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Impossible Bus Timetables

IAN MANNING

The August Issues of Both The Times and Table Talk gave prominence to the finding that there are bus routes in Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong where the buses seldom run to time and often run more than twenty minutes late.

The poor performance of Route 370, an inner suburban crosstown route in Sydney, put me in mind of the performance of Route 504 [right], the route from Moonee Ponds to Clifton Hill in inner northern Melbourne. From 1999 to 2018 I was a regular commuter from Brunswick to Clifton Hill. The quickest and most reliable commute was by bicycle, but I often resorted to Route 504, mainly on days when I wanted to go beyond Clifton Hill after a day at the office. Throughout the two decades of my patronage the timetable was halfhourly, provided initially by two buses. The route is nine kilometres long, so the tabled speed was 18 mph. In the 1990s this was more or less attainable, but as motorists swarmed onto the roads (particularly the crossroads) bus timekeeping deteriorated. By the late 2000s buses were rarely on time and sometimes more than 20 minutes late, which is not much good on a 30-minute service interval. Eventually Public Transport Victoria admitted that the timetable was no longer practical and financed the provision of a third bus. The service interval is still 30 minutes, but the tabled speed has been reduced to 13.5 mph. Operating costs have risen by 50 per cent, borne by the state government. The service is now tolerably reliable and patronage has increased.

Thinking about the effect of the motorist plague on bus speeds and reliability brought me back to J M Thomson's book <u>Great Cities and Their Traffic</u>, published in London in 1977. Reviewing data from a wide variety of cities including cities which had invested heavily in 'freeways', he concluded 'there is a common tendency for peak-hour traffic speeds



in city centres to settle at about 16 mph. This appears to mean that many motorists find speeds of 16 mph about as low as they are prepared to tolerate. As long as speeds are higher than this, more motorists are attracted, but when speeds fall below 16 mph motorists begin to avoid the area in large enough numbers to create a fairly stable equilibrium at about that critical speed' (p 21). Because of the need to pick up and set down passengers, buses are inevitably slower than cars on the same road, so a service speed of 13.5 mph would seem reasonably sustainable for a bus service operating in motorist-infested urban areas. Give that 18 mph is attainable in conditions of reasonably free traffic flow, this means that roughly one-third of the cost of bus operation in the inner cities is due to excess motorists. It also means that it is impossible to finance the costs of bus services from fares.

This brings me to another classic in urban economics, E J Mishan's <u>The Costs of Economic Growth</u> (1967). I don't have this text with me, but it is to this book that we owe a fable which I may paraphrase thus. Once upon a time there was a suburb-full of office workers who commuted to the city by bus, nine km inbound in morning and nine km back in the evening. They travelled at the original timetabled

speed of Melbourne Route 504, 18 mph, and so took half an hour each way. But then one of them shelled out to buy a car and found that he could save 20 precious minutes per day by travelling at 27 mph. As other commuters followed his example the frequency of bus service deteriorated and fares increased, making motoring a more and more attractive proposition. Eventually all the commuters elected to travel by car, to the point where their road speed fell to Thomson's 16 mph. They also incurred extra travel time through inconvenient parking and ended up worse off than when they all travelled by bus, shouldering the costs of motor vehicle operation to achieve commuting times of the order of 40 minutes each way – greater cost for slower travel.

At the time the motorist lobby laughed at Mishan's fable, saying that congestion could be alleviated by the construction of freeways and multistory parking stations. But it has turned out that this is a solution only in small cities. In metropolitan cities we have a high-cost impasse. Citizen mobility is limited by slow road speeds and poor public transport services; citizens are further saddled with the high costs of car ownership and operation and governments are

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saddled not only with the high costs of providing roads and car parks but with the costs of maintaining public transport which the motorists have made uncommercial.

So what is the government of New South Wales going to do with route 370? Obviously, it could follow the example of Public Transport Victoria and shell out for the extra buses required to provide a 20 minute service at current road speeds. If unwilling to find the necessary cash, it could re-schedule the route for a 30 minute service interval, with some chance that this can be maintained by the present number of buses. Either way involves accepting that travel times have increased, but it is at least possible to improve reliability. Meanwhile, the NSW government continues with its established, highcost response of motorway construction, which sadly offers no relief from motorists pushing their way onto the inner-urban bus streets. Indeed, the West Connex interchange at Erskineville guarantees that traffic speeds on the streets traversed by the Route 370 bus will remain at Thomson's equilibrium speed of 16 mph.

