

Luncheon Club: St James to Museum

St James Tunnels



The ABC gong in the first chamber of the proposed Eastern Suburbs Line

Tunnels Under Hyde Park

The tunnels south of St James Station were meant for the Eastern Suburbs Railway. They start off from the station as a double-track tunnel, then change to two single-track tunnels as they start to rise to go over the City Outer track (the track that takes trains from St James to Museum). The line was meant to follow Oxford Street to Bondi Junction with a branch at Taylor Square to the Moore Park area and Randwick. They only reached Hyde Park South (near the War Memorial Pool of Remembrance). This section was constructed at the same time as the line

from Central to St James so that trains would not have to stop when construction recommenced at some future date. However, when the Eastern Suburbs Line finally opened (in 1979), it followed a different route to that planned in the 1920s.

“Cut and cover” was used under most of Hyde Park but “real” tunneling was employed under Park Street.

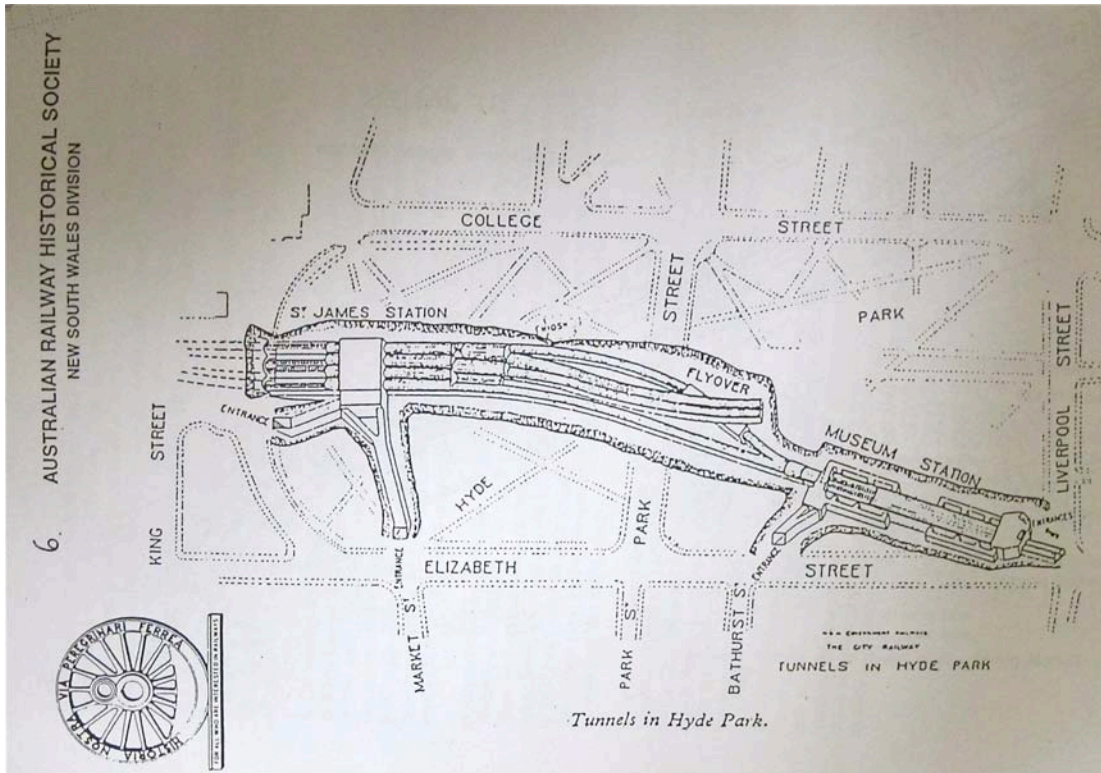
The tunnels were used as air raid shelters during World War II and concrete blast walls were placed across the tunnels to divide them into sections. This was so that a direct hit on one section did not affect those in the other sections. Concrete blast curtains protected “Doorways” between the sections so that the effect of a blast in one section would not go directly into another section. Some of the blast walls were demolished after the war and the rubble covers the floor in one of the single-track tunnels.

The level double-track section had ankle deep water from seepage. The first chamber in this section featured a gong that had been installed by sound effects technicians employed by the ABC. It was for a late night radio programme called “The Listening Room.”

Tree roots from Hyde Park have found weep holes in the base of the walls and invaded part of the single-track tunnels.

Soldiers guarding the air raid shelters wrote graffiti on the walls that included their name, rank and serial number.

The floor of the tunnel is close to the ceiling at the south end and we think this is because a ramp allowed trolleys and perhaps small vehicles to enter the tunnel from Hyde Park.



