

CUMMINGS BRIDLE TRACK ROAD



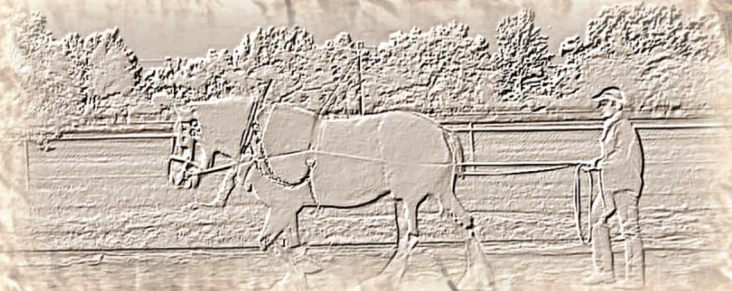
William Cummings
1803 - 1878

*From Peel to the Stockyard
and Tablelands
of the Tambaroura*

The Stockyard

Braggs Crossing

Bruinbun



Winburndale

Peel

A journey along the first Bridle Track from Peel to the Stockyard upon the Tablelands of the Tambaroura

tambaroora.com
Warwick P Taylor
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Acknowledgement of the Wiradjuri Nation as the Traditional Owners

***We would like to acknowledge and pay our
respects to the traditional custodians of this
land, the Wiradjuri people, and pay our
respects to the elders both past, present and
emerging, who's land we are on today***

Preface

The information in this narrative is for the original Bridle Track that William Cummings used to access his holdings at “Bruinbun” and upon the Tablelands of the Tambaroura.

The later Macquarie Bridle Track is only mentioned in regard to the difficulties in having it completed and where it relates to merging with Cummings Track. Sharon Sheldon’s book “Tales of the Bridle Track” is a must read and covers the Bridle Track as we know it today.

For all mentions of the Turon Crossing I have used Braggs Crossing as the reference so there is no misunderstanding between other crossings along the Turon further upstream. Where I have used “Tableland”, this refers to that land north west of and above the Macquarie and Turon Rivers where Cummings had his holdings. The same applies to Cummings “holdings” this implies his freehold land, and his leases and runs that he had under his control.

In many cases place and road names were non-existent in the years preceding the influx of those seeking gold, in this case I have referenced the place or road by using the current name. The only name that was in existence was the “Stockyard” at the future town of Tambaroora, it was referenced prior to the earliest days of gold discovery in the Tambaroora area.

Apologies in advance for any confusion in trying to describe roads and places which have had their names changed. Councils have moved the goal posts, not me!

The period that I have attempted to cover is from 1834 when Cummings was obtaining his Pastoral Leases/Runs which led to the existence of the current Bridle Track Road. Prior to 1885 no accurate and/or detailed maps or plans existed other than the early Crown Plans. Parish maps did not appear until the mid 1880’s, it is fortunate that surveyors noted earlier assets and roads and tracks in detail where they could when creating Crown Plans, this allowed these details to be transcribed onto the early Parish maps and has made researching the route taken that much easier.

I have used Light Detection Ranging (LIDAR) images to show where possible the original road or track without the interference of vegetation or man made structures hiding those details and to also try and eliminate distractions of later man made structures which might confuse.

For accuracy in determining track and road paths I have used LIDAR imaging, Parish maps, SIX maps and Crown Plans which relate to Portions where the tracks and roads may have passed through.

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Road and Place Names used and Dates of Commencement

The list below only gives an indication of when roads, tracks or places came into existence, in most cases a track would have preceded a road, although a road maybe have been surveyed and constructed from a plan.

Earlier Name or Identifier and Descriptor	Current Name
Braggs Crossing Crossing at junction of Cummings Bridle Track and Turon River c.1830's	Lower Turon Crossing
Broken Back Road Braggs Crossing to Hill End 1872-73	Bridle Track
Bridle Track Bathurst to Hill End 1879	Bridle Track
Cummings Bridle Track Road From Peel to the Stockyard and Tablelands at Tambaroura c.1830's	Bridle Track Only part of the existing Bridle Track forms Cummings Bridle Track
Duramana Junction 1. Rankins Estate Road and Tambaroora Road c.1854 2. Duramana Road, the Bridle Track and Turondale Road 1879 When the road works were completed from Braggs Crossing to Duramana Junction via Stoney Creek	At Pipers Rocks
Duramana Road From Peel to junction of Rivulet Road and Turondale Road c.1850's Now Eglinton to Duramana Junction	Rivulet Road
Footes Hotel The Winburndale At the junction of Winburndale Rivulet, Cheshire's Creek and Turondale Road c.1850's	None Not to be confused with the junction at Winburndale Rivulet, Stoney Creek and the original Bridle Track
Kelloshiel Estate of George Rankin 1822	Eglinton to Duramana Junction
Rankins Estate Road From Eglinton to Duramana Junction. Road created by George Rankin of "Kelloshiel" and "Saltram" in 1854	Duramana Road

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Saltram <i>An Estate purchased by George Rankin 1838</i>	Eglington to Duramana Junction
Stoney Creek Junction <i>Stoney Creek, Cummings Bridle Track Road, road to the Forge and later a road to Duramana Junction c.1830's</i>	
Tambaroora Road <i>From Duramana Junction through to Tambaroora via Turondale, Crudine, Pyramul Hill, Sallys Flat onto Tambaroora c.1854</i>	Turondale Road <i>From Duramana Junction to Hill End Road at the Crudine</i>
Turon Crossing <i>Lower Turon River above the junction with the Macquarie River c.1830's</i>	Braggs Crossing <i>c.1860's</i>

Confused yet?

Preamble

Cummings Access to his Holdings and the Early Bridle Track

This track saw its path laid down due to the expansion of pastoralisation spreading out from the newly established settlements in the region, these settlements included Bathurst c.1813¹, Kelso c.1816², Mudgee c.1820³ and Orange c.1829⁴. One of those prominent in the push for this expansion was William Cummings⁵ who in 1836 purchased a land holding of 991 acres at Peel⁶ and in 1837 the 640 acre "Bruinbun"⁷ on the Macquarie river. By the late 1850's he had accumulated pastoral leases of 148,000 acres around the Wellington area and 35,000 acres in the Lachlan area⁸, this included the pastoral interests he had upon the tablelands above the Macquarie and Turon rivers in the vicinity of the yet unnamed district of Tambaroora from circa 1834 on. Some of his pastoral runs included the future "Bundi" Station⁸ and the "Paling Yards"⁹ formerly known as "Cummings Old Station", after the discovery of gold he had on several occasions found horses on these two runs and had them impounded at the Tambaroora Pound. He also had a Stockyard located in the vicinity of the future town of Tambaroora and prior to the towns current name the site was referred to as "The Stockyard" see Figure 1.

The reminiscences of Mr. James Collison in 1919 relates to his experiences at what was to be known as "The Stockyard" and his time with William Cummings, *"Last time I told you about going to the diggings in 1852, and how I lost my bullocks and everything, Well! Before that happened, just after my 16th birthday, I drove in the stuff for the first public house on the Dirt Hole for a man named Chapman. The flash name now for 'the Dirt Hole' is Hill End, but it was always the Dirt Hole in those days. Within a week of that I drove the stuff for the first commissioner's residence and barracks built on The Stockyard another mining place afterwards called 'Tambaroora Flat'. This was where old Billy Cummins had a stockyard 25 years before, but when gold was found there, they gave it the aboriginal name for the place 'Tambaroora Flat'. There were three Cummins brothers and they were about the richest men around Bathurst in those days. Old Billy used to say to me 'Great God, Jimmy my boy, little did I think when riding about here twenty-five years ago that I was riding over thousands of ounces of gold' I asked him why he had left that place, and he explained that it was alright country in good weather, but the stock would not stay on it, and when he came to muster he found he had not as many as when he came to the place, so he took up land on the Macquarie River (Bruinbun). I said to old Billy Cummins that he must have used good wood for his stockyard, for I had pulled some post up a few days before and they were put in 25 years ago. That was in '52 when I pulled up some of the posts of the stockyard and Billy Cummins was old then, so goodness knows when those brothers came out to the colony"*¹⁰

Did you note that James was only 16 when he was driving a bullock team to Tambaroora in 1852? simply AMAZING!!!!

¹ Bathurst, New South Wales, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bathurst,_New_South_Wales#History

² Kelso, New South Wales, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kelso,_New_South_Wales

³ Mudgee New South Wales, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mudgee>

⁴ Orange New South Wales, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orange,_New_South_Wales#History

⁵ William Cummings, 1803 - 1878, Member of the Legislative Assembly, <https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/members/Pages/member-details.aspx?pk=297>

⁶ Crown Plan, 315-691, Lot 3, William Cummings, Land Registry Services, NSW Government

⁷ Crown Plan, 316-691, Lot 11, William Cummings, Land Registry Services, NSW Government

⁸ NSW Government Gazette, No.112, Pg.1838, dtd 18 Oct 1853 - TROVE

⁹ NSW Government Gazette, No.94, Pg.1475, dtd 30 Aug 1853 - TROVE

¹⁰ Newspaper, Yass Evening Tribune, Pg.5, dtd 27 Nov 1919

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Cummings applied for and purchased yearly leases by auction in 1834¹¹ in the County of Wellington which covered area's in the vicinity of the confluence of the Macquarie and Turon Rivers and the tablelands above which would be later known as the "Tambaroura".

He had been moving stock over this region for approximately 20 years from Peel to "Bruinbun" and onto the tablelands to his pastoral runs before the discovery of gold. By the time gold had been discovered in the district roads and tracks had extended as far as Triambil, "Burrendong Old Station", "Tambaroora Old Station", "Tatuali Station", Louisa Creek (Hargraves) and "Toolamanang Station" at Pyramul Hill, these well worn roads and tracks eventually proved a valuable asset for those seeking their fortune in gold¹².

The Tambaroura was a name given to the area, it had no defined boundary as such but was referred to by Europeans as being from the Meroo in the north to the Macquarie in the south, Dixon Long Point in the west and Sally's Flat in the east.

There were of course other pastoralists, the Suttor family were very prominent with extensive holdings throughout the Counties and the Pipers who had large holdings around Bathurst and along the Macquarie, but Cummings appears to have staked his claim on the Tambaroura.

Cummings could go no further with horse and bullock teams after the crossing on the lower Turon (Braggs Crossing) below the big Hill, later known as Hawkins Hill, leading up onto the Tableland, the ascent up the hill proved to great for the teams.

It's not known if Cummings employed Stockmen and Shepherds to manage his stock upon the Tablelands, if he did, these men would require an alternate way of receiving stores and provisions other than his Bridle Track. Another route was available to him for drays to move to the area, it was a lot longer but made access reachable and was to become the main route to the Tambaroora Gold Field in the 1850's to the late 60's for horse and bullock teams.

The road from Peel to Richardson's Station at the crossing near the future Sofala and Suttors "Toolamanang" Station at Pyramul gave him access to the Tablelands. A junction just south of Suttors gave access to other pastoral holdings and villages upon the Tablelands and parts of this road network are still used today.

The road Cummings would have used after leaving the Junction headed south following the high ground and ridges which saw it pass through the future Sally's Flat then continuing westerly along the ridges and high ground separating the water sheds of both Green Valley and the Turon Rivers, this brought him to the future Tambaroora and his Stockyard located in that locality, from there it was an easy journey to his Station at the future Paling Yards on the unnamed Tambaroora creek and beyond to his leases.

¹¹ Newspaper, Sydney Herald, Pg.2, dtd 13 Jan 1834 - TROVE

¹² Surveyor General Map G.4.1481, Item No.2856, NSW State Archives and Records

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Figure 1 - Cummings Original Bridle Track



Image shows Cummings original Track/Road with the current roads as the white dash lines
(Graphics by Warwick P Taylor 2021)

William Cummings entered politics in 1859 becoming a Member of the Legislative Assembly in the New South Wales Colony, details of his career can be viewed here:

[William Cummings Biography](#)

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In 1865 Cummings claimed compensation as a Tenant of the Crown for injury and loss of property sustained by him on account of the discovery of gold upon his rented Crown Lands on the Tambaroora, Maquarie and Turon¹³.

Other Early Roads that interact with Cummings Track

Kelloshiel (Eglington) to the Junction of Duramana Road, Turondale Road and the Bridle Track

This road from Kelloshiel (Eglington) to the Duramana Junction at Pipers Rocks¹⁴ was opened in 1854.

The roads existence came about from the generosity of George Rankin Esq. when subdividing a portion of one of his estates "Saltram", a newspaper article describes the estate and his intention to open a new line of road -

31 Mar 1854 - Opening of Road from Kelloshiel and Saltram to Duramana

"The splendid paddocks at Saltram have been long known for their peculiar rich pasturage, and it is an established fact, that the butter and cheese from "Kelloshiel", immediately adjoining the land now offered for sale, are not to be surpassed by any dairy produce in the colony. The estate is situated in the very centre of the western gold fields, and as it is the intention of the proprietor to open a new line of road to the Turon and Tambaroora through his property, which will materially curtail the distance, an increased value will be given to these lands"¹⁵

A Crown Plan of twenty seven Lots sold in 1858¹⁶ along the Tambaroora Road (Turondale Road) starting from the northern boundaries of Rankins Estates at the Duramana Junction shows the new road he had constructed BUT this Plan does not show the existence of the current Bridle Track at the junction, only Rankins new road(Duramana Road) and Tambaroora Road (Turondale Road) are shown.

