

# ***THE UNNEIGHBOURLY NEIGHBOUR***

**THE PAUCITY OF CORPORATE GOODWILL BY THE  
NSW RAILWAYS ENCOUNTERED BY THE TOWN OF  
HARDEN-MURRUMBURRAH**

**THE EVIDENCE FROM THE HISTORY OF HARDEN RAILWAY  
STATION**



*Locomotive 5311 pulls into the southbound platform at Harden following the departure of the Riverina Express. The train is the regular mixed, afternoon train connection to Cowra. At the left of the photograph is the brick chimney of the footwarmer boiler and on the right side is a fettlers' trike and tool shed and, behind it, the chimneys of two 1870s timber railway houses in Whitton Lane. On the platform adjacent to the brick coping is a continuous strip of bitumen to facilitate the movement of barrows and trolleys filled with parcels and luggage between train and station. The remainder of the platform is covered with Locksley crushed granite. It was white when it was laid in 1912 but the decades of locomotive soot and cinders has given it a grey appearance. The date is 9<sup>th</sup> September 1965.*

**Stuart Sharp**

2<sup>nd</sup> January 2023

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*Not far from the location of the cover photograph is the above picture of 8148 and 8154 on a southbound goods train entering Harden platform on 28<sup>th</sup> December 1992. The subtext on the station nameboard has been removed following the cessation of passenger rail services to Young and Cowra. The condition of the platform surface has deteriorated following the gradual withdrawal of local railway employees who formerly maintained the facility. The old trike shed on the cover has been replaced by a new and larger structure on the right behind the locomotive.*

# **PART 1 PRELIMINARIES**

## **1. A SYNOPSIS OF THE NOTES**

For those who desire a very quick overview, read this the Synopsis, the End Remarks and Appendix 1, which is a tabular summary of events on Harden platform.

The New South Wales Railways provided a passenger and freight service to the residents of the village/town of Harden-Murrumburrah. In so doing, there was little attempt by the Railway Department to show goodwill to its geographic neighbour, namely the people and organisations that together formed the urban centre served by the rail service.

The notes form 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 overall relationship, namely the impact of the management and operation of the railway station at the Harden end of the town and the overall urban conurbation of Harden-Murrumburrah. A separate study examines the relationship of the adjoining station at Murrumburrah on 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. 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, such as the adequacy of the facilities, access to the island platform and the condition of the station forecourt. 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 2022, the conglomeration of structures on the platform represents yearly 140 years of additions, conversions and demolitions. While today it is not a pretty site due to the ongoing physical changes, Harden station does represent the 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 totality of the present 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.

These notes have been written with a methodological structure which is expressed in Appendix 2.

## **AN EXPLANATION OF THE TOWN NAME**

Harden-Murrumburrah is a single urban conglomerate. It is not a composition of two towns. The borough had a different name for each end of the settlement. Murrumburrah was in existence prior to the arrival of the railway in 1877 and was located adjacent to the water supply from Currawong Creek.

Engineer-in-Chief, John Whitton, located the station for the Murrumburrah urban centre approximately one mile to the north of Murrumburrah township because it was the closest location with sufficient flatland. The station was named North Murrumburrah in 1878 and renamed Harden in 1880.

From 1877, the two settlements – Harden and Murrumburrah – expanded until it was impossible to physically determine where one centre ended and the other started. A monument existed for many decades on the main thoroughfare, called Albury Street, at Lucan Street as an indicator of the division point. This has since been relocated to a park.

A nearby railway station opened in 1879 called Murrumburrah to serve residents at that location and, from 1879 until 1976, the town of Harden-Murrumburrah had two railway stations, one at each end. From 1976, only one station – Harden – has served the town and Harden remains an unattended station, although trains stop when passengers are booked to be picked up or set down.

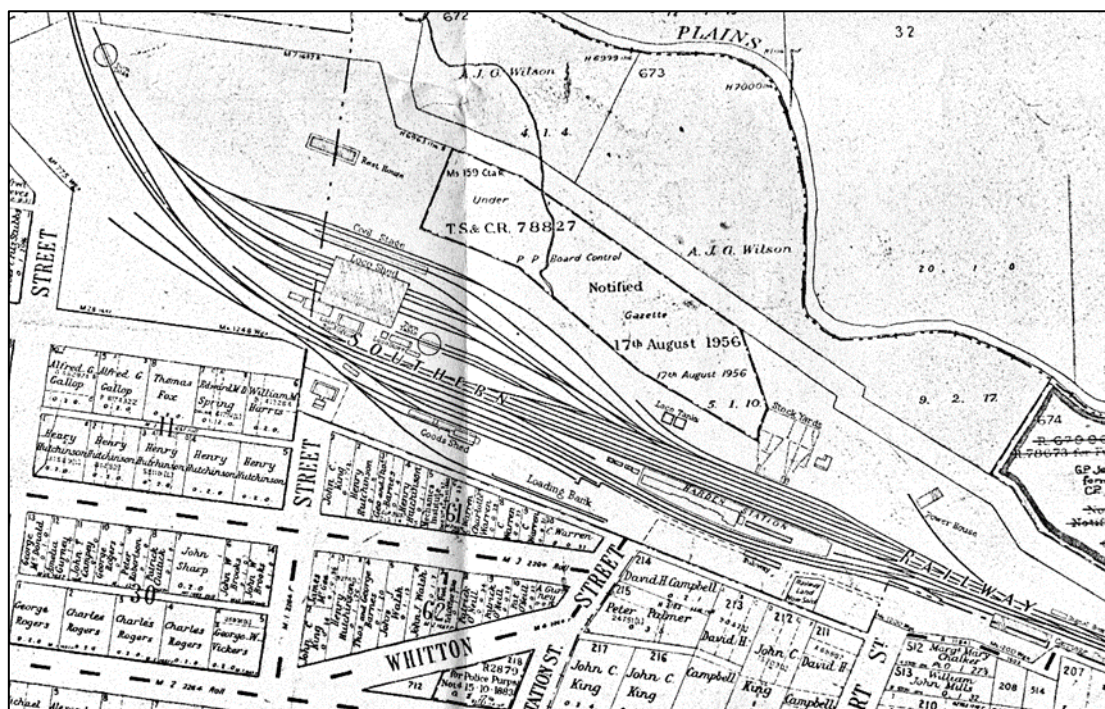


Locomotive 8106 hauling a string of motor vehicles passes locomotive 42207 on a loaded, northbound bulk wheat train in Harden yard on 24<sup>th</sup> March 1984.

## THE LOCATION OF THE STATION

Harden station and yard are located at the north/north-eastern edge of Harden-Murrumburrah. The rail corridor has formed the northern boundary to the urban development of the conurbation, as has occurred in many rural towns in New South Wales. Road and pedestrian access to the station is provided by Whitton Street. The name, Whitton Street, was, in one way an odd reference to the Engineer-in-Chief as he was not present at the opening ceremony on 12<sup>th</sup> March 1877. While he indicated that he was too busy to attend, the real reason was rooted in his personality. He had the grumps with some of the people with whom he came in contact and his non-attendance at all opening ceremonies after Bathurst in 1876 was one way of displaying his grumpiness. Perhaps the Murrumburrah community wanted to show their gratitude for bringing the railway corridor to their village and, accordingly, reflected their thanks by naming the street after him?

Harden station lies roughly on an east-west access. This is reflected in the minor thoroughfare that parallels the southern boundary of the railway corridor. The station forecourt linked Whitton Lane East and Whitton Lane West and provided road access on the eastern side to several 1870s timber residences and departmental facilities, including the per way trike shed and the Signal Sectionman's depot. On the western side, Whitton Lane paralleled the goods yard.



This is a segment of the 1962 parish map of part of Harden-Murrumburrah that shows the location of the station. Whitton Street joins the station with the main road through the town,

*called Albury Street and also known as the Burley Griffin Way. That part of Whitton Street that was perpendicular to the railway corridor was also known as Station Street and Whitton Street became only that part of the road where it turned to the right direction. Each side of the forecourt is Whitton Lane, though the name does not appear on the map. The railway corridor's buffer to urban development is obvious.*

Like many other railway systems throughout the world, the New South Wales Railways did not express the geographic location of stations, depots etc by strict reference to the points of the compass. The Railway Department instead had regard to the location of a facility relative to Sydney. In accordance with the Departmental norm, Harden station has always been referred to as being located on a north-south axis although the station was aligned physically with the east-west cardinal directions.

The railway organisation applied, generally speaking, the adjective, "down", to express trains proceeding away from Sydney and the word, "up", to indicate a train proceeding to Sydney. The terms have also always been applied to the location of infrastructure relative to another facility. These notes have avoided using these words, except where they are expressed as proper nouns, such as the Up Main line and the Down Goods road. The words, down and up, have also been applied as official parlance to indicate the adjectives left and right in relation the location of an object relative to the sides of the railway corridor. Again, such references have been eliminated from these notes.



*This is a photograph of the man whose name was applied to Whitton Street and Whitton Lane. John Whitton was Engineer-in-Chief of the New South Wales Railways from 1857 to 1889. He was in charge of new railway construction for his entire career as well as works on existing lines between 1857 and 1876, with a small exception. **SOURCE:** J. Dargan, *Safe Signals*, 1989, privately published, p. 17.*

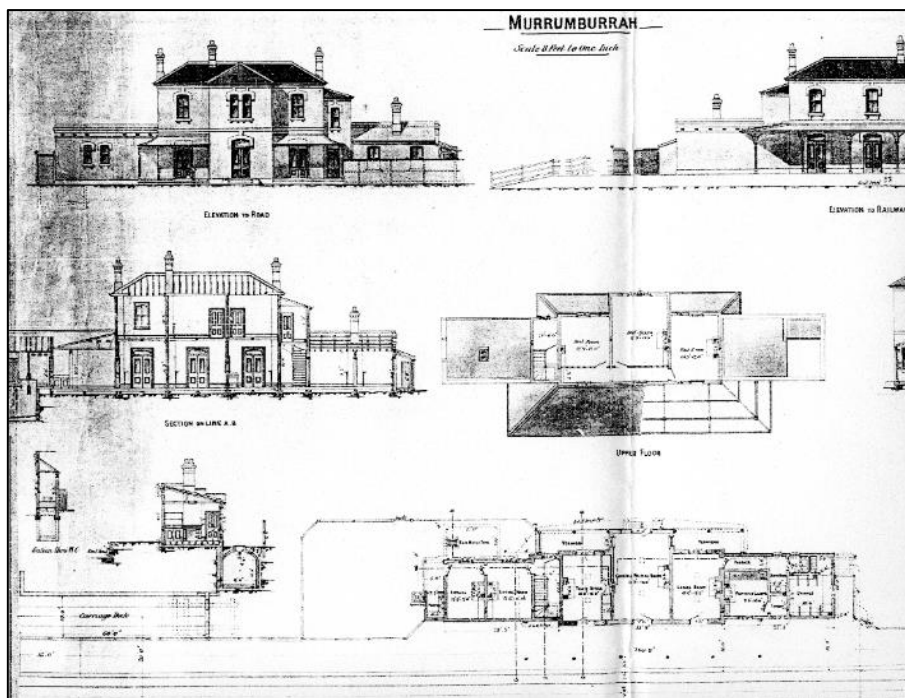


## PART 2 THE SINGLE LINE PERIOD

### 2. 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 Bowring. 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 used the public toilets. The Station Master at Harden in 1877 was fortunate that the combination building was not built as he and his family would have had to share toilets not only with passengers waiting on the platform but by “any person having business on railway property.”<sup>1</sup> This included carriers picking up and delivery parcels, men working in the goods yard and virtually any other person on railway property. The platform was intended to be 260 feet long.



*The above plan was prepared in 1876 for a combined office/residence at Harden. Similar structures were built on all three trunk lines, i.e., to the north, west and south. The Harden example was not built. By the time of the line opened to Harden on 12<sup>th</sup> March 1877, John Whitton had decided to abandon the use of combination structures in order to save money.*

<sup>1</sup> *Narromine News and Trangie Advocate*, 15<sup>th</sup> May, 1942, p. 2.

*Instead, he provided temporary, portable structures at many locations, including Harden, which remained in service until 1880.*

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.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup>

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.

The tight fiscal situation in which Whitton worked was, in part, the result of his own doing. He agreed to extend the three trunk lines (beyond Goulburn, Bathurst and Murrurundi) simultaneously for the sums 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) HARDEN STATION SITE**

One Sydney newspaper reported in the mid-1870s 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 Watson, the Parliamentary Member for The Lachlan, said that he had given fair general support to the then 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

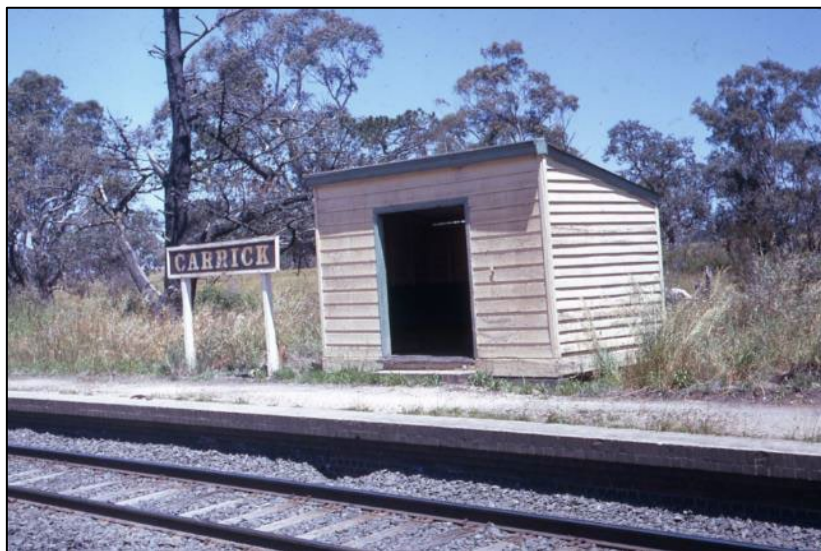
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<sup>2</sup> Some 15 years later, Whitton's colleague, George Cowdery, approved a similar structure at Emu Plains as the marker of the start of the Blue Mountains Railway.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

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 in 1877, there were two hotels, namely the Criterion and Commercial, two stores and a “good” flour mill which was near “Currawang Creek”.<sup>4</sup>

It was quite clear to everyone who turned up on the opening day of 12<sup>th</sup> March 1877 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.”<sup>5</sup>



*The photograph shows the simple timber waiting shed at Carrick near Goulburn, which opened on 27<sup>th</sup> May 1869 under the name Towrang. This style of building continued to be built from the 1850s until 1890 and Harden station may have possessed in 1877 a similar designed and sized waiting shed.*

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.”<sup>6</sup> John Whitton, the Engineer-in-Chief, was not present for the opening ceremony and was represented by Donald Vernon, the Traffic Manager, who was one of Whitton’s departmental protagonists. The Minister for

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<sup>4</sup> *Evening News*, 13<sup>th</sup> March, 1877, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13<sup>th</sup> March, 1877.

<sup>6</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14<sup>th</sup> March, 1877, p. 2.

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).<sup>7</sup>

## THE USE OF TEMPORARY PLATFORM BUILDINGS - 1877

The site of the present Harden station was opened on 12<sup>th</sup> 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 had been 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. However, should the traffic warrant the expenditure, an elegant commodious building will be erected at Murrumburrah.”<sup>8</sup>

The 1877 temporary building/s remained at Harden in use until 1881, when it was sent to Towrang.



*By the time Harden station opened in March 1877, John Whitton had decided to utilise small, portable structures and these were located at many stations. The press often referred to such*

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<sup>7</sup> Cootamundra Herald, 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1877.

<sup>8</sup> Yass Courier, 13<sup>th</sup> March, 1877, p. 2.

structures as “sentry boxes” because of their diminutive proportions. This structure was located at Picton and was photographed by Harry Wright, who was an engineman stationed at Picton in the 1950s. He took this photograph on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1957. **SOURCE:** J. Whitfield, *Picton to Mittagong Main Line Railway Centenary 1919-2019, privately published, 2019, p. 23.*

Just as the railway extension progressed 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 people in another branch of the Public Works Department, namely the Railway Branch. Enter William 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. Mason resigned from the New South Wales Railways in 1881.

From the start of rail operations in New South Wales in 1855, male toilets had been provided but this was not the case for females, especially in rural locations. It is unknown whether female toilet facilities were provided at Harden in 1877.

## **THE TRAIN SERVICE**

The Government Gazette, dated 8<sup>th</sup> of March, 1877, indicated that further 20 miles of the Great Southern Railway from Binalong to Harden would be open on 12<sup>th</sup> March and that the existing Railway By-laws would apply. The notice was signed by John Rae, the Commissioner, and witnessed by Charles Goodchap, who was at the time the Secretary and would succeed John Rae as Commissioner.<sup>9</sup> 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 departed that 2100 arriving at Sydney at 0710 and the passenger train (a mixed train as far as Goulburn) arriving at Sydney at 1750.

Unfortunately for the people of Harden, their very first passenger train service from Sydney to Murrumburrah operated at very inconvenient times. The inconvenient times at least matched the inconvenient location of the station.

After the railway opened on 12<sup>th</sup> March 1877, there are no further references to the railway station in the various newspapers in relation to railway operations until 26<sup>th</sup> 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

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<sup>9</sup> *New South Wales Government Gazette*, No. 83, 8<sup>th</sup> March, 1877, p. 1.

opened to Bowning and it was suggested that the opening of the extension to Harden would further increase the traffic.<sup>10</sup>

## **THE FIRST STATION MASTER'S ARRIVAL AND HIS RESIDENCE – 1876 AND 1877**

Some eight months before Harden station opened in March 1877, the first Station Master, Mr Norrie, had taken up his position in July 1876 in a newly opened telegraph office.<sup>11</sup> The telegraph line between Harden and Young had been completed on 26<sup>th</sup> June 1876. It can only be assumed that the telegraph office was located somewhere within the railway corridor and, possibly, on a platform if it had been completed by that stage.

It was not until 12<sup>th</sup> December 1876 that tenders closed for the construction of Station Master's houses at Yass and Murrumburrah. A second tender closed on the same day for the construction of Station Master's houses at Millthorpe and Spring Hill.<sup>12</sup> All four residences were of the same, new design.

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 level crossing gatehouse or, in very rare circumstances, in a free-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.<sup>13</sup> 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. Both locations, plus Millthorpe and Spring Hill, received permanent houses but temporary platform structures.

Alexander Kerr, a contractor of unknown location, signed a contract for the Harden good shed on 8<sup>th</sup> August, 1876, and he also signed the contract for the brick Station Master's residence but he did not sign this second contract until 27<sup>th</sup> January, 1877.<sup>14</sup> Why? This delay in the construction of the residence is suggestive of the 1870s being a time when John Whitton and his staff were thinking about cheaper ways to 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

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<sup>10</sup> *The Illustrated Sydney News*, 26<sup>th</sup> May, 1877, p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> *Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser*, 8<sup>th</sup> July 1876, p. 49.

<sup>12</sup> *New South Wales Government Gazette*, 28<sup>th</sup> November 1876, No.422, p. 4827.

<sup>13</sup> 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.

<sup>14</sup> John Forsyth, *Main Southern Line – Granville Junction to Albury – Stations and Sidings*, Volume 2, unpublished document, SRA Archives, 1989, p. 113.

in relation to the confirmation of a new standard design for platform buildings. 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 Harden 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."<sup>15</sup> These were Railway owned buildings.

The Station Master's residences at Binalong and Harden, along with Millthorpe and Spring Hill, were the first examples of a new style of railway house and were one part of Whitton's plan to lower costs. The important feature of the residence was that it was built as a free standing structure, not incorporated into the traditional offices of the platform building as at Yass Junction and Bowring. 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.



*The above image shows the Harden Station Master's official house. Originally symmetrical in appearance, its original small size resulted in several later additions. The station awning is partly visible on the righthand side. The house was approved in 1876, built in 1877, last occupied in 2004 and derelict in 2016.*

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, approximately,

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<sup>15</sup> *Cootamundra Herald*, 1<sup>st</sup> May, 1877, p. 2.

in the 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.

However, one of the puzzling features of Harden station today is the position of the residence for the Station Master relative to the platform. It is the rear of the residence that faces the station forecourt, not the front. Normally, the front door and related verandah 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, hence, the Station Master's residence's would have in fact addressed the forecourt of the first station. It makes sense that the 1880 building that exists today was built at the southern end of a temporary platform. Unfortunately, after 1880, 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.<sup>16</sup> 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.<sup>17</sup> 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 of the house. Firstly, there was the use of a symmetrical front for the structure, which matched Whitton's idea about the symmetry of the 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.<sup>18</sup> Face brickwork was used for the load-bearing walls, which was 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.

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<sup>16</sup> Index card for Harden station, former SRA Archives.

<sup>17</sup> NSW, *Parliamentary Debates*, 1<sup>st</sup> Series, Vol. 2 1879/80, 43 & 44 Victoria, p. 1331.

<sup>18</sup> From a metallurgical point of view, the sheets were not iron but steel.



It was not until 1881 that the first privately owned residence at the Harden end of town was constructed of brickwork.<sup>19</sup>

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.<sup>20</sup> 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.



*Locomotive 4817 is stabled on the Loco Road in Harden yard on 19<sup>th</sup> January 1983 awaiting its next rostered operation. With the demolition of the loco depot buildings in the 1960s and 1970s, enginemen signed on and off duty in the office adjacent to the Station Master’s office on the platform.*

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<sup>19</sup> Harden-Murrumburrah Historical Society, *An Outline of the History of the Harden-Murrumburrah District*, 1979, no pag.

<sup>20</sup> J. M. Cottee, *Stations on the Track*, Charnwood, Ginninderra Press, 2004, p. 183.

## **3. 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 official railway structures. Why? Because everyone lived in the gully at Murrumburrah adjacent to Currawong Creek. 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 15<sup>th</sup> September, 1878. This name change followed the opening of a platform at Murrumburrah on the same date.<sup>21</sup>

The name of the station changed again to Harden on 1<sup>st</sup> September, 1880, and that was done following the postal authorities reallocating the name, "Harden", from another nearby location to the area adjacent to 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 the original hamlet of Murrumburrah. Of course, over time, the two places morphed into one urban centre and, today, the residents embrace the concept of 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 17<sup>th</sup> October 1878 and was completed on 14<sup>th</sup> December 1878.<sup>22</sup> 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 12<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>23</sup> While the Postmaster General decline to provide a mail delivery service to the houses and businesses at the Harden end, he did open a postal receiving station at the railway

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<sup>21</sup> In NSW Parliament, *Votes & Proceedings*, Vols. 2 and 3, show the incorrect date of 5<sup>th</sup> September, 1878, for the date of the name change.

<sup>22</sup> New South Wales Legislative Assembly, *Votes and Proceedings*, 1882, volume 4, p. 14

<sup>23</sup> Littlejohn, *Early Murrumburrah*, op. cit., p. 26.

station on 1<sup>st</sup> 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 a place called Currawong, which had closed on 13<sup>th</sup> August, 1877.<sup>24</sup> 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. The residents of the original Murrumburrah village were jealous of the existence of the opportunity to post letters up to train departure time at Harden station and this envy was one of the reasons the people at the Murrumburrah end of town want to increase the status of their railway facility from a platform, which had opened in 1878, to a station. The increase in status was achieved in 1889.

## **THE INTRATOWN FIGHT FOR URBAN HEGEMONY - 1878**

On the 27<sup>th</sup> 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 at Harden. 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.”

There was a good chance that the complaint was more about the narrowness and possibly the short length of the platform. Both dimensions 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 by the residents was the accommodation for the public provided on the platform. Although the design is unknown, with the evidence of other locations and complaints from other people in similar, small villages and towns, it can be assumed that whatever was provided at Harden station was basic.

The Sydney based Traffic Manager, Thomas Carlyle, advised the Commissioner on 17<sup>th</sup> 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 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,

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

who was second in charge under John Whitton, was asked on 22<sup>nd</sup> 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 were “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.

Another petition dated 23<sup>rd</sup> 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 27<sup>th</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> September 1879. That did not mean that the winners were in Murrumburrah and that the losers were located in Harden. Being a good politician and a regular rail user, Lackey would have understood the significance to the railway organisation of the flat land at Harden station and, accordingly, supported improvements at both Harden and Murrumburrah.

The Railway Department decided on 17<sup>th</sup> March 1879 to call tenders for the erection of a permanent platform building at Harden. What was strange was that tenders were called seemingly before the finalisation and approval of the plans. William Mason reported on 10<sup>th</sup> June 1879 that the drawings were ready and specification in hand. Mason forwarded the drawings for the new building on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1879 to the Commissioner, who approved them on 31<sup>st</sup> 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.

One press report in July 1879 described the Harden building as:

“a disgrace to a town like Murrumburrah. The Station Master and his staff of assistants are confined to one small room, only large enough for one man to move comfortably about.”<sup>25</sup>

It was thought that, as at July, tenders were to be called for a new station building in July 1879 but the evidence indicates that the question of providing a permanent building at Harden was commenced in 1879 but continued under consideration until February 1880.

Thomas Carlyle agreed with the report of Traffic Inspector, George Roberts, on the 15<sup>th</sup> December 1879 about the need for additional passenger accommodation at Murrumburrah platform.<sup>26</sup> 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 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 6<sup>th</sup> February 1880, the Commissioner asked what is being done with respect to the erection of the station at Murrumburrah.<sup>27</sup> William Mason replied on 11<sup>th</sup> February that “the matter has been delayed until it was decided what amount of station accommodation was to be given to Murrumburrah South (sic) [i.e., Murrumburrah]. 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 (i.e., 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 1<sup>st</sup> September 1880. On the 17<sup>th</sup> February 1880, the Secretary for Public Works

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<sup>25</sup> *Wagga Wagga Advertiser*, 30<sup>th</sup> July, 1879, p. 4.

<sup>26</sup> 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?

<sup>27</sup> Another source states that the date was 9<sup>th</sup> February, 1880.

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.

Travellers to and from both Harden and Murrumburrah stations could obtain metal season tickets with their names printed on the tickets. These replaced the cardboard tickets then in general use. The scheme commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1879 with silver used for First Class and bronze used for Second Class tickets. The period of duration was three, six or 12 months. Metal season tickets remained in use for the next 100 years. Initially, the tickets were made at the Sydney Mint but, later, they were manufactured by the NSW Railways in a building adjacent to No. 1 platform at Redfern station.<sup>28</sup>

By February 1880, it was clear that improvements would be made to the 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 LOCAL DEMANDS FOR THE PROVISION OF A RAILWAY REFRESHMENT ROOM – 1879/1880**

Pressure to establish a refreshment room at Harden arose from two broad sources in the second half of the 1870s. There was local, regional and colonial-wide pressure from train travellers and there was also pressure from business people in Sydney wanting to make money from the refreshment business. In 1873, refreshment rooms had been established at Sydney, Mittagong, Singleton, Parramatta, Penrith and Mount Victoria while further outlets were established at Gunning in 1877 and Murrurundi in 1878. The major issue of debate was who was to pay for the construction of the facilities. In 1878, the business person who dominated the railway refreshment business was John Castner and in 1878 he suggested that land be reserved for a refreshment room at Bowning. The Railway Department recommended that Harden would be a better location than Bowning, no doubt having in mind the proposed branch line to Young.<sup>29</sup>

The first site to be offered to Castner was Harden station in October 1879. Between that time and January 1882, Castner had inspected the Harden site and advised the Railway Department that it was unsuitable because of its proximity to the male toilet. The Department declined to change the location as it had already commenced planning to build a new, second-class station building. The policy of the 1870s under which the lessees erected the premises was altered in 1880 and, under the new arrangement, the Railway Department would pay for and construct the structure and the lessee would fit out the dwelling. Castner built and leased the first temporary refreshment room at Junee, which commenced operations in 1880.<sup>30</sup> In 1889, the point made by Castner about the proximity of toilets to refreshment rooms was accepted by

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<sup>28</sup> *Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser*, 19<sup>th</sup> June, 1879, p. 7.

<sup>29</sup> C. Banger, "The Railway Refreshment Rooms of New South Wales 1855-1995", *ARHS Bulletin*, July 2003, pp. 256-258.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

the Railway Department and the male toilet was relocated from the southern end of the main platform building where it was adjacent to the refreshment room to the opposite, northern end. From that time and for the next 100 years, the first thing arriving travellers saw and sniffed at Harden was the male toilet. Thus, the establishment of the Harden refreshment room is a tale of the exercise of public versus private power.



*The entrance to the male toilet, as seen on 25<sup>th</sup> February 1978, in its 1889 location at the northern end of the building. The use of paired, saloon-style, swing doors was unusual. The male toilet was relocated from the southern end because the Railway Department wanted to reduce the extent of unpleasant odours and minimise the number of men loitering around the refreshment room. The platform seat was painted in the traditional colour of green.*

Pressure mounted locally for a refreshment room – but at which station. 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 (i.e., at Murrumburrah platform)”.<sup>31</sup> This translated 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.

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<sup>31</sup> *Evening News*, 19<sup>th</sup> December, 1879, p. 2.



*Terry Hocking, the Station Master, stands at the entrance to the 1889 male toilet on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2000 with the stock race immediately behind him. The doorway closer Hocking was the store room containing cleaning agents and apparatus. The steel panel on the timber frame on the right replaced the original (1918) corrugated iron sheets when the timber booking office was demolished in 1965.*

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 served by locating the new refreshment rooms at Murrumburrah than by erecting them at Murrumburrah North. The Minister replied 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”.<sup>32</sup> 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 Railway Department received the petition, 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 the 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

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<sup>32</sup> *Evening News*, 13<sup>th</sup> February, 1880, p. 2.



for a refreshment room, but he had also indicated that the station should be closed. That was pretty arrogant behaviour.

The Commissioner wrote on the 21<sup>st</sup> 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.”

Goodchap instructed Mason to give early consideration to the matter.

William Mason was quick off the mark and told the Commissioner on 26th April 1880 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 29<sup>th</sup> 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.



*On 25<sup>th</sup> February 1978 a “DEB” set forms the Riverina Express. The corrugated iron sheets on the roofs of the platform buildings are rusty, a condition created easily from decades of steam locomotive smoke. The picket fencing on the platform also needs a paint. A 48 Class engine is stabled in the Down Dock waiting for the Riverina Express to clear the platform. It will take a mixed train to Cowra.*

## 4. THE REPLACEMENT PLATFORM BUILDING 1880

### THE FOURTH AND FINAL PROPOSAL FOR A PERMANENT 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.<sup>33</sup> While being respectful to a deceased person, that statement is a load of rubbish. No! A completely new design was adopted. The plans that were prepared in 1880 were the third proposal for a permanent platform building and, counting the temporary structures at the time of line opening, it was the fourth design prepared. The four proposals were:

- a plan dated 1876 for a combination office/residence,
- the use of temporary buildings at the time of the station opening in 1877,
- a plan of unknown design prepared in 1879 for a very large, possibly a First Class station building, &
- the plan approved in 1880 was for a smaller, Second Class station building.



*This is the only known picture of the 1880 building prior to the construction of the refreshment room in 1885. The platform building shown was erected in 1880 and completed in 1881. It appears to be a carbon copy of the structures at Granville and Liverpool built at precisely the same time. The Harden building survives, although much extended and altered. John Whitton had commenced using the design, as at Harden in 1880, at Newtown in 1876.<sup>34</sup> Noteworthy are the gabled roof, transverse gable, finials and ornate timber work on the gables. In 1876,*

<sup>33</sup> Conversation between John Forsyth and the author on 6<sup>th</sup> August, 1981.

<sup>34</sup> An earlier example at Honeysuckle in 1871 did not possess an unusual mono-pitched roof, suggesting its prototypical roots. Newtown was the first to have double-pitched roof using either gables or hips.

*Whitton lost control of works on existing lines, which was taken over by his next in charge, William Mason and later by George Cowdrey. From 1876, works on new lines and works on existing lines were completely separate from Whitton's duties. William Mason, as Engineer For Existing Lines, then used Whitton's Georgian design for second-class stations on existing lines which required replacement structures. Mason's engagement of the design suggests that he was the source of the architecture when he was under Whitton's control. The chimney at the end of the structure does not provide heating in the male toilet but ventilation above the closets, which was a very sound idea. Stone was occasionally used for platform walls if a suitable could be obtained economically, as was the case at Harden. SOURCE: Photograph No. 053437, ARHS Railway Archives*

## **THE LAPSE OF TIME BETWEEN THE USE OF TEMPORARY AND PERMANENT REPLACEMENT BUILDINGS ON THE MAIN SOUTH LINE**

The 1877 temporary buildings at Harden station were replaced, with work on the replacement structure 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**

<b>STATION</b>	<b>YEAR OF CONSTRUCTION OF TEMPORARY BUILDING</b>	<b>YEAR OF COMPLETION OF REPLACEMENT, PERMANENT BUILDING</b>	<b>NO. OF YEARS BETWEEN TEMPORARY AND PERMANENT BUILDINGS</b>
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 Murrumburrah station not occurred because the Railway Department then had to wait and see how many passengers and businesses used the Murrumburrah platform rather than Harden station.

