



The Times

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**Inside: The Day the Wheels Fell Off
Clyde Milk Train
Wait some more**

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Editor

Geoff Lambert 179 Sydney Rd FAIRLIGHT 2094 NSW

thetimes@austta.org.au

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What goes around, comes around—and then falls

off. *"Steel-on-steel" technology is the most reliable, proven technology available*". So said a planning panel for Hawaii's new transit system.

Well ... perhaps.

In Victoria, steel-on-steel led to BIG problems. Two years ago, the regional rail operator in Victoria, V/Line, was gripped by a crisis of unprecedented proportions. This month, we examine what happened when the wheels fell off.



Get thee behind me Satan! - Argy-Bargy during the 2016 Vlocity Crisis

The Day the Wheels Fell Off

GEOFF LAMBERT

THE DERAILMENT OF A SYDNEY XPT on the North Melbourne Flyover in July 2014 was a [harbinger](#). The Australian Transport Safety Board found that a set of dual-gauge points recently installed on the viaduct was not fit for purpose. Eighteen months later, other features of this viaduct again came under close scrutiny.

The “VLocity Problem” seems to have started on 6th January 2016 with S.16/6004 scheduling a special 6-car VLocity trip from Southern Cross to the Bombardier Siding at Dandenong for 11th January. Four days after this special return trip (i.e. 10th January), V/Line issued an overnight notice, S.16/6022 for a 3-car VLocity trip to Craigieburn for lathe-work on the wheels to be carried out on the Saturday afternoon, to return on Sunday—“Accompanied by Pilot ex Lathe”. Also issued on that day was S.16/6017, which scheduled a similar trip for 2 VL sets from Southern Cross to the lathe at Newport Workshops, plus S.16/6021, which scheduled another trip for another VL set to Bombardier for Monday morning.

Something was going on.

The wheels fell off the next day (16th January), when S.16/7018 was issued, cancelling some 85 VLocity-run scheduled services per day, from 18th to 30th January.

Consequently, the Transport Minister and V/Line managers held a “crisis” meeting on Sunday 17th Jan. The CEO of V/Line resigned on 27th Jan..... and the Minister made this statement:

“The current disruptions across the V/Line network – as a result of faster-than-normal wheel wear on VLocity trains and a boom-gate fault – are totally unacceptable. Last week, the Government was told the problems had been identified and the vast majority of services would be up and running by the end of the week.

*This advice from V/Line was **wrong** and this unacceptable situation has*

caused the Government to lose confidence in the leadership of V/Line. The CEO has resigned effective immediately.

On the Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong lines, V/Line now expects services to steadily improve from mid-February, but it will be months before normal services resume in full. V/Line is taking steps to reduce the rate of wheel wear but extensive testing is still underway to determine the exact cause of the problem.

In addition, the timetable change scheduled for 31 January for the Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo lines will be deferred until the Government is confident it can be successfully implemented.

Gary Liddle will be the interim CEO of V/Line. Mr. Liddle is currently CEO of Public Transport Victoria and is the former CEO of VicRoads.

The Government has already ordered a review of V/Line operations, and the technical investigations into the wheel wear and boom-gate issues are continuing.”

The problem with the Boom Gates

Nothing ever happens by halves. In the same week that the wheels fell off, Metro Trains Melbourne banned VLocity cars from operating over its tracks because of the intermittent failure of the VLs to operate Boom Barriers on Metro’s tracks. The Transport Minister, in her Statement, also had the following to say:

“After the boom-gate fault at a level crossing earlier this month, the National Safety Regulator advised that safety measures must be carried out on all 21 affected crossings on the Cranbourne-Pakenham line. While this work is undertaken over the next six weeks, VLocity trains cannot run between Traralgon and Melbourne and will be replaced by coaches. The Government is investigating using other train models to boost services.”

It is not my intention here to analyse the technicalities of these two prob-

lems, but rather to analyse the effect they had on V/Line services over the succeeding months.

History

Actually, it probably started—or at least began to get seriously worse—on the day the Regional Rail Link (RRL) opened for traffic – 21-June-2015.

Wheel wear is part and parcel of operating a railway. Possible abnormal wheel wear with the VLocity (VL) cars was first noticed in 2010 and the cars were regularly shopped for wheel re-profiling at Newport (V/Line), Craigieburn (Coleman Rail) and Dandenong (Bombardier—the car-builders) from 2013 onwards.

Reaction

The events of January/February were the subject of much publicity in the media. The blogosphere went berserk. I have drawn upon such material, as well as my own analyses, to compile what follows.

What happened?

The [enquiry](#) conducted for V/Line by Monash University, came to the conclusion that the radius of curvature of curves and turnouts on the RRL was abnormally high and that the VLs were especially prone to wheel wear. The enquiry identified the North Melbourne Viaduct and the turnouts at Deer Park Junction as the worst offenders. The wheel wear was gradual, but the wheels on the older VL sets began to approach a critical thinness in late 2016.

In the years 2013-15 and 2017-18, V/Line issued 51 S-Notices for VLocity transfer schedules to and from the three wheel lathes around Melbourne, a rate of about 15 per year. The rate was gradually rising, especially during the latter part of 2015.

Response by V/Line

The mass cancellations of trains in mid-January 2016 was (apparently) designed to:



- Take the older VLs with critically-thin wheels out of service to allow wheel repairs to be made.
- Remove VL runs from the Viaduct.
- Free-up those parts of the system where wheel wear was occurring to allow their repair by easing the radii.

The V/Line Passenger NSP of June 2015

Since the early part of the 20th Century, Network Service Plans (NSP—known as Working Time Tables, or WTTs, until the mid 1990s) had been issued once or twice a year for each of the Divisions of the network. The advent of non-printed PDF versions of the NSP saw a few changes made to format and conventions, but a 21st Century NSP was clearly a descendent of a 20th Century WTT.

