WELCOME to the 12th newsletter of NSWHRSI. The objective of this newsletter is to inform, educate and provide insights about the latest updates, plans and heritage news relating to Heritage Railway Stations and Infrastructure (HRSI) across NSW. The news in is separated into 4 core NSW regions – Northern, Western and Southern NSW and Sydney.

Phil Buckley, NSW HRSI Editor

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HISTORY

Proposals were put forward in 1881 and 1901 with an initial length of 74 miles 64 chains (120.4 km) in length. The final build was 80 miles (129 km). The Wagga Advertiser 1908 tells us. “A special meeting of the Wagga Humula-Tumbarumba Railway League was held at the School of Arts on Thursday evening. The President of the League, the Hon. James Gormly, M.L.C., occupied the chair. Mr Jeremy wrote regretting that he was unable to attend, and contended that organisation was lacking in the executive. A permanent sub-committee should be appointed and a fixed day and hour of meeting arranged, say, once a fortnight. At present efforts were only spasmodic, and stirred by startling developments, arising through the persistent endeavors of the partisans of rival routes — and then for a time things - drifted. If the suggested committee were appointed there would be a continuity of effort, and it would be a great factor in assisting their Parliamentary representatives to keep the subject continuously before those in authority. Mr, G. Mitchell, produced a letter from the Public Works Department addressed to Mr. G. G. Kiddie, stating that a party was now making a survey of the line from Mount Horeb to Tumbarumba via Batlow Scrub, and the Minister had approved of this party making a survey from Tumbarumba back to Humula when the former survey was finished. There were not sufficient surveyors in the Department to send a separate party. The meeting decided to request the hon, secretary to write to Mr. M'Garry, M.L.A., asking him to use every endeavor to get a separate party of surveyors to survey the line from Wagga to Tumbarumba via Humula. The Chairman explained that since the last meeting of the League, McGarry and he had been closely watching what was being done by the Works Department in regard to the survey, and that the Secretary, and himself had decided not to call the League together until there was |something to report.”

Extract from Trove of “The Sun” newspaper in 1911 with an update on the proposal.

“WAGGA TO TUMBARUMBA PROPOSED LINE OF RAILWAY

“The Public Works Committee considered the proposed railway from Wagga Wagga to Tumbarumba to-day. Mr. John Storey, M.L.A., presided. In a report read by Mr. W. J. Hanna, Under-Secretary for Public Works, It was stated tha length of the line would be 74 miles 64 chains, and the estimated cost (exclusive of land and compensation) was £387,271. The ruling grade was 1 in 40, both with and against the load, while the sharpest curve was 8 chains in radius. The land through which the projected line would pass was mostly alienated. The line would be built In two sections, i.e., from Wagga to Humula, and from Humula to Tumbarumba. The estimated cost was for an unballasted line laid with 90lb. rails, but the Chief Railway Commissioner, Mr. T. R. Johnson, had, in a report on the line, recommended 701b. rails. The estimated annual expenditure on the line was £24,073, and the revenue £14,734, a difference of 9339. If the railway went only as far as Humula, the estimated cost would be £211,690.

“The Chairman: In view of this fact, Mr. Hanna, that Tumbarumba, via Wagga Wagga, is 383 miles from Sydney, and only 35 miles from the Murray, do you think that such a railway would divert any of the trade row going to Victoria, to Sydney?
Mr. Hanna: It would depend on the freights charged."

The Chairman: Seeing how close Tumbarumba is to the Murray, however, such a railway would probably denied the trade of the district to Victoria?

Mr. Hanna: Yes, I suppose it would.

The Chairman: Don't you think we might ascertain whether or not Victoria is willing to contribute to the cost of this railway, seeing that she would benefit? Of course, she has already done her share, though, by building right up to the Murray.

Mr. Hanna: For a very good reason—to catch the N.S.W. trade.

Mr. G. A. Burgess: Do you think those N.S.W. people living near the Murray should be isolated just because they happen to be nearer Victoria than Sydney?

Mr. Hanna: Certainly not".

**INFRASTRUCUTRE BUILT ON THE LINE**

The first section was Wagga Wagga to Humula to be opened in 1917 and included the following locations:

**Wagga Wagga Railway Station** 521.400km Opened 1 Sep 1879 Operational

**Forest Hill Railway Station** 530.700km Opened 14 May 1917 Closed 4 May 1975


**RAAF Wagga Wagga Siding** 531.130km Opened 20-Aug-1940 Closed 1970-80s

The RAAF Base in the 1970s would be the site of School Air Force Cadets units annual camps. When the camps were on special trains were run down from Sydney, reversing at Wagga Wagga and then heading to the Base. The railway branch line running through Forest Hill has been completely lifted within the RAAF Base, the railway formation is still observable.

**Ladysmith Railway Station** 640.006km Opened 14 May 1917 Closed 4 May 1975


Left Ladysmith railway station in 1948 (Norm MacNamara), right Ladysmith railway station in 1960s.
Tamboolba Railway Station 548.800km Opened 14 May 1917 Closed 4 May 1975
Tamboolba railway station 1954 (George Oakman)

Station sign was saved and seen in 1985
https://www.flickr.com/photos/petervanderveer/3515025470/in/album-72157616410725430/

Coreinbob Railway Station 556.800km Opened 14 May 1917 Closed 4 May 1975
Undated photo, unknown photographer of the station.

Borambola Railway Station 562.200km Opened 14 May 1917 Closed 4 May 1975
What is understood to be the station in 1985 and goods shed
https://www.flickr.com/photos/petervanderveer/3514160843/in/album-72157616410725430/

Edwards Crossing Halt 571.000km Opened N/A Closed N/A

Seen in https://www.flickr.com/photos/petervanderveer/3514199243/in/album-72157616410725430/

Tarcutta Railway Station  577.180km Opened 15 Apr 1917 Closed 4 May 1975

A major station on the line with a 76m up side platform. Opposite were loop and goods sidings, the latter with a gantry crane, goods shed and loading bank. At the down end of the yard was a stock siding and stockyards.

Tarcutta railway station seen in 1960 (Unknown)

Umbango Creek Railway Station  590.900km Opened 14 May 1917 Closed 4 May 1975

Umbango Creek 1960s (Left, Fred Blackwell and right, Philip Craig)

Sheahan Platform  599.156km Opened Apr 1951 Closed Nov 1970

Humula Railway Station  604.600km Opened 14 May 1917 Closed 4 May 1975

A major station on the line.

