PROCEED ORDER

The Journal of the Signalling Interest Group Queensland

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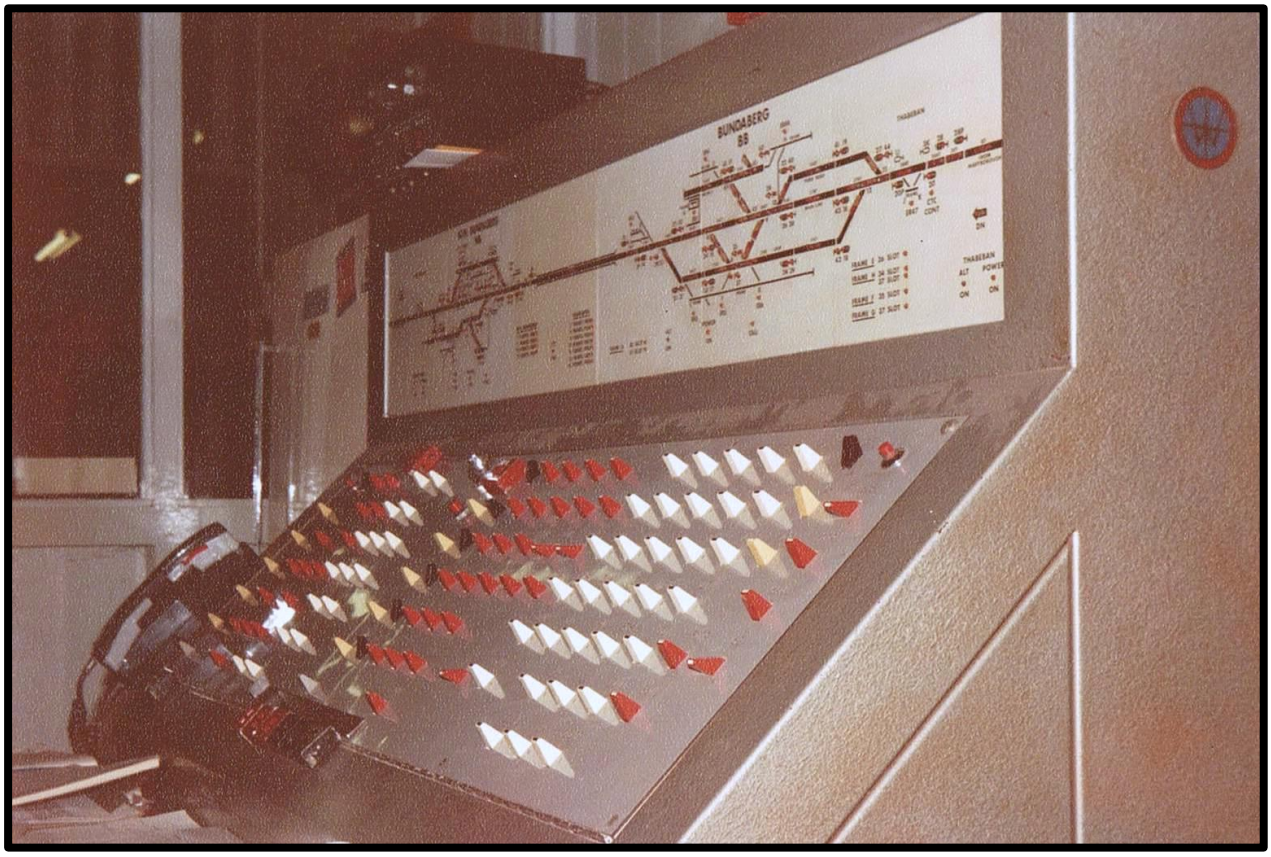

Bundaberg signal panel photographed around 1982 in the Station Masters office at Bundaberg. The panel was made by Westinghouse Australia and controlled Bundaberg and North Bundaberg stations. The area was normally controlled remotely by CTC however when there was considerable shunting to be conducted the Train Controller released control of the signalling to the Station Master who then used the signal panel to work points and signals locally.

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Signal Panels in Queensland

One area of research slowly progressing is the study of signal panels that have been used in Queensland. Just as the various signal cabins had different types of construction and operation, signal panels had similar variations.

The first signal panel used in Queensland to control points and signals was installed at Stuart in North Queensland and was closely followed by Roma Street and Corinda.

