ARHS Melbourne Luncheon Outing Group,
Birregurra Historic Railway Station & Country BBQ Lunch

10:13 am   Depart Southern Cross on Warrnambool Train.

12:10 pm   Arrive Birregurra and walk to Station Building for BBQ Lunch and talk by Michael Menzies on the History of Birregurra & the Line.

1:54 pm   Depart Birregurra on the Up Southern Cross Service.

3:55 pm   Arrive Southern Cross Station.

Tour ends here.

If you are leaving the Tour before Southern Cross arrival, please let Geoff or John know.

If you need to contact John or Geoff on the day of travel only, John 0418 384 718 or Geoff 0412 056 033.

Birregurra was once the junction of the line towards Forrest. The junction was located at the Geelong end of the yard, and faced Colac. Today all sidings have been removed, with the original station building remaining alongside the main line, as well as a iron water tower behind the building.

Early years

In 1870 the Western Railway Extension League requested to support of the Winchelsea Shire Council for the construction of a railway to Hamilton via Colac. By 1874 the railway was being planned and the sitting of Winchelsea and Birregurra stations begun. The line opened to Winchelsea in 1876, and the extension to Birregurra was opened on November 1, 1877. The line was extended to Colac opening later the same year.

Polychrome brickwork was used to construct the station building, which was of similar design to that at Winchelsea. The original station building was extended at an unknown date, with an enlarged station office provided at the up end, along with an entrance porch. Timber extensions were also added behind the station to provided a larger residence.

The goods shed was of corrugated iron with a curved roof, and was accompanied by a four-tonne gantry crane, and a stockyard at the Colac end. A 20,000 gallon overhead water tank was located beside the station building, and remains in place today.

Construction of the branch line to Forrest begun in 1889 and was completed at a cost of 96,000 pounds. It was opened to Deans Marsh on December 19, 1889 and to Forrest on June 5, 1891. The line was used by tourists bound for the coastal resorts of Lorne and Apollo Bay.

Alterations

In 1916 a new 53 foot turntable was provided, along with a new turntable road that led off the carriage dock. A few months later new signals and interlocking were provided. It was about this time that the wooden signal box was provided at the up end of the platform. Large Electric Staff to Armytage and Irrewarra was replaced by the miniature version in September 1928.

The 1929 track chart of the line showed the platform on the southern (down) side of the line, opposite a four road yard and goods platform. At the up end of the platform leading off the turntable area was a carriage dock platform.

Number two and four roads had dead end extensions to the down end, with number four road also having a dead end extension at the up end. A 53 foot turntable was located beside the station building, and a scissors (delta) crossover lead from the main line and number two road to the Geelong and Forrest lines.

Rationalisation

The delta crossing was simplified in 1941 and replaced in single crossover. In 1947 the compound between the main line and the down end of number 2 road was abolished, with dead end siding 'A' renumbered road 2B and connected to the main line at the down end.

The Forrest line was closed on March 2, 1957. In December 1961 the turnout to the Forrest line was removed, the dock and turntable sidings also abolished, along with a number of signals. When number two road was extended to 2100 feet (around 700 metres) in 1968, the signal box at the station was closed and later removed, a signal bay being added to the front of the station to replace it.

By the 1970s freight traffic to the station died off, with few reports of wagons being sighted in the yard. The gantry crane was taken out of use in 1977, but both it and the goods shed were still standing four years later. The station staff was withdrawn in November 1978 due to declining patronage, but passenger trains continued to stop at the station. Freight traffic was sent via road to Colac.

The Lonie Report of 1980 recommended the Geelong - Warrnambool service be closed, which was not undertaken, but it was proposed for Birregurra to lose a number of rail services when moves were made to speed up the service. A local community group successfully put pressure on VicRail to maintain the services.

By this time the yard consisted of the main line along with number 2 and 4 roads, the other sidings being removed. A van goods shed was still located at the up end of the platform, along with a lamp room at the down end (located in the former ladies toilets). The original lamp room and toilets at the down end of the station had been removed some time earlier, the picket fence along the platform being removed in the early 1980s.

Birregurra Town History

Birregurra, is a town in Colac Otway Shire, Victoria, Australia, approximately 130 kilometres (81 mi) south-west of Melbourne. At the 2016 census, it had a population of 828.

