

1st Reading Room is closed until further notice. Due to Alert Level 2, the Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin reading rooms are open by appointment only. Please use this form to make an appointment.

Bridge

The bridge was officially opened on Saturday 30 May 1959, after many years in the making. The images in this gallery are a small selection from the archives of the Auckland Harbour Bridge Authority. These archives are the property of the Auckland Harbour Bridge Authority, which was constituted by law in 1950 to construct, maintain and control a bridge across the Waitemata Harbour from Point Erto, West Haven to Stokes Point, Northcote.

Sir John Allum was the Chairman of the Auckland Harbour Bridge Authority from 1951, and Auckland Mayor from 1941-1953. He was passionate about the building of a bridge, which he promoted for many years before construction.

Contract documents for the construction of the four lane bridge were signed on 29 October 1934 and work on the site began on 1 May 1935. Officials involved in the Bridge's construction included: Richard L. Wilks, General Manager of the Auckland Harbour Bridge Authority; Wilfrid Cardno, Project Manager for the construction companies, Cleveland Bridge and Engineering Co. Ltd and Dorman Long, H.E. Wainhouse, resident engineer for Bridge designers Freeman, Fox and Partners.

The foundation stone was unveiled by the Prime Minister, Rt. Hon C.H. Holland on 27 January 1936.

Public response to the Bridge varied, and the decision to go ahead was not welcomed by everyone. Once construction had started there was great interest in roadworks and progress of the Bridge. People invested in various public issues of the Auckland Harbour Bridge loan, with Sir John Allum reported as saying that "the authority never had the slightest difficulty in getting money".

In April 1959 the bridge was complete 3 weeks ahead of schedule, and workers qualified for a bonus of around £10 each. The first car to cross the bridge was on Friday 24 April, driven by Mr W. Cardno, project supervisor for the contractors. The Bridge was opened on Saturday 30 May 1959 by the Governor-General, His Excellency Lord Cobham, whose car made the first crossing that day. The ceremony was held on the Toll Plaza, at Sulphur Beach, with about 1000 guests in attendance. The Bridge Superintendent, Mr DO MacPherson made the first entry in the daily log book on opening day: "11.10 Bridge open. Good luck to you and God bless. May it never close". The Bridge opened for traffic at 2.58pm, with Lady Allum collecting the first toll from Mr Frank Perry.

Protests about paying tolls appeared in the paper even before the Bridge opened - the toll for a car was 2/6 (25 cents). However that didn't seem to stop the volume of traffic - over 20,000 vehicles crossed the Bridge on the first day. One million vehicles had crossed the Bridge by mid-August, just eleven weeks after the Bridge's opening.



