



CHAPTER 9

CRYING OVER SPILT MILK (HAMLEY BRIDGE)

By 1873 New South Wales and Victoria had developed plans for their respective railway systems that set out the directions for further development. South Australia had no plan and its Parliament was aimlessly processing railway Bills, one at a time. Each new Bill came with its clause that specified the gauge and as with all other clauses in the Bills, the matter of the gauge received a fair airing. Many of these gauge clauses were altered either as a result of a Select Committee or the majority vote on the floor of the House. By the end of 1873 it was obvious that somewhere in the mid-north of South Australia there would be a meeting of the broad gauge and the narrow gauge. But where?

The *South Australian Register*, 26 November 1873, reported the outcome of the Select Committee that recommended construction of the railway from Port Pirie to Gladstone.

Referring to the possibility of a junction between the Port Pirie and Northern Extension Railways at or near Jamestown the Engineer-in-Chief assured the Committee that no difficulty was likely to arise through the difference in width of the two lines. The break of gauge was an unmitigated evil where two railways engaged in an extensive goods traffic and had to work into each other; but the case was different here. The Port Pirie line would carry all the produce, even as far as Jamestown, to Spencer Gulf and would not cooperate with the wide line except in regards to passengers "who were always able to shift themselves without cost to the country or the railways."

It seemed that every member of the Parliament was a railway expert. But so too was the editor of the *South Australian Register* who was showing no sign of letting up on the one member who did know a few things about railways, Arthur Lindsay.

Lindsay was the Member for Encounter Bay who had been obsessional in his pursuit of the advocates of the narrow gauge, to the extent that in 1871 the editor had responded to Lindsay's intransigence with comment that can only be described as intransigent. (see page 70).

But the editor was obviously mellowing with time and was much more accommodating of Mr Lindsay when he wrote the following on 4 December 1873. It included figures for comparison of the costs of the two gauges.

It is not difficult to foresee that the looseness, not to say the incoherency, of our present style of railway legislation will some day involve the country in an amount of confusion and inconvenience which will seriously tax the patience and pockets of those who have to provide a remedy... These figures enable us, at least to some extent, to compare Mr. Mais' conclusions, with those of Mr. Lindsay, who has always insisted that the difference of gauge makes scarcely appreciable difference in the cost.

Meanwhile the editor had thrown his support behind the Engineer-in-Chief. *South Australian Register*, 24 November 1873:

If the general principle is laid down that trunk lines should be built on a wide gauge strong enough for heavy traffic and that mere feeder lines should be built on a narrow gauge, and otherwise made as light and inexpensive as possible in all respects, there would be sound sense in such a scheme. But in The Assembly's recent legislation regard for any such principle is conspicuous by its absence. So far as we recollect, the question of whether the new lines are to be regarded as trunk lines or feeders and whether they really need to be strong enough for heavy traffic, had very little to do with the mode in which the members voted. The result would be equally intelligible if the gauge had been settled in each instance by tossing up a halfpenny.

ABOVE: Changing trains at Terowie. Railcar 104 has arrived from Quorn and would have picked up passengers and parcels at Orroroo and Peterborough. They have all spilled out onto the platform and will soon be aboard the broad-gauge Bluebird to Adelaide. 4 June 1969. JLW PHOTOGRAPH.

Henry Mais was not fired with the same zeal as we have witnessed in John Whitton and Thomas Higinbotham, regarding keeping the narrow gauge out of their respective colonies. His appointment as Engineer-in-Chief of South Australia had been in June 1867, at which time Captain Bagot had already garnered considerable support. Henry Mais did show some initial resistance.

Listed here are the railway Bills that came before the South Australian Parliament in the early 1870s, with comments about the gauge. The halfpenny was not a wasted idiom. It was befitting the level of flippancy that was being afforded the matter in Parliament.

1871 The Narracoorte and Lacepede Railway to be 3 ft 6 in. Given that this line was reaching almost to the Victorian border there was a good case for changing the gauge. During the debate there was only one member of the House of Assembly who declared his opposition to the narrow gauge - Arthur Lindsay.

1872 The Port Wakefield Extension Railway (to Blyth) to be 3 ft 6 in. A few in the Legislative Council attempted to amend the gauge to 5 ft 3 in, putting the case that by building the line to the broad gauge and changing the gauge of the existing railway, it was not too late to avoid the break-of-gauge. There was a further attempt in the House of Assembly to have this line built to the broad gauge. That motion was soundly trounced.

Nothing could be more absurd than sending a Bill to the Upper House to extend a line in one direction on one gauge and on the other in another gauge.

1873 The Port Pirie Railway. This was introduced to the House of Assembly as being 5 ft 3 in but was promptly changed to 3 ft 6 in on the advice of the Engineer-in-Chief that the nature of the country towards Gladstone would entail heavy works.

1873 Port Broughton Railway. The line was enacted as 3 ft 6 in. As this was only ever going to be a 13 mile horse tramway, the gauge was not an issue.

1873 Port Wakefield and Kadina Railway. The Bill was first for the 3 ft 6 in gauge which was amended by the Parliament to 5 ft 3 in. A Select Committee recommended it be built as a narrow-gauge railway.

1873 The Kadina and Barunga Railway. 3 ft 6 in. It was a time of political instability in South Australia. The divisive issue related to the management of Crown lands. There was a three-way wrangle that involved pastoralists, farmers and the Government that had brought down four administrations in rapid succession. Crown land was leased to pastoralists whereas the land that was opened for agriculture and closer settlement was sold by auction. This was closely linked to railway development, for without cheap transport for the farmer's produce (wheat), agriculture was not sustainable.