Can anything be done to return Route 370 to its former timetabled speed? On heavy-traffic bus routes bus lanes and bus priority can help, but dedicated bus lanes are hard to sustain for a 20-minute service like the 370. Maybe, with great political courage, the NSW government could attempt to raise

inner suburban road speeds to what they were three decades ago. This would involve general measures to throttle motorist demand back to conformity with road capacity, such as the area licensing which has been adopted in several overseas cities or the road pricing beloved of economists (which is now highly practicable, as demonstrated on the new generation of toll roads). However, such measures are undeniably politically unpopular. Motorist objections are readily understandable – motorists are the victims of Mishan's paradox and have been conned into paying heavily for speeds which fall well short of their expectations. Coming to the question from a completely different point of view, as a pedestrian and cyclist I also have my doubts about measures to keep the traffic moving. Despite the occasional outbreak of road rage, traffic which moves at Thomson's 16 mph is safer for pedestrians and cyclists than traffic which averages 30 mph or more. Given that walking and public transport are complementary, anything which improves conditions for pedestrians is good for the bus service, even if it involves slowing the buses

Short of road pricing, can anything be done to underpin inner urban mobility? (Notice, I use the term mobility, not accessibility – I'm not here addressing the other side of the equation, which involves the location of trip origins and destinations.) A first, obvious, step is to provide

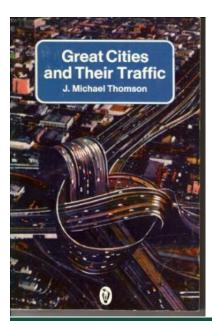
alternatives to motoring. There can be wide, interesting footpaths to encourage walking and safe paths to encourage cycling, both of which can be installed at the expense of road space devoted to motoring. It is, of course, important to keep the buses running on time, even if slowly – a step which will involve public subsidy, which the economists say should be raised from motorists but which could equally well come from other tax sources – even from local taxation. It is also important to keep motoring speeds down even in the absence of congestion, and to block rat runs while providing preferential routes for buses, including bus-only short cuts. Finally, dare I suggest that the motor vehicle importers' advertisements of cars dreamily speeding along the open road should be countered by advertisements which emphasise the short supply of inner urban road space and raise the status of public transport?

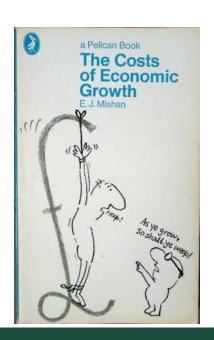
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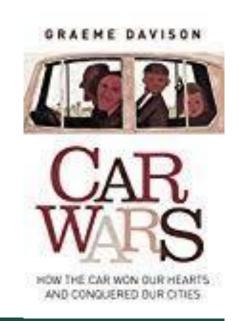
1969 Melbourne Transportation Plan Car Wars, by Graeme Davidson

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Chasing that elusive timetable RICHARD PECK

Sydney State Transit bus route X81 runs to/from Bondi Junction interchange to Bondi Beach on special occasions such as City2Surf and sometimes Festival of the Winds. It is also a fine summer weekend service yet you will look hard to find a timetable for it.

When the City2Surf started in 1980, regular routes 380 and 381 were supplemented. During the Olympic Volleyball from 16-23.9.00 X80 was run and started summer weekends in November 2000. For the City2Surf in 2001 it had become X81 and operated via Bondi Rd. Increasing congestion there saw its route from 2011 switched

to Curlewis St and in 2011 there were departures from North Bondi and South Bondi (opp. Hall St). To Bondi Junction it has been observed using either Birriga Rd or Old South Head Rd and has even been seen on fine summer weekdays. (X82 commenced by 2006 before the City2Surf to get people to the starting point in the city and in 2018 ran via two routes to St James).

When State Transit printed its own timetables, X81 was never printed. When Transport for NSW created downloadable timetables it has rarely appeared on its website. However I was lucky enough on 1-Nov-2017 to



download a timetable valid for 21-Oct-2017 to 25-Nov-2017 (after which it vanished!). This showed departures from Bondi Junction at irregular intervals (30-10 minutes) from 9am-3pm and from North Bondi from 2pm-7.10pm.

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By Bus to Palm Beach HILAIRE FRASER

not provide a complete history of bus services to Palm Beach, but will provide three snapshots. These being the 1970s, pre B-Line and post B-Line.

The 1970s

The first map is scanned from the Department of Government Transport Guide Maps for Bus Drivers which I obtained in 1974. The same maps were also contained in public timetables. This map shows the progressive route numbers as you move up the Northern Beaches from Brookvale to Palm Beach:-

