

ARHSnsw Railway Luncheon Club

Gunning and Beyond Tour

8, 9 and 10 November 2016.

Notes on the various stations to be visited

Prepared by Stuart Sharp.

Note:- Stations are listed in the order in which we expect to visit them, but note that we are not intending to visit Cunnigar. The notes for Cunnigar are included here as they form part of the history of the region.

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GUNNING

THE FIRST “CHEAP” STATION ON THE NSW RAIL SYSTEM

STANGE BEHAVIOUR – THE STATION OPENING 1875

John Whitton, the Engineer-in-Chief, did something, or rather some things, which were very unusual and he did these at Gunning in 1875. Number one was that he split the construction of the platform and the platform building into two contracts. He issued a contract to one D. Williams for the construction of a supposed 300 feet long platform and a second contract to one Mr Hines for the construction of the platform building. While nothing more is known about either gentlemen and neither built any other railway structures, as far as is known.

What was usual or rather became usual was that John Whitton issued these contracts on 6th August, 1875, which was a mere 12 weeks before the opening date on 9th November, 1875. Had the plans only been prepared at that late time? No! Whitton had approved the plans in March, 1875 – six months before he went to tender. John Whitton stands accused of deliberately delaying the issue of contracts so that the works would not be completed at the opening of the line in order to transfer any further expenditure on unfinished station items to the budget of the Railway Commissioner. That type of sneaky behaviour was one of Whitton's policies in order to save money and make his financial position look better.

The number two unusual act was the planning for the provision of a detached residence for the Station Master, in addition to the provision of platform buildings. Whitton had introduced combination offices/residences in 1869 at Wallerawang but decided not to use such a structure for Gunning. Why? Certainly, it would have been a lot cheaper than having the two separate buildings, especially at Gunning where the Station Master's house was planned to be two storeys. The provision of detached accommodation for the Station Master and his family at the time of station opening had only occurred once previously – at Campbelltown in 1858. Then, Whitton realised he would not be able to afford to provide dual buildings and erected no further dedicated residences for station staff until he got to Goulburn.

Although Whitton planned for the construction of a platform building and a detached residence, the contract for the residence at Gunning was not signed until 5th October, 1875, one month before the station opening. Clearly, Whitton had no intention again of completing the structure before the line opened. The initial contractor failed to start and a second contract was not signed until the 24th March, 1876, some four months after the station opening. Even at Goulburn, the Station Master's residence

was not built until 18 months after the station opening. It was Fred Horn, once again, who built the residence at Goulburn, along with carriage shed.

PLAY TIME FOR JOHN WHITTON

On the Main South beyond Goulburn, Whitton was playing with new designs for both stations and residences. He applied different designs at Gunning and Bowning and, after these, decided not to build any further permanent buildings on platforms. Even the great structure at Albury was completed over a year after the line was opened. Similarly, on the Main West, Whitton built structures to different designs as far as Orange and then abandoned all previous styles. On the Main North, Whitton's strategy was to build the smallest possible platform structures and eliminate all free-standing houses for Station Masters. Consistency of design did not revisit the NSW Railways until after 1880. In other words, the use of structures that were different to each other was typical behaviour by Whitton everywhere in the colony. Not finishing buildings was only one of Whitton's strategies. He also decided at some locations to provide zero platform accommodation or use temporary sheds which he moved from station to station.

What John Whitton approved for Gunning station was the expression of just one idea he toyed with in an attempt to lower construction costs and conserve his budget. While he would not again approve a permanent building to the approximate design of the Gunning building until 1880, he did utilise the design in the 1870s for the provision of temporary buildings at Cootamundra, Bethungra and Junee.

STATION BUILDING IDEAS STOLEN FROM THE VICTORIAN RAILWAYS

In 1874, the replacement for second terminal building for Sydney was opened. This was a magnificent Italianate designed structure and followed the train shed design measuring 236 feet by 48 feet.¹ Of course, train sheds were extremely rare in New South Wales with only three ever built.² Because of the unusual design, it is worthwhile questioning why the 1874 train shed was built. The evidence indicates that Whitton stole the design idea from the Victorian Railways, which had used nearly the same design and materials for the original Ballarat station. This was not the first time Whitton had appeared to steal station designs from the Victorian Railways.³

¹ see J. H. Forsyth, *Historical Notes on Main Suburban Line*, Vol. 1, Revised Ed., SRA Archives, 1981, pp. 6 and 7 for a full description of the building

² The 1855 termini for Sydney and Parramatta and the 1874 second Sydney terminus.

³ In 1858, Whitton stole the design for Campbelltown station, which seems to be a replica for the then new building at Flinders Street.

So where did John Whitton look for a new design that he could use at Gunning? Naturally, it was the Victorian Railways. Keith Turton wrote that Chiltern in Victoria [on the Albury-Melbourne line] was the brick prototype station for many similar structures.⁴ The Chiltern structure was built in 1874, one year before the approval for the new design at Gunning. Is that a coincidence or not? While the design of Chiltern and the building that would be provided at Gunning were different in some ways, Whitton would have been aware of the change in design that was being implemented in Victoria and, because he had a pretty competitive personality, thought that he could apply to New South Wales the idea of introducing a new design which would become a standard structure for the expansion of the rail network.

THE OPENING DAY

Neither the station building, nor the residence nor the goods shed were completed at the time of the station opening on 9th November, 1875. The story goes that the initial contract for the construction of the structures went to Mr. Hines but he defaulted and Fred Horn, the builder from Goulburn, took over the contract.⁵ Fred Horn had a railway profile. He was Mayor of Goulburn at the time the line opened to that town in 1869 and he also built station buildings at Goulburn, Marulan, Yass (Junction), Bowning, Tarago, Tarana and the second Sydney station in 1874.

One newspaper referred to the “temporary railway station” being used on the opening day.⁶

There was one interesting quote at the opening ceremony by John Whitton, who said that the 31-mile section from Goulburn to Gunning was the first section opened for traffic on what he called “cheap lines.”⁷

Because John Whitton did not complete the platform buildings at Gunning, the Railway Department was forced to erect a timber booking office at the cost of £246/13/9, a cost which was on top of the £1,514/7/8 for the permanent brick building erected by Fred Horn.

An odd thing about the opening ceremony was the absence of crowd excitement. Author, William Bayley, quotes a local source saying that, on the opening day:

“the crowd....., strange to say, visitors (on the first train) and locomotives in almost solemn silence. There was no hearty cheer, no waiving of handkerchiefs,,,,,, the wind and dust were disagreeable.”⁸

⁴ K. Turton, *6 ½” to Destiny*, Melbourne, Australian Railway Historical Society, 1973, p. 105.

⁵ *The Burrowa News*, 6th November, 1875, p. 2.

⁶ *Queanbeyan Age*, 6th November, 1875, p. 2.

⁷ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19th November, 1875, p. 5.

⁸ W. A. Bayley, *Yass Municipal Centenary History*, Municipality of Yass, 1973, p.

One can well imagine that the local community at Gunning was not too happy at all about the incompleteness of their station facilities and the forced use of a temporary platform. On top of the displeasure of the Gunning community was the angst of the people of Yass who by 1875 had known for a few years that John Whitton was not going to bring the railway into their town.

THE DESIGN FEATURES OF THE PLATFORM BUILDING 1875

On 20th March, 1875, John Whitton approved his new design for Gunning railway station. The features were:

1. Brick construction 53 feet 9 inches external by 14 feet internal 15 feet 6 inches external,
2. total absence of decoration applied to brickwork,
3. double hung window sashes each containing six panes of glass,
4. Gabled roof sheeted with Welsh slate,
5. symmetrically placed chimneys penetrating the roof ridge,
6. asymmetrical presentation with one detached pavilion (toilets and porters' room) with a transverse gable roof without a ridge ventilator,
7. Posted awning with chamfered timber posts,
8. Four rooms in main structure – parcels office, booking office, waiting room & ladies' room,
9. parcels office without public entry from the road approach,
10. 11 feet ceiling height,
11. Five, symmetrically set, double-doors 4 feet 6 inches wide leading to the platform, with two double doors from the waiting room,
12. three feet wide fireplaces,
13. Rear pedestrian entry to the waiting room,
14. Full-length verandahs on both sides,
15. turned, timber finials on gables,
16. fixed platform seat 18 inches wide without a back position between main building and pavilion,
17. 15 feet long "yard" between main building and pavilion with walls sheeted with corrugated iron,
18. Ladies' room acting as an antechamber to female toilet which was connected by a four feet wide "passage" in the semi-attached pavilion,
19. an omission of any words to describe the female toilet – plan left blank, &
20. four urinal stalls and one water closet 5 feet long by 4 feet wide in male toilet,
21. cess pit provided directly under toilet facilities.

On the same day that John Whitton approved the structure for Gunning, he also approved an exact copy for the proposed station at Yass. The Yass building was not

built and replaced by a combination office/residence, which similarly was not completed by the time of line opening.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE PROTOTYPE AT GUNNING AND THE “STANDARD ROADSIDE STATION

The platform building at Gunning was an experiment but it also was used as the prototype for a series of standard building designed buildings John Whitton would approve between 1880 and his departure in 1889. The Table below compares the differences between the prototype and the standard model.

TABLE: DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE GUNNING PROTOTYPE AND PRODUCTION EXAMPLES OF THE DESIGN ROADSIDE DESIGN

BUILDING ELEMENT	GUNNING PROTOTYPE	STANDARD EXAMPLES
Building composition	two structures – main building and one semi-attached pavilion	Two or three structures – main building and one or two pavilions
Roofscape	simple gabled roof	gabled roof often with transverse centre gable on one or both sides of roof
Length of main building	53 feet 9 inches	Variable between 50 and 55 feet
Scale options	Single version	Two versions – standard size (50-55 feet) or mini size (30-35 feet) for main building
Floor plan	transverse with imbalance of internal spaces on each side of entry	transverse with rooms each side of entry balanced on centre access
Pedestrian access	Off-centre rear of building in line with building wall	Centre of rear of building, some examples with entrance proud of building wall or Porched entry
Distance of yard between main building and pavilion	15 feet	Variable – length of an increased to create in each of a larger station
Location of chimneys	Symmetrically placed	Asymmetrically placed
Location of awnings	Both sides of building	Only on platform side
Location of windows	In main building, all windows on road side – one window in pavilion facing platform	In main building, windows on both sides of building – no windows in pavilions facing platform
Style of platform awning	Concave with concave ends	valanced ends using vertical placed timber

BUILDING ELEMENT	GUNNING PROTOTYPE	STANDARD EXAMPLES
		boarding
Awning columns	Timber turned	Timber turned or cast iron fluted or non-fluted
Extent of decoration	Finials on gables	More ornate finials on gables and additional treatment to barges on gables
Shape of underground rainwater tank	Oblong	Circular

The key features of the prototype at Gunning were retained for the production examples in the 1880s, these being:

- the rectangular building footprint,
- centre pedestrian access,
- the gabled roof,
- the use of semi-attached or detached pavilions,
- brick chimneys penetrating the roof ridge,
- the increase in platform width by 50% in front of the main building,
- the almost total absence of decoration, &
- full length platform awnings supported by vertical columns.

The main deviations away from the prototype at Gunning were:

- greater emphasis placed on the design of the pedestrian entry point,
- flexibility in the provision of the number of pavilions,
- flexibility of length of spaces between main buildings and pavillions
- symmetry of floor plan,
- two scale options – standard and mini versions,
- use of centre transverse gables to identify the pedestrian entry point.

Below is a Table with dates of approval of the stations that received the standard roadside design.

TABLE: LOCATION OF STANDARD ROAD DESIGNED BUILDINGS AND THEIR DATE OF PLAN APPROVAL

YEAR APPROVED	LOCATION
3/1/1880	The Rock
3/1/1880	Uranquinty
29/10/1880	Ettamogah
14/1/1881	Grong Grong
14/1/1881	Table Top
19/2/1881	Wongarbon

YEAR APPROVED	LOCATION
26/4/1881	Henty
12/7/1881	Whitton
12/7/1881	Willbriggie
28/8/1881	Coolamon
19/10/1881	Carrathool
27/10/1881	Walcha Road
12/11/1881	Boggabri
17/2/1882	Pipers Flat
17/2/1882	Capertee
3/1882	Kentucky
15/5/1882	Ben Bullen
28/6/1882	Narromine
28/8/1882	Turrawan
10/3/1883	Bolivia
27/6/1883	Clandulla
17/10/1883	Dumaresq
26/10/1883	Mount Frome
11/1883	Girilambone
20/11/1883	Guyra
1883	Trangie
1/12/1883	Glencoe
1/12/1883	Ben Lomond
1884	Blackheath
9/4/1884	Black Mountain
9/5/1884	Morundah
27/6/1884	Byrock
9/7/1884	North Yathong
10/9/1884	Lue
28/2/1885	Coolac
15/5/1885	Deepwater
15/5/1885	Dundee
23/6/1885	Sutherland
6/10/1885	Clifton North – to be sorted
26/10/1885	Amaroo
26/10/1885	Borenore
2/12/1885	Bulli
5/1/1886	Waterfall
13/5/1886	West Ryde
13/5/1886	Eastwood
30/6/1886	Thornleigh
6/7/1886	Michelago
27/7/1886	Cockle Creek
31/7/1886	Carcoar
4/8/1886	Cowra
10/8/1886	Teralba
10/2/1887	Broadmeadow (plan name = Lambton)
22/2/1887	Lyndhurst

YEAR APPROVED	LOCATION
22/2/1887	Mandurama
6/4/1887	Hawkesbury River
13/5/1887	Dapto
21/6/1887	Clifton South
15/8/1887	Morisset
27/10/1887	Woodstock
9/11/1887	Albion Park
15/8/1887	Ourimbah
1887	Gosford
30/8/1888	Gordon
24/9/1888	Chatswood
16/12/1888	Penrith (Nos. 1 & 2 platform)

The above Table lists 66 examples. Although the standard roadside design was the dominant group within the design family, there were another 40 examples which were variations of the design either being larger containing five rooms, possessed different toilet arrangements for used cantilevered brackets rather than vertical columns to support the platform awning. A total of 55% of the 106 examples in total family were of timber construction.

Basically, the production examples reflected considerable variation in relation to non-critical aspects while retaining the overall, major design ingredients. John Whitton varied elements such as the type and design of pedestrian entry, the use of centre transverse gables and the distances between the main building and pavilions in order to reflect the individual status and/or importance of the urban centre served by each station.

The very last example of Whitton's standard roadside design, although in one of the modified versions is not far from Gunning. It is located at Yass Town and was planned in 1891 and built in 1892. After that structure, Whitton's building influence died and stayed dead.

PLATFORMS AT GUNNING

The original platform was planned to be 220 feet long and 10 feet wide, extending to 15 feet wide in front of the building. Ramps 15 feet long were provided at each end of the platform. Gates were provided each end of the building diagonally set where the platform widened from 10 to 15 feet. A carriage dock 60 feet long was located at the Cootamundra end of the platform. What? Smart readers will twig that the contract for the construction of the plan provided for a 300 feet long platform. If one were to have a guess at which one was built, it would be the 220 feet alternative as it would have been cheaper.

The platform was extended 80 feet 1889 and a further hundred feet in 1907. As the carriage dock at the Cootamundra end of the platform prevented extensions in that

direction, the platform was extended in the Sydney direction. When track duplication was opened in 1915, both platforms were 400 feet long. As the platform was extended twice and it never became longer than 400 feet, it seems to add weight to the argument that the initial length was 220 feet.

At the rear of the platform, there was a two-rail timber fence proposed on the construction plan in 1875. Tony McIlwain, now a resident of Cairns, has obtained an undated photograph of the station which shows a picket fencing along the rear of the platform on both sides of the 1875 building. Either the proposed two-rail fence was not constructed or was replaced at some time prior to line duplication in 1915.

Both platforms have been radically shortened in recent years.

THE REFRESHMENT ROOM

According to Chris Banger, the refreshment room at Gunning opened on 11th July, 1877. At that time, the only other refreshment room on the Main South was at Mittagong.

All details about the Gunning refreshment room are unknown but from an 1879 newspaper article it seems that the service and/or the food were not outstanding. The article stated:

“We understand that the Minister for Railways has, determined to erect at Murrumburrah a first class refreshment room for railway travellers. Lavatories will be erected, and 20 minutes or more will be allowed for a first class dinner or supper. This change will not come one day too soon for the present accommodation at Mittagong and Gunning is daily receiving the execrations (meaning ‘utter curses’) of unfortunate travellers.”⁹

In September 1880, a refreshment room was opened at Junee and it seems that the Railway Department considered that, with the Junee room opened, there was no need for the Gunning facility. When this plot became known to the travelling public, there was utter disbelief in the lack of care for train passengers. One classic press article reported:

“It appears that it is the intention of the railway authorities to soon close the refreshment rooms at the Gunning station. If this is done, passengers will be obliged to go from Mittagong to Junee without refreshments of any kind, and by the mail trains this means a trip of nine hours, while those who travel by the mixed trains will be forced to take a luncheon basket with them or else starve

⁹ *Evening News*, 1st December, 1879, p. 3.

by the way. The mail train going south has already ceased to stop at this station for refreshments, although the one bound for Sydney still keeps up the old practice. It is understood that this has been done for a feeler; as if there should be no complaint made the Gunning refreshment room, it will be done away with altogether while, as intimated by one of our inspectors the other day, if the travelling public enter a vigorous protest against being starved, the probability would be that the authorities would at one make this station a permanent refreshment depot and take steps for enlarging the place and in every way making it more comfortable.”¹⁰

Gunning refreshment room appeared in a public timetable for the last time in the issue of 1st June, 1880. Its precise closure date is unknown but, in a newspaper article on 17th February, 1881, only the refreshment rooms at Mittagong and Junee were reported as being operational.¹¹

The history of the Gunning refreshment room is not widely known and it is as equally widely unknown that Gunning provided barracks accommodation for train crews on two occasions. The first one was at the time of the line opening in 1875 and the second time was for track duplication in 1914 and 1915.

TRACK DUPLICATION

Planning for the deviation and duplication of the Main South was well underway in 1914. In November, 1914, the Existing Lines Department prepared a drawing for a one room timber waiting room measuring 20 feet by 12 feet. It had a gabled roof which was sheeted with the normal No. 26 gauge, galvanised, corrugated iron sheeting. There was a nine feet wide opening facing the platform. The structure was absolutely without decoration. Standard metal brackets supported an awning over the platform nine feet wide.

Two designs of buildings were utilised for the duplication of Main South between Goulburn and Cootamundra. The basic difference was in the roof style with some examples having a single-pitched or skillion roof and others having a double pitched or gabled roof. The structure at Gunning on the Sydney-bound platform had a gabled roof, this design was usually provided for larger but, by no means large, urban centres. The structure at Gunning was typical of the time and was used at many other locations for duplication works on all lines. Like examples at all other locations around this time, the waiting room walls were not lined.

THE SIGNAL BOX

Until track duplication, there was no enclosure over the interlocking frame, which was located basically in the same position as the signal box is today. The points and

¹⁰ *The Goulburn Herald and Chronicle*, 6th September, 1880, p. 2.

¹¹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17th February, 1881, p. 6.

signals were interlocked in 1891. This is another example of puzzling discretionary expenditure that was incurred in the midst of the 1890s Depression.

Track duplication through the station occurred on 24th October, 1915, on which date the existing signal box was opened. In contrast to the new waiting shed on the Sydney-bound platform, the signal box had a single-pitched roof. What explains the different roof designs for buildings planned and constructed at much the same time? The branch structure of the Railway Department is the answer. The waiting shed on the Sydney-bound platform was planned by the Existing Lines Branch while the signal box was planned in the Office of the Signal Engineer. The various branches of the railway organisation did whatever they liked in terms of architectural designs and design standards. Branch Heads answered to no one in relation to building design.

The signal box interlocking frame contained 28 levers. As late as 1986, one Assistant Station Master worked the day shift but purely for the operation of the signal box.

At the time of duplication, there was an out of room located on the Cootamundra-bound platform in the position it is in 2016. The external walls were sheeted with corrugated iron, which was pretty typical for that type of structure. Also proposed but not built was a footbridge to be located near the out of shed. No out of shed was indicated in 1914 for the Sydney-bound platform but, as one exists today, it was built at some later time. In contrast to the out of shed on the Cootamundra-bound platform, the shed on the Sydney-bound platform featured horizontally set weatherboards on the external walls.

Dr Bob Taaffe tells us that the design of the signal box was widely used between 1910 and 1920 and similar structures continue to exist at Mittagong, Bowral and Wallendbeen on the Main South line.¹²

Graham Harper advises that closing facilities were provided in the signal box in 1958 allowing it to be switched out as required. Unlike modern facilities at other stations which had refuge loops, Gunning possessed old-fashioned refuge sidings where trains had to push back in order to gain access. It was a time-consuming exercise and often caused train delays.

POST-OPENING ALTERATIONS

Only two changes were made to the 1875 station building in its history. The first was in 1889 when unspecified improvements were made to the female toilet. The second alteration occurred over 100 years later. Countrylink undertook a survey of the station in 1889 and realised that the original, timber awning posts on the

¹² More importantly, the signal box at Mittagong with its mechanical levers continues to be operational in 2016 and is not the only mechanical signal box on the Main South but the only operational signal box south of Campbelltown.

Cootamundra-bound platform were in an unsound condition. In October, 1994, all the timber columns and brackets were replaced with similarly designed chamfered, timber posts. At the same time, replica timber finials were added to the gables.

CLOSURE

Staff were withdrawn from the station on 24th November, 1989, though John Forsyth maintains that the station was also closed on that day. Not so!

Countrylink tried very hard to improve passenger services. Yes, it provided new corporate signage, seats and bins at the station but, more importantly, it re-inserted Gunning as a stopping place for passenger trains.

In 2016, the blue and white signs of Countrylink have been replaced by the orange and white signs of NSW TrainLink.

Stuart Sharp

22nd September, 2016

A VISIT TO A SCARY PLACE

SCARY BOWNING RAILWAY STATION

HOW IMPORTANT WAS BOWNING STATION?

Neville King was a Safeworking Porter and worked at the station in 1940. He wrote a privately published his life on the New South Wales Railways and summarised the importance of the station as “not really a great productive business. The importance of the location of the station was for the train working.”¹³

OPENING OF BOWNING STATION, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE RETREAT FROM REALITY 1876

At the station on the Sydney side of Bowning, Yass (later Yass Junction), John Whitton, the Engineer-in-Chief, approved on 20th March, 1875, the use of the same design of building as he would use at Bowning. Whitton was under a lot of pressure from the people of Yass for not taking the railway line into the town. He considered it unwise to have an opening ceremony at Yass station and he decided that the next place that a ceremony would take place was Bowning. Whitton quickly got on the job and had the contractor, Fred Horn from Goulburn, plus Philip Highman and Henry Paynter sign the contract a mere four days after Whitton had approved the plan – 24th March, 1875. Such quick action did not happen often. Fred Horn also built at different times the station buildings at Goulburn, Marulan, Yass (Junction), Tarago and Tarana.

The station opened on 3rd July, 1876, and, in order to achieve completion of the platform building before the opening ceremony, he stopped work on the construction of the building at Yass and relocated the workforce to the Bowning project.

The Bowning structure was a combination residence/office design for Bowning, though it was not officially called a combination station. The title on the plan refers to “passenger station and residence.” It comprised of three bedrooms upstairs, as opposed to the smaller version of two bedrooms upstairs, such as was built at Wallerawang. The structure was built and survives today on the Cootamundra-bound platform. It was the last combination building erected on the Main South line.

Whitton had introduced the design in 1869 and, after eight examples were built up to 1876, abandoned the use of the design because of the high cost involved. The structure featured centre, stepped entry through the general waiting room and onto the platform. There was also a ticket office, a ladies’ room with one closet, a male toilet and a room for porters/lamps. The platform level was also provided living accommodation for the Station Master and his family and, while they had a kitchen and sitting room, they had no toilet for their exclusive use and were required to use the public facilities. It would be a safe bet to say the toilets would have been cleaner than normal. The hipped roof was covered in Welsh slate. The platform awning

¹³ N. G. King, *There's No Railway There Anymore*, privately published, no details, p. 48.

was supported by turned, timber posts. The platform was 245 feet long and 11 feet wide, except for the part of the platform in front of the building, which was 15 feet wide. This widening of the platform in front of buildings was the standard policy up until 1890. Three rail fencing protected the rear of the platform. There was a carriage dock at the Cootamundra end of the platform.

TRACK DUPLICATION 1912

A redundant out of shed, measuring 30 feet by 15 feet, was to be relocated from Wyong to Breadalbane in 1912 but was instead relocated to the Sydney-bound platform at Bowning for the forthcoming duplication. Oregon timber was used for the frame with “splayed hardwood weatherboards on external walls”. The footprint of the structure was reversed with the rear now facing towards the platform. In order to look as modern as can be, the former verticals posts supporting the awning were replaced by timber braces supporting a seven feet wide awning. Nine-inch square brick work formed the foundations and Malthoid was used for the damp course. There were no windows in new structure. It had a gabled roof covered with the usual galvanised, corrugated iron sheeting. The building was converted into a two-room structure in 1913 at Bowning though, apart from one of the rooms being used for a waiting room, no use was indicated as to the purpose of the other room.

The relocation and re-use of the shed on the Sydney-bound platform was consistent with the use of second-hand structures at Bowning station. In 1876, an existing barracks building was relocated to Binalong and Bowning station received a replacement from Gunning. The sheep yards were also relocated from Gunning in 1876 while a platform-level coal stage was relocated from Harden in 1880.

PROVISION OF REFUGE LOOPS

In 1920, down and up refuge loops were provided at Bowning and, in a way, converted the two side platforms into two island platforms. The use of up and down refuges around or adjacent to platforms occurred in a few places on the Main South, including Wallendbeen in 1920. Jerrawa, Cunningham and Harden was similarly treated.

Graham Harper has provided the following comments about the track layout at Bowning:

“The Bowning conversion was unusual, if not unique. I can’t think quickly of any other situation where an existing platform was islanded by a refuge siding which was served by an extension of that existing platform. A 1948 Working Sketch of Bowning indicated clearly that, by that time at least, there was no platform facing on the Up Refuge platform; it had either been cut back or never existed in the first place. In June 2009, the Down Refuge platform was extant, although minus rails.”¹⁴

¹⁴ Email from Graham Harper dated 29th July, 2016.

THE IMPACT OF THE 1889 TRAIN COLLISION ON THE COOTAMUNDRA-BOUND PLATFORM BUILDING

No, the 1889 collision did not have a physical impact on the building. It is a lot scarier than that.

After the station was closed on 30th of August, 1992, the combination building was put on the rental market and a sculptor took up residence and used the structure as a workplace. He reported seeing a ghost in the building at night time and he cited that, during sleep time, items would be moved around. He credits the existence of the ghost due to an involvement in a train collision 1889. Apparently, the station officer on duty felt guilty about his involvement in collision and, because of his misdeed, the spirit cannot escape the place used to work. How sad!

Only two buildings on the New South Wales Railway system are known to be haunted by ghosts. Bowring is one of them and the other is the engines barracks at Orange East Fork. As a precaution, no entry is allowed into the Cootamundra-bound platform building. Personal insurance usual does not cover scaring by ghosts.

Stuart Sharp
22nd September, 2016

BINALONG RAILWAY STATION

THE FIRST, FAILED ATTEMPT AT PROVIDING A PERMANENT PLATFORM BUILDING 1876

Well before the opening of the line to Binalong on 1st November, 1876, a plan had been prepared in May, 1876, for a combined office/residential structure, much in the design of the combination building that survives today at Quirindi – a building that also dates about the same time. While the Quirindi building was erected, its mate at Binalong was not.

The 1870s was playtime for Whitton and he was happy to implement and change his policy frequently in order to lower construction costs to meet his budget. His strategies included not providing platform buildings, providing temporary buildings and not completing buildings at the time of line openings.

DESCRIPTION OF THE FIRST PLATFORM BUILDING 1876

What happened in 1877 is further evidence that Whitton was not interested in the designs of platform buildings. At Binalong and Harden, Whitton implemented a system whereby he cascaded temporary structures from earlier stations. For example, at the station opening at Harden, he used a timber building that had been relocated from Yass. It remained in use until 1881, when it was sent to Towrang. At Binalong, the only evidence of the building was provided in 1877 was a remark in 1883 by the Station Master, who witnessed the destruction by fire of the platform buildings from his residence. He described the platform structure as “a weatherboard building of small dimensions”.¹⁵

The residents of Binalong had been in disgust of their pathetic station building since it was built in 1876 and they showed their displeasure in not organising an official opening ceremony for the event. Very few people even turned up to see the first train arrived.

THE STATUS OF THE VILLAGE OF BINALONG

Binalong residents shared the same view as people in other towns served by the railway system about the need to match station buildings with the status of the town served but it is interesting to note that this status sometimes did not relate to the size of the population and this was the case at Binalong.

There were two other factors that determine the class of building that the Railways would approve for a particular place and these were either the existence of the town as a centre of government with a courthouse, post office, police station and gaol for the residency of a particularly influential person who had influence to control Government policy. Binalong, while small in population, was an important town and had the status of being the first village established in New South Wales beyond that the limits of authorised settlement in the 1840s.¹⁶

¹⁵ *Southern Argus*, 24th April, 1883, p. 2.

¹⁶ B. Maher, *Binalong – Beyond the Limits*, 2003, privately published, Foreword.

The village of Binalong was pretty small in size population, which was recorded in 1881 as having 179 people. This was a decrease of 10 people over the previous decade from 1861.¹⁷

THE COMMUNITY PUSH FOR A REPLACEMENT BUILDING 1880-1883

In April, 1880, the Secretary of the Binalong Progress Committee sent a letter to the Railway Commissioner complaining about the poor condition of the Binalong station building and it was reported that the Commissioner replied that the residents of Binalong were “fully justified in asking for better accommodation.”¹⁸

Although approval had been given for a new station building, it was unclear whether the local residents had been informed. In August, 1881, rumours were floating around with one corresponded saying “I have heard it whispered that certain small repairs are to be executed. The people of Binalong and Burrowa will be satisfied with nothing short of the new station adequate to the requirements and importance of place.”¹⁹ No one thought highly of the efficiency of the Railway Department any town in New South Wales and Binalong was no different in that way. One view expressed was that a lot of money had been wasted in the area replacing culverts and other work, which was considered wasteful and the result of “official stupidity.” The community consensus was for a “commodious stations”.

The Committee appreciated the work of the local Member of Parliament, Thomas Slattery, to obtain a new station building and he emphasised to Government that the existing station building, which had been in place as a temporary structure since the opening of the line in November, 1876, was a “disgrace” but Slattery indicated in October, 1881, that the new station was “to be proceeded with shortly.”²⁰ The next month Slattery advised that money was available for the new station construction and repeated the assurances in December of that year.²¹ It is fair to say that, had not the fire destroyed the timber buildings in April, 1883, it is unlikely that the Railway Department would have proceeded with its plan for such a fine replacement building, despite the plan having been approved three years earlier.

DELAYS TO CONSTRUCTION

Delays between the dates for approval and construction seemed to plague the Existing Lines Branch and the death of the successful tenderer added to the delays in this case. In order to meet the very tight financial allocation, Whitton had reduced the size of river and creek openings under the main line and these quickly proved to be inadequate. The newspaper stated that “owing to the official

¹⁷ *Burrowa News*, 28th October, 1881, p. 2.

¹⁸ *Burrowa News*, 30th April, 1880. P. 2.

¹⁹ *Burrowa News*, 5th August, 1881, p. 2.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 28th October, 1881, p. 2.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 4th November, 1881, p. 2 and 23rd December, 1881, p. 2.

stupidity, £2000 per mile has been spent on this part (i.e. at Binalong) of the line – removing culverts, erecting new ones, and patching and mending a bad job – since its opening.”²²

The residents of Binalong were concerned at the delay in providing a new station building and the newspaper wrote that “this sum, I conclude (i.e. the money allocated to remediating Whitton’s original per way), would go far in building commodious stations when required, with good roads to and from them, and be far more usefully spent than in supporting a large “flying gang” of carpenters, etc. continually engaged in repairing blunders.”²³ Allocating finance for works on existing lines that did not have strong political support and this issue seems to have been a problem for both William Mason and his successor, George Cowdery.

By 1883, no work had commenced on the new building for Binalong and it seems that the only reason that the New South Wales Railways acted to provide the new building was a fire that destroyed the existing timber structure on 22nd April, 1883.²⁴ As a sideline, that event demonstrated the policy of the Railways to recycle virtually all materials as a means of lowering construction costs and, to provide accommodation while a new building was erected at Binalong, a surplus, temporary office was dispatched from the workshops at Goulburn.²⁵

DESCRIPTION OF THE 1880 APPROVED, REPLACEMENT BUILDING

At the same time as Whitton was pushing the railway to Albury, William Mason, the Engineer-in-Chief for Existing Lines, approved replacement structures on those parts of the line already opened to traffic. Despite being supposedly demoted in January, 1880, Mason approved on 27th July a permanent, brick replacement building for Binalong. This project must be one of the last approvals by William Mason as he resigned from the Railway Department towards the end of 1880.

Mason’s design accorded with newly introduced Second Class design of Georgian influence. It had a rear, centre pedestrian entry marked by a breakpoint in the wall with a wider general waiting room. The Welsh slate roof was extended to mirror the breakpoint. Ornaments included fluted, cast iron posts for the platform awning with extremely decorative capitals and brackets. There were dentils under the eaves. Tall rendered chimneys were covered at the top with graceful sandstone covers. Despite the preparation of the plan for the new structure, there were no physical signs of work for the next two to three years.

Goulburn contractor, William Duncan, was notified that his tender was accepted for the erection of the Binalong railway station in mid-1882 and it was reported that he had the work “in the hand” in October, 1882, at which time he died.²⁶

At Binalong, the station building that was approved was related to the importance of the town as a centre of local government. In 1895, the brick platform structure was later described as a “splendid brick building”.²⁷

²² The *Burrowa News*, 5th August, 1881, p.2.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ The *Burrowa News*, 27th April, 1883, p. 2.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ *Goulburn Evening Penny Post*, 1st July, 1882, p. 4 and *Burrowa News*, 3rd November, 1882, p. 4.

²⁷ *Freeman's Journal*, 15th June, 1895, p. 18.

IMPACT OF TRACK DUPLICATION

Duplication of the Main South at Binalong as part of a much larger project for the duplication of the entire line from Cullerin to Harden on the track through the present station was opened on 22nd December, 1915, in conjunction with the opening of the duplication between Rocky Ponds and Galong. The 1880 building and station was closed on 22nd December, 1915, and was subsequently sold. The 1880-designed building remained in Railway ownership as a store until 1921 when it was sold to "local farmer, John Bergin."²⁸

Planning had been well under way for the previous couple of years for the duplication and deviation in several places of the main southern railway line. Binalong station was a beneficiary of the planning for the duplication and deviation.

BINALONG STATION IMPACTED FAVOURABLY BY A CHANGE IN STATION DESIGN POLICY

Something surprising happened in 1914 and that surprise was the change in station design policy. The change involved the approval of the application of a high level of ornamentation on brick buildings in country locations. From the introduction of the Federation-influenced design in 1892, the most decorative examples of platform buildings had been restricted to stations in Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong and the corridors that connects those regions. This all changed in 1914 when someone in the Existing Lines Department approved a splendidly attractive building for the Sydney-bound platform at Yass Junction containing a refreshment room. This was part of a process that had begun in 1910 when the Railway Department itself realised the appalling design of structures that it had applied to buildings between Maitland and Taree.

Had the brick refreshment room at Yass Junction been the only attractive brick platform structure in rural New South Wales in 1914, it would be assessed as a one-off example of the Federation-influence style. This was not the case as in May, 1914, another brick building was proposed for Binalong, the new building was intended to be located on a new station site on a deviation of the main line.

With the completion of the two, similar designed buildings at Yass Junction and Binalong, it was clear that there was a major change of mind by the Railway bureaucrats towards the treatment of platform buildings in rural New South Wales. The surprises were not restricted to the Main South line and the new policy was applied to other lines. The tragedy was that, because of the impact of the Great War, funds to the New South Wales Railways will virtually dried up in 1915 and the concept of pretty buildings in rural areas died. So the brick buildings at Yass Junction, Binalong, Galong and Cootamundra West stand today as harbingers of a new belief in the quality of platform buildings. The structures at Binalong also stand today as reminders of the impact of war.

DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDING AT THE SECOND SITE 1915

It was a large example being 87 feet long external and the traditional narrow width of 11 feet internal, with matching 11 feet wide awnings on each side of the building. Not only were face bricks

²⁸ *Railway Digest*, March, 1991, p. 72 and *The Canberra Times*, 25th February, 1990, p. 3.

used, bricks were a very attractive orange colour. There was a wide range of ornamentation, which would normally be found on a station in Sydney but especially noteworthy was the name of the station in white etched paint on a blue background at the bottom of the lower window sashes. The provision of the station name in such a manner had been introduced in 1911 but, up to 1914, had not been used outside of Sydney, the areas surrounding Sydney and the Newcastle region. The use of the etched station names for country stations is further evidence of a major policy acceleration in the design of platform buildings in 1914.

Another significant feature, although minor in nature, was the use of face brickwork for the two chimneys, rather than the traditional application of roughcast to denote a country station. This also was a significant measure. Additionally, cement moulding was used around chimneys as an ornamental feature, perhaps to attract the eye of travellers to this important design policy change. One other very interesting detail on the plan was the replacement of the originally intended No. 26 gauge corrugated iron for the roof covering by 3-Ply Malthoid. This was an interesting use which had only been used once previously in 1905 at Frampton on the Main South and in that case only 2-Ply was used. It is not known whether the Malthoid was applied to the Binalong building. Why the change from the conventional use of galvanised, corrugated sheeting? A shortage of the material existed because corrugated iron was exclusively imported into Australia from overseas at the time and the impact of the Great War resulted in the availability of lower supplies.

A detached brick out of shed was also approved and built at the extreme Sydney end of the Binalong platform. Had the Railways intended to save money at Binalong, it would have been possible to replace corrugated iron sheeting on the external walls as the structure was hardly in sight when standing at the main building. It is of no surprise to learn that there was no alpha-numerical code applied to the architectural plan. While that system of coding was applied to buildings on new lines, it was really used for buildings on existing lines. The roofline of the building was extended at the Albury end of the structure to accommodate an interlocking frame, which was installed at a later time by the Office of the Signal Engineer. The new station building opened on 22nd December, 1915.

It appears that, when the decision was made to change the material for the roof covering from corrugated iron to Malthoid, ventilators were not provided through the roof above the toilets. In 1919, a plan was prepared that provided for the installation of flues made of No. 24-gauge galvanised iron for installation above the toilets.

Access to the island platform was provided by a footbridge but the people of Binalong, like those at Goulburn, found access was difficult for people with luggage and older residents. The community requested that the Chief Commissioner provide a subway at the Sydney end of the platform, which was the opposite end to which the footbridge gave access. The Chief Commissioner declined the request.²⁹

The platform building incorporated a signal box, which was opened on 1st January, 1915 – ten days after the new station site opened. The external walls of the signal box were covered with vertically set timber, as was the custom within the Office of the Signal Engineer.

The platform was covered in cream coloured, Locksley Granite.

²⁹ *Burrowa News*, 16th April, 1915, p. 2.

BEAUTIFICATION

Beautification of stations was always the work of willing staff but Binalong was different. There, the local community got together and planted trees on the Cootamundra end of the platform, in the form of a hedge. A working bee was arranged in 1919. Further work on the landscape on the platform at that time. The Station Master and his staff were involved in trimming the bushes and maintaining the garden beds.³⁰

In later years, the station looked terrific. The 1915 building great with his very attractive red coloured bricks. The beauty of the station building was supplemented by the vegetation on the platform. There were shrubs planted on the platform and, surrounding the shrubs, were borders of white painted rocks. Overall, it was a very attractive railway station and remain so until the staff were removed in 1989.

THE ONLY INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT SINCE 1915

Up to the 1970s, Junior Porters were still required to keep the coal fires burning the fireplaces in the general waiting room, the ladies' waiting room and the Station Master's office. The use of coal fires ceased in the winter of 1976 but only the Station Master's office was provided with gas heating from that time. In a country location, that was not much of a problem as waiting passengers would have been accommodated in the office.

CLOSURE

After the staff were removed in 1989, the station's status was reduced to an unattended platform.

The dates when trains stop using the platform and the closure of the station are unknown.

Stuart Sharp

22nd September, 2016

³⁰ *Burrowa News*, 20th June, 1919, p. 1.

RAILWAY STATION DESIGN BY RELIGION

THE INFLUENCE OF CATHOLICISM IN THE REBUILDING OF GALONG RAILWAY STATION

GALONG PLATFORM AT THE TIME OF LINE OPENING

Two platforms were provided in the section from Binalong to the present Harden upon line opening on 12th March, 1877. Just as it is today, bureaucrats wrote press releases and handed these to any newspaper that wanted to have them. In announcing the line opening details, the Railway Department told reporters that construction of the railway line from Binalong involved “works of a light character.”³¹ The same and similar remarks, such as that “the engineering difficulties of the extension thus opened have not been formidable, were made by several newspapers.”³² These words were a little bit of bureaucratic chicanery, being both true and false at the same time. Compared to the cost of construction of the railway line on the Sydney side of Goulburn, much less were spent on construction south of Goulburn. That part was true. However, the railway line that was built between Binalong and Harden involved several very steep gradients and these ultimately required replacement in order to increase train loads and decrease operational costs. What Whitton did was to transfer on-going costs from the budget of the Department of Public Works to the budget of the Railway Commissioner. That is the false part of the statement.

The paucity of development at the station site was mentioned, or rather not mentioned, in the press articles about the opening of the line through the area. The local newspaper, called the *Burrowa News*, never mentioned Galong in its report of the line opening arrangements.³³ It was not alone in omitting reference to the location. The *Cootamundra Herald* also did not refer to Galong.³⁴

In fact, Rocky Ponds station featured more prominently in press reports than Galong at the time of line opening in 1877. One newspaper said “a platform has been built close by (to Rocky Ponds) that will be known as Galong.”³⁵ Some newspapers merely mentioned that there would be two platforms between Binalong and the present Harden.³⁶

The two platforms were at Galong and Cunningham, which were both provided for influential, local landholders. In the case of Galong, the man was John Ryan, who was described as “a large landed proprietor in the Boorowa district and was conspicuous for his genial hospitality.”³⁷ He got a

³¹ *Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser*, 20th March, 1879, p. 4.

³² *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 17th March, 1877, p. 13.

³³ *Burrowa News*, 17th March, 1877, p. 2.

³⁴ *Cootamundra Herald*, 14th March, 1877, p. 2.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 17th March, 1877, p. 1 and the (Sydney) *Evening News*, 12th March, 1877, p. 2.

³⁷ *Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser*, 15th January, 1887, P. 117. He was made a Member of the Legislative Council in 1883 and died in 1887.

platform for his property and he even got the name of the station named after his house – Galong House. He just did not have enough political power to get a building for his platform. After all, John Whitton, the Engineer-in-Chief, was himself a formidable figure in the world of New South Wales colonial politics and Whitton won the day. To Whitton, valuable money could be saved by eliminating as many platform buildings as possible. Moreover, what was there for Ryan to grizzle about? After all, he was one of the very few to at least had a platform.

Apart from John Ryan's nearby house, there seemed to be no or little development at Galong for some time. That remain case for many years, it being noted that, in 1885 when there was public discussion about a branch line to Boorowa, there were still only two landowners between the junction at Galong and the terminus at Boorowa.³⁸

THE PLATFORM BUILDINGS AT THE FIRST STATION SITE 1878-1916

John Forsyth notes that a waiting shed costing £105 was provided in March, 1878, and toilets were provided in 1879.³⁹ No doubt these references came from *Annual Reports*. Plans for the structures are not extant.

By 1883, Galong station was still unattended and one press report advised that people with goods to be shipped had to go to Rocky Ponds station to order the railway vehicles and, when the wagons were loaded, customers go to Binalong station to advise staff that the wagons were ready to be picked up by a goods train.⁴⁰

From 1884, newspapers are filled with articles about a proposal to construct a railway line to Boorowa. For the next four years, article after article appeared in the press about the possibility of the construction of the branch line. In particular, the town of Bowning lobbied very hard for the branch line junction to be at that town, rather than Galong which was unfortunately for Bowning, four miles shorter. Building cheaper railway lines was dominant in the Parliament and press of the 1880s and these became known as light lines, lower costs lines or cheaper lines. Such a cheap line was mooted by the Colonial Government for the branch line to Boorowa in 1888.⁴¹

Galong was still had the status of a platform and not a station in 1886.⁴² One of the factors cited by the people of Bowning was, surprisingly, the alleged absence of a station at Galong. One newspaper said that "a station has to be erected at Galong."⁴³ Even the Boorowa newspaper said that the construction of the branch line would involve "the erection of necessary station buildings at Galong Siding."⁴⁴ Naturally, the people of Bowning pointed out this aspect as well saying that "the construction of the railway will prove of a costly character, besides entailing a large outlay in the erection of the necessary station buildings at Galong Siding."⁴⁵

³⁸ *Boorowa News*, 25th September, 1885, p. 2.

³⁹ J. Forsyth, *Station Information G to M*, State Rail Authority, 1998, p. 1.

⁴⁰ *Burrowa News*, 7th December, 1883, p. 3.

⁴¹ *Goulburn Herald*, 14th July, 1888, p. 4.

⁴² *NSW Government Gazette*, 26 February, 1886, Issue No. 124, p. 1426.

⁴³ *Globe*, 22nd January, 1886, p. 5.

⁴⁴ *Burrowa News* 25th September, 1885, p. 2.

⁴⁵ *Burrowa News*, 25th September, 1885, p. 2.

Binalong was another community which was nominated by its own townspeople as a likely junction for the branch line to Boorowa. The community at Boorowa wanted the railway to start from Galong and indicated that, while there were two freight carriers operating between Binalong and Boorowa in 1886, the traffic was so low that one of the carriers “offered to sell his goodwill of the business to the other for £10.”⁴⁶

It seems that there was no or few staff pointed to Galong by 1887 as the telegraph facilities at Rocky Ponds station, along with the staff at that location, were to be “immediately removed to Galong platform.”⁴⁷ Something fishy must have happened as the telegraph office at Galong was not reported as being officially open until 14th April, 1890.⁴⁸

It was clear that money was an important factor in the construction of the branch line to Boorowa and this point was made exceedingly clear in December, 1888, when Chief Commissioner Eddy visited Galong with his fellow Commissioners and said:

“there is not the slightest possibility of the Galong – Boorowa line being constructed, as the amount of traffic to Boorowa would not pay working expenses, let alone interest on the cost of construction.”⁴⁹

One very important comment needs to be made about Eddy’s statement. It was the Public Works Act of 1888, under which Eddy was appointed, which prescribed that new railway lines would be initially considered by the Standing Public Works Committee of the New South Wales Parliament. That recommendation was then tabled for the houses of Parliament for consideration. It was not Eddy’s call to say whether a line would or would not be built. He was way out of line in making his statement. It was Eddy’s duty to implement Government policy, not make Government policy.

There is some evidence to say that additional station facilities were provided in 1888 at Galong station. There was one press reference that tenders were to be called for the construction of a brick building on the platform.⁵⁰ In addition, John Forsyth indicates that the station was “remodelled in 1888.”⁵¹

While no architectural plan survives to indicate the nature of any platform structure before 1915, there existed one plan dated 4th November, 1909, that showed the outline of a platform building in which the centre component stood proud of the building wall. This architectural feature was usually applied to general waiting rooms to help passengers find the station entrance, which normally was located in the centre of structures built before 1893. There was also a separate “shed” on the platform, no doubt meaning an out of shed.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 5th February, 1886, p. 2.

⁴⁷ *Burrowa News*, 21st October, 1887, p. 2.

⁴⁸ *NSW Government Gazette*, 15th April, 1890, Issue No. 208, p. 3108.

⁴⁹ *Evening News*, 17th December, 1888, p. 4.

⁵⁰ *Cootamundra Herald*, 31st October, 1888, p. 5.

⁵¹ Forsyth, op. cit.

THE SECOND STATION SITE – THE RARITY OF MATCHING BRICK PLATFORM BUILDINGS 1916-2016

Galong as an urban centre grew from nothing to a small community and it is a fair comment to say that it never grew beyond the concept of a village into a town.

The most amazing feature of the chronology of events at Galong railway station was the massive expenditure of public funds to provide for the station at the new site on the duplicated railway. It is beyond comprehension that Galong station would receive twin, brick platform buildings of a high calibre, considering the small size of the urban centre served. How come places like Bowning, Murrumburrah and Wallendbeen did not receive brick buildings upon duplication with their existing stations, since all three locations were larger than Galong? There is only one answer and the answer is not related to the size of the communities but to the nominal, operational needs of the Railway Department. Why say the need was nominal? Because in reality the need was political. When the Galong station was relocated, a Labor Government was in office in New South Wales. In fact, it was the first Labor Government to hold power, the Labor Party having been elected to office in 1910.

The unspoken Railway policy was that each substantial for important town should have one brick building. This was the case for Gunning, Bowning, Binalong, Harden and Murrumburrah. Wallendbeen missed out because it was relatively a small community. Every existing railway station that had an existing brick building received a timber structure on the opposite platform on track duplication. The implementation of this policy was supported on the basis that brick structures provided a higher class of accommodation for the staff and the operational staff of the New South Wales Railways who worked on platforms were predominantly Labor supporters. The New South Wales Labor Government was seeking improved working conditions for union members and the provision of brick structures achieve that objective. Thus, the New South Wales Railways remained in the good books of the Government.

Of course that explanation does not explain why Galong station and brick buildings on both platforms. They were not the end of brick structures. The two platforms were 450 feet each long and both platform walls and copings were constructed with brickwork. In addition, the out of shed was also made of face bricks, which was highly unusual. Interestingly, Binalong station also received a brick out of shed.

It is very hard to find an explanation, especially when capital funds were becoming rare and the use of brickwork for platform buildings in rural New South Wales was restricted in the 20th century mainly to the years between 1910 and 1915. With the exception of the buildings approved for Cootamundra West station in 1917, the Galong building was amongst the last brick structures approved outside Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong areas, apart from a few refreshment rooms. Corrugated iron for roofing was in short supply in 1915 because of the impact of the Great War, the product being entirely imported at that stage. This was addressed at the Galong buildings with the use of 3-ply Malthoid sheets with the joints sealed with the use of cement.

There was one additional factor which probably was extremely significant in explaining the attractiveness of the station setting at Galong. The Catholic Church had a major presence in the town and nearby area. How could the Catholic Church finance such a large presence? The answer to that story takes us back to the opening of the railway line with one John Ryan. His estate gave his two-storey residence to the Church and it was opened as a monastery in 1918 and continued in that

function until 1975. Today, it continues to be owned and operated by the Catholic Church as St Clements Retreat and Conference Centre.

It is well-known that religion was very important in the New South Wales Railway bureaucracy. It would not be surprising to find that the person who approved the magnificent brick buildings at Galong station was a Catholic and knew about the grandness of the Catholic Church in the area.

Is further evidence required to establish the influence of the Catholic Church in the Galong area? Well, what about the name of the first two railway stations on the branch line to Boorowa? The first station was called St. Michaels and the second station was called St. Clements. Of the eight stations on the New South Wales railway system which had the prefix, "St.", 25% were located within three miles of Galong station. The stations were on the line to Boorowa which, even in 1877, was described as "the most Irish and Catholic district in the colony."⁵²

DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDINGS UPON TRACK DUPLICATION

There were two major projects on the Main South line involving station reconstruction in 1915. The first was at Goulburn on the second was at Galong. This latter station was the junction for the branch line to Boorowa, which had been available for traffic since October, 1913. In accordance with the Railway policy of doing easy jobs first and deferring trickier projects, the Railways decided to defer duplication works through Galong but the time had arrived in 1915 to tackle the situation.

The Boorowa branch line was serviced by locomotives and trains that originated in Harden, which was further south and the Railways decided to alter the direction of the junction for the branch line to face trains to and from Harden, rather than to Sydney – which had been the case since 1913. The new station site opened on 9th of June, 1915, but, at that time, the platform buildings had not been erected. In fact, the plans for new buildings on the two side platforms were not prepared until September and October, 1915 – four months after the new site was opened on 16th April, 1916. Work did not start until January, 1916, and the new buildings were not ready for use until the middle of 1916.⁵³ The delay would have been a major problem because the existing station site where staff were located was some distance from the new site.

Although the suite of buildings provided at Galong were attractive, no reports were made in the local press over the significant improvement in accommodation, compared to what was there in the single line days.

The details of the building on the Harden-bound platform were:

- No alpha-numerical classification indicated on the plans,
- 87 feet 0 inches by circa 12 feet external,
- Nine inch thick face brickwork,
- Absence of rendered string course around external walls,
- Gabled roof covered with 3 ply Malthoid and cement and stopped by timber finials,

⁵² *Freeman's Journal*, 10th November, 1877, p. 9.

⁵³ *The Burrowa News*, 21st April, 1916, p. 2 reported that the duplication works had been completed apart from the platform buildings.

- Brick chimneys with corbelling in cement with terracotta pots – fireplaces in centre of walls,
- 11 feet wide awning supported by standard brackets,
- unusually, the ticket window faced on to the platform,
- floor was stepped three inches above the platform height,
- the walls in the signal box were kalsomined,
- the wall at the end of the store is carried up under the roof to stop the adverse odours being omitted from the toilets,
- nine pane Cathedral glass in upper window sashes and ripple glass in lower sashes,
- All single doors - four panel doors with the lower panels smaller,
- Terracotta air vents in plinth course and also at top of walls,
- Float and set internal walls,
- Ceiling height 11 feet 9 inches – Fibro cement sheets for ceilings

The features of the Galong building show that it has a reasonably high level of decoration but notable is the absence of the rendered string course and the use of Malthoid rather than the usual corrugated iron for the roof covering. Roughcast was not applied to the chimneys as was at Goulburn. These variations of decorations indicate that the decision on what to provide on a particular building was a matter for the whim of the officer in charge rather than the Head of Branch.

On the opposing platform, there was a matching brick waiting room and a brick out of shed. It was 20 feet by 10 feet with a 6 feet wide opening facing to the platform. The threshold was formed of quarter inch thick slate. Like the roof on the opposing building, the gabled roof was covered by 3 ply Malthoid and stopped by timber finials, the use of timber for the finials was becoming rarer at this time especially on brick buildings as terracotta or zinc stops was becoming the norm.

Having a brick out of shed was extremely rare and its use at this location reflected in a small way the acknowledgement by the Railways of the role of the Catholic Church, more so than the growing size of the village. The walls of the 12 feet x 10 feet building were 9-inch solid face brickwork and, once again, the gabled roof was covered with 3 play Malthoid. As a reflection of the use of the structure, the floor was four inch thick concrete on a base of old rails. The remaining platform building was a lamp room measuring 10 feet by 8 feet 4 inches also having a concrete floor with a zinc lined bench.

THE UNIQUENESS OF THE GALONG PLATFORM STRUCTURES IN 1915

The composition of brick buildings at Galong station was the only application of brick structures simultaneously erected on opposite platforms in rural New South Wales in the 20th century had a country railway station.

Not only was the use of brickwork significant, the high level of ornamentation was also rare in country areas outside Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong. The Table below sets out similar, attractive structures and emphasises the high-class of the buildings at Galong.

TABLE: COMPARISON AMONGST GALONG (1915), BINALONG (1914), GOULBURN (1915) AND COOTAMUNDRA WEST (1917) PLATFORM BUILDINGS

BUILDING ELEMENT	GALONG 1915 (BUILDING ON HARDEN- BOUND PLATFORM)	BINALONG 1914	GOULBURN 1915 (SINGLE- STOREY BUILDING ON ISLAND PLATFORM)	COOTA- MUNDRA WEST 1917 (SINGLE- STOREY BUILDING)
Building length	87 feet, including 21 feet 6 inches for signal box	87 feet, including 10 feet 6 inches for signal box	61 feet 6 inches	77 feet 6 inches external
Building width	12 feet	11 feet	11 feet internal	12 feet internal
Floor plan	Based on linear floor plan	Based on linear floor plan	Based on linear floor plan	Based on linear floor plan
Room composition	From the Sydney end – ‘urinals’, cleaner’s passage, ladies’ lavatory, ladies’ room, general waiting room, parcels office & booking office	from the Harden end – signal box, parcels office, booking office, general waiting room, lamp room, ladies’ lavatory, cleaner’s closet and “urinals”	From the Sydney end – parcels office, booking office, general waiting room, ladies’ waiting room and ladies’ lavatory	From the Cootamundra end – parcels office, booking office, waiting room, ladies’ room & ladies’ lavatory
Location of “out of” room	Detached brick facility at extreme Sydney end of platform	Detached brick facility at extreme Sydney end of platform	Nil provided	Unknown
External walls	Brown face brickwork	Attractive, orange-coloured face brickwork	Attractive, red/brown brickwork	Brown face brickwork
Internal walls	Rendered, except “Urinal” which was limewashed	Rendered, except “Urinal” which was limewashed	Rendered	Rendered, except the parcels office which was limewashed
Ticket window detailing	Unusually placed to platform side -	Ornate moulding surrounding	Unknown	Unknown

BUILDING ELEMENT	GALONG 1915 (BUILDING ON HARDEN-BOUND PLATFORM)	BINALONG 1914	GOULBURN 1915 (SINGLE-STOREY BUILDING ON ISLAND PLATFORM)	COOTA-MUNDRA WEST 1917 (SINGLE-STOREY BUILDING)
	size described as "ordinary 5 feet 11 inches by 2 feet 10 inches"	the window		
Roof material	3 ply Malthoid with cement to seal the sheet joints	Planned No. 26 gauge corrugated iron but 3 ply Malthoid and cement used instead	No. 24 gauge corrugated iron	No. 26 gauge corrugated iron
Glazing and Windows	Nine panes of Cathedral glass in upper sash – milled rolled glass with name of station in lower sash	Nine panes of Cathedral glass in upper sash – milled rolled glass with name of station in lower sash	Nine panes of Cathedral glass in upper sash – milled rolled glass with name of station in lower sash	Nine panes of Cathedral glass in upper sash – milled rolled glass with name of station in lower sash
Fanlights above doors	Six panes of Cathedral glass	Six panes of Cathedral glass	Six panes of Cathedral glass	six panes of Cathedral glass
Moulding	No moulded string course on external walls	String course around building an above window heads – aprons under window sills	String course around building an above window heads – aprons under window sills	String course around building an above window heads – aprons under window sills
Chimneys	Brick with cement strapwork and terracotta pots	Brick with strapwork and terracotta pots	Brick with strapwork and terracotta pots (roughcast on refreshment room chimneys with flat concrete tops)	Brick with strapwork and terracotta pots (roughcast on refreshment room chimneys with flat concrete tops)
Entry to general waiting room	One single door 6 feet 10 inches by 2 feet 10 inches	Single doors on each side of building with slate	Single entry doors on platform No. 2 side – no public	Single doors on each side of building

BUILDING ELEMENT	GALONG 1915 (BUILDING ON HARDEN- BOUND PLATFORM)	BINALONG 1914	GOULBURN 1915 (SINGLE- STOREY BUILDING ON ISLAND PLATFORM)	COOTA- MUNDRA WEST 1917 (SINGLE- STOREY BUILDING)
		thresholds	doors on platform No. 1 side	
Design of male toilet roof	Integrated into overall building at Sydney end	Integrated into overall building at Sydney end	Detached with gabled roof with zinc finials – string course on external wall	Detached with gabled roof with zinc finials – no string course
Wall material for male toilet	Brick	Brick	Brick	Brick
Location of male toilet	Located at the Sydney end of main building	Located at the Sydney end of main building	Towards the Harden end of the refreshment room building	Towards the Temora end between the refreshment room and signal box
Use of vertical, curtain boarding	Applied to the ends of the awning – not across brick gables at Sydney end but across gable at Harden end	Applied to the ends of the awning – not across brick gables	Applied to the ends of the awning – not across brick gables (gables feature Fibro sheets/ roughcast with vertical timber cover strips)	Restricted to ends of awning – not across brick gables (refreshment room gables feature Fibro Sheets/ roughcast with vertical timber cover strips)
Provision of finials on gables	Tall, timber and finials at both ends	Tall, timber and finials at both ends	Small zinc finials at both ends	Small zinc finials at both ends
Method of support for platform awnings	standard metal, cantilevered brackets	standard metal, cantilevered brackets	standard metal, cantilevered brackets	standard metal, cantilevered brackets
Platform awning widths	8 feet 9 inches	11 feet	12 feet 8 inches on platform No. 1 side – 13 feet 9 ¾ inches on Platform No. 2 side	11 feet
Number of	Two 800	Two – side-by-	Nil – connected	Nil – connected

BUILDING ELEMENT	GALONG 1915 (BUILDING ON HARDEN- BOUND PLATFORM)	BINALONG 1914	GOULBURN 1915 (SINGLE- STOREY BUILDING ON ISLAND PLATFORM)	COOTA- MUNDRA WEST 1917 (SINGLE- STOREY BUILDING)
freshwater rain tanks	gallon capacity – side-by-side at Sydney end	side at Sydney end	to town water supply from the outset	to town water supply from the outset
Fireplace details	5 inch thick concrete hearth, 2'10" wide mantle and grate (standard design and materials)	5 inch thick concrete hearth, 2'10" wide mantle and grate (standard design and materials)	Unknown	5 inch thick concrete hearth, 2'10" wide mantle and grate (standard design and materials)

The buildings at Galong on the platforms were high-class and this is demonstrated in the above Table of buildings at other, larger urban centres. One would not expect such classy structures at a station the size of Galong. The explanation is the combination of the influence of the Labor Party, trade unionism and the Catholic religion.

THE UNIQUENESS OF THE TRACK ARRANGEMENTS

In addition to the large sum of money expended on the platform buildings and freight facilities at Galong, a huge amount of money was spent in altering the track work for the junction of the branch line to Boorowa. Initially, the branch line faced trains proceeding from Sydney to Cootamundra but the decision was taken in 1915 to reverse the direction of the junction to the branch line. The thinking behind this alteration was a policy that affected other parts of the State to concentrate the locations where locomotive depots were established and to use fewer depots to service branch lines. In this case, trains operated out of and back to Harden station and locomotive depot. It was already the junction for the cross-country line to Young, Cowra and Blayney and could also service branch line trains to Boorowa.

At Galong, the alterations were made in stages over a two year period and were complex. Railway author, Neville Pollard, wrote a comprehensive article in 1977 on the history of the branch line between Galong and Boorowa. He included clear plans that show the complexity of the junction arrangements between the first and second station sites at Galong.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ N. Pollard, "A Short History of the Boorowa branch Line," *ARHS Bulletin*, September, 1977, pp.205, 206 and 209.

Signalling and Safeworking Historian, Graham Harper, has provided a description of the arrangements. For a short period, Galong had two railway stations which historians have labelled "Old" and "New." Harper writes:

"On 2nd February, 1915, the Boorowa branch opened from Old Galong, with access to the branch being in the Down, or southbound direction. The old Galong station was to the north west of the later one.

On 16th April, 1916, double line working was instituted between Galong Temporary Junction, which was some distance on the Sydney side of both the Old and New Galongs, and Rocky Ponds Temporary Junction, well to the south of the Galong stations. With this duplication came the new and most recent junction of the Boorowa line. It was located at the Sydney end of the Up Platform at Galong. Old Galong station was retained as a staff (i.e. safeworking) station purely to allow the locomotives on Boorowa trains to run around their trains in order to change direction. This occurred until the new section of line from there to New Galong was opened.

On 7th July, 1917, a 180-degree curved section of track was completed for the Boorowa trains to approach New Galong Junction without having to reverse. At the same time, Old Galong station was closed, having no further purpose in life.

As Boorowa trains were to start and terminate at Harden, the new arrangement was entirely appropriate for this purpose. On the same date, a dead end refuge siding off the branch was brought into use. The length of the siding was 2,104 feet, and access to it was by way of remote controlled, electrically operated points. This was a very early application of power operated points to an interlocking frame comprising full sized mechanical levers, possibly even the first such application. At 2,104 feet in length, this siding was considerably longer than the Down and Up Goods lines at Harden, or the refuge loops at Cunningham for that matter.

The refuge siding at Galong was formally abolished on 20th May, 1957 as part of yard rationalisation works, which included the replacement of two diamond crossing at the southern end of the yard with tandem crossovers. Finally, on 9th July, 1958, closing facilities were provided in the signal box and Galong signal box was then only required to be attended for Boorowa trains and for shunting.

The purpose of this unusual refuge siding is obscure. It was the only one of its type anywhere on the system as far as I am aware. Maybe it was for trial of power operated points in a location where little inconvenience would occur, if the installation packed it in. It was awkward to operate the refuge siding as it was not possible to use it without either backing trains in, or backing trains out, depending on the direction of travel. In the case of 57 class hauled trains, only Down for Cootamundra-bound trains could use the facility as only the first hundred or so feet were suitable for this class of very heavy locomotive. That the siding apparently survived until 1957 is also nothing short of amazing, given the operationally more efficient loops that were available at Bowning,

Binalong, Harden, Demondrille and Wallendbeen. That said, the 1928 Working Timetable does show a number of crosses (i.e. trains overtake or pass each other) at Galong – usually between conditional goods trains and the passenger expresses. Refuge siding was not used much in the 1941 Working Timetable, but the facility appears to have been used a number of times each day in the 1956 Working Timetable. Apparently in 1957, the Railway Department decided it could do without the refuge siding – possibly because of the diesel locomotive working on express trains which was introduced about that time, unless I’m mistaken.”⁵⁵

A RARE INSTANCE OF HELP TO PASSENGERS

Nearby to Harden was Galong, which was now the junction for the branch line to Boorowa. A local resident, Mr. O. Burns, complained at a meeting of the Farmers and Settlers’ Association about the lack of facilities at the Galong Railway Station where the conveniences were allegedly “shockingly inadequate.”⁵⁶ Burns said that “people had to scramble down the platform and walk across the railway line when transhipping from the Mail train to the Boorowa Train. It was both dangerous and unfair that passengers should be asked to put up with such inconveniences, especially in the case of women and children. There was also neither a light nor fire in the waiting room. He would move that the Secretary be instructed to write to the Railway Commissioners and ask that better arrangements be carried out at the Galong Station and that the Galong branch be asked to cooperate in the matter. Mr. F. Chesterton seconded the motion, which was carried.”⁵⁷

In order to overcome the problem of passengers transferring from main line trains to branch line trains on the opposing platform, an alteration was made to the branch line train working at Galong. At some time, it was decided that branch line trains to Boorowa would not commence from what would be regarded as the correct platform, which was the up or Sydney-bound platform. Passengers waiting to go to Boorowa were told not to cross to the opposing platform but to remain on the platform from which they disembarked. When the main line trains proceeding from Sydney to Cootamundra departed Galong station, the signaller would operate the points to allow the branch line trains to reverse on to the wrong platform. Trains would then proceed backwards to the Cootamundra-bound platform, pick up passengers and then proceed forward across the Sydney-bound platform and on to the branch line.

CLOSURE AND WORSE

John Forsyth writes that trains stopped serving Galong station in 1980.

Could things have gotten worse? Yes! On 19th October, 2002, goods vehicles on a Freight Australia train derailed and demolished part of the building on the Cootamundra-bound platform. Tragically, no money from the compensation for the cost of the damages was allocated to the restoration of the platform building.

⁵⁵ Email from G. Harper, 31st July, 2016.

⁵⁶ *The Burrowa New*, 21st June, 1918, p. 1.

⁵⁷ *ibid.*

Thanks to Graham Harper his help in writing this article.

Stuart Sharp

22nd September, 2016

CUNNINGAR RAILWAY STATION

OPENING

The detailed survey of the line was completed on 26th December, 1876.

Platforms were often provided purely to serve the local landholder and this was the case with the station and Cunnigar, which served the massive Cunningham Plains “run.” At one time, the rural property extended to include not only Harden, Murrumburrah, Demondrille but also Nubba.

Cunnigar station opened with the opening of the line on 12th March, 1877, between Binalong and the present Harden station. One Sydney newspaper reported that the township of Cunnigar consisted of “a school and post office only.”⁵⁸ While the goods siding had been completed, the passenger platform building was incomplete.⁵⁹ This incompleteness of facilities at the time of line opening was very much the policy of John Whitton, the Engineer-in-Chief, of the New South Wales Railways.

The station site at the time of line opening was located 150 feet on the Harden side of the former island platform, placing it very close to the present level crossing.⁶⁰ It was New South Wales Railway practice from 1855 to 1932 to locate stations adjacent to or not far from level crossings so that road access was available from both sides of the line. With the opening of the line in 1877, a brick Gatekeeper’s cottage was built adjacent to the level crossing. It featured Gothic Revival influences in its design, which was the standard architecture from Goulburn to Albury. From 1918, it officially became the Station Master’s residence. The structure was demolished in 1989.

OPERATIONS IN THE SINGLE LINE DAYS

An official document indicated in 1894 that Cunnigar station came under the control of Harden station, suggesting that it was unattended.⁶¹ When the plan was issued for platform building for track duplication, only a small waiting shed of unknown design was located on the 1877 platform. In 1881, a platform nameboard was added. A similar nameboard was placed on the platform at Harden in the same year.

The people of Cunnigar had been promised a goods loading bank in 1886 but nothing happened. The local newspaper was quite piercing in its comment saying that “we hope this promise will be carried out more expeditiously than many others we know about coming from the same source – government departments.”⁶² The newspaper’s cynicism was spot on as the loading bank was not provided until 1924.

APPOINTMENT OF STAFF

In 1909, a coal bin was constructed at the station using old sleepers. It measured nine feet by eight feet two inches. Why was this constructed? Certainly not for waiting passengers as they had been seated in the waiting shed for over 30 years without heating. The action suggests that an officer was

⁵⁸ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13th March, 1877.

⁵⁹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14th March, 1877, p. 2.

⁶⁰ NSW, *Main Southern Line Maps*, Revised Ed., Department of Railways, 1967, p. S43.

⁶¹ *Local Appendix to the Working Timetable*, 1894, p. 17.

⁶² *Murrumburrah Signal*, 4th September, 1886, p. 4.

allocated for was to be allocated to the station and this suggestion was supported by the provision of a very small residence for a Traffic Branch officer, which was authorised on 12th September, 1910, at a cost of £140.⁶³ This little house was located a distance away from the Sydney-bound line towards the Sydney end of the station and its small size suggested that it was accommodation for a single (i.e. not married) officer. Now, there were two official residences no doubt needed for the operation of the signal box until 1931.

There are also official records of two related events which indicate the appointment of staff. The first was the installation of a crossing loop in 1906 to allow trains to pass or overtake each other and, secondly, office accommodation being provided in 1909 for a Traffic Branch employee.⁶⁴ It is pretty safe to say that, sometime around 1906-1911, was the first time the station was staffed and staffed by two officers. No, the staff were not placed there to assist passengers and residents with parcels but for departmental purposes as they were required to work during the day and night to operate the signals and points.

TRACK DUPLICATION

Duplication from Harden to Cunnigar station opened on 16th September, 1913, and the decision was taken as part of the duplication process to relocate the Cunnigar station a bit closer towards Sydney so that the first station could be utilised while approval and construction of a new station was underway.

A new timber station building and platform were authorised on 6th of June, 1914, in time for the introduction of duplication with automatic signalling between Rocky Ponds Temporary Junction and Cunnigar on 9th June, 1915. All the work of duplicating various parts of the main line caused lots of delays to traffic and the complaints from the travelling public were extensive. Delays to trains gave the Railway Department a very bad name and there were frequent articles in the press both in Sydney and in rural areas about “our disorganised railways.”⁶⁵

With the completion of duplication between Cunnigar and Nubba, the composition of four out of five stations in the section (i.e. Cunnigar, Harden, Demondrille and Nubba) was the first instance of the use of near-consecutive island platforms in a rural area.⁶⁶

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE REPLACEMENT PLATFORM BUILDING

The plan for the replacement building for the island platform is dated 23rd December, 1914 and was prepared for occupation by the Traffic Branch. The building belonged to the same design family that was built at Murrumburrah (Sydney-bound platform), Galong and Binalong. It was timber framed and the external walls were covered with weatherboards with a one-inch overlap and set in the horizontal position, as was the custom. The building contained four rooms, these being from the Harden end:

⁶³ Shop Order No. 7182, Shop Order Book 21C/256, former SRA Archives, p. 189.

⁶⁴ Station account expenditure card.

⁶⁵ *Wagga Wagga Express*, 9th April, 1914, p. 2.

⁶⁶ The exception was Murrumburrah which had two side platforms. Rural area defined as south of Kiama and Moss Vale, west of Lithgow and north of Maitland.

- booking office 14 feet by 12 feet internal,
- general waiting room 20 feet by 12 feet internal,
- ladies' room 10 feet by 12 feet internal, &
- ladies' toilet, 4 feet by 12 feet internal.

Externally, the building was 50 feet 3 inches long, though the roof was extended towards Harden for a further 17 feet to allow for the installation of an interlocking frame by the Office of the Signal Engineer. One-inch thick hardwood floor boards were used while the ceilings were formed not by timber lining boards but what was called "small corrugated iron." That material was often used for ceilings at that time. The internal walls of the structure were formed by 5/8-inch thick "V" jointed, tongue and grooved lining boards. The building sat on nine-inch square brick piers with zinc ant caps on the top of the piers.

The only pretty feature of the building was the design of the windows. The top window sash was formed by what was called Cathedral glass, which was a composition of nine small, different-coloured panes. While "ripple" (i.e. obscure) glass was used for the bottom sash, the name of the station was expressed at the bottom of the lower sashes showing white letters against a blue background. Below the larger window sills were carved timber aprons which mimicked sandstone or cement moulding.

Symmetrically placed awnings eight feet wide extended the whole length of the building, including the space for the interlocking levers. The awnings were supported by three-inch square timber struts.

The roof of the building was gabled and covered with the normal No. 26 gauge galvanised, corrugated iron sheets. On the roof gables, small zinc finials were placed. Brick chimneys, using face bricks, provided heating for the booking office and also the ladies' room but no heating was provided in the general waiting room. Luckily, the general waiting room was enclosed with doors on each side of the structure, unlike other examples which had waiting rooms with open sides.

The building was constructed using in-house, departmental labour paid on an hourly basis.

ADDITION OF THE SIGNAL BOX

In June, 1915, the Interlocking Branch had decided to enclose the signal box with weatherboards that matched the remainder of the building up to window sill level. Windows surrounded all three sides of the structure with six windows on each side, two of which had sliding sashes and four were fixed sashes while four fixed window sashes were fitted to the Harden end of the structure. All windows were five feet six inches high. Unlike the obscure glazing in the main part of the building, all the window sashes in the signal box used 26-ounce, clear glass. The enclosure of the interlocking frame converted the former open space into a signal box. Although the signaller would have been required to walk from the signal box to both sides of the platform, only one door was inserted into the signal box facing the Cootamundra-bound platform.

The signal box only had a short period of activity between 1917 and 1931, after which the signal box was placed out of service and replaced by automatic signalling between Cunningham and Harden North Box. Up to 3rd March, 1931, staff were required to operate the Standard Block Instruments

that manually controlled the signalling between Cunnigar and Harden. This resulted in a downgrading status of the station and removal of the Station Master. From that time, a Junior Porter was in charge and, even that lowly position was ultimately downgraded by 1967 to an attendant who attended to the work at the station.

The signal box at Cunnigar was removed, along with the 17 feet length of the roof, on 12th July 1963.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TRACK AND PLATFORM ARRANGEMENT

At that time when automatic signalling between Galong and Harden was introduced in 1915, the track layout at Cunnigar station was set out in what was regarded as the modern manner with refuge loops placed on each side platform, as had been done at Binalong, Jerrawa and proposed in 1914 for Demondrille.

Signalling historian, Graham Harper, commented that “it is interesting that the track connections for the two passing loops were all still shown, out of use, on the 1931 track diagram that was issued for the resignalling between Cunnigar and Harden. Perhaps they (i.e. the Railway Department) were hedging their bets.”⁶⁷ Harper is saying that, although the refuge loops had been out of use since 1915, the track work had been left in situ for 16 years just in case the refuge loops were needed for a future increase in train movements. They were never required and ultimately removed.

Graham Harper carefully considered the use of two refuge loops around the island platform at Cunnigar. The full text of his comments is Appendix 1. He wrote, as a summary, that”

“First, for a time island platforms were preferred over two platforms opposite each other at some locations. They obviated any duplication of passenger facilities. Second, from the early 1910s, refuge loops were preferred, but not installed exclusively. The operational advantages of the loops do not have to be stated (easier and quicker entry/exit for trains and, thereby, minimisation of train delays). Access for pedestrians to the station could be hampered or made impossible by a refuged goods train; this would be the downside, unless a footbridge were to be provided.

So, I will postulate that island platforms and refuge loops went together, and that the refuge loops were designed to go around the platforms. There was no reason why push back refuges could not have been provided at island platforms, and similarly, island platforms existed without any refuting facilities at all. So, the causal link is tenuous and I would suggest that each was an independent development and improvement. That said, with a single island platform and refuges on both sides, less land would be required for the arrangement than, for example, at Bowning, which from 1920 had two side platforms but refuge loops proceeding around both platforms. Hence, Bowning had two island platforms.

The track arrangement at Cunnigar was modern at the time of installation, but would be unworkable with today’s prodigiously long goods trains.

⁶⁷ Email from G. Harper, 27th July, 2016.

Another point to ponder: Why were refuge loops provided at Cunnigar, which was a mere three miles from Harden with its twin goods lines which each could hold three trains in addition to the two main lines? In addition, the Railway Department implemented a peculiar track arrangement at Galong, where the Department installed an electrically powered hybrid dead end siding, not of the Up Main line but off the branch line to Borrowa to serve as a refuge for main lines in both directions?”

The evidence provided by Graham Harper creates a picture of conflict in relation to the provision of island platforms and refuge loops at the time the Main South line was being duplicated between 1912 and 1922. What explains this inconsistent picture? It was partly the culture of the New South Wales Railways which fostered individual decision-making at a fairly low level without senior supervision that may have provided policy consistency. The other part of the explanation the fluctuating levels of available capital funds from the New South Wales Government. More modern arrangements were made when money was available and old-fashioned but less costly schemes were implemented when funds were tight.

TOILET FACILITIES

When the station opened, there were no toilets. At an unknown time, a male toilet was provided on the platform but no female toilet was constructed and none existed until the replacement building was provided in 1914. Such discrimination was policy of the New South Wales Railways.

The term “ladies’ toilet” was not expressed on the 1914 plan as the word “toilet” only appeared in the New South Wales railway dictionary in the post 1960 period. Female toilets were traditionally formed of two components. The first was the “closet” for which women were provided a width of four feet and a “lavatory”, which was the term used for the area in which the hand basin was located. Ladies closets were usually about one-foot wide and male closets. The female toilet was vented to atmosphere through the roof of the building with what was known as a “six-inch diameter Breach’s Cowl.” That was standard practice for the time.

The male toilet was also described in accordance with Railway parlance and, like the female toilets, was described in two parts. In the case of Cunnigar, the male toilet was officially described as “E. C. & Urinal.” The letters “E. C.” Were an abbreviation for the words “earth closet”, which meant that there was a box of earth within the toilet which was applied to the night soil after every use. Sometimes, a further abbreviation was used by the New South Wales Railways to describe male toilets using the shortened version, “Urinals”, to encompass both the seated and standing arrangements. Both versions were used at different times to describe the facilities at Cunnigar station. The male toilet was relocated from the original 1877 side platform towards the Sydney end of the 1914 island platform.

COMPARISON WITH BUILDINGS AT NUBBA AND WALLEND BEEN

Was the building at Cunnigar appropriate in design and size to the location it served? The Table below sets out a comparison with similar, timber all structures at Nubba and Wallendbeen.

TABLE: COMPARISON OF BUILDING ELEMENTS WITH STRUCTURES AT NUBBA AND WALLEND BEEN

BUILDING ELEMENT	CUNNINGAR 1914	NUBBA 1915	WALLENDREEN – COOTAMUNDRA- BOUND PLATFORM 1917
Type of platform	island	Island	Side
Floor plan	Based on linear entry	Based on linear entry	Based on linear entry
Room composition	From the Sydney end - booking office, general waiting room, ladies' room and lavatory – roof extended for 17 feet for later insertion of interlocking frame	From the Harden end – booking office, waiting room and store + 15 feet long space for interlocking frame	From the Harden end – ladies' toilet, ladies' waiting room, ticket office, general waiting room & out of room (ticket office formed by partitioning off part of the space of the general waiting room)
Location of “out of” room	Detached structure at Sydney end of platform	None shown on plan	Integrated into Cootamundra end of the platform building
External walls	One inch thick weatherboards with a one-inch overlap	Details unknown other than of weatherboard construction	Five inch wide & one inch thick, rusticated weatherboards
Internal walls	In all rooms, four-inch wide by 5/8 inch thick horizontal lining boards	Unknown	Walls of the ladies' room and toilet were the only spaces to feature lining boards – waiting room and out of room unlined
Ticket window detailing	Extent of ornamentation unknown – plate glass screen	Unknown	Unknown
Roof material	No. 26 gauge galvanised, corrugated iron	No. 26 gauge galvanised, corrugated iron	No. 26 gauge galvanised, corrugated iron
Glazing and Windows	Nine panes of Cathedral glass in upper sash – Ripple glass in	three windows on one side only – no ornamentation	Double hung window sashes each with two panes of clear

BUILDING ELEMENT	CUNNINGAR 1914	NUBBA 1915	WALLENDREEN – COOTAMUNDRA- BOUND PLATFORM 1917
	lower sash – station name in bottom sash		glass – absence of Cathedral glass
Fanlights above doors	five pain of Cathedral glass	Nil	Plain glass
Moulding	Ornamental timber aprons under window sills	Nil	Ornamental timber aprons under windows
Chimneys	Brick with strapwork and concrete tops	Nil	Brick with strapwork and concrete top
Entry to general waiting room	Single doors on each side of building of standard dimensions 6'10" by 2'10"	Single doors on each side of building with dimensions 6'8" by 2'8"	Open fronted waiting room – no doors
Design of male toilet	Detached male toilet from previous station relocated to new platform	Detached male toilet from previous station relocated to new platform	No male toilet on Cootamundra-bound platform
Wall material for male toilet	Corrugated iron	Corrugated iron	Not applicable
Location of male toilet	Towards Sydney end of platform	Towards Cootamundra end of platform	Not applicable
Use of vertical, curtain boarding	Applied to both gables	Nil	Nil
Provision of finials on gables	Zinc finials at each terminus of roof	Finials not applied	Finials not applied
Method of support for platform awnings	3 inch square timber braces	Timber braces of unknown size	standard metal, cantilevered brackets
Platform awning widths	8 feet wide on both sides	6 feet 10 inches wide on both sides	9 feet on one side only
Number of freshwater rain tanks	one 800 gallon capacity	one of unknown capacity	two – both 800 gallon capacity
Fireplace details	In the booking office and ladies' room but not in general waiting	Nil	In the booking office and ladies room but not in general waiting

BUILDING ELEMENT	CUNNINGAR 1914	NUBBA 1915	WALLENDBEEN – COOTAMUNDRA- BOUND PLATFORM 1917
	room – 5 inch thick concrete hearth with great 2'10" wide		room – 5 inch thick concrete hearth with great 2'10" wide

The above Table shows that the building at Cunningar, while possessing basic features, was in detail superior to both those at Nubba and Wallendbeen. The structure provided at Nubba was relocated from the single-sided that existed prior to duplication and simply moved to the new island platform. Awnings were provided on both sides but no windows were added to what was once the rear wall. The absence of a female waiting room, female toilet and heating in any room indicate that a bottom level building was provided at Nubba. The structure at Wallendbeen did not have the detail of the Cunningar structure but did possess female facilities and heating.

All in all, the building at Cunningar in 1915 was appropriate and could even be said that it had parity with the timber building provided at Murrumburrah on the Sydney-bound platform in 1914.

THE PLATFORM

The platform at the time of line duplication was 300 feet long with provision for a future extension of 150 feet. The platform was never extended. At its widest point where the main building was located, the platform was 56 feet 6 inches wide. The Sydney-bound platform was straight but the Cootamundra-bound platform was curved. Each end was ramped, which was essential considering that there was no way to reach the platform other than to walk across the railway lines and use one of the ramps. The platform surface was the traditional white, crushed granite and at the Sydney end of the platform was a very tall palm tree between the tracks.⁶⁸

A photograph of the station building appeared in the in-house journal, called *The Staff*, and showed limited plantings platform but, interestingly, it also showed what appeared to be an out of goods shed located at the far Sydney end of the platform.⁶⁹ In essence, there were three structures on the platform, being

- The main building, including the signal box at the Harden end,
- The “E. C. & urinal” towards the Sydney end of the platform, &
- The out of goods shed at the Sydney end of the platform.

Local residents wishing to gain access to the island platform had to cross the Sydney-bound or Up Main track, the “Up Refuge Loop” and the goods siding. Up until 1920, no facility had been provided

⁶⁸ Photographs showing the 1914 building on the island platform and the 1877 brick gatehouse are in D. Davis (Ed.), *Focus on Cunningar*, the 1999 Cunningar Public School Reunion Committee, 2002, p. 132.

⁶⁹ *The Staff*, 21st February, 1927, p. 108.

to help people cross the tracks and it was only in that year that a “timbered way” was proposed to improve the cross-track access.

CLOSURE AND DEMOLITION OF BUILDINGS

The station closed 9th of March 1975. The building was removed in early 1976 but the platform walls remained in situ until 1982 when they were demolished and the former curved Cootamundra-bound track was straightened. In 2016, it is almost impossible to locate the station site.

The help of Graham Harper is gratefully acknowledged.

Stuart Sharp

29th July, 2016

APPENDIX 1

COMMENT BY SAFEWORKING AND SIGNALLING HISTORIAN, GRAHAM HARPER, ON THE JUXTAPOSITION OF ISLAND PLATFORMS SURROUNDED BY REFUGE LOOPS

The North has a succession of island platforms from Hexham to High Street, excepting Thornton and Tarro. And, of course, the Blue Mountains Line proliferates with them. At that time, there were very few non-island platforms which had refuges running around them. Bowning is the obvious exception, as are to a lesser extent Marulan and Yass Junction which had only a single [up] loop around the less important platform. Wallerawang had a down refuge four tracks out from the down platform. Sodwalls had a pair of refuges, but no island platform. Ourimbah had an Up Refuge behind the Up platform, as did Wyong. Douglas Park also had an Up Refuge Loop behind the Up Platform.

So, what can one make of this? First, for a time island platforms were preferred over two platforms opposite each other at some locations. They obviated any duplication of passenger facilities. Second, from the early 1910s, refuge loops were preferred, but not installed exclusively. The operational advantages of the loops do not have to be stated. Access for pedestrians to the station could be hampered or made impossible by a refuted goods train; this would be the downside, unless a footbridge was to be provided.

In 1919, dead end refuges were provided at Bargo and Yerrinbool, and this seems to have ended the proliferation of refuge loops around platforms. In 1919 also, an up refuge loop remote from the platform was provided at Picton, with the exit points power operated from the signal box. A similar installation occurred at Bargo in 1946, when the dead end down refuge siding was converted to a loop with the entry points being remote from the signal box and power worked.

In 1920, dead end sidings were provided at Otford, but these appear to have been part of the original formation.

However, the new type of refuge siding, with power operated entry points and which terminated short of the platform was repeated in at least one other location -- Bethungra [1946]. The concept was followed with full power signalling at Tuggerah, Belford, Ravenan to mention a few.

So, I will postulate that island platforms and refuge loops went together, and that the refuge loops were designed to go around the platforms. There was no reason why push back refuges

could not have been provided at island platforms, and similarly, island platforms existed without any refuging facilities at all. So, the causal link is tenuous and I would suggest that each was an independent development and improvement. That said, with a single island platform and refuges on both sides, less land would be required for the arrangement than for example at Bowning.

In specific response to your question, the arrangement was modern at the time of installation, but would be unworkable with today's prodigiously long goods trains.

Demondrille was a case where it was necessary for the coaling and watering facilities to be concentrated, rather than have two sets separated by the main lines. Demondrille was unique in that the down refuge, or goods line, crossed the up main at each end of the yard – in a class of its own.

Another point to ponder: Why were refuge loops provided at Cunningar, a mere three miles from Harden with its goods lines, rather than at Galong, where they put in a power worked hybrid dead end siding off the branch to serve as a refuge for main lines in both directions?

Graham Harper

22nd September, 2016

RAILWAY CULTURE AND POLICY IDENTIFICATION BY INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTIGATION THE EVIDENCE OF COOTAMUNDRA STATION

WHAT'S THIS PAPER ABOUT?

This paper is not a history of Cootamundra station. That task is being left to others or, more specifically, to Steve Baker, who is a railway historian specialising in the history of the Cootamundra area.

Rather than examine the community factors and departmental policies that lead to the development of Cootamundra station, this paper looks at the other side of the decision-making process – the outcomes. It examines a small number of building projects following their construction and indicates the cultural factors and railway policies that are reflected by the design and fabric of what was built or altered.

The five infrastructure projects examined are:

- the timber 1877 platform building,
- the brick 1888 platform building,
- the 1928 approved brick refreshment room,
- alterations between 1941 and 1943 to the 1888 building, &
- the 1990 approved Countrylink Travel Centre and coach interchange.

At the outset, the study defines culture and divides it into four distinct time periods. Buildings from each time period are investigated to see whether they mirror the culture and policies of the New South Wales Railways at the time of construction.

THE NO. 1 QUESTION – WHO DETERMINES WHAT COMPRISES THE CULTURE?

Any thinking person will ask how is it possible to determine what railway culture and policies are reflected by any item of infrastructure without first stating the nature of the culture and policies. In view of that excellent question, the method of approach is already determined. The first thing is to define the culture and policies of the New South Wales Railways and then examine the infrastructure associated with Cootamundra station and see if they are reflected by the various developmental works.

