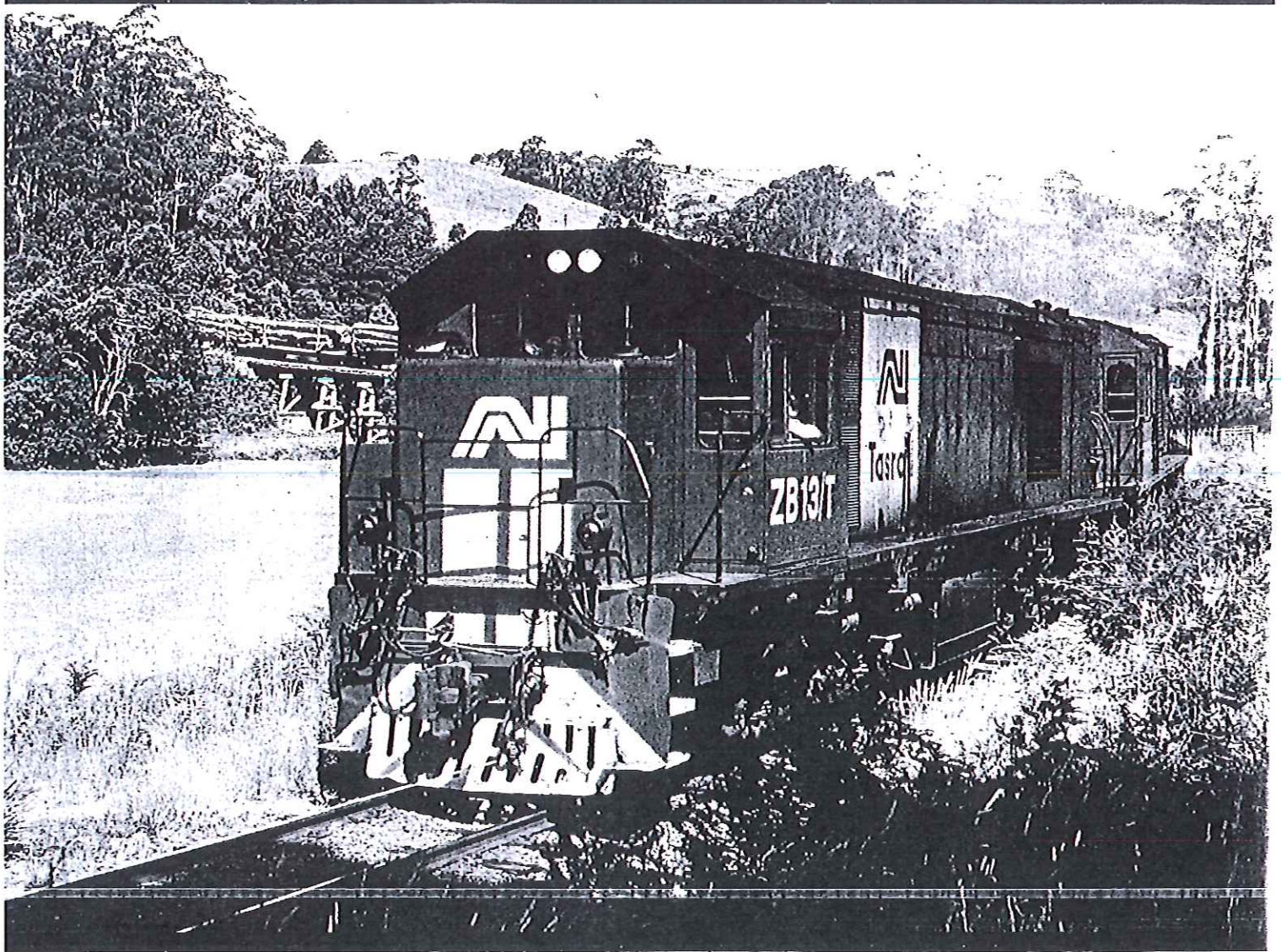


Recommended Price \$6.50

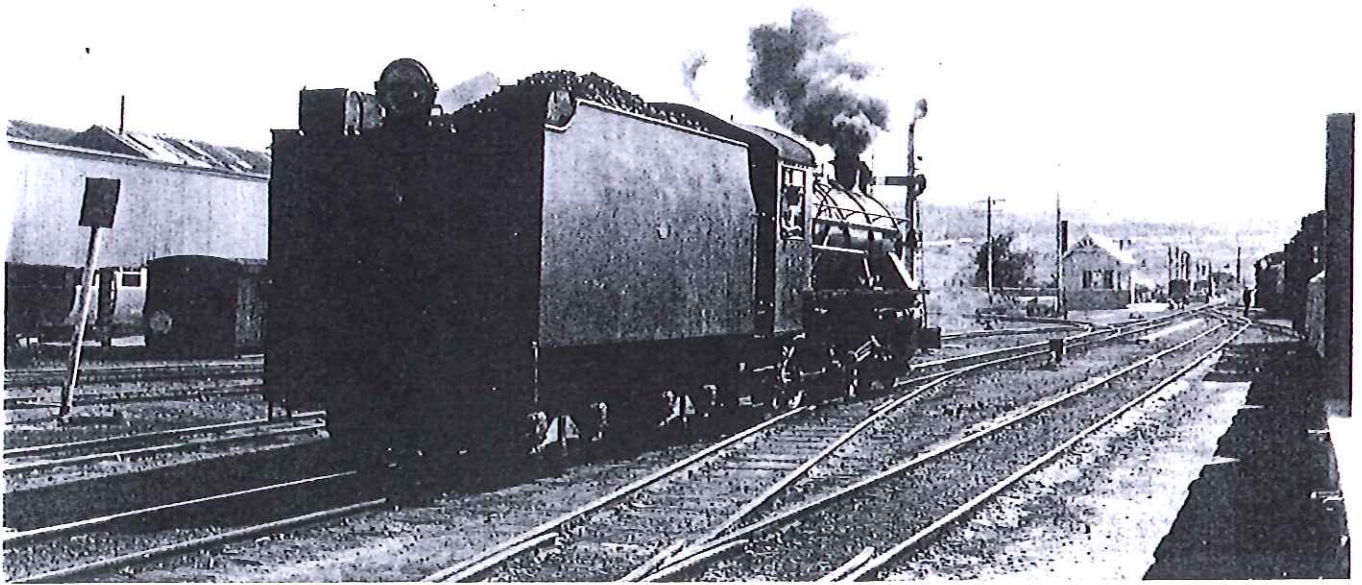
MARCH 1997

AUSTRALIAN RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Bulletin



Volume 48 No 713
ISSN 0005-0105



The North-East Junction signal cabin can be seen in the background as Pacific locomotive M 5 reverses into Launceston station on 29 November 1969.

Photo: H. J. W. Stokes

(Tas.)

THE NORTH-EASTERN LINE OF THE TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS

by H. J. W. Stokes

Construction of the Launceston—Scottsdale Section

North-Eastern Tasmania is dominated by a block of mountains rising to a height of 1572 metres at Legges Tor. To the north the mountains fall away towards Bass Strait in an area of high rainfall naturally covered by dense forest. The quality of the soil varies from infertile granite and quartzite to highly fertile basalt but there was enough good land, timber, gold and alluvial tin to encourage settlers into the area during the second half of the 19th century. They suffered the usual forest settlers' problem of roads that were quagmires for much of the year, compounded by the fact that there was no natural deep water port on the north-east coast.

In 1882, during the planning of the first phase of 1067 mm (narrow) gauge railway construction by the Tasmanian

Government, a line was partially surveyed from Launceston to the north-eastern corner of the island. This followed a roundabout course through the Lefroy goldfield, giving a Launceston—Scottsdale route of 109 km. In 1883 a 96 km route was found by keeping the line further south towards the mountains and this was later reduced to 75.7 km by providing for a tunnel through one of the northern spurs of Mt Arthur. Even this was 12 km longer than the direct Launceston to Scottsdale road, although the latter was more vulnerable to ice and snow.

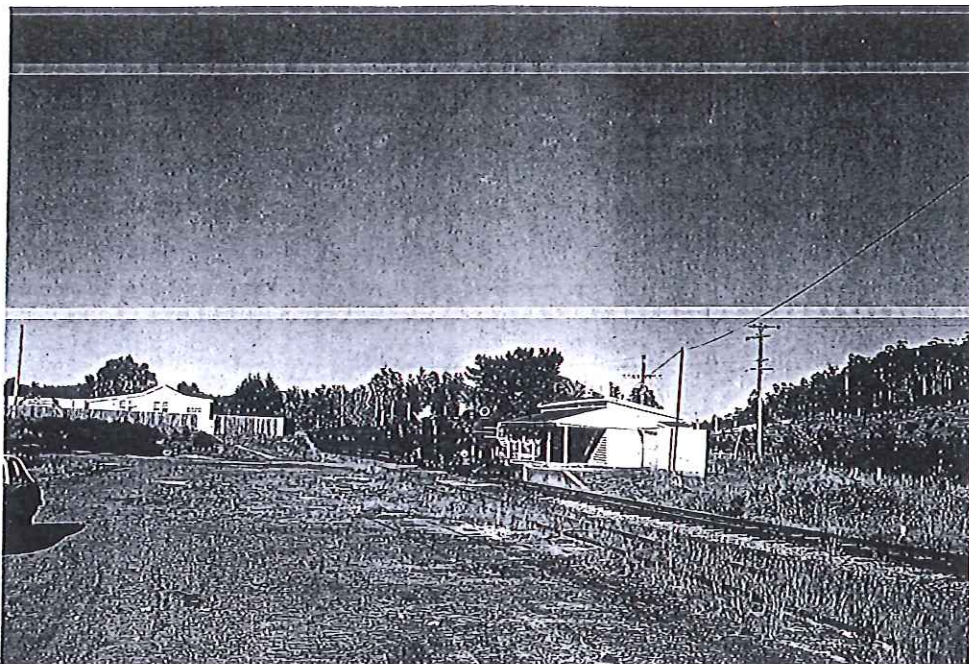
The permanent survey of the Launceston—Scottsdale line commenced in February 1884 and a contract for its construction was signed with the Launceston firm of M. Boland and R. S. Scott on 25 June 1885. Clearing began the following month and by May 1886 the earthworks were almost complete for 41.5 km to the mouth of the tunnel and in progress for a further 15 km, beyond which only clearing had been undertaken. The 704 m tunnel was the largest project on the line.

The approaches were commenced in December 1885, the two headings met on 22 December 1887 and the tunnel was finally completed on 19 December 1888. In addition there were approximately 10 bridges over rivers and creeks and numerous culverts. Between Launceston and the tunnel the culverts were made of concrete but beyond the tunnel they were made of logs and had to be replaced in concrete from 1901 onwards. The ruling gradient was 1 in 40 and the sharpest curves of 100 m (five chains) radius.

Track laying began at Launceston on 4 January 1887 and the rails reached Mowbray in time for a series of race specials to be run with Tasmanian Government Railways and Tasmanian Main Line Railway stock on 16 and 17 February 1887. The original rails were of 25 kg/m weight (50 lb./yd.) but between 1922 and 1932 they were replaced with second-hand 30 kg/m rail (60 or 61 lb./yd.) taken out of the Main and Western lines or purchased from the NSW Government Railways. By July 1888 rails had

During the Tasmanian Government Railways' Centenary celebrations, a tour special was operated on the North-East line using locomotives MA 4 and MA 2. At Nabowla station on 11 February 1971.

Photo: A. Grunbach



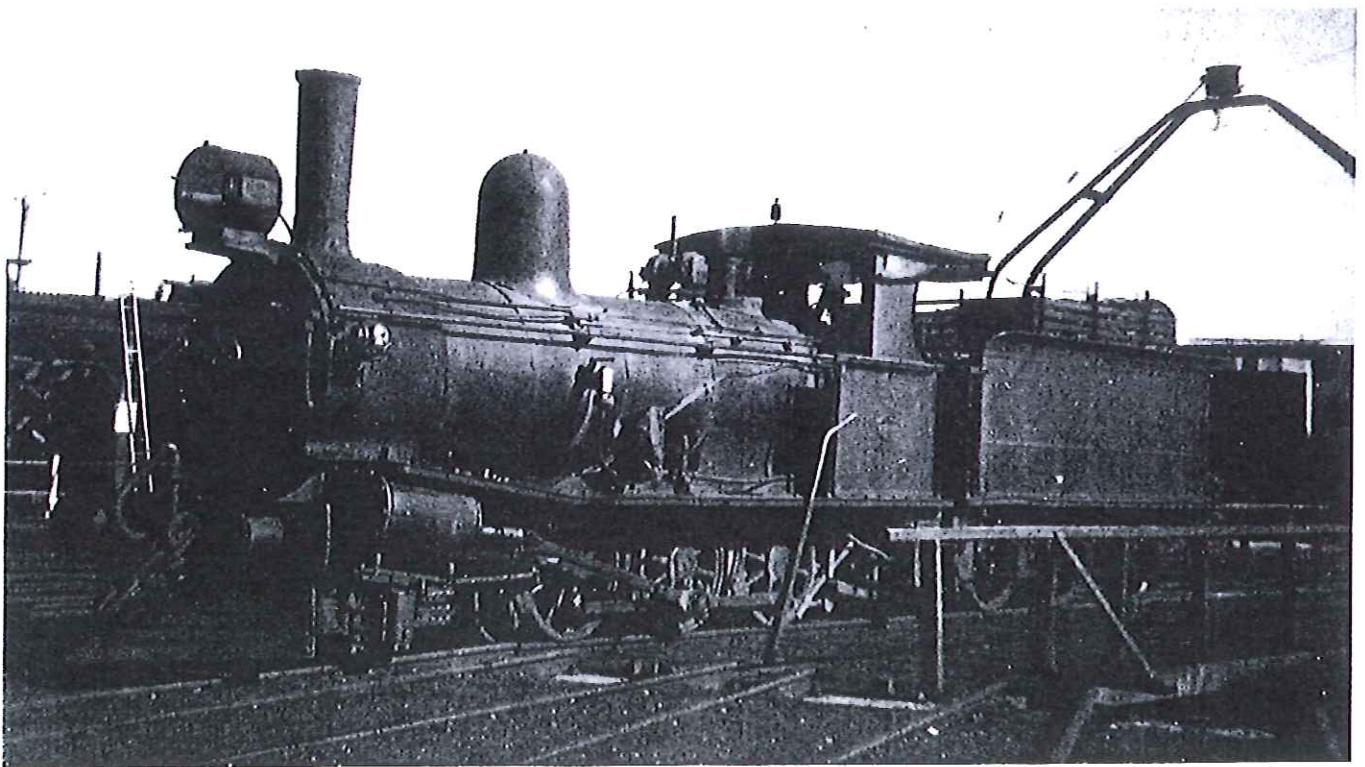
At speed in the scenic countryside near Nabowla on 11 February 1971.

Photo: A. Grunbach

Approaching Blumont on 11 February 1971.

Photo: A. Grunbach





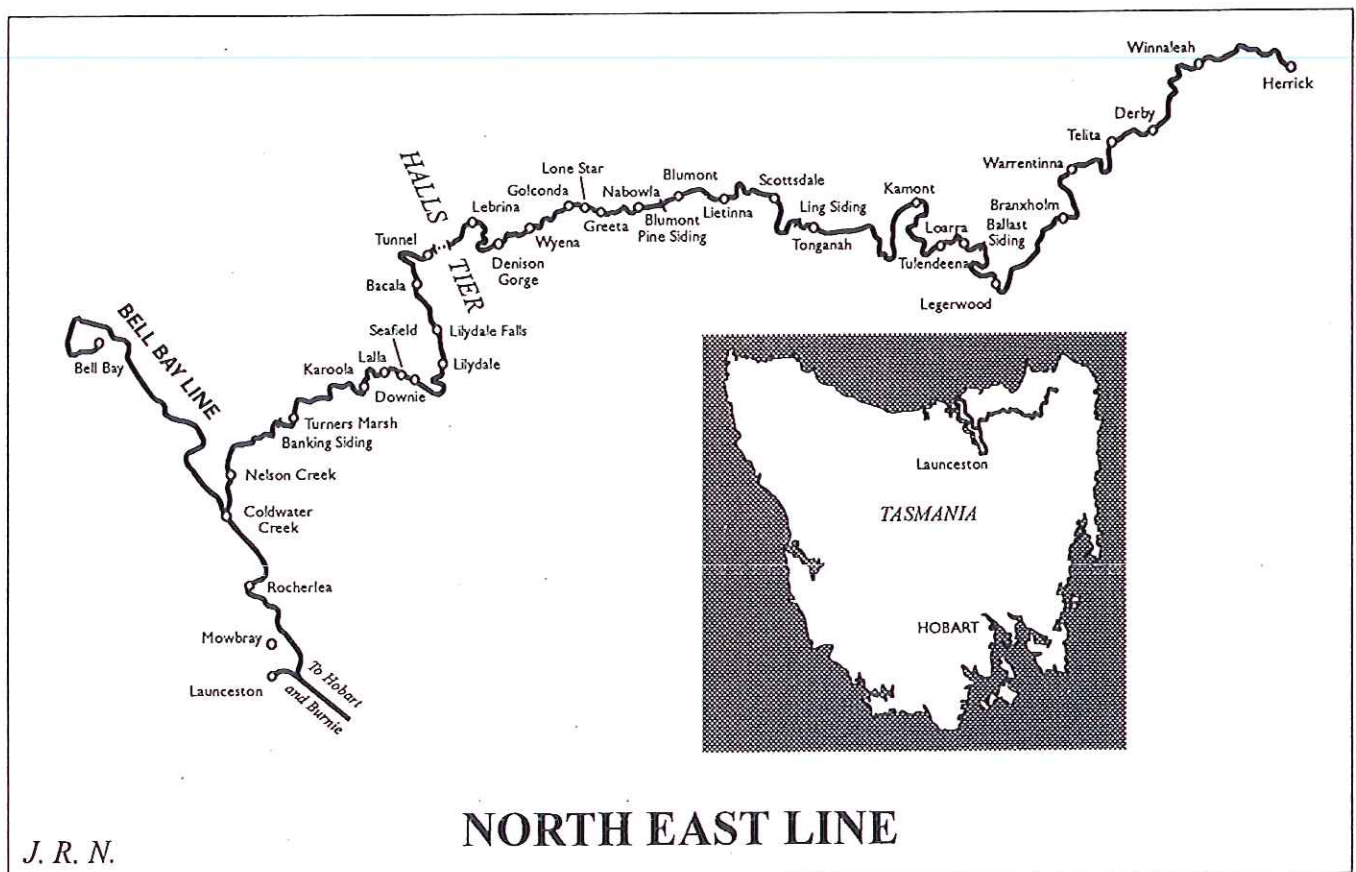
The Beyer, Peacock C class 2-6-0s worked on the North-Eastern line for many years but by 30 August 1961, C 12 was reduced to the role of standby shunter at Launceston. Photo: H. J. W. Stokes

