

## Adamstown Station. Something of a Chronology.

Ed Tonks.

"How and why of Station Names." SRA of New South Wales.

Adamstown is located 161.119 kilometres north of Sydney at an altitude of 15.8 metres. Opened 15 August 1887. Mr T. Adam of Bland Street, Newcastle, purchased 21.8 hectares of land which he subdivided and sold in 1869. The construction name was "Lambton" which was a private town opened for sale on 17 July, 1864 and located on the property of the South Australian Mining Company.

School opened July 1877.

Post Office opened 16 April 1877

WELL! Bland Street should be Blane Street, now part of Hunter Street.

South Australian Mining Company should be Scottish Australian Mining Company.

*Interestingly in advance. The Nepean Times 7 August 1886. "News in Brief." "It's likely that Adamstown will get a railway station. Nearly time. Poor old Adamstown."*

**ARHS Bulletin No. 341 March 1966.**

*In this article C.C. Singleton makes the point that in the preliminary period of construction Broadmeadow was referred to as "Adamstown" and what we now know as Adamstown was referred to as "Adamstown Platform" **Extracts from this article are hereafter shown in bold.***

***Adamstown was opened with the line as a single platform on the down side and, presumably was unattended in its earlier years. At the time the Redhead Coal Mining Company Ltd (and the South Burwood Coal Company) was engaged in constructing a railway to serve collieries being developed at Whitebridge, South Burwood(Later Dudley) and Redhead. This line was to junction with the Government's new line at Adamstown. The prospect of this additional traffic encouraged duplication from Hamilton junction to Adamstown, at about the time the Sydney Line was first opened as a single track.***

Tragedy struck the Adamstown area in mid 1884. On 13 July 1884 Mary Jane Langbridge, a fine healthy girl, nine years of age was run over and killed by a heavy trolley whilst playing on the line of rails to Messrs J and A Brown's new coal pit near Adamstown. At the inquest the jury censured the Browns in allowing their trolleys to remain unprotected in a locality where numbers of children had access to them.

***When opened the line to Sydney crossed J & A Brown's Hartley Vale Colliery line on the same level about 600 metres south of Broadmeadow Station. As the line had been extended to South New Lambton Colliery, the Government proposed to connect the latter colliery to the Government line at Adamstown and thus avoid the irritating flat crossing of the abandoned Hartley Vale Colliery line. This was affected in March 1888. The duplication***

***from Hamilton was opened on 3 March 1889 and the South New Lambton Colliery connection was rearranged.***

According to Dept. of Mines Annual reports New Lambton C Pit, not South New Lambton Colliery is listed from 1887. On 19 September 1888 a major confrontation between miners, miners' families and police and the military occurred at New Lambton C Pit. Adamstown Station by its location and function as a junction station was directly involved in this drama. The confrontation was over the employment of half a dozen non union men who went out by train to the New Lambton C Pit to fill 200 tons of small coal. The non unionists or "scabs" were accompanied by a reporter and thirty police. Upon arrival at Adamstown station the carriage with the strike breakers and police was detached from the train and pulled by horses up to within a quarter of a mile of the colliery. Whilst at the station the carriage was detected and before it started in motion upwards of one hundred miners and their wives gathered at the station, yelled and hooted abuse whilst following the carriage a considerable distance in the direction of the colliery. As tensions increased during the day, Sub Inspector Lynch, in charge of the police detail telephoned to Newcastle for support from the Permanent Artillery Force. Twenty eight members of the permanent force were collected and commanded by Colonel Spalding, they went off immediately by special train, taking ample arms and ammunition and one Nordenfelt gun. Common sense prevailed on all sides and this show of force remained a display only. Nonetheless an interesting aside to the history of the Adamstown Station area.

***During June 1890 the Redhead Coal Company was reorganised to become the New Redhead Estate and Coal Company. By the end of 1890 the junction of that company's private line was in position with the Government Line at Adamstown.*** Earlier, on 27 September 1890 a serious accident occurred near the junction at Adamstown. Three wagons, two of which were loaded with stone broke away and crashed into the contractor's locomotive. The locomotive was destroyed with the damage bill estimated between £500 and £600.

It would appear that the relatively new station was under some threat. On Saturday night , 10 January 1891, a rather concerned and stormy meeting was held at Adamstown. A resolution was carried, "That we the residents at Adamstown take immediate steps to prevent the removal of the Adamstown Railway Station." A committee was appointed to collect signatures to a petition to the Railways Commissioners to the above effect. The mayor and Mr. Hetherington J.P. were appointed to present it. The latter person may well have been Thomas Hetherington who was one of fifteen men killed in the explosion at Dudley Colliery on 21 March 1898. There is a memorial window to his memory in Adamstown Uniting Church, formerly the Methodist Church.