Not everyone is going to agree on what comprises the railway culture and policies. This study adopts a definition used in a research program undertaken some years ago that examined New

South Wales Railway culture as a component in the inputs and outputs of the management decision making process.⁷⁰

FORMAL AND INFORMAL CULTURE DEFINED

Culture takes place on two levels – formal and informal, or visible and invisible. Formal culture includes pattern of activities, official attitudes, corporate philosophy, structure, organisational methods and procedures. The formal culture includes the values shared by the people in the organisation, how the staff at all levels react to official policies and procedures and what the employees think of their corporate leaders. Formal culture was promoted explicitly and implicitly by management and the informal culture was supported by employees.

There were four periods in which management was directly involved in the development and decline of its culture, these being:

- 1855-1882 development of the railway culture,
- 1882-1920 enhancement of the railway culture,
- 1920-1972 stability of the railway culture, &
- 1972-present decline and death of the railway culture.

For each period, the formal culture sometimes contained the same characteristics and sometimes different components. The study of Cootamundra railway station will be split into these four time periods and the various components of the formal culture will be expressed at the start of each period. Informal culture was structured differently and could not be divided into time periods. Rather, the same components existed from 1855 to 1972 as the informal culture was not directed at the organisational level but rather to the dull and often primitive reality of the daily life of employees. Below are the components of the informal culture:

- loyalty to fellow workers before management and customers arising from the adverse and often dangerous work conditions,
- mateship and social interaction often prompted by isolated work conditions or locations,
- agreement on the desirable work benefits, including the guarantee of lifetime employment based on experience, tangible benefits such as superannuation, transport concessions, hospital fund and housing,
- the opportunity for relatively uneducated people for promotion to high rank,
- the belief in a railway lifestyle and the knowledge that senior staff had worked themselves from the bottom grades towards the top,
- minimisation of the impact of rigid rules and procedures and work time and maximisation of leisure time,
- Romance – the belief that railway men and women were special people and possessed special skills and passionately believed in the importance of railways for the economy
- the avoidance of making decisions at low levels in the organisation and the belief that it was always better to forward decisions to someone senior, &

⁷⁰ S. A. Sharp, *Destined to Fail – Management of the New South Wales Railways 1877-1995*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Sydney, Volume 1, 1998, Chapter 12, pp. 157-177.

- mistrust of railway managers.

The examination of the physical development of Cootamundra station will not mirror the informal conduct of staff as the documents which contain such evidence are outside the scope of this study. Hence, only the formal culture of the New South Wales Railways will be examined.

In the first period between 1855 and 1882, the study will examine the 1877 platform building.

CULTURE PERIOD NO. 1

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE RAILWAY CULTURE 1855-1882

THE CULTURE DEFINED

This first period involved the transfer of British railway practice, which itself was based on a military model, to the New South Wales Railways. It contained six explicit cultural components, these being:

- a belief that railways was a special industry and railway staff possessed special insights into and exclusive knowledge of every aspect of railway operation,
- dominance of departmental requirements over public needs,
- the dominance of engineering over all other disciplines and operational matters and staff,
- rigid belief in and application of rules, standards and procedures,
- the concept of corporate paternalism, &
- the development of the image of the “Railwayman” as a unique species who worked in this special industry.

DEFINITION OF THE STATION DESIGN POLICIES 1855-1882

From the start of railway operations in New South Wales in 1855, management implemented and sustained a number of policies in relation to platform buildings. These policy components were:

- bias towards British engineering and design standards,
- restricted expenditure towards the provision of platform buildings,
- an acknowledgement of the political power of key people living in the vicinity of stations by the provision of infrastructure,
- absence of consultation with leading people representing urban communities leading to the choice of designs, materials and standards selected by departmental officials rather than members of the community,
- retention of surplus and redundant materials for re-use or recycling,
- High degree of personal freedom in decision-making without effective supervision,
- use of competitive tender system for construction by private enterprise,
- absence of discrimination of travellers based on class of travel, &
- treatment of women as special people.

INFRASTRUCTURE ITEM NO. 1 – THE 1877 PLATFORM BUILDING

The first item of infrastructure at Cootamundra station involved the issue of two plans in 1877 for the platform building. The first plan was dated 3rd May, 1877, and the second plan was dated 7th September, 1877. Why were there two plans? The answer was railway construction policy. When John Whitton, the Engineer-in-Chief, started construction of the railway line from Goulburn to Albury in 1873, he realised that he would need to review his station platform building policy, which emphasised modest, attractive, uncluttered Georgian-influenced structures. These cost a fair bit of money, though they were far from being classified as excessive, and, despite this level of restraint, his political masters thought cheaper structures could and should be provided. Whitton developed a policy for the section beyond Goulburn which allowed for certain options to be exercised, namely:

- elimination of all platform buildings,
- incompleteness of buildings on handover to the Railway Commissioner,
- use of temporary structures which could be moved from station to station as the railway line advanced, &
- use of permanent but timber structures.

Interestingly, the plans for the platform building at Cootamundra are the earliest known plans relating to the main southern line for the erection of a permanent timber building south of Goulburn. The evidence suggests that Whitton had intended to provide a timber structure as the permanent building for Cootamundra station. That contention supported by the absence of the word “temporary” on the plan.

The building measured 70 feet external by 13 feet internal for the main part and contained, from the Junee end, a parcels office, a ladies’ room, a waiting room, ticket office and Porters’ room.

The plan overall reflected Railway policy in New South Wales at the time and this was evident by the following features:

- moderate size,
- emergence and growth of the use of gabled roofs, compared with the previous dominance of hipped roofs,
- rectangular shape with emphasis on minimal building width,
- location of all windows on the road elevation or building ends,
- location of a very small ticket window facing into the general waiting room,
- protection of the female toilet by the use of an ante-chamber,
- fixed seating in the general waiting room and movable seating in the female waiting room,
- primitive seating in the general waiting room without back support,
- provision of a hand wash basin only in the female toilet,
- near total absence of decoration,
- construction on a raised platform,
- positioning of the building almost directly on the surface of the compacted-earth platform,

- use of timber framing with horizontally set timber weatherboards for external walls, timber lining boards for internal walls and ceilings and galvanised, corrugated iron sheeting on roof,
- use of 10-inch diameter timber stumps for the building foundations,

Exactly the same list of features given here as typical New South Wales Railway policy could also be used to show the ways in which the Cootamundra building was erected at the lowest possible cost. The selection of the station site, some distance away from the main street, and the lack of interest in providing a higher visual experience of the station also suggest that minimisation of expenditure was the number one policy priority. When Whitton thought that it was important, he would locate the station at the visual termination point of a street. The best examples of this are at Wagga Wagga and Albury.

There were only slightly three decorative features and these were of minor importance. These were:

- the use of four-panelled doors,
- the application of vertical boarding for the awning valances, &
- simple, timber capitals on the awning posts with simple timber braces.

The plan prepared in May included a couple of weird features, these being:

- the formation of a symmetrical, full-length, narrow awnings (about three feet wide) on each side of the building formed by the extension of the roof rafters,
- the location of the female waiting room towards the middle of the structure with the female toilet located to the rear of the waiting room,
- an open fronted "waiting room", &
- the absence of all heating.

It would seem that someone noted the weird features of the May plan and stated that a couple of them needed to be revised. The September plan produced changes in the first two features. The narrow awning on the platform side was replaced by an eight-feet wide awning supported by vertical timber posts. The female waiting room and toilet were located to one end, which was the conventional New South Wales Railway practice.⁷¹ The other two weird features remained.

From the evidence, it appears that the building that was constructed did have a posted verandah. There seems to have been one other change that was made and that was the replacement of the planned timber platform wall with stone. Stone and brickwork were the dominant materials used for platform walls south of Goulburn at the opening of the various stations. With the knowledge of precedents and photographic evidence, it appears that the timber wall was replaced at the time of station opening.

The cultural and policy components are now applied to the investigation of the 1877 platform building.

⁷¹ In an email dated 6th September, 2016, Steve Baker confirms that the floor arrangement of the September plan was implemented with the female waiting room and toilet at the Sydney end.

IDENTIFICATION OF RAILWAY CULTURE AND POLICIES IMBEDDED IN THE 1877 BUILDING

Table 1 below sets out aspects of the culture and relevant policies and describes how the 1877 building mirrors these non-physical attributes.

TABLE 1: CULTURE AND POLICIES REFLECTED IN ELEMENTS OF THE 1877 COOTAMUNDRA PLATFORM BUILDING

CULTURAL FEATURE	BUILDING ELEMENT/S THAT REFLECT THE CULTURAL FEATURE
Dominance of engineering over other disciplines and operational issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unattractiveness of structure, called a “dog kennel” in 1881,⁷² - Minimisation of decorative features, - Positioning of building on timber stumps at ground level, - Inadequate weather protection on road side – replacement awning built in 1882, - Initial reluctance to provide a posted verandah on platform side – provided immediately prior to station opening
Priority to the needs of the Railway Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dominant use of internal spaces for staff and not the public
Paternalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provision of a brick residence for the Station Master
Rigid belief in rules and procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Symmetry of the building with all rooms of constant width and rooms each side of waiting room of same dimensions
POLICY	
Use of private enterprise for construction of new works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mrs R B Armstrong, Peter Cram and K McKenzie signed the contract for the work on 4th August, 1877 – another source states that William Sharp was the contractor
Bias towards British operational procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small size of ticket window & restricted opening times to minimise exposure to customers - Use of elevated platform - Termination of the platform ends with ramps
Absence of community consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open-fronted waiting room - Minimisation of seating - Primitive seating, without back support, for bench in waiting room

⁷² *Cootamundra Herald*, 14th May, 1881, p. 2 and 4th June, 1881, p. 6.

CULTURAL FEATURE	BUILDING ELEMENT/S THAT REFLECT THE CULTURAL FEATURE
Acknowledgement of the influence of key landholders	- Location of railway corridor and station on property of John Hurley
Minimisation of expenditure	- Consideration of provision of building without a wide platform awning - Limited use of decorative elements
Absence of discrimination based on class of travel	- No separation of waiting rooms based on travel by passengers holding first or second class tickets
Special treatment for women	- Provision of a waiting room exclusively for women - Provision of an ante-chamber to the female toilet - Allocation of the station's only hand wash basin in the female toilet

CULTURE PERIOD NO. 2

ENHANCEMENT OF THE RAILWAY CULTURE 1882-1920

THE CULTURE DEFINED

This second period was one in which railway management gave to workers benefits for a life of railway service. Management also widened the base of the culture by providing it with more complexity. Five additional characteristics were added to those in the previous period, these being

- a belief that the New South Wales Railway Department was the largest industrial undertaking in Australia,
- the promotion of the idea that the New South Wales Railway Department was equal with the best overseas railway systems,
- the creation of the idea that the Railway Department played a fundamental role in pioneering all types of rural industries,
- the notion that customers were ignorant and that Railway officers had a monopoly on good knowledge,
- the belief that the first priority of every employee was to the Railway Department,

DEFINITION OF THE STATION DESIGN POLICIES 1882-1920

Management continued the same policies in relation to platform buildings that existed in the previous period. The policies applicable to this second period were:

- continued bias towards British engineering and design standards up to 1890,
- restricted expenditure towards the provision of platform buildings especially after 1886,
- absence of consultation with leading people representing urban communities leading to the choice of designs, materials and standards selected by departmental officials rather than members of the community,
- retention of surplus and redundant materials for re-use or recycling,
- High degree of personal freedom in decision-making without effective supervision,
- abandonment of the use of competitive tender system for construction by private enterprise after 1900,
- absence of discrimination of travellers based on class of travel, &
- treatment of women as special people.

These cultural and policy components are now applied to the investigation of the 1887 platform building.

INFRASTRUCTURE ITEM NO. 2 – THE 1887 APPROVED PLATFORM BUILDING

The same cultural features and policies that applied to the first building in 1877 were current when the replacement structure was approved in 1887. George Cowdery was the Engineer-in-Chief for Existing Lines and he approved the replacement building on 14th March, 1887. George Cowdery had taken over the top position sometime in late 1880 and his tenure was marked by his preference for the construction of buildings to a mixture of architectural designs, including the Gothic and Italianate schools. All structures that were either purely Italianate or purely Gothic or purely Jacobean were designed by Cowdery's predecessor, William Mason, and approved by John Whitton. Cowdery's style could be called mix-and-match to the layperson while professional architects have referred to it as Late Victorian Freestyle.

Only 33 buildings were ever built on the railway system which could be called First Class with 30 buildings built up to 1887 and the 1887 building at Cootamundra was within that group. In fact, it was the last First Class building approved and constructed before 1892. Why 1892? That marked the end of the use of designs introduced under the tenure of John Whitton, even though he had departed the organisation three years previously. Of all buildings constructed on the New South Wales Railways between 1855 and the present, the 33 buildings represent about 1% of all structures.

The 30 First Class buildings constructed up to 1887 covered both new lines and existing lines with 20 structures built on new lines and 10 on existing lines. The most popular period for the construction of First Class buildings was between 1880 and 1885 with 16 being built on new lines and three on existing lines. During his ten years of office, Cowdery approved only a total of four First Class buildings for use as replacement buildings on existing lines between 1880 to 1899, these being at Werris Creek in 1883, Petersham in 1884, Summer Hill in 1886 and Cootamundra in 1887. Extreme

luck was on the side of Cootamundra not only in the sense of receiving a First Class building but for receiving a brick building. In the year, 1887, brickwork was approved for only one other station, that being a pair of moderate-sized waiting sheds at St Marys. No brick buildings were constructed on new lines anywhere else in the Colony during 1887. Capital funds were tight in 1887 and the amount of money spent on the provision of new and replacement buildings was absolutely minimal. Cootamundra was a lucky station.

Given that only two stations received approval for the use of brick buildings throughout New South Wales in 1887, what explains the approval for the allocation of a lot of funds for one of these two to be a First Class structure? The answer to that question will have to await further research. Clearly, the building was not approved for the opening of the Gundagai branch line as the branch line was operational from 1st June, 1886, some nine months previously.

While the Cootamundra building appeared symmetrical, it was asymmetrical because of the use of a detached male toilet with a different roof style, called a cut hipped roof. The building was 126 feet 9 inches long. Unlike the 1877 structure, its width was not uniform. The greatest width was under the two transverse gables facing the station forecourt, which were 18 feet wide internal. The entrance to the structure was through the general waiting room which was 16 feet 6 inches wide. The entry was porched, it being eight feet long. Oddly, the entry door, being four feet six inches wide, was offset within the porch.

The floor plan from the Junee end contained the following rooms:

- Ladies' toilet in an attached pavilion,
- Ladies' waiting room,
- Gentlemen's waiting room,
- General waiting room,
- Booking office,
- Parcels office,
- Telegraph office,
- 10-foot long yard containing the lamp room, &
- "Public urinals" in a detached pavilion.

There were two main design elements used in the structure – Gothic and Italianate. The Gothic features were reflected by the high pitch of the main roof and the fretted timber work on the transverse gables. The Italianate elements were evident in the amount of cement rendering around windows and doors and circular vents, the provision of a tower and the amount of cast ironwork both on the roof ridge and under the verandahs on the porch. There was also a touch of Georgian Revival style in the termination of the main roofs and style of the chimneys. The cut hipped roof on the male toilet was a splash of quirkiness. The use of a mixture of design schools in a single building occurred also in the private sector. While it may be said that the design of the Cootamundra building, with its mixture of building styles, was consistent both with departmental practice and what was occurring in the private sector, further research may show that there was a precedent private house somewhere in the Cootamundra area on which the design of the station was based.

This did occur at both Goulburn and Bathurst and it is just possible that it did occur again at Cootamundra.⁷³

IDENTIFICATION OF RAILWAY CULTURE AND POLICIES IMBEDDED IN THE 1887 BUILDING

Table 2 below sets out aspects of the culture and relevant policies and describes how the 1877 building mirrors these non-physical attributes. A couple of features are inconsistent with the culture and policy and these are also noted.

TABLE 2: CULTURE AND POLICIES REFLECTED IN ELEMENTS OF THE 1887 COOTAMUNDRA PLATFORM BUILDING

CULTURAL FEATURE	BUILDING ELEMENT/S THAT REFLECT THE CULTURAL FEATURE
High degree of personal freedom in decision-making without effective supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Incorrect identification on the plan of the location of the station on the Main West line with the expression "G.W.R." - Quirkiness of the cut-hipped roof over the male toilet (possibly the first application on the NSW rail system)
The belief that the New South Wales Railway Department was the largest industrial undertaking in Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - selection and construction of a rare First Class platform building
Rigid belief in rules and procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attempted symmetry of the building, - insistence that people entered the parcels office and telegraph office from the platform rather than the street side, thus requiring, theoretically, the purchase of a platform ticket
Priority to the needs of the Railway Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The design is contrary to the usual cultural practice, with no internal spaces dedicated for use by the Station Master nor Porters
POLICY	
Retention of surplus and redundant materials for re-use or recycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Retention of 1877 timber building by its relocation slightly in the Harden direction, despite its ugliness
Use of private enterprise for construction of new works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A. Evans signed the contract for the work on 22nd January, 1888
restricted expenditure towards the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unsympathetic, subsequent

⁷³ There is a hint to a local source for the design as it was referred to as "our cottage -like railway station" in a 1914 publication entitled "Souvenir of Cootamundra." See *Cootamundra Herald*, 30th October, 1914, p. 2.

CULTURAL FEATURE	BUILDING ELEMENT/S THAT REFLECT THE CULTURAL FEATURE
provision of platform buildings	alterations to the platform building, as evidenced by the doubling of the size of the male toilet and extension into the forecourt area, ruining the elegance of the structure ⁷⁴
Bias towards British operational procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small size of ticket window & restricted opening times to minimise exposure to customers - Use of elevated platform
Absence of community consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Absence of local consultation
Minimisation of expenditure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The building contradicts the pattern of building approvals elsewhere in the colony in 1887
Acknowledgement of the influence of key landholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provision of a separate waiting room with heating for "Gentlemen" – only 21 stations ever allocated space for "Gentlemen" – removed before 1905
Absence of discrimination based on class of travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No separation of waiting rooms based on travel by passengers holding first or second class tickets
Special treatment for women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provision of a waiting room exclusively for women - Provision of an ante-chamber to the female toilet - Allocation of the station's only hand wash basin in the female toilet

In summary, the 1887 was atypical of platform buildings constructed elsewhere in the Colony at the time. This would be expected with the consequence of the approval of a First Class building and the last one approved before 1892.

⁷⁴ Expansion evident in the 1906 refreshment room plan.

CULTURE PERIOD NO. 3

THE STABILITY OF THE RAILWAY CULTURE 1920-1972

THE CULTURE DEFINED

This third period of cultural development was one in which the features of the first two periods were continued without substantial change. There were no additional benefits introduced nor existing ones deleted. One very significant change was the organisation's increasing promotion of its large size as a hallmark of its achievements and as a confirmation of its existence. Railway management developed over a period of six decades the belief for public consumption that the continuation of its large size was essential for the public good.

The existence of the existing components of the railway culture was linked by a common thread, namely that it was universally believed and implemented that the Railway Department was the master and sole possessor of all wisdom and that the customers were collectively and individually ignorant. The railway culture served the organisation, management and staff well because it addressed the following important features:

- Common belief by management and staff about the purpose, role and meaning of the culture,
- the universal reflection that the culture was a necessary response to the political environment,
- unification of the staff against management, based on the reality of adverse working conditions and treatment,
- the belief by the staff that they worked in a special and unique industry,
- the culture was sufficiently comprehensive that most staff would be attracted to some part if, not all of it,
- an ability to withstand attacks by new transport-related ideas, as both management and employee ideas were anti-customer oriented,
- a despise of anything connected with road transport,
- the existence of staff incentives,
- the frequency of statements by management and staff to repeatedly define and re-inforce the culture,
- management support for all aspects of the culture, &
- the beneficiaries of the culture witnessed its positive applicability and confirmed its validation.
-

DEFINITION OF STATION DESIGN POLICIES 1920-1972

The fundamental changes in station design policy for this period are set out below:

- adoption of an eclectic group of engineering and design standards,
- restricted expenditure towards the provision of platform buildings,

- absence of consultation with leading people representing urban communities leading to the choice of designs, materials and standards selected by departmental officials rather than members of the community,
- retention of surplus and redundant materials for re-use or recycling,
- High degree of personal freedom in decision-making without effective supervision,
- exclusive use of departmental labour for construction of platform buildings,
- absence of discrimination of travellers based on class of travel, &
- treatment of women as special people.

These cultural and policy components are now applied to the investigation of the 1887 platform building.

INFRASTRUCTURE ITEM NO. 3 – THE 1927-29 APPROVED REFRESHMENT ROOM

This brick building replaced a smaller, timber structure which had been approved in 1906. The 1906 facility was in the shape of a rectangle whereas the 1928 building was in the shape of an “L”. The replacement refreshment room was built on the Harden side of the 1906 building. This facilitated construction of the 1928 building while the earlier refreshment room continued to operate. About 30 feet of the dock at the Sydney end was filled in, the platform extended and the three sets of buffers refixed.

Internally, the structure measured about 70 feet long by 24 feet wide at the Junee end and 56 feet wide at the Harden end. The public counter was approximately 50 feet long, which seems to have been a standard for the time. The public area was divided into three separate areas – the dining room at the Harden end, the light refreshment room in the centre and the bar at the Junee end. Behind the dining room were the scullery and kitchen, with a combined length of 24 feet and width of 20 feet and behind the scullery and kitchen was a store measuring 14 feet by 12 feet.

Two plans were prepared for the refreshment room. In the first plan dated 23rd October, 1927, a “lantern” was placed in the centre of the roof ridge.⁷⁵ Lanterns had been used occasionally with the first application on a refreshment room at Newcastle in 1897. They appeared on refreshment rooms at Goulburn and Yass Junction in 1914 but were not consistently utilised. A lantern roof was not provided for the 1912 Temora refreshment room. Lantern roofs permitted light to enter the main public space and it would have been the only visual feature of the Cootamundra building from the road approach. The Railway Department must have reviewed the need for the lantern roof and issued a second plan dated April, 1929, omitting the feature.⁷⁶ No doubt the elimination of the design element was oriented to saving money. A post 1910 feature was the reduction in the ceiling height from 11 feet to 10 feet.

⁷⁵ Thanks to Steve Baker for his email of 5th September, 2016, in which he advised of the omission of the lantern roof from the second plan and the design of the footprint of the refreshment room.

⁷⁶ Thanks to Steve Baker for the date and details of the second plan.

What was amazing about the refreshment room, which was erected in 1929, was that it was built and built in brickwork. Table 3 below sets out the totality of brick platform structures built between 1917 and 1939. It shows that there were only nine brick buildings, averaging about one additional brick building every two or so years. It would be fair to say that the New South Wales Government did not allocate much money to platform buildings in rural areas during this period. Why? Because most of the available funding was expended on the electrification of the Sydney network and construction of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Cootamundra must have been an important location for such a brick building to be erected. It was a stronghold of the Labor Party from about 1900 to 1932 and, after the cessation of rural railway construction, the electorate of Cootamundra came a stronghold of the Country Party for quite a few years.

TABLE 3: BRICK PLATFORM BUILDINGS IN RURAL AREAS 1917-1939

YEAR APPROVED	LOCATION	TYPE OF BUILDING
1917	Cootamundra West	Two buildings – large, two-storey refreshment room and single-storey passenger station
1921	Muswellbrook	large, two-storey refreshment room
1924	Dubbo	Off platform refreshment room
1925	Moree	Refreshment room
1927	Parkes	Refreshment room
1928	Taree	Refreshment room and passenger station
1930	Casino	Refreshment room and passenger station
1934	Condobolin	Passenger station
1936	Griffith	Passenger station

At dates unknown, the dining room and light refreshment room in the Cootamundra facility were combined into a single space. Also, an office was built for the Manager of the refreshment room at the rear of the facility.

IDENTIFICATION OF RAILWAY CULTURE AND POLICIES IMBEDDED IN THE 1929 REFRESHMENT ROOM

Table 4 below sets out aspects of the culture and relevant policies and describes how the 1877 building mirrors these non-physical attributes.

TABLE 4: CULTURE AND POLICIES REFLECTED IN ELEMENTS OF THE 1887 COOTAMUNDRA PLATFORM BUILDING

CULTURAL FEATURE	BUILDING ELEMENT/S THAT REFLECT THE CULTURAL FEATURE
High degree of personal freedom in decision-making without effective supervision	- Preparation of the plan which did not allow serving staff behind the counter direct access to the kitchen (subsequently altered)
The belief that the New South Wales Railway Department was the largest industrial undertaking in Australia	- The actual construction of the building, which was thought to be a mere single component of “wonderful railway developments” at Cootamundra ⁷⁷
Rigid belief in rules and procedures	- Symmetrical placement of four sets of double doors leading to the platform,
Priority for staff consideration over customers	- no consideration given to travellers from the Tumut line whose train terminated at the island platform, making access to the refreshment room very difficult
Belief by staff that they achieved ultra-high levels of efficiency	- Report in 1927 that the Cootamundra refreshment room achieved “the highest efficiency for the whole state – 99 7/8%” ⁷⁸
POLICY	
Autonomy of the branches that compose the Railway Department	- Location of the refreshment room on the platform adjacent to and surrounded by other structures only of the Traffic Branch
restricted expenditure towards the provision of platform buildings	- Unsympathetic, subsequent alterations to the platform building, as evidenced by the doubling of the size of the male toilet and extension into the forecourt area, ruining the elegance of the structure ⁷⁹
Bias towards British operational procedures	- Internal layout based on a British design - selection of a “canopy” above the counter in the Bar reflected a degree of influence from American practice by replicating the appearance of an “American”

⁷⁷ *Cootamundra Herald*, 28th November, 1927, p. 2.

⁷⁸ *The Tumut and Adelong Times*, 7th June, 1927, p. 2.

⁷⁹ Expansion evident in the 1906 refreshment room plan.

CULTURAL FEATURE	BUILDING ELEMENT/S THAT REFLECT THE CULTURAL FEATURE
	style bar then in use at Cootamundra West, Harden and Goulburn
Absence of community consultation	- Unlike the 1888 platform building, the front of the refreshment room was considered to be facing the platform, rather than facing the forecourt – the ugly elevation faced the town
Minimisation of expenditure	- There was no increase in the size of the proposed 1927 building, compared with the 1906 structure it was intended to replace – initially, there was no internal room for the Manager, no staff accommodation, virtually no decoration and an absence of back-office functions, such as a laundry, coal bin & staff toilet
Absence of discrimination based on class of travel	- No separation of waiting rooms based on travel by passengers holding first or second class tickets
Special treatment for women	- Allocation of a section of the food counter for exclusive use of women and children

INFRASTRUCTURE ITEM NO. 4 – WARTIME ALTERATIONS TO THE 1888 BUILDING

By 1935, substantial changes had already been made to the 1888 building. Table 5 below sets out the changes to the various internal spaces. The alterations in Table 5 may have been made long before 1935, as was the case with the relocation of the male toilet which had been moved from the Sydney end to the Junee end prior to 1910.

TABLE 5: ALTERATIONS TO THE 1888 PLATFORM BUILDING IMPLEMENTED BY 1935

ROOM FUNCTIONS FROM THE JUNE END, 1888	ROOM FUNCTIONS FROM THE JUNE END, AS AT 1935	COMMENTS
Nil	Building extended - male toilet relocated from the Harden end – 11 urinals, 6 closets & nil hand basins	An increase from 6 urinals, 3 closets & nil hand basins
Nil	Staff bicycle store	Access only from road side
Ladies' toilet in an attached pavilion – 3 closets & 3 hand basins	Ladies' toilet in an attached pavilion – 3 closets & 3 hand basins	location of closets in slightly different
Ladies' waiting room	"Ladies room"	This was the only internal space of the 1888 building that had not been altered up to 1935
Gentlemen's waiting room	"waiting room"	
General waiting room	Entry hall and booking office	Former space divided into 2 spaces
Booking office	Station Master's office, sign-on room & additional, un-named room	Former booking office divided into 2 rooms and an extension added to the road side elevation
Parcels office	Telegraph office	The 12 feet long space of the 1888 parcels office was combined with the 8 feet long space of the 1888 telegraph office
10 feet long yard	Cloak room	The 1888 space was now enclosed with brick walls
Public urinals	Parcels office	Extended on the road elevation side to form a public entry thus eliminating the need for parcel pick-up and deliveries to use the platform
DETACHED FROM 1888 BUILDING		
Nil	Out of shed and store	Set back in the direction of the station forecourt
Nil	Bookstall	Adjacent to but forward of

ROOM FUNCTIONS FROM THE JUNE END, 1888	ROOM FUNCTIONS FROM THE JUNE END, AS AT 1935	COMMENTS
		the refreshment room
Nil	Refreshment room	Opened in 1929 replacing an earlier timber structure

By 1935, the external appearance of the station had changed. An attempt had been made to retain a degree of symmetry by the duplication at each end of the 1888 built structure of the extensions for the male toilet and the parcels office, which had similar dimensions and appearance on the forecourt side. However, there had been already one violation of the concept of symmetry by the addition of a room to the left of the porched entry. Also, fixed hoods had been placed over two windows on the left-hand side looking at the structure and, in later years, another five fixed window hoods would be added to the left-hand side. Ultimately, the building could be visually divided into two components by the placement and non-placement of window hoods. Public spaces were located on the right-hand side and departmental spaces existed on the left-hand side of the porched entry.

World War Two had a significant impact on railway operations at Cootamundra. The major project was the extension of the track duplication from Cootamundra North through the station and to Junee. The section through Cootamundra station was duplicated in 1943 and involved the elimination of the 1904 island platform and its replacement with a new island platform in a different location.

Unlike most other stations on the Main South, the War had a major impact on the Cootamundra platform building. Below is Table 6 which lists known alterations.

TABLE 6: ALTERATIONS TO THE COOTAMUNDRA PLATFORM BUILDING 1941-1943

DATE OF ALTERATION	NATURE OF ALTERATION	COMMENT
4 th July, 1941	Relocation of Station Master's office; expansion of office for Roster Clerks; elimination of cloak room; provision of office for Porters; expansion of parcels office in the Sydney direction and outward to the forecourt & 3 additional fixed sun hoods were added to the windows facing the station forecourt. - an additional amenities building was provided and	The Station Master was relocated to a smaller office. The sign-on room was eliminated. The telegraph office was eliminated and converted into a space for the Porters. An addition was made behind the Porters' room towards the station forecourt. The counter in the parcels office was lengthened, as were the parcel racks. A "locker" 5 feet long and 5'6" high

DATE OF ALTERATION	NATURE OF ALTERATION	COMMENT
	a store and another room were significantly altered. Lockers were also specially built for location in all the offices.	was placed between the out of shed and refreshment room, blocking access between the forecourt and platform at that point. The new walls were formed by 11-inch thick cavity brickwork.
24 th September, 1941	unknown alterations to the refreshment room counter	on 15 th April, 1941, it was proposed to reduce the length of the counter by one panel of about 6 feet in length. Although approved, the change was cancelled. Details of a revised plan are unknown.
22 nd September, 1942	Two gabled roofs to be provided over the parcels office extension proposed in the 1941 plan. The roofs were to be sheeted with "terne coated", corrugated iron sheeting. The fixed window hoods were also covered with "terne coated iron."	It is unsure whether the work in this plan was a replacement for the earlier approved works or provided details of what was approved in 1941.
7 th January, 1943	The provision of the locker between the out of shed and the refreshment room, approved in 1941, was replaced by a store with shelving. Also, a door, with the standard ledged and brace work, measuring 6' 10" x 2' 10", was provided in the June end of the refreshment room.	In view of the provision of the new door into the refreshment room, it seems the store was intended for use by refreshment room staff. While the 1942 plan provided for the use of No. 26 gauge terne coated sheeting, the 1943 plan unusually applied No. 24 gauge sheeting.
15 th December, 1943	The existing 3 closets in the female toilet were removed and replaced by 3 closets in a different location. The roof was also altered with the provision of a gable facing the forecourt	The building wall facing the forecourt was extended and glass louveres inserted in each of the closets. The new closets were smaller than the previous ones, measuring 5' 3" x 3'.

The changes approved on 4th July, 1941 and 22nd September, 1942, were completed in July, 1943. By these alterations alone, the attractiveness of the 1888 building was significantly degraded. One possible interpretation is that brickwork was used for the major building extensions because of the status of the town. That may have been the case but it is equally plausible that there was a shortage of galvanised, corrugated iron sheeting, which might have been otherwise used for the parcels office extensions. This product shortage is also suggested by the use of terne coated material, rather than a galvanised product.

It is possible that the lengthening of the refreshment room counter occurred following the approval of alterations in September, 1941.

The alterations to the female toilet were completed on 22nd October, 1944, thereby taking only 10 months to complete. Interestingly, the number of closets for women had never been increased from the time of the 1888 building. If that were not bad enough, the size of each closet was reduced in the 1943 plan to equate with the standard dimensions for male closets. Female closets were usually wider for a reason only known to women. No changes were made to the male toilet at this time and that facility retained its 11 urinal stalls and five closets.

IDENTIFICATION OF RAILWAY CULTURE AND POLICIES IMBEDDED IN THE WARTIME CHANGES TO THE 1888 PLATFORM BUILDING

Table 7 below sets out aspects of the culture and relevant policies and describes how the 1888 building mirrors these non-physical attributes.

TABLE 7: CULTURE AND POLICIES REFLECTED IN THE WARTIME ALTERATIONS TO THE 1888 COOTAMUNDRA PLATFORM BUILDING

CULTURAL FEATURE	BUILDING ELEMENT/S THAT REFLECT THE CULTURAL FEATURE
High degree of personal freedom in decision-making without effective supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of different titles at different times for the same room function, e.g. "ladies waiting room" and "ladies room" - almost uniform omission of possessive case in description of room functions, e.g. "ladies room" instead of "ladies' room"
Priority for staff consideration over customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visually adverse alterations to the 1888 building made for departmental, functional reasons without regard to the aesthetics of the structure - elimination of the gentlemen's waiting room, - visual separation of the structure

CULTURAL FEATURE	BUILDING ELEMENT/S THAT REFLECT THE CULTURAL FEATURE
	into a departmental half, marked by external, fixed window hoods, on the left side and a public half on the right-hand side of the entry porch.
POLICY	
Autonomy of the branches that compose the Railway Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Location of the off-platform ancillary buildings adjacent to and surrounded by other structures only of the Traffic Branch
Special treatment for women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Retention of the ladies' waiting room as the only structure on the platform not to be physically altered since 1888, - retention of the use of the ladies' waiting room as an ante-chamber to the female toilet, - relocation of the male toilet away from the refreshment room.
Status of employees based on seniority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - allocation of a dedicated specific space for the senior staff member, namely the Station Master

It is unfair to say that women were treated better than men in the provision of facilities at Cootamundra station. Certainly, they retained a special status and this was continually emphasised by the provision of a large wall mirror in their waiting room, as well as movable seating, a table and the application of a more attractive colour scheme on the internal walls. In one way, women were not treated as equal to men and that relates to the amount of toilet accommodation. While the size of the male facilities was doubled between 1888 and 1940, there was no increase in the female toilet facilities. There was also another issue that affected women adversely on Cootamundra platform. While the relocation of the male toilet from the Sydney to the Junee end of the building kept men going to and coming from the male toilet away from women using the refreshment room, it created another problem.

It was a long-held policy of the New South Wales Railways to locate male toilets as far away as possible from the ladies' waiting room and their toilet. This was achieved in the case of the refreshment rooms at Goulburn, Yass Junction, Harden, Junee and Albury, either through the initial building design or subsequent alterations. Unfortunately, at Cootamundra the relocation of the male toilet resulted in the very close proximity of the entry to the male toilet and the entry to the ladies' waiting room.

CULTURE PERIOD NO. 4

THE DECLINE AND DEATH OF THE RAILWAY CULTURE – FROM 1972

OBLITERATION OF THE TRADITIONAL CULTURE

The passenger business of the State Rail Authority was split in 1989 into two operating components. Countrylink was established to manage services to rural areas outside Sydney, Newcastle and, Lithgow. Up to that time, the culture of the organisation had been odious with a poor self-image, outdated industrial practices, unreliable services and a perception by some of the staff that their employment was a form of unemployment benefit. Countrylink introduced a fundamental change in the way trains and stations were managed and Cootamundra was amongst the first country stations to receive an expression of the new corporate policy.

Management obliterated the traditional culture that had existed since 1855 and this was achieved by the following measures:

- elimination of the concept of lifetime employment and job security,
- introduction from 1989 of contract employment for executive staff,
- replacement of the functional engineering and operational branch structure of the organisation with customer oriented organisation,
- elimination of seniority as the only means of promotion,
- elimination of the management view that all staff were contributing worthwhile work,
- removal of the title of Station Master to be replaced by a Station Manager and, subsequently, the elimination of all positions of Station Manager,
- change in the title of the house Journal from “*The Railwayman*” to, initially, “*Transport News*”,
- reduction in the entitlements of staff free travel passes,
- elimination of rent-free or subsidised accommodation for station and other staff,
- elimination of the provision of residences for staff generally,
- modification of the hospital fund,
- amalgamation of the Railway Credit Union with a non-railway credit union,
- elimination of staff cafeterias,
- change in the name of the railway Head Office from Railway House to Transport House, &
- changes in employment practices, e.g.
 - o no direct entitlement of sons of railwaymen to be employed,
 - o virtual cessation of the Railway Institute, including closure of the Institute buildings, &
 - o elimination of the need to wear staff identification numbers.

The changes that Countrylink made to the platform buildings at Cootamundra reflected the changes in the policies and culture of the State Rail Authority.

Before Countrylink took over in 1989, the Cootamundra building was in poor physical condition with noticeable deterioration of the brickwork, roofing and gables. While the building was described as of a good design in 1888, its appearance was adverse due to its poor, external condition, particularly on the forecourt side to the station. At that time, the 1929 refreshment room building was vacant.

Prior to Countrylinkification, the uses of the rooms in the 1888 building from the Junee end were:

TABLE 8: ROOM FUNCTIONS, COOTAMUNDRA 1989

FUNCTION	LOCATION OF ROOM
Male toilet	last space at Junee end facing platform
Store	last space at Junee end behind the male toilet facing the forecourt
Vacant space	Facing the forecourt - formerly the staff bicycle room
Female toilets	Facing the platform with entry through the ladies' waiting room
Ladies' rest room	Facing the platform
Waiting room	Facing the platform
Entry Hall	Provides the pedestrian entry from the porch on the road side to the platform
Booking office	Facing the platform with 2 ticket windows facing into the entry hall
Office	Facing the platform
Sign-on room	Behind the office facing the forecourt
Assistant Station Master's office	Facing the platform
Station Master's office	Facing the forecourt
Meal room	Facing the platform
Staff shower room	Behind the meal room facing the forecourt
Parcels office	Facing the platform
Store	Behind the parcels office facing the forecourt

When built in 1888, the structure contained nine rooms. In 1990, this had increased to 16 rooms and this was achieved by division of the existing spaces and small additions to each end and to the elevation facing the station forecourt.

INFRASTRUCTURE ITEM NO. 5 – COUNTRYLINKIFICATION, 1992

Countrylink was established in 1989 and it produced the first edition of its new in-house magazine, named *Freight Rail & Countrylink Xpress*, in April, 1990. The very first edition contained an article about the proposed Countrylinkification of Cootamundra station. The article reported that:

“new life will be brief into railway activity at Cootamundra with construction of a modern travel centre and establishment of an inter-coach terminal. Work is expected to begin this

year on the travel centre, one of five to be built in the southern region (the others being at Canberra, Goulburn, Wagga Wagga and Albury). The new facilities will create new opportunities and will bring a new dimension to customer services, including a pleasing new face-to-face operation, rather than the old 'hole in the wall' ticket office. The Southern Acting Regional Administrative Officer, Des Scanes, said that the rejuvenation of facilities at Cootamundra gave the lie to the rumour-mongering prophets of doom who had previously forecast the death of the railway town. The new centre and inter-coach terminal will offer a more open, friendly environment to attract additional patronage. Staff will be catered for with improved facilities and a brighter station area with landscaping, paving and signage. There will be undercover access to waiting areas, toilets and food outlets."⁸⁰

Not long after the establishment of Countrylink, the organisation made a decision that would fundamentally alter the way architecture was conducted in the State Rail Authority. Up until 1989, there had been an architectural section in the Way and Works Branch but this was abandoned and divided into two sections – one for freight and country passenger work and the other for work within the CityRail area. It was not long before the architectural section in charge of country works was disbanded. Most of the architects were given redundancy and only one chartered architect remained at his job, which was to issue contracts and supervise the work of external contractors who were engaged to communicate with staff, liaise with the relevant local government authority, prepare plans and supervise building contractors.

In September, 1990, work was underway on the Countrylinkification of the first three stations, these being Cootamundra, Tamworth and Taree, with Tamworth the first to be completed. Tenders closed on 19th December, 1990, for the Countrylink Travel Centre and coach interchange at Cootamundra.⁸¹

The work included:

- demolition of the former offices in the 1888 building on the left-hand side of the porched entry and replacement by a Travel Centre,
- demolition of the buildings between the 1888 building and the 1929 building and the enclosure of the space by a glazed waiting area,
- demolition of part of the former 1929 refreshment room and conversion of the remaining section into an information centre and cafe,
- provision of a large covered area on the forecourt side for the parking of connecting road coaches,
- extensive repairs to the 1888 building and repainting with regard to the heritage values of the place,
- resurfacing of the 246.9 metres or 810 feet long platform,
- new, corporate signage, seats, garbage bins, shelters, &
- repairs to the surface of the station forecourt.

⁸⁰ *Freight & Countrylink Xpress*, April, 1990, p. 3.

⁸¹ *Railway Digest* January, 1991, p. 30.

For the first time since 1888, Cootamundra station looked sparkling. It had the appearance of the facility to attract customers, a policy which had been absent from the station since it opened in 1877.

In June, 1992, *Freight Rail & Countrylink Xpress* contained an article about the “recently completed Cootamundra” railway station and said that it is “a beautiful example of restoration with careful detail ensuring its heritage features are retained.” It reported that the Cootamundra upgrade cost \$1 million and the Cootamundra Council and the Department of Transport jointly contributed \$160,000 to the station redevelopment for the inclusion of the Cootamundra Council operated tourist information centre.⁸²

Because of the limited experience with the concept of the coach interchange, a couple of the early station upgrades had a problem or two. In the case of the Cootamundra development, the major issue was the excessive scale of the three gables projecting above the coaches over the coach bays. Countrylink did learn from that mistake and made sure subsequent coach interchanges were in scale with the existing platform building.

The traditional New South Wales Railway culture, both formal and informal, were dead by the time the work at Cootamundra was planned in 1990. However, the infrastructure development did provide considerable insight into policy changes in the State Rail Authority. It is an interesting exercise to examine the ways in which the Countrylink Travel Centre and coach interchange reflected the fundamental changes and improvements in railway policy that affected stations. Table 9 below sets out those building features which reflect the new policy direction and contrasts these initiatives with the former policy.

TABLE 9: FEATURES OF THE COOTAMUNDRA TRAVEL CENTRE & COACH INTERCHANGE THAT MIRROR NEW & OLD STATION DESIGN POLICIES.

BUILDING FEATURE THAT REFLECTS NEW POLICY	NEW POLICY	OLD POLICY
Overall building design	dramatic and appealing to the local community	an absence of desire to engage local community
Waiting room	Bright and cheery – unisex	Gloomy – separation of sexes
Toilets	Equality in terms of location and closet number and size	Inequality in the number of closets
Use of glazing	Extensive use in waiting room	Minimal use
Coach interchange	Seamless intermodal transfer	Not applicable
Purchase of tickets	Face-to-face and over a counter or seated	Minimisation of staff exposure with public through small window

⁸² *Freight Rail & Countrylink Xpress*, No. 28, June, 1992, p. 1.

BUILDING FEATURE THAT REFLECTS NEW POLICY	NEW POLICY	OLD POLICY
Staff accommodation	Open planning	Enclosed, small spaces
Arrangement of staff seating	Open plan with all members of the team in common view	Restricted to rooms based on seniority and function
Signage	Extensive, with way-finding signs on adjacent street, entry and on platform	Restricted to platform area
Disabled access	Complies with Commonwealth and State legislation	No disabled access
Platform	Clean surface formed by a combination of bitumen and pavers	Bitumen, with considerable patching
Conservation of heritage values	Careful planning and execution to maintain heritage elements – restoration of key fabric – adaptive re-use of part of the refreshment room	No regard for heritage values
Repairs	Extensive repairs undertaken	Minimal repairs – building in poor condition

Table 9 above provides strong evidence of the way Countrylink tried very hard to make the people of Cootamundra proud of their railway station. Despite the problem with the scale of the coach interchange gables, Countrylink succeeded in achieving its goal. The station had not looked so good for treated so well for the previous 60 years.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Buildings do reflect the policies and culture of the organisation that approved and funded their construction. Structures also are designed with embedded priorities and corporate attitudes for the people using them.

This study has examined five infrastructure developments at Cootamundra where the first four of these works reflected various cultural characteristics and formal departmental policies. The last project examined identified the absence of cultural factors and the fundamental change in railway policies affecting the design of railway stations in New South Wales.

It can be well said and easily proven that Cootamundra was a lucky location in terms of the railway facilities provided over the years. What was lucky about Cootamundra station? The following is a list of the lucky events:

- a rare instance of the completion of a platform building at the time of line opening,
- replacement of the initial, narrow awning with a posted verandah,
- one of only two stations to receive approval for a brick building in 1887,
- the last First Class station built in rural New South Wales,
- the use of brickwork for a replacement refreshment room in 1929, &
- the nomination of Cootamundra as the road coach interchange for branch line operations.

There was one consistent reason why Cootamundra was favoured. It was the politics of the place that mattered in the 20th century. It was a Labor Party stronghold and the combination of a very strong branch of the Party, the representation in Parliament by Cabinet Ministers and a large and powerful collection of trade unionists brought sustained benefits. The luck that Cootamundra received extended to other assets of railway operations at that location.

Stuart Sharp

22nd September, 2016

COOTAMUNDRA WEST RAILWAY STATION

THE LAST, LARGE STATION BUILDING PROJECT IN RURAL NEW SOUTH WALES

THE FIRST BUILDING

Cootamundra West as a railway location had existed from on 22nd March, 1911, the date the original signal box was officially opened in association with the single track triangle loop (north fork) and two dead end up sidings and a signal box at the north junction with the main line.⁸³

Two features of the present signal box are worthy of mention. The first one is that the signal box is not aligned to the centre of the platform unlike the other three platform buildings.⁸⁴ The second is the timber construction, which again contrasts to the other structures on the platform formed by face brickwork. Both features tell of the different branches of the New South Wales Railways which built the structures and their autonomy to design what they liked, not what necessarily looked attractive and not necessarily what the local community desired.

The box is not aligned because it is located in the same position as the original 1911 box. Plans dated 1910 show the box located equidistant between the original north and south forks which ran parallel with space marked “future platform”. The parallel section of the south fork was later slightly shifted to the south to accommodate the wider 1917 platform to hold the wide refreshment room. This platform was longer and engulfed the box. This raises the question whether the current box the original 1911 box or possibly an enlargement of the 1911 box, or is it a completely new box built 1916/17 over the old interlocking machine? Some of the 1917 lever numbers are the same for particular signals and points as the 1911 signalling diagram. Interlocking and signal box authority, Dr Bob Taaffe says “the date of the present signal box is more likely to be 1911. If it had been built in 1917, then the signal box probably would have had a hip roof.”⁸⁵

THE PURPOSE OF THE 1917 TRIANGLE DUPLICATION

Signalling enthusiast, David Donald, wrote that the railway line from Cootamundra West to Temora and beyond “has always been looked upon with some importance, as can be gauged by the following two facts: when the duplication of the Main South was being done in the early part of this century, it was planned to send it through to Temora, instead of further south, and this could partly explain the long delay in pushing south of Cootamundra; the second point concerns the rather extensive

⁸³ R. T. T. Taaffe, *The Use and Selection of Materials in Railway Signal Box Construction, 1912-1990*, unpublished Ph. D. thesis, University of Sydney, 1990, p. A8

⁸⁴ Thank you to Steve Baker, ARHS Member, who specialises in the history of the NSW Railways in the Cootamundra area.

⁸⁵ Email from Dr R. T. Taaffe, 4th August, 2016.

installation at Cootamundra West.”⁸⁶ When the signal diagram attached to the 1911 Circular was issued, there was no mention of a station at Cootamundra West. However, 1910 plans show a ‘future platform’ between the north and south forks which run parallel for a distance before junctioning west of the signal box. If no provision needed to be made for platform space, the two forks would have junctioned much closer to the Yass Road level crossing (as they do now since yard rationalisation). David continued by saying that “the original duplication plans were for double track to Temora, and this is shown by the installation of the North Fork in March, 1911 (followed by duplication in June, 1917), and the rather substantial station buildings placed at Cootamundra West.”⁸⁷

There are three issues to be considered flowing from David’s remarks. Firstly, was the Main South line going to be deviated around the back of Cootamundra and reconnect with the existing main line somewhere around Junee? The second issue was whether the track was going to be duplicated west of Cootamundra all way to Temora? Thirdly, was the provision of the large station at Cootamundra West related to either the deviation around Cootamundra or the track duplication to Temora, or to both ideas or neither of the ideas.

When the signal diagram attached to the 1911 Circular was issued, there was no mention of a station at Cootamundra West. All that was built initially was a signal box and an attached small platform for departmental purposes. Was there any other evidence of a station? The Traffic Branch Circular issued in 1917 for the duplication of the North Fork at Cootamundra West definitely shows the two tracks described as Up North Fork and Down North Fork. The two tracks are carried past the platform but, from the Sydney end of the platform, they are renamed as Main Line and Loop Line. Is the term “Main Line” an indication of a proposed deviation? No, as the track extending to the existing Cootamundra platform is also labelled Main Line. So it seems that there were two main lines. Then again, there was another interesting piece of information on the 1917 track diagram and this was the reference to the loop line on the southern fork of the triangle described as the “Tumut Siding.” It was intended in 1917 and implemented in 1919 that the branch line trains to Tumut would commence at Cootamundra West having connected with the Temora Mail, which had a through coach to Tumut. The Tumut Mixed started at the West station immediately the station opened when the Temora Mail was rerouted. Tumut line passengers changed trains at the West station until a through carriage, which had been lobbied for by Tumut line folk for some years, was introduced in 1919. It is interesting to note that the points to the Tumut Siding were worked from ground frames, rather than directly from the signal box – why? One consequence was that all point rodding for the yard exited the signal box on the north side of the platform.

Direct evidence that duplication was to proceed to Temora in 1911 or 1917 does not seem to exist but, based on the track layout and building works at Cootamundra West, it is possible to make a case that duplication to Temora could have been a possibility. Was the station at Cootamundra West one of the major components of the duplication of the main line from Wallendbeen? May be. Certainly, the 1917 track diagram shows the outline of the existing two platform buildings.

⁸⁶ D. Donald, “The Cootamundra West to Lake Cargelligo Branch”, Part 1, *Blocking Back*, Issue No. 5, May, 1982, p. 1.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

If one were looking at innuendo as a source of evidence, the turning of the first sod of the Stockinbingal to Forbes line in 1912 provided input. William Holman, the local Member of Parliament and State Cabinet Minister, said that, “unless the work of duplicating the main trunk lines was carried with, proposed link lines would be practically useless.”⁸⁸ So, was this a reference to carrying duplication from Cootamundra North Junction out to Stockinbingal? Holman would have more likely been referring in 1912 to the need generally to accelerate the duplication of the trunk main line Picton to Harden and especially the expensive Harden – Cullerin bottleneck and because at this time Parliament had still not allocated sufficient funds to get to Harden. The Government passed funding of 3m pounds in 1913. But there certainly were calls around this time for a future duplication to extend beyond Harden to either Cootamundra, or the Main south to Junee, or, because of wheat traffic expectations, to Temora or at least Stockinbingal.

Holman also took the opportunity to express what was one of many criticisms of the Chief Commissioner, Tom Johnson, because of Johnson’s alleged poor performance in pressing ahead with track duplication. There was nothing unusual in this sort of remark as Johnson had been appointed by the previous conservative government, not the existing Labor government.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE STATION

The construction of a new station at Cootamundra West had been announced on 18th April, 1912, by Tom Johnson. This was the same month when Holman was turning the first sod of the line to Forbes at Stockinbingal.⁸⁹ Johnson announced that trains to Wyalong and Temora would go direct around the triangle and not call at Cootamundra Station. Why did Johnson make the announcement about the new station in 1912?

One newspaper in 1912 quoted the Commissioners saying that the new station “will have all the conveniences of an up-to-date station, including a refreshment room.”⁹⁰ The inclusion of a refreshment room may seem a puzzle because approval had been given in 1912 for the establishment of the refreshment room at Temora, which opened in 1914. Why would the Railways Department have two refreshment rooms so close to each other? Maybe the refreshment room at Cootamundra West was indeed built to serve trains proceeding south rather than west. Holman in July, 1912, again attacked Chief Commissioner Johnson accusing him of “dilatoriness” in relation to progress with track duplication.⁹¹ It was not so much a “puzzle” but part of a general trend at the time for expansion of refreshment rooms. For example, a refreshment room was opened at Gundagai 1910/11.

Commissioner Johnson gave evidence in April, 1913, before the British Dominions Royal Commission saying that main line duplication had to be completed at “the most speed.” This was not the view of many people in Cootamundra who wanted the connection between the Main South and Main West lines completed first or at least both being rated as “urgent.” Johnson was not of this view.⁹²

⁸⁸ Ibid., 2nd April, 1912, p. 2.

⁸⁹ *Cootamundra Herald*, 19th of April, 1912, p. 2.

⁹⁰ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18th April, 1912, p. 7 and 18th April, 1912, p. 7.

⁹¹ *Cootamundra Herald*, 16th July, 1912, p. 2.

⁹² *Cootamundra Herald*, 22nd April, 1913, p. 2.

Duplication was the big issue in 1914 and the editorial of the local Cootamundra paper published the case for island platforms, saying that they “are better for traffic flows” and that experts state that “they are a feature of double-line working.”⁹³ The Commissioners met a deputation at Cootamundra in April, 1914, where the new Chief Commissioner, John Harper, “hoped the duplication works would be started at Cootamundra within 12 months.”⁹⁴ It was only after duplication was completed that the Chief Commissioner wanted to consider improvements to station premises” but the Commissioners considered that the only urgent part on the Main South was the section north of Harden, with that station being regarded as “the crucial point” on the line.⁹⁵ On 14th August, 1915, it was announced that duplication to Cootamundra “is being completed.”⁹⁶ Of course, duplication did not reach Cootamundra station until 1943 while it did go past Cootamundra West in 1917, the year the branch line was opened from Wyalong Central to Lake Cargelligo.

In July, 1916, the press reported that the construction of the new refreshment room at Cootamundra West was “in hand.”⁹⁷ That was an interesting remark because plans for the refreshment room building were not prepared until August, 1916. By late October, 1916, the local newspaper reported that the refreshment room was “being erected.”⁹⁸ That seems to be a very generous account of proceedings as it would take another two years before the station was open for passenger business. possibly because work was slowed down with the 1917 financial cutbacks. The Premier called on department heads to give revised plans and cutbacks in 1917 but, unfortunately, the reply from the Railways Department is missing.

It just so happened that William Holman, the State Premier, was the local Member of Parliament. Other locations where plans were underway for additional refreshment room facilities around the same time were Yass Junction and Goulburn. Substantial alterations were also made to the existing refreshment room at Harden. These are additional to the opening in 1912/13 of the refreshment room at Temora, which was the first brick refreshment room erected on the New South Wales railway system since the construction of the facility at Moss Vale in 1890. It is quite possible that Holman was influential in persuading the Railway Commissioners to provide not only additional facilities but refreshment rooms which had a high level of decoration that would normally be seen only in the Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong region.

ARCHITECTURAL PLANS PREPARED

The plan for the Cootamundra West refreshment room dated August, 1916, was only the first production of what was to be provided, though there was no change in the design or size of the structure in the final plans which were approved by Robert Ranken on 5th May, 1917, for the single-storey component and on the 23rd November, 1917, for the two-storey refreshment room. In August, 1917, another plan was issued for the permanent, brick platform buildings at Cootamundra

⁹³ Ibid., 24th March, 1914, p. 2.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 5th April, 1914, p. 2.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 3rd July, 1914, p. 2.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 14th September, 1915, p. 2.

⁹⁷ *Wagga Wagga Express*, 20th July, 1916, p. 2.

⁹⁸ *Cootamundra Herald*, 20th October, 1916, p. 3.

West. It was proposed to have a similar arrangement as that which had been approved for Goulburn, namely a single story structure measuring 77' 6" x 12' wide internally and a two-storey refreshment room 102' 6" x 38' with 70' 11" long upstairs section and containing staff quarters composed of six bedrooms and related accommodation. A third building common to both Goulburn and Cootamundra West was the detached mail toilet block.

The track diagram attached to Circular No. 111 dated 13th June, 1917, relating to the introduction of automatic signalling between Wallendbeen and Cootamundra North Junction shows the platform in position at Cootamundra West. The Commissioners did inspect the works in July, 1917, but no report of progress was made in the local press at that time. In February, 1918, work was still progressing on the refreshment rooms but the Commissioners said that the new station would not be open until the refreshment room was completed.⁹⁹

Even in January, 1918, the local newspaper was using the future tense in relation to the construction of the island platform and station building.¹⁰⁰ A public meeting was held at Cootamundra on 11th January, 1919, after the opening of Cootamundra West platform about rumours that the Cootamundra station was being relocated to Cootamundra West. The Mayor and 45 other people signed a petition of protest. A Railway Station Defence Committee was established. The Commissioners replied within a week saying the existing station was to remain open.¹⁰¹

The station was not officially listed as being open until the 15th November, 1918, though the local press reported that the first train to use the new station stopped on 11th November. The refreshment room was opened "without fuss or ceremony", it being a quiet affair with a high level of local surprise why the local Parliamentary Member, William Holman, the Premier, was absent.¹⁰² It seems that the restricted flow of money was slowing work down on this as well as many other projects. Steve Baker agrees that it is surprising that Holman not there but a possible reason is that this station was not built in response to lobbying from interests groups and was not bringing any new service to the locals, rather it was built for railway operational purposes and, hence, no local political gain in publicity.

DESIGN FEATURES

On the plans, the four buildings on the platform form an interesting station composition and, from a side elevation, the structures are a striking suite of buildings. There is only one thing wrong. Every passenger that walked onto the platform first encountered the absolute ugliness of the pair of double doors leading into the parcels office. The doors dominate the entire visual experience of the station buildings and ruin the architectural attractiveness of the composition. The one thing that is strikingly obvious is that the buildings were not designed from the perspective of a person walking up the ramp onto the platform but were designed on the basis of the elevation from the northern side of the rail corridor.

⁹⁹ *Cootamundra Herald*, 8th February, 1918, p. 2.

¹⁰⁰ *Cootamundra Herald*, 14th January, 1918, p. 1.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 14th January, 1918, p. 2 and 8th February, 1918, p. 2.

¹⁰² *Cootamundra Herald*, 12th November, 1918, p. 1.

Steve Baker violently disagrees with these comments are designed to stimulate debate but he points out that the existing, wide, heavy parcel doors and thick lintel above but these are not original. He writes:

“An early photo shows a narrower opening with two frame and panel doors similar to the other station doors, aligned with a multipaned highlight window above similar to the other station highlight windows, and the moulded string course along the walls and continuing around the original parcel doors and highlight window rather than being interrupted by the current heavy lintel. There is a similar appearance to Goulburn’s single story island platform building. Also, garden bushes are also visible while in 1950s-60s there was a large garden near the station sign. Nothing ugly about all this!. And the design was functional – the two doors aligned with the loading bank on the ramp at the Cootamundra end for horse drawn carts to back up. Foot passengers approached along a guttered footpath adjacent to the south fork with attractive white timber fencing and passed through a pedestrian gate at the top of the ramp, with a roadway running adjacent with double gates giving access onto the platform and double gates on the platform protecting the loading bank. The single station building accords with the “Type A9” standard design minus the gents lavatory and would have appeared pleasantly symmetrical to the arriving pedestrian. The era of grand station entrance design was over by this time. I don’t think the railways were trying to impress the locals with this station. It was purely functional in the standard design of the day and so I don’t think there was any intent by the designers that was designed to be viewed from the north. It might be better said that the station can be better appreciated from a northern perspective because it is obstructed when viewed from other perspectives.”

The Cootamundra West refreshment room featured the newly introduced concept of an “American bar”. The first use of an “American bar” was at Harden in 1914, two years before the issue of the standard plan for such a facility. This was typical of the New South Wales Railways where standard plans were always issued after the introduction of a design into general service. In 1916, plans had already been prepared for the provision of an American bar in the proposed refreshment room at Cootamundra West and, at the same time, it was also intended to install another example in the existing refreshment room building at Mudgee. The American bar at Harden survives in the local museum.

The design of the Cootamundra West buildings accorded generally to the Federation-influenced style. All the decorative features found on Sydney buildings were applied to the two structures at Cootamundra West though there were a few significant differences between the single and two-storey structures. On the single story building, roughcast was not used on either of the gables or the chimneys. Roughcast had consistently been applied to those structures in country areas and was the dominant feature that differentiated buildings approved for Sydney urban locations and those on rural lines. Oddly, roughcast was applied to the gables and chimneys of the two-storey refreshment room and it can only be concluded that this inconsistency between the treatment of the two structures was related to different individuals who prepared the plans or different whims of the same person.

Cootamundra railway historian, Steve Baker, makes the distinction between the design of the two main platform buildings by describing the single-storey structure as Federation-influenced and the

refreshment room as Federation/Edwardian design in the same style of the refreshment room at Goulburn on platform Nos 2 and 3. What Steve is emphasizing is the differences in the types of decorations between the two major buildings on the platform. At Cootamundra West, the obvious external differences are in the treatment of the roof gables with the single-storey building using an extension of the wall brickwork, compared to the application of roughcast on the refreshment room and the manner in which the chimneys are capped, namely with terracotta pots on the single-storey structure and the use of precast concrete slabs for the refreshment room. The two buildings provide an interesting contrast, considering they were approved in roughly the same time period. There was also one difference related to the internal layout of the building. In the single story structure, the fireplaces are set in the centre of internal walls, which had been a design feature since 1855. From 1910, the design policy changed with fireplaces set in either the centre of internal walls or in one corner of a room and the refreshment room at Cootamundra West reflected the more modern design location.

An examination of all the 143 examples in this design family show substantial variations and the explanation of the differences between the two buildings at Cootamundra West is probably based on who was the draughtsman who prepared the plans. It certainly was not anything to do with the top dog in the Existing Lines Branch as occupants of that position were uninterested in maintaining the implementation of a standard design policy, even though they may have approved the implementation of so-called “standard plans.”.

Steve Baker also points out the existence of a detached male toilet at the Temora of the platform, which included a lamp room. Where significant numbers of people were likely to use a platform, detached male toilets were used, instead of having the male toilet contained in the end of a platform building. Goulburn and Fassifern stations also had this arrangement. The location of the male toilet at Cootamundra West was consistent with the Railway practice of locating the facility as far away as possible from the pedestrian access point to the platform. It was a feature of the New South Wales Railways that, when a branch of the Railways introduced a new design, it continued to use some features of the superseded design and this was obvious in the buildings at Cootamundra West.

The detached male toilet is a case study at the station where full length, vertical partitions four feet six inches high divided the urinal stalls. From 1901, urinal partitions had changed from the full length style to half length, starting not from the floor level but from knee height. The urinal partitions at Cootamundra West manifest the old style and this feature, once again, is an indication that the role of whim of the draughtsman. They are also evidence of the absence of design standardisation in the Railway Department. Slate was used for the urinal backs as well as the partitions and this was another instance demonstrating the long transition times between introducing one design and suspending another design. In this case, the transition related to the move away from slate and towards precast concrete for the construction of urinals.

The bottom sashes of the platform level windows contained the name of the station in white letters against a blue background. Stations in the Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong areas had these features from 1901 but they were not applied to country areas until 1913, with Gunnedah station being the first rural location. The station name plates were still in situ at Cootamundra West as late as 1979.

INTER-TOWN RIVALRY

It was not possible to make major railway improvements at one country town or city without raising jealousy amongst neighbouring town centres. For example, one newspaper report in 1918 proudly stated that the Cootamundra West refreshment rooms “are to be bigger than those at Goulburn.”¹⁰³ The good people of Goulburn would have been aware of the high quality of the refreshment rooms that had been provided or intended to be provided or improved at Yass Junction, Harden, Cootamundra West and Temora in the first half of 1914 and the Goulburn local newspaper was full of expressions of concern about the likely quality of the additional refreshment room in their city. They had good reason to be anxious because the refreshment room on the Sydney-bound platform at Goulburn was not much more than an old tin shed.

The local Cootamundra newspaper reported that the new station was built on the model of the structure at Goulburn, which was correct, noting that the second floor accommodation at both locations was for staff, not travellers. The paper made two very significant points about the Cootamundra West building at the time of the opening. Firstly, it was pleased to report that the building at Cootamundra West was larger than its equivalent at Goulburn, which had opened the previous year. There was sustained inter-town rivalry and it was always good news for towns to know that they had something bigger and better than their geographic competitors. So, tick number one was awarded to Cootamundra for receiving something better than a neighbouring centre.

The second point raised by the newspaper report was the question of whether the Cootamundra West station reflected what was considered to be the high status of the town. Luckily, the newspaper indicated that “the station is in keeping with (the town) and is an up-to-date edifice of which Cootamundra is proud.”¹⁰⁴ This statement shows the other ongoing aspect of concern for country towns and their railway stations, namely that they expected to have a station that reflected the town’s social, economic and political status. It seems that the New South Wales Railways got it right at Cootamundra West. On the other side, how stupid the Railways would have been if it had not presented the top-of-the-line building in the electorate and headquarters of the State’s Premier! So, it was tick number two that was awarded to Cootamundra for receiving a building that was considered commensurate with the status of the town.

UNUSUAL DESIGN FEATURES

It did not take long for the New South Wales Railways to perceive the unattractiveness of the building on the approach up the ramp at the Sydney end of the platform. Some bright person in the Railway organisation obtained approval to hide the visual dominance of the parcels office entry. Steve Baker objects to this assertion saying that “I don’t think someone tried to hide perceived ugliness of the building - it was a “standard” design.”

In July, 1919, only eight months after the station opened for passenger business, the Railway Department erected a small timber ticket collector’s cabin. Steve Baker can remember seeing this derelict cabin between the top of the access ramp to the platform and the single-storey building. This replaced the initial arrangement whereby tickets were sold from the booking office through the ticket window which looked into the general waiting room. This timber booking office was still in

¹⁰³ *Cootamundra Herald*, 22nd April, 1918, p. 2.

¹⁰⁴ *ibid.*

situ in 1930. Interestingly, a similar booking office was erected at the top of the ramp on Harden also in 1919.

There were a few mysterious aspects about the design of the buildings. Apart from the problem with the parcels office entrance, what was strikingly absent from the single-storey building were finials on the gables, yet these were provided on the male toilet at the Temora end of the platform. Finials originally existed on all roof gables (single storey, two storey refreshment room plus the gables of the two single story annex to the refreshment room buildings. Only some still remain, including those on the men's toilet. They may have been removed from the top of the refreshment room building when red lights were installed to warn aircraft, and from the parcels office end of the single story building when SES installed antennae when leasing the office. There are a couple of old features in the design, these being the use of stone rather than pre-concrete for the corbels that supported the awning brackets of the platform elevation. Additionally, the floor in the ladies' room was allegedly to be raised by six inches. It was an old idea to raise the floor level of individual closets above the floor level of toilets but it was a most bizarre idea to raise the entire floor of the ladies' room by six inches.

When the plans for the structure in 1916 and 1917 are compared, the only obvious change is the omission of the instruction to elevate the floor of the ladies' room in the 1916 plan. Perhaps the stupidest design feature related to the kitchen in the refreshment room. Unlike most refreshment rooms, kitchens were located behind the serving counter so that staff could walk between the kitchen and the counter to serve customers. This did not occur at Cootamundra West where the kitchen and the serving counter were separated by distance of about 40 feet. Staff had to walk from the kitchen past all the waiting and eating passengers before the serving counter was reached.

The remaining station nameboards on the platform are of a weird design and probably are not original. Steve Baker says that they date from the 1960's and re-used the metal letters from the two original standard type of timber nameboards.

CLOSURE

The refreshment room at Cootamundra West was closed on 25th May, 1930. Steve Baker writes that, after the refreshment room closed in 1930, the functions undertaken in the single-storey building (i.e. the parcels office, traffic, the provision of general waiting room accommodation and booking office/ticket sales in the single-storey building also closed. However, the ladies' toilet remained accessible and tickets and parcel facilities were still available from the Assistant Station Master in the signal box. No doubt that officer also provided a warm environment and a comfy seat for waiting passengers. Customers were few after 1930 but Steve Baker did enjoy the warmth if not a comfy seat while waiting for the Forbes railmotor and Temora mail on occasions in the 1960s!

The station closed sometime in 1983, Steve states that the passenger operations are believed to have remained until buses replaced trains on the Temora line in November 1983. The yard and signal box remained operational until they were closed in 2004 and trackwork rationalised to the simple triangle junction of today.

INVESTIGATIONS IN THE 1930s INTO MAIN LINE DEVIATIONS AND DUPLICATION

Commissioner Hartigan inspected proposed line via Dirnasier in October, 1936, and it seems that the decision about the option of building a new line for duplicating the line along the existing route was easy for him to make. He explained that the construction of any new line was a matter for Government consideration outside his province of authority whereas duplication or deviation work within his powers. He described Cootamundra as “frightfully costly, expensive and unnecessary.” He added that Bethungra Bank was a “nightmare”. Nevertheless, the press report that he was favourably impressed with the idea of a new route between Stockinbingal and Old Junee, saying that “what has been put before me opens up a new angle from my point of view.”¹⁰⁵

The Harden Express newspaper in January, 1937, said the competition between Harden and Cootamundra about the options to overcome the congestion at Cootamundra was developing into “an inter-town dispute of first class magnitude.”¹⁰⁶ There was definite discussion in the Harden press about a new proposal in 1937 for a line from Stockinbingal to Old Junee using the existing Cootamundra West triangle. This contrasted against the 1935 proposal for a new line from Wallendbeen to Yeo Yeo.

The people of Cootamundra were not happy about the way the people of Murrumburrah were agitating to bypass Cootamundra and the Cootamundra Municipal Council established a committee of three Aldermen as well as representatives from the Chamber of commerce to act as a vigilance committee “for the purpose of check making any moves that would, in our opinion, be detrimental to our town.” The Cootamundra Mayor said he could not understand why the people of Murrumburrah would advocate the new route as “all the running sheds will go to Stockinbingal which would be the junction of four lines.”¹⁰⁷

Later in 1937, the Department of Railways sought views from a number of local government authorities about a deviation between Wallendbeen and Yeo Yeo. The subject came up again for discussion in 1939 at which time the Department said that it had received £200,000 to be spent on the redevelopment of the railway yards at Cootamundra. Murrumburrah Council wrote to the Department pointing out that residents of Junee, Temora and Harden/Murrumburrah were consulted in 1937 about the deviation and saw a number of advantages. The 1937 proposal did involve the construction of a new railway line west of Cootamundra and Murrumburrah Municipal Council pointed out that the existing yards at Harden were underutilised at that time and were in a position to provide logistical support for a deviation of the main line.¹⁰⁸

The station closed sometime in 1983, Wikipedia states. Steve thinks that closure occurred when passenger trains were replaced by buses.

¹⁰⁵ *Harden Express*, 1st October, 1936, p. 4.

¹⁰⁶ *Harden Express*, 21st January, 1937, p. 2.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 25th March, 1937, p. 2.

¹⁰⁸ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 13th July, 1939, p. 2.

WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF THE STATION?

There is evidence which would lead a person to think that Cootamundra West station was planned in 1912 with some greater idea in mind than merely serving passengers on the Temora Mail – a deed which lasted only 11 years. Perhaps it was a dream of the NSW Railways to take track duplication to the west of Cootamundra. Below is a list of the events that might lead one to think that there was another, undisclosed agenda in the minds of Railway officials:

- the opening of the triangular connection with the Temora line in 1911,
- the announcement of the new station at Cootamundra West in 1912,
- the approval for the construction of a refreshment room at Temora in 1912, opening in 1912/13,
- the reference to “main line” by William Holman when he turned the first sod at Stockinbingal for the line to Forbes,
- the up and down working through Stockinbingal platform in 1913,
- the duplication of the North Fork in 1917, with the reference to “Main Line” on the 1917 diagram,
- the provision of scissors crossovers at each end of the Cootamundra West platform to theoretically allow a Sydney-bound passenger train on the “Loop Line” to cross to the “Main Line” to enable passengers to use the refreshment room (and the simultaneous crossing of a Temora bound goods train using the scissors crossover) and with the passenger train crossing back to the Up North Fork or what could have been the Sydney-bound track,
- the basis of the rumours in 1919 of the deviation from Yeo to Junee Reefs,
- the announcement in 1917 and implementation in 1919 of branch line trains commencing from Cootamundra West station,
- the substantial delays to passengers on the Temora Mail who wished to alight at Cootamundra, by being required to wait at Cootamundra West station while refreshments were taken before proceeding to Cootamundra station,
- the 1919 statement by the Railway Commissioners at Stockinbingal that a deviation of the main line “had never crossed their minds”,
- the reported pegging of the corridor south of Stockinbingal in 1920 for 15 miles to Dirnaseer,
- the designation in the 4th November, 1923, country public rail timetable of Cootamundra as “LR” (providing only light refreshments in the RRR) and Cootamundra West as “R”, meaning it provided a full meal service (both shown as “R” in October, 1925 timetable),
- a press report in 1927 indicating that all passenger and goods traffic from the South heading north beyond Sydney would be diverted onto the branch line and proceed on the Stockinbingal-Forbes line rather than received through Sydney,¹⁰⁹
- the proposals in 1935 and 1936 to operate 57 class locomotives to Temora,
- the 1936 and 1937 reports examining the “question of deviation and/or duplication of the Main Southern Line south of Cootamundra North”,
- deferral of the 1936 recommendation until 1943 to expand and remodel Cootamundra yard and extend duplication to Junee,

¹⁰⁹ *Tumut and Adelong Times*, 26th April, 1927, p. 5.

- the engineering investigation for the provision of electric lighting at Cootamundra West yard,
- the proposed 1937 deviation between Morrisons Hill and Yeo Yeo, &
- The 1937 alternative discussion on a new line from Stockinbingal to Old Junee, without the deviation between Wallendbeen and Yeo Yeo.

What do you think about the above points?

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE COOTAMUNDRA WEST PLATFORM BUILDINGS YESTERDAY AND TODAY

The Railway Department started in 1910 to move away from construction of very plain buildings using single-pitched roof structures. Over the next couple of years, a few buildings in country areas received approval for construction. This was a major change in policy which had up to that time dictated brickwork for Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong areas and timber for the Bush. Unfortunately, this policy of providing more attractive structures for rural locations were short lived, mainly because of the inability to attract capital funding in 1916 and thereafter.

The Railway Department approved the construction of the very last, attractive brick buildings outside the Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong areas in 1917. The exception was the construction of refreshment rooms but there were very few in number built after 1917 – namely at Muswellbrook, Taree, Casino and Dubbo. Where was that last non-refreshment room building located? Cootamundra West is the answer and, more particularly, the single-storeyed structure.

In 1915, brick buildings were approved for the following stations:

- Galong – on both platforms,
- Goulburn – on platform Nos. 1 and 2 involving two buildings, one of which was a part two-storey refreshment room,
- Moss Vale – a booking and parcels office which was transverse to the island platform,
- Kempsey – two-storey refreshment room, &
- Greta – a one room waiting shed on the Singleton-bound platform.

No brick buildings were approved in country New South Wales in 1916 and only one was approved in 1917, that being the new facilities at Cootamundra West. In fact, the single-storey building at Cootamundra West was the very last brick platform building erected in country New South Wales, other than refreshment rooms. How come? That question needs to be split into two parts. The first part is how come the last building was erected at Cootamundra West. No doubt because the local Member of Parliament, William Holman, was the State Premier at the time and no doubt the Railway Department knew that fact very well. It had been Holman would make the announcement about the new station five years previously. In addition, over the years, the press reports indicated that a modern station was going to be erected. Local expectations were high and needed to be met and could be met because of Holman's position as leader in the State Government.

The second part of the question is how come it was the last non-refreshment room building. There is another fairly simple answer – shortage of capital funds balanced against a massive investment in the Sydney suburban railway system that included electrification, the underground railway and construction of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. In other words, most of the capital funding for platform buildings went to Sydney but even there the platform buildings were stripped of the decorative features applied to the Cootamundra West building when it opened.

After the approval of the Cootamundra West building in 1917, the next brick platform structure approved for the country New South Wales railway system occurred in 1955 at Broken Hill. Why there? It was the city where the Minister for Transport, Ambrose Enticknap, lived at the time. Like the position with Cootamundra West, Broken Hill station was in his electorate.

The single-storey building and the two-storey building, plus the other small structures on the platform, combined to make Cootamundra West station the last major railway station project in the history of the New South Wales Railways.

Very much gratitude is owed to ARHS Member, Steve Baker, for his extensive, personal knowledge, guidance, review and correction of much of the study. This paper could have been jointly authored with Steve but, had he been approached on that aspect, he would probably not agree to any adverse comments made about one of his former hometown stations.

Stuart Sharp

22nd September, 2016

STOCKINBINGAL RAILWAY STATION

STATIONS BEFORE STOCKINBINGAL

Plans do not survive for the buildings at Bauloora, Yeo, Gundabindyal and Combaning. Luckily, a newspaper description is available and states that all these intermediate stations had timber buildings with iron roofs containing two rooms, namely a waiting room and a store.¹¹⁰ From the knowledge of what was being approved on other lines and the evidence of the surviving plan and building at Stockinbingal, it is a good guess to say that the intermediate stations had simple buildings with a single-pitched roof sloping towards the rails. None of these buildings were erected at the time of the station and line openings of 1st September, 1893. In fact, the tender for the construction of all of them was awarded only three weeks prior to the line opening on 7th August, in this case to James Franklin and James Finlay.¹¹¹ The total cost of the four buildings was £1,814/16/1. In 1891, they had been awarded the contract to extend the awning on the platform at Harden. It was estimated that the work on the intermediate buildings between Cootamundra and Temora would be completed by Christmas, 1893 – four months after the line opening.¹¹²

The station of Springdale was opened with a ground level platform and without a building. A waiting shed did not appear until 1902.

STOCKINBINGAL STATION 1893

For the larger hamlet of Stockinbingal, Henry Deane approved on 10th May, 1893, a simple, four room timber building with a skillion roof. Thomas Firth's initials are also on the plan. On the 30th October, 1894, a station arrangement plan for Stockinbingal was signed by Thomas Firth as Acting Engineer-in-Chief, Railway Construction Branch. Franklin and Finlay also built the structure, which was nominated as a "passenger station" as opposed to "waiting shed" for the other intermediate stations. The Stockinbingal building measured 52 feet by 10 feet six with a narrow platform awning (three feet wide) without supporting struts.¹¹³ There were stoves in the ladies' waiting room and the ticket office with flues out the rear wall, not through the roof. The general waiting room was unlined and had a plain, square-headed opening 10 feet wide. There were no shades over the rear windows nor a covering over the rainwater tank to keep the sun off the structure. The building sat on the ground seemingly without any piers or other type of foundation of substance on the platform side. The building was not completed until the end of December, 1893, well after the station opening.

THE SIGNAL BOX 1913

The signal box on the platform was opened on the 1st December, 1913. For a description of the signal box, see the notes about the signal box at Temora, which was of the same design family. One

¹¹⁰ *Evening News*, 12th September, 1893, p. 6. Plan for Springdale and Combaning dated 12th September, 1907, show the two rooms with an additional ladies' room.

¹¹¹ *Evening News*, 31st August, 1893, p. 2.

¹¹² *Ibid* and *Cootamundra Herald*, 12th August, 1893, p. 9.

¹¹³ *Evening News*, 12th September, 1893, p. 6.

interesting feature of the Stockinbingal signal box is the provision of a ticket window in the wall facing the platform, which had been inserted in a similar style as exists at Tarana. It appears that this was done in the 1960s so that the station could operate by a single officer who would be stationed in the signal box, as opposed to one officer in the booking office and a signaller in the signal box.

THE ADDITION OF A SECOND PLATFORM 1913

Up and Down working was introduced through the station in 1913. A second platform was built with a two timber waiting shed measuring 30 feet by 11 feet, with a five feet wide awning formed by an extension of the skillion roof rafters. At the time of its opening, no road access was provided to the new platform.¹¹⁴ It took two more years to provide road access to the Temora-bound or down platform to facilitate transfer of parcels and luggage between road and rail. This second platform has been removed.

When he was much younger, Railway Historian, Graham Harper, argued that the provision of the new and very large station at Cootamundra West was linked to either the deviation around Cootamundra or the growing importance of Temora. He asked why would the Railway Department change the route of the Temora Mail from having the train proceed into the main line station at Cootamundra and then reverse back onto the branch line. This policy change reflected the growth in passenger and goods traffic from Temora and the lines beyond the town to West Wyalong and Griffith.

CONJECTURE ABOUT MAIN LINE DEVIATION

The second issue that the Cootamundra West building represented was the possible deviation of the main line around Bethungra Bank, thus avoiding the steep gradients and substantial expenses associated with bank engine working. As evidence of the plan to deviate around the back of Cootamundra, Harper once cited the provision of the two parallel platforms at Stockinbingal, with what was known as up-and-down train working, where trains to or from Sydney used different tracks through the station.¹¹⁵ However, in more recent times, a wiser Mr. Harper thinks that the up and down working was more related to the safeworking policy of the day, as evidenced by the significant number of other installations of up and down working, rather than as an indication of the intention to take duplicated track through Stockinbingal to either head west to Temora or south to Junee.

The *Temora Independent* newspaper ran a story in January, 1919, stating that the Railways intended to make deviation from Yeo Yeo to Junee to avoid the Bethungra Bank. The newspaper encouraged people of Temora to support deviation.¹¹⁶ Nothing happened. There was also a local proposal that the deviation should start at Combaning and proceed to Junee Reefs. Nothing happened. In July, 1919, at Stockinbingal, the Commissioners, on one of their annual inspection tours, ended speculation on the subject for the time being by saying that a deviation “had never crossed their minds.”¹¹⁷ That denial is very hard to believe. If the Commissioners had not given a single thought

¹¹⁴ *Cootamundra Herald*, 6th July, 1915, p. 4.

¹¹⁵ Conversation with Graham Harper on 21st October, 1978.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 18th January, 1919, p. 3.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1st August, 1919, p. 2.

about the possibility of a deviation, they would not have been doing their duty properly as strategic managers. The people at Stockinbingal accepted the superficial explanation and made another request. The villagers of Stockinbingal asked for a new station building and a new residence but the Commissioners replied that nothing could be done because of the lack of funds.¹¹⁸ A new residence was approved in 1984 and built – a wait of only 65 years. The village never got a replacement platform building.

Readers would like to think that a Railway Commissioner could be trusted to say the truth, in this case the truth being they knew nothing about deviation proposal. Well, in August, 1920, there was a press report that railway surveyors had placed permanent pegs on a railway corridor south from Stockinbingal for 15 miles until the work reached Dirnasier. It was thought that the intended southern junction would be somewhere near June. ¹¹⁹ It did not surprise anyone that deviation around Bethungra Bank would receive very serious consideration in the 1930s.

TODAY

Today, four buildings survive on the platform. This is an extremely rare composition of timber structures. The four structures are from the Temora end:

- signal box – built 1913,
- main station building – built 1893,
- male toilet – built 1963, &
- out of shed – built 1893-1913.

Appearance wise, they belong to the same genre – low cost timber structures with single-pitched roofs. The interesting thing is that the pitch on each of the roofs is different. Attractiveness of platform buildings in rural locations was never a policy option between 1892 and 1914.

The male toilet block is one of the last structures erected on the New South Wales railway system to be made of timber.

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22nd September, 2016

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 24th August, 1920, p. 4.

TEMORA RAILWAY STATION

THE PRESENT COMPOSITION OF PLATFORM BUILDINGS

There are three buildings existing on the platform, these being the original brick 1893 structure with a subsequent addition at the Sydney end, the 1912 approved brick refreshment room and the 1916 timber signal box. These structures are dealt with separately below.

THE 1893 BUILDING

Temora was a larger town and, there, Henry Deane approved on 10th May, 1893, a brick building with the main part measuring 56 feet by 15 feet internal and of constant width. Again, Thomas Firth initialled the plan on the same date as Henry Deane. The dominant, visual feature that distinguished the building from earlier examples of the same design family was the engagement of circular gussets in the brackets to support the 16 feet wide platform awning. This design replaced the employment of vertical awning posts, which had been in use from 1855. The three main rooms were the centre-located general waiting room of 20 feet by 15 feet, the Sydney-end ticket and parcels office measuring 18 feet by 15 feet and the ladies' waiting room being 15 feet square at the Wyalong end, with male and female toilets also at that end. There was a thin red dado line on the internal walls. The structure displayed the usual modifications of those standard roadside buildings approved after the retirement of John Whitton, namely:

- The asymmetrical floor-plan with off-centre pedestrian access through the general waiting room from the street,
- Uniform building width without the use of a porched entry or a wider general waiting room standing proud of the building wall,
- Cantilevered platform awning brackets,
- Small vents on each side of the roof,
- Narrow (six feet), full-length verandah on the street elevation,
- The provision of paired, cast iron, fluted awning posts at the ends of the verandah on the street side with similar, ornate iron intermediate posts with cast iron brackets,
- The location of the female closets in the connecting part between the main part and the male toilet,
- The use of a new system of toilet cubicle ventilation, officially labelled "air closets", which were identified by tall, terracotta vents above each cubicle,
- Provision of an underground rainwater tank notwithstanding the existing transition to above-ground tanks as at Stockinbingal, &
- The location of the lamp room set back from the platform side building alignment and positioned in line with the street side wall alignment.

While the platform awning support system was new, Henry Deane and Thomas Firth decided to utilise a posted verandah on the road side of the building. In so doing, they gave the structure an

appearance of familiarity which travellers would recognize on approach to the station. After the Temora station was built, vertical awning posts went the way of the dinosaur – never again to be used on a New South Wales railway station.

The contractors for the structure at Temora were the brothers, A. and G. Eaton, who it appears were based in either Sydney or Wagga Wagga. The contract cost for the structures was £3,301/15/0. The interesting aspect of the building's construction is that it was far from being complete at the time of line opening on 1st September, 1893, and there are doubts that work would have even started at the time of the opening. Like the contract for the intermediate stations, the contractor was not named until 7th August, 1893.¹²⁰ The Eaton brothers also won the contract for the coal stage and engine shed at Cootamundra, the contract being awarded on 22nd August, 1893.¹²¹ Those facilities were also not built until well after the opening of the line to Temora.

The decision not to provide platform buildings before line opening was an old ruse that John Whitton had implemented when he started the extension of the Main South line from Goulburn. Hardly a permanent station building was ready for occupation between Goulburn and Albury at the time of line opening. The reason Whitton did this was to save capital funds, as the cost of any works incomplete at the time of line opening were the responsibility of the Railway Commissioner, not the Engineer-in-Chief. Both men headed separate branches within the Department of Public Works. While the platform buildings were not completed, Whitton did at least provide platforms at most stations.

The Temora structure was one of seven examples constructed to the modified, post-Whitton standard roadside design. Five examples were built of brick, namely longer versions at Parkes and Forbes and shorter versions at Cobar, Corowa and Temora. Two examples were built of the shorter version in timber at Byron Bay and Lismore. These seven stations represented the very last of the 96 examples of the standard roadside design, which had first appeared in 1874 at Gunning. The Temora building, and the other six examples, represented the end of the Victorian-styled country railway station.

Stanley Alexander had given evidence on 16th January, 1890, to the inquiry by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works into the proposed construction of a railway between Cootamundra and Temora. On that occasion, he stated that the proposed platform building at the Temora terminus would consist of a timber platform costing £250 and a third class timber passenger building costing £300.¹²² What happened to the timber building? The answer is time. For an understanding of any works or equipment on the New South Wales railways between 1885 and 1895, the financial position of the organisation must be dealt with on an annual basis as capital funds increased and decreased each year and formed no overall, consistent pattern, as had been the case from 1855. In 1890, there was less capital funds available for new railway works but an increased amount was obtained in 1893 and the decision was taken to provide what would become amongst the last brick buildings erected on a new railway line in rural New South Wales.

¹²⁰ *Evening News*, 31st August, 1893, p. 2.

¹²¹ NSW, *Government Gazette* No. 584, 22nd August, 1893, p. 6503.

¹²² Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, *Report of an Inquiry into a Proposed Railway between Cootamundra and Temora*, 1890, p. 9.

THE 1911 PROPOSED BUILDING EXTENSION

A plan was prepared in February, 1911, for a 33 feet six inch extension of the 1893 building at the Sydney end. Since the station opened in 1893, there had been a growing trade in parcels, as was typical at many other railway stations. The original building was quite small and parcels business had been conducted in the same 18 feet x 15 feet office that also serve as a ticket office, a staff meal room and an office for the Station Master. A parcels storage shed had already been erected at the Sydney end of the building and the proposal in 1911 was for this to be demolished and replaced by a parcels office 20 feet in length and a separate office for the Station Master 13 feet in length. Also, the existing lamp room, which was unusually placed in line with the wall of the structure on the street approach, was to be relocated. The awnings on both sides were to be extended and the work was intended to match the existing design features. The existing parcels counter was to be removed and reused in the new space.

News of the proposed alterations did not receive attention in the press until January, 1912, and the building extension was listed with many other improvements to the locomotive depot and elsewhere at Temora.¹²³ Work did not proceed on the basis of the 1911 plan and nearly 18 months passed before a revised plan was issued.

