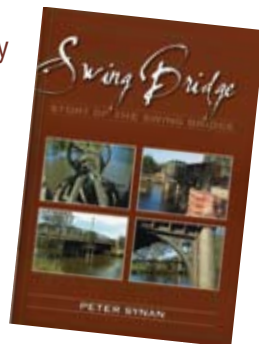


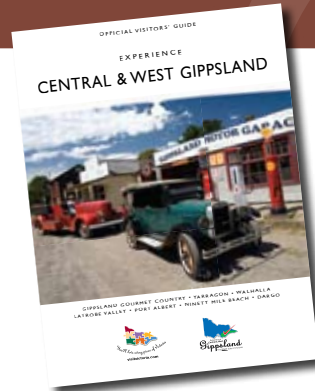
Interesting facts about the National Trust classified Swing Bridge

- It is the oldest surviving swing bridge in Australia.
- It is regarded as one of the foremost engineering wonders in Gippsland.
- Without the Swing Bridge there would not have been a Port of Sale.
- Until recently, the Swing Bridge was last publicly opened over thirty years ago.
- The Swing Bridge Project (road re-alignment & bridge restoration) cost \$15.6m.
- In 1909 Sale hotelkeeper Mrs MJ Dinneen offered a gold medal for the best dive off the Swing Bridge.
- Sports at the Swing Bridge were important social occasions.
- Bridgekeeper Tom Kivlighon fixed lamps on the bridge, red for closed, green for open.
- Speed was a contributing factor to many of the accidents on the Swing Bridge with some cars even plummeting into the river.
- The bridge is operated & maintained by the Wellington Shire Council.



For current opening times call the Wellington Visitor Information Centre 1800 677 520

Excerpts taken from Peter Synan's book 'Swing Bridge, story of the Swing Bridge' Available at local Book stores



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"The Heart of Gippsland"

Cover: National Trust classified historic Swing Bridge - Longford

Discover The National Trust classified Swing Bridge A Hidden Treasure of Wellington Shire

DESIGN: TIMOTHY/SWNETSPACE/NETJAU



The Heart of Gippsland





Discover the National Trust classified Swing Bridge

This unique bridge, designed to swing open for shipping to and from the Port of Sale enabled the waterways of the Gippsland Lakes to be trafficked with cargo and passengers. The bridge is built of iron construction with one long span mounted on cylindrical columns.

At the junction of the Thomson and Latrobe Rivers is located a spectacular, nineteenth century Swing Bridge. This unique bridge, designed to swing open for shipping to and from the Port of Sale, enabled Sale to become a major inland port. The bridge, built of cast iron cylinders and fittings and wrought iron trusses is 61 metres long, with a central swing span of almost 46 metres.



Steamer Omeo, passing through opened bridge



Reflections of Swing Bridge



Latrobe Wharf from steamer Dargo

To view this National Trust classified bridge, take a journey along Swing Bridge Drive, off the South Gippsland Highway, just a short distance south of Sale. This drive takes in the extensive wetlands which are internationally recognised as a sanctuary for migratory birds. A sunrise over the Sale Game Refuge wetlands is a photographer's dream.