175 Wynyard-Brookvale

176 Wynyard-North Curl Curl

177 Wynyard-Dee Why Beach

178 Wynyard-Dee Why

179 Wynyard-South Creek Rd Dee Why

180 Wynyard-Collaroy Plateau

181 Wynyard-Collaroy Beach

182 Wynyard-Narrabeen

183 Wynyard-North Narrabeen

184 Wynyard-Mona Vale

185 Wynyard-Church Point via Warriewood

186 Wynyard-Church Point via Pittwater Rd

187 Wynyard-Newport

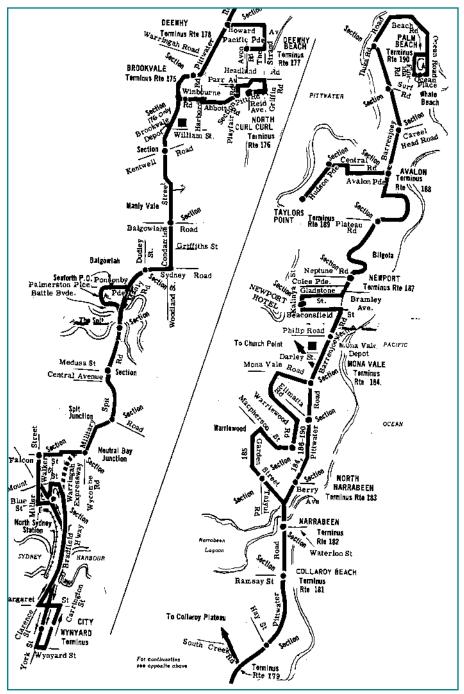
188 Wynyard-Avalon

189 Wynyard-Taylors Point

190 Wynyard-Palm Beach

While the logic of progressive route numbers is pleasing, in more recent times many more trips travel the full length of the route removing the need for short-workings. When short trips occur often they use the same route number as the full route making the network easier to understand. During the 1980s Sydney's government bus network had a systematic programme of eliminating separate route numbers for short trips. In the 1970s the Monday to Friday off peak services had frequencies of 20 mins to Narrabeen (182 and 190 combined) and 40 minutes to Palm Beach (190). Branches to North Curl Curl, Dee Why Beach, Collaroy Plateau and Church Point operated in the peak,





Monday to Friday (continued)	à	۵	à	۵	۵	à	ė.	à	à	5.	6	6
City - QVB York Street				***		***	***					
City - Wynyard Carrington Street	p 09:10	p 09:20	p 09:30	p 09:40	p 09:50	p10:00	p10:10	p10:25	p10:40	p10:55	p11:10	p11:2
Milsons Point Alfred Street		***	-	441			***					
Neutral Bay Junction Wycombe Road	v 09:21					100000				v11:05		
Spit Junction Spit Road	v 09:26	v 09:36	v09:46	v 09:56	v10:06	v10:15	v10:25	v10:40	v10:55	v11:10	v11:25	v11:4
Manly Sydney Road & Belgrave Street	***	***	***	***	***	***			***		***	
Warringah Mall Pittwater Road	09:45	09:55	10:05	10:14	10:22	10:30	10:40	10:54	11:08	11:23	11:38	11:5
Dee Why Howard Avenue	09:53	10:03	10:13	10:22	10:30	10:38	10:48	11:02	11:16	11:31	11:46	12:0
Collaroy Collaroy Street	10:00	10:10	10:20	10:29	10:37	10:45	10:55	11:09	11:23	11:38	11:53	12:0
Narrabeen Waterloo Street	10:04	10:14	10:24	10:33	10:41	10:49	10:59	11:13	11:27	11:42	11:57	12:1
Mona Vale Junction Barrenjoey Road	10:16	10:26	10:36	10:45	10:53	11:01	11:11	11:25	11:39	11:54	12:09	12:2
Newport Hotel Kalinya Street	10:24	10:34	10:44	10:53	11:01	11:09	11:19	11:33	11:47	12:04	12:19	12:3
Newport Shops Coles Parade	10:28	10:38	10:48	10:57	11:05	11:13	11:23	11:37	11:51	12:08	12:23	12:3
Taylors Point Hudson Parade	***		***	***				***		1700		
Avalon Avalon Parade	10:34	10:44	10:54	11:03	11:11	11:19	11:29	11:43	11:57	12:14	12:29	12:4
North Avalon Careel Head Road	10:38		***	11:07			11:33		12:01		12:34	
Palm Beach Ocean Place	10:47		***	11:17	***		11:43		12:11	***	12:44	
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Although the outward short trip to Avalon has its own route number (L88) inward trips from both Avalon and Palm Beach operated as L90. L88 and L90 to Avalon and Palm Beach picked up passengers at Wynyard,

Point

Stops

Point Express

night services)

E89 Wynyard-Avalon via Taylors

190 Queen Victoria Building-Palm Beach (early morning and late

L90 Wynyard-Palm Beach Limited

The first timetable is taken from the public timetable effective 12 February 2017 shows off–peak services between Wynyard and Palm Beach from 9.10 to 14.25. From 10.10 the service frequency is 15 minutes to Avalon (L88 and L90 combined) and 30 minute to Palm Beach (L90).

and L90 to Avalon and Palm Beach picked up passengers at Wynyard, Neutral Bay Junction, Spit Junction, then picked up and set down passengers at Warringah Mall, Dee Why, Collaroy, Narrabeen, then all