THE 1912 EXTENSION AND REFRESHMENT ROOM

In July, 1912, as well as the 33 feet six-inch extension on the Sydney end, an extension was proposed for the establishment of a refreshment room at the Wyalong end of the platform. The refreshment room was to be located 52 feet nine inches from the Wyalong end of the existing structure. The total length of the building was 65 feet long by 25 feet wide internally. The refreshment room was a stand-alone building and not connected in any way to the 1893 structure, except for the extension of the platform awning. However, the refreshment room was set back four feet from the existing platform side building alignment, thereby making the platform awning from the end of the 1893 building to the Wyalong end of the refreshment room 20 feet wide, compared to 16 feet wide for the 1893 building. The total distance of the wider platform awning at the Wyalong in was approximately 118 feet.

Large, cantilevered awning brackets supported the platform awning set at 13 feet centres in the centre, with 11 foot centres used at both the Wyalong and Cootamundra ends of the awning. The ends of the awnings featured vertical timber boarding, which was another typical design feature on buildings of this period.

The main serving and eating area in the refreshment room was 35 feet by 25 feet and was served by two sets of double-doors onto the platform. There was a full-length counter at the rear of the room which was built to the standard dimensions of three feet six inches high and two feet six inches wide across the counter top. At the front below the counter top, was curved four inch by one-inch tongue and groove vertical boarding. The use of vertical timber boarding on the NSW Railways was restricted mostly to feature items and the front of the counter was deemed to be one of those special areas.

¹²³ *Albury Banner and Wodonga Express*, 19th January, 1912, p. 34.

In addition to the main serving and dining area, there was a kitchen of 20 feet in length and a store room 10 feet long on the platform side. On the street side, was a single bedroom measuring 11 feet square and a sitting room measuring 14 feet by 11 feet.

The detailed design work of the refreshment room was to match the 1893 building with three exceptions. The first exception was in the alteration of the roof style. The 1893 building had a simple gabled roof with two roof ventilators on each side. For the refreshment room building, a Dutch gable roof style was adopted without roof vents.¹²⁴ The roof style was similar in design to the “J3” style of official residences, such design having been used since 1890. The second change was the elimination of a moulded string course that extended on the platform side at door head height on the 1893 building. The third change was the elimination of finials at the ends of the roof ridge.

While the plan for the 1912 extensions at Temora stated that the work was to match the 1893 building, there was a reason why this was not carried out fully. It had been nearly 20 years since the 1893 building had been erected and station design styles had changed fundamentally in that period. Designs generally throughout the rail system started to change before the 1893 building was erected and this process of change was reflected in the post-Whitton features. By 1912, the Federation-styled design was well and truly in vogue and the three design changes on the Temora refreshment room were signs of the movement away from the Victorian influences to a more Australian identity. The building of the refreshment room manifested the change in the design process.

At the time the plan for the Temora refreshment room was made, there was an awareness in the Railway Department of a need to improve the appearance of buildings in rural areas. The new buildings at Galong and Yass Junction stations, which were planned a little bit later than the Temora refreshment room, were much more up-market than predecessors in country New South Wales. Up to about 1912, stations in country areas had a much lower level of decoration than those in Sydney. For example, in 1912, the existing buildings on platform Nos. 4/5, 6/7 and 8 at Redfern had been built along the lines of the Federation-influenced style and reflected a wide range of decorative features. Approval was also given for the construction of the same style of building at 19 other stations. Ten of the 19 stations were to be brick and nine were to be timber.

Only two examples of the brick version of the Federation-influenced design were proposed in rural New South Wales, namely a completely new, but very plain, station at the long-term, up-scale site of Lochinvar and the Railway Refreshment Room at Temora. All the timber examples were outside the area of Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong. If that were the case, why was the Temora building erected in brickwork? The normal pattern of material utilisation was the engagement of timber in rural areas and brick in city areas but this was not the case at Temora. Why? The answer is political. The Member of Parliament for Cootamundra was William Holman, who was a cabinet minister from 1910 when the first Labor Government took office in New South Wales. He was Attorney General from 1910 until June, 1913, when he became Premier and remained in office until 1918.

The plans for a refreshment room at Temora were prepared in 1912 but, for an unknown reason, it took until 20th January, 1914, for it to be officially opened. Temora was shown as a refreshment stop for the first time in the public timetable of 28th September, 1913 but Chris Banger has written that

¹²⁴ Architectural definitions are a minefield. Sometimes, the design is known as a Dutch hip, a broken hip or a gambrel roof.

the room was opened during 1912.¹²⁵ It matters little about the precise opening as there was one important factor that was consistent between the years 1912 and 1914. During that period, William Holman was in a powerful position to influence government spending and he did just that at Temora. The structure at Temora seems to have been the first brick refreshment room since the approval of the similar facility at Moss Vale in 1890 and contrasted against the two-storey timber building that had been erected at Gloucester in 1912. The use of brickwork was, thus, a significant development. The other significant development was the use of the Dutch gable for the roof, which was a design feature that had only been introduced in 1909 and had been mostly restricted to the application of roofs on overhead booking offices.

The use of the Dutch gable at Temora appears to be the very first application of the design for a standard-alone platform level structure. Visitors who examine the structure today will not always be convinced of the existence of influence of the Federation style but the case is more strongly understood when the design of the 1893 structure is examined and the use of brickwork is understood. However, there can be little doubt of the significance of the Dutch gable roof style. It was typical practice on the New South Wales Railways to slowly introduce new design features, such as the Dutch gable, and it is quite consistent with Railway practice to parallel use of existing design styles at the same time that a new design feature is being introduced. For example, no attempt had been made to apply the roof design features of the Temora building for the refreshment rooms approved for Yass Junction in 1914 and Cootamundra West in 1917.

Although the Temora refreshment room is relatively small, its brick construction and the use of the Dutch gable style indicate that the facility was well out of the ordinary in relation to the design of platform buildings and these special status elevates the heritage significance of the station.

The refreshment room opened on 20th January, 1914.¹²⁶ The alterations were well received in the regional press and one newspaper indicated that, upon completion of the alterations, “the station is now in keeping with the importance of the town.”¹²⁷

It was not possible to make major railway improvements at one country town or city without raising jealousy amongst neighbouring town centres and it seems that this was the case at Goulburn in 1914. The good people of Goulburn would have been aware of the high quality of the refreshment rooms that had been provided or intended to be provided for improved at Yass Junction, Harden, Cootamundra West and Temora in the first half of 1914. When the New South Wales Railways proposed major works at Goulburn, there was surely going to be a high level of local interest in what the Railways proposed for their station.

Up until 1917, the Temora refreshment room was under the control of a private enterprise manager employed by the licensee of the facility. William Holman had convinced the Railway Commissioners in 1915 that the Department of Railways should manage directly all refreshment rooms and this was implemented at Temora from 4th February, 1917 onwards.

¹²⁵ C. Banger, “The Railway Refreshment Rooms of New South Wales 1855 – 1995, *Australian Railway History*, August, 2003, pp. 298-304.

¹²⁶ John Forsyth, *Station Information N to Z*, unpublished internal document, SRA, undated, p. 210.

¹²⁷ *Albury Banner and Wodonga Express*, 8th March, 1914, p. 2.

THE 1928 REFRESHMENT ROOM CHANGES

In 1928, Linoleum with metal edging covered the counter top and there was a brass rail on the floor. There was a canopy over the counter much in the mould of an American bar, as existed in the Harden refreshment room and would appear in the Cootamundra West refreshment room in 1918. Draught beer was on tap and the single-pull beer pump was sufficient to keep up with the demands of thirsty travellers. Outside the refreshment room, concrete mats had been laid at the entrance doors, these being manufactured in their hundreds in departmental workshops. Signs bearing the name "Bar" were placed overhead attached to the platform awning and were transverse to the platform. Signs were also located at the entrance doors to the refreshment room. By that time, the station had been served by electric lighting.

A plan was issued in 1928 for alterations for the refreshment room. By that time, the 35 foot long main eating and serving area had been divided into a smaller separate dining room and a larger refreshment room. The refreshment room itself was to be further divided into two parts by the provision of a bar 14 feet long at the Sydney end. Access to the bar from the platform was by the provision of a new set of double doors three feet six inches wide. There was also a single door between the main dining area and the bar. It seems that the work was carried out but the inter-room door was removed in 1938. The cellar was refixed from the main area to the new bar. On the platform at the Cootamundra end of the refreshment room was a bookstall. Between the bookstall and the male toilet was the "Out-of Shed", which was a room set aside for second-class parcels that were conveyed by goods trains, rather than first class parcels which were conveyed by passenger train and were retained in the parcels office in the main building until collection or dispatch.

It was also proposed in 1928 to provide a staff cottage at the Wyalong end of the refreshment room containing four bedrooms and a sitting room. Cypress Pine weatherboards were to be provided for the external walls, the internal wall lining boards and for the ceiling. Hardwood was to be used for the floor joists with Oregon studs and roof frame. The cottage was to be painted in the "standard colours" and the inside walls and ceilings were to be varnished. It is unknown whether this staff cottage was built.

In 1956, the last alterations were made to the refreshment room. This was the conversion from dining at tables and chairs to standing up at chest-level benches. The official jargon to describe that arrangement was "counter entree meal service".

THE SIGNAL BOX

Of the three main buildings on the platform, the youngest was the signal box which was located towards the Sydney end of platform. The most striking characteristics of the structure are its timber construction and simple design. These features are strikingly contrasted against the 1893 building and refreshment room, opened in 1914. Both of those older structures reflected characteristics that showed that those people approving their construction tried hard to reflect the status of the town of Temora. The brick buildings were pretty. On the other hand, no attempt was made to design the signal box to reflect anything but the parsimony of the Office of the Signal Engineer.

There is one outstanding element of the signal box that tells residents of Temora that the structure was built for departmental purposes and not to please the burghers of the town. That one

characteristic was the plain and boring-looking rear wall which faced the street side. A wall of weatherboards rebutted the approaching townsfolk, unlike the effort that went into the design to reflect the status of the town in regard to the 1893 structure and the 1914 refreshment room. The signal box is a statement of departmental bureaucracy and, more significantly, it was a statement of the autonomy of the various branches of the organisation which allowed branch heads to virtually do what they liked.

So at Temora there is a combination of buildings that mirror the way the Railway Department worked. It is possible that paint scrapes may reveal that the signal box was even painted externally a palette which was inconsistent with the colours used for the other two main buildings.

The signal box at Temora was opened on 4th March, 1915.¹²⁸ Dr Bob Taaffe wrote that it was based on a standard drawing No. 56A dated 17th June, 1911.¹²⁹ Although the period of construction dates from 1908 until 1922, the example at Temora was constructed at the peak use of the design between 1911 and 1919. It was one of 227 examples built during the period and, of the six variations within the design family, the Temora signal box was contained within that sub-group with the highest number examples.¹³⁰

The dominate design features were:

- Timber frame and timber cladding with horizontally set weatherboards,
- Single-pitched roof sloping to the rails,
- Roof covered with No. 26 gauge galvanised, corrugated iron sheets,
- “Standard sliding sash window facing the platform with a “standard” box sash window in the Sydney end wall,
- Timber lining boards for internal walls and ceiling,
- Positioning of the interlocking frame against the rear wall, &
- Heating provided by a cast-iron stove with an iron flue penetrating a wall rather than the roof.

While the interlocking frame remains in position in the signal box, the name plates on the individual signal levers will have been removed.

Stuart Sharp

22nd September, 2016

¹²⁸ R. T. Taaffe, *The Use and Selection of Materials in Railway Signal Box Construction, 1912-1990*, unpublished Ph. D. thesis, University of Sydney, 1990, p. A24.

¹²⁹ Ibid., p. 76.

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 77.

THE 17 MYSTERIES OF WALLENDREEN RAILWAY STATION

MYSTERY NO. 1 – HOW BIG A PLACE WAS WALLENDREEN WHEN THE RAILWAY ARRIVED?

One Sydney newspaper described Wallendreen in 1877 when the railway arrived as a location that “exists as yet only in paper.”¹³¹ There was one very interesting reference in the same newspaper article which said that:

“it is expected that a considerable quantity of wool from the “Levels” will be received at this site. It seems rather a doubtful policy to locate the sidings so as to suit far-away traffic rather than to accommodate that close at hand.”¹³²

Two comments need to be made. Firstly, the “Levels” refers to land south of Stockinbingal extending down to Junee Reefs. It got its name because it was level. It is a substantial conundrum why John Whitton, the Engineer-in-Chief, decided to take the railway line over the hilly section through Bethungra rather than locate the line from near Wallendreen towards Yeo Yeo and down along the “Levels.” Secondly, the answer to the establishment of a platform at Wallendreen was not to serve those in the region of the “Levels” but to assist the major, influential landholder in the area, namely Alexander Mackay. He was described as “a gentleman distinguished for means, position and popularity.”¹³³

Two years after the line opening in 1879, Wallendreen was still only a small place, with one newspaper describing it as “yet only on a survey map so far as the town is concerned.”¹³⁴

MYSTERY NO. 2 – WHY WAS A STATION PROVIDED, IF THERE WAS HARDLY ANYTHING OR ANYONE THERE?

Just as was the case at Murrumburrah, nothing happened without the activation of political power. Unfortunately for Murrumburrahites, they had to combine into a local pressure group to obtain, firstly, a platform and, secondly, station improvements. This was not the case at Wallendreen where the few residents were fortunate to have a major, powerful landholder in the form of Alexander Mackay. After he flexed his politically powerful muscles, improvements occurred. In July, 1878, the local

¹³¹ *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 3rd November, 1877, p. 12.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 12th April, 1879, p. 18.

¹³⁴ *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 12th April, 1879, p. 18.

Member of Parliament, James Watson, forwarded a response from the Railway Commissioner to a letter dated 15th May, 1878, Mackay had written to the Commissioner about the poor condition of Wallendbeen platform. Mackay had urged the provision of a building on the platform and a good shed. Charles Goodchap, the Railway Commissioner, responded on 5th June, 1878, that “instructions have been given to have this work carried out as early as practicable.”¹³⁵ The *Burrangong Chronicle* newspaper rightly added in the newspaper article that “Mr Mackay deserves the thanks of all who have business relations with Wallendbeen for the trouble he has taken in endeavouring to have so requisite a work carried out.”¹³⁶

When Alexander Mackay asked in 1880 for the provision of stockyards at Wallendbeen, W. V. Read, the Traffic Inspector, noted that there were only three selectors in the area of the station, these being Messrs. Mackay, Gibson and Broughton.¹³⁷ The Traffic Inspector declined the request but obviously underestimated the power of Alexander Mackay. The Commissioner authorized construction of the stockyards on 4th May, 1881.

Four stations in the area – Galong, Cunnigar, Cootamundra and Wallendbeen – were all built because of the powerful individual landholder who held property adjacent to the station. It was Alexander Mackay at Wallendbeen; John Ryan at Galong; Severin Salting at Cunnigar and John Hurley at Cootamundra who each held sufficient political clout to get their own railway station, even though the platforms may not have had a platform building at the opening time. All four station locations had goods sidings, even if the platform building were absent or incomplete.

MYSTERY NO. 3 - WHERE WAS THE FIRST WALLENBEEEN STATION LOCATED?

The station opened on 1st November, 1877, when the railway line was extended from the present Harden station to Cootamundra. The station in the single line days was located on the down or Cootamundra-bound side of the line, at a distance of 660 feet from the present station, according to one John Forsyth reference.¹³⁸ In another reference, Forsyth states that the first station was over 1,000 feet from the second or present station site.¹³⁹ C. C. Singleton wrote that the first station site was opposite the existing wheat silos, which would be approximately in the position of the existing Great War memorial built in 1920.¹⁴⁰

Thankfully, Steve Baker has uncovered an early yard plan in the ARHS Railway Resource Centre which confirmed that the first station was located behind the war memorial obelisk at the end of King Street.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 2nd July, 1878, p. 3.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ *Cootamundra Herald*, 30th October, 1880, p. 4.

¹³⁸ J. Forsyth, *Southern Lines Maps*, Revised Ed., State Rail Authority, 1967, p. S45.

¹³⁹ J. Forsyth, *Station Names N to Z*, State Rail Authority, no date, p. 279.

¹⁴⁰ C. C. Singleton, “The Main Southern Line VII, *Bulletin* No. 111, January, 1947, p. 12.

Steve writes:

“The Railway Commissioner resumed a small triangle of public road directly opposite the Hotel in 1912 – this is approximately the site of the later memorial. The entrance to the station was at this point with a cart weighbridge at its entrance. There was a Bank of NSW and the Palmer Stores were also located at the King, Hoskins, Lackey Streets intersection. This intersection where the first station was located and which is marked by the obelisk today was certainly the focal point of the town and was the meeting point for the three early main roads from Cootamundra (Lackey Street), Cullinga and Murrumburrah (Hoskins Street) and Young (King Street).

The 1917 duplication did not include refuge loops. There was a level crossing at the road junction which gave direct access to the goods shed. The level crossing remained after duplication when the former crossing loop became the Up Main line.

The refuge loops were opened on 18th May, 1920, (Traffic Branch Circular No. 98). Associated with their construction was the provision of a brick subway for road traffic. When the subway was opened a little distance towards Cootamundra, the level crossing near the station was closed. The down refuge loop encroached on the former platform site.”

MYSTERY NO. 4 – WHAT SORT OF BUILDINGS WERE AT THE FIRST STATION?

None is the answer. There was a platform with a brick wall and coping but no building on the platform. A total of 30% of stations at the time of line openings between Goulburn and Albury did not have buildings.

A newspaper refers to Wallendbeen station in 1877, as “a platform which is sufficient for present requirements, and will make way for a station-house and goods shed as soon as the traffic at this part of the line makes such appurtenances necessary.”¹⁴¹

After six months of operation, people using Wallenbeen platform in 1878 were unhappy with their platform. One newspaper repeated an article that was originally in the *Burrangong Chronicle*, which was a newspaper at Young. The article stated:

“our attention has been called to the unprotected condition of the station, erected, we presume, for the accommodation of human beings as well as for stock and goods. At present, the platform is completely unsheltered and, bearing in mind that one train arrives between four and five o’clock in the morning, and another leaves in less than two hours after, it is not a pleasant

¹⁴¹ *Cootamundra Herald*, 13th November, 1877, p. 2.

reflection for a passenger to know, especially during the winter, that on reaching the station in either case should he have any delay to make there, he may as well be in the open field. To say that this is not a creditable state of things is to speak mildly; to say that it ought to be improved, and that the public merit something better at the hands of the Minister for Works is, we believe, what everyone who has chosen to take the train at Wallendbeen will endorse.”¹⁴²

It is hard to believe that in November, 1878, one newspaper described Wallendbeen station as “a model station on the Railway.”¹⁴³ What? Correct! The article was an exercise in sarcasm. It stated:

“the neatest thing in railway stations is to be found on the Great Southern line, at a platform some 60 miles from Wagga Wagga, erected for the purpose of affording convenience to those who, to use a Bush term comprehensive of much vagueness, ‘live outback’ – as much as for the reception of wool and produce grown in the immediate neighbourhood. The station is known as Wallenbeen. As a general traffic station, it is fairly patronised, but in the matter of convenience to travellers and to those who send produce away, it is a gross fraud. The only really good thing about it is its appearance in print where it takes its place amongst a long list of stations at which public accommodation has been attended to.

The only building in the shape of the usual station-house is a square built box eight feet by eight feet labelled “lamp room.” In this apartment, when his outside duties of porter, pointsman, and truck loader permit, the Station Master performs several important duties attached to the office of Station Master, Telegraph Master, Post Master and Lamp Cleaner.

To enable any man to efficiently carry out such a multiplicity of diversify labour, it is necessary that he should possess the patience of a saint, the intelligence and memory of four full-sized individuals and the strength of a working bullock. In order to allow of this sort of four-men-knocked-into-one to be continually on hand, the station-house, which it will be remembered has been correctly described as measuring eight feet square, is still further incommoded by receiving a bed for his use; so that any unlucky traveller finding himself at Wallendbeen station in a shower of rain will find in the only place where shelter may be procured a collection of sundries in the shape of instruments, lamps, flags, oil et cetera stowed away in a space requiring much ingenuity to economise.

Taking it all together, Wallendbeen is rough on the traveller – equally rough, too, on the teams bringing wool et cetera. Owing to nothing in the shape of a

¹⁴² *Cootamundra Herald*, 14th May, 1878, p. 6.

¹⁴³ *Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser*, 9th November, 1878, p. 747.

shed, or the smallest accommodation for loading – trucks are loaded how they can; teams have to draw up alongside the truck placed on a siding running close alongside the main line and the wool and other produce is bundled in somehow, as best they can. There is some risk of the bullocks or horses in the team getting startled by a passing train, but no accident has happened so far. It is probable that, when a team or two have been injured, or some person killed, Wallendbeen station will receive some attention from headquarters.”

It seems that, when Charles Goodchap promised to do something at the station, the local officials basically ignored the Commissioners instruction and built only the “eight feet square lamp room.”

MYSTERY NO. 5 – WHY DID THE PORTER-IN-CHARGE SLEEP IN HIS OFFICE?

There was no official residence for the sole officer after he was appointed in 1878. A residence for the Porter-in-Charge was under construction in August, 1880.¹⁴⁴ A second residence was added in 1885 with the erection of a building that had formerly been located at Bomen. A third residence was erected in 1920 for the Night Officer not far from the Cootamundra-bound platform and a little elevated towards the existing road overbridge.¹⁴⁵ It is still in position in 2016.

MYSTERY NO. 6 – WHY WAS THE RAILWAY DEPARTMENT RELUCTANT TO IMPROVE CONDITIONS AT THE STATION?

Money. It could never be said that public funds were wasted on railway station buildings in New South Wales in the 19th century.

The Railway Department did not have sufficient funds to improve all the railway stations it managed. A telegraph office was opened at the railway station on 18th October, 1880, but further details are unknown, apart from the fact that it was provided only after local pressure was placed on government officials.¹⁴⁶

In 1881, the Railway Department, as usual, was being difficult in negotiations for improvements to the station. In February, 1881, Wallendbeen station comprised of “one little office to do both public and government business in.”¹⁴⁷ Heaven only knows where the alleged post and telegraph office was, which had been supposedly open in October, 1880. Four months after that “opening”, the local press was still demanding that such a facility was required. What was going on? The answer awaits further research.

¹⁴⁴ *Cootamundra Herald*, 28th August, 1880, p. 4.

¹⁴⁵ Photographs of the three official residences are in M. Thorburn, *The Wallendbeen Story*, privately published, no date, pages 75, 123 and 242.

¹⁴⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13th October, 1880, p. 6.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 5th February, 1881, p. 6.

There was no shortage of work to be done at the platform and in 1882 the local Vigilance Committee argued that there was a need for an additional porter. Also on the agenda was a request to raise the status of the facility from a platform to a station.¹⁴⁸ Oh, what was the Vigilance Committee? It was a local group of individuals formed to keep an eye on rival country villages, particularly Murrumburrah. The towns of Wallendbeen and Murrumburrah were lobbying the Colonial Government as the junction point for the cross-country railway line to Young, Cowra and Blayney.

Steve Baker correctly points out that there was one improvement, according to John Forsyth. It was the extension of the Wallendbeen platform in the Cootamundra direction in 1902.

MYSTERY NO. 7 – WHY IS THERE NOT A SINGLE PLAN EXISTING FOR ANY PLATFORM BUILDING BEFORE 1917?

Good question! There are three excellent photographs in Marcia Thorburn's book, *The Wallendbeen Story*, which show a non-standard timber building in 1910 with an awning but the awning was not only on the platform but wrapped around the Sydney end. Thus, the awning protected not one but two sides of the building. The structure was extremely wide and gives the appearance of the structure as being two rooms wide. It is a fair bet to say that bits and pieces were added over a long period in two directions – along the platform and towards the road to the rear.

This platform building was in existence by 1888 but there is no record of its construction, though it seems to have been built after 1882. In 1885, the Wallendbeen Vigilance Committee and the Railway Department swapped correspondence about the need for improved accommodation at the station. The Committee wanted a meeting but Traffic Inspector Roberts declined to meet the Committee members, saying "I have already received your application and the sketch of your requirements, and have sent them to the proper quarter, with my report thereon, and I have no doubt you will receive a reply in due course."¹⁴⁹ Well, that was a classic fob off. The Committee was shattered, with the meeting record saying that "with regard to the matter of additional railway accommodation, it was decided to let it drop."¹⁵⁰

Possibly, the building that was in existence in 1910 was erected between 1885 and 1888 but that is only a guess. There was something very unusual about the platform structure. It was formed of a hodge-podge design that did not resemble anything that John Whitton was implementing at the time, such as his standard roadside design. The structure has a close architectural likeness to the buildings that exist in 2016 at Thirlmere and Wingello (on the Sydney-bound side). The Wallendbeen

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 21st October, 1882, p. 3.

¹⁴⁹ *Cootamundra Herald*, 30th of May, 1885, p. 9.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. There is a problem with the use of the word "accommodation." In the 19th century, the word was also used to refer to limited track space in goods yards and it may be in this instance that the reference was to the freight facilities and not the station. Who knows?

structure was a simple rectangle with a timber frame and timber cladding but lacked any elegance and this indicates that the Wallendbeen structure was erected under the supervision of George Cowdery, who was the Engineer-in-Chief for Existing Lines in the 1880s. Although he stole Whitton's designs for his First and Second Class structures, Cowdery did not utilise Whitton's Third Class design, namely his standard roadside station. Instead, Cowdery approved the construction of crappy looking buildings that suggested they were constructed without a plan prepared by the draughting staff in Head Office in Sydney.

The village's post office continued to be located at the station and the Station Master also acted as the Postmaster. There were complaints about the absence of the Station Master undertaking duties in the yard, during which time he locked the post office. Residents had to wait for him to return and there was concern about the large number of children that loitered about the station, sometimes being as high as 20 kids.¹⁵¹ The problem disappeared in 1914 when a new post office building was opened up a few doors along from the station entrance in King Street.

The local branch of the Farmers and Settlers' Association called for the provision of a replacement railway station in 1909, on the basis that the existing building was "considered unfit for the demand."¹⁵² The Association also requested an expansion of the grain handling facilities, the provision of a 20-ton cart weighbridge, improvements to the stockyard and a larger goods yard. The enlargement of the goods facilities and the erection of a grain shed took place in 1912 but, sadly, no new station building.

MYSTERY NO. 8 – WHY IS THERE A MIX-UP OF DATES ABOUT THE RELOCATION OF THE STATION?

Yes. Many people, including former Archives Officer, John Forsyth, were confused about the replacement of the single-sided platform with two side platforms in 1917 and the provision of Up and Down refuge loops in 1920. John Forsyth says that the new station site was opened on 14th April, 1920, and indicates that it was 314 metres from the 1877 site. Forsyth does not say from which direction the first station was located.

Virtually every known secondary source states that the new station at Wallendbeen was provided in 1920. Thanks to Graham Harper and Steve Baker, this misadventure in historical documentation has been exposed for what it is – a big error.

¹⁵¹ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 23rd June, 1905, p. 5.

¹⁵² *The Farmer and Settler*, 13th August, 1909, p. 2.

The track duplication from Demondrille Creek, which was a little south of Demondrille, to Wallendbeen had been opened on 13th June, 1915 and the section from Wallendbeen to Cootamundra North was opened in two sections on 10th and the 17th, June, 1917.

Graham Harper states "Traffic Branch Circular No. 111 dated 17th June, 1917, provides for the opening of a new station site, coinciding with the duplication to Wamba (between Wallendbeen and Cootamundra). This makes sense, because, prior to this date, some signal changes took place in preparation for the new platforms – including relocation of the Up Starting Signal some 600 feet towards Sydney.

The signal box is shown on the diagram attached to that Circular to be where it survives today. It had a 28 lever frame, which had plenty of capacity for controlling the two refuge loops which were ultimately installed in 1920. I think that, although a single faced platform was used between 1915 and 1917, after that the two side platform were in use after 1917.

The two loops were state of the art, with power operated points at the remote ends. Wallendbeen was also very unusual, possibly unique at the time, in that the down platform (i.e. the Cootamundra-bound platform) was located within the block section Nubba – Wallendbeen. The Home signal was actually at the departure end of the Down platform, and line clear could only be given to Nubba when the line was clear to the Down Refuge exit points."

At the time the station was relocated in 1917, control of the signals and points was also relocated. There had been a signal box at the first station though the well-known Signalling and Interlocking Historian, Dr Bob Taaffe, states that the opening date of the facility is unknown. John Forsyth says interlocking occurred on 8 December, 1890. Come 1917, the first signal box was too small for its new functions and Dr Bob states that it was relocated to Mittagong Junction for further use.¹⁵³ That signal box remains in position in 2016 at Mittagong.

A larger signal box was erected at the new Wallendbeen station site in 1917, the design of which was the same as the first structure. Its pedigree is as interesting as the main platform building. Bob writes that it was intended to be used at Galong but was redirected for the erection at Wallendbeen. The signal box is still structurally in situ in 2016 but was closed for operational purposes on 27th April, 2007. All signals and points at Wallendbeen today are remotely controlled from Junee.

Today, there are four buildings on the Sydney-bound platform, these being:

¹⁵³ R. T. Taaffe, *The Use and Selection of Materials in Railway Signal Box Construction, 1912-1990*, unpublished Ph. D. thesis, University of Sydney, 1990, p. A30.

- the main station building with a gabled roof,
- the signal box with a single-pitched roof,
- a small lamp room with a hipped roof, &
- an out of shed with a single pitched roof.

These four structures existed in 1935 and have been on the platform ever since.¹⁵⁴

MYSTERY NO. 9 – WHY HAVE PEOPLE NEGLECTED NEWSPAPER REFERENCES TO THE PROVISION OF A NEW STATION IN 1917?

Unfortunately, when myths are told for many years it is difficult for people to unbelieve them. There was a reference in the local newspaper in August, 1917, that the location of the new station has not “met with universal approval, accentuated by the poor condition of the road.”¹⁵⁵ The next month there is a reference to the establishment of trees in George Street leading to the Cootamundra-bound platform to commemorate local residents who lost their life in the Great War.¹⁵⁶ It was an understatement to say that there was an absence of universal approval about the location of the 1917 station as it was inconveniently located and remote from the town centre.

There were additional clues in the press that the station was relocated in 1917. For example, the Wallendbeen Progressive Association was formed in 1917 and its first job was to beautify the railway station with ornamental trees, which the townspeople would maintain.¹⁵⁷ There was even one press report later in July, 1917, which said that the new railway station was “nearing completion, and that when the ‘down’ platform is finished, the new booking office will be brought into use.”¹⁵⁸ A few days later, there was a press report that the new railway station would be “completed in a few days.”¹⁵⁹

MYSTERY NO. 10 – DIDN'T THE RAILWAY DEPARTMENT COCK-UP THE PROVISION OF PLATFORM BUILDINGS FOR THE NEW STATION SITE IN 1917?

Yes, it did.

For Wallendbeen, the Existing Lines Branch in March, 1917, decided to provide two timber buildings on the new side platforms to meet the duplication requirement

¹⁵⁴ For a photograph of the four buildings in about 1935, see Thorburn, op. cit., p. 242.

¹⁵⁵ *Cootamundra Herald*, 10th August, 1917, p. 2.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 5th September, 1917, p. 3.

¹⁵⁷ *Cootamundra Herald*, 6th July, 1917, p. 2.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 20th July, 1917, p. 2.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 25th July, 1917, p. 2.

through the station. Plans were prepared for similar buildings on both platforms but, because there was a shortage of money, the Railway Department decided to relocate to surplus buildings and redirect them at Wallendbeen.

The plans were prepared on the mistaken belief that there were two surplus buildings available from Campsie station on the Bankstown line, which had received new, brick buildings in 1915. It was proposed to put one building on the Sydney-bound platform and the other on the Cootamundra-bound platform. Voila!

When it was realised in April, 1917, that there was only one building from Campsie, it having an island platform from the time of its opening in 1895, it was decided to provide a new structure on the Cootamundra-bound platform and use the building from Campsie on the Sydney-bound platform.

As constructed at Campsie, the building had extended roof rafters to form narrow, three-feet wide awnings on each side but this feature was eliminated in the relocation process. This was the only major alteration that was necessary to the building to make it look like a timber version of the Federation-influenced style. The building from Campsie was relocated to the Sydney-bound platform. A nine-feet wide awning supported by standard brackets was added to the structure.

The Existing Lines Branch of the Railway Department planned and built/rebuilt the Wallendbeen buildings. They were positioned on nine-inch, square brick piers, unlike many similar design structures used by the Railway Construction Branch, which were located on ten-inch diameter timber piles. The building on the Sydney-bound platform was 50 feet long by 12 feet 6 inches wide external. On the Cootamundra-bound platform building, the structure was 35 feet by 12 feet internal. It also had a nine-feet wide awning. The building on the Cootamundra-bound platform was dismantled and removed by tender in 1985.

To say that a shortage of money explains the re-use of buildings from Campsie is not the whole truth. Yes, money was in short supply but the simple fact of the matter was that the Railway Department did not consider Wallendbeen sufficiently important to warrant a more attractive building such as the attractive brick structures that were provided not far away at Galong and Binalong.

In the same year as approval was given for the timber buildings at Wallendbeen, the Railway Department approved the construction of the very last, attractive brick buildings outside the Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong area, apart from the refreshment rooms. Those buildings were the two large structures at Cootamundra West, one of which was two storeys. How come Cootamundra got the very last attractive structures? No doubt because the local Member of Parliament, William Holman, was the State Premier at the time and no doubt the Railway Department knew that fact very well.

After the approval of the Cootamundra West building in 1917, the next attractive, brick platform structure approved on the New South Wales railway system occurred in 1955 at Broken Hill. Why there? It was the city where the Minister for Transport, Ambrose Enticknap, lived at the time. Like the position with Cootamundra West, Broken Hill station was in his electorate.

Now, the timber building on the Sydney-bound platform at Wallendbeen is the sole remaining example of the relocation of a platform building outside Sydney.

MYSTERY NO. 11 – SO, IF THE NEW STATION SITE WAS OPENED IN 1917, WHY HAS ALMOST EVERYONE BEEN TRICKED INTO BELIEVING SOMETHING HAPPENED IN 1920?

The answer is that the reports in the press in 1920 were so vague that they could be applied equally to what was happening on the station platforms and in the railway yard. The other key piece of information that tricked people was the erection of the monument to the returned servicemen from the Great War in 1920 and a lot of people thought that the monument was erected at that site because of the existence at the time of the station. No! No! No!

The first mention of some activity on the local railway was in March, 1920, when the local press said that a project would bring “the improvements and save delays.”¹⁶⁰ Clearly, those remarks would suggest to a railway observer that they were not referring to activities on the platform. By April, work was reported as “nearing completion.”¹⁶¹ Unfortunately, the nature of the work is not defined. The delay in progress was reported as being due to “the want of materials.”¹⁶²

There was yet another unexplained item in the newspaper about the station which stated “vested interests got a huge bump when the station was shifted. The shift was necessary owing to the grade being too steep to the old station.”¹⁶³

Steve Baker sees the gradient as one factor, but not the only factor, in the decision to relocate the station. He explains that the gradient the first station site was one in 150 falling towards Cootamundra. Steve comments:

“when the subway was built in 1920, it looks like the sag on the line was lifted as the track is on an embankment over the subway.”

The newspaper reference in 1920 obviously refers to the station and, by suggestion, it refers to the other references in the local newspaper around the same time. From the lack of clarity in the local press, people have assumed that the station was

¹⁶⁰ *Cootamundra Herald*, 12th March, 1920, p. 8.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 27th April, 1920, p. 1.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 28th May, 1920, p. 8.

relocated in 1920. Even the local government authority mentions the error unknowingly on its website of historical occurrences.

Perhaps another reason was the destruction by fire in February, 1920 of the lamp room, which had been the only platform structure in existence in 1878? Certainly the timing was relevant and some people considered that, because there was a fire destroying a building on the platform, the new station was opened at that time in 1920.

Wallendbeen received prizes in the annual railway garden competition from time to time. There is also a reference in 1920 that would have confused some people who are read the newspaper reports. It stated that the staff were to be congratulated “as the station is a new one and the officers have had little time to beautify the platform or finish the several designs. Some beautiful blooms adorn the platform; and the word "Wallendbeen" in colours looks very pretty.”¹⁶⁴ It is easy to think that the station was transferred to its new site in 1920 with newspaper entries such as this.

MYSTERY NO. 12 – WHY HAVEN'T SECONDARY SOURCES HELPED TO RECTIFY THE PROBLEM ABOUT THE DATE OF THE NEW STATION SITE

There is also a major problem with the secondary sources. Steve Baker has first-hand knowledge of the puzzle. He is a volunteer in the Resource Centre of the Australian Railway Historical Association. Moreover, he has delivered a substantial research interest in the Cootamundra region. Steve tells the story:

“the problem is that the official, departmental record of the Department of Railways has got the story wrong, indicating that the new station site opened in 1920. When people seeking information on Wallendbeen station visit the State Records Office or the Society's Resource Centre, the first thing they are handed is the official but incorrect secondary material.

Another key document has got the story wrong. The Society's own journal, *Bulletin*, has an article by C. C. Singleton in 1947 saying, again incorrectly, that the new station site again opened in 1920. So, key documents in two organisations are incorrect. One may well ask why this error has not been detected previously. The answer is that Cyril Singleton was such a revered author that researchers have taken for granted that the information he presented is accurate. After all, he worked for the organisation.

¹⁶⁴ *Young Witness*, 16th December, 1920, p. 2.

The evidence of the problem is reflected in a continuation of the incorrect information, as in Thorburn's book on Wallendbeen and on the website of the local government authority."

In order to rectify the problem, Steve is preparing to submit documentation to the Society bringing to attention the correct, primary evidence.

MYSTERY NO. 13 – OK. THE DATE OF THE NEW STATION IS 1917. WHY WAS IT RELOCATED?

It was stated in the local press that the station was relocated due to the gradient. This is incorrect. Unfortunately, the goods yard that served the town was opposite the first station site. With duplication, it was necessary to provide a second platform opposite the existing station. The presence of the goods yard was in the way and, therefore, prompted two alternatives. Firstly, relocate the goods yard or, secondly, relocate the passenger station. Option No. 2 was chosen on the basis that that was the less costly and less inconvenient arrangement for the Railway Department.

There is a photograph in Marcia Thorburn's history of Wallendbeen which shows the good shed taken from the road side but does not show the station building because the view of the station is blocked by the good shed.¹⁶⁵

MYSTERY NO. 14 – IS IT TRUE THAT THE CONCERNS OF STAFF WERE PLACED BEFORE THOSE OF PASSENGERS AND FREIGHT CUSTOMERS?

Yes. There is a good case of this occurring at Wallendbeen. The relocation of the station really need not be cited as evidence of the bias towards departmental ease. One more case relates to Residence No. 2, had been connected to the town electricity supply in 1937. When the Railway Commissioner visited the station in that year, the deputation from the town folk asked that the station building and other structures be connected to the supply.¹⁶⁶ No response was made by the Commissioner.

Train travellers using the Wallendbeen platform had to wait a long, long time and the station was not connected to the town electricity supply until 1950.

MYSTERY NO. 15 – WERE THE LOCAL RESIDENTS HAPPY ABOUT THEIR RELOCATED STATION IN 1917

No, the local users of the station were unhappy but, like most people everywhere, the lack of evidence suggests that the village-folk basically did nothing substantial to protest about their displeasure. There is a very limited record of strong action by the local community to object to the relocation of the station once the proposal was

¹⁶⁵ Thorburn, op. cit. Compare the photographs on pages 75 and 123 to understand how the station and goods shed were directly opposite each other.

¹⁶⁶ *Cootamundra Herald*, 6th June, 1937, p. 7.

known. Protests might have happened but records of such action are limited. Words of protest were made more often by travellers getting off the train at Wallendbeen and experiencing the inconvenience of the new site. Steve Baker brought to attention the following newspaper report:

“In the words of an experienced railway official, Wallendbeen so far as railway conveniences are concerned, is about the most 'mucked-up' station on the Southern line. By removing the offices from the old site to an out of way place further on, beyond the confines of the village, the department has practically ostracised the residents from direct communication with their main avenue of trade, and the unwary traveller who happens to wend his way into the environs of this little dust heap finds he must make a wide detour around portion of the municipality, uphill and down dale, for the best part of a mile, to reach his objective. If he happens to alight in the early hours and misty darkness of a winter's morning, he wonders which end of the universe he has bumped up against first. Later on, after having covered a place marked on the map 'Australia, and known as Wallendbeen, he quickly transacts his business, and quietly makes his return flight to more convenient scenes, with a strong determination to manage his business in future by post instead of by personal inconvenience caused by the short-sightedness of red-tape officialdom”.¹⁶⁷

While the above newspaper article sums up the inconvenience of the second station site, it was made two years after the relocation of the station. As Steve Baker comments, “the relocation of the station site from the town centre can be seen as another case of the Railway Department’s arrogance in making decisions without regard to the service to the local community.”

MYSTERY NO. 16 – WHY IS THERE A BRICK WALL IN THE CUTTING BETWEEN THE OLD STATION SITE AND THE ROAD OVERBRIDGE?

Steve Baker has the answer. He writes:

“As well as preventing the collapse of the adjacent earth, this wall also supported a water tank and large water treatment plant. Wallendbeen was a watering stop in the single line days with water being pumped from a well in the nearby creek.”

MYSTERY NO. 17 – WAS WALLENBEEN THE ONLY STATION WHERE THE USUAL 20-TON CART WEIGHBRIDGE WAS ON THE PASSENGER PLATFORM SIDE OF THE LINE WITH THE REMAINDER OF THE GOODS YARD ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE LINE?

That seems to be the case. The 1883 *Annual Report* lists the installation of the cart weighbridge at Wallendbeen. It was located immediately on the Cootamundra-bound side of the level crossing with a passenger platform a short distance towards Sydney. All the other freight facilities were on the Sydney-bound side of the line.

¹⁶⁷ Cootamundra Herald, 31st May, 1919.

That railway historian of all things connected with the Cootamundra district, namely Steve Baker, makes the following comment:

“the placement of the weighbridge is unusual but possibly explained by accessibility and the limited space in the early days when the corridor had to accommodate the main line, the loop line and the goods siding with its good shed. There appears to have been no road access to the goods siding from the western side of the intersection at the level crossing where the three major roads came together. In 1912, a 20-ton weighbridge replaced the 10-ton facility, though the location of the weighbridge near the passenger platform was retained.”

Of course, Fairfield station between Granville and Liverpool in Sydney was a similar interesting arrangement. There, the entire goods yard was located in the forecourt of the station on the Sydney-bound side of the tracks. At Fairfield today, a jib crane exists as a marker of the former goods yard.

The assistance of Steve Baker and Graham Harper was fundamental in understanding the mysteries of Wallendbeen station is acknowledged.

Stuart Sharp

22nd September, 2016

DEMONDRILLE RAILWAY STATION

A WARNING ABOUT SOURCES

It is always a nightmare to write about stations that have very little primary, documentary and other evidence about their evolution. The story of Demondrille station is one of those very difficult tales, as there is minimal primary evidence about the various platforms and buildings that were either relocated and rebuilt or replaced. This study is full of speculation and it is important to keep this warning in mind when reading this text.

LINE CONSTRUCTION 1877

The railway line through what is known as Demondrille was opened on 1st November, 1877, when the line between the present Harden station and Cootamundra was opened. There was no station at Demondrille at that time.

The site was well known, it being locally called the “Big Hill”.¹⁶⁸ From the time of the line opening, there was a timber bridge over the line that carried the road to Young but its location was reported not at the present site but “halfway up the incline.”¹⁶⁹

When the line opened, the cutting near the top of what in railway circles is known as Demondrille Bank was the largest excavation at the time of the line opening between Harden and Cootamundra. The cutting was 39 feet deep and required the excavation of 50,000 cubic yards of rock and soil.

The site of Demondrille station at 1,487 feet above sea level was located at the end of a one in 40 gradient for one and three quarter miles from Murrumburrah, which was 1,271 feet above sea level. The gradient represented an increase of 215 feet for trains operating to Cootamundra.¹⁷⁰ Trains from the site of Murrumburrah station faced a severe uphill gradient. The gradient also made it difficult to control trains heading towards Sydney.

REASON FOR OPENING OF STATION

The New South Wales Colonial Government gave approval on 16th of April, 1881, for the construction of a railway line from what was called Murrumburrah to Blayney, being a distance of 108 miles, at a cost of £1,260,000.¹⁷¹ The Railway Department had no other option but to appoint an officer to control the junction trackwork and, with this in mind, it approved in 1884 the construction of a small dwelling for the appointment of a “Pointsman.” The railway line was opened from Demondrille to Young on 26th March, 1885.

¹⁶⁸ *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 3rd November, 1877, p. 12.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ Department of Railways, *NSW Country Timetable*, 20th November, 1960, p. 42. The *Cootamundra Herald*, 13th November, 1877, p. 2 contains incorrect elevation statistics.

¹⁷¹ Report dated 17th October, 1881, of the Railways to the Colonial Treasurer in *Appendix to the Ways and Means of the Government of NSW for the year 1882*, p. 303.

STATION OPENING 1885

How important was Demondrille railway station? Cyril Singleton wrote that Demondrille “has never handled any but the slightest of public business.”¹⁷² In essence, Demondrille was a station opened initially for departmental operational purposes.

Demondrille Junction station was opened on 23rd March, 1885. Was there a platform at the time of station opening? One press report in August of that year described the platform as “nearly an accomplished fact.”¹⁷³ John Forsyth wrote that the platform was 142 feet long.¹⁷⁴ That is an unusual measurement for a NSW Railways platform. Once again, the Railway Department opened a station without completed facilities. As the Department considered the station linked to the branch line, it decided to erect a platform on the branch line and not the main line. That seems a bit stupid as additional passenger trains would have traversed the main line but were unable to pick up or set down passengers.

There are two items of evidence that show the location of the platform only on the branch line. The first item is the composition of the public and working timetables between 1885 and 1890 which show no trains operating on the main line between Cootamundra and Harden stopping at Demondrille. Main line passenger trains are shown as stopping at Demondrille after 1890. The second item of evidence is the map drawn by John Forsyth in his book of southern line maps which shows the first station site as being on the branch line.¹⁷⁵

The design of any platform buildings at the 1885 station is unknown.

It was not until 1888 that the entire line between Demondrille and Blayney was completed and it was at that time that a triangular connection was made between the main line and the branch line to Young. Author, John Reid, says the track arrangement at Demondrille in 1888 was the first triangular connection on the railway system when it opened.¹⁷⁶

The 1885 station site on the branch line remained as the only platform until 12th May, 1890.

ADDITIONAL PLATFORM 1890

In 1890, the Railway Department, despite the widespread impact of the 1890s Depression, decided to spend a fair bit of public money on the station. Authorisation was granted on 11th June, 1890, for the lengthening of the existing branch line platform and on 11th August, 1891, for the construction of a new platform on the main line with a new waiting shed. Now, there were two platforms and a footbridge was authorised to connect the two platforms.

The design of both platform buildings is unknown.

On 24th June, 1891, authorisation was granted for the enclosure of one of the existing interlocking frames and the work was completed on 26th August, 1891. Because of the work of enclosing the

¹⁷² C. C. Singleton, "Main Southern Line – VIII," ARHS *Bulletin*, February, 1947, p. 17.

¹⁷³ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 8th of August, 1885, p. 5.

¹⁷⁴ J. H. Forsyth, *Station Information A to F*, State Rail Authority, 1997, p. 261.

¹⁷⁵ NSW, *Main Southern Line Maps*, Sydney, Department of Railways, 1967, p. S44A.

¹⁷⁶ J. Reid, *Demondrille Then and Now*, privately published, undated, p. 6.

frame, Demondrille now had its first signal box.¹⁷⁷ Still, there was not much for the station officer to do as a crossing loop was not installed 1896.

DESTRUCTION BY FIRE OF MAIN LINE STATION 1892

A fire destroyed the main line railway station building at Demondrille on 27th October, 1892.¹⁷⁸ The Junior Porter on duty, Charles Herring, left the station platform at 6:30 pm after placing a tarpaulin in the lamp room, as there was no other place to keep it. He went to receive No. 38 goods train and was involved in shunting for 20 or 25 minutes when he noticed the fire in the building. He stated: "I ran for the fire buckets and attended to the fire in the lamp room. While the lamp room contained containers of oil, there was no hole or greasy waste cloths." Herring was not smoking at the time. It was reported that Herring could not account for pieces of bottles in the lamp room and, at a local enquiry, a jury reviewed the evidence which did not enable it to say whether the damage was accidental or intentional.¹⁷⁹

Was it a strange coincidence that the Commissioners' special train was approaching the station at the time the fire started? Eight employees received £1 each as a gift from the Commissioners for their effort to fight the fire.

The design of the platform building replaced a one destroyed by fire in 1892 is unknown.

A replacement building, composed of two rooms, was erected at an unknown date but its design is known. It was a timber framed building, clad in timber with a single-pitched roof covered by galvanised, corrugated iron sheets. It measured approximately 35 feet long by 11 feet wide. It is possible that the entire building was not destroyed in 1892 by fire as evidence from 1922 plan shows the two rooms of different widths. Yes. The in-house journal, *Railway Budget*, reported that the platform building was "entirely destroyed" by the fire but the same article goes to say that the "tablet and electric staff instruments and most of the other property was saved."¹⁸⁰ So, was the building totally destroyed or partially destroyed? It is quite possible that part of the building had been constructed in 1890, when the main line platform was built, was in use after the fire as the station design utilised following the conflagration was the same as the design that would have been used before the fire in 1890.

IMPACT OF GRADE IMPROVEMENTS 1900

Grade improvements were authorised on 22nd August, 1900, between mileages 231 35 and 235 10. The work involved a substantial track deviation to reduce the gradient from 1 in 40 to 1 in 75. The work cost £15,400.¹⁸¹ As a result, a new station site was selected on the deviation, which opened on 13th May, 1900. This second station site lasted until 16th July, 1922.

¹⁷⁷ Interlocking and Signal Box Historian, Dr. Bob Taaffe's research does not support the existence of a signal box before 1900.

¹⁷⁸ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 5th November, 1892, p. 2 and *Railway Budget*, Vol. 1 No. 3, 15th November, 1892, p. 29. John Forsyth quotes the wrong year for the fire, stating that it occurred in 1893.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ *Railway Budget*, op. cit., p. 29.

¹⁸¹ Shop Order No. 3977, Shop Order Book 21C/252, former SRA Archives, p. 72.

The design of platform building for the new site in 1900 is unknown. From the evidence, it is a fair bet that the existing platform buildings were relocated to new station site. There is no evidence to support that view.

IMPACT OF PROPOSED TRACK DUPLICATION 1914

Track duplication was well underway from 1912 and, in 1914, the Railway Department prepared a plan for the third station site using two island platforms. There is only one surviving architectural plan for any building at Demondrille station between its opening in 1855 and its closure in 1974. That one architectural plan is dated September, 1914, and relates to a single room, timber waiting shed measuring 15 feet by 10 feet, which was intended for the branch line platform. The shed had a single-pitched roof with the roof rafters extended form an eight-feet wide platform awning, supported by timber braces.

The interesting aspect about this 1914 plan is that it shows the track layout for part of the yard with the up and down goods lines. Two island platforms were proposed connected by a long overhead pedestrian bridge which crossed ten tracks with stepways to the two island platforms. A two room structure was also proposed for the main line platform.

It is very confusing to know whether the proposed waiting shed for the branch line platform was built because the very same plan was reissued in November, 1921, as part of the duplication of the main line and rearrangement of the yard.

The only evidence that the 1914 waiting shed for the branch line platform was not built was the re-issue of the plan in 1921.

What appears to have happened is that the substantial track re-arrangement that did in fact occur in 1922 had been proposed back in 1914 but, at that time, the Railway Department gave serious consideration to a major deviation that would have eliminated Demondrille Bank entirely. Nothing happened for years because funding was tight as a result of the impact of the Great War but, by 1921, was clear to the Department that there was never going to be enough money to carry out the deviation and so the Department reverted to its original idea of duplicating the existing single line as shown in the 1914 plan.

TRACK DUPLICATION 1922

So the same plan that was first prepared in 1914 was re-issued with a new date of November, 1921, for the very same waiting shed on the branch line platform. Only minimal changes were made to the track layout in the intervening eight years.

In 1922, the two room building that had been in existence to serve the main line platform at the second site was relocated to the main line platform at the third site, with one small addition for a female toilet.

On the branch line platform, a new waiting shed was provided. Why? Perhaps there was no building on the branch line platform at that time. The difference in measurements of the two rooms of the main line building point to such an explanation. Possibly, the previous waiting shed on the

branch line platform had been relocated to the main line platform some time before 1914, when the plan was prepared for a new waiting shed on the branch line platform.

DESCRIPTION OF 1922 MAIN LINE BUILDING

The second track deviation was opened on 9th July, 1922, and the new station was opened at the third site on the same day. The only trouble for customers was that the footbridge connecting the platforms to the adjoining land had not been built. Access to the platforms was initially across the tracks.¹⁸² The footbridge came later.

The main line platform building that had been located at the second site was transferred to the new main line platform. It was a two room structure comprising a General Waiting Room which measured 15 feet 10 inches by 11 feet 1 inch. Despite being on an island platform, a door was inserted on only one side of the Room. A brick fireplace was added to the rear wall. On the Cootamundra end of the General Waiting Room, was a Station Master's office measuring 19 feet 11 inches by 10 feet 3 ½ inches. It is interesting to note that these two rooms were about eight inches different in width. This discrepancy is troublesome for those trying to have a simple understanding of what buildings were provided at the station before 1922. A brick fireplace was also added to the rear wall of the office. It seems that the two rooms were in use for transferred to the main line platform at different times before 1914.

The timber waiting shed that was proposed in the November, 1921, plan for the branch line platform was built and lasted until the 1960s.

The buildings on the main line platform were demolished at an unknown time after 1957, according to the retired Signal Sectionman, Sidney Smith.¹⁸³

THE DOMINANCE OF A FUNDING CRISIS, KNOWN DEPARTMENTALLY AS "ECONOMY"

Everything about the Demondrille station in 1922 shouted economy. Single-pitched roofed structures were not designed for island platforms, which was the case at Demondrille. They appear grossly unsymmetrical and even hideous in appearance. There were a few stations on the New South Wales system, including Dungog, Killawarra and Gilmore, which had similar single-pitched roof structures on island platform. In every case, the building had been relocated from a single-sided platform, as was the case at Demondrille. Other factors which indicate penury include:

- the absence of a ladies' waiting room,
- capture of one corner of the General Waiting Room as an ante-chamber entry to the female toilet,
- the absence of doors leading onto the Cootamundra-bound platform,
- the decision not to provide the planned "C1" male toilet,
- the omission of a urinal in the interim, male toilet, &
- the non-relocation of the lamp room.

¹⁸² NSW Railways, *Annual Report to 30th June, 1923*, Sydney, Government Printer, 1923, p. 8.

¹⁸³ Interview with Sid Smith, 23 Scott Street, Harden, 19th January, 1983.

RARITY OF PLATFORM ARRANGEMENT

Demondrille from 1922 became the only station on the New South Wales railway system outside of the Sydney and Newcastle suburban areas which were specifically design and operated as twin island platforms with running lines on each side of both platforms. Demondrille was also one of only two stations on the NSW rail system to have two island platforms that were not parallel – the other being at Blacktown after 1958. It is acknowledged that the track layout at Bowning from 1920 had twin, pre-existing side platforms opposite each other which were converted into island platforms by the installation of refuge loops around the rear of each platform.

When opened, the main line platform from 1900 was 200 feet in length and remained that length until it was demolished in 1970s.¹⁸⁴

The main line platform was an island arrangement with the platform wall serving the Cootamundra-bound side being straight and the wall on the Sydney-bound side being slightly curved. The island platform for the branch line was unusual in that the platform walls on both sides were straight. A photograph of the station with the two island platforms on the buildings on both platforms is in *Australian Railway History*, October, 2010, page 356.

TOILET ARRANGEMENTS

Two options were developed for a ladies' toilet in the November, 1921, plan. One provided for a detached structure contained a "Lobby", a very small, ladies' waiting room with a fixed seat and earth closet with a hand basin console in one corner. The second option involved the addition of an extra four feet long toilet at the Sydney end of the General Waiting Room. One corner of the General Waiting Room adjacent to the platform was screen off and used as an entry to the female toilet. This second option was cheaper, as it was smaller and was the one selected for construction.

A plan was prepared dated 21st December, 1921, for a standard design "C1" male toilet, its distinguishing feature being a curved iron roof. It does not seem to have been built at that stage. An interim, detached male toilet was built 15 feet from the Cootamundra end of the platform. It also had an earth closet but, most oddly, did not include a urinal, having a note on the plan "future urinal."

FOOTBRIDGE

It appears that a footbridge entirely of timber construction was provided either at or sometime after the opening of the second platform in 1890.

The information is a bit fuzzy but it is possible that the first footbridge was replaced by a new steel superstructure on timber trestles covering ten tracks from the southern railway boundary to the northern railway boundary. By March, 1957, the footbridge was truncated and covered only the tracks between the southern boundary and the main line platform. It is unknown when the remainder of the footbridge was demolished.

There is an excellent, colour photograph of the truncated footbridge taken in 1957 in J. Sargent, (Ed.), *Memories – New South Wales Government Railways 1955 – 1965*, Studfield, Train Hobby

¹⁸⁴ Forsyth, *Station Information*, op. cit.

Publications, no date, page 57. The photograph also shows the platform buildings on the two island platforms in their original stone hues. The male toilet at the Cootamundra end can also be distinguished and, although it is hard to distinguish, it appears that at some time the 1921 proposed C1 combined male toilet and lamp room was erected to replace the original toilet and the original lamp room.

OFFICIAL RESIDENCES – ANOTHER RARITY

The 1884 brick Pointsman cottage was relocated on 13th December, 1921, because it was within the footprint of the proposed 1922 coal stage. It was moved to its present position adjacent to the overhead road bridge. This residence is very important in the history of official New South Wales Railway residences as it shows the start of departmental thinking for the use of gabled roofs for official dwellings. The gabled roof, as applied to the 1884 residence, was considered inferior to the hipped roof as used on the Station Master's residence at Harden in 1877. Perhaps the selection of the gabled roof was used at Demondrille as the Railway Department would have considered the location of fairly low importance, possibly as a trial to assess any reactions from the public. Few official residences were erected in the 1880s with gabled roofs but the structure at Demondrille is a rare, surviving example.

There was a second residence for the Night Officer provided an unknown time opposite the former coal stage but it was sold in 1943. There is a photograph of this second residence in *Roundhouse*, Vol. 33 No. 3 July 1996, p. 7. It has the appearance of being of the officially labelled "J1" style.

SUBSEQUENT CHANGES

This station was connected in 1935 to the Murrumburrah Council's electricity network.¹⁸⁵ However, the Department declined to install two electric lights on the footbridge leading to the platforms. Although it was considered by Council as a "bad precedent to light up Railway property," Council stated that it would install the lights, provided they were placed on Railway poles.¹⁸⁶

The name of the station was changed from Demondrille Junction to Demondrille in April, 1940. This was part of a Railway policy to eliminate the word "Junction" from passenger stations.

A reticulated water service was available in the area from 1947 and, while at least one residence was connected to the service, it is unknown whether the station was supplied with fresh water from that source.

A QUIRKY BIT OF SAFEWORKING

Graham Harper draws to attention an unusual feature at Demondrille for the operation of trains proceeding from Cootamundra towards Sydney which used the "Up Goods Line." He writes:

"Demondrille South Box was not a block station; it was in fact a 36 lever subsidiary frame with its main line points levers electrically released from North Box. The block section southwards was Demondrille North to Nubba (or Wallendbeen). So, if an up goods train (i.e. one proceeding towards Sydney) had arrived in clear on the Up Goods Line at South Box,

¹⁸⁵ *Harden Express*, 27th June, 1935, p. 1.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 29th August, 1935, p. 2.

how was the signalman at North Box able to send 'Line Clear' to Nubba, when he hadn't seen the tail lights and therefore had no way of knowing that the train was complete, and hadn't parted in the section?

The answer was that the signalman at South Box had to observe the train as it entered the Up Goods Line, and check the tail lights. He was instructed not to replace the Home Signal (or calling on signal) to danger until he was satisfied that the train was clear of the main line and complete. Return of these signals at South Box to danger activated an indicator in North Box which read: TRAIN ARRIVED UP GOODS. Non display of this message made it impossible for North Box to send 'Line Clear' to Nubba.

Obviously the working of trains to the Down Goods line was unaffected, as the signalman at North Box could see the tail lights for himself."

CLOSURE

The station closed on 9th October, 1974. Of course, signalmen continued to work the remaining signal box until 26th June, 1992, when it became unattended and opened only for trains proceeding to and from Young and Cowra.¹⁸⁷ The signal box remained in service until 28th April, 2007, when it was replaced by a new signalling system that was introduced between Cunnigar and Wallendbeen.¹⁸⁸ The signal box, along with relics of the former coal stage and other infrastructure, stand in 2016 as monuments to the once operational importance of the site.

Stuart Sharp

22nd September, 2016

¹⁸⁷ *Railway Digest*, August, 1992, p. 313.

¹⁸⁸ Australian Rail Track Corporation, *Safe Notice No. 2 – 485*, 2007.

THE PAINFUL NEIGHBOUR

THE PLIGHT OF POOR MURRUMBURRAH RAILWAY STATION

STUART SHARP

22nd September, 2016

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1.WHY STUDY MURRUMBURRAH STATION?

The first point to explain is the title of this essay. Who was the neighbour? It was the New South Wales Railways. Why was the Railways painful? Because the Railways offered nothing without a long battle.

It may seem unfair to the New South Wales Railway Department to accuse it of apathy and arrogance in the way it served the people of Murrumburrah. A student who has studied only Murrumburrah station may come to a more generous conclusion but this study has placed Murrumburrah station in the context of the history of all other stations in New South Wales. Similar themes occur everywhere throughout the State in the history of the New South Wales Railway Department. The dominant theme from 1855 to recent times has been a reluctance to assist the residents served by a station, a lethargy to improve travel conditions and times for rail passengers and an indisposition to initiate action to help freight customer. This study looks at one of these three areas – the disinclination to regard Murrumburrah station as important to the local people. It shows that the dominant strategy applied by Railway officials was to respond to requests for improvements rather than originate improvements.

Murrumburrah station was a fairly smallish affair and relatively unimportant to the bigwigs of the New South Wales Railways. In the context of the entire New South Wales railway system, apart from the goods traffic to and from the mill siding, it was also at the low end of importance. That being the case, why bother spending a lot of time researching its history and presenting it in a form that other people could read? Because it was for quite some time important to the residents of Murrumburrah.

It is the relative insignificance of the station from an operational point of view that is helpful in understanding the psychology of the staff in the New South Wales Railway Department. The attention of this study is not continually diverted away from issues that affect large stations, such as on-time train running, the impact of delays between branch line and main line trains, visits by important people and an exhaustive list of capital improvements.

Really, the only major events that happened at Murrumburrah station were its opening in 1879, the provision of a replacement building in 1900, the erection of a second building in 1918 with track duplication and its closure in 1976. It is because the major improvements were small in number that it is possible to examine the nature of the relationship between the residents of the town and the bureaucrats of the Railway Department. The study is an exposure of the culture of a very large government department that acted in a monopoly environment.

What are the results of the study? There is only one point, but it is a significant point, that needs to be made based on the evidence. That point is that the Railway Department was an unpleasant neighbour which almost exclusively lacked initiative to implement improvements to the town station. Of course the lack of capital funds was a problem but no attempt was made by the Department to befriend the town-folk, apart from the personal service of the local railway staff. The organisation would have had a strong ally, to lobby State governments for increased capital funding, if it had befriended the people in the town. Unfortunately, the Railway culture did not include friendship to outsiders.

In reality, the New South Wales Railways existed not for the people who lived in Murrumburrah. Perhaps that was a cruel thing to say that it may be more correct to say that conveying people to and from Murrumburrah station was not the number one objective the organisation. The primary objective was to provide transport at the lowest possible cost to primary producers. Time and time again freight rates were lowered and they were lowered more times than they were raised. It is no wonder the Department had such little capital funds available to it because it was not in a position to accumulate sufficient revenue to permit significant improvements. The only way advances were made to the Murrumburrah station was when New South Wales governments provided the funds.

Once alternative transport was available to the people of Murrumburrah in the form of privately owned motor cars, people preferred to use their own vehicles rather than take the train. A study of the quality of rail passenger transport from Murrumburrah would reveal the sustained, poor quality of the service in terms of travel times, cleanliness and convenience and the near-gross reluctance to improve service levels.

If it is correct that rail travel was a distant second choice to private motor car, is it not significant that there was a total absence criticism of any aspect of Murrumburrah station, apart from the infrastructure? It is true that there is not a single adverse word about the tidiness and cleanliness of the facilities at the station and there is similarly not a bad word written in the local press about the conduct of the staff at Murrumburrah station. Why? Firstly, local business people and travellers relied on the goodwill of the staff to help them. Any adverse criticism would result in not only poor service but worse. Revenge would take place the form of an inability to find parcels, unsuccessful attempts to reserve seats on trains and delays in being notified of freight arriving at the station. It was in the local residents' interest not to publicly criticise local staff, even if they were unhelpful or incompetent or worse.

It is unusual to set out study of any station year by year but this approach has been adopted for the study of Murrumburrah in order to emphasise how the same issues were raised time and again by the town residents and town organisation. By this method, it is a bit clearer to understand how the New South Wales Railways responded or, more correctly stated, did not respond to requests for improvements to the station. At the start of each year, a one-line summary has been included of the major event during that year. The purpose of this summary is to demonstrate the recurrent themes that dominate the history of Murrumburrah station.

This document is not a history of anything – at least not at this stage. A history would need to integrate Railway operations and services into the history of the town. That task is on the to do list.

2. HOW COME THE RAILWAY LINE CAME THROUGH MURRUMBURRAH?

John Whitton, the Engineer-in-Chief of the New South Wales Railways had believed from his arrival in Sydney in December, 1856, that the two colonies of New South Wales and Victoria should be linked by rail. He had stopped in Melbourne on his journey from England to Australia. Whitton wanted the southern line to proceed to Melbourne and recommended that the southern line be built to Albury, where it would meet the Victorian railway system.

The engineers who undertook the survey of the route chose the route through Murrumburrah because it was considered to be the least mountainous and, hence, least expensive route. The Deputy Surveyor General, John Thompson, reported on 10th June, 1856, that a railway could not be taken via Gundagai and indicated that a more northerly route had to be adopted which was “almost a dead level” from Binalong to Cunningham Plains and on to Wallendbeen.¹⁸⁹ No mention was made in Thompson’s report to Murrumburrah. Murrumburrah was not specifically chosen as a location with which to provide a railway and this was reflected in the decision not to provide a railway station adjacent to the village precinct when the line was opened – and even after the line opening.

By the end of 1856, three important events had occurred. Firstly, the route had been broadly settled and, secondly, the Colonial Government wanted to construct the railway to connect Sydney and Melbourne. One press report stated:

“It is the expressed intention of the Governor-General to carry the trunk railway to the Southern boundary of the colony.”¹⁹⁰

The third event was the arrival of the new Engineer-in-Chief, John Whitton in New South Wales and he quickly supported construction of the railway along the surveyed route.

Murrumburrah had popped up as a small urban centre in the 1840s for two main reasons. Firstly, it was the crossing of east-west and north-south roads and, secondly, there was a supply of fresh water from nearby Murrumbidgee Creek. It was proclaimed as a village in 1858.

In the 1866 edition of *Bailliere’s New South Wales Gazetteer and Road Guide*, it was stated that the Parish of Harden was divided into 40 parishes, one of which was Murrumbidgee. Murrumburrah was not listed as a “chief town” in the Parish, these being Binalong and Jugiong.

Murrumburrah was described the following words:

“a township situated on Murrumbidgee Creek.... An agricultural, pastoral and mining district no manufactories but a mill is in the course of erection a post office and three stores The population numbers about 150 persons.”¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁹ Thanks to Steve Baker, a Cootamundra history specialist, for bringing to attention the 1856 survey report. Email dated 16th August, 2016.

¹⁹⁰ *Bendigo Advertiser*, 15th May, 1856, p. 2.

¹⁹¹ *Bailliere’s New South Wales Gazetteer and Road Guide*, Sydney, 1866, pp. 255 and 388.

A coach service linked the village with Yass and, ultimately, Sydney, as well as other coach services to Binalong, Wombat (to the north) and Young.

In the year the Murrumburrah railway station opened, namely 1879, there were 74 pupils at the local school located at Murrumburrah, though tenders had only been called in 1878 for the erection of a school building. Parents of children at Harden complained that the new school was not in that part of town where most of the population was increasing – i.e. near the present Harden station site.¹⁹² This protest was the start of a century of intra-town rivalry relating to what public services were located at which end of the town.

It is pretty obvious that Murrumburrah was a pretty small place. Keep in mind also that there was absolutely zero urban or any other form of development at the site of what is today Harden railway station before the arrival of the railway in 1877.

In short, the railway came though Murrumburrah because the railway officials believed that there was no cheaper option.

¹⁹² *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 10th April, 1880, p. 690.

3.THE ROUTE THE RAILWAY TOOK TO REACH MURRUMBURRAH

Some 20 years before the railway arrived at Murrumburrah – in the mid-1850s, the railway route had been established to and past the village. The surveyor stated that “from Binalong to Cunningham Plains a straight line may be taken; and onwards the same direction to the reserve at Wallendbeen and by Cootamundry, Hurley’s Station.”¹⁹³

The Deputy Surveyor General reported on 10th June, 1856, to the Surveyor General that it was not possible to follow the direction of the main road through Bookham, which was about 12 km west of Yass and Jugiong, because of the mountainous country and it was also impossible to follow the valley of the Murrumbidgee River because the land with riparian rights was liable to severe flooding. The route through Murrumburrah, then through Hurley’s Station (Cootamundra) to Hooligun’s Creek (Junee) and then to Wagg Wagga seemed to be the only alternative at the time.¹⁹⁴

James Martin, the Attorney General, made a speech in the New South Wales Parliament in September, 1867, about the extension of the railway line beyond Goulburn. He said:

“The plan now proposed by the Government was to take the southern line from Goulburn to a point on the Murrumbidgee somewhere about the 140th meridian. The precise spot would depend upon the adaptability of the locality to be made a terminus, and the site for a future town. The line proposed was by the Cullarin Range to Bowning, thence to Murrumburrah, and then onto Narrandera and from that place to the Murrumbidgee. Trial surveys had been carried as far as Murrumburrah, a distance of eighty-eight and a half miles, and it was estimated that, on this part of the line, the work could be constructed for £10,000 a mile, the country being generally favourable, with no gradients steeper than one in fifty, and no curve of more than thirty chains radius. Beyond this to Narrandera and thence to the River, a distance of 120 miles, the country was level throughout, and the line would be much less expensive, so that two millions would be ample to complete it. The time within which it could be constructed could not be stated with very great accuracy, but it was roughly computed that the Murrumbidgee might be reached by the route he had traced in five years and a half from the present. If the loan were sanctioned, he might tell the House that the Government considered it better to go into the money market with a loan for a large sum than to do as had been done hitherto, and borrow small sums that no large firms would think it worthwhile to treat for.”¹⁹⁵

Martin was not being honest to his fellow Members of the Legislative Assembly when he described the route between Goulburn and Murrumburrah as “generally favourable” and between Murrumburrah and the Murrumbidgee River as “flat throughout”. These two sections contained steep gradients which required huge sums of money to ease gradients in the 20th century.

¹⁹³ New South Wales Parliament, *Votes and Proceedings, 1856/57*, Volume 3, correspondence of the Surveyor General, 10th June, 1856.

¹⁹⁴ State Rail Authority, *Railway Development South of Goulburn & Gunning*, unpublished paper, former SRA Archives, p. 3.

¹⁹⁵ *The Mining Record and Grenfell General Advertiser*, 14th September, 1867, p. 3

There was a report in one of the Goulburn newspapers in late September, 1867, two weeks after Martin's speech in Parliament. It stated:

"A. Francis, Esq., railway surveyor and party are at present camped near Mr. Thompson's Spring Creek. They are defining the most practicable route from Jamieson's survey, which terminates four miles at the Murrumburrah side of Bobara and about a quarter of a mile south of the main road from Binalong to Murrumburrah. It also crosses the main road near its junction with the Chain of Ponds; and Mr. Francis's portion terminates in the plains, four miles short of Murrumburrah. He has made four different surveys, as exhibited by his map; and from his statement and our own knowledge, we believe this portion of the defined route is difficult, if not impracticable. We still maintain the opinion that the government, if they define the country properly between Goulburn and Wagga Wagga, must see not only the necessity, but the advisableness, of continuing the southern line via Grabben Gullen, the Pudman, west of Burrowa, east of Murrumburrah, to Wagga Wagga. By this proposed route, these already agricultural districts will be accommodated; those fitted best for such purposes would thereby be opened; it will be brought nearer to our southern goldfields; and moreover it offers the least obstruction and expense to its construction."¹⁹⁶

Another reference to Murrumburrah was made in early November, 1872, by which time the railway surveying party had reached Wagga Wagga. It stated:

"The engineer in charge of the Southern Railway trial survey party — Mr. Thomas R. Firth is, the *Wagga Wagga Express* states, now in that township, with a view of ascertaining the most practical route from Yass to Albury via Wagga Wagga. The party of surveyors acting under Mr. Firth is not sufficiently large to prosecute the more extended operations, so it is now engaged upon the most difficult portions. The probability is that the old survey via Cootamundra and Bethungra will be followed to Murrumburrah, and then, instead of passing through the unpopulated wilds of the lower River, will strike direct for Wagga Wagga and thence to Albury. One of the, by no means the least, difficult duties with which Mr. Firth is charged, is the discovery of the best crossing place over the Murrumbidgee at a convenient point for the ingress and egress of the line."¹⁹⁷

In 1874, Thomas Firth, the engineer in charge of the survey work, wrote to the Engineer-in-Chief, John Whitton, and confirmed that the route from Gunning to Murrumburrah, which had been surveyed in the 1850s, "must be followed".¹⁹⁸ From Murrumburrah, the criterion for extending the line to Wagga Wagga was the necessity to achieve the lowest cost and that dictated that the shortest route had to be taken through Cootamundra and Bethungra. That was a bad decision as the Bethungra area was mountainous. In fact, the decision to adopt the route from Harden station

¹⁹⁶ *The Goulburn Herald and Chronicle*, 25th September, 1867, p. 2.

¹⁹⁷ *The Gundagai Times and Tumut, Adelong and Murrumbidgee District Advertiser*, 2nd November, 1872, p. 3.

¹⁹⁸ New South Wales Parliament, *Votes and Proceedings*, Railway Trial Surveys, 1875.

through Murrumburrah and up the hill to Demondrille was also a bad decision. In both the case of Demondrille Bank and Bethungra Bank, the New South Wales Railways gave very serious consideration to major deviations, these taking place between 1916 and 1922 in the case of Demondrille Bank and 1935 and 1937 in relation to Bethungra Bank. Because of a shortage of capital funds, neither deviation saw the light of day.

So, voila, that was the way it was to be. The Main South railway line would be built via Murrumburrah.

4. THE FIRST ENEMY – JOHN WHITTON

The New South Wales Governor, Sir William Denison, prepared the job description for the position of Engineer-in-Chief and sent it off to London in September, 1855, asking the President of the British Board of Trade to find an engineer. The job description was important in order to establish the technical standards for the New South Wales rail system and stated that the appointee:

“should have a thorough knowledge of the principles upon which railways are constructed – should be well acquainted with the details of foreign as well as English railways; but it is most desirable that he should not be so far wedded to any particular system as to render it difficult for him to adopt general principles to the peculiar circumstances of the Colony.”¹⁹⁹

The job description was important as it prescribed a person with flexibility as to the type of infrastructure to be provided. John Whitton was not that person as he was wedded exclusively to the British tradition of what Whitton called “First-Class Railways”.

On 12th March, 1856, John Whitton was appointed. With a significant dose of nepotism, his father-in-law recommended him for the job and he arrived on 10th December, 1856, with fellow engineers, Messrs. Mason, Druitt, Barton and Bridgeman. The appointment was a matey arrangement based on personal bias. Whitton was fully fixed on the construction of a British style of railway and this bias was the cause of a fight between Whitton and his political masters about the quantum of money needed to extend the rail network. This clash continued on and off until Whitton retired from the NSW Railways in 1890.

The NSW Government did not get the appointee it wanted and needed. After all, the NSW railways was a tiny affair serving a tiny population. Perhaps, if Whitton had used more timber than stone or brick for all sorts of structures, including platform buildings, these would have been rebuilt and rebuilt, as was the American practice, as traffic increased. The outcome may have been a rail system that was progressively expanded and updated. Whitton's influence resulted in a rail system that was little technologically advanced at the time of his departure in 1890 than when he started in 1856. If it were not for his few political supporters, he should have been sacked when the trunk lines had reached Goulburn, Wallerawang and Murrumbidgee. It was from then that he progressively became obsessed with the dominance of his own beliefs and dismissive of advice and opinions from other key players involved in railway management and operations. His opposition to tail lights at the ends of trains operating at night and to the provision of station refreshment

¹⁹⁹ Quoted in R. Lee, *Colonial Engineer – John Whitton*, Redfern, Australian Railway Historical Society, 2000, pp. 97 & 98.

rooms are just two examples of his refusal to appreciate views that were not his own. It is worth mentioning that no one ever wanted John Whitton to be Railway Commissioner, apart from himself. In fact, the opposite was the case. The Government at one time reduced his salary, removed work from his purview on several occasions and reduced his pension on retirement.

It was Whitton who set the belief amongst fellow railway workers that only paid people working in the railway system possessed knowledge. A culture was quickly established thanks to Whitton's arrogance, and well demonstrated at Murrumburrah, that customers were ignorant and their comments and advice were worthless. Those attitudes, expressed by railway operational staff, are displayed in the surviving press articles relating to the establishment of a platform at Murrumburrah.

When Whitton arrived in Sydney in December, 1856, his initial attention was focussed on major policy issues rather than the style of platform buildings. He was involved in the issue of standardisation of the track gauges between the colonies - his views were dismissed. Before he left England, he was advised by the Board of Trade that the NSW Governor, Sir William Denison had proposed 4,000 miles of horse tramways on existing roads rather than extending the rail network.²⁰⁰ Whitton on several occasions was involved with governors and politicians about the introduction of cheaper railways. Sometimes he won and sometimes he lost but Whitton is generally portrayed as a hero whose major achievement was the use of steam over horse traction.

It would, perhaps, have been better to start with horse tramways so that the lessons of steep gradients were well understood and that a subsequent replacement with steam traction could have used easier gradients and, therefore, achieve economies. Then again, it all depended on how much money the owner, namely the NSW Government, proposed to allocate to rebuilding the railway system.

In 1857, a Select Committee of the Legislative Council presented its Report on the Great Trunk Lines of Railway and recommended that inducements be offered to private companies to construct and maintain railway lines. So far as platform buildings were concerned, it is recommended that "the stations to be plainly built, either of wood or iron."²⁰¹ The idea of cheap railways with cheap buildings was firmly planted in the idea of the press and public – but not of the mind of the Engineer-in-Chief, John Whitton.

²⁰⁰ J. Rae, *Thirty-Five years of the NSW Railways – The Work of the Late Mr. John Whitton*, Sydney, 1898, no pag.

²⁰¹ NSW Parliament, *Select Committee of the Legislative Council Pointed to Consider and Report on Great Trunk Lines of Railway in New South Wales*, Sydney, Government Printer, 1857, p. 4.

*The Legislative Assembly in 1870 appointed a Select Committee to examine the extension of the railway line south of Goulburn. By that time, the Parliament had been exposed to the work of John Whitton and was shocked by the high costs of railway extensions. The Committee resolved that “first-class railroads should for the present, at least, not be further extended.” It recommended a lower cost “more prudent to our limited means, traffic and population.” The Committee supported the use of horse railways from Goulburn to Yass and Wagga Wagga, with a branch line to Gundagai.*²⁰²

While horse railways were not implemented in New South Wales, cheaper railways were the order of the day. The people in Murrumburrah probably did not pay attention to the opening of the railway line at Gunning on 9th November, 1875. There, neither the station building nor the good shed were completed at the time of the station opening. It is also possible that the platform was not completed at the time of line opening as one newspaper referred to the “temporary railway station.”²⁰³ In addition to the incomplete infrastructure, there was an important remark made by John Whitton who said that the 31-mile section from Goulburn to Gunning was the first section opened for traffic on what he called “cheap lines.”²⁰⁴ Because Whitton did not get his way, he made sure the people of Gunning would not get a completed railway station.

Why say all these things about John Whitton? The answer is that it was he who chose the site at Harden rather than extend the railway to the existing commercial area at Murrumburrah. Whitton was allegedly a principled man who built First-Class railways, which he applied to the section of line between Sydney and Goulburn. When he was faced with the need to lower construction costs, he willingly put aside his former high standards and set about to build railways at any cost and, more importantly, at low cost. Whitton did some devious things, such as not completing stations and buildings at the time lines were opened or using temporary structures. Indeed, not a single permanent building between Goulburn and Murrumburrah was completed when the various sections of line were opened. The first building on the Victorian side of Murrumburrah that was completed at the time of line opening was at Bethungra and that building and one at Bomen were the only two structure to be completed between Goulburn and Albury at the time of line opening.

Whitton would do anything to save money and it was that reason why he did not take the railway into the town of Yass, thereby necessitating a branch line which opened in 1894 after Whitton's retirement. That behaviour occurred at other locations such as at Young, Junee, Molong and Armidale where Whitton willingly tried to bypass taking the railway into the towns in order to save money. Was there another motive? He also decided that he could save a lot of money by terminating railways before key towns were reached. In this regard, he wanted to provide a terminus at North Goulburn rather than take the line over the Mulwaree Ponds into Goulburn and also at Raglan where he did not want to extend the line over the Macquarie River into Bathurst.

It was Whitton who implemented a tactic called “departmental revenge.” Whitton's strategy was to seemingly do what his political masters wanted, but then take action to punish both the government and local communities by performing a number of ungentlemanly deeds, such as not finishing

²⁰² New South Wales Parliament, *Report from the Select Committee on Railway Extension*, Sydney, Government Printer, 1870, p. 6, former SRA Archives, Ref. 9A/C.

²⁰³ *Queanbeyan Age*, 6th November, 1875, p. 2.

²⁰⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19th November, 1875, p. 5.

buildings, by-passing towns, stopping lines short of their destinations and even erecting stockyards immediately in front of platforms.

It can be well argued that Whitton's desire to place the terminus of the line at the present station site of Harden was consistent with what he did at Goulburn and Bathurst. He did not want to spend the money take the southern railway line across Murrumbidgee Creek. Of course, in all these three instances the lines were extended but his actions to terminate lines short of their destinations did save money in his budgetary allowance in the short term. Additionally, the decision to terminate the line short of the village punished the residents. Whitton acted in this manner as he wanted to achieve two objectives. Firstly, to show the legal authority of his position and the power he could exercise and, secondly, to punish anyone he could in order to balance the punishment he had received from his political bosses.

On the railway tracks approaching Murrumburrah, came Whitton's invisible, psychological luggage. What follows next in this story is the way Whitton and his departmental public servants – all embracing the same, negative corporate culture – “served” the villagers of Murrumburrah.

5.A VILLAGE WITHOUT A VILLAGE STATION

THE YEAR, 1877 – NO STATION AT LINE OPENING

There was really only one trouble with the opening of the railway line to the present site of Harden. That trouble was that the station was not in Murrumburrah and was not considered to be the station for Murrumburrah. It was not Murrumburrah's station and the local community felt that they had been robbed of an entitlement for a station.

The day after the railway line opened to the present Harden station on 12th March, there was a bizarre and insulting article in one of the Sydney newspapers about the geographic area. For example, it stated that:

“at Cunningham (i.e. the present Cunningham), there is a siding and platform, the neighbourhood being somewhat thickly settled, although at present township consists of a school and post office only.”²⁰⁵

How could an area be described as “thickly settled” with the existence of only two buildings? The story gets even worse. The article then said:

“Murrumburrah station is excellently situated, except that it is nearly a mile from the township, a fact particularly galling to the townspeople as the railway passes their very doors. In spite of deputations, they have had to submit to the exigencies of the traffic and the fiat of the engineers. There is, however, an excellent site for a township close to the station.”²⁰⁶

How was possible that a journalist could describe the present Harden station site as being “excellently situated” and then state that it was a mile from the village? Clearly, the New South Wales Railways did not have a monopoly on stupidity.

Two days after the opening, another article appeared in the Sydney press. The railway formation between Binalong and present Harden were described as “of a light character”. Those words were departmental code for cheap construction. The fencing was incomplete and, because of the shortage of timber, a new type was used called “chock-a-block fencing”, which consisted of short logs placed at right angles to the line and supporting longer logs running parallel with it. Fencing at other parts of the rail corridor only had a single horizontal timber rail and used of horizontal strands of wire. It was stated that the usual three-rail fencing was not use because of the shortage of timber but the real reason was the need to save money. Also, some of the line remained unfenced.²⁰⁷

To what extent did bureaucratic politics come into play in relation to the location of stations? Plenty. Take the case of Goulburn. Captain William Hovell, of Hume and Hovell explorer fame, lived across on Sloane Street opposite the present station. The New South Wales Railways, after being forced to bring the railway into the town, planned to build the station opposite Belmore Park, which was the main commercial area in the 1860s, but that it was Hovell's influence that achieved the

²⁰⁵ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13th March, 1877.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14th March, 1877.

relocation of the station to its present site because it was closer to his home and his home was physically on higher ground, compared to the passenger station, thus allowing him to confirm his high status by the higher elevation of his house. Additionally, Hovell was so well politically connected that he had the entire area between the station and his house covered with stones so that he would not get mud on his boots.

Take the case of Yass. There, Whitton did not take the railway line into the town allegedly because it involved the cost of building two bridges. When the local residents heard of the plan, they wanted to see Whitton. Initially, he declined to see a deputation but, later, reluctantly agreed to meet with the local burghers only if the route of the railway were not discussed. Was there a cost saving by not taking the line into Yass? May be initially but in the not so longer term the answer does not seem to be so clear. By 1894, a branch line had to be built requiring one large bridge, the establishment of a second Yass station (called Yass town) and the permanent allocation of trains crews for the next 70 years. Today, Yass Junction station is in the middle of nowhere and is at an inconvenient location.

With all the issues about cheap structures, incomplete buildings and mischievous behaviour of John Whitton, it should have come as no surprise to the people of Murrumburrah that the cheapest option would be chosen for the site for their station. For Murrumburrah, that meant a station away from the relatively expensive allotments in the village and the selection of cheaper, pastoral land and land free of issues relating to public roads and local drainage. Additionally, Whitton achieve his psychological aim – to punish people.

In November, 1877, there was a newspaper report which contained commentary about the extension of the line from Harden to Cootamundra. It stated the following about Murrumburrah village:

“The (“Murrumburrah”) Creek is crossed by a timber viaduct about 250 feet in length, and of a considerable height. Immediately after, the township proper is entered upon. The citizens have made great efforts to obtain a platform here, but as yet the powers say no. At Murrumburrah, though less straggling than most rural townships, presents nothing very remarkable to the view of the visitor. It he is of an imaginative turn of mind, however, he may figure to himself the public buildings, courthouse, school and post and telegraph offices with which it is about to be embellished. To the left, may be seen the Church of England church and vicarage; to the right, still more conspicuously situated, the Roman Catholic chapel and schools – all tasteful and appropriate buildings.”²⁰⁸

THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE SITE FOR A PLATFORM AT MURRUMBURRAH

The present Harden station is 1,354 feet above sea level. The site of Murrumburrah station is 1,271 feet above sea level. That meant that trains to Sydney have to ascend 83 feet in one and one quarter miles. Next, the site of Demondrille station, at the end of a one in 40 gradient for one and three quarter miles, reached a height of 1,487 feet – an increase of 215 feet for trains operating to

²⁰⁸ *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 3rd November, 1877, p. 12.

Cootamundra.²⁰⁹ Thus, trains in each direction from the site of Murrumburrah station faced uphill gradients, with trains in the Cootamundra direction being much more severely affected.

The difficulty for trains proceeding to Cootamundra is evident in the statistic that the bridge over the so-called Murrumburrah Creek was located at an elevation 24 feet below the track level of the platform at Murrumburrah.²¹⁰ So, the uphill battle to reach Demondrille started before trains reached Murrumburrah platform and the lower elevation of the bridge emphasised the fact that the Murrumburrah platform was itself on the rising gradient to Demondrille. It should not be forgotten that there were considerable problems for trains coming down the hill from Demondrille and it would have required a life of skill on the part of the locomotive driver to stop at the Murrumburrah platform and not overshoot the facility.

In essence, the site for a station at Murrumburrah was operationally difficult.

THE YEAR, 1878 – RESIDENTS PETITION FOR A PLATFORM

On 10th October, 1878, a petition from 49 residents of Murrumburrah, Young and the surrounding district was sent to the Commissioner for Railways asking that a platform be built at Murrumburrah. Amongst the petitioners, was W. J. Barnes, who was a prominent shopkeeper at Murrumburrah. The petitioners stated the obvious, being that Harden station was “a considerable distance from the business part of the town” and caused “great inconvenience and loss of time to persons travelling from and arriving at the station. They pointed out that the main line passed within 100 yards of Murrumburrah town and that a platform should be placed at the Bathurst Street level crossing. The local people and noted that some trains stopped there and started again without difficulty.”²¹¹

On 2nd November, 1878, Thomas Carlyle, who headed the Traffic Branch in Sydney, directed the Goulburn Traffic Inspector, Alexander Crawford, to report on the distance between the existing Harden station and the proposed facility at Murrumburrah. Crawford replied on 19 November, 1878, stating that the distance was one and a half miles and the site was on a gradient of one in 40, this gradient being 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ miles long. The site of the future Murrumburrah platform is located 83 feet below the level of Harden platform.²¹² He stated “it would be impossible to stop here with heavy trains in wet weather. When the railway bridge over nearby Murrumburrah Creek was under repairs, trains had to pull up and steady over and this was done with the greatest difficulty.”²¹³

Thomas Carlyle, a senior bureaucrat in the Traffic Branch in Sydney agreed with his subordinate and added that, as well as the difficulty in starting trains, there would be the added expense of the provision of staff. Carlyle dismissed the claims of excessive distance saying that walking to the proposed Murrumburrah station, compared to the distance in walking to Harden station only

²⁰⁹ Department of Railways, *NSW Country Timetable*, 20th November, 1960, p. 42. The *Cootamundra Herald*, 13th November, 1877, p. 2 contains incorrect elevation statistics.

