

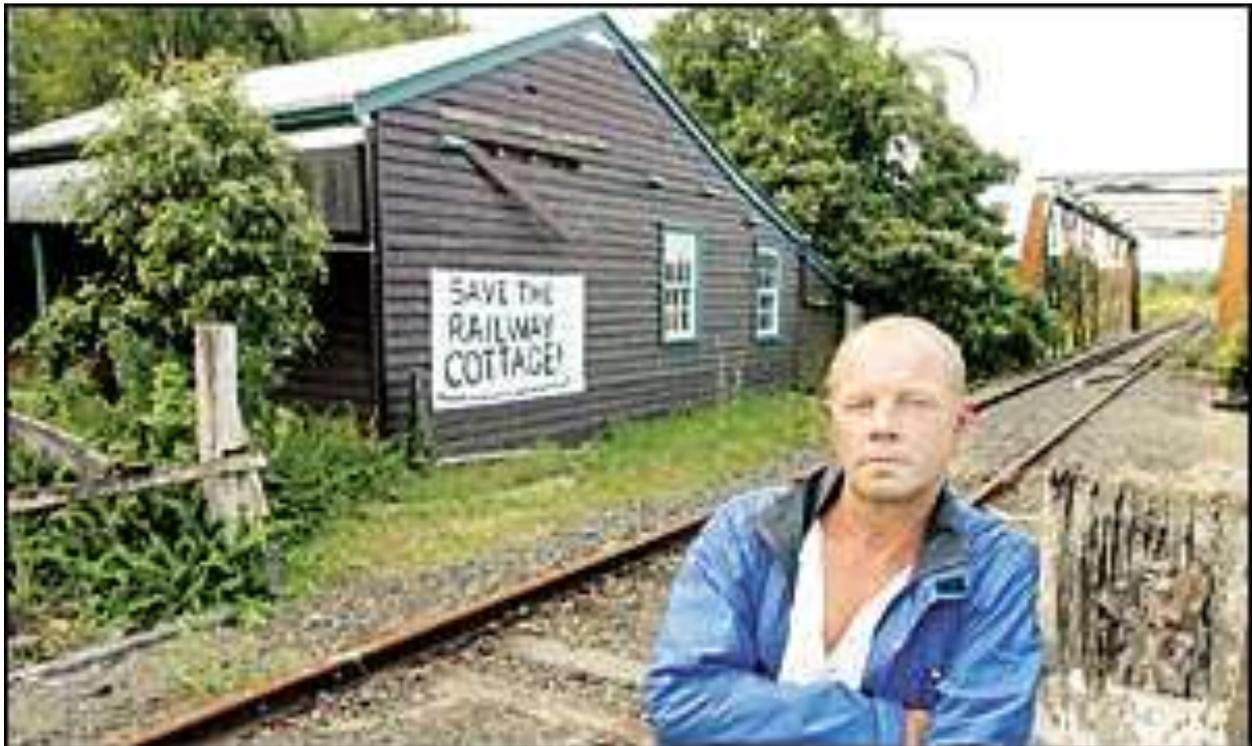
# Scrapbook: Eltham Railway Cottage

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**Northern Star**

## Support for community icon

22nd Apr 2006 8:00 AM



**FINE MEMORIES:** The last resident in the Eltham railway cottage Craig Pearson is devastated by the news that his former home may

By NERIDA BLOK

[nblok@northernstar.com.au](mailto:nblok@northernstar.com.au)

**CRAIG PEARSON** is crushed the Railway Cottage at Eltham may soon be demolished.

The former railway worker said he'd lived in the iconic cottage since 1981 and had raised his family there.

"It's the only place I ever lived in outside my mum and dads," he said.

"I'm devastated."

Mr Pearson said Rail Corp had paid him out for the cottage last year and he now rented elsewhere in the village.

"They said it was a contaminated site with red lead and arsenic in the soil, supposedly," he said.

"I had no real choice. We fought Rail Corp for 12 months with no luck."