Roads to Peel

Although outside the scope of this narrative it is important to include the early routes to Peel from the Sydney Road (Sydney to Bathurst) and from Kelso to Peel, not all roads left via Bathurst.

Green Swamp to Peel

Ten kilometres east of Kelso at a place called Green Swamp¹⁷, the road veers to the right off the Sydney road and heads to Peel via Glanmire, this is a route later taken by early miners to the Turon Diggings.

The newspaper article below describes the routes that could be taken to Peel from Sydney road or from Kelso -

"July 8th 1851 - The throng by the Village of Peel road and Brucedale, for the past week, amounted to no less than 237 persons, bound for the diggings; most of whom were

¹³ Newspaper, Empire, Pg.3, dtd 3 Jun 1865 - TROVE

¹⁴ Map, Parish of Duramana, 1885, Land Registry Services, NSW Government

¹⁵ Newspaper, the Empire, Pg.4, dtd 31 Mar 1854 - TROVE

¹⁶ Crown Plan, 180-1496, Sale of 27 Lots of land on Tambaroora Road, Parish of Duramana, 1858, Land Registry Services, NSW Government

¹⁷ History, Napoleon Reef, Walang and Glanmire Residents Association Inc.

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*accompanied with teams, containing their luggage. A great number of Sydney adventurers stopped at Mr. Howard's Inn, during the week, and this morning (Tuesday) eleven teams from Sydney, passed through the Village, all on their way to the diggings. The number who pass through our township, can only be accounted for, from the advice we have previously given, (to the Sydney adventurers) that the road from the Green Swamp to Glanmire, and hence by Winburndale Creek or Brucedale to the Village of Peel, is decidedly the best way for loaded drays, or either horse or foot passengers for the Turon diggings, and the distance too is scarcely more than twenty miles. Plenty of grass and water can be had from Glanmire to the diggings, on this road, and we have no doubt, in the course of time, the Sydney people, and all others who take the route by our township, will see the advantage of coming.'*¹⁸

In those very early months after the discovery of gold these roads appear to be the only roads to the gold fields on the Lower Turon, for those keen to find gold and not having any reason to continue to Bathurst, the road from Green Swamp to Peel would have been appealing.

Kelso to Peel

This route virtually mimics the current road to Peel from Kelso other than minor re-alignments where the road went through "Brucedale" on its way to Peel. The road from Kelso to Peel via Brucedale merged with the road from Green Swamp in the vicinity of Grosvenors Estate just north of Peel.

¹⁸ Newspaper, *The Peoples Advocate and New South Wales Vindicator*, Pg.4, dtd 12 Jul 1851

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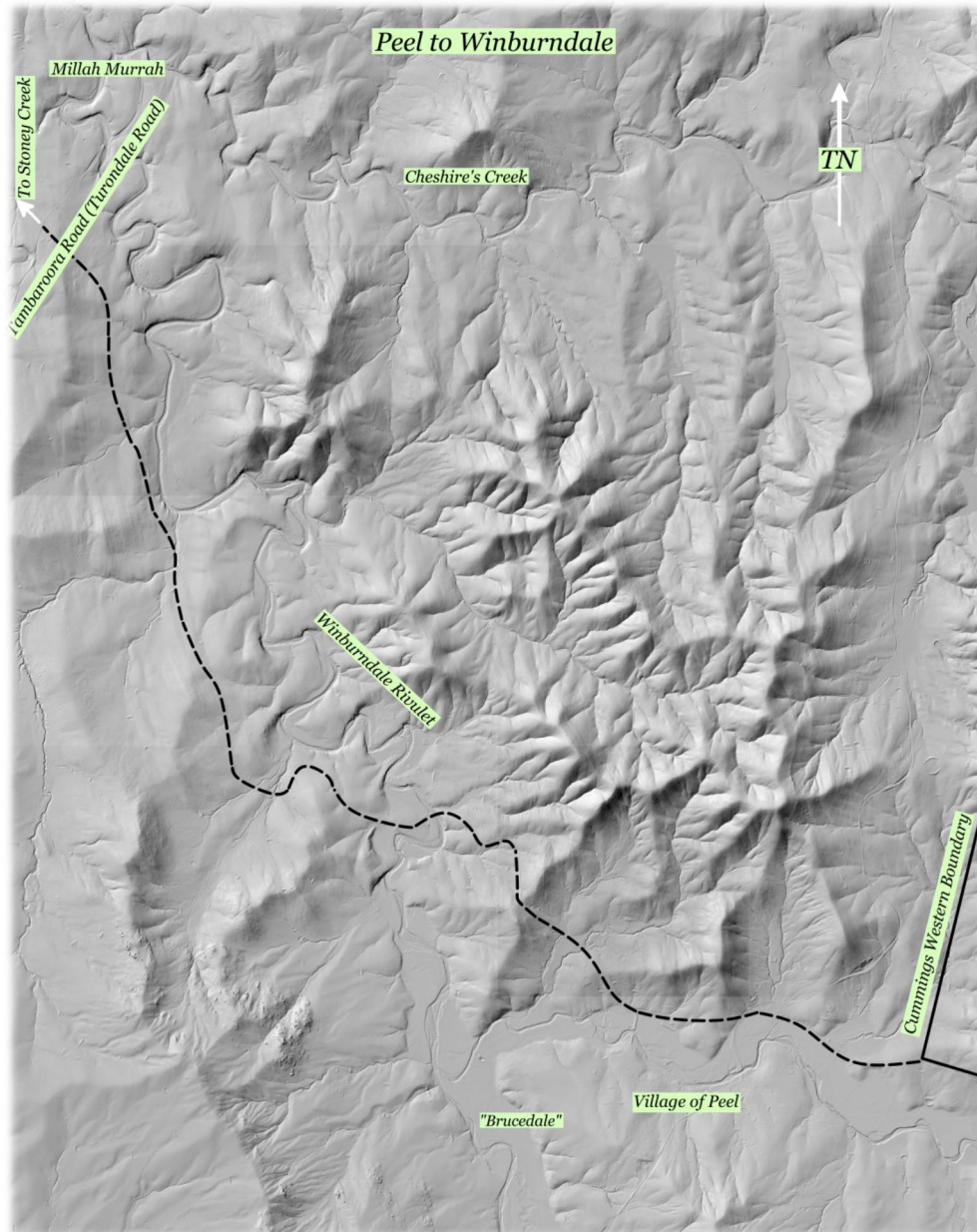
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Peel to “Bruinbun” and the Tableland Beyond - Pre 1851

From Peel Cummings journey would have seen him cross Clear Creek and onto the Winburndale Rivulet, continuing in a north westerly direction along the western bank of the Rivulet towards the future Winburndale, from here he would have crossed the future Tambaroora Road (Turondale Road), see Figure 2.

Figure 2 - Peel to Tambaroora Road (Turondale Road) Winburndale



LIDAR image of Cummings Track from Peel to Tambaroora Road (Turondale Road)
The current road mimics the original Track. Black dash line is the approximate original route
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From Winburndale the Track continued in a north westerly direction to skirt around Black Mountain on the north side, a Crown Plan for an Improvement Lease Block 556¹⁹ shows the dashed line and the notation “Bridle Track - Reserved 1 Chain wide”, the Parish map of Duramana²⁰ and Waltham²¹ have both been notated, the former with “From Hill End - Bridle Track to be reserved” and the later with “Bridle Track to be reserved 100 wide”, even though these Parish maps are at least fifty years after Cummings was travelling this route the fact that the Track can still be identified suggests it was in use till much later. Either end of the Track as shown on the Crown Plan are in direct line with the Peel to Winburndale Track in the east and the Track to “The Forge” at Stoney Creek Junction in the west, the route shown on the Crown Plan can be seen in Figure 3.

This route would have been in use up to at least 1858 as there was no other access to “Bruinbun”, Rankins Estate Road (Duramana Road) at Kellosiel (Eglington) did not come into existence until 1854 at the earliest so there was no connecting route from Bathurst directly to “Bruinbun”.

The Crown Plan for the sale of the twenty seven lots on Tambaroora Road in 1858¹⁶ that did not show the Bridle Track at the Duramana Junction suggests the road from that junction was not in existence until sometime between 1858 and 1893. A Crown Plan²² shows a survey of a traverse of part of the road from Bathurst to Hill End starting at Stoney Creek and finishing at “Bruinbun” undertaken in 1893 by the Department of Works and was proposed to be opened as a Parish road. The section from Bathurst to Stoney Creek may have remained a Track.

¹⁹ Crown Plan, 652-3090, Improvement Lease Block 556, Parish of Waltham, Land Registry Services, NSW Government

²⁰ Map, Parish of Duramana, 2nd Edition, 1897, Land Registry Services, NSW Government

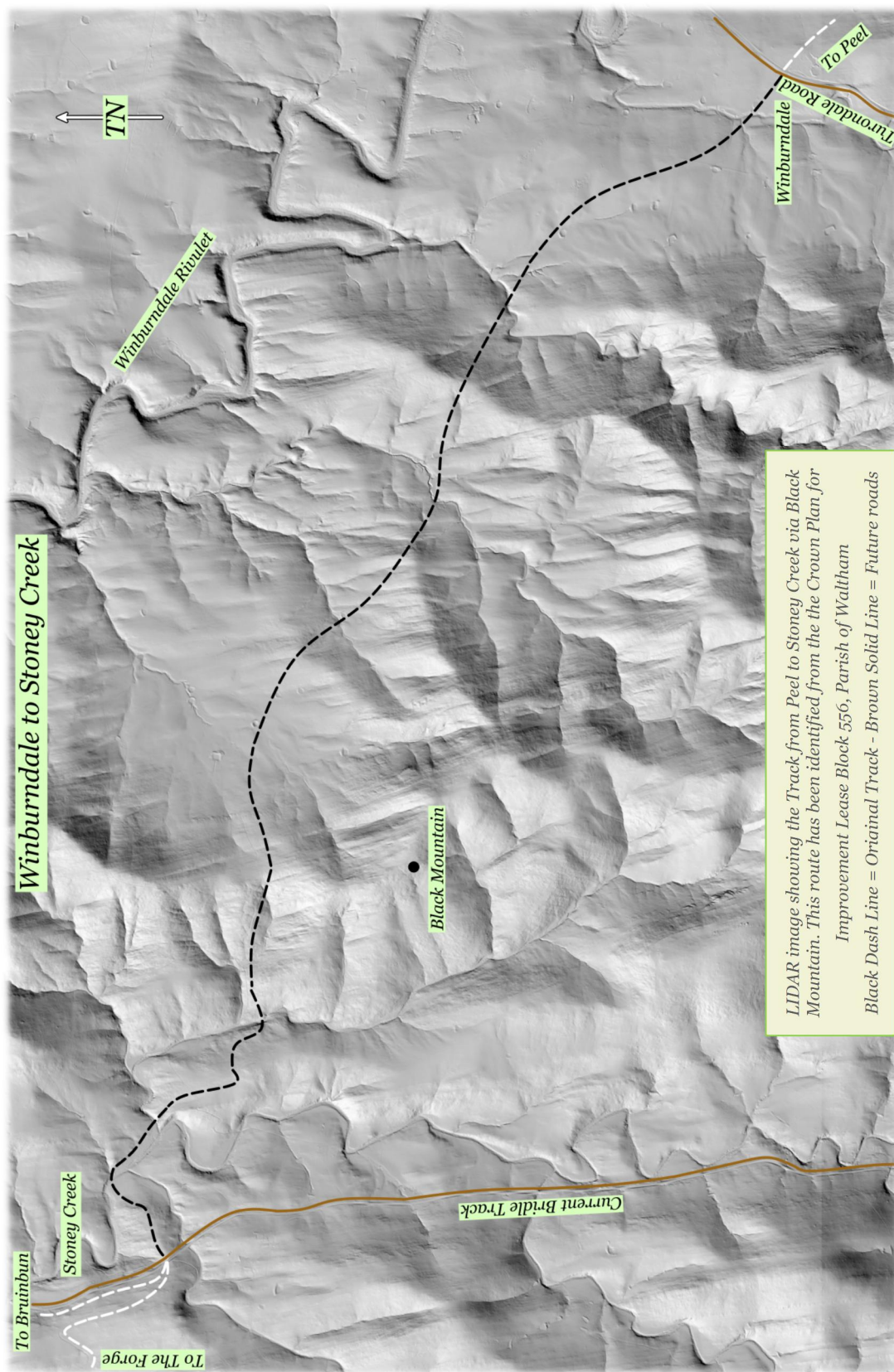
²¹ Map, Parish of Waltham, 2nd Edition, 1894, Land Registry Services, NSW Government