Humula railway station at right, 1935 (Marie Black)
20 years later in 1985 offers a contrasting view of how it decayed -
https://www.flickr.com/photos/petervanderveer/3514226841/in/album-72157616410725430/

A small platform was built past Humula at Nurla.

**Nurla Platform** 609.807km Opened 31 Dec 1913 Closed 1964

**HUMULA TO TUMBARUMBA EXTENSION**

An extension of the line in a south east direction towards Tumbarumba was started in late 1910s. This was opened nearly 4 years later on 9 May 1921. The total combined cost of the two sections was £705,906. The Tumbarumba extension included 4 stations and platforms. The *Sun* newspaper in 1921 reported on the opening of Humula to Tumbarumba section:

“Humula to Tumbarumba 'OPENING-CEREMONY WAGGA WAGGA, 1921

A special train from Wagga was crowded with passengers for Tumbarumba in order to witness the official opening ceremony of the Humula-Tumbarumba railway, and to attend the show. The Minister for Railways, Mr. Estell, took a prominent part in the ceremony. On the arrival of the train at Tumbarumba no time was lost in performing the opening ceremony. Mr. Estell, who was greeted with cheers, briefly congratulated those who were responsible for getting the railway to Tumbarumba because, during the past few years money had been extremely tight. He explained that the oldest resident of Tumbarumba, Mr. J. Bartholomew, a man who had come to the district close on 70 years ago, and who was 92 years of age, spoke highly for the climate in which they lived. Amidst deafening cheers, Mr. Barjtholomew cut the red, white, and blue ribbon with a pair of scissors, which were afterwards presented to Mr. Estell. The total length of the branch line is now 80 miles. It is divided as follows: — Wagga to Humula, 82 miles 18 chains: Humula to Tumbarumba, 28 miles 2 chains. The work on the section between Wagga and Humula was commenced on February 13 1912, and the line was;
opened for public traffic on May 14, 1917. After the ceremony the crowd made its way to the showground, where the Tumbarumba show was held in glorious weather.”

The line included these extra stations:

**Rosewood Railway Station** 629.900km Opened 9 May 1921 Closed 4 May 1975


**Wolseley Park Platform** 635.675km Opened 1927 Closed 31 Aug 1968

**Glenroy Railway Station** 642.100km Opened 9 May 1921 Closed 4 May 1975

Glenroy railway station 1960s (Unknown)

Glenroy area 1969 with an enthusiast train passing by. Photo Dennis Forbes

**Tumbarumba Railway Station** 650.390km Opened 9 May 1921 Closed 1974

A major station and terminus location.

Seen 1965 [https://www.flickr.com/photos/intervene/3362122220/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/intervene/3362122220/)


Steam train at the station 1960s (Unknown)
The final Wagga Wagga to Tumbarumba branch line once built looks as this indicative map below shows.
OPERATIONS

The branch line initially had services for passengers and goods which were hauled by steam locomotives. Later on in the diesel powered locomotives appeared.

GOODS MOVEMENTS

A 1914 “The Farmer and Settler” newspaper story wrote “arrangements are being made for a daily passenger train between Wagga and Tarcutta, on the Wagga to Humula line now under construction. The rails laid for this for a distance of thirty-seven miles from Wagga to about two miles beyond Tarcutta. The line is now being used for carrying the wool clip to Wagga for reconsignment and the first lot of wool was brought in this week. The line is also being used for transporting stock to relief country, in consequence of the drought.”

The railway operations saw the line operating as far as Humula from 1917. This meant Humula needed some locomotive servicing facilities and yard space. This was built with a triangle put in instead of a turntable. When the line to Tumbarumba opened in 1921 the turning triangle was removed. Goods such as timber, wheat and cattle saw much need for trains. Cattle transportation movements on the line saw many cattle uplifted from the Tumbarumba region and transported to various locations such as central south west and south west NSW. To give an idea of movement numbers notes below show how much cattle was in the area. What you will observe is that the trips were undertaken in autumn timeframes.

16.3.1949 - 10 trucks to Jerilderie, 25 trucks to Wodonga
23.3.1949 - 13 trucks to Morundah
6.4.1949 - 27 trucks sheep to Morundah
7.4.1949 - 25 trucks sheep to Carrathool
27.4.1949 - 9 trucks sheep to Hay
10.5.1950 - 9 trucks cattle to Bringagee, 3 trucks cattle to Wagga
15.5.1950 - Special train A/CE. Jowett 25 trucks cattle to Trangie
17.5.1950 - Special train A/CE. Jowett 20 trucks cattle to Trangie

PASSENGER SERVICES

When the line was opened to Humula, passenger services in the early years were carriages within mixed trains. Initial timetables gave a tri-weekly service. In later years CPH rail-motors were used when high level of patronage started to decline. Example is seen here in 1970s [link]. Recollections of people suggest that passengers were picked up and dropped of almost anywhere on the branch line on an informal trust basis. One of the more interesting passenger loads were prisoners who were moved by train to the Tumbarumba Training Centre. Stories suggest that they were able to detrain and help collect mushrooms at lineside locations after rainy periods, if the train drivers saw fit to stop. The popular CPH railmotors branch line trains were operated in pairs. On arrived at Humula they would be split, with one staying at Humula and the other travelling to Tumbarumba. They rejoined hen rejoined when the Tumbarumba service came back to Humula. In the 1960s reflective speed boards were erected along the branch line to assist drivers so they could see the sign better at night time. The only mode of passenger services on the line in the final years was by CPH railmotors, with the exception of steam hauled railfan trips using many carriages in the 1960s, such as seen
here in 1965 - https://www.flickr.com/photos/intervene/3361359821/ . As the terminus after the 1921 extension, Tumbarumba had a small locomotive depot for the crews to replenish the steam locomotives with coal and water as needed. The depot area had a small barrack building which provided in the initial years very basic comforts for crews. Tumbarumba gets very cold in winter and it was very hard on crews. Over the years better amenities, including power were added until the barracks went out of use with the closure of the line.

