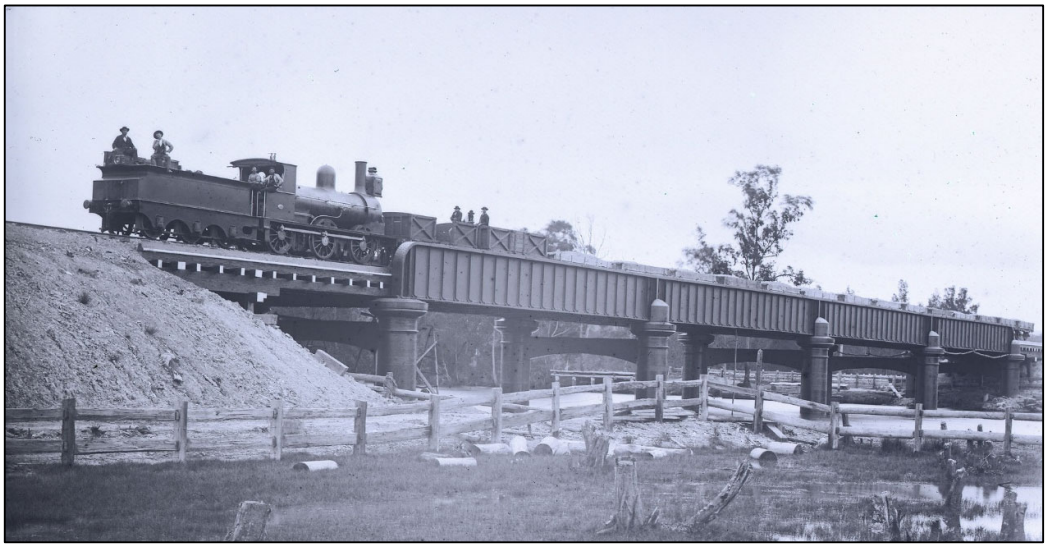
DORA CREEK RAILWAY STATION
A STORY OF FINANCIAL STARVATION
WITH TOUCHES OF THE UNUSUAL



Ralph Snowball took this image of the locomotive, "Murrumbidgee", at Dora Creek on 14th August 1887, which was one day prior to the opening of the line. It appears that the locomotive was hauling ballast wagons. The photographer is standing in what would become part of the goods yard. The loco is positioned what would become the station entrance in 1889. Initially, John Whitton proposed a lower elevation for the bridge but some users of the waterway and the Member of Parliament for Wollombi, Joseph Gorrick, protested in 1883 to Commissioner John Rae about the inadequate clearance for shipping. The bridge was raised but even at its new height there were protests because it prevented sailing ships proceeding up Dora Creek beyond the railway corridor.[1] The press reported that, on the completion of the railway to Sydney, the sailing vessels ceased to trade with Cooranbong and bullock teams filled the breach, taking the timber to Morisset or Dora Creek railway stations.[2] The 1887 facility survives as a road bridge. Apart from the crossing of the Hawkesbury River, the rail bridges, both past and present, at Dora Creek are the longest links over a waterway between Sydney and Newcastle.

[1] *Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser*, third November 1883, no pag.
[2] *Newcastle Sun*, 19th February 1947, p. 8.

THE TOUCHES OF THE UNUSUAL

Very few railway stations in New South Wales were involved in the transfer of people and freight between water and land. Lake Macquarie is a large expanse of water and three stations provided the rail/sea interface for goods and people. These were Dora Creek, Toronto and Cockle Creek. While Toronto and Cockle Creek stations generally focused on holidaymakers and tourists, Dora Creek's primary focus was freight.

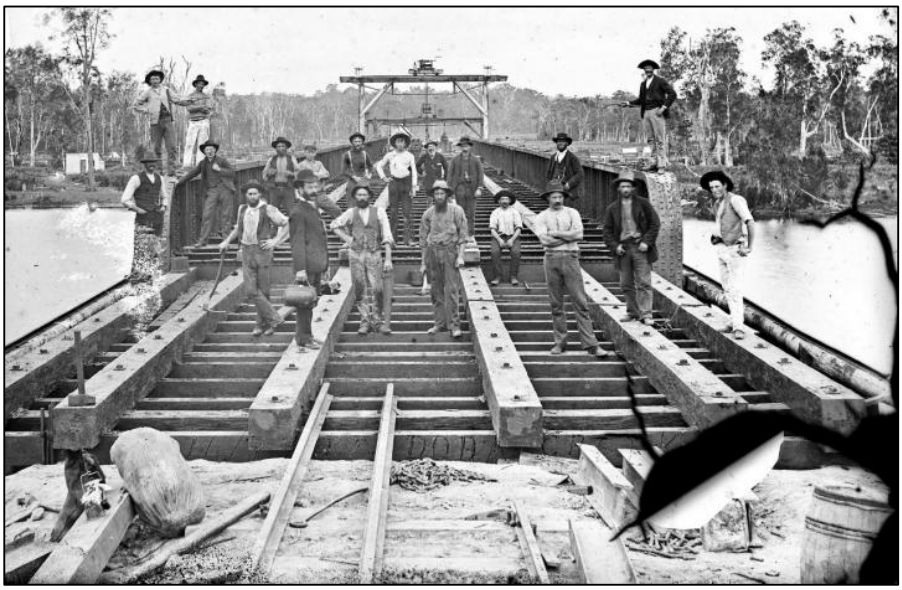
In addition to the confluence between maritime and rail modes of transport, there were five unusual features in the history of Dora Creek station. These were:

- the very steep gradient (1 in 25) between the main line and goods yard
- the pedestrian walkway on the railway bridge over Dora Creek
- the extension of the good siding onto the wharf located in Dora Creek
- the provision of an elevator to transfer containers of dead fish between river and rail
- the extraordinary goods loading bank.

Because of the station's role in the movement of goods between river and rail and its five unusual features, Dora Creek was a rare station.

1887 – THE OPENING OF THE LINE

The railway line on which Dora Creek station exists was opened between Gosford and Broadmeadow on 15th August 1887. At the time, that track section as well as the lines radiating from Newcastle were isolated from the southern and western trunk systems and the entire colonial railway network was not unified physically until 1st May 1889 when the railway bridge over the Hawkesbury River was opened. There was no station at Dora Creek when the line opened.



The photographer is looking south from the northern side of Dora Creek. Ralph Snowball captured this photograph on 14th March 1887 only five months prior to the line opening. The plate web, cast iron bridge was designed and built for two tracks though only what would become the Down Main upon duplication was laid and in use for the first 23 years of the bridge's life. ***SOURCE:*** *Snowball Collection, University of Newcastle.*

1889 – THE OPENING OF THE STATION

Three new railway Commissioners took office on 22nd October 1888 and an early priority was an inspection of all railway lines comprising the colonial network. Just three months after their appointment, the Commissioners visited the Main North line and, on the journey to Newcastle, received at Dora Creek a deputation of five local residents (i.e., Messrs. Healy, Douglas, Mills, Livingstone, and Morley). They requested that a platform should be constructed there. The Chief Commissioner, E.M.G. Edy, replied that he could not give a promise at the present, but indicated that the Commissioners would consider the request shortly.[3]

Not only did they consider the matter but decided to erect an unattended platform, which opened on 16th August 1889. The 1889 platform was located on the northbound side of the single line. A press report in September of that year indicated that the platform was operational.[4]

The platform was under the control of the Station Master at Morisset. He dispatched his Junior Porter to clean the platform and waiting shed. The Junior Porter also attended Dora Creek platform to deal with the "night fish traffic". Any parcels for the station being delivered at night time were taken to either Morisset or Awaba and

[3] *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 16th January 1889, p. 5.
[4] *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 6th September 1889, p. 8.

returned by the first available train the following day. There was one exception – empty fish baskets.[5] The baskets were also left at Dora Creek.

The Dora Creek platform was too short for a passenger train of "average length". Passengers for Dora Creek from the south were "transferred" to the last carriage at Morisset.[6] No mention was made of the arrangements for passengers travelling from north of Dora Creek as the problem of stopping a train with carriages of on the bridge over Dora Creek did not arise.

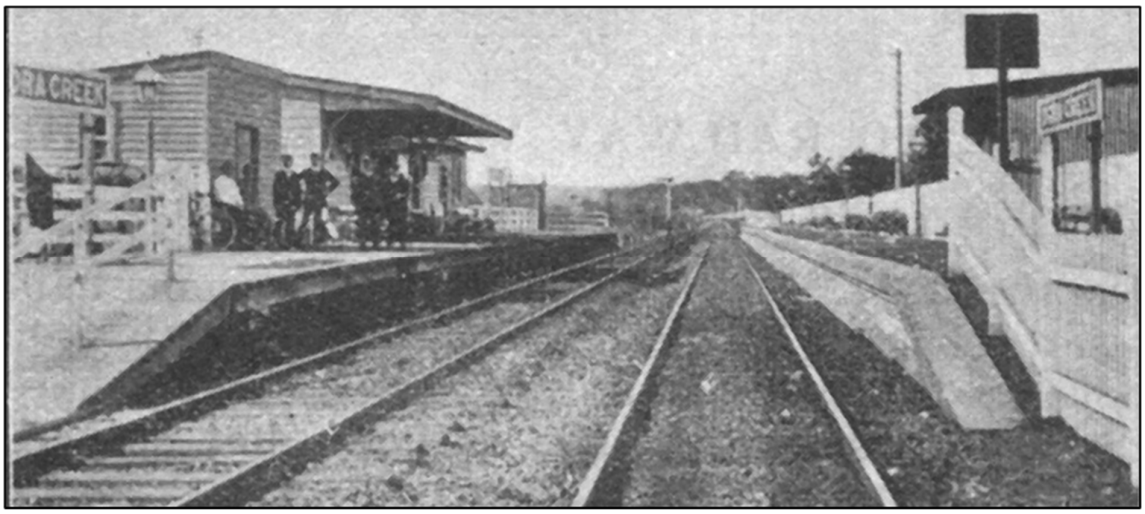
THE FACILITIES ON THE PLAFORM WHEN THE PLATFORM OPENED IN 1889

Dora Creek station started its history of financial starvation from the very day the platform opened. It was provided with the cheapest and most primitive structures possible. Dora Creek platform was opened on 16th August 1889 but no plans survive, probably because no plans were prepared given the primitive status of the platform. The two available, oldest photographs show a small, squarish timber building adjacent to the access steps. It is contended in this essay that the structure, which later became an out of shed (and never a fish shed) was the first building on the platform and, probably, was erected in 1889 as a small waiting room. There was one item of evidence that supports the contention that the structure was not built for the exclusive use of fish, though the fish may have shared the shed's comforts with humans. The structure had a window in at least one side wall. Side walls are the usual location for windows in waiting sheds. It would be very unusual for an out of shed and especially for a fish shed to have windows in any wall in 1889. The fish in the shed did not require natural light as they were dead.

One contention that needs to be tested is whether the building with the roof sloping to the rear was a waiting shed not a fish shed and the second contention is that it was constructed in 1889 at the time the platform was opened. The objective is to assess whether other new stations in 1889 were opened with the most primitive form of similar styled waiting accommodation. Documentary evidence is available for consideration which encompasses the economic and political framework of the time in which the decision to erect the Dora Creek and other platforms was made. The outcome of that investigation will confirm the extensiveness of the erection of extremely cheap platforms and buildings in 1889. This process is split into two parts. Part 1 takes into account the economic and financial situation surrounding the opening of Dora Creek platform and Part 2 adds the political dimension to the period in which the decision to erect the platform was made.

[5] New South Wales Government Railways, *Local Appendix – Northern Division from 1st January 1898*, Sydney, Government Printer, 1898, pp. 47 & 76.
[6] New South Wales Government Railways, *Local Appendix – Northern Division, March 1918,* 1918, p. 168.

From press references, it is known that the platform was unattended and they were no good sidings or freight facilities.[7] Luckily, there is a hint given by the photograph below.



This photograph was taken by the official Railway photographer and appeared in the house journal, known as the NSW Railway and Tramway Budget on 1st July 1915, page 322. The photographer is looking north and the picture shows the original 1889 timber platform (later northbound) on the left-hand side and the 1910 duplication platform for southbound trains on the right-hand side. The building closest to the camera on the northbound platform is, allegedly, the original 1889 waiting room. It was later used as an out of shed in which waiting fish and other goods were held. On the southbound platform was a waiting shed for people only (no fish). There was no additional out of shed on the new platform.

In 1942, a press report appeared which indicated that fish were not kept in the out of shed but rather on the platform itself. It maintained that blowflies "accumulated" at the station when fish were consigned to Sydney and Newcastle. Lake Macquarie Shire Council requested the erection of a shelter shed on the station to house consignments of fish awaiting shipment by train. Between 8,000 and 10,000 cases of fish were sent annually to Sydney with a small amount going to Newcastle. Consignments were expected to be on the platform by 5 p.m. for the train which left at 8 p.m. Despite the liberal use of ice, there was planned to be extensive wastage. Boxes of fish were placed on concrete slabs on the platforms which were then covered with a tarpaulin. Because of the introduction of daylight saving, it meant that the fish were on the platform an hour earlier. The press report said that almost weekly about 100 men engaged in the fish industry at Dora Creek suffered loss because of fish being condemned. Council resolved to request the provision of a "suitable structure".[8] such a facility was only necessary for the southbound platform as the fish did not have to wait long to travel to Newcastle. This press report and Council's involvement in the

[7] *Daily Telegraph*, 27th October 1899, p. 2.
[8] *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 13th October 1942, p. 2 and *Newcastle Sun*, 13th October 1942, p. 4.

matter strongly indicate that the building that top of the fish elevator was at least not for the exclusive use of fish and possibly not used in any way for the storage of fish.

The platform was located on a 1 in 100 gradient facing up trains. Locomotive historian, Ray Love, OAM, tells us an interesting point about Dora Creek for northbound trains in the steam days. He states:

> "After passing through Morisset, then rolling along the level sections toward Dora Creek, all steam crews commenced preparing their fires at Dora Creek for the long, curving 1 in 44 climb up Hawkmount".[9]

At Dora Creek, crews obviously availed themselves of the favourable gradient for northbound trains.

PART 1 – THE ADVERSE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT FROM 1886 AND ITS IMPACT FOR DORA CREEK

The construction of public buildings in 1889 was subject to similar fiscal, political and other factors that appertain today. The facilities of Dora Creek in 1889 were a product of those vicissitudes and the story of the station is a mirror to the development of the New South Wales railway system and to the wider colonial economy at the turn of the 20th century.

