MOSS VALE RAILWAY STATION

MOSS VALE JUNCTION

The junction with the line from Unanderra joins the Main South on the down side in a triangular connection. From 1930, the North Fork of the triangle was built to allow 57 class engines to turn as they initially operated between Moss Vale and Cootamundra. The North Fork of the triangle did not connect with the main lines. In 1983, the North Fork of the triangle was re-instated to allow coal trains from Tahmoor colliery to pass directly onto the Unanderra line. It is possibly that the original triangle for 57 class was modified at that time to join the North Fork with the main lines. Moss Vale Junction signal box was at platform level and opened in 1929, being the last signal box to open on the Short South for the next 50 years.

Before reaching the platform at Moss Vale, there is on the down side the location of the former, derelict, former locomotive rest house. It was of brick construction and was constructed primarily as a result of the increased need for barracks accommodation following the commencement of 57 class running, which initially operated between Moss Vale and Cootamundra. Ray Love advises that it was planned in late 1933 and built in 1934. He states that it was of the type of rest house where access to the individual bedrooms was from a central, internal corridor. There were open-fronted verandahs on each side of the structure at the end where the kitchen, dining room and bathroom were located. In 1934, the southern end of the verandah on one side was enclosed.

The location of the former barracks is prime real estate and, over the past 20 years, there has been a considerable interest from the private sector to purchase the land. One of the forces acting against the disposal of the land was its heritage significance but, with the abolition of the RailCorp heritage unit, there was no internal defence against the avarice of those interests which saw nothing but an old building. Strangely, the barracks were demolished in 2013 to make way for a commuter car park, which was a gross under-use of the valuable real estate. In January, 2014, the 56 space car was opened.

Originally, Moss Vale had a 60 foot turntable but this was replaced by a 75 foot model in 1929. The site of the former 75 foot turntable was incorporated into the Endeavour diesel rail car stabling facility on the up side, it in turn being removed in 1993.

MOSS VALE

THE PLATFORMS

The original platform was lengthened in 1901. The Southern Mail, 27th September, 1901, p. 2 conveyed that "it is the intention of the Commissioners to enlarge the platform at the Moss Vale railway station so as to accommodate two trains. This will necessitate the platform bring lengthened by about 100 feet." The platform was lengthened again in 1908. The *Picton Post*, 28th November, 1908, p. 4 stated that "the work of expanding the Moss Vale railway station by 150 ft. in length is to be carried, out shortly, the alteration being at the Exeter end. This extension has become necessary owing, to the considerable increase in the length of trains of late years, and will prove a great convenience to the railway officials as well as to the travelling public. It is also the intention of the Commissioners to lower the main line, in the vicinity of the station premises by, about, 8 inches. This, also, will be a benefit to travellers, as the distance between the floor of the carriages and the platform is at present rather greater than can be negotiated with any degree of comfort, while to the unwary it possesses also its dangerous aspect. A gang of men has arrived in Moss Vale to carry out the improvements above referred to, which will take probably two months to complete."

The *Robertson Advocate*, 28th July, 1914, p. 2 stated that "extensive alterations are to be made to the Moss Vale railway station in conjunction with the duplication of the line. An island platform is to be created by running the line alongside the eastern side of the station, also there is to be a large assembly platform, with abilities for reaching it by motor car or vehicle."

The yard was remodelled in March, 1999, to accommodate the then proposed Endeavour car fuelling and stabling area. A casualty of the work was the removal of the last co-acting, semaphore signal on the NSW rail system on 26th May, 1999. It was located adjacent to the Up Main, about 100 metres north of the pedestrian bridge at the up end of the platform.

THE STATION MASTER'S RESIDENCES

The Station Master's residence at the top of an embankment on the down side has a date plaque with the date "1869", two years after the line opened. The dating is a puzzle. At the time of line opening, stand-alone residences for Station Masters were not built. The Station Masters resided in nearby gatehouses. Stand-alone residences were not provided generally until the mid-1870s, as was the case at Picton in 1877 and Mittagong in 1874. The approval and construction of the Station Master's residence at Moss Vale is a mystery. The residence was vacated by the Station Master in 1917, when the existing Jc3 type concrete building was erected in Argyle Street.

THE SIGNAL BOX

The elevated signal box opposite the station dates from 1916 at the time of duplication.

