

BRIDGES.

The initial concern for the Borough Council in 1863 was to make the streets of Armidale passable for horse and pedestrian traffic. Because of the number of culverts needed, council had to seek assistance from the government for funds. In May 1864 council called for the erection of a culvert by the government in Barney Street near the racecourse. Major concern also developed over the need for a crossing over Martin's Gully in Niagara Street on the western boundary. But no action could be taken as a 'substantial bridge'¹ was necessary.

A culvert in Dangar Street was completed by August 1864. In September tenders were called for construction of a number of culverts in Falconer (Faulkner) Street consisting of two across Dumaresq Street, two across Beardy Street and two across Rusden Street.² A letter was sent to the chief clerk of the Department of Works requesting the government to build a culvert on the Northern Road at the corner of Markham and Rusden Streets and two at the corner of Beardy and Faulkner Streets.

By 1865, there was only one bridge to cross the Armidale (Dumaresq) creek and that was situated at Trim's store. A lengthy debate took place in council in September about whether Falconer (sic) or Marsh Streets should be bridged. Aldermen Schmidt and Trim supported the government position for a bridge over Falconer Street whilst Ald. Mulligan supported the principle of a private bridge in Marsh Street.³ That month sixty residents also petitioned council to provide a bridge at Markham Street.

Flash flooding resulting from sudden downpours meant that substantial damage was often done to roads. In March 1870 council voted £50 to repair damage to culverts and streets after a heavy storm.

The improvement committee asked the town clerk in March 1878 to write to the Minister of Works asking why the bridge over the Armidale Creek was not being erected. The Commissioner and Engineer for Roads, William C. Bennett informed council in April 'that the bridge will be erected on the site in Marsh-street'.⁴ Some residents and members of council felt that the bridge should be built in Falconer and not Marsh Street. The mayor took petitions of 562 signatures in favour of Falconer Street for presentation to the Minister for Works in April. The former Mayor, John Moore claimed the bridge should be in Marsh Street. The newspapers of the time published a number of letters to the editor and referred to the debate as 'the battle of the bridges'. In opposition, John Trim supported the construction of the bridge at Falconer Street. A correspondent in the *Armidale Express*, 11 October 1878 appealed to authorities to erect a bridge and determine the most suitable and convenient site and 'satisfactorily (to the great majority) terminate the renowned battle of the bridges'.

¹ Council minutes, 18 July 1864.

² Council minutes, 29 August 1864.

³ *Armidale Express*, 16 September 1865, p.2.

⁴ *Armidale Express*, 12 April 1878, p.5.

In July 1891 the works committee was requested to meet with the engineer and discuss safety for public traffic of the bridge on Grafton Road; a bridge over the black gully either in Brown and Mann Streets and a foot bridge over the Armidale Creek. If deemed necessary, sites were to be chosen and sufficient money allocated to carry the work out.⁵ The city engineer reported to council in August that the bridge on the Grafton Road was in a dangerous state and the works committee was empowered to render it safe. That October, council discussed proposed bridges for Gostwyck Road, Chapel and Mann Streets and the works committee instructed the engineer in December to 'prepare (a) plan and specification for (a) Hand Bridge to be placed across the Creek, and recommended that tenders be invited'.⁶

Council agreed in August 1900 to discuss a number of matters with the Minister for Works on the occasion of his visit on 10 September. The matters were to include a new bridge on the Grafton Road near the racecourse; the addition of a foot to the width of the Marsh Street bridge; a high level footbridge across the creek in Dangar Street as well as 'asking for a new bridge or satisfactory renovation of the existing structure'.⁷

In September 1906 Ald. Claverie expressed concern to council about neglect of North Ward particularly in reference to the Marsh Street bridge. In reply the works committee recommended that part of a possible grant be allocated for repairs to the bridge. The committee also recommended that the special grant of £300 be used for works including: the provision of pipe crossings in Marsh Street to replace stone crossings; Allingham Street drainage and the balance of the grant be used for the completion of new bridge in Markham Street.

Council received a report from the shire engineer in May 1908 'submitting plans and specifications for a small bridge over racecourse gully to replace (the) old structure'.⁸ He recommended construction of a permanent structure stone causeway on the street leading past the racecourse and showground at a cost of about £35. That June Dumaresq Shire agreed to share construction of the stone causeway over the gully with costs not to exceed £17 10s. In August the shire also agreed to co-operate with council on a 50% basis with the cost not to exceed £23 13s.

A number of bridges over Dumaresq Creek were eventually built and at various places footbridges and concrete causeways were provided for the use of pedestrians and vehicles.

The Progress Associations pressed the various council to provide improved bridges for their residents. The North Armidale Progress Association was formed in April 1950 with boundaries within the City of Armidale north of Dumaresq Street and east and west

⁵ Council minutes, 28 July 1891.

⁶ *Armidale Express*, 11 December 1891, p.3.

⁷ *Armidale Express*, 31 August 1900, p.2.

⁸ *Armidale Express*, 15 May 1908, p.3.

to the municipal boundaries. The organization approached council in May requesting that the Dumaresq Creek crossings in Dangar, Faulkner and Taylor Streets be given attention because of their deplorable condition.

Allingham Street Bridge.

The New England Rugby League asked council in May 1931 to construct a footbridge across the creek and provided council supplied the material free of charge, the club was willing to undertake the work. Action was not taken by council then it was reported by the *Armidale Express* that a flood in October 1932 swept away a footbridge near the gasworks. A Dumaresq Creek crossing in Allingham Street was completed in April 1936 and the *Armidale Express*, correspondent commented the New England Rugby League had 'been advocating such a bridge for some time'.⁹ Two years later the footbridge structure was deemed to be dangerous and in March 1938 council received a request for a bridge from the New England League. Council opposed the application and as an alternative 'decided to construct a footway at the existing crossing in Dumaresq-st'.¹⁰

Council advised the honorary secretary of the Armidale Teacher's Federation in January 1944 it 'could not accede to the request to erect a footbridge over the creek at Allingham-street'.¹¹ The New England Rugby League Board applied for a crossing over the Dumaresq Creek in October 1945. The matter was referred to the works committee but in November the Rugby League was informed council was not prepared to erect a bridge crossing there at present.

Barney Street Bridge.

The *Armidale Express*, June 1937 reported the discovery of the remains of a bridge between Allingham and Barney Streets, covered by four feet of fill. The correspondent claimed the files of the *Armidale Express* from the 1870s referred to the construction and maintenance of a wide bridge in this street.

Bundarra Road.

Council prepared estimates in September 1962 for building a new bridge over Martin's Gully on the Bundarra Road for the Department of Main Roads. The final cost of £4030 determined in November was to be met with council paying a quarter of the cost from its general fund reserves account.

Canambe Street.

A petition from six ratepayers of the East Ward was presented in February 1908 'requesting the construction of a bridge or culvert over the gully from the racecourse, leading easterly, in Canambe street'.¹² In May the Dumaresq Shire engineer presented

⁹ *Armidale Express*, 9 April 1936, p.4.