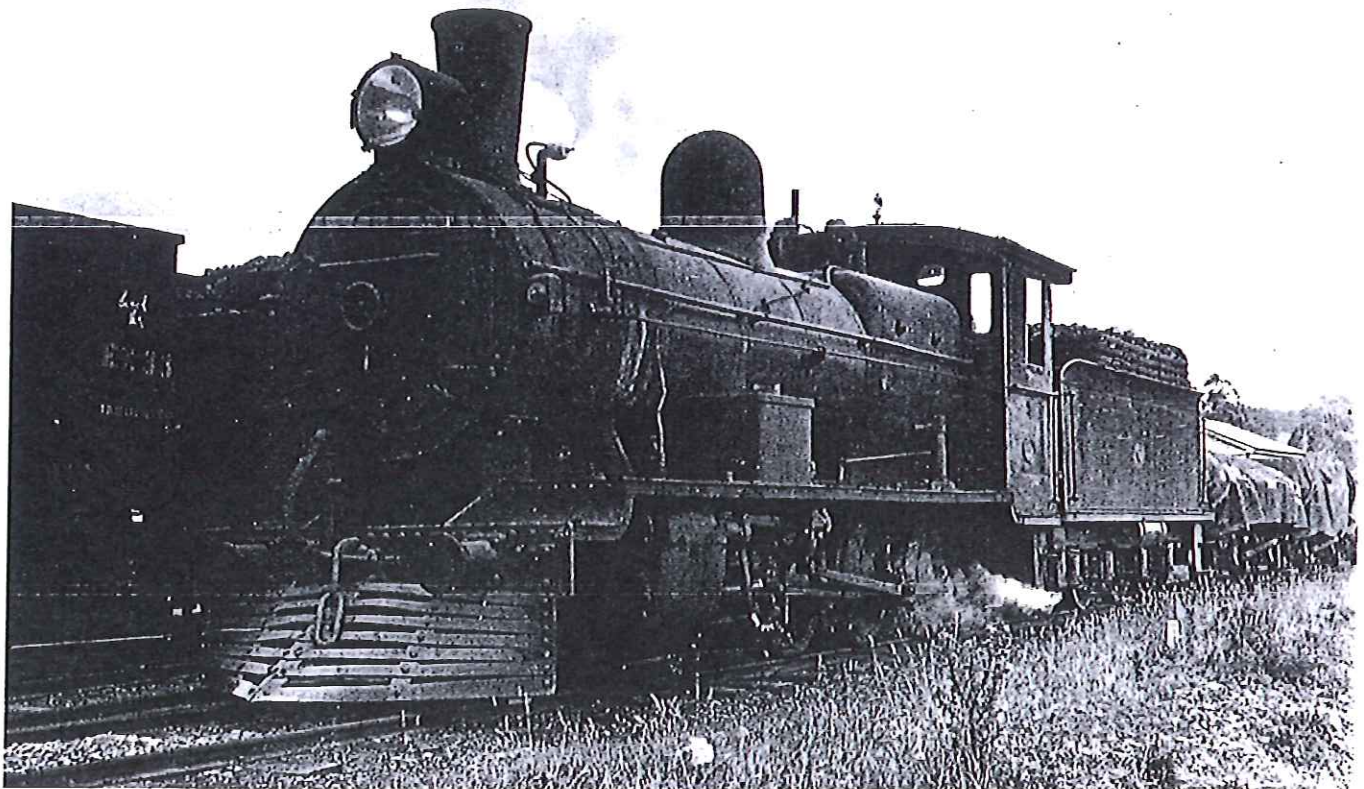
been laid for 60 km and the tunnel was sufficiently complete for the contractors' small loco to pass through it.

The first passenger train through the tunnel was a special carrying the Colonial Governor which ran to the end of the track at 64 km on 2 January 1889. From 6 February 1889 the

contractors ran a ballast train including a seated wagon to Scottsdale daily and the line was formally opened for TGR operations on 9 September 1889. The original stations on the line were Mowbray, Rochers Lane (renamed Rocherlea in 1913-14), Turners Marsh, Karoola, Lilydale, Tunnel,

Lebrina, Wyena, Golconda, Lisle Road (renamed Nabowla in 1912-13), Lictinna and Scottsdale. Each station was provided with a weatherboard passenger station building except Wyena which was intended mainly for blackwood timber traffic and had a shelter only.





E class locomotive No. 1 with the Herrick Goods ex Launceston, crossing the Up Mixed at Legerwood on 2 March 1950.

Photo: J. K. Winney

The Mowbray Racecourse Branch

The 1.0 km branch from Mowbray to Mowbray Racecourse was opened on 16 November 1907. It diverged from the Scottsdale end of Mowbray station and curved westwards round the northern edge of the racecourse to a terminus with two loops behind the grandstand. The extension of the Launceston electric tramway system to the racecourse in 1916 halved the traffic on the line but the TGR continued to run trains for the principal race meetings. The last known working on the branch was an excursion from Burnie for the Launceston Cup on 1 February 1939. The branch was formally closed on 1 September 1939.

The Branxholm and Herrick Extensions

The economic Depression of the early-1890s halted Government railway construction in Tasmania but by the early 1900s the Government was more receptive to calls for railway extensions. In 1904 and 1906 Royal

Commissions considered the prospects for an extension of the Scottsdale line eastwards to a large tract of fertile basalt soil country around the Ringarooma River. The area was already being used for dairying and sheep and cattle raising and there were tin mines at Derby and Pioneer. However, the production of cereal crops, potatoes and timber was hindered by a lack of transport.

The first inquiry did not support the extension, partly because the line would have to cross a tract of mountain country with little potential before it reached the Ringarooma valley. However, the second inquiry recommended that the Scottsdale line be extended for 39 km (24 miles exactly) to Branxholm and this was approved by Parliament in December 1908.

The extension was built by the Public Works Department using sub-contractors and day labour and work began at the end of February 1909. Tree clearing, rock cuttings and earthworks were heavy as the line made a tortuous climb through the ranges separating the Great Forester and Ringarooma river systems. The earthworks included four embankments 18 m high and a number of cuttings benched up to 18 m into hillsides. There were numerous concrete culverts, one of which

was 85 m long. The largest bridges were 12 timber spans over the Great Forester River at Tonganah and 10 timber spans over Legerwood Rivulet west of Branxholm.

The line was formally opened on 12 July 1911. Stations were provided at Tonganah, Trewalla, Kamona, Tulendeena, Ringarooma Road (renamed Legerwood in 1916–17) and Branxholm. Tonganah, Ringarooma Road and Branxholm had weatherboard station buildings but the others had shelters only. Corrugated iron goods sheds were provided at Tonganah and Ringarooma Road (lineside) and Branxholm (overline) but the others had loading platforms only.

The final 22 km extension of the North-Eastern line was commenced by the Public Works Department in the second half of 1916. It was described as the Branxholm–Moorina railway but in fact it terminated at the village of Herrick some 4 km short of Moorina to avoid bridging the Ringarooma River. Herrick is situated on the road to Pioneer and Gladstone in the far north-eastern corner of Tasmania and it is only a short distance north of the main road over the Weldborough Pass to St Helens and the East Coast. Branxholm and Herrick are both close to the Ringarooma River

but the line was taken up on to the plateau to the north of the river to serve the Winnaleah district and to avoid the deep valley through which the river flows east of Derby.

Construction was slowed by war-time labour shortages, heavy rain and the need for extensive earthworks and the line was eventually opened for public traffic on 15 March 1919. The largest bridges were 10 timber spans over Legerwood Rivulet beyond Branxholm and eight timber spans over Davids Creek at the approach to Herrick. Stations were provided at Mara (renamed Warrentinna in 1934–35), Ayr (renamed Telita in 1923–24), Derby, Winnaleah and Herrick. Weatherboard station buildings were provided at Derby, Winnaleah and Herrick; Mara and Ayr had shelters only. Weatherboard goods sheds were provided at Winnaleah (lineside) and Derby and Herrick (overline).

Both the Branxholm and Herrick extensions were originally laid with 25 kg (50 lb./yd.) rail, which was gradually replaced with second-hand 30 kg (60 or 61 lb./yd.) and 31 kg (63 lb./yd.) rail. The X class diesel-electric units were permitted to run to Branxholm by 1952, although they were later subject to an 18 km/h speed limit beyond Legerwood. Relaying of the top end of the line to a sufficient standard to take the X class was finally completed in 1970, although further relaying was required for the Herrick log trains in the early 1980s.

Train Services

The Launceston–Scottsdale section was provided with two daily mixed trains in each direction. After the opening of the Branxholm extension, the morning Mixed out of Launceston was extended to Branxholm, returning the same afternoon and the afternoon Mixed out of Launceston was extended to Branxholm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, returning the following morning. A separate goods train was also provided on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays; this also stabled overnight at Branxholm. In 1922 both mixed trains and the Goods were running right through to Herrick every weekday. In 1925 the morning Mixed and the Goods still ran through to Herrick but the afternoon Mixed out of Launceston terminated at Scottsdale and there was an additional Goods to Nabowla when required.

In the 1919–20 financial year, stations from Mowbray to Scottsdale recorded 55,523 outward passengers, while stations beyond Scottsdale recorded 19,633 outward passengers. There was a marked decline in passenger traffic over the next few years as road competition increased and in 1926 one of the new Drewry petrol rail motors replaced the morning Scottsdale–Launceston Mixed and afternoon return journey. On Tuesdays and Fridays a connecting mixed train was provided in each direction

between Scottsdale and Herrick. The morning Herrick Mixed and the Herrick Goods continued to operate.

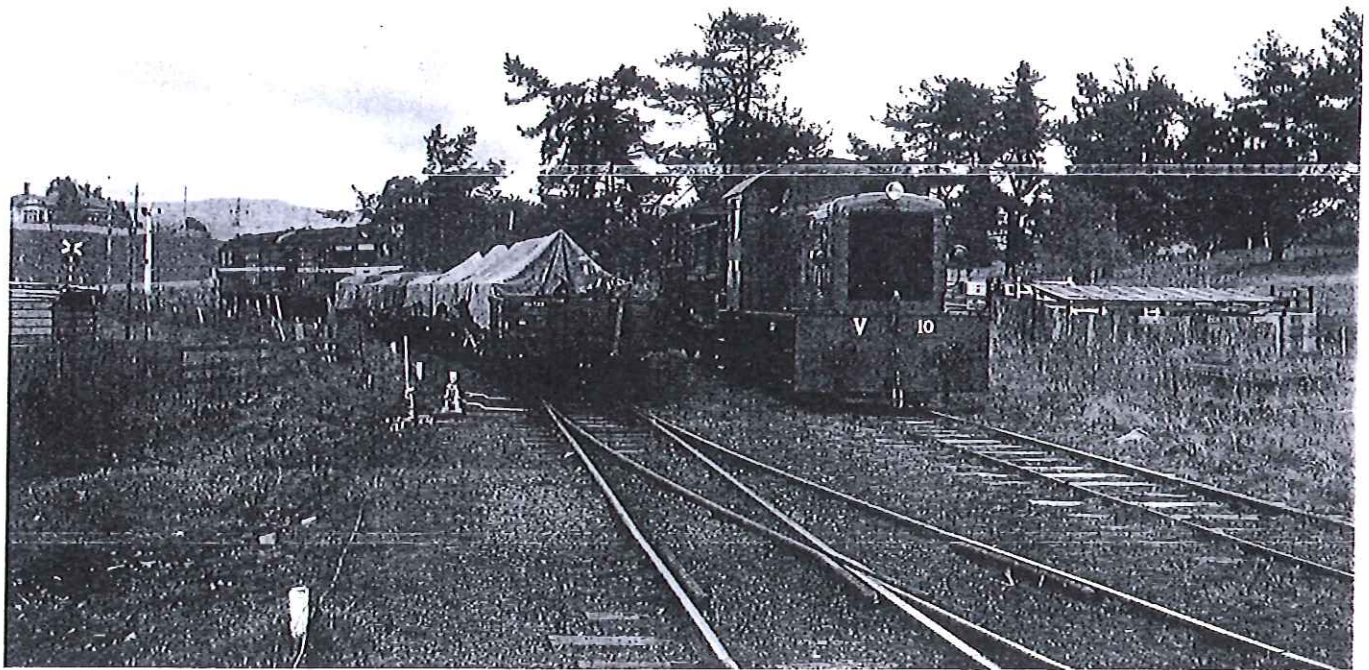
The Scottsdale service was listed as a Mixed in both 1931 and 1937, although Drewry rail motor DP 7 was noted running it on 2 March 1937. The motor was formally restored late in 1938 but the decline in passenger traffic continued and by 1939–40 outward bookings had fallen to 14,005 for stations from Mowbray to Scottsdale and 2419 beyond Scottsdale. Some time after April 1939 the motor was extended to Herrick on Thursday and Friday evenings, returning to Scottsdale the following mornings but the war intervened and in December 1941 the motor was cut back to run between Launceston and Scottsdale only on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. The Tuesday and Thursday trips were restored after the war but no further attempt was made to run a motor beyond Scottsdale.

During the 1940s the wooden body Drewry cars were largely replaced by the 50-seat metal body Gardner/Waddingtons rail motors DP 9 and DP 10. The small 22-seat version of these cars (DP 17–19) sometimes also appeared on the line. Wooden body Drewry car DP 7 was noted on the Scottsdale service as late as February 1947. During locomotive shortages the Herrick Mixed was sometimes replaced by a motor to maintain the passenger and mail service. On occasions, the Scottsdale service was run by a Sentinel



A class locomotive No. 3 at Herrick on 2 March 1950.

Photo: J. K. Winney



*Diesel-electric units XA 4 and X 16 exchange goods trains with diesel-mechanical loco V 10 at Legerwood in August 1964.
Photo: H. J. W. Stokes*

steam car or a train hauled by an A class 4-4-0.

DP 9 generally ran the Scottsdale service in 1949 and the first half of 1950 but it was then replaced by the 1939 and 1945-type Drewry/Waddingtons corridor cars, both the suburban and country versions being noted. Articulated car DP 28 was running the service in January 1952. Passenger traffic improved somewhat during and after the war, particularly from stations between Launceston and Lilydale. Outward bookings in 1954-55 consisted of 17,995 passengers from stations from Vermont Road to Scottsdale but only 908 passengers from beyond Scottsdale. The motor ran for the last time on Saturday, 28 July 1956.

The Herrick Mixed continued to appear in the public timetable, although from about 1950 it ceased to regularly include a side-door car and passengers had to make do with the two compartments in the brakevan. There was also a Goods in each direction. In about August 1961 the timetable for the Mixed was slowed considerably between Legerwood and Herrick and it was no longer possible to travel from Launceston to Herrick and back in one day. The former goods train was cut back to Scottsdale, so that there was only one service on the top end of the line.

The timetable of 6 August 1962

classified the Mixed as a Fast Goods, marking the end of any real attempt to offer a passenger service on the line, although small numbers of fare-paying passengers continued to travel on the goods trains until the TGR ended brakevan travel in 1976. Steam and diesel excursions were run from time to time for enthusiasts and the general public until 1978 and very occasionally since then, mostly on the Launceston-Scottsdale section.

It is unfortunate that no attempt has been made to establish a tourist operation on the line. It runs through beautiful countryside easily accessible to visitors and a combination of steam and diesel services operated in connection with the major heritage project at the old Launceston railway workshops would attract substantial patronage.

Locomotive Working

The first locomotives to work on the line were the Beyer, Peacock B class 4-4-0s and C class 2-6-0s, which were restricted to goods loads of only 81 tonnes and 131 tonnes respectively on the 1 in 40 grades. The two E class 4-6-0s built by Beyer, Peacock in 1907 worked specials over the line from the time they entered service and they were working on it quite regularly by

the 1920s. They were joined by the 10 C class engines rebuilt with Belpaire boilers between 1912 and 1928 (classes CC and CCS). The six T class 4-8-0s acquired from the South Australian Railways in 1921 also worked on the line from the time they entered service.

The two L class 2-6-2+2-6-2 Garratts built by Beyer, Peacock in 1912 were working on the line by 1918, in which year the General Appendix noted that Garratt locomotives were required to work out of Branxholm bunker first to reduce smoke problems on the climb through the tunnel. In February 1922 delays in moving timber were attributed to the fact that a Garratt was under repair and it had been necessary to run the Herrick Mixed with a B class engine, which was "practically useless". Despite the Garratts, the arguments about timber traffic continued during the 1920s.

