



## Field Reports

Please send any contributions, large or small, to [fieldreports@lrrsa.org.au](mailto:fieldreports@lrrsa.org.au) or to P.O. Box 21, Surrey Hills, Vic 3127.

### Vivonne Bay Jetty, Kangaroo Island, SA (LR 142, 155, 200)

On a recent tour to Kangaroo island James Chuang photographed the jetty at Vivonne Bay. According to the article in LR 142, the jetty was originally constructed in 1910 to a length of 990 feet, and fitted with a 3ft 6in gauge tramway, then the article notes that in 1964 the length was a much shorter 180 feet, and without a tramway. It is unknown when the tramway was relaid, but the gauge is narrower, possibly 762mm. A single hand-pushed trolley similar to those in use at Cape Jaffa (LR 177 page 20) is at the shore end. James also saw the alignment of the former Kangaroo Island salt tramway (see LR 117), but didn't have time to check in detail. The tour guide said at one stage there was interest in buying it and running as a tourist operation as the tramway went past two lakes on the island, but nothing came of it.

*James Chuang*

### Coal, Karmai and Cableways Tour – 24 & 25 November 2012

On the weekend of the 24th and 25th of November 2012, 25 members participated in the *Coal, Karmai and Cableways* tour to Korumburra, approximately two hours south east of Melbourne.

The weather was warm and a welcome contrast to the ordinary start we had on the Kerrisdale tour the year before. The members were very privileged to have Barry Sykes the local Korumburra historian as the guide on this tour. Barry was capably assisted by his wife Johanna who arranged the lunch stops and refreshments. The members met at the Coal Creek Historical Village and Barry provided us with an outline of the weekend tour. He also summarised the history of the area which revolved around the local black coal deposits, as well as various farming interests.

The Korumburra and nearby Jumbunna and Outtrim fields were private concerns, unlike the Wonthaggi field which was operated by the Victorian Government. The area was littered with small shafts as well as major mines and the full extent of these workings has been lost to time.

On our way to Jumbunna, Barry pointed out the broad gauge rail embankment which winds its



*The jetty at Vivonne Bay on Kangaroo Island, 9 January 2013.*

*Photo: James Chuang*



*A view of the four-wheel trolley and track at the landward end of the jetty.*

*Photo: James Chuang*

way through several farms parallel to the road. At the Jumbunna station site the members viewed significant embankments and wide track beds, as well as an obvious spur line to the aerial tramway terminus.

Next stop was Ken Rees's farm where Barry had kindly arranged access to the alignment of the former aerial tramway. As we visualised the tramway spanning several significant gullies, we were able to see inside a wedgetail eagles' nest perched in a tree down the hill. It contained two white chicks and one adult nesting, while the other adult kept watch nearby.

Across the valley the members could clearly see the rail embankment of the Outtrim extension which ran conveniently past the higher levels of the Jumbunna coal mine which ultimately led to the closure of the aerial tramway. Coal was then winched up an incline from the mine to coal bunkers on the rail alignment.

Dropping our cars closer to the mine, we inspected the hill top haulage foundations then the Jumbunna line embankment. The group walked along the

Outtrim extension to the Jumbunna coal sidings. Most of the members then headed steeply down to the valley floor where the mine was situated. Only the mullock heap, an occasional concrete foundation, rusty coal skip and two old boilers used as barrel drains in the creek, provide any indication of the substantial workings in this location.

The group then battled a steep climb in the hot sun back up to the formation and eventually the cars for a well earned rest and water stop. We then drove to the recently restored Jumbunna public hall for our lunch and a cuppa provided by Johanna.

The first stop after lunch was Mount Misery which provides a spectacular view of the Outtrim valley towards the south and the Outtrim embankment. The members drove across the embankment on Brian & Evonne Hess's property and stopped to inspect a local coal mine entrance. Some of the more adventurous members went inside the horizontal shaft which apparently went into the hillside over one kilometre.

We then walked along the right of way back to

**Right:** The members pose for the camera at the Coal Creek Historical Village, during the Coal, Karmai and Cableways tour, on 25 November 2012. Photo: Barry Sheffield



the Outtrim road and inspected the deep cutting where the rail passed under the road but has subsequently been filled in. After Outtrim, the members went back to their respective lodgings in Korumburra to clean up and met at the Top Pub for dinner.