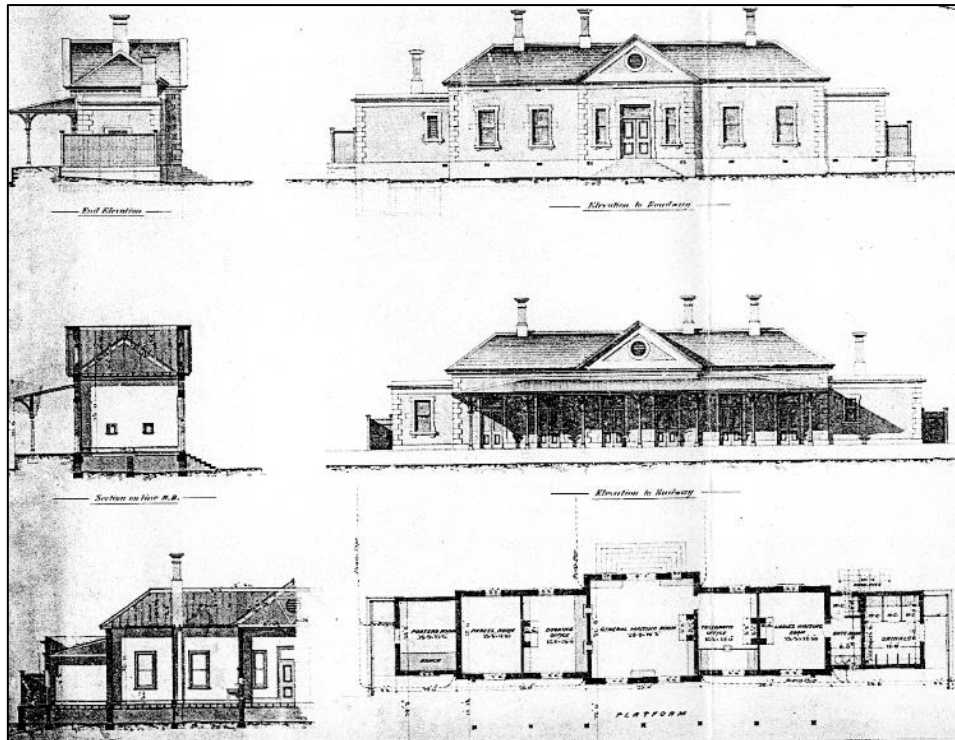
## THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW DESIGN AS AT HARDEN IN 1880

Prior to the construction of the 1880 Harden building, John Whitton had been approving structures influenced by the Georgian style of architecture. It was his exclusive choice in the 1860s for larger places. Appendix 5 gives details about the extent of the influence of the Georgian style. During the 1870s, Whitton moved away from the Georgian design and had been experimenting with different styles, mostly focussed on the use of gabled roofs. The structures at Harden, Granville and Liverpool in 1880 were at the very end of the decade or so of the experimentation but, of course, Whitton was not involved in the design at Harden because he had lost the management of structures on existing lines from 1876.



*This is an image of the 1880 building at Liverpool. It is very similar to what was provided at Harden and Granville in the same year, including the faceted bay window, the ornate bargeboards, the extensive use of sandstone and the cast iron decorations under the verandah. The defining features are the simple gable roof, the end attached pavilions and the centre transverse gable over the bay window that marks the pedestrian entry. The Liverpool structure was extended at the southern end to provide additional male toilet accommodation and, therefore, ruined the original symmetry. The image was taken on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2010 through the glass wall of the overhead concourse building.*

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 Harden design was based on plans which John Whitton had approved in 1876 for Newtown. Harden station was allocated what was known as a Second-Class building. What Harden received was a building of which many of the design features would become typical New South Wales Railway design practice in the 1880s.



*The design of the building at Harden in 1880 had similarities with Whitton's 1876 plan for Newtown shown above. Although the Newtown building utilised the hipped roof of the preceding Georgian period, the application of a transverse gable over the pedestrian entry point into/from the building and onto/from the platform was adopted for the Harden structure.*

## **THE DESIGN FEATURES OF THE 1880 (EXISTING) BUILDING**

No plans of the Harden building survive. In 1880, similar examples were planned and built at Granville and Liverpool and, strangely, plans for those structures do not exist.

The Harden 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.”<sup>35</sup> The building was 102 feet in length and 21 feet wide. The floor plan was based on a centre pedestrian access to the platform through the general waiting room. It employed faceted bay windows on the road elevation. The building consisted of five rooms under the main gabled roof, these being:

- general waiting room,
- ladies' waiting room,
- booking office,
- Station Master's office, &
- combined luggage/parcels office.

<sup>35</sup> NSW, *Railway Reports and Papers 1884 – Return of 1881/82 – Additions and Alterations*, former SRA Archives, p. 11.

At each end of the gabled roof section, was a parapeted “wing” which contained space for the Porters and storage of kerosene lamps at the northern end and male and female toilets at the southern end.

It is unsurprising that the new design, as seen at Harden, Granville and Liverpool, draw on many characteristics from the previous Georgian period. Nevertheless, there were four major departures from the Georgian design. These were:

- The use of a gabled roof instead of a hipped roof,
- The engagement of a transverse gable to mark the point of pedestrian entry,
- The addition of ornamentation, such as fluted cast iron awning posts with ornate capitals and decorative timberwork on the gables, &
- Timber finials on all gables.



*With the abandonment of the 1876 combination office/residential design, the Railway Department gave the residents of the village of Harden-Murrumburrah a much superior platform building and this was reflected in the method of support of the platform awning. In 1876, the combination structure was to feature timber vertical posts but, with the rejection of that design, the 1880 building utilised fluted, cast iron columns to support the verandah. Photographed on 25<sup>th</sup> February 1978.*

Overall, the Harden 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 parapeted wing at the northern end was gobbled up in a later amplification and room re-allocation and is unrecognisable today.



*The above photograph, taken on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1994, shows the transverse gable on the roof and the faceted bay windows on the southbound platform, which prior to track duplication formed the pedestrian access facing the station forecourt.*

There was an extensive list of improvements at stations on existing lines mentioned in the Railway Commissioner's 1880 *Annual Report*.<sup>36</sup> For Harden, there was a number of entries which expressed the term "water closet and urinal" and these were cases where existing toilet facilities were replaced and the plans and urinal flushed with water from a tank in the ceiling cavity. Other stations listed in 1880 as containing water closets included Stanmore, Merrylands Goulburn, Stuart Town, Wellington, Murrumburrah (for women only), Perthville, Locksley, Lithgow, Mount Victoria and Junee. The new station under construction at Harden was the only reference to "two double water closets and urinals erected". At Orange, the reference is to "water laid to urinals".

While the announcement of flushing toilets sounds good news, it also adds confusion to an understanding of toilet hygiene at Harden. For instance, subsequent press reports over the next 50 years provide no confirmation of the use of flushing toilets. Press reports mention at different times the application of earth closets, the use of cesspits and the engagement of urine absorption trenches as the recipients of human waste.

## **THE DESIGN FAMILY TO WHICH THE 1880 HARDEN BUILDING BELONGS**

The Harden structure was a mixture of features not only from the Georgian style but also with titbits 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. For example, there were many differences between the 1880 building at Harden and

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<sup>36</sup> Commissioner for Railways, *Annual Report 1880*, Appendix 1, pp. 6-19.

the 1884 structure at Binalong. Appendix 5 states those differences. The Table below shows the examples of Second class replacement buildings 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. There was limited consistency amongst the various examples of the overall design family. The number of purely Georgian-influence structures built on existing lines was small in quantity, unlike those constructed Georgian examples erected at the time of line opening. The replacement structure erected at Binalong in 1884 was 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 was 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 after 1876, 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: PROVISION OF SECOND-CLASS BUILDINGS AT EXISTING STATIONS 1871-1889**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>COMMENTS (ALL EXAMPLES REFLECTED GEORGIAN DESIGN INFLUENCE WITH HAD HIPPED ROOFS AND PARAPETED PAVILIONS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)</b>
1871	Honeysuckle Point	atypical skillion-roofed pavilions rather than the normal parapeted roofs – this was one of only two examples approved by John Whitton
1876	Newtown	asymmetrical with one attached pavilion – this building was approved both by John Whitton and then William Mason, who became Engineer for Existing Lines in 1876
1877	Newbridge	
1878	Burwood	Transverse gable on roof; matching brick waiting shed on opposite platform with gable roof
1879	Lawson	Small structure
1880	Granville	Gabled roof with matching waiting shed on opposite platform - Victorian Free Classical influence – completed 1882
1880	Liverpool	Gabled roof - Victorian Free Classical influence
1880	Parramatta	Not completed until 1882
1880	Harden	Gabled roof - Victorian Free Classical influence
1880	Eskbank	Not built in 1884
1881	Lidcombe	Pigeon pair with large, open waiting areas
1883	Richmond	Asymmetrical with only one pavilion



<b>YEAR</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>COMMENTS (ALL EXAMPLES REFLECTED GEORGIAN DESIGN INFLUENCE WITH HAD HIPPED ROOFS AND PARAPETED PAVILIONS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)</b>
1883	Redfern	Large open waiting area
1883	Blacktown	porched entry on road side
1883	Windsor	Asymmetrical with only one pavilion
1884	Millthorpe	asymmetrical with two semi/unattached attached toilet pavilions, centre transverse gable – unusually tall chimneys
1884	Binalong	Hipped roof
1885	Spring Hill	asymmetrical with two semi/unattached attached toilet pavilions, centre transverse gable – unusually tall chimneys
1886	Stanmore	Pigeon pair - an enhanced version with hipped roofs for the main roof and also on the attached, balanced pavilions – large open waiting areas
1886	Auburn	double transverse gables with hipped roof
1886	Strathfield	Pigeon pair with island platform between them – large open waiting areas
1887	St. Marys	Pigeon pair with large, open waiting areas
1888	Morpeth	Built at street level above platform
1889	Greta	open-fronted waiting area
1889	Riverstone	open-fronted waiting area
1889	Penrith	large, open waiting area

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.



A colourised, printed postcard of Granville station. The similarity of the 1880 structure on the left to the Harden building is evident in the gabled roof, bulky chimneys, finials and transverse gables. **SOURCE:** Photograph No. 510137, ARHS Railway Archives.

## PHYSICAL CONSTRUCTION OF THE REPLACEMENT PLATFORM BUILDING

As well as the new platform building, a number of additional items was approved during 1880 including residences and machinery at the locomotive depot. The major item listed for that year was the construction of a new station building. It was the only item for which the work was done by contract, rather than by departmental 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.<sup>37</sup> Tenders closed on 1<sup>st</sup> 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      £2,696
- Michael and Welsby        £2,701
- William Thackray         £3,250
- William Sharp             £3,297
- Charles Hardy             £3,730
- H. A. Briggs                £3,826

The tender of Langley and Thompson was the lowest and recommended for acceptance on 8<sup>th</sup> June 1880. The Commissioner approved the tender and it was forwarded to and signed by the tenderers on 9<sup>th</sup> June. The contractors started work in July 1880. The sandstone foundations were laid in August, 1880.<sup>38</sup> Construction

<sup>37</sup> *Cootamundra Herald*, 8th May, 1880, p. 5.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 7<sup>th</sup> August, 1880, p. 3.

was completed on 28<sup>th</sup> of May 1881 at a cost of £694/8/1. Langley and Thompson were listed as “builders, Jacques Street, Balmain.”<sup>39</sup> 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 of £694/8/1 is compared against the estimated cost of £2,696 in their tender, it initially seems that the building envisaged for Harden was not built and that a much cheaper structure was provided.<sup>40</sup> There may have been some design changes but there is no evidence to support any explanation. There are two possible explanation. Firstly, the £694/8/1 may represent only the expenditure in 1881 and did not include sums spent in 1880. Secondly, 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 Cunnigar and does not address the present building. An official document confirms that the platform was indeed “lengthened” in 1881. The 1880 cost estimate of £2,696 does seem correct when compared with the construction of the refreshment room in 1884 which had an estimated cost of £,2074. The 1881 cost of £694 will have to be placed into the basket containing puzzling matters for the time being.



*This picture shows the northern end wall of the 1880 building. The brickwork is in English bond and the building corners were emphasised by the use of sandstone quoins. Note the elegant rain head. Taken on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2000.*

<sup>39</sup> Sands, *Sydney and Suburban Directory*, 1882, p. 497.

<sup>40</sup> 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.

One or more of the existing timber buildings on the platform was/were relocated to Towrang and there re-erected there in 1881.

There was an entry in the 1881 *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.<sup>41</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> January and including on 15<sup>th</sup> of June, 1880, for the present Harden but it seems those referred to Murrumburrah platform as Langley and Thompson would have provide new toilets at Harden as part of their contract.



*The southern end of the 1880 building is identified by sandstone quoins and the slightly recessed wall of the in-fill structure. The 1880 building was extended from that point until it met the northern wall of the 1885 built refreshment room. The roof was similarly extended. Photograph taken on 28<sup>th</sup> May 1982.*

The Under Secretary for Public Works approved a recommendation by the Railway Commissioner for an additional office accommodation, work starting on 20<sup>th</sup> May and ending 20<sup>th</sup> September, 1880, allegedly for the present Harden station.<sup>42</sup> Also, a single water closet was provided, with work starting on 20<sup>th</sup> of May 1880 and been completed on 20<sup>th</sup> September, 1880. These also are possibly references to works at Murrumburrah rather than at Harden station. Likewise, the mention that a chimney

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<sup>41</sup> New South Wales Legislative Assembly, *Votes and Proceedings*, 1882, volume 4, p. 14

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

was added to the ticket office with work starting on 12<sup>th</sup> of August and with completion on 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 1880.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

## 5. THE HARDEN REFRESHMENT ROOM, THE TELEGRAPH OFFICE & THE MALE TOILETS

1881-1887



*Taken between 1912 and 1916, the photograph shows the out of room/lamp room extending beyond the 1880 wall of the 1880 building on the southbound platform. The infill sections at both ends of the 1880 building have been erected and their roof extensions covered with corrugated iron sheets, which contrasted to the slates on the 1880 structure. The free-standing ticket and parcels office is yet to be built across the platform in front of the entrance to the male toilet. The external walls of the 1880 building are yet to be painted. Note the faded stripes painted on the corrugated roof. **SOURCE:** Photograph No. 510145 JR Newland postcard collection ARHS Railway Archives.*

### 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 had been well organised 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 on the main line at Harden or Murrumburrah for use while they changed trains. A delay had occurred because the completed survey plans were destroyed in the Garden Palace fire on 22<sup>nd</sup> September, 1882.

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.<sup>44</sup> 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. At the time, the Department contemplated operating branch line trains to Gundagai from Harden. The key role of Harden station in train operations on the

<sup>44</sup> *Cootamundra Herald*, 21<sup>st</sup> December, 1881, p. 2.

Gundagai line was reflected in the provision of locomotives and crews initially from Harden, rather than Cootamundra. 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 – for the time being.

## THE FINANCIAL PUZZLE OF 1883

The question of building a refreshment room had occurred as early as 1880 and, from that time, the town's people of Harden/Murrumburrah maintained that pressure. What, then, explains 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 factor.



*The view through the dirty glass from one of the first floor bedrooms looking over the Up Yard. The battered JHG guard's van on the right was used to propel empty bulk wheat trains to Cunningham silo. It is the year 2000. In the foreground is the fake tile roof on the awning over the northbound platform.*

Pressure was on the Railway Department to implement the policies of governments from 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 railway corridors and also put forward the notion that landowners donate land required for rail construction. Although neither of these ideas were implemented at the time, they do show that money was in shorter supply.<sup>45</sup> Or was it? There was

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<sup>45</sup> Nev. Pollard, "New South Wales Railways Progress and Politics 1881-1905", *Bulletin*, June, 1993, pp. 143 and 144.

in 1883 a call for tenders for what only can be described as unbelievable for the supply of 6,077,000 bricks.<sup>46</sup> The tenders closed on 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 received the delivery of 300,000 or more bricks.

<b>STATION</b>	<b>NO. OF BRICKS TO BE DELIVERED</b>
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 pay for over six million bricks? Why would 300,000 bricks be required at Harden in 1883? It 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 to explain the situation.

## **RAILWAY DEPARTMENT POLICY RELATING TO REFRESHMENT ROOM OPERATIONS**

When the refreshment room opened at Harden, the Railway Department had installed the food counter, liquor bar and all fixtures. Gas or other lighting was to be provided by the lessee. It was the responsibility of the Manager to clean the facility and serve all trains arriving at the platform. Although the refreshment room was under private control, all staff employed by the lessee were subject to the discipline of the Railway By-laws and the appointment of each employee had to be approved by the Commissioner. Staff could be dismissed by the Commissioner.

A list of the available food and alcoholic drink, officially known as spirituous and fermented liquors, was to be displayed to the public with fair and reasonable prices and hot tea and coffee had to be ready at all times while the rooms were open. It was not until Royal Assent was given on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1883 to the Licensing Act No. 24 of 1883 that the NSW Licensing Court allowed the licensees of refreshment rooms at NSW railway stations to sell all forms of alcohol to travellers. Accordingly, alcohol was sold at the Harden refreshment room from the day it opened.

Sandwiches, chops, steaks, soups and cold meat were required to be served. The Commissioner could direct the Manager of the refreshment room to stock a particular product. For people who wanted to eat on the train after departure, the lessee also had to provide baskets of refreshments in which there was an assorted cold lunch and

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<sup>46</sup> *NSW Government Gazette*, No. 112, 20th March, 1883, p. 1528.



dessert for one person, together with eating implements. These baskets were collected at the terminus of the train journey and returned to the Harden refreshment room at no cost to the lessee. No concession, known departmentally as "free passage", was given for the transport of food and other requirements to be sold. The lease could be terminated at any time by the Commissioner. Because refreshment rooms were on railway property, local government rates did not have to be paid.<sup>47</sup>

## **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. The regulations for the sale of liquor at railway refreshment rooms were published in the New South Wales Government Gazette on 24<sup>th</sup> July 1883.<sup>48</sup> The liquor licensing laws had been changed in May 1883 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".<sup>49</sup> The introduction of the sale of alcohol was 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 suggested 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."<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Sydney Morning Herald, 10th October, 1873, p. 6.

<sup>48</sup> New South Wales Government Gazette, 24<sup>th</sup> July, 1883, Issue 311, p. 3961 and Sydney Morning Herald, 25<sup>th</sup> July, 1883, p. 5.

<sup>49</sup> The Gundagai Times and Tumut, Adelong and Murrumbidgee District Advertiser, 1st May, 1883, p. 2

<sup>50</sup> *Goulburn Herald*, 7<sup>th</sup> March, 1882, p. 2.

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.<sup>51</sup>

## **REFRESHMENT ROOMS ALMOST EVERYWHERE BUT HARDEN**

Requests for the opening of the refreshment room at Harden had been made from 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 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1881. Even at the border station, the platform building was incomplete at that time and it took until the 26<sup>th</sup> February 1882, for it to be finished for use. During the first year, the good shed acted as the station building.<sup>52</sup> 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.<sup>53</sup> That was an interesting comment as a refreshment room had been opened at Gunning on 11<sup>th</sup> 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 12<sup>th</sup> July 1882, for the construction of the railway between Murrumburrah and Young, a distance of 18 miles.<sup>54</sup> 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

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<sup>51</sup> *Goulburn Herald*, 29<sup>th</sup> March, 1884, p. 4.

<sup>52</sup> Lloyd Holmes, *Albury's Railway Centenary 1881 – 1981*, Albury and District Historical Society, 1981, p. 13.

<sup>53</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17<sup>th</sup> February, 1881, p. 6.

<sup>54</sup> *Cootamundra Herald*, 12<sup>th</sup> July, 1882, p. 2.

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 was also made that, in a recent conversation with the lessee of railway refreshment rooms, 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.”<sup>55</sup> 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 “on the question of establishing additional refreshment rooms is under consideration.”<sup>56</sup> 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 it was vital 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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.<sup>57</sup> That facility operated on the platform until April 1893, when it was relocated to a newly built post office in Harden.<sup>58</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> March 1877, less than two weeks before the arrival of the railway.

A great achievement in rural New South Wales occurred in 1882 when a water supply was laid on to the urinals and a water closet at Harden station. A new cesspit was constructed.<sup>59</sup> 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.

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<sup>55</sup> *Evening News*, 14<sup>th</sup> April, 1882, p. 2.

<sup>56</sup> *Goulburn Evening Penny Post*, 11<sup>th</sup> May, 1882, p. 2.

<sup>57</sup> Littlejohn, *Early Murrumburrah*, op. cit., p. 27.

<sup>58</sup> Tenders closed for the new post and telegraph office on 9<sup>th</sup> March, 1892. See *NSW Government Gazette*, 9<sup>th</sup> February, 1892, No. 84, p. 1111.

<sup>59</sup> Railway Commissioner, *Annual Report 1882*, Appendix 1, p. 4.



*This photograph shows the area formerly occupied by the refreshment room. The doors lead to the northbound platform. Taken in 2000, per way staff, who had vacated the space earlier in the year, are yet to take their photocopier. The 1950s two-colour walls (green and cream), the black dado line separating the colours and the picture rail are intact. At the top of the photograph barely visible is part of a large steel beam that was inserted when an original wall was removed to enlarge the refreshment room.*

While the line reached Albury in February 1881, a bridge across the Murray River between Albury and Wodonga was not opened until 11<sup>th</sup> June 1883.<sup>60</sup> It was this latter connection that provided the umph to get the Railway bureaucrats off their bums and do something about additional refreshment facilities. Victorian travellers were quick to express publicly the alleged inferiority of railway facilities in New South Wales.

In the public timetable dated 14<sup>th</sup> June 1883, the refreshment rooms listed on the southern line were Mittagong, Junee and Wagga Wagga.<sup>61</sup> It was in 1883 that the Railway Department got its act together to announce that additional railway refreshment rooms would be provided at Goulburn, Yass, Albury, Bathurst and Wellington.<sup>62</sup> There was no mention of the refreshment room at Harden. The refreshment room at Gunning, which had opened in 1877, was closed by the time the Yass refreshment room had 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

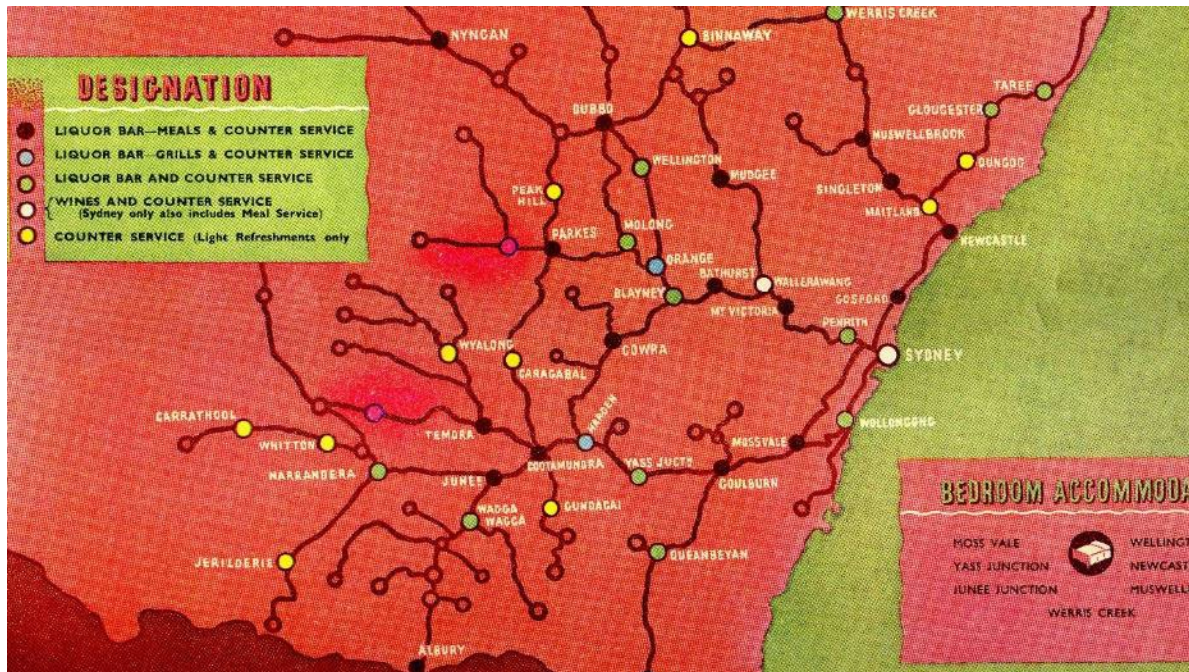
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<sup>60</sup> Holmes, op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>61</sup> Government Railways, *Timetables and Fares*, Government Printer, 14th June, 1883, p.38.

<sup>62</sup> *Goulburn Evening Penny Post*, 2nd June, 1883, p. 6.

was shocked at what he saw at Goulburn station, saying that “the temporary refreshment rooms are not an ornament to the railway station.”<sup>63</sup> 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 different times at Junee, Yass and Wagga Wagga.



Above is an extract from an official Railway wall poster showing the location and status of railway refreshment rooms. Although undated, it is thought to date from the early 1950s. Harden is shown as having a level 2 service, meaning the second highest, of the five descending levels. It was the only level 2 refreshment room on the Main South line.<sup>64</sup>

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
<b>Newtown</b> 1855	<b>Mittagong</b> 12/3/1870	<b>Wagga</b> <b>Wagga</b> Before 6/1880	<b>Young</b> 1/1/1891	<b>Cowra</b> Between 1901 and 1905	<b>Carrathool</b> between 1946–49
<b>Sydney</b> 1856 (closed 10/2015)	<b>Gunning</b> 11/7/1877	(closed 1882)	(closed c1905) <b>Moss Vale</b> 1/1/1891	<b>Gundagai</b> between 10/1909 &	<b>Caragabal</b> between 1946–9

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 18<sup>th</sup> September, 1883, p. 2.

<sup>64</sup> ARHS *Bulletin*, December, 1983, pp. 262 and 263.

1850s-1860s	1870s	1880s	1890s	1900-1920	Post 1920
	(closed before 15/5/1882 & possibly before February 1881)	<b>Junee</b> 9/1880 <b>Goulburn</b> 5/10/1883 <b>Yass</b> 1883 <b>Albury</b> 6/1883 <b>Harden</b> 11/1884	<b>Cootamundra</b> 1/1895	5/1913 <b>Culcairn</b> 1910 <b>Whitton</b> 1910 <b>Narrandera</b> 1912 <b>Temora</b> 1912/13 <b>Jerilderie</b> 1913/14 <b>Wagga</b> <b>Wagga</b> 20/8/1918 <b>Cootamundra West</b> 11/11/1918 <b>Lockhart</b> between 1918-23	<b>Wyalong Central</b> 1949

The above Table shows that the provision of the refreshment room at Harden was part of a large 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 and expansion of the rail system into the New South Wales wheat belt.



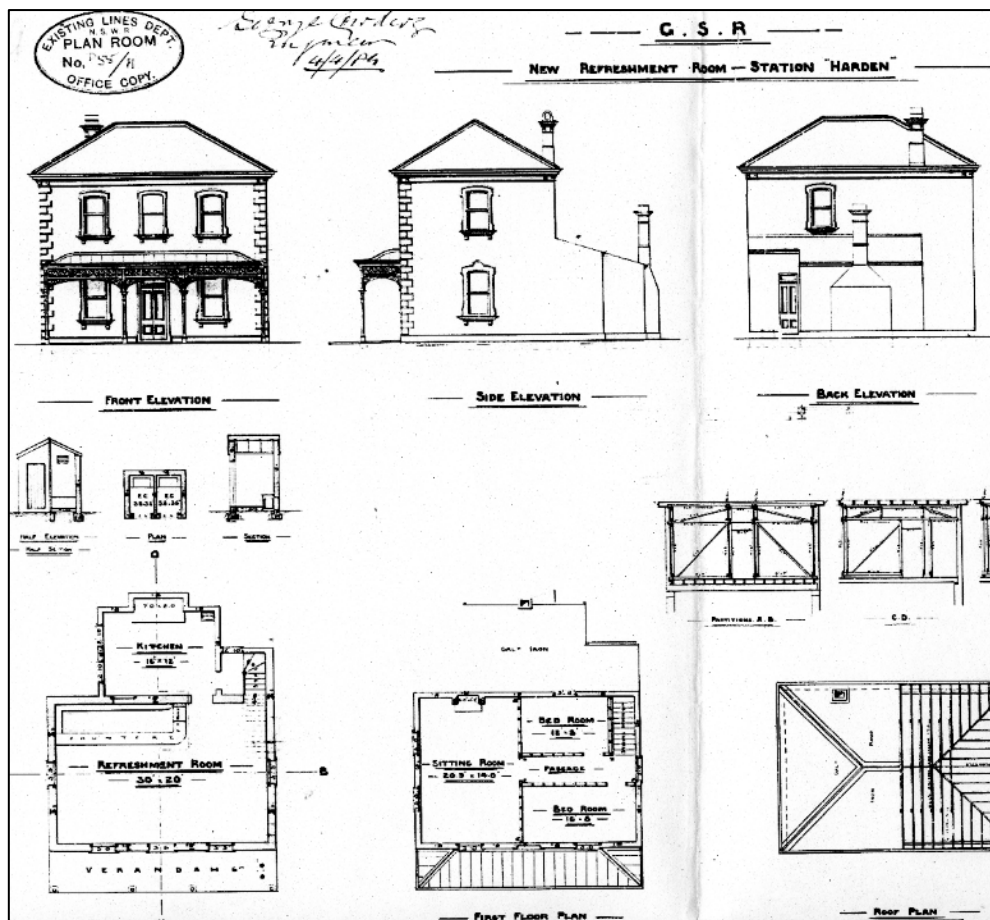
*The southern end wall of the 1884 refreshment room is shown on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1994 and marked by the painted, sandstone quoins. The extension to the refreshment room was carried out in the 1880s as evidenced by the then prevailing design policy to indent the new extension wall where it joined the 1884 structure which was identified by the quoins. The awning over the platform was extended to cover the new pedestrian entrance to the refreshment room.*

Quite a number of refreshment rooms in the 1880s 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 the very astute businessman, 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.<sup>65</sup> 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, encouraged the Government to act urgently.

## **HARDEN'S TURN FOR A REFRESHMENT ROOM – 1884**

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<sup>65</sup> A. Messner, *Trains Up*, State Rail Authority, no date, pp. 14 & 18.



The plan for the refreshment room was approved by George Cowdery, the Engineer for Existing Lines, on 4<sup>th</sup> April 1884. It was a moderately sized but a well-proportioned building with a minimum of external decorations. Upstairs, there were two bedrooms and a sitting room but no bathroom or toilet.

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 5<sup>th</sup> June 1884, with approval for the detailed architectural features occurring on 10<sup>th</sup> June 1884.<sup>66</sup> 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 across the frame. The twin front doors were the standard width of three feet six inches. Facing the platform was a six feet wide awning supported by chamfered, four-inch square timber columns with ornate cast iron brackets. That awning was subsequently replaced by an extension of the awning of the 1880 building.

<sup>66</sup> 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, who states that the approval was granted on 4<sup>th</sup> of April, 1884, but the date on the plan is 5<sup>th</sup> June, 1884.



The external cement rendered decoration was restricted to the window and door openings and the quoins.



*The entrance to the bar from the inside and outside on the northbound platform side. The black letters in the fanlight were expressed on a “milk stippled background”.<sup>67</sup> The bar was located within the 1880 building in what was formerly the gentlemen’s waiting room and female toilet. The bar was provided in 1927 and the absence of moulding around the door opening confirms that this doorway was provided at a time after construction.*

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 fireplace in the sitting room would heat the bedrooms.

A second plan was approved by George Cowdery on 10<sup>th</sup> June 1884 for the architectural details. The awning brackets for the refreshment room contained the letters “NSWGR”, a feature applied to very few stations. The counter refreshment room was designed to the departmental standards, being three feet high with a width across the counter top of two feet.

Tenders closed on 20<sup>th</sup> May, 1884 for the erection of the refreshment room and upstairs accommodation.<sup>68</sup> The press reported on 7<sup>th</sup> June 1884 that William Henry Downey was the successful contractor and his signature is on the plan with the date of 21<sup>st</sup> July 1884.<sup>69</sup> The cost of the building was £2,074. He also won the contract in

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<sup>67</sup> D. Ellsmore, *Harden Railway Station Analysis of Paint Finishes*, unpublished document, 2001, p. ii.

<sup>68</sup> *NSW Government Gazette*, 13<sup>th</sup> May, 1884, No. 217, p. 3080.

<sup>69</sup> *Freeman’s Journal*, 7<sup>th</sup> 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. It is Downey’s

the same year to build the “Pointsman’s cottage” at Demondrille, a building that survives today.<sup>70</sup> The cost of £2,074 compares with the contractor’s estimate in 1880 of £2,696 for the larger, 1880 station building which was completed in 1881.



*This year 2000 photograph shows the ground floor space of the former refreshment room. Note the high ceiling. The photographer is looking north with the paired doors leading to the bar. The timber stud wall across the room was built in 1927 when the Department decided to segregate the alcoholic consumers from the diners. The single door on the left leads to the northbound platform and the pair of doors on the right, without a fanlight above them, lead to the southbound platform. These doorways gave direct access to the dining area where tables and chairs were provided.*

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.

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name that is recorded in the *NSW Government Gazette*, 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 1884, Issue No. 257, p. 3587 as the successful tenderer.

<sup>70</sup> *Evening News*, 4<sup>th</sup> June, 1884, p. 7.



*This photograph shows part of the area formerly occupied by the bar. The doors lead into the former dining area and food counter. The walls are painted in the then tradition of two colours with the lower part, called the dado, in the usual darker colour and the upper part, known as the body of the wall, painted in a lighter hue. The two colours of green for the dado and cream for the body were separated by a brown marker called the dado line.*

It was rare to have two-storey buildings on a New South Wales Railway platforms. For instance, there were only four stations in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that possessed buildings of more than one level, apart from combination offices/residences. These were at Sydney (1874) and Newcastle (1876), with Hay in 1880 with one room on a first floor and a tiny structure at Granville in 1859 which was designed as a two level affair as it was located in a cutting. The largest group of two-level platform buildings were the eight combination structures built mainly between 1869 and 1884.<sup>71</sup> Next was the group of seven refreshment rooms. Compared to these 15 instances, there were ten times the number of single-storey platform buildings.

Why did Harden receive a two-storey refreshment room? 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 19<sup>th</sup> century were wider than 20 feet. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this was reduced even further with the norm being 12 or 13 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 answer to the question lies in the politics of people. At the time, all the other existing refreshment rooms on the Main South were two-storey and the people of Harden-Murrumburrah

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<sup>71</sup> These were the Liverpool, High Street, Wallerawang, Ashfield, Yass, Bowning, Orange and Emu Plains.

would have protested immensely if their town had received what appeared to be an inferior facility.



