
Smythe's Creek Railway Viaduct



B7086 Nimons Bridge 2000



B7086 Nimons Bridge 2011



B7086 Nimons Bridge piers



B7086 Nimons Bridge



B7086 Nimons Bridge deck
2011



B7086 Nimons Bridge 2011

Location

151.3 km mark on Ballarat-Skipton Railway,, NEWTOWN VIC 3351 - Property No B7086

Municipality

GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE

Level of significance

State

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - September 8, 2005

What is significant? Nimons Bridge was built in 1890, as part of the then Ballarat-Linton railway. The bridge is 17 spans with tall timber piers of four driven piles each, with triple sets of diagonal cross-bracing and walers and a single row of longitudinal horizontal bracing between piers. The spans are of a uniform twenty feet (6.1 metres), originally supported by four 21-inch x 9-inch (535 mm x 230 mm) Kauri timber beams per span, following the standard V.R. design of the period. When the superstructure was rebuilt after the 1953 fire, the timber beams were replaced with two 24-inch (610mm) deep rolled-steel-joists on each span. These are marked 'Lancashire Steel Co., Scotland' and are believed to have been second-hand. The deck of transverse-timber planks is 103.6 metres in length. Overall the bridge has an impressive appearance with its exceptionally tall triple-cross-braced piers creating a 'three-tiered' effect, with the deck 19.2 metres above the Woody Yaloak River.

The Ballarat-Skipton line closed in 1985. Nimons Bridge has been recently restored, as part of the Ballarat-Skipton Rail Trail.

How is it significant? Nimons Bridge is significant for technical, historic and aesthetic reasons at a State level.

Why is it significant? Nimons Bridge is technically significant as Victoria's fourth-tallest timber trestle bridge when built, and as the third-tallest surviving example. It is also the second-largest composite bridge combining traditional timber piers with RSJ spans and a timber deck and falls within a select group of fewer than ten timber railway bridges with horizontal longitudinal bracing between the piers and three sets of double cross-bracing on its tallest piers, creating a visually striking 'three tiered' effect that enhances its viaduct form.

Nimons Bridge is historically significant as having served initially the mining community at Linton, then the Western District agricultural area and in later years a kaolin quarry at Pittong.

Nimons Bridge is historically significant as a representative of the 'light' branch line methodology that stimulated the explosion of railway construction in Victoria during the 1880s, and provides an interesting contrast with the more solid and vastly more expensive railway viaducts built in similar terrain on Victorian main lines, at Moorabool and Taradale, in the late 1850s. Approached by a deep cutting and high embankment at either end, the bridge represents a very cost-effective late 19th century engineering solution to the characteristic physiography of western Victoria with flat basalt plains intersected by deep wide valleys occasionally subject to severe flooding.

Nimons Bridge is aesthetically significant for its visually impressive viaduct form, crossing a deep and steep-sided valley that is part of a rich cultural landscape. Within close proximity of the bridge are mullock dumps, tailings, shaft sites and other relics of the deep-lead alluvial mining era. The bridge is the most visually spectacular timber-trestle rail bridge in Western Victoria and is among the most spectacular timber-trestle rail bridges surviving anywhere in Victoria. It is part of the Ballarat-Skipton Rail Trail.

Classified:02/10/2000

Other Names Rail Bridge over Woody Yaloak River, Niemen's Bridge, Nimmen's Bridge, Nimon's Bridge,

Hermes Number 67986

Property
Number

Physical Description 1

Nimons bridge has 17 spans with tall timber piers of four driven piles each, with triple sets of diagonal cross-bracing and walers and a single row of longitudinal horizontal bracing between piers. The spans are of a uniform twenty feet (6.1 metres), originally supported by four 21-inch x 9-inch (535 mm x 230 mm) Kauri timber beams per span, following the standard V.R. design of the period. When the superstructure was rebuilt after the 1953 fire, the timber beams were replaced with two 24-inch (610mm) deep rolled-steel-joists on each span. These are marked "Lancashire Steel Co., Scotland" and are believed to have been second-hand. The deck of transverse-timber planks is 103.6 metres in length. Overall the bridge has an impressive appearance with its exceptionally tall triple-cross-braced piers creating a "three-tiered" effect, with the deck 19.2 metres above Smythe's Creek.

The deck has been recently reinforced with steel beams and has safety barriers running the full length, to comply with safety regulations as a pedestrian/ cycling bridge.

Context

Nimons Bridge is situated within a rich cultural landscape that bears evidence from a century and a half of farming and extensive deep-lead gold-mining activity - a rare combination for the setting of a timber railway bridge in Victoria.

The bridge is visible from a considerable distance across the cleared and well-grassed, steep-sided Woody Yaloak (or Smythe's) Creek valley. The steep escarpments of the valley, the massive earth and rubble approach embankments and several prominent mullock dumps in close proximity, provide many vantage points from which to view the bridge. They also help to accentuate its great height and striking viaduct form.

Intactness:

Nimons bridge, currently part of the Ballarat-Skipton rail trail, is in excellent condition.

Assessment against Criteria

Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria's cultural history. Possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria's cultural history Potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Victoria's cultural history Importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural places or objects

Nimons Bridge was Victoria's fourth-tallest timber trestle bridge when built, and is the third-tallest surviving example. It is also the second-largest composite bridge combining traditional timber piers with RSJ spans and a timber deck and falls within a select group of fewer than ten timber railway bridges with horizontal longitudinal bracing between the piers and three sets of double cross-bracing on its tallest piers, creating a visually striking "three tiered" effect that enhances its viaduct form.

Importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics

Nimons Bridge is a visually impressive viaduct, crossing a deep and steep-sided valley that is part of a rich cultural landscape. Within close proximity of the bridge are mullock dumps, tailings, shaft sites and other relics of the deep-lead alluvial mining era. The bridge is the most visually spectacular timber-trestle rail bridge in Western Victoria, and is among the most spectacular timber-trestle rail bridges surviving anywhere in Victoria

Importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period

Nimons Bridge is a representative of the "light" branch line methodology that stimulated the explosion of railway construction in Victoria during the 1880s, and provides an interesting contrast with the more solid and vastly more expensive railway viaducts built in similar terrain on Victorian main lines, at Moorabool and Taradale, in the late 1850s. Approached by a deep cutting and with high embankment at either end, the bridge represents a very cost-effective late 19th century engineering solution to crossing a deep wide valley occasionally subject to severe flooding.

Usage/Former Usage

former rail bridge, now part of rail trail

Physical Conditions

The deck has been recently reinforced with steel beams and has safety barriers running the full length, to comply with safety regulations as a pedestrian/ cycling bridge.

Nimons bridge, currently part of the Ballarat-Skipton rail trail, is in excellent condition.

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Intactness

excellent

This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.

For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>