



THE PIONEER

RURAL & RESIDENTIAL
PROPERTY

Stroud Road Rail



Just how did Stroud Road get its name? The village of Stroud Road basically evolved with the construction of the North Coast Railway, which celebrates its Centenary this year.

With initial moves as early as 1882 to investigate a new line branching off at Maitland & heading along the developing north coast hinterland toward Grafton, much lobbying & persistence by local Councils of the day, Members of Parliament & transport deprived farming & timber communities basically resulted in what we all now take for granted.

Regionally, two main routes were initially considered. The first via Seaham, Morpeth, Bulahdelah & onto Wingham posed a problem crossing the mighty Hunter River & hindering passage of navigable river trade unless an opening bridge was employed, the other as we know it today via Paterson, Dungog, Gloucester to Wingham to service the development of more fertile & productive farmland.

Locally, despite Stroud already being the Headquarters of the Australian Agricultural Company (AACo), surveyors found that a route just north of Stroud which headed across the Karuah River & up along Mammy Johnsons Creek lent itself more to the natural geography of the area than actually passing through Stroud itself. Ironically, the deepest cutting on the whole North Coast Line was dug by hand just west of Stroud Road at what is now known as the Reidsdale Rd rail overbridge.

Despite some pre-existing farms & houses, the village that inevitably developed around Stroud's new Rail Road became known as Stroud Road. Interestingly, this same situation is repeated at the small village of Walcha Road on the New England line, which bypasses Walcha itself several km's to the west.

In 1902, the 39 mile stretch from Dungog to Gloucester was estimated to cost 342,307 pounds & at peak construction saw 1550 workmen & 268 horses engaged.

With the official opening date of the Dungog to Taree section scheduled for 23rd December 1912, it was postponed due to damage sustained by a week of heavy rainfall until 4th February 1913.

It was policy of the day that landholders affected by the construction of the rail line across their properties receive no compensation except for material costs in maintaining the fence line along the rail corridor.

Sadly, little evidence remains today of the Stroud Road Station itself, with complete demolition occurring in 1988 due to rationalisation of infrastructure & falling patronage.

In it's hey day, Stroud Road boasted two timber mills, butter factory, butcher, baker, blacksmith, two general stores, boarding house, piggery, post office, telephone exchange, tennis courts & cricket ground, with the current school & church opened in 1918 to replace existing ones at Telegerry & the Community Hall was originally built by the Church of England in the early 1930's.

The Stroud Road Community Hall & Progress Assoc Inc. in conjunction with the Gloucester Chamber of Commerce will be holding major "Centenary of Rail" celebrations on the 18th & 19th May which will involve, authentic steam train rides as well as a street parade in Gloucester, static displays of photos, machinery, vehicles, model railways & sales of commemorative souvenirs.

Rod Williams – Secretary Stroud Road Community Hall & Progress Assoc. Inc. with thanks to Stroud District Historical Society archives & other sources

**Above photograph is of the opening ceremony*