¹⁰ *Armidale Express*, 30 March 1938, p.4.

¹¹ *Armidale Express*, 12 January 1944, p.5.

¹² *Armidale Express*, 28 February 1908, p.4.

plans and specifications for a small bridge but also recommended a good strong causeway at a cost of £35.

With the approaching show, the secretary of the Armidale P.A. and H. Association requested the construction of a low level bridge on the eastern side of the racecourse in December 1929. 'The Dumaresq Shire Council and the ... association would each bear one-third of the cost, providing the amount did not exceed £100'.¹³ The matter was forwarded to the works committee for action and council agreed to the request in January 1930.

Because the Main Roads Department would only bear the cost of a culvert for a 10 foot width, council was not prepared to expend £80 on a large culvert at Canambe Street in January 1933.

During repairs to the bridge in October 1951, council found much of the timber had rotted away. A conference was then held between the shire and council representatives to consider appropriate action.

Cook's Road Bridge.

In August 1965 the works committee stated the Public Works Department and Dumaresq Shire should be asked to approve replacement of the existing bridge by a concrete causeway. The city engineer Mr Gentle said 'the bridge would have to be removed to get the full benefit of Dumaresq Creek desiltation works upstream from Cook's Road'.¹⁴ In September the shire refused the request. Twelve months later in August 1966, council recommended the replacement of the bridge by a causeway. It was suggested that the work could be carried out by the use of funds set aside for flood mitigation work. The Dumaresq Shire had agreed to the action in June but felt that the City Council should pay for the work.

Dangar Street Bridge.

At a council meeting in March 1892, the works committee recommended the erection of a handbridge over Dumaresq Creek at the foot of Dangar Streets for £14. But that November, the recently completed handbridge over the creek was washed away in the recent heavy rains.

Following requests from North End residents concerning a bridge in Dangar Street, council informed the public in December that such a request could not be met because of lack of funds and the 'Government had declined to assist'.¹⁵ The Department of Public Works informed council in May 1901 that a bridge at Dangar Street was not warranted. Council moved that the Department of Public Works be asked to obtain from the Lands Department information on the amount of Crown Lands on the northern

¹³ *Armidale Express*, 18 December 1929, p.7.

¹⁴ *Armidale Express*, 18 August 1965, p.3.

¹⁵ *Armidale Express*, 21 December 1897, p.5.

side of Dumaresq Creek and how the value of this land would be enhanced by a bridge at Dangar Street.

The works committee was empowered in September 1903 to make arrangements for erection of a footbridge over the creek for £15 or £16 and in November approval was given for the calling of tenders. The tender of James Browning was accepted in February 1904 for a footbridge for £19 10s including all labour and materials. In April council decided to have wire placed across the footbridge.

By June 1927 the residential area in North Armidale had developed and the closure of the Marsh Street bridge during its construction focussed attention on the other crossings of the Dumaresq Creek. A deputation met the Mayor, Ald. Stephens and 'presented a case for a substantial and permanent crossing over Dangar-street, either by a low level bridge or a concrete causeway'.¹⁶ The mayor promised to present the project before the works committee.

Once the Marsh Street bridge was demolished the timber was to be used in the Dangar Street bridge. 'Armidale Curtis asked if the supervising engineer had prepared a plan for the bridge over Dangar-street, to be built out of the old bridge timbers'.¹⁷ At that stage no action had been taken and tenders for labor only were called for the erection of a footbridge in January 1928. But because only one tender was received, it was decided that the work was to be undertaken 'by the maintenance staff, using the timber from the old bridge and concrete piers at an estimated cost of £42'.¹⁸ Residents of North Armidale expressed their concern in September because no effort has been made to bridge the creek. Council announced in December it could not construct a level crossing but was agreeable to the construction of an open dish crossing.

In January 1933 Ald. McArthur referred to the Dangar Street bridge and claimed that the structure caused problems during flood time. He claimed 'the bridge should be replaced by a level crossing'.¹⁹ By October 1934, there were only two bridges which could be negotiated at all times; the Stephens bridge in Marsh Street and the Markham Street bridge. Demolition of the Dangar Street bridge was underway by April 1936. Although incomplete, the crossing of the Dumaresq Creek was opened for traffic in May 1936. At that stage the footbridge was nearly completed after being raised two feet and an extra span erected. Two weeks later the *Armidale Express*, 10 June 1936 reported: 'the stone bottom and apron are practically finished and ready for the concrete slab'. The crossing was completed and the footbridge painted in June 1936. Two months later, complaints were received about the low level crossing and the engineer informed council an apron of concrete, three inches in depth will be placed on top of the crossing once there is a solid foundation.

¹⁶ *Armidale Express*, 24 June 1927, p.6.

¹⁷ *Armidale Chronicle*, 3 August 1927, p.3.

¹⁸ *Armidale Chronicle*, 6 June 1928, p.3

¹⁹ *Armidale Express*, 11 January 1933, p.7.

The North Progress Association called upon council in August 1951 to close the dangerous crossing because motorists were often stranded. In September council recommended that £2000 be set aside in the 1952 estimates for cleaning Dumaresq Creek and for construction of low-level crossings at Dangar and Faulkner Streets. A new concrete crossing over Dangar Street was completed in 1952.

The footbridge was replaced with a modern steel structure in 1986 at a cost of \$30 000 including works, ramps, footpath, relocation and demolition. Further alterations were carried out to the footbridge in 1987.

Donnelly Street.

Alderman E.M. Wilson asked in May 1954 would it be possible to cement the Dumaresq Creek crossing in Donnelly Street. But it was not until February 1957 that council announced that a grouted stone crossing with ten inch pipes was to be installed at an estimated cost of £200.

Following the death of a young mother in a car washed off the crossing in January 1970, council decided in March to replace the causeway with a bridge and 'to seek immediately a 50 per cent government subsidy'.²⁰ At that stage, council's priority was replacement of the Niagara Street bridge and the engineer, K.O. Gentle felt that the life of the Markham Street bridge could be extended with detailed maintenance. But by September, the Donnelly bridge had been placed on the Department of Public work's subsidy priority list.

In May 1971 council received plans for a three span \$100 000 bridge from the Department of Public Works. However the Armidale I.B.C. felt that the plan should be abandoned and the 'Kirkwood and Tancredi parkways (should) be developed as both tourist roads and traffic feeder routes to the university'.²¹ The creeklands appeal committee also supported the stand by the Armidale I.B.C. but council announced its intention to go ahead with the bridge in December. In August 1972 the tender was awarded to Emoh Ruo Court Pty. Ltd. for \$102 100.

Dumaresq Street Crossings.

The New England Rugby League applied for a crossing between Allingham and Jessie Streets in January 1935. Council decided to construct a concrete level crossing in the centre of town near the football oval 'by relief labour at a cost not exceeding £50'²² in August. The newly appointed city engineer L.G. Botham commenced the preparation of plans for a new stone crossing over Dumaresq Creek in March 1936. The stone crossing was completed in April and the engineer recommended a three inch concrete slab to complete the work. Following a further request from the New England Rugby League for a bridge in Allingham Street, council decided in March 1938 to construct a footway at the existing crossing. In April council approved the construction of a

²⁰ *Armidale Express*, 6 March 1970, p.5.