***19 March 1891 the duplication of the line to Young Wallsend Junction (Later Sulphide Junction) was complete.***

***During October home and distant signals were erected on the Redhead Branch to protect the junction.***

***18 November 1892 installation of first interlocking machine. The 30 lever frame being placed on the open down platform at the Newcastle end as it operated the gates at St. James Road level crossing. At this time, a dead end goods siding was provided on the up side.***

The Newcastle Morning Herald on 19 November 1892 reported. "The Adamstown Railway Station. A new interlocking apparatus was opened at the Adamstown Railway Station yesterday. Since the opening of the double track to Teralba, the department has gradually introduced the interlocking system at the various stations. Adamstown is now an important junction as the Redhead and New Lambton lines branch off the Government railways near the station. The new apparatus consists of a bunch of 29 levers, which work the various semaphores, the points and the gates which guard the different crossings."

During July 1893 a night officer was brought before the magistrate for stealing a number of articles from the Adamstown Railway Station. He was found guilty and given a fine of ten pounds or a month in gaol.

12 May 1898. Funeral train of Mrs McNeil and Miss Marion McNeil, two victims of the wreck of the S.S. Maitland (6 May 1898), departed Adamstown Station for the Presbyterian section of Sandgate Cemetery.

On 13 August 1900, the Minister for Works, the Hon. E.W.O'Sullivan, accompanied by Mr. Edden MLA, and Donald MacDonald, the war correspondent, arrived from Sydney by the midday mail train and alighted at the Adamstown Railway Station for the opening of the extension of the Newcastle tramway system to Adamstown.

C.C. Singleton in his Bulletin article of March 1966 records that a down weighbridge loop was provided between Adamstown and Broadmeadow on 1 July 1901. It was followed by a corresponding up refuge loop on 24 April 1902, so that empty coal trains could stand clear of the main line until the Redhead Branch was empty on traffic. Earlier a runaway siding had been constructed to cater for incidents off the Redhead and New Lambton Branches.

Snowball's photos of the station clearly show awnings off the station buildings. These were partly due to strong representation made by the Mayor of Adamstown to the Railway Commissioners during 1903-1904. He was concerned for the safety and comfort of holiday makers and picnickers, up to 2000 of who crowded onto the station's platforms. At this time key picnic destinations for rail travellers would have included Speers Point via Cockle Creek and Toronto.

The licence for Adamstown's fourth hotel, the Commercial, was granted on 5 July 1902 to William Russell. The hotel was located on the corner of Glebe Road and Park Avenue to the

immediate east of the road and railway crossing at Adamstown Station. Could the site of the hotel have had anything to do with the needs of railway recreational travellers or just reflective of the general growth of population in the area? On 2 November 1972 approval was given to change the name of the Commercial Hotel to the Gates Hotel.

15 August 1906. Death of Thomas Croudace at Lambton. Croudace had been the foundation manager of the Scottish Australian Mining Company's Lambton Colliery at Lambton and had directed much of the company's operational future from then on. He was prominent in Newcastle's business, coal and civic circles. On news of his death flags were flown at half mast from ships and offices. At 1.45 p.m. on 16 June 1906 his funeral train departed Adamstown Railway Station for Sandgate Cemetery. This point of departure was appropriate as it was near Adamstown Station that the branch railway which was destined to carry coal from his company's "model" colliery, Durham, later Lambton Colliery B Pit and later again, Lambton Colliery at Redhead for over ninety years, junctioned with the Government's main line. (Mrs Croudace died on 7 August 1913. Her funeral train also departed from Adamstown Station for Sandgate Cemetery.)

On 13 May 1908 Adamstown's nodal position as a residential area for coal miners was highlighted by an impromptu meeting of Burwood Colliery miners at Adamstown Railway Station. During the Peter Bowling strike of late 1909 meetings of striking coal miners were held at a paddock near Adamstown Railway Station.

At about 3p.m. on 23 January 1911 a loaded coal train from Lambton Colliery crashed into the dead end at Adamstown Station. Brakes failed to set and to hold the train on the falling grade from the tunnel. (Redhead-Fernleigh Tunnel.) The locomotive came to a sudden stop and fell over the fence alongside the line into a ditch. The three wagons behind the engine were smashed but the remainder of the train was practically undamaged. Driver, **Brierley Bailey\*** (See page 10) and fireman, McAuliffe were uninjured. They jumped from the loco when they realised it was not going to stop. Guard Alex Wrieler also survived this incident uninjured.

The Newcastle Morning Herald on 29 November 1911 in an article relating to Adamstown's streets stated that Brisbane Water Road was initially surveyed to be the main Adamstown to Charlestown road. Later, preference was given to the route along Union Street, later Bruncker Road. The paper then makes the interesting point that part of the Adamstown Station buildings stood on the line of the old road.

The Construction and Local Government Journal on 11 February 1916 reported that additional sidings and other extensions were to be made to Adamstown Railway Station.

C.C. Singleton in his Bulletin article of March 1966 states that in 1908, South New Lambton Colliery was renamed New Lambton Colliery. As stated earlier the Department of Mines Annual Reports from 1887 list New Lambton C Pit as a separate operation. It is thought that

New Lambton and New Lambton C Pit output was combined prior to 1887. New Lambton C Pit last appears in Dept. of Mines Annual Reports in 1910 with an employment of one.

