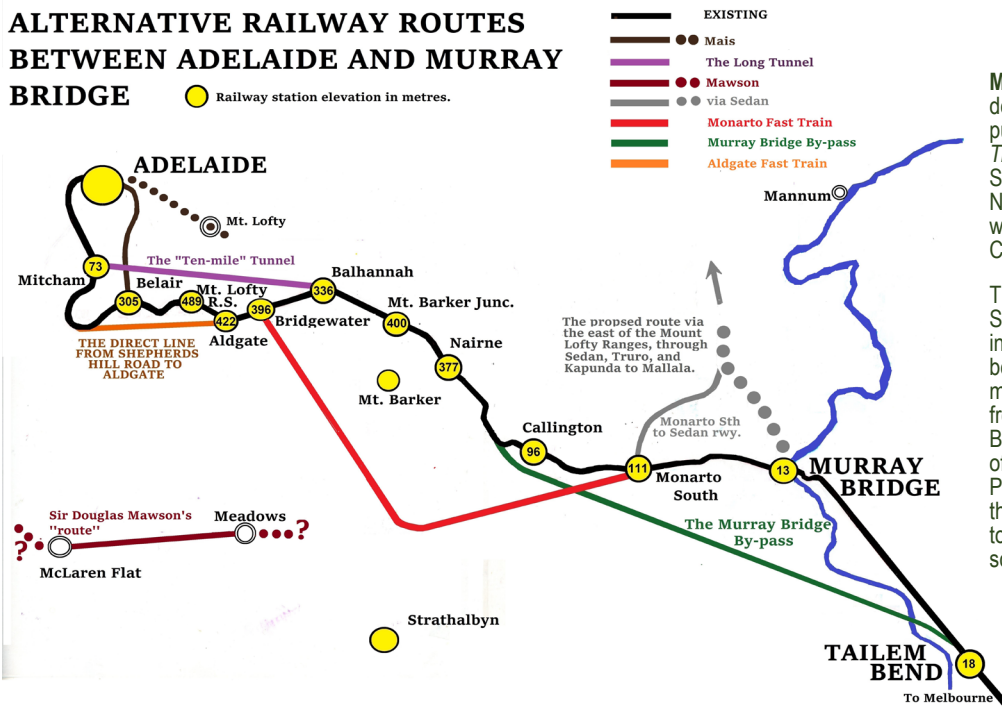


ALTERNATIVE RAILWAY ROUTES BETWEEN ADELAIDE AND MURRAY BRIDGE



MAP drawn following descriptions of the route as published in the *Keeping Track* publication of the South Australian Railways, No. 87, September 1975, written by Murray Stockley, Commissioner of Railways.

The Mawson route and the Sedan-Truro route were not in that publication but have been included. To add to the mix is the very long tunnel from Adelaide to Murray Bridge that was the brainchild of Frank Walsh when he was Premier. He never consulted the Commissioner of Railways to test the practicalities of the scheme. JLW.

CHAPTER 10

BORDERTOWN BOTH WAYS

Bordertown is not on the border.

It is 12 miles (19 km) from the border. It dates from the time of the gold rush, being the site of a police encampment servicing the gold escorts.

There is a strip of fertile land that extends from about Bordertown, south to the sea, that includes Naracoorte, Penola, Mount Gambier, Millicent and Robe. It is commonly referred to as South Australia's 'Green Triangle'.

The coast of South Australia, from Adelaide to the Victorian border, is dotted with many small ports that have met the needs of small coastal trading vessels in earlier times. They now support fishing fleets and recreational boating but have defied attempts to handle larger ocean-going vessels. Much the same could be said of the entire south-east coast of Australia between Adelaide and Geelong, with the notable exception of Portland in Victoria.

South Australia holds the honour of having the first public railway in Australia, which was the horse-drawn Goolwa to Port Elliot Tramway opened in 1854. That railway came about because the mouth of the River Murray was not reliably navigable and Port Elliot became the port for the river traffic. But Port Elliot proved to be a most unsatisfactory harbour. In the first ten years until the tramway was extended to Port Victor there were seven ships wrecked at Port Elliot.

It was a treacherous coastline. On the South Australian side the most notable losses were the *Maria* in 1840 and the *Admella* in 1859. The Victorian south coast is known, with good reason, as the 'Shipwreck Coast'.

There were two physical barriers to settlement of this part of South Australia before 1870. The River Murray and the Ninety-Mile Desert. There were two other major barriers, which could be described as social barriers. The copper mines north of Adelaide had become a magnet for commerce, manufacturing and population. A large part of this country had been taken up by pastoral leases occupied by squatters. The squatters had little interest in developing the country and opposed closer settlement.

The Murray bridge was opened in 1879. The Ninety-Mile Desert was not a desert in the sense of lacking rainfall. It extended from a point just south of Tailm Bend to about Keith. It was low mallee country with no water courses. Its soils were deficient in trace elements.

Lacedpede Bay was about half-way between the Murray mouth and the Victorian border.

The port of Kingston had been established at Lacedpede Bay in 1858. It was named Kingston after George Strickland Kingston who was the Colonial Architect. It is not to be confused with Kingston-on-Murray that honours his son, Charles Cameron Kingston who was the Premier of South Australia from 1893 to 1899. Kingston has been renamed Kingston South East or just Kingston S E.