Yesterday, Mr Pearson said he'd heard Public Works were looking to demolish the cottage 'within the next week'.

"This house is part of the village," he said. "You don't want to see places like this bloody well pulled down. It's a landmark."

An Eltham resident and descendent of original settlers of the village in 1871, James Payne, said he was alarmed at the demolition rumours.

"It's an historic building that sets the tone for Eltham," he said.

Mr Payne said residents of the village were also concerned about the lack of any community consultation over its potential demolition.

Franki Taylor of Eltham said she was saddened by the news.

"It's one of the few icons we've got left here," Ms Taylor said. "People come and have their wedding photos in front of it."

Geneveva Hooper from the Eltham Gallery agreed.

"It would be an absolute travesty," she said. "It's the heart of the village. It would make a fabulous tourism information centre."

Ms Hooper said residents had contacted local councillors, State Rail and local MP's to save the cottage.

Rail Corp staff were not able to make any comment on the issue when contacted yesterday.

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**Northern Star**

## **Close call for cottage Quick action by protesters averts Eltham demolition**

13th May 2006 8:00 AM



STANDING FIRM: Eltham residents yesterday confronted a contractor hired to demolish the town's historic Railway Cottage. The bu

By WILL JACKSON

[will.jackson@northernstar.com.au](mailto:will.jackson@northernstar.com.au)

WHEN James Payne saw a big yellow excavator parked next to Eltham's Railway Cottage on Thursday afternoon, he knew something was afoot.

Rumours had circulated that Rail Corp was to knock down the historic structure, and it seemed yesterday was the day.

A frantic call around resulted in a dozen unlikely activists facing the looming machine about 7am yesterday. Minutes later, the massive scoop made quick work of two nearby structures - a pump house and outhouse - and it seemed like the cottage was next, and perhaps the protesters with it.

But some desperate negotiations with Lismore City Council and Rail Corp brought the demolition to a halt - for the time being at least.

An Eltham resident, and descendent of original settlers of the village in 1871, Mr Payne is seeking an interim heritage listing for the building.

If and when that's done, he and other residents hope to form a community foundation to raise enough money to bring the building back up to scratch.

"It's essential that we retain the cottage because it's the last vestige of Eltham's strong association with the railway," he said.

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# Residents save railway cottage (for now)

18th May 2006 12:00 AM



Eltham residents Lesley Schreiber (left) and Genevera Hoover and outside the Eltham Railway Cottage, which they have saved from demolition last week and now hope to see preserved.

When Eltham residents Genevera Hoover and Lesley Schreiber saw a bulldozer trundle into the village last Thursday on dusk, they knew something was afoot. When the two women discovered the bulldozer had been brought in by the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) to demolish the Eltham railway cottage, they leapt into action, rallying around 30 residents to stand in its way on Friday morning.

The group immediately called Lismore City Council, who revoked the demolition order they had previously served to the ARTC, temporarily saving it from destruction.

This whole thing has been sprung on us so quickly we want to save the building and the entire community is behind us, Genevera said. Its been standing since 1894 its a local icon and the heart of our little village. It may not look like much, but it holds an enormous amount of history.

Lismore Council has set up a meeting with the ARTC next Tuesday, May 23, to discuss the future of the building. Councils director of development and governance, Lindsay Walker, says he hopes to see it saved and understands the community has lots of ideas for its use.

Hopefully we can get an outcome that will save the historical core of the cottage, he said. Its an element of rail infrastructure thats no longer replicated and sits well within a small village environment. It adds to the fabric of the village.

Council, who says the cottage is in a dilapidated state and has been badly vandalised, have now fenced the building for safety reasons.

Concerned Eltham residents have been busy establishing the Eltham Foundation, which will explore ways to preserve the cottage.

It could be a tourist information centre, a railway museum, a coffee shop or simply left as it is whatever happens we want to see it restored, Genevera said. It would be an absolute crime if it was pulled down.

