

**Item name:** Bridge - trestle remnant**Location:**

Coffs Harbour

**Address:****Planning:** Northern**Suburb/nearest town:** Coffs Harbour 2450**Local govt area:** Coffs Harbour**Parish:****State:** NSW**County:****Other/former names:****Area/group/complex:****Group ID:****Aboriginal area:** Gumbainggar**Curtilage/boundary:****Item type:** Archaeological-Terrestrial**Group:** Transport - Rail**Category:** Railway Bridge/ Viaduct**Owner:** State Government**Admin codes:****Code 2:****Code 3:****Current use:** Bridge relics/Archaeological site**Former uses:** Part of a narrow-gauge tram line used to transport timber.**Assessed significance:** Local**Endorsed significance:**

**Statement of significance:** The trestle bridge remnant near Camperdown Street, Coffs Jetty is of local significance in being a fragment and symbol of the former privately built timber tram lines that transported logs to the jetty for milling and then shipment. The hardwood milling activities of several companies in and around the jetty were, for a short time, very important economically to Coffs Harbour and drove the growth and development of Coffs Harbour. This bridge remnant helps demonstrate a major industry now marked by very few surviving physical remains. It helps capture the distinctive features of a critical phase of Coffs Harbour's past history as a busy, shipping port.

Knowledge of, and curiosity about, Coffs Harbour's timber tram lines are an important aspect of Coffs Harbour's sense of identity. They evoke a now-defunct industrial past and even though they are now largely absent, the tram lines continue to have a powerful sentimental/romantic appeal for Coffs Harbour residents.

**Item name:** Bridge - trestle remnant

**Location:**

Coffs Harbour

**Historical notes** Hardwood timber milling and associated tramlines at Coffs Jetty  
**of provenance:** One of the main prompts for the further development of Coffs Harbour was the growth of hardwood timber milling, as opposed to the early cedar-getting which, By 1885, cedar-getting was lessening in economic importance to Coffs harbour. Most of the cedar had been depleted by this time.

In the early 1890s hardwood timber milling emerged as a major industry.

There were existing nearby milling operations at Raleigh and further north in the Northern Rivers area and there had been two early local small-scale timber mills in Coffs Harbour – one set up by George Mills in Moonee Street in the early 1890s to cut and supply timber for the construction of the jetty and another at the jetty set up by William Best, but both mills were temporary and had ceased operations by 1903. Best's mill was marked on Commander Howard's 1890 plan of the jetty as 'Travelling Saw Mill camped thereabouts'.

The emerging hardwood timber industry had very different requirements to those of the earlier cedar-getters. For large-scale permanent timber operations, better roads, local sawmilling operations and transport by rail to modern loading facilities were all required.

As a result, more capital was needed and the industry moved away from local travelling sawmilling and logging operations to large venture-capital experiments and company-based operations. One of the first was the Commonwealth Lumber and Shipping Co Ltd which issued a prospectus and advertised a public share issue in the late 1890s. Part of the plan involved the acquisition of a lease of 20 acres at Coffs Harbour jetty and over 3,00 acres of dense forest in the Nymboida area with tramlines linking the two. The plans never materialised but, as Neil Yeates has observed, the later development of the hardwood timber industry closely followed these first proposals.

The first permanent hardwood timber mill in the area was in Coramba, established in January 1903 by William Shaw. It was cutting 22,000 super feet of ironbark per week for export to New Zealand via Sydney. It was loaded at Coffs Harbour which, at the time, was visited by two ships a week, the 'Dorrigo' and the 'Cavanba', each travelling north and south.

Later in 1903 a mill was set up in Coffs Harbour by George Wallace Nicholl. About a year later, Nicholl died and his business was bought first by the North Coast Steam Navigation (NCSN) Co and soon after by the British Australian Timber (BAT) Co. Nicholl's timber mill was located a short distance from the jetty on the road to Coffs Harbour and was soon joined by another mill, Pike and Co, which burnt down in 1906.

The BAT Co, after acquiring Nicholl's mill, began constructing tramlines to transport logs from the surrounding forests to the jetty. The first tramline went northwards from the jetty across Coffs Creek and to the base of Macauleys Headland and continued for a mile or so after, crossing what was then known as Woolgoolga Road near the present-day Big Banana. The line was extended as areas were logged. In 1908 it was extended to West Korora and the Bucca Bucca Creek Basin, and again in 1912.

In 1905 a local entrepreneur Henry Edgar Day applied for a tramline lease to build a tramline running south from Coffs Harbour jetty across the north arm of Boambee Creek and west towards present-day Englands Road. In 1906 he applied for extensions to go further into Upper Boambee. These were part of a larger plan to construct a timber depot and private jetty near South Coff Island which never eventuated and, after building the tramlines to the Boambee forests, Day forfeited his leases in September 1911 and the tramline were taken over by the Coffs Harbour Timber Co which had established timber mills at Bonville and Boambee.

Logs from Bonville and Boambee were then taken to Coffs jetty via these tramlines and many locals have since confused the ownership of these tramlines as BAT Co tramlines.

According to Neil Yeates, from about 1905 these large-scale timber milling operations gave such an enormous boost to the growth of Coffs Harbour that the term 'the lift of 1905' was coined to describe the impact. Shipping visits increased. From two ships a week in both directions in 1903, Coffs Harbour jetty was receiving about eight

**Item name:** Bridge - trestle remnant

**Location:**

Coffs Harbour

a week (over 400 a year) in 1906 and traffic remained at this level for the next 10 years. In 1905 a direct shipping route between Coffs, Woolgoolga and Sydney was set up by Langley Brothers who had timber milling interests in the area, and a specially built vessel, the SS Fitzroy, entered service from 1912. It has been estimated that the quantities of hardwood shipped from Coffs Harbour increased from 2.75 million super feet in 1907-1908 to 7.5 million super feet in 1916.