From the major WTT change of 1982, train numbers on the system were regularized as 4-digit numbers, where the first digit signified the type of train (passenger, freight, etc), the second digit indicated the region of operation and the remaining two digits represented the region. From early in the 20th Century the regions were:

1. Western & South Western
2. Northern & Midland
3. North Eastern
4. Eastern & South Eastern
5. Suburban

Region 1 was later split into one Region and regions 2 and 4 were each merged into two Regions—Northern and Eastern. A new Region, North East Standard Gauge, was created and “Suburban” was moved to Metro Trains and replaced with a “Metropolitan” V/Line section. All V/

Line trains that ran through the Melbourne CBD originally appeared in this section and did so in the 2015 NSP. This section now contains only those non-revenue trains that are entirely confined to that region.

The 2015 NSP was downloaded from the V/Line website and provided to ATA members *via* its Distribution Service in August 2015 and the reformatted NSP, plus a comprehensive analysis, was provided in the [December 2016 Distribution List](#).

The 2015 NSP had 74 weekday regional “train rosters” containing some 170 “passenger paths” to be run by various combinations of 2-car and 3-car VL sets. In this context, a “path” for a passenger carrying train is described by V/Line as a “service”. This was two-thirds of the total number of services on the system and an indication of how reliant the system was upon these cars and of how sensitive the system was to problems with the VL car sets. The cancellation of 85 of these services was a grievous blow.

S-Circulars

From at least 1894, and probably earlier, the Victorian Government-owned railways have issued “S-Circulars” to notify staff of the running of special trains or of temporary or permanent timetable alterations. The year 1894 was in the post-Speight era of the “professionalisation” of the Victorian Railways (VR), when sloppy administrative systems were being tightened up. It was the year, for instance, when the Weekly Notice first appeared. The Annual Report for 1894-1895 was the first to specifically mention the collation of Circulars into a “Book of Circulars”.

The “S” does not necessarily stand for “Special”, I think—at least not originally. There were also A-circulars and C-Circulars, each related to the branch which issued them. C-Circulars, were issued by the Transportation Branch and sometimes contained timetable material.

I calculate that about 2,600 S-Circulars were produced in 1894. This number probably would have grown as traffic grew, reaching a peak—as did most things on the VR—in the Second World War. At any rate, by 2014, the



rate of issue of S-Circulars had dropped to about 950 per year.

There is a convention for the numbering of S-Circulars:

- ◆ yy6xxx (e.g. 166051)
Non-revenue special trains
- ◆ S.yy-6xxx (e.g. S16.6009)
Test-runs and similar
- ◆ S.yy-7xxx (e.g. S.16-7205)
Special and altered revenue services
- ◆ S.yy-8xxx (e.g. S.16-8017)
NSP indefinite alterations

Where: yy = last two digits of the year and xxx = last three digits of the number.

The S-Circular Saga

The Vlocity crisis of 2016, bumped the annual numbers up to 1,187 (an increase of 24%) and a good deal of this increase related specifically to special trains of the VL cars themselves (about 450 Circulars).

There were three categories of S-Circulars associated with the Vlocity Crisis:

1. Those that amended the NSP
2. Those that detailed VLs going to the lathes for wheel profiling
3. Those that concerned test runs of VL cars

Each of the category 1 S-Circulars was, in essence, a repeat of the previous one, with whatever extra changes had been made in the meantime.

1. NSP Cancellation and Alteration

These S-Circulars were usually issued with a file-name containing words such as “*Cancellations and Alterations due to Shortage of Vlocity*”, but other

SUMMARY OF ALTERATIONS DURING THE 2016 VLOCITY CRISIS

SUMMARY OF ALTERATIONS DURING THE 2016 VLOCITY CRISIS																		
Total services affected-->	319	Totals OR Max			257	115	159	123	8	70	255	182	11	0	48	18	33	217
S.Notice	Start Day	Finish Day	Weekdays	Total Trains Affected	Cancelled	Altered	Platform change	Additional Trains	Coach Replacements	Set Change	Re-instated to run as per NSP	Re-instated but amended	Other	Not replaced (All)	Not replaced (Pass)	Not replaced (EC)	Passenger	
7018	18-Jan	30-Jan	Mon-Sat(2)	108	85	13			37				0	48	18	30	78	
7026	23-Jan	na	Sat	50	7	44			3				0	4	0	14	36	
7028	24-Jan	na	Sun	31	7	24			6				0	1	0	9	22	
7030	25-Jan	na	Mon	112	85	23			41				0	44	11	33	79	
7031	27-Jan	29-Jan	Wed-Fri	122	85	30			39				0	46	13	33	89	
7033	26-Jan	na	Tue	53	8	3			3				0	5	0	15	38	
7038	30-Jan	na	Sat	40	7	36			1				0	6	0	10	30	
7039	31-Jan	na	Sun	28	7	19			4				0	3	0	11	17	
7040	1-Feb	5-Feb	Mon-Fri	119	85	30			43				0	42	11	31	88	
7046	6-Feb	na	Sat	44	7	39			1				0	6	0	10	34	
7048	7-Feb	na	Sun	30	7	21			4				0	3	0	12	107	
7051	8-Feb	12-Feb	Mon-Fri	119	85	30			43				0	42	11	31	88	
7050	8-Feb	Indefinite	Full week	74	51	18			50				0	1	1	0	119	
7053	13-Feb	Indefinite	All Saturdays	43	6	39			1				0	5	0	9	35	
7054	14-Feb	Indefinite	All Sundays	74	51	18			50				0	1	1	0	119	
7055	15-Feb	Indefinite	All M-F	122	87	31	0		43				0	44	12	32	87	
7053_7050	13-Feb	Indefinite	All Sats	43	6	39			1				0	5	0	9	35	
7054_7050	14-Feb	Indefinite	All Suns	30	7	21			4				0	3	0	12	32	
7055_7050	15-Feb	Indefinite	All M-F	157	115	35	0		70				0	45	13	32	125	
8001	22-Feb	Indefinite	M-Thu	239	109	137	103		69	31			0	40	9	31	208	
8002	26-Feb	Indefinite	Fris	247	110	143	109	8	69	34			0	41	10	31	216	
8003	27-Feb	Indefinite	Sats	108	25	91	66	0	14	27			0	11	3	8	100	
8004	27-Feb	Indefinite	Suns	87	21	73	45	0	14	26			0	7	0	12	75	
8009	21-Mar	Indefinite	M-Thu	247	58	148	110	0	25	43	60	5	0	33	0	33	206	
8010	25-Mar	Indefinite	Fris	257	58	159	123	0	25	45	61	5	0	33	2	31	209	
8011	26-Mar	Indefinite	Sat	112	2	94	68	0	0	31	24	0	0	2	0	8	74	
8012	27-Mar	Indefinite	Sun	82	4	66	45	0	1	18	19	0	0	3	0	8	74	
8015	26-Apr	Indefinite	M-F	63	40	9	8	0	11	0	18	1	0	29	7	22	217	

S-Circulars were issued without these words.

