

ST. GEORGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

BI-MONTHLY BULLETIN

VOL 1. NO.4.

APRIL, 1963.

GRATIS.

53 Bruce Street,
BEXLEY.

12th April, 1963.

Dear Friend and Member,

The next meeting of the above Society will be held as follows:-

DATE: - Friday evening next, 19th April, 1963 at 8 p.m.

PLACE: - Council Chamber, ROCKDALE TOWN HALL, Princes Highway, ROCKDALE.

GUEST SPEAKER: - The secretary, Ald. Rathbone, will present a paper on the early history of CARLTON.

All members are cordially invited to attend and to bring any interested friends.

A light supper will be served.

J. I. SWANN
President

R. W. RATHBONE
Hon. Secretary.

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NEXT OUTING ARRANGED.

The next outing of the St. George Historical Society will be to "Fernleigh" the home of Mrs. E. M. Alcock, the oldest building in the Sutherland Shire.

"Fernleigh", which stands in Fernleigh Road, Burraneer Bay is a two-storied sandstone home set in spacious grounds which sweep down to the water's edge. It was built about 1820 by convict labour for Captain Thomas Laycock and is still in its original condition.

Today, the building is a veritable treasure house of old and interesting exhibits not the least of which is a skeleton affectionately known as "Billy Bones".

A private zoo is included in the grounds,

Unfortunately, Mrs. Alcock cannot take more than 15 people on each visit and has asked that children under twelve years of age be not included in the party.

The date, Saturday, 4th May, 1963 leaving Rockdale at 2 p.m.

If you are interested please ring the secretary at LW 4813 - first in, first served.

ROSEVALE VILLA GETS ANOTHER LIFE.

Rosevale Villa, historic home of the pioneer Iliffe family and one of the loveliest sandstone buildings in the Rockdale Municipality, has obtained yet another reprieve.

The company which bought the building for demolition as a site for a petrol filling station has now decided that it is not large enough.

An expert in the demolition of these buildings recently informed Rockdale Council that many similar types of buildings erected about the same time as Rosevale Villa are not of solid sandstone at all, but are merely rubble walls faced with sandstone which makes their demolition for re-erection quite impossible.

The Council has decided to have tests made to see if this is the case with Rosevale Villa before any further moves are made.

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EXTRACTS FROM THE DIARY OF ALEXANDER BRODIE SPARK.

June 28th, 1836 "Mary Stephens pointed out snow on the ground, a thing I have never seen in the colony before".

(the first recorded fall of snow in the St. George Area)

August 3rd, 1839 Mr. Spark recorded that he went out into his spacious grounds and "played golf in the afternoon with Mr. Adam Wilson."

In 1837 Alexander Brodie Spark was having servant trouble at "Tempe". A servant named Pickering staged a one-man strike because Spark would not supply him with shoes. Furthermore, he aggravated the offence by using some choice language to his master. Punishment was swift and brutal - Mr. Spark being a magistrate as well as a business tycoon.

His diary contains this revealing entry

"Pickering punished for abusing me before the gardener because I would not give him shoes and refusing work on this account 50 lashes".

.....

CAPTAIN COOK IN DIFFICULTIES.

One of the most difficult sections of Capt. Cook's memorable voyage to Australia was getting started. Not the least of his frustrations was the appointment of a suitable cook.

The first one appointed by the Admiralty was lame. Cook sent him back. The second one had lost a hand and it took a considerable amount of persistence and persuasion to finally obtain a cook who was sound in wind and limb.

Then Cook struck trouble with the provisions. Although he was granted one thousand pounds weight of "portable" soup there was only enough beer for one month although the voyage was expected to last at least twelve.

After much haggling, it was agreed to make up the remainder in brandy.

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A journey from Sydney to Hurstville in the early eighteen-nineties passed through a terrain which has been considerably altered, unfortunately not for the better, in the last seventy years or so. In the description of scenes and homes along the route no attempt has been made in this essay to group the various items in order of their chronological development, an arrangement which has facilitated the compilation of the story.

