Places of the pioneers: life and work in Tasmania's forests*. Forestry Tasmania, Hobart: 58.

¹⁹ Northern Territory Heritage Register—Declared Places and Objects—Bradshaw's Packhorse Cutting.

²⁰ Watt, P. 1994. 'Routes of human movement in the Central Highlands Region of Victoria', Report for the Australian Heritage Commission: 44. ²¹ Watt 1994: 47

²² Watt 1994: 48.

²³ Register of National Estate record.



and was probably just 'a rough bridle trail' through the Alpine National Park area.²⁴

Other tracks are known to have existed in the Alps region, such as those at Howqua, Bon Accord, Bluff Range, and parts of the Yarra Track, but details about the construction of the tracks have not been located.

New South Wales

In New South Wales there has been relatively little work on tracks, and less descriptive material is available. However, a general picture can be gained, suggesting that many bridle tracks survive, though there type of construction is not clear.

The Nightcap Track, in Nightcap National Park and Whian Whian State Forest, overlaps parts of the original pack track used by travellers and postal workers between Lismore and Murwillumbah in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The track was first used by European settlers in 1874, said to follow Aboriginal pathways, and was resurveyed in 1880-01 by Sir Thomas Ewing. The Nightcap Track was used until 1889 when a coach route from Lismore to Murwillumbah was opened, going through Brunswick Heads.²⁵

In the Blue Mountains there is another collection of tracks, including the Six Foot Track from Katoomba to Jenolan Caves, and the Engineer's Track in the Grose Valley. The Six Foot Track was established as a bridle trail, surveyed in 1884, the name coming from the original tender specifications. The track was re-opened in 1984 as a walking track, but little of the original bridle track remains.²⁶ The Engineer's Track was constructed in 1857 by a group of Royal Engineers as a bridle track up the Grose valley, which was being considered for a railway route. Sections beside the river have been washed away, but sections above this level exist as stone embankments. There is no continuous track along the route.²⁷

In southern NSW, a series of tracks and early roads cross through the South East Forest National Park. The first bridle track, the Mountain Hut Road, crossed Big Jack's Mountain from 1832, later modified in route to create the Purgatory Road. The Cow Bail Trail followed, a stock route upgraded to a dray road by Benjamin Boyd in 1843 for access to his Monaro properties. The Postman's Track was a pack track for mail between the coast and Monaro, in operation by at least 1851, and operating for postal services until

²⁴ Grinbergs, A.M. 1993. 'A study of land routes of human movement in East Gippsland', Unpublished report to the Australian Heritage Commission: 29.

²⁵ Articles from the *Byron Shire Echo*, on their website; material from NPWS website.

²⁶ Web site <http://info.mountains.net.au/history/sixfoot.htm>

²⁷ web site <http://info.mountains.net.au/history/engineers.htm>



1875. The Brown Mountain route was initially a bridle track, but was upgraded to a road in 1889.²⁸

Closer to the Shoebridge Track, the Corn Trail, in Monga National Park, descends 750m from the Clyde Mountain into the Bolaro Valley over a distance of 12.5 kilometres, and was used for access between the coast and tableland before the Clyde Mountain road was opened in 1856. The construction date of the Corn Trail has not been determined, but it is said to date to the 1830s or 40s. The Corn Trail is a simple bridle track, with widely varying grades and some steep sections. Sections of cut-and-fill benching on slopes survive, and there are several sections of zig-zag on steeper slopes. While the embankments have random stones in them, no formed stone retaining walls as seen on the Shoebridge Track were sighted during inspection of the Corn Trail. When the track was reconstructed in 1988 as a walking track, there was uncertainty in some sections as to where the original track went.²⁹ It is difficult in parts to determine what is original and what re-cut track, though it is assumed the sections with cuttings and embankments are original. However, it is clear that the Corn Trail is not directly comparable in its construction to the Shoebridge Track.

A network of tracks exists in the belt of coastal ranges extending from the Great Dividing Range to the coast, and centring on the Deua River and Bendethera. Cath Lawler, whose family settled in the area in the 1860, and spent much of that time at Curmulee, on the Deua 11 km north of Bendethera, and at Belowra to its south, recounts the use of the bridle tracks which criss-crossed the region for personal travel, supply, and the movement of stock including pigs and turkeys.³⁰ Cath's grandfather Rankin packed corn grown in the valleys up to the tablelands for sale, and the George's took wheat grown at Bendethera to the road-head at Krawaree, then drove it to Goulburn for grinding, before re-packing the flour back down to the valley for use; Cath's family herded pigs out to Moruya for shipping to Sydney markets; turkeys were herded to the tablelands, roosting in trees en-route during the night; her mother and aunt rode up to Fairfield at Krawaree for dances; the Georges at Bendethera used the Zig-Zag Track to take produce up to the tablelands, and the George's Track to Moruya.

Neil and Kathleen Waddell recalled the use of the same tracks, from the Araluen end, to visit friends and family, and to access the tableland when needed.³¹ The packing of wattle bark and rabbit skins, and the droving of cattle, were other uses of the tracks. Cath Lawler's father and brother took cattle up the Jump-up Track from the Belowra valley up to Cooma sale yards, and stampedes happened on occasion, in one instance when the cattle got

²⁸ NPWS website
www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/parks.nsf/ParkContent/N0111?OpenDocument&ParkKey=N0111&Type=Xk.

²⁹ From website
www.southcoast.com.au/batemansbay/corntrail/index.html

³⁰ Oral history interview, Cath Lawler, 17 June 2004

³¹ Oral history interview, Neil and Kathleen Waddell, 18 June 2004.

