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# LIGHT RAILWAYS

Australia's Magazine of Industrial & Narrow Gauge Railways



Light Railway Research Society of Australia Inc.



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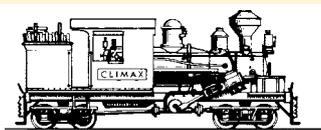
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#### Imperial to metric conversions:

1 inch (in)	25.40 millimetres
1 foot (ft)	0.30 metre
1 yard (yd)	0.91 metre
1 chain	20.11 metres
1 mile	1.60 kilometres
1 ton	1.01 tonnes
1 pound (lb)	0.454 kilogram
1 acre	0.4 hectare
1 horsepower (hp)	746 Watts
1 gallon	4.536 litres
1 cubic yard	0.765 cubic metres
1 super foot (sawn timber)	0.00236 cubic metre



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No 259 February 2018

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## Editorial

Letters to the Editor have been a part of this magazine almost since its inception and over the years has featured a wide variety of topics and opinions. Indeed, when one looks at previous issues, there has at times been quite lively and passionate debate about the topics of the day. However, they have always been informative and interesting and (mostly) civil.

Some editions of the current day magazines elicit lots of letters, whilst others provide almost nothing – it is very hard to predict.

I am always very happy to receive letters to the Editor about any topics related to light railways. If you have read something in the magazine that you think is not correct, write to me and provide your version of the correct answer. If you think you can add something extra to the published material, then send in the new material and I can publish it. If you have any photos (particularly heritage ones) that add something to the published material then by all means send them to me.

Depending on the material submitted I may need to get a second opinion or a peer review from a subject expert, but there are plenty of such people within the Society who are more than happy to provide input.

So, if you think you have something to add, please send it to the Editor for consideration to either [editor@lrrsa.org.au](mailto:editor@lrrsa.org.au) or to PO Box 21 Surrey Hills Vic 3127.

*Richard Warwick*

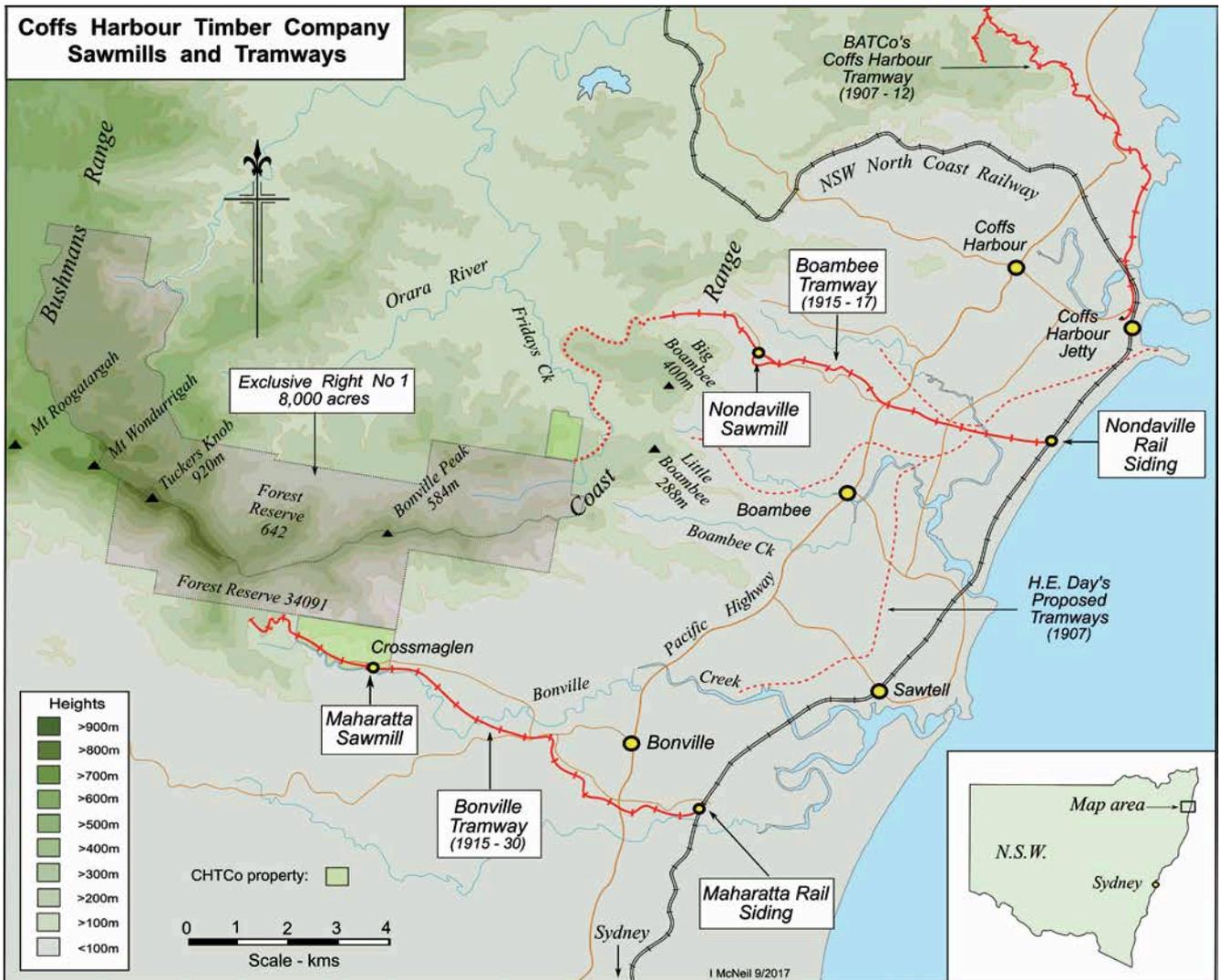
**Front Cover:** *Bingera Mill's Walkers B-B DH Kolan (633 of 1969 rebuilt Bundaberg Foundry 1996 and ex QR DH51) is seen hauling 65 empty 6 tonne bins up Pitt's Hill, on the line from Bingera Mill to the site of the old Fairymead Sugar Mill. Due to excessive flange wear on the number 2 end bogie, the locomotive is run long end leading where possible. Photo: Lincoln Driver*

The Light Railway Research Society of Australia Inc. was formed in 1961 and caters for those interested in all facets of industrial, private, tourist and narrow gauge railways in this country and its offshore territories, past and present.

Members are actively involved in researching light railways in libraries and archives, interviewing knowledgeable first-hand participants and undertaking field work at industrial sites and in forests.

*Light Railways* is the official publication of the Society. All articles and illustrations in this publication remain the copyright of the author and publisher. Material submitted is subject to editing, and publication is at the discretion of the Editor.

Articles, letters and photographs of historical and current interest are welcome. Contributions should be



The Coffs Harbour Timber Company obtained an 8,000 acre Exclusive Right over the Coast Range forests southwest of Coffs Harbour, and built two sawmills and two timber tramways to exploit it.

# The Coffs Harbour Timber Company Limited

## Part 2 – Maharatta Mill and the Bonville Timber Tramway

by Ian McNeil

Part 1 of the story of the Coffs Harbour Timber Company (CHTCo) appeared in Light Railways No 251 in October 2016. It detailed the setting up of the Company to exploit the hardwood forests within an 8,000 acre Exclusive Right behind Coffs Harbour, and the history of its big Nondaville Saw Mill and Boambee Timber Tramway.

### The CHTCo's Maharatta Sawmill at Crossmaglen

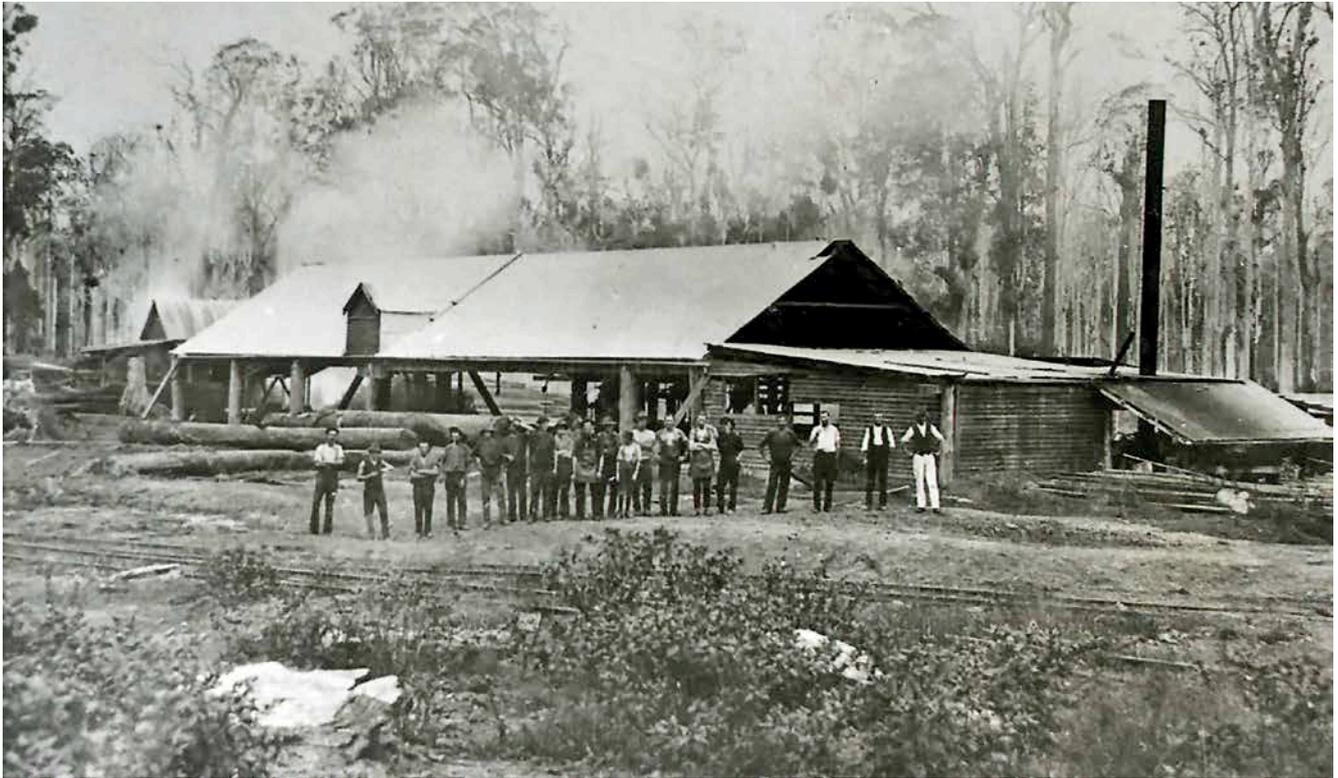
The CHTCo's general manager, Alexander Mackay, established the company's No. 1 saw mill on a 10-acre block beside Bonville Creek, near the school in the present-day village of Crossmaglen. The mill site was covered in dense sub-tropical scrub and the forested foothills of the Coast Range rose steeply on both the northern and western sides. It would be stark contrast to the manicured hobby farms that carpet Bonville Creek valley today.

The first consignment of machinery for the new sawmill arrived at Coffs Harbour Jetty in May 1912 on board the coastal

steamer *Cooloon*,<sup>1</sup> and was hauled to the site by bullock teams. The No. 1 Mill was a relatively small steam-powered plant with a maximum capacity of 7000 superfeet of sawn timber a day. It was equipped with a vertical log saw, a picket saw and a planing machine. Construction was straightforward and it began cutting in November 1912. Eli Carter, the company's chairman and major shareholder, named the sawmill "Maharatta," after his interest in the Maharatta sheep station south of Cooma.

The mill cut hardwood eucalypts; principally blackbutt, mahogany, tallowwood, blue gum and flooded gum, all of which grew profusely on the nearby spurs of the Coast Range. Initially a steam log hauler with ¾ mile of steel rope was sited at the mill to haul in logs for cutting. The nearby Hauler Gully derives its name from this early operation. At the peak of operations in 1915 two steam log haulers pulled in logs to landing stages sited along the logging tramway to feed the mill.

A small settlement including several cottages and a boarding house grew up around Maharatta Mill, the forerunner of Crossmaglen village. Within a year the mill workers had set up the Tuckers Nob Football Club, but their efforts to establish a provisional school at the mill were knocked back by the Education Department on the grounds there were not enough children to warrant it. For the first few years the CHTCo paid a contractor to convey the mill workers' children five miles to Bonville School and return on week days.



*Alexander Clarke Mackay, in white trousers, with the mill workers of the CHTCo's No. 1 'Maharatta' saw mill at Crossmaglen c1915. It was the smaller of the company's two mills with a maximum capacity of 7,000 superfeet of hardwood per day. Sawn timber was railed to Maharatta Siding on the NSW North Coast Railway over the 5-mile Bonville Tramway. Part of the mill's logging tramway can be seen passing in front of the workmen.*  
*Photo: David Beck collection via Mark Fry*

### **The CHTCo's Bonville Timber Tramway**

The CHTCo built a steel-railed, 3ft 6in gauge logging tramway and a sawn-timber outlet tramway, collectively known as the Bonville Timber Tramway, to service its No. 1 Mill at Crossmaglen. The logging tramway crossed Forest Reserve 34091 to access the company's Exclusive Right No. 1 on the eastern slopes of the Coast Range. The Lands Department granted a special lease, 1912-25 Bellingen, in July 1914 permitting construction of the tramway through the Reserve.<sup>2</sup> The lease covered a 2¼ mile long strip of land, 50 links wide, extending upstream along the north bank of Bonville Creek. A survey plan of the line was subsequently prepared by licensed surveyor Edward W Cross in June 1916 as a condition of the lease.<sup>3</sup>

By comparison the five-mile outlet tramway connecting the mill to the NSW North Coast Railway crossed private property along its entire route. By February 1913 the company had finalised tramway right-of-way agreements with the ten property owners along the proposed route.<sup>4</sup> The agreement for the right-of-way through Charles Barden's 78-acre Lot 175, bordering Glennifer and Crossmaglen Roads, was subsequently converted into a Special Lease in 1920.<sup>5</sup>

The tramway was laid with a mixture of 28 lb, 40 lb and 42 lb rails on locally cut hardwood sleepers. The ruling grade was 1 in 40 with curves of 4 chains minimum radius. The route selected by Alexander Mackay passed through undemanding country as far as earthworks were concerned. The tramway headed east from the mill and followed the north bank of Bonville Creek downstream for a couple of miles. It then swung south over the creek and climbed to the summit of the low 30-metre high ridge separating the watersheds of Bonville and Pine Creeks. It crossed Glennifer Road on top of the ridge and descended on easy grades down the shallow valley of Reedy Creek to the North Coast Railway.

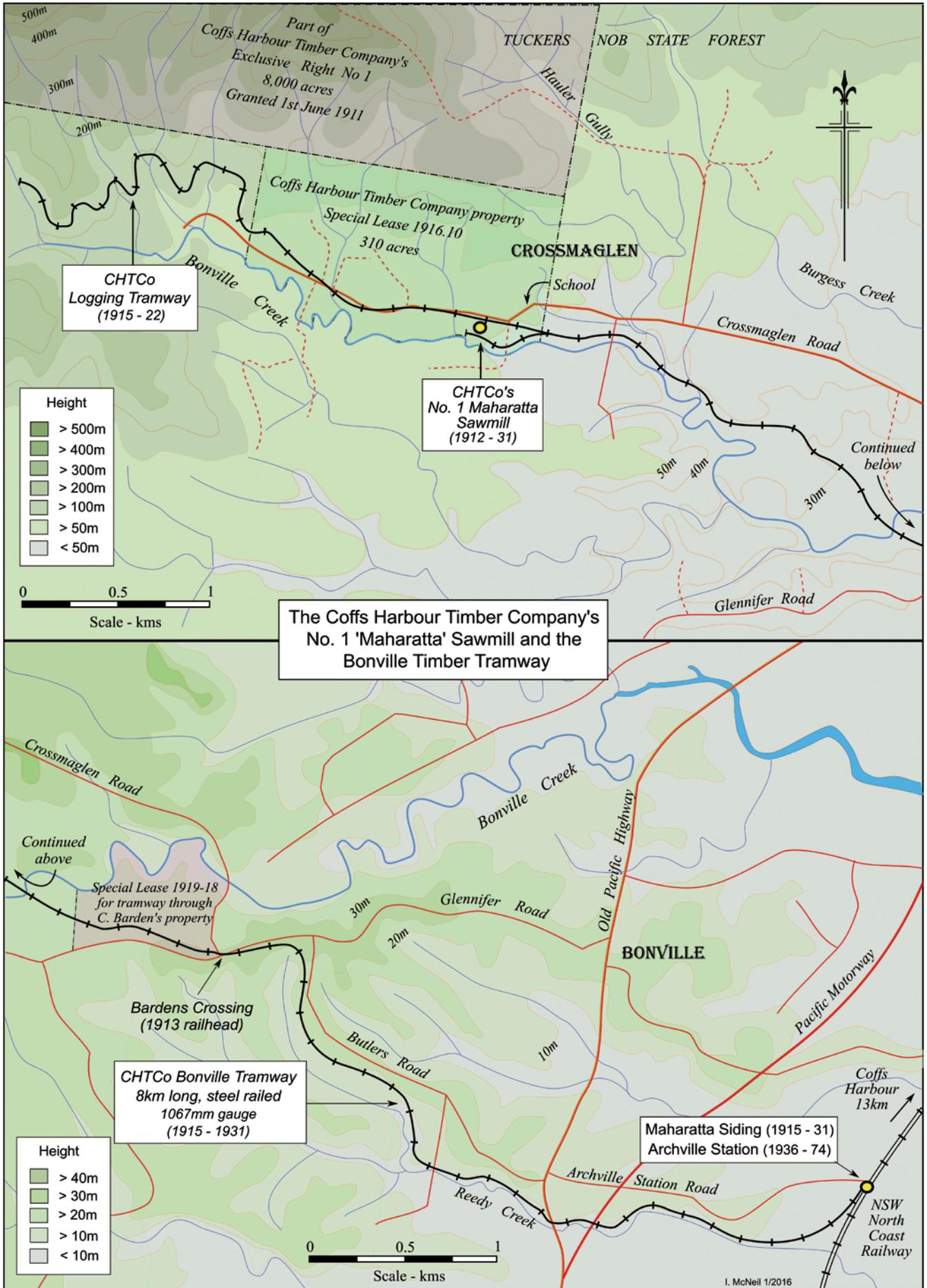
Work commenced in November 1912 on the construction of the Bonville Tramway under the supervision of the company's experienced ganger, William Shanahan. He had previously worked for Alexander Mackay on the construction of the British Australian Timber Company's timber tramways at Coffs Harbour and Woolgoolga.

Tramway construction was straightforward and by the end of January 1913 the tramway had been completed as far as Barden's Crossing on Glennifer Road. This was the temporary railhead until the North Coast Railway was opened for traffic in August 1915.