Brian Robert Andrews in "Coal, Railways and Mines" Volume 1 records that the New Lambton C Pit closed in 1912 but the branch remained open serving both Ebbw Vale and Shortland Collieries until their abandonment in 1935. Ebbw Vale, a tunnel mine and a contemporary of New Lambton C Pit, was developed in 1883. Shortland Colliery was established by James Ruttley in 1897. Ruttley and his family lived in the house "Mount Pleasant", located on the landmark hill to the immediate south of Adamstown Station. Oddly the hill was known locally as "Ruttley's Hill". As at December 1950 much of the western side of this hill was being levelled for the building of the Lustre Hosiery factory. This factory building later became St. Pius X College for boys. Much of the history of Ruttley's Hill is treated in a separate section.

Shortland Colliery worked well for over thirty years until an underground fire caused the colliery to be closed on 25 March 1933. Shortland Colliery's workforce appears to have peaked in 1908 when it provided work for 106 men and boys. All attempts to re-open the mine failed and it was abandoned in 1935. Early in December 1935, the complete colliery plant and equipment was sold by auction.

Brian continues, "After the abandonment of Ebbw Vale and Shortland Collieries in 1935, the New Lambton Branch remained in place. In April 1943 the Commonwealth Government commenced using the railway for the movement of military vehicles to and from Adamstown in conjunction with the nearby Army facilities. At this time the railway was known as the New Lambton Colliery Siding. On 5 March 1945, the connections to the New Lambton Colliery Siding(Branch) were removed and the line abolished. The New Lambton Colliery, C Pit Railway was subsequently dismantled." Much of the land was later sold for housing and light industrial development. The houses on the eastern side of Bailey Street off Park Avenue are built on the general site of the railway that once served Ebbw Vale, New Lambton C Pit and Shortland Collieries.

***As road and rail traffic increased a full time signalman became necessary at the level crossing. One was appointed from 19 January 1919. The signal box was located on the up side adjacent to the gates. The similarity of the lever numbers would have suggested that the original signalling frame was removed to the new location from the down platform.***

On the night of 16 September 1922 a very unusual accident impacted on Mrs Thompson, the wife of Alderman Thompson of Adamstown. About 7 p.m. a train on the down was passing through the station and as was usual the steam whistle was blown. The cap of the whistle came away in two sections. One part buried itself between sleepers on the up line and the other part weighing more than eleven kilograms struck Mrs Thompson on the right leg causing a probable fracture of a small bone.

***On 20 September 1923, the down weighbridge loop became the down relief road. From 10 March 1924, the up refuge loop was termed the up relief road.***

***During 1924, a new locomotive depot was provided at Broadmeadow, to replace the outmoded one at Hamilton. An emergency connection was laid in at the Adamstown end in case of derailment or impediment at the Broadmeadow entrance to the locomotive yard***  
26 August 1925. It was reported that Leslie Owen, a booking clerk at Adamstown Railway Station had pleaded guilty to a charge of having embezzled more than £576 between early February and early July 1925

***Construction of the large Broadmeadow Marshalling Yard, between Broadmeadow and Adamstown Stations, was commenced in 1937. Connections were opened at the Adamstown end to the down yard on 20 December 1937. On 29 May 1938, the two main lines were slewed over on the up side to allow for the new up yard which was brought into use on 28 August 1938.***

“Newcastle. The Missing Years” by Greg Ray, features some magnificent “Rediscovered images of Newcastle and the Hunter.” One such shows Adamstown Railway Station, looking south, in May 1938. A portion of the signal box is seen to the left. “Mt. Pleasant” is clearly seen on Ruttley’s Hill viewed between the up and down platforms. A three set semaphore signal can be seen at the up end of the platform clearly indicating Adamstown’s function as a junction for two branch lines. The station train indicator, on the up platform, shows that the next train is to “Belmont”. Interestingly from 31 December 1939 a new timetable for services to Belmont was introduced which reduced daily weekday services from five to three, except on Fridays when an additional service left Newcastle for Belmont. Another important alteration was the abolition of late trains from Newcastle to Belmont on Saturday and Sunday nights.

***With increasing traffic it was found that trains for the down yard had a tendency to stand on the down main, awaiting admission to the yard and thus causing delays to following fast passenger trains. On 6 April 1948, the down relief line was extended back behind the down platform at Adamstown Station to new motor worked points adjacent to the underbridge over the Caledonian Collieries Ltd line to Waratah Colliery located in Raspberry Gully.*** (By 17 July 1999 the relief line was out of use. Electric overhead wiring above the relief line was being removed on 7 June 2003. It was all gone by 8 June 2003. The tracks of the relief line had been lifted by 24 June 2003.)

About four years before the extension of the down relief line at Adamstown, the provision of the runaway siding on the town side of the up platform had again been vindicated. On 11 October 1944 the Newcastle Morning Herald reported that a guard had been disciplined following a breakaway on the Belmont Line and subsequent crash into the runaway siding. The guards’ union called on the railway authorities to check all brake vans to ensure their ability to hold runaway trains on the steep grades of the Belmont Line.

