



Welcome to the Munro Tramway Historical Group Inc. November Newsletter

munrotramway@gmail.com

23 March 2018

Newsletter #7



Management Committee

President	Col Seccombe	4697 8277	colseccombe@skymesh.com.au
Secretary	Ian Eustace	4697 8058	ian.eustace101@gmail.com
Treasurer	John Jeffery	4697 8152	jjeffery@skymesh.com.au



CULTURAL AWARD

The Munro Tramway Historical Group Inc. were pleased to receive recognition at the 2018 Crows Nest Australia Day Awards. The group won the Cultural Award for their achievements since their inception in September 2015.

A number of committee members were on hand to accept the award from Cr Chris Tait at the well attended event on Friday 26 January.



Members receiving the Cultural Award L-R Phil Egan, John Jeffrey, Lisa Goodman (Toowoomba Regional Council Community Liaison Officer). Keith Ratcliffe, Col Seccombe and Cr Chris Tail (Toowoomba Regional Council).

Some of the significant achievements by the group since it formed include:

- Securing the ownership of one of the original Shay locomotives and with funding assistance from PCCN – Heritage Community Bank, the ongoing restoration work of this loco.
- Liaising with Main Roads and Toowoomba Regional Council to secure a highly visible site to locate the Shay locomotive at the Ravensbourne Rest Area and building an enclosure to securely house the loco.
- With assistance and funding provided by Ravensbourne and District Landcare, developing and installing interpretive signs along the tramway route.
- Developing a brochure which outlines a brief history of the tramway and a walking trail map.
- Developing a comprehensive website which provides a place for the preservation of historical information and photographs, as well as meeting the needs of an online presence for the interest of the general public.
- In conjunction with the Ravensbourne and District Landcare and with funding support from Toowoomba Regional Council, extending and maintaining the track and lantana control and rehabilitation of several km of track.
- Uncovering a significant amount of previously unidentified track which travels east from Palmtree to Bunkers Hill.

Munro Tramway Historical Group would like to thank all members for their on-going support and acknowledge PCCN – Heritage Community Bank, Toowoomba Regional Council and Ravensbourne and District Landcare Group for their assistance.

WHICH LOCO IS IT?

As many people know, there were two different locos that were used along the Munro tramway. These were Shay locomotives sourced from the Lima Co. of Ohio in the United States. The first was purchased in 1904 and carried builders number 906. The second arrived in 1908 and carried builders number 2097. But which loco is the one set up at the Sports Ground?

Both locomotives were very similar in most respects and built to the same plans. They were typical class A shay designs of slim proportions with two 7" by 12" cylinders, built to 2' 6" (762mm) gauge, with a 31½" diameter wood fired boiler, and driving wheels on two trucks.

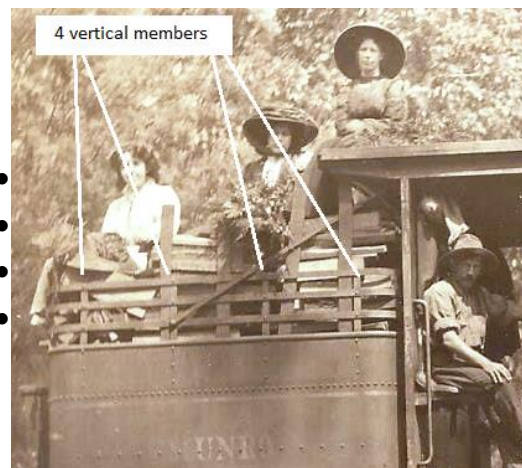
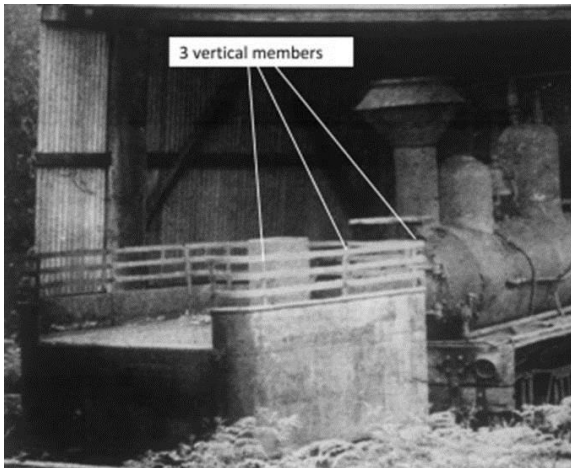
To confuse the issue, the two locomotives were recovered by the Illawara Light Railway Museum and taken south of Wollongong, N.S.W. in 1974. Their plan was to make one good loco out of two with some progress made, but the availability of other easier projects and the lack of some parts resulted in the Shay project becoming stalled in the too hard basket. Later, parts of both locos made their way back to Ravensbourne as the Ravensbourne Mountain Retreat (Sketches) was being developed before the remnants were made available to the Munro Tramway Historical Group.

Throughout the transfers, parts of both locos became mixed with one another. Today there are several interesting marks and differences as to which loco is at the Sports Grounds.

