WELCOME to the third newsletter of HRSI NSW. 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 this letter is separated into 4 core NSW regions – Northern, Western and Southern NSW and Sydney.

Phil Buckley, HRSI Admin

MAIN NEWS

It is heart warming to know that there is a growing state wide and national interest in seeing heritage buildings being saved. This has developed more so over the last few decades as slowly people begin to realise the value of keeping heritage buildings for reuse and tourism purposes. Local towns gain increased benefits as stations can be reused in ways such as museums, shops and local community facilities. These positive events have taken place despite successive NSW Govts over the last few decades, who have generally been disinterested in rural NSW heritage. Govt actions have allowed rural NSW and even inner Sydney railway stations to decay and be demolished. However it is noticed that in 2014 and 2015, a sudden increase in repainting and restoration of railway stations mostly in Sydney and in some limited regional areas. In other news, it was also thought that last year with the failure of the NSW rail trail bill in NSW Parliament, that the rail trail issue would go away but in 2015 it is now clear that the NSW Liberal Govt is pushing ahead with rail trails in north and south NSW at 2 locations.

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RAILWAY HERITAGE STATION PHOTOGRPAHER INTERVIEW WITH CHRIS STRATTON

At what age did you get interested in photography and in railways? I remember being interested in railways from about 8 years old. I’ve never been interested in photography on its own and I’m not interested in any of the technical aspects of photography. I like trains so I use a camera to take photos of them but have never seen myself as a photographer.

What attracted you to start doing railway photos and how did you go about doing this? Was it easy or challenging? I started taking railway photos as I liked trains and I was given my first camera around age 8. The photos weren’t very good as it was a cheap camera described later and I had to rely on seeing trains when I was out somewhere with my parents. I got my first bicycle at age 10 and could then ride to Wollongong station after hearing a steam loco on a tour whistle for the Gipps St level crossing.

Over what timeframe did you photo your heritage stations? I started photographing stations and other infrastructure after getting my first SLR camera in 1980 and I still photograph stations if it is one I haven’t been to before.

What type of camera and film did you use when taking photos? My first railway photos were taken with a plastic camera which used 120 B&W film, it was similar to the Diana camera [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diana_(camera)] most likely one of the variants mentioned in the article as I remember its brand was something like Adastra. My next camera was a Kodak Instamatic 25 which used colour 126 film cartridges and was a big improvement over the old camera but it was still fairly limited. I bought an Olympus OM-10 in 1980 and started serious railway photography in 1980. Around 1984 I also bought an Olympus OM-20 but it proved troublesome and a lot of slides from my trip to WA in 1985 are overexposed. I later replaced the Olympus gear with a Pentax P30N and it proved extremely reliable until I went digital and replaced it with a Pentax K100D in 2005. I started out using Kodachrome 64 with the OM-10, changed to Ektachrome 200, then back to K64 when the E200 became too expensive. I changed to Fujichrome 100 when K64 became hard to obtain.

How did you compose or arrange your photos, did you use certain angles or layout ideas? The only thing I try to do when taking a photo is not shoot into the sun. Apart from that I use the camera on auto, frame the shot and take it. I’m not artistic at all and if I attempt to take arty photos they usually don’t work out.
What was accessing railways like in the timeframe you did your photos as it is rather different in 2015. It was a lot easier in the early 1980s than it is now, especially at major stations like Wollongong and Gosford to name two. There weren't any fences in the way and, as long as you didn't wander onto the tracks, you could pretty much go where you wanted. At depots like Port Kembla, Delec and Lithgow you could ask permission and usually be allowed access to take photos after signing in. This didn't apply in Queensland though, only New South Wales. Away from the major centres on the east coast access hasn't really changed, but there is less to photograph now.

What do you think is your top 3 favourite railway station photos? It is hard to pick 3 out of the many I have taken but I like Couridjah, Berry and Albury.

Have you done other photography besides railways? Apart from the usual holiday and family photos I mainly photographed railways at first but also trams if I saw them, now I photograph railways, trams, planes, and anything of interest as you no longer have to worry about running out of film.


