



RAIL HERITAGE WA

Members Newsletter

October 2020



FOR YOUR CALENDAR

Saturday	10 October	Museum Work Day from 9am (no meeting on 10/10)
Sunday	11 October	RAILFEST 10am to 4pm
Sunday	25 October	South-West Rail and Heritage Centre Open Day
Saturday	14 November	General Meeting 2pm

FROM THE PRESIDENT (Brian Williams)

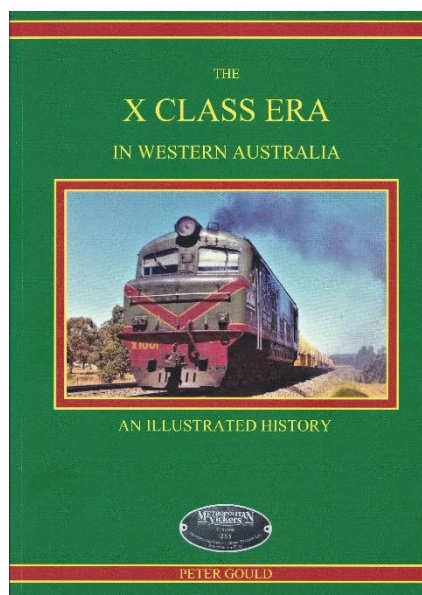
RAILFEST 2020 is going ahead on **Sunday 11 October 2020**, between 10.00am and 4.00pm. I am seeking the assistance of members to help in setting up, cleaning, for Railfest on the day itself as well as Saturday 10 October. The ticketing arrangements for Railfest will allow a controlled orderly access of the public into the Museum which will assist in the maintaining of sensible COVID-19 safety precautions including good hygiene, additional sanitisation and physical distancing.

Volunteers are also sought to assist in the operations of the Museum on Wednesdays and Sundays. I was disappointed that I received no response from the membership in relation to assisting in the operations of the Museum. There are currently 8 members who are available for Sundays and I have 4 members available for Wednesdays.

SALES

At Rail Fest at 10am a new book ***The X CLASS ERA in Western Australia, An illustrated history*** by **Peter Gould** will be launched. On this day it will be available to members at a special price of \$65 – and you can have it signed by Peter. This special price will continue for October thus allowing members who cannot get to the Museum to order a copy at the discounted price. An order is attached to this mailout.

This is the story of 48 locomotives that ushered in the modern era on WA railways. Imported in one bold order, the X class were unveiled with great promise, then suffered so many problems as to bring about a royal commission. But WAGR engineers eventually solved the problems and these engines went on to give three decades of service. Peter has researched their design and construction, the problems operating in WA's harsh environment, the royal commission and politics and their service life. Each of the 48 locos has an individual entry with photograph and life history notes. More than 200 pages, A4 size, numerous photographs mostly in colour.



MUSEUM

A huge thank you is extended to Bruce Keay, Graeme and his painters, for an excellent job on the planning, construction and erection of the new storage area within the Noel Zeplin Exhibition Building. Bruce's design and construction make a fantastic asset for us.

Post Covid-19 Return to Wednesdays (Graeme Bradley)

On Wednesday 30 September, we returned to our normal Wednesday public opening activities at the Railway Museum in Bassendean. This was the first time we have opened on Wednesday since Covid-19 restrictions were mandated in March this year. We have been operating on Sunday now for several weeks.

This first day back was planned to provide for school holiday activities and even though it was relatively short notice, attendance was quite satisfactory. Our book sales were good with income boosted with an unusual sale, two visitors from Esperance both purchased a copy of "A History of WAGR Passenger Carriages". Well done Arno.

