

Kinderan Track to Kanimbla Valley

Brief history of the incline railway

In December 1922 the Chert Road Metal and Timber Company, Limited was formed with a capital of £30,000.⁴ One of the directors was E. A. Williamson of Mount Victoria who also had tried looking for coal in the Grose Valley.

A half-mile (800m) incline railway (similar to the Scenic Railway at Katoomba) was built by March 1925. It may have been 2ft 6in gauge (76.2cm) and the rails were "28lb tee". The operation was run by a "Salisbury 11 x 11 double-cylinder steam winding engine with a double drum and 4,000ft [1,220m] of ¾" steel cable".⁵

The company's facilities were officially opened on Saturday 16th October, 1926 with a "grand carnival".

To establish their operations the company spent £15,000 on the incline, quarry and timber mill. About 20,000 tons of rock was blown out from the cliff. Timber trestles were built: a small 30ft one across the creek adjacent to the base; and another from the cliff down towards the valley — this was 300 to 400 feet long (100 to 130 metres). (Photo p.23.) The railway dropped 850 feet (260m) at an average gradient of 2 in 3.⁶

⁴ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Saturday 30 December, 1922, p.13. Company News.

⁵ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Saturday 10 August 1929, p.23. Auction notices.

⁶ *Light Railways*, No. 63, Vol.XVII, January 1979, Light Railway Research Society of Australia, Article 'Chert' Incline - Mt Victoria - N.S.W., F. John Reid, p.14-17.

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There was a debate during the mid 1920s about the use of chert in roadbuilding. Letters and articles for and against appeared in *The Sydney Morning Herald* from 1924 to 1927.⁷

It seems that those against, won the

day. Within a year of opening, the company was in financial difficulty and tenders were called to purchase the machinery.⁸ (The Blue Mountains Shire also had a chert quarry at Victoria Pass which suffered a similar fate.)

A short while later an attempt was made to form a new company, Mountain Industrials, to take over the operations.⁹ This must have failed as on Tuesday 13th August 1929 everything was auctioned on site.¹⁰

The trestles were destroyed by bushfire on Tuesday 5th February 1952. This fire started above Centennial Glen.

⁷ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 June 1924, p.6 letter; 26 June 1924, p.4 article; 26 January 1927, p.8 letter; 19 February 1927, p.16 article.

⁸ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 October 1927, p.9 Tenders.

⁹ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 November 1927, p.19 Company news.

¹⁰ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Tuesday 13 August 1929, p.8 Auctions.



Trestle support timbers were cemented into holes gouged in the cliff.