

# **RICHMOND BRIDGE**

**Tasmania**

Submission for an  
HISTORIC ENGINEERING MARKER

from

The Engineering Heritage Committee

Tasmania Division

The Institution of Engineers, Australia

April 1991

*Award Ceremony Report attached*



5 October 1989

The Council Clerk,  
Council Chambers,  
Bridge Street,  
RICHMOND, Tas. 7025

The Institution of Engineers, Aust (TASMANIA DIVISION)	
ENGINEERING HERITAGE COMMITTEE	
DATE RECEIVED	
ACTION	CF 52.1
DETAILS	

Dear Sir,

The Institution of Engineers, Aust. through its National Panel on Engineering Heritage has developed a programme of commemorating items of historical engineering significance throughout the Commonwealth.

The Tasmania Division is currently examining a number of engineering works in the State which might be acceptable to the National Programme.

As a consequence it is considered that the Richmond Bridge, as the oldest extant stone bridge in Australia and a fine example of the bridge builders art of that time, should be nominated for recognition as an Engineering Heritage item.

If acceptable to the National Panel, the bridge would be commemorated by the placement of a bronze plaque, with suitably worded description, on a stone pedestal located near the bridge. A public unveiling ceremony by an invited dignitary would also be arranged in conjunction with your Council.

We request that you place this proposal before the Warden and Councillors for their approval.

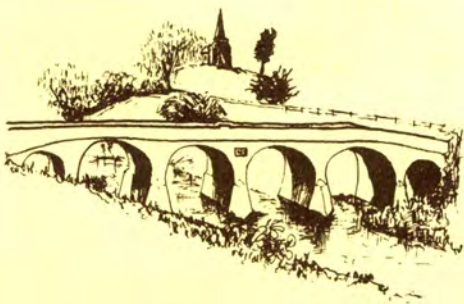
Should further information be required, a member of our Heritage Committee would be available for discussion at any time.

Yours faithfully,

G.F. HARPER,  
Secretary

*AKW*





# Municipality of Richmond

Our ref: 399.010

Your ref:

24 October 1989

The Institution of Engineers, Aust  
(TASMANIA DIVISION)  
ENGINEERING HERITAGE COMMITTEE

DATE RECEIVED 10/11/89

CF-52.1

ACTION Act. 16/11/89

DETAILS application to be made!

Mr. G.F. Harper  
Secretary  
The Institution of Engineers, Australia  
Tasmania Division  
Royal Engineers Building  
GPO Box 171  
HOBART 7001

Dear Mr. Harper

RE: RICHMOND BRIDGE - ENGINEERING HERITAGE ITEM

I acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 5/10/89 regarding the abovementioned matter, the contents of which were considered by Council at its meeting held 17/10/89.

Council is pleased that your Institute has seen fit to nominate the Richmond Bridge for consideration by the National panel as an Engineering Heritage item, and as such, decided as follows:-

"That Council approve the request under the terms and conditions specified."

I await your further advice in due course.

Yours sincerely

G.D. Richardson  
COUNCIL CLERK

16 November, 1989

The Council Clerk,  
Municipality of Richmond,  
Council Chambers,  
RICHMOND, TAS. 7025

The Institution of Engineers, Aust (TAS)	
ENGINEERING HERITAGE COMMITTEE	
DATE RECEIVED	
ACTION	C.F. 52.1
DETAILS	



The  
Institution  
of  
Engineers,  
Australia

Tasmania Division  
Royal Engineers Building  
2 Darvey Street  
GPO Box 171  
Hobart TAS 7001  
Phone (002) 34 2399

Dear Mr Richardson,

RICHMOND BRIDGE

I acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated 24th October, 1989 agreeing to our proposal of 5th October, 1989 to submit the Richmond Bridge for recognition as a Heritage Item.

Appropriate action will now be taken to nominate the Bridge for recognition. Experience elsewhere has indicated that it will take some months to process the nomination. Please be assured that we will advise you as soon as there is anything to report.

Yours faithfully,



G.F. HARPER,  
Secretary



HISTORIC ENGINEERING MARKER

NOMINATION FORM

The Institution of Engineers, Aust  
(TASMANIA DIVISION)  
ENGINEERING HERITAGE COMMITTEE

FROM: Engineering Heritage Committee - Tas. Division

DATE: 9 February, 1990

TO: National Committee on Engineering Heritage  
Commemorative Plaque Sub-Committee  
The Institution of Engineers, Australia  
11 National Circuit  
BARTON ACT 2600

DATE RECEIVED

ACTION

DETAILS

CF 52.1

The following work is nominated for an Historic Engineering Marker plaque:

NAME OF WORK:

Richmond Bridge

LOCATION:

Over the Coal River in the township of  
Richmond, Tasmania. Grid ref. 55 GEN359684  
Map Sheet 8312 Derwent.

OWNER:

Municipality of Richmond

In support of the nomination the following information is provided:

(1) Proposed wording on HEM:

Historic Engineering Marker  
Richmond Bridge

This bridge was recommended by Commissioner John Thomas Bigge in 1820 to provide a reliable crossing of the Coal River for traffic to the East Coast and Tasman Peninsula in times of flood.

