

Darling Harbour Railway Station

Introduction to a film
from the National Film and Sound Archive

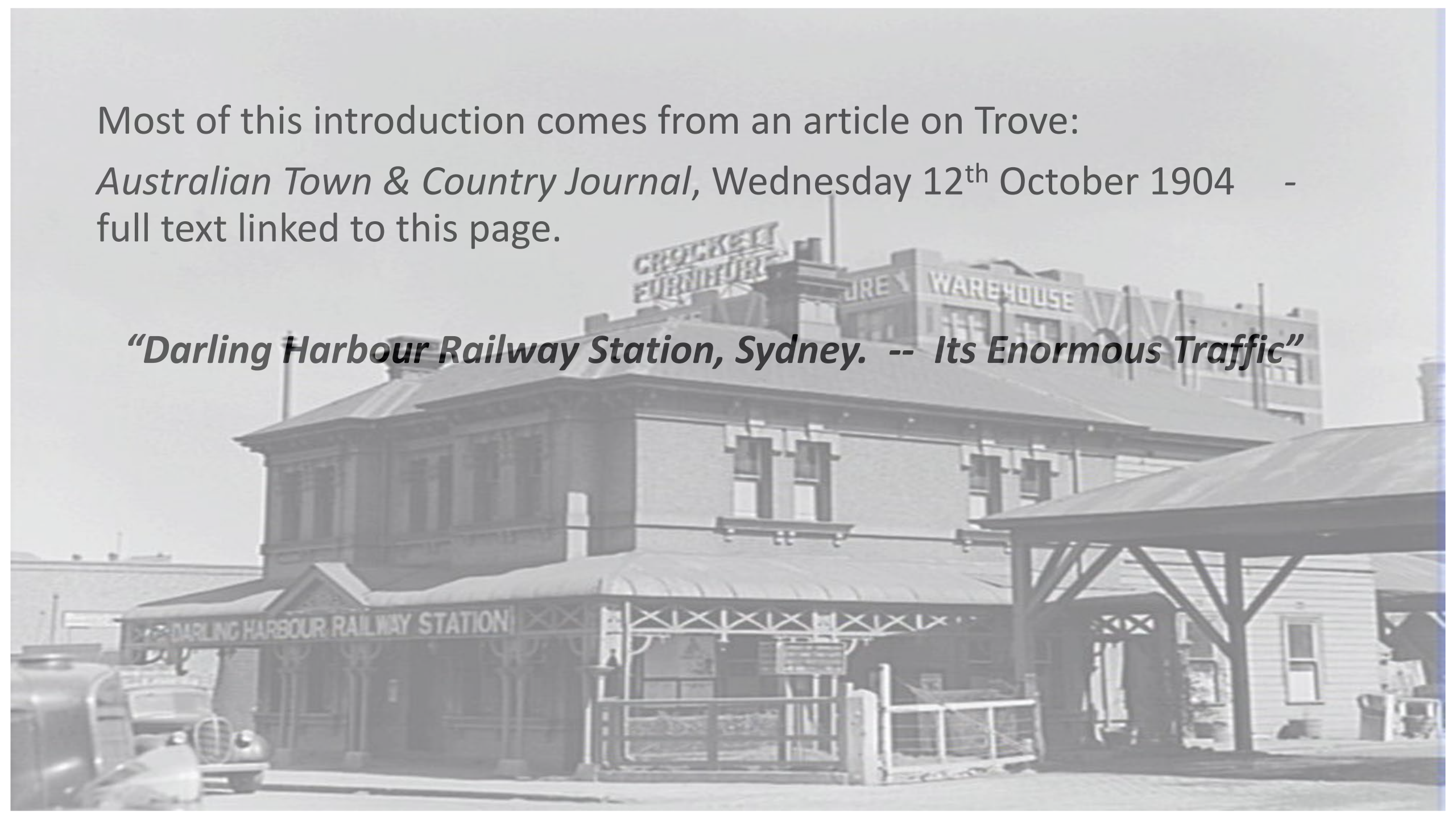
“Steam on the Harbour”

Jan Dardick 16th July 2017

Most of this introduction comes from an article on Trove:

Australian Town & Country Journal, Wednesday 12th October 1904 -
full text linked to this page.

“Darling Harbour Railway Station, Sydney. -- Its Enormous Traffic”



1904

“The Darling Harbour Railway Station is probably the greatest receiving and distributing business south of the Equator. It is the principal mart of exchange between the country and the city. Every day from 500 to 900 railway waggons, laden each with from 6 to 22 tons of produce, rumble inwards from the country. In a few hours they have been unloaded, repacked with merchandise and are rumbling away to the place outback. As the city is the heart of the State, so the railway service is the main artery.”

“Day by day the population of Sydney hears the shrieking and coughing of the mighty engines as they tug at their loaded trains, hears the rattle and clatter of the shunting trucks, and the hum of an endless procession of carriers’ vans and trolleys that take up the work of distribution when the railways disgorge their freights, or that do the work of collecting from the ends of the metropolis, then loading for the return journeys. The average member of the public knows that he may consign any article from a box of apples to a multi-tubular boiler to almost any railway station in the four states, with practical certainty that it will safely and quickly reach its destination.”

