

Modelling Timber Bridges

of the

Queensland Railways

by

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INTRODUCTION

It has been stated that the PB15 steam locomotive was the ubiquitous workhorse of the Queensland Railways. It is then a fair analogy to say that the timber bridge is the ubiquitous structure of the Queensland Railways.

About 110 kilometres of timber bridges existed in the Queensland Railways system. This figure has been substantially reduced with the mainline upgrading program. This program was touted in the press as eliminating all timber bridges on the North Coast Line. This is incorrect as significant numbers still exist with the remaining structures having been modified and in some cases substantially rebuilt to accommodate the heavier axle loadings.

Timber was a popular structural material for bridges because of its ready availability and low cost. The motivation to eliminate timber was not because of structural inadequacy but to reduce the inherent inspection and maintenance costs.

The timber bridge provided a more economical method of spanning gaps than constructing earth embankments in the early days of construction.

The purpose of this paper is to provide the modeller with sufficient information to build a good representation of a Queensland Railways timber bridge.

BRIDGE COMPONENTS

There are various names and terms which are specific to bridge components and structures. The following list is sufficient for discussing the basics of timber bridges and is not intended to be exhaustive.

Glossary Of Terms

Abutment	:	The foundation structure at the end of the bridge.
Brace	:	A diagonal member which connects the piles of a pier to provide lateral stability
Corbel	:	A corbel is a length of timber located under and parallel to the girder that transfers the load gradually to the pier.
Escape platform	:	The platform built off the edge of the top of a bridge to provide a refuge for personnel during the passage of a train.
Foot planks	:	Two planks fixed to the transoms, located centrally between and parallel to the rails and used for personnel access on the bridge top.
Girder	:	A horizontal component of long length which spans across the piers and supports the transoms.
Headstock	:	The horizontal member at the top of the pier on which the corbels rest.
Pier	:	A braced framework supporting the bridge. It has one or more vertical members, flanked by a pair of sloping members and connected by a combination of headstocks, braces and wales.
Pile	:	The vertical or sloping members which provides the elevation for the bridge above the ground and supports the load of the headstocks.
Sill	:	A horizontal member on which the bottoms of the piles in a silled pier rests.
Slab bank end	:	Reinforced concrete backing slabs which prevent the spill through of the earth embankment to the end of the bridge.
Span	:	Distance from one support to the next in line.
Substructure	:	All the structural elements that support the bridge; piers footings, abutments.
Superstructure	:	The part of the structure in direct contact with the loads.
Transom	:	A sleeper which supports the running rail on an open top bridge.
Wale	:	A horizontal member which connects the piles of a pier to prevent spreading of the piles above ground of silled piers and high driven piers.

ASSEMBLING THE COMPONENTS TO BUILD A BRIDGE

A careful study of how the components fit together is necessary so the finished model is authentic. Checking against an accurate plan or prototype photos is the best method. The area which requires the closest attention is the relative positions of the girders, corbels and headstocks.

BRIDGE STANDARDS

QR has a set of standard drawings so that bridges can be constructed and maintained to the required structural adequacy for the designed operating conditions. These standard

drawings are listed in the following table. These drawings are for bridges originally designed for B16 loadings (12 ton load with steam impact) and were checked and found to be adequate for "A" class lines. Therefore the standards have remained unchanged from the steam era until the mainline upgrading program.

DRAWING NUMBER	DRAWING NAME
1932	Standard Timber Bridges General Arrangement
1933	Standard Timber Bridges Pier Details
1934	Standard Timber Bridges Details at Pier Tops
1935	Standard Timber Bridges Details of Sills, Concrete Bases and Cant on Curves
1936	Standard Timber Bridges Details at Bridge Ends
1937	Standard Timber Bridges Material List

These drawings supersede the previous standard drawings numbers 1210, 1211, 1212, 1213 and 1450.

TIMBER COMPONENT SIZES

Piles are 440mm in diameter. Braces and wales are 230x130mm sawn timber. Part worn 30kg rails may be substituted. Headstocks are 250x150mm sawn timber. Headstocks for 3 pile piers are 3000mm long and for 4 and 5 pile piers are 4000mm long.

Corbels are 435mm in diameter and 1800mm long. Girders are of two standard diameters, 435 and 460mm but oversize girders up to 620mm diameter are found in the system. The length of the girders is dependent on the span length, whether the span is single, end or intermediate and the number of girders in adjacent spans. Girders are not intended to be milled to a regular sized section, however octagonal section girders can be observed in bridges. The tops of 435mm diameter girders have 15mm removed and 460mm diameter girders have 20mm removed to provide a bearing surface for the transoms. Girders and corbels have to be dressed to size. Details for the many variations can be obtained from drawing number 1934.

The maximum permissible span length for the number and diameter girders is listed in the following table.

Number & Diameter of Girders	Maximum Permissible Span Length
2 single 435mm	4400mm
3 single 435mm	5600mm
3 single 460mm	6250mm
2 double 435mm	6700mm
3 double 435mm	8200mm

LENGTH OF SPANS AND NUMBER OF GIRDERS PER SPAN

The standard lengths of timber bridge spans are 4000mm, 5000mm, 6000mm, 7000mm and 8000mm. All spans have three girders positioned horizontally adjacent to each other per span except for 4000mm spans for which two girders are structurally adequate. For spans of 7000mm and 8000mm, double girders positioned vertically one on the other are required for structural adequacy. These girders are placed vertically one on top the other and bolted together with M30x825 bolts at 1000mm centres. Double girders are spaced at 1700mm centres and triple girders at 850mm centres. The distance between the centres of the two outside girders of a triple girder span is therefore 1700. This means that the girders in a double girder span will be aligned with the outside girders of a triple girder span.

