



The Times

May 2010

A journal of transport timetable history and analysis



THE CHINESE DRAGON, BENDIGO EASTER FAIR. (Advertiser Photo)



Inside: Pittwater buses

When the dragon went by train

Railway crimes revisited

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The Times

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On the front cover

Top: This is Sun Loong, Bendigo's famous Dragon, at the height of his powers at Easter 1941. Sun Loong lived in Bendigo, but many of the people who animated him lived in Melbourne. They had travelled up the night before on four special trains. These trains (and many others) are described in our story beginning on page 7. Our vantage point is in the backwoods, at Wildwoods, a place now known only from old railway timetables and a modern children's riding school. **Bottom (and below):** A couple of miles up the line from Wildwoods was Lancefield Junction, where the fabulously exotic branch to Kilmore curved away from VR's "Main Line" This photo, taken at about the time of our story (it is probably a Christmas special), shows a train leaving Clarkefield (as it was then) to travel to the terminus (cut back to Lancefield decades before this photo).

Normally Sunbury and Clarkefield cooperated on the despatch of trains and Wildwoods lay dormant. But on busy nights such as occurred at Easter, it was woken from its slumbers, to help in the festivities as a Block Post. In 1941, its busiest night ever, Wildwoods was "open" for six hours and passed sixteen trains along the line.



Contributors Robert Henderson, Geoff Lambert, Victor Isaacs, Albert Isaacs, Tony Bailey, Jim Wells, Jim Stokes, Andrew McLean, Mark Bau.

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Avalon's local bus routes 191-193 Marking the demise of Route 193

ROBERT HENDERSON

Beautiful vistas over the Pacific Ocean, narrow streets, multi-million dollar residences and low patronage – the perfect bus route for an enthusiast, but sadly not one that is commercially viable in the 21st century. That was the State Transit Authority's Route 193 from Avalon to Whale Beach, which made its last run on Friday, 31 July 2009.

Its final timetable showed three return trips during "shopping hours" on weekdays, plus three school trips - one in the morning and two in the afternoon - mainly for children attending Avalon Primary School.

The route was one of a trio of local routes which have circulated around Avalon for almost 45 years. The remaining two routes – 191 to Bilgola Plateau/Tailors Point and 192 to Stokes Point – continue to ply their circuitous way around the tree-lined streets that border picturesque Pitt Water.

John Booth commences a bus service in Avalon

The three routes have an interesting background.

A local Avalon man, John Booth, took the initiative to set them up, originally using only a single minibus, some time in 1965. It was in that bus that I later made my first trip, when the proprietor himself was the driver.

He told me at the time that, from his local knowledge, he had perceived a need for buses to serve the streets of Avalon's neighbouring suburbs, Bilgola Plateau, Tailors Point, Clareville and Whale Beach. While Sydney's longest Government bus route, 190 (Wynyard-Palm Beach), ran along the Palm Beach peninsula's main road, Barrenjoey Road, and another Government bus route, 189, provided a peak-hour-only service between Wynyard and Tailors Point, those routes left many people with a 2km-plus walk from any regular Government bus service. Many also had steep hills to negotiate. Booth's routes helped to close the transport gaps left by Government bus routes.

My first timetable for the routes was published in the Careel Bay and North Avalon Progress Associations' "Peninsula Hand-

book" for 1967 (see page ...). It shows seven return trips to Whale Beach per weekday, five to Tailors Point via Stokes Point and five to Bilgola Plateau, two of which returned to Avalon via Tailors Point. He also initially ran some weekend services, but they had certainly ceased by 1967. This was confirmed by the advertisement in Booth's own 1967 timetable, which declared that he had a "Bus for hire, Public Holidays, Saturdays and Sundays".

Because parts of the routes were operating along or close to the Government bus routes, travelling restrictions were imposed on them such that they could not convey passengers who were "rightly" Government bus passengers. Those restrictions remained in force throughout the private operator's existence.

Around 1974/5, Booth incorporated his business as Pittwater Bus Lines Pty Ltd.

Timetable changes

The routes and timetable continued relatively unchanged until the second half of the 1970s. By then, problems with patron-

BUS TIME-TABLE — LOCAL

Route 1—AVALON TO WHALE BEACH

Monday to Friday

| Depart Avalon | Alexander Road | Surf Road | Arr. Binya and Pacific Roads |
|---------------------|----------------|-----------|------------------------------|
| 8.45A | 8.48 | 8.51 | 8.54 |
| 10.15 | 10.19 | 10.23 | 10.27 |
| 11.55 | 11.59 | 12.03P | 12.07 |
| 1.30P | 1.34 | 1.38 | 1.42 |
| 3.05 | | | |
| (From School, 3.10) | 3.14 | 3.18 | 3.22 |
| 4.10 | 4.14 | 4.18 | 4.22 |
| 5.35 | 5.39 | 5.43 | 5.47 |

WHALE BEACH TO AVALON

Monday to Friday

| Depart Binya Road | Surf Road | Alexander Road | Arr. Avalon |
|-------------------|-----------|----------------|---------------|
| 7.32A | 7.36 | 7.40 | 7.44 |
| 8.54 | 8.58 | 9.02 | 9.06 (School) |
| 10.27 | 10.31 | 10.35 | 10.39 |
| 12.07 | 12.11 | 12.15 | 12.19 |
| 1.42P | 1.46 | 1.50 | 1.54 |
| 3.22 | 3.26 | 3.30 | 3.34 |
| 4.22 | 4.26 | 4.30 | 4.34 |

There is no Weekend Service.

Route 2—AVALON TO TAYLORS POINT

| Depart Avalon | William Street | Stokes Point | Appian Way | Arr. Tailors Point |
|------------------------|----------------|--------------|------------|--------------------|
| 7.50A | 7.54 | 7.58 | 8.02 | |
| 9.20 | 9.24 | 9.28 | 9.32 | 9.36 |
| 11.00 | 11.04 | 11.08 | 11.12 | 11.16 |
| 2.00P | 2.04 | 2.08 | 2.12 | 2.16 |
| 3.35 Via Bilgola Plat. | | | | 3.45 |
| 5.06 | 5.10 | 5.14 | 5.18 | School |

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BUS TIME-TABLE (Continued)

TAYLORS POINT TO AVALON

Monday to Friday

| Tailors Point Depart | Appian Way | Stokes Point | Street William | Avalon Arr. |
|----------------------|------------|--------------|----------------|-------------|
| — | 8.02A | 8.06 | 8.10 | 8.14 |
| 8.27 | 8.31 | 8.35 | 8.39 | 8.43 |
| 9.36 | 9.40 | 9.44 | 9.48 | 9.52 |
| 11.16 | 11.20 | 11.24 | 11.28 | 11.32 |
| 2.16P | 2.20 | 2.24 | 2.28 | 2.32 |
| 3.45 | 3.49 | 3.53 | 3.57 | 4.01 School |
| — | 5.58 | 5.22 | 5.26 | 5.30 |

There is no Weekend Service.

Route 3—AVALON TO BILGOLA PLATEAU

Departs Monday to Friday, 8.15 a.m., 9.56 a.m., 2.35 p.m., 4.40 p.m.; Saturdays, 9.46 a.m., 11.35 a.m. There is no Weekend Service.

Restrictions:

First set down—Avalon to Whale Beach, Alexander Rd.
Last Pick-up—Avalon to Tailors Point, William Street.
Avalon to Bilgola Plateau, Palmgrove Rd.

RADIO & TV LICENSES

| | | |
|------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| COMBINED LICENSE | 17.00 full rate | 04.00 Pensioner rate |
| RADIO ONLY | 05.50 | 01.00 |
| TV ONLY | 12.00 | 03.00 |

TELEPHONE RENTALS

| | | |
|---|-------|----------------------|
| ANNUAL | 40.00 | 26.60 Pensioner rate |
| CONNECTION FEE | 30.00 | 30.00 |
| For special equipment and facilities, telephone the Centre at Chatswood, 41-0341. | | |

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SCHEDULE A

REGULAR SERVICE — THURSDAYS and FRIDAYS ONLY — ALL YEAR

WHALE BEACH

| | Depart Avalon | Marine Parade | Whale Beach Road | Bynya Road | Whale Beach Road | Marine Parade | Arrive Avalon | |
|--------|------------------|------------------|---------------------|---------------|---------------------|------------------|------------------|------|
| A.M. | 10.15 | — | 10.20 | 10.27 | 10.30 | 10.35 | 10.39 | A.M. |
| A.M. | 11.55 | 12.00 | 12.05 | 12.10 | 12.15 | 12.20 | 12.25 | P.M. |
| P.M. | 1.30 | 1.35 | 1.40 | 1.45 | 1.50 | — | 1.55 | P.M. |
| * P.M. | 3.00 | — | 3.10 | 3.18 | 3.28 | — | 3.35 | P.M. |
| * P.M. | 4.15 | — | 4.20 | 4.25 | 4.30 | — | 4.35 | P.M. |

STOKES POINT & TAYLOR'S POINT

| | Depart Avalon | Patrick Street | Stokes Point | Taylor's Point | Stokes Point | Patrick Street | Arrive Avalon | |
|--------|------------------|-------------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|-------------------|------------------|------|
| A.M. | 9.30 | — | — | 9.36 | 9.40 | 9.48 | 9.52 | A.M. |
| A.M. | 11.00 | 11.04 | 11.10 | 11.16 | 11.22 | 11.28 | 11.32 | A.M. |
| P.M. | 2.00 | 2.04 | 2.10 | 2.16 | 2.22 | 2.28 | 2.32 | P.M. |
| * P.M. | 4.00 | — | 4.07 | — | 4.07 | 4.10 | 4.15 | P.M. |
| * P.M. | 5.12 | 5.15 | 5.20 | 5.28 | — | — | — | |

BILGOLA PLATEAU & TAYLOR'S POINT

| | Depart Avalon | Plateau Road | Bilgola Plateau | Plateau Road | Taylor's Point | Arrive Avalon | |
|--------|------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|------|
| A.M. | 9.56 | 10.00 | 10.05 | 10.08 | — | 10.12 | A.M. |
| A.M. | 11.35 | 11.39 | 11.44 | 11.47 | — | 11.50 | A.M. |
| P.M. | 2.35 | 2.39 | 2.44 | 2.47 | — | 2.50 | P.M. |
| * P.M. | 3.35 | 3.40 | — | — | 3.45 | 3.55 | P.M. |
| * P.M. | 4.40 | 4.45 | 4.50 | 4.55 | — | 4.58 | P.M. |

SCHEDULE B

SCHOOL BUS SERVICE, operates during state school terms, but not restricted to school children.

MONDAYS, TUESDAYS, WEDNESDAYS, THURSDAYS & FRIDAYS

WHALE BEACH

| | Depart Avalon | North Avalon Whale Beach Rd. | Whale Beach Bynya Road | North Avalon Whale Beach Rd. | And Barrenjoey High School | Arrive Avalon | |
|--------|------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|------|
| A.M. | — | 7.53 | 8.00 | 8.15 | 8.20 | 8.23 | A.M. |
| A.M. | 8.50 | 8.53 | 9.00 | 9.12 | — | 9.20 | A.M. |
| * P.M. | 3.00 | 3.10 | 3.18 | 3.28 | — | 3.30 | P.M. |
| P.M. | 3.45 | 3.50 | 4.00 | 4.15 | — | — | P.M. |
| * P.M. | 4.15 | 4.25 | 4.30 | 4.35 | — | 4.38 | P.M. |

STOKES POINT

| | Depart Avalon | Riverview Road | Patrick Street | Stokes Point | Patrick Street | Riverview Road | And | Arrive Avalon | |
|--------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|------|
| A.M. | 8.00 | 8.02 | — | 8.06 | 8.10 | — | — | 8.15 | A.M. |
| A.M. | 8.45 | 8.48 | — | 8.55 | 9.00 | — | — | 9.06 | A.M. |
| P.M. | 3.00 | 3.12 | — | 3.15 | 3.18 | — | 3.20 | — | P.M. |
| | (3.05 School) | | | | | | (B'joey H.School) | | |
| P.M. | 3.45 | — | 3.50 | 3.55 | — | 4.00 | — | 4.05 | P.M. |
| * P.M. | 4.03 | 4.05 | — | 4.10 | 4.13 | — | — | 4.16 | P.M. |
| * P.M. | 5.12 | — | 5.15 | 5.20 | — | 5.25 | 5.28 | 5.35 | P.M. |
| | | | | | | | (Taylor's Pt.) | | |

BILGOLA PLATEAU

| | Depart High School | Avalon | Plateau Road | Bilgola Plateau Argyle Street | Taylor's Point | Plateau Road | Arrive Avalon | Barrenjoey High School | |
|--------|-----------------------|--------|-----------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------------------|------|
| A.M. | — | 7.45 | 7.50 | 7.52 | — | 7.54 | 7.58 | — | A.M. |
| A.M. | — | 8.15 | 8.18 | — | 8.27 | — | 8.38 | 8.43 | A.M. |
| A.M. | 8.20 | — | 8.26 | 8.30 | — | 8.35 | 8.40 | 8.43 | A.M. |
| P.M. | 3.23 | — | 3.30 | 3.38 | — | 3.40 | 3.44 | — | P.M. |
| P.M. | 3.23 | — | 3.30 | — | 3.40 | — | 3.44 | — | P.M. |
| * P.M. | — | 3.35 | 3.40 | — | 3.48 | — | 3.55 | — | P.M. |
| P.M. | — | 4.00 | 4.05 | 4.10 | — | 4.12 | 4.15 | — | P.M. |
| * P.M. | — | 4.40 | 4.45 | 4.50 | — | 4.55 | 4.58 | — | P.M. |

* denotes bus-runs common to both schedules. Note: No service weekends or public holidays.

