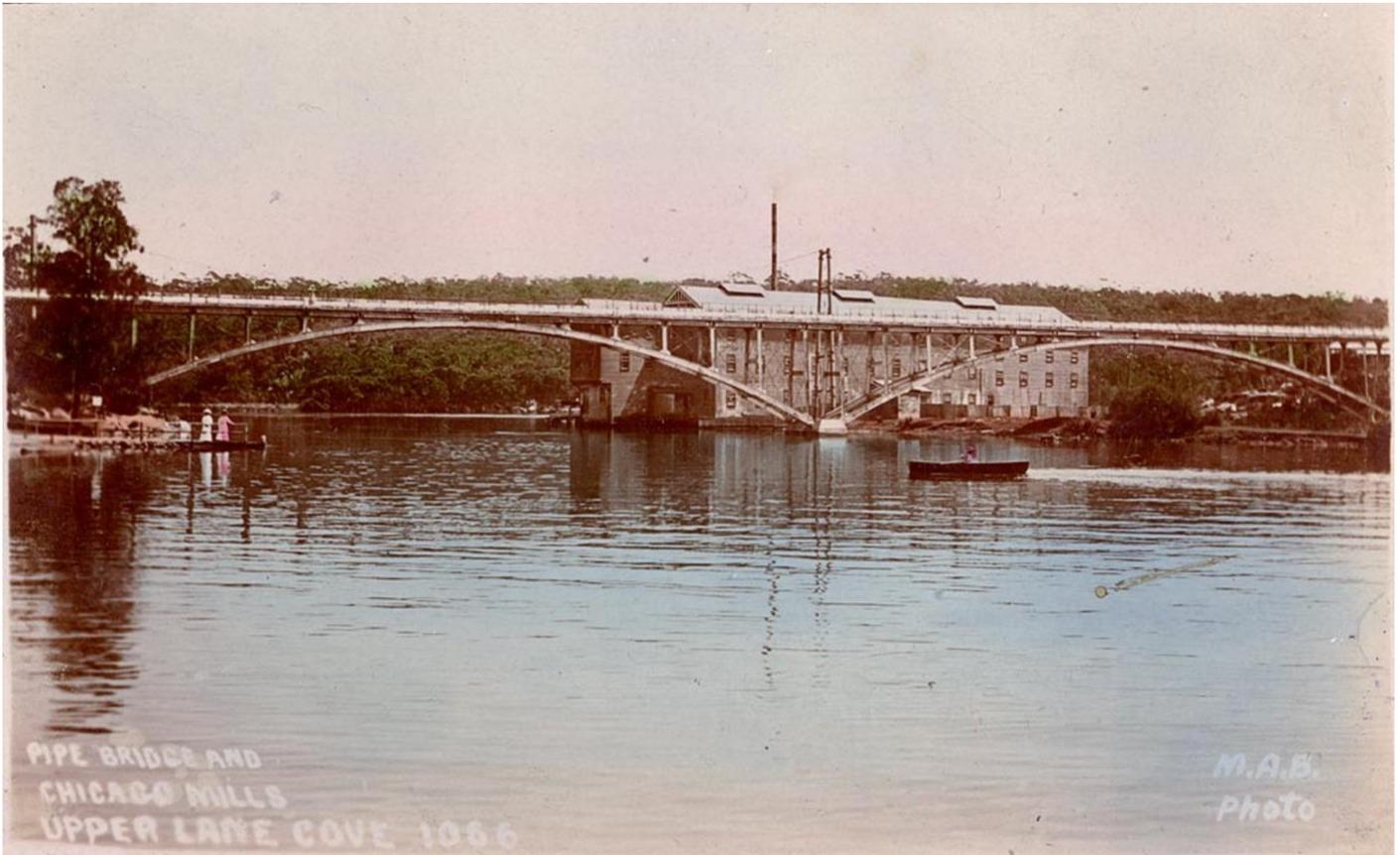


Clifford Love Bridge (circa 1902) – some potted research

Continuing the series on the 'bridges of Lane Cove River' – this time we look at the arched footbridge just downstream of our start/finish line. The bridge we are all familiar with dates back to 1902, its primary purpose being to carry the fresh water supply to North Sydney. It is actually the 2nd bridge at the site (the first being a suspension bridge built for the same purpose circa 1890 more of which later).

The image below (Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org> from Collections of the State Library of NSW) dates from the early 1900's with the original suspension bridge still in situ behind the arched bridge. Note in the foreground the small motor(?) boat and people on the jetty at left



[Sydney Water](#) kindly published the following historical notes.