HEIGHT OF PIERS AND NUMBER OF PILES PER PIER

As the height of the piers increase, the requirements for structural adequacy necessitates the addition of diagonal braces, wales and extra piles. The height of a pier is defined as the vertical distance from ground or stream bed level to the top of the headstocks.

The following tables detail the combination of components for various heights of both driven and silled piers.

Driven Piers

MAXIMUM HEIGHT (mm)	PILES	BRACE	WALE
1500	3	0	
3000	3	1 diagonal	
4500	3	1 pair diagonal cross	
6000	3	2 pair diagonal cross	
7500	4	2 pair diagonal cross	
7500	5	2 pair diagonal cross	
9000	5	2 pair diagonal cross	double

Siled Piers

MAXIMUM HEIGHT (mm)	PILES	BRACE	WALE
1500	3	0	
2500	3	1 diagonal	
3500	3	1 pair diagonal cross	single
5000	3	2 pair diagonal cross	double
6500	3	2 pair diagonal cross	double
8000	4	2 pair diagonal cross	double
9000	5	2 pair diagonal cross	double

OTHER MODELLING NOTES

The butt end of the pile is placed upper most. The reason for this is that the narrow end of a driven pile wedges into the ground for a solid footing. Escape platforms are usually located on the down stream side of the bridge particularly on structures subject to flooding. The slope of the single braces on 2500mm high silled piers and 3000mm high driven piers are such that the low end of the brace is towards the stream flow.

Timber, steel and concrete are used in combination for bridge structures. Short steel spans on timber piers is prototypical. In this instance it is common for one central span to be steel and of slightly greater length than the adjacent timber spans. Timber spans are commonly used for the approaches to steel truss spans on concrete piers. Timber on concrete is unusual but can be found where a pier has been replaced in a timber bridge.

SUGGESTIONS FOR DETAILING

Having gotten the basic timber bridge structure correct, the logical extension is consider further detailing. The unusual and different which can be found around bridges involve supporting structures for maintenance activities particularly for the replacement of piles. A below ground inspection requires the excavation around piles. Pig stying is a common method of supporting bridges during emergencies such as flooding or fires. Visible variations to the bridge structure include piers on concrete bases, silled piers on ground surface rock.

OTHER TIMBER BRIDGES AND ASSOCIATED STRUCTURES

Variations To The Standard

An inspection of bridge drawings dated 1912 and 1915 indicate that the standards from that time to date have changed little. The current standard drawings will suffice for modelling periods from the late steam era to the present day. However, timber bridges other than those of the standard drawings were and can be found of the Queensland Railways. Old photographs reveal a plethora of designs and careful research will be needed for early days modelling. Some interesting structures incorporating features such as lattice girders were constructed during the major expansion of the railways. More mundane features such as a single headstock instead of a double headstock on a pier was used in the early years. Variations to the standards observed in today's QR are only minor and generally not visually significant.

Amended designs for the mainline upgrading program are evident from observed works. Specific details for these works has not been obtainable for inclusion in this paper. It is understood that the bending moment to the transoms by the increased axle load was excessive. The solution to this problem involved the insertion of additional transoms between the existing ones so that the top is almost fully decked.

Strengthening For Flooding

For bridges that are regularly over topped or the risk of flood damage is high, raking piles are often added. These piles sloped at about 45° and suitably strengthened by bracing. There are several examples on the Maryborough Monto branch.

Rail Overbridges

Rail overbridges (road over rail bridge) are maintained by railway personnel. The structures have a distinctly Queensland Railways flavour and would make a satisfying model. The same principles of construction as for the rail underbridges apply to these structures.

Water Tanks

The supporting timber structure for the water tanks of the steam era were maintained by bridge gangs and therefore are appropriate for mention.

CONCLUSION

Timber bridges have endured the passage of time and have only seen significant replacement with concrete structures recently. While possibly not as spectacular as a steel or concrete bridge, they are distinctive. To capture the prototype of the mainline of Queensland Railways it is essential that a timber bridge be represented.

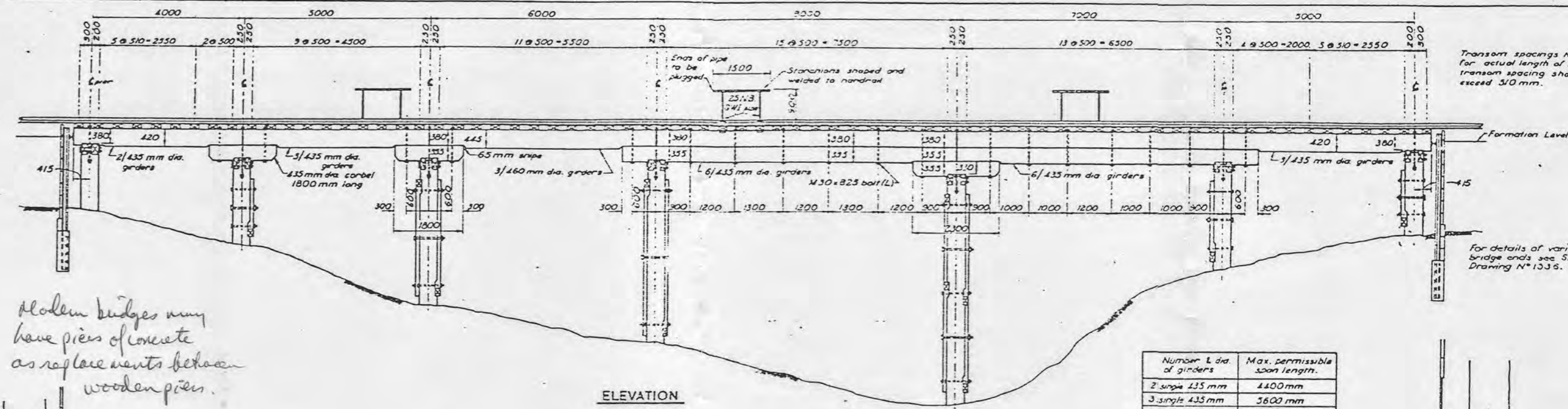
Coal stages similar but
same timber.