With Compliments of **palm beach real estate** 1093 Barrenjoey Road, Palm Beach. Telephone: 919.5187, 919.4069.

age had obviously started to arise. The timetable dated 1 June 1979 was divided into two separate schedules: Schedule A was the regular service which operated on Thursdays and Fridays only throughout the year, while Schedule B was the school bus service which ran every day during State school terms. The school day service had no trips between about 9am and 3pm, whereas on Thursdays and Fridays, services continued to be provided during these hours. This timetable is illustrated on page 4.

The timetable remained this way until Booth decided to cease running his entire bus service in December 1985. Throughout the entire period of over 20 years he had run his service, the Department would not grant him a full licence, leaving him operating under a permit, which gave the operator no security of tenure. Being only a "permit" service, it bore no route number.

The Government takes over

The final straw for John Booth was when the Government announced that it was introducing new, more restrictive funding arrangements for children travelling to and from school under the School Free Travel system, to commence with the 1986 school year. He ran his last bus prior to Christmas 1985. The UTA then had to make a hurried decision to maintain the service and issued a press release on Christmas Eve, announcing that it would take the service over as from the following weekday, Friday, 27 December 1985.

On taking the service over, the UTA initially ran to the same timetable, but was immediately able to eliminate all travelling restrictions. When school resumed in 1986, school services also initially operated to the same timetable as the private operator. At takeover, the UTA numbered all trips on the three routes as 191. Buses came from the nearby Mona Vale depot.

Change came with a new timetable dated 18 May 1986. This timetable not only reflected the Government's experience with running Pittwater Bus Lines' routes, but it also coincided with the operation of the last Government double deck Atlantean bus service, on peak hour Route 189 from Wynyard to Taylors Point via Avalon. The removal of Atlanteans from Route 189 resulted from the easing of some of the curves on Barrenjoey Road between Newport and Avalon (known locally as the "Bilgola Bends") to enable articulated buses to negotiate them. Articulated buses then started operation on Route 190.

At the same time, the UTA altered Route 189. On trips to Wynyard, buses started at Avalon and travelled via Taylors Point and Bilgola Plateau, before regaining Barrenjoey Road for travel to the City. Trips from Wynyard ran in the reverse manner.

The 189 timetable was also expanded from being a peak-hour only route to run more frequently during weekdays, as well as trips on Saturdays and Sundays. Some trips were short-workings between either Mona Vale or Newport and Avalon.

Because Route 189 now served the Taylors Point area more frequently, the 1986 timetable altered the previous Avalon-Stokes Point-Taylors Point route into an anti-clockwise loop between Avalon and Stokes Point only. Limited services continued on the local routes from Avalon to Bilgola Plateau, Stokes Point and Whale Beach, but they now ran every weekday, not merely Thursdays and Fridays.

Route and timetable alterations

Another new timetable on 6 September 1987 (see page 6 for map) made more changes. The Stokes Point route was re-numbered as 192 and the Whale Beach route as 193. The timetable also introduced a more frequent weekday service on Route 191 over an extended route, which was now Avalon-Taylors Point-Bilgola Plateau-Newport and return. Because of the more frequent service on Route 191, Route 189 returned to being a peak-hour route on weekdays, but it continued to operate at weekends.

Buses on Route 191 then stopped using a short loop round Argyle Street, Raymond Road and York Terrace, Bilgola Plateau, until restored in 1997.

Patronage on the extension of Route 191 to Newport presumably did not justify it running there all day, so trips to that point were limited to the evening peak hour, according to the timetable of 3 March 1991. Passengers travelling to Newport in the morning could catch Route 189 buses. The remaining trips on Route 191 mostly ran as an anti-clockwise loop, Avalon-Taylors Point-Bilgola Plateau-Avalon.

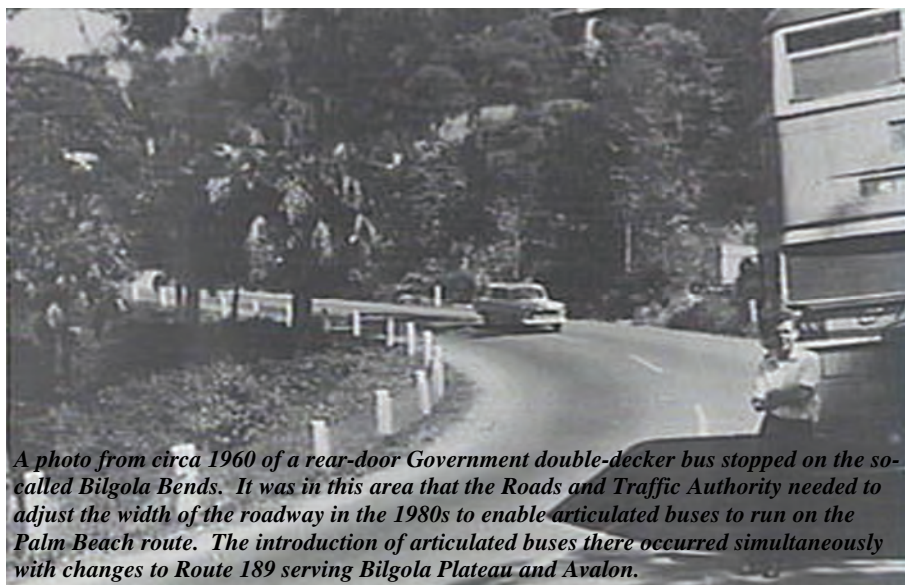
This state of affairs continued relatively unchanged until the timetable of March 1997. From then, Route 191 stopped going to Newport at all. The direction of flow of both Routes 191 and 192 was altered from anti-clockwise to clockwise. Probably due to minimum service level requirements, the service on these two routes was improved to become hourly during the day on weekdays, with Route 191 also having an evening service until after midnight. Hourly services during daylight were also introduced on weekends. At the same time, the timetable showed Route 189 as being reduced to operate in weekday peak hours only, under the new number of E89, in line with the policy of using the prefix "E" for express routes.

The only significant change after that was in the timetable of 21 May 2006, when Route 191 trips after 7pm on weekdays were discontinued.

In the meantime, Route 193 to Whale Beach remained as a weekday-only route, with far fewer trips than either of its two other local counterparts.

The finale of Route 193

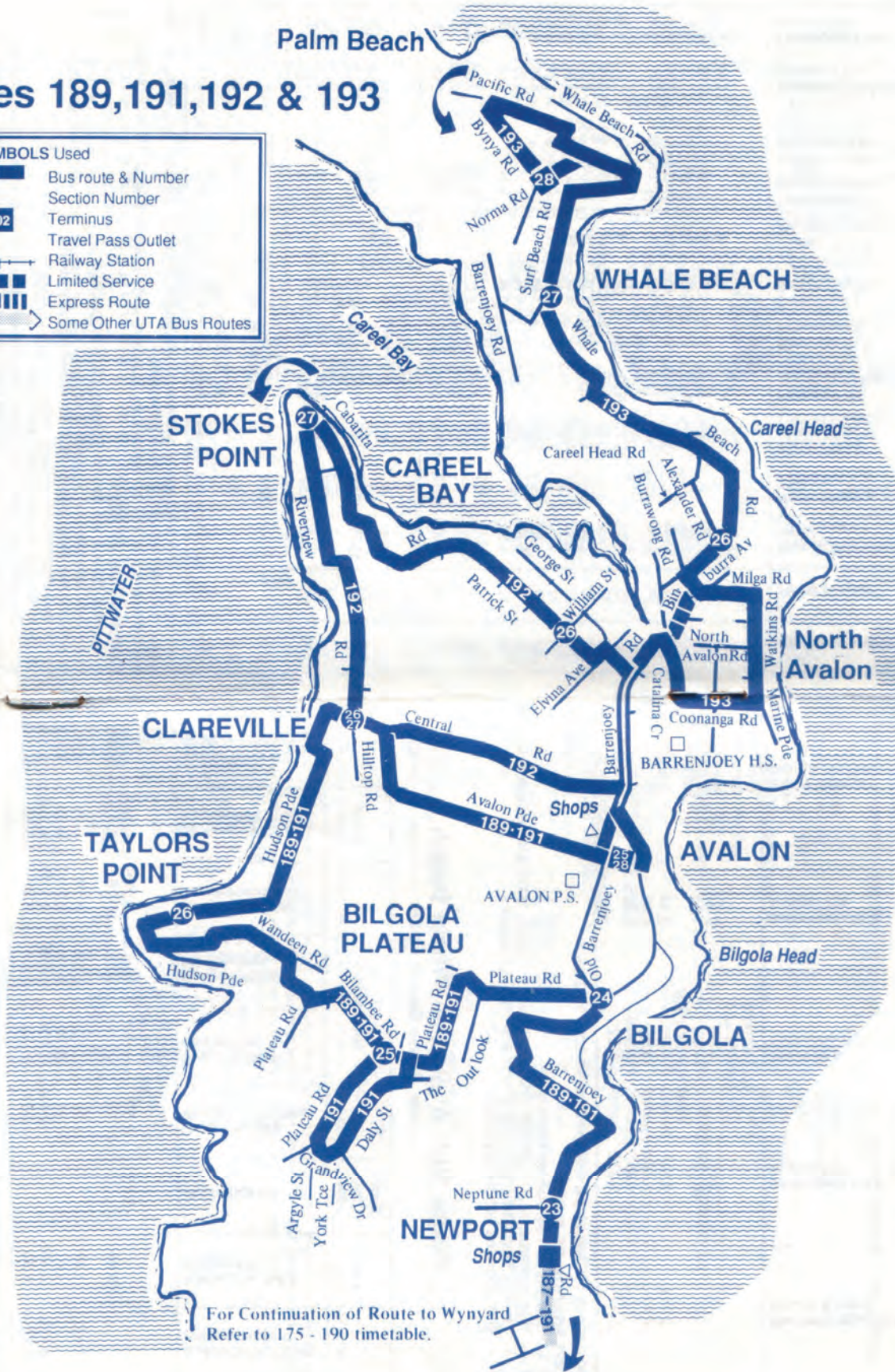
My memories of Route 193 were so fond that I rode it twice in its final two weeks. On the second occasion, on board were four enthusiasts, one girlfriend, and a man with a very young boy who had the makings of a future bus enthusiast. On each trip, there was only one genuine passenger. That demonstrated the inevitability that the route was about to enter the pages of the history book - all except the school trips, which are now known as Route 793. And, as a concession to the small amount of protest at the route's demise, adult passengers are to be allowed to travel on school trips.



A photo from circa 1960 of a rear-door Government double-decker bus stopped on the so-called Bilgola Bends. It was in this area that the Roads and Traffic Authority needed to adjust the width of the roadway in the 1980s to enable articulated buses to run on the Palm Beach route. The introduction of articulated buses there occurred simultaneously with changes to Route 189 serving Bilgola Plateau and Avalon.

