

PROCEED ORDER

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The lever frame in Gatton signal cabin, cut in due to Single Line Working in April 2002. The Down Electric Release has been taken and all Down signals placed at 'stop'. The Up Electric Release (lever No.1) is not taken and the Up signal levers are all at 'proceed'. The cabin has since been decommissioned and removed. The lever frame was known to exist in a private collection and the cabin diagram in a different private collection.

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Train Notice Diagrams

Train Notice Diagrams were signalling diagrams drawn in a specific style and size to suit attachment to Train Notices issued by Queensland Railways. This was more relevant when Train Notices were issued on paper and delivered to stations and traincrew by internal mail systems, however the style of Train Notice Diagrams continues today. The track layout and signalling details are accurate however they are not drawn to scale and as such are easy to handle and read. Stations have a number allocated to them and the Train Notice Diagram or TN Diagram is just one of several drawings drawn for each station. Some other types of signalling diagrams are:-

- CD - Cabin Diagram (drawn with suitable information to allow the signalman to operate the signal cabin)
- MC - Manipulation Chart (used by signalmen at complex stations like Rockhampton where a separate chart was used to show what levers needed to be pulled for each route)
- BI - Interlocking Diagram (used by interlocking fitters to show how the levers are interlocked with each other in a signal cabin)
- PI - Interlocking Diagram (apparently a separate series for the interlocking within Ground Frames, again for the interlocking fitter)
- AS - Signalling Diagram (drawn to scale and includes gradients and curve radii)

Diagrams for each station will have the same number for the station with the appropriate letter prefix based on the drawing type. The accompanying example for Merinda is numbered TN-1, and there will also be drawings numbered AS-1, CD-1 and BI-1.

Diagram TN-1 shows part of Merinda yard, the section between the apex of the angle and Pring on the Collinsville line. Looking at TN-1 in detail we see the relative positions (although not to scale) of all signalling equipment in the area. Normally a Train Notice Diagram will show all the signalling for the whole station so this diagram is a little unusual as it only shows a portion of Merinda yard, which at this time, still had a 45 lever mechanically interlocked signal cabin. TN-1 is an interesting example as it shows both semaphore and colour light signalling with a legend in the top left corner to illustrate the meanings of most symbols.

The position of the cabin is marked with a box, with a line and dot inside the box. The line represents the row of levers in the cabin and the dot represents the position where the signalman stands to work the levers. The signalman faces the main North Coast line with the area shown in the diagram behind the signalman. Signals 9 and 10 at the apex of the angle are shown near 26 points and 27 lockbar. The signals applying into Merinda via each leg of the angle (12 and 13 with Shunt signal 14) are shown on the opposite side of the level crossing. Although the legend of symbols does not show it, the symbols on the roadway indicate flashing lights are provided. Further out two sidings exist which are accessed

So, is TN 1 the first Train Notice Diagram issued? No.

The number belongs to the station with a variety of letter prefixes used for various drawings pertaining to that station as previously mentioned. Just why Merinda gained the drawing number of 1 is unknown, but it is fairly certain that the number previously belonged to another station. There is a system of numbering TN Diagrams of sorts but over the years it has been changed and amended as needed.

Studying the low TN numbers (from 1 to 258) it is clear that these numbers all belong, or once belonged, to stations that had mechanically interlocked signal cabins. Some examples are,

- TN 10 - Ascot
- TN 30 - Cairns
- TN 72 - Grandchester
- TN 140 - South Brisbane
- TN 252 - Paterson

TN 257 is today allocated to Maryborough West but an older diagram from the 1980's shows that this number was previously Oakhurst, the same place, just re-arranged and re-named with the deviation to bypass Baddow. For stations known to have had a signal cabin the numbers from 1 to 169 are almost purely in alphabetical order, except Merinda, which sits oddly out of place with number 1. It seems that it should roughly have had the number 107 where other interlocked stations with names starting with M are numbered, such as Maryborough with number 105 and Mooloolah with number 109.

Later the numbering system was expanded as diagrams were needed to show the signalling layout at stations which were not interlocked but still had signalling. Even stations in Train Order Territory which had no signals just Train Order signs received TN Diagram numbers. Today there are nearly 2000 TN numbers however not every number may be allocated to a station.

The list of TN diagrams (below 258) has several gaps which were most likely allocated to stations with signal cabins or large interlocking machines. Any reader who has old signalling diagrams which could further this research is asked to us via the web site Contact Page.

