

LOCALITY MAP

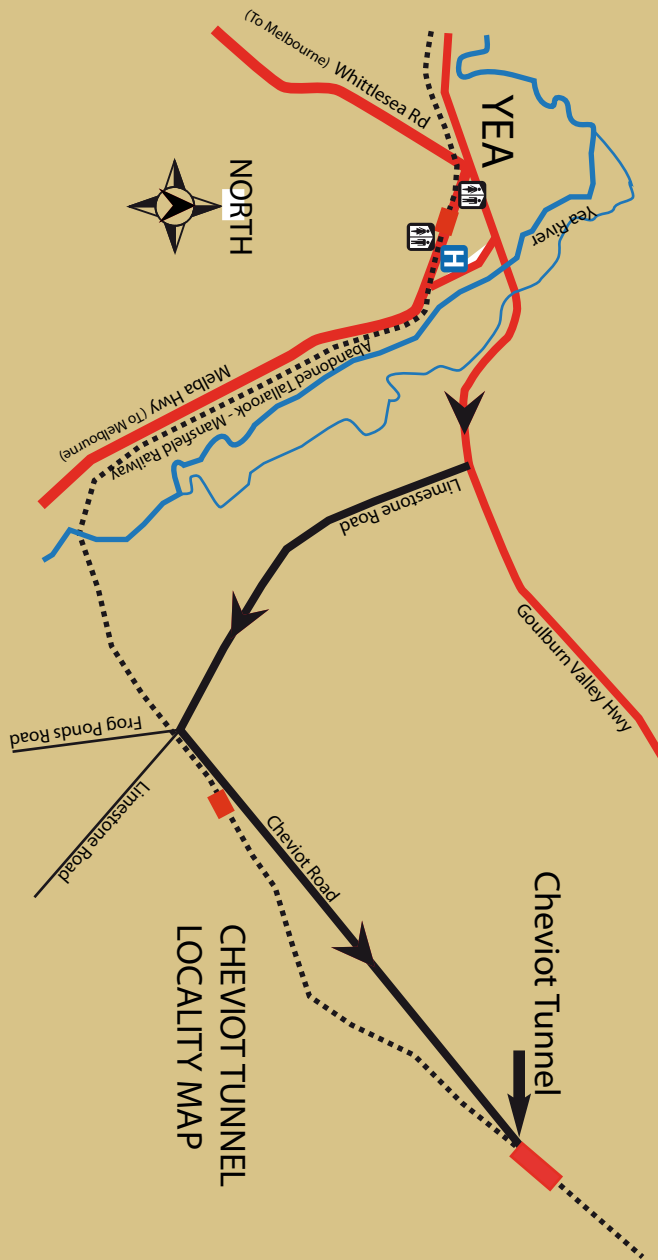


Photo: Elaine White

TIMBER TRAMWAYS

The Cheviot Station, just 3.4 mile (5.5km) west of the tunnel, was built to load sawn timber harvested from the Murrindindi Forest, some 14 mile (23km) away, and transported to the station by horse-drawn wagons. Cheviot Station opened with the rail line in 1889.

The first 3' (0.9m) gauge timber tramway opened in 1901 and led to a terminus some 5 miles (8km) from the Station. It was extended to the Station in 1905. A second tramline commenced operation in 1925. Both tramways stopped operation in 1937 when the horse-drawn wagons were replaced by trucks.

Two six ton derrick cranes were installed at the station yards in the 1920's to handle the large volume of timber transported.

Foran (1889-1890), Vinning (1892-1906), Wightman (1893-1901), and McKenzie (1899-1901) were the major milling companies that operated in the early years. The timber industry around Yea peaked between 1907 -1915 just as the Great War saw many men enlist. This was followed by another boom period between 1923 - 1930 before the Depression caused production to reduce greatly and demand for timber fell.



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Cheviot Tunnel

A Key Piece of Yea's History



1887



1977



2007

Photo: Neville Gee

Photo: R Wealands

Participate
Discover
Celebrate

CHEVIOT TUNNEL INFORMATION

The historic Cheviot Rail Tunnel is a key feature of the Tallarook to Mansfield Rail Line which operated between 1883 and 1970. Being the only tunnel on this line, and made using handmade bricks using local clay, which remain in excellent condition

today it has tremendous heritage values.

The Tunnel was constructed to pass trains across the Black Range at McLoughlin's Gap roughly half way between Yea and Molesworth.

Built under tender by Kenny Bros. as part of the Yea to Cathkin section at a cost of £88,661/2/11 the work was delayed by accidents, floods and several industrial disputes.

The tunnel was constructed from an estimated 675,000 handmade bricks using local clay. This was sourced from Quinlan's pit in a nearby paddock just west of the Tunnel. Some steel hooks that held lanterns in emergencies still exist near the four indented safety alcoves. These are located at regular intervals along the eastern wall.