The tunnels under Hyde Park (Central is to the right).



A disused platform at St James before the concourse was constructed.



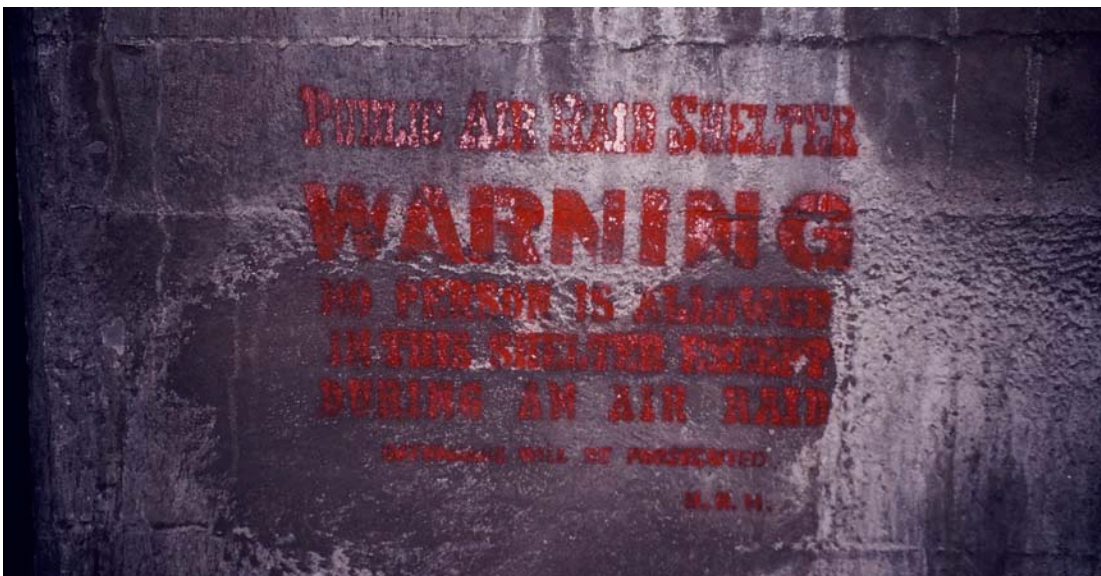
The entrance to the air raid shelter in Hyde Park South.



St James Station under construction looking towards Macquarie Street. St James Church, after which the station was named, is to the left. Note that there was no need to excavate the section where the platforms would be as it would only have to be filled up again!



Starting to recover St James Station. Note how close it is to the surface.



*The sign says: PUBLIC AIR RAID SHELTER
WARNING
NO PERSON IS ALLOWED
IN THIS SHELTER EXCEPT
DURING AN AIR RAID
OFFENDERS WILL BE PROSECUTED*

H.R.H. (His Royal Highness).

Macquarie Street

There are two spare platforms between the platforms that are in use at St James Station. Spare tunnels extend north (as well as south) from these platforms. The spare double-track tunnel north of the station under Macquarie Street was meant for a Western Suburbs Railway to Homebush. Part of the tunnel was used for terminating trains between 1926 and 1956 (when St James was a terminus) and to store trains between 1956 and 1991. There was a small signal box to operate the points and signals involved in this operation.

Tunneling was used under Macquarie Street and bore holes to the surface allowed the dust to be removed and concrete to be poured down from the street. The tunnel descends to go under the City Inner Line, the tunnel that takes trains from St James to Circular Quay. There is a short section of incomplete tunnel between the section that was once used by trains and the section that goes under the City Inner. A low "pilot tunnel" near the ceiling provided access between the two sections. The double-track tunnel under the City Inner contains Lake St James, which is the width of the tunnel and becomes deeper as the tunnel descends. This section was constructed at the same time as the line from Central to St James so that trains would not have to stop when construction recommenced at some future date.

There is a narrow gauge construction railway under the lake and an eel named Eric resides in the water.

The two single-track tunnels between St James and Circular Quay were constructed at the same time during the 1920s but did not reach their potential until Circular Quay Station opened early in 1956. For a short time, Raymond Mas grew mushrooms in the tunnel near the portal at Circular Quay.

