BORENORE RAILWAY STATION

WHAT'S ON THE PLATFORM?

There are five structures on the platform. These are:

1. The timber mini-standard roadside station,
2. The timber detached toilet pavilion,
3. The precast concrete unit signal box,
4. A precast concrete unit electrical relay building, &
5. The corrugated iron out of shed with a gabled roof.

In the station forecourt, there is a recently built, brick rotunda for picnicking.

THE DESIGN FAMILY TO WHICH BORENORE BELONGS

The structure at Borenore was functional in design and lacked any strong architectural features that would induce anyone to provide a name design family. Perhaps, at a pinch, it could be called Railway Gothic New South Wales style.

The design that was classified by the Railway Department as standard roadside buildings in the late 1890s was introduced in 1880. In the clear majority of cases, the platform buildings were formed not by a single structure but by a suite of two or three buildings. The three sizes, with buildings being classified according to the length of the main structure, were:

- the mini-roadside measuring about 35 feet long (as at Borenore),
- the standard roadside at approximately 55 feet long (as at Narromine), &
- the five-room version (as at Molong), which varied from about 80 to 100 feet in length.

Above ground water tanks commenced to be approved in 1884 with Black Mountain station being the first, with Nubba and Muttama in 1885 and followed by Borenore and Nashdale in 1886. These cheaper means of holding drinking water were yet another sign of the squeeze on capital funds commencing well before the 1890 Depression.

The mini versions were approximately 40% smaller in floor area compared to the standard, three-room model. They were pretty standard in appearance compared with the three-room and five-room types. For example, virtually all mini examples possessed the following features:

- asymmetrical appearance,

- absence of pedestrian access through the building to the platform,
- location of the platform awning columns at the edge of the awning to reduce by 50% the amount of cast iron used in the brackets above the capitals,
- positioning of one chimney external to an end wall rather than being encased within an internal, masonry wall,
- constant building width,
- absence of finials on roof gables,
- above-ground rainwater tanks,&
- use of only one semi-detached pavilion[1],

However, there were variations at different times and places. For instance, at some stations there was no overall roof over the toilet block, with individual skillion roofs restricted to the male and female closets.

Below is a complete list of all the mini examples, which commenced to be approved from 1880. They were built in what is usually called the "boom time of railway construction." The boom time started to end in 1886 when capital money became extremely short in supply for the construction of new railway lines

TABLE: NSW STATION BUILDINGS - STANDARD ROADSIDE DESIGN –

MINI VERSIONS

YEAR APPROVED	LOCATION	BRICK OR TIMBER	ONE OR TWO PAVILIONS	CONTRACTOR	NOTES
29/10/1880	Ettamogah	Brick	One		
14/1/1881	Grong Grong	Brick	One	Charles Hardy	
14/1/1881	Table Top	Brick	One	J. Walton et al	Mini version – no heating
19/2/1881	Wongarbon	Timber	One	James Douglas	
26/4/1881	Henty	Timber	One		
17/2/1882	Pipers Flat	Brick	One	J. Button et al	
3/1882	Kentucky	Brick	One	c. Cook	
15/5/1882	Ben Bullen	Brick	One		

[1] There were two exceptions – Ben Lomond and Glencoe.

YEAR APPROVED	LOCATION	BRICK OR TIMBER	ONE OR TWO PAVILIONS	CONTRACTOR	NOTES
28/8/1882	Turrawan	Brick	One		officially called a "waiting shed"
10/3/11883	Bolivia	Timber	One	H. Henricks	
26/10/1883	Mount Frome	Brick	One	D. Mc Farlane	
20/11/1883	Guyra	Brick	One	George Michael	
1883	Trangie	Timber	One	Unstated	32' 6" x 12' 6' internal
1/12/1883	Glencoe	Brick	Two	A. Mathew et al	
1/12/1883	Ben Lomond	Brick	Two	M. Ashworth et al	
26/10/1885	Amaroo	Timber	One	J. Douglas	
26/10/1885	Borenore	Timber	One	J. Douglas	
5/1/1886	Waterfall	Timber	One	A. Coulton	
30/6/1886	Thornleigh	Timber	One	S. Smith	
10/8/1886	Teralba	Timber	One	J. Mc Donald	
22/2/1887	Lyndhurst	Timber	One	J. Ashworth	
22/2/1887	Mandurama	Timber	One	J. Ashworth	
6/4/1887	Hawkesbury River	Timber	One	Chas Palmer	
15/8/1887	Morisset	Timber	one		Date is opening date
27/10/1887	Woodstock	Timber	One	William Lewis	Mini version but a higher presentatio

YEAR APPROVED	LOCATION	BRICK OR TIMBER	ONE OR TWO PAVILIONS	CONTRACTOR	NOTES
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30/8/1888	Gordon	Timber	One	Alex Scouller	
24/9/1888	Chatswood	Timber	One		37 feet long - relocated and enlarged to 50 feet at Wollstonecraft in 1909

The Table below summarises the above information according to year and material.