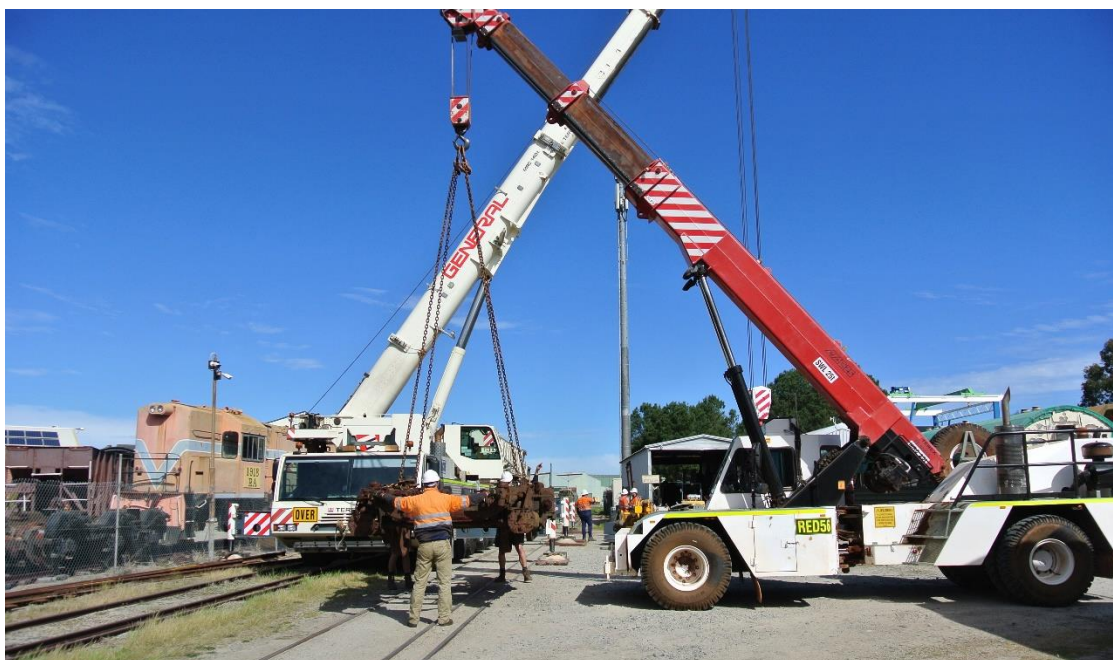
A special thank you is extended to our volunteers who stepped forward to assist in getting our museum opening hours back to the level of pre Covid-19.

A DAY OF LIFTS (Philippa Rogers)

During the past month, a massive operation saw RA 1918 come off stands and receive standard gauge bogies – so it is now KA 213. This locomotive was one of the few that ran as both narrow gauge (RA) and standard gauge (KA). UGL worked with us and closed rail access to their site for the day to enable this to happen. General Cranes also assisted us with a discounted price for the day. The cranes (3 of them) arrived by 7am and everyone was very busy until 4pm.



While one of the large cranes was setting up and locating the locomotive bogies, the other was further down the track extracting two sets of standard gauge carriage bogies from the short section of track where they had been stored for some years. This was to enable two of the standard gauge cars to be returned to standard gauge bogies instead of the temporary narrow gauge bogies.



The smaller franna crane seen here assisted with the siting of various carriage bogies. In addition it extracted a pair of bogies stored near the Water Corp drain that had to be removed as they were next to a tuart tree which is riddled with white ants, necessitating plans for its removal.



After the standard gauge bogies were put into place the two large (140 tonne) cranes carefully lifted RA 1918 off the locomotive stands, which were then removed. The bogies were placed at either end of the locomotive ready for it to be reassembled. W 953 had been moved from the area on the previous weekend to allow space for this working.



Very carefully, the locomotive was lowered onto the standard gauge bogies. It is now KA 213 and we look forward to seeing it repainted in the two-tone blue colour scheme.



The next task was to lift two former Commonwealth Railways carriages, AVDP 362 – a long relay van (seen here) and ARD 83, a Wegmann twin berth sleeping carriage off their temporary narrow gauge bogies (on loan from Bennett Brook Railway) and then onto their standard gauge bogies. This move was made possible due to the completion of the dual gauge track project last year.

Thanks to all involved and Dom for organising the day.

ARCHIVES (Graham Watson)

Recently another two hundred images were added to the RHW online Photo gallery. Our thanks to Lindsay Watson and Adrian Gunzburg for supplying the majority of the images, to Allan and Michael for the captioning of the images and to Geoffrey and Richard (Toad) for preparing the captions and the images for the website.

The new additions are numbered P19801 to P 20000 and bring the total on the photo gallery to 25,444.