By circumstance rather than by design, South Australia was developing a railway network of cheap narrow-gauge railways to get the wheat to the ports, and at the same time extending broad-gauge trunk lines.

It was the only Australian colony to have such a network, and goes a long way to explaining the break-of-gauge chaos that would descend upon the colony in the 1880s.

In 1874, Premier, James Boucaut sought to have a Railway Commission which would set out a plan for future development of the railway system in South Australia. The panel of expertise included Henry Mais, the Engineer-in-Chief. George Goyder, the Surveyor-General, was the Chairman of the Commission, which visited the settled areas of the colony. The report was presented on 12 August 1875. There were four categories of railways grouped in order of priority, being 31 railway projects in total, of which most were to be built to the narrow gauge. The railways identified as 5 ft 3 in were from Kooringa (Burra), Hallett to Gottlieb's Well (Terowie) and from there identified a future direction via Eldoratrilla (near Yunta) towards Manna Hill and the New South Wales boundary. No recommendation regarding gauge was made for the line to the Victorian border. The railway from Kapunda to the Murray would be 5 ft 3 in.

Boucaut had planned to build the selected railways with a £3 million loan. By the time the report was completed Boucaut was no longer Premier. The Parliament rejected that plan, with the result that many of the lines were not built. Despite being rejected, the plan became a broad concept that had some influence on future railway development in the colony.

There were no Bills for new railways in 1874. The railway bills that came before Parliament thereafter were generally in accordance with the gauges that had been recommended by the Railway Commission.

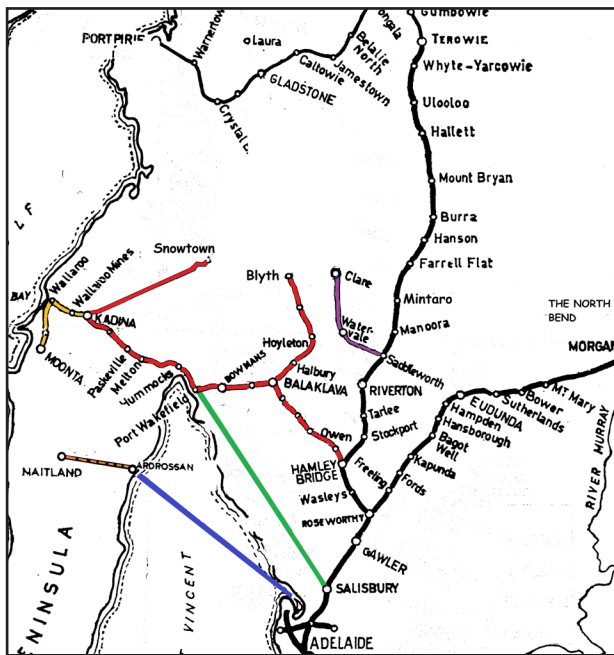
1874 The Murray Railway. This was not a Bill to authorise construction of a railway but was for the Parliament to discuss, as a preliminary to a Bill being introduced. There was general agreement that this would probably be a trunk line to Victoria, and as such should be 5 ft 3 in gauge. Several routes were considered. The Engineer-in-Chief, was of the opinion that he would support the 5 ft 3 in gauge for a route through Kapunda and Blanchetown. If it was to take a direct course from Adelaide to Murray Bridge he would advocate the 3 ft 6 in gauge. To build a railway of 5 ft 3 in from Adelaide to Murray Bridge would involve works 'exceedingly heavy and the cost necessarily great'. This matter was subsequently taken up as the Adelaide and Nairne Railway Bill of 1878. It was introduced to the House of Assembly as 5 ft 3 in gauge.

The following railway Bills were passed in the subsequent years of the 1870s.

1876 The Gladstone and Jamestown Railway. Being an extension of the Port Pirie line, there was acceptance of this being 3 ft 6 in.

1876 The Port Augusta and Government Gums Railway. This was introduced to the House of Assembly for a 3 ft 6 in railway.

1876 Hamley Bridge and Balaklava Railway. This was the one situation where the gauge specified in the Bill was subsequently altered. It was introduced as a 5 ft 3 in gauge but was altered to 3 ft 6 in by the Commissioner of Public Works, who stated that it would save £16,000. That may have been so but subsequently a more plausible excuse would declare itself.



ALTERNATIVE ROUTES. An adaption of the official map of the South Australian Railways as published in the *Metropolitan and Country Time and Fare Tables 1967*. The map is indicative of the lines open and proposed about 1879. Black lines were pre-existing. Yellow lines were the former private lines of the Wallaroo and Kadina Pier & Railway Co. Red lines are narrow-gauge lines opened in the 1870s. The purple line is the proposed railway to Clare. The green line is the direct line sought by the Moonta people for a faster journey. The blue line is the route of the fast steamer to Ardrossan.

1876 Kapuda and North West Bend Railway 5 ft 3 in.

1876 The Burra to Hallett Railway to be 5 ft 3 in.

1876 Rivoli Bay to Mt Gambier Railway 3 ft 6 in.

1877 Hallett and Terowie Railway to be 5 ft 3 in.

1877 The Kadina to Wallaroo Railway 3 ft 6 in.

1879 The Naracoorte to Tatiara Railway. This was to be a 3 ft 6 in gauge which was understandable, given that it was an extension of the earlier line from Kingston (Lacepede Bay). But at its other end it was doomed to meet the projected broad gauge intercolonial railway to the Victorian border. Another break-of-gauge was imminent.(Chapter 10).