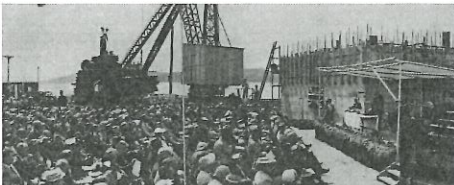
Sir John Allum

Reference: BRW 46221a



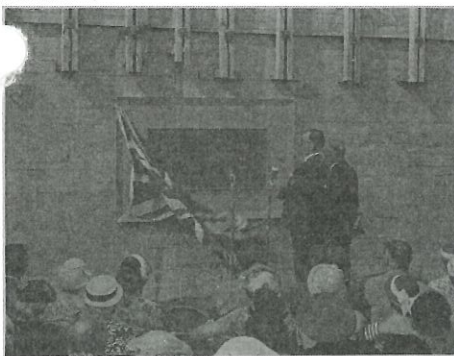
Signing the Bridge contract

Reference: BRW 46221a



Marking the foundation

Reference: BRW 46221a



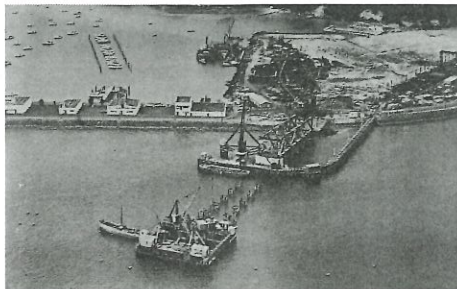
Unveiling the stone

Reference: BRW 46221a



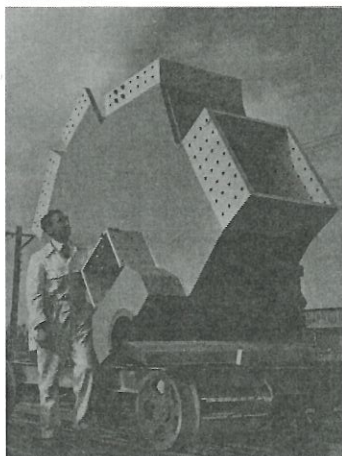
Debenture poster

Reference: BSBW 59821b