Archives Requests this month

Subject	Purpose
Amery railway dam	Historical society
J. Drysdale, WAGR employee record	TV production
MRWA F class photos	Self
Steam Locomotive Course manual	Self
W. Willwork, ASG Board chairman	Family history
G. Thompson, Millars loco driver	Family history
Murchison railway history	Touring

Locomotive G 117- Merredin Railway Station Museum

The 'G' class were arguably the most successful locomotive type ever to operate in WA. Whether on the main lines and shunting yards of the WAGR, or hauling logs or firewood on private lines, they had a reputation for versatility and reliability. The 4-6-0 Dübs-built engines were the most handsome and this is the story of preserved locomotive 'G 117'.



G 117 is seen here with Fs 416 at the Bunbury Loco depot in 1968. (G Wilson, P06876)

G 117 was built by Dübs & Co. in Glasgow, Scotland (Makers No.3501/1897) at a cost of £2620. It arrived at Fremantle on the SS CORNWALL on 28 September 1897, along with G

111-116 & 118-120. The locomotives were in a stripped-down condition and taken to Fremantle Workshops for assembly and trials.

The completed engines were a work of art. They were painted in gloss black, with vermillion (red) between the frames and on the buffer beams, with the latter having a fine white pinstripe around the edge. The dome cover and safety valve surround were highly polished brass, while the chimney top and piping were polished copper and brass. The twin whistles and cab fittings were also polished brass, with polished steel side rods and motion. Large individual brass numerals were fitted on the cab side, while the wording 'CLASS G' and 'W.A.G.R.' was painted on the boiler side and tender, respectively.

G 117 entered service on 6 November 1897 and was sent to Perth depot.

Perth 1897- 98

Perth locomotive depot was adjacent to Wellington Street, on the site which is occupied today by Perth Arena. There was an allocation of 32 locomotives, mostly used on suburban trains and shunting. G 117 spent only a few weeks here, 'running in' wheel bearings and ironing out mechanical issues.

Wagin 1898 - 1902

This was the principal locomotive depot in the Great Southern district and had an allocation of about 15 locomotives. These were used for passenger and goods working to Albany, as well as trains to Northam. Due to their slow speed, the G class worked mostly goods trains.

Perth 1902 - 4

By 1902 the 'G' class were largely obsolete and many of the older 2-6-0 engines were stored at the Fremantle and Midland Workshops, while the newer 4-6-0 engines remained in service. These engines continued to work some main line services but were generally confined to shunting the large marshalling yards. During an overhaul at Fremantle workshops in September 1903, '117' had oval number plates fitted on the cab sides and rear of the tender, whilst much of the brass and copper fittings, and the decorative lettering were painted black to reduce maintenance.

Midland Junction 1904 - 8

This depot had 20 locomotives, mostly heavy freight engines for hauling goods trains to Northam and York. The small group of 'G' class were mostly used as shunters but also worked the line to Mundaring and the zig-zag railway to Kalamunda and Pickering Brook.

Kalgoorlie 1908 - 18

This was a busy depot, stabling 28 locomotives for hauling passenger and goods traffic on the goldfields. 'G' class were used on passenger and goods services around the Boulder Loop line and shunting the large yard at Kalgoorlie station. By 30 June 1909, '117' had travelled 200,387 miles since new.

Midland Junction 1918 - 21

This depot now had 28 locomotives, with the same mix of heavy freight engines and small shunters. The group of 'G' class continued to work the lines to Mundaring and Pickering Brook.

Bunbury 1921 - 25

This depot had 29 locomotives, with most employed on heavy goods working to Perth and Bridgetown. The 'G' class were used as shunters in the yards and on the wharf at Bunbury, and on mixed trains to Busselton. In September 1923, '117' was hired to the Timber Corporation at Greenbushes, while the company locomotive *ELLA* was undergoing repairs. During this time, '117' hauled logs on the forest tramways and sawn timber from the mill to the government sidings.



In November 1962, Bob Taylor photographed G 117 with a shunters' float in Bunbury as it was shunting the wharf area. (T03575)

Narrogin 1925 - 33

This depot had about 30 locomotives, mainly employed on passenger and goods working along the York-Albany main line and the numerous agricultural branch lines.. The 'G' class were used on some branch line services but mostly as shunters at Albany.

East Perth 1933 - 36

This depot had replaced the old Perth depot in 1919 and was the largest depot in the metropolitan area. In 1933 there were 69 locomotives to work passenger and goods services. The 'G' class engines were kept busy shunting on the many sidings at Perth and East Perth.

