

The Railway Luncheon Club 20 May 2009

HORNSBY

The ARHSnsw Railway Luncheon Club members had a fantastic day at Hornsby on 20th May with 29 members in attendance. The adverse weather was in direct opposite of the level of enjoyment. The Station Master, Mark Edmunds, was outstanding in his presentation of present day operations and procedures at the station and he engaged his audience with a repertoire of local anecdotes and incidents. He also gave a handout to all attendees about the relocation of the 1928 power signal box. Members also received from the Society a two page handout on the history of the buildings. Member Noel Reed explained features of the history of the signalling system.

Hornsby has some rare buildings. Members learnt that the 1886 brick platform building on platform 4/5 was the sole example of a five room standard roadside platform building erected in Sydney. Similarly, the brick 1910 buildings on platforms 1 and 2/3 feature the very rare use of extended roof rafters to form the platform awnings. Near the end of the platform 4/5, the brick telephone exchange featured a tiled roof - a most unusual application in the history of NSW railways. Hornsby is one of the very few stations which have two sets of toilets open to the public.

The very first overhead booking office was erected in 1909 as part of the yard and station changes. In 1985-87, the original booking office was replaced and toilet facilities were provided on the overhead concourse. Canopies were placed over the up end stairs and on all the platforms where they were otherwise absent. It appears that the footbridge at the up end was extended easterly to accommodate an additional track to serve a possible platform 0 terminating road. In 1995, the 1987 overhead booking office was replaced by the present structure. The opportunity was taken to widen the footbridge considerably. New toilets were built inside the paid area (train side) and the 1987 toilet area was converted for use as "concessions" (shops). The present lifts were installed in 1995.

Two footbridges exist. That at the Up end is a steel beam bridge that is "haunched". Some of the 1909 fabric survived the 1995 upgrade but the substructure was substantially modified. The footbridge at the Down end is a conventional steel beam bridge and was erected in 1910. Both bridges have new concrete decks, steel canopies and steel balustrades.

The enjoyment didn't stop when the inspection was over. Members retired for luncheon and many enjoyed eating the "Rails" hamburger in the "Rails Restaurant" at the Railway Hotel.

The next meeting of the Railway Luncheon Club is at Parramatta Station on Wednesday, 17th June. Meet at the gates on the western concourse at 11.00am sharp. Special guest is Noel Reed who will talk on the history of the signal box and explain current day signalling practices.

Advanced notice: the July Railway Luncheon Club will be an all-day Novcastrian affair with a visit to Newcastle station. We are ex-Central at 8.15am. Arrive Newcastle 11am. Then welcome by the SM and talks by Ed Tonks and others. Ferry to Stockton, eat at the General Washington Hotel (already sampled and booked) and back on the 3.30pm ex Newcastle. Excursion papers will be distributed to those on the train at Central. Sit in the second car from the front, lower deck. The 8.15am is an eight car set - plenty of room. Only those attending the Luncheon Club event are to get the special handout, which contains a special outline drawing by David Sheedy of the main Newcastle Station building showing what parts were added and when.



Top image: Looking south, the 1886 brick platform building on platform 4/5 was the sole example in Sydney of a five room standard roadside platform building. It is now isolated from the adjacent roadside by the new Down relief line.

Middle image: Looking north from the Down end of Platform 5 showing the new Down relief line. The recently moved old brick signal box is in the left foreground.



Lower image: Where are you Stuart? Railway Luncheon Club participants listen to Stuart Sharp on the northern end of Platform 4. Despite the rain a good RRLC crowd was in attendance.

Images by David Wynter