THE FAMILY OF PLATFORM BUILDINGS TO WHICH THE 1867 MOSS VALE STATION BUILDING BELONGS

The 1867 building at Moss Vale belongs to a group of platform buildings which followed roughly a Georgian influenced design. The design features were:

- Rectangular shape,
- Symmetrical plan based on centre, pedestrian access,
- Attached pavilions with lower roofs at both building ends,
- A hipped roof of uncluttered appearance,
- Posted awnings, &
- Moderate in size and restrained in decoration

John Whitton implemented the first prototype example at Campbelltown in 1858 and revised the design in 1862 for the first production example at Penrith, and Singleton and Picton in 1863. By 1871, Whitton had used the design family of which Moss Vale belongs for the last time. Between 1858 and 1871, the following locations featured the Georgian influenced design upon the opening of the three trunk lines:

- Campbelltown (a slightly different prototype design)
- Picton
- Mittagong
- Moss Vale
- Parramatta
- Penrith
- Mount Victoria
- Bowenfels
- Singleton
- Muswellbrook
- Scone
- Murrurundi

It is of interest that each of the trunk lines received four buildings of the same design.

Whitton had Government approval and funding to take the three main trunk lines to Goulburn, Bathurst and Murrurundi and these lines represent the first period of trunk line development. When the lines reached their initial destinations, there was a lively debate in government and elsewhere about the best way, meaning cheaper, of extending the trunk lines further. What emerged as Government policy was a need for Whitton to build cheaper platform buildings in the early to mid 1870s. Throughout

the 1870s, Whitton moved away from his beloved Georgian influenced design, and used temporary structures and combination offices and residences. He also commenced trials, at Gunning, with a new design in 1874 using for the first time a gabled roof as the dominant form of roofscape. It was at Gunning that the idea of a stand-alone residence for the Station Master was first implemented.

From the mid to late 1870s, there emerged a design for more structures with much higher levels of ornamentation and much larger size. Buildings at Newcastle, Sydney (the second station), Wagga Wagga, Tamworth, Albury and other locations became locations for the use of Whitton's First Class design. He used his gabled roof design, later known as the standard roadside station, as a third class of platform structure. How did he plug the status gap between the First and Third class buildings? He re-introduced the Georgian influenced design that he had applied at Moss Vale and elsewhere. The work of replacing buildings was taken from Whitton in 1879 but there was no change in the design for the Second Class of platform building on existing lines. The list below shows those examples where Whitton and his subsequent design colleagues, William mason and George Cowdery, used the same design as at Moss Vale as replacement structures or new structures on existing lines between 1876 and 1889.

- Binalong
- Blacktown
- Burwood
- Honeysuckle Point
- Eskbank
- Greta
- Harden
- Morpeth
- Newbridge 1877
- Newtown (1876) asymmetrical with one attached pavilion
- Richmond
- Riverstone
- Lawson (1879)
- Liverpool (1879) used of gabled rather than hipped ends for the roof
- Granville (approved in 1880) with matching brick waiting shed
- Spring Hill (1885) asymmetrical with two semi/unattached attached toilet pavilions, centre transverse gable
- Stanmore (1886) an improved version with hipped roofs for the main roof and also on the attached, balanced pavilions
- Windsor (1883)

Twelve examples were built as the First Class of platform building between 1858 and 1871 on new lines and 17 examples were built as the Second Class of platform

structures between 1877 and 1889 on existing lines. All 29 examples shared the same, simple hipped roof and attached pavilions with parapeted walls.

THE MOSS VALE PLATFORM BUILDINGS

Moss Vale station is a composition of three buildings – the 1868 building on the up platform, a 1915 booking and parcels office transverse to the rail lines and the large, 1890 Railway Refreshment Room (RRR). Moss Vale is unusual in that vehicular traffic crosses over the Down Main and terminates between the two main lines, in similar fashion to Blayney and Tocumwal and, in a fashion, Cootamundra West.

In 1866 John Whitton approved a plan for a building at Moss Vale similar to the present building reflected the Georgian influence. In 1867, he approved brick buildings at Mittagong and a second plan for Moss Vale, both with hipped roofs covered with slates, as was the 1866 plan. This second plan was a copy of the building he provided at Picton but was a little shorter. There is some confusion as to who was the contractor for the Moss Vale building, Fred Horn, the Goulburn Mayor, or John Howard. It is possible one party held the head contractor and another party did the physical construction. It was known to occur at other locations.