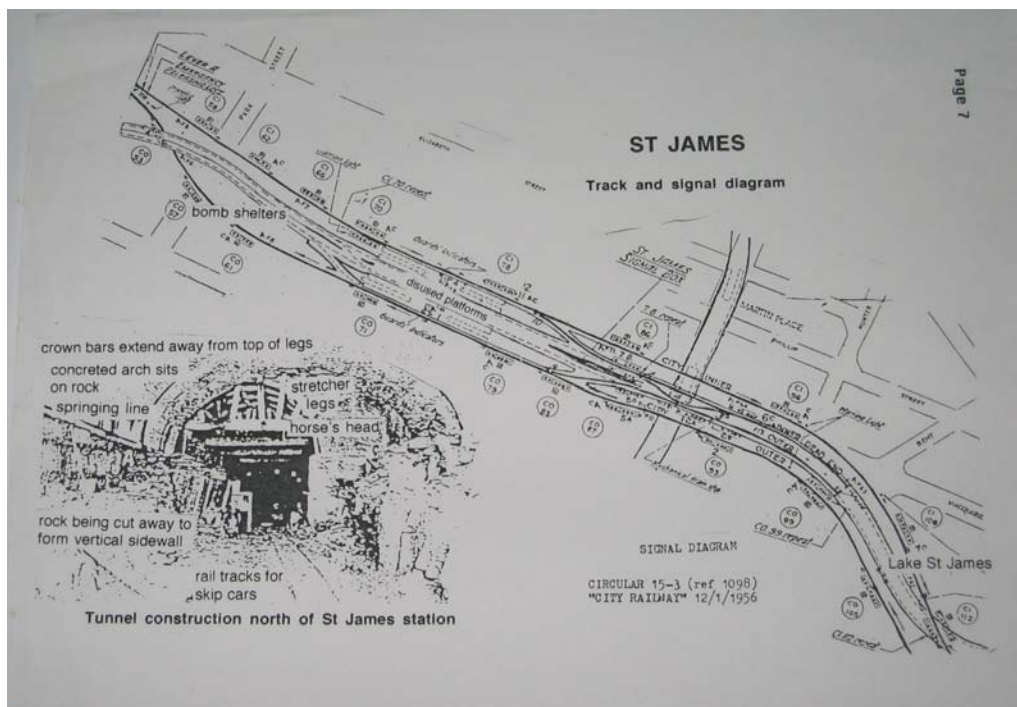
A siding was laid in the City Outer tunnel (that takes trains from Circular Quay to St James) during the 1930s and six trains could be stored between St James and the portal at Circular Quay.



Construction railway under Lake St James.

The City Inner tunnel (that takes trains from St James to Circular Quay) was employed by the anti-aircraft people (RAAF) during World War II. They reached the tunnel via a shaft from Shakespeare Place (outside the Mitchell Library) and via an entrance next to the Conservatorium of Music. The wooden staircase in the shaft was destroyed by fire in 1968.

No. 1 Fighter Sector (RAAF) was formed at Bankstown on 25 February 1942. They commandeered the Capitol Theatre at Bankstown as an operations and plotting facility on 14 March 1942. Operations were handed over to the United States Army Air Corps (USAAC) on 10 April 1942 and they shifted operations to the disused tunnel at St James (City Inner between St James and Circular Quay). On 13 August 1942 the RAAF resumed operations of No. 1 Fighter Sector and they moved back to Bankstown on 7 September 1942. The name changed to No. 101 Fighter Sector (101FS) on 18 October 1943 and No. 101 Fighter Control Unit (101 FCU) on 7 March 1944. They became Air Defence Headquarters Sydney (ADHQ) on 21 January 1945 and moved into a new underground facility at Bankstown (corner of Marion and Edgar Streets) at that time. They were disbanded on 27 January 1947.



Hyde Park section (left) and Macquarie Street section (right).



*The signal box at St James. It was located north of the platforms near Martin Place.
Photo: Bill Laidlaw.*

Museum



Museum Station in the 1970s. Note the stencil indicators. The stations were all listed and a light came on behind those where the next train stopped. Thus, the next train on Platform 2 (left) will follow the Illawarra Line as far as Tempe, then switch to the East Hills Line from Turrella to East Hills. The additional wire along the City Outer track (left) is probably from the emergency crossover that used to exist at the St James end of the station and probably continues past the platform because of the difficulty in finding an anchor point in the arch.



Museum Station under construction looking towards the corner of Liverpool and Elizabeth Streets.



Museum Station under construction looking from the corner of Elizabeth Street and Liverpool Street towards the centre of Hyde Park. The tramway signal box is not at the Sydney Tramway Museum at Loftus.

The pedestrian subway from Museum Station to Castlereagh Street passed through the basement of Mark Foys Department Store. It hasn't changed much since Mark Foys became the Downing Centre.