Another potentially dangerous incident occurred on 28 February 1955 when six coal wagons and two brake vans finished up a mangled wreck in the runaway siding. The Newcastle Sun reported, ".....when a coal train broke its couplings today on the Belmont Line. It careered a mile and a half before running into a dead end at Adamstown Railway Station. The train, consisting of 28 empty wagons and two brake vans was travelling to John Darling Colliery. The driver of the engine followed his runaway set of wagons constantly signalling with the engine whistle to indicate the danger to station staff. Guard Nicholas Nicholls (*actually Nicholas Nicholas*), 58, of King Street, Waratah, who stayed with the runaway until nearing the station leaped to safety a few seconds before it crashed against the stop block. Several trucks were telescoped and there was a resounding crash as trucks and brake vans were torn apart. They finished in a tangle of splintered wreckage."

19 March 1961. Special trains ran to Adamstown for the opening and blessing of St. Pius X College for boys, by the Bishop of Maitland, Rev. John Toohey. St.Pius X was developed in the former Lustre Hosiery factory built on the western slope of Ruttley's Hill.

13 May 1967. 3067 led the last scheduled steam passenger train off the Belmont Line. Steam momentarily returned on 17 May when CPH33 failed.

8 April 1971. Passenger services came to an end over the Belmont Line when CPH17 ran the last passenger service, the 5.24 pm ex Newcastle to Belmont. No more would "Belmont" show on the indicator as the next passenger train to depart the up platform at Adamstown Station.

6 June 1977. It was reported that the new station buildings on the up platform at Adamstown Station were scheduled for completion later that month. The former station building was demolished to make way for the new steel framed, brick veneer building. Construction work began in April by Sydney contractors, Steel Building System Prop. Ltd. The building will house a parcels and booking office, a waiting room, toilets and a store room.

13 July 1977. It was reported that the new half boom gates recently installed at the level crossing at Adamstown were raising issues of noise for nearby residents. The new gates became operational shortly after 1P.M. on 12 July 1977 and replaced gates that had only one red light and no bells. A spokesman for the Public Transport Commission said that the new gates should make less noise than the older type as nylon clappers had been used replacing the more traditional metal clappers.

**The Gates at Adamstown** have been and continue to be a vexing local issue. Take for example---Public concern about and local politicians advocating options to the "notorious" level crossing at Adamstown gathered momentum during the early 2000s. A Newcastle Herald article on 19 May 2004 revealed that a rail overpass plan for the crossing dated back to 1955. A then State Government approved a Northumberland County Council district map

dated 1955 which showed a corridor of land near the existing crossing earmarked for a bridge over the tracks. Nothing positive was done to facilitate this plan as the issue was considered by government departments to have a "low priority". Interestingly daily traffic flow estimates taken in April 2004 revealed that 130 trains passed through the Adamstown level crossing and 11,300 road vehicles passed over it. It was deemed a low priority issue and vehicular traffic could be repeatedly interrupted. As a comparison Metford Crossing experienced 60 trains daily with a vehicular flow of some 9,900 vehicles. This was deemed a high priority issue and an underpass was constructed!!!!!!

By 22 August 1981 a temporary platform, Adamstown No3?, had been installed at the down end of the down platform facing the down relief Road.(By 12 December 1988 this platform had been removed.)

1 October 1982 4714 worked through Adamstown with the last train from Burwood No3 Colliery at Whitebridge.

February 1984 saw the demolition of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century timber buildings on the down platform as part of the SRA's "Facelift" to coincide with the opening of electric train services between Newcastle and Gosford.

12 March 1988 48117 and 4720 worked through Adamstown with the last train from John Darling Colliery at Belmont North.

14 April 1989. From 11 o'clock the staff section for travel over the line to Redhead was transferred from Adamstown to Broadmeadow Station. Only one shift then was necessary at Adamstown Station, paving the way for its becoming unattended. (On the Facebook site "Lost Newcastle "on 11 August 2013, Shaun Potter who worked in the signal box as a junior recalled that the large staff was in the signal box then the miniature staff was relocated to the station's up ticket office.)

19 December 1991 4861 and 4881 worked the last train from Lambton Colliery at Redhead thus bringing to an end a century of rail travel over the Redhead Line. An internal transmitted on 19 December noted, "At 1430 hrs on Thursday December 1991 the ordinary staff and tickets were withdrawn from use for the section Adamstown- Redhead Branch. 402 points have been clipped, locked and spiked. Park Avenue level crossing booked out of use and 208a and 205 signals at Adamstown booked out of use."

By 14 August 1992 a shelter and base for a ticket issuing machine had been erected near the foot of the steps on the down platform.

Weekend of 1-2 May 1993. Near the former junction of the Belmont Branch, the line was straightened and the points removed leaving a cross over between the up and down main lines.

By 14 May 1993 ticket machines had been installed on both platforms.