We all met back at the Coal Creek Auditorium at 8pm for a presentation by Bill Hanks on the various mines, railway lines and tramways in the Korumburra area, plus an overview of Jumbunna and Outtrim. After the presentation, the Coal Creek staff provided us with a wonderful supper. Next morning the members toured the Coal Creek Historical Village and sidings with Barry Sykes as guide. There are a many interesting historic exhibits at the village and I recommend visiting their website for more comprehensive information – see:

<http://www.coalcreekvillage.com.au/home/>

After visiting Coal Creek we said goodbye to Barry and Johanna and the members thanked them both for their wonderful support. We then headed back to Korumburra for lunch.

After lunch we met at the Korumburra railway station for a train trip to Nyora and return on the South Gippsland Tourist Railway's ex SAR Red Hen 402. The railway also has many interesting exhibits and photographs in their museum at the station. Again I recommend visiting their website for more comprehensive information.

<http://www.sgr.org.au/index.html>

The train trip was quite spectacular and we travelled through lush and undulating countryside typical of south Gippsland. We had a photo opportunity at Nyora which is approximately 22km from Korumburra. The train trip finished around 4pm and the members drove back to Melbourne and their respective homes.

I would like to thank Scott Gould and Bill Hanks for arranging another memorable tour. I would also like to specially thank Barry Sykes and his wife Johanna who provided their local knowledge and a detailed line-side guide that made this tour so memorable. And thanks to Ken Rees and Brian & Evonne Hess for access to their properties.

Simon Moorhead

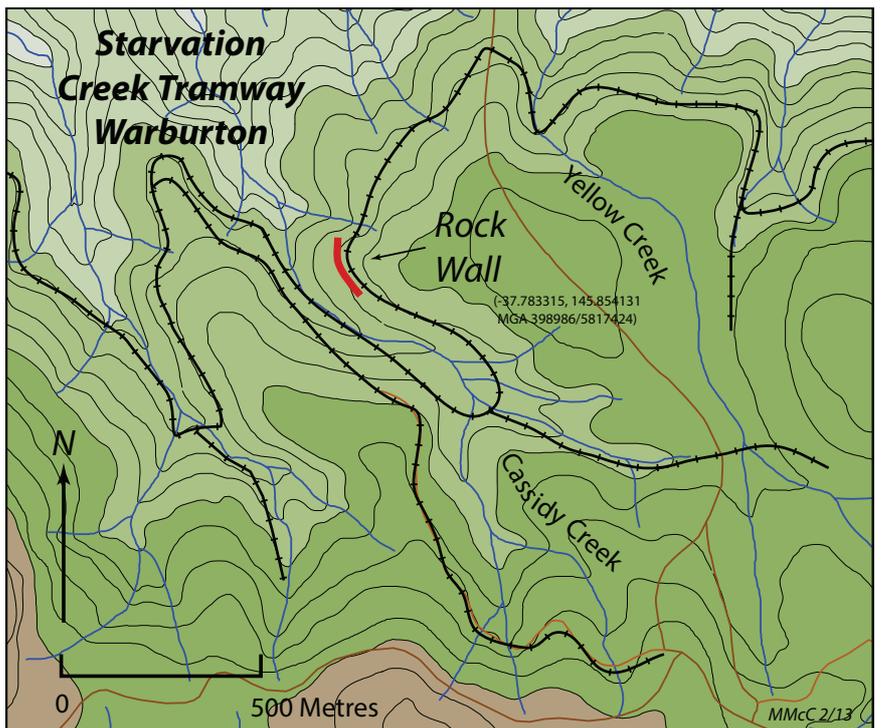


Rock structure on the former Starvation Creek Tramway, East Warburton. Photo: Keith Maplestone

### Starvation Creek Tramway, East Warburton Vic (LR 85)

During February, Keith Maplestone, a forester with Vicforests, came across a rock structure while doing a survey for a potential logging coupe near Warburton. The rocks had been used to raise the tramway up over a rock shelf. It is located about 450m down a spur off Road 5s off Big Creek Rd at MGA reference 398986/5817424 or -37.783315, 145.854131

The tramway was part of the Starvation Creek tramway built in 1921 jointly by Richards, The Federal Timber Co. and Ezard and operated until 1935. (See *Mountains of Ash*, Mike McCarthy 2001) Colin Harvey Vicforests



### Murrundindi Tramway

A recent visit to the former Murrundindi tramway, 100km north east of Melbourne, showed that facilities existing before the 2009 bush fires have now been restored, and regrowth is returning the area to its former glory. The three foot (910mm) gauge iron-railed tramway was constructed in 1920 for sixteen miles (26 km) along the valley of the Murrundindi River south of Yea to access timber resources from the Black Range. At its peak in the mid 1930s, 2.5 million super feet of timber per year was being railed via way of Cheviot, on the Tallarook-Alexandra/Mansfield VR line.

