

MEETING REPORTS JULY

Speaker: Mr. Paul Tuckerman: A HISTORY OF THE THIRROUL RAILWAY
INSTITUTE. (T.R.I.P.S.)

The building was constructed for the NSW Government Railways in 1920 for a multi purpose role. It was used to train the local rail staff in driving, firing, steam railing, signalling, braking systems etc. At that time some 400 people were employed locally in the Thirroul Locomotive Depot. Construction is of NSW timbers, a lot of cedar, and a secretly nailed tallow wood floor. Interestingly, the floor is supported on railway lines, now, you will be pleased to know, no longer carrying any traffic.

Besides being a teaching centre, it also served as a cultural, library, and social centre for the people of the town. Local organisations met here, as they do now. Several generations remember it as where they had their wedding reception or twenty-first party. Later generations are now making similar use of the Institute.

Its training use ceased in the early seventies and it fell into a very poor state. Rather than see it demolished, a self constituted board of trustees restored the, by then, derelict building from voluntary labour and donations. A short term peppercorn rental lease was obtained from State Rail and the Thirroul A.L.P. made it their regular meeting place. Local organisations did likewise and some social, historical, and cultural functions began to be held. More recently, the above non-profit organisation was formed, registered, and obtains leases of the premises from State Rail.

State Rail proclaimed the near unique building to be of significant heritage value, and their cooperation over the years is appreciated greatly. A collection of photographs and other memorabilia has been gathered and displayed. These cover mining and local politicians as well as rail.

P.J.P.