**CLOSURE OF THE TUMBARUMBA BRANCH LINE**

Like many NSW country branch line declines, Tumbarumba closure was done in stages, with the then Public Transport Commission in June 1974, indicating that passenger services to Tumbarumba and other branch lines would be discontinued soon. Cut back on Goods traffic was planned with a “conditional” service to Humula only on Wednesdays and a return trip on Fridays to Tumbarumba. The PTC saw the Tumbarumba branch line passenger and goods use declining. This combined with high fuel prices of the time, helped the decision to implement line closure. A notice was sent out effective from 15 September 1974, to say that all services would cease on the Wagga Wagga to Tumbarumba branch line due to growing fuel restrictions caused from the 1970s global fuel shortages and price increases. It is understood that the last CPH Railmotor service for passengers operated on 3 August 1974. From then on it was either buses or cars for people. The last official goods service to The No. 33 Special Goods operating on July 8 1974 to Tumbarumba when turned around, became the last official goods service on the line and returned as service No. 34 with nine empty cattle wagons and one goods wagon in tow. There was another few sets of goods movements 2 weeks later on July 23 1974, when diesel locomotive 48118 towing a guards van went to Tumbarumba. This movement removed further rolling stock from Tumbarumba yard - 10 empty S trucks and two water tanks. Very strangely on 26 September 1974, the NSW PTC directed that diesel locomotive 48105 run a weed killer poison consist out to Humula and return. What was the purpose of this weed killer train when the line was to be closed is anyone’s guess…..

It is understood that this poison train is the last ever branchline movement beyond Ladysmith. Tied in with the cut backs and removal of all rolling stock, the ever so variable natural environment decided to play its part and a large section of the branch line covering from Humula to Tumbarumba was deemed unrepairable in 1974, due to heavy rain and flood damage causing numerous wash-away. The line was simply left abandoned. The Humula to Tumbarumba section was suspended on 8 October 1974. 5 October 1974 severe storms and heavy rain resulted in heavy flooding of the region with some rain level resulting in extraordinary damage to rail and road infrastructure. The Keajura rail creek bridge near Tarcutta was wiped out by flood waters. In June 1980 a report in the “The Tumbarumba Times” detailed how the State Rail Authority was trying to gain damages from a local person or business who had removed a section of track at a railway level crossing. During 1982 local news again reported on ideas to maybe turn the section from Wagga Wagga to Ladysmith into a tourist railway line. This was seen as unlikely due to the branch line’s need for significant rework. This was very much proven when in April 1982 the SRA inspected the line using a trike and found that it was in a very poor condition.
The last NSW Government locomotive hauled train to run from Ladysmith departed 14 October 1986. Similar to the Bombala branch line closure, the last train to run the line to Ladysmith was a private charter by the ARHS ACT using CPHs 27, 2 & 37 which operated on 15 March 1987. Further official truncating work took place in December 1988 when the line was cut back to just outside Wagga Wagga at the Boral siding. A stop block has been laid on the track at the 522.600km marker. Terminus Tumbarumba railway station was demolished in the late 1980s it is understood.

**PRESERVATION AND BRANCH LINE REMAINS - 2017**

Most of the railway stations survived for a few years after the staged closure but after a while they were nearly all demolished - one by one.
Wolseley Park remains seen by Greg Finster. A cutting, station and local trestle bridge.
By the early 1990s less than a handful of railway stations remained. The only prominent ones left were Tarcutta and Ladysmith. By 1999, the Tarcutta railway station was still in existence but was fenced off and being used as a local works area. The platform and station building were still present, alongside an approach signal. The southern end of the yard is now found under the Hume Highway. Tragically in 2001, a large grass fire, started by a passing southbound semi-trailer, spread and eventually destroyed the disused Tarcutta railway station before it could be restored by a local historical group. The signal box’s 6-lever frame is understood to have been removed in May 2002 for preservation. Tarcutta railway station in the 1990s before it burnt down. (Tarcutta progress association)
In the Tarcutta region in early 2013 more fire caused significant damage to perway area and the small historic halt platform at Edwards Crossing. This halt ended up charred remains. A goods shed is reported still standing at Borambola See this photo: http://www.nswrail.net/locations/photo.php?name=NSW:Borambola:3

At Ladysmith a group, Tumbarail (which is a sub-Committee of the RHTAJunee Inc) was formed in 1995 to restore and reuse the station and yard. Their plans were to reopen a section of the Wagga to Tumbarumba railway as a tourist attraction using trike rail cars. The rail trike operations were successful until 2003 when massive public liability insurance policy costs forced the group to shut down their planned operations. They
restarted operations in early 2015 with a smaller operating structure, see story at http://www.dailyadvertiser.com.au/story/2879202/rail-cars-on-track/ . In the last few years campaigns to convert the railway branch line or parts of, into “rail trails” for bike riders and walkers have featured heavily in local newspaper and social media claiming that a rail trail will “refresh” the railway line and inject money into the surrounding towns. At this stage the only potentially planned test rail trail is Rosewood to Tumbarumba . However it is not certain despite allocation of funding in 2015.

Greg Finster 2017 views
Remains of rail bridge and rail yard at Humula. Phil Buckley 2012 views

Greg Finsters 2017 views of Humula
Tumbarumba railway yard remains, Warren Banfield views in 2016.

Stephen Lomas views 2016 of Tumbarumba.
Greg Finsters 2017 views
A recent newspaper story on the lines history and maybe potential future –
In 2017 only Ladysmith railway station, Borambola goods shed and Tumbarumba have any significant remaining visible memories of this once busy line. Remains of many other former stations can be found along the branch line and at Tumbarumba. Several areas have had sections of rail track removed (without the approval of the NSW Government) but never the less much of the branch line still exists, even if out of sight.

In June 2017 the NSW Upper House passed legislation 37-2 to close down the Tumbarumba branch line and convert it to the first public railway rail trail in NSW. This will taxpayers $5.0m to remove rail track, wooden sleepers and to fix bridges to ensure they is able to safely accommodate people who may walk or ride 21km from Rosewood to Tumbarumba section. Many people are skeptical that this conversion will bring in massive tourist numbers.