A total of 34 of the former type were issued in 2016, compared with 7 in about April 2015 and none in any other year. I am not clear as to what drove the 2015 S-Circulars on this topic.

The “shortage S-Circulars” were mainly issued as separate Circulars for Weekdays, Saturdays and Sundays in batches of three, simultaneously. Single-day amendments for holidays, such as Australia Day, were also issued. Until 12th February, S-Circulars were issued in the S.16-7000 series, thereafter in the S16-8000 series.

A page from a typical such circular is shown on page 7.

Circulars were issued at rather sporadic intervals as V/Line gradually came to grips with the problem and finally ceased with S.16-8020 on 26th April. At this date, there still remained 40 cancelled services. It was not until late March, presumably after curve easing and other such works had been carried out, that the situation was resolved. The crisis was brought to a close in June 2016 when a new

REGION PREFIXES		AFFECTED BY REGION	
PREFIX	REGION	NSP	CRISIS
		339	318
70	North	12	20
71	West	23	18
72	South West via AJ	0	1
73	North East	10	2
74	East	0	0
75	Flin	0	0
76	NESG	0	0
77	South West via RRL M-F	29	16
78	South West via RRL WE	8	10
79	SX Yard	0	0
80	North	43	40
81	West	76	61
82	South West via AJ	2	1
83	North East	34	13
84	East	38	35
85	Flin	12	0
86	NESG	8	0
87	South West via RRL M-F	44	67
88	South West via RRL WE	-	-

Summary of VLOCITY movements to Newport, Craigieburn and Bombardier Lathes					
To Lathes			From Lathes		
Set	Date	S-Notice	Set	Date	S-Notice
VL 56	20-Jan	6028	3VL 56		
VL 28	29-Jan	6046	3VL 28	29-Jan	6046
VL 52	29-Jan	6048	3VL 52	31-Jan	6049
VL 35	30-Jan	6045	3VL 35	30-Jan	6045
VL 39	31-Jan	6048	3VL 39	1-Feb	6051
VL 56	31-Jan	6049	3VL 56		
VL 43	1-Feb	6051	3VL 43	3-Feb	6053
VL 26	3-Feb	6053	3VL 26		
VL 27	4-Feb	6054	3VL 27	8-Feb	6051
VL 38	8-Feb	6061	3VL 38	10-Feb	6062
VL 38	8-Feb	6061	3VL 38	12-Feb	6065
VL 48	10-Feb	6062	3VL 48		
VL 22	12-Feb	6065	3VL 22	15-Feb	6066
VL 24	15-Feb	6066	3VL 24	16-Feb	6067
VL 47	16-Feb	6067	3VL 47	18-Feb	6073
VL 06	13-Feb	6069	3VL 06	No info	
VL 49			3VL 49	13-Feb	6069
VL 25	14-Feb	6070	3VL 25		
VL 31	14-Feb	6070	3VL 31		
	18-Feb	6073			
VL 16	No info.	6082	3VL 16		
VL 22	13-Feb	6084	3VL 22		
VL 17			3VL 17	1-Apr	6156
VL 36			3VL 36	26-Feb	6102
VL 05	27-Feb	6104	3VL 05		
VL 14	28-Feb	6105	2VL 14	28-Feb	6105

edition of the NSP was issued.

The services in the existing NSP were altered in the following ways by these S-Circulars:

- ◆ Cancelled and not replaced with buses
- ◆ Cancelled, but with a replacement bus service
- ◆ Altered routings (and sometimes, times) approaching Southern Cross (mainly to divert VLs away from the Viaduct)
- ◆ Platform alterations at SX
- ◆ Additional Trains
- ◆ Rerouting of Geelong trains away from the RRL lines
- ◆ Sending non VL-run trains over the Viaduct
- ◆ Reinstated as per NSP
- ◆ Reinstated with amendments.

A table which shows progressive changes in the situation as the drama unfolded, appears at the top of our page 5. Also on page 5 (lower right) is a table summarizing which runs were affected over the entire period. Empty train movements are shown in red.

2. VL journeys to the wheel lathes

Lathe runs jumped to 26 in 2016, compared to the other-year average of 15. A typical such circular is shown on page 8. Lathe runs are not strictly “Special Trains” inasmuch as conditional paths exist for them in the NSP.

Lathe runs to Bombardier at Dandenong are scheduled according to the



S.16/7030

3

S.16/7030

**MONDAY 25TH JANUARY 2016
SOUTH WESTERN REGION**

DOWN

19 47 (No. 7797) Empty Vlocitys, Waurn Ponds Platform to Waurn Ponds Siding will be altered to operate as 3VL instead of 2 x 3VL.

20 35 (No. 7899) Addtl Ety Vlocitys, Geelong Loco to Geelong will operate (**Fridays Only**). Consist 2 x 3VL.

22 15 (No. 8809) Vlocity, Southern Cross to Waurn Ponds is altered to operate as 2VL & 3VL instead of 3VL. (**Supercedes S.16/7012**)

23 15 (No. 8811) Vlocitys, Southern Cross to Waurn Ponds is CANCELLED. Replacement Road Coach Service will operate. (**Supercedes S.16/7012**)

UP

04 32 (No. 8702) Vlocity, Waurn Ponds to Southern Cross is CANCELLED. Replacement Road Coach Service will operate.