In about August 1926 an irate miller stopped the Down Mixed at Tonganah and insisted that it pick up a FFF bogie wagon of sawn timber; they lifted the wagon to pacify him but got into difficulties on the climb to Scottsdale, reduced the load and then lost another hour at Nabowla restoring the engine to health. On several occasions an E class engine was provided for the Mixed to increase the load but the timetable suffered. The Garratts

were still working on the line in June 1929 when one was rostered to work a telegraph pole special to Scottsdale, stable overnight and return to Launceston with an extra Goods.

During the Second World War, the A class 4-4-0s and the T class worked the Herrick Mixed and the CC, CCS, E and T classes worked the goods trains. B and C class engines still appeared sometimes if nothing bigger was available. The war also saw the return of Garratt locomotives. L 1 and L 2 had been stored in the mid-1930s but they were again in service between 1943 and 1945 and made some appearances in the North-East.

The Australian Standard Garratts were working on the North-Eastern line by September 1945, when the union blamed the poor state of the track for derailments involving the flangeless driving wheels. The ASGs were permitted to take 222 tonnes up Denison Gorge, compared with 202 tonnes for an L, 162 tonnes for an E and 152 tonnes for a CC, CCS or T. They were not normally permitted beyond Scottsdale, although a Launceston driver once told me of a memorable trip with an ASG on a circus special to Branxholm. The train was 50 tonnes over the goods load and got into difficulties on Mowbray Hill. It was

divided at Mowbray and continued in two sections to Rocherlea, where it was overtaken by the Herrick Mixed. By then they did not have enough water to get to Karoola safely and the Garratt had to leave the train and return to Launceston for coal and water. The train's fortunes were monitored by an inspector, who followed it on a motor trolley!

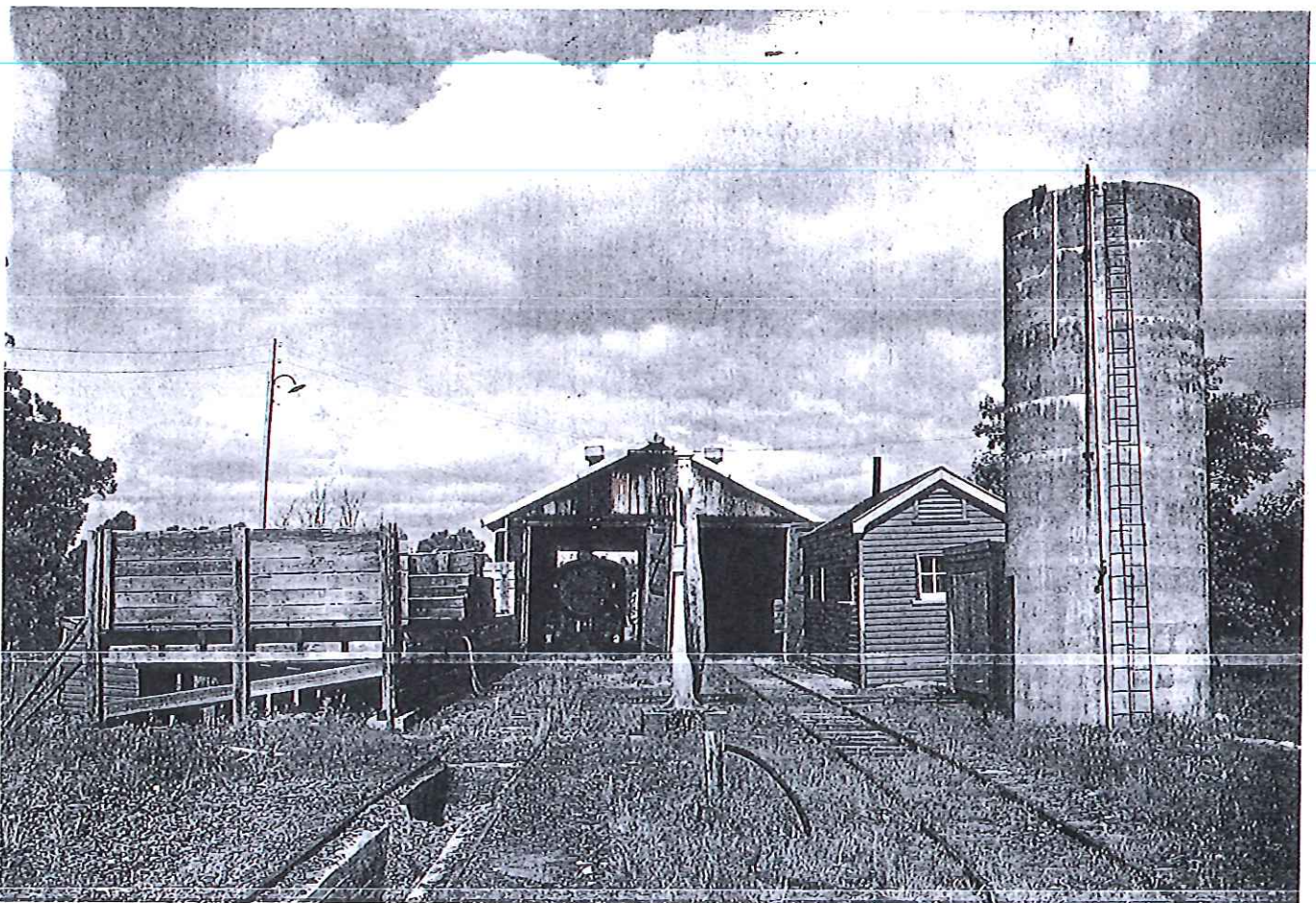
The ASGs were used frequently on the Launceston-Herrick goods trains, which were scheduled to cross at Nabowla. This permitted the engines to be exchanged and the tender engine from Herrick to be turned on the wye; the ASG then returned to Launceston bunker first. The ASGs also worked extra goods trains to Scottsdale. They were still working on the line early in 1954 when the union asked for them to be banned because of the problem of bunker first running. In fact, the withdrawal of the class had already begun and the survivors were confined to the Western line from 1954.

The next newcomers were the M class Pacifics, which replaced the A class on the Herrick Mixed soon after they entered service in late 1952. The E and T class engines continued to work on the goods trains until Pacifics M 8, M 1, M 6 and M 2 were rebuilt with 1.22 m driving wheels to improve

their adhesion. The four conversions were renumbered MA 1-MA 4 and re-entered service between October 1957 and July 1958. Their arrival saw the end of the E and T classes apart from shunting work by E 2 in the Launceston area until 1961. The unrebuilt M class engines continued to do some work on the line until 1961. During the 1950s and 1960s various steam and diesel classes worked shunting trips to Mowbray and Rocherlea, including the H and Q class 4-8-2s.

All regular workings on the line were dieselised about the end of 1961, with the X, XA and Y class English Electric units working between Launceston and Legerwood and a V class Drewry 0-6-0 diesel-mechanical unit working a daily trip from Herrick to Legerwood and back over the 25 kg rail section. One of the MA Pacifics was stationed at Herrick until 1965 as a spare engine for the V. The X class was finally permitted to work through to Herrick in 1970 but the V class continued to work between Branxholm and Herrick for another year or two. The ex TGR English Electrics monopolised traffic on the line until 1983, working in combinations of up to three units.

Between 1983 and 1985 the ex



Standby locomotive MA 2 contemplates its future at Herrick loco shed on 24 December 1963.

Photo: A. Grunbach



Mowbray scrap sidings in early 1957. The photographer is standing on ex-New Zealand Railways' Wf class 2-6-4T locomotive DS 2. Other locos visible are 2-4-2T D 4, 2-6-0 CC 27, Garratts L 1, L 2 and M 2 and 2-6-2T P 1.

Photo: copyright The Mercury, Hobart



Ex-SAR locomotives 837 and 875 entering Karoola, with empty clay tank wagons and pine from South Burnie to SEAS-Sapfor at Tonganah on 10 April 1987.

Photo: M. Dix

South Australian 830 class Alco diesel-electric units took over all regular services in conjunction with the introduction of air-braked wagons. The 830 class were in turn displaced by the ex Queensland Railways ZB and ZC English Electric units in late 1988 and these continue to work the line.

Safeworking

Trains on the North-Eastern line were controlled by the Ordinary Train Staff and Ticket system for nearly a century. Space permits only a summary of the history of Staff working, especially as some staff stations were opened and closed more than once. When the Scottsdale section opened the only staff stations were Lilydale and Scottsdale. By 1922 the staff stations were North-East Junction, Karoola, Lilydale, Lebrina, Nabowla, Scottsdale, Tulendeena, Legerwood, Branxholm and Herrick. Tunnel replaced Lebrina as a staff station for some years in the mid 1920s. Tulendeena was later replaced successively by Trewalla and Tonganah, although there were periods when there was no staff station between Scottsdale and Legerwood.

In 1957 the staff stations were North-East Junction, Rocherlea, Karoola, Lilydale, Lebrina, Nabowla, Scottsdale, Tonganah, Legerwood, Branxholm and Herrick; of these the only attended stations were North-East Junction, Lebrina, Nabowla, Scottsdale, Legerwood and Herrick.

By 1962 Rocherlea and Karoola had been closed as staff stations, Mowbray opened (unattended) and Lebrina and Nabowla were unattended. Rocherlea became an unattended staff station on 6 September 1971 to facilitate Bell Bay line construction and Coldwater Creek Junction became an unattended staff station in about June 1972. After the East Tamar Junction–Coldwater Creek Junction section was rebuilt Miniature Electric Staff working was introduced between those locations, with a subsidiary instrument at the junction of the Mowbray spur.

Train Order working replaced Staff working on AN Tasmanian Region (Tasrail) from 12.01 a.m. on 3 January 1984. Immediately prior to this change, safeworking arrangements in the North-East had consisted of the East Tamar Junction–Coldwater Creek Junction Miniature Electric Staff section and Ordinary Train Staff and Ticket sections between Coldwater Creek Junction and Lilydale, Lebrina, Scottsdale, Tonganah, Legerwood, Branxholm and Herrick.

Storage and Scrapping of Locomotives

From the 1940s onwards there was often a considerable number of steam locomotives in store or awaiting scrapping at Launceston. In order to clean up the yard a bit, two storage sidings were laid behind Mowbray passenger

platform and in 1951 some 16 locomotives were stored there in various stages of dismemberment. They included 4-4-0s B 1, B 5, B 9, B 12 and B 13, 2-6-0s C 5, C 10 and CC 27, 2-6-4 tank DS 2, 2-6-2 tank P 1, 2-4-2 tanks D 3 and D 4, Baldwin 0-6-0 tank *Big Ben* and Garratts L 1, L 2 and M 2. This group was sold for scrap in October 1951 (with the exception of CC 27, which was returned to service) but many other locomotives were cut up at Mowbray over the next 16 years. They included 18 of the 19 Q class 4-8-2s, which were cut up in two batches in 1961–62 and 1965 and most of the R class Pacifics, T class 4-8-0s and C and CC class 2-6-0s. The last two locomotives delivered to the Mowbray scrap sidings were CC 26 and CC 27 in late 1967 but 4-8-2s H 3, H 4 and H 8 were cut up on the old main line at Mowbray in 1979.

Some locomotives not immediately due for scrapping were also stored on the North-Eastern line. The eight A class 4-4-0s were at Turners Marsh in the mid-1950s, while the withdrawal of all 14 ASGs between 1953 and 1957 resulted in the majority of the class being stored in various sidings between Mowbray and Bacala. In May 1958 G 6, G 7 and G 12 were at Mowbray, A 4, G 8 and G 19 at Turners Marsh, G 37 and G 61 at Karoola and G 9 and G 38 at Bacala. The last two ASGs to be removed were G 37 and G 61, which were still at Karoola in August 1961; they were condemned a few months later.

Construction of the Bell Bay Railway

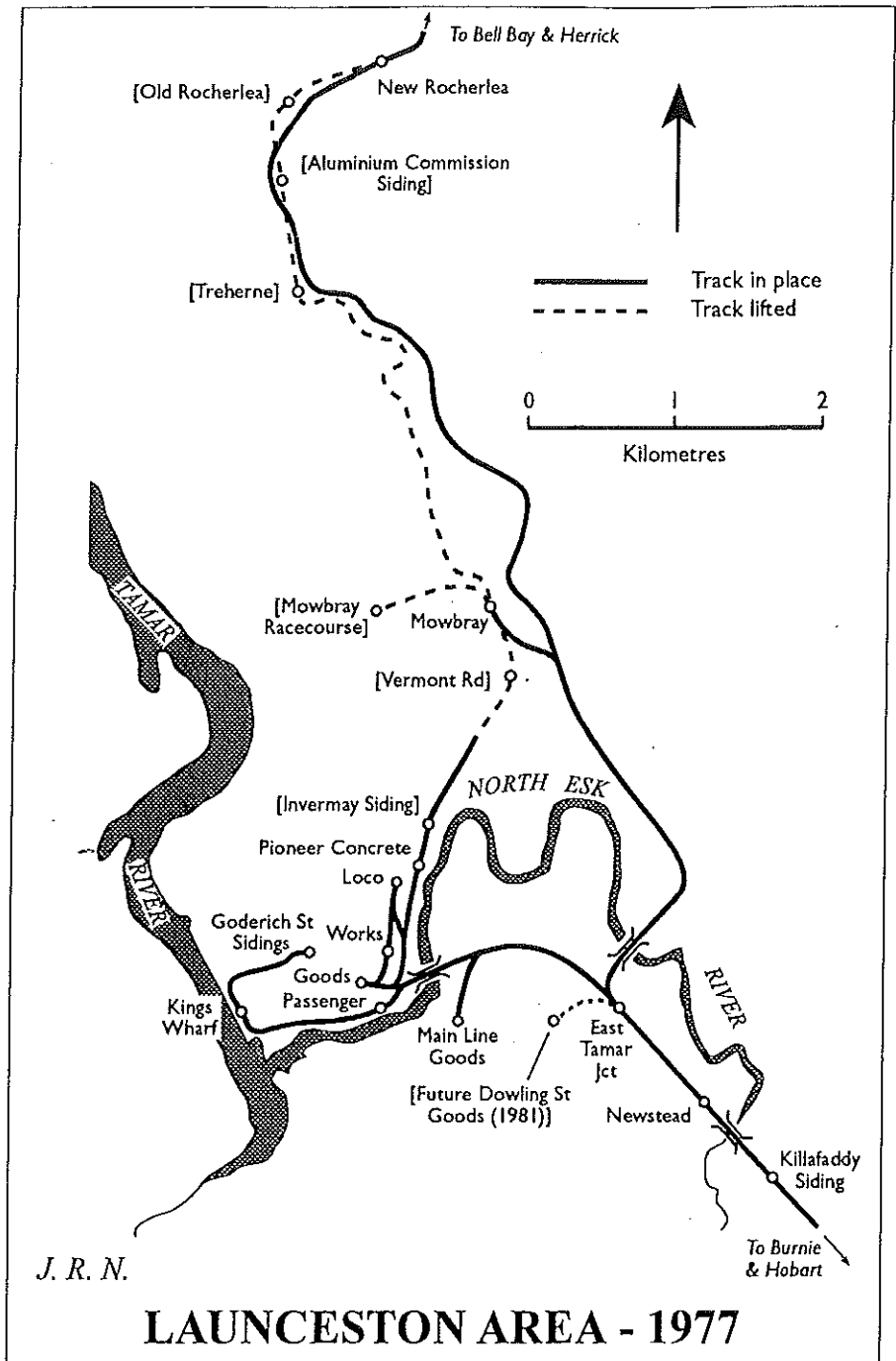
The port of Launceston is accessible to vessels of no more than a few thousand tonnes because of shallow water in the Tamar River, a problem which has gradually worsened as the river silted up. Deep water berths were established on the western side of the Tamar estuary at Beauty Point and Inspection Head and on the eastern side at Bell Bay and over the years various proposals were made for the construction of a railway down the lower Tamar Valley.

The opening of the Comalco aluminium refinery in 1955 confirmed Bell Bay as the major deep water port and industrial centre for the Launceston area but it was the decision made in 1970 to construct two wood-chip mills and associated port facilities at Longreach, south of Bell Bay, which finally justified the construction of a railway down the eastern side of the Tamar Valley to Bell Bay. Commonwealth assistance of 85 per cent of the construction cost was announced on 9 April 1971 and planning commenced immediately afterwards.

Points were installed in about April 1972 at 12.3 km from Launceston, the location becoming known as Coldwater Creek Junction. Home signals were brought into operation at Coldwater Creek Junction on 20 June 1972. Track laying commenced on the new line on 21 June 1972 and it was sufficiently complete for a trial log train to run to Longreach on 12 January 1973. An opening passenger special for dignitaries ran to Longreach on 1 February 1973 and regular log train operations commenced the same day.

Late in 1972 construction began on what was virtually a new railway from East Tamar Junction (situated 2.0 km south of Launceston on the Western line) to Coldwater Creek Junction with a ruling gradient of 1 in 70. This permitted log trains to run directly to and from the Bell Bay line without reversing in Launceston yard and avoided the difficult sections of the North-Eastern line over Mowbray Hill. The new line followed a separate route to the east of the old line from East Tamar Junction to Treherne (just south of Rocherlea) and then continued to Coldwater Creek Junction on or close to the old line but with extensive regrading and realignment.

