

## The Manning River, Transport and Communications

The Manning River was the first highway and key transport route for people and goods during the nineteenth century, but it came with many risks for shipping. Of note in the museum is a minute gun from the steamer *Gypsy*, which was wrecked on the Manning bar in 1856. The gun was later used to announce the arrival of ships as they drew into wharves along the river.

Other items related to waterways include the steering wheel from the cream boat *Sunrise 2*, part of the Crowdy Head signal light, and a cased model of a sailing ship made by Thomas Thornely, c.1900, while he was the lighthouse keeper at Crowdy Head.

The Manning River was host to many small boat builders and the collection includes a set of boat building tools and materials used by Bill Ryan, including a set of caulking irons and a mallet, and examples of hemp and oakum (rope), used to caulk the joins of wooden boats.



Also related to transport is an impressive model of Killawarra Bridge (below). Gordon Bithrey made the five-metre long timber model in 1989 at about the same time the historic bridge was being replaced. He worked for the Department of Main Roads on the maintenance of timber bridges, so the model is his tribute to the robust beauty of this now lost historic structure.



Rail transport played a vital role in opening up the Manning Valley and moving goods to markets. The rail collection includes numerous photographs, uniforms and maintenance tools, a railway stretcher and other ephemera associated with the development and operation of the railways in the Manning Valley.





The collection also includes a sulky, saddlery, bullock team equipment and an extensive collection of tools and equipment associated with horse drawn transport.



The communication collection comprises a representative range of objects relating to postal services, including a now rare red cast iron pillar box, postal equipment, boxes, scales and ephemera from Wingham and district post office; various types of telephones and two manual telephone exchanges.