The colonial economy was not travelling well in 1886. Thirty years of economic prosperity for the New South Wales Colony had ended. Alexander Stuart became Premier in January 1883. He implemented a review of the 1861 land legislation and simultaneously suspended the auction of Crown land. Unfortunately, the immediate cessation of land sales and the ensuing land reform had a major, adverse budgetary impact. The suspension immediately removed £500,000 a year from the Colonial Treasury as well as other moneys as a result of reduced competition between squatters and settlers.[10] By 1886, the deficit was £1,700,000 a year and, in 1887, it was £2,000,000.[11]

The peak of the economic boom and government capital expenditure had occurred in 1885. A recession then followed in 1886 and 1887 when government loan expenditure generally fell by approximately 50%.[12] In 1886, the New South Wales Government

[9] Email from Ray Love, OAM, on 25th October 2023. In a conversation on 2nd November 2023, Ray stated that preparations would start at Morisset.
[10] A. W. Martin, *Henry Parkes – A Biography*, Melbourne University Press, 1980, p. 356.

[11] Ibid., p. 357.
[12] R. Markey, *The Making of the Labour Party in New South Wales 1880-1900*, New South Wales University Press, 1988, p. 111.

stopped assisted migration for fear of increased unemployment.[13] Employment was also affected and the Colonial Government had commenced retrenchments or were transferring staff from location to location in order to fill vacancies. There were still employment restrictions in January 1887 and the Amalgamated Railway and Tramway Services Association blamed the Government for bad management and claimed that the budget deficit had been created by the construction of "political rail lines."[14]

The station on which Dora Creek was located was on an existing railway line and, while funding for structures on existing lines did not originate in allocations of capital funding sourced from overseas money markets, the decrease in the quantum of borrowed funds, as indicated in the table below, by the New South Wales government reflected the growing adverse financial situation.

TABLE: AMOUNT OF BORROWED CAPITAL 1885-1894

YEAR	AMOUNT OF CAPITAL BORROWED (£000s)	PERCENTAGE DECREASE IN FUNDING LEVELS
1885	2838	-
1886	2587	9
1887	1394	46
1888	1001	28
1889	630	37
1890	1204	+9
1891	3110	+158
1892	1846	40
1893	1153	37
1894	670	41

SOURCE: N.G. Butlin, *Investment in Australian Economic Development 1861-1900*, Cambridge University Press, 1971, pp. 322 & 324.

One glimmer of positive news about the New South Wales financial situation was the increase in revenue from railway and tramway operations of £248,000 over those of the previous year (i.e., 1888), which the press described as "an important item in the gross surplus of the colonial budget for 1889".[15]

[13] A. Wells, *Constructing Capitalism*, Sydney, Allen and Unwin, 1989, p. 103.
[14] Ibid., 15th January, 1887 p. 4.
[15] *Armidale Express and New England General Advertiser*, 8th January 1889, p. 4.

PART 2 – THE NEW AND RADICAL METHOD OF MANAGEMENT, I.E., THE PHILOSOPHY OF ECONOMICAL WORKING FROM 1888 AND THE CONSEQUENCES FOR DORA CREEK STATION

The major influence of the late 1880s was the passage of the Government Railway Act in 1888 which received Royal Assent on 19th July 1888. It was that piece of legislation which introduced a new method railway management, known loosely as economical working. Up to the arrival of Chief Commissioner Eddy and his two fellow Commissioners on 22nd October 1888, the railway system had been largely managed by the Minister for Public Works. It was the occupant of that position that set the overall financial policy including access to loan funds, freight and passenger rates as well as employment of staff. After Eddy's arrival, most of those activities continued to be within the ambit of the ministerial head of the Department of Public Works but the Chief Commissioner was granted two significant changes, the first being the authority to introduce measures that would maximise revenue and efficiency and minimise expenditure and, secondly, the right to hire and fire staff. The Chief Commissioner could implement the Commissioners' decisions without recourse to and the approval of the relevant Minister.

The Government Railways Act 1888 allowed for the appointment and dismissal of staff (Section 15) but the Engineer-in-Chief, John Whitton, was exempt from the legislation. Whitton and his staff in the Railway Construction Branch continued to be subject to the directions of the Minister for Public Works. While expenditure of all funds appropriated by the Parliament for the maintenance and management of the system were vested in the Commissioners, all money received by the Commissioners was paid into the colonial Consolidated Revenue Fund – not retained by the Department of Railways. The quintessential provision of the legislation was Section 22 which stated:

> "It shall be the duty of the Commissioners to maintain the railways and all works in connection therewith in a state of efficiency, and to carry persons, animals, and goods without negligence or delay; and in respect of the carriage of persons, animals, and goods, the Commissioners shall be common carriers".

Of Section 22, the keywords were "state of efficiency".

It was in March 1889 that the press gave the public a clearer understanding of the objectives of Eddy and Commissioners Olliver and Fehon. The *Evening News* reported that the three Commissioners were pursuing the following objectives:

- improvement in the facilities for goods and produce traffic of every kind
- curtailment of expenses

- retention of “good men” and payment of reasonable salaries and wages
- ensure that the lines made better financial returns &
- diffusion of any increase in revenue and reduction in expenditure by way of concessions in goods rates, etc., to customers.[16]

A summarised version in another newspaper, stating”

> “It was … their endeavor to work the railways on a more economic principle for the benefit of the country in general”.[17]

Section 23 of the legislation provided the start of the story of Dora Creek station. The Section stated:

> “The Commissioners shall at all times cause to be made a careful inspection of the condition of the railways under their control”.

It was during one of those careful inspections that the three Commissioners stopped to talk to local residents at Dora Creek.

One way to achieve the more economical working involved the adoption of “a systematic method of working each branch of the department”. Eddy explained that it was “intended to adopt a standard plan for all works on the railway, such as buildings, platforms, overbridges, painting, etc., which may, from time to time, be required. This will secure uniformity of design, lessen the departmental work, and reduce the cost of material kept in stock for carrying out such works. The Commissioners hoped to effect considerable economy in this way, their object being to thoroughly systematise the whole of the work of the department”.[18]

About two months after visiting Dora Creek, the Commissioners on 1st March 1889 retrenched 18 employees from the Existing Lines Branch, which was the branch under which Dora Creek station was constructed in August 1889. Included amongst the retrenchment was Alfred Leggatt, who had held the position of architect, as well as John Higgs, who had been the Traffic Manager North for many years as well as a traffic inspector who, like Higgs, was based in Newcastle. Those men would normally have been involved in the design of the facilities at Dora Creek station but that did not occur in 1889.

The railway bridge over the Hawkesbury River was due to be opened on 1st May 1889 and Eddy obviously considered the positions of Leggart and Higgs redundant when the former isolated Great Northern Railway was joined to the southern and western railway systems, which were managed from Sydney. In addition, six draftsmen and

[16] *Evening News*, 13th March 1889, p. 3.
[17] *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 3RD April 1889, p. 8.
[18] *Daily Telegraph*, 13th March 1889, p. 4.

the custodian of plans were retrenched. From 1st June 1889, a further 15 men were retrenched including one resident engineer, a surveyor, two foremen, two inspectors, three sub- inspectors.[19] In summary, up to 30th June 1889, a total of 33 men from the Existing Lines Branch were retrenched and, over all branches, a total of 273 employees lost their jobs to the end of July 1889.[20]

It was these financial and political factors in which the decision to open a platform at Dora Creek was made. Given the gravity of the money situation and the operational targets set by the Commissioners, it would be unsurprising that, no matter what facilities would be provided, they would be basic in form and function.

DO THE DESIGNS OF OTHER BUILDINGS ERECTED ELSEWHERE IN 1889 HELP TO CONFIRM THE DATE AND STYLE OF THE 1889 DORA CREEK INFRASTRUCTURE?

There is no firm evidence that indicates the nature of infrastructure provided at Dora Creek on its opening day. The contention that needs to be tested is whether the building at Dora Creek with the roof sloping to the rear was a waiting shed and not a fish shed. Without a plan, there is no certainty that the structure in the photograph on or about page 5 with the skillion roof sloping to the rear was, in fact, erected in 1889. Fortunately, comparative analysis is one tool available to the historian.

The Appendix to this essay is a small selection of photographs of structures opened and built in the same year as Dora Creek. The evidence shows the use of two basic designs. One was for smaller buildings and the other for larger buildings. The main design difference was the shape of the roof. Smaller buildings received a single pitched, skillion roof and larger buildings a double pitched, gable roof.

The overall picture gets a little bit more complicated with the smaller buildings. It was in 1889 that Chief Commissioner Eddy commissioned the introduction of the first buildings with the reversal of the roof pitch i.e., towards the railway tracks. This was the case, for example, at Toolijooa on the Illawarra line and at Raworth on the Morpeth branch. In essence, in 1889 there was a simultaneous use of John Whitton's traditional design with the roof sloping away from the track and Edward Eddy's contrary design with the roof sloping towards the track. A photographic analysis of the dominant two building designs of 1889 is presented in the Appendix.

THE CONCLUSION OF THE PHOTOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS – WAS THE PRIMITIVE DESIGN USED ON THE DORA CREEK PLATFORM

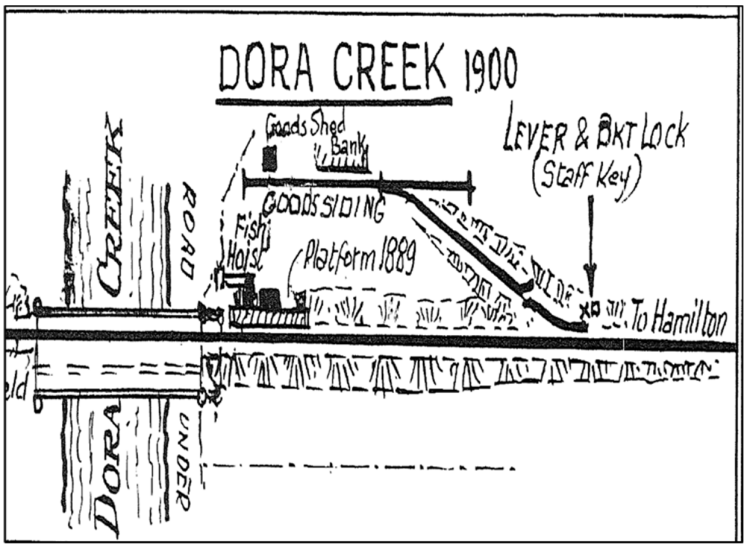
[19] Chief Commissioner for Railways, *Annual Report to 30th June 1889*, Sydney, Government Printer, 1890, pp. 43 & 44.
[20] *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 5th August 1889, p. 3.

CONSISTENT WITH OR OTHERWISE WITH STRUCTURES ERECTED ELSEWHERE IN 1889?

Based on the photographs set out in the Appendix, the answer is yes. In essence, the building at Dora Creek with its roof pitch sloping to the rear was consistent with structures built elsewhere in the same year. Money was very tight for the Railways Department and the primitive nature of facilities at Dora Creek was consistent with similar station openings elsewhere on the railway system. Dora Creek was lucky to get a building because waiting sheds were not always provided with the construction of a platform.

The design of the building at Dora Creek was consistent with those provided at other stations and this adds considerable weight to the contention that, probably, the small building with the pitch sloping to the rear was erected in 1889 at Dora Creek in conjunction with the construction of the platform.

1900 – PROVISION OF THE DORA CREEK GOODS SIDING



The track plan above shows that the goods siding could theoretically be shunted by trains either direction. That was probably the case early after the opening but not the case a bit later as the extension at the northern end served a timber mill and was, therefore, not always available for general use. ***SOURCE:*** *Bulletin, January 1966, p. 15.*

A deputation of regional Members of Parliament and local residents from Dora Creek met the Chief Commissioner on 26th October 1899. The deputation talked about the difficulty of conveying fish baskets from ground level to the platform and they requested a siding to facilitate that procedure. The deputation also wanted staff to be appointed to the platform. In reply, Eddy acknowledged that this was not the first time a siding had been requested but explained that the geographic difficulty of providing

such a siding, namely the vertical differences between the main line and the proposed site for the siding below the main line, would make the exercise expensive. Nevertheless, the Chief Commissioner said he would consider the matter.[21] Luck was with the deputation and Eddy approved the provision of the goods siding. So far, the local community had a history of conducting remarkably successful meetings with the senior railway officials – firstly to get a platform in 1889 and, secondly, to get a siding and the appointment of staff in 1900-1902. The steep gradient of 1 in 25 between the main line and the goods yard was another of the unusual features of Dora Creek station.

Locomotive 5433 shunts in the goods siding at Dora Creek on 10th August 1968. The remainder of its train is visible standing on the Down Main line. A four-wheeled louvered van and a four-wheeled open "S" truck stand at the northern end of the goods siding on what was once named Hely's siding. ***SOURCE:*** *J. Allerton, Photograph No. 644587, ARHS Railway Archives.*

The goods siding was reported as opening on 26th June 1900. According to the 1930 *Local Appendix North*, it held 44 wagons. The 1918 *Local Appendix North* described the access as a "steep gradient rising from the siding" and stated that "care must be exercised during shunting and other operations".[22] The difficult access to/from the goods siding was one of the unusual features of Dora Creek.

Signalling and safeworking historian, Graham Harper, makes the following comment about the date of the opening of the goods siding. His research revealed the following situation.

> "I cannot find any confirmation of the supposed opening date of the goods siding. I checked the *Weekly Notices* for 1899, 1900 and 1901 but there was no mention of the opening. John Forsyth gives the 26th June 1900 date without

[21] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27th October 1899, p. 8.
[22] New South Wales Government Railways, *Local Appendix – Northern Division, March 1918,* 1918, p. 168.

noting the source. In addition, C.C. Singleton in *Bulletin* No. 339 of January 1966 also gives the same date and says that the connection was worked by lever and bracket lock, released by a key on the staff. The details were most likely conveyed in a Traffic Branch Circular, and probably detailed the trains that shunted there as well. There was nothing in the altered train timetables around that date about trains shunting at Dora Creek".[23]

1902 – ADDITIONAL BUILDINGS, THE APPOINTMENT OF STAFF AND EARLY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This photograph of the original platform shows the 1889 building closest to the camera. It was the adjacent, larger building that was erected in 1902. It was of the same design as the 1889 building with one major exception, namely the reversal of the direction of the roof pitch towards the rails which allowed the provision of a platform awning using the extended roof rafters. The next building was the skillion roofed signal box. Near the far end of the platform is the male toilet erected without an overall roof.

