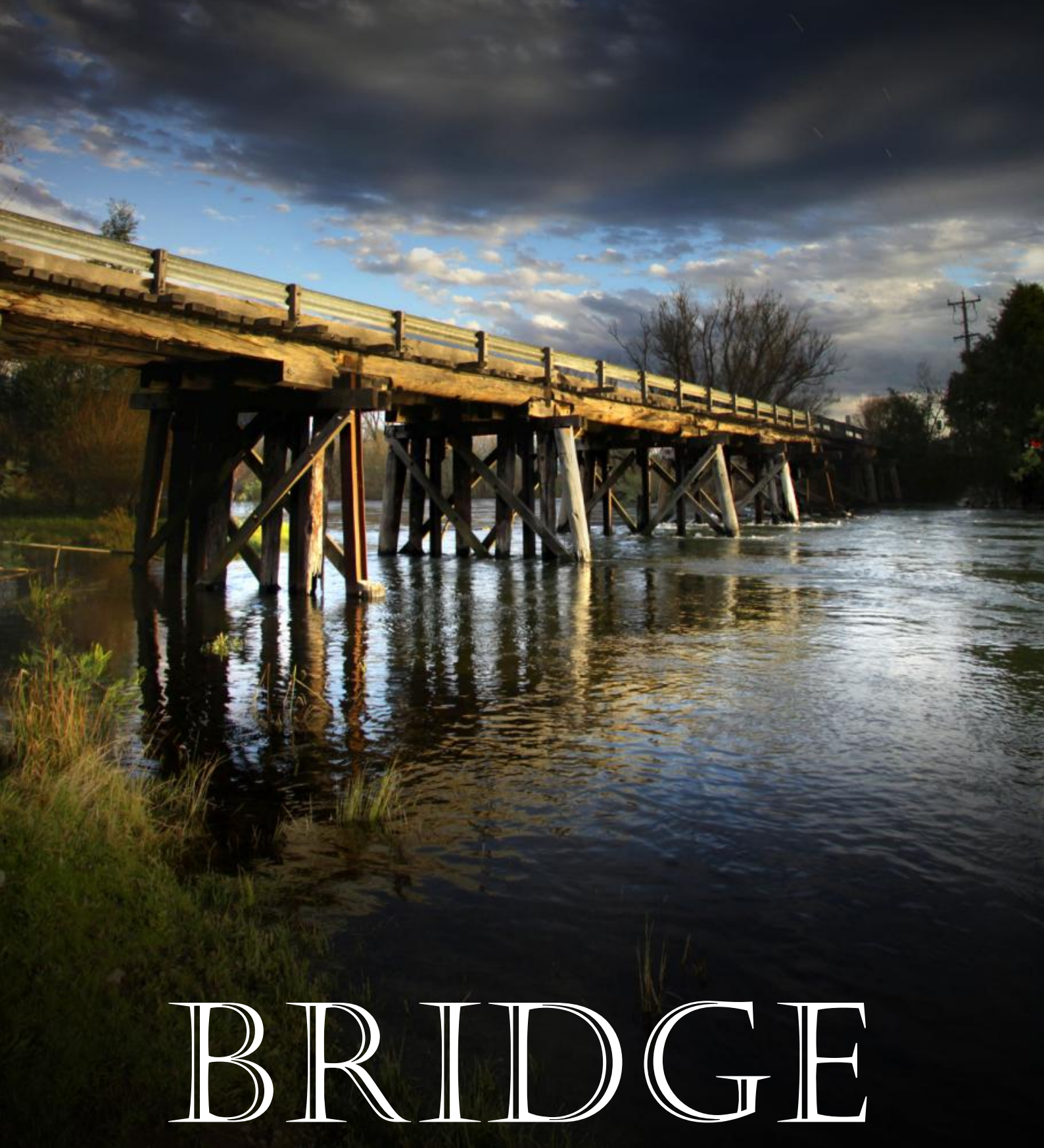


# ACHERON BREAKAWAY



## BRIDGE



**HERITAGE  
STRUCTURE  
SERIES**

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# **ACHERON BREAKAWAY BRIDGE**

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## **CONTRIBUTORS**

---

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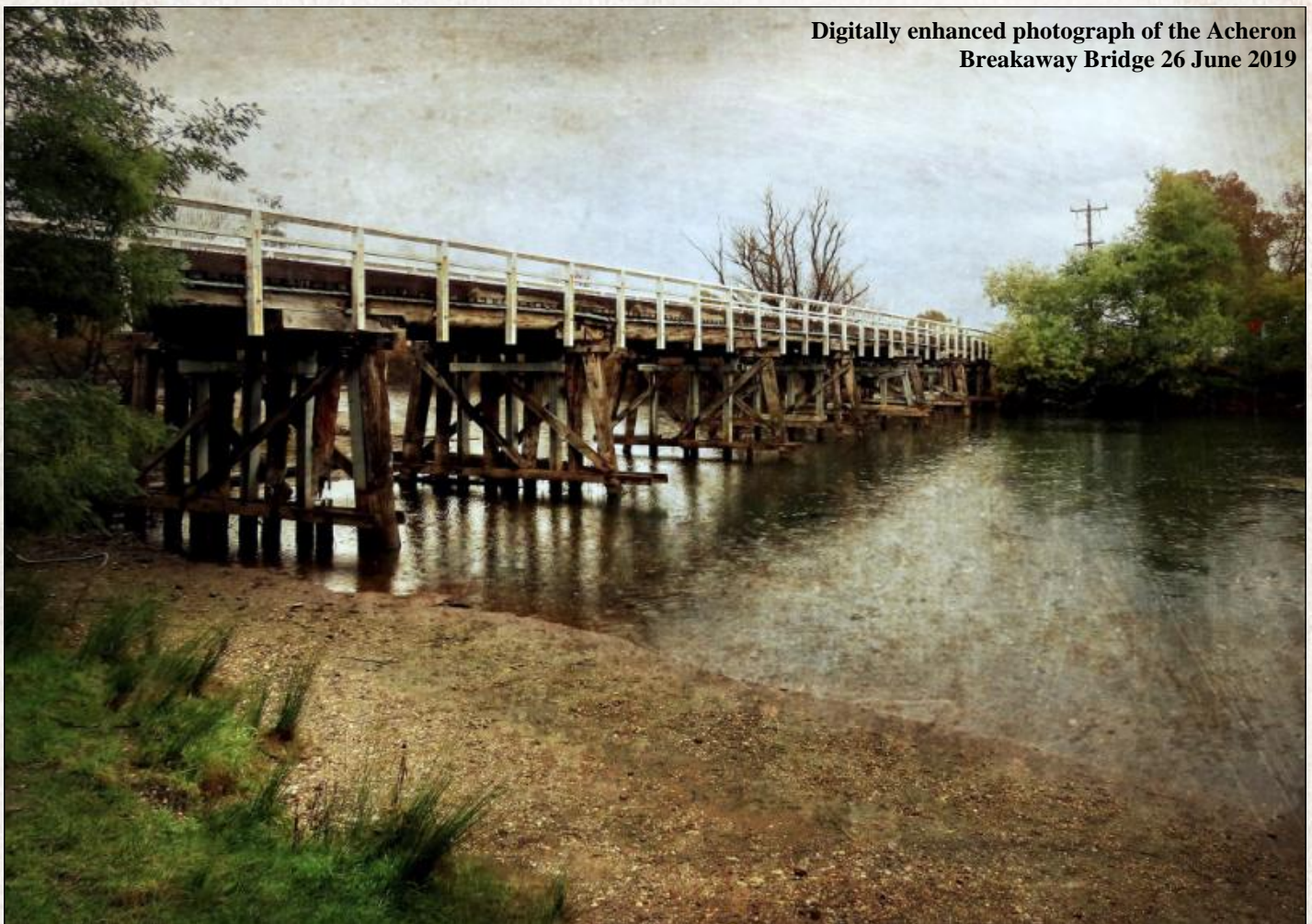


# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## HISTORY

**Name:** Acheron Breakaway Bridge  
**Location:** Acheron  
**Crosses:** Goulburn River  
**Completed:** 13 March 1921  
**Style:** Five span wooden trestle

The Acheron Breakaway Bridge is an historic wooden trestle bridge over the Goulburn River at Acheron. It was built in early 1921 after the river broke away from its previous course during a flood. Today it is the only working road bridge of its type in the District.