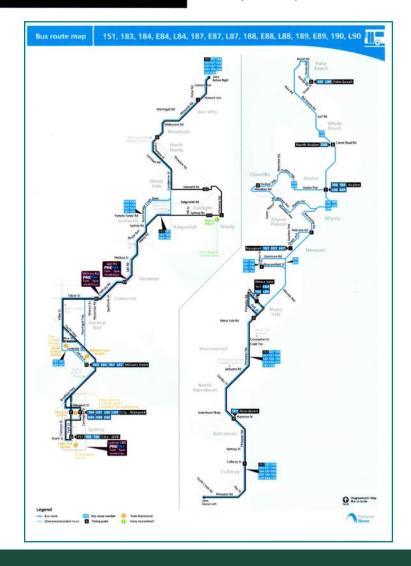
whilst regular services operated to and from Manly. Peak period services operated from Manly to Palm Beach as 142 via Brookvale, 146 via Harbord Rd and 155 via Brookvale and Narrabeen Peninsula.

Pre B-Line

On 26 November 2017 the B1 B-Line Mona Vale to Wynyard service began using double decker buses. The second map details the Pittwater Rd and Palm Beach bus services effective 12 February 2017 pre B-Line.

The routes detailed on this map are:151 Queen Victoria Building-Mona Vale via Manly (early morning and late night services)

- 183 Milsons Point-Narrabeen
- 184 Wynyard-Mona Vale
- E84 Wynyard-Mona Vale Express
- L84 Milsons Point-Mona Vale Limited Stops
- 187 Milsons Point-Newport
- E87 Wynyard-Newport Express
- L87 Milsons Point-Newport Limited Stops
- 188 Queen Victoria Building-Avalon (early morning and late night services)
- E88 Wynyard-North Avalon Express L88 Wynyard-Avalon Limited Stops 189 Dee Why-Avalon via Taylors





City Wynyard to Palm Beach (Limited Stops)



Valid from: 23 July 2018

Creation date: 23 Aug 2018

NOTE: Information is correct on date of download.

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08:39	10:13	11:01	12:06	13:07	14:07	15:03	16:02	17:0
08:46	10:21	11:11	12:16	13:15	14:15	15:11	16:10	17:1
08:53	10:28	11:18	12:23	13:22	14:22	15:18	16:17	17:1
08:57	10:33	11:26	12:30	13:26	14:26	15:22	16:21	17:2
09:01	10:37	11:31	12:35	13:31	14:31	15:27	16:26	17:2
09:06	10:43	11:37	12:41	13:37	14:37	15:33	16:32	17:3
09:10	10:46	11:40	12:44	13:40	14:40	15:36	16:35	17:3
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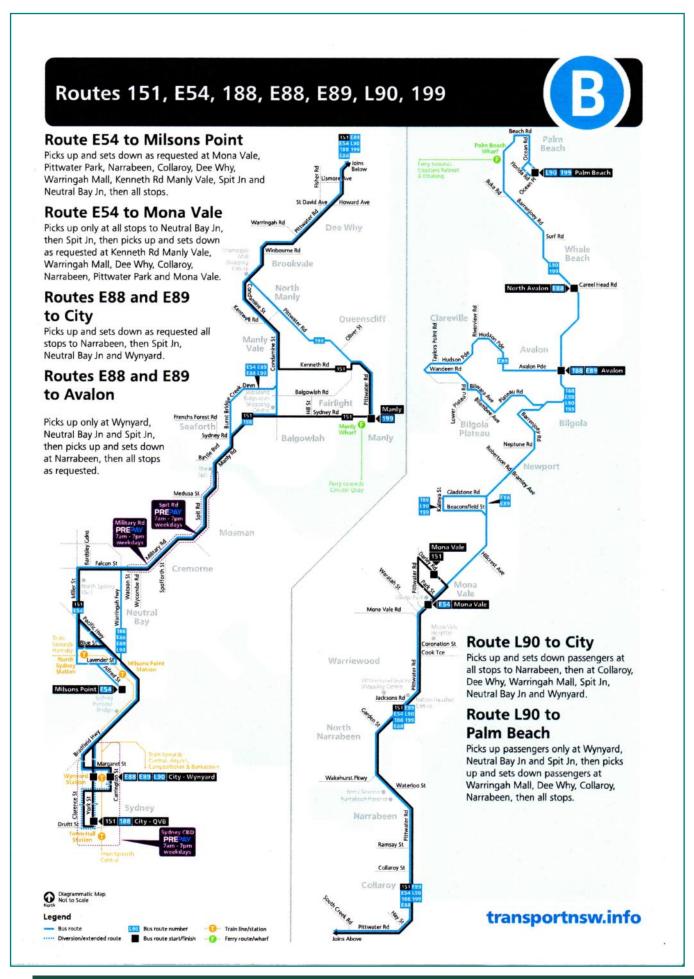
stops. L90 to City picked up and set down passengers at all stops to Narrabeen, then Collaroy, Dee Why, Warringah Mall, Spit Junction, Neutral Bay Junction and Wynyard. The letter "p" beside Wynyard times

Ocean Pl at Ocean Rd, Palm Beach

denoted "PrePay only, no tickets sold on board."

