

CAMELLIA

The railway to Carlingford was constructed as a private railway owned by Benjamin Christian Simpson. Simpson's Railway Act was passed on 13 June 1893. It authorised that a railway be built from Rosehill to Dural in three sections, the first being from Rosehill to Pennant Hills (now Carlingford), the second to Castle Hill and the third to Dural. Mr Simpson contracted Horne and Shand, whose business had already constructed the Prospect Reservoir and the railway from Culcairn to Corowa. Work began on the first section on 29 March 1894. The first passenger train ran to Carlingford, then known as Pennant Hills, on 20 April 1896. Passenger trains from Carlingford first terminated at Rosehill, so passengers either transferred to trains from Sandown at Rosehill or steam trams at Camellia, then known as Subiaco. The private tramway that operated between Redbank Wharf and Parramatta crossed the Carlingford Line on the level just south of Subiaco Station.

Subiaco Station (Camellia) was located 113 metres north of the junction of the Carlingford Line (Simpson's Railway) with the Sandown Line (Bennett's Railway). It was 22.9 km from Sydney and 4.9 metres above sea level.

How did Subiaco get its name?

John Macarthur, a nephew of the famous sheep producer, had to sell his elegant stone mansion and estate when the Bank of Australia (of which he was Chairman) failed in 1843. He sold *The Vineyard* to Thomas Icely from whom Archbishop John Bede Polding, the first Catholic Archbishop of Sydney, purchased it for the Roman Catholic Church. The Archbishop invited some nuns to initiate Benedictine monastic life in Australia. Mothers Scholastica (Jane) Gregory and Magdalan (Constantia) le Clerc arrived from England in 1848 and soon took up residence at "The Vineyard". The convent was renamed Subiaco because Saint Benedict lived in a cave at Subiaco in Italy during the sixth century. The Benedictine Sisters resided in Subiaco house for 108 years between 1849 and 1957.

Although Subiaco Station was located on the south side of the Parramatta River, the estate was actually located on the north bank between Vineyard Creek and Bishop's Creek (later renamed Subiaco Creek).

The property was sold in 1961, and the historic mansion was demolished to make way for expansion of the Rheem factory. The Benedictine Sisters moved to a new monastery in Franklin Road, West Pennant Hills (now Cherrybrook), where they resided until 1988. The community was relocated to Jamberoo Abbey, from which they featured in a highly successful television mini-series titled *The Abbey* that was broadcast on the ABC's *Compass* programme during 2007.

A New Name

The State Government took over Simpson's Railway in 1901. Subiaco House was on the opposite side of the Parramatta River to Subiaco Station and was thus more accessible from Victoria Road Station (Rydalmere). Changing the name of Subiaco Station would eliminate any confusion. A proposed timetable

for the line in 1900 referred to Subiaco as Parramatta Tram Junction, but the station reopened with the government takeover on 1 August 1901 as Subiaco. However, the name changed to **Camellia** a few weeks later on 14 September 1901. The new name came from a local nursery, Silas Sheather's *Camellia Grove*.

When the double track was extended from Rosehill on 19 June 1902, the tracks converged into a single line just 47 metres south of Camellia Station. A mechanical signal box controlled the junction with the Sandown Line.

Hardies

Hardies was located on the Sandown Line. Nothing remains of Hardies Platform, which was only a hop, step and a jump from Camellia Station. James Hardy and Sons produced building materials and pipes in the nearby factory. The asbestos cement in some of their products explains why the ground in the area is polluted with this material. The original platform, which was located on the Down (western) side of the line, opened for employees on 4 April 1938.

Hardies Station was replaced by a new one on the Sandown side of the Grand Avenue level crossing on 18 June 1959. It was located on the Up (south) side of the line and consisted of a wooden platform standing on brick piers.

The Asbestos Slate and Sheet Manufacturing Siding, which opened on 25 October 1916, served James Hardie and Sons. It was located on the Down (northern) side of the Sandown Line. Frame B operated the points, which faced Down trains. The siding curved northwards towards the Parramatta River. The name changed to Hardies Asbestos Siding on 1 May 1926.

James Hardie promoted Fibrolite Asbestos Cement Sheets. Their advertisement claimed that the product was suitable for external and interior walls, ceilings, partitions, gable ends, eaves and linings. It was fire retardant, white ant proof, weather proof and "practically everlasting."

An additional siding for James Hardie was provided on 27 November 1944. Named Hardies Asbestos Siding No. 2, it had a separate connection to the Sandown branch and was thus operated by a new locked ground frame, Frame J.

Bernie Banton worked at James Hardie's plant from 1968 to 1974. He operated a lathe producing pipe parts and shaped blocks of asbestos for power stations. Like the other employees, he inhaled deadly dust particles, but was not told of the dangers.

By April 1985, the word "asbestos" was causing some embarrassment for firms that had used the material and was taken out of the names of Hardies Sidings. Both sidings serving Hardies were removed on 13 November 1990.

Bernie Banton, although suffering from asbestosis, led the compensation fight for workers who contracted asbestos related diseases, and his efforts eventually led to the establishment of a four billion dollars victims' fund. He died of peritoneal mesothelioma on 27 November 2007 at the age of 61.

Electric Trains

Electric trains began running to Carlingford on Sunday 9 August 1959 and to Sandown from Monday 10 August 1959.

Preserved electric locomotive 4615 was the last electric "train" to Sandown on 20 December 2002.

The Bridge

Tenders were called for the construction of a two-lane bridge to carry Grand Avenue over the railway at Camellia on 17 December 1980. Grand Avenue level crossing (located south of Camellia Station) was replaced by a large concrete overbridge in 1982, and the hand operated swing gates went out of use.