The old rambling terminal at Sydney, which was known in those far off days as Redfern, had a distinctive charm of its own. Steam trams chugged their noisy way from Bridge Street to terminate beneath the sheltering roof of the station concourse, there to intermingle with a clustering road traffic consisting largely of hansom cabs, horse drawn omnibuses, and delivery vans of diverse sorts and sizes. Sundry hitching posts catered for a motley assortment of unattended horses contentedly munching chaff from nose-bags, made usually from sugar-bags, which were roped around their necks. There were itinerant drivers of vehicles for hire calling for custom with the arrival of each train, particularly those inward bound from country areas which generally afforded good business. Then there was the clamour set up by youthful conductors of the various horse omnibuses calling attention to their runs via George, Pitt or Castlereagh Streets to the main shopping centre or onwards to the Quay. Above all, apart from the shrieks of locomotive whistles, were the pip-squeaks uttered by the steam tram motors as they departed from hence in a flurry of steam and smoke, dragging two or three unwieldy and ungainly double-decked tramcars, on their way to Elizabeth Street and places north as far as Bridge Street.

It was a grand sight to see the country trains arrive with a "D" Class "HIGH FLYER" at the head-end. These trains usually steamed into Platform No. 6 and, after passing beneath the huge arched train shed, which covered platforms Nos. 5 and 6, came to a panting rest with the engines in the open, hard against the terminal buffer stops. These express engines were kept in splendid condition, their black chimneys were embellished with a burnished copper coping at the top, whilst the steam domes, placed amidships were of highly polished brass. It is little wonder that generations of men have almost worshipped the majesty of the steam locomotive. Great days.

Proceeding through the bustling throng of people and keeping a wary eye open for a fractious horse, we wend our way towards Elizabeth Street and finally arrive at platforms Nos. 1 and 2 which had been built specially for the Illawarra Line traffic. This double faced platform was curved throughout its narrow length and was partly covered by a centrally located roof of spartan simplicity. Here our train of four-wheeled box cars was drawn up. There was usually a single first class car and four second-class cars allotted to the Hurstville run, one of the latter vehicles being fitted with a small brake compartment for the guard. Occasionally one or two of the former third class were included much to the chagrin of would-be passengers. These old-time vehicles had open sides above the waist-lines and some were not fitted with oil lamps for night travelling. They seated forty passengers at a real pinch who were jammed together in a perfect maze of wooden forms, some of the seats being without backs. In wet weather travelling was really miserable as umbrellas had to be used to keep out the side gusts which swept across the carriages.

At the smoky-end of our train, more often than not, would be a small "F" class tank engine, known to its admirers as the "GREEN DONKEY", a most unusual nickname for such a chic and speedy little locomotive. Given the right of way by the guard's whistle and the display of a small green flag, our engine, possibly No. 356, uttered a woeful wail and, slipping its wheels and snorting in fine style, gradually moved its somewhat stiff train over the network of points and crossings, towards the pair of tracks which threaded the famous "Bottle-Neck" tunnel which passed beneath Cleveland Street. On our left side was a white-washed carriage shed which had been constructed cheaply by the lavish use of corrugated iron, beyond which was the busy Sydney goods yard where rows and rows of trucks lined a central roadway and a great gathering of horse drawn vehicles were usually assembled. Clouds of dust arose from the scene amidst which sweating drivers were either loading or unloading the thousand and one items of commerce for which the railway was the common carrier. Presiding over this activity were generally a couple of long-boilered "A" class tender engines which

huffed and puffed their majestic way, pulling trucks here and pushing trucks there at the behest of the active shunting fraternity. High above and surrounded by trees was the beautiful church of St. Pauls, dominated by its square tower of old English design.

On the right side of the line was the Darling Harbour Branch which, strangely enough, had little use at this particular period. Hard against the bordering Regent Street was the elaborate Mortuary Station where funeral trains departed twice daily on their slow and mournful journey to Rookwood Cemetery. These trains generally consisted of four ancient four-wheeled carriages, fitted with hard straight-backed seats, and an old-time "Mountain" radial wheeled van which had an elevated lookout above the normal roof level, permitting the guard to be seated aloft and thus keep an active eye on the behaviour of his train. Behind trailed the small hearse truck, low and squat, reputed to be somewhat rough in its riding qualities. According to the regulations the corpse, and the friends of the corpse, travelled free.

