

REMEMBERING AN EARLY EXCURSION TRIP TO EMU PARK IN THE EARLY 1940'S.

When we were very young my late mother and late younger brother and I and a large party of family, (Aunts, and cousins) and friends during the summer months would go on the EXCURSION TRAINS to Emu Park on Sundays. It was during the war years so petrol was scarce and if one did have a family car in those days, (we did as my late father owned an old rattle trap Buick utility) and the roads were not bitumen highways, but corrugated dirt roads. To get back to the story it was easier for all of us to go down to the beach by steam train. As we lived in Kent Street in Rockhampton and our home was between Cambridge and Albert Streets. Albert Street is now the main Highway, (The Bruce Highway and is Highway No.1.). Kent street is just one street to the south-west of Denison Street along which the main North Coast Railway runs and Archer Park Railway Station is in Denison between Cambridge and Archer Streets so you see we only had to walk down Denison Lane which was our back fence and half a block along Cambridge street and we would be at Archer Park Railway Station. My mother would have us up early and washed and dressed and then she would cut piles of sandwiches. There would be something like:- hard-boiled egg and lettuce, ham and mustard, cheese and onion and last but not least corned beef and pickles which was wrapped in grease-proof paper and then wrapped in tea-towels. The day before she would back little current cup-cakes which she would ice with icing sugar mixture and on top she would sprinkle hundreds & thousands or she would cut jelly beans in half and with cut up jelly lollies make faces etc on the top of these cakes as well as icing arrowroot biscuits in the same way and they were packed into cake tins. There would also be paper-bags of fruit and if it was around Christmas time there would be lollies and nuts as well. All of this food was put into a large port as we called it, but these days they are referred to as suit-cases. Our bathing costumes and towels and hats etc were put into another bag some times a string bag or another type of soft carrying bag. We would set off down to the station to meet all the others. If we were early we would leave our mother and aunt at Archer Park Station and all of us kids would walk the six blocks to Stanley Street Station and then walk along the platform and up over the wooden overhead bridge to the South Street Station to get a large open carriage as most times there would be a party of about twenty of us all told when we picked mother and the aunts up at Archer Park. One day the Yeppoon Express train would leave first and it would be followed at a reasonable time with the Emu Park Express train and then later on during the morning they would be followed by the Stop Trains which would pick up people at all the smaller stations on the way down to the beach. Then the next Sunday the Emu Park Express train would be the first to leave. Although it was called the Express it would pick up people at Archer Park and North Rockhampton only and leave all the others to await the Stop Trains. We were always pleased if the Emu Park was the first train away. As there was no reserved seats all of us kids would pack the windows on the platform side and landing if the carriage had a verandah and tell anyone trying to get into this carriage it was full as we knew we had to have room and seats to pick up the others. Most times it worked. Most times it would be a C-17 loco on the head of our train and there was always great excitement when the Station Master, (if I can remember correctly it would have been Mr. Mounthey who lived in the railway house in Denison Street just off Cambridge Street), rang the bell to be followed by the Guard blowing his and they blew the whistle on the loco and we would be off heading north out through the station yards past the main



