NSW HRSI NEWSLETTER

July 2015

WELCOME to the fourth newsletter of HRSI NSW. The objective of this newsletter is to inform, educate and provide insights about the latest updates, plans and 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.

Since the release of Issue 3, this heritage rail themed newsletter has attracted much interest and praise from enthusiasts and the general public online. They are seeking more and more news and information on heritage station news across NSW. One result has been that I have conducted further research into photos and towns around NSW. In doing this I came into contact with more railway photographers who have kindly opened up their collections to us all. We owe these people a big thank for what they recorded. Many locations they visited can never be seen again as they have been demolished.

Phil Buckley, HRSI Admin

MAIN NEWS

NSW has seen continued repaints and upgrades of Sydney stations with a big focus on changes at Central which is examined in this issue.

Some stations in NSW are seeking a new life with some groups attempting to take on leases while other stations are looking to close up as their tenants unfortunately leave.

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INTERVIEW WITH RAILWAY STATION PHOTOGRAPHER - MARK ZANKER

Over the years I have come in to contact with a diverse range of people in the NSW heritage community and a few of these people have become close friends. One person was Mark Zanker - a clever, pragmatic and thoughtful person - who was kind enough to allow me and our readers an insight to his extensive rail travels of the 1970s-80s and in more recent times. Mark is literally an encyclopedia. He is a person with a wealth of knowledge on railways, political issues and the environment.

Mark’s railway photos have been recognised by many enthusiasts for their quality and rarity. This is illustrated as in Issue 3 – about the destruction of Cessnock station in 1975.

A few years ago he digitised all his film photos and then disposed of the film copies, so what we have in his online collection is what remains of his travels.

I got to know Mark via email, phone chat, facebook comments and eventually got to meet him and discuss his photos in more detail.

Mark is seen on the left and myself on the right in an October 2014 meeting.

At what age did you get interested in photography and also what age in railways?

I was interested in photography from about age 8. It was very different in those days in the 1960s and a very expensive hobby. I was given a small black and white Kodak camera that you could put film cartridges into. Mostly I could only get 12 exposure cartridges as anything else was very expensive. My father also liked photography and he taught himself how to develop and print film, and I benefitted as he showed me the process. It was difficult and laborious, and required a light proof room that fortunately we had under our house at North Bondi at that time. It was also easy to make mistakes and spoil the film. As for railways, again I suppose I became interested in them when I

...
was about 8 years old and they were the main form of long distance transport to country locations in NSW. I lived through the period of the terminal decline of railways in Australia as a means of long distance transport - they are nothing today compared with what they were prior to 1983, which was really their death knell in NSW. But in the lead up to 1983, passenger trains were poorly patronised. They were very slow, for the most part rather uncomfortable, particularly overnight journeys on mail trains in winter, but they were cheap. I remember being able to purchase a Nurail pass for about $20 and being able to travel to many locations, such as Inverell, Barraba, Tumut and Cooma that have long since lost rail services.

What attracted you to start doing railway photos and how did you go about doing this - was it easy or challenging?.
Being interested in railways I wanted to record my journeys, however as it was very expensive and I had extremely limited financial means it was very difficult if not impossible in most cases.

Over what timeframe did you photo your heritage stations?
The very few photos that I was able to take date from about 1974, and have continued on and off since, throughout Australia. But by 1974, the passenger business of railways was well and truly in decline, and many structures had succumbed to the ravages of vandalism and weather. On the whole, those that continued in service until the 1980s have fared much better than those that did not, and brick and stone buildings have lasted rather longer than timber and precast concrete ones. Of those that do survive, it has been because of community reuse of the facility, and examples I might cite include Tailem Bend (SA), Tenterfield (NSW), Katherine (NT), Brookton (WA), Mount Surprise (Qld) and a few others. Some magnificent structures, such as Temora railway station in NSW teeter on the brink of dilapidation and destruction, and some like Newcastle may be destroyed by property developers.

What type of camera and film did you use when taking photos?
I used only the cheapest film and cameras that were available.

