



Field Reports

Please send any contributions, large or small, to fieldreports@lrrsa.org.au or to P.O. Box 21, Surrey Hills, Vic 3127.

Glenrock Colliery Railway, Glenrock, NSW

1435mm gauge

(see map LR 210 p.5)

In early September our Scout Group had its family camp on the sunny shores of Glenrock Lagoon (at the Glenrock Scout Camp). There does not appear to be vast quantities of information on the internet about the railway which formerly passed through the site, and you have to have a trained eye to pick out the formation. Newcastle and Hunter Region Scouts have mounted a wheelset from a wagon on a plinth with a plaque as a memorial to the coal mining heritage of the location. Other than that, there is very little to show of the mining past, except for a poppet-head gin-wheel mounted on the wall of one of the training-centre halls, and a few historic photos. I photographed the embankments on either side of the lagoon where a wooden bridge crossed the lagoon and, remarkably, there are still some remnants of the timber piles and abutments. The bridge crossed the lagoon at a narrow part and at an oblique angle, before swinging around and following the beach north to Merewether.

At least until a few years ago, there was lots of evidence of the formation from this point on, which was traceable for much of its length (at somewhat above beach level), and the other industrial area some distance north of the lagoon is also viewable. Unfortunately the tunnels are sealed. Of course there is virtually no trace once suburbia is reached at Merewether. There is also quite a deal to be seen around the Glenrock site including the remains of Burwood Colliery, and even the footings and ash pit of the loco shed.

Kevin Sewell, September 2013, with additions by Eddie Oliver and John Shoebridge

Mount Ainslie Quarry, Canberra, ACT

610mm gauge?

One hundred years ago this year the foundation stone of the national capital, Canberra, was laid. Most construction work for the new city was delayed until after the First World War. By the 1920s there was a substantial demand for crushed rock for concrete and road metal to meet for which a quarry was established on Mount Mugga Mugga, about 8 km south of the city. The



The inland and coastal bridge abutments where the Glenrock Colliery Railway crossed Glenrock Lagoon between the Glenrock and Burwood Collieries.

Photos: Kevin Sewell

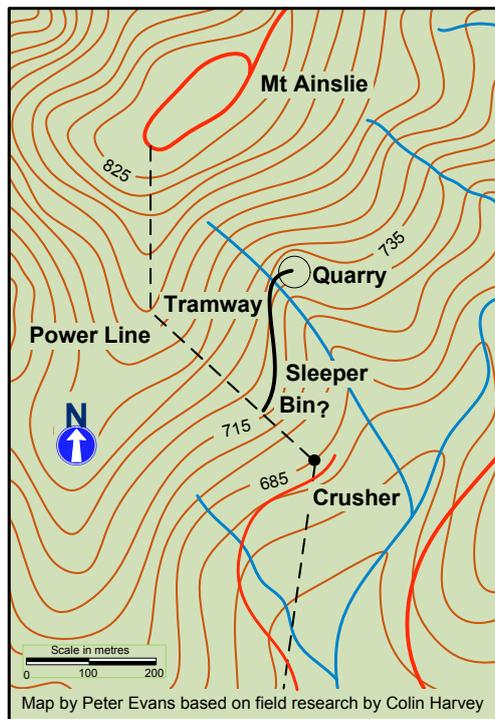
quarry contained a network of 2ft gauge tramways feeding a four-rail balanced incline to a crushing plant near to Mugga Lane. From here crushed rock was conveyed to where needed by road.

In 1930 the Mugga Quarry was closed due to the nature of the rock, quartz porphyry, causing concerns about the health of workers (silica dust exposure could only be eliminated by expensive filtration) and the deleterious effects of its hardness on the crusher jaws. A search for an alternative source of rock was undertaken and suitable stone was located at Mount Ainslie, just 3 km from the city. The rock at Mount Ainslie contained iron pyrites and was suitable for road making but not concrete. The workers' health was expected to not be as affected other than that "*slight irritation of the mucous membranes of the nose and throat may occur from the sulphur content but this probably acts in a beneficial manner in causing the inhaled dust to be coughed up.*" An additional benefit was the much reduced cost of cartage to the city.

In January 1932 approval was given by the Minister of Home Affairs to proceed with a new quarry on

Mount Ainslie. As stockpiles at Mugga were almost exhausted, the new quarry was required to commence operations before October 1932 to meet the requirements of the next construction season. The existing plant at Mugga was dismantled, reconditioned and re-erected at Mount Ainslie. From the new quarry, a tramway was used to transport rock around the hillside for about 200m, on a slightly descending grade, to above the crusher. Instead of an incline tramway it appears that chutes and conveyors were used for the last stage of the journey. The quarry operated in this location until 1939 when cheap metal in large quantities became available from Blue Metal Quarries (Sydney).

From 1926 until 1935, W J Mildenhall was official photographer at Canberra. His photographs are now held by the National Archives of Australia and are available on these websites: <http://mildenhall.moadoph.gov.au> and <http://photos.naa.gov.au> A number of images in the collection show the Mugga and Mount Ainslie quarries in operation; however some of the currently assigned captions are incorrect.



A visit to the Mount Ainslie quarry, within the Canberra Nature Park, in September 2013 revealed the tramway formation to be easily followed from the quarry to a point on the hillside above the concrete foundations of the crusher. Evidence for the arrangements for feeding rock between the tramway and crusher has been obscured by later construction of a power line. At the quarry one length of about 10kg/m rail was located (MGA 696513E 6094667N) and at least one sleeper remains in situ along the tramway route (MGA 696476E 6094561N).

Colin Harvey

Sources:

- Department of Home Affairs, Mt Ainslie Quarry file (NAA: A1, 1931/8449)
- *The Canberra Times*, 1 February 1930
- *The Canberra Times*, 21 November 1939

Sun Ray Salt, Lake Gerahmin/Lake Daytrap, Swan Hill, Victoria

610mm gauge?

On 15 May 2013 I visited Lake Gerahmin (aka Lake Daytrap) where, following reports of tramway remains, I made an inspection. There are about eighty metres of rail which appear to have been pulled off the sleepers, and moved five or ten metres to the side.

There is about 100 metres of formation, clearly defined, with some sleepers (or remains of) visible. The rail looked to be quite heavy, as were the sleepers, which suggests that it might date from closer to the end of operations in 1970 than earlier. From my photographs the heavily corroded rail is about 115mm high, 105mm across the base, and 65mm across the head. These

dimensions suggest something like 60lb rail – possibly sourced from the VR.

John Dennis

Clockwise from bottom left: A section of rail from the Mt Ainslie Quarry tramway. • Looking north along the tramway formation towards the quarry. • At the foot of this photograph (and almost obscured by the tussock) is a remnant sleeper on the tramway formation. Photos: Colin Harvey • Abandoned rails across the flats at Lake Gerahmin/Lake Daytrap. Photo: John Dennis