There are two basic types of signal control panel, the route setting type, and the non route setting type. The route setting type uses a switch or push button to select an entry point and an exit point and the entire route between those points will set up if the conditions are correct - that being that there are no conflicting signals cleared and no track circuits occupied. All points within the selected route will move to the correct position and all appropriate signals will clear to a 'proceed' aspect. These signal panels are referred to as NX panels with NX being an acronym for eNtrance/eXit.

The non route setting type required a switch or button to be operated to manually set each set of points to the correct position and then more switches or buttons to clear all signals within the desired route. This type of signal panel is called IFS which stands for Individual Function Switch.

Queensland had a number of signal panels but again the number of installations was far fewer than some other Australian States and many times fewer than the United Kingdom. The Signalling Record Society in the UK have set out a detailed descriptive format or coding for describing signal panels and the same terminology will be used and explained here. The following list represents a vastly cut-down version of the UK list developed by the Signalling Record Society due to the far less varied styles of panels used in Queensland.

Term or Acronym	**Description or Meaning**
Entrance - Exit or (NX)	Equipment may consist of the signalling controls being mounted geographically on the illuminated track diagram; or a split-level arrangement whereby the signalling controls are generally mounted geographically on a simplified, non-illuminated, desk-style track diagram with the main illuminated diagram separate.
Frame	Where a lever frame exists and needs to be co-operated with the panel to clear a route.
Hybrid	Where more than one type of equipment co-exists in the same place.
Individual Function Switch or (IFS)	Each switch operates just one set of points or one signal. The signalman operates the panel in the same way we would a mechanical lever frame -

	operate each switch to place points in the correct position, then operate each switch for each signal to be cleared.
NX(PP)	One button at the signal: acts as entrance button for route in advance and exit button for route in rear.
One Control Switch or (OCS)	Each route is selected individually at the entrance stage, whereas with an NX system the route selection is made when the exit control is operated.
Workstation or (WS)	Locations which use visual display units (VDU's) and electronic controls (keyboard and/or mouse) to operate signalling systems.
[+]	Indicates the control switches or buttons and indications are combined into a single module of equipment.
[-]	Indicates the control switches or buttons are physically separated from the indications on two different modules of equipment.

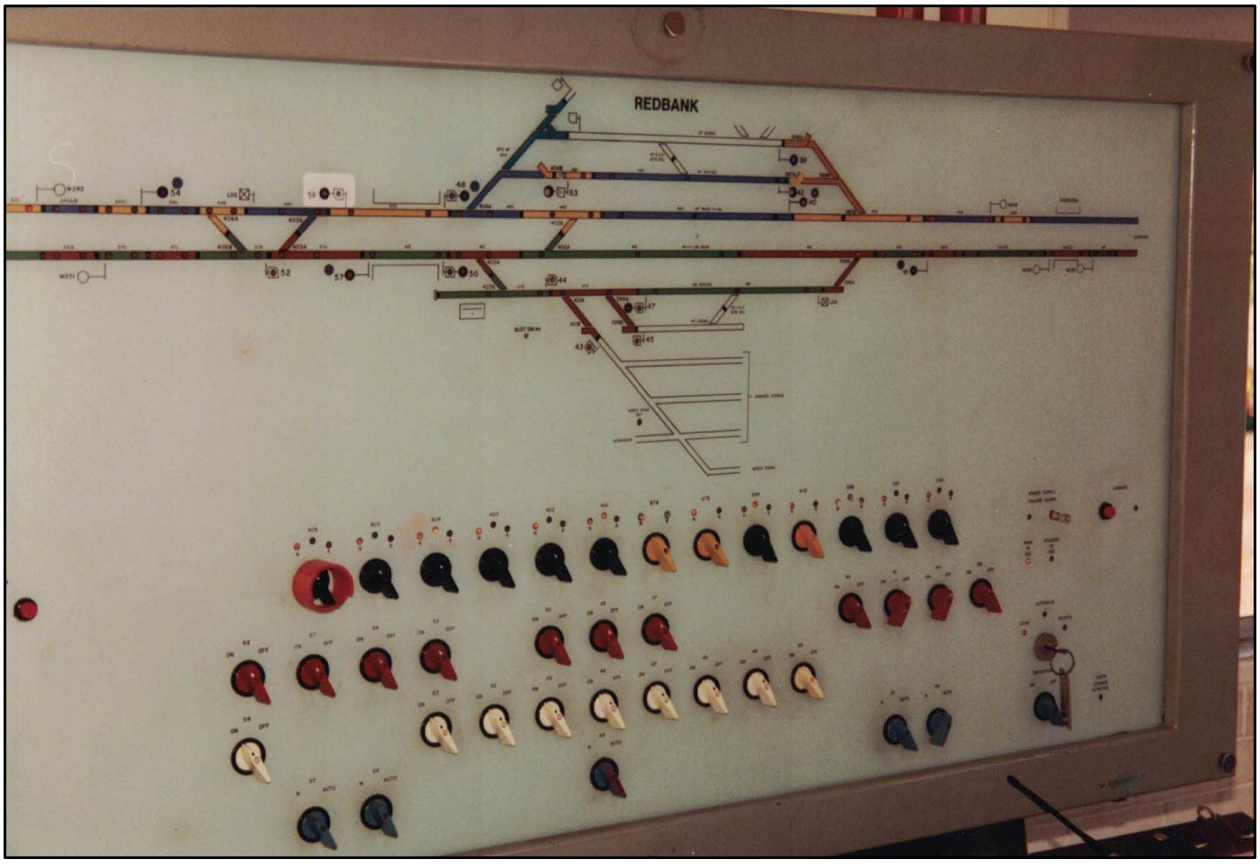
The table below lists just some of the panels to have existed in Queensland, most are believed to now be decommissioned with a couple surviving in preservation; a few remain in use. This list will be expanded in future issues of *Proceed Order.*