In 1839, Wesleyan missionaries and the Victorian colonial government established the Buntingdale Aboriginal Mission in the area - Victoria's first Aboriginal mission.

A post office opened in the area on 1 October 1858 and was renamed Mount Gellibrand in 1894, a few days before another nearby office was opened as Birregurra.

The railway through the town opened in 1877, as part of the line to the south-west of the state. A branch line to Forrest, which opened in 1891 and closed in 1957, junctioned with the main line at Birregurra. The local railway station is served by VLine passenger services on the Warrnambool line.

Birregurra has an Australian Rules football team competing in the Colac & District Football League.

Golfers play at the Birregurra Golf Club on Hopkins Street.

Birregurra is home to the Brae restaurant, which was number 44 in The World's 50 Best Restaurants in 2017.

The town has a primary school which had 92 students as of 2023, and is located on Beal Street.

The name comes from an Aboriginal word thought to mean "kangaroo camp". The town is on Gulidjan Country.

Local events

Birregurra is host to the Birregurra Festival and Art Show, which starts on the second full weekend of October each year.

A produce market is held on the second Sunday of each month from November to April, where local vendors sell cakes, jewellery, plants, fresh fruit and vegetables, wine, arts and crafts. Organisers hold a barbecue for patrons of the market and all proceeds return to the community. The town has cafes, serving food and coffee, a local providore showcasing local produce, the Royal Mail Hotel, a general store, some gift shops and a hairdresser.

Birregurra was the setting for the fictional Victorian town of Haven Bay in the Channel 10 television series The Henderson Kids.

Notable people

Mary Glowrey (1887–1957) was an Australian-born and educated doctor, who spent 37 years in India, where she set up healthcare facilities.

Firth McCallum (1872–1910) was an Australian rules footballer with Geelong Football Club and was named among the top players of the 1899 VFL season.
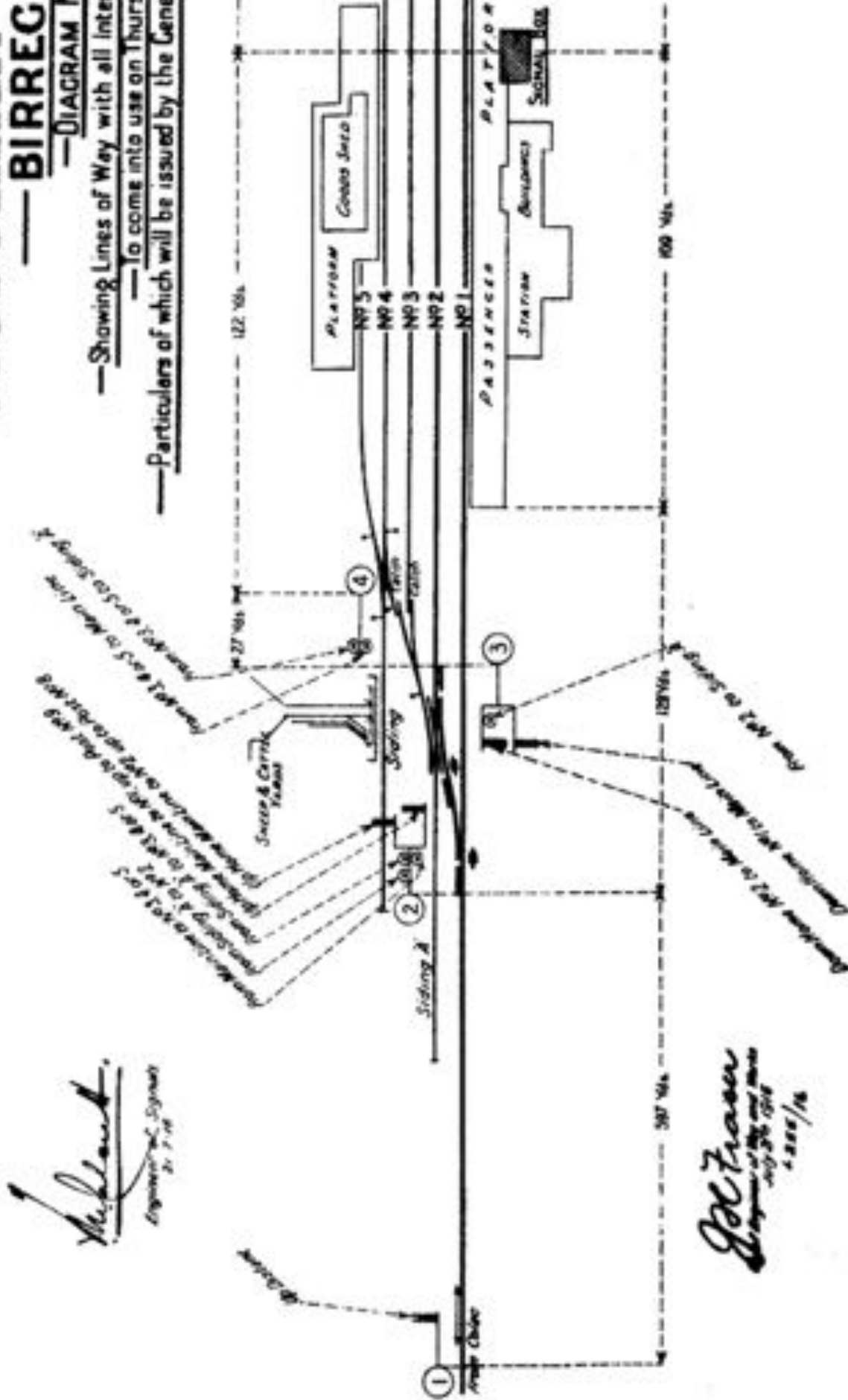
Newsrail Subscribers & Readers refer to the article in Newsrail December 2023 pages 437 to 443.