How did you compose or arrange your photos, did you use certain angles or layout ideas?
I didn’t put any thought at all into angles or layout - I just photographed what was of interest to me. My abiding regret is that I did not see that the tide of history was turning rapidly against many of the structures I saw and experienced, and now of course all that is locked in my unshareable memory.

What was accessing railways like in the timeframe you did your photos?
There is simply no comparison between the 1970s and 2015, certainly on operational railways. Unjustified security concerns are now an irritating hindrance to photographers of railway activities, except perhaps on organised historical or enthusiast society tours, and these have been made far
more difficult than they once were by workplace health and safety laws, and onerous insurance requirements.

**What do you think is your top 3 favourite railway station photos?**
This is a very difficult question to answer, and I cannot say there are three of them. Strangely enough perhaps the photos that mean perhaps the most to me are those of the demolition of the Cessnock railway station in 1975, of guard Ashley Hay posing beside a rail motor at the almost derelict Mount Horeb station in the same year when I travelled on a return journey one day from Cootamundra to Tumut.

**Have you done other photography besides railways?**
I have done other photography over the years, but mostly it had no meaning to anyone other than myself, and so I disposed of them, after I had become severely mobility impaired and decided to change my lifestyle to that of a grey nomad. Consequently, apart from those that I digitised and have shared on the internet, nothing remains of what I did. That is no real loss however, as I had no real talent at all as a photographer.

**What else would you like to share about yourself?**
There is nothing about me that is even of the slightest interest to any of your readers, I expect, except this - never assume that what you see and value today will last until tomorrow. It could easily be destroyed and lost forever, and so if you value it and think others might benefit from sharing what you valued, then take a moment or two to preserve it, even if only on camera.
STATION REVIEW – IVANHOE STATION

Located at the 816.40km marker on the operational main western line mid-way between Parkes to Broken Hill is Ivanhoe station. Opened in 1925 as a concrete style type 12, AC-3 design station, heritage station Ivanhoe is fortunately still in use and sees regular trains pass by….. alas freight more than passengers stopping.
Ivanhoe review continued

Many may not know that Ivanhoe was the terminus of the main western NSW network until the line from Broken Hill joined it in November 1927, thus linking Sydney with Broken Hill by railway finally. Ivanhoe was built as the line to Broken Hill expanded from the Parkes side and was the next extension on from Trida station.
Ivanhoe review continued

The town of Ivanhoe used to have a large railway presence with a railway depot, crew barracks, workshops, track maintenance depot, fuel facilities and a goods shed all located near the station to the south. These days only a water tank, water column, structure foundations and fuel tank concrete foundations remains are observable around the station. They strand as a reminder of the infrastructure they was once needed to maintain railway services in western NSW.

Currently the station is unmanned and is used by NSW Government rail services for passengers services which are only 1 once a week both ways. For any further travels each way on other days, passengers are pushed into using buses which go to Parkes via Cobar route. The only other service it sees on a frequent basis is the high cost trans continental Indian Pacific.
NORTHERN NSW NEWS

BROADMEADOW LOCOMOTIVE DEPOT (BMD)

It is reported that severe weather conditions damaged the Broadmeadow roundhouse structure and flooded the turntable in April 2015. Roofing sheets were torn away from the depot building and the turntable pit was flooded with large amounts of water which took a few days to pump out. Electrical equipment was also damaged in the heavy rain.

GLENREAGH MOUNTAIN RAILWAY INC PROJECT

Mid 2015 has seen the GMR project moving ahead with up to 8 volunteer on site in some weeks. They are active in cleaning up and making safe the railway infrastructure at Glenreagh West Depot. The plans are to soon move the HFO passenger carriages in under the large shed and prepare the steam locomotive for overhaul.

Sleeper repairs and trackwork were conducted in late April / early May 2015 and saw cleaning up in the shed. The sleeper inserter machine was moved in May and this will when repaired, help with restoring the railway line. Soon GMR expect to have a trike operational at Glenreagh West Depot for the using in track maintenance around Glenreagh. (Photos courtesy of GMR).

Additional work is being done on the fettler cottage which is used by volunteers when they stay on site. Dulux has donated paint towards the overhaul of the cottage exterior. The water tower still stands tall at Glenreagh yard too.