An ARTC representative was unavailable for comment at the time of going to press.

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## Railway cottage future uncertain

25th May 2006 12:00 AM

Despite Lismore City Council going into bat for local residents to save the Eltham railway cottage, locals will have to wait for a decision from the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) on the fate of the building.

Lismore City Council is encouraging local residents to engage with the ARTC and explore options for the building now while its future is still under consideration.

The ARTC said they are now talking about the issue with Rail Corp, who own the land, and are awaiting a response. Keep an eye on The Echo for further developments.

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## Eltham Railway Cottage demolition DA

6th Jul 2006 12:00 AM

Eltham Railway Cottage demolition DA

The Australian Rail Track Corporation has lodged a development application (DA) with Lismore Council for demolition of the old Eltham Railway Cottage, despite vehement opposition from the local community.

The Eltham Foundation, which was established by local residents recently to develop an action plan to save the cottage, will meet next Tuesday, July 11, at the Eltham Friendly Inn from 6.30pm.

People have until July 21 to make objections to the DA.

Council computers up for grabs

Lismore Council is getting an IT upgrade, which means surplus computers and faxes are generously being given away to not-for-profit groups.

Anyone groups interested need to apply by August 11. Forms are available at Council offices, on the website at [www.lismore.nsw.gov.au](http://www.lismore.nsw.gov.au), or phone the Customer Contact Centre on 6625 0500.

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## Fate of railway cottage to be decided

9th Nov 2006 1:00 AM

Fate of railway cottage to be decided in May following a huge community outcry. However, the stay of execution has been short-lived and a report to Tuesday's meeting recommends that development consent be issued for demolition. Archival recording of the building and its immediate environs is a requirement of consent. Remediation work to counteract soil contamination will also be required. The Eltham community has stated in its submission to Council that the demolition of the cottage would be a loss to the village and have a negative social impact on the community. The Council report notes that the applicant Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) was asked to comment on the Heritage significance of Eltham railway cottage. The response was that the cottage was of relatively low significance. In addition ARTC states that if the local community wants the cottage retained it should clearly indicate how to fund restoration work and future maintenance as well as show how any future use will be economically viable and self-sustaining.

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# Residents on right track

16th Nov 2006 9:00 AM



THAT'S THE TICKET: Thrilled about the Eltham railway cottage decision are local residents (from left) Franki Taylor and her dog

By JAMIE BROWN and MARY MANN

staredit@northernstar.com.au

ELTHAM resident Jan Maxwell is overjoyed that the old railway cottage has been saved from demolition.

On Tuesday night Lismore City Council unanimously backed her community in refusing Rail Corp's development application to demolish the village's historic cottage.

Residents attended the council meeting expecting the worst.

But Mrs Maxwell said she never expected a unanimous vote in the village's favour.

Cr Jenny Dowell said she had seen a list from residents on all the things they'd done in an effort to keep the cottage.

"They should be congratulated," she said.

"It's an important thing for the community and by refusing the DA we're showing that we support the community."

The next step for Eltham residents is to find out the extent of repairs required to turn the original core of the cottage ? not its later additions ? into community space, perhaps a museum.

Critical to that first step is the public release of Rail Corp's report into the state of the cottage, which evidently states that \$100,000 in remediation is required to save the building, including remediation of contaminated soil.

Mrs Maxwell said independent estimates, using volunteer labour, put the bill closer to \$40,000.

However, residents have not been able to see Rail Corp's report, which could save money in unnecessary consultants fees.

Meanwhile, the Australian Rail Track Corporation, which is representing Rail Corp, declined to comment.

"Until we can see what it is we supposedly can't afford to do, we really don't know what to do to save the cottage," Mrs Maxwell said.

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## **Eltham railway cottage moves with the times**

14th May 2008 12:00 AM

The Eltham railway cottage, which was saved from demolition in 2005 by local residents and Lismore City Council, will have to be relocated if residents want it to remain a historical feature of the village.