09:40 11:19 12:14 13:15 14:10 15:09 16:04 17:04 18:05

The letter "v" beside Neutral Bay Junction and Spit Junction times denoted "Stops to pick up passengers only. PrePay only, no tickets sold on board." Note the off-peak journey time from Wynyard to Palm Beach was 93 minutes. The other services found on 12 February 2017 map were peak or early morning and late night services.



Post B-Line

The third map details the Pittwater Rd and Palm Beach bus services effective from 26 November 2017 the date of the introduction of the B-Line.

The routes detailed on this map are:151 Queen Victoria Building-Mona Vale via Manly (early morning and late night services)

188 Queen Victoria Building-Avalon (early morning and late night services) 199 Manly-Palm Beach E54 Wynyard-Mona Vale Express (peak)

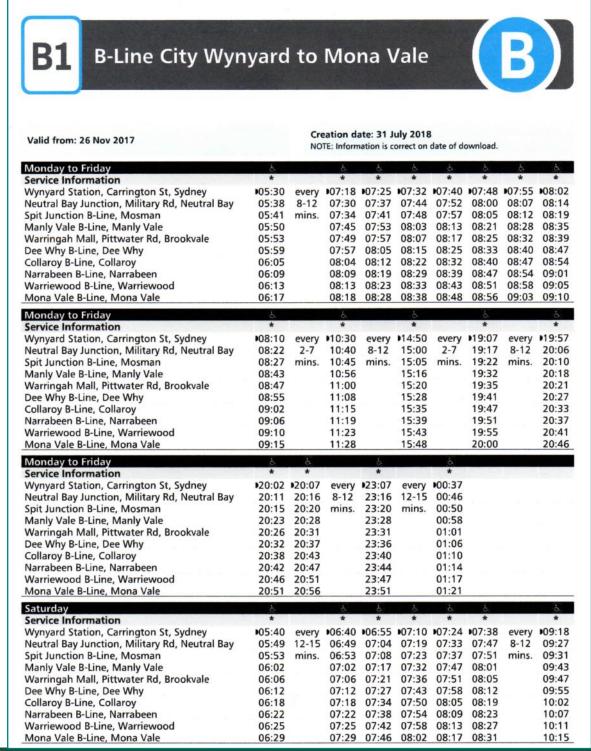
E88 Wynyard-North Avalon Express (peak)

E89 Wynyard-Avalon via Taylors Point Express (peak)

L90 Wynyard-Palm Beach Limited Stops

Thus the network has been simplified from 15 routes to 7 routes. The second timetable effective 23 July 2018 shows that L90 Wynyard to Palm Beach now

runs hourly maintaining a journey time of 93 minutes. The black semi-circle against Wynyard, Neutral Bay Junction and Spit Junction times denotes "Picks up passengers only". The third timetable also effective 23 July 2018 shows that substantive service to Palm Beach is provided by route 199 from Manly operating every fifteen minutes to Avalon and every thirty minutes to Palm Beach. Unless you were at Wynyard at the right time



to get the through L90 service you would have to travel on the B1 from Wynyard shown in the fourth timetable. The B1 timetable says after the 10.30 service from Wynyard the services run every 8 to 12 minutes to 14.50. The trip planner on transportnsw.info gives more information. The 10.30 B1 service arrives Mona Vale at 11.28, the next connection towards Palm Beach is 11.38 terminating at Avalon at 11.56. This is a journey time of 86 minutes compared with 79 minutes for the

through service. The next 10.40 B1 service arrives Mona Vale at 11.38. This may just allow a connection at Mona Vale. The 10.50 B1 service arrives at Mona Vale at 11.48. The next connection at Mona Vale is the 11.53 to Palm Beach arriving at Palm Beach at 12.25. This is a journey time of 95 minutes compared with 93 minutes for the through journey. This analysis shows that journey times for the through service and two vehicle journey are very similar. However, a similar journey time is dependent on

selecting a trip from Wynyard to provide the required connection at Mona Vale, say at least five minutes, and both vehicles running on time.

