

1948	25 August	Last train (freight) ran on UPR.
1957		Shooting of the Movie "The Bridge on the River Kwai" using K1 104 and 106 locomotives. Climax blast on 10 March 1957, first attempt.
1972/3		Formal passenger transport between RPR and AVS suspended.
1974	16 August	A Cabinet decision was taken to close the KV beyond Homagama for passenger traffic from 1 January 1975 and for goods traffic from 1 January 1976.
1975	14 April	Last scheduled train from OPK to RPR.
	15 April	Section between Homagama and Opanake was closed.
1976		Track between Opanake and Ratnapura lifted.
1977		Track between Ratnapura and Avissawella lifted.
1978	8 December	Train services resumed back to Avissawella.
1991	25 October	Broad Gauged KV line was opened up to Nugegoda.
1993	23 April	Broad Gauged KV line was opened up to Homagama.
1997	5 August	Opening of new Avissawella Station with Broad gauge facilities.
1998	October/ November	Use of dual gauge facilities came to an end due to lack of maintenance, and the middle rail was lifted from 1998 onwards.

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not officially catering to passengers, but were primarily one-way goods trains. The service was cut back to Homagama in 1976 (A Cabinet decision was taken on 16 August 1974 to close the KV line beyond Homagama for passenger traffic from 1 January 1975 and for goods traffic from 1 January 1976<sup>70</sup>). However, local trains continued to run. Since Homagama was not properly functional as a terminus station, service later resumed to Padukka and then to Avissawella on 8 December 1978. (It is said that the new government formed in 1977 immediately suspended the track lifting. Otherwise, the track would have been totally dismantled; verbal information only.)

The last scheduled train from OPK to RPR ran on Sinhala and Tamil New Year's Day (14 April) in 1975<sup>71</sup> and the section between Homagama and Opanake was closed on 15 April 1975. The same year, motive power and rolling stock were transferred to RPR, including the three Class V2 steam Rail cars. The track between OPK and RPR was lifted in 1976. The demolition of the uppermost section of the KV was strongly protested by the local community. It is

ates are from the booklet, "Kelani Valley Broad Gauge Railway" (1991). A Souvenir issued to commemorate the opening of the first segment of broad gauged

71 Occasional baby trains and Rail cars kept on running up to early 1976.

, and to be lifted (Verbal information). (Refer plates 3.6.1.3 to 3.6.1.6.)

The official decision was taken on 16 August 1974 to close the KV line beyond Homagama for passenger traffic from 1 January 1975 and for goods traffic from 1 January 1976. Accordingly, Avissawella was a 'closed' station until 8 December 1978, when it was re-opened. Even during this 'officially closed' period, the station was still functioning to facilitate running of freight trains, baby trains and other local trains.

Once the Ratnapura and Pelmadulla extensions had been lifted by 1977, all train traffic was limited to Avissawella and the station became the terminus of the narrow gauge KV line for the second time. After about three years, all the railway equipment beyond the station in the direction of Ratnapura beyond the over-bridge was dismantled. As such, the over-bridge was dismantled as well<sup>84</sup>. (The bridge was only 18 feet wide and was not wide enough to allow two big vehicles to cross at the same time. Also, there were restrictions for heavy vehicles such as limited speed). The transfer sidings were

One stone abutment of this bridge still remains to date.

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## Correction Sheet as of 15th August 2021

As a result of further information becoming available after this edition went to press, the following corrections have to be included.

These corrections will be incorporated in future editions of the book.

August 2021.  
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pters, it re of the tensions on. This lowever, 976 had witness suggests. lose the ety was tnapura "Kelani ere was to take ie track.

were two prominent parliamentarians from the area and they had not uttered a word against the lifting of the track<sup>102</sup>. The Association protested by blocking the track at Hunuwala, but without any consideration for their grievance, the track was lifted. After the track was lifted, it is said that several embankments were cut down and a bridge between Watapota and Dela was lifted. The author, who has resided around the Pelmadulla extension, personally witnessed such embankment cuts, without there being any good reason for doing so, back in the 1980s. The most prominent political evidence is visible on one of the walls of the old Ratnapura Railway Station. Whilst the last scheduled train ran between OPK and RPR on 14 April 1975 and the track between RPR and AVS was lifted only in late 1977, RPR Station was converted to a bus stand even before the closure of the railway. On 24 October 1976 a ceremonial plaque was unveiled to open

102 Those parliamentarians were neither planters nor transporters, and the public suggested that they were influenced by the planters and a politician who ran a transport business, which continues to operate to date.