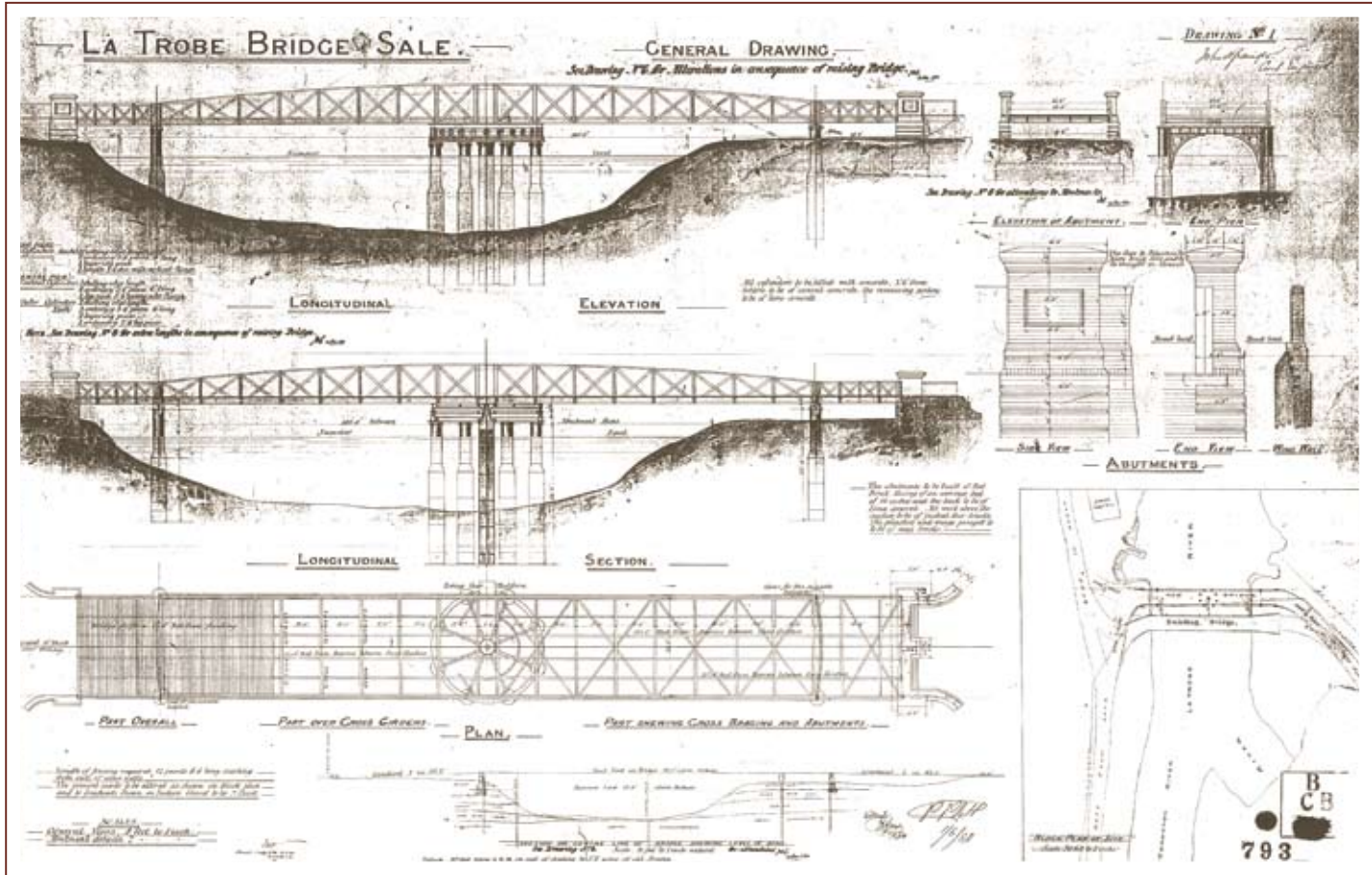
Steamer Omeo passing by bridgekeeper's cottage

The Swing Bridge, originally called the La Trobe Bridge, was built 1880-1883 by contractor Peter Platt to a John Grainger design. Grainger was the father of celebrated Australian pianist and composer Percy Grainger. This bridge is the oldest surviving, intact, Swing Bridge in Australia. It can still be swung manually as of old.



Tom Kivlighan swinging the bridge in the 1920s

One of the early bridgekeepers was a woman, Eliza Ball, who had no trouble in swinging the bridge, even though its weight is said to be 130 tonnes. The last bridgekeeper, Tom Kivlighan, was also well known for his plaiting skills. Kivlighan might be summoned, day or night, to open the bridge, by the whistle of an approaching ship. Each day he opened the bridge for the steamers *Omeo* and *Dargo*. Other regular traders were the *Queenscliff*, which visited weekly from Melbourne, and the Gippsland Lakes freighter *Burrabogie*.



Plan drawing of Swing Bridge with specifications. Signed by contractor Peter Platt, 1/6/1880

When the bridge was completed, shipping could only go as far as The Willows Jetty, leaving a transport gap of about 2 kilometres into Sale. This prompted the building of a canal, enabling shipping to travel right into the town so that cargo could be transferred directly to rail via the wharf railway line.

The Sale Canal was built in three stages, 1886 -1890. Much of the work was done by hand with pick, shovel and wheelbarrow. Horse-drawn scoops, centrifugal pumps and a dredge were also used.

This historic bridge has now been fully restored to its original operating condition. It is now a pedestrian bridge, as highway traffic uses a new bridge on a realigned section of the South Gippsland Highway.

It is a wonderful experience to visit this Swing Bridge, especially at the times each week when it is swung open. Contact the Wellington Visitor Information Centre - Sale on **1800 677 520** for current bridge opening times.