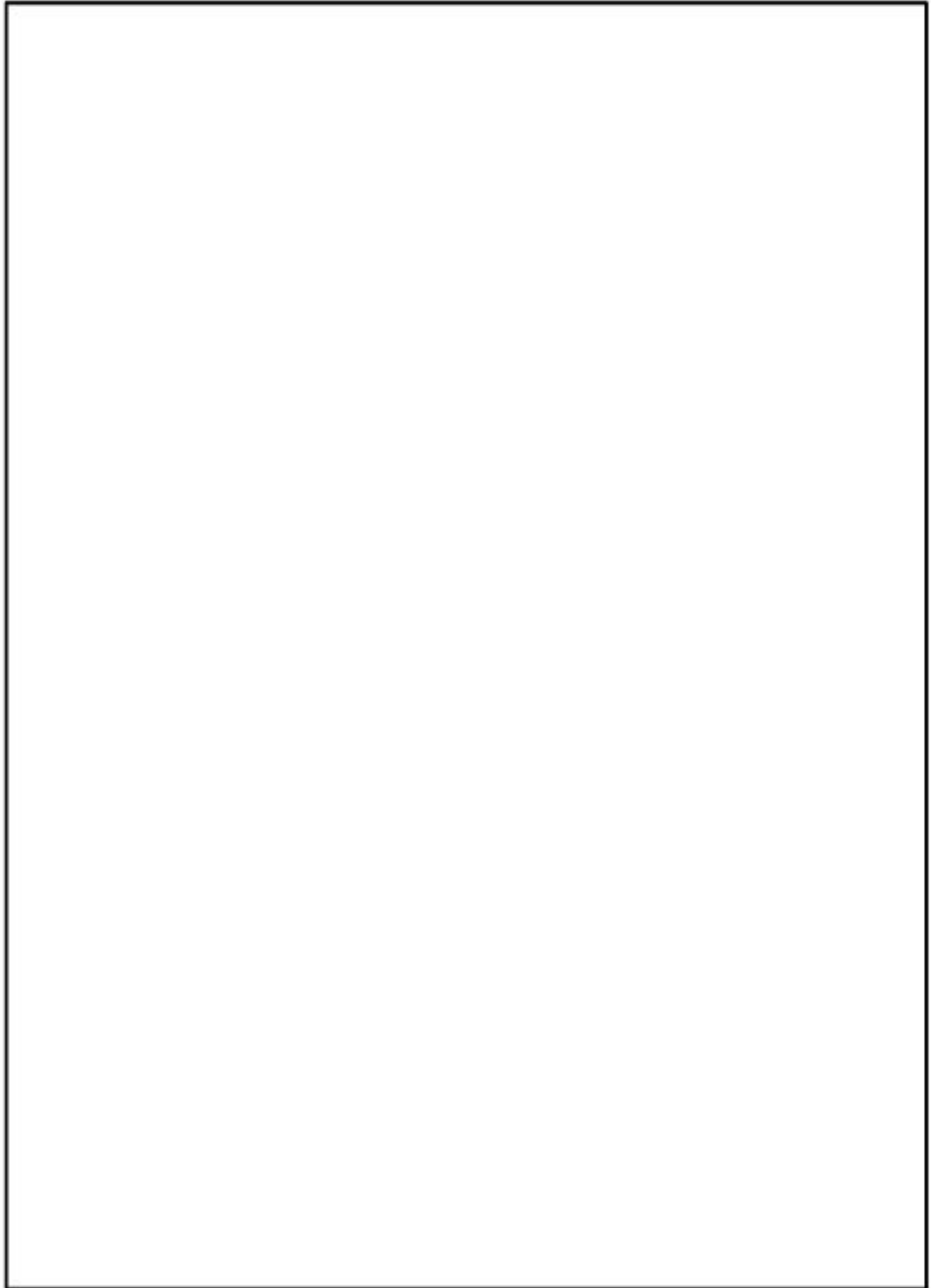


Figure 1:
The Corn Trail [or Track]
State Forests: South Coast Forest Map

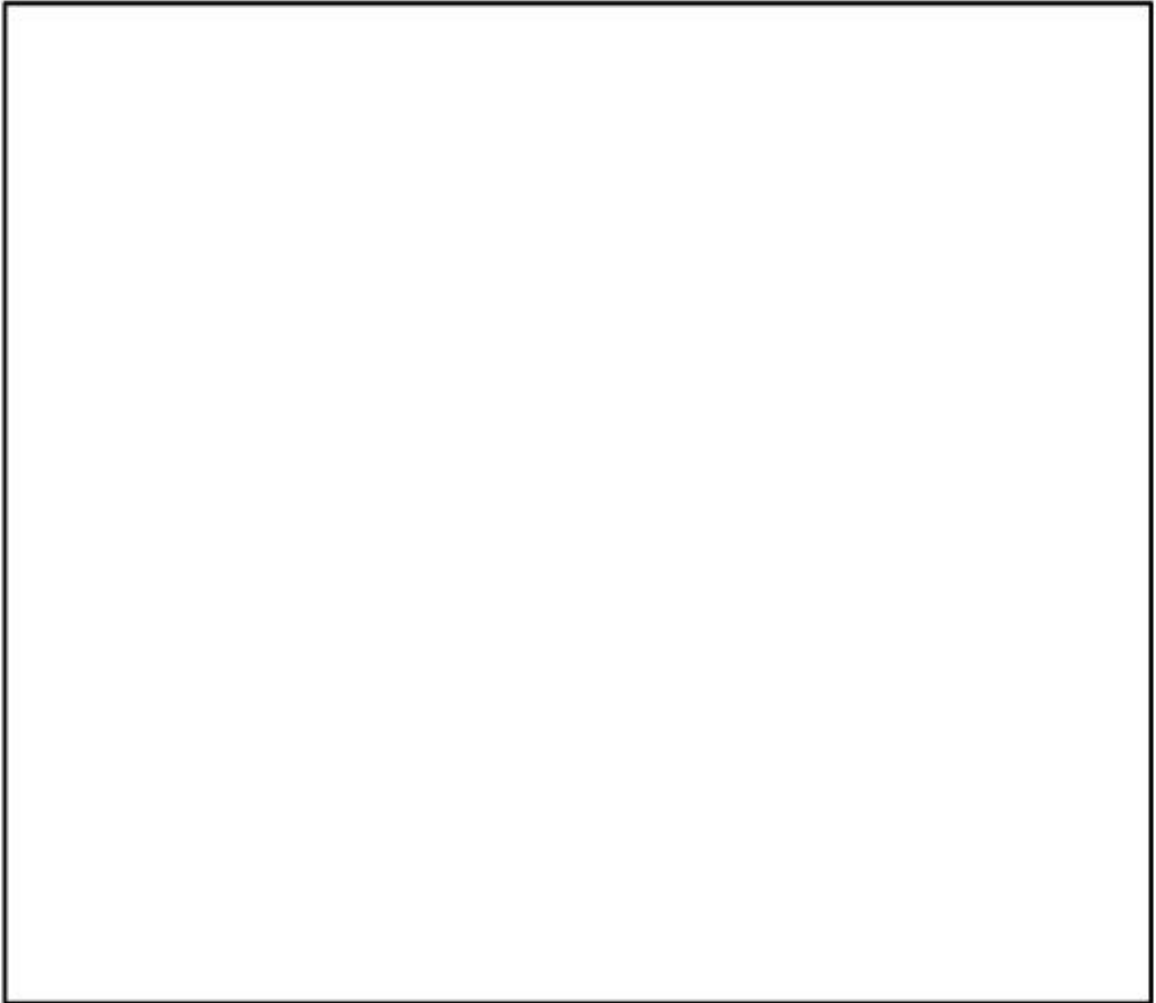


Figure 2:
The Bendethra, Georges, Cawoolie, Buckyjumba, Tarlton, Bryce's and Zig Zag Tracks.
State Forests: South Coast Forest Map

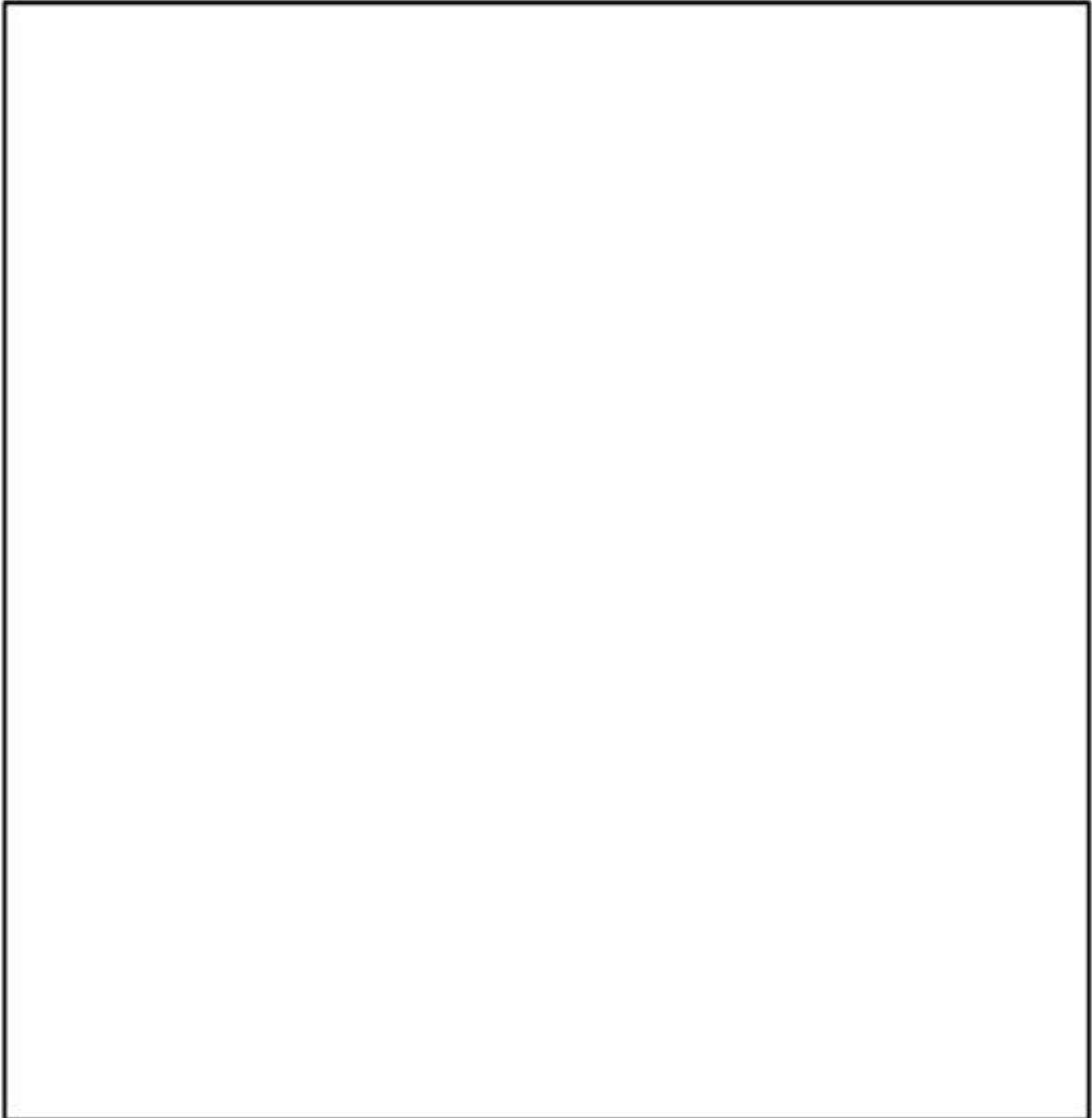


Figure 3:
The Myrtle Creek, Junction, Wadbilliga, Razorback, Yowrie-Belgowra, Bryce's, Byrne's and Bate Tracks.
State Forests: South Coast Forest Map



spooked by a train on the tablelands. At another time a mob being taken from Belowra to Carnyina Station near Krawaree broke out of a holding yards and stampeded home. 'Super' Sutherland and Jessie Thompson, who were trapping in the area, were persuaded to help take the cattle back up the track, but they were only dressed as they were, and were badly effected by snow and cold on the tableland.³²

