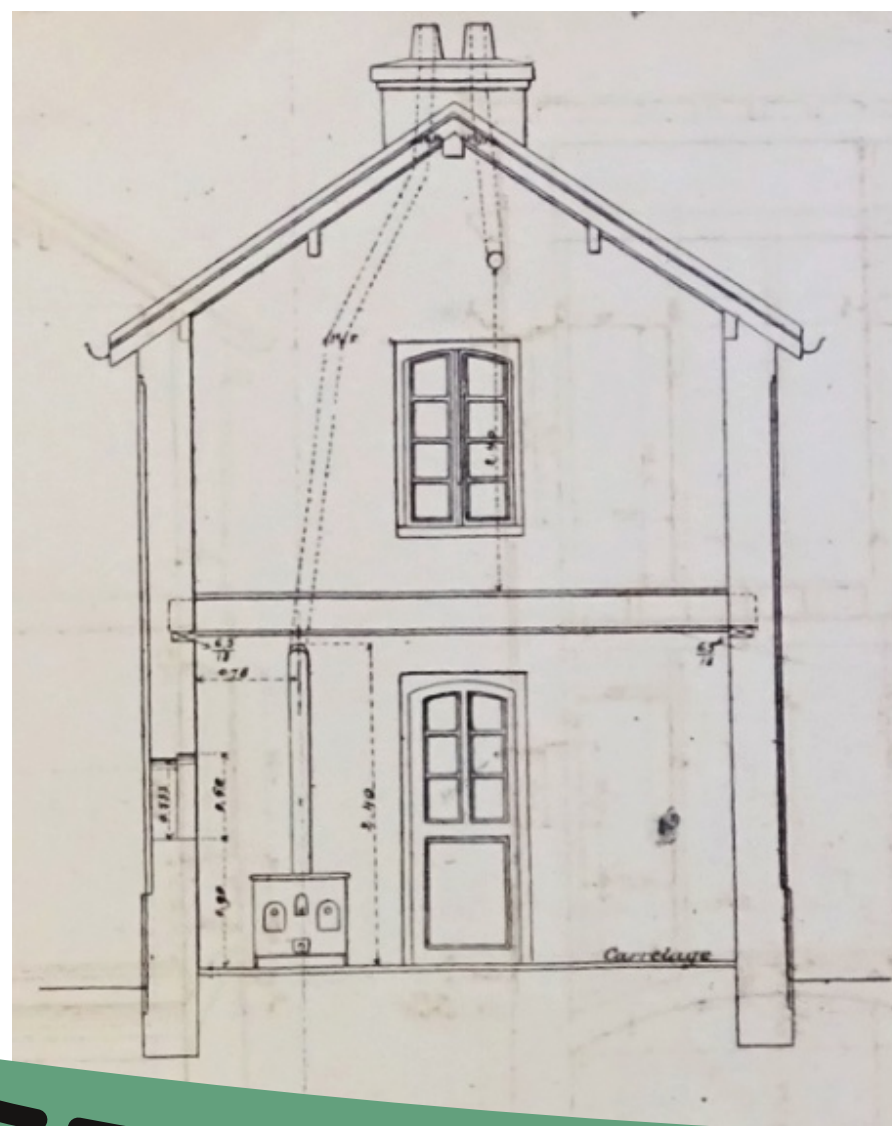
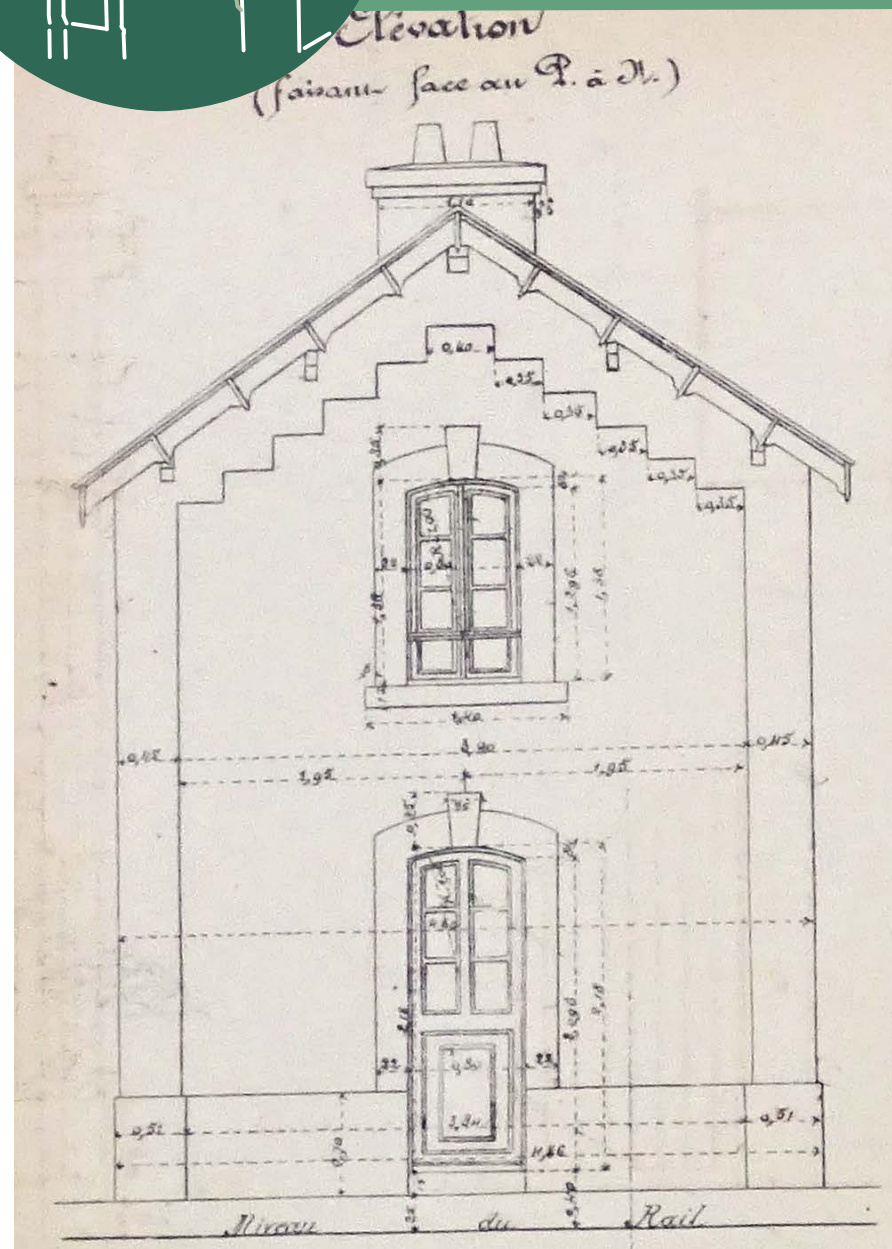