07 12 (No. 7716) Empty Vlocitys, Wyndham Vale South to Wyndham Vale is CANCELLED.

07 16 (No. 8716) Vlocitys, Wyndham Vale to Southern Cross (Platform No. 15), is CANCELLED. Replacement Road Coach Service will operate.

06 32 (No. 7720) Empty Vlocitys, Waurn Ponds Siding to Waurn Ponds Platform is CANCELLED.

06 51 (No. 8720) Vlocitys, Waurn Ponds to Southern Cross is CANCELLED. Replacement Road Coach Service will operate.

06 52 (No. 7726) Empty Vlocitys, Waurn Ponds Siding to Waurn Ponds Platform is CANCELLED.

07 10 (No. 8726) Vlocitys, Waurn Ponds to Southern Cross (Platform No. 16) is CANCELLED. Replacement Road Coach Service will operate.

08 04 (No. 8738) Vlocitys, South Geelong to Southern Cross is CANCELLED. Replacement Road Coach Service will operate.

08 40 (No. 8742) Vlocitys, South Geelong to Southern Cross is CANCELLED. Replacement Road Coach Service will operate.

08 51 (No. 7744) Empty Vlocitys, Waurn Ponds Siding to Waurn Ponds Platform is CANCELLED.

08 55 (No. 8744) Vlocitys, Waurn Ponds to Southern Cross (Platform No. 16) is CANCELLED. Replacement Road Coach Service will operate.

3



Network Planning
 Level 1
 Southern Cross Station
 Ph 9619 2197 GC
 18th February, 2016

**SPECIAL VLOCITY TRANSFER TRAIN
 SOUTHERN CROSS – SOUTH KENSINGTON -
 BOMBARDIER SIDING – WEST TOWER AND RETURN
 FRIDAY 19TH FEBRUARY 2016**

The following Loco-Hauled Vlocity Transfer Train will operate.

DOWN		0991
		LIGHT LOCO
Southern Cross Yard	dep	09 34- (Consist; N Loco)
		TC
Franklin Street		09 36*
		F
Flyover Jun		09 37*
Spion Kop		09 38*
		RRL
South Kensington Sdgs	arr	09 40 – Reverse Direction

DOWN		0591
		LIGHT LOCO
South Kensington Sdgs	dep	09 50 – (Consist, N Loco)
		RRL
Spion Kop		09 52*
West Tower		09 53*
Southern Cross (Platform No. 15)		09 58*
Flinders Street	arr	10 02 - D
(Platform No. 9)	dep	10 10
		SP
Richmond Jun		10 13*
		CL
Caulfield		10 25* - Via No. 4 Plat
Oakleigh		10 34*
Westall		10 41*
Dandenong		10 54*
Bombardier Sdg	arr	10 57 – Attach Vlocity.



work load at Bombardier. Given the parlous nature of some of the wheel sets, the greater proportion of these trains were loco-hauled. A VL will be sent to Dandenong once the work on the preceding VL has been completed. Thus, when 3VL26 ran to Bombardier on 3-Feb-2016, it swapped with 3VL43, which had gone to Bom-

bardier on 1-Feb. The average (median) stay at Bombardier was about 50 hours. The paths used for the return journey of these trains can also be used for deliveries of newly-constructed VL sets—this happened nine times during the crisis.

3. VL Test Trains

New VLs were delivered over the entire period 2013-2017, with more to come. At least one “test run” is made per delivery. Test runs are also generally made when a VL returns to service from repairs. During the crisis a number of VLs made runs to test the interaction between the wheels and the

S.16/6208

S.16/6208



Network Planning
Level 11
628 Bourke Street
Ph 9619 5183 GC
4th May 2016

VLOCITY TEST TRAINS SOUTHERN CROSS – WYNDHAM VALE AND DEER PARK WEST JUNCTION

Special Vlocity Test Trains will operate as shown below for System Testing.

SUNDAY 8TH MAY 2016

Consist, 3VL (each service)

DOWN		8861	8167	8863	8865
		ETY VLCTY	ETY VLCTY	ETY VLCTY	ETY VLCTY
Southern Cross (Platform No.)	dep	02 00 (4) TC	02 02 (5) TC	02 04 (6) TC	02 06 (4) TC
Franklin Street		02 02* F	02 04* F	02 06* F	02 08* F
Flyover Jun		02 03*	02 05*	02 07*	02 09*
Spion Kop		02 04* RRL	02 06* RRL	02 08* RRL	02 10* RRL
South Kensington		02 06* RRL	02 08* RRL	02 10* RRL	02 12* RRL
Footscray		02 08 -D	02 10 - D	02 12 - D	02 14 - D
Sunshine	arr	02 20
Ardeer	dep	02 14 -D	02 16 - D	02 18 - D	(arr Plat 3
Deer Park		02 17 - D	02 19 - D	02 21 - D	then shunt behind
Deer Park Jun		02 20 - D	02 22 - D	02 24 - D	Post 916)
Deer Park Jun		02 21*	02 23*	02 25*	
Wyndham Vale South	arr	02 21*	02 25*	
Deer Park West Jun	arr	02 34	02 25	02 41	
FORMS		(8862)	(8172)	(8864)	(8866)

newly-altered turnouts and curves. Test runs jumped to 410 in 2016, compared to the other-year average of 241.

A typical Circular—for testing the turnouts at Deer Park West Junction (picture, p6, bottom left) — is shown on page 9 [proof-reader Max Michell thinks this might be a Circular for testing running times].

As for the Level Crossing problems that so riled the Minister at the start of January, these ended up being lost in the morass. They related entirely to the VL cars on the Metro Network and applied to (mainly), the Cranbourne Line and the Broadmeadows Line. The latter had few VL sets traversing its tracks. The problem was coped with by terminating the

VL cars short of the Metro system at Craigieburn and Pakenham. If S-Circulars for this were issued, they have not come to my attention; nor were they present in the “Vlocity Crisis” S-Notices.