A station officer was appointed on 20th January 1902 and no doubt that event prompted the need for office, toilet and other accommodation. The press commented:

> "A few months ago, the station there was only a siding and platform. Now it is a fully equipped station, with telephone communication to Teralba and Newcastle".[24]

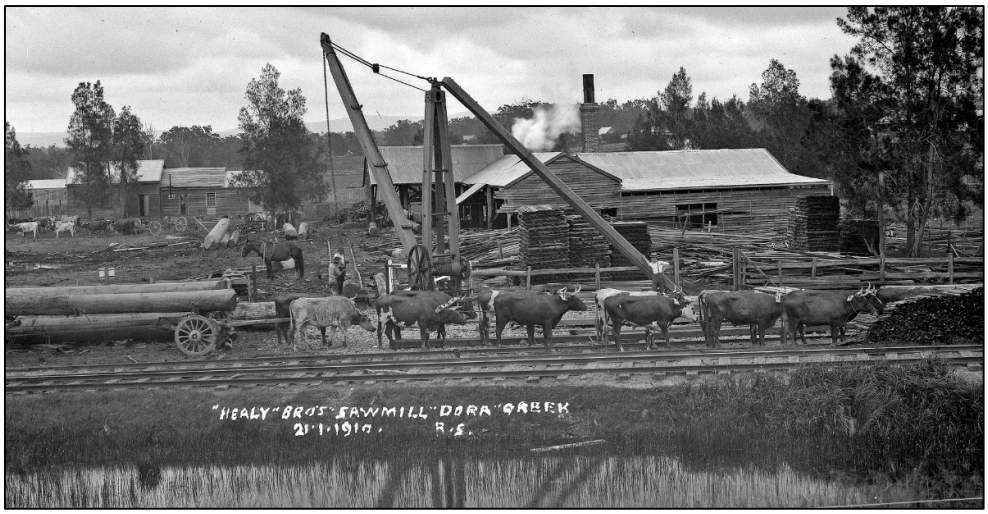
There was another substantial development at the station which would bring added revenue to the Railways. The following report indicates the nature of the activities.

> "Messrs. Healey Bros., who have a saw mill about a mile up the (Dora) Creek, are now building new mills adjoining the railway siding. In addition to sawn

[23] Email from Graham Harper on 15th October 2023.
[24] *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 14th March 1902, p. 7.

timber, this district sends out sleepers, logs, and pit timber in abundance. The logs are chiefly despatched to Foster's mills at East Maitland. The sleepers for railway purposes are obtained at Mount Faulk, several miles out of the town. The pit timber and the props go to the A. A. Company's Hamilton siding and to the Newcastle Company's collieries at The Glebe. The fish netted at Lake Macquarie, into which the Creek runs, are sent to Sydney, the average output being over 200 baskets per week.

Messrs. Whitehead Bros. have an excellent vineyard close by from which they despatch by rail some 300 cases of grapes weekly. The Seventh Day Adventists' settlement at Cooranbong lies between Dora Creek and Morisset, but the former, three miles away, is the nearest station. The population stands at about 300. The average attendance at the public school …is said to be about 40. Two (passenger) trains each way stop at the station. The township of Dora Creek will progress".[25]



Hely (or Healy) Bros. sawmill and coach making factory had been operating from at least the late 1890s, though a sawmill of unknown ownership had been operating since 1890. The photograph was taken on 21st January 1910 and shows the stiff-legged or tripod crane. There is conflicting information about the crane/s serving the goods yard. The crane dates from either 1909 or 1910. The sawmill at Dora Creek was destroyed by fire in August 1919. ***SOURCE:*** *Snowball Collection, University of Newcastle*

One niggling aspect about the 1909 tripod crane relates to its carrying capacity. The surviving plan dated 10th May 1909 provides for 10 tons capacity crane using a timber jib with cross sectional dimensions 14 inches by 14 inches. However, the official document of facilities, known as the *Local Appendix*, shows the crane to have a

[25] *Ibid. Healy Bros has also been mentioned in other documents as being spelt Hely.*

capacity of only five tons. It is unknown if it were the crane in the photograph or whether there were two cranes.

One subject of importance to the growth of the settlement in the 20th century was the provision of a hotel which would provide residential accommodation for holidaymakers. There was no hotel in 1902 and still no hotel in 2023. However, that was not the case in the 19th century. Historian of the Newcastle region and Hunter Valley, Ed Tonks, OAM, writes that there have been licensed premises at Dora Creek but not a great deal is known about them. He says that Michael Chamberlain in his history of Cooranbong makes the following references.

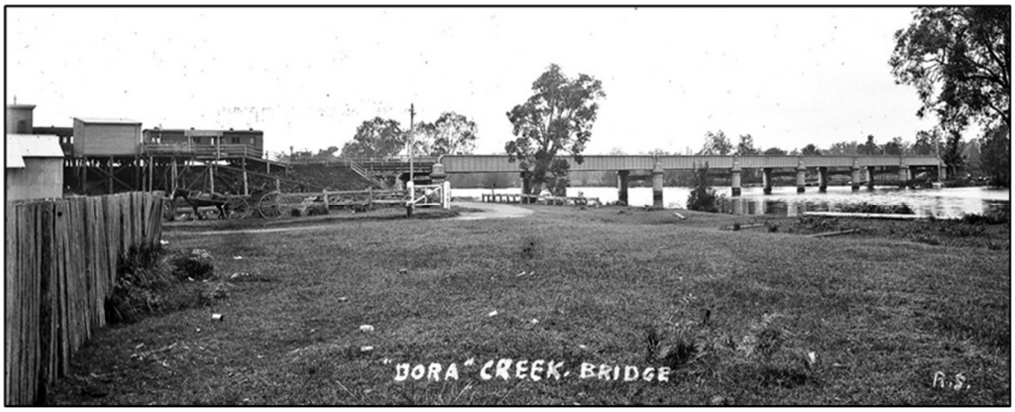
> "Henry Worley ran a roaring hotel trade in the 1880s on the Morisset side of Dora Creek, quenching the thirst of many a navvy occupied on the (construction of) the railway bridge. Annie Burgman remembers its long low verandah and the owners who continued to reside in the building after it closed as a hotel. It was abandoned in the late 1890s and burnt down in 1900.
>
> (Also), a public meeting to discuss the town's view about a road traffic bridge over Dora Creek was called at Edwin Coulter's Hand and Hart Hotel on 7th November 1885. The Government had promised to connect both sides".[26]

The road connection across Dora Creek so desired in 1885 did not occur until 1958 at which time the redundant 1887 railway bridge was utilised for road traffic.

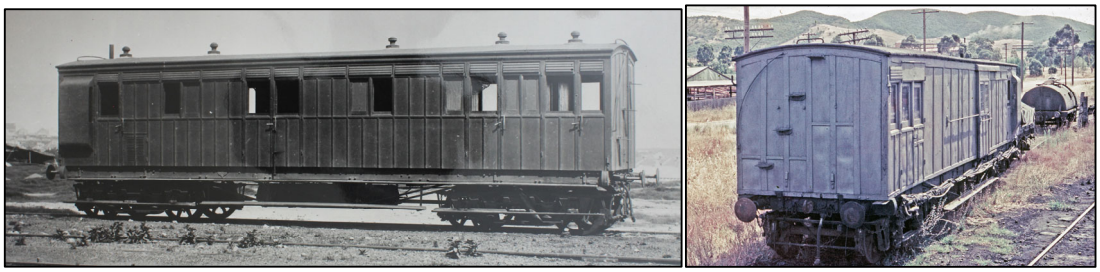
On 28th December 1901, the Railways Department purchased lot 3 in Dora Street on the opposite side of the railway corridor for the erection of a residence for the Station Master. The building, with a full length front verandah, faced Dora Creek and not Dora Street. The Station Master only had 100 feet between his property and the water's edge. There is conflicting evidence about the construction date but the house was built in 1902 or 1903. The construction of the house confirms the date the platform facilities were expanded.

1903-1905 – THE INSTALLATION OF A MOST UNUSUAL FORM OF INFRASTRUCTURE – A FISH ELEVATOR

[26] Email from Ed Tonks on 16th October 2023.



The foregoing photograph looks east and shows the height of the platform above ground level, the fish elevator and the entry/exit gate for the goods yard. It was taken before 1920. What was the carriage in the platform? Evan Rees, rollingstock historian, writes that the end vehicle of the train was a guard's van and was one of the very recognisable 'Redfern' brake vans, coded HV in 1892. He adds: "We can date the photo to post-1904, as the HV in the photo has seen the passenger and lavatory accommodation removed and replaced by a shorter compartment with double doors for fish traffic, as shown in the following photo of HV 750 in breakdown train service in the 1950s".[27] ***SOURCE:*** *Lake Macquarie Council Library.*



Evan Rees has kindly supplied these two photographs. The one on the left is the Redfern brakevan in original condition and the photo on the right shows the post-1904 reconfiguration.

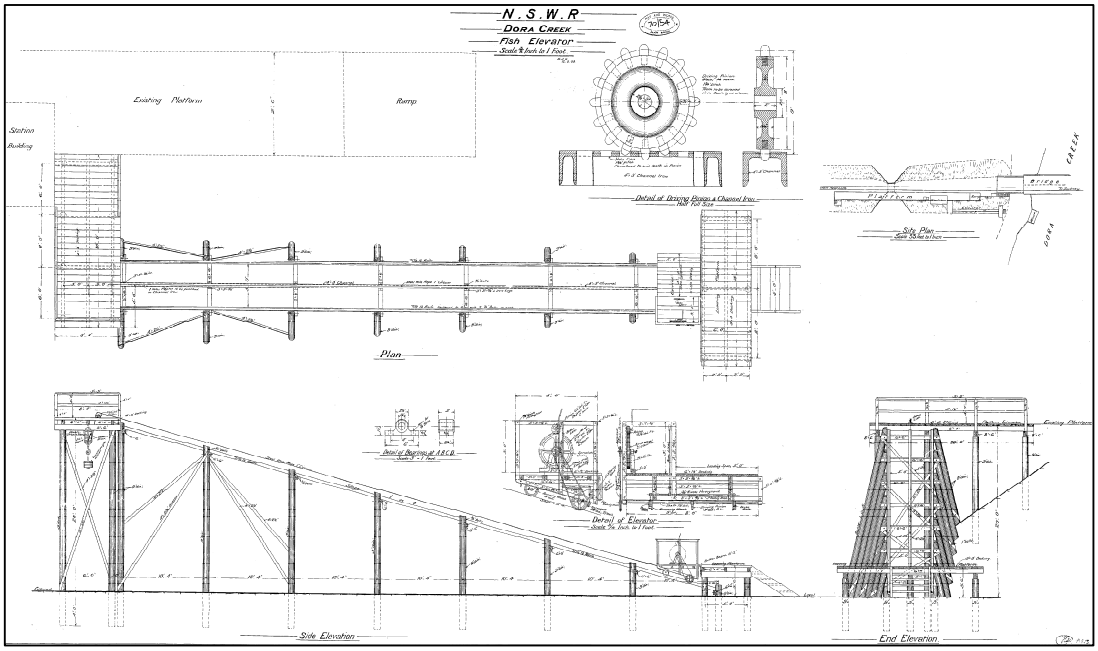
The fish trade was an early commodity that benefited from the provision of the railway line through Dora Creek. However, one of the challenges was transferring the heavy containers between the water level and the platform. Early in the 20th century, most capital funding was directed into the construction of the second Sydney station, which opened in 1906. Given the rarity of lifts in the difficult financial time, it is amazing that the New South Wales Railways went ahead with the idea of helping fishermen. The fish elevator is another of the unusual features of Dora Creek station.

A few stations on the railway system had elevators of various kinds to transfer parcels and/or luggage between platforms and ground-level. Waterfall was one example and

[27] Email from Evan Rees on 19th October 2023.

Lithgow was another. Similar elevators were proposed for other stations, including Epping, but were not built.

The lift was located towards the southern end of the original platform later becoming the Down Main platform. The facility pleased fishermen for the first decade until the track was duplicated in 1910. The problem was that the lift did not serve the new southbound platform and the much larger market for fresh fish in Sydney. Although fishermen requested the relocation of the lift, the Railway Department declined to do so possibly on the basis that the vertical distance between the ground-level and the southbound platform was not as substantial. The plan of the facility appears below.



The plan for the fish elevator was dated 12th September 1903 that served the original and later northbound platform. The hand-powered elevator track was 76 feet long with an elevation of 20 feet between ground and platform level. The gradient was 1 in 4 and the track gauge was 5 feet. The loading deck, covered with 6 inch wide timber 1½ inches thick, was 5 feet by 5 feet and there was also a 5 feet by 3 feet area for the operator. There were two controls – a winch handle and a separate brake. The elevator was constructed in January 1905. It would appear that the winch was human powered.

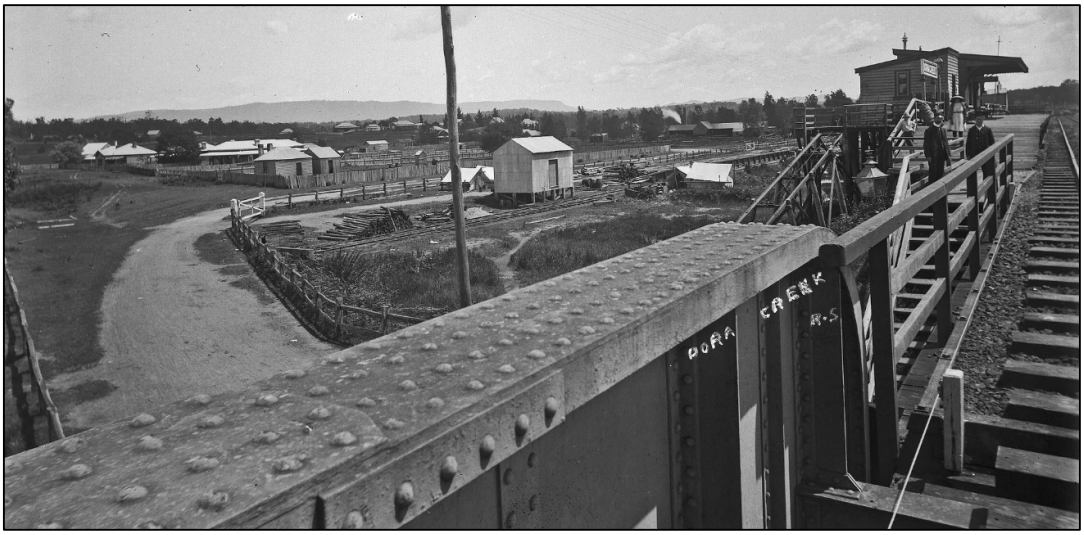
1904-1908 – THE PROVISION OF GOODS FACILITIES

The goods shed opened in 1904. It was small in size and measured 20 feet by 14 feet. The absence of awnings on either side of the shed was an economy measure that was implemented from the mid-1880s when money was becoming tighter. The goods shed was demolished on 9th August 1983 which was about the same time the goods sidings were removed.