Unlike New South Wales and Victoria which planned their railways radiating from the capitals, the South Australians developed a system of isolated and cheap railways from the country to the sea. In 1871 there were two such lines in the south-east of the colony that were put before Parliament for authorisation. From Lacedpede Bay to Naracoorte, and from Rivoli Bay North to Mount Gambier. The line from Lacedpede Bay was authorised but the Bill for the Rivoli Bay (Beachport) line was not successful. It would have to wait a few years.

We have seen in Chapter 6 that the South Australian Legislative Council had been mesmerised by Captain Bagot and his disciples. In Chapter 7 we have seen that many more had fallen under the spell of Robert Fairlie.

By 1871, most of the South Australian Parliament had become converts. Engineer-in-Chief, Henry Mais, who had opposed the move to the narrow gauge for the Port Wakefield Tramway, had now become an advocate of the cheaper construction. But within the Parliament there remained the solitary voice of Arthur Lindsay, who deserves to be remembered by history as testimony to the fact that the lone voice is most likely to be the one that matters. He was going against the flow and received quite a ribbing from the editor of the *South Australian Register*. With time, the editor moderated his position regarding Arthur Lindsay and his views.

The line from Lacedpede Bay to Naracoorte was constructed to the 3 ft 6 in gauge and built with 35 lb rail. It was the lightest rail used in South Australia and the line would be worked with horses. Its construction was dogged by many delays and it was not opened until 1876.

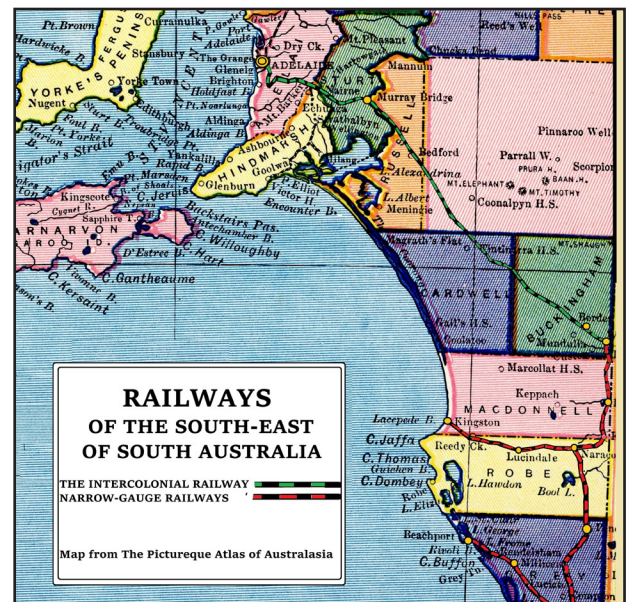
Here we must digress. South Australia had been well placed to develop the inland navigation of the Murray Darling system, which was made possible by the short tramway linking Goolwa to Port Elliot. From 1854 the paddle steamers worked out of Mannum going as far as the rivers would allow. They were loaded with building materials and other general merchandise and returning with barges loaded with bales of wool. New South Wales and Victoria were not happy to see the incursion of South Australia trade penetrating their borders. Victoria responded with the establishment of the Port of Echuca, from which there were soon many riverboats plying the system. And those Echuca riverboats were doing good business in the Riverina and West Darling regions, much to the dismay of New South Wales. The Riverina was loosely defined as that part of New South Wales between the River Murray and the Murrumbidgee.

In Chapter 7 we had read about the railway from Melbourne to Echuca that had been opened in 1864. And there was serious intention to build railways reaching out from Melbourne in three directions.

By 1874, 'railway matters in the colony (South Australia) were in a confessedly unsatisfactory condition with six systems of railways all isolated from each other and the whole country was crying out for railway communication'. These were not my words but were the exact words of Hon. Alfred Catt who was a subsequent Commissioner of Public Works.

New South Wales and Victoria had already established broad plans for their railway development, in both cases having their railways centralising traffic flow towards the capitals.

In previous chapters mention has been made of Premier, James Penn Boucaut's 1874 Railway Commission. The findings and recommendations of that report, relating to railway gauges in South Australia, were to have a profound effect on the destiny of the break-of-gauge situation in the State, and are presented here in detail.



South Australia however, was aimlessly dealing with each new railway Bill in random order. Premier, James Boucaut, on 23 October 1874, moved for the construction of some new lines that would be funded by taxation. It was a collection of lines that would only partly address the needs of the colony. This stirred Arthur Lindsay into action. He could see that there needed to be a plan.

On the 28th of October Mr Lindsay moved that:

An address be presented to his Excellency the Governor, praying that he will be pleased to cause to be issued a commission with all necessary powers to inquire into and report on the construction of railways within the colony including one to the Victorian border, as well as other lines.

This motion was carried on 19 November 1874.

The members of the Commission were appointed. The Chairman was George Goyder, the Surveyor General. The other prominent identity was Henry Coathupe Mais, the Engineer-in-Chief. The report was released in August 1875 but within a few months the Boucaut administration was defeated. In consequence, some of the lines recommended in the report were not built.

On reading the minutes of evidence it is clear that most people in the regions at that time regarded it to be more important to have rail access to the nearest port for both themselves and their produce. The coastal steamers provided a good service to Adelaide and some provided a service to Melbourne. These communities did not regard it as important to have a fast rail service to Adelaide.

