

MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER

RAILWAY LUNCHEON CLUB DARLING HARBOUR GOODS LINE

To celebrate our 50th outing on 18 September, we decided to come closer to home and have a look at what remains of the Darling Harbour Goods Line. After a walk through the Devonshire Street pedestrian tunnel to Henry Deane Plaza, our group of about 40 heard about the biography of this not so well known Engineer in Chief of the Construction Branch of the NSW Railways, as well as some history of Devonshire Street.

Life Member John Oakes then took the group to look at what remains of the Darling Harbour branch. We started with the old underpass under Railway Square, part of which dates from 1855 and is the oldest structure remaining on the NSW railway system. We were able to have the gates to this opened, giving a good view of this historic structure, but unfortunately due to safety concerns we could not enter the underpass. The locations of the various sidings which served the industries in this area were pointed out by John, and then we went to the bridge over Ultimo Road. Unfortunately, little can be found of its history and even its date seems to vary from 1874 to 1879. But, none the less, RRC Manager Bill Phippen gave the group an informative presentation of what is known of it.

After lunch at the Great Southern Hotel, about 20 members availed themselves of the opportunity to go with John Oakes to Jones Bay to see the remains of the Darling Harbour branch there. It was a fitting way to celebrate our 50th outing, and thanks go to John, to Bill, and also to those in Sydney Trains who were able to open the gate for us.

Our next outing is our 2-day visit to Bathurst on 22 and 23 October. This is now booked out.

On 20 November, our outing is to Redfern. Meet in the paid area on the overbridge at the top of the stairs to No.1 platform.

There are no outings in December or January, but our usual informal lunch only affair will be on 19 February 2014 at the Great Southern Hotel in George St, near Central Station.

Gary Hughes



An O Class tram passing under the Ultimo Road overbridge, thought to be c.1950. Ted Skiller photo, held by the RRC. Published in ARH Nov. 2009



At the entrance to the Railway Square underpass. Image: David Taylor



The underpass at Railway Square. The original 1855 structure is beyond the steelwork near the centre of the underpass. The double track was gauntleted following electrification of the line. Image: David Taylor

SEPTEMBER GUEST SPEAKER

Member and author Jim Longworth spoke about what is remaining around Sydney in tramway archaeology. While little evidence of tramlines can still be seen (apart from when they are uncovered whenever roads are resurfaced) the actual routes and infrastructure can still be plainly observed in many instances, particularly in Sydney's Eastern Lines.

Jim used a then and now approach to his presentation when appropriate yesteryear images were found. The replacement of tram services by motor buses was not all encompassing. For example, tram stop shelters were sensibly turned into bus stop shelters with little modification. Tram stop shelters were built to a standard design or followed the architectural design of nearby buildings. There are many ex tram stop shelters still 'in service'.

Jim's lecture was a sampler to the release of his book on Sydney's tramway archaeology (look for it in bookshop later this year). When it is released and you know of something tramway related not mentioned in the book, let Jim know.

George Gettens thanked Jim on behalf of the members for his enlightening presentation.

RESEARCH APPEAL

Jim Longworth is researching amusement railways in NSW. Would anyone with memories, rumours, written material, leads, photographs, etc., please contact Jim by e-mail jimlongw1952@gmail.com