In 1894 a cornflour mill was established on the eastern bank of the river adjacent to the bridge which became known as the "Clifford Love Cornflour Mill". This mill is currently [was] operated by the Goodman Fielders Maize Products, and the company take a keen interest in the steel arch bridge. A suspension bridge was constructed in 1890 to cross the Lane Cove River carrying the rising main extending from Ryde up to the Chatswood Reservoirs from where it was distributed to the North Shore. In 1902 the current steel arch bridge was built to operate in tandem with the original rising main. The suspension bridge was demolished in 1945 and only the steel arch bridge (Clifford Love Bridge) remains. It provides pedestrian access from Magdala Park to Epping Road and as part of the Great North Walk.

The Clifford Love Bridge has close associations with early industrial activity which centred around the Lane Cove River valley. It was the first bridge constructed of its type built for the provision of a public water supply. The bridge itself is a significant steel arch bridge, having two spans each of 57.9m. The "Register of Australian Historic Bridges" lists it as second in span to the Sydney Harbour Bridge under the category "historic metal arch bridges". It provides a vital role in the provision of water to inhabitants of the Upper North Shore, carrying water from the Upper Nepean Scheme. The bridge serves the function of carrying the rising main across the Lane Cove River from Ryde Pumping Station to Chatswood Reservoir. From this reservoir water is supplied to the North Shore. It is aesthetically pleasing, contributing positively to the riverscape. It also has historical links with the development and settlement of the Upper North Shore. Finally, it serves as a vital pedestrian link between the western and eastern banks of the Lane Cove River and as part of the Great North Walk.

Twin span steel arch bridge supporting 750mm rising main. Completed in 1902, it operated in parallel with the original suspension bridge until 1945, at which time the suspension bridge was demolished. Unlike the original suspension bridge, the arch bridge carries a walkway which enables it to be used as a footbridge. The present steel arch bridge has two spans each of 57.9 metres, together with smaller end spans supported on steel trestles. It is second in span length to the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Each span is a two pin arch of fabricated section girder supporting steel columns which in turn support simple lattice beams carrying the deck and pipes.

The '2nd span' of the bridge is now largely obscured from the river by Mangroves and buildings/land reclamation – but is definitely there. The 'Chatswood reservoir' referenced in the notes is the large tank located on the corner of Pacific Highway and Mowbray Road at Artarmon.

Below is an image of the two pipe bridges taken from the Magdala Park side of the river – also expected to be in the early 1900's.



Source: Sydney Water

The image below shows the area as it was in 1943 (image copyright NSW Government – more imagery is available at this site - <https://maps.six.nsw.gov.au/> [once there, select the *basemaps* button at top right hand side and choose 1943 imagery]). Of interest in this image is:-

- Lane Cove River Bridge (or Epping Bridge as we call it and yes another article will provide some history of that one). This section of the bridge was completed in February 1940.
- the original suspension bridge still in place (not removed till 1945),
- the distinct stain in the water downstream of the factory – the environment was clearly less of a concern at the time.
- And the yet to be started Rotary Athletics Field and LCRK shed!



Stepping back in time are a series of photos below circa 1890 showing various construction photos of the original suspension bridge (now demolished/replaced). The image below is of particular interest and is looking upriver from the Magdala Park side. Note:-

- The size of the Chicago Mills factory at the time and it's proximity to the water.
- The absence of Epping Bridge (not built till 1940)
- The lack of Mangroves – research suggests they're current proliferation is well beyond their original spread, supported by sedimentation from the development of upriver suburbia.



Source: <http://dictionaryofsydney.org/image/43779> Titled - Construction of the suspension bridge carrying water pipes across the Lane Cove River 1890. By Blomfield, Harold Arthur. Contributed by Private Collection (Courtesy of Charles Blomfield, Wagga Wagga)

Below: Two shots of the Suspension bridge under construction from the Magdala Park side of the river.



Source: <http://dictionaryofsydney.org/image/43779> Titled - Construction of the suspension bridge carrying water pipes across the Lane Cove River 1890. By Blomfield, Harold Arthur. Contributed by Private Collection (Courtesy of Charles Blomfield, Wagga Wagga)

Below two additional construction photos – the first from Magdala Park side of the river, the 2nd from the Epping Road side.



Source: <http://dictionaryofsydney.org/image/43779> Titled - Construction of the suspension bridge carrying water pipes across the Lane Cove River 1890. By Blomfield, Harold Arthur. Contributed by Private Collection (Courtesy of Charles Blomfield, Wagga Wagga)

For those who like a bit of history – the original bridge foundations from the 1st Bridge can still be found on the Magdala Park side of the river (see picture below with footbridge just visible in background). Also a section of remnant cast-iron pipe from the old pipe alignment and I'm sure the foundations for the suspension wires.