Distance travelled at its general overhaul on 12 December 1935 was 533,894 miles.

Fremantle 1936 - 40

This depot had about 25 locomotives, many of which were 'B, G and K' class for shunting the large number of sidings around the wharves and town.



G 117 is seen here on the turntable in front of the roundhouse at the Bunbury locomotive depot. (G Bown, T02355)

Bunbury 1940 - 44

The depot had about 38 locomotives. The 'G' class were working as shunters around Bunbury and hauling Mixed goods trains to Busselton and Augusta.

Midland Junction 1944 - 49

This depot had about 40 locomotives, with the same mix of heavy freight engines and small shunters. The group of 'G' class continued to work the lines to Mundaring and Pickering Brook (closed 22 July 1949). In this post-war period many WAGR engines were in poor condition due to years of hard work and deferred maintenance.

Banksiadale 1949 - 57

During the general overhaul at Midland Workshops in 1949, the boiler in '117' was converted to wood-burning. The locomotive was then transferred to the WAGR sawmill at Banksiadale, near Dwellingup, in August 1949. The mill operated an extensive network of forest tramways for hauling logs to the mill and sawn timber to Dwellingup station. The timber cut at this mill supplied Midland Workshops and sleepers for around the WAGR system. Initially 'G' class worked the main line trains but were relegated to shunting after the arrival of the large 'CS' class engines from 1951.

Fremantle 1957 - 62

This depot had about 20 locomotives, but significant changes were coming. The standard gauge project and the re-organization of Fremantle yard had earmarked the depot for closure. Dieselization of the shunting duties and opening of new North Fremantle diesel depot put an end to steam operations. At its general overhaul in January 1961, '117' had travelled 765,722 miles.



In January 1966 G117 is seen on the causeway at Bunbury, bringing empty GH class wagons from the Bunbury Power Station. A crew member can be seen sitting on his seat outside the cab. (P Hopper, P09593)

Bunbury 1962 - 68

By 1962 the future for 65-year-old steam engines was grim. There was still work for a 'G' class at Bunbury due to load limits on the jetties at Bunbury and Busselton. There were 35 locomotives in the depot, including the small group of vintage 'G' class. The boiler life of '117' expired on 30 November 1968 and the locomotive was withdrawn and stowed.

Bob Moss captured G 117 at Northam c1970. (T03434)



Northam 1968 - 70

Along with a number of other retired engines, 'G 117' was stowed at Northam by May 1969. In April 1970, the Lions Club of Merredin contacted the WAGR to purchase a locomotive for display and 'G 117' was considered, along with 'G 67'. 'G 117' was written off the books on 10 September 1970 and negotiations for its sale proceeded.

Midland Workshops 1970 - 71

By November 1970, '117' had been moved to Midland Workshops. It was inspected on 28 July 1971, with the plan to remove the tender from '117' and fit it to 'G 67' - for sale to the Lions Club of Merredin. 'G 117' would acquire the tender from 'G 123' and be available to sell to either Lou Whiteman or the Kalgoorlie museum. The Merredin museum had been offered 'DM 588' (April 1971 for \$1296) and either 'FS 423' or 'FS 452' (July 1971 for \$1436 each). However, on 7 October 1971, 'G 117' was instead offered due to the poor condition of 'G 67' and it was sent to Merredin on 16 November 1971.

Merredin 1971 - 73

Initially, 'G 117' was displayed on a section of track on the outskirts of Merredin. Due to vandalism concerns it was relocated to West Merredin yard in February 1973 and subsequently to the railway station museum.

In 1972 Malcolm Searle photographed G 117 in the Lions Park in Merredin. (T04920)



G 117 at Merredin in 2020

As displayed today at the museum, 'G 117' is comprised of boiler No.540 which was built at Midland Workshops in August 1945. The tender is from 'G 43', while the cab is off Neilson-built 'G 67'. Part of the original cab from '117' was used for the wall sculpture at the PTA Centre in East Perth.

(J Austin)

SOUTH-WEST RAIL AND HERITAGE CENTRE

Another successful Open Day was held on Sunday 27 September with well in excess of 200 visitors. Rail Heritage WA will be responsible for the November Open Day there on 22 November.

