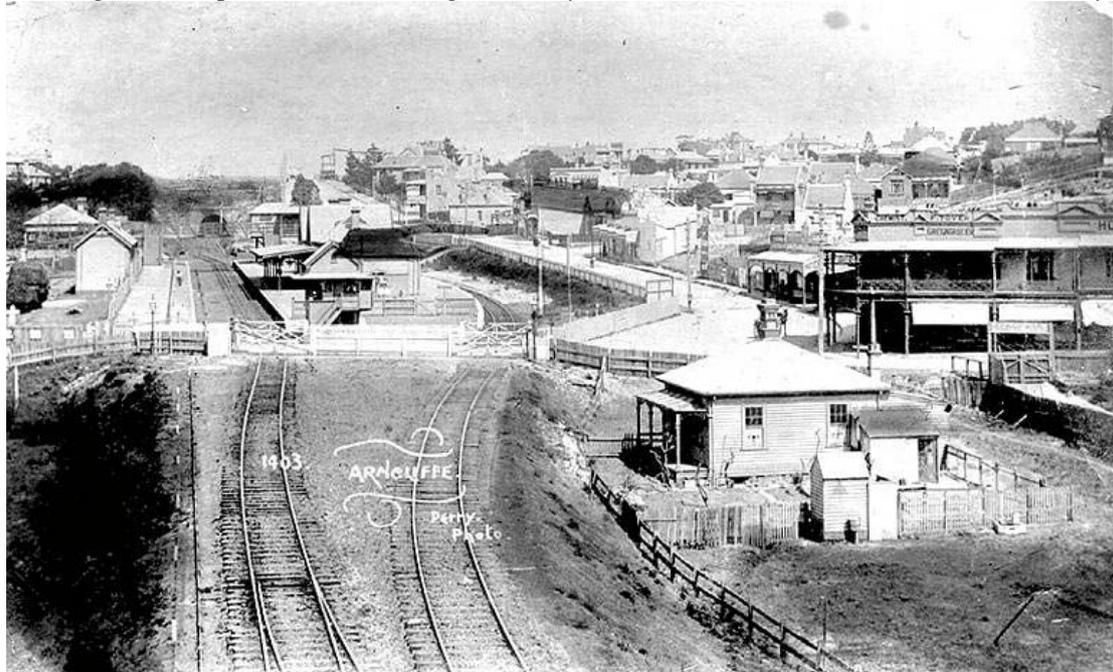


## ARHS LUNCHEON CLUB: ARNCLIFFE RAILWAY STATION



*Looking in the Up direction, during the early double track era, n.d., Rockdale Library.*



*Looking in the Down direction, during the island platform era, n.d., Rockdale Library. Subdivided Down platform as a walkway on left; sharply slewed Down track; footbridge at far end of platform; double track tunnel in distance; signal box; level crossing at Done St; level crossing keeper's cottage on right.*

Jim Longworth and Stuart Sharp, April 2012



The Illawarra line was the first NSW line intended to serve suburban residential development, and first to be built as double track. The Sydenham–Hurstville line and Arncliffe station were opened as double track on 15 October 1884

Arncliffe Station was designed as the first major station on the Illawarra Line southwards from Sydney and was one of the most substantial stations of the eight built in 1884, reflecting the importance of the locality. It was shown as 'Illawarra Road' on the working plans. The station was designed by the NSW Government Railways and buildings were built by Alfred McNeill and William Clark. Arncliffe was named after David Hannan's land grant 'Arncliffe'.

Arncliffe was constructed as a second class station with two wayside platforms. The Up platform had an impressive brick building with a street frontage, and the Down platform a smaller brick building. Building design was an eclectic mixture of Gothic Revival and Italianate architectural styles. Features included: centre transverse access; symmetrical, longitudinal room placement; symbiotic combination of large building on the Up platform and smaller waiting shed building on the Down platform. The Gothic character is shown in the steep roof, and transverse gables that dissect it. The Italianate style is shown in the heavy molding, including the render around the doors and windows and the ornateness of the ironwork at the top of the posts supporting the verandah columns.