Digitally enhanced photograph of the Acheron  
Breakaway Bridge 26 June 2019

### The Bridge:

The Acheron Breakaway Bridge is a wooden bridge located at Acheron that spans the Goulburn River, Victoria's longest and most significant irrigation river. The bridge is significant for being one of just a few working wooden trestle bridges left over the entire length of the Goulburn River. The bridge is a significant tourism attraction, as well as a highly prized bridge for fishing, photographers and as a location for wedding photographs to be taken.



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## HISTORY

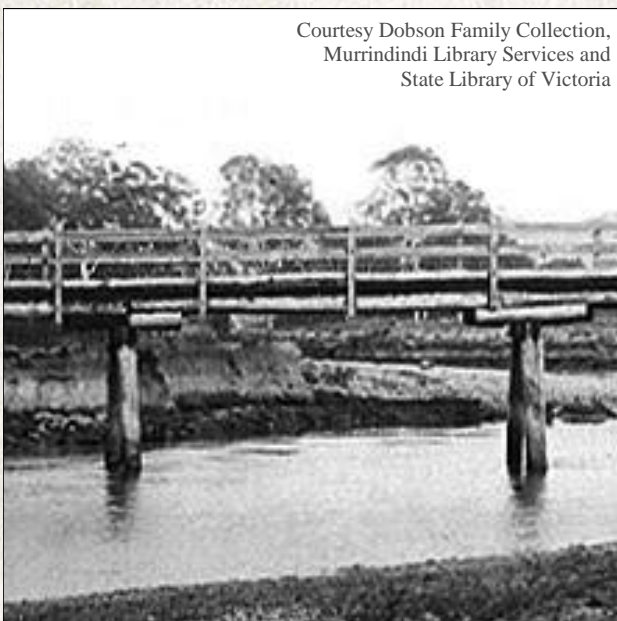
### **The Breakaway**

From as early as 1914, there were troubles with the Goulburn River breaching its banks and charting new paths between Thornton and Acheron during flood events. Further bank breaches occurred in 1915 and 1916, with works conducted by the Shire on numerous instances to mitigate further breaches while also working to return the river to its original source. One newspaper report stated how at one point the river had divided into three active water courses as it travelled through a farmer's property between Thornton and Acheron.

During a public meeting held at Thornton on 28 March 1918, discussions were had regarding what steps should be taken to ensure the river didn't leave its original course. Cr JT Murray was the Shire President at the time and he guided the meeting, informing those present how it was hoped that any breakaway could be stopped by pre-emptive work on the bank of the river on different farming properties.

### **The Dobson/Rennie unofficial Breakaway Bridge**

By 1919, the problem was becoming untenable due to farmer's land being divided by the river. In that year farmers Dobson and Rennie allocated 20 pound to have a temporary bridge built over the breakaway. It is our current understanding that this bridge was the first built in the proximity of the current Breakaway Bridge.



Courtesy Dobson Family Collection,  
Murrindindi Library Services and  
State Library of Victoria

### **The Official Breakaway Bridge**

In 1920, after a motion was raised at a local council meeting, it was passed that an application be made to the Public Works Department for 400 pound, to be used towards the building of a new bridge. This was the start of a process that eventually led to an official public bridge being built over the breakaway.

In early 1921 a contract was awarded to WJ Peters for the construction of a new bridge. Mr Peters was the only respondent to the tender.



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## HISTORY

Peters completed the bridge by 13 May 1921, using a significant amount of local timber. An inspection of the bridge timbers after it was completed, led to the quality of the wood selected being praised. The bridge became known as the Breakaway Bridge due to it being built over the Goulburn River after the Goulburn River broke away from its previous course.

Flood damage continued to be a problem at Acheron, and in 1931 a significant washaway of the abutments of the Breakaway Bridge led to the temporary construction of a suspension bridge for pedestrians and a considerable extension to the northern end of the bridge. An old photograph shown later in this factsheet shows a bridge with over double the original five span bridge built by Peters. There are no known photographs of the suspension bridge.

Breakaway Bridge in 1934, three years after the river moved 150 feet to the south

Courtesy Dobson Family Collection,  
Murrindindi Library Services and  
State Library of Victoria



### Current Heritage Status

In 2006 the Breakaway Bridge was listed on the Shire's Heritage List, with a recommendation that the bridge receive a Heritage Overlay. This was later adopted.

In October 2011, the Victorian Heritage Group defined the bridge as one of around 40 remaining wooden bridges with running boards left in Victoria and one of just 15 wooden trestle bridges of this length to have running boards. Today there are less than six wooden trestle bridges in Victoria with the same (or more) wooden spans and wooden running boards.



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## HISTORY



In 2011/12 the Shire of Murrindindi elected to have the bridge replaced with a reinforced concrete bridge after it became dangerous for heavy vehicles. The local community was outraged and this led to Acheron locals spearheading a campaign to save the bridge, which included public meetings, petitions, submissions and significant media attention.

The campaign was so effective that it led to the Shire of Murrindindi shelving its plans and instead restoring the current wooden trestle bridge.

Restorations were completed successfully and the bridge returned to full service in August 2013.





# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

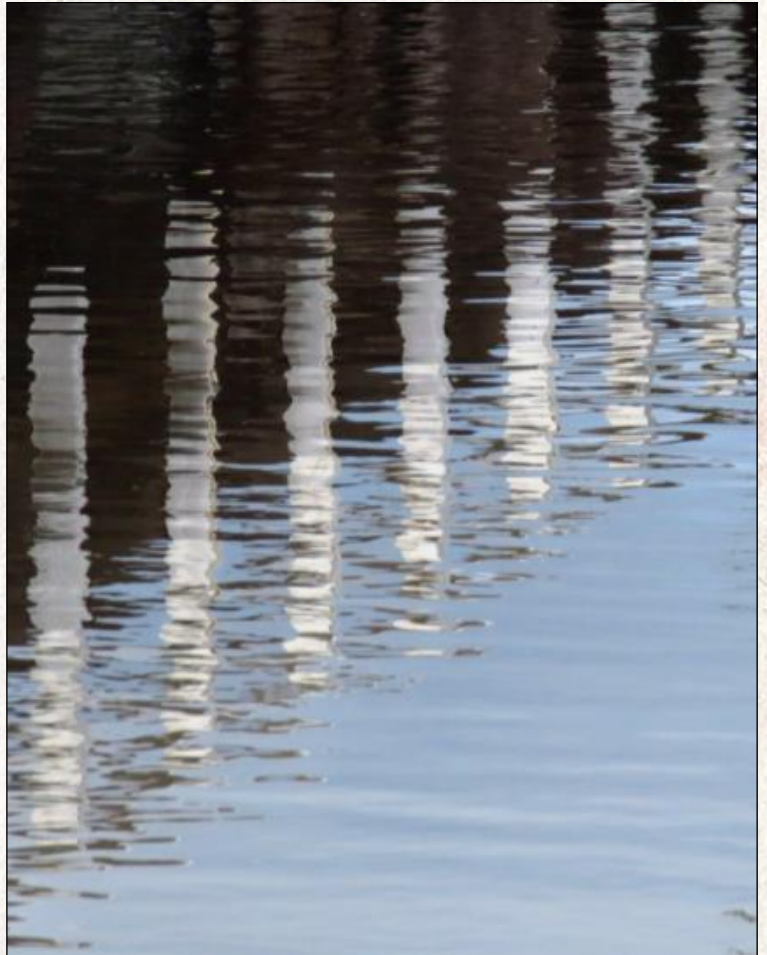
## HISTORY

### **Opening of upgraded Bridge**

The renovated bridge was officially opened to the public in August 2013.

### **Today**

Today the bridge attracts a large number of tourists and anglers each year, and it has become a favourite location for wedding photographs to be taken. Amateur and professional artists and photographers visit the bridge regularly and the bridge is often featured in local tourism promotional literature, second only to the enormous rail and road bridges at Bonnie Doon.