The Report also acknowledged that the intercolonial railway would probably be through Bordertown but deliberately avoided any comment about the gauge, stating the need to avoid a break-of-gauge at the border. There was another problem looming. Early surveys for the railway from Adelaide to Murray Bridge confirmed that this line would have heavy gradients and tight curves that would restrict train loads. It was going to be a very costly railway and to achieve a better route would involve some very costly engineering.

THE REPORT OF THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN RAILWAY COMMISSION OF 1875

Author's introductory note. Soon after this report was completed the Boucaut Ministry was defeated and the report in its entirety was dead. Elements survived with the subsequent construction of some lines. The Commission made some observations and recommendations on the matter of railway gauges that seem to have been adopted as policy. Regarding routes, these will be mostly dealt with in the various chapters. Comment re gauge is by the *South Australian Register*, 12 August 1875.

We publish below, with the exception of an elaborate definition of the proposed line from Adelaide to the Murray Bridge and of the branch line to Strathalbyn, the report of the Railway Commission which has been engaged for several months in formulating a general scheme of iron road extension for the colony. Most of the time of the Commission has evidently been engaged in collecting information with regard to special routes, but attention has never-the-less been given to the principles of railway construction. The vexed question of the gauge is dealt with, but not in a decisive way, the prevailing idea being that the two systems can be carried on in the colony without much danger of their clashing.

The report recommends the construction of 31 lines of railway including in all 1375 ½ miles. Of these 18 are regarded as of pressing importance, the total length being 821 miles. The Government, as may be gathered from the Treasurer's statement, have resolved upon carrying out 11 of the lines, the aggregate length of which may be roughly set down as 530 miles. A sum of over £1,900,000 is to be borrowed for these railways...In regard to the railway to the Murray the Government have ignored the recommendation of the report in favour of the route by way of Mount Barker to Edwards's, and have pronounced themselves of supporters of the North West Bend Line.

GAUGE

11 The Commission observed that the Victorian Select Committee on Railways in 1871 states in the fourth paragraph of the report: "it appears from the evidence submitted that a narrower gauge than the one adopted in Victoria (viz., 5 ft 3 in) would be more economical both in the construction of the permanent way and rolling stock; but as to the expediency of constructing any new lines only to a narrower gauge in view of the mileage already constructed on the present gauge, the value of rolling stock now in use and the inconvenience and risk which would result from a break-of-gauge, the balance of the 3 ft 6 in gauge these lines are not, however, connected but are distinct systems. South Australia is, therefore, not troubled to the same extent as Victoria in the construction of new lines.

12 The Commission concur, as indeed do nearly all who have considered the subject that for very hilly country necessitating sharp curves, the narrow or 3 ft 6 in gauge, is less costly, and lines upon it are more attainable than those of broader gauge. That the surveys and estimates of the two gauges made by the Engineer-in-Chief for a distance of 3 miles, through exceptionally difficult country, in the Valley of the Torrens, show the expenditure on the 5 ft 3 in gauge to be £64,265 per mile compared with £36,018 on the narrower gauge of 3 ft 6 in.

13 It appears by the evidence of the officers of the Engineer's Department who have had experience in the construction of the lines on both gauges that there are savings affected in construction of the line and in the cost of rolling stock on the 3 ft 6 in compared to the 5 ft 3 in gauge but that such saving varies according to the nature of the country and the local price of material.

15 Assuming, for the purpose of comparison and, that the estimates supplied by the Chief Assistant Engineer, Mr.

Patterson, in his letter dated the 12 July, 1875, and which are based upon the present contract rates for the construction of the Port Pirie and Gladstone Railway, are correct, we have for extremely rugged hilly country, abounding with sharp curves, cuttings, and tunnels, the cost of construction on the 5 ft 3 in gauge, including rolling stock and stations is £64,000 per mile against £36,000 per mile for the 3 ft 6 in gauge. This estimate is, however, for the worst and most expensive portion of the hill lines, and for an average hilly country may be taken as a proportionately less cost. The savings affected by adopting the narrow-gauge for extremely heavy country would be largely over three-sevenths of that for the 5 ft 3 in gauge, the difference in cost decreasing as the engineering difficulties and works become less, until the minimum has been attained, which would occur when the line could be constructed as nearly as possible to the natural surface of the ground, with a difference in cost is then about £170 pounds per mile, as instanced on the first 14 miles of the Port Wakefield and Hoyleton Railway.

16 The Commission has considered the statement of the Engineer-in-Chief in his letter dated 15 July 1875, forwarding that from Mr Patterson dated 12 July, where Mr Mais says that he is of the opinion that the future gauge of the locomotive railways of this province will depend entirely upon the gauge to be adopted for a line to Victoria. But bearing in mind the number of miles of line already reconstructed upon 5 ft 3 in gauge and enormous loss that would accrue to this Province by the sacrifice of machinery and rolling stock adapted for that gauge, and further that the lines already constructed on the 3 ft 6 in gauge form separate and independent systems from the ones on the main trunk line of 5 ft 3 in gauge. They recommend that the 5 ft 3 in gauge be continued on the north line from Adelaide by Koorunga in the direction of the north-east with all its main contributories. For the line to the Murray in the direction of Victoria that gauge must be considered in connection with the speed desired to be attained and for all new lines other than the lines of the mainline to the Murray they consider that the 3 ft 6 in gauge should be continued. The Commissioners are also of opinion that it is undesirable to import any rails for the 3 ft 6 in gauge of a less weight than 40 pounds to the yard, and for the main trunk line on the 5 ft 3 in gauge than 60 pounds to the yard. We also recommend that an early opportunity to be taken to replace the light rails upon the Burra line with those of greater weight.