The tracks also played their part in the growing environmental movement. From the 1930s and increasingly into the 1950s, walkers, including Myles Dunphy and Roy Davies, made their way into the Bendethera and surrounding areas, often using the pack tracks.³³

The primary tracks, many of which are shown at least for part of their length on the parish maps, included:

In a submission by Terence Hart of Braidwood to NPWS Queanbeyan Regional Manager, dated 21 May 2001, Hart proposed conservation and access to the following bridle tracks in the Deua/Bendethera area:

- Araluen to Curmulee to Alpine to Bendethera up the Deua River.
- Alpine to Fairfield via Wyanbene.
- Bendethera to the upper Shoalhaven river on the Zig-Zag Track.
- Bendethera via Diamond Creek, Coondella and Burra to Moruya on the Georges Track.
- Belowra to Cadgee on the Bryces Track.
- Belowra to the tablelands on the Jump-up Track.
- Belowra to Wattlegrove.
- Oranmeir/Snowball area, via the headwaters of the Shoalhaven River, Mt Euranbene, Woila Creek, the Tuross River and Wandella Creek, to Cobargo, on the W.D. Tarlinton Track.
- Wadbilliga and Yowrie River junction and the old travelling stock reserve [TSR] to Wadbilliga station. This track was constructed into a road by Eugene Burke and 'Super' Sutherland.
- Yowrie via the Wadbilliga and Yowrie rivers junction, over Barren Jumbo Mt to Belowra.
- Wadbilliga via Wadbilliga Hole to Myrtle Creek then onto the junction of Woila Creek with the Tuross River.
- Belowra to Bendethera via Buckyjundra Creek.³⁴

The descriptions of these tracks suggests that all were simple bridle and pack tracks, with little cut-and-fill construction, and included quite steep sections, sometimes eased with zig-zags.

³² Oral history interview, Cath Lawler, 17 June 2004

³³ Oral history interview, Cath Lawler, 17 June 2004

³⁴ Oral history interview, Cath Lawler, 17 June 2004; Submission by Terence Hart of Braidwood to NPWS Queanbeyan Regional Manager, dated 21 May 2001, NPWS Narooma office files.



Most were formed for the majority of their length by the movement of horses cutting a path, rather than being formally constructed.

In the opinion of all oral history interviewees, the Shoebridge Track stands out as distinct from the other tracks in the region out in terms of its construction and constant grade.

5.1.4 TRACK CONSTRUCTION : THE ANALYSIS

A clear distinction has to be drawn between graded and ungraded pack horse tracks. Ungraded tracks were used by pack horses throughout the southern NSW coastal ranges, and presumably elsewhere in NSW. However, in situations where heavy and constant use was intended, graded pack tracks like the Shoebridge appear to have been regarded as being safer and more efficient. Ungraded tracks were created by the movement of horses and stock cutting their own path, with relatively little formal construction necessary, and were therefore cost little or nothing to create, and their maintenance was a matter of occasional clearing of timber. Graded tracks, on the other hand, required surveying to ensure grade, and construction of cut-and-fill benched track sections, and the maintenance of these features. The cost of the Shoebridge Track was probably the major factor in Shoebridge's bankruptcy, whereas the settlers creating ungraded tracks had no such worry.

There is a great consistency between the various descriptions of graded pack tracks in Australia and New Zealand. They:

- were ideally about six feet wide, but could be as narrow as four feet if side clearance was adequate;
- maintained a steady grade, and hence meandered around slopes and followed side gullies [as a result they are often along the sides of ridges rather than running along the undulating and steep ridge tops];
- used zig-zags to maintain steady grade when climbing steep terrain;
- had as even a surface as possible, necessitating benching and cutting on slopes;
- often had corduroy surfacing over soft ground;
- crossed streams on as level a track as possible, either by bridge, embankment, or by ford with levelled bottom and no steep banks;
- often had huts built at intervals for the use of travellers and packers.

The Shoebridge Track shared most of these characteristics, which are demonstrated clearly and well in the surviving sections. The best-preserved sections of the Shoebridge Track show that it was built as a six foot wide track [as the contract details for its construction specified]. Passing lanes were achieved by either creating a parallel track at a higher level for about 30 m on steeper slopes, or widening the track to 10 feet on flatter ridge crests or saddles. The availability of these naturally flatter areas in the



central and eastern end of the section of the track through national parks land probably explains why constructed passing lanes have only been observed at the western end.

The Shoebridge Track maintains a reasonably constant 1:12 gradient through the 14.5 km section crossing the range. No section of the track is so steep that zig-zags had to be used. The section of the track outside the national park, heading east to Austin's Point, is across flatter land, and has a much lower grade and hence probably necessitated less track construction works. It seems probable that much of the track in this eastern section has been built over by roads and vehicle tracks—for example, the Quart Pot Road certainly overlays the track east of the park boundary, and the road east down the Buckenbowra valley from the Quart Pot Creek junction may also follow its line.

The track surface, while now eroded and uneven, shows signs of having been carefully levelled when built, as required in the works specifications. There are extensive lengths of the track that are benched into the slope by the simple cut-and-fill technique. On the steepest slopes the track fill was supported by stone retaining walls to maintain the wide flat surface. No section of the surviving track surveyed crosses wet ground necessitating corduroy surfacing, but this might have been required in the lower unsurveyed sections to the east. The stream crossings across the range are all small intermittent creeks and gullies, which are crossed at-grade, with no evidence of bridges or fords. The crossing of the Buckenbowra Creek further to the east is assumed to have been a ford.

The Halfway Hut, referred to in contemporary sources as being on the eastern side of the range, has not been located. However, an undated Forestry map shows the Halfway Hut to have been located on the saddle at map reference 668 438, at an elevation of about 260 m, being 120 m above the start of the climb out of Quart Pot Creek. Further survey might locate evidence of the hut.

The Corn Trail, and from the descriptions provided, many of the other tracks in the region, also have sections of cut-and-fill benching, sometimes in the form of zig-zigs on very steep slopes, but they differ from the Shoebridge in both the lesser-extent of this work and the steep grades of some of the track sections. Stone retaining walls do not appear to be a major feature of any of the other tracks.

Many of the tracks described are to various degrees eroded, overgrown, or destroyed by later road development. Few, if any, are completely intact, though some sections retain features in good condition. This pattern is repeated on the Shoebridge Track. The surviving sections on the Shoebridge Track range from very good condition to badly eroded, while sections on the eastern side [Monga National Park] have been destroyed or disrupted by fire trail development, or are more difficult to trace on less-steep land.

5.1.5 TRACK CONSTRUCTION COST



The extent of work required in constructing graded pack tracks is, to some degree, indicated by the cost of construction. It is interesting to compare the Shoebridge Track with some other tracks where costs are known.

The Heaphy Track [a graded track] in New Zealand [1886] cost £50 per mile to complete. The Heaphy Track was maintained until 1928, then fell into disrepair until taken up as a walking track in the 1970s.³⁵

The Port Davey Track in Tasmania [an ungraded track] was completed between 1899 and 1901 at a cost of around £2,000, for approximately 26 km. [£12.5 per mile].³⁶

The builder of the Kermandie Track in Tasmania [1896, an ungraded track], Arthur Geeves, was paid £13 per mile for the construction, comparable with the Port Davey Track.³⁷

The Tasmanian tracks involved a lot more level ground than the New Zealand tracks, and more corduroying than bench cutting, and they appear not to have been graded tracks, all of which might explain the substantial difference in costs across the Tasman.

By comparison, the Shoebridge Track, at 27 miles in length [through to Nelligen], was reported to have cost Shoebridge between £200 and \$400 to build initially, with a further £1,000 from government to complete the track to acceptable standard, a combined cost of between £44 and £51 per mile. This is much more than the Tasmanian tracks, and more like the New Zealand costs, probably reflecting, as in New Zealand, the cost of graded cut and fill work compared with ungraded tracks.

5.1.6 SUMMARY OF COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT

On all these comparisons, the Shoebridge Track is assessed as having good examples of most of the major characteristics of graded pack tracks.