A loading bank was provided in 1908. It was unusual in a number of ways, these being:

- the extended length - 150 feet long
- dissimilar gradients of the end ramps - with the ramp at the southern end on a 1 in 15 gradient and that at the northern end on a 1 in 5 grade
- exclusive use of the loading bank with the unknown operator entering into a formal Agreement with Railways Department on 23rd May 1908 in regard to its use (perhaps with Healy Bros., the nearby sawmillers for the loading of logs?)
- the location being adjacent to the goods shed.

A five ton, timber, tripod or stiffed leg crane was installed in 1909 and, sometime between 1918 and 1930, a fixed loading gauge had been erected to the goods siding.



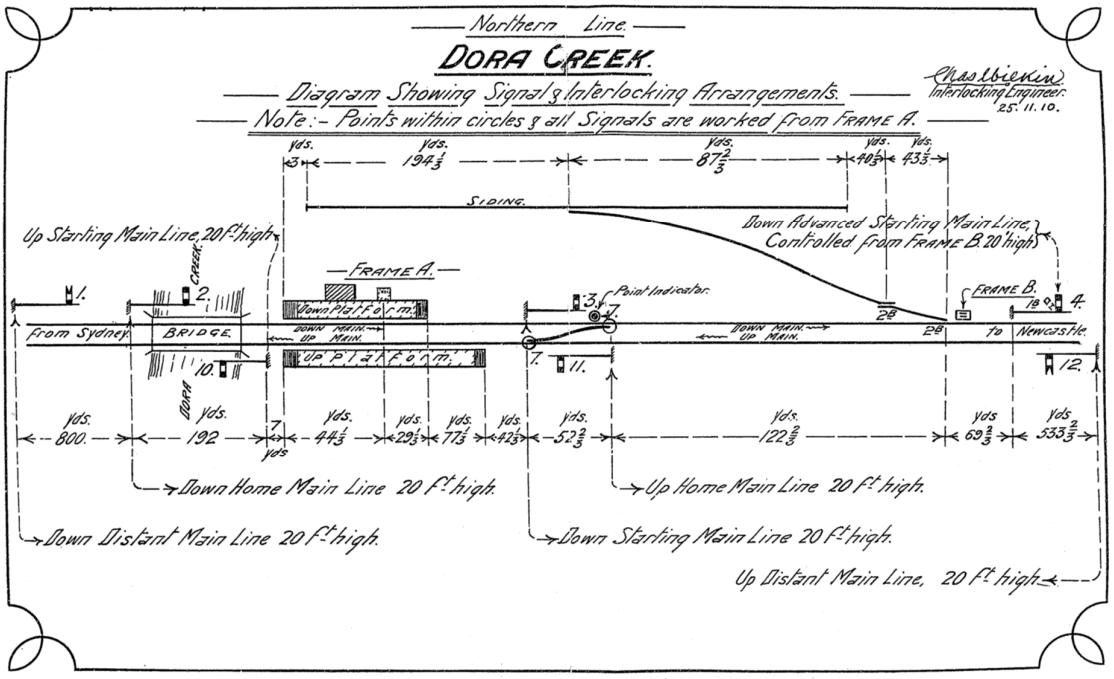
This photograph, taken prior to 1920, shows the goods shed with tents in the goods yard. The loading bank, provided in 1908, can just be seen above the roof of the tent towards the right-hand side. The fish elevator is just visible as are the timber platform and the 1889 and 1902 buildings serving the platform. The significant vertical difference between the platform and the ground surface is noticeable. ***SOURCE:*** *Snowball Collection, University of Newcastle.*

1910 – TRACK DUPLICATION AND OPENING OF SIGNAL BOX

The New South Wales Railways created a temporary location named Dora Creek Junction just to the north of the station on 13th February 1910 in connection with the duplication of the track between that point and Hawkmount Loop. Duplication from Morisset to Dora Creek Junction occurred on 13th December 1910 at which time Dora Creek Junction closed. Signalling and safe working historian, Graham Harper, writes that the block telegraph sections at that time were Morisset – Dora Creek – Hawkmount – Awaba. He adds that Hawkmount was not often switched in and was closed on 2nd June 1924. Then the section became Dora Creek to Awaba.[28]

[28] Email from Graham Harper on 16th October 2023.

Harper says that automatic signalling replace block working to Awaba on 10th February 1938 but block working to Morisset continued until 28th October 1957. At that time, the Down Main was slewed across to the new railway bridge. Although Dora Creek signal box was not closed until 1957, working sketches dated 1946 inferred that the closure of the box had happened by then. Harper suggests that, possibly, the work to replace the block telegraph was planned in 1946 but deferred until the new bridge over Dora Creek was partly in use. This was most likely the case because of the curtailment of funding. The Up Main line was diverted via the new bridge on 6th May 1958.[29]



This is the track and signalling diagram in 1910 upon track duplication.

Dr Bob Taaffe has written extensively on the history of signal boxes. He states that a timber framed and externally timber clad structure was opened at Dora Creek on 13th December 1910 in conjunction with the opening of track duplication from Morisset. It contained a McKenzie and Holland interlocking frame with 12 levers. The box was closed on 28th October 1957 when automatic signalling was provided for Morisset and the new bridge was completed over Dora Creek.

[29] Ibid.

The foregoing beautiful photograph shows three buildings, these being the 1889 waiting shed, the 1902 skillion roofed main structure and the 1910 signal box. Of interest are the curved iron brackets supporting the platform awning. Every structure in this picture is of timber construction including the platform frame, platform deck and the three rail fence at the rear of platform. They reflect financial starvation. However, note the exquisite design of the vertical posts supporting the station nameboard and the manner in which the junction of the fence and the posts is expressed. Everything in the photograph reflects the Eddy regime. One area that does not get mention often is platform seating and in this photograph the seats have been stripped of their 19th century ornamentation. The cast iron arms of the seat are gone as are the dividers between the ends of the benches. A single plank now forms the back. The Station Master is standing in front of the door of the signal box in his white pith helmet. ***SOURCE:*** *R.T. Taaffe, Signal Boxes of New South Wales Railways and Tramways, Volume 4, Taaffe Press, Hobart, 2020, p. 83.*

Evan Rees has an interest in carriages and he has spotted the unusual looking vehicle stabled in the goods siding. It is visible under the station nameboard. Evan provides the following comment.

> "The above image was, of course, taken after 1910 based on the opening year of the signal box. By that time, four-wheeled carriages had been almost completely withdrawn from passenger service and many converted to workmen's vans. The carriage in the above photograph is a four wheeled example converted to a workmen's van, based on the end panelling and roof, as there are no radial or bogie carriages matching this pattern in service at the time. The only real clues to its identity are the six vertical panels divided by vertical mouldings on the end which come up to cant rail height, and the double roof supported by simple cast iron posts. This combination is relatively rare among four-wheeled carriages, only being found on three types of cars:
>
> - 1855 and 1857 Wright & Sons 2nd class
> - 1861 Wright & Sons composite
> - 1883 Hudson Brothers 2nd class.

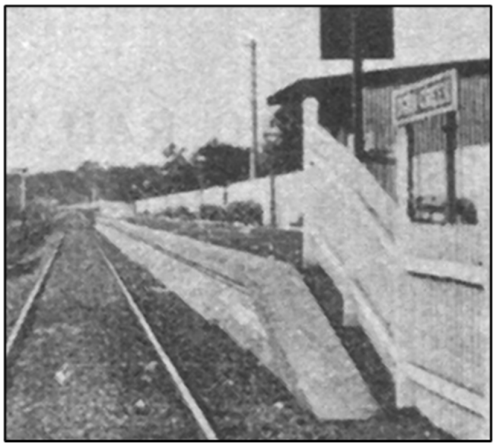
Based on how many of each type entered service as workmen's vans, I suspect it is probably an 1883 Hudson second class car. However, there is insufficient detail to rule out the other two possibilities".[30]

1910 – THE SECOND PLATFORM

For track duplication, a second platform was erected. At 425 feet in length, the new platform was over double the length of the original and later northbound platform, which was 205 feet. As well as different links, the method of construction was different. The original platform used a timber frame with timber planks for the surface. There was no wall to the platform adjacent to the track. By the time the second track was opened in 1910, the departmental policy dictated that rammed earth platforms with brick walls were to be erected for duplication works.

The brick platform wall for the new platform, constructed for track duplication, contrasted with the open timber arrangement for the original platform, which served as the northbound platform.

The title of this essay referred to the history of starvation from which the station suffered. There was no better example of the shortage of funds invested at Dora Creek than the facilities, or rather the absence of facilities, the Department provided in connection with the opening of the platform for southbound trains in for track duplication.



The only facility on the southbound platform was a waiting shed, the external walls of which seemed to have been clad with corrugated iron sheets. The was no ticket office or toilets. There was no footbridge to connect the platforms. Today, subway access is available for pedestrians but that was not the case in 1910 with passengers having to cross the tracks at grade at the southern end of the platforms. At a later, unknown time a fish shed was built on the southbound platform. Until 1958, no other buildings were erected on the southbound platform.

1910 – THE WALKWAY ON THE BRIDGE

Three days after the opening of duplication from Morisset to Dora Creek the Railway Department issued a plan on 16th December 1910 for a pedestrian walkway attached

[30] Email from Evan Rees on 18th October 2023.

to the western side of the railway bridge.[31] Most components of the walkway were timber. The stepway was three feet six inches wide and the horizonal decking was four feet wide. Galvanised netting was used for the balustrade. Railway Archives state that the walkway opened on 14th September 1911.[32] The walkway is still attached to the 1887 bridge.

Having just mentioned the financial parsimony by the New South Wales Railways in minimising facilities on the southbound platform, it is hard to understand the reason for the organisation's unnecessary expenditure on the walkway. Perhaps one of the senior staff had a holiday house on the southern side of Dora Creek?

A most unusual feature of Dora Creek was the attachment of pedestrian access to the railway bridge. Based on press reports, it would appear that members of the public regularly walked across the bridge from the time of its opening in 1887 using the vacant area for the future second track. Once track duplication occurred, that access was unavailable and the walkway was built adjacent to the Down Main line. Bill Phippin, OAM, has extensive knowledge of railway infrastructure engineering and indicates that the bridges at both Kempsey and Grafton also had walkways with that at Grafton having dual walkways. Bill explains that the Grafton example is "a bit special as it is also the road bridge, but the footpaths are beside the railway, not the road".[33] ***SOURCE:*** *Lake Macquarie Library.*

[31] Two photographs show the walkway. See M. Chamberlain, *Cooranbong 1826-1996*, Cooranbong Times, 1997, pp. 158 & 202.
[32] J. Forsyth, *Historical Notes on Main Northern Railway*, Vol 1., Second Ed., State Rail Authority, 1975, p. 42.
[33] Email from Bill Phippen, OAM, on 24 October 2023.

This is another undated photograph of the railway bridge showing the walkway. The photographer is looking roughly in an easterly direction and his camera is pointed towards the approximate location of the Station Master's house on the banks of the waterway. ***SOURCE:*** *Lake Macquarie Library*

1910-1921 – EXISTING AND PROPOSED INFRASTRUCTURE

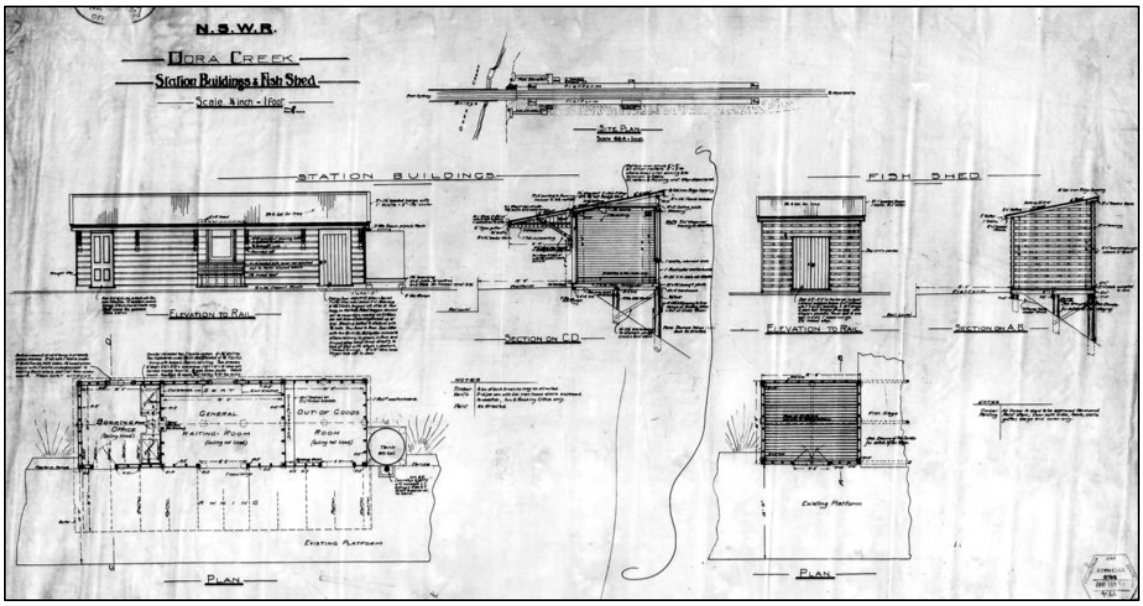
THE NORTHBOUND PLATFORM

On the original and later northbound platform, these were the buildings:

1. the 1889 waiting shed operating in 1910 as an out of shed and used for the storage of both fish and fruit as well as general merchandise
2. adjacent was the three room structure erected in 1902 containing a female waiting room and toilet, an open-fronted general waiting room and a booking office. Overall, the structure measured approximately 35 feet by 12 feet
3. the 1910 built signal box, &
4. a male toilet at the far northern end of the platform.

