NSW HERITAGE RAILWAY STATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE NEWS

WELCOME to the 15th 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 newsletter is separated into 4 core NSW regions – Northern, Western and Southern NSW and Sydney.

MAIN NEWS
Rail line closures, rail trail expansion plans and planned reopening of some branch lines is all the rage at the moment in NSW. Politicians are confusing voters when they say rail transport matters but they then take it away with the same hand.

We explore some very hot issues in the news at the moment, we also take a look back at some rail worker’s careers and the once very popular railway hotels.

Phil Buckley, NSW HRSI Editor

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Hexham railway station 1984, Garry Ware collection

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MY RAILWAY CAREER INSIGHTS By John Trew

I first started on the NSW Railways in 1954 at Wollongong as a Junior Station Assistant (JSA) and after a few months I was sent to North Wollongong where I worked in the booking office.

The photo right, is of John in his railway uniform when about 16 years old.

Wollongong railway station seen left, below (unknown photographer). An old view, left, of North Wollongong railway station (unknown photographer)

My parents move to Coledale and I was transferred to Scarborough railway station still as a Junior. (Ed: In the older days the NSW railways employed young kids in the lowest positions jobs to perform the basic and less complex tasks. As they grew older they would be given chances to be promoted to more senior roles. These roles were at times low pay, hard work and boring but it is where many railway careers started)

Scarborough railway station right, 1983 from Steve Bucton collection.

My Father who worked on the Railways in the Permanent Way which is looking after the lines. He was transferred to Sutherland, so I was transferred to Mortdale railway station where I became interested in the Signal Box there. After a few months a vacancy became available in the signal box for a telephone boy to record the trains coming in and out, which I got. After that role I was a telephone boy Hurstville Signal box. At 19 I was offered a Safe Working Assistant at Scarborough Signal Box
which not only did the signal box but also act as Shunter with the coal mine trains. You could not be a Signalman until you was 21 years old. Mortdale railway station, left Phil Buckley collection. Steve Bucton 1983 view right, of the Scarbourgh signal box.

SIGNALMAN CAREER STARTS

At 21 I was appointed 6th class Signalman at Meeks Rd Junction. I then progressed to 5th Class as it was done on seniority. In the Sydney Metro area there was a long list of other people waiting for promotion, so to jump over them quicker and move up the career path in order to progress, I had to go away to Country NSW.

The photo right, taken by John looking out of Meeks Road Junction towards the main line from Tempe to City.

I was offered 5th Class at Moss Vale, Casino or Orange signal boxes, so I gave my preference in this order Casino, Orange and Moss Vale. I lost out on Casino and went to Orange signal box operations where I stayed for 2 years.

A view of John at Grong Grong railway station signal levers in the 1960s. Grong Grong railway station seen 1983 (Australian Rail Maps)
I enjoyed those years there and learnt a lot. The busiest time of all shifts was in the afternoon when getting 308 the meat express ready. This had to leave before the Central West Daylight Express and the Silver City Comet.

While there at Orange, I started to see the transition from steam to diesel locomotive power, which in one way was sad but that’s progress.

Orange signal box, right. Phil Buckley collection.

Johns views inside the former operational Orange signal box.

I was offered 4th Class at Rockdale which I took later because I had jumped over so many on the seniority list by going to the Country and coming back.

Rockdale signal box, right, Phil Buckley photo.

In 1966 at only 28 years old I was appointed 3rd Class Signalman which was a holiday roster between Mortdale and Hurstville Signal Boxes.

As the Signalmen at these 2 signal boxes wanted the overtime, I mainly ended up in other signal boxes such as Thirroul, North Sutherland, Erskineville, Wells Street, Campbelltown, Epping, Chullora, Warwick Farm Racecourse Signal Box, North Strathfield, Illawarra Junction, Balmain Road and Union Street.
END OF RAIL CAREER

There was numerous other signalman positions but I declined as they was permanent and there was a long way to retire. In 1973 I resigned from the NSW Railways as I could see that the signalman was going to be made redundant as Computerised Train Control (CTC) signaling was coming of age. I had a great time and made many friends and it was a great experience.

THE FIRST ORIGINAL GLENBROOK RAILWAY STATION courtesy of https://www.facebook.co/BanTheBund

The Blue Mountain railway line consisting of a single track main line opened in 1867 which meandered through the locality known as Glenbrook. At this time there was a small siding opened called ‘Water Tank’. This was where a pipeline brought water from the nearby Glenbrook Lagoon to a storage tank beside the line from which the steam locomotives could be topped up. The Water Tank siding was renamed Wascoe's Siding in 1870 after a nearby roadside inn. As rail travel grew in the Blue Mountains, this siding grew into a passenger railway station in 1877. By 1878 it was again renamed as Brookdale. A year later in 1879 another renaming saw this changed to Glenbrook. The station was placed in the middle of the town and the railway corridor route to get to the town saw the use of the historic Lapstone Zig Zag. Shown in red in the middle of the map at below right.
As the railway system expanded and more trains needed to use the Blue Mountain line, the Lapstone Zig Zag reached operational capacity and a new route over the mountain was planned. This resulted in the Lapstone Zig Zag being bypassed and a deviation route to the south of Glenbrook being built. This created the need for a new railway station. Here is a newspaper report from 1911 covering the deviation works which employed 1,100 workers. In 1926-7, a monument was erected commemorating the realignment of the Great Western Highway plus another one using one of the signs used on the original Glenbrook railway station platform. They were erected on the northern side of the highway in the area which is now a nature reserve. There are interesting buildings in the area such as Glenbrooks first Public School, the first School of Arts and the Stations Masters-House.
After the old Glenbrook Station closed in 1913, the remains of this railway site are now mainly beneath the Great Western Highway ....... as can be seen in the photo below.
DARLING HARBOUR RAILWAY GOODS YARD HISTORY OVERVIEW

