

THE CONVICT TRAIL PROJECT



The Convict Trail Project is a community based project with an interest and role in the conservation, management and promotion of the Great North Road. The project brings together community groups, State Government agencies and local Councils including both Baulkham Hills and Hornsby Shire Councils.

At certain locations along the length of the Road, Convict Trail markers offer interpretation and information for visitors. There are also various opportunities to picnic, walk, cycle and explore parts of the Road.

More detailed information is included in 'Explore the Convict Trail - Great North Road' available for a small fee from the Convict Trail Project local libraries, Visitor Centres and some retail outlets in Wisemans Ferry.

You can also find out details about the Convict Trail and the surrounding area including maps at:

www.convictrail.org

or

www.thehawkesbury.com.au



MORE INFORMATION

THE CONVICT TRAIL PROJECT

PO Box 96, Wahroonga NSW 2076.

Web: www.convictrail.org

Email: convictrail@bigpond.com

HILLS VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE

656B Old Northern Road, Dural.

Ph: 02 9651 4411 / 1800 644 557

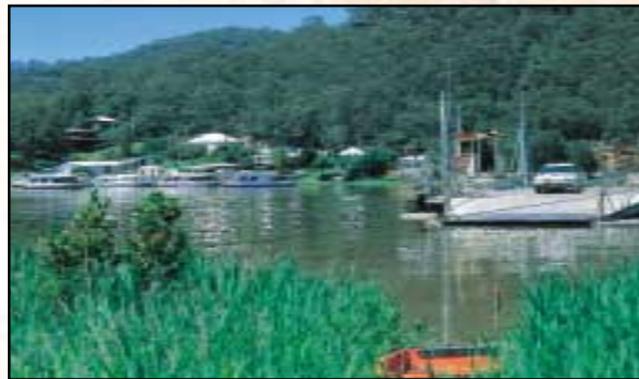
Web: www.thehawkesbury.com.au

HORNSBY VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE

28-44 George Street, Hornsby.

Ph: 9847 6683

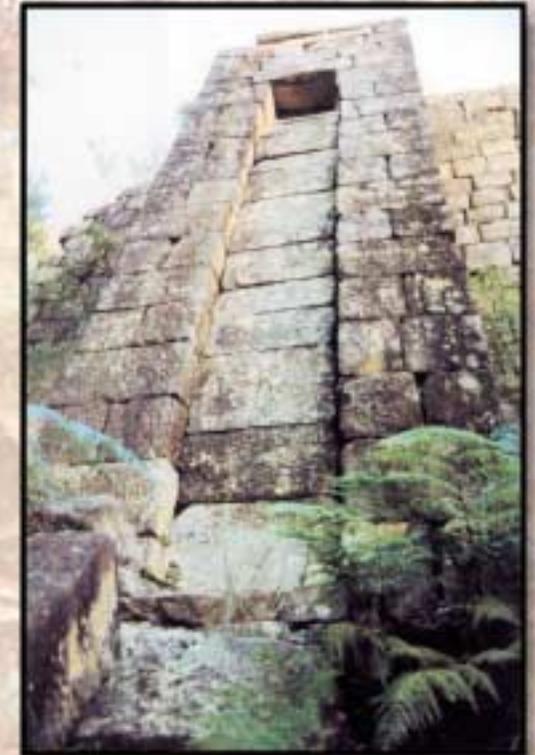
Web: www.thehawkesbury.com.au



Some of the sites referred to in this brochure feature steep slopes and are designed for people who bushwalk regularly. Visitors to these sites are encouraged to take utmost care both for your personal safety and to maintain the historical integrity of the sites. Footwear suitable for bushwalking and climbing should be worn. Visitors with heart or breathing problems should avoid these sites.

The contents of this publication have been compiled in good faith but are published without responsibility in law or otherwise for their accuracy and without any assumption of duty of care by Baulkham Hills Shire Council, Hornsby Shire Council or the Convict Trail Project.

THE CONVICT TRAIL



The Great North Road
through the Shires
of Baulkham Hills and Hornsby



WHAT IS IT?

The Great North Road is a 240km convict-built masterpiece constructed between 1826 and 1836 to provide an overland route from Sydney to Newcastle and the Hunter Valley. It remains one of the most impressive engineering feats of Australia's convict era. Much of the road has since become a secondary road but still remains an important route today. It is also popular as a scenic drive for tourists and those who wish to explore remnant sections of the road by walking or cycling.

WHERE IS IT?

Today, the Great North Road traverses a variety of cultural and natural landscapes, from the suburban streets of inner Sydney to the ridges, valleys and plains of Greater Sydney and north towards the Hunter.

Through the Shires of Baulkham Hills and Hornsby, Old Northern Road and New Line Road follow much of the original line of the Great North Road. Over time, alternate routes have replaced some sections of the Road that passed along remote and desolate ridges.

WHO BUILT IT?

A route was surveyed in 1825 and Governor Darling assigned re-offending convicts to begin construction under the supervision of Surveyor General Thomas Mitchell. Living conditions were harsh, work was labour-intensive and the equipment crude. The many bridges, complex drainage systems and walls that remain are a monument to the labour of the men that built them and represent an important era in the development of Sydney and the Nation.

WHY WAS IT BUILT?

The road was constructed during a period of colonial expansion as it became necessary to link settlers in the Hunter Valley with Sydney via an overland route. Prior to this, passenger travel and transportation of goods was conducted via ship. The road also facilitated further expansion of Sydney and provided greater access to agricultural areas, especially within the Lower Hawkesbury.

THE GREAT NORTH ROAD - Sydney to The Hawkesbury



SITES OF INTEREST – in and around Baulkham Hills and Hornsby Shires.

1. Devlins Creek Stone Causeway, Epping

The road crossed Devlins Creek via a convict-built causeway dating back to 1828, now located under the M2 bus flyover off Beecroft Rd. A Convict Trail marker is located at the side of Beecroft Rd.

2. Pyes Creek Bridge, Woodlark Place, Cherrybrook

The remains of a small stone and timber single span bridge are evident as well as a small quarry 15m to the north of the bridge. A Convict Trail marker is located in the Pyes Creek Bushland Reserve at the end of Woodlark Place.

3. Elouera Estate, early pavement and drains, Dural

Convict hewn rock faces, early pavement and stone gutters remain on the original line of New Line Road. A Convict Trail marker is located at the end of Daintree Place, where stairs provide access to the Road.

4. Hawkins Lookout, Old Northern Road, Wisemans Ferry

Accessible from Old Northern Road, the lookout provides brilliant views over the Hawkesbury River and was one of the most difficult sections of the Road to build. A Convict Trail marker is located within the lookout and picnic tables are provided.

5. Wisemans Ferry Park Reserve

Wisemans Ferry is an historic town captured in time. It features Australia's oldest ferry service, operating since 1827, and the original ferry masters home, now the historic Wisemans Ferry Hotel. A Convict Trail marker is located within the Reserve opposite the ferry crossing, which is also a beautiful spot to enjoy a picnic.

6. Devines Hill, Dharug National Park, Wisemans Ferry

Just across the historic ferry crossing to the north are some of the most visible sections of the The Great North Road. Large buttresses, stone culverts and large sandstone walls (some carved with the initials of convicts) are visible for walkers or cyclists. Signs along the trail explain this impressive engineering structure and the hardships of those who built it.