

## Cox's Road Dreaming: The Development of an Innovative Thematic Tourism Package

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### ABSTRACT

*Greening Bathurst's contribution to Bathurst's bicentennial celebrations in 2015 was the production of a thematic tourism guide, "Cox's Road Dreaming Guide Book: A Natural History of Cox's 1814/15 Road – Australia's First Inland European Road". The guide consists of a 100-page coloured booklet and 8 accompanying maps. The booklet describes 116 sites along the line of Cox's Road or in the immediate surrounds, between the Flag Staff at Bathurst (the location where Governor Macquarie proclaimed Bathurst on the banks of the Macquarie River on 7 May 1815) and Prospect Hill on the Cumberland Plains, east of Emu Crossing (where the building of Cox's Road commenced on the Nepean River on 18 July 1814). The objectives of the project were to (1) enable contemporary Australians to better understand the iconic nature of William Cox's Road both as a road building exercise that opened up inland Australia to European exploration and settlement, as well as to understand the adverse outcomes for indigenous people that eventually resulted in them becoming fringe-dwellers in their own land, (2) facilitate tourists being able to experience 'history with their boots on' by visiting a range of carefully chosen sites that illustrate the difficulties and technologies used in colonial road building, the natural history of Cox's Road, the geography of the road, and the complex factors necessitating Governor Macquarie to order its construction in 1814, (3) enable tourists to better understand the subsequent plethora of roads that gradually replaced the original line of Cox's Road from 1815, (4) appreciate pre-1814 European explorations and Indigenous knowledge that made it possible for Cox's Road to be constructed, and (5) enable tourists to experience aspects of early colonial history and Aboriginal culture through the telling of European and Indigenous stories of people who ventured over the mountains via Cox's Road or subsequent roads. The criteria used to select sites along Cox's Road are described, as are the factors determining which stories should be told, and how a balance was eventually achieved between the many disciplines that have been drawn on to tell this Dreaming story.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Cox's Road, natural history, road construction, surveying, thematic tourism.*

### 1 INTRODUCTION

*Cox's Road Dreaming Guide Book: A Natural History of Cox's 1814/15 Road* (Goldney, 2015) is a thematic tourism guide, jointly developed by Greening Bathurst (GB) and NSW Land and Property Information (LPI). It was produced and printed in 2015 as Greening Bathurst's and LPI's contribution to the bicentenary celebrations of Bathurst as Australia's oldest inland European settlement. To access the newly discovered Bathurst Plains named by George Evans in 1813 during his inland expedition, Governor Macquarie ordered a 'road' (in reality little more than a bush track) be built between Emu Plains on the Nepean River and the

Bathurst Plains on the Macquarie (Wambool) River. Lieutenant William Cox was commissioned by Macquarie to build the road (about 163 km in length), remarkably completing it in 6 months on 21 January 1815. Cox deployed a continuously changing team of soldiers, volunteer free men, unchained convicts working for their freedom and two Darug men (Figure 1). The guide consists of a 100-page coloured booklet and 8 accompanying maps. It describes 116 sites along the line of Cox's Road or in the immediate surrounds, between the Flag Staff at Bathurst (the location where Governor Macquarie proclaimed Bathurst on the banks of the Macquarie River on 7 May 1815) and Prospect Hill on the Cumberland Plains, east of Emu Ford crossing. The building of Cox's Road commenced on the Nepean River on 18 July 1814.

Since much of the route of Cox's Road between Emu Ford and Mount York now lies buried beneath the Great Western Highway, with some sections having been incorporated into minor Blue Mountains domestic roads and others located under housing estates, it should not be surprising that only 42 sites (36%) are on the route of Cox's Road or at locations where John Lewin, the colonial artist who travelled with Macquarie's entourage in 1815, sketched his paintings mostly along the line of Cox's Road. The remaining 74 sites are at locations that provide complementary information that help us to better understand the human and environmental aspects of Cox's Road including Aboriginal culture and history. Parts of the road remain within the Crown roads estate but cannot be accessed since they are enclosed within private land. This is the case for the 17 km section from the junction of the Mid Hartley Road and the Great Western Highway, and the Rydal Hampton Road tracking along the ridge of the Great Dividing Range. The 8 coloured maps include a slightly exaggerated side elevation of the route of Cox's Road from Bathurst to the Nepean River (Figure 2), a plan view, two maps identifying the geology and vegetation communities along a 2 km wide transect of the route (Figure 3), and 4 maps identifying the location of each site in relation to Cox's Road, matched by written directions and a description for each of the 116 sites.

## **2 NATURAL HISTORY AS THE PROJECT'S PRIMARY DRIVER**

The major thrust of the project was to describe the natural history of Cox's Road. There have been a number of publications that provide a range of insights in to the history of Cox's Road, including William Cox's diary written whilst building the road in 1814/15 and the various experiences of those who travelled the road (Mackaness, 1950), at least one biography of William Cox (Cox, 2012), a robust bicentennial souvenir (Cox-Whittaker, 2014), one significant historical-archaeological study of Cox's Road with significant input from surveyors of the Lands Office in Orange (Karskens, 1988) and a recent historical analysis of the history of the building of Cox's Road (Karskens, 2014).

