



Produced by Enthusiasts  
for Enthusiasts

# TRAIN TALK

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A 100% NMRA Affiliated Club



7mm 19 class on its proving  
Photo: Robert Comerford

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## Doug Clarkson

Meanwhile, back at Hampton it was all action. 40 lb. Second-hand rail was purchased; a turning loop laid down plus a new engine shed and Company Office. Horses would still be needed for shunting duties when no locos were on site so stables received an upgrade as did the feed and hay sheds. A track was laid parallel to a QR siding with gantry crane spanning both. Bulk timber could now be quickly transferred for delivery to Toowoomba.

[illegible]

Right of way agreements with land holders affected by the rail line were simple; free transport of goods and people to and from Hampton. Passengers sat on the stack of timber destined for the boiler and enjoyed the smoke and sparks drifting their way.



When freight was involved two small flat wagons were used. The new Shay arrived. Not on a flat wagon ready to roll. It came packed in a number of sturdy crates. Queensland had several companies building steam locomotives just then. One might have expected a request for help. Not so. Instead, the task of assembly was awarded to the local blacksmith, Ernie Shum and his mate Olaf Olsen. They did a faultless job and loco no.1 steamed trouble free for the next thirty years.

Where the teams pulled one or two loads at a time, No.1 hauled six. The



improvement was so impressive a second, almost identical Shay was ordered. Ernie was needed again. No.2 was set to work hauling logs from the camps to the mill at Ravensbourne.

To cope with some very steep grades and two substantial bridges NO.2 worked from the centre of a four-wagon consist, when reaching a bridge the trailing pair were uncoupled and the

front two pushed across, the engine then returned for the others.

Engine crews consisted of engineer, fireman and guard, there were gates wherever the line crossed property boundaries, plenty of them, the engine was expected to stop while the fireman opened the gate, he climbed back as they steamed through, they stopped again for the guard to close it then on to the next one, understandably the engineer with a heavy load and uphill grade preferred to keep rolling. Now the fireman had to race his engine to the gate, the guard in his turn shut the gate and sprinted after his fast departing seat on the last timber load, this practice caused plenty of ill feelings and complaints.



Munroe looked after his workers, there was a football team of some merit, a general store, butchers shop and school, some of the wives baked bread (one penny a loaf). There were dances and company picnics, the Munroe brothers owned a second mill at Geham and another in Toowoomba near the new Bunnings, a pioneer spirit is still alive in Ravensbourne. Today Grandsons work the family farms, names connected to the mill still appear on Mailboxes.

Directly across from us a 1,200-acre farm once owned by the company to spell their horses and bullocks now belongs to Jimmy Strohfeldt, I suspect his pride and joy is the mill he operates just up the road, Jimmy cleared our house site and when a carpenter and myself started building he supplied all the timber, in a traditional way help was offered should we need it.

Our plan had high ceilings over the living area, this required a heavy laminated beam to support the roof, we framed the walls but were quite unable to

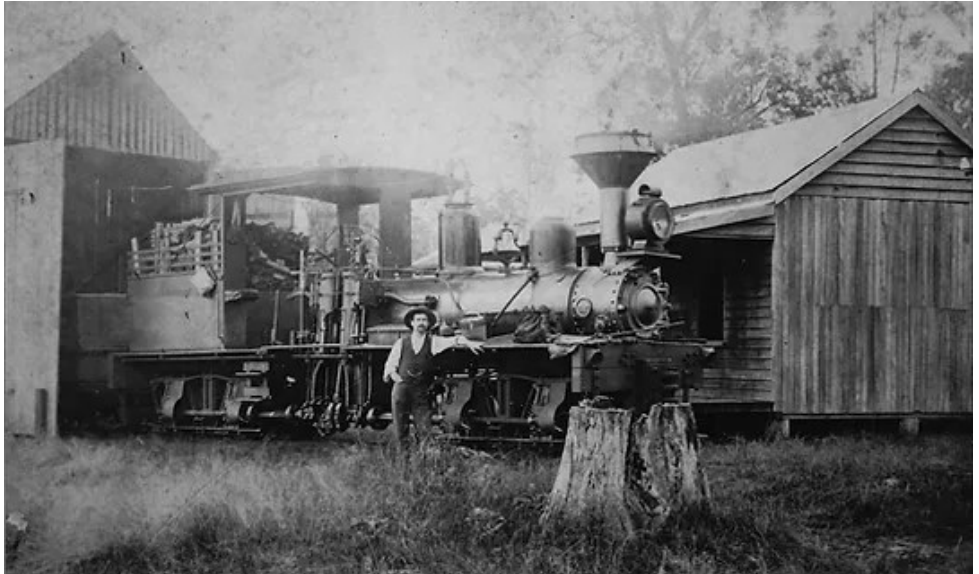


fit the beam, Jimmy arrived with his mill team, we watched with some concern as hefty young men swarmed up the walls, beam in hand, it was over in minutes, the team stood rolling cigarettes then 'anytime' and they were gone.

A lad of about 10 turned up at times while we were building, with the house finished I could begin painting again, a neat cottage just up the road made a perfect picture, remains of the mill on the right, stands of gum trees on the hills behind and an old white horse grazing nearby, but I needed access to the front paddock to get the best view, 10-year old said grandma lives there, we went up together, "Hi Grandma this is Doug", a steady look corrected him, "no he's not he's Mr. Someone or other", then "but I don't know what someone he is", all was sorted, the picture painted.

The family purchased it for Grandma to mark some anniversary, I painted Jimmy's mill, I painted the Hampton Store early morning, before breakfast to catch the long shadows, there was a yellow sign over the petrol pumps - 68 cents, if only.

Across the valley an old bullock wagon lay abandoned near some trees, dairy cows grazed nearby, I painted it then entered it in an art show as 'Sam's Wagon', somebody purchased it. We lived at Ravensbourne for ten years, it's my regret that all the paintings completed during that time have gone, I don't posses a single one.



For forty years the two Shays rested, scattered amongst the bracken, they had been stripped of any valuable scrap leaving parts all over the paddock and down the creek. The Illawarra Light Railway Museum came to the rescue, they would combine both engines into a static display, maybe one day No.1 might even steam again.