²¹ *Armidale Express*, 3 December 1971, p.9

²² *Armidale Express*, 21 August 1935, p.7.

footbridge by the Rugby League with plans of the construction to be provided to council.

The *Armidale Express*, 9 April 1936 announced the probability of plans for a crossing west of Markham Street 'thus allowing traffic to traverse Dumaresq Street along its whole length'. This crossing commenced in July with a considerable quantity of rotten rock placed at the approaches. The West Armidale Progress Association also 'indicated the need for a pedestrian crossing of the creek'.²³ Three weeks later, the association thanked council for repair work completed at the crossing.

The New England Rugby League Board applied for the erection 'of a causeway in Dumaresq-street fronting the new entrance gates to be put up at Rugby League Park'.²⁴ The matter was referred to the works committee and the Rugby League was informed in November that improvements had been made to the stone crossing.

In November 1961 council informed Armidale Rugby League that an available footbridge was not suitable to be 'placed across Dumaresq Creek, adjacent to Rugby League Creek entrance'.²⁵ Any suitable foot bridge was to be placed near the junction of Barney and Elizabeth Streets. In May 1962 the Armidale Rugby League again applied for a foot and motor bridge over the Dumaresq Creek. The city engineer, P.G. Agnew estimated the cost of such a construction would be £4000 and informed the Rugby League priority would be given to Markham Street when the financial position improved.

Council announced plans for construction of a new causeway between Markham and Butler Streets to cost \$340 in November 1965. G.T. Cochrane offered to contribute towards \$25 towards the cost of the causeway because of the amount of material that it carted from its depot in Dumaresq Street.

Eastwood Bridges.

In July 1891 council discussed the necessity for a bridge across the 'black gully' on Gostwyck Road either in Brown Street or Mann Streets. The Black Gully began south of Kentucky Street, crossed the south eastern corner of the racecourse and then flowed along this section of Cook's Road into Dumaresq Creek. By May 1892 a bridge was built in Mann Street and that month, council accepted a tender from James Norris to construct an approach to the bridge at a cost of £17 10s. Urgent repairs were required to the Eastwood bridge by March 1905. A minor roads grant was used by council to extend the south side of the bridge 45 feet to enclose dangerous holes and to extend the north wing by 36 feet.

The residents of Dangarsleigh and district presented a petition to council in July 1927 seeking support for an appeal to the Minister for Lands 'to do away with a dangerous

²³ *Armidale Express*, 1 October 1947, p.5.

²⁴ *Armidale Express*, 31 October 1945, p.8.

²⁵ *Armidale Express*, 22 November 1961, p.14.

corner'²⁶ at the corner of Kennedy and Mann Streets to permit the erection of a suitable bridge. It was not until January 1935 that Ald. Watson 'moved that Council apply for a grant for the renewal of the bridge at Eastwood, on the Dangarsleigh Road behind the Armidale School'.²⁷ The Department of Local Government made available a special grant of £250 in June for the construction of a bridge at the corner of Kennedy and Mann Streets. An engineer was approached to supply the plans and supervision of the work to include a concrete arch. By August the estimated cost of a new concrete bridge was £900 and it was decided to prepare plans 'for a portion only of the structure to be erected on the line of Mann-street at an estimated cost of £450'.²⁸ R. Brown, a Tamworth surveyor estimated the cost of the culvert at £366 in October.

L.J. Botham was appointed municipal engineer in February 1936 and immediately commenced preparatory work in March incidental to the building of a new concrete bridge in Mann Street, Eastwood. At the same time, he prepared plans for a new stone crossing over the creek in Dumaresq Street. By the end of April, the walls and foundations for the concrete culvert at Eastwood had been completed. But in May the timber of the existing bridge was found to be unsafe and a decision was made for 'an additional centre wall and concrete slab to be constructed at an estimated cost of £37-19-0'.²⁹ The bridge was completed in July and the city engineer expected the total expenditure should be under £500.

Elm Avenue Bridge.

Dumaresq Shire engineer H.W. Sando submitted estimates for various types of concrete and timber bridges to the shire in December 1940. In March 1941 the Minister for Works and Local Government authorised the preparation of plans for a low level bridge leading to the University College. The university was prepared to make available £1200 for construction of the bridge.

The city engineer P.G. Agnew reported the wooden bridge needed replacing in March 1963 and in May it was reported the low and narrow bridge was a trap for flood debris which 'endangered the safety of the structure'.³⁰ Negotiations for a new bridge began in August 1964 and a series of discussions between the council and the university took place during 1965. Council hoped that the university might contribute towards cost of construction. A grant was applied for by council in May 1965. Initial estimates in July were £30 000 but costs had risen to £73 000 by October 1966.

In April 1966 it was announced that the new bridge will be six feet higher than the present one and almost twice as long. Approaches and creek widening to cost \$10 000 were to be met from a Council Commonwealth Aid for Roads grant. Plans and specifications were completed in September and council announced in January 1967

²⁶ *Armidale Chronicle*, 6 July 1927, p.3.

²⁷ *Armidale Express*, 9 January 1935, p.6.

²⁸ *Armidale Express*, 21 August 1935, p.7.

²⁹ *Armidale Express*, 13 May 1936, p.7.

³⁰ *Armidale Express*, 22 May 1963, p.5.

that the tender of M.R. and E.M. Firth, Tamworth for \$88 193 had been accepted. Construction of the pre-stressed concrete bridge commenced in February and the University of New England promised to pay \$10 000 towards the cost of the bridge in May. To that date, \$4000 had been paid but financial difficulties prevented 'payments for 1968 and 1969 being made in advance'.³¹ The bridge was completed in September and opened on Saturday 7 October by the Minister for Public Works and Member for Armidale, Davis Hughes.

Faulkner Street Bridge.

A public petition for erection of a handbridge at the foot of Falconer (sic) Street was presented at the council meeting held on 12 April 1892.

Following a petition from several North Armidale residents, council took action in January 1907 to construct a footbridge over the creek. The tender of J. Browning was accepted for £29 7s 6d for its construction in the following month.

A petition signed by over fifty ratepayers in April 1927 stated 'its firm opinion that the interests of the ratepayers and the majority of the general public would best be served by a crossing at the foot of Faulkner-street'.³²

In May 1936 the work's committee recommended the construction of a crossing in Faulkner Street by the provision of a low-level crossing of rotten rock and necessary grading work. At that time traffic used Marsh or Dangar Streets to cross the Dumaresq Creek. Footpath steps had been put in at Faulkner Street and it was also recommended, 'a new footbridge be constructed out of Dangar street timber in line with the eastern footpath'.³³ The thoroughfare and footpaths were reformed and raised in June and July so that they were above flood level. At the same time the low level crossing was being completed. The footbridge formerly in line with the western footpath, had been shifted to the eastern side which 'enabled the bridge to be raised several feet higher'³⁴ with stone cemented abutments to withstand heavy floods.