Comment on this article –[Letter to Editor](#), [Facebook](#)

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The Clyde Milk Train

JAMES T WELLS

A FASCINATING SERVICE THAT ran in Victoria around the 1910-15 period was the Sundays only Pakenham – Clyde milk train.

My sources of information are:

- A 1910 amendment to the working timetable (S. 32210.10.), which originally appeared on victorianrailways.net (our page 11),
- An article in Dandenong's "*The South Bourke and Mornington Journal*" of [March 23rd, 1911](#) and
- [Bradshaw's Guide to Victoria](#) of August 1915.

Dandenong then was a market town to the south east of Melbourne on the main Gippsland line which headed east through Pakenham to end at Bairnsdale. Dandenong was the junction for the South Gippsland line, which then terminated at Port Albert. Clyde was/is a station about 20 km from Dandenong and may soon become the terminus for the suburban electric train service from Melbourne which currently terminates at Cranbourne.

The first thing to note about the 1910 WTT is that, being an amending one, it doesn't cover the full service. We are told that No. 10 runs from Clyde to Dandenong (up direction) at 5:50 pm and then to Berwick (down direction) for a 32 minute turnaround before heading back to Spencer St. (now Southern Cross) as No. 14A – Goods and Milk.

There are references in the notes to the 11:00 am Down Pakenham train and the 12:50 pm Down to Clyde and the 7:15 pm Up from Pakenham.

The running time from Pakenham to Berwick is about 30 min. We don't know whether the Pakenham train preceded the 7:47 pm from Berwick or followed it.

Confirmation that there were two trains comes from the article which states that the 12:50 pm was ex Melbourne and dwelled at Dandenong from 2:14 to 3:10pm, before proceeding to Clyde, arriving there at 3:50 pm. The train for Pakenham left Melbourne at 11 am.

The article implies that the Clyde train catered for passengers. The WTT has a

strange reference to a 'car' being included from Dandenong to Clyde 'as usual'. The list of vehicles for the Up journey does not include a 'car'.

The choice of Clyde as the South Gippsland line destination is interesting. When the line closed for passengers in 1981, Clyde was a minor station in the section Cranbourne to Koo-Wee-Rup. In 1966, it was staffed by a caretaker only.

It was more than just a locality; there was a town with various facilities – see [this](#) blog— and had excellent road connections to the east.

The major centre in the area was, and still is, Cranbourne, but its station is to the north west of the town centre. Maybe avoiding having horse drawn vehicles in Cranbourne's main street was a factor in having Clyde as the terminus.

Reversing the train from the locomotive aspect was not difficult as the DDE (later D4) steam locomotives were 4-6-2T tank engines and could run at 40 mph bunker first. There would have been a loop¹, but if it wasn't a three road station; i.e. a crossing loop plus goods siding, difficulties would arise if vehicles were left in the loop.

Presumably the milk would have been in metal cans which would have required considerable man-handling to load and unload into the railway 'trucks' or vans. These would be heavy but could be wheeled along by turning them slightly away from the vertical. Lifting would have been required to get them onto shelves in the railway vehicles².

From the 1910 WTT amendment, it is noted that specific vehicles were assigned for particular destination stations: maybe the high socio economic status of Malvern, Hawksburn and Toorak explains why each of them had whole vehicles dedicated to them. Unloading must have been pretty snappy; the timetable only allows for a couple of minutes dwell. Did the local dairy send staff to assist? Almost certainly they did as unrefrigerated milk is quite perishable and horse drawn vehicles would have been on hand to cart the milk to the dairies.

One truck was for South Yarra and the



S. 3220-10.

(A. 2.)

VICTORIAN RAILWAYS.

CLYDE-PAKENHAM LINE.

On and after SUNDAY, 10TH JULY, 1910, the Clyde-Pakenham Sunday Milk Train will be altered to run as shown hereunder, and TERMINATE AT BERWICK instead of Pakenham:—

SUNDAYS.

Station.	No. 10 (Altered).	Station.	No. 14A. Goods and Milk (Altered).
UP.		UP.	
Clyde ... Dep.	p.m. 5 50	Berwick ... Dep.	p.m. 7 47
Cranbourne ... "	6 2	Narre Warren ... "	8 0
Lyndhurst ... "	6 20	Hallam ... "	8 12
Dandenong ... Arr.	6 30	Dandenong ... Arr.	8 20
		" ... Dep.	8 35
DOWN.		Springvale ... "	8 47
Dandenong ... Dep.	6 50	Clayton ... "	8 58
Berwick ... "	7 15	Oakleigh ... "	9 10
		Murrumbeena ... "	"
		Carnegie ... "	"
		Caulfield ... "	9 23
		Malvern ... "	9 29
		Armadale ... "	9 34
		Toorak ... "	9 39
		Hawksburn ... "	9 44
		South Yarra ... "	9 51
		Richmond ... "	9 57
		Flinders-street ... Arr.	10 1
		" ... Dep.	10 12
		Spencer-street ... Arr.	10 16

The load of 12.50 p.m. Down and 5.50 p.m. Up to consist of 2 "D" vans (one at each end) and 4 Louvres (car attached between Dandenong and Clyde as usual), and on Up journey milk to be loaded in following order:—

Front Van ...	Malvern Milk
First Truck...	Hawksburn Milk
Second Truck	Toorak Milk
Third Truck	South Yarra and Brighton line Milk
Fourth Truck	Flinders-street and Richmond
Trailing Van	St. Kilda and Port Melbourne

The 11 a.m. Down Pakenham train to consist of a close coupled train and "D" van, and be regularly run by engine of "DDE" class.

Empty milk cans for Beaconsfield, Officer and Pakenham to be forwarded by 11 a.m. Down, and those for other stations by 12.50 p.m. Down. Milk from Pakenham, Officer and Beaconsfield to be forwarded by 7.15 p.m. Up, and discharged at suburban stations; all other milk by 7.47 p.m. Up.