Originally a
solid head
stock but
hard to replace.

Leave centre
girders out
for Branch
lines - Note
not ties on
bridge-decks.

Modern bridges may
have piers of concrete
as replacements between
wooden piers.

3.01

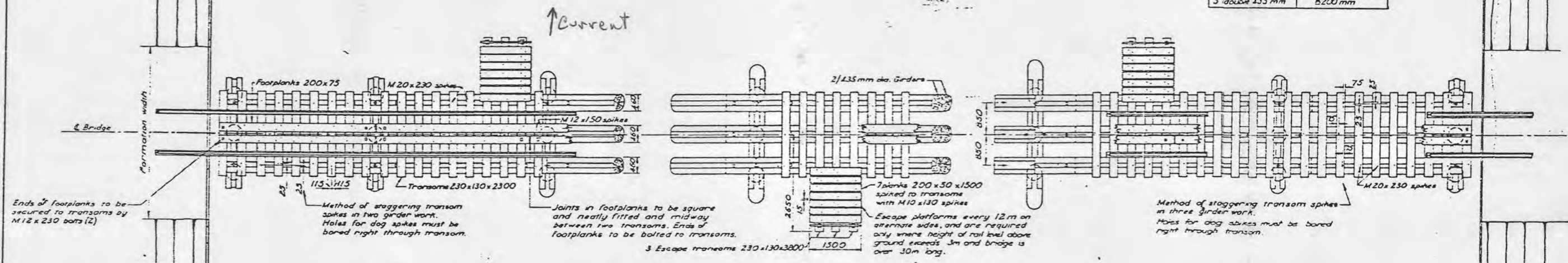


Transom spacings to be adjusted
for actual length of span, but
transom spacing shall not
exceed 310 mm.

For details of various forms of
bridge ends see Standard
Drawing N° 1336.

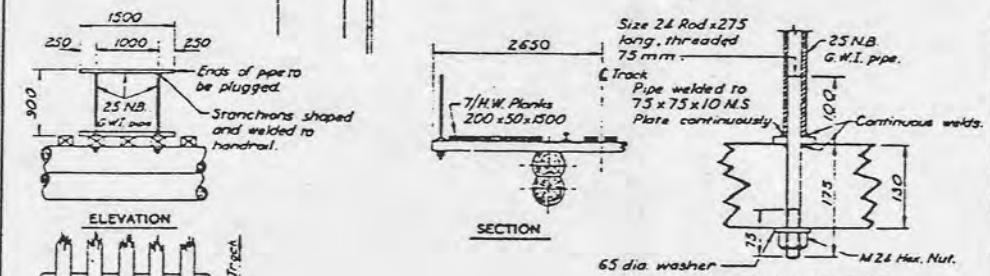
Number & dia. of girders	Max. permissible span length.
2 single 435 mm	4400 mm
3 single 435 mm	5600 mm
3 single 460 mm	6250 mm
2 double 435 mm	6700 mm
3 double 435 mm	8200 mm

ELEVATION



PLAN

SCALE: 1:50



ESCAPE PLATFORMS

SCALE: 1:50

NOTE: Where top of bridge is below flood level, all escape platforms to be on the downstream side and are to be constructed as shown above

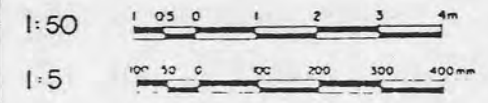
THIS DRAWING IS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH STANDARD DRAWINGS NOS. 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937
THIS DRAWING SUPERSEDES STANDARD DRAWING NO. 1210

NOTES:

1. The depths between faces of girders, and the depth to the pile shoulder must not depart from those shown on standard drawing N° 1334.
2. Headstocks of intermediate piers must be kept not less than 150 mm above ground.
3. All new girders, corbels and transoms shall be bored 150 mm from the ends to accommodate anti-split bolts if required at a later date.
4. Heart sides of headstocks, walers and braces to be placed inwards. All other squared timbers generally to be placed heart downwards.
5. Certain species of timber, when used for girders and headstocks, are required to be 25 mm larger than shown on the drawings. See relevant timber specification.
6. The top face of girders for a width of 150 mm, the upper surface of footplanks, escape planks and handrails to be given 3 coats of an approved white lead-free paint.
7. Refer to Standard Practice Directive N° 4301 for limits on the number and arrangement of various types of piers in a bridge.
8. The ends of all sawn, hewn and round timber (except transoms), and the tops of piles shall be treated with a special mixture of petroleum jelly in accordance with the relevant instructions.
9. All beds and joins to receive a thick coat of an approved white lead-free paint.
10. All sapped, dressed, hewn or sawn timber below ground to receive 2 coats of an approved tar mixture.
11. No other timber shall be painted or tarred except in tropical high rainfall areas, where the tops of girders for one half the circumference and the top face of headstocks shall receive 3 coats of an approved white lead-free paint.
12. Galvanised bolts shall be used in lieu of black bolts over tidal waters, and in other areas where considered necessary by the Maintenance Engineer.
13. 'Loctite' shall be applied to all bolts in accordance with the relevant instructions.
14. These structures were originally designed for B.K. (12 ton axle load with steam impact) but have been checked and found adequate for all 2nd Class line loadings.