On Tuesday members of the Eltham Foundation met with a representative of the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC), who said the Environmental Protection Authority had deemed pollutant levels so high on the current site that the cottage is unfit for residential, industrial or commercial use.

However, the ARTC suggested the building could be moved and refurbished once its on a new site.

It turns out that in the village itself there is a site that used to be occupied by a church that was relocated many years ago, and it is owned by Lismore City Council, Eltham Foundation president John Maxwell said. This is a site we could move it to if Council is co-operative and I have no doubt they'll try to accommodate us as they have been very much on our side in the past.

The cottage was to be demolished by the ARTC in May 2005 but an outcry from local residents prompted Council to step in and save the cottage, giving residents an opportunity to negotiate with the ARTC about preserving the iconic building.

The ARTC will now report back to the Eltham Foundation on costs involved in the relocation and the group then plans to approach Council to discuss use of their land.

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## Future of Eltham Railway Cottage?

12th Nov 2009 10:21 AM

Eltham Community Foundation is urging anyone who feels passionate about the preservation of the Eltham Railway Cottage to make their opinions known in a survey that was recently distributed.

Foundation member Wayne Cameron said they are looking for ideas on future uses for the cottage, which was slated for demolition, with the most popular ideas being put in a proposal to the State Rail Authority.

“We have to have a definite use identified in order to secure the lease,” he said. “People can make their own suggestions or choose from the alternatives we’ve outlined – things like a community centre or a tourist information centre.”

The surveys are due back by November 23 and can be dropped off at the Eltham Village Gallery or emailed to [wayne\\_c@westnet.com.au](mailto:wayne_c@westnet.com.au).

For information, phone Mr Cameron on 6629 1476

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## Saving Eltham Railway Cottage

Liina Flynn | 15th Jul 2010 12:46 PM



Liz Gibbs is fighting to save the Eltham Railway Cottage.

Four years ago, when the Eltham Village community saw a bulldozer ready to knock down the historic railway cottage, they picketed together and saved the building from being demolished. After years of campaigning to have the cottage listed as a heritage site, members of the Eltham Community Foundation are now trying to get the historic building listed on the new Local Environment Plan (LEP) for the Lismore area.

Liz Gibbs, the convenor of the Eltham Heritage Committee, is encouraging as many people as possible to make a submission to Council to have the cottage listed on the LEP as a heritage building.

At a village meeting in Eltham on Tuesday night, 60 community members came together to discuss what could be done to protect it into the future.

“We’ve been battling the red tape and bureaucracy for a long time now,” Liz said. “We haven’t been able to make headway because the LEP was set in place. Now we are getting a new LEP we have a chance to protect the building and Eltham precinct by getting them listed as heritage.”

Liz said that the cottage was built in 1894 out of timber taken from the Big Scrub and was historically important.

“It’s living history,” Liz said. “It was initially used as a gate keeper’s cottage and Mary Stewart was the first person to live there; she was also the post mistress for Eltham and her husband was the platform attendant.”

Liz said that the rail line through Eltham used to be called ‘the railway to nowhere’.

“The line here was the only rail line not connected to the large network and was important because the farmers in the local area needed to get their produce out by rail. People even used to bring the cream here from Rosebank and Clunes to get it onto the train. When the rail line was built, Eltham was the base camp and it became an important village in the local area. The railway has created the human geography of our area; the towns here have been formed around the rail network.”

Liz said that getting the village of Eltham listed as a heritage area was important because it was one of the few intact turn-of-the-century villages.

“There is no development here like in Bangalow and Clunes – even the main businesses here are in heritage buildings,” Liz said. “By getting it listed on the LEP we are taking the first step toward protecting the railway cottage and precinct as a heritage site. It will mean that the National Trust will list the village and this will open up funding channels for restoration work and help us lobby with the state government.

“We want the building to be a part of our community and be put to community use,” Liz said.

Liz said that at the meeting, local heritage expert Jane Ainsworth came along and gave some tips on how to write submissions to the Council.