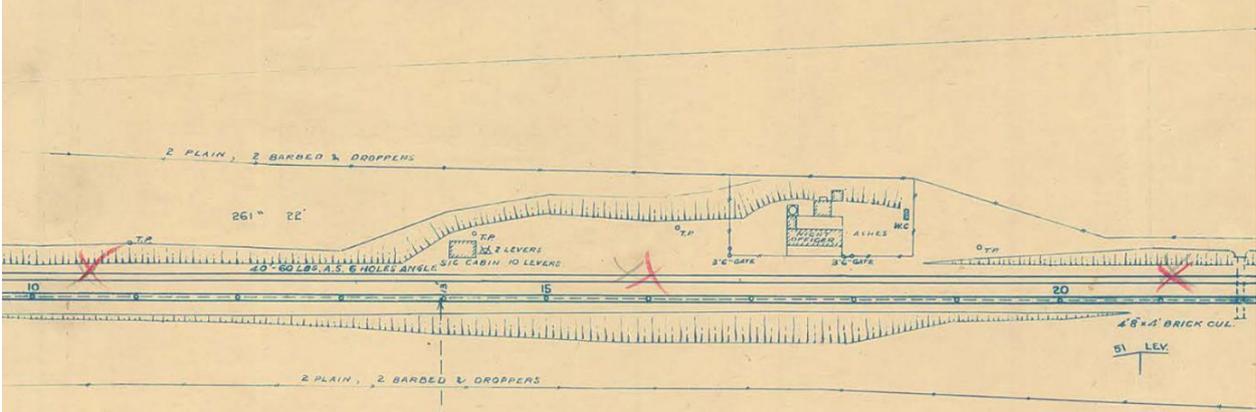
MY FAVOURITE CABIN

The question of what was or is my favourite signal cabin in Queensland had never crossed my mind, until I read a series of articles in The Signalling Record from 1998. The Signalling Record is the journal of the Signalling Record Society, a special interest group in the United Kingdom which was founded in 1969. The journal started out as a Newsletter in 1970 and changed to its current A5 format in 1987; it is still in production today.

A number of articles appeared under the title of My Favourite Box which were written by various people with their own answer to that question and the reasons why. Reading these articles got me wondering what my favourite signal cabin in Queensland would be and why.

I didn't favour cabins that I had visited over ones that I had not visited as that would severely restrict the choices available. I considered all the cabins that I now know to have existed in Queensland, and everything I know about each of them. In some cases that is a fair bit, in other cases less so, and with regard to some signal cabins all I know is that it existed with little or no details available. I thought about the very large signal cabins like Toowoomba, Rockhampton, Ipswich or Yeerongpilly, and I thought about small or very small cabins like Redbank Auxiliary, Ingham or Innisfail. I obviously thought about Bundamba cabin at my local station which incidentally I never set foot in nor do I have one picture of it. I decided the best starting point was to review a list of signal cabins starting with Cairns, Mareeba and Kuranda in the north of Queensland, and working my way through to Ernest Junction cabin in southern Queensland; and out to Hughenden and Emerald in the more regional parts of Queensland.

The location I eventually arrived at as my favourite was Magoon, a short-lived crossing loop with a signal cabin which operated between 1942 and 1947, to help manage increased war time rail traffic on the single line between Helidon and Toowoomba. Magoon was a very simple crossing loop located between Murphy's Creek and Holmes consisting of only an Up and Down road with no sidings or freight facilities at all. The only buildings were the signal cabin and a small building used as accommodation for the Night Officers. The Night Officers accommodation was in a small fenced area towards the Toowoomba end of the yard and there was also an external water closet. The crossing loop was situated in bushland in the foothills of the Toowoomba Range, away from the main road and any houses.



The signal cabin itself was near the centre of the crossing loop on the southern side of the line; outside the cabin at the Toowoomba end were two additional signal levers which were used when the cabin was cut-out. The concrete foundation of the signal cabin was about 16 feet 4 inches long, 11 feet 4 inches wide, which gives the approximate size of the building. The foundation also shows the position of the lever frame

within the building near the Brisbane end. Two rails were positioned here to accommodate the 10-lever interlocking machine which operated the two sets of points and six signals provided. The rails were spaced at approximately 4 feet 2 inches which suggests a lever frame with 5" centres between levers was used. The use of these rails also indicated that a low-level lever frame was used which indicates the building was not a tall one, and that the signalman faced away from the tracks when operating the levers. No photographs are known to exist of Magoon signal cabin but I have a feeling that it would have been a quite typical Type 1 signal cabin.



Above: The remains of the foundation for Magoon cabin. The cleared area behind the cabin would have been bushland in the 1940's.