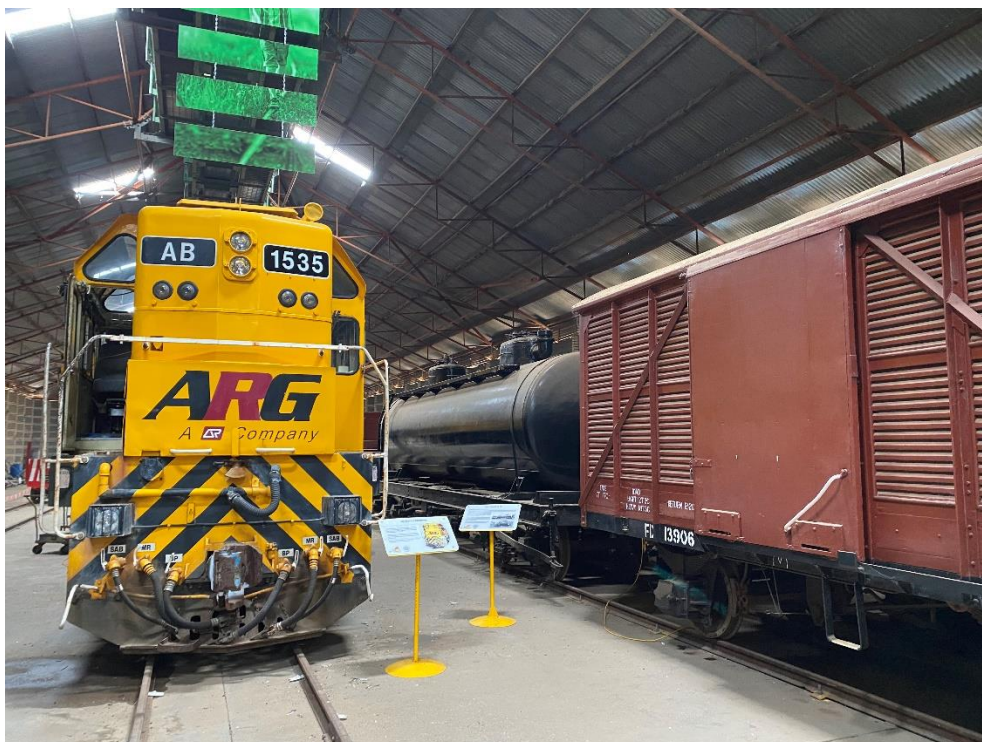
Efforts continue to seek a replacement for the former Bunbury Goods Shed.

WHEATBELT HERITAGE CENTRE AT MINNIVALE

It seems that many people were taking up the 'Wonder out yonder' with over 300 people braving bleak conditions to attend the Heritage and Wildflowers day on 19 September. We held a successful small sales stall there. Thanks to James Waterhouse for the photos.



Some of the crowd can be seen here along with our vehicles, which are all in excellent condition and enjoying living under cover. AB 1535 (below) is now also part of Rail Heritage WA's fleet and is keeping in running order and negotiations are underway to allow it to be moved on site.



NEWS FROM AROUND THE STATE (Simon Barber)

TIER THREE RAILWAYS

An engineering review report into the Arc Infrastructure Tier Three lines by Agonis Group was released on 24 September. The report listed assessments of all the lines and presented detailed costings of work needed to get each line up to operational status. Options explored included gauge conversion of the lines which feed into West Merredin from narrow to standard gauge.

The report can be accessed through the following link:

https://www.transport.wa.gov.au/mediaFiles/Freight-Ports/FREIGHT_P_Tier_3_Grain_Lines_Engineering_Review_Report.docx

The State Government has indicated three preferred options for line reopening in the shorter term. These are the Narrogin – Kulin, York – Quairading and West Merredin – Kondinin railways, with the latter under consideration as either being narrow or standard gauge. No services have operated on any of the Tier Three lines since June 2014. Various community advocations have been made in the ensuing years, with the most recent one being a public meeting held in Kulin during August.

AURIZON

Locomotive Notes

The overhaul of Q4012 at Gemco Rail has been cancelled due to the discovery of a bent frame. This occurred some years ago as the result of a level crossing accident near Esperance. Q4018 has been substituted in the overhaul programme, with its frame being transported by truck to Gemco. Q4012 has subsequently been stripped of usable parts, these being used in the Q4018 overhaul.

Q4015 is in storage at Forrestfield.