GMR is seeing an increase in local and regional interest and support due to a revamped media campaign which started in 2014. A revamped website is expected to be released by mid 2015 to assist railway enthusiasts and visitors to gain access to more timely information and detailed news online. (GMR supplied photos)
NEWCASTLE BRANCH LINE

In early June at Newcastle station drilling began being conducted by NSW Govt body - Urban Growth. It is understood the drilling was required so Urban Growth can “test” the soil under the railway lines. Some people have noted that such drilling / testing the land was never required when the railways used it, so it somewhat interesting that it is now all a sudden urgent need for the NSW Govt to do... is expected that weeks of testing / drilling is required. This kind of drilling makes many local people think that Urban Growth is essentially steering the controversial looming property development into the railway corridor.

WESTERN NSW NEWS

COWRA RAILWAY STATION

In early April 2015 there was a white ant inspection of Cowra station. This revealed that the building is needing funding to fix the ongoing damage caused by these hungry white ants. The ground around the station is an ideal environment for the ants and sadly they find the station structure very tasty!... The pest controllers installed white ant traps around the building and it is hoped this will capture and minimize the ant levels for the next few months. Ongoing pest control is needed at Cowra to limit the damage. Unfortunately many other stations around NSW also face a similar problem.

At a regular open day in June 2015 there were over 30 visitors – a sign that increased interest in the station is happening. Chris Stratton has kindly donated 120+ heritage train and station photos from the 1980s taken along the Cowra branch line. Some are now appearing on the walls of the waiting room to help educate visitors to the lines past colourful history.
BLAYNEY TO DEMONDRILLE BRANCH LINE – NSW GOVT SAYS NOT TO REOPEN – FOR THE MOMENT

In May 2015, the NSW Government formally announced that the Blayney to Demondrille branch line, which had attracted only 2 local tenders for the potential reopening, would not be proceeding due to financial risks being to great for both parties hoping to win the tender.

People felt confused that the Roads, Maritime and Freight Minister Duncan Gay made the announcement to the public in Cowra instead of what most people would of thought was more normal … having the Transport Minister Andrew Constance make the announcement.


TEMORA RAILWAY STATION

In May and June 2015 extensive works were conducted at Temora railway station. The heritage-listed old Temora Railway Station is well on the way to having a new lease of life. It will again play a part in Temora's social fabric. The refurbishment of the building is progressing well. On completion it will house a youth space, visitor facilities, exhibition area and rail museum.

Kris Dunstan, Council's Director of Environmental Services, said the project is coming together well and is excited at the potential for a variety of uses. …Continue over page.
The renovations of the male and female toilet block is finished. These facilities will shared by station and park visitors. The adjacent Federal Park landscaping will extended into the station forecourt. Making an attractive setting for locals and visitors alike. The Youth Hub, to be located in the old 'refreshment room' at the northern end of the station, received NSW Government ClubGRANTS funding of $110,993, and is shaping as a fantastic space for the district's young people. The rail museum is another exciting development, and this interpretive display will be located at the southern end. "It has been really heartening to see all the information that has come to light for the museum, and we will have a great record of how the station operated in its heyday," Mr Dunstan said. "There will also be an opportunity for commercial tenancy, with an alfresco courtyard and indoor dining area available, as well as the station platform."

"Mr Dunstan said the project has had its challenges, with the old building in quite a derelict state at commencement, and a great deal needing to be done to clear pest infestation, replace ceilings, windows and other repairs. A funding injection of $100,000 for conservation works came from the NSW Government Heritage program. Mr Dunstan believes the final result will return the building to a prominent place in the heart of the town. "Council believed the old place deserved better, took the initiative with the refurbishment and it is an exciting development." Mr Dunstan said Council had appreciated the support and partnership of the John Holland Rail Group, agent for Rail Transport NSW. The refurbishment is expected to be finished within the next few months."
WOODSTOCK RAILWAY STATION