TABLE: MINI ROADSIDE STATION BUILDINGS BY YEAR AND WALL MATERIAL

YEAR APPROVED	TOTAL NO. APPROVED	BRICK EXAMPLES	TIMBER EXAMPLES
1880	1	1	–
1881	4	2	2
1882	4	4	–
1883	6	4	2
1884	0	–	–
1885	2	–	2
1886	3	–	3
1887	5	–	5
1888	2	–	2
TOTALS	27	11	16

Of the total of 27 examples, 16 or 60% were constructed in timber, with the remainder in brick. If the mini version were used as a cost saving measure, why would the more expensive brick versions be used for 40% of the family members? The analysis of the mini versions helps understand the pattern of use of timber or brickwork. Certainly, the timber version was used exclusively to save money after 1885. The pattern of overall funding for the entire railways in the 1880s was an important factor but it was only one of two factors. The second factor was the cost of building individual station buildings and the use of brick or timber depended equally upon the availability of materials and the quantum of quotations supplied by

contractors. In other words, there were local factors involved in the cost process as well is colonial-wide factors. It is correct to make the broad statement that brick versions were used between 1880 and 1883 when there was more money available to the New South Wales Railways and timber versions were applied when capital funding was declining between 1885 and 1888.

What was the overall position for all versions of the standard roadside station in relation to the use of brickwork or timber? The Table below summarises the position.

TABLE: USE OF BRICK OR TIMBER FOR ALL ROADSIDE STATION BUILDINGS, EXCEPT THE SIX FIRST CLASS, FIVE-ROOM EXAMPLES (ST. PETERS-HURSTVILLE IN 1883)

YEAR	TOTAL 5 ROOM EXAMPLES BUILT	TOTAL 5 ROOM TIMBER EXAMPLES	TOTAL 3 ROOM EXAMPLES BUILT	TOTAL 3 ROOM TIMBER EXAMPLES	TOTAL MINI VERSIONS	TOTAL TIMBER MINI VERSIONS
1880	4	3	2	2	1	–
1881	2	1	6	5	4	2
1882	2	1	2	1	4	–
1883	1	0	3	0	6	2
1884	2	1	5	3	0	–
1885	2	1	6	3	2	2
1886	3	1	6	2	3	3
1887	1	0	6	6	5	5
1888	0	0	1	0	2	2
1889	0	0	1	0	0	0
1890	0	0	5	2	0	0
1891	0	0	2	1	0	0
TOTALS	**17**	**8**	**45**	**25**	**27**	**16**

The first thing obvious is that it was only the three-room version that was used between 1889 and 1891 and the structures built in this period in brickwork represented the near-last brick structures on new, rural railway lines.

The second obvious item is the virtual cessation of the use of the larger, five-room version after 1886. The third obvious aspect is the abandonment of the use of brickwork for the mini versions after 1883.

The period in which all three examples were utilised was between 1880 and 1888. That period of eight years can be divided based on funding levels into the time between 1880 and 1884, which was the boom time, and 1885 to 1888, in which time capital money became much more difficult to obtain. The Table below shows different rates of construction between the boom and not-so-boom time.

TABLE: NO. OF ROADSIDE BUILDINGS 1880-1884 & 1885-1888

VERSION	1880-1884	1885-1888
Five-room	11	6
Three-room	11	19
Mini	15	12
TOTALS	44	37

From the above Table, there was not much difference in the construction rate overall for roadside buildings between the two periods of more and less capital funding for this style of building. The next step is to see whether timber structures were more prevalent in one of the two periods in the following Table shows the outcome.

