



AUSTRALIAN RAILWAY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MELBOURNE BRANCH

Email: <melbournelog@arhsnsw.com.au> Mobile 0412 056 033

ARHS Melbourne Luncheon Outing Group, Daylesford Spa Country Railway Via Bullarto Wednesday October 1st 2025

The Daylesford Spa Country Railway is a Heritage Railway operating mainly Railcars between Daylesford and Bullarto on the former VR Daylesford branch line.

We are doing this trip via Bullarto as the Daylesford V/Line Coach stop is a long uphill walk to the Daylesford Station.

- 10:06am Catch the 10:06 am Bendigo train to Woodend, traveling in the second car from the front.
- 11:05am Arrive Woodend Station and walk across to the bus stop.
- 11:15am Catch Daylesford V/Line Coach to Bullarto
- 11:50am Arrive Bullarto. Eat your lunch you brought with you and have a coffee or tea and explore the Station Buildings and surrounds.
- 12:30pm Catch our DERM or Walker Railcar to Daylesford.
- 1:00pm. Arrive Daylesford Station, explore the Station Building and Displays.
Catch a Railcar to the Workshops. TBC on the Day.
- 2:00pm Catch the Railcar back to Bullarto Station.
- 3:27pm Catch the Bus back to Woodend Station.
- 4:03pm Arrive Woodend Station, walk to Platform.
- 4:18pm Catch the VLine VLocity Service back to Southern Cross or your Destination.
- 5:30pm Arrive back at Southern Cross Station.

History from the Daylesford Spa Country Railway Website.

The railway between Carlsruhe and Daylesford was opened in two sections during 1880. The first section between Carlsruhe and Trentham opened on the 16th of February 1880 with an intermediate station at Tylden. The second section of the line was opened on the 17th march 1880 with an intermediate station at Bullarto, the current terminus of the CHTR. Fern Hill station between Tylden and Trentham also opened on this date. Other stations opened were Lyonville between Trentham and Bullarto on the 14th June 1880 and Musk Creek (later shortened to Musk) in September 1881. The main produce carried on the line was potatoes and firewood. Passenger traffic was also quite high in the early years with 50,000 passengers recorded in 1884.

With the apparent success of the Carlsruhe to Daylesford railway attention soon turned to connecting Daylesford with Ballarat. After numerous schemes to connect the two localities, a railway was finally opened on the 19th of January 1887 between North Creswick on the Ballarat to Maryborough line and Rocky Lead (later renamed Rocklyn), an extension to Daylesford was opened on the 1st of June 1887. Stations on this line were located at: North Creswick (Junction), Broomfield, Allendale, Kingston, Newlyn, Rocky Lead, Wombat, Leonard's Hill (later renamed Leonard), Ballan road (later renamed Sailors Falls), Woodburn and Daylesford.

The Daylesford to North Creswick railway was closed in July 1953 when it's once a fortnight mixed passenger/ goods train was withdrawn. The Karlsruhe to Daylesford railway lasted another 25 years until falling track standards led to the replacement of the railmotor service with a road coach. The line was closed to all traffic on the 3rd of July 1978.

On the 27th of June 1980 the Central Highlands Tourist Railway was formed and the long task of restoring the railway to operating condition commenced. During the mid to late 1980's, Gangers trolley's conveyed passengers on short trips to the Wombat forest about halfway between Daylesford and Musk. On the 15th of September 1990 railmotor services were restored between Daylesford and Musk for the first time in 13 years. The section of line between Musk and Bullarto was reopened on the 17th of March 1997. In early 2002, The Central Highlands Tourist Railway adopted the trading name of Daylesford Spa Country Railway.

On the evening of 23 February 2009, bushfires in the Daylesford region burnt out 1.6 km (1 mile) of track between Daylesford and Musk, with approximately 2000 sleepers totally destroyed along with the pit logs. Services resumed two weeks later on 8 March between Daylesford station and the 74 milepost at the edge of the fire damaged section.

Following the completion of reconstruction works through the forest, test runs to Musk were operated on 14 and 15 August 2010, with a formal re-opening of the line to Musk on 29 August 2010. Further reconstruction works on the Musk to Bullarto section occurred during 2013 and the DSCR was formally re-opened through to Bullarto on 15 March 2014.

In December 2011, a new rolling stock storage shed was constructed on the former Ballarat line formation behind the East St industrial estate. Approximately 500 metres of the Ballarat line was re-laid along the formation and into the shed, plus two turnouts.

