



The Great North Road *The Convict Trail* From Epping to Wisemans Ferry

The Great North Road is a 240km convict built masterpiece constructed between 1826 and 1836 to provide an overland route from Sydney to Newcastle and the Hunter Valley. Much of the original convict built road remains in use today, although a lot of the original surface is well buried beneath bitumen. Convict built remains, such as stone retaining walls, pick dressed cuttings, culverts, bridges and stone cut drains, can be seen when driving along the road, or when walking in Dharug and Yengo National Parks.



View from Courthouse Cave; Wall near Hawkins Lookout; Detail of Pickmarking; Pickmarking along roadside

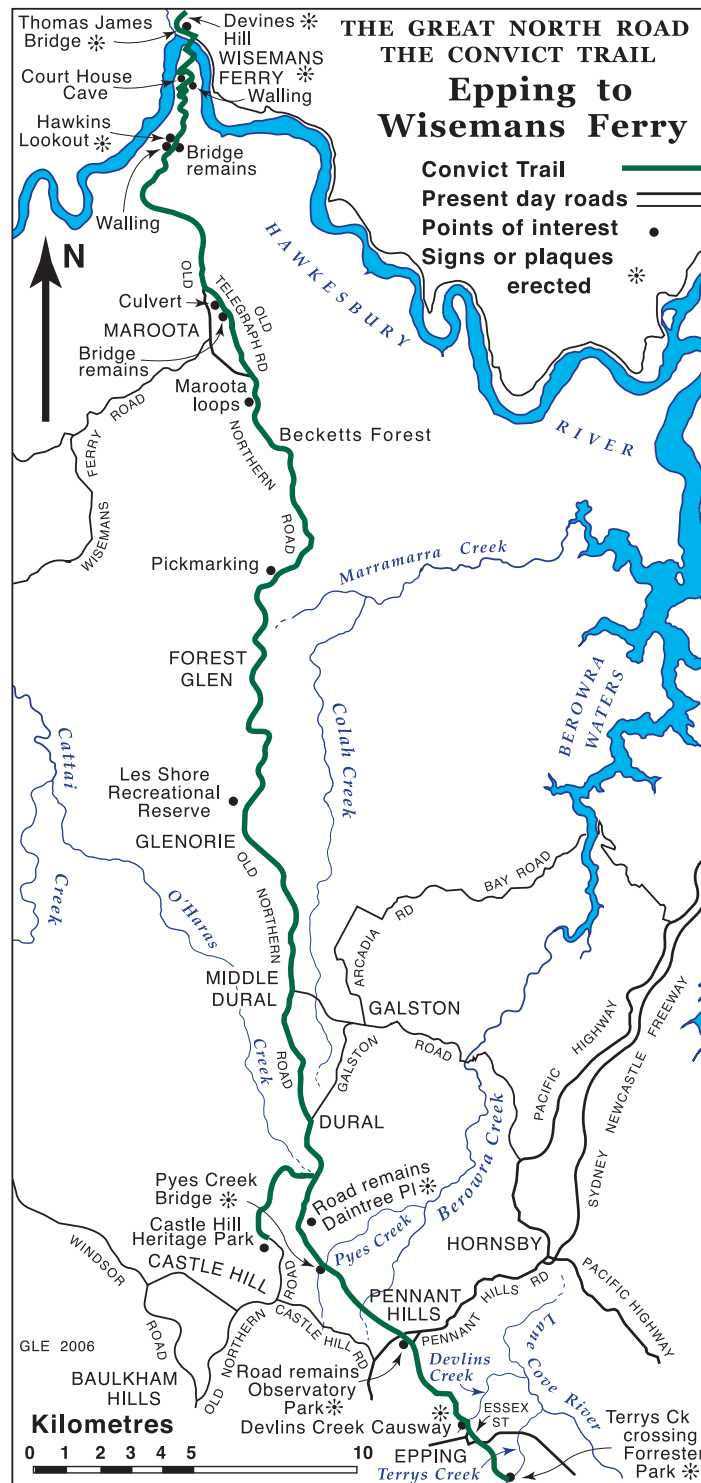
Epping to Wisemans Ferry

Within Metropolitan Sydney rare convict remnants remain. The most significant is the stone causeway crossing at **Devlins Creek**. It sits under the M2 bus flyover between Beecroft Road and the Railway line. Other relics can be found in Foresters Park, Epping; Observatory Park, Beecroft; Woodlark Place, Cherrybrook; and Daintree Place, Dural. In 1826 work on the road commenced just north of Heritage Park Castle Hill, the site of the Government Farm, 1801-1811.