The project described in this paper would have been more difficult to implement without the availability of a reliable route of Cox's Road at an appropriate scale (1:25,000). Fortunately, the route of Cox's Road had been meticulously reworked by Allan Carey and other Department of Lands surveyors in the 1980s and recently brought to light again and updated by Kevin Boole (LPI) and Patsy Moppett, as members of the National Trust Cox's Road Project Committee. However, there remain some uncertainties regarding parts of the Carey model, particularly in the section from the O'Connell Road through to Bathurst.



Figure 1: Surveyor General John Oxley's 1815 map of the road to Bathurst that very soon was known as Cox's Road (Oxley, 1815) – see references for further information about the discovery of this important map.



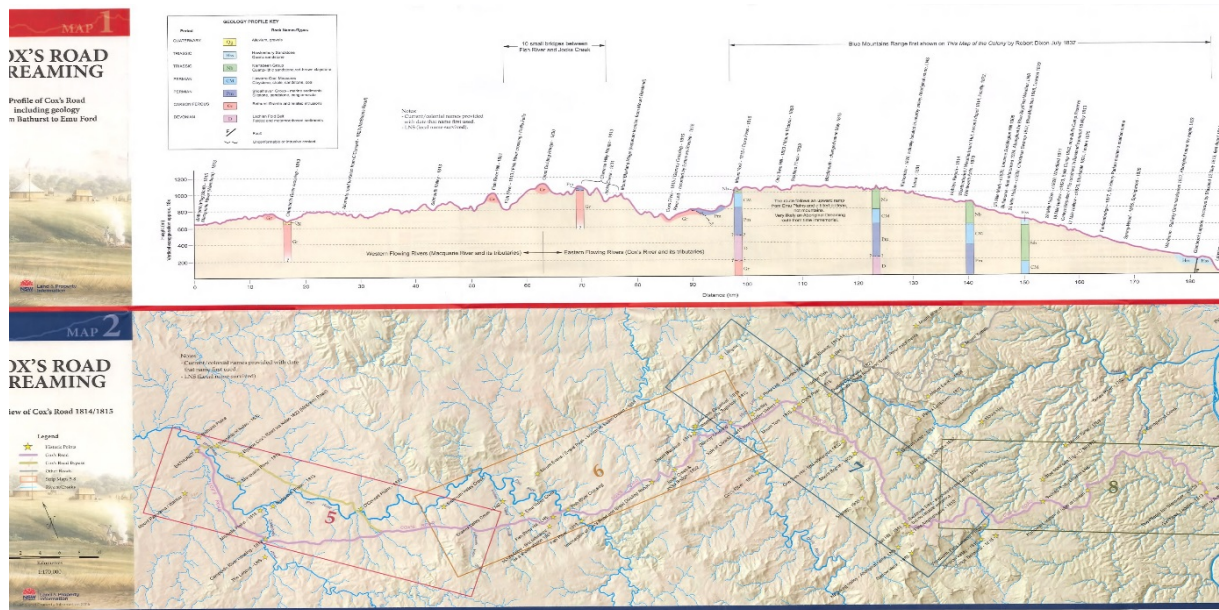


Figure 2: Maps 1 and 2 from Cox's Road Dreaming illustrate the geography and route of Cox's Road.

