Mapping the historical Rogans Hill to Parramatta railway line

Key Learning Area	Unit or lesson title and main focus questions	Most appropriate level and suggested number of lessons
Geography	**Mapping the historical Rogans Hill to Parramatta railway line**	**Stage 4–5**
	What remains of the old Rogans Hill to Parramatta railway line, closed in 1932?	1–2 lessons

Teacher briefing

This geographic and historical research activity is appropriate for either Stage 4 or 5, and can be included in a History class as an extension to the previous unit.

Students enter latitude and longitude into Google Maps and view the most likely remnant locations of the historic Rogans Hill to Parramatta railway. They discuss the likely orientation of the platforms, by viewing the surrounding roads and directions to the stations.

Requirements for these lessons

- Information on the Rogans Hill to Parramatta railway line from Rolfe Bozier's website **http://www.nswrail.net/**

  http://www.nswrail.net/lines/show.php?name=NSW:rogans_hill

- Computers, internet connection
- Google Maps.

Assessment

Informally assess students on their ability to understand instructions on how to enter latitude and longitude into Google Maps. Assess their ability to identify how the station may have been oriented at the location given and the depth of their understanding of how change has occurred.

Background information

A steam tramway opened between Parramatta and Baulkham Hills in 1902, and was extended to Castle Hill in 1910, carrying passengers and produce to and from the area. In 1919, the NSW Government decided to convert the tramway into a railway to encourage the subdivision of estates for residential use. The new section between Westmead and Northmead was built in 1922, and the line opened to traffic to Castle Hill in 1923. It was extended to Rogans Hill in 1924. The line was single track throughout, and ran alongside Windsor and Old Northern roads between Northmead and Castle Hill. It was closed on 1 February 1932.

Web links

⊕

https://maps.google.com.au

A link to the most likely location of each station is given in the table on page 146. Students can type the latitude and longitude into Google Maps. For example:

Rogans Hill Station location: -33.72396, +151.01961

When entering latitude and longitude into Google Maps, it should be in the following order: latitude, longitude (separated by a comma). Do not forget the minus sign that precedes the latitude.

Alternatively, using the digital version of this file, click on the links provided. The following link, for example, will immediately show the map location in close-up view.

https://maps.google.com.au/maps?q=-33.72396,+151.01961&z=18

Syllabus links

Geography K–10

Geography Stage 4 – Interconnections

– the way transportation and information and communication technologies are used to connect people to services, information and people in other places

(GE4–2) describes processes and influences that form and transform places and environments

(GE4–3) explains how interactions and connections between people, places and environments result in change

(GE4–7) acquires and processes geographical information by selecting and using geographical tools for inquiry.

Geography Stage 5 – Changing places

– the causes and consequences of urbanisation

(GE 5–2) explains processes and influences that form and transform places and environments

(GE5–3) analyses the effect of interactions and connections between people, places and environments

(GE5–7) acquires and processes geographical information by selecting and using appropriate and relevant geographical tools for inquiry.

Learning experiences

Students use Google Maps to identify each location on the satellite image and find what is there now. Discuss the likely orientation of the platform and rail line.

Students draw a map and attempt to connect the stations using the existing roads as a guide. They should be aware that almost no evidence remains today of the actual rail line, so it is a speculative exercise. There is no known 'correct' answer.

Station name	Approximate latitude and longitude
Westmead Junction	-33.8081,+150.9865
Mons Road	-33.8026,+150.9831
Northmead	-33.7914,+150.9971
Moxham Road	-33.7859,+150.9954
Model Farms Road	-33.7772,+150.9996
Junction Road	-33.7672,+150.9975
Baulkham Hills	-33.7614,+150.9932
Cross Street	-33.7525,+150.9943
Southleigh	-33.7437,+150.9986
Parsonage Lane	-33.7383,+151.0011
Castle Hill	-33.7314,+151.0083
Rogans Hill	-33.72396,+151.01961

The table above shows the most likely locations of the Rogans Hill Line stations.

Figure 25: Model Farms Road. Copyright Google Maps 2018. A platform and loop siding were located just to the south of the intersection with Model Farms Road. The location is now the Model Farms Siding Reserve. The park probably encompasses the loading/unloading area. The location is latitude -33.7772, longitude: +150.9996.

Background information

This simple mapping exercise can be extended by 'virtually visiting' the sites, using Google Street View, or actually visiting the sites and photographing them.

The latitudes and longitudes of the locations given below are 'best guesses'.

The following information is principally compiled from Rolfe Bozier's website NSWRail.net

http://www.nswrail.net/lines/show.php?name=NSW:rogans_hill

Rogans Hill Line station locations

Westmead Junction opened 28 January 1923, closed 31 January 1932.

The Line began here.

Location map: https://maps.google.com.au/maps?q=-33.8081,+150.9865&z=18

Mons Road opened 28 January 1923, closed 1 February 1932.

Mons Road was a platform situated near the intersection of Mons Road and Old Windsor Road. It opened with the Line.

Location map: https://maps.google.com.au/maps?q=-33.8026,+150.9831&z=18

What's left?

The bridge over Toongabbie Creek between Mons Road and Northmead Stations – two sandstone piers remain at the bridge site. The steel girder superstructure had been removed before 1943.

Northmead opened as Woollen Mills 28 January 1923, renamed Northmead 1 August 1923, closed 1 February 1932.

Situated adjacent to the intersection of Briens Road and Windsor Road, this platform opened with the Line with the name 'Woollen Mills'. It was renamed in 1923.