As the impending reality of the break-of-gauge drew closer, the members of Parliament sought solace with talk of third rail schemes and break-of-gauge trucks. They could defend the yet to happen break-of-gauge with a clear conscience because the inventors were working on designs for trucks that could change from one gauge to the other. In 1874 this was just chit-chat, but by 1884 this branch of endeavour had progressed beyond drawings and there were working models of trucks with wheels that could be shifted in and out.

There continued to be the almost lone voice of Arthur Lindsay. By 1875 the editor of the *South Australian Register* was still harping about Arthur Lindsay, like he had back in 1871, but was showing more signs of coming around to Lindsay's point of view. In the edition of **7 June 1875** he wrote:

In speaking on the question of gauge Mr Lindsay showed that he has abated none of those deeply rooted predilections and prejudices of the old way... on one point we can unhesitatingly agree with him, and that is the serious inconvenience associated with the break of gauge...if he is a monomaniac, which he asserts he has been charged with being, there is much method in his madness and he can justly assume to himself the credit of having done something to educate public sentiment up to the conviction that while railways afford the most economical and serviceable means of transport in a young country, it is a ruinous mistake to make them after the costly model of lines in thickly populated communities.

Arthur Lindsay departed the Parliament in 1878 after 18 years. He would have been pleased that there was one member of the press who had taken up his cause, an astute young editor of the *Burra Record* which had changed its banner only two weeks before with a revitalised image.

From the *Burra Record*, **18 October 1878**:

It is a pity Mr A F Lindsay is not now in Parliament for then at least a protest could be entered against the folly that is being constantly perpetrated of authorising railways of diverse gauges.

The new editor was a 28 year old Frederick Holder and though the break-of-gauge was yet to happen in South Australia, he could see that it would bring expense, delay and damage. He noted that the arrangements now underway regarding Hamley Bridge, would be replicated by a break-of-gauge at Terowie.

It is always unpleasant to look a blunder in the face, but this is a thing that only grows the worse by letting it alone, and every year that it is neglected makes the ultimate cost the greater.

Frederick Holder remained the managing editor until 1887 and provided much valuable and objective reporting and opinion. In the chapters that follow we will encounter some more of Frederick Holder's wisdom.

There have been profound socio-economic consequences of the break-of-gauge. One that we have seen here is the relative fortunes of Halbury and Balaklava. It would be repeated many times throughout Australia with the placement of a break-of-gauge rendering one town stillborn whilst jettisoning another into a boom town. Balaklava was a private town surveyed in 1869 along the newly completed Port Wakefield to Hoyleton tramway. Halbury was about 6 miles to the east and the point where the road from Auburn joined the tramway. In the 1875 report of the Railway Commission the junction of the broad-gauge and narrow-gauge systems was described as 'near Halbury'. Therefore the Halbury folk had some reason to aspire to a town of some prominence.

But it was Balaklava that became the major centre of commerce, helped in part by the junction of the railway in 1880. Halbury never came to much.

The example of Halbury and Balaklava was trivial when compared to what was to come.

A break-of-gauge station needed plenty of space to accommodate sidings. The nature of the change of the trans-shipment process involved delay and congestion which conspired to clog sidings. It also needed a locomotive depot. The process of passengers, mails and parcels, all at once and with precious few minutes to do it, demanded a very wide platform to spread this lot out. Of course, no-one in South Australia could appreciate that in advance of it happening.

If one wanted an example of a location that was not good for a break-of-gauge it would be hard to find one more worthy of the title than Hamley Bridge. The station occupied a rise between two river valleys and the railway approach from both directions was difficult, with a grade in one direction and significant curves in the other direction. There was nowhere to expand.

Henry Mais, the Engineer-in-Chief considered Hamley Bridge quite unsuitable for a break-of-gauge station and recommended the break-of-gauge be at Balaklava.

In 1875 the major population centres north of Adelaide, that would be served by the new railway and break-of-gauge, would be the copper mining communities of Moonta, Wallaroo and Kadina. There was also the Clare community, although it was doubtful if this centre of population would generate much traffic on the line via Blyth. The people at Clare had joined forces with Saddleworth, with the objective being to have a broad-gauge railway joining those two centres. A successful narrow-gauge line from Blyth down to Hamley Bridge would be counter to that objective.