(2).....station building, which was the old galvanised corrugated iron structure with the roof over some of the tracks. Just before we would head out across Stanley Street our train would pass the parcel office and a Signal Cabin n the end of the platform. As we crossed Stanley Street we would cross over a diamond crossing of the branch line down to the City Wharves. Then the track turned north-west and travelled along Denison Street and shared it with the road traffic. It was always an annoyance to us Rockyites to hear people from other towns say, "Oh! You have the train running along the Main Street". Where we we knew our main Street was called East Street and although it ran parallel it was two more street further away, (Alma Street and Bolsover Streets were between). Continuing on we would cross Derby Street. Just before crossing William Street we would pass the Central Girl's State School on our left. The Infants being the first to pass and the swimming pool of the seniors on the corner was next. If we were on the Express we wouldn't stop at next street crossing which was William Street, (0 miles 27 chains - 33ft altitude), but there was no station there, but the railway did put a couple of wooden slat-seats under the awning of one of the shops there. We would continue on the left-hand track, (left-hand if one was travelling north) as it was double line all the way along Denison Street. Our next crossing would be across Denham Street and then Fitzroy Street, (which was The Bruce Highway in those days) and between William and Fitzroy there were shops and business along both sides of the street and that is why people thought they were travelling through the main street of Rockhampton. Just before crossing Archer Street our train would be switched over to the right-hand track and then into Archer Park Station, (0M 69ch. 30ft). The Signal Cabin in those days was in line with the street and the Signalman could look up or down Denison Street and see the whole length, but in later years they moved it onto the station platform itself. Our parents didn't have trouble in finding us as we would all be looking out for them and then with the noise we would make they knew into which direction to run to get into our carriage. The older ones would get off and grab all the bags of food etc and after settling down again we would be off again. Of course there would most likely be an argument on who was to get a window seat and the most preferred one was one facing the engine even though we would most likely get an eye full of soot somewhere along the way. After a short stop the Station Master would ring his bell and the Guard would blow his whistle to be answered by the loco and we would chuff and puff out of the station. At the Cambridge Street end of the platform a short branch went of to the right on a curve and behind a building and across Alma Lane into the back of an old disused Butter Factory. Our train would then be switched back to the left-hand road and up past all the wooden houses on either side of the street. Most of them being on high-blocks to allow the cool breezes to keep them cool during the summer months. Our next crossing would be across Albert Street, just an ordinary quite street in those days. On the right hand-side just before we turned 90° into North Street we would pass the Vacuum Oil Company Oil Terminal which had a branch line into its yards and across Denison Lane into another section of their yard in Kent Street. There was a very small signal box between the tracks here and it set the points to the Alton Downs branch line which continued on in a north west direction across north Street with the old Rockhampton Jail on its left and out past the Showgrounds which has a siding and further along Lion Creek Road a branch line went off to the left into Skyrings Saw Mill. It continued on along the left-hand side of Lion Creek Road before crossing to the right-hand side through the suburb of Applegarth. Then on through Pink Lily, Alton Downs, Pukatika, Milyando, Alton Downs, Waroula and terminating at Ridgeland. This branch was closed soon afterwards.



(3).....Alton Downs Junction was (1m 12c 35ft alt). Now our train was now travelling north-east parallel to North Street with the roadway and private homes on the right hand side and the vacant Council Paddock on the left. We crossed the level crossing where Bolsover Street joined the Lion Creek Road. On the left was Victoria Park before we went past the start of Victoria Parade and then across the Alexandra Railway Bridge which was opened 6 November 1899. This bridge crosses the Fitzroy River and in those days was double tracked, but today it only has one track which has just been re-aligned down the middle. When they took up one track as as two trains couldn't be on the bridge at the same time on account of the weight one track was always to the up side, but now with the container traffic they had to move it into the middle of the bridge so they wouldn't fowl the side supports. Just as we came off the bridge we were switched over to the left and passed the Glenmore Signal Cabin, (1m 52c 35ft) on our right. The main North Coast up to Mackay and further north continued on to the right of this cabin and across Glenmore Road. Our track also crossed this road and in those days they had those wig-wag warning alarms to protect this level crossing as it was quite a road junction as one road went down between the two lines here as well. The track now swung around and headed in an easterly direction to pass Glenmore Road Station, (1m 61c 33ft). and still turning to head in the opposite direction that we had travelled up along Denison forming a huge "U". We crossed over Moores Creek and followed along Bridge Street. When the new Fitzroy Street bridge was built the line curved and followed Ashney Street to go under the roadway, but in those days it followed Bridge Street with a level crossing and then across Goodsall Street and into North Rockhampton Station, ( 2m 51c 24ft). This was the last stop to pick up passengers if it was the Express, but the Stop Trains would stop at most stations. After leaving we would parallel Lakes Creek Road and through Kalka (3m 52c 24ft), and just before we crossed Frenchmans Creek to pass through Koongal (4m 48c 24ft) we would all look out of the windows on the left to see who would be first to spot the full size statue up the creek. It was all that remained of an ornamental statue in the pond of a huge garden that had been laid out by a well known French Botanist whose name was Thozet. We all thought it was haunted and it was the mark of a grave of someone. We then passed Berserker (5m 8c 37ft) and passed The Central Queensland Meat Export company, (CQME) meat works at Lakes Creek. We knew when we were passing here as all the windows would be shut and all of us kids would say we are passing Stinky Bay. After we passed though the Lakes Creek Station we would cross the Emu Park main road and then continue on through Nerimbera (7m 13c 22ft). We were now passing the southern slopes of the Berserker Range and that was why the line was now in a south easterly direction. We now crossed the main Emu Park road again now there is another meat works with a cattle yard and siding for Fields Meat Works, but in those days they were not there. We continued on swinging around to the north-east passing though Nankin (11m 36c 68ft) and it was here that the Broadmount Line branched off to the right. It had long gone when we passed. Continuing on we passed the Railmotor stop at Leaholme (13m 32c 83ft) and on past Coolcorra (14m 18c 76ft). I have the metal letters from this station on the side of my home now in Kent Street. I bought them with the letters to form EMU PARK all for \$6-00. I put an application for them from the Railway Department about ten years or so and got them for that price. To get back to the story. The main road crossed the railway here by an old wooden overhead bridge which had a sharp "S" bent to get onto it and off again and many a time a car has ended up down onto the railway track below. We next passed through Sleipner Junction (14m 75c 88ft). It was here that the Yeppoon branch line went off to the right and followed