All stations, Clayton to Pakenham, inclusive, to notify Milk Senders of altered earlier timing of Milk train.

T. B. MOLOMBY,

Superintendent Passenger Train Service.

Spencer-street, July 1, 1910.

3033.6.10

Brighton line, another for Richmond and Flinders St. The trailing van catered for the two short lines (now light rail routes) to St Kilda and Port Melbourne. What about the rest of Melbourne you ask?

The special milk train ran only on Sundays. On other days, ordinary goods trains (passenger as well?) would have catered for the milk traffic.

The point of the newspaper article was to campaign for a time table change. It was felt that two hours at Clyde was inadequate time for 'visitors to see their friends' and that the dairy farmers would appreciate a later departure.

Thus, the article recommended that the train should no longer go to Berwick; with Berwick etc. being served by the Pakenham train with milk being transferred at Dandenong.

The author was most concerned that connections with suburban trains be maintained at Flinders St. It appears he lived on the Heidelberg line, which rather suggests that the newspaper entry may have been a letter rather than an article.

It's not clear from the article whether Clyde line passengers needed to change trains at Dandenong.

By 1915 this had happened. It's not possible to scan the original so an Excel version will suffice (page 13).

These were the only services to operate east of Dandenong (also Oakleigh) on a Sunday.

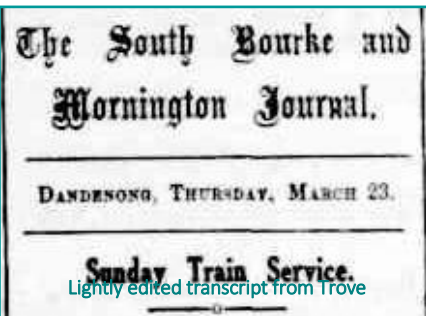
Our friend travelling to the Heidelberg line would need to transfer to the now closed Princess Bridge station with its island platforms. Departures after 9 pm on a Sunday make interesting reading:

- 9:10 North Fitzroy
- 9:15 Reservoir
- 9:25 Heidelberg
- 9:35 North Fitzroy
- 9:45 Bell
- 9:55 North Fitzroy
- 10:10 Heidelberg



The North Fitzroy trains apparently terminated there; they did not run on to Royal Park (Coburg line) or beyond. The only services between Royal Park and North Fitzroy were Whittlesea trains – three a day, except on Sundays – when there was one only.

Whittlesea would have been a more attractive destination for Sunday excursionists than Clyde. There were many other possibilities, including Gembrook.



THE SUNDAY TRAIN SERVICE of our district, even while of no use to our people as a general thing, may be made more satisfactory by some amendments which we venture to suggest, it may even be within the bounds of possibility that, before long, a country train that will be of some service to country people may be arranged. However, that is matter for another story.

The milk train at present leaves Melbourne at 12.06 p.m. and arrives at Dandenong at 2:14. At 3.10 p.m. it leaves Dandenong for Clyde, and returns to Dandenong at 6.30 p.m.

This train goes on to Berwick at 6.50, arriving there at 7.15 and leaving at 7.47 for Melbourne. It gets to Dandenong at 8.20 and departs at 8.35, arriving at Flinders Street at 10.1.

Visitors to Clyde and Cranbourne have to travel by the passenger train leaving Flinders Street at 11 a.m., and wait at Dandenong until 3.10 p.m., when they are carried along in a car attached to the milk train. They get to Clyde at 3.50 and have to board the train for the return journey at 5.50, which means that they shall be in Clyde for less than two hours. They get back to Dandenong at 6.30 and have to wait there an hour and a half before they get their train back to Melbourne.

Could not this Clyde train leave on the return journey later and give visitors to that part of the district more time to see their friends? And further, would it not be possible, while giving this little concession, to make the lives of persons engaged in the dairying industry less of a drudgery than it now is? For instance, let the passenger train leaving Pakenham at 7.15 p.m. pick up the milk at Berwick, Narre Warren and Hallam, and discharge the cans on arrival at Dandenong. This could be accomplished by placing a truck on the passenger train to receive this milk, and would do away with the running of the present milk train between Dandenong and Berwick, which leaves Dandenong at 6.50 p.m. and, returns from Berwick at 7.47 p.m.

By this means, the 5.50 p.m. train from Clyde could be put back till 7.15 or 7.30 and connect with the up passenger train from Pakenham. Even if extra time be taken for loading milk at Berwick, Narre Warren and Hallam it would mean that its arrival in Melbourne would be only twenty minutes later than usual, viz., 9.20 p.m., which would permit Sunday excursionists to catch the last suburban trains home as they do now.

It is very necessary that this should be made clear, for the connection with suburban trains is all important. The arrival of the Dandenong train at Flinders Street twenty minutes later than now would give the passenger to Coburg and Reservoir (pleased with a reasonable opportunity of visiting country friends) thirty minutes in which to catch his home train; one to Heidelberg forty minutes; and other suburbanites even more time.

Thus it will be seen that they will have no cause of complaint. Were the Clyde train to leave there at 7.30 p.m. it would reach Dandenong at 8.10 p.m., which would allow twenty-five minutes in which to discharge passengers and pick up milk. It could then leave at the same time as at present, viz., 8.35 p.m.

Our suggestion, if adopted, would practically cut out the train between Dandenong and Berwick, and its cost in haulage would be saved. As stated above, the milk train now leaves Clyde at 5.50 p.m. This means that the dairyman must bring in his cows very early in the afternoon to be milked (in summer in the extreme heat of the day) in order that the milk can be sent to the metropolis for the consumer. The life of a dairyman under these circumstances is not to be envied. Let a neighbour or a visitor from a distance drop in, and the dairyman, while willing to perform the rites of hospitality, cannot look upon the advent of his friends without dire misgivings that the slightest attention he may pay them will jeopardise his chance of getting his milk away by the train.

What labor is employed on the place likes some freedom on Sunday, and the employer has to be up and doing himself. A couple of hours more time, as provided by the train leaving later

on the return journey, would be of great value to the dairyman and, as we have shown, could be arranged by the Railway Department without disorganising existing routine.

