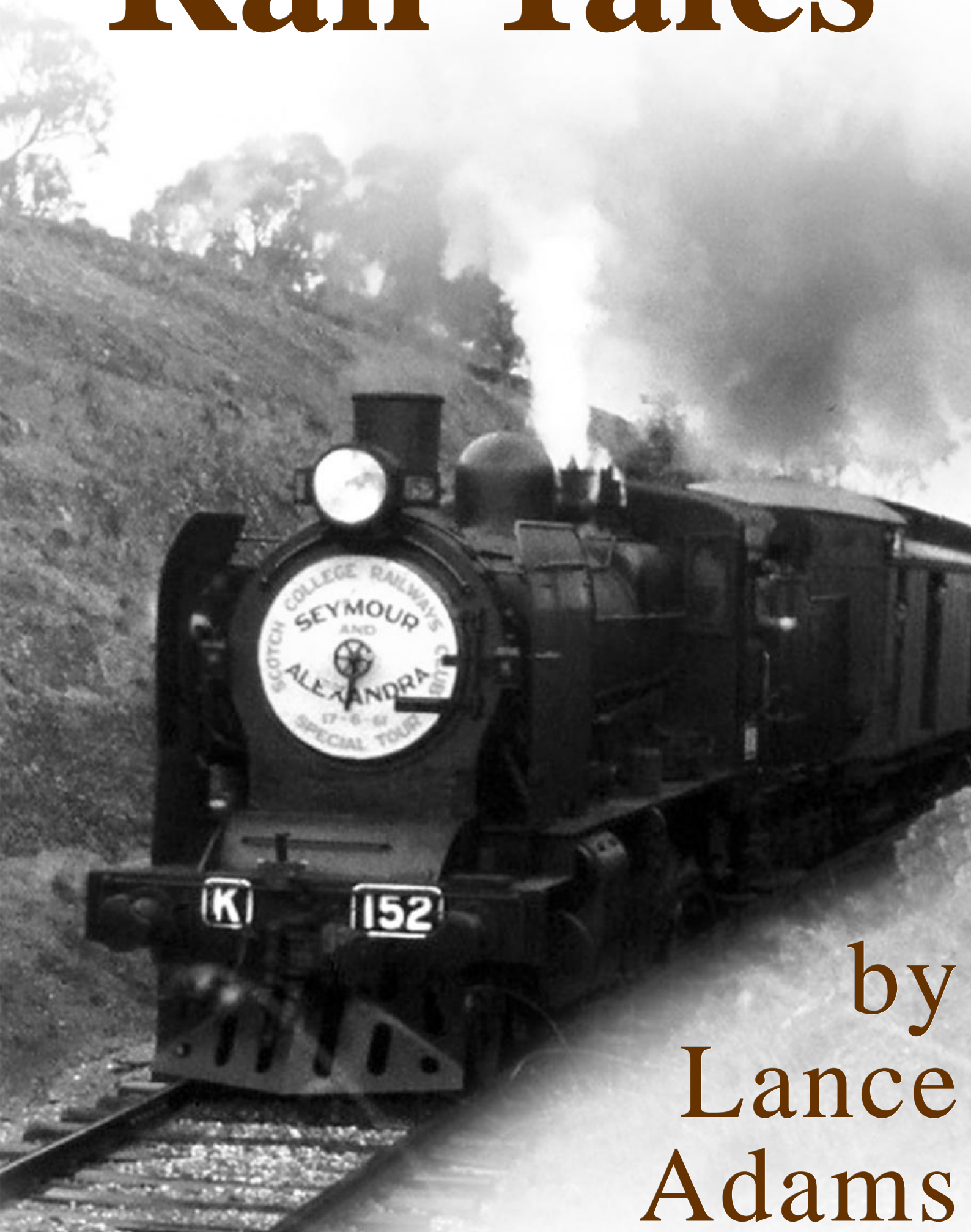


Rail Tales



by
Lance
Adams

RAIL TALES

© Lance Adams

As a 15 year old lad, I was first employed by the Victorian Railways as a supernumerary engine cleaner at the Melbourne depot. After additional training at the Bendigo Locomotive Depot in practical operation of steam locomotives, as well as receiving basic theory training in Rules and Regulations, Westinghouse brake and engine working, I was thus qualified to act in the higher grade as a locomotive fireman. I then spent the following 12 months at the Bendigo Locomotive Depot. By age 17 I was being sent as required to various locations throughout the State to relieve as a Fireman. By the early 1960s, aged 18, I had been appointed to a regular Fireman's position at Cudgewa, out from Tallangatta in the High Country.

When the Railway Department required a temporary Fireman to cover a holiday relief at Yea, and as they had someone in mind to go to Cudgewa, I was asked to fill in at Yea for four weeks. Wanting to get out of the isolation of the High Country, I accepted the temporary posting and came to Yea. The regular Yea Fireman received instructions on his term of leave that he was to be promoted and never returned to Yea. I was offered his position as a permanent posting, which I accepted, satisfying everyone.

So commenced a lengthy time for me on the Upper Goulburn Branch. By 1970, I was falling due for a driver's examination in readiness for a promotion and a compulsory transfer to Seymour, Benalla or Wodonga was imminent. In the meantime a job was called for a Fireman at Dandenong, on the local yard shunting engine. I applied and was successful as the Senior applicant.

The Railway Department were not very pleased about this pending appointment, and put a stipulation on the transfer that he must be prepared to act as a Steam Locomotive Fireman on Puffing Billy as required. Puffing Billy was crewed in those days by Victorian Railways engine crews. This also meant that when I was to be examined for locomotive driver, that I would also have to do the full steam locomotive exam, which had been phased out some years earlier. So commenced a long working association for me with the Puffing Billy organisation. I ended up being the last VR driver to be qualified in steam. The younger drivers behind me were not. I felt I was like *the last of the Mohicans*.

Continued...

RAIL TALES

© Lance Adams

In 1974 I transferred from the locomotives in a desperate attempt for a drivers classification and took a position as state relieving Rail Motor Driver. I returned to driving locomotives in 1977 and worked on the Mansfield Branch and Alexandra line again, driving both locomotives and rail motors until the line was decommissioned in November 1978.

When the Mansfield, Alexandra line ceased operation, I was compulsorily transferred into Seymour Locomotive Depot as a Locomotive Driver. In early 1979 I was promoted to the position of Classroom Instructor at the Seymour Locomotive Depot for the Driver's School, in charge of engineman's training. During my tenure in this position I achieved a 100 percent pass rates, for all levels of examination on a first attempt, which was the highest pass rate in the state.

In 1984, I was recruited by the Melbourne Suburban Train Services to train their driver's a position I held until forced into retirement in 2012 by ill health. During this time, I continued to drive Puffing Billy and took over their engineman's training program and conducted classroom instruction and practical tuition on Steam Locomotives.



A collection of articles written by Lance Adams of Yea
and published in the free Artworkz eSplash Magazine

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UP TRAINS AND DOWN TRAINS

HOW THE MELBOURNE TRAINS GOT THEIR SOUND

TRAWOOL & BALHAM

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA

When the Tallarook–Yea Line opened in 1883 the intermediate locations were 5 Mile Gate House, Trawool, 9 Mile Gate House, Kerrisdale and Homewood.

Later, after the opening of the line an additional station, Wrights Siding (later renamed Granite) was added to service. It was a granite quarry supplying granite stone to the monumental trade. This location was about 3 km on the Downside of Trawool.

Over its existence, Granite had two separate stations. The first one situated on the Upside of the line on the Upend of Falls Creek (recently renamed Trawool Creek) and a later replacement station which was situated on the Downside of the line, at the Downend of the Falls Creek Bridge. Both platform structures were of wooden construction. Just what date the replacement station was brought into use I don't know.

Left is an early photo taken circa 1920 of a Tallarook–Yea hauled by a DD class loco on a mixed train standing at the second Granite platform. This station ceased to exist from the 1950s. This location was situated right at the bottom of the steepest pull on the line (the Granite bank) and was spoken about often by 1950s local enginemen as being a particularly difficult, slippery climb when coming from a standing start on a frosty morning.



This station had long been removed when I came on to the line firing in the 60s. Not much remains at this location now, although an earthen mound of dirt, exists on the Upside of the former line near Trawool Creek. This had nothing to do with the Granite Station site, and its origins are unknown to me at present.

Another station that did not survive the 87 years on the Mansfield extension was *Balham*.

This was located just past the Cheviot Tunnel and was originally a construction siding for the line when it was being built in the late 1880s early 1890s. A large homestead in the area was *Balham* who utilised this siding almost exclusively. In the early 1890s, this *Balham Homestead* made application to the railways department for the spartan amenities at this location to be upgraded to a full station.

The Railway Department stated that if the station was to be upgraded, the *Balham Homestead* would have to bear the expense and not the Railway Department. A standoff took place and the siding and site were consequently removed. When I first came on the line some 70 years after Balham was removed, the previous layout and wooden platform face were clearly visible. This area was severely ravaged in the bushfires of January 1969 and precious little now remains. A walk around the area today would still turn up some archaeological gems.

Lance Adams
Retired special class Locomotive driver
Former Yea Engineman
Yea

RAILING THE TUNNEL

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA

After the devastating January 69' Bushfires that nearly wiped us out during an 'Up Alexandra' goods trip, the tunnel on top of Balham Hill (Cheviot Tunnel) needed a complete relay after raging fires ripped through it and destroyed the track. Apart from fodder relief trains that were organised within days, the downside of the tunnel and the tunnel area required considerable work to get the railway back operational again.

I was rostered on a works train, which was one of the first to run north of Yea to convey replacement heavy rails to the tunnel site. It was a particularly blowy day and the works gang (Local and Special) working in the actual tunnel had set up tarpaulins to slow the flow of strong wind through the tunnel. They had also set up a makeshift lighting system which was anchored to the tunnel walls, so it would illuminate their operation.

I managed to get away from the engine a little bit for a quick inspection and witnessed an amazing sight. To get the new sleepers in position in the confines of the narrow tunnel, the gang removed a small amount of old ballast from where they had started, placed it on a hand trolley and pushed it outside the portal. After placing the replacement sleepers long ways in the piece devoid of ballast, they would then swivel them around. The ballast removed from the next section was then back filled. This was repeated until the whole job was completed.

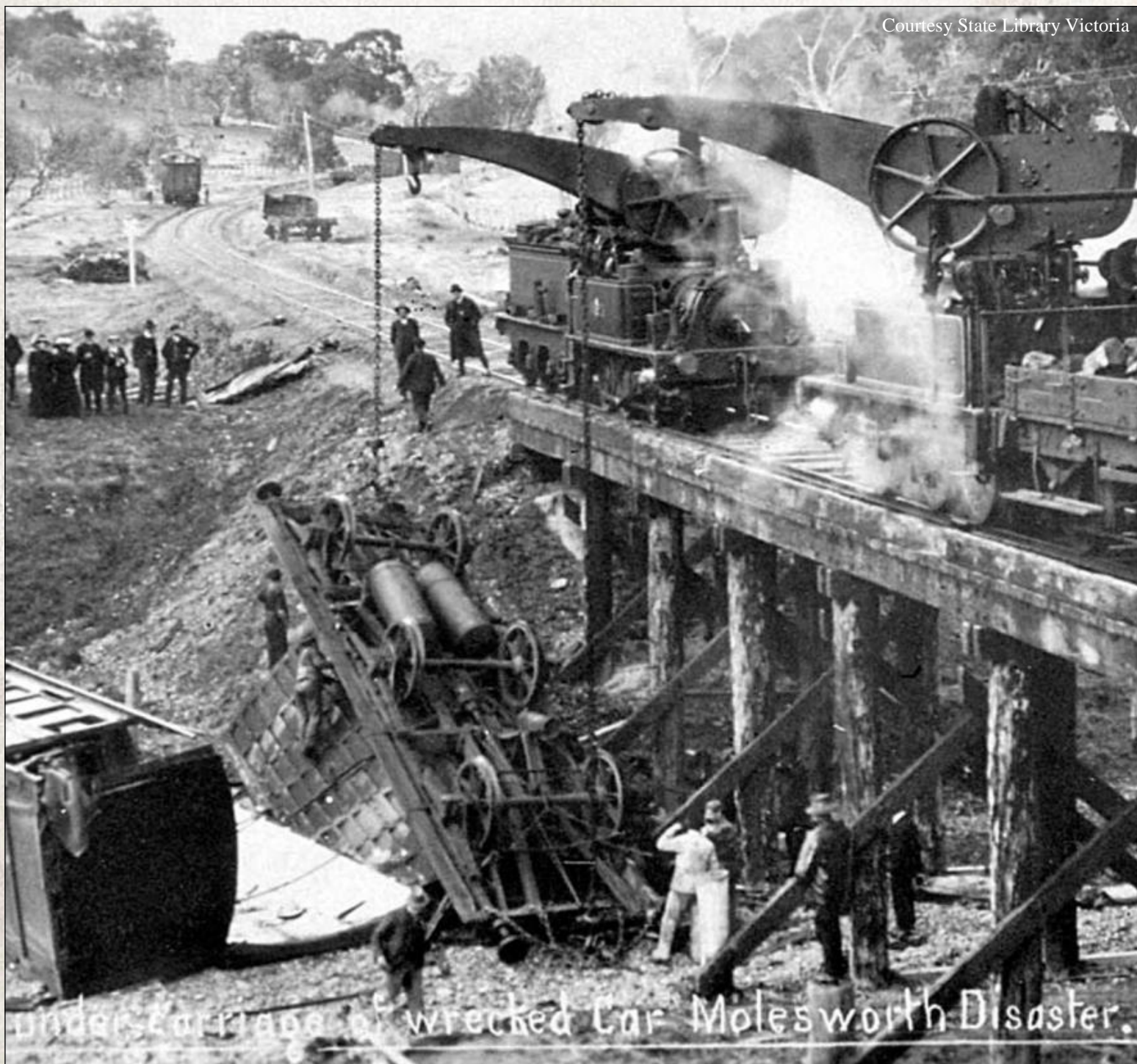
New bluestone ballast was laid down from a ballast train some months later and the original river ballast replaced. The remains of the heavy bluestone ballast could still be clearly seen recently with the conversion of the formation to a rail trail which saw the former right of way sealed with bitumen.

Many other ballast trains ran to areas affected by this devastating fire, particularly the rebuild of the destroyed small span bridge at 'Harvey's Gully' (Culvert) just on the Down side of Balham, where a deviation into the creek bed was constructed. I ran one of the first trains that ventured into this deviation, after it was completed. It was 0430 in the morning and the headlight of the 'T' class did not light up the track at all, the Koalas were dazzled though! It was quite a drop and rise and how we didn't experience a high and low divide at each crest and traversing the actual creek, amazes me to this day.

I have been back to this site a few times over the years and precious little remains of this deviation except the Steel Pipe culvert that replaced the original burnt down structure of about 5 or 6 spans, which is still there.

This was the site of a rail accident back in September 1911 when a Mansfield bound train suffered a broken axle and toppled off the Culvert (image below).

Lance Adams
Retired special class Locomotive driver
Former Yea Engineman
Yea



Courtesy State Library Victoria

CONNECTION FROM CATHKIN

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA

The connection from Cathkin to Alexandra Road Station (also known as Rhodes, Lily, Koriella) commenced with a single connecting train from the junction at Cathkin right from the opening of the Mansfield line, with a train leaving Cathkin around 12.30 pm and returning around 5.30 pm. Alexandra bound passengers and goods had to complete or commence their journeys by horse drawn stage coaches or drays. In the early 1890s this service had increased to both a morning and afternoon run from Alexandra Road. By 1895 things were not going well for the fledgling service to Alexandra and the line was subsequently closed to all traffic.



At Cathkin on switch trip rumming

Following deputations and agitation from locals to the Victorian Parliament (see editions of the Yea Chronicle of the time for details) a plan and permanent survey was conducted which saw the railway receive its final extension from Alexandra

Road, through Eglinton Cutting and Victoria Gap to Alexandra in 1909. The station building at Alexandra dates from this period, and the current building has that era's look to it.

When the initial service to Alexandra Road commenced, Cathkin sported a back platform dock road, which was removed in the period 1895–1909. I never saw any trace of this former road, but I know of its existence. Koriella likewise dramatically changed around this time period too. It originally had four roads and there is evidence of two turntables clearly distinguishable at both ends of the track arrangement on separate sides and ends of the yard.

In my time on the line, Koriella was a simple loop siding equipped with staff



Shunts at Koriella after 1969 Bushfire

Approaching Koriella



locks at both ends. Traces of the former four track, and two separate turntable layout were clearly discernible. I do not know what can be seen now as I have been nowhere near the place in decades.

Cathkin was dramatically altered in 1949, with the disconnection of the 50 ft turntable and the connection to the Alexandra line changed. An Annette locked down home departure signal on the Alexandra line was abolished too.

Cathkin remained in its final guise until closure in 1978. The mixed train service (goods and passenger car attached) was withdrawn in 1945, and the regular goods train ran on Mondays and Wednesdays until February 1978 after which trains ran on an 'as required' basis. The last revenue goods train operating in August 1978 was hauled by Y131. A clearing train hauled by Y166 ran in October 1978. The Alexandra and Mansfield lines were officially closed to all traffic in November 1978 so bringing to an end rail services in this area.

Lance Adams
Retired special class Locomotive driver
Former Yea Engineman
Yea

T405 at Alexandra



UPSIDE / DOWNSIDE

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 8 SEPTEMBER 2017

The terminology Up refers to a train going towards Melbourne, and the term Down refers to a train coming from Melbourne. This system is archaic and does have anomalies. A train can change designation on the move. An example of this would be an ex-Geelong train (Up) proceeding around the Brooklyn loop line and going on to Sunshine. The moment this train passes through Brooklyn it immediately becomes a Down train, with a Down number.

63RM at Cathkin Railway Station. In this instance the ETM (End of Train Marker) is displayed (white round disk). This means it is heading to Mansfield, making this an Down train.

Copyright © Bob Wilson



Up trains have even numbers whilst down trains have odd numbers. This system of numbering trains has changed significantly in recent years with the introduction of various rail operators working across the continent of Australia. The numbers of Interstate trains are now designated with numbers and letters to avoid confusion.

I give an example here, of 2MP7. The 2 designates the number of the train on its originating day, while M describes the originating city (Melbourne). The P describes the destination city (Perth), with the 7 denoting the day of the week (Saturday). Trains within Victoria use a different system, with the prefix 8 for goods (Freight) trains and 9 for Passenger services. Three more digits are added thereafter to give a 4-digit train describer number, still using the odds and even number system for final designation. The second digit is relevant for the line the train is operating on, while the final 2 numbers are for the train itself (odd or even). It would be easy to work out 4MB3.

The terms 'Upside' or 'Downside' are railway words, designating which side of the line is being referred to. For instance, if we were travelling in a Down heading away from Melbourne, the Downside of the line would be on the left of the train, facing towards the direction of travel. For example, the Yea Station is on the Downside of the line, while the Alexandra station is on the 'Upside' of the line.

When referring to specific locations, the use of the terminology 'Upend' and 'Downend' are used to be specific as to the location of things. For instance, at Cathkin the Alexandra line branched off at the Downend of the yard and likewise at Alexandra, the Rubicon Timber Tramway sidings were also at the Downend (furthered from Melbourne). While the SEC Pole Road was at the 'Upend' of the yard, in a small loop siding near a loading crane.

Lance Adams
Retired special class Locomotive driver
Former Yea Engineman
Yea

RIDING SAMSON AT YARCK

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 25 FEBRUARY 2017

I was running an 0400 Yea to Mansfield goods train back in the 1970s, and after running through (No shunts) to Yarck, I arrived at Yarck just after 0500, and it was still quite dark. A shunt was required to place two stock trucks into the stock loading road, which was an extension off the loop siding. Up trains usually work from the Up end of the yard and Down trains consequently from the Down end of the yard. However for this move it was expedient to place the trucks into the stock siding from the Up end points, so as to avoid hauling any vehicles in the loop siding out first.

At the time, Yarck had a railway residence which was occupied by the local track repairer, and whose wife just happened to be the station caretaker. This couple, apart from having a tribe of out of control kids, had a collection of various animal pets. One of these exotic pets was a huge Merino stud ram named Samson. I had known Samson for sometime and he took an instant dislike to me from day one—so I was generally very wary of him.

We completed the required shunting movement into the livestock siding this particular morning as quietly as possible, so we didn't disturb anyone. We quietly put the locomotive back on the head of the train. Westinghouse Air Brake Instructions require me (the driver) to carry out a visual inspection of the re-coupling before departure. I alighted the locomotive to carry out this procedure and was on the ground examining the first truck, when I became aware of a presence near me in the darkness. I turned around slightly and got a glimpse of Samson running at full pace, with his head down in a charge.

He hit me with a mighty force and I had little time to brace myself. The impact knocked me into a nearby wet drain, and I had to sit in wet overalls until I got home to Yea some 12 hours later. This head butt resulted in an injury to my left hip which I am still getting stabbing shooting pains from to this day. I didn't submit an accident/injury report of the incident as I had visions of a head office clerk reading the report of how the driver of a Mansfield bound train injured his hip in a confrontation with a ram at Yarck.

He who laughs last laughs best, as about 14 months later I was running an Up goods train, and was not requiring to stop at Yarck. I was proceeding through Yarck at track speed when I spied Samson charging headlong towards my thundering locomotive, with his head down. He hit the locomotive and its 300 ton train with a mighty crash, which shook the locomotive violently. He then disappeared from view under the cow catcher. Bits of stud ram flew out from under the engine everywhere.

I broke out in fits of laughter, as I explained to an inquisitive Fireman as to what was so amusing. I still had a case of the giggles when I walked in my backdoor in Yea, 40 minutes later. My wife asked me why I had the giggles, and I told her about Samson's demise. This proves the old adage of 'He who laughs last, laughs best'.

Attached is an Image of Y163 shunting in the loop siding at Yarck in September 1978, with the points to the stock siding clearly visible immediately in front of the photographer. The house was immediately to the left, but was long gone by 1978.

I was a lot more relaxed when in Yarck from then on.

Lance Adams
Retired special class Locomotive driver
Former Yea Engineman
Yea



Lance Adams Collection

LOCAL FOOTBALL SPECIALS

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 25 FEBRUARY 2017

With the train set, engine and crews locally Yea based and special train movements arranged and controlled by the Station Master at Yea special trains were often run to convey locals to neighbouring towns in the 1930s and 40s. Many a story about these social football event specials have been related to me over the years by the crews who ran them and locals who had travelled on them.

The regular Yea train consisted of about five carriages, capable of carrying 250–300 people to social events like this. It is easy to imagine a D3 Loco at the head of the five V class corridor rolling stock and a trainload of party revelling locals.

I am in possession of a 1915 black and white photograph of the Yea local set standing at the Yea Station, only this time the motive power is W 225. It has five V class 6 wheeled bogie cars behind it. The W class locos disappeared from the VR in the early 30s with the advent of the DD locos, which later morphed to become the ever reliable and easy to work on D3 light line workhorses.

When train services began in 1883 the service was operated out of Tallarook using 'O' & 'Q' class primitive saturated, slide valve engines. These engines sported large domes and looked archaic in early photographs. By the 1930s the 'W's were at the end of their service and well worn out and were replaced on service to the line by the newer D3 locos. These remained the stable means of motive power on the line until the more powerful and modern 'K' class

arrived in the 40s. With the arrival of the top heavy, rough riding, coal hungry, thirsty 'J' class engines in the 50s, the stalwart 'K' class locos were superseded on the line.

Yea's steam motive power allocation settled into a routine of 2 J class engines (514 & 516) and 1 K class engine 150 which was here for more than a decade when it was replaced by 154 now statically preserved in a pioneer settlement in Moe. J516 after spending many

K154 opposite the Yea locomotive shed on the site of the current Yea skate park

Lance Adams Collection

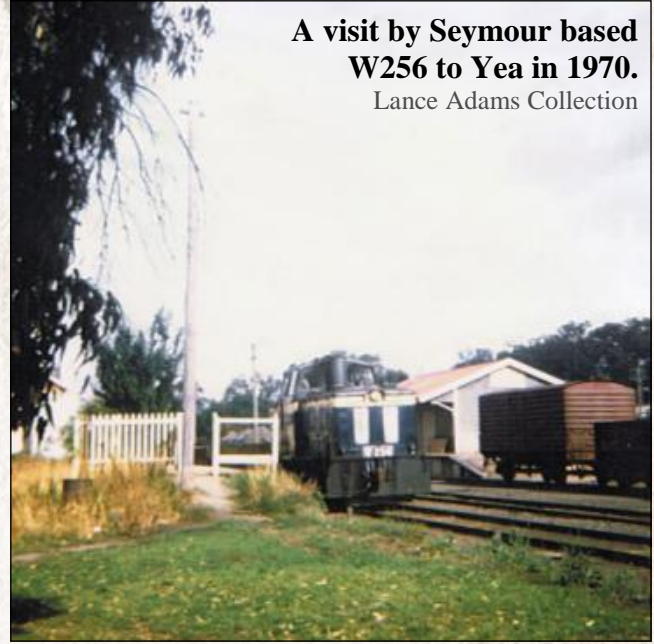


years in a park in Greensborough, is currently under restoration in Healesville and will steam again on that line.

This fleet of Yea based chariots of fire, served the district until the line was dieselised in the 60s. Diesel locos drifted in and out daily as there was no fuelling facilities on the line for them. The regular classes of diesels were the 'T' and 'Y' class with an occasional visit by a 'B' class engine on a special occasion (both goods and passenger trains). On at least one occasion a 'W' class diesel hydraulic visited. I was lucky enough to actually photograph a 'W' class here at Yea on possibly its only visit out here. An extremely rare event somewhere about 1970.

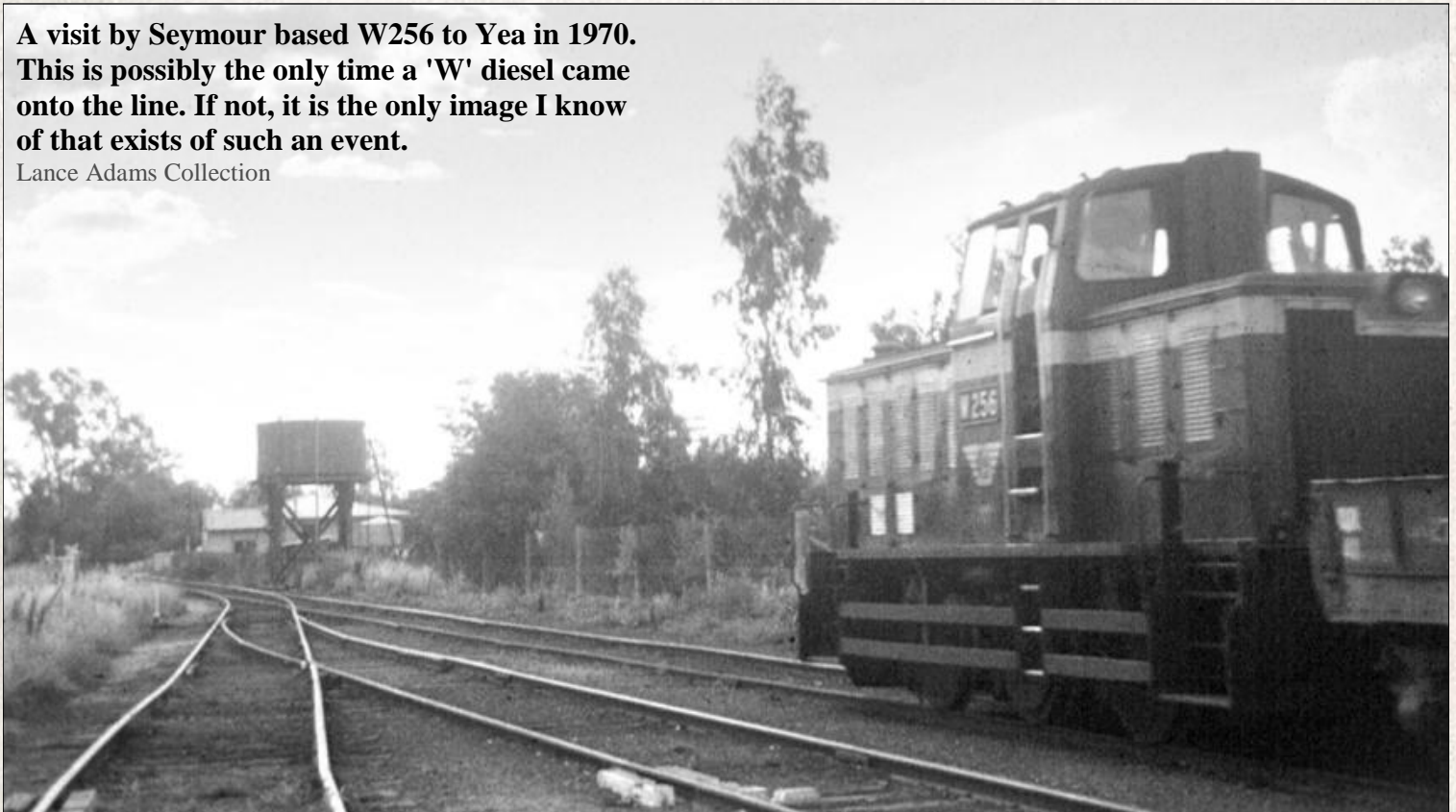
Lance Adams
Retired special class Locomotive driver
Former Yea Engineman
Yea

A visit by Seymour based W256 to Yea in 1970.
Lance Adams Collection



A visit by Seymour based W256 to Yea in 1970.
This is possibly the only time a 'W' diesel came onto the line. If not, it is the only image I know of that exists of such an event.

Lance Adams Collection



Response to piece by Lance Adams story on Local Football Specials

RECEIVED BY US ON 15 MARCH 2017

Dear Mr Adams.

I am almost 95 and I remember when the local footy teams travelled by train to the local towns. I was just 14 years old then. We had moved from one of the timber mills at Rubicon, as my father needed work after the mill had closed down.

I lived with my parents here in Alexandra, but seeing as I was only 14 years old, I was not allowed to go on the train. My mother had two boarders then; Ken Bell and Frank McLintoch. Both of these men played football locally. I think Jack Blain was Captain then.

How interesting it is to read that someone else can find this information, as sometimes people can doubt what you say. When I left school at 14 and a half, I worked at the Union Bank at Alexandra, which later became the ANZ Bank, but has now closed.

I earned two shillings and sixpence per week at the time. I would give my mother one shilling and sixpence and I had sixpence for the footy and sixpence for the pictures. What great times we had so long ago.

We moved back to the Rubicon when I was about 15 and a half. Then of course the terrible bushfires in '39 had taken all of our homes etc. I moved into this house with my parents when I was 18 and have been here ever since. This is a total period of 77 years.

I hope you find this bit of nostalgia interesting. I certainly found your piece very much so.

All the best for you and your family

Kathleen Chanter

EGLINGTON CUTTING

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 3 APRIL 2017

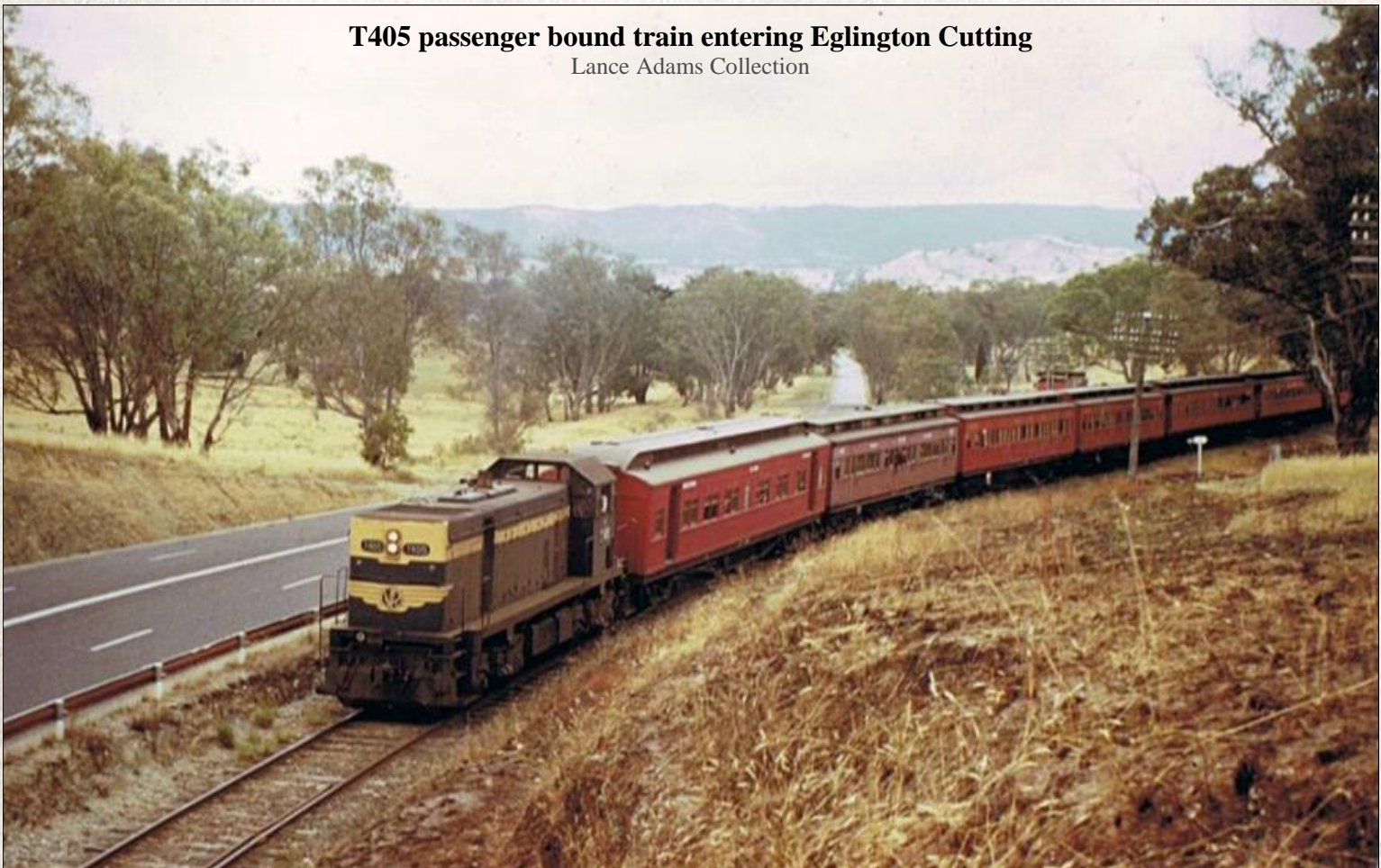
I was running a 3.00 am Yea–Alexandra goods train one Autumn Monday morning in the mid to late 70s and after ascending the long and winding grade from Koriella to the Eglinton Cutting, I was preparing for the steep descent towards the Endicott Road level crossing and Crusoe Creek down the other side. Then there was only one more rising grade left before heading through the Victoria Gap to Alexandra Station. I was ready!

I entered the Eglinton Cutting where the highway comes very close to the line, but as I was easing the throttle closed I became aware of a set of red reflectors in front of me. Baffled by this unusual scene in the thick early morning cold fog, I brought my train to a stand. In front of me was a motor car sitting idle in the middle of the train tracks, with its red reflector lights facing towards me.

After sounding the whistle with no response from the stationary car, I alighted from the

T405 passenger bound train entering Eglinton Cutting

Lance Adams Collection



locomotive and walked to the vehicle to attempt to rouse the driver. He was sound asleep in the front right hand seat, behind the steering wheel.

After I had made several attempts to attract his attention while standing outside in the freezing morning air, he awoke and wound his window down just enough for me to be able to address him.

I suggested that the location he had chosen for a sleep was not the wisest of choices and I told him that he had better shift his car. He replied with a silly 'Why?' I replied that if he did not move his ***** car I would show him why!!!

While driving home, he had somehow managed to drive onto the railway line, and then decided that as trains no longer used this portion of track, he would sleep it off and continue his drive home in the morning. Sadly for him, trains did still use that section of track.

He was lucky that no visible damage was done to his vehicle, as if my 'T' class had have hit him, it would have been a very different outcome. He could not have known just how lucky he was that his car had ended up at just the right angle for me to spy his red reflectors. I think of this incident every time I go to Alexandra nowadays and pass through Eglinton Cutting in a car.

Someone in the know must have been aware of this incident, as they erected guard rails at this location shortly after this, to prevent it from happening again.