No detailed description of any other track in NSW that is clearly a graded pack track has been sighted during this study—all other described appear to be ungraded tracks. There is a strong argument [and a recommendation of this report] for further research and survey to clarify and expand knowledge of track types in NPWS and other areas [including Crown Land and private land], as there appears to be many historic tracks through these areas, and their comparative assessment is difficult without a better understanding of their history and the types involved. The Shoebridge Track would appear, on the basis of evidence currently available to be both a good example, historically, of a 19th century bridle track servicing remote settlements, and potentially a rare example of a graded pack track.

³⁵ Mahoney 1991: 76-77.

³⁶ Pearson et al 1996

³⁷ Gowlland and Gowlland 1986



Even without this broader comparative context, there is now sufficient information about the pack tracks in the south coast region to be able to assess the Shoebridge Track. As an historical transportation route, the Shoebridge is an important contribution to the set of tracks in the region. The Shoebridge Track was most clearly intended to provide a commercial supply route into a populated area [Araluan Valley], whereas the other tracks in the region were primarily for small-scale domestic travel and supply, and the transport of pastoral and agricultural produce. This difference is reflected in the contrasting construction and grades of the tracks. The Shoebridge, perhaps because of the extensive cut-and-fill construction and stone retaining walls, appears to have survived in a more complete and traceable form than many of the other tracks.

5.2 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE AGAINST CRITERIA

The heritage values of the Shoebridge Track are assessed here in relation to the NSW State Heritage Register Criteria. These criteria are used by the NSW Heritage Office and Heritage Council in the assessment of places for the State Heritage Register, but are also used as the basis for assessment at the local and regional level. A statement of significance encapsulating this assessment is given in the next section of the report.

Criterion A: an item is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW's cultural or natural history;

The Shoebridge Track is important in the pattern of European settlement of the Araluen Valley, in providing essential transportation between the valley and the coast at a period when other access was not available or unreliable in the period c.1860-1870. The Shoebridge Track is also an essential and important component of the collection of bridle tracks servicing the isolated valleys of the NSW south coastal ranges, being the only track in the region designed and built for commercial supply use. These constitute local and regional heritage values.

Criterion B: an item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in NSW's cultural or natural history;

The Shoebridge Track is associated with the life of Thomas Shoebridge, head of a family prominent in the local area. It is also associated with the works of Mr Webber, local Superintendent of Roads, Mr Wedekind, the contractor and 26 un-named construction workers, as well as with named users of the track [McLeod, Egan, Gunstan], and with the local families who used the track in later years [including Waddell, Hinchcliffe, Reid]. These associations are significant in local history, and particularly to local descendants of these families.

The Shoebridge Track follows a prominent ridge system to cross from the catchment of the Araluen/Deua River to that of Buckenbowra Creek, and this route is likely to have been used by



Aboriginal people, and Aboriginal artefacts have been reported on some saddle and ridge locations. In finer detail, the Shoebridge Track runs along the crest of the ridge for only very short distances, being mainly off the ridge tops to maintain a constant grade, and as such the Track is not likely to overly Aboriginal routes or sites except at saddles and ridge crossings.

Criterion C: an item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW;

The construction of the track is a technical achievement, but only within the context of being a good piece of surveying and construction work of a standard common in the period. The track passes through country with high aesthetic appeal, but the road itself is a minor feature in that landscape. The track is not considered to satisfy this criterion in terms of the 'importance' of the values exhibited.

Criterion D: an item has strong or special associations with a particular community or cultural group in NSW for social, cultural or spiritual reasons;

The track is significant to a small number of families who have had ongoing knowledge and use of the track. The track is part of a series of places [including other tracks, old settlement sites, and mining remains] that collectively have strong and special associations for these families. The Shoebridge Track itself, if it had to be disaggregated from this entire 'sense of place', would be of moderate local significance under this criterion.

The existence of the track has not been widely known of within the broader community until recent years, and strong or special associations have not yet developed. User groups have developed recent associations with the track, but these could be regarded at this stage as being more about recreational amenity than social heritage significance.

Criterion E: an item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of NSW's cultural or natural history;

The potential exists to study the design and construction of pack tracks in nineteenth century NSW, and in this context the Shoebridge Track would be an important example of the graded pack track form, and may be a rare research resource of that type. The further study of the Shoebridge Track, in conjunction with that of the other bridle tracks in the region, has the potential to expand knowledge and understanding of the nineteenth century settlement patterns and lifestyles of the south coast ranges region.

Criterion F: an item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of NSW's cultural or natural history;

Graded pack tracks appear to be uncommon if not rare in NSW. At the present time, the Shoebridge Track, with substantial lengths



with good integrity, appears to be the only documented graded pack track in the state, but others are likely to exist. Hence, in the absence of comparative information it is not possible to determine the level of rarity as a graded pack track, though it would appear to be uncommon or rare. As a bridle track, the Shoebridge Track is one of many in the region, and is uncommon in that context in that it is the only one constructed to satisfy primarily commercial needs.

Criterion G: an item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW's

- cultural or natural places; or
- cultural or natural environments.

The Shoebridge Track has many of the principal characteristics of graded pack tracks in a relatively unaltered form, and some in good condition. The graded pack track type is considered to be a significant variant within the pack bridle track class. The Track is significant at the regional level, and while there is an absence of definitive comparative information about other graded pack tracks elsewhere in the state, the place at this stage has to be assessed as important against this criterion at the state level.

In summary, the Shoebridge Track meets two and probably three criteria at the State level, several at the regional level and all but one at the local level of significance [see tables below].

5.3 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Shoebridge Track is important in the pattern of European settlement of the Araluen Valley, in providing essential transportation between the valley and the coast at a period when other access was not available [c.1860-1870]. This association is of local significance. As a transport route, the Shoebridge track has historical characteristics of bridle tracks shared with a range of other tracks in the region—the relatively short-term servicing of isolated settlements for supply, access to markets and communications.

The track appears is part of a larger collection of tracks that characterise the isolated settlement and transportation problems facing the coastal range country of southern NSW throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries, and appears to have regional and state significance in that context.

The Shoebridge Track is associated with the life of Thomas Shoebridge, and of other persons of local historical interest, whose descendants still live in the district. The track is also associated with a small number of families who made continued use of it, and is of social significance to those families as an element of their 'sense of place' in the Araluen Valley.

Shoebridge Track appears to be uncommon if not rare in NSW as a substantial length of pack track in relatively unaltered form. Further comparative information on pack tracks elsewhere in the state is needed to determine the level of rarity. There are many



other bridle tracks in the region, and the Shoebridge Track is a rare [indeed unique] example of one major variety [graded tracks] within the class at the regional level.

The Shoebridge Track has many of the principal characteristics of graded pack tracks [based on New Zealand examples] in a relatively unaltered form, and some in good condition. In the current absence of definitive comparative information on graded pack tracks in NSW, the place is assessed as important as an example at the state level. The potential exists for further study of the history, design and construction of pack tracks in nineteenth century NSW, including the Shoebridge example, to provide new information about the State's cultural history.

5.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF COMPONENTS OF THE SHOEBRIDGE TRACK

As indicated in the statement of significance, the entire length of the Shoebridge Track has historical significance, and Sections 1, 5, 6, 7, and 8 have attributes that make them significant in demonstrating the characteristics of graded pack tracks—the steady grade [averaging 1:12] and the survival of recognisably original alignment and construction details being the main features.

Particular components of the Shoebridge Track contribute substantially to its overall cultural significance. These are identified in Table 4.4. Some elements of the track at the far eastern and western ends are of uncertain authenticity, and other sections have been overlain by modern fire trails, and these features are also identified in Table 4.4. The purpose of identifying significant components is to ensure that their conservation is given due consideration in the management of the place.

ASSESSMENT OF COMPONENTS OF THE SHOEBRIDGE TRACK

Components of high significance contribute substantially to the overall significance of the track

Components with uncertain authenticity or of poor integrity includes sections that may be the result of recent track reconstruction work, and sections where erosion has reduced integrity substantially.

Components overlain by modern fire trails, and of little significance have either been destroyed, or where they might still survive on the hill slopes parallel to the road, have not yet been located, and are likely to be fragmentary.

[Map references are to the Araluen 1:25,000 map [8826-1S], and are based on GPS readings [WGS 84, Zone 55H.]