Late March 1994 modifications to external walls of shelter which had been erected on down platform following demolition of late 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings.

3 September 1994. Excavation work on level crossing. Relief line operational.

By 28 July 1999. Relief line out of use. Tracks noted as being rusty from 17 July 1999.

By 18 February 2003 disused relief line cleared of overgrown vegetation. Electric overhead wiring and stanchions still in place.

16 April 2003 . Rails placed in temporary storage on relief line.

7 June 2003. Much activity and work focussed on Adamstown Station area during this rail shutdown period. Down main line near station being pulled up and replaced. Lights still on down relief line signal near crossing. Electric wires above relief line being taken down. Gone by 8 June.

8 June 2003. Ditch being dug on relief line across level crossing. Lights still on signal on down relief line.

9 June 2003. Ditch filled in and tarred over. Red flag on relief line.

By 24 June 2003. Tracks lifted on down relief line. Remnant tracks visible in retarred section of crossing.

Between 24-27 June 2003. Ballast removed from former down relief line.

By 8 July 2003. Stop block installed on former relief line on loco depot or down side.

As at 30 September 2003 power off on relief line signal but signal still in place.

By March 2004. Gate installed across former relief line parallel with steps on down platform.

9 April 2005. Up line dug up.

As at 2005. New gates and lights being installed at New Lambton, St. James Road side of crossing. Old gates set back from relief line. New gates pushed up further over path of former relief line.

As at 5 June 2005. Down end of up platform truncated opposite former signal box.

Between 2 – 9 March 2006 work had begun on construction of access ramp from St James Road across former relief line to down platform.

By April 2006 concrete had been laid for access to down platform.

By 4 June 2006 ramp constructed from down platform over site of former relief line to access St. James Road. With this low level access operational the western extension of the

high level steps over the former relief line down to St. James Road would appear to be superfluous.

14 April 2012. Film crew commissioned by Rail Corp to record Adamstown Station before further demolition work commences.

16 April 2012. Trestle work in place beneath western extension of footbridge over former relief line.

By 20 April 2012. Western extension of footbridge over former relief line gone. Access steps remain—going nowhere.

By 20 April 2012. Eastern extension of footbridge with access from signal box end also under construction.

21 April 2012. Access steps to former western extension over relief line being removed.

By 26 April 2012. Debris of demolished western access steps deposited on site of former relief line.

29 May 2012. Installation of security camera on truncated eastern end of footbridge.

By 15 November 2012. “Adamstown” sign and Fernleigh Track signage installed to east of up platform in area once occupied by the runaway siding.

Newcastle Herald 3 January 2014. Issue of Adamstown Gates and level crossing raised yet again.

## **DRIVER BRIERLEY BAILEY.**

This driver seemed to have quite an eventful working life if newspaper reports are any indication.

On the afternoon of Thursday 30 September 1891 a passenger train working tender first out of Fassifern left the rails about 400 metres on the south side of Teralba. The tender left the line first and ran some distance tearing up the rails and eventually turned over dragging the engine with it. The fireman, George Cockcroft (spelt Cockroft on his headstone in Sandgate Cemetery) was frightfully scalded and was picked up in an insensible state from underneath the engine. He died in Newcastle Hospital shortly after admission. The engine driver, **Brierley Bailey** received only slight injuries.

It was reported that the week before in late September 1891 **Brierley Bailey** had had a miraculous escape on the South Burwood (soon to be Dudley) Line when his engine left the rails at a bridge.

Then on 23 January 1911 the crash at Adamstown as detailed on page 4.

No doubt if he had have kept a diary it would have made interesting reading.

### **Ruttley's Hill.**

Ruttley's Hill forms part of the background to many a photograph from Adamstown Station looking south.

By 1908 the house "Mt. Pleasant" had been constructed on this landmark hill to the immediate south of Adamstown Railway Station. The house located at an altitude of some 38 metres (125 feet) had a commanding view of the area. A NMH article on 9 December stated it was located "at the fork of the Belmont and Sydney railway lines."

The house does not appear in the 1898 Snowball photo of Adamstown Railway Station.

"Mt. Pleasant" was the home for many years of James Ruttley and his family. Ruttley owned small collieries in the area including Shortland and Crofton. Shortland had opened in 1897. It was a near neighbour to New Lambton C Pit and Ebbw Vale Collieries. However by then Ruttley was no novice to Newcastle area coal mining. He had had a number of ventures with "rat hole" collieries---small scale producers and small scale employers. During 1882, in partnership with D.Hughes and B. Tonks he had sunk a shaft on the Dog and Rat Estate in the Waratah Commonage leased by J and A Brown. In 1897 Benjamin Tonks began to work J.Ruttley's Quarry Colliery at Waratah. He gave it up the next year as a non-paying venture.

A flag pole near the house, "Mt. Pleasant" was used to indicate if Ruttley's mines were working. A white flag indicated work but a red flag indicated no work.