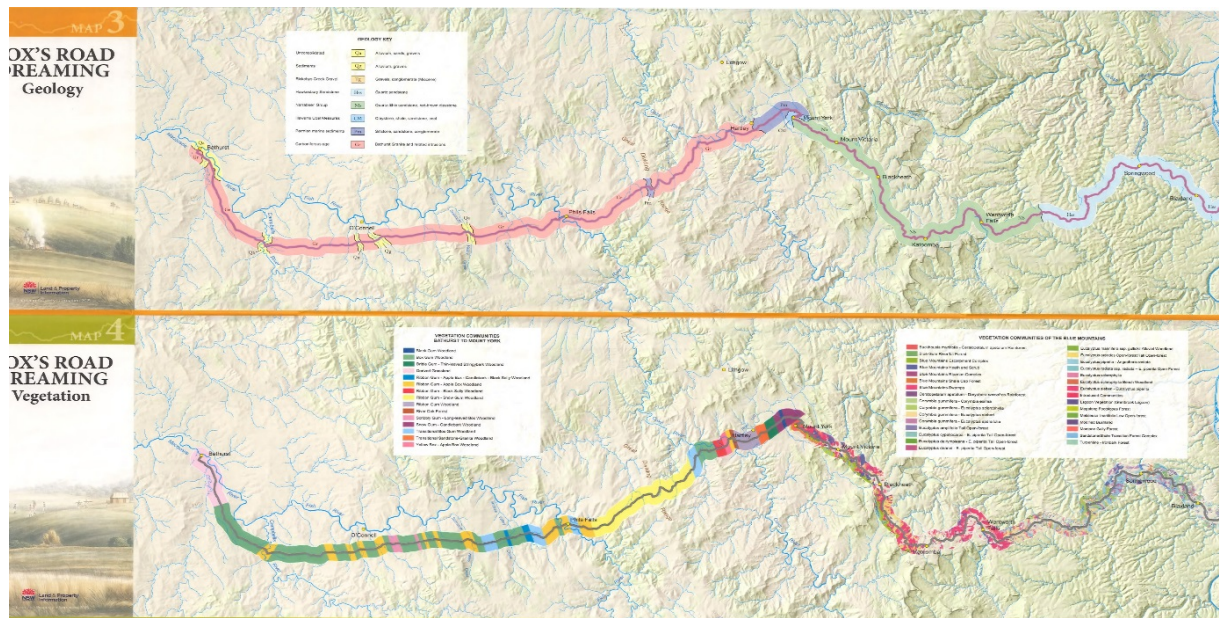


Figure 3: Maps 3 and 4 from Cox's Road Dreaming illustrate the geology (upper map) and the vegetation communities (lower map) along the route of Cox's Road.

No one has previously attempted to examine Cox's Road in relation to its rich natural history. Natural history (from the Latin *historia naturalis*) is the study of organisms in their environment. It was widely practiced in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries as a very fashionable pseudo-scientific hobby, often in a form little different from stamp collecting. Nevertheless it has an honourable history stretching back to the ancient Greeks. When approached from a more scientific perspective, natural history focused on life cycles of living organisms and their systematic collection to help facilitate the classification of living organisms into similar groups using the binomial system (a 2-part name for every organism). This naming system was devised by Linnaeus in 1753 and is still in place today. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, natural history incorporated the study of geography, geology, biology, biological and physical processes, and the developing applied sciences. It also embraced the study of Indigenous culture, often in a

very paternalistic and demeaning manner, including the theft of Aboriginal artefacts, excavation of burial grounds and the removal of body parts including severed heads that were sent back to Europe to a range of museums and wealthy collectors. At its best the study of natural history was undertaken to improve the understanding of nature and at its worst as a means of making easy money. However, European colonial and Aboriginal history is the glue that holds these natural history stories together. The discipline of natural history is now absorbed into the contemporary science of ecology that seeks to understand the numerous patterns in nature rather than concentrating on gathering numerous unrelated facts or objects.

### 3 COX'S ROAD DREAMING

The use of the term 'Dreaming' often has quite different meanings for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. This Dreaming story (or rather 116 individual 'stories') is not seeking to emulate Aboriginal Dreaming and song lines, although inspiration is drawn from Aboriginal culture (see Appendix). In the Cox's Road Dreaming story-telling we sought a nuanced reappraisal of this period of colonial history, particularly that relating to Aboriginal people, the debunking of some myths without necessarily robbing them of their continuing importance, and identifying the outcomes for Aboriginal people that led to their dispossession, the precipitous decline in their numbers, and their new reality as colonial fringe-dwellers in their own country. At many sites stories about Aboriginal people and their cultures are told without in any way claiming that these represent other than snapshots of Aboriginal history. The guide does attempt to communicate the Aboriginal understanding of *dreaming* and *song lines*, since these concepts are generally poorly understood by non-Aboriginal people. The guide recommends visiting McMahons Point (site 85). Parts of the description of this site are reproduced in the Appendix, retelling the majestic Gundungurra Dreaming/Creation story of Mirrigan, the giant quoll, and Gurangatch, a giant fish, in their epic predator-prey chase.

### 4 OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

The objectives of the project were to:

- 1) Enable contemporary Australians to better understand the iconic nature of William Cox's Road both as a road building exercise that opened up inland Australia to European exploration and settlement, as well as to understand the adverse outcomes for Indigenous people that eventually resulted in them becoming fringe-dwellers in their own land.
- 2) Facilitate tourists being able to experience 'history with their boots on' (Ward, 1970) by visiting a range of carefully chosen sites that illustrate the difficulties and technologies used in colonial road building, the natural history of Cox's Road, the geography of the road, and the complex factors necessitating Governor Macquarie to order its construction in 1814.
- 3) Enable tourists to better understand the subsequent plethora of roads that gradually replaced the original line of Cox's Road from 1815.
- 4) Appreciate pre-1814 European explorations and Indigenous knowledge that made it possible for Cox's Road to be constructed.
- 5) Enable tourists to experience aspects of early colonial history and Aboriginal culture through the telling of European and Indigenous stories of people who ventured over the mountains via Cox's Road or subsequent roads.