# TIMELINE

BASIC TIMELINE OF EVENTS





# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## TIMELINE OF EVENTS

- 1877** The first bridge at Acheron was erected on land donated by Thomas Connelly.
- 1878** Complaints regarding the bridge's quality appeared in the *Alexandra Standard*.
- 1886** Tenders accepted for the forming of the Acheron Bridge, by the then Public Works Department. Mention of the acceptance is noted in *The Argus* on Friday 17 December 1886.
- 20 March 1914** **A serious breakaway occurred on the Goulburn River** which caused the Council considerable anxiety. However local Thornton residents were reported as being indifferent about the seriousness of the breakaway. The breakaway occurred on the property owned by Charlie Taylor. (*Alexandra Standard*, Friday 20 March 1914).
- 24 September 1915** **A serious breakaway of the Goulburn River occurred along a section of bank on the property of Mr Edwards**, for around six chains [120 metres]. The new breakaway was called *The Edwards Breakaway*. (*Alexandra Standard*, Friday 24 September 1915).
- Late 1915** **A bank was established and works conducted to stem the overflow of the breakaway.** (*Alexandra Standard*, Friday 29 September 1916).
- 28 January 1916** There was a push to have the breakaway fixed before another flood event washes away the road again. (*Alexandra Standard*, Friday 28 January 1916).
- 29 September 1916** A newspaper report reported on how **the property of Mr WA and A Dobson had been affected by the river leaving its course at Mr Edwards property, where the river was running at right-angle to its original course.** It also mentioned how a





# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## TIMELINE OF EVENTS

bank erected to stem the overflow the previous year had been almost demolished. It further mentioned how the old breakaway had again been opened and properties damaged. (*Alexandra Standard*, Friday 29 September 1916).

**28 March 1918**

A public meeting was held at Thornton to discuss the steps that should be taken now that the Goulburn River had broken away from its stream bed. (*Alexandra Standard*, Friday 5 April, 1918).

**27 March 1919**

Reference to a **Special Committee for the breakaway of the Goulburn** at Acheron being held on 27 March. It was decided that a channel be cut out on the property of Mr Edwards. (*Alexandra Standard*, Friday 17 April 1919).

**1919**

**A temporary bridge was put in place by farmers Dobson and Rennie** at a personal cost of 20 pound. Produce was carted to the bridge, carried across by hand, then reloaded to another cart on the other side. (*Alexandra Standard*, Friday 23 April 1920).

**14 January 1921**

**Mr Dobson and Rennie were again reported as asking that the breakaway be attended to.** It was also reported that there had been talk of bridge timbers and stringers. (*Alexandra Standard*, Friday 14 January 1921).

**23 April 1920**

An article titled *Acheron Appeal* was published in the *Alexandra Standard* by Messrs. Rennie and Dobson re the breakaway. It stated that the new location of the river was now permanent. Cr Wylie advised that the breakaway had divided the farmer's property and stated how he had suggested the farmers put in an application for a bridge. Cr Baker also advised that a Government Engineer had visited the site. A motion that an application be made to the Public Works for 400 pound to be used towards the erection of a bridge at the Breakaway, was passed. (*Alexandra Standard*, Friday 23 April 1920).





# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## TIMELINE OF EVENTS

- 11 February 1921** Only one tender was received for the construction of the Breakaway Bridge over the Goulburn River at Acheron. This was from Mr WJ Peters (Alexandra Standard, Friday 11 February 1921). The bridge was to be a five span wooden bridge. (Alexandra Standard, Friday 4 February 1921).
- 13 May 1921** **Completion of the Breakaway Bridge over the Goulburn at Acheron.** (Alexandra Standard, Friday 13 May 1921).
- 10 March 1922** **A reference to the construction of the Breakaway Bridge the year before was published.** It stated that the construction of the current Breakaway Bridge was completed by contractor WJ Peters, partially at the expense of those interested ratepayers, and opened. (Alexandra Standard, Friday 10 March 1922).
- Circa 1931** A suspension bridge for foot traffic and stock was established at the Breakaway Bridge at Acheron, after a big washaway occurred at the bridge. (Alexandra Standard, Friday 16 October 1931). The river moved around 150 feet to the south when a flood caused soil to be washed away.
- 13 May 1932** A Feature Survey and report on the Acheron Breakaway Bridge was tabled. It reports how the bridge has twice been lengthened due to the northern abutments having washed away, and how the southern abutments have recently been destroyed and a suspension bridge erected to connect it with the mainland. Consideration was given to returning some of the lower breakaway back to its original course. Four options were raised for consideration. (Alexandra Standard, Friday 13 May 1932).
- 1932** Five new trestles were added to the southern end of the Breakaway Bridge. The now high and dry trestles on the northern side of the river were later removed and that area backfilled and a new section of road laid to the bridge's end.





# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## TIMELINE OF EVENTS

- 1960s** Two runners and abutment logs were replaced by the Boote brothers. The grey box trees used for the work were cut down and prepared by them, and were sourced from Basil Robertson's lane, along the UT Creek Road. The entire series of top running boards were also replaced at this time.
- unknown** Repairs were made to the bridge, which included replacing the wooden railing with a lower profile steel railing.
- 1968** Frank Jordan and his two sons John and Peter were riding a home made raft below the bridge when it hit a tree and flipped over onto them. Frank and John made it back onto the raft, though Peter was nearly lost when he was trapped under the raft for a period of time. From that time the family have referred to the bridge as the *Tragedy Bridge*, even though Peter was saved.
- Late 1960s** A smaller wooden bridge over the Acheron River just upstream of the current day Acheron Twin Rivers Caravan Park was washed away. The caravan park almost went broke from a lack of patronage.
- 1970s** The roadway over the Breakaway Bridge into Alexandra was sealed.
- 2001** During renovations, steel piles were driven to bedrock, replacing some of the older wooden piles that had rotted. The bedrock was much deeper than first thought, resulting in the steel piles needing to be much longer. Wooden tyre runners and decking were also replaced as part of this upgrade. The bridge was closed for some months during the repairs. The works were finished by 3 October 2001 and at the re-opening ceremony, Jack Moloney cut the yellow ribbon. Councillor Mike Dalmau gave a brief speech.
- 2006** The bridge was listed on the Shire's Heritage List, with a





# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## TIMELINE OF EVENTS

recommendation that the bridge receive a Heritage Overlay. This was later adopted.

**30 June 2010**

The *Alexandra Standard* Newspaper ran a front cover article on the Breakaway Bridge, reporting how it had been assessed by world renown Senior Structural Engineer/Wood Technologist Dan Tingley. Shire Engineers, in consultation with VicRoads, moved quickly to impose restriction on the bridge after preliminary information was received from Dan Tingley. The Shire action included reducing the bridge load limit to a three tonne gross weight limit with a 20 km speed limit.

**March 2011**

Craig and Samantha Gloury of the Breakaway Caravan Park, started a petition to save the historic Breakaway Bridge. Copies of the petition were located at local businesses that included the Breakaway Twin Rivers Caravan Park, Ian Newman's Antique Store, Alexandra Green Grocers, Alexandra Camping Shop, and Around The Corner Take-Away. It was a huge success.

**April 2011**

Artworkz become involved in the fight to save the bridge and started work on this factsheet and a tourism brochure. Artworkz were very active in the media through their eSplash magazine.

**April 2011**

Respected Alexandra based artist Peter Matheson drew the Acheron Breakaway Bridge as part of the effort to help save it.

**August 2011**

Council addressed the issue of the bridges future and stated their preferred option is to replace the bridge. They also stated that they would be conducting a consultative process, inline with their consultation policy, and that they wanted that process complete by a meeting to be held in November.

**October 2011**

The Victorian Heritage Group defined the bridge as one of around 40 bridges of its kind left in Victoria. They also have defined the bridge as one of just 15 of its length, with running





# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## TIMELINE OF EVENTS

boards. It is one of just six with the amount of spans it has.