In relation to the railway to the Murray:

28 The Commission has not recommended the construction of this line upon either the 3 ft 6 in or 5 ft 3 in gauge for the following reason:- were the line intended only for the accommodation of local and river traffic and not exceeding 20 miles an hour the Commission would recommend its construction upon the narrow gauge but seeing that it will be used for the conveyance of the English mails as well as passengers to the neighbouring colonies speed becomes a question of paramount importance and as by its adoption, and the addition of one steamer on the line to South Australia a fortnightly mail could be secured with all the attendant advantages for the Province (see Mr Todd's evidence), the Commission deem it best to keep the gauge of this line open. With a 5 ft 3 in gauge, and the light engines and rolling stock and express speeds would be assured, which it may be desirable to secure even at a very largely enhanced cost, which cannot well be estimated until the detail survey now in progress has been made, the simplest form of construction decided upon, and the specifications drawn.



GREEN. Broad-gauge lines. **ORANGE.** Narrow-gauge lines built. **PURPLE.** Lines recommended in the 1875 report. The dotted green line represents the proposed line to Apsley. **BLACK.** The Kingston to Naracoorte railway.

There was an additional problem and that was the near absence of any produce from the proposed route through the Ninety-Mile Desert. It was important that the line paid its way on the way to the border but that was not going to happen. There was much discord in the Parliament surrounding this railway, for which reason it would be another ten years before Bordertown had direct rail communication with Adelaide.

The people at Bordertown must have taken cheer from the report of the Railway Commission for it delivered them two lines on the map. There was a narrow-gauge connection from the Naracoorte line that branched at Baker's Range (Lucindale). It would be built in two stages, the first being 16 miles to Cockatoo Lake and the second part via Mundalla to Bordertown, a total distance of 50 miles.

These lines in the south-east of the colony would all be 3 ft 6 in narrow gauge except the line from Murray Bridge that was to connect through to Melbourne.

The preferred routes identified by the Commission would be the lines to the ports that were built later in the 1870s. They would include the line to Mount Gambier and Rivoli Bay (Beachport).

When the railway from Kingston to Naracoorte had been authorised in 1871, there had been the hint that it was to attract business from over the border, but there was no clear statement or policy to that effect. But the recommendations of the Railway Commission report of 1875 were obviously targeting that trade with three of the recommended lines ending exactly at the border. At the time of the report those localities where the lines ended at the border had neither names nor population.

By 1878, Bordertown was no closer to getting either of the two railways.

The desire by South Australia to secure this Victorian market worked against the interests of Bordertown in that the railway from Bakers Range (Lucindale) via the Cockatoo Lake and Mundalla didn't happen. In March 1881, the line was extended from Naracoorte, to run as close to the Victorian border as possible, to terminate at Tatiara (later renamed Custon). This was 14 miles short of Bordertown and was not gladly received by producers of that district. In January 1885 the connection to Bordertown was made but it was the long way around and 101 miles (170 km) compared to the projected route via the Cockatoo Lake which would have been 81 miles (148 km). Thus, the producers of the Bordertown district were paying for an additional 20 miles (32 km) of transport for their produce and inwards goods.

Mention should now be made of the choice of gauge for the intercolonial railway between Adelaide and Victoria.

Henry Mais had been of the view that the railway over the Mount Lofty Range should be built as a narrow-gauge line. He was supportive of a broad-gauge line to Victoria via Blanchetown. However, when the Commission was taking evidence in 1874-5, a very strong recommendation was made by the Postmaster General, Sir Charles Todd, that a narrow-gauge railway would not support a fast express that would be needed to get the intercolonial mails to Melbourne.

The colonies were still very dependent on the English mails, both for the workings of governments and commerce. To be in receipt of those mail deliveries by even one day was of great commercial advantage. From 1852 to the time of Federation, the time taken for the mails to reach Sydney had contracted from about 64 days to 30 days.

For many years the mail steamers had by-passed Adelaide, thus putting it at a disadvantage. At different times the mails for Adelaide were off-loaded at sea near Kangaroo Island. Eventually, South Australia had chartered a fast steamer that met the overseas mail steamers near Albany.

Sir Charles Todd was confident that sending the mails from Adelaide to Melbourne by rail would ensure that Melbourne received its mails a day earlier. The advantage for South Australia was that it would guarantee the mail steamers would make Adelaide their landfall for the mails.

Without that evidence from Sir Charles Todd it is very likely that the intercolonial railway would have been built to the 3 ft 6 in gauge, with the inevitable break-of-gauge at the border.

Eventually South Australia responded to the Echuca move with the railway to North West Bend (Morgan) in 1878, thus shortening the distance of the journey of the riverboats and providing a direct connection to Adelaide. As a port, Echuca was eclipsed only by Sydney. The Morgan line was successful in that it captured nearly all of the wool from New South Wales, but it was a short-lived victory. Within the next six years New South Wales would respond with railways to Narrandera, Hay and Bourke.