ALL DIMENSIONS ARE IN MILLIMETRES UNLESS SHOWN OTHERWISE

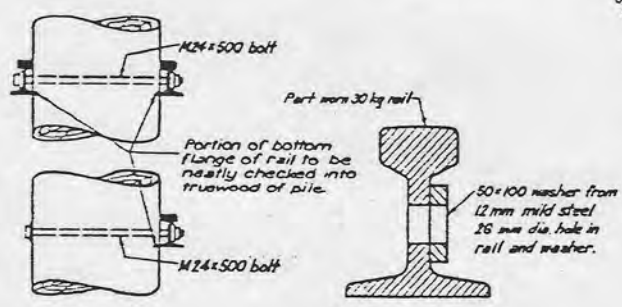
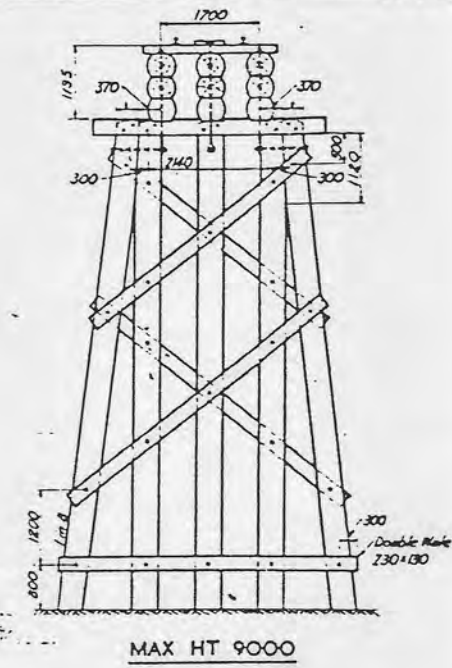
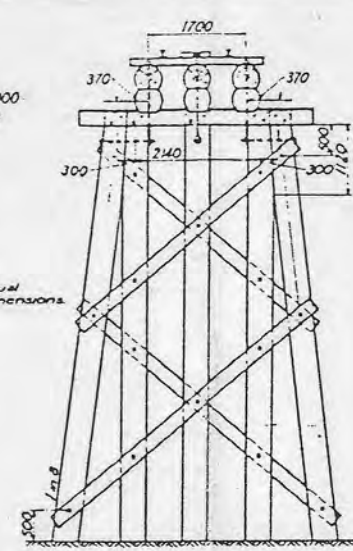
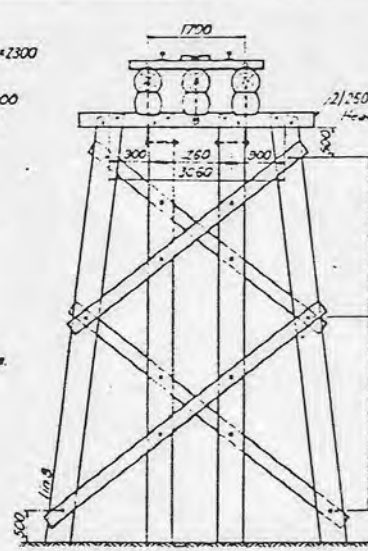
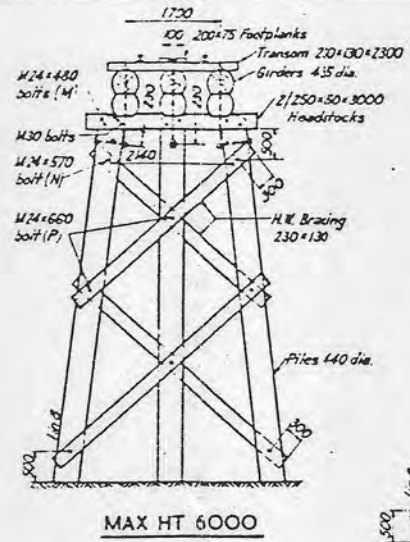
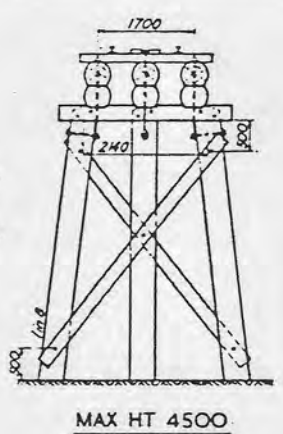
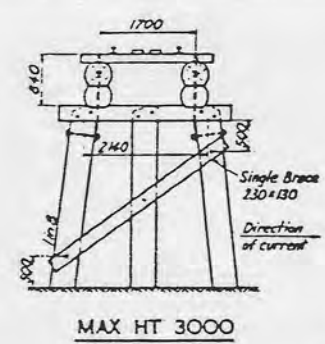
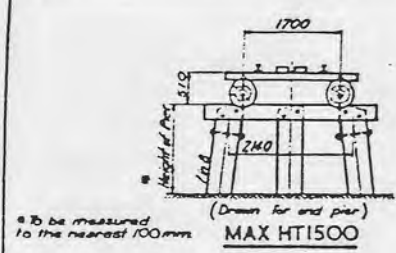
C.E.'S. FILE	1920-1	SCALE:	1:50 1:5
DRAWING NUMBER	1932	LOADING:	SEE NOTE 14 (ADEQUATE FOR ALL "A" CLASS LINE LOADINGS)
ISSUE			