- 24 November 2011** A public information meeting was held at the Acheron Hall. There was a significant turnout.
- 8 December 2011** A public meeting was held by those wishing to save the bridge, to discuss issues pertaining to the bridge. There was a significant turnout.
- 27 February 2012** Councillors voted unanimously to refurbish the Acheron Breakaway Bridge at the normal Council Meeting, after they received significant ongoing resistance to their preferred option to have it replaced.
- March 2012** Letters were received by all those who had written submissions, confirming the bridge had been saved and would be refurbished.
- 7 March 2012** An article in the *Standard* Newspaper reported on the bridge being saved. The headline was *BRIGHT FUTURE FOR OLD BRIDGE*, and the cover article included a picture of Acheron locals Sam Gloury and Marian Rennie.
- August 2013** The bridge was re-opened after refurbishment works were completed. Hand railing was restored to better reflect the bridge's earlier appearance. Those central to fighting to save the bridge, as well as the broader community, were kept away from the opening. Only three seats were made available by the Shire for members of the community, and these were pre-allocated.
- 29 January 2014** The Shire received an award from the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia (IPWEA) for excellence in innovation, development, construction and management of public works projects and services. The award was presented in the field of 'Capital Project Award under \$1 million' and was presented to the Shire. The Shire of Murrindindi representative stated:





# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## TIMELINE OF EVENTS

*Breakaway Bridge is an iconic landmark and to carry out these works involved a lot of careful planning and management. It was important that the bridge retained its historic identity whilst providing a robust structure that supported the area's transport needs... The community of Acheron and in particular the Project Reference Group were fantastic to work with. It was through this collaboration that we were able to deliver a very successful project.*

**15 October 2022**

The northern abutment was washed away during a major flood event caused in part by heavy rain and the lake being full (and over-full for some days).

Goulburn Murray Water released 13000 ML/Day for nearly three weeks from Sunday 25 September before raising it to 38000 ML/Day on Friday 14 October causing the most significant flooding downstream since 1974. At Murchison the flood level exceeded the 1974 level.

On 14 October Lake Eildon exceeded 100 percent capacity. Seymour is inundated, as is Murchison and Shepparton. Along the Murray Echuca is inundated by both the Murray and Campaspe Rivers.

On 19 October GMW reduced the flow to 28,000 ML/Day for 24 hours before raising it again to 38,000 ML/Day.

**23 October 2022**

The release from Lake Eildon was reduced to 1500 ML/day ending the local flooding.

**23 October 2022**

The Breakaway Bridge was finally able to be accessed. A significant amount of debris was banked up against the upstream side of the bridge and the entire northern abutment had been washed away with a 10 meter gap between the bridge and road





# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## TIMELINE OF EVENTS

now exposed.

### **24 October 2022**

The release from Lake Eildon was reduced to 1200 ML/day. The same day the flooding peaked at Echuca wharf in excess of the 1974, November 1975 (94.80) and October 1993 height (94.77 m). The flood at Echuca will be remembered for a 3 km levy build through the town that excluded a number of properties.



# GALLERY

RELATED IMAGERY



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## GALLERY



Bank collapse below southern approach to bridge



### Breakaway Bridge in 1934

This panoramic photograph had been created by combining two smaller photographs which was mounted on board with the following explanatory text:

*Bridge over Goulburn breakaway near Alexandra. The five spans on left of picture [southern side of river] were added after one winter 1932 when the river moved approx 150ft. The photo shows the present perilous state of the approach on the left where two of the upstream piles are laid bare and the approach likely to fall in at any time.*

*The original section of the bridge on the right which served for 12 yrs with only minor repairs is now shown practically on dry land. (Signed) A. M. Wilson Acheron (Vic).*

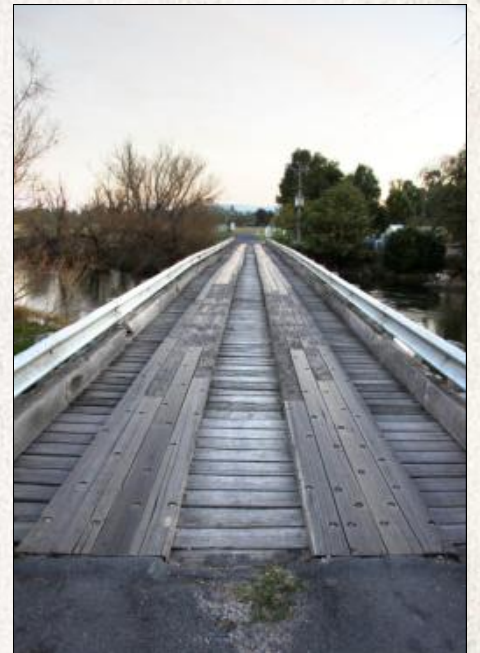
The original spans on the right, which were now on dry land, were eventually removed and the area filled in. The roadway was then raised to meet the new spans over the new position of the river.

Courtesy Dobson Family Collection,  
Murrindindi Library Services  
and State Library of Victoria



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## GALLERY



**Acheron Bridge in April 2011**



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## GALLERY



**Fishing is synonymous with the Acheron Breakaway Bridge**



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

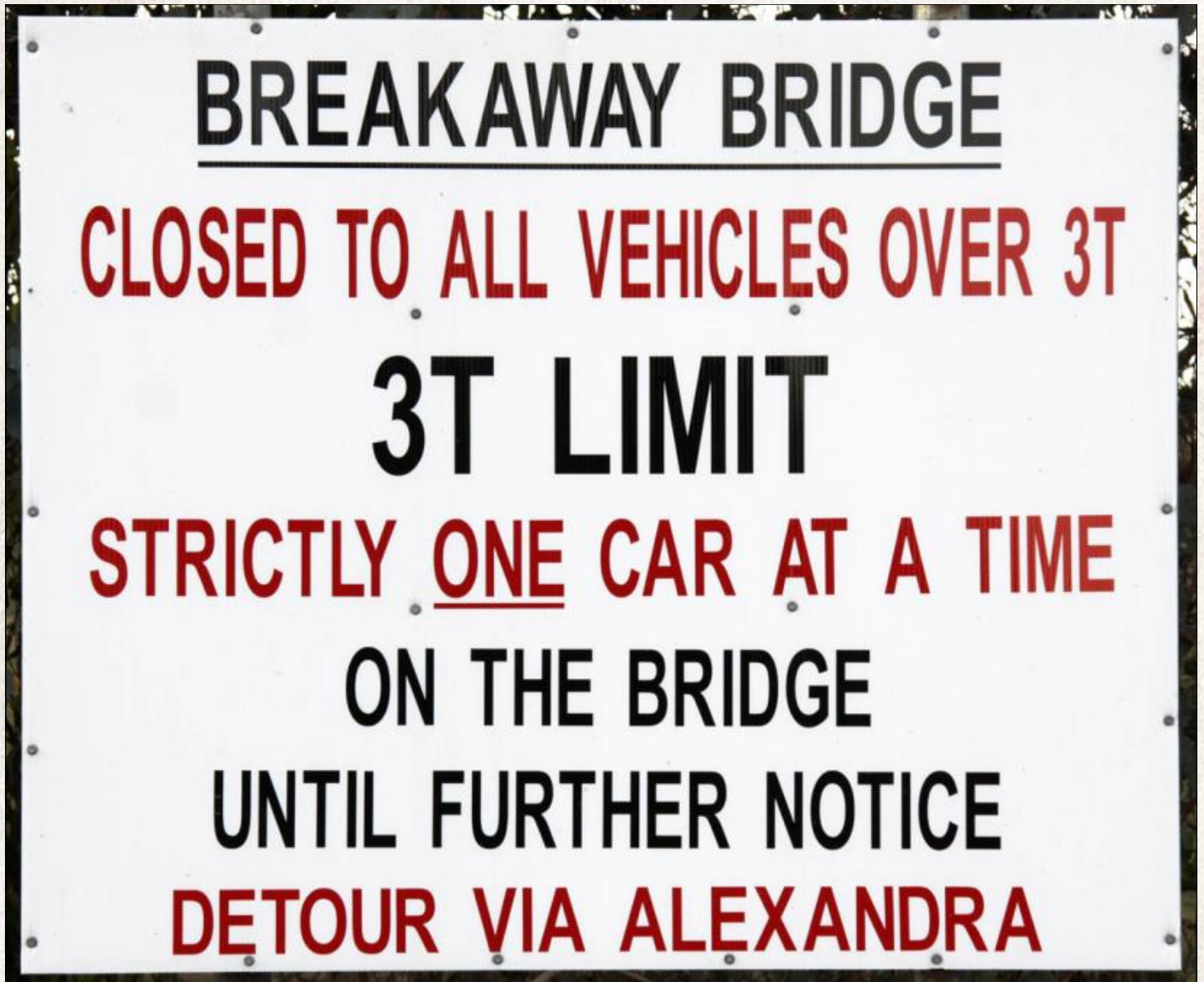
## GALLERY



**A view from under the bridge in 2011 with the older railings**



## GALLERY



In 2010, the Breakaway Bridge was assessed by the Shire, as being in a poor state of disrepair. Subsequently a reduced weight limit was introduced. The above sign was photographed in April 2011.