## **5 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

Developing a complex project such as Cox's Road Dreaming within a defined budget and the need to meet a strict deadline (the dual launches in August and September 2015) revolved around the following: (1) Background research, (2) project management, (3) access to an appropriate budget and fund raising, (4) careful and appropriate selection of sites to be utilised, (5) the design of 8 maps and the guide book, (6) developing a project website, and (7) developing a sales network. Only topics 4-7 will be briefly addressed in this paper.

### **5.1 Site Selection and Criteria Used to Select Sites**

Approximately 200 sites were initially selected over a 2-year period (2012-2014), each site being visited by the author. These were whittled down to the current 116 sites by May 2014, when the author began the task of preparing site descriptions. Sites were selected based on the following criteria:

- Enabled a reasonably even distribution of proposed sites along the line of Cox's Road. 24 sites were located on Map 5 between Bathurst and Lowes Mount Road. 13 of these sites were clumped in or around Bathurst or in the immediate surrounds. 19 sites were located on Map 6 between Lowes Mount Road and Glenroy crossing, along with three roads built after 1815. 42 sites were located between Glenroy Crossing and Wentworth Falls, along with the location of three roads built after 1815. 33 sites were located between Wentworth Falls and Emu Crossing, with three sites located east of the Nepean River. Two of these sites were also roads built post 1815.
- Sites were to be accessible by car and/or a short walk, or would enable access to a track head from where a track could be readily walked. 74 sites can be directly accessed by driving to and parking nearby (e.g. Bathurst Flag Staff), 21 sites can be accessed from a car park and then by walking 1-3 km to reach a particular site (e.g. Evans Crown view over the Bathurst Plains), 5 sites can be accessed using a parking bay at a track head and then undertaking a 2-6 km walk (e.g. Darwin's Walk at Wentworth Falls), and 8 'sites' were alternative roads built post 1815 that can still be driven along either their complete length or in part (e.g. parts of Lockyer's Road, but not Lockyers Pass, the latter being only a walking track).
- Enough information existed either from existing sources or by undertaking relevant research to facilitate its interpretation in relation to its natural history features and/or its European and/or Aboriginal history and culture, enabling the writing of a short and interesting story.
- Site selection sought to ensure there was a balance between the various discipline categories and avoid an overemphasis on technical matters (in-depth treatment of particular topics could be accessed via the project web resources by those wishing further information).
- The story developed for a site was deemed to be analogous to a piece of an historic jigsaw puzzle, and the pieces (when put together) would, over time, provide a comprehensive understanding (picture) of the history and natural history of Cox's Road.

### **5.2 Design of the Maps and Guide Book**

The 8 maps and 116 site descriptions with images and/or illustrations were designed to facilitate a high level of integration between different ways of presenting information about Cox's Road:

- A close examination of Maps 1 and 2 at a scale of 1:170,000 is the recommended entry point for those engaging for the first time with Cox's Road Dreaming. These maps are designed to communicate basic geographical concepts about Cox's Road in a readily understood graphic form. Map 1 is a profile/side elevation of Cox's Road with a vertical exaggeration to emphasise changes in elevation. The basic information that can be gleaned from this map includes the names and dates of features named by Europeans in the colonial period, notes on the map highlighting particular features (e.g. catchment boundaries, locations where Cox built bridges, and the tilted and ramp-like nature of Cox's Road over the Blue Mountains), the numerous 'hollows' that both enabled valley and hanging swamps to form (thereby providing water for stock and people as well as providing a welcome respite from the constant climb from Emu Ford to One Tree Hill [Mount Victoria]), the location of the three major river valleys that are crossed by Cox's Road (the Cox's, Fish and Campbells river valleys), geological columns at six locations together with an interpretative legend, the Lapstone Fault and the monocline creating Lapstone Hill (the first major obstacle to the road builders, eventually solved by constructing a zigzag based on the principle of the inclined plane).
- Map 2, at more or less the same scale as Map 1, enables a direct comparison to be made between the two maps. It demonstrates the snaking of Cox's Road as it wends its way from west to east (the Macquarie River, the Fish and Campbells Rivers, Cox's River and the River Lett), north of Cox's Road in the Blue Mountains the Grose River and its numerous tributaries including Springwood Creek, the Grose River draining into the northwards flowing Nepean River. Historic European names are provided and significant changes in elevation demonstrated through subtle shading. The locations and width of strip maps 5-8 are also demonstrated on this map.
- Maps 3 and 4 identify a 2 km wide transect along the length of Cox's Road, Map 3 demonstrating changes in the geology along Cox's Road, mainly granite west of Mount York and Narrabeen and Hawkesbury sandstone east of Mount York. The Quaternary, recent alluviums and gravels associated with the five main rivers and creeks crossed at right angles by Cox's Road west of Mount York stand out (but not alluviums at the Fish River Crossing at Phills Falls) as Cox's Road approaches Emu Ford in the east.
- Map 4 illustrates the vegetation communities that Cox and his road building team encountered in their trek from east to west. 15 mainly open woodlands were encountered west of Mount York. The numerous swampy meadow formations are not illustrated because of their small scale distribution. East of Mount York the very complex vegetation of the Blue Mountains along the transect is well illustrated (31 vegetation communities in all). These communities range from forests to woodlands with the intermittent swamps (valley and hanging) of the mid Blue Mountains also included. By directly comparing the geology transects with the vegetation transects, it is possible to discern that in some cases vegetation communities appear to change in response to geology as well as elevation.
- Maps 5-8 illustrate the locations of individual sites in relation to both Cox's Road and coteremporary major roads. The route of the suite of historic routes that mushroomed post 1815 are also illustrated.
- The Guide Book is designed to provide the following information about each site: Site name and number (the sites are numbered from 1-116 moving from west to east), usually an image or map, a brief description as to how the site can be accessed, the position (altitude, latitude and longitude), the estimated time that is required to visit the site, the relevance to furthering participants' understanding of the natural history and history of Cox's Road, a site description including some words/phrases highlighted that are defined in the glossary located on the project website, and a key question to reflect on for most sites. References for each site are only provided on the website (see section 5.3). The