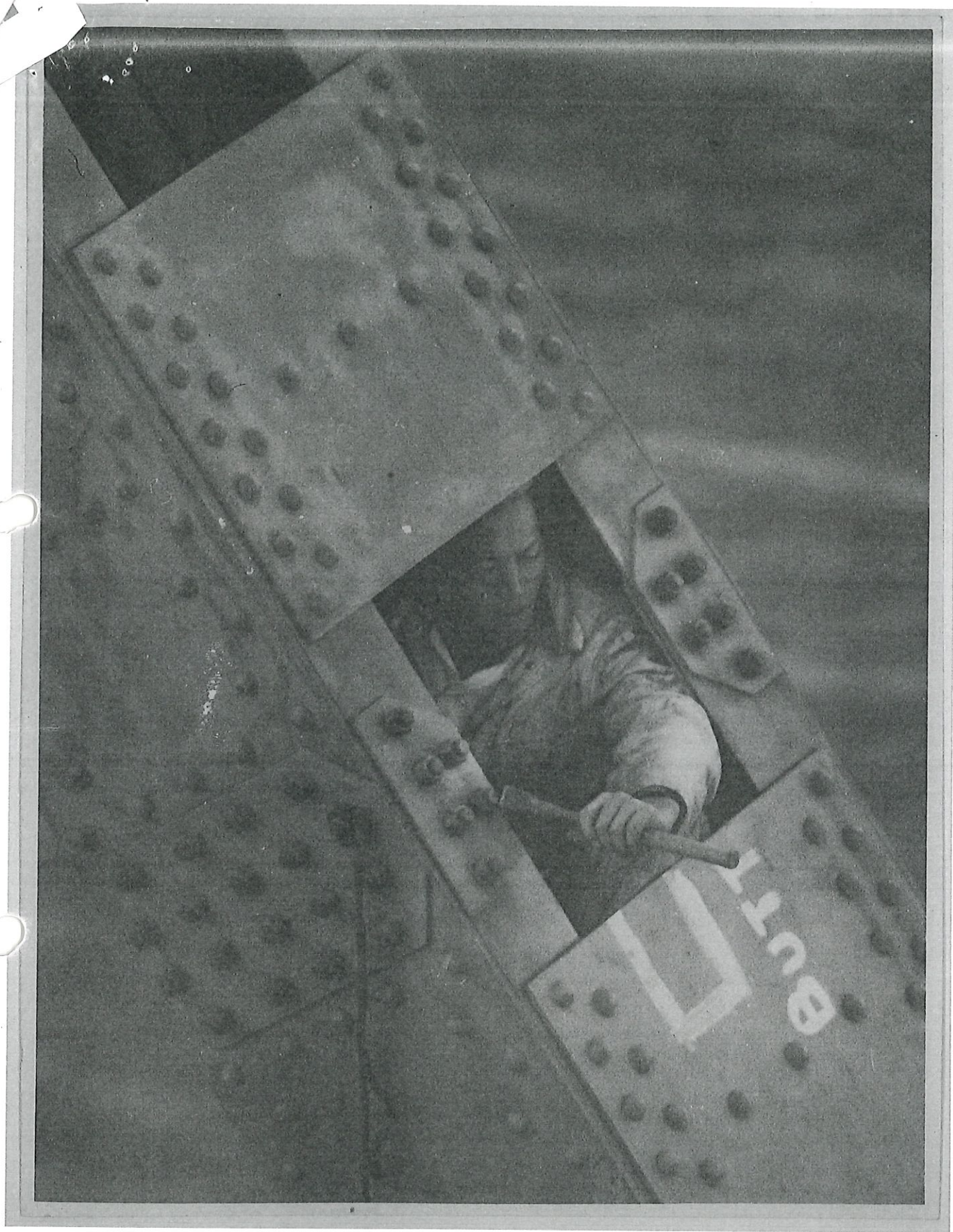
14 February 1957 construction process

Reference: BSBW #6202a



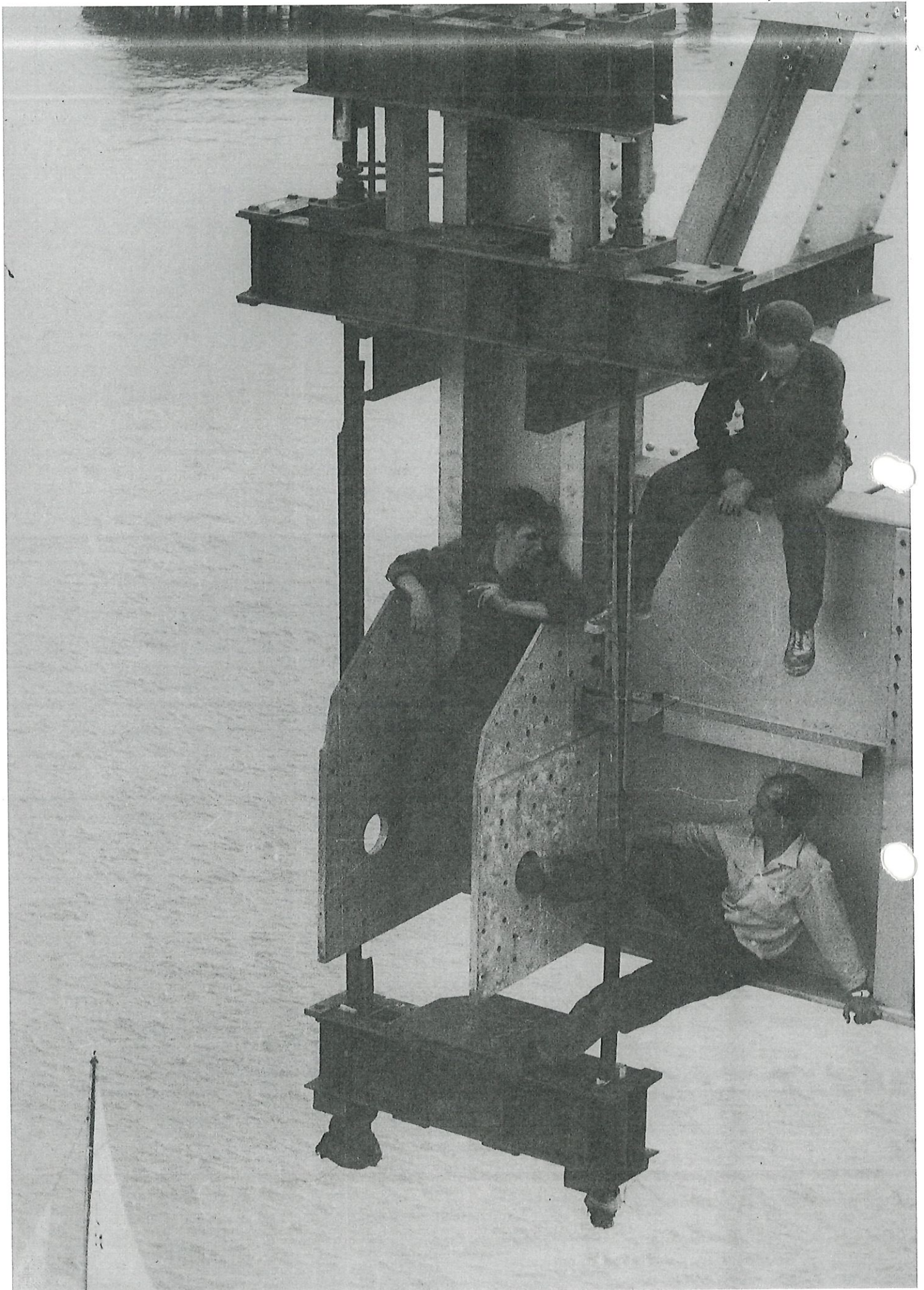
A knuckle

Reference: BSBW #6202a



Steel erector

Reference: BBRW_432214

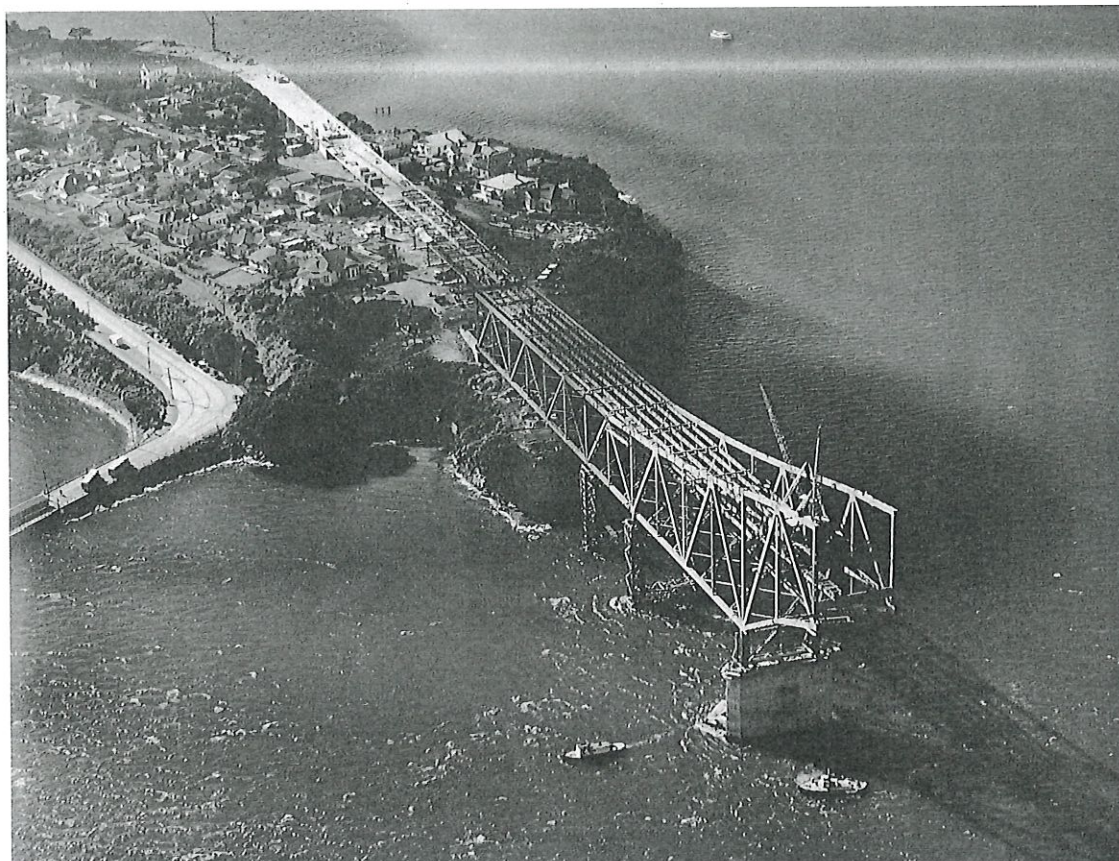


Waiting for work
Reference: RBRW/S&V11



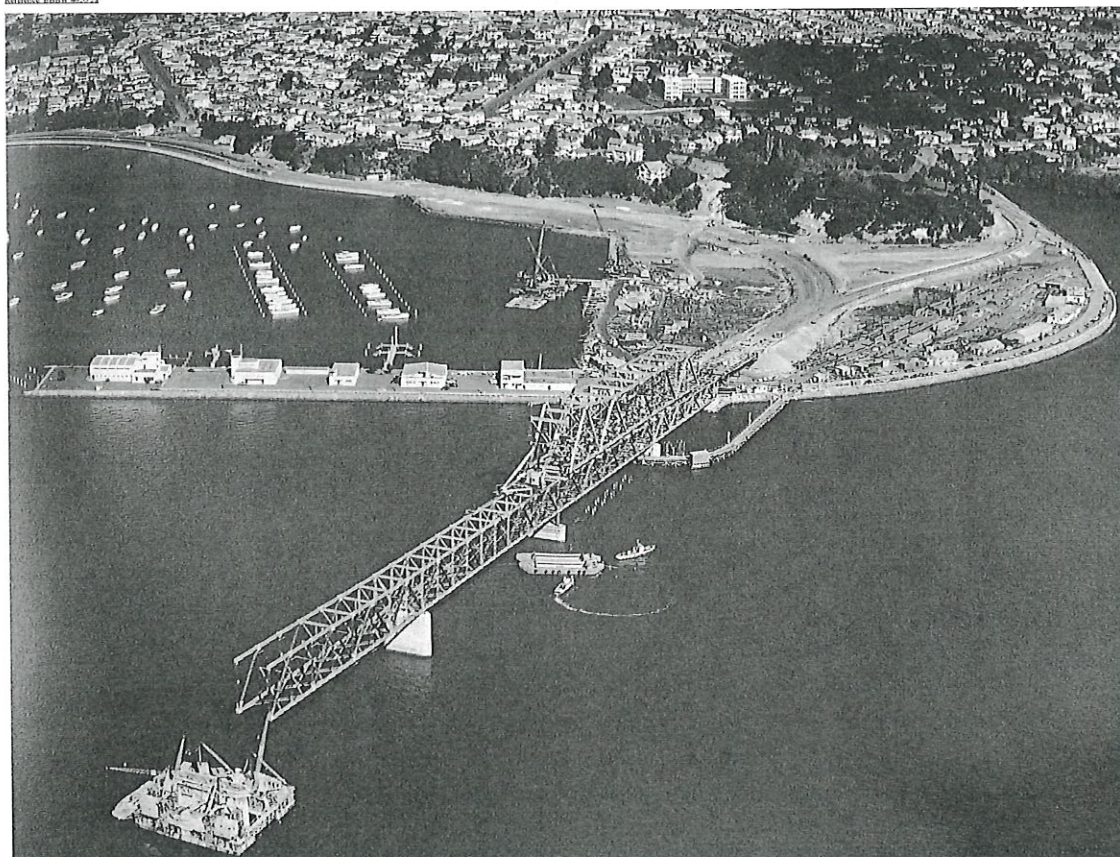
Royal Oak School

cc-BB00W-622211