Immediately south of the Mortuary station was the Wesleyan Church (which has since come under the usage of the Liberal Catholic Church) and a ribbon development of shops facing towards Regent Street. Many complaints were received by the Railway Department from the Church authorities about the prolonged whistling which went on from time to time during the religious services, as irate locomotive drivers sought entrance to this siding or that. Our No. 356 made its own particular din before plunging into the darkness of the Bottle-Neck Tunnel, beyond the southern portal of which, between the years 1884 and 1891, was located the temporary WELLS STREET JUNCTION SIGNAL BOX. Here the two lines, one up and one down, diverged to form four tracks, two for the Main Suburban and two for the Illawarra Railway. On our left side, grouped within the narrow area bounded on the east by Regent Street Redfern and on the west by the railway fence, was Messrs. Hudsons Timber Yard, of "ready-cut" fame. This untidy mass of sheds was gutted by flames in the mid-nineties and the Company sought other premises. At the right or Darlington side of the line were rows and rows of nondescript terrace houses bordering Eveleigh Street and its bisecting laneways, a scene which has not changed overmuch with the passing years.

Diving beneath the Lawson Street Road bridge our train of yore entered the EVELEIGH Station with its No. 1 platform lined with a motley assortment of strangely designed pint-sized brick buildings which still remain in situ. At the level of Lawson Street was the main station office with its once neat roof of small tiles which glowed in various shades of red and orange after a shower of rain. The Illawarra train passed between the two groups of workshop buildings associated with the maintenance and repair of locomotives and carriages. Close by the present elevated coal stage was the original Eveleigh platform, built primarily to serve the workmen engaged at the railway shops, but removed when its site was required for the building of an extra pair of tracks to serve the Main Suburban service.

The magnificent three bay running shed comes into view, and one could observe a most motley assortment of locomotives awaiting their turn to speed south, west and north. There were huge Baldwin built "American" consolidated engines, a vast assembly of small tank engines destined for the Sydney suburban trains, and all types of lesser breeds champing to be on their way. A grand sight for men and the sons of men.

Clear of the running shed the Illawarra Railway diverged from the metals of the Main Suburban line to curve and follow a down gradient in a southerly direction to the Erskineville Station, at this time located on the northern side of the Swanson Street Road bridge. When the Alexandria Goods Sidings were built about 1912, this station was dismantled as its site was required for the construction of new sidings and junction points, etc. It was replaced by a new station erected on the present location at the south side of Swanson Street. Clear of the platforms a fine three arched brick bridge carried the railway across Victoria Street. This structure is still in use and it is surprising how few Illawarraites know of its existence or the beauty of its design. A high embankment carries the line on a curve to the south-west to cross a somewhat similar bridge spanning MacDonald Street. The clustered houses and odd looking cottages which form South Newtown lay cheek by jowl on the western hill slopes bordering the track, whilst on the eastern side of the line were grass paddocks, and sundry vegetable and other small farms which spread across the flat land, reaching southwards to the

shores of Botany Bay.

Rattling over the Bray Street level crossing and passing its adjacent gate-house with its industrial backdrop, formed by the huge bottle-shaped kilns and belching smoke-stacks of Messrs. Bakewell Brothers brickworks, our train enters the deep cutting over the top of which a high-level bridge carried the Cooks River Road. Next is St. Peters Station hedged in by mighty brick walls and connected with its entrance gateways at Cooks River Road by lengthy stair-ways. The station buildings were quite ornate in appearance and have been adapted for present day usage. The surrounding area was popular as a working mans suburb, the older section being clustered around the St. Peters Church of England, a historic building which dominates the hill slope, south-east of the station which bears its name.