### **Development:**

1885: Residents requested Firth Street be converted from a footway into a road and connected with Done Street.

1885: Residents requested Done Street be extended from the station to Wollongong Road.

1888: Council asked the PMG to establish a savings bank in the post office at the station.

1890: Signal box opened on 2 April.

1891: Council requested the Commissioners provide additional goods handling accommodation at the station. A second goods siding was laid in on 5 October.

1892: Commissioners refused to erect a wicket gate at the station, and blamed council for damage along Queen Street arising from inadequate drainage.

1895: Residents requested that a Post Office building be built, instead of the postal authorities renting a room at the railway station.

1896: Footbridge built on 30 April.

1900: Residents requested the Commissioners throw open access to the western side platform.

1900: Residents requested the overhead footbridge be extended to give access from Firth Street. The Commissioners refused because the footbridge was only intended to provide access between the

platforms. Drinking water was to be provided on the platforms.

1903: Commissioners and Council combined to improve the drainage around the station.

1906: Ostensibly to reduce the number of station staff and to improve the efficiency of ticket collection, on 30 October 1906 the Up platform, now Platform 1/2, was converted into an island platform, and the Down platform made redundant. A footbridge and small overhead booking office were also constructed, and opened on 25 May 1907. Residents and Council objected to the introduction of island platforms on the Illawarra line.

1906: Local residents induced the Commissioners to improve the appearance of the Firth Street side, using 150 trees and shrubs provided by the Botanic Gardens.

1907: Council wrote to the Commissioners requesting the railway widen the entrance to the bridge and remove the hoardings from the fence.

1908: Residents requested Council provide a more direct route of access between Wollongong Road and the station.

1908: Council proposed a subway be installed at the Sydney end of the platforms. Commissioners refused on the basis of it creating two entrances to the station.

1909: Arncliffe–Bexley steam tram tramway was opened on 13 October, with the ceremony held at the station.

1911: A tramway from the station to the beach was proposed; but not built.

1918: Automatic signalling was installed towards Sydney on 10 July.

1919: In preparing for quadruplication, on 28 October 1923, the original footbridge and overhead booking office were demolished and replaced by a new footbridge. The southern wing of the Platform 1/2 building was demolished.

1921: Done St level crossing was closed in June.

1921: Automatic signalling was installed towards Hurstville and the SB closed on 25 August.

1922: Provision of a 5-ton jib crane in goods yard.

1923: Conversion of Forest Road double track tunnel into a four track overbridge.

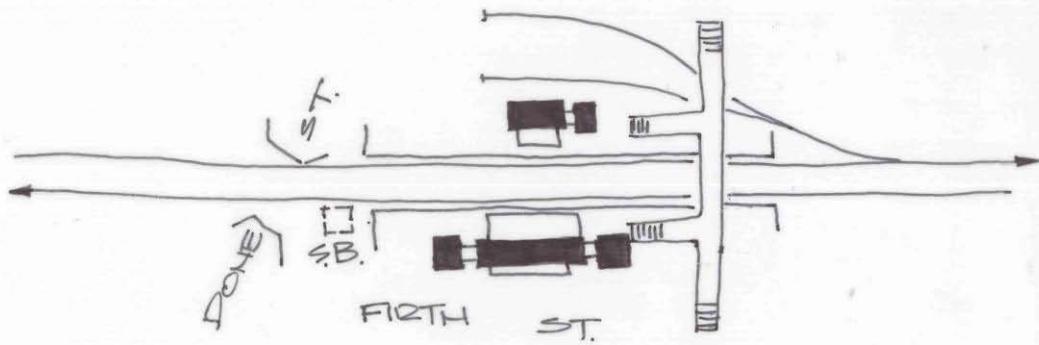
1923: The Down Platform was converted to an island platform, now Platform 3/4. The platform 3/4 building underwent major alterations including new platform awnings on both sides; floor levels raised; and new door and window openings and joinery. A single track was retained in the goods yard reflecting the on-going importance of rail in suburban goods movement.