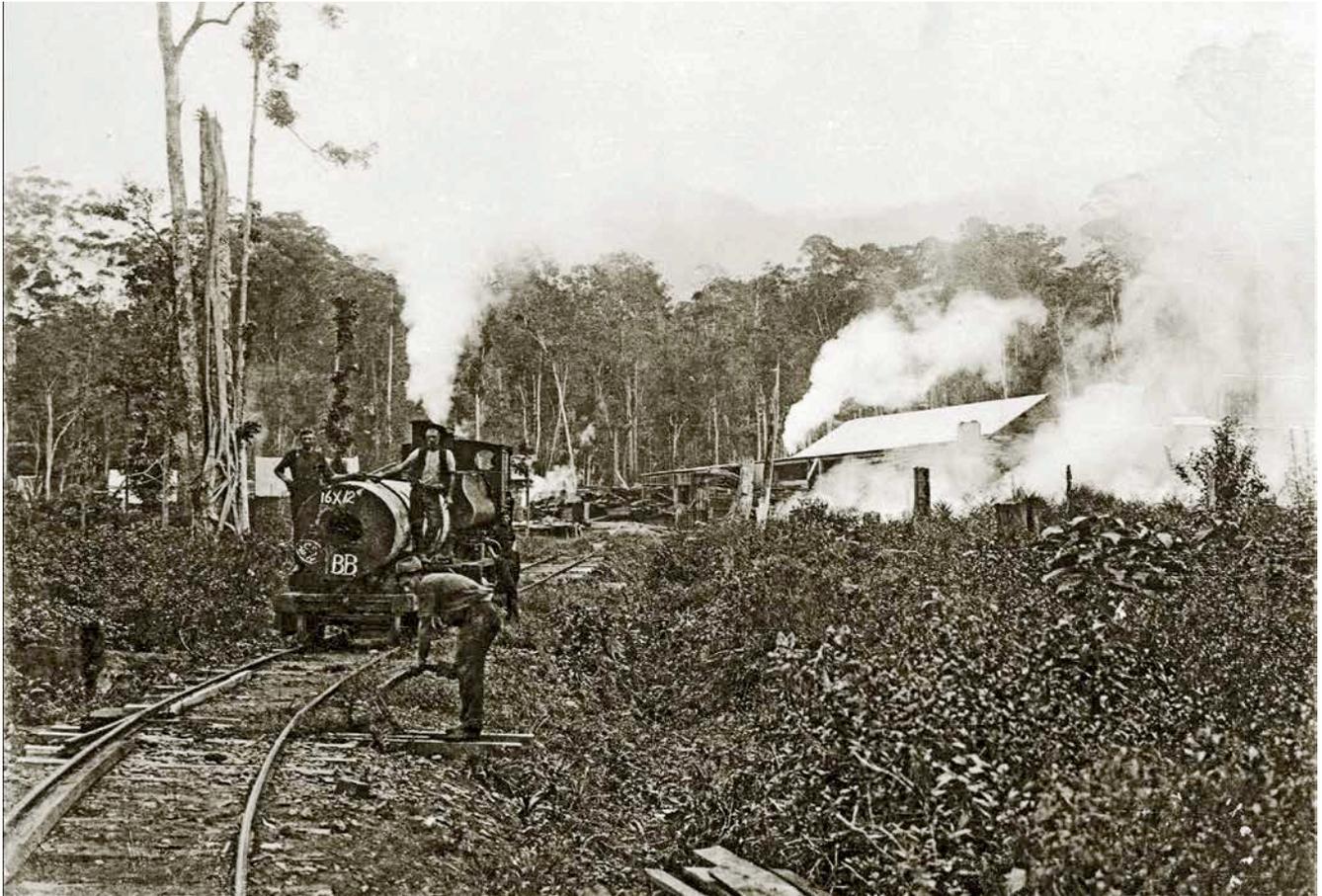
Sawn timber was transferred from the company's railway trucks to horse and bullock wagons for the slow eight-mile road haul to Coffs Harbour Jetty. Manager Alexander Mackay was highly critical of the delay in completing the North Coast Railway, claiming it was costing his company dearly. Teamsters charged 3s 6d per 100 superfeet to road haul timber to Coffs Harbour as against six pence by rail.

Construction of the isolated 34-mile 7th section of the NSW North Coast Railway between Coffs Harbour and Macksville had commenced earlier in November 1911 but progress had been slow. The railway crossed unconsolidated alluvial flats south of Coffs Harbour and considerable difficulties were experienced in obtaining secure foundations for the large steel bridges across the estuarine mouths of Boambee, Bonville and Pine Creeks. Delays were also caused by a shortage of rails and rolling stock. The first half of the 7th section, the 13 miles between Coffs Harbour and Raleigh on the north bank of the Bellinger River, took four years to complete. It was another four years before the rails reached Macksville, a further 21 miles south.

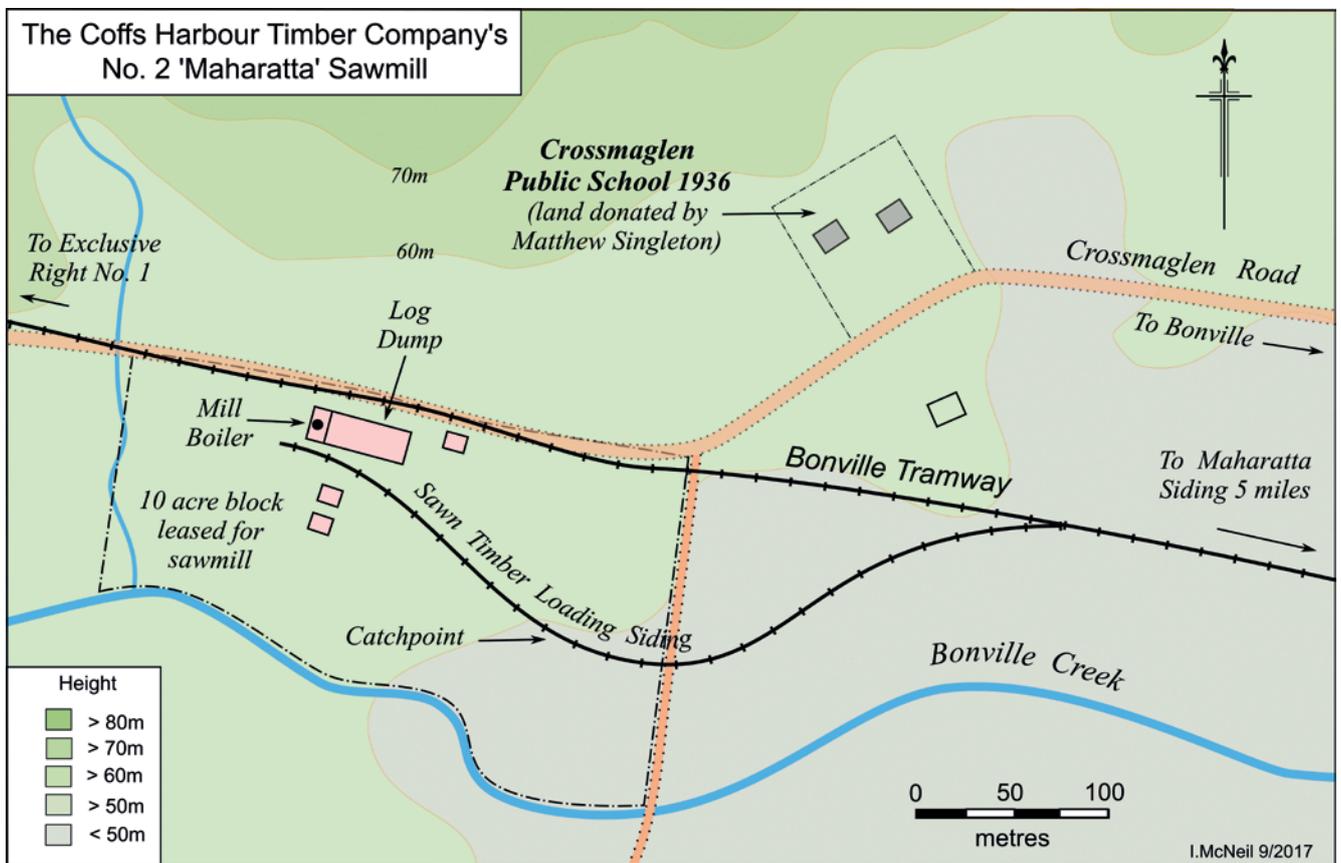
The construction of the final section of the outlet tramway from Barden's Crossing to the railway was deferred until October 1914. A number of men were then put on to cut sleepers and lay rails, and they finished the job in February 1915.



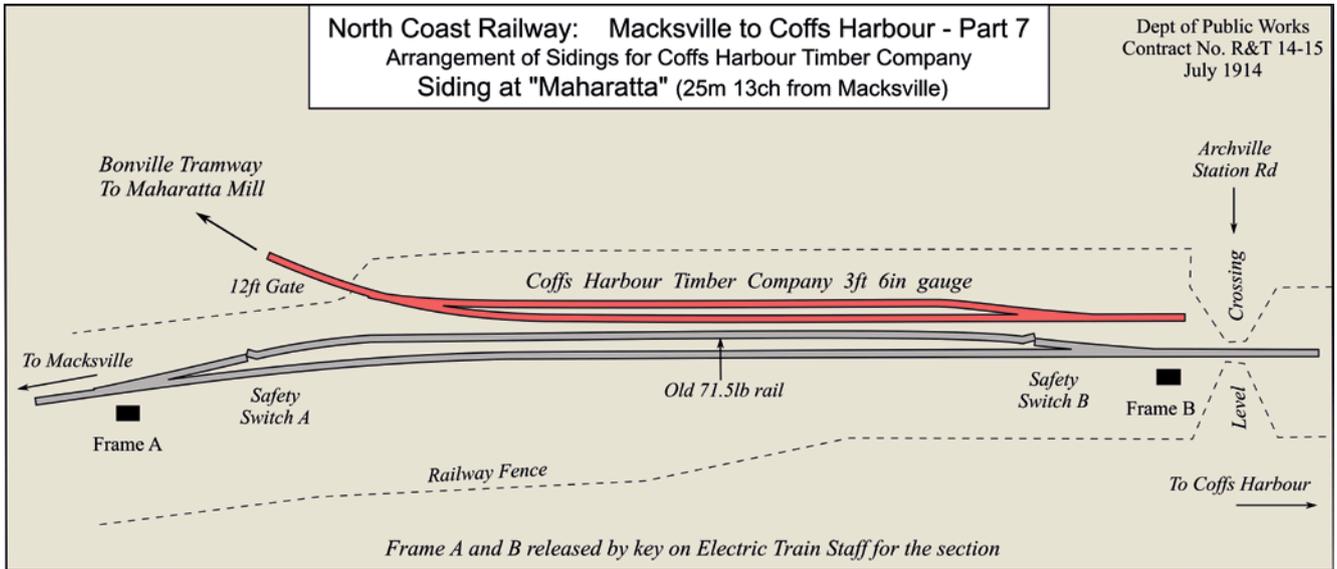
The CHTCo's five-mile 3ft 6in gauge Bonville Tramway transported sawn timber from its Maharatta saw mill at Crossmaglen to a private siding on the NSW North Coast Railway. A two-mile logging line extended into the forests behind the mill.



Maharatta Mill, Crossmaglen: 0-6-0ST Andrew Barclay 222/1880 with a blackbutt log on the mill's dead-end, sawn-timber loading siding. The siding curved to the right behind the photographer to connect with the Bonville Tramway on the other side of the mill. It is thought the catch point was a precaution against uncoupled timber trucks running away onto the main line. Photo: NSW State Library



Maharatta Sawmill's sawn timber loading siding featured an unusual (for a timber tramway) catch point, presumably as a precaution against loaded timber trucks running back onto the main line.



Unlike the Boambee Tramway's balloon loop terminus at the CHTCo's Nondaville Siding, the Bonville Tramway terminated in a simple loop siding beside the company's private Maharatta Siding on the NSW North Coast Railway.

The tramway terminated beside the company's private Maharatta Siding on the Government Railway. Facilities here consisted of a 550 ft long standard gauge loop siding paralleled by a similar length tramway loop siding with a short head shunt to facilitate locomotive run around. To shunt the siding, the points accessing the standard gauge loop siding were released by a key on the miniature electric train staff controlling the Raleigh to Coffs Harbour Section.

The Bonville Tramway operated for some 15 years. The company's 10-year Exclusive Right No. 1 expired in May

1921; the outer section of the logging tramway through Crown Land was pulled up and the tramway lease for it was allowed to lapse. The end came in December 1930 when fire destroyed 80000 feet of sawn timber at Maharatta Siding as well as a 120 ft loading ramp and a number of rail trucks.<sup>6</sup> This disaster brought about the voluntary liquidation of the CHTCo, and in June 1931 a work gang began pulling up the tramway.<sup>7</sup> Some 350 tons of rails were recovered and advertised for the liquidation sale, listed as 1 mile of 28 lb rail, 1¼ miles of 40 lb rail and 3½ miles of 42 lb rail and valued at £2,100.<sup>8</sup>



*Ex-Joadja 0-6-0ST Andrew Barclay 222/180 on the Bonville Tramway with a short trainload of sawn timber en route to Maharatta Siding, c1915. The white-trousered figure standing next to the locomotive is CHTCo general manager Alexander Clarke Mackay. Photo: NSW State Library*



0-6-0ST Andrew Barclay 222/1880 on the Bonville Tramway beside an eight-ton steam log hauler which supplied logs to the Maharatta Mill at Crossmaglen. The CHTCo had a total of five log haulers which cost £1,000 each. This once virgin bush is now carpeted with manicured hobby farms.

Photo: David Beck collection via Mark Fry

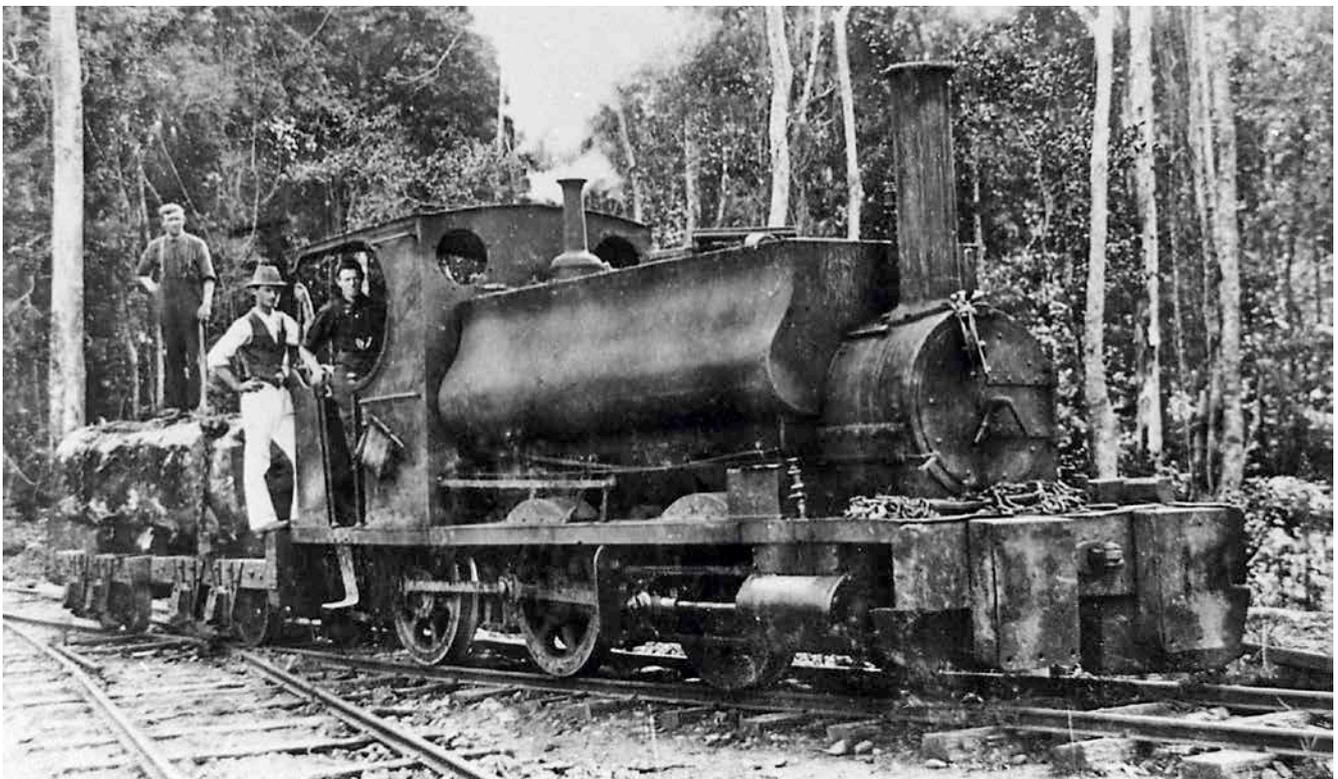
### **The first Bonville Tramway locomotive: 0-6-0ST Andrew Barclay 222/1880**

The CHTCo purchased two second-hand Andrew Barclay (AB) steam locomotives in late 1912 from Messrs Cameron and Sutherland, second-hand machinery dealers of Sydney. Both locomotives had been purchased new from Andrew Barclay and Sons Ltd of Kilmarnock, Scotland, by the Australian Kerosene, Oil and Mineral Company for its oil shale operation at Joadja, NSW, and had been sold off when the works closed down in 1905. The CHTCo assigned AB 0-4-0ST 237/1881 to its Nondaville Mill in the Boambee Valley, and AB 0-6-0ST 222/1880 to Maharatta Mill at Crossmaglen.

The six-coupled AB 222/1880 had 10 inch diameter by 18 inch stroke outside cylinders and 36½ inch diameter

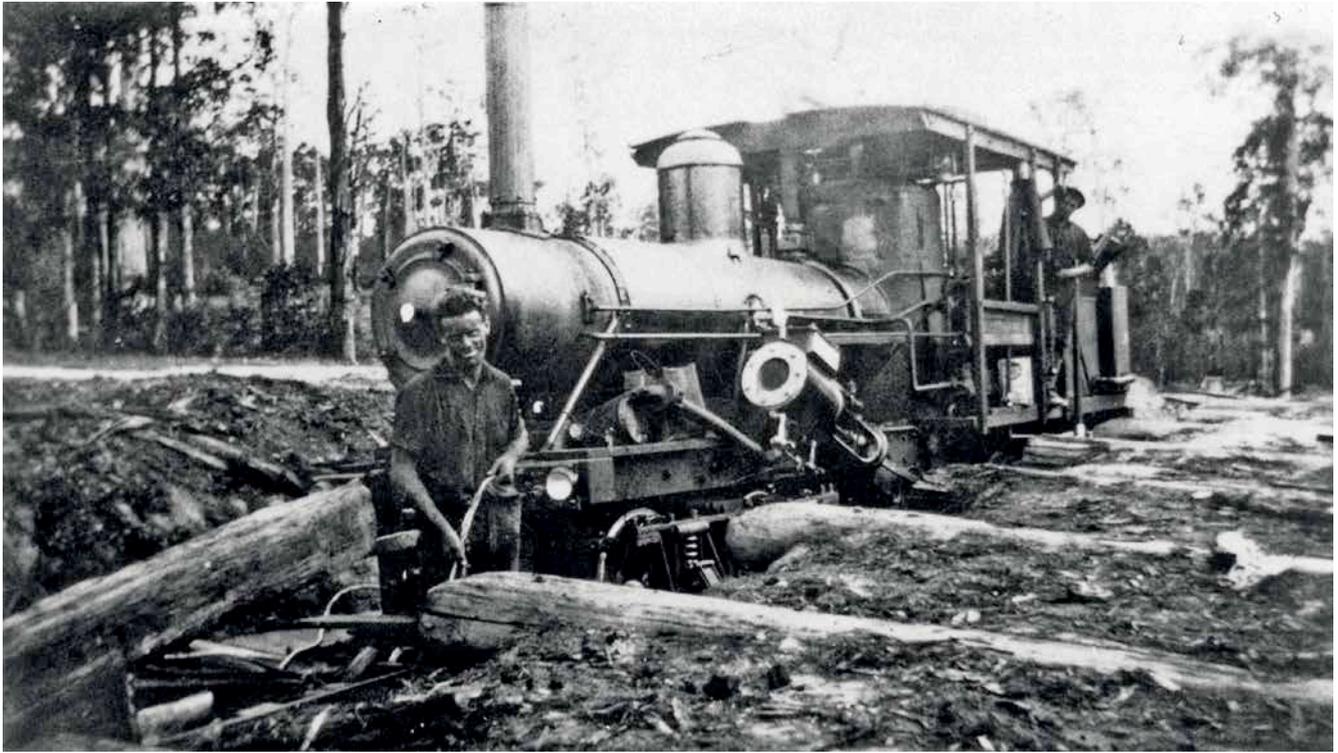
wheels, the centre pair being flangeless. The locomotive was first recorded on the Bonville Tramway in June 1913 when a local newspaper reported that it had been running on the tramway for some time, "doing good work".<sup>9</sup> Its subsequent career appears to have been uneventful, at least, no reports of accidents and incidents made it into the local newspapers. An old forestry worker, the late Mr. Ernie Herdegen, said the locomotive was notorious for sparks flying out of its stack, and was responsible for many fires in the area.

AB 222/1880 was joined at Crossmaglen by 0-4-0ST AB 237/1881 after the company closed the Nondaville Mill in 1917. The locomotive was cannibalised during the early 1920s. Its boiler and cab, and possibly other parts, were removed and used to rebuild AB 237/1881.<sup>10</sup>



Alexander Clarke Mackay, in his signature white duck trousers, stands on a log truck behind 0-6-0ST AB 222/1880 on the Bonville Tramway c1915. He was the Coffs Harbour Timber Company's first general manager and oversaw the construction of the company's sawmills and tramways between 1912 and 1916.

Photo: David Beck collection via Mark Fry



*B-class Climax (2225/1899) at the Jarrah Mill log yard at Simsville, NSW, in 1925. It was acquired by CHTCo for the Bonville Tramway in June 1929, presumably as a replacement for the worn-out Andrew Barclay 237/1881. The Climax's stay was short, and it was abandoned at Crossmaglen after the tramway was pulled up in 1931.*  
*Photo: Loretta Marsh*

**The second Bonville Tramway locomotive: B-class Climax (Cn 2225/1899)**

The CHTCo's Climax locomotive represented the last gasp, as it were, of the company's rail transport of timber. In June 1929 Herdegen and Singleton, who had leased the Maharatta Mill at Crossmaglen, advertised to buy a 'good second-hand 3ft 6in gauge light locomotive.'<sup>11</sup> They purchased a 17 ton B-class Climax geared steam locomotive (code number 2225/1899) from Stroud Timber Limited at Simsville, NSW. Its actual builder's number is not known and Climax historians Taber and Casler assigned it a code number, 2225, instead.