She said that future plans for the cottage could include turning it into an information centre and archive museum.

“We are also looking for people who have skills in writing grants to help us secure funding for any future restoration work on the cottage,” Liz said.

Anyone who would like to join the Heritage Committee or write a submission to Council can phone Liz Gibbs on 6629 1654 for advice. Alternatively, you can drop into the Eltham Village Gallery and have a chat with the local proprietor about how you can help. Submissions for the draft LEP close on August 29.

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**Northern Star**

## Railway cottage make over

Ava Benny-Morrison | 14th Sep 2010 2:00 AM



Preserving history: Liz Gibbs a member of the Eltham Heritage Committee is unsure of who was responsible for work on the Eltham railway cottage over the weekend but thinks perhaps it was the elves. Jacklyn Wagner

PEOPLE in Eltham are scratching their heads as they try to figure out whom or what gave the village's cherished railway cottage some much-needed maintenance.

So far the rumour mill suggests the Eltham Elves may have been working their magic.

The 116-year-old railway cottage is not looking as miserable and unkempt as usual, with the garden looking trimmed and previously encroaching trees gone.

The tiny structure also received some weather-proofing, and a window that had been smashed by a rock now boarded up.

The cottage, which sits inside a chain link fence draped with 'danger do not enter' signs, wears a new sign reading: 'I am 116 years old, please save me'.

But no one is owning up to the maintenance work, with only unconfirmed sightings of green and red elves feeding the rumour mill.

The railway cottage has been at the centre of controversy for the past few years, with locals fighting to save the historic structure from demolition.

In 2006, a group of locals lay down in front of a bulldozer to stop the Australian Rail Track Corporation's attempt to flatten the historic building.

Four years on and concerned residents and members of the Eltham Heritage Committee, like Liz Gibbs, are still fighting to have the treasured structure heritage listed and thereby protected.

“What has been going on here is demolition by wilful neglect,” Ms Gibbs said.

“They (the ARTC) are hoping it will fall into such a state no one will be able to retrieve it. Everyone wants to keep the cottage, it's ours and no one else's.

“It is a very important part of our streetscape. Eltham was once one of the busiest railway towns on the Northern Rivers and this is part of our history.”

Ms Gibbs said the town was using the Eltham Community Foundation to fight for the railway cottage, which was hindering their ability to use the resource for other things.

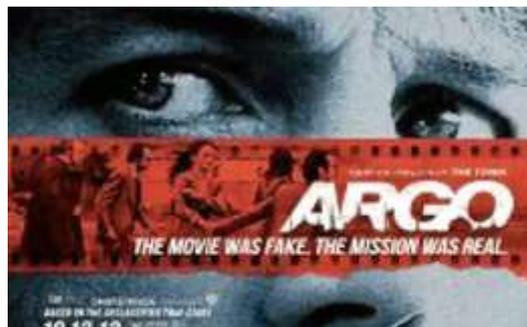
“The community foundation could restore and maintain the heritage buildings and support the local schools with educational opportunities, but it has been hijacked in fighting this battle,” she said.

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## Eltham's community film night is really going off the rails

21st Feb 2013 2:30 PM



THE Eltham Community Foundation will screen its first film for 2013 this Saturday, February 23.

Directed by Ben Affleck, Argo is a dramatisation of a joint CIA-Canadian secret operation to extract six fugitive American diplomatic personnel from revolutionary Iran.

The foundation's film nights have been very well supported and have become its primary fundraising event.

It has been negotiating with NSW Transport to secure a lease on the Eltham Railway Cottage this year. Funds are building and the cottage is in desperate need of some loving attention, so

fingers are crossed that events like this one will put the foundation over the line to obtain this lovely old building for more functions and events. The film starts at 7.30pm and costs \$10, or \$22 for a movie/meal deal.

