

Village Voice July 1994

(a very occasional publication of the Balmoral Village Intercommunity Association)

Steam Trains to Balmoral...?

You may have noticed some activity around the site of the old railway station in recent weeks. Survey pegs have gone in along the old siding and there has been some clearing of the regrowth. Last month the Railway Museum in Thirlmere was given an extension on its lease to include Balmoral and some of its members are preparing a proposal to their governing Board to terminate the steam trains at Balmoral instead of Buxton.

From my talks with people so far, some are very much in favour. They see new commercial opportunities and the tourists bringing benefit to existing small businesses. Others have expressed concern, seeing the increased road traffic and people as a disruption to the peaceful country atmosphere of the Village.

I think that there are many questions that need to be answered before an informed conclusion can be made. This proposal has major implications for the environment of our Village and it is important that residents express an opinion and have an input into the proposal.

If the proposal is accepted by the Museum Board it will still be a long time before we actually see the trains as much rail maintenance has to be undertaken.

The Association will devote its next meeting to discussion of this topic and will invite someone from the museum to answer questions.

So be sure to come to the next meeting:-

ALL BALMORAL RESIDENTS AND FRIENDS WELCOME

Next Meeting

Sunday, 10th July

10.30 a.m.

Village Hall.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Ian Tait (President) ph. 898 418
Gay Scott (Secretary) ph. 898 246

Welcome to Balmoral

For many years the sign with this message has hung on the walls of the Fireshed facing Wilson's Drive. It dates from the early '70's when Ron and Libby Brown lived here (*at Balmoral Lodge, ed.*). Ron was an engineer with the Dept. of Motor Transport (now R.T.A.) working on the bridges for the new F4 freeway. In a letter to the Intercommunity Ron recalled the origin of the sign.

Welcome to Balmoral

Sometime about May 1973 the Welcome to Balmoral sign was erected on the railway platform building at Balmoral.

The sign had been made by the RTA's signwriter Mike Carrig at the Picton Works Office. Mike was a true craftsman who always added some extra class to all his signwriting jobs. He was proud of his craft and often drank a toast to celebrate his achievements. The drink also seemed to steady his hand.

Travellers on the loop line would no longer ponder where they were as the Sunday evening train to Sydney came to a stop at Balmoral Station to pick up just one and sometimes two passengers. Half asleep they would wipe their eyes and gape with amazement at the site of John Meredith and/or Mrs Gadsen being farewelled from Balmoral by a joyful band of locals with goblets full of wine or glasses of beer.

The train would slowly pull away from the platform accompanied by much waving and cheering from the party left behind.

The sign became a landmark and a symbol of the warmth and comradeship enjoyed by the small community living in Balmoral Village. It was a sign not just for those passing through but was a comforting greeting to those living in the village each time they returned to their homes.

Ron Brown
12.4.94

When the trains stopped running on the Loopline and the station buildings were put up for sale Peter Lawrence claimed the sign and put it on the Fireshed. Time and weather took their toll and the original sign has now been renewed. Many thanks to Ted Haines for creating the copy of the original sign and volunteering his skill and materials. Thanks too to Peter Lawrence for retrieving the sign in the first place. Peter re-erected the sign, this bit of Village history on Easter Monday 1994.

Alan Scot. June/94