



## SteamRanger's Heritage - an insight into our past

### BACKGROUND

An important component of the Strathalbyn - Victor Harbor rehabilitation project in 1986/ 1987 was the construction of a turning facility and a depot for the Cockle Train at Goolwa.

This article contributed by the then project manager describes the facility

A depot layout plan and some views of the early construction stages are attached

### Goolwa Depot

*Extract from "50 Years of the ARHS SA Division" 2002  
Contributed by Dean Harvey*

The Goolwa Council was determined that this be located on the Victor side of the town because they were developing an industrial estate there. This did not suit us at all as when the Cockle Train arrives at Goolwa the engine would have to run tender first over several level crossings to a Victor side depot to turn and then run tender first back again to the station for the next run to Victor. An unnecessary risk. We plugged for the Strath side of Goolwa as light engine movements would usually be funnel first in both directions. We needed the co-operation of Council and finally with a little bit of Government input they accepted our proposal. It was a very important step forward and the land had to be compulsorily acquired from the farmer owner.

During 1986, earthworks for the depot were completed with compacting carried out at my usual 4" - 5" upper limit of fill for each compacting session. Again, this resulted in a depot which has never had subsidence problems even though in places the fill was up to 45" (1,140mm) deep.

A start was made on the trackwork just before the Minister of Transport pulled the plug, on October 30. under the misguided belief that the money was exhausted. Everything was in hand originally to complete the depot before Xmas and we were geared up to operate daily Cockle trains in January. The precipitate decision to stop work on October 30 caused a direct loss of \$120,000 revenue as the planned Cockle Train service could not operate that summer.

By autumn 1987. work on the depot was started again. Actually, it is a clever design with the depot itself situated inside the triangle, a very convenient arrangement. The carriage and loco shed is a 42m x 15m colourbond clad shed covering two of the five depot tracks. To provide a good floor at acceptable cost we relived an old railway practice using second hand sleepers so giving an authentic loco depot theme. It is very well lit with strategically placed powerful lights.

Water quality at Goolwa was not too good for locos most of the year at the time of construction and SA Water could only provide a 30mm connection. The solution was a 90,000 litre above ground concrete tank at the town end of the depot which had two feed sources - mains water and rain water pumped from the large tanks either side of the shed. The mix of the two ensured good quality water for locos most of the time. Large diameter underground pipes with strategically placed sumps disposed of storm waters to a deep depression at the northern extremity of the site and this works extremely well.

Water from the main tank is pumped automatically to the 23,000 litre overhead tank as gravity feed for loco and depot purposes. The frame supporting this tank, was recovered by volunteers from Hilra. The novel ablutions building is actually a concrete water tank adapted for the purpose. A kitchen car and shower car are marshalled on the track adjacent to the eastside of the shed.

Sleeping vans are dispersed around the site for use by our volunteer workers. A man proof fence surrounds the depot and indigenous seedlings raised by Daphne Neville (now full grown trees) were planted around the property.

## GOOLWA DEPOT EARLY DAYS - A PHOTO PORTFOLIO

*ARHS Recorder November 1987 pages 25, 25*  
*Roger Currie*



Main loco shed from Goolwa end



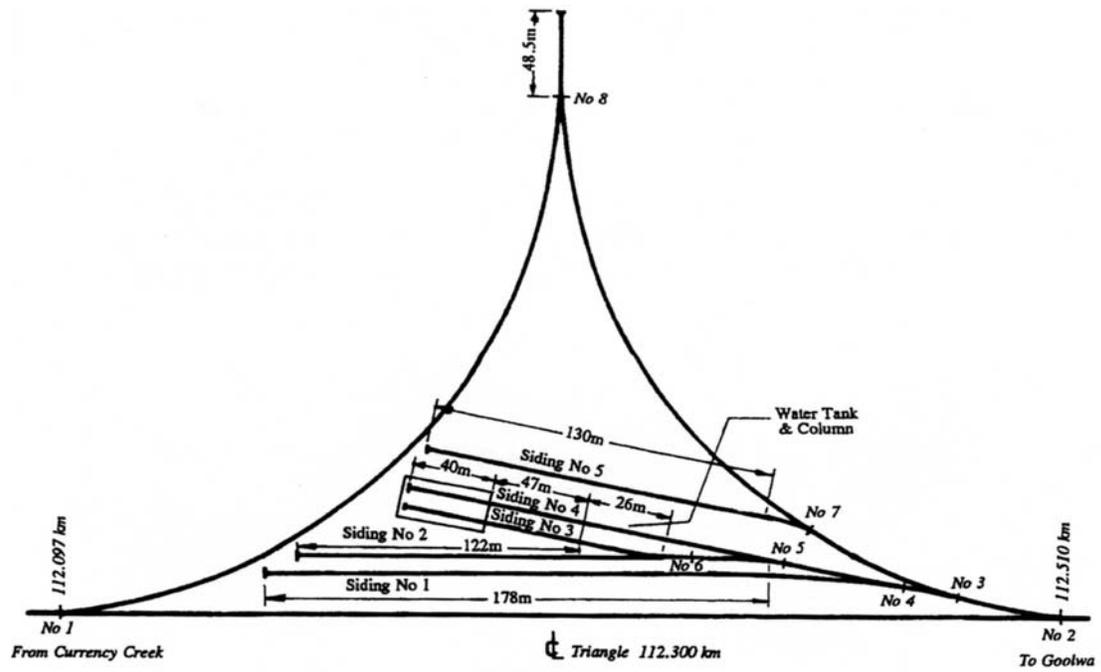
Shed interior from main entrance doors (Goolwa end)



General view from near main Goolwa end entrance gates - triangle line veers off to the right



Installing the elevated water tank reclaimed from Penfield yard



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