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**Northern Star**

## Secret' spots on rail trail



Hamish Broome | 23rd Oct 2014 5:57 AM



BEAUTIFUL LINE: Richard White and Rick Stewart are campaigning for the Northern Rivers Rail Trail.  
Mireille Merlet-Shaw

THERE are hundreds of beautiful "secret" spots along the overgrown Casino to Murwillumbah rail line, says rail trail supporter Richard White.

Mr White is one of a handful of people intimately familiar with some of the best sections of the trail.

He has walked from Bentley to Tuncester, Bangalow to Byron, and enjoyed the dramatic Naughtons Gap tunnel near Casino.

What struck him about being on the track was how different an experience it was to driving or riding through the same landscape along the road.

"The amazing thing is, if you are on the track you get away from the road, and it's a really quiet rural landscape," Mr White said.

"It's a totally different perspective."

"And the fact that you will be able to spend the time enjoying your pushbike instead of worrying about traffic, and ride with your children - you won't know yourself."

A few spots stood out as especially memorable for Mr White, and they're all situated at different points along the 123km trail, which boasts a whopping 158 bridges and nine major tunnels.

One is a beautiful stretch around Woodlawn, just five minutes north-east of Lismore on the way to Bexhill, a picture of bucolic rural beauty and rolling hills quite remarkably different from the more densely foliated areas further north in the Tweed Shire.

Then there's the stretch between Bentley to Naughtons Gap, which includes the Naughtons Gap tunnel and several elegant old bridges through another stunning fertile valley.

One unmissable world-beater which may come to define the rail trail's public image is the view from St Helena north over Cape Byron on the rail line between Bangalow and Byron Bay.

In fact, Mr White said anyone could ride the trail from Byron Bay up to Bangalow, such is the gentleness of the gradient.

"It's really good to see the lack of gradient from St Helena going down to Byron Bay. It's minimal," he said.

"The train's taking a totally different route from the road and cuts out all the gradient."

The Burringbar Range between Mooball and Stokers Siding on the way to Murwillumbah introduces some majestic drama to the experience, taking in views over Mt Warning and dense rainforest around Burringbar.

Eltham Station is a quaint historical waypoint on the railway with an old railway cottage, the Eltham Pub, and tennis courts.

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March 20, 2015 by Darren Coyne

## Eltham on track to save historic railway cottage



The Eltham Railway Cottage looks set to be handed over to the community. (File pic)

### **Darren Coyne**

The former Eltham Railway Cottage, slated for destruction in 2006, looks set to be handed back to the community.

The Lismore City Council has agreed to negotiate a lease with Transport NSW with a view to sub-lease the cottage to the Eltham Community Foundation Inc.

The Foundation is hoping the cottage will play ‘a substantial role’ as part of an historic precinct if the proposed rail trail goes ahead.

The cottage is in close proximity to other historic landmarks including the Eltham Gallery, Eltham Friendly Inn, Masonic Hall, tennis courts and other historic built elements, and forms part of the streetscape.

Foundation spokesman John Maxwell told councillors recently that the fight to save the cottage had been ‘a long and frustrating journey’ but ‘we’re pleased to endorse the recommendation.

Mr Maxwell said that while site contamination was a serious issue, the Foundation was confident it could be resolved.

Mr Maxwell was referring to an environmental assessment conducted by State Rail in 2005 which found the site highly contaminated and unsuitable for public access.

The contamination assessment detected elevated concentrations of arsenic, lead and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons.

‘The Eltham community foundation has retained Land, Fire and Assessments to prepare a full site report upon which we will act,’ Mr Maxwell said.

The battle to save the cottage has involved a community survey undertaken by the Foundation in 2009.

That survey found that members of the community wanted the cottage to be used as a combined archive/museum, visitor centre and community centre.

Mr Maxwell said that while there was a certain lack of clarity as to what use would be made of the restored building, ‘hopefully if the rail trail goes through the cottage will play a substantial role’.

When it came time to vote on a recommendation to lease and then sub-lease the cottage to the Foundation (which would pay for remediation of the site), councillors agreed unanimously to support the proposal.