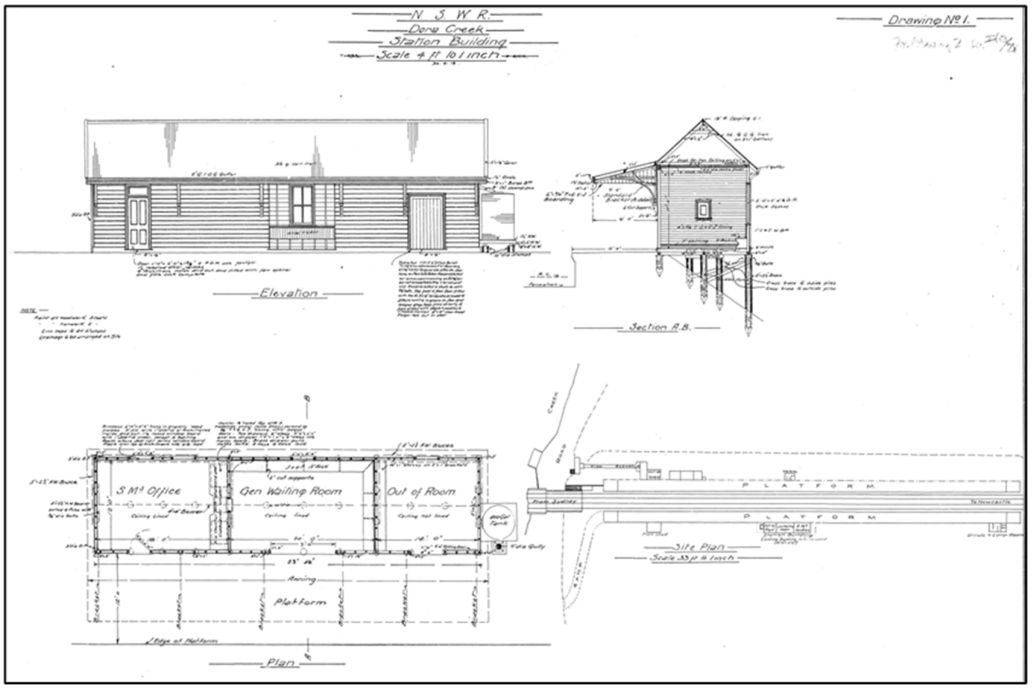
THE SOUTHBOUND PLATFORM

On 29th August 1910, the drawing office issued the plan below for a three room timber building with a skillion roof 35 feet by 12 feet internal, making it a copy of the main building on the opposite platform. There was also to be a separate "fish shed" which would be served by another fish elevator. Not one bit of the plan was constructed.



Above is the 1910 plan prepared for the construction of a building for the new southbound platform. The main building was to be a near replica of the structure on the opposite platform. The small structure was labelled the "fish shed" was to be adjacent to the fish elevator at the southern end of the platform. Nothing was constructed.

A second, more modest plan was issued on 30th April 1913. Although the main building remained the same, both the fish shed and fish elevator were abandoned. It too was not implemented. The plan below shows the 1913 proposal for the southbound platform.



By 1915, the only structure was a waiting shed with a skillion roof 13 feet by 11 feet with iron sheets on the external walls.

A public meeting was held at Dora Creek on 17th February 1917 to form a progress association. The focus was on the inadequate facilities on the southbound platform. During the discussions, some extreme criticism of the local railway station facilities occurred, and it was pointed out that Dora Creek dispatched the heaviest fish consignments of the State and a "very heavy quantity of fruit and vegetables in the season". It was alleged that no facilities to deal with the dispatch of such commodities existed. There was no shelter and, although the 1905 fish elevator existed to serve the northbound platform, it was on the wrong side of the line. The press commented that "railway needs will be one of the first items to come under the attention of the new progress association".[34]

The next month saw the Dora Creek Progress Association requesting facilities for the sale of tickets on the southbound platform.[35] The request was declined.

On 4th May 1920, the Department issued a plan for the "renewal" of the northbound platform, though the nature of the work was not expressed. The existing male toilet at the far northern end of the platform was to be "reconstructed", though the details were not stated. The plan gave the idea that there was to be a female toilet on both platforms. It appears the work did not proceed.

In a reply to a letter from the Dora Creek Progress Association dated 23rd July 1921 about the need for an additional waiting shed on the southbound platform, the Secretary for Railways wrote:

> "The matter has had inquiry and consideration by the Commissioners. In reply, I am to say that the cost of providing additional accommodation to obviate goods having to be placed into the present waiting shed would be considerable, and it is considered that the extent of the traffic would not warrant the provision of such additional accommodation at the present time, particularly in view of the financial position".[36]

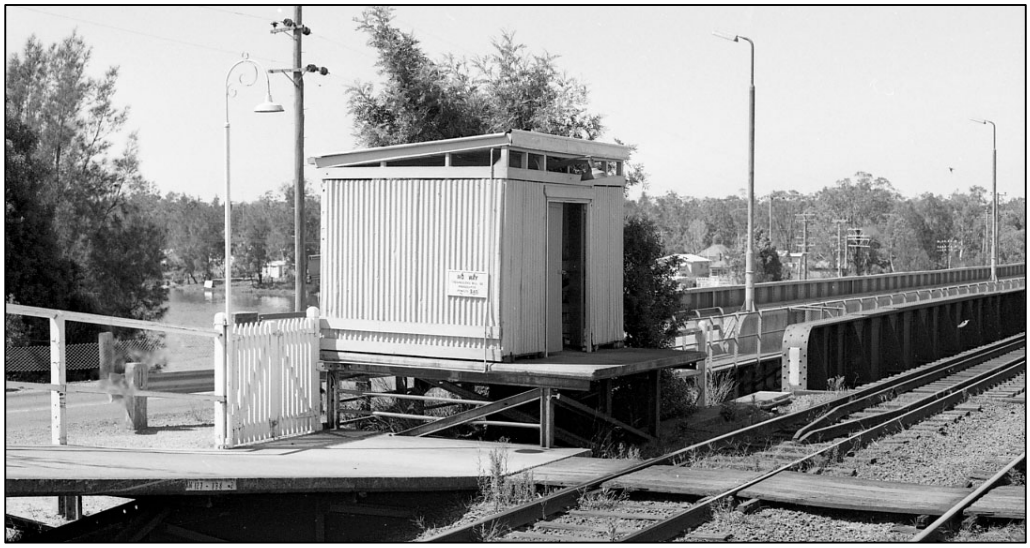
While the New South Wales Railways would not erect any further sheds on the southbound platform, two months after declining the request the Department decided in September 1921 to build a "cart stage" at the southern end of the southbound platform.[37] A "cart" in railway parlance was a stage was a road vehicle.[38] Now why

[34] *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 20th February 1917, p. 5.
[35] *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 8th March 1917, p. 3.

[36] *Gosford Times and Wyong District Advocate*, 28th July 1921, p. 13.
[37] *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 21st September 1921, p. 3.

[38] A railway vehicle was called a truck.

would the Department say “no” and, shortly thereafter, reverse its decision and say “yes”? Possibly the Department thought that, since the cart stage was not on the platform, there was no inconsistency. A fish shed was built on the stage in 1945.[39]



This is the fish shed constructed in 1945 that was positioned off the end of the southbound platform and was relocated to a similar location when the new station opened in 1957 and 1958. In the foreground is the entry gates to the southbound platform and the timber walkway across both tracks. Photograph taken on 5th February 1978.

1920-1960 – THE RAILWAY WHARF AND OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE TO SERVE SANITARIUM HEALTH FOOD COMPANY

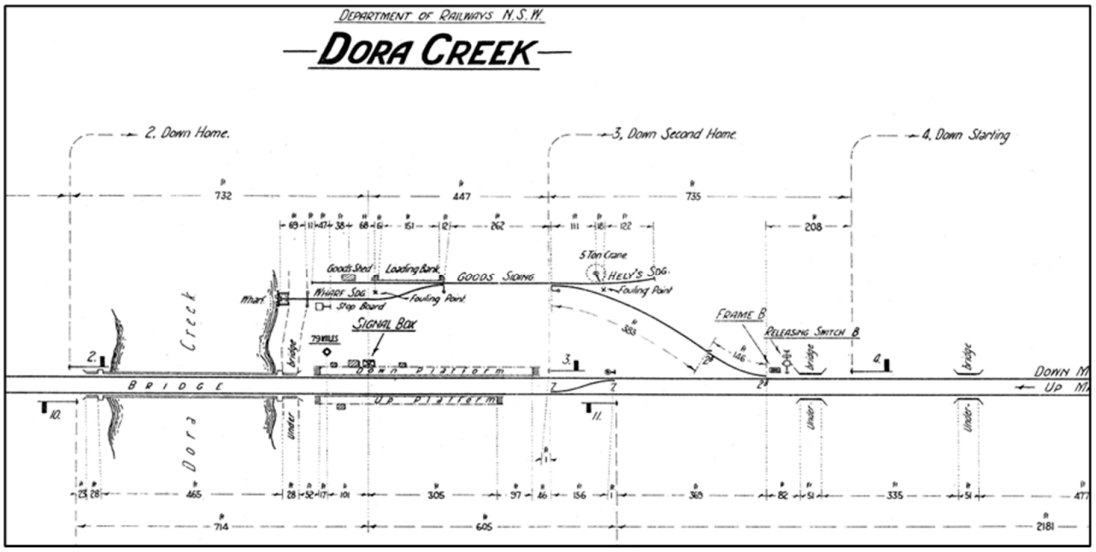
Sanitarium Health Foods commenced operating from Cooranbong in 1898 and utilised a horse and cart to take raw produce and finished products between Morisset and Cooranbong. From 1902, the company purchased a 35 feet launch and operated it along Dora Creek between Cooranbong and Dora Creek station.[40]

The company has had a history of using technology to increase efficiency and requested the New South Wales Railways to provide a siding on to the wharf serving its launch. The Railway Department issued a plan on 19th April 1921 for the Sanitarium Health Food Company to provide for an additional siding in the goods yard and to permit the extension of a siding onto the existing wharf. However, as Graham Harper mentions, the siding was operational from October 1920. The post-opening issue of the plan may have been intended solely for attachment to a formal Agreement between the Railway Department and the Sanitarium Health Food Company or the siding was constructed and a drawing prepared to reflect what was in place.

[39] *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 3rd July 1945, p. 3.
[40] https://www.sanitarium.com/au/about/sanitarium-story/history.

It was between 1920 and the late 1930s that a railway siding extended onto the wharf which protruded into Dora Creek.[41] The construction of railway tracks on a wharf for direct marine/rail interchange was most unusual and exceedingly rare. Graham Harper continues with the story.

> "A new siding was placed into use for the Sanitarium Health Food Company. It was known as the wharf siding and connected to the existing goods siding opposite the loading bank and extended across the roadway on to the wharf. There were 245 feet standing room in the new siding and could accommodate seven rail vehicles. The Company's employees were responsible for hand shunting the vehicles to and from the wharf. Engines were not allowed on the wharf".[42]



This 1935 track and signalling diagram shows the additional siding in the goods yard extending across the public road and onto the wharf in Dora Creek. The new siding was called the Wharf Siding. ***SOURCE:*** *ARHS Track and Signal Diagrams, Ver. 4.*

The Sanitarium Health Food Company had, apparently, stopped using the wharf in the late 1930s. A press report of 1939 provided details of the wharf's condition from the minutes of a recent meeting of the Lake Macquarie Shire Council. It stated:

> "Concerning the condition of the wharf near Dora Creek railway station, Mr. Webb reported that it was dilapidated. Inquiries locally disclosed that it was built in two sections, one section being erected prior to the inauguration of local government (in 1905) and the other about 1914, when the first bay was repaired. There was no evidence that the council had done any of the work. Its condition was such as not to warrant expenditure for repairs, and replacement

[41] Ibid., p. 181.
[42] Graham Harper email on 10th October 2023 based on *Weekly Notice* No. 45 of 1920.

with a new structure might be considered in conjunction with the erection of wharves and jetties around the Lake".[43]

Neil Munro photographed three car "NC4" set on 28th February 1986 undertaking a suburban service between Newcastle and Morisset. The need to slew the track away from the original alignment in a westerly direction is reflected in the curve in both the track and platform at the northern end of the station. The decks of the platforms are concrete poured in situ supported on a sub-frame of old rails. At the rear of the platforms, the latest style fencing was utilised, comprised of two rails and two strands of wire between the two rails. Unlike timber fencing in previous decades, the top rail was set in what was known as the "park style" in which the top rail was placed on each edge rather than its side. This gave a triangular appearance to the fence. As Dr Bob Taaffe comments, the rotation of the railing also helped the shedding of rain water.

Photographer of NC 4, Neil Munro indicates that these three-car Goninan built EMU sets entered service with electrification to Newcastle in 1984They were the only EMU sets with a two-letter target. He writes:

> *"The NC sets commenced daily all-stations service between Newcastle and Fassifern and return from the day of the official opening of electrification.[44]*

[43] *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 17th October 1939, p. 7.

[44] Neil adds: "The sets terminated in the Toronto Branch platform at Fassifern connecting with two-car diesel trains shuttling from there to Toronto and return. One northbound and one southbound passenger service between Newcastle and Fassifern each day was worked by a diesel train (northbound) returning early afternoon to Newcastle for service and another 'fresh' (southbound) diesel train from Newcastle to take up the shuttle to Toronto. These diesel sets passed each other near Fassifern and were the only such suburban services not worked by NC sets other than the first southbound service to commence the Toronto service early morning and the last northbound service from Toronto late at night to Newcastle. Email from Neil on 24th October 2023.