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Figure 3 - Winburndale to Stoney Creek



(Graphics by Warwick P Taylor © 2021)

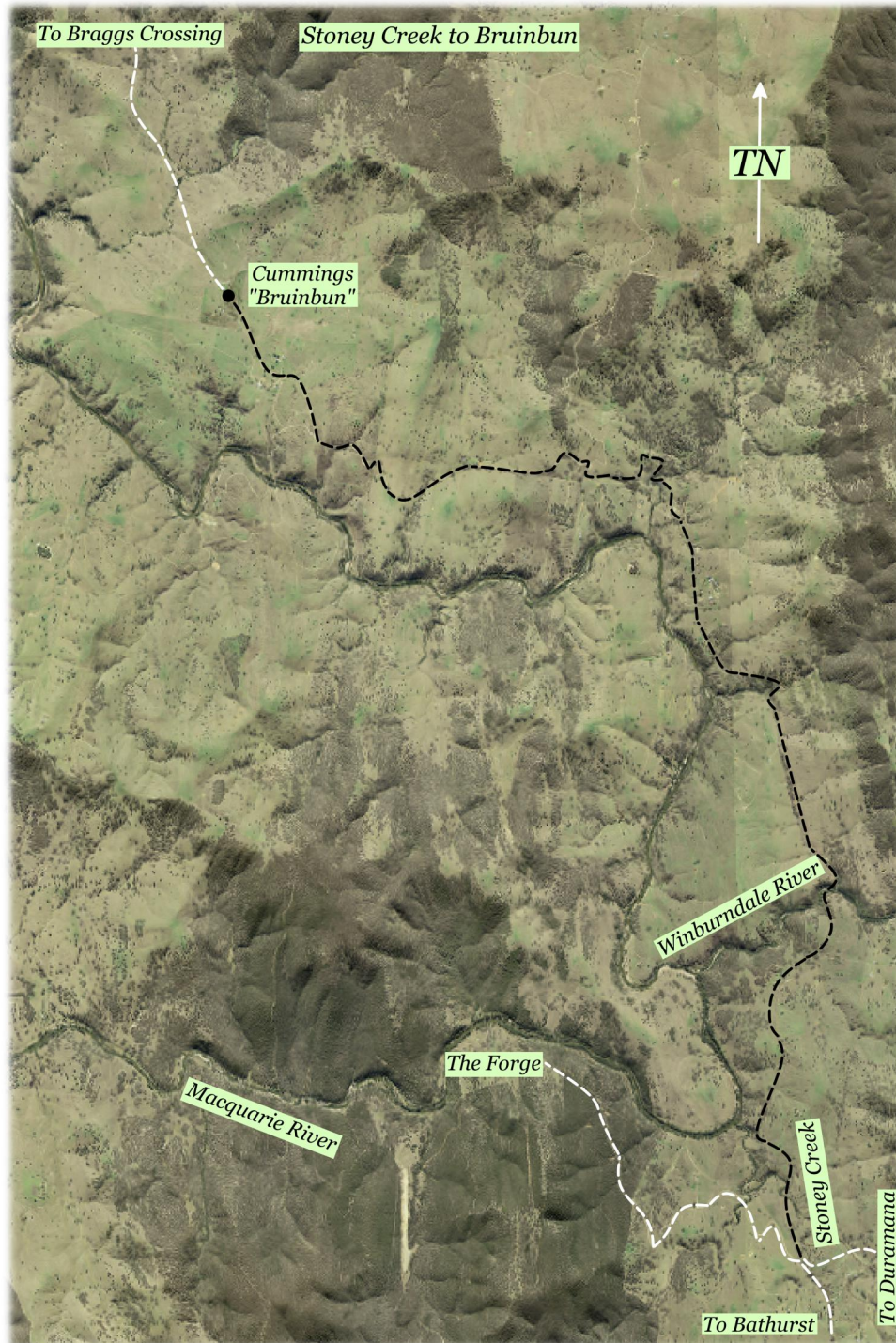
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From Stoney Creek it appears that the Track to “Bruinbun” had laid down the foundation for the existing road to that place with possibly some minor variations to the route²², see Figure 4.

Figure 4 - Stoney Creek to Bruinbun



SIX map image of area thru which Cummings Track passed

(Map courtesy of Land Registry Services, NSW Government

Graphics - Warwick P Taylor © 2021)

²² Crown Plan, 4408-1603, Traverse of part of the road from Bathurst to Hill End, Parishes of Bruinbun, Macquarie and Waltham, County of Roxburgh, Land Registry Services, NSW Government

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The route from “Bruinbun” to Braggs Crossing was at the time across un-alienated crown land and being such there were no restrictions on movement across it, the track after leaving “Bruinbun” appears to have followed high ground and ridge lines which allowed it a direct route where possible leading to Mares Nest, see Figure 5. Mares Nest overlooks the Macquarie and Turon rivers and their junction, it is from here that the track descends down the spur on the north side of Mares Nest to Braggs Crossing, see Figure 9, remnant of the track descending the spur is still visible from Kissing Point Lookout. Evidence of this route can be seen on the early parish and pastoral maps for the area produced by the surveyors tasked to document the region. When the un-alienated crown lands were eventually surveyed in the early 1900’s the surveyors included Cummings Track in the survey of the Portions, the track was then recorded as a reserved road, see Figure 5. In later years part of the road had a name change to Hodges Road²³.

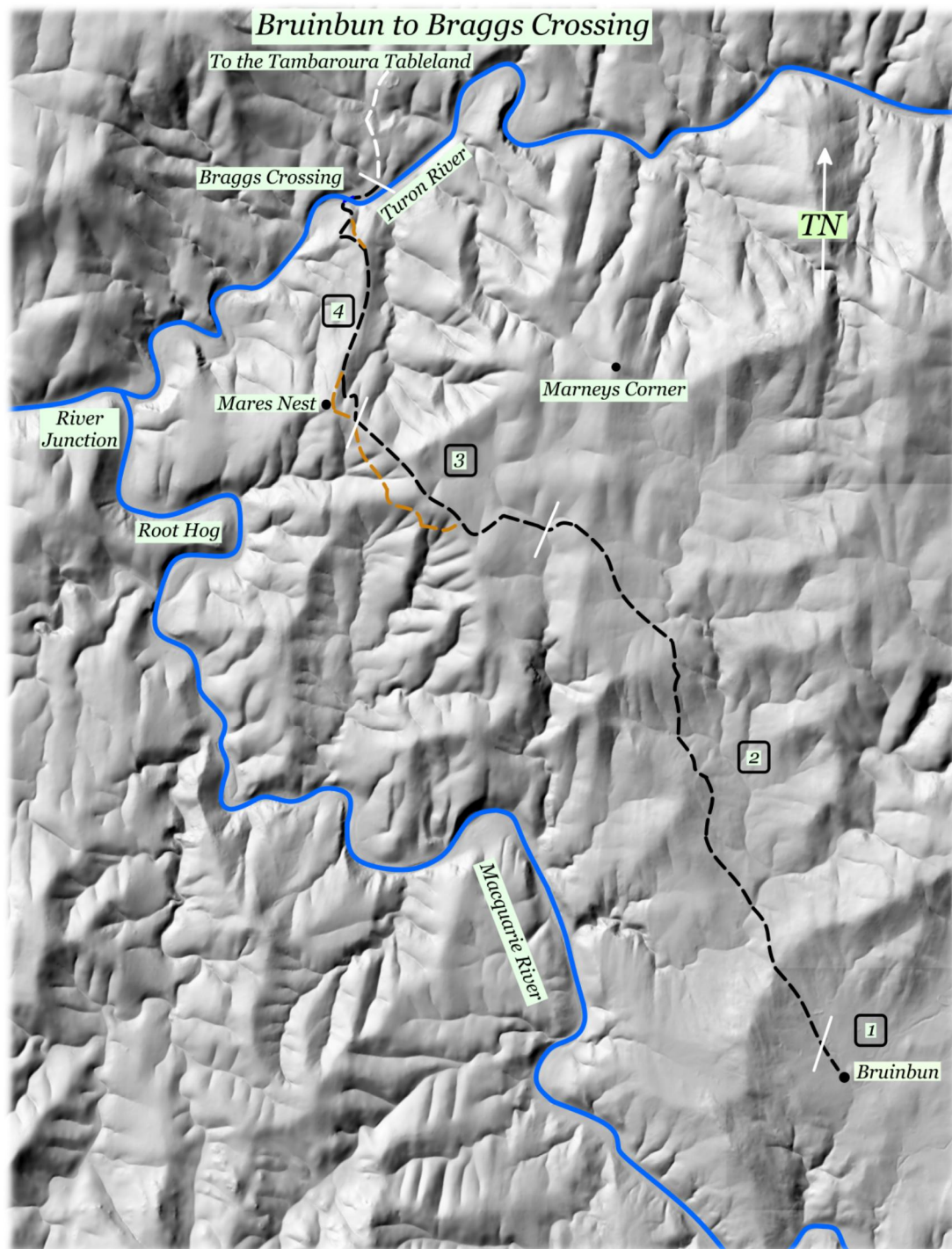
²³ SIX Maps - <http://maps.six.nsw.gov.au/>

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Figure 5 - Bruinbun to Braggs Crossing



This LIDAR image shows the route from Bruinbun to Braggs Crossing

The black line represents the route per the surveyors plans and the brown line a later re-alignment

(Graphics by Warwick P Taylor 2021)

The numbers on the image represent the source from which the route was reconstructed -

1. Portion 1, Cummings, Crown Plan 316-691 Parish of Bruinbun
2. Portion 15, Crown Plan 4320-1496 Parish of Bruinbun
3. Portion 10, Crown Plan 3416-1496, Parish of Bruinbun
4. Portion 11, Crown Plan 4130-1496, Parish of Bruinbun

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The track from Braggs Crossing to the tableland was only suitable for foot and horse led traffic, no horse drawn vehicles could negotiate the ascent up to the tableland by this route, not until late 1872 were horse drawn vehicles able to ascend and descend to and from the tableland and that was via a different route.

Before 1851 at the time of the gold discovery in the region there was just the one track, this gave Cummings quick access to his holdings on the tableland, but with a regional population increase comes demands for more convenient, and faster direct routes between regional centres, and there were of course those who wanted comfort and those who wanted gold.

After crossing the Turon and moving a short distance upstream along the western bank the track steered a course towards a spur protruding from the tableland to the west down to the Turon, the track first ascended and then descended this spur falling into Oakey Creek upstream from its junction with the Turon. After crossing Oakey it once again ascends a spur running north south on the eastern side of Oakey Creek leading to the tableland above, see Figure 6.

At a later date a re-alignment saw the track continue a short distance further along the Turon until it crosses the Oakey Creek causeway at the junction with the Turon before making its ascent up onto higher ground where it merges with the track previously mentioned, the track then makes its ascent up along the spur onto the tableland at a point later known as Hawkins Hill, in those early days the Hawkins feature was referred to as either Hawkins spur, ridge or mount before finally settling for Hawkins Hill, see Figure 6.