Originally known as Bigges Bridge it was constructed by convict labour under the supervision of the Engineer for Public Works, Major Thomas Bell and Superintendent of Stonemasons William Wilson, commenced in Dec. 1823 and completed in Jan. 1825 it is the oldest remaining bridge in Australia. Dedicated by the Institution of Engineers, Australia 1991

(2) Historical Significance:

The necessity for a bridge over the Coal River at Richmond was pointed out by Royal Commissioner John Thomas Bigge, when he visited Van Diemens' Land in 1820. As a consequence the bridge was known for some years as Bigges Bridge.

The bridge is constructed of freestone quarried locally from nearby Butchers Hill and consists of six spans of 4.3, 8.1, 8.3, 8.5, 8.3 and 4.1 metres making a total span of 41.5 metres with a width of 6.4 metres.

It was built by convict labour under the Superintendence of Major Thomas Bell of the 48th Regiment who was Engineer in Charge of Public Works and Mr. William Wilson who was Superintendent of Stonemasons at the time.

Building commenced in December, 1823 and was completed in January, 1825 at a total cost of 2000 pounds. During 1824 Major Bell was succeeded by Major Sydney Cotton as acting Engineer.

The building of the bridge meant that traffic was able to proceed without delay to the East Coast and Tasman Peninsula when the ford across the river was impassible.

In 1828 the Colonial Architect, John Lee Archer, reported that one of the piers was in a bad state and in the following years two of the piers were rebuilt.

In September, 1883, the Mercury newspaper reported that the way outline of the bridge "due to settlement of the piers" was receiving attention and that the piers were being cased with stone and brought to a cutwater edge in line with the stream and newly pointed all over and under with cement. This work was completed in 1884.

Since then general maintenance work has been carried out by the Public Works Department, now Department of Main Roads, as required.

3. The nomination of the bridge for an H.E.M. has been put to the Richmond Municipality Councillors who are in full agreement with the proposal.

4. The Richmond Bridge is the oldest extant stone bridge in Australia and is in every day use proving it to be a fine example of early colonial engineering. Richmond village is one of the most popular tourist attractions in Tasmania and the bridge one of the main features in it thus the plaque would be seen by thousands of tourists each year.

5. Several recent photographs of the bridge are attached which show the main features.

6. In the event that this nomination is approved, the Tasmania Division will organise a suitable unveiling ceremony possibly during the 1991 Engineering Conference.

*Photo's in Bridge File.*

*A. L. Brewitt*

-----  
(Chairman of Nominating Committee)

-----  
(Secretary of Nominating Committee)



Facsimile

To: KEITH DREWITT  
Fax: (002) 34 7189  
From: ROB GREEN BOE Secretary  
Date: 3.4.90  
Subject: RICHMOND BRIDGE  
File: 3/6/93  
No. of Sheets:  
(including this one)

EAST TASMANIA DIVISION



The Institution of Engineers, Australia

The Institution of Engineers, Aust	
(TASMANIA DIVISION)	
ENGINEERING HERITAGE COMMITTEE	
DATE RECEIVED	
ACTION	CF52.1
DETAILS	<i>[Signature]</i>

National Headquarters  
National Circuit  
Barton ACT 2600  
Phone (06) 270 6355  
Telex AA62748  
Fax (06) 273 1405

Keith  
The Commemorative Plaques Sub-Committee  
Supports your submission that the  
Richmond Bridge be awarded an Historic  
Engineering Markers plaque. The words  
you proposed for the plaque are too  
many as, the following are proposed for  
your agreement:

HISTORIC ENGINEERING  
MARKER

RICHMOND BRIDGE

BEST EXAMPLE OF EARLY COLONIAL BRIDGE ENGINEERING WAS BUILT  
TO PROVIDE A RELIABLE ALL-WEATHER CROSSING OF THE COAL RIVER.  
AFTER COMMISSIONER JOHN EDGE, IT WAS CONSTRUCTED BY CONVICT  
LABOUR BETWEEN DECEMBER 1823 AND JANUARY 1825 UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF ENGINEER  
MAJOR THOMAS BELL AND STONEMASON WILLIAM WILSON, USING LOCALLY QUARRIED  
FREESTONE. IT IS THE OLDEST BRIDGE IN AUSTRALIA.  
(64 words)

DEDICATED BY  
THE INSTITUTION OF ENGINEERS, AUSTRALIA  
1991

Kind regards,  
*[Signature]*

c.c. Ray Whitmore (01) 570 4999  
Ken McInnes (05) 657 1040  
L. 1021 663 2883



The  
Institution  
of  
Engineers,  
Australia

Tasmania Division  
Royal Engineers Building  
2 Davey Street  
GPO Box 171  
Hobart TAS 7001  
Phone (002) 34 2399

24 May, 1990

The Council Clerk,  
Council Chambers,  
Bridge Street,  
RICHMOND, Tas. 7025

Dear Mr Richardson,

Further to our letter of the 16th November, 1989, I am pleased to inform you that our nomination of the Richmond Bridge as an Historical Engineering structure has been accepted by the National Committee and approved for an H.E.M. plaque.

A copy of a typical bronze plaque is enclosed together with the wording proposed for the Richmond Bridge.

It is our intention to have the plaque unveiling ceremony as a function during the National Engineering Conference to be held in Hobart during April, 1991. We will invite a suitable eminent person to unveil the plaque.

Would you please inform the Warden and Councillors of the above, and seek their approval or suggested amendments. In the near future a member of our Heritage Committee will contact you with a view to having an on site discussion concerning an appropriate position for fixing the plaque.