When Sydney’s first railway opened in way back in 1855 it included a single track branch line to Darling Harbour. A railway yard was constructed situated at the Cockle Bay end of the Ultimo/Pyrmont suburb. This enabled goods to be shipped around Australia and exported to the world via sailing ships. It was also used to offload imports into Sydney. With rapid growth in railway system use and network expansion across NSW by 1874, the Darling Harbour railway goods yard was extended on reclaimed land and jutted out further into the bay. By 1891 with even more expansion of goods movement around NSW/Australia and globally, all outwards goods traffic was being dispatched from Darling Harbour. Right, Darling Harbour goods yard with Town Hall in background 1883-1885 (State Library of NSW).

Darling Harbour goods yard as seen, left, in 1900 (Powerhouse museum collection). Darling Harbour seen right, early 1900s. (Wiki) Darling Harbour goods yard as seen, left, in 1900 (Powerhouse museum collection). Darling Harbour seen right, early 1900s (Wiki).
Further expansion was undertaken in the late 1910s with the building of a new goods shed in the middle of the yard. Darling Harbour goods, right, shed being built in the early 1919.


Darling Harbour goods yard seen, left, at top right in 1937. (Royal Australian Historical Society). Darling Harbour Goods Yard seen right, at top in 1934 view of Sydney. (Wiki)


Darling Harbour 1950s by Adam Forrest Grant. http://blogs.abc.net.au/.a/6a00e0097e4e688833019aff159d08970d-pi

Darling Harbour goods yard seen 1950 - http://1.bp.blogspot.com/-qmyMzUmU6PU/VLIPBOu-tcj/AAAAAAAAB1mg/PP6zdrzBRq4/s1600/Darling%2BH Harbour%2BSydney%2B1950s.JPG

At its peak use in the early 1960s the Darling Harbour Goods Yard covered an area of 56 acres (22 hectares). There was over 50km of track to move 13,500 trains a year. The urban renewal of Darling Harbour in late 1970s and accelerating in the 1980s, it became time for the closing of such a Goods Yard so close to the CBD. The last goods train departed Darling Harbour in 1984. By the 1990s the entire yard had vanished under the new Darling Harbour precinct and there were only limited track remains left to the northern end. Nowadays this limited track corridor sees the popular light rail traverse it instead.

Darling Harbour as seen in 1977 by Philip Vergis.
FETTLER GANG INSIGHTS

NSW HRSI was sent a message in 2017 which had attached some fascinating fettler information. August Canoon started with the NSW railways in 1925 as a Horse Driver and progressed to Labourer then Ganger duties over a period of almost 32 yrs. He rotated through fettling and ganger duties. Gus retired from rail fettler work 1956. He was given the certificate of service below and featured in a newspaper story too.

![Certificate of Service](image)

DID YOU KNOW?


RAILWAY HOTELS ACROSS NSW

With the coming of the rail into rural NSW and as the network expanded in the 1860s, many towns started to build hotels near the railway stations to cater for people who needed food and accommodation during their trip. Over the next 60 years + many hotels were built across NSW from small to ones like Culcairn’s 70 rooms. The hotels followed the expansion of the NSW railway main line network and branch lines. As rail travel in the 1800s boomed former busy coach road wayside inns dried up. At the railway junctions, villages and towns like Koorawatha, Parkes, Hornsby, Orange, Goulburn etc hotels were needed because passengers required some form of accommodation during journey breaks. This brought us new hotels located either next to or nearby railway stations. Eventually at the peak of rail travel across NSW in the 1950-60s, nearly every NSW rail town had some form of hotel or rail accommodation near the station. Some with large numbers of bedrooms available.

A traveler could roam NSW from north to west to south and pass through towns large or small and stay at railway motels. The names for the railway hotels varied from location to location but most adopted Railway Hotel, Junction or, if at end of the line locations, Terminus designations. It is observed that it was largely due to the commercial traveler’s desire to roam NSW that general hotel service and living standards were improved in the ongoing battle for clientele. As rail travel grew more and more elaborate hotel designs were opened. They became more diverse in services offered and rooms available. Some hotel buildings had the public bar alongside smoking rooms, billiard rooms, writing rooms and large dining rooms.

Sadly, with the increased usage of the motor car and buses from the 1960s onwards, railway based accommodation and associated clientele for many hotel declined. However, nowadays people do seek out country holidays and trips around NSW and many Railway Hotels still survive as a tourism destination. Recently NSWHRSI was told how a heritage train visited Ariah Park and around 130 people swarmed into the Ariah Park hotel for a meal. This shows rail travel and rail heritage operations can easily boost rural NSW locations and provide some support in job security. In this article we intend to showcase a small, small selection of some of the vast number of demolished and surviving railway hotels and their history where possible.

Nyngan - A pub existed on the site since 1865 with a new hotel built in 1884 after a fire. Stables and blacksmiths were once located in the rear of the hotel. Sadly this hotel was again burnt out in late 2000 and since then it understood to have remained closed. The nearby railway station still stands but doesn’t see regular passenger traffic anymore.

Wingen - It is estimated that the Durham hotel has existed since the late 1800s. It was once busy with a railway station located nearby. It nowadays has traffic from passing drivers. The nearby railway station has been demolished for many years.
**Strathfield** - Built after the end of World War I period, the Strathfield Hotel has been a family business for over 90 years. In 2008 it was taken over by a Brian Whelan who invested $3m in upgrading the pub/hotel. It is located 15metres north of the railway station.