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		DRAWN	8.8.8 8/79	ENGINEER FOR WORKS DATE
		CHECKED	8.8.8 8/79	APPROVED
		PASSED	8.8.8 8/79	31-7-79
		SUBMITTED	8.8.8 8/79	DATE

QUEENSLAND RAILWAYS.	CHIEF ENGINEER'S BRANCH
STANDARD TIMBER BRIDGES	DRAWING NUMBER
GENERAL ARRANGEMENT	1932
	ISSUE

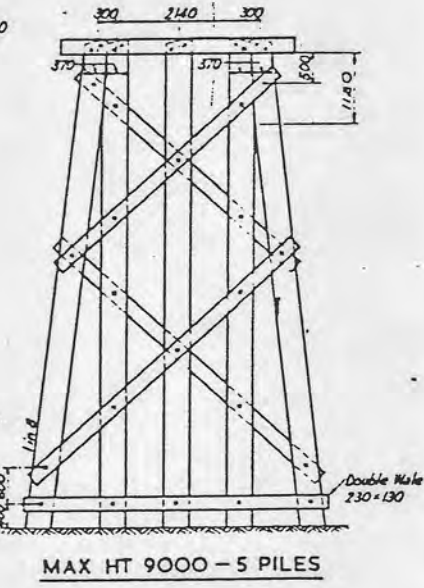
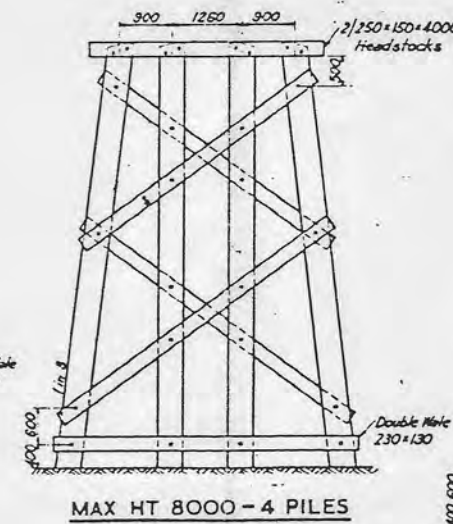
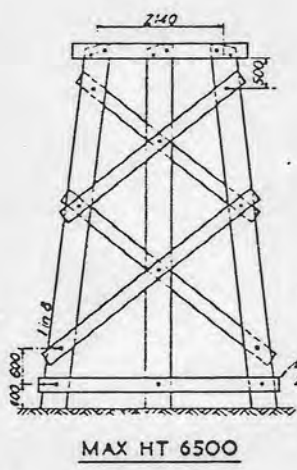
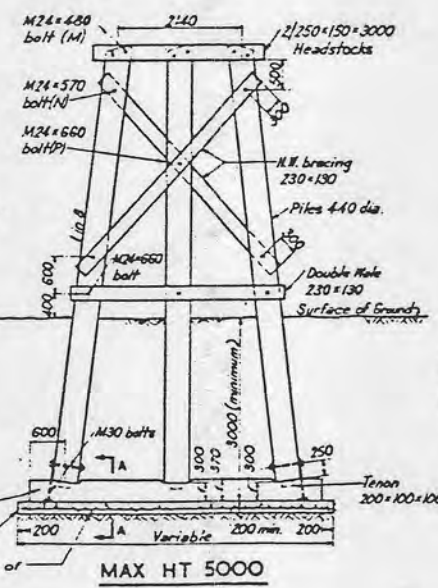
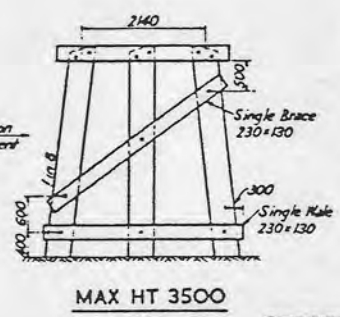
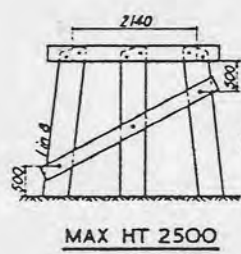
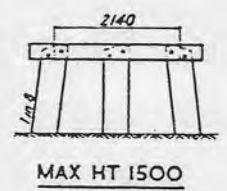




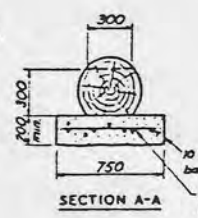
DETAILS OF
RAIL FASTENING.
SCALE 1:10

SECTION THROUGH RAIL
AT FASTENING
SCALE 1:2

ALTERNATIVE RAIL BRACES



- Notes:
1. All piers constructed in accordance with this drawing, both driven and silled, shall have the piles placed with the butt end up.
 2. For bridges on curves, or subjected to floods, male and brace bolts may be increased to M30 at the discretion of the Maintenance Engineer.
 3. All males and braces shall be checked 40 mm into true wood of piles.
 4. All new piles in silled piers shall be sapped and tarred from 300 mm above surface of ground to bottom of pile.
 5. In driven piers the ground shall be excavated after piles are driven to allow piles to be sapped and tarred from 300 mm above to 1000 mm below surface of ground or further if necessary.
 6. Round sills shall be sapped completely.
 7. All sills shall be tarred on all surfaces.
 8. All beds and joints shall be well tarred.
 9. For sizes of headstocks for different species of timber see relevant timber specifications.
 10. Heart sides of headstocks males and braces to be placed inwards.
 11. Part-worn 30 kg rails may be used for males and braces. Arrangement of rails should be as for timber males and braces.
 12. All dimensions are clear of sapwood.