*The photograph above shows the high ceiling, paired doors and picture rail in the former refreshment room on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2000*

The Table below shows all examples of two-storey refreshment rooms.

**TABLE: TWO-STOREY REFRESHMENT ROOMS BUILT – NSW RAILWAYS**

<b>APPROVAL DATE FOR REFRESHMENT FACILITIES</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>AVAILABILITY OF PUBLIC BEDROOMS</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
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	June	Yes	
5/6/1884	Harden	No	
1884	Mount Victoria	Yes	
4/11/1884	Wellington	Yes	

APPROVAL DATE FOR REFRESHMENT FACILITIES	LOCATION	AVAILABILITY OF PUBLIC BEDROOMS	NOTES
12/12/1885	Werris Creek	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	

**NOTE:** *Albury station is missing from the Table. Although the platform building at Albury is large, it was built as a single storey structure. In 1930, internal alterations were provided to provide first floor staff accommodation at the northern end of the building.*

The above Table shows that there was only one refreshment facility opened at an intermediate station in the 19<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> century. Its modest size probably 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 at the system's maximum size in the early 1950s and the above Table shows 11 were two-storey, representing 20% of all refreshment rooms. It was the refreshment room that was the visually dominant type of two-storey building erected on New South Wales Railway platforms because of their larger physical size (except Harden) and high level of internal and external decoration. Thus, when the entirety of platform buildings at the approximately 1,500 railway stations in the State are considered, two-storey refreshment rooms were extremely rare examples of New South Wales railway architecture.



*The unpainted structure dates from a time between 1946 and 1957 and possibly when the northbound platform was extended in 1954 at the southern end. The doghouse for two animals is located adjacent to the entrance to the then sitting room for refreshment room staff. Taken on 28<sup>th</sup> May 1982.*

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

LOCATION	APPROVAL DATE	TYPE OF BUILDING	NOTES
			building – closed 1//1/1891
Yass	1883	Combined office/residence	Private residential accommodation converted to public bedrooms
Harden	1884	Refreshment room	
Bowling		Combined office/residence	Extant
Junee	16/6/1883	Refreshment room	Like Harden, it had posted verandah on platform (now removed)

The above Table clearly demonstrates 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 building as “newly erected”.<sup>72</sup> Now for the puzzle. A tender had been let for occupation of the refreshment room prior to April 1885 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 26<sup>th</sup> March 1885.<sup>73</sup> 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.<sup>74</sup>

#### **HOW TIMELY WAS THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE HARDEN REFRESHMENT ROOM, COMPARED WITH OTHERS ON THE MAIN SOUTH LINE?**

<sup>72</sup> *Cootamundra Herald*, 26th November, 1884, p. 4.

<sup>73</sup> *Murrumburrah Signal*, 2nd May, 1885, p. 6.

<sup>74</sup> NSW, *Main Southern Line Maps*, Revised Ed., Department of Railways, 1967, p. S43A.



The above photograph dates between 1889 and 1912. The external walls of the buildings are unpainted. There is a gap between the 1880 building and the 1884 refreshment room, though the male toilet has already been relocated to the far end and the roof extended. Note the 1896 carriage shed located at the righthand side of the photograph behind the tender of the engine. **SOURCE:** photograph No. 510146 ARHS Railway Archives.

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

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 but the opening of the platform at Murrumburrah delayed matters.

What is clear from the Table above is 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.<sup>75</sup>

## **DETAILED ARCHITECTURAL ASSESSMENT OF THE INTERNAL DECORATIONS IN THE HARDEN REFRESHMENT ROOM**



*This photograph shows the former refreshment room looking into the former bar. SOURCE: D. Ellsmore, Harden Railway Station Analysis of Paint Finishes, unpublished document, 2001, front cover. According to Dr. Ellsmore, the use of green for the dado dated from the early 1950s and that it replaced the original dark brown. The cream for the body of the wall had been applied at earlier times. The ceiling was covered with press metal sheets. The door on the left provided access to the northbound platform and the paired doors on the right to the southbound platform.*

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 are 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

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<sup>75</sup> NSW Government Gazette, 24/10/90, Issue No. 603, p. 8195.

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.”<sup>76</sup>

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**

In 1881, the population of Harden/Murrumburrah total 1,620 individuals comprising of 880 males and 740 females.<sup>77</sup> Crowding on railway platforms had been a big problem at many stations from the 1870s and at some stations, such as Dubbo, the Station Master in 1881 acted to prevent the crowding of the platform by “loungers.”<sup>78</sup> At times, it was difficult for travellers to reach their carriages. He instructed his staff to allow only people with train tickets to enter the platform. the instruction used at Dubbo was

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<sup>76</sup> D. Ellsmore, *Harden Railway Station Analysis of Paint Finishes*, unpublished document, 2001, p. 6.

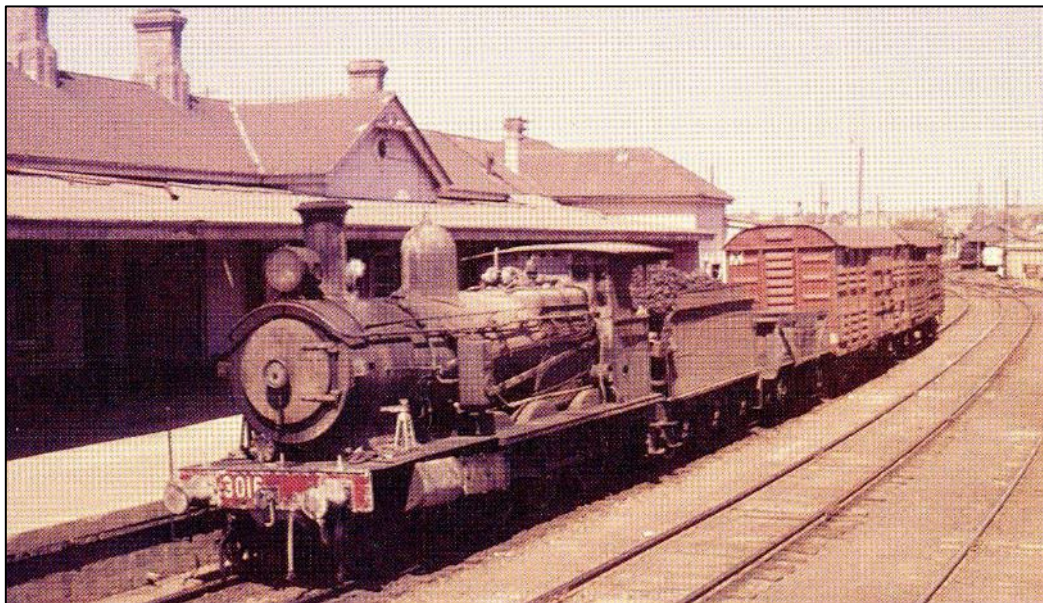
<sup>77</sup> Report dated 17th October, 1881, of the Railways to the Colonial Treasurer in Appendix to the Ways and Means of the Government of NSW for the year 1882, p. 582.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 2<sup>nd</sup> April, 1881, p. 2.

widely cited as “a good rule” for those actually using the rail service rather than just looking at the travellers. The extent of the problem at Harden station is yet to be determined.

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.<sup>79</sup>

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.



*The platform building looks pretty shabby. Chris Sim took this photograph on 8<sup>th</sup> January 1966 of loco, 3016, alongside the southbound platform making up its train. Railway historian, Lawrence Ryan, wrote that the use of 30T class engines was rare on trains between Harden and Cowra. He added that the mixed train in the photograph ended up having a composition of S, VLX, VLX, S, CR and guard's van. Note an engine and a works' van just outside the two-road carriage shed at the right. SOURCE: L. Ryan, Lines to the Lachlan, Revised Ed., St. James, ARHS. 1993, p. 181.*

Local historian, Dick Littlejohn, said that, even when a verandah was added to the post office, “the conditions were primitive.”<sup>80</sup> There were also additions and alterations of an unknown description to the post and telegraph office in 1885, possibly the construction of the verandah noted by Dick Littlejohn.

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<sup>79</sup> Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser, 22nd February, 1881, p. 3.

<sup>80</sup> Littlejohn, *Early Murrumburrah*, op. cit., p. 27.

From 1<sup>st</sup> 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 issued 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. The press reported:

“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 affected”.<sup>81</sup>

The Postal Department moved its office into town and away from the station in 1893.

## **ENLARGEMENT OF THE HARDEN REFRESHMENT ROOM - 1885**

It was not long since the refreshment room had been opened when it was decided to enlarge the facility.<sup>82</sup> 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 refreshment room.

On 21<sup>st</sup> July, 1885, George Cowdery approved plans for additions to the refreshment room. Tenders closed on 8<sup>th</sup> September 1885, for the construction and erection of additions to the refreshment and accommodation rooms at Harden.<sup>83</sup> John Sharp was the successful contractor and the tender price was reported to be “over £500”.<sup>84</sup> The work, which would not have commenced until November 1885, 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 in January 1886 glowingly about the excellent work at Harden station, saying that Harden “now boasts one of the finest

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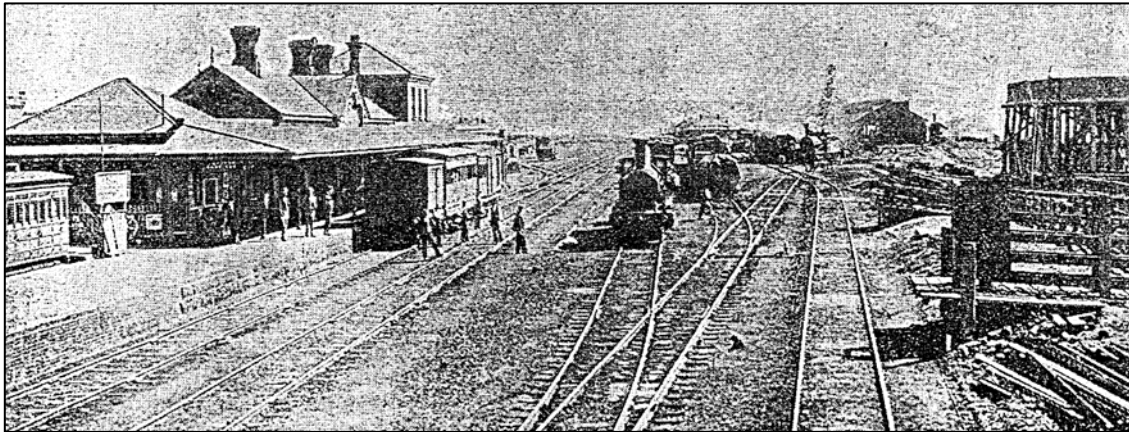
<sup>81</sup> *Goulburn Herald*, 24<sup>th</sup> September, 1885, p. 2.

<sup>82</sup> *NSW Government Gazette*, 28<sup>th</sup> August, 1885, No. 373, p. 5632.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>84</sup> *NSW Government Gazette*, 23<sup>rd</sup> October, 1885, No. 496, p. 6923, *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 31<sup>st</sup> October, 1885, p. 14 and *Murrumburrah Signal*, 31<sup>st</sup> October, 1885, p. 5.

refreshment rooms between Sydney and Wagga Wagga.”<sup>85</sup> The 1880 building had a gabled which was an unusual feature for Second Class buildings to which the Harden building belonged. Hipped roofs were the preferred style for station buildings at the time 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, namely an out of shed, 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.



*The refreshment room looms large in the above photograph. One traveller in November 1884 commented that, at Harden, there was “a monster refreshment room in the course of erection”. Of Cootamundra, he described the station as “miserable”.<sup>86</sup> The male toilet has been relocated to the north end, thus dating the photograph between 1889 and 1912. The carriage dock is at the left and the malodorous stock race is at the right opposite the platform. In 1887, Harden station had a staff of 11.<sup>87</sup> **SOURCE:** UNKNOWN*

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. 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 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 have been timber to which corrugated iron sheets would be attached. Also, a lamp

<sup>85</sup> *Murrumburrah Signal*, 24th January, 1886, p. 5.

<sup>86</sup> *Nepean Times*, 15<sup>th</sup> November 1884, p. 2.

<sup>87</sup> *Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser*, 24<sup>th</sup> March 1888, p. 651.

was fixed over the door on the platform to the refreshment room as well as other locations under the platform awning.<sup>88</sup>



*This photograph was taken on 25<sup>th</sup> February 1978. The different roof materials show the original building and subsequent additions. Maroon paint has been applied to the plinth at the base of the building, to the doors on the entrance to the male toilet, the luggage trolleys, water bubbler and vertical posts supporting the platform awning. A mixed train has already been composed, headed by a 48 class engine and including a HCX composite car, for the branchline service to Young and is stabled in the Down Dock.*

The licensee of the refreshment room was none other than John Castner, who held similar licenses at another 12 stations, including Sydney, Mittagong, Goulburn, Yass, Junee and Wagga Wagga.<sup>89</sup> Mr. Castner's lease for the whole of these rooms did not terminate until 31<sup>st</sup> December 1890.<sup>90</sup> He also operated the railway gasworks at Junee. Castner had strong links with government officials of a very suspicious type.

Alyson Wales, a former Murrumburrah high school student, wrote about the full-time and part-time workers who were employed at the Harden refreshment room. She said:

“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

<sup>88</sup> Railway Commissioner, *Annual Report 1885*, Appendix, p. 5.

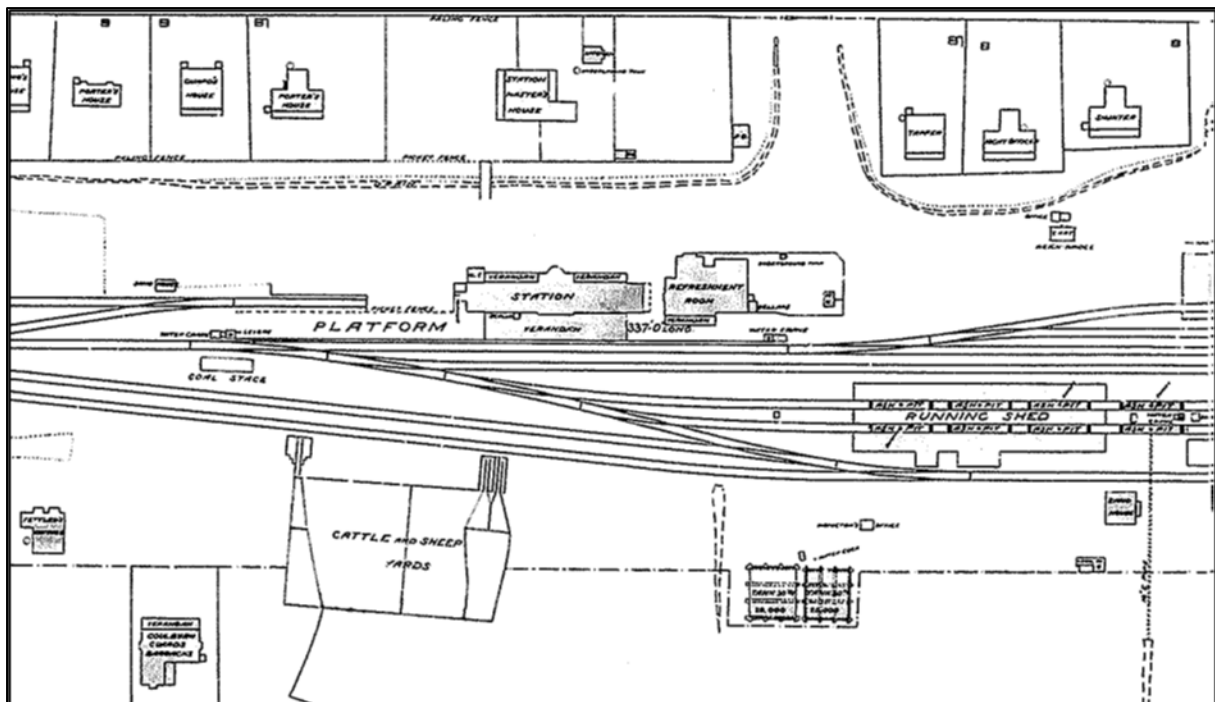
<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 30<sup>th</sup> July, 1886, p. 7. The 13 refreshment rooms were: Sydney, Mittagong, Goulburn, Yass, Harden, Junee, Wagga Wagga, Parramatta, Penrith, Mount Victoria, Bathurst Wellington and Nyngan. The refreshment room on the Great Northern Railway and that line generally were physically unconnected to the western and southern systems and managed separately.

<sup>90</sup> *Bowral Free Press and Berrima District Intelligencer*, 7<sup>th</sup> August 1886, p. 3.

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 (actually coal ed.) into the kitchens. The Basket Boys' uniform was a fawn coat, navy trousers and a cap".<sup>91</sup>

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 for departure.

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 Cunnigar as the station for the "Lord of the Plains – D. H. Campbell", who managed the large Cunningham Plains pastoral station.<sup>92</sup>



Above is the track plan for 1887. It shows the single platform being 337 feet long. The 1884 approved refreshment room, with the 1885 addition, is shown as a separate structure to the 1880 main building. There was a single dock platform at the northern end. At that time, there were 20 official residences at Harden with 13 on the southbound side and seven on the northbound side. The stockyards were located directly opposite the platform and no doubt provided interesting aromas, sights and sounds for the waiting passengers. At that time, the

<sup>91</sup> 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.

<sup>92</sup> Cootamundra Herald, 8th of April, 1885, p. 5.

*two track locomotive shed was very close to the platform and would have added to the unpleasantness of waiting passengers with the noise, smoke and cinders.*

## **PROGRESS OF WORK ON THE REFRESHMENT ROOM 1885-1887**

Tenders closed on 8<sup>th</sup> September 1885, for additions to the existing refreshment room.<sup>93</sup> 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.” However, 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.”<sup>94</sup>

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.”<sup>95</sup> The optimism of early completion was misplaced. For an unknown reason, a new plan was issued on 9<sup>th</sup> April 1886, for the same additions to the refreshment room for which the plan was prepared in 1885. Work then allegedly accelerated and the larger facility was reported to be in use by June, 1886.<sup>96</sup> The work cost approximately £282.

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.<sup>97</sup> 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 is assumed that the additions to the refreshment room were finalised in 1886.

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<sup>93</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2nd August, 1886, p. 4.

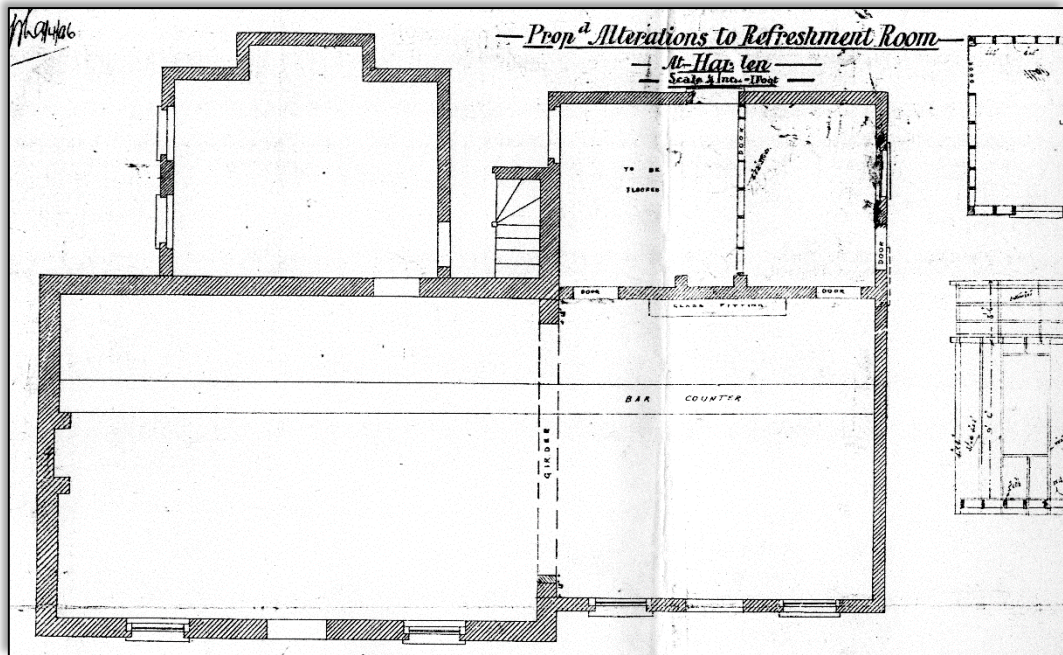
<sup>94</sup> *Murrumburrah Signal*, 27th February, 1886, p. 4. *NSW Government Gazette*, 23<sup>rd</sup> October, 1885, Issue No. 496, p. 6923 states the contract had been awarded to Sharp.

<sup>95</sup> *Globe*, 18<sup>th</sup> March, 1886, p. 3.

<sup>96</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24<sup>th</sup> June, 1886, p. 6.

<sup>97</sup> *Murrumburrah Signal*, 14<sup>th</sup> May, 1887.





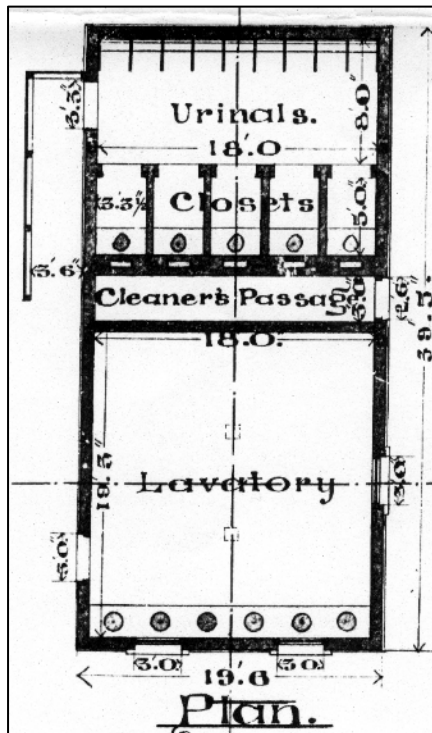
*In the short time of two years, the original 1884-approved refreshment facility, which is expressed on the left, was almost doubled in size. The 1885 plan involved the demolition of the southern wall and the insertion of a girder at ceiling level and the extension of the existing 30 feet long counter by another 20 feet. The proposed addition is identified by the recessed front wall. Moreover, two rooms were to be added to the rear as well as a freestanding, timber laundry measuring 15 feet by 10 feet. It contained a circular “wash copper” in which to launder the tablecloths and other fabrics used in the refreshment room. An additional underground water tank was also added.*

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.

## **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

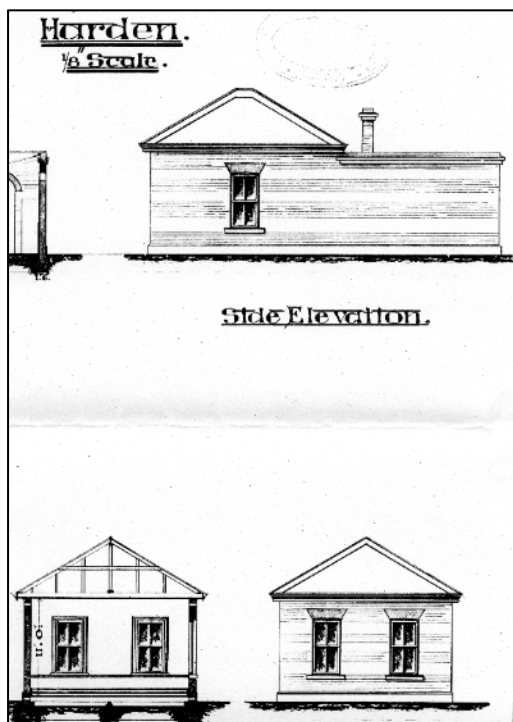
were “urinals and closets.” The building is extant but unrecognisable with a multitude of internal and external changes.



*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 contractors 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.<sup>98</sup>*

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 19<sup>th</sup> century and for the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> 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.

<sup>98</sup> *Murrumburrah Signal*, 8th June, 1889, p. 2.



*The design of the male toilet block is unusual with a hipped roof over the hand wash basins and a parapet covering a single-pitched roof over the closets and urinal. The windows faced the platform with entry on the side of the building nearer to the end of the platform.*

A traveller commented that Harden railway station “looks immense”.<sup>99</sup> This was a reference to the effect of the additional toilet block at the north end of the large male toilet block as well as the refreshment room at the opposite end. Because the 1889 toilet block, like the 1884 refreshment room, was free-standing, the 1880 main structure retained its symmetrical attractiveness. Both additions to the station reflected a rapid increase in passenger business in the 1880s, a phenomenon experienced at many stations throughout the Colony.

An unpleasant function at most stations was the removal of night soil pans from the toilets. At Harden and larger stations, a paid arrangement would have been in place with the town contractor to change the station pans. At smaller stations without a local contractor, the track staff undertake the work. Station staff did not usually change the pans. In 1884, some Porters on the Main Northern line were instructed the change the pans as a temporary measure for an unknown reason. They refused to change the pans, stating that “the work is derogatory and does not form part of their duty”.<sup>100</sup> They were suspended from duty.

## **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

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 28<sup>th</sup> September, 1889, p. 2.

<sup>100</sup> *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 27<sup>th</sup> September, 1884, p. 11.

to Railway officials to upgrade both the platform and the station.<sup>101</sup> That deputation appears to have been successful to some degree as the *Annual Report* revealed that very minor additions were made to the platform buildings, costing a mere £49.<sup>102</sup> 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.<sup>103</sup>

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.<sup>104</sup>



*This photograph shows the building on 14<sup>th</sup> May 1909. The transverse gable in the middle of the roof identifies the entrance to the platform from the general waiting room and station forecourt. SOURCE: Photograph No. 510544 ARHS Railway Archives*

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<sup>101</sup> *Cootamundra Herald*, 28th November, 1888, p. 7.

<sup>102</sup> Commissioner for Railways, *Annual Report 1887/88*, Appendix 1 p. 24.

<sup>103</sup> 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.

<sup>104</sup> *Murrumburrah Signal*, 16<sup>th</sup> March, 1889, p. 2.

## 6. 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 1890s 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 in 1891. 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 tucked away in their own financial reserves for maintenance and replacement of assets and did not have to ask the Colonial Government for more money.



*This pre-duplication photograph shows the much less photographed road side of the building. The female toilets have been relocated to occupy the rear part of the ladies' waiting room and the corrugated iron screen towards the left was erected to permit the discrete changing of the night soil pans in their toilet. The verandahs each side of the bay window featured cast iron lacework. Towards the right side protruding beyond the main building alignment is, nearer to the camera, the out of shed/luggage room and, behind it, the 1889 male toilet. **SOURCE:** Les Pinney collection*

## THE PROVISION OF AN “OUT OF GOODS SHED” - 1891

A Departmental “Shop Order” was written on the 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1891, for the provision of “accommodation for out of goods”. Tenders closed on 24<sup>th</sup> August, 1891, for the erection of an ‘ “out of” goods shed’.<sup>105</sup> 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 ofs’ 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. Rates were different for small items and so they were cheaper to send as goods rather than parcels...”<sup>106</sup>

In contrast with out ofs, parcels were consignments that travelled by passenger train for quick delivery and were kept within the main station building on arrival, unlike out ofs which were often kept in a detached shed with a lower level of security. Up until the time of Chief Commissioner Eddy, only parcels under 56 pounds in weight were conveyed by passenger trains and those over 56 pounds were taken by goods trains.<sup>107</sup> With the term, out of, Eddy introduced the concept of a second-class parcel under 56 pounds in weight. However, because out ofs 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 ofs 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 were 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.”<sup>108</sup> This means that they often had large doors facing both onto the platform and to the road approach side.

At Harden, the “out of goods shed” was provided at the northern 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

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<sup>105</sup> *New South Wales Government Gazette*, 18<sup>th</sup> August, 1891, Issue No. 536, p. 6388.

<sup>106</sup> K. Williams, “Parcels and Small Consignments on the NSW Railways”, *Australian Railway History*, July, 2016, p. 14.

<sup>107</sup> *New South Wales Government Gazette*, 6th October, 1885, Issue No. 457 Supplement, p. 6561.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

walls covered with galvanised iron sheets. The Harden out of shed was completed 9<sup>th</sup> December 1891. Since this was the same date when contractors, Franklin and Findlay, completed their contract for the extension of the platform awning and other changes, they possibly also built the out of goods room somewhere on the platform.



*The photographer is looking across the northbound platform from the northern end on 12<sup>th</sup> December 1970. The next mixed train to Young/Cowra was too long for the South Dock and has been formed and stabled in the yard for the scheduled departure time. It trails an HCX carriage the design of which dates back to 1890 and its use was a reflection of the consistent, inadequate funding made by State Government's to improve the railway system and particularly country branchline services. The platform was enhanced by extensive hedging towards the north end, but the presentation remained a responsibility of interested station staff. Once they were made redundant, the vegetation was removed. On the left is the remains of the water column. To the immediate left of the station nameboard is the Station Master's residence.*

## **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.<sup>109</sup> 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.

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<sup>109</sup> *Australian Railway History*, July, 2016, page 17.

## REFRESHMENT ROOM ARRANGEMENTS & AWNING REPLACEMENT - 1891

It was in the public timetable of 1<sup>st</sup> January 1891 that refreshment room details were expressed for the first time 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” against 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 1<sup>st</sup> January 1891, that the existing refreshment room at Mittagong was closed and a replacement 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 24<sup>th</sup> August 1891 for additions to the Junee refreshment room.<sup>110</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 southern 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 26<sup>th</sup> September and completed on 9<sup>th</sup> December 1891, to provide a “covering” over the entrance to the refreshment room.<sup>111</sup> The estimated cost was £180 but the actual cost was £434/12/8. The awning on the present northbound platform was 14 feet 9 inches wide. In 1891, they won contracts for the construction of timber railway residences at Frampton, Yanco and Henty. In August 1893, Franklin and Findlay won the tender for the construction of the five intermediate stations on the

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<sup>110</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24<sup>th</sup> August, 1891, p. 6.

<sup>111</sup> *NSW Government Gazette*, 1<sup>st</sup> September, 1891, Issue No. 573, p. 7015 states that Franklin and Findlay were the successful contractors.



new line between Cootamundra and Temora, namely Bauloora, Yeo Yeo, Stockinbingal, Gundibindyal and Combaning. Franklin and Findlay was a Goulburn based organisation which in 1893 constructed the first chambers in Albury Street for the Murrumburrah Municipal Council.<sup>112</sup>



*The photographer is looking north with the start of the gradient to Cunningham just perceived. Harden North Signal Box is located on the left hand side of the photograph. Locomotive 44233 comes to a stop at Harden with No. 65 Intercapital Daylight Express on 25<sup>th</sup> February 1978.*

## **MALE TOILET ALTERED & NEW LAMP ROOM PROVIDED - 1891**

The 1889 male toilet at the northern 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 northern 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 but also the lavatory, where the hand wash basins were located. A linen closet was also provided as part of the space of the 1889 lavatory.

As well as extending the platform awning in the southern direction by 58 feet, it was also extended at the northern 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

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<sup>112</sup> D. I. McDonald, *The Shire of Harden – a History of Local Government 1890-1990*, p. 64.

road leading to the railway station was receiving consideration.<sup>113</sup> 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. The management of the forecourt 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 NORTHERN 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 location was changed sometime between 1891 and 1914, when it was used for an extension of the refreshment room
Ladies' waiting room	16 feet	

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 4<sup>th</sup> June, 1891, p. 2

ROOM DESCRIPTION	LENGTH OF ROOM	NOTES
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

As at 1887, the platform was 337 feet long. Tenders were called on 5<sup>th</sup> September for the platform extension and "other works".<sup>114</sup> Additions were made to the station nameboards on 28<sup>th</sup> May 1891 to indicate to passengers to change there for stations on the Cowra line. The erection of such signage had only taken six years since the line to Young had been opened.



*This 1986 photograph shows the expansion of the first-floor facilities in 1891 to provide a bathroom, with bath only. There was still no first floor toilet. Unfortunately, no doubt because of the 1890s Depression, the cheapest possible materials were utilised for the walls which were covered externally by corrugated iron sheets.*

<sup>114</sup> *Cootamundra Herald*, 5th September, 1891, p.5.

# 7. 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 the entrance to Harden railway station. The Secretary for Railways requested a plan of the location Council would like the trees to be planted.<sup>115</sup> 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.<sup>116</sup> 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.<sup>117</sup> 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. The relationship was not a happy tale.

## STATION PRESENTATION

The 1890s was a period in which there was a degree of harmony about the link 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".<sup>118</sup>

The Railway Commissioners visited Harden station on 13<sup>th</sup> 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".<sup>119</sup>

There was an event in 1896 that adversely affected the visual presentation of the station. A Shop Order was issued on 26<sup>th</sup> August 1896 for the erection of a two-track

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<sup>115</sup> *Murrumburrah Signal*, 22nd June, 1901, p. 2.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 21st September, 1901, p. 2.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 18th June, 1904, p. 2.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 18<sup>th</sup> February, 1893, p. 2.

<sup>119</sup> *Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser*, 22nd June, 1895, p. 1294.

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 also completed at a number of stations, including Young and Cowra. The Harden building was completed on 29<sup>th</sup> 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 northern 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 north 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 6<sup>th</sup> May. The then Engineer for Existing Lines, James Fraser, recommended 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.<sup>120</sup>

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 maintained that 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.<sup>121</sup> How interesting it was that the Harden newspaper did not include Murrumburrah/Harden as one of the “fine towns”!

Not everyone sees things the same way. This was the case in 1907 when a local newspaper reported 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.”<sup>122</sup> The reporter must not have been looking at the unattractive 1891 additions at the northern end or the 1896 carriage shed.

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<sup>120</sup> *Murrumburrah Signal*, 23rd April, 1904, p. 2.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 2nd March, 1906, p. 2.

<sup>122</sup> *Murrumburrah Signal*, 16th April, 1898, p. 3.

