

# CONTENTS AND SYNOPSIS

## **Introduction.** Page 6

September 1884. Seth Ferry is a guard with the South Australian Railways. We meet him at the Adelaide Station early in the morning. He is about to take a special train to Carrieton. A stock special and not sheep or cattle. Dogs. 200 dogs that will be put into service with the Vermin Board in rabbit eradication. There is one dog that is a cut above the rest. When Ferry gets to Carrieton he asks if he can buy the dog. No. But if he can find a dog they can do a swap. He's got 24 hours. He goes to Port Augusta where he finds a dog but his return to Carrieton meets with many delays. He's got one chance. It is 36 miles and he's got four hours left. He is on board a Kalamazoo. Up down – up down – up down. It is a rollicking outback trolley race against time. He is still some miles short of Carrieton when the time is up. But with the help of his railway kin and a bit of luck he gets the dog.

## **Chapter 1. To Ulooloo.** Page 11

June 1885. Bob is aboard the Terowie express out of Adelaide. We meet the driver, Matt and the fireman Alfie. In Riverton the express stops for refreshments. Here they meet Spencer Skipper, a reporter from the *Register* newspaper on his way to report on a new mine with a funny name, Broken Hill. When they get to Terowie, Skipper meets Ferry at the Royal Hotel.

## **Chapter 2. The Petersburg Mob** Page 16

Ferry tells Skipper that with the help of the Port Augusta stationmaster, the captain of a clipper ship, a Port Augusta publican and the local policeman how he got the dog. He then tells of the riot at Petersburg. Then Bob tells how he ran away out of fright with all the fireworks and shooting.

## **Chapter 3. Midge and Maypole** Page 21

We meet some of the engine crews at Petersburg. One of them is a Polish fireman whom the engine crews call Maypole. Mr Skipper arrives in Petersburg on his way to do another report on the silver mines. Bob forms an attachment with Skipper. In the evening Maypole is at the pub and in his broken English says that they will be up at sparrow-fart next morning with a work train on the new railway. One of the patrons in the pub thinks that Maypole has called him an old fart. Bob rescues Maypole from the fight.

## **Chapter 4. The Hill of Mugwumps** Page 27

Skipper and Bob go to Silverton. Skipper books into the hotel but the publican won't let Bob inside. He has to stay in the wood shed. Skipper gets ill from the Silverton water. Bob's doggy mind works out how to get out of the wood shed. He finds a way into the hotel and finds Skipper. A terrible sandstorm descends on Silverton and turns day into night. They never get to see the Broken Hill mine.

## **Chapter 5. Scotty** Page 34

Bob is on board the express with Matt and Alfie. Matt loves his job and on the way he bursts into song.

*Oh! Driving with steam is like living a dream.*

They stop at Mintaro station where the stationmaster is an Irishman known as 'Scotty'. Pennywise Pendleton is the Traffic Manager for the South Australian Railways and doesn't approve of Bob travelling on the trains. Scotty receives advice by telegraph that Pendleton is about to join the train at Riverton. Bob has to stay with Scotty at Mintaro. Bob helps Scotty with tasks around the station.

## **Chapter 6 . The Yankee Amok** Page 40

Bob meets George and Arthur who are the crew on the slow goods train to Adelaide. It has an old engine which is leaking steam and when it gets to Hamley Bridge is nearly out of puff. They have to halve the train to get up the grade and that requires detonators being put on the rails. Wally the guard gets injured but resourceful Bob makes sure that he gets first aid. Bob cannot resist riding on a Yankee engine and when they get to Islington he spies one and is off like a flash. But the Yankee engine has a faulty regulator and takes off on its own and demolishes the paint shop. But thanks to Bob, no one is injured.

## **Chapter 7. Lady Olivia** Page 45

Skipper meets Matt, Alfie and Bob at his office at the *Register*, then they meet Alfie's sister Lottie, who lives at Largs Bay. Lottie has a Smithie dog very similar to Bob, called Lady Olivia. Bob is there to spend a few weeks with Lady Olivia and maybe have a romp in the sandhills. But Bob is a railway dog and has no interest in Lady Olivia or the sandhills. He rides the Largs Bay train. Alfie calls in and announces that he and Matt will be taking the first train to Bordertown on the new railway. It will be the first train to cross the Murray Bridge.

**Chapter 8. Emmeline****Page 52**

There is some concern that the Murray Bridge is haunted but the train gets safely across. Halfway to Bordertown is a station called Cold and Wet. Here Bob meets Emmeline who is a disabled girl. She has a beautiful singing voice. Bob stays at Cold and Wet for a few days.