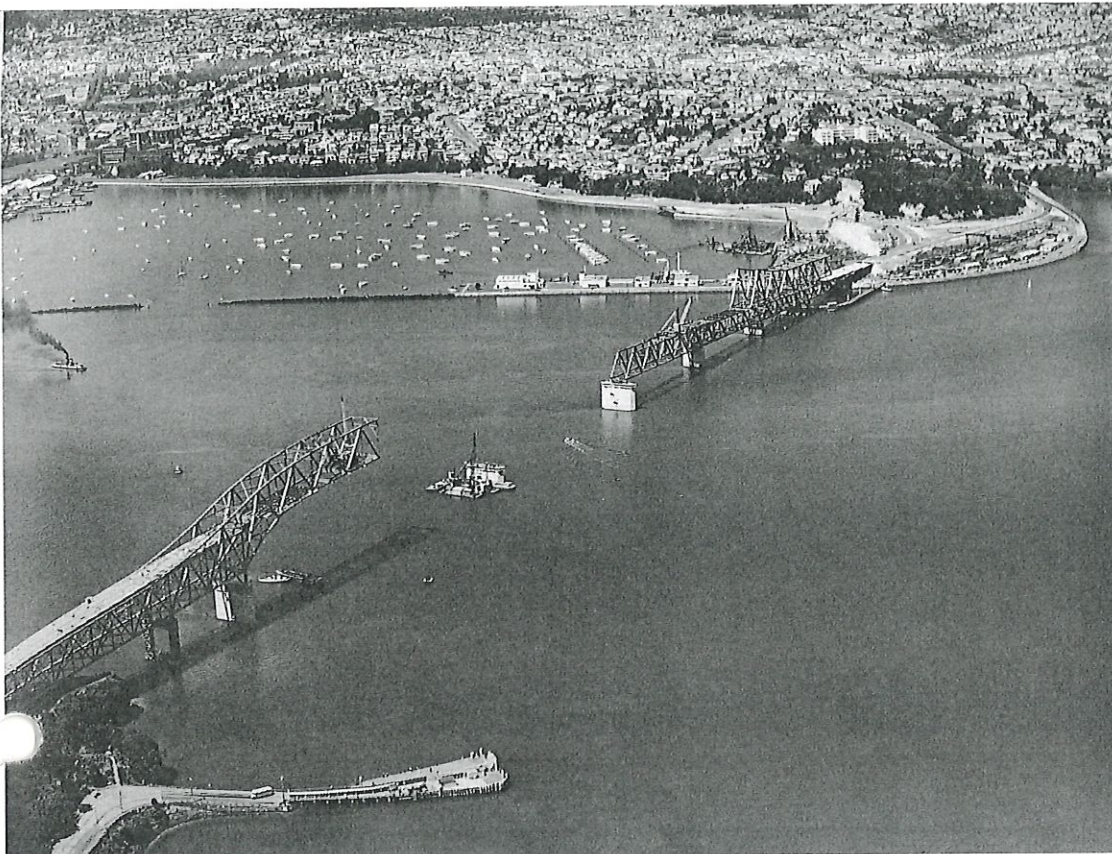
5 August 1958 - construction process

Reference: BBNW 462024



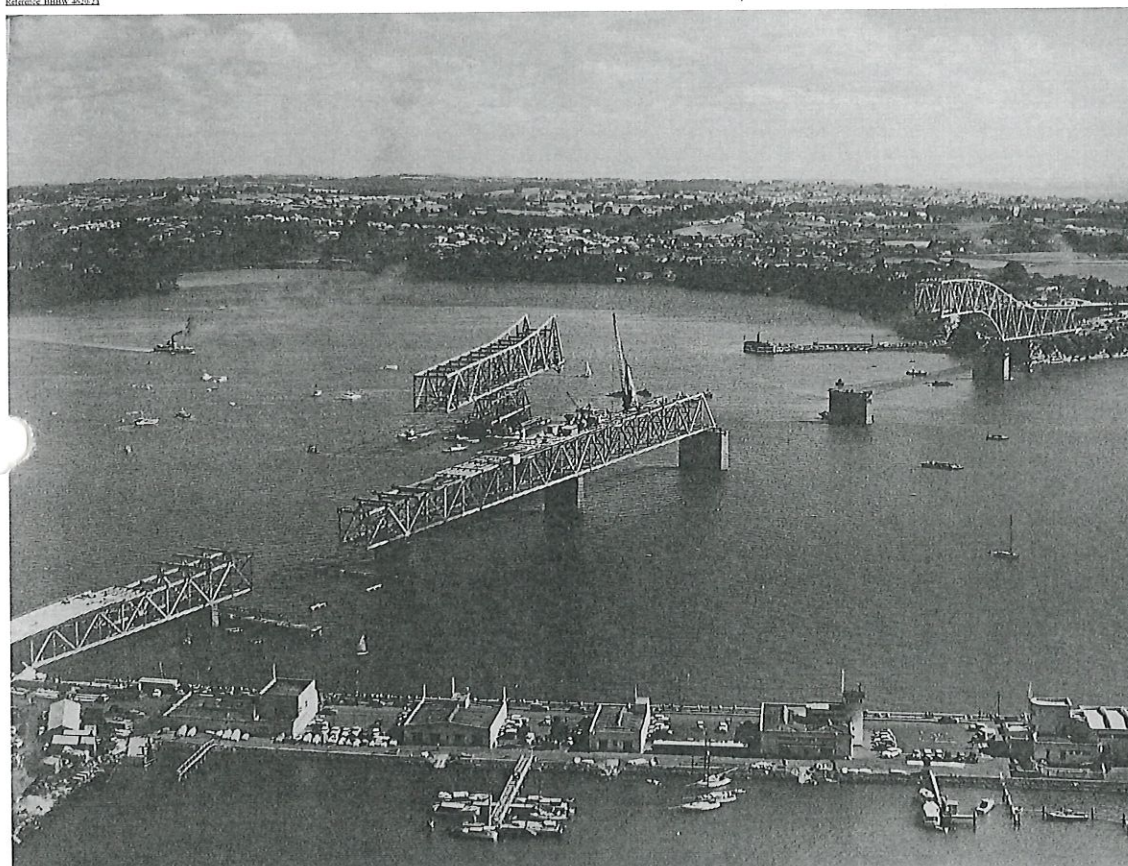
5 August 1958 - construction progress from Point Erlin

Reference: BBNW 462024



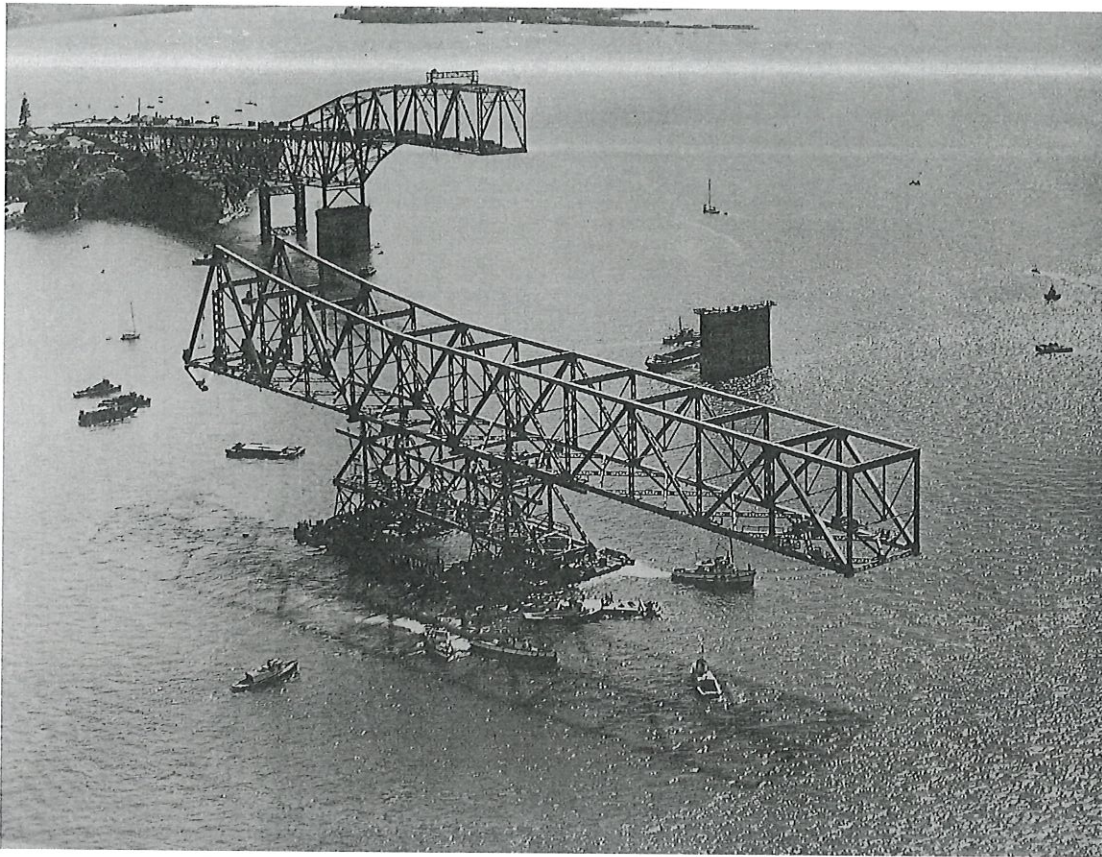
29 October 1958 - construction progress

Reference: BHHW 4625.11



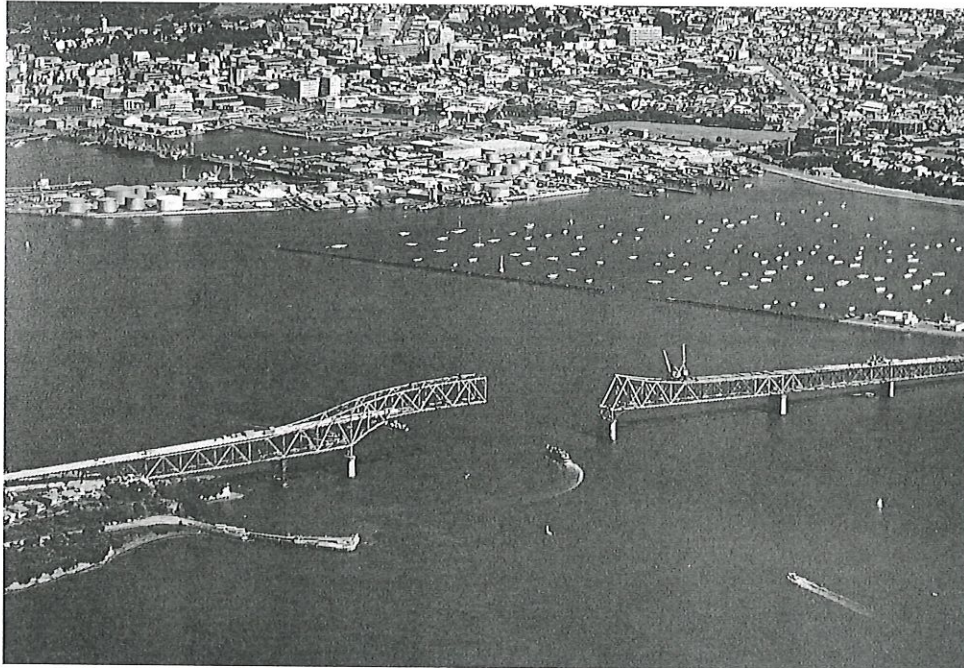
29 November 1958 - construction progress