Add anything else you like to add about yourself. I was born, and have lived all my life, in Wollongong. I have visited most areas of Australia photographing trains, except Darwin, the Pilbara and Cape York. I have visited Fiji many times, also New Zealand and Hawaii.

Editor's note - Chris’s photos have attracted much interest on various facebook forums in the last few years and Chris has recently kindly donated his 1980’s travel photos of the Blayney to Demondrille branch line to the Cowra railway group. They are intending to put on display in the future at the their station his photos to enable tourists to see more of the area’s past history. We also thank Chris for his support with our facebook page enabling thousands of people to see how life was like 30 years ago in rural NSW.
STATION REVIEW - CUMNOCK RAILWAY STATION

Located mid-way on the former branch line from Molong to Dubbo, Cumnock was constructed in the 1920s as an island type intermediate station using pre cast concrete panels. The station was last operational in late 1980s. Since then it has deteriorated significantly and is currently fenced off due to asbestos issues. It is one day hoped that the station may be restored for local heritage significance and tourism potentials.

Continue over page...
This edition’s news focuses on stations being repainted in the last few months. Additionally sadly a reversal is being noted with many rural stations losing tenants and having to either close up or they are intending to close shortly.

**NORTHERN NSW NEWS**

**BROADMEADOW LOCOMOTIVE DEPOT (BMD)**

Recent works have seen the Broadmeadow Administration building area cleared of heavy overgrowth of bushes and trees and this cleaning up of the site intends to help to limit damage to the building.

**GLENREAGH MOUNTAIN RAILWAY INC PROJECT**

In October 2014 GMR volunteers and friends visited the tunnels and the Mole Creek elevated water tank. Both tunnels were reported to be in excellent condition with no apparent damage to the structures or the track. There is however heavy vegetation on either side and in between but the culverts on the down side of Tunnel No 1 and the Up side of Tunnel No 2 are in good condition. Most of the sleepers and the timberwork above the culverts will need replacing. Mole Creek tank is approx. 1 km from the nearest road access and was difficult to reach as the track is heavily overgrown. The tank is supported on substantial timber columns and is in surprisingly good condition. Timber Top was also visited and is quite remote and difficult to reach. See the photos of this inspection at [https://www.facebook.com/glenreagh.railway/posts/794225083954567](https://www.facebook.com/glenreagh.railway/posts/794225083954567). Sad to report that the restored heritage station at Lowanna was attacked by young vandals Saturday, November 1 2014. They smashed all the windows in the building. They were sighted in the act by locals who called the NSW Police. They did not break into the building and no other items were damaged.

**GLEN INNES RAILWAY STATION**

The former bar/pub that was located at the station is now no longer a tenant and the site is vacated and unused. Vandals are already attacking the station.
NEWCASTLE BRANCH LINE

Sadly December 26 2014 saw the much debated closure of the Newcastle railway branch line past Hamilton station. Wickham, Civic and Newcastle stations are all now closed off, decaying and under security patrols.

The heritage aspects and potential reuse at this stage is unknown. There is a pending court case against the NSW Government that argue against the closure of this line. It is expected to be heard later on in 2015. The Liberal Govt claims that the travel times would not be adversely affected does not appear to be holding up since the closure. Many people have supported the closure but an equal number who object to the closure have also voiced opinions in newspapers and online forums etc. The buses and trains connection at Hamilton station are also in a hot topic at this time of publication. A local group “Save Our Rail” is moving ahead with trying to find legal ways to seek a reopening of the branch line back to the Newcastle terminus. Their website is - http://saveourrail.org.au/?page_id=2 . Sadly the NSW Liberal state Govt has tarred over/concreted and grassed the railway line besides removing overhead wiring and signals etc. It should be noted that all of these changes took place within 4 weeks of closure. Many people have said online that they are no longer visiting Newcastle by train as it is inconvenient for them to change.

This closure of Newcastle branch may see tourism and business numbers to Newcastle drop. It remains to be seen how much an impact on local businesses this closure of the last section of the line has had. Some businesses have already publicly expressed they are suffering a trading drop with some already closing as a result of the line truncation. Locals have already noted that having no trains to Newcastle and around 310 replacement bus services a day operating is bringing increased road traffic as a result. The damage to the businesses in the area could grow if traffic delays increase and people are late to work.