TABLE: TIMBER ROADSIDE BUILDINGS 1880-1884 & 1885-1888

VERSION	1880-1884	1885-1888
Five-room	6	2
Three-room	18	11
Mini	4	12
TOTALS	28	25

The above Table shows the impact of a reduction of capital from 1885. The strategy involved a near cessation of the use of the larger, five-room version in the second half of the 1880s, as well as the greater use of the mini version exclusively in timber after 1883. The case of the three-room version shows a different trend with brick versions being twice as popular as the timber examples after 1888. One would have thought that the same financial hardship affecting the other two versions would also apply but, surprisingly, the New South Wales Railways was able to borrow an increasing amount of capital funds in 1890 and 1891. That even surprise the Railway Department, which always believed that money should be spent if it was available.

CONSTRUCTION ARRANGEMENTS

Tenders closed for the construction of the earthworks and permanent way between Orange and Molong on 19th April, 1884.[2]

On the way to Molong were three stations. These were constructed by competitive tenders separate to the construction of the per way. Amaroo and Borenore were both three room, timber mini-roadside design buildings. Nashdale received a smaller, two-room structure with a gabled roof and an awning five feet wide formed

[2] *New South Wales Government Gazette*, 14th December, 1883, Issue 528, p. 6811.

by the extension of the roof rafters. It contained a general waiting room and a ticket office. James Douglas was the contractor for Borenore, Amaroo and Nashdale.[3]

Construction of the station buildings and gatehouses formed a separate set of contracts but the New South Wales Railways had trouble in attracting suitable quotations. Tenders closed for the first time on 3rd November, 1885, the construction of the station buildings at Nashdale and Borenore.[4] Tenders were called for a second time closing on 24th November, 1885.[5]

James Douglas was the successful tenderer for the building at Amaroo.[6] Douglas was also awarded a separate contract for the construction of the station buildings at Borenore and Nashdale.[7] While he signed the contract plan for Borenore, the date was unspecified, apart from "1886", which was strange as the press published his name as the successful contractor in December, 1885.

For what seems a somewhat strange reason, tenders for the construction of station buildings at Amaroo as well as four gatehouses formed a separate tender, closing initially on 3rd November, 1885.[8] Tenders were called for a second time closing on 24th November, 1885.[9] The four gatehouses were located at the following mileages – 200 miles 61 chains, 203 miles, 205 miles 68 chains and 211 miles 78 chains.

However, there was problems with the construction of the station at Borenore and in April, 1886, no decision had been taken about the site of the station.[10] In November, 1885, the press reported that local residents, Messrs Ardill, Stibbard, and Ivers, "formed a deputation to the Minister for Works to ask that the site of the Borenore railway station should be altered to a place 50 chains distant. The deputation alleged that the proposed change would be a great convenience to the settlers, and stated that some time ago a petition with 237 signatures had been presented to the then Minister for Works, praying for this very change." The press also reported that the Minister, William Lyne, replied that "before anything further was done he should make enquiry into this matter, and also into the question of calling for tenders for the station house, to see which of the two sites appeared to be most suitable. He should give it every attention, and see what he could do."[11]

At that time, the station at Borenore was located between mileages 200 miles 9 chains and 200 miles 30 chains.[12] Borenore station opened on 21st December, 1885.

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[3] *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 26th December,1885, p. 41.
[4] *New South Wales Government Gazette*., 13th October, 1885, Issue 474, p. 6698.
[5] Ibid., 30th October, 1885, Issue 515, p. 7053.
[6] *Evening News*, 16th December, 1885, p. 6.
[7] *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 9th January, 1886, p. 15.
[8] Ibid., 7th October, 1885, Issue 459, p. 6582.
[9] Ibid., 27th October, 1885, Issue 503, p. 6976.
[10] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 March, 1886, p. 4.
[11] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12th November, 1885, p. 6.
[12] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17th September, 1885, p. 5.

DETAILS OF THE BORENORE BUILDING

The Borenore building was 36 feet long and 13 feet wide internal. There was a nine feet wide platform awning with the vertical awning posts erected, unusually, towards the very edge of the platform.

The building at Borenore was constructed to the reverse of the plan. That type of change was not uncommon and the researcher could well wonder why the architectural plan was not prepared correctly in the first place.

There have been some alterations to the building since its construction. These are:

- The replacement of one rear window with a door,
- The elimination of the "passage" between the main building and the toilet pavilion,
- The demolition of the original rainwater tank,
- Replacement of the original three-rail fencing at the platform rear with a two-rail fence,
- Removal of the corrugated iron fence between the main building and the toilet block,
- Addition of non-original room tablets (i.e. signs with the room functions),
- The insertion of new male & female toilets in the Molong end of the main building, &
- The removal/replacement of the cast iron awning brackets.