As if it were not bad enough to have the mess at the northern end of the station, in 1910 a similar treatment was applied to the southern end. A footwarmer furnace had been provided at the station before 1910 just off the platform at the southern end. 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.<sup>123</sup>

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 9<sup>th</sup> August. These additional facilities were placed off the end of the southern 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.<sup>124</sup> 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 related to the existence of station gardens. Individual Station Masters had planted gardens at some stations before 1890 but 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 encouraged the planting of gardens, stating:

“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”.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> C. Banger, “Footwarmers on Australian Government Railways,” *Bulletin*, April, 2000, p. 124.

<sup>124</sup> *Murrumburrah Signal*, 5th June, 1916, p. 2.

<sup>125</sup> *New South Wales Railway Budget*, 17<sup>th</sup> July, 1894, p. 200.

It would take another five years before the Commissioners commenced an annual garden competition. 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<sup>126</sup>

The above list totals 36 stations, of which 11 were suburban and the remainder country areas. The stations formed a stimulus to the 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 – 1892-1901**

There was an absence of harmony between people in Harden and Murrumburrah and the local newspaper office, which was located at Murrumburrah, used a “correspondent” to submit reports about Harden station. The topic of the day in 1892 was the need for a larger 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.<sup>127</sup>

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 were concerned, size mattered. A larger clock was not primarily required for waiting passengers to facilitate better visibility, but

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> *Murrumburrah Signal*, 9<sup>th</sup> July, 1892, p. 2.

for a sociological reason, namely, to reflect the prosperity of the town. 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 the existing clock 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, 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.<sup>128</sup> Again, 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 the 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.”<sup>129</sup> By October, the Commissioners had found a clock and were refurbishing it before sending it to Harden for installation.<sup>130</sup> The clock arrived in November, 1901, being described as “nice.”<sup>131</sup>

## **PLATFORM OPERATIONS AND ISSUES**

There was a report in 1892 that portion of the platform surface 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.<sup>132</sup> 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, it 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

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 1<sup>st</sup> June, 1901, p. 2.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 24th August, 1901, p. 2.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid. 26 October, 1901, p. 2. There is conflicting information that says the clock was not installed until May, 1903. See *Murrumburrah Signal*, 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 1903, p. 2.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid. 23rd November, 1901, p. 2.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 10<sup>th</sup> December, 1892, p. 2.



was located on the platform, this being normal for a New South Wales railway station and the practice of providing stretches did not end until 1990.

In 1897, the platform was extended by 100 feet.<sup>133</sup>

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.<sup>134</sup> The use of platform tickets was a fairly recent event and had been first introduced at Sydney railway station on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1891 at a cost of tuppence.<sup>135</sup> 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.<sup>136</sup> 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.<sup>137</sup>

Platform tickets were also to be used for local carriers and other people frequently picking up and delivering goods to the station parcels office and, for this purpose, it was possible to purchase platform tickets for a period of six or 12 months.<sup>138</sup> Some stations had been designed from the outset so that members of the public could deliver and pick up parcels from a door facing the street, thereby obviating the need to buy a platform ticket. At other stations, such as at Young, the building was altered to provide a separate public entry to the parcels office.<sup>139</sup> The building at Harden station did not have a separate rear entry to the parcels office and the situation was made worse with the conversion of the side platform to an island platform in 1912, as parcels had to be delivered and picked up directly from the platform itself using the subway.

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.<sup>140</sup> There was a protest meeting in February 1907 at the cost of tuppence 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

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<sup>133</sup> *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 24th April, 1897, p. 10.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 31st December, 1898, p. 1.

<sup>135</sup> *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.

<sup>136</sup> *Illawarra Mercury*, 15th September, 1891, p. 4 and *The Australian Star*, 10th September, 1891, p. 6.

<sup>137</sup> *New South Wales Government Gazette* No. 609, 26<sup>th</sup> August, 1892, p. 6927.

<sup>138</sup> *Glen Innes Examiner and General Advertiser*, 26<sup>th</sup> August, 1904, p. 2.

<sup>139</sup> The alteration was made in 1924.

<sup>140</sup> *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 26<sup>th</sup> January, 1906, p. 2.

merely killed time and gratify idle curiosity.”<sup>141</sup> The newspaper thought that the restriction on access to the platform was absurd in country towns.



*This photograph, taken on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1994, shows part of the face brick addition to the refreshment room dating from the late 1940s/early 1950s. The single storey part of the refreshment room contained the kitchen, staff sitting room and pantry. The sitting room was added in 1906. Note the different style of window frames on the first floor level of the two-storey refreshment room. Those windows were added in 1901 when bathroom was installed.*

Railway By-law No. 15 had prohibited smoking on all New South Wales platforms from at least July 1870 and possibly earlier.<sup>142</sup> Unfortunately, staff did not necessarily enforce the ban at any time.<sup>143</sup> In Australia, unlike the case in the United Kingdom, railway staff were permitted to smoke while on duty and that worked against those very staff empowered to apprehend offenders. In the 1880s, cigarettes were introduced into Australia, which encouraged further smoking. Emeritus Professor Blainey wrote that, by the 1890s, four or five out of every six men were smokers.<sup>144</sup> The By-law banning smoking by the public was re-issued in 1885 and in 1891 but the problem did not go away.<sup>145</sup> In 1901, Railway staff were still not enforcing the By-law 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.”<sup>146</sup>

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:

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<sup>141</sup> *Murrumburrah Signal*, 8th February, 1907, p. 2.

<sup>142</sup> *New South Wales Government Gazette*, 25th July, 1870, Issue No. 173 Supplement, p. 1573.

<sup>143</sup> *Gundagai Times and Tumut, Adelong and Murrumbidgee District Advertiser*, 11<sup>th</sup> May, 1882, p. 2.

<sup>144</sup> G. Blainey, “History of Leisure in Australia”, *The Victorian Historical Journal*, 1978, Vol. 49 No. 1, pp. 7-22.

<sup>145</sup> *New South Wales Government Gazette*, 26<sup>th</sup> August, 1891, Issue No. 560, p. 6709.

<sup>146</sup> *Murrumburrah Signal*, 27th April, 1901, p. 1.

“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”.<sup>147</sup>

Nothing was done to extend the platform awning.

## **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 shunting yard and locomotive depot, the local newspaper thought that the railway authorities should install electric lighting rather than gas.<sup>148</sup>

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.<sup>149</sup> 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.<sup>150</sup>

Another issue raised by the Farmers and Settlers' Association in 1909 was the need for a list of the prices to be shown on a poster and affixed 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.<sup>151</sup>

## **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 initially 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.

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid. 18th January, 1902, p. 2.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid. 5th July, 1902, p. 2.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 30th March, 1906, p. 2. Tenders for the purchase of four Aerogen gas plants (one to power 60 lights, two plants to power 30 lights each and one to power 15 lights were sold by tender in 1926. See *NSW Government Gazette*, 13<sup>th</sup> August, 1926, Issue No. 107, p. 3478.

<sup>150</sup> *The Farmer and Settler*, 12th March, 1909, p. 7.

<sup>151</sup> *Albury Banner and Wodonga Express*, 30<sup>th</sup> July, 1909, p. 4.

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.”<sup>152</sup>

On 29<sup>th</sup> 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 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 9<sup>th</sup> of April 1896. It was also intended to build a new laundry. It is unknown whether these works were implemented.



The above photographs look along the corridor on the first floor level of the refreshment room. The picture on the left looks south over the single-storey kitchen area and the one on the right looks north onto the roof of the 1880 building. The photographs were taken on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2000

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:

- Moss Vale                    £900
- Goulburn                    £301
- Yass Junction                £192

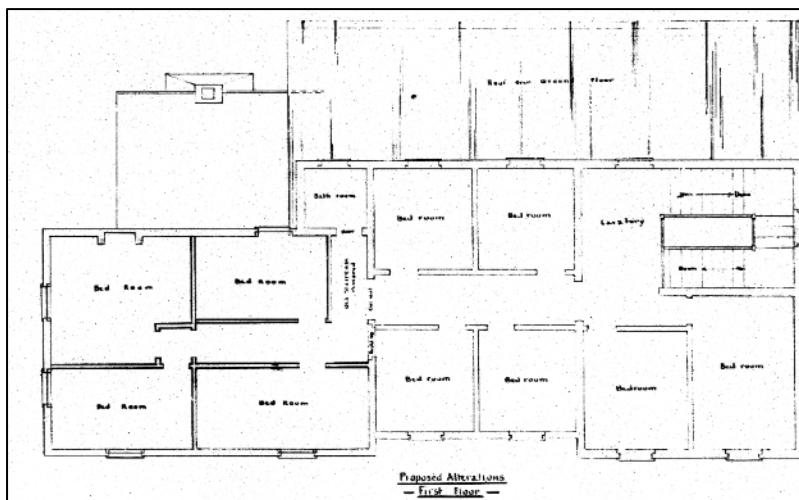
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<sup>152</sup> *The Farmer and Settler*, 4th October, 1902, p. 2.

- Harden £216
- Cootamundra £26
- Junee £833<sup>153</sup>

In 1898, travellers by train praised the excellence of the tea supplied at the Harden refreshment room.<sup>154</sup> 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”.<sup>155</sup> The staff at the station lost a black and tan cattle dog on 4<sup>th</sup> October 1898 and reward was offered for the return of the animal to the station.<sup>156</sup>

A plan was prepared, with the date of 16<sup>th</sup> September 1901, for a massive expansion of the refreshment room. There was to be an increase in the size of the public area and an increase in the size of the accommodation for the Manager and staff. Adjacent to the rear kitchen were to be separate sitting rooms for the Manager and for the staff as well as a “private dining room”. Upstairs, the number of bedrooms was to be increased from four to ten. As far as can be worked out, the proposed alterations downstairs went nowhere. The upstairs area had previously been converted from two to four bedrooms by the elimination of the sitting room.



*This 1901 plan proposed an additional six bedrooms to the existing four bedrooms plus a much enlarged counter and dining areas and two private dining rooms. The proposed increase in the number of bedrooms did not go ahead but some changes were made at platform level.*

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.<sup>157</sup>

By 1905, the population of the Harden end of the town was 750 people and residential 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

<sup>153</sup> *The Scrutineer and Berrima District Press*, 21<sup>st</sup> November 1896, p. 2.

<sup>154</sup> *Murrumburrah Signal*, 16<sup>th</sup> of April, 1898, p. 6.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 24<sup>th</sup> December, 1898, p. 1.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 26 November, 1898, p. 3.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 25<sup>th</sup> February, 1899, p. 2.

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”.<sup>158</sup>

Ambulance classes were being held in the general waiting room at Harden station in 1905.<sup>159</sup>

Five years after the 1901 partial changes to the refreshment room were made, work being authorised on 12<sup>th</sup> June 1906 and completed on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1906.<sup>160</sup> These works must have been substantial as they cost £1,132 but the nature of some of the alterations is unknown. What is known is that the 1901 proposal for the construction of a downstairs sitting room for the Manager and his family was provided in 1906.<sup>161</sup>



*The above photographs taken on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2000 show the first staircase on the left and a later staircase on the right.*

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 6th October, 1905, p. 2.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 19th May, 1905, p. 2.

<sup>160</sup> Shop Order No. 585 4, Shop Order Book 21C/252, former SRA Archives, p. 95.

<sup>161</sup> 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.



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 1912**

The conversion of the Harden side platform into an island platform was made public in June 1911.<sup>162</sup> News slowly came to light about various aspects of the project but it was public information in August 1911 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.<sup>163</sup> 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. The Railway Department indicated that it would be necessary to resume some land. Access to the station was confirmed as being from Whitton Street as it did to the 1877 side platform.

Navvies started arriving in the town in June 1912 to carry out the duplication work. The 1896 carriage shed, which was relocated immediately at the northern end of the platform, was relocated in January 1913 to a location adjacent to new Down Main line about 300 feet on the northern side of the north end of the platform.<sup>164</sup> Railway cottages Nos. 8, 9 and 10 also had to be relocated from near the southern end of the station to locations not far from the newly positioned carriage shed on the northern side of the platform.



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<sup>162</sup> *The Farmer and Settler*, 16th June, 1911, p. 4.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, 18th April, 1912, p. 2.

<sup>164</sup> Shop Order No. 8240, Shop Order Book 21C/257, former SRA Archives, p. 39.



*This 1986 photograph faces north and shows the subway entrance with the tiniest of signs to direct pedestrians. The platform building is to the left with the male toilet occupying the space at the extreme north end. The three tracks were officially known as the Down Main (next to the platform), the Down Goods Line (in the middle) and No. 1 Down Siding (on the left). On the right-hand side is the Station Master's official residence. Note the poor condition of the pavement. Harden North signal Box is in the distance.*

On 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1912 a plan was prepared for the construction of the (existing) subway with a gradient of one in eight. The subway is brick-lined 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 a four-rail cast iron fence formed the balustrades.

There is a number of factors that question whether the provision of an island platform with subway access was the best outcome, including:

- Potential public concern about the personal safety of people in the subway,
- The difficulty of older and infirm residents climbing the inclines and carrying luggage,
- The inability of the station staff to supervise safety, cleanliness and lighting,
- the high cost of excavating the subway compared with a footbridge,
- the elimination of road access directly to the platforms making it impossible to easily 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,
- the need to alter most rooms in the platform building in relation to the provision of doorways to serve the new northbound platform,
- the dismantling of the then existing verandahs on the former road approach and their replacement by a full length awning, &
- the length of the time taken for passengers between the station approach and the platform.

## **COMMUNITY UNHAPPINESS ABOUT THE SUBWAY**

In 2023, Harden is the only station outside the Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong conurbation to feature the operation of a pedestrian 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.<sup>165</sup>

It did not take long in 1912 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 from the public before it is too late”.<sup>166</sup> 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”.<sup>167</sup>

The local press was surprised that the attitude of residents, saying:

“(They) 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”.<sup>168</sup>

The basis of the complaint seems to have been the length of the ramps which the newspaper informed readers were 150 yards each and the excessive distance along which 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.”<sup>169</sup> The Mayor considered that Council should not leave the matter at that stage and should 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 again expressed doubt about the wisdom of the subway approach to the station saying “it will be anything but a blessing”.<sup>170</sup> 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

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<sup>165</sup> Moree is an island platform but passenger trains used only one side.

<sup>166</sup> *Murrumburrah Signal*, 10th June, 1912, p. 2.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, 1<sup>st</sup> July, 1912, p. 2.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 15th July, 1912, p. 2.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 19th July, 1912p, 2.

<sup>170</sup> *Murrumburrah Signal*, 21st November, 1912, p. 2.

and yard.<sup>171</sup> 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”.<sup>172</sup>

Council ended 1912 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 been constructed on the southbound side of the existing platform. Council wanted to know how they would get goods from the station as they were “completely in the dark”.<sup>173</sup> Again, Alderman Hart supported the subway and an overhead bridge at the southern end of the station though he thought that the Railway Commissioners would disregard council’s request. Alderman Kelly said that 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.

Inter town jealousy was rife at the time and the press at Harden noted that both Goulburn and Junee stations had overhead pedestrian bridges and it seemed proper that Harden should have the same. Council 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.<sup>174</sup>

The new island platform and subway opened on 18<sup>th</sup> 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.

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid., 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 1913, p. 2.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., 19th December, 1912, p. 2.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.



*This photograph shows some of the problems with the subway, namely poor lighting and the difficulty of supervision. It was taken on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2007.*

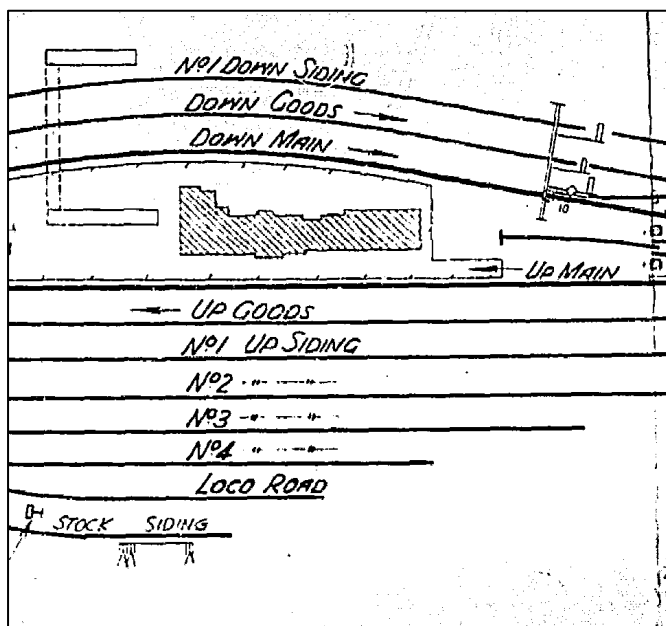
Although the subway was opened, it continued to be a source of trouble for the community. Cordials and other goods were being taken off trains at Cunnigar station in January 1913 for collection as an alternative to proceeding through the subway.<sup>175</sup> While Cunnigar station was also an island 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 had single sided platforms.

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 railwaymen 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.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> Ibid., 13th January, 1913, p. 2.

<sup>176</sup> *Murrumburrah Signal*, 20th March, 1913, p. 2.



*This 1947 track plan shows correctly the footprint of the platform building in 1918 when the structure was at its maximum overall size. It also shows the outline of the subway.*

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 arrival at Harden on 1<sup>st</sup> 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.<sup>177</sup>

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 most of the business was done in Murrumburrah”.<sup>178</sup> 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 in 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

<sup>177</sup> Murrumburrah Signal, 4th December, 1913, p. 2.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

are better treated than in any other part of the world.”<sup>179</sup> 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 12<sup>th</sup> January 1914 for alterations and additions to refreshment room. Authorisation to proceed was granted on 16<sup>th</sup> July 1914. Around the time of the Great War, the Railway Department cottoned-on to the idea that more people could be served at a counter if the facility were placed in the centre of a room, rather than in front of one wall. At some time between 1896 and 1914, alterations were made to the Harden 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.

Nearly every time there was an alteration to the refreshment room – in 1885, 1896, 1906 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 to be 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 southern end of the refreshment room, the 1914 alterations extended the space in the northerly direction by utilising the gentlemen’s waiting room adjacent to the ladies’ toilet. Only 30 or so 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. It reappeared in 1917.

A new policy was introduced from 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1914 for the 1914/15 Summer and this was another task for refreshment room stations.<sup>180</sup> Harden station was not involved but those at Yass Junction and Cootamundra were to provide ice for main-line trains. While water bottles had been used in passenger carriages since 1892, the water was often hot and in 1914 ice was to be added to the water at selected stations. The ice was to be supplied by local freezing works under contract. This initiative started with a suggestion by Henry Hoyle, M. P., who at the time was the Assistant State

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<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 14th March, 1918, p. 2.

<sup>180</sup> NSWGR, *Weekly Notice No. 44*, 31<sup>st</sup> October-6<sup>th</sup> November, 1914, p. 38.

Treasurer.<sup>181</sup> The press reported that the scheme was so successful that it was a failure. People quickly consumed the iced water and the containers were then empty for much of the journey. For one passenger, the only way to drink cold water was a return to the old policy of passengers hanging canvas water bags outside the carriages.<sup>182</sup> Obviously, no thought was given to the need for iced water for travellers on branch line trains radiating from Harden station to Cowra and Boorowa.



*This photograph shows the first so-called American bar installed into a New South Wales railway refreshment room, the location being Harden. This photograph is looking in a southerly direction with the door to the southbound platform behind the barmaid. It shows the square end to the bar. SOURCE: D. Burke, *With Iron Rails*, Kensington, University of NSW Press, 1988, p. 75.*

The Railway Department issued a plan dated 27<sup>th</sup> October 1916 for the re-design of the refreshment room and the installation of an “American bar.” The former main room was divided into two separate parts with the bar at the northern end and the dining area at the southern end. All upstairs rooms as well as the downstairs rooms were to receive a “coat of Keystone or other 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

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<sup>181</sup> *The Muswellbrook Chronicle*, 18th February, 1914, p. 4 and the *Dubbo Dispatch and Wellington Independent*, 6<sup>th</sup> March, 1914, p. 6. Hoyle was a former blacksmith with the Railway Department but was dismissed in 1890 for his union activities.

<sup>182</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17<sup>th</sup> December, 1914, p. 4.

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 southern to the northern 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 was also installed at the opening of the Cootamundra West station in 1918.



*The photograph shows the American bar that was located in the Harden refreshment room. One of its quintessential design features is its oval shape. It stood in the bar area as if it were an island with drinkers on all sides. A second quintessential feature was the elevated canopy that mirrored the same overall shape surrounded as the counter. Glasses and bottles were positioned behind the canopy. This photograph shows the pointed end of the bar, compared to the square end of the previous photograph. Thanks to the good work of historically minded local residents, the bar was saved from destruction and relocated in 1981 to the Harden Murrumburrah Historical Society Museum.*

**SOURCE:** <https://aumuseums.com/nsw/murrumburrah-harden-historical-society-museum>

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.<sup>183</sup>

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 a southerly direction.

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<sup>183</sup> What appears to be half of an American bar from the former Goulburn refreshment room is conserved in the Goulburn brewery. It is also possible that the Goulburn bar has not been truncated from an American bar but is an example of a pentagon-shaped bar that abutted a wall. A standard plan was issued in 1923 for a pentagon-shaped bar, complete with an overhead canopy as used in the American bar.



Included in the demolition was the sitting room for the Manager of the refreshment room which was located at platform level. 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 southern end. Its external walls were covered with corrugated iron sheets.

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 19<sup>th</sup> of April 1915. It provided for an extension of the existing lease only for a period of six months until 31<sup>st</sup> 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.”<sup>184</sup> The object was to prevent persons gaining access to platforms for the purpose of obtaining intoxicating liquor during prohibited hours, 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 of carriages and obtain refreshments.<sup>185</sup>

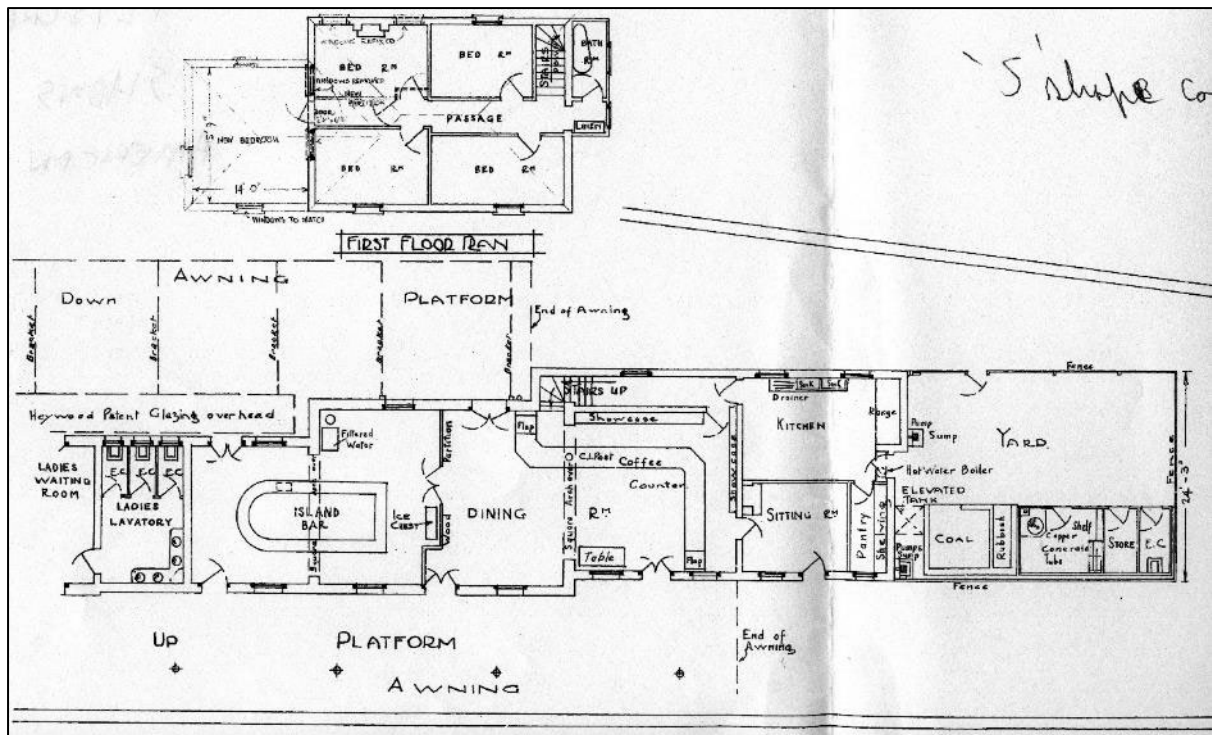
On 31<sup>st</sup> December 1916 the Government ended private enterprise management of most refreshment rooms throughout New South Wales and operated them as a branch of the Railway Department from 1<sup>st</sup> January 1917. The Harden refreshment room was one of the very first to be taken over, along with those at Gosford, Werris Creek,

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<sup>184</sup> *The Goulburn Evening Penny Post*, 18th May, 1916, p. 4.

<sup>185</sup> *ibid.*

Tamworth and Glen Innes, om 1<sup>st</sup> January 1917.<sup>186</sup> Government management lasted for the next 40 years until the Harden refreshment room closed in 1957.



The above undated plan shows the arrangement at the southern end of the building roughly between the period 1920 to 1950. The American bar is called an “island bar” but the plan incorrectly shows one end rounded. The bar was pointed at one end and square at the other. Subsequent to this undated plan, the bar area was extended and the female toilet closets were relocated onto the southbound platform. Another change that would come in the future was the reconstruction of the refreshment room yard with the erection of a new building with face brick walls in the late 1940s/early 1950s. When the refreshment room opened in 1885, there was no bathroom on the first floor but the plan shows the later addition of such a facility.

The transfer of management from private enterprise to government control affected virtually all refreshment rooms and the origin of the initiative was a suggestion made by the Premier, William Holman, to the Commissioner in 1915. It 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 had come 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.<sup>187</sup> The difficulty of obtaining trained staff was also seen as a negative feature of the proposal at that time. Apparently, the change of

<sup>186</sup> J. Forsyth, *The When and Where of Railway and Tramway Events*, unpublished document, State Rail Archives, 1996, p. 315.

<sup>187</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald* 24th September, 1901, p. 7.

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 in 1917 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.”<sup>188</sup>

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.<sup>189</sup>

The Great Railway Strike in the middle of 1917 affected Harden station as fewer passenger trains were operating. The wages of waitresses were reduced during the strike by making the girls sign off work between trains.<sup>190</sup> Wages were restored when the strike terminated and normal rail services resumed. Such treatment was applied generally throughout the rail system.

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.

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<sup>188</sup> *Young Witness*, 27<sup>th</sup> March, 1917, p. 1.

<sup>189</sup> *Murrumburrah Signal*, 4th July, 1915, p. 2.

<sup>190</sup> *Young Witness*, 4<sup>th</sup> September, 1917, p. 2.



*CPH rail motor No. 2 is stabled in the Down Dock on 19<sup>th</sup> June 1983 waiting for its next run to Young and Cowra.*

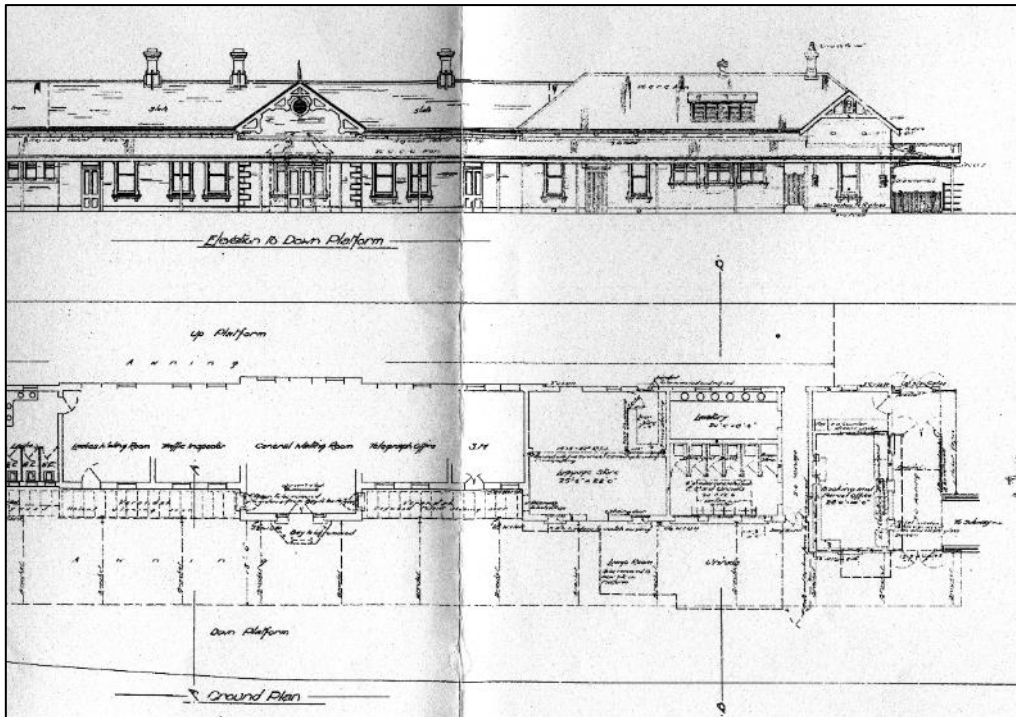
## **TOILET IMPROVEMENTS**

On 16<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>191</sup>

Ever since the new male toilet block had been erected in 1891 at the northern 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 northern 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 the time of the 1889 toilet plan, 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.

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<sup>191</sup> Shop Order Book 21C/258, former SRA Archives, p. 32.



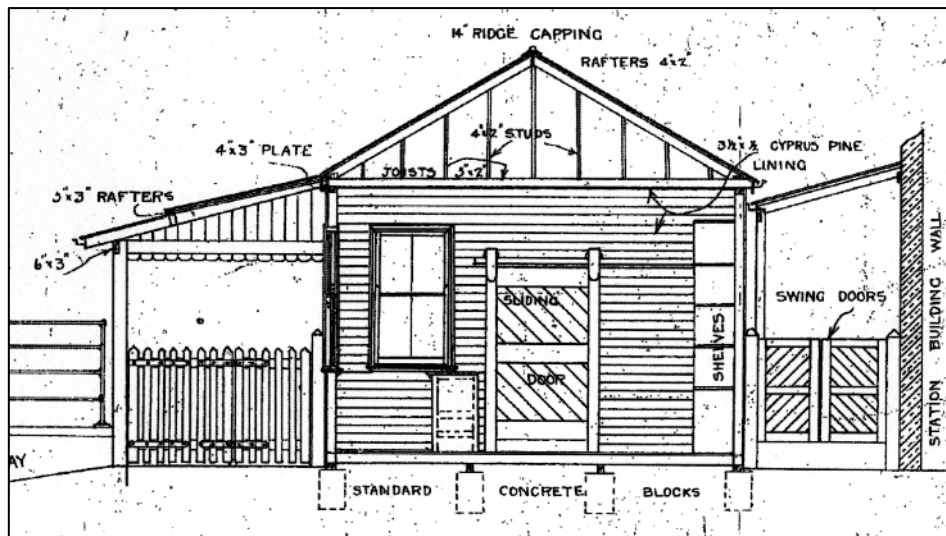
*The above 1915 plan shows the proposed re-arrangement at the northern end of the platform building. Up until that time, there was a space between the northern end of the 1880 building and the southern wall of the 1889 male toilet. In 1915, the 40 feet wide male toilet was nearly double the width of the 1880 building. It was to remain as is with entry from both platforms via a five foot wide passage way. On the other side of the passage way was a 20 foot long, timber ticket and parcels office with paired doors providing access between the subway and the platforms. A new luggage store was to be built facing the northbound platform to fill the gap between the 1880 building and the 1889 male toilet. The most dominant ocular aspect of the proposed changes was a large, hipped roof with a significant sized ventilator over the urinals. The proposed roof design was abandoned and a simple extension of the existing 1880 hipped roof was built. One pleasing feature that was also abandoned was the demolition of the faceted bay window facing the southbound platform.*

## **NEW, FREE-STANDING, TIMBER BOOKING/PARCELS OFFICE**

At the northern end of the platform structure, a large parcels and booking office measuring 28 feet 6 inches by 14 feet 6 inches internal was to be built at the top of the ramp. The timber building was erected in either 1915 or 1916 as a combined booking and parcels office. This was a primitive-looking, utilitarian 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.

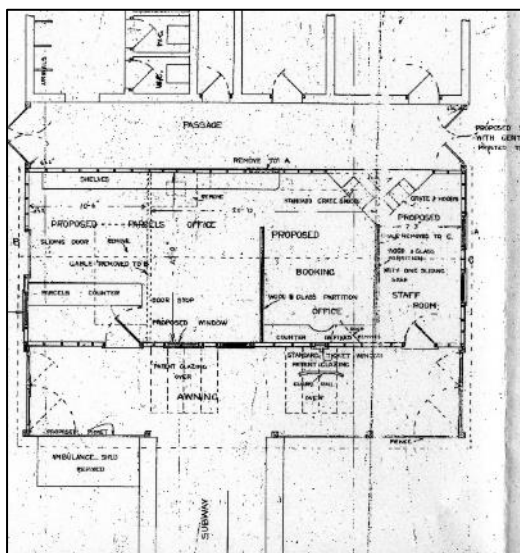
Picket fencing was also intended to be placed around the end of the subway entrance at the top of the subway with gates controlling access to both platforms. It was at that time that the paired, half-sized swing doors were fitted to the entrances to the male

toilet as well as a pair of swing picket gates that gave access to both platforms from the subway.



The above plan shows the cross section of the timber booking and parcels office looking from the northbound to the southbound platform. On the right are the swing doors to the male toilet. The picket gates on the left control pedestrian movements between the subway and platforms.

The most visual alterations proposed involved the main, 1880 building. The roof of the 1880 building was slate but, by that time, but the roof extension at the southern end of the structure was mismatched with corrugated iron sheets and it was similarly proposed to sheet the large roof at the northern end with the standard No. 26 gauge, galvanised corrugated iron sheeting. There was to be a substantial rectangular louvre on the roof over the male toilets but it was not erected.