During May 1910 the Crown Solicitor for the Commonwealth acting under instructions from the Attorney-General has issued three writs against colliery and shipping companies, alleging breaches of the Australian Industries Preservation Act, popularly known as the anti-trust law. Included amongst the second writ was James Ruttley and another small scale coal producer, Ferderick R. Croft.

In the latter half of 1911 the postman refused to deliver letters to "Mt. Pleasant" on account of it's not being within a certain distance to a road. By 29 November 1911 the postal authorities advised Mr Ruttley to place a private letter box near Brisbane Water Road. This street was initially surveyed to be the main Adamstown to Charlestown road and passed over part of Ruttley's Hill. Later, preference was given to the route along Union Street, later Bruncker Road. Part of the Adamstown Station buildings stand on the line of the old road.

Early in July 1917, Thomas Bates, Inspector of Collieries took action against James Ruttley as owner of Shortland Colliery for providing insufficient mine ventilation. Ruttley was fined at the Newcastle Police Court before Mr. V.G. Adrian S.M.

Reportedly the floors of “Mt. Pleasant” were concrete. The concrete in the lounge and hall was hidden under dull coloured tiles. In the style often found in Manhattan’s old brownstone houses, tiles with pictures of Chloe-like bathing belles and cherubim’s flanked the mirror above the lounge room’s marble fire place.

Mr. Tom Tessier of Brisbane Water Road recalled in December 1950 that Mr. Ruttley “had a hankering for old stuff—antiques, motors, anything old. He liked it. Once he bought a sailing ship—a big four or five master and went to America in it with a cargo of coal. And that iron fence around his house. That was not new. It came from the Danger Estate at Duckenfield. As a matter of fact, I carried it down.’ Mr. Tessier concluded, “I suppose in the early days that house was one of the mansions of the district.”

On 6 January 1934 the Sydney Morning Herald reported, “The Newcastle fire chief (District Officer Leslie Hurley) suffered severe burns in a perilous episode during a fire which caused damage estimated at £4000 and which destroyed the two storey retail furniture store of H. Prentice and Co. Ltd in Hunter Street Newcastle, late this afternoon.” The article concluded, “Prentice and Co were tenants of the destroyed building. The owner was Mr. James Ruttley of Adamstown, a well-known northern colliery proprietor. The building was insured.”

Shortland Colliery was closed as a result of an underground fire which occurred on 25 March 1933. All attempts to reopen the mine failed and it was abandoned in 1935. Shortland Colliery’s plant and equipment were sold by auction early in December 1935.

1935 was to be a watershed year for the Ruttley Family.

On the morning of 6 February 1935 the wooden steam launch, Nalad sank off the coast of Norah Head. The crew of two were rescued. The Nalad was owned by James Ruttley. It had been built in Sydney about 1884 and was well known on both the Hawkesbury River and in Newcastle. By the early 1930s it was used mainly for fishing and lightering work.

James Ruttley was killed in an accident in 1935. The Newcastle Morning Herald for Saturday 3 August 1935 reported his death. “Mr. James Ruttley, 79, of Mount Pleasant, Adamstown, who fell under a car which passed over him at Rothbury on Tuesday (29 July) died in the Maitland Hospital last night. Mr. Ruttley was the oldest colliery manager in the Newcastle district and was well known on the South Maitland Coalfield. He was owner of Shortland Colliery which closed about 18 months ago, lessee of the Rothbury Colliery property and was interested in several small mines in the Newcastle district.”

His funeral notice was in the same edition of the Herald. His funeral was held on the afternoon of Sunday 4 August 1935. He is buried in the Church of England section of Sandgate Cemetery.

The Sydney Morning Herald on Monday 5 August 1935 also reported his death under the headline, "Colliery veteran's death". An additional detail is included in this report. "Mr. James Ruttley, for many years a prominent personality in northern coalmining, died in Maitland Hospital during Friday night from injuries suffered in an accident at North Rothbury a few days previously. Mr. Ruttley fell under a slowly moving motor car, when he overbalanced at the gate of the Rothbury Colliery Estate, of which he had held a lease since 1931. Mr. Rutterly was operating various northern collieries for more than 50 years."

More details relating to this fatal accident were given in the Singleton Argus for 19 August 1935 when reporting on the coroner's findings. "The Maitland District Coroner held an inquiry at the weekend into the death of James Ruttley, mine manager of Adamstown, who died in Maitland Hospital an August 3. Evidence was given that he got out of a car driven by his daughter at Rothbury Colliery to open the gates, but feeling unsteady on his feet he caught hold of a post. He fell to the ground near the post and the wheels of the car passed over him. The Coroner found that death had resulted from heart failure, due to shock from injuries accidentally received. "It is quite obvious that Miss Ruttley was in no way to blame" he added." The specific name of the daughter who was driving the car was not given in this newspaper report.

