

GENERAL ARRANGEMENT OF BRIDGE

The bridge over the Murray River at Barham-Koondrook consists of a wrought iron vertical lifting span with length 58ft two composite timber, wrought iron and steel De Burgh truss spans with length approximately 104ft and two timber beam spans with lengths of 30ft each.

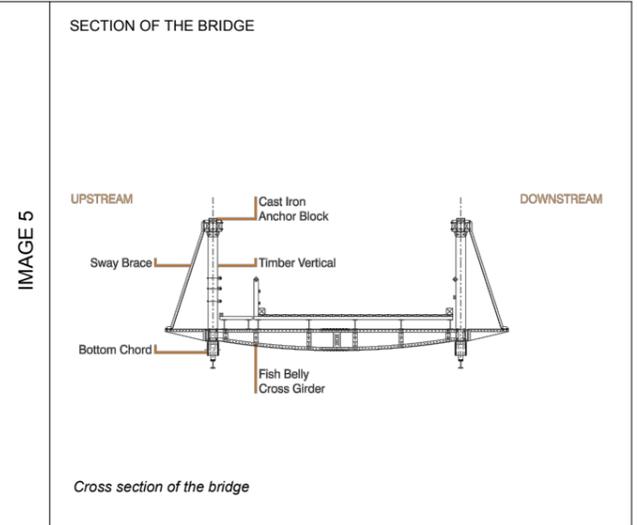
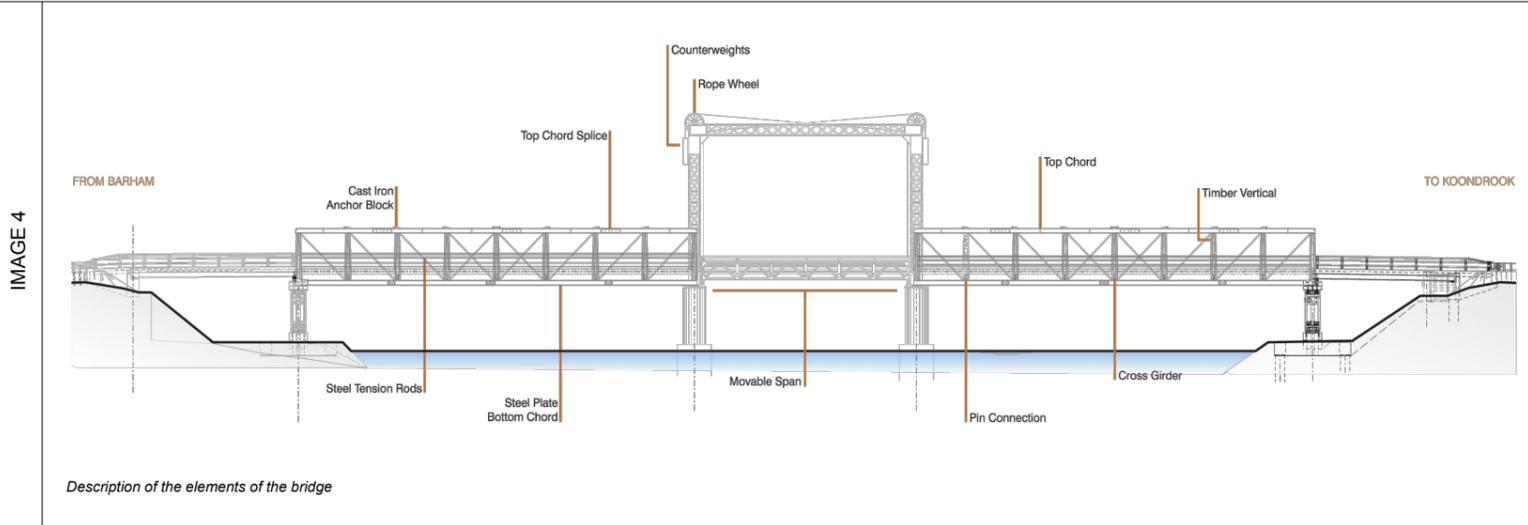
The bridge is largely two lanes wide and has a clearance over the normal water level of 49 ft. when the lift span is open.

The upper framework of the lifting span consists of four wrought iron lattice towers with longitudinal wrought iron lattice girders and transverse plated truss girder connecting the towers at the top.

The supports of the lift span comprise of two piers made from pairs of tubes fabricated from curved and shaped wrought iron plates riveted together, and joined with cross ties forming elliptical holes for improved aesthetics. The piers then continue as cast iron concrete filled tubes below the waterline.

The two approach spans are De Burgh trusses consisting of a steel bottom chord, vertical timber posts and diagonal steel tension members.