Section	Feature	Map Reference	Comment of significance
Components of high significance			
1 [outside Park]	Section with original width and construction details	588 461 to 589 463	A section with some low stone retaining walls on down-slope side of track, up to 70 cm high. Six-foot width of track obvious in parts, with 1 m cutting on up-slope side.
1 [outside Park]	Passing-lane	598 463	Passing track on up-slope side of main track
1 [outside Park]	Passing-lane	599 467	Passing track on up-slope side of main track, with stone packing supporting start of the embankment on the passing lane.
1	Passing-lane	602 467	Passing track on up-slope side of main track, located approximately on <u>National Park boundary</u> .
1	Passing-lane	604 466	Passing track on up-slope side of main track,
1	Blazed tree	608 466	Tree with large section of bark removed, and marks of axe in the lower exposed <u>inner trunk</u> . <u>Near a distinct ridge saddle</u>
1	Stone retaining wall	612 460	Rough stone retaining wall up to 80 cm high on down-slope side, cutting eroded reducing track to 50-80 cm wide.
1	Rest saddle	616 457	Saddle on ridge, the only major level area on Section 1 of track—probable historic rest area
5	Descent from main ridge	647 439 to 657 440	Section 5 appears to be a relatively intact section with numerous examples of stone retaining walls supporting track fill.
5	Stone retaining wall	655 441 to 656 440	Stone retaining wall 80 to 100 cm high continuous along side of track.
On fire trail	Possible halfway hut site	668 438	Flat saddle, possible location for halfway hut, with access to water down slope.
8	short section out of creek	700 439	Track rises out of Quart Pot Creek onto Quart Pot Road ridge. Not surveyed to full length, but is the only section so far identified off the main ridge crossing.
Components with uncertain authenticity or of poor integrity			
1	Section overlain by forestry tracks	582461 to 588 461	Section that appears to have been re-cut for forestry use—on Vacant Crown Land
1	Eroded section	624 462	Section of track across stony slopes, eroded cutting and fill reducing track to as little as 30cm wide.
1	Newly filled section	631 463	Section across extremely steep slope has collapsed and been recently re-built with stone rubble and wire. Section also has original stone packed embankments.



2	short section	639 459 to 640 454	Flat section east of fire trail, some sections of which may not be on the original alignment.
3	short section	641 456 to 642 449	Flat section east of fire trail, some sections of which may not be on the original alignment.
4	short section	643 446 to 644 445	Flat section east of fire trail, some sections of which may not be on the original alignment.
7	Eroded section	673 439 to 684 438	Track appears overlain by forestry tracks at eastern end, and other sections are across loose soil and are very eroded.

Components overlain by modern fire trails, and of little significance

Gollaribee Fire Trail	637 461 to 641 457	Fire trail overlies track, or track not yet identified parallel to trail.
Gollaribee Fire Trail	641 455 to 642 454	Fire trail overlies track, or track not yet identified parallel to trail.
Gollaribee Fire Trail	642 449 to 643 446	Fire trail overlies track, or track not yet identified parallel to trail.
Gollaribee Fire Trail	644 445 to 648 439	Fire trail overlies track, or track not yet identified parallel to trail.
Fire Break Fire Trail	657 440 to 663 439	Fire trail overlies track, or track not yet identified parallel to trail.
Fire Break Fire Trail	668 438 to 673 439	Fire trail overlies track, or track not yet identified parallel to trail.
Quart Pot Road	684 438 to 698 439	Fire trail overlies track, or track not yet identified parallel to trail.
Quart Pot Road	702 440 to 713 451	Fire trail overlies track, or track not yet identified parallel to trail. To Monga National Park boundary at 713 451.



6.0 CONSERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS AND GUIDELINES

6.1 MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS FLOWING FROM SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of a place can be determined by the place satisfying one or more of the Heritage Office Criteria. The Shoebriidge Track satisfies all but one of the criteria, variously at local, regional or state level. The implications arising from significance relate directly to the nature and degree of the values identified under each criterion. The Table below indicates the **level of significance of values** under each criterion, and the implications arising from that level of significance.

Significance under each criterion, and the implications arising from that level of significance

Criterion	Level of Significance	Implications Arising from Significance
Criterion A Course and pattern of history	Regional and Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve significant elements of the track
Criterion B Association with persons or groups	Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise and respect associations
Criterion C Aesthetic of creative value	nil	nil
Criterion D Social significance	Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise and respect associations. • Consult those with close associations of proposed changes to the place.
Criterion E Research value	State and Regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve significant elements of the track until research is complete. • encourage and support further research at regional and state level
Criterion F Rarity	State and Regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve significant elements of the track • encourage research to confirm level of rarity at state level
Criterion G Good Example	State and Regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conserve significant elements of the track • encourage and support further research at regional and state level



As summarised in Table above, the significance of the Shoebridge Track at local, regional and state level suggests that the NPWS should take a proactive role in ensuring the conservation of its values. 'Proactive' in this context would mean in the first instance the '**preservation**' of the track in sense used in the Burra Charter: 'maintaining the fabric of a place in its existing state and retarding deterioration'. This would entail ensuring that use and management practices do not threaten the survival of the track features, and that the deterioration of significant surviving features is monitored and remedied or retarded.

It is possible that in the future some works might be necessary to 'restore' or 'reconstruct' specific features, again using Burra Charter definitions: '**Restoration**' means 'returning the existing fabric of a place to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing components, without the introduction of new materials into the fabric'; '**Reconstruction**' means 'returning a place to a known earlier state and is distinguished from 'restoration' by the introduction of new material into the fabric. An example of this might be the 'restoration' of a collapsing stone retaining wall by removing slumped earth and reassembling the fallen stones, which would become 'reconstruction' if, say, concrete reinforcing was introduced behind the stone to underpin or strengthen the wall. At this point in time there is no need for restoration or reconstruction work on the track, and any future work should be indicated by a monitoring program.

NPWS should encourage and support further research to better understand some key aspects of the place's significance in a regional and state context. This might be achieved by seeking NPWS funding for a broader study of tracks in NPWS estate, or co-funding such work in conjunction with other land management authorities, and by encouraging and supporting access by third parties with their own research funding.

Recognising and respecting associations, historical and current, of families and individuals and the Track is an important implication arising from significance. There are a number of ways in which this could be achieved:

- by recognising, in any communications, public statements or publications, that NPWS is aware of and respects their special relationship with the track;
- by provision of this report, or at least the historical and comparative assessment component, to those who have provided oral history information to this project, and those who are thought by NPWS to have long-term and direct association with the track; and
- by informing those families and individuals with long-term and direct associations of any firm proposals involving the condition, conservation or use of the track, seeking their comments and views, and providing feedback on the final decisions. This might be achieved, for example, by face-to-face advice, meeting, letter or community circular.



6.2 OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

Management opportunities and constraints are influenced by legislative obligations and consequent NPWS management policies [as identified below]. NPWS has a range of policy directives, as well as management opportunities relevant to the Shoebridge Track. NPWS has a primary requirement to meet its obligations under legislation [described below].

The longest section of Shoebridge Track [Section 1] through Deua National Park, and the short Sections 2, 3 and 4 in Monga National Park, are within the Buckenbowra Wilderness Area, and are subject to the management requirements associated with wilderness zoning. These requirements arise from Section 9 of the *Wilderness Act 1987*: A wilderness area shall be managed so as:

- [a] to restore [if applicable] and to protect the unmodified state of the area and its plant and animal communities,
- [b] to preserve the capacity of the area to evolve in the absence of significant human interference, and
- [c] to permit opportunities for solitude and appropriate self-reliant recreation.

The eastern Sections 5, 6, 7 and 8 are within Monga National Park and are outside the Wilderness Area.

The opportunity to conserve the Shoebridge Track's heritage significance could be achieved by:

- annual inspection of the track and noting of changes in condition:
- as-necessary and low-key preventative or repair works [preservation, restoration, reconstruction] to key features [as identified in Table 4.4] of the track, such as periodic removal of trees threatening banks and cuttings; stabilising unstable stone retaining walls; stabilisation or repair of actively slumping cutting batters [not reconstructing already slumped batters], preventative or repair works to the surviving stone walling and earth batters at passing lane entry points,
- prevention of damage to the track by over-use by groups [particularly large horse riding groups] or by mechanical vehicles

Should decay or damage to stone wall features necessitate engineering assessment or substantial structural work, funding should be sought to undertake this work with suitably qualified professional supervision.

Monitoring during annual inspection should be based on a simple record sheet, and should include observation of decay and deterioration, visitor access and damage, or other forms of disturbance.

Recreational opportunities and constraints include:

- Use of the Shoebridge Track as a walking track— The route up to the range from the Araluen side to the main ridge and return



would be a good day walk. Constraints in the promotion of the active use of the track by walkers would include the possible need to limit use or group numbers should use lead to environmental damage or require development of infrastructure to support the use, contrary to the management guidelines for Wilderness Areas; the ability to manage the maintenance demand for such as use; the potential exacerbation of other would-be users [horse riders] by the active favouring of one set of users; the negotiation of access through Vacant Crown Land at the Araluen end of the track; parking arrangements at the Araluen end.. Informal use of the track by walkers, not advertised by NPWS, would not necessarily result in the same degree of constraints.