Other City Railways

Wynyard

Tunnels between Wynyard and the Harbour Bridge were meant for the Waringah Railway. The trains from Platforms 1 and 2 at Wynyard would use these tunnels to reach the two tracks on the eastern side of the Harbour Bridge. There was a station on the eastern side of the road opposite the present Milsons Point Station. The tracks then crossed the road lanes to join the North Shore Line at North Sydney Station. A short section of tunnel north of Platform 2 at North Sydney rises to go over the Up North Shore tracks. It was meant for the Waringah Railway.

Platforms 1 and 2 at Wynyard, the spare tunnels north of Wynyard, the tracks on the eastern side of the Harbour Bridge, the station platforms opposite Milsons Point Station and the bridge over the traffic lanes between Milsons Point and North Sydney were used by trams from 1932 (when the Harbour Bridge Opened) until 1958. The space occupied by Platforms 1 and 2 and Wynyard is now a car park. Part of the tunnels to the Harbour Bridge is used as an exit from

the car park but the sections near the northern portal are used for an air conditioning unit and a pistol shooting range. The tracks on the eastern side of the bridge were converted to additional traffic lanes when the tram system on the north side of the harbour closed down and the bridge over the traffic lanes at Milsons Point was demolished.

Waverton to Lavender Bay

The North Shore Line from Hornsby to St Leonards opened in 1890 and it was extended to the edge of the Harbour at Lavender Bay in 1893. The line was electrified in 1929. Passengers changed into ferries to cross the harbour to Circular Quay. When the Harbour Bridge opened in 1932, the site of the station at Lavender Bay was converted into railway sidings and the line from Waverton to this site is still used by trains that are stabled on these sidings.

Central

There are two disused platforms directly above the underground platforms (24 and 25) that are used by the Illawarra and Eastern Suburbs trains. Known as Platforms 26 and 27, they have never seen a train.



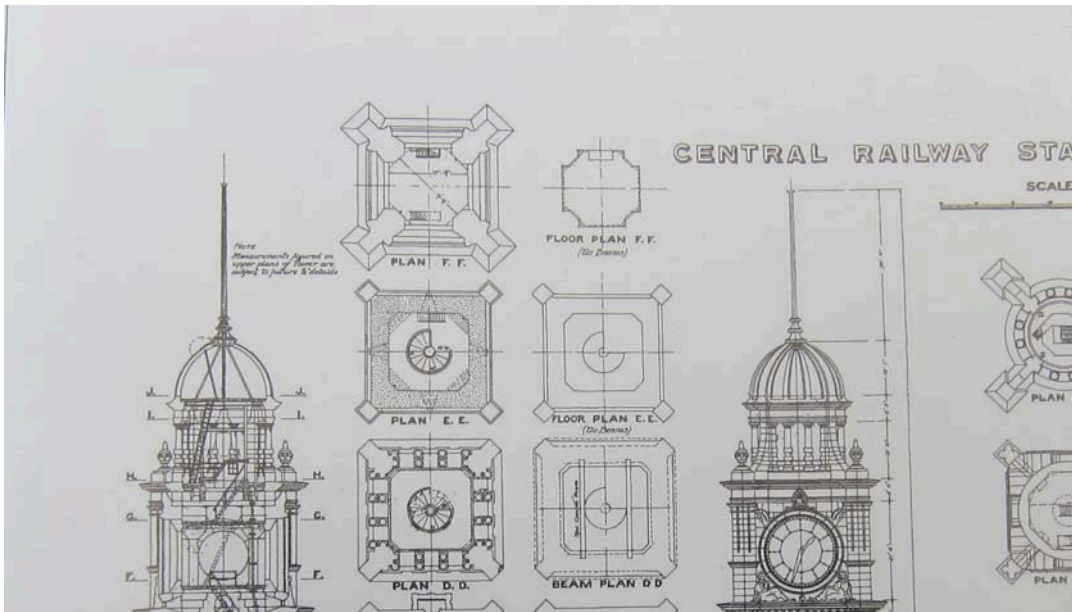
The headline from the Daily Mirror on 17 May 1959. Work began again in 1967 and the line was completed in 1979.



Dr John Bradfield and the Greek columns at the north-eastern entrance to Central Station.



This German railway gun from World War I was captured near Amiens by some victorious Victorian Australians, but it did not suit their gauge: so it went on display on the corner of Eddy Avenue and Chalmers Street from 1920 to 1923.



John Oakes now thinks that we can safely blame the architects for naming the station Central rather than Sydney. Their plans from the beginning were headed Central Railway Station.

Redfern

Plans by Dr JJC Bradfield for a railway to serve the south-eastern suburbs would have included extra platforms at different levels near Platform 10 at Redfern. Space was allowed in this area for the extra platforms and a dive from the underground platforms that would have connected them to the above-ground tracks is evidence of these plans.