Routes 189, 191, 192 & 193

| SYMBOLS Used | |
|--------------|---------------------------|
| | Bus route & Number |
| | Section Number |
| | Terminus |
| | Travel Pass Outlet |
| | Railway Station |
| | Limited Service |
| | Express Route |
| | Some Other UTA Bus Routes |



For Continuation of Route to Wynyard Refer to 175 - 190 timetable.

Wild night at Wildwoods

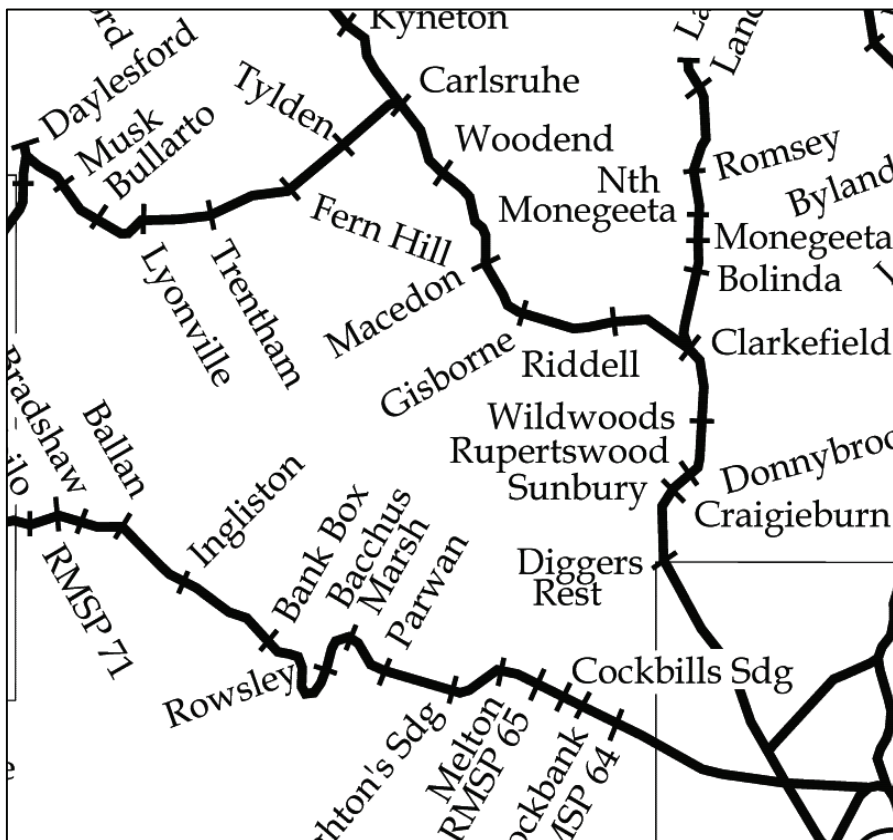
Geoff Lambert has a mock experience while standing on the Sunbury Bank

Wildwoods, on the Mt Alexander Rd to the 1851 gold rush, was a foretaste of the dreaded Black Forest still to come. By the time the first diggers made their way over the gap, down Breakneck Hill and panted into the Bush Inn, much of the land had already been cleared. In place of *wild woods* were endless fields of Scotch Thistle, even then referred to as "noxious".

A few years later, the Victorian Railways "Main Line" struck a path along the ridge between Jacksons Creek and Riddell's Creek, climbing 360 feet from Sunbury. At the top of the grade was what later became known as Lancefield Junction and, still later, as Clarkefield. About one-third of the way up, just after the 1 in 50 grade eased and the curves straightened, was Wildwoods Siding. The 2½ mile post was close by.

Wildwoods was apparently opened between 1890 and 1892 and had a crossover until 1896 and a siding until sometime between 1903 and 1916. The reason for the siding and crossover is not known, but it may have been an agricultural siding. About a mile further along had been McKay's Siding, which was certainly for this purpose. For most of its life, Wildwoods was a special Block Post and was only switched-in on special occasions; typically Foundation Day, Christmas and Easter. In 1927, for example, Wildwoods was switched in as a block post on 31-Jan from 0700-0930; 14-Apr from 0700-2000; 15-Apr from 0700-1000 & 1405 till 1245 Down Goods cleared; 16&17-Jul from 1405 till 1245 Down Goods cleared; 18-Jul from 0700-1000 & 1405 till 1245 Down Goods cleared; 19-Apr from 1405 till 1245 Down Goods cleared; 23-Dec from 1405 till 1245 Down Goods cleared; 24-Dec from 0700 to 2000; 26&27-Dec.12 from 1405 till 1245 Down Goods cleared (C circulars). For a short period Wildwoods was open regularly as a Block Post, most notably for three months in early 1940, about a year before our story really starts. Wildwoods was abolished totally in 1967.

Wildwoods is well named. It *is* a wild place, especially in autumn and winter. The line here emerges from a long cutting and is exposed to the westerly winds which sweep unimpeded from South Australia, across one of the world's largest lava plains. However, on the night of our story, Thursday 10th April 1941, it was clear and mild but with the promise of an evening nip in the air. At Wildwoods, the sun set a



few seconds before 6:01 PM.

This was the night of the last Great Hurrah of Victorian Railways' massive holiday traffic. Traditionally known as Black Thursday, the day was the busiest day on the system. This particular Black Thursday was the busiest day of all because war-time petrol rationing had been introduced, but war-time restriction on travel had not. Nowadays the traffic out of Melbourne on most lines nearly matches that of the old fashioned Black Thursday, but nothing ever matched the evening rush at Wildwoods on Black Thursday 1941.

On this day, Wildwoods was open from 5 pm to 11 pm. In that time no fewer than 16 Down trains were signalled on the bells in the tiny cabin, all of them passenger trains.

In The Argus

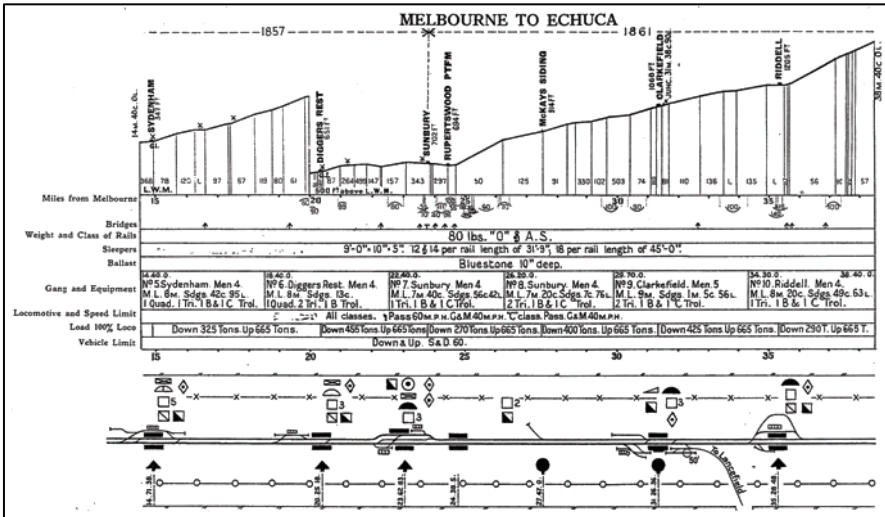
With a continuance of warm autumn sunshine likely, holiday goers will begin their rush from the city after work to-night to take full advantage of the short Easter respite. The Weather Bureau's special Easter forecast promised on present indications, "Fine and pleasant weather, with mild sunshine and rather cold nights, at

least for the first few days. No immediate prospect of unsettled conditions."

All Resorts Full Abnormally heavy bookings at the Tourist Bureau all day yesterday promise one of the busiest Easters on record for guest houses at the near hill resorts. Indications are that all of them will be booked out by to-night.

Many Special Trains Heaviest booking on record was reported yesterday for the many special and normal trains to leave for country centres and other States today and tonight. In many cases, all bookable seats had been taken early this week. There is no restriction on travel at ordinary fares for members of the Forces at Easter. However, concession fares will not be booked for travel to-morrow; before noon on Friday, nor on Easter Monday Provided that an interstate journey is to the home town and that It Is the first there during the present month, a return ticket to a border town may be purchased for 5/- for use at times other than those mentioned above.

Australian National Airways and Ansett Airways report heavy bookings for Easter. For Tasmania it is not possible to book a seat earlier than the 830 am. plane via Flinders Island on Saturday, and for Syd-



ney there remained last night only three seats in a plane leaving Essendon on Sunday afternoon.

An appeal to motorists to drive with particular care during the holiday period was made last night by the RACV. The "golden rules" issued for motorists were: -Don't overtake another car on the left; give way to another car to pass; keep to the correct side of the road; slow down at level crossings and intersections; don't speed or drive recklessly. Motorists were warned to fill up their tanks to-day, as Good Friday will be observed as a closed holiday for garages throughout the State. Petrol cannot be supplied in any circumstances-not even to RACV patrols-but garages will remain open until midnight to-night RACV, patrols and a breakdown truck for towing will be on duty to-morrow to answer distress calls received from motorists at the head office of the club. On Saturday, Sunday, and Monday garages will be closed at 2 pm. Outside the metropolitan area they will reopen from 6 to 7 30 p m. on those days.

"Easter Brides' Day" on Saturday will keep many churches busy from morning till dark. With bookings to occupy the full day, some churches will have a continuous procession of bridal parties, and some parties will be arriving as newly weds depart under showers of confetti. Proprietors of city car services reported last night that practically all their cars had been hired for weddings. Special services in churches throughout the State to-morrow and on Sunday will emphasise the spiritual significance of the Easter season. The Town Hall will be crowded tomorrow night for the Philharmonic Society's performance of Verdi's stirring "Requiem"-a departure

from the custom of presenting the oratorio "Elijah" at Easter. Soloists will be Thea Phillips, soprano; Heddle Nash, the English tenor, and; Arnold Matters, Adelaide bass.

Sporting Programme Sporting fixtures will be held in many country centres, as well as in the metropolitan area. Williamstown Racing Club will hold meetings at Flemington on Saturday and Monday. At Stawell the principal professional footrace in the world, the Easter Gift, will begin on Saturday, when heats will be run. The semi-final and final will be held on Monday. The programme is as follows:

Athletics-Stawell Gift (Saturday and Monday). Coleraine Gift (Saturday), Maldon Gift (Saturday). Heathcote Gift (Monday) Bendigo Gift (Tuesday and Wednesday)

Tennis-St Kilda Parkdale and country centres (Friday, Saturday and Monday)

Trap Shooting-Tottenham (Saturday and Monday) Commonwealth starling championship

Bowls-country singles und fours champion shins on metropolitan greens.

Football-Carlton vs Fitzroy; League and Association practice (Saturday); Association season opens and League practice (Monday).

Cycling-Board track (Saturday).

Normality suspended

The special trains for Easter 1941 were shown in circular C. 6/41, issued on March 14. This is a rather famous document from the collection of Jack McLean. It was reprinted in facsimile edition by the ARHS in 1988 and has, at least once, been the subject of articles in AATTC's *The Times*. The booklet runs to some 160 pages; probably only a third devoted to timetables. The balance consists of a plethora of information, guidance and edicts covering everything from *Ambulance Equipment*, through *Gassing* and *Ticket Checking* to *Z vans*.

Easter Day (Sunday) was 13th April but Circular C6. /41 applied from 4th to 16 April inclusive. It carried a notice to the following effect: *The Passenger, Mixed, and Goods Train services shown herein are additional to those shown in the Working Time Table, which are to have effect as usual, except where otherwise stated, and the arrangements shown herein are to be observed on dates shown.* This however was something less than gospel for such a massive program. From Thursday to Tuesday of Easter, the circular showed almost every passenger train that turned a wheel. A working time table (WTT) for the Northern and Midland Districts had last been issued in October 1940.

A list of all Down trains passing Wildwoods from both the WTT and C6/41 is shown in the Table on page 9. Interpreting this is difficult because the WTT data comes from the closest edition which I own, that of March 1938. Much had happened since then which altered the pattern of trains- the Second World War for starters. The train numbering system also altered sometime between 1938 and 1941, moving from one which was determined by a train's place in the table, to one allocated by office of the General Superintendent of Transportation. It is probable that the trains shown in italics—conditional trains— did not run on Black Thursday-C6. /41 enjoined that they were not to be put on if they clashed with the special traffic. It is very probable that none of the regular goods trains shown here in light (red) type ran either because their schedules imply impossible or unlikely train separations. C6/41 however had little to say about this and referred the reader to a "separate circular", which may not have survived.