1925: A new larger timber overhead booking office was constructed.

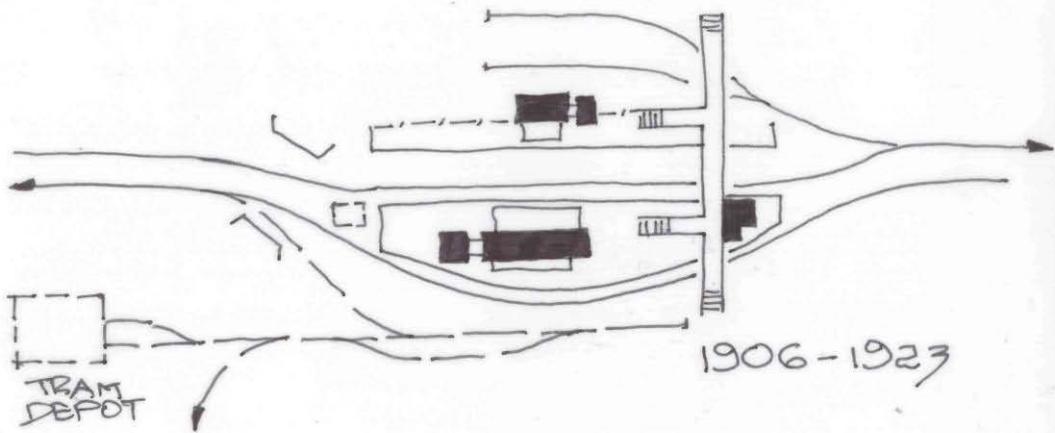
1926: Line electrified on 1 March.

1927: Arncliffe–Bexley tramway closed in January.

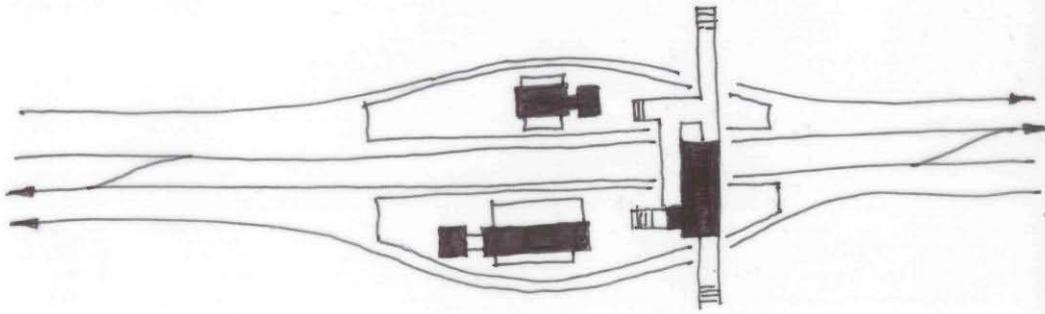
1940: Goods yard closed on 2 December.