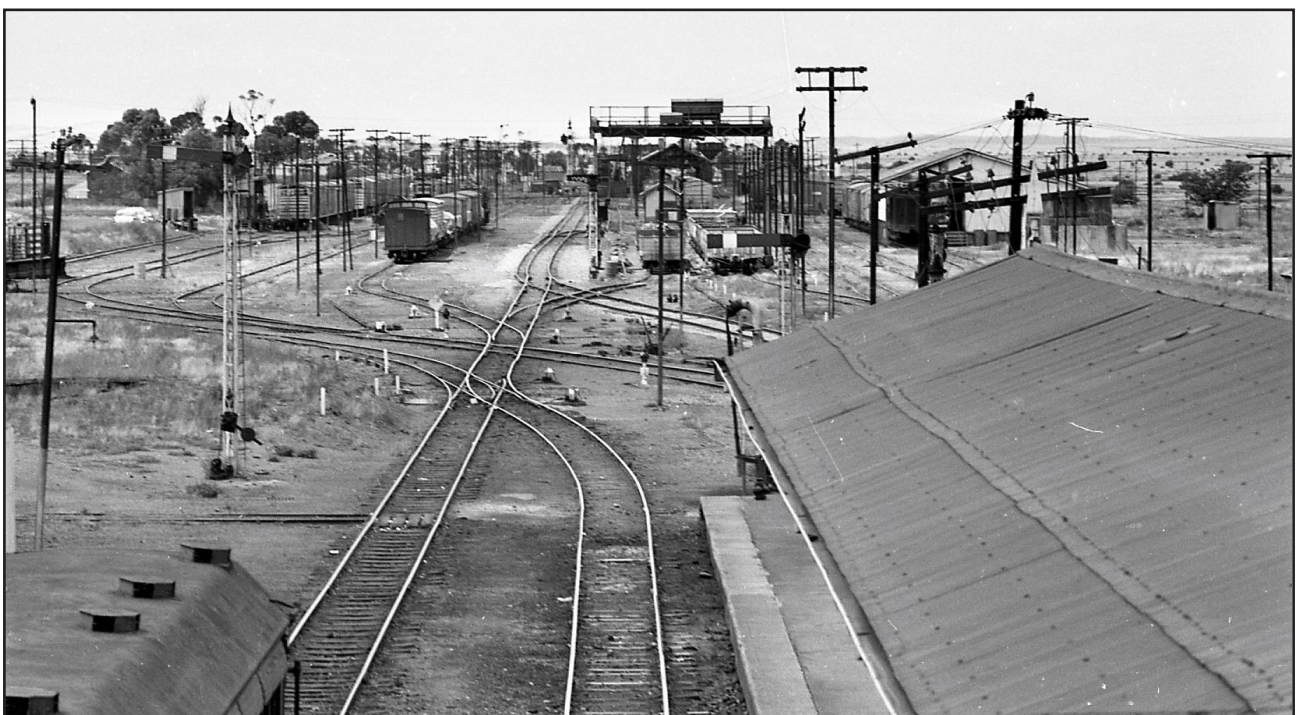
TEROWIE, 2 December 1969. A break-of-gauge station needs plenty of space. **JLW PHOTOGRAPH.**

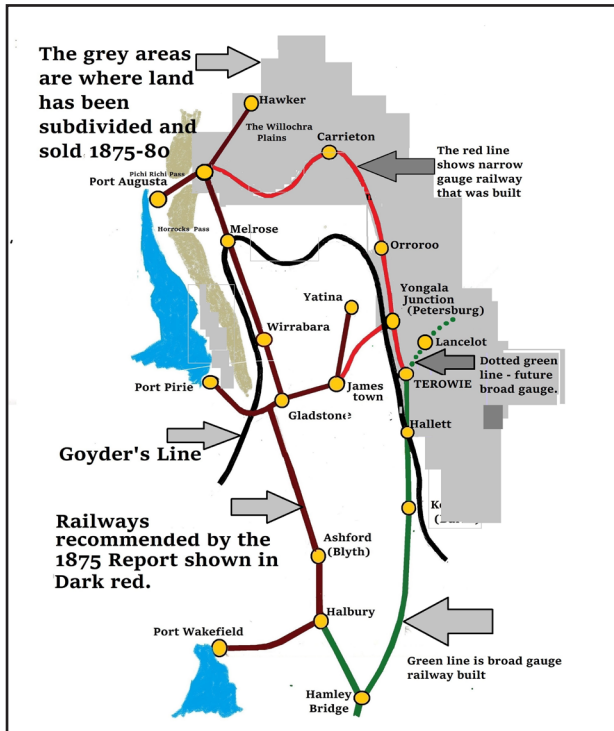
Beyond Clare was mainly pastoral country but the Government was alert to the potential for closer settlement, for which reason it was moving ahead with opening of the lands for closer settlement and farming. The farmers would need economical transport for their produce and hence the Government became busy scheming new but cheap (narrow gauge) railways.

The 1870s was a decade that delivered a run of good seasons, better than anything that had been seen in earlier times. In the late 1860s the Lands Department had restricted the regions that had been subdivided because it believed that the limit of the good country had been reached. But with the good seasons of the 1870s and farmers clamouring for land, there was an easing of policy about 1875-6. There was a conviction that rain followed the plough. That the breaking up of the hard topsoil, by some science, yet unknown, brought the rain. The seasons of 1877 and 1878 continued with bountiful crops, and the Government pushed forward with further subdivision and auctions.

The Government over-ruled Henry Mais' plan to have the break-of-gauge at Balaklava. They were silent on the matter of the £16,000 they were saving, but offered the excuse that this was a matter of Government policy. That policy seemed to be one of directing commerce towards Port Wakefield.

The Moonta people were not happy. They wanted a faster connection. They probably had good reason. To make the trip to Adelaide they had to be out of bed in the small hours to make the departure of the railway tram that would deliver them to Wallaroo, from which the train journey to Adelaide occupied about 7 hours. It was a journey of about 134 miles, which was an average rate of travel of about 19 miles per hour. They reasoned that they deserved better and had lobbied hard for a direct railway south from Port Wakefield. That would have reduced the journey to about 115 miles. That early morning departure time of the tram varied but to give the extreme example, in 1886 it was 3.45 am.