The station yard itself was straight and the track curves on approach from both ends so the Starting signals would have been visible from the cabin and the other signals, the Home and Distant signals, would have needed electric repeaters to be provided. The crossing loop is situated on the side of a small hill and there are one or two small cuttings along the length of the crossing loop. So why if I've never seen the signal cabin, or visited it (except for a site visit when only the concrete foundation remained) does it rate as my favourite in all of Queensland?

The one-word answer is 'atmosphere'.

I can easily imagine this small building sitting adjacent to the railway line, basically in the bush with only one country road nearby which would have seen very little road traffic. The road only went to the signal cabin, and perhaps a property located further back into the

bushland. So, when there were no trains in the area, the only sounds to be heard would be the wind in the trees and the birds. It's possible that the sound of the trains could be heard departing Murphy's Creek and climbing the grades towards Magoon, and after leaving Magoon climbing again further up the range towards Holmes and Spring Bluff. Given the hilly nature of the terrain this would have been hit and miss, and also quite dependent on the direction the wind was blowing. It would have been, apart from the interruption of trains, a quiet and peaceful place for the Night Officers to work. I suspect they would have interacted with the wildlife in the area, perhaps feeding the birds and wallabies that came by the cabin, looking for food scraps or a drink of water. Given the surrounding bushland lizards and snakes would have been seen frequently as well.



Above: Another view of the foundation of Magoon cabin, the location of the lever frame is evident.

Inside the signal cabin, with the levers at the Murphy's Creek end of the building, the other end would surely have had a very comfortable chair for the Night Officer to sit between trains and read the newspaper or a book, or perhaps listen to the wireless for news on the war.

During the day the sounds of the birds and the breeze would give a very rural and isolated feel to the place. At night when it was wet the sound of frogs in the low-laying areas behind the cabin would have echoed through the cuttings around the cabin. During Winter the pot belly stove would have been a warm welcome retreat for the Night Officer between trains. In Summer the sound of kookaburras and cicadas would have filled the air during the hot afternoons, quenched later in the afternoon or evening by a thunderstorm. With all the trees around, and the wiring for

the Telephones and Electric Staff Instruments both outside and inside the signal cabin, lightning must have been an occupational hazard to be wary of. It would have been quite wet at times; an article from the Queensland Times records the events one day, early in 1944 as follows:-

*CLOUDBURST ON TOOWOOMBA RANGE (Wednesday 5th January 1944)
More than 2 inches of rain fell in 20 minutes at Murphy's Creek and Spring Bluff, on the Toowoomba Range, in a storm late on Wednesday night. The train from Brisbane to Dirranbandi was delayed for 70 minutes until flood water had subsided, and train services were disorganised throughout the night.*

I don't believe Magoon was a passenger or parcel station so no tickets to be sold, no cash to be handled, and no deliveries picked up or dispatched. Perhaps the only people who may have gotten on or off a train would have been the Night Officers who worked there.

All this sounds like a very relaxing and serene place to spend a shift, working trains up and down the Great Dividing Range - Magoon, my favourite signal cabin.

FORGOTTEN STATIONS

Broxburn (Pittsworth Branch, 13 Miles 14 Chains from Wyreema)

Broxburn appears to have opened with the line from Wyreema to Pittsworth in 1887 however at that time the place was called Balgownie. Originally recorded as a Stopping Place in 1887 and early 1888, by mid-1888 it is recorded as a Gate with a siding and goods shed. Later in 1888 the station between Green Hills and Pittsworth is recorded as being called Broxburn. A station yard plan dated 'revised January 1923' and revised again to February 1920 shows the layout at the time. The alterations between 1923 and 1930 include removing the 18' gates from the level crossing (Broxburn Road) at the Wyreema end, and the nearby station house is now used by the Fettle. The station building and 100-foot timber faced platform are adjacent the main line and the loop siding to serve the goods shed is on the Pittsworth side of the platform. No signals are shown. A dead-end off the siding at the Wyreema end serves a loading bank at the end of the platform. By early 1937 the goods shed had been removed, and in August 1951 it was approved to remove the station building and replace it with an 8' by 6' shed. In January 1952 it was approved to remove the dead-end part of the siding, by April it was decided to remove the loop siding as well and the points were spiked over. By mid-1952 it was confirmed that the siding was out of use and had been spiked over. In September 1952 the sidings were removed and in November 1952 the station building was also removed. The final change came in July 1970 when it was approved to remove the nameboard and delete Broxburn from the timetable.