(4).....around the hillside and followed Sleipner Creek upstream. The Emu Park line continued on straight ahead over Sleipner Creek and again crossed the main road. Even though we happened to be on the Express it would always stop at Tungamull Tank (16m 58c 117ft) to fill the loco tender with water. After we set off again all the kids would be leaning way out of the windows to see who could hit the wet canvas hose which had been pushed back away from the track, but those with long arms could always manage to give it a hit and get splashed in the process. A little further on we would cross the branch road which had turned off the Emu Park Road and it headed down to Keppel Sands, The Sand Hill we called it in those days. Tungamull station (17m 67c 141ft), was where it turned off and we passed through it and onwards we went. We then passed through Coowonga (20m 13c 53ft), Coorooman (22m 59c 35ft), Tanby (25m 41c 105ft) and to arrive to our first sight of the sea in Keppel Bay. In fact the Pacific Ocean. We went through Kinka (28m 47c 18ft), and would look out as we crossed over the small wooden bridge over Kinka Creek to see if the tide was in our out. We were now heading in a south-easterly direction following the coast before going under the wooden overpass as the road from Yeppoon across the Scenic Highway headed towards Emu Park. When we stopped at Phillip Street 31m 10c 30ft), we knew it wasn't long before arriving at our destination so everything was bundled up. Emu Park (31m 52c 20ft), being our destination for that day. Although the platform was to be on the right hand side of the train most of the doors on the left were swung open and all the big lads would get ready to jump off as the train slowed down to a crawl into the station. These lads would jump off while it was still moving and then run for a good table in the shade over in Bell Park. Mother and the aunts and the younger children would do the correct thing and get out onto the platform and walk across to the park. Once a table was taken charge off someone was left to guard it with ones life while the others went and helped with the food basket and other things. It took about an hour and a half for the journey and arrival would be somewhere about 10am. It all depended on what train you caught. During the holiday period over Boxing Day or New Years Day I had seen about 1,000 people on Archer Park Station some going to Yeppoon and some even going in the other direction up to Mount Morgan to visit friends or relations who lived up there. In those days they would have been helped up Razor Back by the Abt Rack engines. To get back to our story when we heard the engine going onto the turn-table we would would run back across the park and help the crew to push it around. Some times I would go and look into the engine shed and saw PB-15 No737 all polished up ready to bring the workers up each week day. I had never travelled behind her as we always went down on the weekend excursions, but during the school holidays we may have gone down during midweek and then we would see No.737 and her train waiting at Sleipner Junction. It was always the first train to leave about 4-30pm in the afternoon and then wait for the Yeppoon train to arrive and then would split the two trains and No.737 would take the its train on to Emu Park while No.740 would take the Yeppoon train. Then we would walk down to the beach past all the little wooden changing sheds which were owned or leased for their own family to use instead of using the larger public changing sheds. As we were only down for the day we had to use the Public one. After a swim if the tide happened to be in we would be getting hungry so early lunch was the order of the day. Some of us would walk across the road to the corner shop to get a billy of hot water to make a cup of tea and they would charge us about threepence or sixpence I forget now. Of course we would think the sandwiches and cakes our aunts brought was much better than the one our mother had brought so we would we in the business of swapping. After lunch it was always a walk out along the