The railway connecting Hamley Bridge and Balaklava was opened on 15 January 1880 and ushered in with it, the era of the (serious) break-of-gauge for Australia. As the official party was proceeding towards Hamley Bridge somewhere along the line, in the carriage full of officials, there was unofficial chatter that the railway about to be opened that day had been a mistake. The unofficial response by an unnamed member was probably not intended for the press, but did find its way into the press coverage of the event. From the ***South Australian Register*, January 1880:**

However, even if a mistake had been made - which seemed by no means certain to the Commissioners - it is now too late to remedy it, and as one of the members suggested, it is useless now crying over spilt milk.

It did not take long for the realisation that a mistake had been made - or more correctly a procession of mistakes. Within two weeks there was mention (***Burra Record* - 30 January 1880**) of a third rail to Adelaide. That noise only got louder and in 1884 the Government instructed Henry Mais to provide costings and recommendations. Of course, by this time they had Terowie to consider in addition to Hamley Bridge. Mais found, much as Thomas Higinbotham had found in Victoria a decade before, that the third rail was not as easy as it sounded.

When we look at the chart on page 7 we can see that 1889 was the year of greatest havoc.

Of those 1,529 references, about 60% were in newspapers published in South Australia, and about 30% in New South Wales. Noting that this was the year of the break-of-gauge at Wallangarra (on the NSW/Qld border), we find that the Queensland contribution was less than 2%. Given that Victorians had plenty to grumble about in changing trains at Albury the contribution of their newspapers was about 4%.

It was Terowie that was the source of most of this havoc.

TEROWIE

We can't deal with Terowie until we have dealt with Goyder.

George Woodroffe Goyder was the Surveyor-General and head of the Lands Department that was responsible for setting rents for pastoral leases and the subdivision of Crown land for closer settlement. The season of 1865 had yielded a poor wheat crop. The Government responded by sending Goyder north to examine the country and report on the suitability of the region for closer settlement and cropping. Goyder studied patterns of native vegetation and in 1866 presented his report. Central to that report was a line on the map, beyond which he considered the land would not reliably support agriculture. This was then known as Goyder's Line of rainfall.

Over the next few years there was no land beyond Goyder's line opened for closer settlement. But there were farmers eager for more land and the Government was eager to see some monetary flow into its coffers. It was noted that it did rain on the other side of Goyder's line. Goyder and his line eventually became the source of ridicule, and by 1877 large tracts of land beyond Goyder's line were opened. Much of those bountiful harvests of 1877 and 1878 were from the other side of Goyder's Line.

The Railway Commission had reported in 1875. The map shows the lines that were recommended for the north of the colony. Note that most of those railways were inside Goyder's line. But the farmers who had taken up land beyond Goyder's line needed a means to get the wheat to the port.

The broad-gauge railway had been extended to Hallett in 1878. It was 120 miles from Hallett to Port Adelaide. The report of the Railway Commission had recommended extension of the broad gauge trunk line initially to Gottlieb's Well (Terowie) and subsequently to Manna Hill and the NSW boundary and with a nebulous branch north from Manna Hill.

There became almost an obsession with the Port Augusta Railway and the opening up of the Willochra Plain, north of Quorn. Terowie and Yarcowie were on the wrong side of Goyder's line. So too, the poor farmers further north on the Willochra Plain. They put their faith in prayer. However the drought set in and continued in 1880, 1881, and 1882. Driving through the Willochra Plain now, the only reminders of past human endeavour are ruined farm houses and graveyards.

According to the Boucaut plan the Port Pirie line was to be extended to Yatina, which was just inside Goyder's line. In those few years in the mid 1870s Goyder's line no longer mattered. There needed to be railways into the new settled areas. Eventually it emerged that South Australia was building its railways but not according to any plan. They bungled along from one railway to the next. They justified their actions as following the pattern of railway development in India where light feeder railways junctioned at stations along those trunk routes. The pattern in India had been to build the trunk routes first, and then build the feeder lines. South Australia did it the other way round.

They had only vague ideas where these trunk routes would go and the gauge that they chose for the trunk lines seemed to vary according to what direction the wind was blowing on the day.

Returning to that chart on page 7 and the record numbers in 1889, (mostly Terowie). Why Terowie?

We had witnessed at Hamley Bridge, a decision that was based on 'the natural flow of commerce'. What that really meant was that it was the cheapest and easiest but not necessarily the shortest. With the break-of-gauge at Hamley Bridge it would see the produce from the land, served by the new railway, going to Port Wakefield. If Henry Mais had won the day and the break-of-gauge had been established at Balaklava, the natural flow of that traffic would have seen it go to Adelaide. We can only assume that Port Wakefield interests had Premier Colton's better ear. This was despite Port Wakefield being long recognised as too shallow and not an ideal port for loading wheat.

A similar situation was brewing in the country to the east of Jamestown. The unit of land survey was the 'Hundred', representing a survey of about 100 square miles. Within each Hundred there was a township, sometimes having the same name as the surveyed Hundred. Should the wheat go to Port Pirie or Adelaide? Meinig, in *The Margins of the Good Earth*, wrote that wheat had a particular propensity to seek out the closest port. Furthermore, it has been my own observation that there seemed to be an unwritten rule that ensured not one grain of wheat should have its passage to the port interrupted by a break-of-gauge. There may have been sound reason for that. Early photographs show train-loads of bagged wheat, but without tarpaulins to protect from the rain. The break-of-gauge would have caused delay and increased the risk of rain damage.

