

SORELL HERITAGE STUDY

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Address: Arthur Highway Dunalley 7177		UPI:	PID: 0
Name: SWING BRIDGE			
Feature Type:	Structure Type:	Site Feature Type:	Dating: 1945- 1965
	Bridge		Access Restrictions: Unrestricted
			Inspection date: October 1996 P Davies
			Style: N/A
			Grid ref: 5625 564800 5250750
Indication of Significance: High probable significance		Theme: Shipping Roadways	
Material:	Steel + concrete		Listings:
Condition:	Good		
Integrity:	Intact		
National Estate Criteria:	A4 B2 C2 D2 E1 F1		Photograph Index: 9: 32; 8:7
Risk: Excavation: ☐ Development: ☐ Maintenance: ☒ Vandalism: ☐			
SITE DESCRIPTION: The 1965 bridge, replacing the 1905 bridge, was mechanically operated rather than hand operated as was the earlier bridge. The new bridge is supported on concrete walls and piers supporting the fixed carriageway and the swinging section. The decking of the moving section has a metal mesh floor to reduce weight and swings out of the passage. The concrete supports are protected by timber rails. The bridge is operated from a control box 100 metres away on the highway and the gates protecting the road are still operated by hand. The operating system for the old bridge is now in the carpark of the Dunalley Hotel as an historic display.			
HISTORY: The narrow isthmus at East Bay Neck provided 'the key to communication between Hobart town and all the east Coast' with settlers following James Kelly's 1816 example and dragging their boats over 'on round blocks of wood'. In unfavourable winds the effort could save up to two weeks of battling around the Tasman Peninsula. A convict tramway across the isthmus allowed the arriving Governor Eardley Wilmot to cross over in 1843. Although the excavation of a canal through the isthmus was touted as 'a work which the Government will, no doubt soon effect' and Governor Denison ordered a report into the matter in 1854, tenders were not called until 1901. Work started in 1902 with a steam dredge brought down from Derby for the work. The Salisbury Foundry Company in Launceston was contracted to fabricate a hand operated swing bridge to be erected at the western end. This bridge was replaced by a hydraulic system on the new concrete and steel bridge in 1965. The Denison Canal was finally completed and opened by the Governor, Sir Gerald Strickland on October 14, 1905, although not without his vessel being stranded several times at the entrance to the canal by the changing tide. The canal heralded a buoyant period in Dunalley's economy and social life. A library was established for the influx of workers while new faces brought new ideas. The town's importance grew as it consolidated itself as the major regional port for the Sorell district and Forestier Peninsula.			
BOUNDARY: The listing boundary is formed by the road formation on each side abutting the bridge and the canal over which it is located.			

COMMENTS:

The bridge, although a replacement structure, is an excellent example of engineering and technology to provide an openable bridge over the Denison Canal. It demonstrates best technology at the time, is well designed and forms an important visual element in Dunalley and on the road to the Tasman Peninsula, with the bridge and canal forming part of the tourist experience for many visitors to the area. It is the only operational swing bridge in Tasmania.

It meets Criteria A4, B2, C2, D2, E1 and F1 for inclusion in the Register of the National Estate.

It should be included in Schedule 3 of the Sorell Planning Scheme and should be nominated for inclusion in the Tasmanian Heritage Register and the Register of the National Estate.

BIBLIOGRAPHY + PREVIOUS STUDIES:

DUNBABIN, Thomas. 1954. *A Farm at the World's End: Some account of the Dunbabin's of Marchwiell in Tasmania*. T Dunbabin, Hobart.

Hobart Town Gazette 1/10/1825, p2

REID, Owen. 1979. *The South East*. Curriculum Centre, Education Department, Hobart

ROSS, James. 1830. *Hobart Town Almanac and Van Diemen's Land Annual*. James Ross. Hobart Town.

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