The usual composition of through passenger trains on the Bendigo line at this time was about 4 to 6 cars and a van, totalling some 220 tons. Black Thursday trains were not like this however. Like Mae West, they were "heavily made-up" to "full passenger loads as far as practicable". We can be fairly sure that many of the trains this day would have been hauled by A2 locomotives. These had a maximum load up the

Goods and Passenger trains passing the 26.5 mile 5 pm to 11 pm

| Line | Nearest station to 26.5 MP | 1941 | | 2010 |
|----------|----------------------------|--------|--------|------|
| | | Normal | Easter | |
| Bendigo | Wildwoods | 6 | 16 | 8 |
| Geelong | Manor | 5 | 8 | 13 |
| Ballarat | Melton | 4 | 10 | 12 |
| Albury | Beveridge | 7 | 11 | 6 |
| Eastern | Berwick | 6 | 8 | 6 |



Sunbury bank of 385 tons, a little below the generic maximum for any normal passenger train. The late-night “Cheap Excursion” trains were no so favoured, being allocated to 1 or 2 D3 engines, for which maximum load was 300 tons per engine. The Chief Traffic Manager that all main line trains were to be made up of vestibuled stock, with “access to lavatories”.

The running time for normally-loaded Passenger trains from Sunbury to Clarkefield was about 12 to 14 minutes and about half of this would have been spent struggling up the steepest part of the grade to Wildwoods.

Most trains on Black Thursday could have made it all the way to Clarkefield without the help of Wildwoods, but the time gap between some was too short for comfort. During the time that Wildwoods was switched in, the shortest interval between Sunbury departures was 11 minutes; the average was 19 minutes. The former meant that the time interval between a train passing Wildwoods and Sunbury subsequently begging Wildwoods to let another into the section was as little as 5 minutes. By then, the first train was still to arrive at Clarkefield. There would have been a lot of confusing bell ringing.

Wildwoods in operation

It was the responsibility of the District Superintendent to arrange for the switching in and out of Wildwoods, subject to rule 26 of Appendix (iv) of the Book of Rules and Regulations. His first task was to get the signalman to Wildwoods which then, as now, was in the middle of nowhere and without public road access. Likely as not, the signalman pumped his way up the hill from Sunbury on a trike. It is also possible that the signalman would have arrived at Wildwoods on one of the preceding trains—this was what happened in other remote places like Bank Box on that day.

If by trike, he would have placed it on the line after regular Echuca train No. 99

(following close on the heels of Special B7) had cleared Clarkefield at 3:36. Tucked under his bluey was the all-important Train Register book, normally kept at Sunbury for safe-keeping. Arriving at Wildwoods some little while before 4 PM, he had to haul the trike off the line, open the locked door of the cabin with his SL key (?) and proceed to “Switch In”. Both lines had to be clear for this, but there

were no trains “on line” at this hour.

He has perhaps an hour to wait before the action starts when Clarkefield suddenly dings once- “Call Attention”, then asks “Is Line Clear” for the Woodend Roadside goods which is shuffling down from Riddell. With clanking side-rods it passes Wildwoods at about 4:50 PM. As he bells “Train Departure” for it, he looks south towards Melbourne and spies what he has been looking for. On the horizon is a tell-tale smudge of smoke left by B9, the second Bendigo Special for the day. It is on its way across the plain between Sydenham and Diggers Rest. A few minutes later Sunbury calls twice, asking “Is Line Clear” for the Special and advising “Train Arrival” for the Roadsides.

At 5:03 PM, dead to time, the Train Departure signal dings out on his Down Instrument. *It's on!* With fingers ever so slightly trembling, he asks “Is Line Clear” from the man at Clarkefield, and he promptly acknowledges. He pulls his signals off.

With pipe in hand, our signalman steps out of the cabin to listen for B9. It seems to him to be hauled by a Stephenson-gear A2, judging by the awkward off-beat exhaust ricocheting from the sides of the

| Train No. | Destination | Locos | Departure Sunbury | Notes | Separation |
|-----------|-------------|-------|-------------------|----------------------------------|------------|
| 65 | Bendigo | C | 12:42 AM | Fast Goods | |
| 67 | Bendigo | | 1:07 AM | Goods | 0:25 |
| 71 | Bendigo | | 1:34 AM | Conditional Goods | 0:27 |
| 1 | Bendigo | | 2:12 AM | Conditional Goods | 0:38 |
| 5 | Bendigo | | 3:11 AM | Fast News Goods | 0:59 |
| 3 | Bendigo | | 3:42 AM | Conditional Goods | 0:31 |
| 11 | Cohuna | | 4:17 AM | Goods | 0:35 |
| 13 | Bendigo | | 4:52 AM | Conditional Goods | 0:35 |
| 15 | Bendigo | | 5:42 AM | Conditional Goods | 0:50 |
| 17 | Woodend | | 7:24 AM | Roadsides Goods | 1:42 |
| B3 | Bendigo | A2 | 8:36 AM | Special | 1:12 |
| 55 | Bendigo | | 8:50 AM | Ordinary | 0:14 |
| 63 | Swan Hill | A2 | 9:46 AM | Great Northern Limited | 0:56 |
| 27 | Bendigo | | 11:00 AM | Conditional Goods | 1:14 |
| 29 | Bendigo | | 11:39 AM | Conditional Goods | 0:39 |
| 29a | Bendigo | | 12:39 PM | Conditional Goods | 1:00 |
| 31 | Bendigo | | 1:39 PM | Goods | 1:00 |
| 31a | Bendigo | | 2:19 PM | Fast Goods | 0:40 |
| B7 | Bendigo | A2 | 3:00 PM | Special | 0:41 |
| 99 | Echuca | | 3:23 PM | Altered (Bendigo) | 0:23 |
| B9 | Bendigo | A2 | 5:02 PM | Bendigo | 1:39 |
| DF7 | Daylesford | D3&K | 5:35 PM | Special | 0:33 |
| W5 | Woodend | D3&K | 5:46 PM | Altered- continues to Daylesford | 0:11 |
| B11 | Bendigo | A2 | 6:15 PM | Connects to Maryborough | 0:29 |
| B13 | Bendigo | A2 | 6:35 PM | Connects to Daylesford | 0:20 |
| L5 | Lancefield | PERM | 7:02 PM | Rail-motor (altered 127) | 0:27 |
| B17 | Swan Hill | A2 | 7:17 PM | Special | 0:15 |
| B19 | Echuca | A2 | 7:32 PM | Special | 0:15 |
| 45 | Bendigo | X | 7:32 PM | Fast Goods (Cancelled?) | |
| DF11 | Daylesford | D3&K | 7:46 PM | Special | 0:14 |
| 55 | Bendigo | | 8:08 PM | Goods (Cancelled?) | |
| DF13 | Daylesford | D3&K | 8:10 PM | Special | 0:24 |
| M5 | Mildura | A2 | 8:27 PM | Special | 0:17 |
| M11 | Maryborough | A2 | 9:12 PM | Special- Back to Maryborough | 0:45 |
| 59 | Bendigo | | 9:17 PM | Conditional Goods (Cancelled?) | |
| B21 | Bendigo | 2 D3? | 9:49 PM | Special Cheap Excursion | 0:37 |
| 61 | Bendigo | C | 10:07 PM | Fast Goods (Altered as No. 125?) | |
| B23 | Bendigo | 2 D3? | 10:10 PM | Special Cheap Excursion | 0:21 |
| B25 | Bendigo | 2 D3? | 10:26 PM | Special Cheap Excursion | 0:16 |
| C1 | Castlemaine | 2 D3? | 10:40 PM | Special Cheap Excursion | 0:14 |
| 63 | Bendigo | | 11:07 PM | Goods (Cancelled?) | |
| 125 | Bendigo | | 11:22 PM | Goods, altered | 0:42 |

cutting. The late afternoon sun does not reach into the cutting and he has to wait until the engine has breasted the grade to confirm his suspicions. With a brief acknowledging twitch of his pipe to the driver, his attention becomes fixed (as required) on the wheels of B9 as it passes. With nothing amiss, he waits until the train (complete with white tail disk) has passed the regulation quarter of a mile beyond his signal. He turns abruptly on his heel into the shack to give 3 “dings” to Sunbury and two “dings” to Clarkefield. He throws his down signals back to danger and watches the train recede all the way up the straight and into the Clarkefield curve. In the late afternoon air, the smoke from B9 hangs for a long time. Clarkefield is over-eager—he seems to bell Train Arrival as soon as the smoke trail first obscures the Clarkefield station buildings. Our hero hears the bell and scurries inside to acknowledge it.

It is only a few minutes before the bell dings again for the Daylesford special. There will be 4 of these tonight because Daylesford is a popular spot that was all the rage with well-to-do Melbournites during the Depression. And this one *is* special because it is double-headed with D3 and K class locomotives. A2s are not allowed to venture on to the Daylesford branch. The Daylesford specials are somewhat slower over the track because of the presence of the K-class goods engine, taking 14 minutes from Sunbury to Clarkefield.

Even as it passes his box, the next is only 5 minutes on the Up side of Sunbury and whistling impatiently for the signal. This is train W5, bound in the first instance for Woodend. It is an alteration of No. 115, the regular Woodend service. However, tonight it will only pause there to collect passengers off the following Bendigo special No. B13, before journeying on to Daylesford. When W5 passes Wildwoods the sun is barely above the horizon, the autumn light streaming horizontally onto the carriage windows and hiding the passengers behind a creamy glare of light. Peering into this light, they themselves blink at the silhouette of a man in a bluey propped against a small shack, puffing contentedly on a pipe.

And so it goes. Two more A2-hauled Bendigo Specials follow, one with connections to Maryborough, the next with yet another connection to Daylesford. Then there is an odd man out—a Petrol Electric Rail Motor (PERM) bound for Lancefield. It’s a slow mover and takes more than 10 minutes to grind its laborious way up to Wildwoods. Here it still has another 8 droning minutes to go, before it draws to a stop at Clarkefield, just past the trailing crossover. Here is a complication; in order to get on to the Lancefield line, it has back through the crossover onto the Up line. Here passengers are dealt with on the Up

platform before the “Motor” trundles off along the branch.

The motor is clear of the Down main line by 7:24 but, by this time, the following Bendigo Special B17 is already stopped at the Wildwoods home signal “waiting line clear” The last rays of light have long vanished from the western sky and curious passengers with their heads out the window can discern no apparent reason for them coming to a halt at such a Godforsaken spot. Some of them have a long way to go— to Korong Vale or Swan Hill— and are none too pleased that they have been brought to a stand here. When the train jerks into action again, they are more mystified than mollified to see a human figure silhouetted against the light of a flickering oil lamp in the doorway of what look like a country outhouse.

The following train, B19, started out from Spencer St only 10 minutes behind B17, but by Sunbury it trails by 15 minutes, a gap that has lengthened to 18 minutes when it passes on to Clarkefield. Although labelled an “Express”, it is destined to “stop all stations” after Castlemaine and will arrive at Bendigo fully half an hour behind its predecessor.

Two more Daylesford trains are now on their way across the flat— Nos. DF11 and DF13. Like the other Daylesford trains, these are foot-draggers, handicapped by the presence of their small-wheeled engines. The special timetable at this stage of proceedings shows no passing times for anything but Sunbury and Macedon. At 40 minutes for this stretch, the Daylesford trains are 5 to 10 minutes slower than an A2-hauled Express.