One of the more colourful characters in the South Australian House of Assembly was Ebenezer Ward, who was the member for Gumeracha in the Adelaide Hills. The district had many market gardens supplying their produce to Adelaide but they called for faster transport for their produce.

Adelaide Observer, 27 July 1878:

Mr. Ward introduced his motion affirming that "immediate action should be taken to connect Adelaide by railway with the colonies of Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland by the most direct and reasonably practicable route via the Murray Bridge and the South-Eastern border of this colony to Melbourne."

The speech by the member for Gumeracha was characterised by all his usual vehemence and by a fair share of the somewhat gaudy rhetoric with which he delights to embellish his oration.

The action taken by Mr. Ward was effective in serving one good purpose. It elicited from the Treasurer a definite statement as to the intentions of the Government.

There were two forces that were influencing railway development of this region. The producers of western Victoria were most unhappy and South Australia was eager to have the business.

Producers in western Victoria were making noises about a railway to Apsley and were even suggesting that a railway joining Naracoorte and Apsley could become the favoured route for the intercolonial line. Even with a break-of-gauge!

The Argus Melbourne 5 October 1878:

Regarding the proposed line of railway from Branxholme to Casterton and Apsley.

The view of the present Minister of Railways, his reason for including this line in the Construction Bill about to be introduced into the Legislative Assembly, is not for the purpose of benefiting any particular locality, but for the sake of preventing the producers of the rich agricultural lands of the Wannon and Glenelg from passing into the hands of the merchants of the adjoining colony of South Australia.

Instead of adopting a system of centralisation by which the railways of that colony should meet in the capital, South Australia has for some time past been constructing short lines of railway from different parts of the Victorian border to nearer ports on the South Australian side with the object of appropriating the whole of our north-western districts which comprise some of the richest agricultural lands in this colony. During the last few years a line of railway has been made from Naracoorte to Lacepede Bay which every year takes thousands of tons of produce from this colony and vessels are annually sent direct from Lacepede Bay for London, almost entirely loaded with Victorian wool and wheat. The South Australian Government is now about to extend the above railway from Naracoorte to Bordertown, a distance of between 50 and 60 miles. This line will run parallel with and within a few miles from our border, and its object is of course to attract additional produce from the Victorian side and in return to supply the stores, machinery and other articles usually required on farms and sheep stations. There is no doubt that the only way to compete with the South Australians is to adopt their policy, and by running short lines of railway to our nearest ports to offer to the producers equal facilities of transport on this side of what would have been provided on the other side of the border.

Now we have the South Australian perspective, which is really saying the same thing, but the language is different.

South Australian Advertiser, 31 March 1883:

The Tatiara and Bordertown Railway

By taking the railway to our border we should be offering inducements to a large number of Victorian settlers to cart their produce to our station, and thus increase the revenue of the line. That the railway will secure a good deal of traffic from the Victorian side of the border cannot be doubted if the indications already given by selectors and others in the Wimmera District that they will do as much trade as possible with South Australian firms are to be regarded as likely to be of lasting effect. The agriculturist and the squatter alike desire to get their produce to market in the most expeditious manner and it is therefore more than probable that such of those settlers, as are beyond the pale of railway communication in Victoria, will gladly avail themselves of the conveniences provided by the South Australian Government.



SOUTH AUSTRALIAN RAILWAYS V CLASS. These were the lightest locomotives used on the system and could just manage on the Kingston line where they replaced the horses. They also had the advantage of being small enough to be disassembled and loaded aboard the small coastal vessels that tied up at Kingston.

They weighed a little over 15 tons.

FROM THE LIONEL NOBLE COLLECTION.



THE PORT FACILITIES AT KINGSTON

Kingston was a busy port in the 1870s but couldn't handle the larger vessels. It was strangled, in part, by having inadequate port facilities, and a flimsy railway that was struggling, even in the 1950s, to be worked with small W class engines. **STATE LIBRARY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA. PRG 280-1-17-4-33.**

Victoria was then slow to penetrate railways into the Wimmera and west of the Glenelg River, that would otherwise have seen the produce from that country go to Portland. The line from Braxholme to Casterton was opened in 1884. There would be only one further line built into this country in the period before federation and that was in 1894 to Goroke. It seems that Victoria was content to let some of its commerce flow over the border to South Australia, or was it that Victoria had its sights set firmly on the traffic from the Riverina?

With the advent of Morgan in 1878, many of the riverboats that had previously worked out of Goolwa relocated to the new port. This was also of advantage regarding passengers travelling on the river steamers, as the railway provided a daily mixed train service to Adelaide. Morgan was 310 miles (498 km) from the Darling Junction near Wentworth. For the riverboat arriving at Wentworth, having come down the Darling, to proceed upstream to Echuca was 560 miles (901 km). Victoria was so concerned about the impact that Morgan would have on the Echuca trade that it cut rates by 10%, and that was in addition to previous cuts that had been made. With the opening of the intercolonial railway from Adelaide to Murray Bridge in 1885, some of the riverboats made that their base.

