



### The Out-Depot

The infrastructure of a sugar cane railway system was, and is, a scaled down version of the main line systems. In the days of steam there were requirements for 'en route' facilities such as water tanks to service the locomotives, although, unlike the main lines, trips were mainly 'out-and-back' on a daily basis. This focussed the servicing of motive power and rolling stock on a central depot, invariably located within the mill precinct.

Out-depots catering for overnight stopovers were used on a few systems that had long runs. With the

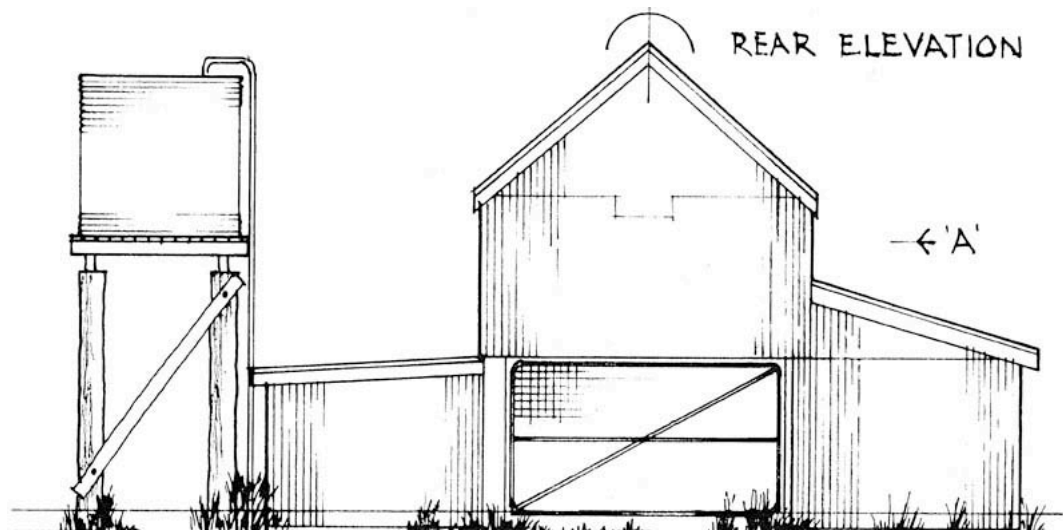
use of diesels and more efficient running the need for intermediate facilities has largely disappeared.

The out-of-service (and now demolished) out-depot located west of Koumala was typical of Queensland's 'timber and tin' construction; Wallaville is a modern era out-depot with an ex-main line building and very basic servicing facilities while Silkwood and Mourilyan provides a transition between the two.

All four out-depots had/have loco servicing facilities as well as a storage for one or more locos, albeit in a fenced area at Wallaville.