Johns Street level crossing is met after which, on the eastern side of the line, appeared the large brick works of Messrs. Goodsell with its huge pug pit which has in recent years been filled in with rubbish and now-a-days is a public playing field. Then came the Illawarra Road level crossing, which has been replaced by a road overbridge, and, also on the eastern side of the line, lay the brick-making establishment of Messrs. Charlesworth, its pug pit being in course of reclamation at the present moment. Marshy swamp lands followed the route of the railway on its western side from St. Peters Station to Tempe and it has been stated that at certain tides it was possible to row a boat along the meandering stream as far north as the Illawarra Road alignment.

Approaching Marrickville Railway Station, which, incidentally, was renamed Sydenham in January, 1895, the huge pile of the Baden Powell Hotel was particularly noticeable at the north-east corner of Sydenham Road and Bolton Street and Adjacent to the Sydenham Road Level crossing gates. This hostelry has long been dismantled and the license transferred to a new site at the southern end of Bolton Street. The former hotel site was later occupied by the old established firm of Joseph Edwards and Sons for the storage of second hand machinery and is now occupied for a similar purpose by Messrs. T. Ward and Company. Rattling over the Sydenham Road Level crossing Marrickville Station was entered, the buildings of which were after the style adopted at the St. Peters Station. The station-master's residence, a neat brick building of standard design, stood within the railway property at the southern end of the Up platform. Then came the gated level crossing of Marrickville Road which has been replaced by an overhead bridge, a much safer measure.

Beyond Marrickville, on its eastern side, was a large market garden occupying the site of the present day Bellevue Park and a cluster of cottages, which still remain, were dotted over the slopes of a shallow outspur from the ridge followed by the old Cooks River Road, nowadays named the Princes Highway. At the western side of the railway, on the site now occupied by Fraser Park, the junction of the Bankstown Railway and the Meeks Road Sidings, was a dense growth of Swamp Oaks interspersed with numerous shallow pools of water. This marsh, named Gumbramorra Swamp, was subsequently drained (about 1894) by an extensive system of stormwater channels, one of which is in close proximity to the railway. Bordering this low-lying land are several rocky spurs which, at the time under review, had their gentle slopes covered with tree growth amongst which could be discerned the older homes of the suburb of South Marrickville.

On the same side of the track and on slightly higher ground there were Chinese market gardens which had access, by means of a red-painted "Occupation-gate", across the railway to Bridge Street. Passing through a rock-walled cutting, crossed at its highest point by the May Street overbridge, the train reached an extensive grassed area forming part of an estate attached to a large stone-built mansion, which fronts Unwins Bridge Road. This old home was once given prominence by Norfolk Island pine-trees, one of which was forked about midway in its height. As the route of the Illawarra Railway divided the property into two sections it was necessary to provide an occupation gate to permit the owners to have direct access. A gate-house, which is still occupied, marks the site of the former Renwick Street level-crossing and a short distance further south was the more important Unwins Bridge Road level-crossing controlled by the staff of the Tempe Railway Station. The

neighbouring goods yard had a large jib-crane for the ready handling of blocks of stone taken from several local quarries.

Tempe Railway Station was noted for its week-end crowds who travelled by train to enjoy the pleasures of boating and swimming at the then very beautiful reaches of Cooks River. There were no less than three boatsheds, one of which still functions as the Canoe Club to cater for their needs. Boats could be rowed up-stream, through delightful forest country, as far as Canterbury, the river scene being somewhat akin to that of the National Park at Audley.

Immediately south of Tempe Station the railway crossed Cooks River by means of an iron bridge, after which an embankment kept the rails well above the level of a samphire-swamp bordering the branch of Cooks River known as Wollli Creek. This area was formerly named Tempe after a house of that name built nearby about 1825. The home formerly belonged to Mr. Alexander Brodie Spark and, after changing hands a number of times, eventually became a convent and is still in excellent repair. A small cottage, named Pine Farm, occupied the site of the present day Wollli Creek Junction Signal Box and can still be remembered by the presence of a growth of trees including a splendid white magnolia. Opposite, on the eastern side of the line, was Grundy's dairy farm which was later removed when the land was taken over for tramway purposes. Here too is a solitary magnolia tree marking the site of the old homestead.