**Culcairn** - Built in since 1891, it was built as the town grew from passing rail traffic. The original hotel building was expanded in 1910 to include over 70 rooms, horse stables, coach house with extensive gardens within the site. The hotel saw the need to cater for people who would drive their coach or horse to Culcairn, stable it and then catch the train to either Sydney or Melbourne. Interestingly in 1909 it had the town’s first electricity supply. For a number of years the Culcairn Hotel was the largest hotel between Sydney and Melbourne. It is west of the station.

**Grenfell** – 104 years old this hotel has stood the test of time. The original Grenfell Railway Hotel was built in 1879 licensed to Ellen Rich. New owners changed the name in 1883 to The Osborne Hotel. With expansion of the railway lines in NSW, nearby Koorawatha was to be a junction connecting Grenfell. With this planned railway coming to Grenfell the hotel name was changed to The Railway Hotel in 1900. The existing hotel was built in 1914 by Joseph Thompson. Included in the works was the adjoining shops that run along Main Street. This hotel was famous for being used in the 1980s ABC Australian Film “1915” starring Sigrid Thornton.

**Muswellbrook** - The Muswellbrook railway hotel was established in 1882 to cater for needs of the local residents and passing traffic and may have been a staging post for Cobb & Co. In 2011 it was renovated with historical aspects kept intact as much as possible. In 2015 the hotel is reported to have gained a former NSWGR guards van - [https://www.muswellbrookchronicle.com.au/story/3047875/railway-hotel-on-the-right-track/](https://www.muswellbrookchronicle.com.au/story/3047875/railway-hotel-on-the-right-track/)
Murrurundi – This hotel is believed to have opened in the early 1900s located near the railway station. It still serves the local residents and travelers.

Goulburn – The Southern Railway Hotel, formerly called the Coolavin Hotel, built in 1872, it is located nearly opposite the railway station. This is what some suggest is a traditional pub with a rich history and full of character.

Spring Hill - The current Railway Hotel was opened in 1911 and this replaced the Railway Arms Hotel which had been located next door. With the railway station nearby much business was created. The hotel was renamed at some point as “Whistle Stop Tavern” and still provides bar, bistro, entertainment and accommodation. It is reported to have been known as the “Whistlestop Tavern” until 2009/10, when the business name was changed back to the more obvious associated name of “Railway Hotel”. The Spring Hill railway station was sadly demolished in the 1980s.

Millthorpe – The arrival of the railway in the Orange region 1877 did much to boost the local economy. The Railway Hotel was built in 1884 just a few metres walk from the railway station. The station at Millthorpe was completed in 1886 which meant more shops built to cater for the business flowing into the town. The hotel still offers accommodation and bistro meals. The view below shows the Millthorpe railway station in the background with the hotel in the middle. More on Millthorpe’s railway history can be seen at http://www.arhsnsw.com.au/lunchclubnotes/1709%20Central%20West/N-%20Millthorpe.pdf

Right, an undated view of the Millthorpe hotel and railway station.
**Parkes** - The Railway Hotel is located to the east of the railway station and was established in 1895 however the building as it stands today was established in 1915. The current Railway Hotel operates 7 days a week from 10am until late. They don’t have accommodation but provide good food and drinks.

**Kempsey** – The Railway Hotel, built in 1885 (with additions in 1922), is one of the Kempsey CBD’s original buildings. The 132 year old building retains its olden days style charm. It was mothballed until 2016 when it was brought and converted to mostly permanent accommodation for locals. A recent ABC story covered the reuse of the local railway hotel - http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-02-07/historic-railway-hotel-helps-people-who-need-second-chance/9400794

**Hornsby** – The original federation era Hornsby Railway Hotel was built in 1888 by Martin Hayden opposite the railway station catering for the Hornsby community and regional travelers. The hotel has lost some of its building features and architecture over the years but is still very much a local hotel with decent meals.

Below left, an undated early 1900s photo showing the hotel, right, what could be a 1940s views of the hotel from Hornsby Shire Recollect website. The railway garden can be seen in the foreground. Right a 1950s view of the hotel.
Redfern – 3 hotels were built to the east of the station over 90 years. None survived the as the NSW railway station grew more and more busy. The hotels thrived for 87 years due to good positioning and catering for the needs of thirsty locals. The first pub constructed in 1861 known as the Darlington Inn, operated at the south-west corner of what is today Wells and Rosehill Streets. It served the inner south Sydney area of Redfern population and industry workers. The pub's name was changed to the Bedford Hotel in 1880, just before the opening of a new Eveleigh (later Redfern) railway station in 1885. This change brought more foot traffic to the pub as it a few metres walking distance of the new railway platforms. By the 1890s the Bedford Hotel had grown into a 2 level brick building.

Above right photo: The pub in 1893. Australian, Town and Country Journal

In 1903 the pub underwent a rebuild and transformed with slate a roofed, three storey brick building encompassing 16 rooms and offices. Intriguingly this rebuilt pub would only last a few years and by 1911 it was demolished as the NSWGR then acquired more land at Redfern station to expand east and build more platforms 6 to 8. The third creation of the Bedford Hotel was built on land further east of the original hotel. This was facing onto Gibson Street in 1911.

Right, The Bedford Hotel seen in 1930. Photo: Noel Butlin Archives, Australian National University.

As the NSW railway system expand even further in size, this affected Redfern again and the station had to be developed further east again with the addition of 2 more railway platforms – nine and 10 created in the 1950s. The land for the railway expansion was resumed by the Railway Department. This further expansion led to the end of the Bedford Hotel. The hotel had nowhere else to go and was forced to close in 1952. Today part of the last building site of the Bedford Hotel, now known as Lawson Square, is found at the corner of Gibson and Lawson Streets, Redfern.