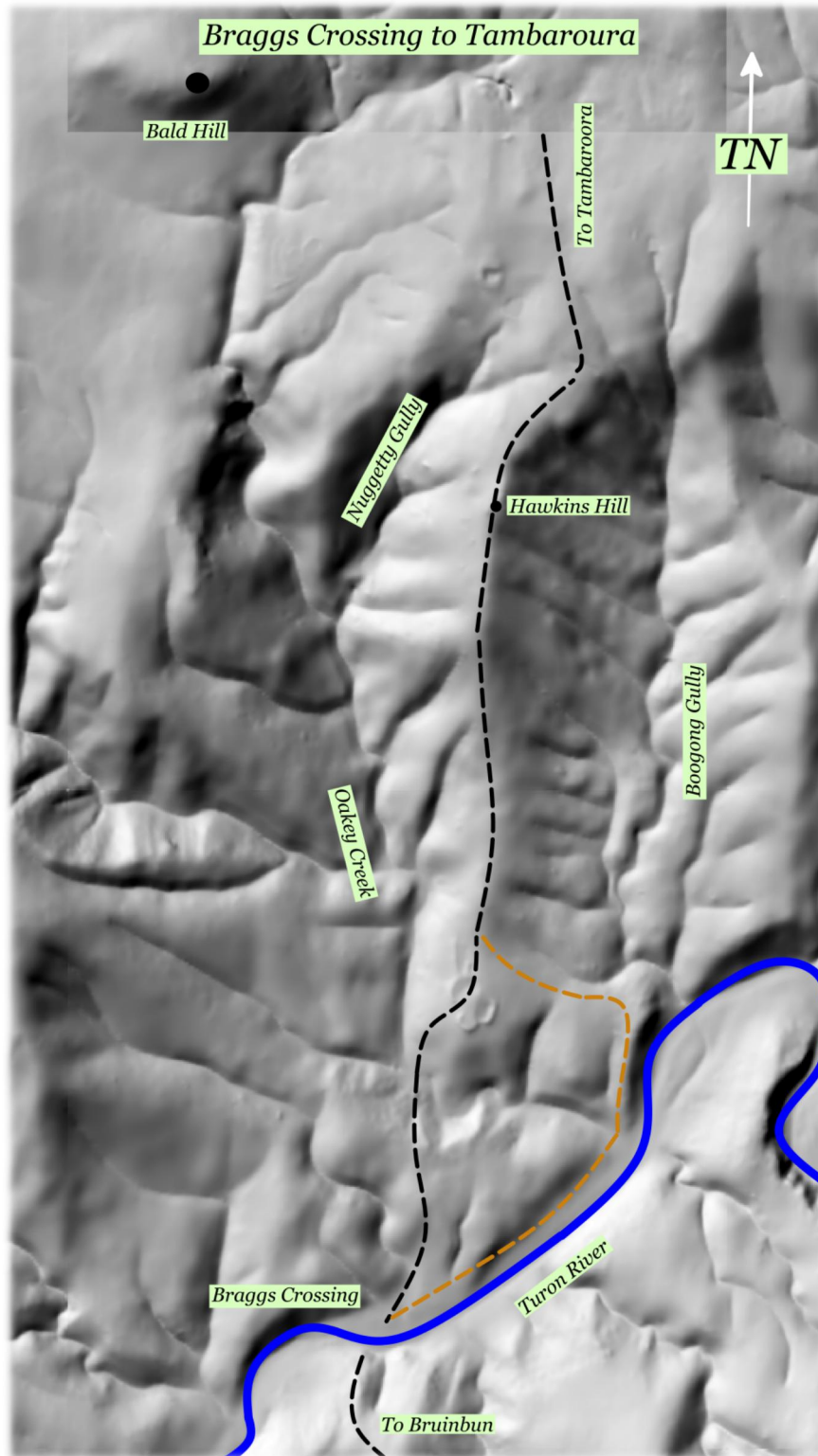
From here Cummings could manage his holdings, but come the end of 1851 the situation changed dramatically, encroachments upon his Leases and Runs and loss of stock saw Cummings withdraw back to "Bruinbun" and Peel.

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Figure 6 - Braggs Crossing to the Tableland



This LIDAR image shows the original path from Braggs Crossing up to the Tableland

The black dash line marks the original route and the brown dash line indicates
a change of path at a later date

(Graphics by Warwick P Taylor 2021)

Bruinbun to Turon River Crossing (Braggs) - 1851 to 1870

What may have started as a bridle track quickly changed after the discovery of gold, the influx of prospectors seeking their fortune opened up the area with offshoot tracks, this was especially the case along the Macquarie and Turon rivers. It did not take long before stores and Inns appeared along both rivers and roads culminating at Braggs Crossing, William Cummings son was one of these who opened commercial ventures including a butcher shop. Braggs was as far as the road went, from the crossing up to the tableland was strictly a bridle track until 1872-73. After the discovery of gold at Root Hog and Chambers Creek new tracks were developed following a spur down the south side of the ridge from Mares Nest to the Macquarie and across the river to Root Hog and Chambers Creek.

Thomas Clines purchased Lot 2²⁴ of 30 acres in 1864, Lot 3²⁵ of 2 acres in 1866 and Lot 4²⁶ of 40 acres in 1865 at the future Marneys Corner later known as Mahoneys Corner²⁷, see Figure 7, approximately 4 kilometres east of Mares Nest, the area was also given the descriptive name "Quartz Ridge" not to be confused with the Quartz Ridge later known as Turondale. This quartz ridge is visible from Kissing Point Lookout. A track and dray road were both noted as passing his holdings coming from Bathurst merging with Cummings Track from Bruinbun to Braggs Crossing approximately 1.2 kilometres east of Mares Nest.

Clines two acre holding had on it at the time of his purchase a hut, shed and stockyard, in all probability this may have been a rest area for the dray teams on their way to the Root Hog, Chambers Creek and Braggs Crossing. Drays would have had to take a more lenient route taking into consideration the heavy loads they had to move.

Figure 7 - Marneys Corner (Mahoneys)



This image is taken from Kissing Point Lookout looking south east, the quartz outcrop can be easily seen, Thomas Cline had both a 30 acre and a 2 acre portion on the ridge.

(Image and Graphic - Warwick P Taylor 2021)

²⁴ Crown Plan, 317-1496, Lot 2, Thomas Clines, Land Registry Services, NSW Government

²⁵ Crown Plan, 318-1496, Lot 3, Thomas Clines, Land Registry Services, NSW Government

²⁶ Crown Plan, 314-1496, Lot 4, Thomas Clines, Land Registry Services, NSW Government

²⁷ NSW Government Gazette, No.19, Pg.576, dtd 2 Feb 1979, Geographical Names Act - TROVE

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It wasn't only gold diggers opening up new tracks and roads, from 1853 Crown Land leases by auction were becoming more common with land being made available in the more isolated area's. It was not long before they were reaching out around Bruinbun on the Macquarie and along the Turon river. These leases were auctioned as Sections consisting of 640 acres each²⁸.

With the increased amount of foot and horse traffic heading to the Macquarie and Lower Turon in the vicinity of Root Hog, Chambers Creek and Braggs Crossing and by now the Tambaroora Gold Fields shorter routes would have been pushed through, the Gold Rush was on, not everyone could afford the cost of transport to the diggings, an obvious solution was to find shorter route's to those Fields, one of those would have been a track from the junction of Rankins Estate road and Tambaroora road to Stoney Creek, this would shorten the time and distance dramatically.

²⁸ NSW Government Gazette, No.27, Pg.454, dtd 8 Mar 1853 - TROVE

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Braggs Crossing to Tambaroora via Hawkins Hill and Vice Versa - 1851 - 1872

Figure 8 - Bridle Track - Kissing Point



This view is of the original Bridle Track taken looking down the eastern side of the spur on Hawkins Hill as Kissing Point, the track at this point was used by Mining Companies to access their Claims further down the spur, hence it is in all probability wider then it originally was.

(Image courtesy of Warwick P Taylor 2020)

As prospectors followed the gold trail down the Macquarie and Turon Rivers to the Lower Turon, many chose to chase the gold in their tributaries, one of these was Oakey Creek²⁹ off the Turon River, this creek wound its way up to the Tableland above, in doing so prospectors realised the ground became increasingly more precipitous. For some the arduous climb was made that much easier by Cummings bridle track.

6 August 1870 - Journey to Root Hog from Tambaroora

A reporters description of a journey he made to Root Hog from Tambaroora in 1870 describes in part the location of the track on the other side of the Turon, given his description was down Hawkins Spur, down the Turon, then across by boat, then up 700 feet, then down 700 feet, then across the Macquarie to Root Hog. The description given after crossing the Turon of ascending 700 feet and descending 700 feet to the Macquarie provides an insight to the route of the Track from Braggs Crossing to Root Hog, see Figure 9. This route would have taken the reporter when ascending the other side of the Turon up to Mares Nest (Finger Post Trig Station), then down to the Macquarie and across to Root Hog. Even up to 1895 the track can be seen on the parish map of Bruinbun.

“The weather was almost perfect the greater part of the time I spent at Tambaroora, sharp frosty nights, with ice from one-sixth to half-inch thick every morning, and brilliant cloudless days. On one of these I went over to the Root Hog (he'll have to root too, to get much up here). Now this route may be roughly described as three miles of bad travelling, two of worse, and three of worst. The first is the road I think I mentioned before; the second

²⁹ Oakey Creek was formerly known as Bald Hills Creek

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is down Hawkins's Spur, 1000 feet; and the third is down the Turon, which is ultimately crossed in a boat, then up 700 feet and down 700 feet, then across the Macquarie in a boat; after which, in returning, you reverse the process, but the variation scarcely repays the labour. And yet the mountains about the junction of the two rivers are very majestic and imposing; the clear Macquarie joining the tawny Turon at the broad base of some tremendous spurs, whose heads are in the mist on a moist day. Thin wreaths of blue smoke coming up from below, betray the huts of resident miners, mostly Chinamen, whose dams in place stretch across the river and check the flood, in some cases spoiling a ford. I met the sergeant and trooper Burgess riding down armed, to compel a mob of fifteen of them to cut a dam which impeded the crossing of the river. This mob had threatened to murder the interpreter if he came again to them on this errand. There must be something good in the Turon. Yet these boats on the Turon and Macquarie are of quaint design and curious build; square-sterned, flat-bottomed blunt-pointed barques; some almost as frail as Charon's On the Styx, in which he used to scull the departed souls of Greeks and Romans to the fields of bliss or realms of torment. The charge is 6d (not over the Styx, which, subject to certain drawbacks, was free) in some places, and nothing in others."³⁰

Figure 9 - Original Bridle Track at Mares Nest



This image is taken from Kissing Point Look Out and shows the original path of Cummings Track, satellite images actually show slight deviations of its path on the Spur, no doubt made due to track conditions. At a later date the track continued over the Spur and down to the Macquarie to Root Hog.

(Image and Graphics - Warwick P Taylor 2021)

22 June 1871 - Distribution of money for Subordinate Roads for the year 1871

An allocation for the Lower Turon to Tambaroora, 20 miles £140.0.0³¹, no specific details given for the allocation.

³⁰ Newspaper - Australian Town and Country Journal, Pg.10, dtd 6 Aug 1870 - TROVE

³¹ Newspaper, The Empire, Pg.3, dtd 22 Jun 1871 - TROVE

18 December 1871 - Commissioners Report on the Western Gold Fields

This report was written by the Commissioners to the Western District, Mr.P.F. Adams, Mr. Harold Maclean, Mr. Whittingdale Johnson and Mr. William C. Bennett to the Secretary for Lands on the 12 December 1871. This report was written by those in authority and not just a reporter or correspondent.

Within the report and of particular interest to those who had long argued for improvements to the roads the Commissioners wrote in part:

“The route to Tambaroora opens a larger question. The necessity for a better and more direct route between Mudgee and Bathurst has long been felt, and the proximate opening of the railway to Bathurst gives it further importance, irrespective of the gold workings at Hill End, so that any expenditure for local purposes should be made to conduce to the formation of the through route as much as possible.

At present the traffic route to Tambaroora from Sydney is via Wallerawang to Tabrabucca, forty miles by the Mudgee road, and thence by a ridge road, via G. Suttors 640 acres and Sally’s Flat to Tambaroora, thirty-one miles over and unformed mountain track, on which there has been little or no expenditure.

The Tambaroora people have found this the best road, and are anxious for its improvement, because they have hitherto considered Bathurst inaccessible, which it certainly is for wheels by the present direct route, and nearly so by the Monkey Hill line, on which a great proportion of the whole traffic is carried, chiefly forage and breadstuffs: but from reports of the road superintendent, who has been instructed to examine the line via Bruinbun to Winburndale Creek, we have some hopes that on further examination a practicable line will be found in that direction to Bathurst; this would reduce the distance from Bathurst to Tambaroora to about thirty-five miles, in lieu of the present route via Monkey Hill, about forty-six miles, and on it the whole of the Hill End and Tambaroora traffic could be conveyed from Bathurst and the railway terminus; and when the road from Tambaroora to Mudgee is in better order, and we now recommend that it should receive a larger share of public money, communication between Bathurst and Mudgee would be considerably improved.

Facilities would also be afforded for the cartage of the quartz, &c, to the river, to which no doubt many of the crushing establishments would be removed if a good road existed.

Pending these improvements, and the opening of the railway, the road from Tambaroora to Sally’s Flat should receive a larger grant than it has done, to prevent the great increase in traffic making it impassable.”³²

³² Newspaper, The Empire, Pg. 4, dtd 18 Dec 1871 - TROVE

Figure 10 - Advertisement for Coach Services from Wallerawang

ROYAL MAIL COACH.
To and from HILL END, TAMBAROORA, and
WALLERAWANG RAILWAY STATION,
In connection with COBB and CO.
The most direct, shortest and best road from
SYDNEY TO HILL END, TAMBAROORA.
THROUGH IN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS.
On and after Monday, the 1st of January, a Coach will leave
HILL END every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, WAL-
LEWARANG RAILWAY STATION, at 5.30 a.m., meeting
Cobb and Co.'s MUDGEE COACH at Tabrabucca Swamp,
returning from Wallerawang to Hill End every Tuesday,
Thursday, and Saturday.
Passengers should leave Sydney by the 5 p.m. Mail Train
on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday Evenings, and be sure
and get out of Train at Wallerawang Railway Station, where
they can book.
All Parcels sent punctually, and should be directed
VIA WALLERAWANG and ILFORD COACH.
S. BROWN,
Proprietor.