Numerous sawmilling operations sprang up around the Coffs area and some timber was cut and transported the old-fashioned way using loggers and bullock teams, but the BAT Co operations at both Coffs Harbour and Woolgoolga remained the largest and most influential. Two more BAT sawmills and associated tramlines were built at Boambee and Bonville in 1912. The Boambee mill was on Englands Road and closed in about 1917, and the Bonville mill was opposite the present-day Crossmaglen Public School and continued until March 1931. When the North Coast railway line came through in 1915, the BAT Co took up some of their tramlines and relaid them from the Boambee and Bonville mills to two special sidings called Nondaville and Mahratta.

Prior to the First World War the timber industry suffered a downturn and at the outbreak of war, timber exports were disrupted. This meant the busy shipping routes slowed down and timber mills closed. The Coffs Harbour Timber Mill at Boambee closed in 1914 and the BAT Co sawmill at Coffs Harbour jetty has been closed for about a year before it was destroyed by fire in January 1915.

Trestle bridge remnant at Camperdown Street

It is likely that the supporting timber trestles surviving near Camperdown Street formed part of Henry Edgar Day's 1095 narrow gauge tram line. It originally ran from the jetty south towards Boambee Creek and taken over by the Coffs Harbour Timber Co in 1911.

The Coffs Harbour Timber Mill at Boambee closed in 1914 and the section of the disused tram line near the jetty was probably destroyed by the construction of the North Coast main line in 1922. Construction began in 1911 at Raleigh and reached Coffs Harbour in 1915.

The rail tracks don't appear to be original or, if they are, not in their original configuration.

The bridge remnant is possibly the sole surviving remnant of the 1905 tram line built by Henry Edgar Day.

**Themes:** **National theme**  
3. Economy

**State theme**  
Transport

**Local theme**

**Designer:** Henry Edgar Day

**Builder:** Henry Edgar Day

**Year started:** 1905

**Year completed:** 1914

**Circa:** Yes

**Physical description:** One high cross-braced timber trestle, several posts and some timber walling. Eleven steel tram tracks rest on top of the structure.

It is located in a park/reserve alongside the North Coast Main line as it approaches Coffs Harbour from the south, crossing Camperdown Street near Jordan Esplanade.

**Physical condition level:**

**Physical condition:** Has some archaeological potential as a surviving relic of the timber tram lines that serviced the hardwood timber mills near Coffs jetty.

**Archaeological potential level:**

**Archaeological potential Detail:**

**Modification dates:**

**Item name:** Bridge - trestle remnant

**Location:**

Coffs Harbour

**Recommended management:**

<b>Management:</b>	<b>Management category</b>	<b>Management name</b>
	Statutory Instrument	List on a Local Environmental Plan (LEP)
	Recommended Management	Carry out interpretation, promotion and/or education

**Further comments:** It appears to be have partly reconstructed more recently as a self-conscious relic of the past tram lines.

**Criteria a):** The trestle bridge remnant near Camperdown St, Coffs is of local significance in being a fragment and symbol of the former privately built timber tram lines that transported logs to the jetty for milling and then shipment. **[Historical significance]** The hardwood milling activities of several companies in and around the jetty were, for a short time, very important economically to Coffs Harbour and drove the growth and development of Coffs Harbour. This bridge remnant helps demonstrate a major industry now marked by very few surviving physical remains. It helps capture the distinctive features of a critical phase of Coffs Harbour's past history as a busy, shipping port.

**Criteria b):** **[Historical association significance]**

**Criteria c):** **[Aesthetic/ Technical significance]**

**Criteria d):** Of local significance. Knowledge of, and curiosity about, Coffs Harbour's timber tram lines are an important **[Social/Cultural significance]** aspect of Coffs Harbour's sense of identity. They evoke a now-defunct industrial past and even though they are now largely absent, the tram lines continue to have a powerful sentimental/romantic appeal for Coffs Harbour residents.

**Criteria e):** Of some significance having only a limited ability to reveal information about the former timber tram lines and their operation. **[Research significance]**

**Criteria f):** **[Rarity]**

**Criteria g):** **[Representative]**

**Intactness/Integrity:** Moderate integrity.

<b>References:</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Year</b>
	Neil Yeates	Coffs Harbour Vols 1 and 2	1990

<b>Studies:</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Year</b>
	EJE Consulting	CHCC Heritage Study		1998
	Robin Hedditch	Coffs Harbour Heritage Study		2013

<b>Parcels:</b>	<b>Parcel code</b>	<b>Lot number</b>	<b>Section number</b>	<b>Plan code</b>	<b>Plan number</b>
-----------------	--------------------	-------------------	-----------------------	------------------	--------------------

**Latitude:**

**Longitude:**

**Item name:** Bridge - trestle remnant

**Location:**

Coffs Harbour

DRAFT

**Location validity:**

**Spatial accuracy:**

**Map name:**

**Map scale:**

**AMG zone:**

**Easting:**

**Northing:**

**Listing: Name**

**Title**  
Heritage study

**Number**

**ListingDate**

**Data entry:** Data first entered: 24/05/2013

Data updated: 19/01/2014

Status: Partial

**Image:**



**Caption:** Trestle Bridge Remnant

**Copy right:**

**Image by:** R Hedditch

**Image date:**

**Image number:**

**Image url:** <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/WebAP/P/3455d72d7a500f645d48629b0eece2aac51.jpg>

**Thumbnail url:** [http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/WebAP/P/Thumb\\_test3455d72d7a500f645d48629b0eece2aac51.jpg](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/WebAP/P/Thumb_test3455d72d7a500f645d48629b0eece2aac51.jpg)