This undated plan about 1916 shows the proposed stand-alone timber booking and parcels office with a staff room on the righthand side. Intending passengers would exit the subway at the centre bottom, buy a ticket or carry out parcels business and then could enter either platform through the picket gates.

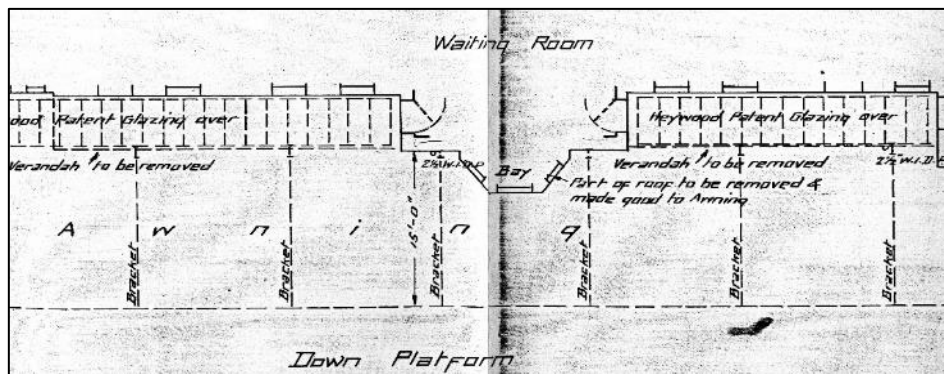
An awning, cantilevered from the building wall using standard brackets, was proposed for the southbound platform as a part of the works in 1915 but it took until 1919 for the awning to be built.



This 1939 photograph shows the timber, stand-alone ticket and parcels office that was constructed in either 1915 or 1916 and located transverse to the island platform facing the top of the subway. The combined ticket and parcels office was demolished in 1965. The extent of landscaping and vegetation is a credit to the station staff. **SOURCE:** J.M. Cottee, *Stations on the Track*, Charnwood, Ginninderra Press, 2004, p. 184.

## AWNING FOR THE SOUTHBOUND PLATFORM

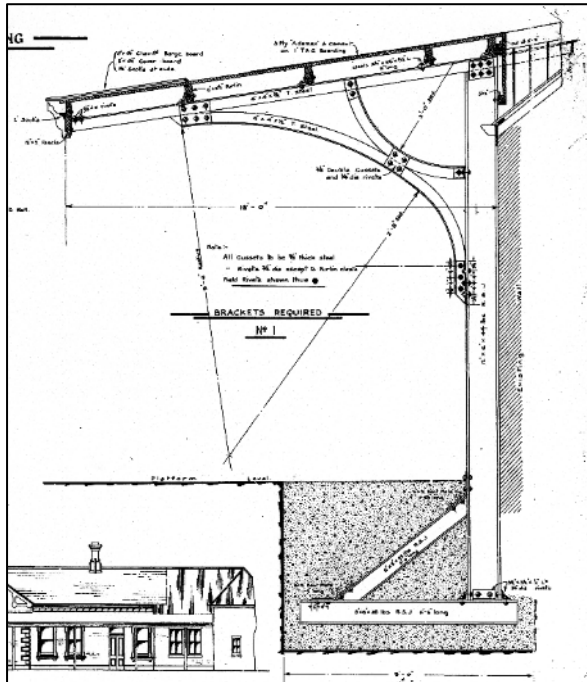
It took a long time for the Railway Department to provide an awning over the new platform on the southbound side of the building. The cantilevered awning was first proposed in 1915 and it was not until June 1917 that a plan was prepared for the provision of an awning 15 feet wide along the full length of the 1880 building and part of the refreshment room. The existing “verandahs” each side of the bay window of the 1880 building were removed. 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 but the work did not proceed.



The June 1917 plan above shows the proposed replacement of the verandahs and the insertion of glazed sheets against the building wall on the southbound platform. Note the location of the two entry doors to the general waiting room in the 1880 building. The glazing was not fitted.

One year later, Robert Kendall, the Engineer-in-Chief for Existing Lines, approved the plan for the awning on the southbound platform on 4<sup>th</sup> 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 as it seems that corrugated iron sheeting was in short supply, probably due to the conduct of World War 1. The roof gussets were 3/8 inch thick steel and the rivets 3/4 inch diameter. The construction of the new awning was undertaken in 1919.



*This is the June 1918 plan for the use of standard, cantilevered brackets to support the new, 13 feet wide awning on the southbound platform. The vertical steel elements sat proud to the building wall.*

## 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 4<sup>th</sup> May 1916, the Mayor asked the Acting Chief Commissioner once again 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.<sup>192</sup>

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. It was taken to Sydney for repairs. Evidence that Harden was becoming the influential end of the town was reflected in 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 the

<sup>192</sup> *Murrumburrah Signal*, 4th May, 1916, p. 3.



trolley was especially handy for conveying luggage, commercial travellers' samples and general freight. Commercial travellers had their samples in wicker baskets which were called panniers<sup>193</sup>



*The photograph shows panniers at Orange station. SOURCE: P. and N. Body, With Steam and Steel - Albert Denniss, Chief Train Manager 1933 – 48, p. 57.*

While the Goulburn District Superintendent, Mr J. D. Reid, was in the Harden, the Committee approached him about the need for a replacement trolley and he “promised” that the “trolley” would be put back in service “at any time”.<sup>194</sup>

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 northbound platform as it had a gravel surface.<sup>195</sup> A press report of 1932 said that it had been at the station “for many years”.<sup>196</sup>

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.<sup>197</sup> The tale of tow-motors does not end in 1935 and has re-incarnations in the 1980s. The first re-incarnation in the early 1980s was a small van and the second occurred when Countrylink was formed in 1989, it employed a tow-motor between the platform and top of the subway in the forecourt area. Parts of the vehicle were painted in the then corporate colour of blue. Its withdrawal date is unknown but was probably removed when the station became unattended in 2004.

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<sup>193</sup> P. and N. Body, *With Steam and Steel - Albert Denniss, Chief Train Manager 1933 – 48*, p. 57 shows a photograph of a pannier.

<sup>194</sup> *Murrumburrah Signal*, 29th January, 1917, p. 2.

<sup>195</sup> *Harden Express*, 7th July, 1932, p. 2.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, 3rd March, 1977.



*This photograph shows the Countrylink buggy outside the Station Master's office on the southbound platform. The Countrylink corporate blue colour was widely applied not only to new seats and bins but to the steel brackets supporting the platform awning and, in fact, the whole station building. Note the crude way the base of the new platform seat has been fixed. The photograph was taken on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1994.*

## **STATION LIGHTING – THE USE OF ELECTRICITY**

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 lighting of Harden station by electricity was a long time after the station at Young featured electric lighting – 30 years later. The Colonial Governor, Lord Carrington, visited Young on 11<sup>th</sup> December 1889 to officially switch on the town electricity supply. When he was greeted at the station, electric lighting had already been in operation for four months.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> W. A. Bayley, Rich Earth – *History of Young*, Young Municipal Council, 1977, p. 109 and *Sydney Mail and NSW Advertiser*, 6<sup>th</sup> July, 1889, p. 14.



*Six years later on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2000 the buggy was still operational.*

There was a rare event at Harden in 1918 and it was rare because it was one of the few times the Railway Department took the 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.<sup>199</sup> After that approach, Council applied to the NSW Government in June 1918 for a loan of £7,250 for the construction of electricity power generating plant. At that time, Council did not specify whether the fuel supply would be oil, gas or coal. The request included specific reference to the possibility of an agreement with the Railway Commissioner for the supply of electric lighting to Harden railway station and the concomitant requirement that a larger plant would be necessary if that agreement were forthcoming.<sup>200</sup> The Council's scheme commenced in 1920.

## **ROOM DESIGNATION OF THE 1880 BUILDING IN 1918**

In 1918, the rooms in the 1880 building and refreshment room, as shown in the plan below, from the northern end were:

- Porters' room
- Station Master's office
- telegraph office (ticket sold in separate building at top of subway)
- general waiting room
- Traffic Inspector's office
- ladies' waiting room
- ladies' toilet

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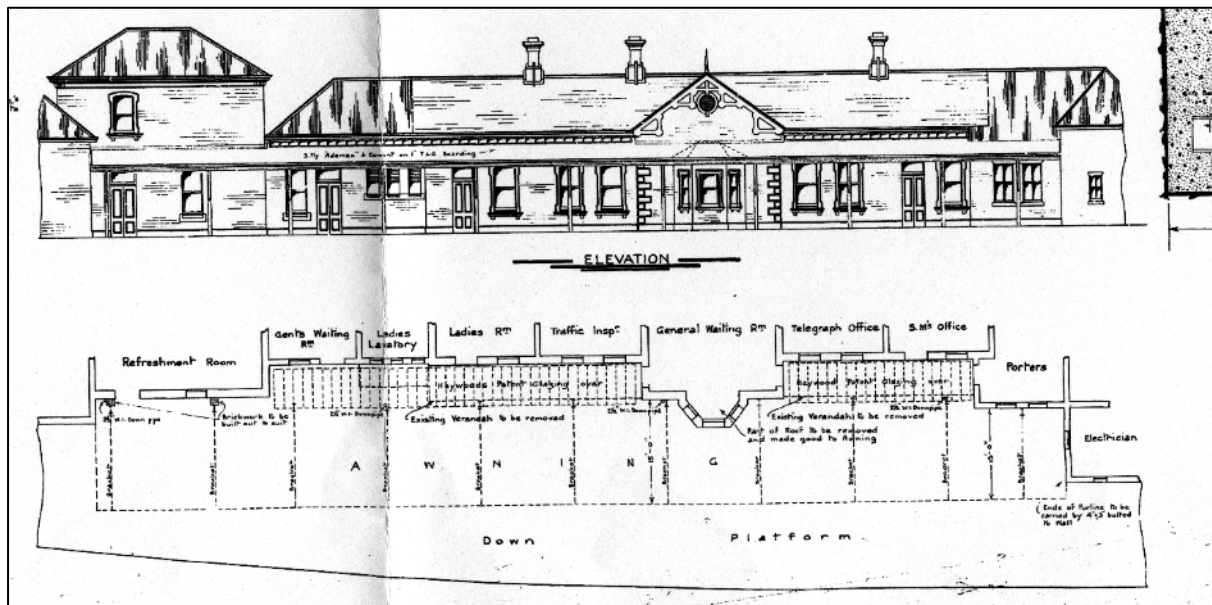
<sup>199</sup> *Harden Express and Galong Reporter*, 13th June, 1918, p. 8.

<sup>200</sup> *NSW Government Gazette*, 28<sup>th</sup> June, 1918, Issue No. 81, p. 3160.

- gentlemen's waiting room
- refreshment room.

There are lots of puzzles about the internal room changes at Harden. Either the 1918 plan was incorrect or the American bar, the plan of which was dated from 1916, had not been built by 1918. The answer is unknown.

As the plan below related only to the southbound awning, the existing male toilet at the north end was not shown on the plan due to its width being nearly double the 1880 building. The first document that indicated the presence of an office for a Traffic Inspector, located to the immediate left of the general waiting room in the above plan, is dated 1915.



*The major feature of the above 1918 plan is the completion of the in-fill spaces between the male toilet and the 1880 building at the north end (with a room for Porters, luggage and out of) and the refreshment room and the 1880 building at the southern end (with a gentleman's waiting room). No further expansion of the 1880 building occurred after 1918, although there was a later addition to the refreshment room at the south end. All subsequent alterations, with one minor exception to the female toilet, to the floor plan of the 1880 involved internal changes.*

## **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".<sup>201</sup> That was the first "growl" made by the local press in March 1918. Growl No. 2 was a complaint about Porters saying that "they regarded themselves as the salt of the Earth." Growl No. 3

<sup>201</sup> *Harden Express and Galong Reporter*, 28th March, 1918, p. 2.

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”.<sup>202</sup>

There are also complaints that staff were not enforcing Railway By-Laws No. 8 prohibiting people expectorating on railway property and No. 11 prohibiting smoking from covered areas of a platform or in any building or carriage not provided for that purpose.<sup>203</sup> The only time staff would act would be when a passenger brought the offence to notice. Railway staff were also cited as being amongst the offenders.

## **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”.<sup>204</sup> This was a reference to the white granite that the Railways used on the top of platform surfaces.



*Locomotive 48107 sits in the Down Dock on 25<sup>th</sup> February 1978 waiting its next turn of duty. Some additional shunting will need to take place with HCX carriage amidship of the goods wagons.*

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<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 July, 1911, p. 14.

<sup>204</sup> *Murrumburrah Signal*, 4th of June, 1914, p. 2.

## 9. 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. Government health authorities requested the New South Wales Railways manufacture face masks in an attempt to prevent the disease spreading. Within a three-day period, the workshops at Eveleigh and Randwick manufactured 63,470 masks for staff at Harden and every other railway facility within the State.

In addition, the New South Wales Railways provided a number of enclosures that were known as inhalation chambers. These consisted of an enclosed space which contained a glass jar to hold disinfectant and a supply of compressed air to deliver the disinfectant, which comprised of one and a quarter percent solution of sulphate of zinc in water. This was distributed within the chamber by an atomiser. Two types of chambers were made. The first was a mobile variety using existing compartments in some railway carriages and 20 trams. The idea was that these could be moved to any location at short notice.

The second type was a fixed structure of a wooden frame and covered with calico, hessian, canvas or other suitable material. These were provided at a number of stations on the rail system in early 1919. Everyone arriving by train had to walk through this facility in an attempt to disinfect both the throat and nasal passages in an endeavour 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. There is no evidence to indicate whether inhalation chambers existed at either Harden or Murrumburrah in 1919 but one was located at Goulburn station.



*This photograph of an inhalation chamber was published in New South Wales Railway and Tramway Magazine, 1st March, 1919, p. 114.*

As well as the staff, the public had to wear face masks at all times while on Railway property in an effort to restrict the spread of the disease. This applied not only to travellers but to local residents visiting stations for any type of business, such as the collection of a parcel.

Travel restrictions were imposed on 4<sup>th</sup> April 1919 and people from Sydney were not allowed to travel beyond the boundaries of Picton, Mount Victoria and Maitland. On 12<sup>th</sup> 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 8<sup>th</sup> July 1919.<sup>205</sup>

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.<sup>206</sup>

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.<sup>207</sup> Three other railway officers were also affected who lived in the same boarding house, which was quarantined.<sup>208</sup> 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 history 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 replacements, 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

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<sup>205</sup> *Government Gazette of NSW*, Special Issue No. 108 (Supplement), dated 12<sup>th</sup> May, 1919, p. 2728 and No. 165 (Supplement), dated 8<sup>th</sup> July, 1919, p. 3802.

<sup>206</sup> *The Sun*, 13<sup>th</sup> February, 1919, p. 7.

<sup>207</sup> *Cootamundra Herald*, 6th May, 1919, p. 2.

<sup>208</sup> *Gundagai Independent and Pastoral, Agricultural and Mining Advocate*, 5th June, 1919, p. 2.

operational requirements. That strategy had been applied in 1915 and was applied again in 1927.

The Railway Department issued a plan on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1926 but the plan was amended on 6<sup>th</sup> April 1927 for a further 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 1880 building 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,
- 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 extant to explain the totality of internal changes to the building at Harden. However, a number of features of the station were expressed on the 1927 drawing, including:

- the 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 northbound platform,
- the conversion of the 1889 “lavatory” into a store room at the northern end,
- the conversion of the 1891 linen closet into a bath room at the northern end,
- the conversion of the 1891 lamp room into a room for an electrician at the northern end,
- the conversion of the 1891 “open space” into an out of room at the northern end,
- the conversion of the 1891 parcels office into a Porters' Room towards the northern end,
- the conversion of the 1891 telegraph office into the office for the Station Master towards the northern 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
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>48</b>

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 carried out at night time. Six 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 in the local press of the garden at Harden station. In the regional competition, Harden station took out second prize in the garden petition for ferns and plants, coming behind Murrumburrah station in first place.<sup>209</sup> The civic leaders of Murrumburrah would have liked Murrumburrah dominating Harden.

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

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<sup>209</sup> Murrumburrah Signal, 10th November, 1927, p. 2.

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 4<sup>th</sup> 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. The ice chests 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. Appendix 7 gives details of all NSW refreshment rooms and their division into the five official categories. and these are shown in the Table below, starting with the most comprehensive service and ending with the lowest level of service.

Appendix 7 indicates that there were nine refreshment rooms from Sydney to Albury inclusive and one would have to think that there was an oversupply 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 served 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 1<sup>st</sup> July 1922, that number was increased Statewide from five to twenty-two including Goulburn, Cootamundra, Temora and Cowra.<sup>210</sup> No change was made to the status of the Harden refreshment room.

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.<sup>211</sup> 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.

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<sup>210</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27<sup>th</sup> June, 1922, p. 6, *Lithgow Mercury*, 30<sup>th</sup> June, 1922, p. 3 and *The Land*, 30<sup>th</sup> June, 1922, p. 3.

<sup>211</sup> 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.



*On the left is the face brick laundry and toilet block for the refreshment room which is thought to have been constructed in the 1950s. To the left of the station nameboard in the photograph is the former doorway from the refreshment room kitchen which has been bricked up but unpainted. Off the platform is the large bund for the storage of coal. The frame was formed by old rails with concrete poured in situ to form the walls. The photograph was taken on 25<sup>th</sup> February 1978.*

In both March and July 1922, the Railway Commissioners announced changes to the pricing for meals at all refreshment rooms. Minimum pricing was introduced for full meals and grills. As well, minimum charges also applied to the “special dining room” on the first floor of the Sydney Terminal building for luncheon only. There were also some price reductions, which were reported to be the result of the execution of new contracts which set prices much lower than previously was the case.<sup>212</sup> The new charges commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1922. While most items sold in the refreshment room came from Sydney, they were not necessarily made in the refreshment room at Sydney station. For example, tenders were called for the supply of aerated waters, bread and rolls, biscuits, cakes and pastry to be supplied to Sydney station for distribution throughout the State network.<sup>213</sup>

In 1924, the report of the Royal Commission into railway management was released. It was undertaken by two English railway officials, Sir Sam Fay and Sir Vincent Raven. Generally, the findings of the report were supportive of the way the New South Wales Railways was operated. What they found in regard to refreshment rooms was consistent with their overall findings. They were satisfied with the way refreshment rooms were operated and thought that the food was good and the prices reasonable. They also noted that refreshment rooms were profitable.<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

<sup>213</sup> *Government Gazette of New South Wales*, 25th November, 1921, Issue 172, p. 6708. Tenders closed on 7th December, 1921, for a six months’ supply of these ingredients from 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1922.

<sup>214</sup> *Northern Star*, 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 1924, p. 4.

The Royal Commissioners commented that it was “difficult to cater for an intermittent and uncertain number of people.”<sup>215</sup> However, the travelling public were not always happy to acknowledge that fact. One Letter-to-the Editor of the Young *Daily Witness* pointed out the inconvenience of the times of the Harden refreshment room for people travelling beyond Young towards Cowra. The morning train from Sydney arrived at Harden at about 0500 but the correspondent pointed out that no one wants to eat breakfast then as 0700 was the “proper breakfast hour.”<sup>216</sup> Similarly, the opening of the refreshment room for the evening train to Sydney at 2000 was far too late as 1800 was the “universal meal hour.”<sup>217</sup> The correspondent’s solution was to provide a refreshment room at Young. No doubt the letter writer would have pressed her/his case further if he/she had known that a refreshment facility had existed at Young between 1891 and 1905.

The Railway Department issued statistics in 1925 about the operation of refreshment rooms. The article made a strong point that the annual revenue of £20,000 was five times the amount of £4,000 that was formally taken in the form of rent when the refreshment rooms were privately operated for July 1917.

A total of 974 staff worked in 60 refreshment rooms in 1925 throughout the State and, of that number, 430 staff received full board and lodging while the remainder were stationed in Sydney and Newcastle and were entitled to two free meals a day. A total of 1,800 meals were served every day throughout New South Wales.

Annual statistics are set out below that indicate the high level of tobacco smoking at stations and on trains:

- number of packets of cigarette papers 333,000,
- number of cigarettes 19 million (nearly 54,000 per day),
- number of cigars 342,000, &
- number of boxes of matches 2,448,000

The 60 refreshment rooms each day went very close to averaging the sale of 1,000 cigarettes per day. With smoking being such an extensive habit, it is little wonder that dedicated, smoke-free waiting space was provided for women at stations and that non-smoking departments existed on trains.<sup>218</sup> While smoking in non-dedicated parts of stations had been banned since before the first train arrived at Harden in 1877, it was not until 1928 that penalties were imposed under Clause 36 of By-law No. 739 for

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<sup>215</sup> Ibid.

<sup>216</sup> *Daily Witness*, 14<sup>th</sup> January, 1924, p. 1.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid.

<sup>218</sup> *The Land*, 24th July, 1925, p. 5.

throwing cigarettes, cigars, matches, smoking tobacco and other rubbish onto railway platforms and other property.<sup>219</sup>

A plan was prepared on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1926 and amended on 6<sup>th</sup> 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.

Harden refreshment room was lucky to have received attention in 1926 to accommodate the ever-growing demands placed on the facility. The Chief Commissioner acknowledged that refreshment room business generally had grown to such an extent "as to fully tax the accommodation provided, and this has been rectified from time to time by alterations and extensions of rooms where congestion is most marked." He mentioned that the facilities at both Goulburn and Temora had recently been extended. However, other facilities were not so fortunate.<sup>220</sup> At the same time in 1926, there was public disquiet about the Head of the Departmental Railway Refreshment Rooms, P. Sydney Hunt, that he was taking an excessive degree of the profits by the of special trains to tour country facilities including a private dining saloon with kitchen, sleeping quarters and lounge. He also had his own on-train staff. Instructions were issued that "unnecessary shunting of his train was to be avoided." The press considered that he should be subjected "to any of the slight discomforts to which the ordinary paying public have to submit."<sup>221</sup>

Sydney Hunt might have been the scourge of some rural people but apparently was well liked by the Railway Commissioner as he had been sent to America and Europe in 1925 to examine the latest developments relating to refreshment and dining car services.<sup>222</sup> That was a long-term hint of what the future held for the Harden refreshment room – closure and replacement by on-train services.

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<sup>219</sup> *Singleton Argus*, 6<sup>th</sup> March, 1928, p. 4.

<sup>220</sup> *Singleton Argus*, 13<sup>th</sup> February, 1926, p. 5.

<sup>221</sup> *Sunday Times*, 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 1926, p. 12.

<sup>222</sup> *The Land*, 24<sup>th</sup> July, 1925, p. 13.



On 15<sup>th</sup> February 1986 locomotives 44204 and 4456 wait on No. 1 Down Siding with a train of out-of-gauge sheet steel for the Melbourne XPT to pass.

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.<sup>223</sup> This was an easy request to which to accede as the Railway Commissioners were supportive of the special status that women were given generally in society. Ladies were entitled to travel in female only compartments on trains and also enjoyed elevated facilities in their waiting rooms, including mirrors, movable seating, hand wash basins, lining boards on internal walls and enhanced decorative colours on internal wall surfaces. Under Railway By-law No. 12, men were fined if they refused to leave facilities set aside for women.<sup>224</sup>

Women could also obtain some tickets, such as seasonal and excursion tickets, at reduced fares. To illustrate the special status of women in society generally, it is interesting to examine a claim in 1925 that passenger trains were "badly ventilated" and that steam locomotives emitted "a peculiarly malodorous and probably dangerous gas." Dr Grace Boelke claimed that these factors attributed to "the breakdown in the health of many girls".<sup>225</sup> No mention was made of the impact on male travellers.

When the Commissioners visited Harden in February 1929, they commented that the "enlarged refreshment room..... will be a great boon to travellers."<sup>226</sup>

From 1923 to 1939, a freezing works and butter factory had existed in Harden although ice for the refreshment room was not acquired locally but sent from Sydney, with two bags of ice coming each day.<sup>227</sup> Murrumburrah Council was puzzled by this occurrence as the Department had recently informed Council that the policy

<sup>223</sup> *Sydney Mail*, 9<sup>th</sup> February, 1927, p. 28 and *Dubbo Liberal and Macquarie Advocate*, 6<sup>th</sup> July, 1928, p. 4. This new policy had been introduced in December, 1926, in relation to the refreshment rooms which served trains to and from Moree.

<sup>224</sup> *New South Wales Government Gazette*, 6<sup>th</sup> October, 1885, Issue No. 457 Supplement, p. 6561.

<sup>225</sup> *Evening News*, 26<sup>th</sup> March, 1925, p. 6.

<sup>226</sup> *Harden Express and Galong Reporter*, 28<sup>th</sup> February, 1929, p. 1.

<sup>227</sup> The Harden Co-operative Butter Factory had opened on 10<sup>th</sup> March, 1923, with milk being supplied from farms by the use of motor trucks. See *Young Witness*, 15<sup>th</sup> March, 1923, p. 6.

concerning procurements for the refreshment room emphasised local purchases.<sup>228</sup> The Railway Department did eventually purchase a small number of food and other supplies locally but this did not occur until 1939.

Never before had the prices for foods been lowered twice in the one year but this did occur in both March and June 1929 “to induce the maximum amount of business.”<sup>229</sup> Non-travellers were allowed to eat at the Harden refreshment room, provided they purchased a platform ticket but they were not allowed to purchase alcohol.<sup>230</sup>



*The station is towards the right in the distance. In the rain, railway operations continue. The southbound train, with locomotives 44210, 4862, and 8145 will travel on the Down Goods line, rather than the Down Main line, as was the practice. There is a southbound bulk wheat train sitting in No. 1 Down Siding. The date was 29<sup>th</sup> May 1982.*

## **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/ticket office, measuring 20 feet x 10 feet, was 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 northbound 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 usually hauled by a horse but, in this case, railway staff provided the power. Men would carry patients

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<sup>228</sup> *Harden Express*, 6th March, 1930, p. 4.

<sup>229</sup> *The Land*, 30<sup>th</sup> June, 1922, p. 3.

<sup>230</sup> *National Advocate*, 29<sup>th</sup> July, 1929, p. 2.

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 northbound platform side. This was the first time at Harden station that an 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 1880 brick building and was located in front of the male toilet block that was provided in 1889. The impact of this was the concealment 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 30<sup>th</sup> June 1919 and completed on 15<sup>th</sup> March 1920.<sup>231</sup> A similar, detached timber booking office was also erected in 1919 on Cootamundra West station.

The enlarged 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.

The year, 1919, was one in which the appearance of new buildings took a long second place to recycling of materials as a mean of 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. Concrete was the product of the time.

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<sup>231</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> March, 1920.



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 Municipal Council-operated electricity supply started on 7<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>232</sup> The Council electricity supply system did not become profitable until 1927.<sup>233</sup> 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.<sup>234</sup> Hydro-electricity commenced to be supplied from the power station at Burrinjuck Dam in 1927, although Murrumburrah Council maintained 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 weir, which was some distance out of town.<sup>235</sup> 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

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<sup>232</sup> *Murrumburrah Signal*, 16th of August, 1921, p. 2.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*, 25th May, 1927, p. 1.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*, 30<sup>th</sup> May, 1929, p. 4.

<sup>235</sup> *Harden Express and Galong Reporter*, 7th February, 1929, p. 3

charges.<sup>236</sup> 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.<sup>237</sup>

## 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 the footpath.<sup>238</sup> 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 East 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.



*Locomotive 42211 passes Harden station on the Up Main line on 25<sup>th</sup> February 1978. The blooming blossoms divert the eye from the suite of different building forms and shapes on the platform. On the Down Main line, a DEB set forming the Riverina Express has stopped at the platform.*

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".<sup>239</sup> The next month Council asked the Railway authorities whether it would switch on such a light if the Council installed the facility. This time,

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<sup>236</sup> *Harden Express and Galong Reporter*, 16<sup>th</sup> May, 1929, p. 4.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*, 11th April, 1935, p. 4.

<sup>238</sup> *Murrumburrah Signal*, 25th October, 1923, p. 4.

<sup>239</sup> *Murrumburrah Signal*, 19th August, 1926, p. 4.

the Area Commissioner, deciding that the matter was far too hard for him to decide, sent the request to Sydney for the consideration of the Chief Commissioner.<sup>240</sup>

On 5<sup>th</sup> 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 would stop for the night. The public was not allowed on the platform while the train was in the station.<sup>241</sup> By this year, the people of Murrumburrah/Harden had been complaining about the subway for 16 years, since it was first announced in 1911.

The Railway Department had rejected all the approaches for a pedestrian bridge, saying that 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 southern end of the northbound 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 Main track.<sup>242</sup> That event would have done nothing but encourage local residents to renew their protests about the subway – and they did.

## PLATFORM EXTENSION

On 26<sup>th</sup> October 1923, plan was prepared for the 80 feet extension of the northbound platform at the southern 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 No. 8 gauge wire with a three inch square hardwood rail at the top. The top of the platform extension 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 12<sup>th</sup> April 1924.<sup>243</sup> This 80 feet extension was removed and was replaced in 1954 with an extension of 183 feet from near the southern end of the refreshment room complex.

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<sup>240</sup> Ibid., 30th September, 1926, p. 2.

<sup>241</sup> *Murrumburrah Signal*, 5th May, 1927, p. 2.

<sup>242</sup> R. Atherton, *Rupert Duffy Heggaton – Five Decades in Murrumburrah*, Harden, Harden-Murrumburrah Historical Society, 2012, p. 32.

<sup>243</sup> Shop Order dated 20<sup>th</sup> November, 1923, Shop Order Book No. 21D/261, former SRA Archives, p. 79.

So why was only the northbound platform lengthened at the southern end? Perhaps the North Dock siding prevented any extension for the northbound platform at the northern end.

## TOILETS

Improvements to the sanitary arrangements at the station were completed on 1<sup>st</sup> March 1924, though the nature of the work is unknown.<sup>244</sup>

Of course, it 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.



*By the time that this photograph was taken on 26<sup>th</sup> December 1979, the three refreshment room chimneys had been demolished. No plan exists to show the date of construction of the face brick structure for the refreshment room staff but it appears to have been constructed in the late 1940s/early 1950s, possibly in conjunction with the platform reconstruction and extension at the southern end in 1954. Note the ramp that joins the existing platform to the extension. The dog box is empty waiting for the next canine to appear.*

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<sup>244</sup> Shop Order No. 6694 dated 7<sup>th</sup> September, 1923, Shop Order Book No. 21D/261, former SRA Archives, p. 435.

## 10. ELEVEN YEARS OF FRUSTRATION 1930-1940

### ASPHALTING THE STATION APPROACH

The newly appointed Chief Commissioner, William Cleary, visited Harden on 14<sup>th</sup> May 1930 and spoke to a number of railway staff. He commented favourably on the garden plots around the station.<sup>245</sup> 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.<sup>246</sup>

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.<sup>247</sup> Aldermen 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.<sup>248</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*, 15th May, 1930, p. 2.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>247</sup> *Murrumburrah Signal*, 27th October, 1932, p. 3.

<sup>248</sup> *Harden Express*, 27th October, 1932, p. 1.



*On 28<sup>th</sup> May 1982, rail motor, CHP 38 known as Creamy Kate, sits in the northbound platform ready for a run to Young. It had been introduced into service (not at Harden) in 1934 and was still at work 50 years later. Parcels sit on two trolleys. As was usual, the entire platform surface under the building awning was asphalted.*

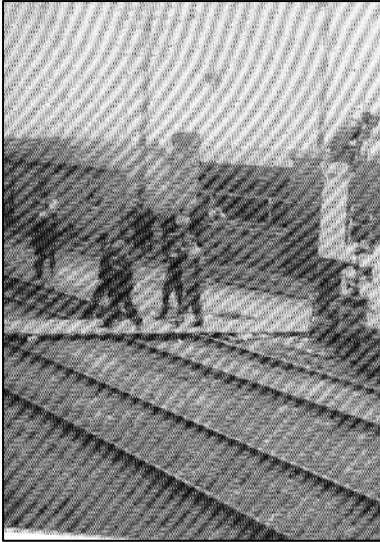
Commissioner Hartigan met with a Council deputation in 1934. There was only one item on the agenda relating to the station and this was the desire to asphalt part of Station Street/Whitton Street between the subway and that part of the road under Council's control. Hartigan asked how much Council would 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 23<sup>rd</sup> October, 1934. In 1927, for the visit of the Duke of York a temporary level crossing was placed at the southern end of the platform to provide at-grade access and that arrangement was used again in 1934. Rather than the Duke leaving the platform by the subway, a new temporary walkway was built. The royal train reversed from the southbound platform and into the goods yard and the train was stabled in a location adjacent to the goods loading platform. Temporary stairs were built as well as a temporary dais near the station entrance.<sup>249</sup> All the shops in the town were closed for the event.

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<sup>249</sup> *Harden Express*, 13th September, 1934, p. 1 and 25<sup>th</sup> October, 1934, p. 2.



*This photograph shows the temporary walkway in 1934 from the island platform across the railway tracks for the Duke of Gloucester. The walkway was built as even the Railway Department realised that the subway was poorly lit and did not reflect favourably on the administration. Behind the Duke was the first footwarmer boiler, which had to be removed when the northbound platform was lengthened in 1954. **SOURCE:** R. Atherton, Rupert Dufty Heggaton – Five Decades in Murrumburrah, Harden-Murrumburrah Historical Society, 2012, p. 32.*



*The 246 feet long goods loading bank where the Duke of Gloucester's train was stabled is shown below the station nameboard. The track serving the loading bank was known as No. 5 Down Siding. The nameboard has been painted in the official blue colours of Countrylink, which have since been replaced by the orange and white of NSW Train Link. The photograph was taken in March 1993.*

The decision for the Duke to avoid the subway was a 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 advised the Railway Department of its opinion.<sup>250</sup>



*8174 and 8165 on 15<sup>th</sup> February 1986 hauling a northbound goods train approach Harden station as 8149 moves from the Down Goods line with an empty bulk wheat train in the opposite direction.*

## **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 Commissioner on his tour in February 1935. The League also wanted the area in front of the station beautified. The League was keen to establish 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.”<sup>251</sup> 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.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>250</sup> *Harden Express*, 27th February, 1936, p. 3.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, 7<sup>th</sup> March, 1935, p. 2.