A petition bearing sixteen names sought improvements to the crossing and council decided to construct a concrete crossing 'as soon as staff is available'³⁵ in October 1947.

In June 1963 the city engineer announced 'the estimated cost of a concrete causeway over the causeway ... would be \$1,500 and would not be of first class construction'³⁶. Extensive damage was caused to the crossing by the floodwaters of November 1975.

³¹ *Armidale Express*, 24 May 1967, p.13.

³² *Armidale Chronicle*, 12 April 1927, p.3.

³³ *Armidale Express*, 13 May 1936, p.7.

³⁴ *Armidale Express*, 29 July 1936, p.4.

³⁵ *Armidale Express*, 15 October 1947, p.3.

³⁶ *Armidale Express*, 7 June 1963, p.6.

A quote was received from Romac Engineering on 19 June 1987 to supply material, fabricate diagonal bracing and erect footbridge railings for \$600³⁷.

Grafton Road Bridge

At the council meeting on 28 July 1891 various bridges were discussed especially the one on the Grafton Road near the racecourse which carried all traffic to the Hillgrove Mines. In September 'the City Engineer reported the bridge ... to be in a dangerous state, and the Works Committee was empowered to do what was necessary to render it safe'.³⁸ A week later, council announced plans to construct an eight foot brick barrel culvert on the Grafton Road. In view of the traffic to the Hillgrove mines, the government was asked to contribute half costs and erect the structure. That October, 'The Works Department offered to contribute £50 ... providing the Council also gave £50'.³⁹

Council applied to the government in July 1907 for a special grant of £200 for a new bridge over Black Gully as the old structure was dangerous. The government granted £120 towards the bridge in November and council asked the Dumaresq Shire to contribute but the approach was rejected in 1908. It was not until the council meeting on 12 January 1909 that the tender of W. Sims was accepted for construction of the bridge for £127.

In November 1935, council requested the Main Road Department provide for 'a concrete culvert to replace (the) wooden culvert on Hillgrove road to be included in the programme for 1936'.⁴⁰

Jessie Street Bridge.

With the arrival of the railway in 1883 and the construction of a gate keeper's cottage at the southern end of Dangar Street, access for South Armidale residents and travellers was only by railway gates. Residents felt that an overhead bridge should be provided. In May 1892 council moved that an approach be made to the Commissioner of Railways to have an overhead bridge constructed near Jessie Streets for the convenience of the southern side of the city. Two years later in June 1894, council again forwarded a request for an overhead bridge to the commissioners. Council representatives met the commissioners to discuss the overhead bridge and the cost of coal freight in October 1895. They urged the building of the bridge but no action was taken. Twelve months later in September 1896 a petition for a bridge, signed by town and country residents was presented to council.

Council decided in March 1901 to form a deputation to wait on the Railway Commissioners during their visit to Armidale to discuss the Butler Street drainage, an overhead bridge across the railway line, the reduction in carriage of coal to the

³⁷ Armidale City Council Files, 107B Bridges B2.

³⁸ *Armidale Express*, 4 September 1891, p.3.

³⁹ *Armidale Express*, 9 October 1891, p.7.

⁴⁰ *Armidale Express*, 13 November 1935, p.7.

gasworks and also support farmer's access to the weigh bridge at the goods shed. A letter was received from the Railway Commissioners in September concerning the overhead bridge. The commissioner's attention was drawn to the locking of the railway gate in Butler Street at night with no one in attendance. Again in November council discussed the bridge but the *Armidale Chronicle*, 16 November 1901 reported 'nothing definite was done in the matter'.

In August 1902 council discussed the issue of an underway at the Niagara Street railway crossing and the Dangar Street crossing but stood the matters over. At that stage the railway had recommended the closing of Niagara Street. A petition from twenty eight residents asking the council to urge the Railway Commissioners to construct the overhead bridge was accepted in March 1903. After lengthy discussion, it was decided to again approach the commissioners and a letter forwarded to the Railway Commissioners from council asking that the Jessie Street bridge be not overlooked when funds permit was forwarded in May. However council was informed that construction of the bridge 'was impossible at present through lack of funds'.⁴¹ Concerned by the response, the commissioners were informed by council of the urgency of the work.

Aware that Maitland and Tamworth residents had railway crossings at all streets, residents on the southern side of the line again petitioned council in May 1908. They felt that council should 'through the member for the district approach the Railway commissioners urging the necessity of constructing crossings at both Markham and Jessie streets'.⁴² In July the Railway Commissioner's informed council 'they could not expend the money on a crossing over the railway at Jessie or Markham street at present'.⁴³ Parliamentary representative, Edmund Lonsdale promised council every assistance. At the council meeting held on 13 August the mayor promised to interview the Commissioner for Railways regarding the bridge when in Sydney for the municipal conference. With some reluctance, Chief Commissioner Johnson met the Mayor Ald. Wilson and Town Clerk Jones in September but again informed the representatives that funds were not available. 'He promised, however, to see that the request was included in the next estimates when in course of preparation'⁴⁴.

Walter J. Hawke announced a public meeting to be held on Friday 27 August 1909 at the council chambers to discuss the bridge. The mayor presided and a 'fair and representative' group attended. The meeting considered that an overhead bridge was 'absolutely necessary for the convenience and safety of the public'.⁴⁵ Consequently representatives of council met with the Railway Commissioners to again discuss the bridge. An issue that concerned residents was the locking of the gates in Dangar Street at night and in November, council was informed: 'The Department approved of an

⁴¹ *Armidale Express*, 22 May 1903, p.2.

⁴² *Armidale Express*, 29 May 1908, p.3.

⁴³ *Armidale Express*, 17 July 1908, p.3.

⁴⁴ *Armidale Express*, 15 September 1908, p.5.

⁴⁵ *Armidale Express*, 31 August 1909, p.4.

electric call bell being erected at the Dangar Street gates connected with the gate-keeper's house'.⁴⁶

The *Armidale Express*, 3 February 1911 reported 'a movement has now been initiated ... for ... the conversion of the existing pedestrian railway crossing at Allingham and Mossman Streets into a vehicular crossing.' A special meeting over level crossings called by the Mayor W. Curtis, was held in February at the council chambers and various plans presented including an overhead bridge, first proposed in 1892. The proposal for a bridge was supported by the community and by early April money had been subscribed. The *Armidale Express* felt that the 'sum required by the Railway Commissioners as a contribution towards the cost of the bridge - £250- will be within measurable distance'.⁴⁷ By mid May, £120 had been collected and an application was made to the Municipal Council for a £ for £ subsidy. However that month council was informed by the commissioners that construction of the bridge was impossible at present through lack of funds. Council again informed the commissioners of the urgency of the work.