Under instructions from the Trustees of the Estate of James Ruttley, F.R. Strange, auctioneer, conducted an auction of his some of his assets. The NMH for 21 March 1936 published details under the headline, "Colliery Plant, Newcastle". "F.R.Strange, Limited will sell on Thursday next, 26 March at 11o'clock on the land adjoining residence," Mount Pleasant", Adamstown, The plant as it now lies, situated in the undermentioned localities--- Adamstown. Daimler 4-cylinder touring car, old model, but mechanism, body and leather upholstery perfect, cast iron railings, cast iron columns, thousands of Purple Bangar slates (loose and in cases), old fashioned iron safe, sundry scrap iron and heavy timbers. Miner's Dail, Theodolyte, Dumpy Level, Anemometer and other instruments, sundries etc." Locations where some of Ruttley's colliery equipment was positioned included, Cumdu (Cwmdu) Shaft, Branxton, Maitland Extended Shaft, Branxton, Cardiff Borehole Colliery and the Newcastle Wallsend Coal Company's Colliery.

One wonders if the Daimler touring car was the vehicle that caused Ruttley's fatal injuries.

Another insight into James Ruttley is provided by a NMH article for 2 November 1967. Under the headline "Disappearing Knoll" a local Adamstown resident, Mr McMahon recalled that Mr. Ruttley in his later years bought a car, but the steep hill was too much for its ancient engine. Pushing power was provided by local youngsters who each received 6 pence a push. Could this have been the Daimler advertised for sale by auction in March 1936?

On 1 July 1937 the SMH gave notice of Mrs Ruttley's death. "RUTTLEY, June 30, 1937, at a private hospital Lewisham, Henrietta Elizabeth, relict of the late James Ruttley, colliery proprietor, Newcastle and loving mother of Miss Henrietta Ruttley, Fred, Harriett (Mrs

O'Brien) and Doris (Mrs Ruttley) aged 76 years.) Henrietta Ruttley was buried in the same grave as her husband at Newcastle's Sandgate Cemetery.

During the war years of the early 1940s the tactical importance of Ruttley's Hill was highlighted in a NMH article of 21 May 1942 under the headline "More sirens sought." "Kotara wardens state that the sirens are still indistinct. They are to ask the Chief Warden (Ald. Fairhall) to have three more sirens installed at block tower, Gully Line Bridge, Ruttley's Hill at Adamstown, and at a spot to be selected on Charlestown Road."

The Ruttley Family featured in the SMH on 6 November 1943 relative to a "Bequest of 6,000 Pounds Unclaimed." "A woman who became entitled to 6,000 pounds under her father's will cannot be found. The money will probably be divided among her relatives. In 1920, Miss Elsie Ruttley, a daughter of Mr. James Ruttley, colliery owner of Adamstown, left her father's home. Letters sent by him to an address she had given him were returned unopened, and Mr. Ruttley never saw his daughter again. He died in 1935 leaving an estate of £42,000. In the Equity jurisdiction yesterday, it was stated that repeated efforts to trace Miss Ruttley had failed. Mr. Justice Roper directed the Master-In-Equity to inquire who were entitled to share Miss Ruttley's benefits under her father's will."

Interestingly neither the funeral notice of James nor that of Henrietta mentioned Elsie as a daughter.

A further newspaper report (Singleton Argus 10 November 1943) suggested that Elsie was married and living in Queensland. Her married name was thought to be 'Clements'

A "Trove" search through the 1940s revealed that despite numerous legal notices being placed in a variety of Australian newspapers there was no obvious claim by Elsie Ruttley or Elsie Clements for her inheritance.

As at 9 December 1950 "Mt. Pleasant" had been occupied by Mrs Hollings and her large extended family for about twelve years. She recalled that years ago it was bought by the Church Of England Diocese as a site for a school for boys. After holding the property for several years the Diocesan Council decided it was unsuitable. The property was returned to its original owners. Mrs Hollings stated that although it has changed hands several times since it has never been used as anything other than a private residence.

More change was afoot when in late 1949 or early 1950 the site was acquired by Lustre Hosiery as a site for a factory. By early December 1950 a large section of the western slope of Ruttley's Hill had been levelled to make way for a factory. Mrs Hollings thought that the house "Mt. Pleasant" was being taken over as the factory manager's house.

When Ed Downs photographed the aftermath of the 28 March 1955 runaway, a more or less intact "Mt. Pleasant" could be seen on the hill in his view looking south. The Lustre Hosiery

Factory could be seen to the right of Ruttley's Hill, partly obscured by the up semaphore signal.

However by the early 1960s the house had been demolished and the once landmark structure reduced to a pile of discarded and broken tiles and other building material spread about the floor level. Some stone steps still remained. Ironically by then the short lived Lustre Hosiery Factory had closed and its spacious interior redeveloped as St. Pius X College, a Catholic secondary school for boys. With the house gone the landmark character of Ruttley's Hill was further reduced by the quarrying and salt of the hill's conglomerate.