SILLED PIERS
SILLED PILES 440mm DIA TAPERING TO 360mm MIN DIA

THIS DRAWING IS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH STANDARD DRAWINGS NOS. 1932, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937
THIS DRAWING SUPERSEDES STANDARD DRAWING NO. 1211
ALL DIMENSIONS ARE IN MILLIMETRES

C.E.'S FILE	1920-1
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LOADING:	SEE NOTE 14 ON DRG. NO. 1932 ADEQUATE FOR ALL "A" CLASS LINE LOADINGS



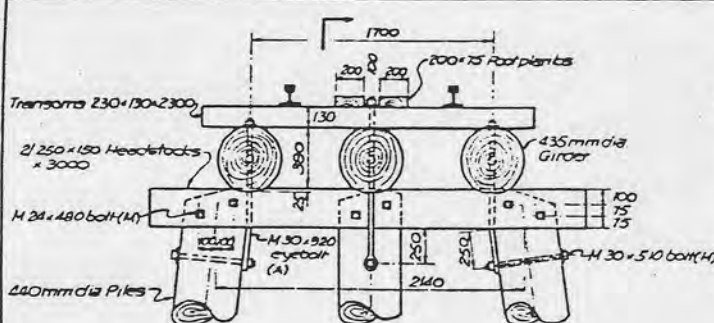
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1:50	1 0.5 0 1 2 3 4m

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	PASSED	DATE	DATE
	SUBMITTED	DATE	DATE

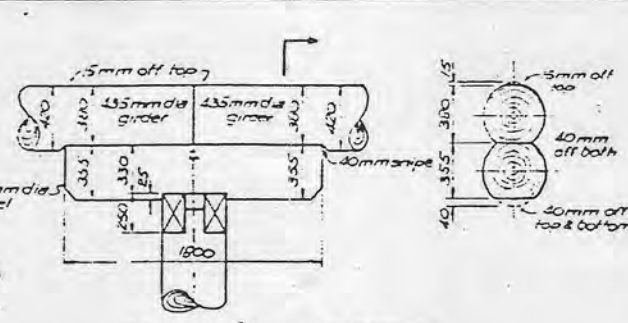
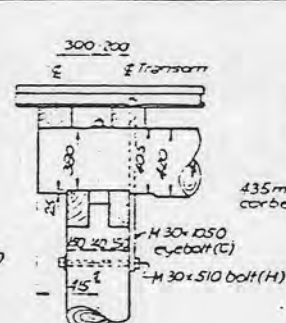
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CHECKED	DATE	DATE
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QUEENSLAND RAILWAYS	CHIEF ENGINEER'S BRANCH
STANDARD TIMBER BRIDGES	PIER DETAILS

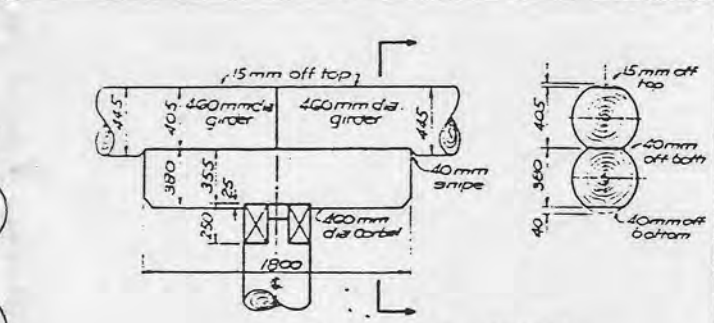
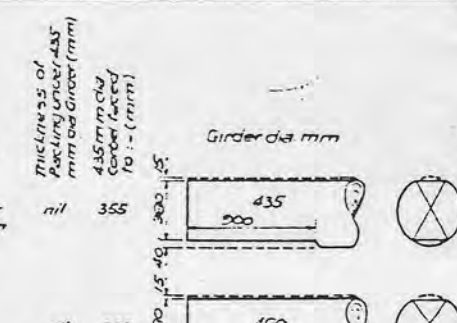
DRAWING NUMBER	1933
ISSUE	



