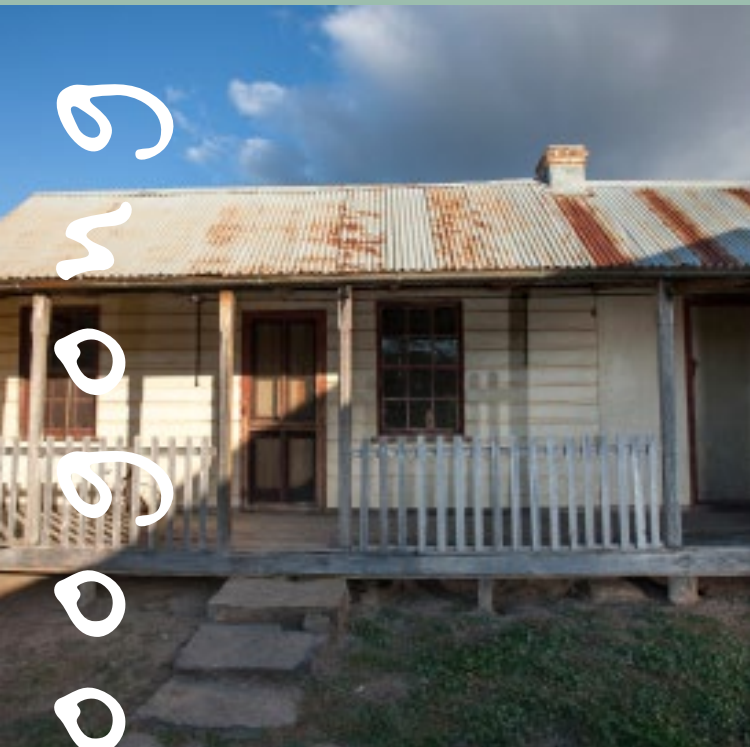




Googong Foreshores



London Bridge Walking Track

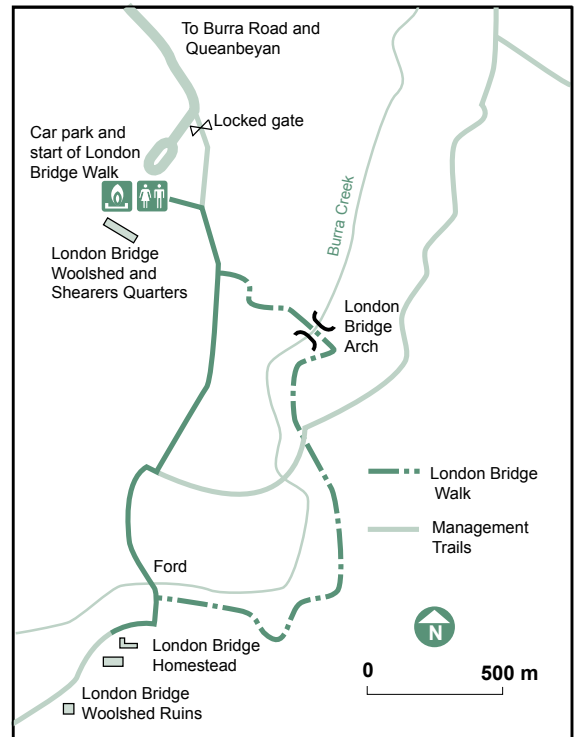
London Bridge Walking Track

This 3.4 kilometre, two hour circuit walk takes you from the London Bridge woolshed and shearers quarters, across London Bridge Arch and along Burra Creek to the homestead. The return trip is via the management trail.

The homestead is protected by a security fence but is clearly visible from outside the fence. Many of the out-buildings, including the remains of the original woolshed are outside the fence and may be explored at any time. Open days are held to inspect the homestead. Contact the Ranger Station for details.

London Bridge Arch

The limestone of London Bridge Arch began to form when sediment and coral remains were deposited on an ocean floor 420 million years ago. It was then subjected to intense pressure. Over time the ocean receded and erosion shaped the landscape.



The arch was formed by water slowly leaching through the limestone, enlarging cracks until a passage became big enough for Burra Creek to pass through. It reached its present size about 20,000 years ago.

The arch was first recorded by Europeans in 1823 when explorer Captain Mark Currie was directed to the arch by an Aboriginal guide. Currie described it as 'a natural bridge of one perfect Saxon arch, under which the water passed'.

Aboriginal history

The area now known as Googong has a rich history in Aboriginal culture. The Ngunnawal people have lived in and maintained the area for thousands of years. The area is also rich in cultural and natural resources which sustained the Ngunnawal people. The Queanbeyan River was a traditional pathway used by the Ngunnawal, Yuin and other neighbouring tribes to gain access to the higher country where they would perform lore such as initiation, trade and marriage. Googong also has Aboriginal sites which are viewed by the Ngunnawal people as holding spiritual significance, including London Bridge Arch. Please respect all heritage sites.