Small townships rapidly sprouted in this country. Terowie had its first hotel in 1873. The next settlement to the north-east was Lancelot, that could be described as a true frontier outpost on the track to the Barrier Ranges. It could make a case for being on Boucaut's broad-gauge railway to Manna Hill. It would be about 150 miles to Port Adelaide. If the railway to Jamestown was extended to Lancelot it would be only about 85 miles to Port Pirie.

But it was a feature of the topography in this country that there were many north-south ridges. It was easier to build railways and roads that ran north-south. East west corridors would need to cross these ridges and as a consequence were costly to build and operate.

People began talking about the two lines meeting at Lancelot and this notion even received some official status when the surveyors pegged out Lancelot as one of the largest townships in the north. But there was another railway survey that was pending. This was the main trunk line connecting Adelaide to Port Augusta. Lancelot, it seemed had the best of both. Its wheat could go to Port Pirie, and its people could enjoy the benefits of being connected to the metropolis.

The last leg of the broad gauge main trunk line, from Hallett to Terowie had been authorised in 1877. It couldn't go any further because there was no clear direction of which way it should go. It had been built with the clear intention that it would be extended north to Lancelot and beyond, but a look at the map shows that there had been a change of mind. This was an expensive change of mind, both in terms of construction and ongoing operation.

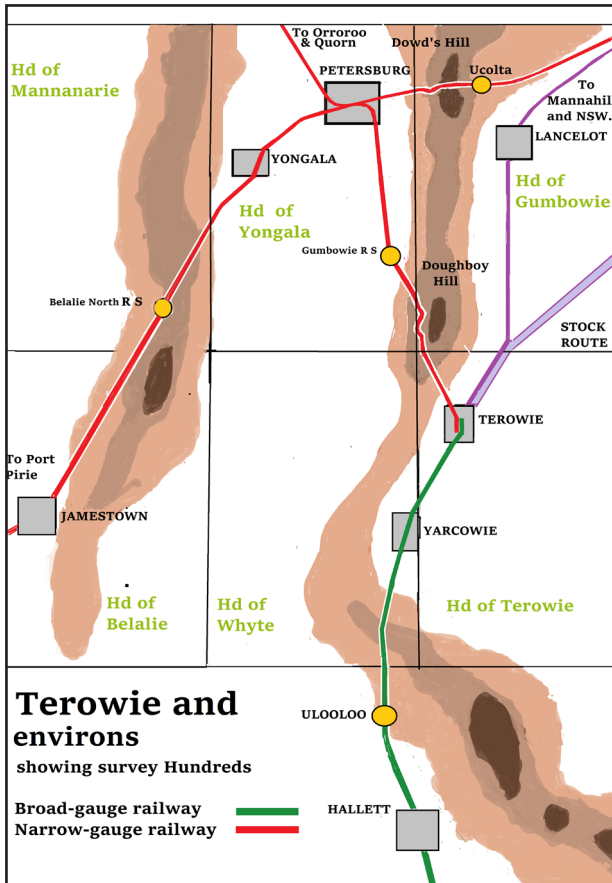
At Lancelot there had been an early spurt in building and population. In June 1879 it was reported that there was construction well advanced for a store and a hotel.

What was less obvious to the buyers looking at the cadastral map was the north-south ridge immediately west of Lancelot. To the railway surveyors it was not the best place to have a junction.

Further north at Orroroo the wheat had to pursue a natural flow to Port Pirie. If the broad gauge trunk line was to be extended further north, the Orroroo farmers would have faced a 176 mile journey for their wheat to Adelaide or the alternative of about half that distance to Port Pirie with a break-of-gauge at Lancelot or wherever the junction of the systems occurred.



PORT WAKEFIELD. A Parliamentary enquiry asked what would be involved in deepening the port. The reply was that they would need to deepen the whole gulf. **STATE LIBRARY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA. PRG 280/1/11/35 (1).**



To get the railway over the range required a large cutting and a sweeping reverse curve. It also introduced a 1:50 gradient which restricted loadings for this section. So, to get the Orroroo wheat to Port Pirie and the wheat from Terowie/Yarcowie along the railway could only happen by using the 3 ft 6 in gauge.

The main trunk line that was to run north from Terowie was to connect with the Port Augusta line at Pichi Richi (Quorn). The railway surveyors could not find a way to run this trunk line to Lancelot, and instead were able to make the junction near the north-east corner of the Hundred of Yongala. They called it Yongala Junction.

The wheat haul from Hallett was comparable to the haul to Port Pirie. The latter would have involved a break-of-gauge which would have exposed it to spillage or delay.

Yongala Junction was designed so that all the wheat from the wider locality would go to Port Pirie. Even the wheat from Terowie would flow to Port Pirie. It would be a long way around but 87 miles was shorter than the 140-mile haul to Adelaide.

Lancelot missed out and eventually faded away. There had been no Government township at Yongala Junction. This presented an opportunity for a private township survey. Its promoter named it after the original land holder, Peter Koch. It became Petersburg.

There was a good source of water at Terowie. It's name had been an aboriginal word for 'hidden water'. That had worked in its favour as it had become a watering place on the stock route from New South Wales. The water was also suitable for locomotive purposes and supplied the Terowie locomotive depot. Petersburg also needed a locomotive depot. Thus, there were two major locomotive depots 14 miles apart. That was an obvious inefficiency.