Lance Adams
Retired special class Locomotive driver
Former Yea Engineman
Yea

HOW TO BURY A MILE POST

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

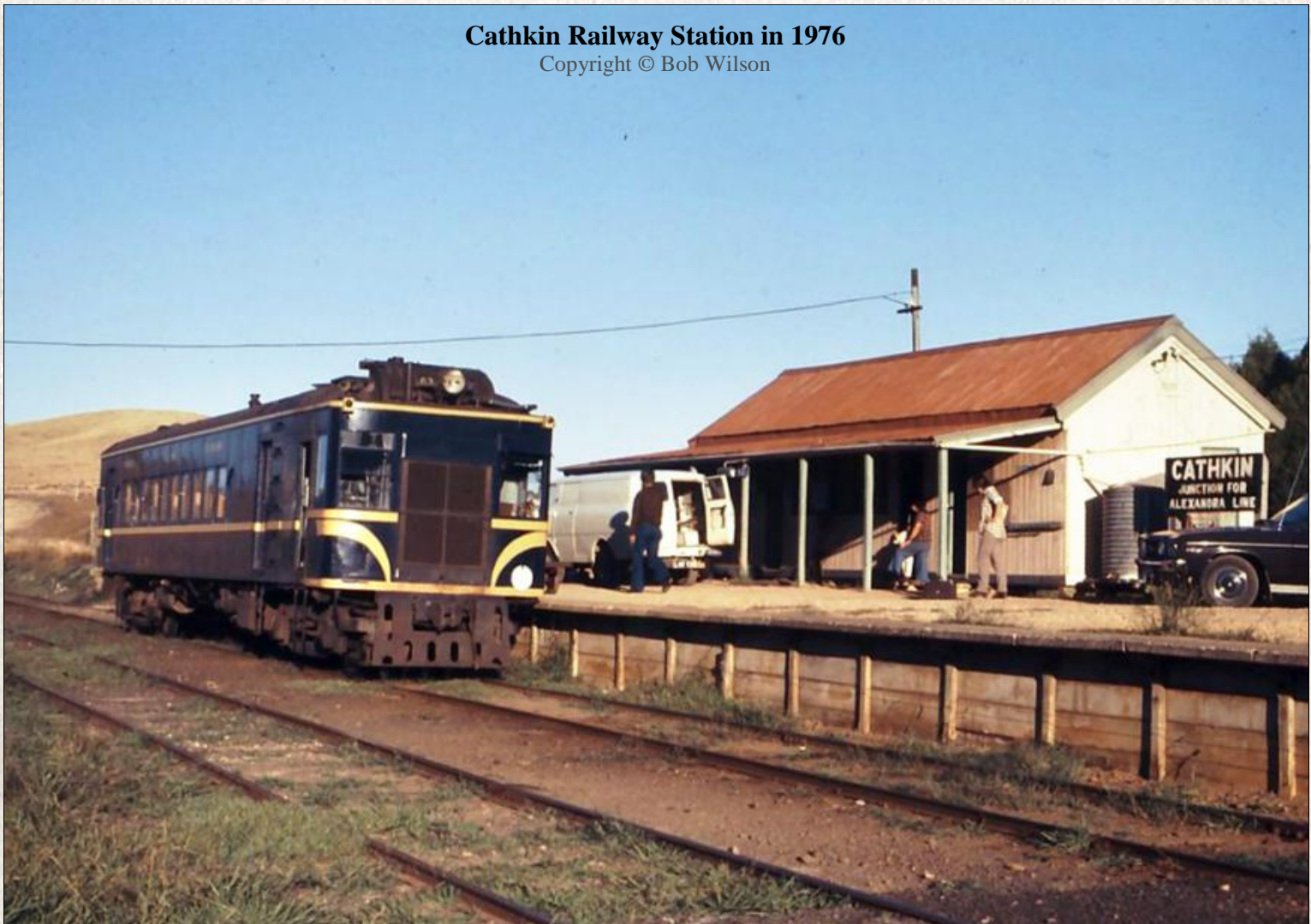
© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 27 MAY 2017

In early 1943 in conjunction with the Japanese army's expansion across Asia and with the possibility of an Australian invasion getting ever closer, the Australian Federal Government issued an edict (see Hansard of the time) that all street names, numbers and any other signage within a 100 mile radius of a capital city, that might assist an advancing Japanese force, be removed.

The railways were not to be exempt from this decree, and so all station signage was removed and sent to the Spotswood reclamation depot for possible replacement when circumstances improved. Likewise lineside mileage posts (known as marker pegs) were all to be removed if they came within the prescribed radius.

Cathkin Railway Station in 1976

Copyright © Bob Wilson



In typical railway style they did not make things that easy. Not just satisfied with removing the prescribed mile posts, they sent out a detailed set of instructions for the procedure more akin to burying pirates' treasure. Face North, then at an Angle of 45 degrees march 200 yards and bury it. Most mile posts of that era, dating from the early days of railways were made of wood with just a few early ones (different in design) made of cement. The idea was to return at a later date to reclaim them. In my opinion most of them ended up in the fireplaces of the various track repairers along the lines length.

By late 1944 the railway men in general were totally lost as to their whereabouts on the various lines, and permission was granted, with an easing of the invasion threat, to have the marker pegs replaced. Alas it was not that simple as they proved difficult to re-locate. As a matter of fact only two pegs were found, one by the railways themselves, and one by the Puffing Billy Railway, at Belgrave near Cockatoo. They might have rotted away, but in my opinion they were never buried as instructed.

Right when materials (reinforcing, concrete and manpower) were in short supply, replacement concrete mile posts of a more robust design had to be manufactured and installed. Any of the old milepegs seen around the railway area are from this era. I have attached an image of the 1944 replacement Yea Station sign and mile pegs from under the Down end water tank in the Yea yard, opposite the former locomotive shed. Yea was officially 79 and 3/4 miles from mileage zero in Melbourne (but that's another story on its own) therefore the 80 mile post (peg) was a little on the Down side of the short railmotor loop and the end of the platform.

Yea did not get its old station sign back (wooden backboard, with wooden letters) but Cathkin did. I have attached an image of that sign captured in 1976 still displaying the fact that you changed there for the Alexandra line (practice stopped in 1945).

Senior residents living in these various areas today may still remember these events and times taking place.

Lance Adams
Retired special class Locomotive driver
Former Yea Engineman
Yea

1944 replacement sign for 'Yea' Railway Station and an old mile peg previously located near the Yea Station water tank

Lance Adams Collection



TURNTABLES

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 27 JULY 2017

I recently got to thinking about the date the turntable size was increased from 50 foot to 53 foot, and I got blinded by the notion it was with the advent of D3 locomotives in 1929. But it would have been earlier in 1902, with the introduction of DD locomotives, which was a forerunner of the D3 locomotives.

In the early years, motive power on our branch was primitive, saturated, high brass domed 'O' and 'Q' class locos. Baldwin 'W' class engines later appeared on the line, once it was extended beyond Yea. These were replaced in the 1920s by DD and later D3 locomotives, when they were built. These were the main stay of the locomotives, working the line until the newer 'K' class engines were placed out here in the mid 1940s. These were later superseded by those coal hungry, thirsty, top heavy, poorly designed, rough riding articulated house bricks the 'J' classes, which worked the line until dieselisation took place on 25 October 1965. Hooray, no more J classes!

405 on turntable at Peterborough on 25 January 1963

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Turntables keep the working locomotives in an optimal working direction, so they were situated at various locations across the Victorian Rail (VR) system. During the decades of steam operated locomotives, turntable length had to evolve with their ever increasing size.

In the early days with the smaller locomotives, turntables were 50 foot. But with the advent of the standard VR loco, the DD class, 53 foot turntables became the order of the day. In later times, many country turntables were increased to 70 foot, with Ararat in Victoria having a 120 foot turntable installed to enable larger *Heavy Harry* to be turned there. He spent his entire working life on the north east corridor, not the western corridor as originally planned.

Most country locations had 53 foot turntables, and these were placed at strategic operational points. Some like Healesville, Daylesford. Warnambool, Korong Vale, Mornington, Inglewood (moved from Cressy) Ultima and Wallan had two turntables (a 53 foot local table and a 70 foot main line table). Sale and Hopetoun boasted 70 foot turntables.

Turntables existed in our district at Tallarook, Yea, Cathkin, Koriella, Alexandra, and Mansfield. These turntables were all 53 foot units extended from 50 foot in the late 1920s and early 1930s to handle the longer DD locos.

Enfield roundhouse in 1971

Lance Adams Collection



Tallarook had a 53 foot turntable situated opposite the Tallarook stock yards, at the 'Down' end of the station on the 'Up' side of the main line, and this was later used to store workman's carriages. This turntable was removed in the late 1960s.

Yea had a 53 foot turntable, situated at the 'Down' end of the yard, on the 'Up' side of the line, with an extension off 3 Road. This turntable was operational till the end of services on the line, and was removed after an accident involving children illegally moving it.

Cathkin's turntable was situated at the 'Down' end of the yard in the Y of the two running lines. This turntable was disconnected, taken out of service and removed as surplus following a yard redesign of the 'Down' end in 1949. These facilities were protected by an Annette locked two-position 'Down' home departure signal, which was removed at the same time,

Koriella (Alexandra Road, Rhodes or Lily) boasted two turntables over its existence. One 50 foot turntable at the 'Up' end of the yard, on the 'Down' side and for a short time another 53 foot turntable at the 'Down' end of the yard on the 'Up' side. Traces of both could be seen as late as the 1970s.

Alexandra Railway Station turntable and water tank. Photograph taken during Carey Grammar School railway trip to Alexandra in 1968 aboard a D3-639 loco. You can see here that the locomotive has already been turned around. See the current site on the next page.

Photograph courtesy Murrindindi Library Services and State Library Victoria 2017



The Alexandra turntable was situated on a separate siding at the 'Up' end of the station, on the 'Up' side of the line. This siding was protected by a two-position, Annette locked 'Up' home departure signal. These facilities were removed following the withdrawal of regular steam traction on the line. A water tower was also situated on this short extension. The protecting two-position signal was also removed at this time.

Mansfield had a 53 foot turntable, situated at the 'Up' end of the yard on the 'Down' side of the line of a compound crossover connection from three and four roads. This turntable was operational until well into the diesel days. The last time I availed myself of its services was to turn a Y class diesel locomotive with a defective headlight on the long end. I don't know if and when it was removed.

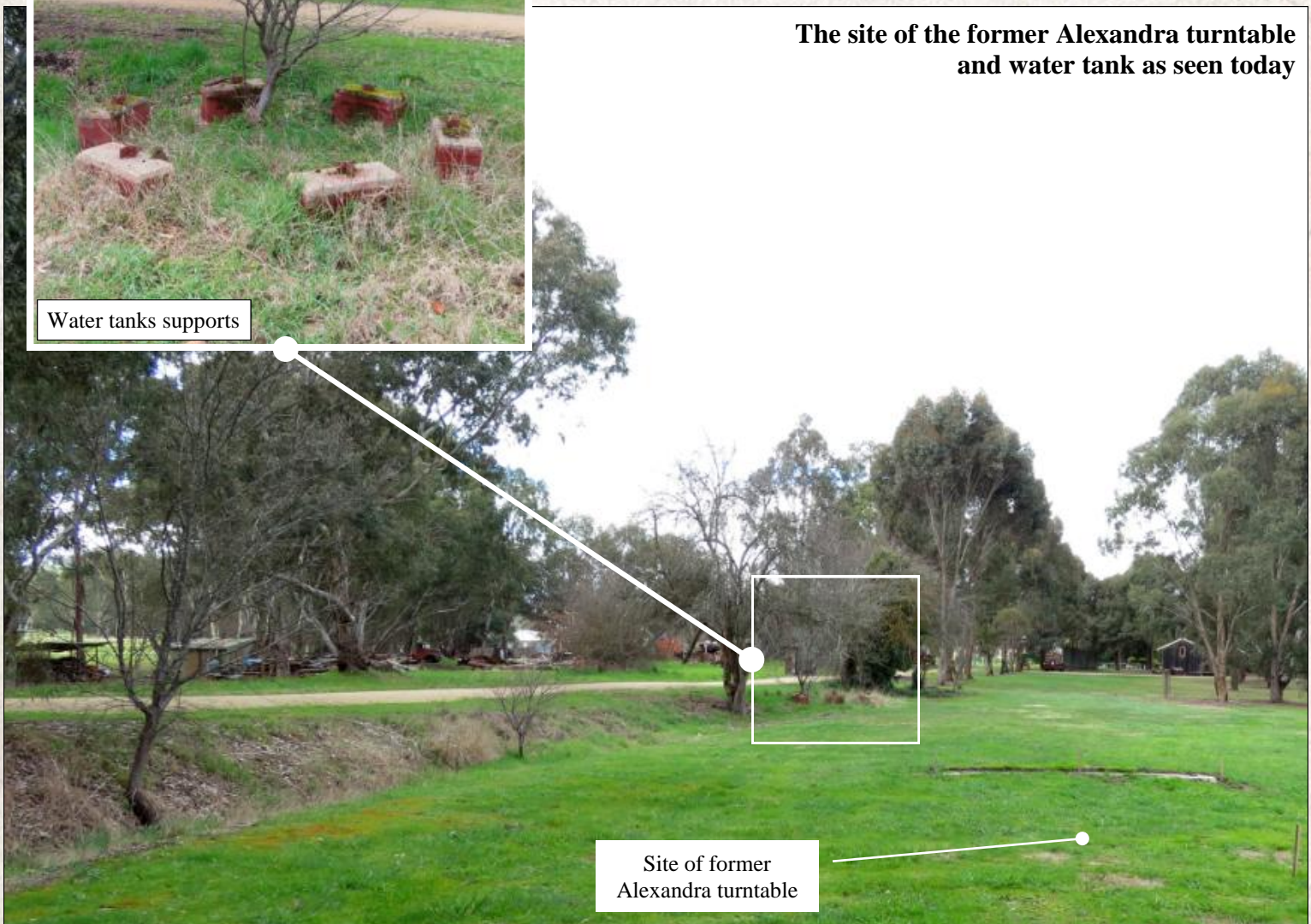
All 53 foot balance turntables and some of the 70 foot ones were manually operated, while the more major locations had electrically driven ones. The hardest machines to turn were DERM railmotors, as all the weight tends to be at one end. They are also difficult to balance.

I turned a DERM on the Numurkah balance table, whilst doing a railway enthusiast special of the Picola, Cobram, and Tocumwal lines. I turned the



Water tanks supports

The site of the former Alexandra turntable and water tank as seen today



Site of former Alexandra turntable

DERM as instructed on the S Circular and had plenty of assistance from keen railway enthusiasts passengers until a huge storm hit, whereas I was on my own. The local driver-in-charge, having a quiet Saturday afternoon beer in the local pub, took pity on me and came out to give me a hand in the storm. If it wasn't for him, I would probably still be there. Thanks George!

Over the ensuing years of dieselisation across the various rail systems, turntables have virtually disappeared, and now only exist at major locations. When removed, they were hotly sought after by farmers who could drop them in over a creek as a ready-made crossing. They would just lower them in and away they would go. Ready to use!

Another way to achieve the turning of locomotives was the use of triangles. This was not common in Victoria, with triangles existing at only a few locations, namely Stony Crossing, Meringur, Wakool, Moulamein and Wodonga.

One driver I worked with, had to split an 'N' class engine at Balranald as it was too long for the small 53 foot local table, and he was still belly-aching about it 40 years later. I know what I would have done, and that was to run it backwards to Moulamein and use the turning triangle there. Triangles however were common on other systems and were two bob a dozen.

Another method for turning locomotives and trains was a reversing loop. One existed in North Melbourne surrounding the Car and Wagon workshops, and the entire Spirit Of Progress carriages and locomotive were turned in this way. When this train arrived in Albury, it would be reversed to Wodonga coal sidings and turned on the triangle there ready for its return journey to Melbourne. *Heavy Harry* was turned at Wodonga and Melbourne the same way, as it was too long for a 70 foot turntable.

Another reversing loop existed at Beech Forrest, allowing trains arriving from Colac to be reversed to run along the ridge beyond, without arduous shunting maneuvers. A tennis court existed in the centre of this reversing loop, and a train chuffing around this tight circular path didn't rate a second glance. Even if black smoke from the funnel darkened the sky and obliterated the sun.

Lance Adams
Retired special class Locomotive driver
Former Yea Engineman
Yea

A DIFFERENT FATE FOR THE KERRISDALE STATION

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 18 SEPTEMBER 2017

Over the course of the weekend just gone, I put on an electronic historical display of about 200 of my never displayed Images of the Mansfield line, as part of an exhibition put on by the Yea Historical Society at the town hall in Yea. My wife always said that if I hang around long enough that I would be stuffed and put in a glass display cabinet like Phar Lap. Well I think her prediction might have come to pass. Right again!!!

During the running of this information and image display, when several images of the Kerrisdale station appeared on screen, a tale of the fate of that building arose, which I had nearly forgotten about, but it is worth getting down on record for posterity, as it is humorous.



DERM 63 pausing at Kerrisdale on a down Yea & Mansfield Sunday service in the 1970s

Copyright © Bob Wilson



Yea based K154 at the head of a Yea-Tallarook passenger train, thundering through Kerrisdale Station in the 1960s

Copyright © John Dare



Kerrisdale from a DERM hauled train travelling back to Yea after running a train to the main line at Tallarook.

Copyright © Bob Wilson

- A DIFFERENT FATE FOR THE KERRISDALE STATION -

When the line closed in November 78, all the infrastructure laid idle for years, and in the mid 80s they advertised for sale and removal by contract the Kerrisdale station building. When the Douglas's from Kerrisdale were successful in the purchase of the building, they went to the site with a low loader to collect their building, they found it had been stolen. I do not know of any other railway station to have suffered this demise.

The Seymour police were duly called and after a short time located the errant structure on a nearby farm. The building was recovered and returned to the rightful new owners minus the original window frames, which had gone, probably by someone else.

That building is now on site at the Kerrisdale Mountain Railway and museum near the former Kerrisdale station. Whilst the building is original, the windows are not.

Lance Adams
Retired special class Locomotive driver
Former Yea Engineman
Yea



Monday morning DERM pausing at Kerrisdale Station on its way to Melbourne circa spring 1975

Lance Adams Collection

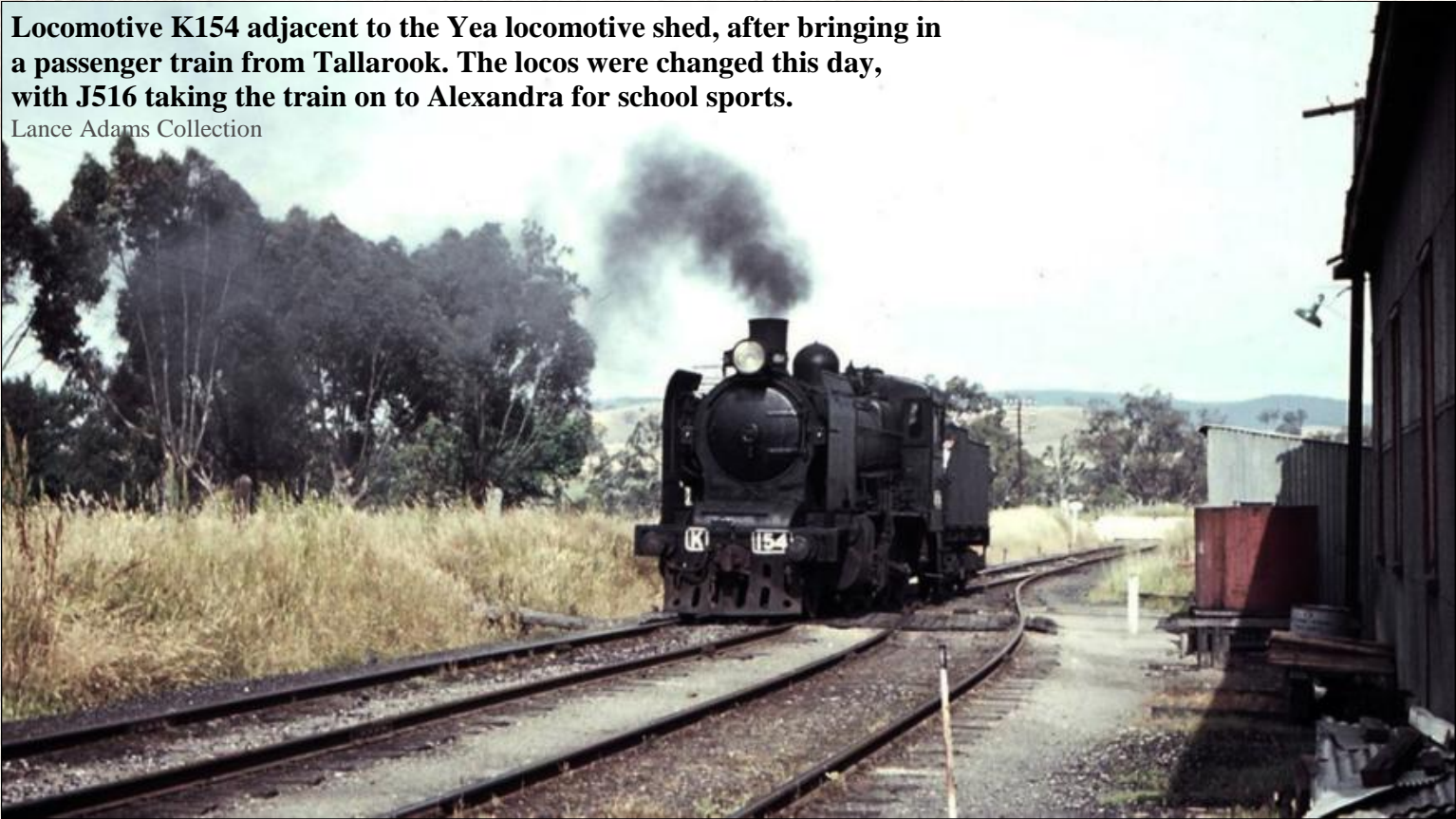
CHARIOTS OF FIRE

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 21 SEPTEMBER 2017

Locomotive K154 adjacent to the Yea locomotive shed, after bringing in a passenger train from Tallarook. The locos were changed this day, with J516 taking the train on to Alexandra for school sports.

Lance Adams Collection



I suppose after all these years, I had better put something down about these deplorable, rolling bricks that had weird names given to them by the crews who ran these 'Chariots of Fire'. With local names like Puff the Tragic Wagon, The Silver Ram, The Mule and the like conjure up vivid nightmares of peering down a gauge glass, looking for signs of water. I was told years ago that they were steam engines. 'They will go without water, but they won't go without steam'. I am still working this one out after all these years. They were the only machine built by man that had a soul. They are all different, with one member of a class being totally different to another in how they like to be handled. One beast liked it this way, whilst another didn't. I was told years ago to never flog a Steam Locomotive, a Willing Horse or a Woman. Treat them right and they will work all day for you. I did try to flog a steam engine once and I didn't get very far until my Fireman threatened to brain me with the shovel. The locomotive wasn't pleased with me either, so I quickly remembered the old adage, pulled my head in and never did it again. Our forefathers must have had a constant wrestle with their saturated, slide valve beasts of burden. And we think we had it bad with our superheated, Pennsylvania floating valve machines.

In the early days of operation on the Yea line, the machines were 'O' & 'Q' class high brass domed machines, with no headlights bar a three kerosene light arrangement on the front, that wouldn't dazzle anything. When the line was extended beyond Yea, and operation of the trains moved to Yea in the late 1890s, the motive power were 'W' class Baldwins. These were replaced by the DD's in the 20s which morphed into D3 locos, singing Kettles, around 1930. These lasted on the line until the clanking 'Ks' appeared in the 1940s. These were replaced in 1954 by those top heavy, coal hungry, rough riding J classes. These locomotives saw out the steam days serving the district until the diesels turned up in October 1965.

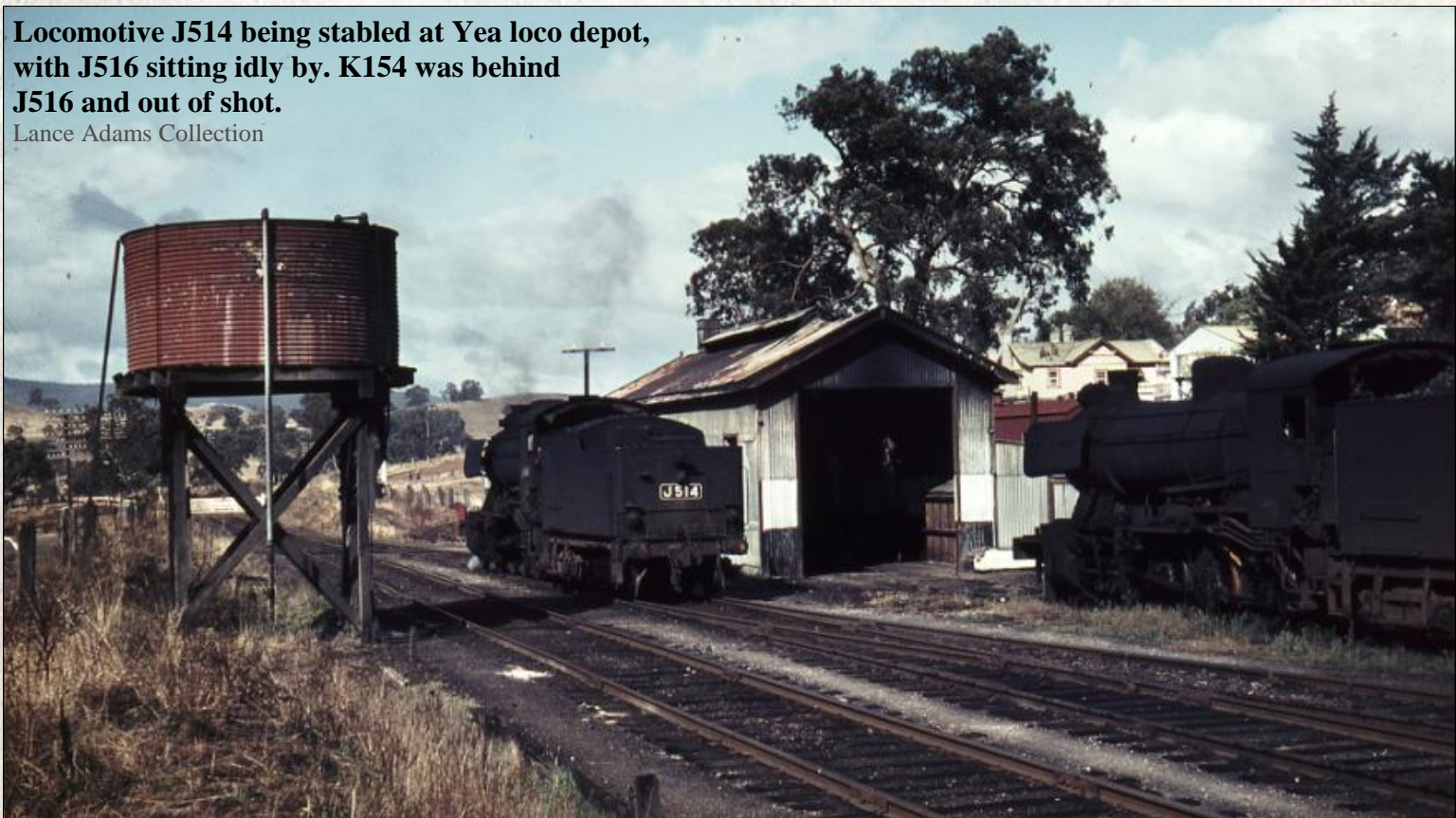
Having said all this, I think I should touch on here what the fate was for each of our trusty steeds. The regular fleet of engines based at Yea to haul the trains in the district to Mansfield, Alexandra and Wallan, were 2 J class engines Numbers 514 & 516 and a K class numbered 154. On 25 October 1965 the last steam hauled goods train out of Yea, was hauled by K157 after having been to Alexandra earlier that day, driven by Des Clements. This train out of Yea that evening was driven by Yea driver-in-charge Bill Skey. That was the end of regular steam motive power on the Upper Goulburn branch. Good bye and good riddens to those rough riding articulated house bricks!!!

J514 entered service on 11 May 1954 and was sent to Yea loco depot almost straight away and was removed from the line when dieselisation occurred in October 1965. It was scrapped after a brief period of time out of service on 18 March 1970.

J516 entered service on 11 June 1954 and was sent to Yea loco depot almost straight away and after was removed off the line just prior to dieselisation. It was sold to a local council in

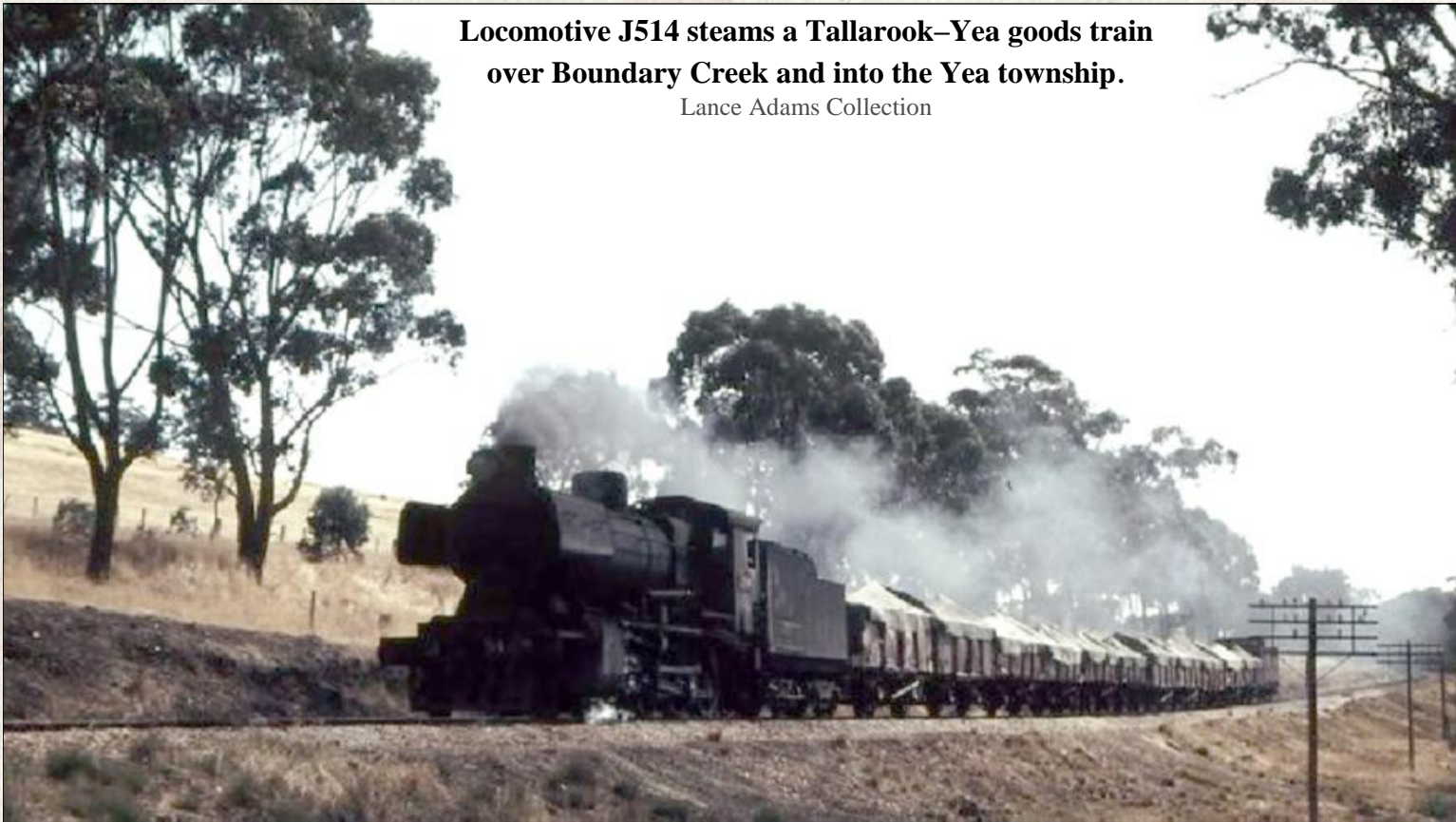
**Locomotive J514 being stabled at Yea loco depot,
with J516 sitting idly by. K154 was behind
J516 and out of shot.**

Lance Adams Collection



**Locomotive J514 steams a Tallarook-Yea goods train
over Boundary Creek and into the Yea township.**

Lance Adams Collection



Greensborough on 23 May 1973 where it languished until the late 80s when it was sold again to the 'Yarra Valley Tourist Railway' at Healesville. It is currently undergoing restoration work and will steam again on that line.

K154 was the last K class to be regularly based at Yea, and after its withdrawal from the line, was transferred to the Geelong district for work. It entered service on 21 September 1940 and was eventually sold to the 'Moe Folk museum' on 27 June 1971 where it remains on static display to this day. Temporary track was laid for 154 to steam itself into its final plynthed location. It had run a special farewell trip to Rosedale earlier that day.

K150 has to be mentioned here as it spent 10 years here at Yea loco, servicing the district. It was replaced by K154 in early 1963. It entered service on 18 May 1940 as K140, but was renumbered to 150 on 18 September 1940 and was eventually withdrawn from service and scrapped on 08/11/67.

*Lance Adams
Retired special class Locomotive driver
Former Yea Engineman
Yea*

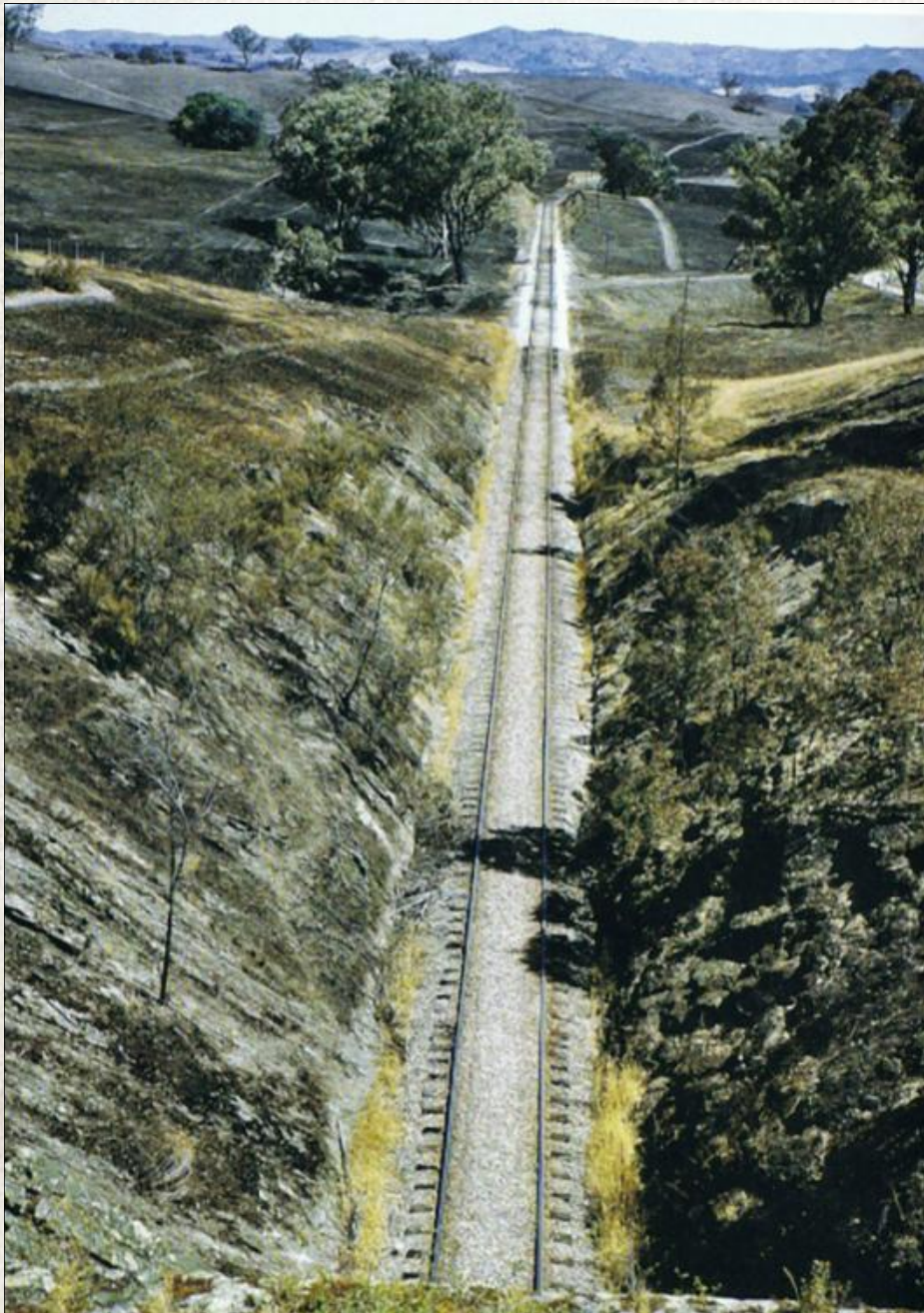
MY PLACE IN THE 1969 BUSHFIRES

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA



With the 48th anniversary of the '69 fires upon us I thought it due time to put a few lines down for posterity about the event and my experiences in it.



We had been to Alexandra on a goods' train and were held up at Cathkin for nearly two hours because of fires in the area. When we were told to 'GO', we ran smack into the main front of the fire near Molesworth. The 100 year old homestead—Lorna Doone was well ablaze as we passed it. With fierce fires burning on the North East side of the ranges, high temperatures and strong wind, we crawled up the hill with the Guard already refusing to ride in the wooden Z van, which eventually caught fire. We crossed the small culvert/bridge at Harvey's Gully as it started to burn.

A decision was made by all three of us that if we considered the fire to be as severe on the South West (Yea) side of the tunnel that we would stay in the tunnel for safety.

