

RESEARCH

Please send contributions to research@lrrsa.org.au or to P.O. Box 21, Williamstown, Vic 3016.

Future Digital Developments

In recent *Light Railways*, we have reviewed some of the newer digital resources available to researchers, including online mapping resources (LR231), using satellite and aerial imagery and GPS (LR232) and the Field Reports article on the Powelltown tramway (LR233). This issue, I look at the future to try and predict what tools *Light Railways* researchers may have at their disposal in the coming years.

Lidar (Light Radar), uses rapid pulses of laser to measure the height of terrain below the Lidar unit. As the multiple laser pulses bounce off both foliage, structures and the ground, later processing of the data enables foliage to be penetrated and actual ground levels (or tree heights) determined with a great deal of accuracy. This makes Lidar an ideal tool for archaeological surveys looking for ground disturbances, such as tramways. Its ability to penetrate forest canopy has led to the discovery of features that were not distinguishable through traditional geo-spatial methods and are difficult to reach through field surveys¹.

This year, an expedition in Cambodia has discovered the lost city of Mahendraparvata²—a much older city than its more famous cousin, Angkor Wat. Another recent discovery was in Honduras, where the legendary city of Ciudad Blanca may have been found³. While the capture and analysis of Lidar images is still expensive, it is becoming more widely used as the resulting data can have multiple applications.

Now, Governments⁴ and research centres are starting to make Lidar data publically available (open access). As the Lidar data in its raw format requires specialist software to create viewable images, it is not possible for the average user to view open access data. One source of open access data has created a series of Lidar images that can be loaded into *Google Earth* and viewed⁵. The accompanying Lidar images are from a recent series captured by VicForests for use in forest management. The top images are overlaid with the route of the former Forest Commission of Victoria Thomson Valley Tramway at 'Little Boys', a construction and maintenance camp. While the satellite images show glimpses of the former line, mainly due to modern roads

built along some of the tramway route, the Lidar image clearly reveals the full extent of not only the tramway, but also the benching at the site of the camp, plus an array of bulldozer tracks hidden in the scrub. Armed with this knowledge, ground proving can confirm which tracks are tramways, while being aware of other tracks which often lead researchers astray.

Given that *Google Earth* has only been in existence since 2005 and has seen massive growth in that time, it seems highly probable that another decade will see significant Lidar coverage in this format. For examples of Lidar images in *Google Earth*, see <http://tinyurl.com/LRRSA-Lidar234>.

1. <http://www.lidar-uk.com/usage-of-lidar/> Retrieved 02 Nov 2013
2. <http://www.smh.com.au/national/jungle-surrenders-its-lost-city-20130614-Zoa9b.html> Retrieved 21 Oct 2013.
3. <http://www.livescience.com/32017-lost-city-honduras-images.html> Retrieved 21 Oct 2013
4. <http://lidar.cr.usgs.gov/>. Retrieved 28 Oct 2013
5. <http://opentopo.sdsc.edu/gridsphere/gridsphere?cid=geonlidar&format=ge>. Website of the The OpenTopography Facility, based at the San Diego Supercomputer Center at the University of California, San Diego. Retrieved 28 Oct 2013

Stuart Thyer

Tulloch History

Dave Jehan is trying to complete his book on the history of Tulloch and is seeking colour photos of some rolling stock. While not all are within the scope of *Light Railways*, our readers often have a broad range of interests. He is seeking:

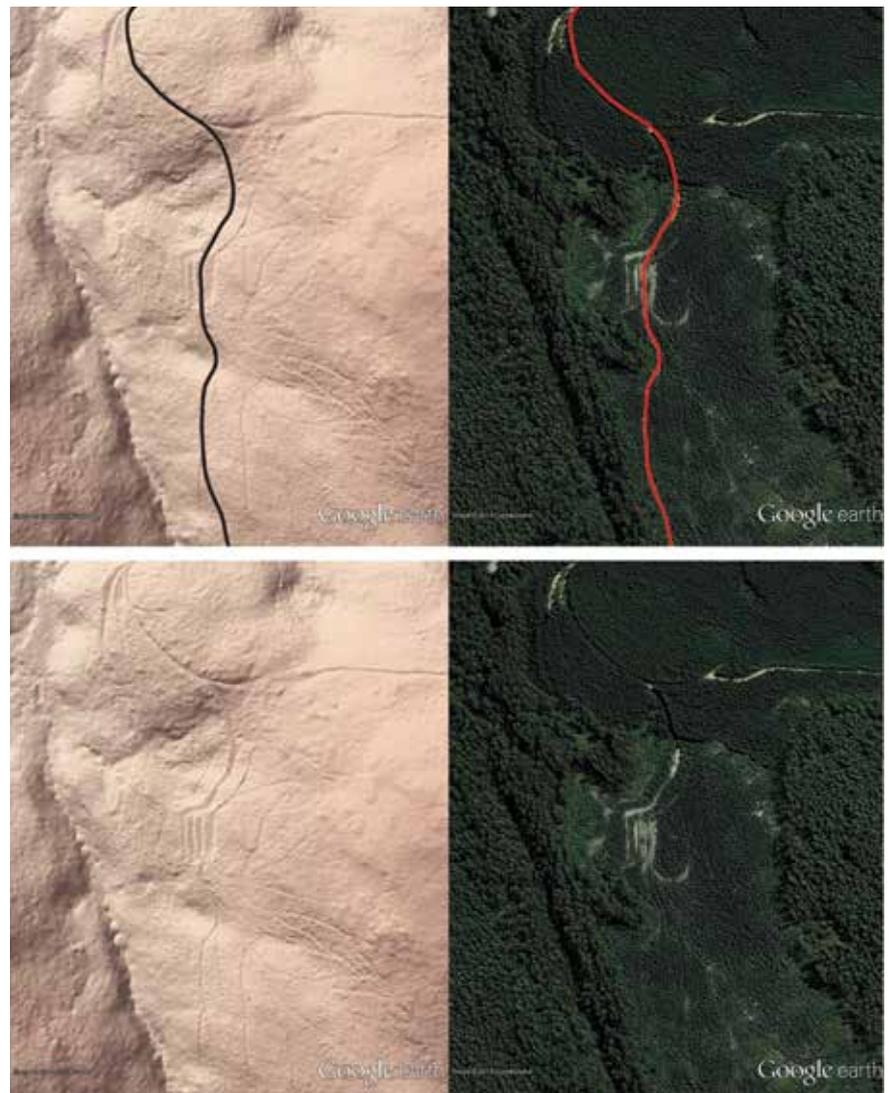
- South Maitland Railway railcars
- Coal Cliff Colliery No. 5
- Victorian Railways W class locomotives
- Tasmanian Government Railways W class locomotives
- Victorian Railways 'DRC' railcars

Any reader with images that they would be willing to have published, please contact him on email – davidjehan69@yahoo.com.au. He is looking to have the project completed before the end of the year, so prompt replies would be appreciated.

Dave Jehan

South East Queensland Tramways

Queensland based researcher Peter Cokley has taken a different approach to publishing findings on his chosen area of research. His ongoing research is posted both to the LRRSA yahoo groups page (see LR231 Research) and to the Railway Archaeology section of



Lidar images (left) and satellite views (right) of 'Little Boys' camp, Thomson Valley, Vic.

Photo: Courtesy Google, Digital Globe and Forest Commission Victoria.

Railpage Australia under the title 'South Coast QLD Historical Tramways sugar timber road construction etc'. <http://www.railpage.com.au/f-f29.htm>

His research takes in the Nerang Central sugar mill, Carrara and Rushton Nerang River sugar cane punts and associated tramways, Neranwood timber line, road building tramway between Southport and Burleigh Heads and the former Pleasure Island amusement park tramway at Carrara. Peter is also researching the QR steam era South Coast Line to Southport and Tweed Heads.

Peter is taking the approach of publishing his progress reports on internet forums so discussion further enriches the topic. He notes that it has the added advantage of flushing out extra information as other researchers and local historians pass on bits of information. Rather than risk not completing an article, he has chosen to publish and constantly update.

The following short article on Pleasure Island amusement park is one example of new media assisting in research, some of his material was discovered on *Facebook*.