To our mind, the suggestions offered will give a much improved milk service, passengers on the whole would be better treated, and there would no extra expense but rather a saving to the Department. In pointing out these facts to our readers, and suggesting a remedy based upon reasoning that will bear the keen official examination that is

sure to follow—we have done our part, and it now rests with those more intimately concerned in the matter to do theirs. In Mr. Fitzpatrick, now the Chief Commissioner of Railways, a representative deputation would find a sympathetic listener, for he has always been "the people's" man. A prompt move should be made in the direction indicated.

Endnotes [from the Editor]

1. In 1911, Clyde was an electric staff station, but the siding arrangements are unclear; nor has the "Clyde" page of the

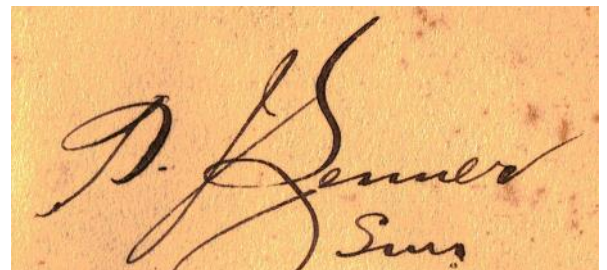
Track Charts book survived. A diagram was issued in 1947, but it has not survived. By 1965, however, there was only a staff-locked dead-end siding there. In the General Appendices between 1913 and 1953, there were elaborate instructions for crossing different types of trains at Clyde, a consequence of some nearby steep grades.

2. The 1913 General Appendix had half a page of instructions on "milk traffic". The gist of them was that outgoing milk cans had to be on luggage trolleys or on the ground, spotted so as to be in the correct position for the correct van or truck when the milk train arrived.

			EXISTING 1911			PROPOSED		
			Eastern	Eastern	South-Eastern	Eastern	South East	Eastern
			Pass	Pass	Milk with Pass car	Pass	Milk with Pass car	Paas with Milk car
DOWN	Melbourne		11:00		12:06	11:00	12:06	
	Dandenong	arr	??		14:14	??	14:14	
					attach car		attach car	
	Dandenong	dep	--->		15:10	--->	15:10	
	Clyde	arr			15:50		15:50	
UP								
	Clyde	dep			17:50		19:30	
	Dandenong	arr			18:30		20:10	
DOWN				ex-Pakenham	reverse			ex-Pakenha
	Dandenong	dep		at 19:15?	18:50			at 19:15?
	Berwick	arr		19:32	19:15			???
					reverse			
UP								
		dep		19:32	19:47			???
	Dandenong	arr		19:59	20:20		--->	20:15?
		dep		20:03	20:35			20:20
	Melbourne			20:59	22:01			21:20

The table above has been constructed from the VR's "all-lines" WTT of 1909, E&SE section—Ed

In the 1960s, I boarded with the widow of a VR Station Master at Clyde, Percy Zenner. Apart from Clyde, he was also SM at Maldon, Dingee, Victoria Park, and Devenish. The photo of Clyde station in 1921 on our page 12, is Percy's. The signature at right is from one of the several General Appendices I found in the back shed at the Zenner residence.. Geoff Lambert



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Wait a Little While Longer

MAX MICHELL

JIM WELL'S ARTICLE ON WAIT-A-WHILE was interesting for a couple of reasons.

The first is the wonky route that the line follows. On a recent survey of the line, we got into discussions with a long time rail operator in the area. He suggested that the line was extended from Jerilderie (opened 1884) to Berrigan (1896) with the intention that it be extended in the fullness to Cobram (opened as a VR line in 1888), more or less due south of Berrigan. Curvature on the extension was mild mannered, typically 800 metres radius or better as befits a line in near flat country. However there was someone in Finley (22 km west of Berrigan) who was able to exert sufficient political pressure to get an unplanned extension west from Berrigan.

To get out of the existing station, which had never been planned for a westward extension, a 200 metres radius curve was required while various sharper than normal curves (300 - 400 metres radius) were required to minimise land take and construction cost - the line closely follows the Riverina Highway which may have been an early stock route and rudimentary road in 1896 -1898, when the Finley extension was built. Finley station and yard was built on a north-south axis using a 440 metre 90 degree curve, possibly to avoid cutting the town in half. I would be surprised if there were any expectation at that stage that the line would later be extended to Tocumwal and a meeting with the Irish Gauge, since that line was a decade away at that stage.

The route via Berrigan to Tocumwal is around 23 km longer than if it went direct more or less along the Newell Highway route. Having said that Berrigan had (and still has) the largest grain receival set-up in the region, although it is unclear which is the chicken and which is the egg.

Victoria built an extension from Strathmerton to near the Murray River at Tocumwal in 1905, with the final link (bridge) being completed in 1908.

NSW finally extended their line south from Finley in 1914. Although there was some interchange of passengers (or at least the time tables suggested there was) with only limited freight running this way, apart from during WWII. One traffic that was regularly transhipped was explosives from Victoria to NSW and points north.

Although these NSW towns were a long way from Sydney and any NSW port, grain and other agri-produce was 'regulated' to run via those places rather than going 'backwards' over the southern border. This continued until around the 1980s when the beginnings of competition policy removed this type of control. Almost overnight the southern Riverina freight went southwards, sometimes to an Irish Gauge loading point but just as often straight through on road.

The demise of the staple traffic on this line was the direct cause of the rather sudden progressive line closure between 1987 and 1991. Over the years I travelled on several freight trains from Narrandera and Junee which had Jerilderie / Berrigan / Finley bulk grain as a significant part of the load.