Chief Railway Commissioner Johnson proposed in July 1912 'to erect a bridge over the line in Jessie Street, provided council agree to close the Dangar-street level crossing'.⁴⁸ Council decided to accept the proposal not over Jessie-street, but at a position centrally situated between the two streets. Once the final decision for the site for the bridge was made, 'the committee formed to secure its erection in Jessie street' gave 'up all hope of seeing their scheme materialise'.⁴⁹ The committee now turned its attention to the best detour possible for the road on the western side of the cemetery. This action meant negotiations with Dumaresq Shire. At a meeting of the committee held in January 1913 to decide on the fate of the £129 subscribed, residents decided to offer part of the money to the two councils to construct a culvert over Mosman's Gully in Jessie Street and form that road to the intersection with Kelly's Plains Road.

The Commissioner of Railways informed council in November 1912 that the bridge would be built and the closing of the Dangar Street crossing will be included in the next Level Crossing Bill. But in March 1913 council reminded the commissioner of expediting the erection of the bridge as previously promised.

Council's offer to take over portion of railway land near the Dangar Street bridge for road purposes was to be placed before the commissioner but the department warned council 'the transfer should not be construed as committing the department to any expenditure associated with the widening of the bridge'.⁵⁰ The Chamber of Commerce requested council in October 1938 approach the Main Roads Department seeking alterations to the overhead bridge. In reply to the request the town clerk 'said the matter

⁴⁶ *Armidale Express*, 26 November 1909, p.2.

⁴⁷ *Armidale Express*, 7 April 1911, p.4.

⁴⁸ *Armidale Express*, 26 July 1912, p.4.

⁴⁹ *Armidale Express*, 29 November 1912, p.3.

⁵⁰ *Armidale Express*, 28 September 1938, p.7.

had been referred to the ... Department on several occasions⁵¹ but council was prepared to take action again.

Council decided to ask the Main Road Board to widen the bridge in March 1944. The issue was again raised with the Commissioner for Main Roads, Mr Craig on 31 October in Armidale. In August 1946 council again discussed the issue of the provision of a footbridge. The mayor said in January 1947 that the matter of improvements to the bridge was a matter between the Departments of Railway and Main Roads. Council applied to the Local Government Department in November for a grant from petrol tax to make alterations to the railway over bridge.

In September 1950 the Main Road divisional engineer submitted proposals for the improvement of the overhead bridge. Council agreed to consider the proposals on site. The widening and re-alignment of the bridge was approved by the Department of Main Roads and Railways together with an extra footway on the western side of the bridge in August 1954. The Department of Main Roads made £3000 available for the widening of the overhead bridge over the railway in Dangar Street in May 1956. By that stage, council had already set aside £500 for the work. But it was not until September 1958 that work commenced on widening the roadway and providing an additional footway on the bridge.

A Jessie Street crossing over the Dumaresq Creek was constructed for the use of carriers carting from the quarries. During the 1930s it went out of service and remained silted until October 1969. That month the city engineer, K.O. Gentle announced plans to improve the crossing.

Markham Street Bridge

Edward Allingham wrote to council in June 1864 and stated 'a bridge over Markham-street would be a great convenience'.⁵² He offered to assist council if they undertook the work but at the time council was more concerned about drainage and the provision of culverts. Following the presentation of a petition for construction of a bridge over the creek at Markham Street in September 1865, a public meeting chaired by the mayor was held at Mr Gordon's hotel, the Plough Inn. Sixty residents petitioned the mayor but only a dozen people attended the meeting held on 26 September. A sum of £12 15s was subscribed at the meeting and it was moved that immediate steps should be taken for the erection of a bridge over the creek'. Despite the fact that a committee was formed consisting of the mayor and Messrs Gordon, Black and Galvin, no action was taken. In October 1867 Ald. Trim attempted to allocate £70 for construction of the bridge but the motion lapsed for want of a seconder.

It was not until March 1870 that a bridge over Markham Street was again suggested and in May the improvement committee recommended building a bridge not exceeding £100. Twelve months later in March 1871 plans and specifications were approved with one third of the cost to be met by subscriptions and the rest by council. The tender of

⁵¹ *Armidale Express*, 12 October 1938, p.7.

⁵² *Armidale Express*, 25 June 1864, p.2.

Joseph William Moore was accepted for £158 with modifications to planks and side rails. By September, the piers had been sunk and the whole of the round timber and 1000 feet of sawn timber were available on site. Later that month, the bridge was strengthened by the construction of another pier on the north side to stop flood damage. The bridge was extended by 25 feet on the southern side and Moore was asked to do the extensions for £166. The bridge was completed in January 1872 and ten years later council allocated £40 for new decking.

Council expressed concern about the condition of the bridge in July 1896 and placed a sign on the bridge stating it was unsafe for heavy traffic. The Public Works Department determined in October that as the bridge was on a minor road, then council was responsible for upkeep of the bridge.

In September 1900 a deputation of council aldermen raised the issue of new bridge with Minister H.W. O'Sullivan whilst he was visiting Armidale. Ald. Makin stated in May 1901 there was an urgent necessity for a substantial bridge at Markham Street. Twelve months later, the Department of Works offered council £500 for a bridge if council contributed £300. At the council meeting on 18 November 1902, council decided to submit plans for a bridge to the Department of Public Works through Mr Lonsdale. Council determined to make a further application to the government in July 1903 for a grant of £500 for new bridge. In January 1904 council reminded the Department of the Minister's promise of a £500 grant. Council was still unsuccessful and at the council meeting on 26 July action was taken to erect a warning notice declaring the unsafe condition of the bridge.

Twelve months later council took action to apply for the grant promised by the previous government for construction of the new bridge. In August 1905 the Under Secretary of the department contacted council and council asked the local member to again interview the Minister for Works. By that stage plans had been prepared, submitted and approved by the Department. At the council meeting on 10 October Ald. Fitzgerald reported on an interview with the minister concerning the waterworks question and also stated the £500 promised for the bridge would be available probably during the coming year.

In January 1906 the Department of Works announced a £500 grant towards the cost of the new bridge; plans had already been sent to the Department. Following receipt of the plans and specifications for the bridge in May, the works committee recommended that month that tenders be called for constructing the bridge. In September the works committee recommended that £80, part of a special grant of £300, be allocated for completion of the new bridge. Two months later in November, council expressed concern about the slow work of the contractor Mr Sims.

Still concerned about progress on the bridge, the Public Works Department was asked by council in February 1907 to allow Mr Everett to supervise building of the Markham Street bridge. The *Armidale Express*, 10 May 1907 announced 'the work has been completed' and 'Mr. Everett has certified to its faithful completion'. By June Mr Everett had passed the bridge although council was concerned whether it had been completed

according to specifications. Once the government paid the full cost of the bridge, Ald. Higinbotham reminded council it had promised to spend £81 improving the creek between Marsh and Falconer (sic) Streets.