opening sections of the Guide Book provide a brief overview of the building and history of Cox's Road as well as suggestions as to how best to organise and optimise explorations of Cox's Road.

### 5.3 The Project Website

The project website is located at <http://coxsroaddreaming.org.au/>. It complements and enriches the Cox's Road Dreaming experience by enabling the following:

- Access to additional material for each site including more detailed maps and/or satellite imagery to help locate each site.
- Access to a klm file of Cox's Road, which can be 'dropped' into Google Earth or NSW Globe via the LPI website portal, enabling viewers to see Cox's Road overlaid on the latest available aerial photography. This enables a user to simultaneously read the relevant Guide Book description and also to view its location on a laptop or iPhone at any scale.
- Access to the project glossary that defines words or phrases that are in bold in the Guide Book and to biographical information for some colonial identities held online via the Australian Biographical Dictionary (e.g. William Cox and Lachlan Macquarie).
- Access to hundreds of historical references used as the basis for the preparation of site descriptions.
- Access supporting material such as in-depth descriptions of the geology and vegetation of Cox's Road in commissioned papers by experts in their field.
- Access to reviews of Cox's Road Dreaming.
- Access to a pdf file of Cox's Road overlaid on the relevant LPI topographic maps for those wanting to travel with hardcopy 1:25,000 maps in hand.
- Suggestions as to how best to organise expeditions to sites along the road based on areas of interest.

## 6 INFORMATION PROVIDED IN COX'S ROAD DREAMING GUIDE

An excerpt of a site description is provided in the Appendix. The description provided integrates geology and landform, aspects of the history of Lake Burragorang, information on the D'harawal and Gundungurra people, a brief description of vegetation along the Kings Tableland Road, engages with the classic Gundungurra Dreaming story of Mirrigan and Gurangatch, and reflects on the importance of Dreaming and song lines to Aboriginal people. Other sites might have a narrower focus, say on geology, vegetation or European history, but most are multi-faceted, providing a wealth of information.

The information provided for each site description is based on one or more of the following discipline/subject areas:

- Natural History (e.g. geography, flora and fauna, swamps [swampy meadows, valley and hanging swamps], geology, geomorphology, hydrology, floods and droughts, climate, road and bridge building including land bridges, navigation and surveying techniques).
- European and Aboriginal history and culture specifically relating to the Darug, Gundungurra and Wiradyuri people.
- Dreamtime stories and their meaning.
- Aboriginal explorers.
- Historic wells and precincts.



- Landscape paintings along the route including John Lewin's paintings created as a member of Governor Macquarie's entourage that came over the road in April-May 1815 to the Bathurst Plains, and intriguing mysteries regarding the locations of some of Lewin's Cox's Road paintings.
- Descriptions of travelling over Cox's Road by laypeople and naturalists who used Cox's Road or roads that were subsequently built.
- Colonial houses and other infrastructure along the road or subsequent roads.
- Early explorations that pre-dated the building of Cox's Road.
- Agricultural pursuits.
- Transport used by colonial travellers and difficulties in travelling along these early roads.
- Early signs of land degradation.
- Pioneer settlements.
- Building techniques and sawpits.
- Colonial maps of the period.
- Roads that were built post 1815 to enable more efficient travel across the Blue Mountains to Bathurst and Mudgee.
- Panoramic views.
- Colonial cemeteries.
- Colonial poetry.
- Archaeological sites.
- Infectious diseases.
- Stock routes and traffic using Cox's Road.
- World views and preconceived notions held by settlers and explorers.
- Myths associated with Cox's Road and pre Cox's Road explorations.

The major focus of each of the 116 site descriptions, based on 11 categories, is shown in Table 1. However, as previously indicated, most descriptions draw on many discipline areas, seeking to integrate multiple information threads into pertinent and interesting accounts. Not surprisingly, natural history topics dominate site descriptions as the major focal point on 33 occasions, 43 if Lewin's paintings are also included in this category.