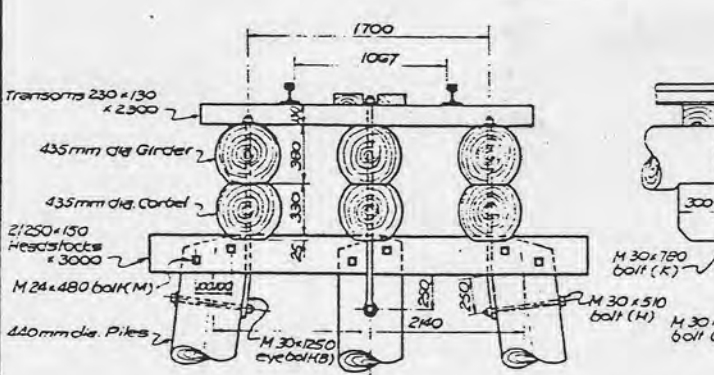
END PERS



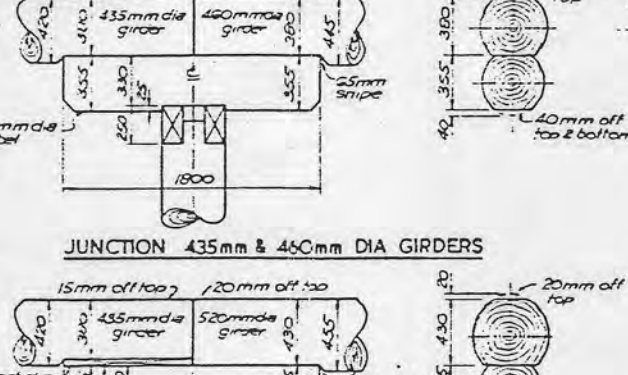
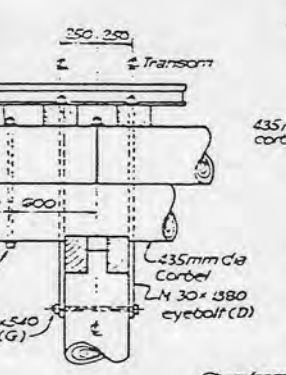
JUNCTION 435mm DIA. GIRDERS



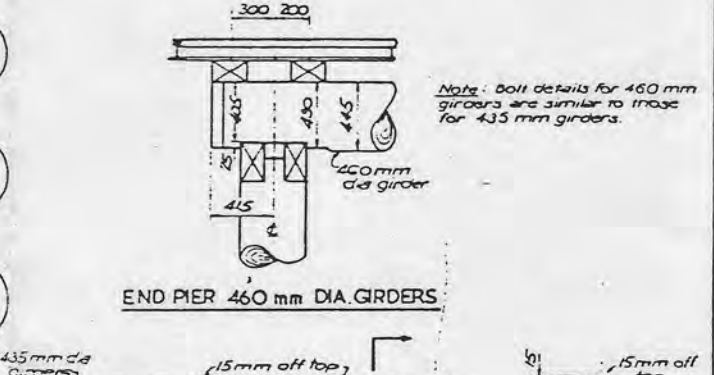
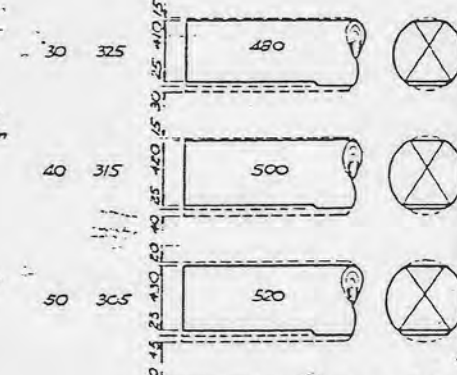
JUNCTION '460 mm DIA. GIRDERS



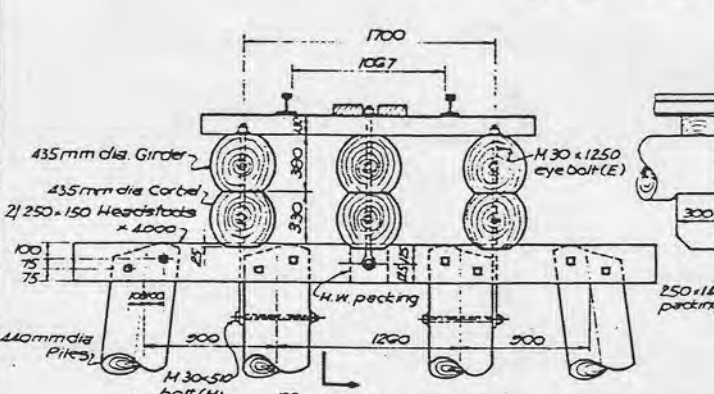
INTERMEDIATE 3 PILE PIERS



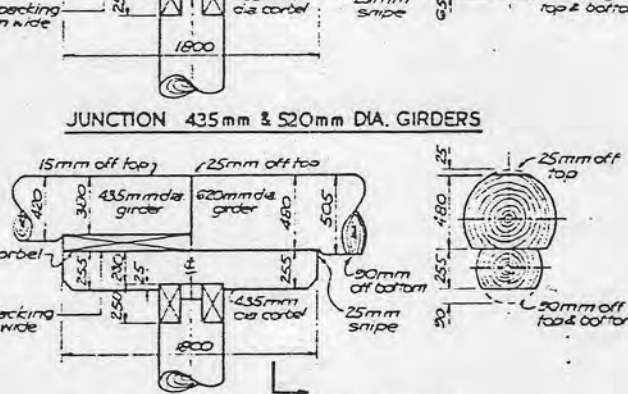
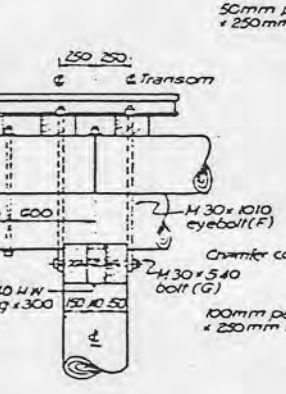
JUNCTION 435mm & 450mm DIA GIRDERS