Date **Birregurra**	What was done?	WN or WON Date
Wed, 14 Jul 1897	Track and signal alterations; up Colac line home signal moved 348 yards further in.	(WN03/1897)
Sat, 1 Feb 1908	Provide Staff Exchange Box.	(WN05/1908)
Mon, 3 Jan 1916	By this date, provide new turntable road and 53ft turntable, leads off carriage dock and secured by Annett lock.	(WN01/1916)
Mon, 14 Aug 1916	By this date, provide new signals and interlocking.	(WN33/1916)
Tue, 18 Sep 1928	Provide miniature electric staff in lieu of large electric staff to Armytage.	(WN41/1928)
Wed, 19 Sep 1928	Provide miniature electric staff in lieu of large electric staff to Irrewarra.	(WN41/1928)
Thu, 26 Jun 1941	Post 10 moved 55 yards further out.	(WN29/1941)
Wed, 2 Jul 1941	Post 11 moved 55 yards further out. Delta at junction abolished and replaced with a single turnout.	(WN29/1941)
Tue, 30 Jun 1942	By this date, Staff Exchange Box abolished.	(WN26/1942)
Tue, 1 Sep 1942	By this date, the officer in charge will send a message to the Chief Telegraph Officer, before 9am, detailing the total rainfall over the 24 hours until 8:30am that day.	(G.O 24)
	By this date, the Officer In Charge is responsible for equipping trains with, for instance, soap, sanitary paper etc.	(G.O. 96)
	By this date, immediately following departure of a passenger-carrying train, details of number of passengers and expected number of meals needed are to be telegraphed to the next Refreshment station (Colac), viz. "AHAB [train no.] train [number] passengers [number] meals" (AGRA in lieu of AHAB for late train.)	(G.O. 98 (8)
	By this date, immediately following departure of a passenger-carrying train, details of number of passengers and expected number of meals needed are to be telegraphed to the next Refreshment station (Colac or Geelong), viz. "AHAB [train no.] train [number] passengers [number] meals" (AGRA in lieu of AHAB for late train.)	(G.O. 98 (8))
Tue, 9 Apr 1946	By this date, turntable disc abolished.	(WN15/1946)
Fri, 4 Jul 1947	Posts 8 and 9 abolished. Provide new post 8 with four arms.	(WN27/1947)
Sun, 31 Aug 1947	Compound between mainline and yard at down end abolished. Siding A renamed 2B and connected to mainline. Provide new post 10, one arm and one disc. Up and down mainline distants, and up and down home signals at down end, moved further out.	(WN36/1947)
Tue, 2 Dec 1947	By this date, telegraph instrument removed.	(WN48/1947)
Mon, 4 Mar 1957	Forrest line closed.	(WN07/1957)
Wed, 13 Dec 1961	Turnout to Forrest line, dock and turntable siding abolished. Posts 2 and 3 abolished. Discs on post 4 and bottom arms post 5 removed; ground disc 7 abolished.	(WN01/1962)
Tue, 14 May 1968	Interlocking abolished, replaced by plunger locks. Crossing loop extended to total 2100 feet. All signals except 1 up and 1 down home signal abolished. Provide staff exchange box.	(WN21/1968)
Wed, 13 Aug 1969	Down home signal moved 660 feet further out.	(WN33/1969)
Tue, 27 Jun 1978	Provide non-interlocked switch-out facility which works without a train present. Staff Exchange Box removed. May open at intermediate composite electric staff block post in Winchelsea-Colac electric staff section.	(WN28/1978)
Tue, 19 Dec 1978	By this date, no-one in charge in lieu of stationmaster.	(WN51/1978)