²¹⁰ NSW, *The Railway Guide of New South Wales*, Third Ed., Sydney, Government Printer, 1996, p. 94.

²¹¹ NSW Legislative Assembly, *Votes and Proceedings*, 1880.

²¹² NSW, *Main Southern Line Maps*, Revised Ed., Department of Railways, 1967, p. S43.

²¹³ NSW Legislative Assembly, *Votes and Proceedings*, 1880.

involved a difference of five to ten minutes, a statement which, of course, was rubbish. What arrogance!

The Commissioner replied on 28th November, 1878, saying “no”. The key movers and shakers in Murrumburrah knew how to play the game of bureaucratic politics and they decided to escalate the stakes.

RAILWAY POLICY AGAINST THE OPENING OF ADDITIONAL PLATFORMS

It is hard to believe that there was more sympathy in the Railway Department for the establishment of a platform at Nubba, which was 9 miles from Harden station, than for a platform at Murrumburrah. Luckily, a comment was made in a Sydney newspaper that explains the reluctance of the Department to provide platforms additional to those existing at the time of line opening. The newspaper article stated:

“No doubt, as things are managed now, these platforms are a nuisance; but is there any reason why all trains should be advertised to stop at them? Will the traffic arrangements of New South Wales not admit of what is usual elsewhere – quick train stop at only at the principal stations, and intermediate trains stopping at all?”

Now we know why there was a reluctance to provide a platform at Murrumburrah. It was not only the closeness of the Harden station but the existence of departmental policy which stated that all passenger trains must stop at all stations.²¹⁴

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ABSENCE OF A SINGLE, POWERFUL PERSON LIVING IN MURRUMBURRAH

Very influential landholders in the region were provided with platforms without any request for trouble. The existence of platforms at Cunningham and Wallendbeen attest to this location of power. Unfortunately, no one person resided in Murrumburrah who held equivalent power to the big, nearby landholders.

The position was beautifully summarised in the following article which was made in relation to the question of the provision of a platform at Jindalee:

“One does not care to make odious comparisons, but there is little doubt that more attention is paid in Sydney to the wishes of one big sinner than to the wants of 99 little ones.”²¹⁵

What the people of Murrumburrah had to do is to come together and form a single pressure group.

²¹⁴ *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 3rd November, 1877, p. 12.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

THE YEAR, 1879 – THE ANNOUNCEMENT FOR THE OPENING OF THE MURRUMBURRAH PLATFORM

Once the residents of Murrumburrah realised that they had to combine and work together as a united lobby group, their political power was substantially stronger than acting as separate individuals. The people of Murrumburrah, and Young, made representations about the need for a station to the Minister for Public Works, John Lackey, who said on 9th January, 1879, that a platform might be erected at the town of Murrumburrah for passenger traffic only and suggested it be done as an experiment and, if through traffic (i.e. non-stopping trains) were to suffer, the Murrumburrah station could be removed.²¹⁶ The Secretary for Public Works, Lackey, wrote a minute on 9th January, 1879, saying a platform will be erected at Murrumburrah. The people of Murrumburrah had won a great victory it seemed. At last, someone in Sydney was on the side of the Murrumburrahites.

On 6th February, Traffic Inspector, George Roberts, reported on talks he had had with key Murrumburrah residents and made the following recommendations:

- the location be at the Bathurst Street level crossing,
- the platform should not be less than 150 feet with a waiting shed and provision for issuing tickets,
- platform should be opened only for passenger traffic,
- a Porter-in-Charge was to be placed in possession of the station and also take over charge of the level crossing gates at Bathurst Street,
- the Porter-in-Charge occupy the official railway gatehouse adjoining the proposed platform, now in the possession of one of the permanent way men,

Roberts commented that he thought the passenger traffic was likely to be large and that he noted that leading residents planned to request the government to have mail put out on the platform from the train. He also proposed that the new station be called Murrumburrah Platform, as opposed to the existing Murrumburrah Station.

Thomas Carlyle, the Traffic Manager, stated on 7th February mails and passengers will be received and book to and from the platform and a Porter will be placed in charge. Work started on the provision of a platform on 14th February, 1879.

Carlyle commented that goods or mixed trains should not stop at the platform on account of the one in 40 gradient. Despite Mason saying that the platform should be no less than 150 feet long, on 28th of February Mason recommended a platform length of 100 feet.

Internal correspondence within the Railway Department swished between officers but the essence was that it was not intended that the Murrumburrah platform would replace Harden station. As at February, 1879, no drawings or specification had been prepared for the new platform. The Commissioner inquired of William Mason, the Engineer for Existing Lines, whether the work should be undertaken by tender or by departmental labour and Mason replied on 18th February to the Commissioner that the work should be done by contract. On 26th February, 1879, Mason instructed his second-in-charge, George Cowdery, to have the drawings prepared. The Commissioner noted the papers on 5th April, 1879.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

The Engineer for Existing lines forwards drawings on 1st July, 1879, for the preparation of tender documents. Despite the absence of detailed drawings, work on the construction of the platform and was under way towards the end of February, 1879, at the site where Bathurst Street crossed the railway line at a level crossing.²¹⁷

MURRUMBURAH PLATFORM OPENS

Work on the platform was completed on 6th September 1879.²¹⁸ The station opened on 15th September, 1879.

The first step had been taken. The village of Murrumburrah at least had a place to get on and off passenger trains. That was only the start of the local community's desire for adequate rail facilities to meet the village's transport needs.

Traffic Inspector, George Roberts, reported on 13th December, 1879, that the passenger traffic at Murrumburrah station was increasing daily and there was every prospect of it continuing to do so for some time to come and that, at the time of his report, it was the most important station south of Goulburn. It was because of the increased traffic that Roberts recommended that the existing platform of 100-foot length was too short as guard's vans were off the platform, requiring trains to stop and back up to load and unload luggage and parcels. Roberts recommended that an additional 100 feet be added to the platform and this was carried out in 1880. Roberts also said that the booking office and accommodation for passengers was insufficient and he recommended that a weatherboard building be erected, in accordance with a sketch he prepared, stating that the internal walls should be lined, that the internal ceiling height should be 10 feet and that the roof of the building should be "continued over the platform without uprights." This is an important reference relation to station design of the period as it indicates that the building contained a gabled roof with the roof rafters extended over the platform to form a pretty narrow awning. This was an unusual choice of design but was typical of the ever-changing design policies that occurred in the 1870s. Roberts suggested that the existing waiting shed could be removed to Frampton.

Thomas Carlyle, the Traffic Manager located in Sydney, agreed with Robert's report on the 15th December. Carlyle said that most of the passenger and parcel business had been diverted away from the platform at Harden to the Murrumburrah platform. Roberts and Carlyle had agreed that they would submit a new proposal towards the end of 1879, which they did. Their idea was to review the proposed replacement building at Harden in the light of passenger levels at Murrumburrah station. Their decision was to make Murrumburrah station the passenger facility while goods traffic would be continued to be dealt with at Harden. The two men felt that the provision of improved accommodation at Murrumburrah would obviate the need to provide a replacement building at Harden.

The *Evening News*, which was a Sydney newspaper, published an article that a refreshment room would be established at Murrumburrah as well as "lavatories."²¹⁹ A lamp room was built for the new

²¹⁷ *Cootamundra Herald*, 22nd February, 1879.

²¹⁸ the New South Wales Legislative Assembly Votes and Proceedings, 1882, volume 4, p. 14

²¹⁹ *The Evening News*, 1st December, 1879, p. 3.

platform. By the end of year, key residents of Murrumburrah were informed that the proposed refreshment room would be provided at Harden, not Murrumburrah. This obviously hurt the local people who said that all the Railways were going to “give us were one or two wooden rooms.”²²⁰ People of Murrumburrah did not understand the argument, as the development at the western end of the village was estimated to be 20 times that at the eastern or Harden end of the village.

As at the end of 1879, the only refreshment rooms on the southern line were at Mittagong and Gunning.

²²⁰ *Cootamundra Herald*, 20th December, 1879, p. 3.

6.THE IMPACT OF THE PLATFORM OPENING

THE YEAR, 1880 – PROTESTS FOR BETTER ACCOMMODATION

The Engineer for Existing Lines, William Mason, advised the Commissioner on 5th January, 1880, that drawings had already been prepared for a new building at Harden but, considering that the larger proportion of the passenger and small-parcels traffic would be done at the Murrumburrah platform, he thought the existing proposal building for Harden was too large. Unfortunately, those plans £3,000 station building do not exist. Mason recommended that the proposed building for Harden not be built, in the light of a new structure for Murrumburrah platform.

On 6th February, 1880, the Commissioner asked what was being done with respect to the erection of the station at Murrumburrah North (Harden). In February, 131 residents of Young petitioned the Commissioner for a refreshment room at Murrumburrah platform rather than Harden on the basis that the mail coach from Young and beyond received and delivered mails and passengers at the Murrumburrah platform.

When the petition was received, it was referred to Inspector Roberts who wrote that:

“I can imagine a no more inconvenient site for a station than that on which the Murrumburrah platform is now situated; it is on a bank of a gradient of one in 40 rising for nearly two miles on the Wagga side. Coming down the grade, trains have such difficulty in stopping and run past the platform; whilst ascending they had great difficulty in starting. When the line is open to Albury, and our through passenger traffic is much heavier than at present, and we shall have to run faster and keep the time, we shall not be able to stop at this platform. The through trains should only stop at Murrumburrah North (Harden) and at this place I consider refreshment rooms should be.”

William Mason was asked on 9th February, 1880, what was the present position and he replied two days later that “the matter has been delayed until it was decided what amount of station accommodation was to be given to Murrumburrah South. It appears to be that the latter place (i.e. Murrumburrah platform) will be more used as a passenger station, being closer to the township than the former (Harden) and it is proposed to erect sufficient accommodation for passengers at Murrumburrah South platform. Mason recommended that “a small station only be erected at Murrumburrah North.”

Charles Goodchap, the Commissioner for Railways, decided on 11th February, 1880, that “a small station only be erected at Murrumburrah North (i.e. Harden)”. He accepted the advice of Mason but seemed not to agree with Carlyle’s opposition to the platform at the present Murrumburrah site.

On 17th of February 1880 the Secretary for Public Works indicated that the number of passengers using Murrumburrah station in 1879 was 1201 and 511 at Harden. Murrumburrah dealt with 329 mail bags and none at Harden.

The *Australian Town and Country Journal* stated in April that the Murrumburrah platform was too small. It argued the case for the provision of a refreshment room, considering the distance between

the existing facilities at Gunning and Wagga Wagga but the article did not nominate either the Murrumburrah or Harden sites.²²¹ The proposed connecting line between Demondrille and Blayney added to the case for a refreshment room. The survey undertaken of proposed Blayney-Demondrille line had been conducted by Railway Surveyor Wade in 1875 and the line had been staked out in 1879 by Surveyor Hogg.²²²

On 12th April, 1880, a public meeting was held at Murrumburrah to seek improvements to the local railway platform. It was stated at the meeting that the room in which the Porter-in-Charge worked measured six feet by three feet and he had to put everything into that office, including luggage that had been booked. There was so much luggage on some occasions that the Porter had to clear the office of items at the start of the shift in the morning and place them on the platform so that he could enter the room. The absence of adequate space for luggage was also a problem at Harden station and, there, the Station Master resorted to taking the luggage home at night to his residence for safe keeping and bringing it back to the platform in the morning. At that time, Murrumburrah platform was staffed by a single officer while there were three men on duty at Harden. Also, on the list all Murrumburrah station was accommodation for ladies, which did not exist in 1880. As well, the platform was too short and could only accommodate two carriages. The last thing on the list was the provision of a siding to serve the flour mill and town generally. Interestingly, the people at the meeting thought that the provision of a goods siding was the first priority over improvements at the platform.

Was the level of accommodation provided at Murrumburrah platform worse, the same as or better than at other stations in the area? It was about the same. The Railway Department policy dictated that demand should proceed supply. The provision of infrastructure, both for passengers and goods, started at the bottom with the most basic of items. For new stations, even the status was subject to a bottom-level appellation – platform. Small offices were the order of the day and priority was usually given to staff and departmental requirements over passengers or freight customers. At nearby Harden station, the Station Master was reported to take home passenger luggage for storage as there was insufficient room in his platform building. At Nubba, there was no shelter provided for passengers on the platform when the station was opened and, when it rained, waiting passengers had to take shelter in the Porter's residence a little distance away. Wallenbeen railway station fared no better and there existed an office eight feet square in which the sole staff member worked alongside his equipment and also his bed. There was no shelter for passengers for some years.

The New South Wales railway organisation existed primarily for the staff. The townspeople at the Murrumburrah meeting in April, 1880, heard stories that the drivers and guards on trains did not want to stop at Murrumburrah station and, worse still, undertook mischievous activities to make their protests known, including stopping the train past the platform so that people had to climb down onto the per way. Crews particularly liked doing this also to the local Traffic Inspector, George Roberts. Witnesses had taken the trouble to secretly observe goods trains that stopped from time

²²¹ *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 10th April, 1880, p. 690.

²²² G. A. Rose, "Surveying the Railways Way," *Australian Railway History*, September, 2016, p. 27.

to time at the platform and the observers said that they did not see any trouble for the crews starting their trains at the base of Demondrille Bank.

At the April meeting, a telegram from James Watson, the local Member of Parliament, was read. It stated that he had waited upon the Railway in the that day (i.e. 12th of April) about the inadequacies at Murrumburrah platform. The report Watson gave was that the Commissioner concurred with the necessity of increasing the facilities and stated that that these would be “proceeded with without any unnecessary delay.” There was also talk about the location of the future refreshment room which would be needed when the line opened to Young and Cowra. Watson reported that the Commissioner thought that Harden was a better location because there was more room at that station.²²³

News of the inadequate accommodation was also reported in the Cootamundra newspaper. The paper was supportive of the move for improved facilities. As well as providing a description of the existing, pathetic buildings, the *Cootamundra Herald* stated that there really ought to be a good station at Murrumburrah because the government had allocated more funds than at any other station between Murrumburrah and Goulburn. The press article also agreed that a siding also needed and noted that there were three firms in Murrumburrah which were sending away 2,000 tons of goods in the year on the Railway.²²⁴

The Commissioner wrote on the 21st April, 1880 that the station at Harden will be the principal one for the district, being the place where locomotives will be changed and, because of that arrangement, will be the refreshment station. Goodchap said: “I therefore think that a station on the design approved by the Minister should be erected. At same time, something must be done to improve the accommodation at the platform at Murrumburrah. A ladies’ room should be erected et cetera et cetera.” He instructed William Mason to give early consideration to the matter.

It was clear that departmental convenience was the primary consideration in the selection of the Harden site for the refreshment room. The Sydney newspaper, the *Evening News* on 25th May, 1880, reported the anger of residents of Murrumburrah about Harden station, saying:

“great indignation is expressed here (i.e. Murrumburrah platform) at the unnecessary delay in commencing the improvements to the railway platform. Winter has now set in very severely and the apology for a waiting room, which is only an open shed, constitutes the accommodation provided for passengers leaving by the early and late trains. Females and children suffer acutely from exposure in this wretched watch-box, or as it is popularly called, the “Punch and Judy Box.” In wet weather, ladies and others have no protection whatever from a drafting rain, which beats in on the very seats and females especially are subject to many inconveniences. It is to be hoped that immediate action will be taken by the Department to afford something like accommodation to the numerous unfortunates that are compelled to wait here for trains during the coldest hours of the morning and night.”²²⁵

When the Commissioner read the newspaper report, he instructed William Mason on 27th May to “hurry on the improvements at the platform which have already been authorised.” On the same

²²³ *Cootamundra Herald*, 17th April, 1880, p. 6.

²²⁴ *Cootamundra Herald*, 17th April, 1880.

²²⁵ *Evening News*, 25th May, 1880, p. 2.

day, Charles Goodchap, advised the Colonial Treasurer that he acknowledged that the accommodation was insufficient and had urged the Engineer for Existing Lines to expedite the work.

In the second half of the year, a new ticket office, a new parcels office, a new male and female toilets were provided as well as the platform being lengthened another 100 feet.

A Parliamentary Return in 1882 listed a number of works that had been completed in 1878, 1879, 1880 and 1881.²²⁶ Unfortunately, the information was mixed up under separate headings entitled Harden and Murrumburrah and it would appear that the person preparing the table was confused about what capital item was provided at which station. For example, it indicated that the coal stage and turntable had been erected at Murrumburrah whereas these items were provided at Harden. In 1880, it lists “new water closets and a urinal” were provided with the work starting on 19th January and including on 15th of June, 1880, for the present Harden but it seems those referred to Murrumburrah station as Langley and Thompson would have provide new toilets at Harden as part of their contract.

The Under Secretary for Public Works approved a recommendation by the Railway Commissioner for an additional office accommodation, work starting on 20th of May and ending 20th September, 1880, allegedly for the present Harden station.²²⁷ Also, a single water closet was provided, with work starting on 20th of May 1880 and been completed on 20th September, 1880. This also is possibly another reference to works at Murrumburrah rather than at Harden station. Likewise, the mentioned that a chimney being added to the ticket office with work starting on 12th of August and been completed on 2nd of September, 1880 seems to refer to Murrumburrah station.²²⁸

7. THE PUSH FOR IMPROVED FACILITIES

THE YEAR, 1882 – TRIVIAL CHANGES

Minor improvements started to occur in 1882. Turnstiles were erected to the platform.²²⁹ These allowed people onto the platform but not off the platform. Also, the existing “water closet and urinals” were removed and re-erected at an unknown location.²³⁰ What was labelled a “water closet” is unknown.

THE YEAR, 1883 – PLATFORM LENGTHENED

The platform was lengthened a further 48 feet and widened to 17 feet. When the station opened, the original platform was 100 feet long. Another 100 feet were added in 1880 and, with the 48 feet added in 1883, total length of the platform was 248 feet. The platform at that time could accommodate about five or six bogie carriages, depending on the length of the vehicles. A platform

²²⁶ New South Wales Legislative Assembly Votes and Proceedings, 1882, volume 4, p. 14

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ *Annual Report of the Railway Commissioner*, 1882, Appendix, p. 4.

²³⁰ *Annual Report of the Railway Commissioner*, 1882, Appendix, p. 4.

width of 17 feet was usually excessive for that time for small stations and the trend was to set a standard of 12 feet wide that had started in 1871 with the platforms for the second Sydney station.

THE YEAR, 1884

Between December, 1879, and December, 1884, no protests were recorded in the local newspaper but that did change in December, 1884, when the *Murrumburrah Signal* newspaper described the station as “a miserable apology for a station house.”²³¹ As could be expected, there was no response from the Railway Department and no further improvements made.

THE YEAR, 1885 – PIDDLING STATION IMPROVEMENTS

There was great optimism about the future of Murrumburrah when the Demondrille to Blayney line would be completed and the local newspaper claimed that the connecting line would “build up a new and greater Murrumburrah”, as well as stimulating development at Demondrille.²³² The line to Young opened on 26th of March, 1885, and reached Cowra on 1st November, 1886. The extension between Cowra and Blayney did not open until 13th February, 1888. So the locals at Murrumburrah had to wait a few more years to see the impact of the connecting line between the Main West and Main South. When the line was opened to Young, it was loss-making. The same pattern occurred with the opening to Cowra took place and also with the completion of the line to Blayney.²³³ Never in its life did the link line between Demondrille and Blayney make a profit on operating expenses.

Piddling improvements were made to Murrumburrah station in the year. A new rain water filter was fitted and the tank-stand was “fixed”, whatever that meant. Also, the fence at the rear of the platform was brought closer towards the rail tracks by a distance of two feet to allow for the widening of the adjacent Neill Street. This narrowing of the platform was not a problem as it had been widened to 17 feet in 1883 and in 1885 was still 15 feet wide – three feet wider than the norm. The Bathurst Street level crossing was moved 20 chains closer to Harden.²³⁴

THE YEAR, 1886 – INTERLOCKING FRAME INSTALLED

The Murrumburrah Progress Association, which was established in 1882, met seeking improvements to the waiting shed but George Cowdery, the man who replaced William Mason as Engineer for Existing Lines, on a visit in April said that he was waiting for land to be purchased.²³⁵ By July, the local newspaper ran an editorial noting the “considerable jealousy” between Murrumburrah and Harden and wanted to know why Harden had a railway station while Murrumburrah only had a platform.²³⁶ By August, Murrumburrah residents had a gut full of the lack of progress, saying that it had been four months since Mr Cowdery’s visit. The Progress Association pressed on with its demand for a siding and the stopping of the daily trains at Murrumburrah platform. Members of the

²³¹ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 6th December, 1884, p. 6.

²³² *Ibid.*, 8th August, 1885, p. 5.

²³³ *Annual Report of the Railway Commissioner*, 1887, p. 20 and 1893, p. 8.

²³⁴ *Annual Report of the Railway Commissioner*, 1885, Appendix, p. 5.

²³⁵ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 24th of April, 1886, p. 4.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 3rd July, 1886, p. 4.

Association were angry that their request for a siding had been declined and that the Railway Department was still thinking about stopping the mail train.²³⁷ The goods siding came in 1886.

On the 25th August, 1886, an interlocking frame was commissioned that protected both main line trains and the goods siding. It was located directly off the Sydney end of the platform and the signal levers were exposed to the weather, not being protected by any covering.

THE YEAR, 1887 – THE PUSH FOR ELEVATED STATION STATUS

The Murrumburrah Progress Association met in March, 1887, and, once again, complained about conditions at their platform and pressed for it to be elevated from a platform to a station.²³⁸ There was some tangible benefits for customers arising from the elevation from platform to station and these included:

- elimination of the need to prepay for some items dispatched,
- an absence of the arrangement for cash on delivery for the receipt of items,
- the transfer of mail bags between road and rail, rather than mail bags being loaded and unloaded at Harden,
- the ability to post letters at the station, &
- the capacity to place letter directly into the “TPOs” (i.e. Travelling Post Offices) on the Mail train, upon payment of a late fee.

These features had been introduced from 1870 throughout the NSW railway system and were in regular use when the railway line opened through Murrumburrah in 1877. The advantage of using the T. P.Os. was that a letter could posted after the normal mail closing times.²³⁹ Up to 24 hours delivery time were saved in this manner.

The local newspaper reported that the railway platform was a favourite spot to visit on Sunday nights. “Evidently, the mail (and female) (sic) trains are particularly interesting to some people.”²⁴⁰

A single-ended goods siding facing trains proceeding to Cootamundra had been provided from 25th August, 1886. Now, with that objective achieved, the Progress Association turned its attention in 1887 to the next item on the list. It wanted the erection of a goods shed and weighbridge. In September, no action had taken place in relation to both the upgrading of the status of the platform and the erection of a goods shed.

THE YEAR, 1888 – CHIEF COMMISSIONER EDDY SUPPORTS INCREASED STATUS OF STATION

Tenders were at last called in January, 1888 for the construction of the good shed. Charles Hardy from Wagga Wagga won the tender process in February, 1888. The good shed and landing stage

²³⁷ Ibid., 21st August, 1886, p. 4.

²³⁸ Ibid., 26 March, 1887, p. 4.

²³⁹ R. C. Peck, *Travelling Posts Offices 1870 – 1983*, privately published, 1984, page 6.4.

²⁴⁰ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 20th August, 1887, p. 4.

costing £358 were erected.²⁴¹ For comparison, the 1887 brick building at Cootamundra (the present structure) was erected costing £512.

In January, 1888, the Progress Association was told their platform would not be upgraded in status.

Trains started working between Demondrille and Blayney on 13th February, 1888, but the train did not stop at Murrumburrah platform. There was outrage at what was called “this slap in the face.”²⁴² The Progress Association stated that “we won’t stand for these capers.”²⁴³ One thing that did change at Murrumburrah station was the allocation of a second porter though this was a disappointment as the person was “not a long sleeve”, meaning a senior officer and thereby a signal that the Railway Department continued to regard the station as a platform and not a station. In April, 1888, Murrumburrah residents said that it was time to prepare a petition as a means of putting pressure on the Railway Commissioner for increased status of their platform.²⁴⁴ At least by that time, the train to Blayney was stopping regularly at Murrumburrah platform.

In late 1888, there was a completely new organisation running the New South Wales Railways with three Commissioners, the Chief Commissioner being E.M.G. Eddy. It was Eddy who introduced the idea of having annual inspections of the railway system by the Commissioners and the three top men were on tour in November. Initially, they proposed not to stop at Murrumburrah platform but, after sustained local pressure, they inspected the platform and the yard on 23rd November, 1888. Chief Commissioner Eddy was sympathetic about the request for a siding directly into Allsopp’s flour mill then under construction. The deputation showed the increasing revenue from goods business at the station and demonstrated that the revenue was much in excess of many other stations. Because the platform was not rated as a station, there were problems consigning goods and prepayment was required. The point was made that, while all business was done in Murrumburrah, all station facilities existed at Harden.²⁴⁵

²⁴¹ Appendix to the *Annual Report*, 1887/88, p. 24.

²⁴² *Murrumburrah Signal*, 25th February, 1888, p. 2.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 3rd March, 1888, p. 2.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 21st April, 1888, p. 2.

²⁴⁵ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 1st December, 1888, p. 2.

8. FROM PLATFORM TO RAILWAY STATION – THE FIRST TRACK DEVIATION

THE YEAR, 1889 - THE CHANGE OF STATUS FROM PLATFORM TO STATION

In January, 1889, Chief Commissioner Eddy promised to examine the status of Murrumburrah platform, though the request by the Progress Committee for the stopping of passenger train No. 16 at Murrumburrah was unsuccessful because the Railway Department said that the gradient was too long and too steep.²⁴⁶ That excuse sounded like the Traffic Branch was in the ear of the Chief Commissioner. Also relevant to know was that Eddy himself was an ex-Traffic Branch officer in the United Kingdom.

The Editor of the *Murrumburrah Signal* newspaper announced the elevation in status from a platform to a station in February, 1889. He said it reflected credit on the Commissioners for the prompt and decisive manner they dealt with the matter. He added that, before the NSW Railways were handed over to the new Commissioners, the matter “received little attention at the hands of the authorities below.”²⁴⁷ The townspeople were informed that the Commissioners were “carrying out a general scheme of reorganisation, and intended that the general control of the Railways shall be in Sydney only.”²⁴⁸ As the passage of time revealed, there was no fundamental change in the way the Railway Department was managed so far as the southern line was concerned. The reference only had implication for the northern line, which had existed with independent management until the unification of the main northern and main southern/western systems following the completion of the Hawkesbury River railway bridge in 1889.

It was reported in the local newspaper that a “very serviceable addition is being made to our railway station, in the shape of a lavatory for ladies and gents. When completed, it will prove exceedingly convenient for passengers from the Western line going on the Melbourne and Sydney trains and vice versa.”²⁴⁹ This reference is unintelligible as toilets were provided from the platform opening in 1879 and a “water closet” was installed in 1882. Perhaps new toilets were provided?

THE YEAR, 1890 – MURRUMBURRAH COUNCIL FORMED - ACTS AS A NEW LOBBY GROUP

Murrumburrah Municipal Council held its first meeting on 19th May, 1890. This was a key event because it brought together all the very influential business people and residents in the town and formed these into a single pressure group organisation that would lobby the Railway Department for improvements for the 85 years. In 1892, the town population was 1,300 people.

In its *Annual Report* published in January, 1890, the Murrumburrah Progress Committee stated that the elevation of the platform status of the station “is given it (i.e. the town) a prominence as a commercial centre, which it so long lacked.”²⁵⁰

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 12th January, 1889, p. 2.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 23rd February, 1889, p. 2.

²⁴⁸ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 2nd March, 1889, p. 2.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 8th June, 1889, p. 3.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 18th January, 1890, p. 2.

The people of Murrumburrah took umbrage at the Murrumburrah correspondent for the Sydney newspaper, *Australian Star*, in reporting an accident. Correspondence referred to Harden as East Murrumburrah. The people of Murrumburrah and Harden pointed out that no such name appeared in any railway guide, any timetable or postal publication and that such references were misleading and contributed to the “feelings of antagonism that have existed for some time between factions of Harden and Murrumburrah.”²⁵¹ The same correspondent had previously got into hot water by the Murrumburrah Progress Committee for falsely referring to one business having existed in Harden when it actually existed at Murrumburrah.

THE YEAR, 1891 – THE FIRST STATION MASTER – ANTAGONISTIC STAFF

It was in January, 1891, that the first press reference occurred which indicated the position of Station Master at Murrumburrah, the occupant being Mr Spence. No doubt the elevation from platform to station in 1889 was a factor. He reported to the local newspaper that the station was one of the most profitable on the line.²⁵² Those words were enough for the newspaper to press the case for improved station buildings. One article said:

“the continued and increasing development of both passenger and goods traffic at our central station should be a source of satisfaction to the community, and should resolve at an early date in a proper recognition by the Commissioners of our right to demand certain much-needed improvements to station premises, and most notably a widening of the present and certainly narrow platform, together with improved arrangements of the comfort and convenience of passengers; improved lighting of the platform, etc.”²⁵³

What had happened to the platform to induce press criticism about its width? The last reported news was that it was 15 feet wide in 1885.

The Editor of the *Murrumburrah Signal* wrote a blistering editorial claiming that it was the union representatives of the drivers and others at the Harden locomotive depot which were thwarting all attempts for an improved and better located station. No report is available about any problem with its location from the time of its opening in 1879. The Editor said:

“It is conceded that, owing to disgraceful bungling, brought about principally by ‘backstairs influence’ of interested parties, our railway station is not happily situated. We must have an alternative site.”²⁵⁴

The Editor was arguing that train drivers did not want to stop at Murrumburrah platform and were influential in their attempts to mitigate any attempt by the town’s population to make the station permanent or improved in any way. He went on to say that the locomotive drivers “from the first (moment) expressed a strong animus in the matter.” Over the last year, the Editor reported that every effort was made to have the stop annulled by wasting time in backing the train for half a mile, generally ‘fussing about’, not backing the train up, losing time before Harden and stopping at insignificant wayside stations.²⁵⁵ He claimed that the only people who are alighted at Harden railway

²⁵¹ Ibid., 22nd February, 1890, p. 2.

²⁵² Ibid., 22nd January, 1891, p. 2.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 10th September, 1891, p. 2.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

station were railway employees and those who wished to avail themselves of the 10 minutes allowed there for refreshments. The Editor assured readers that the people of Murrumburrah would not be ignored.

In October, 1891, platform tickets were required to gain access to Murrumburrah platform and, from that time until August, 1892, £15 worth of platform tickets were sold.²⁵⁶

THE YEAR, 1892 – NO FUNDS FOR A NEW STATION

Murrumburrah was officially gazetted as a village on 3rd March, 1892.²⁵⁷ This was an additional factor in the rising influence of the people in the urban centre to lobby for improvements to both railway stations.

The local newspaper published an article entitled “Our Railway Station” in which it was stated that “it would be difficult to find a platform of any place rating as a station so rusticated and mean-looking as that which does duty at Murrumburrah. Just when a deal of passenger traffic is done, the platform is altogether too narrow, and besides, several of the boards are of different portions for our very much worn indeed. True, the interior of the station building is not at all bad, but all things considered, we think the importance of the place entitles it to more imposing edifices than those which do duty at the present time.”²⁵⁸

There is one important piece of information expressed in the foregoing article and that is that the platform was not formed of solid earth but had a timber frame with a timber deck – something that was reserved only for minor locations at that time. It would have been interpreted as an insult to the village.

Chief Commissioner Eddy and Commissioner Oliver made an inspection of Harden station in early August and the opportunity was taken by the Murrumburrah Municipal Council to have a deputation to put forward a number of matters, one of which was the desire for a new railway station building at Murrumburrah, owing to the increase in traffic. The deputation also wanted an increase in the length of the goods siding.²⁵⁹ The local community protested about the inadequate accommodation at this station.²⁶⁰ Eddy replied that the question of a new station at Murrumburrah would need to “stand over at present. In view of the present decline in the railway revenues, I could not agree to it just now.”²⁶¹

Between 1892 and 1895, nothing appeared in the local press or elsewhere about Murrumburrah station. Perhaps the local villagers, the Aldermen and the press acknowledged the difficulty of the financial times and did not pursue their desire for a new station building or new station.

THE YEAR, 1896 – EDDY PROMISES A NEW STATION BUILDING

The platform accommodation at Murrumburrah was described as being “totally inadequate to the requirements of the place. The difference in the staffing levels for Harden and Murrumburrah was

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 13th August, 1892, p. 2.

²⁵⁷ R. A. Littlejohn, *Early Murrumburrah*, Harden-Murrumburrah Historical Society, no date, p. 22.

²⁵⁸ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 2nd April, 1892, p. 2.

²⁵⁹ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 6th August, 1892, p. 2.

²⁶⁰ *Cootamundra Herald*, 7th of August, 1897, p. 10.

²⁶¹ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 6th August, 1892, p. 2.

also noted.²⁶² Harden station had 12 employees and Murrumburrah had four staff but what was irksome was that it was claimed that Murrumburrah station generated the most revenue of any station between Sydney and Albury.

The Commissioner inspected Murrumburrah station twice in 1896. In May, Chief Commissioner Eddy and Commissioner beyond met a deputation on site where the Murrumburrah Mayor told the senior officers that “the railway platform, which is built on piles, was positively dangerous and the station itself required certain improvements.”²⁶³ The Commissioners promised that they would look into the question of improvements. On 23rd October, 1896, and the same two Commissioners paid another visit and described the station as “miserable” and mooted that improvements would be forthcoming. At the Cootamundra newspaper said that “the present station is a miserable one and the narrow platform is absolutely dangerous.”²⁶⁴ The local newspaper on that occasion indicated that “a new and commodious passenger station is to be erected and the goods yard and accommodation increased.”²⁶⁵ In November, 1896, there was another newspaper announcement that the Railway Commissioners had decided to erect a new passenger station at Murrumburrah.²⁶⁶ On that occasion, the newspaper said the station “will be a great boon.”

THE YEAR, 1897 – NEW CHIEF COMMISSIONER AGAINST NEW BUILDING

Chief Commissioner Eddy suddenly died on 27th June, 1897. This had a major effect on Murrumburrah because it was Eddy, who was the boss, and indicated that a new building would be provided. Now, with Eddy’s death, the new Chief Commissioner, Charles Oliver, did not agree with Eddy’s decision.

In August, 1897, the Commissioners were once again on their annual tour of inspection and, while at Murrumburrah, the Mayor once again referred to the “inadequate accommodation of the present station”. The Commissioners promised to have alterations effected with as little delay as possible.²⁶⁷ However, it turns out that the so-called alterations did not mean a new building. A Sydney newspaper reported that Chief Commissioner Oliver said that the only alterations shown were to be those on a plan sent to Murrumburrah Municipal Council some time ago and involved the transfer of the existing building to the opposite side of the line, plus adding 30 feet to the length of the platform.²⁶⁸ This reference to the opposite side of the line is a little confusing. When the station opened in 1879, Murrumburrah platform was located on the southern side of the track and was convenient in relation to the town. Oliver was not suggesting that the new station would be on the northern side of the line or wrong side of the town but was merely pointing out that the foreshadowed deviation between Harden and Murrumburrah that was going to be built to the north at Murrumburrah and the present buildings would be relocated across the existing line and, thereby,

²⁶² *Cootamundra Herald*, 15th February, 1896, p. 13.

²⁶³ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19th May, 1896, p. 5.

²⁶⁴ *Cootamundra Herald* 28 October, 1896, p. 8 and *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners’ Advocate*, 26th October, 1896, p. 6.

²⁶⁵ *The Australian Star*, 23rd October, 1896, p. 5.

²⁶⁶ *The Australian Star*, 13th November, 1896, p. 6.

²⁶⁷ *Cootamundra Herald*, 7th August, 1897, p. 10.

²⁶⁸ *Evening News*, 4th August, 1897, p. 6.

being on the opposite side of the then existing line but the station was still on the southern side of the new deviated line.²⁶⁹

THE YEAR, 1898 - A NEW STATION COMES WITH TRACK DEVIATION

The people of Murrumburrah were under the impression that a major deviation between Harden and Murrumburrah would commence in March and that the deviation would be on the northern side of the existing line. The local newspaper said that the villagers wished to have a new railway station in keeping with the improvements that were proposed and one worthy of the town and district which was to support the new railway works. It was pointed out that "the present buildings have long been an eyesore to both our residents and visitors but, now that a change is to be made, we sincerely trust it will be one that will give entire satisfaction to our residents and reflect the greatest possible credit on the railway authorities of New South Wales."²⁷⁰

Why did it take so long for something to happen at Murrumburrah? After all, the local community had been wanting a better station building 20 years from 1879, when the platform was opened. The only reason that Murrumburrah station received a new building – and indeed a new station at a new site – was because of the huge amount of money to be spent on the track deviation. The improvements to the station were only a small cost when considered the large amount of money wrapped up in the major deviation between Harden and Murrumburrah. The Harden-Murrumburrah proposed deviation, along with others that started in 1897, was being undertaken to employ thousands of unemployed men thrown out of work by the 1890s recession. Moreover, there was a major decrease in revenue from the carriage of wool in 1898, compared with the previous year. The deviation proposal at Murrumburrah was badly timed because of the importance of another major event. The local newspaper said that "this is but another matter that is doomed to stand over until the Federation question is settled."²⁷¹

By the middle of April, 1898, no start to the deviation between Harden and Murrumburrah had occurred but, apparently, it got underway in mid-May, 1898. The physical work started before Parliamentary authorisation was obtained, this happening almost a year later. The local newspaper reported on 7th May that "the shaky, disgraceful looking platform is still in existence and most people are wondering when it is to be improved upon. The people don't care about the line grade but they certainly do want a more comfortable and serviceable platform. The town is ashamed of it. The platform is a disgrace to any department and the wonder is that the authorities are not ashamed of it. We suppose we must humbly wait until the State servants feel disposed to give us what we want."²⁷²

The point made by Murrumburrah residents was that their station dispatched a lot of freight business from the flour mill but the town got nothing in return. For example, in October, 1898, the

²⁶⁹ There is a sketch in an article by C. C. Singleton, "Main Southern Line VIII," ARHS *Bulletin*, No. 112, February, 1947, p. 16 in which shows the location of the 1879 and 1900 stations.

²⁷⁰ Murrumburrah Signal, 26th February, 1898, p. 2.

²⁷¹ Murrumburrah Signal, 16th April, 1898, p. 3.

²⁷² Murrumburrah Signal, 7th of May, 1898, p. 2.

local newspaper stated that “our people have always had such a hard job to get anything in the shape of decent improvements done to the place.”²⁷³

On the list of things people also wish to ask for was the stopping of the train at Murrumburrah that left Harden 9:20 pm to Cowra.²⁷⁴ Meanwhile, the station acted as a place of entertainment and a place to go to when people had nothing better to fill the time. One December night, a big crowd gathered at the platform to watch the Police take three suspected burglars to Cowra by train.²⁷⁵

THE YEAR, 1899 – WORK STARTS ON THE NEW STATION

The track deviation for “grade improvements” was carried out between Harden and Murrumburrah (mileages 228 and 25 chains to 229 and 70 chains) and was authorised on 14th April, 1899. The work was estimated cost £15,600. Land was resumed from Mrs Miles Murphy at a cost of £175.²⁷⁶

There was great excitement when the successful tenderer was announced for the construction of a brick residence for the Station Master. This building replaced a small structure that was provided in 1884 for the Porter-in-Charge. The dream was that the new station “will also be built from designs of an up-to-date character.”²⁷⁷

By late November, work had started on the commencement of the new platform.²⁷⁸ At the end of 1899, the local newspaper had good news about the new railway station. It said:

“we are to get nice new station buildings. The railway station will be conveniently situated in Bathurst Street and it will be on such a level piece of line that our residents may in all justice ask the stopping of the express and all other trains at our station. These are at least some concessions and it is to be hoped that our people will unite with the Commissioners in making the whole railway service in our midst as complete and as perfect as possible.”²⁷⁹ The Engineer-in-Chief, Thomas Firth, was at Murrumburrah at the time and he attempted to pour some cold water on the dream that all passenger trains would stop at the station. He reminded newspaper readers that the present Murrumburrah railway station was on a one in 40 gradient and was one of the very steepest of all lines in New South Wales. True it was but that was something the local people had heard before as an excuse and did not appreciate being reminded, especially as they were in a relatively happy mood.

THE YEAR, 1900 – THE OPENING OF THE NEW STATION

In January, 1900, although construction had not started on the new railway station building, the local Member of Parliament, Kenneth MacKay, said that his good efforts to secure a new station had resulted in the Railway Department spending £725, rather than the first intended cost of £325.²⁸⁰

²⁷³ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 15th October, 1898, p. 2.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 6th July, 1889, p. 2.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 24th December, 1898, p. 1.

²⁷⁶ Shop Order No. 3976, Shop Order Book 21C/252, former SRA Archives, p. 72.

²⁷⁷ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 21st October, 1899, p. 2.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 25th November, 1899, p. 2.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 2nd December, 1899, p. 2.

²⁸⁰ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 20th January, 1900, p. 2.

The new station was on a new site and a new design of building was used for the first time. From 1897, a cheap style of building, called Pioneer, was introduced by the Railway Construction Branch for erection on new lines. As one would expect with the fierce inter-branch competition, the Existing Lines Branch, which managed buildings on existing lines, never used the new design but, in 1900, the Railway Construction Branch issued a new plan which it coded A6 for an enhanced version of the 1897 model. The Existing Lines Branch did use this enhanced version a couple of times and all 12 examples of the enhanced Pioneer style structure are shown in the Table below.

TABLE: ENHANCED PIONEER BUILDINGS 1900-1920

YEAR OF APPROVAL	LOCATION	BUILDING MATERIAL T= TIMBER B = BRICK	EXISTING OR NEW LINE
16/8/1900	Standard Class A6 plan	T	
4/8/1900	Murrumburrah	B	E
7/9/1900	Inverell	T	N
24/6/1900	Grenfell	T	N
20/4/1900	Brewarrina	T	N
1910	Coonamble	B	E
1905	Grafton	T	N
2/2/1908	Narrabri – not a standard building, being 20 feet longer.	B	E
1912	Marrar	T	E
1913	Yanco	T Not built	N/A
29/4/1914	Kempsey (designated A5)	T	N
1915	South Grafton	T	N

YEAR OF APPROVAL	LOCATION	BUILDING MATERIAL T= TIMBER B = BRICK	EXISTING OR NEW LINE
	(designated A5)		
1920	Leeton (noted on plan as "A5 modified Pc3")	T Not built	N/A

Of the 12 approved examples, ten were built with four erected on existing lines, including the Murrumburrah example. The four examples on existing lines were all brick and this was consistent with the policies of the two construction branches. The Railway Construction Branch used timber because it was cheap and funding was very limited whereas the Existing Lines Branch used brick for buildings because its policy was oriented towards long life maintenance minimisation. It also had access to more funds. The town of Murrumburrah received a building that the Railway Department wanted to give it and the new building showed no particular feature that reflected any local design input.

At the same time, a new residence for the Station Master was authorised on 7th April, 1900, at an estimated cost of £475. Authorisation for the new station building was made on 14th September, 1900, with an estimated price of £375. Two things to note. Number one was that the new building would be moderate in size and only just a tad larger than the brick residence. Number two was that formal authorisation for the platform building occurred well after the actual construction. So much for the rules for the expenditure of public funds! At the end of January, 1900, the new residence was "drawing to completion."²⁸¹ That was a very over-optimistic comment.

The contractor for the new station was Mr McGee and in June, 1900, construction was underway but wet weather had slowed him down.²⁸² In September, the local newspaper said that the station looked "very nice and, only for the sardine-tin affair close by, the surroundings would be all that could be desired."²⁸³ With the new station being erected, the local community made its next demand and that was for a turnstile to be located at the western end of the station. The Secretary for Railways reply that the matter would be examined when the Commissioners did their next inspection.²⁸⁴

It seems that the new railway station was opened at the new site when the one mile 76 chain 25 link long deviation between Harden and Murrumburrah opened on 7th October, 1900.²⁸⁵ However, there is no firm evidence of the date the station opened on the new site. One aspect irritated the local community. The newspaper stated that "the most conspicuous portion of the Murrumburrah

²⁸¹ Ibid, 27th January, 1900, p. 2.

²⁸² Ibid., 2nd June, 1900, p. 2.

²⁸³ Ibid., 8th September, 1900, p. 2.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 18th October, 1900, p. 1.

²⁸⁵ John Forsyth, *Southern Line Maps*, Revised Edition, SRA Archives, 1967, p. S43.

new railway station, as viewed from the town, is the objectionable galvanised iron building (at the old station site) and, as soon as something is done to improve matters, the better.”²⁸⁶

Even though the new station was operational, the local community did not give up its frequent complaints about the facilities and in November claimed that the platform was badly in the of a coat of asphalt, as the place was very dusty when crowds gathered.²⁸⁷ Also, it was recorded that the male toilet and lamp room at the station had been repainted and it may well be that these structures were relocated from the first station site to the second station site.²⁸⁸

THE YEAR, 1901 – FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS REQUESTED

Apparently, there was no-smoking ban at all New South Wales railway stations and, despite the prohibition, the local newspaper reported that “several persons may be seen nightly on both Harden and Murrumburrah stations smoking away at their pipes and cigarettes evidently without the slightest pangs of a guilty conscience.”²⁸⁹

The Station Master, Mr Donnan, planted trees near the entrance to the station and the local press was impressed with this initiative saying that, “in a few years’ time, they will give the place an improved and beautiful appearance.”²⁹⁰

The Commissioners met a deputation in late June on the platform at Murrumburrah from the town representatives. The newish Chief Commissioner, Charles Oliver, “did not leave a very favourable impression on account of his rather stiff answers.” Commissioner Kirkcaldie was favourably received and it was considered that he “promises to become the most popular of the lot.”²⁹¹

It has pretty consistently been a policy of subsequent rail administrations to eliminate level crossings, where possible. This was often achieved when major tracks improvements were undertaken and this was the case when the major deviation occurred in 1900 between Harden and Murrumburrah. It was no surprise, therefore, that one of the items discussed at the deputation was the Vernon Street pedestrian bridge, which was located about 200 metres on the Demondrille side of Murrumburrah station. Its authorisation occurred on 6th March, 1901, to replace a level crossing that provided access to the Roman Catholic Church and school. The framework for the bridge was lying on the ground in the vicinity for a week or more in late October, 1900, and the bridge was reported as being completed in mid-November, 1901. The locals were not happy with the gradient on the northern side of the bridge and Chief Commissioner Oliver commented that it was the same as anywhere else. Also, the deputation said that deposits of “wet, slippery frost” occurred on the treads during winter. Thomas Firth, the Engineer for Existing Lines, was amongst the official party and suggested jocularly that people should not go to church on frosty mornings. One local resident

²⁸⁶ Ibid., 13th October, 1900, p. 2.

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 24th November, 1900, p. 2.

²⁸⁸ Ibid., 1st December, 1900, p. 2.

²⁸⁹ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 27th April, 1901, p. 1.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ Ibid., 29th June, 1901, p. 2.

replied “yes but if you don’t go to church in the cold of this world you might get it too hot in the next.”²⁹²

Other items discussed at the deputation relating to the station were:

1. the inadequacy of the two 500-gallon rainwater tanks at Murrumburrah station, requiring the Station Master to use a supplementary private supply,
2. the obstruction to the views of the new station from the town caused by the embankment at the site of the former station, saying that it was “very unsightly”,
3. the short length of the platform, with mail trains continuing to push back and pull forward,
4. the request for a gate in Clark Street opposite the west end of the platform to provide pedestrian access for the Catholic clergy and nuns who are required to detour by the subway and walk half a mile, &
5. the need for the platform to be asphalted as exposed parts become “boggy in the wet”.²⁹³

The Mayor subsequently reported that most of the requests were to be met and the Railways sent a letter to Council in October saying that the “numerous improvements promised at Murrumburrah would be carried out as soon as possible.”²⁹⁴

THE YEAR, 1902 – PUBLIC GRIZZLES GO ON AND ON

It was only a couple of months until the next complaint was made by the local newspaper. This time the complaint was that the “gentlemen’s waiting room” at the Murrumburrah station was a “frightfully draughty place for those using the room, especially during the present cold weather.”²⁹⁵ The reality was that there was no gentlemen’s waiting room designated as such at Murrumburrah station. A good guess to explain the error would be the jealousy that the people of Murrumburrah felt towards the gentlemen’s waiting room that existed at Harden railway station between 1891 and 1914. It would seem that the male travellers of Murrumburrah decided to rename their general waiting room as a gentlemen’s waiting room.

In addition to the trees planted at the entrance of the station in April, 1901, Mr Donnan, the Station Master, had planted a “nice runner on the Murrumburrah railway platform, and it has grown rapidly in the last week or two.” Once again, the local newspaper praised the Station Master for his work saying that the plantings would “give our railway station building a most attractive appearance.”²⁹⁶

The Vernon Street footbridge continued to give problems because the treads were grooved and water did not run off, causing ice to form. Because the Railway Department declined to do anything, a number of local people wanted to drill holes in the treads to let the water run away as

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ Ibid. 12th October, 1901, p. 2.

²⁹⁵ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 17th May, 1902, p. 2.

²⁹⁶ Ibid. 1st November, 1902, p. 2.

“pedestrians have to splash through it when they are going to and from the church.”²⁹⁷ The Commissioners replied in May, 1903, that they would provide holes in the treads, as requested.

THE YEARS 1903-1906 - NO COMPLAINTS

When the Commissioners stopped at Murrumburrah platform in May, 1903, they were amazed that the local Council raised no issues and “they were evidently surprised when they were allowed to depart in peace.”²⁹⁸

The Commissioners passed through Harden and Murrumburrah in April, 1904, and, again, without finding any improvements required by the local people.²⁹⁹

Things must have been satisfactory as the same pattern existed in 1905 and 1906.

THE YEAR, 1907 – THE ARROGANT CHIEF COMMISSIONER VISITS

Representatives of the Murrumburrah Municipal Council met the Commissioners on the station in May. The Council wanted to purchase the former embankment of the original railway line which had been abandoned in 1900 on the basis that it was “unsightly and apparently useless to the Commissioners.” Apparently, there were timbers and other materials located on the site and Council wanted to purchase the materials. Because of the reluctance of the Railway Department to do anything, Council thought the best strategy was to simply buy the land. The embankment also prevented the widening of the road that led to the subway under the railway line. Chief Commissioner Johnson said he would look into the matter.³⁰⁰

What came next was well published in the local press and came as a shock. The Council Mayor said that there were matters to discuss at Harden station and asked the Chief Commissioner, Tom Johnson, for the deputation to be conveyed there by the Commissioner’s special train. Johnson replied that he never conveyed passengers by his train and that it would form a “bad precedent” to do so in this case.³⁰¹ Whatever happened to the embankment is not recorded.

The year, 1908, was another sleeper so far as the station was concerned.

THE YEAR, 1909 – REQUEST FOR IMPROVED LIGHTING

Local members of the Farmers and Settlers’ Association went about to organise in February a meeting upon the arrival of the Association’s President, Mr Patten, MLC, from Sydney. The Association wanted improved lighting at the station and sought the cooperation of both the Murrumburrah Municipal Council and the Demondrille Shire Council.³⁰² It would appear that from these references to local government the poor lighting was on the road side approach the station rather than on the platform itself. However, this was not the case and the Association was in fact

²⁹⁷ Ibid. 22nd November, 1902, p. 2.

²⁹⁸ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 2nd of May, 1903, p. 2.

²⁹⁹ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 23rd April, 1904, p. 2.

³⁰⁰ Ibid., 17th May, 1907, p. 2.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

³⁰² *The Farmer and Settler*, 26 February, 1909, p. 3.

referring to the platform areas, as it again raised the need for improved lighting at stations at both Harden and Murrumburrah in March, 1909.³⁰³

There was a more serious issue in 1909 and this was the decision to establish a telephone exchange at Harden rather than at Murrumburrah. This was interpreted as “another attempt to push Harden ahead of Murrumburrah.” An air of resignation dominated with the newspaper saying, unfortunately, that, by that measure, Harden “becomes practically the telegraph station.”³⁰⁴

1910-1915 A DISTRACTION TAKES ATTENTION AWAY FROM THE STATION AND RAILWAYS GENERALLY

Something happened in this period that had never happened before. The private motor car arrived in Murrumburrah/Harden. The construction of a motor garage was mentioned in the local paper in 1911.³⁰⁵ In 1912, it was possible to hire a Ford Overland car in the town and, in the same year, a Ford dealership existed at Harden, called the Harden Motor Garage, which was located in Neill Street. There was also an application in 1912 by Spence and McKinney for the construction of a motor garage 75 feet x 25 feet at Harden.³⁰⁶ One of the local general medical practitioners, Dr Heggaton, owned a motorcar in 1913.³⁰⁷ The Ford dealer in 1914 said in his advertisement in the local paper that 450,000 Ford motor cars existed worldwide. Demand for vehicles was high and A. C. Morris of the Harden Motor Garage commented that “we could sell quite a number if we had them on hand.”³⁰⁸

There was one additional statistic that defined the growing importance of the private motor car in New South Wales and, simultaneously, marked the start of serious competition to railway transport. It was in the year, 1916, that the horse population peaked in Australia. From that time, the number of horses decline every year basically as the number of motor vehicles rose.

People who had access to a private motor car made it their number one travel choice from that time and avoided using trains were at all possible. The end of the railway monopoly was still a long way away but at least a competitor had arrived and was making a big impression.

³⁰³ *The Farmer and Settler*, 12th March, 1909, p. 7.

³⁰⁴ *Albury Banner and Wodonga Express*, 8th October, 1909, p. 43.

³⁰⁵ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 20th July, 1911, p. 4.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 4th December, 1912, p. 2.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 22nd October, 1913, p. 2.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 23rd February, 1914, p. 2.

9. THE SECOND PLATFORM – THE SECOND TRACK DEVIATION

THE YEAR, 1916 – THE DREAM OF THE DEMONDRILLE BANK DEVIATION

The local newspaper provided a progress report on duplication of the main southern line, indicating that traffic had increased 20% in the last 10 years. The survey for the deviation had been completed in 1916 and duplication between Harden and Demondrille involving a distance of 6 miles and 34 chains.³⁰⁹ While this deviation did not eventuate, it would have meant that Murrumburrah might not have had a station in very close proximity to the commercial centre and the western end of the town would have been in exactly the same position it had been in between 1877 and 1879 when the nearest railway station was located at Harden.

The evidence indicates that a decision was made quickly against proceeding with the deviation and a station building and platform were authorised on 14th December, 1916, for the new Sydney-bound or up platform for additional duplicated track through the station. The Railway Department forwarded plans to the Murrumburrah Municipal Council in January, 1917, for the new track arrangements and the only comment that Council made was that it thought the gradient that led up to the platform from a nearby road needed to be reduced. After some discussion, Aldermen realised that they were not likely to get anything better and resolved to accept the proposal put forward by the Department.³¹⁰ By June, 1917, all works on the proposed duplication between Murrumburrah and Demondrille was closed “owing to there being absolutely no funds available.”³¹¹ Duplication of that section of the track would not be completed until July, 1922, though work continued to complete the duplication between Harden and Murrumburrah, which opened on 25th March, 1918.

At the time the building was approved for the Sydney-bound platform in September, 1917, both platforms were shown as 400 feet in length and remained at that length until they were reduced in the 1970s.

THE YEAR, 1917 – FIRST BIG PUSH TO CREATE A COMPETITOR TO RAIL PASSENGER TRANSPORT

The Great War prompted the Commonwealth Government to ban the importation of completely assembled motor vehicles, but allowed car chassis to be imported. This ban prompted the establishment of the manufacturer of motor car bodies in Australia, the firm the coming Holden Motor Body Builders.³¹² The organisation became an important employer of labour, especially in South Australia, and it remained a protected industry from the time of the Great War until the present time. Surely, that is unfair competition? By 1917, Ford was manufacturing the model ‘T’ car in Australia. Anyone who could afford to purchase a motorcar did so because the New South Wales Railways could not offer the same level of comfort, speed, cleanliness and overall journey time as the private motor vehicle. In just 10 years – in 1927, one in four Australian families owned a

³⁰⁹ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 22nd May, 1916, p. 3 and the *Burrowa News*, 19th May, 1916, p. 4 which stated that the traffic growth rate was not 20% but 20% per annum.

³¹⁰ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 18th January, 1917, p. 2.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, 14th June, 1917, p. 2.

³¹² M. Lay, *History of Australian Roads*, Australian Road Research Board, Special Report No. 29, p. 27.

motorcar. Tragically, the New South Wales Railways was not interested in improving the quality of rail services to create a viable alternative to transport my private motor car.

Not only did the Great War stimulate the private motor car industry, it also gave great assistance to the production of mass-produced trucks and buses that could operate in harsh wartime conditions and work it for peacetime commercial use.³¹³ Bowden wrote:

“The advances in truck construction during the 1920s made road transport serious competitor to the railways for the first time.”

By 1929, the railways had lost considerable amount of revenue that “seriously threatened the financial viability” of the State Government.³¹⁴ Now, the New South Wales Railways was under pressure both in relation to passenger and freight transport. What did it do in response? Nothing! That is nothing but to go to government and seek legislative protection to allow the transport monopoly to continue unfettered – a system that operated until 1965.

THE YEAR, 1918 – TWO NEW BUILDINGS

No. 1 NEW BUILDING – THREE-ROOM STRUCTURE ON THE NEW SYDNEY-BOUND PLATFORM

The last major improvement at Murrumburrah station occurred in 1918, with the provision of an additional platform and platform building associated with the duplication of the tracks through the station. After its construction, not a single improvement was made to the station, apart from asphaltting the forecourt, connection to the electricity supply and connection to the town sewerage scheme.

On the new Sydney-bound platform was a single timber framed and timber clad, three room structure that was provided specifically for track duplication. The building was typical of structures at other stations on the Main South line when it was duplicated. The question is: did Murrumburrah receive a new platform building that reflected the town’s level of importance? Also, was the design and standard of presentation the same as, better than or worse than platform buildings provided at other stations affected by the duplication?

The Table below lists those stations where a second platform was provided for duplication and indicates on those second platforms the type and material of building that was erected. In the column headed “Notes”, an indication is given whether the design of the building on the second platform matched the design of building on the original platform.

³¹³ B. Bowden, *Driving Force – the History of the Transport Workers’ Union of Australia 1883 – 1992*, St Leonards, Allen and Unwin, 1993, p. 53.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

TABLE: MAIN SOUTHERN LINE – BUILDING APPROVED BETWEEN GOULBURN AND COOTAMUNDRA WEST FOR TRACK DUPLICATION 1912-1919

YEAR APPROVED	LOCATION	WALL MATERIAL	ROOF DESIGN	NOTES
1912	Yarra	Timber	Gabled roof	Design of original building unknown
1912	Breadalbane	Timber	Gabled roof, narrow awning style	One room – non matching
1912	Harden	NA	NA	Existing brick building converted into an island platform structure
1913	Bundanoon	Timber	Gabled	One room – opposite platform altered to match duplication structure
1913	Towrang	Timber	Skillion roof	New buildings on both platforms – matching
1913	Cullerin	Timber	Skillion roof	One room – design of building on opposite platform unknown
1913	Goondah	Timber	Skillion roof	One room – non matching – relocated from Greta
1913	Bowning	Timber	Gabled roof	Two rooms 25' x 12' – non matching
1914	Carrick	Unknown	Unknown	NA
1914	Goulburn Platform Nos. 2 & 3	Brick	Gabled roof	120' brick building – non matching
1914	Fish River	Timber	Skillion roof	One room 15' x 12' – non matching building

YEAR APPROVED	LOCATION	WALL MATERIAL	ROOF DESIGN	NOTES
1914	Oolong	Timber	Skillion roof	One room 15' x 10' internal – design of original building unknown on other platform
1914	Jerrawa	Timber	Gabled roof	Existing building converted for use on island platform
1914	Coolalie New site	Timber	Gabled roof	One room - new, matching buildings erected
1914	Werai	Timber	Skillion roof	One room – unknown design of building on opposite platform but was called “waiting shed”
1914	Yass Junction	Brick	Gabled roof	Large RRR – non matching
1915	Exeter	Timber	Skillion roof	One room 16' x 12' – matching
1915	Wingello	Timber	Gabled roof	WR and out of Room
1915	Tallong	Timber	Skillion roof	One room – non matching
1915	Marulan	Unknown	Unknown	NA
1915	Gunning	Timber	Gable roof	One room – non matching
1915	Illalong Creek New site	Timber	Gabled roof	Matching one room structures on both platforms
1915	Binalong New site	Brick	Gabled roof	New building on an island platform
1915	Galong new site	Brick	Gabled roof	One room - Matches opposite platform building

YEAR APPROVED	LOCATION	WALL MATERIAL	ROOF DESIGN	NOTES
1915	Cunninggar	Timber	Gabled roof	New island platform – 60' long
1915	Nubba	Timber	Gabled roof	Existing structure converted into use on island platform
1915	Wallendbeen New site	Timber	Gabled roof	Matching four room buildings on each platform
1916	Rocky Ponds New site	Timber	Skillion roof	One room – matching buildings on both platforms
1917	Cootamundra West	Brick	Gabled	New station on island platform with matching refreshment room
1918	Murrumburrah	Timber	Gabled roof	Three rooms – non matching
1919	Mittagong	Timber	Skillion roof	Two rooms – non matching

The above Table lists 31 buildings approved in connection with duplication between Goulburn and Cootamundra West stations, inclusive. The majority of buildings were of timber construction, totalling 25 or representing 80%, and five were of brick construction. Brick was used either for well-developed urban areas, including Goulburn, Binalong, Galong and Cootamundra West, or for a key railway station, namely Yass Junction. A total of 18 of the 31 buildings, representing 58%, had a gabled roof while the remainder had a single-pitched roof.³¹⁵ Single-pitched roofs were restricted, in the main, to smaller places but Mittagong is the outstanding exception. The use of a puny, unattractive building at that location was disgraceful.

The provision of gabled roofs at all five brick buildings shown in the above Table was just a small hint that the location served by the station was a bit more important than those places that received single-pitched or skillion roofed structures. Another five stations with timber construction and gabled roofs served larger urban centres where a reasonable person would think a brick building should have been provided. In this group are Bundanoon, Murrumburrah, Gunning, Bowning and Wallendbeen. The only recorded evidence of the reaction of the people of Murrumburrah to the timber building is favourable and, on that evidence, it seems that the Railway Department had done

³¹⁵ The design and materials of the duplication buildings at Carrick and Marulan are unknown.

its homework at Murrumburrah and it had sussed out whether there would be any protest about the delivery of a timber structure rather than of brick construction.

All 31 examples shown in the above Table belonged to the same design family as the building that was erected in 1918 at Murrumburrah. In 2016, there are only 12 surviving examples of the original 31 buildings. The extant structures are the five brick examples at Goulburn, Yass Junction, Binalong, Galong and Cootamundra West and the seven timber examples at Mittagong, Exeter, Bundanoon, Wingello, Bowning and Wallendbeen.

It is a fair thing to say that the duplication structure at Murrumburrah did not reflect the status of the town in 1918 when it was constructed and this was demonstrated when the Murrumburrah building is contrasted against the elegant, brick structure that was provided at Binalong in 1915. Binalong was a little village with smaller population than Murrumburrah. The same be said about the pair of brick buildings erected at Galong.

Unlike the building at Binalong, the plan for the Murrumburrah structure had the initials of the approving officer, Robert Kendall, who dated the plan 17th September, 1917. Neither plan for the Murrumburrah or Binalong structures showed any alpha-numerical building code, which was usually provided only for new buildings on new lines. The Murrumburrah building was timber framed and clad externally with horizontally set weatherboards, measuring on the plan 53 feet 5 ½ inches long by 12 feet wide internal. As built, the structure accorded with the planned dimensions. The building at Binalong was 87 feet long by 11 feet wide internal.

The structures at both Murrumburrah and Binalong shared basically the same Federation-influenced design and floor plan. However, there were quite a few differences in the details between the two buildings and the Table below sets out these differences in order to demonstrate how the New South Wales Railways played with building elements to reflect what it considered to be superior and inferior station locations.

TABLE: DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MURRUMBURRAH, 1917 AND BINALONG BUILDINGS, 1914

BUILDING ELEMENT	BINALONG	MURRUMBURRAH
Floor plan	Based on linear floor plan	based on transverse, centre entry
Room composition	from the Harden end – signal box, parcels office, booking office, general waiting room, lamp room, ladies’ lavatory, cleaner’s closet and “urinals”	from the Harden end – out of room, waiting room and booking office
Location of “out of” room	Detached brick facility at extreme Sydney end of platform	Integrated into the Sydney end of the platform building
External walls	Attractive, orange-coloured face brickwork	Five inch wide & one inch thick, rusticated weatherboards

BUILDING ELEMENT	BINALONG	MURRUMBURRAH
Internal walls	Plastered	Booking office and waiting room featured lining boards – out of room unlined
Ticket window detailing	ornate moulding surrounding the window	absence of ornate moulding
Roof material	Planned No. 26 gauge corrugated iron but 3 ply Malthoid and cement used instead	No. 26 gauge corrugated iron
Glazing and Windows	Nine panes of Cathedral glass in upper sash – milled rolled glass with name of station in lower sash	Nine panes of Cathedral glass in upper sash – Ripple glass in lower sash – no station name in bottom sash
Fanlights above doors	ten panes of Cathedral glass	five pain of Cathedral glass
Moulding	String course around building an above window heads – aprons under window sills	No ornamentation – no timber aprons under windows
Chimneys	Brick with strapwork and terracotta pots	Brick with reduced strapwork – no terracotta pots
Entry to general waiting room	Single doors on each side of building with slate thresholds	Double entry doors 5 feet wide on each side with fixed sun canopy over doors on road approach
Design of male toilet	Dutch gable	Double pitched, gabled
Wall material for male toilet	Brick	Corrugated iron
Location of male toilet	Located at the Sydney end of main building	No toilets on the platform
Use of vertical, curtain boarding	Applied to the ends of the awning	Applied to the ends of the awning
Provision of timber finials on gables	at both ends	finials not applied
Method of support for platform awnings	standard metal, cantilevered brackets	standard metal, cantilevered brackets
Platform awning widths	11 feet	9 feet
Number of freshwater rain tanks	Two	One

BUILDING ELEMENT	BINALONG	MURRUMBURRAH
Fireplace details	5 inch thick concrete hearth, 2'10" wide mantle and grate (standard design and materials)	5 inch thick concrete hearth, 2'10" wide mantle and grate (standard design and materials)

Both the buildings at Murrumburrah and Binalong were members of the same group of buildings that was used between 1892 and 1935 and the hallmark feature of the buildings was the nature of the decoration that was applied to the external walls. This group became the first class of buildings to be used on island platforms and the introduction and expansion of the use of the class of buildings matched the increasing use of island platforms on the New South Wales railway system.

Both the buildings at Murrumburrah and Binalong were approved by the Existing Lines Branch. It was only Existing Lines Branch that used the gabled roof structures up to 1911 but, from 1911, the Railway Construction Branch started also using the Federation-influenced design on new line construction in rural areas, though only in the most basic fashion.

The buildings at Murrumburrah and Binalong share many basic characteristics, including their rectangular shape, the narrow internal width, their gabled roofs and the design of the platform. However, the differences provided in the above Table demonstrate that the New South Wales Railways could use individual building elements to allocate a certain status to the station served.

In essence, the building at Binalong was an example of a structure normally approved for a larger urban setting. Given the small size of that urban setting at Binalong, the other reason why elegant buildings were sometimes erected was due to its railway function. The track layout at Binalong was set out upon duplication to accord with the ultimate safeworking layout with passing loops provided in both directions around the platform. Jerrawa, Harden, Demondrille and Bowning were the only other stations to have that feature south of Goulburn. Binalong was also a locomotive watering spot. Perhaps those features possibly demanded a higher level of building presentation than other main line stations. Certainly, the Station Master at Binalong would have been much more senior than his colleague at Murrumburrah because of the greater use of the signalling and safeworking features, in particular the ability to simultaneously remove trains from the main line in both directions to allow faster trains to overtake. Murrumburrah was not a locomotive watering stop and did not feature refuge loops to allow the overtaking of trains. On the other hand, a lot more revenue was earned from Murrumburrah station due to the freight traffic handled through the goods yard and the flour mill.

It is unknown who built the Binalong structure but it is known that James Egan was a carpenter and was contracted to build the timber platform structure on the Sydney-bound platform at Murrumburrah railway station. By March, he had mostly completed the building, which contained a room for the Station Master measuring 18 feet by 12 feet, a booking office measuring 20 feet by 12 feet and a parcels office measuring 14 feet by 12 feet. The local newspaper described the building as being a structure "of a neat and tradesmen like manner" with horizontally set weatherboards on the external walls, fibrous plaster ceilings, Cypress Pine flooring, galvanised corrugated iron roof and a nine feet wide platform awning supported by cantilevered brackets similar to those used on the

building on the Cootamundra-bound platform.³¹⁶ The building at the platform was lit by kerosene fuelled lamps. There was a circular corrugated iron tank to hold rainwater and perhaps the most spectacular feature, at least rated by the local newspaper, was the building ventilation which was stated to be “perfect.” The height of the new platform was three feet two inches, which was the new standard height adopted in 1906 by all Australian railway systems, this being an increase of six inches over the previous standard height that had been used since 1855.

While it is interesting to make a comparison of the Murrumburrah timber structure against the more elaborate brick building at Binalong, it is worthwhile also to consider a comparison with two nearby stations that had similar-looking, timber structures. The Table below compares the Murrumburrah structure in 1917 with the buildings at Cunningar and Wallendbeen.³¹⁷ It uses the same design elements that were applied to the comparison between Murrumburrah and Binalong.

TABLE: DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE BUILDINGS AT MURRUMBURRAH, 1917, CUNNINGAR, 1914 AND WALLEDBEEN, 1917

BUILDING ELEMENT	MURRUMBURRAH	CUNNINGAR	WALLEDBEEN COOTAMUNDRA- BOUND PLATFORM
Type of platform	side	island	Side
Floor plan	based on transverse, centre entry	Based on linear entry	Based on linear entry
Room composition	from the Harden end – out of room, waiting room and booking office	From the Sydney end - booking office, general waiting room, ladies' room and lavatory – roof extended for 17 feet for later insertion of	From the Harden end – ladies' toilet, ladies' waiting room, ticket office, general waiting room & out of room (ticket office formed by partitioning off part of the space of the

³¹⁶ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 11th March, 1918, p. 2.

³¹⁷ The building on the Sydney-bound platform at Wallendbeen, which exists in 2016, was an 1895 building that was converted from an island platform structure and relocated to Wallendbeen from Campsie on the Bankstown line. The building on the Cootamundra-bound platform at Wallendbeen, now demolished, was planned and built specifically for Wallendbeen.

BUILDING ELEMENT	MURRUMBURRAH	CUNNINGAR	WALLENDREEN COOTAMUNDRA- BOUND PLATFORM
		interlocking frame	general waiting room)
Location of “out of” room	Integrated into the Sydney end of the platform building	Detached structure at Sydney end of platform	Integrated into Cootamundra end of the platform building
External walls	Five inch wide & one inch thick, rusticated weatherboards	One inch thick weatherboards with a one-inch overlap	Five inch wide & one inch thick, rusticated weatherboards
Internal walls	Booking office and waiting room featured lining boards – out of room unlined	In all rooms, four-inch wide by 5/8 inch thick horizontal lining boards	Walls of the ladies’ room and toilet were the only spaces to feature lining boards – waiting room and out of room unlined
Ticket window detailing	absence of ornate moulding	Extent of ornamentation unknown – plate glass screen	Unknown
Roof material	No. 26 gauge galvanised, corrugated iron	No. 26 gauge galvanised, corrugated iron	No. 26 gauge galvanised, corrugated iron
Glazing and Windows	Nine panes of Cathedral glass in upper sash – Ripple glass in lower sash – no station name in bottom sash	Nine panes of Cathedral glass in upper sash – Ripple glass in lower sash – station name in bottom sash	Double hung window sashes each with two panes of clear glass – absence of Cathedral glass
Fanlights above doors	five pain of Cathedral glass	five pain of	Plain glass

BUILDING ELEMENT	MURRUMBURRAH	CUNNINGAR	WALLENDREEN COOTAMUNDRA- BOUND PLATFORM
		Cathedral glass	
Moulding	No ornamentation – no timber aprons under windows	Ornamental timber aprons under window sills	Ornamental timber aprons under windows
Chimneys	Brick with reduced strapwork – no terracotta pots	Brick with strapwork and concrete tops	Brick with strapwork and concrete top
Entry to general waiting room	Double entry doors 5 feet wide on each side with fixed sun canopy over doors on road approach	Single doors on each side of building of standard dimensions 6'10" by 2'10"	Open fronted waiting room – no doors
Design of male toilet	Double pitched, gabled	Detached male toilet from previous station relocated to new platform	No male toilet on Cootamundra-bound platform
Wall material for male toilet	Corrugated iron	Corrugated iron	Not applicable
Location of male toilet	No toilets on the platform	Towards Sydney end of platform	Not applicable
Use of vertical, curtain boarding	Applied to the ends of the awning	Applied to both gables	Nil
Provision of timber finials on gables	finials not applied	Zinc finials at each terminus of roof	Finials not applied
Method of support for platform awnings	standard metal, cantilevered brackets	3 inch square timber braces	standard metal, cantilevered brackets
Platform awning widths	9 feet	8 feet	9 feet
Number of freshwater rain	One	one 800 gallon	two – both 800

BUILDING ELEMENT	MURRUMBURRAH	CUNNINGAR	WALLEND BEEN COOTAMUNDRA- BOUND PLATFORM
tanks		capacity	gallon capacity
Fireplace details	In booking office and waiting room – 5 inch thick concrete hearth, 2'10" wide mantle and grate (standard design and materials)	In the booking office and ladies' room but not in general waiting room – 5 inch thick concrete hearth with great 2'10" wide	In the booking office and ladies' room but not in general waiting room – 5 inch thick concrete hearth with great 2'10" wide

It was stated that Murrumburrah did not receive a building on the new Sydney-bound platform that reflected the status of the town and this was supported by the comparison with the building of similar design at Binalong. The Table above confirms the previous statement that the Railway Department play with building details on each of the examples. The building at Wallendbeen had the lowest level of ornamentation and features but the building at Cunnigar was on an equal with the Murrumburrah structure, though the more attractive features varied between the two examples. The Murrumburrah building did not have timber aprons under the external windows or finials on the roof gables, as existed on the example at Cunnigar. On the other hand, the Murrumburrah building did have the following features that were absent from the Cunnigar building:

- metal awning brackets,
- heating in the general waiting room,
- attractive, paired doors to the general waiting room, &
- a fixed awning over the pedestrian entry point.

The building at Cunnigar only had single door entry into the general waiting room and no heating in that space. So, the Murrumburrah building was pretty much the same as was applied to Cunnigar station. That conclusion strengthens the earlier remark that the building on the Sydney-bound platform at Murrumburrah was subordinate to the status of the town. How could the Railway Department provide the station name in the windows at Cunnigar, which was a classy feature, yet not apply this element at Murrumburrah? Nevertheless, comparison with Wallendbeen station shows that the standard of the building could have been a lot worse than what it was. For Wallendbeen had to suffer with:

- no doors into the general waiting room
- no heating in the general waiting room,
- no lining boards in the general waiting room,

- no coloured glass in the windows.

The residents of Wallendbeen got the raw prawn of a deal from the Railway Department and they should have been incensed with what they got. The station at Wallendbeen had two side platforms like Murrumburrah but on the Sydney-bound platform the town received a second-hand building from Campsie on the Bankstown line in Sydney. How is that for a slap in the face?

Another negative aspect of the new platform at Murrumburrah was the absence of toilets and this deficiency was mentioned in the local press as being “a matter that should certainly be brought under the notice when the Railway Commissioners pay a visit to Murrumburrah station on 18th March, 1918. The Commissioners duly arrived at the station on the 14th, not 18th, March, 1918, and the Mayor took the opportunity to say that the new Sydney-bound platform caused “great inconvenience” for people as they had to walk through the narrow and dangerous subway on Bathurst Street, which was described as being “in an awkward place.” Murrumburrah Council also wanted an overhead pedestrian bridge to link both platforms but James Fraser, the Commissioner, replied that “only pedestrians were inconvenienced” and could not promise the construction of a bridge because of the “prohibitive price of labour and materials.”³¹⁸ no mention was made in the press about the provision of toilets and toilets were never provided on the Sydney-bound platform.

Also on Council’s list of requests was the need for improvements to the road in front of the platform on the Cootamundra-bound side of the station and, in this instance, Fraser said that the land would be “maintained”, whatever that meant. The Railway Commissioner offered to pay half the cost of metalling the road leading to the Cootamundra-bound side of the station but Council argued that the Railway Department should put the road in decent repair, after which Council would maintain it.³¹⁹ Third on the list was the provision of electric lighting to the station from Council’s proposed electricity network. The Mayor pushed Council’s Electrical Engineer, Mr Pepper, to the front of the deputation, who stated that light could be supplied at four pence per unit and power at two and a half pence per unit. Fraser said the Department could get light and power cheaper from its own resources than from the Council supply but undertook to consider the request.³²⁰ The last item on the request was a need for a shed on the new Sydney-bound platform in which to store commercial travellers’ samples and other goods awaiting collection and Fraser replied that he would also consider that request.

It seems that the only improvement that was done at Murrumburrah at Council’s request was the widening of the subway in Bathurst Street from 25 feet to 40 feet. With that achieved, Council then pressed for improved lighting in the subway. Negotiations continued in 1918 between the Railway Department and the Murrumburrah Municipal Council about the establishment of an electricity network and the question of whether the Department would take electricity from the Council supply.

It became clear a little bit later that Council wanted the road and footpath in front of the Cootamundra-bound platform asphalted. Council followed up the matter in writing with the Railway Department and received a letter in late June indicating that it would “make repairs to the road.”³²¹

³¹⁸ Ibid., 14th March, 1918, p. 2.

³¹⁹ *Harden Express and Galong Reporter*, 25th July, 1918, p. 7.

³²⁰ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 11th March, 1918, p. 2.

³²¹ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 27th June, 1918, p. 2.

It also promised in July to erect a “loading tank” on the new Sydney-bound platform, whatever that was.

NO. 2 NEW BUILDING – THE SIGNAL BOX ON THE COOTAMUNDRA-BOUND PLATFORM

There were three buildings on the existing, Cootamundra-bound platform in 1918. These were the brick 1900 main station building, a timber clad signal box adjacent to the 1900 building and a male toilet with walls sheeted with corrugated iron, which was located towards the Sydney end of platform.

The timber framed and timber clad signal box on the Cootamundra-bound platform contained the interlocking frame that both protected main line trains and controlled the access to the goods siding. It was located on the immediate Sydney side of the brick building and was opened on 25th March, 1918, in conjunction with the opening on the same day of the duplicated track from Harden South signal box.

The signal box was a statement of departmental bureaucracy and, more significantly, it was a statement of the autonomy of the various branches of the organisation which allowed branch heads to virtually do what they liked. Dr Bob Taaffe wrote that it was based on a standard drawing No. 56A dated 17th June, 1911.³²² Although the period of construction dates from 1908 until 1922, the example at Murrumburrah was constructed at the peak use of the design between 1911 and 1919. It was one of 227 examples built during the period and, of the six variations within the design family, the Murrumburrah signal box was contained within that sub-group with the highest number examples.³²³

The dominate design features were:

- Timber frame and timber cladding with horizontally set weatherboards,
- Single-pitched roof sloping to the rails,
- Roof covered with No. 26 gauge galvanised, corrugated iron sheets,
- “Standard sliding sash window facing the platform with a “standard” box sash window in the Sydney end wall,
- Timber lining boards for internal walls and ceiling,
- Positioning of the interlocking frame against the rear wall, &
- Heating provided by a cast-iron stove with an iron flue penetrating a wall rather than the roof.

The interlocking frame in the signal box contained 20 levers and replaced the previous frame located off the Sydney end of the Cootamundra-bound. Murrumburrah remained the junction between the duplicated track to the north and the single track to the south until 9th July, 1922, when duplication was opened between Murrumburrah and Demondrille. Although the signal box had a timber frame, the foundations were provided by the use of pre-cast concrete slabs that were manufactured in the

³²² R. T. Taaffe, *The Use and Selection of Materials in Railway Signal Box Construction, 1912-1990*, unpublished Ph. D. thesis, University of Sydney, 1990, p. A24.

³²³ Ibid., p. 77.

railway workshops in Sydney and the use of these pre-cast slabs, officially called units, was an early application. The signal box remained in position until it was demolished in 1986.

The level crossing that existed at the Sydney end of the station had been replaced in 1900 with the opening of the first deviation of the line. While the Railway Department thought that the provision of a subway the safer, the subway became much more of a pain in 1918 because it made passengers arriving and departing on the Sydney-bound platform experience a much pedestrian longer journey and increased the potential of being hit by road vehicles in the subway, which was very narrow with extremely limited visibility on each side. The subway would remain a point of irritation with the local community for decades.

10. ABSENCE OF FUNDS AFTER THE GREAT WAR

THE YEAR, 1919 – NO ONE ALLOWED ON THE PLATFORM WITH INFLUENZA

After a survey of ratepayers and approval from the State Government, Council called tenders for the provision of an electricity supply system in the town and a successful tender was accepted in April, 1919.³²⁴ The Railway Department and Council started dictating on whether the Department would be a customer but, like all things to do with the Railways, years went by before a decision was made and it was not until 1929 that the State Railways became a customer of the town electricity supply.

The New South Wales Government announced in June that there was a massive outbreak of influenza throughout the State though, in Murrumburrah, it was only in a mild form but already one person had died. The man was 25 years of age and resided at nearby Aurville, which was adjacent to the locomotive depot. Another two people were in the local hospital with one of those being William Wilson, who was a railway examiner with nine children. An emergency hospital had been set up in Murrumburrah Public School and the Council issued a by-law saying that anyone with the disease caught in a public place or in contact with another person would be fined £20.³²⁵ This restriction included the local railway station.

THE YEAR, 1924 – REQUEST DENIED FOR A STATION FOOTBRIDGE

There were two requests made of the Commissioners on their annual inspection in March, 1924. The first one was the provision of a pedestrian bridge between the two platforms, which was an issue that had been requested previously, and the provision of a “horse dump” which had been requested by the local Turf Club. In relation to the footbridge, James Fraser said that such a facility would cost £500 or £600 and the expenditure was not worth it just to “save a short walk”. He agreed to the horse dump.³²⁶ Fraser’s comment was unfair because the issue was not length or so much as the danger through the narrow subway in Bathurst Street. Such savage language by Fraser was typical of deputations at other stations throughout the State.

³²⁴ *The Riverine Grazier*, 8th April, 1919, p. 4.

³²⁵ *Young Witness*, 3rd June, 1919, p. 2. and 10th June, 1919, p. 2.

³²⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17th March, 1924, p. 10.

Meanwhile, the National Roads and Motorists' Association was formed in New South Wales with one of its aims being to help motorists using the road system who may have had mechanical problems. When did the New South Wales Railways provide staff to help rail passengers? Not until 1941 were train hostesses employed on some country trains.

An even more important event occurred in 1924 and that was legislation to create the Main Roads Board and the supporting New South Wales Department of Main Roads.³²⁷ How important was this event? John Fitzpatrick, the Minister for Local Government, said during the second reading of the legislation in August, 1924:

“.....in 1925, that year will be designated by the historians of the future as the era in which was inaugurated a civilised and modern method of road construction in the State of New South Wales.”³²⁸

The Hume Highway was declared a main road in 1914 and this enabled State funding to be allocated to the road. One of the early projects of the new Main Roads Board was the deviation over the Cullerin Range between Breadalbane and Gunning on what was then called the Great Southern Road.³²⁹

THE YEAR, 1926 – LOCAL BUSINESS ASKED TO FUND STATION PLANTS

The Murrumburrah Station Master, W. J. Muir, was commended by the local newspaper for doing his utmost to beautify the railway platform by planting attractive flowers. He decided to sow 40 rose bushes and the newspaper thought it would be nice if the business people would contribute a shilling each for the purchase of the bushes. Why was this necessary as the Department operated its own nursery at Homebush? The answer is that the Railway Department did not supply flowering plants. In April, the Commissioners stopped at Murrumburrah as part of their annual tour but apparently no deputation was organised at the station.³³⁰

THE YEAR, 1926 - NO ONE WANTS TO SEE THE AREA COMMISSIONER

As a result of the 1924 Fay/Raven Royal Commission into the administration of the New South Wales Railways, new positions of Area Commissioners had been established. Unfortunately, they had little authority to make decisions and to spend money. The Area Commissioner based in Goulburn was J.D. Reid, who previously had been the District Superintendent. An advertisement was placed in the local paper saying that he would be at Murrumburrah station at 5:40 pm on 8th October and invited local bodies, including both Councils, the Progress Committee, the Farmers and Settlers' Association and representatives from local businesses to meet him to discuss local issues. As nothing was recorded in the local press, it is assumed that there were no local issues.³³¹

³²⁷ NSW, *The Roadmakers*, Sydney, Department of Main Roads, 1976, pp. 76 & 82.

³²⁸ Quoted in *The Roadmakers*, *ibid.*, p. 82.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

³³⁰ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 22nd April, 1926, p. 2.

³³¹ *Ibid.*, 7th October, 1926, p. 2.

THE YEAR, 1927 – GARDEN AWARDS ISSUED BUT NO MONEY FOR ASPHALTING

In February, the Chief Commissioner awarded the Station Master, W.J. Muir, a framed certificate for winning first prize in the railway garden competition for his area of the State for 1926. The first ever photograph of the railway station appeared in the local press on 25th May, 1927, and it was mentioned that the station had won first prize for ferns and pots in the year 1925/26.³³² A photograph of the station also appeared in the Railway in-house magazine called, *The Staff*. Murrumburrah station also took out the same prize in 1927, with Harden station coming second.³³³ That would have made the pro-Murrumburrah people happy that they beat Harden station.

The Area Commissioner visited the station in June and Council requested that asphaltting be carried out alongside the railway station. Council also wanted both platforms asphalted. The Assistant Area Commissioner, H. P. Harris, was also in attendance and he responded on the subject of asphaltting and the evidence in the paper suggests he was a bit of a smart-arse. He was recorded as saying that it was “a pity Council did not continue the asphaltting to the station when doing the footpath in the vicinity and he could not promise to have any work done at the station at the present time, as no money was available for such purposes. Council would have to be patient and live in hope for the present.”³³⁴ Harris said that only urgent matters could be attended to until more money became available and that, at the present time, the Department was endeavouring to curtail expenses.

The annual garden competition, which had been in existence from the 1890s, great way for the Department to make stations look attractive and the competition was used as a means of diverging public attention away from essential works, such as asphaltting the forecourt at Murrumburrah station.

THE YEAR, 1929 – THE ATTRACTIVE STATION GARDEN

The Murrumburrah Station Master, W. J. Muir, was transferred to Belmore and, upon his departure, one of the newspapers commented on the work he had done on the station garden, being a “lover of flowers.” Apparently, conditions at the station were adverse as very little space was available and Muir was obliged to grow plants in pots, “with the result that every pleasing effect was obtained.” He had secured first prize in the annual railway garden competition in the pot plan section for four consecutive years.³³⁵

THE YEAR, 1931 – THE STILL ATTRACTIVE STATION GARDEN

For a number of years, nothing appeared in the local newspaper about the station. In May, 1931, there was a favourable mention saying that the station “presents a most clean and tidy appearance. Pot plant were flowering and the various rose plants are out in bloom, creating a pretty effect.”³³⁶

³³² Ibid., 25th May, 1927, p. 1.

³³³ in the, 10th November, 1927, p. 2.

³³⁴ Ibid., 16th June, 1927, p. 1.

³³⁵ *Harden Express*, 16th May, 1929, p. 2.

³³⁶ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 21st May, 1931, p. 2.

THE YEAR, 1932 - THE STILL, STILL ATTRACTIVE STATION GARDEN

The golden wattle trees at the station were in full bloom and the local newspaper remarked that they had “a very beautifying effect”.³³⁷

THE YEAR, 1933 – OFFICIAL DOCUMENT OMITTS REFERENCE TO ONE PLATFORM

In what could be regarded as an insult, an official Railway document in 1933 showed that Murrumburrah station had only one platform of 400 feet in length.³³⁸

THE YEAR, 1934 – YES TO A DUMP; NO TO ASPHALTING

Council met the Railway Commissioners in February and raised two issues. The first one was the need for a “dump” at the Harden end of the platform to make it easier to load goods into rollingstock.³³⁹ A dump is some form of structure to assist with the transfer of goods between road and rail and often means a ramp. In reply to the request, Commissioner Hartigan said he would think about it. In July, the Commissioner replied that he would provide the dump.³⁴⁰ Work on the dump on the Sydney-bound platform was underway in early 1935. The second issue was the asphaltting of the Sydney-bound platform. Hartigan said no.³⁴¹

Rather than undertake the two jobs Council wanted done, the Commissioners asked Council to provide a quote for the asphaltting of the station approaches.³⁴² At the end of 1934, Council and the Railway Department were swapping letters about the asphaltting.

In August, there was an unusual visitor to the station. In response to a complaint of straying livestock, Council’s Health Inspector visited the station, at the request of the Murrumburrah Station Master, and noted the footmarks of a calf on the Sydney-bound platform. The Inspector inspected the pedestrian entry into the general waiting room and commented that a mature animal could not proceed through the doorway of the room from what was locally known as “Convent Hill.”³⁴³ Clearly, the incident involved a Catholic calf. This fracas was the subject of a Council meeting at which Council resolved to inform the Station Master that Council did not have anything to do with impounding stock on railway property.