The new line was formally brought into use on 18 August 1974 and the old line from North-East Junction to



Treherne was closed as a through route at the same time. Mowbray station remained in use for both revenue and works traffic. It was initially accessed from the north via a temporary junction at Treherne but on 20 December 1974 a new 800 m spur was opened to the southern end of Mowbray yard from a point on the new line 2.7 km north of East Tamar Junction. From North-East Junction the old line was retained almost to Vermont Road for cement traffic to a new terminal south of the old Invermay siding and for wagon storage beyond. The track was lifted in the mid 1980s.

Changes in Freight Traffic

Freight traffic on the North-Eastern line was traditionally made up of a variety of commodities. Outward traffic consisted mainly of sawn timber, logs, firewood, potatoes, dairy produce and livestock. Inward traffic consisted of fertilisers, fuels and everything else required by town and farm residents from beer to machinery. In 1919-20 stations on the line consigned 65,019 tonnes of revenue freight and received 23,784 tonnes.

By 1949-50 the comparable figures

were 30,498 tonnes and 21,593 tonnes, the decrease in outward traffic reflecting the decline in the timber industry. By 1969-70 the tonnages had increased to 35,531 outwards and 38,040 inwards; the increases were due mainly to pine poles thinned from plantations and rail/ferry containers outwards and superphosphate inwards.

From the mid-1970s, the line was transformed quite quickly from a general carrier to a much more specialised operation dependent on a limited range of bulk traffics. The first step in the process was the establishment of a china clay mine at Tonganah by Associated Pulp and Paper Mills in 1975. The clay is transported to the APPM (now Amcor) paper mill at South Burnie in tank wagons. In 1978 a new siding was opened west of Blumont to load pine logs from the district's extensive plantations for Australian Newsprint Mills at Boyer. Further sidings for pine traffic were installed at Tonganah in 1984 and at the site of the old Ling Siding west of Tonganah in 1987. Depots for eucalypt logs for woodchipping were established at Tonganah and Derby in 1979 and at Herrick in 1982.

All this new traffic produced the highest tonnages and heaviest trains ever seen on the line. Three unit combinations of ZB or ZC locomotives were permitted to take a ruling grade load of 1500 tonnes and three unit combinations of 830 class locomotives were permitted 1220 tonnes. In 1987 four unit combinations of 830s were working 26-wagon woodchip log trains out of Herrick. The pattern of operation was also modified. In the early-1970s there was only one Goods in

each direction (crossing at Branxholm) with provision for an extra train as far as Scottsdale if required. By 1978 the Herrick trains were crossing at Scottsdale and there was a second train regularly running as far as Scottsdale and continuing to Tonganah and Legerwood as a shunting trip when required. In 1987 there was one round trip daily from East Tamar to Herrick and one to Tonganah, the two trips being arranged so that they did not need to cross on the North-Eastern line.

The clay and log traffic came just in time because the line's traditional traffics in livestock, dairy and vegetable products and merchandise disappeared rapidly in the late 1970s and 1980s. Much of this was probably the inevitable result of deregulation and changing distribution patterns which have led to the virtual elimination of general purpose secondary railways from Australia. However, one must still wonder whether the loss of traffic such as refrigerated containers was unavoidable.

The concentration on bulk traffics intensified the process of station closures and building removals. Several of the more remote sidings had closed in the 1950s and early-1960s and between 1969 and 1972 Bacala, Tunnel, Blumont and Telita were also closed. Lalla closed in about 1976 and Turners Marsh, Wyena, Golconda, Lietinna and Tulendeena in 1978.

The Winnaleah-Herrick section of the line was closed to all traffic on 2 October 1978 because of the poor condition of the bridge over David's Creek but the bridge was replaced with a bank and culvert and the line reopened on 25 January 1982 to serve the new Herrick woodchip log termi-

nal. Derby closed in 1984 and the concentration of superphosphate traffic at bulk terminals finished most of the remaining stations, Karoola, Lilydale, Lebrina and Nabowla closing in 1986, Rocherlea, Legerwood, Branxholm and Winnaleah in 1987 and Tonganah (apart from private sidings) and Herrick (apart from logs) in 1988.

Most station buildings and goods sheds survived until the full Australian National takeover of the TGR in March 1978 but they were virtually eliminated in the early-1980s. Many of the old TGR staff cottages survive in private ownership, although some have been considerably altered.

In recent years, eucalypt and pine logs, which were the main contributors to Tasrail's growth in the 1970s and 1980s, have proved to be the least reliable of Tasrail's main traffics, with strong road competition and sudden changes in volumes and loading points. This has caused major problems on secondary lines which have come to depend wholly or largely on timber traffic.

On the North-Eastern line the Herrick woodchip log traffic was suspended in April 1991, resumed in January 1992 and ceased again permanently in April 1992. As there had been no other traffic beyond Tonganah since 1988 this resulted in the closure of the upper end of the line and a considerable amount of rails and sleepers have since been recovered for use elsewhere. The Blumont pine log traffic ceased in 1991 but in February 1996 the line still justified the running of one train a day to handle the Ling pine traffic, china clay from Tonganah and superphosphate to the bulk terminal at Scottsdale.

[To be Continued]
oooOOOooo

Letters to the Editor

New South Wales Railways—Passenger Carriages {Bulletins 676 February 1994, 693 July 1995 and 701 March 1996}

Dear Sir,

I have just read the letter by Mr G. Kirkby (March 1996) and then Paul Rogers's letter (July 1995). Unfortunately, my copy of *Bulletin 676* is in a "to be sorted and filed" heap at the moment, so I have not reread the original article. They mention a series of old train photographs that Paul suggests were taken on the Bankstown line.

I would like to suggest that the initial series of photographs were taken in 1905 for the 50th anniversary celebrations. However, this basic series then appears to have been added to over the years, the one mentioned by Paul involving post-1912 cars (see *Man of Steam*, p. 71) being a case in point and the photos on pages 195 and 287 of *Railways of New South Wales*, as mentioned by Mr Kirkby, are another two. As far as I am aware, the original 1905 series included the following:

1. 1 class locomotive and early four-wheel cars.

Published in *Railways of New South Wales*, p. 33 and elsewhere. Described as "a representative train of the early sixties".

2. Side-on view of above. Published in *The Greatest Public Work*, p. 120.
3. D class and train, c. 1880s type. Published in *With Iron Rails*, p. 82.
4. Side view of above. Published in *Locomotives of New South Wales, Volume 1*, p. 54.
5. Side view of train similar to above but three Redfern cars at front and next car different.



Karoola station looking towards Launceston on 29 November 1969. Twin-gabled station buildings were also provided at Lilydale and Scottsdale.

Photo: H. J. W. Stokes

(Tas.)

THE NORTH-EASTERN LINE OF THE TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS

by H. J. W. Stokes

(Continued from Bulletin 713 March 1997)

Description of the Line

North-Eastern line trains leaving **Launceston** station travelled towards Hobart for the first 300 metres of their journey until they diverged from the Western line on to the North-Eastern line at North-East Junction signal cabin. In accordance with the rather complicated TGR system for determining directions of travel they were therefore designated as Up trains and continued to be Up trains all the way to Herrick, even though they were travelling away from Hobart for almost their entire journey. The Up side was therefore the left-hand side (in general the western or northern side) of trains travelling towards Herrick.

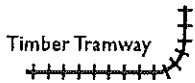
Immediately beyond North-East

Junction the line crossed the entrance to Launceston goods yard on a diamond crossing and then followed the bank of the North Esk River, passing the workshops, locomotive yard and roundhouse on the Up side. **Invermay Siding** (1.6 km) handled goods traffic only (mainly timber) from 1921–22 until the early 1960s. Approximately 1.8 kilometres from Launceston the line left the North Esk flood plain and began the ascent of Mowbray Hill on a 1 in 40 grade, the scene of some notable contests with gravity on frosty mornings, particularly with the light-footed M class Pacifics.

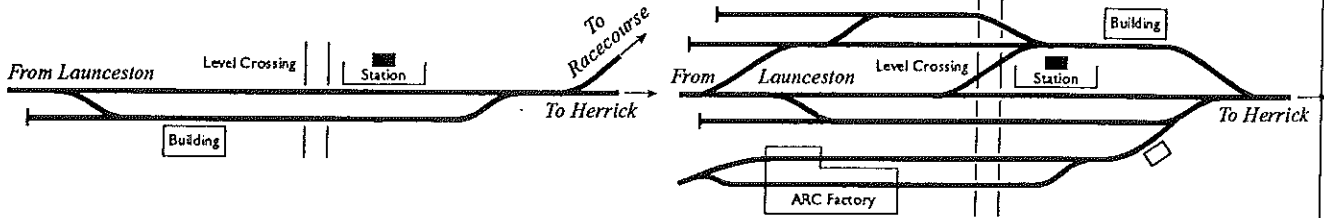
Vermont Road (2.8 km) was a passenger stopping place opened in 1954 and abandoned with the Scottsdale rail motor service in 1956. **Mowbray** (3.3 km) originally had a loop siding

and dead-end and the Mowbray Racecourse branch diverged from the Up end of the yard between 1907 and 1939. From the 1940s onwards several sidings were added to serve an engineering factory, timber yard and ballast dump. The southern end of the yard remained in use in February 1996 for container traffic and wagon storage, accessed from the Bell Bay line via the 1974 spur.

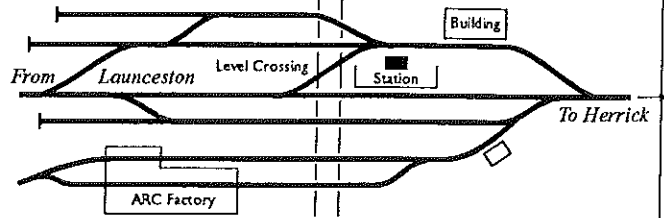
Beyond Mowbray the line climbed again on 1 in 40 and 1 in 50 grades to Rocherlea. **Treherne** stopping place (6.4 km) was opened in 1954 and continued to be used occasionally for school excursions until the early-1970s. **Aluminium Commission Siding** (7.2 km) was in use between 1955 and about 1961 for the transfer of Fingal Valley coal for road delivery to Bell Bay. The siding was then used



INVERMAY SIDING



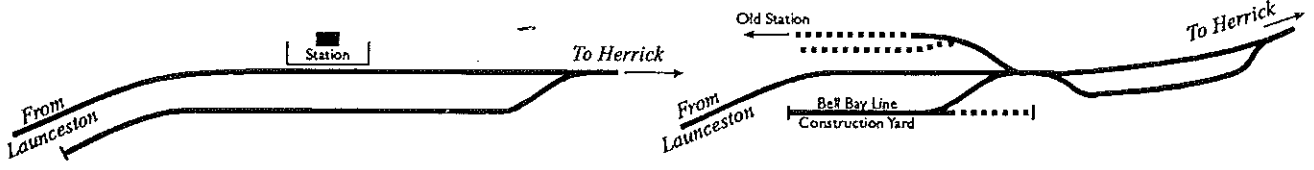
MOWBRAY JCT - 1930



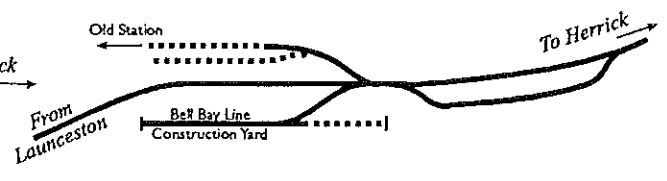
MOWBRAY - 1971



ALUMINIUM COMMISSION SIDING



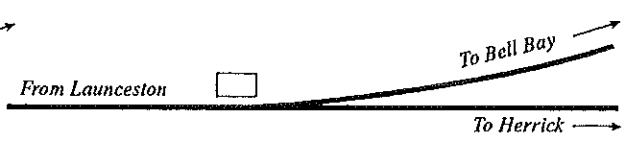
ROCHERLEA - 1961



ROCHERLEA - 1977



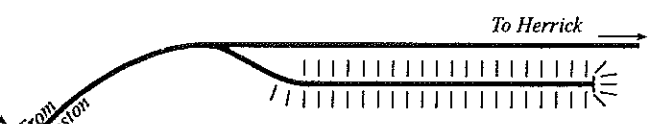
BARNARDS CREEK SIDING



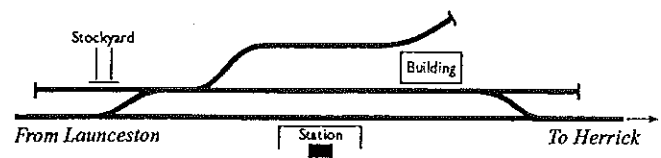
COLDWATER CREEK JCT



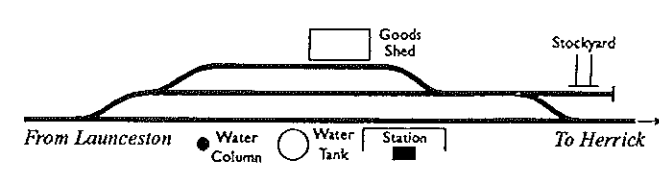
NELSON CREEK



BANKING SIDING



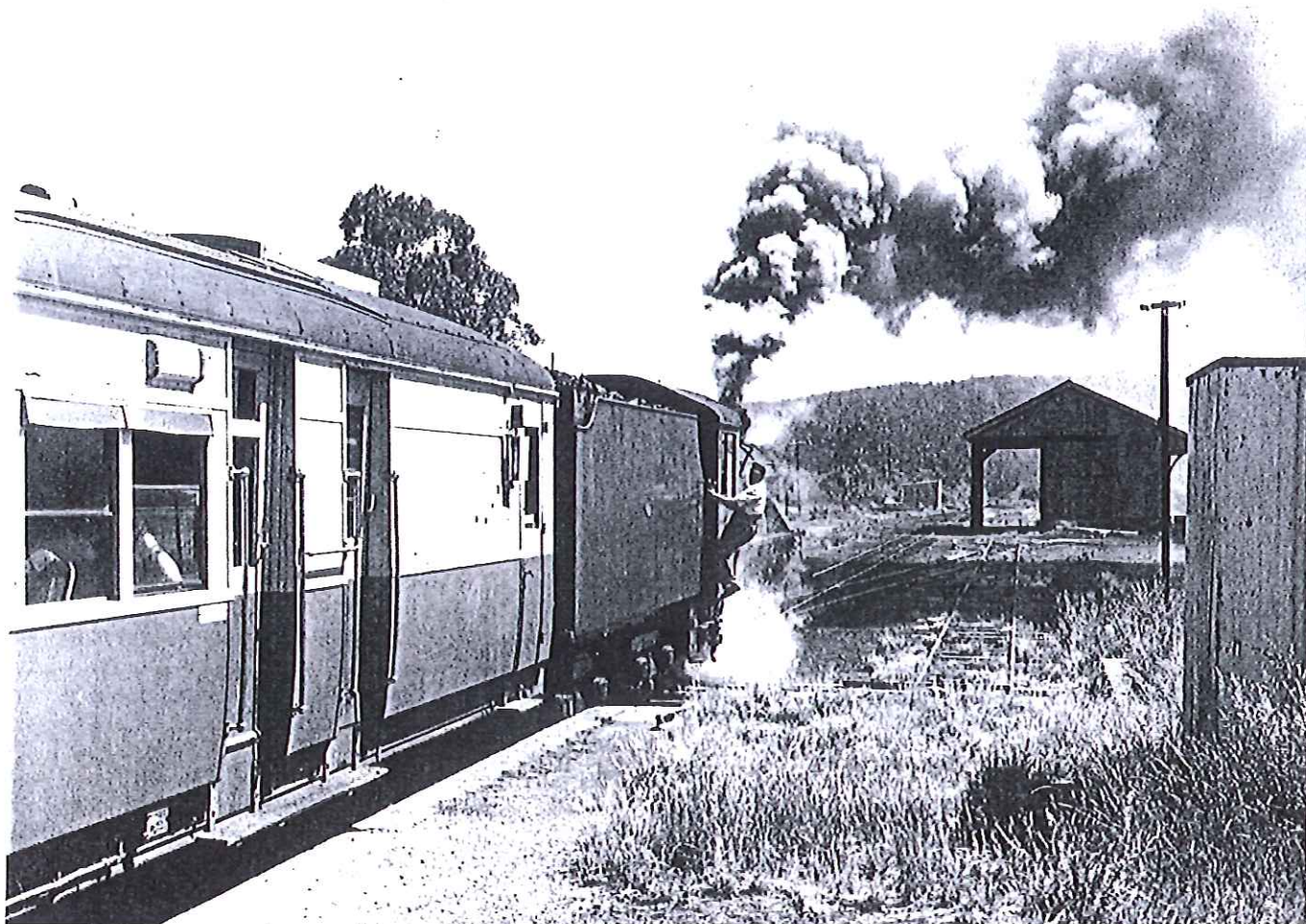
TURNERS MARSH



KAROOLA

NORTH-EAST LINE STATION DIAGRAMS

J. R. N.



Pacific M 5 leaving Lilydale for Scottsdale with a passenger special on 29 November 1969.

Photo: H. J. W. Stokes

for wagon storage until it was removed in conjunction with the realignment.

Rocherlea (7.5 km) had a loop and dead-end but it was bypassed by the new line which passed under the Lilydale main road in a cutting. A loop was provided on the new line beyond the old station and it has been used at various times for local goods traffic (until 1987), reversing log trains and cleaning pine log wagons. Just beyond the new loop **Barnards Creek Siding** was formed from a 100 m radius curve which had been replaced by a new section of line to the west. The siding was intended for ballast traffic but it was abandoned after several years' use for wagon storage.