- Recreational horse riding across the track— While horse riding is not incompatible with the retention of the heritage significance of the track, recreational horse riding is prohibited by NPWS policy from the section that traverses the Wilderness Area. The non-wilderness sections in Monga National Park would still be accessible, but through-riding would not be an approved activity. Paradoxically, there is the potential for horse riding to have an adverse impact on the more fragile eroded sections of the track, and monitoring of this impact might indicate the need to limit or divert use or to undertake maintenance works.
- The fragility of the track in some sections [especially the eastern end of Section 1, and Section 7], combined with the exclusion of mechanical transport from the wilderness area section of the track, precludes the use of bicycles or powered vehicles on the Track.

6.3 STATUTORY COMPLIANCE

National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974

The National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 [as amended] provides the primary basis for the legal protection and management of Aboriginal sites within NSW. The implementation of the Aboriginal heritage provisions of the Act is the responsibility of the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. This Heritage Assessment has not studied or assessed the Aboriginal sites and significance of the Shoebridge Track, and as such no recommendations in relation to Aboriginal site protection are provided. Standard policies regarding Aboriginal places within National Parks should be followed.

The NPWS role in the conservation of the historic environment is also recognised in the Act. It legislates for the creation of Historic Sites as a reserve category, and directs that plans of management must consider historic places within national parks, nature reserves and historic sites [s. 72].

NPWS maintains a register of historic sites, which constitutes the s.170 Register required under the *Heritage Act 1976* [see below]. It is a recommendation of this Heritage Assessment that the Shoebridge Track be added to that register.



Wilderness Act 1987

The *Wilderness Act* [section 9] specifies that: A wilderness area shall be managed so as:

- [a] to restore [if applicable] and to protect the unmodified state of the area and its plant and animal communities,*
- [b] to preserve the capacity of the area to evolve in the absence of significant human interference, and*
- [c] to permit opportunities for solitude and appropriate self-reliant recreation.*

The *Wilderness Act* has given rise to NPWS policies regarding the management of Wilderness Areas. While the *Wilderness Act* does not preclude the conservation of significant cultural places within Wilderness Areas, as an essential management operation, it does limit the options for recreational use, and the NPWS policies reflect this constraint in relation to the section of the Shoebridge Track that passes through the Buckenbowra Wilderness Area. By restricting the nature of through-use of the track, the controls over the Wilderness Area also limit the potential uses of the track in non-wilderness areas to the east.

Heritage Act 1976

The *Heritage Act 1976* was amended in 1987 to include section 170, which requires government agencies to prepare a register of heritage assets it owns or controls. The objective is to create a comprehensive inventory of state-owned heritage places, and to achieve a total asset management approach to the management of heritage places¹. The direct constraints arising from s.170 listing apply only if a place is recognised as being of regional or state significance in a Regional Environmental Plan or a conservation order, or is identified in a Local Environmental Plan, but the expectation is that responsible management following the guidelines in the *NSW Heritage Manual* would be applied to all places in the s.170 register. The National Parks and Wildlife Service's historic site register has become its s.170 register, so places included in the NPWS heritage register will also be on the s.170 register. It is recommended that the eight Shoebridge Track sections identified in this study be added to the s.170 register.

The *Heritage Act* also controls disturbance of archaeological sites across the state, including on NPWS managed land. Section 4 of the Act applies to 'relics', a relic being:

'Any deposit, object or material evidence relating to the settlement of the area that comprises New South Wales, not being Aboriginal settlement, and which is fifty or more years old [s.4[1]].'

It is illegal to disturb or excavate land to discover, expose or move a relic without a permit issued by the Heritage Council of New South Wales. Excavation permits are usually issued subject to a range of conditions that cover matters such as analysis and

¹ Heritage Office of NSW, 1996. *NSW Government and heritage*, a component of the *NSW Heritage Manual*, Sydney :2.



reporting requirements, artefact cataloguing, storage and curation². The recorded historic features on the Shoebridge Track, and indeed the track formation itself, are 'relics'.

6.4 STAKEHOLDER ISSUES

A range of stakeholders and interested individuals have been consulted in the course of this project.

Members of regional park user groups, such as 'Access for All' and horse riding groups, have been actively involved in the use of the Shoebridge Track by horses for the several years. Recreational horse riding through the Wilderness Area is not allowed by NPWS policies implementing the Wilderness Act. Horse riding in the eastern section of the Track [Sections 5-8], outside the Wilderness area, is not prohibited, but is subject to appropriate controls in Park planning.

The option therefore still exists to negotiate access by user groups in the eastern section through the Monga National Park, but through-riding to the Araluen could not be approved. If use by horse riders of the eastern sections occurs, monitoring is essential to assess the impact of horses on the relatively fragile sections of the track, especially Section 7, and limit or prevent horse riding, or maintain the track, if impact is detrimental to the survival of the track and adjacent natural values.

As yet there is little knowledge of the track by bushwalkers, though a number of bushwalkers are known to have used the track in recent years, and knowledge is likely to increase to some extent over time. Foot-traffic is a relatively benign impact on the Track, but pro-active advertising of the use of the track as a foot track would both increase the need for management activity and potentially cause objections and bad relations with the horse riding groups who are denied access.

The provision of information to stakeholders [other than the families with social associations with the track, dealt with elsewhere in the report] and the general public about the significance of the track would be a natural implication of determining that the place had the level of significance it demonstrates. However, the nature of that information and the extent of its distribution should be determined in the context of a number of other considerations, including:

- the conservation of the other values of the parks concerned, including wilderness protection;
- the potential for conflict between increased recreational use and NPWS wilderness management obligations;
- the ability to provide resources to deal with both information provision and subsequent demand for access, and with the likely public response to what might be seen by some as an unbalanced support of some forms of recreation.

² see Heritage Office of NSW, 1996. *Archaeological Assessments*, a component of the *NSW Heritage Manual*, Sydney



6.5 CONDITION & INTEGRITY ISSUES

The condition and integrity of the Shoebridge Track varies along its length, as indicated above. No section is in pristine condition, but some demonstrate clearly the nature of the cut-and-fill construction, including stone retaining walls and the width of the original track, and the steady gradient is a feature of all surviving sections of the track. While the section of track through Deua National Park is continuous, the eastern half of the track through Monga National Park is broken up into small sections by the construction of the Fire Break Fire Trail and the Gollarribee Fire Trail, impacting on overall integrity.

Management emphasis should be placed on the preventative and remedial conservation of the primary features in those sections of the track still with high integrity and fair condition. Sections 1 and 7 have a high proportion of important features located in them [see Table 4.4 above].

6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- 1 The eight Shoebridge Track sections identified in this study be added to the NPWS s.170 register.
- 2 Ongoing conservation of key features of the Shoebridge Track be undertaken, based on regular monitoring [see below].
- 3 Disturbance and excavation of the Track for other than specifically approved purposes be prohibited in compliance with the *Heritage Act*, and that any excavation be within the conditions of an excavation permit [currently delegated to the NPWS historical archaeologist].
- 4 Monitoring of the condition of the track should be incorporated into a regular [annual] inspection program.
- 5 NPWS policies regarding the protection of Aboriginal places within National Parks should be followed.
- 6 Controls over use be implemented if monitoring demonstrates damage through unsustainable levels of use or types of use that are not authorised.
- 7 Recreational use of the track through the Buckenbowra Wilderness Area be limited to informal bush walking.
- 8 Recreational use of the track outside the Wilderness Area might include walking and horse riding, within sustainable levels, subject to other management considerations.
- 9 Use on the Track of bicycles or other mechanical transport should not be allowed.
- 10 Information on the history and significance of the Shoebridge Track should be made accessible on request at local NPWS offices, but that unless resources allows for adequate management of increased use, no pro-active advertising of the track should occur.



- 11 Liaison with user groups should be maintained and recreational demand outside the limits recommended here be directed to alternate areas.
- 12 Additional historical and ground survey research be undertaken by NPWS or others should be encouraged, to document and assess the suite of bridle tracks in the Deua and adjacent parks throughout the NPWS region, and throughout the state generally on all tenures.
- 13 Further survey work to identify additional features of the track [such as passing lanes, unrecorded sections, and the Halfway Hut] should be undertaken as resources allow, and any coincidental discovery of new features added to the Section 170 Register.