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50 YEARS OF NSWGR RAILWAY OPERATIONS MEDALLION

In 2016 a railway collector Graeme Knappick, purchased this rare medallion to honour the 50th anniversary of NSW Railways train operations. The medallion was manufactured in 1905 and was not easy to find in good condition 112 years later. More information on the medal can be seen at http://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/items/56196

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MEMORIES OF ORTON PARK RAILWAY STATION by Dave Free

Dave Free writes a weekly History article for a local free newspaper at Bathurst called “Bathurst City Life”. Dave has sent NSWHRSI a story he wishes to share with us about the history of local Orton Park railway station.

RAIL COMMUTING IN BATHURST REGION - ORTON PARK STATION

Many people have a fascination with long-abandoned facilities. When was the thing opened, what were the stories of the people who used it, why and when did it close? Maybe there is also a touch of sentimentality about giving some attention to a lost place whose time has come and gone. This certainly applies in the case of the Orton Park rail platform.

Orton Park is a house and property about halfway between Bathurst and Perthville. William Lane originally built a house there in 1830. This still exists behind the more impressive later home visible from the Vale Road. The name derives from a Methodist minister, Joseph Orton, who conducted the first such service west of the
mountains. Lane’s son, Edwin, sold the property to Charles McPhillamy and it stayed in that family for many years. Omya Australia, which has a limestone processing plant nearby, has adapted and restored the house as part of a commercial use and as a service to the community.

What many people may not recall so easily is that the property had its own railway platform from late in the 19th century well into the 20th century. Much of the evidence and detail is anecdotal. There seems to have been an actual small station there (although the difference between a platform and a station might be a matter of personal interpretation).

Dianne Barnes relates the memories of the late Mrs Mary Peard, who recalled that her father was appointed to that section of line and lived in a house next to the railway close to where the Omya processing plant has a road junction with Vale Road. The station was also deemed important enough at one stage to have a public road connecting it to the “Apsley-Bathurst Road”, duly gazetted and published in the Free Press Dec 1, 1899.

The platform may have been located in what is now a small copse of trees to the south-east of the Omya works. It was 244.565kms from Central Station and Bathurst station was back down the line 5.465 kms. To give that some perspective, Allan Leaver reports that the Omya level crossing relay hut is at exactly 244.580km from Central as these things are measured. It is therefore possible the actual platform was on the Vale Creek side of the Western line rather than the Orton Park property (Mt Panorama) side (Parish maps have it creek-side).

Orton Park 1962 photo right, courtesy of Denis Chamberlain from his book “Railway West Chronicles” and originally in the possession of the late J. Loudoun-Shand.

Other memories, especially from rail workers, have it in the middle of the house paddock on the north side of the line. Perhaps it was moved between these two sites at one stage or there may have even been two of the things! The assumption that it was a private facility for the “big house” residents seems wrong. It was used by many people who lived and travelled in the immediate area. A hand-held “stop disc” was used to alert the driver that people wanted to be picked up. The platform opened June 1st 1880 and closed Dec 1963.

Many residents relay stories from parents and grandparents of using the train to get to school at South Bathurst of a morning. The driver would blow the whistle at Perthville to alert the children he was about to arrive. The magnificent panoramic photo at right, shows a goods train moving through the front of the property at Omya entry Feb 6th 1964. Photo by kind permission of Raymond Love. This seems to confirm the location at one stage was on the Vale Creek side and also that the facility was in some use beyond the advertised 1963 closing date.
People caught the train from there to go into the cinema on Saturdays. Ian Klemm relates the story of his relatives catching the morning train out that way to visit Claude Kable on Lagoon Rd and alerting the driver of the night train by hurricane lamp if they wished to be picked up by the evening service back to town.

On timetables at the turn of the century it certainly was a designated “stop” and sale notices for properties at about that time (for example in the Free Press and Mining Journal Jan 1886) made a big selling point of there being a rail platform at that location. A timetable from Jan 1889 gives us the information that a ticket from Bathurst to Orton Park would cost you 6p First Class and 4p Second class; to get to Perth would cost you an additional 4p (before people get excited about the cheapness of a cross-continent leg, Perth was the then-name for Perthville). Also of note is the Oct 1903 Free Press story of the opening of a bridge across the Vale Creek at Orton Park which will mean “easy access for residents of Lagoon, Vale Road and White Rock to the rail platform. ...The hills now to be traversed in order to get to Perth will be avoided”. There was also a move at that time for a rail siding near the platform for easy loading of produce from nearby farms. A story from the late Mrs. Mary Peard (whose father was appointed to that rail position), is that following a major flood in 1926 or 27, the house became unlivable and after the family moved to Violet St, it was demolished.

Contemporary photos show two suspected sites for the platform (one mound of earth in the house paddock and the other near the Omya level crossing with water tanks nearby). Sadly no definitive location for the station was found. Of course while all this commuting was going on west of Bathurst, there must have been similar movements from the now closed stations of Kelso, Raglan etc. Spur lines going into army depots at White Rock and Lloyds Road (2BOD) were a whole other sub-system and a topic for another story. So for one brief moment in this little article, the largely lost and forgotten Orton Park station is put to work again.

Huge thanks also to Allan Leaver and other members of fb site Bathurst Memories for important details, contacts and reminiscences and to Graeme Hanger and especially Mr Ian Schofield for arranging access to Omya. Orton Park 1962.

The photo right, shows Orton Park property owner at that time, John Loudoun-Shand with his sons, John (holding a train stopping disc) and Stewart at the site. Photo courtesy of Denis Chamberlain from his book “Railway West Chronicles” and originally in the possession of the late J. Loudoun-Shand.

1970s FILM OPERATIONS OF THE CASINO TO MURWILLUMBAH RAILWAY BRANCH LINE

Possibly what is the best recorded views of operations along the former operational (closed 2004 by the ALP in NSW) branch line that ran from Casino to Murwillumbah, taken in the 1970s showing how busy the line was.