Rocherlea is the end of suburban housing development and the line continues northward through bushland on a generally level formation. **Coldwater Creek Junction** (12.5 km from East Tamar Junction by the new line) has colour light Home signals and a staff cabin. In 1981 the North-Eastern line was remeasured and the old quarter mile posts measured from Launceston were replaced by new posts at 500 m intervals commencing from 0.0 km at Coldwater Creek. Virtually no official metric distances were

issued for the line and in order to establish locations to one decimal point I have walked the distance from nearly all stations or station sites to the nearest metric post and checked the results against mathematical conversions of the old mileages.

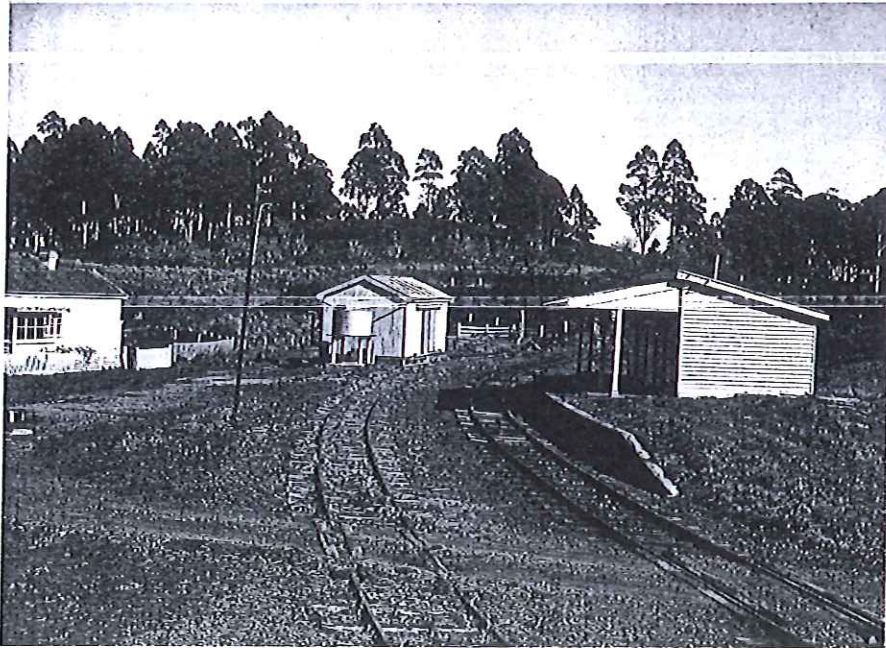
Beyond Coldwater Creek the North-Eastern line is back on typical narrow Tasmanian formation with frequent cuttings, embankments and changes of curve and grade as it climbs across the range of forested hills between the Tamar and Pipers Rivers. A siding was installed for a quarry in 1920–21 at 8½ miles (approximately 1.3 km from Coldwater Creek Junction) but no other details are known. A section of 1.8 km of level track (the last level section of any significance on the whole line) ends just beyond **Nelsons Creek** (4.1 km), which was opened in 1905 and ceased to handle revenue traffic in about 1956, although the loop and shelter were still in place in 1964.

The line continues to climb on 1 in 40 or 1 in 50 grades to a summit at **Banking Siding** (8.1 km), which was a dead-end siding running out on to an embankment installed some time between 1918 and 1922. It was

awkwardly sited with the main line falling away at 1 in 40 in each direction, on the Launceston side in a cutting on a 100 m curve. In consequence, when an engine had brought the second half of its load up from Turners Marsh it was permitted to continue to Launceston trailing the first half of the load behind the van. The siding had probably been removed by 1940.

Turners Marsh (8.9 km; 232 m above sea level) had a loop and two dead-ends and an additional dead-end had been installed by the early 1950s for storing locomotives and wagons. It was closed for revenue traffic in 1978 but the Launceston end of the loop remained until at least 1987. Beyond the station the line continues a precipitous descent through a mixture of forest and farmland, predominantly on grades between 1 in 40 and 1 in 50, with numerous sharp curves. McKennas Gorge is crossed at approximately 10 km on an embankment which replaced a six-span timber trestle in 1915.

Approaching **Karoola** (14.1 km; 145 m above sea level) the line crosses the Pipers River on a 95 m bridge which originally consisted of a central iron girder and 12 timber trestle spans;



*Tunnel station looking towards Launceston on 29 August 1970.
Photo: H. J. W. Stokes*

the timber spans were replaced by steel spans on concrete piers in 1991. Karoola had a twin gable weatherboard station building and two loops and a dead-end. It closed for revenue traffic in 1986 but the outer loop is still in place. A dam and hydraulic ram were installed in 1899 for locomotive water and a concrete tank (also still in place) was added in 1911–12.

From Karoola the line climbs through farmland, mainly on grades between 1 in 40 and 1 in 50, to cross the ridge between the Pipers and Second Rivers. There are some quite large cuttings and banks as the line winds round the northern slopes of Browns Hill, notably a 20 metre high embankment at Brooks Gully. Lalla (16.2 km) had a loop and two dead-ends; it opened in 1903 and closed in about 1976. Seafield (17.6 km) had a loop siding from 1924–25 to 1955. Downies Crossing (18.8 km) was situated immediately beyond the summit and handled passengers and van goods from approximately 1918 to the early 1960s.

The line then descends on 1 in 40 and 1 in 44 grades to Lilydale (21.5 km; 164 m above sea level), which is the largest town between Launceston and Scottsdale. It is attractively situated in a valley of fertile farmland dominated by Mt Arthur (1187 m) and its surrounding forested ridges to the east. Lilydale had a twin gable weatherboard station building, which in earlier years included a refreshment room. At its maximum extent the yard consisted of three loops and three dead-ends, with a corrugated iron

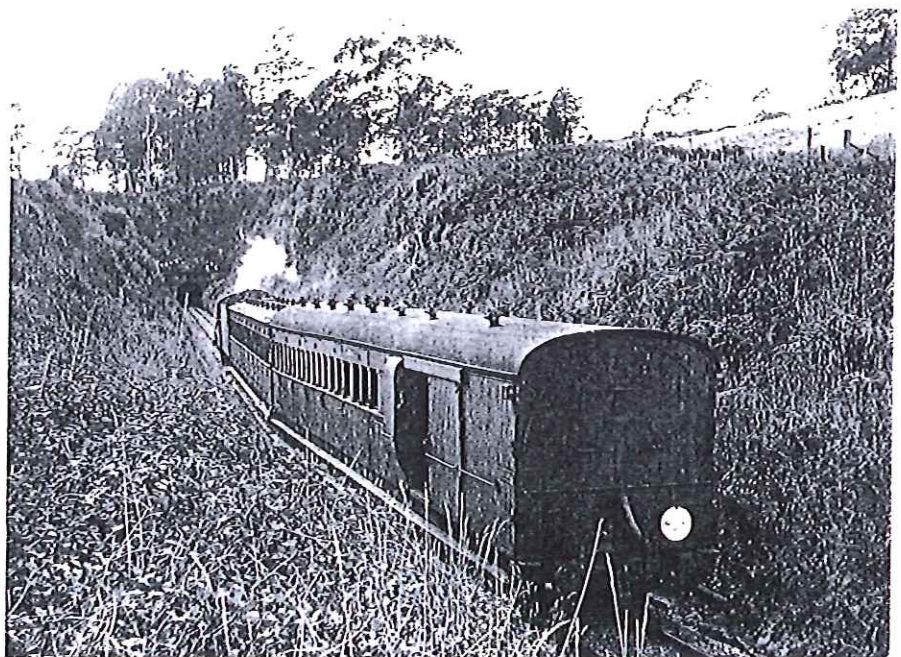
overline goods shed, stockyard, timber loading platform, coal stage and ash pit. On the Launceston side of the main yard there was a spur to a fruit packing shed and timber mill. By 1961 the layout had been reduced to the crossing and goods loops, each with a trailing dead-end. The station building was removed in 1982 and revenue traffic ceased in 1986 but the crossing loop is still in place.

At Lilydale the line turns northwards and continues downgrade to Lilydale Falls stopping place (23.5 km), where it crosses the Second River on a steel girder span on concrete

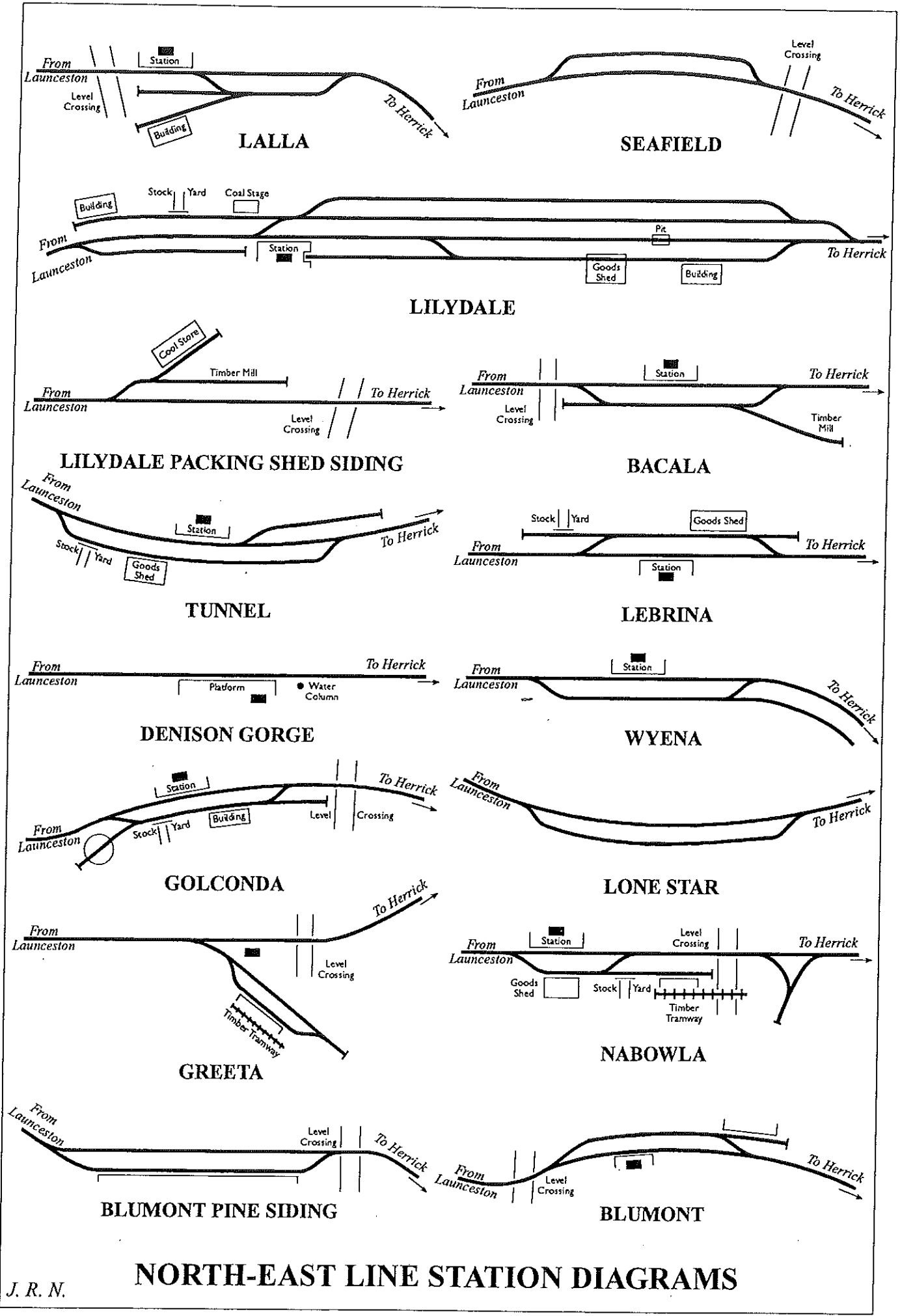
piers. The bridge is situated in a scenic reserve and a gravelled area was provided for passengers to disembark on the Lilydale side of the bridge and then walk to the falls through a gate in the Down side fence. Immediately beyond the bridge the line begins a 5.7 km climb on predominantly 1 in 40 and 1 in 44 grades to traverse Halls Tier, one of the northern spurs of Mt Arthur.

Bacala (25.5 km) was opened between 1913 and 1969. In earlier years it had a loop and two dead-ends but by 1961 only the loop was left. Approaching the top of the climb the line turns eastward through a big 100 m radius horseshoe and reaches Tunnel (29.0 km; 280 m above sea level). It originally had a loop and dead-end. In the early 1920s the Herrick–Launceston Goods was regularly dividing at Wyena and stowing the first half of its load in the siding at Tunnel, which interfered with timber loading. In 1922 a dead-end banking siding was installed beyond the passenger platform and the original dead-end was later incorporated in the goods loop. The banking siding was removed in 1944 and the whole station closed in 1969.

The summit of this section of the line is at the Launceston end of the 705 m tunnel, through which the line descends on a 1 in 60 grade. The tunnel was cut from each end and from two vertical shafts through wet slate and sandstone, requiring the sides to be lined with concrete and the roof and ends with bricks. Beyond the tunnel the line makes a winding descent

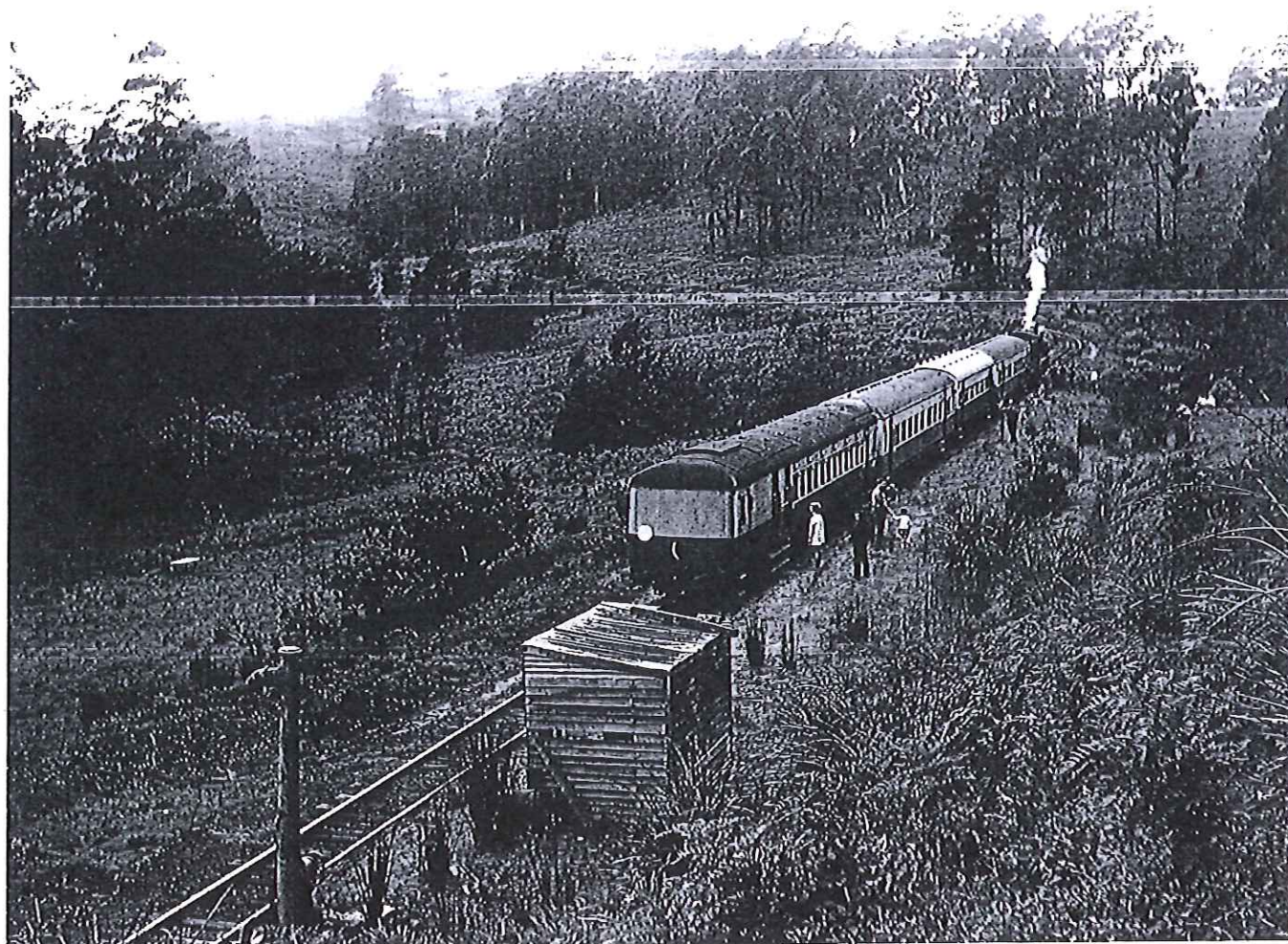


*Pacific M 6 approaches the west end of the tunnel with a passenger special on 13 March 1966.
Photo: H. J. W. Stokes*



NORTH-EAST LINE STATION DIAGRAMS

J. R. N.



Denison Gorge station, looking towards Launceston on 29 November 1969.

Photo: H. J. W. Stokes

on predominantly 1 in 40 and 1 in 44 grades into the narrow valley of the Denison River. The grade eases briefly for **Lebrina** station (32.4 km; 210 m above sea level), which was closed to revenue traffic in 1986 but retains its loop.

