

# Moreton Sugar Mill: Maroochy River Depot and Bridge

CaneSIG photos by Lynn Zelmer at LocoShed's *Maroochy Twilight*, 26 September 2003



Members of the LocoShed e-mail discussion group gathered at Nambour during the week of 22 Sep 03 to document the last year of Moreton Sugar Mill's tram line operation. The mill had been crushing for some weeks with weekend operation but this is expected to be the last year of operation for the mill.

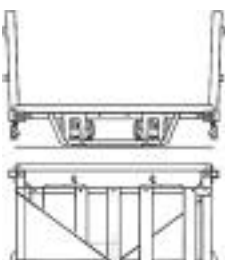


Shift change, 0700 hrs 26 Sep 03, at the Mill. Note the wood fire in the old oil drum and the pile of newly formed sprags (chocks) with turned handles.



Locomotive Bli-Bli ready to depart for the day's work, 0720 hrs 26 Sep 03. Note the tow rope, end-of-rake markers, etc., as well as the warning lights.

On Friday 26 Sep 03 the group (individuals from NSW, SA and Qld) gathered at the River Depot for a final photo session and BBQ.



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River Depot is located at the end of River Store Road on the south side of the Maroochy River, and is the site of Moreton Mill's last timber lift bridges. The 'depot' consists of a small iron shed—recently burned by vandals—with a sand drying facility which stores but no longer dries engine sand, a disused turning loop, a toilet, and a small smudge fire to keep off 'mossies' while the crew eats their mid-shift meals.



The depot building appears to be of relatively recently construction with horizontal sheets of iron and galvanised corner caps. Inside has been badly burned but it likely contained a single fixed table down the centre (the 'T' support in the photo below likely supported one end of the table).



The wood frame (see interior framing below) building is set on heavy timber supports and has guttering along both sides leading to the water tank. The triangular roof end is [was] timber sheathed but now shows the effect of recent vandalism (see above).



The annex has iron sheeting on three sides only with a drier constructed of a mix of untreated and galvanised iron. A small amount of clean sand was piled inside the building but there was no evidence of recent firing of the drier.



The lift section is raised by hand using a simple chain harness and permits boats to pass along the river. Concrete weights are attached to each corner and help keep the lift section more or less horizontal when being raised or lowered, although old photos sometimes show the lift section hanging at odd angles.





The lift section drops onto solid timbers as rails are guided into place (see inset below). The harness is then disconnected from the lift section and raised back up into the top of the bridge structure to clear the top of locomotives.



Bridge down for rail traffic.



Other photos of Moreton Mill trains crossing the bridge can be found on the CaneSIG web site—use ‘bridge’, ‘lift bridge’ or ‘River Depot’ (without the quotes) as a search term.

Basic modelling dimensions for both the bridge and the depot building should be available later this year in a revision of this brief note.

Happy Modelling,

**Lynn Zelmer, 30/9/03**



Moreton Mill's sugar cane tram lines (red), QR Brisbane to Cairns main line (green), and some representative roads (brown).

The mill is located near Nambour's CBD and is accessed via a line down the middle of Howard Street. The Howard Street yard provides storage for both full and empty bins as well as serving as a truck-rail transfer point.

The River Depot lift bridge provides the only rail link to the northern cane fields while a shared use bridge at Bli Bli provides access to the coastal area cane fields.