

MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER

RAILWAY LUNCHEON CLUB THIRROUL STATION

Forty five members and friends made the journey to Thirroul for the Luncheon Club's monthly outing on Wednesday 16 November. Thirroul SM Michael Keelan welcomed the group and proudly told us that Thirroul had the second largest passenger numbers (after Wollongong) on the South Coast Line.

Thirroul Station was opened as Robinsville on 21 June 1887, the name being changed to Thirroul on 1 November 1891. Over the years Thirroul has seen expansion from the humble single platform to three platforms by 1938, track duplication in 1915 – 1916 and a Railway Institute in 1920. A large loco depot was opened in 1917 and closed in 1965 and in subsequent years bi-directional signalling has been introduced and lengthy crossing loops established at the northern end of the station. The Railway Institute building survives and is today managed by a local preservation group and made available for community activities.

A nearby gem was the War Memorial and local veteran Keith Woodward gave our group some history of the community activity which resulted in its establishment in 1917. The visit was rounded off with lunch at the nearby Ryans Hotel.

The next outing for the Luncheon Club is on 21 December to Sydney Signal Box. We meet at Redfern Station on the overbridge in the paid area at 10.45am. In the event that access to the signal box may not be possible on this day, then an inspection of Redfern Station will be substituted. Lunch will be at the Railz Hotel.

There are no outings in January or February, but on 15 February, Stuart Sharp and John Oakes would be happy to join anyone interested for an informal lunch at 12 noon at Whelans Hotel at Strathfield. Note that this is not an ARHS activity. The normal Luncheon Club outings will resume on 21 March.

Gary Hughes

JOHN HOYLE NATIONAL AFFAIRS EDITOR RETIRES FROM RAILWAY DIGEST

As close to 90% of ARHSnsw members also subscribe to *Railway Digest*, John's own farewell and Chris Walters' piece bidding John goodbye from Digest's editorial committee will be noted on page four of the December 2011 issue.

In January 1997, John Hoyle's name became a regular credit with each edition of the magazine. Thus John has been a *Digest* stalwart with his monthly contribution for fourteen years.

His focus has always been news from the railway industry and he gave *Digest* the balanced coverage of news to go with the articles of other contributors for our nationally-oriented magazine.

Often he would write articles to compliment his news compilations such exploring about-to-be-closed Queensland railways branches and changes/upgrading of suburban operations around the country.

John forewarned me when I took up Society duties in 2000 that he could not guarantee his regular contribution forever and 2005 may be his last year. That he has gone on well past this date is a reflection of his commitment to the Society's modern news magazine.

Such is his recognition as the pre-eminent railway news writer in Australia that he was recently offered and accepted a regular column in the *International Railway Journal* commenting on Australian news and events.

Behind the scenes, John was always ready to lend advice to myself and mentor *Digest* editorial staff on various publishing matters and industry events. We shall sincerely miss this aspect of John's contribution to the success of *Digest* as well.

Sadly, the December 2011 issue will be John's last compilation of national affairs news.

John is now intent on taking that well-earned holiday that for many years was determined by compiling and writing news contributions for *Digest*. But John has assured us that he will still contribute an occasional article depending on his motivation.

Beginning with the January 2012 issue, the Society is pleased to now announce that John Birchmeier will assume the role of *Railway Digest's* national affairs news editor. John too is a transportation enthusiast and is a self-published author of several bus transportation books. He is currently the editor of *Australian Bus & Commercial Vehicle Heritage* magazine.

Ross Verdich

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