THE YEAR, 1935 – NO AGREEMENT ON FORECOURT ASPHALTING BUT AGREEMENT ON THE LOADING/UNLOADING OF LIVESTOCK AT THE PLATFORMS

The Murrumburrah Progress Association decided to raise with the Commissioners on their tour in March a request to load and unload cattle and horses at the station for the local agricultural show and horse races.³⁴⁴ Hartigan gave his agreement as long as the loading and unloading were done at the owner’s risk. The Association also wanted Murrumburrah station connected to the reticulated water supply, but not for human use, rather for the trees, shrubs and plants. Yes, was the answer.

³³⁷ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 4th August, 1932, p. 3.

³³⁸ NSW, *Local Appendix to the Working Timetable*, 1st April, 1933, p. 39.

³³⁹ *Harden Express*, 15th February, 1934, p. 2.

³⁴⁰ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 19th July, 1934, p. 3.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 15th February, 1934, p. 2.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, 5th July, 1934, p. 2.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, 16th August, 1934, p. 3.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 21st February, 1935, p. 3.

Once again, discussion took place on the asphaltting of the approach to the station and the Commissioner proposed that, if the Railway Department provided the asphaltting, would Council maintain it. Hartigan said that such an arrangement was in accordance with Section 273 of the Local Government Act. In 1907, the Local Government Act had been amended to transfer the task of building and maintaining local roads from the Department of Public Works to local government authorities.³⁴⁵ From that time, councils could undertake asphaltting, if they had the necessary equipment. Hartigan knew he could negotiate with any local council about the improvement to road approaches to stations, even on Railway owned land. Council also raised the possibility of creating a small park between the residence of the Station Master and the platform and Hartigan said he would consider the matter. Nothing happened. After spending six minutes at Murrumburrah station, the Commissioner departed for Harden station. His departing remark was that it was a fine station and the Station Master was doing well.³⁴⁶

In July, the Railway Department sends a letter to Murrumburrah Council saying that it was willing to pay Council £17/17/6 to asphalt the footpath and approaches to Murrumburrah station and for Council to pay £2/2/0 for the legal costs associated with the preparation of a formal agreement as well as undertake ongoing maintenance.³⁴⁷ The Mayor was shocked at the conditions, describing them as “pretty hot” and recommended that Council not agree to the terms. Council resolved that it was happy to receive £17/17/6 but it would not pay for the legal costs and it would not take over all future maintenance.

One month later, the Deputy Railway Commissioner replied saying that the cost for the legal fees would be waived. Council gave further consideration the question of ongoing maintenance for the approach to the Murrumburrah station and stated that it would agree to maintain the approaches for a period of seven years but not for all time. Council also declined to accept all legal liability for the work.³⁴⁸ Council stated that the Commissioners were “attempting to evade their responsibilities to keep the approaches to the station properties in proper order, more especially as the land is owned by the Commissioners and is non-rateable.”³⁴⁹

In June, 1935, the Murrumburrah Progress Association complained to the Railway Department about the rough handling of parcels and luggage being thrown from the guard’s van onto the platform from the Temora Mail in the mornings. The Association also wanted the Murrumburrah Council provide a street light outside the station, on the corner of Bathurst and Neill Streets, and to operate all night for passengers arriving by the early morning train.³⁵⁰ It is unknown whether the light was ever provided.

Just to show who held the power, the Railway Department deposited a large amount of ballast near the station which Alderman Prosser described as “disgraceful.”³⁵¹

³⁴⁵ National Association of Australian State Road Authorities, *Bush Track to Highway*, Sydney, 1987, p. 8.

³⁴⁶ *Harden Express*, 7th March, 1935, p. 1.

³⁴⁷ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 18th July, 1935, p. 4.

³⁴⁸ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 29th August, 1935, p. 4.

³⁴⁹ *Harden Express*, 29th August, 1935, p. 1.

³⁵⁰ *Harden Express*, 11th July, 1935, p. 6.

³⁵¹ *Harden Express*, 28th February, 1935, p. 3.

A sign of the end of the competition between the Murrumburrah and Harden ends of the town was seen in a proposal to combine the Murrumburrah Progress Association with the Advance Harden League. The press reported that there was only “a few individuals causing the strife.”³⁵² Members promised each other that they would work “in harmony.”

THE YEAR, 1936 – ONCE AGAIN, AN ATTRACTIVE STATION

Commissioner Hartigan stopped for a few minutes at the station and complimented the Station Master, C. R. Jacobi, on his work to beautify the station, saying it was “the cleanest and prettier station on the tour.”³⁵³

The local newspaper said that Murrumburrah station was “quite a picture with its variety of beautiful rose blossoms of all colours and a grand collection of pot plants.”³⁵⁴

THE YEAR, 1937 – STILL NO ASPHALTING

When the Commissioner visited Harden station in June, 1937, the Mayor raised the issue about the asphaltting of the approaches to the station and the unacceptable terms that had been proposed in 1935. Hartigan said that he would not alter his former decision.³⁵⁵ The impasse continued.

THE YEAR, 1938 – ADDITIONAL POSTAGE ON LETTERS MAILED AT THE STATION

The first time, the Post Master General applied a one penny additional fee on letters placed in the mailbox on Murrumburrah platform.³⁵⁶

THE YEAR, 1942 – ANNOUNCEMENT THAT STATIONS WOULD BE CONNECTED TO TOWN SEWERAGE SYSTEM

Council was advised in December, 1942, that the Railway Department had called tenders for the installation of a sewerage system at Harden and Murrumburrah railway stations.³⁵⁷

THE YEAR, 1943 – SEWERAGE CONNECTION DELAYED

The Railway Department forwarded plans and a specification to Council of the proposed connection to the sewerage system at the railway station, the Station Master’s residence and the Night Officer’s residence for approval.³⁵⁸ Tenders were called on 25th March, 1943. Unfortunately, the Department wrote in July that, although tenders had been called for the work, the contractor was experiencing difficulty owing to his staff having been deployed for urgent Commonwealth works. As a

³⁵² Ibid., 31st October, 1935, p. 2.

³⁵³ Ibid., 23rd April, 1936, p. 1.

³⁵⁴ Ibid., 3rd December, 1936, p. 2.

³⁵⁵ Ibid., 17th June, 1937, p. 1.

³⁵⁶ Ibid., 13th January, 1938, p. To.

³⁵⁷ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 24th December, 1942, p. 4.

³⁵⁸ Ibid., 21st January, 1943, p. 4.

consequence, the Department said that it would be some time before the contractor was able to carry out the work.

In September, a new community organisation was formed and was known as the Harden Murrumburrah and District Development Association.

THE YEAR, 1944 – STILL NO SEWERAGE CONNECTION

The Railway Department apologised to Council about the non-connection of Murrumburrah station and the residence to the town sewerage system. The successful contractor was released from the contract because of the difficulties he encountered and it was intended to call fresh tenders but the matter had to be deferred owing to the “acute shortage of labour and materials.”³⁵⁹ Tenders were called for a second time in June, 1944. In July, Railway officers called in on the Town Clerk and stated that a contract had been let for the sewerage connection at Murrumburrah but by August when tenders closed no tenders had been received.

In November, 1944, Council indicated that it was in a position to provide 12 men to do the labouring for the sewerage works and make available. Mr. P. Salter, the Council Health Inspector, was in a position to provide supervision. Also, Messrs. Sutton Bros, which was a local contractor, would undertake the necessary plumbing. The Railway Resident Engineer at Cootamundra supported the idea on the basis that only the Harden and Murrumburrah stations and two residences at Murrumburrah would be initially connected. Here is a case where the local government authority stepped in to help the Department of Railways implement improvements. The tall-poppies in the Department rejected the offer and use their own resources to carry out the work in 1946 – two years after the offer was made.

11.THE POST-WORLD WAR 2 DEPARTMENTAL MALAISE

THE YEAR, 1946 – STATION GARDEN SUFFERS

The station garden suffered due to severe wind in November and Leading Porter Beeching was disappointed as he hoped to receive the first prize in the garden competition.

THE YEAR, 1953 – CONFLICT OVER THE STATION ROAD APPROACH

If there was one outstanding issue that caused ongoing confrontation between Murrumburrah Council and the Department of Railways, it was the management of those geographical areas where the property boundaries of both organisations meant. There was a range of specific issues and these involved drainage problems, noise, dust and smoke pollution, collection of night soil, payment of rates from non-railway tenants in railway residences, unsafe subway access, overhead bridges in disrepair, absence of control of noxious weeds and animals, dilapidated fencing and a disregard for signage.

³⁵⁹ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 11th May, 1944, p. 4.

This paper only refers to those issues related to the railway stations. However, even within this narrow topic there was sustained correspondence between the two organisations about the appearance and maintenance of station approaches. Once again, the road approach to Murrumburrah station was the subject of discussion in 1953. Apparently, there was a tree, called the “Tree of Heaven” for which the root system was extending beyond the Railway boundary and onto the Council footpath. As well, thistles and rubbish were growing on the sidewalk. The Town Clerk advised that the area in question belonged to the Railways and Council resolved to make an inspection and, if that inspection confirmed the Railways were responsible, a notice would be served on the Department.³⁶⁰

One month later, the approach to the station was described as “most untidy.” The pepper trees near the station needed lopping and the area was generally untidy. Ashes from the station fireplaces were thrown across the footpath, despite there being a bin at the station, which was reportedly “never used”.³⁶¹ Council decided to make yet another approach to the Department.

THE YEAR, 1967 – PLATFORMS SHORTENED

At this time, both platforms were 400 feet long, which was the same length as they were in 1933.³⁶² By July, 1973, the platforms had been reduced to 298 feet in length.

THE YEAR, 1974 - THE STATION BECOMES UNATTENDED

It was announced in the local press on 10th October, 1974, that Murrumburrah railway station would close from 19th October.³⁶³ The Goulburn District Superintendent, R. Turnbull, sent a letter to the *Harden Murrumburrah Express* newspaper saying that “due to lack of patronage and the present economic instability, a direction was made by the Public Transport Commission.” He added that Harden railway station was in close proximity and that no great inconvenience would be occasioned by the local residents.”³⁶⁴ Clearly, this was another display of departmental arrogance as the distance of one mile was a fair way to walk, even for able-bodied people on hot or cold days and nights.

Staff were withdrawn from Murrumburrah station on 19th October, 1974 and the station was then operated under unattended conditions.

THE YEAR, 1976 – STATION CLOSURE

Murrumburrah station closed on 8th February, 1976, though the siding into Bunges’ mill continued to operate.³⁶⁵ The Public Transport Commission said that the closure was part of its policy to close and remove unattended, wayside platforms throughout the State and, in doing so, accelerate the running of trains.

³⁶⁰ *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 5th February, 1953, p. 1.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 30th April, 1953, p. 4.

³⁶² NSW, *Local Appendix to the Working Timetable*, 1967, p. 55.

³⁶³ *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 10th October, 1974, p. 2

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁵ *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 15th January, 1976, p. 2.

THE YEAR, 1981 – AN ATTEMPT TO CONSERVE THE BUILDINGS

Harden Shire Council had approached the Department of Railways in March, 1981, to demolish the unsightly buildings at Murrumburrah station. Vandals had caused a considerable amount of damage to the buildings since staff were withdrawn. In 1982, the National Trust advised the Department of Railways that the station was an industrial archaeological site, advice which stopped demolition temporarily.

Engineers in the Railway Department maintained that there was nothing special about the construction of the buildings at the station as they were similar to many others throughout the State. Of course, this was incorrect. The 1900 brick building on the Cootamundra-bound platform was an example of a very small number of structures of the enhanced Pioneer style.

The Railway Department decided that, as it was the National Trust which wanted to save the buildings, the Trust should maintain the structures. The Department placed an advertisement in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 6th September, 1982, inviting potential lessees to come forward. Neither the National Trust nor anyone else came forward.

Although there were no staff allocated to the station, the two residences continued to exist and were occupied by Railway officers, with one containing a signaller and the other a labourer.

THE YEAR, 1985 – BUILDINGS DEMOLITION COMMENCED

A photograph appeared in the local paper taken during the demolition of both buildings. One interesting feature of the timber building on the Sydney-bound platform was the provision of a fixed awning over the entry from the street into the general waiting room. This awning was provided at the time of construction in 1918. The roofs of both buildings were painted red at the time of demolition.³⁶⁶

THE YEAR, 1986 – DEMOLITION COMPLETED

The signal box was closed on 29th July, 1985. The demolition of both the 1900 and the 1918 platform buildings was completed in February, 1986, except the signal box. The signal box was demolished in the late 1980s. The precast concrete slabs that were used for the rear wall of the foundations of the signal box were still extant in 2010.

Stuart Sharp

22nd September, 2016

³⁶⁶ *Harden Express*, 28th March, 1985, p. 3.

THE RELUCTANT SERVANT

RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TOWN OF HARDEN- MURRUMBURRAH & THE NSW RAILWAYS

THE CASE STUDY OF HARDEN RAILWAY STATION

STUART SHARP

22nd September, 2016

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1.A TASTE OF WHAT YOU WILL READ

This is a story about the interface of the relationship between the town of Harden- Murrumburrah and the New South Wales Railways. It examines only one aspect of the relationship, namely the railway station at the Harden end of the town. A separate study examines the relationship of the other station at the Murrumburrah end of the town.

This is not a happy story but it accurately maps the frustration of the people of the town in dealing with the Colonial and, later, the State railway organisation. The New South Wales Railways operated in a monopoly situation for its entire existence until it was split up and sold in the 1990s. It was starved of money because of the policy of its owner. It was the puppet of the Colonial and, later, the State government. The railway organisation was destined to fail. Research in other, unpublished spheres of railway service in Harden-Murrumburrah, such as the provision of passenger and freight services, has established the same level of poor service and frustrating communications and more.

Year after year and decade after decade, the history of Harden station is one where the same aspects appear and reappear and reappear. Any aspect of the station's operations that affected people in the town was the subject of complaint, often on a frequent basis. Local railway officials had no power to act in any way to help the local community. Over the long run, there were no winners. All the railway personnel lost their jobs and all the town residents turned to motor cars for private travel.

The reader will also come to realise that, after 1885, the New South Wales Railways became overwhelmingly interested in saving money at the expense of desecrating attractive platform buildings, such as the one at Harden. In 2016, the conglomeration of structures on the platform represent yearly 140 years of additions, conversions and demolitions. While today it is not a pretty site, Harden station does represent cultural history of the New South Wales Railways and the policies that were adopted over the decades in an endeavour to provide facilities and services at the lowest possible cost. It is the unattractiveness of the composition of buildings at Harden which is of heritage significance because the structures survive at a single site tell part of the story the growth of the town of Harden/Murrumburrah.

2.METHODOLOGY

Surely there is only one way to write the history of something? You get information and write it down and, voila, there is a history. Unfortunately, that is not a history. All that has been done is the compilation of information from extant documents. Although it is not possible to write a history without evidence, the simple documentation of that evidence is not a history.

THE ROLE OF THE CHOSEN SUBJECT

The selection of the subject to be examined is a very important part of the methodology. In the case of the expression of a series of past events outlined above, there is missing a key ingredient and that is what is the major question to be asked and answered in the preparation of a document of history.

It is fairly obvious to see that, if no question is raised and answered, the expression of a list of events is disengaged from the process of learning.

THE BALANCE BETWEEN THE SIGNIFICANT AND THE INSIGNIFICANT

Unlike the physical sciences, the discipline of history involves a number of mental factors that can currently operate in the absence of a step-by-step practical user manual. Researchers need to know the difference of what is outstanding and what is ordinary and what is significant and what is insignificant. At the same time, researchers need to know how to interpret and express the meaning of events to the audience. So far, the methodology used in this case study follows that pattern of activity but that is where the process stops.

THE LIMITS OF EVIDENCE

Human activity is often recorded in evidence because it is an event, i.e. something has occurred. Methodology also includes what is unrecorded or, rather, considers what is absent. Historians are able only to work with evidence but they are aware of the limitations of evidence, which includes what is not recorded and the extent to which evidence is accurate. After all, evidence is often only something that someone desired to be preserved. It may be absolutely false, partly correct or convey “truth”.

CONTEMPORANEOUS CONTEXT

Another mental tool that the historian uses is the understanding of the relative significance of the subject in the context of other contemporaneous subjects. Often documents are written in such a way that the subject of the essay seemed to be of critical importance and interest, to the extent that the author has been found necessary to spend a lot of time and effort in researching, writing and publishing the outcome of her/his work. In other words, authors tend to over emphasise the importance of what they are writing about. While the reader may be thankful that this has not been the case in this essay, there is a downside.

The result is that this document is not a history because it does not embed the chronological and comparative study of Harden station into the development of the village and, later, the town. It merely tells one part of the story of the interaction between the town and the railway operator. For a history to be written, the story of the railway stations at Murrumburrah and Harden need to be set in the context of the everyday life of the town. It is only that way that an assessment can be made of the importance of the subject of the essay.

OK. What is the question asked in this study? The question is:

Did the New South Wales Railways, the owner and operator of the two railway stations in the village/town, provide station facilities that well served the town?

PLACEMENT OF THE SUBJECT IN ITS CONTEXT

The approach adopted is to examine chronologically the developments that occurred at the site of what is today Harden station. Also, the method includes consideration of what was happening at

other railway stations on the Main South line and allows an assessment to be made as to whether the people of Harden-Murrumburrah received worse or better facilities for the same standard of facilities compared to other stations. Thus, the method is both chronological and comparative within the same time periods.

MENTAL BAGGAGE OF THE RESEARCHER

Every researcher has a brain that contains a wide range of views and attitudes that will affect the conduct of the study and the presentation of the results. These include:

- a consciousness of the engagement of a methodology,
- an ability to discriminate between methodology and historical methods,
- acknowledgement of the limitations of evidence,
- recognition of the complexity of historiography,
- clarity about the reason why the study is undertaken and the expected outcome,
- the role of ideology,
- the complexities about causation and the trickiness of the concept of truth,
- ideas about the way the world works,
- views on the connectivity or otherwise of time,
- an ability to discriminate whether the researcher is a participant or observer in the study area,
- the degree of formal training in the discipline of history, &
- the extent of the possession of skills in the English language.

METHODS FOR THE CONDUCT OF THE STUDY

Unfortunately, the official file of the New South Wales Railways dealing with both Murrumburrah and Harden stations do not survive. This study includes basically four sources of material with the first being the extant architectural plans and the second being local newspapers. The third source is the records of the New South Wales Parliament and the last is the Annual Reports and other official documents of the various railway undertakings. In addition, some secondary material has been researched.

This essay should be read in conjunction with the similar study of Murrumburrah station, which was located at the opposite end of the same town – what is today known as Harden-Murrumburrah. The two studies involve an examination of one bigger station and one smaller station. There is a very clear match between the issues raised by the local residents and local organisations and the Railway Department. The two studies – of Harden and Murrumburrah – together confirm the nature of the culture of the New South Wales Railway bureaucracy. That culture very much was negative towards anyone and anything outside the ambit of the organisation.

The paper on Murrumburrah station contains relevant information not included in this document that explains why the railway came through Murrumburrah and also gives information on the station building construction policy at that time.

3.WHY DID THE RAILWAY COME THROUGH HARDEN/MURRUMBURRAH?

The history of the railway through Harden and Murrumburrah starts in 1857 when John Whitton, the Engineer-in-Chief, Railway Construction Branch, Department of Public Works, foreshadowed the construction of a railway line from Sydney to the Murray River to link with the Victorian Railways at the border and provide a continuous railway between Sydney and Melbourne.³⁶⁷ From that time, the extension of the southern line came closer and closer to Harden and Murrumburrah, with Goulburn being reached in 1869. After a little hiccup about the amount of money to be spent on further railway extensions, the tracks headed south from Goulburn in 1874 and it was necessary for the surveyors to keep well ahead of the construction. It was in 1872 Murrumburrah got its first mention in the official documents, with the nomination that “the most troublesome places were Rocky Ponds and Murrumburrah.”³⁶⁸ The problem at Murrumburrah was that the village was at the bottom of the gully through which Murrumburrah Creek flowed. Steep gradients were needed in both directions to cross the Creek. Any station would have to be located on the rising gradient from Murrumburrah to Demondrille. Also, there was no flood-free, flat land on which to build a station, let alone a railway yard or a locomotive depot or any other sort of build.

The railway line zoomed through Murrumburrah late in 1877 on his way to Cootamundra and beyond. No building; no platform and no signpost were provided at the spot where the railway brushed the side of the village. John Whitton had stated at the opening of the line to Gunning in 1875 that the line was of a “cheap type” for, as the *Sydney Morning Herald* more kindly worded the nature of the funding allocation as relating to “work of a light character, £7,000 per mile.”³⁶⁹ Whitton was very skilful in saving money and he did this by a number of measures including:

- the selection of all types of buildings the lowest cost,
- the elimination of as many buildings as possible,
- the use of portable buildings, &
- the delay in the completion of buildings at the time he handed lines over to the Railway Commissioners, who were required to complete buildings from their departmental budget rather than Whitton’s financial allocation.

Whitton also decided to reduce the amount of ballast, provide very limited under track drainage and changed the style of boundary fencing from three-rail to two-rail as well as using unusual fencing methods. Most of these measures were reflected in what he provided in the area around Murrumburrah village. Between Bowning and Bethungra, not a single permanent platform building

³⁶⁷ E. Harding, *Uniform Railway Gauge*, Melbourne, Lothian Publishing Co., 1958, p. 41.

³⁶⁸ Report by Thomas Firth to the Engineer-in-Chief of Surveys, 1872 and 1873.

³⁶⁹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14th March, 1877, p. 2.

was provided, Whitton used unattractive, timber temporary and offered portable structures for every station.

The history of Murrumburrah station provides more information explain what was provided at the line opening and why that occurred. Have a look at what follows to understand the way Whitton operated and the consequences he left behind in for the town of Harden-Murrumburrah.

More information is provided on this aspect of the study in the document prepared in relation to Murrumburrah station.

4.THE DOMINANT ENGINEERING & ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN FACTOR - MONEY

John Whitton gave a lot of consideration to ways of reducing the amount of funds he spent on platform buildings and essential residences for Station Masters. The building he approved for Bowning in July, 1876, was the last time that he would combine a building containing both traditional office accommodation and a residence for the Station Master and his family. For the next four years, Whitton played with designs until he perfected what would become a standard station design and a standard residential design. Although plans were drawn for combination buildings for both Binalong and Harden, these were abandoned and Whitton used temporary timber structures for the platform structures. Although the platform buildings at those stations were pretty crappy, he did introduce a new design of residence at both Binalong and Harden, both of which stand in 2016. This new design of stand-alone residence became the standard residential accommodation for Station Masters from 1877 until 1889.

The use of temporary buildings at Binalong and Harden was not unique to those two stations and, in fact, the provision of temporary structures and unfinished structures was the pattern at the time of the various extensions between Goulburn and Albury. This pattern is reflected in the Table below showing what was provided in the form of staff and public accommodation on platforms at the opening of each station.

TABLE: DETAILS OF PLATFORM BUILDINGS UPON LINE OPENING GOULBURN (EXCLUSIVE) TO ALBURY (INCLUSIVE) IN LINE ORDER

STATION & OPENING DATE (final names used)	APPROVED BUILDING DESIGN	BUILDING MATERIAL AT OPENING	BUILDER & BUILDINGS AT TIME OF OPENING	REPLACEMENT DATE
Yarra 1 st site 9/11/75 2 nd site 27/10/12	No building on platform			
Breadalbane 9/11/75	Details unknown			
Fish River	No building on			

STATION & OPENING DATE (final names used)	APPROVED BUILDING DESIGN	BUILDING MATERIAL AT OPENING	BUILDER & BUILDINGS AT TIME OF OPENING	REPLACEMENT DATE
9/11/75	platform			
Gunning 9/11/75	Prototype standard platform building – gabled roof	Brick with iron roof	Fred Horn, Goulburn, replaced Mr. Hines - Present brick building “far from complete”	Not replaced – building extant
Jerrawa 3/7/76	No building on platform			
Yass 3/7/76	Exactly same building style as at Gunning approved by JW on 20/3/75 – 1875 plan cancelled - Revised plan in 1876 for a two-storey combined office/residence with contract date of 24/3/76	Timber	Fred Horn & two others - foundations laid in February for the 1875 building – John Whitton instructs work to stop in April, 1876 – workers relocated to Bowning at JW's instruction – temporary timber buildings provided	Building completed after line opening - extant
Bowning 3/7/76	Combination two-storey office/residence, the same as the 2 nd building for Yass	Brick with iron roof	Foundations laid in February – men transferred from Yass to work on the Bowning building	
Binalong 1 st site 1/11/76 2 nd site 22/12/15	Combination single-storey office/residence planned 23/5/76 but not built	Timber	Foundations laid in February – work stopped	Temporary offices survived until brick structure like that approved for Binalong and Harden in 1880
Galong 1 st site 12/3/77 2 nd site 16/4/17	No building			
Rocky Ponds 1 st site 12/3/77 2 nd site 16/4/16	No building			
Cunningar 12/3/77	Design unknown	Timber	Building “not yet complete”	Morphed into a larger structure with duplication
Harden 12/3/77	Design unknown	Timber	Portable buildings transferred from Yass	1880
Wallendbeen 1 st site 1/11/77 2 nd site 1917	No building			
Cootamundra	1 st temporary	Timber	Temporary building –	Date unknown

STATION & OPENING DATE (final names used)	APPROVED BUILDING DESIGN	BUILDING MATERIAL AT OPENING	BUILDER & BUILDINGS AT TIME OF OPENING	REPLACEMENT DATE
1/11/77	building design had often-fronted waiting room and used extended roof rafters to form an awning in place of a posted verandah – 2 nd temporary building had four rooms with gabled roof – open-fronted waiting room & conventional posted verandah		contract let to Peter Cram on 3/8/77 for the building with extended roof rafters & on 4/8/77 contract to William Sharp for a temporary building with posted verandah	when the first timber building was replaced by the second timber building – present brick structure approved in 1887
Bethungra 15/4/78	Temporary four-room building with gabled roof – open-fronted waiting room	Brick	Contract issued late and 1 st contractor went on holidays – 2 nd contract for platform building not let until three days after line opening – built by Amos Brothers	Not replaced – only instance where the contractor for the construction of the per way also constructed the platform building
June 6/7/78	Temporary building with gabled roof	Timber	Frame only erected at time of station opening	1883
Harefield 3/9/78	No building			
Bomen 3/9/78	Open-fronted waiting room – unusual hipped roof	Brick	Only building on the line completed at time of line opening – contract to Charles Hardy of Wagga Wagga signed on 9/10/77	Not replaced
Wagga Wagga 1/9/79	Temporary building called “absurd”	Timber	Temporary structure – foundations for present building not started until three months after line opening – Charles Hardy et al signed contract on 25/10/79	1880
Uranquinty 1/9/80	One-room shelter shed with posted verandah	Timber	Not completed by John McDonald before line opening – The Rock and Yerong Creek built to the same plan	1888
The Rock 1/9/80	One-room shelter shed with posted verandah – considered a temporary station building	Timber	Completed by John McDonald before line opening – The Rock and Yerong Creek built to the same plan	Contract for present building let to J. Johnson in October, 1880

STATION & OPENING DATE (final names used)	APPROVED BUILDING DESIGN	BUILDING MATERIAL AT OPENING	BUILDER & BUILDINGS AT TIME OF OPENING	REPLACEMENT DATE
Yerong Creek 1/9/80	One-room shelter shed with posted verandah	Timber	Completed by John McDonald before line opening – The Rock and Yerong Creek built to the same plan	Not replaced – merely supplemented by additions
Culcairn 1/9/80	Present building in place with line opening	Timber	Contract let on 20/5/80 to Charles Hardy	Not replaced
Gerogery 1/9/80	Present building in place with line opening	Timber	Contract let on 20/5/80 to Charles Hardy	Not replaced
Table Top 3/2/81	No building			Contractor, Mr. Johnson, completed a small brick structure in August, 1881
Ettamogah 3/2/81	Small brick building approved by JW on 20/10/80 but it seems not to have been erected		Not extant in 1914	Not replaced
Albury 3/2/81	Present Italianate building incomplete	Brick	Goods shed used as a station building for 1 st year after line opening – Stevens and Kyle, contractors, had started work in October, 1880	Not replaced

SOURCE: architectural plans for each station together with newspaper reports.

The Table below sorts out the information in the above Table from line order to the allocation of stations into status order. The Table below allows a clearer understanding of what buildings John Whitton did and did not provide between Goulburn and Albury.

TABLE: STATUS OF BUILDINGS AT TIME OF STATION OPENINGS GOULBURN-ALBURY

NO BUILDING PROVIDED	TEMPORARY BUILDINGS	INCOMPLETE BUILDINGS	COMPLETED BUILDINGS	DETAILS UNKNOWN
Yarra	Yass	Gunning	Bomen	Breadalbane
Fish River	Binalong	Bowning	Culcairn	Cunningar
Jerrawa	Harden	Albury	Gerogery	
Galong	Cootamundra		Ettamogah	
Rocky Ponds	Bethungra			
Wallendbeen	Junee			
Harefield	Wagga Wagga			

Table Top	Uranquinty			
	The Rock			
	Yerong Creek			

The Table above shows how John Whitton met his budget. Very few buildings were completed at the time he handed over the lines to the Railway Commissioner for the commencement of train operations. All costs after that event were not included in Whitton's budget, but that of the Railway Department. Of the 27 stations, eight or 30% had no building; ten or 37% had cheap temporary structures; three or 11% were incomplete and only four or 15 % had been completed. Only the building at Bomen was a brick structure. In short, 85% of the stations did not have a permanent platform building. The above Table confirms that what happened at Harden was consistent with the pattern of station construction for the entire line from Goulburn to Albury over the period 1875 to 1880.

The next question that pops up is whether the use of low-cost construction options also applied the provision of platform walls. The Table below lists the stations and the materials that were used to form the platform walls and the copings, this latter element being the joint between the vertical and horizontal surfaces of the platform.

TABLE: MATERIALS THAT FORMED PLATFORM WALLS AT DATE OF LINE OPENING GOULBURN (EXCLUSIVE TO ALBURY (INCLUSIVE) IN LINE ORDER

STATION	MATERIAL	STATION	MATERIAL
Yarra	Brick	June	Stone with brick capping
Breadalbane	Brick	Harefield	Stone with brick capping
Fish River	Brick	Bomen	Stone with brick capping
Gunning	Brick	Wagga Wagga	Brick
Jerrawa	Brick	Uranquinty	Timber
Yass	Stone with brick capping	The Rock	Timber
Bowning	Brick	Yerong Creek	Timber
Binalong	Stone	Culcairn	Brick with stone capping
Galong	Brick	Gerogery	Timber
Rocky Ponds	Brick	Table Top	Brick
Cunningar	Brick	Ettamogah	No entry recorded
Harden	Stone with brick capping	Albury	Brick with stone capping
Wallendbeen	Brick		

STATION	MATERIAL	STATION	MATERIAL
Cootamundra	1877 plan shows timber wall but it is possible that “stone with timber capping” shown in 1892 was erected in 1877		
Bethungra	Stone with brick capping		

SOURCE: NSW, Report of the *Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Alleged Defectiveness and Unsuitability of the Baldwin Locomotives*, Sydney, Government Printer, 1892, Appendix, p. 360.

The Table above shows that the stone and brick platform wall at Harden was consistent with the practice that prevailed before 1880. When a comparison is made with the materials used for the provision of platform walls and the provision for platform buildings, there is a striking dissimilarity. Whitton from 1865 to 1880 consistently made sure that platforms, and especially platform walls, were made for permanency. This contrasts with Whitton’s disregard for the need for permanent platform buildings at the time of line openings.

The two Tables raise an interesting comparison. While Whitton’s policy in relation to platform buildings focussed on temporary structures or the elimination of buildings completely, he provided permanent platforms with dominantly, high-grade materials. Why so? It was because Whitton was basically a track engineer and not interested in buildings. It was not Whitton but William Mason, his second-in-charge who supervised the architectural and drafting staff. It was an easily decision by Whitton where to save money.

An analysis of the 27 stations between Goulburn and Albury, indicates that 12 stations or 44% had brick walls with brick copings. Eight stations or 30% had stone walls with brick copings. Only four stations or 15% had timber walls and timber copings and it is interesting to note that all these four stations were located south of Wagga Wagga and date from 1880. What is significant about 1880? It was from that time that John Whitton started to approve his new design for Third-Class buildings, which later became known as the “standard roadside station.” It was from this time that a new platform policy was introduced. One of the main features of the new policy was the establishment of a minimum platform width of 12 feet. The policy also changed the established dictum that stone or brick were to be used exclusively for walls and copings and introduced the use of timber for both permanent timber buildings, such as Culcairn, Gerogery and Coolamon and also for some brick buildings, such as Corowa, Temora and Cobar.

By this stage, it should come as no surprise to learn that the total cost of the line from Goulburn to Cootamundra was “considerably less than Mr Whitton’s estimate, which was £7000 per mile, although heavier rails have been laid down and extra ballast put upon the line.”³⁷⁰ The newspaper article gave no explanation but it is very clear Whitton saved heaps of money by adopting his new station building policy, which was not to provide permanent buildings.

³⁷⁰ *Cootamundra Herald*, 13th November, 1877, p. 2.

5. THE INITIAL STATION BUILDINGS

THE ABANDONED COMBINATION OFFICE/RESIDENCE - 1876

A plan was prepared in 1876 for a large, two-storey combination station building at the present site of Harden station similar to what was constructed at Yass Junction and Bowning. It was to measure 100 feet 3 inches long by 23 feet 6 inches wide. As well as the usual offices, waiting rooms and toilets, the downstairs section contained a family kitchen and a family sitting room. Upstairs, were three bedrooms and a linen closet. There was no separate family toilet and family members use the public toilets. The platform was intended to be 260 feet long.

The 1870s was playtime for John Whitton in relation to the design of platform buildings. He had introduced the first double-storied platform building at Wallerawang in 1869 to mark the end of his triumphant railway across the Blue Mountains.³⁷¹ In 1875, Whitton struck on the idea that he could use the design that he had applied to Wallerawang for stations on the Main South line. This was an attempt to lower construction costs by combining a residence for the Station Master as well as offices for station operations. Whitton had approved the part two-storey design at High Street near Maitland in 1873 and at Ashfield in 1874. He then applied the design to Yass Junction and Bowning, both in 1875, which were built and survive today. Then, Whitton had second thoughts. The combination residence/office building intended for Harden, along with a similar structure proposed for Binalong, were not erected.³⁷²

The decision not to build the combination examples at Binalong and Harden was due to the difficult financial position in which John Whitton was placed. In both of these instances, Whitton adopted one of his new strategies – the relocation of redundant or portable buildings at existing stations together with the decision to leave the construction of permanent buildings to the Railway Commissioner after he handed over the line. This policy allowed Whitton to save substantial sums of capital funds.

It must be remembered that the tight fiscal situation in which Whitton worked was the result of his own doing. He agreed to do the work for the sum offered by the NSW government. Also, he had adopted high-cost building construction policies between Sydney and Goulburn for which Whitton received censure. Politicians were not going to let Whitton spend what they considered excessive amounts of money south of Goulburn. Had Whitton adopted a more balanced, less extravagant construction policy north of Goulburn, perhaps he would have been allocated more funds than he did receive south of Goulburn.

THE INCONVENIENCE OF THE PRESENT STATION SITE

One Sydney newspaper reported that the present Harden station was a mile from the township but noted that there was plenty of room for housing in the immediate vicinity of the station. James

³⁷¹ Some 15 years later, Whitton's colleague, George Cowdery, approved a similar structure at Emu Plains as the marker of the start of the Blue Mountains Railway.

³⁷² Whitton used the design for the last time at Orange in 1876 but his colleague, William Mason, who was looking after existing lines used Whitton's design for East Maitland in 1879.

Watson, the Parliamentary Member for The Lachlan, said that he had given fair general support the present Government Ministry for two years and was not going to desert a sinking ship – whatever that meant. The Member for Goulburn, William Roberts, commented that Harden was one of the oldest townships beyond Yass in the southern district and had a population of nearly 200. He added that it was an important centre, being the nearest railway station for Young, Grenfell, Jugiong et cetera. At the time of the railway arrival, there were two hotels, namely the Criterion and Commercial, two stores and a “good” flour mill which was near “Currawang Creek”.³⁷³

It was quite clear to everyone who turned up on the opening day that the station site was a long way from the urban centre that it was alleged to serve. Another Sydney newspaper reported that the Harden station “is excellently situated, except that it is merely a mile from the township, a fact particularly galling to the townspeople, as the railway passes their very doors. Despite deputations, they have had to submit to the exigencies of the traffic and the fiat of the engineers. There is, however, an excellent site (for housing and commercial development) close to the railway station.”³⁷⁴

The *Sydney Morning Herald* noted that the usual three-rail fencing that defined the railway corridor had been replaced by a single timber rail and wire because of the scarcity of local timber. The *Herald* described the town of Murrumburrah as containing “two or three scores of dwellings, five or six public houses and a bank, none of them of very pretentious character.”³⁷⁵ John Whitton, the Engineer-in-Chief, was not present for the opening ceremony and was represented by Donald Vernon, the Traffic Manager. The Minister for Public Works, John Lackey, was present as well as the local Member of Parliament for Young, James Watson.

John Dillon and Albert King, two leading hotelkeepers, intended to run buses to and from their respective hotels at Murrumburrah to the railway station (at Harden).³⁷⁶

THE USE OF TEMPORARY PLATFORM BUILDINGS - 1877

The site of the present Harden station was opened on 12th March, 1877, under the name “Murrumburrah.” At Binalong and Harden, Whitton implemented a system whereby he cascaded temporary structures from earlier stations. For example, for the station opening at Harden, he used a timber building that had been relocated from Yass. The *Yass Courier* newspaper made the following remark about their former building, which was relocated to Harden:

“the station house at Murrumburrah will be recognised by the people of Yass as the wooden structure which did duty at our local station before the present potential building was erected. The inhabitants of Murrumburrah do not care about having our cast-off, portable buildings, but then economy is the prevailing mania in the Railway Department of the day.

³⁷³ *Evening News*, 13th March, 1877, p. 2.

³⁷⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13th March, 1877.

³⁷⁵ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14th March, 1877, p. 2.

³⁷⁶ *Cootamundra Herald*, 3rd April 1877.

However, should the traffic warrant the expenditure, an elegant commodious building will be erected at Murrumburrah.”³⁷⁷

The 1877 temporary building remained at Harden in use until 1881, when it was sent to Towrang.

Just as the railway extension whizzed past Murrumburrah village, so too did Whitton’s responsibility for the infrastructure he left behind. Once the line was opened, all the tracks, the buildings, dams and other structures had to be maintained by other people in another branch of the Public Works Department, namely the Railway Branch. Enter James Mason. Whitton had gone overseas in 1868 and it was in his absence that Mason, Whitton’s second-in-charge, approved the plan for the very first Italianate structure at Goulburn and the very first free-standing, uniquely-designed residence specifically for a Station Master. When Whitton again went overseas in 1878, Mason approved another Italianate structure for Maitland. Although there is a lack of evidence, credit can be given to William Mason for the provision of the attractive brick building that was approved for Harden in 1880. This was one of the last jobs the undertook as he resigned from the New South Wales Railways in that year.

TRAIN SERVICE

The Government Gazette, dated 8th of March, 1877, indicated that further 20 miles of the Great Southern Railway from Binalong to Harden would be open on 12th March and that the existing By-laws would apply. The notice was signed by John Rae and witnessed by Charles Goodchap, who was at the time the Secretary and would succeed John Rae as Commissioner.³⁷⁸ The timetable provided two trains per day each way with a passenger train (a mixed train south of Goulburn) departing Sydney at 1000 and arriving at Harden at 2320 and a mail and passenger train departing Sydney at 1725 and arriving at Harden at 0450. The mail and passenger train from Harden Sydney departed that 2100 arriving at Sydney at 0710 and the passenger train (next as far as Goulburn) arriving at Sydney at 1750.

Unfortunately for the people of Murrumburrah, their very first passenger train service from Sydney to Murrumburrah operated at very inconvenient times. Oh well, the inconvenient times at least matched the inconvenient location of the station.

After the railway was opened on 12th of March 1877, there are no further references to the railway station in the various newspapers in relation to railway operations until 26th May of that year when a Sydney newspaper reported that the passenger traffic between New South Wales and Victoria had greatly increased when the line was opened to Bowning and it was suggested that the opening of the extension to Harden would further increase the traffic.³⁷⁹

THE STATION MASTER’S RESIDENCE - 1877

Why is the Station Master’s house relevant to the platform buildings? Because up to 1876, Whitton had either combined residences into the platform buildings or housed the Station Master in a nearby

³⁷⁷ *Yass Courier*, 13th March, 1877, p. 2.

³⁷⁸ *Government Gazette*, No. 83, 8th March, 1877, p. 1.

³⁷⁹ *The Illustrated Sydney News*, 26th May, 1877, p. 2.

level crossing gatehouse or, in very rare circumstances, in a pre-standing, small house of the same design the use for gatekeepers and points men. The residence at Goulburn was the first purpose-built, new design of residence for a Station Master, but it was built 19 months after the station opened.³⁸⁰ The concept of concurrently built, permanent platform buildings and permanent residences was not implemented before 1880. What Whitton did at Harden and Binalong was to implement half of his new building construction policy and that half refers to the provision of the Station Master's residence at Harden.

Alexander Kerr, a contractor of unknown location, signed a contract for the good shed on 8th August, 1876, and he also signed the contract for the brick Station Master's residence but he did not sign this second contract until 27th January, 1877.³⁸¹ Why? This delay in the construction of the residence is evidence of the 1870s being a time when John Whitton and his staff were thinking about cheaper ways provide platform buildings and staff housing. In August, 1876, Whitton was still tinkering with what to do to replace his former combination office/residence. He was not ready to act. Whitton continued approving different designs from the time of the provision of platform buildings at Gunning in 1874 until he settled on what would be the standard arrangement during the 1880s for platform buildings and detached residences, which were located to one side of the station forecourt.

The Station Master's house was incomplete at the time of the line opening in March, 1877, and was still under construction in May of that year. Also, there were "about half a dozen (timber) cottages, neatly finished now being operated upon by the painters."³⁸²

The Station Master's residences at Binalong and Harden were the first examples of a new style of railway house and were part of Whitton's plan to lower costs. The important feature of the residence is that it was built as a free standing structure, not incorporated into the traditional offices of the platform building as at Yass Junction and Bowning. It would not be until 1880 that the new "standard" platform building would be built at a station with the new "standard" residence, as at Harden.

There is one important reason why the residence at Harden is far more significant than the similarly designed building at Binalong. The structure at Harden is set not only within the railway corridor but is set in position adjacent to the station. This contrasts to the residence at Binalong which is located several hundred metres from the station in one of the main streets of the village. In other words, the Harden structure was not only the important prototype for future railway houses but was located in the correct position which John Whitton desired as one of two structures (the other being the platform building) for his standard suite of station structures for stations in the 1880s.

One of the puzzling features of Harden station today is the position of the residence for the Station Master as it is the rear of the residence faces the station forecourt. Normally, the front elevation would face into the courtyard. It is known that the Station Master's residence was erected in 1877 and it seems that, at the time of the opening of the station, there was a temporary timber platform further towards Sydney and, at that time, the Station Master's residence did in fact address the

³⁸⁰ A plan was prepared for a Station Master's residence in 1867 for Mount Victoria but it was the same design that John Whitton used for at least 12 gatekeepers' cottages across the Blue Mountains.

³⁸¹ John Forsyth, *Main Southern Line – Granville Junction to Albury – Stations and Sidings*, Volume 2, unpublished document, SRA Archives, 1989, p. 113.

³⁸² *Cootamundra Herald*, 1st May, 1877, p. 2.

forecourt of the first station. It makes much sense that the 1880 building that exists today was built alongside the temporary platform and structures further towards Cootamundra. Unfortunately, with that action, the Station Master's residence then faced the wrong way, as it is today. It is known that a new platform was provided in September, 1879 at a cost of £495.³⁸³ There is another reference in 1879 that indicates that the 1880 building was not erected on the 1877 platform. A motion was moved in Parliament that all papers relating to the erection of station buildings and the determination of the sites of the stations at both Harden and Murrumburrah be tabled in Parliament.³⁸⁴ This suggests that the Railways was thinking about a new site at Harden at the same time as they were thinking about a new platform building.

Because the residence at Harden was an integral part of Whitton's composition of structures for stations, it is important to note a few key design features. Firstly, there was the use of a symmetrical front for the structure, which matched Whitton's idea about the symmetry of platform buildings that were used between Picton and Goulburn. Secondly, there was the use of the simple, hipped roof, again a feature of platform buildings on the Sydney side of Goulburn – but not the 1880 platform building at Harden. Lastly, the materials were noteworthy. On the roof, was the most prolific building material used on all sorts of New South Wales railway station buildings, namely galvanised, corrugated "iron" sheets.³⁸⁵ The more important material was that applied to the load-bearing walls, which was face brickwork usually set in English bond. In the vast majority of cases, Whitton would provide a brick official residence regardless of whether he provided a brick or timber platform building. This priority for staff accommodation died along with Whitton.

The construction of the brick Station Master's residence at Harden was of singular importance to the development of housing in the village – the word, "village" being a concept which included both the Harden end and the Murrumburrah end of the same place. The Station Master's residence was the first brick house in the village and would have been a powerful indicator of the stature of the New South Wales Railways. It was not until 1881 that the first privately owned residence in the town was constructed of brickwork.³⁸⁶

One writer has indicated that the first platform structure at present Harden was formed from the 1876 plan of the two-storey combined residence/offices together with major additions the 1880s. He also said that the roof on the structure was of hipped construction. Both statements are fundamentally incorrect. The plan for the combination building was not used; there was no brick platform building for the first four years and the roof of the 1881 building was gabled, not hipped.³⁸⁷ Other incorrect information given by the same author says the station was "rebuilt" in 1881 and that the footwarmer boiler was "provided" in 1910. These were just words that had been taken hollis-bollis from what the former Railway Archives Officer, John Forsyth, had erroneously written in the time of the dinosaur.

³⁸³ Index card for Harden station, former SRA Archives.

³⁸⁴ NSW, *Parliamentary Debates*, 1st Series, Vol. 2 1879/80, 43 & 44 Victoria, p. 1331.

³⁸⁵ From a metallurgical point of view, the sheets were not iron but steel.

³⁸⁶ Harden-Murrumburrah Historical Society, *An Outline of the History of the Harden-Murrumburrah District*, 1979, no pag.

³⁸⁷ J. M. Cottee, *Stations on the Track*, Charnwood, Ginninderra Press, 2004, p. 183.

6. THE IMPACT OF THE FIRST STATION 1877

NAME CHANGES

There was not a single house or other structure within one mile of the Harden station site in 1877, apart from the railway structures. Why? Because everyone lived in the gully at Murrumburrah. It did not take long for the Railway administration to appreciate the hostility of the local Murrumburrah community and, in acknowledgement of that unease, the name of the station was changed to North Murrumburrah on 15th September, 1878. This name change followed the opening of a platform at Murrumburrah on the same date.³⁸⁸

The name of the station changed again to Harden on 1st September, 1880, and that was done following the postal authorities reallocating the name from another nearby location to the area adjacent and including the present Harden station. So why would the post office people transfer the name of one place to another? Well, it seems that post office officials were a little more sensitive than the railway offices to what was the misuse of the name "Murrumburrah", notwithstanding the word "North" preceded the location as an adjective. It seems that everyone in the village was happy that the distinction had been made as to the location of Murrumburrah. Of course over time, the two places morphed into one urban centre and, today, the residence refer to a single town with two commercial centres.

The first additional building on the platform was a lamp room and parcels room, which were constructed by day labour. The work started on 17th October, 1878, and was completed on 14th December 1878.³⁸⁹ These were only small structures and it is amazing that a total of eight weeks were required for the construction process.

HARDEN STATION GETS MIXED UP IN POSTAL MATTERS - 1877

The station opened on 12th March, 1877 and, coincidentally, this was the same date that the pre-existing office for the Murrumburrah Telegraph Department and the office for the Postal Department were combined into one facility in the village. The new post and telegraph office for the village was not located on the railway platform, perhaps because they were in existence before the arrival of the railway.

Harden was not a big place in 1880 three years after the line opening and this is known by a report by the postal Inspector in that year who said that Harden consisted of about 12 houses, the railway station and goods shed, three inns and three stores.³⁹⁰ While the Postmaster General decline to provide a mail delivery service to the houses and businesses, he did open a postal receiving station at the railway station on 1st October, 1880, with a railway telegraph operator in charge of the facility. It was at that time that the Postmaster General changed the name of the station from Murrumburrah North to Harden. It had been the name of a post office to the north of the railway at

³⁸⁸ In NSW Parliament, *Votes & Proceedings*, Vols. 2 and 3, show the incorrect date of 5th September, 1878, for the date of the name change.

³⁸⁹ New South Wales Legislative Assembly Votes and Proceedings, 1882, volume 4, p. 14

³⁹⁰ Littlejohn, *Early Murrumburrah*, op. cit., p. 26.

a place called Currawong, which closed on 13th August, 1877.³⁹¹ The name was then available for transfer to another facility.

The Postmaster at Murrumburrah delivered mail every morning to the Harden railway station where it was collected by the local residents. That arrangement lasted until 1884. There was also a letter box at on the station which was cleared by train guards. Residents could post letters after the normal mail closing time as long as the late fee postage had been applied. This was a very attractive feature of a railway station and was one of the reasons the people at the Murrumburrah end of town want to increase the status of their railway facility from platform to station – the change of status not being achieved until 1889.

THE INTRATOWN FIGHT FOR URBAN HEGEMONY - 1878

On the 27th December, 1878, Messrs T. and G. Barnes, a big-wig local retailer, and 60 other residents wrote to the Commissioner for Railways to call attention for the need for a larger platform building. The structure then in use was described as “very small and causes the public much inconvenience, affording little shelter during wet weather or accommodation for travellers.”

Smart readers will note that two items are being mentioned in this same reference. Firstly, there is the platform and there is a good chance that the complaint was more about its narrowness and possibly its length, though both dimensions possibly were inadequate, according to the local inhabitants. From 1855 to the 1870s, the width of platforms in many cases, except large stations like Goulburn, was narrow with widths of six or eight feet being common. What would become the standard platform width of 12 feet, was first introduced in 1871 with the planning of the second Sydney terminus railway station. However, it was not until after 1880 that the width of 12 feet became a New South Wales standard. The second issue raised in the above quotation refers to the accommodation for the public provided adjacent to the platform. Although the design is unknown, with the evidence of other locations and complaints from other people in other villages and towns, it can be assumed that whatever was provided at Harden station was pathetic.

The Sydney based Traffic Manager, Thomas Carlyle, advise the Commissioner on 17th January, 1879, that he agreed with the petitioners and stated that the passenger traffic from the station was larger than any other station between Goulburn and Wagga Wagga. However, because it had been decided to work to erect a platform at the level crossing at Murrumburrah, he recommended the postponement of suitable replacement buildings at Harden until the Murrumburrah platform was opened and an assessment had been made of the impact of the additional station. William Mason, who was second in charge under John Whitton, was asked on 22nd January, 1879, to report on the “character of the present building and the cost of putting up one of a better class.” Mason replied to the Commissioner that the structures at Harden are “built with timber and of a temporary kind not suitable for the requirements of the traffic there. Suitable buildings might be erected for about £3,000. The building that George Cowdery, who were taken over from William Mason, approved in 1880 cost only £649. Imagine what a £3,000 building would have looked like at Harden station.

³⁹¹ Ibid., p. 27.

Another petition dated 23rd January, 1879, not from Murrumburrah residents but from 31 signatories from what they called East Murrumburrah, which was the area adjacent to Harden station, requested that the new station house be erected on the site of the present Harden building in place of the station asked for by some of the inhabitants of what they insultingly called Western Murrumburrah, which in reality was Murrumburrah. In essence, the petition did not want to see a platform established at “Murrumburrah Township”, the reasons being:

- “the goods shed, Station Master’s house, sheep and cattle yards and other government buildings had been erected on the Harden station,
- land has been purchased at high rates at East Murrumburrah on the supposition that the railway station would be permanently established there,
- hotels and other buildings had been erected at considerable cost,
- a substantial bridge had just been erected across Murrumburrah Creek and the traffic from Young would not now in any way be impeded, &
- there are already too many delays and platforms on the main southern line from Sydney to Wagga Wagga”

The Minister for Public Works, John Lackey, replied on 27th of March, 1879, to Mr Barnes informing him that the station at Murrumburrah was to be erected. Although the Minister had issued instructions that a station was to be provided, the Railway Department considered that the Minister did not know anything about railways and decided not to provide a station, as requested, but merely a place to get on and off trains – known as a platform. The platform was constructed at Murrumburrah, opening on 15th September, 1879. That did not mean that the winners were in Murrumburrah and that the losers were located in Harden. Being a good politician, Lackey would have known the significance to the railway organisation of Harden station and supported improvements also at that location.

The decision was made on 17th March, 1879, to call tenders for the erection of a permanent platform building at Harden. What is strange is that tenders were called seemingly before the finalisation and approval of plans. William Mason reported on 10th June, 1879, that the drawings were ready and specification in hand. Mason forwarded the drawings for the new building on 1st July, 1879, to the Commissioner, who approved them on 31st July, 1879. Unfortunately, this 1879 plan is not extant. It seems that these plans were tossed out because, despite the approval to of the plans, work did not proceed to replace the existing buildings at Harden in 1879. The evidence indicates that the question of providing a permanent building at Harden was reviewed and still under consideration until February, 1880.

Carlyle agreed with the report of Traffic Inspector, George Roberts, on the 15th December, 1879, about the need for additional passenger accommodation at Murrumburrah platform.³⁹² Carlyle said that most of the passenger and parcel tracking had been diverted away from the platform at Harden to the Murrumburrah platform. Roberts and Carlyle had agreed that they would submit a new

³⁹² As well as being the Traffic Inspector for the section between “Murrumburrah” and Junee, George Roberts was also the Station Master at Wagga Wagga. Alexander Crawford was the Traffic Inspector for the section from Picton to “Murrumburrah.” See NSW, *Blue Book*, 1878, p. 105. So who actually controlled “Murrumburrah” station?

proposal towards the end of 1879, which they did. Their idea was to review the proposed replacement building at Harden in the light of passenger levels at Murrumburrah station. Their decision was to make Murrumburrah station the passenger facility while goods traffic would be continued to be dealt with at Harden. The two men felt that the provision of improved accommodation at Murrumburrah would obviate the need to provide a replacement building at Harden.

On 6th February, 1880, the Commissioner asked what is being done with respect to the erection of the station at Murrumburrah.³⁹³ William Mason replied on 11th February that “the matter has been delayed until it was decided what amount of station accommodation was to be given to Murrumburrah South (sic). It appears to be that the latter place (i.e. Murrumburrah platform) will be more used as a passenger station, being closer to the Township than the former (Harden) and it is proposed to erect sufficient accommodation for passengers at Murrumburrah South platform. Mason recommended that “a small station only be erected at Murrumburrah North.”

These various references in 1879 and 1880 to Murrumburrah, Murrumburrah North, Murrumburrah South, Murrumburrah East and Murrumburrah West no doubt contributed to the decision by the post office authorities to give an entirely different name to the geographic area around the present Harden railway station, this occurring on 1st September, 1880. On the 17th of February, 1880, the Secretary for Public Works indicated that the number of passengers using Murrumburrah station in 1879 was 1,201 and 511 at Harden. Murrumburrah dealt with 329 mail bags and none at Harden.

By February, 1880, it was clear that improvements would be made to stations at both Murrumburrah and Harden but the nature of those improvements at that time is not clear to researchers today. Then, a new subject pops up – the need for refreshment facilities.

FIRST DEMANDS FOR THE PROVISION OF A RAILWAY REFRESHMENT ROOM – 1879/1880

In mid-December, 1879, there was a newspaper report that “a public meeting was held last evening at Murrumburrah North (i.e. Harden), at which a feeling of confidence was expressed that the Government, recognising the responsibility of their position, would not commit themselves to any action so inimical to the public interest as the proposal to erect the railway refreshment rooms on a site so unsuitable as the platform (at the site of Murrumburrah station)”.³⁹⁴ This translates into modern speech as a warning to the Colonial Government from the people of Harden that there would be trouble if the New South Wales Railways decided to place a refreshment room at Murrumburrah rather than at Harden. As time now tells us, the refreshment room was built at Harden station.

Another deputation in February, 1880, presented a petition to the Minister of Public Works for the erection of a refreshment room not at the present Harden but at Murrumburrah station. On this occasion, the 131 signatories were residents of the town of Young and its vicinity, “setting forth that the convenience of a greater number of railway passengers would be consulted by locating the new

³⁹³ Another source states that the date was 9th February, 1880.

³⁹⁴ *Evening News*, 19th December, 1879, p. 2.

*refreshment rooms at Murrumburrah than by erecting them at Murrumburrah North. The Minister said that he would consider the erection of the refreshment room, but would be chiefly guided by the report of the Traffic Manager, who would, doubtless, give the subject due consideration in the selection of the site”.*³⁹⁵ This petition was based on the argument that the mail coach from Young and beyond received and delivered mails and passengers at the Murrumburrah platform.

When the petition was received, it was referred to Inspector Roberts who wrote that:

“I can imagine a no more inconvenient site for a station than that on which the Murrumburrah platform is now situated; it is on a bank on a gradient of one in 40 rising for nearly two miles on the Wagga side. Coming down the grade, trains have difficulty in stopping and run past the platform; whilst ascending, they had great difficulty in starting. When the line is open to Albury, and our through passenger traffic is much heavier than at present, and we shall have to run faster and keep the time, we shall not be able to stop at this platform. The through trains should only stop at Murrumburrah North (Harden) and at this place I consider refreshment rooms should be.”

Robert’s response was unbelievable. In March, 1879, Minister Lackey had directed that the platform at Murrumburrah be provided and in December of that same year Inspector Roberts supported improvements to the Murrumburrah platform. In the above quote, not only did Roberts consider that Murrumburrah was the wrong place for a refreshment room, he had indicated that the station should be closed. That was pretty arrogant behaviour.

The Commissioner wrote on the 21st April, 1880 that the station at Harden will be the principal one for the district, being the place where locomotives will be changed and, because of that stoppage, will be the refreshment station. Goodchap said “I therefore think that a station on the design approved by the Minister should be erected. At the same time, something must be done to improve accommodation at the platform at Murrumburrah. A ladies’ room should be erected et cetera et cetera.” He instructed Mason to give early consideration to the matter.

William Mason was quick off the mark and told the Commissioner on 26th April that the drawings were ready and that tenders could be called for the work. Mason promised that the “ladies’ room et cetera will be erected as early as possible.” Upon instructions from the Commissioner, Mason prepared a draft advertisement inviting tenders for the erection of the new station at Harden on 29th of April, 1880. This reference to plans being ready for the calling of tenders was in fact referring to plans that had been revised following the impact of the opening of the platform at Murrumburrah.

³⁹⁵ *Evening News*, 13th February, 1880, p. 2.

7.THE REPLACEMENT PLATFORM BUILDING 1880

THE FOURTH ATTEMPT AT PROVIDING A PLATFORM BUILDING - 1880

The former Archives Officer of the State Rail Authority, John Forsyth, argued that the abandoned plan for the two-storey, combined station and residence was used as a basis for the 1880 station building.³⁹⁶ While being respectful to deceased persons, that statement is a load of rubbish. A completely new design was adopted. The plans that were prepared in 1880 was the third proposal or a permanent platform building and, counting the temporary structures at the time of line opening, it was the fourth design prepared. Before the opening, there was a plan dated 1876 for a combination office/residence and a plan. Next, was a plan of unknown design prepared in 1879 for a very large, possibly a First Class station building, and the plan finally approved in 1880 was for a smaller, Second Class station building.

THE PATTERN OF REPLACEMENT BUILDINGS ON THE MAIN SOUTH LINE

The 1877 building at the present Harden station was replaced, with work finishing in 1881. Was the four-year time lapse consistent with the replacement of temporary buildings at other locations on the Main South line?

The Table below sets out the years where the initial temporary buildings were replaced.

TABLE: PERIOD BETWEEN THE PROVISION OF INITIAL TEMPORARY BUILDINGS AND THEIR REPLACEMENT BY PERMANENT STRUCTURES

STATION	YEAR OF CONSTRUCTION OF TEMPORARY BUILDING	YEAR OF COMPLETION OF REPLACEMENT, PERMANENT BUILDING	NO. OF YEARS BETWEEN TEMPORARY AND PERMANENT BUILDINGS
Gunning	1874	1875	1
Yass	1876	1877	1
Binalong	1876	1884	8
Galong	1877	1916	39
Harden	1877	1881	4
Cootamundra	1877	1888	11
Junee	1878	1883	5
Wagga Wagga	1878	1880	2
Albury	1880	1882	2

From the above Table, it seems that the Harden building replacement was somewhere in the middle between a short and a long time. It possibly would have happened a lot earlier had the opening of

³⁹⁶ Conversation between John Forsyth and the author on 6th August, 1981.

Murrumburrah station not occurred as the Railway Department had to wait and see how many passengers and businesses used the Murrumburrah platform rather than Harden station.

DESIGN FEATURES OF THE 1880 DESIGNED (EXISTING) BUILDING

Only one sheet of the plan for the 1880 platform building survives and that relates to the provision of the verandah over the platform, which was supported by ornate timber posts six inches wide and was set on nine-inch diameter cast-iron bases. There were timber capitals seven feet seven inches above the platform level and above the capitals were simple timber brackets.

The building was described as “of brick on stone footings, cement dressing on all openings, all inside rooms plastered, roof covered with slate, tongue and groove flooring nailed on hardwood joists.”³⁹⁷ The building was 102 feet in length and 21 feet wide. The floor plan was based on a centre pedestrian access through the general waiting room. Typical of some other railway buildings was the use of faceted bay windows on the road elevation. The building consisted of five rooms under the main gabled roof, containing a general waiting room, a ladies’ waiting room, a booking office, the Station Master’s office and a luggage/parcels office. At each end of the gabled roof section, was a parapeted “wing” which contained space for porters and kerosene lamps at the Sydney end and male and female toilets at the Cootamundra end.

The parapeted wing at the Sydney end was gobbled up in a later amplification and room re-allocation and is unrecognisable today. Overall, the building was symmetrical. It was constructed in face brickwork and symmetry was displayed in a number of ways. The floor plan was symmetrical and there were symmetrical “wings” at each end of the main building. The placement of the chimneys was symmetrical. The roof was covered in slate and its uncluttered appearance was broken only by the placement of transverse gables on both sides of the structure that marked the point of entry from the town into the building on one side and from the building to the platform on the other side.

THE DESIGN FAMILY TO WHICH THE 1880 HARDEN BUILDING BELONGS

By 1874, John Whitton had used the Georgian-influenced as his First Class design at the following locations on the opening of stations on the three trunk lines:

TABLE: GEORGIAN-INFLUENCED DESIGN PLATFORM BUILDINGS 1858-1874 ON NEW LINES

YEAR APPROVED	LOCATION
Campbelltown	1858
Parramatta	1859
Penrith	1862
Picton	1863
Singleton	1863
Mittagong	1866

³⁹⁷ NSW, *Railway Reports and Papers 1884 – Return of 1881/82 – Additions and Alterations*, former SRA Archives, p. 11.

YEAR APPROVED	LOCATION
Mount Victoria	1867
Moss Vale	1867
Muswellbrook	1868
Bowenfels	1869
Scone	1870
Murrurundi	1871
Kelso	1874

Apart from the very first example at Campbelltown, the other examples showed consistent design features and the only major variation was in the length of the buildings. It was the buildings listed in the above Table that formed what John Whitton used as his First-Class platform buildings. It will be noted that the structure at Goulburn, which dates from 1868, is not amongst the list as it was a structure of pure Italianate design and was the prototype example of what became the new, higher standard for First-Class buildings. How did that occur? The structure at Goulburn was not approved by John Whitton but by his second-in-charge, William Mason, while Whitton was on holidays overseas.

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 circles 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 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, starting at Gunning, with a new design in 1874 using for the first time a gabled roof as the dominant form of roofscape. It is significant that the structure at Harden also had a gabled roof.

From the mid to late 1870s, there emerged a design for more structures with much higher levels of ornamentation and much larger size for First Class structures. Buildings at Newcastle, Sydney (the second station), Cootamundra, Junee, Wagga Wagga, Tamworth, Albury and other locations became locations for the use of Whitton's new 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 Picton and elsewhere as the new Second Class building. The work of replacing buildings on existing lines was taken from Whitton in 1879 but there was virtually no change in the design for the Second Class of platform building. The Table above shows those examples which Whitton used up to 1874. By the time 1871 had ended, Whitton was no more interested in using his once favoured Georgian-influenced design, possibly because of what he saw that his colleague, William Mason, had approved at Goulburn. The approval of Kelso three years later is a bit of a puzzle and it probably has something to do with the anger Whitton felt when he was obliged to carry the railway terminus from his preferred location at Raglan across the Macquarie River and into the town of Bathurst. Anyway, there must have been some discussion between John Whitton and William Mason about the use of the design because Mason continued using the

Georgian-influence style from 1872 until 1889 as the standard option for Second Class buildings, with a couple of exceptions.

What type of building did Harden end up getting in 1880 as a replacement for the jumble of timber structures that slowly increased in number since 1877? The structure was one of those exceptions. Harden station was allocated what was known as a Second-Class building and this family group contained influences from the Georgian style of architecture but the building at Harden did not contain the pure Georgian influences of the previous examples. What Harden received was the prototype of what became typical New South Wales Railway design practice.

The Harden structure was a mixture of features not only from the Georgian style but also with tidbits from the Italianate school of architecture. Eclectic is a word that could be fairly used and the application of this jumble of different architectural styles was typical of what the approving officers of the New South Wales Railways did up to 1890. The Table below shows the examples approved by John Whitton, William Mason, when he took over control of buildings on existing lines, and, after Mason's resignation, by his replacement, George Cowdery. It is interesting to note that the other building of the same design family approved in 1880 was at Liverpool and that this structure also had a gabled roof. However, there is little consistency amongst the various examples of the overall design family. The number of purely Georgian-influence structures built on existing lines was a few in number, unlike those constructed at the time of line opening. The replacement structure erected at Binalong also in 1880 is one of the few examples of the purely Georgian-influenced buildings, contrasting with the example at Harden with the use of the more conventional hipped roof. What is the explanation? People is the answer. Whitton was very much a creature of consistency and that is reflected in the buildings of the Georgian-influenced design he used on the opening of stations on new lines. William Mason and George Cowdery, who controlled replacement buildings on existing lines, were a little more relaxed and allowed variations, such as the use of gabled roofs and open-fronted waiting rooms. The Table below indicates the variations in design style.

TABLE: SECOND-CLASS PLATFORM BUILDINGS - 1872-1889 APPROVED ON EXISTING LINES

YEAR APPROVED	LOCATION	DESIGN STYLE INFLUENCE	NOTES
1872	Honeysuckle Point	Georgian	Skillion roofs over pavilions
1876	Newtown	Georgian	asymmetrical with one attached pavilion
1877	Newbridge	Georgian	
1878	Burwood	Georgian	
1879	Lawson	Georgian	
1880	Liverpool	Victorian Free Classical	Gabled roof
1880	Harden	Victorian Free Classical	Gabled roof

YEAR APPROVED	LOCATION	DESIGN STYLE INFLUENCE	NOTES
1880	Binalong	Georgian	
1880	Eskbank	Georgian	Not built until 1884
1880	Granville	Georgian	With matching brick waiting shed
1881	Richmond	Georgian	Asymmetrical design
1883	Windsor	Georgian	Asymmetrical design
1883	Blacktown	Georgian	Porched entry
1885	Spring Hill	Georgian	One detached & one semi-detached pavilions + large transverse gables
1886	Millthorpe	Georgian	One detached & one semi-detached pavilions + large transverse gables
1886	Stanmore	Georgian	Attached pavilions with hipped roofs
1888	Morpeth	Georgian	
1889	Greta	Georgian	Open-fronted waiting room
1889	Riverstone	Georgian	Open-fronted waiting room

Thirteen examples were built as the First Class of platform building between 1858 and 1874 and 19 examples were built as the Second Class of platform structures between 1876 and 1890. All 32 examples shared the same, simple hipped roof and attached pavilions with parapeted walls, except for the examples at Liverpool and Harden with its gabled roof. Why was the Harden design a bit out of the ordinary? As things turned out, the design example that was provided at Harden was not repeated elsewhere south of Goulburn and the same applies to the more standard version with a hipped roof at Binalong. All other stations south of Goulburn that required replacement buildings, were either lower standard structures, such as at Jerrawa and Jindalee, or higher standard structures, as at Cootamundra and Junee. Railway engineers were always trying to provide towns with the notion that their station building was unique and the best on the railway system and, in view of the absence of repeated examples, they achieved their objective at both Harden and Binalong.

THE COMPARISON BETWEEN THE 1880 BUILDINGS AT HARDEN & BINALONG

The Table below illustrates the differences between the design features of the buildings at Harden and Binalong. The Harden building being an example of the influences of the Victorian Free Classical style and the Binalong structure possessing influences belonging to the Georgian school.

TABLE: COMPARISON OF DESIGN FEATURES OF SECOND-CLASS STATIONS AT HARDEN AND BINALONG PLATFORM BUILDINGS, AS CONSTRUCTED

DESIGN FEATURE	HARDEN	BINALONG
Street setting	Located at the end of Station Street	Located parallel to Fitzroy Street
Size of station forecourt	railway owned land extends approximately 100 feet and terminates at Whitton Lane	no forecourt
Extent of visual interpretation	Strong interpretation as station provides a termination of the visual corridor & the use of attractive face bricks	very poor visual interpretation as the station is located very close and parallel to a public road & use of bricks of a pedestrian colour
Dominance of pedestrian entry	Strong visual presence due to transverse gable above entry point with projected general waiting room	Poor visual presence due to minimal projection of general waiting room
Floor plan	Transverse based on centre pedestrian access	Transverse based on centre pedestrian access
Number of rooms	five in main building + attached pavilions at each end	five in main building + attached pavilions at each end
Wall material	Attractive, bright-coloured face brickwork set in Flemish bond with bright mortar colour	Face brickwork set in Flemish bond but of subdued colour and subdued mortar colour
Wall dressing	cement render around all window and door openings & projecting quoins	no wall dressing, though dentils were provided under the eaves
Roof material	Welsh slate	Wells slate
Roof pitch	Medium	Medium
Roof design	Gable with ornate timber	Simple hip – roof

DESIGN FEATURE	HARDEN	BINALONG
	work & use of Redwood finials – roof penetrated only by chimneys through ridge	penetrated only by chimneys through ridge
Chimneys	Face brickwork with strapping without caps	Face brickwork with semicircular caps
Window design	Semi-circular heads with all-round cement moulding – faceted bay windows on Road side	Square head without moulding, apart from window sills – no bay windows
Awning design	Awnings both sides of building supported by cast iron, fluted posts	Awnings both sides of building supported by cast iron, fluted posts
Fencing at rear of platform	Picket fence painted white	Picket fence painted white

The above Table shows one dominant theme and that is the way the building at Harden was presented in a much stronger visual manner through the following features:

- The use of the projection of the walls general waiting room beyond the building alignment,
- The application of a transverse, centre gable roof marking the point of pedestrian entry,
- The symmetrically-placed, faceted bay windows,
- The contrasting window, door and other moulding, &
- The selection of attractive bricks set in a bright coloured mortar.

The location of the Harden building also played a fundamental part in the visual strength of its setting. At that time, the amount of commercial and residential development around Harden station was minimal and the only explanation for the decision to provide a strong visual presentation was the knowledge that the station building would become the shop window of a much larger railway centre, which proved to be correct. Unfortunately, the beauty of original structure has been desecrated with subsequent additions and the addition of the platform awning on the road elevation upon track duplication.

With the construction of the buildings at Harden and Binalong, the two smallish villages received buildings which the residents could view as being special and possibly unique to their town, although most local inhabitants would not have knowledge of what was provided at other villages and towns of similar size. Both structures did possess a common floor plan and were of approximately the same size. Basically, the only difference was the application of the detailed design elements and the form of the roof shape.

Harden and Binalong were the only stations on the Main South line between Liverpool and Albury to have their original timber structures replaced by Second Class buildings. At all other stations, either

the original timber or brick structures survived or were replaced with subsequent timber structures or First Class brick buildings (as at Cootamundra and Junee) or Third Class buildings (as at The Rock).

PHYSICAL CONSTRUCTION

A number of items were approved for Harden during 1880 covering structures at the locomotive Depot as well as residences. The major item listed for this year was the construction of a new station building. It was the only item for which the work was done by contract, rather than a labour. The platform building project was approved by the Commissioner – all other projects at Harden for 1880 were approved by the Heads of Branches.

Tenders were called on 8th May, 1880, for the construction of the new passenger station.³⁹⁸ Tenders closed on 1st June, 1880, and were forwarded on the same day by the Under Secretary for Public Works, who was the ex-Railway Commissioner, John Rae, to the Railway Commissioner for the erection of the station buildings at “Murrumburrah North”. Six tenders were received as follows:

- Langley and Thompson £2696,
- Michael and Welsby £2701,
- William Thackray £3250,
- William Sharp £3297,
- Charles Hardy £3730, &
- H. A. Briggs £3826.

The tender of Langley and Thompson was the lowest and recommended for acceptance on 8th June, 1880, and was forwarded to and signed by the tenderers on 9th June. The contractors started work in July, 1880. The sandstone foundations were laid in August, 1880.³⁹⁹ Construction was completed on 28th of May, 1881, at a cost of £694/8/1. Langley and Thompson were listed as “builders, Jacques Street, Balmain.”⁴⁰⁰ Charles Hardy was a Wagga Wagga contractor and, although unsuccessful on this occasion, did build a number of railway station structures at other locations in the south of the Colony.

When the much lower actual cost is compared against the estimated cost in their tender, it initially seems that the building envisaged for Harden was not built and that a much cheaper structure was provided.⁴⁰¹ There may have been some design changes but there is no evidence to support any explanation. It is possible that the larger sum quoted in the tender price also included other elements, including possibly the provision of a new and larger platform with the stone platform wall. It has already been stated that the 1877 station was possibly located slightly to the north of the present station and this is reflected by the position of the Station Master’s residence, which faces toward Cunningham and does not address the present building. The other pieces of evidence included an official mention that the platform was “lengthened” in 1881. The 1880 cost estimate of £2,696 does seem correct when compared with the refreshment room in 1884 which had an estimated cost

³⁹⁸ *Cootamundra Herald*, 8th of May, 1880, p. 5.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 7th August, 1880, p. 3.

⁴⁰⁰ Sands, *Sydney and Suburban Directory*, 1882, p. 497.

⁴⁰¹ Actual cost from NSW, Railway Reports and Papers 1882/83 – a Return in Answer to Question No. 5, *Votes and Proceedings*, 23rd August, 1882, former SRA Archives.

of £2074. The 1881 cost of £694 will have to be placed into the basket containing puzzling matters for the time being.

One or more of the existing timber buildings on the platform was or were relocated to Towrang and there re-erected in 1881.

There was an entry in the *Annual Report* that a station nameboard was fixed on the platform – possibly for the first time. Nameboards were also fixed at Yass and Cootamundra stations at the same time. It looks like there were no nameboards at stations between 1877 and 1881.

A Parliamentary Return in 1882 listed a number of works that had been completed in 1878, 1879, 1880 and 1881.⁴⁰² Unfortunately, the information was mixed up under separate headings entitled Harden and Murrumburrah and it would appear that the person preparing the table was confused about what capital item was provided at which station. For example, it indicated that the coal stage and turntable had been erected at Murrumburrah whereas these items were provided at Harden. In 1880, it lists “new water closets and a urinal” were provided with the work starting on 19th January and including on 15th of June, 1880, for the present Harden but it seems those referred to Murrumburrah station as Langley and Thompson would have provide new toilets at Harden as part of their contract.

The Under Secretary for Public Works approved a recommendation by the Railway Commissioner for an additional office accommodation, work starting on 20th of May and ending 20th September, 1880, allegedly for the present Harden station.⁴⁰³ Also, a single water closet was provided, with work starting on 20th of May 1880 and been completed on 20th September, 1880. This also is possibly another reference to works at Murrumburrah rather than at Harden station. Likewise, the mentioned that a chimney being added to the ticket office with work starting on 12th of August and been completed on 2nd of September, 1880.⁴⁰⁴

In 1881, the population of Harden/Murrumburrah total 1,620 individuals comprising of 880 males and 740 females.⁴⁰⁵

FUNDING FOR THE BRANCH LINE TO YOUNG

In March, 1881, the NSW Parliament passed the Public Works Loan Act No. 28 that provided capital funds for a 108-mile railway from Blayney to Murrumburrah at cost of £1,260,000. The people at Young were well organized from the time when they learnt that a survey was under way to connect the western and southern railway systems. For the years between 1880 and 1884, the residents of Young were politically active and lobbied for a refreshment room at Harden for use while they changed trains. A delay had occurred because the completed survey plans were destroyed in the Garden Palace fire on 22nd September, 1882.

⁴⁰² New South Wales Legislative Assembly Votes and Proceedings, 1882, volume 4, p. 14

⁴⁰³ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁵ Report dated 17th October, 1881, of the Railways to the Colonial Treasurer in *Appendix to the Ways and Means of the Government of NSW for the year 1882*, p. 582.

It was not coincidental that the New South Wales Parliament approved the plans for the construction of railway lines to Young and Gundagai on the same day.⁴⁰⁶ The Railway Department had decided in 1881 that Harden station would be the major, regional operations centre and this was mentioned as one of the reasons why the branch line to Young and Cowra would commence near Murrumburrah, rather than Wallendbeen. Departmental officials realised the strategic placement of the refreshment room at Harden as it would serve passenger trains from the Young and Gundagai branch lines as well as the main line. In so doing, the establishment of another refreshment room at Cootamundra was avoided. The key role of Harden station in train operations on the Gundagai line was reflected in the provision of locomotives and crews initially from Harden, rather than Cootamundra.

THE FINANCIAL PUZZLE OF 1883

The question of building a refreshment room as early as 1880 and have maintained that pressure. What, then, explaining the delay in planning the construction until 1884? Money or rather the lack of it was an important factor in explaining the timing but was not the only fact.

Pressure was on the Railway Department to implement the policies of governments and private enterprise to increase the flow of freight business through Sydney but the trouble was that money for railway construction was getting harder to obtain. The Railway Commissioners in their 1883 Annual Report suggested the sale of land adjoining the rail corridor and also requested landowners to donate land required for rail construction. Although neither of these ideas were implemented, they do show that money was in shorter supply.⁴⁰⁷ Or was it? There was in 1883 a call for tenders for what only can be described as unbelievable for the supply of 6,077,000 bricks.⁴⁰⁸ The tenders closed on 3rd April, 1883, and the tender notice specified the number of bricks to be delivered to one or more of 50 stations. Below is a list of those stations that required the delivery of 300,000 or more bricks.

STATION	NO. OF BRICKS TO BE DELIVERED
Newtown	300,000
Parramatta	500,000
Goulburn	600,000
Harden	300,000
Cootamundra	300,000
Junee	600,000
Bathurst	300,000

If funds were so tight, how could the New South Wales Government afford to play for over six million bricks? Why would 300,000 bricks be required at Harden in 1883? It

⁴⁰⁶ *Cootamundra Herald*, 21st December, 1881, p. 2.

⁴⁰⁷ Nev. Pollard, "New South Wales Railways Progress and Politics 1881-1905", *Bulletin*, June, 1993, pp. 143 and 144.

⁴⁰⁸ NSW, *Government Gazette*, No. 112, 20th March, 1883, p. 1528.

could be that the Railway Department did intend to build a refreshment room at Harden earlier than it did in 1884. No official evidence survives explain the delay.

REFRESHMENT ROOM POLICY CHANGES 1883

John Whitton had strongly opposed the provision of refreshment rooms but by 1883 he did not control facilities on existing lines. Now, in 1883, the liquor licensing laws had been changed so as to "allow of licenses being, granted to persons keeping refreshment rooms at railway stations, at the pleasure of the Governor, and irrespective of distance. Travellers in the County of Cumberland must travel 20 miles in order to get a glass of grog, and 10 miles in all other parts of the colony".⁴⁰⁹ These changes were the direct result of political pressure by John Castner, who held the government contract for operation of all refreshment rooms at NSW railway stations. Evidence of this was shown by the completion of a temporary refreshment room at Junee in 1882. Castner established a similar facility at Yass Junction in 1883. The change in government liquor policy was further evidence that Whitton had lost much of his influence at this time.

Under Section 77 of the New Licensing Act, spirit merchants, as well as brewers and publicans, were compelled to have their licence details legibly painted in front of their premises. The clause stated:

"Every licensee under this act shall cause to be painted and shall maintain so painted in letters at least two inches long on the front of his premises his, name in full followed by the words if he be the holder of a publicans license 'licensed to retail fermented and spirituous liquors' and if of a brewer or spirits merchants license then with the words 'licensed brewer' or 'licensed spirit merchant' and in other cases with words sufficient to describe the business for which the license has been granted. And every licensee failing to comply with the requirements of this section shall for the first offence be liable to a penalty not exceeding two pound and for any subsequent offence to a penalty not exceeding ten nor less than two pounds."⁴¹⁰

Castner's details were ultimately written above one of the entry doors to the refreshment room at Harden when it opened.

The licenses that Castner held allowed the licensee to serve the public generally and not just bona fides travellers.⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁹ *The Gundagai Times and Tumut, Adelong and Murrumbidgee District Advertiser*, 1st May, 1883, p. 2.

⁴¹⁰ *Goulburn Herald*, 7th March, 1882, p. 2.

⁴¹¹ *Goulburn Herald*, 29th March, 1884, p. 4.

8. THE HARDEN REFRESHMENT ROOM, THE TELEGRAPH OFFICE & THE MALE TOILETS

1884-1886

EVERYWHERE BUT HARDEN

Request for the opening of the refreshment room had been made in early 1880 but nothing happened at that time. There was an important event in 1881 that stimulated the railway bureaucrats to seriously think about the matter. That was the opening of the line to Albury on 3rd February, 1881. Even at the border station, the platform building was incomplete at that time and it took until the 26th February, 1882, for it to be completed for use. During the first year, the good shed acted as the station building.⁴¹² It appears from the evidence relating to both the completion of the permanent Albury building and the response to the requests for the provision of a refreshment room at Goulburn that railway officials realised that the whole question of the provision of refreshment facilities needed to be considered following the completion of the line to the Murray River.

A letter to the Editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald* complained that, in 1881, there was no refreshment room between Mittagong and Junee, which was a distance of 210 miles.⁴¹³ That was an interesting comment as a refreshment room had been opened at Gunning on 11th July, 1877. It is known that it closed before May, 1882, and seems from the letter to the Editor that it had closed before February, 1882. If that were the case, there would have been added pressure on the New South Wales Railways to provide refreshment facilities between Mittagong and Junee.

As well as completion of the line to Albury, the construction of the link between the Main South and the Main West added further pressure to the railway bureaucracy to make a decision about the erection of refreshment rooms. Tenders were called on 12th July, 1882, for the construction of the railway between Murrumburrah and Young, a distance of 18 miles.⁴¹⁴ This should have stimulated the people of Murrumburrah into action to lobby for the immediate construction of a refreshment facility, in support of the petition in 1881 from the people of Young, but no action is recorded as occurring by the Murrumburrah residents in 1882.

It was a different story in other nearby towns. *In April, 1882, the Mayor of Yass and the local Member of Parliament lead a deputation to meet John Lackey, who was the Minister for Public Works. The Mayor referred to the correspondence that had passed between him and the Railway Department about the opening of a railway refreshment room at Yass, and argued that Yass station was particularly suitable for a refreshment room, it being one of the principal stopping places for watering the engines, and equidistant 100 miles either way from Mittagong and Junee. The point*

⁴¹² Lloyd Holmes, *Albury's Railway Centenary 1881 – 1981*, Albury and District Historical Society, 1981, p. 13.

⁴¹³ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17th February, 1881, p. 6.

⁴¹⁴ *Cootamundra Herald*, 12th July, 1882, p. 2.

*was also made that, in a recent conversation with the lessee of railway refreshment rooms, Mr. John Castner, that gentleman had stated that Yass would be very suitable. There was another very significant point made by the deputation and that was "that an arrangement for refreshment rooms there (i.e. Yass) would settle the disputes respecting difficulties about land at Harden. Mr. Lackey replied that he knew that complaints had been made of the want of refreshment rooms on the line, and thought the reasons weighty for making one at Yass. He promised to see the Commissioner for Railways the same day upon the matter."*⁴¹⁵ So, the dispute between the people of Murrumburrah and Harden about the location of the refreshment room was well-known outside the town.

Also, an application for a refreshment room at Goulburn was sent to the Railway Commissioner in early 1882 and the Secretary for Railways, David Vernon, replied that the application "will receive attention on the question of establishing additional refreshment rooms is under consideration."⁴¹⁶ This was a clear sign that the Railway Department was having a very broad look at the provision of refreshment facilities on the Main South line and was important that the people of Murrumburrah/Harden get their act together to lobby for a refreshment room in their own town.

The postal receiving office that had been provided in 1880 was doing great business and, from 1st September, 1882, the office was reclassified as a post office and, in 1883, money order and saving bank facilities were added under the title of the Government Savings Bank.⁴¹⁷ That facility operated on the platform until April, 1893, when it was relocated to a newly built post office in Harden. It is noteworthy that the very first branch of the current Commonwealth Bank in the entire Colony of New South Wales was opened in Murrumburrah on 1st March, 1877, less than two weeks before the arrival of the railway.

What must have been a pioneering achievement in rural New South Wales occurred in 1882 when a water supply was laid on to the urinals and a water closet. A new cesspit was constructed.⁴¹⁸ Where did the water supply come from? It is possible that rainwater was collected from the roof of the structure and stored in a tank in the ceiling cavity. This is known to have occurred at other stations not connected to a reticulated water supply. This matter needs further investigation.

While the line reached Albury in February, 1881, a bridge across the Murray River between Albury and Wodonga was not opened until 11th June, 1883.⁴¹⁹ It was this latter connection that provided the umph to get the Railway bureaucrats of their bums and do something about additional refreshment facilities.

In the public timetable dated 14th June, 1883, the refreshment rooms listed on the southern line are Mittagong, Junee and Wagga Wagga.⁴²⁰ It was in 1883 that the Railway Department got its act together to announce that additional railway refreshment rooms would be provided at Goulburn,

⁴¹⁵ *Evening News*, 14th April, 1882, p. 2.

⁴¹⁶ *Goulburn Evening Penny Post*, 11th May, 1882, p. 2.

⁴¹⁷ Littlejohn, *Early Murrumburrah*, op. cit., p. 27.

⁴¹⁸ *Annual Report of the Railway Commissioner*, 1882, Appendix, p. 4.

⁴¹⁹ Holmes, op. cit., p. 14.

⁴²⁰ Government Railways, *Timetables and Fares*, Government Printer, 14th June, 1883, p.38.

Yass, Albury, Bathurst and Wellington.⁴²¹ There was no mention of the refreshment room at Harden. The refreshment room at Gunning, which had opened in 1877, was closed by that time when the Yass refreshment room had been opened.

Despite trains starting and terminating at Goulburn and passengers changing trains there, nothing happened to provide a refreshment facility until 1883. The first indication of a change in departmental policy occurred when construction of refreshment rooms was under way in September, 1883, and a newspaper reporter was shocked at what he saw at Goulburn station, saying that “the temporary refreshment rooms are not an ornament to the railway station.”⁴²² A simple timber and iron shed had been provided at Goulburn and the structure, although enlarged, remains in position at that station on platform No. 1 today. Similar temporary facilities were also provided at Junee, Yass and Wagga Wagga.

The Table below sets out the pattern of construction of refreshment rooms on the Main South line and in the southern region, this latter term covering branch lines which were connected to the Main South line.

TABLE: DEVELOPMENT OF REFRESHMENT ROOMS SOUTHERN AREA

1850s-1860s	1870s	1880s	1890s	1900-1920	Post 1920
Newtown 1855 Sydney 1856 (closed 10/2015)	Mittagong 12/3/1870 (closed 1/1/1891) Gunning 11/7/1877 (closed before 15/5/1882 & possibly before February, 1881)	Wagga Wagga Before 6/1880 (closed 1882) Junee 9/1880 Goulburn 5/10/1883 Yass 1883 Albury 6/1883 Harden 11/1884	Young 1/1/1891 (closed c1905) Moss Vale 1/1/1891 Cootamundra 1/1895	Cowra Between 1901 and 1905 Gundagai between 10/1909 & 5/1913 Culcairn 1910 Whitton 1910 Narrandera 1912 Temora 1912/13 Jerilderie 1913/14 Wagga Wagga 20/8/1918 Cootamundra West	Carrathool between 1946–49 Caragabal between 1946–9 Wyalong Central 1949

⁴²¹ *Goulburn Evening Penny Post*, 2nd June, 1883, p. 6.

⁴²² *Ibid.*, 18th September, 1883, p. 2.

1850s- 1860s	1870s	1880s	1890s	1900-1920	Post 1920
				11/11/1918 Lockhart between 1918-23	

The above Table shows that the provision of the refreshment room at Harden was a late addition to a larger programme to provide food and drink to passengers following the completion of the railway line between Sydney and Melbourne in 1883. The other interesting feature of the above Table is the correlation between the opening of additional refreshment rooms between 1919 and 1920 as the railway line extended into the New South Wales wheat belt.