FRE - 1906



1906-1923



1923  
QUADRUPPLICATION

JL 1/2

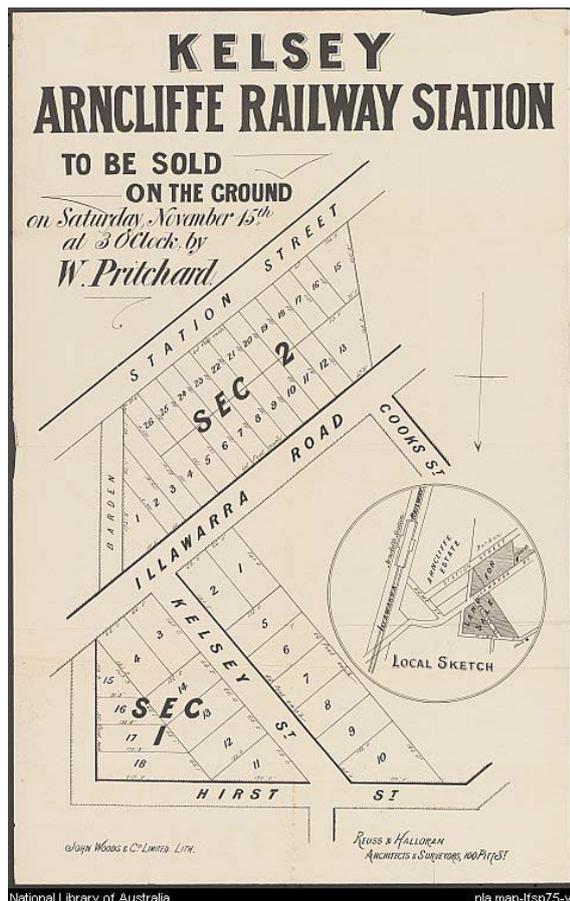


*Looking in the Up direction, showing the original roadside entry to the station building, and disused Down platform building beyond, n.d., Rockdale Library.*



*Looking in the Down direction through the goods yard, n.d., ARHS RRC.*





*The station provided a focus for speculative land sales around the turn of the century, 1900.*

### **A Focus for Celebration:**

As well as providing daily transport, the station provided a focus for significant civic celebrations, e.g.:

1906: Members of local St. George Friendly Societies gathered at the station to procession from there.

1908: The Minister for Education, Mr. Hogue, was met at the station by a school cadet band, which then paraded to the opening of the Arncliffe Public school.

1909: Norman Gordon, clerk, was presented with a watch and address, upon his transfer to Windsor railway station.

1915: A lady collector for the Sydney City Mission raised funds at the station.

1916: The local Empire League raised funds by running a produce and family stall at the station.

1935: The State Premier, Mr. Stevens, delivered a pre-election address opposite the station.

### **A Site of Tragedy:**

As well as providing improved transport, Arncliffe railway station also provided a tragic, and near-tragic, site for several persons, e.g.:

1884: John Salier, having just purchased a ticket for Sydney, was seized by an epileptic fit and expired.

1889: Residents expressed concern about the danger to children in crossing the line to get to school, and the need for a local school to occupy the children's time so preventing the children from playing around the station.

1890: Two large stones were placed on the track near the station, presumably with the intent of wrecking a train. Three young men were arrested on suspicion.

1891: Alfred Lewington was cut to pieces on the line.

1892: Mrs. Tydeman was killed while attempting to cross the tracks.

1893: Robert Davis was convicted of drunkenness and wilfully damaging a portion of the station premises.

1898: An exciting man-hunt resulted in capturing the criminal Peisley near the station. He was handcuffed, with a silk handkerchief, and loaded onto a train for transporting to Redfern Police Station.

1898: A boy, Leslie Reardon, was convicted of placing a fish-plate on the track, in the tunnel, in front of a passing passenger train. He placed the fish-plate on one of the rails to see if the train would flatten it out. Fortunately the train merely flicked the fish-plate off the rail.

1898: Frederick Hathaway was shot at by three burglars who were attempting to break into the post office on the station. The bullets lodged in the platform and woodwork of the station building.

1899: Grace Thackeray, aged 6, was playing beside the line when she attempted to cross the tracks, and was killed by a passing train.

1902: George Ridley was decapitated by a passing train.

1902: Percy Hunt was sentenced to imprisonment with hard labour for six months for falsely collecting someone else's luggage from the station to which he had no legal entitlement.

1907: Residents complained about young men congregating around the Lyne Street-Belmore Street intersection, engaging in larrikinism and hindered persons accessing the station entry.

1910: Samuel 'Moss' Browne, Station Master, committed suicide in the office at the station by shooting himself.

1924: Francis Mansfield, Carpenter's Labourer working on works at the station, was run down and killed by a train while crossing the tracks.

1932: Charles Bridge fell from an electric train at the station, fracturing his spine.

1939: Two teenage boys were caught after breaking into the station office and stealing some Porter's caps.

1951: James Lever died after stepping off a train before it had stopped.

1954: Wong San was followed from the station and attacked on a dark part of Spring Street.