1. 1970s film of the Casino to Murwillumbah branch line Goldcoast Motorail, track repairs, depot operations https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vy4rM1mlo-g

2. 1970s film of the Casino to Murwillumbah branch line Goldcoast Motorail, track repairs, depot operations https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K3VZRsGrpKw
3. 1970s film of the Casino to Murwillumbah branch line Goldcoast Motorail, track repairs, depot operations
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ywayJ8woO5g

4. 1970s film of the Casino to Murwillumbah branch line Goldcoast Motorail, track repairs, depot operations
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_i5ZSWgAXCk

5. 1970s film of the Casino to Murwillumbah branch line Goldcoast Motorail, track repairs, depot operations
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZKhUFITvWw

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**NSW NEWS**

**150th ANNIVERSARY OF RAIL TO THE BLUE MOUNTAINS**

Late July 2017 saw 3 days of celebrations for the 150th anniversary of rail into the Blue Mountains of western Sydney / NSW. A condensed rail history of the region can be seen at https://bluemlocalstudies.wordpress.com/2015/11/09/the-railway-the-blue-mountains/. NSWHRSI covered rail heritage operations around Penrith and up to Wentworth Falls over the 3 days of 21-23 July 2017.

The first event saw a celebration of the 150 years of rail to Wentworth Falls on July 21 2017.
Several hundred people attend a community event with a variety of local speakers and officials commemorating the 150 years of public transport to the town. Steam locomotive 3642 and diesel locomotive 4204 brought a passenger train from Central to the town.
July 22 2017 saw Heritage F1 Red Rattler conduct trips from Penrith railway station to Blacktown railway station and back during the day. 3642 and 4204 left Penrith railway station and went up to Valley Heights railway station and back a few times.

Penrith
St Marys railway station. The signal box was painted from red to cream in the last few months.

Rooty Hill railway station
Emu Plains railway station
Glenbrook railway station

Blaxland railway station
July 23 2017 saw 3642 and 4204 operate from Lawson railway station to Katoomba railway station on a few services. Robyne Ridge provided these photos shown below.
NORTHERN NSW NEWS

BROADMEADOW ROUNDHOUSE

In July 2017 the public were made aware of repairs being made to the Broadmeadow roundhouse, where a section of roofing had been damaged earlier from an April 2015 storm. The damaged section, over 2.5 years old, was replaced in an intense job which required cranes and personnel working in high-risk areas. The future of the Broadmeadow roundhouse is still unknown. See the repair news at http://murphysgroupservices.com.au/broadmeadow-roundhouse-newcastle-roof-remedial-works-sydney-trains

CASINO TO MURWILLUMBAH BRANCH LINE

Local north coast NSW community group seeking to bring back their public railway transport to Casino to Murwillumbah produced this informative video - https://www.facebook.com/nrrag/posts/683337341874750. With a massive population growth in the northern rivers since the 1970s, passenger and freight rail is needed to take the stress off the main roads. One day, under a more public transport friendly government, we may see a restart of the regional rail operations in northern NSW. Until then the mainstream government parties will lose their votes faces the potential loss of votes to smaller parties. In July 2017 in news, which many didn’t expect, Federal and State Governments have begun plans to implement a rail trail on the Murwillumbah branch line from the terminus south for around 20km to Crabbes Creek. If and when this is implemented, it means rail will never come back to this area. See more at https://www.northernstar.com.au/news/63m-of-funding-for-rail-trail-announced/3201302/
GLENREAGH RAILWAY STATION

The Glenreagh Mountain Railways lease on the yard area was terminated on 31 July 2017 by ARTC. On 1 August 2017 ARTC took over control again of the Glenreagh railway station and yard and claim the area will become an operational part of the main line. It is not known what is to happen to the 102 year old heritage railway station which is not listed for protection. Some of the other infrastructure may be moved nearby. GMR have requested specific items from the yard if they can be saved. In late July 2017 a local regional newspaper highlighted the station future with a story being placed on the front page of the newspaper - https://www.dailyexaminer.com.au/news/village-battles-to-save-historic-railway-station/3204349/

GRAFTON RAILWAY DEPOT

A report covering the building of a new Clarence River road bridge indicates the likely removal of the old South Grafton depot turntable at Grafton yard could take place. The report says "It is unclear from the EIS documentation exactly how the turntable associated with the Grafton railway station will be impacted. There is insufficient information to demonstrate why demolition is the best option for this site. There should be a heritage impact assessment to evaluate the options, of which retention should be one (Heritage Council)". See more at http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/documents/projects/northern-nsw/grafton-clarence-river-crossing/clarence-river-grafton-bridge-submissions-report-2014-10.pdf. As of July 2017 the turntable was still observed to be in place in the yard.

HONEYSUCKLE RAILWAY STATION

Excavation works in Newcastle at Honeysuckle are for modern day purposes, have found the remains of Honeysuckle railway station. It is unknown if these historical remains will be preserved in any way or just built over the top or demolished. See more at https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=777874999004294&set=gm.164322565892574&type=3&theater and https://www.flickr.com/photos/122972896@N06/sets/72157686874764945
KENDALL RAILWAY STATION

Barry Trudgett has supplied photos of the recently repainted Kendall railway station. It has being refreshed and has more colour now when compared to the previous fading light green colour. The 2015 view left and 2017 view right show the transformation. A craft shop rents the station. When I last visited in 2015 they had a book available to buy on Kendall’s rail history, which is well worth buying.

More photos from Barry Trudgett of the repainted buildings.
LISMORE RAILWAY BRIDGES

More bad news for rail heritage in NSW, with statements surfacing in July 2017 that John Holland Rail, on behalf of the NSW Liberal State Government, plans to organise the delisting and eventual removal of the timber railway bridges at Lismore on the Casino to Murwillumbah railway line. These bridges are over 100 years old and need to stay. Seems like people power need to ensure our rail heritage remains intact. See more at https://www.echo.net.au/2017/07/historic-lismore-railway-bridges-threatened

MANIILA RAILWAY BRIDGE

Late June 2017 was the timing of an announcement which indicates the heritage railway bridge at Manilla is likely to be demolished by John Holland Rail on behalf of the NSW Government. During July, local community opinion over the 111 year old bridge quickly got the notice of the NSW Govt who then backed down on its potential demolition for the moment. See more at http://www.northerndailyleader.com.au/story/4749812/council-weighs-in-on-viaduct/

TENTERFIELD RAILWAY STATION

Repairs have begun on the fireplace in the main station building. Volunteers plans are to reopen and repair the fireplace. Other work is being undertaken on the barracks building with repairs to some of the rooms for reuse. Tenterfield railway museum has passionate volunteers with up to 24 attending on some working bee days.