The timber bridge stood until it was completely redecked in 1952. By the early 1960s, the timber bridge posed a maintenance problem because of increased traffic resulting from the growth of Armidale and the University of New England. The city engineer P.G. Agnew announced speed restrictions and a load limit on the bridge in April 1961 because the main timbers were badly eaten and rotten. These load and speed restrictions remained until 1981. In March 1963 Agnew reported that 'both wooden bridges over Dumaresq Creek at Markham Street and Elm Avenue and the wooden bridge over Martin's Gully in Niagara Street are in urgent need of replacement'.⁵³ In July the city engineer announced that replacing the bridge would cost up to £20 000. Thus, 'Council decided to spend £1900 to make the present bridge safe and to build a new one by about 1966.'⁵⁴

In 1979 the Minister for Local Government and Roads informed council it was eligible for a grant under the Bridge Subsidy Scheme with council to meet its share of the cost. That year plans and specifications were approved by the Department of Main Roads. Council considered several options for a replacement bridge including: a larger flood free structure and other alternatives which relocated the bridge further to the west as part of an overall redevelopment of the flood plain between Markham and Donnelly Streets.⁵⁵ Based on cost, the decision was taken to replace the bridge on the present site with the same longitudinal dimension and to develop the city's priority traffic plan. The structure was designed by the city engineer's department under the direction of the chief design engineer, Bruce Macfarlane and built by Moggill Constructions Pty. Ltd of Sumner Park, Queensland for a tender price of \$201 247. The total project cost including roadworks was \$289 000 which was partly financed by a State Government subsidy of \$112 500.

The new bridge was of reinforced concrete founded on bedrock designed to resist floods with pedestrian traffic on both sides of the deck. The former bridge had a deck width of 5.5 metres whilst this new structure had a depth width of 7.4 metres for vehicles. Other new features were lighting supported within the railings as well as lighting beneath the bridge to provide opportunity for security lighting of future cycleway development.

The sealing of the present concrete Markham Street bridge was completed in March 1982 and at the council meeting on 31 May Council selected the name Alderman Kenneth Jones, B.E.M. Bridge. Alderman Jones attended his first council meeting on 14 December 1942 and by December 1982 had completed forty years of service. At his first meeting he was elected as a member of the works committee and appointed vice-

⁵³ *Armidale Express*, 13 March 1963, p.10.

⁵⁴ *Armidale Express*, 31 July 1963, p.8.

⁵⁵ Armidale City Council Files, No 107 B, Bridges B2.

chairman in 1944 and held that position until 1982. He was deputy mayor from December 1946 to 1965 and in 1978 was granted Freedom of the City.

Ald. Ken Jones cut the ribbon to officially open the £300 000 bridge named in his honour on Saturday 19 June 1982. At the opening, former mayors attended including Bill Ryan, Cyril Carey, Lloyd Piddington, Douglas Hewitt and John Failes.

Marsh Street Bridge.

The tender of E. Grovers for £47 10s for the erection of the proposed bridge over the Dumaresq Creek was accepted in October 1865. Money was raised by the community to help meet the cost of the bridge and working bees were carried out by residents. Money was also allocated by council in July 1866 for the road from Dumaresq Street leading to the new bridge. In August 1867 the improvements committee was allocated a sum of £50 to clear away the old bridge and build a new one where the creek intersects Marsh Street. Ald. Trim, the owner of a bridge just to the west of Marsh Street voted against the proposal. Two months later, Ald. McLean was given the task of drawing plans and specifications and William Mason won the tender to remove and erect the bridge for £63 in October. As only £45 had been voted, Alderman Moore, Tysoe and McLean guaranteed to pay the balance.⁵⁶

In early November a considerable amount of additional timber had been drawn to the foot of Marsh-street for erection of the proposed bridge. At the end of the month one of the frames for the deepest part of the structure had been put in place on an excellent foundation but by the end of February 1868, it was reported to council the bridge had been at a standstill for some time. Council allocated £46 for its construction and had paid £20 but now aldermen had to make their contribution. In March, £20 was voted for completion of the approaches to the new bridge⁵⁷ and in April it was reported the bridge is fast approaching completion. The council meeting on 4 August moved that Mr Mason be paid the balance of his contract £65 12s for the bridge. The bridge had been completed for some time by early September, and the *Armidale Express* reported it had 'rather an imposing appearance from its length'.

In September 1871 the mayor drew council's attention to the present state of the flooring of the Marsh Street bridge, now called the Belmore Bridge. The Earl of Belmore had visited Armidale in September 1869 and the name was obviously taken from the Earl.

In April 1877 council urged on the government the necessity for 'a substantial bridge ... as the present bridge is in a dangerous state, and unfit for loaded waggons to pass over'.⁵⁸ The tender was awarded to contractor J.J. Matters in September 1878 and that month he sought permission to fence off both sides of the Belmore bridge whilst he was erecting a new one. Council allocated £29 for repairs to the bridge in January 1879 but in February 1879, L.A. Donnelly the Road Superintendent instructed contractor J.J.

⁵⁶ Council minutes, 29 October 1867.

⁵⁷ Council minutes, 10 March 1868.

⁵⁸ *Armidale Express*, 6 April 1877, p.4.

Matters, 'to proceed with the works on the proposed bridge over Armidale creek at the place contracted for in Marsh-street without further delay'.⁵⁹ That month some aldermen intimated that council would attempt to prevent the bridge being erected over Marsh Street rather than Falconer (sic) Street. In April the town clerk was instructed to write to the Minister for Works asking for an extra span to be placed on the northern side of the bridge. Council felt the present plan would not be sufficient to carry water away in flood time.

Because of the change in the course of the Dumaresq Creek, council decided to approach the Minister for Works in February 1891 to extend the bridge. The mayor informed council in April that an officer had been sent to report on the bridge but it was not until February 1894 that J. Barling the Under-Secretary, forwarded a report on the bridge to council. The divisional engineer felt that 'the expenditure of £1350 was not warranted, and nothing short of this would be of any use'⁶⁰ to extend the bridge above flood level.

Whilst on a visit to Armidale by Minister E.W. O'Sullivan in September 1900, a deputation of aldermen expressed the need for a side footpath on the bridge. In February 1902 the town clerk was instructed to write a further letter in answer to the Roads Department stating that the bridge was erected by the government on the main Great Northern Road and though included in the town has never been placed under municipal control. But in March the Department of Public Works informed council it could see no reason to change the plans concerning fencing of the approaches. Ald. Higinbotham asked that Mr Lonsdale be approached to meet with the Minister for Public Works concerning the bridge.

In May 1908 Mr Lonsdale M.L.A. unsuccessfully interviewed the Minister for Works concerning the bridge. In July the 'government could not repair the Marsh Street bridge, but offered some old decking to the Council for use in repairing same free of cost'.⁶¹ The bridge was inspected by Mr Reid, District Works Officer, S. Herbert, District Architect, Ald. W. Curtis, chairman of the works committee and Mayor Ald. C.G. Wilson in November. Mr Reid condemned three of the principal girders and also a large portion of the decking. Council took action to close the bridge pending a report from Mr Spencer, Dumaresq Shire engineer.