Meanwhile, New South Wales was agonising over the loss of business from the Riverina. They had previously resisted the incursion of private railway companies but in 1867, there was an acceptance that the natural flow of commerce in the western Riverina was to Melbourne. Thus there was a case for a private railway joining Deniliquin and Echuca. The Deniliquin & Moama Railway Company was authorised to construct a line that connected via a bridge over the Murray, at Echuca. The gauge was 5 ft 3 in which would allow through running of Victorian rolling stock.

Two of the Directors of the Deniliquin & Moama Railway Company were Simon Fraser and R Burrowes, both Members of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly. That goes a long way to explaining the authorisation of a private line when previously none had been possible. If New South Wales had built a railway to Deniliquin it would have been a haul of about 460 miles (740 km) to Sydney, against 202 miles (325 km) to Melbourne. The distance from Echuca to Deniliquin was only 45 miles (72 km). The two colonies eventually became embroiled in a rate war, progressively lowering railway rates.

This private line was opened in 1876. New South Wales had long been averse to the incursion of gauges other than the 4 ft 8½ in.

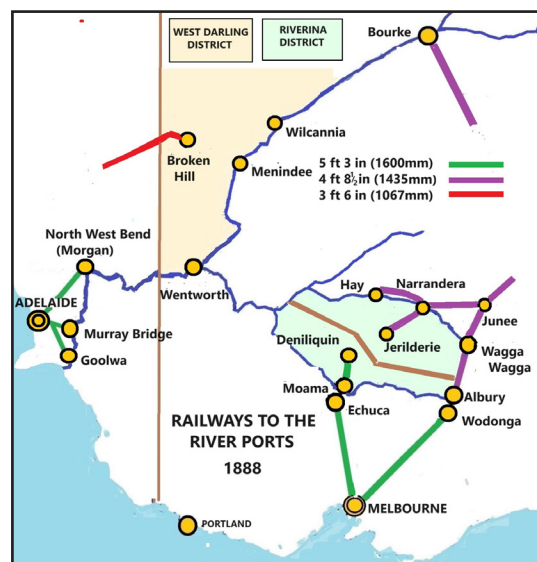
In subsequent years there were calls for a railway from Jerilderie to Deniliquin. Such a line would have created a break-of-gauge at Deniliquin. But the relative distance to Sydney when compared to the distance to Melbourne would have been in favour of the latter. Even a break-of-gauge would have been no deterrent to the vast amount of Riverina wool that would make its way south. The two colonies were using the gauge diversity to reinforce their protectionist positions. That is for Chapters 12 and 15.

1876 was also the year that the Commissioner of Railways in New South Wales advised that their policy should be:

to push railways, as speedily as possible, into the southern and western interior of the Riverina to enable a large proportion of the produce that properly belongs to New South Wales, to come to Sydney.

The first railway to a river port in New South Wales was to Wagga Wagga in 1879, followed by Hay in 1882 and Bourke in 1885. The railway to Jerilderie was opened in 1884. It was 428 miles (688 km) by rail from Jerilderie to Sydney. For the final word on the railway from Jerilderie and its proposed extension to Deniliquin, Sir Henry Parkes said, very definitely, that the line 'will go to Jerilderie and no further'.

THE STATE OF RAILWAYS TO THE RIVER PORTS. The brown line across the Riverina is the demarcation of the rates offered by the Victorian Railways, taken from an 1894 document. South of that line - no reduced rate. North of that line - general reduction of 46%.





THE PORTICO OF THE SERVICETON RAILWAY STATION. The building is an impressive structure that was built with the intention of having a very important role and it met that need for many years. But there are no longer any railway employees living in the town, and the trains don't stop. The West Wimmera Shire now has keep of the site. That is Les Millikin who is the caretaker. He is usually found in the grand dining hall and will easily be coaxed in to discussion about the paranormal, or oblige with a conducted tour of the dungeon. But please leave a donation in the tin. It pays for the materials used in the upkeep. The Serviceton Railway Station deserves to be recognised as a shrine of Australian Federation. **JLW.**

We had seen in Chapter 7, that Victoria had established in 1871, a Select Committee on Railways, that had determined the cost of construction and rolling stock for the 3 ft 6 in gauge. It was favourable when compared to the cost of construction of the 5 ft 3 in gauge, but the advantage was lost by the need for break-of-gauge stations with their operating costs and inconvenience.

Unfortunately, this lesson would be lost on a subsequent generation of Victorian politicians. They were destined to eventually have break-of-gauge stations, of which we will deal with in the next chapter, when we consider the 2 ft 6 in narrow-gauge lines.

In the three decades that followed that report, Victoria was largely spared the cost and inconvenience of the break-of-gauge. But not entirely. There were two places where the demon could not be contained.

Their existence was not permanent and the finger of blame was not pointing towards Victoria. The first was Wodonga. When the standard gauge railway from Sydney was opened to Albury in 1881, there was a gap of about two miles, with Wodonga on the other side of the river. In June 1883 the bridge was completed. There were two tracks across the bridge. One broad gauge and other standard gauge. The trains from Melbourne crossed over the bridge and passengers changed trains at Albury.

The trains from Sydney crossed the bridge and passengers changed trains at Wodonga. It was not a successful arrangement and within a few months all changed at Albury.