All of this activity is managed from the offices of the railway station located at the intersection of Pier & Harbour Streets, Haymarket, by the station manager Mr Charles Paull



Charles Paull 1844-1919

The stationmaster himself entered his service 40 years ago as a junior, when the entire goods staff numbered 18 men and the railways only extended to Penrith, Richmond and Picton. After spending seven years in the coaching branch, as a guard, pilot, porter etc., he was assigned goods foreman at Redfern. Darling Harbour Station was opened in 1875, and Mr Paull, under the late Mr Carlisle managed both stations. The stationmaster is now in his 60th year, but retains the full vigour of his youthful days, which he strongly attributes to the fact that, all his life, he has been a total abstainer.

Darling Harbour Railway Station

Corner Pier & Harbour Streets

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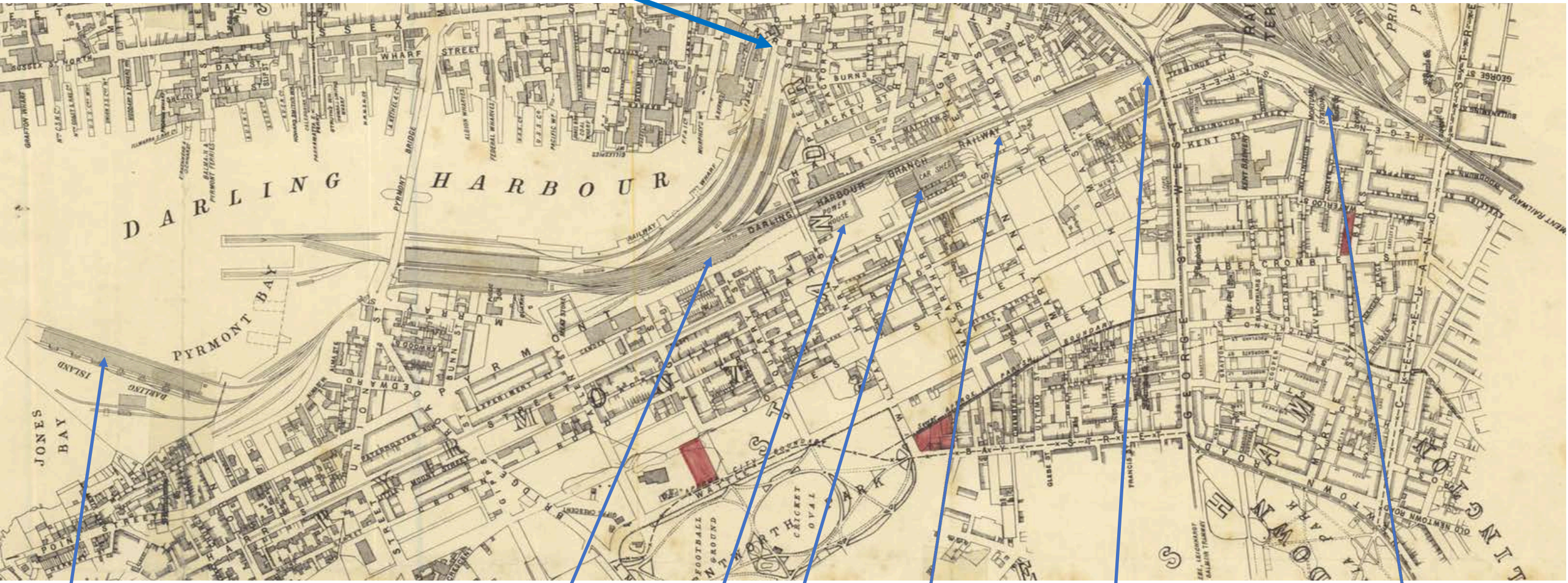


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Looking NW along Pier Street from the bend in the road

Corner of Pier & Harbour Streets - Now the site of the Chinese Gardens



Grain sheds

Receiving yards

Powerhouse

Tramsheds

Ultimo Street signal box

George Street tunnel

Mortuary station

City of Sydney map of 1904. Darling Island is present but the Jones Bay finger wharves had not yet been constructed.

Trains bound inwards to the station pass Redfern and the Mortuary Station



c.1884

Darling Harbour goods line to the left below

Christ Church St Lawrence spire

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then travel under
George Street
railway bridge,



across the Ultimo Street bridge



to the William Henry Street bridge
at Ultimo



Looking northward toward sawtooth building

A short distance below the William Henry Street bridge is an open space, many acres in extent, and capable of holding 2000 trucks, known as the general reception roads. The engines are detached from the trains near the William Henry Street bridge, and the trucks are “kicked” along to the general reception roads, whence, according to the class of freight, they are run by gravitation – the grades are downward – to other reception yards, or onto the sheds wherein they are to be discharged.