Climax 2225, known as *Daddy Long Legs* at Simsville, had been purchased new by Laheys Ltd for its Canungra logging tramway in Queensland. Pines and Hardwoods Ltd acquired the locomotive for its Simsville operation in 1925. When that company went

into voluntary liquidation in 1927, the Climax was inherited by Stroud Timber Limited who took over the Simsville operations.<sup>12</sup>

It is likely that the CHTCo purchased the Climax to replace the composite 0-4-0ST AB 237/1881, which by then was nearly 50 years old and was possibly worn out. The Climax's career on the Bonville Tramway was short lived. The company's Maharatta Siding facilities were destroyed by fire in December 1930 and two months later the company went into voluntary liquidation. The locomotive's last task was probably the lifting of the Bonville Tramway rails in mid-1931.

The company's liquidators advertised Climax 2225 for sale in October 1931 with an estimated book value of £400.<sup>13</sup> There were no takers and the locomotive was left abandoned at the mill site. The abandoned T-shaped boiler with its round firebox was photographed at Crossmaglen in 1961.

*The abandoned boiler of the B-class Climax (2225/1899) at Crossmaglen in 1961. The Climax was purchased second-hand from Simsville in 1929 and operated on the Bonville Tramway for a short while until the CHTCo went into liquidation the following year. There were no buyers at the liquidation sale and the locomotive was eventually scrapped at Crossmaglen.*

*Bruce Macdonald photograph per Jim Longworth.*





*Langley Bros' SS Fitzroy, commanded by Captain James Colvin, taking on passengers at Coffs Harbour Jetty c1913. The steam jetty crane transferred timber, general cargo and passengers to ships which had to be held off the Jetty by heavy hawsers. The same crane loaded CHTCo's timber onto the SS Belbowrie. Captain Colvin was one of the Exclusive Right No.1 Syndicate members. He went down with the Fitzroy when it sank off Tuncurry Beach in June 1921.*

*Photo: NSW State Library*

### **The Coffs Harbour Co-operative Steamship Company Ltd**

The North Coast Steam Navigation Company and Langley Brothers were the two principal shipping companies providing a regular passenger and cargo service between Coffs Harbour and Sydney in the years leading up to World War 1. Before the protective ocean breakwaters were built, transferring passengers and cargo between ships and the 1600 ft long ocean jetty in heavy seas was a risky business. Coastal steamers pitched and tossed, and had to be held off the jetty by heavy cables attached to mooring buoys. The steam jetty crane transferred timber, general cargo and passengers, the latter in large cane baskets, a practice that called for a high degree of skill and judgement by crane drivers.

Company steamer captains sometimes declined to risk their vessels in bad weather and bypassed Coffs Harbour, a practice that infuriated local merchants and timber shippers. CHTCo manager Alexander McKay gave evidence to a Public Works Committee in 1913 that, as manager of the British Australian Timber Company several years ago, he had lost count of the number of times he had been carried past his destination.

With this practice in mind, and a developing shortage of shipping due to the war, the CHTCo made alternative arrangements to ship its timber to Sydney. In May 1915 it signed a five year contract with John William Buckley, a Sydney sawmill owner and shipping manager, who was then trading as the Coffs Harbour Shipping Co. Buckley controlled the SS *Belbowrie*, a 250-ton capacity twin-screw wooden steamship built in 1911 by Rock Davis at Blackwall on the Brisbane Water. The *Belbowrie* was made especially for the timber trade with one large box hatch forward to expedite the loading of up to 80000 superfeet of timber, and with deck space for

piles and girders up to 90 feet long. Buckley contracted to ship the company's timber to Sydney five times a month for a going rate of three shillings and threepence per 100 super feet of timber.<sup>14</sup>

Upon gaining the contract, Buckley lost no time in floating a new company, the Coffs Harbour Co-operative Steamship Company Limited, to take over the business. He painted an optimistic picture of contracted timber cargoes going to Sydney, with all the town's goods and merchandise being shipped back on return trips. The *Belbowrie* and the timber contract could be secured for £6750 on easy terms. £1 Shares in the new company could be taken up for as little one shilling down and one shilling a month, which would allow the little man to share in the handsome dividends that were all but guaranteed.<sup>15</sup> Buckley's enthusiasm was infectious. In no time at all, 5000 shares had been taken up by local residents and Coffs Harbour businessmen, thus enabling the company to be registered in June 1915 with a capital of £10,000 and with Buckley as its managing director.<sup>16</sup>

At first the business prospered, with the *Belbowrie* being hard pressed to ship the enormous quantities of sawn timber produced by the CHTCo's two sawmills during the second half of 1915. But storm clouds began to gather. The Big Nondaville mill shut down in October 1915, and although it re-opened for part of 1916, timber production was much reduced as the company struggled to find markets. The *Belbowrie* often returned to Coffs Harbour with near-empty holds in the face of stiff competition from the North Coast Steam Navigation Company. Although the directors reported modest trading profits at the annual shareholders' meetings, they were swallowed up by the interest payments on the mortgaged steamer, and no dividends were payable.

The storm broke in November 1917, only days after the directors had tabled an optimistic forecast at the Annual General Meeting. The company received a notice from the liquidators of the Nowra-based Coastal Shipping Co-operative Company Limited, demanding payment of money owed for the purchase of the *Belbourie*, and failing that, possession of the *Belbourie* within three weeks. As a consequence the City Bank of Sydney called in the CHTCo's overdraft of £4,500. To avoid the seizure of the *Belbourie*, which would have left the shareholders with nothing, the directors were forced to negotiate its hasty sale to Bell and Frazer, timber merchants of Sydney, for £6,600 to settle its debts. With no vessel, and the CHTCo's timber freight contract going with the *Belbourie* to Bell and Frazer, they put their company into voluntary liquidation in early 1918.<sup>17</sup>

As the financial disaster unfolded, it was revealed that Buckley had previously set up the Coastal Shipping Co-operative Company Limited in 1913 at Nowra on the NSW South Coast. He had sold thousands of shares to local residents and businessmen along similar lines and with similar promises as he subsequently did in Coffs Harbour. As its managing director he negotiated a first mortgage loan from the City Bank to purchase the steamer *Belbourie*. His new company only traded for a year before going into voluntary liquidation. It could not compete with the larger and longer-established Illawarra and South Coast Steam Navigation Company for the relatively small amount of trade available on the South Coast.<sup>18</sup>

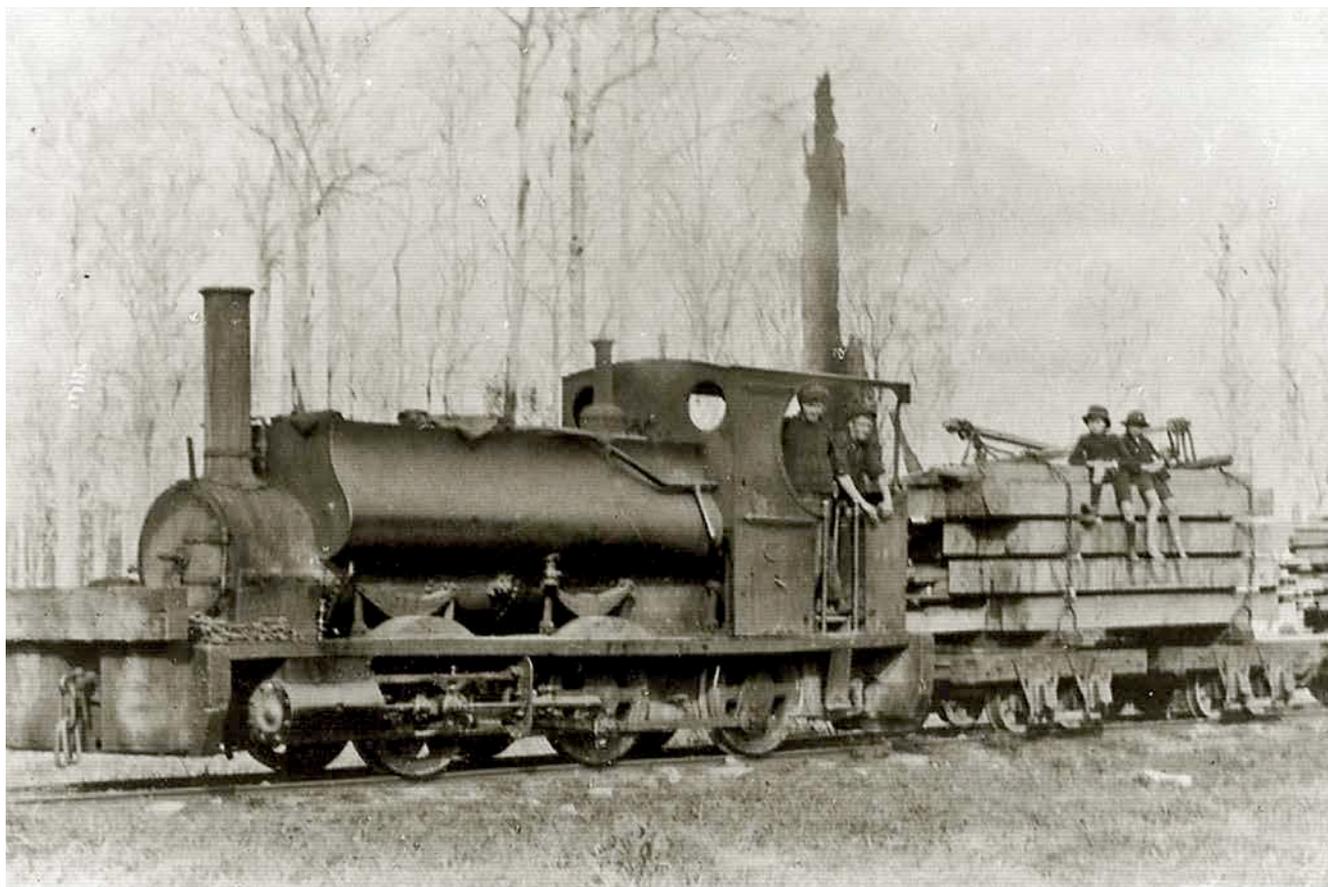
Buckley was appointed as one of the company liquidators but deferred liquidating the assets and instead used the *Belbourie* to set up the Coffs Harbour Co-operative Steamship Company. He persuaded several of the more affluent Coffs Harbour shareholders to act as guarantors for the City Bank mortgage

over the *Belbourie* which, he said, would be transferred across from the Coastal Co-operative Company in due course. The long-suffering and out-of-pocket shareholders of the Coastal Co-operative Company finally lost patience. In November 1917 they appointed new liquidators to wind their company up and return their funds. The new liquidators demanded repayment of the purchase money on the *Belbourie* owed to the City Bank or, failing that, immediate possession of the vessel. Buckley's Coffs Harbour guarantors became alarmed and refused to pay out the £4500 overdraft now demanded by the City Bank.

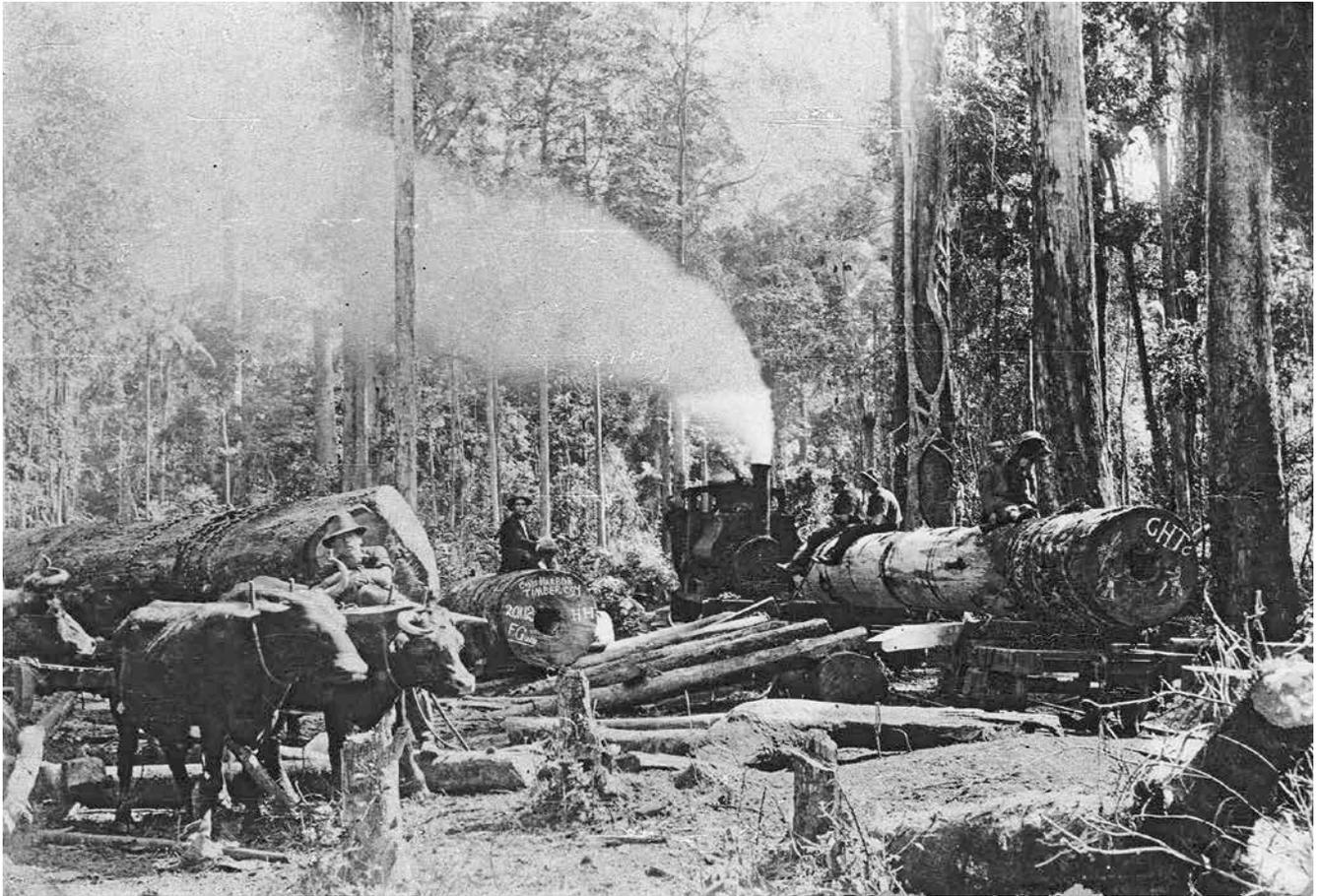
There were furious exchanges at an extraordinary general meeting of the Coffs Harbour Co-operative Steamship Company called in January 1918 to recommend voluntary liquidation. The shareholders were forced to accept but hauled the directors over the coals. "Buckley's Bust Business" was castigated in terms that the local paper could not print without falling foul of the laws of libel. Buckley disappeared back to Sydney. Two years later, the shareholders got about one third of their money back from the liquidators.

### **The CHTCo during the First World War and its aftermath**

The outbreak of World War 1 in August 1914 had a serious effect on the timber industry of the NSW North Coast. It depended heavily on exports, which were badly affected by a shortage of shipping and the loss of European markets. The big Woolgoolga mills belonging to the British Australian Timber Company and the Great Northern Timber Company closed down throwing hundreds of men out of work. Many more men lost their jobs when the NSW Government stopped the purchase of sleepers, girders and piles except in small quantities for immediate requirements.



*Ex-Joadja 0-6-0ST Andrew Barclay 222/1880 hauls a load of hardwood sleepers, sawn timber and children on the Bonville Tramway en route from the Crossmaglen saw mill to the CHTCo's private Maharashtra Siding on the NSW North Coast Railway. Harry Wright collection*



*0-6-0ST Andrew Barclay 222/1880 with Hurtle Hodgson's bullock team loading flooded gum logs onto Bonville Tramway timber trucks for the short trip to Maharatta saw mill c1924. This 300-acre property at Crossmaglen was owned by CHTCo director Matthew Singleton. The logs have been suitably labelled, cartooned and posed for the photographer, as has the dog wearing his master's hat. Photo: NSW State Library*

The CHTCo initially kept its two mills open and pushed ahead with its tramway development program. In February 1915 it advertised for steel rails to extend its logging tramways,<sup>19</sup> and the following month purchased nine miles of tramway line and the A-class Shay locomotive (Lima 2135/1909) from the British Australian Timber Company's closed Coffs Harbour operation.<sup>20</sup>

An extension of the Maharatta Mill's logging tramway at Crossmaglen was underway in November 1915 when the ganger-in-charge, William Shanahan, had the misfortune to break a leg when a steel tramway rail fell on it.<sup>21</sup> Over four miles of logging tramways had been laid when licensed surveyor Edward Cross drew up his survey plans for the Lands Department in mid-1916.

When the NSW North Coast Railway line to Coffs Harbour opened to traffic in August 1915 the CHTCo began railing all its sawn timber to Coffs Harbour Jetty by rail. It had won a contract to supply half-a-million superfeet of hardwood timber to the Melbourne Harbour Trust in December 1914 followed by a New Zealand export order for another 500,000 superfeet the following February. At the peak of operations in mid-1915 the company had five steam log haulers at work on its logging tramways, three at Nondaville and two at Maharatta, and the two mills were working at full pressure.

At first the CHTCo prospered and the SS *Belbourie* was hard pressed to ship the large quantities of sawn timber being railed to Coffs Harbour. But by late-1915 the effects of the war caught up on the company. It was forced to shut the big Nondaville Mill in September 1915 when export orders dried up and it was unable to obtain shipping space for its remaining orders.<sup>22</sup> The wages bill for the Nondaville operation was

£1000 a month, and its closure as a big loss for the district.

Alexander Mackay resigned as general manager when the mill closed, and his position was taken by Captain C W Elliot, late of the North Coast Steam Navigation Company. Elliot subsequently enlisted as a Warrant Officer in the Australian Army and sailed for the Western Front in May 1918. He was succeeded by Malcolm Williams who previously had been in charge of the CHTCo's business at Glenreagh.

The company re-started the Nondaville Mill in July 1916 and operated it until the General Strike of August 1917 when over 100,000 workers in NSW and Victoria went out on strike, seriously disrupted shipping and railways. The company was also facing a steep increase in timber royalties under the recently enacted 1916 Forestry Act. The Nondaville Mill shut down again, this time for good.<sup>23</sup> The whole of the sawmilling plant as well as the tramway rails and two locomotives were advertised for sale in the Sydney press in November 1917.<sup>24</sup>

The CHTCo's ten-year, 8,000 acre Exclusive Right No. 1 was extinguished in late 1917 when Tuckers Nob and Orara West State Forests were proclaimed under the 1916 NSW Forestry Act. The company had taken very little timber off it, especially west of the Coast Range, as the early closure of the big Nondaville Mill meant that the planned logging tramways to access the timber never eventuated.

### **The final years of the Coffs Harbour Timber Company**

The CHTCo kept the small Maharatta Mill at Crossmaglen and its Bonville Tramway open through the war. There were some changes in mill management during that time. Alexander Donald Mackay, the first mill manager and eldest son of Alexander Clarke Mackay, resigned in April 1916 to

join the railway construction firm of Norton Griffiths at Coffs Harbour. He was replaced by George Davidson, but his stay was cut short after he was charged the following year in Sydney with uttering valueless cheques.

Davidson was replaced by Matthew Singleton JP, a successful farmer and pig breeder in the Bonville district. In September 1917 Singleton let his farm and moved to Crossmaglen to manage the CHTCo's Maharatta saw mill. Two years later he was appointed as a director of the company.<sup>25</sup>

Large quantities of cheap oregon timber from North America flooded the market during the early 1920s and caused a major slump in the local timber industry. The company managed to keep the mill open for most of that period except for a few months in 1922 and again in 1923. Operations were scaled back and the steam log haulers were replaced by bullock teams hauling to log dumps on the line.

In 1925 CHTCo director Matthew Singleton purchased the company's 300 acre leased property at Crossmaglen. The following year he formed a partnership with an experienced sawmiller, Edward Herdegen, and leased Maharatta Mill from the company.<sup>26</sup> Herdegen managed the mill and the partnership traded under the Coffs Harbour Timber Company's name.

Herdegen and Singleton kept the Bonville Tramway open and renewed the lease for the line through Barden's property when it fell due in December 1928. The following year they purchased B-Class Climax locomotive 2225/1899 from Stroud Timber Company at Simsville. Not much is known of its operations during the late 1920s though a newspaper snippet from May 1926 records a Sydney train being delayed when trucks on a goods train derailed at Maharatta Siding.

