

In the Oberon Council area Cows Road starts at the Fish River upstream of Tarana.



It climbs up the hill from the Fish River and follows the route of Phils Falls Road



At the top of Phils Falls Road, Governor Macquarie and his party stopped and Lewin... sketched the view to Evans Crown, later creating this lithograph.



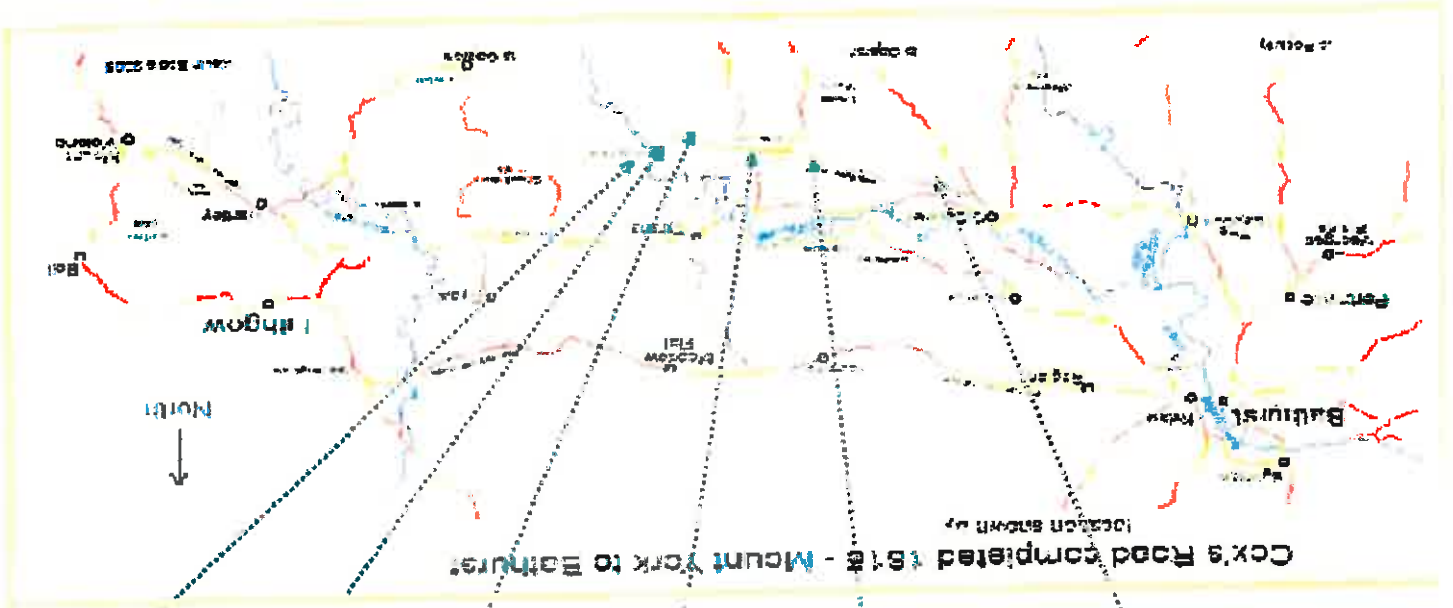
Cows Road then crossed what is now the Hazelgrove to Tarana road. The current Carlwood Road is the route of Cows Road to O'Connell.



Cox wrote on 1 January 1815, "At Sidmouth valley I never saw finer grass, or more on the same quantity of land in a meadow in England than there was here, and just in a fit state for mowing."



Carlwood Road follows the route of Cows Road, meeting the Oberon Road at O'Connell. It crossed the Beaconsfield Road near Box Flat Road and the O'Connell Plains Road before following the ridges to cross the Campbells River near The



# Coxs Road

Over the Blue Mountains  
The First Road to the West  
1814-1815



Through the  
Oberon Council area



## The History of Cox's Road

Governor Macquarie needed new lands to extend and consolidate resources to support the growing settlement of Sydney. Severe droughts, especially in 1812, and England's extended conflict with France and the United States, all placed pressure on the continued support and existence of the settlement in Sydney. The new Government outpost at 'Bathurst' would enable Governor Macquarie to control the expansion of the colony to the west.



Governor Macquarie appointed retired Lieutenant William Cox JP of Clarendon, near Windsor, on the 14<sup>th</sup> May 1814, to build the first constructed road out of the Sydney Basin "across the Blue Mountains to the Macquarie River and a central part of the Bathurst Plains". Cox's party consisted of thirty convicts, with a guard of eight soldiers.

Within 6 months they constructed over 100 miles of road and associated bridges from the Nepean River to the then unnamed site of Bathurst. Governor Macquarie instructed that where possible the road was to follow Surveyor Evans' 1813 survey.

Governor Macquarie stated that the road was to be made "at least 12 feet wide so as to permit two carts or other wheel carriages to pass each other with ease.

*The timber in forest ground to be cut down and cleared away 20 feet wide, grubbing up the stumps and filling up the holes, so that a four wheel carriage or cart*

*may pass without difficulty or danger. In brush ground it is to be cut 20 feet wide and grubbed 12 feet wide".*

Cox's party assembled on the banks of the Nepean River near Emu Plains on 17 July 1814. Ascending the Blue Mountains and arriving on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1814 at Mount York on the edge of the western escarpment. After deciding on his path to the valley floor, 38 days of exhaustive work resulted in a road involving 1.6 kilometres (1 mile) of steep graded descent.

Governor Macquarie at this point on his way to Bathurst in April 1815 said "The Pass constructed here by Mr. Cox and his party I have named Cox's Pass ..... as a just tribute due to his indefatigable zeal and meritorious exertions in constructing and finally completing this grand and important pass".

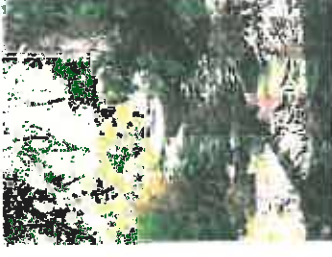
After such a difficult section, the remainder of the construction across the foot Bathurst must have seemed relatively straightforward.

The road constructed by Cox remained in regular use till 1827, serving as a direct access to the Government settlement at Bathurst. In many places it has continued in use as a local access road.

## The Journey in 1815

Imagine yourself travelling from Sydney to Bathurst in 1815. You would be either on horseback or in a wagon, or would otherwise be walking. The road had been completed in January 1815. Governor Macquarie left Sydney on 25th April 1815 and travelled by Cox's Road to Government outpost on the banks of the Macquarie when he proclaimed the township of Bathurst on 7 May, 1815.

The journey on the new road commenced at Emu Ford on the Nepean River near Penrith,



and mostly followed the general location of the present day road from Glenbrook to Mount Victoria. It then descended Mount York via Cox's Pass.

Upon reaching the valley floor it proceeded in a generally westerly direction, following ridge lines where possible and passing by the present day named localities of Hartley Vale, Glenroy, Mount Blaxland, Pitts Corner and the present day Cuthill Road to Phillips Falls on the Fish River. From there it followed the Mount Olive Rd and Cartwood Road, past Sidmouth Valley, to a point 2 kms south of O'Connell.



The road then continued westerly, crossing Beaconsfield, and Bloom Hill Roads and then in the general direction of the O'Connell Plains (Lagoon ) Road, meeting the Campbells River 1500 metres north of the present bridge crossing at The Lagoon (Apsley).

It then ascended the hill to cross Bidjeeribbin Road, continuing north along the ridge line generally following the Gormans Hill Road. It terminated overlooking the Macquarie River near the present day memorial in the Peace Park, Bathurst.