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Comment on this article

Letter to the Editor

<u>Faceebook</u>

100									
199 Manly to Paln	n Bea	ach							
Monday to Friday	11:05	11:30	11:35	11:50	12:05	12:20	5	12:35	à
Manly Wharf, Belgrave St, Manly Warringah Mall, Pittwater Rd, Brookvale	11:05	11:20 11:32	11:47	12:02	12:05	12:32	-	12:47	-
Pittwater Rd at Old Pittwater Rd, Brookvale	11:22	11:37	11:52	12:07	12:22	12:36	-	12:51	-
Dee Why B-Line, Dee Why	11:28	11:43	11:58	12:13	12:28	12:42	-	12:57	
Collaroy B-Line, Collaroy	11:36	11:51	12:06	12:21	12:36	12:50	-	13:05	-
Narrabeen B-Line, Narrabeen	11:41	11:56	12:11	12:26	12:41	12:55	-	13:10	-
Warriewood B-Line, Warriewood	11:46	12:01	12:16	12:31	12:46	13:00	141	13:15	-
Mona Vale B-Line, Mona Vale	11:53	12:08	12:23	12:38	12:53	13:07	13:14	13:22	13:2
Barrenjoey Rd after Darley St, Mona Vale	11:56	12:11	12:26	12:41	12:56	13:10	13:17	13:25	13:3
Newport Anchorage Marina, Beaconsfield St,	12:01	12:16	12:31	12:48	13:03	13:17	13:24	13:32	13:3
Newport	12:05	12:20	12:35	12:52	13:07	12.21	13:28	13:36	13:4
Barrenjoey Rd before Robertson Rd, Newport Barrenjoey Rd near Avalon Pde, Avalon	12:05	12:26	12:35	12:58	13:13	13:27	13:34	13:42	13:4
Barrenjoey Rd near Careel Head Rd, Avalon	12:15	12.20	12:45	12.50	13:17	-	13:38	13:46	13:5
Ocean Pl at Ocean Rd, Palm Beach	12:25	-	12:55	-	13:27	-		13:56	14:0
Monday to Friday	ė.	ó.	6		8	á	ė.	6	5
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Pittwater Rd at Old Pittwater Rd, Brookvale	13:06	13:21	13:36	13:51	14:06	14:21	14:36	14:51	15:0
Dee Why B-Line, Dee Why	13:12	13:27	13:42	13:57	14:12	14:27	14:42	14:57	15:1
Collaroy B-Line, Collaroy	13:20	13:35	13:50	14:05	14:20	14:35	14:50	15:05	15:2
Narrabeen B-Line, Narrabeen	13:25	13:40	13:55	14:10	14:25	14:40	14:55	15:10	15:2
Warriewood B-Line, Warriewood	13:30	13:45	14:00	14:15	14:30	14:45		15:15	15:3
Mona Vale B-Line, Mona Vale	13:37	13:52	14:07	14:22	14:37	14:52 14:55	15:07 15:10	15:22 15:25	15:3 15:4
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Barrenjoey Rd before Robertson Rd, Newport	13:51	14:06	14:21	14:36	14:51	15:07	15:22	15:37	15:5
Barrenjoey Rd near Avalon Pde, Avalon	13:57	14:12	14:27	14:42	14:57		15:29	15:44	16:0
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Ocean Pl at Ocean Rd, Palm Beach	-	14:26	-	14:56	-	15:28	-	15:58	12
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Manly Wharf, Belgrave St, Manly	15:05	15:20	15:35	15:50	16:05	16:20	16:35	16:50	17:0
Warringah Mall, Pittwater Rd, Brookvale	15:19	15:36	15:52	16:06	16:20	16:35	16:49	17:04	17:1
Pittwater Rd at Old Pittwater Rd, Brookvale	15:23	15:39	15:55	16:09	16:23	16:38	16:52	17:07	17:2
Dee Why B-Line, Dee Why	15:29	15:45	16:01	16:15 16:23	16:29	16:45	16:59 17:07	17:14 17:22	17:2 17:3
Collaroy B-Line, Collaroy	15:37		16:09			16:53			17:4
Narrabeen B-Line, Narrabeen Warriewood B-Line, Warriewood	15:42 15:47		16:14 16:19		16:42	16:58		17:27	17:4
Mona Vale B-Line, Mona Vale		16:10	16:26	16:40	16:52	17:08	17:22	17:37	17:5
Barrenjoey Rd after Darley St, Mona Vale			16:29					17:40	
Newport Anchorage Marina, Beaconsfield St, Newport			16:36						18:0
Barrenjoey Rd before Robertson Rd, Newport	16:09	16:25	16:41	16:55				17:51	18:0
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Barrenjoey Rd near Avalon Pde, Avalon	16:16	10.32							
Barrenjoey Rd near Avalon Pde, Avalon Barrenjoey Rd near Careel Head Rd, Avalon Ocean Pl at Ocean Rd, Palm Beach	16:16	10.32	16:52	17:06	17:18	17:34	17:48		18:1

The Times October 2018

Mark Twain and ramblings around Central Victoria JAMES T WELLS

ARK TWAIN WAS the famous American author who visited Victoria in 1895.