Disaster struck in December 1930 when a fire destroyed 80,000 feet of sawn timber at Maharatta Siding as well as a 120 ft loading ramp and a number of rail trucks and sundries.<sup>27</sup> With the country then in the grip of the Great Depression, this was the last straw for the CHTCo. An extraordinary general meeting was called in January 1931 and a resolution was passed to voluntarily wind up the company. A work gang began pulling up the Bonville Tramway rails in June 1931.<sup>28</sup> Frazer and Hall, Sydney, were elected as the liquidators, and they advertised the company's assets for sale in October 1931.<sup>29</sup>

Maharatta Mill was purchased as a going concern by G L Briggs and Sons, owners of the large Briggsvale saw mill and tramway operation on the Dorrigo Plateau.<sup>30</sup> Briggs kept the mill open but its timber was now despatched to Coffs Harbour by lorry. Edward Herdegen stayed on as mill manager but in February 1933, while supervising the loading of a timber lorry at the mill, was badly injured when a quantity of sawn hardwood fell on him. He spent six weeks in Coffs District Hospital recovering from his injuries.<sup>31</sup> A few months later Briggs sold the mill to a Dorrigo sawmiller, John Seccombe, who closed it down and used the machinery to set up a new mill at Boambee.

The NSW Railway Department paid the CHTCo £40 10s scrap value for the old 71½ lb rails at Maharatta Siding and abolished the siding in August 1931.<sup>32</sup> Local residents successfully petitioned the Railway Department to provide a short timber passenger platform there, which opened as Archville Railway Station in April 1936. A small shelter shed was erected in October 1940 and the station remained in use for passengers until closed in June 1974.

### Extant Remains

Today the Coffs Harbour district is heavily populated and closely settled, consequently it is difficult to find evidence of the CHTCo's sawmills or tramways. The fertile valleys of

Boambee and Bonville Creeks, through which the company's tramways were built, are now replete with manicured hobby farms. Faint traces of the Bonville tramway formation can be seen in Pine Creek State Forest off Butlers Road and in Tuckers Nob State Forest west of Crossmaglen. A shallow cutting in a paddock near the end of Englands Road marks part of the Boambee Tramway's balloon loop at Nondaville Mill.

### Acknowledgements

Grateful thanks are due to Richard Horne for access to his substantial research into Andrew Barclay locomotives and for the supply of photographs. My thanks also go to Mark Fry, John Kramer, Jim Longworth, Bruce Macdonald and Jeff Moonie.

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Bongaree jetty, viewed from the ss Doomba. Note the three jetty approach walkways, dating the photo to post-1926. The centre (original) jetty was built in 1912 and fitted with a narrow-gauge tramway in 1913. The clothing seems indicative of the mid-1930s however, note, under the awning, the hatless lady in smart white shorts, bare legs, short-sleeve top and high-heels, rebelling against the fashion status quo.

Photo: John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland Neg: 6798-0001-0001

## Bongaree's jetties – more from Bribie Island

by Phil Rickard

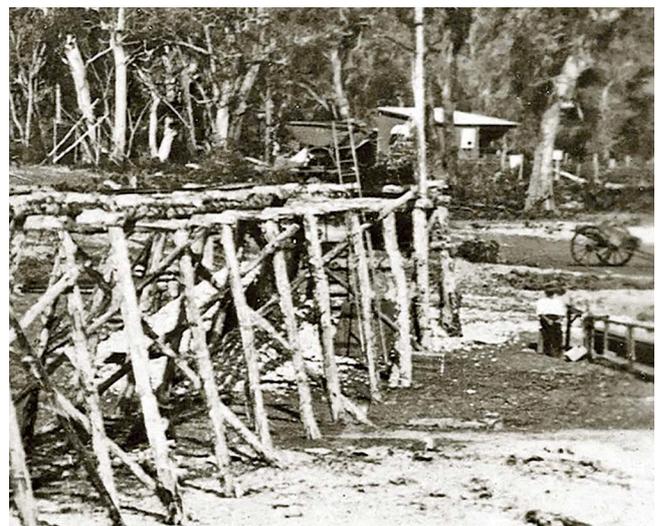
I was most interested in Rod Milne's article on the tramways of the Moreton Bay Islands (LR 251, Oct 2016) and, like Rod, I was rather amazed at the spindly jetty on Bribie Island, seen in the photo on page 19. However, I suspect its raison d'être has been mis-understood. There were actually two jetties at Bongaree – the one depicted, plus the 'normal' passenger jetty just a few yards away to the right, and out of the picture. The photo in LR251 was taken from the foredeck of the SS *Koopa*, which was berthed at the passenger jetty.

The story of Bongaree's jetties starts in February 1902, when James Campbell and Sons Limited was granted a Special Lease (SL 724) over 12 acres of land on the western side of Bribie Island, on Pumice Stone Channel as a wharf site.<sup>1</sup> The following year, in August, the Brisbane Tug Company Limited was formed; a partnership between three existing firms that undertook towage in the port of Brisbane – Gibbs, Bright and Company; Webster and Company; and James Campbell and Sons. George Peter Campbell was named as manager and secretary. In addition to undertaking Brisbane's towage, the new company declared that developing excursion traffic would be a priority.<sup>2</sup>

The new company's three tugs were not purpose-built tug boats such as we know today, but vessels also capable of being used as excursion steamers. The SS *Beaver* (222 tons) was certified by the Marine Board to carry 400 persons on Moreton Bay or 700 in the Brisbane River, the PS *Boko* (203 tons) could carry 253 persons on the Bay and 506 in the river and the SS *Greyhound* 255 on the bay and 450 in the river. As there was generally only enough work for two tugs at Brisbane it was clearly good business sense to use any spare vessels on excursion traffic.<sup>3</sup>

The SS *Greyhound* was the preferred excursion steamer and little time was lost in diversifying its use. One unusual trip was for the Eight-hours' Day holiday at the end of April 1904. At this time Bribie Island was bereft of a jetty or landing and very few people lived there. The *Greyhound* ran a 'camping excursion' to Bribie on Saturday 30 April and returned to pick up the campers and picnickers on the Monday.<sup>4</sup> Transfer to the beach was done by boats. In July the *Beaver* became the first of the company's vessels to receive its new colour scheme, "a green colour [Aberdeen green] . . . with a red band around the funnel".

In October 1904, the company announced that the *Greyhound* or *Beaver* would institute weekly excursions to "Redcliffe, Bribie Island, South Passage, Pile Light and other



Enlargement of the land end of the temporary staging, showing a small heap of gravel, with skips above. Height to rail level is about 13ft; the sea end being some five feet higher. For full picture, see Light Railways No.251. Photo: John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Neg:APA-114-0002-0007

favourite resorts”; not that Pile Light, about eight km north-east of the Brisbane River entrance, in Moreton Bay, could be considered a favourite resort! All vessels had their passenger facilities upgraded around this time whilst the *Boko* had its funnel reduced in height and mast cut so it could get under the Victoria Street bridge in Brisbane, for up-river excursions. Electric lights were installed throughout and moonlight trips proved popular in addition to the normal day return trips. The ‘Tug Company’ had clearly tapped a latent market; holiday traffic, especially, was proving extremely popular.

Towards the end of 1905 the company obtained a 21-year lease on an acre of land at South Passage, on the southern tip of Moreton Island, and proceeded to erect a jetty (261ft long, no tram) for the landing of passengers. Again, this proved very popular as the spot allowed access to a much sought-after ocean surf beach on one side or, on the eastern side of the point, a shallow tidal pool suitable for children. Other events that proved popular included special trips with cheap tickets for children and parents, company picnics, fishing excursions, inspection trips whenever visiting naval warships (Commonwealth, British, Japanese etc) were in the Bay, visiting military encampments at Lytton and the free use of vessels for charitable events such as raising funds for hospitals.

In February 1911, in a business restructure, the Brisbane Tug Company was acquired by a new company, the Brisbane Tug and Steamship Company Limited. The company’s issued capital was increased. George Campbell was appointed manager and secretary of the new company.<sup>5</sup> A key intention of the new company was to buy a fast, purpose-built pleasure steamer of large proportions, specifically for the Moreton Bay trade – in fact it had already been in consultations with a Scottish shipbuilder (Ramage and Ferguson, who had also built the *Beaver* in 1886) for many months. At the time, Brisbane’s population was about 150,000 and both railway and water excursions were big events, eagerly anticipated by all in the early years of the new century and a newly federated country.

As much of the shoreline nearest Brisbane was tidal mud flats or mangroves, there was a growing demand for sandy ocean beaches and they could only be reached by steamer. This made trips to the various seaside resorts much sought-after by excursionists.

Later in the year came the news that the new vessel, the *SS Koopa* (“Flying Fish”), had departed Leith, Scotland, on 17 October, and would arrive in Brisbane by the end of December. Such proved to be true, the *Koopa* arriving on Christmas Eve. The twin-screw steamer *Koopa* (416 tons) was built by Ramage and Ferguson Ltd, had a length of 192 ft 6 in, breadth of 28 ft and draught of 6 ft 6 in. She had two sets of triple expansion engines; cylinders 13, 21 and 34 in diameter x 18 in stroke, with steam supplied from two Scotch marine boilers. Top speed was 16 knots. Two decks for passenger accommodation were provided, the top, promenade, deck extending almost the whole length of the vessel. The lower, enclosed, deck had two main saloons. A kitchen, bar and confectionery kiosk were also included. The two funnels and the full-length covered promenade deck gave her a distinctive appearance.<sup>6</sup>

After arrival, she was immediately put into service, running two well-patronised return trips to Redcliffe, a favourite beach resort, on Christmas Day and Boxing Day. On New Year’s Day 1912, even larger crowds were carried; on three legs of the two return trips to Redcliffe over 1200 people were on board for each journey. One month later, the Queensland Government granted Special Lease No.1628 over 12 acres on Bribie Island to the company. Effectively, this was another continuation of the 1902 five-year lease that had been extended in 1907 for another five years to 1912. A key difference this time was that Special Lease 1628 was for 21 years (at £2 per annum) and required a “good and substantial wharf” to be built.<sup>7</sup> The purchase of the *Koopa* and the expansion to Bribie Island were clearly two key parts of the Brisbane Tug and Steamship Company’s future plans.



*Arriving at the Bongaree jetty; taken from the promenade deck of the ss Doomba, March or April 1924. The temporary staging, to facilitate the import of stone and gravel for construction of the company’s private road, is clearly seen – with one skip visible – beyond the passenger jetty. The ss Porpoise is largely hidden behind the jetty shelter shed. Three men and the top of the skip being filled, can just be seen above the roofline. Compare with photo on next page. The row of huts in the background were built by the Brisbane Tug Company and often referred to as the ‘Twelve Apostles’. Photo: APA-114/2 Campbell Family Photograph Albums, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland*



*The ss Porpoise at the temporary construction staging, at Bongaree in 1924, taken from the foredeck of the ss Doomba. The Porpoise is known to have been at that jetty in late March and early April when George Hallett got his fingers jammed in some machinery.<sup>22</sup> The Porpoise (125 tons) was built in Sydney in 1875. She was 103ft 8in long, 17ft 9in wide and 6ft 9in draught and had a 2-cylinder compound engine rated at 12hp. Purchased by John Burke Limited in 1908 for use as a coastal trader. Note the scoop fitted to the derrick, being used to transfer stone or gravel from her hold to the skip on the elevated staging. A similar photo, but with the lighter Pirra (owned by T F Moxon), may be seen in the SLQ's image APA-114-0002-0008. Photo: APA-114/2 Campbell Family Photograph Albums, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland*

In mid-January the SS *Koopa* made the first of many trips to Bribie Island (it would serve the island until May 1953), though it could not land passengers as the company's jetty had yet to be completed. By early May that deficiency had been rectified; Sunday the 12th is thought to be the first time the *Koopa* berthed at the new jetty at Bongaree. Bribie Island had arrived as a tourist destination, even if it was somewhat rural and rustic! It was good for picnics and camping, had a beach on the bay side of the island whilst an hour's walk enabled one to reach the ocean surf beach. In early June the *Koopa* carried company shareholders and friends on a special trip to Bribie Island to view what had been accomplished. Luncheon was partaken on board whilst berthed at the new jetty and a band provided entertainment.<sup>8</sup> The jetty, constructed by Taylor Bros., well-known bridge, wharf and pier contractors of Bulimba, was 200 feet in length by 10ft wide, leading to a T-head 75ft x 16ft.<sup>9</sup> Previous to the *Koopa* entering the Tug Company's fleet, excursions were usually suspended for the winter months but, with a purpose-built vessel now available, trips were run every weekend, even in the off-season and Bribie was usually the destination.

In November 1912 the government declared the new 'Town of Bongaree' adjacent to the company's jetty, conducted a survey and placed 100 blocks, each of one rood,<sup>10</sup> up for auction. These were eagerly sought after and most lots were sold at between £5 and £31 each, well above the set price. Another sale followed in December 1913; prices ranged from £20 to £42. The price increases clearly showing where Bribie was heading. Further sales followed in subsequent years.

Over the years the company made various other improvements at Bongaree – in 1913 it laid a narrow gauge tramway along the jetty and supplied a trolley for conveyance of luggage and stores, erected jetty railings, and a stylish shelter shed at the jetty head.<sup>11</sup> Changing sheds and lavatories were erected at the beach for use of excursionists. Private enterprise

provided a store and boarding houses and the company built a row of twelve huts along the foreshore, north of its jetty. These were quickly dubbed the 'Twelve Apostles' and appear in many early photos of Bongaree.

In early January 1914, the Queensland government granted the Tug Company's secretary, George Peter Campbell, Special Lease No. 1862, for 21 years over a narrow strip of land across Bribie Island for the purpose of building a tramway.<sup>12</sup> The area, stretching from the jetty to the ocean beach, together with blocks at each end for termini, equalled about 58¼ acres. The rent was £2 per annum, for the first six years and subject to review thereafter.<sup>13</sup> It seems Campbell was embarking on a private venture. Unfortunately, the Great War intervened.

In 1920, at the rent review hearing, Campbell advised that the original lease was obtained [signed?] on 31 March 1914. It was then found that the Minister for Railways had to give permission, a rather slow process. Then a London agent was needed to purchase the plant with Burns, Philp and Company eventually being appointed. They were arranging for the plant and material to be purchased from Belgium when war was declared, and advised Campbell to await the end of hostilities. The war was now over but the price of material was said to now be five [sic] times what it was in 1914. Campbell stated that he had had a survey made at a cost of £100 whilst also keeping a walking track open along the easement. He hoped plant would soon be available at a reasonable price so work may proceed. He was granted the same rent as that existing, £2 per annum for another six years.<sup>14</sup>

Still events moved slowly. In early December 1922 tenders were called for the clearing and grubbing of the two-chain-wide easement. By March 1923 this was subject to some industrial troubles over hours worked and the matter ended up in the Arbitration Court in Brisbane. The dispute was between the Australian Workers' Union (AWU) and the Brisbane Tug and



*Bongaree 1924. Temporary elevated staging. Passenger jetty on right with luggage trolley just visible. Two skips are at the far end of the staging with Blake Bros' International truck nearby. The Tug Company's road stretches into the distance. What a great view the kids had from the swings outside the caretaker's cottage!*

*Photo: Vera Campbell's photo colln, p.36, Bribie Island Historical Society*

Steamship Company (confirming that, ultimately, the company was behind the tramway scheme), jointly with the Queensland Employers' Federation. Around ten men were engaged in the clearing work under foreman William Shirley. Though clearing work was completed by mid-May, the Tug Company had a reality check and decided to construct a roadway, rather than proceed with the tramway. Railway material was proving expensive whilst road vehicles seemed to offer a less costly and more flexible alternative, considering the small distance to be traversed. Road work was well underway by September 1923, a visitor reporting a 'lively scene' with bullock team, grader and scoop at work.

As stone for the road (or railway had it gone ahead) was unavailable on sandy Bribie, it had to be imported. To this end, Blake Brothers, carriers from suburban Windsor, were engaged to provide gravel and stone. This came from Bowser & Lever's quarry at Windsor and was trucked by Blakes to a wharf in Brisbane whence it was shipped to Bongaree by various ships and lighters. An elevated staging was erected using the rather slim paperbark piles visible in the photos. This staging was about 120 yards in length and had double track at the jetty head. Road metal and gravel was unloaded by the various vessels' steam-powered derrick and a grab, into standard 2ft-gauge side-tipping skips. Photos show at least two, that being the reason for the double track at the head; whilst one truck was being loaded, the other could be wheeled ashore. There, the material could either be tipped to a heap or emptied directly into Blakes' motor trucks for movement to the required site. If dumped, it was later reloaded via another couple of skips operating up a short ramp and emptied into motor trucks – the attached photo shows the arrangement.

The 'first-class macadamised motor road' was virtually finished by the end of September 1924. Indeed, from late August (and even earlier – i.e. Easter, along much of the way) the Tug Company had been running a motor omnibus along its road at 'one shilling per return journey'.<sup>18</sup> A month later the company hosted an invited party including the Acting Premier, William Gillies; various ministers and MLAs. After luncheon

on the SS *Koopa*, the party drove over the new road to the ocean beach at Woorim.<sup>19</sup> With the road's completion the temporary elevated staging was dismantled. It was said that the Tug Company had spent around £8000 on the entire venture. One journalist claimed it was the best road around Brisbane!<sup>20</sup> Within a few months the company had three buses available along its private toll road. In December the Queensland government declared a new town – Woorim – at the ocean beach-end of 'Campbell Road', and started selling lots.

The Tug Company continued to improve and build additions on the island. In September 1922, at its instigation, the telephone was connected. Later in the same year it donated land for tennis courts to be constructed. On 24 November 1923, the company's newest vessel, the SS *Doomba* – even larger than the *Koopa*, came to Bribie for the first time. In 1926, with the Bongaree jetty barely able to cope with the crush of passengers, two additional jetty approaches were constructed out to the T-head, which was, itself, widened to 40 feet. Only the centre jetty (the old one) carried a tramway. Shelter sheds were added at the ocean beach, plus a life-saving reel. A bowling green was constructed at Bongaree; a water tank was provided with clean drinking water and, in 1929, a kiosk for the sale of oysters and seafood built near the jetty. By 1933 the company had carried more than one million excursionists to Bongaree.<sup>21</sup> Bribie Island was now one of the premier beach resorts around Moreton Bay, principally due to the foresight and drive of the Brisbane Tug Company and, specifically, G P Campbell.

#### **Acknowledgements and references**

My grateful thanks to Donna Holmes at the Bribie Island Historical Society for answering my numerous questions and freely giving of her knowledge of G P Campbell's activities pertaining to Bribie, and providing access to the society's photographs. The society's interesting blog may be found at <http://bribieislandhistory.blogspot.com.au/> and is well worth a visit.

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*Adjacent to the gravel heaps at the base of the elevated staging (and hidden in the other photos) was this reload ramp. A couple of skips would be filled with gravel and hauled up a short ramp using a block and tackle, with a horse (out of sight to the left) providing the motive power. One of Blake Bros' motor trucks will then be backed under the structure and filled. Photo: courtesy of the Blake family, Bribie Island Historical Society W09\_888012*

# A Warburton timber man

by Nick Anchen

## Introduction

As part of some research for his books, Nick Anchen interviewed old time Warburton timber man Des Morrish in 2012. This is his story.

Des Morrish was born in Warburton on 28 January 1920, and is one of the few remaining old-time timbermen – a breed of tough bushmen who lived out in the rough bush settlements such as Federal Mill. Des spent the 1940s in the employ of the Federal Timber Products company, whose sawmill was one of the last bush mills to survive. The work was hard and the pay and conditions were dreadful, but the men enjoyed the satisfaction of a job well done, and of a sense of teamwork that only this type of work could bring.

Des spent his entire working life in the timber industry, and even when being interviewed at the age of 92, he loved nothing more than explaining the techniques of the high lead logging system, and reminiscing about the old days of climbing the mighty Mountain Ash, high up in the mountain ranges above Warburton.

## The timber industry

I was born and bred in Warburton, and in 1936 at the age of 16 I first went out into the timber industry. I got a job as a sawdust boy, wheeling sawdust, at a little sawmill on Crooked Creek called the White Slaves mill, where I was paid £2/0/6 per week. This mill was eight miles out from Warburton towards McMahon's Creek, and I used to ride my bike there and back every day. This was the only job a 16 year old was allowed to do – they wouldn't let you anywhere near the saws at that age, but then when I turned 17 I progressed through the mill, doing different jobs, such as working on the 'little bench', where we cut broom handles, pickets and so on.

One time we logged a patch of Silvertop poles, and they had a terribly rough bark on them, like pine bark. My job was to take the bark off with a crow bar and chop the ends off to make them square. Alec Isaacs was the benchman and his assistant was Bill Partridge, and as fast as I could pull the bark off, they cut them up on the saw bench. It was a stinking hot day, and the sweat was pouring out of me. Then the boss, Bill Downey, walked past and said to me, 'Just as well you've got a good easy job today Des!'