WESTERN NSW NEWS

BATHURST RAILWAY STATION

The station dating from 1860s is getting a new paint job to brighten it up. This commenced in February 2015. The upgrade includes external cleaning, repainting and improving the station garden, heritage seats, fences
gutters and other related infrastructure. All the upgrades and improvements are expected to be finalised by June 2015.

BROKEN HILL RAILWAY STATION - No.2 NSWGR ERA

It seems there are still plans to restore and reuse the former NSWGR 1920s era PC style railway station at Broken Hill. It has been noted that limited site removal of overgrown bush has happened in 2014 and the town council was at last report seeking to work with a potential new business owner to take over the building with a lease to be arranged with the relevant rail agency.

FORBES RAILWAY STATION

Reports in April 2015 that the Forbes Tourism Information Centre is planning to vacate the railway station site due to lack of Govt maintenance. If this happens it, may see the station closed up again. A small craft shops in the station may stay on but it is unknown at this stage. Thanks to Russell Denning for the news.
TEMORA RAILWAY STATION

Further planning and some work has progressed over last few months at Temora station. 2015 has started with workers now starting the restoration of the station in earnest. Retiling of the toilet blocks was completed in January 2015 and this was then to be followed by plumbing works in March 2015. Major overhaul and building work was started in late January 2015 by early April had seen extensive work done to the community centre area. This fast pace of work will see a rapid transformation from a decaying station into a restored heritage railway museum and local community facility. Several former local rail workers visited the station last year and shared their experiences working at the site. A large public interest is growing with online forums sharing the progress and news. Thanks to Kris Dunstan for these newspaper clippings below.

Site plans for the restored Temora railway station

WALLERWANG RAILWAY STATION

It is observed that the former popular café and lolly shop closed during mid 2014 and the station is vacant.
SOUTHERN NSW NEWS

COROWA RAILWAY STATION

A local campaign to maybe restart a railway heritage operation from Corowa towards Culcairn, was announced in late 2014. The plan is to see some carriages brought into the railway station for display. Later a more advanced plan may gather local support to restore the railway line out of the town. It is noted that while the railway yard and turntable are intact, the line out of the station heading to Culcairn has been tarred over into a footpath..... People interested in following the concepts can join the projects facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/pages/Culcairn-to-Corowa-Heritage-Railway/3549067980221367

GUNDAGAI RAILWAY STATION

In December 2014 the GHR project was approved for a NSW Art and Museum Gallery department grant worth $6,462 to assist in the upgrade of the station displays in the railway refreshment room. The grant will see new photo displays, mannequins and cabinets for items installed.

NIMMITABEL RAILWAY STATION

The local Men’s Shed project to restore and reuse Nimmitabel station is progressing with further talks with Cooma Shire Council to get the station approvals completed. Talks and planning between the project members, council and rail agencies have continued through late 2014 and into early 2015.

THIRROUL RAILWAY STATION

During late 2014, restoration was started on the overhauling of the island platform waiting shelter structure at Thirroul railway station. In 2013 the NSW Govt had wanted to demolish the building due to white ants and damage. It was to be made redundant and replaced with a very bland and simple colourbond canopy.... A community outcry about keeping local heritage saw the Govt change its mind. The original building structure will remain but will be upgraded with new external materials. This reworked island platform room will take up to 8months to be restored.
**TUMUT RAILWAY STATION**

The Tumut Railway Model Group who are the current tenants at the station have indicated that they are planning to leave the station sometime in mid to late 2015, as they can no longer maintain their model displays at the site. This will result in the station becoming vacant again. The modellers took over in late 2013 after a craft group left the station. What this change in 2015 means may be difficult to assess at this stage but local interest in reusing their soon to be vacant small town railway station would appear to be very limited.

**SYDNEY REGION**

**CENTRAL RAILWAY STATION**

An overhaul is being done to some of the stairwells leading to the platforms 16-23 in April 2015. The results so far have seen tiles removed and exposed concrete/brickwork remain. The photos taken over the last week indicate some fast work is being carried out.
EPPING RAILWAY STATION

In late 2014 / early 2015 work was begun to repaint Epping station in new heritage colours. Here we see old scheme.