The work of loading and discharging freight is mostly carried out under cover, the trains being run in under enormous sheds. Of these there are eight or nine, some of them being more than 1000 feet long, and sufficiently wide for trains to discharge on either side, leaving a cart track almost as wide as George Street, Sydney, and as well paved in the centre.



All the sheds are devoted to inward traffic. The wool is carted hence in great waggons to the big wool stores at Pymont or the Circular Quay, or to the wool station at Woolloomooloo.



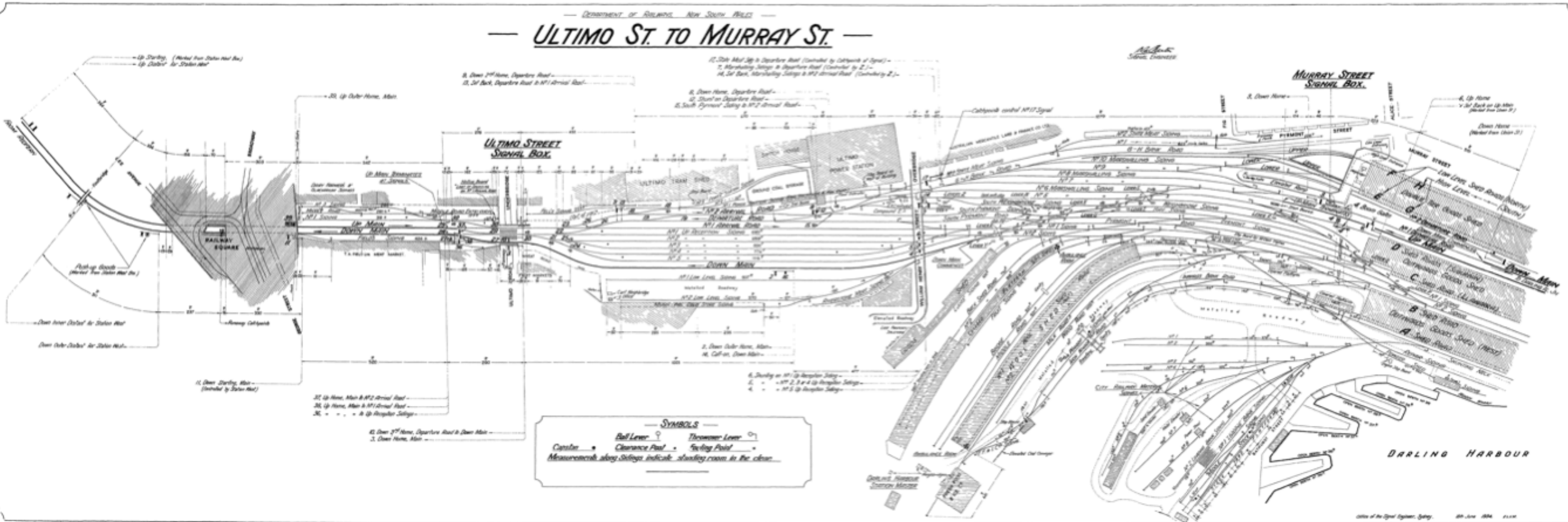
The woolshed, built by the late Chief Commissioner Eddy is 1050 feet long and capable of unloading 120 trucks simultaneously, under cover. Hence more than 10,000 bales have been dealt with in a day.

When no wool is coming to hand, the big woolshed is used for wheat, flour and general merchandise (inward or outward).

1904 - Some statistics

- Mr Paull has a permanent staff of 338 men, including 72 clerks and 45 shunters.
- The gross tonnage handled each year is between 1¼ and 1½ million.
- The revenue generated approximates £800,000, and the value of the merchandise handled of course is unknown, but it must be in the millions of pounds.
- This year there will be a general increase in tonnage, owing to the unprecedented wheat harvest.
- The wool traffic, which when Mr Paull became identified with it in 1871, was 38,910 bales in a year, was last year 375,360 bales, while it has reached (in 1894) 528,128 bales.
- The coal traffic represents 250,000 tons per year. One week the average number of trains arriving daily was 28, while as many as 40 or more sometimes arrive in a day.

Darling Harbour Station was opened in 1875, for the wheat traffic; the wool traffic was sent to it in 1878. In 1880 it was necessary to extend to the other side of the Pyrmont Wharf. At the present time there are 15½ miles of rails in the yard alone.



Introducing “Steam on the Harbour”

www.nfsa.gov.au/collection/curated/steam-harbour-darling-harbours-working-trains



The Goods Yards were finally decommissioned in 1984 with the last “steam” train, 1919, to steam out of the yards on 19th June 1971, escorted by the NSW Transport Workers Band to the tune of Chopin’s The Funeral March.



ARHS Last day of shunting 18.6.1971 John Chapman

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The next time a steam train ran on this line was during the Bicentennial Celebrations, April 1991, when the Locomotive 3801 did a commemorative run through the last of the tracks and transported passengers from Redfern to Dulwich Hill.