Advertisement for Coach Services from Wallerawang³³ as described in the article above

(Image courtesy of National Library of Australia - TROVE)

17 February 1872 - Hill End to Chambers Creek

A description by a reporter confirms that the Hawkins Hill Bridle Track was still being used too descend to the Turon, the later Bridle Track along Broken Back Ridge had still not been constructed -

*"With your kind permission, I will guide your reader from Hill End to Chambers Creek. The traveller quits Weirs most excellent Hotel, not later than 5p.m., and takes the track down Hawkins Hill. The descent is precipitous, but in half an hour he reaches Oakey Creek; ascending the opposite spur he soon arrives, by the bridle track, at Bragg's hotel and store, on the Turon"*³⁴

3 August 1872 - Deputation of Members of Parliament meet with Minister for Works

Interest in the Tambaroora and other Gold Fields was increasing at a rapid rate, parallel with the increasing quantity of gold being recovered. A newspaper correspondent made the following observations in Aug 1872 regarding expenditures on the roads leading to the Tambaroora Gold Field :-

"On Monday, the 28th July, a deputation, consisting of Mr. D. Buchanan, M.L.A., Mr. J. Campbell, M.L.A., Mr. Booth, M.L.A., Mr. Chapman (Mayor of Sydney) Alderman Merriman, Alderman. Green, Mr. Renny, Mr. Murray, and Mr. Corneille, had an interview with the Minister for Works respecting the badness of the roads to Hill End. The deputation consisted of a few of the persons who have at various times during the last few months been upset with the coaches running to Hill End; and it was scarcely an exaggeration on the part of the

³³ Newspaper, Australian Town and Country Journal, Pg.28, dtd 30 Dec 1871 - TROVE

³⁴ Newspaper - Australian Town and Country, Pg.15, dtd 17 Feb 1872 - TROVE

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honourable and learned member for the Western Gold Fields – who introduced the deputation – when that gentleman described his associates as being ‘all more or less damaged’. One gentleman was lame, another had his arm in a sling, a third appeared with his hand bandaged, and so forth.

Some appear to have come down softly in the mud, while others, like Mr. Booth had ‘generally dropped on their feet’ and perhaps on that account were better qualified to give unbiased testimony as to the badness of the thoroughfare.

Mr. Buchanan drew attention to the importance of the gold-fields of the Tambaroora district, and to the necessity of improving the roads, so as to accommodate the increasing traffic in that part of the country. The members of the deputation drew attention to various parts of the road, more especially to Wyagdon Hill, the Cockatoo siding, Monkey Hill, and the length between Hawkins public-house [at Sallys Flat] and Hill End. They urged that if a small amount were to be at once expended in filling in the ruts, removing boulders, and extracting stumps, a great saving in public time and convenience, possibly life, would be the result.

They thought that the expenditure of about £500 would be sufficient until such time as the road could be properly formed. They referred in terms of the highest commendation to the skill and care of Cobb and Co.’s drivers, and also spoke well of the sort of horses.

It was however, urged that the Government ought to interfere to regulate the licensing of coaches. Some of the coaches were licensed to carry forty persons when, owing to the roughness of the roads, it was not safe to allow them to carry one half the licensed number. Mr. Sutherland said he agreed with all that had been stated with reference to the bad state of the roads. The Government had hardly been two months and a half in office, and they had placed £6000 on the Estimates for the road from Bathurst to Hill End (**The Appropriation Fund states the £6000/o/o was for the road between Tambaroora to Hill End**), and they had also drawn heavily on the vote for unclassified roads. £500 had been placed at the disposal of Trustees, who had been requested to expend it as judiciously and expeditiously as possible, and the local officer of the Government had been instructed to give them all the assistance in his power.

Although the £6000 on the Estimates had not yet been voted, still, having regard to the great urgency and importance of this matter, all the preparatory arrangements had been made, and twenty contracts had been let in anticipation of the vote which Parliament would no doubt grant in the course of a day or two. A contract had been let for levelling and metalling the road from Hill End to Tambaroora. Something was being done to improve the Bridle Track, and a contract had been let for formation of a new road to the right of Monkey. **Surveys had been made for a road from the Turon and Oakey Creek to the summit of Hawkins Hill, and contracts had let for the formation of a road.**

The Government had thus done all that it was in their power to do; and he thought that if the residents of Hill End and Tambaroora would do well to form themselves into a municipal district, for by doing so they would be entitled to demand from the Government an amount equal to one-half of what they might themselves contribute. In reply to Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Sutherland stated that £22,000 had been placed on the Estimates for the roads to Mudgee and Gulgong. Mr. Sutherland undertook to consult with the Commissioner of Roads, with a view to ascertain whether anything more could be done in the way of temporary repairs to the Bathurst and Hill End road.³⁵

³⁵ Newspaper, The Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser, Pg.144, dtd 3 Aug 1872 - TROVE

10 October 1872 - A Trip to Hill End and Tambaroora

This correspondent details his journey from Sydney to Tambaroora, noting that he preferred the Hawkins Hill Bridle Track to the coach road -

“Left the Redfern station by through train for the Western districts, and arrived at Macquarie Plains, 135 miles from Sydney, at 4p.pm., and from thence by coach to Bathurst, ten miles. This being my first visit, I was most agreeably surprised at seeing so large a city so far in the interior: broad streets laid off at right angles, and many of the buildings not only large but respectable; the beautiful river Macquarie passing contiguous, affording not only a plentiful supply of water, but also fish of excellent quality. Bathurst possesses the elements of material greatness, being located in the centre of a rich mineral district.

In the morning we left Bathurst on our pack-horses for Hill End, preferring the Bridle Track to the coach road, which is about half the distance, but so difficult to travel that few but trained horses would face the mountain; but our scrubber ascended in a zig-zag direction the most dangerous heights, with thousands of feet below them in an almost perpendicular descent, without one false step. The Homeward Bound claim on the Turon, which lay directly in our track, has been sunk with great deal of care; but, like many others we inspected, but not yet struck the precious metal. Crossing the Turon River we ascended a most tremendous height, then down into Oakey Creek, where many are engaged in sinking deep shafts. The Chinamen employed on alluvial work with satisfactory results. From this we ascended what is called Hawkins Hill, in reality a very high mountain, almost as steep as the roof of a house, and one of the richest gold-fields yet discovered in the Australian group. The names of the different claims pegged out are legion, and one would think the vocabulary was nearly exhausted. Not a few of them are exceedingly rich, whilst many may be expected to turn out “duffers”.

Arrived at the top of the mountain, a most magnificent scene was presented to our view. The contrast between the bright yellow and dark green of their foliage forms a most pleasing picture, and from the disrupted appearance one is led to conclude that it has been the theatre of fearful volcanic eruption.

It is here, at the very edge of the precipice, that the settlement commences, and extends some distance towards Tambaroora, forming the nucleus of a large city. Streets are being formed, and public buildings in course of erection, and a municipality is about being inaugurated.”³⁶

1872 - Survey Undertaken of the Hawkins Hill spur section of the Bridle Track

In 1872 a feature survey was undertaken in the area of Hawkins Hill, survey markers were placed along the Track leading down from Hawkins Hill see Figure 11, the distinguishing survey marks were the broad arrow over consecutive alphabet letters³⁷ over the last two digits of the year, the survey started on Hawkins Hill and continued down the Spur, along Oakey Creek and the Turon River³⁸.

³⁶ Newspaper - Empire, Pg.2, dtd 10 Oct 1872 - TROVE

³⁷ The Plan noted is R.152.r and included several sheets.

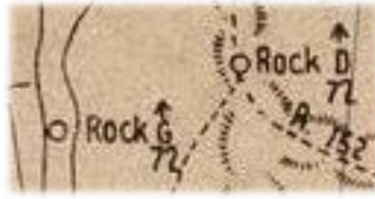
³⁸ 1899 Parish Map of Tambaroora

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Figure 11 - Survey Markers on Hawkins Hill Spur



*Survey Markers used in the Feature Survey along the Bridle Track and Oakey Creek
(1899 Tambaroora Parish Map courtesy of Land and Property Services, NSW Government)*

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Braggs Crossing to Hill End via Broken Back Ridge And Vice Versa 1872-3 to now



1872-73 - Construction of a new road from Hill End to Braggs Crossing

This is the current road, it starts its descent at Beard Street following the side of the spur down the western side of Deep Creek and along Broken Back Ridge, see Figure 13, from where it got its name "Broken Back Road" but still affectionately known as the Bridle Track. It continued down around that spur and crossed into Boogong Gully continuing down until it crossed Oakey Creek meeting the Turon river which it follows to Braggs Crossing, see Figure 12.

It was constructed as part of an overall development of a new road to Bathurst, interested parties in this road were not only the local communities but also those north of Tambaroora and as far reaching as Mudgee, the road would have cut distance and time for those wanting to go to Bathurst.

The section from Hill End to Root Hog was the only portion that was completed and opened on time, ongoing issues with interested parties saw delays and vandalism prevent it from being completed from Braggs Crossing to Bathurst until 1879. While these issues were ongoing it did give the communities of the lower Turon, Root Hog and Chambers Creek easier access to all the commercial interests which had been established in Hill End.

A Bridle Track Road Committee was formed to represent these communities and approach the Government to have a substantial road constructed from Bathurst to Hill End and beyond. Petitions from Mudgee and Hargraves were added to those of Tambaroora and Hill End and presented to the Government.

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Figure 12 - Braggs Crossing to Tambaroora



This image shows Broken Back Road from Braggs Crossing to Hill End entering the Village at Beard Street

The solid white line is Broken Back Road and the dashed white line is the original Bridle Track
(Graphics by Warwick P Taylor 2021)

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Figure 13 - Broken Back Ridge



Figure 14 - Retaining Walls along Broken Back Road



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The greatest issue with the bridle track from Braggs Crossing to Bathurst was the ongoing problem with what direction the road should take, disagreements contributed to the delay in it not being finished, the Hill End Bridle Track Road Committee constantly approached the Government to have the Track completed to Bathurst, as it only catered for the communities and miners scattered along its route on the Lower Turon and Macquarie rivers as far as Root Hog. Carriage³⁹ costs out of the district were kept at a high premium because of this.

11 July 1872 - Tenders Out for New Road Down Broken Back to the Lower Turon

*"Tenders are out, I am informed, for making a road from here to Tambaroora; another to Bathurst, via Monkey Hill and the Box Ridge; and a third down Broken Back to the Lower Turon"*⁴⁰

9 August 1872 - Construction of New Road Underway down Broken Back Ridge

A description given by a correspondent describing a walk down the yet uncompleted new road to the Lower Turon via Broken Back:-

*"The roads go bravely on fortunately for us, and when the spring and the fine weather arrive we shall probably have a good and easy passage to Tambaroora and to the Lower Turon via Broken Back. I strolled down this latter yesterday, or rather down a part of it in company with a crowd of others induced by curiosity, the weather, and the cessation of labour. It really is a most picturesque walk, winding along the precipitous sides of the hills that formerly varied all communication by vehicle with below. The gradient is easy, the work - well its not finished yet, so it is premature perhaps unfair to pass remarks upon it, but still one could hardly divest himself of the idea that those sideling walls might be made more secure, and that if it were wider two vehicles might pass each other; and the whole line seems destined to become the favourite lounge of the golden city. Nor could one fail to draw distinctions between the littleness of man beside the giant hills, and ruminate on the triumph of mind over matter in the reduction of nature's barrier to nothingness."*⁴¹

18 January 1873 - A Journey to Hill End

A correspondents description of a journey to Hill End from Bathurst, this is the first report of a journey taken along the new road from Braggs Crossing to Hill End constructed to bypass the original Bridle Track off Hawkins Hill:-

"Leaving Bathurst, after an early breakfast, a pleasant ride of about eighteen miles, brings the traveller to Foote's accommodation house, where an hour's rest is usually taken. Thence the journey is continued by crossing the Winburndale, through a pretty grass country, until within a few miles of the river Turon, the road become steep and rugged, and the river crossed, the celebrated Hawkins' Hill faces the traveller, rising abruptly to the height of 1700 feet.

*Until recently the ascent of Hawkin's Hill was very arduous, coming at the end of the day's journey, but all that is now changed, a good coach road having been constructed winding picturesquely round the many spurs of the hill, and by an easy ascent reaching the summit*⁴². As the top of the hill by the new road is gradually approached the views of the surrounding country become very extensive, while life is given to the scene by the Turon winding at the base of the hill, the bright open glades tending upwards by Chambers' Creek revealing,

³⁹ Carriage - the term in this respect refers to coach passengers or transportation of goods of all sizes

⁴⁰ Newspaper, Sydney Morning Herald, Pg.6, dtd 11 Jul 1872 - TROVE

⁴¹ Newspaper, Sydney Morning Herald, Pg. 6, dtd 9 Aug 1872 - TROVE

⁴² This was the new surveyed, constructed road referred to as Broken Back Road, but now known once again as the Bridle Track

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dotted at intervals, as far as the eye can reach, the white glimmer of the tents of prospectors, with in foreground, quartz crushing machinery and the township of the Lower Turon, adjacent to which is many a well kept Chinaman's garden, while close to the road itself as it winds upwards are disclosed brakes and dells, with some really formid-ravines, the whole constituting a varied and beautiful landscape. A sudden turn in the road shuts out the view, bringing the horseman at once into the town of Hill End, where in a comfortable hotel he enjoys the rest well earned by the somewhat long though pleasant ride."⁴³

18 January 1874 - New Road to the Turon

By this report the new "Bridle Track" road had been constructed in 1873, the road was referred to as Broken Back road. Today's Cadastral maps refer to the ridge as Broken Back Ridge.