Reference: BHHW 4625.24



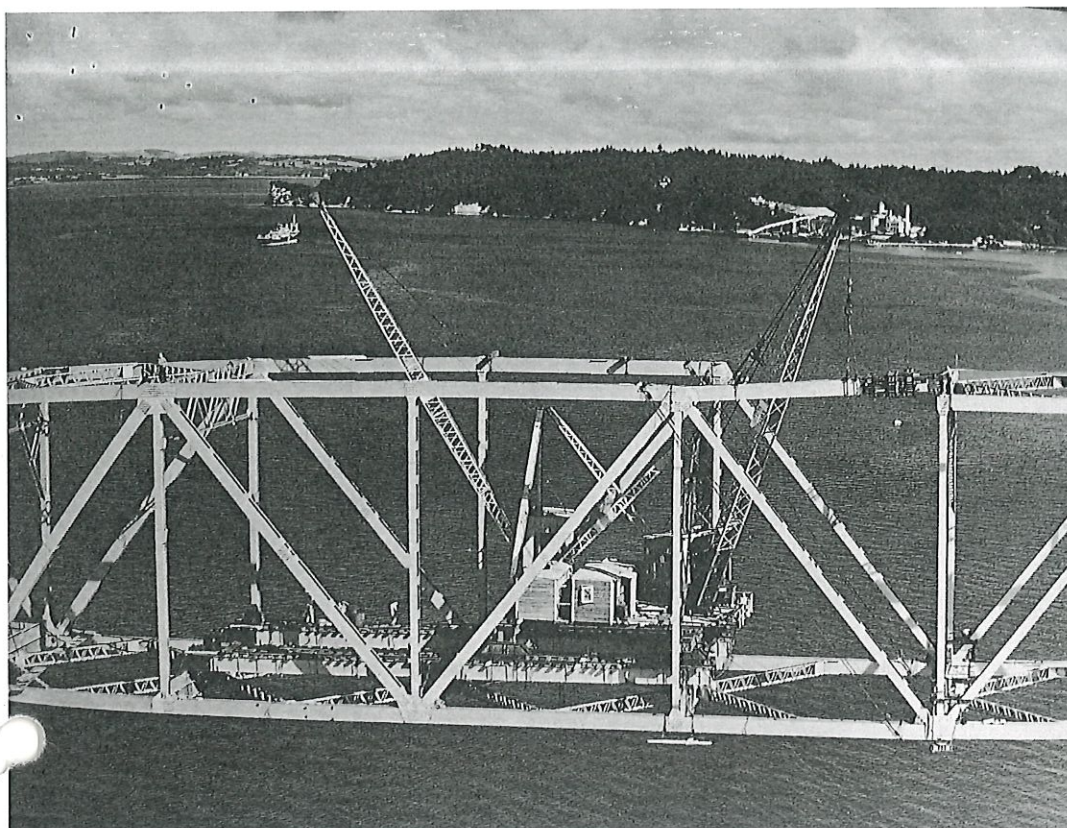
22 November 1958 - construction progress