Date	What was done?	WN or WON Date
Line History		
Tue, 13 Mar 1877	Line Opened	Winchelsea - Birregurra
Fri, 27 Jul 1877	Line Opened	Birregurra - Colac
Fri, 5 Jun 1891	Line Opened	Birregurra - Forrest
Mon, 4 Mar 1957	Line Closed	Birregurra - Forrest

History	**Warncoort Loop**	**History**
2012	Warncort Loop Established, first appears on Birregurra to Colac Signal Diagram 2012-136	????
Thu, 17 Jan 2013	Construction of new Formation for Warncoort Loop.	WON-2013-16
2021	Effective 0800 hours 6th April 2021 Start and End TPWS signs will be progressively removed, in line with updates to Section 36 of the 1994 Book of Rules and Operating Procedures (as amended) which will be issued on a separate SW Circular.	(WON 13/2021, SW.0041/2021)
Sat, 21 May 2022	In conjunction with the Warrnambool line upgrade works, the following changes were made between 1st and 21st of May: The following signals and associated equipment were upgraded from 2 position signals to 3 position signals: • Home Signals WCT6, WCT10, WCT12, WCT26, WCT30, WCT32 & WCT42 • Former distant signals, now Repeating signals G1347 & G1412; the associated blocks are now worked by axle counters Additional signals were provided: • Down home signal WCT4 (135.828km) • Up home signal WCT26 (138.664km) All home signals, new and upgraded, are fitted with TPWS. Modifications to level crossings were made thus: • Ghazeepore Road (85.155km) made double track, operated by axle counters • Reservoir Road (88.678km) operated by axle counters • Pettavel Road (90.409km) operated by axle counters	Sat, 21 May 2022

