

BEECROFT RAILWAY & STATION

The railway was a major factor in the history of Beecroft, and warrants a summary. Beecroft Railway Station opened in September, 1886, as a very basic platform with a single track located adjacent to the park (Village Green). As the developing centre of Beecroft was further north, the station was rebuilt at its current location in March, 1892. Initially, these were both single track side platforms, but due to increased use, especially agricultural freight the double track was extended from Epping to Hornsby by 1892. This included a goods siding at Beecroft in particular to support the local orchards. In 1894 a waiting shed was erected on the up station and a ladies waiting room with toilet on the down station. *Below:* Beecroft Station around 1896, view from Railway Parade [M. Woodman & J. Furze in BCHG (1995)]



Postcard from 1906 of Beecroft station with double track and separate platforms, carriages being pulled by a C30 class team engine in reverse on the up line. [HSR; Ralph Hawkins].



Beecroft Station around 1910 looking south, here with two lines and separate platforms. There is a rainwater tank on the waiting room, lamp (kerosene?), signals and top right the stationmasters house. At this stage there was a ladies toilet on the down station. Note the boards of the walkway between the platforms. [Hornsby Shire Recollects]



Beecroft station looking south in 1909-1910 with C30 class locomotive arriving.
 [Photo Algernon Winn; BCHG; HSR; Marion Lambert].



Beecroft station around 1910, looking north, showing kerosene lamps and massive amount of telephone? wires. The station got the telephone in 1899 via the Epping Exchange. Many ladies here waiting for the train. The locomotive is in reverse with at least five carriages. [HSR; Marion Lambert; Geoff Smith]



Beecroft rail station around 1912? with two platforms, prior to rebuild as an island platform. Bricks for construction at left. Distance centre shows the old stationmasters house in what is now a reserve and behind the Cenotaph. Points for the goods siding can be seen. [HSR; Norma Macdonald].



An interesting photo of the first stage of the Beecroft School of Arts in around 1905, and probably after it was formally opened on 10 December, 1904. The end windows say "LIBRARY" AND "READING ROOM", and there is a plaque on the wall below the windows. The sign between them appears to be promoting some function. The wooden extension on the left of the building contains the toilets. To the left are four wood frames, probably to protect newly planted trees. On the porch are three boys, with a young girl in a bonnet. On the right the white fence is around the park. Of note to the right (see detail left) is a view of the railway line and embankment curving to the left. Foreground is a freight carriage and guards van.
[Hornsby Shire Recollects]



Cutting near Beecroft with two C30 class loco pulling up the gradient and blowing smoke, in 1913. Must be a heavy load. Note two houses along a road on upper bank.
[Gostalgia on flickr]



In 1913-14 a new island platform was built for two tracks. At this time a subway was also constructed for access to the station from both sides; the ticket office was within the subway tunnel, at the base of the stairs. This is an excellent photo showing the various tracks, siding and new signals. There was a goods siding on the village (western) side of the station. The core of emerging Beecroft Village is seen to the right. Automatic signalling Epping to Thornleigh installed in 1925; Strathfield to Hornsby was electrified in 1929. [NSW Office Environment and Heritage]



Railway station looking north in February, 2006, showing the character of the station building. [station photo 2006 by Saberwyn on Wikipedia]

In 1957 there was major graffiti vandalism of the station building with the words "SLEEPY HOLLOW" painted in white over much of the brickwork. This made the front page of the Sydney Morning Herald. SMH 27 July, 1957, page 4: "...vandals yesterday defaced signs on walls, doors.. at Beecroft Station with thick paint". SMH 12 August, 1957, page 1: "...twice in the past few months vandals have descended on Beecroft Railway Station in the early hours of the morning and painted on it....Sleepy Hollow".

**VANDALS DEFACE
BEECROFT STATION**



Above: subway with former ticket office and ticket windows, now closed. Mostly the left hand window was used.

Earlier the station also handled mail and bulky goods; through the door was a counter and storage shelves. In the tunnel opposite these windows was a small wooden newsagents stand in the 1950's, and the walls of the access tunnel had large noticeboards with train timetables. There was a wooden fence with gate at the end of the office, and when the passengers alighted, the stationmaster collected the tickets there.

There was at least one hold-up attempt in the 1950's.

In the late 1950's one of the stationmasters was a Mr Tabachnik (?) who lived in Copeland Road East and his children went to the public school.