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## GALLERY



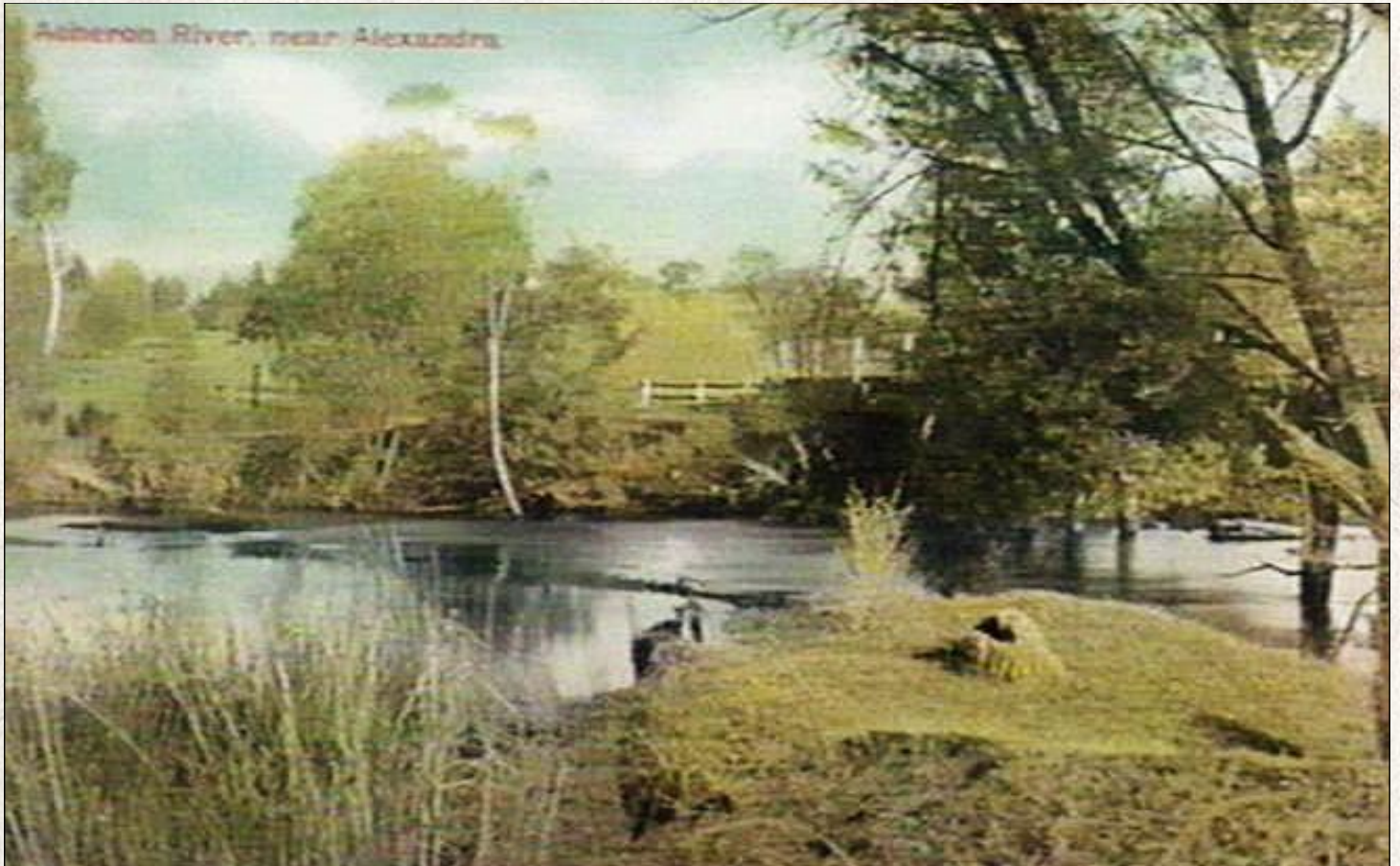
**The Acheron Bridge over the Acheron River in the early 1900s.  
This was of similar design to the bridge over the Goulburn River.**

Courtesy Sandra Cumming and the State Library Victoria  
Photographer Lin Cumming



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## GALLERY



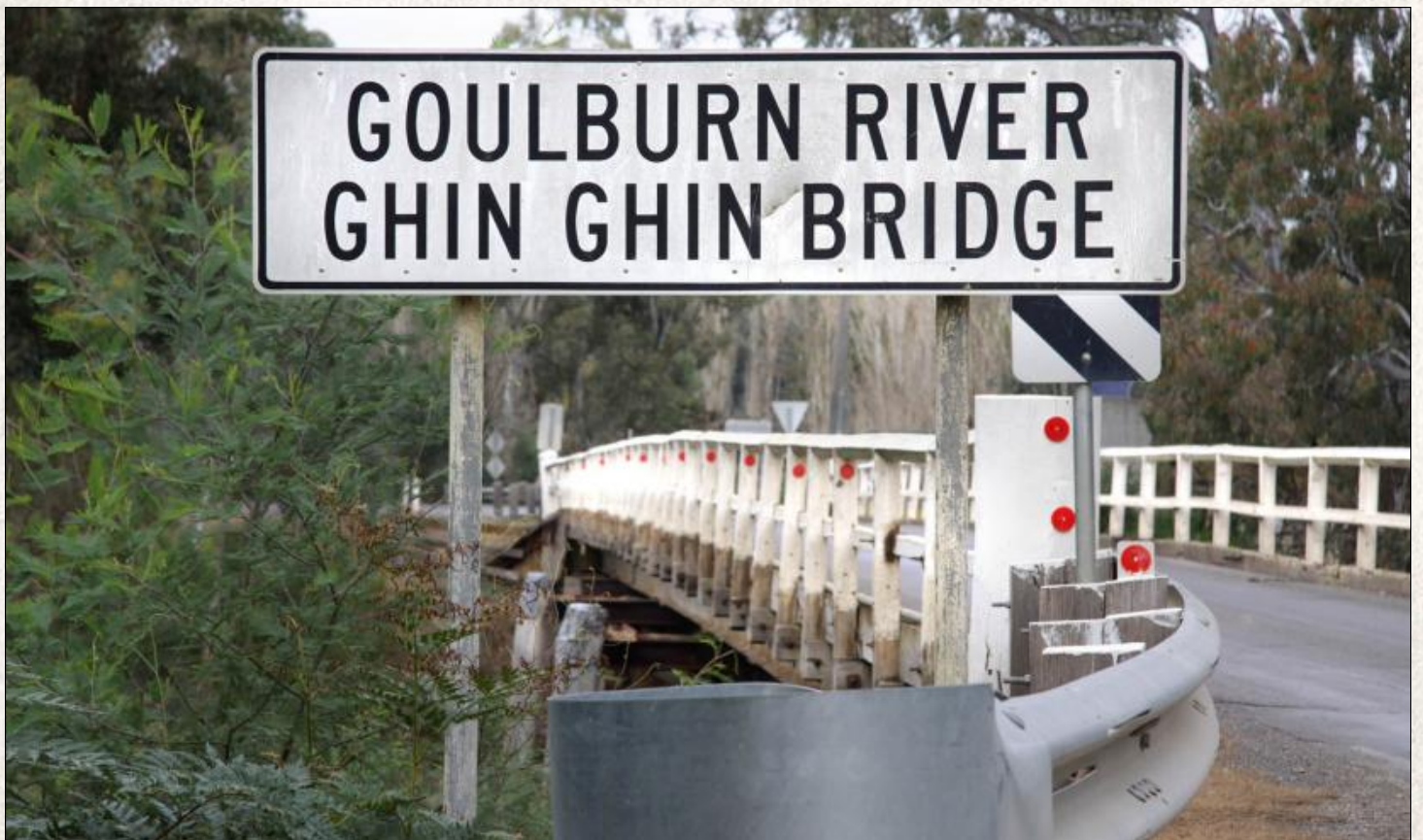
**One of the two bridges at Acheron in the mid 1900s. This wooden trestle bridge is believed to be the smaller bridge over the Acheron River, 600 metres upstream from the Goulburn River. This bridge has since been removed and replaced with a modern concrete bridge.**

Courtesy State Library Victoria



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## GALLERY



**The Ghin Ghin Bridge in 2011 before being replaced with a concrete bridge in 2015.** Like the Acheron Breakaway Bridge, the Ghin Ghin Bridge held significant heritage value. Together they represented the last two wooden trestle bridges of their type and length in the Murrindindi Shire. A third, the wooden Eildon Bridge, was dismantled in 2003.