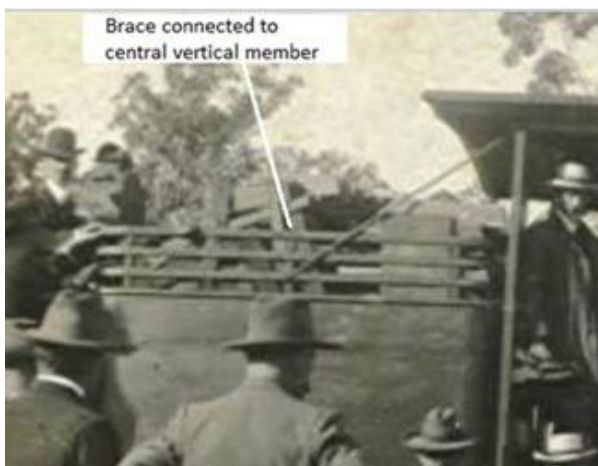
- The first most obvious is a test date found on the boiler showing a date of 7 July 1904. This clearly shows that the boiler is that of the 906 as the 2097 was not made until 1908.



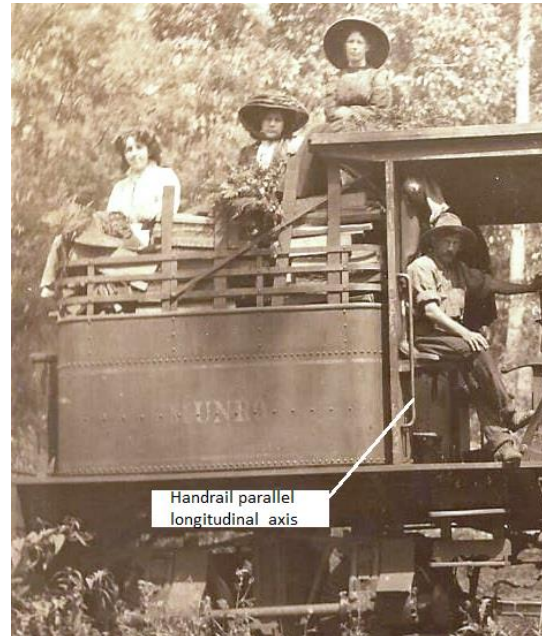
- A clear difference is the number of vertical members fitted to the rear tender surround: Shay 906 had 3 and Shay 2097 had 4. In visiting the Sports Grounds, you will see that there are 4 vertical members showing the rear tender is from the 2097.



- Another difference is the bracing from the driver compartment back to the tender. In the case of 906 it fits to the central vertical member and in 2097 it fits to the 3rd vertical member. The tender at the Sports Grounds continues to have a bolt at the 3rd vertical member showing it was from the 2097.



- The other difference is the alignment of the handrail to the driver's compartment: 906 has the handrail "90 degrees" whereas 2097 has it "in line". We know the photo at left below is the 906 as it was taken in 1905 (note the 3 vertical members and the bracing). The handrail today has yet to be installed.



In the end the loco that now rests at the Sports Grounds is a mix of different parts from each. However, the loco has typically been referred to as the 906, as at its heart is the 114 year old boiler from that first unit built.

For more history and stories of the tramway and district, please visit:

<http://munrotramway.wixsite.com/mthg> or Google "Munro Tramway"

UPDATE FROM THE TRAIN, ARTEFACTS AND MACHINERY GROUP

The weather in February has been good for our properties but a nuisance for restoration work on the locomotive at Ravensbourne. However we have now progressed to a point where we will complete the trucks and wheels in the next few weeks and start on the pistons and drive gear. During this process we will be back at the loco site and will be able to tidy up some of the loose ends that have not been completed yet.

We have ordered sleepers and are trying to get some rail delivered, to put under the loco, as the rail we have is both too short and too light.

We have had the interpretive signs printed and hope to arrange their erection in the not too distant future. Working bees will continue each Saturday morning, with a view to getting the basic renovation completed well before the end of this year, to allow for a big opening ceremony. After that there will still be detailed work to complete, as time allows.

FROM THE HISTORY DESK

Former Ravensbourne resident Tom Ryan has shared with us photographs and information about some of his ancestors from the district.

Mary Ann McQuillan

When half (41,300 acres) of the huge Crow's Nest Run was resumed in March 1870 by the Queensland Government, Tom's great grandmother Mary Ann McQuillan, was one of the first people to select land. Her application for 160 acres was registered in October 1871 but a statement in her file (now located at State Archives) implies she was squatting on the block from January of that year. The block which borders what is now the western part of Palmtree Road has been owned in recent years by Julian and Nicole Booth. When it was built in the 1890s, the Munro tramway passed within metres of the McQuillan property.



Mary Ann McQuillan



Mary Helen Ryan (nee McQuillan)

Mary Ann's sons Rodger, James, and John selected blocks to the north of her block – properties now owned by Peters, Roberts and Egans. Ill health forced Mary Ann to transfer the block to her sons. It became part of their extensive Perseverance and Ravensbourne holdings. Her daughter Mary Helen lived on the property until she and her family moved to Ravensbourne where she was one of the successful applicants in the ballot when it was opened for purchase in November 1888.