<sup>252</sup> *Murrumburrah Signal*, 7th March, 1935, p. 3.



As had occurred in other initiatives, 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.<sup>253</sup> The Commissioner revised the 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.<sup>254</sup>

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."<sup>255</sup> Council went on the attack again and wrote to the Commissioner 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 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.<sup>256</sup> 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."<sup>257</sup> 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, did have a subsequent interview with the Commissioner who promised to review the matter. Council decided to withhold further action until Commissioner Hartigan again visited the town.<sup>258</sup>

The Commissioner arrived in in April 1936 and he is recorded as being favourably impressed with the gardens and hedges on the railway platform.<sup>259</sup> 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.<sup>260</sup> Hartigan said he would see what could be done. That was the second time that the Commissioner had promised to review the proposal, Hartigan having 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.<sup>261</sup>

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<sup>253</sup> *Harden Express*, 9th May, 1935, p. 3.

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, 6th September, 1935, p. 3.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, 10th October, 1935, p. 4.

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, 7th November, 1935, p. 1.

<sup>259</sup> *Harden Express*, 23rd April, 1936, p. 1.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>261</sup> *Murrumburrah Signal*, 24th September, 1936, p. 2.

At long last, the Department did indicate in February 1937 that it would undertake repairs in the vicinity of the subway at Harden.<sup>262</sup> 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.<sup>263</sup>

The Railway Commissioner was to be on tour between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> of May 1937 and the Railway Department requested Murrumburrah Municipal Council and others to lodge with local Station Masters issues that were intended to be raised. This was the usual procedure. For Council, the number one issue to be raised was the need for improvements in front of Harden station. The only conclusion 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".<sup>264</sup> One would expect that to be the end of the matter but, in July 1937, the Department sent plans of an alternative scheme to Council, which would make available a triangular shaped area at the rear of the Station Master's residence. On receipt, Council flicked the matter to the Advance Harden League for consideration, a time-wasting exercise as the same person was in charge of both Council and the League.

Now for the twist. The Department changed its mind about who should pay for the work. By September 1937, the Railway Department accepted Council's estimate of £55 to undertake the improvements at the top of the subway.<sup>265</sup>

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.<sup>266</sup> 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.<sup>267</sup> 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."<sup>268</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> *Murrumburrah Signal*, 25th February, 1937, p. 2.

<sup>263</sup> *Harden Express*, 11th March, 1937, p. 1.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*, 17th June, 1937, p. 1.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, 23rd September, 1937, p. 3.

<sup>266</sup> *Harden Express*, 13th January, 1938, p. 1.

<sup>267</sup> *Murrumburrah Signal*, 9th February, 1939, p. 1.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*, 23rd March, 1939, p. 4.

It is also worth mentioning that the garden beds that were a dream for some years where never provided.<sup>269</sup> 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.<sup>270</sup>



*From the mid-1930s, local resident groups endeavoured to arrange the beautification of the station entrance shown above in this 1986 photograph. Renewed attempts were made in the 1940s and again in the 1960s and the only work undertaken by the Railway Department that was implemented related to the paling fence at the rear of the Station Master's residence. The above photograph shows the boundary of the original fence adjacent to the concrete path. The relocated fence was also repaired. Council long wanted seating at the top of the subway while detraining passengers waited for road transport. The bench in the picture is the outcome of the saga and was probably paid for by Council.*

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.<sup>271</sup> 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".<sup>272</sup> By October 1939, there was still no lawn at the top of the subway and Council resolved to provide it.

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<sup>269</sup> *Harden Express*, 8th December, 1938, p. 6.

<sup>270</sup> A photograph of the platform gardens is in Cottee, op. cit., p. 184.

<sup>271</sup> *Murrumburrah Signal*, 22nd June, 1939, p. 1.

<sup>272</sup> *Harden Express*, 22nd June, 1939, p. 2.

## **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.<sup>273</sup>

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.<sup>274</sup>

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 19<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>275</sup> The tender process was repeated in 1940 but this time including laundry.

In 1939, Herbert Chapell was the Sub-Manager of the refreshment room. He was the only salaried officer. There were six other people working in the facility who were classified as wages employees and paid on an hourly basis. There were two Counterhand-Waitresses, one Cook-Counterhand, one Housemaid-Waitress, one Bar Waitress and one Basket Boy. The occupant of this last position, as well as carrying a basket of food along the platform to serve passengers who did not want to go into the refreshment room, also did whatever heavy lifting and menial tasks were to be performed.<sup>276</sup> At that time, for a comparison, there were 13 staff working at the Cootamundra refreshment room.

## **CONNECTION OF THE STATION TO THE RETICULATED WATER SUPPLY**

On 1<sup>st</sup> December 1932, Murrumburrah Council agreed to take water from the Burrinjuck scheme, though the option had been available since January, 1928<sup>277</sup> The work of laying pipes for the town reticulated water supply had commenced in April 1933.<sup>278</sup> 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.

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<sup>273</sup> *Harden Express*, 12th March, 1931, p. 2.

<sup>274</sup> *Harden Express*, 13th September, 1934, p. 4.

<sup>275</sup> *Harden Express*, 13th April, 1939, p. 3.

<sup>276</sup> *Government Gazette of NSW Supplement*, 27<sup>th</sup> June, 1939, No. 96, pp. 3127 & 3132.

<sup>277</sup> *Murrumburrah Signal* 1<sup>st</sup> December, 1932, p. 1.

<sup>278</sup> *Harden Express*, 6 April, 1933, p. 2.

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. Commissioner Garside said he would look into the matter, which he did and eventually transferred the land to Council ownership.<sup>279</sup>

## 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.<sup>280</sup>

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 and several cans of cream rolled onto the railway line in front of the locomotive on the northbound Albury Mail. No comment need be made about the resultant impact.<sup>281</sup>

## 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.”<sup>282</sup>

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:

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<sup>279</sup> *Harden Express* 7<sup>th</sup> March 1935, p. 5.

<sup>280</sup> NSW, *Local Appendix to the Working Timetable*, 1<sup>st</sup> April, 1933, p. 39.

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*, 4<sup>th</sup> October, 1934, p. 2.

<sup>282</sup> *Harden Express*, 15<sup>th</sup> June, 1933, p. 2.

“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”.<sup>283</sup>

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.<sup>284</sup>

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 unusual but not unknown at that period. Council got the green light and did the work, whatever was involved.<sup>285</sup> 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. Also J. Findley from Goulburn had carried out plumbing work at the station in 1933.

At the end of 1935, Harden station had a staff of 34 officers.<sup>286</sup> When the Station Master was doing nothing in November of that year, he opened a load of baskets from the northbound Albury Mail which contained pigeons that would fly back to their home in Melbourne.

Lightning destroyed the telephone switchboard in September 1937. It seems that either the switchboard was small or the fire lacked a punch as only one bucket of water was required to extinguish the conflagration.<sup>287</sup>

## **USE OF RAIL TO CONVEY NEWSPAPERS**

Newspapers had been carried by train to and through Harden from 1887. They were initially conveyed by a special, daily train operated by the New South Wales Railways but subsidised by the colonial government at the request of the owners of the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Daily Telegraph* newspapers. In the 1930s, the train commenced to carry passengers and, in later years, the newspapers were carried by the overnight mail trains. The use of trains to convey newspapers started to be changed in 1939 when road vehicles were used convey newspapers to Goulburn,

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<sup>283</sup> Ibid.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid., 15 February 1934, p. 2.

<sup>285</sup> *Murrumburrah Signal*, 18th January, 1934, p. 3.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid., 5th December, 1935, p. 2.

<sup>287</sup> *Goulburn Evening Penny Post*, 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1937, p. 4.

where they were transferred to a goods train. This allowed an acceleration of two hours in the delivery as far as Junee.<sup>288</sup>

From 30<sup>th</sup> April 1939 was the introduction of new uniforms. The previous uniform, where buttons were done up to the neck of the jacket and the cap was similar to the French Army model, was abandoned. The jacket being phased out of use featured the person's employee number on the collar. The use of employee numbers was totally abandoned. Instead, the rank of the individual was reflected in her/his cap badge and also the colour of the cloth band around the new military-style cap. The new uniform for Station Masters featured a double breasted and braided lapel coat with silver buttons.<sup>289</sup> This action was just one of many initiatives which Commissioner, Tom Hartigan, introduced in the 1930s in order to modernise the New South Wales Railways and make an attempt for it to be attractive as an alternative to the use of private automobiles and aviation.



*The photographer is looking through the out of room to the side paling fence of the Station Master's residence. The picture captures the 1889 and subsequent additions to the northern end of the 1880 building. The large window on the right identifies the original Porters' room. As was the architectural practice, the walls of attached pavilions were indented relative to the main wall of buildings. Harden building accorded to that practice. 28<sup>th</sup> May 1982.*

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<sup>288</sup> V. Isaacs, How We Got the News, Andergrove, *Australian Newspaper History Group*, 2008, pp. 4-11.

<sup>289</sup> *Goulburn Evening Penny Post*, 20th April, 1939, p. 1.

# 11. THE IMPACT OF WORLD WAR 2 ON STATION OPERATIONS

## THE 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.<sup>290</sup> However, the War took a toll on Council's availability of manpower. Council was still engaged in 1941 with the work at the entrance to the subway. By October, Council men were digging up an area and planting it with Buffalo grass.<sup>291</sup> The beds of flowers were never planted.

## THE SUBWAY

Many times did the Railway Department decline a Council request for some sought-after improvement but then stated that the Department had no objection to Council undertaking and paying for the work? Well, here was another instance.

The long history of non-co-operation 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.<sup>292</sup>

## FUNCTIONS CARRIED OUT IN THE PLATFORM BUILDING 1942

In 1942, the designation of the rooms in the 1880 building, as extended, were:

### NORTHERN HALF

- male toilet and store
- out of room and lamp room
- (undesignated) office
- Station Master's office
- telegraph office

### CENTRE OF BUILDING

- general waiting room and pedestrian entry (through faceted bay window)

### SOUTHERN HALF

- ladies' waiting room with the female toilet adjacent on the southbound platform

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<sup>290</sup> *Murrumburrah Signal*, 11th January, 1940, p. 4.

<sup>291</sup> *Murrumburrah Signal*, 16th October, 1941, p. 1.

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.*, 30th October, 1941, p. 4.



- refreshment room bar
- refreshment room dining area

Additionally, the stand-alone timber ticket office was located at the top of the subway at the northern end of the 1880 extended building while the refreshment room service area (i.e., the coal supply, laundry and toilet) flanked the southern end of the 1880 building.

## **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. Did this mean that Railway plumbers went to war but gardeners did not? Probably, as the men would be in different age groups.

Council had heard in 1943 that a number of railway stations were being reviewed and the seniority of the Station Masters was 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.<sup>293</sup> It was reported as the largest public meeting in the town for many years. The Mayor was particularly keen to find out ways of combining Harden and Murrumburrah, though it was reported that such a proposal was impossible while there were two shopping centres.

Yet another new community organisation was established in 1945, this time being called the Commerce Association.<sup>294</sup>

## **CAMOUFLAGED STATION NAMEBOARDS AND PLATFORM ACCESS RESTRICTIONS**

The Commonwealth Government issued a National Security Regulation on 6<sup>th</sup> March 1942 requiring the removal of all signs indicating place names and distances within

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<sup>293</sup> *Harden Express*, 16th September, 1943, p. 1.

<sup>294</sup> *Ibid.*, 1<sup>st</sup> March, 1945, p. 4.

100 miles from the coast.<sup>295</sup> 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. The Department painted station nameboards in 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 but it also annoyed Australians.

In accordance with advice received from the Commonwealth Government, the Traffic Branch issued a Circular on 19<sup>th</sup> 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 the backgrounds of the nameboards were to be repainted black with white lettering. So far as the electrified area was concerned, the Department continued the then existing practice of painting “number 35” colour for the background (a colour called “gamboge”) with black lettering.

Another issue that Council raised with the then local Member of Parliament, 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 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1944, the policy changed from the restricted issue of platform tickets to a total ban.<sup>296</sup> The argument that the Department 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”.<sup>297</sup> 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.<sup>298</sup>

There were no lighting restrictions in force at Harden during the War, apart from the drawing of blinds at night time.<sup>299</sup>

## **THE IMPACT OF THE INTRODUCTION OF THE RIVERINA EXPRESS IN 1941 WITH ON-TRAIN SERVICE**

One benefit of the growth in passenger traffic due to the War was the increased trade in the refreshment rooms, which recorded a surplus of £30,919 in 1940/41. The total earnings of £840,966 was the highest figure recorded in the history of the Railways. However, other initiatives by the Department would ultimately have a detrimental effect on the long-term future of refreshment rooms.

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<sup>295</sup> NSW, *The Roadmakers*, Sydney, Department of Main Roads, 1976, p. 174.

<sup>296</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18<sup>th</sup> May, 1944, p. 2 and Murrumburrah Signal, 25<sup>th</sup> May, 1944, p. 4.

<sup>297</sup> NSW, *Roadmakers*, op. cit., 22nd June, 1944, p. 4.

<sup>298</sup> *Harden Express*, 31st August, 1944, p. 10.

<sup>299</sup> Department of Railways, *Railways at War*, Sydney, no date, Appendix A.

For the first time in New South Wales, Commissioner Hartlgan announced that, commencing 3rd November 1941, hostesses would travel on the newly introduced daylight express trains, and the Departmental press release stated:

“It will be their function to give an additional service to the public, particularly elderly people and mothers with small children, in the way of seeing to their comfort throughout the journey. The hostesses will travel on the trains between Sydney and Wellington, Sydney and Tamworth, and Sydney and June. In response to advertisements, no less than 636 applications were received from girls who were anxious to secure one of the eight positions available. Each of the applications was carefully reviewed and 50 of the girls were personally interviewed, the eight finally selected being considered to possess all the qualifications necessary to enable them to be successful in their new positions”.

The first daylight express train introduced, from 12th May 1941, was the Riverina Express. Trains on the other lines also commenced in 1941, being the Northern Tablelands Express to Armidale and the Central West Express to Dubbo. A buffet service was also inaugurated on the Riverina Express and the Department intended to provide this service on the other daylight express trains. There was an immediate adverse impact on the level of business at some country refreshment rooms, as was the case at the Muswellbrook refreshment room with the decision that the new Northern Tablelands Express would stop at Muswellbrook for lunch.

While on-train catering would increase in the future, in 1941 it was the refreshment rooms that absorbed the lion's share of trade from hungry and thirsty travellers. Notwithstanding the huge numbers of troops that were moved throughout the railway network during World War 2, there was minimal impact on the physical fabric of the existing refreshment room buildings. This is explained largely by the strategy to use voluntary groups to serve food and drink to military personnel on other parts of railway property than the refreshment room itself. For example, members of the Muswellbrook Voluntary Aid Detachment, working in shifts, assisted the staff at the Railway Refreshment Room in serving breakfast to a large number of troops who passed through the town on 27<sup>th</sup> June 1940.<sup>300</sup> However, there were a few instances throughout the State where the fabric of refreshment rooms was altered by major, structural enlargements.

The refreshment room at Harden encountered congestion, which prompted an internal re-arrangement of spaces, but the facility was not externally altered.

## **THE PEAK OF REFRESHMENT ROOM BUSINESS**

In December 1939, the Commonwealth Director of Railway Transportation indicated that the southern rail corridor between Melbourne and Sydney could accommodate 16

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<sup>300</sup> *Muswellbrook Chronicle*, 27<sup>th</sup> June 1940, p. 1.

interstate troop trains each way per day, regardless of whether the trains commenced from Albury or from Tocumwal, which joined the Main South line at Cootamundra (sic).<sup>301</sup>

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 refreshment rooms throughout the State which were split into three categories at the time 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 each refreshment room.<sup>302</sup> 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 refreshments were available including 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".<sup>303</sup> So the article implied that Harden was a very special case with some supplies being permitted to be purchased locally.

Harden was a prescribed location where defence personnel undertook refreshments, as were Yass Junction, Cootamundra, Junee and Albury.<sup>304</sup> 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.<sup>305</sup> The Red cross volunteers also assisted invalid soldiers returning home. They

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<sup>301</sup> S. J. Butlin, *War Economy 1939 – 1942*, Canberra, Australian War Memorial, 1961, p. 400.

<sup>302</sup> *Murrumburrah Signal – Special Railway Centenary Edition*, 2nd March, 1977, p. 9.

<sup>303</sup> *Harden Express*, 12th December, 1940, p. 2 and Wellington Times, 23rd December, 1940, p. 5.

<sup>304</sup> Department of Railways, *Railways at War*, Sydney, no date, p. 23.

<sup>305</sup> *Murrumburrah Signal*, 13th of August, 1942, p. 4.

set up a sign outside the waiting room and had a serving area inside the facility. The Red Cross also raised money for Australian prisoners of war.<sup>306</sup>



*As far as is known, no plans survive that indicate the date of the unpainted, face brick addition to the refreshment room, thought it was built after 1946. The structure included a new laundry, new incinerator, a new coal store and a staff toilet. There were three chimneys associated with the structure, including a very tall chimney. Other items of interest included the extension to the platform on the right-hand side of the photograph using a system introduced in the 1930s in which a frame of old rails was firstly constructed and concrete poured in situ. The platform coping was cantilevered towards the rail in an endeavour to provide a safe place for staff if they were caught on the tracks with a train approaching. Also on the right-hand side towards the lower corner is a bracket lock to prevent the ball lever from being moved. The photograph was taken on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1964. **SOURCE:** Unknown.*

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.

## **ADDRESSING REFRESHMENT ROOM CONGESTION IN 1943**

In 1943, the Department proclaimed that it had standardised the time of trains stopped at railway stations into three different time periods – these being seven minutes, 12 minutes and 30 minutes.<sup>307</sup> Was this proclamation about standardised times reflected in the reality of the public timetables? The Table below sets out the time duration or a random sample of refreshment rooms from Goulburn to Junee for select trains.

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<sup>306</sup> *Harden-Murrumburrah Express*, 17th December, 1981, p. 24.

<sup>307</sup> *Narrandera Argus and Riverina Advertiser*, 21<sup>st</sup> May, 1943, p. 1.

**TABLE: SELECT TRAIN DURATIONS IN MINUTES AT REFRESHMENT ROOMS GOULBURN-JUNEE PROCEEDING SOUTHWARD, 1944**

TRAIN	GOULBURN	YASS JUNCTION	HARDEN	COOTA	JUNEE
Temora Mail	35	5	15	29	-
South West Mail	10	6	8	40	-
Albury Mail	12	6	14	14	14

**SOURCE:** *Public timetable dated 28<sup>th</sup> May 1944. The timetable for 1943 is not extant.*

If the Department had standardised duration times to take refreshments, this was not reflected in the above Timetable. Not one of the stops accorded with the 1943 announcement about the standardisation policy.

In addition to standardising the duration of trains standing in platforms, the Department also introduced what it termed “standard meals”. This initiative had proved to be very successful, particularly on the North Coast line during the War.

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.

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 to 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”. 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”.<sup>308</sup>

The Mayor had received correct intelligence about a plan to remedy the situation. The Railway Department issued a plan dated 24<sup>th</sup> of June 1943 for alterations to the refreshment room counter. The 43 feet long counter, which had been installed in 1927, was to be removed and replaced to one side of the room. The counter was to be extended to a length of 46 feet nine inches. The refreshment room was approved in 1884 and alterations to the shape of the counter and reorganisation of the facility had 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 counter. 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 the change in 1943 represented the ninth time the refreshment room had been substantially altered and in each of these cases the shape of the counter had been altered in order to accommodate the ever-growing number of passengers. Glass fronted showcases also had to be installed behind the new counter.

Another plan dated 19<sup>th</sup> January 1943 provided for the replacement of the existing refreshment room hot water service storage with a larger storage cylinder of 22 inches in diameter and three feet four inches. The cylinder, which weighed 600 pounds when full, was to be supplied by 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 24<sup>th</sup> of May 1943 involved a revision of the January plan and, this time, embraced 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

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<sup>308</sup> Ibid., 1<sup>st</sup> April, 1943, p. 3.

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. An issue for the men was the shortage of tobacco and the same meeting resolved that refreshment rooms should sell tobacco so that the railwaymen could obtain their war-time quota.<sup>309</sup> This action at Harden reflected the widespread lodgement of never-ending complaints by unionists during World War 2 who demanded that the Railway administration make workplace and other improvements. If the demands were not met, the unions threatened strike action. Unions pressed for all sorts of demands allegedly because of the impact of the labour shortage on union members.

## **COMPARISON OF DEVELOPMENTS AT THE HARDEN REFRESHMENT ROOM WITH THOSE AT GOULBURN, YASS AND COOTAMUNDRA**

Four refreshment rooms were simultaneously in existence between Goulburn and Cootamundra between 1893 and 1957. Appendix 8 sets out the years in which the four refreshment rooms were altered or enlarged. Was the Harden facility operated consistent with departmental practice compared to other stations? Also, Was there any pattern to the timing of additions and alterations across the four refreshment rooms?

Appendix 8 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 2 affected only the Harden refreshment room. The very interesting aspect of the Appendix 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 at an early time by the need to enlarge it almost as soon as built.

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<sup>309</sup> *Harden Express*, 22nd February, 1945, p. 2.



## 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.<sup>310</sup> 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. In April, the Acting Secretary for Railways wrote in reply to the Murrumburrah Municipal Council regarding the connecting of government owned premises with the sewerage system and stated that the large expenditure involved in the heavy railway works for defence purposes precluded favourable consideration being given to the matter. It was therefore regretted that the request could not be acceded to at the present time. Alderman King said that, if Council did not press for the sewerage to be installed at the railway station, ratepayers would see Council as weak. The railway paid no rates, and if it can't be forced to put the sewerage on. King explained that Council could not force local property owners who were not in a position to do so or charge for the sewerage or increase the price of the pan system. The Clerk read the Ordinance in which it was stated that the Council had power to enforce owners of property who were subject to water and sewerage rates to install the sewerage. Alderman King added:

“The Council put the sewerage in to the houses of the ratepayers in order to provide work for the unemployed, but only about thirty got work, and now the Railway refuses to have it installed. Just supposing the whole of the Municipality was sewered, who was going to service the railway with the pan system? I will move that legal information be obtained from Mr. Bluett”.

Alderman Killick seconded the motion, which was carried. Alderman Dawson moved that the Council inspector be instructed to make an inspection of the sanitary conveniences at both railway stations and furnish a report to next meeting. It was seconded by Alderman O'Brien and carried. The Mayor commented:

“I do not know what condition the sanitary conveniences at Murrumburrah are in, but I do know that those at Harden are most objectionable. If they were attached to any hotel in the Municipality, the proprietor would be summoned”.<sup>311</sup>

Alderman Gibson of Murrumburrah Municipal Council was informed that it had no power to compel the Railway Department to connect its properties to the sewer. Alderman King moved that William Ross, the Parliamentarian for Cootamundra electorate, be asked to make representations to the Premier regarding the connecting of railway properties to sewerage system and, also, that notice be given to the Railway Department that rateable properties must be sewered. The motion was carried.<sup>312</sup>

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<sup>310</sup> *Picton Post*, 24<sup>th</sup> December, 1940, p. 4.

<sup>311</sup> *Murrumburrah Signal and County of Harden Advocate*, 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1941, p. 3.

<sup>312</sup> *Murrumburrah Signal and County of Harden Advocate*, 1<sup>st</sup> May 1941, p. 3.

By May 1941, 130 residences in the town had been connected to the sewerage scheme.<sup>313</sup> 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.<sup>314</sup> The Secretary for Railways replied 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".<sup>315</sup>



*It is 10<sup>th</sup> December 1970. The ballast wagons have just dropped their load on the Up Main and Up Goods lines. The toilet smells from the male facility were not the only problem for passengers waiting on the platforms. There were also odours from the stock yard and race, which was immediately opposite the northbound platform. The stock wagons are stabled on the Stock Siding with the stock race just to the right out of the photograph. The bulk wheat facility is under construction. It followed demolition of the former rest house and nearby locomotive depot facilities.*

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 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

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<sup>313</sup> Ibid., 1<sup>st</sup> May, 1941, p.2.

<sup>314</sup> Ibid., 26th June, 1941, p. 4.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid., 10th July, 1941, p. 4.

conveniences prevailing at Harden station owing to the heavy traffic".<sup>316</sup> 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.



*The South Dock was used for the stabling of special vehicles. One such special carriage was the dental clinic car, which was resting against the buffers on 5<sup>th</sup> September 1985.*

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.<sup>317</sup> Many stations throughout New South Wales were similarly connected to local sewerage systems during World War 2 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."<sup>318</sup> 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

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<sup>316</sup> Ibid., 23rd January, 1942, p. 4.

<sup>317</sup> *Murrumburrah Signal*, 24th December, 1942, p. 4.

<sup>318</sup> *Murrumburrah Signal*, 11th May, 1944, p. 4.

a “colour test” on the drainage and maintained that the waste did not enter the creek.<sup>319</sup> Undeniably, there were problems as the Murrumburrah Health Inspector had observed that repairs were required to some closets, “in accordance with Ordinance 44”.<sup>320</sup>

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.

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 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 northern 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,

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<sup>319</sup> Ibid., 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 1927, p. 1.

<sup>320</sup> Ibid.

- two sinks in the refreshment room kitchen, &
- a tub the refreshment room laundry.

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 28<sup>th</sup> August 1945 though the Station Master's residence had been connected on 25<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>321</sup> 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 2. 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.



*Some aspects of the refreshment room have been demolished. The three chimneys have disappeared and the coal bund has gone. The steps from the platform to ground level have been pulled away from platform. This was a 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1994 view.*

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<sup>321</sup> *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 23rd September, 1949, p. 3.

## **PART 4 THE DECLINE**

### **12. DIMINUTION OF 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.<sup>322</sup> These initiatives plus the huge publicity campaigns in 1940 and 1943 to promote the 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 were 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.<sup>323</sup> Whereas the number of registered private cars per person in the population of 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.<sup>324</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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

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<sup>322</sup> C. Banger, "On-Train Catering New South Wales 1921-2001," *Australian Railway History*, March, 2004, p. 111.

<sup>323</sup> The Bus and Coach Association, *Private Buses at the Crossroads*, North Parramatta, no date, p. 8.

<sup>324</sup> *Ibid.*

swivel bucket chairs along a streamlined-looking counter”.<sup>325</sup> Author, David Burke, stated that the new train was bringing “an overdue measure of comfort and speedier daytime schedules.”<sup>326</sup> 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 services, passenger services became faster and fewer staff meant lower operating costs. Even the politicians of the State Labor Party who were in power at the time could 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.<sup>327</sup> A prescient 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 the 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%.<sup>328</sup> Customers simply chose the alternative road service because it was available, safer, quicker and cheaper.



<sup>325</sup> D. Burke, *30 Days on Australia’s Railways*, Dural, Rosenberg Publishing, 2014, p. 99.

<sup>326</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>327</sup> *West Wyalong Advocate*, 22nd September, 1949, p. 8.

<sup>328</sup> 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.

*This undated photograph shows both the corners of both the northern and southern end walls of the 1884 refreshment room. The location of the corners was marked by the quoins not far from the three, first floor windows. The cane crates under the station nameboard look interesting. They were either awaiting return to Sydney Steam Station after having been used to convey food prepared in Sydney for sale in the Harden refreshment room or they had been used to convey homing pigeons probably from Sydney and were awaiting return. The evidence indicates that the railway staff did free homing birds at nominated times. The platform wall looks decidedly daggy. At the left-hand side, the single door led into the railway bar. The next two doors provided entry into the refreshment room with one set of doors leading to the tables in the dining area and the other door providing access to the service counter. The door under the hipped roof of the single-storey structure was used by refreshment room staff who, at one time, would have walked up and down the platform selling minor refreshments. SOURCE: Uncatalogued photograph, State Rail Authority Archives.*

## 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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 railway 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 17<sup>th</sup> March 1947 and destroyed all the girls' possessions as well as the house.<sup>329</sup>

On 30<sup>th</sup> June 1948, the South West Mail derailed at Rocky Ponds and the 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.<sup>330</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> July the refreshment room was given one hour's notice to prepare 200 meals for relief track gang members.<sup>331</sup>

Tenders were again called in March 1948 for the supply of certain commodities for the refreshment room and the process was repeated in 1949.<sup>332</sup> In 1950, the tender system was extended to the laundering of linen used for table cloths.<sup>333</sup> The linen had been sent to Sydney for cleaning.

One of the most obvious additions to the original platform building was the refreshment room services area, containing the laundry, coal pile, clothes washing line and staff

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<sup>329</sup> *Cootamundra Herald*, 18th March, 1947, p. 2.

<sup>330</sup> T. Edmonds, "The South West Mail Derailment Rocky Ponds, 5.05am 30<sup>th</sup> June 1948," *Australian Railway History*, March, 2013, p. 15.

<sup>331</sup> *Harden Express*, 2nd July, 1948, p. 5.

<sup>332</sup> *Ibid.*, 12th March, 1948, p. 3 and 25<sup>th</sup> March, 1949, p. 2.

<sup>333</sup> J. Longworth, "Laundering the Railways' Dirty Linen", *Australian Railway History*, November, 2017, p. 19.



toilet, located at the southern end. This collection of refreshment room miscellany was for a long time highly noticeable because it was the only part of the platform building complex where the walls are unpainted and remained 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. The building, for which no plan survives, appears to date from the late 1940s/ early 1950s. The southern end brick wall of the facility was 24 feet 3 inches wide across the platform.



*This 1986 photograph shows part of the replacement service building for the refreshment room. It also shows the concrete bund at the southern end of the station. It was the task of the junior staff to supply coal from the bund to a small container within the refreshment room compound behind the station nameboard as well as to all fireplaces throughout the building. The subtext of the station nameboard has been simplified following the introduction of road coaches to replace the railway service to Cowra. Note how the traditional platform electric light stand has been modified for the use of fluorescent tubes to replace incandescent bulbs.*

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 13<sup>th</sup> March for cartage; 20<sup>th</sup> March for bread and bread rolls and 27<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>334</sup>

## CHANGE IN DEPARTMENTAL REFRESHMENT ROOM POLICY

From 1<sup>st</sup> February, the Railway Department ceased table service in the Junee and Cootamundra railway refreshment dining rooms. Table service had been introduced in 1918. That service included "damask linen tablecloths, glittering silver, shining crystal and spotless crockery".<sup>335</sup> From 1<sup>st</sup> February 1950, patrons were required to proceed to the refreshment room counter to order and collect their meals at the Junee and Cootamundra facilities. By the end of June 1950, table meal service had been discontinued at six "important country rooms and an improved counter entrée service was substituted. The change in the arrangements resulted in appreciable economies in labour and other costs".<sup>336</sup>

The press reported that the "innovation" had been initially trialled at Parkes from 1<sup>st</sup> December 1949 and the Department maintained that the trial had been "an outstanding success".<sup>337</sup> As evidence of the success, the Department indicated that, for the month of January 1950, the Parkes refreshment room had served 4,011 meals at the counter compared with 2,121 meals served at tables and 1,630 meals at the counter (totalling 3,751) served during January, 1949.<sup>338</sup> Following the successful launching of the scheme at Parkes and the introduction of similar service at Junee and Cootamundra, the scheme was extended on 1st March to Casino, Kempsey and Bathurst.<sup>339</sup>

As well as the increased service level, one Departmental Inspector mentioned that the change resulted in "a big saving in wages cost to the Department".<sup>340</sup> At the end of February, a press article appeared that contained some background to the service change. The Secretary wrote:

"Because of the impossibility of obtaining female staff to maintain full dining-room service at the major rooms throughout New South Wales, it was decided to give a trial to the counter entree type of service at Parkes, and this has proved so popular that similar services have been introduced at two other rooms - one of which is Junee; three more rooms will be changed over to counter service at the end of this month. Since the new service was introduced at Junee, the local

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<sup>334</sup> Ibid., 28th February, 1957, p. 7.

<sup>335</sup> *Dubbo Liberal and Macquarie Advocate*, 18<sup>th</sup> March 1950, p. 2.

<sup>336</sup> Department of Railways, *Report of the Commissioner for the year ended 30th of June 1950*, Sydney, Government Printer, 1950, p. 64.

<sup>337</sup> *Daily Advertiser*, 1st February 1950, p. 2. In relation to start date at Parkes, see *Barrier Daily Truth*, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1950, p. 4.

<sup>338</sup> *Barrier Daily Truth*, 23rd March 1950, p. 4.

<sup>339</sup> Ibid.

<sup>340</sup> *Daily Advertiser*, 1st February 1950, p. 2.

manager reports that the complaints have been negligible in comparison with the number of patrons served. ....

To suggest that food being supplied, or the method of supply is the same as that provided for troops in wartime is a gross exaggeration. Cutlery, condiments and iced water are provided on each table and all table tops are nicely painted, the general appearance of the room being such that no one could take reasonable exception to it. During the War, the Victorian Railways Commissioners changed their dining-room service to an entree service, and, because of its many advantages, decided to retain it permanently".<sup>341</sup>

From the introduction of the new Riverina Express in 1949, no alcohol was served on the train. The Yass Municipal Council and Yass Chamber of Commerce asked in 1950 on the Commissioner's annual tour that consideration be given to the opening of the bar at Goulburn station to serve the Riverina Express. The Commissioner was reported as saying "that refreshments were served on the train and he was not in favour of doing anything further. In his opinion, there was nothing more obnoxious than a man under the influence of liquor on a train, and he did not consider it necessary to open the Goulburn bar. That was his policy and it would continue".<sup>342</sup>

In his first week in office as Minister for Transport in July 1950, Billy Sheahan stated that "bitter complaints have been made, particularly by tourists from overseas, at the quality of the railway refreshment services and the lack of reasonable facilities for serving of liquor. I am also determined that people living in remote areas will be able to travel in reasonably clean and comfortable carriages". He mentioned nothing about improving refreshment room services.

As far as is known, table service continued to be available at the Harden refreshment room in 1950, but worse was to come in 1951.