Yours faithfully,

*G.F. Harper*  
G.F. HARPER,  
Secretary



# Memorandum

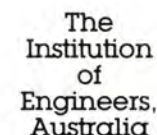
The Institution of Engineers, Aust  
TASMANIA DIVISION  
ENGINEERING HERITAGE COMMITTEE

DATE RECEIVED

ACTION *CF 527*

DETAILS Tasmania Division

From: Mr. K.C. Drewitt - Tasmania Division  
Date: 17th August, 1990  
Subject: **Richmond Bridge H.E.M.**  
File No: -  
To: Mr. R. Breen BOE Executive Officer



The  
Institution  
of  
Engineers,  
Australia

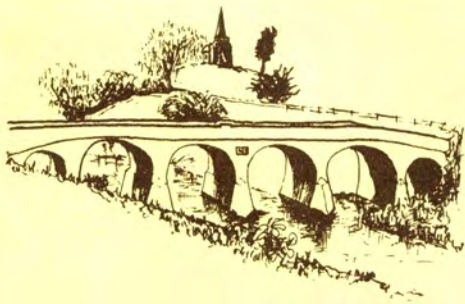
Tasmania Division  
Royal Engineers Building  
2 Davey Street  
GPO Box 171  
Hobart TAS 7001  
Phone (002) 34 2399

I have finally received agreement from the Richmond Council with the proposed wording on the plaque so the casting can now proceed.

The agreed wording is as follows:

THIS FINE EXAMPLE OF EARLY COLONIAL BRIDGE ENGINEERING WAS BUILT TO PROVIDE A RELIABLE ALL-WEATHER CROSSING OF THE COAL RIVER. ORIGINALLY NAMED AFTER COMMISSIONER JOHN BIGGE, IT WAS CONSTRUCTED BY CONVICT LABOUR BETWEEN DECEMBER 1823 AND JANUARY 1825 UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF ENGINEER MAJOR THOMAS BELL AND STONEMASON WILLIAM WILSON, USING LOCALLY QUARRIED FREESTONE. IT IS THE OLDEST BRIDGE IN AUSTRALIA.

DEDICATED BY  
THE INSTITUTION OF ENGINEERS, AUSTRALIA  
1991



# Municipality of Richmond

Our ref: 399,010

Your ref:

19 September 1990

Mr. G.F. Harper  
Secretary  
The Institute of Engineers Australia  
Tasmania Division  
Royal Engineers Building  
2 Davey Street  
HOBART 7000

Dear Mr. Harper

RE: PLAQUE - RICHMOND BRIDGE

Thank you for your letter dated 24 May, 1990 regarding the abovementioned matter. Please accept my apologies for the delay in replying thereto but Council was waiting for a reply from the Richmond Preservation and Development Trust.

The suggested wording on the plaque is acceptable to Council and it is considered that the most suitable position for it would be on the new sandstone wall near the steps leading to the riverbank walk.

Should you require any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Yours sincerely

G.D. Richardson  
COUNCIL CLERK





The  
Institution  
of  
Engineers,  
Australia

Tasmania Division  
Royal Engineers Building  
2 Davey Street  
GPO Box 171  
Hobart TAS 7001  
Phone (002) 34 2399

14th February, 1991

Mr. K. Drew,  
The Secretary,  
Department of Roads & Transport,  
1 Murray Street,  
HOBART, Tas. 7000

Dear Sir,

RICHMOND BRIDGE

As you may be aware, the Institution of Engineers, Australia has in place a programme for the recognition of Historical Engineering sites or structures by the attachment of an appropriate plaque at the site or on the structure.

The Engineering Heritage Committee of the Tasmania Division has nominated the Richmond Bridge as the first structure in Tasmania to be recognised in this way.

It is intended to present a plaque to commemorate the bridge during the week of the National Engineering Conference on the afternoon of April 11th. His Excellency the Governor of Tasmania has graciously consented to unveil the plaque at an appropriate ceremony.

Your approval is requested for the mounting of the plaque in a suitable position on the bridge subsequent to the ceremony. It is suggested that on the return of the parapet wall on the downstream side at the Western end of the bridge would be a suitable location.

The bronze plaque measuring 40cm x 30cm is worded as shown on the attached sheet.

Your co-operation in this matter will be appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

K.C. DREWITT,  
Chairman  
Engineering Heritage Committee

DATA DIVISION  
HERITAGE COMMITTEE



HISTORIC ENGINEERING  
MARKER  
RICHMOND BRIDGE

THIS FINE EXAMPLE OF EARLY COLONIAL BRIDGE ENGINEERING WAS BUILT TO PROVIDE A RELIABLE ALL-WEATHER CROSSING OF THE COAL RIVER. ORIGINALLY NAMED AFTER COMMISSIONER JOHN BIGGE, IT WAS CONSTRUCTED BY CONVICT LABOUR BETWEEN DECEMBER 1823 AND JANUARY 1825 UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF ENGINEER MAJOR THOMAS BELL AND STONEMASON WILLIAM WILSON, USING LOCALLY QUARRIED FREESTONE. IT IS THE OLDEST BRIDGE IN AUSTRALIA.

DEDICATED BY  
THE INSTITUTION OF ENGINEERS, AUSTRALIA, 1991



THE INSTITUTION OF ENGINEERS, AUSTRALIA  
Tasmania Division

ENGINEERING HERITAGE COMMITTEE

A Report on the Plaquing of the Richmond Bridge

An Historical Engineering Marker having been awarded to the Richmond Bridge in Tasmania, the ceremony of dedication was held on Thursday, 11th April, 1991.