**Chapter 9. Parachilna Pa****Page 58**

The Locomotive Superintendent, Mr Thow, honours Bob with a special collar in recognition of his saving lives in the paint shop incident. It is fitted at Quorn. Then Bob goes to Parachilna on a work train and meets Pa Stanitski who has an old Polish recipe. Maypole and Pa get terribly drunk on some of 'sweet little water' that Pa is brewing up in some old coppers. They are running low on firewood but Maypole lifts a few buckets of coal from the engine tender to keep the coppers going. Pa falls down a latrine hole but Bob alerts others to Pa's predicament. On the return from Parachilna they discover that there is not enough coal to get them back to Quorn.

**Chapter 10. Going Round the Bend****Page 66**

Bob rides a light engine to Morgan with Matt and Alfie and meets Captain Ritchie of the *Pioneer* paddle steamer and goes for a river trip. He falls overboard. But riverboats are too slow for Bob. He can't wait to get back on the engines once it gets to Murray Bridge.

**Chapter 11. Cousin Jacks****Page 73**

Skipper is off to Moonta and Bob goes with him. Skipper goes to the local kiddlywink (sly grog house) for a game of skittles with the Cousin Jacks. But the Cousin Jenny's do not approve and descend upon the kiddlywink with brooms, feathers and a black pot. In the commotion Bob puts himself in danger to protect Skipper. He gets feathered, but the Jennys clean him up and he attends a pipe organ concert the next night.

**Chapter 12. Going Home****Page 79**

We next meet Bob at Bourke where he joins a paddle steamer down the Darling. The river level is rapidly falling and they are the last riverboat out of Bourke. They get stranded near Louth but eventually make it to Wilcannia. One of the other riverboat captains has a bulldog, a fighting bulldog, a death machine for any other dog that crosses its way. But Bob is a clever dog and wins the day without a drop of blood.

**The Last Chapter.****Page 87**

Bob arrives in Broken Hill where he discovers there are no cats because they've all been turned into pies. He also discovers that there are dead dogs in Broken Hill. He attends the banquet for the opening of the Broken Hill railway, where the pies have come up from Adelaide. Back in Adelaide, Bob renews old acquaintances. Emmeline sings the *Song of Australia* at the Eisteddfod. He goes back to Petersburg and learns that Ferry must leave Petersburg for another station. This brings us to the end of 1888 and Bob travels with Ferry and his wife from Petersburg to Terowie. Bob must choose. Go with Ferry or go back to Petersburg?

But this is not the end. Bob spent the next seven years riding the trains in South Australia and into the adjoining colonies. He had many adventures and met many people in his travels. Will he invite us to join him in more of these rollicking adventures?

**APPENDICES**

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## ***THE BREAK-OF-GAUGE***

**The next release by  
Sarlines Railway Books.**

**Release anticipated in late 2023.**

My fascination with railways is mainly centred around issues of social history, which is the impact of the railways on the way we live and how the railways have impacted on the patterns of settlement. It is very relevant to South Australia as the origins of European settlement of the colony commenced in the same decade as Stephenson and his *Rocket*.

South Australia was the first of the Australian colonies to construct a public railway and in so doing became the first jurisdiction within the British Empire to own and operate a public railway. But whilst that has attracted considerable comment, mostly favorable, it was a 'bad improvement'.

'Decimated' is the best word to describe the present state of the public railway network in South Australia. After considering the metropolitan train services, and the national routes, the South Australians can claim ownership of about 50 km of railway.

The other railway administrations of mainland Australia have been subject to some rationalisation of routes and services but have emerged with meaningful intrastate networks. So, what went wrong in South Australia?

It was the State that became the butt of ridicule by the others regarding its complexity of differing railway gauges. The South Australian Railways once proudly touted themselves as world leaders in gauge-conversion. Not really something to crow about.

This book looks at the issues from a national perspective. It is a topic that Eric Harding dealt with in his book, *Uniform Railway Gauge* published in 1958, but there has not been a thorough revisiting of the topic since.

Harding pointed the finger of blame at Francis Shields, the engineer of the Sydney Railway Company as the villain who caused the break-of-gauge at Albury, but the evidence now clearly marks the culprit as Governor Charles Fitzroy.

Abraham Fitzgibbon was an engineer who was affected by disordered thinking and sent Queensland down the narrow gauge track.

I go back to Ireland (metaphorically) to find the origin of the '5 foot 3' and conclude that the Irish got it right.

The *Break-of-Gauge* will be of similar presentation and pricing to previous hard cover books in the Sarlines range.

The front cover illustration is by Glen Hadden. Albury was Australia's most famous break-of-gauge station. The scene is about 1938. 'The Blue', the *Spirit of Progress* has made an on-time arrival from Melbourne and passengers must change trains for Sydney.