The second plan was for a slightly larger building (84 feet long) with six rooms. The building contained "urinals", a ladies' waiting room and toot, general waiting room, a booking office, a parcels office and porters/lamps room. It seems this latter plan was used for the present building but there is no signature on the plan. The contract was signed on 20th April, 1867. There were no Vice-Regal rooms provided at the time of line opening as the official residence for His Excellency was not purchased until 1882. A carriage shed built for the Governor's carriage at Moss Vale in 1884.

The Vice-Regal entry and waiting room dates from 1889. James Angus, the newly appointed Engineer for Existing Lines, extended the platform building by

- 1. building additional toilets at the rear of the ladies' waiting room (now at the down end) with a skillion roof, a new detached male toilet with a Dutch gabled roof (vents in the roof ends) and a Lamp Room with a parapeted roof,
- 2. Adding a porch at the rear to the "Hall", a new general waiting room, a "Private Room" and a Gents' Waiting Room and Store,
- 3. New slate roof,
- 4. 14' 6" ceiling height,
- 5. Built by contract,
- 6. Circular gussets in cantilevered brackets supporting the awning, &
- 7. End parapeted building now only at up end.

In the list of seven attributes, one stands out. It is No. 6, being the use of cantilevered brackets in place of vertical columns. In the brackets were circular gussets which Chief Commissioner Eddy liked and from 1889 their use accelerated and the circular design also inspired him to use the circle as a concept for a range of

uses including windows in station doors, elevated locomotive water towers and windows in engine cabs. The replacement of vertical awning posts with cantilevered awning brackets was viewed by both railway officials and the travelling public as a sign of station modernisation. The replacement programme continued for the next 70 years, reflected in the replacement of the awning posts at Picton in 1963.

When the 1889 approved work was completed for the Colonial Governor, with his own entry and waiting room, the Governor was unimpressed. It seems that the Governor then demanded closure of the Mittagong railway refreshment room (RRR) and its relocation to Moss Vale. That way, the Governor Lord Carrington (NSW Governor 1885-1891) was not delayed as his carriage was attached to regular passenger trains. When the RRR opened at Moss vale in 1891, the Governor had a suite of room in the new building on the first floor. The waste of public funds at the time involved the abandonment of the substantial two-storey building at Mittagong, the construction of new rooms in 1889 in the 1867 building and, in just two years, their abandonment for new accommodation in 1891 in the RRR structure.

Well-known author, C.C. Singleton, says that the plan of the station yard is attributable a request by Governor Strickland, who had an invalid daughter. His Excellency wanted privacy to allow his daughter to transfer between the Governor's carriage in the dock platform and a road vehicle.

By 1922, the State Governor was using his official motor car and his rooms on the first floor of the RRR became largely redundant. In that year, they were converted into additional bedrooms for RRR customers. Hill View ceased being the official residence in 1957.

The *Wollondilly Press*, 22nd December, 1909, p. 1 reported that the station was in the course of being lit by electricity. However, as was the case at many stations, there was a dispute between the NSW Railways and the local council, which was the generator of electric power, over the tariff. The *Robertson Advocate*, 12th April, 1912, p. 2 reported that "the trouble between the local council and the Railway Commissioners regarding the lighting of the Moss Vale railway station has been satisfactorily arranged. The Mayor (Dr. H. Leighton Jones) paid a visit to Sydney and met the Chief Electrical Engineer for Railways and discussed the subject at length with him.

As a result of the interview the Mayor submitted a minute to the last meeting of the council recommending that electricity be supplied to the Commissioner for lighting the Moss Vale station at the rate of 8d per unit up to the amount of £15 per quarter and that any amount used in excess of that amount be charged for at the rate of 4d per unit. After considerable discussion the minute was adopted."

In 1911, additions were made between the 1867 building and the RRR and the awning was extended in front of the two buildings.

In 1915, a gentlemen's waiting room was in existence on in the up platform building. Moss Vale was one of only 19 buildings on the NSW rail system to have a gentlemen's waiting room, all of which were provided after the departure of John Whitton. Nine of the 19 stations were located on the Main South, suggesting that the southern line was the most important of the three trunk routes. Also, Robert Ranken, the Engineer-in-Chief for Existing Lines, approved the existing covered way between new down platform and the RRR and toilets. As part of the project was the erection of the present booking and parcels offices between the two platforms. He additionally approved the present canopies on the down platform.