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## GALLERY



**Here the Acheron Breakaway Bridge is pictured on the day the WinNews team came and did a feature on the bridge's future. The water from Lake Eildon was being released at 7,000 Megalitres per day in this image. Workmen were placing water height markers during the day, in preparation for a 10,000 Megalitre per day test release the following week.**



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## GALLERY



**Wooden runners on the Acheron Breakaway Bridge in 2013**



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## GALLERY



**Acheron Breakaway Bridge 29 June 2019**



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## GALLERY



**Acheron Breakaway Bridge reflection 30 June 2019**



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## GALLERY

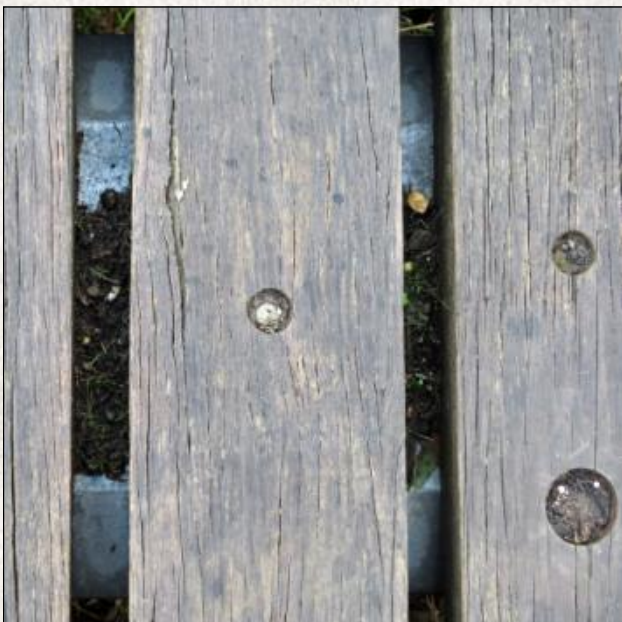


**Northern access to the Acheron Breakaway Bridge 30 June 2019**



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## GALLERY



**Acheron Breakaway Bridge 30 June 2019 with its steel caps (left) laid just under the top of the bridge to protect beams from water.**

**The image (top right) shows steep caps laid over the beams during renovations in September 2013.**



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## GALLERY



**Acheron Breakaway Bridge 3 July 2019**





# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## GALLERY



**Acheron Breakaway Bridge 7 July 2019**



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## GALLERY



**Acheron Breakaway Bridge 8 July 2019**

Copyright © Allan Layton 2019



# NEWSPAPERS

RELATED NEWSPAPER ARTICLES



## NEWSPAPERS

### Correspondence.

*[We do not hold ourselves responsible for the opinions expressed by our correspondents.]*

#### THE ACHERON BRIDGE.

*(To the Editor of the Standard.)*

SIR,—In reply to "Ratepayer's" letter re damage done to the Acheron bridge and report thereon, he ("Ratepayer") should make himself acquainted with the principle upon which the bridge is built before he rushes into print, as he speaks of piles where there are none, the bridge in question being simply a log structure. The Engineer, who should have superintended the erection of this bridge, must have either neglected his duty or there has been a want of engineering skill, otherwise he would not have allowed the pier, which has settled down so much, to have been erected on a foundation of sand. With respect to the capabilities of the Shire Engineer, the majority of the council appear to have no confidence in him, they having recently dismissed him. In conclusion I may state that I have known the President of the Shire for the last 18 or 20 years as a practical engineer, he having had the management, working, and repairing of various descriptions of engines and machinery during that period; and as for road and bridge making, it is well known that he has done a great deal of that in this district at his own expense for the benefit of the public.—I am,  
&c.,  
**ANOTHER RATEPAYER.**  
Acheron, 4th July.

#### Rate-payers Letter

Alexandra Standard, 13 July 1878  
National Library Australia





# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## NEWSPAPERS

### BEFORE BRIDGES

In November of 1868, the Connellys Punt was moved from the Acheron River, to the Goulburn River, in order to connect the Alexandra Road with the Yarra Valley Track. It was reported that 15 miles of travel would be saved. The new connection was via the Government surveyed road at Fisher's creek, which was reported as being in far better condition than the one in current use. The punt is being moved on rollers - at great expense.

*Alexandra Times*, 27 November 1868  
Courtesy State Library Victoria



## NEWSPAPERS

### **THE ACHERON BRIDGE.**

*( To the Editor of the Standard. )*

**SIR,—**Reports were read at the meeting of the council on the 18th inst. that one of the piles of the bridge erected some years ago at Wylie's had been undermined by the late floods, and that the bridge at that point had gone down about 3 feet. I want to know, Sir, why the Engineer was not sent out to see to repairing the damage, and securing it, instead of the President, who may be a very good wheelwright, but has not, so far as I have been able to learn, been prepared, either theoretically or practically, as an engineer. It is a well-known fact that the foundations of a structure, if faulty in the first instance, will not stand, and if remediable at all, it can only be done so on scientific principles, which if not properly applied invariably leads from bad to worse, and in the present instance the course being pursued will probably lead to this bridge being completely washed away by the next flood, at a direct loss of some hundreds of pounds to the ratepayers, and an indirect loss that cannot easily be calculated, particularly to those who, like myself, have to use this part of the road.—Yours respectfully,

**A RATEPAYER.**

[These two letters were crowded out in our last issue.—ED. S.]

**Pylon undermined by flooding**

Alexandra Standard 29 June 1878  
National Library Australia



## NEWSPAPERS

### *PUBLIC TENDERS.*

The Public Works department accepted the following tenders yesterday:—Acheron-bridge, forming, &c., Fisher's Creek to Buxton-road, contract No. 253A—E. Nichols, Buxton, £439 17s. 6d.; drainage works to Crown lands rear of Victoria-barracks, St. Kilda road—W. Wareing, Carlton, £187 13s. 6d.; fittings, &c., Mining department, public offices, Ballarat—W. J. Parlett, Fitzroy, £80 14s. 2d.; new steps, fencing, &c., entrance to Studley-park, near Abbotsford—Wright Bros., Richmond, £45 6s.; supply of 1,340 tons of wrought-iron 30in. and 24in. pipes—Mephan Ferguson, Carlton Foundry, £17 14s. 6d. per ton; painting, colouring, and repairing state schools, Carlton—W. Perl, Footscray, £112 7s. 9d.; Bell-street—J. G. Harmsworth, Carlton, £85 16s. 6d.; Port Melbourne—G. C. Williams, Melbourne, £125 13s.; Albert-park—D. Norris, Melbourne, £123 18s. 9d.