After them follows a *really* long distance train, No. M5, bound for Mildura. It is 50 minutes out of Spencer St when it passes Wildwoods, but still has 11 hours to go. This train is a “Relief” to the normal Mildura train, which reaches Mildura via Ballarat. It has always been faster to Maryborough via Castlemaine than via Ballarat. Passengers on another Mildura spe-

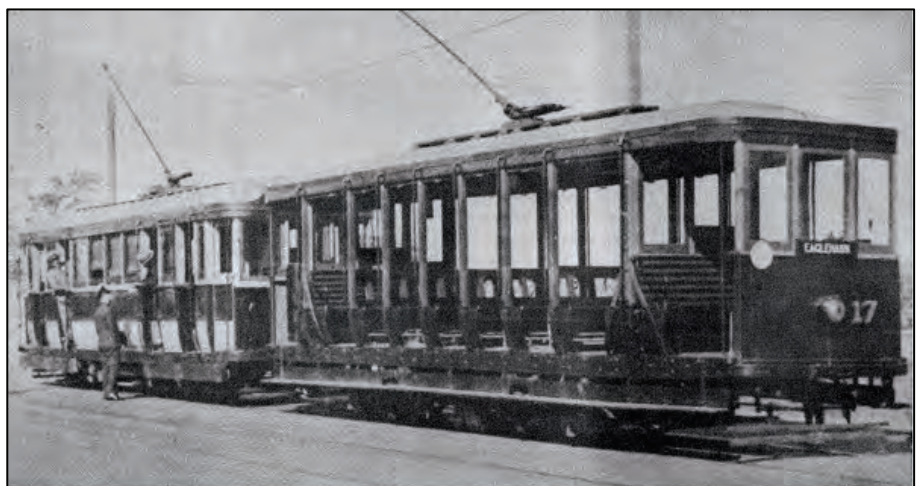
cial which runs the latter route, D21, will discover this to their chagrin tonight. D21 leaves Spencer St 5 minutes after M5, but trails it by half an hour at Maryborough.

The next train is also bound for Maryborough— the “Back to Maryborough” special, originally scheduled in “S-notice” No. S840/41. This is a *Guaranteed Special Train*, pre-paid for by the organisers of the “Back to” and for which all passengers hold specially-printed tickets.

Specially-printed tickets are also the order of the day for the last 4 passenger trains of the evening— the *Special Cheap Excursions*, with 3 Divisions to Bendigo and 1 to Castlemaine— trains B21, B23, B25 and C1. None of these trains leave Melbourne before 9 PM and none of them arrive at their destinations before 12:30 AM, the last at 1:10 AM. A number of seemingly unusual conditions apply to these trains, as C.6/41 says:

BENDIGO CHEAP EXCURSIONS.— *On April 10, the Bendigo Cheap Special will be run in three divisions, all running through to Bendigo. A fourth division will terminate at Castlemaine. Passengers for the Cheap Specials are to be booked only at Melbourne, and returns sent promptly to Superintendent Train Services. Trams for Eaglehawk will connect with Bendigo Cheap Specials at Bendigo. S.M., Spencer-street, to arrange for barrier staff to ascertain number of passengers desiring Eaglehawk tram connection and wire the information to S.M., Bendigo.*

The number of tickets to be sold for the 9.1 p.m. and 9.22 p.m. Specials will be limited; pass holders must not be allowed in these divisions nor in 9.38 p.m. for Kyneton and Castlemaine. Only Second class tickets to be issued for these Specials. Checking staff to note that tickets for these divisions have the time of departure printed thereon. Excursion tickets will be issued by 9.50 p.m. Special for all stations Sunbury to Castlemaine inclusive. Platform tickets are not to be issued for these trains. Booking windows to have notice posted accordingly.



Periodical ticket holders may travel on the Cheap Excursion Specials.

What is all this about? Who would be travelling at this late hour and why do they want to go to Eaglehawk on the trams? It doesn't take much Googling to find out. In any case, a person of "the older generation" could tell you straight away. These trains are carrying passengers to the Bendigo Easter Fair.

The first Bendigo Easter Fair was instigated by Burnside and Aspinall in 1871 to raise funds for the Sandhurst Benevolent Asylum and Hospital. It raised over £1000 for this charitable cause and was considered such a success that it has been held every year since. It is thus Australia's longest continuously-running festival. The Festival is held every Easter and throughout its history has varied from one to ten days in duration. In 1893 reports in *The Weekly Advertiser* described a parade held that included a large and colourful Chinese section which delighted crowds. Today the gala parade features upwards of 100 floats entered by local community groups, schools and businesses. The parade traditionally ends with the large Chinese section led by *Sun Loong*, the world's longest Imperial Dragon. The Chinese section has grown to over a thousand participants. Chinese cultural groups from Bendigo and Melbourne participate in the parade, demonstrating lion and dragon dances. A fund raising event called "Popular Girl" was held in which well-known local women raised money and, in doing so, gained "votes" and the person who raised the largest number of votes was crowned the "Popular Girl".

Now it seems fairly clear- the passengers on these late trains were people from the Melbourne's Chinese community who stayed with friends and relatives along the Eaglehawk tram line in what is now called the "Chinese Precinct". It doesn't take too much imagination to envisage the streams of people heading down Little Bourke St after late-night shopping had ended on Thursday and piling into the trains for the Festival. Next morning, they would be inside the dragon or cheering him on from the sidelines. When these people returned

is not clear- it is not even clear whether tickets purchased for the forward journey were Singles or Returns. There was no corresponding fleet bringing them back to Melbourne after the Fair. Presumably they returned in dribs and drabs over several days on non-cheap Specials and Regular trains.

These four trains pass through Wildwoods in less than an hour. Two are double-headed with D class engines, which means they will have to spend extra time at Castlemaine to be watered. The last of them, which actually terminates in Castlemaine, clears Clarkefield at 10:53 PM.

Even so, our signalman's job is not yet quite finished. An empty car train, the return of DF7 which passed Wildwoods over 5 hours ago, is still rolling down the bank into Sunbury. This train is available to "take passengers offering", but it is doubtful that any take up this offer.

For Wildwoods, the witching hour comes 60 minutes early tonight and our signalman proceeds to "switch out" his little signal box and gets ready to return to Sunbury. He leaves the Train Register book behind because he, or somebody else, will have to repeat it all tomorrow morning as another fleet of trains heads north. He has to be down the hill before the next empty car train leaves Clarkefield at about 11:40 PM.

As he pumps wearily along, he meets No. 125 Fast Goods trudging uphill. This train would normally have left Melbourne at 5:45 PM, but tonight has left at nine. Although hauled by a big X-class engine and described as "Fast" in the WTT, it is anything but and takes a full 90 minutes to ascend the bank from Sunbury to Gisborne.

Behind our signalman's trike, a stream of seven Empty Car Trains is on the line or getting ready to return to Melbourne. He has seen them all full of chattering passengers as he "helped" them up the hill and he may see many of them going up the hill again in the morning.

Meanwhile, in Bendigo the trams are massing, ready to cart their passengers along the single track to Eaglehawk. These run in convoys of three, the first two bear-

ing special "Tram Following" disks. Wal Jack's photo from Easter Monday morning of 1941 shows two such trams on the Eaglehawk line.

Was it all worth seeing?; worth going to see? There can be little doubt of that. The 1941 Easter Fair in Bendigo was probably the biggest ever and nearly all "historic" photos, including those used in this story, are of that year's Fair and that alone. After it was all over, the *Argus* reported on the doings:

Bendigo Events-Easter Fair: Crowded with holiday makers and decorated with thousands of flags, Bendigo streets yesterday were the scene of a spectacular procession commemorating the official opening of the Bendigo Easter Fair. A great favourite with the crowd was "Loong," the historic dragon of the Chinese community. High above the crowds floated the banners and flags of the Chinese. Long lines of boys and girls in gay Eastern costumes rode by, and gorgeous paper lanterns and exquisitely designed mandarin carts were shown once more with the customary atmosphere of symbols, flutes, and crackers. Applause greeted the winner of the Popular Girl Competition, who was Miss Peggy Straughair, and the other candidates, Misses Gertrude Perry, Dorothy Kerr, and Doris Trevena. Following the unprecedented success of the Easter Saturday street carnival, when nearly £4,000 was handed in by the four streets sponsoring the Popular Girl candidates, yesterday's function gives promise of raising a record sum for Bendigo charities. The fair was officially opened by Cr. O. A. Pethard, Mayor of Bendigo, when the procession reached the showgrounds. Members of the Bendigo Travellers' Club brought its surprise packet effort to a close by disposing of 20,480 packets.

Yes, it was worth going to see.

Wildwoods would have been worth going to see too- but the only spectator was also the only participant- our signalman hero, puffing contentedly on his pipe as he shepherded those 16 trains through the night.



NORTHERN LINE.

| Train No. | B7 (Rel. to Nos. 97, 99) | No. 97 | No. 99 Sats. Exc. | B9 | | |
|-------------------------------|--|--|--|----------------------------|---|---|
| | Bendigo April 10, 11, 12. | Bendigo Sats., as per W.T.T. | Echuca and Swan Hill, (except April 10, 14 See footnote) | Bendigo April 10 | — | — |
| DOWN. | Echuca, Swan Hill April 11. | Maryboro' | Terminates Bendigo, April 10, 14 Korong Vale April 14 Maryb'rough as usual | | | |
| From Plat. No. | ... | | | | | |
| | p.m. | p.m. | p.m. (see note) | p.m. | | |
| Spencer-street Dep. | 2 25 | 2 35 | 2 35 (N) | 4 20 | | |
| North Melbourne " | * | * | * | * | | |
| Footscray " | 2 32* | 2 42* | 2 44 | 4 29 | | |
| West Footscray " | * | * | * | * | | |
| Sunshine " | 2 39* | 2 49* | 2 53 | 4 39 | | |
| St. Albans " | * | * | 2 58 | * | | |
| Sydenham " | * | * | 3 5 | * | | |
| Diggers' Rest " | * | * | 3 15 | * | | |
| Sunbury " | 3 0* | 3 10* | 3 23 | 5 2 | | |
| WILDWOODS (see note) " | * | * | * | * | | |
| Clarkefield " | * | * | 3 36 | * | | |
| Riddell " | * | * | 3 44 | * | | |
| Gisborne " | * | * | 3 54 | * | | |
| Macedon Arr. | ... | ... | ... | ... | | |
| " Dep. | ... | * | 4 2 | * | | |
| WOODEND Arr. | ... | 3 52 | 4 12 | 5 52 | | |
| " Dep. | 3 43 | 3 55 | 4 15 | 5 55 | | |
| Carlsruhe " | * | 4 1 | 4 21 | § | | |
| KYNETON Arr. | ... | ... | ... | ... | | |
| " Dep. | 3 56 | 4 8 | 4 28 | 6 7 | | |
| Redesdale Junction " | * | § | 4 32 | § | | |
| Malmsbury " | * | 4 18 | 4 38 | 6 17 | | |
| Taradale " | * | 4 24 | 4 44 | 6 24 | | |
| Elphinstone " | * | 4 29 | 4 49 | 6 29 | | |
| Chewton " | * | 4 35 | 4 55 | 6 36 | | |
| CASTLEMAINE Arr. | 4 25 | 4 42 | 5 2 | 6 41 | | |
| " Dep. | 4 30 | 4 47 | 5 7 | 6 46 | | |
| Harcourt " | * | 4 55 | 5 15 | 6 54 | | |
| Ravenswood " | * | 5 7 | 5 27 | 7 7 | | |
| Kangaroo Flat " | * | 5 19 | 5 39 | 7 19 | | |
| Golden Square " | § | 5 23 | 5 43 | 7 24 | | |
| Bendigo Arr. | 5 15 | 5 35 | 5 55 | 7 30 | | |
| To Return as | ... | Usual | Usual | B30 | | |
| | B20 B24, B28 | | | | | |

2.25 p.m. Bendigo, on April 10, 11 and 12, is relief to 2.35 p.m. and is to take all van goods for stopping stations.

(N) **2.35 p.m. Northern**, April 10 and 14, will terminate at Bendigo. The **6.15 p.m. Bendigo-Echuca** and **6.20 p.m. Bendigo-Swan Hill** trains, will NOT run on these dates, instead connection will be provided with **6.20 p.m. April 14**, and **6.35 p.m. (Swan Hill)** and **6.45 p.m. (Echuca) April 10**.

On April 10 the **2.35 p.m. Bendigo** to have bogie van and Vanman is to be provided.

WILDWOODS—Block Post see page 46.