As it was, we deemed the fire to be not as bad so we ventured on right through to Yea. We disregarded instructions about pinning a number of handbrakes down, before commencing the long drop down towards Cheviot. We had been told that any driver that failed to pin down brakes would not make the bottom of the Hill. On this occasion we made it, even if we were a little over the speed in places and low on brake pipe pressure at the bottom near Cheviot.

Cheviot was severely burnt too on that day. If we had stayed in the tunnel as we had thought of doing, we would have been all burnt to a crisp as the fire, combined with the strong wind, absolutely roared through the tunnel like a fire tube on a steam locomotive.

A following train, hauled by a flat top 'T' class locomotive on an Up (towards Melbourne) Mansfield goods, was stranded at Cathkin for six weeks while they got the line operational again. We used that engine to run one Fodder relief train from Cathkin to Mansfield and return. It was out of fuel after that and when the line eventually reopened it was towed to Seymour Loco to get it going again.

The photograph on the previous page was taken in early March '69 from the top of the tunnel, looking South West, showing the newly relaid track with heavy rails and main line ballasting completed. By the time this image was captured the line was again fully operational.

Some things never go away.

Lance Adams
Retired special class Locomotive driver
Former Yea Engineman
Yea

RAILWAY SMASH

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 3 OCTOBER 2017

Like in any industry, occasionally accidents happen, however with large heavy fast moving trains, the consequences of such accidents can be significant and far reaching. This was the case with the rail accident referenced below in an article published in the *Kilmore Free Press* newspaper on Thursday 24 November 1910. The accident occurred at the Kilmore Junction (now known as the Heathcote Junction) and the driver was James Ryan, former resident of Yea and father of six. James was killed while heroically trying to save the runaway train. Just 18 months earlier James had accepted a promotion from his role as fireman to engine driver. The new position saw him move his family from Yea to Seymour.

An inquest into the accident returned a verdict of 'accidental death' in relation to James. In January 1911 the widow of Mr Ryan was awarded 500 pound compensation and two of her sons were working for the Railway Department by 1911. Ernest, the eldest son of James, worked as a compositor for the Yea Chronicle for sometime.

It is worth remembering before reading the article that 1910 was a fledgling time in the rail industry and continuous brakes were only just coming onto the scene.

RAILWAY SMASH THE ENGINE- DRIVER KILLED

On Saturday morning another railway smash was added to the long and rapidly increasing list, and the death of the engine driver has placed another name on the scroll of railway fatalities. This time the smash occurred at Kilmore Junction, when a Strain laden with firewood was wrecked by running into the dead end.

The train and its crew comprised of driver James Ryan, fireman H. Williams and guard O. Parlane, left Seymour early on Friday morning for Bendigo with a load of light rails for the Ouyen line. The train passed through Kilmore a few minutes past seven, and nothing out of the ordinary occurred on the journey to Bendigo. On the return journey a load of firewood was made up, mostly at McIvor Siding. Prior to making up the load the guard asked the driver how much he would take, and the latter replied that twelve trucks would be enough, as the brakes were not too good and it was better to be on the safe side.

The train arrived at Kilmore a little after midnight. No water was taken, and it was noticed that there was very little air in the Westinghouse brakes. The train was sent on at 12:15 on Saturday morning by Mr W. Davis, stationmaster, who had then been on duty for 19 hours continuously. The run to the junction was a short one, and on the down grades great speed was obtained owing to the brakes failing to hold the train.

At Leslie the hand brakes were put down on the trucks and the train started to its doom. From Leslie to the junction the down grade is pretty steep and even with all brakes down, little or no impression was made on the speed and in a very short distance the train was beyond control and tearing along at an enormous rate. The whistle fairly screeched as the train gained speed, and as the junction was approached the danger signal was against the train, but the crew could do nothing; they were powerless on a bolting train. The junction reached, the train was turned into the dead end, and with all its pace on it crashed straight onto the face of the cutting. The junction of the Bendigo and North Eastern lines is right on the top of the Big Hill, 1400 feet above sea level, and with an incline of 400 feet in three miles. All the lines are laid through heavy cuttings, the station being also built in the excavation, but the signal box is on top the cutting on the eastern side.

On the opposite side is the dead end. It is not the ordinary kind such as is found in station yards, but is cut out of the bank, which also acts as a stop, and the short line into it is on the upgrade. Into this dead end the bolting train crashed at 12:35 on Saturday morning. The impact was so great that the engine and tender, one of the monster D D class, No. 674, and weighing about 110 tons. was forced up the almost perpendicular face of the cutting for about twenty feet and then thrown over the side, falling broadside across the North-Eastern line. Three trucks followed suit, the firewood being sent flying all over the line, One truck was thrown clean up on top of the cutting, about forty feet high, the blocks of wood thrown out as if by a bomb shell, and rattled down like an avalanche on the other fallen trucks. The brakes were all hard down after the smash. **The engine driver, James Ryan, evidently had no chance of escape, for as he and the fireman stood at their posts, they tried in vain to steady the pace, and when the bank was struck the tender was forced onto the engine and so prevented Ryan being thrown out. The two men never flinched as they raced to death; up to the very last they tried to hold their train, the total weight of which was about 310 tons, but without avail.**

Ryan was evidently killed outright. The base of his skull was smashed in, one leg was broken, and he was badly scalded by escaping steam. The fireman, Williams, had a marvellous escape. He was thrown up on top of the cutting, and beyond a few bruises was unhurt. How he was thrown to such a height is not known. He also held the staff received from Kilmore station, and on meeting the junction stationmaster, Mr L. Malcolm, handed it to him. The guard was also unhurt, having thrown himself flat on the floor of the van when he realised the danger.

Mr Malcolm had a very trying time. A train was coming on from Wallan at the same time as

the wrecked train was approaching, and under the circumstances the two would have met at the points. He could see that a smash was certain, and had to act quickly and for the best—there were half a dozen ways in which a smash would probably occur. If he let the bolting train through on the chance of running onto the main line, there was also the chance of a collision with the other train before the main line was reached. There was also the chance of the runaway going right across the double line, and still wreck the other train as well, as itself, and destroy the line in addition. Again if it reached the main line in safety — a very doubtful chance — it was almost certain to come to grief further on, there being a heavy down grade for a good few miles. In fact, with the pace it would have gained, there was nothing to prevent the bolting train running right to Melbourne, with the line clear and 'stand-up'. Mr Malcolm put all his signals at danger and kept them there, then took what seems to have been the best course in a most critical situation — he evidently fully realised the position in a flash, there was no time to think it out, a smash must occur, and he picked the least—he turned the bolting train into the dead end, where it crashed into a solid clay cutting at a speed of about thirty miles an hour. Mr Malcolm held the points as the train rushed over them to its destruction. and beheld the terrible spectacle of a railway smash in earnest, which the pale moon light made more weird and appalling.

The news of the calamity was at once sent up and down the line to stop other trains coming on, and the break-down trains from North Melbourne and Seymour were soon on the road with help. Just outside the main line semaphore the train approaching from the Wallan side stopped, and this saved further disaster. The driver thought he had not sufficient steam to take him over the hill and stopped to get up a better steam pressure, at the time, too, he had line clear. Had this train kept going it would have struck the fallen engine, which was right across the same line.

Fireman Williams, after his miraculous escape from death, went to the standing train and asked the driver and fireman to give him a hand as he had had a smash and his mate was under the engine. The men at once complied and on their way to the wreck met Mr Malcolm, to whom Williams gave the staff. It was then impossible to do anything in the way of finding Ryan, as the place was covered with escaping steam. The great engine lay on its side snorting and panting like some monster, but it soon eased off, and poor Ryan was found at his post; killed through devotion to duty. Although there are a few houses in the vicinity of the smash, and some men were camped close by, the crash of the wreck was not heard by many. This was due to the calamity having occurred in a deep cutting, and the banks being of clay, thereby deadening the noise.

The men in camp and some residents were called for assistance, and they helped to take Ryan's body from the engine cab and place it in the station waiting room, pending removal to Wallan. Although the accident occurred within a couple miles of Wandong, many people there did not know of it until some hours after — it was known on the other side of the world before all Wandong knew of it.

The wreckage presented the wonderful effect of the tremendous impact. Five of the trucks were thrown about as if they were toys, one was splintered to matchwood, and crushed against the tender, another was stood almost on end against the crashed one, whilst, a third rested on the end on the up right one and formed a bridge to the face of the cutting on which the other end was stuck. Three other trucks were thrown up with the first mentioned, the whole forming the three sides of a square. On the side of the dead end a truck was turned over, another being simply off the rails. The other four trucks, together with the guard's van, did not leave the line, and were not damaged in any way. The box blocks were thrown all over the place, giving the appearance of a great hail storm. These were collected and stacked on the aides of the line.

Six of the trucks were wooden and six iron. The former were splintered and broken about in marvellous fashion, two being damaged beyond repair. The iron trucks were crushed up in a similar manner to which a person would crush a matchbox in the hand. Fragments in the shape of fittings, hose connections of the Westinghouse brakes, hand brakes, iron bars and rods, and other parts of the trucks were scattered all about, showing the fearful force with which the train had met its doom. Those of the trucks which were in a dangerous position and threatened to topple over onto the line were secured by wire ropes and hawsers to the trees on top of the cutting. The engine and tender, lay where they fell broadside on the North-Eastern line, and both showed the violence of the fall. The engine was battered and bent in an almost incredible degree. The traveller and front wheels were some yards away on the side of the line; the funnel had to be taken off to allow other trains to pass, as it was right across one rail of the second line. The dome and top fittings were twisted and screwed out of shape, and inside the cab, where the unfortunate driver had been killed at his post, was simply a jumble of fittings, hardly one being in its place. **The tender had been forced almost onto the engine, and there was barely enough room left to take Ryan from where he lay, but the poor fellow was beyond all feeling, and was therefore taken out as quietly as possible.**

The cab was in a terrible state from hot ashes and steam and water rushing into it, and it seemed a relief that the plucky driver had been killed outright, otherwise his agony would have been something fearful. When the engine came down on the line it broke sleepers in two, bent the heavy rails like pins, and threw coal from the tender some distance away. It lay there a dismal sight. The fire had been literally bashed out, the boiler was emptied, and the furnace doors were burst opened, showing the internal parts bent and broken. Immediately after the smash word was sent for the casualty trains. At North Melbourne the call for help was received a few minutes after the wreck, and the breakdown train was away at once, fully manned, and did the run up in an hour and 28 minutes. At Seymour word was also promptly received, and answered, the breakdown train from there getting away at 1.50, and arrived on the scene shortly afterwards; it started with a few men and picked up others on the track.

The officials in charge of relief trains were Mr G. Locke, rolling stock inspector, Mr W. Jones, chief foreman, metropolitan district, Mr T. P. Dawes, Seymour, roadmaster Fogarty, and district superintendent Smith being also in attendance. There were about 30 men

and two engines, and the steam cranes followed from Newport. Nothing further than being made secure, was disturbed pending the inspection of the coroner, a Dr Cole, who arrived by a special train during the afternoon and made a thorough inspection of the wreck. When Dr Cole had completed his inspection, the work of clearing away the debris was at once started and in an earnest manner, too. In a very short time the four undamaged tracks and the van were taken out of the way, and two others were got back onto the rails. This was the easy part of the work. Getting the trucks off the face of the cutting was a task of danger, but no risks were taken. The work of taking up the broken line where the engine lay was very difficult, and much hard work was ahead in removing the engine and tender. Only one line being available, the oncoming trains were all put onto it at the Wandong and Wallan stations, and after being conducted at walking pace past the smash, were put back on their own track again. The work of clearing away the wreckage was hampered a good deal by cold wet weather setting in and making the place very unpleasant to carry on operations, but it went steadily on so as to have full traffic restored as speedily as possible.

The body of James Ryan, the unfortunate but plucky driver, was removed to Wallan, and an order having been received for burial, the remains were taken to Bendigo for interment. Ryan was a married man with six children (the eldest of whom is a son of 18 years), he being an employee of the Railway Department. Deceased resided at Seymour for sometime, where he was held in high esteem. He had been driving for about 18 months, and had a good deal of experience as a fireman. The engine he met his death on was his favourite one, and Williams, the lucky fireman, was also Ryan's choice; thus he had his own particular engine and his own particular fireman when he was carried by a bolting train to his doom.

H. Williams has had a good experience as a fireman, and is regarded as a careful and competent stoker. Both the fireman and guard (Parlane) are single men, and reside at Seymour. They returned to their homes during the day, and, although uninjured, suffered severely from shock.

Kilmore Free Press
Thursday 24 November 1910

Lance Adams
Retired special class Locomotive driver
Former Yea Engineman
Yea

SNAKE TALES

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 18 DECEMBER 2017



One of the downsides of running trains on the Mansfield line, was a never ending run in with the local reptiles of the area. One never left the locomotive unless you were armed with a 'hookie', a long piece of flexible fencing wire, which was used to swish across the advancing snake and disable it. The worst place for such encounters was at Cathkin, where my record for dispatching slithering reptiles was 13 snakes in 45 minutes. They were just the ones I saw, but I cannot think how many might have seen me!!! Jim Dunn who was a long time Assistant Station Master at Cathkin, used to carry a gun when out and about and he looked a sight out shunting, carrying his ready to go weapon. Quite unnerving to say the least. Jim had a tribe of kids who must have been accustomed to getting a fright with these creatures. The local police tolerated Jim's discharge of his firearm on a Sunday for this purpose. About a year ago, I had a conversation with retired Chief Traffic Manager, David Watson, of Seymour (retired el supremo of the traffic branch) and he brought back to mind a question from a traffic branch examination. (Q) What do you take with you when you turn a train into No 2 road? (A) A red and green flag and keys for the quadrant signal lever and plunger, unless you were at Cathkin, where you took a gun as well. Everybody in the railways knew of this location and its perils.

The Station Mistress at Yarck had a collection of exotic animals which included a large carpet python named Pedro, which gave me numerous frights, but met his match one day when I trundled through the station with an Up stock special, hauled by a 'T' class diesel locomotive doing track speed through Yarck, and Pedro failed to get out of the way in time. Talk about lose your head!!! No more Pedro scares for me.

On one occasion in the 60s, I turned up for work one morning after having eaten something a little doubtful the previous day, and I required the use of every station toilet to Mansfield and return. A long day on any occasion, but worse when you are in that condition. We arrived back at Cathkin around 5 pm with the temperature reaching into the 40s. I immediately headed for the concrete toilet (thunderbox) on the Up end of the passenger platform. Settling myself in to ease the building internal pressure, I became aware of another presence in the confines of the dimly illuminated small concrete, sweltering edifice. There in the gloom was the gaping, hissing open jaw of the biggest tiger snake I had ever seen. With a shriek of 'Egad', I grabbed for my overalls and pants around my ankles and took flight, losing any of the urges that compelled my attendance in the first place. The toilet at the next stop, Molesworth, seemed a lot better proposition. I don't know if anybody got that snake or not or whether I got him at a later date.



Another location very bad for tiger snakes, was the long bridge at Mileage Post 82 at the Yea River. We were forever and a day severing snakes out there, and if I ever had to get off the engine to investigate a problem with the train, I made sure I had my trusty Hookie wire with me.

I never received a snake strike, but I came close on a number of occasions. However I did receive a dry bite from a black snake once away from my railway duties. No major problems with that one. Even today, I give all snakes a wide berth and try and leave them alone as much as possible.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea



WHAT THE YEA ENGINE CREWS DID

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 25 FEBRUARY 2017

Yea locomotive depot, before
it was removed in 1967

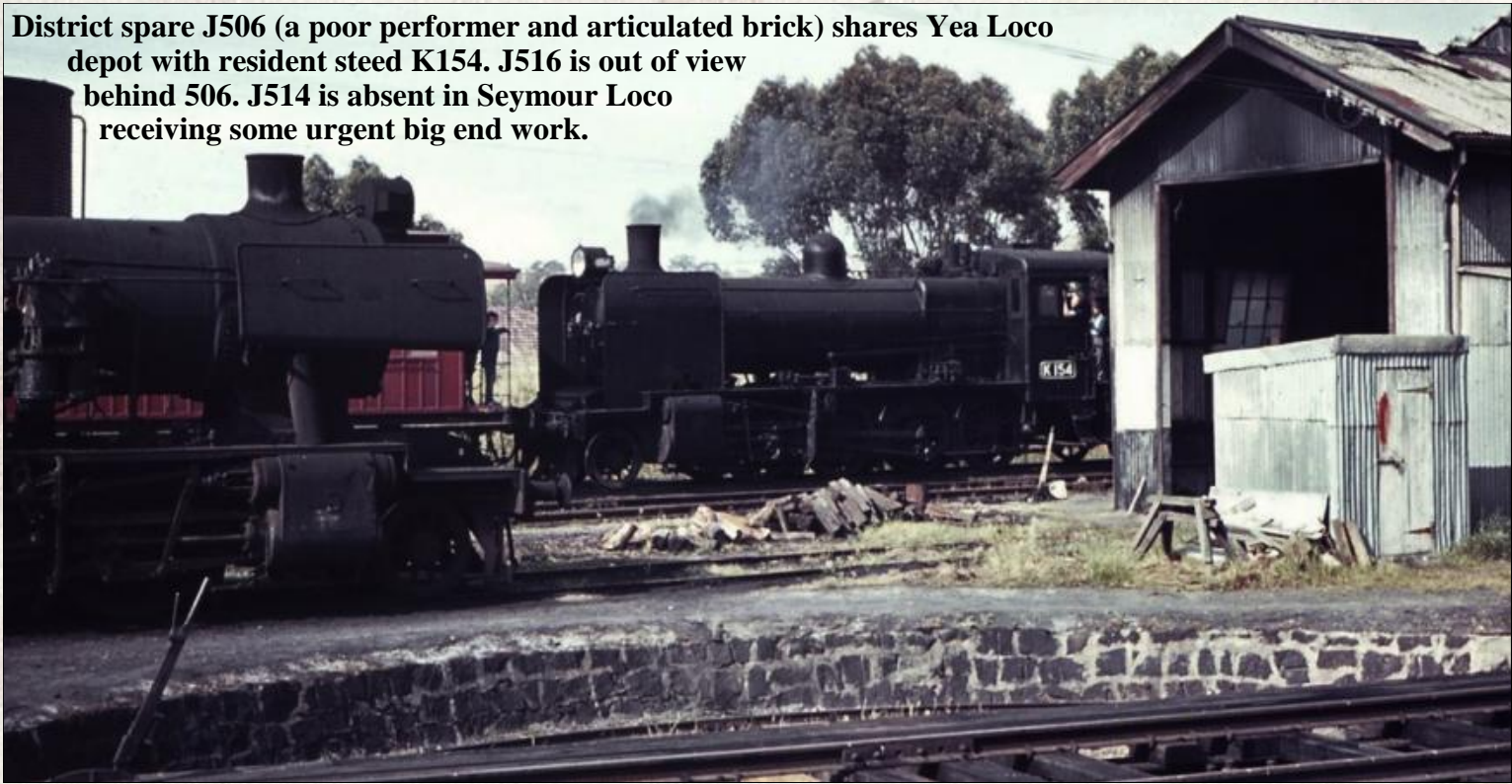


Yea was the focal point for train operations on the Mansfield and Alexandra line. When Yea was the terminus of the line in 1883, the daily service was run from Tallarook. Once the line opened North East of Yea, to Molesworth, train operations shifted to Yea. At its zenith, Yea boasted five engine crews, but with the introduction of the railmotor fleet in the late 40s, this manpower requirement was reduced to three crews. When the line commenced operation there

was a crew based at Cathkin. Whilst Cathkin had a turntable and an engine service area, it did not have an engine shed. The Cathkin engine had the lowest engine mileage per week in the state, doing just one trip per day to Alexandra Road (later Rhodes, Lily and Koriella). Other duties for the Cathkin engine was to run Light Engine out to Home Creek between Cathkin and Molesworth and pump water via a steam driven pump connected to the boiler supply, into a lineside tank for use by mainline trains. I never saw or heard of this style of operation at any other location on the VR, but I heard this operation spoken about for years after. The driver at Cathkin was Paddy McDonald, whose former house has just undergone an extensive renovation. The Cathkin crew were removed and shifted to Yea following the first closure of the Alexandra line in 1895, with the Home Creek water tanks also being abolished and the lineside water facilities provided at Merton. The reservoir constructed to supply this water was on the small hill just to the rear of the station. The windmill that powered it has since been restored and is now situated in Mansfield.

When I came onto the line in the 60s, Yea had three crews (a crew consisted of a driver and fireman) and I will lay out below a typical three week rotation of work on the next pages.

District spare J506 (a poor performer and articulated brick) shares Yea Loco depot with resident steed K154. J516 is out of view behind 506. J514 is absent in Seymour Loco receiving some urgent big end work.



Week 1. Sunday: Off Duty

- Monday:** Sign on 2.00 am prepare two engines, make up 4.00 am Mansfield and conduct train examination on 4.00 am Mansfield. Assist 4.00 am Mansfield in the rear to the tunnel and return light engine. Run 6.00 am Alexandra and return. Perform yard work at Yea as required and recondition and hostile Loco. Sign off when finished usually about 3.00 pm.
- Tuesday:** Off roster
- Wednesday:** Sign on 2.20 am, relieve 2.25 ex Tallarook, (No 113) and prepare two engines, make up 4.00 am Mansfield and conduct train examination on 4.00 am Mansfield. Assist 4.00 am Mansfield in the rear to the tunnel and return light engine. Run 6.00 am Alexandra and return. Perform yard work at Yea as required and recondition and hostile Loco. Sign off when finished usually about 3.20 pm.
- Thursday:** Sign on 2.20 am and run 4.00 am Mansfield goods and rest at Mansfield.
- Friday:** Ex Mansfield rest on No82 (2.30 pm) to Yea.
- Saturday:** As Required usually sign on 6.45 am for 8.00 am Tallarook BONA and return down switch trip as locally arranged. This train usually took any loading in Tallarook left from the previous week's operation as well as set up loading for the coming week. I have been as far as Mansfield on this non timetabled switch. Definitely an 8-12 hour job.

Week 2

Sunday:	Off roster.
Monday:	Sign on 3.00 am and run 4.00 am Mansfield and return. Sign off 6.10 pm.
Tuesday:	Sign on 6.30 am and run 8.00 am Mansfield and return. Sign off when finished.
Wednesday:	Sign on 3.00 am and run 4.00 am Mansfield and return. Sign off 6.10 pm.
Thursday:	As required (Available to work)
Friday:	As required (Available to work)
Saturday:	As required (Available to work)



The district spare J522 (another mobile brick) at the head of an upload about 6.00 pm. All that remains to do now is get into 2 Road clear, to allow the Down Mansfield 280 Railmotor to go through at 6.35 pm. This locomotive had run a train to Alexandra and returned earlier that day. This train was a combined Mansfield and Alexandra Up load. 514 had already gone to shed after bringing the train in. Additional Yea loading plus a reconditioned 522 have been added. 23 1/2 miles of mayhem lay ahead. Just keep a nice fire, and keep the back corners banked. This is a full load!

Week 3

Sunday:	As required (Available to work)
Monday:	Sign on 5.50 pm Relieve and run 6.50 pm Up load change over Number 125 ex Tottenham yard through to Seymour and return 113 (1.15 am) ex Tallarook to Yea. Sign off 2.30 am.
Tuesday:	Sign on 5.50 pm Relieve and run 6.50 pm Up load change over Number 125 ex Tottenham yard through to Seymour and return 113 (1.15 am) ex Tallarook to Yea. Sign off 2.30 am.
Wednesday:	Sign on 5.50 pm Relieve and run 6.50 pm Up load change over Number 125 ex Tottenham yard through to Seymour and return 113 (1.15 am) ex Tallarook to Yea. Sign off 2.30 am.
Thursday:	Off roster
Friday:	Sign on 5.50 pm Relieve and run 6.50 pm Up load change over Number 125 ex Tottenham yard through to Seymour and return 113 (1.15 am) ex Tallarook to Yea. Sign off 2.30 am.
Saturday:	Off Roster (Not required).

This pattern of work changed slightly over the years with changing timetable requirements, but I have tried to give a snapshot here of how the line worked steadily for a number of years.

The end came in February 1978 when controlling operations and supervision of the line was transferred to Seymour. Although trains were run often, they were run both to Mansfield and Alexandra on an as required basis. All operating grades were compulsory transferred out of Yea. Two drivers went to Seymour and one to Wodonga. All other staff were retrenched as surplus to requirements.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea

TRAIN STAFF AND TICKET

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 25 FEBRUARY 2017

This morning I received an email from Graham Stoney an ex MLA and while putting together a reply I recalled something from my dim past that you and your group might be interested in even though it is quite a bit of obscure railway working.

The Cathkin–Alexandra line was operated under the 'Train Staff and Ticket' system throughout its operational life, with Koriella being a block post as required, although I never saw this happen. Somewhere around 1965 the 'Ticket' option was withdrawn from this section. While this was not isolated to the Alexandra line, it occurred in other locations as well, but it was not common.

In the early 70's, I was involved in a special train operation with T364. Diesel loco T364 being attached to steam locomotive K184 at Yea. The pair then worked in tandem to Cathkin, where T364 was moved to the rear of the train and assisted it right through to Alexandra.

Double heading of diesel locomotives on the Alexandra line was not permitted, due to axle load restrictions on the light line and bridges. Two steam locomotives could double head and the last time I know of that happening was the running of a special passenger train, to convey Alexandra school children for a day at the 1956 Melbourne Olympics. There should be some locals still living in Alexandra who were on that special train all those years ago.

On the day I assisted K184 in the rear from Cathkin–Alexandra. T364 was then detached at Alexandra, and the Train Staff was returned by road to Cathkin, I returned to Yea, light engine. I unfortunately did not capture this rare event on film, but it is covered on the DVD I sent you recently, so this will have to do.

This is the only time that I know of where the no Ticket option caused such a problem on the line, but that was the way it was. It gave us time for an extra cup of tea and a biscuit!!!!.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea

R CLASS LOCOMOTIVES ON THE YEA BRANCH

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 17 FEBRUARY 2018

R706 and K161 at Yea in December 1968. R706 is swapped for K161 to proceed to Alexandra.

Lance Adams Collection



In December of 1965, R706 ran a passenger train as far as Yea on an Australian Railways Historical Society tour along the Upper Goulburn branch. This tour went on to Alexandra behind K161. It has been assumed that this was the only visit to Yea of an 'R' class locomotive, but this is not the case.

While the 'R' class were not common to the line, from time to time one did appear on a goods train, may be at times all the way to Yea, but as far along the branch as necessary to set up loading for clearing by the evening up load ex Yea at 1850. Both the 0300 Melbourne–Seymour roadside pickup goods and its return working, the 1100 Seymour–Melbourne roadside pickup goods, were both time tabled to run switch trips along the Yea branch as

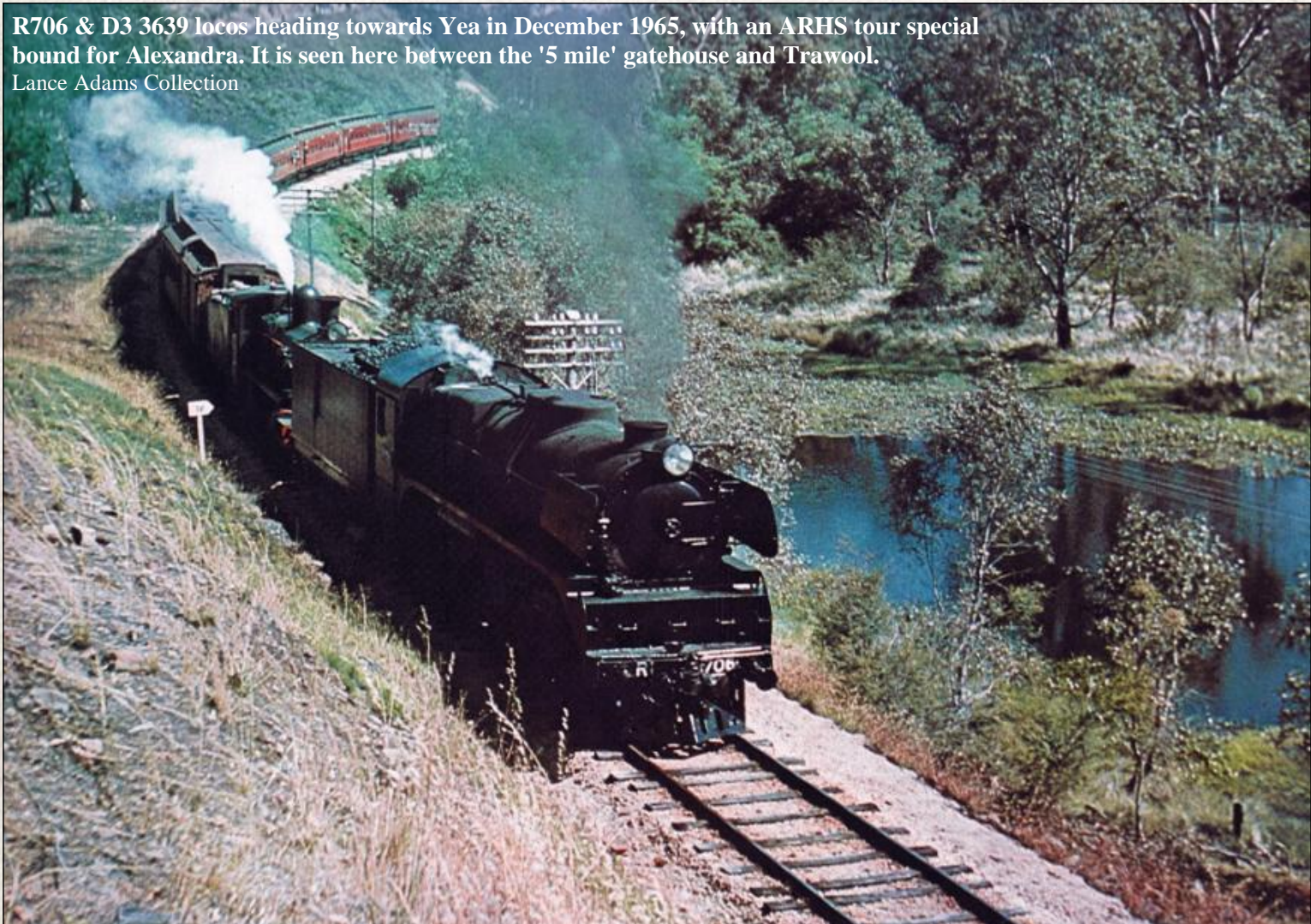
required. A switch trip can best be described as a quick diversionary trip to a location to transfer loading. These switch trips were common around the Victorian Railways at various locations.

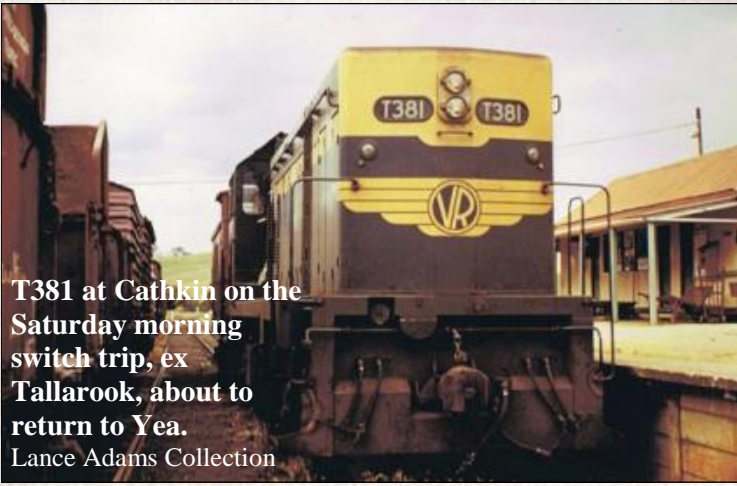
When these switch trips ran, they ran with whatever motive power was rostered on them, and if it was an 'R' class, then an 'R' class came ventured out. In the diesel days, 'B' classes also made appearances as far as Yea on those trips.

When those switch trips did run, they would be crewed by the Seymour crews rostered for the respective pickups, leaving the Yea engine crews to their regular work allocation. Another regular switch trip, this time run by Yea based crews, was the 0800 Saturday morning BONA (Engine and Guards van) from Yea–Tallarook returning with an 1100 down goods train. This train worked as far along the branch as arranged by the Station Master at Yea, who acted as the line controller. I have been as far as Mansfield on one of these switch trips, but it was usual for it to take loading over the range and terminate at Cathkin, before returning to Yea.

On one occasion in the early 70s, on T381 after returning from Cathkin BONA, we had to switch three empty 'M' trucks (cattle vehicles) to Homewood without a guards van, and return light engine. Our usual aim was to be in the pub by 1500. Some days we didn't make it!!! Some relatively late days out were endured on the switch.

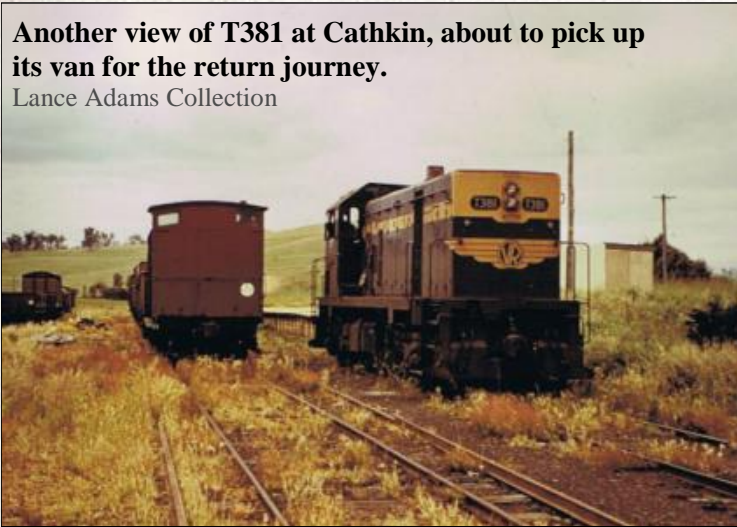
R706 & D3 3639 locos heading towards Yea in December 1965, with an ARHS tour special bound for Alexandra. It is seen here between the '5 mile' gatehouse and Trawool.
Lance Adams Collection



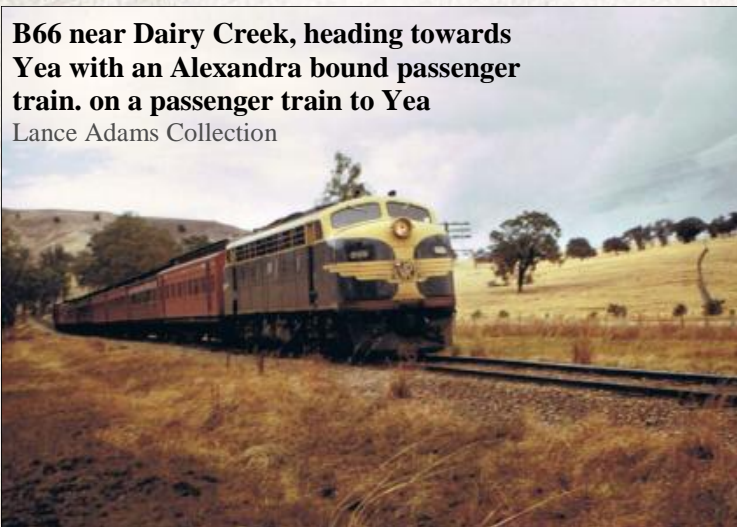


I have attached some Images here of these operations or workings, Including an Image of a rare run by a 'B' class diesel on a passenger train on the branch.

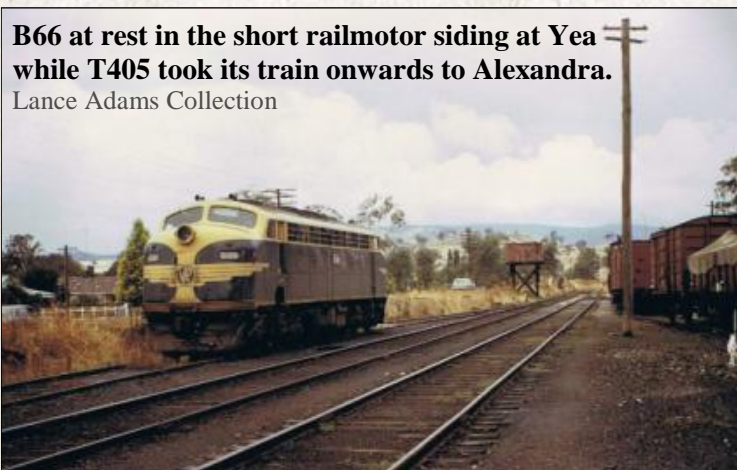
On that day, the B66 was changed at Yea for T405 which took the train on to Alexandra and return with the 'B' again taking the train back to Melbourne. The Mansfield railmotor, a Walker 153HP unit, connected with the through Alexandra train at Cathkin. This event occurred in April 1971.



While larger Main line locomotives did work along the branch as far as Yea, they were still a rare visitor that I was lucky to bear witness to on occasion.



Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea



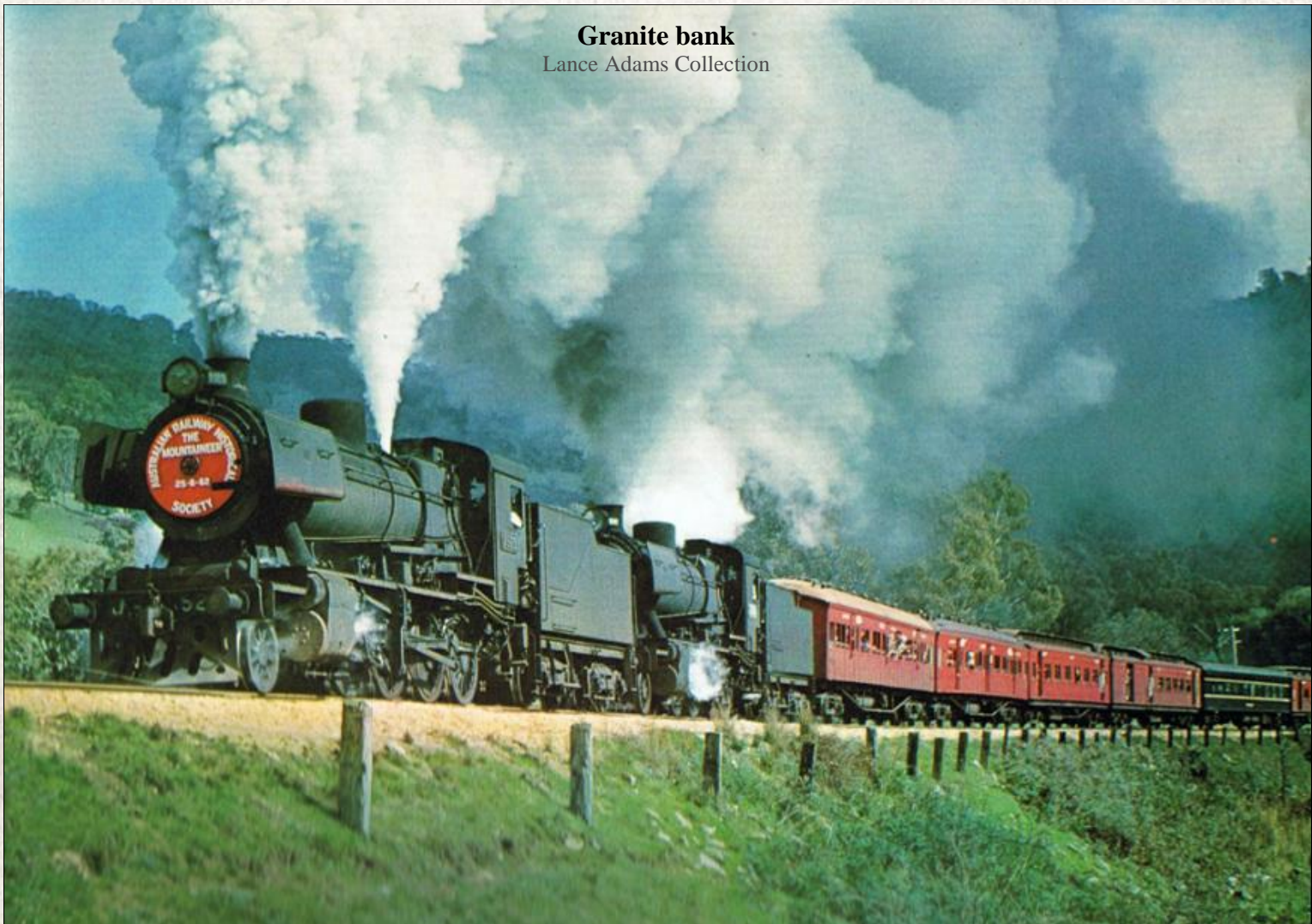
SPARE TIME MACHINE

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 20 MAY 2017

The 23½ mile journey from Tallarook–Yea was a hard one to say the least which I have endured many times and survived in all facets as a fireman, loco driver, and railmotor driver through the 60s and 70s. Railmotors were allocated between 50 and 51 minutes for the journey, on Sundays 47 minutes. Loco hauled goods trains however were allowed 70 minutes. 113 goods used to run on the down out of Tallarook, four days per week, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday at 0115, arriving into Yea at 0225 and forming 115 goods from there to head further along the branch to Mansfield and Alexandra.

The 1905 timetable for the line shows an evening departure from Tallarook–Yea daily at 2100 being allocated a bare 60 minutes to do the trip. Motive power at this time would have been a 'W' class Baldwin engine. Considering that these chariots of fire would have been a saturated,



Granite bank

Lance Adams Collection

slide valve beast, without a recognised form of headlight, in the thick fog known to this area, it must have been a wild, blind ride. In the 60s with the advantage of electric headlights, to accomplish this trip in the allotted 70 minutes everything had to go just perfectly and that is before a divide on the Granite bank at 0200. A trip on this portion of line, in the early hours of the morning has to be experienced to be believed. If it is going to go pear shaped it will on this run. Lots of things to get clobbered on the way home. Wild pigs, goats, deer, wayward wandering livestock and some stupid native animals.

If anyone has got a spare time machine I would like to borrow it as I want to see how it was done or if it really was done at all! In my opinion it cannot be done. On any account it must have been a white knuckle ride. I must have gotten it wrong for all those years. I have tried running in the dark with the headlights extinguished, as that is how I taught my firemen to drive this section, and that was really scary.

I have attached an Image (below top right) of J516 three minutes into its 70 minute gallop from Tallarook–Yea and just commencing its downhill drift towards School House Lane and Reedy Creek. Undulations to the Granite bank (ruling grade) and into it! Rubbish and ash everywhere. I have attached another image (previous page) captured on the Granite bank. Duck for cover as the ash is thrown everywhere. Another two images (below bottom) show the view from a 'T' class loco in the Tallarook–Yea section.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea



D CLASS LOCO'S

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 25 FEBRUARY 2017

The D class Loco's were the standard locomotive of the VR, built by four different builders.

1. The Thompson Foundry in Castlemaine
2. The Phoenix foundry in Ballarat
3. The Victorian Railways Newport workshops in Melbourne
4. A handful were also built at the Baldwin Locomotive Works in America

Only one Baldwin D3 survives statically in the railway museum at North Williamstown in Melbourne (635), while Newport built 639 remains operational for traffic. Finally 684 is plynthed in a park in Seymour, near the station.

The Baldwin D3's were the easiest steamers and were built to the same design. I believe that Baldwin used superior materials and this showed in their performance. Just wave the shovel at them and they would go!

The D3 fleet started life as DD Locomotives, then morphed into D1, D2 (saturated engines) and D3 (superheated). The D3 engines, which were common to the Alexandra line from their delivery, were the main for of motive power on the line from around 1929 to 1940 when they were superseded by the new K class consolidations.

The D3's were referred to by the Loco men as 'singing kettles' because of their free operations. They were a pleasure to work on, although in their later years were a little rough riding.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea

SILVER RAM

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 21 SEPTEMBER 2017



**Locomotive K152 climbing Box Hill
between Homewood and Yea**

Lance Adams Collection

K152 was a frequent sight on the Victorian network until its demise in the late 1960s. She was quite a striking beast with a set of large curled ram's horns wired to its headlight painted in brilliant silver frost, hence her name. How the horns got there is a story that should be recounted.

K152 was running a goods train out of Robinvale, Victoria to that heavenly place Ultima when it had an encounter with a very valuable stud ram. By the time the paperwork from head office reached the crew involved it was quite thick and lengthy. While running another similar train shortly after this, an unofficial stop was made, the deceased Rams horns retrieved, and after being cleaned and painted in Silver Frost paint, that just happened to be left laying around from the painting of the Ultima wheat silos, the ornate, curly horns were wired to its headlight. Everyone admired and knew the Silver Ram and she looked resplendent decked out in her horns.

When K152 was scrapped, the horns were removed from her headlight, painted in letterbox red and fitted to the headlight of J550. This terrible machine ended up as a static exhibit in a parkland setting in Warragul for years with the red Rams Horns still on it. It has since been relocated to Noojee but I am not sure if the horns are still attached or not.

Regretfully, I don't have any images of K152 adorned with her lovely horns but I do have one image of it working a passenger train to Alexandra, just out of Yea (topping Box Hill) prior to the horns being fitted. J550 was not a popular steed, and I cannot recall it having a name, apart from something I wouldn't repeat here.

I had my only trip to Shelbourne out from Maldon, with K152 long before the ram's horn's incident.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea

LITTLE BOYS AND SNAKES

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 20 JUNE 2017

On this day I was relieving at Healesville and was running a down service with a 153 HP Walker car. I stopped at Yarra Glen and after performing station work with the female caretaker, I left the motor by the Van door to do safe-working duties (place the two position light signal protecting the crossing at proceed). I also rejoined the train via the door to the engine room.

The train then ran through to Healesville, non stop. When I pulled into the Healesville platform around ten minutes later, there were police present and there was much activity on the platform. I immediately alighted from the engine room door to be greeted by the police.



© Dominik Vanyi

They informed me that the caretaker at Yarra Glen had lost track of her five year old son about the time the train went through and could I assist with any information and if I saw anything.

I had no recollection of him at all although I had seen him on previous occasions. I then entered the van area only to find the little fellow playing contentedly in the van. He must have let himself into the van as I entered the engine room by the driver's door. He seemed quite happy with his short train ride.

The police took him back to Yarra Glen to his mother, and I completed my shift without incident. This male child would be an adult now, and I wonder if he remembers or knows anything of his little adventure on the Healesville railmotor all those years ago.

Another humorous incident happened again while running a down service on the 0932 ex Lilydale, where some wicker baskets kept falling off the shelf in the Van. I had put them up again twice, so at Yarra Glen I decided to leave them where they fell.

On arrival at Healesville, I entered the van to assist in unloading the van goods, only to find an empty wicker basket, and its contents, a consignment of live snakes destined for the Healesville sanctuary, at large in the van. Mayhem and much chaos ensued and you have never seen three grown men vacate a van so quickly. We eventually managed to get the slithering escapees back in the basket and out of the van area. We knew we had them all by reading the consignment note.

I had never seen live snakes consigned this way before, nor did I see it again. I was always wary of wicker baskets. However, crates of racing pigeons for release at a certain date and time were common.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea

RAIL GAUGES OF AUSTRALIA

AS I UNDERSTAND THEM

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 1 DECEMBER 2017



When railways were first planned and getting under way in Australia in the 19th century, a meeting took place in Sydney to unanimously decide on a rail gauge. It was agreed at this meeting that the Irish broad gauge of 5 foot 3 inches would be the agreed gauge.

With this commitment, with the Victorian gold rush in full swing, the Victorian government went ahead with some bold railway constructions. In no time flat, railways had already reached out to the border river town of Echuca 150 miles from Melbourne, which nearly sent the fledgling colony of Victoria broke. NSW at the time had only laid a short section of line to Parramatta, when their Irish Engineer In Chief died. The chosen replacement, an Englishman, rejected the concept of the Irish gauge outright and insisted that what little rail construction had taken place should be converted to British standard gauge of 4 foot 8 1/2 inches and all new lines built to this gauge.

Victoria on the other hand was too far committed with going with the Irish broad gauge, that they just continued along with it, having the narrow minded opinion that let NSW do what they want and we will do our thing, it will not matter. None of the designing forefathers had the long term vision of the two colony systems ever meeting at any point and that coastal maritime shipping had the Interstate trade covered.

Other states soon got into the railway construction free for all, with South Australia opting for the Irish broad gauge, the same as Victoria, with a number of divisions being of the Narrow gauge of 3 foot 6 inches. Queensland, Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory, went along with 3 foot 6 inches too, which they still are to this day.

By the mid 20th century the folly of our forefathers was apparent and a purpose built standard gauge line was constructed between Sydney and Melbourne, with East–West Adelaide to Perth route and the Port Augusta–Alice Springs and Darwin routes following in later years.

Standard gauge is gradually creeping in across the Victorian network today, with the Main North East line being solely standard gauge beyond Seymour heading North, while standard gauge now gets as far South West as Portland. Many sections of track within Victoria are laid with dual gauge track.

The need for gauge changing is not only shifting, but is gradually being reduced. All goods travelling from Sydney to Melbourne, and vice versa, had to be manually transshipped at the break of gauge at Albury. The Second World War highlighted this slow procedure. We tried everything to minimise it, right down to bogie exchange which still goes on today to a certain degree.

Not only did Victoria go it alone with its 5 Foot 3 inch foray into railways, there was also a dabble into some 2 foot 6 inch narrow gauge lines into Mountain country, of which Puffing Billy is a survivor, using rolling stock and locomotives off the 4 trial Narrow Gauge lines.

Nineteen locomotives and numerous vehicles were constructed for this purpose. Many of these original items work on the Puffing Billy Railway to this day. Puffing Billy is not a replica, but remnants of this early trial.

I would be remiss, if I didn't mention Alexandra here, as the line that ran out of here, at the down end of the yard, known as the Rubicon tramway, was the first one to utilise diesel traction as a motive power in Australia. I think that this locomotive is still on static display at the 'Alexandra Timber Tramway and Museum' which has a museum and display in the former VR station area. A piece of Australian railway history.

The entire continent of Australia was a hotchpotch of various gauges that are still in existence today albeit gradually heading for an eventual uniformity of gauge.

Our forefathers have left us with a considerable legacy, brought on by the old Sydney–Melbourne rivalry of the early years, when we were all separate colonies, doing our own thing. It took Federation and years of working together to try and fix this mess in gauge differences. The struggle is not over yet.

The later day Iron Ore railways in the Pilbara region of Western Australia are all of standard gauge construction, allowing for the purchase Internationally of off-the-shelf locomotives and rolling stock. Most countries in the world run standard gauge, as British engineers were heavily involved with the early construction of railways.

Britain did trial a section in the early days, of Isimbad Kingdom Brunel's 7 foot broad gauge. It did not catch on and the locomotive and rolling stock survive as a curiosity in a museum in operating condition.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea

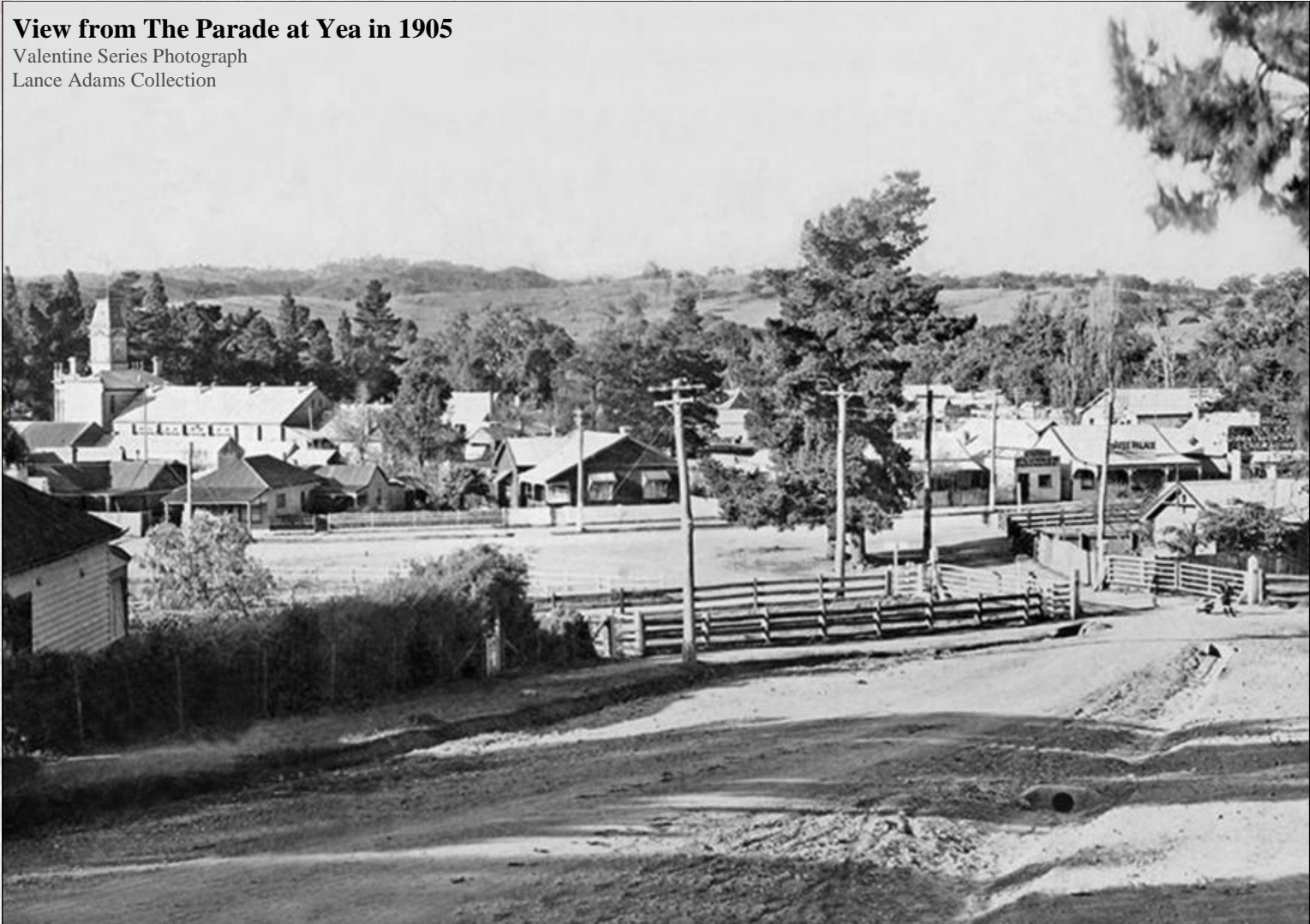
GATEHOUSES OF THE MANSFIELD LINE

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 13 JANUARY 2018

View from The Parade at Yea in 1905

Valentine Series Photograph
Lance Adams Collection



In the early years of the Victorian Railways it was common to have gatehouses placed along the line at strategic busy locations to separate road and rail traffic from each other. The Mansfield line had its share of these unique locations, usually operated by the Ways and Works Branch, with the track repairer living in the residence (gate house) and his wife usually helping as the gate operator.

These gates would have been constructed of very heavy wood. Wooden hand operated gates existed along the Mansfield line at the following locations:

The Five Mile Gatehouse: Situated five miles from the Junction at Tallarook at 62 miles 56 chains 15 links, where the main road formerly crossed the railway right of way. This

location was drastically altered in the mid to late 1920s to keep the road on the right of the former railway where it is now. The gates were abolished in 1927 and the gatehouse subsequently removed.

At these locations, as they were not protected by fixed signals of any kind, the gates remained permanently closed against road traffic. When a road vehicle was required to cross the railway line, the gatekeeper had to be roused and after ascertaining the possible position of any train in the vicinity, would operate the gates for the road vehicle to proceed at the road user's risk.

These locations were indicated to drivers of trains approaching them by the fitting of a triangular board under the approach whistle board (a white cross on the lineside) and the obligation of the engine driver was to blow an additional long whistle between the whistle board and the crossing. These whistle boards were placed twice the distance from a crossing as a normal whistle board (normal distance being 440 yards).

The Nine Mile Gatehouse: Situated nine miles from Tallarook at mileage 66 miles 40 chains 20 links placed at the top of the Granite Bank. This was just on the downside of Trawool, where an underpass takes the rail trail under the roadway now. The gates at this location were operated under the same rules and conditions as the Five Mile gates, with the Gatehouse being fitted into a triangular wedge of land between the roadway and the railway on the Down side of the line. This house, which was of an unusual construction in order to get it to fit the tight fit wedge, sat on some very tall stumps. It was known locally as the house on stilts.

Passengers on passing trains used to play a game where they would lean from the train as they passed and touch the guttering. The gates were abolished on 27 March 1947, however the house remained for sometime afterwards and I have vague recollections of it when I came onto the line as a Fireman in the 1960s. I didn't think to get a photo of this unique structure, but I am aware of a book being written at the present on 'Gatehouses of the Victorian Railways' and I am sure one would be included there.

Lyons Street: Situated at the Up end of the Yea Station and yard at 79 miles 10 chains 15 links. This gatehouse survived till the last day of operation of the railway and was the last set of gates on the line. The original gatehouse was replaced by a more modern Pre-Fab' building in the 1950s. This site is currently occupied by an Elders Stock and Station Agency.

Yarra Glen-Yea Road: A set of gates at 80 miles 10 chains 20 links situated at the down end of the Yea Station Yard. The gatehouse is still standing in Oliver Street, but the small wooden structure which housed the kerosene lamps and fittings on the side of the railway line there,

has gone.

Mansfield Station Yard Gates: Situated at the down end of the Mansfield yard at around mileage 131.5. These gates were unusual in that they would have been solely for shunting movements at the down end of the Mansfield yard. Considering most shunting procedures took place from the other end of the yard, I personally cannot see the logic in this facility. These gates were abolished early; probably prior to 1915. I have no recollections of an old gatehouse there, but I have seen photographs of the installations.

These gates were unique to the Victorian Railways and I do not know of any such set-up anywhere else. I do not know whether this set of gates were subject to the same rules as the other locations not protected by fixed lineside signals. My personal opinion is that the Mansfield down home signal provided ample protection and that the gates would remain closed to rail traffic until it was placed to the proceed position. This may not have been the case however.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea

RAILWAY MILEAGE ZERO

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 17 JANUARY 2018

It might be thought that the subject of determining a zero for railway mileage was simple, but that is far from the truth. In fact it is quite complicated, complex, and steeped in history.

When Victoria was formed in the early years it was a Colony of NSW and in the early years of the railways in this Colonial atmosphere, private railway companies constructed lines to various corners of the state and depending on which company did the construction is where their mileage zero was calculated from, Melbourne technically was a railway island, having three non-connected separate stations. Flinders Street, Spencer Street, and Princes Bridge.

There was no permanent connection between Flinders Street and Spencer Street, with only a ground level line available for goods traffic which was restricted to daylight use, provided a man walked in front of the following train displaying a red flag. Even Flinders Street Station and Princes Bridge had no physical connection, and at one stage they were even considering building a tunnel under the now Swanson Street to connect the two locations. This tunnel never eventuated, although the track profiles today indicate a definite drop in elevation when travelling under the Swanson Street bridge, which is in current dire need of urgent work being done to keep it safe and operational.

Railways being constructed South and East radiated out from Flinders Street, while lines going North originated at Princes Bridge (where federation square is now). Lines heading West, radiated out from Spencer Street (then Batman Hill).

In the middle to late 1800s 'Victorian Railways' was formed to bring uniform operating standard to railway operations in the state and to uniform the railways in general. By the late 1800s railway construction in Victoria was in an absolute frenzy, with scores of towns forming Railway Leagues to lobby for their town to be considered for a railway to be built.

The Yea–Mansfield–Alexandra lines were all part of this lobby, with the various lines being constructed under the Octopus Act. Several lines that turned out to be white elephants, were actually authorised under this Act. They didn't have a long operating life and ceased operation prior to the dawn of the 20th century. Three of the lines I refer to were Kilmore–Lancefield, the Outer Circle line in Melbourne (which we desperately need now), and the Dunkeld–Penshurst Railway.

With the formation of Victorian Railways and the uniting of all railways in the State under one banner, a new Railway Mileage Zero was decided upon.

The Railway Mileage Zero unified point was on the new viaduct line between Flinders Street and Spencer Street, about where the Waterside Hotel stands now on the corner of King and Flinders Streets.

Things didn't end there, as all lines that had previously been constructed, retained their original measuring points and markers (and still do to this day). You can still see numbers around the rail system relating back to this period. For instance if you observe any Automatic Signal Number, the numbers (in hundreds of feet from the measuring point) following the prefix latter line code, will give you an accurate distance. Just divide by 52.8 and you have the answer in feet. All measurements are in Imperial Miles, Chains and Links. Overhead power supply staunchens are measured in the same way.

Things get a little more tricky in the Goulburn Valley, where there are two lines to Echuca. The one that is called the Main Line is via Bendigo, while the other subsidiary line runs from Toolamba–Echuca, with a different set of mileage figures. Consequently any station beyond Echuca (over the boarder) have two sets of distances for them. There is approximately 10 miles difference (less) via Toolamba than Bendigo, with all passenger fares and goods rates calculated over the lesser distance line.

In the early years of the Victorian Railways an ornate wrought iron clock was placed to mark Mileage Zero. This clock was donated to the city of Melbourne upon its foundation as a city, and has had several installation sites over its life span from the now Federation Square, to outside the Elizabeth Street entrance to Flinders Street station (Mileage zero). The last known site was near the Railway Head Office in Spencer Street, welcoming passenger arrivals to Melbourne by train. Train Guards, who were responsible for accurate time keeping, used to set their watches by this magnificent clock. This time would be relayed by them to various country locations as they passed through them.

This clock was removed from here when the Spencer Street Station complex was redeveloped into Southern Cross as it is now. The clock was thought to be lost, but it was re-discovered in a scrap yard in Sale, Victoria and after an expensive restoration has been returned to inside the Southern Cross Station complex, where it proudly sits today on display at ground level. It is painted in its original 'Brunswick Green' livery and looks quite smart.

When I was younger, I thought there must have been several of these clocks around Melbourne as I had seen old photos at a number of locations, but it turns out that it is the same clock. What a fantastic surviving relic from the old Melbourne Colony and 'Railway Mileage Zero'.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea

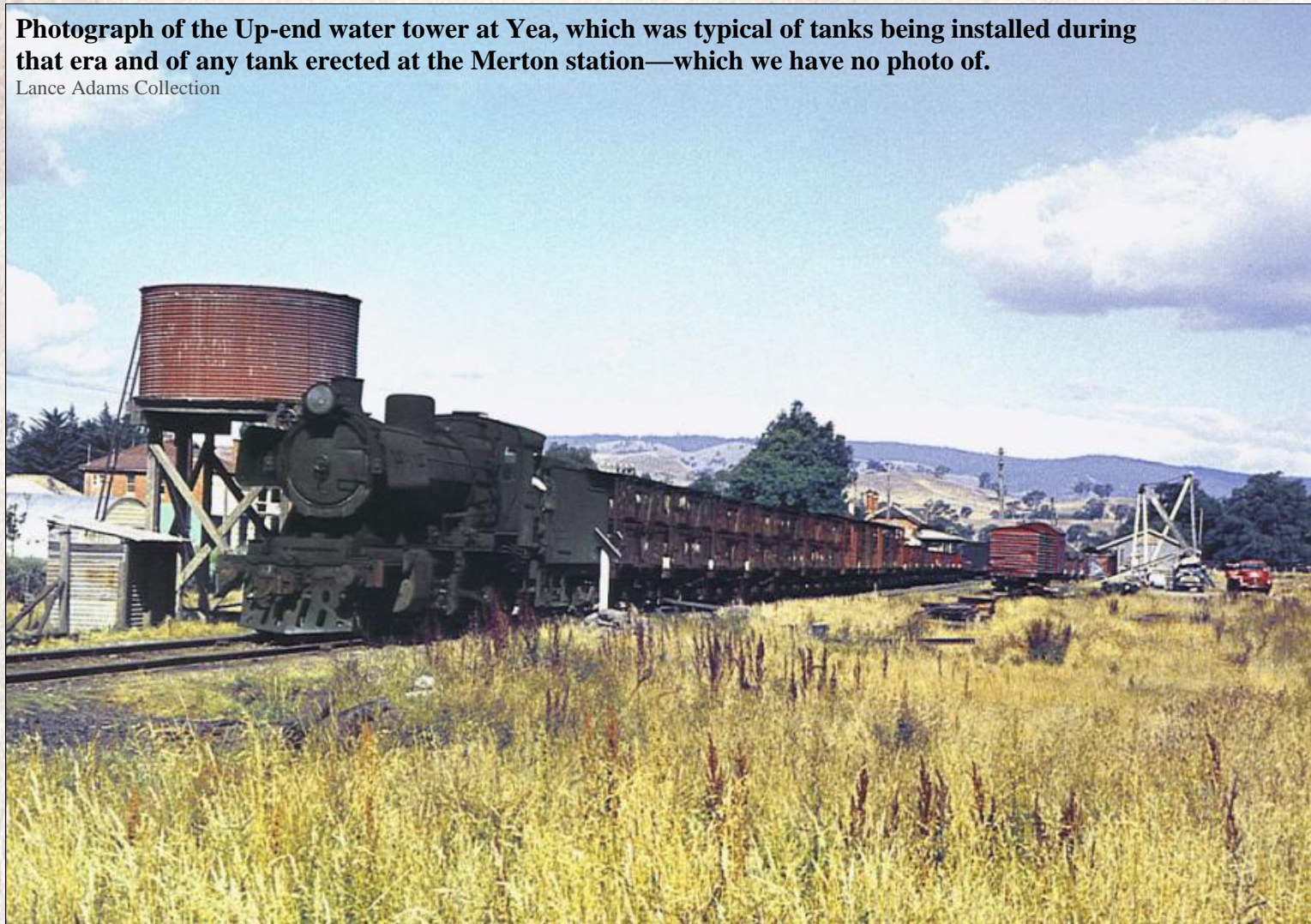
LINESIDE WATER SUPPLIES

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 19 DECEMBER 2017

Photograph of the Up-end water tower at Yea, which was typical of tanks being installed during that era and of any tank erected at the Merton station—which we have no photo of.

Lance Adams Collection



In the early days of train operations on the Mansfield line, intermediate lineside water supplies were used to quench the requirements of the little Baldwin, saturated, slide valve 'W' engines. These supplies were well stretched out, so as a result, the thirsty beasts were able to get a top up from tanks provided at Home Creek and between Molesworth and Cathkin.

Apart from the daily trip to Alexandra Road (later named Rhodes, Lily, and finally Koriella), the little Cathkin based engine was used to run out to Home Creek (on its own) and pump water from a small steam driven pump attached to the locomotive. The water was pumped into the lineside tanks so later thru' trains could top up with water. This Cathkin based locomotive had very low engine run miles per week, clocking up most of its weekly engine miles just tottering to and fro' to Home Creek, instead of actually running a train. In my opinion it would not have been unusual for the engine to return from Koriella to Cathkin light, so it could perform this task, then return back to Koriella in time to run the late afternoon train back to Cathkin, where it connected with the afternoon Up Mansfield train.

In the early days, before the line reached Alexandra, passengers had to start and complete their journeys by stage coach, which departed Alexandra around 0430. The morning Up train, originated at Alexandra Road (Koriella) running to Yea and on to Tallarook to connect with a train to Melbourne. This engine and carriages were then used to run the morning Mansfield and return train, returning to Alexandra Road that evening, where a Yea crew would stay the night in barracks in readiness to run the morning departure.

This arrangement stayed in vogue until train services on the Alexandra Road section were ceased in the mid 1890s, when the morning Up train was timetabled to originate at Yea and return to Yea in late evening. Around this time a water supply was organised for the locos at Cathkin and the Home Creek tanks were removed. It was still a tight thing getting these primitive, uneconomical little steeds to Mansfield on one tank of water. Something had to be done.

The answer was to get a water supply en route, and Merton was the chosen location. To achieve this, an elaborate overhead cable bucket scoop arrangement was implemented. The outcome included the construction of a teardrop shaped dam on the Up side of the line, on the hill behind the Merton Station. Water was pumped from this dam by a wind driven windmill pump. This old pump has been found and fully restored in Mansfield, and can be inspected by contacting the Mansfield and District Historical Society. I have never seen this pump, but I know of its existence today.

By the time I came onto the line in the 1960s, no water facilities existed at Merton. But the senior drivers at that time, recalled how they took water there in the 1940s. With the larger, superheated engines making an appearance on the line, water at Merton was no longer essential. Now a thru' run on one tank of water was theoretically possible, as long as the injectors were kept trim and the waste of water was kept to a minimum, although the running into Mansfield light from the 128–29 mile post was not unheard of.

That Merton teardrop dam is clearly visible today on Google Maps and can be viewed [here](#).

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea

ANNIVERSARY DAY

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 25 OCTOBER 2018

A very young Lance Adams driving K157 on a small Up Carpolac goods, heading back to Goroke on New Years Eve 1968/69. The train to Carpolac ran every Tuesday.

Lance Adams Collection



Yesterday was October 25th, which is a special day on the railway calendar of this district as it marks the anniversary of the withdrawal of steam traction off the Upper Goulburn Branch.

On that day in 1965 K`57 ran a goods train from Yea to Alexandra and return under control of driver Des Clements with operating porter Nick Roe acting as guard. The entire event was followed by an ABC film crew and recorded for posterity. It maybe worth following up to see if the footage still exists in their charge or the film archives somewhere. K157 returned to Yea that afternoon and ran the 1850 Up load to Tallarook that evening with Yea driver Bill Skey in charge thus finishing an 83 year steam domination on the line.

I remember arriving back in Yea from work on this evening 1995 and having flashback memories to this event 30 years previous. Now 53 years later I am having similar retrograde thoughts on the day. A special day in the history of our district, probably only remembered by a handful of surviving locals.

A few years after this event, I ran into K157 again in her last years, when I was sent to Horsham relieving as a fireman one wheat season and three of the attached images in this article are of this re-union of old friends.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class
Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea



**K157 on the Carpolac Line out of Horsham
on New Years Eve 1968/69**
Lance Adams Collection



**K157 on the Carpolac Line out of Horsham
on New Years Eve 1968/69**
Lance Adams Collection



**K157 on the Carpolac Line out of Horsham on New
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Lance Adams Collection

GATEHOUSES OF THE MANSFIELD LINE

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 13 JANUARY 2018

View from The Parade at Yea in 1905

Valentine Series Photograph
Lance Adams Collection



In the early years of the Victorian Railways it was common to have gatehouses placed along the line at strategic busy locations to separate road and rail traffic from each other. The Mansfield line had its share of these unique locations, usually operated by the Ways and Works Branch, with the track repairer living in the residence (gate house) and his wife usually being the gate operator.

These gates would have been of very heavy wooden construction. Wooden hand operated gates existed along the Mansfield line at the following locations:

The Five Mile Gatehouse situated five miles from the Junction at Tallarook, at 62 miles 56 chains 15 links, where the main road formerly crossed the railway right of way. This location was drastically altered in the mid to late 1920s to keep the road on the right of the former railway where it is now. The gates were abolished in 1927 and the gatehouse subsequently removed.

At these locations, as they were not protected by fixed signals of any kind, the gates remained permanently closed against road traffic. When a road vehicle required to cross the railway line, the gatekeeper had to be roused and after ascertaining the possible position of any train in the vicinity, would operate the gates for the road vehicle to proceed at the road users risk.

These locations were indicated to drivers of trains approaching them by the fitting of a triangular board under the approach whistle board (a white cross on the lineside) and the obligation of the engine driver was to blow an additional long whistle between the whistle board and the crossing. These whistle boards were placed twice the distance from a crossing as a normal whistle board (normal distance 440 yards).

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Passengers on passing trains here, used to play a game where they lean from the train as they passed, and touch the guttering.

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Lyons Street, Yea, situated at the Up end of the Yea Station and yard at 79 miles, 10 chains 15 links. This gatehouse survived till the last day of operation of the railway and was the last set of gates on the line. The original gatehouse was replaced by a more modern 'Pre-Fab' building in the 50s. This site is currently occupied by an Elders Stock and Station Agency.

Yea Road, Yarra Glen. This set of gates at 80 miles 10 chains 20 links was situated at the down end of the Yea Station Yard. The actual gatehouse is still standing in Oliver Street, but the small wooden structure to house the kerosene lamps and fittings on the side of the railway line there have gone.