A later timetable change incorporated some selected NC set services being extended to Morisset. They ran as an all-stations sweeper service ahead of a southbound interurban service to Sydney with passengers transferring to the Sydney train at Morisset. The NC set then followed a northbound interurban from Morisset stopping at all stations to Newcastle. The faster weekday transit times thus achieved by the interurban trains north of Morisset provided a quicker turn around at Newcastle with a saving on car sets at a time when patronage was rising and double decker interurban cars were in growing demand on the South Coast, Blue Mountains and Central Coast. The three-car NC sets were later replaced by four-car single deck interurbans based at Gosford, then two-car K sets also based at Gosford. These two types operated to Newcastle between double decker interurbans from Sydney during weekday morning peaks and shuttled to Morisset during the daytime off-peak, returning to Gosford in the evening peak".[45] ***PHOTOGRAPH SOURCE:*** *Photograph No. 467600, ARHS Railway Archives.*

Cyril Singleton wrote that, at the start of 1941, that the name of the Sanitarium Health Food Company was deleted from all operational Railway records and that the name of the Wharf Siding was altered to No. 2 Goods Siding. This siding had grown by ten feet since its opening in 1920 and was *255* feet in the clear in 1941. The portion of the siding outside the railway boundary fence was demolished at that time and the gate in the boundary fence to the wharf was removed.[46]

In 1954, the No. 2 good siding that had been used by Sanitarium Health Food Co. Ltd. was extended by 80 feet. The company had stopped using Dora Creek as the transfer point and was, apparently, using road transport to Awaba station.[47]

In the early 1950s, the Sanitarium Health Food Company was going gangbusters commercially. In order to meet the demand for cereal products, it approached the Department of Railways to take a lease of what was known as Hely's siding at the extreme northern end of the yard. The Department agreed and issued a plan dated 28th September 1953 which included the construction of a loading shed 30 feet by 31 feet 6 inches. Business continued to expand and, with a plan prepared on 13th August 1954, the Company had enlarged the facility which was then 52 feet 8 inches long. The shed contained a "hopper grid" which suggests underfloor discharge. With this arrangement, Sanitarium Health Food Company could receive bulk commodities, which were trucked from Dora Creek to its plant at Cooranbong.

[45] Email from Neil on 24th October 2023.

[46] C. C. Singleton, "The Short North", Part 5 Wyong-Awaba, *Bulletin*, January 1966, p. 21.

[47] Based on information from retired, veteran train driver, Bob Gibson on 10 September 2023.

Good fortune continued to favour the Sanitarium Health Food Company which was desirous of receiving more rail hoppers each time the siding was shunted. The only problem preventing implementation of that idea was the difficulty of working the 1 in 25 gradient that connected the goods yard to the main line. To overcome that vexation, the Department issued a plan on 20th January 1959 to ease the gradient to 1 in 40. It appears that the proposal did not proceed. Nothing more is known of the fate of the unloading facility until the closure of the goods yard in 1983 and the removal of all tracks.

"V" sets passing through Dora Creek station have been a daily occurrence for nearly 40 years but, in 2023, it is soon to stop according to Sydney Trains. Neil Munro was on hand on 7th July 1984 just one month after the extension of electrification to Newcastle on 3rd June 1984. Neil is standing on the northbound platform and looking across to the southbound platform. Neil seems to recall that both platforms were lengthened to 535 feet to facilitate the unloading (northbound) and loading (southbound) of trains conveying children from Sydney attending a week at a National Fitness camp at Myuna Bay on Lake Macquarie, which he says was only fifteen minutes by buses from Dora Creek station. By the time this photograph was taken, the former green platform seats had been repainted orange. The New South Wales Government had announced in 1951 that electrification from Sydney to Newcastle would be completed by 1956.[48] Oh well, better late by 28 years than never! ***PHOTOGRAPH SOURCE:*** *Photograph No. 466920, ARHS Railway Archives.*

1925-1955 – A SMALL SCATTERING OF NEW WORKS AT THE STATION

These years were known by New South Wales station historians as the period of near-nothingness, apart from the electrification and associated works in the Sydney region in the 1920s. Also, virtually nothing was spent on existing stations in either Sydney or elsewhere in the State in the 1930s, 1940s, 1950s and for that matter the 1960s and 1970s.

[48] *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 27th July 1951, p. 1.

In 1925, the northbound platform at Dora Creek was still half the length of the up platform and the Department indicated that it would be lengthened.[49] It took the Railways Department a little time to find some money but, in 1934, the Department was ready to extend the northbound platform by 34 feet. The work was carried out in January 1935 but it was somewhat longer than 34 feet. The press reported that the extension to the northbound platform was capable of serving four more carriages. The Chief Commissioner was reported as saying:

> "For many years, long passenger trains have had to be shunted at this platform to allow people getting out and, at times, there was danger through those unaccustomed to the place getting out and jumping down the bank. On one occasion, a man, jumping out in the dark, landed in the swamp".[50]

That platform extension did not solve the problem entirely as a press report in 1939 stated that "the station is only three-quarters of the length of (a) train".[51] In 1930, the northbound platform was 205 feet long but, by 1961, it was 425 feet. So far as the southbound platform was concerned, it was 423 feet long in 1930 and 604 feet in 1961. According to John Forsyth, Retired SRA Archives Officer, states that, in 1975, both platforms were 636 feet long.[52] An eight car "V" set is 535 feet long. If so, why then in 2023, do passengers alighting at Dora Creek need to travel in the rear six carriages?

The buildings on the platforms as well as the platforms themselves were lit by electricity in 1946 but the Station Master's residence was not similarly illuminated until 1962.

[49] *The Newcastle Sun*, 19th May 1925, p. 5.
[50] *Maitland Mercury Daily*, 8th January 1935, p. 6.
[51] *Daily Telegraph*, 20th June 1939, p. 1.
[52] J. Forsyth, *Historical Notes on Main Northern Railway*, Vol 1., Second Ed., State Rail Authority, 1975, p. 43.

Locomotive 3824 rockets through Dora Creek despite facing a mile of adverse grades ending with the 1 in 129 grade approaching and through the station.[53] engine 3824 is hauling the evening southbound Newcastle Flyer on 2nd December 1967. The platforms are curved to accommodate the deviation necessary for the replacement bridge brought into service in 1957 and 1958. The "park" style fencing at the rear of the platforms shows two horizontal timber rails and two wire strands in the top half and three or four strands in the bottom half of the fence. ***SOURCE:*** *J. Allerton, Photograph No. 644589, ARHS Railway Archives.*

1946 – NO TICKET OFFICE ON SOUTHBOUND PLATFORM

The Cooranbong Progress Association requested the Railway Department in 1946 that a "ticket box" or subway be built at Dora Creek railway station to enable passengers on the southbound line to buy tickets without crossing the railway line".[54] The Dora Creek Progress Association had made the same request five years earlier in 1941 with the same result. No, was the answer twice.

As far as is known, no ticket office was provided on the southbound platform until the new buildings were erected on the track deviation in 1958.

1945-1949 – THE GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW DORA CREEK STATION, THE EASING OF GRADIENTS AND SEVEN NEW RAILWAY BRIDGES ON THE SHORT NORTH

The Government made an announcement in 1945 indicating the construction of seven replacement bridges at locations between Hornsby and Broadmeadow, but the press report stated that physical work was restricted at that time to the construction of "a new station at Gosford (including) an island platform".[55] Of course, that was rubbish. The island platform with its Back Platform Road did not open until 1959.

The residents of Dora Creek read in the regional press about the possibility of a new station in 1946, including a subway, at Dora Creek but no details were expressed in the press article.[56]

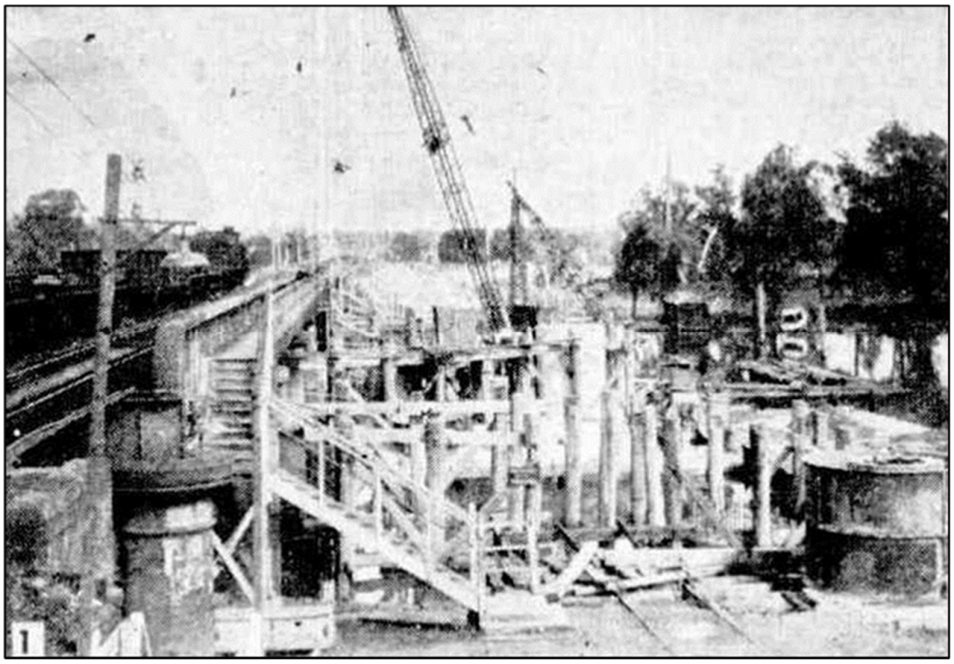
Maurice O'Sullivan, the Minister for Transport, stated in January 1947 that improvements would be undertaken to track and station facilities on the main northern railway line between Sydney and Newcastle, which included the easing of gradients between Dora Creek and Teralba. He explained that the work was not proposed "at

[53] Oral advice from Ray Love OAM on 22nd November 2023 states that the adverse gradients against southbound trains commenced about one mile from the station with grades starting with 1 in 101, then 1 in 132, 1 in 200, 1 in 660, next was a level section and ending with a grade of 1 in 129 approaching and through the station.
[54] *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 13th December 1941, p. 10 and 19th April 1946, p. 8.
[55] *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 10th October 1945 19475 p. 2.

[56] *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 15th January 1946, p. 4.

present".[57] That turned out to be another project that was never carried out in the long, long period of near-nothingness.

The Government next re-announced in 1949 the construction of seven new railway bridges between Hornsby and Newcastle "to allow the operation of heavier locomotives and faster trains on the line". The new bridges were to replace "old ones" at Woy Woy Creek, Broadwater (Gosford), Ourimbah Creek, Wyong Creek, Wallarah Creek (between Warnervale and Wyee), Dora Creek and Cockle Creek. Provisions were to be made for speeds of up to 70 m.p.h., except at Woy Way where the maximum permissible speed would be 60 m.p.h.



This is admittedly an inferior quality reproduction but it demonstrates one important aspect of the construction of the new railway bridge. The picture confirms that construction of the replacement facility commenced in 1950. As an item of interest, the photograph shows a southbound goods train on the original bridge. Workmen are driving the cylinders for the bridge foundations. ***SOURCE****: Newcastle Sun, 19th August 1950, p. 10.*

The longest bridge of the seven was to be located over Dora Creek, which would have six 80 feet steel spans on concrete piers and abutments on 10 feet diameter reinforced concrete cylinders founded 70 feet below water level.

The press report in 1950 stated that a deviation would necessitate the construction of new platforms and station buildings at Dora Creek Station as well as a new station at

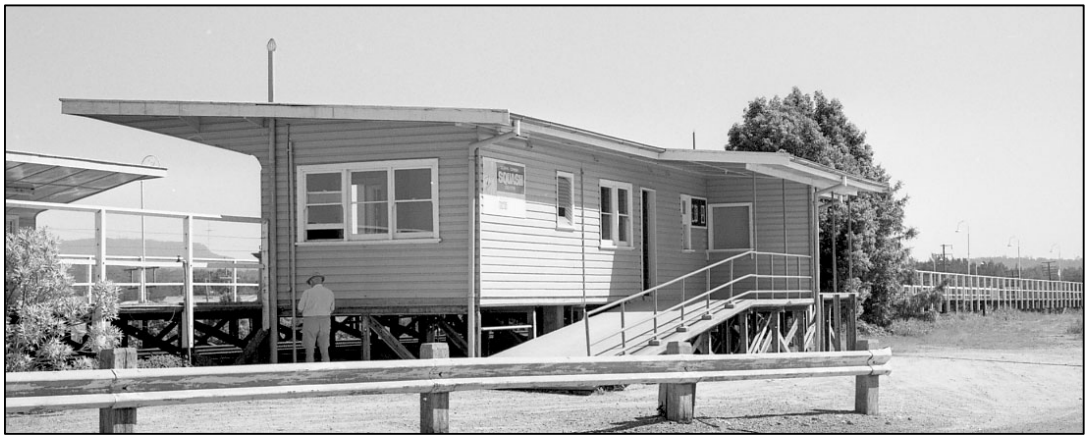
[57] *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 18th January 1947, p. 4.

Cockle Creek.[58] Another government announcement was made in 1951 stating that a survey was under way to investigate a possible new railway line between Dora Creek and Minimbah or Allandale. The objective was to provide a flood-free route than would avoid the swampy and flood prone areas around Maitland and Hexham.[59] No need to say anything more about that proposal.

1954-58 - THE IMPACT OF TRACK STRENGHTENING ON STATIONS ON THE SHORT NORTH LINE

1. THE REASON FOR THE ERECTION OF NEW PLATFORM BUILDINGS IN THE 1950s?

The major station design project of 1954 involved the replacement of the existing platforms and associated structures at Dora Creek. The then Chief Civil Engineer, Norm Vogan, approved on 11th June 1954 two replacement buildings for the station. Like the buildings at Cockle Creek, the Department had no choice but to rebuild the Dora Creek station. Replacements were necessary because the Department was constructing a new bridge over Dora Creek to accommodate the operation of 57 and 58 class locomotives which did not align with the existing platforms.[60] Work commenced on the Dora Creek bridge in 1950.[61] However, there was a shortage of steel manufactured in Australia and that shortage delayed construction of the new bridges.



The 1954-approved buildings had a resemblance to holiday cottages along the coastline more so than to any architectural form. This photograph from 1978 shows the author's technical assistant namely his Father, helping to record dimensions of the building. He is pictured

[58] *Newcastle Sun*, 4th February 1949, p. 3.
[59] *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, 27th July 1951, p. 1 and *The Inter-High Schools Association of Railway Clubs*, Vol. 6 No. 6., 7th March 1958, no pag.

[60] A photograph showing the former and new track levels appears in *Bulletin*, January 1966, p. 21.
[61] *Newcastle Sun*, 19th August 1950, p. 10.

measuring the vertical distance between the building's bottom wall plate and the top surface of the platform. The three windows at the end of the building identify the ladies' waiting room. The closest (small) window in the rear of the building is the location of the female toilet. The traditional, small ticket window is faintly visible just past the single door giving entry to the waiting room and platform. At the top of the 1 in 10 ramp is the officially named "parcels delivery hatch", which was covered with a roller shutter.