And the new colours going on are manilla / buff / yellow which are replacing the faded white and brown. Some further painting was being done in late March 2015 to finish off the overhaul.
HORNSBY RAILWAY STATION

During late 2014 / early 2015 Hornsby railway station was repainted from a faded white / manila / buff colour to a red and manilla colour scheme as is commonly being seen around NSW. This painting took a few weeks and included a grey undercoat shown in these photos. We see the old style here –

And the new colours here
RICHMOND RAILWAY STATION

Celebrated 150\textsuperscript{th} anniversary November 29 2014. These photos capture the anniversary day and the events at the station. Senior NSW Govt rail officials were present to honour the station’s history. Also on display was various rail heritage rollingstock. Some of these types would have once worked across Sydney and in some cases on the rail branch to Richmond. They arrived throughout the day and included 3642 with carriages and diesel in tow, a 620 railmotor and a CPH railmotor. Indicating how the site has changed over the last 30 years, the nearby MacDonalds sits on what was the former goods yard and goods shed area.
RHODES RAILWAY STATION

The late 1800s era waiting shelter (now a store room) is nowadays the sole heritage remains at Rhodes. It was repainted from its faded white / beige scheme into a new tan scheme in late 2014.

ROCKDALE RAILWAY STATION

During late 2014, the station was repainted from its former beige / buff scheme into the standard red/tan scheme. Here we see the old colours scheme as it was.

TOWN HALL RAILWAY STATION

The various upgrades being conducted at Town Hall railway station have nearly finished. New colours added to the station with grey and orange now in use. Some heritage style old station signs have reappeared again which are similar to the St James and Museum station signs. During the upgrades on the walls of one of the stairways access areas, a WW2 air raid shelter sign was uncovered and has now being preserved.
YOUR SAY - HERITAGE PHOTOS

Every issue HRSI will try to publish a selection of heritage photos from various railway photographers, showing the different NSW stations as they once were.

Photographer - Lindsay Richmond - Coolac 1974 left and Yass Town 1983 right.

Photographer - Chris Stratton - Marulan, left and right, Sandy Hollow both seen in 1982

Photographer - Mark Zanker - Batlow 1987, left and right, Black Mountain seen in 1977.
INSIGHT TO RAILWAY STATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN DEMOLISHED / DESTROYED

This edition we take a look at a rare insight to the lower Hunter Valley, town of Cessnock’s former railway station destruction during late 1975. It was initially setup as a private coal branch line serviced by privately owned railmotors. In later years it is understood to have become a NSW Govt run service. Mark Zanker was present in 1975 and captured some rare photos of the appalling tear down and removal of the Cessnock railway station. Nearly 40 years on this lower Hunter Valley area is becoming massively populated and will require a future government to build a railway passenger service to the town. This is another example of removing necessary rail infrastructure way too soon. Other examples in NSW have included the former Castle Hill and Camden branch lines, which now many years later will be needing to be rebuilt totally from scratch at a massive cost.
OTHER NEWS

RAILWAY PHOTOGRAPHER NOTICE FROM ARTC – ARTC RELEASES RAIL SAFETY PHOTO GUIDE

From photos uploaded to various facebook groups over the last year, more and more railway enthusiasts are taking risks it has being accessing/walking into live operational main line corridor areas and accessing stations and signal boxes without permission or the awareness of what they are doing is unsafe. ARTC has released 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.


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 likeminded 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 –

NSW railway stations http://nswrailwaystations.wordpress.com/

Sydney railway stations http://sydneyrailwaystations.wordpress.com/

NEXT ISSUE

Next newsletter will examine some of the branch line travels of Mark Zanker in the 1970s and see stations he visited and recorded. We will examine issues affecting local communities when reusing disused stations along with more insights to remaining historical stations with photos / reviews.

To follow HRSI click on the facebook link – https://www.facebook.com/NSWRSI. HRSI can be contacted on the facebook page for story / information or photo submissions.

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TAIL END TRIANGLE PHOTO

We leave you with a view of Bomen railway station located just north of Wagga Wagga, on the main southern line.