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Lance Adams
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and Former Yea Engineman
Yea

T326 at Yea

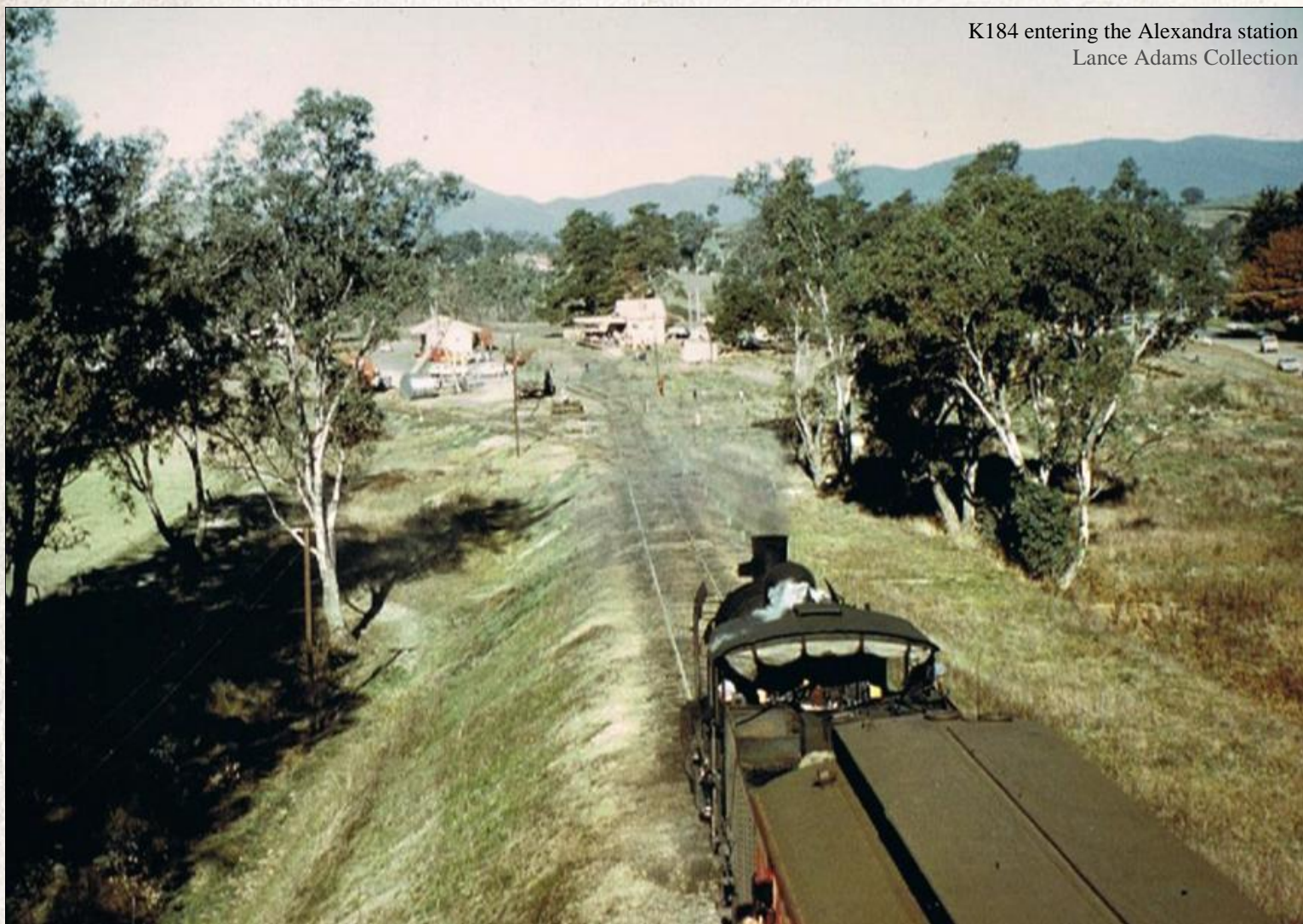
Lance Adams Collection



TRAIN SERVICES ON THE ALEXANDRA LINE

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 27 FEBRUARY 2018



K184 entering the Alexandra station
Lance Adams Collection

From the outset in 1891 a daily service, connecting at Cathkin with the Mansfield bound train, was initiated. This service terminated at Alexandra Road (now Koriella) which was then the end of the line. Passengers were required to complete their journey to Alexandra by stage coach.

By 1892 the service was increased to allow for an early AM departure from Alexandra Road to Tallarook, to connect with a thru' service to Melbourne. There was still a connecting service from Cathkin to Alexandra Road daily, with still a connecting stage coach to the Alexandra township.

By 1895 the service to Alexandra via Alexandra Road was deemed to be not warranted, and subsequently ceased. The morning train now commenced running from Yea and returning there in the evening ex Tallarook at 9.00PM.

Local agitation in the early 1900's saw the line extended and re-opened over the Victoria gap and Curusoe creek into Alexandra proper. The service was then provided by a mixed goods, a goods train with passenger cars attached, on Monday's, Wednesday and Fridays.

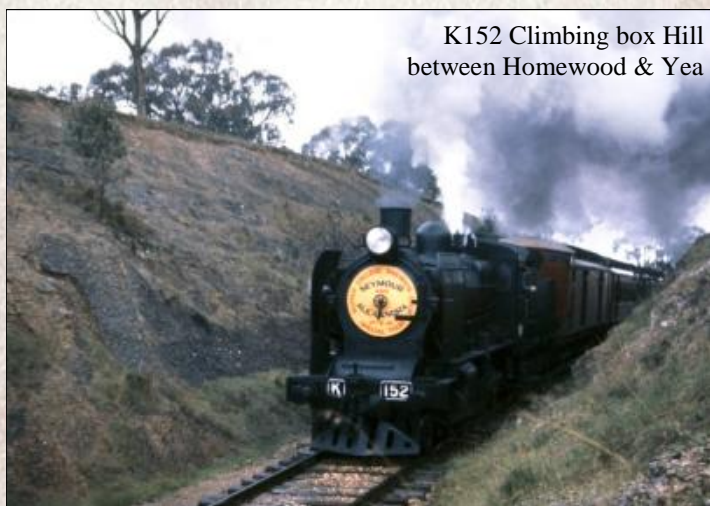
In 1945, due to coal shortages from world war 2, this service was also axed, and the line reverted to the running of 2 goods trains per week on Mondays and Wednesday. This arrangement lasted until early 1978, when trains were altered to only run on an as required basis only.

In August 1978 the end finally came for the Alexandra branch, when the last revenue goods train, hauled by Y131 ran. A clearing train ran in October 1978, hauled by Y166 which saw the end of all rail services to Alexandra.

Separately provided passenger trains were never a feature on the Alexandra line, but from time to time, one did run, usually for some occasion or event.

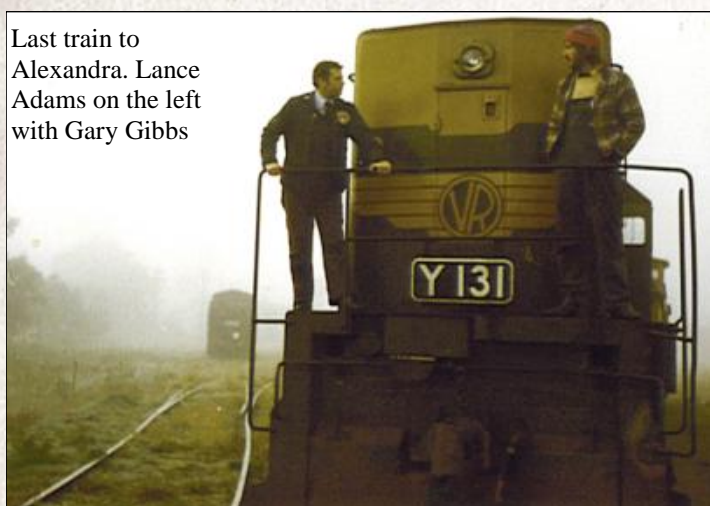


D3 639 Alexandra
Lance Adams Collection



K152 Climbing box Hill
between Homewood & Yea

A better Farming train in the late 20's, picnic football specials ex Yea, in the 30's & 40's and a special train to convey school children to the Melbourne Olympic games in 1956. There was also special railmotor trips run on New Years day for a back to celebration in Alexandra towards the end of the 1950's. These services were run by 280HP Walker railcars. From time to time Walker 153HP railcars found their way on to the branch to Alexandra.



Last train to
Alexandra. Lance
Adams on the left
with Gary Gibbs

Other special trains to traverse the line ran in the 70's, with 1 notable working by T405 on an excursion train. Also another special train was run around the same time to convey Alexandra school children to a district inter school sports event at Broadford.

The last steam hauled passenger train occurred in the mid 70's, hauled by K184.

With train services on the Alexandra line now just a distant memory, it is nice to just sit and recall the memories.



T405 at Alexandra

As an add on, I have supplied a scan of the gradients and curves from my official 1927 Victorian Railways issue book. This book shows the gradient profiles of Victorian railway lines and is something all engine drivers have.

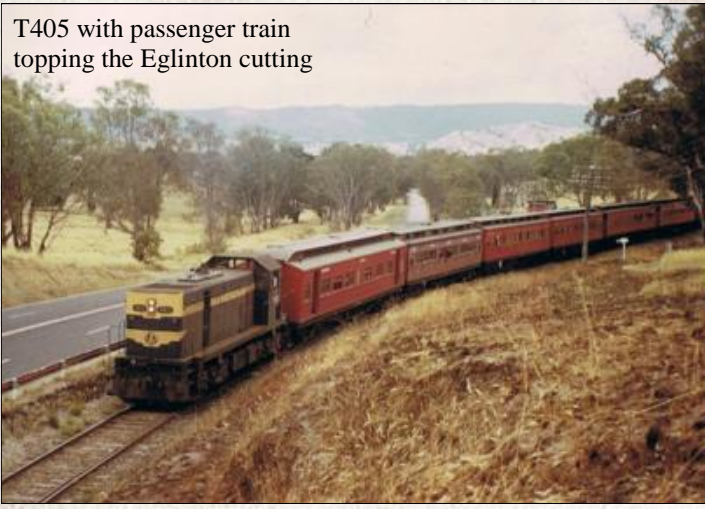
I have two copies, one is an 1897 print issue, while the other is a dated 1927. These have never been re-issued or reprinted, however they still have a form of the documents in modern metric form, on lines that are still open today.

The gradient scan (next page) shows mileages, major watercourses, level crossings, gradients, curves in chain radius, and the year the line was opened in various stages.

As you can see, the line rises steadily from the junction at Cathkin, detailed distances shown

- TRAIN SERVICES ON THE ALEXANDRA LINE -

T405 with passenger train
topping the Eglinton cutting



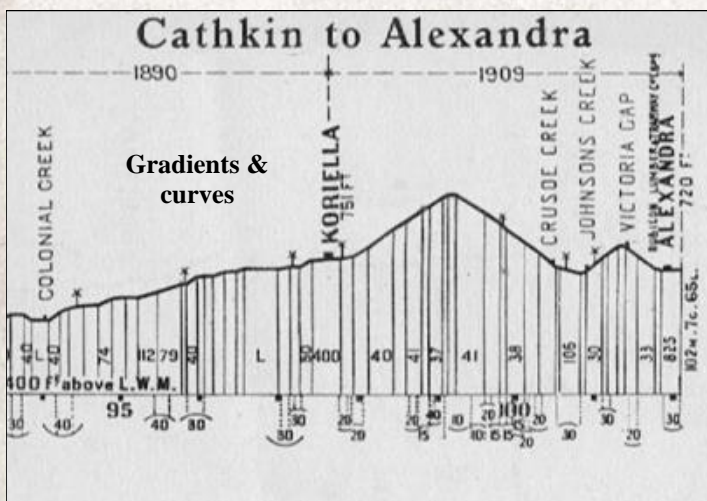
from Melbourne mileage zero (the clock) and really starts heavy climbing after Koriella on the 1909 construction rising some 51 feet in total, despite some heavy down grades towards Alexandra.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea

T405



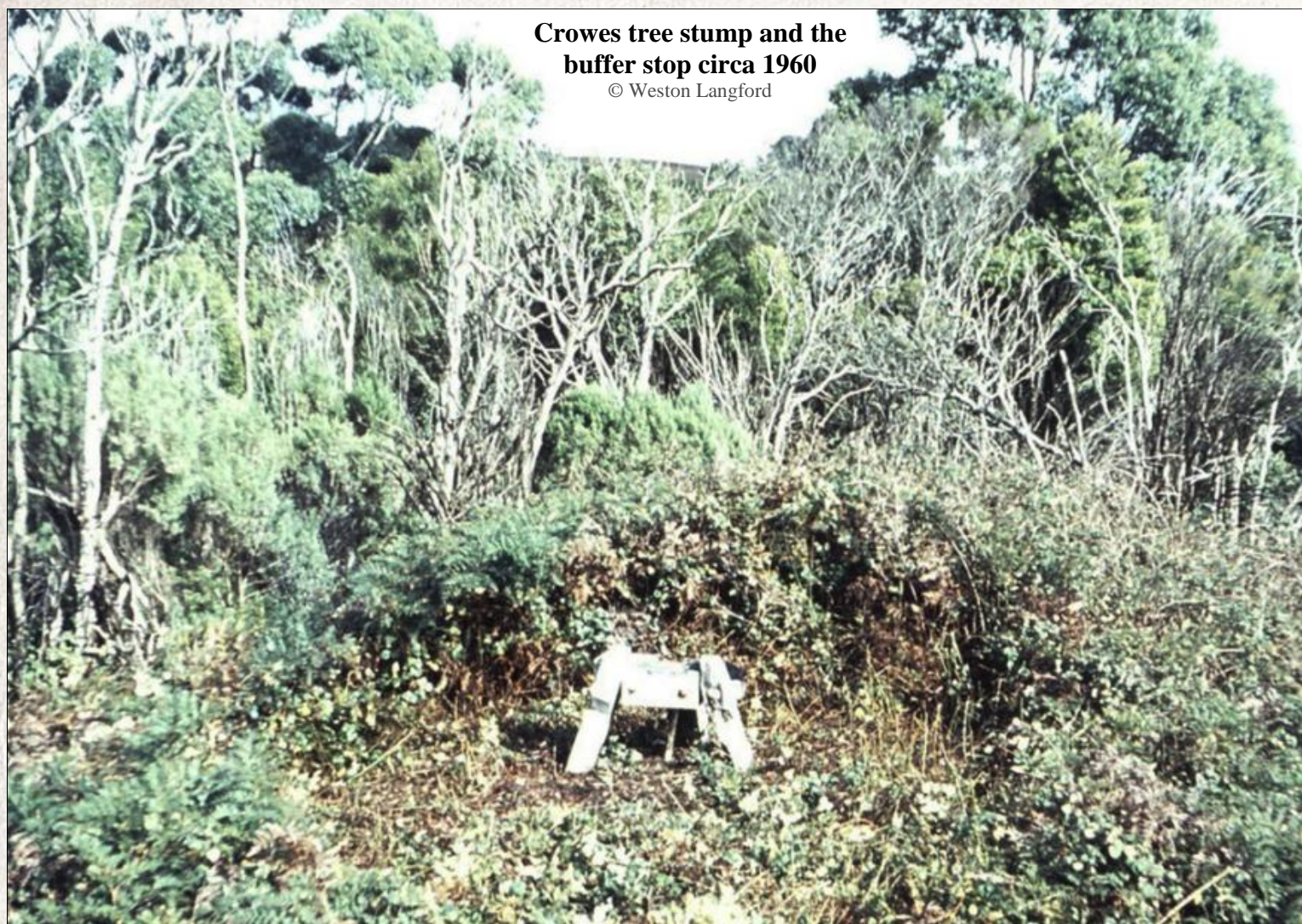
Y105 at Cathkin



THE LINE THAT ENDED IN A TREE STUMP

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 18 MAY 2018



Crowes tree stump and the
buffer stop circa 1960

© Weston Langford

From early information I have been told, Victoria's most southern mainland Railway Station, was the isolated Crowes Station in the Otway Ranges near Beech Forest, was once known as 'the line that ended in a tree stump'! Tree stumps were common place in the area at that time, as the area was being heavily logged. On 7 August 1942 a further poignant stump connection was made when a train wrecked on a huge tree stump at Crowes. Up until that time the stump had served as an end-of-line marker. A photograph from the 'Otway Districts Historical Society Collection' shows the **scene after the incident**. The site informs us that Locomotive G41 was derailed at Crowes after hitting the stump on a particularly foggy night. The driver had apparently missed the station in the mist and driven the train into the stump at full speed. It took three days to have the train re-railed. Locally the site became known as 'Over the Black Stump'. We are indebted to Des Jowett for researching the year of the crash.

I have visited the Crowes Station site a number of times, and apart from the small portion of line and an NQR wagon placed there by the Puffing Billy Preservation Society (PBPS) back in the 1990s, there is very little there to fossick over.

In the mid 1990s when the PBPS were restoring G41, I accompanied a group to archeologically dig out the former locomotive service pit at Crowes to obtain dimensions, as this was former 'G' Class territory. We back-filled the former service pit when we had the required data. New service pits for the 'G' were constructed at Belgrave Locomotive Depot based on these figures.

In the time that Puffing Billy was being restored in the early 1960s, the rolling stock and locomotives were transferred to operate on this railway, with quite a number of trains run in the Otways, to help get them started. When their track was operational again, everything was transferred back to Belgrave and the Beech Forest line closed altogether.

The 'G' was a unique locomotive to work on. We only had two Garrat type loco's in Victoria, namely 41 and 42, while other States had various classes. The 1960s class NSW Garrat, was probably the largest with mechanical standard stokers fitted because of its size.

Although I never got to run trains on the Crowes section beyond Beech Forest and Lavers Hill, as it ceased operation in 1954, I was however present for the running of rail recovery trains toward Kincaid tanks. This is very rough and rugged country with tiger snakes every where.

Crowes tree stump was officially at a distance of 139 miles 20 chains and 49 links from mileage zero in Melbourne. This was a fascinating little railway, consigned to the trash bin of



a few individuals' memories. I doubt whether there would be much interest in it these days.

The men who drove this line in the later days were, Clarry Kenyon, Bill Brady, Leo Moore, Jimmy Southern and John Hope. In the 1930s the regular driver was John Taylor, and in the 1920s, Bob Dalton (who came from Healesville). Before that was Allan Crocker (who came off the Whitfield narrow gauge). There was an Engine crew based at Crowes in the early days but they were withdrawn with the Garrett locomotives being introduced to the line in 1926.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea



*Download the
latest update here*

MEALS ON WHEELS

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 9 JANUARY 2019

Cooking snags on the
A2 at Ballarat

© Rob Morgan 2019



Being an engineman in my era, was a tough life, with excessive hours of shifts directly dictating to us our culinary gastronomical tucker. Anything that required refrigeration didn't last long bouncing around on a hot swaying steam locomotive. I always knew when it was getting hot as you could put your hand on the regulator (throttle) under 100 F, but over 100 F you required a wet rag, known as a 'sweaty'. Consequently our diet consisted of whatever we could lay our hands on, out on the track.

We had a variety of cooking methods available to us, with the most common one being slow cooked behind the sizzling injectors for several hours. The aromas were fantastic to smell. A rough piece of skirt steak slow cooked in this manner, usually resulted in the most tender fillet steak several hours later. Anything that went behind the Injectors was usually wrapped in buttered brown paper as tinfoil was not available. The only foil we had seen was the wrappings from inside cigarette packets, and apart from being too small, it had an aroma you would not want on your food.

We all carried a supply of potatoes in our work bag, which we used to wipe over our windows to keep rain drops from forming on them. After wiping any excess viscous liquid with news paper, we had rain free windows and also a snack of beautifully slow cooked potatoes cooked behind the injectors. Pumpkin with skin on, done the same way is delicious too, particularly if a dollop of butter was thrown in as well. A manifold or turret to cook on, depending on the class of Loco' that was being worked, always provided some great recipe ideas. I still slow cook here at home, and my wife just loves how I do the baked slow cooked potatoes, carrots, onions and pumpkin. They take three hours to cook!!!

Over the years I have had some interesting incidents occur and some not so successful things happen with different cooking techniques. The most memorable one would be the time I placed a whole chicken in the smokebox, after a small time on top of the boiler. I didn't think the whole bird was cooking well enough so I decided to transfer my cooking method to the smokebox (which is a partial vacuum) at the front of the boiler. I duly forgot about it, and when I commenced steaming at the bottom of the gradient, I saw all this rubbish coming out of the funnel. For a few seconds I couldn't work out what it was, and then realised my chicken had been blasted in pieces, all over the countryside. The smokebox was off limits for cooking for quite sometime after that, although I did receive some snide comments from my work colleagues who knew about the incident.

Another interesting incident happened on the way to Wycheproof, when a well known Korong Vale driver, who was known for eating well and for always waiting till he had an audience to give us his daily lecture on if you work hard, you have to eat well. This statement was usually made while I was tucking into a can of something. I was quite new to the railways at the time and young as well. It was possibly even my first time away from home.

On this particular hot Mallee day, 45 degree, the Driver arrived at the engine, and said 'Good morning boy!' and tossed his locked enamel plate on top of the boiler. Several hours down the track our Wycheproof meal time had come around. With everybody gathered around on the Locomotive, the short sermon on working hard and eating well was delivered. With his captive audience watching on to see what gastronomic delight he was to consume on that particular day, he unlocked the locking clasps on his enamel plate and lid, to reveal a sad and sorry looking badly wilted salad! Everybody just looked away. I tried not to choke with laughter on my tin of stag beans, which I had to share with him or he would have had nothing to eat. We were all quite hungry that day.

On another run years later, I was running an excursion train, and on that train was a group of Japanese school girls. We had stopped at an intermediate crossing station to allow another train to pass, and I decided it was an appropriate time to indulge in some Lamb shaslicks I had prepared the previous night and just cooked on the turret. While devouring these delightful morsels, I noticed a young Japanese girl on the platform, keenly watching me eating on the footplate. I offered her one of my shaslicks which she eagerly accepted. As she was munching through her offering of tender meat on a stick, I turned to her and said, 'Do you know what that is?' and she replied 'No'. I said 'Kangaroo'. She immediately spat out

what she was already eating on the platform and threw the remaining stick of meat on the ground in disgust. It was quite a humorous episode.

My favourite work meal was a concoction called 'spew'. We all carried items for emergency rations when things got a little drawn out. I usually had enough food for a 12 hour shift, but always had something in reserve. A can of Baked beans or something, a sealed can of Ham, loose onions and potatoes.

Recipe for Spew (feeds 3)

1. Brown 750 grams of mince in the fire on the shovel.
2. Add your can of Spam and brown that too in the fire.
3. Add a can of creamed corn.
4. Add a can of Baked Beans or Chilli Stag Beans.
5. Chop up the onion that has been growing for weeks in your work bag, and add it to the mix (including any green growth that has sprouted from it). Greens are good!

Looks like Spew, tastes great. As a matter of fact, I will get the ingredients and make it for tomorrow night's meal. My wife usually refuses to eat this footplate delicacy, but I love it. I lived on it for years. Today's meal will be cooked in an electric skillet. A far cry from shoving the coal shovel into the firebox!!!

Cooking in style aboard K 153
at Hurstbridge
© Rob Morgan 2019



Get some crusty Tin Loaf bread and tuck in!

Mealtimes let you use your imagination to make something out of what you can get. Sometimes an idea would come up one day, you would work out what you could do, and execute it another time.

One day we hit a kangaroo and decided to chop it up. After skinning it, it baked nicely in the fire after a stint on top of the boiler in the cab. Kangaroo meat is good eating. I have eaten snake too. Yum, Yum.

While on the job we needed fresh water, and some enginemen used to take drinking water directly from the tender and lineside tanks, but I always used and carried a water-bag. Everyone of us were issued one such bag each year. The waterbag was usually suspended on the safety chain between the engine and tender, which was very handy for a quick thirst quencher while doing a hot job on a hot day.

Another thing we needed was boiling water for hot drinks. The traditional method for getting boiling water was from the injector overflow pipe, but after water treatment tablets were added to the water, this method, although still used, lost favour. Often a billy boiler, a small hooked rod, was used to hang a billy full of water in the fire, which would boil very quickly.

We all carried a billy and I still have mine today. There is nothing like Billy tea! To prevent ash and rubbish accumulating in the Billy water, we used to throw a piece of matchstick in, so the rubbish would all form around it. We used to fish the matchstick, ash and rubbish out when the billy had boiled. Each billy was also well coated with soap on the outside to prevent soot from forming on them.

I am thankful to Rob Morgan for supplying both the lovely images in this article for you to enjoy.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class
Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea

RUNNING TRAINS ON THE ALEXANDRA LINE

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 17 JANUARY 2019



K184 enters the Alexandra station

Lance Adams Collection

Of all the items I have compiled on railways in general, I have not written much on the actual running of trains on the Alexandra branch. So here I go!

The line branched off at 93 miles, 28 chains, 64 links, at Cathkin, at an altitude of 581 feet above a **Low Water Mark** of 350 feet. This junction was moved slightly in a down direction in 1949 when the Cathkin turntable and former loco' servicing area, and protecting home signal were disconnected from the Alexandra line. This was done when major track alterations were carried out and connections to the branch made more convenient. A back platform dock road at Cathkin for the Alexandra line, was removed earlier around the late 1890s.

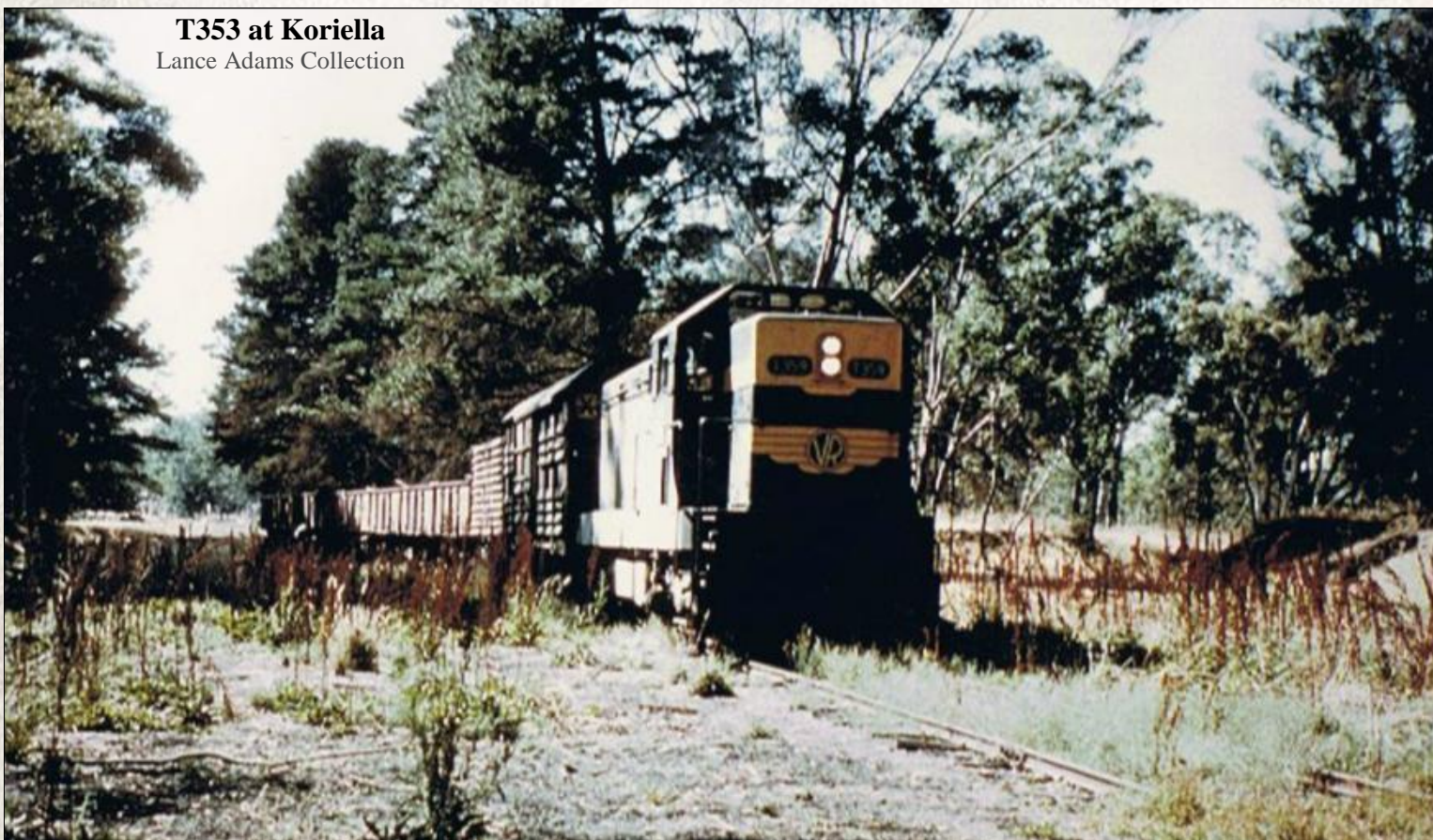
Leaving Cathkin by a 15 chain right hand radius curve, the line climbs steadily towards Koriella (originally Alexandra Road, then Rhodes and Lily) with one gradient as steep as one in 40 near mileage 96.

The main road is crossed just on the Up side of Koriella and a sweeping 30 chain radius right hand curve brings the line into Koriella at mileage 96 miles, 60 chains, 10 links, at an altitude of 751 feet above a **Low Water Mark** of 400 feet.

Koriella was the temporary terminus of the line from 1890–1909 when the line was eventually extended through to the actual township of Alexandra. When Koriella was the terminus for the line, the station layout boasted four roads and over the 29 year period had two independent turntables of different sizes at either end of the yard, on opposite sides of the tracks. When the line was extended through to Alexandra in 1909, Koriella became a nondescript no one in charge wayside station. I don't know what is visually present today or what might be found there, as I have not been near the place in 40 plus years. A thing I must do in future. Just a simple staff locked loop siding existed at Koriella in my day, with the clear signs of what had been there previously.

Leaving Koriella, the gradients become more severe during the ascent to Eglinton Cutting at 99 miles, 30 chains, 22 links, and the line threads through this area on 20, 15 and 40 chain radius curves. From here the line drops sharply on steep gradients (equal to that of which conventional type railway trains can readily negotiate anywhere in the world) to Curusoe Creek near the 100 mile peg. Then the line rises sharply, crosses Johnson Creek, and enters

T353 at Koriella
Lance Adams Collection



Alexandra Station

Photographer Charlie Norbury

Courtesy John & Maureen Norbury 2019



Victoria Gap, exiting on a 20 chain left hand curve with a short, sharp drop into the Alexandra station on a left hand 30 chain radius curve. Alexandra station is at 102 rail miles from mileage zero in Melbourne, with the end of track at 102 miles, 7 chains, 65 links. Alexandra is at an altitude of 720 feet above a **Low Water Mark** of 400 feet.

Shunting of trains at Alexandra.

The Alexandra yard consisted of one (platform) two and four roads. Four road being the goods shed road, with a SEC pole loading siding at the Up end of the yard as an additional loop siding.

Arrival trains usually arrived into the No 1 road, the platform road. After parcels and the likes were unloaded, they would be drawn ahead into the extreme dead end at end of track and the brake van and loading pushed into the shed road, with any shed road vehicles being propelled out into the open.

The loco' would now proceed to the Up end of the yard via the Loco' servicing area, which ran off the main platform track at the Up end of the station, which was protected by an Annette locked home signal. Departure trains would be made up at the Up end of the yard,

**Lance Adams & Gary Gibbs on
the last train to Alexandra**

Lance Adams Collection



utilising the heavy gradient on a falling grade to gravity assist the operation. Just ease up on the wagons, and let gravity do the work.

This simple form of shunting went horribly wrong one morning when a heavy bogie Louvre wagon loaded with bagged cement, was miss-dropped into the shed road, the resulting impact causing a number of injuries. Quite a lot of correspondence ensued after this incident, as under railway rules, workers are not permitted into vehicles when shunting movements are happening. Live roads were supposed to be locked and blocked, and this wasn't done on this occasion. I think the injured were not railway staff, but carriers picking up consignments for customers. Carriers were difficult to oversee, as they just wanted their items and then to get out of there.

When a departure train had been made up, it was usually placed in No 1 Road, just in advance of the platform, and a train examination was carried out. Then it was pushed back into the platform out the front of the station office where parcels and van goods were loaded into the brake van. When this was completed, the train departed back to Cathkin and Yea, where it connected with the train from Mansfield.

Plunger locking was fitted to two sets of facing arrival points on the SEC pole road loop, and the points leading from the main line to No 1 and No 2 roads and an Up home departure signal protected the turntable road with an Annette lock. This signal and turntable access track was removed in 1965 with the withdrawal of steam motive power off the line.

Speeds of trains on the Alexandra branch

All goods and Passenger trains 15 mph (25 kmh)

D3 hauled trains were 30 mph (50 kmh)

I ran a 'W' class diesel hydraulic on the line once, and that too was 30 mph, and a very rough ride on the little O-6-0 diesel.

Double heading of steam Locomotives, although rare, was permitted. But not with diesels. I once assisted a passenger train to Alexandra hauled by a K class steam locomotive, although T364 lead from Yea to Cathkin. It had to assist in the rear from Cathkin to Alexandra. T364 eventually returned light engine from Alexandra to Yea.

Safeworking system

The Alexandra branch was worked on the train staff system, but with NO tickets. There might have been tickets in the early years, but for the period I was on the line, there were no tickets permitted. The Rushworth-Colbinnabin-Stanhope track, was the only other section that I am aware of, to have this same restriction.

Distance Legend Conversion

1 Mile = 1.61 km

1 chain = 22 yards with 100 Links to the chain. (These are surveyors measurements) and were readily used by engine crews.

Lance Adams

Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver

and Former Yea Engineman

Yea

ROSTERING OF ENGINE CREWS BY VR

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 18 JANUARY 2018

**Fireman Ian Britnell and driver
Lance Adams with Loco 7A in 1985**
Lance Adams Collection



Most people would have given little thought to the life of engine crews and their appalling hours when they saw a train weaving its way to its destination. Most times their journey was just rostered to do, regardless of the time it took. For instance the 2.30 pm Echuca-Balranald weekly goods used to run out of Echuca on a Friday afternoon and the engine crew would stay on the engine until Balranald was reached sometime on Saturday morning. The last 43.25 miles was usually the hardest from Moulamein-Balranald heading into a rising morning sun. That engine crew would stay in Balranald for the remainder of the weekend, in primitive conditions until they returned to Echuca at midnight on Sunday night, which usually involved

MARCH 1975

83 MONDAY 24 282

SIGN ON 5.5 A.M.

RM 30 HEALESVILLE TO LILYDALE
 RM 30 LILYDALE TO HEALESVILLE
 RM 30 HEALESVILLE TO LILYDALE
 RM 30 LILYDALE TO YARRA GLEN
 RM 30 YARRA GLEN TO LILYDALE
 RM 30 LILYDALE TO HEALESVILLE
 RM 30 HEALESVILLE TO LILYDALE
 RM 30 LILYDALE TO HEALESVILLE

SIGN OFF 3.10 P.M.

N.S.P. (3)

1 MEAL \$1.20

10 HRS 10 MIN

5.5 A.M TO 3.10 P.M.

APRIL 1975

82 ~~WEDNESDAY 2~~ TUESDAY 1 273

SIGN ON 7.35 A.M.

RM 3A Wonthaggi To NORA
 RM 3A NORA To Wonthaggi
 RM 3A Wonthaggi To NORA
 RM 3A NORA To Wonthaggi

SIGN OFF 10.25 P.M.

1 MEAL \$1.20

14 HRS 50 MIN

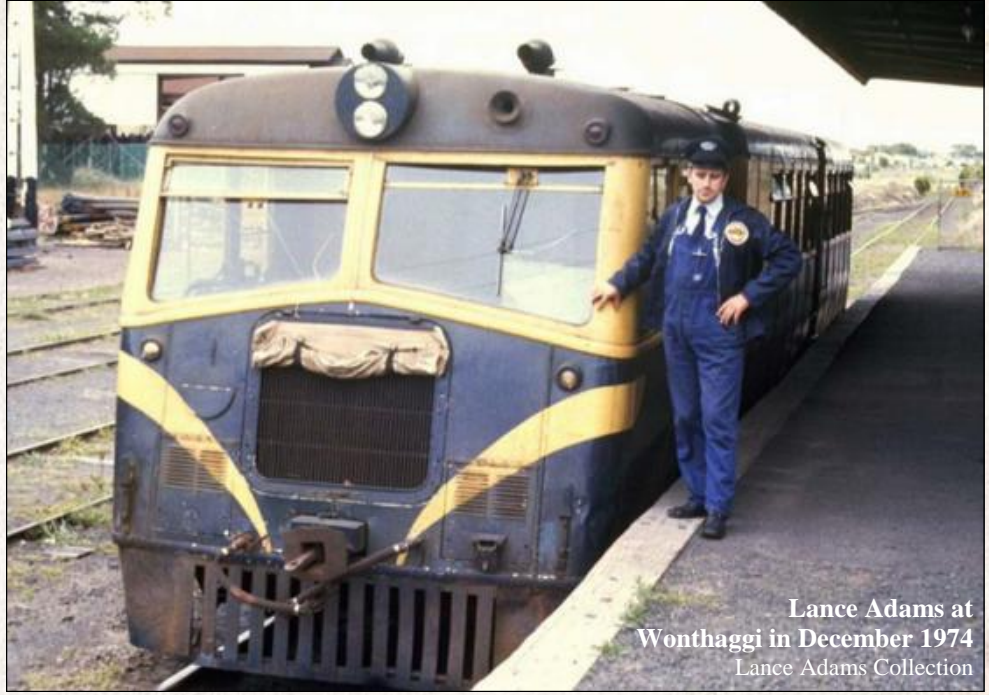
7.35 A.M TO 10.25 P.M.

another 12-15 hour shift. Similar rostering occurred on Kooloonong and Kulwin running, with both these locations requiring stays over a weekend.

Overnight stays are common to modern day enginemen, but now their accommodation is a lot more tolerable, with accommodation usually sourced in Motel type accommodation. Engine crews working longer hauled trains such as the Ghan to Darwin from Port Augusta, and across the transcontinental line to Perth have a crew car attached to their train. The train departs with three enginemen on board which rotate every 12 hours until the journey is completed. Crew members spend six hours in the drivers seat, and a further six hours in the assisting engineman's seat. They would then have 12 hours off, resting on the train as it goes, if they can!!!

Crews based at a depot location, generally have it a little better for their work allocation. There is generally a master roster pattern to follow as a guide to work arrangements and allocation and generally a more regimented length of shifts, but long hours is generally the order of the day. Rosters are planned for an eight hour day, but with train patterns constantly changing, this rarely happens with shifts blowing out to 12 hours being common.

The normal rostering code for engine crews is a maximum of 12 shifts in a fortnight, not to commence a shift with 96 hours actual work for a fortnight and 11 hours book off in a home depot, and eight hours off in a foreign depot, unless it's an emergency. I have been called in under emergency status a number of times. It's not pleasant! A guarantee of 80 hours per fortnight was offered with all other payments for daily overtime incorporated to



Lance Adams at
Wonthaggi in December 1974
Lance Adams Collection

calculate fortnightly monies. If you worked a long job today, you can rely on getting a shorter job somewhere in the fortnight to balance out the allocation of work or you might be booked 'OFF ROSTER' completely, and someone else given your job to equalise time.

