

South
Australian
Heritage
Act
1978-80

HERITAGE SURVEY

10209

ITEM IDENTIFICATION SHEET

PROJECT
HERITAGE SURVEY REGION 8

Item Ref. No. 16

ITEM NAME: Road Bridge

Former or other Undalya Bridge

Office Use

ITEM No.

DOCKET No.

HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

Undalya Bridge was built in 1879-1880 and crosses the River Wakefield. It is a Bow string truss type girder bridge with top bracing and masonry abutment. The builder (steel structure) was J. Hooker, supplied by Hopkins Co. (Middlesbro). There are two single bowstring trusses. (Designed in 1879).

The stone abutments built by Auburn mason Joseph Meller predate the steel structure.

Alterations were made in 1889 and 1929. The abutment was also underpinned in 1889.

This was the longest single span (37 metres) road bridge of its day in South Australia. It remains a good example of a bow string bridge and the "basket handle" bracing is unique. The bridge is also a landmark in the picturesque River Wakefield valley.

LOCATION
Address

Town Undalya

Postcode

Section 357

Hundred Upper Wakefield

County Stanley

L.G.A. Saddleworth & Auburn

S.H.P. Region 8

A.M.G. Ref. 6629-IV

54 28690 622720

SUBJECT

4.7

4.10

PERIOD

State

Study Area
1869-84

REFERENCES

National Trust, 2506;
Inst. of Engineers, 209;
Jensen, Colonial architecture..., p.418;
Moyle, The Wakefield..., p.100;
S.A. Highways Dept. 121

Verbal Dennis Cumming

Archival photographs S.A.A. B31359 (c.1908)

TYPE OF ITEM

LAND Natural feature ☐

Historical site ☐

Historical Gdn. ☐

BUILDING ☐

STRUCTURE ☒

PHYSICAL CONDITION ☐

STATUS

Reg. of State Her. Items

Reg. ☐ Interim L ☐

Nominated ☐

National Estate

Reg. ☐ Proposed L ☐

National Trust

CL ☒ RL ☐ File ☐

Other

S.A. Highways Dept. ☒

Instit. of Engineers ☒

RECOMMENDATION

(A) State ☒ (B) Local ☐

PREPARED BY

HERITAGE INVESTIGATIONS

Date: 1982

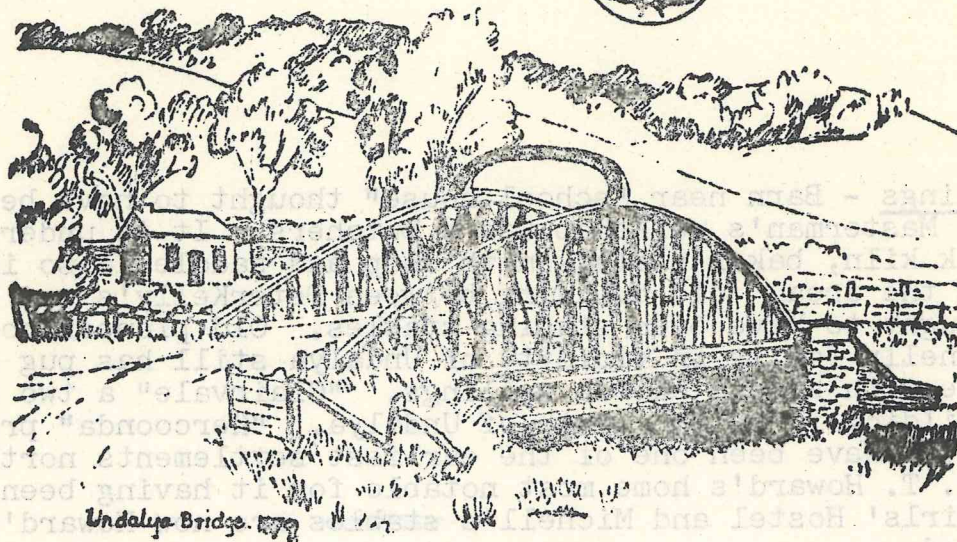
PHOTOGRAPH

Film No. 245

Negative No. 8

Direction of view to N





"BACK TO UNDALYA"

30th December 1979

The "Basket Bridge", Undalya, classified by the National Trust in 1979, is now 100 years old, being opened early in 1879. In April 1877 the Midland Road Board decided to erect a new bridge replacing the one constructed in 1855. A tender by J. Hooker was accepted in June of the same year. In less than two years from the decision to erect a new iron bridge it was officially opened for use. The chairman of the board, Mr. H. T. Morris (manager of Anlaby Station) and local Commissioner, John Bowden, attended "having formally opened the new bridge at Undalya". Descendants of John Bowden had the story passed down to them that Mrs. Bowden cut the ribbon, thus opening the bridge.

The structure is of a single span of 120 ft., having the honour of once being the biggest one-span bridge in S.A.

Wool-washing site can still be seen downstream from the Basket Bridge. There were three wool-washers at Undalya, but the most notable was G.H. Michell, who was the founder of the company G.H. Michell & Sons (Aust) Ltd. This firm had its beginnings as a one man business, washing wool by hand, after which it was dried on racks in the sun, packed in bales and taken to Adelaide for sale.

Roman Catholic Cemetery Patrick Michael Ryan, who discovered the copper that was the start of the Moonta mine in 1861, buried here. On the hill a former prominent landmark stood - the church of St. Patrick, which was built in 1866, used until 1915 and later demolished. The bell from this church is now in the Auburn Uniting Church replacing a cracked one. A convent school was on the western side of the church.

Two hotels One hotel was west of the church and the convent, being across the road. Only rubble visible today. Part of Peter Kelly's house was the other hotel, which had additions to the front after it ceased to be an hotel. A room at the northern rear of this building was used for many years as a Post Office when mail was collected from the Undalya siding by horseback.

Bible Christian Chapel built 1859. Used also as a school until 1940. Now a pottery.

Other buildings - Barn near "school house" thought to have been jewellers. Masterman's workshop was a butchers. It is understood that a brick kiln, baker's blacksmith shop and saddler also in business in the area. Old building between Peter Kelly's and Robinson's cottage thought to have been staging stables. Old pioneer cottage of the Donnelly family in vicinity of Undalya still has pug and pine visible with strong calico ceilings. "Clairvale" a two storey gracious building is to the south of Undalya. "Kercoonda" property was thought to have been one of the earliest settlements north of Gawler. Mr. T. Howard's home most notable for it having been the Land Army Girls' Hostel and Michell's ~~stables~~ are now Howard's shearing shed.

Hundreds of fruit trees and vines were growing in and around Undalya Fruit drying sheds built. Tennis Club formed in 1923 and courts on site of former vineyard.

Landslide on hill occurred since stone and gravel were used for construction of bitumen highway.