In May 2015, repair work was noted at Woodstock station. Observed that there was looked like reinforcement or structural beams on the platform side leaning up against the station building. There was safety tape around the building. In late 2014 a story was printed in a local Cowra newspaper talking about the decay of the Woodstock station building - [http://www.cowraguardian.com.au/story/2606656/woodstock-heritage-site-falls-into-disrepair/](http://www.cowraguardian.com.au/story/2606656/woodstock-heritage-site-falls-into-disrepair/).
Bombala railway station / precinct site is being upgraded to cater for future rail tourism. The varied wagons / rollingstock on site are being slowly restored and the grounds are maintained by a very small team of local town volunteers who are funded by the Bombala Shire Council along with any funds they raise themselves. (Photos and news courtesy of Ang Rodwell)

GOULBURN LOCOMOTIVE DEPOT

Noted online in March and April 2015, were comments that the Goulburn Locomotive Roundhouse Preservation Society (GLRPS) are still working with ARTC and the QLD rail operator Aurizon to ensure damage from the mid 2013 shunting accident is fixed. It is understood from news, that an Aurizon insurance policy is paying for the repairs and have so far partially fixed the siding road leading to the turntable pit. The more substantial repairs to fix the extensive damage incurred to the turntable are progressing very slowly. The turntable still lies out of use nearly 2 years on. It is missing much of its timber planking and ARTC has awarded a contract for the repair of the wooden topped turntable. As of April 2015 preliminary discussions to move to the next stage of the repairs, has lead some of the components for the rebuild being ordered. These are waiting for delivery to the roundhouse. These significant repairs are required to fix the destruction that saw half of the historic depot 105 ft turntable badly torn up. Current estimates put the total damage bill at over $500,000. An example of the damage can be seen at - https://www.flickr.com/photos/53191724@N02/16573759064/in/photostream/
MICHELAGO RAILWAY STATION

A new war memorial has being unveiled on the road side area out the front of the Michelago railway station in early 2015. Lindsay Richmond spotted this new memorial and says that the village honours its local history. The memorial is expected to become a prime location for future war memorial events. Lindsay has also contributed a photo of Michelago in 1989 when the line was more active with ARHS (ACT) doing steam locomotive trips there.

NIMMITABEL RAILWAY STATION

The local Men’s Shed project to restore and reuse Nimmitabel station is progressing slowly with further talks including John Holland Rail and 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 mid 2015.
SYDNEY REGION

ARNCLIFFE RAILWAY STATION

Upgrades to Arncliffe station have been announced by the NSW Government and will begin around July this year. The changes will see 4 new lifts installed along with new toilets, CCTV upgrades and other non rail improvements. It is pleasing to least know the Transport department and NSW Government took the stations heritage values onboard with the planning of this upgrade and have kept the footbridge, platform buildings and ticket office.

CENTRAL RAILWAY STATION

Focusing on Central, big changes are underway with new tiling, signage and moving of ticket gates. As last reported, back in March / April 2015 work had started on retiling stairwells and concourse areas with what seems to be a nod to the old heritage themed tiling of the early electric platform years the 1930s. This work is continuing with new tiles taking up their place on the walls and pier supports in the concourse under the electric platforms and on the stairwells to the country platforms. Below we see the old style, the initial removal, the new tiles place on and some of the newly completed work.
TICKET GATES OVERHAUL / CHANGES - An overhaul of the northern end electric platform ticket concourse in May 2015 has seen the existing Opal swipe card / tickets gates moved from near the stairwell areas and have been placed into the external main concourse walkway. Hopefully this will reduce one assumes the congestion experienced with peak hour travel movements at the current gate locations. As part of this concourse change, the glass security barriers were also taken down to open up the concourse walking areas. The Opal card utilisation will eventually lead to the closure of the heritage styled manned booking office / ticket gate windows. This is a major change as a result of introducing the electronic / card / e card Opal card in the last 2 years. Some travelers and commuters reckon this has transformed NSW transport to an easier way to travel but not all are convinced still. Photos below show the newly moved gates in early May 2015 and the old ticket office windows features.
Many people may not notice the intricate details of the old booking office windows, with their metal bars, and old style money tray / benches which enable people to lean on while waiting for their ticket.
NEW STATION SIGNAGE – Central has also gained new platform and concourse signs, which were installed during April/May/June on platforms 1-23 and in concourse areas. Some of the new signage is rather confusing to people who aren’t used to signage designs like this eg what does “G” mean?. It is understood the colours and location of platform numbers on the country platforms are potentially not suitable for some passengers to easily find and it is expected that a high level project team reporting to the senior management is to examine changes required and what would need to be done to improve this problem. Larger platform numbers and numbers that clearly stand out for elderly or low vision impaired commuters would be some potential discussion points on the agenda.
CROYDON RAILWAY STATION