(WON 17/2022, SW.0085/2022) |

Waurn Ponds Stabling Yard 2022-046

Birregurra 1916-016 lhs of Drawing.
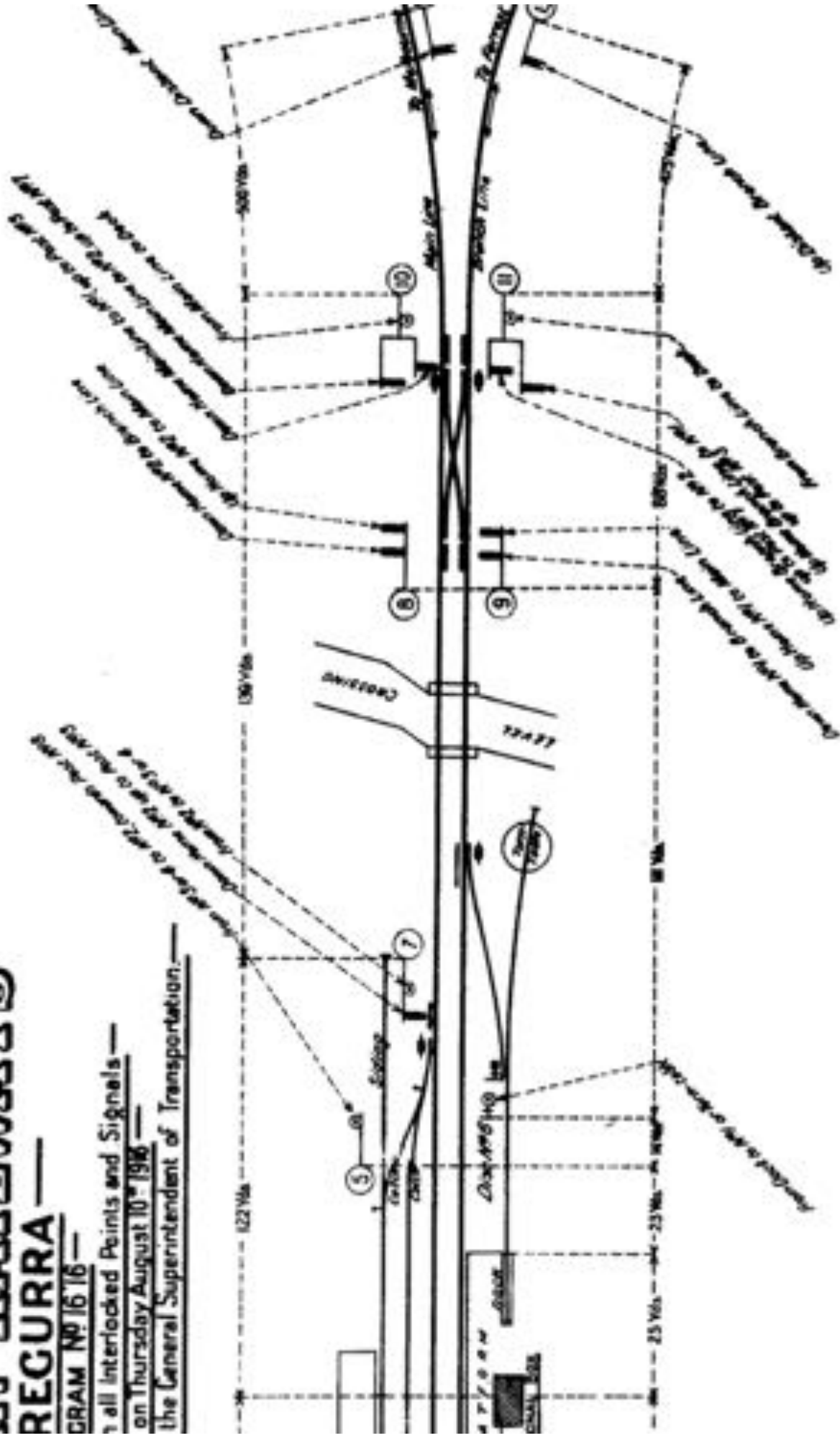
Birregurra 1916-016 rhs of Drawing.
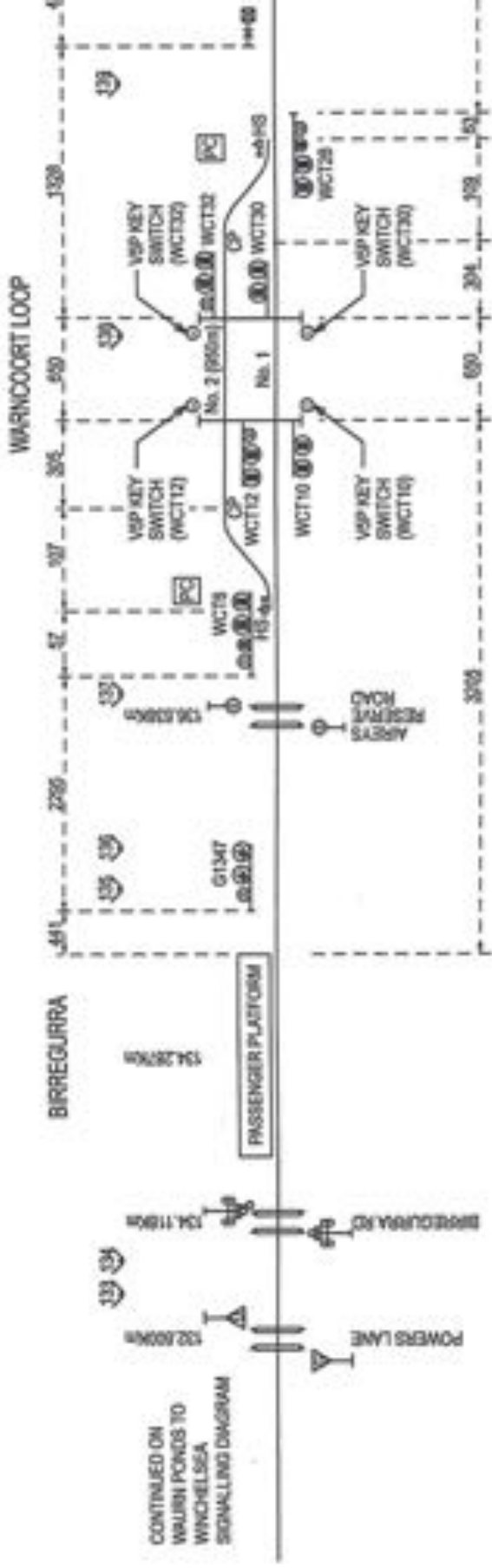
Birregurra to Colac 2012-136 Partial
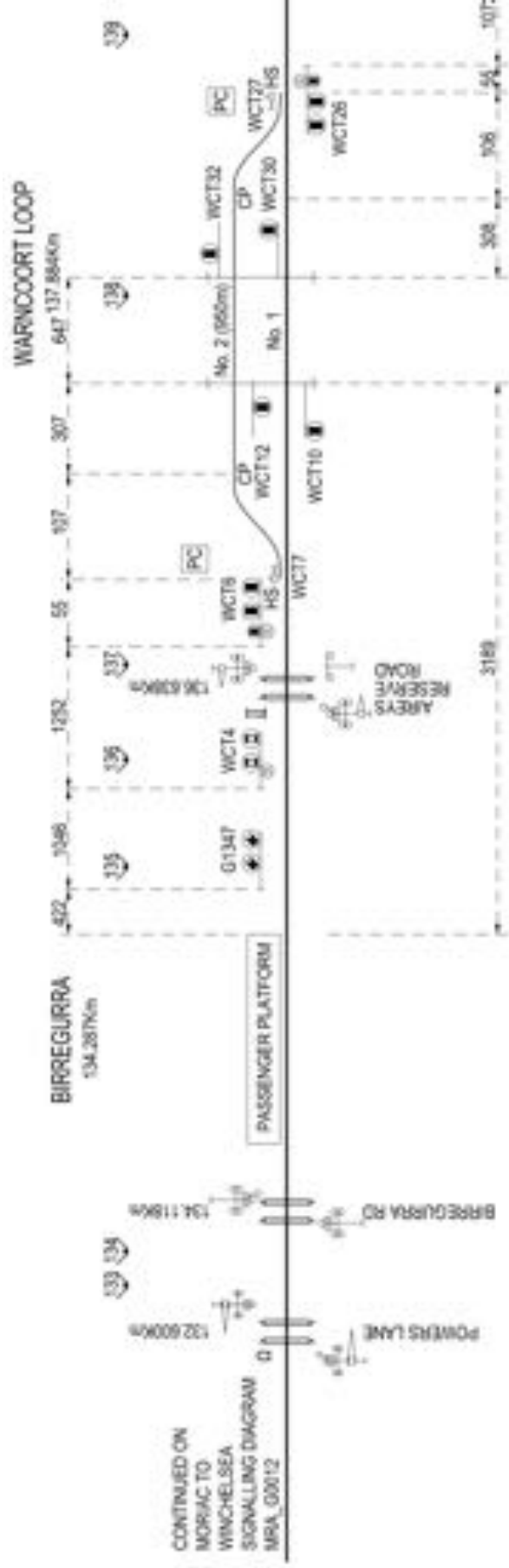
Birregurra to Colac 2023-038 Partial

CLOSE X

N403 (Steam) on a train of empty wagons, with a D3 shunting the Down end of the yard at Birregurra

Monday, 28th May 1956

Photo: Andrew Blair

Birregurra Goods Shed 2018 Xmas in July <mbpa.weebly.com>

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Birregurra Station Xmas in July 2018 J.T. Collins Collection, La Trobe Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria

Information from <vicsig.net> Chris Gordon, images and information from www.railgeelong.com Marcus Wong, vicscreen.vic.gov.au, Geelong RRL Update & Wikipedia.

Notes compiled by Geoff Wallace

E&OE

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Birregurra Railway Station rear View _008 vicscreen.vic.gov.au

Birregurra Station Platform www.railgeelong.com

Birregurra Railway Station_002 vicscreen.vic.gov.au

Birregurra Railway Station Platform_004 vicscreen.vic.gov.au

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