Narrandera – This Railway Hotel was erected in 1878 in anticipation of the upcoming rail line running along the then main street. This railway corridor location did not eventuate and the Railway Hotel was renamed as the Narrandera Hotel and known as the Top Pub. At one time the Railway Hotel boasted: "18 public bedrooms and 16 horse stables. Narrandera in the late 1800s saw large development with many hotels built. Shearers used the hotels as they moved from job to job along with rail construction workers. There were 22 hotels in the town at one point.

We hope this short feature article will inspire some of readers to maybe travel to parts of NSW to see the many railway hotels/pubs, the heritage town buildings... along with heritage railway stations. Travelling helps to
inject money into rural NSW and more importantly sustain jobs in country NSW. So consider going bush for a bit and you will, like the NSWHRSI editor, eventually see much of NSW as you keep going back out into the country. If you would like to learn more about NSW railway hotels, there is a book covering the topic available at http://railwayhotelsofaustralia.com.au/books/railway-hotels-nsw/

GOULBURN RAILWAY SIGNAL COLLECTION

Would you like to visit a railway museum that is full of fascinating railway signal heritage items only 2.5hrs south of Sydney? Now you can thanks to the generosity of the Goulburn railway Signal Collection team. Located on Platform 1 at Goulburn rail station it is only visited by prior appointment. Tourists can organise to visit any morning except a Sunday. If keen please call Phil on 0400 575 297. Entry is by donation. You will need around 45mins to inspect in detail the wonderful and rare collection. Below are some photos of the collection and what you can expect to see.
NSW NEWS

Rail trail “fever” is spreading across NSW like an uncontained virus as many Liberal, ALP and National politicians abandon their country voters requests for railway corridors to be reused for rail operations... and instead pour massive amounts of capital funding into rail trails. Rail trails program and organisations appear to wish, in the majority of cases, to rip up unused railway lines and remove all rail infrastructure in order to produce a flat surface. This is then crafted into, for NSW at least, a rather unknown and unproven scheme which favours bicycle riders, walkers and horse riders who then randomly use a railway formation.

Across many country towns in NSW there is low interest in using such corridors. Many people are instead wanting their railway services returned for passenger and freight. Seemingly all three levels of government are ignoring such transport requests. I suggest that it will take a set of serious road crashes and loss of life before any NSW political party, and their associated politicians, will reopen a closed country railway line to passenger transport reuse.

NORTHERN NSW NEWS

ARIMDALE RAIL BRIDGE

The rail bridge just a few hundred metres north of Armidale station has been hit by more trucks in the past few years. The most recent was in March 2018 which has caused more community debate. In March 2018 a nearby bus operator and car yard dealer are demanding the bridge come down. Being business owner the NSW Government is more likely to listen to them than the community north of Armidale but that would then mean if the bridge was removed (like happened a few years ago in Cowra, the town’s rail bridges were removed) no future railway line north of Armidale could be easily reinstated thus a less chances of future tourism and rail traffic to Guyra, Tenterfield etc. See more at http://www.armidaleexpress.com.au/story/5296048/another-truck-bites-the-duct-business-owners-demand-change/?cs=471
CASINO TO MURWILLUMBAH RAILWAY BRANCH LINE (FORMER)

This former line is currently hotly debated by pro and con camps for either reinstating a railway service or proceeding ahead with mass rail trail conversions. The section from Murwillumbah south to Crabbs Creek is so far likely to be converted into a rail trail with over $23million allocated already.

In March 2018 the NSW HRSI Editor was sent a reply to a query about the currently closed north coast branch line and in the reply the NSW Government has said that, for a host of reasons, the Casino to Murwillumbah line will never reopen. Please see the letter below detailing the NSW Government actions.

Dear Mr Buckley

Thank you for your correspondence to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure about the Casino to Murwillumbah rail line. The Minister asked me to respond on his behalf.

I note your comments, however, there are no plans to reopen this rail line as studies completed by successive governments have found it would not meet current or future transport needs. The last study completed in 2013 included a thorough engineering examination that concluded the infrastructure has deteriorated significantly.

As you may be aware, the Minister recently announced a suite of public transport initiatives to improve connectivity in the North Coast region. Transport for NSW is also working on a strategic business case for a mass transit solution for Tweed Heads, connecting south-east Queensland and northern NSW including the Gold Coast Airport and new developments at Cobaki Lakes. This recognises this area as one of the fastest growing in NSW, and a need to better connect the Tweed to south-eastern Queensland.

The government has also delivered a new Byron Bay to Lismore bus service to better connect these major centres, as well as Ballina and Lennox Head and provide improved access to Lismore Hospital and Southern Cross University.

In addition, on 14 August 2017, the government announced it would replace the entire regional diesel train fleet, including the XPT, XPLORER and Endeavour sets. This will significantly improve regional public transport and deliver customers with unprecedented levels of comfort, reliability and reduced journey times. When the new fleet is delivered, we will have the opportunity to review the regional rail timetable, including services to the North Coast at Casino.

Thank you for taking the time to write.

Yours sincerely

Mark Coure MP
Parliamentary Secretary for Transport and Infrastructure

11/3/2018
One statement shown below, raised the curiosity of many people as it shows what a railway line provides when good, locally suitable services are run -

I note your comments, however, there are no plans to reopen this rail line as studies completed by successive governments have found it would not meet current or future transport needs. The last study completed in 2013 included a thorough engineering examination that concluded the infrastructure has deteriorated significantly.

The NSW Government's claim that this line cannot meet current or future transport needs is very curious considering the amount of ever increasing road traffic in the regions that the line passes through. Many local towns such as Byron Bay, Mullumbimby, Bangalow and Murwillumbah are chaos for road users. A public transport rail based system to remove the heavily congested road traffic would be a positive.