The information in *The Times* article put some perspective on the strangely named Wait-a-While. The location is easily identifiable from the Riverina Highway although there is nothing there in the way of rail artefacts to show it was actually a 'place'. The Google Earth view (p4, left image) clearly indicates that a largish slab of land abutting the south side of the railway is not farmed, and I would surmise that is because it is owned by the crown as part of the station site acquired when the line was built - maybe

there were plans!!! The timetables on page 5 indicate that goods/mixed trains were allowed a part of 8 minutes between Berrigan and Finley on the down, and all of 5 minutes on the up to work at Wait-a-While, indicating that some sort of traffic was expected at that station. The Sidings and Platforms extracts on page 4 indicate that Wait-a-While had both a goods siding and a grain siding, a grain shed and a cart weighbridge, and that the sidings had standing room of 1430 feet (436 metres in current speak)—a not inconsiderable amount of room when the typical wagon (the infamous S truck) was only 22 feet (6.7m) long. It would seem that the lateral Wait-a-While Road may have been something of an artery to the railway, at least in its early days.

The undated timetables on page 5 have a couple of interesting aspects:

The daily (Mon-Sat) Motor train in fact was two trains with the pair crossing at Berrigan early each afternoon, the up being the one to 'take the knock'. In more recent times (post WWII?) a single Motor Train did a daily out and back journey to Tocumwal - same frequency but somewhat faster and with half the train resources.

As well as this, on Mon. and Thur. there was a three way cross at Widgie-wa - a place north of Jerilderie with rather minimalist facilities from all appearances. No. 3 down fast goods crossed No.2 up mixed during which time No. 1 down Motor Train ran through them both.

The station officer at this rather isolated location would have had a rush of business twice a week that would have had him running between his various frames to achieve this peculiarly scheduled arrangement. Staffs and tickets would have been flying all over the place on these days.

On Wed. and Fri., No. 3 didn't get involved so it was only a simple cross on those days while, on Tue. and Sat., it was an absolute shoo-in with just the Motor Train to contend with.

Commissioners' Trains in WA— Corrigenda

Letter from DAVID WHITEFORD

I'm very impressed with the photographs and map added to my Commissioner's Tour articles, also how well the timetables printed.

However, there was a gremlin on page 16 because the 1933 tour table was repeated and the 1951 table left out. [see correct tables below—Editor]. Also there were no years provided against the timetable samples and I wonder if a note could go in the Febru-

ary issue (see text under the tables, below). I've just realised that page 19 contains three copies of the same timetable.

Thanks, and you really do do a great job as so much of *The Times* is due to your content.

The Editor apologises for these errors. A corrected E-version of the January issue will be provided automatically to

e-subscribers. If snail-mail readers wish to have a paper- or e-copy, please contact the Editor at thetimes@auستا.org.au or write to me at the address on page 2.

The Times will be expanding its proof-reading team to include authors and others who express an interest. Please [contact me](#) if you are interested.

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Tour	Region	Dates 1933	Miles inspected	“Through” miles	Total miles
1	Great Southern	29/1 – 3/2	476	596	1072
2	South West	3/4 - 8/4	356	378	734
3	South West	1/5 – 5/5	369	421	790
4	Central wheat-belt	15/5 – 20/5	584	416	1000
5	Upper Gt. Southern	26/6 – 30/6	239	540	779
6	Northern	10/7 – 15/7	634	1070	1704
7	Eastern Goldfields	21/8 – 26/8	383	845	1228
8	Esperance & Central wheat-belt	18/9 – 22/9	306	872	1178
9	Midland Rly / Northern	16/10 – 17/11	527	400	927
10	Central / NE wheat-belt	12/11 – 17/11	504	506	1010

Tour	Region	Dates 1951	Miles inspected	“Through” miles	Total miles
1	Great Southern	14/1 – 20/1	348	710	1058
2	South West	12/2 – 15/2	229	300	529
3	SW / Great Southern	2/4 – 5/4	452	395	847
4	Midland Rly / Northern	27/5 – 1/6	586	341	927
5	Northern	27/5 – 1/6	501	951	1451
6	Upper G. Sth/ SW	25/6 – 29/6	288	468	756
7	Central wheat-belt	22/7 – 27/7	582	379	961
8	Eastern Goldfields / Esperance	22/8 – 1/9	406	1226	1632
9	Eastern Goldfields	17/9 – 22/9	270	389	659
10	Central / NE wheat-belt	21/10 – 26/10	519	534	1053

Commissioner's tour timetable dates in this article are:

- Page 17 is from Weekly Notice #34 of 1933
- Page 18 top left and the central notes from W/N 42 1933; top right from W/N 24 1951; bottom is a continuation of the tour timetable on page 19.
- Page 19 W/N 28 1951



Country Departures		13:46:06
SOUTH GEELONG	13:50	Via TARNETT / WYNDHAM VALE
WAURN PONDS	14:10	This service is now departing from the Coach Terminal
BENDIGO	14:15	
WENDOUREE	14:17	Via BALLARAT
TRARALGON	14:20	This service is now departing from the Coach Terminal
SOUTH GEELONG	14:30	Via TARNETT / WYNDHAM VALE
SEYMOUR	14:42	

Scenes from a crisis



TEMPORARY TRAVEL CHANGES

MONDAY - FRIDAY

The following train services are being replaced by coaches with further notice.

Service	Replacement
Wendouree	Coach
Traralgon	Coach
South Geelong	Coach
Waurup	Coach
Wendouree	Coach
Traralgon	Coach
South Geelong	Coach
Waurup	Coach

TEMPORARY TRAVEL CHANGES

PUBLIC HOLIDAY TIMETABLE ON LABOUR DAY

Monday 14 March

W-Line services will be replaced by coaches with further notice.

Free travel on V/Line services

Saturday 23 January to Sunday 31 January, 2016



Due to recent disruptions on W/Line services, as a gesture of goodwill, customers will be able to travel for free on all W/Line services from first service Saturday, 23 January to last service Sunday, 31 January 2016.

Customers should not touch on their myki when catching a W/Line train or coach but will need a valid ticket if travelling on other metropolitan services.

Eligible W/Line myki pass holders will be automatically refunded the equivalent value of up to nine days free travel to their cards.

Eligible customers with a single or return paper ticket can seek a refund from a W/Line ticket office or agent. Eligible customers with a periodical W/Line paper ticket should contact 1800 800 007 for a refund.