Civil engineer and one time railway employee with a special interest in bridges, Dr Don Fraser, outlined the problems in the post-World War 2 period. He has written:

> "Post-War reconstruction generally was greatly hampered by shortages of steel. It severely restricted the bridge renewal programme which had already been curtailed during the 1930s by the economic depression and postponed by World War 2 and the demands of the new Hawkesbury River railway bridge. Many projects were again deferred……. By 1955, the supply of steel had begun to improve and there was an urgent need to remedy the 20 years of imposed inadequate attention to railway under bridges. ….. A series of (the) large-span double-track through girders were designed in 1947 to replace the understrength 1884 wrought iron bridges on the Main North but their constructions were delayed ten years or more (with) Woy Woy, Wyong and Dora Creek (1958), Gosford (1959) and Ourimbah (1965)".[62]

The above photograph, taken on 5th February 1978, shows the 1954-approved structure on the northbound platform. It had taken 100 years for the New South Wales Railways to remove the dominance of British design on station architecture with its emphasis on restrictions on the size and number of windows on the platform elevation and elsewhere. Note the departure from

[62] D. Fraser, *Bridges Down Under*, Redfern, ARHS, 1995, p. 125.

British influences seen in the airy presentation of the general waiting room (closest to the camera) with its relatively large windows on three sides of the building. Entry to the internal space was by a set of two hinged doors totalling four feet six inches wide. Next was the single door leading to the booking office and, at the far end, a sliding door again four feet six inches wide for the out of room. At the extreme righthand side of the photo is the goods shed.

2. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NEW PLATFORM BUILDINGS

The significance of the reconstruction of the two stations in the 1950s was reflected by the fact that the rebuilt structures at Cockle Creek and Dora Creek represented the first instances of stations being rebuilt in regional areas for over 10 years, apart from some instances caused by fire damage, such as Blandford. The use of open-framed platform fronts formed by old railway tracks, the timber framing and cladding for the two new buildings and the use of the single-pitched roofs all identified the Dora Creek buildings as an exercise in providing the cheapest possible station accommodation.

Together with the new buildings at Cockle Creek, the Dora Creek buildings represented the first time in 40 years that an existing platform building had been replaced, apart from instances of destruction by fire. It is significant that, by the time Norm Vogan approved the replacement timber buildings at Dora Creek in 1954, no brick buildings had been erected anywhere in New South Wales between 1948 and 1954 and only three structures were built in brick or stone after 1954 up to 1960.

Another restrictive element of British railway station building design was the avoidance of interconnecting doorways between rooms. The breakaway from British practice was also seen in the design of the 1954-approved Dora Creek structure in the structure on the southbound platform. There, the room layout provided for internal connecting doors between the booking office, the parcels office and the office store and this internal interconnectedness allowed for the operation of the building by one staff member. Looking south, the rooms from the left were the male toilet with three smaller windows, the store (with two larger windows), the parcels

office, the booking office (three windows and with entry through the parcels office), the general waiting room (two windows) and, lastly, the female toilet closet and waiting room with the single window the far end. One aspect of British station design that did endure was the location of toilets. British practice dictated that male and female toilets should be physically separated as far away from each other as was possible. That overseas edict was displayed at Dora Creek with the male toilet at one end and the female toilet at the other end of the structure. The 1945 built fish shed is visible on its own platform just before the rail bridge.

The Dora Creek buildings were significant in the history of NSW station buildings because they were the:

- the last timber building over 35 feet in length and the second-last timber buildings over 12 feet long to be erected on the system,
- Largest buildings at the time since 1855 to have a skillion roof,
- Widest awning of all buildings with skillion roofs,
- First buildings with skillion roofs to have soffits,
- First buildings since 1916 of more than one room to have skillion roofs,
- First buildings within the Newcastle-Sydney-Wollongong to have no heating for the public, &
- First buildings to have ceiling height windows [on the platform side only]

3. 1954 – THE START OF PHYSICAL WORK ON THE NEW BRIDGE AND STATION

In 1954, the only physical work at Dora Creek station was the near-completion of the new northbound platform and the concrete floor of the structure on that platform. Work was suspended in November 1954 and did not resume in 1955. No work had started on the erection of the steelwork for the new bridge, though the components were ready at the Chullora workshop.

Colour slide film was very expensive in the 1960s and 1970s and the author's usual technique at the time was to take one coloured picture at each station showing all buildings, if possible. In this February 1978 photograph, the buildings are in their original pastel green colour together with white paint work for joinery and other detailed elements. Pastel colours were widely used in the 1950s, especially on smaller structures while white paint was the preferred colour for more important structures. The platform seats were painted in their traditional colour of dark green with gold/yellow lettering. Note that the old rail substructure for the platforms does not have the circular concrete bases, which were applied in the 2000s.

4. STATION DESIGN FEATURES

The dominant design feature was the use of large, single-pitched roofs on each of the matching buildings on the platforms. The roofs sloped to the rear, which was a design used very rarely since 1889. While the roofs were utilitarian and cheap, they looked decidedly unattractive from the rear. However, the installation of soffits for the platform awnings was an elegant feature and directed some attention away from the less-than-satisfactory design outcome, such as the vistas from the roadsides of each building. They were relatively large for New South Wales buildings. One building was 80 feet by 12 feet 8 inches external (on the southbound platform) and the other was 41 feet 2 inches by 12 feet 8 inches external (on the northbound platform). A standard five stall concrete urinal was installed on the southbound platform.

Other building details were:

- external walls covered with six inch wide softwood weatherboards, bevelled, chamfered and checked all round
- old rails used as the sub-structures to support the buildings,
- bullnose profile skirting and architraves above and below doors,
- 11 feet 6 inch wide cantilevered awnings extended from roof rafters over platform with a two feet overhang at the rear,
- no. 24 gauge galvanised iron on roof (No. 26 gauge was the usual thickness),
- Masonite dado to a height of four feet with asbestos cement sheeting above on internal walls,
- asbestos cement sheeting for ceilings,
- 3/16 inch thick asbestos cement sheets to form soffits under platform awnings,
- eight feet wide concrete ramp (with a gradient of 1 in 10) from street to ticket office window, waiting room and parcels office,
- room designations on southbound platform from the southern end were 'ladies' with toilet, 'waiting room', booking office, parcels office, store & 'men' with a lamp store inside the male toilet,
- hand washbasins in both male and female toilets (rare installation in male toilet),
- room designations on northbound platform from the southern end were waiting room, booking office & out of room,
- porched entry to ladies' toilet from platform,

- double-hung single pane window sashes
- no chimneys and no heating for public – electric radiator, fan and kettle in booking office only,
- ticket office window facing onto the access ramp on southbound platform, not into waiting room but, on the northbound platform the ticket window faced the conventional direction into the waiting room,
- parcels counter facing onto access ramp on southbound platform secured by a roller shutter,
- 'cart dock' outside parcels office, &
- ceiling height nine feet.

This photograph of the northern end of the building on the southbound platform shows the modernisation of the design philosophy relating to toilets. While British practice dictated them to be dark and miserable places, the New South Wales Railway architects had made an earnest effort to make them more acceptable, particularly since in the 1950s staff used the same toilets as the travelling public. On the right-hand side of the doorway are the two windows for the station store. The blinds are pulled down to prevent busybodies from peering into the goodies inside. Unfortunately, while the architects had attempted to make internal spaces light and bright, the position of such relatively large and accessible windows made it easy for reprehensible and offensive people to break into stores, parcels offices etc. It did not take many years for the Traffic Branch to insist on the location of windows at ceiling level to prevent unauthorised entry. Note that, in the 1950s, the use of room tablets (i.e., small signs indicating room functions) had disappeared. Note also the need to step into the building from the platform level. As Dr. Bob Taaffe points out, the elevation of the building floor level stopped water entering the rooms when the platform was hosed.[63] The application of soffits under the platform awnings was a touch of elegance, although it appears that there was some trouble

[63] Email from Dr. Bob Taaffe on 4th November 2023.

with the roof structure at the time. Dora Creek was one of the first new stations to feature fluorescent lighting.

Railway historian, C. C. Singleton, described the Dora Creek buildings as such:

> "The new fibro-cement station buildings were of pleasing design and convenient approaches were arranged, both from ground level or the new elevated roadway, which used the old bridge when vacated by the railway".[64]

Singleton was amiss when he maintained that the structures were of asbestos cement construction. Only the soffits and internal linings utilised that material.

By the time it is necessary to design the building for Dora Creek, the Inter War Functionalist style was no longer used by the New South Wales Department of Railways. Possibly, the decision not to apply the Inter War Functionalist style was Norm Vogan's decision or, more likely, the decision could have originated with his architects. Vogan was a track engineer and not trained and skilled in design. His major interest was in achieving the lowest possible expenditure for buildings. The Department had adopted a much stronger policy against expending funds on station buildings because it considered them to be a poor investment. Hence, the Dora Creek structures were designed to a simpler, cheaper utilitarian design and of timber construction without any architectural family associations.

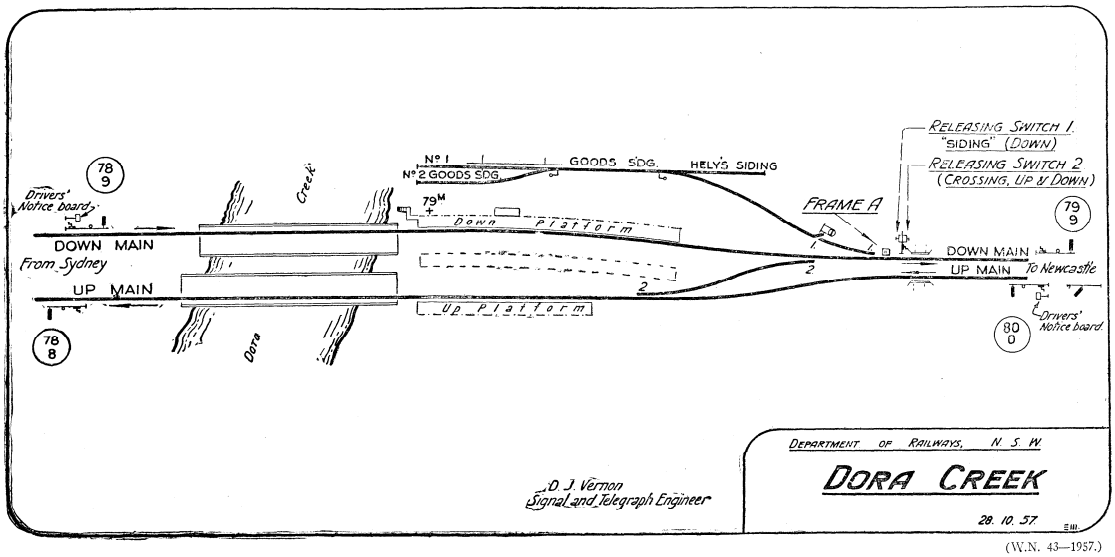
The only other larger examples of the single-pitched roof were those at Leightonfield (1941), Dora Creek (1954), Cochrane (1956), Broken Hill (1955), Lapstone (1961) and at Loftus (1963). Was the style applied to Cockle Creek the dominant architectural form for stations in the 1950s? That's a hard question to answer as so few stations were rebuilt in that period, but the use of single-pitched roofs won the contest with competing architectural styles by default as there was no other design contender.[65] Thus, the roof form as used at Dora Creek was consistent railway practice, though it harked back to olden days.

5. CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW PLATFORM BUILDINGS

In 1954, the only physical work at Dora Creek was the near-completion of the new northbound platform and the concrete floor of the structure on that platform. Work was suspended in November 1954 and did not resume in 1955. This situation was similar to other works projects such as cockle Creek, Circular Quay and Granville. An undefined amendment to the building plan was made in October 1957 to please the Chief Traffic Manager, this latter comment is stated on the plan. There was a ramp with a gradient of 1 in 10 on the southbound platform to provide easier access to the

[64] C. C. Singleton, "The Short North No. 6 Awaba to Hamilton", *Bulletin*, February 1966, p. 27.
[65] The one caveat was the completion of the platform buildings at Clyde and Granville in 1960 which accorded to the Inter War Functionalist style, which had been both approved a bit earlier in 1949.

parcels office by the elimination of steps for trolleys. In accordance with the traditional NSW practice of stepping up into a building, the floor of the ramp terminated four inches below the floor of the building. The grunt necessary to pull trolleys from the ramp into the building was a way of telling the customer that he or she was entering a NSW Railway building.



This track and signalling diagram in 1957 show the Down Main line slewed across to the new railway bridge and new Down platform while the Up Main continued to use the original alignment. The Down Main served was aligned to the new platform and the Up Main remained in its 1887 alignment. The total length of the deviation to serve the new bridge was 4,163 feet but, compared against the 1887 alignment, as deviated in 1902, the total additional distance was 20 feet.[66] *Dr. Bob Taaffe adds that the diagram shows the signals on the non-deviated Up Main as being upper quadrants, which means they replaced the older mechanical signals. Bob asks whether this was to allow the signal box and signalmen to be removed and so save wages? The up signals would need to have been replaced when the second track was slewed. At least some of the equipment would have been recovered for use elsewhere.*[67]

The Dora Creek bridge came into partial use in 1957, as did new automatic signalling on the new alignment. Also, the Cockle Creek buildings did not start to enter in service until 1957, together with the new bridge at that station.[68] Despite the Short North line being very busy, pedestrian access between the platforms was at grade with a timber plank crossing, though subsequently a subway was built adjacent to the waterway as part of the deviation works. An out of shed in which fish were held was removed from

[66] J. Forsyth, *Historical Notes on Main Northern Railway*, Vol 1., Second Ed., State Rail Authority, 1975, p. 42.
[67] Email from Dr. Bob Taaffe on 4th November 2023.
[68] Photograph No. 101667, ARHS Archives, taken on 26th October 1957, shows a train using the old bridge. On 28th October 1957, the Down Main was diverted to use the new bridge, but the Up Main continued to use the old bridge until 6th May 1958.

the old station and re-erected at the southern end of the southbound platform. The new bridge and new station were brought into use on 6th May 1958.

Railway historian, Peter Attenborough, has written extensively on the Short North and in *Byways 20* provides general information as well as photographs of the goods yard.[69]

1959 – THE INSTALLATION OF A SEPTIC TANK

When the new platforms opened in 1957 and 1958, the night soil system was still retained and the contents were removed from the platforms in the traditional, take-away black containers. The Department decided to install a septic system and issued a plan on 26th March 1959 including calculations to estimate the size of the tank. Railway officers worked out that an average of 60 people, including both staff and waiting passengers, would use the toilets each day. By providing a tank of 600 gallons capacity, the facility had in reserve 170 gallons for "future expansion". The tank remains at the station and is located just north of the existing waiting shed on the southbound platform. It is identified by its concrete lid at surface level.