Table 1: Major focus of each site based on 11 categories.

Category	Number of Sites	Percent of Sites in Category
Natural history	33	28.5
Colonial buildings & infrastructure	16	13.9
Aboriginal history & culture	15	12.9
Road building	15	12.9
Analysis of John Lewin paintings	10	8.6
Post 1815 roads	8	6.9
Personal accounts of people using roads	5	4.4
Colonial transport	4	3.4
Colonial explorers	4	3.4
European history & culture	4	3.4
Cemeteries	2	1.7
<b>Total: 11 categories</b>	<b>116 sites</b>	<b>100%</b>

## 7 SITE DESCRIPTION CASE HISTORIES BASED ON LEWN'S 1815 PAINTINGS

John Lewin was an outstanding colonial painter as well as an excellent naturalist. He is widely regarded as the first colonial artist who was able to capture the Australian landscape including its flora and fauna, not only in a creative manner but also imbued with the true colours of the bush, whilst retaining an aura of naturalness. Lewin came over Cox's Road with Governor Macquarie's entourage in 1815 as the expedition's artist. He teamed up with Major Henry Antill, agreeing that he would paint a number of scenes during the journey with Antill recording the crossing expedition in his journal (Mackaness, 1950). In Cox's Road Dreaming, 18 of Lewin's 20 Cox's Road paintings are reproduced at the 13 sites where they are relevant (including two of the Bathurst Plains and three in different locations descending Cox's Pass). These are an invaluable historical record of the landscape in 1815 through which Cox's Road traversed. In this section, a selection of these paintings is reproduced to illustrate how each painting helped to contribute to the richness of each site description.

Figure 4 shows Lewin's depiction of the Bathurst Plains with Macquarie's expensive Bengal tent positioned on the left bank of the Macquarie River between two lesser tents. Lewin's initial sketch was from the opposite bank of the river (the right bank). In the background is a row of two wheeled carts, each laden during the crossing expedition with goods and chattels, each pulled by one ox or horse. The flag pole is located in front of the Bengal tent, the Union Jack waving in the morning breeze flaps in a south-easterly direction. The camp site is located on the first river terrace, a quaternary relic of the Macquarie (Wambool) River as it cut down through the river valley. The tops of River She-oak lining the edges of the Macquarie Rive are just visible, with a group of regenerating River She-oaks located to the left of the painting. The rising smoke from the camp fire appears to be drifting ever so slightly in a south-easterly direction in response to a very light breeze from the north-west. The flag pole represents the location where Governor Macquarie proclaimed Bathurst as a settlement on 7 May 1815. It is now the location of the Flag Staff monument commemorating Bathurst's bicentennial. The undulating treeless Bathurst Plains are there for all to see with a corridor of the now endangered Yellow Box Woodland gracing the ridge west of the camp site on the foot slopes of Mount Panorama (Wahluu). There appear to be no shrubs on the grassy plains. This painting so admirably depicts the classic-style parkland that so appealed to settlers and explores alike, part of the magic of the 160 km<sup>2</sup> area that constituted the Bathurst Plains.



Figure 4: Lewin's painting of the Bathurst Plains with Macquarie's expensive Bengal tent in the centre.

This was a landscape that reminded them of the great estates in Britain, which were also creations of the human imagination created by gifted landscape gardeners. Macquarie and his fellow colonialists viewed these lands as virgin, desirable, well-watered land, nevertheless

‘waste’ land ripe for the development of civilised agriculture and immediately useful as grazing land. Through the eyes of a 21<sup>st</sup> century ecologist, this same view demonstrates a cultural landscape intentionally created by Wiradyuri people to optimise their lifestyle and cultural expression through the use of a range of land management strategies very likely including the periodic use of fire. Such were the differences in world views of the colonial explorers and settlers and the Wiradjuri, it was not possible for Governor Macquarie or fellow colonialists to entertain the possibility that Aboriginal people too were also ‘gifted landscape gardeners’. Without this and other Lewin paintings of the Bathurst Plains, it is doubtful that our imaginations alone, even with the aid of the many thoughtful colonial descriptions, could in their own right conjure up appropriate images of the Bathurst Plains. Lewin’s paintings illustrate the saying that one picture is worth a thousand words.

Figure 5 shows Lewin’s instructive painting of the Campbells River crossing south of Bathurst. It appears to have been sketched on the right bank while he was facing directly west. Again his eye for detail is seen in the colour of the foliage, tree canopy shapes and other tree habit characteristics. These observations enabled an experienced botanist (Bower, 2015) to identify this treed scene as Ribbon Gum-Apple Box woodland. Many other features can be inferred such as tree height and diameter, the nature of the simple wooden bridge that was constructed over the river, the spacing between trees, the absence of understorey shrubs and felled timber as well as the grassy understorey free of dense woodland floor litter. There is much more to be discerned in this painting. Faithfully portrayed is the park-like landscape, again very likely a cultural landscape created by Wiradyuri people. Figure 5 as did Figure 4 greatly enriches our understanding of the Bathurst landscape in ways that words alone could not convey.



