
Growing up in Glenbrook - 1926-27

The Lower Blue Mountains were on the move! The deviation in the Western Highway was, to an 11 year old a vast improvement in road surface, road alignment and far better gradients. However the tarred surface was only about 11 or 12 feet (i.e. about 3.5 metres) wide. There was not a great amount of road traffic during the week, but weekends were busier. I can remember a Fagiol truck and a Lancia motor car that used to travel regularly past the school during the day.

The railway service was the life-line of the area. Quite a few of our fellow pupils were children of the railway workers who took such a pride in their strenuous work and in the well run service which had a splendid record for safety and reliability. All locomotives were steam powered and very few passenger trains ran other than at the peak hours at morning and evening.

The water in the old rain-water tanks had to be used sparingly, bushfires were fought with wet corn-bags and green branches, water was not laid on in those days.

Lighting of the homes, business places, railway buildings was mostly by kerosene lamps and candles. Cooking was generally on fuel stoves (wood burning) or "Primus" kerosene burners. Clothes, sheets, towels etc. were boiled in "coppers" (boilers made of copper which also were wood-burning) and scrubbed clean on washboards in laundry tubs. Food was kept cool in ice chests or "Coolgardie" safes which were cooled by evaporation of water dripping onto a hessian fabric which surrounded the cooling chamber. Water for baths and showers was heated by a "chip-Heater" in which paper, bark, twigs etc. burnt quite efficiently.

The nearest Banks, Doctors, Chemists, shops selling clothing, household goods and hardware were in Penrith and Springwood. Bread, meat, fruit and vegetables were delivered to homes from the same townships. Milk, groceries, daily papers and stationery were supplied by the local stores. Police Stations were at Penrith and Springwood. Nepean District Hospital was where Governor Phillip Hospital is now at Penrith.

Blue Mountains National Park was just Crown land – a few cattle were run in the Euroka area and quite a lot of timber power poles were cut and hauled from the area of the Causeway across the creek and up the steep grade to the Railway Station or truck loading area by teams of draught horses.

If anyone in 1926 had been told it would be possible to travel to London from Sydney in less than 24 hours the statement would have been considered ridiculous – just as silly as suggesting that man would visit the moon – and come back to Earth as well.