The “dive” that would have served trains from the railway to the south-eastern suburbs is located between the Down Illawarra Local track and the Up Illawarra track outside Sydney Signal Box between Redfern Station and the Cleveland Street Bridge. The train is heading towards Central on the Up Illawarra Local track.

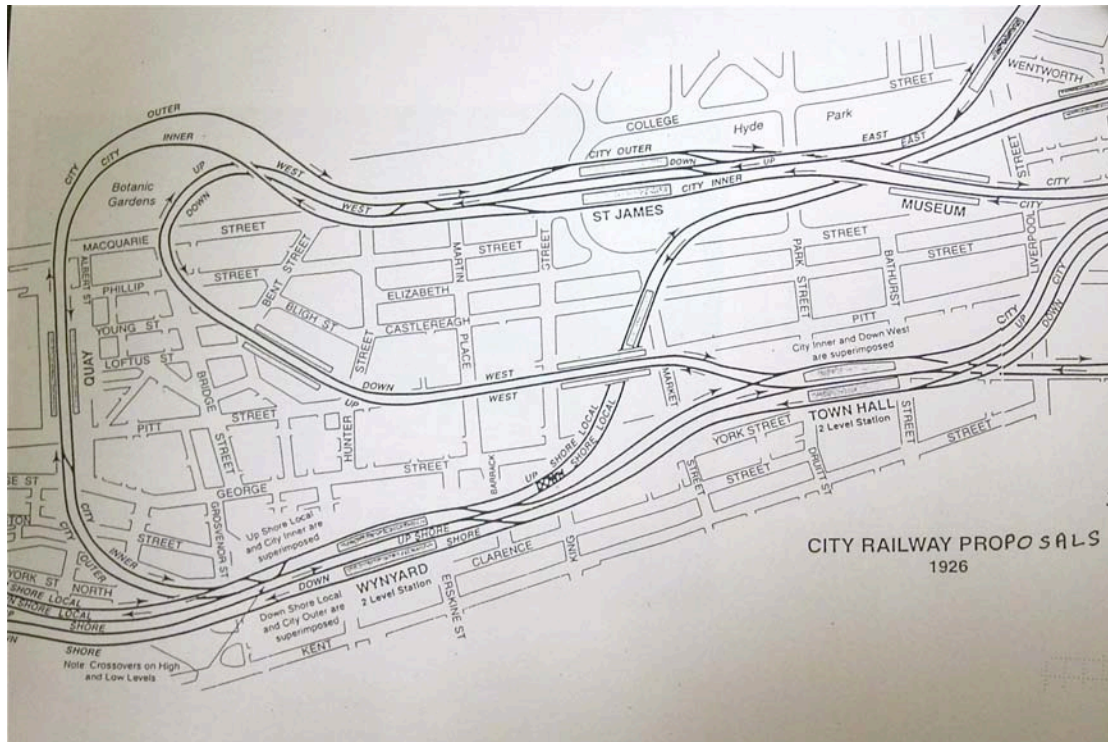
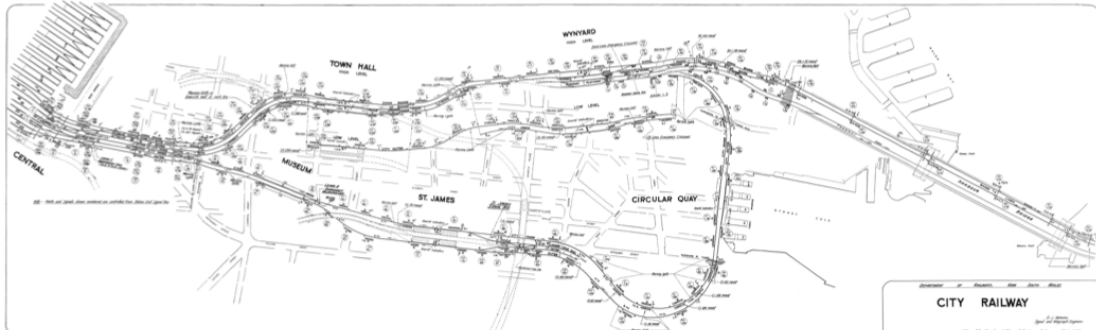


Diagram showing proposed city railways. Note Up and Down Shore Locals from Harbour Bridge to Central. Note Up and Down West from St James to Town Hall. Note Up and Down East from St James to Taylor Square.



St James, the City Circle and the Harbour Bridge.