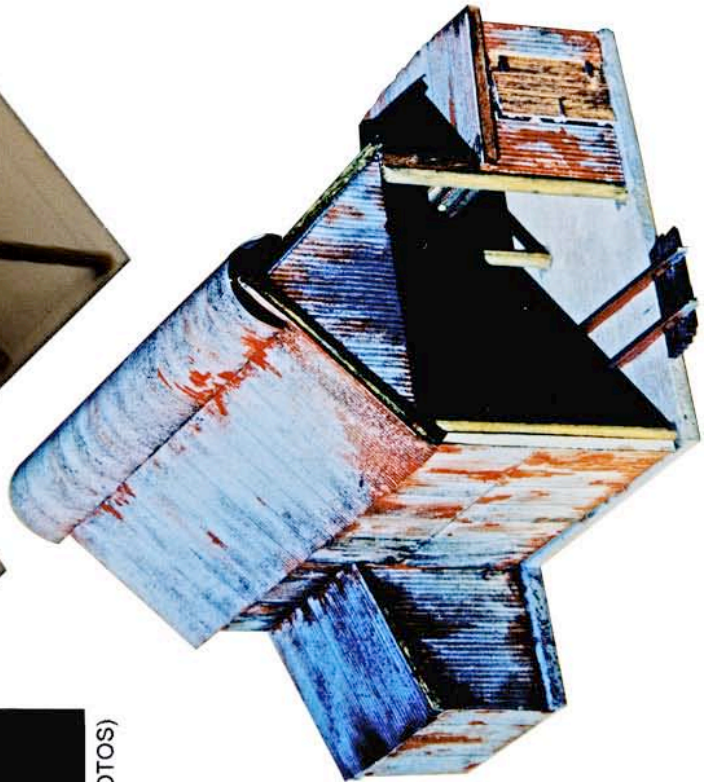
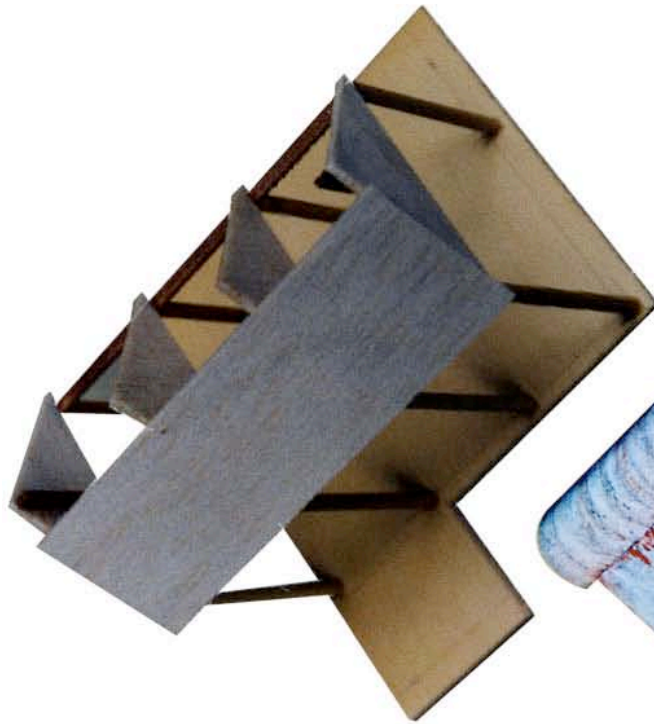


Greg Stephenson photo. West of Koumala, c 1986; cane trains still run beside, although the building is no longer in tramway use. Originally part of an isolated narrow gauge tramway, this line was later incorporated into the Plane Creek system. As far as loco sheds go, they don't come much smaller, more basic or even more whimsical. Jim Hutchinson's rear elevation drawing (below) shows the same side as the photo. This drawing and the others on the page three are 1:87 (HO) scale.