The Arncliffe Street level crossing is now reached with the gate-keepers house adjacent and at a lower level than the track. A particularly fine willow tree in the yard was destroyed because the occupants quite wrongly thought it would make the house damp. To make a damp house dry one covers the walls with ivy and plants poplars and willows nearby. Next door to the gate-house is the old time residence of the Firth family whose property originally extended southwards to the Booth Street alignment. The southernmost portion was eventually sold to Mr. Justin McSweeney who erected the large house named "Kirnbank" which is today in a sad state of disrepair and its tree surround and once famous gardens despoiled in the interests of factory premises. A grove of Swamp Oaks remained till quite recently on the eastern side of the line and formed a fine background to the Mitchell cottage which, for many of its later years, was utilised as an office for the Wollli Creek Tramway Depot. Working on the questionable assumption that beauty is incompatible with industry these trees have recently been removed.

The Illawarra Road now comes into view and what was originally a straight section has been deviated into a series of "dog-legs", first to avoid the well-designed Western Suburbs sewer viaduct and then the railway lines, beneath which it passes through a fine brick-arch bridge. The fertile flats on the eastern side of the railway were formerly farmed as market gardens but factories being more important than foodstuffs, according to planning authorities, the once prim arrangement of rectangular vegetable beds has been given over to manufacturing interests. Before reaching Arncliffe and on the western side of the line, there was another fertile area under intense cultivation. On this land was a small stone cottage adjacent to the Wollongong Road which, according to report, was formerly in use by slaughter-men who prepared both cattle and sheep for the Sydney retail market. The steep little hill rising behind the gardens was then known as Vinegar Hill owing to its being owned by Mr. Monk, of vinegar fame. When the hill estate was up for sale it was called "The Knoll" in the realty advertisements.

Passing the gate-house, located at the north-western side of the Done Street level-crossing, the two platforms of Arncliffe Station were entered. The station buildings, similar to those built at Marrickville and Tempe, are still in service although adapted to serve four tracks and platforms. There was a goods yard with two sidings at the eastern side of the Down platform from which a great number of two-wheeled poison carts, constructed by the local firm of Fortescue Brothers, of Loftus Street, Arncliffe, were railed to all parts of the state.

South of Arncliffe Station, the railway enters a deep cutting which has always been noted for its splendid clusters of ferns growing in the moist fissures of the rock faces. There was formerly a tunnel beneath the Forest Road or Arncliffe Hill ridge which had to be removed when the lines were quadrupled during the nineteen-twenties. Emerging from the darkness of the tunnel, a rock cutting ensconced the rails for some little distance before a sight could be obtained of the wooded gully which has since become residential and served by Gore and Somerville Streets. An "Occupation gate" crossed the line at Hattersley Street intersection with Rocky Point Road. From this point a wide vista of Botany Bay and its opposing headlands opens out to the east and also a large area devoted to market gardens dominated by the two-storied home of the Beehag family. These gardens and nurseries continued as far south as Rockdale Station and were owned by many pioneers of the St. George district. One German family was particularly hard-working in the method of cultivation and the good wife has been seen in double harness with an ox whilst father was keeping their joint efforts in a straight furrow with the plough. The rocky eminence in the middle foreground was graced by the Rockdale school, and on its western slopes by the grazing paddock, dotted with tall blue gums, which belonged to the Bray family, whose property extended to Rocky Point Road. The old farm-house is still intact and appears to have been built about 1858. For many years there was a deep well in the front garden which was operated by a long centrally pivoted mast with a bucket dangling from a rope at one end and a counter-balance weight and haulage rope at the other.

The western side of the line consisted of a wide valley girt by a surround of low hills which was drained by Spring Creek. This tree-dotted grazing area was originally under the ownership of Mr. Joseph Davis whose fine homestead, known as "Lydham" is still in excellent preservation.