Below Lebrina there is a large horseshoe and ten 100 m radius curves before the line reaches the bottom of Denison Gorge at Wyena. The ascent of Denison Gorge was regarded as the most difficult on any major TGR line and the diagram book issued in the early 1920s cited the haulage capacities for E, L and T class locomotives for both normal 1 in 40 grades and "on the Gorge". However, the authorities soon realised that the Gorge represented a revenue opportunity as well as an operating problem. Excursion trains began stopping at 35.1 km in December 1889 and during 1890 the TGR purchased additional land and laid out paths and bridges in the rain forest running down to the river. A platform, shelter, refreshment stall and locomotive water supply were also provided. Scheduled trains stopped at **Denison Gorge** from 20 January 1890 and excursions were run

regularly from Launceston on summer weekends, continuing to Golconda to reverse. The double-headed excursion on Boxing Day 1890 carried 800 passengers and a further 200 were turned away.

Passenger traffic to Denison Gorge virtually ceased around 1950, although the locomotive water supply was maintained. In 1972-73 volunteers restored the paths and picnic area but there were unfortunately not very many opportunities to run trains to it before all passenger operations ceased in 1978.

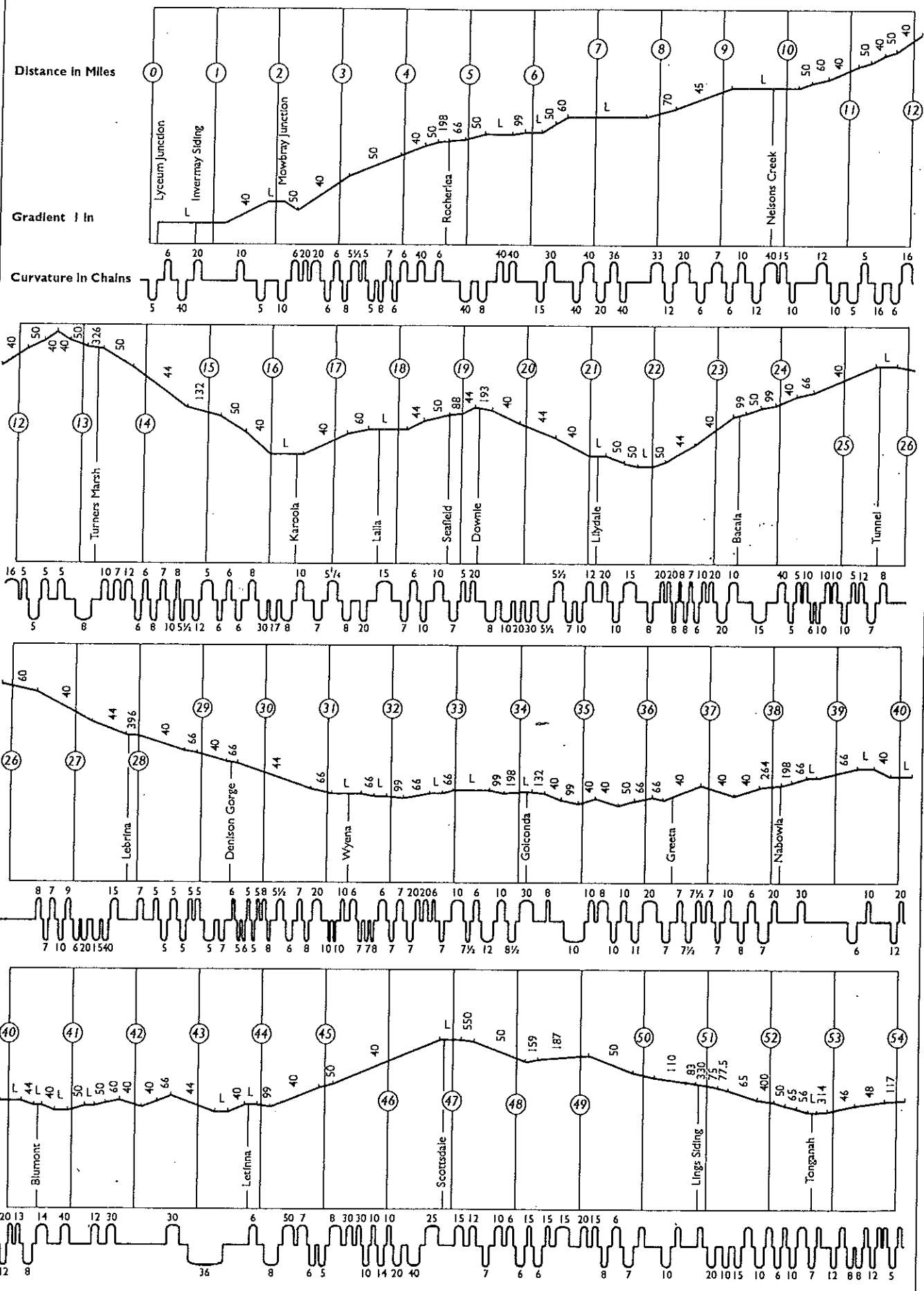
Wyena (38.1 km; 100 m above sea level) had a loop and dead-end and closed in 1978. Beyond it the Denison River turns away to the north and the line follows a switchback course eastwards through a mixture of farm and forest country with the mountains rising to the south. The line crosses a series of northward flowing rivers and creeks with some steep but generally short climbs over the intervening ridges. The largest bridges are three steel spans on concrete piers over the Little Forester River west of Nabowla and a timber trestle over the Brid River east of Lietinna.

Golconda (42.4 km; 109 m above sea level) had a loop and two dead-ends, the western of which served a 12.1 m turntable installed in 1890 and removed after the installation of the wye at Nabowla in 1918-19. The turntable was shorter than the TGR standard and may have been adapted from one of the old 1600 mm gauge Launceston and Western Railway turntables. The station closed in 1978 but the weatherboard station building survived until around 1992. **Lone Star** (43.8 km) had a loop siding between 1924-25 and approximately 1937 but did not handle passengers.

Greeta (46.0 km) was on a 1 in 40 upgrade and the siding swung away to the south with a loop so that trains could shunt on the level. The siding opened in about 1909 and closed in 1958 but the shelter on the Main line was still in place in 1961. **Nabowla** (48.8 km; 109 m above sea level) had

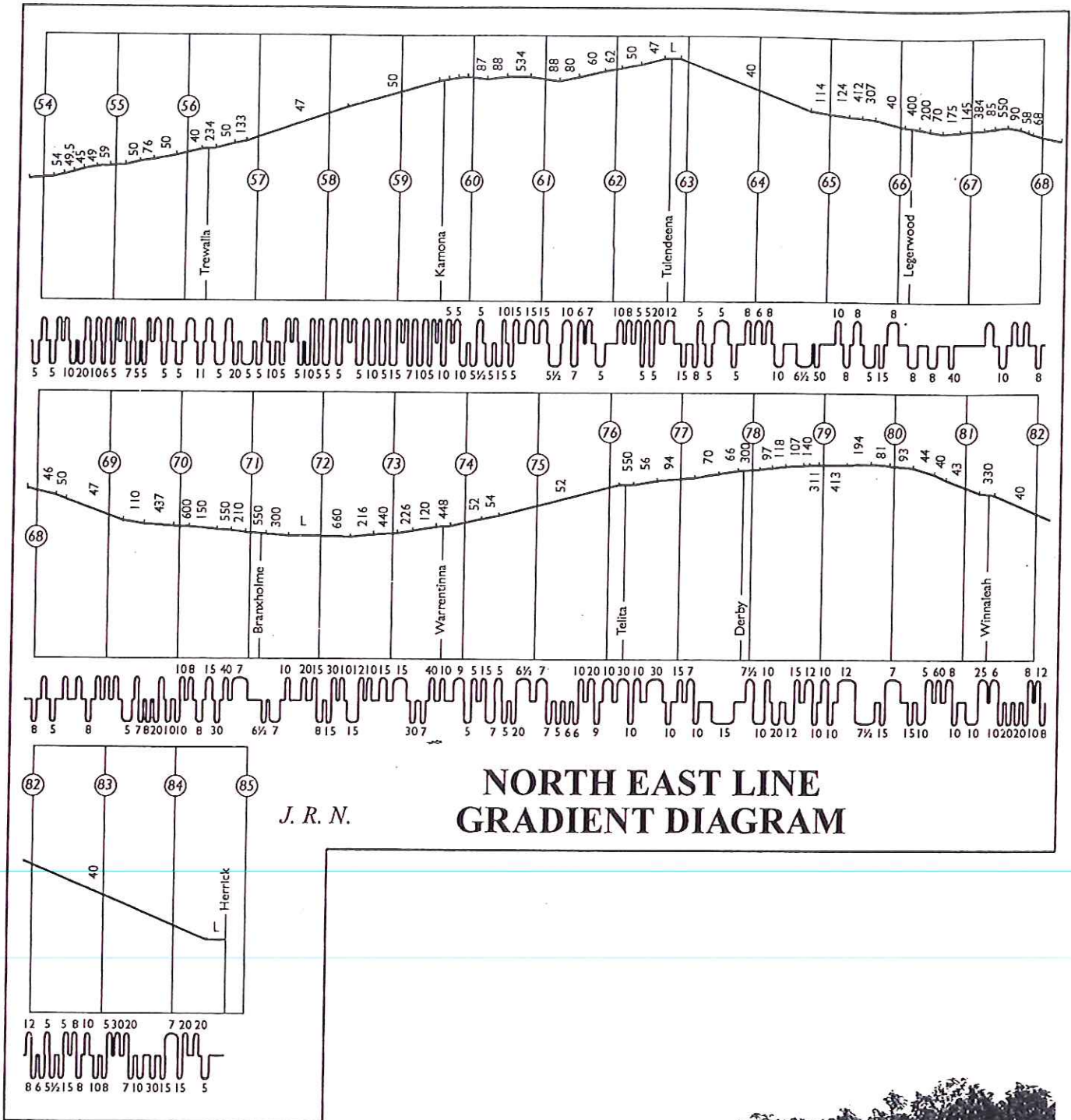
Editor's Note:

Despite numerous attempts to obtain full details for the diagrams on pages 113 and 114, we have been forced to present them with some curvatures missing.

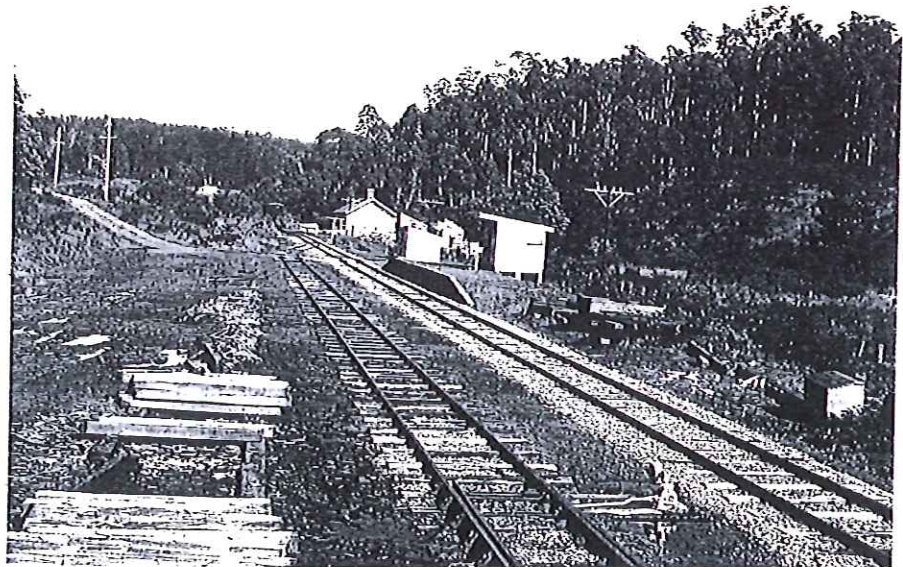


NORTH EAST LINE GRADIENT DIAGRAM

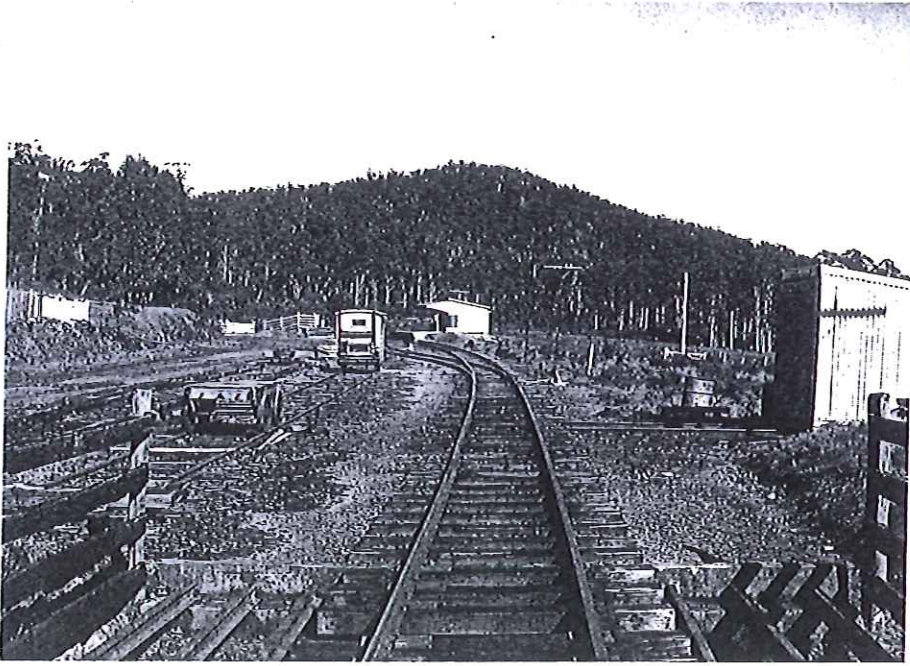
J. R. N.



a loop and dead-end plus a wye (which may have had its origin in a spur laid in to a ballast pit in 1908–09) on the Down side to the east of the station. The wye was removed in 1982 and the Scottsdale end of the loop is still there. **Blumont Pine Siding** (51.0 km) was a loop in use from 1978 to 1991. It was used for RoadRailer trials in March 1993 but has now been lifted. **Blumont** (52.6 km) was opened in 1904–05 as **Timber Siding** and renamed in 1913–14. Despite its original name it was always open for both passenger and goods traffic. It had a loop and dead-end and a rather primitive iron shelter and closed in about 1971.

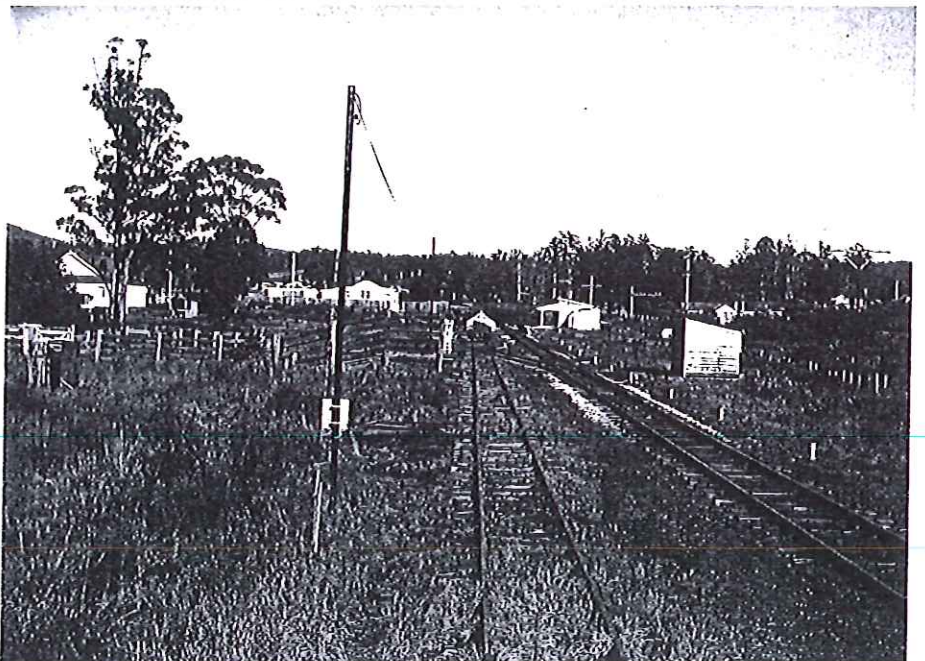


Wyena station looking towards Launceston on 29 August 1970.
Photo: H. J. W. Stokes



Golconda station looking towards Launceston on 29 August 1970.

Photo: H. J. W. Stokes



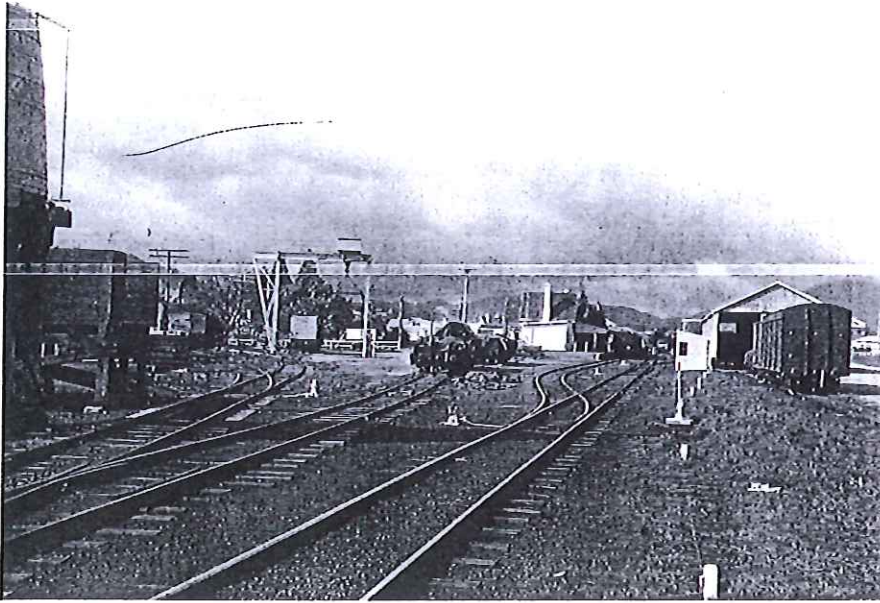
Nabowla station looking towards Launceston on 29 August 1970.