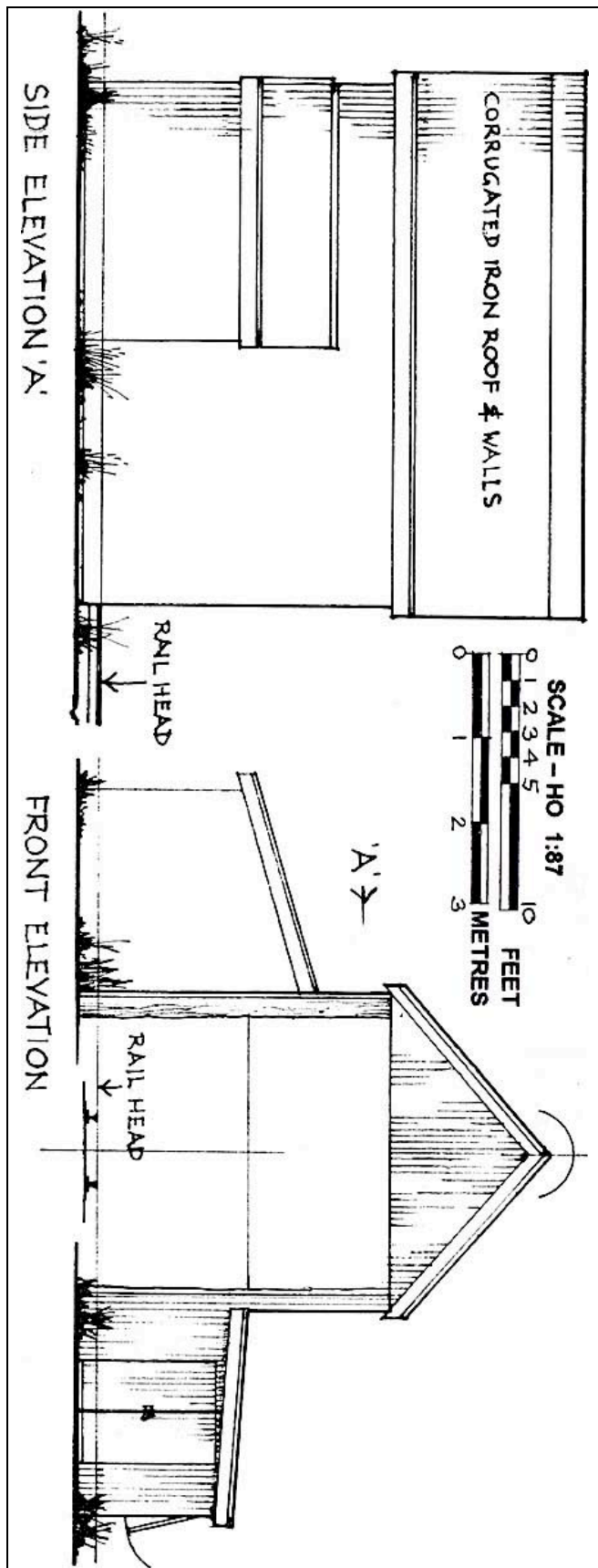


# CaneSIG: Modelling Loco Depots



GREG STEPHENSON (BOTH PHOTOS)





Loco shed west of Koumala, c 1986.

### The Model

Materials included 1/8" dowels, scale 6" x 2" strip-wood for the wall girts and 1.6 mm balsa for the roof construction. There was no pit. For stability the plywood base was drilled for the posts. Acrylic contact cement glued sheets of corrugated aluminium to the wall frame and sub-roof. The gates at each end were fabricated from 0.5mm brass wire with tulle to represent the chain wire mesh. The model would benefit from detailing with the water tank and stand, pipes and other paraphernalia found in a loco depot.

### Transition-era Changes

The Silkwood out-depot of the South Johnstone system is another example of a small loco facility located some distance from the mill itself. The photos show how the shed has been enlarged, interestingly since the cessation of steam operations. Note the sand drying facility in the two earliest photos (David Mewes photos, next page), including the cranked flue (second photo next page) where this equipment has been roofed over.

Modelling the structure should be a straightforward exercise, regardless of the version selected, and would be useful for a layout where a mill complex is not to be included. Added interest would come from two different eras of iron sheeting (and weathering) and construction methods on the 1978 version, since the timber used in the earlier section would likely be much rougher than the dimension lumber in the new section.

Greg Stephenson's more recent photographs (third photo next page and first photo on following page) suggest that the Silkwood out-depot has again undergone significant changes, as the building seems to have reverted to the length of the original loco shed and lost the sand drying facility.

While it does not appear that environmental controls are in place in the event of a fuel spill, etc., it may simply be that the facility is small enough that more stringent containment requirements do not apply. Appropriate regulations should be consulted to determine what level of control is required during a particular era.

Steam era facilities converted to the needs of the diesel era, for example, would not likely have had a need for containment barriers, etc., prior to the enforcement of environmental controls in the late twentieth century. Modellers should verify details from photographs and other sources, preferably on the ground, during the particular era being modelled.

In any event, it will take a site visit and discussion with locals at the very least to determine when and how the changes happened. This isn't as much of a problem for representative modellers, but should be a concern for modellers intending to create a prototypically correct model set in a specific era.



