

HOBART'S FLOATING BRIDGE

Location: Demolished. Formerly across the Derwent River at Hobart

Owner: State Government.

Markers and interpretation panels are located at each end of the bridge site.

The Bridge

The two lane floating bridge operated from 1943 until 1964. It consisted of 24 reinforced concrete pontoons joined into two half arches, and a lift span for ships near the western shore.

The Hobart Bridge Company was authorised by parliament to build the bridge and charge tolls.

Entrepreneur Stan Barnett floated the company, attracting local investors. The Public Works Department designed the bridge under the leadership of

Chief Engineer Allen Knight (later Sir Allen) who was responsible for the concept. Allen Knight went to the USA in 1937 to study lift spans.



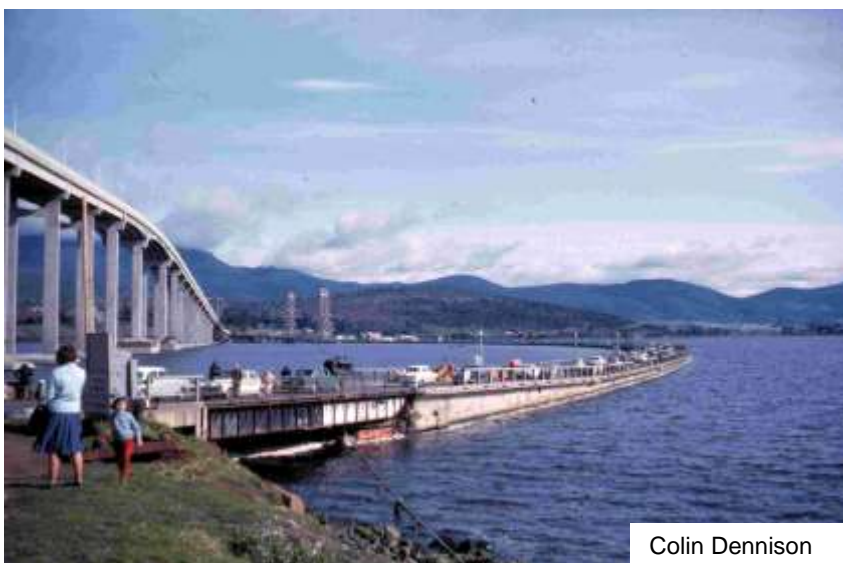
Joining bridge to lift span

Adam Clift

The Timms Bridge Construction Company won the contract in 1938 and set up its works area on Pavilion Point at the western end of the bridge. The outer lift span tower foundation was excavated inside two caissons down to a depth of 37 metres, and formed the western abutment for the floating pontoons. The pontoons were launched into the river and towed across the Geilston Bay to be joined up.

Heritage Significance

- A traditional bridge would require multiple piers extending down through 30 metres of water and 30 metres of mud to support its deck. The floating bridge avoided this unaffordable cost.
- Floating bridges elsewhere were straight and required a series of anchors to keep them on line. But tests in the mud proved anchors unreliable. The arch shape required only attachment to the shore at each end, a brilliant solution.
- Eastern shore residents had greatly improved access to shops, jobs and hospitals in Hobart.
- Despite periodic storm damage, the bridge served for 21 years during which the eastern shore population rose from 5000 to 30,000.



Colin Dennison



Note:

Interpretation panels on next page

Last day before removal 16 August 1964. Tasman Bridge at left.

Interpretation Panels and Markers

The Floating Bridge 1943-1964

Before the floating bridge opened, people wanting to cross the River Derwent had to wait for a river ferry or drive 20 km north to Bridgewater. Once the bridge was opened, people could cross at any time of the night or day.



How Floating Bridges are Constructed
 Floating bridges are unique, self-supporting structures. They consist of a series of floats or pontoons that are connected together to form a bridge deck. The floats are buoyant and can move up and down with the water level. The bridge deck is supported by a network of cables and beams that are anchored to the floats. This design allows the bridge to be opened and closed by moving the floats up and down.



Why is Floating Bridge?
 The Floating Bridge was an innovative engineering solution to the problem of crossing the River Derwent. It was designed to be a simple, self-supporting structure that could be opened and closed by moving the floats up and down. This design allowed the bridge to be opened and closed at any time of the night or day.



How the Bridge was Opened
 The bridge was opened by moving the floats up and down. This was done by a system of cables and beams that were anchored to the floats. The bridge was opened by moving the floats up and down, which raised the bridge deck above the water level.



How the Bridge was Closed
 The bridge was closed by moving the floats down. This was done by a system of cables and beams that were anchored to the floats. The bridge was closed by moving the floats down, which lowered the bridge deck below the water level.



How the Bridge was Maintained
 The bridge was maintained by a team of engineers and workers. They performed regular inspections and repairs to ensure the bridge was safe and operational.



How the Bridge was Used
 The bridge was used to transport goods and passengers across the River Derwent. It was a vital link between the north and south banks of the river.



How the Bridge was Built
 The bridge was built by a team of engineers and workers. They used a combination of traditional and modern construction techniques to build the bridge.



How the Bridge was Demolished
 The bridge was demolished in 1964. It was replaced by a permanent bridge, the Alan Wright Bridge.



Engineering Heritage Marker Placed on 5 May 2015



The Floating Bridge 1943-1964

Before the floating bridge opened, people wanting to cross the River Derwent had to wait for a river ferry or drive nearly 20 km north to the Bridgewater Bridge. Ferries such as the 22 tugboats could carry up to 30 cars and 150 passengers, but the river crossing took up to an hour. However, once the floating bridge was opened, people could cross quickly at any time of the night or day. The floating bridge formed a residential town on the water in those years. Between 1943 and 1964, the population here increased from 5,000 to over 30,000 people.




How the Bridge was Built
 The floating bridge was built by a team of engineers and workers. They used a combination of traditional and modern construction techniques to build the bridge.



How the Bridge was Used
 The bridge was used to transport goods and passengers across the River Derwent. It was a vital link between the north and south banks of the river.




How the Bridge was Maintained
 The bridge was maintained by a team of engineers and workers. They performed regular inspections and repairs to ensure the bridge was safe and operational.



How the Bridge was Demolished
 The bridge was demolished in 1964. It was replaced by a permanent bridge, the Alan Wright Bridge.




How the Bridge was Built
 The floating bridge was built by a team of engineers and workers. They used a combination of traditional and modern construction techniques to build the bridge.



How the Bridge was Used
 The bridge was used to transport goods and passengers across the River Derwent. It was a vital link between the north and south banks of the river.



How the Bridge was Maintained
 The bridge was maintained by a team of engineers and workers. They performed regular inspections and repairs to ensure the bridge was safe and operational.



Engineering Heritage Marker Placed on 5 May 2015