What is interesting about refreshment rooms in the 1880s is that quite a number were opened as temporary facilities. Those rooms at Goulburn, Yass, Junee and Wellington were opened in 1883 in temporary rooms. In 1884, Werris Creek and Armidale were also opened as temporary facilities and, lastly, the room at Nyngan was opened as a temporary facility in 1885. No similar refreshment rooms were open in the previous decade – namely the 1870s – or the following decade – namely the 1890s – on a temporary basis. No rooms were open between 1885 and 1890 on a temporary basis. Why were those seven rooms between 1883 and 1885 opened on a temporary basis? It was not the shortage of money as there were plenty of capital funds available for works on existing lines. It was not until 1883 that the NSW Licensing Court allowed the NSW Railways to sell all forms of alcohol to customers. This co-incided with a settlement in 1882 between the NSW Railways and a very astute businessman, named John Castner, with a decision that the Railway Department, and not Castner, would provide the accommodation in which refreshment rooms would operate. In that year, Castner stitched a deal to operate all refreshment rooms on the NSW rail system for a period of five years.⁴²³ What a genius! He had completely avoided the capital expenditure to set up his business. It may well have been that there was simply a rush to establish new business enterprises or it may well be that Castner, being a very influential person, encourage the Government to act urgently.

HARDEN'S TURN FOR A REFRESHMENT ROOM - 1884

It was Harden's turn in 1884 for the provision of a refreshment room. George Cowdery, the Engineer for Existing Lines, approved the provision of the part two-storey refreshment room on 5th June, 1884, with approval for the detailed architectural features occurring on 10th June, 1884.⁴²⁴ The facility was moderate in size comprising, on the ground floor, a refreshment room 30 feet by 20 feet internal with a kitchen at the rear measuring 16 feet by 12 feet internal. Upstairs, were two bedrooms and a sitting room. The external walls were formed of load bearing brickwork and the hipped roof was covered with galvanised, corrugated iron sheeting. The windows reflected the standard width of three feet three inches across the frame with a height of six feet six inches also

⁴²³ A. Messner, *Trains Up*, State Rail Authority, no date, pp. 14 & 18.

⁴²⁴ Alyson Wales, *Harden Railway Station*, unpublished high school history essay, Murrumburrah High School, 1984, reprinted in *Harden-Murrumburrah Historical Society Bulletin*, No. 157, June, 1985, states that the approval was granted on 4th of April, 1884, but the date on the plan is 5th June, 1884.

across the frame. The twin front doors were the standard width of three feet six inches. Facing the platform, was a six feet wide verandah supported by chamfered, four-inch square timber columns with ornate cast iron brackets. The external cement rendered decoration was restricted to the window surrounds.

There was no heating in the public area of the refreshment room nor was there any heating for the two upstairs bedrooms. Probably it was assumed that there would be sufficient heat from the seven feet long stove, officially known as a range, for the downstairs area while the single fire place in the sitting room would heat the bedrooms.

A second plan was approved by George Cowdery on 10th June, 1884 for the architectural details. The awning brackets for the refreshment room contained the letters "NSWGR". The counter refreshment room was once again designed to the departmental standards, being three feet high with a width across the counter top of two feet.

Tenders closed on 20th May, 1884 for the erection of the refreshment room and upstairs accommodation.⁴²⁵ The press reported that William Henry Downing was the successful contractor and his signature is on the plan, with the date of 21st July, 1884.⁴²⁶ The cost of the building was £2,074. He also won the contract in the same year to build the "Pointsman's cottage" at Demondrille, a building that survives today.⁴²⁷ The figure of £2,074 compares with the contractor's cost in 1880 of £2,696 for the larger station building completed in 1881.

There are a few design features that dominated the presentation of the Harden refreshment room. Firstly, the detailing, such as the window and door designs and the decorative rendering around those features, matched those of the 1880 main building. Secondly, the structure was part two-storey with the dining room and kitchen on the ground floor and residential accommodation for the Manager and his very small family on the first floor. It is amazing that the draughtsman who undertook the drawing thought that only two bedrooms would be sufficient. The number of bedrooms was subsequently increased to four by elimination of the upstairs lounge room and its conversion into two additional bedrooms. Thirdly, the roof was hipped, which was the dominant style at that time for platform buildings, rather than gabled for the 1880 structure. Fourthly, the refreshment room was relatively modest, even small, in size.

It was extremely rare to have two-storey buildings on a New South Wales Railway platforms – not only refreshment rooms but buildings of all types. Why was this done at Harden? That is a good question as there would have been plenty of land on the road side of the station to provide a structure with a larger footprint. It is a characteristic of New South Wales railway stations that platform buildings have traditionally been relatively narrow and very few in the 19th century were wider than 20 feet. In the 20th century, this was reduced even further with the norm being 12 or 13

⁴²⁵ NSW, *Government Gazette*, 13th May, 1884, No. 217, p. 3080.

⁴²⁶ *Freeman's Journal*, 7th June, 1884, p. 10. There is conflicting evidence that the name of the contractor was William Conroy. It may be that Conroy was a sub-contractor or he was the builder who physically constructed the building but he did not hold the contract. This sometimes happened at other locations.

⁴²⁷ *Evening News*, 4th June, 1884, p. 7.

feet width. It is not an explanation to say that accommodation was needed for the Manager of the refreshment room upstairs as it could have been provided at ground level adjacent to the dining room.

The Table below shows all examples of two-storey refreshment rooms.

TABLE: TWO-STOREY REFRESHMENT ROOMS BUILT – NSW RAILWAYS

APPROVAL DATE FOR REFRESHMENT FACILITIES	LOCATION	AVAILABILITY OF PUBLIC BEDROOMS	NOTES
1873	Mittagong	Yes	Conversion of 1867 building from single to two-storey – closed 1/1/1891
20/8/1883	Yass Junction	Yes	Conversion of 1875 combination structure into public bedrooms
12/7/1883	Junee	Yes	
5/6/1884	Harden	No	
1884	Mount Victoria	Yes	
4/11/1884	Wellington	Yes	
12/12/1885	Werris Creek	Yes	
1/1/1891	Moss Vale	Yes	
1896	Newcastle	Yes	1877 building had offices upstairs - Five staff bedrooms above new RRR but first floor not converted to public use until 1928
1912	Gloucester	No	Timber construction
1914	Goulburn	No	Platform Nos. 2 & 3
23/11/1917	Cootamundra West	Yes	Closed in 1930 as a refreshment room and bedroom accommodation
1921	Muswellbrook	Yes	

It will be noted that Albury station is missing from the Table. Although the platform building at Albury is large, it was built as a single story structure. In 1930, internal alterations were provided to provide first floor staff accommodation at the northern end of the building.

From the above Table, it is glaringly obvious that there was only one refreshment facility opened at an intermediate station in the 19th century that did not provide bedroom accommodation for the travelling public and that was at Harden. Why? Possibly because more than one hotel, such as the Doncaster Hotel, was within spitting distance from the station and there was, therefore, no need to provide private, overnight accommodation. Each of the hotels had sample rooms where commercial travellers could place their goods on display for inspection by the town's shop retailers. Also, each hotel had touters waiting on the platform to attract arriving passengers wanting food, drink or accommodation.

The refreshment room at Harden was the smallest such facility provided in the 19th century. Its modest size mirrors judicious expenditure of public funds but it also might just have been an acknowledgement of the competition from the town's hotels.

There were 55 refreshment rooms on the New South Wales railway system and the above Table shows 11 were two-storey, representing 20% of all refreshment rooms. It was the refreshment room that was the dominant type of two-storey building erected on New South Wales Railway platforms. There were also seven combined offices/residences designed in the same manner as the 1876 planned but not built structure at Harden.⁴²⁸ The only other platform structures of two-storey on the entire railway system were at Sydney Terminal, Thirroul (the train control centre) and Hay (part two-storey). Thus, when the entirety of platform buildings at the approximately 1,500 railway stations in the State are considered, two-storey refreshment rooms are extremely rare examples of New South Wales railway architecture.

Another way to appreciate the significance of the two-storey refreshment room at Harden is to examine it in the context of other two-storey platform buildings on the Main South line. The Table below lists all two-storey structures between Sydney and Albury on the main line as at the year, 1884, being the year when plans were prepared for the refreshment room at Harden.

TABLE: TWO-STOREY PLATFORM BUILDINGS, MAIN SOUTHERN LINE, 1884

LOCATION	APPROVAL DATE	TYPE OF BUILDING	NOTES
Ashfield		Combined office/residence	Demolished in 1894
Mittagong	1873	Refreshment room	Conversion of 1867 office building – closed 1/1/1891
Yass	1883	Combined office/residence	Private residential accommodation

⁴²⁸ These were located at Ashfield, Emu Plains, Wallerawang, Orange, High Street, Bowning and Liverpool.

LOCATION	APPROVAL DATE	TYPE OF BUILDING	NOTES
			converted to public bedrooms
Harden	1884	Refreshment room	
Bowning		Combined office/residence	Extant
Junee	16/6/1883	Refreshment room	Like Harden, it had posted verandah on platform (now removed)

The above Table demonstrates clearly the status that was provided to Harden station by the erection of a two-storey refreshment facility in 1884, considering that over 40 stations existed between Sydney and Albury.

The only evidence that exists as to the opening date of the Harden refreshment room is a newspaper reference in late November, 1884, referring to the buildings as “newly erected”.⁴²⁹ Now for the puzzle. A tender had been let for occupation of the refreshment room prior to April but the conflicting evidence makes it impossible to know whether the refreshment room was or was not ready for the opening of the line to Young on 26th March, 1885.⁴³⁰ One thing is for certain. The year, 1895, for the opening of the refreshment room stated by John Forsyth, one-time Archives Officer of the State Rail Authority, is incorrect.⁴³¹

HOW TIMELY WAS THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE HARDEN REFRESHMENT ROOM, COMPARED WITH OTHERS ON THE MAIN SOUTH LINE?

The Table below sets out the opening dates of refreshment rooms relative to the construction of branch lines from those stations.

TABLE: REFRESHMENT ROOM COMPARED WITH RELATED BRANCH LINE OPENINGS

STATION	OPENING YEAR OF REFRESHMENT ROOM	OPENING OF BRANCH LINE
Goulburn	1883	1885 – to Queanbeyan
Yass	1883	1892 – to Yass Town
Harden	1884/85	1885 – to Young
Cootamundra	1895	1893 – to Temora
Junee	1880	1881 – to Narrandera

⁴²⁹ *Cootamundra Herald*, 26th November, 1884, p. 4.

⁴³⁰ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 2nd May, 1885, p. 6.

⁴³¹ NSW, *Main Southern Line Maps*, Revised Ed., Department of Railways, 1967, p. S43A.

Of the five entries in the above Table, Goulburn, Yass and Junee were opened before branch lines emanating from their stations were opened. Concerning Cootamundra, the refreshment room was opened two years after the opening of the line to Temora. Harden is the puzzle in the Table because it is unknown whether it was opened prior to or after the opening of the branch line to Young. The opening of the refreshment facility at Harden could have been planned better so that it was in operation well before the opening.

What is clear from the Table above that most of the refreshment rooms that were provided were built for trains on main lines, not to serve junctions with branch lines. The facilities at Yass, Junee and Albury certainly initially for mainline passenger trains. In addition, the refreshment rooms at Gunning and Wagga Wagga, which were subsequently closed, also existed solely for mainline trains. The refreshment rooms at Cootamundra and later at Culcairn and may be at Harden were related initially to branch line operations. The existence of a refreshment room at Young between 1891 and about 1905 suggests that travellers to and from that town may have played a very strong part in pressuring the Railway Commissioner and the Colonial Government to provide a refreshment room at Harden for the branch line passengers.

DETAILED ARCHITECTURAL ASSESSMENT OF THE INTERNAL DECORATIONS IN THE HARDEN REFRESHMENT ROOM

Conservation Architect, Dr Donald Ellsmore, undertook a detailed examination of the internal surfaces of the refreshment room. He wrote:

“the photograph of the Harden interior shows glimpses of what is probably the first scheme of decoration. The dark dado and light wall filling is decorated with a band of stencil flowers in two colours above the dado. There is an elaborate stencil pattern on the nib of the wall and a stencilled frieze above the cornice. The bar is a polished timber confection with a canopy supported on polished brass columns. Bottles, flags potted palms adorn the canopy. The bar was separated from the refreshment room, mainly to segregate women and children from men.

To meet the demanding schedules of the Railway, which timetabled trains to set down passages at unusual times at remote places, the refreshment room manager and his family were sometimes accommodated on-site, often in rooms above the refreshment rooms. Such facilities were provided at Mittagong, Mount Victoria, Werris Creek, Harden, Junee and elsewhere. The facilities were built soundly but it appears from the surviving evidence that the interior appointments were modest. The bedrooms lacked decoration or features such as fireplaces that would have made them more comfortable.

Nevertheless, it has been determined by observation and some recent focused research by the State Rail Authority that the decoration of the refreshment rooms at stations was far more interesting and ambitious than other station room interiors. Rooms were sometimes decorated with contrasting wall and joinery colours, or wall and ceiling stencilling, or graining and marbling, or combinations of all of these. Clearly, the use of such decorative devices that were uncommon in passenger station interiors reflected a private enterprise

approach to the promotion of the businesses, even though the NSW Government was the construction authority.”⁴³²

Dr Ellsmore found that the structure contained authentic paint samples of scientific, technical and aesthetic significance. The internal walls were painted two-tone green which he considered would be attractive to train travellers. Upstairs in the bedrooms, there were “pretty paint colours” that would have appeal to families. The bedrooms were painted schemes of green, blue, mauve and cream and Dr Ellsmore considered that these were “far livelier than the colours used in the refreshment room.” It established that the internal walls had been painted several times and the colour schemes had changed from time to time. Overall, he said that the decorations were representative of other known examples, such as Mittagong, Yass Junction and Mount Victoria.

THE PUBLIC POST AND TELEGRAPHIC OFFICES AT THE STATION 1881-1885

William Watson, the Parliamentary Member for Young, requested in 1881 that the existing public and railway telegraph systems at the station, which were located in different rooms or even separate buildings, be combined into a common site. John Lackey replied in Parliament that there was no objection to this.⁴³³

It was in 1884 that the Harden railway telegraph officer found that he could not undertake both his railway business and all the postal and other facilities for the town residents. A full-time postal and telegraph officer was appointed and a detached “small hut” was built at the back of the refreshment rooms as a post office. This work possibly was the result of the request in 1881 by William Watson to combine the public telegraphic and postal facilities at the station.

Local Historian, Dick Littlejohn, said that, even when a verandah was added, “the conditions were primitive.”⁴³⁴ There were also additions and alterations of an unknown description to the post and telegraph office in 1885, possibly the addition of the verandah noted by Dick Littlejohn.

*From 1st October, 1885, all telegrams sent by the public at railway stations had to be prepaid and postage stamps had to be placed on the telegrams to denote payment. From that date, railway stations would issue postage stamps for those people who did not have their own stamps. The major exception to the rule was telegrams sent to newspapers, presumably because they were prepaid. The only other exception were telegrams that were in reply to an initial telegram with the words “reply paid.” This new procedure was introduced “to facilitate business on the lines. At present, (the Railway Department reported) much time is consumed daily in the transmission of accounts between the various (Railway) offices in the head office in Sydney, and by the alteration in the mode of payment the railway lines will be set entirely free for the transaction of their legitimate business. It is anticipated by the (Railway) officials that a saving of 30 to 40% of time will be effected.”*⁴³⁵

The Postal Department moved its office into town and away from the station in 1893.

ENLARGEMENT OF THE HARDEN REFRESHMENT ROOM - 1885

⁴³² D. Ellsmore, *Harden Railway Station Analysis of Paint Finishes*, unpublished document, 2001, p. 6.

⁴³³ *Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser*, 22nd February, 1881, p. 3.

⁴³⁴ Littlejohn, *Early Murrumburrah*, op. cit., p. 27.

⁴³⁵ *Goulburn Herald*, 24th September, 1885, p. 2.

It was not long since the refreshment room had been opened when it was decided to enlarge the facility.⁴³⁶ That does not come as a surprise as the 1884 facility was, at best, moderate in size and, in the context of other permanent refreshment facilities on the main trunk lines, was the smallest.

On 21st July, 1885, George Cowdery approved plans for additions to the refreshment room. Tenders closed on 8th September, 1885, for the construction and erection of additions to the refreshment and accommodation rooms at Harden. John Sharp was the successful contractor and the tender price was reported to be “over £500”.⁴³⁷ The work involved the addition of a single-story section at the Cootamundra end of the building. Facing the platform was a room measuring 20 feet square which almost doubled the public space. The food and beverage counter was redesigned and, from its 1884 design as a corner facility, the counter was now straight and was 50 feet long. Behind the extension of the refreshment room was a wash house measuring 20 feet by 14 feet and contained a hand wash basin. This appears to be a room for staff. The original end wall was demolished and a timber beam inserted, supported by a single, fluted, cast iron, column sitting on a 14-inch square sandstone base. Two rooms were added to the rear but their intended use was not indicated on the plan.

The *Murrumburrah Signal* newspaper reported glowingly about the excellent work at Harden station, saying that Harden “now boasts one of the finest refreshment rooms between Sydney and Wagga Wagga.”⁴³⁸ It was described as a “substantially built structure that gave credit to the contractor, Mr Downey, at a cost of £1000.” It is noteworthy that the successful tenderer, John Sharp, sub-contracted another person, in this case Mr Downey, to provide the actual physical construction activity.

The 1880 building had a gabled roof and it has been already mentioned that this was an unusual feature for Second Class buildings to which the Harden building belonged. A hipped roof was the preferred style for the design family and the selection of a hipped roof for the 1884 refreshment room and the 1885 building alterations reflected the dominant design preference for Second-Class platform buildings, as was the case at Harden. When an additional building was erected in 1891 at the Sydney end of the 1881 building, it too had a hipped roof. Gabled roofs only became popular and used extensively between 1880 and 1914 and for one reason only – they were cheaper to construct than hipped roofs.

There was also a free-standing laundry measuring 15 feet by 10 feet which had a timber frame and contained a “wash copper”. A new underground water tank was also provided. This 1891 addition was the very last underground rainwater tank built on the NSW railway system. There is conflicting evidence about heating. In one plan it would appear that an additional cooking “range” was fitted as well as a stove for heating. In another plan, fireplaces were provided in the refreshment room as well as the wash house. No matter which version was erected, this was the first heating provided for the travelling public. It had taken eight years from 1877 to provide some comprehensive but still basic comfort for passengers on the platform. With the provision of the free-standing laundry and its unsightly collection of materials, such as tablecloths and napkins, hanging on the washing line, a

⁴³⁶ NSW, *Government Gazette*, 28th August, 1885, No. 373, p. 5632.

⁴³⁷ *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 31st October, 1885, p. 14 and *Murrumburrah Signal*, 31st October, 1885, p. 5.

⁴³⁸ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 24th January, 1885, p. 5.

fence was built around the laundry area. Although the material of the fence is unknown, from knowledge of many other facilities, the posts and rails would be timber on which corrugated iron sheets would be attached. Also, a lamp was fixed over the door on the platform to the refreshment room as well as other locations under the platform awning.⁴³⁹

The licensee of the refreshment room was none other than John Castner, who held similar licenses at another 17 stations, including Sydney, Mittagong, Goulburn, Yass, Junee and Wagga Wagga.⁴⁴⁰ He also operated the railway gasworks at Junee. Castner had strong links with government officials of a very suspicious type.

One of three levels of refreshment services was applied to each refreshment room on the NSW rail system. The top level served three-course meals. The middle level, of which Harden was an example, had a counter service while the bottom level provided only light refreshments.⁴⁴¹

Alyson Wales, a local high school student, wrote that both full-time and part-time workers were employed at the Harden refreshment room where the female servers “wore a uniform which was a formal dress green with pearls and green cuffs. The service included sandwiches, stews of main meals. They also sold, coffee, soft drinks and lollies. Everything that was used in the refreshment room was brought down from the railway refreshment room store in Sydney station, even the ice. Basket Boys walked up and down the platform with a basket around their necks selling hot pies, sweets et cetera to those passengers who did not want to go inside for a meal. Other duties done by the Basket Boys including letting the servers know if the trains were on time, stoking the fires and carting wood into the kitchens. The Basket Boys’ uniform was a fawn coat, navy trousers and a cap.”⁴⁴²

All railway stations in New South Wales had a bell of some description, fixed to one external wall of the refreshment room or platform building or, at smaller stations, a hand-held bell. The bell was activated as a warning to passengers in the refreshment room and on the platform to return to their seats on the train.

A Cootamundra newspaper in 1885 described Harden station as “deserted and unused, except for the goods yard.” Now that was a strange comment, considering the establishment of the refreshment room would have increased activity at the station enormously. Perhaps it was just another instance of inter-town rivalry? At the same time the paper referred to the platform at Cunningham as the station for the “Lord of the Plains – D. H. Campbell”, who managed the large Cunningham Plains pastoral station.⁴⁴³

⁴³⁹ *Annual Report of the Railway Commissioner*, 1885, Appendix, p. 5.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 30th July, 1886, p. 7.

⁴⁴¹ *Bulletin*, December, 1983, pp. 262 and 263.

⁴⁴² Alyson Wales, *Harden Railway Station*, unpublished high school history essay, Murrumburrah High School, 1984, reprinted in *Harden-Murrumburrah Historical Society Bulletin*, No. 157, June, 1985.

⁴⁴³ *Cootamundra Herald*, 8th of April, 1885, p. 5.

PROGRESS OF WORK ON THE REFRESHMENT ROOM 1885-1887

It was reported in the press in February, 1886, that the additions to the refreshment room being carried out by John Sharp were being “pushed on rapidly.” The additions to the refreshment room were causing a little concern to the people who lived at Murrumburrah. The article stated:

“There are persons who believe Harden (so-called) will outdo Murrumburrah before long. I fail to see it – nothing extraordinary has occurred to make me believe that such will be the case. Demondrille Junction has its admirers and more than one person expects to see it rise into a township. Murrumburrah is between the two and may be termed the heart of both. Let us hope Harden and Demondrille Junction will expand and make the three places into one grand township.”⁴⁴⁴

By March, 1886, the additions were reported as being “very nearly completed and no doubt will be fully occupied when the Young to Blayney line is opened.”⁴⁴⁵ The optimism of early completion was misplaced. For an unknown reason, a new plan was issued on 9th April, 1886, for the same additions to the refreshment room for which a plan was prepared in 1885. Work then allegedly accelerated and the larger facility was reported to be in use by June, 1886.⁴⁴⁶ The work cost approximately £282.

All refreshment rooms on the southern and western lines, including the one at Harden, were held by the same licensee, John Castner, and his lease for all the facilities did not end until 31st December, 1890.⁴⁴⁷

There was a puzzling report in the local press in early 1887 saying that the additions to refreshment room were completed not in June, 1886, but in early 1887. Not only were the dates of completion different but so was the cost with a report that the additions costed £752, not £282 as stated in 1886. This larger amount included fittings, fencing, supervision by the Inspector and relocating an existing tank and fence.⁴⁴⁸ Something must have gone horribly wrong for the work to take so long or it was decided to make further additions to the refreshment room. This is another mystery that needs to be solved.

It can be safely said that the additions to the refreshment room were finalised in 1886.

A land sale at Harden which took place in 1887 caused great concern in the community and the Murrumburrah Progress Association protested saying that the advertisement gave the impression that Harden was more important than Murrumburrah. The *Murrumburrah Signal* newspaper, which was based in Murrumburrah, rebutted the protest and said that the name “Harden” only referred to railway land inside the railway boundary. The *Signal* tried to balance its remark by saying that railway employees were just as good as any of the business people in Murrumburrah.

⁴⁴⁴ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 27th February, 1886, p. 4.

⁴⁴⁵ *Globe*, 18th March, 1886, p. 3.

⁴⁴⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24th June, 1886, p. 6.

⁴⁴⁷ *Bowral Free Press and Berrima District Intelligencier*, 7th August, 1886, p. 3.

⁴⁴⁸ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 14th May, 1887.

NEW, ENLARGED MALE TOILET BLOCK - 1889

In May, 1889, a plan was prepared for a new brick male toilet at Sydney end of the existing building. This additional structure was 19 feet 6 inches long and 39 feet 5 inches deep across the platform, being considerably wider than the original platform building. There were two design features that marked this structure as a building of the 1880s. These were the arched heads to the external doorways and the use of a hipped roof but the hipped roof only covered the “lavatory”, which contained the wash basins. For the roof over the closets and urinals, a single-pitched roof was used hidden by parapets on all sides. Behind the “lavatory” was a cleaner’s passage and behind it were “urinals and closets.” The facilities are extant.

In the middle of the new toilet structure on the side wall facing the 1880 brick structure was a doorway for staff to change the toilet pans. This allowed junior officers to change toilet pans without being seen by members of the public. There were nine urinal stalls each being two feet wide, which was the standard width at New South Wales stations. The back of the urinal and the divisions between each stall were made of Welsh slate. There were also five male closets, each being five feet long and three feet three and a half inches wide, again being examples of standard New South Wales Railway practice. The announcement of the new male toilet block, as well as new female toilets, was made in June, 1889.⁴⁴⁹

There were two very important features incorporated into the design of the new male toilet block. The first one was the provision of facilities for men to wash their hands after using the toilet facilities. The provision for hand wash basins for men was unheard of in the 19th century and for the first half of the 20th century. It is possible that the wash basins at Harden was the first installation of hand washing facilities for men on the New South Wales railway system. The second significant design feature was the provision of ventilation above the closets. Never before had ventilation been provided and the erection of a brick chimney was an important technological innovation and probably was the basis for the introduction in 1890 of what became known officially as “air closets”, which were provided at a number of stations including Temora in 1893.

Someone noted Harden railway station, saying that it “looks immense.”⁴⁵⁰ This was a reference to the effect of the addition at the Sydney end of the large male toilet block. While it may be fair to say that the building to enlarge, the 1880 main structure had lost its symmetrical attractiveness with the addition of buildings at each end.

PUBLIC GRIZZLES - 1888

Despite having an attractive building completed in 1881 and an expanded refreshment room completed in 1886, the local community was unhappy in 1888 about the presentation of the station. Of course, there was the combined daggy-looking, public postal and telegraphic building on the road side, which was not removed until 1893 and it is possible that its primitive design irritated residents. A deputation was made to officials to upgrade both the platform and the station.⁴⁵¹ That deputation appears to have been successful to some degree as the *Annual Report* revealed that very minor

⁴⁴⁹ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 8th of June, 1889, p. 2.

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 28th September, 1889, p. 2.

⁴⁵¹ *Cootamundra Herald*, 28th November, 1888, p. 7.

additions were made to the platform buildings, costing a mere £49.⁴⁵² The nature of those editions is unknown.

In 1889, the refreshment room was not open for all train services operating through the station. In fact, it was opened only for the branch line passenger train between Harden and Young, being one train from Sydney opening at 0646 and closing at 0720 for breakfast while the refreshment room was open for two trains from Cowra and Young, opening at 0405 and closing at 0436 for breakfast for passengers waiting for the next train to Sydney and between 2034 and 2105 for the mail train to Sydney.⁴⁵³

The Murrumburrah Progress Association received a reply in 1889 from Traffic Inspector Roberts advising that lights would be placed at the entrance gates to Harden station.⁴⁵⁴

9. STATION IMPROVEMENTS 1891

HOW COME THERE WAS MONEY FOR SUCH EXTENSIVE WORKS?

The year, 1891, was similar to 1890 in that capital expenditure continued for the approval of platform buildings, as well as other areas of capital expenditure such as rollingstock. The Depression was pretty harsh in New South Wales but money was still available to the New South Wales Railways in 1890 and 1891. It was only in 1892 that money for capital works was becoming scarce.

As in 1890, there was a considerable difference between capital for works on new lines and capital for renewals on existing lines. While Parliament controlled the former, the Commissioners had access to their own funding sources for projects involving existing lines. This access to funds within the New South Wales railway organisation provides the answer to what seems to be a conundrum. Any thinking researcher would want to know how the Railway Department could allocate so much money to the improvements at Harden as well as many other stations on the existing railway system during the 1890s Depression. The answer is that they had funds away in their own financial reserves and did not have to ask the Colonial Government for more money.

THE PROVISION OF AN "OUT OF GOODS SHED" - 1891

A Departmental "Shop Order" was written on the 3rd July, 1891, for the provision of "accommodation for out of goods". Tenders were called on 24th August, 1891, for the erection of an "out of" goods shed. What was an "out of goods shed"? Railway Historian, Ken Williams, described an "out of" as:

*"consignments of small items of goods.... (that) travelled by goods train..... where the speed of delivery was not guaranteed. "Out of" were by definition in the *General Appendix* items of less than one ton delivered to any one station that could be contained in a railway vehicle.*

⁴⁵² Appendix to the *Annual Report*, 1887/88, p. 24.

⁴⁵³ Alyson Wales, *Harden Railway Station*, unpublished high school history essay, Murrumburrah High School, 1984, reprinted in *Harden-Murrumburrah Historical Society Bulletin*, No. 157, June, 1985.

⁴⁵⁴ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 16th March, 1889, p. 2.

Rates were different for small items and so they were cheaper to send as goods rather than parcels...”⁴⁵⁵

Parcels were consignments that travelled by passenger train for quick delivery and were kept within the main station building. However, because “out of” were conveyed at lower rates they were not given the higher level of protection afforded to parcels and, accordingly, they were placed at larger stations in a separate shed, though in smaller stations parcels and “out of” were often grouped together, depending on available space. This second tier of parcels was an initiative of the new Chief Commissioner Eddy.

Having explained what an “out of” was, it is necessary to explain what was an “out of goods shed.” Up to 1891, good sheds were detached buildings of large proportions located elsewhere on Railway property, not on passenger platforms. However, this did not apply to “out of goods sheds”, which indeed were provided on platforms, usually 20 feet or more distant from the main platform building. Ken Williams stated that “out of sheds were not necessarily sheds at all. There will are numerous different architectural styles used as “out of” sheds. The basic requirement for the “out of” shed or room is a lockable covered space with access to both rail and road.”⁴⁵⁶ This means that they often had large doors facing both onto the platform and to the road approach side.

The “out of goods shed” was provided at the Sydney end of the main building and was free-standing and of brick construction. The use of brickwork for such a lowly structure as an out of shed was practically unheard of as they were normally constructed of the most primitive materials, usually being timber framed with walls covered with galvanised iron sheets. The “out of shed” was completed 9th December, 1891. Since this was the same date when contractors, Franklin and Findlay, completed their contract for the awning and other changes, it can be assumed they also provided this out of goods rooms somewhere on the platform.

INTRODUCTION OF PARCELS STAMPS – 1891

Chief Commissioner Eddy brought numerous improvements to the New South Wales railway system. One of those was the creation of second-class parcels, which were kept in out of rooms or out of sheds. Another new idea was the issue of stamps to be affixed to all parcels to indicate that payment had been made. This was perhaps not so much a new idea but a realisation by Eddy that New South Wales was lagging behind the other colonial railway systems. The New South Wales Railways issued parcels stamps for the first time in August, 1891.⁴⁵⁷ Queensland Railways had been a pioneer in this area using them from 1867. The Victorian Railways issued parcels stamps from 1877, the South Australian Railways in 1885 and the Tasmanian Railways in 1886. The only state that New South Wales beat was Western Australia, which started issuing parcels stamps in 1905. Today, parcels stamps are a very collectable and sought after item.

REFRESHMENT ROOM ARRANGEMENTS & AWNING REPLACEMENT - 1891

⁴⁵⁵ K. Williams, “Parcels and Small Consignments on the NSW Railways”, *Australian Railway History*, July, 2016, p. 14.

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁴⁵⁷ *Australian Railway History*, July, 2016, page 17.

It was in the public timetable of 1st January, 1891, that for the first time were provided in the actual table of train times of the locations where food and alcohol available at refreshment rooms. It was during 1891 that Chief Commissioner Eddy introduced the allocation of the letter "R" again station names in public timetables to indicate the presence of a refreshment room. Harden was shown in this manner.

On the Southern line, refreshment rooms were shown at Sydney, Moss Vale, Goulburn, Yass, Harden, Junee and Albury. There was also a similar facility at Queanbeyan. It was on the 1st January, 1891, that the existing refreshment room at Mittagong was closed and the new one at Moss Vale was opened. This costly exercise was done to please the then Colonial Governor whose official residence was nearby to Moss Vale station. The closure of the Mittagong facility meant that the Governor did not have to wait for his fellow passengers to obtain food and drink. Tenders were also called on 24th August, 1891, for additions to the Junee refreshment room.⁴⁵⁸ While the refreshment rooms were all operated by private enterprise, passengers "who consider they have reason to complain should go to the Station-master (sic)." It is interesting to note that complaints were not made to the person in charge refreshment rooms but to an official who really did not have any authority to seek redress.

A Railway "Shop Order" dated 21st May, 1891, provided for the replacement of the six feet wide posted verandah outside the 1885 built refreshment room and its replacement by an extension of the platform awning by a length of 58 feet. The 1881 platform awning was 14 feet 9 inches wide and extended for a length of 90 feet 6 inches, which was the length of the building minus the two parapetted wings. Thus, there had been a gap of some 20 feet in length at the Cootamundra end between the awning in front of the main building and the narrow awning of the refreshment room. Now the gap had been plugged.

The contract for the extensions of the platform awning was issued to James Franklin and James Findlay on 26th September and completed on 9th December, 1891, to provide a "covering" over the entrance to the refreshment room. The estimated cost was £180 but the actual cost was £434/12/8. The awning on the present Sydney-bound platform was 14 feet 9 inches wide. Franklin and Findlay were a Goulburn based organisation which in 1893 constructed the first chambers in Albury Street for the Murrumburrah Municipal Council.⁴⁵⁹ Also, in August, 1893, Franklin and Findlay won the tender for the construction of the five intermediate stations on the new line between Cootamundra and Temora, namely Bauloora, Yeo Yeo, Stockinbingal, Gundibindyal and Combaning.

MALE TOILET ALTERED & NEW LAMP ROOM PROVIDED

The 1889 male toilet at the Sydney end was altered in 1891 apparently under the Franklin and Findlay contract. Part of the male toilet became an open space 15 feet long by 24 feet wide and behind it was a lamp room 10 foot 6 inches wide. At the extreme Sydney end, there had been a short privacy screen that covered the entrance to the urinals and closets, being three feet six inches wide. In 1891, it was decided to extend the privacy screen to cover not only the urinals and closets

⁴⁵⁸ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24th August, 1891, p. 6.

⁴⁵⁹ D. I. McDonald, *The Shire of Harden – a History of Local Government 1890-1990*, p. 64.

but also the lavatory, where the hand wash basins were located. A linen closet was also provided part of the space of the 1889 lavatory.

As well as extending the platform awning in the Cootamundra direction by 58 feet, it was also extended at the Sydney end by 34 feet to provide cover to the 1889 male toilet.

STATION FORECOURT REPAIRS - 1891

Murrumburrah Shire Council received a letter in June, 1891, from the Secretary for Railways stating that Council's application for a funding grant for maintenance of the road leading to the railway station was receiving consideration.⁴⁶⁰ A sum of £50 was orally promised. By mid-July, no money had been received and, despite no funds having been received, Council advised the Divisional Engineer at Goulburn that it was proceeding with the work.

This was the first record of the local government authority approaching the Railway Department to repair or improve the approaches to the station. This became a major issue of irritation between the two parties and would be raised again and again for the next 100 years.

DESIGNATION OF ROOMS - 1891

At the time of the 1891 building alterations, the rooms of the main building and their lengths are set out in the Table below from the Sydney end:

TABLE: DESCRIPTION OF ROOM FUNCTIONS FROM SYDNEY END

ROOM DESCRIPTION	LENGTH OF ROOM	NOTES
Parcels office	10 feet six inches	This room was originally the porters' room and was located under the end parapet
Telegraph office	16 feet	Members of the public used a separate combined postal and telegraphic office at the front of the station
Booking office	16 feet	
General waiting room	20 feet 2 inches	This room acted as the centre axis with three rooms placed symmetrically on each side
Gentlemen's waiting room	16 feet	The provision of a room for gentlemen was abolished in 1914 but, at an unknown time, its

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid., 4th June, 1891, p. 2

ROOM DESCRIPTION	LENGTH OF ROOM	NOTES
		location was changed sometime between 1891 and 1914, when it was used for an extension of the refreshment room
Ladies' waiting room	16 feet	
Ladies' toilet	Originally 10 feet six inches	Extended at an unknown time between 1881 and 1891 to a length of 21 feet to increase the number of closets from one to three

PLATFORM WORKS

Tenders were called on 5th September for the platform extension and “other works.”⁴⁶¹ Additions were made to the station nameboards on 28th May, 1891, to indicate to passengers to change there for stations on the Cowra line. This had only taken six years since the line to Young had been opened.

10. SUSTAINED PUBLIC DEMAND FOR IMPROVEMENTS 1892-1910

STATION FORECOURT

Murrumburrah Shire Council wrote to the Railway Commissioners in 1901 asking for trees to be planted at Harden railway station. The Secretary for Railways requested a plan of where Council would like the trees to be planted.⁴⁶² No trees were ever planted. Another issue was the need for a light on the immediate approach to the station from the town. The public post office had been located in the area and, while the post office had been relocated into the main street of the town in 1893, the lamp posts remained in situ for possible use.⁴⁶³ Nothing happened.

There was only one time that the Railway Department undertook repairs willingly in relation to the road in front of the station. That occurred in June, 1904.⁴⁶⁴ It was the second time that the forecourt had been raised by the local community. The first time was in 1891 when the local government authority repaired the road because the Department was disinclined to do so. Over the next 100 years, the condition of the road in front of the station and the appearance of the station forecourt would be the subject of frequent correspondence between the land owner, namely the Railway Department, and the town's people who looked at it and used it. It was not a happy tale.

⁴⁶¹ *Cootamundra Herald*, 5th September, 1891, p.5.

⁴⁶² *Murrumburrah Signal*, 22nd June, 1901, p. 2.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.* 21st September, 1901, p. 2.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 18th June, 1904, p. 2.

STATION PRESENTATION

The 1890s was a period in which there was a degree of harmony about the relationship between the town of Harden/Murrumburrah and the Railway Department. Everyone seemed pretty happy about the state of things. For example, the local newspaper stated in 1893 that both Harden and Murrumburrah stations were “amongst the category of flourishing stations.”⁴⁶⁵

The Railway Commissioners visited Harden station on 13th June, 1895, as a part of their annual visit and, apart from announcing that tenders would be called the next week for the rebuilding of the locomotive shed which had been destroyed by fire, made no comment other than that they “expressed themselves as well pleased with the management and arrangements.”⁴⁶⁶

There was an event in 1896 that adversely affected the visual presentation of the station. A Shop Order was dated 26th August, 1896, for the erection of a two-track carriage shed and related sidings at Harden. Up until this time, carriages were stored without external cover but Chief Commissioner Eddy implemented a scheme whereby passenger carriages when not in service were to be stored under cover. This policy enabled carriages to be placed into service especially during the afternoon and night which were not boiling hot internally from exposure to the sun. Carriage sheds were completed at a number of stations, including Young and Cowra. The Harden building was completed on 29th May, 1896.

While it was commendable to care for the welfare of passengers, there was an important issue for the town. The carriage shed was located at the immediate Sydney end of the platform. It was primitive in design, basically being a large rectangle covered with tin sheets. Its large size dominated the visual experience of the station and added to the demise in the ocular pleasure of looking at the formerly attractive 1880 main station building. In 1912, the carriage shed was relocated further towards Sydney because it was in the pathway of the additional main line for duplication through the station. It was demolished in 1974.

Mr Bill Yard-Leake complained in 1903 about the poor condition of the station, especially the closets and lavatory on 6th May. It was recommended by the then Engineer for Existing Lines, James Fraser, that the work be undertaken and that “the whole of the passenger station be renovated internally; the renovations to the refreshment room to stand over for the present.”

The Commissioners passed through Harden and Murrumburrah in April, 1904, without finding any improvements required by the local people.⁴⁶⁷

Inter-town rivalry surfaced again in 1906. The Harden newspaper said that, “as a railway junction Cootamundra gains its chief measure of importance.” It also stated that Cootamundra was “the centre of a wondrously rich pastoral and wheat district” but the existence of a number of “fine towns in the small radius”, with Temora, Junee and Gundagai mentioned as examples, detracted from Cootamundra’s significance as the centre of agricultural and pastoral activity.⁴⁶⁸ How noble it was that the Harden newspaper did not include Murrumburrah/Harden as one of the “fine towns”!

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid., 18th February, 1893, p. 2.

⁴⁶⁶ *Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser*, 22nd June, 1895, p. 1294.

⁴⁶⁷ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 23rd April, 1904, p. 2.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid., 2nd March, 1906, p. 2.

Not everyone sees things the same way. This was the case in 1907 when a local newspaper reports that “some excellent improvements” (referring to the refreshment room) had been carried out at the station and the local newspaper reported that Harden railway station was “now one of the finest structures this side of Moss Vale.”⁴⁶⁹ The reporter must not have been looking at the unattractive 1891 additions at the Sydney end or the 1896 carriage shed.

As if it were not bad enough to have the mess at the Sydney end of the station, in 1910 a similar treatment was applied to the Cootamundra end. A footwarmer furnace had been provided at the station before 1910 but its location was unknown. It was probably close to the platform. Sealed containers holding hot water had been introduced in 1887 and the Harden station supplied these into branch line trains to Young and Cowra until 1910. In 1903, a new type of footwarmer, called the McLaren patent type, had been in use on the Albury Express and Albury Mail but the footwarmer facility at Harden did not serve these trains. The McLaren type was also a sealed container but contained not hot water but crystalline, hydrated sodium acetate. They required to be immersed in boiling water for 75 minutes before they were ready for placement in carriage compartments.⁴⁷⁰

In 1910, the Railway Department abandoned the use of the hot water footwarmers and used exclusively the McLaren type from that time. This explains the year, 1910, when there was a change at Harden. The provision of enlarged facilities for heating the McLaren footwarmers at Harden was completed on 9th August. These additional facilities were placed off the end of the Cootamundra end of the platform and involved a coal-fired furnace, a big tub of boiling hot water to heat the footwarmers, a stack of footwarmers and a stockpile of coal. Smoke poured from the tall brick furnace chimney when in use. Impressive the facility was in function but not in terms of appearance or pollution. Interestingly, it was not until June, 1916, that “all important trains” were supplied with footwarmers.⁴⁷¹ Footwarmers remained in use until 1982 but the Harden facility had closed before that year. The footwarmer facility at Cowra was also changed in 1910 to serve trains proceeding to Harden.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A STATION GARDEN POLICY

There was, however, one policy initiative in which stations in both urban and rural areas shared. This was the existence of station gardens. Individual Station Masters had planted gardens at some stations and in 1892 there was a call by the Railway Institute to formalise a garden competition and award prizes. Nothing happened at that time. In July, 1894, the Railway Institute again promoted “the desirability of improving the surroundings of railway stations wherever possible, by utilising station grounds and forming flower gardens thereon. Since the matter was first mooted, a number of gardens have been formed and planted with ornamental shrubs and flowers, and their appearance has added considerably to the attractiveness of the stations, besides which they are much appreciated by the travelling public, and we trust that further efforts will be made by the staff, and gardens extended all stations where there is any available land suitable for the purpose.”⁴⁷² It would take another five years before the Commissioners commenced an annual garden competition.

⁴⁶⁹ *Murrumburrah Signal* 16th April, 1898, p. 3.

⁴⁷⁰ C. Banger, “Footwarmers on Australian Government Railways,” *Bulletin*, April, 2000, p. 124.

⁴⁷¹ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 5th June, 1916, p. 2.

⁴⁷² *New South Wales Railway Budget*, 17th July, 1894, p. 200.

Nevertheless, the Railway Institute set out those stations on the railway system that had gardens in 1894. These were:

METROPOLITAN AREA

ILLAWARRA LINE:	Rockdale, Kogarah & Hurstville,
WESTERN LINE:	Lewisham, Burwood, Croydon & Strathfield
SOUTHERN LINE:	Merrylands, Liverpool, Granville & Campbelltown
SOUTHERN DISTRICT:	Menangle, Balmoral, Colo Vale, Mittagong, Bowral, Moss Vale, Yass Junction, Junee, Wagga Wagga & Albury
WESTERN DISTRICT:	Springwood, Blackheath, EskBank, Wallerawang, Brewongle, George's Plains, Orange, Molong & Windsor
NORTHERN DISTRICT:	Gosford, Newcastle, Waratah & West Maitland
SOUTH COAST:	Bellambi & Nowra ⁴⁷³

The above list totals 36 stations, of which 11 were suburban and the remainder country areas. The stations formed a stimulus to further growth of the idea about station garden and the Railway Institute was an influential player in promoting the idea and sustained mentioning the subject in its Journal in 1895.

It can only be assumed that no garden existed at Harden railway station at this time – 1894.

THE EXISTING PLATFORM CLOCK NOT GOOD ENOUGH

Typical of the conflict that existed between people in Harden and Murrumburrah was the use of a “correspondent” to submit reports to the local newspaper, which was located at Murrumburrah. The topic of the day in 1892 was the need for a large clock on the platform, to be placed “in a conspicuous place at the front of the station buildings.” The newspaper considered that such a large clock would be easy to see and save “a considerable amount of unnecessary anxiety” amongst the “large numbers of passengers” using the station.⁴⁷⁴

There was already a clock on the platform but the real issue was not reported in the local press in 1892. So far as platform clocks are concerned, size matters. A larger clock was not required for waiting passengers to facilitate better visibility, but for a sociological reason. The motive for requesting a larger clock really did not matter in 1892 as no new clock was installed for the next ten years.

The matter of the provision of a larger platform clock was again raised in 1901. The main trouble was that it was “insignificant” and had been insignificant for a long time and the local community wanted a “more convenient and better looking timepiece. Harden, being a very busy and important depot,

⁴⁷³ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁴ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 9th July, 1892, p. 2.

where hundreds of passengers get out at the station at least six days a week, straining to look at the little clock. The local newspaper demanded a “good serviceable clock like the one on the platform at Goulburn.” Despite the local Member of Parliament asking the Railway Commissioners for a better clock, they declined to do anything until they a paid a visit to the station, which was to shortly take place.⁴⁷⁵ Of course, the clock was not wanted for the benefit of passengers but because it was an important symbol that mirrored the status of the town served by the station and the people of Harden and Murrumburrah were irked by the idea that both Cootamundra and Goulburn stations had larger clocks. Platform clocks symbolised status of rural towns.

The Commissioners turned up at Harden station in August, 1901, and inspected the existing clock. They promised that, when a larger clock became available, it may be moved to Harden but at present no suitable clock could be transferred.”⁴⁷⁶ By October, the Commissioners had found a clock and were refurbishing it before sending it to Harden for installation.⁴⁷⁷ The clock arrived in November, 1901, being described as “nice.”⁴⁷⁸

PLATFORM OPERATIONS AND ISSUES

There was a report in 1892 that portion of the platform at the station was very worn with “nasty holes near the refreshment room”. The brick capping along the coping was wearing and the local newspaper considered that sandstone would be a more appropriate product.⁴⁷⁹ Such a belief in the superiority of sandstone was true but false in relation to the product. Sandstone was used regularly between 1860 and 1890 for platform paving and thresholds but, with heavy traffic, became eroded and unsafe.

One of the initiatives of Chief Commissioner Eddy was the introduction of *Local Appendices to the Working Timetables* and the 1894 *Local Appendix* for the southern line mentioned that the station was connected to the departmental telephone circuit. The station did not provide a public telegraph service because the post office had been relocated into the Harden commercial centre in 1893. A stretcher for an emergency was located on the platform, this being normal for a New South Wales railway station and this practice of providing stretches did not end until 1990.

In 1897, the platform was extended by 100 feet.⁴⁸⁰

With the commencement of the “busy season” (meaning Summer) in 1898, the Railway Department implemented a requirement that people who wished to go on to the railway station to see the mail train arrive or depart were required to procure a tuppence platform ticket. However, a local newspaper reported that quite a number of people managed to gain access to the platform “without spending a copper” by using other than the entry doors.⁴⁸¹ The use of platform tickets was a fairly recent event and had been first introduced at Sydney railway station on 3rd March, 1891, at a cost of

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid., 1st June, 1901, p. 2.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid., 24th August, 1901, p. 2.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid. 26 October, 1901, p. 2. There is conflicting information that says the clock was not installed until May, 1903. See *Murrumburrah Signal*, 23rd May, 1903, p. 2.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid. 23rd November, 1901, p. 2.

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid., 10th December, 1892, p. 2.

⁴⁸⁰ *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 24th April, 1897, p. 10.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid., 31st December, 1898, p. 1.

tuppence.⁴⁸² The objective was to control the number of people loitering on the platform at that station. The idea was endorsed by communities at many railway stations throughout the colony and started to be extended in September, 1891.⁴⁸³ The Yass Town branch line was opened in April, 1892, and the issue of platform tickets was applied to that line in August, 1892. By that latter time, the issue of platform tickets seemed to have been applied to all railway stations.⁴⁸⁴

In 1906, it was still mandatory for people to purchase a platform ticket to be on the Harden platform and the evidence suggests that the Railway By-Law had not been enforced on a regular basis. Instructions were issued to all stations in 1906 to enforce the By-law.⁴⁸⁵ There was a protest meeting in February, 1907, at the cost of twopence for platform tickets and the people were angry that there was no discrimination between those who had "legitimate business on the platform" and those "who go to merely killed time and gratify idle curiosity."⁴⁸⁶ The newspaper thought that the restriction on access to the platform was absurd in country towns.

The Railway By-Laws had prohibited smoking on all New South Wales platforms from at least May, 1888, and possibly earlier. Even at that time, staff were not enforcing the ban.⁴⁸⁷ The By-Law banning smoking was re-issued in 1891.⁴⁸⁸ In 1901, Railway staff were still not enforcing the By-law existed that banned smoking as evidenced by a local newspaper report that "several persons may be seen nightly on both Harden and Murrumburrah stations smoking away at their pipes and cigarettes evidently without the slightest pangs of a guilty conscience. Not long ago, a lady had a very narrow escape from burning on the Harden platform on account of the dress being set alight by a match that was carelessly thrown away."⁴⁸⁹

More seats were placed on the platform in 1902 and the new, larger clock, installed in November, 1901, was "going well." This time, the local newspaper was full of praise for the Railway Commissioners saying that "these improvements are heartily appreciated by the general public and the authorities deserve credit for attending to the wants of people. However, there is another matter at Harden railway station which needs attending to and that is in regard to the covering. The platform was extended a considerable distance some time ago (i.e. April, 1897) but no covering was erected, so that persons getting out of the train at any point on this extension on a rainy day or night would get wet before reaching the covered-in in portion of the platform."⁴⁹⁰

STATION AND PLATFORM LIGHTING

There was talk in July, 1902, of the station being lit by acetylene gas and the local residents were most enthusiastic and wished it to come true, saying that there was plenty of scope for improvement so far as platform lighting was concerned. Because of the high level of activity in the

⁴⁸² *New South Wales Government Gazette* No. 143, 3rd March, 1891, p. 1717, which amended Railway By-law No. 58 and *Goulburn Evening Penny Post*, 17th February, 1891, p. 4.

⁴⁸³ *Illawarra Mercury*, 15th September, 1891, p. 4 and *The Australian Star*, 10th September, 1891, p. 6.

⁴⁸⁴ *New South Wales Government Gazette* No. 609, 26th August, 1892, p. 6927.

⁴⁸⁵ *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 26th January, 1906, p. 2.

⁴⁸⁶ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 8th February, 1907, p. 2.

⁴⁸⁷ *Gundagai Times and Tumut, Adelong and Murrumbidgee District Advertiser*, 11th May, 1882, p. 2.

⁴⁸⁸ *NSW Government Gazette*, 26th August, 1891, Issue No. 560, p. 6709.

⁴⁸⁹ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 27th April, 1901, p. 1.

⁴⁹⁰ *Ibid.* 18th January, 1902, p. 2.

shunting yard and locomotive depot, the local newspaper thought that the railway authorities should install electric lighting rather than gas.⁴⁹¹

In March, 1906, gas lighting was being installed at the station and the local newspaper reported that the improvement would be much appreciated by the travelling public.⁴⁹² It seems that there was scope for further improvement. The Farmers and Settlers' Association raised the need for improved lighting at the stations at both Harden and Murrumburrah in March, 1909.⁴⁹³

Another issue raised by the Farmers and Settlers' Association in 1909 was the need for a list of the prices to be affixed to be placed on a poster and a fixed to a wall in all refreshment rooms for the various items that could be purchased. The Association argued travellers should be able to select items based on price as well as presentation.⁴⁹⁴

RELOCATION OF THE PUBLIC POSTAL AND TELEGRAPHIC OFFICE FROM THE STATION

A public post and telegraphic office had been provided at the station since 1880 and was contained in one of the rooms of the main building. From 1883 a non-railway postal officer had been appointed and in 1884 the public postal and telegraphic work was transferred from the main building to a "small hut" in front of the station.

Intra-town jealousies continued in 1902 to exist between the Harden and Murrumburrah ends but, with a number of houses being built on vacant land between the two commercial centres, there was hope that the development would "tend to do away with much of that jealousy which has been so noticeable in the past."⁴⁹⁵

On 29th April, 1893, the post office and the agency for the Government Savings Bank closed at the railway platform and relocated to a new post office in the main shopping centre in Harden. This relocation of the post office would have been an indicator that the status of the Harden end of the town had customers who resided some distance from the station and the main street would have provided a more central and convenient location.

REFRESHMENT ROOM OPERATIONS AND ALTERATIONS

The Railway Department proposed to extend the public counter in the refreshment room and issued a plan dated 9th of April, 1896. It was also intended to build a new laundry measuring. It is unknown whether these works were implemented.

Tenders for the management of the refreshment room at Harden and elsewhere were renewed in 1896 and the list below shows the amounts paid by the licensees for the operation of the various refreshment rooms on the southern line:

⁴⁹¹ Ibid. 5th July, 1902, p. 2.

⁴⁹² Ibid., 30th March, 1906, p. 2.

⁴⁹³ *The Farmer and Settler*, 12th March, 1909, p. 7.

⁴⁹⁴ *Albury Banner and Wodonga Express*, 30th July, 1909, p. 4.

⁴⁹⁵ *The Farmer and Settler*, 4th October, 1902, p. 2.

- Moss Vale £900
- Goulburn £301
- Yass Junction £192
- Harden £216
- Cootamundra £26
- Junee £833⁴⁹⁶

In 1898, travellers by train praised the excellence of the tea supplied at the Harden refreshment room.⁴⁹⁷ Animals were apparently popular at Harden station. A “splendid young cockatoo” resided at the refreshment room and the cockatoo was reported as being an “excellent talker.”⁴⁹⁸ The staff at the station lost a black and tan cattle dog on 4th October, 1898, and reward was offered for the return of the animal to the station.⁴⁹⁹

A plan was prepared, with the date of 16th September, 1901, for a massive expansion of the refreshment room. There was to be no increase in the size of the public area but an increase in the size of the accommodation for the Manager and staff. Adjacent to the rear kitchen were to be separate sitting room is for the Manager and for the staff as well as a “private dining room”. Upstairs the number of bedrooms were to be increased from four to ten. As far as can be worked out, the proposed alterations downstairs went nowhere but the upstairs was converted from two to four bedrooms by the elimination of the sitting room.

One of the problems faced by travellers was the absence of indications on carriages at Sydney station of the destination of particular cars and also the absence of carriage numbers. Travellers were having difficulty finding their carriage, especially en-route when they detrained to attend the railway refreshment rooms.⁵⁰⁰

By 1905, the population of the Harden end of the town was 750 people at accommodation was in short supply. It was reported that over 1,000 men were employed on various railway works at the time in the Harden area and the lessee of the railway refreshment room was asked whether he could let out the upstairs bedrooms in the building. He was not in favour of the proposal and pointed out that there were only three bedrooms but, more importantly, he made the comment that he was “not often on the place, meaning that he was an absentee licensee.”⁵⁰¹

Ambulance classes were being held in the general waiting room at Harden station in 1905.⁵⁰²

Five years after the 1901 partial changes to the refreshment room were made, work being authorised on 12th June, 1906, and completed on 3rd November 1906.⁵⁰³ These works must have been substantial as they cost £1,132 but the nature of some of the alterations is unknown. What is

⁴⁹⁶ *The Scrutineer and Berrima District Press*, 21st November, 1896, p. 2.

⁴⁹⁷ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 16th of April, 1898, p. 6.

⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 24th December, 1898, p. 1.

⁴⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 26 November, 1898, p. 3.

⁵⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 25th February, 1899, p. 2.

⁵⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 6th October, 1905, p. 2.

⁵⁰² *Ibid.*, 19th May, 1905, p. 2.

⁵⁰³ Shop Order No. 585 4, Shop Order Book 21C/252, former SRA Archives, p. 95.

known is that the 1901 proposal for the construction of a downstairs sitting room for the Manager and his family was provided in 1906.⁵⁰⁴

11. TRACK DUPLICATION COMETH WITH GOOD AND BAD RESULTS 1911-1918

PART PLAYED BY THE STATION IN THE GREAT WAR

There was not a single reference to the Great War in the local newspapers, apart from farewells to departing soldiers and welcoming home celebrations on their return.

For the New South Wales Railways, it was a turbulent period with a very high number of strikes by the various unions, including those at Harden. The supply of money was also very limited after 1915.

CONSTRUCTION STARTS WITHOUT PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL

What is almost unbelievable is that all the plans and documentation prepared throughout 1912 was done on the assumption that the New South Wales Parliament would pass it necessary legislation to authorise the Chief Commissioner for Railways to act as Constructing Authority to carry out the duplication and deviation of the line. The legislation, known as the Great Southern Railway Improvement Act No. 59 of 1912, was not authorised by Parliament until the 20th December, 1912. In short, there was no authorisation to undertake all the planning and other activities that had been going on from 1911. One additional comment needs to be made about the title of the legislation and that is the reference to the "Great Southern Railway", which was a term last in official use in 1889 and was abolished by Chief Commissioner Eddy following the opening of the Hawkesbury River bridge, which unified the northern and southern railway systems.

PLATFORM CONVERSION FROM A SIDE TO ISLAND CONFIGURATION

The conversion of the Harden side platform into an island platform was made public in June, 1911.⁵⁰⁵ News slowly came to light about various aspects of the project and was known in August that the approach to the island platform would be by the use of a subway.

The Commissioners visited Harden station in April, 1912, and spent an hour inspecting the plans for the proposed improvements and told the local community that the first task would be conversion of the existing platform into an island arrangement.⁵⁰⁶ The new Down Main line was very close to Mr Wallem's house (which was located between the existing Station Master's residence and the present platform) and it would be necessary to resume some land. Access to the station was confirmed as being from "Whitton Street." Rightly so, John Whitton's status has been reduced and Whitton Street

⁵⁰⁴ It is also possible that the upstairs conversion from four to two bedrooms occurred in 1905 and not 1901. This is another conundrum to be resolved.

⁵⁰⁵ *The Farmer and Settler*, 16th June, 1911, p. 4.

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 18th April, 1912, p. 2.

is now known as Whitton Lane East and Whitton Lane West, with the station forecourt dividing the two parts. The 1896 carriage shed, which was relocated immediately at the Sydney end of the platform was relocated in January, 1913, to a location adjacent to new Down Main line about 200 metres on the Sydney side of the platform.⁵⁰⁷

Navvies started arriving in the town in June, 1912, to carry out the duplication work. Cottages Nos. 8, 9 and 10 also had to be relocated from near the Cootamundra end of the station to locations not far from the newly positioned carriage shed on the Sydney side of the platform.

On 22nd May, 1912, a plan was prepared for the construction of the existing subway with a gradient of one in eight. The subway was and is ten feet wide, eight feet high and the floor was formed of three-inch thick gravel covered by asphalt. The three tracks above the subway roof, which were set at 12 feet centres, were supported by steel beams 13 feet long. The ramp from the road approach was proposed to be 88 feet 6 inches long while the ramp to the platform was to be 116 feet long. That part of the subway under the tracks was to be 61 feet long, making a total length of 265 feet 6 inches. Bullnose bricks were used at the top of the brick walls and there was a four-rail cast iron fence used on the sides of the subway on the platform.

There is a number of factors that question whether the provision of an island platform with subway access was a good idea. For example,

- the cost of excavating the subway was high,
- made access by road vehicles directly to the platforms impossible to pick up and deliver heavy parcels and other items,
- the adverse ascetic impact on the 1880 building and the creation of an additionally, unsightly composition of structures from the road approach,
- most rooms in the platform building required alterations for the provision of doorways to serve the new Cootamundra-bound platform,
- the dismantling of the existing verandah on the former road approach and replacement by a full length awning, &
- the time taken for passengers between the station approach on platform was long

COMMUNITY UNHAPPINESS ABOUT THE SUBWAY

In 2016, Harden is the only station outside the Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong conurbation to feature the operation of a subway on a daily basis. Possibly the reason for this is that Harden station is the only operational island platform in rural New South Wales with passenger trains continuing to use both sides of the island platform.⁵⁰⁸

It did not take long for the local community to be concerned about the subway access. The local newspaper in June thought that the subway was “most awkward and some protest should be made

⁵⁰⁷ Shop Order No. 8240, Shop Order Book 21C/257, former SRA Archives, p. 39.

⁵⁰⁸ Moree is an island platform but passenger trains used only one side.

from the public before it is too late.”⁵⁰⁹ By July, concern about the subway was topical and the newspaper said that, “in the opinion of many, (the subway) is a most inconvenient one.”⁵¹⁰

The local newspaper was surprised that the residents “are inclined tamely to submit to the construction of a subway approach to the station without protest. They do not realise exactly what that approach will mean to them, or the inconvenience it will cause. When they have had the experience of its inconveniences, they will be willing to move Heaven and Earth to get it altered.”⁵¹¹ The basis of the complaint seems to be the length of the ramps which the newspaper informed readers were 150 yards each and that the distance was excessive to carry luggage to and from the station. The newspaper considered that, once the subway was put in place, it will be “the most awkward and inconvenient place on the southern line.” It recommended a letter of protest to the Minister for Public Works.

At the next meeting of the Murrumburrah Municipal Council, the subject of the subway was considered. Council had received a reply from the Railway Commissioner to its letter of protest saying that the proposed subway was “most convenient.”⁵¹² The Mayor considered that Council should not leave the matter at that stage and prepare a letter to the Minister stating that Council wanted an overhead footbridge. This was not a unanimous view and Alderman Bembrick said he had inspected the site and learnt the other side of the argument. He explained that the overhead bridge would be inconvenient to elderly people. Alderman Hart desired to have both the subway and the overbridge, saying that heavy luggage, such as commercial travellers’ samples, would be conveyed in the subway and said that he had seen this arrangement work well in Melbourne. Council resolved to let the matter stand over for two weeks so that further information could be received.

The months passed and in November, 1912, the local newspaper expressed doubt about the wisdom of the subway approach to the station saying “it will be anything but a blessing.”⁵¹³ On a brighter note, the newspaper announced that a power station to generate electricity would be established by the Railway Department, primarily to pump water from the new dam, but would also provide lighting of the station and yard.⁵¹⁴ The Railway power station was in existence in 1914 but it seems that the station was still lit by gas and there was concern expressed in the local press that electricity was bad for the eyes.⁵¹⁵

Council ended the year with further discussion on the subway and, once again, Alderman Bembrick had no objections but did comment that it would have been better had no railway line is being constructed on the southern or down side of the existing platform. Council wanted to know how they would get goods from the station as they were “completely in the dark.”⁵¹⁶ Again, Alderman Hart supported the subway and an overhead bridge at the Cootamundra end of the station though he thought that the Railway Commissioners would disregard their request. Alderman Kelly said that

⁵⁰⁹ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 10th June, 1912, p. 2.

⁵¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1st July, 1912, p. 2.

⁵¹¹ *Ibid.*, 15th July, 1912, p. 2.

⁵¹² *Ibid.*, 19th July, 1912p, 2.

⁵¹³ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 21st November, 1912, p. 2.

⁵¹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 23rd April, 1913, p. 2.

⁵¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 19th December, 1912, p. 2.

no other station of the importance of Harden in the State were there three lines between the station in the town and thought that some draughtsman in Sydney had carried out the plan.

Both Goulburn and Junee stations had overhead pedestrian bridges and it seemed proper that Harden should have the same. Council had revised its understanding of the subway length from 300 to 250 yards. The Mayor thought the matter had gone too far, seeing that the subway had been completed but he could see no objection why an overhead bridge could not be constructed with a ramped access from the street side and 18 steps on the platform. There was further concern about the absence of an overhead cover to the subway. If the overhead bridge were not provided, Council wanted a lift for luggage and an overhead concourse while Alderman Kelly proposed a level crossing to reach the platform, though he admitted it was dangerous. Council resolved to write another letter to the Commissioner pointing out the difficulty with luggage and goods and complaining that the work on the subway access was done without consideration of the local conditions.⁵¹⁷

The new island platform and subway opened on 18th December, 1912. The length of the subway was neither 300 yards or 250 yards but 234 yards or 702 feet or 213 metres. Those measurements differ from those expressed in the May, 1912, plan and it can only be assumed that the Railway Department revised the May plan to ease the gradient. The subway gradient was opened with a gradient of 1 in 8 and it continues to be this gradient today.

Although the subway was opened, it continued to be a source of trouble for the community. Cordials and other goods were being taken to Cunnigar station in January, 1913, for collection as an alternative to proceeding through the subway.⁵¹⁸ While Cunnigar station was also an island platform, it had improved access by the use of an at-grade crossing. One would have thought that it would have been better to have the goods shipped to Murrumburrah, which was a single sided platform.

Council would not let the matter go and considered the subway again at its March, 1913, meeting with Council deciding to have a deputation on the matter. Alderman Hart said that some of the railway men had suggested that the only improvement involved shortening the length of the ramp on the town side by demolishing the existing Station Master's residence. Alderman Hart persisted with his desire for an overhead bridge.⁵¹⁹

The subway was still a matter of concern to Council and the Mayor raised the issue with Chief Commissioner Johnson, who was "in a very affable mood" on arrived on 1st December, 1913, as part of his annual inspection. In reply to the problem of getting goods from the platform, Johnson said that there was no better way of organising the duplication and, to overcome the access problems, he had arranged for goods that normally would be loaded and unloaded at the platform to be delivered to the goods shed without delay.⁵²⁰

Obviously, Johnson was a skilled orator and, when the Mayor asked whether Harden was more important than Murrumburrah, the Chief Commissioner replied that Murrumburrah was "by far more important place than Harden, being a very much more important commercial centre, as by far

⁵¹⁷ Ibid.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid., 13th January, 1913, p. 2.

⁵¹⁹ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 20th March, 1913, p. 2.

⁵²⁰ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 4th December, 1913, p. 2.

most of the business was done in Murrumburrah.⁵²¹ Johnson then said Harden was a large railway depot but Murrumburrah was essentially the business place. Those words would have been very well received by the Mayor and Aldermen on the Murrumburrah Council.

THE SHED AT THE TOP OF THE SUBWAY ON THE ROAD SIDE

On a visit by the Commissioners in March, 1918, Murrumburrah Municipal Council reminded the senior staff of a request made in May, 1916, for a shed at the top of the subway on the town side which to hold parcels luggage and commercial travellers' sample bags. Two years later, the structure had not been built and James Fraser, the Chief Commissioner was unsympathetic in his response saying that "many inconveniences have to be done without in these abnormal times" and his main argument was that "the people of New South Wales had better railway facilities and are better treated than in any other part of the world."⁵²² Finally, Council received a letter from the Chief Commissioner in May, 1918, asking to what extent local financial assistance would be provided for the erection of a shed at the top of the subway. Council flicked the matter to the Harden Progress Committee for consideration.

ALTERATIONS TO THE REFRESHMENT ROOM

The Railway Department prepared an architectural plan on 12th January, 1914, for alterations and additions to refreshment room. Authorisation to proceed was granted on 16th July 1914. At some time between 1896 and 1914, alterations were made to the refreshment room that changed the location of the serving counter from its 50 feet length in 1896 to an island configuration that existed in 1914. In 1914, it was proposed to revert the 1896 plan and have the counter at the rear of the room and, once again, the counter was to be 50 feet long. It seems the 1914 alterations to the counter were not implemented as a new scheme evolved in 1915.

Every time there was an alteration to the refreshment room – in 1885, 1896 and 1914 – there was a change in the shape of the serving counter and, once again in 1915, a new design was adopted. Previously, there have been corner counters, straight counters and an island counter. What design could be different? The answer was the redesign of the counter into the shape of an "S", which was given a new name. Now, it was the "coffee counter".

Track duplication was the stimulus for massive changes to the design and layout of the refreshment room. Whereas the 1885 and 1896 additions were added to the Cootamundra end of the refreshment room, the 1914 alterations extended the space in the direction of Sydney by utilising the gentlemen's waiting room adjacent to the ladies' toilet. Only 20 stations throughout New South Wales had gentlemen's waiting rooms, representing 1% of the total of all stations. The facility at Harden had been provided in 1891 and it must have been a disappointment to gentlemen to lose their rare facility in 1914.

The Railway Department issued a plan dated 27th October, 1916, for the re-design of the refreshment room and the installation of the "American bar." The former main room was divided into two separate parts with the bar at the Sydney end and the dining area at the Cootamundra end. All upstairs rooms as well as the downstairs rooms were to receive a "coat of Keystone or other

⁵²¹ Ibid.

⁵²² Ibid., 14th March, 1918, p. 2.

suitable paint.” At that time, the lessee was complaining of vermin. There were loose floor boards in the bar area requiring fixing and the stove damper required adjustment as the heat was not being distributed evenly to the ovens. The American bar was provided in the space of the gentlemen’s waiting room. As a result of the alterations, the service of alcoholic beverages in the refreshment room was moved from the Cootamundra to the Sydney end of the facility. This is the bar that is currently located in the Harden Murrumburrah Museum. This was a new style of bar in the shape of an island with cupboards above head height for the storage of glasses et cetera. An American bar would be installed at the opening of the Cootamundra West station in 1918. The facility at Harden was the first installation of this type of bar on the New South Wales railway system. The American bar in the Museum is the only one of its type that has been conserved in its entirety.⁵²³

Because of the conversion of the platform from a single sided affair to an island platform, major alterations were made to the rear of the refreshment room buildings. This resulted in the extension of the existing single story part in the direction of Cootamundra. Included in the demolition was the sitting room for the Manager of the refreshment room. The sitting room had only been in existence a few years. Other structures that required relocation were the kitchen, the washroom, a store, the staff toilet and the storage bin for coal.

Upstairs, the sitting room had been removed in either 1901 or 1906 and the space was then occupied by four bedrooms. By 1914, a bathroom had been added by an addition which was external to the refreshment room wall at the Cootamundra end.

A Memorandum of Agreement for the operation of the Harden refreshment room was signed by William Henry Wilson, who was the licensee, and was dated 19th of April, 1915. It provided for an extension of the existing lease only for a period of six months until 31st December, 1916, and thereafter on a monthly tenancy. The annual rents paid for the southern line refreshment rooms were:

- Sydney £625,
- Moss Vale £625,
- Yass Junction £150
- Harden £220,
- Cootamundra £200,
- Junee £750,
- Culcairn £20,
- Albury £300, &
- Whitton £15

Instructions were issued in 1916 to Station Masters at all railway refreshment room stations that, in future, no platform tickets would be issued to any person “until his or her genuine necessity for access to the railway platform is satisfactorily established.”⁵²⁴ The object was to prevent persons gaining access to platforms for the purpose of obtaining intoxicating liquor during prohibited hours,

⁵²³ Half of an American bar from the former Goulburn refreshment room is conserved in the Goulburn brewery.

⁵²⁴ *The Goulburn Evening Penny Post*, 18th May, 1916, p. 4.

such as Sundays, when rooms were only open for railway travellers. Additionally, the instruction was aimed at keeping the platforms clear to enable passengers to obtain seats and allow travellers to get in and out and obtain refreshments.⁵²⁵

On 31st December, 1916, the Government ended private enterprise management of all refreshment rooms throughout New South Wales and operated them as a branch of the Railway Department from 1st January, 1917. Government management lasted for the next 40 years until the Harden refreshment room closed in 1957.

This transfer of management from private enterprise to government control affected all refreshment rooms and origin was a suggestion made by the Premier, William Holman, to the Commissioner in 1915 and was one of a wide range of initiatives made by the then Labor Government to increase work opportunities for unionists. This was not the first time that the question of government takeover of all refreshment rooms had been raised. When the subject came up for discussion in 1901, the Railway Department declined to take over management because it could not afford the compensation that would be payable to the private lessees for the equipment and furniture in the facilities.⁵²⁶ The difficulty of obtaining trained staff was also seen as a negative feature of the proposal at that time. Apparently, the change of management made no difference to the service provided by the refreshment room at Harden.

Not long after the Railway Department took over management, it altered the hours of operation. The Young newspaper carried the story:

“The travelling public who have been compelled to wait at Harden station for incoming trains have no doubt experienced the pangs of hunger in the interim. It has been a long standing practice for the refreshment room (the soft drinks and liquors being under the one roof) to remain closed until some 10 minutes prior to the arrival of trains; Very soon, however, the old order will-change and bona fide travellers will be permitted to partake of creature comforts at all hours. A partition is to be erected during the next few weeks separating the bar from the light refreshment portion, or as a very pious person puts it the sheep from the goats.”⁵²⁷

Every time there were improvements at Harden station, the residents of Murrumburrah became uneasy about the ever growing dominance of railway workers and the impact on the development of the town. This was the case in 1915 when the Farmers and Settlers’ Association had “lively interchanges in a serious, though good humoured strain” about the relative importance of the two commercial centres in the town. It seems there was a certain amount of disagreement that it was regrettable that the two centres had developed. There was also a consensus that there should not have been two post offices and two police stations for the one town.⁵²⁸

⁵²⁵ *ibid.*

⁵²⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald* 24th September, 1901, p. 7.

⁵²⁷ *Young Witness*, 27th March, 1917, p. 1.

⁵²⁸ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 4th July, 1915, p. 2.

In 1918, two ice chests were to be provided in the refreshment room as well as new doors and petitions. The facility was repainted and minor repairs undertaken. Work to install the ice chests was deferred to 1919.

TOILET IMPROVEMENTS

On 16th April, 1914, authorisation was granted for the replacement of the existing “old type of seats in the earth closets at the station with standard toilet seats. This was part of a system-wide programme.”⁵²⁹

Ever since the new male toilet block had been erected in 1891 at the Sydney end of the platform, the area looked decidedly unattractive as it had the appearance of a series of add-on structures. In 1915, a plan was prepared to resolve the poor appearance of the station building at the Sydney end at the same time as providing increased facilities. It was proposed to provide a luggage store, a new lamp room and six additional urinal stalls in addition to the original nine dating from 1889, making a total of 15 stalls. There are also five additional male closets. These additions were possible as it was proposed to remove the cleaner’s passage and linen closet. This meant that toilet pans were no longer changed and it may suggest that a septic tank was to be provided at the station connected to the male toilets.

NEW, FREE-STANDING BOOKING/PARCELS OFFICE

As well, at the Sydney end of the structure, a large parcels and booking office measuring 28’6” by 14’6” was to be built at the top of the ramp. Picket fencing was also intended to be placed around the end of the subway entrance at the top of the subway with gates controlling access to both platforms. The most visual alterations proposed was the replacement of the roof system with a much larger hip roof. The roof of the 1880 building was slate but, by that time, the roof extension at the Cootamundra end of the structure had been mismatched with corrugated iron sheets and it was similarly proposed to sheet the large roof at the Sydney end with the standard number 26 gauge, galvanised corrugated iron sheeting. There was to be a substantial rectangular louvre on the roof over the male toilets.

The changes that were made to the refreshment room counter were the limit the work that was carried out in accordance with the 1915 plan. There was no luggage store and the male toilets were not enlarged and the brick booking and parcels office were not built. An awning, cantilevered from the building wall using standard brackets, was proposed for the Cootamundra-bound platform as a part of the works in 1915 but it took until 1919 for the awning to be built.

While the brick booking and parcels office did not get a guernsey, a cheaper detached timber building was erected in either 1915 or 1916 at the top of the pedestrian subway as a combined booking and parcels office. This was a primitive-looking, unattractive structure that added another level of yuck to the presentation of the station. By 1915, the suite of buildings on the Harden platform had lost their attractiveness and were a merely hodgepodge of functional spaces.

⁵²⁹ Shop Order Book 21C/258, former SRA Archives, p. 32.

AWNING FOR THE COOTAMUNDRA-BOUND PLATFORM

It took a long time for the Railway Department to provide an awning over the new platform on the Cootamundra-bound side of the building. The cantilevered awning was first proposed in 1915 and it was not until June, 1917, that a plan was prepared for the provision of an awning 15 feet wide along the full length of the 1880 building and part of the refreshment room. Transparent glazing was to be fitted between the awning and the building. Heywood's Patent Glazing was to be used to replace the former awnings on each side of the faceted bay entry/widow. The narrow awning, supported by vertical posts, on the former roadside of the building was removed. This being only the second installation of this product after an initial use at Maitland in 1915.

One year later, Robert Kendall, the Engineer-in-Chief for Existing Lines, approved the plan for the awning on the Cootamundra-bound platform on 4th October, 1918. The roof of the awning was unusually covered with "3 Ply Adamax", which sat on one-inch-thick tongue and groove boarding. Adamax was a bitumous based product and first used in 1917 for ant caps on foundation piers for buildings. Its use was extended in 1918 as a roof covering on a number of buildings and it seems that corrugated iron sheeting was in short supply. The roof gussets were 3/8 inch thick steel and the rivets ¾ inch diameter. The construction of the new awning was undertaken in 1919.

ELECTRIC TOW-MOTOR EMPLOYED AT THE STATION

By 1916, a battery-powered, tow-motor had been provided at Harden station to convey parcels, goods and luggage between the platforms and the top of the subway near Whitton Lane. This made Harden one of only three stations to have tow-motors, the others being Sydney Terminal and Newcastle. When the Railway Commissioners visited Harden on 4th May, the Mayor asked the Acting Chief Commissioner to provide a shelter shed at the top of the subway to protect all the items deposited there by the tow-motor. James Fraser admitted that the claim was reasonable and promised to have an estimate prepared and for the work to proceed as soon as possible.⁵³⁰

Issues relating to the subway was a topic that would not go away since its opening in 1912. By 1916, the electric tow-motor was in use but, one year later, it was not in use.

Proof that Harden was becoming the influential end of the town was the formation of the Harden Progress Committee and it made its first thrust into railway affairs in January, 1917, with a request to the Railway Department for a replacement of the "electric trolley", which had been removed from the station because of the expense in charging its batteries. The Committee said it was used purely for railway work and was especially handy for conveying luggage, commercial travellers' samples and general freight. Commercial travellers had their samples in wicker baskets which were called panniers⁵³¹ While the Goulburn District Superintendent, Mr J. D. Reid, was in the Harden, the Committee approached him about the need for a replacement and he "promised" that the "trolley" would be put back in service "at any time."⁵³²

⁵³⁰ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 4th May, 1916, p. 3.

⁵³¹ P. and N. Body, *With Steam and Steel - Albert Denniss, Chief Train Manager 1933 – 48*, p. 57 shows a photograph of a pannier.

⁵³² *Murrumburrah Signal*, 29th January, 1917, p. 2.

The tow-motor broke down in 1916 and was taken to Sydney for repairs. It seems to have been taken away for repairs on a couple of times as there was nervous concern amongst train travellers in 1932 that the tow-motor had not been returned to Harden. The machine was reported as being the only one of its kind in this State and was especially useful on the Cootamundra-bound platform as it had a gravel surface.⁵³³ The press report of 1932 saying that it had been at the station “for many years.”⁵³⁴

Veteran local railwayman, Sidney Smith stated that the tow-motor was withdrawn due to breakdowns and alleged accident risks and disappeared before he came to the town in 1935. It had been driven by the late Gordon Sheldrick.⁵³⁵ The tale of tow-motors does not end in 1935.

When Countrylink was formed in 1989, it employed a tow-motor between the platform and top of the subway in the forecourt area. The vehicle was painted in the then corporate colour of dark blue. Its withdrawal date is unknown.

STATION LIGHTING – THE USE OF ELECTRICITY

There was a rare event in 1918 and it was rare because it was one of the few times the Railway Department took initiative about an improvement to the station. The Department wrote to the Murrumburrah Municipal Council enquiring about Council’s plans for the installation of an electricity network in the town and proposals for lighting the railway station by electricity.⁵³⁶

The use of electricity to light the station had first been raised in 1913 when the Railway Department erected a power station near the stockyards but, although the power station existed, the electricity was not used to light the station. The Council’s scheme commenced in 1920.

ROOM DESIGNATION OF THE 1880 BUILDING IN 1918

In 1918, the rooms in the 1880 building from the Sydney end were:

- Porters’ room,
- Station Master’s office,
- Telegraph office,
- general waiting room,
- Traffic Inspector’s office,
- Ladies’ waiting room,
- Ladies’ toilet,
- gentlemen’s waiting room, &
- refreshment room.

A 1915 plan was the first such document that indicated the presence of an office for a Traffic Inspector, this being the room to the immediate left of the general waiting room.

⁵³³ *Harden Express*, 7th July, 1932, p. 2.

⁵³⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵³⁵ *Ibid.*, 3rd March, 1977.

⁵³⁶ *Harden Express and Galong Reporter*, 13th June, 1918, p. 8.

PUBLIC COMPLAINTS OF DECLINING SERVICE

In March, 1918, there was a protest about the limited time the ticket office was open. It was departmental practice that the ticket office window be raised for business 15 minutes before train arrival but this was not always the case and it was reported that, at some times, especially when trains were running late, the window was opened only 5 minutes before train arrival, “with the resultant leap for life.”⁵³⁷ That was the first “growl” made by the local press in March. Growl No. 2 was a complaint about Porters saying that “they regarded themselves as the salt of the Earth.” Growl No. 3 was the inattention given to the delivery of parcels. Growl No. 4 was the inability of the booking clerk to locate stations in order to work out fares. Growl No. 5 was a protest that unnamed Railway officers were referring to Harden as being on the Western line. A local newspaper said that “these are quoted by our correspondents as a few samples of what innocent railway travellers have to put up with. Many of the comments were on the personal side and have been omitted.”⁵³⁸

LOCAL SOURCE OF PLATFORM SURFACE MATERIAL

Additional sidings were being constructed near the Murrumburrah Showground in 1914 and material was excavated to obtain “rotten granite for railway platforms.”⁵³⁹ This was a reference to the white granite that the Railways used on the top of platform surfaces.

12. RESTRICTED FUNDING 1919 TO 1929

THE 1919 INFLUENZA EPIDEMIC

Nothing good came out of World War 1 for the New South Wales Railways. The returning soldiers brought with them the Spanish influenza epidemic and a number of stations on the rail system in 1919 had an “inhalation chamber” installed on their platforms. Everyone arriving by train had to walk through this facility in which their throat was sprayed with a substance to disinfect both the throat and nasal passages in an attempt to limit the spread of the disease. The disease was at its worse between January and August, 1919. There was no charge to the public for the use of this chamber. No known plan exists of an inhalation chamber on a New South Wales railway station but Railway Historian, Ray Love, understands that these were simple, timber framed structures holding one person at a time and covered with hessian or canvas.⁵⁴⁰ There is no evidence whether inhalation chambers existed at either Harden or Murrumburrah in 1919 but one was located at Goulburn station.

Apart from the inhalation chambers, the public had to wear face masks at all times while on Railway property in an endeavour to restrict the spread of the disease. This

⁵³⁷ *Harden Express and Galong Reporter*, 28th March, 1918, p. 2.

⁵³⁸ Ibid.

⁵³⁹ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 4th of June, 1914, p. 2.

⁵⁴⁰ Discussion with Author, 16th May, 2015.

applied not only to travellers but to local residents visiting stations for any type of business, such as collection of a parcel.

Travel restrictions were imposed on 4th April, 1919, and people from Sydney were not allowed to travel beyond the boundaries of Picton, Mount Victoria and Maitland. On 12th May, restrictions were eased provided that a person had not been infected in the previous two days and possessed a medical certificate from a registered doctor saying that they were clear of influenza. The travel restrictions were totally lifted on 8th July, 1919.⁵⁴¹

In Harden, people who had to change between branch line and main line trains and had to wait some time would sometimes wander off the platform into the town and some would go to the various hotels. The only trouble in early 1919 was that the travellers removed their facial mask when they left the station area and this caused considerable concern amongst the local community. One traveller entered one of the nearby hotels and was refused service on the basis that he was not wearing his mask and the local newspaper argued that it should be mandatory that travellers remain on the station between trains and continue to wear their masks.⁵⁴²

There were cases of pneumonia in Harden and Murrumburrah. In one of those cases, a railway worker, George Dunn, and one of his children contracted the disease and they were isolated in their railway residence at Harden.⁵⁴³ Three other railway officers were also affected and lived in the same boarding house, which was quarantined.⁵⁴⁴ The railway station was shorthanded because of the number of people who were absent on sick leave. All such influenza cases were reported to the Municipal Council.

1927 BUILDING CHANGES

It is a feature of the New South Wales Railways that very few, permanent platform buildings were replaced with larger structures. The New South Wales Government simply did not provide sufficient capital funds to allow for building replacement, even though there were strong cases for doing so. Despite growing numbers of passengers using the Harden station, the Railway Department was required to play with the existing spaces and modify and rearrange rooms to meet operational requirements. That strategy had been applied in 1915 and was applied again in 1927.

The Railway Department issued a plan on 3rd December, 1926 but the plan was amended on 6th April, 1927, for a rearrangement of the internal spaces. Most but not all work affected the refreshment room. This was the last time a major change was implemented to the whole of the facility and the second last time the refreshment room was altered substantially. Below is a list of the changes, apart from those that affected the refreshment room:

- provision of a public space at the front of the Porters' Room by partitioning off part of their space,

⁵⁴¹ *Government Gazette*, Special Issue No. 108 (Supplement), dated 12th May, 1919, p. 2728 and No. 165 (Supplement), dated 8th July, 1919, p. 3802.

⁵⁴² *The Sun*, 13th February, 1919, p. 7.

⁵⁴³ *Cootamundra Herald*, 6th May, 1919, p. 2.

⁵⁴⁴ *Gundagai Independent and Pastoral, Agricultural and Mining Advocate*, 5th June, 1919, p. 2.

- provision of a small sign-on counter and public space by partitioning off one corner of the Station Master's Office,
- provision of a public space within the Telegraph Room by partitioning of one corner of the room,
- relocation of the ladies' closets (three in number) to the rear of the ladies' waiting room, which was achieved by dividing the ladies' waiting room into two halves using a timber framed wall,

Not every plan is available to explain the totality of internal changes to the building at Harden. However, a number of features are presented in a 1927 drawing, including:

- freestanding, timber booking and parcels office located on the platform at the top of the subway,
- twin swing doors erected at the opening on both sides of the building covering the passageway to the male toilet – still extant in 1982,
- provision of “water closets” for the female toilets, as opposed to earth closets,
- the installation of the Heywood's clear glazing over part of the awning on the Cootamundra-bound platform,
- the conversion of the 1891 “lavatory” into a store room at the Sydney end,
- the conversion of the 1891 linen closet into a bath room at the Sydney end,
- the conversion of the 1891 lamp room into a room for an electrician at the Sydney end,
- the conversion of the 1891 “open space” into an out of room at the Sydney end,
- the conversion of the 1891 parcels office into a Porters' Room towards the Sydney end,
- the conversion of the 1891 telegraph office into the office for the Station Master towards the Sydney end, &
- the conversion of the 1891 booking office into the telegraph room in the centre of the building.

In summary, virtually every internal space at the station was reconfigured into something different. It was in 1927 that the Station Master received his own office for the first time.

John Forsyth, the one-time Archives Officer of the State Rail Authority, wrote that the maximum number of people working for the NSW Railways at Harden was 272 in 1927. Of that total, 48 staff worked in the Traffic Branch in the following positions:

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| • Station Master | 1 |
| • Night Officer | 2 |
| • Clerk | 6 |
| • Telegraph Operator | 3 |
| • Leading Porter | 3 |
| • Porter | 8 |
| • Junior Porter | 6 |

• “Tranship” Porter	1
• Office Cleaner	1
• Signaller	6
• Shunter	11
• TOTAL	48

Of the 48 positions, 31 worked on the platform but over three different shifts. The Station Master always worked the morning shift.

All stations were ranked in importance, with the seniority of the Station Master increasing in proportion with the size and complexity of the work at the station. The Station Master at Harden was ranked as Second Class, as was his equivalents at Cootamundra and Albury. First Class Station Masters were located at Goulburn and Junee. Temora and Wagga Wagga had Third Class Station Masters while the grade at Young was Fourth Class and the Station Masters at both Yass Junction and Yass Town were Fifth Class. Oddly, the Night Officer (the position being later renamed the Assistant Station Master) at Harden was First Class, perhaps indicating a high level of work at night time. Nine clerks also worked at the station during this period in support of the Station Master. These were additional to the Porters and Junior Porters who worked on the platform.

STATION GARDEN

It was in 1927 that the first mention of the garden at Harden station in the local press. Harden station took out second prize in the garden petition for ferns and plants, coming behind Murrumburrah station in first place.⁵⁴⁵ The civic leaders of Murrumburrah would have liked that outcome.

It is interesting to note that the very first time gardens got a mention in the local press in regard to Murrumburrah station was also 1927. That coincidence seems a little strange as the annual garden competition had been going on for a number of years. Maybe gardens were started only in that year at the encouragement of the Railway Department as a means of deflecting attention away from public criticism about the low level of service provided to travellers, as occurred in 1918. Gardens provided no-cost solutions to stations where maintenance was lacking.

REFRESHMENT ROOM CHANGES

Robert Kendall was the Engineer-in-Chief for Existing Lines and on 4th of January, 1919, he approved the provision of two ice chests to be fitted under the counter of the American bar. The work was planned for 1918 but it was deferred. They were lined with No. 26 gauge galvanised iron and insulated with cork. Ice came in two sizes having been brought by train to Harden from Sydney. Half hundredweight blocks measured two feet nine inches by eight and a quarter inches by seven and a quarter inches. One hundredweight blocks measured the same length by 14¼ inches by eight and a half inches.

In 1921, the refreshment room at Harden was one of 55 similar facilities operated directly by the New South Wales Railways. Refreshment rooms were officially divided into five categories and

⁵⁴⁵ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 10th November, 1927, p. 2.

these are shown in the Table below, starting with the most comprehensive service and ending with the lowest level of service.