The ceremony was arranged as one of the functions held during the National Engineering Conference in Hobart the same week.

An invitation was extended to the Governor of Tasmania, General Sir Phillip Bennett, A.C., K.B.E., D.S.O. to officially unveil the plaque which he graciously accepted.

The bridge was originally built during 1823 to 1825 under the supervision of officers of the Army Garrison in Tasmania and completed when Lt. Col. Arthur was the Lt. Governor of the Colony. It was thus considered appropriate that the plaque should be unveiled by a military officer i.e. the Governor.

It was decided to hold the ceremony in a park area adjacent to the Richmond Council Chambers rather than at the bridge where traffic would have been a problem however the bridge could be seen from the park only 100 metres or so distant.

A number of invitations were sent to various people connected with the Richmond Council, Department of Roads & Transport, the Military, the Institution of Engineers, National Trust and others.

The Chairman of the Tasmania Division, Mr. J. Collier presented the plaque on behalf of the Institution before a gathering of 60 - 70 people.

The Governor then gave a pertinent address before unveiling the plaque which was followed by responses from the Warden of Richmond Mr. R. Giles and the Secretary of the Department of Roads & Transport, Mr. K. Drew.

The Chairman of the Engineering Heritage Committee, Mr. K. Drewitt acted as Master of Ceremonies.

The invited guests were then treated to afternoon tea provided by the local Council in the hall of the Council buildings.

The ceremony was recorded on video tape and a number of photographs were taken.

Accompanying this report are copies of:

1. The official programme as distributed to guests.
2. An invitation to the ceremony.
3. The arrangements for the Governor.
4. Three photographs of the unveiling.
5. A VHS video tape of the ceremony.

*K. K. Drewitt*

5th March, 1991.

Honourable Mrs. J. Jackson,  
Minister for Roads & Transport,  
1 Murray Street,  
HOBART, TAS. 7000

Dear Mrs. Jackson,

The Institution of Engineers, Australia has arranged a ceremony to present an Historic Engineering Marker commemorating the Richmond Bridge.

This is being done as part of the Institution's National Plaquing Programme and is the first such plaque to be presented in Tasmania.

His Excellency, the Governor of Tasmania, has graciously consented to unveil the plaque with Mr. Robert Isles the Warden of Richmond, responding on behalf of the Municipality.

We invite you to attend this ceremony which will take place at 2.30p.m. on Thursday, 11th April 1991 and to acknowledge the presentation on behalf of your Department.

Yours faithfully,

J.E. COLLIER,  
Chairman,  
Tasmania Division.

The Institution of Engineers,  
TASMANIA DIVISION

HERITAGE COMMITTEE

ACTION

*Plaquing file*

DETAILS

DETAILS





THE INSTITUTION OF ENGINEERS, AUSTRALIA  
NATIONAL ENGINEERING CONFERENCE  
HOBART TASMANIA  
8 - 12 April 1991



15th March, 1991.

The Institution of Engineers, Australia  
TASMANIA DIVISION  
HERITAGE COMMITTEE  
ACTION  
DETAILS

General Sir Phillip Bennett, A.C., K.B.E., D.S.O.,  
Governor of Tasmania,  
Government House,  
HOBART, TAS. 7000

Your Excellency,

Please find attached an outline of the ceremony of unveiling an Historic Engineering Marker at Richmond which you have generously consented to perform.

The Institution's Plaquing Programme and the historical aspects of the Richmond Bridge are also briefly explained for information.

The Ceremony will be held in front of the Millers Cottage at Richmond if the weather is suitable or otherwise in the hall attached to the Council Chambers.

It is expected that approximately 60 invited guests will be present at the function, however, there will no doubt be a number of local residents and visitors also gathered round.

If any further information is desired, please have your Secretary ring Mr. Geoff Harper, on telephone: 34 2399.

Yours faithfully,

J.E. COLLIER,  
Chairman,  
Tasmania Division.

enc.



GOVERNMENT HOUSE  
TASMANIA

20 March 1991

Mr J. E. Collier  
Chairman  
Tasmania Division  
The Institution of Engineers Australia  
2 Davey Street  
HOBART 7000

Dear Mr Collier,

Thank you for your letter of 15 March and I note the arrangements proposed for the Governor's involvement at the Richmond ceremony, set down for Thursday 11 April. I have passed the details to the Aide-de-Camp and have instructed him to liaise with Geoff Harper should there be any problems, however the overall programme looks most appropriate.

Kind regards,



D. J. Pitchford  
OFFICIAL SECRETARY

EXHIBITION  
TASMANIA



4/4/91

Office of the Secretary for  
**ROADS and TRANSPORT**

10 Murray Street, HOBART 7000

GPO Box: 936J Hobart 7001

Telephone: (002) 30 8011  
Fax: (002) 23 2446

File No. B157  
28 March 1991

The Institution of Engineers, Aust  
(TASMANIA DIVISION)  
**ENGINEERING HERITAGE COMMITTEE**

DATE RECEIVED 4/4/91

ACTION

DETAILS

Mr K C Drewitt  
Chairman  
Engineering Heritage Committee  
The Institution of Engineers, Australia  
2 Davey Street  
HOBART TAS 7000

Dear Sir

Richmond Bridge  
Plaque Unveiling - 11 April 1991

Thank you for your letter of 14 February 1991. The Minister for Roads and Transport, the Hon Judy Jackson regrets that she will be unable to attend, but has asked me to represent her on that occasion.