SHOEBRIDGE TRACK • MONGA & DEUA NATIONAL PARKS
HERITAGE ASSESSMENT • 2004

APPENDIX 1 • ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW LOGS

APPENDIX 1

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW LOGS



ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW LOG

Shoebridge Track Heritage Assessment for NPWS

Interview with:

NEIL WADDELL AND KATHLEEN WADDELL

'The Junction', 4561 Araluen Road, Araluen 2622

18/6/2004

Interviewed by
Michael Pearson

Counter	Subject
001	Introduction. Family background. Family in Lower Araluen before 1850, and their interests were mainly in alluvial and reef mining. Held mining leases, with Hinchcliffe and Blundell in Ferguson Gully, below the Shoebridge Track. Roads to mines built by the Waddells.
030	Track runs down from Shoebridge Track down to mines, with two hut sites on it.
047	Knowledge of the Shoebridge track was 'always just there'—the family knew it and it was part of the local geography. Surprised when people claimed it had been just rediscovered. Waddells ran stock in there, burnt it off regularly and ran 60-80 cows. Knew it since his youth, mustering cattle down from hills after winter, went as far over as Big Oaky. The track was a bit of a problem, because when the cattle got on it they were difficult to turn around. Done on horseback, parts of the track were inaccessible due to slumping, and cleared up logs from time to time. Country was much more open when being grazed. Cattle travelled from one hollow to another all winter, but stayed near water on the western side of the range.
100	Family used it, dad used it to ride over to Buckinbowra, but most use on the Araluen side. Used road up past mines to short-cut to Shoebridge. In depression one or two 'tramps' used track a day, come in for a meal.
132	Dingo bating—Horses were their lives, the only transport. Having trouble with dogs, and in 1943-44 old Harcourt [Reid] came, and Neil went with him [Neil born 1935], and took old horse up onto the Shoebridge Track, and shot it [and poisoned



- it]. The first horse Neil had ever seen shot. Another dingo trapper Mal Cody did the same thing. A great track for dogs, which liked human contact. Lots of cross-bred dogs among the dingos.
- 164 World War Two—Didn't mean a lot to Neil, the Trigs were being maintained, and Major Creek Mountain and Araluen Mountain [roads] were mined for blowing up. Can't remember Jim Sturgess in this area, but down around sassafras way.
- 191 Father and Auntie used it to Buckenbowra a bit, as one of the aunties husbands was working over there. Didn't take long. Police used it, used their stables for their horses, and went on patrols.
- 108 Trig stations—were kept clear during the war, army and contractors did it. Doesn't remember VDC. Airplane went down near Mericumbene, south of the Shoebridge track, engine recovered by Freddy Barlow with draught horses on a slide.
- 252 Mericumbene Track—went down route of Mericumbene fire trail, but bridle track was over a bit. Neil worked for Mericumbene, and their cattle went over into Buckenbowra, and Neil could go over in a morning and get them, and have them back by 3.00. Track not as hard as the fire trail, but in that sector. Horses went the easiest way. Trails were marked by use, not built, Magnificent stonework in Shoebridge left for dead by the water races around the valley, are far bigger feats than the Shoebridge. Barry McGowan didn't give them enough attention.
- 333 Forestry Map of Shoebridge, shown by Reids, showing the Halfway Hut. Neil had put a copy together for me, but doesn't know the date, will have to chase it up. Has other maps. Knows the other end fairly well now. Neil doesn't think the track at the eastern end is overrun by road, Thinks further to north.
- 423 Believes Burnell was responsible for or influenced in some way the Shoebridge. Discussion about the chances. Probable links to Corn trail-Bolaro track, and track to Browlee from Bolaro. Not sure if tracks went to May's Wharf. Thinks there was a wharf further up Buckinbowra River. People who own country refer to Austin's wharf a bit further up.
- 540 Tracks up Deua—Used by family, had to use them to visit neighbours, and to tableland, depending on where you want to go. Some have stone walls, but doesn't want to release his information yet. Discuss funding application.



635 Used to bring cattle out along river, The river was the road, Jack Milligan used to bring cattle from Moruya, then take them to Braidwood, just what you did. Families, Davis's, Wattles', just used to visit each other.

680 Regrets NPWS took it over.

TAPE SIDE 2

000 Horses were part of life. Tracks maintenance—the families just cleared it up if they wanted to get past. The Nevins owned the country here when Neil was young, and before mustering went around and cleaned up the tracks with tomahawks. Cleaned up through Woolla up to Bendethera.

020 Passing bays—Neil only knows them at western end—at other end you could pass. Pack horses were not always led—they knew their jobs. As a kid worked for timber industry pulling posts, and had 5-6 draught horses, and they would do their allotted jobs all day with no-one to run them. Pack horse would do the same thing. A string of pack horse did not need to be linked to lead horse 'would be too dangerous'. Doesn't believe they would be linked. Someone at front, probably not anyone at end. Seen photos of horses with doors on both sides. Furniture would have been packed in.

094 Tanbark was massive industry in Araluen. Some went out in bags and bundles. Cut it up with chaff cutter. Lots of trees show signs of bark removal. No eucalyptus distilling work in valley, wrong species.

140 Nearly 600 members in 'Access for All'. Tracks all over region. Has maps with tracks on it. Other tracks from Badja into Woila Creek, has copy of survey [county map]. Still being identified. Diplomatic process getting information from the old families. Discuss Jim Sturgiss work.

270 Wary of Parks. Information gone missing. Importance of tracks never meant much to Neil until people started getting interested, and some were being destroyed. Taking mine leases off the maps—heritage gone, whoever does it. Problem matching maps up, old to new ones. Parks have used new names for places that already had names.

440 Mericumbene track—[on western side of river paralleling river] shown as easement on 1:25,000. Parks need better resources.

490 Lots of logging tracks near Shoebridge because of the timber fuel needs of the dredges. Father though the last major usage



of the track was by teams of draughthorses leaving to go back to the coast, as not enough work left in Araluen. Bullocks may also have been taken across. Skill of draught horses. Horses were far more valuable than anything else.

- 550 Any major gaps in information? No— just a very important part of history. Mine tracks and mines below the Shoebridge need attention. Mines were prospects only, no battery. Has photo of grandfather and brother-in-law at the mine adit. Scarred trees around are not Aboriginal, they are for hut bark.
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ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW LOG

Shoebridge Track Heritage Assessment for NPWS

Interview with:

CATHERINE LAWLER

146 Princes Highway, Bodalla 2545

17/6/2004

Interviewed by
Michael Pearson

Counter	Subject
001	<p>Introduction. Family background. On Cath's mother's side—her great-grandfather Rankin had land at Burlang in the 1860s, then land on the Deua River. Grandparents Alan and Catherine Rankin [nee Ryan] were settled 57 years at Curmulee, 7 miles from Bendethera.</p> <p>On her father's side—the Condons from Ireland in 1855, were hotel keepers. Father married Sylvia Rankin, worked as a stockman, eventually on the Bate estate [Sam Bate one of largest landholders in area, acquired all of Charles Byrnes land at Belowra, where Cath grew up.</p>
036	<p>Cath's father used the bridle tracks through the district. Grandfather Rankin grew corn and took it by pack horse to the tableland—Krawaree, Bradiwood, Goulburn. Raised pigs at Curmulee on the Deua, and droved them out to Moruya for transport north on the boats. They also cured bacon themselves.</p>
049	<p>Routes to the tablelands: Curmulee to Alpine [Blanchetts'] then up Curmulee Mountain to 'Fairfield' at Krawaree. Trucked on from there. Fairfield was the closets Post Office.</p>
052	<p>Usually took 2-3 packhorses, but Cath has photos of 6-7 horses at one time taking out a load of corn. Took 2-3 hours to Fairfield [Byrnes']. Mother and aunt used to ride to Fairfield and Krawaree for local dances. Auntie Vera went to school at Majors Creek.</p>
173	<p>Bendethera—the Georges owned Bendethera and used the Zig-Zag track to the tablelands, and the Georges pack track to Moruya via Bendethera Mountain, Coorandella [known to Cath as 'Coondella'], Diamond Creek into Burra. The route</p>



was used to drive pigs to market. The Grand[parents] owned land at Coorandella, and it was used as an overnight stop.. They also drove turkeys up to the tablelands. The turkeys would roost for the night, and gathered together with corn.

109 Grandmother made cheese and pressed it with a level press using a pole. Dogs were used to herd the pigs and turkeys on the tracks. Getting pigs to leave Curmulee was difficult, but once they got going they were OK.

134 The tracks were maintained with axes and cross-cut saws, and fallen logs were burnt, but the less-scrubby nature of the bush then prevented fire getting out of control. The family went out on clearing days. The government paid Alan Rankin to keep the Georges Pack track cleared, and used to pay people to help.

175 Three large families used the tracks regularly from Bendethera. The priest visited from Moruya 3-4 times a year.

189 The first bulldozed track into Bendethera was in the 1960s. At that time Alan was still driving cattle from Moruya to Bendethera to Braidwood for sale. 'It was such a relief to find a road' says Cath, when travelling out of the area. The cattle could spread out.