Location	Interface Type	Design & Model	Interlockings
Acacia Ridge	IFS [+]	Desk mounted[1]	
Bajool	Frame/IFS [+]	Free standing panel	
Bundaberg	IFS [+]	Desk mounted	Bundaberg & Nth Bundaberg
Bundamba	IFS [+]	Free standing	
Clapham North	OCS [+]	Wall mounted	
Clapham South	OCS [+]	Wall mounted	
Cobarra	IFS [+]	Wall mounted	
Corinda	OCS [-]	Floor mounted	Corinda & Indooroopilly
Dinmore	IFS [+]	Free standing	
Doomben	IFS [+]	Free standing	
Fisherman Islands	IFS [+]	Wall mounted	
Goodna	IFS [+]	Free standing	
Maryborough	IFS [+]	Wall mounted	
Moura	IFS [+]	Wall mounted	
Moura Mine	IFS [+]	Wall mounted	
Redbank	IFS [+]	Free standing	
Rockhampton	NX(PP) [-]	Floor mounted	
Roma Street	OCS [-]	Floor mounted	Roma Street & Toowong
Wacol	IFS [+]	Free standing	

- Free standing refers to a panel which sits on one or two posts on the floor. It may have a desk placed immediately in front of it.
- Floor mounted refers to a larger panel which sits on the floor as a complete unit, without legs.
- Wall mounted refers to a panel which hangs on a wall with no means of support below necessary.

[1] The first Acacia Ridge panel was built onto and integrated with the desk as a permanent attachment, and in the same style laminate finish.

Above: Rockhampton Cabin 'A' as seen in 2008 prior to decommissioning. This is an NX panel with a free standing and separate mimic panel. This type would be classified as NX(PP)[-}



Above: Redbank panel which was installed around the same time as the panels at Bundamba, Dinmore, Goodna and Wacol. They were all the same design with subtle differences in the types of switches used. Despite that all are coded as IFS[+] type panels.

Newspapers 1933

A regular feature of this journal is to review signalling and safeworking news that appears in the newspapers 100 years ago. This feature is usually presented in January however while researching another topic the following article from 1933 appeared in Trove. Considering the detail and illustrations included it was thought too good to wail until 2033 to present the article in the usual timeframe.

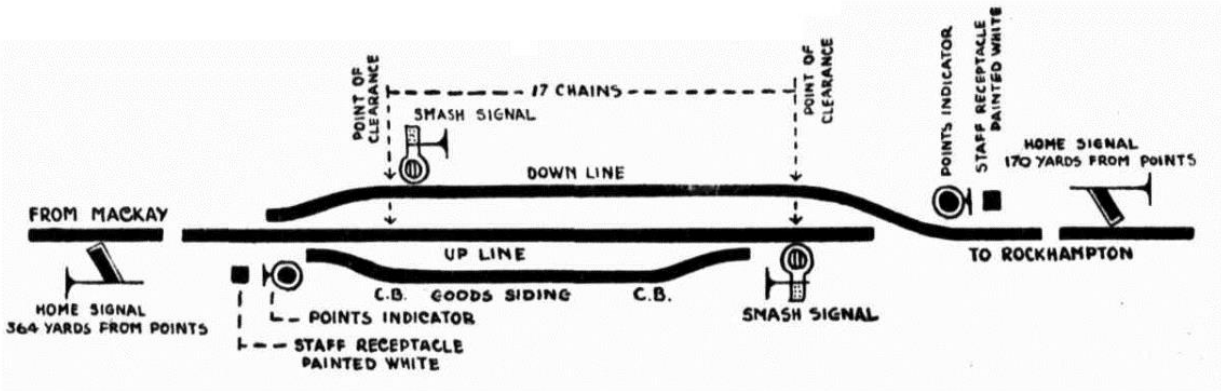
The article includes interesting information from both Queensland and New South Wales and is presented 'as written' in the newspaper. Any errors are that of the original author.