Extinct animals

Remains of locally extinct native rats, mice and small marsupials have been found around the arch. These animals may have become extinct in the mid 1800s when European settlers cleared and farmed the surrounding land.

left to right: London Bridge Arch AT, London Bridge Homestead AT, Cumbungi AT, London Bridge Homestead AT



Along Burra Creek

Europeans first settled in this area about 1834 when the habitat was grassy woodland. The trees were killed by ringbarking to create more pasture, while others were cut down for building and firewood.

The most common tree species remaining is Apple Box. Settlers found that its interwoven grain made it difficult to split and hard to burn. Some of the small native plants which formed the understorey in the original woodland can still be seen here including Juniper Wattle or Prickly Moses Wattle *Acacia ulicifolia* and a small herb Early Nancy *Wurmbea dioica* which carpets the ground in early spring.

As you walk down the track you may see Eastern Grey Kangaroos resting in the shade of the trees. They move out into the grasslands to graze in the late afternoon.

Many species of birds can be seen at Googong Foreshores. A bright green and yellow flash is likely to be the Eastern Rosella. It has a very distinctive chatter when feeding and a loud screech when alarmed. The Australian Kestrels are commonly seen hovering with rapid wing beats and their tail fanned looking for prey such as young rabbits and small birds. See **Googong Bird List** brochure.

Since the 1980s, ACT Parks and Conservation Service staff with the help of community groups including the Friends of Googong ParkCare group have been planting trees in much of this area. Species such as Red Box and Yellow Box have been planted to increase the mix of species.

Work is also undertaken to control the spread of Willow, Hawthorn, Poplars and Briar Roses, all of which were introduced to this area. However, the area around London Bridge Homestead is managed to maintain its rural context and while the spread of exotic regrowth is controlled, the older exotic trees remain to allow visitors to appreciate the area for its rural history and landscape.

The London Bridge property

In 1857, John McNamara, an Irishman from County Clare, paid 30 pounds for 30 acres of land in the Burra Valley. 'London Bridge' became one of the first properties in the area.

As you look at the collection of buildings which make up this homestead, you can see at least five architectural styles and different uses of building materials. The styles and construction varied according to the costs of materials and labour. Corrugated iron and weatherboard replaced stone and pisé as mass produced materials became available with the arrival of the railway at Queanbeyan.

The first construction, the stone cottage, was built in about 1860 from stone quarried from a nearby hill. Additional buildings were constructed over the years in response to the needs of a growing family—John and his wife had 13 children although not all of the children lived at the homestead all the time. The McNamara family owned the London Bridge property until 1920. During the later years of this ownership, it was leased to James Moore until the property was purchased by the Noone brothers in 1921. By that time the estate had been extended to 9000 acres.

In 1928, it was sold to the Douglas family with whom it remained until the Commonwealth resumed most of the

property in 1973 to protect the catchment of the dam.

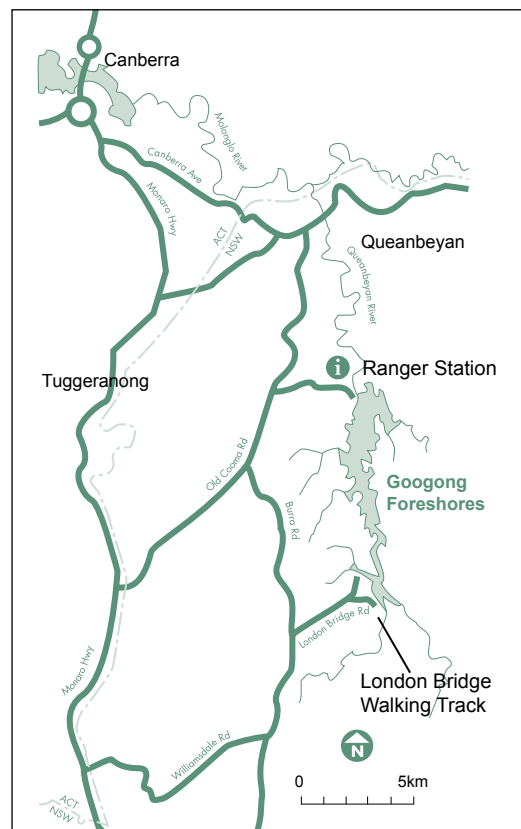
The significance of the diversity of this site and the rural setting of the area are recognised by the listing of the homestead on the Register of the National Estate and its classification by the National Trust of Australia.

A fragile heritage—please protect this area

- Do not rock climb on the arch or enter the caves—they are extremely fragile.
- Keep to the tracks and protect this special environment.
- Googong Foreshores is a wildlife refuge so please leave your pets at home.
- Take your rubbish home—there are no bins.
- Use the toilets provided at the car parks.
- Swimming and camping are not permitted.

Location

Googong Foreshores is located 10 kilometres south of Queanbeyan, NSW. The London Bridge area is a further 10 kilometres south. The area is managed by ACT Parks and Conservation Service for water catchment, recreation and as a wildlife refuge.



Early Nancy



Apple Box

Further information

Ranger Station (northern end of Googong Foreshores)
Ph: (02) 6207 2779

Canberra Connect: 13 22 81

Website: www.tams.act.gov.au

See the **Googong Foreshores Map and Guide** for more walks at Googong.

Photo credits: AT Andrew Tatnell



ACT
Government