In "Following the Equator" he said: "Got up at 6am, left (Ballarat) at 7.30; soon reached Castlemainewaited several hours for a train; left at 3.40 and reached Bendigo in an hour..... It has actually taken nine hours to come from Ballarat to Bendigo. We could have saved seven by walking."

I have a sentimental interest in this. My grandparents lived in Castlemaine and I have a youthful memory of "We must get Aunt Hilda down to the bus stop in time for the bus to Ballarat". This was on a Sunday afternoon.

Mark Twain's journey was almost certainly via Maryborough and it may have been this occasion that gave rise to the famous quote "Maryborough is a railway station with a town attached" [he didn't actually say this—<u>Editor</u>].

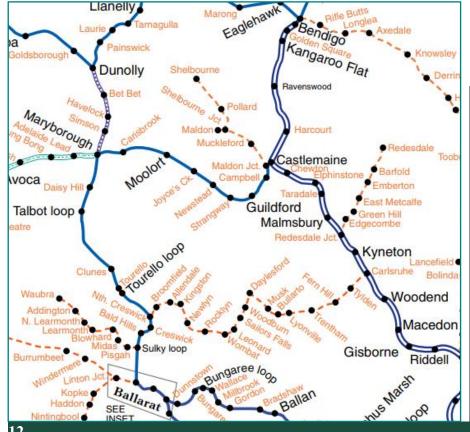
The timetable for 1895 is not available [WTT for 1894 is shown on page 14—Editor] but it appears from the Bradshaws August 1915 timetable that not much would have changed in twenty years (page 13, top left). Departure from Ballarat was at 7:30am and it appears the train ran through to Castlemaine. We can't be certain as Bradshaws no where used a change trains symbol. The train also conveyed passengers off the Mildura line, in 1895 opened to Birchip.

Departure from Castlemaine for Bendigo on the afternoon train from Melbourne would have been at 3:59pm to arrive at Bendigo at 4:47pm, very close to the 1895 times. Mark Twain had another crosscountry option for this trip. He could have gone via Daylesford; the junction station for the now long closed line to that place being at North Creswick on the line to Maryborough.

Departure from Ballarat in 1915 would have been at 7:50am for an excruciatingly slow trip to Daylesford –arrive 11:15am, 3 hr 25 min for 37m (= 60 km, less than 20 km/h). A highlight of the trip would have been the crossing above the dam wall of Jubilee Lake near Daylesford. Web searching suggests that the railway trestle bridge is still in use with a low deck walking track; the railway deck having been removed – see image below.

This shows a DD class 4-6-0 locomotive hauling an E or W car and a narrow bodied foot-boarded V or L car. It's interesting that the loco had a destination headboard.

Mark would have spent four hours in Daylesford but the connection at Woodend for Bendigo would have





The Times October 2018

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meant a wait of about an hour for a fast Bendigo train which would have got him there at 8:04pm. Of note is that this train only stopped at Woodend if required to pick up. It was followed by a fast train to Castlemaine and then a slow train to Bendigo. All these trains stopped for 15 to 20 minutes at Kyneton which at that time had refreshment rooms.

Another alternative would have been to go via Melbourne but he almost certainly wanted 'to see the country'. A disincentive of the Melbourne option was an early departure (6:45am – 1915 time) and he would still have reached Bendigo at the same time as the Maryborough option. It would also have cost more.

On a Sunday he would have had the option of travelling to Melbourne on the Adelaide Express leaving at 7:43am. Subsequently this train was known as *The Overland* (the "Overdue" for many) and the Sunday permission to travel from Ballarat still existed in 1977.

Looking at the situation in 1966, not too much had changed except that the train ex Ballarat (now

7:08am, diesel rail car) ran only to Maryborough. A long wait ensued for the 4:35pm diesel rail car to Castlemaine and a wait of over two hours for a Bendigo arrival before 9pm.

Now let's jump another 50 years or so to see what options Mark Twain would have today.

As of Aug 2018 V/Line's trip planner offers the following suggestions for coach only travel between Ballarat and Bendigo.

The prime one is to leave Ballarat at 10:05am via a strange back roads route – Creswick, Allendale, Campbelltown, Maldon and Lockwood to arrive Bendigo at 11:53am. This service connects to Swan Hill and Mildura.

Leaving at 1:50pm is a service via Creswick and Daylesford along the Midland Highway to Castlemaine. Bendigo arrival is at 4:05pm. This is a distinctly slower journey than the trip via Maldon.

Both Maldon and Daylesford have tourist railways; steam operated in the case of the former.

The weirdest suggestion is to leave Ballarat at 11:05pm on the Mildura

coach and alight in Maryborough, not at the station, but at the corner of Havelock St. and Clarendon St. at 11:58pm. One then waits until 5:45am for the coach to Castlemaine – plenty of time to walk to the station. One can even wait there for the coach.