There was a tinge of good news in 1951. Harden station won second place in its regional, geographic section of the Departmental annual garden competition.<sup>343</sup>

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<sup>341</sup> *Daily Advertiser*, 25<sup>th</sup> February, 1950 p. 2.

<sup>342</sup> *Yass Tribune-Courier*, 18<sup>th</sup> May 1950, p. 4.

<sup>343</sup> *Weekly Notice No. 48*, 24-30/11/1951, p. 7.



*This photograph on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2000 shows the bricked-up former doorway that connected the refreshment room kitchen to the service area. The staff toilet cubicle is located in the corner. The door on the left gave access to the laundry.*

## **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 8<sup>th</sup> 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.”<sup>344</sup>

Murrumburrah Municipal 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.”<sup>345</sup>

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<sup>344</sup> *Grenfell Recorder and Lachlan District Advertiser*, 15<sup>th</sup> November, 1951, p. 2.

<sup>345</sup> *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 16th November, 1951, p. 3.

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 dismiss some of the staff. By some miracle, the restriction on night-time opening was lifted on 3<sup>rd</sup> December and the Harden refreshment room operated as normal.<sup>346</sup>

What was that miracle that stopped the first stage of the closure in 1951? The local Member of Parliament, Billy Sheahan, was also the Minister for Transport between 30<sup>th</sup> June 1950 and 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 located 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, if the financial position of the Harden refreshment room continued to remain unsatisfactory, the number of male staff would be reduced and a number of the full-time female staff would be altered to part-time.<sup>347</sup> 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.<sup>348</sup>

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<sup>346</sup> *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 14th December, 1951, p. 1.

<sup>347</sup> *Ibid.*, 11th January, 1952, p. 1.

<sup>348</sup> *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 6th March, 1952, p. 4.



*John Stormont on the 24<sup>th</sup> April 1953 captured perhaps the most annoying operational aspect by the Department of Railways to the residents of Harden-Murrumburrah, namely the large amount of smoke, soot and cinders. Locomotive 5801 runs past the station with a goods train headed for Goulburn. SOURCE: K. T. Groves, *The Big Engines*, Burwood New South Wales Rail Transport Museum, 1990, p. 90.*

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. Cahill’s biographer, Peter Golding, wrote that, as a result of the Premier’s directive, more than 3,400 railway employees were retrenched and another 662 were also to go. Despite protesting, the railway unions did not take industrial action 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.<sup>349</sup>

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 in June calling for tenders to take over operations of the refreshment room at Harden for three years from 1<sup>st</sup> August 1957.<sup>350</sup> No tenders were received. Furnished staff quarters came with the job at Harden. The advertisement was repeated on 13<sup>th</sup> June and 27<sup>th</sup> June. It was not an unusual or unrealistic decision to offer the refreshment facility for lease at Harden as

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<sup>349</sup> P. Golding, *They Called Him Old Smoothie – John Joseph Cahill*, North Melbourne, Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2009, page 258.

<sup>350</sup> *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 6<sup>th</sup> June 1957, p. 4.

there were other similar facilities that were leased or attempted to be leased to private enterprise, such as the one at Gundagai, Blayney and Moree.<sup>351</sup> No tenders were ever received for the lease of the Harden refreshment room.

The Harden refreshment room closed on 1<sup>st</sup> September, 1957. The local Member of Parliament, Billy Sheahan, was transferred from the position of the Minister for Transport on 23<sup>rd</sup> 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 had he remained in the transport portfolio? 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 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1956. As of 21<sup>st</sup> 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.<sup>352</sup> 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, the Liberal Party 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.<sup>353</sup>

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 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

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<sup>351</sup> *Railway Transportation*, July 1957, p. 20.

<sup>352</sup> *Ibid.*, 10<sup>th</sup> October 1957, p. 1.

<sup>353</sup> 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.

southern end of the refreshment room, thus dividing the facility. 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, particularly the Spirit of Progress, and waited at Harden station for passenger trains proceeding back to Melbourne. This stopped in the late 1980s.

## **DETERIORATING STAFF ATTITUDES**

The Harden Branch 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.<sup>354</sup> 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.”<sup>355</sup>

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”.<sup>356</sup>

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<sup>354</sup> Ibid., 31st October, 1947, p. 1.

<sup>355</sup> Ibid., 2nd June, 1955, p. 1.

<sup>356</sup> D. J. Howse, *Railways of Australia*, Department of Railways, no date, pp. 19 and 20.



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 working expenses between 1946/47 and 1953/4.<sup>357</sup> 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.



*Locomotives 4471 and 4456 have made a stop at the southbound platform to exchange information with station staff. The scene is covered with exhaust as the two diesel-electric engines start off again with their goods train. In the distance on the right-hand side can be seen the roof of the two track carriage shed. The date is 12<sup>th</sup> December 1970.*

## **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.<sup>358</sup> 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.<sup>359</sup> 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.

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<sup>357</sup> Ibid.

<sup>358</sup> *Harden Express*, 7th of May, 1948, p. 7.

<sup>359</sup> Ibid., 18th June, 1948, p. 6.



*The photographer is standing in the out of room facing the southbound platform looking out to the side paling fence of the Station Master's residence. The pipe balustrade of the subway is visible. Note the poor condition of the platform surface. The photograph was taken on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2000.*

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.”<sup>360</sup> 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 southern end through the goods yard to and from the street.”<sup>361</sup>

## **STATION FORECOURT AND PRESENTATION**

Harden station was reported in the Yass press as having “fine flower gardens in what otherwise appears to be a drab landscape”.<sup>362</sup> No wonder! Harden station won the 1948 championship prize in the annual Departmental garden competition covering

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<sup>360</sup> *Ibid.*, 14th January, 1949, p. 1.

<sup>361</sup> Department of Railways, *Minutes of Commissioner's Tour of Inspection*, 26<sup>th</sup> May, 1960, p. 10.

<sup>362</sup> *Yass Tribune-Courier*, 6<sup>th</sup> May 1948, p. 6.

the whole of the NSW rail system for the station garden.<sup>363</sup> In 1949, while it was not the grand champion, it did win its geographic regional competition.<sup>364</sup>

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 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.<sup>365</sup>

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 decline in the funds available to the Department, it was quite impracticable for the work to be carried out at the then present time.<sup>366</sup> 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 repair the area - 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.<sup>367</sup> 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.<sup>368</sup> 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.

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<sup>363</sup> *Weekly Notice No. 50*, 11-17th December 1948, p. 6.

<sup>364</sup> *Weekly Notice No. 48*, 26/11-2/12 1949, p. 16.

<sup>365</sup> *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 27th January, 1950, p. 1.

<sup>366</sup> *Ibid.*, 11th June, 1953, p. 1.

<sup>367</sup> *Ibid.*, 4<sup>th</sup> March, 1954, p. 1.

<sup>368</sup> *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 21st July, 1955, p. 2.



On 7<sup>th</sup> November 1982, a special passenger train stops at the platform. The platform gardens look magnificent. **SOURCE:** Photograph No. 056933 ARHS Railway Archives.

## ANOTHER PLATFORM EXTENSION

In January, 1950, it was planned to remove the 1924 built, 80 feet long extension of the northbound platform at the southern 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 the south. 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. One of the structures to be moved was the footwarmer furnace, which was relocated to a position immediately off the northern end of the platform.

## 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 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.<sup>369</sup> Nothing was mentioned about mail going in the opposite direction. Another conundrum!

One of the casualties of the difficult financial situation was the decision by the Department of Railways to close all parcels offices on Saturday afternoons and

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<sup>369</sup> *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 28th March, 1950, p. 3.

Sundays from September 1952. The only exception was the Sydney parcels depot at Railway Square.

Passengers could still deposit and receive their luggage on application with the station staff. Fruit and perishable goods were also to be delivered to consignees on application but would not be received. Station Masters would make special arrangements for the dispatch of stone fruit in season and day-old chickens would also be accepted for dispatch and delivery on application.<sup>370</sup>

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.<sup>371</sup> 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 9<sup>th</sup> March 1964. No Council or other deputation was going to be organised to meet him.<sup>372</sup> 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, could Council maintain electricity supplies to the station during blackouts. He gave an example of an incident on Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> May 1952 when the power was cut off between 1815 and 1915 during which time No. 15 passenger train arrived at 1900 and departed at 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.<sup>373</sup>

## **THE IMPACT OF ROAD OPERATIONS**

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<sup>370</sup> *Mudgee Guardian and North-Western Representative*, 15<sup>th</sup> September 1952, p. 1.

<sup>371</sup> 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.

<sup>372</sup> *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 5th March, 1964, p. 2.

<sup>373</sup> *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 15th May, 1952, p. 2.

The conveyance of newspapers by rail was cut back on 21<sup>st</sup> June 1964 to Goulburn and completely discontinued from 1<sup>st</sup> November 1970.<sup>374</sup>



*Gary Hughes was on hand on 17<sup>th</sup> December 1960 to photograph locomotive 3610 pass the station on the Up Goods line. A few of the locomotive depot buildings are visible on the right of the photograph.*

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<sup>374</sup> V. Isaacs, *How We Got the News*, Andergrove, Australian Newspaper History Group, 2008, pp. 4-11.

## **13. STRUGGLING ON 1965-1972**

### **THE STATION APPROACH - AGAIN**

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 4<sup>th</sup> December 1962 to submit a 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 project 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.<sup>375</sup> 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.<sup>376</sup> 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 Railway Department also lost interest in the wool dump and that project, again, went nowhere.

### **THE SUBWAY - AGAIN**

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 near-repeat of one similarly made in 1949 which wanted a rail in the centre of the subway. 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

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<sup>375</sup> Ibid., 23rd September, 1965, p. 3.

<sup>376</sup> Ibid., 24th November, 1966, p. 1.

warranted". The Industrial Development Committee was informed on 12<sup>th</sup> July 1968. The subject was again raised this time by Murrumburrah Municipal Council in June 1969 but the matter was once again declined.<sup>377</sup> 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**

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 new 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 per way staff.<sup>378</sup>



*This year 2000 photograph shows part of the former refreshment room which was converted for use by per way staff. The staff vacated the space when Countrylink advised FreightRail that it had to pay for the rental of the space. The Track Supervisor and his staff vacated the room in early 2000.*

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<sup>377</sup> Department of Railways, *Minutes of Commissioner's Tour of Inspection, 6<sup>th</sup> May, 1968*, p. 16.

<sup>378</sup> *Ibid.*, 1<sup>st</sup> April, 1965, p. 1.





*The photograph shows the replacement services building, containing the laundry, coal supply and staff toilet, which was erected for the refreshment room. The plan does not survive. It is known that it was built after 1946 and, very remotely, in the early 1950s, keeping in mind the Department raised the issue of the closure of the refreshment room in 1951. Countrylink has removed one of the traditional station nameboards and mutilated the brickwork in the process. The photograph was taken on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1994.*

Tenders closed on 28<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>379</sup> 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 replacement 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.<sup>380</sup> 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 the 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

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<sup>379</sup> Ibid., 8<sup>th</sup> April, 1965, p. 11.

<sup>380</sup> *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 20th January, 1966, p. 2.

globes in the subway and on the ramps 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.



*Locomotive 4512 heads a southbound goods on the Down Goods road on 12<sup>th</sup> December 1970. Towards the right is the tall, brick chimney that served the range in the kitchen of the railway refreshment room. On the left-hand side under the signal gantry is the brick office for the District Locomotive Engineer while towards the middle can be seen the steel frame of the bulk wheat facility, which was being built on the footprint of the demolished train crew barracks. Rural and railway historian, Neville Pollard, says that the wheat storage is known officially as a Depot E type. It was opened in 1970 with storage of 600,000 bushels, which equated to approximately 16,350 tonnes.<sup>381</sup>*

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.<sup>382</sup>

## **THE PLATFORM LENGTHS**

In 1967, the southbound platform was 535 feet long, which was the same length as in 1933. The northbound platform had been extended and was now 600 feet long in 1962.<sup>383</sup> In 1973, the southbound platform was still 535 feet long but the northbound

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<sup>381</sup> Email from Neville Pollard on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

<sup>382</sup> *The Railwayman*, Volume 11 Number 2, April, 1970, p. 1. Wendy’s photograph also got splashed across the pages of the *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 26<sup>th</sup> February, 1970, p. 7.

<sup>383</sup> 1962 track and signal diagram and NSW, *Local Appendix to the Working Timetable*, 1967, p. 55.

platform was shown in an official document as 705 feet in length, a length that had existed from at least 1965 and possibly from the 1954 built extension at the southern end. This latter length looks suspiciously incorrect.<sup>384</sup>

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<sup>384</sup> The northbound platform was shown as being 215 metres (705 feet) long in NSW, *Local Appendix the working Timetable*, 1<sup>st</sup> July, 1973, p. 55.

# **14. BAD NEWS FOR HARDEN - THE IMPACT OF THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT COMMISSION 1972-1980**

## **ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT COMMISSION**

The Public Transport Commission replaced the Department of Railways. Phillip Shirley, the Chief Commissioner, commenced service on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> October 1972. 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.

## **THE ABOLITION OF PLATFORM TICKETS FOR COUNTRY STATIONS**

In February 1974, the Commission amended the Railway By-laws to waver 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".<sup>385</sup> Note that the invitation to visit stations was to look at passing rollingstock and not the buildings that comprised stations.

In its eight years of existence, the Commission did little for Harden apart from sustaining long-term dismay.

## **CHANGES TO THE PARCELS SERVICE**

The head office officials of the Australian Railways Union visited Harden in 1974 to discuss the proposed railway cuts, which included closure of the parcel offices on the platform and the reduction in station staff.<sup>386</sup> Local businesses and the general public were invited to attend. A report in the local paper said that 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

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<sup>385</sup> *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 28th February, 1974, p. 2.

<sup>386</sup> *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 1<sup>st</sup> August, 1974, p. 1.

community attended the two meetings that were held to discuss the issue.<sup>387</sup> 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 10<sup>th</sup> October 1974 that Murrumburrah railway station would close.<sup>388</sup> Also, the hours of operation of all parcels offices 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.



*The vast majority of platform buildings in New South Wales were divided spatially into two broad sections – those spaces occupied by staff and those spaces occupied by the public. The dividing point was, usually, the pedestrian entry point. The building at Harden was consistent with that arrangement. This February 1986 photograph looks at that half of the structure occupied by staff functions. On the extreme right-hand side extending further onto the platform than the remainder of the building is the out of room. Next to it is the parcels office followed by the Station Master's office, then the ticket office and, at the extreme left, the general waiting room. By the time this photograph was taken, all parcels business had been relocated (in 1982) from the platform building into the good shed. To facilitate the transfer of parcels between trains and the good shed, the State Rail Authority purchased a small van to transport the parcels and luggage. The van is parked outside the Station Master's office.*

Harden Shire Council wrote to the Public Transport Commission requesting that parcels business be transferred to the goods shed. This was proposed as an alternative to the total closure of the parcels office. The Minister for Transport, Wal Fife, replied to Terry Sheahan on 25<sup>th</sup> March 1975 saying that the income parcels business at Harden did not warrant the expense of changing the present location

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<sup>387</sup> Ibid., 15<sup>th</sup> August, 1974, p. 1.

<sup>388</sup> Ibid., 10<sup>th</sup> October, 1974, p. 2

parcels office from the platform to the good shed, a move that was requested by the local community in order to save going to two locations to transact business.<sup>389</sup> 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.



*This photograph shows part of that half of the 1880 building occupied by public functions. Towards the right-hand side is the faceted bay window. It marked the location of the general waiting room. To its left was the ladies' waiting room and the female toilet, which was marked by the two small windows indicating that it consisted of two closets. At the left-hand side of the photograph was the bar. It was the extension of the bar area that forced the demolition of the original female toilets within the building and their very odd placement protruding onto the southbound platform. On the extreme left-hand side is the corner of the original 1880 building which is marked by the sandstone quoins which, unfortunately, were subsequently painted.*

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. Parcels for Harden were taken to Cootamundra by rail and brought back to Harden by road truck and deposited for collection initially at the railway goods shed and, with the closure of that facility, at a petrol station in the town.

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<sup>389</sup> *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 3rd April, 1975, p. 3.

## 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 Cunninggar or Murrumburrah and it was planned to also close Demondrille station and signal box and remotely control the track junction from Harden.

The plan was implemented and the only objective that was not achieved was the demolition of the 1880 building.

## GAS HEATING IN THE GENERAL WAITING ROOM

It was in 1976 that the Commission decided against demolition of the entire platform structure, possibly as a result of the union and local government pressure. As a result, the Commission had to address the need for building maintenance and minor improvements.



*The above photograph, taken in August 2000, shows the Station Master's office with the traditional bookshelf at the back of the table holding official policy and other folders. The room is heated by gas which replaced coal fireplaces in 1976. The fake wall panelling was fitted in 1985 and the ceiling was lowered at the same time. The bottom of the wall clock is just visible above the Station Master's desk. It was a 31 day British Regulator clock with a "National Time Recording Co." movement.*

In June 1976, Frank Franklyn, the General Manager of the Way and Works Branch, approved initially the provision of gas heating in the general waiting room and, later, in the staff offices to replace the open fires. The existing coal fires were removed and gas heaters inserted therein. To assist with the retention of heat in the general waiting room, one of the two entry doors that flanked the faceted bay windows on the southbound platform was permanently closed. No other rooms were heated by gas at that time. Two LP gas cylinders were placed adjacent to the external wall on the northbound 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 topic 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?”<sup>390</sup> 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.



*The State Rail Authority removed guards' vans from train in 1985 with a few exceptions. One of those exceptions was on 15<sup>th</sup> February 1986 when an out-of-gauge sheet steel train operated between Port Kembla and Melbourne. It is seen passing Harden South Signal Box.*

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<sup>390</sup> Ibid., 17th February, 1977, p. 4.



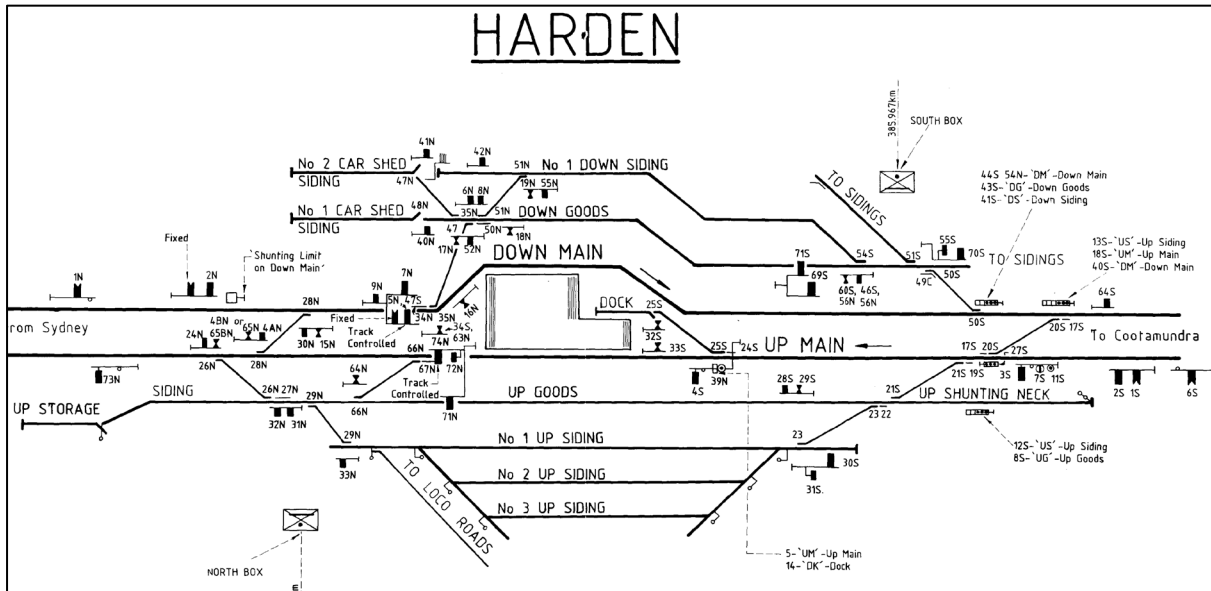


*The above photograph taken on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2000 shows the ticket office from the official side. The interior decor dates from the 1980s period.*



*The above photograph shows the ticket office from the passenger side. In the early 1980s, the program was implemented to replace the small, British-style ticket windows at larger stations. Harden was so treated in 1985.*

## 15. A FAIR EFFORT TO KEEP THINGS GOING - THE STATE RAIL AUTHORITY PERIOD 1980-1989



*This 1987 track plan shows the simplification of the signalling arrangements, the truncation of the nest of sidings on the northbound side as well as the elimination of the North Dock road. The stock siding has been removed.*

### ESTABLISHMENT

The State Rail Authority commenced operation on 1<sup>st</sup> 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. Thanks to massive government support, it was the Authority which introduced the concept of XPT trains.



*On 13<sup>th</sup> March 1984, the photographer observed State Rail Authority coach waiting to commence a service from Harden to Young and Cowra. The coach is standing in the forecourt in front of the Station Master's residence. The entry gates to the goods yard are just visible on each side of the photograph.*

## **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 23<sup>rd</sup> October, 1981.<sup>391</sup>



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<sup>391</sup> 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.

*This is the American bar at the Harden Murrumburrah Museum in 2016. On this occasion, distinguished railway historian, Neville Pollard, is keen to obtain more information about the history of the facility.*

## **TRANSFER OF PARCELS BUSINESS TO THE GOODS SHED**

From 21<sup>st</sup> 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).<sup>392</sup> The new business was known as Trackfast Small Freight. This involved the transfer of parcels business from the station to the goods 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 UNIMPRESSED – AGAIN**

In 1982, ticket sales at the station had increased 45% since the Wran 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 were at 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.



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<sup>392</sup> State Rail Authority, *Weekly Notice No. 39 of 1986*, p. 9.

*A southbound XPT service leaves Harden on 19<sup>th</sup> June 1983.*

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.”<sup>393</sup> It was a case of one tick 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.



*When the entire station was reroofed in the early 1980s with Macromastic fake tiles, there were a few left over and some were used to reroof the platform dog kennel. The photograph was taken on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1984.*

## **CAR PARKING NIGHTMARE AT THE STATION**

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/Whitton 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

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<sup>393</sup> Harden Murrumburrah Express, 10th September, 1981, p. 5.

avoided carrying luggage some distance from the main street. She claimed that motorists were unaware that they were breaching the legislation and assertion was believable as there were no signs in the area to provide instructions or warnings. Most of the offenders were residents from outside the town. Business owners were concerned that parking fines turned people from ever returning to Harden. 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.<sup>394</sup> A line was subsequently painted.

## **RAILWAY COACH SERVICES**

The car parking problem stimulated the local press to say in April 1986 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".<sup>395</sup> 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 one additional wall of the existing transshipment awning to protect the bus from adverse weather.

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<sup>394</sup> 26<sup>th</sup> June, 1986, p. 10.

<sup>395</sup> Ibid., 10th April, 1986, p. 1.



*The timber platform in the Harden goods yard was known as the transhipment stage and was used for the transfer of goods items between the Cowra and Boorowa lines and the main lines. The track on the right is No. 3 Down Siding and No. 4 Down Siding was located where the coach is standing. In 1949, the "T" shaped awning was erected to provide weather protection. For the coach operations, the following changes were made: No. 4 Siding was removed; a concrete pad was laid; the timber-framed side wall was built and a cheap humpy clad in corrugated iron sheets provided to hold cleaning materials and a hose for washing the coach. The date is 8<sup>th</sup> December 1984.*

## **CHANGES TO PARCELS OPERATIONS**

By 1982, parcels business had been amalgamated with goods traffic at the goods shed and a private contractor had replaced the Railway-owned truck to pick up and deliver 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:

### **NORTHERN HALF OF BUILDING**

- male toilet
- out of room
- parcels office
- Station Master's office
- Clerk's office
- booking office

### **CENTRE OF BUILDING**

- general waiting room and pedestrian entry

## **SOUTHERN HALF OF BUILDING**

- ladies' waiting room
- female toilet
- vacant space (formerly part of the bar area of the refreshment room)
- per way offices (i.e., offices for track maintenance inspectors).



*The use of the out of room has long gone but a few of the bicycles hooks, shown at the top left-hand corner, survive. The brick wall, set in the not-so-common Flemish bond, has retained the traditional two-colours despite a recent repaint. The date 31<sup>st</sup> May 2000.*

## **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 previously,
- improved seating in the general waiting room,
- a sign to direct customers to the goods shed for parcels business,
- the need to asphalt the southbound platform near the former refreshment room as it was 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 the 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.<sup>396</sup> The work was under way during November 1985. 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.”<sup>397</sup>



*The fake wall panelling was fitted in 1985 by the local carpenter. The date is 31<sup>st</sup> May 2000.*

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.<sup>398</sup> 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 “Change here for Cowra.” The letters were coloured black on a white background. The platform signs were still extant in April 1989 but did not survive Countrylinkification in the early 1990s.

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<sup>396</sup> *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 7<sup>th</sup> March, 1985, p. 11.

<sup>397</sup> *Ibid.*, 7<sup>th</sup> November, 1985, p. 2.

<sup>398</sup> *Ibid.*, 28<sup>th</sup> November, 1985, p. 1.



*This photograph, dated 31<sup>st</sup> May 2000, shows the internal features of the general waiting room with its fake timber wall panelling which was erected in 1985. The sole upholstered seat is shown on the right though there is a narrow timber bench that follows the shape of the bay window. The only decoration is a corporate poster.*

Just as well the State Rail Authority 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 Authority.<sup>399</sup>

The State Rail Authority capital works programme for 1986/87 included the provision of a new depot on the platform for Harden Sectionman, Electrician and 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 far southern end of the vacant accommodation in the former refreshment room space before 1982.

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<sup>399</sup> Ibid.



*On the 31<sup>st</sup> May 2000, the seating in the ladies' waiting room was indeed primitive. Obviously, smoking was still permitted indoors at the time.*



*Besides the timber bench, the only other piece of furniture in the ladies' waiting room was a table. The fake timber wall panelling has been used to cover the former fireplace. Taken on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2000.*



*The luggage trolley in the photograph had been introduced by the Public Transport Commission in the 1970s for use at Sydney Terminal station and, a decade later, had found a new home at Harden. It is 8<sup>th</sup> December 1984 and the trolley has been abandoned by a traveller who has wheeled luggage from the platform to the top of the subway.*



*Railway historians, Dr Bob Taaffe and Graham Harper, were long-term users of railway toilets and their photographs appeared in some local press using toilets in the area. The photograph of Bob Taaffe shows him standing against adjacent to the pair of swing doors that led from the northbound platform into the male toilet.<sup>400</sup> Bob was only a youngish bloke on 25<sup>th</sup> February 1978 and it was rare at that time to see swing doors protecting the entry to male toilets.*

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<sup>400</sup> Ibid., 24th April, 1986, p. 3.

The last employee to hold the position of Station Master at Harden Terry Hocking, who had transferred from Cootamundra in 1987.<sup>401</sup> He assumed the position in August of that year 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 12<sup>th</sup> 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 former Railway house on Railway land, as well as three grazing leases.



*The above photograph taken on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2000 shows the Station Master's residence adjacent to the pedestrian subway. Oddly, it faces not into the station forecourt but away from it and it is thought that its footprint reflects the location of the platform entry in 1877.*

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<sup>401</sup> Ibid., 24<sup>th</sup> September, 1987, p. 2.



*The Public Transport Commission blue rubbish bin, a relic dating back to the 1970s, sits in the corner of the male toilet on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2000. The bin is not the most significant item in the space. From the very start of the railway system in 1855 and for the next century, hand washbasins were not fitted to male toilets and it was not until the 1970s that one was provided in the male toilet at Harden. Apparently, railway administrations thought that male hygiene was exceptionally high and there was no need for additional measures to limit the spread of disease.*

## 16. COUNTRYLINKIFICATION 1989-2013

### ESTABLISHMENT OF COUNTRYLINK

On 11<sup>th</sup> 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 and in between. 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.



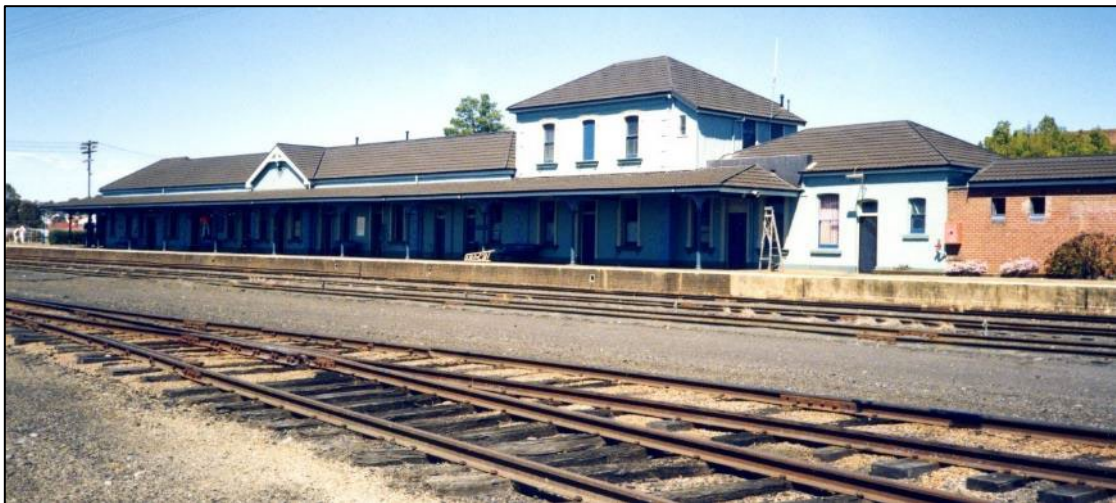
*The southbound XPT service has stopped in Harden platform on 13<sup>th</sup> March 1984.*

### 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, about which the report stated:

- 1880 building and refreshment room were painted white externally with the refreshment room laundry building at the southern end being of face brickwork,
- the 1889 male toilet at the northern 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 northern end had some plantings,
- the public address system on the platforms dated from 1985,
- fake tiles were used on the roof had replaced the original slate using black Macromastic metal sheeting with a profile similar to standard Marseilles pattern, terracotta tiles,<sup>402</sup>
- fake timber panelling existed in the general waiting room and offices 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 northbound platform,
- carparking existed capable of holding 20 motor vehicles,



The contract painters are just about finished on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1994 with the repainting of the structure in the new corporate colours of dark and light blue. The services building to the right will be painted before the painters walk away.

## **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

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<sup>402</sup> This product comprises pressed, galvanised metal sheets sprayed with a granulate material coating to look like concrete or terracotta roof tiles.



year and another 13 people within two to four years, making a total of 19 positions to be eliminated. This left a staff of three people.<sup>403</sup> There were also four positions existing at Demondrille and these were to be totally eliminated.



*It is now 13 years since the structures were painted. The buildings are looking scrappy on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2007. The end building has now been painted.*

Terry Hocking, the Station Master, was advised of changes in September 1989 that would commence on 18<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>404</sup> 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”.<sup>405</sup>

Cowra station was completely closed and Binalong station became unstaffed from the same time.

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<sup>403</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14th of July, 1989, pp.1-5.

<sup>404</sup> *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 2nd November, 1989, p. 2.

<sup>405</sup> *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 14th September, 1989, p. 2.



*This photograph taken on 19<sup>th</sup> January 1983 from Whitton Lane East shows the level of amenities that per way and signalling staff used prior to their relocation into the vacant space of the former refreshment room in the 1970s and 1980s.*

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.<sup>406</sup>



*This 1993 photograph was taken in the general waiting room. In the 1990s, staff were not always on duty on the platform 24 hours a day and a communications device was added equally as a means of assisting waiting passengers and also diverging attention away from the fake, timber wall panelling. The photograph records a period when printed timetables and other documents were made available at no charge to potential travellers.*

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

<sup>406</sup> SRA, *Weekly Notice No. 50*, 9<sup>th</sup> December to 15<sup>th</sup> December, 1989, p. 27.

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.



*The coach door is open on 13<sup>th</sup> March 1984 waiting for passengers who will detrain from the southbound XPT service. It sits adjacent to the small park where Murrumburrah Shire Council dreamed on several occasions of flower beds and sculptured shrubs but Council's dream was never realised.*

## **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 that stopped in the main street of Harden to Cootamundra or Canberra, thereby eliminating the “long slog” up and down the subway.<sup>407</sup>

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.<sup>408</sup>

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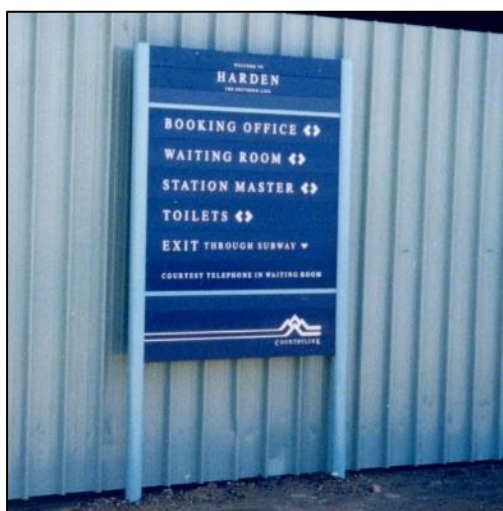
<sup>407</sup> Ibid., 14<sup>th</sup> December, 1989, p. 11 and 21<sup>st</sup> December, 1989, p. 20.

<sup>408</sup> Ibid., 14th June, 1990, p. To.

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”.<sup>409</sup> Of course, he omitted 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.<sup>410</sup>

## **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. Just like John Whitton over 100 years previously, Countrylink categorised stations according to the towns they served. While Whitton related the design of stations to the size of the local urban centre or the presence of a very influential resident, Countrylink took into account local passenger loadings and the interface with coach services. Category One stations on the Main South were Sydney Terminal, Goulburn, Cootamundra, Wagga Wagga and Albury. Harden was a Category Two station along with Junee.



