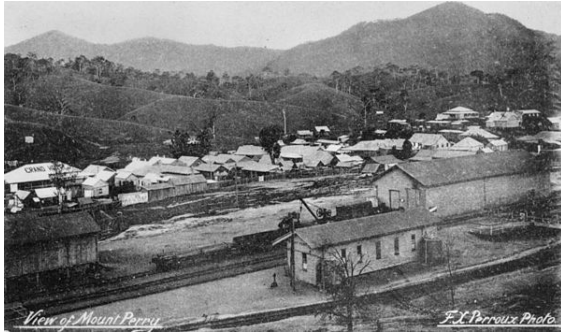


# Mount Perry railway line



Mount Perry railway station and town in 1907



Rail Motor 1901 at Gin Gin Station, ~1989



A photo of Mt Perry station, published in 1925, that appears to be from ~1910



RM 1901 crossing the Splitters Creek bridge ~1989



Bundaberg Station in 1882

The **Mount Perry Branch Railway** is a closed railway line in Central Queensland, Australia. In 1869 copper was discovered at Mount Perry in the Bundaberg region of Queensland, Australia and the township grew rapidly.

A railway to the coast was essential to provide cheap transport and make the mining of low percentage ore viable. **Maryborough** and **Bundaberg** vied for the opportunity to be the terminus and the latter city was successful.

## 1 Survey

A survey dated 20 March 1875 proposed a line from North Bundaberg, thus avoiding an expensive bridge over the Burnett River, west to Gin Gin and then via the old road and telegraph route to Moolboolaman but still some distance short of Mount Perry. There were delays in gaining official approval for the line to the extent that, when Parliament finally approved construction, mining at Mount Perry was substantially curtailed.

## 2 Opening

The first 65 kilometre section from North Bundaberg (originally called Bundaberg station) to Moolboolaman opened on 19 July 1881 and stops were established at Oakwood, Sharon, Manoo, Bingera, Birthamba, Koolboo, Goondoon, Hilo, Bullyard, Tagon, Maroondan, Upping, McIlwraith, Gin Gin, Tookie, Watawa, Tirroan, Guragila and Daysford. Construction of the first stage predated the completion of the **North Coast line** from Maryborough to Bundaberg by some seven years and it was only then that Bundaberg station was renamed North Bundaberg.

## 3 Extensions

There followed extensions to Gillen's Siding opened on 15 August 1882, then via Goyan and Ellimatta to Boolboonda opened on 12 November 1883, and lastly via Wonbah, Wolca and Drummer's Creek to Mount Perry opened on 20 May 1884. A feature of the last stage of the line was construction of the **Boolboonda Tunnel**. Excavated a distance of 192 metres through solid rock, the tunnel is the longest unsupported tunnel in the southern hemisphere. Completion of the final stage meant that a service leaving Mount Perry at 7.30am took 4 ½ hours to reach Bundaberg before departing at 3.00 pm for the return journey.

## 4 Locomotives



*For information, see text*

Information about locomotives is sketchy. The locomotive pictured on the right was apparently used from 1881 to 1890. The description of the photo reads:

“Steam locomotive with a group of men gathered around it, ca. 1880 This locomotive has a plate on the side of the cabin with

the words 'Railway Works Ipswich Queensland 1877' inscribed. The locomotive was built at Ipswich Railway Workshops in 1877. It was known as an A10 class steam locomotive (or an **Ipswich A10**). It ran on the southern and western railway, as Locomotive 36, until 1881 when it operated on the Bundaberg Railway. In 1890 it was sold to contractors building part of the Bundaberg - Gladstone railway and in 1892 sold again to Young Brothers of Fairymead Mill, Bundaberg. It was used initially on trains at Avonside, then at the mill at North Bundaberg. Its boiler exploded at Avondale in the early 1890s. In 1935 it was replaced by a locomotive purchased from Mount Lyall in Tasmania but its remains were not disposed of until 1951.”

## 5 Traffic

Two trains a week operated after the Moolboolaman opening but a rapid rise in timber transport necessitated three trains a week in 1883 and daily services in 1884. **Sugar cane** traffic increased quickly when a mill was opened at Bingera in 1885. Although mining activities dwindled, timber transport took over to some degree until copper mining again became viable in the early 1900s. Until then, the line ran at a loss but high copper prices saw large scale mining return to Mount Perry and provide the railway and town with a new lease of life.

## 6 Accident



*Railway carriages derailed at Gillen Siding on the Mount Perry branch line, 1924*

A fatal accident resulted after a derailment near Gillen's Siding early on Sunday 17 February 1924. The train was on an excursion from Mount Perry to Bargara. Two people died in the incident which was apparently caused by excessive speed.

## 7 Closure

Transportation of timber, sugar and dairy products continued until it became uneconomical for the service to continue. The line closed in stages – from Mount Perry to Tirroan (just west of Gin Gin) on 31 October 1960, from Tirroan to Gin Gin in 1988, Gin Gin station on 17 January 1992 and the line to North Bundaberg on 16 January 1993.

## 8 Heritage

### Station and museum

About 1994, North Bundaberg station building was relocated some 500 metres west to the opposite side of the track and is now part of the Bundaberg Railway Museum.<sup>[1]</sup>

### Listed bridge

Although avoiding a bridge over the Burnett River, the route could not avoid a crossing of Splitters Creek, a Burnett tributary located a short distance to the west. This imposing heritage listed structure towers high over the creek and features steel rods which link the trestles to provide extra strength.

## 9 Heritage listings

Splitters Creek has a number of heritage-listed sites, including:

- Bundaberg - Mount Perry Line: Splitters Creek Railway Bridge<sup>[2]</sup>

## 10 Industrial railways

Industrial railways (tramways) transported goods, such as sugar cane, from the production area to the main line.<sup>[3]</sup> Some of the industrial locomotives have been preserved at the Botanical Gardens Railway, Bundaberg.<sup>[4]</sup>

## 11 See also

- Construction of Queensland railways

## 12 References

[1] Bundaberg Railway Museum. Queensland's Rail Heritage.

[2] "Splitters Creek Railway Bridge (entry 15304)". *Queensland Heritage Register*. Queensland Heritage Council. Retrieved 2013-07-07.

[3] A.C. Lyn Zelmer. Cane Tram Notes #5: Bundaberg Fowler Steam Locomotives.

[4] Botanical Gardens Railway. Collections Australia Network. Commonwealth of Australia.

## 13 Further reading

- "Perry's Past - A Centenary History of Perry Shire" by Mervyn Royle 1980
- "Triumph of Narrow Gauge: A History of Queensland Railways" by John Kerr 1990 Boolarong Press, Brisbane

## 14 External links

- Information sheet on Class A10 locomotive
- 1925 map of the Queensland railway system

## 15 Text and image sources, contributors, and licenses

### 15.1 Text

- **Mount Perry railway line** *Source:* [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount\\_Perry\\_railway\\_line?oldid=596743281](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Perry_railway_line?oldid=596743281) *Contributors:* Bearcat, Shiftchange, Kerry Raymond, DI2000, Mattinbgn, GrahamHardy, Biscuittin, Crusoe8181, Jamietw, Mjohns4122 and Ellis678

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