Figure 5: Lewin’s painting of the Campbells River crossing south of Bathurst.

Figure 6 shows Lewin’s painting entitled *Sidmouth Valley Showing the Macquarie River*. It is included in the guide but is not a site that can be visited since there is significant uncertainty about its location. The author’s description in the guide (p. 28) provides compelling reasons as to why this cannot depict the Macquarie River. One knowledgeable regional botanist argues that it is possibly a painting of a location on the Cumberland Plains (R. Medd, pers. comm., 2015). The location of two other Lewin paintings is also in dispute, although not reproduced here. These include *Pitts Amphitheatre*, a view over a mountain valley near Katoomba that is very likely a location from a nearby valley (Site 72), and the well-known painting labelled *Emu Ford Crossing* (Site 112). The morphology depicted in that painting does not match the present-day landscape, and whilst undoubtedly a painting of the Nepean River, it is very likely from much further upstream. While Lewin’s paintings are very helpful in enabling contemporary viewers to better understand the landscape of the colonial era, a

healthy scepticism needs to be in play when considering historical data.



Figure 6: Lewin's painting *Sidmouth Valley Showing the Macquarie River*.

Lewin's painting *Jamison Valley* (Figure 7) is reproduced here not only because it too sheds light on the environmental conditions encountered by the expeditionary party, but because it provides the only clue in regards to one of the building techniques that must have been regularly used by the Cox's Road building team. Illustrated in the painting is a completed wooden hut. In the foreground is a 3 m section of a tree trunk around 0.2 m in diameter, propped up at one end by two pieces of timber. Half a dozen men are standing nearby, one slightly bending within the doorway frame work. Cox regularly describes in his diary the search for suitable timber needed to build bridges over rivers and two rocky sections of the road, fences, and in this case the building of a basic hut. Nowhere in his diary does he explain the preparation of timber after it had been felled, dragged by an oxen team to the preparation site, prior to a trunk being sawn into planks or structural beams. The technology of the day generally used at a permanent site required a sawpit to be dug. A log was then placed in position over the pit and two sawyers, one in the pit and one on top of the log were able to rip the log with a long two handled saw. Digging a saw pit was not an option for a team in a hurry, more so in sandstone and granite country. Rather, Cox's team must have jury rigged a range of above ground sawpits, each design likely very dependent on the terrain in which they were working. Here at Jamison/Jamieson Valley near Wentworth Falls, the raw timber is likely being readied for sawing into planks using a very rudimentary pair of timber props. Lewin's informative painting in this case appears to partly fill an information gap about the team's use of basic everyday technology. From Cox's point of view, this was not really worth a mention in his diary.



Figure 7: Lewin's painting *Jamison Valley*.



Figure 8 shows Lewin's painting *Springwood*. Lewin depicts a towering forest with trees up to 65 m tall. The forest is dominated by Mountain Blue Gum (*Eucalyptus deanei*). The luxurious tall forest grows well on Wianamatta Shale soils overlying the less fertile soils derived from Hawkesbury sandstone. The forest floor has minimal litter, few to no ground logs, and self-evidently was readily accessed by Cox's men in their carts and drays. The height of a dray wheel roughly equates to the height of a man, enabling an approximate estimate of tree diameters, height and spacing. Site 97 encourages participants to visit Deanei Reserve to experience a similar but growing forest in a younger state of development. The forest floor is messy – logs and shrubby understorey are present in stark contrast to the open and clean floor visible in the Lewin painting. Neither a 4WD nor a horse-drawn cart could drive through one of the contemporary forests without a significant amount of clearing. From these observations we can deduce that Lewin is depicting a cultural landscape imagined and created by Aboriginal people (either Darug or Gundungurra).



Figure 8: Lewin's painting *Springwood*.

## 8 CONCLUDING REMARKS

It is unlikely that many people will have the time or the inclination to visit all 116 sites along the length of Cox's Road. The website does suggest ways in which groups of sites can be visited around a particular theme, e.g. geology, botany or Aboriginal culture. Some have substituted the practical approach 'history with your boots on' in favour of armchair reading and appeared to have enjoyed the experience, as well as significantly increasing their understanding of this period of colonial history. The author has escorted people in bus and car trips along much of the route, many warming to the presence of a knowledgeable guide who can easily find each site. Clearly some find greater enjoyment in listening to a riveting story rather than reading about a site. Disciplined travellers can drive to most sites, but not walk the trails, in a whistle-and-stop 2-day tour. In the author's view it is the interdisciplinary nature of this thematic tour of perhaps Australia's most iconic trail that is its most enduring quality. There is something very fascinating about the intertwining natural histories along the trail responding to quite different time scales, ranging from days through to hundreds of years and indeed back to the beginning of time. However, Cox's Road Dreaming is still waiting to be discovered by most of the populace.