Source: www.murrayriver.com.au



CONSTRUCTION OF THE BRIDGE

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

It was found that there were at least 200 new settlers within a 50 mile radius of Barham and Koondrook so the area was an ideal outlet for the produce. Also due to the absence of a bridge, produce was transported across the river about 90 kilometres upstream at Swan Hill and 90 kilometres downstream at Echuca.

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

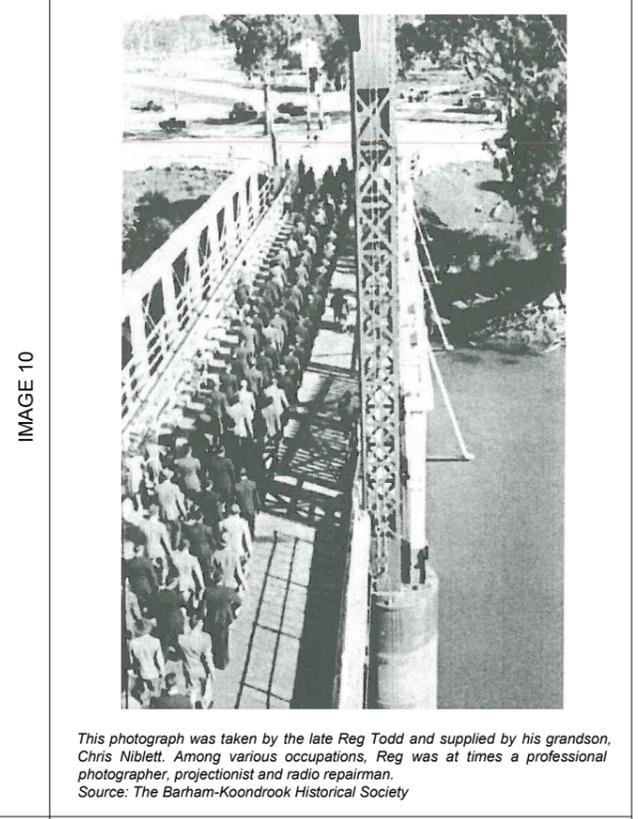
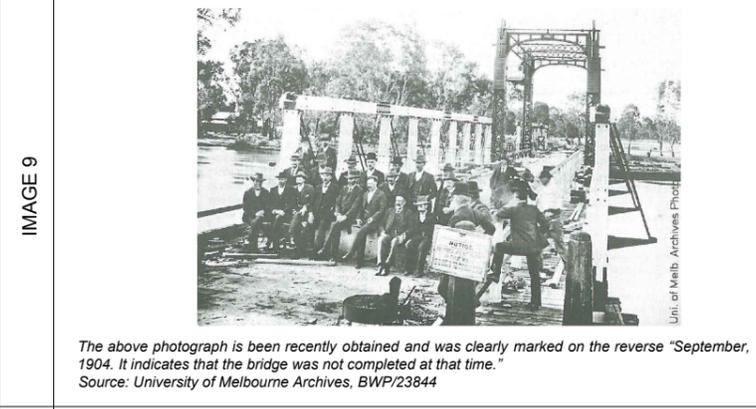
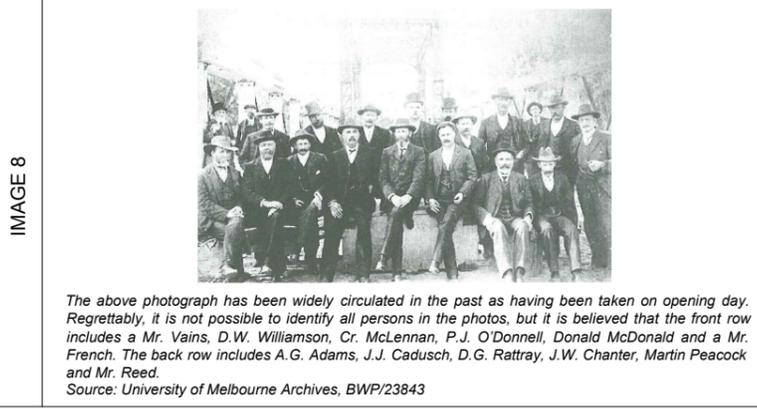
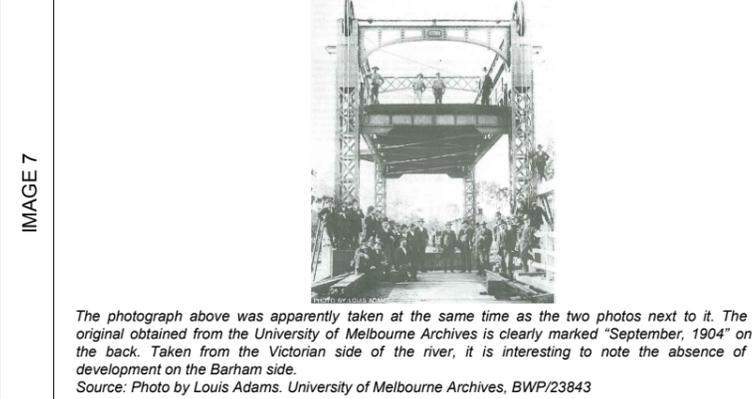
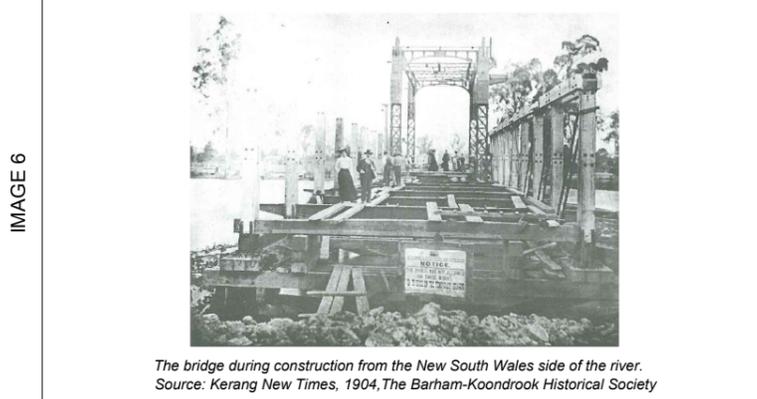
The timber for the bridge was obtained from the north east coast of NSW, with the raw material for the wrought iron and steel coming from Scotland and structural members fabricated in Ballarat at the Eureka Iron Works.