"It had long been a desideratum how to get from Hawkins Hill to the smiling valley of the Turon below with a vehicle; but art has at length triumphed over nature, and the Government has, at great expense, constructed a road known as Broken Back, by which means the Turon can be reached with a vehicle in a short time."⁴⁴

A search of Broken Back returned a list of gold leases situated on the road at an area known as Broken Back mid-way down to the Turon River.⁴⁵

13 November 1874 - The First Horse Drawn Vehicle to Negotiate the Bridle Track

It was not until late 1874 that the first horse drawn vehicle made the arduous journey to Bathurst, this journey was by the newly constructed Broken Back Road Bridle Track from Hill End to Braggs Crossing, then using Cummings Bridle Track up to Mares Nest and across to "Bruinbun", it must be remembered that the Macquarie River Bridle Track did not exist and when it finally did, was not opened until 1879 -

"THE BRIDLE TRACK TO HILL END. - The Bathurst Times states, that two gentleman (Mr. Steel and Mr W.T. Pullen) on Monday last accomplished the journey between Hill End and Bathurst in a buggy by way of the bridle track. Hitherto it has been thought well nigh impossible that any person could pass between the two places in a vehicle along this road. Mr. Steel and Mr. Pullen left the Hill at 5am., and arrived in Bathurst at 3pm., and, as they stopped on the road two hours, the distance was done in eight hours - some five hours less than the time usually taken by the ordinary route. But though the journey was done in safety, it was not unattended with danger, and we would not recommend persons to travel by it, until something is done to render it passable. A portion of the road has already been cut between the Winburndale and the Turon, but this is a mere track, and, over the creeks, bridges, only some five feet six inches wide, have been erected, so that in a vehicle the journey is by no means an easy one."⁴⁶

Another article describes the same journey but includes the details of the returning passenger -

"Last but no means least amongst the nine days wonders is the journey just accomplished by Mr. Pullen to Bathurst. He has absolutely driven from here through to Bathurst by the Bridle Track with a buggy drawn by one horse, beating the coach by Sofala, with its relays of four

⁴³ Newspaper, Australian Town and Country Journal, Pg.18, dtd 18 Jan 1873 - TROVE

⁴⁴ Newspaper, Freeman Journal, Pg.5, dtd 31 Jan 1874 - TROVE

⁴⁵ New South Wales Government Gazette, No. 116, Pg.1498, dtd 19 May 1874

⁴⁶ The Sydney Morning Herald, Pg.4, dtd 13 Nov 1874 - TROVE

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horses. He started with Mr. Steel on one day - last Monday, I think - and returned the next day with the same horse, bringing Mrs. Steel and baby, leaving Mr. Steel to return by coach. This is the first occasion on which a buggy has been driven through, and is a first class test of the difficulties that would beset an engineer in carrying a road from here to Bathurst by the bridle track. I learn further from Mr. Alfred Fairfax, to whom we are in the main indebted for the improvements to the bridle track, which have enabled the performance of the feat of Mr. Pullen, that a short cut has been discovered from Broham's to Forbes, on the Winburndale, which avoids Stony Creek Hill and the numerous crossings of that small but annoying creek. It can be easily understood that but little assistance could have been rendered to Mr. Pullen by a lady with a baby, and that the difficulties of the road cannot be of an insurmountable character when the same horse can accomplish them there and back on two successive days. I cannot avoid making use of this opportunity of pointing out to those who have invested largely here, and are deterred from visiting their property by the difficulties and dangers of the journey, that an expenditure of less than a couple of thousands on the bridle track would make it a practicable buggy road and reduce the journey from here to Bathurst to about thirty-five miles, some say thirty. A journey here would then be rather a pleasure trip than an effort to bring one's self under the doctor's care, and the benefits to us residents, if only in the shape of reduced cost of carriage, would be enormous. A trip to Hill End, via the railway to Raglan, with the temptations of the Zig Zag, and a picturesque and easy buggy road of forty miles in all from there, would not be calculated to deter the desiring tourist or investor."⁴⁷

⁴⁷ The Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser, Pg.655 dtd 21 Nov 1874 - TROVE

Hill End to Bathurst and Vice Versa - 1874 to NOW

The construction of the Macquarie river "Bridle Track" was a long dragged out affair between surveyors, politicians, committee's and vagabonds and their vandalism and took many years to resolve, but eventually a route was decided upon which hugged the Macquarie river from Winburndale at the Stoney Creek Junction to Braggs Crossing. Issues were still to delay its final completion, the track was in fact constructed as a road and not a track.

But the "Bridle Track" name stuck. Just like some people think Hill End is a Town....it is only a Village and always has been !!!!

17 December 1874 - Municipal Council Approach to the Government to turn the Track into a Buggy Road

Towards the end of 1874 the Hill End Municipal Council approached the Government to induce them to turn the Track into a Buggy Road :-

*"The Municipal Council is taking active steps to induce the Government to make the bridle track into a buggy road. This can be done at little expense, and place us within 35 miles of Bathurst. Not more than 20 miles of road require to be made, and the engineering difficulties to be encountered may be estimated by the fact that Mr. Pullen drove the whole way in one day, returning the same way on the following day with the same horse, bringing a lady and her infant back with him. The road is for the most part through a very picturesque country, and will do away with the great obstacle - the present coach journey - to a visit for the inspection of their mining property by many interested in the district."*⁴⁸

11 December 1875 - Meeting to have the Bridle Track finished

The bridle track was still not accessible to horse drawn vehicular traffic through to Bathurst from Root Hog, as seen below the road to Root Hog from Hill End was in excellent condition. A public meeting was held to approach the Government to consider the urgent need to upgrade the bridle track for usage as a road, at this time the talk was about fixing Cummings old Bridle Track :-

"It was intended to call a public meeting last Saturday to memorialise the Government of the urgent need we feel of a road to Bathurst via the Bridle-track, but this was deferred to the Saturday following, out of respect to Mr. Brand⁴⁹. Now that we are out of luck and money too, as a natural consequence the great impost on all we consume in the form of the cost of carriage is severely felt. How great this is will be readily seen when it is understood that the cost of carriage ranges between £10 and £12 per ton. By the present route from Bathurst we have to traverse 65 miles of road, than which there is none worse in the land. Those who have done the journey once do it no more, except on great compulsion, and their report deters others from coming. We are thus altogether isolated. Those who come here have the melancholy pleasure of going back again. Now, a road via the Bridle-track is but 35 miles from Bathurst, and would place us on the direct route between that town and Mudgee. All the difficulties of the road have been already overcome by the fine mountain road from here to the Root Hog, a distance of 8 miles.⁵⁰ Twelve miles of road from Bathurst hither-ward have been completed, so that only 15 miles remain that want any more doing, and this the easiest part of the whole 35 miles. The fact that buggies have now been driven by this route through to Bathurst in one day and back the next day by the same horse shows what sort of

⁴⁸ The Sydney Morning Herald, Pg.9, dtd 17 Dec 1874 - TROVE

⁴⁹ Mr. Robert Brand was killed in a mining accident

⁵⁰ This refers to the newly constructed road referred to as Broken Back from Hill End down to Root Hog.

a road it is likely to be as far as engineering difficulties are concerned.⁵¹ There can be little doubt that the completion of this road will do more to bring about a revival here than any other thing. A gentleman, a resident of Sydney, has long urged upon us the necessity of this road, but whilst business was brisk, and money easily made, anything like combination for any purpose was out of the question. Now that it is difficult with many of us to earn a livelihood, the necessity of the work becomes daily more apparent, if we are to struggle along at all, and we are preparing to follow the advice of our Sydney friend and combine. The cost will not be much, and we have contributed greatly to the Exchequer, and hope to do more at no very distant time. Let a paternal Government hold out to us a helping hand."⁵²

The fact that the track was accessible to the Root Hog 8 miles distant by horse drawn vehicles suggests that the community had been instrumental in the roads improvement which would have been to their commercial benefit with carriage costs increasing.

20 January 1876 - Meeting of the Bridle Track Road Committee

At some time in late 1875 early 1876 a committee was formed to conduct the business of continuing to apprise the Government of the need for a road to Bathurst -

*"A meeting of the Bridle Track Road Committee was held at Street's Hotel, last Tuesday night, to report progress, and for other necessary business purposes, at which it transpired that the member who had kindly volunteered to canvas Bathurst on the matter had obtained upwards of 500 signatures of influential people to the petition asking the Government to complete the road in question, and many promises of pecuniary assistance in furthering the object of the committee is such were needed. The gentleman in question further stated that if he had had more time at his disposal he would have been able to obtain treble the number of signatures, and that, as as he could gather, the feeling in favour of the necessity and advisability of the road was very general. The secretary then read letters from Mudjee, from which I gathered that steps were being taken to get a committee to act in unison with that at Hill End, and collect signatures to the petition, seeing that Mudjee was as much interested in the immediate formation of the proposed road to Bathurst, and almost as much as Hill End and Tambaroora, Lower Turon, Louisa, and the other towns on the line of the proposed road. It is almost unnecessary to repeat the arguments in favour of the proposed route, as there are very few who know anything of Hill End but are aware of the terrors of the present coach journey from it to Bathurst, and the heavy impost in the form of carriage on all articles brought here by that circuitous route. This has in a great measure tended to depress the mining industry of the Western Gold-Fields, in that it has prevented many who are or were deeply interested (pecuniarily) in the mines from visiting them, and exercising that supervision which they required; and through the mostly nature of the works, arising from high wages, necessitated by dear commodities of every-day consumption, and the cost of mining stores generally, much valuable ground is left unworked, as it will not pay under these circumstances. The route by bridle track is about 36 miles, by Sofala (the present coach road) 62 miles, and of the 36 miles 18, including the most costly parts, are finished. **We have 8 miles of mountain road all but useless, as a vehicle can neither get on nor off that part of it south of the Turon.** The road to Mudjee too from here is good, but requires to be completed to Bathurst via the Bridle Track to be of much service. Signatures are being collected here, and I do not think a man in the place will refuse to sign."⁵³*

⁵¹ This would have been in reference to Steele and Pullen's epic buggy journey in 1874

⁵² Newspaper, Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser, Pg.747, dtd 11 Dec 1875 - TROVE

⁵³ The Sydney Morning Herald, Pg.2, dtd 20 Jan 1876 - TROVE

18 March 1876 - Deputation to the Minister of Works

*"A deputation consisting of Mr. J.S. Smith, M.L.A and Mr. Booth, M.L.A., waited upon the Honourable the Minister of Works, to urge the Government the desirability of making the present bridle track from Hill End to Bathurst available for the purposes of general traffic. They pointed out that this would be a very great convenience to the general public who used this road, and presented a petition signed by upwards of eleven hundred residents of Bathurst, Hill End, and Mudgee and the surrounding districts, including the Municipal Council of Hill End. The Minister stated that, from the representations made to the Government by petitioners and from other sources, a sum would be placed upon the Supplementary Estimates for the purpose of carrying out the proposed work"*⁵⁴

1 April 1876 - Meeting of the Bridle Track Committee

*"Last night a meeting of the Bridle Track committee was held at Weir's Hotel. The secretary stated that he had communicated with the Hon. Messrs. Smith, Booth, and Buchanan, M.L.A s, and Mr. Alfred Fairfax, asking their assistance and co-operation in bringing the very numerous signed petition from Bathurst, Mudgee, Lower Turon, Hargraves, and this place, praying for the completion of the Bridle Track Road, under the notice of the Hon. The Minister for Works; and that he had received replies from Messrs. Booth and Smith stating that they had presented the petition, that Mr. Fairfax was unfortunately out of town and, therefore, could not accompany them; and that the Minister had placed an amount on the supplementary estimates. Resolutions were then passed directing that the thanks of the committee be conveyed to the Hon. Messrs. Smith and Booth, to the Rev. Mr. McEwan of Mudgee, and to other gentlemen who had kindly interested themselves in our behalf in the matter. The accounts were then directed to be made up, and a final meeting will be called for their liquidation, when the labours of this committee will be considered closed"*⁵⁵

15 July 1876 - Community continues to apprise the Government for a Road to Bathurst

Approaches made to the Government must have proved fruitless as the community at large were still endeavouring to have the road completed.