Photo: H. J. W. Stokes



The Herrick Goods at Lietinna on 20 August 1964. The train is headed by diesel-electric units XA 4 and X 16.

Photo: H. J. W. Stokes



Scottsdale station looking towards Herrick in August 1964.

Photo: H. J. W. Stokes

Lietinna (58.0 km; 94 m above sea level) had a loop and dead-end and also the only original locomotive water supply on the Launceston–Scottsdale section, water being pumped from the Brid River to a concrete reservoir on the cutting above the station. The water supply was removed after Scottsdale station was connected to the town supply in 1908–09. Lietinna was closed in 1978 but the sidings were in place until at least 1987.

Beyond the Brid River bridge the line climbs for 4.7 km on an almost continuous 1 in 40 grade on to the fertile plateau of volcanic soil on which Scottsdale is situated. Scottsdale (63.3 km; 200 m above sea level) has always been the largest town and station on the line and even in 1996 the yard remained substantially intact. The main line runs through the station as the second road, with the passenger platform on a loop to the north and the shunting and goods loops to the south. The goods loop is divided by a crossover, the western half formerly serving an overline goods shed and timber platform and the eastern half a stockyard. A spur was added for the Vacuum Oil Company at the western end of the goods loop in 1929–30.

A corrugated iron carriage shed was originally located at the eastern end of the yard but it was moved to the Launceston end of the platform when the line was extended and demolished in the 1930s. A refreshment room was added to the eastern end of the twin gable weatherboard station building in 1914–15. On the north-western side of the yard there was a two road

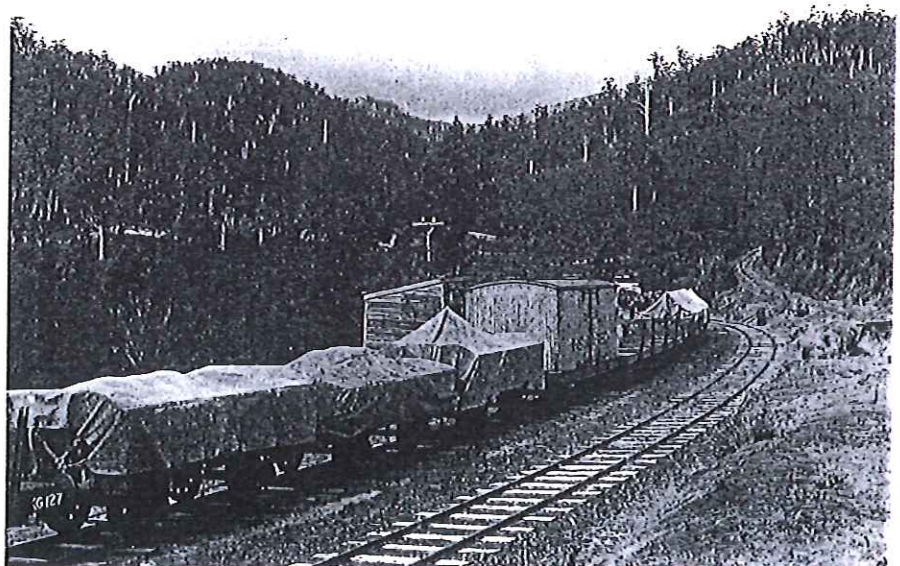
corrugated iron locomotive shed, a 13.7 m turntable and coal stage. Circular water tanks built of Huon pine were provided at each end of the yard.

During the 1960s various changes were made to the yard to handle Bass Strait rail/ferry container traffic, pine logs and superphosphate. The loco shed was demolished in the early 1960s but one of the shed roads was converted to a goods siding. A new siding serving a travelling electric gantry was installed east of the passenger platform and a fixed gantry and new loading bank provided on the dead end at the eastern end of the goods

loop. In the early 1980s all the buildings left were demolished apart from the east gable and former refreshment room of the station building, which are still used by Tasrail. A bulk superphosphate terminal with raised track over a hopper was opened on the site of the goods shed in March 1987 and substantially enlarged in 1995.

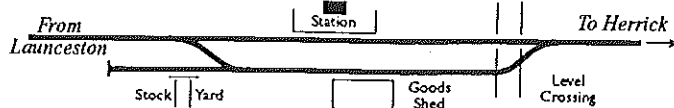
From Scottsdale the line descends to the Great Forester River at Tonganah. Ling Siding (69.4 km) was opened for passenger and goods traffic in 1918–19, although a shelter was not provided until 1922–23. It fell into disuse around 1963 and was later lifted but on 28 September 1987 a new and longer siding was opened to handle pine log and sawn pine traffic to and from the adjacent Frenchpine mill.

Tonganah (72.4 km; 113 m above sea level) is just east of the steel and concrete bridge over the Great Forester; it closed to revenue traffic in 1988 but the loop siding is still in place. The goods shed was moved to Nabowla in 1919–20. At 73.0 km (which is on the site of the old 53 mile post) the spur to Associated Pulp and Paper Mills' Tonganah clay mine diverges on the northern side of the line. The spur swings away from the main line to a loop at the mine but ends close to the main line at 73.6 km. The mine spur was opened in 1975 and on 11 April 1984 an additional 600 m spur was opened running northwards to end in two sidings at the SEAS/Sapfor (now Tasmanian Softwoods') pine mill. The pine mill spur was still in place in 1996 but had not been used since the early 1990s.

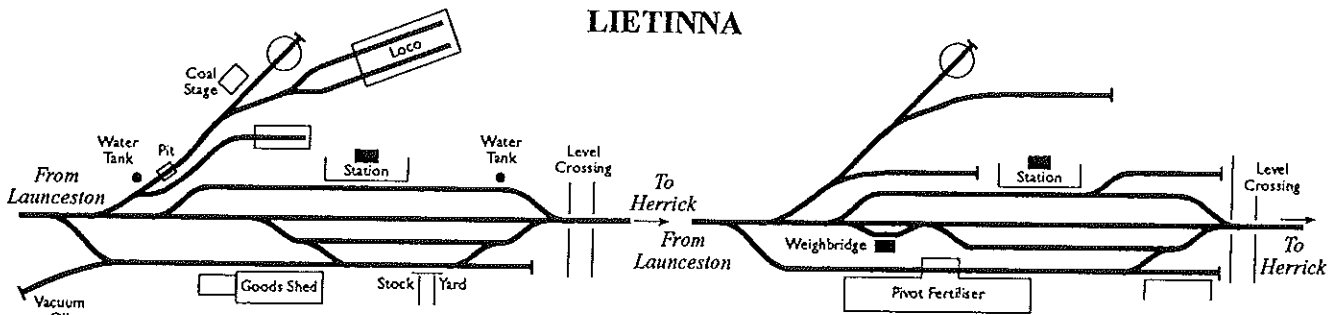


Trewalla station looking towards Herrick in August 1964.

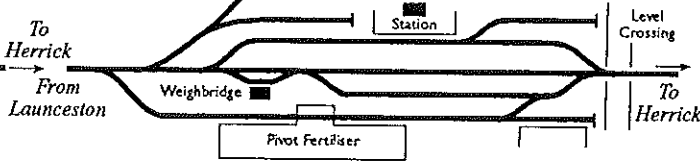
Photo: H. J. W. Stokes



LIETINNA



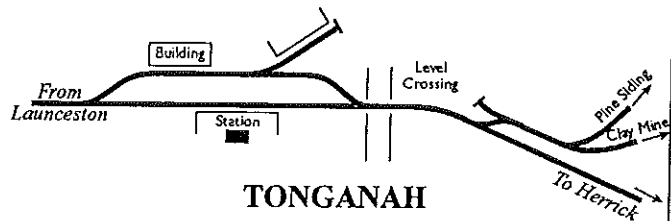
SCOTTSDALE - 1930



SCOTTSDALE - 1996



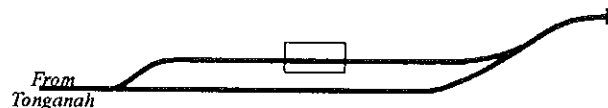
LING SIDING



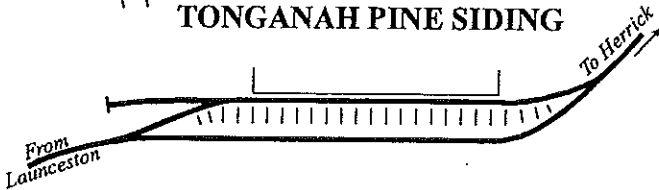
TONGANAH



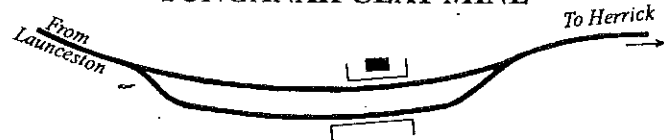
TONGANAH PINE SIDING



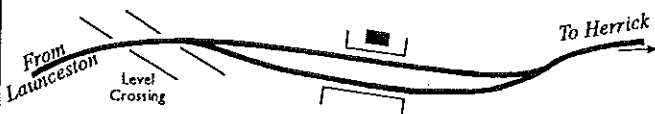
TONGANAH CLAY MINE



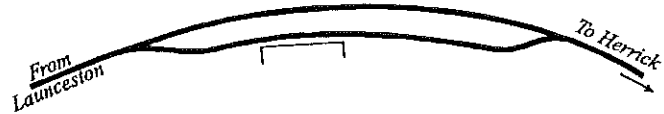
TONGANAH WOODCHIP LOG SIDING



TREWALLA



KAMONA



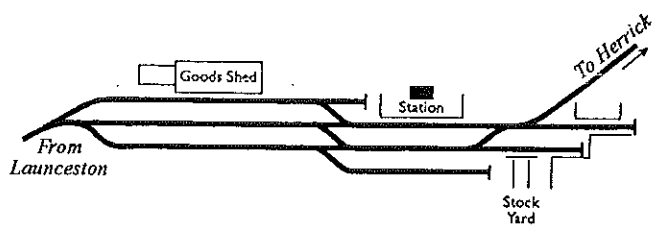
LOARRA



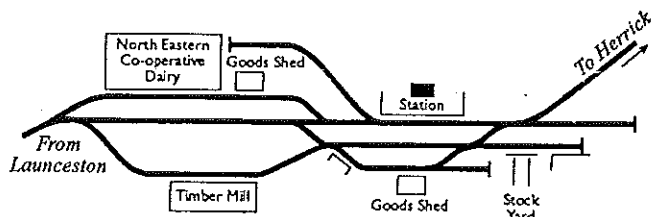
TULENDEENA



TULENDEENA BALLAST SIDING



LEGERWOOD - 1930



LEGERWOOD - 1977

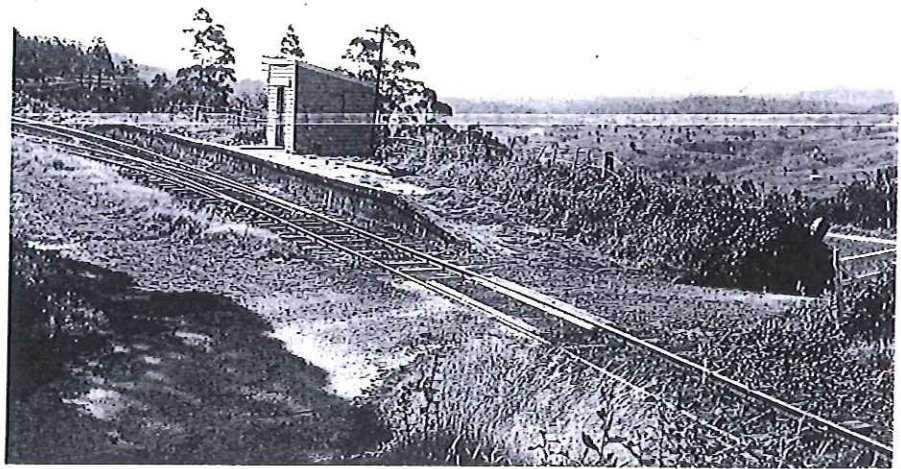
NORTH-EAST LINE STATION DIAGRAMS

J. R. N.

Beyond the APPM spur the main line has been out of use since April 1992 and is becoming heavily overgrown. It climbs steadily through forest country, predominantly on grades of between 1 in 45 and 1 in 50. A loop siding was installed in 1979 for woodchip logs at 73.5 km (adjacent to but not connected with the end of the clay mine spur) but this was later removed. The **54 Mile Tank** (74.6 km) was installed for locomotives on the Down side in 1922–23. At around 76 km the line turns southwards into a six kilometre horseshoe around the head of Parris Rivulet in order to gain height.

Trewalla (78.0 km; 204 m above sea level) served a small farming area which has disappeared into eucalypt and pine forest and traffic ceased in 1964–65. **Kamona** (83.6 km; 311 m above sea level) was just east of the saddle through the top of the ridge between the Great Forester and Arnon Rivers and the community it was intended to serve is far down through the bush to the north. Traffic had virtually ceased by the early-1950s, although the siding was still in place in 1964 and the shelter in 1977; by 1992 a short dead-end had been relaid at the Launceston end.

The line then winds south-eastwards around the headwaters of the Arnon River. **Loarra** (86.6 km) served an isolated settlement between about 1914 and 1923, although goods trains still stopped at the siding site in 1932 to unload provisions and to pick up school children for Trewalla. **Tulendeena** (88.9 km; 342 m above sea level) is the summit of the line and the station (closed in 1978) was situated



Tulendeena station looking towards Launceston in April 1969.

Photo: H. J. W. Stokes

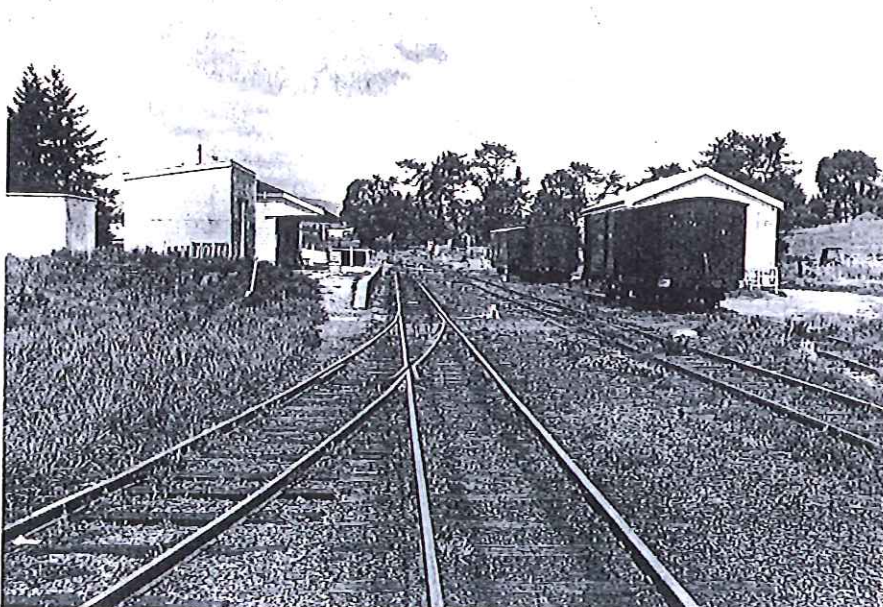
high up in the saddle between the Arnon and Ringarooma Rivers, with views far out to the north towards Bass Strait. Immediately beyond Tulendeena the line begins the precipitous descent of Billycock Hill into the Ringarooma valley on a continuous 1 in 40 grade with two big horseshoes. At 89.7 km a trailing siding to a ballast pit was opened in 1927–28 and closed in 1948; it was identified by its location of 63 miles 30 chains.

Approaching Legerwood the grade eases and the line enters the farmland of the Ringarooma valley. **Legerwood** (94.4 km; 247 m above sea level) handled a substantial volume of

timber, farm produce and fertilisers and also dairy products from the North-Eastern Co-operative Dairy factory in the station yard; in 1977 the factory was loading both insulated vans for local traffic and overseas containers on flat wagons. There were a number of additions and alterations to the layout over the years. The station closed to revenue traffic in 1987 but the station building remained in use as a post office until July 1993 and was still in place in 1996.

From Legerwood the line follows Saddle Creek and Legerwood Rivulet through farmland on grades as steep as 1 in 46 down to **Branxholm** (102.2 km; 176 m above sea level). Branxholm was laid out on similar lines to Scottsdale with a 4-track yard and a 2-road loco shed and 16.78 m turntable. The main line ran through the station as the second road; it was removed after the Herrick extension was opened but reinstated in the 1980s to avoid the curve through the platform road. The third and fourth roads and dead-end survived until after the closure of the station in 1987. The station building was removed in 1982 but the goods shed remained in private use in 1996. The loco shed and sidings were removed after the line was extended to Herrick but the circular wooden water tank remained to serve a standpipe at the Launceston end of the platform. The turntable was moved to Antill Ponds in 1920–21 and is now in use again on the Don River Railway.