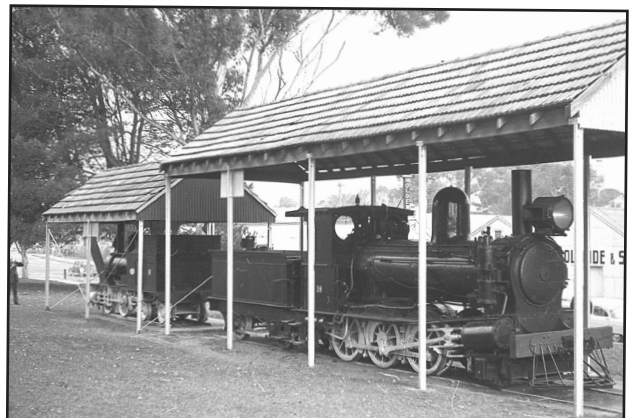
When we consider break-of-gauge stations we also need to observe the degree of complexity. Hamley Bridge and Terowie, whilst generating much havoc, were not burdened by the need to serve more than one master. They were operated by the SAR.

Wodonga (and Albury) needed facilities and staff to meet the needs of both colonies. Being border stations brought the additional requirement of Customs. Serviceton was similarly burdened, to which was the added complexity of having two gauges. It also had two time zones.

A major problem with Serviceton was that the two jurisdictions could not agree on the border. Fortunately there were no passengers that changed train at Serviceton. There was only goods, and not very much. South Australia had laid a third rail between Wolseley and Serviceton in 1885, which was admitted as being an after-thought with a view to capturing some business from producers near Serviceton sending to Kingston. There was some meaningful traffic in the first year, after which it declined markedly. The suspicion is that Victoria responded with lower rates. The third rail was removed about 1894.

The Serviceton railway station was built in the middle of what was known as the 'disputed territory' and was built by Victoria with 2,000 tons of bricks from Horsham. It was to become the property of whichever colony was eventually found to be the rightful owner of the disputed territory, and the cost of construction and operation would be settled with the other colony paying half. But South Australia had not contributed a penny towards the cost of construction, and when, in 1914 the Privy Council determined the border in Victoria's favour South Australia still refused to pay. The matter of payment was finally settled in 1919.

THE LIGHT CONSTRUCTION OF THE RAILWAY FROM KINGSTON TO NARACOORTE mandated the use of the smallest of engines, which were the V class 0-4-4 built in 1877 and the W class 2-6-0 that were built in 1878. They continued to work the trains on the line until 1959, after which one of each was placed on display in Naracoorte. W class 18 and V class 9. The photograph was taken in 1966. **JLW.**





FROM THE PICTURESQUE ATLAS OF AUSTRALASIA 1888, showing railways open to that year. The broad-gauge (5 ft 3 in) lines are highlighted in green and the narrow-gauge (3 ft 6 in) lines are highlighted in red.

Note that a large part of western Victoria was not well served by the Victorian lines.

In 1917 there was a railway constructed from Heywood in Victoria, to Mount Gambier but it fell foul of the break-of-gauge at Mount Gambier. See Chapter 15. The rails are still in place but it is not presently open for traffic. It serves as a monument to the bungling of rail planning that will feature in the closing chapters.

The intercolonial railway enjoyed a narrow window of opportunity in that the relationship between the two colonies had long been a difficult one, not only the cross-border trade, the position of the border itself, but also Victoria's protectionist policies. In 1885 Sir John Downer and Sir James Service were respectively the Premiers of South Australia and Victoria. They were both passionate about federation and were able to rise above the squabbling. As witness to the mutual respect that these two Premiers enjoyed is the fact that in 1885, Sir John Downer had sent a message to Sir James Service recommending that the border station be named in his honour. That appeared in the South Australian provincial newspaper the *Kapunda Herald*, 25 August 1885, but does not appear in most of the major daily newspapers.

Mr. Service has received the following telegram from the Chief Secretary of South Australia :—" It is proposed that the border railway station should be named after you. Have you any objection ?" Mr. Service telegraphed in reply as follows—" I shall be very pleased indeed to think that even in name I was a connecting link between the two colonies." The station which will be called Serviceton, is the changing station on the overland line to Adelaide.

The intercolonial express trains between Adelaide and Melbourne was the first time that two Australian capitals were joined by rail, without the interruption of the break-of-gauge. On the the afternoon of 19 January 1887, the two express trains departed, one from Melbourne and one from Adelaide. They crossed quietly in the night at Dimboola and arrived at their respective destinations next morning. It was an occasion that called for a 'champagne and brass band' departure. But there had been a change of government in Victoria and a return to the old days of squabbling. The two governments could only agree that they couldn't agree and the two expresses departed and arrived without ceremony. We could eventually add the cost of the Serviceton railway station to that list of squabbles.

In the months that followed there were many from South Australia and Victoria who took advantage of the ease of travel between the two colonies. First there was the Jubilee Exhibition in Adelaide, for which very attractive excursion fares were offered. Then there were many from South Australia who attended the Melbourne Cup.

The development of the country adjacent to the border between South Australia and Victoria also fostered a mixing of the people of the two colonies. My own ancestry was a great-grandmother from Hamilton and my great-grandfather from Naracoorte.

Thus, the railway and its intercolonial express were essential ingredients in driving forward the Federation of the Commonwealth of Australia.