Middle: stairwell from station to subway and old lightwell roof of the ticket office, looking north.

Below : subway exit on Sutherland Road side originally built in 1914. There was a nice creek to the left, but in the late 1950-1960's a lot of rubbish was disposed of down the slope.

[Sydney Trains; photo by Geoff Ward; NSW Govt: Transport for NSW; Dept Environment & Heritage]





Close up of 1910 photo of station looking south. On the cutting in the background is the stationmasters house, it was built in 1894 and extended in 1898. This house was located behind the war memorial, before the park was built there. There was a fence with the railway property behind it, with a cream painted weatherboard house of government style. It was vacant from around 1957-58 and was completely empty; exploration found a number of photos of 1950's boxing stars pinned to the wall. I don't know when it was demolished. There was also a narrow steel ladder behind the house near the road bridge that ran down the face of the cutting.

It appears that the first stationmaster was Tom Casserley in 1894, and from 1898 a Mr Hopkins; from 1914 to 1916 there was a "stationmaster" James Doran, listed as residing at the SW corner of Copeland Rd and York St (but not sure if he was at Beecroft). The stationmaster living in the Railway Pde house in 1921 was Silas Prescott Cox (no relation). He was born 1875 and in March 1917 enlisted in the Army Medical Corp with rank of S/Sgt; he was posted to UK on medical ships, and returned to Australia in February 1919. From 1922 to at least 1930 he was the stationmaster at Elizabeth Street (St James Station), Sydney.



This steam locomotive is a C30 class built in Sydney by Beyer, Peacock & Co for suburban railways, especially those with steep gradient such as from Epping to Hornsby. This photo is 1913. A total of 145 were built between 1903 and 1917. They were also referred to as 4-6-4 due to the configuration of their wheels.



Steam locomotive 3801 was built 1943 and operated by NSWGR 1943-1976. It is a C38 class (4-6-2). Here it is on a special run and approaching Beecroft Station heading north passing under Copeland Road bridge, 17 March 2007. In early years it was on the Newcastle Flyer run

The old station masters house would have been up on the bank to the right.

[flickr photo by Dennis]



NSWGR C38 class steam locomotive painted green with yellow trim, which preceded the 1954 Royal Train with the sign "Pilot Engine" on the front. [Railpage]

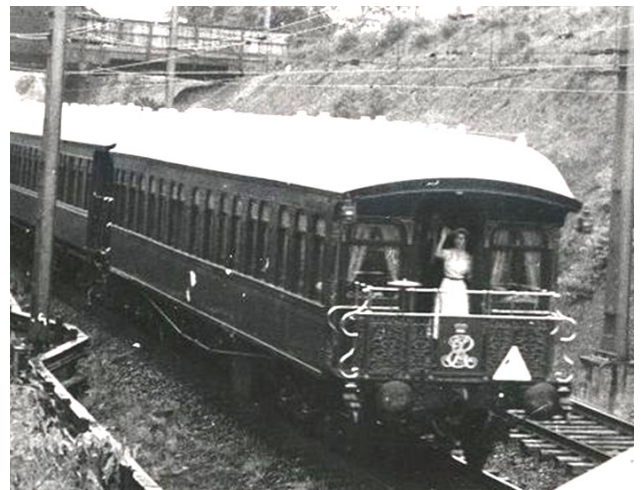


Above: Royal Train at Duffy Ave, Thornleigh, Tuesday 9 February, 1954. Two ALCO class C40 diesel electric locomotives end to end, led by #4001 painted royal blue with yellow trim, on Sydney to Newcastle run.

Right: Locos pulling four carriages and Queen waving from rear carriage nearing Thornleigh; she obviously enjoyed travelling through Beecroft!

[C.C. Singleton; NLA.gov.au; HSR]

February 9, 1954, I joined school children and other patriots in the Beecroft Village Green to gawk and wave. I think my brother Ian and others had put pennies on the rails a bit further down; they recovered some and lost some. Some boys also put 2 shilling coins.



NSWGR AD60 class Garratt locomotive (4-8-4+4-8-4) produced between 1952-1957 in Manchester. These were three-part articulated heavy goods steam locomotives, and were often roaring up the Beecroft line. We could hear them at home and they were very noisy with a load and in the wet. This one #6029 was in service 1954-1972 and was restored and is owned by NSW Rail Museum Thirlmere [Wikipedia; flickr.com]