It is indeed interesting to again reflect on this type of newspaper article and wonder how many readers were interested or even understood the content given its specialised nature.

RAILWAY SAFETY IN PRACTICE
How Queensland Keeps Lines Clear

In view of the number of derailments that have occurred in New South Wales during recent months and the frequent references to broken catch-points, diagrams have been prepared showing the safety measures adopted in this State and New South Wales to cover uncontrolled rollingstock and to keep the lines reasonably clear. The two methods are vastly dissimilar, and in the opinion of local officials, the Queensland system is best. It is significant too that, the New South Wales authorities last week issued strict instructions that the "catch-point" system was to be discontinued and all such points not replaced with rails were to be locked.

Queensland operates on the unattended staff station and smash signal method in the maintenance of safety on main line practice, although in the Toowoomba ranges near Holmes, there is a run-off for trains or trucks which get out of hand. This had the effect of side-tracking the runaways. The accompanying diagram shows a typical staff station for single line working at Elalie on the Mackay-Rockhampton section. All such turns in Queensland are right-hand.



Coming from Rockhampton, the train must pull up at the points indicator, clear the staff, and then proceed off the main line on to the down line to pull up at the smash signal. Before entry is gained on to the main line, the line must be cleared to that direction, and when the whole of the train is clear, the points automatically close entry to the main line from the down track. Should a coach or truck, on some sections get out of hand, it would swing from the main line to the Down line and run straight past the smash signal to a side track and then into a sandbank.

Many such unattended stations are equipped with these sandbanks, but recent practice has been to eliminate these, leaving the Down line to connect direct with the main line, and the smash signals to do their work. Should the train crew fall asleep the same procedure would follow, but on reaching the smash signal this would crash against the side of the engine cabin and thus draw their attention to the fact that something was wrong. The same procedure would follow in the case of a train from Mackay running past the smash signal on the Up line. Should one section of the train become separated from the other the air brakes would act automatically through the escape of air and the train would be pulled up. This also applies to the detached section of the train, which could then be easily picked up. However, such accidents are rare in this State.

It is pointed out, however, that if a truck did get on to the main line and the brakes refused to act, it would come to rest in a decline in the way of an oncoming train. On the other hand, its absence from the former train would be noticed at the next station, and oncoming trains could be quickly stopped.

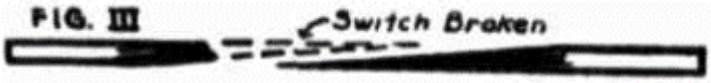
DERAILMENT CAUSES

Throughout the main lines of New South Wales there is a system of catch-points in operation, and more particularly in the mountain railways, by which breakaway vans or trucks running back in the wrong direction on a gradient may be caught and stopped before they reach high speed. The train going in the right direction passes the catchpoints. The following diagram shows the New South Wales system in operation.

- *Fig I - Catch point in working order. When the train goes forward in the direction of the arrow, the flange of the wheel presses the wedge-like "switch" against the outer rail, and there is a smooth forward run.*

- *Fig II - A familiar kind of break on "catch-points." The tip of the switch is broken, but the damage is not enough to disturb the safe forward running. The small fracture is observed by the daily ganger, and the defective rail is replaced with one having an undamaged switch.*

- *Fig III - The "one-in-a-million" chance which caused the recent serious derailment of the Albury Mail (as well as others) and might have been an awful catastrophe. The switch broke at the catch points; the wheel then fell inside the rail instead of keeping the track, and the other wheels followed.*



(Telegraph Wednesday 26 July 1933, page 9)

FORGOTTEN STATIONS

Callan (Mt Morgan Branch, 5¾ Miles from Kabra) appears to have been provided between June 1900 and November 1900 as during the latter month the then un-named siding at 5 Miles 60 Chains was named Callan after the member for Fitzroy, Mr. A. J. Callan. The February 1901 Appendix to the Working Timetable refers to the siding as the Mt Morgan Company's Firewood Siding (5m 60ch). By June 1901 passengers are recorded travelling to or from here but not until 1907 is a shelter shed (and presumably a platform) mentioned.