Unfortunately there were several casualties during construction. A serious explosion on 14th December 1887, killed Peter Byrne, aged 24, and two other men were injured. One of these, John Jordan, was transported by train to the Royal Melbourne Hospital where he later died from his injuries. Another worker named Fennel, was buried under rock and suffered severe bruising. Peter Byrne is buried in Yea Pioneer Cemetery where his workmates erected an imposing tombstone. Daniel Driscoll, another 24 year old died of injuries suffered from a rock fall in May 1899.

IN THE MIDST OF LIFE WE ARE IN DEATH.
 LORD, HOW SUDDEN WAS MY DEATH
 FORSEEN BY NONE BUT THEE.
 HARK, YE COMRADES BE PREPARED
 FOR SO YOUR END MAY BE.
 (EPIITAPH FROM PETER BYRNE'S GRAVE)

The rail line from Tallarook to Yea opened on Friday 16th November 1883 with the Yea Station being the terminus for 6 years. Consequently, Yea became the base for train crews and locos and the town



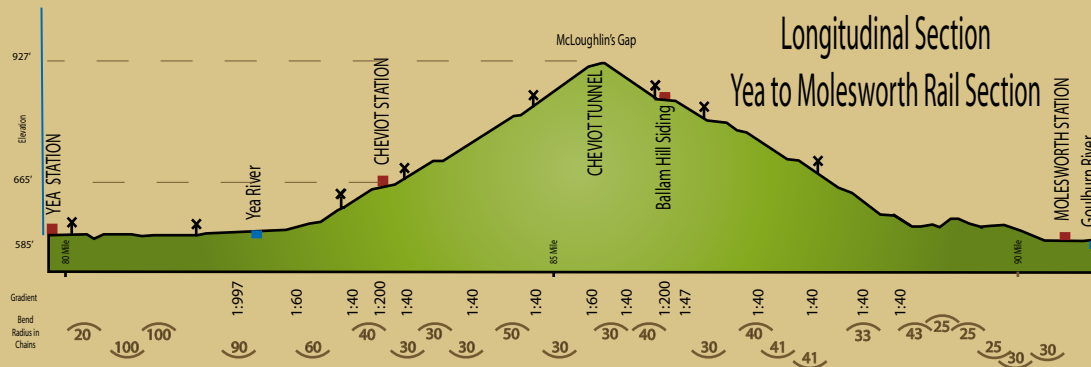
Steam Passenger Train at Yea Station
 Photo: Yea Historical Society

prospered. The brick Station buildings at Yea were part of the tender. The Refreshment Rooms operated from 1891 and the Yea to Molesworth extension finally opened on 12th November 1889.

Yea is 83 miles by rail from Melbourne and sits at an elevation of 565 feet. The line to Mansfield crossed the Yea River flats over a mile-long wooden trestle bridge before commencing a three mile climb up an almost continuous 1:40 grade with many curves to the Cheviot Tunnel.



K161 & D639 drift out from Cheviot Tunnel - Dec 1965
 Photo: Keith Atkinson



The lights of the last train through the Cheviot Tunnel are just visible
 Photo: Neville Gee

Having breasted the summit, the hardworking fireman of a steam locomotive received respite as the train traversed the five miles of downgrade, three miles of it at 1:40 to Molesworth Station (elevation 569 feet). Several minor rail accidents occurred at Suicide Bend (near Sheepwash Lagoon) as trains descended from the Tunnel at speed to Molesworth.

Immediately beyond Molesworth the railway crossed the Goulburn River.

Over the years several of the wooden bridges were damaged by fires. These were gradually replaced with concrete culverts. The continuous wooden trestle bridge over the Yea River flats was replaced in 1946-47 by concrete and steel bridges formed interspersed across several earthen embankments.

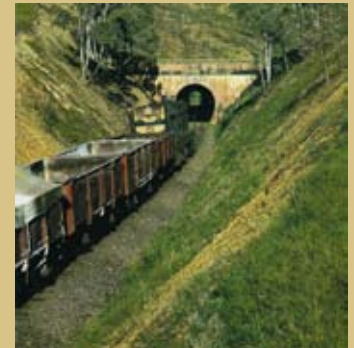
The Railway service closed on March 16, 1970.

The grade was only briefly broken at Cheviot station where it reduced to 1:200 so that trains could start and stop safely. The tunnel itself lies on a 1:60 grade. The top of the grade is at the eastern end of the tunnel at an elevation of 927 feet (283m).



K184 at Cheviot Station - 1973
 Photo: Neville Gee

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 DISCOVER
 CELEBRATE



T335 enters Cheviot Tunnel - May 1973
 Photo: Neville Gee