In 1934, there was to be an extension of the 13 feet wide awning on the down platform by 270 feet. A total of 18 standard awning brackets was to be used to match the existing brackets at 15 feet centres. The work was not approved and not carried out.

From the 1930s to the time of the creation of CityRail in 1889 nothing happened at Moss Vale station. The inaction was completely consistent to what happened at most NSW railway stations. There was one exception in relation to Moss Vale. The lantern roof in the male toilet was raised with a 12 feet wide ventilating cowl in the ridge.

It was not until 1992 that Moss Vale station received major renovations to the platform buildings to provide them to CityRail standards. In 1986, the ticket office had been relocated to up platform building from the transverse building but was relocated back to the transverse building as part of the 1992 upgrading works. The station today basically reflects the changes from 1992.

In January, 2014, NSW Trains proposed between April and December, 2014, to carry out "improvements to the forecourt, new bike racks, upgraded footpath and new kiss and ride space plus CCTV improvements". The proposed visit in November will determine the extent to which the works have been carried out.

THE RAILWAY RERESHMENT ROOM

The Mittagong RRR was amongst the earliest on the NSW rail system. It was opened in 1873 at considerable expense and closed in 1893 after the Moss Vale RRR was completed and opened in 1891.

The largest platform building that James Angus approved in 1890 was the last, large RRR on the NSW railway system. He erected it at Moss Vale and the building was significant in three respects. Firstly, it was among the very first new buildings erected without the use of vertical posts to support the platform canopy. Previous experiments at Raglan and elsewhere involved small brackets and narrow awnings. This was the first application of large brackets supporting a wide canopy. The use of cantilevered awnings proved so popular that a programme was immediately implemented across the NSW rail system to replace posted verandahs. Secondly,

James Angus, Engineer-in-Chief for Existing Lines, approved the design of the building in the Federation Free Classical style and, thus, represented a very early use of a building style that was moving away from the 19th century Victorian styles. Thirdly, it was one of the last platform buildings to feature slate for the roofing material.

The refreshment room building was very attractive with multi-paned upper window sashes, curved moulding for sills under windows on the road elevation for the first floor, sandstone lintels, sills and trim, a cedar counter and fittings and a panelled ceiling. The two-storey building was 110 feet by 50 feet and was 45 feet in height. There were seven bedrooms on the first floor plus the Governor's Dining Room and Governor's Private Room. It had a 60 feet by 40 feet public eating area. Like most large RRRs, the facility had its own poultry yard.

There was timber stud partitioning between the upstairs bedrooms and other rooms and this would have been a very early use of dividing rooms using timber partitioning.¹ It seems that the Governor was not favourably impressed with the appearance of the work and improved fittings for the Governor's waiting room were carried out in November, 1890, before the opening of the facility on 12th January, 1891.

Conservation Architect, David Sheedy, says that the building the style is transitional, having some classical influences to the window lintels, roof parapets and interior pilasters. Conservation Architect, Peter Freeman, calls the decoration "functional and florid, and was an early example of Federation Free Classical style". The contractor was Messrs. Dean and Sons and the wok was conducted under the supervision of T. Johnson, a Government Inspector of Works. It is noteworthy that the Railway administration did not supervise the contract work. The Press reported favourably on the building. The Scrutineer and West Camden Advocate, 23rd December, 1890, said that the building was "an ornament for the town" and "the best on the Southern Line". The notation is expressed in the newspaper that local people wanted to believe that the NSW Railways had provided a building for their town that was superior to all other towns. The newspaper also expressed astonishment that the building had been completed in such short time. The Sydney Evening News, 2nd January, 1891, p. 6 stated that "the railway refreshment rooms at Moss Vale were opened for business yesterday. They attracted a large number of sightseers, and were much admired for their grand appearance."

The Moss Vale Railway RRR closed in 1962 or 1967, depending on which source one supports, though there was a café operating on the down platform until about 2002 in part of the former RRR. There are extant reminders of the privileges of Vice-

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¹ This partitioning may have occurred in 1892 when two additional bedrooms were provided.