In March 2018 plans were revealed by Byron Bay Council for some form of a review of the local railway corridor. What has gained some people’s interest is that this line has not officially been closed down and withdrawn by NSW Parliament. Why then is a council undertaking such activities which seem to focus on the end result of even more rail trails? The known tender details are -

“Tender Title: Multi Use of Byron Shire Rail Corridor

Tender Description: Following the tabling of a Mayoral Minute at the 15 December 2016 Ordinary Meeting, Byron Shire Council resolved 16-670 to support a multiple public transport and active transport use of the rail corridor within the shire, including public transport provision in conjunction with a walking and cycling path where feasible.”
Accordingly Council is seeking quotations from those suitably qualified to complete the following studies as outlined within the Request for Expressions of Interest, which is specifically in regard to the rail corridor within Byron shire only;

- State and Use of Corridor Report (i.e. an engineering assessment of the rail corridor);
- Economic and Social Feasibility Study; and
- Social Impact Assessment.

The scope of works required to complete both are detailed within the documentation. To ensure credibility of this study, a detailed assessment of the condition of the existing rail corridor and track will be required, including evidence within the report.

Quotes MUST be provided for undertaking the assessment for each of the following geographic links:

- Yelgun to Billinudgel
- Billinudgel to Mullumbimby
- Mullumbimby to Byron Bay
- Byron Bay to Bangalow (Rifle Range Road)

Other areas for consideration are:

- Tyagarah (Pacific Highway) to Blues Festival site (i.e. outside of the rail corridor)
- Within the Billinudgel section a Yelgun stop or line spur and/or connection onto North Byron Parklands (i.e. outside of the rail corridor)
- Stop at Ewingsdale accessing The Farm / The Byron Hospital and other additional stops in high residential areas"

GLENREAGH RAILWAY STATION

In late May 2018 local Glenreagh people will have a meeting to form a committee to develop plans to restore and preserve the station.

MANILLA RAILWAY BRIDGE

During March 2018, John Holland Rail / NSW Government came under attack from a Tamworth MP who was unhappy with the lack of much needed repairs to the Manilla railway bridge. See more at http://www.northerndailyleader.com.au/story/5265419/wake-up-to-yourselves-mp-blasts-john-holland-over-manilla-show-mess/?cs=159

MURWILLUMBAH RAILWAY STATION

In February 2018 news reports stated that the NSW Premier and Cabinet were to shortly enact legislation to convert the Crabb’s Creek to Murwillumbah section of the former railway line into a rail trail. See more at https://www.facebook.com/Prime7NewsNorthCoast/videos/2029876703696102/?hc_ref=ARR7-fhfObKf54UpkSOiqADTO72kRzCCTyzgpsidDznUL2BaCTFnBwY4C75Lx0TwcL4. See this news report also for more information on what is happening https://www.northernstar.com.au/news/rail-trail-is-given-the-green-light/3325371/#.WNQonNbkja0o.facebook
NEWCASTLE RAILWAY STATION

In February 2018, Revitalising Newcastle started to cut back Newcastle railway station platform according to the post at this page and it seems the platform sections will be removed - https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1783057528381532&set=gm.1847381428620019&type=3&theater &ifg=1.

OLD CASINO RAILWAY STATION

From observations he did in a recent visit, Barry Trudgett informs NSWHRSI that he believes that the Old Casino railway station has suffered severe termite damage. A wall of the waiting room seems to have been attacked badly by termites. On left is an October 2015 view by Phil Buckley with no damage and right, is an April 2018 view of the station waiting room wall showing the decline in this area with termite damage.

Barry supplied this photo showing more damage.

SINGLETON RAILWAY BRIDGE

In March 2018 an upgrade to the railway bridge over the road running north of Singleton was announced. Under the program a new bridge, widening of the road and new track upgrade will take place. See more at https://www.singletonargus.com.au/story/5291424/long-awaited-upgrade-to-hole-in-the-wall/
WEST TAMWORTH RAILWAY STATION

On 13 February 2018 Tamworth Regional Councillors voted to **reject** the request from John Holland Rail / NSW Government request to demolish Tamworth's historical 130 year+ old first railway station which is located at West Tamworth. All councillors voted in favour to save the railway station. This is a great outcome for NSW rail preservation and history. The councillors are going to ask the NSW Government to promise that they will provide funds to restore the railway station back to a usable status.

WESTERN NSW NEWS

BOGAN GATE RAILWAY STATION

Recently NSWHSRI revisited Bogan Gate railway station in far west NSW. On a recent train trip to Broken Hill that we thought the station looked in a better condition and decided to investigate further. Compared to the last on the ground inspection, back on a wet July 2016 visit to the town, the heritage timber railway station building is now looking better. The building is looks cleaner - possibly a deep clean was undertaken or maybe a new paint coat on the building was done. We noted a repaint of doors. Although the station building looks better, the signal box, station sign and shed are decaying paint wise and need further restoration funds to be made available to fix up this station. As it is on an ARTC leased line, we understand that this means it is now outside the NSW Government control (despite being in NSW) and acquiring additional funding for any future site improvements will be possibly challenging. At the moment a local arts/crafts group lease the station for weekend events and keep the station looking good under their care.

COWRA RAILWAY DEPOT

Over the last few months some work has been undertaken to repair the sleepers in the yard around the Cowra railway depot. See some of the work at https://www.facebook.com/fisherbus/posts/1825253690864030.