A future newsletter will focus on the people who were successful in the ballot including Mary Helen who, known widely as Granny Ryan, for some years operated a shop and post office in Ravensbourne Village.

James Kenneth Kean

Tom Ryan also gave us the photograph of James Kenneth Kean, one of Tom's great grandfathers. Kean, a character closely involved with sawmilling at Perseverance in the 1890s,



was a Scot who arrived in the Warwick district around 1870, working for some years on the Southern and Western Railway. In 1878 he lost a hand in a sawmill accident at Stanthorpe. He made his own prosthesis and was able to resume work in sawmilling.

A newspaper report in 1893 about his teenage son becoming lost in the surrounding bush indicated that James Senior was working at the Perseverance Saw Mill, off what is now Shum Road, which was operated until around 1891 by Cameron and Hebbel.

Newspaper advertisements in January and February 1894 indicate that Kean had become a co-owner of the Perseverance Saw Mill.

The depression years of the 1890s were tough and by August 1896 a clearing out sale of the mill was advertised by order of the

mortgagee, one James Walker who a few years later became a foundation member of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Australia.

Kean then moved on to become a saw sharpener at the Munro mill at Perseverance. His sudden death at the mill from a heart attack was reported in the Darling Downs Gazette in April 1900.

In July 1896 James Kean's daughter Agnes married John Thomas Ryan who at the time was employed at the Perseverance (Kean and Shum) mill. John and Agnes were Tom Ryan's grandparents.

Location of Enterprise Sawmill

The Enterprise Saw Mill operated from around 1899. It was located where Esk-Hampton Road crosses Perseverance Creek. Tom Ryan has questioned our placing of the mill on the eastern bank of the creek just north of the road, prompting us to revisit the information. A photograph that was published The Queenslander in June 1900 was taken from a road (see in bottom right corner) looking across the creek at the mill building. A fence in the foreground partly encloses a slope of what appears to be the bank of a gully leading into the creek.



THE ENTERPRISE MILL, RAVENSBOURNE.

A recent onsite inspection revealed that the old road was on the southern side of the current road. It headed to a low-level bridge via significant cuttings that are still evident through both banks of the creek. The creek in the foreground of the photo and much of the bank of the gully is now obscured by the very significant quantity of road base used for the current road.

The 1900 newspaper report stated that the mill was on land leased from Thomas Murphy; that land was on the northern side of the old road. An electoral list for 1903 also indicates that at least two mill workers lived on Portion 16, the land being leased from Thomas Murphy.

We hope that in the future we may be able to find physical underground evidence on the site that will firm our opinion of the location.

30 line manual telephone exchange at Palmtree

Early telephone exchanges were installed at country post offices and other locations. One such exchange was located in the home of the Shum family in what is now Shum Road at Palmtree. Victorian member Ivy Dennert (nee Shum) was an accredited telephonist at Palmtree, along with her mother and sister. Although the exchange had capacity for up to 30 telephone subscriber lines, Ivy recalls that the maximum number of local subscribers was 16.



While lines between many exchanges and their subscribers were party lines with a number of subscribers sharing the one very long aerial telephone line, the only times conversations were 'shared' in Palmtree were when telephone wires crossed in strong winds.

This magneto type exchange required subscribers to turn the handle on the telephone. The current generated by this action was sufficient to raise the calling signal at the exchange. The telephonist could identify the caller by the number revealed behind the drop-down shutter. Calls between customers were connected using a set of cords.

The Postmaster General's Department (PMG) operated both the posting of letters and telephone calls. Often, both facilities were housed in the same building, attached to the residence occupied by the postmaster and his/her family. This was the case at Ravensbourne. The mail for Palmtree residents came from Murphys Creek for some years, then from Ravensbourne. Those households without telephones would be reliant on the local public telephone which was usually located in the foyer or outside the exchange.

On the type of exchange shown here, the bottom row of jacks (holes just visible at the base of the white bars) was used for the connection of lines to nearby exchanges. In the case of the Palmtree exchange, those exchanges were Ravensbourne, Hampton, Crows Nest and Toowoomba. Two jacks were reserved for trunk (long-distance) calls.



MEMBERSHIPS

If you are not already a member, you might be interested in joining the Munro Tramway Historical Group. By becoming a member your contribution will greatly assist our capacity to further progress our projects. Members are able to get involved in any area of and contribute to this community project - especially for those with an interest in old machinery, trains, history, walks and tourism.

You can do so via the Application form link below.

The annual membership fee is:

Individuals - \$15.00

Junior members (under 18 years) - free.

Payment:

Direct deposit:

Account: Munro Tramway Historical Group Inc. Heritage Bank

BSB: 638 070

Account Number: 13911279

Please feel free to share our newsletter with your interested friends and family.

If you are no longer interested in receiving this newsletter please reply to this email, or send an email to munrotramway@gmail.com and we will remove you from the database.

23 March 2018
munrotramway@gmail.com