² P. Freeman, Moss Vale Conservation Management Plan, Vol. 1, p. 14.

Regal office enjoyed by the colonial and state governors. The existence of a Vice-Regal waiting room and the up dock platform are obvious features, not to mention the RRR itself.

The provision of the RRR at Moss Vale gave a big boost to Moss Vale as a railway town, but at the expense of the closure of the RRR at Mittagong. The *Evening News*, 11th September, 1890, p. 6 gave the first report of progress. "The erection of the railway refreshment room at Moss Vale is proceeding rapidly, a large number of men being employed. Tenders have also been accepted for a post-office, council chambers, and a Masonic Hall."

A second report was available in December. The *Evening News*, 18th December, 1890, p. 5 reported that 'the new building for the railway refreshment rooms at Moss Vale is drawing towards completion. The principal room is a magnificent one. A banquet is to be held tonight, and it promises to be a grand affair. The Railway Commissioners have been invited. A dance takes place after the banquet."

The *Evening News*, 2nd January, 1891, p. 6 stated that "the railway refreshment rooms at Moss Vale were opened for business yesterday. They attracted a large number of sightseers, and were much admired for their grand appearance."

The Goulburn Evening Penny Post, 11th October, 1890, p. 6 said that "Mr. J. W. Melrose, railway surveyor, with a staff of nine, is now taking the necessary levels to establish a water supply for the railway at Moss Vale, and probably the township itself." Such action was taken because the NSW Railways tried to align stops for refreshments for passengers with stops for refreshments for locomotives in order to save time."

In 1917, the Goulburn and Moss Vale railway refreshment rooms were taken over by the Government from the various private enterprises that held the licences. There was much anger at this arrangement by local businesses as they thought, correctly as time found out, that 'the change is likely to be seriously felt by Goulburn storekeepers and others, as bread, pastry, groceries, cordials, and other goods now purchased in Goulburn will, it is understood, be obtained in Sydney."

The RRR building was significant in two design respects. Firstly, it was among the very first new buildings erected without the use of vertical posts to support the platform canopy. When the RRR was built, the opportunity was taken to replace the existing, timber vertical posts on the 1868 building. The use of cantilevered awnings proved so popular that a programme was immediately implemented across the NSW rail system to replace posted platform verandahs. Secondly, James Angus, Engineer-in-Chief for Existing Lines, approved the design of the building in the Federation Free Classical style and, thus, represented a very early use of a design that started to move away from the 19th century Victorian styles.

Over the next 20 years a number of changes were made to the refreshment room building. In 1916, there were alterations to the counter to accommodate entry from the new down platform. A 6 inch thick concrete floor was laid in cellar. In 1918, three timber bedrooms for female RRR staff accommodation were removed and replaced by a seven brick bedroom extension and related bathroom accommodation. In 1927, a two-storey extension on the eastern side was added to the RRR, as well as internal alterations to the RRR. In 1930, "improvements" of unknown type were made to the hall entrance of the RRR. A 4 inch thick, re-inforced concrete slab was used in place of the timber floor on a frame of old 80 lbs rail in the RRR.

In 1946, there was proposed to be an extension to accommodate ten extra staff rooms, upstairs accommodation for the Sub-Manager and other updating of the entire RRR. The staff accommodation was cancelled on 11th November, 1946. In 1947, new shelving and storage was provided in the RRR as well as new arrangements in the "Dishwashing Room and Sandwich Room". In 1948, there was a new hot water and steam service at RRR. In 1950, the partitions in the RRR between the Dining Room and the Light Refreshment Room were removed and replaced by a counter 2 feet 3 inches wide with stainless steel skirting, the front being covered with polished Queensland maple plywood with Masonite to the top.

In 1951, a new male bathroom and alterations to the existing ladies' bathroom in the RRR were completed. One and a half inch thick terrazzo slabs on the bathroom floors. The windows were fitted with "Supa" louvers. The stud walls were to be covered with "Colterro" lathing and cement render to provide a key for wall tiling to a height of 6' 6". Nothing happened at that time and a second plan was issued in 1954. The improvements were undertaken at that later time.

In 1957, female staff accommodation was provided on the first floor of the RRR on the down side, consisting of three bedrooms, a bathroom and a sitting room. "Nylex" vinyl floor tiles were placed on the timber floor. The work was completed on 7th January, 1959. These were the last new works relating to the issue of food and drink.

