



Devine's Hill roadway

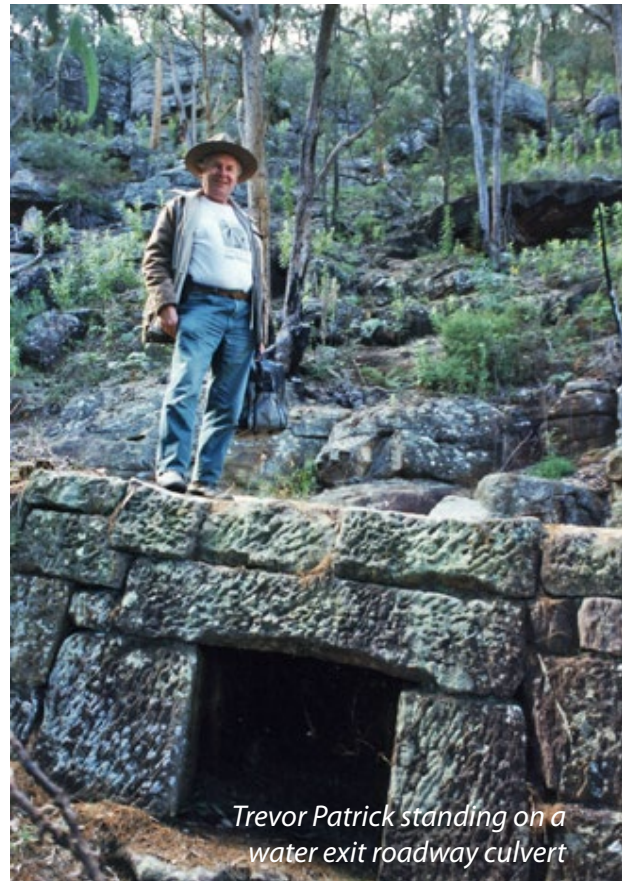


Graceful curve of convict roadway





One of the many stone buttresses



Trevor Patrick standing on a water exit roadway culvert

DEVINES HILL

A discovery walk that will amaze you.

by Trevor Patrick



Come on the wonderful drive along the Old Northern Road (formerly Great Northern Road) from Baulkham Hills to Wisemans Ferry on the Hawkesbury River.

At the park near the ferry ramp is a monument to the convicts who built the

road. The design also depicts the heritage of the riverboats that once sailed these waters.

Cross the river on the oldest ferry crossing in Australia, turn left a few hundred metres along the road and park at the sandstone entrance to Devines Hill walk. Make sure you bring a picnic lunch, water, hat and wear comfy shoes.

The high quality stonework you are about to see was carried out under supervision of Assistant Surveyor Percy Simpson between 1828 and 1832. Simpson was an engineer who knew the latest European road construction techniques. Culverts built beneath the road ensured flash flooding did not undermine the work.

Up to 700 convicts worked on the Road at any one time – clearing timber, digging drains. Sandstone was quarried from near the Road, using jumper bars and gunpowder.

The stone was then cut to shape and placed into position, forming fine masonry walls.

Continued overleaf





Convict trail ferry marker



Convict carving



Convict carving - guard profile

No mortar was used to hold the stones together. Food rations were limited yet great care was given to the men. Each road gang carried a medicine chest with creams to treat rough skin (due to handling harsh sandstone) and laxatives such as castor oil for constipation due to absence of fresh fruits and vegetables in their diet.

Marvel at the craftsmen's skill at building sandstone supports of the road which have been free standing for over 185 years.

What is the Great North Road?

Extending north from Sydney to the Hunter Valley, the Convict Trail follows the route of the 240km Great North Road, built between 1826 and 1836. Most of this road continues to be used today, offering an alternative scenic route between Sydney and the Hunter, where one can explore the brilliant engineering works created by hundreds of convicts – many working in leg-irons.

Relics such as stone retaining walls, wharves, culverts, bridges and buttresses can still be seen along the entire length of the Great North Road – in Sydney suburbs like Epping and Gladesville, at Wisemans Ferry or Wollombi, Bucketty or Broke, or when walking in Dharug and Yengo National Parks.

The Devines Hill and Finches Line part of the Great North Road is one of the 11 Australian Convict Sites that are World Heritage Listed.

Further reading: www.convicttrail.org

More on Parramatta at www.hillstory.com.au

Trevor Patrick Author "In Search of the Pennant Hills" the award-winning book of the three settlements of the Hills District of northern Sydney.

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Female Factory Exhibition