Reference: BBNW 462021



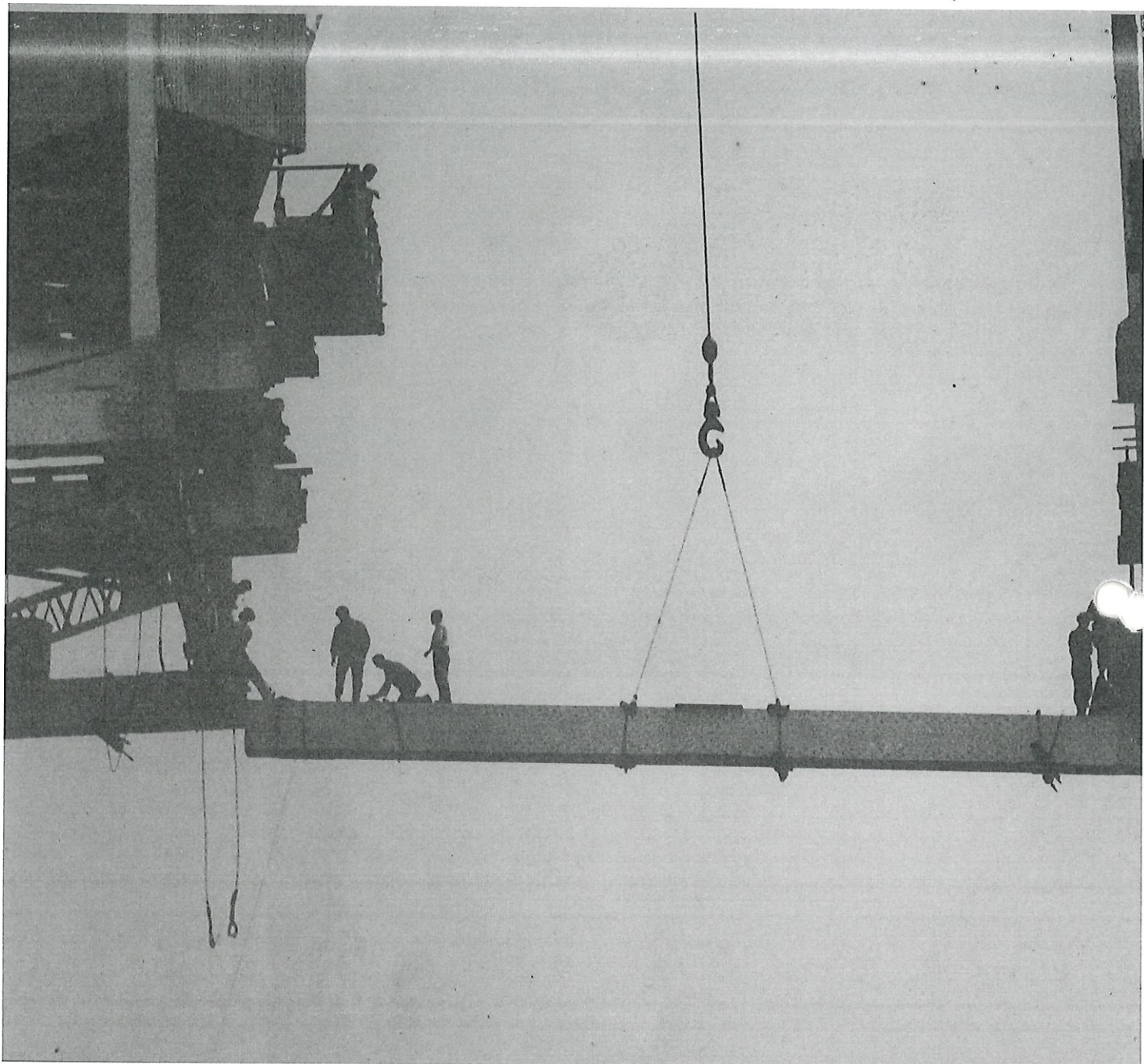
16 January 1959 - construction progress

Reference: BBNW 462021



9 March 1959 - construction progress

Reference: BDDW 4650.21

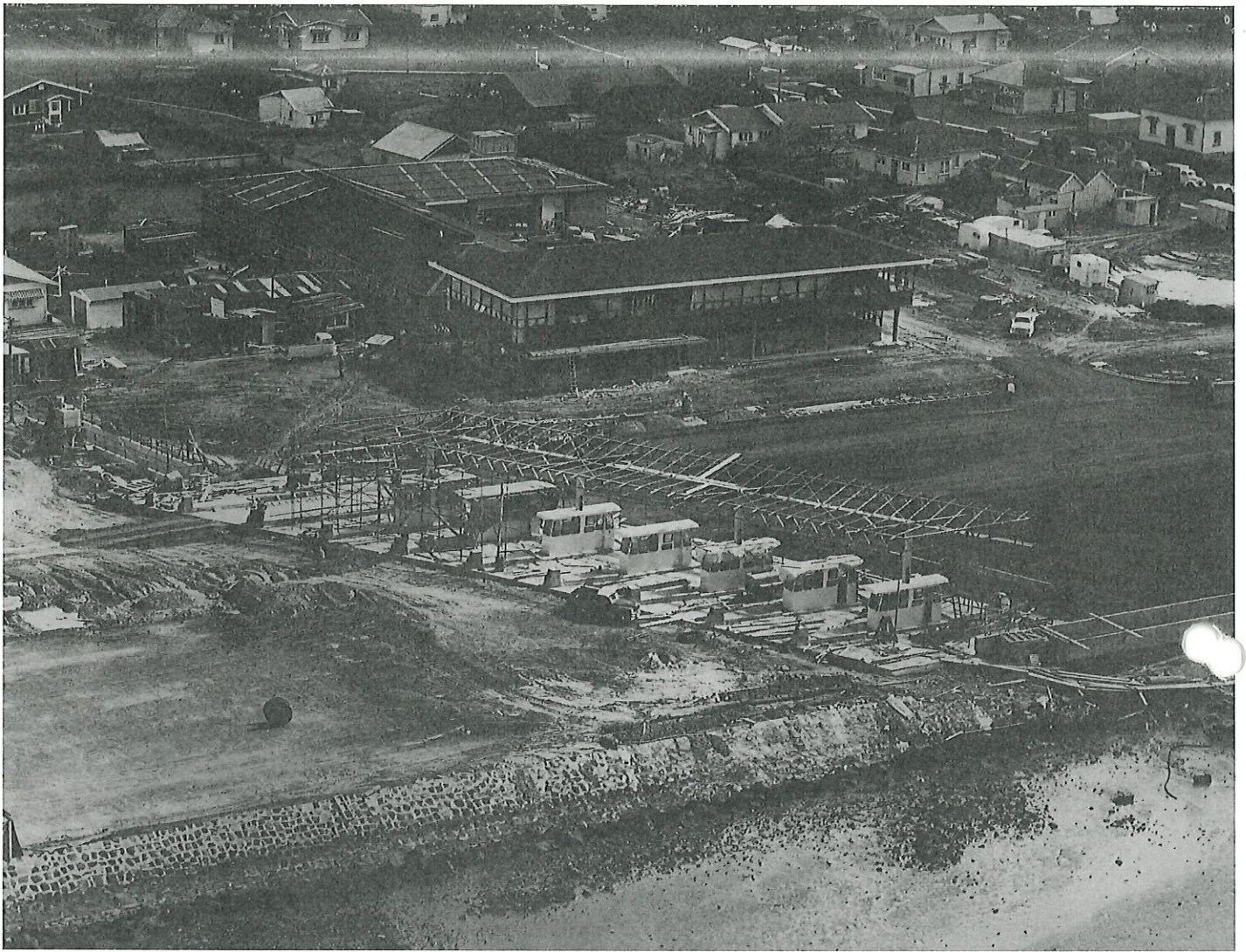


Bridging the gap
Reference: BDDW #52224



Cranedriver

Reference: BBBW-402221



8 April 1959 - construction progress

Reference: HROW 4520.1a

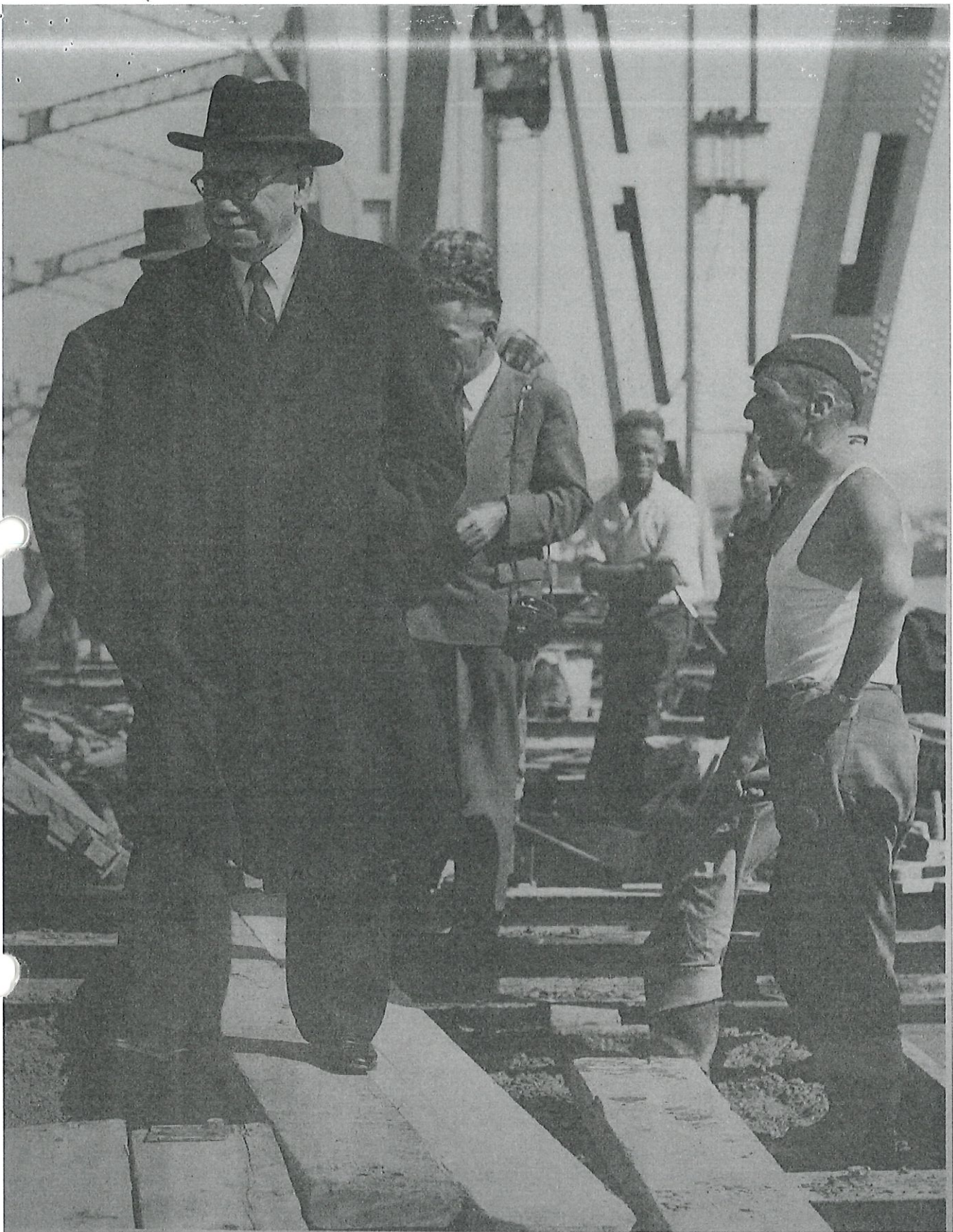


13 April 1989

Reference: BBRW 4620.21



Last skip of concrete
Reference: BHRW 402221



Crossing the bridge
Reference: BDBW 463221





During the road works

Reference: BDBW-432221



And they walked across

Reference: BBNW 425023



*The Chairman and Members of the
Auckland Harbour Bridge Authority
extend a cordial invitation to*

Mr. and Mrs. A. U. Wells.