DUNEDOO RAILWAY STATION

NSWHRSI has been made aware that a fence line has been installed by ARTC at the Dunedoo railway yard. ARTC has fenced off the station yard to limit access from the nearby community park and parking bay by people, who would appear to just walk into the railway yard. Increased regulation and WHS requirements made such a move essential. ARTC have left a small gate or unfenced area for people to still access the station. Until this was fenced it was possibly the only railway station in central NSW that had an operational railway line next to a community area with no fence in the rail corridor. The photos below taken over the last few years, show the view before the fence has gone in.
GRENFELL RAILWAY YARD

In early February 2018 the Grenfell railway water tank totally collapsed and resulted in a final sad wipe out one of the town’s connection to its railway history. From the opening, until the demise of steam, there were two locations on the Cowra branchline where locomotives could obtain water, Koorawatha and Grenfell. The stand at Grenfell was supplied from a purpose-built dam some 1.6 km away. The dam, Company Dam, still remains and now supplies irrigation water to a local sporting ground.

In June 2014 the water tank had no fencing around it but sometime afterwards a fence was built to keep people away. Right, Deidre Carroll photo.

Scott Tucker’s January 2018 view, left, of the water tank before it fell down. You can see the serious lean and the hazard it posed over the next few weeks. Deidre Carroll took the (right) photo only 2 days before the collapse. Note the severe angle of the rear timber beam and others beginning to fail.

Sadly the water tank at the railway yard collapsed at 5:10pm on the 9th of February, 2018. Deidre heard it collapse and was on the scene shortly afterwards and took these views.
Deidre took further close up photos showing the utter destruction.
The local Grenfell newspaper right, used photos from Deidre to put on the front page to inform the locals of the collapse.
KANDOS RAILWAY STATION

In mid February 2018 Robyne Ridge visited Kandos to inspect the changes to the station prior to the extension to Rylstone being reopened.

MOUNT VICTORIA RAILWAY STATION

Mt Victoria railway station has a special 150th anniversary exhibition on for a few months with various historical displays and information. See more at https://www.facebook.com/MountVictoriaMuseum/photos/a.324765364293960.62934.323497684420728/1396004347170051/?type=3&theater
OBERON RAILWAY STATION

Oberon Council is reported to have short listed an Expression of Interest, from the volunteers who maintain the Oberon railway station, for funding of $133,000.00 to assist in the rebuilding of the Oberon Station platform. Time will tell if Oberon’s platform project gains a boost in funds.

SILVERTON RAILWAY STATION

In NSW but of a different rail gauge this is worth including in our news. In March 2018 plans have been released by the local MP proposing the reopening the former narrow gauge Broken Hill to Silverton tram line as a tourist train line. See more at https://www.facebook.com/SCNewsSA/videos/1520942218004404/?hc_ref=ARTtNowwcI3O1ypxLJvhBKXux-28ZNAtnU2vLBJDCq9XO2c2OKHvuvxk_EKW-MdTRE48

VALLEY HEIGHTS LOCMOTIVE DEPOT

From February to March 2018 the Valley Heights locomotive depot underwent major reworks of tracks, asphalt and repairs to the forecourt. The major works were undertaken and deemed necessary for the safety of the museum’s workers and visitors. The project delivered a range of improvements which included:

- removing existing asphalt surface after 40 years of use,
- lifting the rails and timber sleepers that extend into the Roundhouse,
- improve the surface and reduce the risk of injury, along with increased accessibility for those who have mobility constraints,
- reinstalling access from the turntable where the rails are currently missing so that enlarging the undercover storage space for rail exhibits can be undertaken.

It was decided that once the new sleepers were in place a new concrete surface was to be laid. The concrete was coloured and textured in order to match the existing asphalt surface.

Photos 2013, Phil Buckley.
SOUTHERN NSW NEWS

BATLOW RAILWAY YARD

During February 2018 work started on a new fire station on the north eastern end of the former railway yard. Andrew Lawson supplied this photo. The work activity is occurring along Mill Road. The former Batlow station was located to the right of the photo.

COOMA RAILWAY YARD

In March 2018 the Cooma Monaro Railway organisation announced on their facebook page the following news regarding an issue they have with site operations – “Cooma Monaro Railway would like to take this opportunity to inform you of the outcome of the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) requirement for a report on historic unapproved work/s undertaken within the Cooma railway precinct. The works in question were undertaken prior to 2014.

It is regrettable that CMR must inform you that as a result of unapproved works being undertaken on and in the vicinity of the railway institute building, CMR have been issued an official warning notice from OEH advising that alterations and additions made were unapproved and will remain unapproved indefinitely and that the work completed breached the Heritage Act 1977. Furthermore, OEH requires CMR to engage a Heritage Consultant to prepare a Statement of Heritage Impact (SoHI), a schedule of works to remediate the unapproved alterations and seek an appropriate adaptive reuse of the railway institute building and tennis courts. The SoHI and works schedule must be approved by OEH before any remediation work can be completed. OEH reserves the right to seek a court order against CMR and may also commence criminal proceedings for breaches of the Heritage Act. The maximum penalty for breaches to the Heritage Act is in excess of $1,000,000.00.

A copy of the OEH warning letter can be read on the CMR noticeboard located at the Cooma station. As part of CMR’s contractual obligations with THNSW, CMR have notified THNSW of the OEH warning letter and in response, Andrew Moritz, THNSW CEO has formally acknowledged the notification and furthermore required CMR to prepare and submit an action plan to address all items identified by OEH. Copies of the THNSW correspondence and CMR’s action plan are available on the CMR noticeboard located at the Cooma station.