A more in-depth history of the railways in the Daylesford area can be found in the book, "Timber, Spuds and Spa" by Murrell Osborne and is available from the DSCR at Daylesford.

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Daylesford Spa Country Railway

The Daylesford Spa Country Railway (which is operated by the Central Highlands Tourist Railway) is a volunteer-operated 1,600 mm (5 ft 3 in) gauge tourist railway located in Victoria, Australia. It operates on a section of the closed and dismantled Daylesford line, and currently runs services between Daylesford and the hamlet of Bullarto.

Victorian Railways era

The original line was opened in two stages, from the mainline junction at Karlsruhe to the town of Trentham, on 16 February 1880. The remainder of the line, from Trentham to Daylesford, was opened a month later on 17 March 1880. The line initially had significant goods and passenger traffic, with 50,000 passengers travelling the line in 1884 alone. However, over the next seventy years, both traffic and the quality of line gradually degraded, until the last passenger service was replaced with a road coach in 1978.

Reopening as a tourist railway

The Central Highlands Tourist Railway was founded two years later, and set about restoring the railway to operating condition. After several years of restoration, trolley services commenced from Daylesford station to a temporary terminus located in the Wombat State Forest, a distance of 3.2 km (2.0 miles), in the latter half of the 1980s.

On 15 September 1990 rail services commenced between Daylesford and the nearby hamlet of Musk, a distance of 5.4 km (3.4 miles). Another 3.8 km of line was opened on 17 March 1997, allowing services to operate as far as Bullarto, 9.2 km (5.7 miles) from Daylesford. As Bullarto station had been demolished, this required building a new platform and installing a portable station building.

In 2002, the organisation changed its trading name from the Central Highlands Tourist Railway to the Daylesford Spa Country Railway.

On the evening of 23 February 2009, bushfires in the Daylesford region destroyed 1.6 kilometres (one mile) of track running through the Wombat State Forest, with about 2000 sleepers destroyed, rails buckled, and the last two broad-gauge cattle pits on a running railway in Victoria destroyed. As a result, services were truncated, running out of Daylesford on the 1.7 km (1.1 mile) of line which remained unaffected. The repairs were expected to cost \$250,000.

In August 2010, services over the first 5.4 km (3.4 miles) from Daylesford to Musk were reinstated after repairs to the damaged section through the forest, and the rest of the line through to Bullarto was reopened in December 2013.

Current operations and extension plans

The railway operates every Sunday, with five return services to Bullarto and one to Musk on its regular time table. In 2017, the railway commenced operations on Wednesdays during the school holidays with three return services to Bullarto. On the first Saturday evening of each month, the railway operates the Silver Streak Food and Wine Train, although these have been suspended since March 2020

The railway also runs the famous Daylesford Sunday Market within the station grounds, which has been an important part of the railway's activities since the early 1980s.

In 2018 a new platform opened adjacent to the Passing Clouds winery at Musk, opening up new opportunities for passengers to enjoy the hospitality of the winery and travel there by vintage train.

For many years, there have been plans to re-open the line from Bullarto to Trentham, which is 9.7 km (6.0 miles) from Bullarto and 18.9 km (11.7 miles) from Daylesford. While these plans were on the back burner for some time, this re-opening is now in planning and is considered a priority project by Hepburn Shire Council. The project will see the reopening of the disused Lyonville and Trentham stations, and the construction of a new station at Wombat Forest. However no date has been set for when the Bullarto-Trentham section will reopen.

Bullarto Station from <Daylesfordrailway.com.au>

Opened on 17th March 1880, it was the only intermediate station between Trentham and Daylesford and as such had 5 sidings and at an elevation of 2452 ft above sea level, the highest station in Victoria. At the time of opening facilities were sparse with a report in September 1880 stating that at Bullarto there was a goods platform with small shed and that a shelter shed and closets (toilets) for passengers are badly wanted as it was the busiest station on the line other than Daylesford.

By May 1881 a shelter had been provided for passengers and in 1882 a 30 x 20 foot goods shed had been erected.

At this time there was agitation for a proposed line to Ballarat to junction at Bullarto in place of Daylesford. This caused much heated criticism from those in Daylesford with public meetings and rallies held. Even though the local member for the area, James Wheeler, had a timber tramway at Bullarto Station to transship his loads from his mill, he advocated for the Daylesford option which eventually won out with the line opening in 1887.