The coach arrives Castlemaine at 6:42am; for an hour's wait for the 7:47am train to Bendigo. Also leaving at that time for Bendigo is a Kyneton Bus Lines school days only bus service but this takes much longer to get there.

A modern Mark Twain almost certainly would prefer to minimise the road travel and perhaps revisit Maryborough. He could leave Ballarat at 10:45am by train to arrive Maryborough at 11:38, have a long lunch before the 3:35pm coach for Castlemaine (4:32pm) and then the 4:47pm train to Bendigo – arrive 5:10pm. He would take comfort from the intense service now offered on this route – 23 trains on a Monday so missing one isn't too much of a problem.

Perhaps he would like to experience the delights of Daylesford – arrive 2:45pm on the Bendigo coach; leave at 5:25pm for Woodend and then catch one of the frequent trains to Bendigo.

Of interest is the goods (freight) service on the Castlemaine to Maryborough line in 1966 (page 15). The Castlemaine-Maryborough page from the VR Working Timetable dated 7/11/66 is shown on page 15.

Castlemaine is a junction station on the main Northern line to Bendigo; then double track and quite likely soon to be that way again. The junction is located at the Up end of the station so Maryborough trains travelling to / from Melbourne must reverse at Castlemaine. This meant placing a guards van at the end of train as it

faced the new direction of travel."

Maryborough was a major centre on the 'Midland' line to Mildura. It had a locomotive depot and several 'roads' (loops) for the marshalling (shunting) of goods trains. A major issue for this operation were the level crossings at each end of the yard, both then gated and operated from signal boxes.

I remember a sign for motorists at the northern end, saying the gates could be closed for extended periods and to use alternative routes. This road was a main road – the Pyrenees Highway. Now there is an underpass.

The line to Castlemaine branches off at the northern end of the yard so trains from Mildura have to reverse if going to Castlemaine. The Down goods service was a simple one of two trains a day, one at 12:05pm, the other mid-evening. Both originated at Castlemaine.

On the Up there were three trains; a 'local' in the morning reaching Castlemaine in time to form the 12:05pm down service and two trains proceeding through to Melbourne.

No. 4 on Tuesdays and Thursdays seems to have provided the 'roadside' service as it had long dwells at the principal stations. No. 6 also had dwells at these stations but not for as long.

The main interest here is with No. 130 – the "Fast Goods" from Mildura leaving Maryborough at 10:25am. "Fast" you ask? It left Mildura at 7pm the night before (6pm Fridays) and reached

Melbourne at 5:00pm next day – 22 hours for 565 km – average 26 km/h.

The VR would say that this didn't matter to the customers as time sensitive freight would use the "Fruit Flier" Express Goods which did the trip in a mere 11 hours [see The Times June 2016].

Why was 130 scheduled via Castlemaine and not Ballarat as for the corresponding down service? This meant two reversals of direction compared to none with the Ballarat option.

The first explanation would be load limits. Via Castlemaine a "B" class diesel electric locomotive was allowed 750 tons; via Ballarat only 700 tons, the critical grade being the 1 in 49 up to Parwan just to the east of Bacchus Marsh. I

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A—Comes from Mildura

The second would be pathing difficulties on the single lines around Ballarat. It would have been far simpler to get it onto the double track at Castlemaine for an easy run into Melbourne. The only cross on single track would be with train No. 9 - the down diesel rail car at Newstead. A negative was a long dwell at Castlemaine influenced by the need to wait for the Up Swan Hill passenger to clear. It left Castlemaine at 12:35pm.

doubt whether this was the reason.

MELBOURNE W

112

Trains around Ballarat that would be 'in the way' included:

• The Down "Mildura Sunlight"

passenger train (Tu,We,Th)

- Down Donald Railcar (Mo,Sa)
- •Up Horsham Passenger

0

• Down Horsham Passenger

•No. 133 Down Express Goods to Adelaide (2pm ex Melbourne).

By this time, Bank Box Loop had been opened in the section Bacchus Marsh – Ballan and should have meant little difficulty for 130 to follow the Up Horsham passenger from Ballarat.

An alternative would be to run No. 130 via Geelong but this would probably have meant transit of the busy Newport to South Kensington suburban line in the peak hour.

The Geelong possibility would have been influenced by 130's 'brother' train – 130A, the A not to be confused with the symbol on the Castlemaine timetable.

130 arrived at Donald at 5:05am. At 5:30am 130A left for Geelong on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thurursday. 130 itself followed at 6:50am. This would seem to indicate that 130 was split with wheat going forward on 130A. Donald is a 'break of grade' station, i.e. on the plains near the foothills. Allowed loads north of Donald are much higher than south on the 1 in 50 grades encountered in the hills.

If this is so, it's surprising that 130A is not shown as to run only if required, because wheat traffic then was quite seasonal.

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