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David Mewes photo, Silkwood c 1969. The brick structure is the sand dryer; note also the wholestick truck in the foreground.



David Mewes photo, Silkwood c 1978. The building has been extended using standard wood frame and iron construction. Note the gutters and downspouts, rather than piping to an elevated water tank as diesels have replaced steam locos. It's unclear whether the sand dryer is the original facility or, as is more likely, has been expanded as well as being covered.



Greg Stephenson photo, Silkwood c 1995. Almost twenty years later; this is the same end as the photo above and it looks as if the building has been shortened again, likely with the removal of the sand drying facility.



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Greg Stephenson photo, Silkwood c 2000. The opposite end of the building; note the fuel and oil stains on the ground and the apparent lack of a containment barrier around the diesel tank or oil drums. Diesel fuel and other supplies, including sand, are likely delivered by truck, making for additional modelling potential.

### The Modern Out-Depot



Wallaville, August 2002. A rake of full bins arrives for consolidation into a larger rake bound for the mill; a rake of empties waits behind the crew shed. The old Wallaville mill site (one mill building plus the loco shed, etc., still remain in a farmer's field) is off to the right. The far left track includes a triangle junction that would allow loco turning. Diesel fuel facilities are located beyond the crew shed while the fenced pen for secure overnight loco storage is to the right of the sand tower and behind the rake of empties.

The Wallaville out-depot is located at a branch line junction and contains several parallel tracks where smaller rakes are combined for transfer to the mill and empties are left for distribution. The out-depot includes a sand drying and storage tower and a crew shed recycled from when this was a stop on a standard gauge Queensland Railway branch line.

The original Wallaville mill has been abandoned for many years but a few original buildings and other relics remain, including the original loco shed (see *Modelling Loco Depots #4*) off to the right of this view. The old Queenslander building with the radio antenna in the background belongs to the mill as well. Other buildings nearby form the core of a small farming community.



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Longer shot looking towards the out-depot (above) with a rake of fulls arriving for consolidation into a larger rake to go to the mill. The train will continue on beyond the points in the foreground and back the rake onto rake already parked in front of the crew shed. A rake of empties is on the right hand track, which runs behind the crew shed (see photo below for the end of the rake).



Wallaville, August 2002 (both photos above and all on the next page). Servicing the loco in the open air, but in the shade of the crew shed. The loco is cleaned (swept out and windows wiped), sand boxes filled by hand, joints greased and connectors checked at the end of the shift. The fenced loco pen is roughly 50 metres further to the left on this track.

Diesel fuelling facility with mill office in background (next page). Note the containment barrier in case of a major leak with minor spill marks on the ground near the bowser (foreground). Interestingly, the bowser (photo bottom of next page) is sited right on the points, rather than on a separate loco servicing track. The crew shed and sand tower are behind and off to the right; the loco storage pen is on the far end of the short dead-end track running off this set of points and behind the crew shed.



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Sand is taken from the tower (above) in buckets. The fenced loco pen (above right) is located further to the left at the end of the short track running from the points at the bowser.



## CaneSIG: Modelling Loco Depots



Looking away from the Wallaville out-depot. Although well-used, and the far track is ballasted, most of the tracks are still weed and grass covered. Loose cane billets and other trash are also common. Lynn Zelmer photo, 2002.



The former Goondi 'triple-fronted' steam shed serves as an out-depot of Mourilyan Mill. The central bay accommodates the two-road loco shed, with the left and right hand bays housing workshop, storage and navvy facilities. Greg Stephenson photo, 1995.

### Acknowledgments

These notes have been edited and extended, with permission, by CaneSIG Coordinator Lynn Zelmer from Jim Hutchinson's *Modelling the Railways of Queensland Convention 2000* notes. Jim provided

the Koumala model and drawings; uncredited images are from Lynn Zelmer and the CaneSIG collection. Wallaville photos all August 2002.