In that same year a contract was issued for the construction of a third class station building at Bullarto of a standard design adopted in 1886 which had a general waiting room, station masters office and ladies waiting, the latter two with a fireplace. The station masters office also doubling as the postal and telegraph office for the district.

This reflected the importance of the station and in 1890 it was the third busiest station on the line for passengers with over 11,000 and the second for goods with over 18,000t being dispatched. This would turn out to be the height of the station.

The economic depression of the 1890s saw a downturn in the demand for timber, the main export for the station, and with the closing of the sawmills in the area (James Wheeler shut his in 1892) a corresponding drop in passenger numbers. In 1893 the spare closet was relocated to the station at Birchip and by 1900 passenger numbers had fallen to just over 7,000 and outwards goods tonnage 13,000, mainly now consisting of potatoes and other root crops.

Because of this increase in produce, a 10t Fairbanks cart weighbridge was moved from Rocky Lead on the Ballarat line to Bullarto at the request of local farmers in 1889.

The station remained unchanged through the first decades of 1900s, however by 1920 traffic had dropped to 4,500 passenger and just 2,000t of goods which reflected the population change due to the Great War and the impact of motor vehicles. As such in 1926 the station master was removed and it was reduced to caretaker status, meaning the wife of the Ganger in charge of the maintenance team based there would look after the station when required.

Like that of the 1890s, the depression of the 1930s severely impacted the line and by 1940 passenger and goods had dropped to just over 1,000. As part of wartime economy drives, major alterations occurred in 1941 along the entire Daylesford line. At Bullarto this saw the removal of sidings 3 and 4, the carriage dock and most significantly a major alteration to the station building by demolishing the general and ladies waiting room and converting the station office by the provision of a small booking and waiting area.

In 1956 No 2 road was removed, and the station remained unchanged until 1967 when a major rationalisation occurred along the entire line in an attempt to save costs. With passenger numbers now in the hundreds, all facilities at Bullarto were removed and a 3 sided corrugated iron shed (commonly known as a 'Mallee Shed') provided for passengers and the station became a no one in charge location.

In 1972 the goods shed and platform were removed and by 1975 just 64 passengers used the station and it remained unchanged until it closed along with the line on 3 July 1978.

Everything you see at Bullarto today has been rebuilt using original plans and photos by Daylesford Railway to accurately recreate Bullarto in 1930.



Station Listing Wikipedia

DSCR Locomotives & Railmotors [\[edit \]](#)

Number *	Image *	Year built *	Builder *	Status *	Notes *
RM 7		22 July 1949		Under Restoration	102 hp Walker railmotor. Stored for future restoration.
RM 32		24 March 1953		Operational	153 hp Walker railmotor.
RM 53		15 February 1926		Under Restoration	A double ended Leyland railmotor
RM 62		21 July 1930		Stored	DERM, Stored for future restoration
RM 63		7 August 1930		Operational	DERM
RM 74		8 February 1937		Under Restoration	Passenger mail motor.
RM 82		11 October 1950		Stored	280 hp Walker railmotor. Spare parts for RM 91.
RM 85		15 May 1951		Stored	280 hp Walker railmotor. Stored for future restoration.
RM 91		30 May 1952		Operational	280 hp Walker railmotor.
DRC 40		18 May 1971		Operational	Diesel Rail Car.
Y 159		14 March 1968		Operational	Y Class Diesel Locomotive
RT 3		15 February 1957		Operational	Rail tractor

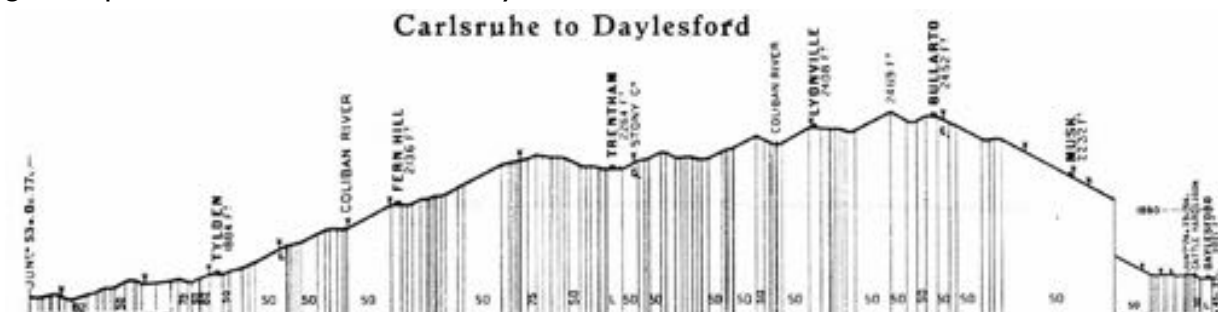
DSCR Locomotives & Railmotors [DSCR Website](#)**Trailers and Carriages** [\[edit \]](#)

