

GREAT NORTH ROAD

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. Much of the original convict built road remains in use today although a lot of the original surface is well buried under bitumen. You can see convict built remains, such as stone retaining walls, pick dressed cuttings, culverts, bridges and stone cut drains, when you drive along the road, or when you walk in Dharug and Yengo National Parks.

THE CONVICT TRAIL

The Convict Trail includes the Great North Road, the surrounding land, and historic buildings. The Convict Trail Project Inc. (CTP) is a community based organisation devoted to caring for, protecting and promoting the Great North Road.



Above: Remains of Devlins Creek Crossing, Epping
Cover: View along wall of wharf remains at Bedlam Point to Abbotsford

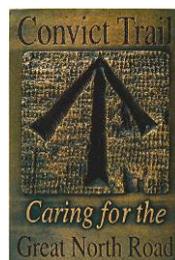
To achieve its objectives the CTP works with many partners, including the NSW Department of Planning—Heritage Branch, councils, Dept. of Corrective Services, NPWS, RTA & local tourism associations. The Project brings together community groups, individual members, tourism groups, State Government agencies and local councils. For more information, including “conservation partners” visit the CTP website.

This brochure is one of a series of area specific electronic brochures written by the Convict Trail Project and available from the website below. The content of this brochure has been compiled in good faith but is published without responsibility in law or otherwise for its accuracy and without any assumption of duty of care by the Convict Trail Project. The sites are listed to allow you to appreciate how much evidence remains and what is supporting the road you are driving on.

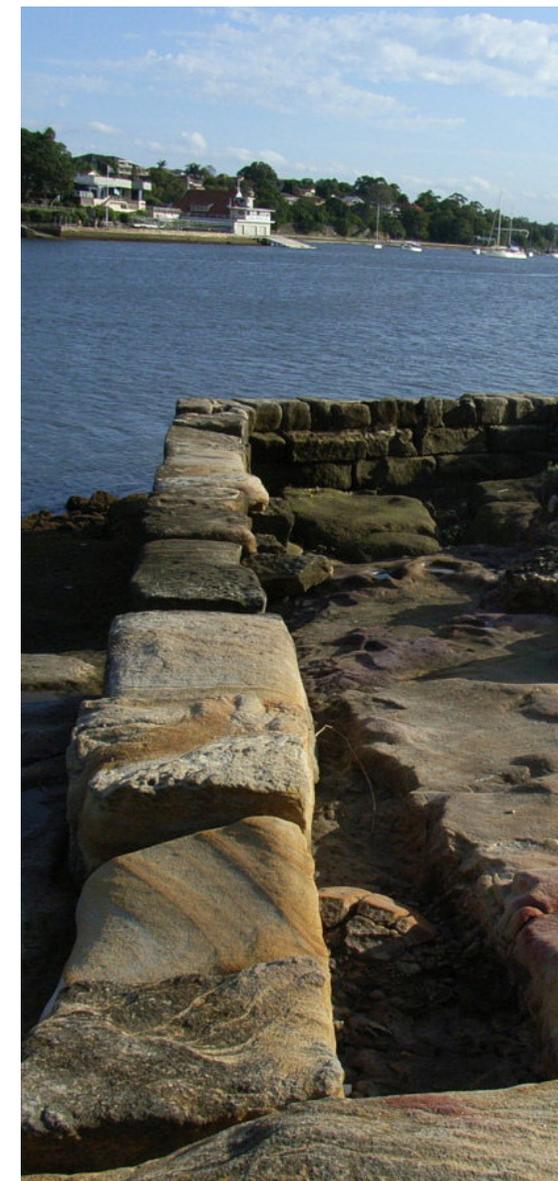
Remember, do not trespass on private property.

Many of the convict relics noted in this guide are used for traffic. You should only view them from safe locations.

For more information purchase an “Explore the Convict Trail” booklet or visit the Convict Trail Website www.convicttrail.org. New members welcome. Write to CTP, PO BOX 96 Wahroonga NSW 2076.



Map: George E. Elliott: Photos & Text : Elizabeth A. Roberts: Brochure Template Nicole Leary & Brook Partridge.



The Great North Road
The Convict Trail
Five Dock to Epping
the Sydney end

Five Dock to Epping: the Sydney end

In this section of the Great North Road one would think that 180 years of urbanization would have obliterated the road but amazingly traces of the road can still be found.

The Great North Road through Five Dock and Abbotsford from Parramatta Road to Abbotsford wharf still follows exactly the original line of the road.