Rockdale Station had two separate opposed platforms and was noted in the early days as being the terminus of Mr. Saywell's single-line tramway to Lady Robinson's beach. The tramway office was incorporated in a residence adjacent to the railway station which also served to house the locomotive driver, Mr. Long. The building was notable in having a series of ship's tanks above the kitchen roof to contain water for the tram engines. Above these tanks was a large wind-mill which operated a pump bolted to the kitchen floor which, in turn, was built over a deep and unfailing well. The tramway platform was covered by a large shed, which served to cover the tramcars and coal staging, and also the facades of a row, or arcade, of small lock-up shops which remain to this day. A level crossing carried Frederick Street across the railway at the southern end of Rockdale Station, the gate-keeper's residence, a weather-board structure, being within the fence line at the south-eastern side of the track. On the opposite side of the tracks was the railway dam, which supplied water per medium of a steam pump and tank to the Government locomotives working in the Up direction. When the line was first opened, this was the only supply along the route, and as the small tank engines carried sufficient to run to Hurstville and return to Rockdale, tank replenishment became most necessary. The engine working the Kogarah- Sans Souci Tramway also journeyed from Kogarah to Rockdale to take water before commencing its tramway journey.

The slopes of the Bexley Estate were gradually developing into a good class of residential suburb at this period, and land sales in the area were the order of the day. The eastern side of the track showed a broad vista of market gardens, which reached nearly to the shores of Botany Bay. The small brick homestead of the Skidmore family could be noticed on the southern bank of Black Creek, against the Rocky Point Road bridge. The garden, which came into Chinese hands, was on the northern bank of the creek, and bordered by a row of pine-trees. A feature nearby was a huge gum-tree, one of the original forest trees, which supported high in its branches a large notice board, stating "Woodman, spare this tree in memory of poor old Charley Barsby". There was evidently some particular sentimental value attached to the old gum which, unfortunately, passed away with the tree when it was felled.

The Harrow Road level crossing had its gate-keeper's residence, a weather-board structure, on the north-western side of the line, and beyond

was a high embankment divided at Black Creek by a two span wooden trestle bridge. The Fry homestead was adjacent and its orchard property has been taken over by Kogarah Council for the purposes of a sewerage dumping depot, the surrounding land being converted into parkland, with a fine showing of willow trees along the drain, which has supplanted the former picturesque creek. This stream was once lined with quince trees which over-hung the deep still pools, where the local children often caught carp, eels, tortoises, quinces, and nasty words from Mr. Fry.

The Fry Estate extended along the creek at the western side of the railway, and was grassed for agistment purposes. There were rock outcrops above the stream, and along the crest of the largest rock was a series of hoardings, depicting an old-time "High-Flyer" steam locomotive, attached to three representations of loaded railway trucks. Pearson's Sandsoap was the main theme of this unique display, whilst farther south and on the same alignment, was an erection of flat iron, shaped like a huge Noah's Ark, which served to catch the eye of children of all ages. I think this particular sign advertised Elvy's Pianos. The rectangular streets of West Kogarah lay ahead, where numbers of brick houses were then being built on the newly opened subdivision.

Gazing at the wall of a slight rock side-cut on the eastern side of the railway one could discern the name "Baxter, 1884" chiselled into the sandstone face, the name representing the engineer who was in charge of the construction of the first section of the Illawarra Railway. Above the shelf just mentioned was a long siding and platform used generally by horse trains catering for the Moorefield Racecourse traffic. The quarry adjacent to the overbridge supplied metal necessary for the ballasting of the Sans Souci Tramway.

Entering Kogarah Station, the station master's residence was immediately met on the left-hand side and then came the two groups of station offices which were opposite one another, both having a direct road approach. Access to either platform was by means of a foot level crossing at the southern end of the station. The Sans Souci Tramway had its Kogarah terminus at a dock platform adjacent to the Down main station platform, an arrangement which facilitated the transference of passengers. In the early eighteen-eighties the trams were operated by small tank engines stabled at Eveleigh Running Sheds, but about 1892 the service was vested in the Tramway Department who introduced the well known steam tram engines.