Number *	Image *	Year built *	Builder *	Status *	Notes *
26 MT		29 August 1930		Stored	DERM trailer. Stored for future restoration.
56 MT		5 February 1952		Stored	Walker railmotor trailer
200 MT		24 April 1928		Operational	Brill railmotor trailer
28 C		15 December 1891		Stored	C van
ZL 544		26 February 1918		Operational	ZL van
BN 1		16 September 1981		Operational	N type carriage
BDN 6		2 October 1981		Operational	N type carriage
BRN 52		October 6, 1983		Operational	N type carriage
ACN 54		October 6, 1983		Operational	N type carriage

Trailers & Carriages [DSCR Website](#)



Bullarto Y152 1975 A down Daylesford goods pauses at Bullarto to have a chat with the gatekeeper. Photo ex Victorian Railway.net



Gradient Chart Carlsruhe to Dayslesford

ATTRACTIVE—
DAY RETURN FARES

RAIL ONLY

Melbourne—Daylesford

1st Class - 18/-
2nd Class - 14/-

MELBOURNE—

DAYLESFORD—

MELBOURNE—

(Full Passenger train and Diesel rail-car service)

Melbourne Daylesford Fares c1950

INCLUSIVE TOURS

DAYLESFORD (RAIL and LUNCH)

Including—
Reserved seat from Melbourne to Daylesford,
and
Lunch at Royal Hotel.
1st Class - 25/-
2nd Class - 25/-

HEPBURN SPRINGS

Including—
Reserved seat from Melbourne to Daylesford;
Road trip;
and
Lunch at Mineral Springs Hotel.
1st Class - 28/-
2nd Class - 24/-

Bookings At

The Victorian Government Tourist Bureau, 272 Collins Street, Melbourne (Telephone, F0404), or the Main Booking Office, Spencer Street Station.

FROM MELBOURNE				TO MELBOURNE			
	Diesel Rail Car Mon. to Sat.	Passenger Train Sat.	Diesel Rail Car Mon. to Fri.		Passenger Train Mon. to Sat.	Diesel Rail Car Mon. to Sat.	Diesel Rail Car Sat.
MELBOURNE— (Spencer St.)	Dep. 9.30	11.30	4.15	DAYLESFORD	Dep. 8.30	8.45	8.45
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Carlisle	...	...	...	...	...	8.45	8.45
Tylden	...	...	...	...	...	8.45	8.45
Fern Hill	...	...	...	...	...	8.45	8.45
Lyonsville	...	...	...	...	...	8.45	8.45
Traralgon	...	...	...	...	...	8.45	8.45
Sydenham	...	...	...	...	...	8.45	8.45
Oggers Rail	...	...	...	...	...	8.45	8.45
Sunbury	...	...	...	...	...	8.45	8.45
Clarendon	...	...	...	...	...	8.45	8.45
Riddell	...	...	...	...	...	8.45	8.45
Gisborne	...	...	...	...	...	8.45	



Snow, fortunately, is not a common sight on the V.R., especially in spring, but on October 1 there were substantial falls in many parts of the State. Not surprisingly, snow blanketed some of the higher railway stations. The Melbourne-Daylesford rail motor is shown arriving at Bullarto while snow was still falling. At an altitude of 2,452 ft., Bullarto is not far below the V.R.'s highest station—Shelley, 2,562 ft.



Woodend Station Rose Postcard pinterest Anna Laurendet c1930?



Daylesford Station Victoria pinterest Denis_Noone c1960?