A Newspaper article in Jul 1876 carried requests by the Tambaroora and Hill End community for action -

"There are two matters that are now engrossing a great amount of public attention here - 'The Bridle Track road, and the late delivery of the mails, an hours delay of the latter being no uncommon occurrence; and I have been several times requested by our most influential townsmen to make some remarks on the subject in my weekly reports, in the hope that attention may be drawn to the matter, and application to the proper authorities would be the better course to pursue, and I get for answer, - 'There is nothing like ventilating the matter in the public press'. Under these circumstances I have promised to make some few remarks upon these matters which happen to be intimately connected — for the completion of the Bridle Track road means regular delivery of mails. A large and influential committee was some few months back embodied to press upon the consideration of the Government the necessity for completing the road from Hill End to Bathurst; and to that end a petition setting forth the many arguments in favour of such a course was prepared, and, with something like 1200 signatures of inhabitants of Bathurst, Mudgee, Hargraves, Tambaroora, and Hill End, sent down. As a result of this a sum necessary for the completion was placed upon the Estimates, and we know no more about it. Of the road in question the

⁵⁴ Australian Town and Country Journal, Pg.12, dtd 18 Mar 1876 - TROVE

⁵⁵ The Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser, Pg.435, dtd 1 Apr 1876 - TROVE

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nine miles from Hill End to the Root Hog, almost the only part necessitating anything like outlay, is completed, but is utterly useless as it terminates on the side of a precipice near the Oriental machine⁵⁶ at a place to which access is only possible by a horseman. At the Bathurst end twelve miles are already completed, leaving fifteen only to do, and the engineering difficulties of this may be gathered from the fact that buggies on several occasions have been driven along a great part of it. As it is, some thousands of pounds are thrown aside, awaiting only a small further expenditure to make them a boon to all the towns mentioned as contributing signatures. The Hill End portion of the accomplished road was commenced with a view to reaching Orange; but there is no benefit that might have accrued to us from such a road that will not be equally gained by connecting us with Bathurst; in addition to which, we shall be gainers to a very large extent by the latter route. This road would place us within 36 miles of Bathurst, and the railway, at the highest computation, usually stated as 33 miles. I believe, about the same distance would place us in connection with Orange, but we should have the extra trainage to pay, and besides, Bathurst will suffer sufficiently by the removal of the terminus to Orange without at the same time divorcing our custom thence. We have at present 60 miles of a miserable monotonous road to travel to reach Bathurst, entailing perfect misery on travellers, and a heavy impost on goods in the form of high carriage, not to mention the delays that might be avoided. This fearful journey has deterred many a would-be investor from visiting our district, and has added much to its present depression. The bridle track route would give a pleasant drive of 35 miles through the most romantic scenery in the country, and bring Bathurst and Mudgee, with the intervening towns, into direct communication. It would aid in the development of the district by bringing investors, who could see for themselves instead of depending on others, and by lessening the cost of material and the transport of machinery and supplies; it would open up golden mines at present too isolated to be properly and economically worked. It would be a yearly saving to the Government in postal charges, and enable early and regular delivery; and it would relieve us from the famine prices with which we are treated on the approach of winter. Roads are then so bad and carriage so high!"⁵⁷

22 August 1876 - Consolidated Revenue Funds Allocation

644. Road from Hill End to Bathurst by way of the Bridle Track, £2489.0.0⁵⁸

9 September 1876 - Meeting of the Bridle Track Road Committee

Committee meetings continued to conduct the business of apprising the Government of the need for a road to Bathurst -

"On Thursday last another meeting of the Bridle Track Road Committee was held at Weir's Hotel (the Mayor in the chair), to receive the report of the secretary, &c. After the minutes of the preceding meeting had been read and confirmed, a letter from Mr. A. Fairfax was read in answer to the one addressed to him in accordance with a resolution passed at the previous meeting, in which that gentleman stated that he had waited on Mr. Bennett, the Commissioner for Roads, and had been informed that instructions had been given for at once carrying out the necessary survey, as also that a balance of £2500 remained unexpended to the credit of the work. This places a sum of £5000 at the disposal of the Commissioner, which will be sufficient to make a good buggy road all the way from hence to Bathurst. Steps were then initiated to find out who was the surveyor who had charge of the work, and it was decided to offer the gentleman the benefit of the experience of old residents

⁵⁶ The Oriental Machine was the Oriental Co.s battery located on the north side of the Macquarie river at Root Hog

⁵⁷ The Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser, Pg.75, dtd 15 Jul 1876 - TROVE

⁵⁸ NSW Government Gazette, No.XI An Act to appropriate and apply out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of New South Wales certain sums to make good the Supplies granted for the Service of the Year 1876 and for the year 1875 and previous years, Pg.3327, dtd 22 Aug 1876

in selecting the shortest and easiest route, to which end a sub-committee, consisting of Messrs. Beyers, Wythes, Bragg, Newman, Petersen, Attwood, Weir, and Collings, was elected, The meeting then, after passing a unanimous vote of thanks to Mr. A. Fairfax for the prompt and energetic action he had taken in the matter, was closed.”⁵⁹

4 November 1876 - Description of Proposed road between Root Hog and Monaghans

Some of the text in this story is confusing, the mention of “Foote’s, on the Winburndale” refers to Foote’s Hotel on the Winburndale Rivulet on the Turondale Road, whereas from deciphering the intentions of those responsible for the route it should be Winburndale at the Stoney Creek junction.

“The proposed excursion along the Bridle Track route, as now being surveyed, came off last week, and was made into a very enjoyable picnic, Mr Beyers, chairman of the committee and Mayor of this place having prepared a surprise in the shape of a luncheon and supper with champagne, &c. The committee met Mr. Cambridge, the surveyor, at the Root Hog, and proceeded on to his camp where, as the day was fairly advanced the luncheon was dispatched. The party then followed the line as far as Native Dog Creek, a point some distance beyond that at present reached by the survey. It follows the Macquarie at a little above high water mark generally, and will be an almost level road, no gradient at present laid out exceeding 1 in 24. The party passed two very nasty places first along the rapids, nearly in front of Allen’s Nuggetty, which some may remember, and next a sheer wall of rock a short distance ahead of Monaghan’s, but besides these there appears to be little but sideling work. The distance from the Oriental Battery to Foote’s, on the Winburndale, will be 15 miles. The party returned to Bragg’s, on the Lower Turon, where the supper was prepared. A variety of toasts were drunk, but all the speakers confined their remarks almost entirely to the Bridle Track Road. It was evident from the speeches, that all were not in favour of the route now being surveyed, and various arguments were advanced by the objectors which I may briefly summarise thus.

A. It is a dangerous one, having precipices on either side in places, with no escape from a falling rock on one hand or a frightened horse on the other, to which it may be answered, that the same objection applies to parts of the road that must be passed whether the present surveyed line be taken from Bragg’s to Foote’s or the Bridle Track be followed.

B. That it is longer is doubtful statement, as to make the present Bridle Track available for traffic a certain gradient must not be exceeded, to preserve which, zigzags must be made.

C. That it will be of no use for driving cattle along, as it would be dangerous to meet them both for riders and drivers, in the narrow places. To this it is answered that very few, if any, cattle come or are likely to come that way, and that if they do it would be better to drive them along the Bridle Track proper, where they could feed. They do not want a macadamised road to travel on.

The idea of these gentlemen seems to be that the present track, which in places ascends and descends hills, where a merciful rider would relieve his horse by walking, can, by a small outlay for clearing and levelling along the sidelings, be made practicable for vehicles. No doubt it could be traversed by light buggies if the occupants did not object to get out and walk a good part of the way. But what would be the use of such a road? Teamsters would never follow it, nor any-body else in a hurry, and a few heavy rains would cut it to pieces. We want a permanent road along which mails and heavy materials, machinery, &c , can be brought. We want a reduction in the cost of carriage which lays a tax of from £10 to £12 per

⁵⁹ The Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser, Pg.330, dtd 9 Sep 1876 - TROVE

ton on all we obtain from Sydney. We want to break the almost monopoly prices that obtain for hay, corn, chaff, flour, potatoes, and such like goods, by bringing us within easy reach of their producers. The concluding remarks of Mr. Cambridge were quite to the point. He stated that Government officials who had devoted their lives to the study of road making, whose business it was, had been carefully over both routes, and it was reasonable to suppose they were better judges of which was the more suitable than men who had given little or no thought to the matter. As far as I have yet seen it is evident that the road as at present laid out is the proper one, fulfilling all the requirements of a permanent line of traffic and I may add that its whole length from the Winburndale will be a panorama of romantic scenery.”⁶⁰

16 December 1876 - Meeting of the BTRC with description of Tracks to be selected

“A meeting of the Bridle Track Committee was held at Weir’s hotel, the mayor Mr. L. Beyers, in the chair. Its object was to decide on a route to be surveyed in addition to the one now being laid out. It will be remembered that the latter was selected by the Government road surveyor of the district, and to my mind as far as I have had the opportunity of following it, far in advance of the present bridle track. However, some of the committee that a better line can be laid out, and to that end I have obtained from the Roads Department a promise to survey any line they may point out, to compare the two and select the better. Amongst the committee three lines are advocated, all converging on Bruin Bun, which I will particularize as Cline’s, Mosedale’s and Bragg’s. The two former propose to cross the Turon at the mouth of Oakey Creek, and ascend immediately by the spurs on the south side. Cline’s track has a considerable advantage between the top of the hill and Bruin Bun, but require, it is said, a great outlay to mount the hill. Mosedale would reach the “finger post”, or Trig Station, by a very easy route, crossing at Oakey Creek. Bragg would strike the same level a little beyond the “finger post” but would make a start from the road already completed at the Root Hog racecourse. The committee decided on Mosedale’s line, in consideration of its being two miles shorter than Bragg’s, and probably costing no more, considering that the difficulty of ascending by Cline’s more than counter-balanced its acknowledged advantages from the top to Bruin Bun. The only drawback to this second survey is the loss of time involved, as the same surveyor has to do the two. For my own part, I should be glad to see half a dozen made, if as many routes could be suggested and compared; but let them all be carried simultaneously by different men, so that no loss of time may be involved. Let the best road for general public use be selected without reference to prejudice or vested interests of any kind.”⁶¹

Interestingly the meeting held decided upon Mosedale’s line yet at the meeting with Mr. Wood (see below) they had unanimously agreed on the road along the Macquarie.

20 January 1877 - Decision made on Route of the Track

“On Friday afternoon, a meeting of the Bridle Track Committee was convened at Bragg’s Hotel, Lower Turon, to meet with Mr. Wood, the superintendent of roads, and finally decide on the route to be followed, at which it was unanimously decided that the track laid out along the Macquarie and now in course of survey, be the one selected. The committee, having now completed its duties, has dissolved itself.”⁶²

⁶⁰ Newspaper, Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser, Pg.586, dtd 4 Nov 1876 - TROVE

⁶¹ Newspaper, The Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser, Pg.780, dtd 16 Dec 1876 - TROVE

⁶² Newspaper, The Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser, Pg.82, dtd 20 Jan 1877 - TROVE

10 May 1877 - Change of Road Construction Management

"A change has been made in the direction of affairs as regards the Bridle Track Road. Mr. Cambridge has gone, and Mr. H. Adams has taken his place. It is a long while since I heard anything about the survey, which has been going on for something like eight months, I am told. I now learn that Mr. Adams has instructions to erect stores, shops, and powder magazine at Bruin-bun(sic), and to hasten the completion of the survey as much as possible. Fifteen miles of the road have been laid out, extending from the Root Hog to the junction of Stony Creek with the Macquarie, about one mile beyond the junction of the Winburndale with the river. The result of this survey must have completely astonished the opponents of the present route, which proves to be but a little longer than the existing bridle track. It is called fifteen miles from Bragg's to Foote's on the Winburndale (and good miles too, as I have many times proved). The new route, with all its ins and outs measures three miles from Bragg's to the Root Hog, and fifteen miles more to a point one mile beyond the Winburndale, or two measured miles more than the fifteen bush miles. How many more than the said fifteen it would take to carry a road, with gradients like the one laid out, along the present track, I fear to say; certainly not less than half as many more. So that apart from the advantages of a level road, and a most picturesque one, we have a really shorter one.