The heritage style booking office and facilities above the rail line are expected to be removed in an upgrade of the station. Plans released seems to indicate the new building will do away with this older building. The old style building which looks weatherboard style but is actually concrete panels designed to imitate weatherboard. Further clarification is expected to confirm the replacing of the older concourse building by SydneyTrains.
HORNSBY RAILWAY STATION

Painting work has mostly finished at Hornsby and many people have said that the station looks so much better than it did 1 year ago. The upgrade money has been well spent transforming the station buildings with new colours.
ROCKDALE RAILWAY STATION

During late 2014, the station was repainted from its former beige / buff scheme into the now heritage standard red/tan/manilla scheme.

ULTIMO RAILWAY BRIDGE/ DARLING BRANCH LINE

The inner Sydney city branch line from Central station yard to Darling Harbour which was once a very busy goods line but until recently was abandoned by NSW government for rail purposes, has now undergone a
transformation. For a while line has been eyed off by the NSW Government intending to reuse it for a walkway. Over the last few months development work has seen paint stripping and repainting undertaken. See more at http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-05-12/sydney-bridge-under-wraps-for-new-pedestrian-network/6459838

WYNYARD RAILWAY STATION

Upgrades are happening at a number of inner city stations and this includes Wynyard station concourse area. The concourse and external areas around the station ceiling roofing has been removed exposing the original concrete beams structure of the station. These sections are being cleaned up, refurbished and the ceiling will be replaced. New signage like at Town Hall and Central is also appearing at Wynyard.
YOUR SAY - HERITAGE PHOTOS

Every issue HRSI will try to publish a selection of heritage photos from our growing collection from various railway photographers, who show us the different NSW stations as they once were.

Photographer – Adrian Compton – left side 1975, compared with view right side Phil Buckley 2013

Photographer - Chris Stratton – Left - Kentucky railway station on the former Great Northern Railway line to Wallangarra seen 1984 and right, Berrigan railway station on the line to Corowra in southern NSW seen 1983.

Photographer Chris Stratton – left, Green Swamp Road railway station in south western NSW 1983, right Inverell railway station in northern NSW seen 1983.
Photographer - Mark Zanker – Newbridge railway station 2001 left, and Richmond railway station 1977 right

Photographer Greg Finster - Peak Hill station now moved off the branch line to the Peak Hill sports oval preserved seen in 2015 and right, Coonamble station and yard seen in 1970s with the wheat silos under construction in background.

This issue we welcome 3 new contributors, Brett Leslie, Gordon Ross and Robert Paterson.

Photographer – Brett Leslie – Bogan Gate 1987 left and right Tocumwal 1982
Photographer – Gordon Ross – Vineyards station western Sydney 1970s left, and right, Rankins Springs 1979

Photographer - Robert Paterson – Early 1980s views of Forbes on the left and Hay on right.

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 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 stations area 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 traincrews, 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.

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 Heritage Railway Stations and Infrastructure facebook page - https://www.facebook.com/NSWRSI?ref=bookmarks

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

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

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

NEXT ISSUE

Next newsletter- issue 5, will examine a NSW branch line in detail with historical and current day photos and information, factors affecting local communities when attempting to reuse disused stations, see an exclusive tour of an historical underground abandoned railway station/tunnel in Sydney CBD, along with more insights to news and events covering historical stations around NSW.

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.

TAIL END TRIANGLE PHOTO – THEN/ NOW – NIMMITABEL NSW. A look back at what was once an operational Nimmitabel railway station in southern NSW – a 1970 black and white view Greg Finster compared with Peter Watters 2015 view.