NORTHERN LINE—continued.

| Train No. | DF7 | No. 115 (W.T.T.) | W5 (No. 115 altd.) | No. 123 | B11 | B13 | DF9 (No. 115 altd.) |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|---|---|--|--|--------------------|--|
| DOWN | Daylesford Express Apr. 10 | Woodend Sats. exc. as per W.T.T. | Woodend Apr. 10 | Bendigo Sats. Exc. (W.T.T.) Alt'd as B11 Apr. 10 | No. 123 altered Bendigo Apr. 10 | Bendigo Apr. 10 | Daylesf'd Lancefield April 11 |
| | | Continues later to Daylesf'd | Con- tinues later to Daylesf'd | Daylesford exc. Apr. 10, 11, 14 (See notes) | Maryboro' | Daylesf'd | (Instead of 4.50 p.m. Daylesf'd & 6.0 p.m. Lancefield) |
| | | Cancelled Apr. 10, 11 (See W5 & DF9) | | Marybo' Sats. exc. | | | |
| From Platform No. | | | | | | | |
| Spencer-street Dep. | p.m. 4 50 | p.m. 4 50 | p.m. 4 55 | p.m. 5 40 | p.m. 5 40 | p.m. 6 0 | p.m. 6 0 |
| N'th M'bourne " | * | * | * | * | * | * | 6 4 |
| Footscray ... " | 5 6* | 4 58 | 5 4 | * | * | * | 6 10 |
| Sunshine ... " | * 6* | 5 6 | 5 12 | 5 54* | 5 54* | 6 14 | 6 20 |
| St. Albans ... " | * | * | * | * | * | * | 6 35 |
| Sydenham ... " | * | 5 17 | 5 28 | 6 3* | 6 3* | 6 23* | 6 51 |
| Diggers' Rest ... " | * | 5 28 | 5 39 | * | * | * | 6 59 |
| Sunbury ... " | 5 35* | 5 35 | 5 46 | 6 15* | 6 15* | 6 35* | * |
| Wildwoods (see note) | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| Clarkefield ... " | * | 5 52 | 6 3 | 6 26* | 6 26* | 6 46* | 7 15 |
| Riddell ... " | * | 6 1 | 6 12 | 6 31* | 6 31* | 6 54 | 7 23 |
| Gisborne ... " | * | 6 14 | 6 25 | 6 39* | 6 40* | 7 4 | 7 35 |
| Macedon ... Arr. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 7 43 |
| " ... Dep. | 6 10* | 6 22 | 6 33 | 6 45* | 6 48* | 7 12 | 7 48 |
| WOODEND ... Arr. | 6 22 | 6 35 | 6 45 | 6 57* | 7 0 | 7 22 | 8 0 |
| " ... Dep. | 6 37 | 6 51 | 7 12 | 7 23 | 7 25 | 7 25 | 8 2 |
| Carlsruhe ... " | 6 43* | 7 5 | 7 5 | 7 8* | 7 8* | 7 31 | 8 10 |
| Kyneton ... Dep. | | | | 7 12 | 7 15 | 7 40 | ... |
| Redesdale J'n ... " | | | | 7 23 | 7 27 | 7 52 | |
| Malmsbury ... " | | | | 7 30 | 7 35 | 7 59 | |
| Taradale ... " | | | | 7 35 | 7 40 | 8 4 | |
| Elphinstone ... " | | | | 7 42 | 7 48 | 8 12 | |
| Chewton ... " | | | | 7 47 | 7 53 | 8 18 | |
| CASTLEMAINE Arr. | | | | 7 51 | 7 58 | 8 23 | |
| " ... Dep. | | | | 7 59 | 8 7 | 8 31 | |
| Harcourt ... " | | | | 8 11 | 8 20 | 8 44 | |
| Ravenswood ... " | | | | 8 23 | 8 32 | 8 57 | |
| Kangaroo Flat ... " | | | | 8 27 | 8 37 | 9 2 | |
| Golden Square ... " | | | | 8 35 | 8 50 | 9 10 | |
| Bendigo ... Arr. | | | | | | | |
| Return as ... | DF12 | No 44 or 56 from Dayl'fd | No. 56 Fri. | Usual | Usual | B32 | No. 44 Altd. Sat. |

DAYLESFORD LINE.—Passengers from Melbourne for the Daylesford line should be directed as follows:— On April 10 to the 4.50 p.m. (DF7) and 6.50 p.m. Through Expresses and 7.15 p.m. through train (6.0 p.m., B13 also connects). On April 11 to the 6.0 p.m. (DF9) (4.50 p.m. altered). On April 14 to 6.20 p.m. (B15) and on April 15 to 5.40 p.m. Bendigo train in preference to the 4.50 p.m., to obviate long delay at Woodend.

Stations, Sydenham to Daylesford inclusive, to make the later departure timing of Daylesford train from Melbourne on April 10, 11 and the altered connection with 6.20 p.m. from Melbourne on April 14 widely known.

The 5.40 p.m. Bendigo on April 10 to have double-headed load of 400 tons including Buffet Car.

WILDWOODS.—Block Post, see page 46.

NORTHERN LINE—continued.

| Train No. | W5 | No. 127 | L5 No. 127 altered | B15 (No. 129) W.T.T. | B17 | B19 |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|--------------------------|---|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| DOWN | Woodend Empty Cars April 14 | Lancefield Rail Motor Sat. exc. as per W.T.T. | Lancefield April 10 | Echuca and Swan Hill Sats. as per W.T.T. | Swan Hill (Express) April 10 | Echuca. (Express) April 10 |
| | | Cancelled April 11, 14 See Note | | Bendigo Special April 14 Connect Swan Hill- Echuca | | |
| | | Altered April 10 (See L5) | | Connects Maryboro. April 12 Daylesford, Lancefield, April 12, 14 | | |
| From Platform No. ... | | | | | | |
| Spencer-street ... Dep. | p.m. 6 0 | p.m. 6 0 | p.m. 6 3 | p.m. 6 20 | p.m. 6 35 | p.m. 6 45 |
| North Melbourne ... " | * | 6 4 | 6 7 | * B | * | * |
| Footscray ... " | * | 6 10 | 6 13 | 6 28 | * | * |
| Sunshine ... " | 6 17* | 6 20 | 6 23 | 6 37 | 6 50* | 7 0* |
| St. Albans ... " | * | 6 35 | 6 38 | * B | * | * |
| Sydenham ... " | * | 6 51 | 6 53 | 6 49 | * | * |
| Diggers' Rest ... " | * | 6 59 | 7 2 | 6 59 | * | * |
| Sunbury ... " | 6 40* | * | * | 7 5 | 7 17* | 7 32* |
| WILDWOODS ... " | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| Clarkefield ... " | 6 51* | 7 24 | 7 20 | 7 17 | * | * |
| Riddell ... " | * | | | 7 25 | * | * |
| Gisborne ... " | * | To | To | 7 35 | * | * |
| Macedon ... Arr. | ... | Lancefield | Lancefield | ... | ... | ... |
| " ... Dep. | 7 12* | page 47 | page 47 | 7 42 | 7 52* | 8 10* |
| WOODEND ... Arr. | 7 25 | ... | ... | 7 54 | ... | ... |
| " ... Dep. | ... | ... | ... | 7 56 | 8 5* | 8 24* |
| Carlsruhe ... Arr. | ... | ... | ... | 8 ... | ... | ... |
| KYNETON ... Dep. | ... | ... | ... | 8 9 | 8 20 | 8 40 |
| " ... " | ... | ... | ... | 8 8 | ... | ... |
| Redesdale Junction ... " | ... | ... | ... | 8 19 | ... | ... |
| Malmsbury ... " | ... | ... | ... | 8 30 | ... | ... |
| Taradale ... " | ... | ... | ... | 8 37 | ... | ... |
| Elphinstone ... " | ... | ... | ... | 8 43 | ... | ... |
| Chewton ... " | ... | ... | ... | 8 48 | ... | ... |
| CASTLEMAINE ... Arr. | ... | ... | ... | 8 56 | 8 50 | 9 15 |
| " ... Dep. | ... | ... | ... | 8 58 | 8 55 | 9 20 |
| Harcourt ... " | ... | ... | ... | 9 7 | ... | 9 29 |
| Ravenswood ... " | ... | ... | ... | 9 18 | ... | 9 41 |
| Kangaroo Flat ... " | ... | ... | ... | 9 21 | ... | 9 55 |
| Golden Square ... " | ... | ... | ... | 9 30 | ... | 10 0 |
| Bendigo ... Arr. | ... | ... | ... | 9 30 | 9 35 | 10 5 |
| Return as | DF4 | Usual | Usual | Usual. B10 Apr. 15 | B34 | B34 |

The 6.35 p.m. (B17) April 10 is to be made up in two parts, the front portion for Swan Hill and the rear for Korong Vale with Swan Hill van (bogie) in centre so as to permit easy division of train at Bendigo. S.M. Spencer-street to note.

Cars detached at Bendigo from B17 and B19 to be returned to Melbourne by 1.30 a.m. (B34) April 11. S.M. Bendigo to arrange.

Connection to Lancefield will be made with the 6.0 p.m. (DF9 Daylesford) April 11 6.20 p.m. (B15 Bendigo) on April 14.

WILDWOODS.—Block Post, see page 46.

NORTHERN LINE—continued.

| Train No. | DF11. | DF13. | M5 | M11 | Instead of 5.45 p.m. | Instead of 5.45 p.m. |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|--|---|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| DOWN. | Daylesford Express, April 10 | Daylesford April 10 | Mildura April 10, 14 (Air Conditioned Sitting Cars and Sleeper) See Note | "Back to Maryborough" April 10 (S840 /41) | Goods, No. 125 Altered, April 14 | Goods, No. 125 Altered. April 10 |
| From Platform No. | | | — | — | — | — |
| Spencer-st. ... Dep. | p.m. 6 50 | p.m. 7 15 | p.m. 7 45 | p.m. 8 20 | p.m. 6 0 | p.m. 9 0 |
| North Melbourne... " | * | * | * | * | ... | ... |
| Footscray ... " | * | 7 23 | * | * | ... | ... |
| Sunshine ... " | 7 11* | 7 32 | 8 4* | 8 37* | 6 40 | 10 25 |
| St. Albans ... " | * | * | * | * | 6 52 | 10 37 |
| Sydenham ... " | * | * | * | * | ... | ... |
| Diggers' Rest ... " | * | * | * | * | ... | ... |
| Sunbury ... " | 7 46* | 8 10* | 8 27* | 9 12* | 8 15 | 11 22 |
| Wildwoods (see Note) " | * | * | * | * | Keep clear | ... |
| Clarkefield ... " | * | * | * | * | of M5 | a.m. |
| Riddell ... " | * | * | * | * | 9 53 | 12 52 April |
| Gisborne ... " | * | * | * | * | ... | ... 11 |
| Macedon ... Arr. | 8 27 | 8 51 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| " ... Dep. | 8 32* | 8 56 | 9 14* | * | ... | ... |
| WOODEND ... Arr. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| " ... Dep. | 8 43* | 9 10 | 9 26* | 10 0* | 10 34 | 1 26 |
| Carlsruhe ... " | 8 50* | 9 20§ | * | * | ... | ... |
| Kyneton ... Arr. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| " ... Dep. | ... | ... | 9 36* | 10 10 | 10 51 | 1 43 |
| Redesdale Junction " | ... | ... | * | * | ... | ... |
| Malmsbury ... " | ... | ... | * | * | ... | ... |
| Taradale ... " | ... | ... | * | * | ... | ... |
| Elphinstone ... " | ... | ... | * | * | ... | ... |
| Chewton ... " | ... | ... | * | * | ... | ... |
| CASTLEMAINE ... Arr. | ... | ... | 10 5 | 10 45 | ... | ... |
| " ... Dep. | ... | ... | 10 20 | 11 0 | 11 35 | 2 30 |
| Harcourt ... " | ... | ... | To M'boro | To Maryborough | ... | ... |
| Ravenswood ... " | ... | ... | & Mildura | ... | ... | ... |
| Kangaroo Flat ... " | ... | ... | pages 56,60 | page 56 | a.m. | ... |
| Golden Square ... " | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Bendigo ... Arr. | ... | ... | ... | ... | 12 45 | 3 40 |
| Return as | DF14 | DF16 | Usual | Arranged | — | — |

The 6.50 p.m. (DF11) must not be allowed to leave Spencer-street ahead of B17 and B19. S.M., Spencer-street and Control to note and arrange.

WILDWOODS—Block Post, see Page 46.

NOTE:—The 7.45 p.m. (M5) runs to Mildura, and will have the air-conditioned sleeping, AE and BE cars attached, instead of No. 73 via Ballarat, which terminates at Maryborough, April 10, 14.

For travel conditions Mildura Line, see page 59.

Consider your verdict: Railway Crimes on trial

A plethora of letters

From Jim Wells

Dear Victor

So you would like a debate? I'm happy to contribute but Geoff may get many contributions and I feel it may be better for others to have a go as I am a regular contributor.