THROUGH THE DIESEL WINDOW

Miles from Melbourne	Height above Sea Level			Miles from Melbourne	Height above Sea Level		
2½	23 ft.	Maribyrnong River	From the city to beyond Sunshine the Diesel passes through one of the most industrialized areas in Victoria. On either side of the line appear large industrial establishments, a notable one being the H. V. McKay Massey Harris Pty. Ltd. (Sunshine Harvester Works) on the right-hand side.	43½	1,656 ft.	Macedon	Station for the popular resort of Mt. Macedon, three miles to the right of the railway. Many visitors are attracted to Mt. Macedon by its lovely private gardens. A large memorial cross stands out prominently on the summit and can be seen from right-hand window of the train. Between Macedon and Woodend, the line winds through densely wooded country known as the Black Forest. In the gold rush days, this area was infested by bush-rangers who preyed upon diggers going to or from the fields at Castlemaine and Bendigo.
3½	53 ft.	Footscray					
6	120 ft.	White City (Dog Racing)					
7½	125 ft.	Sunshine					
9½	136 ft.	Albion	Here there is a goods line branching off and connecting at Broadmeadows with the main north-eastern line.				
11½	224 ft.	St. Albans	Terminus of suburban electrified system.	48½	1,841 ft.	Woodend	So called because, to people on their way to the goldfields, it marked the end of the Black Forest.
15	347 ft.	Sydenham	Close to the line are the 700 ft. radio masts of the Australian Broadcasting Commission.	53	1,800 ft.	Carlsruhe	Here, on the way to Daylesford, we leave the main Bendigo line.
20½	651 ft.	Diggers Rest	A favourite resting or camping place for diggers going to or coming from the diggings in the roaring 'fifties.	56½	1,884 ft.	Tylden	Named after Brigadier-General Tylden of the Crimean War.
23½	702 ft.	Sunbury	So named after a village on the Thames.	59½	2,136 ft.	Fern Hill	—
24½	694 ft.	Rupertswood	On the right-hand side may be seen the former home of the late Sir Rupert Clarke, Bt., which has been taken over by the Salesian Fathers. Here, about 80 to 90 boys receive primary education and experience in practical farming.	63½	2,264 ft.	Trentham	Named after Lord Trentham. The Trentham Falls, situated in a pretty park, are within easy walking distance from the station.
31½	1,068 ft.	Clarkefield	This is the junction for the Lancefield line and was once known as Lancefield Junction. Its name was changed to Clarkefield after Sir Rupert Clarke, Bt.	67½	2,408 ft.	Lyonville	The State Forestry Department has camps throughout this area to look after the large forests, particularly on the left of the line towards Mt. Blackwood.
35½	1,205 ft.	Riddell	Named after Mr. J. C. Riddell, an early squatter.	69½	2,452 ft.	Bullarto	An aboriginal name meaning abundance, big, broad, large. The station is the second highest in Victoria (Shelley, 2,562 ft., on the Tallangatta-Cudgewa line, being the highest).
				72½	2,232 ft.	Musk	So named because of the native musk tree growing in the gullies.
				75½	2,021 ft.	Daylesford	Named after the English home of Warren Hastings, Worcestershire. Daylesford is known as the spa centre of Australia.

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Victorian Railways Print.

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Day-Return Trips Melbourne to Daylesford & Hepburn Springs July, August & September 1915
ex Victorian Railways.net



Bullarto Station as rebuilt <daylesfordrailway.com.au>



Since the closure of Shelly in the late 1970's, Bullarto once again became the highest station in Victoria and is living up to this reputation as a cold place in winter following a shower of snow. James Brook.



ABOVE: A selection of tickets from the Daylesford line (courtesy Doug Miles).

From victorianrailways.net



This is the closed Daylesford railway at the Melbourne end of Lyonville station. In the photo above, looking across the closed level crossing at Gleeson Street. The old rail line can be seen proceeding down the 1-in-50 grade towards Trentham. The twenty-two mile Carlsruhe to Daylesford railway was opened in 1880 and closed in June, 1978. 12:51pm, Saturday the 12th of September, 1981
Photos by L-I 172

Information from DSCR website, pinterest.com & Wikipedia.

Notes compiled by Geoff Wallace

E&OE



Daylesford K153 at the Daylesford turntable with the last train. pinterest flickr



Carlsruhe Station, Y 121 swings off the Daylesford branch on an up goods as the fireman hands the staff to the signalman, Feb. 2 1978. 5 months later, on July 3 1978 the line closed. Photo courtesy Geoff Winkler



Carlsruhe Station, now a Private Residence, no Signal Box or Building now next to Water Tank. G. Wallace 20191030