LZ3119 and 3120 are to be retrieved from Avon Yard, and transferred to the Forrestfield workshops for mechanical attention. The movement had not occurred by 30 September due to mechanical issues with the units. They are to be used for Aurizon ore traffic in New South Wales with new contracts coming on stream. Aurizon has also been investigating the return of other LZ class units to service in Western Australia, using reconditioned EMD 645E motors sourced from the USA.

P2501 was trucked from Narngulu to Forrestfield during September; it had been stored at Narngulu for some time on stands without bogies. It is understood that the unit is to receive an overhaul. P2503 is undergoing an overhaul by Aurizon at Forrestfield and been repainted into the simplified Aurizon scheme. This was the final unit in the class to wear the ARG orange and black colour scheme.

Forrestfield Yard

Aurizon is in the process of clearing parts of Forrestfield Yard prior to the land being sold for non rail industrial development. The sections to be cleared include the intermodal terminal, narrow gauge loco area, truck parking apron next to Gemco Rail, yardmaster's tower and the turntable region.

New home for the 'Ballaarat' loco (Geoffrey Higham)

The Busselton station building was moved again in 2016 to its new location at the waterfront and is now part of an expanded visitor centre and small museum. The prize exhibit in this museum is the 1871 locomotive, the first steam loco in WA and the oldest surviving loco built in Australia.

Traditionally known as the 'Ballaarat' – the spelling in 1871 of the city in Victoria where it was built, and which was painted on the boiler cladding in a works photo – the loco itself has been externally restored and looks very good.

As may be seen from the photos, this important relic has now been given the care and protection it deserves, after decades in the open air at Midland and then in central Busselton. It is now well protected from the elements. It is also safe from vandals because entry to the museum room is through the staffed visitor centre.

The engine will be 150 years old next year – Rail Heritage WA celebrated the 100th anniversary of this loco and the railway it ran on near Busselton back in 1971, and no doubt the 150th will also be a special occasion.

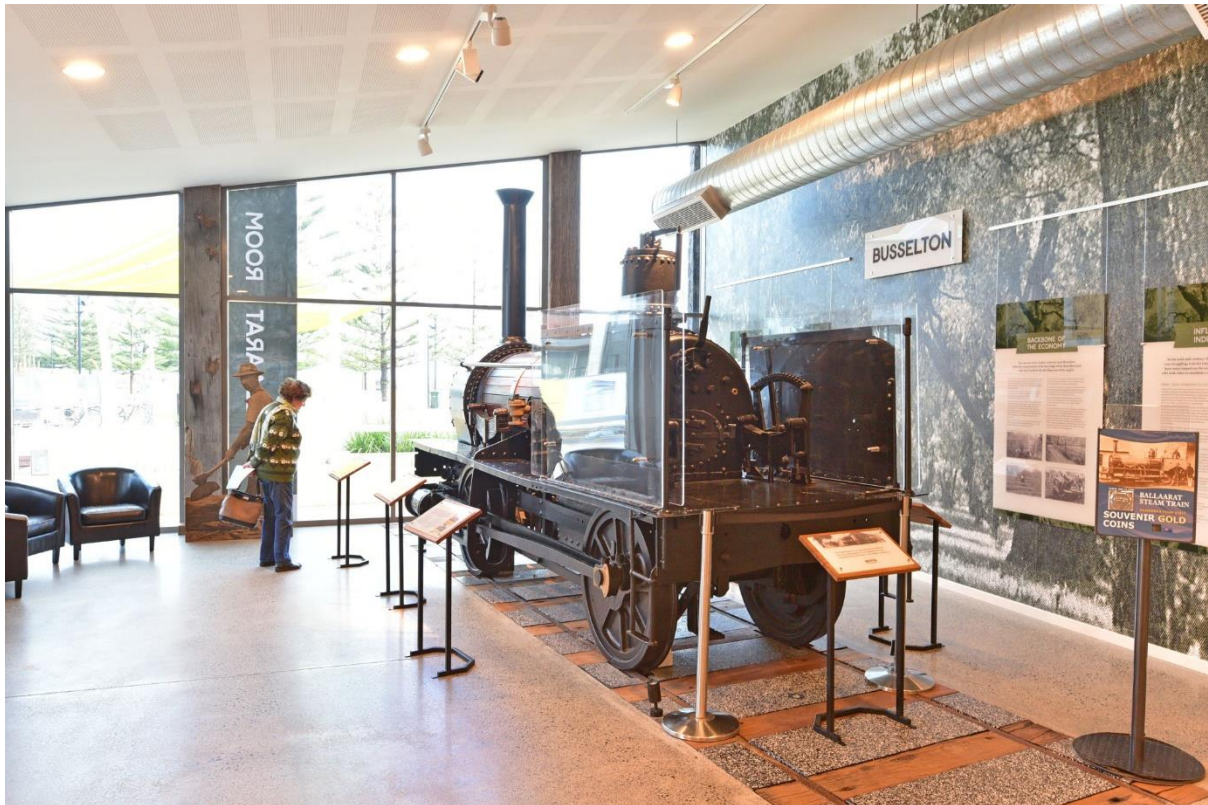
The station building itself is interesting, built in 1894 for the opening of the railway from Boyanup to Busselton. It was very similar to buildings at Mullewa and Toodyay, which in turn were patterned on a New Zealand Railways design, their "4th class" station building. (remember that C.Y.O'Connor came to WA from New Zealand)



