

**RAILWAY LUNCHEON CLUB
SANDGATE**

In keeping with our normal custom of a yearly outing to the Hunter Region, on Wednesday 24 August the Luncheon Club visited Sandgate to see the remains of the former branch line there which closed on 13 October 1985, as well as some interesting facets of the cemetery itself.

Aby led by local Hunter historian, and well known ARHS member Ed Tonks, our group of 43 was treated to a wealth of information about the local history there and an enlightening look at the Newcastle War Cemetery. After all that, it was off to the Hamilton North Bowling Club for lunch.

Our thanks go to Ed for his very informative and professional presentation, to Stuart Sharp for his valued history of the station and also thanks to ARHSnsw Tours Director Spencer Ross for his assistance and for the provision of the coach.

There will be no outing in October, and our last outing for the year, our 3-day tour to Gunning and places beyond, is on 8, 9, and 10 November 2016. This tour is fully booked.

Gary Hughes, Manager Railway Luncheon Club



Our group on the disused Sandgate Cemetery platform. Image: Bill Laidlaw



Upper: On 22 September 1985, 669 trails a 2-car set onto the Sandgate Cemetery branch at Sandgate.

Below: The same scene today. Both images: Ed Tonks



**A PASSENGER TRAIN TO RYLSTONE
(Well almost!)**



Saturday 10 September 2016 defied the weather forecasters and provided a clear fine day for the heritage 621/721 Rail Cars from The Rail Motor Society at Paterson to travel over the Western Line through the Blue Mountains to Lithgow, Wallerawang and Kandos. Our opportunity to continue the extra eight kms from Kandos by train was declined by line operator John Holland and a bus was provided for those passengers eager to explore Rylstone albeit for a short period only due to constraints of our timetable. An on-time departure from Central was followed by passenger pick-ups at Strathfield, Parramatta, Blacktown and Penrith. Continued on-time running over the Blue Mountains was maintained whilst passengers enjoyed a most welcome Devonshire morning tea served by the friendly and accommodating TRMS hospitality crew.

After stops at Mt Victoria to pick up another passenger and at Lithgow for our local driver we proceeded to Wallerawang and joined the truncated Mudgee Line. We passed the stations that once served the towns of Portland, Cullen Bullen, Ben Bullen, Capertee, Torbane, Excelsior, Brogans Creek to Clandulla where we awaited a train order to proceed to Kandos along the now out of use section of the line, arriving 10 minutes behind the table. On arrival at Kandos, passengers who had booked lunch walked across the park from the station to the Kandos Hotel where Publican Ray had a great Pub roast lunch followed by desert waiting to be served. The local bus proprietor then conveyed those passengers who chose to explore the township of Rylstone. Being a local market day, many took the advantage to check out local handicrafts and produce before walking through the historic town noting the various buildings and plaques. We rejoined our bus for the return to Kandos for an arranged 15 minute later departure for the return trip.

The afternoon sun created a great display on the Capertee Valley walls as we retraced the rails to Wallerawang, noting the Mt Piper and Wallerawang Power Station on the way. An on-time arrival at Lithgow was achieved where we thanked and farewelled our local driver and continued through the 10 tunnels noting some restoration work being carried out at the Zig Zag. Our descent of the mountains from Katoomba was slowed as we followed a regular timetabled service until St Marys where we were given the green light on the double track. Passengers were farewelled at their respective stations and an arrival at Central was eight minutes down. The train departed on time for the return run to Paterson and recorded a good run.

Our special thanks must go to the Rail Motor Society crew and those responsible for the preparation of the train and negotiating with the rail authorities responsible for the safe passage of our train throughout the tour, making it the great success it was.

Spencer Ross, Tours Director