AT THE SERVICETON RAILWAY STATION This is the booking hall. The three ticket windows were for purchasing tickets into South Australia. On the opposite side are three identical ticket windows where intending passengers would buy tickets into Victoria. JLW.



The broad-gauge railway from Adelaide to Bordertown was opened in May 1885. South Australia then had to wait another 18 months for Victoria to connect.

Wolseley became the station where the people and the produce changed trains. Bordertown had a locomotive depot, but Wolseley didn't. It would have been an inefficiency to have two locomotive depots so close, but everything to do with a break-of-gauge is inefficient. The narrow-gauge engines that arrived at Wolseley then had to proceed as light engines to Bordertown for their servicing and turning. In practice a number of these light engines were coupled together as one movement.

Wolseley is a bitterly cold place at night, and it would be a toss-up between Terowie and Wolseley as to which was the more miserable place to change trains. In time the Mount Gambier service would boast a sleeping car but what luxury is there in having a berth in a sleeping car when the timetable says that the traveller must be out on the Wolseley platform at 2.20 am?

The train trip for the people of the South-East and their merchandise had long been disadvantaged by the track arrangement which had worked in favour of the road transport operators and the eventual demise of rail to most centres. That is where rail has been the loser. The railway routes that met the needs of the 1870s have not met the needs of later times and the trip is much longer than it needs to be. It is an unusual event to have a new railway because there needs to be a shorter way. Such improvements rarely progress beyond chit-chat, which has long been the case of a broad-gauge (or standard-gauge) line from about Tintinara to Mount Gambier.

Rail traffic to Mount Gambier has been impeded by the line through Murray Bridge, which has been dogged by gradients and curves. It adds about an hour to the journey. There have been many studies of deviations and alternative routes. Henry Mais, given more time, could have found better routes over the Mount Lofty Ranges.

In 1989, AN (Australian National) had examined a route from Murray Bridge to Adelaide that followed the Cambrai line, and then through Truro and via the Barossa to link with the northern line near Mallala. It would be a longer distance but would save time. It is believed that a study found it was not a viable project based on a 50 year pay back. 50 years is the usual norm for 'bean counters' in their forward projections, but considering the existing route has been in place for nearly 140 years, how would it look with a pay back of 100 years?

In 1921, eminent geologist, Sir Douglas Mawson identified a natural escarpment to the south. (***Victor Harbour Times and Encounter Bay and Lower Murray Pilot, 2 September 1921***)

Sir Douglas Mawson can never make out why the engineers of the South line chose to cross the range at its highest point. He believes that it would be a wise principle for the trains to go round rather than, over the lofty peaks of the Mount Lofty ranges. It is said that there was a good deal of wire pulling at the time when the line was constructed to get it placed in its present locality. Sir Douglas suggests that the line should go up through the McLaren Flats and the Meadows Valley and thus cut out about 500 ft (150 m) rise every time the range is crossed.

I close this chapter with what must surely be the most bizarre incident in the history of politics in Australia.

In 1892 C C Kingston was South Australian Attorney General and spied an opportunity for enticing business from the other side of the Victorian border. The Chairman of the Board of Railway Commissioners was Joseph Henry Smith. Kingston instructed Smith to offer preferential rates to the Victorians. Eventually there was a ruckus amongst the South Australian producers that culminated in an official enquiry. The evidence provided by Smith did not align with the evidence provided by Kingston. Richard Baker was the President of the Legislative Council and a supporter of Smith. It had been a well-known fact that whilst Kingston and Baker were two of the sharpest legal minds in South Australia their relationship had long been hostile.

It was so bad that Smith and his family were genuinely in fear of their own safety and Smith took a month's leave, and with his family went to Victoria in anticipation of Kingston cooling down. Richard Baker had authorised Smith's leave. What happened next is described by the ***South Australian Register, 24 December 1892***, more dramatically than any words that I could ever craft.

MR. KINGSTON'S LETTER.
Mr. Kingston's letter to Mr. Baker was to the effect that as the Government had granted Mr. Smith, the Chairman of the Railway Commissioners, one month's leave of absence Mr. Kingston had been frustrated in all his efforts to vindicate his honour, and that as he had thus been prevented from refuting the malignant charges made by Mr. Baker against him he would either shoot Mr. Baker or be shot by him. He required Mr. Baker to meet him at half-past 1 o'clock in Victoria square, opposite Mr. Baker's office, and he stated that in order to terminate the differences between them he enclosed a loaded revolver and cartridges, and would be in the square at the appointed hour prepared with a similar weapon, and would wait there till Mr. Baker made his appearance. If Mr. Baker, the letter proceeded, was a man of honour and courage he would not refuse to be present in the square at half-past 1 o'clock. The whole tenor of the letter exhibited signs of great mental excitement

Richard Baker declined the invitation. Kingston had to face the court, and by way of penalty was required to keep the peace for 12 months. Before that period had expired he had become South Australia's 23rd Premier.

We will meet Kingston again in Chapter 12. When Smith's term of office expired in 1895, Kingston made sure that it would not be extended. But he went one further. Smith's role had dated from 1888 when the South Australian Parliament, in one of its more lucid moments, determined that it needed an expert to run the railways. Kingston reversed that and South Australia reverted to a bungling arrangement where the Railways Department was stuck in the 19th century. This started a procession of events that we can follow to 1978 and the eventual demise of the South Australian Railways.