Cath fears that if the tracks are not used, mapped and recorded, they will be lost—she wants them kept open and recorded. The history of the Bendethera Valley deserves to be better known, and the hard work it was to make a living there—the Georges took a header for their wheat into the valley over the old tracks.

260 Second World War—Father and 'Super' [William Gordon] Sutherland went to meetings on the coast, and Dad was to lead any withdrawal from Bendethera if an invasion occurred, using a 'burnt earth' policy, even taking the gates with them! The roads were mined, and Jim Sturgess came to Wattlegrove, owned by the Bate Estate, with horses and gear to survey the tracks. In Later years he told father that they believed a spy was in the district providing information to the enemy. Father showed Sturgess the local tracks, then 'Super' Sutherland showed Sturgess the tracks behind Cobargo, Yowie, Brogo area.

The V.D.C. [Volunteer Defence Corps] camped on the property at Wattlegrove, and did work on the tracks, but a bit 'hush-hush', and cleared the trig stations sites east and west for surveying and aircraft use. Jim Sturgess plotted the tracks and 'kept his eyes open'.



- 345 Shoebridge Track—Cath does not know as much about Shoebridge as the other tracks. Neil Waddell is her main source of information. She knows that tracks in the area were used for packing rabbits and wattle bark as well as the farm produce. The Shoebridge appears unique in its width and length, construction and grade. All other tracks had switchbacks and steep sections but the Shoebridge went 'gap-hopping'. Cath knows an old man in Batemans bay who mustered using the track, and a man at Bolar who used cattle on it. It was never forgotten, but became impassable in places.
- 421 Accidents on tracks—On the Jump-up Track from Belowra through Woila Creek to the tablelands, cattle and sheep were brought in and out. A cow fell off and was killed, and a packhorse fell too, coming down the hill, and had to be destroyed. Between Bendethera and Curmulee several cows were killed in falls.
- 452 There was not much construction work on the tracks, they were mainly defined through being worn use, 18 inches to 3 foot deep. They are different from the Showbridge cuttings and stoned up sections. Hundreds of head of cattle will cut a track very quickly. Cath's father and brother took cattle up the Jump-up Track to the Cooma saleyards, and stampedes occurred on occasions. One mob was spoked on the tableland by a train. Cattle taken by Henry Greg from Belowra to Carnyina Station, near Krawaree, via yards at Woila Creek, broke free of the holding yards and stampeded home, a very noisy event. Jessie Thompson and 'Super' Sutherland, who were trapping in the area, helped take the cattle back up the track, but were caught in snow at the tops without adequate clothing. 'Supers' hands were frozen, and he had to be helped off his horse. Italian station workers let the horse loose, thinking the nose backs were to keep their nose warm. It was hard to round them up again!
- 606 The tracks generally were not on TSRs, except in the east and west, where the tracks met settled land at the Cooma and Nimmitabel end.
- 643 Corn was grown on flats of the Deua at Curmulee, Alpine and Bendethera. The Georges' also grew wheat at Bendethera, taking it up to Krawarri, from where it was trucked to Goulburn for milling, then returned to Krawarri and trucked back down to the valley. Corn was sold on the tableland to individual buyers, not middlemen.



TAPE SIDE 2

- 001 [section lost in turnover—Bushwalkers started coming in in the 1920s and 30s. Myles Dunphy and Roy Davies were the most notable.] Walkers kept in touch with the family. They walked in on the Georges Track, coming in from the coast, though some might have come from the tablelands. They would just turn up. In 1959 Myles Dunphy wrote about the valley in his diary, and about Cath's grandparents.
- 033 Cath has travelled a lot of the tracks, even after they moved to Moruya. From Moruya to Fairfield transport was by road. Then, down the valley by horse, and Cath remembered a lot of the track details.
- 060 Some tracks are very steep [unlike Shoebridge]. 'Devils pinch' up Curmulee mountain from Alpine had zig-zags, over-lain by a road now, with a helicopter pad above it. The Jump-up was very steep in parts.
- 083 W.D. Tarlinton was shown by Aborigines down from Krawarree in 1828-29 [?], via Mt Euranbene, Woila Creek into Belowra, down the Tuross River to the junction of Wondella Creek, and out to Cobargo, where he established holdings [a book about Tarlinton has been written]. Sam Bate and Charles Byrne were other early settlers, and a book has been written about bate. W.D. Tarlinton's track and the Georges Track are the most important through the area.
- 139 Sam Bate Track runs through forest and private property from Tilba to Belowra, and is still in use. Cath's father took a string of pack horses from Belowra in 1939 to Fairfield with all their gear. Route—down Belowra Creek, then up Bickyjamba Creek and over into Benbethera, then up to Fairfield and the trucks.
- 160 Grandfather and grandmother were in their 80s when they rode up the mountain on the move to Moruya [to the road at Fairfield, then to the coast by truck]. Grandmother's cockatoo was in a box, but ate its way out, and sat on her shoulder for the rest of the trip, and lived in Moruya long after the old people had died.
- 171 Life was hard but self-sufficient. The track from Curmulee and Alpine down river to Woolla Station and Araluen was a dray track. Lots of work was necessary to keep the tracks open. All the tracks interconnected. The Shoebridge was different. The tracks were easily lost to regrowth, but can still be found by reference to blazes on old tree trunks.



The Wilderness policy is a major problem. The tracks need to be better known. Lots have been lost, but those in national parks survive, and should be recognised and kept.



ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW LOG

Shoebridge Track Heritage Assessment for NPWS

Interview with:

BRUCE AND ROYEN REID

1633 Princes Highway, Moruya.

17/6/2004

Interviewed by
Michael Pearson

Counter	Subject
001	Introduction. Family background. Grandfather George Harcourt Reid was a dingo trapper for the Dingo Destruction Board, and came from Cooma to Moruya in 1946 and trapped until the mid 1950s. his area of operations stretched from the Clyde River to the border and the coast to the tablelands.. He always travelled on horseback.
027	Grandfather travelled the Shoebridge Track to get to Mericumbene and Araluen to trap dingos. He died in 1971. Father told of many things he did with grandfather.
043	Bruce and Royden were shown parts of the Shoebridge track by their father in the late 1970s. this was done by horseback on the eastern and western end, and the middle section on foot. They camped at Quart pot Creek. Father had ridden it with his father. Neil Waddell was shown the track by grandfather, possibly in the 1940s.
062	Grandfather travelled via the Jump-Up on the Georges Track from Monaro through Bendethera to the coast. He always rode a horse, and used tracks to get around. He used old horses as dingo baits, shooting them poisoning the carcass. Poisoned on the Shoebridge with Neil Waddell.
098	Mericumbene Track—Neil Waddell tells story of doing a round trip up the Shoebridge and back down the Mericumbene track, but not sure where it is.
121	Mary Greg lived at Tall Trees [Lower Araluen] and her mother travelled across the Shoebridge Track to visit her sister in Buckenbowra in a day return.
129	Bob Williams reckons he knows where Mericumbene track is.



- 140 Think the missing bits of the Shoebridge track on the eastern side of the range are under the road, or close beside it. Along the ridge the road seems too steep for the track in two places, but have been unable to locate the track either side. The track stuck to the Quart Pot track ridge at its eastern end.
- 163 Thinks the track put in by Burnell and his convicts in the 1860s.
- 200 Halfway Hut—Claim to know where it is, as shown on an old Forestry map, which locates 'Halfway hut' at the first prominent saddle up the ridge above Quart Pot Creek. 'Bully' Spencer in Batemans Bay claims to know where it is from locating it 30 years ago. The map also shows the track continuing along the Quart Pot fire trail ridge east of the national park boundary.
- 315 Road east along Buckinbowra valley—The track alignment, or a later dray road along it, is 'stoned up' between Buckinbowra and Austin's ford, located by John Davidge. Think boats may have come up to May's Wharf rather than Nelligen. Other roads went out to Broulee via north Moruya and Muggendora.
- 436 The other tracks in the area don't have the constant grade of the Shoebridge. There is a track to the mine area in Goonenough Gully, that is benched and stoned up and about 3 km long. There is also a track down from the Shoebridge to the mines, they found a tree marked 'ML1' nearby.
- 546 Down the Deua River between Araluen and Moruya traces of the original track can be found on both sides of the river. It is marked by being worn by use, not constructed. Replaced by the Shoebridge as an all-weather road.
- 617 There is a network of tracks in the region. Bridle track up the Deua from the junction [Neil Waddell's place], lots of it in private property, but many section survive.
- 676 The Zig Zag track out of Bendethera valley would have continued west beyond the present road it meets, but has not yet been found. The Jump-Up is amazing for its steepness in parts. [Tape ends abruptly, but interview finished moments later].



APPENDIX 2

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