In 1966, the former staff room at the RRR on the up side was converted to an Amenities Room for Enginemen. The work was completed on 18th July, 1968. The use of buildings and spaces on platforms, usually the domain of the Traffic Branch, by other branches was widespread throughout the 1960s and was a sure sign of dwindling passenger traffic. At this time, the building was allowed to fall into disrepair as there was a widespread understanding that there was insufficient money available to keep largely unused station buildings maintained. Sometime in the 1960s, the RRR had closed but for the previous ten years the facility had operated under the rebranded banner of the T.C.S., meaning Trading and Catering Services. After almost ten years after closure, the former T.C.S. space was remodelled in 1975 into a combined amenities room for enginemen and guards. The stud walls were covered with Villaboard sheeting. It was also a sign of the times that enginemen and

guards, who belonged to different branches of the Department of Railways and different trade unions, would share the same physical space. It was an indicator that the power of the unions was starting to diminish.

It was not until 1984 when Don Archer, who was Acting Chief Civil Engineer, approved the allocation of funds to repair the RRR. Comprehensive works were undertaken to the roof, windows, external doors, eaves, brickwork, stonework and internal cleaning. In 1986, Kevin Ryan, the then Chief Civil Engineer, approved major renovations, including small parts of the RRR for use as shunters' toilets and a meal and locker room. Major repairs were made to all spaces. An unusual feature was a new room named "Waiting Room 2" on the down side. The gardens were revitalized.

For several years, Skeet's RRR was located in part of the former RRR building on platform 2. Bob Hooley served light meals every day of the week but the facility closed in about 2002 because State Rail realised there was asbestos in the building. The Macarthur Model Railway Club was also served a notice to quit the premises because of the dilapidated condition of the premises. Some remedial work has been carried since that time.

OTHER INTERESTING STUFF

There is a tri-level "Moss Vale" station nameboard at both ends of the down platform. That sign dates from the early 1990s and not the new-wave of tri-level signs applied to the new Glenfield building in 2013. Also visible from a train in the down platform are old-style outlines of a hand-pointing signs to both the ladies' and men's toilets. Other rare signage exists at the station, such as "Telegraph Office".

The up dock has brick walls and is corbelled, in accordance with the practice at the time of duplication of the line. The present down platform canopy dates from 1915 with duplication. R. and B. Wheatley, *Railway Portraits*, Vol. 2, privately published, 2006, p. 86 has a photograph taken in 1968 showing the up end dock.

Two unusual seats on the down platform. Note also the rare use of vertical boarding behind one of the seats but they are void of the higher backs that were provided on island platforms in Sydney. Behind the platform is the two-storey structure which was built in 1927 for supplementary accommodation for the RRR. There is also a rare case of the use of concrete unit construction for a non-corridor residence built for the Station Master located at 239 Argyle Street.

The cart weighbridge survives. It is one of the few weighbridges manufactured by W.B. Hawke in Kapunda, South Australia. Moss Vale also possessed the very last use of the rare (for NSW Railways) somersault signal. A photograph appears in the April, 1988, edition of *Railway Digest*, p. 142

At the extreme down end of the platforms, a 54,000 litre fuel tank was erected in early 1982 to service engines involved in local working. It went out of service sometime after 1990. The South Dock was removed on 19th January 1995.

The rail bridge over Argyle Street marks the down end of the railway precinct. This structure, built in 1914, is a single span of 129 feet of the Pratt truss design. It replaced an earlier bridge, which was relocated for use over the Georges River at Liverpool to give access to the Moorebank military camp.

The Gundagai Times and Tumut, Adelong and Murrumbidgee District Advertiser, 29th May, 1883, p. 2 repeated an article from another newspaper, called *The Scrutineer* which said that "nearly 1000 gallons of milk are brought to Moss Yale railway station every morning from Robertson and Burrawang, by four-horse wagons. The company pays the supplier I0d per gallon and divides the cost of conveyance."

The *Evening News*, 19th July, 1899, p. 6 reported that "the Railway Commissioners have opened tenders for; extending the carriage-shed at Moss Vale, The lowest tender was £98 10s." Strangely, no roof was provided over the dock platform at the up end where the Governor's carriage was stabled.

Stuart Sharp

13th October, 2014