The season of 1878 was a reasonable one for the farmers at Terowie and neighbouring Yarcowie. They lamented that the railway was not ready to take their crop away. But the following season was not favourable and when the railway from Hallett to Terowie was opened in 1880 those farmers had the means to send the wheat south but no wheat to send. There was a reluctance by both farmers and the press to mention the word 'drought' but the following year brought no respite. And by the time the drought years of 1880, 1881 and 1882 had passed all had learned the hard lesson of the folly of trying to grow wheat around Terowie and Yarcowie.

When the broad-gauge line to Terowie was opened in May 1881, South Australia had already had 6 months of Hamley Bridge experience. The opening of the broad-gauge railway to Terowie was a short event where the Treasurer, Hon. William Rounsevell, who was also one of the members for Burra, gave a short address.

TRANS-SHIPMENT AT TEROWIE. There is no information about what they were shovelling. We suspect that this 1909 scene was posed, but it is testimony to the numbers of the workforce at Terowie. STATE LIBRARY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA B-32911.



He was probably sensing a growing sentiment of discontent over the break-of-gauge problem. He could not have officiated at Terowie without mention of the break-of-gauge. He offered a half promise:

He had one regret in connection with the work, and that was that they had consented to the idea of a break of gauge – (cheers) – but he trusted that when the rolling stock had become somewhat worn the Parliament would see its way clear to take up the rails and have one uniform gauge for our colony (Cheers).

But there was no such plan nor policy.

At first sight it would have seemed logical to extend the broad-gauge line to Yongala Junction. The reason was to get the farmers' wheat to the port. From Terowie to Adelaide was 140 miles. From Terowie to Port Pirie, even though it was a round about journey, was much less. These railways had been built for no other purpose than the farmers and their wheat. But by the time they were built there was very little wheat coming out of the district.

This chronology tells of the ups and downs of Terowie:

1880, 15 December. Broad-gauge railway opened from Hallett to Terowie and narrow-gauge railway from Jamestown to Yongala Junction opened on the same day.

1881, 11 May. Opening of Terowie to Petersburg railway. Terowie becomes the third break-of-gauge in South Australia.

1881, 22 November. Opening of railway from Orroroo to Petersburg.

1882, 17 May. Opening of railway from Orroroo to Pichi Richi (Quorn) concurrent with the opening of the railway to Farina.

1884, 2 February. Railway extended from Farina to Hergott Springs. This was well into pastoral country and generated a lot of wool and livestock traffic which was mostly destined for Adelaide and thus needed transshipping at Terowie. Harking back to that havoc chart on page 7, we can see that the problems started to take off about 1884. There was a lot happening.

1884. Parliament requested a report from the Engineer-in-Chief regarding the costs and suitability of a third rail to Adelaide. The report did not recommend it. It would be costly to construct due to the complexity of track which would not be possible to fit in to the existing yard space at Adelaide and Port Adelaide. These would need completely separate yards and would need much investment in narrow-gauge rolling stock.

1884, 29 July. The first mention in a newspaper of a new mine called the Broken Hill. (*The Express and Telegraph*).

1884, November. Terowie was selected as the starting point of a railway to the Barrier Ranges but there was an irregularity in the Parliamentary voting process. The matter was put before the House again a week later.

This time the decision was in favour of Petersburg. When the word came through to Petersburg that evening the town went on a celebratory riot.

1885, 20 June. Broken Hill Proprietary issues first prospectus.

1885, October. There were about 200 teams on the track between Terowie and Silverton. Ores heading south and general merchandise to the mining district, **Leader (Melbourne) 17 October 1885.**

1886, 8 May. Broken Hill Proprietary commenced smelting at Broken Hill. Prior to this all ore was sent via Adelaide to Spottiswoode in Melbourne.

1886, 5 June. From the *South Australian Register*. Now, this is where the story gets interesting (JLW). The Petersburg community could see there were problems with the break-of-gauge that were being felt by travellers and merchants further up the line and could see advantage (for Petersburg, at least) by extending the broad gauge and having the break-of-gauge at Petersburg. They had a deputation present the case to the Commissioner of Public Works, (Hon. J B Spence). It was apparent that transshipment had become quite an industry in Terowie, and a wider economy than those employed by the railways. The Commissioner advised that it was a matter that required some thought and that 'the Terowie people would object to the changes'.

1887, 14 June. Railway from Petersburg to NSW border open.

1888, 12 January. The railway operated by the Silverton Tramway Company from Cockburn to Broken Hill was opened.

1889, November. The Broken Hill Proprietary established a refinery at Port Pirie.

From Silver to Steel – the Romance of the Broken Hill Proprietary, by Roy Bridges, was published as the Company's official history in 1920. It explains the decision to site the refinery:

In order to facilitate shipments on the Proprietary's behalf it was decided first to establish an agency at Port Adelaide. But in weighing the advantages of Port Adelaide against Port Pirie, the board found that the latter port was better suited for its purposes – for the importation of its mine timber and coal and for exports of the products of the mine. The freight charges through Port Pirie were lower and no break of gauge (that otherwise would have) increased the cost of hauling ores and supplies. The board accordingly secured wharf accommodation at Port Pirie.

On the decision to erect the refinery the board did not immediately select the site for the works but the break of gauge at Terowie and the initial cost of filling in any site offering at Port Adelaide induced the board to choose Port Pirie.