THORTON RAILWAY STATION

In July 2017 refurbishment work was observed with repainting of the railway station. Several windows were boarded up.
WICKHAM RAILWAY STATION

Matthew Ward sent in these photos in late May 2017 showing the NSW Government demolishing the heritage railway station at Wickham.
Garry Luxton views of the demolition over June and July 2017.
Wickham railway station of the future... or a “big shed” as some call it.

TAMWORTH WEST RAILWAY STATION

In June 2017 Simone Taylor made NSWHRSI aware that Tamworth West station had suffered some kind of damage. It is speculated it could be white ants or other structural problems.
WESTERN NSW NEWS

BATHURST RAILWAY MUSEUM


BLAYNEY – DEMONDRILLE BRANCH LINE


COWRA RAILWAY STATION

In July 2017 long term plans to fix the Cowra railway station building moved ahead with approvals were given to remove white ant damage. A local builder has been given approval to replace the white ant destroyed door architraves, a few skirting boards and the posts in the foyer to the ticket office. Additional work will see the already replaced, but since destroyed, BAR entry fascia replaced. Some repairs to the station building undertaken in July 2017 show white ant damage. Russell Denning photos.
ESKBANK RAILWAY STATION

It is intriguing to observe progress in the saving the historical Eskbank railway station, in Lithgow NSW is taking a long time. NSWHRSI understands that Sydney Trains and Transport Heritage NSW need to resolve specific conditions covering the site but it is very disappointing that no agreement can be reached after so long. There is potential to bring more tourism and employment to Lithgow NSW if there was some breakthrough in the discussions over the CMA. Here is hoping that somehow a positive outcome can be resolved before we lose yet another historical building to the environment and time. See more at http://www.lithgowmercury.com.au/story/4784491/grand-plans-to-restore-eskbank-station-to-former-glory-photos/?cs=1464.
MEDLOW BATH RAILWAY STATION

In June 2017 various work was conducted at the station covering painting of platform edging and signage. Peter Watters photo.

MERRYGOEN RAILWAY STATION

The remaining station infrastructure at Merrygoen railway was demolished in the first week of July 2017. It is understood that this was done by ARTC. Craig Porter supplied this view when it was intact around 2010. He also took this turntable view just nearby.

Phil Buckley took these views in 2011 of the Merrygoen station infrastructure.
Michael Flood took these views post demolition.

OBERON RAILWAY STATION

In July 2017 a new awning and tin roof was understood to have been installed on the 1920s era Oberon railway station, along with a repaint of the station building awning support and building signage. It has been a very slow restoration at the Oberon railway project which is still struggling to reach operational status nearly 10 years after it started work on the rebuild of the line.

TARANA RAILWAY STATION

It seems old timber light poles were cut down at Tarana railway station in recent overhauls and these have now being replaced with new timber poles and the lights reinstalled. I found this evidence in recent photos at Tarana – https://www.busaustralia.com/forum/download/file.php?id=92265&mode=view. It is a positive that the stations heritage type light poles were restored after no one was able to confirm if they would ever return.
WALLERAWANG RAILWAY STATION

Nearly 4 years after the old Café and lolli shop closed at Wallerawang railway station, a new business has now opened in May 2017. The “Station Expresso” hopes to service the market for tourism and locals who seek a café spot in the town. See more at the media story http://www.lithgowmercury.com.au/story/4687483/station-expresso-rolls-into-town-photos/#slide=2. It is hoped rail enthusiasts visit to have a break in their travels when driving through this area of NSW.

SOUTHERN NSW NEWS

ARIAH PARK RAILWAY STATION

Ariah Park in south west NSW is a timber building that is part of the NSW Government railway network that come under the contractor John Holland Rail for upkeep and maintenance. Some can observe from the photos below that upkeep by JHR has been lacking somewhat with significant building decay observable.

Over the last few years a local community organisation is understood to have started to repair the building rather than just let it decay with neglect. It is understood that, after significant discussions, John Holland Rail finally sent in a contractor to assist the repairs. Major progress was noted in July 2017 by John King when visiting the town and he has supplied these photos. John has told us from his visit that the station seemed to be getting new timber planks and a refurbishment. The news is that the goods shed is likely to be repaired in the future all going well.
Nigel Judd has sent in these photos of the new timber a few hours after John left.
BOWNING RAILWAY STATION

John King provided an update on refreshment work being done at Bowning railway station in mid July 2017. John observed replacement of entire roofing sections along with roofing beams underway. There had been long term infestation from white ants and danger from asbestos.

BULLI RAILWAY STATION

In June 2017 Bulli railway station celebrated 130 years since it opened. The current site custodians, the Black Diamond Heritage Centre (found at https://www.facebook.com/Black-Diamond-Heritage-Centre-Bulli-406786176111213/ ) celebrated with a cake and by holding a railway heritage display showcasing how rail transformed Bulli and the surrounding region. See more at http://www.illawarramercy.com.au/story/4744325/bogan-benched-for-longest-trip-on-the-shortest-day/?cs=300
COOMA RAILWAY

Cooma Monaro Railway has gained a $28,000 grant which will be spent across several areas. One is to help refurbish a part of the Cooma railway station and turn it into a museum. Some of the money will also be spent on a heritage master plan through working with a heritage consultant. Working with railway track engineers some money will be spent on track maintenance and a repair plan. The track work will hopefully see CMR extending operations south to Rock Flat with the creation of a new picnic area. See more on news video at https://www.facebook.com/JohnBarilaroMP/videos/1571350442886363/?hc_ref=ARRnx26dvDLT4ZDxcVPiAoOSbLx3mwA5psa5AcnUs-bY4y7E1poUnHso5GGrljCNnzg. It is understood that CMR are abandoning the northern run to Chakola railway station and cutting this back to the racecourse station.

GUNDAGAI RAILWAY STATION

In July 2017 new caretakers were appointed by the current lease holders of the Gundagai station. Over the last few months it has appeared that Gundagai Heritage Railway has apparently now transformed into a pro rail trail organization. Many past GHR volunteers feel that this is a betrayal of their work which was focused on the buildings history as a Rail Station and now a museum. NSW Rail Trail supporters have become board members. Concern is held for the future and about the past work of volunteers working on the station since 1992.