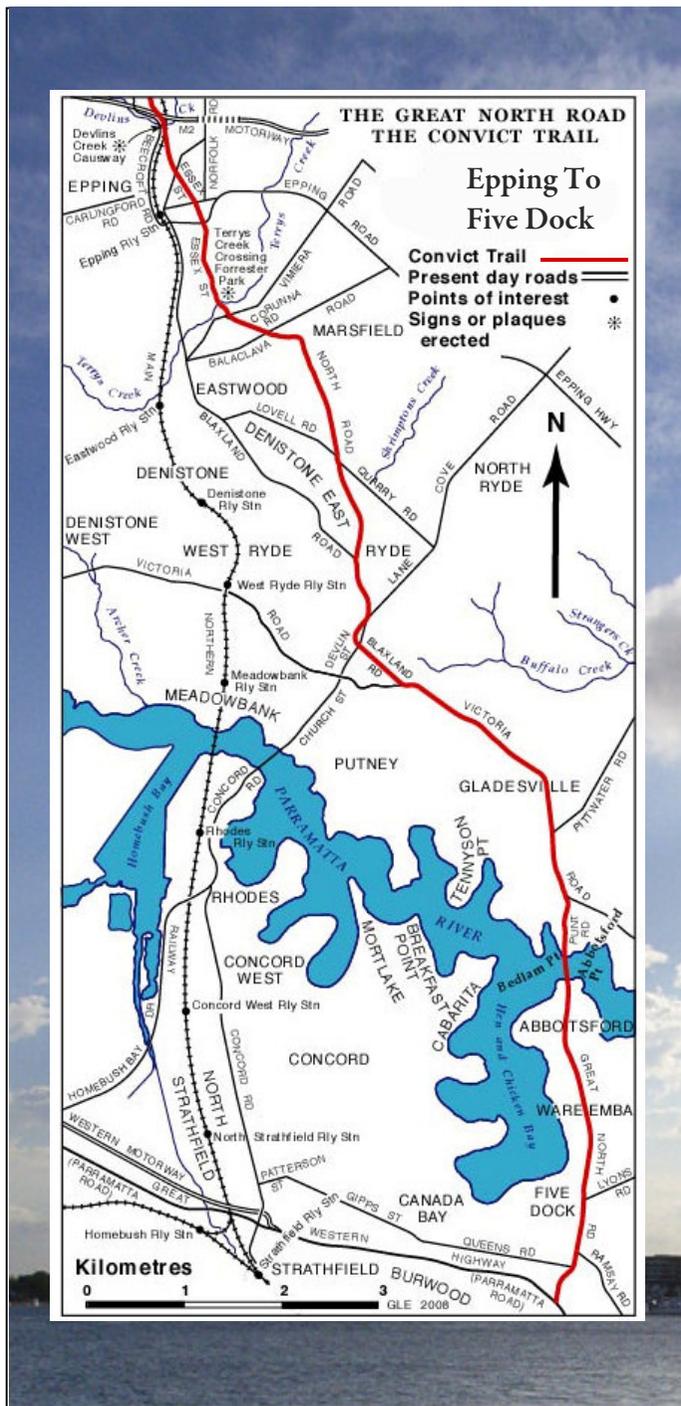
In 1893 much of the original road surface would have been disturbed when a branch line tramway was laid down the middle of the road. The main purpose of the steam tram, to this then little populated area, was to take crowds to watch sculling races on the Parramatta River.

At the end of the road opposite the current wharf in a small section of pick marking that could date from the original cutting for the wharf.

To serve the passing traffic the Red Cow Inn was built where the Sydney Rowing Club now is, a few of the stones from the original building are set in one of the walls.

It appears all evidence of the original wharf on the Abbotsford side disappeared with the building of the new Parramatta ferry wharf.

On the other side of the river at Bedlam Point and in Punt Road evidence exists. Over many years hard fill had been dumped at the end of Punt Road changing the shape of the shore line and apparently covering the ramp up from the wharf.



Bedlam Point as seen a great deal of change since the punt wharf and Ferryman's hut were built in 1830. Evidence of various structures can be seen at very low tide.

An electricity cable, supported by high towers, came across from Abbotsford to supply electricity to the North shore.

Round the corner Meggitt's oil seed mill operated for many years using *Rockend Cottage* Banjo Patterson's grandmother's house as its headquarters.

On the Gladesville Asylum side of Punt road remnants of the original drains can be found.

North of Bedlam Point most of the route can be traced in the suburban roads. It followed Victoria Road to about Blaxland Road, is lost under the Top Ryde developments then reemerges in North Road, Corunna Road, through Vimera/Forresters Park to Essex Road, then under the railway line to emerge at the Devlins Creek Crossing opposite Candy Ave then up along Beccroft road.

A low level crossing exists, over Devlins Creek under the bus flyover off the expressway. Despite its poor condition this is important evidence of survival in the urban area and is the only low level stone crossing in existence. Finding evidence of the Corduroy timber crossing in Forrester Park depends on the state of flood washouts and silt deposits.

Despite 180 years of urbanization it is amazing how many traces as well as actual evidence of the Great North Road can still be found in this section and how the 1830s road is still reflected in the modern urban city.