The final location of the plaque is under Ministerial consideration, and you will be notified further of the Minister's decision.

Yours faithfully

  
K W Drew  
SECRETARY

*Incorporating  
Divisions of*

**ROADS**  
10 Murray Street  
HOBART 7000

**TRANSPORT**  
1 Collins Street  
HOBART 7000

**METRO**  
212 Main Road  
MOONAH 7009



File: CF 5-50  
Richmond ~~Highway~~ BRIDGE  
20 April 1995

Office of the Secretary for ACTION

ROADS and TRANSPORT

10 Murray Street, HOBART 7000

The Institution of Engineers, Aust (TASMANIA DIVISION)	
ENGINEERING HERITAGE COMMITTEE	
DATE RECEIVED	11/4/91
	Crek. with 11/4/91.

GPO Box: 936J Hobart 7001

Telephone: (002) 30 8011

Fax: (002) 23 2446

File No. B157  
3 April 1991

Mr K C Drewitt  
Chairman  
Engineering Heritage Committee  
The Institution of Engineers, Australia  
2 Davey Street  
HOBART TAS 7000

Dear Sir

Richmond Bridge  
Plaque Unveiling - 11 April 1991

Further to my letter of 28 March 1991, a decision has now been made for the permanent location of the plaque. The position which you proposed on the downstream parapet, western end, of the Bridge is considered most appropriate, and is accordingly approved.

Arrangements for the fixing of the plaque to the Bridge will be made by DRT, and our Asset Management Engineer (Bridges), Mr Rod McGee, (Phone (002) 30 3514) will contact you further in this regard.

Yours faithfully



K W Drew  
SECRETARY

Incorporating  
Divisions of

**ROADS**  
10 Murray Street  
HOBART 7000

**TRANSPORT**  
1 Collins Street  
HOBART 7000

**METRO**  
212 Main Road  
MOONAH 7009

IF EVERY PAGE IS NOT RECEIVED,  
PLEASE IMMEDIATELY TELEPHONE  
(002) 34 2611



GOVERNMENT HOUSE  
HOBART  
TASMANIA

FROM: Lieutenant Peter Bowers, RAN, Aide-de-Camp

A No: (002) 34 2556

TELEPHONE No: (002) 34 2611

TO: Mr Keith Drewitt, Chairman, Heritage  
Committee

FAX No: 34 2216

TELEPHONE No: 342 599

MESSAGE: Mr Drewitt,

Please find attached an Event Sheet for  
His Excellency's unveiling of the Richmond  
Bridge plaque. If wet weather, the  
ceremony will be held in Richmond Hall.  
If you have any comments, please  
contact me.

W 8/4

2 pages follow.



GOVERNMENT HOUSE  
TASMANIA

E V E N T S H E E T

IT WOULD BE APPRECIATED IF ARRANGEMENTS  
FOR THE FUNCTION ARE NOT ALTERED WITHOUT  
FURTHER REFERENCE TO GOVERNMENT HOUSE.



EVENT SHEET  
INSTITUTION OF ENGINEERS AUSTRALIA - UNVEILING OF PLAQUE  
MILLERS COTTAGE, RICHMOND  
THURSDAY 11 APRIL 1991

ATTENDANCE : His Excellency General Sir Phillip Bennett, AC,  
KBE, DSO.  
Lieutenant Peter Bowers, ADC.

TIMINGS :

2.40 pm ARRIVE Millers Cottage.

MET BY :  
Mr Jim Collier.

PRESENTATIONS  
Mr Keith Drewitt.  
Cr Robert Giles.  
Mr Keith Drew.

MOVE TO seating.

- 1. HE
- 2. Mr Collier
- 3. Mr Drew
- 4. Mr Giles
- 5. Mr Drewitt
- 6. ADC

4    2    3    5



2.45 pm Mr Collier welcomes guests and presents plaque to the Municipality.

Mr Drewitt invites His Excellency to unveil the plaque.

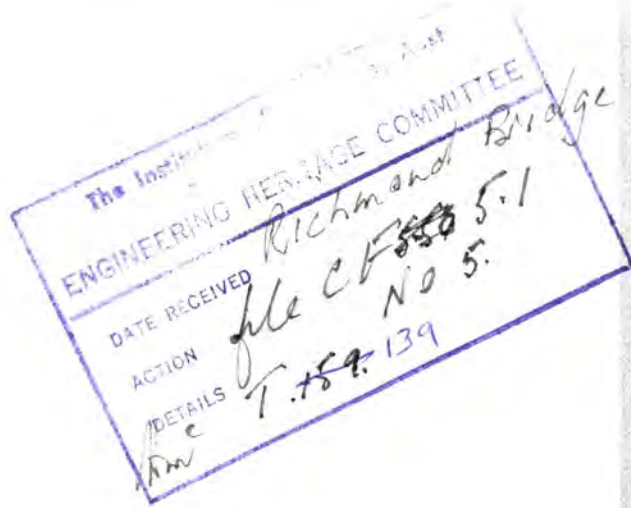
2.55 pm His Excellency speaks (4 mins) and unveils plaque.

Mr Giles speaks.  
Mr Drew speaks.  
Mr Drewitt announces His Excellency's departure.  
His Excellency is escorted to car by Mr Collier.

3.15 pm DEPART Richmond.