The valley road adjoining the tramway was upgraded to all-weather use in 1935, and the Murrundindi tramway went out of use shortly thereafter. The 1939 Black Friday bush fires prompted the removal of small sawmills from forest areas.

The rails were removed and the tramway returned to nature for over forty years. However,

in 1984, crews creating a walking track in the Murrundindi valley re-discovered the tramway right of way, of which 2 km was incorporated into the new route.

One of the major Black Saturday fire outbreaks in February 2009 started near the former Murrundindi sawmill. The fire devastated the valley, destroying all picnic facilities, bridges and many features of the walking tracks. Access to the area was restricted for the rest of the year. Four years later, picnic and camping areas have now been re-constructed and the valley is fully open to walkers again.

The former Murrundindi tramway is accessible from the Bull Creek Road, just south of the Bull Creek picnic and camping area, 4 km south of the main Suspension Bridge camp site, in turn 8 km from Devlins Bridge on the Melba Highway. Today's walking track varies slightly in course from the tramway right of way, for example where trestle bridges were destroyed in 1939.

Two bridges, one over the Murrundindi River, a

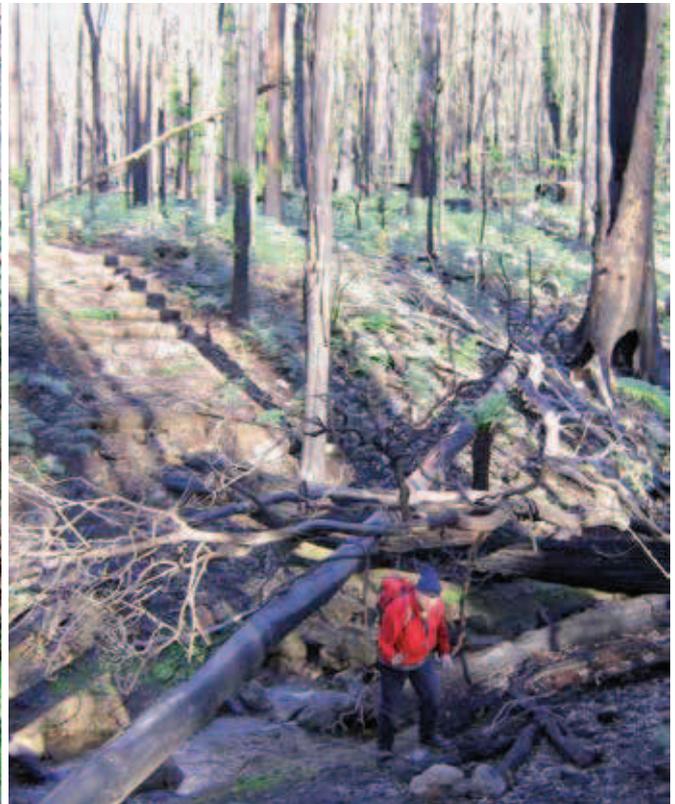
second over a side creek, have been replaced in steel, rather than timber as was previously used. Some evidence of the former tramway failed to survive the fires, only a few embedded sleepers are now visible.

However, two substantial tramway cuttings and sections of the formation remain in good order. The Department of Sustainability & Environment salvaged two former log bogies and has now replaced them with a log in situ beside the walking track.

East of the Murrundindi River, the remains of Trafford Mill, constructed in 1925, survive largely intact. The excavation for the mill boiler is still visible, and the sizable sawdust heap, though somewhat blackened, is still in situ.

After the 2009 fires, other sections of the former tramway were visible further down the valley, but did not co-incide with today's walking track. These have since been allowed, once again, to return to nature.

*Ray Peace*



### Murrundindi Tramway Clockwise, from top left:

- The walking track bridge at Murrundindi, June 2008.
- The same location in July 2009.
- The saw log and bogies back in position, January 2013.

*All photos: Ray Peace*