Kogarah was regarded as the incipient commercial centre of the district of St. George and at the time under review, boasted five stores and other business establishments with a population estimated to be about four hundred. The old Kogarah village was a ribbon development strung out along Rocky Point Road in the vicinity of the Moorefield Racecourse, where its several stores and hostelrys served the needs of a predominantly rural community. The present-day shopping centre, adjacent to the station and along Railway Parade, came with the opening of the line and the consequent subdivisions of "desirable homesites". Perhaps the oldest residences in the latter area were a group of white-washed cottages which faced Railway Parade, immediately south of its intersection with Belgrave Street.

The western side of the line at Kogarah had, as its foreground, the oft-times flooded course of Black Creek, a sort of no-man's land which supported more than one flock of goats. The creek and railway followed a common course until near Carlton; on the slopes beyond the former Chandler Estate had been subdivided into housing blocks with the many intersecting streets set out in rectangular symmetry, the joy of municipal engineers and town planning enthusiasts, but a complete dead loss from an artistic angle.

It was originally proposed to carry the Illawarra Railway across Georges River at Taren Point, but the attitude of the Holt-Sutherland Estate Company in demanding an extortionate sum for the right-of-way through their extensive property, coupled with the blandishments offered by landed interests in the Hurstville area, induced the Government to construct the line along the present route, a circumstance which explains the great sweeping curve between Kogarah and Carlton.

Most of this section of track is carried on an embankment for grade easing purposes. There was a pedestrian level crossing at the foot of Gray Street and a level crossing with gate-house nearby at Webber's Road (or Brown's or the Hurstville-Kogarah Road, now-a-days Willison Road.) Immediately south of the latter road crossing and on the western side of the line was a steam pumping plant operated by the Water and Sewerage Board in connection with the city water reticulation system.

Carlton platform was located midway between Salisbury Road and Winchester Street and opened for traffic in 1887. It is understood to have been constructed of wood which served for a number of years before brick station buildings and platforms were erected on the present site between Mill and Short Streets. The long 1 in 60 grade against down trains made it difficult, at times, for the small tank engines in use on the passenger trains to start away from the platform. Scenically, perhaps the most picturesque part of this line is just south of Carlton where a magnificent view of the whole of Botany Bay and its foreshores unfolds in all directions, with the eastern suburbs laid out in panorama with the smoke and spires of Sydney as the background. Entering a somewhat lengthy cutting, the train eventually passed beneath the Lily Street over-bridge adjacent to the comparatively new Allawah Railway Station. Then came Woid's Avenue level crossing and the overbridge at the Sydney end of Hurstville Station, where the original route of Forest Road was intersected by the railway. This main thoroughfare had to be diverted along the northern side of the station and forms what is today the main shopping centre.

Hurstville Station was unique in having "staggered" platforms, an arrangement which obviated the need of heavy cuttings in the surrounding hillside. Access was gained, in the first instance, by a centrally placed foot level crossing, this danger was later eliminated by a footbridge of unequal levels. There was a goods yard and little else, when the station yard was first opened, but about 1892, a locomotive shed and a carriage shed was erected, where trains and engines could be stored overnight on what has been previously described as a "Bed and Breakfast basis". A further feature of early Hurstville station yard was the provision of two through roads laid between the outer platform roads, which enabled goods or through trains to pass stationary trains standing at either the Up or Down platforms.

The station was opened with great ceremony on the 15th October, 1884, when, it is understood, the first Government built locomotive, No. 10 (the second engine to possess this road number) had the honour of drawing the first train. The routine passenger services were handled by small six-coupled side-tank engines of Class N which were nick-named Terriers by their numerous admirers. These were, in turn, superseded by engines of Class "F" which possessed the unusual name, unofficial, of course, of the "Green Donkeys". Then came larger engines of Classes "M", "CC" and, finally, "S", after which came the electrification services, completely devoid of all glamour.

Hurstville was claimed to be a "suburb of greater retirement with easier access to more secluded waters, and a larger area perhaps of country suited to suburban settlement". In 1890 the village had several stores, two hotels, a post office, three churches, and a number of private residences, the principal settlement being along the slopes of Gannons Hill, approximately half a mile away from the station. The place has changed considerably in the last seventy years, but this development is outside the theme of this story.