TABLE: LOCATION AND CLASSIFICATION OF NSW REFRESHMENT ROOMS 1920-1950

LOCATION	OFFICIAL CLASSIFICATION	AVAILABILITY OF PUBLIC BEDROOM ACCOMMODATION
UNCLASSIFIED		
“Central” (Sydney Terminal)	liquor bar – meals and counter service	No
Wallerawang	Ditto	No
Warialda	Ditto	No
TOTAL IN GROUP	3	
Moss Vale	liquor bar – grills and counter service	Yes
Goulburn	Ditto	No
Cootamundra	Ditto	No
Junee	Ditto	Yes
Albury	Ditto	No
Cowra	Ditto	No
Temora	Ditto	No
Mount Victoria	Ditto	No
Bathurst	Ditto	No
Parkes	Ditto	No
Dubbo	Ditto	No
Mudgee	Ditto	No
Nyngan	Ditto	No
Gosford	Ditto	No
Newcastle	Ditto	Yes
Singleton	Ditto	No
Muswellbrook	Ditto	Yes
Tamworth	Ditto	No
Burren Junction	Ditto	No
Moree	Ditto	No
Kempsey	Ditto	No
Coffs Harbour	Ditto	No
South Grafton	Ditto	No
Casino	Ditto	No
TOTAL IN GROUP	24	
Harden	Liquor bar – rules and counter service	No
Cooma	Ditto	No

LOCATION	OFFICIAL CLASSIFICATION	AVAILABILITY OF PUBLIC BEDROOM ACCOMMODATION
Narrabri	Ditto	No
Armidale	Ditto	No
Glen Innes	Ditto	No
Byron Bay	Ditto	No
TOTAL IN GROUP	6	
Yass Junction	Liquor bar and counter service	Yes
Wagga Wagga	Ditto	No
Narrandera	Ditto	No
Queanbeyan	Ditto	No
Taree	Ditto	No
Penrith	Ditto	No
Blayney	Ditto	No
Molong	Ditto	No
Wellington	Ditto	Yes
Werris Creek	Ditto	Yes
Wollongong	Ditto	No
Gloucester	Ditto	No
TOTAL IN GROUP	11	
Jerilderie	Counter service (light refreshments only)	No
Whitton	Ditto	No
Caragabal	Ditto	No
Gundagai	Ditto	No
"Wyalong"	Ditto	No
Caragabal	Ditto	No
Peak Hill	Ditto	No
Byrock	Ditto	No
Binnaway	Ditto	No
Maitland	Ditto	No
Dungog	Ditto	No
TOTAL IN GROUP	11	
TOTAL NO.	55	

SOURCE: *undated, multi-coloured poster published by New South Wales Railways.*

There were nine refreshment rooms from Sydney to Albury inclusive and one would have to think that there was over supply of food and alcohol to passengers but this was not the case. Not every refreshment room was opened for every train and opening hours for each facility depended on what train was at what location at mealtimes. One caveat needs to be kept in mind and that is that the Railway Department altered from time to time which refreshment rooms serve full meals and which

ones served only grills. In 1922, for example, there were only five refreshment rooms – Moss Vale, Junee, Albury, Newcastle and Wellington – that served full three or four course meals. From 1st July, 1922, that number was increased from five to 22 including Goulburn, Cootamundra, Temora and Cowra.⁵⁴⁶

In both March and July, 1922, the Railway Commissioners reduced the charges for meals at all refreshment rooms. The reductions were reported to be the result of the execution of new contracts which set prices much lower than previously was the case.⁵⁴⁷

The staff of seven worked in the refreshment room at Harden, apart from the Manager in 1921. There were three Waitresses, one Cook, and one Counter Hand, all being female. There were two males on the staff, one being a Boy Useful and the other being a Basket Boy.⁵⁴⁸ Both the male staff were young kids. The Boy Useful was a general hand and the Basket Boy walked along the platform selling items to people who chose to remain in the train.

A plan was prepared on 3rd December, 1926 and amended on 6th April, 1927, for a rearrangement of the internal spaces that mostly affected the refreshment room. This was the second last time a major change was implemented to the facility. Below is a list of the changes that affected the refreshment room:

- repositioning the American bar further towards Sydney and occupying the space that was formerly the female toilet as well as the space that was formerly the gentlemen's waiting room,
- installation of a sliding door between the main dining area and the bar,
- elimination of the former "S" shape and the installation, for the second time, of an island type counter in the centre of the room. The length of the octagonal shaped counter was now 63 feet, &
- enlargement of the area for tables and chairs.

In 1927, the Railway Department established a new policy, in response to representations by the Country Women's Association, for specified areas at counters in all railway refreshment rooms throughout the State for the sole use of women and children.⁵⁴⁹

When the Commissioners visited Harden in February, 1929, they commented that the "enlarged refreshment room..... will be a great boon to travellers."⁵⁵⁰

Up to 1930, although there was a freezing works and butter factory in Harden, ice for the refreshment room was not acquired locally but sent from Sydney, with two bags of ice coming each day. Murrumburrah Council was puzzled by this occurrence as the Department had recently

⁵⁴⁶ *The Land*, 30th June, 1922, p. 3.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁸ Alyson Wales, *Harden Railway Station*, unpublished high school history essay, Murrumburrah High School, 1984, reprinted in *Harden-Murrumburrah Historical Society Bulletin*, No. 157, June, 1985.

⁵⁴⁹ *Sydney Mail*, 9th February, 1927, p. 28 and *Dubbo Liberal and Macquarie Advocate*, 6th July, 1928, p. 4.

⁵⁵⁰ *Harden Express and Galong Reporter*, 28th February, 1929, p. 1.

informed Council that the policy concerning procurements for the refreshment room emphasise local purchases.⁵⁵¹ The Railway Department did eventually purchase a small number of food and other supplies local but this did not occur until 1939.

ENLARGED BOOKING AND PARCELS OFFICE

The Railway Department decided in 1919 to provide a larger, combined booking office and parcels office at the top of the ramp on the platform. The existing, 1915/16 built, small detached combined parcels office, measuring 20 feet x 10 feet and a booking office with the same measurements, at the top of the pedestrian ramp were enlarged. Both rooms were doubled in size and the new ceilings were formed by three and a half inch wide by half-inch thick Cypress Pine lining boards. To permit the extension of the parcels office, the "ambulance shed" was relocated adjacent to the subway fence on the Cootamundra-bound platform. It was traditional railway convention to provide a building for nearly everything on Railway property. The ambulance shed provided protection for the ambulance, which was a two-wheeled dray which would usually be hauled by a horse but, in this case, railway staff provided the power. Men would carry patients from the station to one of the local doctors to receive medical attention. It was railway staff who later were behind the push for a permanent motorised ambulance for the town.

The enlarged, combined booking/parcels office also contained a small staff room measuring seven feet three inches wide by 15 feet long, which was added to the Sydney-bound platform side. This was the first time at Harden station that internal space had been provided for staff to either act specifically as a meal and/or recreation room. The whole building was detached from the existing brick building and was built to be the same width of the male toilet block that was provided in 1889, being 39 feet 3 inches across the platform with a length of 15 feet. The impact of this was the removal of the existing corrugated iron screen in front of the toilet block that had been erected in 1891. Twin swing gates were provided at each end of the passageway and were emblazoned with the word "gentlemen". These gates existed up until the early 1980s. The work was authorised on 30th June, 1919 and completed on 15th March, 1920.⁵⁵² A similar, detached timber booking office was also erected in 1919 on Cootamundra West station.

The new booking/parcels office and staff room had all the features of a cheap building. It was timber framed and clad externally in horizontally set weatherboards. Gone were the days when an attractive hipped roof may have been provided and in 1919 an El Cheapo gabled roof was used. Internally, the structure had some unusual features, including two fireplaces that combined to form a triangle along one wall. This came about with the addition of a fireplace in the staff room, which was placed back to back to the existing fireplace in the booking office. Also, the sliding door that had been provided for platform access into the parcels office was reused between the booking office and the staff room. These were unusual design arrangements and had not been previously seen on platform buildings and were applied in order to save money.

⁵⁵¹ *Harden Express*, 6th March, 1930, p. 4.

⁵⁵² There is yet another of problem with the evidence as a conflicting entry existed in the Shop Order Book which stated that the enlargement to the combined ticket/parcels office was not authorised until 15th March, 1920.

The year, 1919, was one in which the appearance of buildings took a long second place to cost savings. Another feature of 1919 plan for the combined booking/parcels office was the appearance of the word “standard”. The new building had foundations of “standard concrete blocks”; there was a “standard ticket window” and the fireplaces had “standard grate and hobbs.” The use of the word “standard” meant that these elements were constructed in departmental workshops in large numbers. The use of concrete blocks for the foundations is a surprise as it was only in 1919 that the Railway Department prepared its first plan for a building whose walls were made of precast concrete blocks. Thus, concrete was the product of the time.

A new picket fence was provided across the platform with gates, preventing people from leaving the platforms without their tickets been inspected. The work was undertaken in 1920.

So how did residents in the Harden/Murrumburrah find out that a parcel was waiting for them at the station? There were three ways in which people were informed. Station staff would telephone the intended recipient, if she or he had a telephone. Alternatively, staff would send a card in the post with a brief description of the merchandise stating that it was available for collection at the station. Lastly, there were a number of carriers which picked up and delivered goods and parcels between the station good shed and station parcels office and private businesses and houses. Some organisations had an arrangement whereby a nominated carrier would arrive at the station on a daily basis and pick up or deliver a parcel on behalf of a business or resident. These arrangements were known to local station staff.

ELECTRIC LIGHTING AT THE STATION

The Murrumburrah Council-operated electricity supply started on 7th May, 1920, with 170 consumers. By September, Council was losing £57 per month and felt that, if the Railway Department took a supply, the financial predicament would be eased. At last, in August, 1921, the Department approached Council stating that the Railway powerhouse could not supply sufficient electricity that was required. That was the second time the Department had approached Council about a connection with the town supply, the first being in 1918. The only problem was that the generating equipment used in the Council-owned scheme was inadequate to additionally meet the demands of the local railway operations.

Council investigated the acquisition of a larger engine to meet the extra demand.⁵⁵³ The Council electricity supply system did not become profitable until 1927.⁵⁵⁴ Because the Railway Department considered that the electricity charges were excessive, it was not until May, 1929, that the Department decided to take electricity from the Council for the lighting of the station and the yard.⁵⁵⁵ Hydro-electricity commenced to be supplied from the power station at Burrinjuck Dam in 1927, although Murrumburrah Council maintain the local physical components of the system.

In 1929, the Railway Department indicated to Council that it would take electricity from its supply but only for the station and the yard. The Steam Shed Inspector felt left out and wrote to Council asking when the power would be available as he wished to use it to pump water from the Railway

⁵⁵³ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 16th of August, 1921, p. 2.

⁵⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 25th May, 1927, p. 1.

⁵⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 30th May, 1929, p. 4.

weir, which was some distance out of town.⁵⁵⁶ The Town Clerk replied that Council had not received any formal advice that the Department would take the electricity but that was not the truth of the matter. The Department did take the supply from 1929 and immediately requested a reduction in charges.⁵⁵⁷ The formal agreement for the supply of electricity for power and lighting between the Council and the Railway Department was not signed until 1935 because the Department previously did not accept Council's terms. The formal Agreement was for a period of five years.⁵⁵⁸

THE SUBWAY AND APPROACH TO THE STATION

If there were one subject that would not go away it was the access to the station. In October, 1923, Council and the Railway Department swapped correspondence on the question of a footpath leading to the top of the subway. Such a facility required the relocation of the fence of the Station Master's property and the Department wanted to know that, if the Railways moved fence, would Council construct a footpath.⁵⁵⁹ This was not the first time the Railways wanted Council to contribute funds and it was part of the strategy to avoid any expenditure, where possible. At the same time, the Railway Department informed Council that it was now responsible for the maintenance of Whitton Lane down the side of the Station Master's residence and that this had been made a public road in 1914. Council was far from happy about this requirement.

Once again, the subway was topical correspondence in 1926 between the local Council and the Railway Department. This time, Council wanted a light to be placed in the subway but the Railway Area Commissioner at Goulburn replied that the matter "could not be entertained."⁵⁶⁰ The next month Council asked the Railway authorities whether it would switch on such a light if the Council install the facility. This time, the Area Commissioner deciding that the matter was far too hard for him to decide and sent it to Sydney for the consideration of the Chief Commissioner.⁵⁶¹

On 5th May, 1927, it was announced that the Royal Train with the Duke and Duchess of York would be at Harden station on the way from Melbourne to Canberra and would arrive at 2:47am, where the train stayed for the night. The public was not allowed on the platform while the train was in the station.⁵⁶² By this year, the people of Murrumburrah/Harden had been complaining about the subway for 16 years, since it was first mentioned in 1911.

The Railway Department had rejected all the approaches for a pedestrian bridge, saying there was nothing wrong with the subway. Well, guess what? Deep down the Department agreed with the local residents and this was reflected in the arrangements for the Duke and Duchess to leave the platform. Rather than ask the royal couple to walk through the subway, the Department built an at-grade pedestrian level crossing at the immediate Cootamundra end of the Cootamundra-bound platform not far from the site of the footwarmer boiler. Such an arrangement would normally be built out of old sleepers but not in this case. First class hardwood was used to form the crossing and proof of this arrangement is a public photograph showing the Duke in full stride crossing the Down

⁵⁵⁶ *Harden Express and Galong Reporter*, 7th February, 1929, p. 3

⁵⁵⁷ *Harden Express and Galong Reporter*, 16th May, 1929, p. 4.

⁵⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 11th April, 1935, p. 4.

⁵⁵⁹ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 25th October, 1923, p. 4.

⁵⁶⁰ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 19th August, 1926, p. 4.

⁵⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 30th September, 1926, p. 2.

⁵⁶² *Murrumburrah Signal*, 5th May, 1927, p. 2.

Main track.⁵⁶³ Now that event would have done nothing but encourage local residents to renew their protests about the subway – and they did.

PLATFORM EXTENSION

On 26th October, 1923, plan was prepared for the 80-foot extension of the Sydney-bound platform at the Cootamundra end. The extension was formed by a frame of 80-pound old rail on which sat timber flooring six feet six inches wide and three inches thick, set in ten foot long sections. The rails were placed in concrete. At the rear of the platform was a fence formed of four inch by three inch hardwood posts with three strands of number 8 gauge wire with a three inch square hardwood rail at the top. The top of the platform was three feet two inches high above the top of the rail, which was the then standard height. The NSW Railways commenced raising platforms to the height of three feet two inches from 1906 and that height became an Australian standard for rural platforms from 1912. The existing platform at Harden was lower at two feet ten inches and a ramp was used between the existing and new sections of platform. The extension was completed on 12th April, 1924.⁵⁶⁴ This 80-foot extension was removed and was replaced in 1950 with an extension of 183 feet from near the Cootamundra end of the refreshment room complex.

So why was only the Sydney-bound platform lengthened at the Cootamundra end? The answer is that the South Dock siding and a host of buildings and facilities, such as the footwarmer furnace, were located at and off the end of the Cootamundra-bound platform and would have involved the demolition and relocation of the footwarmer facility to lengthen that platform. The extensions to the Cootamundra platform were made at the Sydney end where, in a similar fashion, the North Dock siding prevented any extension for the Sydney-bound platform.

TOILETS

Improvements to the sanitary arrangements at the station were completed on 1st March, 1924, though the nature of the work is unknown.⁵⁶⁵

Of course must be remembered that, unlike conditions today, there were no toilets specifically constructed for staff and it was in the interests of all officers working at the station to press for improved facilities.

⁵⁶³ R. Atherton, *Rupert Duffy Heggaton – Five Decades in Murrumburrah*, Harden, Harden-Murrumburrah Historical Society, 2012, p. 32.

⁵⁶⁴ Shop Order dated 20th November, 1923, Shop Order Book No. 21D/261, former SRA Archives, p. 79.

⁵⁶⁵ Shop Order No. 6694 dated 7th September, 1923, Shop Order Book No. 21D/261, former SRA Archives, p. 435.

13. ELEVEN YEARS OF FRUSTRATION 1930-1940

ASPHALTING THE STATION APPROACH

The new Chief Commissioner, William Cleary, visited Harden on 14th May, 1930, and spoke to a number of railway staff members. He commented favourably on the garden plots around the station.⁵⁶⁶ Council representatives were favourably impressed with his easy manner and recalled to him how they had been in awe and had trembling voices when they approached a previous “Great Railway Chief.” It would seem that this was a reference to James Fraser. Council said that it was anxious to make the station, which was the town’s front door, a bit more presentable by putting down bitumen from the railway boundary to Albury Street, which was the main thoroughfare through town and now called Burley Griffin Way. Cleary told Council to proceed with the work, of course at Council’s cost, and he would make repairs to the road outside the station.⁵⁶⁷

Council received a reply in 1932 from the District Engineer, Goulburn, concerning what Council regarded as the poor condition of the road surface at the entrance to the station. The Railway Resident Engineer did not consider it necessary to carry out any work at the present time but said that, should circumstances warrant it at any time, the Resident Engineer at Cootamundra would undertake the work.⁵⁶⁸ Alderman knew well that such promises were vacuous as the Railway Department rarely did anything without a sustained fight from the community. Council did not like the advice it received from the Railways as there were several potholes that needed attention and decided to refer the matter to Council’s Works Committee for advice.⁵⁶⁹

Commissioner Hartigan met with a Council deputation in 1934. There was only one item on the agenda relating to the station and this was the desire to asphalt part of Station Street between the subway and that part of the road under Council’s control. Hartigan asked how much Council would charge to undertake the work and, when the Mayor replied £48, the Commissioner told Council to proceed with the task.

FURTHER COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE SUBWAY

The people of Harden/Murrumburrah were not the only ones that did not like using the subway to gain access to the platform. Plans were underway for a visit to Harden by the Duke of Gloucester proposed for 23rd October, 1934. In 1927, for the visit of the Duke of York a temporary level crossing was placed at the Cootamundra end of the platform to provide at-grade access but that arrangement was not used in 1934. Rather than the Duke leaving the platform by the subway, the royal train reversed from the Sydney-bound platform across to the Cootamundra-bound platform and then into the goods yard and the train was stabled in a location adjacent to the goods loading

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid., 15th May, 1930, p. 2.

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁸ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 27th October, 1932, p. 3.

⁵⁶⁹ *Harden Express*, 27th October, 1932, p. 1.

platform. Temporary stairs were built as well as a temporary dais near the station entrance.⁵⁷⁰ All the shops in the town were closed for the event.

The decision for the Duke to avoid the subway was a kind of validation of the remarks made by local residents about the length of time it took to use the subway, the poor lighting in the subway and general grunginess of the subway. These complaints by the community went back over 20 years.

In December, 1936, Council considered that the condition of the subway was “dangerous” and advise the Railway Department of its opinion.⁵⁷¹

BEAUTIFYING THE STATION APPROACH

One of the old chestnuts reappeared in 1935. It was the need for an overhead pedestrian bridge to reach the island platform. The Advance Harden and District League was behind the idea and intended to raise the matter with the Commissioners on their tour in February, 1935. The League also wanted the area in front of the station beautified. The League was more concerned about a “comprehensive scheme of improving the station approaches.”

The Commissioner finally arrived in March, 1935, and the Advance Harden Progress Association told the Commissioner that the subway was unsuitable in Winter because it is very damp and inconvenient. The League did raise the question of a pedestrian bridge but said that it was “not pressing the request.”⁵⁷² Hartigan replied that there was no urgent need for an overhead bridge and there was a strong need for economy. The League commented that the fence on the right-hand side facing the station was in a state of disrepair and also wanted the boundary fence belonging to the Station Master’s residence moved towards Sydney between six and eight feet to allow the establishment of a bank of flowers. He did not reply to the request to beautify the area in front of the station but later sent a letter requesting Council to undertake the work.⁵⁷³

As had occurred in other cases, there were strings attached to any deal with the Railway Department that were not made clear earlier in the negotiations. In May, 1935, the Advance Harden League received advice that the Department would support the station approach improvements but the League found the conditions, including an estimated cost of £68, were unsatisfactory.⁵⁷⁴ The Commissioners revised their initial estimate of the cost of the works and in September said that the League would have to pay £78 to which it replied that it was not prepared to improve Railway property.⁵⁷⁵

The Advance Harden League also took offence at the close proximity of the Station Master’s toilet at the rear of his residence to the approach to the railway station. It was described as being within “a few inches inside the Station Master’s backyard.”⁵⁷⁶ Council went on the attack again and wrote to the Commissioners complaining that the approach to the station needed to be improved and that the fence around the Station Master’s residence was “dilapidated”. Council got the same reply as

⁵⁷⁰ *Harden Express*, 13th September, 1934, p. 1 and 25th October, 1934, p. 2.

⁵⁷¹ *Harden Express*, 27th February, 1936, p. 3.

⁵⁷² *Ibid.*, 7th March, 1935, p. 2.

⁵⁷³ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 7th March, 1935, p. 3.

⁵⁷⁴ *Harden Express*, 9th May, 1935, p. 3.

⁵⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 6th September, 1935, p. 3.

⁵⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

the League, but this time quoting a cost of £67, plus ongoing maintenance, plus a reservation that the Railway Department could cancel the lease at any time.⁵⁷⁷ Some of the Aldermen “were very caustic in their criticism of the Railway Department, which pays no rates and then has the cheek, as one Alderman put it, to ask people to spend money on Railway property.”⁵⁷⁸ Council resolved to reject the Commissioner’s terms and to ask the local Member of Parliament to raise the matter with the Minister for Transport. The Member, William Ross, had an interview with the Commissioner who promised to review the matter. Council decided to hold further action until Commissioner Hartigan visited the town.⁵⁷⁹

The Commissioner arrived in April, 1936, and he is recorded as being favourably impressed with the gardens and hedges on the railway platform.⁵⁸⁰ He had discussions with the Mayor and it is reported that the Commissioner was impressed with Council’s scheme for the development of the approaches to the station.⁵⁸¹ Hartigan said he would see what could be done. That was the second time that the Commissioner had promised to review the proposal, Hartigan made the same promise in 1935.

After years of discussion between the Railway Department and Council, the Department in 1936 resolved to move the fence back a few feet that enclosed the Station Master’s residence. This was to allow the beautification of the area and, of course, the Railway Department stated that work would be undertaken by Council and at Council’s expense.⁵⁸²

At long last, the Department did indicate in February, 1937, that it would undertake repairs in the vicinity of the subway at Harden.⁵⁸³ In March, 1937, the Railway Department undertook the work advocated by the Advance Harden League but, at that stage, the construction of flower beds was still a dream.⁵⁸⁴

The Railway Commissioners were to be on tour between the 13th and 18th of May, 1937, and Murrumburrah Municipal Council and others were requested to lodge with local Station Masters issues that were intended to be raised. For Council, the number one issue to be raised was the need for improvements in front of Harden station. The only illusion one could make is that the work that was started in March of that year was not finalised. The Commissioner turned up in June, saying that he was pleased with the conditions that he found at Harden. The Mayor said that Council’s only request was for “some further work of a minor nature to be done to the new approach to the subway and he understood that it was to be carried out, after which it was proposed to plan flower beds and lawn.”⁵⁸⁵ One would expect that to be the end of the matter but, in July, the Department sent plans of alternative scheme to Council, which would make available a triangular shaped area at the rear of the Station Master’s residence. Council then flicked the matter to the Advance Harden League consideration, a time wasting exercise as the same person was in charge of both Council and the League.

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid., 10th October, 1935, p. 4.

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid., 7th November, 1935, p. 1.

⁵⁸⁰ Harden Express, 23rd April, 1936, p. 1.

⁵⁸¹ Ibid.

⁵⁸² *Murrumburrah Signal*, 24th September, 1936, p. 2.

⁵⁸³ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 25th February, 1937, p. 2.

⁵⁸⁴ *Harden Express*, 11th March, 1937, p. 1.

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid., 17th June, 1937, p. 1.

Now for the twist. The Department changed its mind about who should pay for the work. By September, the Railway Department accepted Council's estimate of £55 to undertake the improvements at the top of the subway.⁵⁸⁶

Murrumburrah Municipal Council received a letter in 1938 from the Railway Department stating that, as the Department had already expended a fair amount of money upon the approach to the subway at the station, it could not agree to spend further money on the proposed beautification scheme. The Department reminded Council that it had agreed to carry out the beautification works out of his own funds.⁵⁸⁷ Council resolved to make yet another approach to the Department on this subject.

A new organisation popped up in 1939, namely the Harden-Murrumburrah Chamber of Commerce, which requested that seats be placed on the block of land at the top of the subway entrance to the station. Council's first thought was to find out whether the Railway Department would pay for such seats.⁵⁸⁸ That episode naturally ended in a negative outcome but the Department said it had no objection to Council providing seats at the location, on the understanding that they needed to be removed "when the land was required by the Department."⁵⁸⁹

It is also worth mentioning that the garden beds that were a dream for some years were not provided.⁵⁹⁰ It is clear to understand why the Council wanted to beautify the top of the subway area as the platform itself was a very attractive composition of hedging and potted plants and the proposed landscaping at the top of the subway would have complimented the platform gardens.⁵⁹¹

Nearly two years after the issue of improvements to the Harden station entrance was raised, correspondence was flowing freely between the two key bodies through 1939 and, at long last, Council indicated would undertake the work for £55/16/9, which Commissioner Hartigan agreed to pay.⁵⁹² It had taken three years of effort for Council to squeeze another 16/9d from the Department and a local newspaper reported that it was "gratifying to know that at last something definite is to be done"⁵⁹³. By October, 1939, there was still no lawn at the top of the subway and Council resolved to provide it.

LOCAL SUPPLY OF SOME ITEMS TO THE REFRESHMENT ROOM

Assistant Commissioner Forster visited Harden in April, 1931, and noted that the clock in the refreshment room was two minutes slow. "Yes", said the Manager and explained that "since the 57 class locomotives have been going through, it is impossible to keep the clocks in order because of the vibration." The Assistant Commissioner remained silent.⁵⁹⁴

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid., 23rd September, 1937, p. 3.

⁵⁸⁷ *Harden Express*, 13th January, 1938, p. 1.

⁵⁸⁸ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 9th February, 1939, p. 1.

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid., 23rd March, 1939, p. 4.

⁵⁹⁰ *Harden Express*, 8th December, 1938, p. 6.

⁵⁹¹ A photograph of the platform gardens is in Cottee, op. cit., p. 184.

⁵⁹² *Murrumburrah Signal*, 22nd June, 1939, p. 1.

⁵⁹³ *Harden Express*, 22nd June, 1939, p. 2.

⁵⁹⁴ *Harden Express*, 12th March, 1931, p. 2.

A railway cruise visited the station for a meal in September, 1934, but the refreshment room was not able to cater for the 124 girls expected to arrive for a meal. In the circumstances, a special marquee was erected on the platform to feed the visitors.⁵⁹⁵

The first time that a call for tenders appeared in the local newspaper for supplies for the refreshment room occurred in April, 1939. Tenders closed on 19th April for the supply of ice, and cordials as well as cartage to the local station. Naturally, the tender form had to be obtained from Sydney and lodgement of the tender documents was also to occur in Sydney.⁵⁹⁶ The tender process was repeated in 1940 but this time including laundry.

CONNECTION OF THE STATION TO THE RETICULATED WATER SUPPLY

On 1st December, 1932, Murrumburrah Council agreed to take water from the Burrinjuck scheme, though the option had been available since January, 1928.⁵⁹⁷ The work of laying pipes for the town reticulated water supply had commenced in April, 1933.⁵⁹⁸ The Railway Department declined to take a supply from the Burrinjuck scheme when the water became available in 1928 and this was the position at the end of 1934. The Department changed its mind in 1935.

Prior to taking a supply from the Burrinjuck scheme, the drinking water for Harden station had been supplied from a well some distance from the station on the corner of Clark and Stair Streets. The supply was not required after the end of March, 1935, as the station was being then connected to the reticulated water supply from Burrinjuck Dam. Council asked the Commissioner to acquire the land on which the well was located so they Council could use the water supply for the establishment of a town swimming pool. Garside said he would look into the matter, which he did and eventually transferred the land to Council ownership.⁵⁹⁹

PLATFORMS ISSUES

In 1933, both platforms at Harden were 535 feet long. Only three other stations south of Picton had platforms that were longer, these being Albury at 1,305 feet, Goulburn's three platforms at 596 feet and Cootamundra with a length of 565 feet.⁶⁰⁰

While the platforms were the same length at Harden, they were uneven in terms of the layout due to the location of dock sidings at each end of the platforms. The Sydney-bound platform was longer at the Cootamundra end and the Cootamundra-bound platform was longer at the Sydney end.

Goods were transhipped on a daily basis between branch line and main line trains across the island platform and on one night in October, 1934, an unattended trolley with 30 dozen cartons of eggs

⁵⁹⁵ *Harden Express*, 13th September, 1934, p. 4.

⁵⁹⁶ *Harden Express*, 13th April, 1939, p. 3.

⁵⁹⁷ *Murrumburrah Signal* 1st December, 1932, p. 1.

⁵⁹⁸ *Harden Express*, 6 April, 1933, p. 2.

⁵⁹⁹ *Harden Express* 7th March 1935, p. 5.

⁶⁰⁰ NSW, *Local Appendix to the Working Timetable*, 1st April, 1933, p. 39.

and several cans of cream rolled onto the railway line in front of the locomotive on the Sydney-bound Albury Mail. No comment need be made about the resultant impact.⁶⁰¹

BUILDING PRESENTATION

Repairs and painting were undertaken to the platform buildings starting in June, 1933. One newspaper made the following comment:

“under the supervision of Leading Painter Brown, the Harden railway station buildings are rapidly being transformed from a dilapidated to a more pleasing appearance. All the buildings had undergone a remarkable transformation which was carried out by local labour.” The plumbing work was undertaken by J. Findley of Goulburn. Such work apparently had not been done “for many years” but now the station was looking “spick and span with its pretty and well cared for station garden to enhance the attractiveness of the busy Harden station.”⁶⁰²

There was a good news story in winter, 1933 involving a lady carrying a young baby who arrived on the train from Young and were seen on the platform. A local newspaper reported the following story:

“she sought the friendly warmth of the waiting room to pass the remainder of the night, as her funds were exhausted and she could not proceed further. Railwaymen as a whole are always ready to help anyone in distress and, learning of her plight, Porter Creech sought the co-operation of Mrs Feltham, a railwayman’s wife, and together they collected sufficient money to secure food for the baby and also to pay the woman’s fare to West Wyalong and to give her a small sum of money.”⁶⁰³

Commissioner Hartigan inspected the station buildings in 1934 and elsewhere and remarked that they were “scrupulously clean and tidy”. Of course the station building looked good as it had been painted the previous year. Hartigan was impressed with the station garden with its flowers and roses in bloom and enquired the name of the officer responsible. Hartigan complemented Leading Porter Stan Anderson for his work.⁶⁰⁴

Electrical repairs were acquired at the station in 1934 and Murrumburrah Council forwarded a quotation to the Commissioners to carry out the work. The use of external parties to carry out repairs was most unusual at this time. Council got the green light and did the work, whatever was involved.⁶⁰⁵ So in 1934 there were two maintenance jobs that were not done by departmental staff but carried out by Council workers. It is noteworthy that external contractors were also used in 1934 to paint the buildings at Kingsvale and Prunevale stations on the branch line to Young.

At the end of 1935, Harden station had a staff of 34 officers.⁶⁰⁶ When the Station Master was doing nothing in November, he opened a load of baskets from the Sydney-bound Albury Mail which contained pigeons that would fly back to their home in Melbourne.

⁶⁰¹ Ibid., 4th October, 1934, p. 2.

⁶⁰² *Harden Express*, 15th June, 1933, p. 2.

⁶⁰³ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid., 15 February 1934, p. 2.

⁶⁰⁵ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 18th January, 1934, p. 3.

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid., 5th December, 1935, p. 2.

14. THE IMPACT OF WORLD WAR 2 ON STATION OPERATIONS

STATION ENTRANCE

Although there was agreement reached in late 1939 to beautify the station entrance, the work was still incomplete by Christmas, 1939 and, in January, 1940, the Department asked Murrumburrah Council to finalise the asphaltting and provide concrete kerbing to the approaches of the station subway.⁶⁰⁷

The War also took a toll on Council's availability of manpower Council was still plodding on with the work in 1941 with work at the entrance to the subway. By October, Council men were digging up an area and planting it with Buffalo grass.⁶⁰⁸ The beds of flowers were never planted.

THE SUBWAY

How many times had the Railway Department had declined to meet a Council request but stated that it had no objection to Council undertaking and paying for the work? Well, here was another instance.

The long history of non-cooperation continued in 1941 with the question of the provision of an electric light in the subway. The Department declined to provide a light but had no objection to Council installing one. Council decided to think about the matter.⁶⁰⁹

STATION PRESENTATION

Although the Railway Department claimed it did not have staff to undertake the provision of a sewerage system at the station, it seems that some staff had idle time for non-core business. In 1941, Harden station receiving a prize in the annual garden competition.

Council had heard in 1943 that a number of railway station were being reviewed and the seniority of the Station Masters were being increased. The problem was that Harden station was not among those where the station seniority was to be increased and Council carried a motion to have Harden station regraded.

Alderman O'Brien had a great idea and thought the freight business of Murrumburrah station should be included as part of the work done for Harden station to help increase the status of the station but the Mayor said that the idea was not a goer. The Department rejected the request for an elevation in status and, in fact, lowered the status of Harden station.

A public meeting was held in 1943 at which it was decided to form the Harden Murrumburrah and District Development Association.⁶¹⁰ it was reported as the largest public meeting in the town for many years. The Mere was particularly keen to find out ways of combining Harden and

⁶⁰⁷ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 11th January, 1940, p. 4.

⁶⁰⁸ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 16th October, 1941, p. 1.

⁶⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 30th October, 1941, p. 4.

⁶¹⁰ *Harden Express*, 16th September, 1943, p. 1.

Murrumburrah though it was reported that such a proposal was impossible while there were two shopping centres.

Yet another new community organisation established in 1945, this time being called the Commerce Association.⁶¹¹

CAMOUFLAGED STATION NAMEBOARDS AND PLATFORM ACCESS RESTRICTIONS

The Commonwealth Government issued a National Security Regulation on 6th March, 1942, requiring the removal of all signs indicating place names and distances within a 100-mile deep coastal corridor.⁶¹² The New South Wales Department of Railways removed all signs within that corridor from stations but also decided to repaint all station nameboards that remained outside the 100-mile deep corridor. Station nameboards had been painted dark colours that, while certainly camouflaging station names, also made them difficult to read. [Naturally, the objective in World War 2 was to thwart any Japanese invasion.

In accordance with advice received from the Commonwealth Government, the Traffic Branch issued a Circular on 19th January, 1943, stating that the original colours on station nameboards were to be reverted to for railway stations outside the Sydney electrified area. That meant that background of the nameboards were to be repainted black with white lettering. So far as the electrified area was concerned, the existing practice of painting “number 35” for the background (a colour called “gamboge”) with black lettering was to continue.

Another issue that Council raised with Billy Sheahan in 1943 was the restriction placed on local residents on railway platforms during World War 2. It seems that people were not permitted on platforms, at least at Harden station. The Minister for Transport replied to Billy Sheahan that the issue of platform tickets had been restricted and that this was done in “the public interest.” From 22nd May, 1944, the policy changed from the restricted issue of platform tickets to a total ban.⁶¹³ The argument that was used to restrict people was the alleged misuse of platform tickets by people for train travel. The Minister assured Billy Sheahan that the restriction would be lifted “as conditions justify the action.”⁶¹⁴ Restrictions were also placed in August, 1944, on people wishing to use the various train services and an application had to be made directly to the Station Master.⁶¹⁵

THE PEAK OF REFRESHMENT ROOM BUSINESS

Men and women in uniform received concessions at the refreshment room.

The Railway Department went on a big propaganda exercise in December, 1940, and prepared a very comprehensive article relating to refreshment room operations that a number of country newspapers reproduced, including the *Harden Express*. The article stated that there were 55

⁶¹¹ Ibid., 1st March, 1945, p. 4.

⁶¹² NSW, *The Roadmakers*, Sydney, Department of Main Roads, 1976, p. 174.

⁶¹³ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18th May, 1944, p. 2 and *Murrumburrah Signal*, 25th May, 1944, p. 4.

⁶¹⁴ NSW, *Roadmakers*, op. cit., 22nd June, 1944, p. 4.

⁶¹⁵ *Harden Express*, 31st August, 1944, p. 10.

refreshment rooms throughout the State which were split into three categories and the top category served comprehensive meals.

On the southern line, those stations in the top group were located at Sydney Terminal, Moss Vale, Goulburn, Yass Junction, Cootamundra, Temora, Junee and Albury. There were 11 facilities in the second group, which were called grill rooms and the words "Grill Room" was displayed outside the refreshment room.⁶¹⁶ These were located in the southern area at Harden and Cooma. At its peak in the early 1940s, there were 15 employees working in the refreshment room at Harden. The bottom group catered for light refreshments and these facilities were found at Strathfield, Wagga Wagga, Queanbeyan and Jerilderie.

A total of 43 refreshment rooms had full liquor licenses while a further seven sold only local wines. As well, "basket boys" patrolled the platforms where refreshment facilities were available selling ice creams and sweets. In addition to the fixed facilities, buffets were located on trains travelling between Sydney and Canberra, Mount Victoria and Newcastle as well as trains to Brisbane. On diesel trains travelling between Parkes and Broken Hill and Sydney and Canberra, food was served at the passengers' seats.

Now here comes the important part for Harden and it needs to be kept in mind that it was only in 1939 that local procurement commenced. The propaganda said that "in certain circumstances, country refreshment rooms obtain some supplies of foodstuffs locally."⁶¹⁷ So the article was saying that Harden was a very special case in that some supplies were permitted to be purchased locally.

In 1942, it was reported in the local press that volunteers, including the Red Cross, were working at the station to assist with the provision of food and drinks to the soldiers on the various troop trains.⁶¹⁸ The Red cross volunteers also assisted invalid soldiers returning home. They set up a sign outside the waiting room and had a serving area inside the facility. The Red Cross also raise money for Australian prisoners of war.⁶¹⁹

Of course, there was a high level of secrecy during the War and Special Train Notices were not issued early or willy-nilly providing details of troop and other military movements. Telephones and word of mouth were used to notify volunteers to come to the station. Staff who were volunteering at the station to serve meals to troop trains were given very short notice, sometimes even only one hour, for them to attend the station to help with the business. The volunteers, the vast majority being women, would be on standby with food already prepared.

In February, 1943, Murrumburrah Municipal Council discussed the conditions at the Harden refreshment room and the local newspaper had the following report:

"The Mayor, Alderman F. Kelly, spoke of the poor and inadequate arrangements prevailing at the Harden Railway Refreshment Rooms to cater for the travelling public, and which he declared was deplorable in as much as the rooms were too small to accommodate the large number of travellers who seek entrance to procure a cup of tea or coffee and sandwich.

⁶¹⁶ *Murrumburrah Signal* – *Special Railway Centenary Edition*, 2nd March, 1977, p. 9.

⁶¹⁷ *Harden Express*, 12th December, 1940, p. 2 and *Wellington Times*, 23rd December, 1940, p. 5.

⁶¹⁸ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 13th of August, 1942, p. 4.

⁶¹⁹ *Harden-Murrumburrah Express*, 17th December, 1981, p. 24.

He was at the station that day when the Riverina daylight express pulled in, carrying over 300 passengers, most of whom made their way to the Refreshment Rooms, but only a small proportion gained admittance after a great struggle. To make matters worse, some of those who did get in were left behind and had to wait for a late train continue their journey. He believed that some scheme had been devised by the Railway Department to enlarge the rooms, but as yet no move has been made to go on with the work. He considered this was a matter that should be brought before the local Member of Parliament, and he would move to that effect.

Alderman Gibson seconded the motion saying “these conditions apply to all refreshment rooms from here to Sydney’, he said. Alderman Dawson remarked that most of the cooking at the Harden Railway Refreshment rooms was done out in the open.”

The Department replied in April acknowledging that there was “some degree of congestion at very busy times and consideration was being given to a rearrangement which would ameliorate the conditions.”⁶²⁰

The Mayor had received correct intelligence about a plan to remedy the situation. The Railway Department issued a plan dated 24th of June, 1943, for the alterations of the refreshment room counters. The island counter of 43 feet in length, which had been installed in 1927, was to be removed and the counter placed on one side of the room. The counter was to be extended to a length of 46 feet nine inches. The refreshment room was provided in 1884 and alterations to the shape of the counter and reorganisation of the facility occurred in 1885, 1891, 1896, 1914, 1926 and 1927. The 1943 alterations to the refreshment room counter involved the last known changes to the shape or length of the bar. Below is a list of the years in which the shape or length of the counter was altered.

- 1884 – located in one corner,
- 1885 – straight counter 50 feet long,
- 1891 – nature of alterations unknown,
- 1896 – counter was extended to an unknown length,
- 1914 – reverted to rear of room,
- 1915 – changed to “S” shape,
- 1926 – original plan to alter the counter altered into an island configuration
- 1927 – revised plan to change the counter altered into an island configuration, &
- 1943 – counter located to one side of room 46 feet 9 inches in length.

This represented the seventh time the refreshment room had been substantially altered and in each of these cases the shape of the counter was altered. Glass fronted showcases also had to be installed behind the new counter.

Another plan dated 19th January, 1943, provided for the replacement of the existing hot water service storage with a larger storage cylinder of 22 inches in diameter and three feet four inches high for the refreshment room. The cylinder, which weighed 600 pounds when full, was to be supplied by

⁶²⁰ Ibid., 1st April, 1943, p. 3.

an external contractor but lagged and fitted by the departmental workforce. The lagging was to be made of “plastic asbestos”, slag wool or similar. A three-quarter inch diameter sludge cock was fitted to the base of the cylinder. At that point, the Railway bureaucrats stopped to have a rethink, possibly after having a discussion with the Harden Refreshment Room Manager. They realised that any improvement in the delivery of additional hot water also required larger piping.

A third plan dated 24th of May, 1943, involved a revision of the January plan and, this time, involved the installation of a completely new hot water system for the refreshment room. It served the kitchen where the seven feet long stove, called a range, was heated using electrical coils as well as serving two sinks. The hot water service also served the staff bathroom. All the tubing was to be copper.

In 1945, two young ladies from the refreshment room attended the local branch meeting of the Australian Railways Union and the minutes noted that was the first time that anyone from the refreshment room had attended a meeting. Conditions at the refreshment room were reported as being “far from satisfactory” and the meeting resolved to form a deputation to inspect the facility and decide on a list of claims. Another issue for the men was the shortage of tobacco and the meeting resolved that refreshment rooms should sell tobacco so that the railway men could obtain their war-time quota.⁶²¹ The lodgement of never-ending complaints by unionists during World War 2 who demanded that the Railway administration make workplace and other improvements or staff would proceed on strike. Unions pressed for all sorts of demands on the basis that there was a labour shortage.

COMPARISON OF DEVELOPMENTS AT THE HARDEN REFRESHMENT ROOM COMPARED WITH THOSE AT GOULBURN, YASS AND COOTAMUNDRA

Four refreshment rooms were simultaneously in existence between Goulburn and Cootamundra between 1893 and 1957. The Table below sets out the years in which the four refreshment rooms were altered or enlarged. Your objective is to determine, firstly, whether the Harden facility was consistent with departmental practice at other stations and, secondly, whether there was any pattern to the timing of additions and alterations across the four refreshment rooms.

TABLE: COMPARISON OF DEVELOPMENT AT SOUTHERN LINE REFRESHMENT ROOMS BETWEEN GOULBURN AND COOTAMUNDRA

DATE	GOULBURN	YASS	HARDEN	COOTAMUNDRA
1881		Temporary facility opened		
20 th August, 1883		Permanent refreshment room opened		
5th August, 1883	Permanent refreshment room opened			
Second half			Opened	

⁶²¹ *Harden Express*, 22nd February, 1945, p. 2.

DATE	GOULBURN	YASS	HARDEN	COOTAMUNDRA
of 1884				
June, 1886			Enlarged	
1891		Additional staff bedrooms on first floor level of 1876 building, plus other changes	Extended	
1893				Secondary source indicates opening of the refreshment room
January, 1895				Refreshment room opened following expression of tenders
1896			Expansion	
1901			Expansion	
1902		New kitchen at rear & store		Existing refreshment room demolished by shunting accident on 24 th October
1904				Unknown additions
1906			Improvements	New, larger facility opened
1906-1914			Improvements	
1914		Additional, large refreshment room on Sydney-bound platform	Counter redesigned	
1915	Additional refreshment room opened on platform Nos. 1 and 2		Facility redesign	
1916	Cupboards installed in platform No. 1 room + linoleum on the floor	Conversion of the single space into a bar & a tea/coffee room provided	Installation of an "American" bar	

DATE	GOULBURN	YASS	HARDEN	COOTAMUNDRA
		on the Sydney-bound platform		
4 th September, 1916	Railway Department assumes management of the refreshment room			
1917		Conversion of the single space into a bar & a tea/coffee room provided on the Cootamundra- bound platform	Bar separated from remainder of facility	
1 st January, 1917			Railway Department assumes management of the refreshment room	
16 th February, 1917		Railway Department assumes management of the refreshment room		
1 st March, 1918				Railway Department assumes management of the refreshment room
1919	No. 1 platform room enlarged		Two ice chests installed	Alterations consequent on the opening of the refreshment room at Cootamundra West + linoleum on floor
1925	Two			

DATE	GOULBURN	YASS	HARDEN	COOTAMUNDRA
	additional sinks provided in each room + two fruit stalls for platform + dedicated coal bin			
1927			Re-arrangement of internal spaces	Replacement, brick room planned & built in 1928/29 + two fruit stands on platform
1930				Electrically operated warning bell installed
1943			Alteration to counter & replacement of hot water service	
1946			Installation of fly-proof screens on all windows	
8 th November, 1951			Attempted part closure – re-instatement on 3/12/51	
1954		Refrigerator installed	Additional refrigerator & toaster provided	
1955	Unspecified repairs to facility on No. 1 platform			
1 st September, 1956		Refreshment room closed		
1957				Electrically powered refrigerated bottle cabinet install
1 st March,			Tenders	

DATE	GOULBURN	YASS	HARDEN	COOTAMUNDRA
1957			called for takeover of facility	
1 st September, 1957			Refreshment room closed	
1960	New stainless steel sinks, new glass-washing machine & hot water service in both rooms			
1962				Secondary source indicates decision made to close the refreshment room
23 rd March, 1983				Refreshment room closed
8 th October, 1974	Facility on Nos. 2 & 3 platforms closed			
June, 1986	Facility on No. 1 platform closed			
1991				Half of the refreshment room building was demolished as part of the Countrylink coach interchange
1992				Tourist information and arts centre and cafe established in remaining space
2013				Cafe opening reduced to hours of trains and coaches

DATE	GOULBURN	YASS	HARDEN	COOTAMUNDRA
NUMBER OF TIMES FACILITY ALTERED OR EXPANDED	5 (1915, 1916, 1919, 1925 & 1960)	6 (1891, 1902, 1914, 1916, 1917 & 1954)	15 (1886, 1891, 1896, 1901, 1906, 1906- 14, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1919, 1927, 1943, 1946 & 1954)	6 (1904, 1906, 1919, 1927, 1930 & 1957)

The assistance of Steve Baker in the provision of material relating to Cootamundra is appreciated.

The above Table indicates that alterations and additions were not uniform across the four refreshment rooms. There seems to have been two periods when improvements occurred at a number of the facilities. The first period was between 1901 and 1910 and the second period was between 1914 and 1919. Surprisingly, the impact of World War Two affected only the Harden refreshment room. The very interesting aspect of the Table is the large number of times the Harden refreshment room was altered and/or expanded – three times greater than the average of the other facilities. These alterations must have occurred in response to changes in passenger train operations, which resulted in increasing numbers of trains stopping at the Harden facility. Also, the refreshment room at Harden was small in size and this was emphasised by the need to enlarge it almost as soon as built.

STATION CONNECTION TO TOWN SEWERAGE

As part of the 1940 official propaganda campaign to attract people to use the railway refreshment rooms, the Commissioner stated that it was departmental policy to connect stations to sewerage systems, where possible.⁶²² This was an important commitment as it would not be too long before Murrumburrah Council was pressing the Railway Department to connect Harden station with the town's sewerage system.

The town sewerage system connected its first properties in April, 1940. By May, 1941, 130 residences in the town had been connected to the sewerage scheme.⁶²³ Council requested its State Member of Parliament, Billy Sheahan, to write to the Railway Commissioner requesting that all railway properties in the municipality be connected to the town sewerage system.⁶²⁴ The Secretary for Railways reply in July stating that consideration was being given to the removal of ten residences and their relocation to other centres and ended by saying that the question of connecting railway properties would, therefore, remain in abeyance. The paperwork went to and fro once again but this time it related to Council's request that the sewerage system be connected to Harden railway station. The Department replied that it would receive consideration "in the light of available funds".⁶²⁵

By January, 1942, 203 houses in the town had been connected to the sewerage system. The Department wrote to Council stating that, at that time, it was still unable to connect the station or

⁶²² *Picton Post*, 24th December, 1940, p. 4.

⁶²³ *Ibid.*, 1st May, 1941, p.2.

⁶²⁴ *Ibid.*, 26th June, 1941, p. 4.

⁶²⁵ *Ibid.*, 10th July, 1941, p. 4.

any other building on Railway property, to the town sewerage system. This did not go over too well with Council at all and Alderman Gibson said that "the Commissioner's attention should be drawn to the unsatisfactory sanitary conveniences prevailing at Harden station owing to the heavy traffic."⁶²⁶ Alderman Kilbrick wanted to rev up the speed of things and pointed out that other towns had enforced their powers to connect Railway property. Council decided to get a legal opinion on Council's instruction that the Commissioner be given 14 days to install a sewerage scheme.

Council was advised in December, 1942, that the Railway Department had called tenders for the installation of a sewerage system at Harden and Murrumburrah railway stations.⁶²⁷ Many stations throughout New South Wales were similarly connected to local sewerage systems but there is no surviving evidence to explain why this was such a widespread initiative as a significant amount of human and other resources were required to dig trenches, laying pipes and convert toilets. It can only be assumed that the pressure to act was related to the large increase in people using railway stations as a result of troop movements, ambulance train operations and military special trains.

Three years had elapsed without the Railway Department making any attempt to connect the station. In 1944, Alderman Dawson said at a Council meeting that it had "come to his knowledge that urinals emptied into a drain which runs under the railway line and into a creek. The stench was abominable. Toilet pans were not used at the station toilets, with night soil discharging into cesspits."⁶²⁸ This was not the first time that there were complaints about the discharge of urine into a nearby creek. In October, 1927, the Health Inspector of the New South Wales Railways had conducted a "colour test" on the drainage and maintained that the waste did not enter the creek.⁶²⁹ Undeniably, there were problems as the Murrumburrah Health Inspector had observed that repairs were required to some closets, "in accordance with Ordinance 44."⁶³⁰

Council resolved in 1944 to serve a notice on the Railway Department to install toilet pans. It was also resolved that Council would tell Billy Sheahan of the difficulty in getting the sewerage system connected to Harden station and would inform him of the manner in which the urine was disposed of. The Minister for Transport replied denying that sewerage ran into an open drain but said that, owing to manpower and materials shortages, it was not possible to do repairs at present. Alderman Dawson repeated earlier remarks that "an objectionable odour prevailed in the vicinity of the toilets."

In July, 1944, Railway officers called in on the Town Clerk and stated that they would go to the local labour exchange and, if there were six labourers available, a start would be made on the sewerage system at Harden railway station. Council replied that, if no labourers were available, it would agree to its three workers, who were presently erecting rural electricity lines, being loaned for the sewerage work and that an endeavour would be made to find another three men. Council also nominated a local firm, Messrs Sutton Bros, which might be in a position to consider submitting a tender for the plumbing work.

⁶²⁶ Ibid., 23rd January, 1942, p. 4.

⁶²⁷ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 24th December, 1942, p. 4.

⁶²⁸ *Murrumburrah Signal*, 11th May, 1944, p. 4.

⁶²⁹ Ibid., 3rd October, 1927, p. 1.

⁶³⁰ Ibid.

In November, 1944, Council indicated that it was in a position to provide 12 men to do the labouring for the sewerage works and made available Mr P. Salter, the Council Health Inspector, to provide supervision. Also, Sutton Bros would undertake the necessary plumbing. The Resident Engineer at Cootamundra supported the idea on the basis that only the Harden and Murrumburrah stations and two residences at Murrumburrah would be initially connected.

The Railway Department had prepared plans had been prepared in 1942 for the connection of the station buildings and other structures to the town sewerage system. One plan showed the alterations to be undertaken in the Harden station building:

- four closets in the male toilet – with the provision for a fifth water closet,
- two closets in the female toilet – a decrease from three in 1927 – with provision for a third water closet,
- installation to all closets of white glazed “Belle Isle” pattern pedestal pans, seats with new flush pipes and cisterns,
- two staff showers at the Sydney end behind the booking office at the top of the ramp,
- hand basins in the Station Master’s office and the Porters’ office,
- no hand wash basins in the male toilet,
- one hand wash basin in the female toilet,
- a machine for washing glasses within the American bar,
- two sinks in the refreshment room kitchen,
- a tub the refreshment room laundry. The

Of course, work had not started in 1942 or 1943 but finally got under way in late 1944. The station and other buildings were connected to the local town sewerage system on 28th August, 1945, though the Station Master’s residence had been connected on 25th January of that year. Most of the departmental cottages, the signal boxes, the office at the locomotive depot and the rest house were not connected to the town’s sewerage system until 1948 and the Railway Institute was connected in 1949. The very last Railway-owned building in the town that was to be connected to sewerage system was cottage No. 43 in Whitton Lane, which was connected in September, 1949.⁶³¹ However, the sewerage system did not extend to the locomotive running shed and the staff went over to the Mechanics Institute building to use its facilities.

The connection of railway stations to local sewerage schemes was an activity that was undertaken at many railway stations during World War Two. For example, the station at Yass Town was connected in 1941, Yass Junction in 1942 and Cootamundra in 1944. It seems that, in all cases, it was the local government authorities that were doing the pushing for connection rather than the Railway Department taking any initiative.

⁶³¹ *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 23rd September, 1949, p. 3.

15. DECLINING BUSINESS, DECLINING STAFF ATTITUDES, DECLINING INTEREST 1946-64

REFRESHMENT ROOM COMPETITION FROM ON-TRAIN BUFFETS AND DINING CARS

By the end of World War 2, the Department of Railways had wanted for some years to introduce and extend the operation of on-train buffet facilities in order to eliminate trains stopping at refreshment rooms. In 1941, 1942 and 1944, the Railways implemented on-train refreshment facilities on some trains passing through Harden but the War diverted resources and the strategy could not be sustained.⁶³² These initiatives plus the huge publicity campaigns in 1940 and 1943 to promote usage of refreshment rooms suggest that the Railway Department was aware of the high costs associated with the operation of over 50 refreshment rooms throughout the New South Wales rail system and realised the cost savings to be made from on-train catering.

It was not only high wages costs that were the problem. Fewer people were using trains and, for that matter, all modes of public transport in the immediate post-Second World War period. Rail's share of the total number of public transport journeys was 27%, while the government bus share was 29% and for private buses it was 33%. It must be kept in mind that the New South Wales Department of Railways could only manage 27% even with the very high level of government legislative protection. Private car ownership had started to accelerate from 1935 and absolutely zoomed from 1945. Total public transport patronage in New South Wales started to fall dramatically from 1945 and kept falling to 1980 and beyond.⁶³³ Whereas private car ownership per person in New South Wales was about 0.05 in 1925, it was 0.1 in 1955, 0.2 in 1963, 0.3 in 1968 and 0.35 in 1980.⁶³⁴ Unless the Department of Railways succeeded in making their stations, trains and train services more attractive, potential customers would choose to travel by their own motor vehicle and, if people did not own a car, poor rail infrastructure and services would act as a stimulant to save for a vehicle.

A good start to service improvements was made on 19th September, 1949, when the Riverina Daylight Express operated for the first time with air-conditioned carriages, including a car with "a modern electric kitchen (which) served 27 diners who sat on swivel bucket chairs along a streamlined counter."⁶³⁵ Author, David Burke, stated that the new train was bringing "an overdue measure of comfort and speedier daytime schedules."⁶³⁶ This benefit of supplying on-train food and drink meant that trains did not have to wait at stations for people to purchase food from the refreshment rooms.

As a result of on-train service, passenger services became faster and fewer staff meant lower operating costs. Even for politicians of the State Labor Party who were in power at the time could

⁶³² C. Banger, "On-Train Catering New South Wales 1921-2001," *Australian Railway History*, March, 2004, p. 111.

⁶³³ The Bus and Coach Association, *Private Buses at the Crossroads*, North Parramatta, no date, p. 8.

⁶³⁴ Ibid.

⁶³⁵ D. Burke, *30 Days on Australia's Railways*, Dural, Rosenberg Publishing, 2014, p. 99.

⁶³⁶ Ibid., p. 98.

see the benefits. The Minister for Transport in 1949, Maurice O'Sullivan, stated that he wanted to abolish all refreshment rooms at stations and believed that on-train food and drink should be provided instead at stations.⁶³⁷ A wise person could see that there would be adverse implications for the Harden refreshment room in the not too distant future.

Declining customer service affected all parts of the Department of Railways. Customers had to endure delays in delivery, pilfering and damaged goods. For these reasons, freight customers often chose road services where possible. The growth in road freight traffic and decline in railway traffic was reflected in a survey on the Pacific Highway between 1945 and 1949. While the number of motor cars, motorcycles and utilities increased by 180% during those four years, the increase in lorries increased 611%. Within that figure, lorries up to three tons capacity had increased 427% whereas trucks over three tons capacity increased by 1,338%.⁶³⁸ Customers simply chose the alternative road service because it was available.

THE HARDEN REFRESHMENT ROOM OPERATIONS

On after the War, business went on bubbling at the refreshment room as it had done for many decades. On 4th February, 1946, work was completed on the installation of fly proof screens over the refreshment room windows.

At the start of the War, there were ten or so vacant official residences around Harden station. One of these residences in Whitton Lane was used as accommodation for the girls in the refreshment room. In 1947, only two girls resided there, one coming from Cooma and the other one coming from Narrandera, but a fire occurred on 17th March, 1947, and destroyed all the girls' possessions as well as the house.⁶³⁹

On 30th June, 1948, the South West Mail derailed at Rocky Ponds and staff of the Harden refreshment room who were not on duty were called out to supply food and hot drinks to the passengers who had been taken to Harden on a relief train.⁶⁴⁰ They were also required to prepare meals for the various workers at the crash site. In the following days, the Harden refreshment room continued to dispense food and drinks to those working at the derailment location and on 2nd July, the refreshment room was given one hour's notice to prepare 200 meals for relief track gang members.⁶⁴¹

Tenders were again called in March, 1948, for the supply of certain commodities for the refreshment room and the process was repeated in 1949.⁶⁴²

⁶³⁷ *West Wyalong Advocate*, 22nd September, 1949, p. 8.

⁶³⁸ G. Wotherspoon, "An Historical Review of Rail Freight and Road Freight in New South Wales," in Commission of Enquiry into the N.S.W. Road Freight Industry, *First Report on Economy, Efficiency and Road/Rail Rationalisation*, Volumes I, II and III, Supplementary Paper, Sydney, 1980, p. 71.

⁶³⁹ *Cootamundra Herald*, 18th March, 1947, p. 2.

⁶⁴⁰ T. Edmonds, "The South West Mail Derailment Rocky Ponds, 5.05am 30th June 1948," *Australian Railway History*, March, 2013, p. 15.

⁶⁴¹ *Harden Express*, 2nd July, 1948, p. 5.

⁶⁴² *Ibid.*, 12th March, 1948, p. 3 and 25th March, 1949, p. 2.

One of the most obvious additions to the original platform building is the refreshment room services area, containing the laundry, coal pile, clothes washing line and staff toilet, located at the Cootamundra end. This collection of refreshment room miscellany is highly noticeable because it is the only part of the platform building complex where the walls are unpainted and remain in their original face brick condition. The bricks are set in stretcher bond which indicates that the walls were provided much later than the other parts of the platform building. It may be that the former corrugated iron fence around the refreshment no room laundry, coal pile and staff toilet was replaced in the 1950s with the existing face brick walls. At the Cootamundra end, the brick wall was 24 feet 3 inches wide across the platform.

An additional toaster and refrigerator were added to the refreshment room in February, 1954 – three years after the announcement the refreshment room would close.

An advertisement was placed in the local paper in 1957 calling for tenders for the supply of foodstuffs to the Harden refreshment room. Tenders closed on 13th March for cartage; 20th March for bread and bread rolls and 27th March for ice. This was the first advertisement in many years to appear in the local press and there was one significant improvement, that being that the tender form could be obtained from the Harden refreshment room rather than tender forms being supplied from Sydney. The tender was to be for a period of 12 months but seems that no one told the bureaucrats assessing the tenders that the refreshment would close in seven months' time during the contract period.⁶⁴³

CLOSURE OF THE HARDEN REFRESHMENT ROOM

The press got hold of information in 1951 that the Railway Department intended to close down the refreshment room and bar at Harden. The closure was to be in two stages and this first stage in 1951 was the closure during the evening from 8th November. This caused a degree of anger from people travelling from Cowra, Koorawatha and Grenfell to Sydney on the night mail trains. One newspaper stated that:

“the food and service at the Harden refreshment rooms was never particularly good, but at least it was better than nothing. Now, apparently, even that will be denied to night travellers. It is a striking contrast to the courtesy and service that is given on airlines all over Australia, run by the much maligned private enterprise.”⁶⁴⁴

Murrumburrah Council was also angry and resolved to protest to both the Commissioner for Railways and the Minister for Transport. Alderman Page “said it was a “retrograde step which would bring the town into disrepute. A decision to close the refreshment room at night has meant that there is no service for the trains coming off the Young-Cowra branch. This is particularly inconvenient for those who are on the 8.30 pm train from Cowra and have to wait until 2.00 am for the main line train.”⁶⁴⁵ The only trains for which the refreshment room was open were the early morning mail trains and the paper train. In November, 1951, the Manager had been instructed to

⁶⁴³ Ibid., 28th February, 1957, p. 7.

⁶⁴⁴ *Grenfell Recorder and Lachlan District Advertiser*, 15th November, 1951, p. 2.

⁶⁴⁵ *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 16th November, 1951, p. 3.

dismiss some of the staff. By some miracle, the restriction on night-time opening was lifted on 3rd December and the Harden refreshment room operated as normal.⁶⁴⁶

What was that miracle that stopped the first stage in 1951? The local Member of Parliament, Billy Sheahan, was also the Minister for Transport between 30th June, 1950 and 2nd April, 1952. It pays to have friends in the right position. How was the November, 1951, closure explained? The Railways said it was a “trial period.”

Although the opening hours of the Harden refreshment room had been restored, Billy Sheahan advised Murrumburrah Council that there would be a reduction in staff in the near future because the present setup was unprofitable. Income for some time did not warrant opening the facility for both the Temora Mail and the Albury Mail. Sheahan replied, based on advice from the Railway Commissioner, that there was not a great inconvenience with the closure of the Harden room because the refreshment rooms at Yass and Cootamundra, both only one and a half hours away, remained open.

The only problem was that the passengers who joined from the Cowra line were in a totally isolated carriage with no inter-carriage connection with the rest of the train. When the trains stopped at Yass or Goulburn, the Cowra branch carriage was not in the platforms and, thus, passengers could not use the refreshment facilities. Billy Sheahan ended his advice warning Council that the financial position of the Harden refreshment room continued to remain unsatisfactory and the number of male staff would be reduced and a number of the full-time female staff would be altered to part-time.⁶⁴⁷ One would think that with the closure of the refreshment room well in the minds of the Department of Railways, the organisation would be reluctant to invest any additional money in the facility. This was not the case and a power socket was installed in the American bar before the end of 1951.

In addition to the provision of on-train meals, the Railway Department in the early 1950s played with the operation of the fixed refreshment rooms. Bars would from March, 1952, be open ten minutes before train arrival time, whereas, in the past, they were not open until the passenger train stopped in the platforms. The alteration was made on the basis that the former arrangement resulted in congestion and placed certain passengers at a disadvantage, such as those in carriages distant from the refreshment room. How on Earth did the bureaucrats think this would help people other than in the middle of the train? There was also another change. The new policy stated that, along those corridors where daylight trains operated with dining cars, refreshment rooms would remain closed but that policy was altered for the facilities at Goulburn, Junee and Bathurst which would open not only the bar but provide light meals.⁶⁴⁸

Premier, Joe Cahill, wrote to all Cabinet Ministers, including Billy Sheahan, the Minister for Transport, at the end of 1953 stressing the need to embark on a “tough cost-cutting exercise” for all departments and he told Sheahan that he must operate the railway services within the budget. Polding wrote that, as a result, more than 3,400 railway employees had been retrenched and another 662 were also to go. Despite protesting, the railway unions did not take industrial action

⁶⁴⁶ *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 14th December, 1951, p. 1.

⁶⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 11th January, 1952, p. 1.

⁶⁴⁸ *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 6th March, 1952, p. 4.

against their Labor Government because Cahill told them that, had the men not been dismissed, the Department of Railways would be unable to pay their wages.⁶⁴⁹

Clearly, closure of the Harden refreshment room never dropped off the policy option list between 1951 and 1957. In early 1957, a new tack was adopted by the Railway Department, keeping in mind that Harden was within Billy Sheahan's electorate. There appeared an advertisement in the local paper calling for tenders to take over operations of the refreshment room at Harden for three years from 1st August, 1957.⁶⁵⁰ Furnished staff quarters came with the job. The advertisement was repeated on 13th June and 27th June. It was not an unrealistic decision to offer the refreshment facility for lease as there were other similar facilities that were leased to private enterprise, such as the one at Gundagai. No tenders were received for the lease of the Harden refreshment room.

The Harden refreshment room closed on 1st September, 1957. The local Member of Parliament, Billy Sheahan, was transferred from the position of the Minister for Transport on 23rd February, 1953, but he still held the powerful Cabinet position of Minister for Health in the Cahill Ministry. Could he have acted once again to stop the closure of the Harden refreshment room? Probably not. The Government of which he was a member well knew the parlous condition of railway finances in New South Wales at the time and Sheahan would not have had his Government's support to keep the Harden facility open when others were being closed. Also, it was he who had warned Murrumburrah Council about the "unsatisfactory" financial position of the operation and the reality of future staff dismissals.

The refreshment rooms at Wagga Wagga and Yass Junction had been closed on 2nd September, 1956. As at 21st September, 1961, the refreshment rooms at Cootamundra and Junee and Narrandera were all closed on Sundays but those at Moss Vale, Goulburn and Albury were opened seven days a week. One month after the closure of the Harden refreshment room, there was an article, not an advertisement or tender request, in the Harden press that the Department would be interested to hear from anyone who would be interested in taking over the Harden facility, even on a part-time basis.⁶⁵¹ This offer appeared following an approach by the Harden Murrumburrah Chamber of Commerce to the Commissioner. As an enticement, the Commissioner said that the successful tenderer would be free to purchase her/his supplies wherever she/he chose.

The Australian Railways Union made representations to the Commissioner to prevent the closure and, astonishingly, supported its request by referring to statements by the Liberal Party which claimed that, if elected at the next state elections, would keep the refreshment room open by leasing it to private enterprise. When the Liberal Party took office in 1965, it made no attempt to re-open refreshment room.⁶⁵²

The refreshment room at Yass Junction had been closed in 1956 and part of the refreshment room there was converted into employee accommodation. The same was done at Harden. In January,

⁶⁴⁹ P. Golding, *They Called Him Old Smoothie – John Joseph Cahill*, North Melbourne, Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2009, page 258.

⁶⁵⁰ *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 6th June, 1957, p. 4.

⁶⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 10th October, 1957, p. 1.

⁶⁵² Alyson Wales, *Harden Railway Station*, unpublished high school history essay, Murrumburrah High School, 1984, reprinted in *Harden-Murrumburrah Historical Society Bulletin*, No. 157, June, 1985.

1958, all internal electrical fittings and external signage were removed from the Harden refreshment room. At the end of 1958, alterations were made to the downstairs kitchen area of the refreshment room to facilitate conversion to an employee residence. A timber partition was built at the Cootamundra end of the refreshment room, thus blocking that facility off completely. A new stainless steel sink and cupboard were provided in the former kitchen area and the former eight feet long “range” was replaced by a small fuel stove. Upstairs, an instantaneous electric bath heater was fitted to the bathroom.

Long after the tenant had departed, the area was later used by some on-train staff of the Victorian Railways as accommodation. Some train crew members disembarked from passenger trains from Melbourne and waited at Harden station for passenger trains proceeding back to Melbourne. This stopped in the late 1980s.

DETERIORATING STAFF ATTITUDES

The annual Railway Institute dinner was held at the end of October, 1947, in the railway refreshment room. Commissioner Hartigan expressed a note of warning that there was a tendency of the younger men in the Railway service to treat the public with less respect than they were entitled to. He explained that this occurred only in recent times and said that the men who had had years of service behind them were still discourteous to the public as in the days of old, whereas many of the youngsters were inclined to treat the public as nuisances.⁶⁵³ The refreshment room Sub-Manager and his wife undertook the catering for the dinner.

Attitudes did not seem to get any better in the following years. There was a press article in June, 1955, by Ray Oliver, who was the Liberal candidate for Young. He wrote about the “couldn’t-care-less” attitude of railway staff towards public, which was driving people away from railways to airlines. The article said that employees, who were once efficient and conscientious, had now become slipshod because they were dispirited by the poor management decisions within the Railway Department. Travellers were “treated like cattle being railed to a destination.” The article said there was indifference to the welfare of passengers and said this was due to the “decadent Labor Government.”⁶⁵⁴

Oliver’s concern was not political grand-standing. The inability of the Department of Railways to obtain “adequate and efficient staff” was a major issue during the 1950s. There was strong competition in the labour market generally because government undertakings were restricted to paying wages no higher than the relevant industrial awards, whereas private enterprise companies could and were paying above award wages. The Chief Traffic Manager stated in 1955 that, because of the relative low wages, the Department was “in most instances receiving only the lower labour types discarded by industrial organisations. This has resulted in the general standard of staff declining perceptively in the last few years, with consequent anxiety to the (Railway) administration.”⁶⁵⁵

On top of the poor quality of staff, was the increase in working costs due to the introduction of the 40-hour week in Australia in 1947. The impact of this was indicated by an increase of 163% in

⁶⁵³ Ibid., 31st October, 1947, p. 1.

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid., 2nd June, 1955, p. 1.

⁶⁵⁵ D. J. Howse, *Railways of Australia*, Department of Railways, no date, pp. 19 and 20.

working expenses between 1946/47 and 1953/4.⁶⁵⁶ The increased cost of staff prompted the introduction of initiatives to lower staffing levels through new technology, including the commencement of diesel-electric locomotives and on train-buffets.

THE REPLACEMENT OF THE SUBWAY

A subject that was first raised in 1912 was the topic, once again, for discussion in the Murrumburrah Municipal Council. Council requested an overhead pedestrian bridge to provide access to the Harden platform in 1948.⁶⁵⁷ One month later, the Department said that the subway was adequate and that the site was unsuitable for an overhead bridge. This was the first time that someone said that there were problems with the site.⁶⁵⁸ Now, here is a little secret the good people of Harden-Murrumburrah did not know about. Just two years later, in November, 1950, the Chief Civil Engineer of the Department of Railways approved a plan for the provision of a footbridge over the railway line at the Cowra end of Young station parallel with Main Street. It was to be seven feet wide and have one in eight gradient ramps on each side – no steps. Wouldn't the residents of Harden-Murrumburrah have been jealous of that initiative had they knew about it? They certainly would have argued that, if a branch line station deserved footbridge, so did Harden station. Luckily for the Railway Department, footbridge at Young was not built.

Once again in 1949, Council pushed the question of an overhead pedestrian access to Harden station but it received advice that it could not be built "without complete redesign of the station."⁶⁵⁹ Then, the *Harden-Murrumburrah Express* newspaper suggested that a handrail be provided down the centre of the ramp as a solution to some unnamed problem. It was resolved that yet another letter would be dashed off to the Department of Railways asking whether it would consider the suggestion.

In May, 1960, representatives of Demondrille Shire Council met with the Commissioner during his annual tour of the rail system. Of the four issues raised, the only one relating to the station was the request for an overhead pedestrian bridge to replace the subway to reach the platforms. Council argued that "it was most difficult for elderly and infirm people." Commissioner McCusker was perplexed by the request as he said that usually towns with an overhead bridge wanted a subway, which the people of Harden already had. He considered that the existing subway was "quite adequate and would have to remain. In the cases where elderly or infirm people were concerned, the Station Master, on request, would arrange for them to be escorted from the platform at the Albury end through the goods yard to and from the street."⁶⁶⁰

STATION FORECOURT

Inter-town rivalry was still a feature of country life in the 1950s. Council decided in 1950 that there should be a taxi stand outside the railway station. Why did Council raise that issue then? Because Aldermen were not happy that a taxi from Young had been waiting for passengers off the train at Harden and Council believed that Harden taxis should have preference to passengers coming off the

⁶⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁷ Harden Express, 7th of May, 1948, p. 7.

⁶⁵⁸ Ibid., 18th June, 1948, p. 6.

⁶⁵⁹ Ibid., 14th January, 1949, p. 1.

⁶⁶⁰ Department of Railways, *Minutes of Commissioner's Tour of Inspection*, 26th May, 1960, p. 10.

train. As the land beyond Whitton Lane was Railway property, Council resolved to ask the Department of Railways for two taxi stands outside the station.⁶⁶¹

The Department of Railways advised Murrumburrah Council in 1953 that repairs would be effected outside the Harden Railway Station, which was used for car parking. While the Department acknowledged that a permanent job would be made by asphaltting the area, it regretted that, owing to the recession in the funds available to the Department, it was quite impracticable for the work to be carried out at the present time.⁶⁶² However, the Department issued instructions that the repairs were to be effected when there was an improvement in the financial position. The sting is always on the tail.

The Department then wrote a tricky few words saying that it would review the matter at that time (i.e. when there were funds available) but gave no undertaking to do the work. So, in one sentence the Department said it would go ahead with the repairs and, in another sentence, stated that it would review the subject – not build – when more money was available. It was not until March, 1954, that the Department indicated that it was in a position to pay for the improvements.⁶⁶³ The only condition was that Council had to maintain the area, which Council said it would do.

Murrumburrah Council in 1955 placed an amount in his 1956 financial estimates to cover the cost of concreting the plot of ground at the top of the subway at Harden station. It had been planted with lawn in 1941 in place of a once-held dream of flower beds. Now, Council resolved to replace the grass with concrete, which it believed would provide “a more durable product.” Council had given up its hope of flower beds and revised its 1935 dream of garden beds with a plan to integrate the concreted area along with shrubs and seats.⁶⁶⁴ This subject had been the matter of considerable correspondence over many years and the lack of resolution on the issue pointed to a fair degree of mediocre management within the Railway Department and an absence by the Labor Government to provide the Railways with adequate finance.

PLATFORM EXTENSION

In January, 1950, it was planned to remove the 1924 built, 80 feet long extension of the Sydney-bound platform at the Cootamundra end. It had used a frame of old rails and a deck of old sleepers. In its place, was an extension 183 feet from near the end of the refreshment room complex towards Cootamundra. Five small buildings existed in the area behind the 1924 platform and the South Dock Road and these buildings were demolished as a part of the new platform, which was constructed of earth fill with a platform wall built of old rails and concrete poured in situ. While the plan was issued in 1950, the physical work did not take place until 1954.

STATION OPERATIONS

There were two post offices in the town, one at each of the commercial centres. There was a lovely little ritual carried out on a daily basis between Harden and Murrumburrah and this involved the exchange of public mail at a place which was known as “the Monument”, this being a statue in

⁶⁶¹ *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 27th January, 1950, p. 1.

⁶⁶² *Ibid.*, 11th June, 1953, p. 1.

⁶⁶³ *Ibid.*, 4th March, 1954, p. 1.

⁶⁶⁴ *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 21st July, 1955, p. 2.

Albury Street halfway between the two commercial ends of the town. It was at the insistence of Council that the mail be treated in this manner but in 1950 Council changed its mind and, from that time, the mail for Murrumburrah residents was brought by train to Murrumburrah platform.⁶⁶⁵ Nothing was mentioned about mail going in the opposite direction. Another conundrum!

In 1962, a stocktake of portable dog boxes located throughout the country indicated that one was located on the platform at Harden, though it was not officially numbered, unlike the one at Goulburn which was numbered 19. The shock was that Cootamundra was allocated two dog boxes, which were numbered 20 and 103.⁶⁶⁶ Perhaps there were more dog races at Cootamundra? It would seem that the numbering of portable dog boxes was haphazard as there were as many unnumbered boxes as officially numbered boxes with Moss Vale and Temora also been recorded as having unnumbered boxes.

The end of the good old Railway days was reflected in the response to the announcement that the Commissioner would be at Harden for nearly four hours on 9th March, 1964. No Council or other deputation was going to be organised to meet him.⁶⁶⁷ No one seemed to care anymore about the railway station.

ELECTRICITY BLACKOUTS

In the early 1950s, blackouts were something that happened from time to time. The Traffic Inspector, S. Weaver, based at Harden railway station wrote to Murrumburrah Council asking that, if possible, to maintain electricity supplies to the station during blackouts. He gave an example of an incident on Wednesday, 7th May, 1952, when the power was cut off between 1815 and 1915 during which time No. 15 passenger train arrived at 1900 and depart that 1906 and No. 48 departed for Young at 1914. There was considerable confusion on the platform and inside the refreshment room and there was difficulty in getting an injured female member off the Riverina Express train. Council decided that the electricity supply to the station should be “left on” during blackouts and decided to make power available to the Railways pending advice from the Electricity Commission.⁶⁶⁸

⁶⁶⁵ *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 28th March, 1950, p. 3.

⁶⁶⁶ Want to see a dog box? The dog boxes at Cootamundra station are shown in M. Holdsworth, *Lenses South*, Hyde Park, Cadeco, 2016, p. 173. Dog boxes were of two types – fixed and portable. At Cootamundra, in 1964 the two portable dog boxes are painted tuscan while the fixed dog boxes were painted green.

⁶⁶⁷ *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 5th March, 1964, p. 2.

⁶⁶⁸ *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 15th May, 1952, p. 2.

16. ON THE ROAD TO DEPARTMENTAL SELF-DESTRUCTION 1965-1972

THE STATION APPROACH

The Department of Railways had shown a high degree of arrogance in the way it dealt with the official representatives of the town of Harden/Murrumburrah. Complacency and slothfulness amongst the senior ranks of the Railway organisation were commonplace. An example of the significance of departmental lethargy occurred in 1965. The Railway Department had asked Murrumburrah Council on the 4th December, 1962, to submit quote for the repair and asphaltting of the station platform area for which Council quoted £950. The Department did not seem to be in any hurry to carry on with the work and the Department took until September, 1965, to ask Council whether its 1962 quote was still current or whether Council wish to furnish an amended quote.⁶⁶⁹ It seems that the Department's interest in the matter fizzled out once again in 1965.

The Department rattled Murrumburrah Council in late 1966 by announcing that it was going to construct a wool dump in the car parking area in front of Harden railway station, which was on Railway land.⁶⁷⁰ A wool dump was a raised platform to assist in the loading of railway goods vehicles. Alderman Hubble commented that many years previously the Harden Industrial Committee wanted to plant trees in the area but had difficulty in getting permission. Similar quests went back 40 years to beautify the approach to the station at the top of the ramp and none of them was implemented. Alderman Bourke was one of the smarter representatives on Council and said "what are we protesting about? We're likely to hear nothing more about it." What he was saying was that no improvement had ever occurred at that location despite a multitude of correspondence on the subject and this latest idea would be in the same category as all of the earlier proposals – going nowhere.

THE SUBWAY

A representative of the Harden Industrial Development Committee met the Commissioner while on his annual tour of inspection in April, 1968, and stated that difficulty was experienced by elderly people in negotiating the ramps leading to the platforms at Harden and asked if arrangements could be made to provide a handrail on each side to overcome the problem. That request was a repeat of one similarly made in 1949. The Commissioners stated that the matter would be "investigated but no promise could be given that handrails would be installed." One month after the inspection, a senior Railway officer noted on the papers that "installation of handrails not considered warranted". The Industrial Development Committee was informed on 12th July, 1968. The subject was again raised this time by Murrumburrah Municipal Council in June, 1969, but the matter was once again declined.⁶⁷¹ The handrail issue had a similarity with many other aspects of the station management over the years, namely repeated requests by town organisations and repeated rejections by the Railway Department.

BUILDING CHANGES

⁶⁶⁹ Ibid., 23rd September, 1965, p. 3.

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid., 24th November, 1966, p. 1.

⁶⁷¹ Department of Railways, *Minutes of Commissioner's Tour of Inspection*, 6th May, 1968, p. 16.

In April, 1965, the local press published an article that the timber ticket and parcels office at the top of the ramp on the platform was to be demolished and tenders had been called for the work. Also, the then office used by the Station Master was to be converted into a parcels office while an adjoining room would be used by the Station Master as well as the booking office. A portion of the refreshment room was to be used as offices for Per Way Inspectors. By so doing, an improved level of accommodation was available for traffic staff.⁶⁷²

Tenders closed on 28th April, 1965, for the demolition and removal of the redundant timber booking and parcels office, a building which measured 39 feet by 15 feet 6 inches. The power, water and telephone connections were discontinued.⁶⁷³ The timber booking and parcels office at top of the subway was removed at an unknown time and ticket sales from that time were conducted from the booking office in the 1880 building. This was the first time since 1919 that ticket sales had been conducted in the 1880 building and the first time since 1919 that the ticket window faced into the general waiting room.

Billy Sheahan advised Murrumburrah Council in 1966 that the Railway Department would be undertaking some works at Harden station which included unknown works to the platform awnings and also to the offices. It was also planned to rewire the electrical system in the 1880 station building and convert lights from incandescent to fluorescent operation. The work was to be completed by the end of March, 1966.⁶⁷⁴ Those grand intentions were never fulfilled.

Two years after the promise of changing all the building lights to fluorescent presentation, a little bit of action occurred in 1968. A third fluorescent light was added to the existing two fluorescent fittings that had been installed at the station some time prior to 1960. Now, there were three fluorescent lights – a far cry from conversion of all incandescent globes. All other lighting in the platform building and on the platform was by incandescent globes with the 24 platform lamps. Eight incandescent globes in the subway and ramp lamps had 100 Watt fixtures, though these were reduced to 60 Watt for the two light fittings in the subway under the tracks. This poor level of illumination in the subway had been a concern for many years, even decades.

Only on one occasion has a member of the staff of Harden railway station ever appeared on the front page of the in-house journal of the New South Wales Railways. That one time occurred in 1970 when a photograph of Miss Wendy Barnes appeared wearing a bikini, having won the “Miss Sunshine Quest” conducted by radio station 2LF. Under the heading “Railway Beauty”, it was reported that Miss Barnes worked in the booking and parcels office of the station and was successful in winning the Quest.⁶⁷⁵

⁶⁷² Ibid., 1st April, 1965, p. 1.

⁶⁷³ Ibid., 8th April, 1965, p. 11.

⁶⁷⁴ *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 20th January, 1966, p. 2.

⁶⁷⁵ *The Railwayman*, Volume 11 Number 2, April, 1970, p. 1. Wendy's photograph also got splashed across the pages of the *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 26th February, 1970, p. 7.

THE PLATFORMS

In 1967, the Cootamundra-bound platform was 535 feet long, which was the same length as in 1933. The Sydney-bound platform had been extended and was now 600 feet long in 1967.⁶⁷⁶ In 1973, the Cootamundra-bound platform was still 535 feet long but the Sydney-bound platform was shown in an official document as 705 feet in length. This latter length looks suspiciously incorrect.⁶⁷⁷

17. BAD NEWS FOR HARDEN - THE IMPACT OF THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT COMMISSION 1972-1980

ESTABLISHMENT

The Public Transport Commission replaced the Department of Railways in late 1972 and that initiative alone was a step to address the management lethargy that had existed for many decades. The problem was that the New South Wales Government was not willing to allocate sufficient capital funds to rectify the many problems that existed in both freight and passenger services and facilities. Moreover, the Commission had to manage not only the railways but Sydney's Government owned bus services as well as the Government owned ferry services in both Sydney and Newcastle, freight services throughout the State and all ancillary operations, such as workshops.

ABOLITION OF PLATFORM TICKETS FOR COUNTRY STATIONS

In February, 1974, the Commission amended the Railway Bylaws to waive the necessity for platform tickets to be purchased outside Sydney and Newcastle for a trial period of six months. The Government approved this "in order to encourage people to visit stations and see the many trains now operated by the Public Transport Commission."⁶⁷⁸

In its eight years of existence, the Commission did little for Harden apart from bringing misery.

CHANGES TO THE PARCELS SERVICE

The Australian Railways Union officials visited Harden in 1974 to discuss proposed railway cuts, which included closing the parcel offices on the platform and the reduction in station staff.⁶⁷⁹ Local businesses and the general public were invited to attend. A report in the local paper said that

⁶⁷⁶ NSW, *Local Appendix to the Working Timetable*, 1967, p. 55.

⁶⁷⁷ Shown as being 215 m long in NSW, *Local Appendix the working Timetable*, 1st July, 1973, p. 55.

⁶⁷⁸ *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 28th February, 1974, p. 2.

⁶⁷⁹ *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 1st August, 1974, p. 1.

businessmen were conspicuous by their absence at the meeting. Apart from Terry Sheahan, the local Member of Parliament, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, no other section of the community attended the two meetings that were held to discuss the issue.⁶⁸⁰ The Mayor said that, if the cuts were to take place in October as proposed, the action would be detrimental to the railway employees into the town.

It was announced in the local press on 10th October, 1974, that Murrumburrah railway station would close.⁶⁸¹ Also, the hours of operation of all parcels office on the railway system would be restricted from 0830 to 1700 on Mondays to Fridays and 0830 to 1230 on Saturdays. Parcels business had dropped from 1972 at Harden and the average number of parcels in 1975 was 165 per week inwards and 26 parcels per week outwards. The average weekly revenue for all pass business was \$336.

Harden Shire Council wrote to the Public Transport Commission in early 1980 requesting that parcels business be transferred to the goods shed. Minister for Transport, Wal Fife, applied to Terry Sheahan on 25th March, 1975, The Minister replied to Terry Sheahan saying that the income parcels business at Harden did not warrant the expense of changing the present location parcels office to the good shed, a move that was requested by the local community in order to save going to two locations to transact business.⁶⁸² The relocation would involve the provision of a concrete path in the goods yard on which to wheel barrows, plus alterations in the good shed, including the construction of a counter. Staff would still be required at the station to provide luggage facilities. This request would again be raised in 1980 but the answer was still negative.

However, all parcels business did end up being transferred from the station to the Harden good shed in 1986. Therefore, why did the Commission reject the idea in 1975? Council's suggestion was soundly based but senior Commission staff had a bigger plan with an even bigger, adverse impact for Harden station. The secret was not shared with Council in 1975 nor 1980.

The Blue Spot parcels service started in rural areas between Sydney and Dubbo in October, 1975. It was expected that it would be extended to Harden and the southern area in the not distant future. Indeed, it was.

PROPOSED DEMOLITION OF THE 1880 PLATFORM BUILDING

It was in 1975 that the Murrumburrah Municipal Council and Demondrille Shire Council amalgamated to form the Harden Shire Council and it was this new organisation that provided the frontline of representation of the town to the Railway authorities. As things turned out, it was a good strategic move to combine forces as the then Public Transport Commission had undertaken a review of railway operations within the Goulburn district, which included Harden. The review proposed retention of only 50% of all buildings in the railway yard at Harden, which included one signal box, the goods shed and only a waiting room on the platform. Everything else was to be demolished. Nothing was to remain at Cunningham or Murrumburrah and it was planned to also close Demondrille station and signal box and remotely control the track junction from Harden.

⁶⁸⁰ Ibid., 15th August, 1974, p. 1.

⁶⁸¹ Ibid., 10th October, 1974, p. 2

⁶⁸² *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 3rd April, 1975, p. 3.

GAS HEATING IN THE GENERAL WAITING ROOM

There was a change of policy in relation to the proposed demolition of the platform building. Now, in 1976, the entire platform structure was to be retained, possibly as a result of union and local government pressure.

In June, 1976, Frank Franklyn, the General Manager of the Way and Works Branch, approved the provision of gas heating in the general waiting room to replace the open fire. The existing coal fire was removed and a gas heater inserted therein. No other rooms were heated by gas at that time. Two LP gas cylinders were placed adjacent to the external wall on the Cootamundra-bound platform and were enclosed with Cyclone wire mesh. This presented yet another item of clutter that further deteriorated the visual experience of the station.

THE SUBWAY

An old chestnut got another run in the press in February, 1977, with a Letter to the Editor of the local newspaper requesting the elimination of the subway at the station, saying that it was long, steep and unpleasant with luggage, especially for old people. The correspondent asked “why not have a platform easily accessible like other towns?”⁶⁸³ To anyone with a smidgen of railway knowledge, no answer is required.

Sidney Smith was a veteran Harden employee and strong member of the Australian Railways Union and he supported the push for a new side platform, saying that the subway was built for a battery driven electric trolley that used to convey commercial travellers sample baskets (i.e. paniers) from the station to the sample rooms at the local hotels.

18. A FAIR EFFORT TO KEEP THINGS GOING - THE STATE RAIL AUTHORITY PERIOD 1980-1989

ESTABLISHMENT

The State Rail Authority commenced operation on 1st July, 1980 and continued in existence till 1989. It genuinely tried to improve rural passenger services and to maintain existing infrastructure. So far as passenger services were concerned, it did a good job of modernising passenger rail travel and also tried as hard as possible to keep the station staffed.

⁶⁸³ Ibid., 17th February, 1977, p. 4.