#### Public Tenders

The *Argus*, 17 December 1886  
National Library Australia



# OTHER

OTHER RELATED ITEMS



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## BREAKAWAYS FROM 1914–21

### BASIC OVERVIEW OF THE EVENTS LEADING TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CURRENT DAY BREAKAWAY BRIDGE

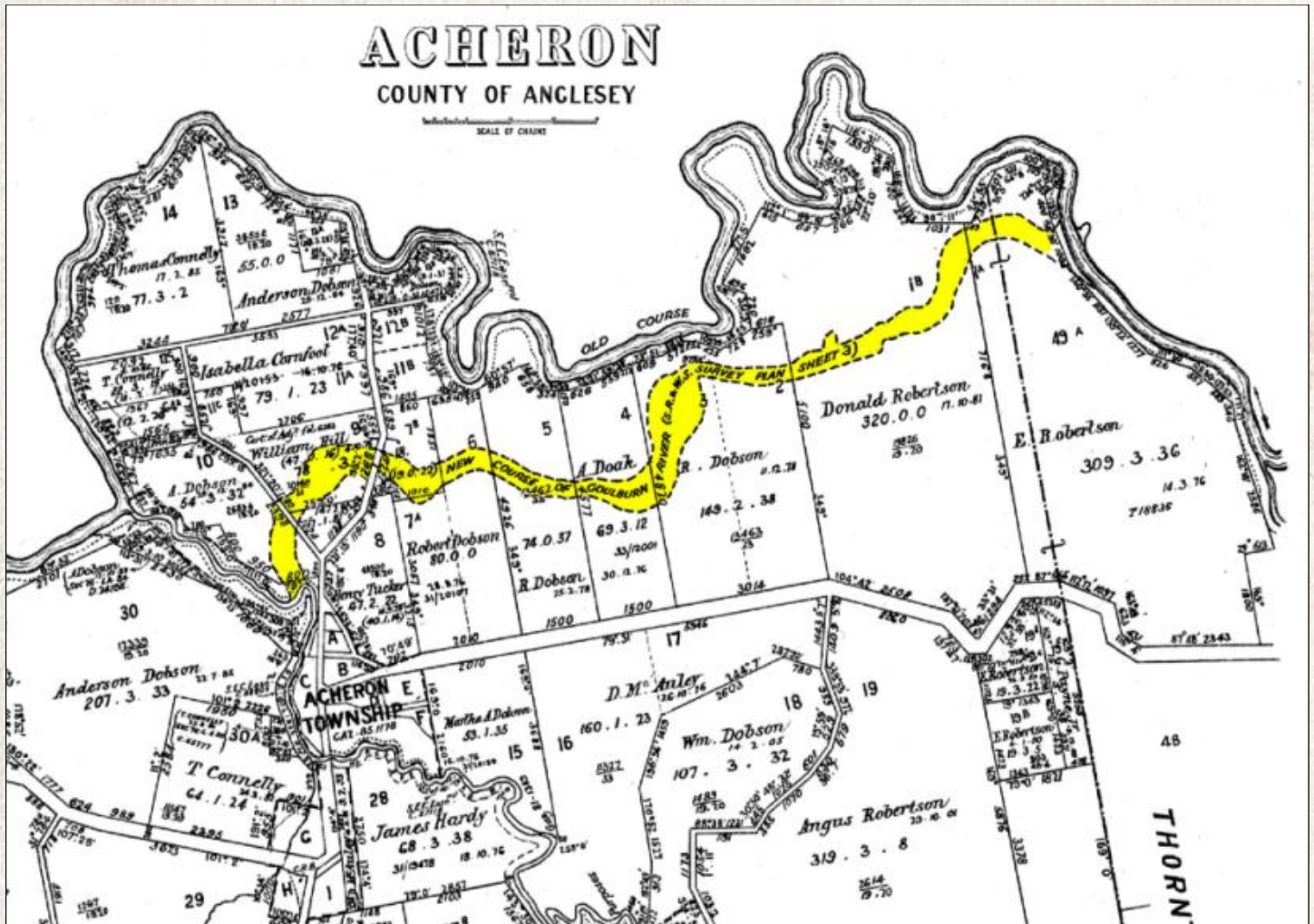
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- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| 20 March 1914     | <b>1. Breakaway at the Taylor's Thornton property.</b>   |
| 24 September 1915 | <b>2. Breakaway at the Edwards property near Acheron.</b>  |
| 29 September 1916 | A levee bank was established and works conducted to stem the overflow of water.  |
| 29 September 1916 | <b>Breakaway opened again at the property of Mr Edwards.</b> The property of Mr WA and A Dobson was again affected by the river leaving its course at Mr Edwards property where the river was running at right-angle to its original course. A bank erected to stem the overflow the previous year had been almost demolished. <b>The old breakaway (1.) had also opened again</b> and properties damaged. |
| 28 March 1918     | A public meeting was held at Thornton after the <b>Goulburn River had again broken away from its stream bed.</b>   |
| 27 March 1919     | A Special Committee was established to deal with the breakaway. It was decided that a channel be cut out on the property of Mr Edwards.  |
| 1919              | A temporary bridge was built by famers Dobson and Rennie at their own expense to reconnect their properties.   |
| 11 February 1921  | A single tender was received by the Shire for the construction of a new Bridge from contractor WJ Peters. It was accepted.   |
| 13 May 1921       | <b>Completion of the Breakaway Bridge over the Goulburn at Acheron by contractor WJ Peters.</b>  |



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## MAP OF THE BREAKAWAY



Early map showing the Goulburn River Breakaway

Breakaway of the Goulburn River in yellow

Courtesy State Library Victoria



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## LOCAL WOOD BRIDGES LOST 2000–19



2015 **Ghin Ghin Bridge**

Near Yea

Decommissioned due to poor condition caused by years of neglect  
Dismantled and replaced with a concrete bridge the same year



2010 **Tumbling Waters Bridge**

Thornton

Badly damaged beyond repair and replaced by modern concrete bridge  
Fathers Day Weekend flood



2009 **Lubra Creek Bridge**

Rubicon

Unusable

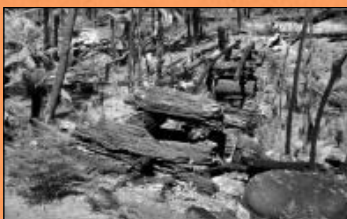
Deteriorated over time



2009 **Beech Creek Bridge**

Rubicon

Destroyed and rebuilt to a similar style  
Black Saturday bushfires



2009 **Timber Tramway Bridge**

Marysville

Destroyed and rebuilt to a similar style  
Black Saturday bushfires



2003 **Eildon Bridge**

Eildon

Lost in 2003

Dismantled



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## TRAGEDY BRIDGE

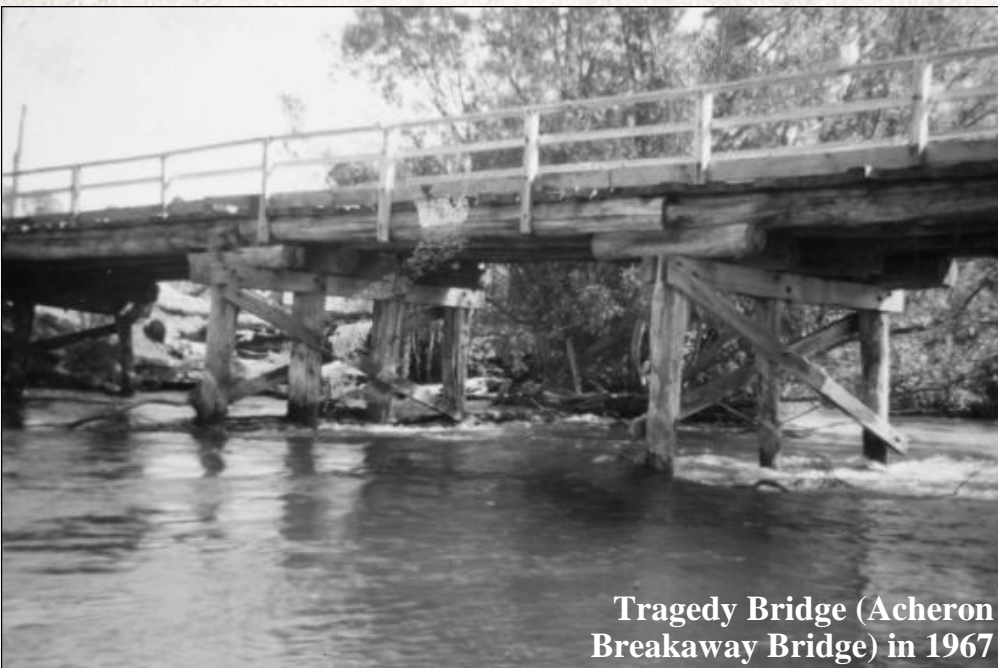
### TRAGEDY BRIDGE

In 1967, Frank Jordan and his two sons were riding a home made raft down the Goulburn River, when tragedy nearly befell them. Their raft was made of eight steel four gallon drums welded together, with a wooden structure to sit on.



Overnight campsite at Thornton with the home made raft.

They had camped on the banks of the Goulburn River at the Thornton Bridge the night before, and launched the raft the next morning with the intent to ride the raft all the way to Seymour. When approaching the Acheron Breakaway Bridge, and after nearly



Tragedy Bridge (Acheron Breakaway Bridge) in 1967

cleaning up a fisherman, the current took the raft to the left of the river and into a willow tree. The raft was halted in its path, and the current then lifted the raft vertical before flipping it on the three men.