St. Pius X College was initially set up in Union Street Tighe's Hill in 1959. The Tighe's Hill site closed on 2 December 1960 and the new site at Adamstown was occupied on 5 December 1960. As Tighe's Hill expanded in enrolments it was obvious to Catholic authorities that a new site was needed. Bishop Toohey finally selected a factory building at Adamstown owned by the struggling Lustre Hosiery Company which had been hit hard by the advent of synthetics. Bishop Toohey blessed and opened the school on 19 March 1961. Special trains were run to Adamstown for the occasion. The Catholic Church had spent some 170,000 pounds remodelling the former factory as a school. It was set on 10.5 hectares (26 Acres) of land. At the opening, the Area Director of Education, Mr. Gelfius was thanked for his assistance. So too was the Northumberland County Council which had agreed to permit the establishment of a school on land which was zoned for light industrial purposes.

# ADAMSTOWN RAILWAY STATION

- Station opened on 15<sup>th</sup> August, 1887 with the opening of the line
- There is a plan labelled 'Lambton' that shows a standard roadside station (52' long example), similar to the down platform building at Ourimbah but the verandah over the platform on the plan has been crossed out but the was not built – such an omission of a platform canopy is consistent with many other buildings erected at smaller locations between 1887 and 1890, such as at Bombo – appears not to have been built (care needs to be exercised not to confuse the two stations which had the same construction name, 'Lambton', the other station being Broadmeadow)
- James Angus approves on 27/11/1890 a standard roadside station in timber 55' long x 15' – the plan originally had matching detached pavilions but the one for the Lamp Room is omitted and a small shed clad in corrugated iron and with a hipped roof is used for that purpose – features are:
  1. Rear pedestrian entry with a full-length, rear, posted verandah 6' wide but no porched entry – ornamental iron work only on posts
  2. Room designations T & PO, GWR & LWR
  3. Corrugated iron on roof, with finials on all gables
  4. Posted awning 15' wide – curved ironwork to support awning from the posts, the same as Greta
  5. 12' ceiling height
  6. At the ends of the platform awning, the usual vertical boarding has been replaced by No. 20 gauge iron sheet
  7. Ticket window is 3' high and 2' wide and has mesh in the bottom half
  8. Contractor is Samuel Hughes et al
- There is a plan dated 1891 for a one room waiting shed built with extended roof rafters forming a narrow supported by small, ornate brackets – shed had rounded wall corners at the rear – this appears not to have been built
- A photograph post 1887 duplication shows a small timber shed on the present up platform with scalloped bargeboards – date of construction is unknown
- A Snowball photograph (shown in E. Tonks, *Adamstown via Fernleigh*, p. 5) shows a medium-sized timber building on the up platform post 1903/04 as well as the earlier small timber shed – noted on this second, larger building is the use of standard steel brackets to support the platform awning



- On 30/1/1900, Thomas Firth, the Engineer for Existing Lines, approved the construction of three buildings on the up platform, all with a skillion roof – the first was 8’ long for a Ladies Room, the second was 12’ long for a General Waiting Room and the third was 8’ long for a Ticket Office
- In 1952, the original cast iron posts supporting the down platform awning were replaced by large, steel cantilevered brackets, the same as those that survive at Awaba [down platform] and Cockle Creek
- A photograph taken on 2/4/55 shows what is a completely different suite of buildings on the up platform, with three timber buildings – two with skillion roofs [the 1900 buildings] and one with a gabled roof, this last-mentioned structure possibly could be the same structure mentioned above as the ‘post 1887’ building
- On 11/6/1975, Frank Franklyn, the Chief Civil Engineer, approved a brick building with a flat roof – it was the first structure to have the traditional brass money tray at the bottom of the ticket window replaced with a “Sweda plastic tray” – nothing happened in 1976 – it had a steel frame with brick veneer walls – classy, aggregate panelling for external walls was deleted from the plan and replaced by face brickwork – it possessed a wide fascia, which was typical of buildings of the 1970s and 1980s – it was funded under the Commonwealth Government Urban Public Transport Improvement Programme
- On 21/6/1977 the Newcastle District Engineer approved a plan for furniture the station - the contract was signed in June and the structure was built by Steel Building Systems Pty Ltd
- On 16/1/1984, Don Archer, the Acting Chief Civil Engineer, approved the demolition of the timber building on the down platform and replaced it by a two-room brick building similar to the 1976 building opposite it – the policy was to demolish as many timber buildings as possible between Gosford and Broadmeadow as a “facelift” for the opening of electrification – demolished in 1991
- The down platform was to have one of the 1991 ‘Newcastle line type standard platform awnings’ (the Newcastle area was the only CityRail management sector which had a standard platform shelter for its distinct area – which apparently omitted windbreaks because of the reported high level of regional vandalism)

- It seems that the 1991 Newcastle line standard shelter was not built as the present shelter on the down platform, planned in 1993, utilizes the frame, roof and awning of the 1984 building – this is the current arrangement on the down platform
- The up platform contains to house the 1976 brick building but the original light-coloured bricks have now been painted with a fairly disgusting hue of light green

*These notes would not have been possible without the assistance of Ed Tonks, whose help is much acknowledged.*

Stuart Sharp

23<sup>rd</sup> March, 2014