Driving to Wisemans Ferry along Old Northern Road you travel on a road that was originally built by convicts. In parts, convict built stone walls and culverts still support the road, in others the road passes through convict cut cuttings with their tell-tale pick markings. In other sections small abandoned road loops can be found. The thirty kilometres from Glenorie to Wisemans Ferry contains evidence of convict work. There are even unmarked convict graves and the marked grave of a wayfarer who died walking along the road. His grave (maintained by the RTA) is between the Windsor road junction and Maroota School.

At **Forest Glen** there are remains of a large well or in-ground tank, probably of convict origin and possibly the enlargement of an Aboriginal water soak. The road probably follows an Aboriginal pathway as there is Aboriginal rock art nearby in many places.

About two kilometres north of Canoelands Road are the **Maroota Loops** now on private land. The road was built around the side of the hill so horses pulling loaded wagons had as gentle an incline as possible.



The convict road then crossed the current road onto an unmarked track that becomes **Old Telegraph Road**. About 1915 the main road was moved to its current line to join the road from Windsor. With a small deviation into Old Telegraph Road you can find a large stone culvert and evidence of where the natural rock was used as a bridge abutment.

From the "Tobruk" entrance evidence shows that, before this section was rebuilt in 1927, the convict road zigzagged down the hill to the saddle. On the other side of the saddle, the road follows the original route to the bottom of the hill. Approaching **Hawkins Lookout**, the road is carried by a long stone wall with culverts.

Hawkins Lookout provides excellent views over the Hawkesbury River. There are picnic tables and an information plaque.

There are 41 sites between Hawkins Lookout and **Wisemans Ferry** including long sections of walling holding up the road, a small bridge, culverts, Court House Cave, and convict graffiti. At the bottom of the hill is the village of Wisemans Ferry where Australia's oldest ferry service has operated since 1827. On the right is the hotel, part of which is Solomon Wiseman's original house built in 1826.

Beside Wisemans Ferry is Wisemans Ferry Park Reserve, a large river front park with sculptures, plaques, picnic tables and toilets. Thomas James Bridge, the oldest functioning bridge on mainland Australia is just across the river.

THE CONVICT TRAIL

The Convict Trail is the name for The Great North Road, the surrounding land, and historic buildings. The Convict Trail Project Inc. (CTP) is a community based organisation with objectives of the care, protection and promotion of the Great North Road.

To achieve its objectives the CTP works with many partners, including the NSW Heritage Office, councils, Dept. of Corrective Services, NPWS, RTA & local tourism associations. The Project brings together community groups, individual members, tourism groups, State Government agencies and local councils including both Baulkham and Hornsby Councils. For more information, including "conservation partners" visit the CTP website.

This brochure is part of a series of area specific electronic brochures available from the Convict Trail website. The content of this brochure has been compiled in good faith but is published without responsibility in law or otherwise for its accuracy and without any assumption of duty of care by the Convict Trail Project. The sites are listed to allow you to appreciate how much evidence remains and what is supporting the road you are driving on.

Remember: do not trespass on private property. Many of the convict relics noted in this guide are used for traffic. You should only view them from safe locations.

For extra information purchase an "Explore the Convict Trail" booklet or visit the Convict Trail Website www.convicttrail.org.

New members welcome. Write to the CTP, 7 Coolabah Close, Thornleigh NSW 2120.



Cliffs at Wisemans Ferry; Well at Forest Glen; Grave of Wayfarer; Small bridge opposite Hawkins Lookout