After staying in use for just 100 years, the bridge over the Parramatta River was replaced by a new steel pony Pratt truss structure during May 1996. The piers from the old bridge are still in use, although strengthened by being encased in steel tubes. The ornamental arched abutments remain for the present.

Safeworking

Ordinary Train Staff and Ticket Working stayed in use on the Carlingford Line until June 1992. The head of the Staff was round in shape and the tickets were red on colour. The section was "Camellia-Carlingford."

Although Camellia kept its 19th Century signalling technology until June 1992, the signal box itself was replaced on 1 November 1981 by one in a new brick building. The worn out "McKenzie and Holland 6A pattern rocker shaft type frame" was replaced by a less ancient 20 lever frame. It controlled the rodding for the mechanical points plus the wires for lower quadrant signals, which were still making use of kerosene lamps.

Rosehill and Camellia Signal Boxes were abolished on 13 June 1992. The complex junction at Camellia was replaced by a very simple one at Rosehill. It is operated from Parramatta Road Signal Box, where a pushbutton interlocking machine has replaced the old panels.

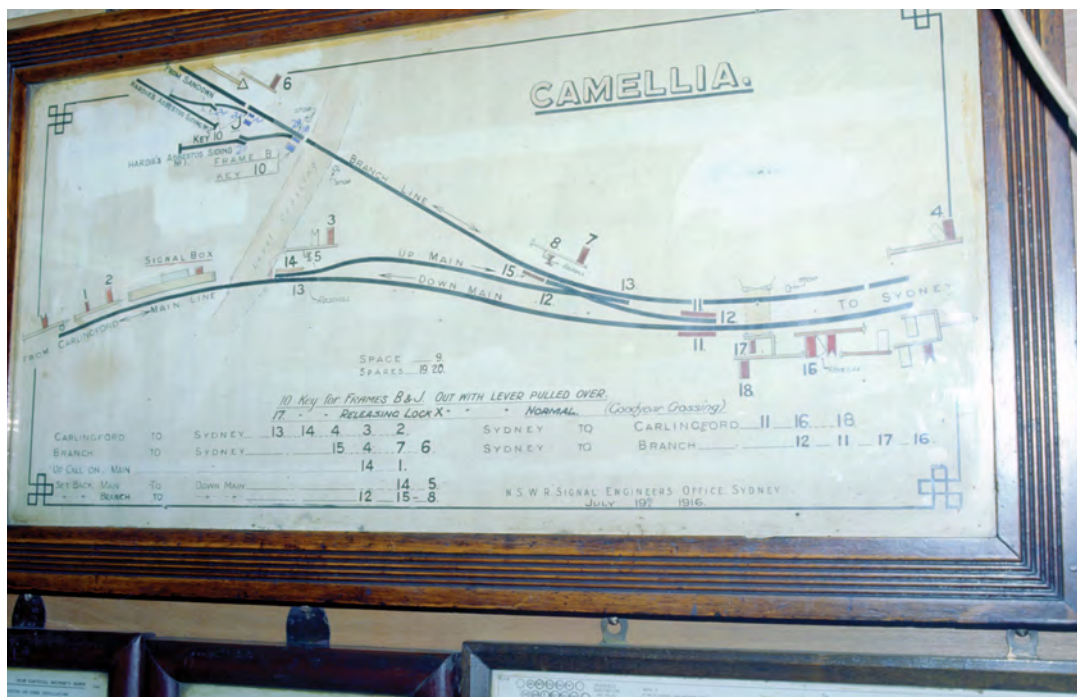
An axle counter at Rosehill replaced ordinary Train Staff safeworking on the Carlingford Line on 21 June 1992.



The second Hardies Station that opened in 1959 and closed in 1991. Hardies Asbestos Siding No. 1 curves off to the left. John Oakes.



The signal facing Up trains at Camellia Station. Note the fixed distant signal for Rosehill that always showed a red light at night. When the top arm was lowered, the signal would show green over red (caution) at night. The small signal arm is a wrong road signal. When the Up line was blocked by racecourse specials (or ambulance trains during World War II), trains from Carlingford could go around them via the Down line. Clearing required levers at both Camellia and Rosehill to be reversed. It could only be cleared if the Down signals at Rosehill were at "stop." 23 September 1991. NJ Simons Collection. ARHSRRC 059052.



The diagram in Camellia Signal Box. The connection from the Sandown Branch to the Up Carlingford line was in the form of a single slip. Note that Levers 12 and 13 operated the points in the single slip as well as related points in the Carlingford line. AS Hayne ARHSRRC 075322.



The first Hardies Platform was close to the junction. Camellia Station is in the left background. Note the wrong road signal that allowed trains from the Sandown Line to use the Down Carlingford line if the Up line was occupied by race trains (or the ambulance train during World War II. ARHSRRC 010028



The junction for the Sandown Line. Note the single slip in the Up Carlingford line. ARHSRRC 106795



The ordinary train staff and ticket box for the Camellia Carlingford section. ARHSRRC 106848



Camellia Station with a steam tram on the private Redbank Wharf – Parramatta steam tram line. CC Singleton Collection. ARHSRRC 005276

Parramatta Steam Tram

The tramway opened on 1 October 1883. Goods and passengers transferred from ferries to trams at Redbank Wharf (near the confluence of Duck River and Parramatta River) to bypass the shallow sections of the Parramatta River. The biggest customer was Meggitt Ltd of Parramatta, a firm that produced linseed oil. The tramway closed on 31 March 1943.



*Camellia showing the steam tram crossing and the Grand Avenue level crossing HH
Matthews Collection ARHSRRC 024045c*



The buildings on the Camellia Station platform and the Grand Avenue level crossing with the hand operated gates. The signal on the Sandown Line that protects the junction is behind the pole in the right background. ARHSRRC 100681.



Camellia showing the point rodding and signal wires. ARHSRRC 059049