In the 1990s, the station was leased to the Borenore Tennis and Social Club and the building became its headquarters. Now, the structure is vacant but is well maintained.

THE PLATFORM

The platform as built was 330 feet by 12 feet wide, extending to 15 feet wide in front of the suite of buildings. There were matching four feet six-inch-wide cart gates on the diagonal sections where the platform widened. The platform wall was brick sloping towards the rails at the toe of the wall. There were 15 feet long ramps at each end. The platform was two feet nine inches above the rail head.

All the platform characteristics were consistent with standard engineering design policy. The use of a brick platform wall and timber buildings identifies the interest and technical bias of the Head of Branch. The Engineer-in-Chief, John Whitton, was a track man – not an architect. His passion and priority was trackwork, not buildings, and he placed his track engineering background ahead of other technical matters. It is interesting to remember that it was Whitton's policy everywhere in New South

Wales to provide permanent platforms even when he provided no buildings, temporary or portable buildings or cheap structures, as in the case of Borenore station.

THE SIGNAL BOX

Dr Bob Taaffe, the guru of signal box design, indicates that three signal boxes were built for the intermediate crossing loops between Orange East Fork Junction and Molong in 1925 and all featured a different construction method. Nashdale opened as Cargo Road on 11th May, 1925, using large, flush-jointed, pre-cast concrete slabs. Borenore opened on 7th July, 1925, and featured smaller, rusticated, pre-cast concrete slabs. Also, the roof was steeper. Gamboola signal box opened on 8th May, 1925. It was a timber version of the pre-cast concrete unit type. Why the use of timber and not concrete at Gamboola? Bob Taaffe speculates that, maybe, it was built in timber because it was on the side of a steep embankment but then cites that the signal box at Wolli Creek was also on a similar steep embankment and it had a concrete unit base.

Perhaps the most interesting point made by Bob is his comment that "all of these signal boxes were provided in conjunction with the opening of the new main line to Dubbo via Yeoval. At one time, the Railway Department intended to close the Orange-Dubbo line via Wellington line and direct all traffic via Yeoval. When the signal boxes between Orange East Fork Junction and Molong were brought into use, a number of signal boxes/crossing loops on the line via Wellington were closed."

Bob, like everyone else, wonders about an explanation for the differences in design between the four signal boxes, including the one at Molong. He summarises by saying "only the use of a time machine might tell us."[13]

Signalling and safeworking historian, Graham Harper, added the following remarks:

> "Two new loops were opened in 1925 between Orange and Molong – Cargo Road, later Nashdale and Gamboola. Because of the grade, Gamboola was set up as and up and down main loop, with runaway catchpoints In the up loop. Borenore was already a crossing loop, but its interlocking was enhanced in 1925 with the provision of a signal box in readiness for the Molong-Dubbo traffic."[14]

WHAT WAS THE MOST INTERESTING PRODUCT SHIPPED BY RAIL FROM BORENORE STATION?

[13] Email from Dr. Bob Taaffe, dated 13th May, 2017.
[14] Email from Graham Harper on 15th May, 2017.

The answer is marble or, more correctly, blocks of marble. The most significant railway use of the product was for the construction of the Sydney terminus opened in 1906. One press reported stated that:

> "the finishing to the walls has been carried out in the booking-hall, also in the corridors and elsewhere, entirely in New South Wales marble, particularly from the Borenore quarries near Orange, and it may here be said in passing that this display of an almost hidden State wealth should be of the greatest assistance possible in developing what promises to-be an important industry."[15]

Until the time of the First World War, the marble quarry continued to operate, supplying both Australian and overseas markets. Government surveyors in 1912 investigated a route for a proposed railway from Borenore station to the marble quarry, four miles distant. The press reported that local landowners were "somewhat alarmed in consequence".[16] The siding did not eventuate. A quarry was also opened at Gamboola. After 1916, for whatever reason, there were no further press reports about the operation of marble quarries in the area.

Borenore station was a very busy place between the time of the line opening in 1885 and the opening of the railway line to Forbes in 1893 as it was the closest rail head to Forbes and became interchange point between Road and rail transport for Forbes.

Stuart Sharp

20th May, 2017

[15] *Molong Argus*,10th August, 1906, p. 20.
[16] *Molong Express and Western District Advertiser*, 15th Jun3, 1912, p. 7.