At the time of writing (February 2016), about 600 of a print run of 2,000 copies had been sold using the limited distribution network between Penrith and Bathurst. A further 100 copies were given as gifts to the many people who facilitated the production of Cox's Road

Dreaming or who were financial sponsors of the project. The website was completed on 28 February 2016. The feedback to Greening Bathurst has been overwhelmingly positive. A number of very supportive independent reviews have been written and are available on the website.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Permission to use the digital images of the Lewin paintings reproduced in this paper was provided by the State Library of NSW. Permission to use the digital image of John Oxley's 1815 map of the Road to Bathurst was provided by The National Archives, UK. This is the earliest known map of the route of Cox's Road. This map was 'discovered' by Bathurst Historian Dr Robin McLachlan in 2014, just in time for it to be widely used and acknowledged during Bathurst's bicentenary year.

## REFERENCES

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## APPENDIX

### **Site 85: McMahon's Lookout– Kings Tableland (A section from Cox's Road Dreaming p. 73):**



**Relevance of this site to Cox's Road:** Provides: (1) a geographical perspective to colonial explorations pre and post the construction of Cox's Road; (2) an experience of the changing vegetation communities from Cox's Road to McMahon's Point; (3) a better understanding of the geology of the Blue Mountains; and (4) most importantly to become acquainted with Gundungurra Country and the Dreaming/Creation story of Mirragan and Gurangatch.

The Burratorang Valley is part of the ancient lands of the D'harawal and Gundungurra people. They were rapidly dispossessed of their land soon after Robert Hoddle surveyed an access road into the valley in 1824. The Cox's Road Dreaming Guide includes a number of Aboriginal sites. At best these are brief encounters to demonstrate some aspects of Aboriginality in relation to Cox's Road – an attempt to rebalance well known European historical stories where Aboriginal people have so often been excluded or written out of the cast. Our Dreaming story is not an Aboriginal history. But here at McMahon's Lookout, overlooking where the Cox's River once ran freely, we will briefly engage with the Gundungurra Dreaming story of Mirragan (a giant quoll and a great hunter) and Gurangatch (a giant fish, possibly a Murray Cod). The story commences at a large waterhole at the junction of the Wollondilly and Wingecaribbee rivers and describes Gurangatch being chased by Mirragan after unsuccessfully trying first to spear him and then to poison him with hickory bark, again unsuccessfully. Seeking safety in a predator-prey epic chase, Gurangatch begins to tear up the Wollondilly Valley, born along by the disturbed waters, followed in hot pursuit by Mirragan, along the rivers and tributaries of the southern Blue Mountains and up over the Great Dividing Range. The unrequited chase ends at Jooljundoo, a waterhole just west of the Great Divide, likely in the upper Duckmaloi River, possibly at the waterhole that was used to establish the Duckmaloi offtake weir. The weir is part of the Fish River scheme, ironically bringing western flowing water to the eastern catchment to guarantee supply to Blue Mountains towns. There Gurangatch dives into the depths to recover from the fatiguing chase and to rest his wounded body. Mirragan, with the help of some friendly water birds, is able to wrench off a piece of flesh from Gurangatch. The legend ends curiously with the prey safe but wounded, and the predator's hunger satisfied. The co-creators of this landscape continue to live on in their respective domains, as 'Burringilling', heroic personages, animals with human attributes. Martin Thomas and Jim Smith draw important understandings from this extraordinary myth. This is not just a good ripping yarn but a Gundungurra Creation Story. It is more than a story, since the chase represents a cultural map, not a topographical map familiar to most Europeans that nevertheless includes the naming and descriptions of particular geographical features such as limestone caves, bends, hills and rock formations. The ethno-musicologist Catherine Ellis first called the adventures of these Dreaming characters' song lines. Others have called them story strings or story lines, but most commonly the Dreaming. Thomas writes about the pre-European landscape being full of geographical markers of an ancestral journey, such as has been briefly described here – so much so that he writes 'the Australian landscape was mythically invested.' These Dreaming stories – song lines, story strings – interconnect throughout the Australian landscape, brilliantly conceptualised by David Mowaljarlai's 1993 map of trade routes and storylines linking Aboriginal Nations across Australia. Storylines on David's map even reach out into the continental shelf, suggesting storylines that exist in cultural memory back to the period when sea levels were much lower. These song lines served multiple purposes: they encouraged engagement with Country; helped to demarcate territory; fused mind maps and storytelling together; invited participants to read the landscape; facilitated navigation through familiar and unfamiliar landscape (if one knew the story or could sing the story); and, most importantly, probably helped renew an individual's or groups' relationship with the ancestral creation beings thereby facilitating the ongoing well-being of Country.