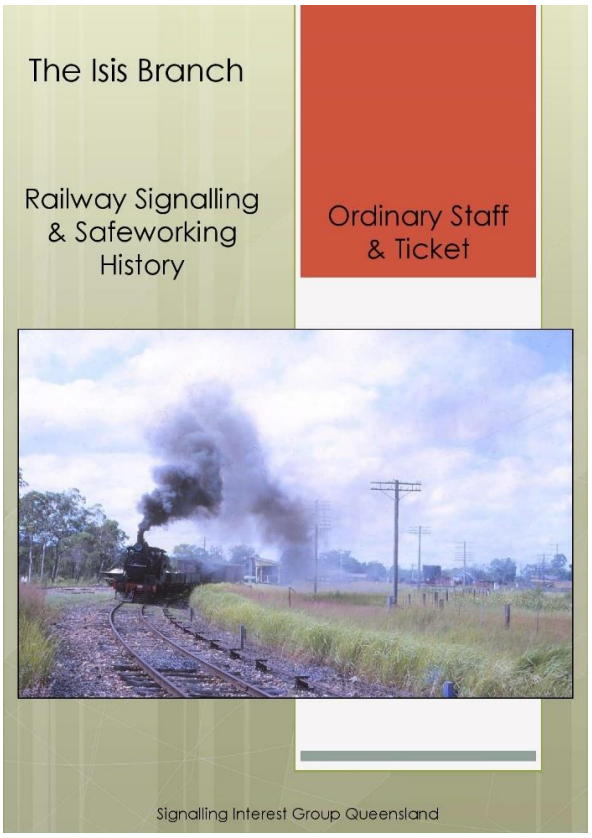
By May 1921 the dead-end siding which once existed at Callan, the property of the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company Limited, had been removed. A station yard plan dated 'revised to March 1924' shows the layout at the time. The very simple facilities include a rail level platform (with gravel surface) located between right-hand and left-hand 15 chain curves. On the eastern side of the platform a pedestrian gate is provided in the fence line and there are no signals, sidings, or buildings here. The platform is approximately 16 Miles 44 Chains from Archer Park, or plan mileage of 5 Miles 56 Chains from Kabra. A second gate is located in the eastern fence line which may indicate where the siding once existed and passed through the fence.

Barambah Creek (Kilkivan Branch)

Barambah Creek was a watering station approximately 2 ½ Miles from Murgon, between Murgon and Wondai, and had no platform, siding or signals. The single track gently curves as it runs roughly parallel to Barambah Creek. In 1916 it was noted that as this is only a watering-place, no goods should be accepted for it. In December 1928 the Weekly Notice advertised a vacancy for the position of 'pumper' at Barambah Creek, and in February 1929 it was announced that a Fireman from Bowen was appointed. A station yard plan dated 'revised July 1909' and revised again to May 1929 shows the layout at the time. Barambah Creek is a watering station only with A 17-foot double-tier tank is shown at approximately 56 Miles 54 Chains as well as a 400-gallon tank, pump house and tin shed. The only other mention of Barambah Creek in the Weekly Notice is from July 1958 and relates to a boilermaker and his assistant sent from Maryborough to Barambah Creek presumably for repairs. They arrived around 6pm and worked until 4am, then had to wait for a rail motor to pick them up at 8.50am. The query was about payment for waiting time.

SIGQ NEWS

SIGQ is proud to announce the first book published by the group has been revised and is again available for purchase. The revised version has a new cover and an extra 20 pages of new information added to give more context to some of the signalling alterations mentioned in the book. Initially the book will be offered via eBay, and details will be placed on the SIGQ website.



Further news is that Volume 2 has re-commenced writing and editing and may be available by the end of the year.

This volume concerns Train Order Working and uses the Greenvale Railway, from Cobarra to Greenvale as its focus.

A similar format will be used with information about the railway in general (opening, closing and trains), information about Train Order Working, and individual station histories.

The purchase price is expected to be $25 plus postage & packing.