The crossing-keeper's house



Who would have guessed that this ordinary house used to be that of Acquin's crossing-keeper?

An exception that proves the rule

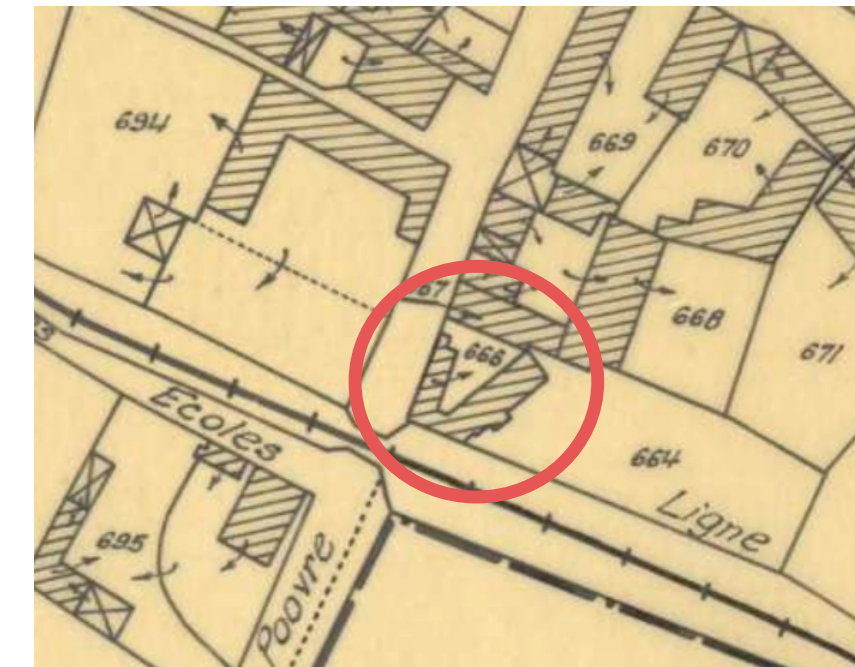
When the Anvin-Calais railway line was opened, there needed to be a crossing-keeper's house **at each intersection with a main road**. On 21 August 1878, Acquin town council asked the local interest railway company (V.F.I.L.) to install a 2-metre barrier to be manned by a crossing-keeper: this tied accommodation was built in **1883**.

Crossing-keepers' houses often had an upstairs floor and at least three rooms. But the one in Acquin is quite different: it is a **small, rectangular bungalow**.