Members and Friends of CMR, please be reassured, that the current CMR Board takes this matter very seriously and is working closely with the Office of the Environment and Heritage, Transport Heritage NSW and the Heritage consultant to ensure that we complete the remediation work as soon as possible and prevent any further action being taken by OEH. In addition, the Board will be reviewing CMR’s internal processes to ensure that no further unapproved work is undertaken into the future.”
DEMONDRILLE TO YOUNG RAILWAY LINE – BREAKING NEWS

After waiting close to 7 months with no detailed update regarding why the 2016 announcement for reopening of the railway line from Demondrille to Maimuru, near Young, had not happened as promised by former Roads and Freight Minister Duncan Gay....NSWHRSI finally, yes, finally had an acknowledgement and a vague update from the NSW Government in late April 2018. We were advised literally as we were going to publication - that there are plans underway (for quite some time) to reactivate the entire closed railway branch line from Demondrille – Cowra – Blayney. We were advised that “many people” are working to make this change happen but this update we received in still didn’t address the late 2017 query we initially put to the NSW Govt about why the Demondrille to Young section had not being opened in August 2017 as stated by Duncan.

We are still also waiting for any public announcement to allow the locals in the region to know of this instead of heritage railway enthusiasts. We think the Demondrille to Blayney railway line’s reopening may become a key election item and much focus will be put onto this in the next NSW state election, which is due in 2019.

GOULBURN TO CROOKWELL BRANCH LINE

In mid February 2018 the DPC was in Goulburn to assess the closing down plans of the Goulburn to Crookwell line to allow for conversion into a rail trail. They have also assessed other parts of the state from Guyra in the north down to southern NSW following requests for rail trail approvals along suspended railway branch lines. https://www.crookwellgazette.com.au/story/5223622/workshop-for-rail-trail-development/?cs=621. A massive turn out to the forum in Goulburn took place - http://www.goulburnpost.com.au/story/5238313/huge-turnout-to-rail-trail-forum/

HARDEN RAILWAY STATION

In February 2018, Wendy Maxwell made NSWHRSI aware of the poor condition of Harden railway station with bird poo found in many areas on the northern/western side of the station. The town side is much cleaner. “I regularly go over to the station to put my mum on the Melbourne to Sydney train. This line is on the far side of the station, out of the public eye. The front of the station (Sydney to Melbourne line) is clean and free of all pigeon excrement etc. It is the rear of the station that is very poor shape. It is terrible for the travellers, visitors and residents of Harden. The rooms in the station and toilets are open access and are also in a very poor state. It is mainly due to the pigeons and not being regularly maintained for cleanliness”. As a result of NSWHRSI sharing this news online, we were advised that the Area manager for Harden railway station would be getting the contracted cleaning service to fix this up ASAP. The question has to be asked why is the town side clean and the country side filthy?
LADYSMITH RAILWAY STATION

In mid February 2018 up to 9 tonnes of timber railway sleepers were stolen from the volunteer run railway organisation who maintain and run Ladysmith railway station. A white ute was seen in the vicinity at the station on the day of the robbery. See news report at https://www.facebook.com/WINNewsRiverina/videos/1620761334677668/?hc_ref=ARTsH6hUduTWtuijr5hSOof1Y11CtauK2W5Gktf_XOYQzDE168FukZzoWsbYSTsvU4WtM&fref=gs&dti=117001524313&hc_location=group

NIMMITABEL RAILWAY STATION

During February NSWHRSI visited Nimmitabel railway station which is nowadays reused by the Nimmitabel Mens' Shed. While there we saw much work had been achieved since our last visit in 2015. New rooms are being created with lining work underway in the main station room. Further work in the new kitchen will soon take place.

TUMUT RAILWAY STATION

Mid February 2018 saw the station precinct host a local business market. Andrew Lawson photo.

TUMUT TO BATLOW RAIL TRAIL CONVERSION NEWS

It seems the plan to convert the currently non-operational Tumut to Batlow railway line into another "rail trail" is now moving into next phase with what is reported to be a destination management plan project which has been put on public display by the Snowy Valleys Council. The document can be seen at: http://www.snowyvalleys.nsw.gov.au/Have-Your-Say/Snowy-Valleys-Destination-Management-Plan . If you would like to voice your support in keeping the Tumut to Batlow railway line intact and in public hands and not converting to a rail trail, please take a few minutes and email the SNVC at SV2028@snowyvalleys.nsw.gov.au .

You will need to email the council within the next 2 weeks to ensure your statements are put on the file. If this line is converted to a rail trail it will never again become a rail line in the future, despite the claims of rail trail supporters suggesting a reconversion back to rail being possible.
SYDNEY REGION

CENTRAL RAILWAY STATION

March 2018 saw the NSW Government publicly unveil plans for the “Metroisation” of Central railway station. According to artist impressions of the planned changes a white massive archway will encompass the station’s eastern end of this historical building, removing the clear heritage structure lines. Shown below are public Sydney Metro / NSW Govt artworks of the changes. According to the artist renditions changes to the platform awnings also seem to be likely. See more at http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-03-07/sydney-trains-chaos-fears-as-central-station-prepares-for-revamp/9522736

EVELEIGH RAILWAY WORKSHOPS

In early February 2018 a small number of stakeholders from various heritage enthusiast groups, blacksmithing, state heritage organisations and government departments and including myself, were invited to attend a meeting chaired by Mirvac who now own the historic Eveleigh Workshops, renamed as the ATP.

The editor of NSWHRSI, Phil Buckley, was very lucky to be one of the few external stakeholders to be attend the meeting. Other attendees included government departments, heritage organisations and heritage specialists.
The external stakeholders involvement in the meeting was to provide Mirvac and their design team with various insights to how Mirvac might meet external stakeholder’s expectations and concepts in their future plans.

We want to make Mirvac aware that the Eveleigh workshop site is able to expand under Mirvac plans of accommodating new tenants but critically, Mirvac must ensure heritage is retained along with telling the bigger historical story of why Eveleigh was built.