I have attached a couple of scans from my 1975 diary (above), where I was sent short notice to fill in at other locations. When you consider that travelling time to and from Yea was to be added to these shifts, they became quite a lengthy exercise.

The Yea job was another classic example of long hours. A typical Yea engine crews week would be a number of long 12 hour+ jobs to Mansfield and return and a couple of shorter jobs around 10 hours to Alexandra and return. The Late shift runs on the Up would usually be four nights of around 11 hours each, running from Yea to Wallan and return.

All in all the life of an engineman's was not an easy one, with the Yea based crews having a particularly hard road to traverse. The Seymour crews used to have a saying about Yea, 'Throw away your watch, and take a calendar' when you go out there.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman, Yea

THE MEN ALONG THE LINE

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 25 MARCH 2019, eSPLASH 211



Mansfield Railway Station in the early 1900s

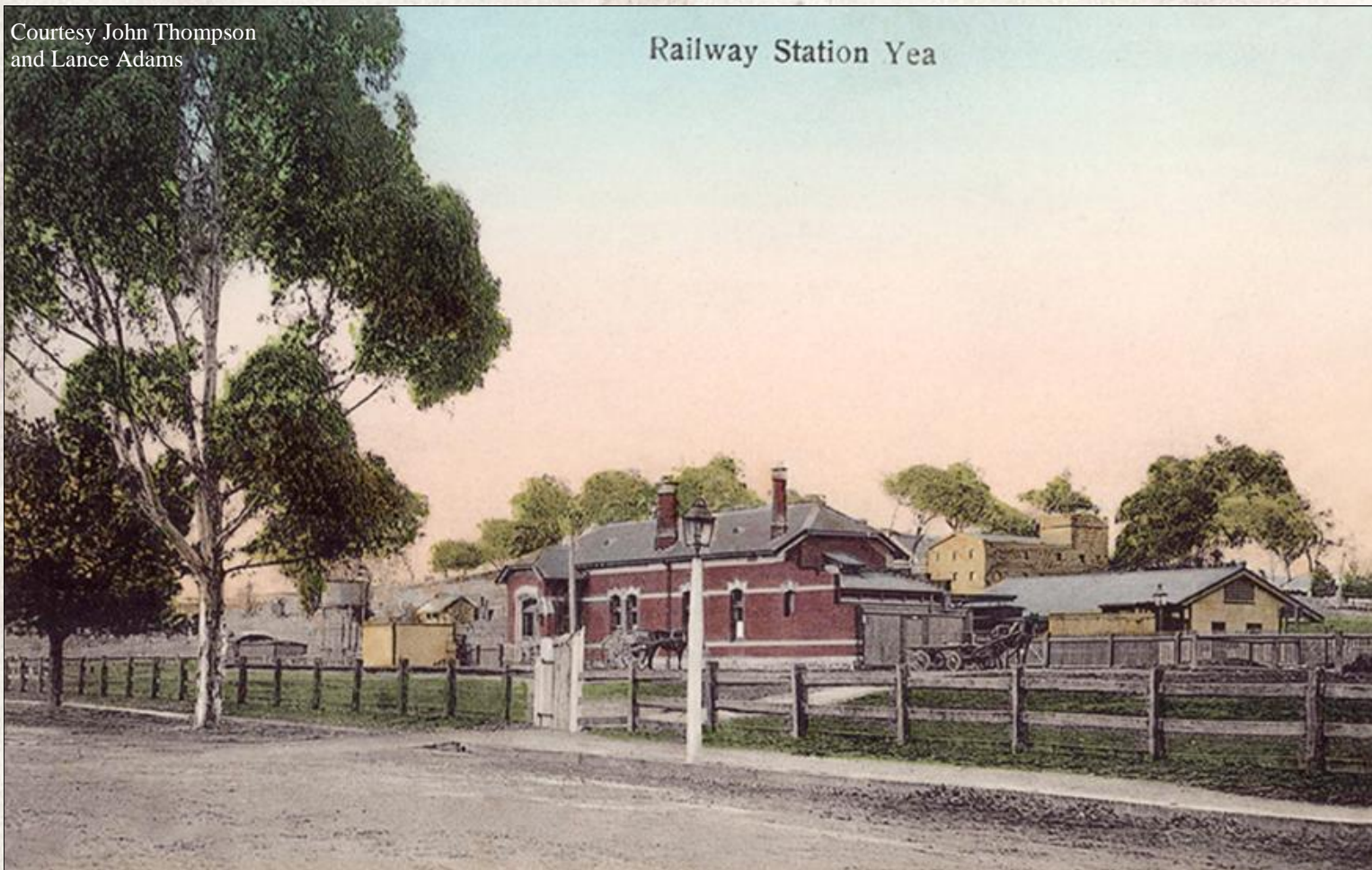
Courtesy John Thompson
and Lance Adams

With this district's rich railway heritage, it's only fitting that the Station Masters at the various stations along the route be acknowledged for their service to the growing communities and to the railway fraternity in general. This article was written by Lance Adams, retired locomotive engine driver from the Mansfield/Alexandra Line using information supplied by Michael Jordan, retired Station Master.

It all began in November 1883, when a branch line from Tallarook reached Yea. Yea was then supplied with a temporary station in the form of portable pre-fabricated buildings, which were later transported to Mansfield as the initial station buildings there, when the line was extended North East in the late 1880s. With the extension of the line, came the present standing gothic edifice at Yea.

Courtesy John Thompson
and Lance Adams

Railway Station Yea



Station Masters at Yea

It commenced with **Edwin Moss**, aged 30 from 15/11/1883 until he was transferred on 29/07/1884 to Kyneton.

Samuel Williams, aged 23, from 23/08/1885, transferred 10/02/1886 to Donald.

Robert Ford, aged 25, from 13/06/1885—there seems to be an overlap of appointment dates here as his transfer date is 1892 to Ringwood. Maybe there were shift Station Masters as this was around the time of the line extensions beyond Yea.

James Russell, aged 31, from 30/09/1885, transfer date unknown to Caulfield.

Around this time, the impressive Yea Railway Station was constructed.

George Gordon, aged 47, from 31/07/1903, transfer date unknown and no information on a further appointment.

William Noonan, aged 46, from 10/08/1903, transferred 09/02/1913 to Echuca.

William Robertson, aged 45, from 1904, transferred 13/01/1907 to Rosedale.

David Stewart, aged 44, from 01/06/1908, transferred 01/06/1909 to Beaufort.

William Burgess, aged 45, from 09/02/1909, transferred 07/06/1914 to Wallan.

Thomas Menhennit, aged 55, from 06/11/1915, transferred 20/08/1917 to Hawthorn.

John Dunstan, aged 53, from 18/08/1919, transferred 13/12/1930 to Kyneton.

Evan Anderson (ex Alexandra), aged 39, from 11/05/1921, transferred 30/04/1927 to Mildura.

Henry Kloppman, aged 53, from 30/06/1925, transferred 08/02/1926 to Heathcote.

Alexander Davidson aged 54, from 21/03/1921, no further appointment—possibly resigned.

Henry McCarthur, aged 39, from 12/04/1928, transferred 03/02/1931 (promoted from Assistant Station Master, Yea).

Vincent Boswell, aged 52, from 20/04/1928, transferred 24/02/1931 to Learmonth.

James Harbour, aged 44, from 10/06/1938, transferred 03/03/1940 to Carnegie.

Malcolm Robinson, aged 51, from 10/05/1940, transferred 10/08/1943 to Brunswick.

Henry Callaghan, aged 43, from 10/09/1943, transferred 31/03/1944 to Kyneton.

Henry Duncan, aged 53, from 07/11/1944, transferred 04/06/1949 to Morwell.

David Little, aged 57, from 02/06/1947, transferred 09/06/1949 to St Arnaud.

Henry Hosking, aged 55, from 10/02/1952, transferred 29/11/1954 to Dimboola.

Charles McConnell, aged 46, from 01/06/1953, transferred 06/01/1955 to Yarrawonga.

Reginald Skews, aged 51, from 12/07/1949, transferred 06/09/1955 to Red Cliffs.

Gordon Ryan, aged 54, from 01/02/1955, transferred 01/12/1955 to Warracknabeal.

William Leversha, aged 44, from 21/11/1955, transferred 22/10/1968 to Sale.

Maurice Isaac, aged 52, from 23/10/1958, transferred 06/02/1960 to Orbost.

Harvey Sambell, aged 43, from 24/05/1960, transferred 01/08/1961 to Relieving Staff.

Chris Hynes, aged 50, from 04/08/1961, transferred 19/07/1962 to Korong Vale.

Thomas Nolan, aged 55, from 25/07/1962, transferred 22/01/1965 to Stawell.

David Plumridge, aged 50, from 17/02/1965, transferred 29/04/1966 to Korumburra.

Laurence Taylor, aged 40, from 15/07/1966, transferred 04/06/1969 to St Arnaud.

John Lorenz, aged 38, from 13/08/1969, transferred 25/03/1970 to Castlemaine.

Neville Joyce, aged 33, from 20/05/1970, transferred 05/05/1971 to Wangaratta.

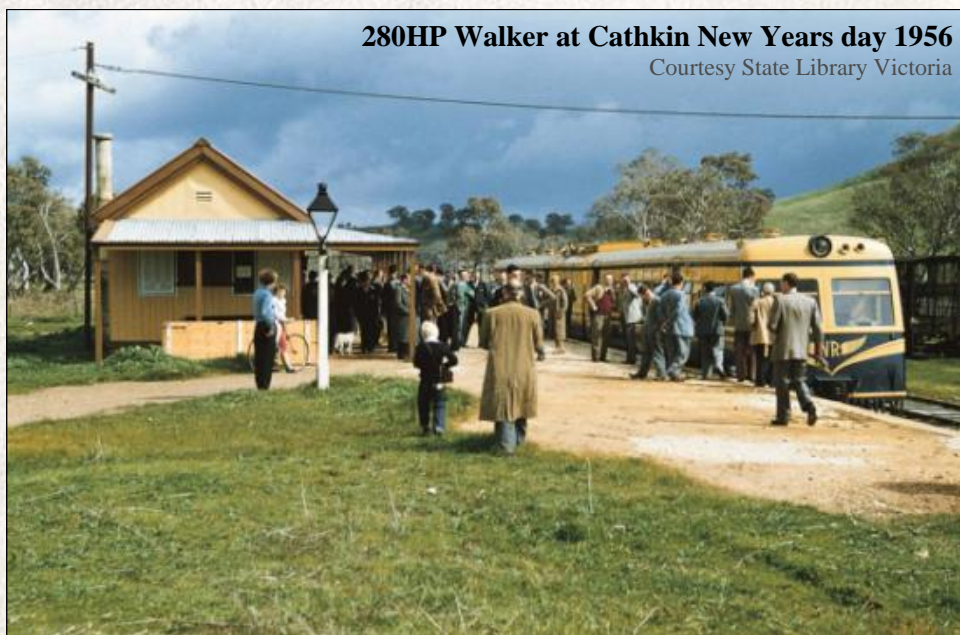
Humbert Gerkowski, aged 38, from 28/07/1971, transferred 05/06/1973 to Clayton.

Lewis Martin, aged 45, from 20/08/1973, transferred 30/05/1975 to Clayton.

Kenneth Barnes, aged 45, from 23/05/1975, transferred 13/12/1976 to Lilydale.

From this date and after the line closed, a relieving Station Master **Gunter Zimmerman** was put in who lasted after the line closed managing railway business until around 1979 when the last of the station staff were removed and Gunter retired.

In the early years of the line, Cathkin had a Station Master appointed there, who were as follows: In the 1890s there was a guard, Loco and crew stationed at Cathkin, but no listing for a Station Master in this era. The yard was somewhat different in this era as well, as Cathkin boasted a back platform dock road, which was removed following the first closure of the Alexandra Road line in 1895.



Station Masters at Cathkin

John McCauley, aged 26, from approximately 1905 to 1907 when he transferred to Armstrong.

William McKay, aged 42, from 31/01/1907, transferred 24/07/1910 to North Richmond.

Algernon White, aged 42, from 06/08/1908, transferred 14/11/1910 to Relieving Staff.

Michael Cumming, aged 44, from 31/07/1912, transferred 18/03/1913 to Thornbury.

Harry Burke, aged 46, from 19/07/1913, transferred 19/07/1915 to Piangil (later SM Mansfield 02/02/1920 to 25/06/1923).

John Carnegie, aged 33, from 13/04/1920, transferred 30/03/1921 to Woodend.

William Orr, aged 38, from 13/10/1922, transferred 05/03/1926 to Newtown.

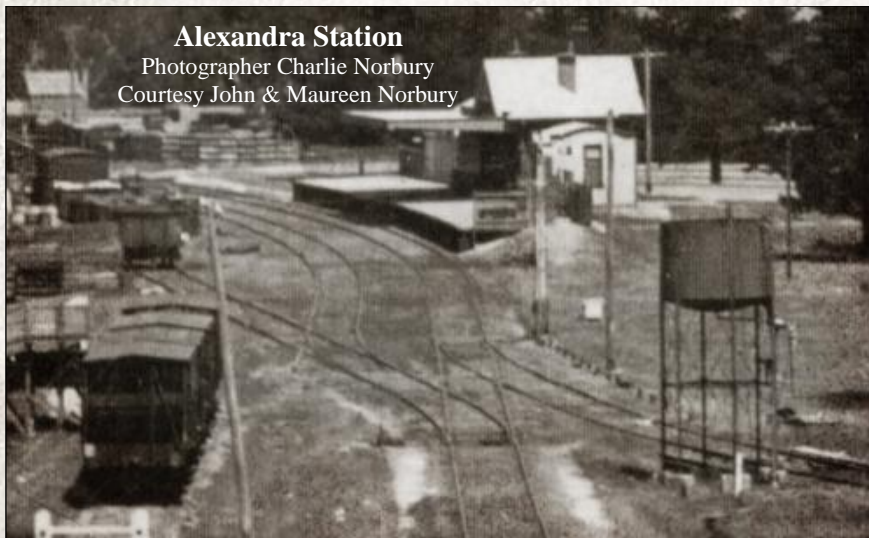
It appears that the station was digressed to an Assistant Station Master's position around this time and with no listing available on these men, the trail goes cold until the appointment of ASM James Dunn on 01/09/1939 who remained the OIC right up to just before the closure of the line, probably upon his retirement in 1975. When James retired, Cathkin became a 'no one in charge' station supervised by the SM at Yea, who regularly attended there as train days required it.

Alexandra Road, Rhodes, Lily & Koriella

When the line first ventured out from Cathkin in the early 1890s, towards Alexandra, the terminus of the line was at Alexandra Road (now Koriella), but previously known as Alexandra Road, Rhodes and Lily. To get things started, the Station Masters at the original Alexandra Road were as follows:

Alexandra Station

Photographer Charlie Norbury
Courtesy John & Maureen Norbury



Alexandra Road

Thomas Murphy, aged 32, from 1890, transferred 26/02/1904 to Stratford. Considering the Cathkin–Alexandra Road section was closed in 1895, he must have acted as a rail agent for the area.

David Stewart, aged 29, from 1893, transferred 06/07/1900 to North Creswick.



In 1909 the line was extended from Alexandra Road through to Alexandra itself, and train services were resumed across Eglinton Cutting and Victoria Gap into the Alexandra township, albeit three mixed trains per week. (A mixed train is a goods train with passenger carriages attached and these were very common in Victoria until the early 1960s).

Alexandra

Albert Booth, aged 48, from 02/07/1912, transferred 01/02/1920 to Moe. There is no listing for an SM at Alexandra prior to Albert Booth, so possible relieving staff were used, as the Station Master's residence may not have been completed.

Arthur Kemmis, aged 52, from 07/06/1919, transferred 21/11/1919 to the relieving staff.

Arthur Nugent, aged 52, from 20/03/1919, transferred 21/02/1920 to relieving staff and later Fitzroy.

Evan Anderson, aged 37, from 20/01/1920, transferred 10/05/1921 to Yea.

Daniel Andrews, aged 33, from 26/07/1928, transferred 13/03/1933 to Westgarth.

Harry Belcher, aged 37, from 02/01/1930, transferred 07/11/1933 to Portland.

Phillip Thresher, aged 35, from 25/11/1933, transferred 18/10/1938 to Rutherglen.

Alexander Dawson, aged 37, from 01/02/1939, transferred 10/09/1939 to Boort.

Horace Parker, aged 44, from 11/09/1939, transferred 02/02/1944 to Merbein.

Francis Stanton, aged 32, from 10/05/1944, retired October 1956.

Thomas Williams, aged 39, from 16/10/1956, transferred 03/05/1963 to Longwarry.

James Farrow, aged 56, from 02/05/1963, transferred 30/05/1963 to Linton.

C. Castellano, aged 33, from 19/08/1963, transferred 30/11/1965 to Mirboo North.

Donald Austin, aged 42, from 01/05/1968, transferred 28/02/1973 to Cobden.

About this time the Station Masters office was moved out of the main station building into a new office in the goods shed.

Donald Cameron, aged 27, from 10/07/1973, transferred 09/05/1976 to Bruthen.

Dennis Gazelle, aged 27, (Last Station Master) from 21/06/1976, transferred 24/07/1977 to Pascoe Vale. From this date and up to closure the station was supervised by the Line Station Master at Yea, who attended Alexandra by company car as required. Other staff were still in position until closure in August 1978.

Bonnie Doon

There appears to be no permanent appointment prior to **John Tydeman**, aged 34, from 27/02/1900, with no further appointment from this location, which suggests he left the railway service to remain in the district.

Daniel McElkee, aged 42, appointed in 1904, but appears to have no further appointment, leaving the railway service also to remain in the district.

James Lewis, aged 42, from 30/01/1907, transferred 30/04/1907 to Bayswater and then Walhalla.

Thomas Lewis, aged 44, from 13/09/1911, transferred to Strathmerton.

James Ginnane, aged 47, from 01/06/1914, transferred 19/04/1920 to Murchison East.

John Foley, aged 36, from 17/05/1923, transferred 08/07/1926 to Williamstown Beach.

Station Masters appear to have been withdrawn from around this date, and the station ran with assistant station masters filling the role from 1926 to 1977 with the supervision of the station overseen by Mansfield and later Yea.

Maindample

When the line to Mansfield opened in October 1891, Maindample became the temporary terminus for a short time for early train operations. The Station Master appointed to Maindample was **John Fitzpatrick** (aged 25), who when the line opened to Mansfield in 1891, became the initial Station Master there. Merton was also a temporary terminus on its extending way towards Maindample and Mansfield, and it is extremely likely that John Fitzpatrick was there as well in the early years.

Mansfield

John Fitzpatrick (ex Maindample), aged 26, from October 1891, transferred 10/10/1904 to places unknown.

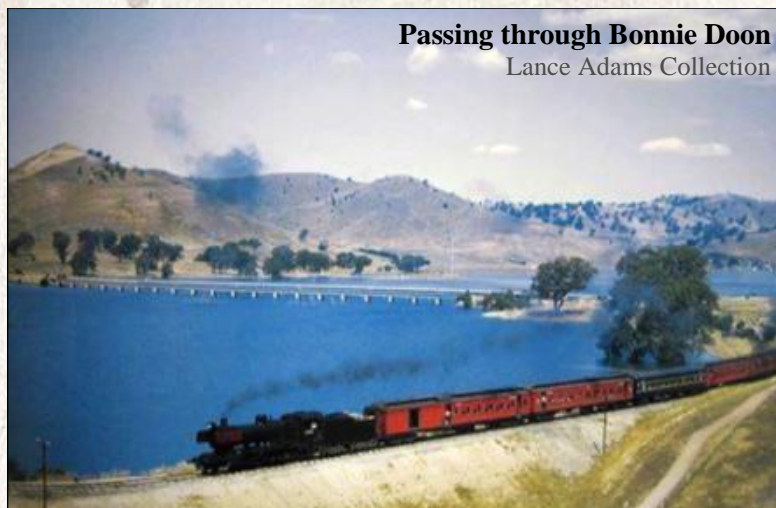
William Barker, aged 45, from 24/07/1900, transferred 13/03/1906 to Broadford.

Joseph Neville, aged 39, from 10/03/1901, transferred 15/12/1910 to Surrey Hills.

Cornellius McKernan, aged 48, from 17/12/1908, transferred 31/05/1914 to Bairnsdale.

Harry Burke (also SM Cathkin 01/06/1914 to 19/07/1915), aged 47, 02/02/1920, transferred 25/06/1923 to Piangil.

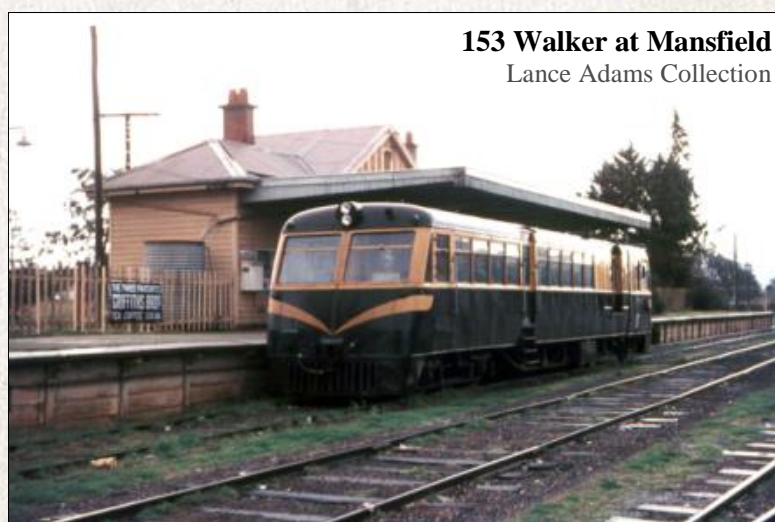
It was around this time the current standing Mansfield station building was constructed.



Passing through Bonnie Doon
Lance Adams Collection



Mansfield staff
Courtesy John Thompson
and Lance Adams



153 Walker at Mansfield
Lance Adams Collection

Richard McDougal, aged 47, from 28/08/1934, transferred 18/02/1937 to Broadford.
Charles Curthoys, aged 45, from 16/01/1944, transferred 10/05/1949 to Charlton.
Leonard Duffus, aged 47, from 02/03/1955, transferred 25/03/1957 to Woomelang.
William Groves, aged 46, from 01/06/1957, transferred 16/08/1957 to Quambatook.
George Brown, aged 44, from 19/07/1957, transferred 30/04/1959 to Kooweerup.
Alexander E Dawson, aged 49, from 28/09/1961, transferred 26/01/1965 to Orbost.
Clive Robertson, aged 44, from 28/01/1965, transferred 11/11/1970 to Leongatha.
Robert Bird, aged 40, from 1970, transferred 17/10/1972 to Kerang.
George Alexander, aged 41, from 12/01/1971, transferred 19/06/1973 to Red Cliffs.
John Friebe, aged 28, from 23/09/1973, transferred 28/06/1977 to Elsternwick (last Station Master).

From this date onwards the station was supervised by the SM Yea with relieving staff filling in as required. Assistant Station Masters still remained in place. The last Assistant Station Master at Mansfield was Kerry Casley. The line closed on and after 08/11/1978.

I would like to acknowledge Michael Jordan for his help in preparing this article and for his friendship which has made it possible.

© Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea

THE RECLAMATION DEPOT

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 16 APRIL 2019

The Reclamation Depot



The Victorian Railways were great recyclers of used items, and everything that was currently surplus was sent to the Spotswood reclamation depot for storage, categorising, and ultimate re-issue and re-use as required. Everything imaginable was held in storage there, and if one attended there you could buy very cheap ex railway items at a bargain price.

On one trip out to Yanac from Dimboola in the 1970s, out of curiosity I inserted the train staff in the ticket box to see when the last staff ticket had been issued, only to find that there had never been a staff ticket issued at Yanac but the book had previously been at South Morang and Crowlands, with record of staff tickets being issued in the 1920s and 1880s respectively. This was a little curiosity game I used to like to indulge in, when I got to out of the way places. The staff ticket issued at Crowlands is interesting in that Crowlands became an

intermediate station on the now defunct Navarre Line, with Crowlands being ultimately renamed Ben Nevis, meaning that this ticket issue must have been very early in railway history eventually ending up in a locked box in Yanac.

Signal masts were another item stored at the Spotswood depot which had the stencilled name of their original location painted on the concrete base of the lattice posts. They made interesting reading.

Recycling was not confined to safe-working items, but rails and station buildings too. When a track was re-laid with heavier or new rail, the rails were taken to the Spotswood depot, treated and straightened and re-used. The original 1862 line to Bendigo was laid with Krupp chaired rail, and after a pre-treatment process at the Spotswood depot, still works as siding rails along the sidings of the Bendigo Main Line. The branch to Fyansford, near Geelong, was laid in 1914 utilising re-used rail from the Lancefield–Kilmore white elephant line which saw its last train in the early 1900s.

In recent years, the Main Line to Mildura was re-laid with heavier rails, and that track would have been rejuvenated at the Spotswood depot and re-used somewhere else around the system. Likewise the 80 lb rail from the Yea–Tallarook section would have been treated and re-used probably as a siding somewhere. Quality 80 lb rail was a scarce item. Puffing Billy rescued a lot of the used rail off the Mansfield and Alexandra Line for suitable re-use on their light line operation.



Puffing Billy

The Spotswood reclamation depot is still clearly marked to this day with its title still clearly visible on the front of the building in cement lettering. This building is situated at the down end of Spotswood Station on the Down side of the line. It is in use today for another railway purpose, by another railway provider (EDI I think).

Station buildings too were re-used with the Walhalla Station being relocated to Hartwell in 1944 and the Bayles and Catani Stations relocated to the Burwood Down side building in the 50s. I have visions of a J Class hauled train moving a station building on the former Bendigo–Heathcote Line. I cannot recall where this station was coming from or going to, but these sort of movements were not uncommon.

When extra temporary train staffs were requested from the railways department by the Puffing Billy railway, the reclamation depot was called upon to supply same, and when the replacement temporary train staffs arrived, they were all off the former Otway Ranges, narrow gauge railway to Beech Forest, all with the sections clearly identified on the reverse of the brass name plates, that if unscrewed could be clearly read. Those temporary train staffs are still in use to this day.

While I am on the subject of train staffs, the Cathkin–Alexandra train staff was damaged around 1968 and replaced with a new one (aluminium type). Also when the electric staff system was withdrawn from the Mansfield Line in 1965, a master key had to be provided for the Cathkin–Bonnie Doon section. The master key that was sent out by the reclamation depot's safeworking section, the master key from the Daylesford Woollen Mill siding off the former Daylesford–Newlyn Line was installed. The section was clearly stencilled on it with absolutely no reference to its new location at Cathkin.

*Retired Train Driver and former Yea Fireman
Lance Adams
Yea, Victoria*

SIGNALS THAT HAD NAMES

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 25 APRIL 2019

Long Tom signal
Lance Adams Collection



Throughout the Victorian Railway network there were thousands of fixed signals, but just a few of them had individual names that we referred to them.

Long Tom

The above photograph shows a signal known as Long Tom. This signal was situated in the Flinders Street yard, off the special and race line arrivals, under the employee footbridge. It was controlled by Flinders Street 'B' box, and was so named because of its tall wooden post. In this view an Up Frankston goods train is lifting its train from a standing start from Long Tom, circa 1963.

The Three Sisters

The Three Sisters at Mangalore, near Seymour, are so named because of the three 'dolls' fitted to the bracket post. The left hand doll is to the No. 2 road, the centre doll is to the Shepparton line, and the taller right hand doll is to the North East Main Line which goes to Benalla and Albury.

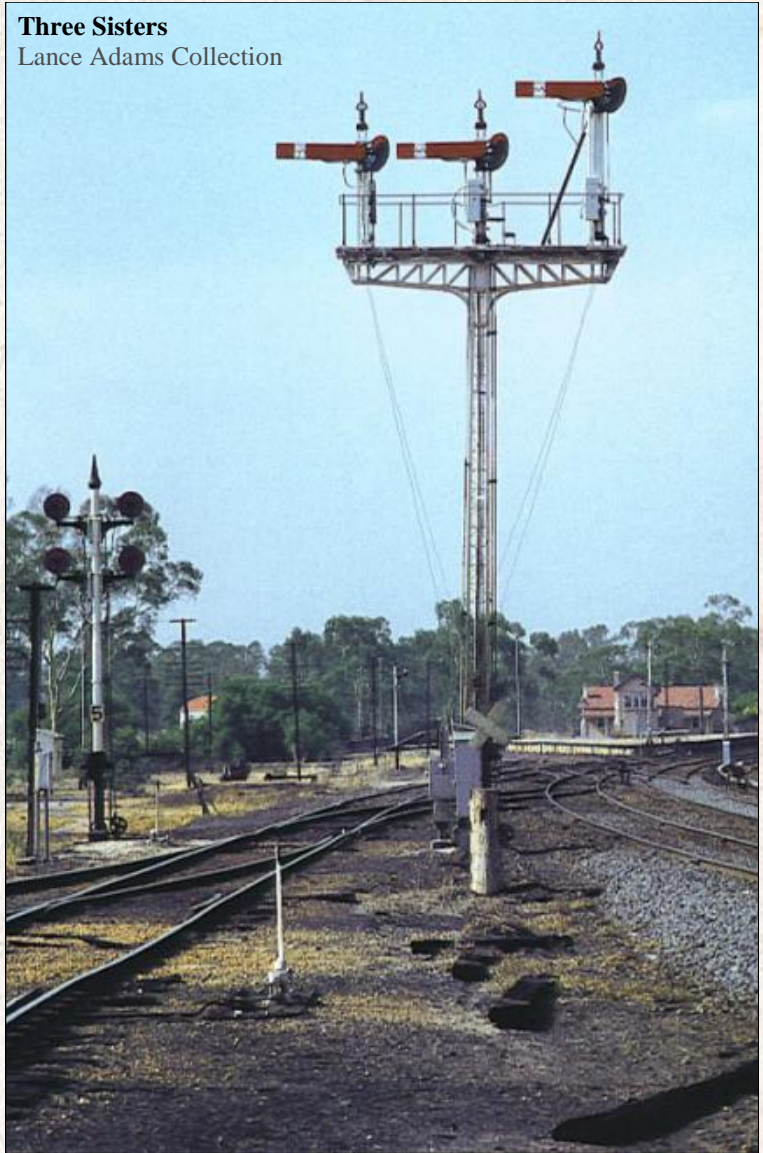
Haley's Comet

The photograph below is of the Haley's Comet signal at Hurstbridge. This was so named when a junior driver burst into the station office one Monday morning, after



Three Sisters

Lance Adams Collection



running an early morning down Hurstbridge train, boldly announcing that there was no kerosene light in the arrival Home signal. A senior driver was present at the time, and quickly informed the young driver that he had been at Hurstbridge for 25 years, and had never seen a light in the signal and that he had more hope of seeing the return of Haley's Comet than of seeing a light in the Hurstbridge home signal.

The following week a circular was issued to staff to inform everyone that from a given date and until further notice, the Hurstbridge home signal would be electrically lit. It was the brightest of bright and you could see it for miles.



Mandrake

Lance Adams Collection

Mandrake

A final signal that had a name was Mandrake the Magician. This brought trains from the Down end shunting neck into roads 2-9. Mandrake was so named because he could take you anywhere, you didn't know where!

Mandrake is the tall signal coloured red and circular, at the extreme right of the above picture.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea

THE ONLY MACHINES BUILT BY MAN THAT HAD A SOUL

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 3 JUNE 2019



D3 (659) at Yackandandah circa 1952

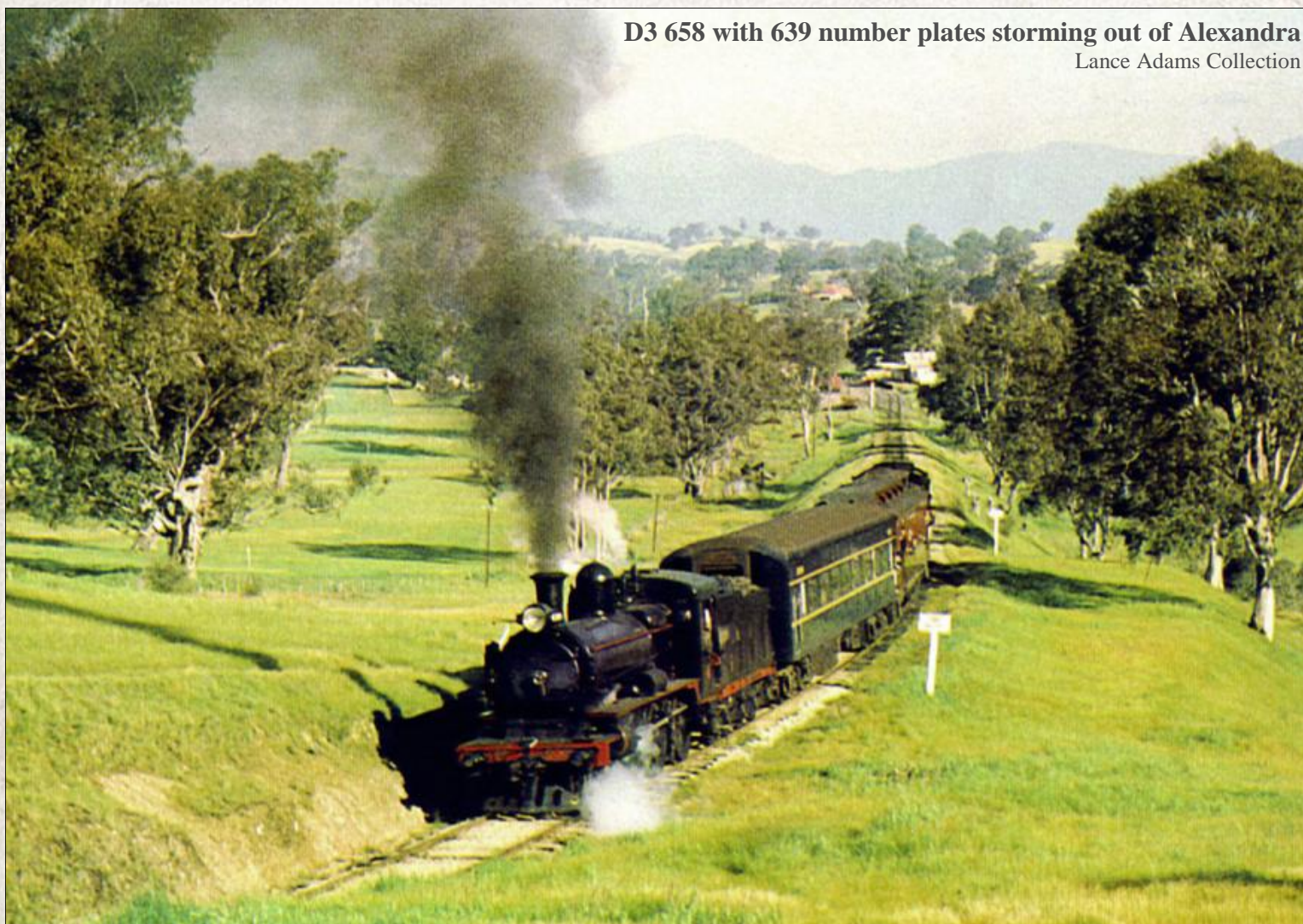
Lance Adams Collection

Whilst the diesel locomotives were a lifeless bunch of generic butter boxes on wheels, and much better to work on, the Steam Locomotive was the only machine built by man that had a soul, and they were all different. You could get several good trips out of them operating them in a particular manner, and then for no good reason they would go sour on you and not co-operate at all.

There were four varieties of D3, all made supposedly to the same design, but they had to be handled totally differently. A batch was made by the Phoenix Foundry in Ballarat, while others were made by the Thompson Foundry in Castlemaine. A small number were made by the Baldwin Locomotive Works in the USA and fully imported, while the greatest number were constructed by the Victorian Railways at the Newport workshops.

The Baldwin D3s were by far the best to work on and steamed more freely than the rest of the various manufactures of the class. Luckily, one of this species (No 635) has been preserved as a static exhibit at the Railway Museum in North Williamstown, Melbourne. The other breeds of D3 Locomotives were no equal to the Baldwins. I don't know exactly how many Baldwin D3s there were, but not many, maybe as few as four. D3 635 spent a considerable amount of time working trains on the Wahgunyah branch out from Springhurst, although it has been to Yea and Alexandra a few times.

These little steeds were affectionately referred to by engine crews as 'Contented Kettles'. The poorest ones were the ones produced by the Phoenix Foundry. As they were all of the same design, it had to come down to materials they were constructed from. One D3 (No 639) remains, restored and in service to this day. It is a Newport workshop model, built in the late 1920s, and is really D3 658 (a former Benalla engine) with D3 639s number plates. D3 639 was a much pampered little steed, as it hauled the Railway Commissioners train for years. D3 658 taking over those duties after it was replated in the late 1950s. An historic photograph exists of this engine hauling a goods train on the Yackandandah line in the early 1950s as D3 658. The D3s were the main backbone of motive power on the Yea–Alexandra– Mansfield line from 1929 onwards, until they were superseded by the newer more powerful K class consolidations in the 40s.