Stuart Thyer

Pleasure Island Amusement Park, Qld

Pleasure Island amusement park, a small scale version of Disneyland, operated at Carrara on Queensland's Gold Coast from 1959 till closure in 1962. It included a 48 passenger capacity tram on a half mile long 2ft (610mm) gauge tramway on tracks purchased from Queensland Railways [QR].^{1,2}

The tram carried the title *Funlander* on the locomotive's nose and *Pleasure Island Railway*, in black lettering, on the carriages' sides. The tram title was reminiscent of QR's long distance air-conditioned trains such as *The Sunlander*. The locomotive is described as a ¾ ton diesel costing £2000, so it is assumed it and the carriages were built for the venture. Its appearance resembled a QR 1200 class diesel electric locomotive as used on some of these QR trains. The fully enclosed orange carriages, mounted on 4 wheel fixed wheelbase frames, had cream window surrounds and a mid-car height broad cream horizontal stripe.³

A static exhibit at Pleasure Island was Fowler 0-4-0WT (16249 of 1925), originally from Rocky Point Sugar Mill, Woongoolba, Qld. After Pleasure Island closed, the Fowler was displayed at George Gilltrap's Auto Museum, Kirra. It later became a

static exhibit at Dreamworld theme park, Coomera, before eventually returning to Rocky Point sugar mill where it was restored as a static exhibit.^{4,5} Another Pleasure Island exhibit was the 'Nautilus' submarine, purchased from director Stanley Kramer after he'd finished making the movie *On the Beach*. Other exhibits included a vintage fire engine, a stage coach painted in Wells Fargo livery, paddle boats and miniature jeeps. McRobbie wrote that he had the stage coach built by a Toowoomba firm of coachbuilders from "various old and new parts" for \$1500. He sold it to Gilltrap's Auto Museum for \$400 who repainted it as Cobb and Co. It was later noted at various Gold Coast parades billed as an authentic Cobb and Co Coach and claimed to be priceless.⁶ Pleasure Island was opened 12 December 1959 by Alexander McRobbie, Ellis Hinds and Geoff Styant Browne. They bought 10 acres of land at Carrara on the eastern side of Keith Williams' Surfers Paradise Water Ski Gardens, on the southern bank of the Nerang River. The Water Ski Gardens eventually reappeared as the now famous Seaworld theme park. Pleasure Island only lasted until 1962 when it closed due to financial difficulties.

1. McRobbie, Alexander. *The real Surfers Paradise: from seaside village to international resort*, Pan News, Surfers Paradise QLD, 1988. Pages 251ff.
2. The *South Coast Bulletin*, 9 Dec 1959
3. Cross, Trevor, "Pleasure Island Train, Carrara", image posted to Facebook, page titled 'Have you seen the old Gold Coast'. Accessed 31 Oct 2013 <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=618214908221448&set=a.618214868221452.1073741934.280745045301771&type=1&theater>
4. Browning, John. *Preserved Australian Sugar Cane Locomotives*, http://www.lrrsa.org.au/LRR_SGRc.htm Light Railway Research Society of Australia Inc.
5. Webber, Brian. *Exploring Queensland's Railways – South from Brisbane*, ARHS [Q] 2007, Page 111
6. McRobbie, Alexander. *The real Surfers Paradise: from seaside village to international resort*, Pan News, Surfers Paradise QLD, 1988. Pages 251ff.

Peter Cokley

Cooloola Tramway, Qld

Further to the possible heritage listing of the Cooloola tramway (see LR230 Research), readers may be interested in an allied site at the State Library of Queensland <http://tinyurl.com/LRRSA-Cooloola234>.¹ The site details a number of research sources and includes a photo of *Mary Ann* (Walkers 1/1873), which would have made a fitting addition to John Kerr's *Tall Timber and Tramways Queensland* (LRRSA, 2009).

1. <http://blogs.slq.qld.gov.au/jol/2013/08/13/william-pettigrew-and-the-cooloola-timber-tramway/> Accessed 28 Oct 2013

Phil Rickard

Langley Vale Tramway, NSW

A great film clip of the Langley Vale tramway (LR226, 227) can be found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=64RSnXNdEs>. The film features great footage of many of the facets of logging often read about, but rarely seen in action. The many hazards faced by timber workers, including the use of timber jacks, are clearly seen. The clip is believed to have come from a mid 1920's film shot for or by the NSW Forestry Commission but provenance is unclear.

Stuart Thyer



Ned Kelly bushranger style re-enactment with Fowler 0-4-0WT (16249 of 1925) at Pleasure Island amusement park, Carrara, Queensland, circa 1960. Photo: Alexander McRobbie. Image reproduction courtesy of the Gold Coast City Council Local Studies Library, image number LS-LSP-CD440-IMG0009



The Pleasure Island tram, seen here partially hidden behind the firetruck, was a very smartly presented unit. Peter would like to hear from anyone with more of the history or subsequent disposal of the locomotive and carriages. Photo: Trevor Cross