

THE SPIT

Historical Overview



**Local Studies Service
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THE SPIT PUNT

The Spit was originally known as the Sand-Spit. In 1846 John Burton acquired 30 acres opposite The Spit at present day Seaforth.

In 1829 Barney Kearns commenced a regular ferry service from Chinamans Beach to Clontarf.

Peter Ellery also settled opposite The Spit in 1849 and in 1855 purchased the land he was farming. He was often requested by travellers to take them across Middle Harbour. In the early 1850s Peter began a ferry service, from the flat area adjacent to the present day bridge, across Middle Harbour to the Sand Spit on the Mosman side. He charged 1/6d (15 cents) for a horse and cart and 6d for passengers who were walking. Initially he used a rowboat however in 1862 the road to The Spit was constructed and as there was an increase in traffic he introduced a hand operated punt.



Ellery's Punt, The Spit, n.d.

In 1871 the Government replaced this service with a public ferry and in 1888 a steam punt was installed. This was manned by employees of the Public Works Department who were provided with stone cottages at The Spit on Mosman side. The steam punt operated until the first Spit Bridge was built in 1924.

SPIT ROAD

In the early days in order to reach Manly most travellers would have taken a track which followed the present day Mona Vale Road from the suburb of Gordon.

It was also possible to travel to Manly via the Spit. This road was a rough track which ran off the Rosherville Beach track from present day Military Road.

In 1862 a road from St Leonards to Balgowlah via The Spit was opened. This road was very steep and ran along the west side of the headland. Travellers to Manly found this road easier to use than the road from Gordon.

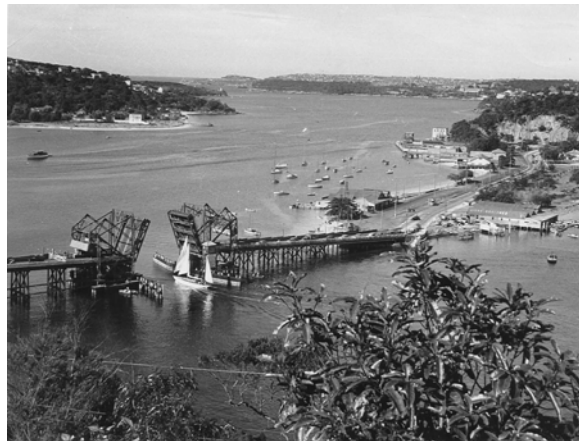
In 1887 a new road to The Spit, today known as Parriwi Road, was constructed on the east side of the headland. This road was also used by the tram from 1900.

In 1922 part of Parriwi Road collapsed so in 1924 it was decided to build another road to The Spit. This road was one of the first concrete roads in Australia and is still in use today as the approach to The Spit Bridge.

SPIT BRIDGES

The proposal for a Spit Bridge was first suggested in 1861, then in 1888 and again in 1915. However, it was not until 1923 that the proposal was seriously considered and a bridge was erected.

The First Bridge



The First Spit Bridge, 1930s

In 1923, the NSW State Government passed the necessary legislation and authority was given to the Sydney Harbour Trust to design and construct a bridge across Middle Harbour on behalf of Manly Council.

Manly Council raised the required money and was given permission to be reimbursed from the collection of tolls after the bridge was built. By 1930 the bridge was paid for, the toll was abolished and control of the bridge was transferred to the Department of Main Roads the same year.

This bridge was a low-level opening timber bridge and cost £60,000 to construct. Designed as a temporary bridge it was expected that it would be replaced with a high-level bridge within 20 years.

On 5 May 1924 the first pile was ceremoniously driven by the Mayor of Manly, Ald. A.C. Samuels. The bridge was completed and officially opened on 23 December 1924. During the first five days of operation 16,451 vehicles crossed the bridge. The bill for a passenger on a bicycle was one penny and a car cost sixpence.

The Second Bridge



The Second Spit Bridge, 1958

By the 1950s the bridge was no longer adequate as vehicles would queue for over an hour to cross so it was decided to build a new one. The Department of Main Roads called for tenders to build this bridge.

The English firm Cleveland Bridge and Engineering Co. Ltd. won the tender and the work was carried out under the supervision of The Department of Main Roads. It was hoped that the bridge would be completed by 1954 but construction difficulties and strikes held up progress. It was finally completed in 1958 for a total cost of £1,110,000.

The bridge is 745 feet long. There is a four lane roadway which measured 44 feet across and on each side of this a pathway each 5 feet wide. The opening width is 80 feet and it is electrically driven.

The steelwork was manufactured in England and the sub-structure consisted of concrete. Some piers were on rocks at depths up to 100 feet below water level and some were on concrete piles. The bridge was officially opened 19 November 1958.

TRAMS



Opening of the tram line to The Spit, 1900

In 1893 the North Sydney tram service was extended to Spit Junction. Then in 1900 the tram line was extended to The Spit and there was a great celebration by local residents.

However, as the trams could not go onto the punt, travellers to Manly had to disembark at The Spit, transfer to the punt on foot and catch the Manly tram on the other side.

In 1911 a single tram line to Manly from The Spit was opened which required that a special punt be designed to transport the trams across Middle Harbour. This punt was 75 feet long and 25 feet wide and remained in use until 1939 when buses replaced trams on the Manly side of Middle Harbour.

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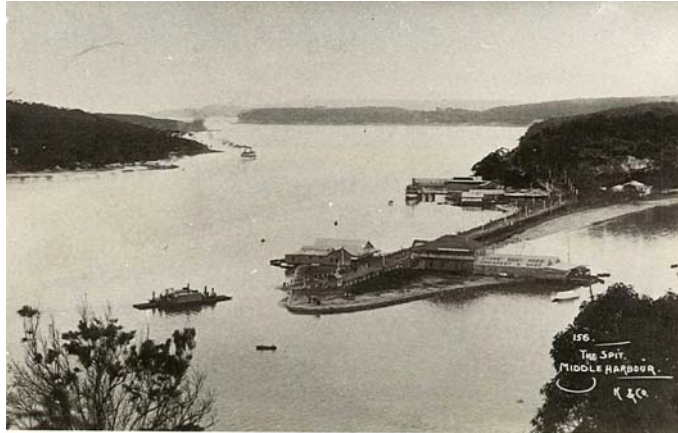
Photographs

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Search terms include The Spit, The Spit Bridge, Trams, Punts and Middle Harbour

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The Spit, c. 1908

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