The sawmill had a little tramway, which ran 1½ miles down to the main road, where the timber went into Warby by lorry. There were two bridges along this tramway, where most of the bush had been cut out, but there were still a few trees we were cutting just before Christmas 1938. We had a few fires going in the clearing, just burning the heads off these trees, and one of these fires got away and burnt the two tramway bridges out.

My mate was Jack Cameron, who was one of the best workers I ever met. He and I were given the job of replacing the bridges just after Christmas, and so we went out on 6 and 7 January, and we cut up some timber and rebuilt the bridges, but we couldn't do any more until the mill started up to cut the wooden rails for them.

## Black Friday bushfires

We usually got about a 60 or 70 inch annual rainfall in Warburton, but in 1938 there was a terrible drought, when we only had about 16 inches for the year. Then on Friday 13 January 1939, six days after we'd done the bridge job, the Black Friday bushfires came through and burned the bridges out as if they had never been there. All the fish in Crooked



*Des Morrish, a high-climber and driver of the Washington Winch at the Federal Mill, displays his talent for ascending tall spars. It is hard to imagine this form of tree lopping within the safety regimes of today.*

*Photo: Mike McCarthy Collection*

Creek were dead and were belly-up, although we weren't sure whether it was the heat that killed them, or whether they were killed by the charcoal contaminating the water.

I was in the Warburton fire brigade at the time, and Max Sparkes was the Captain. I lived next door to Max, and on Thursday 12 January I said to him, 'I'm not going into work tomorrow, there's a bad day coming up.' On the morning of the 13th, Harry Martyr, Max and I were on the Dodge fire truck. It was our only truck and it didn't carry water, so we could only pump water from a river or dam. We went up to the aqueduct, which used to run between the O'Shanassey and Silvan Reservoirs, although what we thought we were going to do there I don't know. It was extremely hot, so Harry and I went for a swim in the channel.

Then the fire came down from the north west, from the direction of Mount Donna Buang and Mount Ben Cairn. The noise was incredible – it sounded just like a thousand tornadoes, and then the wind changed and it took the fire down through Parbury's Creek, where the golf course is now. It sizzled down the hill and crossed the Yarra River, then raced up the other side of the valley, and within seconds Mount Little Joe and all the southern side of Warburton was ablaze. So we went back down into the town, and the truck was wanted everywhere at once – Big Pat's Creek, East Warburton, McMaho's Creek – as there were fires everywhere. But Max said, 'This fire truck is here to protect the township of Warburton, and it remains in town. If we take it out in the bush it will get burnt, and we'll get burnt, and we'll lose the town as well.' All the shops were built next to one another, and

many of them were built ten or twelve feet off the ground, so they could easily have gone up and the whole town could have burnt down. We were there to put the spot fires out, and we spent all day driving around the outskirts of town, putting out these spot fires as best we could. There wasn't much panic in town, and the townsfolk were very good. The shopkeepers brought out crates of drinks and sandwiches and everybody pulled together well.

It rained on the Sunday, so we thought we'd go out to check things out at Matlock. But when we got to the McVeigh's pub and drove past the 'goose neck', a big sharp bend in the road, the most incredible scene confronted us. There were all these big, full sized trees just ripped completely out of the ground and strewn all over the place, all with great clumps of dirt still attached to their roots. They had been literally sucked out of the ground by the wind, and it was as if a giant had come along and strewn a box of matches everywhere. You could have walked for miles on tree trunks without touching the ground. This was thought to have been caused by the updraft of the wind as it rose up to get more oxygen, which was estimated at well over 200 mph! So of course we couldn't get through, and we went back to Warby.

We found out later it had been carnage up at Matlock. At Jimmy Fitzpatrick's sawmill, fifteen men and twelve horses lost their lives in the fire. Only one man survived, George Sellars. He'd found a bare patch of ground and he got blankets off his bed and two 4 gallon drums of water, and he kept tipping water over his blankets, and that was how he remained alive. On the other side of the road, Victor Yelland's old sawmill had been bought by a bloke named Henderson, and he'd built a little brick house. When the fire came, big Ted Silver had eleven men and one lady – the cook – inside this brick house.

The lady panicked and rushed out into the flames, and her body was never found. The men said they couldn't bear the heat any longer, and they should pray to the Lord for help. Ted said 'I've never prayed to the Lord in all my life, and I'm not going to be a hypocrite and ask for help now.' Then he said, 'If you listen to me, I think I can save your lives. We're going to stop in this house as long as we possibly can. Drop to the floor and fill your lungs – the best air you're going to get is from near the floor. Once the big fire's gone, we'll get out and run down to the water supply, where it will be green and we can find some water. If the heat gets too much, drop to the ground and dig through the ashes and dirt and put your mouth in there and get some air into your lungs.' The men did as he said, and they all survived.

The fire truck from Woods Point came up to Matlock, and when the blokes got there they found most of the charred bodies lying up near the sawdust heap. Jimmy Fitzpatrick's two boys were found dead inside the mill's water tank, where they'd either boiled or suffocated. They got some coffins and put the bodies inside, then loaded them onto a tray-bodied truck and took them to Mansfield.

Woods Point had a bad time of it, too. Doug Ross had the bakery, and on the day of the fire he'd put a batch of bread in the oven, but hadn't yet fired it. The heat of the fire was so intense that it baked the bread, and this was all the townsfolk had in the end. The amazing thing was that the whole of the goldfields from Walhalla through Aberfeldie to Woods Point had been denuded of most of the trees over the years, as firewood was in such high demand. It had become almost a man-made desert. And yet despite this, the fire still came through and ravaged the place, such was its intensity. And they talk today about containment lines!



*The Federal Mill in the early 1940s with three feet gauge log tramway in foreground. The earlier four feet gauge line to the south had been removed by this time.*

*Photo: D Morrish*



*Remains of the Ada No 2 Mill after the January 1939 bushfire. The boiler remains at the site of the mill to this day.*

*Photo: State Library of Victoria*

Ted Silver, the man who saved so many in the Matlock fires was a big, tall, long-armed bugger. In 1940 he went to war, and was awarded a medal for bravery. He lived in Don Valley, near the Launching Place Hotel, and he used to get in there and get too much beer in him and make a nuisance of himself. One day in 1953 he was causing trouble, and a man named Barton stood up and objected. Big Ted gave him a hell of a hiding, but some time later this fellow came back looking for Silver, and he shot him dead, along with another man.

In 2009, we had a five day remembrance at the old Church of England in Warburton for the 70th anniversary of the Black Friday bushfires. There were a few of the old timers in the place, and each of us spoke of our memories from the fires. Old Norm Golding, then 101 years of age, spoke about what he did that day. Norm ran a bus service between Powelltown and Lilydale, and on Black Friday he was on the road beyond Powelltown, when he came across three little girls. The fire was coming, so he grabbed them and put them in the railway tunnel to keep them safe from the fires. When Norm had finished saying this, a lady in the congregation stood up and said, 'I was one of those little girls that you picked up and put in the tunnel.' Norm looked at her and said, 'Lady, you were well worth saving!' Her name was Leslie Forrest, (nee Bramich), and it turned out that I used to play tennis with her mum and dad, so the whole thing was very touching.

### **Tanjil Bren**

All the timber was cut out already – the fire just finished it off – so Bill moved the operations to his new sawmill at Tanjil Bren. On the Sunday afternoon, we all piled into Bill's car for the long drive up to the mill, which was an eight mile walk into the bush from the road. War was declared on 3 September 1939, on a Sunday night, and as we had no communications at the sawmill, it was a full week before we arrived back at Warburton and found out about it.

### **Federal Timber Products**

In 1940 I took a job with Federal Timber Products, who owned Federal Mill. I worked there all through the 1940s until the mill closed in 1950. The mill was connected to La La siding at Warburton by a 20 mile-long tram line, a distance later reduced to seventeen miles once the company put a few shortcuts in. We had a drum saw which we used to cut barrel staves, and these went on the tram, which was driven either by Watti Clinch or George Bullen. At La La the timber was loaded onto Victorian Railways trains and railed off to Yarraville where it was made into barrels.

I lived at Warby, as did most of the mill workers, and I used to walk the seventeen miles to and from the mill each week, which took me about five hours. Work started at half past seven in the morning, and we worked eight hour days, plus Saturday mornings. And all this for just £3 per week! At Federal, you could please yourself whether you batched in one of the huts or stayed at the boarding house. I preferred to batch. When I knocked off work in the afternoon, I was often so buggered that I'd have a wash, cook myself some tea, and I'd be ready for bed.

We had to work until quarter to one on Saturdays, which was no good if you wanted to play football on the Saturday afternoon. The mill engine driver, Barry Milkins, was a real character. He was a returned man from WWI, and was a very learned, well-cultured man, and he was our boxing instructor at the mill. Barry would put the mill clock forward, just a few minutes each night, so that by Saturday it might be up to an hour fast. This meant we'd end up knocking off at quarter to twelve, and we had time to run the seventeen miles home, down the tramway to Warburton. I played football for Yarra Rovers, which had men from East Warburton and Big Pat's Creek, and if we were playing away it was two shillings for your bus fare.

One Friday night, one of the blokes came in from the boarding house and went into the engine room and put the clock on again, so it was over an hour fast. When the whistle blew on

the Saturday morning, it was so early that the mill manager, Wally Hudson, was still in bed! So on the Monday night he called a meeting and he said, 'Right you blokes. From now on, I'll blow the whistle every morning at starting time, and you won't get away early on the Saturday.' We called a strike over this, which lasted for sixteen weeks. We stayed at the mill through the week during this strike, and we were supported by all the other mill workers in the district, with a two shilling per week levy imposed on every man, enabling us to survive. As a result of this strike, we all ended up getting the five day working week out of it.

The conditions were pretty hard, with the rain and mud in winter, and sometimes snow, too. We were working at a fair altitude, as the big Mountain Ash trees only grew above about 2500 to about 2700 ft. We logged an area of thousands of acres around the Federal Mill, many miles around the boundary. The Ada River was the boundary between our area and the Victorian Hardwood Company's area, which was based at Powelltown. Snakes were common in the bush, but I never had much trouble with them, as I always just let them get away. I never knew of anyone getting bitten in my time, either.

The blokes were good to work with, and there were some highly skilled timbermen amongst them. Fred Newcombe was the head faller, and he was a highly skilled man with a long-handled axe. When he was scarfing a tree, he'd never overcut once – every strike with the axe would result in a cut the exact width of the blade, he never missed. You could run your hand down where he'd cut and it was smooth, just as if it had been planed. He was a beautiful axeman, old Fred.

Felling trees could be dangerous at times. When you were driving wedges in, the steel would become so thin around the edges, perhaps a few thousandths thick, and sometimes a piece about the size of a five cent piece could break off and shoot out between the wedge and the hammer like a bullet. One time this happened to me. The piece hit my hand, and passed clean

through and out the other side, knocking my hand clean off the hammer. I was lucky. On several occasions blokes copped it in the guts, when the metal piece went through their intestines, and this killed a few men over the years. If we were a long way from the mill, it would take a while to move an injured man out of the bush. They'd go to the mill on the tramline, but this may have been many miles, depending where we were working at the time, and the tractors were not built for speed. When the Coroner examined one of these unfortunate fellows, he was convinced that the man had been shot.

### **The Washington winch**

Federal Timber Products had one of the four 80 ton Washington winches which were brought out from America, and I was the operator. The Washington had a vertical boiler operating under very high boiler pressure, and two massive water tanks on the back and a big stack of firewood next to it. It had twin auto-positive injectors, they worked beautifully, and she was a great steamer, too. The winch pulled itself around between the different logging sites.

World War II was on, and I joined the Royal Australian Engineers in 1941, although I never had the chance to serve overseas. The Federal Company badly needed a skilled Washington winch driver, and the wooden barrels we produced were used for packaging glucose – essential for the War effort. The Company wrote to Southern Command requesting my release back to the mill, so it was out of the Army and back into the bush for me.

Once I was married, in 1944, I sometimes left Warby late on the Sunday night after stopping for tea at home, and I'd start walking up the tramline at night. I never bothered with a lantern, as I knew the way so well. I'd arrive at the winch site just in time to fire her up for the day's work. It took about five hours to raise working steam pressure in her.



*The Washington Winch with smaller motor winch alongside at the Federal Mill. The winch hauled logs from the surrounding bush using the high lead system where the logs were raised at the front to aid passage through the bush.*

*Photo: D Morrish*

## The High Lead logging system

Jack Corbett was a French Canadian timberman who came out to Australia in 1928. He taught the men high climbing techniques, as well as the innovation of the High Lead logging system, a system that was only a viable proposition in big mountain ash forests. He became the bush manager for the FTP, and he was a good bloke all right. Jack really made a name for himself at Federal Mill by putting a water tank way up on top of four tall trees, one of which later blew over, and this tank provided terrific water pressure for the mill.

There were two completely different operations out in the bush. The Federal Timber Products company used the High Lead system. Corbett also taught Ezard, another prominent sawmiller, who used the High Lead system over on the Thompson Valley near Erica.

The High Lead system allowed you to log a selected area for anything up to two years. We did about seven or eight different sites in my time there. Then a tramline would be built to a point near the winch, where logs were loaded and taken to the mill to be cut up. All this was operated by one winch, the Washington. We walked through the bush trying to find suitable areas for high lead operations, bearing in mind the quality and quantity of the trees, and most importantly, the availability of a water source for the steam winch.

The high lead method involved cutting what were called Spar Trees, and it was my job to select suitable trees. I'd wear spurs on my feet and put a rope around the outside of the trunk, which was often up to fifteen foot in diameter. On the rough bark at the base of the tree you were all right, but once you reached the smooth bark higher up, you had to make sure you drove your spurs right in and both feet were level. If your spurs came loose and you slid down the trunk, the rope would get shorter and you'd end up jammed tight against the tree. When I'd climbed near the top of the tree, which was sometimes over 250 feet up, I'd cut the top off. Before I did this, I'd drive my axe into the trunk to stop it swinging around

and cutting you, and then I'd get right in behind the trunk and ride it from side to side. The trunk would swing 20 to 25 feet backwards and forwards, so you really had to hang on! That was the thrill for about nine or ten hours of work. You were on your own, and there was no safety whatsoever – if you slipped, you were a goner.

The view from the top of the tall trees was breathtaking. You could see for many miles in all directions. One thing I recall was looking out toward the Noojee railway, which was about ten or fifteen miles away as the crow flies. You could see the train going along between Noojee and Nayook, and although it was too far away to hear it chugging up the hill, every now and then a white plume of steam would come up, and about ten seconds later, you'd hear the howling steam whistle.

Once I cut the head off the spar tree, I'd rig it with wire ropes, one of which transported logs through the air under steam power, via an elaborate series of wire ropes attached to specially selected trees. By the time we'd finished, the tree was fully supported and could withstand enormous pressure, and we could swing off the spar tree 360 degrees for up to a mile and a half around.

## A close shave

I had an accident once when I was cutting the top off a 280 ft high tree. Jack Corbett was on the ground and one of the wire ropes, known as a 'tail rope' snapped. I knew what was going to happen – that the rope would come up and run through the tail rope block quicker than what it could turn in the sheave, then it would spring back at me. And I knew if the rope hit me, I was a goner. So I quickly climbed out and laid full length on the guy rope, and then the wire wrapped itself around the trunk several times and locked itself, just where my head had been. On the ground, Jack was frightened, because he also knew what would happen, and he yelled out, 'You all right up there Des?' 'Yeah, I'm all right', I said. 'You better come down and have a cup of tea', he said. That was the only close call I ever had, and it wasn't even my fault!



Log under haulage on the Federal Mill winch operated four-foot gauge log tramway that ran south from the mill until around 1940. Photo: D Morrish



*The tramway under construction. The sleepers on the curve were 100 mm water pipe cut in half longitudinally. Steel rail welding is in progress.*

## The Wombat Creek Tramway North Warrandyte

by Richard Schurmann

In 2003 I was engaged in an owner builder house project on a very steep and narrow block of land in North Warrandyte to the east of Melbourne. A desire to minimize bush destruction led to a search for alternatives to taking large earth moving machines down into the bush for the septic tank absorption trenches. We needed two trenches, each 15 metres long by one metre wide. After an initial excavation with a miniature excavator, an attempt was made to remove the spoil with a 'Kanga' miniature loader tractor. It was soon discovered that this machine was not able to negotiate the steepest 1 in 2 gradient up to where the soil had to be taken. Many alternatives were considered, such as a sealed road for the Kanga and the hire of conveyors. All seemed too expensive. Eventually the decision was made to use rail, and the tramway project was born.

The gauge chosen was 15 inches and it was settled when it was discovered that some wheel-axle sets and suitable sleepers were available on a loan basis. The grade seemed to require a cable hauled line, and this seemed to dictate a straight run. The trouble was that a straight track would not easily connect the two terminus locations. This led to a design of a rail system that was cable hauled and with a small radius curve about a third the way down the incline.

The rails were wooden except on the curve and on the turntable. The wooden rails were second hand hardwood house floor joists. The wooden track was simply made with

one 75 mm flat head nail at each rail/sleeper connection. At rail joints, we simply butted the rails and nailed the two rails to one sleeper. On the curve, the sleepers were steel, cut from 100 mm pipe. The track on the curve was held in place against the tension of the cable by driving star pickets into the ground at the end of the sleepers. The rail for the curve was steel strip, which was welded to the sleepers. The pulleys for the cable on the curve were made from wheels from a hardware shop with the tyres removed.

### Description of the line

The driveway on this property terminates in a level area in front of the garage doors. This level area is supported by a 'crib' retaining wall on the downhill side. The fill in behind the wall has been mostly brought in by the tramway. The top terminus of the tramway consisted of a track into this area. Material for transportation down the hill by the tramway was brought in by tip truck and stockpiled on the up hill side of the track. Material brought up the hill by the tramway was discharged to the downhill side and formed the fill in the crib wall. During the life of the tramway, the track at this point was lifted about 600 mm as the fill was brought in. A stout pallet beside the building was used to locate the hired electric winch which was attached to the building structure to locate it against the cable tension.

From the top terminus, the line proceeded diagonally down the slope. The gradient here was an easy 1 in 8. At the bottom of this grade was the curve. The line turned about 70 degrees to the right, and from here ran directly down the hill. The initial gradient on the straight after the curve was about 1 in 2.5 as the line climbed down off the road embankment.



*Unloading the wagon at the top terminus. The 'No standing any time' sign was supposed to remind people not to stand around on the track on the downhill side of the wagon.*

Part way down the long straight on the left was the topsoil stockpile. From here the gradient steepened again as the track traversed the slope that had been formed by the Kanga mini loader. Where the line crossed the top trench, a turntable was crossed on the level. As the trench was dug under it, the turntable was supported on a couple of trestles. The turntable gave access to a siding, which ran for about twelve metres beside the top trench on a level grade.

Originally, the main line did not extend past the turntable, but later it was extended to a dead end on the level straddling the bottom trench.

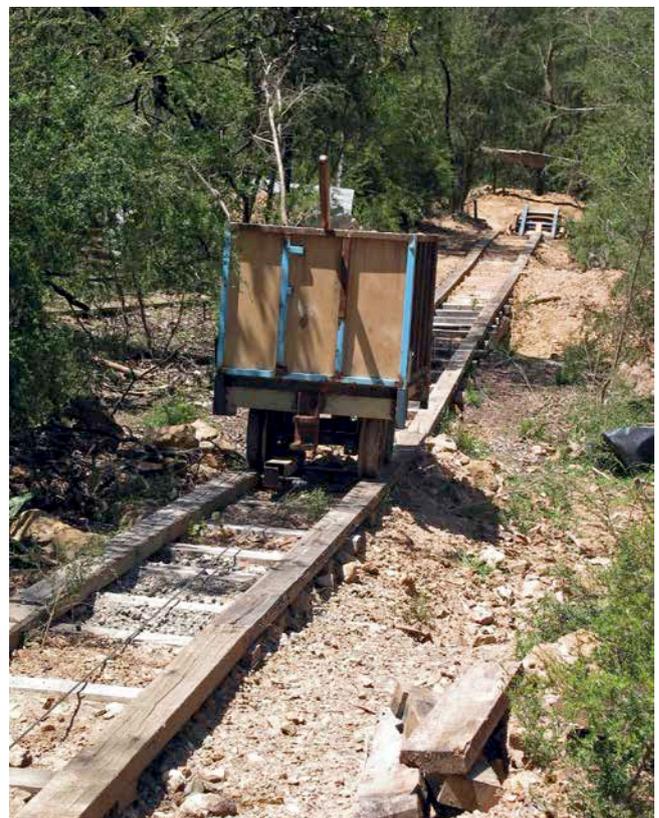
### Rolling Stock

Four axle/wheel assemblies were available, but we only used two of these. The first wagon was made deliberately simple, with the idea of building a more elaborate hopper if the tramway proved successful. As it turned out, the construction of a second vehicle was not justified. A pair of vehicles would have been outside the winch or pulley system capacity, and the simple vehicle seemed to be as convenient as any more elaborate one would be. The chassis of the vehicle was of welded construction with very simple bearings for the axles made by bending a piece of strip steel around the axle. Axle lubrication was by molybdenum disulphide grease applied with a kitchen knife. The "deck" of the vehicle was of treated pine from an old pallet. The ends of the body were made removable, but this refinement was never utilized. The sides were hinged from the top. We did not need a hopper, as unloading was easily achieved by releasing one side, and then tipping the whole wagon to empty it. During service, the wagon was modified by the addition of an outrigger at the uphill end. This held a steel tool box filled with bluemetal screenings. This was found necessary to offset the tendency for the vehicle to tip over the downhill end axle and empty its contents onto the track.