Thus, the break-of-gauge at Terowie was significant in the genesis of South Australia's first provincial city, although there has been ongoing grief in recent time about having a lead smelter at the end of Port Pirie's main street. There could have been a greater cause of grief if the smelter had been built at Port Adelaide.

1891, 7 January. The Great Northern Railway to Oodnadatta opened. All traffic between Oodnadatta and Adelaide was trans-shipped at Terowie.

1898, 4 August. The South Australian Register. reported Port Pirie and Broken Hill had developed respectable town councils, who were advocating better transport arrangements for their people, and of course, the Terowie break-of-gauge was high on their list. Again Petersburg acted with a deputation that waited upon the Commissioner of Public Works, Hon. J J Jenkins. But there was a sharp rebuke from Terowie that extending the broad gauge to Petersburg 'would wreck Terowie and ruin its inhabitants'. They concluded by claiming that the Petersburg petition had been 'conceived in selfishness'.

1904, 29 July. Reported by the *Advertiser*, another move from Petersburg interests to extend the broad gauge. At Petersburg there was the Petersburg Traders Association and at Terowie the folk had formed the Vigilance Committee. Broken Hill had thrown its support behind Petersburg and was even calling for the broad gauge to be extended to the border. It seems that they had a matching understanding by the Silverton Tramway Company that they would extend the broad gauge to Broken Hill. Port Pirie was also supporting this move but was less forceful in its approach.

1917, October. Opening of the Trans-Australian Railway between Port Augusta and Kalgoorlie. All traffic to Adelaide was via Terowie.

1925 Chief Commissioner Webb's railway rehabilitation scheme saw few improvements to the narrow-gauge system. The one major project was the roundhouse at Peterborough*. There was no official plan for extending the broad gauge to Peterborough, but it was evidently something that Webb had planned for the future. Broad-gauge track was laid on the turntable and the roads leading into the bays.

*In 1918 Petersburg was renamed Peterborough as part of a campaign to purge Germanic-sounding place names.

THE PETERBOROUGH ROUNDHOUSE c1925-1926. The broad-gauge rails were later lifted.

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"Something will undoubtedly turn up."

This is the optimism that animates the northern town of Terowie as its decline as a railway centre sets in.

The widening of the track between Terowie and Peterborough will reduce Terowie to a whistle stop, displacing the large body of railwaymen employed on break of gauge operations.

Breathes there a veteran of World War II, who headed north by train whose memory is not stirred by the mention of Terowie?

Terowie, they will tell you, was the place where troops from Adelaide on their way to Alice Springs and Darwin were bundled out of the train, and according to the time of year, sweated or froze for days on end waiting for a train to take them on the next stage of their journey.

They told me at Terowie that some of those men might now treasure happy memories of Terowie, but they did not give that impression in 1926.

The eminent conductor, Mr. Joseph Post (now director of the NSW Conservatorium in Sydney) was for a time Terowie's camp major, and he summed up Terowie as "the dust bowl of Australia."

But Terowie, remember, was also the place where grim-faced Gen. Douglas MacArthur on March 20, 1942, made his historic declaration to the Press assembled there:

"I came out of Bataan and I SHALL RETURN."

It was from little Terowie that he flung his promise to the Philippines and his challenge to Japan.

Along a deserted, dusty road that had once echoed to the tramp of legions of marching men I went in search of Mr. Ern Purdey. He is caretaker of the railwaymen's barracks.

Mr. Purdey, 80, said: "Terowie has always had us and down, but mark my words, these barracks will not be empty for long. Something will undoubtedly turn up."

MR. WILBUR BESANKO (left) and Mr. "Ern" Purdey, two Terowie identities, are confident something will be done to save their town.

9d. an hour the Hallett District Council. Mr. Wilbur Besanko (P who, with Mr. Hodden and Mr. "Matt" Redden, G, a tinge of bitterness, Mr. Jack Noack called that five years ago he and Mr. Hodden and

From the *Sunday Mail*. 26 November 1966.

Webb is reported as saying that he considered conversion of the Broken Hill line to broad gauge but did not pursue it because the information that he was given was that the Broken Hill mines only had reserves to last another twenty years.

1926, 18 September. The Observer reported another move, this time by the Railways Standing Committee, to extend the broad gauge. At the Peterborough meeting, the Members of the Railways Standing Committee were told of major problems arising from the trans-shipment at Terowie. There was delay, with consignments taking 'five to eight and even up to ten days'. It was claimed that even perishable goods were 'hung up' for five or six days. They were also told of goods that had been damaged. Fibrous plaster was a common casualty. This took the form of ceiling mouldings that were easily damaged. Terowie seems to have been the only break-of-gauge location where the magnitude of the trans-shipment developed into an industry that pervaded the town to the extent that the numbers involved created such noise that it was just not possible to shut down Terowie without causing a major social convulsion.

1954. The population of Terowie was reported to be 1,154.

1966. Terowie learns its fate and is resigned to the inevitability from 1970 that it will no longer be a break-of-gauge station, but remains optimistic that something will turn up.

1970, 12 January. The opening of the broad gauge from Terowie to Peterborough concurrent with the opening of the standard-gauge railway from Broken Hill to Port Pirie.

1982. Standard gauge from Crystal Brook to Adelaide (Dry Creek), effectively leaving the broad-gauge line to Peterborough only for shifting the wheat from stations along that line. Closure of the bogie exchange at Peterborough.

1986 Cessation of passenger services to Peterborough via Burra and Terowie.

1987 Closure of the railway from Hallett to Peterborough.