Overall I spent around 2-3hrs listening to other people's ideas, helping to devise key marketing concepts for the various areas. In my case, I tried to address what I thought were the main “wishes” coming from the general heritage and railway enthusiast/tourist market. We are concerned with what we felt was missing from Mirvac’s overview of Eveleigh. Indeed I would argue that inner Sydney needs a rail museum which should be included into the ATP. This could work well in with Mirvac's plans to make money if they were willing to visualise this.
I also pointed out how large model displays showing the change at Eveleigh from the 1800s to 1900s to 2000s could add significant visual benefits to help ensure people knew what had existed and had been demolished. I am very passionate about ensuring that the blacksmithing operation is kept alive, as this is the last operational aspect of the workshop site and dates back to the 1800s. I expressed my concerns that this should be retained as a major drawcard for the ATP in rail and heritage tourism terms.

We left the meeting with some ideas for the Mirvac team and the designers of the ATP site to think about. Some members of the team were keen to examine in more detail some of the good ideas the meeting had generated. NSWHRSI hopes to provide further updates on the heritage aspects of the ATP revision plans in the future. The meeting was then followed in the next few weeks by further community consultation sessions.
Further views of the Eveleigh model display below shows the depicted future era Eveleigh railway workshop site with the new business buildings in place.
A further follow up meeting was undertaken in April 2018 to hear updates made on the plans and what is likely to be proceeded with. The ATP consultants also listened to famous Eveleigh worker Richard Butcher’s ideas at this meeting. Thanks to the ATP Communications for the invite and we hope our input was found to be useful. ATP supplied meeting photos and PDF screen shots. Model photos by Phil Buckley.

In April 2018 located at the northern end of the Eveleigh workshops, the water tank was observed to be undergoing some repairs.
In April 2018 news broke that NSW Government rejected a plan from Google to make a new business HQ / hub at Eveleigh - https://www.smh.com.au/politics/nsw/state-government-rejects-plans-for-google-hq-in-sydney-20180417-p42a5v.html. The information was not clear but suggests the North Eveleigh was to be affected.

GORDON RAILWAY STATION
Changes to Gordon railway station appeared in the news in March 2018 regarding impacts of heritage upgrades. The plan is for Sydney Trains to widen and cover platform one, in a project that could involve removal of a 50-metre long section of established hedge on the eastern side of the station. Upset local residents rallied to protect the heritage listed Gordon railway station after they found that the works didn’t have Heritage Office approval. Residents have said that initial site works was halted after they raised concerns with Ku-ring-gai Council and the NSW Heritage Office. See more at https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/newslocal/north-shore/rail-work-halted-pending-heritage-approval/news-story/ded943a42f37a21e4f8d705d33beb114. Gordon railway station was in the news a few years ago when the station booking office lost one of its heritage ticket windows which was removed by Sydney Trains. The Heritage Office stepped in and asked for it to be reinstated.

LOFTUS RAILWAY SUBSTATION
A planned hand over of the refurbished electrical substation at Loftus to the local tram museum was delayed in March 2018. See more at http://www.theleader.com.au/story/5273037/tram-museum-addition-yet-to-open?cs=1507
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.

Mudgee railway station seen left, 1921 and right in 2011 via Phil Buckley

Photographer Greg Fitzgerald 1970 view of Merriwa railway yard and Phil Buckleys 2015 view

Photographer James Whitfield 1979 view left of Liverpool railway station right, Phil Buckley similar 2017.
Photographer Barry Trudgett provides these images of the modern era Broken Hill railway station (built late 1950s) with the left photo from 1972 by his father and the right taken by himself in 2017.

Lawson railway station on left seen late 1800s maybe and right, 2016 view by photographer Phil Buckley.

Photographer Greg Fitzgerald 1970 view, left of Ourimbah railway station and yard and a 2015 view, right by Phil Buckley showing how the old industry has disappeared.
Photographer Paul Johnson 1977 view of rarely Coolah railway station and right, Phil Buckley view in 2017. The station building is now located in Leadville and we hope to share this in an exclusive story in a future newsletter.

Photographer Rob Williams view of Liverpool railway station seen left in 1990s and right in 2017.

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 been 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/

TRAIN HOBBY PUBLICATIONS RAILWAY BOOKS

As some may know there is an excellent range of NSW railway stations and locomotive depot photos available from Train Hobby Publications in Victoria, who have over the years brought together many unique and nowadays very rare to find images of NSW railway stations before they were demolished. NSWHRSI at times works with the publishers to showcase select images for stories or articles and help to increase your awareness of what once existed in NSW. We highly recommend these fabulous all colour books as the best insight to NSW railway stations from the past years from the 1950s to the 1980s. Some of these titles may no longer be in print but most are still available to buy. If you are keen to buy.... check out http://catalog.trainhobby.com.au/ and review the title on the left-hand side menu.... for NSW titles :)

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/Cowra-Railway-Station-348015252063485/?fref=ts

Eskbank - https://www.facebook.com/EskbankRailHeritageCentre/?fref=ts

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 -


Railcorp state heritage register listings of stations and detailed information -

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

NEXT ISSUE

Coming up in our next NSWHRSI newsletter- issue 16 due August 2018, we will examine:

- Interview with Benn McNally – Beecroft railway station CSA
- Branch line review – Bombala branch line
- Railway Station review – Cootamundra railway station
- NSW heritage railway stations in 2018 – on track to what kind of future?
- 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/NSWRCSI. NSWHRSI can be contacted on the facebook page and welcome any stories / information or photo submissions.

TAIL END TRIANGLE PHOTO

Inverell railway station in 1988 from Peter Burr collection