### Operation

The writer and some other participants in the project had some familiarity with railway safeworking practice, but we did not have any knowledge of rope haulage rules. Of course, with a rope haulage, the driver is not with his train, but is located with the winch at the top of the incline. Due to the curve in the main line, and the thick bush, the driver could not see his train when on the lower half of the system. A signal was set up near the curve. This was styled like a Victorian Railways lower quadrant semaphore signal. The choice of style was largely just for fun, but no extra time or trouble was taken to meet more than the minimum requirement. The signal was contrived so that it would revert to the 'Stop' by gravity as a fail-safe feature. The signal was operated by a cord that ran down beside the long straight. This cord could be grabbed by a person at any of the three stopping places. Attempts were made to establish various signalling codes, however it was found unnecessary to go to this sort of complication, and we were intent on getting the job done with minimum cost, there was no time to 'play trains'. The signal made quite a clatter when operated, so the inevitable procedure to start a move was to work the signal back and forth to alert the winch driver, and then to hold it off until it was required to stop. When starting, if the driver set the vehicle off in the wrong direction, he was immediately stopped, and restarted, and usually got the hint and tried the other direction.

The tramway was usually operated by at least four people. Operations of the tramway varied according to the stage of the work. Traffic consisted of (i) top soil from the trenches to the top soil dump, (ii) clay or rock from the trenches to the top terminus, (iii) scoria from the top terminus to one of the trenches, and (iv) top soil from the top soil dump to one of the trenches. On some days, all four of these activities were taking place. The time for a return journey from end to end was just under ten minutes.



*The wagon runs down the long straight. The turntable (blue painted steel) straddles the top trench below.*

*The Turntable. This photo was taken at the time when the excavation of the top trench was completed, and traffic consisted of extraction of soil from the bottom trench (shown here) and the bringing down of scoria to backfill the top trench. The black plastic archway in the trench is called "Rein Drain". It is used to increase the water holding capacity of the trench.*



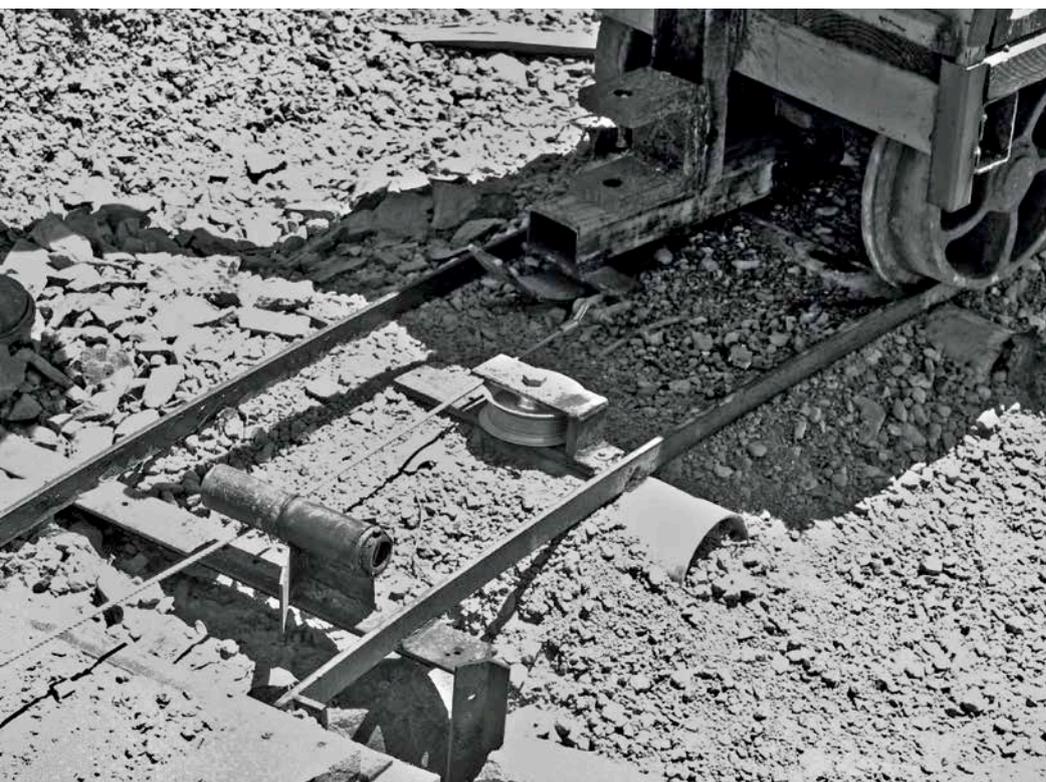
For working the bottom trench or the topsoil dump, the wagon remained on the main line. For working the top trench, the wagon was stopped on the turntable, and the cable was disconnected. the vehicle was turned and run down the siding by man power.

The sad day came when the work was done and it was time to dismantle the tramway. In surprisingly short time, the tramway was used for pulling out the tramway itself. Each track panel could be lifted by two men, and a stack of four panels could be carried on the wagon.

The wagon and the signal were transported to Tasmania for service on John Robin's Jacky's Marsh Tramway.

The Wombat Creek Tramway was short lived. However, it performed a function that could have not been performed with modern equipment at the same cost or with the same minimal bush destruction. A tramway is still sometimes the best engineering solution to a transport problem.

The railway enthusiast connection in this instance did not involve an element of 'playing trains' as we were too focused on trying to complete the project at minimum cost, but the connection was essential in that without some railway knowledge, we would not have had the confidence to choose this solution.



*Working the Curve. Unfortunately, the only photo of this was taken in very bright sunlight, and it has been difficult to show the details in the sun and the details in the shade. This black and white representation works best in this instance. To run the cable around the curve, several pulleys were provided. These were made from rubber tyred wheels from a hardware barn with the tyres discarded. The ad hoc brackets were welded to the steel sleepers. At the up hill end of the curve there was a sharp change of gradient, and the cable had to be held down at this point. This was done with the roller made of water pipe. The draw gear on the vehicle had to be contrived to thread the cable under the roller. This was hinged with a pin that was set to the side to clear the roller (out of view in the shot). It was supported on a skid, which just ran along the ballast and sleepers.*



# Industrial Railway NEWS

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**Special thanks to contributors to the *Sugar Cane Trains/Navvy Pics 2ft* Facebook page.**

## QUEENSLAND

### **BUNDABERG SUGAR LTD, Bingera Mill**

(see LR 258 p.26)

610 mm gauge

Com-Eng 0-6-0DH *Wattle* (FD4789 of 1966 rebuilt Bundaberg Foundry 1990) struck a semi-trailer at the Jensen Street and Gin Gin Road level crossing

in South Kolan on 18 November and pushed the prime mover about 25 metres sideways. The *Wattle* was heading to the mill with about fifty full cane bins on. There were no injuries.

*News Mail* 18/11/2017; Andy-Ray Von Sonnenschein 11/17

### **ISIS CENTRAL SUGAR MILL CO LTD**

(see LR 258 p.26)

610 mm gauge

In early December after the crushing had finished, Walkers B-B DH 6 (610 of 1969 rebuilt Isis Mill 2002) was being used to tow the herbicide spraying wagons around the system. Josef Menich 12/17

### **MACKAY SUGAR LTD, Mackay mills**

(see LR 258 p.26)

610 mm gauge

A female locomotive driver's assistant died after being struck by the cane train she was shunting at a siding on McGregor Creek Road at Mirani on 31 October. Images from the scene show an Eimco B-B DH at the head of the train. Farleigh Mill uses cut down redundant 4 tonne bins to collect chocks at the end of the crushing season. An ex Queensland Railways 1067 mm gauge wagon is stored on a panel of track at the east end of the Pioneer River bridge at Mirani. This is used whenever the bridge is sand blasted and is craned across onto dual gauge trackage which runs the length of the bridge.

*Daily Mercury* 31/10/2017, 1/11/2017; Phil Mifsud 10/17; Peter Jenkinson 10/17; Mitch Zunker 12/17

### **MACKAY SUGAR LTD, Mossman Mill**

(see LR 257 p.30)

610 mm gauge

A visit to the Mossman area on 5 November saw the following locos at work. At the mill yard were Com-Eng multi-unit 0-6-0DH locos *Ivy* (AL4181 of 1965) and *Cook* (AL3372 of 1964) along with *Douglas* (AL2562 of 1963) and *Faughy* (AL4190 of 1965). The latter pair were also seen delivering empties and picking up fulls on the line south towards Port Douglas. EM Baldwin B-B DH *Daintree* (7303.17.77 of 1977) was seen alongside the Cook Highway south of Mossman where a bin in its rake of fulls was being rerailed. It was later seen on a rake of empties north of the mill. James Chuang 11/17

### **MSF SUGAR LTD, Mulgrave Mill**

(see LR 258 p.26)

610 mm gauge

The rebuild of Clyde 0-6-0DH 19 *Redlynch* (65-435 of 1965) was completed around September when it did some test runs in multi-unit mode with Clyde 0-6-0DH 18 *Barron* (64-379 of 1964). Since then they have operated as individual locomotives with 18 *Barron* being used as an RSU remote control loco when doing runs south of the mill. EM Baldwin 6 wheeled brake wagon 13 (7065.46.77 of 1977) was spotted derailed at the end of a rake of empties in the Kamma area late in November. It had come off on a set of points and got dragged with the trailing end out to one side of the track for about half a kilometre. Joseph Dietz 11/17; Cade Fornera 11/17



*Com-Eng 0-6-0DH multi-unit locos Cook (AL3372 of 1964) and Ivy (AL4181 of 1965) shunting in the Mossman Mill yard on 5 November. Photo: James Chuang*



South of Mossman Mill, EM Baldwin B-B DH Daintree (7303.1 7.77 of 1977) stands by while a full bin from its rake is rerailed on 5 November. Photo: James Chuang



At the end of the day, South Johnstone Mill Clyde 0-6-0DH multi-unit locos 2 (55-56 of 1955) and 3 (56-90 of 1956) pose with a cane harvester at Sundown near Innisfail on 4 December. Photo: Jason Sou

### **MSF SUGAR LTD, South Johnstone Mill**

(see LR 258 p.27)

610 mm gauge

On 6 October, Clyde multi-unit 0-6-0DH locos 2 (55-56 of 1955) and 3 (56-90 of 1956) were picking up out of a siding at Mourilyan. On 24 October, Com-Eng multi-unit 0-6-0DH locos 8 (A1543 of 1960) and 9 (AH3979 of 1964) were working in former Babinda Mill territory north of the Russell River. On 5 November, Clyde 0-6-0DH 12 (55-60 of 1955) was working the 'Little Tableland' areas directly south of the mill while EM Baldwin B-B DH 32 *Liverpool* (10385.1 8.82 of 1982) was working the Nerada line. Late in the afternoon of the previous day, Com-Eng multi-unit 0-6-0DH locos 4 (AD1138 of 1960) and 5 (AH2460 of 1962) were seen heading north out of the South Johnstone township with a long rake of empties. By early November, 32 *Liverpool* had its usual South Johnstone bogie brake wagon 6 (built in 1990) instead of the standby unit Hockey 6 wheeled brake wagon 4 (built in 1982). EM Baldwin B-B DH locos 24 (5477.1 8.74 of 1974) and 26 (7244.1 8.77 of 1977) were working the coastal line to Silkwood on 10 December. Com-Eng 0-6-0DM 28 (AA1544 of 1960) is said to be destined for scrap with the gearbox and some other parts being retained. A semi-trailer ran into a rake of empties crossing the Bruce Highway at Moresby on 18 November. Although bins were scattered far and wide, no one was injured.

Luke Horniblow 10/17, 12/17; James Chuang 11/17; Darren Smith 11/17; MSF Sugar 11/17

### **PROGRESS RAIL SERVICES, Redbank**

1067 mm gauge

This firm undertook a maintenance and spare parts supply deal with Aurizon from July 2016. Non-core rolling stock maintenance, which

includes overhauling narrow gauge locomotives and components, is being undertaken at the Redbank Maintenance Facility and ex Queensland Railways Clyde Co-Co DE 1720 (66-502 of 1966) has been obtained as its workshops shunting loco. It has been repainted in a livery of yellow body, black frames and bogies and with yellow and black headstock stripes. It was seen in use during November and December.

Colin D Hadley 11/17; Leon Harris 11/17, 12/17; *Railway Gazette* 21/3/2016

### **SUGAR TERMINALS LTD, Lucinda**

(see LR 257 p.31)

610 mm gauge

The Queensland Sugar Limited logo had been applied to the hood sides of Com-Eng 0-6-0DH (G1023 of 1958) by 25 November.

Luke Horniblow 11/17; Editor 11/17

### **TULLY SUGAR LTD**

(see LR 257 p.31)

610 mm gauge

Two new bogie ballast hoppers manufactured by local firm GTB Engineering Company Pty Ltd had appeared in service by late October. The doors are pneumatically operated. Walkers B-B DH *Tully-9* (618 of 1969 rebuilt Tully Mill 2010) is receiving a new Cummins QSK19 motor during the 2018 slack season. This is the last of the these locos at Tully Mill to retain its original Caterpillar D353 motor.

Luke Horniblow 10/17, 12/17; Nicholas Taifalos 12/17

### **WILMAR SUGAR (HERBERT) PTY LTD,**

**Herbert River Mills**

(see LR 258 p.27)

610 mm gauge

Victoria Mill's Clyde 0-6-0DH *Lucinda* (65-436

of 1965) was on loan to Macknade Mill from 27 November and was still there on 18 December. Macknade Mill's EM Baldwin B-B DH *Wallaman* (6400.3 4.76 of 1976) and EM Baldwin 6 wheeled brake wagon BVAN 2 (7065.5 7.77 of 1977) were sent to help out at Victoria Mill from 10 December and were still there on 18 December. EM Baldwin B-B DH 19 (7070.3 4.77 of 1977), presently at Victoria Mill, is supposed to be fitted with a new Mercedes Benz V8 motor and Allison transmission at Macknade Mill during the 2018 slack season. Victoria Mill's EM Baldwin B-B DH *Homebush II* (6400.1 4.76 of 1976) was paired up with the new Chinese built bogie brake wagon in early December. This unit was fitted out at the mill and has disc brakes. There are now two Clyde brake wagons spare at Victoria Mill with these being 4 wheeled BV6 (CQ3477-2 of 1976) and 6 wheeled BV7 (CQ3477-3 of 1976). Editor 11/17, 12/17; Darren Myran 12/17

### **WILMAR SUGAR (INVICTA) PTY LTD,**

**Invicta Mill, Giru**

(see LR 258 p.28)

610 mm gauge

The last rake of cane to arrive here for the 2017 season was a transfer from Kalamia Mill hauled by that mill's EM Baldwin B-B DH *Burdekin* (10215.1 7.82 of 1982).

Jamali Labelak 11/17

### **WILMAR SUGAR (KALAMIA) PTY LTD,**

**Kalamia Mill**

(see LR 257 p.33)

610 mm gauge

A transfer rake to Invicta Mill hauled by EM Baldwin B-B DH *Burdekin* (10215.1 7.82 of 1982) on 29 November was the last rake of cane to be brought in for the 2017 season at that mill.

Jamali Labelak 11/17



Tully-17 (Com-Eng AH52100 of 1966) with the new ballast hoppers on the mill side of the Tully River on 26 October. Photo: Luke Horniblow



**Above:** The Com-Eng 0-6-0DH shunting loco (G1023 of 1958) of the Lucinda bulk sugar terminal is seen sporting its new QSL logo on 25 November. Photo: Luke Horniblow

**Below:** South Johnstone Mill Clyde 0-6-0DH 12 (55-60 of 1955) drops down through the Camp Creek area with cane from around Mena Creek on 5 November. Photo: James Chuang



## **WILMAR SUGAR (PLANE CREEK) PTY LTD, Plane Creek Mill, Sarina**

(see LR 257 p.33)

610 mm gauge

Clyde 0-6-0DH D1 (56-101 of 1956) was in use at the end of the Plane Creek line beyond the weak bridge from 8 November. Walkers B-B DH 4 *Carmila* (676 of 1971 rebuilt Bundaberg Foundry 1996) was taken to Proserpine Mill on 24 November for refurbishment. A 2,300 hectare cane farm at Clairview is expected to add up to 150,000 tonnes of cane to the mill's throughput over the next few years. This cane will be road hauled 35 kilometres north to the southern terminus of the mill's rail system at Carmila. This year, Plane Creek started on a capital works programme which included \$1.2 million for one hundred and seventy-five new cane bins.

Luke Axiak 11/17; Michael Stash Brown 11/17; *Daily Mercury* 16/12/2017

## **WILMAR SUGAR (PROSERPINE) PTY LTD, Proserpine Mill**

(see LR 258 p.28)

610 mm gauge

Plane Creek Mill's Walkers B-B DH 4 *Carmila* (676 of 1971 rebuilt Bundaberg Foundry 1996) will be refurbished at Proserpine this slack season and arrived on 24 November.

Michael Stash Brown 11/17

## **NEW SOUTH WALES**

### **NORTHSIDE STORAGE TUNNEL JOINT VENTURE, Sydney**

(see LR 155 p.16)

762 mm gauge

Noted at Lake Macquarie Light Railway on 12 November were two small EM Baldwin 4wDH tunnelling locomotives. They were 15 (5366.3 6.74 of 1974) and 16 (5366.1 4.74 of 1974). Although last reported in use on 762 mm gauge

by the Northside Storage Tunnel Joint Venture (NSTJV) in Sydney in 1999-2000, they have both been converted back to 610 mm gauge. These locomotives were among a quantity of equipment ex NSTJV that was stored at Kooragang Island and they are believed to have been sold at auction by John Holland Construction in May 2007. They are currently stored at Lake Macquarie Light Railway for their owner after their previous storage site at a depot in Thornton, where treated power poles were stockpiled, had to be vacated.

John Browning 11/17

## **VICTORIA**

### **ONE TREE HILL MINE, Christmas Hills**

508 mm gauge

This small gold mine was reopened in 1993 and worked until 2008. During this period, a rail line of 3 or 4 hundred metres in length was in use. It ran out of the adit to a bridge where the ore was unloaded. A small diesel hydraulic loco with rod drive and a side tipping wagon of one tonne capacity were used. The loco was made by the owner of the mine, Stan Bone and was powered by a single cylinder Lister motor. It appears to have been built on the frame of a battery electric loco. An Eimco loader of 457 mm gauge was used inside the mine and its wheels had to be double flanged to stop it dropping between the rails.