26th April, 1991

The Council Clerk,  
Municipality of Richmond,  
RICHMOND, Tas. 7025



The  
Institution  
of  
Engineers,  
Australia

Tasmania Division  
Royal Engineers Buildi  
2 Davey Street  
GPO Box 171  
Hobart TAS 7001  
Phone (002) 34 2399  
ENGINEERING  
HERITAGE  
COMMITTEE

Dear Mr Richardson,

Would you please express our appreciation to the Warden and Councillors for the Council's ready co-operation in the recent function associated with the presentation of the Historic Marker for the Bridge.

The afternoon tea provided after the ceremony was excellent and greatly appreciated by all in attendance.

Once again our thanks to all concerned.

Yours faithfully,

**K.C. DREWITT,**  
Chairman,  
Heritage Committee



The Chairman of the Tasmanian Division of  
**THE INSTITUTION OF ENGINEERS, AUSTRALIA**  
and the Chairman and Members of the  
Engineering Heritage Committee  
cordially invite



*approx 80 guests invited. Total attendance*

to attend a ceremony at RICHMOND  
on Thursday 11th April, 1991 at 2.45 p.m.  
to commemorate

**THE RICHMOND BRIDGE**  
with the unveiling of an  
**HISTORIC ENGINEERING MARKER**  
by His Excellency, The Governor of Tasmania  
General Sir Phillip Bennett AC, KBE, DSO.

The Ceremony will be held  
on the grassed area adjacent to the Millers Cottage

*approx 100*  
*Arr*  
*30/3/95*

R.S.V.P. by Thursday 4th April, 1991  
Tel: 34 2399

Afternoon tea will be  
served after the Ceremony



The Chairman of the Tasm  
**THE INSTITUTION OF ENGI**  
and the Chairman and Members of the  
Engineering Heritage Committee  
cordially invite

to attend a ceremony at RICHMOND  
on Thursday 11th April, 1991 at 2.45 p.m.  
to commemorate

**THE RICHMOND BRIDGE**  
with the unveiling of an  
**HISTORIC ENGINEERING MARKER**  
by His Excellency, The Governor of Tasmania  
General Sir Phillip Bennett AC, KBE, DSO.

The Ceremony will be held  
on the grassed area adjacent to the Millers Cottage

R.S.V.P. by Thursday 4th April, 1991  
Tel: 34 2399

Afternoon tea will be  
served after the Ceremony



Acceptances

- Governor & ADC
- Col. Matthey
- Maj. Opie
- Mr. G. Brown Nat. Trust
- Dr. Gregg Museum
- Bert Guin ex PWD
- Elizabeth Jones
- Dr & Mrs Mike Sargent
- Prof. Mrs. Ray Whitmore
- Mr. Ivan Gaggia - Roads & Transport
- Mr. K. Drew - Secretary - Dept. Roads & Transport
- Mr. G. Roberts - Roads & Transport
- Mr & Mrs J. Collier
- ~~Prof. M. I. Atkinson~~
- Mr. C. Johnstone
- Mr & Mrs K. Drewitt
- Mr. H. McTie
- Mr. A. Knight
- Mr. P. Crawford
- Mr & Mrs D. Keenan
- Mr. M. Taylor
- Mr. H. Gilbert
- Mrs R. Jones - Richmond Historical Society
- Mr & Mrs E. Perry
- Mr & Mrs T. Hughes
- Mr. R. Foster
- Mr. Colin Bevan
- Mr. Robert Giles
- Mr. Colin Howlett
- Mrs Pauline Conroy
- Dr. Fergus Mitchell

HERITAGE COMMITTEE

RECEIVED April 1991

ACTION Richmond Bk - The CF

DETAILS Plaque Ceremony 5.1.

11 April 1991 T159

Home 139

~~Mr. Tony Pether - Secretary - Dept. Parks & Heritage~~

Mr. Gary Richardson.





## HISTORICAL NOTE

192

HISTORICAL RECORDS OF AUSTRALIA.

1886.  
22 April.

LIEUT.-GOVERNOR ARTHUR TO EARL BATHURST.  
(Despatch No. 22; acknowledged by Earl Bathurst, 2nd December, 1826.)  
Government House, Van Diemen's Land.

My Lord,

22 April, 1826.

I have the honor to bring under the consideration of Your Lordship the urgent necessity that exists for inducing a Gentleman of talent and respectability to proceed to this Colony to undertake the duties of Civil Engineer and Mineralogist.

General Darling acquainted me with Your Lordship's Instructions that Mr. Busby should proceed to this Island if he could be spared, but His Excellency has informed me it is not possible from the necessity of Mr. Busby's presence in New South Wales to attend to the various operations in which he is engaged.

Colonel Sorell has already submitted to Your Lordship that no part of this Island has yet been scientifically examined, and the nature of its Minerals, its Geology and its Native Productions are yet nearly, if not wholly, unknown. But the assistance of a Civil Engineer is a point of still greater importance to which I am most anxious to draw Your Lordship's attention, for there is not a man of experience or science in the Island to whom I can refer for professional information, or to whom I can intrust the execution of any undertaking of magnitude or importance.

A striking instance of the total absence of this description of Ability has been sadly ascertained in the construction of a Stone Bridge over the Coal River, which was commenced by my Predecessor, and was so far advanced that I was compelled to proceed with it. But it had scarcely been completed when a report was made of the necessity of immediate steps being taken to secure it from falling, the Piers having considerably sunk.