*to be present at the Official Opening
of the*

Auckland Harbour Bridge

by

His Excellency The Viscount Cobham, G.C.M.G., T.D.

Governor General of New Zealand

at

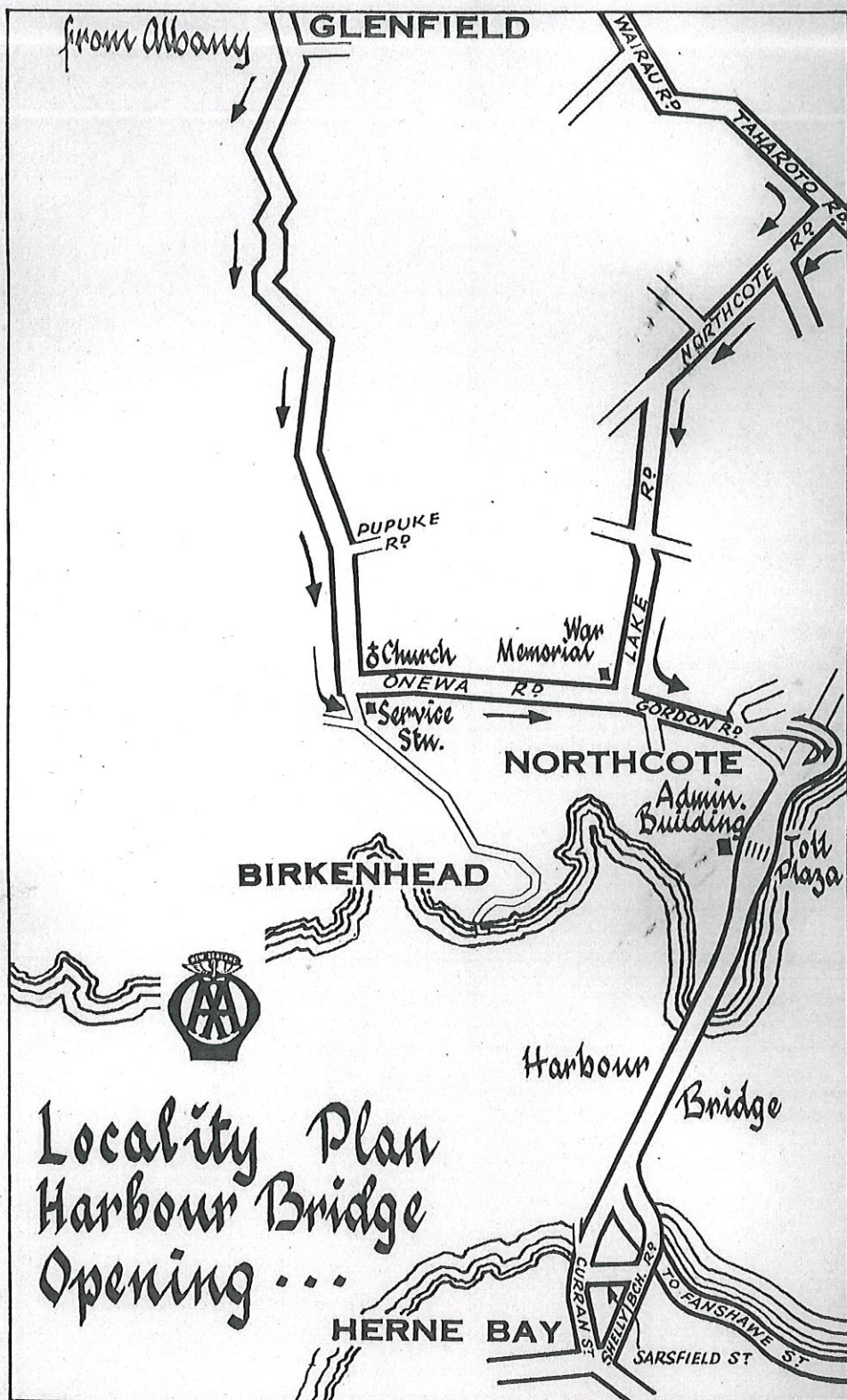
Sulphur Beach, Northcote

on Saturday morning, the thirtieth of May

Nineteen hundred and fifty nine

at ten o'clock

*Please return the enclosed card
by the fifteenth of May*



AUCKLAND HARBOUR BRIDGE

OFFICIAL OPENING

10 A.M., SATURDAY, 30TH MAY, 1959

ADMIT VEHICLE TO TOLL PLAZA

SULPHUR BEACH
FROM
GORDON ROAD FLYOVER

AUCKLAND HARBOUR BRIDGE

OFFICIAL OPENING

10 A.M., SATURDAY, 30TH MAY, 1959

ADMIT VEHICLE TO WESTHAVEN

AUCKLAND HARBOUR BRIDGE