The station building was removed from its original location in August 1987 after the Busselton line closed to a park at the entry to Busselton, opposite the new city offices and the original space is now occupied by the Busselton Community Resource Centre. In 2006 it was moved again to the seaside, next to where the siding ran from the yard to the jetty. It has been extensively added to with a front platform for the little train running on the jetty, the "Ballaarat room", offices and workshop/shed for the little train.

The detailed story of the 'Ballaarat' has been researched by Philippa Rogers and published in "Light Railways" magazine issue 224, now out of print but available for free download from the Light Railways Research Society website.





MUSEUM ROSTERS

DATE	TICKETS/SALES	SITE SUPERVISOR		DUTY SUPERVISOR
WEDNESDAYS		Museum open 1.00pm – 4.00pm		
07 October	A de Smalen	S Rayner	Curtis Perry	A de Smalen
14 October	A de Smalen	G Bradley	Curtis Perry	A de Smalen
21 October	A de Smalen	S Rayner	Curtis Perry	A de Smalen
28 October	A de Smalen	G Bradley	Curtis Perry	A de Smalen
04 November	A de Smalen	S Rayner	Curtis Perry	A de Smalen
11 November	A de Smalen	G Bradley	Curtis Perry	A de Smalen
18 November	A de Smalen	S Rayner	Curtis Perry	A de Smalen
25 November	A de Smalen	G Bradley	Curtis Perry	A de Smalen

DATE	TICKETS/SALES		SITE SUPERVISOR		DUTY SUPERVISOR
SUNDAYS			Museum open 1.00pm – 5.00pm		
RAILFEST - SPECIAL ROSTER					
11 October					
18 October	B Williams	B Keay	D Raine		B Williams
25 October	L McBeath	M Miles	G Higham		G Higham
01 November	A de Smalen	B Horton	Vol Reqd		A de Smalen
08 November	B Williams	B Horton	G Watson/M Gillooly		B Williams
15 November	B Williams	B Keay	D Raine		B Williams
22 November	A de Smalen	B Horton	Vol Reqd		A de Smalen
29 November	L McBeath	M Miles	G Higham		G Higham

RAILFEST 2020 family fun day

Where? **The Railway Museum,**
136 Railway Parade,
Bassendean

When? **Sunday 11 October 2020**
10.00 am to 4.00 pm

Swap meet - new &
pre-owned, model trains,
books, railwayana

Rare trades
demonstrations

Model engineers
- BIG models

Historic bus
display

METRONET
see the latest plans,
ask the experts

Model railways
Sausage sizzle
Buffet car teas
'Thomas' Bouncy Castle
Historic trains
New exhibition



Book launch
Illustrated history of
the X class

**Free shuttle bus from
Bassendean train station!**

Who?
RAIL HERITAGE WA
with the
WA Model Railway Club

How much?
No extra!
Adults \$9.00
Concessions \$7.00
Children (4-15) \$4.00
under 4 yrs free

www.railheritagewa.org.au
www.facebook.com/railheritagewa

TICKETS – IMPORTANT
COVID awareness – help us all stay safe - book your tickets beforehand
with TRYBOOKING <https://www.trybooking.com/BLLOS>
ONLY VERY LIMITED TICKETS AT THE GATE !