GUNDAGAI RAILWAY BRIDGE

In late June 2017 the local Gundagai newspaper reported that a work order had being started to repair the historic Gundagai railway bridge southern section. John Holland Rail is to undertake repairs over an unknown time frame to fix the bridge in this southern area near the embankment.
John King supplied these photos in June 2017 of the initial preparation work at both the north and south ends of the bridge.
PICTON TO MITTAGONG RAILWAY BRANCH LINE

Is the Mittagong to Picton rail line a rail likely to become a trail line? ABC Radio Illawarra in July 2017 reported on the long term plans to progress the rebuild of the disused section of the line into a dual railway and walkway. To make this happen Wingecarribee councillors have said that they are willing to agree to a $16m federally funded study to build a trail which comes after nearly 40 years since the last passenger service was run on the line. Claims are made that such a new track and trail could generate 2,000 extra people a week in the area.

OTFORD RAILWAY TUNNEL

It is reported that $3m is to be spent on converting a 1.8km disused rail tunnel for walk and bike riders at Stanwell Park / Otford area. See more at http://www.illawarramercercury.com.au/story/4771328/otford-tunnel-vision-plan-to-turn-derelict-site-into-cycleway/?cs=300

TUMBARUMBA RAIL TRAIL

In mid June 2017 official legislation to close down the Tumbarumba railway line for the rail trail was approved. In the NSW Upper House, Parliament House, Sydney politicians voted 37-2 to approve the change in the act to seal this railway section from Rosewood to Tumbarumba line. What this means is that a rail trail will now meander through many farming properties and then into Tumbarumba. It appears that documentation says that it will require around $5m to build the rail trail. This suggests that the wooden sleepers and the railway tracks will be removed. Only railway bridges will remain from what we are told of plans. What this means is that the way is being opened for other country NSW non operational railway branchlines to suffer the same fate. Once rail line is pulled it is most unlikely that a rail service will ever return. What is unknown is how accurate are the predictions regarding tourist and tourist $ inputs if rail trails prevail.

SYDNEY REGION

BEECROFT RAILWAY STATION

June 2017 saw the announcement of a lift to be built at the heritage station. It is not known at this time what the design will look like. It is hoped it is not like Artarmon which has ruined the heritage layout there. See more at https://www.facebook.com/tudehope.damien/posts/871074416389295
CENTRAL - RAIL HERITAGE WEEKEND

Across the long weekend in June 2017, Rail heritage operations operated out of Central over 3 days. A mix of steam and diesel locomotives hauling carriages and diesel rail motors powered people across the inner west and southern lines. One of the key people ensuring it ran on track and time was seen at right, Ross Jackson, a Rail Operations and Safety manager for Heritage Transport NSW. Across the 3 days Sydney saw fast CPH railmotors, noisy and popular steam and diesel locomotives run through heritage railway stations along their various routes. Over 2 days NSWHRSI managed to capture a few movements at Central and through to the southern and inner west line stations ranging from Central, Redfern, Erskenville, Stanmore, Summer Hill, Croydon, Strathfield and Homebush. We would like to thank the various Sydney Trains station staff who provided assistance which helped us record these views.
The NSW Country network and northern and far western section of Sydney never sees any rail heritage operations in the rail long weekends which is interesting to note. Future rail heritage weekend could consider taking rail heritage to country NSW so they too can experience the rail action.

CENTRAL RAILWAY STATION – VIVID LIGHT FESTIVAL

The famous sandstone clock tower was lit up for a few days to showcase Vivid lighting technology. The tower was lit a mix of heritage, modern era and future era transport images comprising Red Rattler, Steam locomotive, K sets and Metro.
CME BUILDING, NORTH EVELEIGH

As part of the debatable plan to reuse a lot of the Eveleigh workshops, the 130 years old CME building at North Eveleigh is being worked on to restored it and make it reusable for the future. It is likely to become another office or community building when refurbishment is completed. See this link for May 2017 news


In early August a planned open day by Urban Growth is to be held at the see

HOLSWORTHY BRANCH LINE

During July to September 2017 the Liverpool Regional Museum has a display covering the WW1 history of the former branch line that served Holsworthy Army base. The branch line saw various movements of WWI ordnance, ammunition, stores, cavalry and artillery horses, military equipment and personnel with part of the line still in service during WWII. Sidings were located at Liverpool Army Camp, Holdsworthy Internment Camp, Anzac Rifle Range, Remount Depot, Moorebank Stores, Ammunition and Ordnance Depots and later Cable Makers. See more at http://mylibrary.liverpool.nsw.gov.au/BookingRetrieve.aspx?ID=72030

HOMEBUSH RAILWAY STATION

In June 2017 work started on the upgrade under the TAP plan. A new tower is being built on the southern side of the station and is waiting completion. New curved overhead panels were noticed on the concourse and are being implemented to provide better cover for customers.
LEIGHTONFIELD RAILWAY STATION
During June 2017 a newspaper published an interesting insight to the purpose of the building of this railway station. Read more at http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/newslocal/fairfield-advance/leightonfield-stations-wwii-story-lives-on/news-story/2156a9162b4b0ccf70840968dfcdcoec

LIDCOMBE RAILWAY STATION
Upgrades to the station in mid 2017 is seeing the construction of new awnings on the platforms at the station.

NORTH EVELEIGH WORKSHOPS
Carriageworks (former North Eveleigh railway workshop area) launched in July 2017 the 1917: THE GREAT STRIKE exhibition. History tells us that the introduction of new working methods in NSW in 1917 caused many tram and rail workers to go on strike, which also spread to Victorian workplaces. Many rail workers were sacked or if they did return to work were, downgraded in their roles. These divisions caused much anger well into the next few decades.
It is a free exhibition and highly recommended all rail and heritage enthusiasts visit. See more at this link http://carriageworks.com.au/events/1917-great-strike/

PENRITH RAILWAY STATION

Graeme Knappick took these nice evening views of Penrith in July 2017
The modernisation works continue with the new concourse now completed behind where Graeme took these photos in July 2017.

Graeme informs NSW HRSI that the upgrade work is expected for the new concourse and lifts above the tracks is due to be completed and the site open to the public on 31 July 2017.