OFFICIAL OPENING

10 A.M., SATURDAY, 30TH MAY, 1959

DUTY VEHICLE



Seated guests

Reference: BBBW-402221



Meeting the staff

Reference: DDBW 50311

30 / 5 / 1959

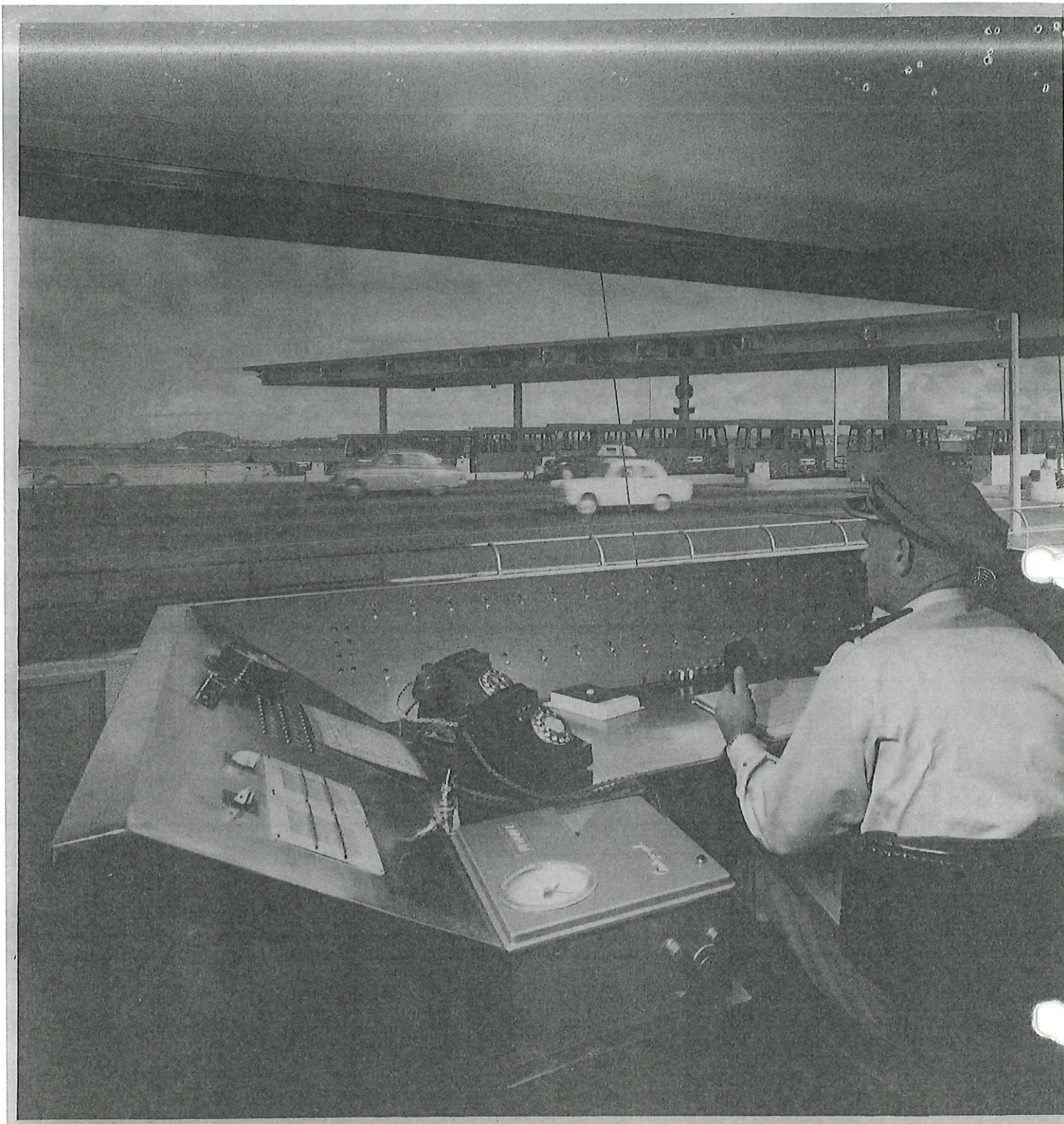
No. 1

Daily log



Bridge worker fatalities

Reference: BBRW 508V1

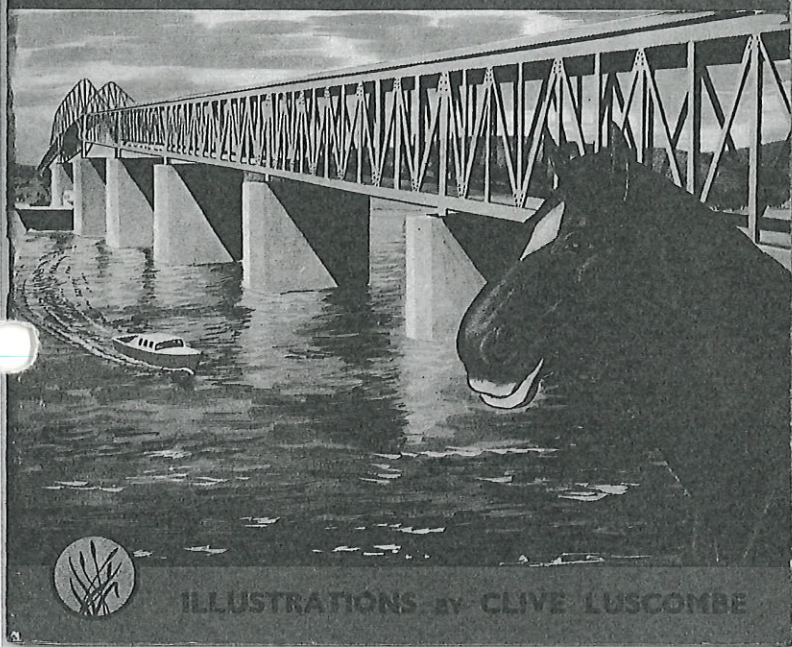


Bridge supervisor

Reference: BDDW 508311

JIMMY AND THE BRIDGE

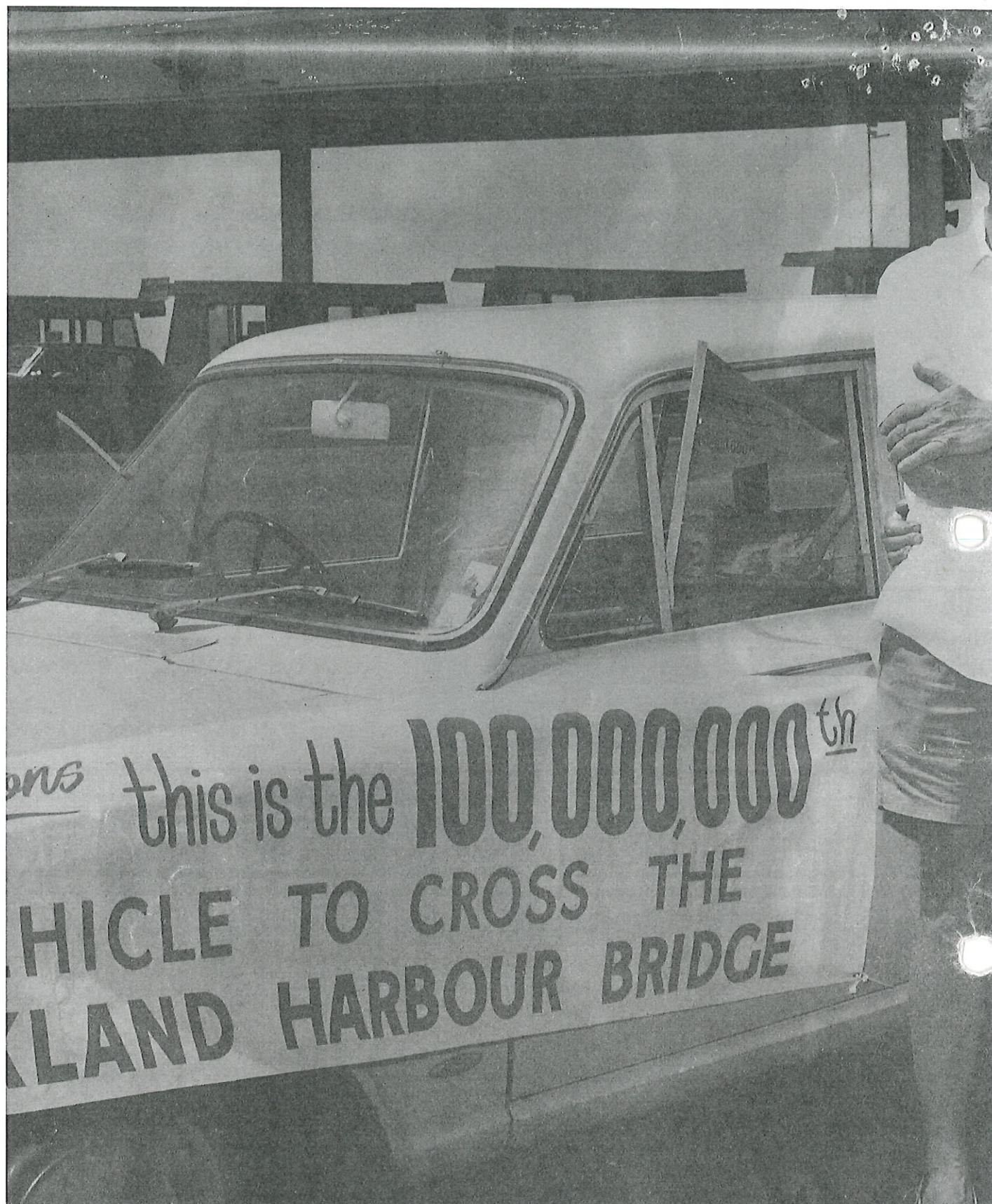
BY KENNETH SAUNDERS



ILLUSTRATIONS BY CLIVE LUSCOMBE

Jimmy and the Bridge

Reference: PA0151432



100 millionth car

Reference: B08W452221

[View more](#)

[More information](#)

• [History of the Holden Astra](#)