Two crimes not included:

- the building of the Trans Australia Railway - done solely for political and defence reasons, a white elephant when completed - carried next to no freight, and impact on the passenger market very limited.

Even today it's value is not as great as some think. If it didn't exist, most freight would go to sea, with some to road and air.

This negates your crimes of sg connections in WA and SA.

- the excess regulation (co-ordination) of transport that took place from the 1920's to the 1980's. This was a world wide problem, I have a book on the subject, but it meant that transport modes failed to develop appropriately and that the railways were over protected. Major impact on the nation's welfare. Even today there is still muttering about the absence of level playing fields. Agree trucks have not been taxed enough to pay for impact damage on roads but rail subsidies are excessive. Ridiculous that we have many kms of country track used solely for a few passengers a day. There's generally no need for duplicate infrastructure in low volume situations.

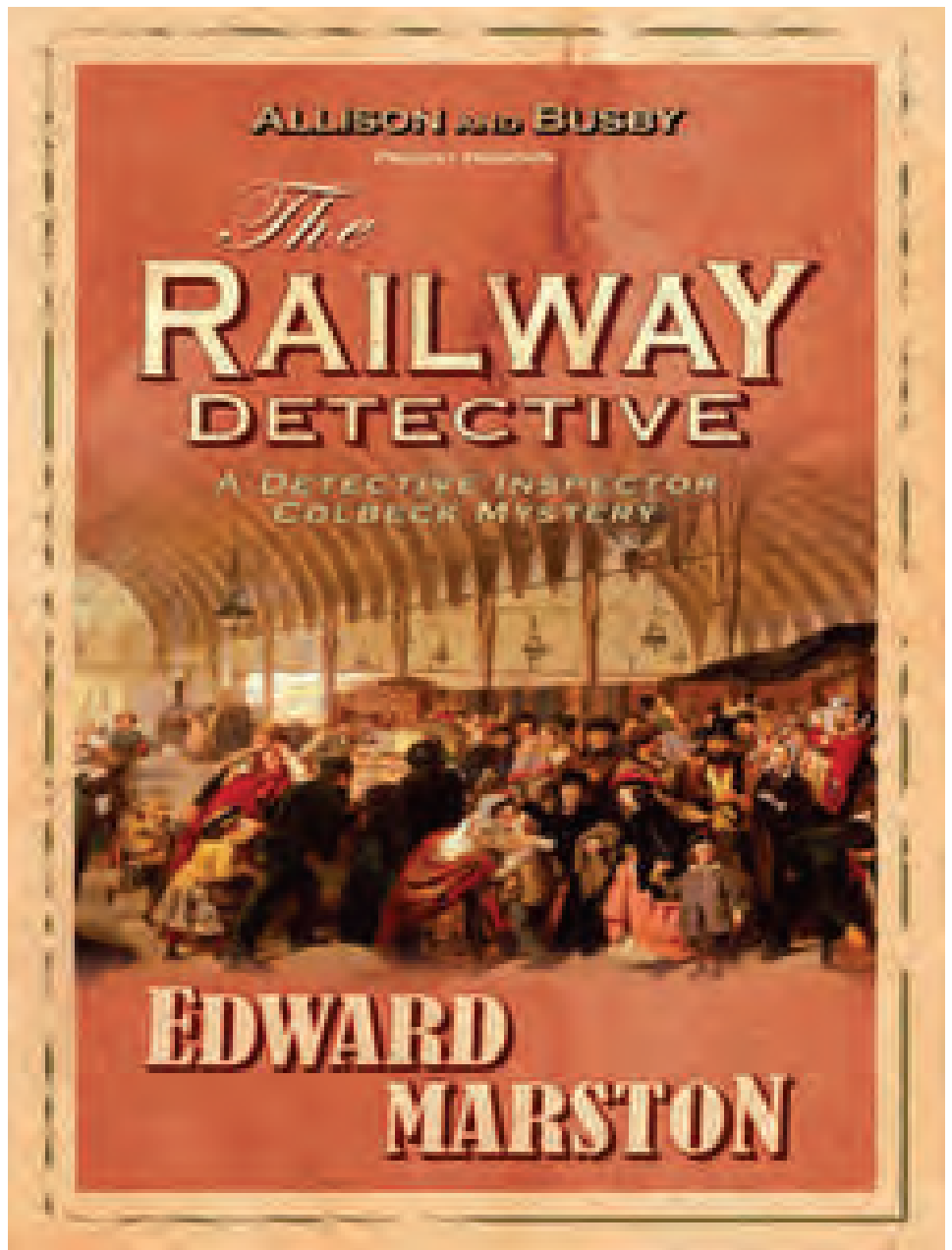
Crimes mentioned that need deletion:

The main one I would focus on would be tram scrappings in the 1950's - very proper and necessary having regard to changes in technology and the need to make effective use of available road space. I'm sure you are aware of all the arguments; I won't go into them now. There was a very good article about street cars in Trains mag a few years ago.

Happy to comment on other crimes that you mention.

From Albert Isaacs

(1). Congratulations to Victor Isaacs for his excellent list of "The Greatest Crimes in Australian Railway & Tramway History" (The Times, January 2010). As Victor anticipates in his subheading, I am also sure that the article will engender considerable debate. With sibling rivalry in mind, Victor will probably be surprised to learn that I completely agree with every Crime



on his list, although my order would be somewhat different to his (which I concede, is an extremely minor point). For example, my top three would be:

First Victor's No.1

Second Victor's No.7

Third Victor's No.4

Regarding Victor's No.7: while the Commonwealth government was the main perpetrator of the Crime of unequal road/rail funding, all other governments are also guilty to a greater or lesser degree.

Let me now add my own list of Crimes.

Whilst these are also in my considered order of turpitude, they would have to be interleaved with those on Victor's list:

Tasmania: For the government's decision to wash its hands of any involvement in railways between the selling of the Tasmanian Government Railways to the Commonwealth in the 1970s, through to the mid 2000s.

New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia equally: For, during the 1990s privatisation process, not recognising the need to build into the contracts with the new freight companies, a

clause(s) that would have ensured rail maintenance, particularly on branch lines.

Western Australia: For taking so long to reverse the running down of the Perth suburban rail system, including the closing of the Fremantle line in the 1980s (a decision which, luckily, was quickly reversed by a new government).

South Australia: For taking so long to decide to electrify the Adelaide suburban system.

Queensland: For taking so long to properly connect Brisbane's south suburban and north suburban systems.

New South Wales: For replacing the established pattern of an overnight and day-time passenger train on all long-distance lines with, in most cases*, only one new train (XPT) per day. (Ironically, at about the same time, Victoria's established pattern of a morning and evening passenger train on all long-distance lines was usually supplemented by a third, midday train.)

* The North Coast line is the notable exception.

Commonwealth: For building the Canberra rail terminal so far out of town, particularly as there was a construction railway in front of (old) Parliament House in the 1920s and part of this could have easily have been utilised to bring the railways nearer to other major facilities.

Queensland: For deciding to build a narrow gauge system. Whilst this may have made it easier to initially build the railways, we are now seeing repercussions as debate ensues as to the best way of linking Queensland with both New South Wales and the Northern Territory.

Most privatised railway companies: For not recognising the commercial potential of enthusiast/tourist trains, rather than learning from QR which has shown that such a policy can work.

Let the debate continue ...

(2) Like Victor, I also read the throwaway remark about the greatest crimes in Australian railway history, which was hidden between the covers of a recent edition of a popular, mainstream railway magazine.

Like Victor, I also thought that it may be a good idea to expand of that short list of three.

Unlike Victor, I didn't do anything about it until motivated by Victor's letter to so do.

Now, Mr Editor, you have told me how big is the response you're receiving on this particular subject. I doubt that the mainstream railway magazine received anything like this sort of feedback – certainly nothing more on the subject has been published by them. The Times deserves both a green tick and an elephant stamp for encouraging the interactivity that has been built up be-

tween the editorial team and the reader-ship!

From Tony Bailey

My problem with Victor's article is the 21C tendency to cast historical blame on 19 C people who were really living in a different age.

I think that it is a little unfair to blame 19th C Colonial Governments for problems which they could not necessarily have anticipated. For instance it was only in 1863/64, in the middle of the Civil War, that Lincoln pushed through the Transcontinental Railway Act and gave the first major impetus to the idea of a Transcontinental Railway - by this time nearly all of the major gauge decisions had been made in Australia.

I can't reach my copies of Robert Lee's books on NSW, but suspect that the current version of the broad and standard gauge events no longer matches the accepted railfan versions, especially in the light of my comments above! Has anyone actually sighted the MS (or word files!) of the full version of Lee's Victorian book (not the much abbreviated version that was published) and was there another version of the gauge story after he saw the Victorian papers?

From Jim Stokes

I read Victor's list of crimes against Australian railways with much interest. I agree with most of his judgements, although I might be tempted to divide them into Mortal crimes and Venal crimes. Mortal crimes would include those which were quite irreversible, such as the loss of major reserved track tram routes like Anzac Parade and Wynyard in Sydney.

New South Wales It is appropriate that New South Wales heads Victor's list, because the decline of the once great NSW system in the second half of the twentieth century has had consequences far beyond NSW. The situation is even worse than it seems because some of the improvements that have actually taken place have relied heavily on far-sighted infrastructure development such as the metropolitan goods lines and the Bradfield tunnels that goes back to the early 20th century. The Sydney rail network can still rise to great loading challenges on major occasions, but it is falling further and further behind the growth of the city. Transport planning in Sydney seems to assume that a combination of tollways and diesel buses will do the job for the 21st century. To this dubious view of the future the politicians have added the concept of the Virtual Railway, which consists of periodic announcements of grand visions for rail which the hard men behind the scenes will do their best to ensure never happen.

The Gold Coast This is an interesting crime because I suspect the Gold Coast got

a better railway through starting again from scratch than it would have done if the old line had been retained and gradually upgraded. However the loss of the rail corridor into Southport was certainly a crime.

Tasmania I agree that the dreadful grades and alignment of the southern half of the Hobart – Launceston line have always been a serious handicap. However it is perhaps unfair to direct all the blame at those who built the line. Considering the small population and struggling finances of Tasmania in the 1870s it was a considerable achievement to build the line at all. Some of the blame should go to later governments which could and should have tackled the problem, with particular censure to those who closed the Brighton – Apsley line in 1947. The Apsley line would have provided the basis of a much better alignment between Brighton and Antill Ponds.

The Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth tram systems We could well add to the list of guilty parties the transport planning consultants of the 1950s and 1960s who made a nice living touring the country with the mantra of 'scrap the trams and build freeways'. All the same I doubt if these systems would have just gone on unchanged as the cities spread far beyond the limits of the trams systems with traffic densities too low to justify tram extensions on a large scale. Perth has got the best result of the three with an impressive suburban rail system that covers much of the territory formerly served by the trams. Though we need to remember how close that system came to being lost in the 1980s, a disaster that would have certainly have been one of Victor's major crimes. Brisbane too got substantial electric rail coverage, but there were major tram routes in the north and south-east that should have been upgraded to light rail. Adelaide probably fared worse, with rail coverage confined to the western half of the city and major tram routes in the eastern half that should have been upgraded to light rail.

Gauge standardisation One crime that Victor did not mention was the failure to implement Sir Harold Clapp's recommendations on standardisation after the Second World War. However I have always had mixed feelings about this. It would have delivered much essential standardisation decades before it actually happened. But it would have spent a huge amount of money converting labour-intensive late 19th century broad and narrow gauge systems to labour-intensive late 19th century standard gauge systems. It would also have standardised thousands of kilometres of track that were destined to close within

a decade or two.

And finally we are all criminals In the later 20th century billions of dollars were sunk into the bottomless pit of railway operating losses. Much of this money would have been better spent in modernising the railways to handle more efficiently the traffics for which they were best suited. But far too often change was resisted by politicians, management, unions, user groups (regardless of whether they actually used the railway or not) and the public generally.

From Andrew McLean

Few could disagree with Victor Isaacs' list of "Railway Crimes", but I would argue that there are plenty more, and they are still happening.

Victor correctly blames past governments for creating the gauge mess, but I would argue that more recent and present governments are just as much to blame for their abysmal failure to fix it. Even when we do make some stuttering progress on the gauge question, there seems to be an in-built urge to sabotage the next step.

