

**Place name** Latrobe River Swing Bridge and precinct

**Survey Date:** 4/07/2004

**Other name**

**Id:** 1173

**Street** South Gippsland Highway

**Last Update** 4/10/2004

**Locality** Sale

**Postcode**

**Official Locality**

**Property No** HO61

**Local Government Area** Wellington Shire

**Property Info**

**Precinct:** Not in precinct

**Easting** 507600

**Northing** 577700

**Map** 8321-4-3

**Workshop number** Primary - S1/23

**Workshop votes**

**Field survey number**

**Community priority**

**Designer** John Grainger, engineer

**Builder**

**Ownership**

**Built Date** 1880

**Change Date**

**Description** The Swing Bridge crosses the Latrobe River some three miles south of Sale, a short distance from the confluence with the Thomson River. The bridge has a swing span of 45 metres. The central section of the bridge can be rotated horizontally to allow river traffic to pass either side. The pier is supported by nine cast iron cylindrical columns approximately one metre in diameter, eight cylinders supporting the circular roll bath with a central pier acting as a pivot. (1) (2)

Fine example of swing bridge design in a remarkably good state of preservation. Exemplifies a bridge design to meet the conditions where water way and road traffic cross at approximately the same level. Such a design avoids the necessity of carrying road traffic either above or below the water way. Today, owing to increase in volume of water borne and road traffic, such designs are rarely acceptable because of delays caused and loading restrictions. (National Trust Register, B2379)

Precinct - scar trees on northern bank 1-2 downstream. River environment.

The main members of the structure are wrought iron trusses supporting a timber deck. A plaque is attached to the wall footings on the river bank.

**Condition & Integrity:** The bridge no longer operates on a regular basis but is kept in an operational condition. The structure has been strengthened and decking replaced but there have been no major alterations.(1).

Place type: Transport

## Condition

## Integrity

**History** A punt was the earliest means of crossing the Latrobe and Thomson Rivers in the 1840s. In 1857 a low level timber bridge was opened to traffic approximately 15 metres upstream of the swing bridge. Later the Latrobe Wharf was built just south of this timber bridge to cater for increasing traffic from the Gippsland Lakes. The construction of the canal upstream necessitated a larger bridge which could provide access to river traffic.

Tenders for a bridge were invited in May 1880 by the Board of Lands and Works. John Grainger, father of Percy Grainger, the great Australian composer, designed the structure. Grainger was an architect and civil engineer, well regarded for his bridge design work. Peter Platt, a local contractor, built the bridge. The Gippsland Mercury announced the opening of the bridge on February 8, 1883.(1) (2)

Most traffic on the river occurred in the boom years of trade on the Gippsland Lakes around 1910 when the bridge was opened approximately twenty times per day. It was used regularly until the 1920s.(2)

The bridge was redecked in 1933 and reinforced in 1953. No significant alterations have occurred to the structure which now carries traffic on the South Gippsland Highway, and although it remains operational, it is rarely opened.(2); Associations: Sale Canal

Heritage Protections Register	Reference	Zoning	Status
National Trust Register	2379		Listed
Planning Scheme	HO61		Listed
Register of the National Estate	004771		Listed
Victorian Heritage Register	H1438		Listed

National Estate	Code	Assessment Detail
	G	: Value - This place was assessed for social value (sub-criterion G1). The indication of possible social value from the workshop was confirmed by social value research, but the place was accorded a low priority for further assessment by the present project because it is not a forest related place.

### Research Required

### Recommendations

### Fieldwork priority?

**Stage 1 Ranking** Assessed & protected **Stage 2 priority** No Action: Already include

**Final Ranking** National significance **Final Recommendation** Amendment C26

**Statement of significance** The swing bridge is a significant part of the heritage of Sale and Australia being the only bridge of its type in Victoria and has national significance as an example of engineering innovation. The bridge has at least state significance for its historical associations with trade on the Gippsland Lakes early this century and for its demonstration of transport links between the port of Sale, the Lakes and Melbourne from late last century. (Heritage Vic 602836)

The swing bridge over the latrobe river south of sale was erected in 1880-83 By peter platt, contractor, at a cost of 6857 pounds. John grainger architect And civil engineer, designed this elegant wrought iron trussed structure as a Balanced swing span of 45 metres, centrally supported or eight pivot cylinders Resting on bedrock. Brick abutments support the fixed approach decking with The boom mechanically operated.

The swing bridge at sale is a unique bridge type in victoria, with only few Others of this type and degree of sophistication elsewhere in australia. The Structure is a distinguished work of john grainger, the architect/engineer who Later in 1886 designed the princes bridge in melbourne. The bridge facilitated Development of the port of sale and a regular steamer service operated up the Canal for many years (1885-1920) with connections to melbourne and the Gippsland lakes.

The swing bridge at sale no longer operates on a regular basis, the river and Canal silting up after th 1920's. The bridge was redecked in 1933 and the Structure strengthened in 1953. The bridge is kept in an operational condition. (RNE, 4771)

Of national significance.

### Extent of designation

### Informant

### Notes

### Follow up

<b>Bibliography</b>	Sale Heritage Study Context Pty Ltd. 1999. Identification and Assessment of community and heritage values in the Gippsland Forest Region. Report to Environment Australia and Natural Resources and Environment, Victoria as part of the Comprehensive Regional Assessment: National Estate Gippsland Regional Forest Agreement. Context Pty Ltd, (2004), Wellington Heritage Study: Sale Review
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South Gippsland Highway, ID 1173ii.jpg

Context

1/01/1994



South Gippsland Highway, ID 1173 i.jpg

Context

1/01/1994



Update South Gippsland Highway, ID 1173iii.jpg.jpg

Peter Synan

1/01/1994



Update South Gippsland Highway, ID 1173vi.jpg.jpg

Kristy Crawford

20/02/2007



Update South Gippsland Highway, ID 1173iv.jpg.jpg.jpg

Kristy Crawford

20/02/2007



Update South Gippsland Highway, ID 1173v.jpg.jpg

Kristy Crawford

20/02/2007





SWING BRIDGE OPEN TO  
ALLOW THE PASSAGE OF  
THE STEAMER S.S. DARGO

THE Swing Bridge, Sale, was built in 1883 by the Victorian Government. It was the first moveable bridge built in Victoria, and it replaced a wooden bridge about 50ft. further up stream; length 200 ft., when open 63ft. clear space either side of the centre pier. Designed by John Grainger (who also designed Princes Bridge, Melbourne) the contractor was Mr Peter Platt, of Sale, castings and fittings by Messrs Johnson and Co. Tyne foundry Melbourne. In the period of boom river traffic, 1885-1910, the bridge would be required to be opened on an average of 20 times a day. The bridge keeper's cottage was situated on the right hand side of the road approaching from Sale. This bridge, built for horse drawn traffic, is still in use on the busy South Gippsland highway, over 100 years later.