Barry Sheffield 10/17; Stan Bone 10/17

## **OVERSEAS**

### **FIJI SUGAR CORPORATION**

(see LR 258 p.29)

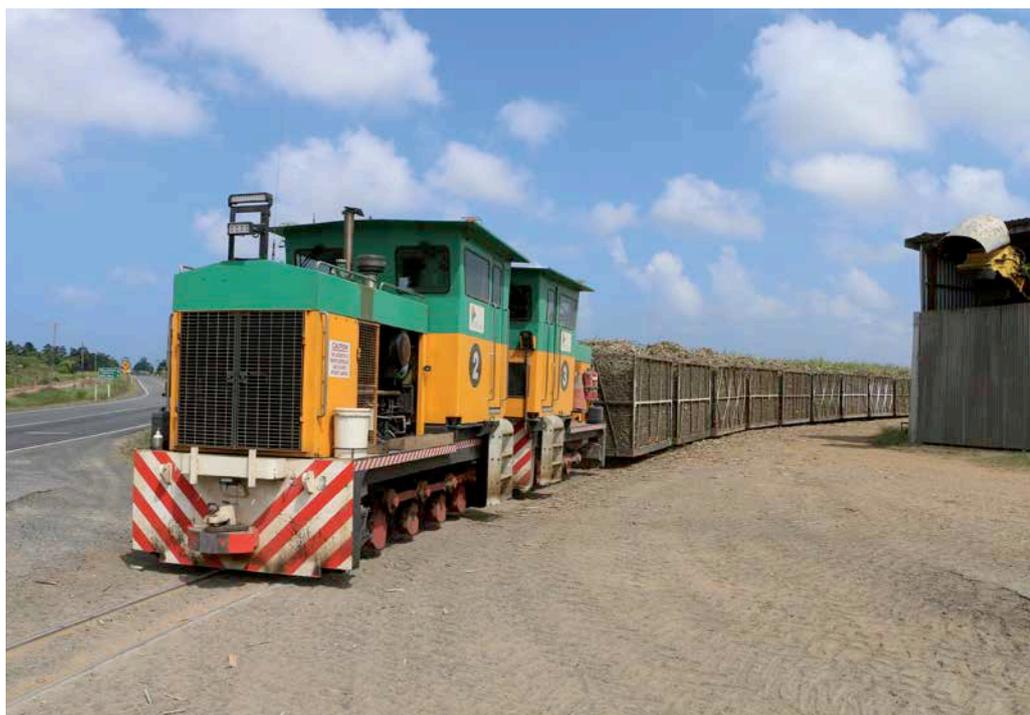
610 mm gauge

Raymond Marsh paid a visit to Lautoka Mill on 10 November, which was after this year's crushing season had finished and locos he observed included the following. Stored outside on a line next to the empty yard were the hulks of Clyde

0-6-0DH locos 9 (64-380 of 1964), 14 (68-655 of 1968) and 22 (59-204 of 1959) along with that of EM Baldwin 0-6-0DH 16 (5058.1 5.73 of 1973). In and around the loco shed were Clyde 0-6-0DH locos 10 (65-437 of 1965), 12 (65-431 of 1965) and 15 *Oscar* (56-91 of 1956 rebuilt Ontrak 2434-2 of 2009), EM Baldwin 0-6-0DH locos 13 *Chilli* (9442.1 4.81 of 1981 rebuilt Ontrak 2435-1 of 2009) and 16 (6/1257.1 7.65 of 1965), Simplex Mechanical Handling 4wDH locos 14 (122U136 of 1973) and 15 (122U156 of 1975), Hunslet 6wDH 21 (9273 of 1987) and Diema 4wDH 10 (5172 of 1991). Also in the loco shed was the Clyde Queensland 4wDMR of 1975 with its wheel sets out. 12 has reverted to yellow and grey since last being seen in grey and blue in 2016. 15 has been moved into the locoshed since last year although it is still gutted. There are obviously plans afoot for it as the sloping front to the hood has been cut off. 21 has lost its Rarawai Mill yellow livery since 2016 and is now painted in Lautoka Mill yellow and grey. Although its official number is supposedly 18, it continues to carry its former mill's identity of 21. A small number of cane bins were seen in the empty yard along with the usual strings of whole stalk trucks.

FSC has engaged the services of a New Zealand consultant to survey the rail system. India is providing Fiji with aid money to assist agricultural industries and it is also ready to provide support in railway network development. The permanent secretary for the Ministry of Sugar has stated that FSC has been directed to revamp the rail system because it will reduce transportation costs. Money spent subsidising the transportation of cane to the mills (presumably by road transport) will be put back into the rail system.

Raymond Marsh 11/17; Fiji Broadcasting Corporation 13/11/2017; [fijivillage.com](http://fijivillage.com) 7/12/2017; *The Fiji Times* Online 11/12/2017



*Clyde 0-6-0DH multi-unit locos 2 (55-56 of 1955) and 3 (56-90 of 1956) of South Johnstone Mill pull out of a siding at Mourilyan on 6 October. Photo: Luke Hornblow*



**Above:** Com-Eng 0-6-0DH multi-unit locos 4 (AD1138 of 1960) and 5 (AD2460 of 1962) head north out from South Johnstone Mill with a rake of overnight empties near sunset on 4 November. Photo: James Chuang

**Below:** South Johnstone Mill's Clyde 0-6-0DH 12 (55-60 of 1955) approaches Frasers Loop in the Germantown area south of the mill on 5 November. Photo: James Chuang





# LETTERS

## EM Baldwin tunnelling locomotives Job Number 5366

In 1974, EM Baldwin & Sons Pty Ltd produced a batch of six small diesel-hydraulic tunnelling locomotives for the Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works (MMBW). They were built to 2 ft gauge, convertible to 2 ft 6 in gauge, and some if not all have been used on both gauges.

EM Baldwin allocated works numbers in a non-traditional way, which was described in detail by Craig Wilson in his book *Built by Baldwin* published in 2002 by LRRSA. The basic component was the Job Number and this had a suffix to denote the sequence number of the particular locomotive within the job. To this were added further numbers to indicate the month and year of completion.

Over the years, there were inconsistencies in the way that this numbering was stamped on builder's plates, leading to confusion at times. When published in *Built by Baldwin*, the numbering was standardised by the author for the sake of consistency and accurate record keeping.

A particular case of difficulty has been Job Number 5366. The numbers on these locomotives were stamped on a large plate that was the basis of the driving console. Taking one example, the number appeared as '5366-6-74'. The difficulty with this was not knowing whether the middle '6' referred to the sequence number within Job 5366 or the month in which it was completed. The plate was also stamped with the 'Model No.', 'Engine No.' and 'Transmission No.'

As several of these locomotives survive, a review of plates and of data provided to the writer over the years has enabled the difficulty to be solved and this letter is to put on record the correct details, which have not always been complete or accurate when published in *Light Railway News* and *Light Railways* over the years. The information includes the details recorded by the late Ray Graf on his many visits to construction sites, and by Peter Charrett, and it has been found to be consistent with a list of MMBW locomotives provided by Mike McCarthy.

The answer to the problem lies in the 'Model No.' stamped on the plate, which in the example referred to above is 'DH4T/3'. 'DH4T' indicates a 4-tonne diesel-hydraulic tunnelling locomotive. Careful analysis of the recorded information for all six locomotives shows that the '3' is the locomotive sequence number within Job 5366. Thus in the standardised numbering used by Wilson,

the builder's number of this locomotive is 5366.3 6.74. The month designation shown in *Built by Baldwin* is different, but the June date is not inconsistent with MMBW delivery records.

The table below shows what are believed to be the correct details. The locomotives were later owned by Transfield and some were used in Sydney by the Northside Storage Tunnel Joint Venture (NSTJV). The NSTJV numbers had been added.

Thanks to Grahame Swanson of Lake Macquarie Light Rail for his assistance.

John Browning  
Annerley, Q

### References

1. Extract from MMBW records courtesy Mike McCarthy (see *Light Railway News* 24, October 1981). The MMBW numbers have been confirmed by observations.
2. Personal observation, 12 November 2017
3. Ray Graf observation, 29 January 1998
4. Email from Craig Wilson, 9 January 2002
5. Peter Charrett observation, April 1977 (*Light Railway News* 5, August 1978)
6. Possibly in error for 3/7/1974
7. Ray Graf observation, 22 September 1995

MMBW number <sup>1</sup>	MMBW delivery date <sup>1</sup>	Details on plate				NSTJV Number	Standardised builder's no.
		Number	Model No.	Engine No.	Transmission No.		
034	19/4/1974	5366-4-74 <sup>2</sup>	DH4T/1 <sup>2</sup>	699631 <sup>2</sup>	2003 <sup>2</sup>	16 <sup>2</sup>	5366.1 4.74
035	20/5/1974	5366-5-74 <sup>3</sup>	DH4T/4 <sup>3</sup>	699625 <sup>3</sup>	2004 <sup>3</sup>	17 <sup>4</sup>	5366.4 5.74
036	25/6/1974	5366-5-74 <sup>5</sup>	DH4T/5 <sup>5</sup>	699627 <sup>5</sup>	No record	-	5366.5 5.74
037	28/6/1974	5366-6-74 <sup>2</sup>	DH4T/3 <sup>2</sup>	699630 <sup>2</sup>	2007 <sup>2</sup>	15 <sup>2</sup>	5366.3 6.74
038	28/6/1974	5366-4-74 <sup>7</sup>	DH4T/2 <sup>7</sup>	699634 <sup>7</sup>	2006 <sup>7</sup>	-	5366.2 4.74
039	3/6/1974 <sup>6</sup>	5366-6-74 <sup>7</sup>	DH4T/6 <sup>7</sup>	699633 <sup>7</sup>	2008 <sup>7</sup>	14 <sup>4</sup>	5366.6 6.74



Details stamped on the console plate of EM Baldwin 5366.1 4.74.

Photo: Grahame Swanson



EM Baldwin 5366.5 5.74 on 2ft 6in gauge at the MMBW Hammond Road site, Dandenong South, 8 September 1976.

Photo: John Browning

2000s, 32 pages was the standard size for LR, with the very occasional 40-pager. Now 40 pages is the standard with a couple of 48-page issues per year. Will the next ten years see 56 pages as a bumper issue? One of the big drivers of that change has been Trove – the National Library’s newspaper digitisation programme. Such is the spread of items and snippets across dozens of newspapers that some articles would be virtually impossible to research and write in a timely manner. One example of this was the article on Melbourne’s roadside plateways in our last issue. Whilst previous articles had tackled the subject to varying degrees only Trove made it possible to grasp the breadth of the task and collate all the sources to make proper sense of the subject. I hope you think Trove is a good use of taxpayers’ monies – I do!

On another matter, regarding Ross Mainwaring’s wonderful photo of the Mt Lyell loco on the front cover of the last issue, several knowledgeable ‘green-fingered’ readers have pointed out that the plants appearing behind the locomotive, whilst of the genus *Rhododendron*, are not in fact rhododendrons (as we usually know them) but azaleas. The plants in the foreground are camellias, which the editor should also have known as he, and the society’s council drink great quantities of tea made from one of its

varieties whilst sitting late into the night (and his wife has a number of them in the garden!).

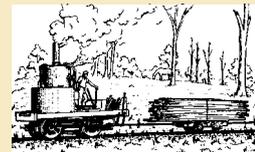
W L (Bill) Hanks  
Hon President  
via email

#### Plateways of Melbourne (LR 258)

This is just a quick note to tell you how much I have enjoyed reading your article. I didn’t know that there used to be so many plateways around Melbourne – I knew about the Nepean Highway, Centre Road and Centre Dandenong Road plateways but not the others and I am looking forward to reading Part 2 to find out more.

This isn’t just light railway history but local and social history as well; research of the best kind. You also touched on a couple of things in passing that have been quite enlightening, such as the nightsoil wagons. I never knew how they used to deal with nightsoil after it was collected, and to read about the wagons with their big tanks of nightsoil making their odorous way through the night to the sand belt for disposal was one of those lightbulb moments that make you go “Aah!” (or is that “Urgh!”?)

Darryl Grant  
via email



## LRRSA NEWS

### MEETINGS

#### ADELAIDE: “Don River Ruston locomotive and light railways on the TAR”

We will discuss the Don River Ruston and some of the light railways on the Trans Australia railway. News of light rail matters will be welcome from any member.

Intending participants would be well advised to contact Les Howard on 8278 3082 or by email [lfhoward@tpg.com.au](mailto:lfhoward@tpg.com.au), since accommodation is limited.

#### Location:

1 Kindergarten Drive, Hawthorndene.

**Date:** Thursday 8 February 2018 at 7.30pm

#### BRISBANE: “Bundaberg Garden Railways”

Bob Gough will show a DVD of the May public holiday long weekend in Bundaberg 2017 of the Botanical Gardens railway and the 3ft 6 in gauge private track of a WW2 Jeep on metal wheels. Bob will also show a section car ride on private property in Bundaberg.

**Location:** BCC Library, 107 Orange Grove Road, Coopers Plains.

**Date:** Friday 16 February 2018 at 7:30pm

#### MELBOURNE: “South Gippsland Tramways”

Mike McCarthy will be presenting his findings in relation to the tramways used in the construction of the Great Southern Railway from Toora to Port Albert. Connections to ports for the delivery of materials, tramways from sawmills for the delivery of sleepers, and the West Alberton ballast tramway will all be covered.

**Location:** Ashburton Uniting Church Hall, Ashburn Grove, Ashburton.

**Date:** Thursday 8 February 2018 at 8pm.

#### SYDNEY: “NSW Coke manufacturing”

The coke manufacturing industry is an integral part of the steel making process throughout the world. Coke was produced in NSW from the late 1800s to satisfy the early iron furnaces, foundries and smelters that were then coming into production.

American coke making predated NSW by some 50 years, so a DVD about the industry’s history in south-western Pennsylvania will be presented to the meeting. Naturally, unique industrial railway systems associated with the subject will be well represented.

**Location:** Woodstock Community Centre, Church Street, Burwood. Free Council car park behind building (entry via Fitzroy Street) or close-by street parking. Only 10 minutes easy walk from Burwood railway station.

**Date:** Wednesday, 28 February 2018 at 7:30pm.

## Michael Clifford Galway Schrader 30.9.1930 – 27.11.2017

We are very sorry to report the passing of Michael Schrader, a very active railway enthusiast in Victoria since the 1940s. He had been a member of the LRRSA since December 1966. He was a very skilled railway photographer, and his pictures have been widely published, especially in the Train Hobby series of books. As early as 1945 he was photographing timber tramways around Warburton and Erica. Some of these photographs are unique in their content – taken of operating tramways from the perspective of a railway historian – a view quite different to a typical snap by a worker or local. He was very helpful in making these pictures available to the LRRSA.

In the 1950s he was a Venturer Leader at the 10th Malvern Scout Group, and is remembered for taking the Venturers on expeditions along narrow gauge railways and searching for abandoned timber tramways. With such a background it is not surprising that he said he “always found something of interest in *Light Railways*”.

He was the Hon. Secretary of the Australian Railway Historical Society Victorian Division from 1955 to 1959, and was later President and Vice-president of that organisation, and remained on its committee until 1973. During that time he organised many railway-enthusiast trips, some of great complexity which involved an enormous amount of organisation – such as three-week trips to Western Australia and Queensland in 1962 and 1964 respectively. He was also involved in organising the special passenger trains on the Beech Forest 2 ft 6 in gauge railway in 1959.

In the 1960s he was working in management positions in the freight forwarding company Mayne Nickless – a company which had been established in 1866 as a parcel delivery service. After working with Mayne Nickless he became Secretary of the Bus Proprietors Association. Then in the 1980s he was Executive Director of Railways of Australia, a marketing and publicity organisation set up by the Australian railway systems.

Even at the age of 15 Michael had excellent writing skills, as can be seen in his report on a visit to Erica in 1945, which was republished in *Light Railways* No.186.

*Michael Schrader had a well developed sense of humour which is demonstrated in this photograph. He was searching the amazing contents of the workshops at Normanton, when he came rushing out holding an object and saying “look what I found!”. He then placed it on the running board of the Panhard railcar. ARHS Vic. Div. Queensland Tour, 19 August 1964. Photo: Frank Stamford*





## Field Reports

Please send any contributions, large or small, to [fieldreports@lrrsa.org.au](mailto:fieldreports@lrrsa.org.au) or to P.O. Box 21, Surrey Hills, Vic 3127.

### Fermoy, Woods Point Central and Vulcan mines, Woods Point, Victoria

Gauges unknown

The generally-accepted definition of an Australian gold mine is 'a hole in the ground with a Cornishman at the bottom and a liar at the top'. In the case of the Fermoy, Woods Point Central and Vulcan mines at Woods Point, this turned out to be extremely accurate.

The Fermoy was discovered in the summer of 1863-64 by Lawrence Roche, who found golden specimens on the surface near the junction of Harpers Creek and the Goulburn River. The source of the specimens was a 'blow' of quartz, with gold visible in the quartz only under magnification. A tunnel was driven, and a trial crushing of some picked quartz yielded almost one ounce of gold.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the reef attracted adverse comment because of the generally barren nature of the stone.<sup>2</sup>

A battery site was selected near the mouth of the tunnel, and machinery was ordered from Melbourne.<sup>3</sup> Erection of a 30 ft iron waterwheel and a twelve-head battery commenced in April 1865.<sup>4</sup> By this time, a large quantity of quartz had been raised and stacked at the mouth of the tunnel. Gold could not be seen in the stone, but a small portion privately assayed was claimed to yield the equivalent of 12 oz to the ton.<sup>5</sup> By May 1866, there was sufficient water to operate the wheel, and some stone was put through the battery for a trial crushing.<sup>6</sup> However, the results were disappointing, and the Fermoy Company only clung to survival by crushing for adjacent mines.

One of these was the Woods Point Central. In July 1864, Thomas Keenan and James Bonthron discovered quartz leaders on the south side of Harpers Creek upstream of the Fermoy claim. A drive was put in from the side of the creek and about twelve tons of quartz raised.<sup>7</sup> Plans were implemented to connect the mine to the Fermoy battery by tramway.<sup>8</sup> This raised some eyebrows in Woods Point given that the stone, like that of the Fermoy, was largely unproven. The local mining reporter could only see a few specks of gold in the tunnel and considered that these had been 'wisely kept for show'.<sup>9</sup> His report started a fierce debate in the local press.<sup>10</sup> Opinions conflicted, but the inescapable

conclusion was that the Woods Point Central was being 'boomed', especially as no attempt had been made to publicly test the stone.

The Vulcan was opposite the Fermoy on the north side of the Goulburn River. It was discovered by a Woods Point blacksmith in January 1865.<sup>11</sup> A prospecting shaft was sunk for about 30 ft. Gold was said to be visible in the stone before the miners were driven from the shaft by foul air.<sup>12</sup> A trial crushing of six tons packed to the Fermoy battery in July 1866 was reported to yield almost half an ounce to the ton: disappointing by Woods Point standards, but seemingly enough to encourage further development of the mine.<sup>13</sup> A tunnel of generous proportions was started 200 ft vertically below the position of the shaft.<sup>14</sup> In June 1867, tenders were called for the construction of a tramway from the Vulcan tunnel to the Fermoy battery<sup>15</sup> and, by the beginning of July, construction was well advanced.<sup>16</sup> The

tramway was about a mile long and incorporated an ore-shoot. The first crushing was completed by early December 1867. From 200 tons of stone, not one grain of gold was obtained. The only metal in the battery box was a small amount of something, which turned out to be lead. The conclusion of the directors of the Company was that an act of sabotage had occurred.<sup>17</sup> The day after the crushing, tests were performed at many places in the mine by parties with no direct interest in the venture and, again, not one grain of gold was obtained.<sup>18</sup> The Vulcan mine turned out to be just another of the many swindles perpetrated at Woods Point in the late 1860s.