The cost of the bridge was approximately £11,358 and the payment was covered by both the New South Wales and Victorian Governments. On the 8 October 1904 the bridge was officially opened with a number of Federal and State members attending the event.

The opening ceremony and banquet were apparently well attended; the enthusiasm of the spectators was such that a crowd of people rushed across the lift span before it had completely closed, causing one of the cogwheels in the lifting gear to break. The lifting gear was shut down for a number of days while a replacement wheel was obtained.

The Barham Bridge was designed by engineer E.M. de Burgh with construction completed in 1904. The design is an adoption of his previous design of Cobram Bridge and as with Cobram, the design incorporates further improvements on the Hinton and Murwillumbah Bridge designs.

Source: Volume 1: Vertical Lift Span Bridges - Movable Span Bridge Study - Project, 22/16519, GHD



ECONOMY

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

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

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

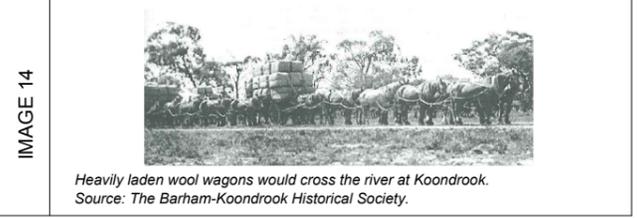
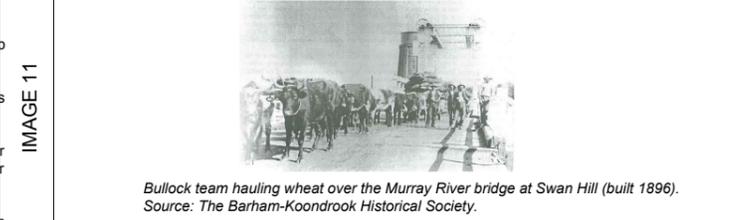
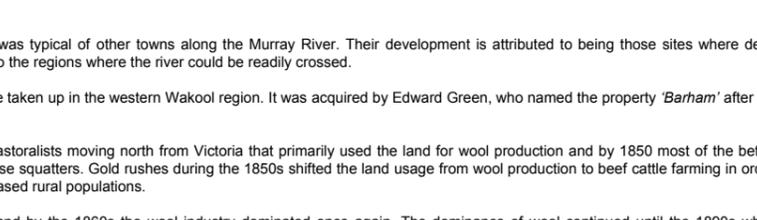
However this shift was short lived and by the 1860s the wool industry dominated once again. The dominance of wool continued until the 1890s when production of wheat increased dramatically. Finally in July 1893 a site for the township of Barham was surveyed and the first lots were sold.

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

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

The punt was considered to be too inconvenient and unreliable due to its limited operating hours and old age, as it was previously used at Echuca for 30 years before being moved to Barham. Also pastoralists would avoid the crossing as usage frequently decreased the value of stock due to "knocking about".

Source: Volume 1: Vertical Lift Span Bridges - Movable Span Bridge Study - Project, 22/16519, GHD



NOTES

1. IMAGES AND TEXT ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

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