**REDFERN RAILWAY STATION**

All the control rooms inside each platform building on platform 2/3, 4/5 and 6/7 are now placed outside as of July 2017, with the control hubs at right, now operational. The old control rooms are now non-operational. Photo: Wayne de Bruyn.

**STRATHFIELD SIGNAL BOX**

On July 8 2017, Sydney Trains Tony Eid marked the closure of the Strathfield Signal Box by pulling the last manual signalling lever, while operating from nearby Homebush centralised control centre.
THORNLEIGH RAILWAY STATION

June 2017 long weekend saw more work done on stripping the middle section of the foot bridge of lead paint and repainting in safer materials. Some locals suggested this might have been Thornleigh’s version of the popular Vivid light festival.

YOUR SAY - HERITAGE PHOTOS

Every issue HRSI will publish a selection of heritage photos from our growing collection of various railway photographers (40+ now contributing), showing the different NSW stations as they once were from 1950s up to recent times.

Photographer Toad Montgomery view of Wagga Wagga rail yard 1990s and right, photographer Phil Buckley view 2015.
Photographer Tony McLaughlin view, left, of former western side of Central carriage shed 1980s, right Greg Fitzgerald view of Auburn yard 1970

Photographer Barry Trudgett views of Greta railway station 1988 and 2017

Photographer Warren Banfield view, left, of Sandgate cemetery station siding 1982, right, photographer Peter Bass view of Murwillumbah railway station 1976
Lakemba railway station 1920s left, and right, 2014 from Phil Buckley

Photographer Greg Finster view, left, of Narrandera railway station early 1980s, right, courtesy of Chris Collins a undated and unknown collection view of the Casino to Murwillumbah branch line signal box at Camira in the 1980s.

Lyndhurst railway station 1986, seen left by Australian Rail Maps, and right seen 2017 via photographer Phil Buckley.
Photographer David Nelson view of Yagobie on the Inverell branch line in late 1960s, left, and right Paul Nugent view of Border Loop signal box 1980s.

Girilambone railway station seen left 1990 by photographer Barry Trudgett and right, 2015 by Phil Buckley

Photographer Jim Leppitts view, left, of Yerrongpilly locomotive depot 1980, right photographer Lawrie Boyle view of Campbelltown yard 1962
Bombala railway station 1921, seen left, and right seen 2016 via photographer Phil Buckley.

OTHER NEWS

RAILWAY PHOTOGRAPHER NOTICE FROM ARTC – ARTC RAIL SAFETY PHOTO GUIDE

From photos/videos uploaded to various facebook groups over the last year, more and more modern day era railway enthusiasts are taking risks it has being observed accessing/walking into live/operational main line corridor areas and accessing closed off station areas along with signal boxes without permission or the awareness of what they are doing is “unsafe”.

It is known that railway agencies in NSW(such as ARTC and John Holland Rail) do watch facebook forums for breaches and combined with reporting of trespassers by train crews, it has seen there is a need for an education campaign. The result has seen ARTC release an online rail safety guide to ensure enthusiast don’t trespass or cause a problem with railway operations while taking photos. Many photographers don’t know that there are serious fines and police action if you are found inside an operational railway corridor without a proper and valid reason. See http://www.artc.com.au/library/News%20-%202014-08-09.pdf and http://www.artc.com.au/Article/Detail.aspx?p=6&np=4&id=434 for more details.

FUTURE RAILWAY STATION TOURS – COME ON BOARD!

With the above notice in mind, in the future HRSI is examining offering group tours of some of the heritage railway stations across NSW, to help like minded enthusiasts photograph the buildings and learn about why the railway stations were built and used. Tours may include northern, western and southern NSW and could be done over a weekend in some cases or a few days, depending on the level of demand and interest shown. More details will be released when planning is finalised.

Recommended links –
NSWHRSI has a large online footprint bringing you the latest heritage news and photos. View our various online publications to learn more -

* Our primary facebook page is at https://www.facebook.com/NSWHRSI for heritage railway station and infrastructure news.

* Join our sister page “NSWGR History" for past current and future NSW rail news and issues - https://www.facebook.com/groups/117001524313/
* Read our older NSWHRSI newsletter issues at https://nswrailwaystations.wordpress.com/nswhrsi-newsletters/

* Visit our rail history websites for NSW country railway stations at https://nswrailwaystations.wordpress.com and Sydney stations at http://sydneyrailwaystations.wordpress.com/

* Join NSWHRSI on Twitter at https://twitter.com/NSWHRSI

We also have 3 country rail page covering branch lines operations

Northern NSW railway branchlines page - https://www.facebook.com/northernnswrailwaybranchlines/

Western NSW railway branchlines page - https://www.facebook.com/westernnswrailwaybranchlines/

Southern NSW railway branchlines page - https://www.facebook.com/southernnswrailwaybranchlines/

HERITAGE RAILWAY STATIONS PROJECTS - A variety of NSW volunteer run heritage railway stations projects are online with websites and facebook pages. All of these projects have links to their actual website on the facebook pages to enable readers further into their projects and news. Join their facebook too if your interested.

Cowra - https://www.facebook.com/Cowrarailwaystation

Eskbank - https://www.facebook.com/EskbankRailHeritageCentre

Nimmitabel - https://www.facebook.com/nimmitabelrailway

Temora - https://www.facebook.com/groups/494316453913386

Other pages of interest

Closed and Abandoned railway lines in Australia facebook page - which covers NSW at times https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=531274093606869

Like to learn a very indepth history of the NSW railway system this link may appeal - http://www.transportheritagensw.com.au/#!thematic-history/c1jyt


NSW station name listing - http://www.ozrevenues.com/Articles/nsw-railway-station-names.html
NEXT ISSUE

Coming up in the next NSWHRSI newsletter- issue 13 in November 2017, some of our features stories will examine:

- Coolah railway branch line review.
- Garden competitions at railway stations across NSW
- Darling Harbour goods yard history
- The first Glenbrook railway station and more…..
- Plus all our regular insights to heritage stations news, developments and events around NSW.

To follow NSWHRSI click on the facebook link – https://www.facebook.com/NSWRSI. NSWHRSI can be contacted on the facebook page and welcome any stories / information or photo submissions.

TAIL END TRIANGLE PHOTO

The original timber Wingham railway station on the main north coast line in the mid 1900s. It has since being replaced with a more modern brick building in the 1980s.