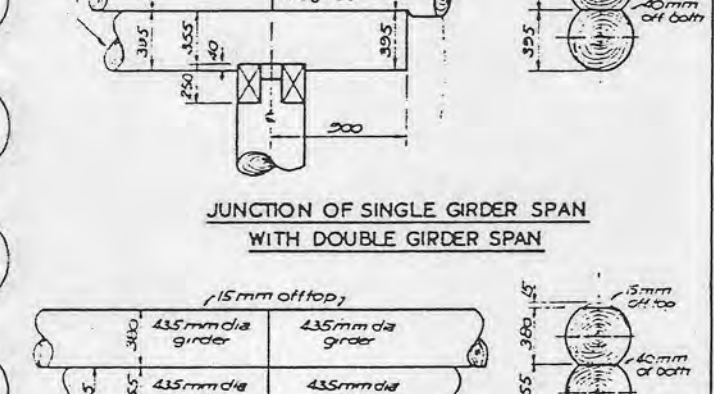
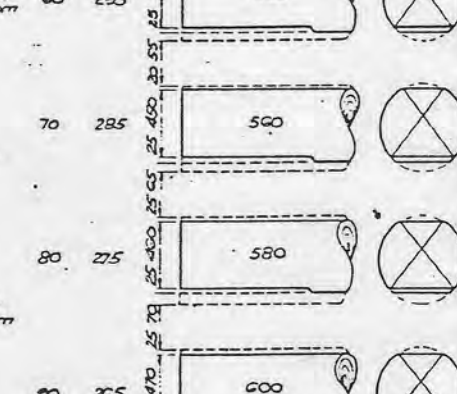
END PIER 460 mm DIA. GIRDERS



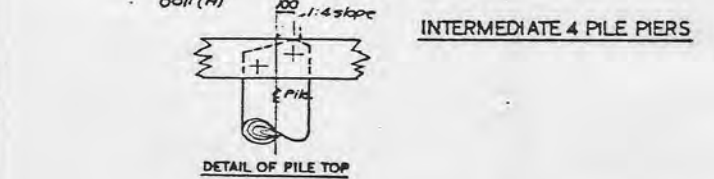
INTERMEDIATE 4 PILE PIERS



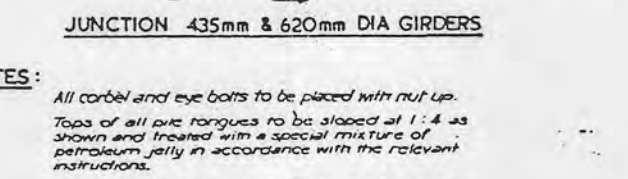
JUNCTION 435mm & 520mm DIA. GIRDERS



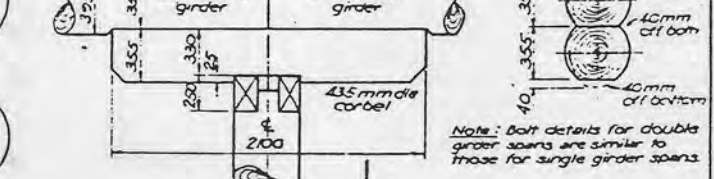
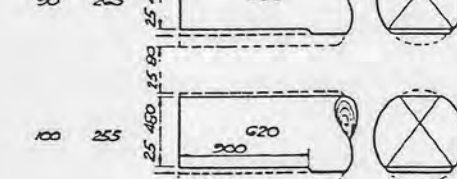
JUNCTION OF SINGLE GIRDER SPAN
WITH DOUBLE GIRDER SPAN



DETAIL OF PILE TOP



JUNCTION 435mm & 620mm DIA GIRDERS



JUNCTION DOUBLE GIRDER SPANS

NOTES:

All corbel and eye bolts to be placed with nut up.
Tops of all pipe tongues to be sloped at 1:4 as shown and treated with a special mixture of petroleum jelly in accordance with the relevant instructions.

Where packing 15mm or more in thickness has to be used, this must be in one length for the whole distance required.

Packing thinner than 15mm may be inserted as cross packing, but the whole of the bed must be filled and the packing nailed in place.

DRESSING OF OVERSIZE GIRDERS FOR JUNCTION WITH 435mm DIA. GIRDERS

ALL DIMENSIONS ARE IN MILLIMETRES

METHOD OF FIXING GIRDERS ON PILES

(DRAWN FOR 435 mm DIA. GIRDERS)

THIS DRAWING IS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH STANDARD DRAWINGS NOS. 1932, 1933, 1935, 1936, 1937
THIS DRAWING SUPERSEDES STANDARD DRAWING NO. 1210

C.E.'S. FILE		1920-1		SCALE: 1:20				1:20				ALTERATIONS		CALC.		METRICATED FROM DRAWING NO. 1293		RECOMMENDED		QUEENSLAND RAILWAYS.		CHIEF ENGINEER'S BRANCH	
DRAWING NUMBER		1934		LOADING: SEE NOTE 14 ON DRG N°1932		ADOPTED FOR ALL "A" CLASS LINE LOADINGS								CHECKED		L. J. 27.8.73		BROOKS ENGINEER		DATE		DRAWING NUMBER	
ISSUE														DRAWN		S. R. B. 8/79		ENGINEER FOR WORKS		DATE		1934	
														CHECKED		S. R. B. 8/79		APPROVED				ISSUE	
														PASSED		S. R. B. 8/79							
														SUBMITTED		S. R. B. 11-7-80		CHIEF ENGINEER		DATE			

DRAWING NUMBER
1935
ISSUE