D3 658 with 639 number plates storming out of Alexandra
Lance Adams Collection

Several other of our beasts of burden had colourful local nicknames.

Puff the Tragic Wagon (J 506) was a poorly maintained beast that gave its crews a hard day out every time. It didn't like the Alexandra track in particular, and every attempt was made to keep it off that running.

The Mule (J 500) was a Korong Vale based engine, that steamed poorly, rolled poorly, and was generally not liked in the District. Its job was to do the Korong Vale yard pilot, with a weekly jaunt to Wedderburn with the Wednesday goods train. Occasionally it was used to assist an Up train on the Teddywaddy Bank, and that was usually an interesting experience. The regular driver on The Mule was 'Shorty' Allen who absolutely had faith in this reluctant bucket of bolts. The Wycheproof boys hated it, and so did everyone else in the District.

Leaping Lena (J 509) in front of **Puff the Tragic Wagon** (J 506) at Yea, where the children's skate park is now.

Lance Adams Collection



Cyclops (J 522) was known as the One-eyed Monster. It was reluctant to do anything, until you forced it. With its headlight boring a hole into the night, we forced her home on many a night, turning the turbo, steam generator off to achieve our goal.

Leaping Lena (J 509) rode something woeful. No adjustment of the axle box wedge bolts seemed to make much difference to the riding qualities.

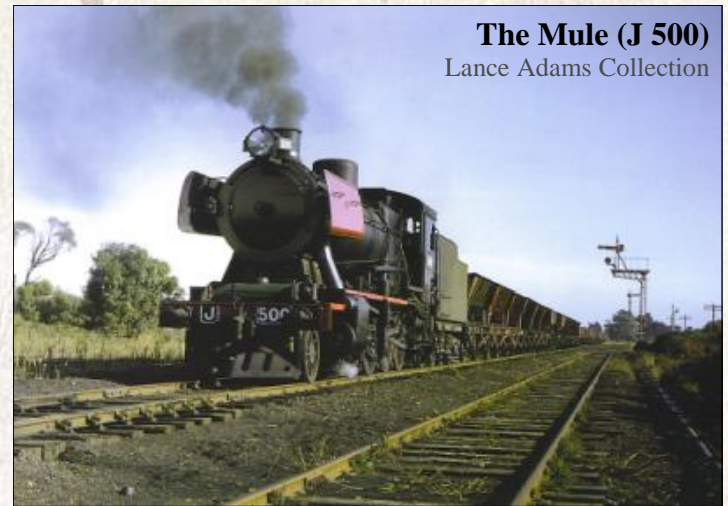
The Silver Ram (K 152) was named after an incident at Annuello near Robinvale, after dispatching a prize winning stud ram and generating considerable annoying paper work.

The curling ram's horns, were painted silverfrost and mounted with fencing wire, on top of its headlight. When 152 was scrapped, the horns were re-painted letter box red and re-attached to the head light of J 550, which now resides as a static exhibit at Noojee, near Warragul. The horns are no longer attached.

Last but not least was **Heavy Harry** (H 220). When it was being constructed at the Newport work shops in the 1940s, he was the biggest locomotive ever constructed in the southern hemisphere. He was named when a weighty fitter (affectionately called Heavy Harry) happened to be in the area when a reporter was questioning a rail employee as to the name of the beast. The employee proclaimed that his name was 'Heavy Harry', mistakenly thinking the reporter was referencing the fitter! From this time 'Heavy Harry' was adopted as the name of the loco.

Interestingly, Heavy Harry had a Pocono (Mohawk) 4-8-4 wheel arrangement, which meant that it had eight driving wheels.

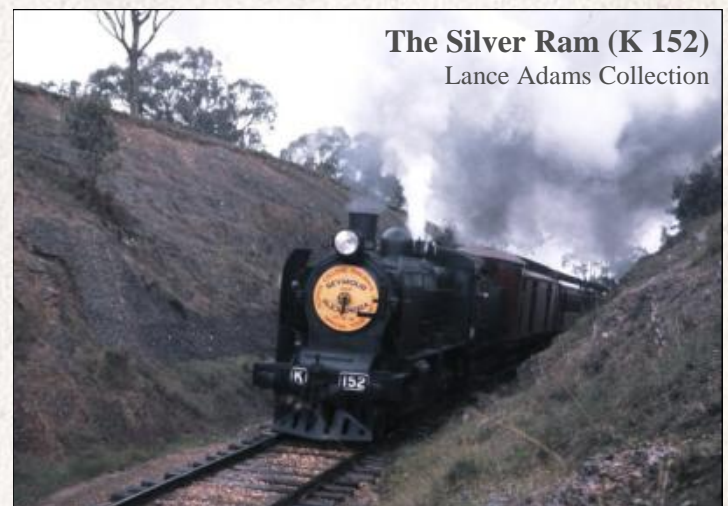
Lance Adams
Retired Special Class
Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea



The Mule (J 500)
Lance Adams Collection



Cyclops (J 522)
Lance Adams Collection



The Silver Ram (K 152)
Lance Adams Collection



Heavy Harry (H 220) leaving Avenel in 1956
Lance Adams Collection

AN AUSTRALIAN STORY OF LIFE IN AN ISOLATED TOWN

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 8 JUNE 2019, eSPLASH217

I was recruited by the Victorian Railways as a supernumerary junior engine cleaner at age 15, at the Bendigo Locomotive Depot. By the time I reached the age of 17, I had been trained as a Locomotive Fireman in basic Rules and Regulations, Westinghouse brake, and Engine working, and had become what was known as a Cleaner Q. It was normal and accepted practice to be sent statewide as required to act as Fireman to gain experience in all kinds of conditions and train running circumstances. I was filling in at a temporary capacity at Ultima in the Mallee, when a Fireman's position was advertised (internally) statewide at Cudgewa. I was successful in being the successful applicant. This application meant that I had to be available to sit an extra theory examination in the Red Book questions 61–120. Upon passing this examination, I was appointed to the position, made a permanent employee of the Railways Department and received a Fireman's classification, a pay rise and placed on the bottom of the engineman's seniority list. I duly took up the position at Cudgewa.

T 388 arrives at Cudgewa on a passenger train

Lance Adams Collection



To get to Cudgewa, I had to travel in the Guards Van of the 1.30 am Wodonga–Cudgewa Goods Train on a freezing cold, snowy morning. By the time dawn broke we had climbed the hills and were in the Shelley region. I had seen some steep country, but man was this steep! I had been in some isolated places, but when I stepped off that goods train, my first thought was, my goodness, where the hell am I. I settled in to my accommodation in a small railway portable that had been organised for me in advance by the Railways Department, for which they deducted the princely sum of 5 shillings per week from my pay. I spent the remainder of the first day, buying some food, learning the layout of the tiny town of Cudgewa and finding and sampling the hotel. I was ready to commence duty the next morning as advised.

Cudgewa at the time consisted of one and a half crews (three men) one driver (George Judge), one acting driver (Brian Dixon) and one fireman (me). The Cudgewa job was to sign on at 7.30 am, then relieve a Wodonga crew off the 1.30 am ex Wodonga, who would rest the day in the barracks at Cudgewa. Then run the 10 am Up roadside goods, against a 9.00 am roadside ex Wodonga, going to Koetong on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, and Tallangatta on Tuesdays. We would arrive back at Cudgewa around 4.30 pm, recondition our steed, and be relieved by the same Wodonga crew that we had relieved that morning, signing off around 5.45 pm. Then it was over to the pub.

As this pickup goods train was scheduled six days per week, it required us to be working 12 hours per day. Three days per fortnight I fired for the Senior driver, and five days per fortnight for the acting (unappointed driver) known as a Fireman Q. Each man was rostered 5–4 days per week, with the junior man as Fireman. It all worked well, with each man rostered for a long weekend off, every third week. Your fortnightly 80 hours were usually amassed in 7–8 shifts of 11 plus hours each day.

This left plenty of time off to enjoy, but not much that might interest an 18 year old lad not owning a car. The hotel soon became a major place of interest to meet locals and enjoy some company and a decent meal. It was a very relaxed atmosphere. The then publican had a fully grown pet Eastern grey kangaroo, named Whompy, that was a regular in the main bar. It would get quite aggressive should his personal position at the bar be taken. This marsupial could really down the beer in gulps eventually falling over and kicking. I had to pay for my beer, but he didn't. The roo' was quite a character at the pub, and well known. From time to time I would play football with it in the area behind the main building. He was a good kick, but his marking ability left a bit to be desired. By gee the big boomer could run though! I made the calculated mistake, of getting in a kick to kick with some young Cudgewa lads, and ending up at the end with the roo'. I learnt very quickly that he played too rough for me, after several 'dumpings' and 'rollings' on the ground. A mob of wild kangaroos, regularly came in to watch the fun. It didn't take long for me to get back with the other lads, and leave Whompy on his own. The big kangaroo loved playing football!!! Visitors to the area were rare, but one group did manage to make Cudgewa by train, and had an outdoor breakfast on the tables outside the pub with the areas famous dunny budgies (blow flies).

Train passengers enjoy breakfast with the 'dunny budgies'
at the historic Cudgewa Hotel

Copyright © Bob Wilson



Consequently, the Cudgewa Hotel played a major part in my free time there, and after a long, rough, hard, hot 11 plus hours out on the heavy grades, it was a welcome watering hole at shifts end.

I left Cudgewa to come to Yea for a six week holiday relief swap, which they were having difficulty in filling. Someone was found who would go to Cudgewa (pronounced Cudgewar), so I came to Yea. During that temporary stint in Yea, the job became vacant, and I was asked if I would like to stay on. Keen to get back into some form of civilisation again, I eagerly accepted. This job also involved some lengthy shifts, but Melbourne was only 80 miles away and I had bought my first car. Plus I had most weekends off.

All those years later, and a few more thousands of miles operating trains of all types, I am still here at Yea, but Swan Hill looks a little warmer!

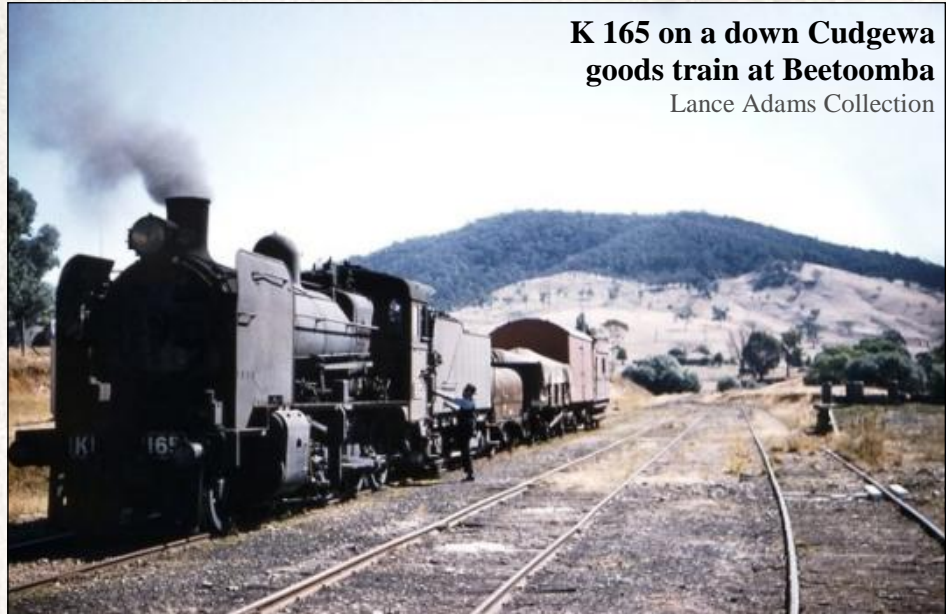
Trains to Cudgewa were usually hauled by K class locomotives, with an occasional visit by a J class locomotive. I think the J classes were more common in the 1950s, but it was quickly worked out that the long narrow boilers and high centre of gravity, made them unsuitable for this track. They did not ride well either! Thumping around everywhere.

The Cudgewa railway was a very busy line, with up to five goods trains per day carrying general goods, livestock and components for the fast completing Snowy Hydro Scheme. Out ward loading saw a lot of livestock being transported to the Melbourne markets from the Kosciuszko High Country beyond Corryong. Double heading of trains on this steeply gradient line, was not permitted, so a lot of short heavy trains were the norm'. One double headed K class passenger train ran in the 60s with special permission, but this is the only instance that I am aware of this happening.

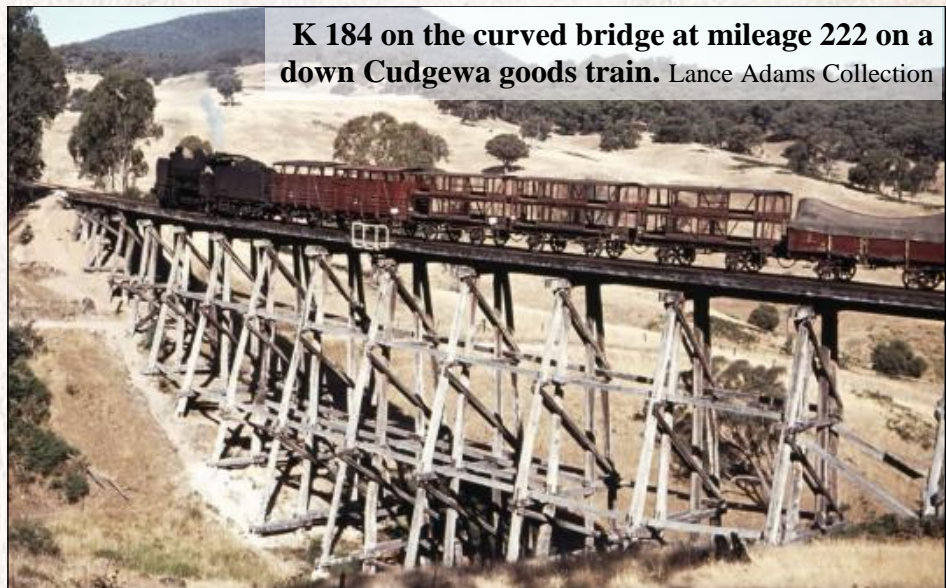
The Cudgewa line is now, like a lot of other lines, dispatched into the history basket. But a few small things just hang on. Because of the exceptional rough trackage, if you placed a small amount of liquid in a cup on the floor, it generally swished all around the receptacle, and was known as 'Cudgewa rinse'. Consequently, when any drinking vessel is rinsed in this manner in our house, it is known that we are giving it a 'Cudgewa rinse'.

Because of the rugged terrain the Cudgewa railway traversed, it had some quite spectacular trestle bridges along it, and an article about the line without mentioning this and the Cudgewa Bridge Gang would be remiss.

The Cudgewa Bridge Gang were a wild pack of mountain men, who used to frequent the Cudgewa Hotel on a Friday and Saturday night. Just one look at these bearded mountain brutes was enough to strike terror into a young lad. I always gave them a wide berth and tried to keep out of their way. The gang consisted of three carpenters and a cook. I never found out if the cook was officially a member of the gang or the three carpenters were, and they employed the cook themselves.



K 165 on a down Cudgewa goods train at Beetoomba
Lance Adams Collection



K 184 on the curved bridge at mileage 222 on a down Cudgewa goods train. Lance Adams Collection

Every Monday morning we would drop the gang at their specific work site with some basic food stuffs and copious amounts of beer. Each day we would drop off a supply of new beer, but never any additional food. We never dropped off any lumber supplies for their work, but they always seemed to have a fresh beam fitted or fresh pile inserted, when we came back through later in the day. They must have sourced any timber required locally, by going out in the bush and felling it themselves. I always thought they probably got their own meat out in the bush too. Fresh kangaroo is always tasty if cooked right. Their accommodation was some sheets of tin put up along the bridge abutments, with a raging open fire. To watch this team of men work was really something, as they seemed to be able to manipulate huge sections of timber with ease, forming the most intricate pieces as required. All of their tools were hand tools, with no modern power tools anywhere. When they were working on a lofty structure, they would have a rope tied around each tool, so they could simply haul it up should they accidentally drop it over the side. Really ingenious bunch of blokes.

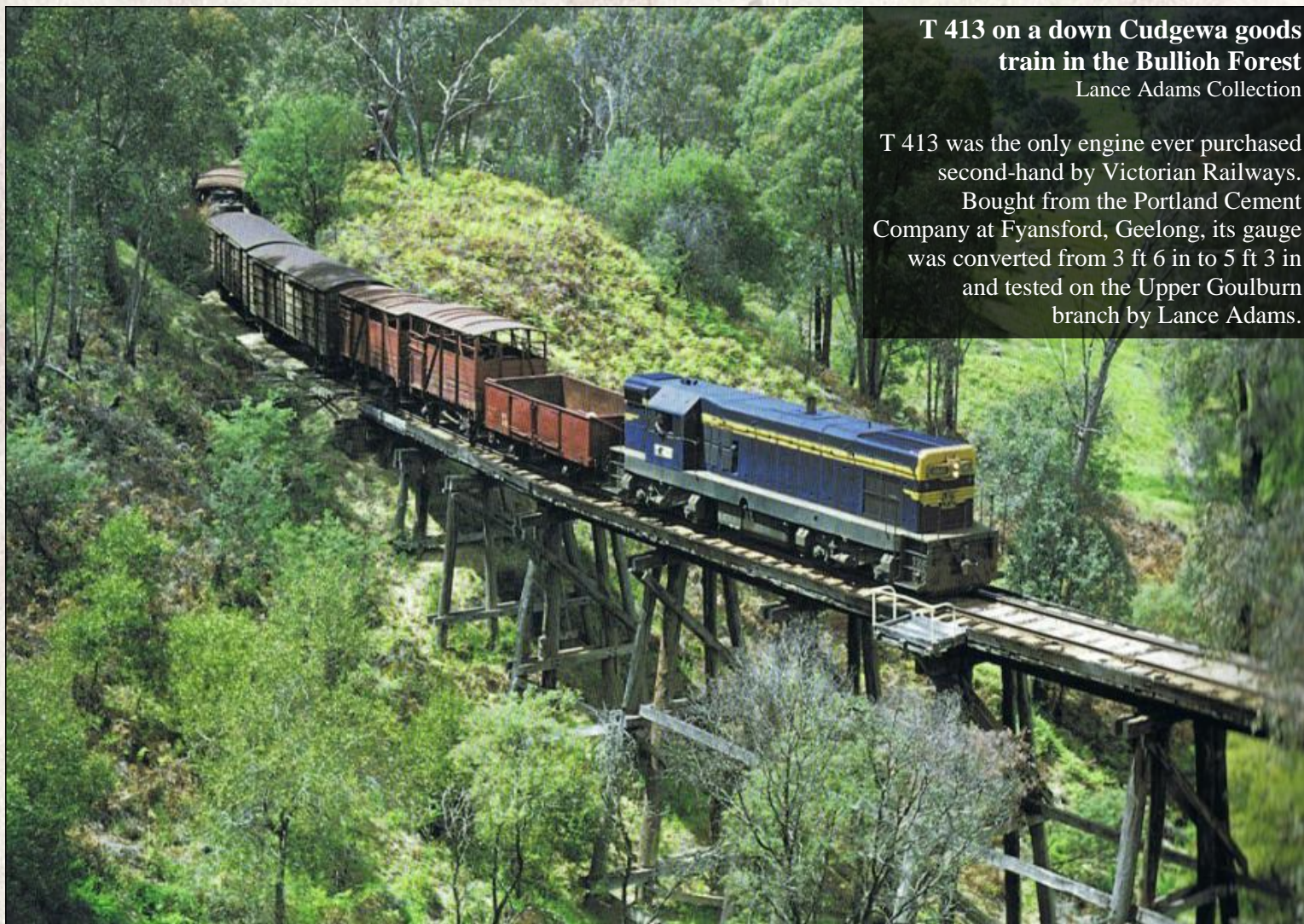
They used to play cribbage for a penny a point, except on pay night it was six pence a point. George (my driver) always made the point of telling me 'not to play cards with the bridge gang'. He said they were evil. I never did!

One incident that must be told, is about the evening we lost the Cudgewa beer truck with the hotel's weekly supply, from the train. We were on the last stretch into Cudgewa, known as the Wabba Flats, when the train lost its air and divided. We duly set back, rejoined the train and completed our journey into Cudgewa. The Guard was checking the train upon arrival in Cudgewa, when he worked out the Cudgewa beer wagon was missing from the train. We quickly deduced, that the missing truck was out at where the train had divided. We hastily went back out there and found the truck in a paddock well clear of the line, bogged up to its axles in Wabba Flat mud. The vehicle was unloaded on to a road truck and delivered to the hotel. The errant truck was rescued several days later by the Wodonga Loco' breakdown truck.

T 413, dynamic brakes and Cudgewa (see picture next page)

T413 was purpose bought second hand, from the Portland Cement Company at Fyansford, Geelong, for use on the steeply graded Cudgewa line. The locomotive was constructed with the first series batch of T class locomotives numbered 320–346 for the Victorian Railways in the 1950s.

413 was built originally to a 3 ft (feet) 6 in (inches) gauge for the cement company's private railway operating from the quarry/mine to their processing plant, some 5 km away. The locomotive was bought to streamline operations and to supersede their Australian Standard Garrat locomotive, which currently lies as a static exhibit in the Victorian Railway Museum in North Williamstown, Melbourne. This locomotive was the only diesel locomotive bought second hand by the Victorian Railways, and after modification appeared on the VR locomotive register in 1968.



T 413 on a down Cudgewa goods train in the Bullioh Forest

Lance Adams Collection

T 413 was the only engine ever purchased second-hand by Victorian Railways. Bought from the Portland Cement Company at Fyansford, Geelong, its gauge was converted from 3 ft 6 in to 5 ft 3 in and tested on the Upper Goulburn branch by Lance Adams.

After modification and re-gauging to suit 5 ft 3 in tracks, the locomotive underwent extensive load testing and crew familiarisation on the Upper Goulburn branch to Alexandra and Mansfield. The dynamic brake equipment proving a valuable braking asset on the steep gradients of these lines. After satisfactory results working trains over these two lines, 413 was sent to the Cudgewa line as the main form of motive power.

It should be noted that I have worked this locomotive on the Rushworth, Colbinabbin and Stanhope lines, and I found the dynamic brake feature not quite as effective as it was on the Cudgewa branch, mainly because the grades, while steep, were not as long as those on the Cudgewa branch.

Other T classes were the second series numbered 347–366, the third series from 367–399 and the final series from 400–412. All these T classes were not equipped with dynamic braking.

Second series T 360 was involved in a serious collision with another train at Portland in the late 1960s and rebuilt as a fourth series T class.

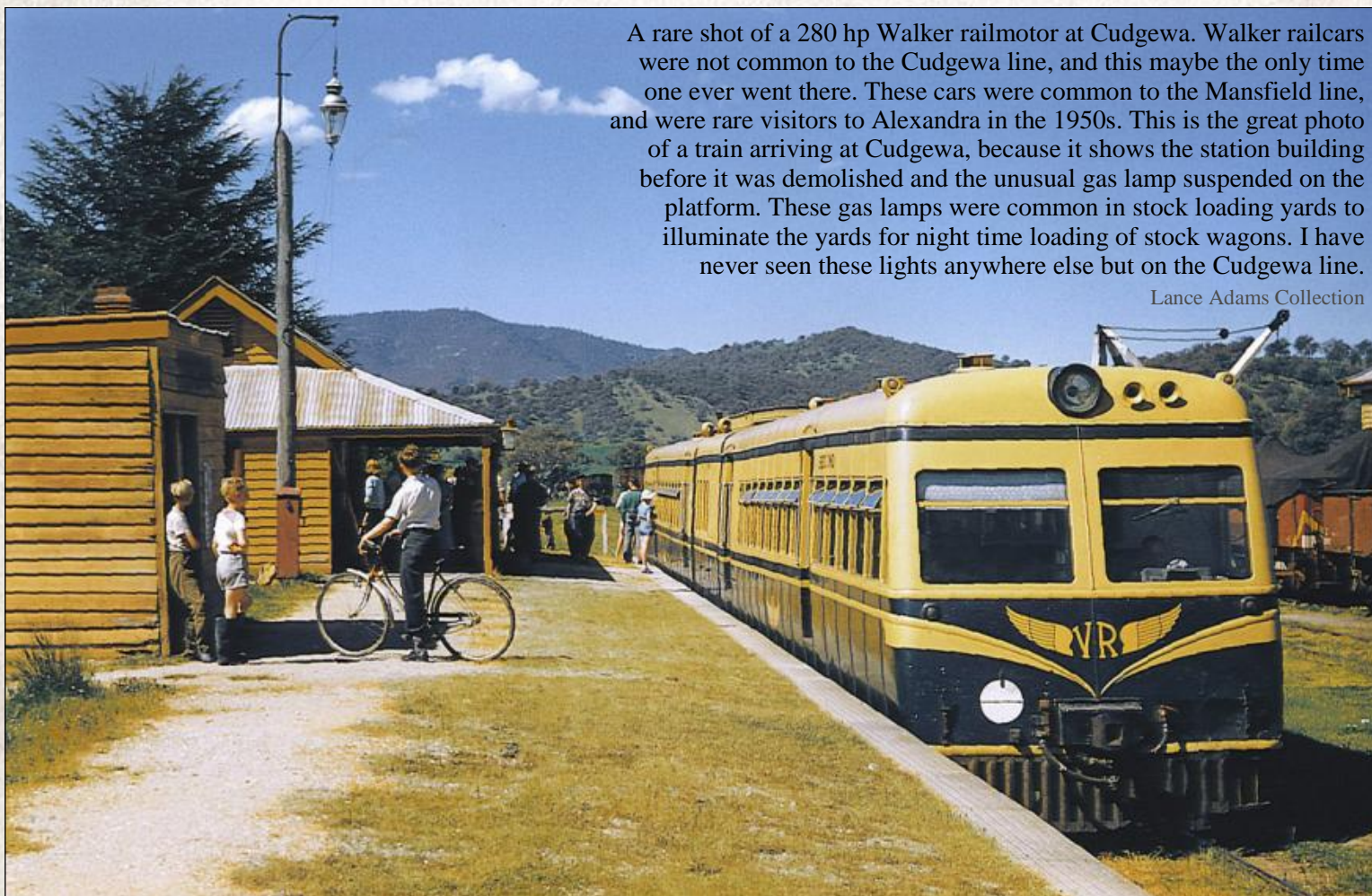
T 413 has been preserved operationally and can still be seen hauling trains around what is left of the Victorian network.

Queensland railways, kept away from fitting their engines with dynamic braking, as they considered this form of braking exerted too much strain on the track, forcing the outer side rail of a curve, to be unduly forced out. The force has to go somewhere, but I don't agree with this theory as I was not aware of any such damage to the track during T 413's time on the Cudgewa track.

L, B, S, & X class locomotives had dynamic brakes fitted, and I have nothing but praise for this feature. The L class were a magnificent engine on the road thanks to this equipment but hopeless in the yard shunting due to the lengthy N03 control pipe. The only effective way to shunt with them, was to retain 20+ lb in the control pipe, which made the engine brake more responsive when shunting.

T 413 was an outstanding success on the Cudgewa running, and I can't work out why the various other models were not equipped with dynamic braking too.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class
Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman (and Fireman at Cudgewa)
Yea



A rare shot of a 280 hp Walker railmotor at Cudgewa. Walker railcars were not common to the Cudgewa line, and this maybe the only time one ever went there. These cars were common to the Mansfield line, and were rare visitors to Alexandra in the 1950s. This is the great photo of a train arriving at Cudgewa, because it shows the station building before it was demolished and the unusual gas lamp suspended on the platform. These gas lamps were common in stock loading yards to illuminate the yards for night time loading of stock wagons. I have never seen these lights anywhere else but on the Cudgewa line.

Lance Adams Collection

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF KORIELLA

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 20 MARCH 2018

K184 entering the Alexandra station
Lance Adams Collection



Little today is recognised about the significance to the Alexandra District of that tiny sleepy location of Koriella. When the railway first reached out its tentacles to this district on its edging way to Mansfield, the rails reached Koriella in 1890. As the rail line into Alexandra would require civil engineering skills not yet available to our forefathers, as well as advanced mechanical engineering skills for the machinery to handle the demanding gradients, Alexandra was isolated from the growing railway network by its local hills. So with Koriella now being the terminus, it was then known as Alexandra Road and the short distance for all traffic to and from the Alexandra township had to be commenced or completed by bullock dray (for goods), or stage coach (for passengers).

This proved most unacceptable to the locals. A morning train departed Alexandra Road at 6.50 am every weekday morning, going to Yea and Tallarook to connect with a through train to Melbourne. This journey commenced with the stage coach departing Alexandra at around 5.45 am. The train returned from Melbourne, Tallarook and Yea to Alexandra Road at 11.10 pm, with passengers returning to the Alexandra township a little after midnight. Another service also operated out of Cathkin departing there at 12.30 pm daily returning at 5.30 pm to Cathkin, to connect with a through Mansfield train to Yea and Tallarook for connection to Melbourne.

This inconvenient service was not well received by the locals of the time, so in short time it was foundering. The lunchtime connecting train from Cathkin to Alexandra Road and return was the first to be axed, and it now commenced its morning trip from Yea to Tallarook. Then the late evening train from Tallarook was terminated at Yea leaving Alexandra Road completely devoid of a regular train service and the entire short line was closed in 1895.

By 1905 community agitation led by a local woman was at feverpoint, and after much lobbying and arousing parliamentary interest, a permanent survey was conducted on extending the then closed line from Alexandra Road into Alexandra itself. By 1909 this had been achieved, with trains travelling over the steepest gradients a conventional train could negotiate in the world (33%). Alexandra now had rail service connecting it to greater Australia and the world. This seemed a more acceptable way to do things.

Consequently Alexandra Road was renamed Rhodes to avoid confusion with the former terminus. Rhodes underwent another name change to Lily which in turn was short lived, when the name was again changed to what we know it now as Koriella.

Not much remains of Koriella Station today, but at its zenith it boasted four tracks and a 50 ft turntable, the pit of which is still visible today. It had a station building of some consequence, a Station Master and several railway residences. Over the years a larger 53 ft turntable appeared; I don't know when or why, the pit of which can be clearly seen if you take a walk around the former station yard precincts. One turntable pit is located at the Up end of the yard, on the Down side of the line while the other was located at the down end of the yard on the Up side of the line, not far from the road that crosses the line there. I think it is called Spring Creek Road.

A word of warning to any individual who contemplates investigating this area, as it is tiger snake heaven. Beasties everywhere. Do it in the cooler months!

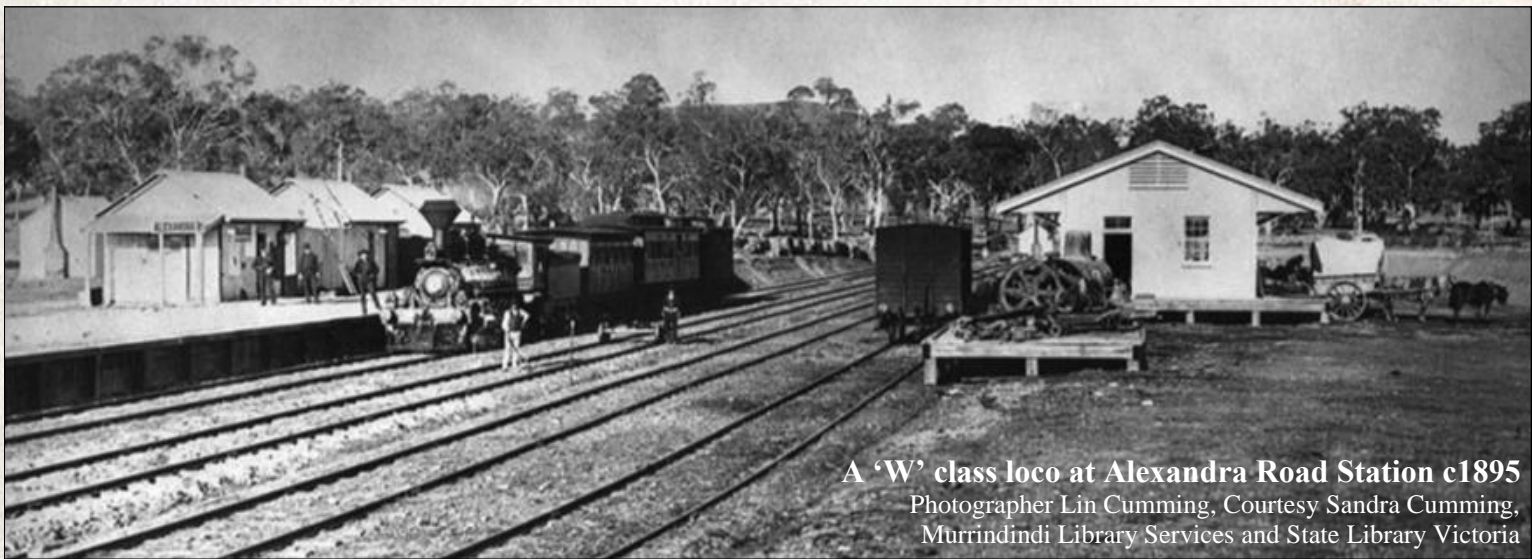
When the railway finally reached Alexandra in 1909, Koriella lost its prominence and became a simple wayside



single loop station with no one in charge, under the supervision of the Station Master at Alexandra. Alexandra Road (Rhodes, Lily, Koriella) has an elevation of 751 ft and is 97 miles, 60 chains and 15 links from mileage zero (0), putting it approximately 18 rail miles from Yea.

The later-day image of T353 shows it shunting at Koriella with an Alexandra bound twice a week goods train circa 1970s. A former turntable pit is to the immediate left of this image.

When the late evening train ran to Alexandra Road, it required a night shift from Yea with a Yea crew to run it from Yea to Alexandra Road and return the next morning. The engine returned to Yea light engine on Saturday night and did the opposite movement on Monday morning in time to run the 0650 Up service back to Yea.



A 'W' class loco at Alexandra Road Station c1895

Photographer Lin Cumming, Courtesy Sandra Cumming,
Murrindindi Library Services and State Library Victoria

The pictured 'W' class locomotive has a diamond stack, which means it was a wood burner. The first train to Mansfield was hauled by a wood burning W class loco. The W's were all scrapped by 1930. I believe some of the early ones to be of Baldwin construction, as they have that Baldwin appearance. I liked Baldwin engines. Go anywhere, do anything, and be successful at it. Don't get me started on Baldwins!

The W's were a locally produced direct copy of the two Rogers American imported S classes (numbers 162 and 164). Both these impressive, ornate locomotives spent sometime at Yea and I would have loved to have seen them thundering through the Yea bush. One was eventually sold to the South Australian Railways, while the other was sold to the McIvor Timber Tramway near Kilmore, where it worked for years. Its operating shed was still in existence the last time I was in the area.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea

AMUSING OURSELVES WITH FRED COLE

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN
© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 26 JUNE 2019



An Up Stanhope goods approaching Rushworth

Lance Adams Collection

After the demise of the Yea branch, I found myself in Seymour as a loco driver and was pretty much a regular on the Colbinabbin and Stanhope branches for a good deal of time. Originally there was a crew at Murchison East, to work the branch, but after their removal in the late 1970s, the running fell into the hands of Seymour. And with me being the new boy on the block, I was first in line for the task.

When I first started going out there, Graham Pollinelli (the former Geelong footballer) was the Station Master (SM) at Rushworth. He was fantastic, extremely capable and well organised as the line SM. But Graham was later transferred to the line SM up Kaniva or Nhill way, and his replacement was Fred Cole, who was nicknamed Fred Bear. Fred was totally incompetent and an easy target for fun and frivolity.

The powers that be, in their wisdom, allocated Fred a Fordson rail tractor for shunting, and in a yard not protected by fixed signals, he was a menace to everyone.

We regularly placed detonators under the wheels of this contraption, to give Fred a bit of a scare. He soon started looking at the wheels before moving it and the fun was gone. The next time my mate and I were on a goods train on the Rushworth line we took along a roll of insulating tape and taped a detonator to the top of each wheel. Fred didn't find these detonators, and he went beserk after they exploded, leaving him in a cloud of acrid cordite smoke.

Lance Adams driving T 396 at Rushworth

Copyright © Andy Main



Some of the things he got up to with that rail tractor defies belief, and he was regularly getting into places he shouldn't.

The Colbinabbin Branch had some quite steep grades on it, and two individual loads were listed in the working timetable, one for a single engine and the other for a double headed (two) engines. There was a dividing board on the Erwin bank where we were to divide the train, should we have a double headed load with a single engine. On a good day it was possible to take more than a single load over the Erwin bank, providing you were always

aware of the short term ampere ratings, throttling back as the amps increased and avoid activating the wheel slip relays. Real branch line driving, probably carried over from my Cudgewa and Yea days of train running. Main line drivers didn't have to give this much thought, although they did have to give consideration to their short term amp ratings.

The approach to The Rushworth yard, is via a short steep descent over two level crossings, and if you make a full equalising application at the first crossing, the slight upgrade in the yard area itself will bring the train to a stand. I refer to this as AWP braking. Apply, Wait and Pray.