*From Stony Creek Junction the road will in all probability keep the right bank of the creek through the Oak Forest to Bonham's, where it meets the existing road to Bathurst. This is a long gentle sweep, which escapes the constant crossing of the creek, with beautiful "pinch" at the end, the delight of all who follow the present track. On the whole, then the much talked of road, with all its sidelings and zigzags, will not exceed thirty-eight miles, which will with ease be traversed in one day, saving not less than twenty miles on the route by Sofala"*⁶³

14 September 1877 - Work Continues on the New Road

*"The work on the Bridle Track will continue its quota to an improved state of things here, which the completion of the Bridle Track road will make permanent. Already about 60 men are at work, and ere long a great many more will follow. The centre of the operations is at Bruin-Bun(sic), where the Government depot is established. A great deal of lost time results from the action of certain vagabonds who have taken upon themselves to hinder the work by removing the surveyor's marks, and either placing them in different positions, or destroying them altogether. The fools seem to think that they cannot be replaced. It is a pity some of these gentry cannot get an opportunity of exercising their talents within the walls of one of her Majesty's gaols."*⁶⁴

11 October 1877 - Consolidated Revenue Funds

*"Road from Hill End to Bathurst by way of the Bridle Track, £2423.1.10"*⁶⁵

Proposed Road to Oakey Creek - The Tambaroora and Turon River District Gold Field

*The map of 1877 notes "Proposed Road to Oakey Creek"*⁶⁶. This is the current road in use today. Although this appears on the 1877 map, the information is out of date by 4 or more years. A road was in place between Hill End and Root Hog but no further by January 1873,

⁶³ Newspaper, Sydney Morning Herald, Pg.7, dtd 10 May 1877 - TROVE

⁶⁴ Newspaper, Sydney Morning Herald, Pg.3, dtd 14 Sep 1877 - TROVE

⁶⁵ NSW Government Gazette, No.VIII An Act to appropriate and apply out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of New South Wales certain sums to make good the Supplies granted for the Service of the Year 1877 and for the year 1876 and previous years, Pg.4015, dtd 11 Oct 1877

⁶⁶ Tambaroora and Turon River District Gold Field Map, Survey Branch Department, Department of Mines, Sydney, 1877

the compiling of this map would have taken 4 years to complete due to the amount of data that had to be included.⁶⁷

14 April 1879 - Road Construction Underway

*"In regard to the road from Hill End to Bathurst via bridle track, commencing from the Turon, there is a little work requires to be done before you reach the first portion of cutting; thence from there to Bruinbun the road is pass for a conveyance. Mr. Roberts's cutting there stops further progress, he not being finished. I noticed on this part of the road it is very narrow, from the Oriental engine at Root Hog as far as what is called the Bluff, the road being only 12ft wide. I think for the safety of those who may travel this road, that the Government should be made aware of this dangerous portion of it, and that steps should be at once taken to have it made the proper width. Passing on from Bruinbun, I find Mr. Lawton and party has finished. Mr. Carroll's cutting on McGrath's Hill will lake another week or so to allow vehicles to get on to the portion of road that is completed. A few more cuttings bring you to Winburndale. There is a heavy piece of cutting done here by Johnson and party, who will finish in a few weeks. Leaving Winburndale, we meet a few men clearing timber, and others filling up gullies on different parts of the line. Next we meet a party of men employed by Mr. Scarr road superintendent, and Mr. Alfred Walker, of Hill End, is boss over these. He is a very energetic and sober man, and one that understands his work well, and I hear he is to have another appointment, and I feel quite sure he will give every satisfaction in whatever position he may be called to fulfil. This work is carried on by day work, and they are certainly making great improvements to the old track. Leaving Mr. Walker and his party of men, we follow on the road, the same being finished to the top of Bruinbun Hill; the rest of the road needs very little to be done to it to complete it into Bathurst. Taking everything into consideration, and this being 20 miles nearer than Sofala, that this will be the main road to Bathurst, it will be a pleasant ride from here to Bruinbun, and one that anybody can appreciate. I have a pleasant duty to perform, and one that should be made known; and more is the pity that we have not more of their sort in the Government service. Mr. Scarr is spoken of in the highest terms by the men (and as one remarked to me he was none of these back-door trotters) for his impartially to all. Mr. A. Walker was spoken of in high terms, by the men saying he could get more work done than three bullies. I believe it is Mr. Scarr's intention, when he gets the road through, to have some pipes and cement brought out from Bathurst— the pipes to put in small creeks, and the cement to build some culverts, he not approving of the wall building. This will make a great improvement, the crossings over the creeks being of a temporary nature for the present."*⁶⁸

10 May 1879 - New Bridle Track along the Macquarie River being Constructed

This eventually became the current Bridle Track:

*"A new road from Bathurst, one which follows the river valley wherever possible and avoids the ranges, is being constructed, and will greatly facilitate traffic."*⁶⁹

3 January 1888 - Road Estimates

*"The following shows the proposed distribution of the vote on estimates for 1888 for Subordinate Roads under trustees and under officers of the Department in the Western District:- Hill End, via Bragg's to Main Western Road, £360."*⁷⁰

⁶⁷ The 1877 Map took 4 years to compile, started in 1873 and finalized in 1877

⁶⁸ Newspaper, Evening News, Pg.7, dtd 19 Apr 1879 - TROVE

⁶⁹ Newspaper, The Sydney Mail, Pg.733, 10 May 1879 - TROVE

⁷⁰ Newspaper, Bathurst Free Press and Mining Journal, Pg.3, dtd 3 Jan 1888 - TROVE

18 September 1891 - Description of Bridle Track from Hill End to the Macquarie

"It is over these mountains that Root Hog is reached. Leaving Hill End on the left of Hawkins Hill, on the old bridle track to Bathurst, the road is now cut sufficiently wide to admit of a cart or dray. At once, scarce 500 yards from the township there is a gully of great depth. At the side of this gully the road is cut from the mountain side, and for at least three miles the road winds and turns, ever downwards, overlooking this tremendous gully.

Only for a short distance on this treacherous track is the side of the road fenced, and that only at a sharp pinch which puts one in mind that the fencing was not put so much for the safety of travellers, but in this particular spot as a matter of giving greater confidence to the makers of the road. Both driver and passenger feel a sort of thankfulness when the bottom of the hills have been safely reached, for the slightest accident or waywardness of the horses would toss one into a gorge some hundreds of feet deep, with no chance of a footing, for in many places the angle of the hill is over 60 degrees.

At the foot of the hills wind the Lower Turon River, which at the time was running strong owing to the heavy rains of the previous week, and as a consequence, the boulders had found a resting place where they shouldn't, that is in the crossing place of the river. The sensation of a strong rushing stream flapping up to the bottom of the buggy, the horse jolting and stepping on a stone or boulder, and then sliding off again, the wheels of the buggy dropping in the cavity, can better be realised than can be described. Thanks to the horse and its driver the passage was safely effected.

Passing the once famous field, known as Braggs Old Mill, where at one time three hotels and the necessary shops for providing supplies for man and beast, there is now only one Chinaman in a miserable hovel. The mountain in the distance has to be climbed, this time up and around sharp curves on the mountain side, with not a vestige of protection from the depths beneath, still winding upwards, and at one sharp bend of the road, after passing an extra wooded part, the wonder of this wondrous mountainous district starts before one as the surprise in its grand scenery, at the base of which is the Macquarie, boiling and foaming, rushes past, rise in one bold outline of solid rock, bathed in sunshine and worn with ages.

*Above, as the mountain reaches upwards, shades of blue and olive tints, from the darkest to the lightest shades of that colour, the sky of that lovely cobalt blue and olive seen only in Australia. On the hills the wattle was in full bloom, a lovely flower, with a lovely perfume."*⁷¹

4 May 1893 - The Roads Vote

Ongoing maintenance votes:

Following are the amounts proposed for expenditure this year:-

*"Hill End to Bathurst, Bridle Track Road, £180."*⁷²

28 March 1893 - Preliminary Notification of Parish Road

*A preliminary notification in the Government Gazette giving notice of the intention to open the road between the southern boundary of Bullocks Lot 1 in the Parish of Waltham to Anderson Brothers Lot 1 (Cummings "Bruinbun") in the Parish of Bruinbun as a **Parish Road**⁷³. This was/is part of the original Cummings Bridle Track with slight re-alignments, the road survey was completed on 18 July 1892⁷⁴. Confirmation was later given on the 21 July 1893⁷⁵ and is still the current road.*

⁷¹ Newspaper, Evening News, Pg.3, dtd 18 Sep 1891 - TROVE

⁷² Newspaper, National Advocate, Pg.2, dtd 4 May 1893 - TROVE

⁷³ New South Wales Government Gazette, 205, Pg.2534, dtd 28 Mar 1893 - TROVE

⁷⁴ Crown Plan, 4408-1603, Traverse of part of the road from Bathurst to Hill End, Parishes of Bruinbun, Macquarie and Waltham, County of Roxburgh, Land Registry Services, NSW Government

⁷⁵ New South Wales Government Gazette, 517, Pg.5657, dtd 21 Jul 1893 - TROVE

CUMMINGS BRIDLE TRACK - PEEL TO THE TABLELAND

Updated Thursday, 17 February 2022

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February 1894 - Road Estimates

Following from the schedule to Estimates-in-Chief for 1894 shows the principal items of expenditure on roads in the Western districts :-

“Hill End to Bathurst, (bridle track road) 36 miles, £150.”

25 March 1925 - Crown Survey Plan for Lot 223 (Stuart), Parish of Carroll

Shows “Main Cut Road” along the track⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Crown Plan, 5488-2091, Lot 223, 25 Mar 1925

CUMMINGS BRIDLE TRACK - PEEL TO THE TABLELAND

Updated Thursday, 17 February 2022

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Lease and Land Settlement covering Cummings Bridle Track Road between “Bruinbun” and Braggs Crossing

Post 1900 - Un-alienated Crown Lands west of Cummings “Bruinbun” to the junction of the Macquarie and Turon rivers and bounded by those rivers was taken up as either Conditional Purchase Leases, Crown Leases or Improvement Leases or in part as an extension to the Hill End and Tambaroora Temporary Common(HETTC) up until the Leases were either resumed, revoked or expired, the land was then advertised for sale. As part of the survey for each Lot Cummings Bridle Track was included and shown as a reserved road from “Bruinbun” to Braggs Crossing⁷⁷.

The Lots of interest where Cummings Bridle Track passed through after leaving “Bruinbun” and heading to Braggs Crossing are Lot 15 surveyed in 1930⁷⁸, Lot 10 surveyed in 1909⁷⁹ and Lot 11 formerly part of the HETTC extension from 1903 and surveyed in 1925⁸⁰.

⁷⁷ Map, Parish of Bruinbun, Third Edition, dtd 1917, Land Registry Services, NSW Government

⁷⁸ Crown Plan, 4320-1496, Lot 15, Parish of Bruinbun, Land Registry Services, NSW Government

⁷⁹ Crown Plan, 3416-1496, Lot 10, Parish of Bruinbun, Land Registry Services, NSW Government

⁸⁰ Crown Plan, 4130-1496, Lot 11, Parish of Bruinbun, Land Registry Services, NSW Government

INCIDENTS ON THE BRIDLE TRACKS

16 January 1852 - Robbery and Attempted Murder - 1852

A robbery and attempted murder occurred on the Hawkins Hill Track on the 16th January 1852, the newspaper report re-counted -

“On Friday last, as Mr. John Carter was returning from the Dirt Hole Creek, accompanied by a man who travels with him as a guard, he was stopped on the Big Hill leading to the junction of the Turon from the Macquarie by two men armed with guns and pistols and robbed of about 95 ozs. Of gold and £20 in notes. It appears from information received that Mr. Carter and his man were leading their horses downhill, which is very steep, Mr. Carter being about fifteen yards in advance, when after proceeding some 200 yards downwards his attention was attracted to a quantity of newly cut boughs, placed against a tree, close by the roadside. His suspicions being somewhat excited, he drew his pistol from his belt and cocked, and had hardly scarcely done so before two men leaped from amongst the boughs and called upon him to stand, at the same moment levelling their pieces, Mr. Carter immediately presented his pistol and pulled the trigger, but the lock unfortunately was too stiff to go off.

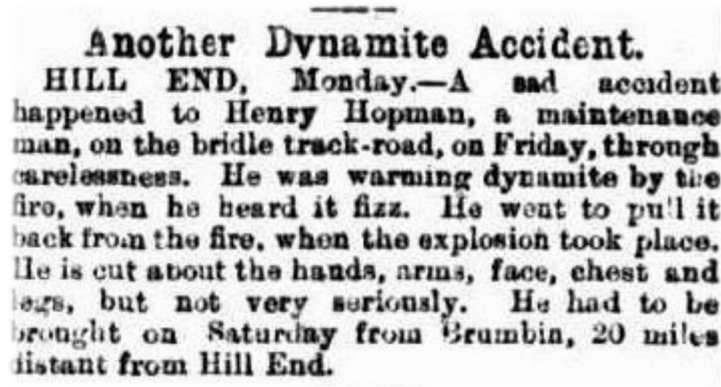
In the meantime the foremost of the ruffians fired, the ball passing through Mr. Carters hat and wounding the horse he was leading. The other bushranger then advanced, and levelled his piece, when the flurry of the moment, whilst tugging at the trigger, the pistol fell from Mr. Carter’s hand, and he made a spring down the hill to escape. The second piece was fired at the same instant, but although only about ten yards intervened, no injury was done. The man who fired the first had now obtained possession of Mr. Carter’s pistol, and started in pursuit of him, but notwithstanding that he had the misfortune to fall over a rock which obstructed his path, he fortunately escaped without further injury than a sprain and a bruise or two.

The man who had all this time been an inactive spectator of all the proceedings, made no attempt whatever at retaliation, but, panic-stricken by the position of affairs, quietly suffered himself to be disarmed, and the horses, gold, etc., to be taken”.⁸¹

At the time of this incident, it would appear that the Big Hill had not yet been named Hawkins Hill.

⁸¹ Newspaper, Bathurst Free Press and Mining Journal, Pg.2 , dtd 21 Jan 1852 - TROVE

26 July 1880 - Maintenance Accident on the Bridle Track Road⁸²



(Image courtesy of National Library of Australia - TROVE)

The End

(for the time being)

⁸² Newspaper, Evening News, Pg.2, dtd 27 Jul 1880 - TROVE