Cheynes Bridge

B6839 Cheynes Bridge

Location

Licola Road,, HEYFIELD VIC 3858 - Property No B6839

Municipality

WELLINGTON SHIRE

Level of significance

Demolished/Removed

Victorian Heritage Register (VHR) Number

H0109

Heritage Listing

National Trust

Statement of Significance

Last updated on - May 16, 2008

Cheynes Bridge is historically, culturally, and aesthetically significant at State level. It is a timber-piered six-span bridge built in 1947, with a superstructure consisting of rolled steel joists that support timber cross-beams which carry a longitudinal timber deck just over 100 metres long and measuring 6.6 metres between kerbs. Abutments are of timber and concrete. Historically, this bridge commemorates the earliest phase of post-war-reconstruction at the end of World War 2, and Victoria's final phase of timber-bridge design. Road traffic after World War 2 would be markedly more demanding on bridge builders than it had been prior to 1939. Cheynes' bridge is therefore a good representative example of that final phase in Victorian timber-bridge design for fast-moving semi-trailer

transports, a decade before timber gave way to steel and concrete in Victorian main-road bridge construction. Sawn timber had been extremely scarce, and reserved for war purposes. Big back-logs in house and general construction required the opening up of large forest areas. Previous key timber settlements, like Healesville, Warburton and Noojee, had depended on railways to get their timber out, but the age of railway construction was now long past. The mountains above Licola were to provide a very large proportion of Victoria's post-war timber, and in 1947 the reconstruction of the Licola road with its decaying timber-truss bridges was a priority for the Country Roads Board working in conjuction with the forest commission. Fast moving log-jinkers and heavy loads of sawn green timber provided a novel challenge on mountian roads. Since Cheynes Bridge was constructed for heavy timber traffic, it needed to be a substantial bridge built to new post-war (American-based) loading standards specifically designed to carry fast-moving semi-trailer traffic. Pre-war bridges had been built to loading standards designed for two-axle vehicles. The weldability of steel joists was important, because steel cross-connections between joists would in these post-war circumstances stabilize superstructures and spread the load. The use of steel joists also allowed for wider spacing of timber piers in flood-prone river channels, and the new standard steel-joist and timber motor bridge could therefore be ecnomically used to replace many older timber-truss structures, as happened on the Macalister River both at Licola and at Cheynes Bridge in 1947. The Macalister River valley has long been deservedly popular with Victorian sight-seers, campers and fishermen. The site of Cheynes Bridge near the foot of some of Gipsland's most rugged and beautiful mountain country is a popular river-side camping and fishing spot, of considerable social significance to Gippslanders and city dewllers alike. The Macalister Valley at this spot is broad, with an attractive stony river bed. The current Cheynes Bridge has for half a century been an integral part of this attractive setting on a popular tourist route. The lengthy silhouette of this substantial timber-trestled structure fits well into a rural forest setting, and complements this beautiful stretch of river.
Classified 'State': 16/09/1997

File Note: Bridge destroyed by flood, June 2007

Hermes Number 69994

Property Number