THE REFRESHMENT ROOM BAR SAVED FROM DESTRUCTION

In 1981, the Harden Murrumburrah Historical Society was successful in its negotiations to save the elaborate, American bar from the refreshment room. In April, 1981, the Society placed it in its museum in Albury Street, Murrumburrah. It went on display on 23rd October, 1981.⁶⁸⁴

TRANSFER OF PARCELS BUSINESS TO THE GOODS SHED

From 21st September, 1986, there was a system-wide amalgamation of the parcels business with what was known as LCL freight (meaning less than carload freight, meaning small consignments of goods).⁶⁸⁵ The new business was known as Trackfast Small Freight. This involved the transfer of parcels business from the station to the good shed at Harden. These items were no longer delivered by rail to Harden station. Deliveries and pickups were made by road from and to the Cootamundra Freight Centre.

The event marked the end parcels business on the New South Wales Railways, an activity that had been conducted from 1855. No longer was there an item conveyed by rail officially labelled as a “parcel”.

THE HARDEN COMMUNITY HURT – AGAIN

In 1982, ticket sales at the station had increased 45% since the Labor Government reduced all train fares by 20% in 1976. Similar increases were evident at other stations on the Main South line.

The population of Harden/Murrumburrah in 1982 was 2,170 people and a good many of them as the station for a special event. In October, 1981, a brand-new XPT power van and two carriages arrived at Harden station for inspection by members of the public. It was reported that hundreds of people were on the platform and it was the largest crowd station since the railway centenary in 1977.

There was only one “flaw” on the day of the visit – a word used in the local press. The promotional material was handed out to the public included a cardboard wheel on which details of “important centres” proposed to be served by the XPT trains were provided. Harden station was not on the wheel and the local residents hoped that this was not “an omen of things to come for Harden but rather just a typographical error.”⁶⁸⁶ It was a case of one ticket for omen and zero ticks for typos.

MAINTENANCE OF THE STATION APPROACH

The year, 1982, witnessed the Harden Shire Council committed to a formal Agreement with the State Railway Authority to maintain the asphalted surface of the station approaches, under an annual payment by Council of \$0.10, if demanded. What sort of Agreement was this where it was Council which had to make a payment for doing the maintenance work? The Agreement was in accordance with Section 273 of the Local Government Act.

CAR PARKING NIGHTMARE AT THE STATION

⁶⁸⁴ Alyson Wales, *Harden Railway Station*, unpublished high school history essay, Murrumburrah High School, 1984, reprinted in *Harden-Murrumburrah Historical Society Bulletin*, No. 157, June, 1985.

⁶⁸⁵ State Rail Authority, *Weekly Notice* No. 39 of 1986, p. 9.

⁶⁸⁶ *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 10th September, 1981, p. 5.

One Easter day early in April, 1986, five motorists were booked for breaches of the Motor Traffic Act in front of the railway station. The boundary between railway property and the public road in Station Street was a straight line that extended across the forecourt between Whitton Lane East and Whitton Lane West and the five motor vehicles were parked not on Railway property but on a public road. One motorist said that people wanted to squeeze into the area as it was near the subway and thus avoided carrying luggage some distance from the main street. She claimed that motorists were unaware that they were breaching the legislation and that is believable as there were no signs in the area to provide instructions or warnings. Most of the offenders were residents from outside the town and business owners were concerned that parking fines turned people from ever coming to Harden again. These transgressions stimulated words in the local press that efforts would be made to increase the parking area at the station because the local business people wanted shoppers to come to Harden and utilise the local businesses.

The local Member of Parliament, Terry Sheahan, got involved in the issue as did Harden Shire Council. Mrs. Sue Heggaton said that she had parked her car in an orderly fashion and in line with other cars and only the boot area of her car was over the imaginary line. Column after column appeared in the local newspaper on the topic and the general consensus was that someone who lived in Whitton Lane East complained to the Police. Council dispatched the letter to the local Traffic Committee, with a suggestion that a line be painted across Station Street to assist motorists.⁶⁸⁷

RAILWAY COACH SERVICES

The car parking problem stimulated the local press to say that “it was revealed recently that Harden had been made an important road rail link for the Central Western area and efforts would be made to seek upgrading of passenger facilities at the Harden station.”⁶⁸⁸ That was a reference to the operation of a State Rail bus service from Harden to Cowra and the only benefit that came from that initiative was the construction in the goods yard of a large shelter to protect the bus from adverse weather.

CHANGES TO PARCELS OPERATIONS

By that time (i.e. 1982), parcels business had been amalgamated with goods traffic at the goods shed and a private contractor was picking up and delivering parcels and freight from the Cootamundra Freight Centre each day Monday to Fridays.

USES OF THE ROOMS IN THE PLATFORM BUILDING 1982

The uses of the various internal spaces of the platform building from the Sydney end were:

- male toilet,
- out of room,
- parcels office,
- Station Master’s office,
- Clerk’s office,

⁶⁸⁷ 26th June, 1986, p. 10.

⁶⁸⁸ Ibid., 10th April, 1986, p. 1.

- booking office,
- general waiting room,
- ladies' waiting room,
- female toilet,
- vacant space that was formerly part of the bar area of the refreshment room, &
- Per Way offices (i.e. offices for track maintenance inspectors).

MAINTENANCE & OTHER ISSUES AT THE STATION

There were 67 staff working in Harden in 1982 with 23 in the Traffic Branch working either at the station or in the signal boxes. Norm Apps was the First-Class Assistant Station Master in 1982. In that year, the position of Station Master was vacant and Norm sent a report to his superiors in the Traffic Branch in Sydney on the issues which he wished to be addressed at the station. These were:

- the need to upgrade the general waiting room and booking office,
- replacement of the linoleum in the booking office and elsewhere,
- improvement of the lighting in the subway, as the lights were destroyed on a weekly basis by local vandals,
- the need for two additional luggage barrows to supplement the existing two which were delivered on trial several years ago,
- improved seating in the general waiting room,
- a sign to direct customers to the goods shed for parcels business,
- the need to asphalt the down platform near the former refreshment room as it was present unsealed and dusty, &
- the requirement of a public address system on the platform to serve the increased customers using the rail service.

Nothing happened for some time. Harden Shire Council made representations in 1985 to the Minister for Transport requesting improvements to the station facilities. In reply, the Minister was reported as saying that the booking office would be completely upgraded with a new ticket window and the installation of fake wall panelling around the room as well as a new, lower ceiling.⁶⁸⁹ The work was under way during November. At that time, the "improvements" to the waiting room and toilets had been completed. External painting and "underground wiring" were expected to be completed "in the next week or so."⁶⁹⁰

Towards the end of 1985, the Chairman of the State Rail Authority board, Sir Lennox Hewitt, and the Deputy Chief Executive, Ron Christie, inspected "the completed works" in the company of Ted Ritchie, the Goulburn District Superintendent.⁶⁹¹ The three men, plus the Station Master, Bill Ledger, stood under the large station sign to have their photograph taken. The platform sign had not been changed in style or colour by the State Rail Authority to accord with the new corporate colours. The nameboard consisted of large black letters with smaller letters underneath the station name stating

⁶⁸⁹ *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 7th March, 1985, p. 11.

⁶⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 7th November, 1985, p. 2.

⁶⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 28th November, 1985, p. 1.

“Change here for Cowra.” The letters were coloured black on a white background. The platform signs were still extant in April, 1989.

Just as well the senior executives did not walk through the subway at night. Only one light was reported as being in working order in the subway and Council was once again obliged to make representations to improve the situation in the absence of any initiative from the State Rail Authority.⁶⁹²

The State Rail Authority capital works programme for 1986/87 included the provision of a new depot on the platform for Harden Sectionman/Electrician/Linesman who were housed in dilapidated accommodation. The improved accommodation was achieved by relocating the staff from old timber offices in the railway yard to vacant rooms on the platform that were formerly part of the refreshment room. Perway offices, amenities and a store were already established in the Cootamundra end of the vacant accommodation in the former refreshment room space before 1982.

Railway historians, Dr Bob Taaffe and Graham Harper, were long-term users of railway toilets and their photographs appeared in the local press using toilets in the area. The photograph of Bob Taaffe shows him standing adjacent to the pair of swing doors that led from the Sydney-bound platform into the male toilet.⁶⁹³ By this time, it was rare to see swing doors protecting the entry to male toilets.

The last employee to hold the position of Station Master at Harden Terry Hocking, who had transferred from Cootamundra in 1987.⁶⁹⁴ He assumed the position in August and remained in the position until his redundancy in 2004.

OFFICIAL RESIDENCES

There were 25 official residences available for staff in 1982 and 22 of these were occupied staff, retired staff, widows of deceased staff and one non-employee. The address of the Station Master's residence was 51 Whitton Lane, which was an interesting street name since John Whitton declined to attend the official opening on 12th March, 1877. There were three residences in Whitton Lane, seven in North Street, four in Cattleyards Road and 12 in Aurville Road. There was also one “res site” on which a former employee owned a house on Railway land, as well as three grazing leases.

⁶⁹² Ibid.

⁶⁹³ Ibid., 24th April, 1986, p. 3.

⁶⁹⁴ Ibid., 24th September, 1987, p. 2.

19. COUNTRYLINKIFICATION 1989-2013

ESTABLISHMENT

On 11th April, 1989, Countrylink was formed to manage rural railway services and country railway stations, including Harden. A separate body, called CityRail, managed urban services in Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong. Both organisations existed as commercial businesses of the State Rail Authority. Countrylink made a very big effort to conserve and maintain heritage-listed buildings, such as the one at Harden.

A SNAPSHOT OF STATION FEATURES 1989

Countrylink quickly commissioned the preparation of an asset register for all country railway stations under its control. The consultant's report provided a snapshot of the status of some of the facilities at Harden station at the time, which included:

- 1880 building and refreshment room were painted white externally with the refreshment room laundry building at the Cootamundra end being of face brickwork,
- the 1889 male toilet at the Sydney end was still in use as a toilet but the area containing the male hand wash basins, known formally as the "lavatory" was used as a telephone exchange,
- the 1891 out of room was located between the male toilet and the 1880 building,
- parcels business was carried out in the ticket office, (this was a strange comment as parcels traffic had already been located away from the platform)
- the Station Master had a separate office, which had been upgraded in 1985, adjacent to the ticket office,
- asphalted platform surfaces were in poor to reasonable condition,
- the grassed area of the platform at the Sydney end had some plantings,
- provision of public address system on the platforms dating from 1985,
- fake tiles were used on the roof replacing the original slate using Macromastic metal sheeting with a profile similar to standard Marseilles pattern, terracotta tiles,
- fake timber panelling existed in the general waiting room dating from 1985,
- part of the former refreshment room area which had been used by the Signal Sectionman from 1986 had been taken over and extended for per way offices, store and amenities,
- there was a portable dog box on the Sydney-bound platform,
- carparking existed capable of holding 20 motor vehicles,

STATION SERVICE AND STAFF REDUCTIONS

The worst news came in 1989. The *Sydney Morning Herald* had the heading on page one “SRA takes axe to 8000 jobs.” Multiple pages were given over to the cuts all over the State under the sub-heading “The Great Train Shake-up.” At the time, Harden had 22 railway staff on the payroll and it was intended to eliminate six people within one year and another 13 people within two to four years, making a total of 19 positions to be eliminated. This left a staff of 3 people.⁶⁹⁵ There were also four positions existing at Demondrille and these were to be totally eliminated.

Terry Hocking, the Station Master, was advised of changes in September, 1989, that would commence on 18th November. From being open 24 hours Monday to Saturday, the station would operate only between the hours of 0835 and 1735 and would be unattended between 1145 and 1245 each day. The station would not open on Sundays in the future. At that time, five employees worked to the station but, after the cuts, there would be only the Station Master and one Station Assistant. The press stated that there would be no more checked luggage and less time available for the purchase of tickets and for the provision of personal assistance to passengers.⁶⁹⁶ Waiting rooms would only be open during working hours. Hocking was reported to be philosophical about the reductions, saying “that’s it. They’ve made up their minds. There’s nothing we can do about it now.”⁶⁹⁷ Cowra station was completely closed and Binalong station became unstaffed from the same time.

Harden station even gained a little status late in 1989 when Cowra, Young and Binalong stations were placed under the control of the Station Master at Harden as they were to become unattended stations.⁶⁹⁸

In the year 2000, employees of the District Engineer continued to occupy the southern end of the Harden platform building but the owner, Countrylink, decided to charge the organisation under which the per way staff were employed – called the Railway Services Authority – rent for the accommodation. The Authority decided, upon hearing that unwelcome news, that it would take the opportunity to relocate its offices out of the platform building and into a recently constructed metal shed at Murrumburrah that was owned by the Harden Shire Council.

Interestingly, that new shed was located on land which had formerly been part of the Murrumburrah goods yard. Ultimately, that site at Murrumburrah was abandoned by the Railway Services Authority when all the employees were told to take redundancy or relocate to another town.

COMMUNITY DESPAIR FOR THE STATION

After 80 years of complaint about the subway, two proposals appeared in the press which were aimed at overcoming the problem associated with the length and gradient of the facility. The first one was a suggestion to “turn our dead railway station into either a shopping complex or motel.” The second suggestion was to abandon the use of the station altogether and take the bus service

⁶⁹⁵ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14th of July, 1989, pp.1-5.

⁶⁹⁶ *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 2nd November, 1989, p. 2.

⁶⁹⁷ *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 14th September, 1989, p. 2.

⁶⁹⁸ SRA, *Weekly Notice No. 50*, 9th December to 15th December, 1989, p. 27.

that stopped in the main street of Harden to Cootamundra or Canberra, thereby eliminating the “long slog” up and down the subway.⁶⁹⁹

Tom Apps, who had once been a train guard, and then drove a State Rail coach for the next six and a half years, lost his driving job in 1990, when the work was taken over by private enterprise, namely Western Road Lines. Tom did not want to take the redundancy package and was then employed in the booking office to issue tickets.⁷⁰⁰

The local member for State Parliament was Alby Schultz and at the end of 1990 he “categorically denied rumours that the Harden railway station would close.”⁷⁰¹ Of course, he admitted to mention that he could give such a categorical denial only for the day he spoke. One month later in January, 1991, he gave another bold but incorrect prediction when he said that “there is absolutely no intention of any changes at Harden.” At that time, several businesses in the shopping centre had been approached by Countrylink to see if they wished to sell train tickets. All that Alby would confess was that there may be a reduction in personnel.⁷⁰²

STATION UPGRADING – FIRST TIME FOR COUNTRYLINKIFICATION 1994

In 1994, it was the turn of Harden station receive attention under a State-wide programme managed by Countrylink to upgrade buildings and platforms.

The major component of the project was raising the platform on the Sydney-bound side to the then standard height of 1.060 metres or three feet six inches. Before the work started, the platform ranged in height from two feet six inches at the Sydney end to three feet at the Cootamundra end. Concrete was laid for a width of 2.6 metres for the entire length of the platform which was 156.8 metres or 514 feet five inches. New false bases were provided for the fluted posts that supported the platform awning as the original ones were submerged with the new work. The platform was graded back towards the building on a gradient of one in twenty, where a continuous drainage grate 150 mm wide was located or the entire length of the structure.

In addition, damaged bitumen on the ramps and at the front of the ramp on the street side were repaired. At the time, the Sydney bound platform was 212. 8 metres or 698 feet 2 inches and the Cootamundra bound platform was 163.6 metres or 536 feet nine inches long but it is unknown whether the Cootamundra bound platform also was elevated at that time.

At the same time, the station was upgraded, including painting and improved station lighting. New Countrylink blue and white signage also appeared at this time. The total cost of the works, including the platform resurfacing, was to be hundred and \$160,000.⁷⁰³

POSSIBLE CONVERSION FROM AN ISLAND TO A SIDE PLATFORM

That pesky topic of the subway would not go away and the local newspaper in 1994 presented yet another version of the old problems with the subway, this time saying that there were safety

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid., 14th December, 1989, p. 11 and 21st December, 1989, p. 20.

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid., 14th June, 1990, p. To.

⁷⁰¹ Ibid., 13th December, 1990, p. 1.

⁷⁰² Ibid., 17th January, 1991, p. 2.

⁷⁰³ *Railway Digest*, November, 1994, p. 10.

concerns for elderly people and people travelling at night. The Lachlan Regional Transport Committee wanted the “replacement of the Harden pedestrian subway with direct ground level access to the railway platform.”

There was serious consideration given to the conversion of the island platform back to a single-sided platform with the elimination of the Cootamundra-bound platform. This would have required all southbound passenger trains to cross to the opposing main line to reach the station. This was a good idea as it would mend the elimination of the subway and an end to nearly 100 years of complaints about the subway. Such a scheme was done at Yass Junction. Harden Shire Councillor, Alice Lemon, was a keen advocate of this proposal and there was one press report which provided favourable news. It stated:

“Cr Alice Lemon has had a small victory in that the money (for the platform conversion) has been allocated at this stage, although a commencement date has not been announced.”⁷⁰⁴

Unfortunately, the conversion of the platform did not occur at Harden.

THE LAST MAN STANDING

Terry Hocking was the last occupant of the position of Station Master at Harden station and lived in the Station Master’s residence at 51 Whitton Lane.

The organisations that have managed the New South Wales railway system over the decades and centuries has been adversely affected by the influence of the trade unions, especially when Labor Governments were in power. It was such power that was at play with the creation of Countrylink travel centres, which impacted upon the operation at Harden station. A computerised terminal had existed in the booking office at Harden station from 1976 but was removed in 1992 when the Cootamundra Travel Centre was opened. The demise of Harden station ticketing was simply a victim of the exercise union political power.

When the New South Wales railway system was broken up in 1989 into Freight Rail, Countrylink and CityRail, the station at Harden became a victim of the split. Unlike other country stations, the staff at Harden were employed not by Countrylink but by Freight Rail. This was another result of negotiations between the railway unions and Countrylink. By the time the Cootamundra Travel Centre opened, Harden station lacked a terminal for the computerised reservation system, requiring the staff to telephone Sydney to secure a seat on a train.⁷⁰⁵ Senior staff at Freight Rail declined to pay for the installation of the computer equipment as it considered that Freight Rail should not have been allocated a staff member whose only tasks were to look after passengers, not freight. Freight Rail decided to avoid the cost of installing the computer equipment by simply the withdrawal of staff. It was an expression of corporate anger.

Freight Rail by Countrylink advised Terry Hocking in March, 2004, that it did not want him and that it was at that time that Terry decided to retire. He was told that the soil of the residence was

⁷⁰⁴ *The Young Witness*, 4th August, 1995.

⁷⁰⁵ *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 23rd June, 1994, p. 1.

contaminated, thus eliminating the ability to either rent or sell the residence. The residence has been vacant since that time.

Tickets started to be on sale from 1st June, 2004, in a shop in the main street but, for at least the last five years, the office of the Harden Shire Council has been selling railway tickets.

While Hocking had indicated to Countrylink that he wished to retire, Countrylink decided that the date of the station closure would be 2nd July, 2004. While this process of staff elimination was in progress, the main railway lines in New South Wales were leased to a Commonwealth Government organisation called the Australian Rail Track Corporation from 4th June, 2004. Because Terry was then technically working for that part of the Corporation known as Network Control, the Corporation via Countrylink Head Office directed that he sit in one of the two signal boxes after that date. Because Hocking was not a qualified signaller, he decided to be sick until his formal retirement on 29th July, 2004.

The last day on which the station was staffed was Friday, 2nd July, 2004. Terry Hocking moved out of the residence on 13th August, 2004, and departed the town to live in retirement at Ulladulla.

SECOND TIME FOR COUNTRYLINKIFICATION 2004

Five days after Terry Hocking closed the door on the platform building last time in 2004, Countrylink announced the upgrading of the station. This meant the application of the latest corporate signs, new bins and platform seats.⁷⁰⁶ The work would cost \$160,000 and included repainting in a heritage colour scheme for the first time, raising of the platform height to meet the new standard and improved platform lighting. The eight-week upgrade was undertaken by a Harden contractor, David Johnson. The work commenced in October, 1994. Countrylink signage on the platform lasted until it was replaced in 2016 by the new orange and white corporate signage of New South Wales New South Wales TrainLink.

It is possible that it was the Cootamundra-bound platform that was raised in 2004, as only the Sydney-bound platform had been raised in the 1994 upgrade.

TRAINLINK TAKES OVER IN 2013

New South Wales TrainLink was the replacement organisation that had commenced operation on 1st July, 2013. Apart from repainting the station in 2015, nothing else as happened to the station building.

STATION SECURITY 2016

On 8th January, 2016, the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, Andrew Constance, announced the provision of 200 high definition CCTV and "Customer Help Points" at 22 train stations and coach stops. Amongst the stations to receive attention were Yass Junction, Cootamundra, Junee and Wagga Wagga. Sadly, Harden station was not to receive any improvement in security.

⁷⁰⁶ Ibid., 7th July, 1994, p. 1.

20. SUMMARY OF KEY STATION DEVELOPMENTS

YEAR	EVENT
1876	Plan prepared or combination office/residence – not approved and not built
1877	station opened under the name of Murrumburrah on 12 th March
1877	Temporary, timber buildings used on platform with at least one coming from Yass station
1877	Prototype official residence constructed in station forecourt
1879	Railway Commissioner decides on 17 th March to call tenders for a permanent building
1879	William Mason, Engineer for Existing Lines, says on 10 th June drawings are ready
1879	Station name changed on 15 th September to North Murrumburrah following the opening of platform on same date at Murrumburrah
1879	In December, petition made for the first time construction of a refreshment room – community split whether location should be Murrumburrah or Harden
1880	William Mason reports on 11 th February a delay due to an evaluation of the impact of the opening of Murrumburrah platform on 15 th September, 1879
1880	Commissioner decides on 21 st April that Harden will be the principal station
1880	William Mason reports on 26 th April for a second time that (revised?) drawings are ready
1880	Tenders called for Second Class (i.e. the present) building on 8 th May
1880	Tenders closed for Second Class building on 1 st June and physical construction starts in July
1880	Tender for the construction of brick station building by Langley and Thompson accepted on 8 th June
1880	Physical construction works commence in July
1880	Station name changed on 1st September to Harden
1880	platform lengthened
1880	Postal receiving office established at station staffed by Railway officers
1881	Second Class building completed on 28 th May and redundant temporary buildings relocated to Towrang station
1882	On 1 st September, 1880, the postal receiving office was upgraded to a post office
1883	banking facilities were added to the post office – still staffed by Railway officers
1884	full-time postal officer appointed in charge of post office, which was relocated to a small, detached timber building on the front of the station
1884	George Cowdery approved on 5 th April plans for part two-storey refreshment room

YEAR	EVENT
1884	Tenders closed on 20 th May for construction
1884	Contract awarded to William Downer on 21 st July
1885	Branch line opened between Demondrille and Young on 26 March but it is unclear whether the refreshment room was open for that event
1885	George Cowdery approved on 21 st July plans for additions to the refreshment room
1885	Tenders closed on 8 th September for construction of additions
1886	Tender awarded to John Sharp in February for additions to refreshment room
1886	Completion of the additions is unclear and occurred sometime between June, 1886, and early 1887
1889	new, detached brick male toilet block constructed at Sydney end of building – prototype installation for air closet ventilation & rare installation of hand wash basins for men
1889	kerosene powered light provided at entrance gate to station
1891	alterations to 1889 male toilet block
1891	Last underground fresh water tank constructed on the New South Wales railway system in yard of the refreshment room
1891	Rearrangement of rooms and the creation of a gentlemen's waiting room – only 1% of stations having such a space – remove 1914
1891	Replacement awning 14 feet wide built to replace existing 6 feet wide awning in front of the refreshment room
1891	Platform awning extended at Sydney end as far as new male toilet block
1891	Detached out of goods shed built at Sydney end
1891	Lamp room provided at Sydney end
1891	Platform extended for a second time
1891	Repairs to ground surface in station forecourt
1893	Post office relocated from station forecourt into main street of Harden
1896	Counter in the refreshment room extended
1896	carriage shed built at the immediate Sydney end of the platform
1897	Platform extended by 100 feet for a third time
1901	Alterations to the refreshment room with the conversion of the first floor spaces from two to four bedrooms
1903	Larger clock installed on platform
1906	Station lit by gas to replace kerosene lights
1906	Alterations to refreshment room – downstairs sitting room provided for Manager
1910	Alterations and expansion of the furnace and related equipment for the heating of foot warmers – hot water type replaced by McLaren model
1912	Side platform converted into island platform and subway provided
1914	Alterations to refreshment room at the Sydney end and the installation of an American bar – installed in the space that was

YEAR	EVENT
	formerly the gentlemen's waiting room
1914	All toilet seats in closets replaced by new standard model
1915	Luggage store proposed at Sydney end as well as new lamp room – lamp room only provided
1915	six additional urinals provided in male toilet plus five additional closets
1915	Proposed freestanding, brick combined booking and parcels office at Sydney end not built but replaced by smaller timber structure
1916	Small timber shed built at the start of the subway on the Road approach for storage of luggage et cetera
1916	Battery operated tow-motor allocated to station for cartage of luggage et cetera between platform and road approach – removed sometime between 1932 and 1935
1919	the 1915 timber combined booking and parcels office enlarged
1919	two additional ice chests installed in refreshment room
1919	Awning built on the Cootamundra-bound side of the platform
1920	dual swing doors fitted to each side of the entrance to the male toilet
1920	new entry/exit gates at top of subway on platform
1924	Sydney-bound platform extended 80 feet – fourth time platforms extended
1924	Toilets improved – nature of work unknown
1927	Alterations to many rooms on the platform buildings, including the refreshment room
1927	First time station garden is mentioned in the local press
1928	Counter space in the refreshment room for exclusive use of women and children
1929	Electricity connected to station from local government power station
1933	stationary painted
1935	Reticulated water supply connected to station – connection to nearby well discontinued
1939	Supplies for the refreshment room changed to allow for limited local purchases rather than all items coming from Sydney
1941	Lawn planted at top of subway on road side
1942	Station nameboards camouflaged – removed 1943
1943	Refreshment room counter altered in shape and new hot water system installed
1945	Station connected to the town sewerage system
1946	Flyscreens fitted to windows of the refreshment room
1951	First stage of closure of the refreshment room takes place in November – closure removed within weeks
1954	an additional toaster supplied to the refreshment room
1954	the 1924 80 feet addition to the Sydney-bound platform replaced by 183 feet section – fifth time platforms extended
1957	Refreshment room closed on 1st September
1965	The 1919 timber combined booking and parcels office at

YEAR	EVENT
	Sydney end on the platform demolished
1968	A third fluorescent light fitted to the station – all other lights incandescent
1976	General waiting room heated by LP gas
1981	the American bar recovered from former refreshment room in April and relocated to Museum in Murrumburrah
1982	Agreement between State Rail Authority and Harden Shire Council for the maintenance of the station forecourt
1985	general waiting room upgraded with the provision of fake wall panelling and new seats; new Lino fitted to floors; public address system installed and additional flights provided
1985	Slate roof of 1880 building covered with fake, Marseilles, metal tiles
2004	Station became unstaffed from 2 nd July
2004	Countrylink upgrades platform and building
2014	Countrylink makes a further upgrade to platform and building

21.END REMARKS

Author, John Gunn, wrote:

“As in every debate on railway matters, the central issue was always brought down to one of cost.”⁷⁰⁷

This study of Harden railway station well demonstrates Gunn’s remark.

However, that catchy sentence applies only to the Department of Railways and only partly explains the reluctance to serve the people of Harden/Murrumburrah. It was the Departmental culture that provides the remainder of the explanation. The Railway culture fostered and implemented a view that only staff and, more correctly only senior staff, knew how to serve its geographic neighbours and customers. This study shows that the town of Harden/Murrumburrah was as much the victim as well as the beneficiary of the railway line passing by its urban area.

The residents of the town can be well-pleased that the Murrumburrah Municipal Council and later Harden Shire Council did excellent work to press the railway authorities for repairs and improvements and even more. It was the ratepayers who at times had to pay for works for which the Railway Department had responsibility.

There is one more important point about the presentation of the chronology of events at both Harden and Murrumburrah stations. The tabular summary of development confirms a pattern of expenditure on railway infrastructure that is similar to the history of most other stations in the State. The key features are:

- Inadequate funding for the construction of permanent buildings in the 1870s,
- The growth impact of the completion of the railway line between Sydney and Melbourne between 1881 and 1883,
- The slow-down in expenditure between 1886 and 1890,
- The ability to secure funding in 1891 and 1892, despite the existence of the 1890s Depression,
- The difficulty of finding capital funds between 1893 and 1896,
- The boom following the opening of lines into the wheat belt between 1897 and 1919,
- The contraction of funding between 1921 and 1930,
- The slow-down in economic activity between 1931 and 1941,
- The increased travel demand in World War 2,
- The abandonment of Government support for railways between 1946 and 1980,
- A splinter of support by the State Rail Authority from 1981 to 1989,
- Recognition of the heritage responsibilities with funding limited to the meeting of those obligations from 1989 to the present.

⁷⁰⁷ J. Gunn, *Along Parallel Lines*, Melbourne University Press, 1989, p. 123.

Stuart Sharp,

22nd September, 2016

THE STATION WITH THREE NAMES – YASS, OAK HILL JUNCTION & YASS JUNCTION

PUBLISHED MATERIAL

Well-known railway historian, Bob Booth, wrote an article in 1980 about steam train working at Yass Junction in the magazine of the then New South Wales Rail Transport Museum, *Roundhouse*.⁷⁰⁸

JOHN WHITTON NOT A POPULAR BLOKE

When the townsfolk of Yass realised in 1871 that Engineer-in-Chief, John Whitton, was not going to bring the railway into the town, the evidence suggests local community chose to do nothing for the next two years. That delay was a shame as valuable time was lost and it was not until 1873 that the Yass Railway Committee took action to attempt to redirect the line into the town. The following report was provided in a Goulburn newspaper in 1873.

“A deputation waited on the Ministry 11th March, 1873. Mr. Parkes informed the deputation that the government was not desirous of injuring the interests of Yass; but that the Engineer-in-Chief (a mate of Henry Parkes) had reported against the railway extending into the town, and general interests were of greater importance than local ones. He (Mr. Parkes) was personally favourable to the object of the depositions and the government would again ask Mr. Whitton if it were at all possible to have the station at North Yass.”⁷⁰⁹

Yass was not the only place of some significance that would miss out on the John Whitton Railway. It would be a case of bad luck also for Boorowa, Murrumburrah, Young and Junee.

The people of Yass ultimately got their act together and arranged for a private surveyor to examine a possible route into the town. The Parliamentary Member for Yass Plains, Michael Fitzpatrick, sent a telegram saying:

“Mr. H. Grundy, civil engineer, will to-day commence preliminaries for carrying out the private survey of the railway line with the view, if possible, of

⁷⁰⁸ R. K. Booth, "Byways of Steam: Yass Junction," *Roundhouse*, April, 1980, pp. 10-20.

⁷⁰⁹ *The Goulburn Herald and Chronicle*, 12th March, 1873, p 2.

discovering a means of bringing the line near to, or into Yass, and one that will be likely to prove acceptable to the Government.⁷¹⁰

By September, 1873, the quest for a railway into the township seem doomed. One Sydney newspaper reported:

"If the reports are correct, that occasionally creep out respecting the railway terminus at Yass, the Committee has got plenty of work before them to succeed in bringing the terminus anywhere near Mr. Grundy's line. The whole of the surveyors that we have heard speak on the matter are unanimous in the opinion that Mr. Grundy did all it was possible any civil engineer could do in the time allotted to him; they say it was impossible for him to do any more and, so far as his calculations go, he is wrong; but while calculating on the expense of bringing the terminus into North Yass, he made no calculation of the cost of bringing it out. As a matter of course, that was no business of his. The Railway Committee did not ask him a question on that point.

The latest report we have heard convinces us that the Government will, if it can, adhere to Mr. Whitton's original line. A surveyor who was employed near Kulangan (the station of Mr. J. A. Murphy) had his plans finished, but did not like to send them in, thinking that this line of Mr. Grundy's, if adopted, might make an alteration in the number of miles. We are informed he wrote to one of his superior officers, telling him so; and the reply he received was, not to be frightened to send his plans in, as there was not the slightest chance of Mr. Grundy's line being adopted."⁷¹¹

The end of the fight for the railway occurred in January, 1874. The brief message was contained in the Sydney press:

"Mr. Whitton's final report upon the deviation of the railway has been received. It is unfavourable to Yass, in as much as it condemns Mr. Grundy's report upon the new line as impracticable at the figure named."⁷¹²

From this time, Johnny Whitton could continue his main southern railway line unimpeded by protests from the burghers of Yass – at least for the time being.

⁷¹⁰ *The Maitland Mercury & Hunter River General Advertiser*, 14th June, 1873, p. 6.

⁷¹¹ *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 18th September, 1873, p. 4.

⁷¹² *Evening News*, 17th January, 1874, p. 2.

WHITTON EXPERIMENTS WITH STATION BUILDING DESIGNS

The physical evidence at Yass Junction tells us that Whitton approved the use of the same design of building as he used at Bowring, which was the next station down the line. However, the structure was built and survives at Yass Junction today was not the first building he had approved for that location.

Whitton had approved the use of two different building designs for two different locations on the 20th March, 1875. The one for Yass Junction, being a new design, was not built. Whitton decided to use the same design as he had intended initially for Yass Junction at Gunning. For Gunning, Whitton had approved the introduction of a new design. Clearly, a rethink of station designs was under way but the transition in the 1870s from one design period to another was inconsistent and based mostly on the preference of the approving officer – in this case, John Whitton - rather than any departmental policy.

The structure that Yass received is called a combination office/residence and was one example of a family of combination structures used between 1855 and 1882. The family contained two major variations, one with the residential accommodation behind the platform offices and the second with the accommodation upstairs. There were variations also between these two, broad groups. All were constructed of brickwork. The Table below sets out the locations and years in which combination structures were used.

TABLE: COMBINATION OFFICES AND RESIDENCES 1855-1884

APPROVAL YEAR	LOCATION	TYPE & SUB-TYPE
1855	Ashfield	Single-storey
1855	Newtown	Single-storey
1856	Fairfield	Single-storey
1856	Liverpool	Two-storey – longitudinal – a stand-alone type
1857	Waratah	Single-storey
1857	Hexham	Single-storey
1859	Lidcombe	Single-storey
1860	Blacktown	Single-storey
1861	St. Marys	Single-storey
1861	Branxton	Single-storey
1863	Menangle	Single-storey
1864	Mulgrave	Single-storey
1864	Windsor	Single-storey
1867	Bowral	Single-storey
1868	Emu Plains	Single-storey
1869	Greta	Single-storey
1869	Wallerawang	Two-storey – transverse
1869	Rydal	Single-storey

APPROVAL YEAR	LOCATION	TYPE & SUB-TYPE
1872	Tarana	Single-storey
1873	High Street	Two-storey – transverse
1874	Ashfield	Two-storey – transverse
1875	Yass (Junction)	Two-storey – longitudinal
1875	Bowning	Two-storey – longitudinal
1875	Yass Junction	Two-storey – longitudinal – not built
1875	Brewongle	Single-storey
1876	Blayney	Single-storey
1876	Binalong	Two-storey – longitudinal – not built
1876	Harden	Two-storey – longitudinal – not built
1876	Orange	Two-storey – longitudinal
1882	Emu Plains	Two-storey – transverse

The Table above shows 29 combination structures built between 1855 and 1882. They represented less than 1% of all platform buildings erected on the NSW Railways. All but one was built up to 1876, the exception is Emu Plains, which was approved by George Cowdery six years after the last example was approved at Orange.

In the 1870s, Whitton was under pressure to rethink the type of platform buildings to be provided for the Main South line in order to save money. This was reflected in the period 1873 to 1876, which was the only time three variations of the combination structure were simultaneously used. Plans had already been prepared for combination structures for Binalong and Harden and these were to be virtual copies of what Whitton ultimately used at Yass and Binalong. The rethink of station building policy was also demonstrated in the decision not to build the combination examples at Binalong and Harden. Additionally, this evidence also shows the difficult financial position in which Whitton was placed. In both of these instances, Whitton adopted one of his new strategies – relocate redundant buildings at existing stations and leave permanent buildings to the Railway Commissioner after he handed over the line. This policy allowed Whitton to save substantial sums of capital funds. It must be remembered that the tight fiscal situation in which Whitton worked was the result of his own doing. He agreed to do the work for the sum offered by the NSW government. Some commentators refer to the high values and high principles of John Whitton but one would have thought that, if he was firm in holding these beliefs, perhaps he should have declined to accept the job of heading railway construction beyond Goulburn.

Another action by John Whitton confirmed that the mid-1870s was a time of fundamental design changes. Whitton approved the, for the first time, the use of a

new style of residence for Station Masters. This time, there was no combination office and residence. It involved the erection of a two-bedroom, free-standing, brick structure with a hipped roof. The residence was 30 feet wide and had a full-width verandah across the front. This style of residence was necessarily because Whitton did not want to spend much money on brick platform buildings, especially at small locations, and the temporary buildings he did use were small. A house 30 feet wide was not a large structure. The stand-alone, railway residences at Binalong and Harden that survive today were built in 1877 and provide a further insight into railway culture. That culture believed that it was far more important to provide reasonable housing for staff as a priority over accommodation for the travelling public.

The contractor who ultimately built the present structure on the Cootamundra-bound platform was Fred Horn, who was the one-time Mayor of Goulburn. He built also the platform buildings at Marulan, Goulburn, Gunning, Tarana and, in conjunction with Henry, his brother, at Tarago.

WHITTON PLAYS FAST AND LOOSE WITH THE YASS PLATFORM BUILDING

John Whitton reported favourably in January, 1876, as to the progress made with the Yass railway extension. Then, something happened. There was a press report saying "the Government has not yet decided upon its course of action."⁷¹³ What did that unintelligible remark mean? By April of that year, something dramatic had happened and it had happened to the Yass railway station. The press reported:

"Mr. Whitton, the Engineer-in-Chief, has some time ago issued instructions to the contractor for the erection of the Yass station to abandon the work and to confine his attention exclusively to the completion of the station at Bowning and that, in consequence, the men at work on the former have been removed to the latter.

We are also informed that the contractors (Messrs. Amos and Co.) have been directed to have that portion of their contract from M'Graths' to Bowning completed and ready for traffic simultaneously with the completion of Messrs. Blunt and Williams' contract. Unless the Engineer-in-Chief has some objective to gain by the delay, there is nothing to prevent the line being opened to Yass on or before next Queen's birthday, the 21th proximo (i.e. 21st May, 1876)."⁷¹⁴

The actual opening date was 3rd July, 1876 but it did not apply to Yass. Now why would Whitton stop work at Yass and transferred the workforce to Bowning? The answer is that Whitton had taken a lot of flack from the people of Yass and there was also a degree of sympathy from the Government. As an indication of the ill-feeling

⁷¹³ *The Maitland Mercury & Hunter River General Advertiser*, 15th January, 1876, p. 9.

⁷¹⁴ *Evening News*, 12th April, 1876, p. 2.

amongst the community, there was a press report in the local paper condemning the actions of a number of citizens for allowing the town to be bypassed by the railway line. The newspaper article said:

“It is reported that the local larrikin element contemplates the burning in effigy of Mr. Brown of the Yass Courier, Dr. Campbell, the Manager of the Commercial Bank, and the late Thomas Laidlaw, for their action in regard to the Yass Railway Station.”⁷¹⁵

That was not the only evidence of local anti-Whitton anger. Whitton travelled on 20th May, 1876, over the line before it was opened and the press reported that “*the Municipal Council and the general public at Yass showed no interest in the matter.*”⁷¹⁶

Author, William Bayley, summarised the local, ill-feeling toward Whitton. He said:

*“it might well be imagined that the public relations between Yass people and the railway and anyone who had anything to do with building it were negative.”*⁷¹⁷

In order to minimise any protest or disruption at the opening ceremony, Whitton decided not to have a line opening ceremony at Yass but perform that function at Bowning, which was not far away. To achieve that purpose, Whitton wanted to make sure the platform building at Bowning was finished for the big day. Bowning did get a completed building but the structure at Yass was not completed by the opening ceremony, possibly by intent by Whitton to punish the Yass community. After all, Whitton seem to have a vindictive streak in his character. It was he who invented the cultural practice of departmental revenge under which senior railway staff implemented government decisions but showed displeasure in some way or other if they did not agree with the direction.

By this time, Whitton had an idea that a good strategy to save money was to not complete buildings. Not only did he do that at Yass but also at Gunning. Going down the South line, the next building completed at an opening ceremony was the platform structure at Bethungra. By the time had completed the line to Albury, only one other station structure – at Bomen – had been completed by the time of line opening, including the terminus at Albury.

⁷¹⁵ *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 22nd July, 1876, p. 6.

⁷¹⁶ *The Gundagai Times and Tumut, Adelong and Murrumbidgee District Advertiser*, 26th May, 1876, p. 3.

⁷¹⁷ W. A. Bayley, *Yass Municipal Centenary History*, Municipality of Yass, 1973, p. 48.

WHITTON DIGS THE KNIFE IN STILL DEEPER TO YASS RESIDENTS

After work stopped on the platform building at Yass, it was no surprise to the Yass residents that John Whitton did not return to the Yass building to complete it before the line opening. The building works were only up to the foundation level when work was stopped. Whitton had no intention of focusing his workforce to make sure the building at Yass was completed when the first passenger train raced through the platform.

At the time of the line opening, Whitton was gracious enough to supply a temporary, timber building. Boom! Whitton has another idea. Why not re-use the Yass temporary buildings as the railway line was extended southward? A great idea! When the railway line opened to the present Harden station, Whitton moved the building at Yass to Harden location in 1877 and its final resting site was at Towrang station in 1881. Why then? Because the present platform structure at Harden had been completed – thanks to George Cowdery in the Existing Lines Branch.

MINOR IMPROVEMENTS 1881

John Forsyth reports that a shed was built over the copper for heating footwarmers. He also mentioned that station nameboards were fixed on the platform. Both of these events occurring in 1881.

STATION IMPROVEMENTS 1882

The platform building at the Yass railway station underwent “a thorough repair” in 1882. The nature of the works is unknown but the local newspaper stated that “the improvements will be a great acquisition and will make the building much more comfortable than it has been, not only for the Station Master, but also for the ladies and gentlemen who are kept waiting for the arrival of different trains.”⁷¹⁸

PROVISION OF A REFRESHMENT ROOM 1881-1883

The first refreshment room at Yass was a temporary structure. There is no indication of its location nor the design of the facility. It was reported as being under construction in March, 1881.⁷¹⁹ Well, something must have gone wrong as a report in September, 1881, indicated that the refreshment room was still proposed to be open.⁷²⁰

⁷¹⁸ *Southern Argus*, 24th January, 1882, p. 4.

⁷¹⁹ *The Gundagai Times and Tumut, Adelong and Murrumbidgee District Advertiser*, 11th March, 1881, p. 2.

⁷²⁰ *Ibid.*, 27th September, 1881, p. 2.

Then, nothing more is said about the temporary refreshment room. The next reference is in April, 1882, with the local community lobbying Government for the establishment of a room. One Sydney newspaper gave a report of the meeting of a deputation with Minister Lackey. The press stated:

“Yass station was particularly suitable for a refreshment room, it being one of the principal stopping places for watering the engines, and equidistant 100 miles either way from Mittagong and Junee; he also mentioned that, in a late conversation with the lessee of railway refreshment rooms, Mr. Castner, that gentleman had stated that Yass would be very suitable and that an arrangement for refreshment rooms there would settle the disputes respecting difficulties about land at Harden (referring to a local dispute about whether the refreshment room should be at Murrumburrah platform or Harden station). Mr. Lackey replied that he knew that complaints had been made of the want of refreshment rooms on the line, and thought the reasons weighty for making one at Yass. He promised to see the Commissioner for Railways the same day upon the matter. The deputation thanked Mr. Lackey and withdrew.”⁷²¹

Lackey saw the Commissioner for Railways on the matter the same day.⁷²² Not surprisingly, the Commissioner agreed with his ministerial master and granted Castner a ten-year lease. The Commissioner said he would commence construction immediately though there is another reference that Castner indicated that he would build his own accommodation.

On 30th January, 1883, the Commissioner indicated that the plan had been prepared for the refreshment room.⁷²³ The refreshment room at Yass opened on 20th August, 1883 and appeared in the public timetable dated 9th June, 1884.⁷²⁴ Castner did not stick around for long and by March, 1884, it left the Colony for England. He sublet the refreshment rooms at Mittagong, Goulburn and Yass.⁷²⁵

*There is a photograph of the 1883 refreshment room in Chris Banger’s book, *The Daylight*, Redfern, ARHS, 2015, p. 114. It shows the facility as a stand-alone structure at the Cootamundra end of the 1876 building. It had a simple gabled roof which was covered with corrugated iron sheets.*

⁷²¹ *Evening News*, 14th April, 1882, p. 2.

⁷²² *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15th April, 1882, p. 6.

⁷²³ *Southern Argus*, 30th January, 1883, p. 2.

⁷²⁴ *Southern Argus*, 23rd August, 1883, p. 2.

⁷²⁵ *Goulburn Herald*, 29th March, 1884, p. 4.

BUILDING ALTERATIONS 1891

The refreshment room was altered in 1891. It was during this period that the single-story pavilion at the Cootamundra end of the 1876 structure received an additional level for bedroom accommodation for either the refreshment room manager and his family or his staff. At that time, there were seven bedrooms upstairs.

THE STRANGE CASE OF THE STATION WITH TWO NAMES 1892

The branch line to Yass Town opened on 20th April, 1892. Prior to the branch line opening, it seems that the powers to be in Sydney decided in February, 1892, they would change the name of the junction station. The idea seems to have been that the name “Yass” would be allocated to the terminus station and, therefore, there was a need to select a new name for the junction station.

Two departments were involved in the name change – the New South Wales Railways and the Postmaster General, as there was a post and telegraph office at the railway station under the control of the latter organisation. Two months before the branch line opening in 1892, some bright spark in the Postmaster General’s Department started the process by renaming the post office at Yass Junction station. The name decided on was Oak Hill Junction, named after the “Oakhill Estate”, which was an Aboriginal reserve established in 1875 just to the immediate south of the station. Aborigines continued live there until the 1950s. The crossing of the Hume Highway by the railway line was known as the “Oakhill Crossing.”⁷²⁶ So, in February, 1892, we have the station to be called Yass Junction and a post office at the station to be called Oak Hill Junction.

With the name of the post office changed, the Railway Department decided to change the name of the station on 9th March, 1892, to accord with the name of the post office. However, just when the Railway Department decided to change the name of the station to Oak Hill Junction, in order to accord with the post and telegraph office, the Postmaster General abandoned the idea and from the 1st March, 1892, the name of the post office at the station was to be called Yass Junction. Naturally, the Railway Department followed suit and that is the story of the strange case station with three names.⁷²⁷

THE NEW KITCHEN AT THE REFRESHMENT ROOM 1902

The then Engineer-in-Chief for Existing Lines, Thomas Firth, approved on 15th February, 1902, the construction of a brick kitchen adjacent to but to the rear of the main refreshment room. It measured 18 feet by 15 feet. A brick chimney was provided to exhaust the smoke from the “range” (New South Wales Railway-speak

⁷²⁶ N. G. King, *There’s No Railway There Anymore*, privately published, no details, p. 48.

⁷²⁷ *NSW Government Gazette*, 26 February, 1892, Issue No, 137, p. 1644 and John Forsyth, *Station Information N to Z*, p. 373.

for an oven). He also approved the erection of a new store. The counter in the refreshment room was to be 40 feet long but, as built, it was 39 feet 8 ½ inches. It was supposed to be three feet wide but, as built, was 2 feet 10 ½ inches wide. The reason why the kitchen and a store were physically set back from the 1876 building was the presence of a locomotive water tank, which had to be relocated further towards Cootamundra.

The stairs to the first floor accommodation in the 1876 building were relocated from towards the Cootamundra end to towards the Sydney end in order to allow for a rearrangement of the upstairs rooms. The then existing seven bedrooms was reduced in number to six and the space that was used for the former seventh bedroom was converted into a bathroom.

At the same time, a new male toilet block was built at the Sydney end of the 1876 building. It contained five “water closets” and five urinal stalls.

PLATFORM LENGTHENED 1904

John Forsyth writes that the platform was lengthened during the year.

THE PROVISION OF A GOODS PASSAGE BETWEEN THE MAIN LINE AND BRANCH LINE PLATFORMS 1913

The porters’ and lamps room was removed to make way for a “passage for transferring goods from main line to Yass tram”. Another victim of the work was the male toilet where the number of closets was reduced from five to three. This reduction in the closet accommodation prompted the construction of a second male toilet in 1914 towards the Sydney end of the Cootamundra-bound platform.

From the creation of this passage, it is possible to determine the way parcels and small goods traffic were conveyed between mainline and branch line trains. In some instances, parcels and goods were removed from main line trains and placed on the main line platform and left there until the departure of the main line passenger train. Then, the branch line train would be shunted into the platform and the parcels and goods loaded on to the branch line train, which then would reverse and proceed forward to the branch line.

Obviously, same platform transshipment was not carried out at Yass Junction and the goods were transferred by barrows between the branch line and main line platforms. Why so? It is possibly something to do with the agreement with the railway unions on staffing branch line trains. The usual staff complement would be three men – locomotive driver, locomotive fireman and guard. It must be remembered that the branch line was not worked as a railway until 1917 and this allowed the normal staff complement to be reduced to two men, with the fireman/guard also acting as the train guard/fireman. One condition of this departmental/union agreement, was the understanding that the branch line locomotive would not proceed onto the main line and, if it did, the usual crewing

arrangements would apply. Hence, the transshipment of goods and parcels between the mainline and branch line platforms.

Although no plan exists, from the photographic evidence it appears that a small shed was erected on the road side of the station to help protect the parcels from adverse weather elements. It was attached to the rear wall of the main building. There is a photograph of this shed on the road side in Richard Barrack's book, *Country Branch Lines NSW*, Part 4, Pinewood, 2011, page 40 and in *Byways of Steam 2*, page 46.

THE CONSTRUCTION AND DEMOLITION OF THE BRANCH LINE PLATFORM

The date is yet to be established when the raised branch line platform at Yass Junction was provided on the road side of the station for use by the branch line train. Very few photographs of the platform exist but there is a good image of it in Ron Preston's book, *Tender into Tank*, Revised Edition, New South Wales Rail Transport Museum, 1984, p. 73. Based on that photograph, the awning in front of the station that exists today marks the Cootamundra end of the former branch line platform.⁷²⁸

There is another photograph taken in 1947 in S. Mc Nicol, *Yass Railway Album*, Elizabeth, Railmac Publications, 1992, page 13 that shows a branch line train at the branch platform but it shows the provision of an awning above the branch line platform. How come? There were two awnings on the road elevation. One awning featured a hipped arrangement and that was the taller structure which was erected over the pedestrian entrance. The second awning was located above the branch line platform and was single-pitched with vertical timber boarding that terminated the ends of the awning. It would appear from the two photographs Steve Nicol's book on page 12 that the awning over the branch line platform was removed between 1947 and 1954.

It is possible that the branch line platform was not provided until 1917 when the line was converted from tram to train operation and also the likely time the short raised platform was erected at the Yass Town terminus. Strangely, there is no reference in the *Local Appendices* of 1933 and 1967 to the existence of the branch line platform at Yass Junction.

There are two conflicting pieces of physical information that make it difficult to interpret what happened based solely on a visual inspection. The first item of evidence is the provision of cast iron vertical supports, plus ornate capitals, which were used for both awnings. The use of such vertical columns would be suggestive of a construction time about the time of the branch line opening in 1892. However, the second piece of evidence is the design of the branch line platform wall. It was of brick construction and featured what is known as corbelling, or the consecutive extension of brickwork beyond the body of the wall. This corbelling was located

⁷²⁸ There is an excellent photograph showing the relationship between the large, rear awning and the branch line platform in an article by Ian Wallace entitled "A Morning at Yass", in *Byways of Steam 2*, Matraville, Eveleigh Press, 1991, p. 46.

immediately below the coping. The design treatment of the platform wall indicates a construction date more appropriate to 1913 when the passage was provided between the mainline and branch line platforms. The design of the platform wall that existed at Yass Junction was not applied to platforms in 1892.

The decision to abandon a major proposal in 1914 to provide a tramway platform towards the southern boundary of the forecourt – i.e. not adjacent to the 1876 building – prompts one to consider whether the construction of the tramway platform that is known to have been provided was made about 1914 as a cheaper, alternative to the Rolls-Royce plan. More research is required to work out construction date for both the branch line platform and the awnings on the road side of the station building.

There is another interesting piece of information relating to 1914. In that year, the Existing Lines Department prepared a drawing for a waiting shed measuring 15 feet long by 10 feet wide for the “Yass tramway.” There was a note on the plan stating “site to be selected.” No location was provided and the building was never erected. Why was the plan prepared in 1914? No one knows. However, the preparation of the plan is evidence of a degree of activity in relation to the branch line. This activity included the provision of the Sydney-bound platform, the proposed tramway platform at the southern boundary, the provision of the “passage” through the building and the extended footbridge. In other words, while no evidence exists to say that the branch line platform that was built was provided at the opening of the branch line in 1892, there is plenty of evidence that it could have been provided in 1914.

PROVISION OF TEMPORARY REFRESHMENT ROOM UPON TRACK DUPLICATION 1914

Refreshment facilities was an important topic to the travelling public and it is not surprising that a major design change was introduced in conjunction with the provision of a new refreshment room. In 1914, duplication of the main lines was well underway and one of the areas where “a large number of men” were working was the section of the southern line between Gunning and Yass Junction.⁷²⁹

It seems that the New South Wales Railways knew it would be a few months before a permanent refreshment room would be ready for business on the Sydney-bound platform and, to meet the passenger demand, a temporary facility was erected on the new platform. The plan was dated 18th February, 1914, and provided for timber construction with galvanised, corrugated iron sheeting on the external walls. The building was 30 feet by 15 feet internal for the public area and behind it was a kitchen 17 feet 8 inches by 8 feet internal. The gabled roof was covered in corrugated iron. Economy was to be the dominant theme of construction with

⁷²⁹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25th July, 1914, p. 20.

window sashes being supplied from “stock” and the bottom plates and floor were to be cut from “old per way sleepers”. The doors were ledged rather than the more attractive use of panels. The counter was set at a height of three feet three inches and was covered with “pilecloth.” Unlike the unpleasant story of the temporary refreshment room at Goulburn also in 1914, it seems the people of Yass were not concerned about the appearance of their temporary refreshment room.

At this time, both platforms at Yass Junction were 450 feet long. The existing platform, which was to become the Cootamundra-bound platform, was 10 feet wide while the new Sydney-bound platform was proposed to be 15 feet wide.

REPLACEMENT OF THE TEMPORARY REFRESHMENT ROOM WITH A PERMANENT STRUCTURE 1914

The Existing Lines Branch prepared the first plan for the additional refreshment room on the Sydney-bound platform at Yass Junction on 4th February, 1914. As part of the plan, the building was to include the usual array of waiting rooms and toilets as well as the refreshment room. Gas lighting was used not only on the new platform but also for the existing platform and a feature of the plan was the use of abbreviated symbols rather than words to indicate the location of the lighting fixtures. This was known as the Kelite system and the Yass Junction plan was the first known instance of the use of this system.

It was intended to provide a third platform known as the “tram platform” for branch line trains proceeding to and from Yass Town and a footbridge was proposed to extend to serve both main line platforms and the tram platform. This tram platform was not to be located adjacent to the 1876 building on the Cootamundra-bound platform but approximately 50 feet south. The tram platform was not built and the footbridge was restricted in length to serving only the main line platforms. Even though in this case a large amount of money was being expended, the need for economy existed. As well as deleting the tram platform and truncating the length of the footbridge, a proposed new office for the Manager of the refreshment room was also omitted from the works.

The platform building at Yass Junction contained a number of design features that had never been previously applied to a country station. The dominant design of the structure was one relating to the Federation-influence style that had been in use since 1892. These elements were contained in plans dated 7th and 15th July, 1914, and were:

- Face brick construction,
- Lantern roof, with 18 windows four of which on each side were pivot hung windows in the lantern roof,
- Bullnose bricks on window sills – at rear of building,

- Stone corbels for awning brackets,
- Moulded string course on external wall facing the platform (not applied to building ends or back,
- Silicate paint on building ends and rear wall – two coats,
- Limewash “Urinals” and store – two coats,
- Nine pane coloured Cathedral glass in upper window sashes,
- Rendered aprons under external windows and timber apron under ticket window,
- Dado with two-colour internal walls float and set,

an effectively

The final architectural plans for the building were dated in August, 1914, and provided interesting detail about the urinal in the male toilet. From 1900, the New South Wales Railways had introduced a system-wide policy that reduced the height of petitions between the urinal stalls from ground level to shoulder level and had eliminated the bottom half of the petitions. Strangely, at Yass Junction, both the back of the urinal and the petitions were one-inch thick slate and the petitions extended from the floor to a height of four feet six inches and were 18 inches wide. Those arrangements represented a regression in time for an unknown reason but, at the same time, the urinal arrangements were very modern with the urinal being flushed by a galvanised iron, 20-the gallon capacity, automatic, overhead cistern. The traditional width of urinal stalls was two feet but in this particular case that measurement was reduced slightly to 1 foot 11 1/3 inches. Why? Because no one paid any attention to the adherence to standard practices and no one closely and effectively supervised staff in their work, despite being paid to do so.

There was one significant feature which defined the building as a structure not to be located in the Sydney, Newcastle or surrounding area and this was the application of roughcast concrete on the chimneys. Examples of the Federation-style in urban areas featured face brickwork for the chimneys. So, in a very delicate manner, the Existing Lines Branch continued the distinction between city and country. However, that is not the end of the story about subtle distinctions and the Existing Lines Branch wanted to identify the building as being distinct from the work of its fellow engineering branch, namely the Railway Construction Branch. The gabled roof was covered with No. 26 gauge corrugated iron with No. 18 gauge iron for the ridge. While it may be thought that this was an inferior roofing material compared to slate or terracotta tiles, this was not the comparison that should be examined. Rather, it was the decision not to apply asbestos-cement “slates”, which was the normal product used in rural areas by the Railway Construction Branch.

In essence, the building on the Sydney-bound platform at Yass Junction reflected the subtleties of time and the politics of both location and bureaucracy. Surprisingly,

construction of the new refreshment room was undertaken quickly and by October, 1914, it was estimated that the building would be finished in about two months.⁷³⁰

Had the brick refreshment room at Yass Junction been the only attractive brick platform structure in rural New South Wales in 1914, it would be assessed as a one-off example of the Federation-influence style. This was not the case as in May, 1914, another brick building was proposed for Binalong, the new building was intended to be located on a new station site on a deviation of the main line. It was a large example being 87 feet long external and the traditional narrow width of 11 feet internal, with matching 11 feet wide awnings on each side of the building. There was a wide range of ornamentation, which would normally be found on a station in Sydney but especially noteworthy was the name of the station in white etched paint on a blue background at the bottom of the lower window sashes. The provision of the station name in such a manner had been introduced in 1911 but, up to 1914, had not been used outside of Sydney, the areas surrounding Sydney and the Newcastle region. The use of the etched station names for country stations is further evidence of a major policy shift in the design of platform buildings in 1914.

With the planning completed for the two, similar designed buildings at Yass Junction and Binalong, it was clear that there was a major change of mind by the Railway bureaucrats towards the treatment of platform buildings in rural New South Wales. Next, twin matching Federation influenced buildings were provided at Galong and Goulburn, both in 1915. That would have been the end of the attractive buildings in rural New South Wales had not been for one factor. The electorate of the then Premier, William Holman, was Cootamundra and it should be of no surprise to realise that the two buildings erected on the Cootamundra West platform in 1917 also featured the attractive Federation influence style. The surprises were not restricted to the Main South line.

For a very brief period, namely between 1914 and 1917, there was a flurry of departmental activity to provide rural railway stations with the same level of attractiveness that was being applied in the Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong areas. The Great War, with the concomitant difficulty in obtaining overseas capital money and shortages of skilled labour, ended the time of pretty buildings in country New South Wales. It never returned.

ADDITIONAL MALE TOILET 1914

A brick male toilet was provided on the Sydney side of the footbridge on the Cootamundra-bound platform. The colour of the bricks was dirty brown and the structure had a corrugated iron roof. There is an excellent photo of the toilet block in Richard Barrack's book, *Country Branch Lines NSW*, Part 4, Pinewood, 2011, page 37. The urinal itself was constructed of high class, Welsh slate one inch thick.

⁷³⁰ Goulburn Evening Post, 21st October, 1914, p.8.

STATION IMPROVEMENTS 1916

In 1914, it was proposed to set up an “air-gas machine” to supply 60 gas lights to provide illumination not only inside the buildings on both platforms but also for platform lighting. It is unknown whether the gas machine was provided but, by 1916, the station was lit by gas that was manufactured by the Yass local government authority. This local, municipal gas plant had been opened in 1892 on the very same day as the branch line was opened to Yass Town but the Railway Department was never connected to the town supply until 1916, probably on the basis of the high cost of laying pipes considering the isolated location of station.

At the refreshment room on the Sydney-bound platform, the former single space was divided into two parts in October, 1916. The first part was a tea and coffee room and the second part was a bar 24 feet long. At that time, the shape of the counter in the tea and coffee room was changed from a straight interval to a variation of the figure “S”. The bar for the sale of alcohol was separated from the main room by a wall and doorway.

Another improvement to public health was the installation of a septic tank to receive the waste production from the male and female users.

ALTERATIONS TO THE BUILDINGS ON THE COOTAMUNDRA-BOUND PLATFORM 1917

Minor alterations were approved in March, 1917, to the existing, brick building at Yass Junction on the Cootamundra-bound platform. The only downstairs bedroom became a staff room and the former main refreshment room was divided into a bar and a tea and coffee room. At this time, the shape of the counter had changed from a straight interval to an “L” arrangement. These alterations followed the rearrangement of the internal spaces of the refreshment room on the Sydney-bound platform in the previous year. Also on the Cootamundra-bound platform, the former sitting room became an office for the Sub-manager. Two other minor works were undertaken, namely the provision of an asphalt pathway from the refreshment room kitchen to the meat safe and the insertion of a staff toilet in the refreshment room yard.

As was the custom for all refreshment rooms located on platforms, the ancillary facilities – i.e. the coal bin, garbage container, the dust bin, the staff toilet, the meat safe and the laundry were enclosed by a fence made of ugly corrugated iron sheets. It is hard to believe that the New South Wales Railways would love to provide buildings sheeted with corrugated iron on platforms. Nevertheless, this they did and they use the material for a variety structures, including connecting main platform buildings with detached pavilions, enclosing refreshment room yards, the construction of out of sheds, lamp rooms and other minor functional structures. While residents and travellers using the platform would have noticed the extent of this inferior and unattractive material, the Railway Department could not care less.

It is hard to find a more unattractive station on the New South Wales railway system on the road side than Yass Junction. While visual ugliness is unattractive, it is a source of information about the culture of the New South Wales Railway organisation. After 1893, the Railway Department did not allocate any consideration to architectural niceness and intentionally mistreated all structures – from the beautiful to the utilitarian – in the same manner. Because of the dominance of the organisation by engineers, no regard was made to the impact of an addition or an alteration to an existing structure, especially those seen by members of the public. The Department of Railways did not entertain what non-employees thought. This was a part of the cultural make-up of the organisation which believed in the superiority of the actions and thinking of the organisation above all other bodies and people. Therefore, the ugliness that was a feature of the Yass station was an important ingredient to understand the culture of the people who managed the property. That ugliness has been removed for many years but it is still seen in every photograph taken of the structures that existed on the Cootamundra-bound platform.

It would seem that, although there is no more documentary evidence after 1917 of alterations to the refreshment room complex, a number of changes were made and there is an excellent photograph in Richard Barrack's book, *Country Branch Lines NSW*, Part 4, Pinewood, 2011, page 38 that shows the atrocious condition of the approach elevation to the Cootamundra-bound platform.

The opportunity was taken in 1917 to add a second water closet to the ladies' toilet facilities and this required the erection of a new privacy screen inside the actual ladies' waiting room.

On 16th February, 1917, the Yass refreshment room was placed under direct departmental management. This was in accordance with a statewide policy to eliminate private ownership of refreshment facilities.

CONNECTION TO ELECTRICITY NETWORK 1935

Departmental records indicate that the refreshment room was connected to the electricity system, from Burrinjuck Dam.⁷³¹

WATER SHORTAGE 1939

There was a water shortage in the district. The railway refreshment rooms were "feeling the strain", and a special supply of water had been sent from Goulburn by rail on 2nd February, 1939. It seems that either the town of Yass or the Railway Department facilities at Yass Junction were not connected to the supply of water at Burrinjuck Dam.⁷³²

⁷³¹ John Forsyth indicates that the connection was made in 1936, not in 1935. Further research is required.

⁷³² *The Canberra Times*, 3rd February, 1939, p. 3.

STATION CONNECTED TO TOWN SEWERAGE SYSTEM 1942

In 1942, the station was connected to the town sewerage system. The timing of the connection is interesting as many stations were similarly connected during World War Two, not at the request of the Railway Department but by local government authorities.

POOR-QUALITY LOCAL WATER 1948

The quality of the local water supply for locomotives was very poor and in 1941 a water treatment plant was installed. This seems also to have been a problem for the water supply for the refreshment room and the presence of the problem indicates that the station was not connected to any reticulated supply system. In 1948, a water treatment plant was introduced solely for refreshment room.

THE FIRST IMPROVEMENT TO THE REFRESHMENT FACILITIES IN 37 YEARS 1954

It seems such a petty thing to mention but, with no improvement made in facilities over three decades, anything is of significance. The departmental records show a simple entry “installation of refrigerator in refreshment room.” Was it only one refrigerator in one refreshment room? Was ice being used up until that time? Who knows!

CLOSURE OF THE REFRESHMENT ROOM ANNOUNCED 1956

Members of the three State Parliamentary parties were critical of the decision to close Railways refreshment rooms in seven country towns. These included the facilities at Queanbeyan, Yass Junction, Wagga Wagga, Molong, Gloucester, Wellington and Tamworth stations.⁷³³ Some Members of Parliament wanted the refreshment rooms to be handed over to private enterprise.

The Leader of the Country Party, Michael Bruxner, was quoted as saying:

“the decision would prove a hardship to train travellers who had no other means of providing refreshments for themselves on long journeys. Over the years the Railways, management has endeavoured to give efficient service to the travelling public a part of its responsibility. Are the travelling public refraining from patronising these refreshment rooms because of inadequate services, or is it that they prefer to take their own provisions with them? Whilst having no desire to interfere with the work of the Railways Commissioner, my Country Party colleagues and I wish to point out that good

⁷³³ *The Canberra Times*, 17th August, 1956, p. 3.

and adequate opportunities of taking refreshments on long journeys are one of the inducements to travel by train."⁷³⁴

The Member of Parliament for Monaro, John Selffert, said:

“it would be monstrous for passengers travelling on the night journey from Southern Monaro to Sydney if they could not obtain refreshments at Queanbeyan. The train arrives at Queanbeyan at 9.45 p.m. and passengers need refreshments before settling down for the all-night-long and freezing cold trip. There are no buffet cars on the night mail trains. Furthermore, the train is not heated in any way. It would be unthinkable to deprive passengers on the other train of refreshments when it arrives there at 4.30 a.m. Closing refreshment rooms was a negative approach to the problem. Certainly cut your losses, but firstly examine the alternative of leasing the refreshment rooms to private interests. If the refreshment rooms were leased, the public could still obtain refreshments at odd hours, and the department would make a profit from rentals to caterers.”

All the talk was to no good. The Yass refreshment room closed on 1st September, 1956.

WORKS IN THE 1980s AND 1990s

Sometime between 1960 and 1965, the 1891 refreshment room additions on the Cootamundra-bound platform were removed.⁷³⁵ The building that remained on that platform was basically the 1876 structure with the subsequent addition to the upstairs level at the Cootamundra end.

As was done at Harden, the roofs of the buildings on the Cootamundra-bound platform were recovered using fake, metal tiles. A few years later, even the departmental record commented adversely on the appearance of the roof, saying “the mental tiled roof is out of character with the historic nature of the building.”

Both the male and female toilets were upgraded in May, 1982.

At some time in the early 1990s, Yass Junction station received the corporatisation treatment, otherwise known as Countrylinkification, with new platform seats, signage and rubbish bins.

Both platforms were recorded as being 453 feet long in the early 1990s. That was an increase over the length of the platform in 1967 when they were 400 feet long, though they were 460 feet long in 1933.

⁷³⁴ Ibid.

⁷³⁵ See photographs in M. Holdsworth, *Lenses South*, Hyde Park, Cadeco, 2016, pp. 153 and 1954 that show the 1891 building existing in 1960 but not in 1965.

DEMISE OF THE SIGNAL BOX 1993

All mechanical and upper quadrant semaphore signals were abolished on 13th February, 1993, and replaced by a new relay room and a control panel to operate the points and signals. “Two way” running was introduced on the main lines through the station. New facing and trailing crossovers were brought into use to allow passenger trains to use the more conveniently placed Cootamundra-bound platform.⁷³⁶

On 18th January, 1997, the interlocking formerly performed by the signal box at Yass Junction was remotely controlled from Goulburn signal box.⁷³⁷

STATION UPGRADE 2015

The local Member of Parliament, Pru Goward, announced on 27th March, 2015 a series of works for the station, including:

- A designated coach and bus stop,
- new pedestrian crossing of the Yass Town branch line in front of the building,
- a new footpath,
- a car drop-off and pickup zone at the entrance,
- storage rack for bicycles,
- new fencing outside the station,
- new orange and white signage,
- ramped access to the platform for people with disabilities,
- a disabled car space near the entrance, &
- a new car park with, for the first time, lines on the pavement designating individual car spaces.

The work was completed on 29th September, 2015. There was one catch, however. No longer was the railway station called a “station.” It was now a “Transport Interchange.” As all passenger trains used the Cootamundra-bound platform, which was platform No. 2, it was renumbered to platform No.1 at the time of the upgrading works. Now, Yass Junction has one unnumbered platform. Sad!

REMOVAL OF STAFF 2016

On 8th January, 2016, the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, Andrew Constance, announced the provision of 200 high definition CCTV at 22 train stations and coach stops. Amongst the stations to receive attention were Yass Junction,

⁷³⁶ *Weekly Notice* No. 7, 6 to 12th every, 1993, p. 33.

⁷³⁷ *Weekly Notice* No. 2, 11 to 17th January, 1997, p. 17.

Cootamundra, Junee and Wagga Wagga.⁷³⁸ Why would he make an announcement when a lot of people were on holidays? The answer came in March.

The State Government announced in March its desire to withdraw New South Wales *TrainLink* staff from 12 stations, including Yass Junction. So, probably the Government had known in January and even earlier that it was going to cut staff at country stations. Some advisor probably said to the Minister for Transport to make an announcement about the improvement to customer safety and then, after a little while, make the announcement of the removal of staff. The timing seems too slick not to be suspicious.

At the moment, there has been a reprieve for the existing one staff member but the future does not look rosy.

Stuart Sharp

22nd September 2016

⁷³⁸ *Railway Digest*, March, 2016, p. 9.

THE END OF JOHN WHITTON'S INFLUENCE

YASS TOWN STATION BUILDING

EXISTING PUBLISHED MATERIAL

An article by veteran railway historian, Neville Pollard, was published in the ARHS *Bulletin* in November, 1975, related to the Yass Town railway. It is an excellent article and deals with the history of the opening of the line from Goulburn to Yass, as well as details of stations on the branch line. As Neville writes, the 1892 opening represented the start of a sustained period of American technology applied to the construction of bridges and in this case a truss bridge across the Yass River.⁷³⁹

There also exists a published article by a former locomotive driver about his experiences working the branch line in the 1950s and 1960s. See J. Blundell, "Memories of Yass in the 1950s," *Federal City Express*, September, 1992, pp. 5-8.

THE TRAMWAY LEGISLATION

The popular view that exists about the 1880s is a time of great railway extension due to the ability of the Colonial Governments to obtain large sums of capital funds on the London money market. It is true that a lot of money was spent in the 1880s but it is as equally correct to say that the New South Wales legislature wanted to maximise the use of the borrowed funds by lowering construction costs. There is substantial evidence that indicates the desire to build cheap or light railways from 1880. Even that discussion was a follow-on from the public debate about the expenditure of railway extensions beyond Goulburn, Bathurst and Murrurundi in the 1870s. In fact, the theme of minimising railway construction costs goes back to the start of the railway system in New South Wales in 1855, with the initial replacement of timber bridges and the construction of the low-cost branch line opened between Blacktown and Richmond in 1864. In essence, the expenditure of public money has never been of the political agenda in New South Wales and the theme in those debates as being a desire to do more with the money available.

The record in relation to the branch line to Yass Town is an example where a deputation called upon the Minister for Public Works in March, 1880, for the construction of the tramway from the junction at Yass into the town. The press report of the time captures the flavour that supported low-cost railway extensions. The deputation record states:

"(The deputation) proposed that a tramway could be easily constructed either on or off the road, and it would be a boon to the inhabitants, and prove remunerative to the Government. Mr. Lackey stated, in reply, that the Government had proposed certain lines in the vicinity of Sydney, and is undertaking this work. It occurred to the Government that it was desirable to adopt the system, generally adopted in America, namely, to use these

⁷³⁹ N. Pollard, "The Story of the Yass Town branch Line," ARHS *Bulletin*, November, 1975, pp. 249-272.

tramways as feeders to the railways, for the purpose of testing the practicability of the proposal. The Government had determined, after considering several lines suggested to strike a line between Campbelltown and Camden.”⁷⁴⁰

Throughout the 1880s, much discussion is recorded about the legislation to provide light railways, otherwise known as tramways. In relation to the branch line to Yass Town, surveyors were at work in August, 1887, examining the proposed routes between the junction and the town.⁷⁴¹

Things happen often because of key people and the provision of a line to Yass Town is one of those examples where a key person was of fundamental importance. Thomas Colls was the Mayor of Yass in the 1870s and took a strong leadership position to try to get the main line to pass through his town. In 1886, he was elected the Member of Parliament for Yass Plains and commenced lobbying vigorously for the construction of a branch railway into the town.

In 1888, planning was finalised in the money approved the turning of the first sod occurred in 1890. These are important dates, not only because they relate to the Yass Town branch line but also because they were years when the New South Wales Government was under strong financial restraint and had been working with restricted funding from 1886. It is, thus, a miracle that the Colonial Government pushed forward with a railway into the township of Yass. Why did the branch line occur at that time, despite the onset of the Depression in 1890? Because there was a huge workforce involved in railway construction and, if at all possible, governments wanted to continue to provide work for these men as a means of minimising industrial action.

THE WAY THE BRANCH LINE SHOWED ITS LOW-COST CONSTRUCTION

The challenge for the Railway Department was to build a branch line but spend as little money as possible though making sure the works did not look cheap. After all, Yass was an important regional town.

There were several features that reflected the desire to spend as little money as possible on the constructing and operation of the branch line to Yass Town. The bridge over the Yass River was the first example of the application of the Pratt truss type bridge, though it was not the first application of American bridge technology. American designed Whipple trusses were used for the crossing of the Shoalhaven River in 1879 for a railway which was never built and at Lewisham in 1886 to replace an existing sandstone viaduct.⁷⁴²

While Yass River bridge was not the first American designed to be used on the New South Wales Railways, it did mark start of a long period of American influence in bridge technology, due to the ease of construction and lower cost.

⁷⁴⁰ *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 20TH March, 1880, p. 31.

⁷⁴¹ *Goulburn Herald*, 11th August, 1887, p. 3.

⁷⁴² Don Fraser, *Bridges Down Under*, Redfern, Australian Railway Historical Society, 1995, pp. 42-44.

Second-hand rails were laid on the branch line, this being the first time that brand-new steel was not utilised.⁷⁴³ Very small locomotives, called trams, operated all trains from 1892 to 1917, when conventional railway locomotives and rollingstock were utilised. The use of public streets for the rail corridor was extremely rare in New South Wales, as was the use of only two men to operate all train services, rather than the usual three-person crew. The use of timber for the terminus building and the elimination of a raised platform were also indicators of low-cost.

The decision not to build a residence for the Station Master is also possibly another indicator of an attempt to restrict expenditure of public funds, though an existing building for the Station Master was purchased on the open property market. Actually, the purchase of existing, private residences rather than the construction of in-house buildings commenced actively at this time.

WHAT PLATFORM BUILDING DESIGNS WERE IN USE GENERALLY IN 1891?

This question and answer is the question whether the building provided at Yass Town was consistent with what was being provided elsewhere in New South Wales.

The big project in 1891 was the quadruplication of the section of line between Redfern and Homebush in Sydney. For that project, Chief Commissioner Eddy introduced a new, Edwardian-looking design. Apart from a single example at Katoomba, no other examples were provided beyond Redfern-Homebush corridor.

The other major rail project involved the duplication of the line from Granville to Picton. Two stations received new buildings in 1891 as part of the duplication to Picton. At Fairfield, a new, brick building with a posted verandah was erected on the Sydney-bound platform, to the same design that had been used at Campbelltown in 1890. It Campbelltown building was the very last brick standard roadside building on a raised platform erected on the system and the second last example of the use of vertical columns on a new building to support the platform awning. The Yass Town station building was the last example of a design of John Whitton's time.

When the design of the Yass Town building was approved in 1891, it was the only new station building approved in that year for a country location, apart from the Katoomba station building. The total focus of railway construction in 1891 was Sydney, where Chief Commissioner Eddy and the dream of building a suburban-looking railway. The design of the Yass Town building was consistent with structures planned before 1891.

THE DESIGN FAMILY TO WHICH THE YASS TOWN BUILDING BELONGS

It is serendipitous that the very first and the very last example of the design family to which the Yass Town building belongs are very close to each other. The prototype example was approved for location at Gunning in 1874 and exists today on the Cootamundra-bound platform. The very last example, though slightly modified from the standard version, is that at Yass Town.

⁷⁴³ Nev. Pollard, "New South Wales Railways Progress and Politics 1881-1905", *Bulletin*, June, 1993, p. 144.

The basic design feature of the family is the use of gabled roofs. This was a significant change from the previous design style which used hidden roofs. There was a basic floor plan in which buildings were designed upon centre pedestrian access through the structure with the rooms balanced equally from that point towards each side. Examples contained either three, five or seven rooms. There was also a mini version about 30 to 35 feet long as well as the standard version between 50 and 55 feet long. The only difference was the size of the rooms and the selection of wall materials. Some of the examples were a symmetrical composition with balancing pavilions at each end of the main building while other examples, such as the Yass Town structure, were asymmetrical with only a single pavilion at one end.

This design family was the only one in which John Whitton personally dominated the architectural process. With all other designs used during Whitton's period between 1857 and 1889, it was William Mason, second in charge, who was head of the design process. In the 1890s, the most popular version of Whitton's gabled roof family became known as the "standard roadside station." However, this was not a term that Whitton used or anyone else used in Whitton's time. The feature of the standard roadside station was the provision of three rooms in the main structure, as it exists in the Yass Town example.

There were 106 examples of the standard roadside design, which was a design John Whitton introduced in 1880 and initially applied to the station at The Rock. A total of 58 of the 106 examples, representing 55%, were constructed in timber. The example at Yass Town was not only the last example of the roadside design but also the last timber example and it was a post-Whitton, slightly modified design. Few timber examples remain including Yass Town, The Rock and Narromine.

Stuart Sharp wrote an article in the October, 1991, edition of *Federal City Express* about the Yass Town building and some of his remarks are repeated in this paper. One significant point made was the fact that the building example at Yass Town was the only instance of the use of the "standard roadside station" design being utilised as a terminus building. Similar designed structures, although much larger, were used for temporary termini at Molong, Narrabri West and Gundagai, though in all cases the lines were extended.

Sharp also argued that the Yass Town station building had a couple of interesting features. Firstly, he postulated that it was the first town in New South Wales to be served by two stations. Secondly, he stated that the station was only one block away from the main commercial district on the Hume Highway and challenged readers to think of another country terminus where the station was so handy to the shopkeepers and shoppers.

THE 1891 APPROVED YASS TERMINAL BUILDING

Perhaps the initial aspect to be noticed of the plan for the terminal building was the fact that the station was not called Yass Town, being called instead "Yass Terminus". Another very interesting point about the plan was the fact that it was not headed "New South Wales Railways" but "New South Wales Tramways."

Henry Deane signed but did not date the plan the structure at Yass Town, but there is a note in one corner of the plan "1889 E-I-C office 4/2/91". George Thornton and one other person signed the

contract plan on the 1st April, 1891.⁷⁴⁴ Deane did not attend the opening ceremony in 1892 but sent his assistant, Thomas Firth. Although the structure was the last use of one of Whitton's roadside buildings, it was a modified version with the ladies' toilets in the connection between the main building and the male toilet pavilion. Prior to the construction of the Yass Town building, female toilets were normally contained within the space within the ladies' waiting room, which provided an ante-chamber. The trouble with that arrangement was that only one or two closets could be provided. The other aspect about the previous arrangement was the non-existing or very limited ventilation from the female closets. These had always been designed by men, who apparently thought that ladies did not produce adverse odours to the same extent as gentlemen.

By relocating the closets to the intermediate section between the main building and the end pavilion, additional closets could be provided and any adverse odours – if women produced those fractured fragrances – were more effectively dealt with by the use of Henry Deane's new invention called "air closets." For the first time, each individual female closet was vented to atmosphere through vertical piped shafts which discharged into a ventilator ridge above the male and the female closets. Later examples of the use of air closets discharged human perfume directly to atmosphere through tall, terracotta chimneys above each closet, thereby eliminating the ridge ventilators.

The same layout of the male and female toilets was used at Temora, Forbes, Parkes, Corowa, Cobar, Campbelltown and Fairfield over the next couple of years but in these later examples the closets were vented by the provision of the chimneys from each closet. After those examples were built, the use of the modified standard roadside station design was abandoned.

The Yass Town building was of timber construction and the main part measured 55 feet by 13 feet. The Yass Town building was the last application of a building design of the Whitton era. There were some nice design touches to the building and these were:

- verandahs on both sides of the structure supported by cast iron columns with fancy capitals and brackets,
- the use of a pair of entry doors from the road side into the general waiting room,
- the provision of heating in the three rooms of the main building, all with brick chimneys,
- an elegant ticket office window measuring three feet high and two feet wide,
- the symmetrical expression of windows and doors on both sides of the structure, &
- timber finials on all gables.

The above decorative elements were restrained in application and were pretty much normal procedure for buildings erected in the 1880s. Although the Yass Town structure was planned 1891, its design heritage was firmly based in the previous decade.

⁷⁴⁴ There is a secondary source that indicates that the contract for the platform building was let to Messrs Thompson and Bates for £1224. See N. G. King, *There's No Railway There Anymore*, privately published, no details, p. 48.

Just in case there was any criticism of the allocation of unnecessary expenditure for the decorative elements, the structure contained a number of building elements that indicated financial restraint due to the tightness of capital funds. These features being:

- Timber construction,
- the provision of only one, semi-attached pavilion – resulting in the asymmetrical appearance of the station structure,
- the use of timber piles instead of brickwork for the building foundations,
- the absence of a porched entry on the road elevation,
- use of corrugated iron for roofing material rather than slate as at the junction station,
- the absence of the normal tall, terracotta vent pipes over the toilet closets,
- the absence of terracotta pots atop the chimneys,
- the ugly provision of an asymmetrical “shed” enclosed by corrugated iron sheeting,
- the introduction of a single-pitched roof for the 20 feet long “shed”,
- the use of corrugated iron sheeting at the rear of the section linking the main building and the toilet pavilion,
- the use of a single pane of plain glass for fanlights – rather than small, coloured Cathedral panes, &
- the selection of simple double-hung window sashes,

However, if funds were tight one would have thought that they would replace the vertical cast iron awning posts with timber and would have eliminated the cast iron brackets above the capitals on the columns. The doors facing the platform were also quite attractive having four recessed panels in the classic New South Wales Railway tradition that had been in place since the 1860s.

What is the overall assessment of the Yass Town building? The surprising aspect about the 1890s Depression is that the Railway Department was able to provide funds in the years 1890, 1891 and 1892. It is this availability of funds that allowed the construction of the branch line. Overall, the terminal building like the line itself reflected financial restraint but this was balanced by the allocation of a few decorative features which would appeal to the local community. After all, it was a rare case of a country terminus located in the very heart of the town it served. Normally, the Railway Department would establish a terminus at the edge of a town or even quite some distance away from it in order to minimise expenditure on land acquisitions. However, in the case of the Yass Town branch, this was not a problem as the land for the terminal station and freight yard was given free of charge by the owner to the Railway Department.

A SEEMINGLY TROUBLING FEATURE

As designed and built, a corrugated iron “shed” was connected to the building at the Sydney end. This later accommodated parcels and out of s and a window was placed in the wall facing the road elevation. The troubling feature is the corrugated extension which is shown in a 1961 photograph taken by Ian Wallace in *Byways of Steam 2*, page 43. However, the extension is omitted from a

photograph taken in the 1960s that appears in Richard Barrack's book, *Country Branch Lines NSW*, Part 4, Pinewood, 2011, page 50. A photograph taken in April, 1969, by Leon Oberg in the March/April, 1977, edition of the *Australasian Model Railroad Magazine*, page 32, shows that the shed has been removed.

The stressful aspect is that the shed appears in later photographs and also on the Wikipedia website. There is one clue that helps to understand what has happened. In recent photographs, the brick chimney that once served the ticket and parcels office at the Sydney end as been rebuilt. It seems that the "shed" also at the Sydney end was reinstated as part of the effort to return the station footprint and appearance to its 1892 setting.

So what seems troubling is not so.

PLATFORM PROVIDED

The raised platform is said to been provided in 1910 or 1917.⁷⁴⁵ The tradition of departmental penury was maintained in the construction of the platform, which is only five feet long but is ramped at both ends. Appearances can be deceiving to some people and apparently that was the case in this instance. Neville Pollard states that the platform was shortened after the cessation of passenger services in 1958.⁷⁴⁶ Mmmmmmm! Both the *Local Appendices* for 1933 and 1967 state that the platform length at Yass Town was five feet. The official evidence indicates that the structure was built as a very short platform. Whatever the date and whatever the length, a sure sign of the tightness of money was the provision of a fence at the rear of platform with only two horizontal rails rather than the more usual three horizontal rails.

If it is considered that the raised platform at Yass Town were provided about the same time as the raised branch line platform at Yass Junction, then one would have to say that 1914 was the year the Yass Town platform was provided. At least that is consistent with the dominant mythology about the facility.

CONNECTION TO THE TOWN SEWERAGE SCHEME 1941

The station was connected to the local sewerage scheme in August, 1941. Yass Junction station was similarly connected in 1942.

At the time of the connection of the Yass Town station to the sewerage system, there were two closets in the male toilet and these retained their 1892 galvanised iron vent shafts that terminated in the ridge ventilator on the roof of the male toilet. The two closets in the female toilet was similarly converted. Up to about 1960, basins for washing of hands was rarely provided in male toilets, though this was standard for female toilets. The existing hand basin in the female toilet was replaced with a 20 inch by "16 inch, pressed iron, porcelain enamelled wash basin."

It was usual practice for the closets in female toilets to be wider than their male counterparts for some unknown reason the planners knew about. Interestingly, this was not the case at Yass Town where sexual equality dominated closet size with both male and female toilets being three feet six inches wide. The small doors at the rear of each cubicle, which allowed pans to be exchanged, were

⁷⁴⁵ *Southern Weekly*, 3rd August, 1992, p. 1.

⁷⁴⁶ Pollard, op. cit., p. 269.

removed. Also, a hand basin was fitted into one corner of the then out of room, which was the original 20 feet long “shed.”

There was one change the female toilet that was made at an unknown date, supposedly before 1958 when passenger rail service ceased. It was conventional New South Wales Railway practice to protect the access to female toilets by the use of an ante-chamber and, in most cases including Yass Town, this was performed by the ladies’ waiting room. The change involved the provision of a door into the female closet area which gave direct access from the platform side. It was located opposite the wash basin and, while a level of privacy was achieved, the safety of women was compromised. This was an unusual and uncommon change in the reason is unknown.

THE ADDITION OF A NEW OUT OF SHED 1958

It would seem that parcels and out of traffic was booming and that an additional accommodation was required. The idea was to relocate the out of goods from the existing “shed” at the Sydney end to another building and use the vacated space for the higher revenue parcels traffic.

Let us start with an image of the terminus without the 1958 out of shed. There is an excellent photo in Richard Barrack’s book, *Country Branch Lines NSW*, Part 4, Pinewood, 2011, page 49, which was taken in 1957 – the year before the out of shed arrived. Naturally, it does not show the out of shed but it does show that a raised platform existed at the time and in the location where the future shed would be provided.

The people at Yass Town Museum indicate that the out of shed was moved from Goondah in 1958. It would seem that the location of the structure was predetermined by the existence of the small, timber platform a little distance from the station building towards Yass Junction. The *Visitors’ Guide* to the Museum indicates that this small platform was known as the “cream stage.” On the very next page (page 50) of Barrack’s book, is a photograph of the new out of goods shed in position in the 1960s. There is also an excellent image of the station building looking at the rail elevation.

AFTER THE END OF THE RAIL SERVICE 1958

Peter Neve said that a subsidised bus service operated between the branch line terminus and the junction station after the station closed for passenger services on 18th May, 1958. The bus last operated on 17th May, 1967, owing to “poor patronage.”⁷⁴⁷

STAFF AT THE STATION 1979

In 1979, four staff still worked at Yass Town station. At that time, the terminus was worked by mainline freight trains – Nos. 405 and 408 from Goulburn and Harden respectively. These trains operated Monday to Saturday but, if no traffic was to be set down or picked up, the goods trains did not enter the branch line. Some 73% of the traffic was comprised of petrol and kerosene.

⁷⁴⁷ *The Railway News*, March, 1969, p. 4.

CLOSURE 1988

The station closed in November, 1988, but the Yass Railway Museum was opened in 1992 to ensure the conservation of the facility. Well done to them!

Stuart Sharp

22nd September, 2016