There is still substantial evidence of both short-lived ore-delivery tramways. These were located and mapped on 4 December 2004, starting at the obvious workings of the Fermoy mine right beside the Goulburn River. The tramway to the Woods Point Central follows the north side of



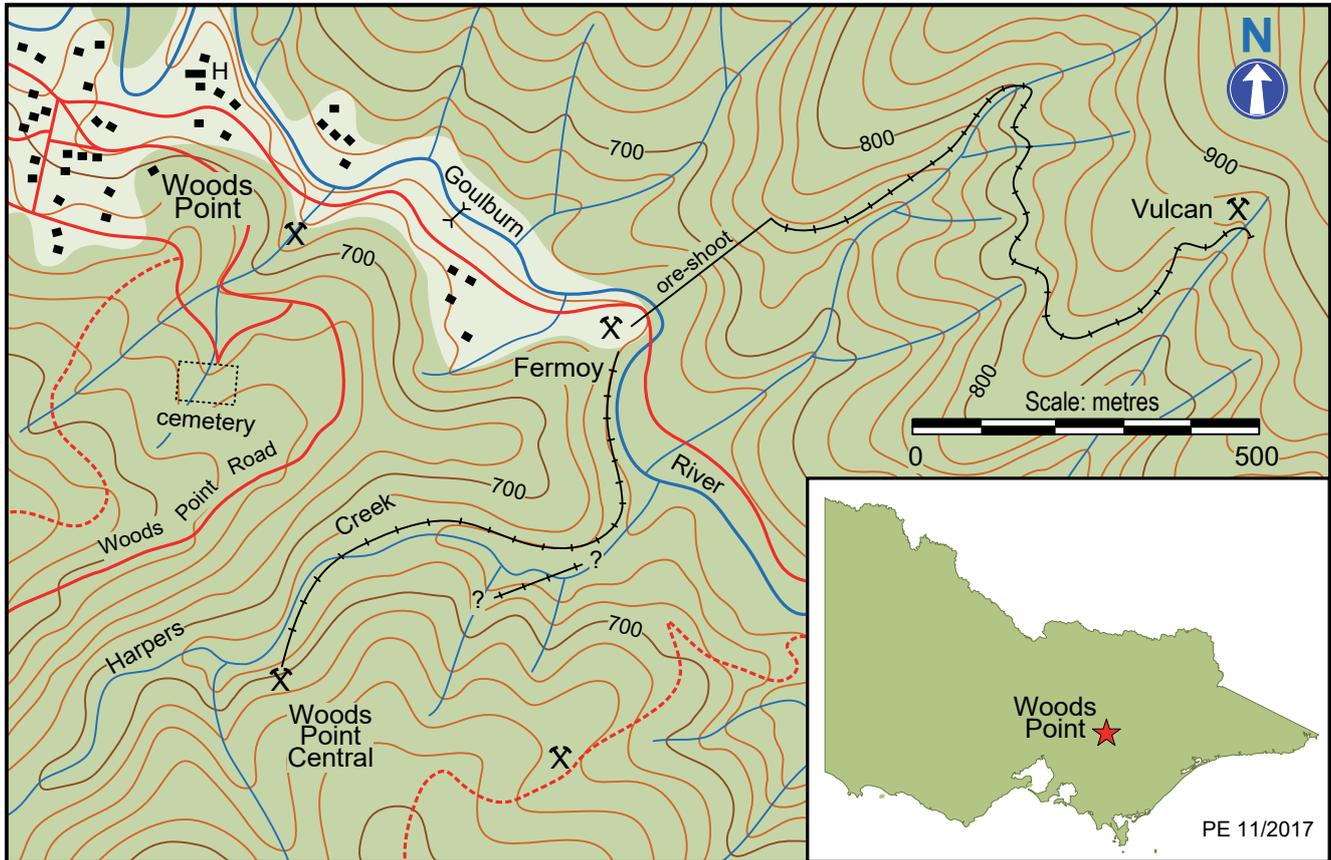
*The formation of the Woods Point Central tramway looking west, about halfway between the Fermoy and Woods Point Central workings.*

*Photo: Peter Evans*



*The commodious Vulcan tunnel, approximately 1.4 m wide and 1.7 m high and designed to take two parallel tracks.*

*Photo: Peter Evans*



Harpers Creek for about 500 metres on a gentle upgrade before crossing to the south side and the Woods Point Central tunnel. There must once have been quite a substantial bridge at the creek crossing, but there is no sign of it now. The Vulcan tunnel is commodious, designed to carry two parallel tracks (although nothing could be discerned beneath the water filling the tunnel). The tramway below the tunnel continues on a gentle downgrade, curving around the gullies on an easily-followed side-cut for a little over one kilometre before terminating on a spur. There is no sign of any lowering gear foundations, so this must have been the start of the ore-shoot, which continues straight down the hillside at an angle averaging 40 degrees below the horizontal

in a cut up to 1.5 m wide and 1.2 m deep, almost certainly once lined with sawn timber. There was no indication of the gauge of the tramway although, at one point, sleeper impressions 1 m long and spaced at 900 mm were observed. Peter Evans 11/2017

#### References

1. *The Mountaineer*, Supplement 12 September 1864; *Woods Point Times & Mountaineer*, 22 July 1865.
2. *Woods Point Times & Mountaineer*, 22 July 1865.
3. *Woods Point Times & Mountaineer*, 22 July 1865; 31 March 1866; *Dicker's Mining Record*, 31 October 1865.
4. *The Mountaineer*, 7 March 1865; *Woods Point Times & Mountaineer*, 22 July 1865; *Woods Point Times*, 26 April 1865, 29 April 1865.
5. *Woods Point Times & Mountaineer*, 5 August 1865.
6. *Woods Point Times & Mountaineer*, 22 November 1865; 26 December 1865; 26 May 1866; 30 January 1866.
7. *Woods Point Times & Mountaineer*, 22 July 1865.
8. *The Mountaineer*, 25 April 1865, 1 May 1865, 5 May 1865; *Woods Point Times*, 29 April 1865.
9. *Woods Point Times & Mountaineer*, 22 July 1865
10. *Woods Point Times & Mountaineer*, 9 August 1865; 12 August 1865; 19 August 1865; 26 August 1865.
11. *The Mountaineer*, 31 January 1865.
12. *Woods Point Times & Mountaineer*, 4 October 1865.
13. *Dicker's Mining Record*, 31 July 1866; *Woods Point Times & Mountaineer*, 4 August 1866.
14. *Woods Point Times & Mountaineer*, 4 October 1865; *Woods Point Times*, 10 May 1865.
15. *Woods Point Times & Mountaineer*, 12 June 1867.
16. *Woods Point Times & Mountaineer*, 3 July 1867.
17. *Woods Point Times & Mountaineer*, 7 December 1867.
18. *Woods Point Times & Mountaineer*, 11 December 1867; 21 December 1867



**Left:** The Vulcan mullock heap looking south from the tunnel mouth. **Right:** The lower terminus of the Vulcan tramway, looking south-west down the hillside at the start of the ore-shoot. Photos: Peter Evans



## Heritage & Tourist NEWS

News items should be sent to [heritagetourist@lrrsa.org.au](mailto:heritagetourist@lrrsa.org.au) Digital photographs for possible inclusion should be sent direct to Richard Warwick at [editor@lrrsa.org.au](mailto:editor@lrrsa.org.au) including the name of the location, the name of the photographer and the date of the photograph.

### QUEENSLAND

#### FRIENDS OF ARCHER PARK STATION AND STEAM TRAM MUSEUM INC. Rockhampton

1067 mm gauge

Archer Park's refurbishment is now complete and looks excellent. The new colour scheme for the station is classic cream with Indian red trim, and lime white on posts and beams and metal lace work at the front of the building. Everyone at Archer Park is pleased with the new paint job and it has put everyone in good spirits. The carriage shade (roof) over the tracks has also been completely renewed.

Following closure from 2 October 2017 to 9 November 2017, the Museum is now open again to the public. During the shutdown, the office was still staffed, completing Safety Management System audits and other necessary work to keep the Station compliant with ONRSR. Wednesday 15 November saw two representatives from ONRSR undertake a Track Maintenance and Procedures audit. The Museum received helpful feedback for minor improvements from the process and were pleased to hear that the organisation is compliant and doing a good job. The yearly compulsory tram boiler inspection and maintenance will commence on 11 December. It has been decided to operate the tram for an extra Sunday on 3 December due to this short delay in beginning the maintenance. The Exhibit Story Sensors are working well and getting good feedback from visitors.

*Tram Tracks* 2 December 2017

### NEW SOUTH WALES

#### RICHMOND VALE RAILWAY, Richmond Vale

Graham Black from the RVRM has provided the following report about the devastating fires in September.

On Tuesday 12 September 2017 just before midday a stolen car was dumped and set alight a mile or so from the RVRM and this quickly set the surrounding bush on fire (No rain had been

recorded at the railway since 2 June 2017). The Rural Fire Service (RFS) attended and brought some of it under control at the western fence of the railway site. I was called in that afternoon to make some fire tracks with the RVRM caterpillar loader so the RFS large tank trucks could drive through the bush as it had been decided to back burn, using the rail line as a barrier.

The next morning the weather conditions changed to a westerly wind of about 60 to 70km/h and the temperature was over 30 degrees C and this created a fire storm which came at the railway and there was no way it could be stopped. By 1000 the fire was right around the site and there was no way out or in. It was decided that all action would be on saving the buildings, the car shed with 20 or so passenger and goods wagons

stored inside, the engine shed, the 110-year-old administration building, the entry building and workshops. The RFS had a pump truck getting water out of the old power station cooling pond and feeding about nine fire units still on site and by late afternoon we had achieved this, but it was at a cost of a lot of rolling stock. Thankfully no one was injured.

I spent over six years (2002 to 2008) restoring sixteen 4-wheel coal wagons and two 4-wheel brake vans. Of the 4-wheel coal wagons, now only seven survive with a little damage, two were badly damaged and the rest destroyed. The oldest was 135 years old and the youngest was around 70 years old and also a 98 year old brake van was destroyed.

Also, two stainless steel passenger cars (6001 and 6002) were destroyed and another was



*Some of the burnt non-air coal hoppers at Richmond Vale, after the September fire. Photo: Graham Black*



*The sad remains of East Greta Coal Mining Company brake van 42.*

*Photo: Graham Black*

badly damaged. These 1955 built cars were the first of the inter-urban electric trailer cars to enter service in NSW.

Before the fire there was approximately 50 4-wheel coal wagons stored on the railway, but now a total of only 12 survive. (In 1950 13,000 of these wagons were in service in the Hunter Valley and these were the last survivors).

In addition, over 1000 sleepers were destroyed on the main line with about 200 to 300 in the Mulbring Road Branch. Most of the timbers under five turnouts were badly burnt or destroyed but the biggest problem is the damage to No 1 bridge with one pier and many timbers burnt.

If you would like to make a donation to the RVRM, the online fundraiser can be found at [www.gofunfraisise.com.au/beneficiary/rebuildrichi](http://www.gofunfraisise.com.au/beneficiary/rebuildrichi)  
Graham Black 24 December 2017

## VICTORIA

### PUFFING BILLY RAILWAY, Belgrave

762 mm gauge

The steel frame of the first of the new NBH carriages has been delivered and the bodywork is now being fitted at the Emerald carriage workshops. The Puffing Billy Workshops Blog contains much interesting information on the development of the design concept of these carriages: <http://puffingbilly.com.au/en/pb-news/blog/>  
October was an outstanding month resulting in another all-time monthly record. Total passengers carried was 51,693, which was 14,118 or 37.57% above last year's record October. YTD passengers now total 165,097, which is 19,235 or 13.19% ahead of last year. October passenger numbers were boosted by special charter trains

operated on the Lakeside/Gembrook section for the Scouting movement during the school holidays.

The Railway has now achieved another milestone in that it has now carried over 500,000 passengers over the past twelve months. Total passengers for the previous twelve months was 506,472. Total passengers for the past six months was 234,877.

The Railway recently received State Government funding of \$8.2 million towards development of the Discovery Centre at Emerald Lake Park. Together with the \$5.5 million commitment from the Federal Government in 2016 and a \$2.0 million allocation of internal funds, the funding package is now complete. Five architectural firms have been chosen to bid for the design. A decision on the successful firm is expected during December, with design and construction to take two years.

The Society's Publications Group launched its latest project, *Speed Limit 20 Plus*, at Emerald station over the weekend of 25 and 26 November. The book is a revised edition of the long since out of print Ted Downs' classic book, *Speed Limit 20*.

*Monthly News*, December 2017 & January 2018

## TASMANIA

### THE TASMANIAN TRANSPORT MUSEUM SOCIETY INC., Glenorchy

1067 mm gauge

TTMS has been granted a lease over 4.5 km of the railway track between Glenorchy and Chigwell. The museum does not expect the lease to take effect before mid January and the first train to run before Easter, but planning for the human resources needed to run the expanded services safely and professionally is now underway. Operations initially will be limited to Sundays. The TTMS still has a lot of work to do before its Safety Management System goes to the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator for approval. Clearly, nothing can happen until all the boxes have been ticked.

Tasmanian Transport Museum Society Inc. Newsletter November/December 2017

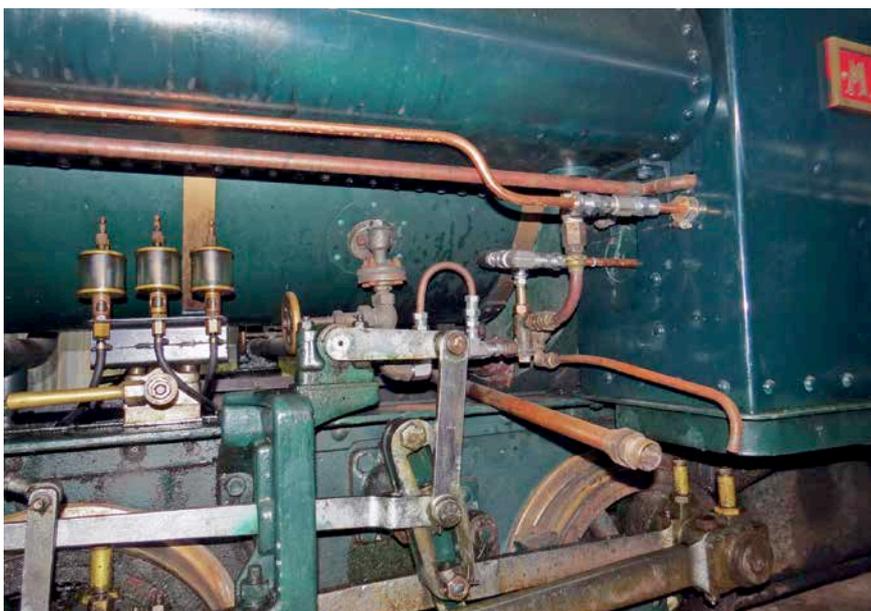
## SOUTH AUSTRALIA

### COBDOGLA IRRIGATION AND STEAM MUSEUM, Cobdogla

610 mm gauge

The Cobdogla Irrigation and Steam Museum had a very successful Twilight Train evening for Halloween with six trains, filled to capacity. The majority of passengers were well into the theme with all sorts of weird and wonderful characters on the ghost trains. Even most of the parents were in on the act. The trains were topped and tailed by both Simplex engines; locomotive *Farleigh*, works number 7369, built in 1939 and locomotive *Peter*, works number 9861, built in 1953.

The Bagnall steam locomotive, number 1801, built in 1906, has received new safety valves, and all the brass fittings in the pipe system were replaced with steel ones. With the locomotive



Cobdogla, Bagnall locomotive, B/No. 1801 of 1906 left side, showing the injector blow down, lubricators and Bagnall Price valve gear. Photo: Denis Wasley



Cobdogla, Bagnall locomotive: the Christmas tree from top, isolating valve, blower, injector and tender steam heat. The two off three valve branches are top row, oil burner steam supply, bottom row, oil supply. Photo: Denis Wasley



Some of the trackwork being done at Cobdogla, in 35 degree heat.

Photo: Denis Wasley

not scheduled to be used before Easter, the opportunity will be taken to install an oil heater in the tender tank.

Track work is continuing with the replacement of dead sleepers as required. To assist with this, a sleeper extraction and inserting machine is under construction using a hydraulic track lifter as the basis for the new machine.

Report from Denis Wasley 12 November 2017

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA

### BENNETT BROOK RAILWAY, Whiteman Park 610 mm gauge

A lot is happening at the railway. Another concertina door has been installed on an RP wagon which means conductors now have the ability to walk through the whole train from front to back which means train crews have better access to the passengers.

Work on the restoration project, the historic ZB 213, is progressing well. It is a composite passenger, goods and guards van.

Work for the Dole participants have been kept busy. They have cleaned up the yard, and made the walking area better for guards and shunters. They have installed shelving in the locomotive shed and are painting the new administration area. They have installed a sliding door at one end which will provide more protection from the weather. Participants have also been out walking the track to remove troublesome weeds and shrubs.

While the Railway had a weed spraying contractor spray the three metres each side of the track, some of the shrubs have proved tougher and needed removal by hand. Whiteman Park requires this as part of the Railway's fire management program. The six metre clearance

effectively acts as a fire break, and also allows access by fire management vehicles in the event of a fire.

The end of the year is fast approaching and workers are well into the summer maintenance time. There has been a strip down on the 0-4-2T Perry (*Betty Thompson*) and the boiler inspector is being contacted to give a clear picture of the what is needed to run this locomotive in the coming year.

The Fowler is out of service with a leaking torque converter.

Workers are in the process of assessing the large locomotive fleet and will be looking at the repair problems of all large diesels and prioritising locomotives that will give the Railway long term service for the given funding and labour.

The Dorman Planet number 8 is tentatively back in service with the fuel pump diaphragm gasket causing the fuel starvation problems replaced. The Railway would have preferred to have had more time to reintroduce this locomotive to traffic and to iron out any small problems, but with the Fowler's failure they did not have that luxury.

NG15 123 is waiting for the chosen contractor to report back with a quotation for the boiler repairs. The Railway had to change contractors a couple of months back due to a number of problems and are now using the company which had previously worked on the boiler in the second half of the 1980s. Work sporadically happens on the chassis when time from the above locomotives allows.

All other locomotives are operating with minor repairs. *Ashley* suffered a breakdown, which was repaired that evening.

Interestingly, research into the Planet locomotives indicates that the *Yellow Rose* with builder's number 2055, turned 80 earlier this

year. It was dispatched to Whiteman's Brick in July 1937 from F.C.Hibberd.

Also, the Dorman Planet number 8, ex Great Boulder Gold Mines, appears to be unique as the only TCN class built by Hibberd with builder's number 3966. It is assumed that TCN stands for Torque Converter Narrow as similar locomotives were more common on standard gauge.

The signals department has been busy with multiple maintenance duties. The wooden cross arms were replaced on the end poles of the telegraph pole route. The end poles take the tension of wires over the whole route. The wooden cross arms are over 100 years old, having been installed between Muehea and Gin Gin on the Midland Railway and had rotted. Zincalume steel cross arms have been installed as a substitute.

Mussel Pool received attention on many occasions. Workers repaired the signal wires for the mechanical signalling at Mussel Pool that operate the outer home and distant signals, as they became twisted due to some of the pegs rotting and breaking up. The wooden bridges holding the wheels also required replacement.

Work has continued on the WVJ South signalling project. With the installation of the ladder on the WVJ South Distant, the signal has been completed. Refurbishment of the colour-light signal for the starter signal for No.3 road South has also occurred. Preparations for the removal of the semaphore signals at WVJ South are scheduled for December. Over the summer months, the signals department will be concentrating on readying the remainder of the signals for installation at WVJ South. Most of this work will be undertaken in the hangar at the workshops.

*Bennett Brooklet* November/December edition



**Above:** The tourist tram on the jetty at Busselton, WA, that runs for the full length of the pier, in October 2017. Photo: John Phillips.

**Below:** Pemberton Tramway Tram No. 1 heads out of town with a full load of passengers in October 2017. Photo: John Phillips



# Books from LRRSA Sales ...

## Speed Limit 20 Plus

The Story of the Narrow Gauge Branch Lines of the VR  
By Edward A Downes

Revised edition published by Puffing Billy Preservation Society, November 2017

Over 130 pages, 210 x 135 mm, hard cover, many photographs and track diagrams.



Long out of print, this is an updated version of the much sought-after book originally published in 1963. It is a history of the Victorian Railways' five 2 ft 6 in gauge lines, and it includes an additional chapter to cover events since 1963.

Price \$49.95 plus postage

(\$44.95 to LRRSA members)

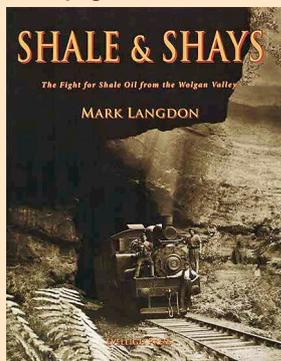
Weight 550 g

## Shale & Shays

The Fight for Shale Oil from the Wolgan Valley  
By Mark Langdon

Published by Eveleigh Press.

300 pages, 279 x 215 mm, hard cover, many photographs.



A new history of the famous standard-gauge Wolgan Valley Railway, NSW. With five chain curves and 1 in 25 grades in spectacular scenery, it used four three-truck Shay locomotives. Includes some original hand-coloured photographs, detailed maps, and rolling stock diagrams.

Price \$78.00 plus postage

(\$70.20 to LRRSA members)

Weight 1,400 g

## Simsville and the Jarrah Mill

Myall River State Forest, New South Wales

By Ian McNeil

Published by the LRRSA

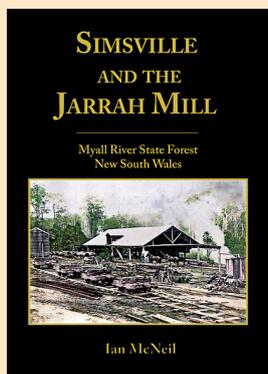
Soft cover, 96 pages, A4 size  
55 photographs, 12 maps and diagrams, references, and index.

The history of a 3ft 6in gauge tramway and sawmilling operations at the village of Simsville, near Stroud. The tramway used three Climax geared locomotives.

Price \$29.00 plus postage

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Weight: 490 g



## The McIvor Timber & Firewood Company

Tooborac, Victoria

By Frank Stamford

Published by the LRRSA

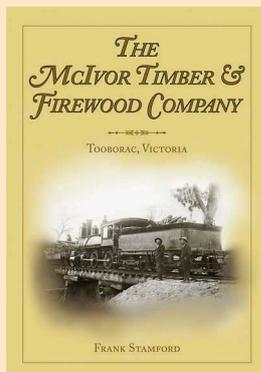
Soft cover, 104 pages, A4 size  
104 photographs, 23 maps and diagrams, references, and index.

The history of a 5ft 3in gauge tramway from Tooborac to Mitchell's Creek, Puckapunyal, Moornbool West and Cherrington.

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(\$22.50 to LRRSA members)

Weight: 550 g



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