Location map: https://maps.google.com.au/maps?q=-33.7914,+150.9971&z=18

Moxham Road opened 28 January 1823, closed 1 February 1932.

A wooden platform located on the western side of Windsor Road, at the northern side of the intersection of Moxham Road.

Location map: https://maps.google.com.au/maps?q=-33.7859,+150.9954&z=18

Model Farms Road opened as Model Farms Road 28 January 1923, renamed Model Farms 1 February 1923, closed 1 February 1932.

A platform and loop siding located just to the south of the intersection with Model Farms Road. The location is now the Model Farms Siding Reserve.

Location map: **https://maps.google.com.au/maps?q=-33.7772,+150.9996&z=18**

What's left?

The park probably encompasses the loading/unloading area as it is some way below the former track level.

Junction Road opened 28 January 1923, closed 1 February 1932.

A wooden platform and shed located just to the south of the Windsor Road intersection with Junction Road.

Location map: **https://maps.google.com.au/maps?q=-33.7672,+150.9975&z=18**

Baulkham Hills opened 28 January 1923, closed 1 February 1932.

A platform and crossing loop located between Railway Road and Old Northern Road. The location is now a car park, a small park and a bowling green.

Location map: **https://maps.google.com.au/maps?q=-33.7614,+150.9932&z=18**

What's left?

There is evidence of the cutting where the rail line left the road alignment and passed through what is now the bowling club.

Cross Street opened 28 January 1923, closed 1 February 1932.

A platform located opposite the intersection with Cross Street.

Location map: **https://maps.google.com.au/maps?q=-33.7525,+150.9943&z=18**

Southleigh opened as Excelsior Avenue 28 January 1923, renamed Southleigh, June 1923, closed 1 February 1932.

A platform located just to the north of the intersection with Excelsior Avenue.

Location map: **https://maps.google.com.au/maps?q=-33.7437,+150.9986&z=18**

Parsonage Lane opened December 1923, closed 1 February 1932.

A platform located just to the north of the intersection with Parsonage Road.

Location map: **https://maps.google.com.au/maps?q=-33.7383,+151.0011&z=18**

Castle Hill opened 28 January 1923, closed 1 February 1932.

The original terminus, which consisted of a platform and a pair of sidings located between Old Castle Hill Road and the Old Northern Road. The location is now the Castle Hill Park.

Location map: **https://maps.google.com.au/maps?q=-33.7314,+151.0083&z=18**

Rogans Hill opened 24 November 1924, closed 1 February 1932.

This was located close to the intersection of Castle Hill Road and the Old Northern Road.

Location map: **https://maps.google.com.au/maps?q=-33.72396,+151.01961&z=18**

What's left?

The station site now has unit blocks built on it, although one section of formation on approach to the station is still discernible as a driveway.

"In 1921 Strang's Garthowen Estate was subdivided and an auction sale held on 9 April. The NSW Government Railways acquired the park site for construction of the Castle Hill Railway Station. From 1910 a tramway had operated from the Woollen Mills to Castle Hill. This was converted to a railway with the Castle Hill Station opened on 28 January 1923 and an extension to Rogans Hill opened on 24 November 1924. Castle Hill Railway Station was not manned so the junior porter sold tickets on the steam train. Due to financial difficulties and increased vehicle traffic on the roads, the railway was closed on 31 January 1932. By June 1934 all tracks had been removed. The site became Castle Hill Park. A new plaque commemorating the railway was erected in Heritage Week April 2002. There is also an old railway signal from the era."

Source: **http://www.thehills.nsw.gov.au/Library/Library-e-Resources/Hills-Voices-Online/Heritage-Sites/Arthur-Whitling-Castle-Hill-Park**

Teacher reference and extension work

The following passage about the closure of the Rogans Hill to Parramatta Line during the Great Depression provides an insight into the growth of car traffic and roads in the North West Region.

This source can be used in diverse teaching-learning contexts and as a discussion starter.

> ## Railway Losses
>
> ### Westmead to Rogans Hill line
>
> Fearing that the Government may decide to remove the railway line from Parramatta to Rogans Hill, the Baulkham Hills Shire Council has appealed to the Blacktown Shire Council and the Holroyd Council for support in opposing any such move.
>
> In a letter to the Shire Council, the Minister for Railways (Mr. Stevens) said that the loss on the operation of the line In 1923 was £12,593. This loss had steadily increased yearly, and it had now reached £27,203.
>
> "In these circumstances the service cannot be continued long unless there is a guarantee of increased public support," Mr. Stevens wrote "It seems that the remedy is with the residents of the district served, who are at present patronising motor services to the detriment of the railway. I propose, however, to take up with the Commissioners the question of continuing the service for the time being, and to have the whole of the question reviewed in the light of the results of the current year's workings."
>
> The letter added that one of the main reasons for the construction of the line was to provide fruit growers with adequate facilities to enable them to forward their products to market. With the development of motor traffic and the provision of good roads, the fruit was to a considerable extent being forwarded direct to Sydney by road, and the department had lost the major portion of the traffic anticipated. In addition, there had been a considerable falling-off in the passenger traffic.

Source: The *Sydney Morning Herald*, Thursday 12 December 1929.

http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/16609515

Discussion questions

- How much did the rail line lose in 1923?
- How much did the rail line lose in 1929?
- What was the main reason the rail line was opened?
- What did Mr Stevens, the Minister of Railways in 1929, conclude was one of the primary reasons for the falling-off of railway traffic?
- What historical travel patterns may have had an impact in the area?

First look at Bella Vista Station, October 2018.