The expense of Public Money on a fair Estimate of the Labour upon this Bridge could not have been less than £2,000, and the imprudence of commencing other important operations of the same nature without some additional imported knowledge would involve me in much responsibility.

I therefore trust Your Lordship will direct a suitable person to be employed and sent out to this Colony without delay as Mineralogist and Civil Engineer; in one single Year a scientific Man would abundantly save to the Public any reasonable Salary Your Lordship may think proper to allow.

I have, &c.,

GEO. ARTHUR.

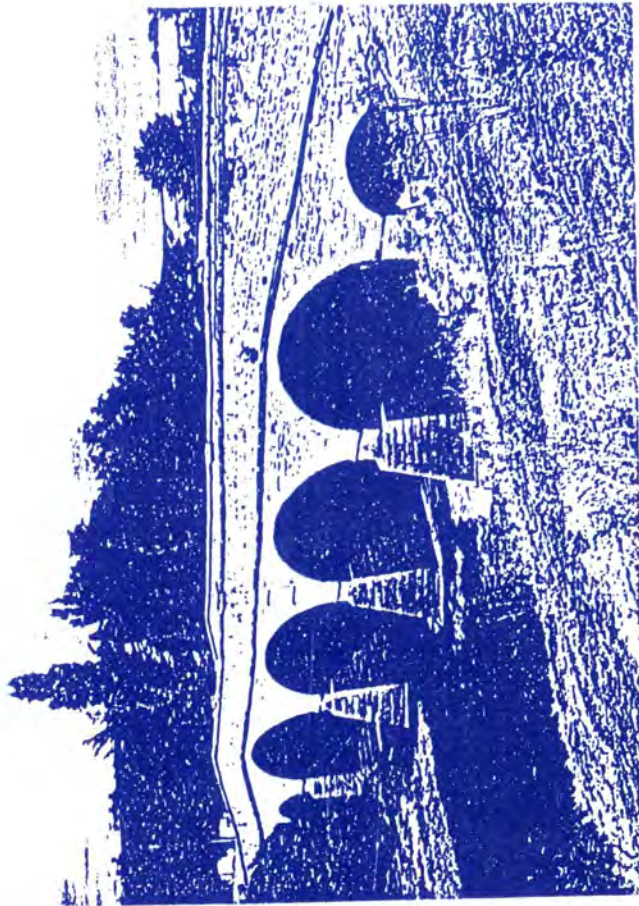
THE INSTITUTION OF ENGINEERS, AUSTRALIA

Official Ceremony  
for the unveiling of an

HISTORICAL ENGINEERING MARKER

THE RICHMOND BRIDGE

1823 - 1825





## **RICHMOND BRIDGE**

**Constructed 1823 - 1825**

In 1820 a Royal Commissioner Mr. John Thomas Bigge was sent from England to report on the state of affairs in the Colony.

Amongst other things he recommended that a bridge be built over the Coal River to enable traffic to proceed to and from the East Coast during times of flood.

Building of the bridge commenced in December 1823 employing convict labour and was completed in January 1825. Originally known as Bigges Bridge the total cost was put at £2,000.

It is now the oldest masonry bridge in Australia still in use.

### **Australian Engineering Plaquing Programme**

The A.E.P.P. has been developed as a means of giving deserved public recognition to historic engineering works and sites. Programmes of this kind have been running in U.S.A. and U.K. for many years. A similar programme was adopted by the Institution of Engineers, Australia in 1985.

The Richmond Bridge HEM is the first such plaque to be presented in Tasmania.

**Programme for the Ceremony to be held at Richmond on Thursday, 11th April, 1991 at 2.45 p.m.**

### **Master of Ceremonies**

**Mr. Keith Drewitt *M.I.E. Aust.***

Chairman of Tasmania Division Engineering Heritage Committee

### **Welcoming Address and Presentation**

**Mr. Jim Collier *F.I.E. Aust.***

Chairman of the Tasmania Division, The Institution of Engineers, Australia

### **Unveiling of Historical Engineering Marker**

**His Excellency General Sir Phillip Bennett *A.C. KBE, DSO***

The Governor of Tasmania

### **Responses:**

**Mr. Robert Giles**

Warden of the Municipality of Richmond

**Mr. Keith Drew**

Secretary of the Department of Roads and Transport

### **Conclusion**

**Mr. Keith Drewitt *M.I.E. Aust.***



Richmond  
Bridge  
Plaque  
Ceremony  
I.E.A. R/11  
S.E. Mung  
11/4/91



**HISTORIC ENGINEERING  
MARKER**  
RICHMOND BRIDGE

THIS FINE EXAMPLE OF EARLY COLONIAL BRIDGE  
ENGINEERING WAS BUILT TO PROVIDE A RELIABLE ALL-  
WEATHER CROSSING OF THE COAL RIVER. ORIGINALLY  
NAMED AFTER COMMISSIONER JOHN BIGGE, IT WAS  
CONSTRUCTED BY CONVICT LABOUR BETWEEN  
DECEMBER 1823 AND JANUARY 1825 UNDER THE  
SUPERVISION OF ENGINEER MAJOR THOMAS BELL AND  
STONEMASON WILLIAM WILSON, USING LEGALLY  
QUARRIED FREESTONE. IT IS THE OLDEST BRIDGE IN  
AUSTRALIA.