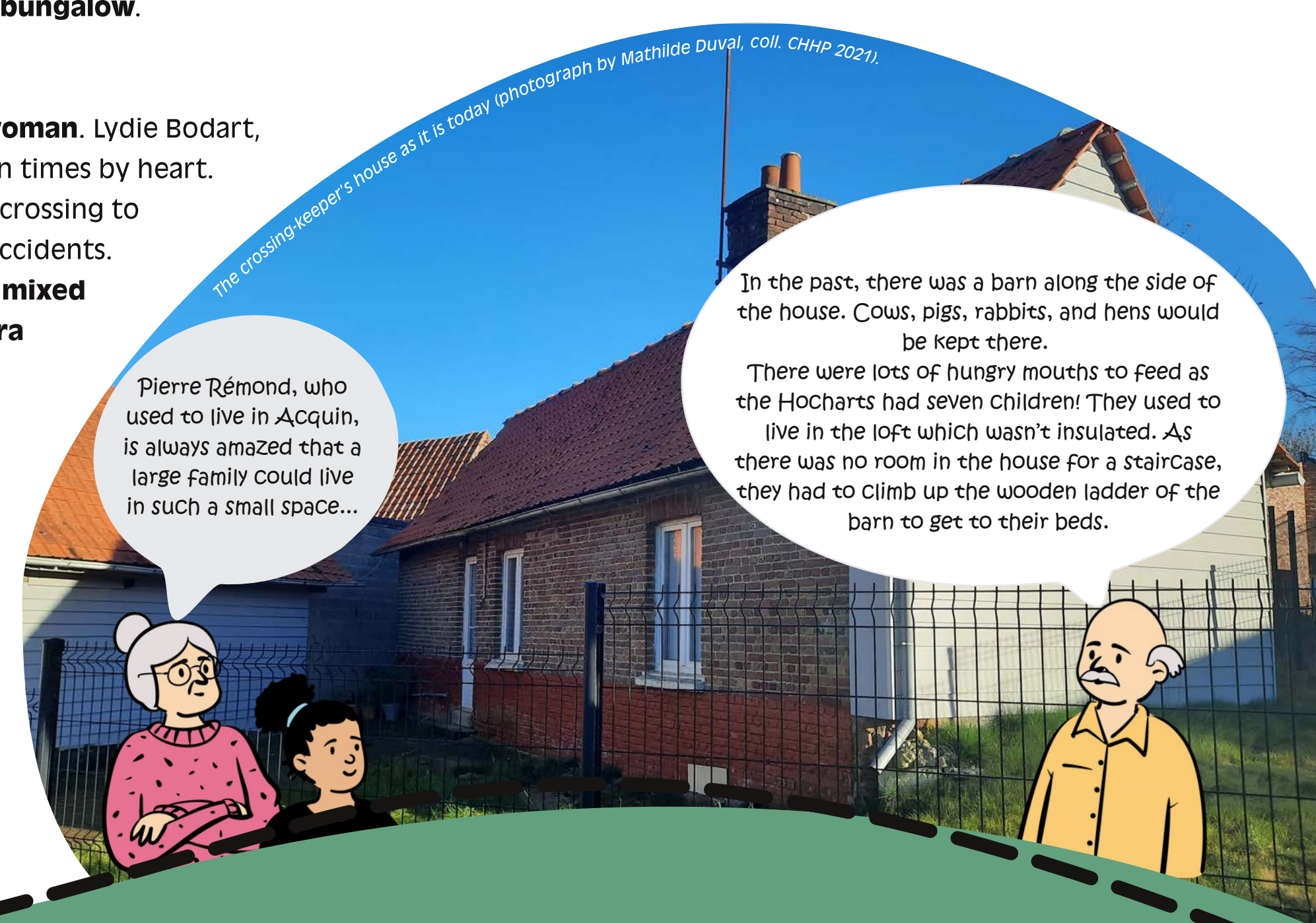
Available at all hours

As was often the case, **Acquin's crossing-keeper was a woman**. Lydie Bodart, and her successor Madame Hochart, used to know the train times by heart. Both **during the day and at night**, they had to be at the crossing to lower the barrier each time a train passed, thus avoiding accidents. Every day, there would be **six passenger trains and two mixed trains** (passengers and freight), not to mention **some extra carts** of sugar beet at harvesting time, from October to January.

The crossing-keeper's husband would more often than not work on the line. He would maintain the section of rail track that went through the village. Between shovelling gravel to shore up the **ballast**, and cleaning the **ditches**, he was always busy!



The crossing-keeper's house, with barn, in 1935 AD62, 3P 008/5).



Pierre Rémond, who used to live in Acquin, is always amazed that a large family could live in such a small space...

In the past, there was a barn along the side of the house. Cows, pigs, rabbits, and hens would be kept there. There were lots of hungry mouths to feed as the HOCHARTS had seven children! They used to live in the loft which wasn't insulated. As there was no room in the house for a staircase, they had to climb up the wooden ladder of the barn to get to their beds.