On the 7th March 1999, both waiting sheds featured the hallmark colours of the early days of CityRail – red and white. Station names were expressed on the back of platform seats under which a coloured interval was added using the colour that CityRail had allocated to each line. The colour of the northern line was red and it appears on the station seat.

1995-1999 – THE IMPACT OF CITYRAIL

CityRail had been established by the New South Wales Government in 1989 to operate suburban and interurban passenger services. About a dozen Line General Managers were appointed with one stationed in Newcastle. The occupant of the position was highly active in implementing his instructions to eliminate as many

[69] P. Attenborough, "The Short North – Wyong to Fassifern, *Byways 20*, Matraville, Eveleigh Press, 2002, pp. 31 & 32.

platform buildings as possible and remove all unsightly structures. Any platform vegetation was also purged. It was in the 1990s that standard designs of waiting sheds were developed for use at all minor stations, including Dora Creek. Platform buildings at the station were extant in 1996 but removed by 1999. The rear of both platforms featured white painted steel loop fencing, which was a feature widely utilised through the CityRail network.

A plan was also issued for commuter car park on southbound side holding 35 vehicles. The car park was ready the use by May 1996. As part of the project, the former concrete ramp eight feet wide that served the rear of the building on the southbound platform was demolished. However, the existing substructure at least on that platform was utilised for the construction of the new CityRail waiting shed, though another three inch thick slab of concrete was added to the existing surface.

The photographer is standing in the goods yard approximately in the location of the goods siding. This 1999 photograph shows the rear of the waiting shed on the northbound platform. Interestingly, the circular concrete bases around the sub-frame elements have not been provided.

2000 – INSTALLATION OF CCTV.

Multiple cameras were installed on the platform as they were at virtually every other station on the CityRail network at that time.

2013 – SYDNEY TRAINS

Sydney Trains was formed in 2013 and has managed to leave its mark at Dora Creek. The red seats have been replaced with brown ones with a finish of fake timber. The red rubbish bins are now gone and not replaced. The white metal screens on the waiting sheds are now black. The red and white station nameboards have been changed to the new corporate orange and white. The ugliest addition of the current

owner is the circular blobs surrounding the bases of all the old rails forming the platform sub-structures.

2023 – THE ARCHAEOLOGY

In 2023, little remains to tell the story of a simple station, starved most of the time of money but with touches of the unusual.

Above are engineers, Bill Laidlaw and John Watsford, examining on 2nd August 2023 one of the fixtures holding the 1990s waiting shed to the 1950s concrete slab. The transparency of the facility was a hallmark feature of CityRail station design policy to ensure that there were no hidi-holes for misbehaving anthropoids intending to carry out roguery and wrongdoing.

Three veteran members of the Australian Railway Historical Society combine their knowledge on 2nd August 2023 to identify extant infrastructure. On the left, Bob Gibson is pointing to the southbound platform substructure formed of old rails set in concrete. The circular concrete foundations were not a part of the 1954 platform plans and appear to have been built after CityRail "upgraded" the station in the mid-1990s. probably post-2000. On the right, John Watsford shows the new concrete slab for the waiting shelter which was placed on top of the 1950s slab for the now demolished platform building. Although partly obscured, Bill Laidlaw is standing near the concrete lid of the six hundred gallon septic tank installed in 1959.

These two images show the waiting sheds on the platforms in 2023. The picture on the left is of the southbound platform while that on the right shows both platforms as the image taker looks south. The CityRail white pool-top fencing adorns the rear of both platforms.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Because of the station's role in the movement of goods between river and rail and its five unusual features, Dora Creek was a rare station.

At virtually every time in the history of Dora Creek station up to 1989, the facility has been starved of funding. After 1989, the demolition of the existing platform buildings was not related to any financial shortcoming but to the CityRail policies that dictated minimal buildings on platforms, elimination of public toilets and the use of machinery to issue tickets and supervise station operations rather than people.

Oddly, the shortage of money spent on the station buildings was balanced by other initiatives, including the willingness to open the station in 1889, the preparedness to open a goods siding in 1900 despite the adverse gradient, the fish elevator in 1905, the walkway on the bridge in 1911 for the general public. the extension of the goods siding on to the wharf to facilitate the interchange of goods in 1920 and the transfer of the 1887 bridge to the then Department of Main Roads.[70] It is odd that all these nice things were not related to the platform facilities but to help other groups of people. The staff and the passengers largely, but not entirely, missed out.

[70] Suters-Doring-Turner, *City of Lake Macquarie Heritage Study*, 1992-93, Item DC-01, no pag.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to Bob Gibson, Graham Harper, Bill Laidlaw, Ray Love OAM, Neil Munro, Bill Phippen OAM, Evan Rees, Dr. Bob Taaffe, Ed Tonks OAM and John Watsford. Thanks also for the personal service from Donna Newtown, the Librarian at the Royal Australian Historical Society, the staff at the Mitchell Library and Craig Mackey, Archives Supervisor and the volunteers at the Australian Railway Historical Society. Craig is outstandingly helpful and his ongoing capacity to assist enquirers makes easy and fruitful the task of research.

It's time to go. See you at another station on another journey.

Stuart Sharp

5th November 2023

APPENDIX

DO THE DESIGNS OF OTHER BUILDINGS ERECTED ELSEWHERE IN 1889 HELP TO CONFIRM THE DATE AND STYLE OF THE 1889 DORA CREEK INFRASTRUCTURE?

NEXT BIT

Two designs were in use in 1889.

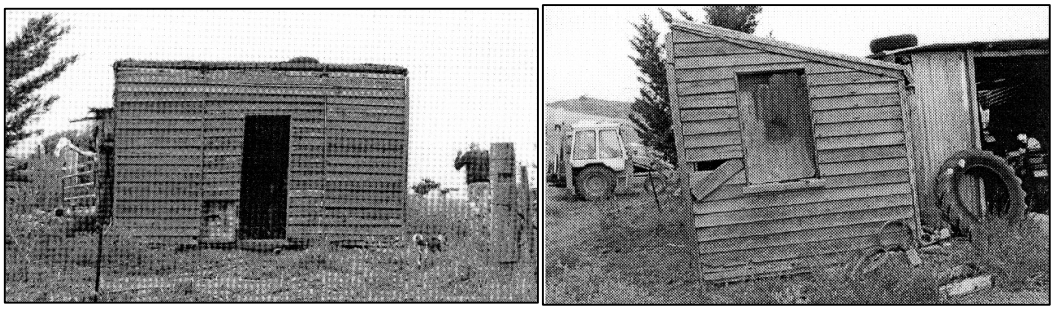
THE FIRST DESIGN – THE SINGLE PITCHED ROOF

IMPLEMENTATION

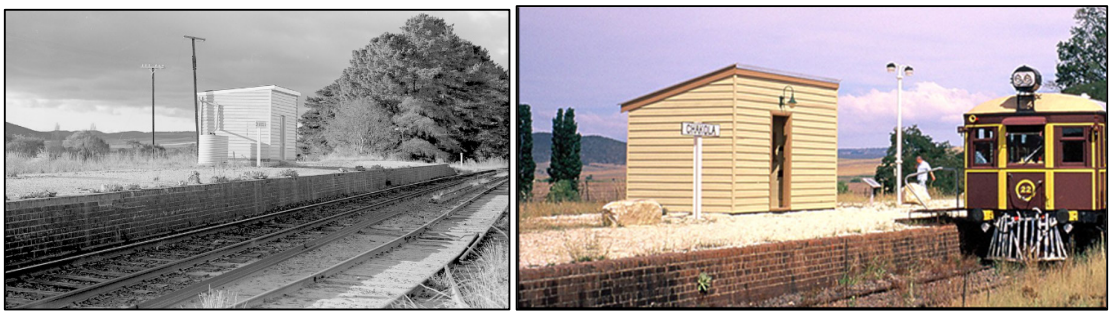
This design was used for one or two room waiting sheds. The design was applied both by John Whitton's Railway Construction Branch in the Department of Public Works and George Cowdery's Existing Lines Branch in the Railway Department. Two examples follow.

1. CHAKOLA

The two photographs immediately below show pictures of the building that existed in 1889 when the line was extended from Michelago to Cooma. The structure was removed during the 1950s to a nearby rural property. Archaeological research has confirmed the design of the timber structure, which contained two rooms – a general waiting room and a ticket office.



These two photographs above show the 1889 Chakola building located on a nearby farm. They show that the original open-fronted area of the general waiting room had been enclosed with a door across the opening. ***SOURCE****: Victoria Design & Management Pty. Ltd., Chakola Railway Precinct, 2000, no. pag.*



The foregoing photograph of Chakola on the left was taken on 4th June 1975 and shows the remaining section of the 1959 replacement building. When erected, it was thought to be a larger structure and this is perhaps reflected in the flimsy arrangement for the location of the

rainwater downpipe and tank. Nevertheless, the 1889 overall design intention was replicated. The 1889 brick platform wall survives. The picture on the right shows the reconstruction of a replica 1889 building at Chakola. It was funded by the State Rail Authority in order to help the viability of operations of the railway conservation group operating out of Cooma station. ***SOURCE:*** *John Oakes collection captured on 1st May 2010.*

2. MALDON

The photograph below of Maldon well demonstrates the transition associated with the arrival of Chief Commissioner Eddy. The original single line became the Down Main and the waiting shed on the platform was constructed at the time of station opening in 1889. It featured the pitch of the roof sloping away from the tracks, in accordance with the practice up until 1889. Upon duplication in 1892, a second platform was constructed for the Up Main and on it was a waiting shed with the pitch of the roof reversed. This accorded to Eddy's policy of enabling the provision of a narrow platform awning facilitated by an extension of the roof rafters. That design continued in use extensively until about 1915 but was occasionally used up to 1960.

The photographer is looking north and the level crossing at the northern end of the platforms continues to exist. This excellent photograph of the two styles of waiting shed highlights the genius of Eddy in which a minor design alteration produced a very economical five feet wide platform awning. ***SOURCE:*** *photograph No.001435 ARHS Railway Archives.*

THE SECON DESIGN – THE DOUBLE PITCHED ROOF

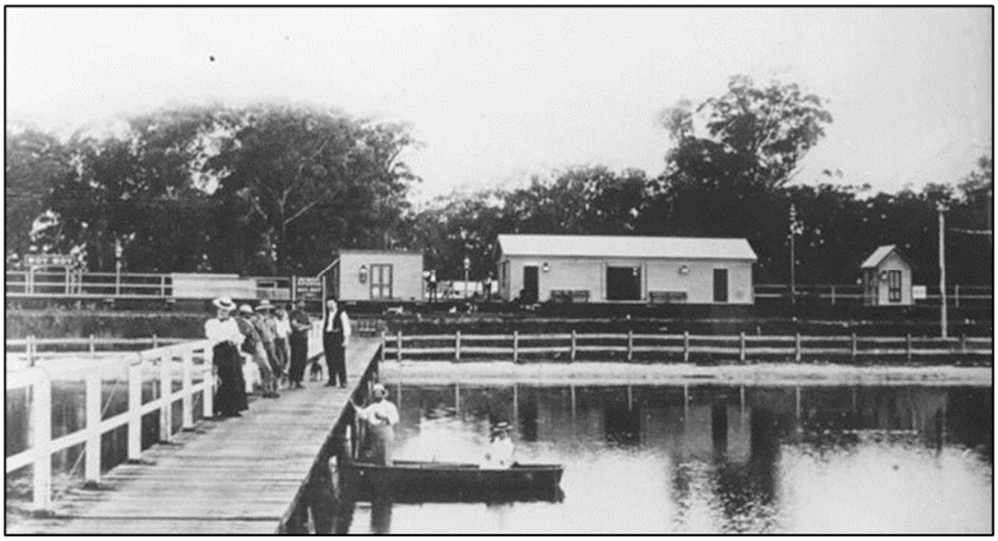
There was a bit of variation in the design of larger buildings erected in 1889. However, all possessed gabled roofs. In some instances, narrow platform awnings were provided by the application of small cast-iron brackets, which was another innovation of the early Eddy period. For example, at Broadmeadow, Eddy's new appointee for

the position of Engineer for Existing Lines, James Angus, approved in 1889 a 60 foot long timber building with a gabled roof in connection with track duplication. That building had a five feet wide awning supported by small brackets. At other locations in 1889, including Wingello, platform awnings were supported by the traditional use of vertical posts. Elsewhere, no awning was erected over the platform. Two examples follow to show the variety of the style of double pitched buildings.

1. LILYVALE

The photograph of Lilyvale, which was opened in 1889, demonstrates the transition of designs from one regime to the next. John Whitton's support for timber finials at the ends of gabled roofs was provided at the same time as Eddy's desire to be simultaneously economical and innovative resulted in the expression of a narrow platform awning supported by small brackets.
SOURCE: *Photograph No.034418 ARHS Railway Archives.*

2. WOY WOY



The above photograph shows the first building at Woy Woy station in the form of a three room, timber structure. The structure was approved and built in 1889 at the start of the 1890s Depression and its functional orientation with zero architectural embellishment, including the absence of a platform awning, tells the story of a shortage of money. The small structure on the left-hand side shows the pitch of the roof sloping to the rear. It possibly provided temporary residential accommodation for the station officer, keeping in mind that official residential housing was not approved for Woy Woy until 1896. ***SOURCE:*** *C. Swancott, Good Old Woy Woy, Brisbane Water Historical Society, 2010, p. 82.*

CONCLUSION OF THE PHOTOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS – WAS THE PRIMITIVE DESIGN USED ON THE DORA CREEK PLATFORM CONSISTENT WITH OR OTHERWISE WITH STRUCTURES ERECTED ELSEWHERE IN 1889?

Yes. In essence, the building at Dora Creek with its roof pitch sloping to the rear was consistent with structures built elsewhere in the same year. Money was very tight for the Railways Department and the primitive nature of facilities at Dora Creek was consistent with similar station openings elsewhere on the railway system. Dora Creek was lucky to get a building as waiting sheds were not always provided with the construction of a platform. For instance, there was no building on the second platform at Gosford when it was built in 1889. At other locations, such as at Irondale on the Mudgee branch and Myall Mundi on the Inverell branch did not even have a platform. They received only a small nameboard attached to a post made of a piece of old rail. The design of the building at Dora Creek was consistent with other stations and this adds considerable weight to the contention that a small building with the pitch sloping to the rear was erected in 1889 in conjunction with the construction of the platform.

Stuart Sharp

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