Mr Lonsdale again interviewed the Works Department in January 1909 and in April the Under Secretary informed council an extra £50 had been granted making £150 in all towards repairing Marsh Street Bridge. Following discussions between the contractor W. Sims and the works committee in October, the decision was taken to reduce the bridge by two spans, that is, by 62 feet. The smaller bridge meant that the vacant space was to be filled by earthworks. By the amended contract the work could now be done for £284, which would also include portion of the original scheme of Mr Engineer

⁵⁹ *Armidale Express*, 14 February 1879, p.4.

⁶⁰ *Armidale Express*, 6 February 1894, p.7.

⁶¹ *Armidale Express*, 17 July 1908, p.3.

Spencer for improving the creek bed. The *Armidale Express*, 16 November 1909 announced the 'bridge contract is now completed and the structure is again open to the public'. That December, a letter was received from the Public Works offering £100 towards redecking but the mayor submitted a report from Mr Read, an engineer estimating the cost of repair to be £200. Council determined to send another letter to the local member applying for £200 as the bridge was handed over to council in a bad condition.

Instigated by the mayor and with the consent of the president of the Dumaresq Shire Council, shire engineer Montague Smith presented a detailed critical report on the bridge in October 1925. He provided an estimated cost of various types of bridges and commented 'I would suggest no more repairs be carried out, but a new bridge be constructed'.⁶² The mayor promised to interview the Main Roads Board with the town clerk, Mr Milner on his next trip to Sydney and to seek money for the work. Two weeks later, the Board replied that it was prepared to pay half the cost of a new bridge if council paid the other half over a term of years. Two months later, a further report was tabled on rock soundings for the approaches as requested by the designers.

In January 1927 the board agreed 'to increase its contribution from one-half to two thirds of the actual cost'.⁶³ The Main Roads Board supplied plans and specifications to council in February and asked for the tenders to be called immediately. Council was to: re-pay one third of the whole amount over a period of fifteen years; construct a temporary crossing for the use of traffic during rebuilding and provide stone aggregate to the contractor from council's quarry. Four months later, the board intimated it was prepared to extend repayments of the loan to twenty years.

On the recommendation of the Main Roads Board, 'the tender of the State Monier Pipe and Reinforced Concrete Works of £7,050.15.0'⁶⁴ was accepted by council in April 1927 for construction of a concrete bridge. Preference was given to this company because it was a state government concern. With the agreement of council, an engineer R.A.J. Thompson, was appointed by the Main Roads Board to supervise construction in June. Costs of the appointment were to be met by the board and council. Although by August work was proceeding satisfactorily, some difficulty was experienced with the 'presence of submerged logs, apparently used in the construction of the old bridge'.⁶⁵ The whole of the superstructure timber to the finished deck level was complete in October and the deck was in position ready for concreting.

At a public meeting held in November 1927 in the council chambers, a committee of citizens was formed to beautify the environs of the new bridge. Council decided to call the new bridge, Stephen's Bridge in December because of the magnificent public duties of the Mayor Ald. Morgan Stephens. The bridge was opened on 16 December and the

⁶² *Armidale Chronicle*, 14 October 1925, p.8.

⁶³ *Armidale Chronicle*, 22 January 1927, p.5.

⁶⁴ *Armidale Chronicle*, 13 April 1927, p.3.

⁶⁵ *Armidale Chronicle*, 31 August 1927, p.3.

Monier Pipe Company supplied the marble tablet with the inscription: 'Armidale City Council. Opened December 1927. Morgan Stephens, Mayor'.

The North Armidale Progress Association expressed concern in March 1954 about the safety fencing recently erected by Armidale City Council and made a number of suggestions. In September 1958 the Department of Main Roads announced that the roadway on the concrete bridge will be widened and a new cantilever footway will be constructed in place of the existing footway.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ *Armidale Chronicle*, 31 August 1927, p.3.

New England Highway By-pass Bridges.

With the completion of the New England by pass a number of names were selected by a council and community committee for the various bridges completed as part of the contract.

Anaiwan Bridge (Madgwick Drive)

The name of the local Aboriginal tribe was suggested by Armidale resident Steve Widders.

Private Billy Brett Bridge (Railway Crossing)

The name was nominated by the Armidale Association of the Vietnam Veterans supported by Armidale resident Des Ryan and local members of parliament, Ray Chappell and Ian Sinclair. Aged 21 years and a private of the Second Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, he was killed in action on 30 September 1967 during an ambush by the Viet Cong in the Phuoc Tuy Province. He was the only conscripted Armidale soldier killed during the Vietnam war and a plaque is attached to the World War One memorial fountain in Central Park. Following his death, a funeral service with full military honours was held for the soldier in St. Peter's Cathedral on Thursday 12 October.

G.J. Cochrane Bridge (Bundarra Road)

George Cochrane established a carrying business in Armidale in 1924. By 1976 the company was master carriers, suppliers of sand, gravel, loam, imported bricks and ready mixed concrete.

Hungerford Bridge

John Farrell suggested the name Septimus Hungerford for the Armidale and District Historical Society. The Reverend Hungerford (1825-1927) was the second vicar of Armidale at St. Peter's Cathedral from 1854 to 1875.

G.S. Hutchinson Bridge (Queen Elizabeth Drive)

The name George Hutchinson was nominated by Armidale resident Peter Hutchinson. He moved to Armidale in 1934 and established a small Insurance Agency in Beardy Street. Much involved in community activities, he was an alderman for 11 years and a director of the Armidale and New England Hospital for 34 years. Mr Hutchinson was a founder member and honorary secretary of the Armidale Building Society for 21 years. He was a Board member of The Armidale School, the New England Girl's School and a lay canon of St. Peter's Cathedral. The Armidale Travel Centre (now the New England Travel Centre) was started by him and he was also a foundation member of East West Airlines.

Widders Bridge (Dumaresq Creek crossing)

The name Widders is one of the oldest Aboriginal families in Armidale. George Widders was much involved in activities to establish relationships between the black and white community.

Niagara Street Bridge

In July 1864 concern was expressed by council over the state of Niagara Street and the need for a crossing over Martin's Gully in Niagara Street on the western boundary. However no action could be taken as a 'substantial bridge'⁶⁷ was necessary.

In September 1890 it was announced that a new bridge was to be erected by the government on a pound for pound basis with council. Council's share was to be £44. But by May 1906 the bridge was in a dangerous state and prior to this date the Roads Department had kept it in order. Council decided to ask the Works Department to repair the bridge before handing it over to the council and shire.

By May 1934 the bridge required two girders and several new planks costing £20. Council was requested by Dumaresq Shire to co-operate in the repair work.

Council informed the Main Roads Department in November 1935, that the 'council desires a culvert at Niagara Street, Bundarra Road'.⁶⁸ Ten years later, council received a petition in October 1945 from residents seeking improvements for the Dumaresq Creek crossing in Niagara Street.