Frank and his son John managed to find their way back onto the raft, though Peter was not to



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## TRAGEDY BRIDGE

be seen and was assumed to be caught under the tree. The current then took the raft with the two men on it under the Acheron Bridge and further downstream. They frantically tried to find a way to the back so they could return to the tree to try and find Peter, Frank's other son. Then a hand was seen near the edge of the raft, and after a short period, a rope under the raft that had caught Peter's leg was cut free and Peter was lifted to safety.

Afterwards the then Caravan Park owner towed the raft to Riversdale Bridge, where Frank's daughter Susan was waiting unaware of the events that had transpired. Peter was then taken to Alexandra Hospital for a check up, though was soon released.

The family refer to the Acheron Breakaway Bridge as "Tragedy Bridge" due to that eventful day in 1967 that nearly ended in Tragedy.

Years later the boys built Canadian Canoes, and again were on the Goulburn near the Killingsworth Reserve on Killingsworth Road near Yea, when one hit a log, was punctured, and quickly sunk with guns and equipment on board. They never found the canoe at that time, though years later during a period when the river was very low, it was spotted in a vertical position pointing out of the river. This stretch of the river was once used for regattas, due to it being a wide, deep and long straight stretch of the river.



Frank and his two boys on the raft



Passing under either the Thornton Bridge (Gilmore Bridge) on the way to Acheron Breakaway Bridge



# eSPLASH MEDIA ARTICLES

ARTICLES FROM THE eSPLASH eMAGAZINE



## Acheron Breakaway Bridge Raft Race circa 1980 Courtesy Kelly Petersen 2013



The Goulburn River between Thornton and Acheron was once the location for a very competitive and popular raft race, and the historic Acheron Breakaway Bridge served as the finish line.

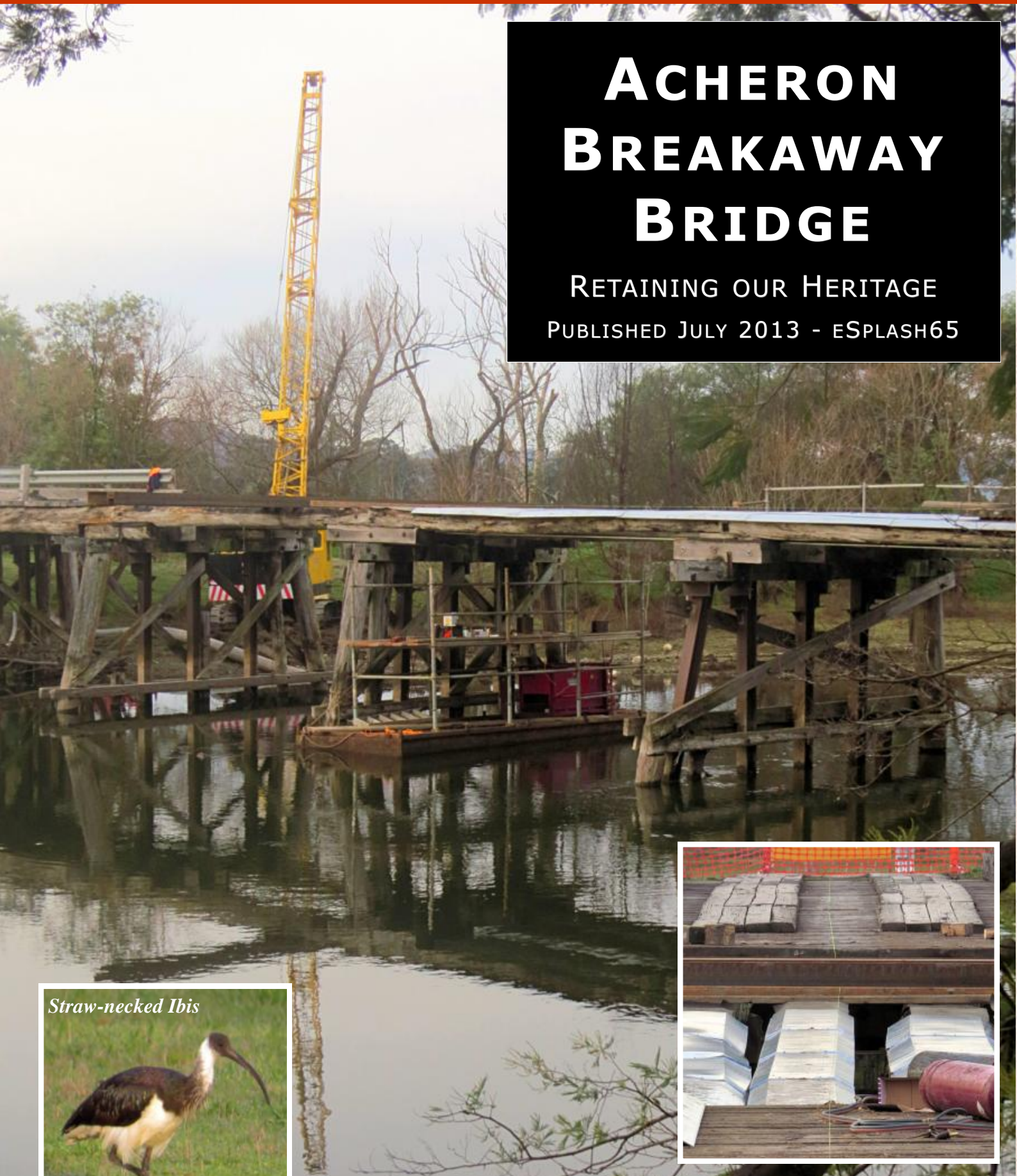
Attendees on the bridge would often throw paint, water and flour bombs down on the rafts as they crossed the line. One raft, *Titanic 2*, was even equipped with a water hose enabling them to wet those on the bridge. It was all fun, and everyone involved had a great time.



# ACHERON BREAKAWAY BRIDGE

RETAINING OUR HERITAGE

PUBLISHED JULY 2013 - ESPLASH65



*Straw-necked Ibis*



## **Breakaway Bridge Repairs Continue**

The renovation of the Acheron Breakaway Bridge is well under way, with workmen working long hours to finish the large task. When finished, it will once again provide safe access for those travelling through Acheron.





### **A mobile mill a little like a 'Lucasmill'.**

The Lucasmill was invented in a small farm shed by the Lucas family at Wooragee near Beechworth in 1994. To date, over 13,500 machines have been sold in over 100 countries.

Ironbark is one of the hardest woods in Australia and is perfect for Trestle Bridges.



# ACHERON BREAKAWAY BRIDGE

SIDE RAILINGS - PUBLISHED SEPTEMBER 2013 - eSPLASH67



## Side railing goes on

The Acheron Breakaway Bridge refurbishment continues, and this week the side hand railing has taken shape. The new railing is more akin to the original hand railing used when the bridge was first built.



# ACHERON BREAKAWAY BRIDGE CLOSED FOR RENOVATIONS

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17 JUNE TO 19 AUGUST 2013

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Published in eSplaash63





## The historic Breakaway Bridge spanning the Goulburn River

Acheron

Published April 2012 - eSplash33



The heritage Acheron Breakaway Bridge is pictured here in 2011, in the lead up to the Public Information Session held by the Shire of Murrindindi.

This occurred after significant public pressure was mounted to save the historic wooden trestle bridge to raise the bridge's historic profile.

The bridge was ultimately saved when the Shire Councillors reversed their previous vote and chose to move to refurbish the bridge. This occurred in 2012.

It is hoped that new railings similar in design to the original railings, will be restored.

Y o u r   S u b m i s s i o n s   w e l c o m e



OVER THE GOULBURN RIVER

# ACHERON BRIDGE

CELEBRATING HISTORIC  
TRESTLE BRIDGES  
& ADVANCING TOURISM

## VICTORIA

- Highest wood bridge on the Goulburn
- Very popular with tourists
- Victoria's longest river
- Victoria's main irrigation river
- Only wooden bridge beside a caravan park on the Goulburn River
- One of just a handful of working wooden trestle bridges surviving over the Goulburn River

ONE OF JUST A FEW WOODEN BRIDGES LEFT OVER THE GOULBURN RIVER





*Artworkz*

*Serving the community*