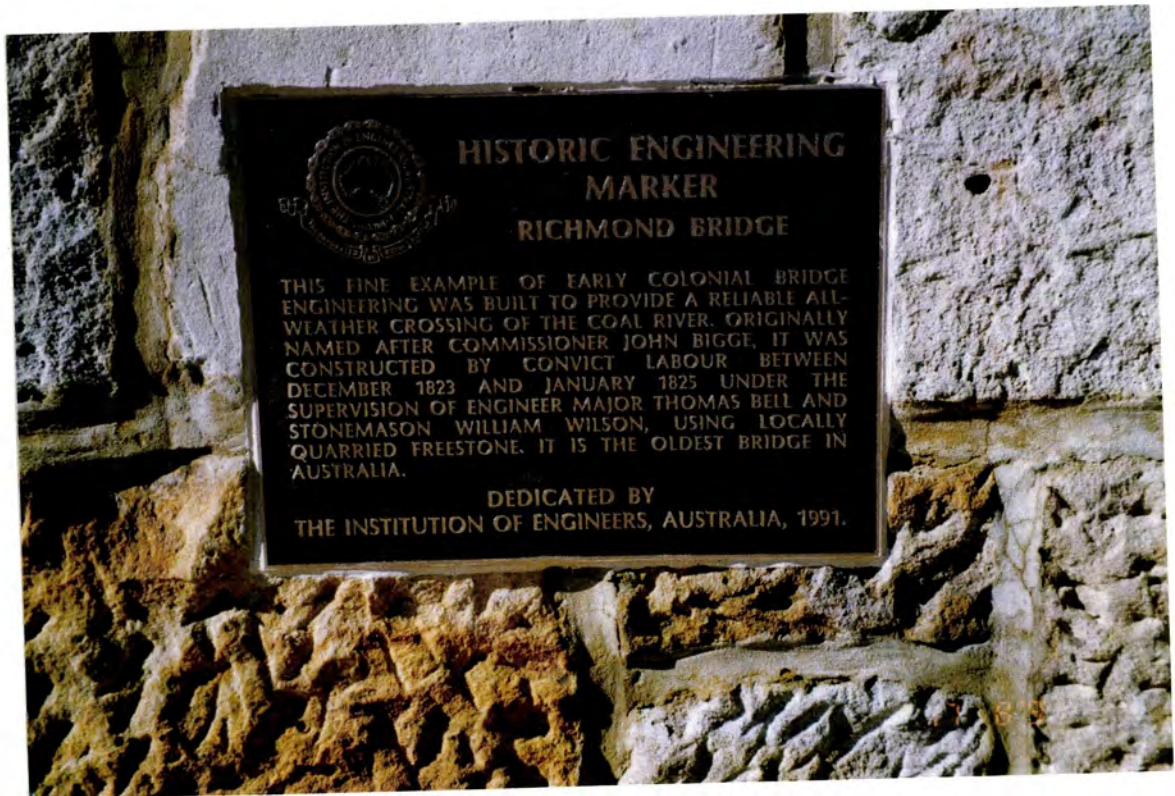
DEDICATED BY  
THE INSTITUTION OF ENGINEERS, AUSTRALIA, 1991.







RICHMOND BRIDGE  
PLAQUE ON WEST WING WALL  
17-8-91 WDF  
DEDICATED 11-4-91











Office of the Secretary for  
**ROADS and TRANSPORT**

10 Murray Street, HOBART 7000

GPO Box: 936J Hobart 7001

Telephone: (002) 30 8011

Fax: (002) 23 2446

File No. B157  
5 September 1991

Mr K C Drewitt  
Chairman  
Engineering Heritage Committee  
The Institution of Engineers Australia  
Tasmania Division  
GPO Box 171  
HOBART Tas 7001

Dear Mr Drewitt

Thank you for your letter and the photographs of 22 August 1991 regarding the historical engineering marker that was installed on the bridge by the Institution.

As requested, I am please to enclose a complimentary copy of "Convicts and Carriageways" for the Institution's Library.

Yours sincerely

K W Drew  
SECRETARY

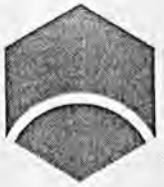
*ack 19/9/91*

*Incorporating  
Divisions of*

**ROADS**  
10 Murray Street  
HOBART 7000

**TRANSPORT**  
1 Collins Street  
HOBART 7000

**METRO**  
212 Main Road  
MOONAH 7009



The  
Institution  
of  
Engineers,  
Australia

Tasmania Division  
Royal Engineers Building  
2 Davey Street  
GPO Box 171  
Hobart TAS 7001  
Phone (002) 34 2399

22nd August, 1991

The Secretary,  
Department of Roads and Transport,  
Murray Street,  
HOBART, Tas. 7000

Dear Mr Drew,

RICHMOND BRIDGE

We have observed with pleasure the mounting of the Historical Engineering Marker on the Richmond Bridge and thank your Department for its co-operation in doing this.

The enclosed photographs illustrate the mounted plaque on the wing wall for your personal information.

As we are steadily building up a library of information relating to matters of Engineering Heritage as well as detailed documentation on specific projects, I wonder if it is too much to ask if you could make available a copy of "Convicts and Carriageways" which contains much historic information and which would be very useful for reference in our work.

Yours faithfully,

*K.C. Drewitt*

K.C. DREWITT,  
Chairman,  
Engineering Heritage Committee

*Reply 5/9/91  
with complimentary copy  
"Convicts & Carriageways"*