*The Countrylink sign states: “Welcome to Harden. The Southern Line ..... courtesy telephone in waiting room. The photograph was taken on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1994.*

The major component of the project was the raising of part of the platform on the northbound 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 northern end to three feet at the southern 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

<sup>409</sup> Ibid., 13th December, 1990, p. 1.

<sup>410</sup> Ibid., 17th January, 1991, p. 2.

inches. New false bases were provided for the fluted posts that supported the platform awning as the original ones were submerged in concrete. 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 for 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 northbound platform was 212.8 metres or 698 feet 2 inches and the southbound platform was 163.6 metres or 536 feet nine inches long. The southbound platform was not 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 \$160,000.<sup>411</sup> The work was scheduled to commence in July 1994 but that was not the case and upgrading started in October of that year.<sup>412</sup>



Oddly, only the northbound platform was raised in 1994. The southbound platform had to wait a further ten years to be similarly treated. 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1994

## **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 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 southbound 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

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<sup>411</sup> *Railway Digest*, November 1994, p. 10.

<sup>412</sup> Countrylink, *Station Upgrading Programme 1994-95 – Heritage Stations*, no details.

and an end to nearly 100 years of complaints about the subway. There were precedents. The diversion of trains to the opposing track was carried out at Cootamundra, Junee, Yass Junction and Goulburn. 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”.<sup>413</sup>

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.



*This is the office of the Station Master, Terry Hocking, 31<sup>st</sup> May 2000.*

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. The industry journal, *Railway Digest*, reported in 1992 that:

“Staff are to be withdrawn from Harden station, leaving it as probably the largest country town in the state where passenger trains stop at an unmanned station.

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<sup>413</sup> *The Young Witness*, 4<sup>th</sup> August 1995.

The signal box and perway staff will come under the control of Cootamundra".<sup>414</sup>

No. The staff were not all withdrawn in 1992, only most. There was one survivor, Terry Hocking.

When the State Government broke up the New South Wales railway system 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.<sup>415</sup> 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 used Countrylink to advise Terry Hocking in March 2004 that Freight Rail 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 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 1<sup>st</sup> June 2004 in a shop in the main street. Then, Harden Shire Council sold railway tickets for a number of years. That has now stopped and there is nowhere in the town where people can make a booking.

While Hocking had indicated to Countrylink that he wished to retire, Countrylink decided that the date of the station closure would be 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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 29<sup>th</sup> July 2004.

The last day on which the station was staffed was Friday, 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2004. Terry Hocking moved out of the residence on 13<sup>th</sup> August, 2004 and departed the town to live in retirement at Ulladulla.

## **SECOND TIME FOR COUNTRYLINKIFICATION 2004**

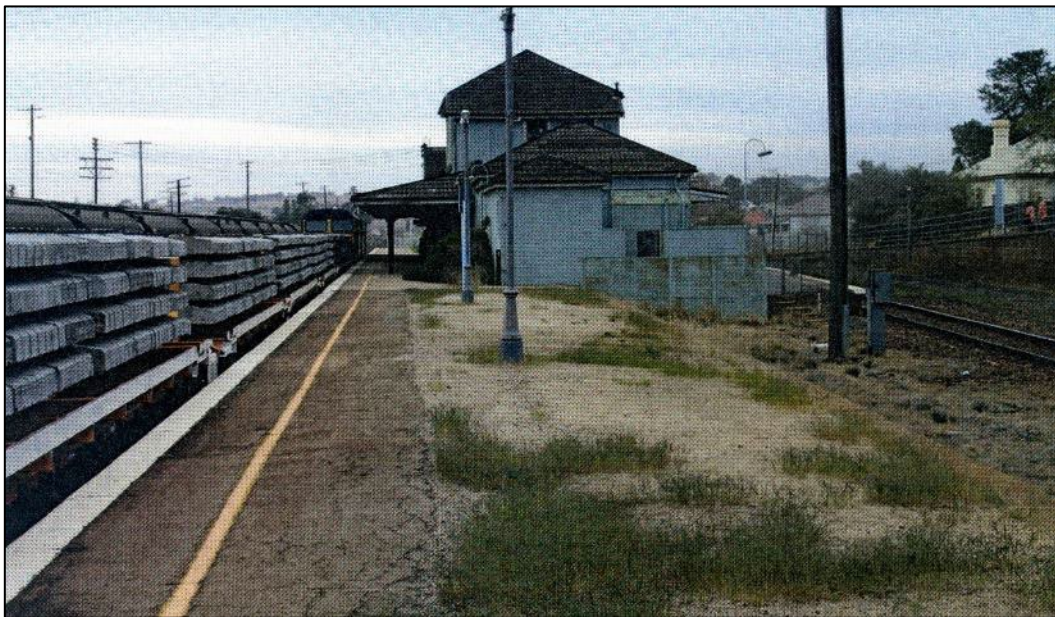
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<sup>414</sup> *Railway Digest*, April 1992, p. 134.

<sup>415</sup> *Harden Murrumburrah Express*, 23rd June, 1994, p. 1.

Five days after Terry Hocking closed the door on the platform building for the 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.<sup>416</sup> 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 TrainLink.

It is possible that it was the southbound platform that was raised in 2004, as only the northbound platform had been raised in the 1994 upgrade.



*Three years after the last staff left the station in 2004, things are looking pretty daggy on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2007.*

## **TRAINLINK TAKES OVER IN 2013**

New South Wales TrainLink was the replacement organisation that had commenced operation on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2013. Apart from repainting the station in 2015, nothing else has happened to the station building.

## **STATION SECURITY 2016**

On 8<sup>th</sup> 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.

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<sup>416</sup> Ibid., 7<sup>th</sup> July, 1994, p. 1.





*Long-time railway observer, Gary Hughes, stands on the northbound platform on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2016 as a container train zooms past.*

## **ABSENCE OF CLEANLINESS FROM 2017**

A blog was made on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2021 in the Twin Town Times, saying.

“It took a long time to get essential work done at the Harden Station. It required the writing of letters, phone calls and finally attention from the media for this work to be performed. The sanitary state of Harden station, classified as unstaffed, has been described by many as “sub-standard” ever since the station came under the care of the Cootamundra Railway Station staff. They can only attend two to five hours a week, it is understood, depending on their availability”.

In 2017, The Times reported on ‘spikes’ being installed on various buildings throughout the Twin Towns (i.e., Harden-Murrumburrah), which resulted in pigeons having to relocate to a new place to call home, and (the place they chose) was at the station. Spikes and mesh were also installed at the station to try to prevent the vermin from residing there but, unfortunately, they have been making quite a mess”.<sup>417</sup>

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<sup>417</sup> [https://twintowntimes.com.au/\\_/2021/06/is-harden-station-finally-getting-the-attention-it-deserves-2/](https://twintowntimes.com.au/_/2021/06/is-harden-station-finally-getting-the-attention-it-deserves-2/). Cited on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

## **PART 5 SUMMARY**

### **17. END REMARKS**

An interesting aspect of the history of Harden station is the very limited number of comments in the two local newspapers about the quality of service furnished by local staff and, in those few instances that appeared in the press, no names were mentioned. In fact, the only press references to staff involved a few instances where there was a change of Station Master and those mainly refer to Murrumburrah station – not Harden. Any adverse press criticism was made by people from Young. The thrust of the vexation of the local press was towards the head office of the railway organisation in Sydney.

Much of the history of Harden station relates to the construction of platform buildings, physical additions and internal changes. Again, there are very few press references that express any opinion about the quality of the work carried out. A significant part of the history of Harden station also reflects the physical interface between railway property and non-railway property. The one topic that stands out over a hundred year period is the subway access and the station forecourt. The local government authority tried numerous times to obtain improvements but the little that was undertaken was, in the main, paid for and carried out by the Murrumburrah Municipal Council. The list of railway topics that provided exasperation and angst for the village/town were:

- the physical location of Harden station one mile from the settlement at Murrumburrah
- the decision to establish the refreshment room at Harden rather than Murrumburrah
- the unglamorous and uninviting appearance of the station forecourt
- the major, adverse impact of the construction of the island platform
- the length, steepness and inadequate lighting in the subway
- the inaction of staff to stop people smoking in those locations where smoking was banned
- the use of platform tickets which were required by local residents to dispatch and pickup parcels
- the lack of empathy in understanding that the station and its facilities, such as the platform clock, reflected on the status of the town served by the station
- the connection of railway property to the local water supply scheme, the local electricity network and the local sewerage system

The outstanding single major issue affecting the village/town was the location of the station and refreshment room at Harden. It is understandable that the site was located on the basis that it was the nearest large amount of flat land to Murrumburrah village. However, there were major, long-term negative impacts of that decision. These were:

- the creation and development of a second commercial centre, with a second post office and a second Police station
- the establishment of long-standing rivalries on a wide range of issues between Harden and Murrumburrah
- the diversion of much existing commercial enterprise from Murrumburrah to Harden resulting in the near death of the commercial centre at Murrumburrah
- the creation of a deep-rooted and persistent division in the population between the blue-collar railway employees and self-employed residents working in the primary sector

There was another group of topics which irritated the local community but which were not expressed in the local newspapers, given that many if not all of the staff involved lived in the town. In that group were:

- the disregard for the physical impact of changes on the once elegant 1880 building
- the inadequacy of the refreshment room in terms of size and staff to handle the number of passengers travelling on the trains
- the location of the carriage shed and stock race close to the station which had an adverse visual and nasal impact for people waiting on the platform
- the Railway policy to supply items for the local refreshment room from Sydney rather than locally

These notes cover only the impact of the New South Wales Railways on the town relating to one sector of railway operations, namely Harden station. The history of other sectors of the railway empire at Harden, such as the locomotive depot, the operation of the goods yard and infrastructure support groups, support the same theme as expressed in these notes, i.e., that the New South Wales Railways acted in an unneighbourly way to its immediate geographic neighbour.

Author, John Gunn, wrote:

“As in every debate on railway matters, the central issue was always brought down to one of cost.”<sup>418</sup>

Gunn’s catchy sentence is correct but only partly correct to explain the reluctance of the New South Wales Railways to co-operate with and assist the people of Harden-Murrumburrah. It is more accurate to say that the history of the New South Wales railways is explained in three words – people and money, which can be expanded slightly to organisationally-oriented bureaucrats and a lack of money. It was the Departmental culture that provides a big part of the explanation. The Railway culture fostered and implemented a view that only staff and, more correctly only senior staff,

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<sup>418</sup> J. Gunn, *Along Parallel Lines*, Melbourne University Press, 1989, p. 123.

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 developments in Appendix 1 confirms a pattern of expenditure on railway infrastructure that is similar to the history of most other stations in the State. The key features were:

- 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

Stuart Sharp, 16<sup>th</sup> October 2016 and revised and illustrated on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2023



*Station Master, Terry Hocking, drives the author off the property and we bid Terry and Harden station farewell on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2000. Terry has four more years until he is retired.*

# APPENDIX 1

## 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 <sup>th</sup> 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 <sup>th</sup> March to call tenders for a permanent building
1879	William Mason, Engineer for Existing Lines, says on 10 <sup>th</sup> June drawings are ready
1879	Station name changed on 15 <sup>th</sup> September to North Murrumburrah following the opening of platform on same date at Murrumburrah – opening of Murrumburrah platform delays consideration of a new building and refreshment room at Harden
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 <sup>th</sup> February a delay due to an evaluation of the impact of the opening of Murrumburrah platform on 15 <sup>th</sup> September, 1879
1880	Commissioner decides on 21 <sup>st</sup> April that Harden will be the principal station
1880	William Mason reports on 26 <sup>th</sup> April for a second time that (revised?) drawings are ready
1880	Tenders called for Second Class (i.e., the present) building on 8 <sup>th</sup> May
1880	Tenders closed for Second Class building on 1 <sup>st</sup> June and physical construction starts in July
1880	Tender for the construction of brick station building by Langley and Thompson accepted on 8 <sup>th</sup> 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 <sup>th</sup> May and redundant temporary buildings relocated to Towrang station
1882	On 1 <sup>st</sup> September, 1880, the postal receiving office was upgraded to a post office
1882	Completed survey plans for the line between Demondrille and Cowra were destroyed in the Garden Palace fire on 22 <sup>nd</sup>

YEAR	EVENT
	September 1882 and, consequently, delayed planning for the refreshment room at Harden
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 <sup>th</sup> April plans for part two-storey refreshment room
1884	Tenders closed on 20 <sup>th</sup> May for construction of RRR
1884	Contract awarded to William Downer on 21 <sup>st</sup> July for RRR
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 <sup>st</sup> July plans for additions to the refreshment room
1885	Tenders closed on 8 <sup>th</sup> September for construction of additions to the refreshment room
1886	Tender awarded to John Sharp in February for additions to refreshment room
1886	Completion of the additions to the refreshment room is unclear and occurred sometime between June, 1886, and early 1887
1887	Footwarmers filled with hot water placed in branch line trains
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	Relocation of the male toilet from the southern to the northern end of the 1880 building with the construction of a free-standing male toilet block
1891	Last underground fresh water tank constructed on the New South Wales railway system in yard of the refreshment room for the laundry
1891	Rearrangement of rooms and the creation of a gentlemen's waiting room – only 1% of stations having such a space – removed 1914, reappeared 1917 and removed 1927
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 northern end as far as new male toilet block
1891	Detached out of goods shed built at north end
1891	Lamp room provided at north end
1891	Platform extended for a second time
1891	Repairs to the ground surface in station forecourt
1891	Bathroom provided on first floor, the walls of which were covered with corrugated iron sheets
1893	Post office relocated from station forecourt into main street of Harden

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>EVENT</b>
1896	the second time that the counter in the refreshment room was extended
1896	carriage shed built at the immediate Sydney end of the platform
1897	Platform extended for a third time by 100 feet
1898	a tuppence platform ticket required to enter the station, if not travelling
1901	Proposed alterations to the refreshment room with the of a further six bedrooms and a larger counter area – not carried out
1901	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
1907	Improvements made to refreshment room (nature unknown)
1910	Alterations and expansion of the furnace and related equipment for the heating of footwarmers – hot water type replaced by McLaren model filled with crystalline, hydrated sodium acetate
1912	Side platform converted into island platform and subway provided; carriage shed relocated
1914	Alterations to refreshment room at the Sydney end and the installation of an American bar – installed in the space that was 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	First time a plan of the building shows an office for a Traffic Inspector
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
1916	Supply of footwarmers at Harden expanded from branch line trains to “all important trains”
1919	The 1915 timber combined booking and parcels office enlarged
1919	two additional ice chests installed in refreshment room
1919	Awning built on the Northbound side of the platform
1920	Combined ticket/parcels office at top of stairs enlarged with a staff room
1920	Half-size, dual swing doors fitted to each side of the entrance to the male toilet
1920	New, half-size swing doors located at top of subway on platform
1924	Toilets improved – nature of work unknown

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>EVENT</b>
1924	northbound platform extended 80 feet – fourth time platforms extended
1927	Alterations to many rooms on the platform buildings, including the creation of a separate bar area in the former space of the gentlemen's waiting room and female toilet
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	station painted – it is possible that all the face brick structures were painted at this time
1935	Reticulated water supply connected to station – connection to nearby well discontinued
1939	For the first time supplies/services (i.e., ice, cordials and laundry) purchased locally 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
1948	Harden station wins the championship prize covering the whole of the NSW rail system for the station garden
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 northbound 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 Sydney end on the platform demolished
1968	A third fluorescent light fitted to the station – all other lights incandescent
1974	Two track carriage shed demolished
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



<b>YEAR</b>	<b>EVENT</b>
1994	Raising of platforms; painting of buildings & provision of Countrylink blue-coloured platform seats, rubbish bins and station nameboards
2004	Station became unstaffed from 2 <sup>nd</sup> July
2004	Countrylink upgrades platform and building
2014	Countrylink makes a further upgrade to platform and building

# **APPENDIX 2**

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **A DEFINITION OF HISTORY TO GUIDE THE ANALYSIS**

Surely there is only one way to write the history of a railway station or any matter? You get information and write it down and, voila, there is a history. Yes, it is history but an incomplete history. All that has been accomplished with such an approach would be the compilation of information from extant documents. Although it is not possible to write a history without evidence, the simple documentation of that evidence does not represent good history. Good history endeavours to understand why something happened and the impact of such action. It defines the players and focusses on the quine sine qua non of the issue. In this manner are the notes penned.

### **WHY ARE THE NOTES SO LARGE?**

The only way that a correct history of Harden station, or any topic, can be written is by an analysis of the documentation. While it is easy to write that a big issue in the history of station was the management of the station forecourt, the expression of that fact requires a review of the evidence in order to indicate to what level was the topic a big issue. These notes have investigated and amalgamated the evidence in order to determine how often the forecourt was an issue. Ambiguous and unintelligible references have been omitted. The same approach has been adopted for the other issues that have emerged in the history of the station where there was interaction between the New South Wales Railways and the local government authority. Because of the investigations expressed in these notes, it is possible that a more concise document may now be written.

### **THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF THE EVIDENCE**

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.

The study of Harden station is facilitated by the existence of two local newspapers as well as newspapers in nearby Yass, Young and Cootamundra. Sometimes, it has been possible to compare reports of the same subject against reports in other newspapers and, thereby, increase the accuracy of an incident.

Human activity is often recorded in evidence because it is an event, i.e., something has occurred. The 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 for some reason. It may be absolutely false, partly correct or convey “truth”.

## **THE INVESTIGATION OF THE OPERATIONS OF NSW RAILWAYS ON THE LONG-TERM GROWTH OF THE TOWN**

A 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 an essay seems to be of critical importance and interest to the extent that the historian has been found necessary, or has been seduced by the amount of evidence, to spend a lot of time and effort in researching, writing and publishing the outcome of her/his work. In other words, historians may tend to over-emphasise the importance of what they are writing about.

These notes form a railway history of Harden station but not a history of the impact of the railway facilities and operations on the development of the village and, later, the town of Harden-Murrumburrah. It merely indicates what was the day-to-day interaction between the town and the railway. For a history to be written, the story of the railway stations at Murrumburrah and Harden needs to be set in the context of both the long-term spatial, commercial and residential growth of the town and the everyday relationship between the people and organisations of the town with the railway system. Such an approach would reveal not only the issues of concern to both the Railways and the local government authority but also the cumulative impact of those daily interactions. That approach would also answer whether the New South Wales Railways provided station facilities and services that well served the town.

## **THE CHRONOLOGICAL AND COMPARATIVE PROCESS**

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 some assessment to be made as to whether the people of Harden-Murrumburrah received the same, 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.

The author has endeavoured to address of those issues.

## **THE ADDITION OF EVIDENCE RELATING TO MURRUMBURRAH STATION**

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 across the two stations between the issues raised by the local residents and local organisations and the Railway Department. Also, the two studies – of Harden and Murrumburrah – together indicate a common view on 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 notes 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.

Stuart Sharp

1<sup>st</sup> January 2023

## APPENDIX 3

### WHY DID THE RAILWAY COME THROUGH HARDEN/MURRUMBURAH?

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.<sup>419</sup> From that time, the extension of the southern line came closer and closer to Harden and Murrumburrah, with Goulburn being reached in 1869.



John Whitton, whose photograph is shown on the left, commented in 1873 that the southern line, after leaving Yass, “should proceed towards Albury, in the direction of Bowning, Binalong, Murrumburrah, Cootamundy, Junee and Wagga Wagga”.<sup>420</sup>

After a big 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”.<sup>421</sup> The problem at Murrumburrah was that the village was at the bottom of the gully through which Currawong 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 building.

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

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<sup>419</sup> E. Harding, *Uniform Railway Gauge*, Melbourne, Lothian Publishing Co., 1958, p. 41.

<sup>420</sup> *Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser*, 26<sup>th</sup> June 1873, p. 2.

<sup>421</sup> Report by Thomas Firth to the Engineer-in-Chief of Surveys, 1872 and 1873.

relating to “work of a light character, £7,000 per mile”.<sup>422</sup> 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 to change 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 was provided. Instead, 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.

Stuart Sharp

2<sup>nd</sup> January 2023

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<sup>422</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14th March, 1877, p. 2.

## APPENDIX 4

### THE INSUFFICIENCY OF CAPITAL FUNDS

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. The platform buildings at those stations were pretty crappy but Whitton did introduce a new design of residence at both Binalong and Harden, both of which stand in 2023. This new design of stand-alone residence became the standard residential accommodation for Station Masters from 1876 until 1889. Tenders were called for the construction of the residences for the Station Masters at Harden and Binalong in a single parcel, with the closing date of 19<sup>th</sup> September, 1876.<sup>423</sup>

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**

<b>STATION &amp; OPENING DATE (final names used)</b>	<b>APPROVED BUILDING DESIGN</b>	<b>BUILDING MATERIAL AT OPENING</b>	<b>BUILDER &amp; BUILDINGS AT TIME OF OPENING</b>	<b>REPLACEMENT DATE</b>
<b>Yarra</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> site 9/11/75 2 <sup>nd</sup> site 27/10/12	No building on platform			
<b>Breadalbane</b> 9/11/75	Details unknown			
<b>Fish River</b> 9/11/75	No building on platform			

<sup>423</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9th December, 1876, p. 9. On the same date, tenders closed for the construction of similarly designed residences at Millthorpe and Spring Hill, making those two structures first of the new design on the Main Western line.

<b>STATION &amp; OPENING DATE (final names used)</b>	<b>APPROVED BUILDING DESIGN</b>	<b>BUILDING MATERIAL AT OPENING</b>	<b>BUILDER &amp; BUILDINGS AT TIME OF OPENING</b>	<b>REPLACEMENT DATE</b>
<b>Gunning</b> 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
<b>Jerrawa</b> 3/7/76	No building on platform			
<b>Yass</b> 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
<b>Bowning</b> 3/7/76	Combination two-storey office/residence, the same as the 2 <sup>nd</sup> building for Yass	Brick with iron roof	Foundations laid in February – men transferred from Yass to work on the Bowning building	
<b>Binalong</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> site 1/11/76 2 <sup>nd</sup> 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 Harden in 1880



<b>STATION &amp; OPENING DATE (final names used)</b>	<b>APPROVED BUILDING DESIGN</b>	<b>BUILDING MATERIAL AT OPENING</b>	<b>BUILDER &amp; BUILDINGS AT TIME OF OPENING</b>	<b>REPLACEMENT DATE</b>
<b>Galong</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> site 12/3/77 2 <sup>nd</sup> site 16/4/17	No building			
<b>Rocky Ponds</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> site 12/3/77 2 <sup>nd</sup> site 16/4/16	No building			
<b>Cunningar</b> 12/3/77	Design unknown	Timber	Building “not yet complete”	Morphed into a larger structure with duplication
<b>Harden</b> 12/3/77	Design unknown	Timber	Portable buildings transferred from Yass	1880
<b>Wallendbeen</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> site 1/11/77 2 <sup>nd</sup> site 1917	No building			
<b>Cootamundra</b> 1/11/77	1 <sup>st</sup> temporary building design had open-fronted waiting room and used extended roof rafters to form an awning in place of a posted verandah – 2 <sup>nd</sup> temporary building had four rooms with gabled roof – open-fronted waiting room & conventional posted verandah	Timber	Temporary building – 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	Date unknown when the first timber building was replaced by the second timber building – present brick structure approved in 1887
<b>Bethungra</b> 15/4/78	Temporary four-room building with gabled roof	Brick	Contract issued late and 1 <sup>st</sup>	Not replaced – only instance where the

<b>STATION &amp; OPENING DATE (final names used)</b>	<b>APPROVED BUILDING DESIGN</b>	<b>BUILDING MATERIAL AT OPENING</b>	<b>BUILDER &amp; BUILDINGS AT TIME OF OPENING</b>	<b>REPLACEMENT DATE</b>
	– open-fronted waiting room		contractor went on holidays – 2 <sup>nd</sup> contract for platform building not let until three days after line opening – built by Amos Brothers	contractor for the construction of the per way also constructed the platform building
<b>Junee 6/7/78</b>	Temporary building with gabled roof	Timber	Frame only erected at time of station opening	1883
<b>Harefield 3/9/78</b>	No building			
<b>Bomen 3/9/78</b>	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
<b>Wagga Wagga 1/9/79</b>	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
<b>Uranquinty 1/9/80</b>	One-room shelter shed with posted verandah	Timber	Not completed by John McDonald before line opening – The	1888

<b>STATION &amp; OPENING DATE (final names used)</b>	<b>APPROVED BUILDING DESIGN</b>	<b>BUILDING MATERIAL AT OPENING</b>	<b>BUILDER &amp; BUILDINGS AT TIME OF OPENING</b>	<b>REPLACEMENT DATE</b>
			Rock and Yerong Creek built to the same plan	
<b>The Rock</b> 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
<b>Yerong Creek</b> 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
<b>Culcairn</b> 1/9/80	Present building in place with line opening	Timber	Contract let on 20/5/80 to Charles Hardy	Not replaced
<b>Gerogery</b> 1/9/80	Present building in place with line opening	Timber	Contract let on 20/5/80 to Charles Hardy	Not replaced
<b>Table Top</b> 3/2/81	No building			Contractor, Mr. Johnson, completed a small brick structure in August, 1881
<b>Ettamogah</b> 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
<b>Albury</b> 3/2/81	Present Italianate building incomplete	Brick	Goods shed used as a station building for 1 <sup>st</sup>	Not replaced

<b>STATION &amp; OPENING DATE (final names used)</b>	<b>APPROVED BUILDING DESIGN</b>	<b>BUILDING MATERIAL AT OPENING</b>	<b>BUILDER &amp; BUILDINGS AT TIME OF OPENING</b>	<b>REPLACEMENT DATE</b>
			year after line opening – Stevens and Kyle, contractors, had started work in October, 1880	

**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**

<b>NO BUILDING PROVIDED</b>	<b>TEMPORARY BUILDINGS</b>	<b>INCOMPLETE BUILDINGS</b>	<b>COMPLETED BUILDINGS</b>	<b>DETAILS UNKNOWN</b>
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 permanent 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	Junee	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		
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 in this Appendix 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 easy 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 that 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 at Culcairn, Gerogery and Coolamon and also for some brick buildings, such as Corowa, Temora and Cobar.

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."<sup>424</sup> The newspaper article gave no explanation but it is very clear Whitton saved heaps of money by adopting his new station building policy, which opposed the provision of permanent buildings.

Stuart Sharp

2<sup>nd</sup> January 2023

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<sup>424</sup> *Cootamundra Herald*, 13th November, 1877, p. 2.

## APPENDIX 5

### THE COMPARISON BETWEEN THE 1880 BUILDING AT HARDEN & THE 1884 STRUCTURE AT BINALONG

The Table below illustrates the differences between the design features of the buildings at Harden and Binalong. The Harden building was an example of the influences of the Victorian Free Classical style and the Binalong structure possessed influences belonging to the Georgian school.

**TABLE: COMPARISON OF DESIGN FEATURES OF SECOND-CLASS STATIONS AT HARDEN AND BINALONG PLATFORM BUILDINGS, AS CONSTRUCTED**

<b>DESIGN FEATURE</b>	<b>HARDEN 1880</b>	<b>BINALONG 1884</b>
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	no wall dressing, though dentils were provided under the eaves

<b>DESIGN FEATURE</b>	<b>HARDEN 1880</b>	<b>BINALONG 1884</b>
	openings & projecting quoins	
Roof material	Welsh slate	Wells slate
Roof pitch	Medium	Medium
Roof design	Gable with ornate timber work & use of Redwood finials – roof penetrated only by chimneys through ridge	Simple hip – roof 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 of the entry/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 the original structure has been desecrated with subsequent additions and the addition of an awning on the southbound platform 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).

Stuart Sharp

2<sup>nd</sup> June 2023

## APPENDIX 6

### THE PREVIOUSLY USED GEORGIAN DESIGN FAMILY

John Whitton had implemented the prototype of his First Class, Georgian-influenced design at Campbelltown in 1858 and the second at Parramatta in 1859. The mass production variation appeared in 1862 with Penrith and Singleton. The majority of the 15 examples were 15 feet wide internal with a few being slightly narrower at 13 feet 6 inches. The length of the family members was the dominant area of change and, as a consequence of those changes, floor plans changed. Between 1858 and 1876, the following locations featured the Georgian influenced design.

LINE	YEAR	LENGTH
<b>SOUTH</b>		
• Newtown	1876	91 (on existing line)
• Campbelltown	1858	70
• Picton	1863	85
• Mittagong	1866	85
• Moss Vale	1867	85
<b>WEST</b>		
• Parramatta	1859	125
• Penrith	1862	125
• Mount Victoria	1867	85
• Bowenfels	1869	85
• Kelso	1874	75
<b>NORTH</b>		
• Singleton	1862	125
• Morpeth Junction	1863	70 (on an existing line)
• Muswellbrook	1868	70
• Scone	1870	75
• Murrurundi	1871	75



*This photograph shows a member of the design family of which predated the Harden building. It dates from 1867 and is of Muswellbrook station. There are two main differences between the Muswellbrook and Harden buildings. The Muswellbrook structure is much shorter, less elaborate and featured a hipped roof, which was the standard roofscape for members of the design family. The features the Granville and Harden buildings have in common are the overall symmetry, the use of pavilions at each end and posted verandahs on both the road and rail elevations. It is unusual for a New South Wales rail station to have a stepped entry but that was the case at Muswellbrook.*

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 1860s, 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 1876. 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.

Seventeen examples were built as the First Class of platform building between 1858 and 1876 and 26 examples were built as the Second Class of platform structures between 1876 and 1890. All 43 examples shared the same, simple hipped roof and attached pavilions with parapeted walls, except Harden, Granville and Liverpool with gabled roofs.

Stuart Sharp

2<sup>nd</sup> January 2023

## APPENDIX 7

**TABLE: LOCATION AND CLASSIFICATION OF NSW REFRESHMENT ROOMS  
1920-1950**

<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>OFFICIAL CLASSIFICATION</b>	<b>AVAILABILITY OF PUBLIC BEDROOM ACCOMMODATION</b>
<b>GROUP 1</b>		
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
<b>TOTAL IN GROUP1</b>	<b>24</b>	
<b>GROUP 2</b>		
Harden	Liquor bar – rules and counter service	No
Cooma	Ditto	No
Narrabri	Ditto	No
Armidale	Ditto	No
Glen Innes	Ditto	No
Byron Bay	Ditto	No

LOCATION	OFFICIAL CLASSIFICATION	AVAILABILITY OF PUBLIC BEDROOM ACCOMMODATION
<b>TOTAL IN GROUP 2</b>	<b>6</b>	
<b>GROUP 3</b>		
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
<b>TOTAL IN GROUP 3</b>	<b>11</b>	
<b>GROUP 4</b>		
“Central” (Sydney Terminal)	liquor bar – meals and counter service	No
Wallerawang	Ditto	No
Warialda	Ditto	No
<b>TOTAL IN GROUP 4</b>	<b>3</b>	
<b>GROUP 5</b>		
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
<b>TOTAL IN GROUP 5</b>	<b>11</b>	
<b>TOTAL NO.</b>	<b>55</b>	

**SOURCE:** *undated, multi-coloured poster published by New South Wales Railways.*

Stuart Sharp, 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2023

## APPENDIX 8

**TABLE: COMPARISON OF DEVELOPMENT AT SOUTHERN LINE REFRESHMENT ROOMS BETWEEN GOULBURN AND COOTAMUNDRA**

DATE	GOULBURN	YASS	HARDEN	COOTAMUNDRA
1881		Temporary facility opened		
20 <sup>th</sup> August, 1883		Permanent refreshment room opened		
5 <sup>th</sup> August, 1883	Permanent refreshment room opened			
Second half of 1885 or 1886			Opened	
June 1886			Enlarged	
1891		Additional staff bedrooms on first floor level of the 1876 building, plus other changes	Extended	
1893				Secondary source indicates opening of a privately opened concession
January 1895				Refreshment room opened following calling of tenders
1896			Expansion	
1901			Expansion	
1902		New kitchen at rear & store		Existing refreshment room partly demolished by shunting accident on 24 <sup>th</sup> October
1904				Unknown additions, probably repairs
1906			Improvements	New, larger facility opened
1906-1914			Improvements	
1914		Additional, large	Counter redesigned	

DATE	GOULBURN	YASS	HARDEN	COOTAMUNDRA
		refreshment room on northbound platform		
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 on the northbound platform	Installation of an "American" bar	
4 <sup>th</sup> 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 Northbound platform	Bar separated from remainder of facility	
1 <sup>st</sup> January, 1917			Railway Department assumes management of the refreshment room	
16 <sup>th</sup> February 1917		Railway Department assumes management of the refreshment room		



DATE	GOULBURN	YASS	HARDEN	COOTAMUNDRA
1 <sup>st</sup> 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 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 <sup>th</sup> November 1951			Attempted part closure – re-opened on 3/12/1951	
1954		Refrigerator installed	Additional refrigerator &	

DATE	GOULBURN	YASS	HARDEN	COOTAMUNDRA
			toaster provided	
1955	Unspecified repairs to facility on No. 1 platform			
1 <sup>st</sup> September 1956		Refreshment room closed		
1957				Electrically powered refrigerated bottle cabinet installed
1 <sup>st</sup> March 1957			Tenders called for takeover of facility	
1 <sup>st</sup> 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 <sup>rd</sup> March 1983				Refreshment room closed
8 <sup>th</sup> 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

<b>DATE</b>	<b>GOULBURN</b>	<b>YASS</b>	<b>HARDEN</b>	<b>COOTAMUNDRA</b>
				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
<b>NUMBER OF TIMES FACILITY ALTERED OR EXPANDED</b>	<b>5</b> <b>(1915, 1916, 1919, 1925 &amp; 1960)</b>	<b>6</b> <b>(1891, 1902, 1914, 1916, 1917 &amp; 1954)</b>	<b>15</b> <b>(1886, 1891, 1896, 1901, 1906, 1906-14, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1919, 1927, 1943, 1946 &amp; 1954)</b>	<b>6</b> <b>(1904, 1906, 1919, 1927, 1930 &amp; 1957)</b>

*The assistance of Steve Baker in the provision of material relating to Cootamundra is appreciated.*

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