1962 saw the opening of "the gauge" from Melbourne to Wodonga, but even this was a retrograde step, because there was a better alternative.

Imagine that in 1962 we had built a *decent* double track standard gauge line from Spencer St to Albion (say 80 km/h to Middle Footscray, then 130 km/h + beyond) converted both tracks Albion – Broadmeadows and everything further north, and with all the money saved on new line in the north east, built a high speed sg line from Tottenham to Geelong.

This would have left a break of gauge at Echuca (relatively unimportant) but got rid of those at Tocumwal (saving the Narandera – Tocumwal line) and Oaklands (probably saving Oaklands – Boree Creek).

SG traffic would have had double track as far as Mangalore, and of course any other improvements (heavier rail, Pandrol clips, further duplication, and regrading south of Seymour come to mind) would have benefited all traffic, not just one gauge or the other.

North East passenger traffic would have been faster and more reliable, and the difference today would be even greater. (Craigieburn in a SG Vlocity would be 19 minutes express, compared to up to 36 in the peak today)

Geelong would have got (quasi) duplication 20 years sooner, and "Fast Rail" times 45 years sooner, with under 45 minutes possible at 115 km/h max then, and under 35 minutes today.

1970 saw SG from east to west, but this came with the insanity of triple gauge stations at Peterborough and Gladstone, built

(at vast Commonwealth expense) solely to prevent "Commonwealth" money being spent on a "State" branch line, as standardising the branches was actually cheaper.

1995 saw Melbourne – Adelaide standardisation, and this time we got both ends wrong.

At the Adelaide end, instead of simply standardising both tracks to Belair, we only standardised one, and then had to spend a fortune on new loops and signals, which left everyone worse off!

The Melbourne end was even worse, because here we spent a fortune going the wrong way to Ararat and slowing everything down, not because the Cressy route was the best freight route (it isn't) but because it is clearly the worst passenger route.

If we had spent the same money standardising, straightening, and duplicating the Ballarat route, high priority freights would be about 40 – 50 minutes faster to Ararat than now, and we would have had "much better than Fast Rail" times to Ballarat a decade sooner. Today's Overlands would be 70 - 90 minutes faster, making a mockery of the claim that the Cressy route was chosen because it was "just as fast".

The "Fast Rail Upgrade" saw the next Victorian blunders, with a State Government absolutely determined that "State, passenger" money could not benefit "Federal, freight" rail, and the upgraded lines were deliberately made as difficult as possible to standardise by using broad gauge only concrete sleepers.

The Ballarat/Ararat line was an obvious candidate for immediate conversion, and this would have dovetailed very neatly with the Government's claimed desire to standardise Geelong – Mildura, and if done together, would have avoided another gauge mess at Ballarat. This was deliberately missed.

On the Bendigo line, four tracking and grade separation from Sunshine to Sydenham (instead of the idiocy of upgrading part of one track in the country and ripping up part of what was left) would have allowed a much more frequent service which was faster and more reliable, but would also have made conversion simple, so it was ignored. And this brings me to today, where we have yet another chance to reduce the gauge mess, but instead we are paying billions to retain it.

"Regional Rail Link" will be a double track broad gauge line from Southern Cross to West Werribee via Sunshine. Much of the multi billion cost of this line is for a new tunnel under Footscray, yet there is no evidence that we need one.

Let's imagine that we standardised the Regional Rail Link and everything beyond West Werribee, Melton, Sydenham, and

Craigieburn, and got rid of the dual gauge nonsense in Bunbury St. If all "country" passenger services used Bunbury St, the enormous cost of a new tunnel could instead be spent on:

Complete duplication to Ballarat, with a new alignment from Parwan to Bank Box Loop

Two extra SG tracks to Sydenham, and complete reduplication to Bendigo

One extra SG track Broadmeadows – Craigieburn.

Would passenger and freight fit through Bunbury St? The people who say "certainly not" also told us that Cressy was "just as fast".

Duplicating Ballarat and Bendigo properly, and effectively triplicating Geelong and much of the Seymour line (all completely suburban free) would have obvious benefits for reliable, fast, express running. But another, important advantage would be that this allows much smarter utilisation of any "pinch point".

From 1600 to 1800 on weekdays, there are at present 26 departures from Southern Cross which could use Bunbury St, or 13 per hour. If these departed at 3 minute intervals, the down line in Bunbury St would be occupied for 39 minutes each hour, leaving a 21 minutes free.

In the same two hour period, there are 11 ups, or 5½ per hour. If these were timed to arrive at 4 minute intervals, the up line would be occupied for 22 minutes each hour, leaving 38 minutes free.

Clearly, if there were "flying junctions" at Sims St and West Footscray/Tottenham, country passenger and freight would easily fit, and there would be no need yet for a horrendously expensive new tunnel.

Imagine you are a Ballarat commuter and you have the choice – double track standard gauge all the way, shared with freight, or today's single track, but with your own tunnel under Footscray. Let's put some numbers on this.

Ballarat travellers "against the peak" are particularly badly hit. In the afternoon, we have the 1514 from Ballarat, taking 93 minutes, the 1558 (94 minutes) and the 1757 (96 minutes). On the single line, we can't have a train around 1700 (it simply doesn't fit), so there is a bus at 1715, but it takes 115 minutes!

On a suburban free double line we could easily run an express every hour, and on a decent alignment and the Bunbury St tunnel these would take about 55 minutes, producing savings ranging from about 40 minutes to an hour.

Keeping the single line and building a new tunnel will do nothing for Ballarat line capacity, so we could expect the trains in the above example to be 4 minutes faster

(instead of 40), but the bus will stay the same!

But what if you are a freight operator? Although you have to share track with country passenger services, overall, you are far better off. You have an extra, much faster route to Ararat, and crossing delays east of Ararat and south of Seymour are effectively eliminated.

And what if Bunbury St fills up in the future? This will mean that we are running 50 – 100% more country trains in the peak than now, totally impossible with today's single lines and suburban pathing. When it becomes necessary, a third line would still be half the cost of two broad gauge tunnels, and could easily offer double stack clearances.

If "Regional Rail Link" was standard gauge, everything outside the suburban area bar Gippsland would soon follow, setting Victoria well on the way to a gauge "cure", with massive passenger improvements possible on all four standard gauge main lines. Building a broad gauge link condemns us for generations to come of idiocy and misplaced investment, and second rate services.

Victor responds:

I am very pleased that my article has provoked such a response. All these contributions are thoughtful in the great tradition of AATTC members.

I think that Jim Wells has perhaps taken a somewhat narrow view of the value of the Trans-Australia Railway. Even though this could not be justified for many decades on economic grounds, there are other considerations, especially national unity at the time. In a sense, the Trans Australia Railway was – like the Senate – part of the price we had to pay for Federation. Nor can I agree with Jim's view on tram closures in the 1950s/60s. These had nothing to do with "changes in transport technology". Changes in tramway technology, at the time, extended to tramway technical development, which was elsewhere used to improve this form of transport. Rather the tramway closures of the 1950s/60s had everything to do with mere fashion. It simply became a trend among transport planners to decry tramways. Correction: This was a trend among transport planners in the English-speaking world. These planners would go on their overseas "study tours" which, almost always were confined to English-speaking countries. In the US, many tramways were then being closed. There were various reasons for this, but buy outs by petrol and tyre companies US city transit systems were common then. But the main focus of these trips was always to what was then still regarded as "Home", Britain, and especially London. In the UK, many tramways had not developed because of the restrictive legislation

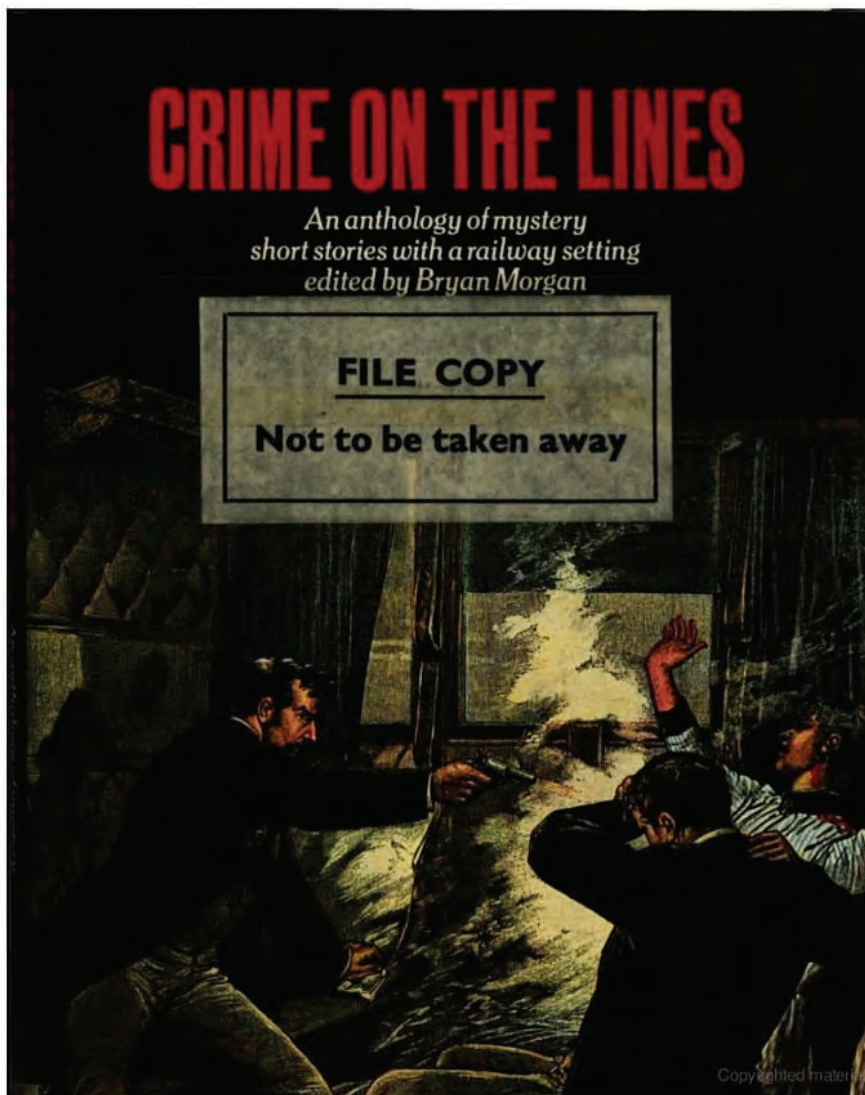
on municipal/company control. In addition, London had peculiar local considerations. London was then, especially by Australians, regarded as the greatest city of the world. London was then closing its tramways. The unique local reasons for this were the very expensive conduit electrical system and no trams being allowed in central London for "aesthetic" reasons. The planners, however, drew general conclusions from what they saw, especially in London, and hence recommended closure for many Australian systems. The fact that tramways can be developed with modern technology can easily be proved today by a glance at Melbourne. And it is the tramways which is a major reason why Melbourne is today such a liveable city.

Tony Bailey makes a very valid point about not judging nineteenth century people living in a very different age to us. However, we can still decry the conse-

quences of their decisions.

Albert Isaacs adds a number of additional "crimes" to mine. So, now I will also add my own addition to the original list. That is, Victorian Railways cheap and nasty decision to buy Walker Diesel Rail Cars in the early 1950s. These were notoriously rough riding. How many people, I wonder, took a ride on these "modern" vehicles, and, after a frightful shaking-about, vowed never to travel by train again?

I wouldn't wish, however, to add anything more to Albert's and Jim Stokes' very sensible (in my view) opinions. Andrew Mclean, as usual, gets us thinking hard and has a very visionary view of how our railway system could have been improved and developed in a very much better way.



Flier flyer

Thanks to MARK BAU for posting this on his web-site

NEW EXPRESS TRAIN "THE GEELONG FLIER"

(Commencing 3rd MAY, 1926)

Leaves Flinders-st. - - 9.0 a.m. Daily
(No. 1 Platform) (Sundays exo.)

Leaves Geelong on return - 4.0 p.m. Daily
(Sundays exo.)



Only 70 Minutes
each way

WHY USE THE ROAD?

We provide luxurious travel by rail—even our 2nd Class
Cars are more comfortable than Motor Buses!

FARES (Single)

First Class 8'3 - Second Class 5'6

THE RAILWAY IS THE BEST WAY