(5).....jetty and then past the oyster huts and along the cliff path over to the other beach. On the way back we would always stop and have a look at the huge stuffed crocodile hanging from the rafters of one of the old hotels. I think it was named the Pine Beach Hotel. Then we would walk down along a street to look over Charlie Kerr's fence to see all the painted animals he had made up out of drift wood he had collected and had then all over his front garden. Mr. Kerr was one of our local Dentist up in Rocky, but had a holiday home down in Emu Park. Some times we would have another swim before getting back to the station early to try and get one of the Sunshine Express Carriages of the Townsville Mail train as they would use them from time to time if the ordinary carriages wouldn't take the amount of people going to the beach. Then we would sit and play cards and finish off the sandwiches, cakes and fruit etc before the train pulled out on it homeward journey. By then we could be sore and red by being out in the sun too long and becoming sunburnt, but in those days nothing was said about sun cancer. We would get back to Archer Park about 8pm or 9pm. It all depended on what train you caught. We would be tired out and stagger on home up Cambridge Street and down Denison Lane and by next weekend ready to do it all over again. Those were the days. I'm only sorry I never took a camera and took more photos. I left it too late and then one day all the old steam engines were gone.

Mervyn S Brookfield  
Rockhampton.



## Sections OPENED FOR TRAFFIC:-

North Rockhampton	to Emu Park	22 December	1888
Nankin Junction	to Broadmount	1 January	1898
Sleipner Junction	to Mount Chalmers	18 November	1908
Mount Chalmers	to Yeppoon	20 December	1908
Alton Downs Junction	to Ridgeland	11 October	1916
Bajool	to Port Alma	5 May	1912
Rockhampton Wharf Branch		17 September	1867
Kabra	to Moonmera	15 June	1898
Moongan	to Mount Morgan	26 November	1898
Mount Morgan	to Wowan	16 October	1912
Wowan	to Rannes	2 February	1915
Rannes	to Baralaba	30 July	1917
Baralaba	to Nipan	21 June	1926
Nipan	to Theodore	7 May	1927
Mount Morgan Deviation		19 April	1952

## NOMEMCLATURE OF CQ RAILWAY STATIONS ON THE EMU PARK BRANCH.

Rockhampton	Name of City.
Archer Park	Name of park in which station stands.
Glenmore Road	Name of adjacent road
North Rockhampton	Named after city of Rockhampton.
Kalka	Kangaroo.
Koongal	Local name.
Berserker	After range of hills nearby.
Lakes Creek	After creek of that name.
Nerimbera	Unknown?
Nankin	After adjacent creek.
Leaholme	Unknown?
Coolcorra	Unknown?
Sleipner	After Mt Sleipner which was named after one of the Archer Brother's horses.
Tungamull	Unknown?
Coowonga	Pigeon.
Coorooman	Name of creek, "Coorawan" Kangaroo.
Tanby	Local name.
Kinka	Night Owl.
Phillip Street	After street in township.
Emu Park	Name of seaside resort.

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Mount Nicholzen	Mountain in vicinity.
Mount Chalmers	Name of mountain and township.
Cawarral	Cattle camp.
Bondoola	Abundance of water.
Barmaryee	Land mark.
Yeppoon	Name of township and old sugar plantation.

Engine No.737. Class PB-15.

Makers Name M/s Walkers Ltd Maryborough QLD.

Makers No.384.

Cost £6,745/9/2.

Commenced to run 26 April 1926.

Commenced Rockhampton May 1968.

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