Because a number of school children living in the Dumaresq Shire area had to cross the vehicular traffic bridge in Niagara Street, the West Armidale Progress Association asked the shire in November 1948 to erect a footbridge over the creek. The West Armidale Progress Association was informed in April 1949 that the bridge was wide enough to allow for a pedestrian way. In December the shire engineer proposed a bridge with 'a bitumen seal on a stone ballast foundation with Armco pipes underneath to take the normal flow of water'⁶⁹ at an estimated cost of £80. The shire informed the Armidale council in November of its intention to construct a crossing .

In December 1961, engineer P.G. Agnew recommended council consider constructing a new bridge to replace the present one in the next C.A.R. programme as the existing bridge is in bad condition. Again in March 1963 he called for the listing of the bridge in the programme because of its condition. Three years later, the city engineer K.O. Gentle stated in his annual report, 'replacement of the bridge ... should be regarded as urgent'.⁷⁰

Consulting engineers were engaged in 1967 to design a new bridge to replace the one across Martin's Gully in Niagara Street. Council applied for a grant in 1967 and preliminary plans for a new bridge were submitted to the Department of Public Works and Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission in February 1968. But it was not until November 1969 that the Minister for Public Works, Davis Hughes informed council plans for the bridge have been approved. He offered council a grant of 50% of the actual cost of the bridge, estimated to cost \$37 900. Council accepted the offer with

⁶⁷ Council minutes, 18 July 1864 .

⁶⁸ *Armidale Express*, 13 November 1935, p.7.

⁶⁹ *Armidale Express*, 9 December 1949, p.6.

⁷⁰ *Armidale Express*, 14 December 1966, p.4.

tenders to be called early in 1970. The tender was awarded to W.H. Marshall and Son of West Tamworth for just under \$36 000. Associated earthworks, creek relocation and a by-pass were undertaken by the city's engineering department to bring the total cost to over \$46 000. Construction of the new pre-stressed concrete bridge commenced in August 1970 and it was completed in July 1971.

O'Dell Street Bridge.

In August 1905 plans and specifications for a steel galvanized wire and batten suspension bridge to cross Dumaresq Creek and not to exceed £14 10s were tabled in council. The tender was awarded in September to S.H. Bower at a cost of £13 7s 6d to be constructed under the supervision of Aldermen Warnecke and Jones. Some months later, council decided to complete repairs on the bridge and place a notice on the bridge cautioning all persons against 'swinging upon or in any way damaging the bridge'.⁷¹

The suspension bridge was badly damaged by floods in January 1926 and was no longer fit for pedestrian traffic. Twenty nine West Armidale residents petitioned council in October 1933 requesting a bridge and crossing be placed over the creek. Council promised to erect a bridge as early as possible and the works committee recommended in November an amount be set aside in next year's estimates.

In March 1934, residents again requested a crossing over the Dumaresq Creek. Previously a swing bridge which lasted many years had been built but because of the removal of sand and loam from the creek a long bridge was now required. In May council invited tenders for a low level pile and plank bridge and a high level suspension bridge. In July Ald. Watson criticised the decision to provide a single plank footbridge and because of the possible danger to the children, council 'agreed to have guard rails provided'.⁷² The bridge was completed that year.

Because of the dangerous state of the bridge in March 1945, twenty one West Armidale residents presented a petition 'asking council to attend to the crossing and footbridge over the creek at O'Dell-street'⁷³ in March 1945. In October 1952 residents again petitioned council to carry out improvements and provide a light at the crossing.

In 1985 council renewed the timberwork on the bridge for \$4000.

Swimming Pool Bridge.

In August 1930 council approved the payment of £35 to Thomas Monckton, the proprietor of the baths to provide a footbridge over the creek to the baths. The plan also provided for the entrance to the baths from Beardy Street. By September the new entrance to the pool from Albion Park across a low level bridge was ready for patrons. But a flood in October 1932 swept away the bridge as well as a footbridge near the

⁷¹ Council minutes, 11 December 1906.

⁷² *Armidale Express*, 11 July 1934, p.4.

⁷³ *Armidale Express*, 7 March 1945, p.8.

gasworks. A further flood in January 1933 again swept away the footbridge leading to the paths but the component parts were recovered.

Council approved the construction of a suspension bridge over the Dumaresq Creek in June 1933 provided Mr Monckton accepted full responsibility for its maintenance. Council was prepared to provide £10 towards construction of the bridge and also approved the planting of trees in the Albion Park. The bridge over the creek immediately in front of the entrance to the baths was completed in October and the *Armidale Express* commented: 'The strong ropes used to support the footway were formerly used in the old Hillgrove mines'.⁷⁴

In January 1950 Thomas Monckton expressed his concern about the state of the suspension bridge. The creek was cutting into the southern bank and he estimated 'if nothing is done, and the bridge collapses, it will cost £500 to repair'.⁷⁵ But the council refused to comment on the bridge.

A quote for improvements to the footbridge was given by Highdowns Partnership Sawmill in May. That year, council reformed and renewed the timber on the bridge at a cost of \$14 000.

Tancredi Street

Prior to 1933, a large log was thrown across the Dumaresq Creek to provide a thoroughfare for West End residents. On a number of occasions floods damaged the log and in October 1933 council decided not to replace it. Council resolved to call tenders for a suspension bridge as soon as possible.

Taylor Street.

Once the Marsh Street Bridge was closed for rebuilding in 1927, attention was drawn to the need for more Dumaresq Creek crossings. A petition signed by nearly fifty ratepayers of North Armidale 'asking that a permanent low level bridge crossing be constructed over Dumaresq Creek, in Taylor-street'⁷⁶ was presented to council in March 1927. The crossing was completed by June.

Trim's Bridge.

By 1865 the only permanent bridge over the Dumaresq Creek was the bridge constructed by John Trim near his Commercial Store. In May 1867 repairs to the bridge were carried out by council and Mr Trim provided new slabs and nails for the repairs.

A serious accident occurred on the bridge in September 1872. Mr Trim hoped 'Council would see fit to have the rotten decking replaced'⁷⁷ as large traffic travelled over it. The improvement committee inspected the bridge to ascertain what repairs were necessary.

⁷⁴ *Armidale Express*, 13 October 1933, p.7.

⁷⁵ *Armidale Express*, 11 January 1951, p.8.

⁷⁶ *Armidale Chronicle*, 30 March 1927, p.3.

⁷⁷ Council minutes, 17 September 1872.

At the council meeting of 14 January 1873, £50 was set aside for decking and repairing the bridge near John Trim's Commercial Store. A tender for £48 was awarded to Mr Kerr. By March, repairs to the bridge were progressing and nearly half of the decking laid and timber for the rest was 'on the ground'.⁷⁸ The bridge was completed in April and in September, a further sum of £40 was allocated for repairs to this bridge and culvert near the Presbyterian Manse. Further bridge repairs for £18 were completed by H. Schmutter in January 1874.

In April 1903 council discussed whether the bridge should be repaired or demolished and £3 was set aside for repairs in May. That July concern again was expressed about the position of the bridge and its influence on the water course in the creek. A decision was taken by council in October 1906 to remove the bridge at a cost of £1 10s.

⁷⁸ Council minutes, 18 March 1873.