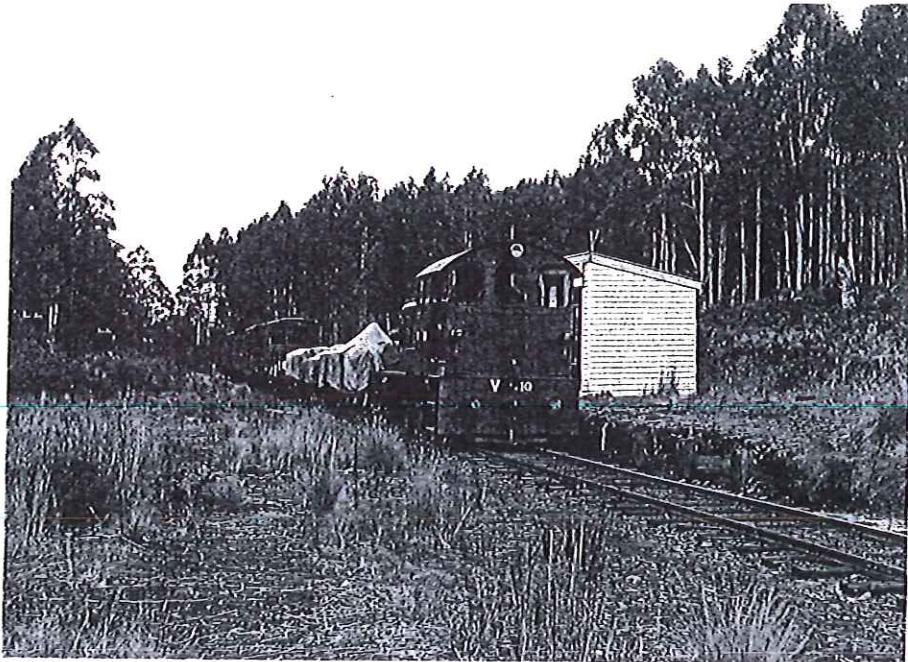
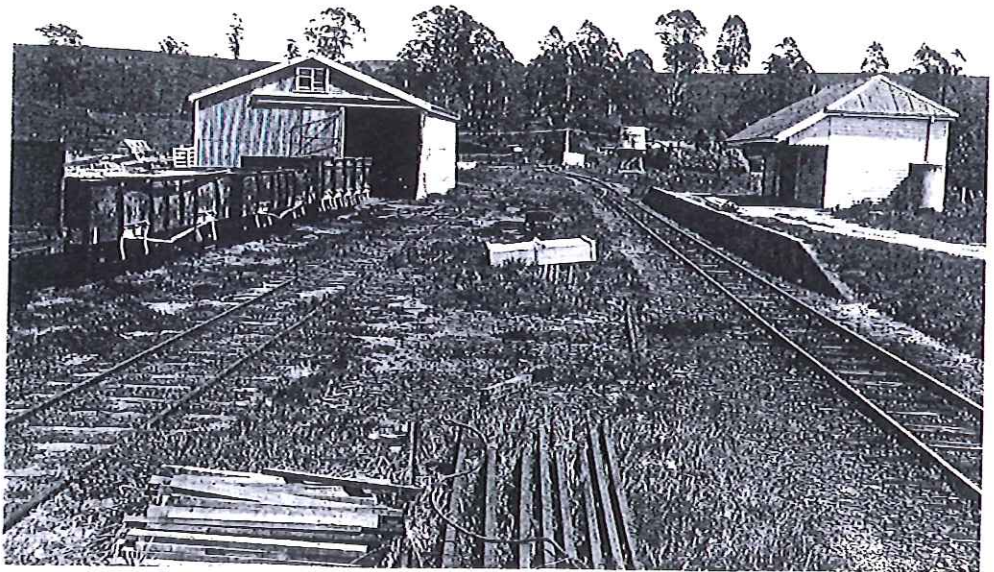
Beyond Branxholm the line runs close to the Ringarooma River, crossing Legerwood Rivulet on a 10 span



Legerwood station looking towards Herrick on 4 November 1977.

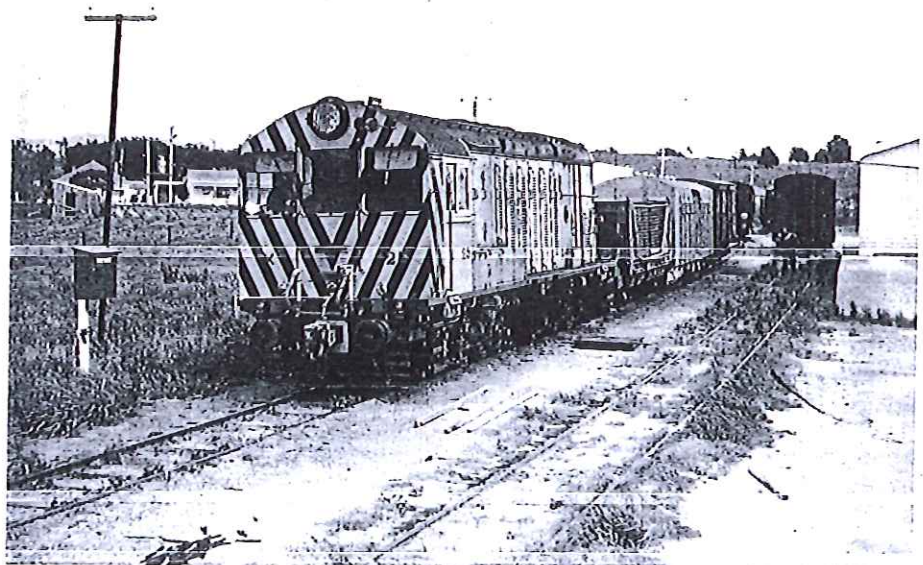
Photo: H. J. W. Stokes

Branxholm station looking towards Launceston on 4 November 1977. Photo: H. J. W. Stokes



V 10, an 0-6-0 diesel-mechanical unit, at Warrentinna with the Herrick Goods in August 1964. Photo: H. J. W. Stokes

Diesel-electric X 25 shunts the Herrick Goods at Winnaleah on 18 November 1977. Photo: H. J. W. Stokes



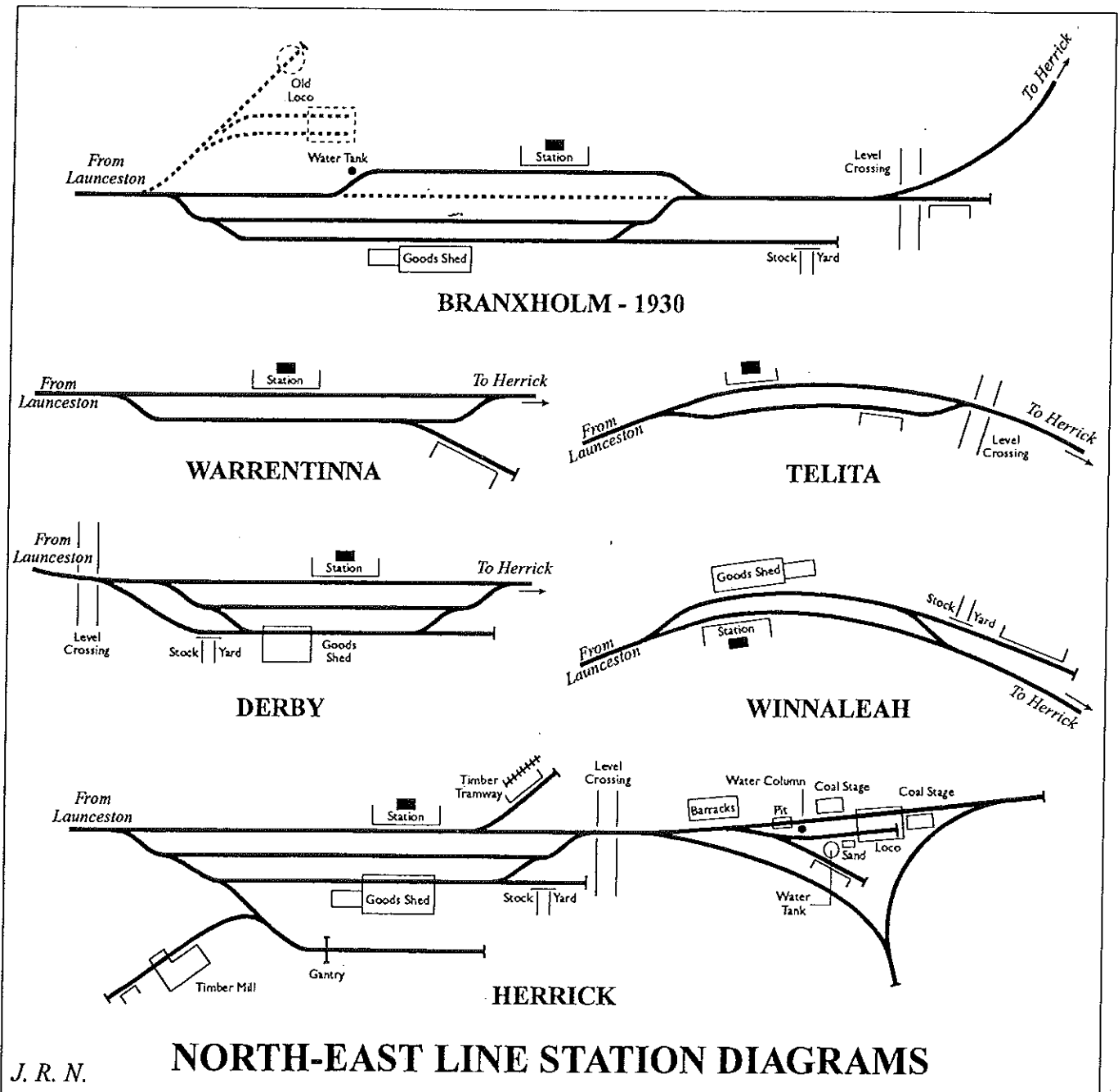
trestle. It then begins yet another winding ascent on grades of up to 1 in 52 to climb through bushland on to the plateau. **Warrentinna** (106.3 km) had a loop and two dead-ends for timber traffic; the siding was closed in 1953 but trains stopped at the shelter for van goods until about 1970. **Telita** (110.4 km) had a loop and shelter until 1972. **Derby** (113.1 km; 259 m above sea level) served an old tin mining town in the Ringarooma valley to the south and despite its isolated location it was provided with a station building and overline goods shed and two loops and a dead-end. The inner loop and goods shed had gone by 1964 and a long loading bank was provided for woodchip logs in 1979. The station closed for revenue traffic in 1984 but the siding was retained for ballast loading.

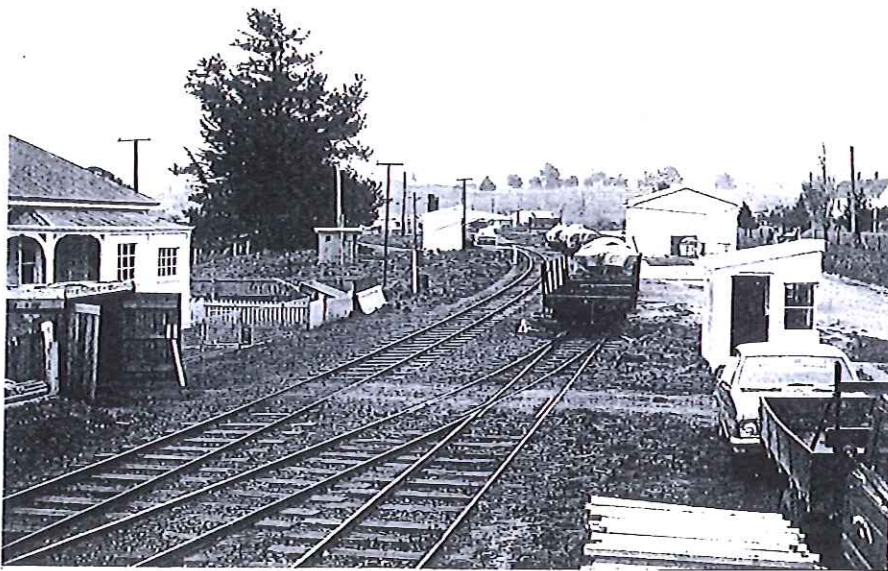
Beyond Derby the line follows an undulating route across the rich basalt farmland of the plateau with views to the mountains to the south. **Winnaleah** (116.5 km; 236 m above sea level) served a small town with a loop and a long dead-end to a stockyard and in earlier years a timber mill; the station closed in 1987. Winnaleah was one of the last stations on the line to handle livestock before Australian National abandoned the traffic in 1978.

The line ends characteristically with a continuous 1 in 40 descent and numerous sharp curves as it follows Davids Creek down from the plateau into the Ringarooma valley. **Herrick** (124.0 km; 109 m above sea level) had engine release and goods shed loops and dead-ends to a stockyard and to a log platform (later used for works vehicles) at the further end of the

passenger platform. Additional roads were provided later to a gantry for sawn timber behind the goods shed and to a timber mill at the Launceston end of the yard.

Beyond the station the line crossed the Gladstone main road and terminated in a wye, on the northern arm of which was a two road corrugated iron locomotive shed with coal stages on either side of it. There was a water tank and standpipe at the Launceston end of the shed and a siding for loading timber and sleepers within the wye. The shed was demolished in the mid-1970s but the X class diesel-electric working the Goods continued to turn on the wye and stable at the shed site until 1978. The old station was virtually razed to make way for the woodchip log terminal, which was built on the site of the passenger platform.



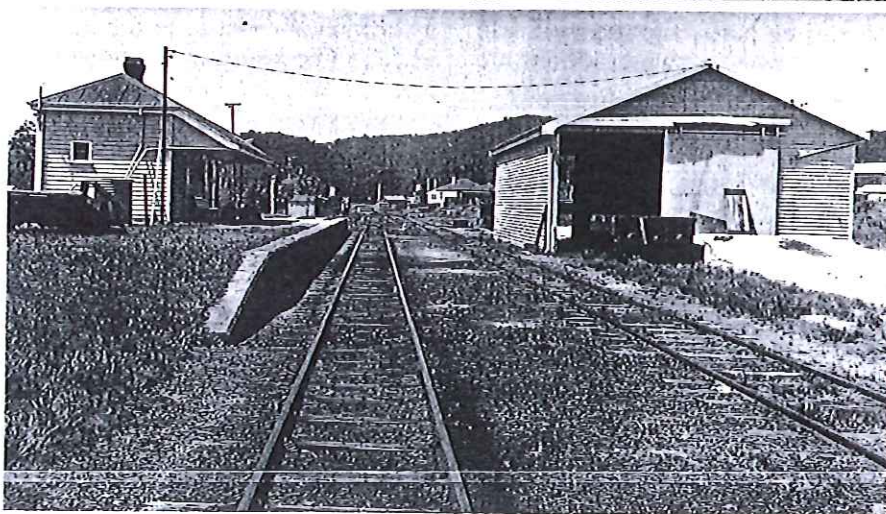
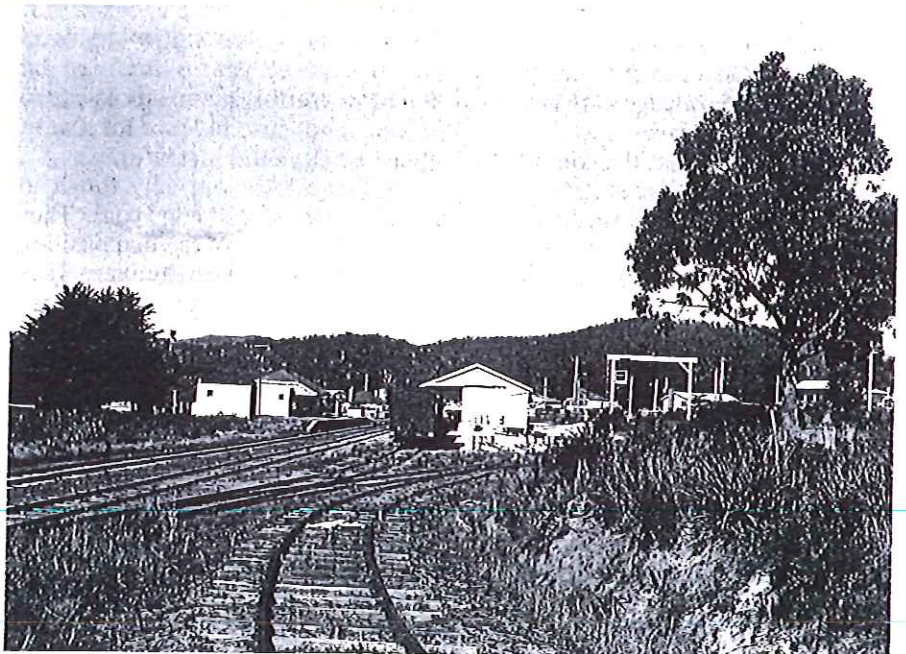


Winnaleah station looking towards Launceston on 28 August 1970.

Photo: H. J. W. Stokes

Herrick station looking east from the timber mill spur in April 1969.

Photo: H. J. W. Stokes



Herrick station and goods shed on 4 November 1977.

Photo: H. J. W. Stokes

The main line curved through the station site with a loop on its southern side, briefly regained the old formation over the level crossing and then curved south-eastwards on a long headshunt across the site of the wye in the direction of Moorina. This

permitted incoming empty log trains to propel the loaded rake out on to the headshunt and then depart with it via the loop. Herrick handled superphosphate traffic until 1988 but thereafter only log trains.

Acknowledgments

I acknowledge with gratitude the contribution made to this article by Keith Atkinson, Michael Dix, Ken Flood, Jack McLean and the editors and contributors of *Tasmanian Rail News*.

oooOOOooo