Y 115 shunting at Rushworth
Lance Adams Collection

On one particular occasion, I approached Rushworth with a double load and single engine only to find Fred and his Fordson tractor sitting in No 1 track on my arrival. With all the arrival home signals removed several years earlier, Fred had no protection, and nor did we. I ordered my Fireman to hit the floor, and after placing the automatic brake handle into emergency, did likewise and just waited for the crunch, as 2000 tonne of train did the pushing. Fred got a real fright of his life when this behemoth bore down on top of him and was not going to stop in time.

On another occasion, entering the second crossing at the north end of the Main Street, a funeral cartage commenced to cross in front of me and stopped in my path, as it awaited its turn to enter the T intersection. The inevitable happened and I plowed into the hearse, causing the coffin to be catapulted on to the main street of Rushworth. I learnt a valuable lesson that day: 'you cannot kill a dead man'. It did wonders for the hearse though.

On another occasion, Fred wanted to place some vehicles for loading at the silo road at Colbinabbin. So he used his Fordson rail tractor, and ran light with out permission from Rushworth-Colbinabbin to do the vehicle placement. He also picked up every vehicle in the yard, some loaded, and pulled out towards Erwin and Rushworth. But he got on to a small bridge over the irrigation channel, and couldn't move back into the yard.

Y 115 arrives at Colbinabbin from Rushworth

Lance Adams Collection



Colbinabbin is also unprotected by a home signal, with the approach to Colbinabbin being via a long, flat straight stretch of railway, and on my approaching goods train I could see something bright and canary-yellow in the distance in a heat haze, which had me totally confused. As I got closer I determined it was a rail tractor and stopping short of it, was no problem. I switched the headlight on to high, turned the generator field switch off, and powered my engine up to full rev's.

Fred panicked, not wanting to suffer another clobbering from a loco', and dived into the safety of the Irrigation channel. He obviously could not swim, and was going down, so I took off into the channel, clothes and all, to rescue the big plonker!

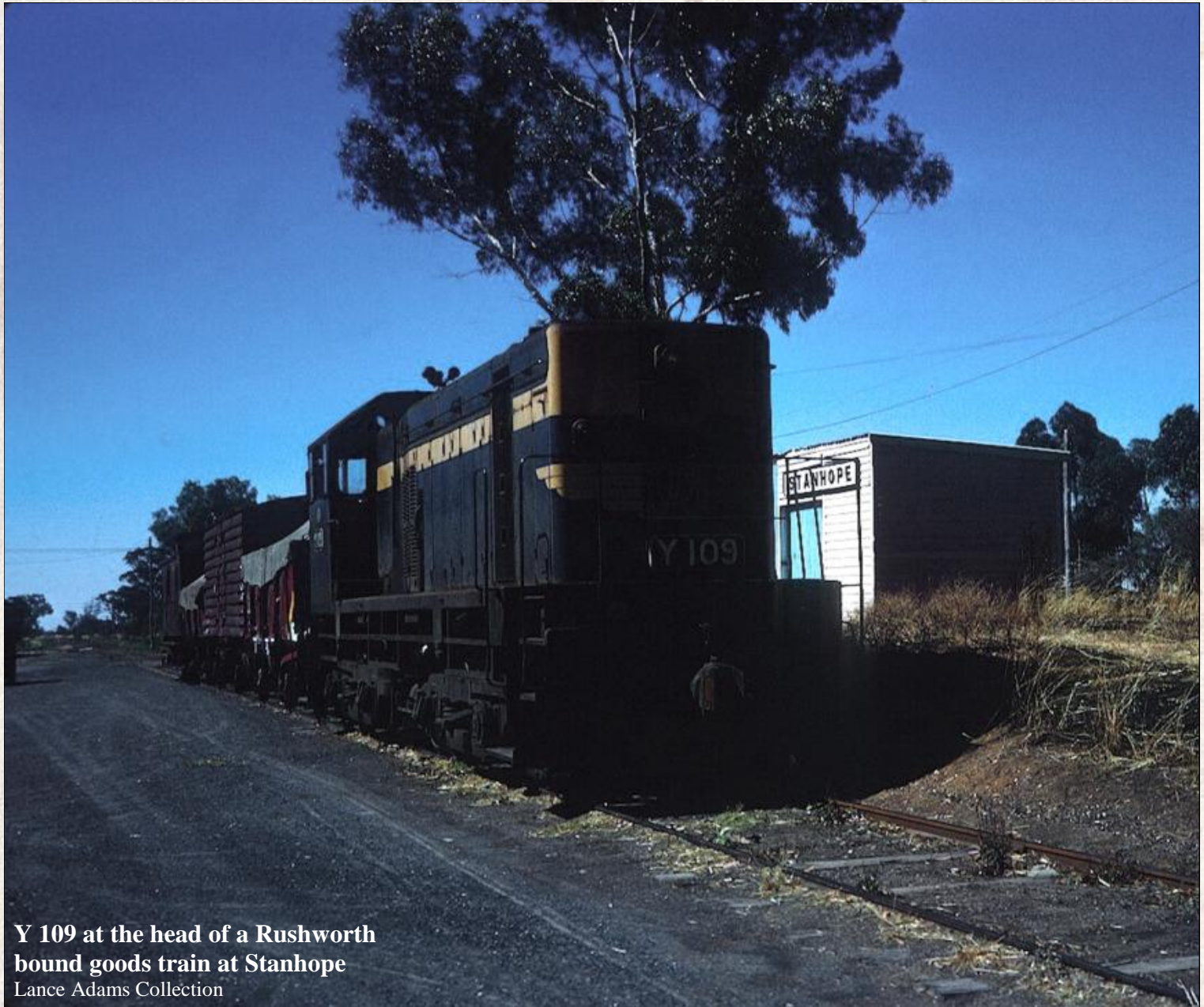
Shortly after this incident, the powers that be at the Kremlin (Seymour Railway Administration Centre) took Fred's rail tractor from him and gave him a road shunting tractor instead. He was equally as lethal with this thing, which he used like a battering ram, as he had with the rail tractor.

His mis-use of the road tractor was responsible for another interesting incident whilst shunting at Congupna Road some years later, as well as causing me to be crushed by a train that should not have been moved whilst I was underneath it.

The Rushworth–Colbinabbin–Stanhope line has been dispatched in to the trash bin of time, like countless others, but the memories live on. Fred would be retired by now, and I have no idea what happened to him or where he went. He was certainly a unique character. When he was in the yard shunting, he would wear shorts, gum boots and a rain coat (shiny side in), even on the hottest of days!

**K184 heads a passenger train to Rushworth
near the Waranga basin**
Lance Adams Collection





**Y 109 at the head of a Rushworth
bound goods train at Stanhope**
Lance Adams Collection

His hand-signals left a lot to the imagination, and when shunting at Rushworth, I used to have my fireman stand behind me so we could have a parliamentary style debate on what was the intention of each hand signal.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea

A LITTLE KNOWN ABOUT PROPOSED RAILWAY IN OUR DISTRICT

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 23 MARCH 2018



**Ian Britnell (left) and Lance Adams with
NA 7 at Lakeside in the late 1980s**
Lance Adams Collection

In the 1890s, there was serious consideration for Victoria to experiment in Narrow Gauge railway lines into mountainous terrain to encourage development of these areas.

The first such experimental line ran from Wangaratta to Whitfield which was constructed and opened in 1899. Further plans to extend this railway out of the flat King Valley into the Tolmie Ranges to Tolmie and onto Mansfield were seriously considered. This would have given the area a connection with the regular network at both ends. The operating point for the proposed line was to be at Whitfield and a substantial engine shed/maintenance facility was constructed at Whitfield which still stands in use to this day as an agricultural facility/garage.

I think the rails may still be in the existing shed complex.

Other narrow gauge railways (all of 2 feet 6 inch gauge) were constructed in the state and were in the following places:

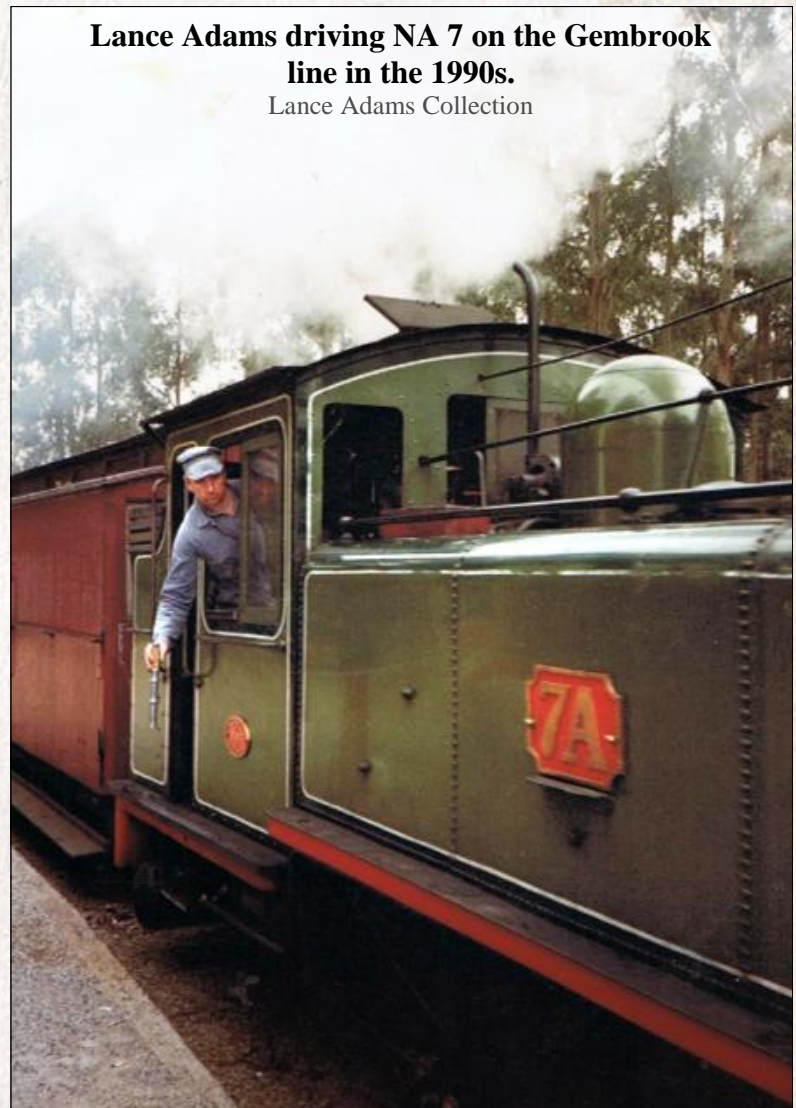
1. Wangaratta to Whitfield (1899–1953).
2. Upper Ferntree Gully to Gembrook (1901–present) The Puffing Billy Railway in the Dandenong Ranges.
3. Colac to Beech Forrest and Crowes (1902 and 1911–62).
4. Moe to Walhalla (1910).

Several other lines of Narrow Gauge construction were on the drawing board including Lilydale–Warburton which was eventually constructed in VR broad gauge of 5 feet 3 inches. The Whitfield–Tolmie–Mansfield railway never got out of the planning stages and was never built.

Remaining operating carriages and motive power from the former four lines, have all been acquired by the Puffing Billy Railway and operate over their railway today, including locomotive 14A which was the former Whitfield engine. This locomotive was transferred in the 1950s from Wangaratta to Colac, working trains on that line until its closure in the 60s.

A bushfire in 1952 destroyed a small bridge resulting in Locomotive hauled trains to be removed from the line beyond Moyu. A temporary light capacity bridge was hurriedly constructed and the Postal Motor only was permitted to operate right through to Whitfield. This arrangement remained in force until Saturday, October 10th, 1953, when it made its final run, causing Whitfield to become devoid of a rail service.

The Whitfield Postal Motor was affectionately referred to as 'The Spirits of Salts' due to its rapid progress it made along its 30.5 mile daily trip to and from Wangaratta. It was a unique looking machine and quite bone jarring to travel on. It's a shame that it doesn't survive, but 14A, a regular Whitfield line locomotive does, and runs regularly on the Puffing Billy



Lance Adams driving NA 7 on the Gembrook line in the 1990s.

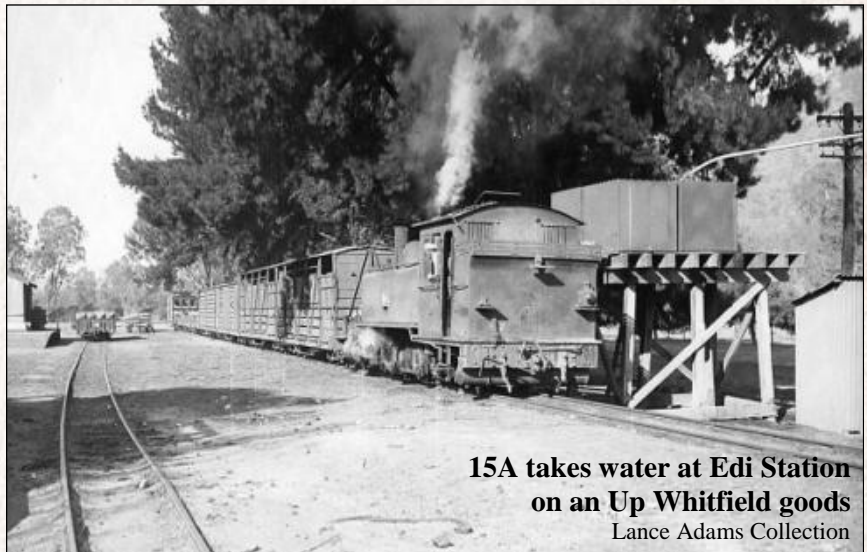
Lance Adams Collection

Railway along with its sisters in the class, 6A, 7A, 8A and 12A (with 3A awaiting possible restoration). Other items of Rolling Stock from the Whitfield railway, along with other items off the four Victorian Narrow Gauge lines survive and operate to this day.

Left over pieces remain throughout the King Valley, of the Whitfield railway, with signage evident in a number of locations, such as Piper, Docker, Oxley and Edi.

The Narrow Gauge yard area at Wangaratta was excavated and utilised for the Standard Gauge railway line to Sydney in the 60s with not much remaining today. The Narrow Gauge yard area was known as 'Polly's Yard' and the Narrow Gauge railway engine just referred to as Polly. At Colac and Moe the little train was affectionately known as the Coffee Pot, while at Upper Ferntree Gully it was known as Hissing Jenny, which later morphed into the Puffing Billy we know today

All in all, 17 NA locomotives were built for the Narrow Gauge operations, two fully imported American Baldwin locomotive works (1 Simple, 1 Compound) and another 15 by the Victorian Railways, at their Newport workshops. (1 Compound & 14 Simple). None of the original Baldwin built locomotives survived into modernity (1 & 2) but 6,7,8,12 & 14 survive and are in operating condition, while 3A survives as a static exhibit awaiting a possible future restoration project. There are plans afoot at the moment to convert 14A to oil firing, from black coal, and I hope someone comes to their senses before this is done. I would not like to work on these Saturated, Slide Valve Volatile bombs as an oil burner. It will be a bomb on wheels. Historic 14A should be left as is.

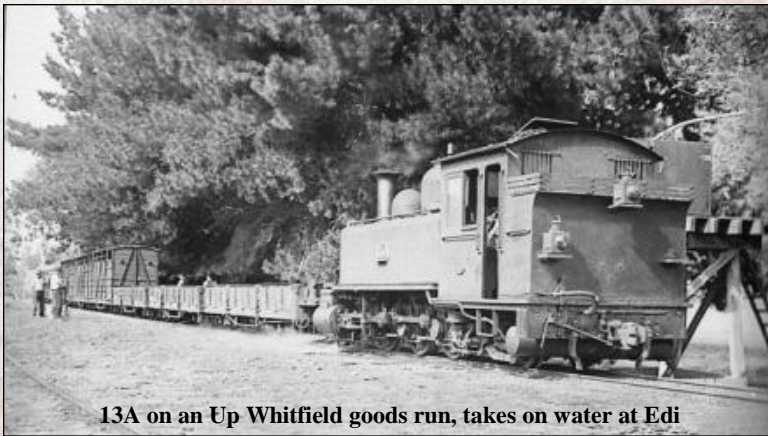


**15A takes water at Edi Station
on an Up Whitfield goods**
Lance Adams Collection

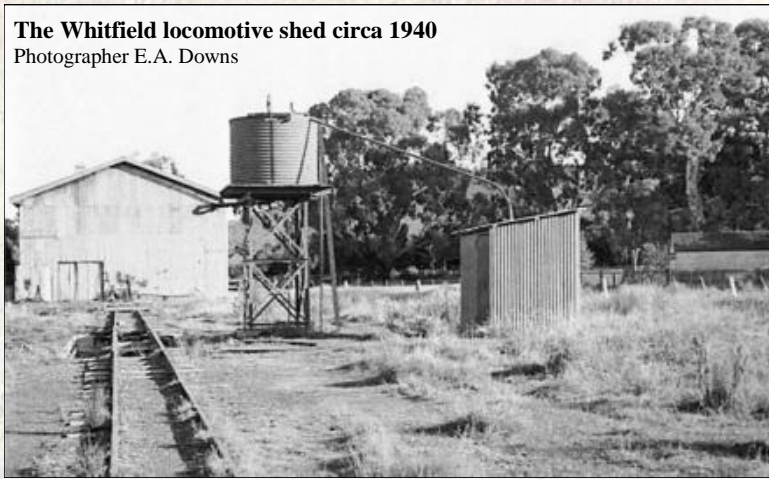


**Remains of
Edi Station in 2018**

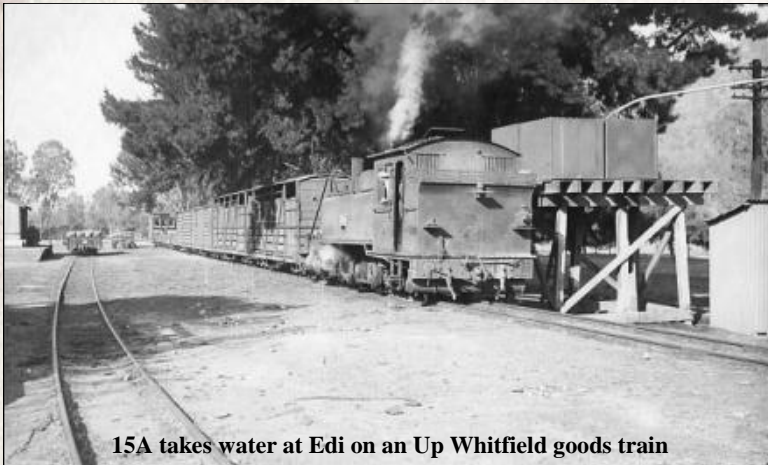
Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea



13A on an Up Whitfield goods run, takes on water at Edi



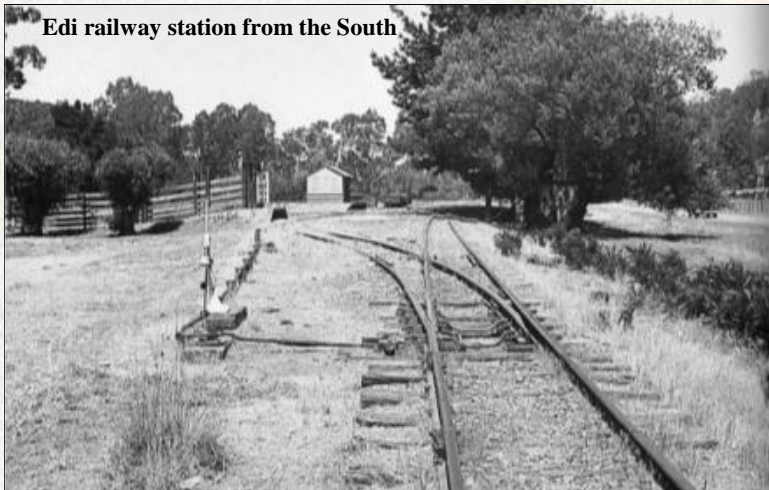
The Whitfield locomotive shed circa 1940
Photographer E.A. Downs



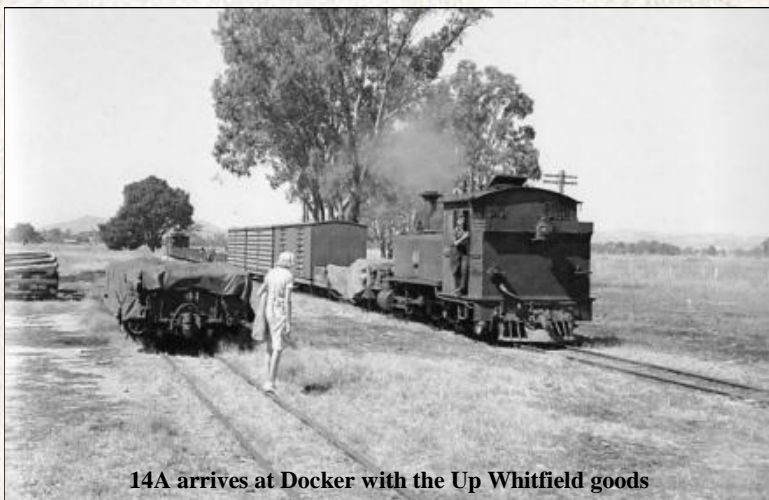
15A takes water at Edi on an Up Whitfield goods train



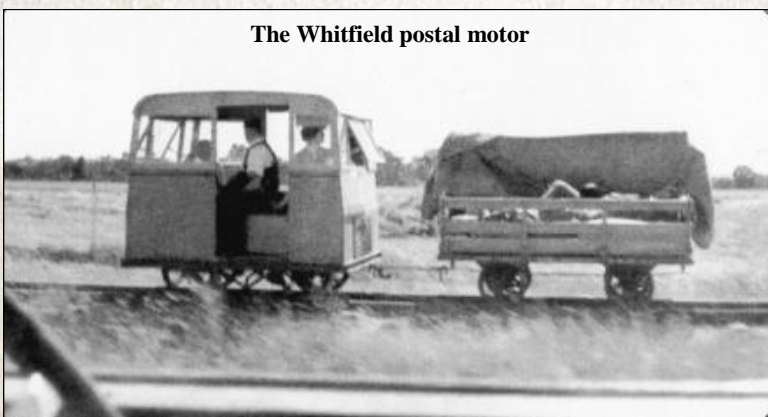
15A upon its arrival in Whitfield in 1945
Photographer E.A. Downs



Edi railway station from the South



14A arrives at Docker with the Up Whitfield goods



The Whitfield postal motor



Whitfield station area shortly after closure in 1953



2A on the first train to Whitfield on opening day 1899

MAIL BY RAIL

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 13 AUGUST 2019



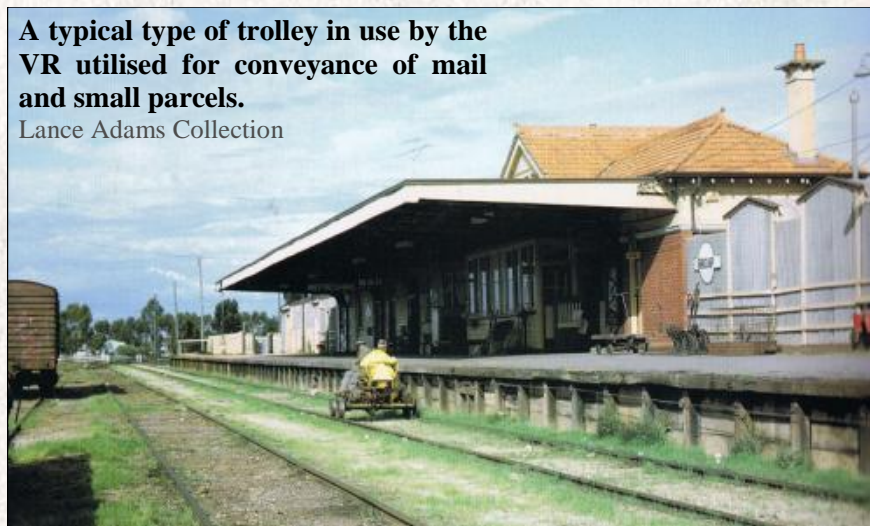
Beech Forest postal trolley at Beech Forest, with regular driver Billy (crash hat) Withers.
Lance Adams Collection

In the early days in the State of Victoria, with just about a train running regularly on every line, getting the mail to these isolated communities was just a matter of getting it to the station. Consequently Victoria's main mail sorting and distribution centre was directly opposite Spencer Street Station (now the Mail Exchange Hotel).

With the Depression of the late 1920s and early 1930s, a heavy atomisation of rail services took place throughout the State of Victoria, and a new line of thinking had to take place to keep the mail communication up. Hence designated mail delivery trolleys were introduced on many lines that serviced isolated communities. Other services operated throughout the state, utilising standard VR type service equipment.

A typical type of trolley in use by the VR utilised for conveyance of mail and small parcels.

Lance Adams Collection



Some locations had purpose built machines constructed for them. One such service was between Piangil and Kooloonong. Originally a purpose designed unit was constructed in Sheffield, England and known as the Sheffield Postal Motor. It operated until the mid 1960s, when it was replaced by a purpose built local construction, based on the common KS type trolleys.

This KS design used to make two trips per week between Piangil and Kooloonong. One was in the early evening, after connecting with a service from Swan Hill, with mails and small parcels, towing with it a small lightweight unsprung trailer. It was quite a noisy contraption to ride in and the original Sheffield Postal Motor it replaced, is still in existence and preserved in the Railway Museum at North Williamstown, Melbourne.

Kooloonong postal motor at Piangil

Lance Adams Collection



This service ended up being the last such mail service run by the Victorian Railways (VR). When it was finally withdrawn, its demise was fully covered by the ABC. It can be found on the Internet quite easily.

Wherever these designated mail trolleys operated, they were listed in the railways Internal Timetable as an operating train, albeit a mail trolley.

Many isolated tiny communities such as Telford Station (right) on the Benalla to Yarrawonga line, had the station double as a post office (note suitable signage). Just drop the letter in the sending box, where it would be cleared by the railway employee and placed on the train.

Telford station

Lance Adams Collection



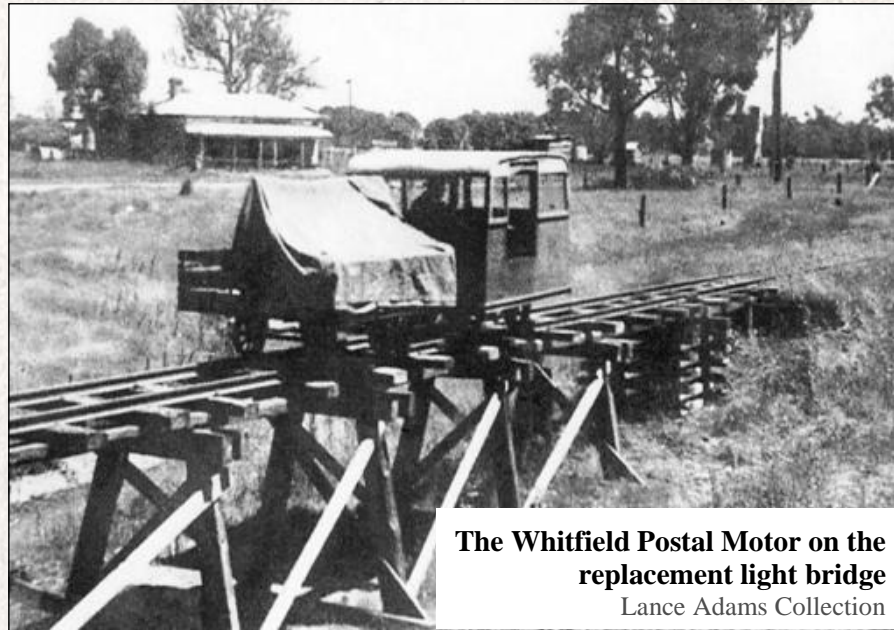
Mail sack in hand, a female postal worker, meets the Whitfield–Wangaratta train at Docker to hand over her mail sack of letters.

Lance Adams Collection



The Whitfield line deserves a special mention here. After the line experienced a catastrophic bushfire in 1953, and services were truncated to Moyou, a temporary lightly constructed bridge built just out of Whitfield and a proper narrow gauge postal motor was constructed in 1941 to continue the service. The little NKS trolley used to depart Whitfield at 9.15 am every morning and return every afternoon from Wangaratta at 2 pm. This vehicle had the infamous name of the 'Spirits of Salts'. This vehicle survived to modernity, but unfortunately it was wrecked in a safe-working mix up, on the Puffing Billy Railway some years back.

The Spirits of Salts was so named for the speed it used to whiz up and down between Wangaratta and Whitfield. It was a shame that this historic vehicle was accidentally wrecked, but accidents do happen.



The Whitfield Postal Motor on the replacement light bridge

Lance Adams Collection

See the final timetable for the Whitfield Postal Motor on the following page.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea

W.T.T. 58/52.

VICTORIAN RAILWAYS.

W.T.T. 58/52.

Office of Chief Traffic Manager,
Room 73. 'Phone 1803.
28th July, 1952.

WANGARATTA - WHITFIELD.

Commencing on TUESDAY, 5TH AUGUST, 1952 the FULL Passenger and Goods service between Wangaratta and Whitfield will be as under:-

<u>DOWN</u>	<u>3</u>		<u>UP</u>	<u>8</u>		<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>
	Goods.	Postal		Postal	Postal		Goods
	Tue.	Motor		Motor	Motor		Tue.
	A.M.	P.M.		A.M.	A.M.		A.M.
Wangaratta dep.	7. 0	2. 0	Whitfield dep.	8.30	9.15		
Targoora	...	...	Pieper	...	...
Laceyby	...	...	Jarrott	...	...
Oxley	...	2.35	King Valley	8.55	9.40		
Skehan	...	...	Hyem	...	...
Docker	...	3.10	Edi	9.20	10. 5		
Byrne	...	...	Dwyer	...	...
Moyhu	arr. 9. 0	...	Claremont	...	...
	dep.	3.34	Angleside	...	...
Angleside		...	Moyhu	arr. 9.50(See	...		
Claremont		...		dep. Note A)	10.37	10. 0	
Dwyer		...	Byrne		...	...
Edi		4.10	Docker		11. 0	10.25	
Hyem		...	Skehan		...	...
King Valley		4.32	Oxley		11.35	...	
Jarrott		...	Laceyby		...	...
Pieper		...	Targoora		...	...
Whitfield arr.		5. 0			F.M.	Noon	
			Wangaratta arr.		12.15	12. 0	

A. On Tuesdays the Postal Motor will run from Moyhu to Wangaratta as an ordinary track machine in accordance with the instructions shown in the General Appendix, pages 485 to 492 inclusive.

Commencing Tuesday, 5.8.52 the following instructions will apply:-


The Guard of the 7.0 a.m. (No.3) will be in charge of the signalling arrangements at Moyhu from the arrival of his train until departure of the 10.0 a.m. (No.4) up.

The 2.0 p.m. (No.5) Postal Motor, Mondays commencing Monday, 4th August, will be despatched from Wangaratta to Whitfield on a Train Staff Ticket and the 7.0 a.m. 'down' (No.3) and 10.0 a.m. (No.4) on Tuesdays will run between Wangaratta and Moyhu on the Train Staff. The Signaller at Wangaratta must hand the Driver and Guard of the 7.0 a.m. 'down' (No.3) a written order instructing them that their train must not proceed beyond Moyhu and that the 8.30 a.m. 'up' Postal Motor will be running from Whitfield to Moyhu without the Train Staff or Ticket and the Postal Motor will meet their train at Moyhu. The Driver and Guard of the 7.0 a.m. 'down' must sign for the instruction on a copy held by the Signaller at Wangaratta.

Authority is hereby granted for the 8.30 a.m. 'up' (No.8) Postal Motor, Tuesdays to run from Whitfield to Moyhu without the Driver being in possession of the Train Staff or Train Staff Ticket. In this connection, the Driver of the 8.30 a.m. 'up' (No.8) Tuesdays must, prior to departing from Whitfield, communicate with the Signaller at Wangaratta and definitely ascertain that the 7.0 a.m. 'down' (No.3) to Moyhu is the only train on the line. The Driver of the 8.30 a.m. 'up' (No.8) must approach Moyhu cautiously and not enter the station yard at Moyhu until permission is received from the Guard of the 7.0 a.m. 'down' (No.3) to do so.

Passengers and mails etc. are to be transferred from the 8.30 a.m. 'up' (No.8) Postal Motor, Tuesdays at Moyhu to the 10.0 a.m. (No.4) 'up' Goods.

ALL CONCERNED TO NOTE AND ARRANGE ACCORDINGLY.

G. ROGERS,
Chief Traffic Manager,
Per:- 

GOING FOR A RIDE

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 26 JUNE 2019

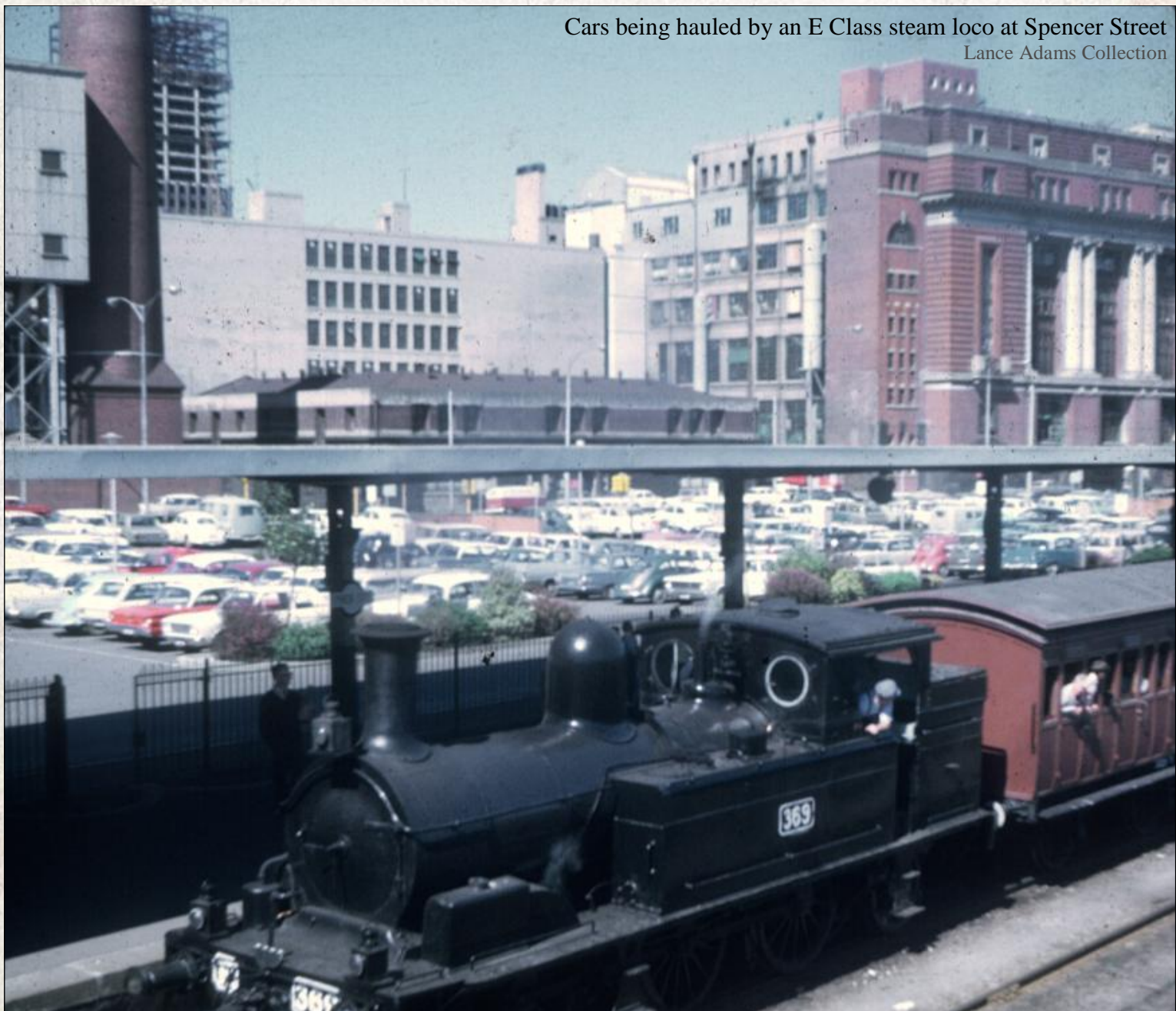


In the early days of train services on the Alexandra railway, the train set and engine were based at Yea and Cathkin. A through service to Yea and Tallarook, originated from Alexandra Road (Koriella) early every morning, and returned late every evening, which required a Yea based engine crew to stay overnight in Spartan conditions at Koriella. The day train to Alexandra Road (Koriella) was a connecting shuttle train to and from Cathkin, with the thru' Mansfield train. Passengers completed or commenced their journey by stage coach, while goods was conveyed by bullock dray.

The passenger accommodation on these pioneer trains were quite primitive to say the least, and a journey on them would have been quite an ordeal to undergo when there was no alternative, which they weren't. The rolling stock on these carriage sets, were of six wheeled, rigid design, with no form of heating. Fortunately one set of these six wheeled bucking brutes survive, and are displayed at spasmodic appearances at special events. If you ever get a chance to see these historic vehicles, do so, but bypass the chance for a ride, unless you want to suffer from aches and pains, for a lengthy time afterwards.

The interesting thing to note about these carriages, is the fact that the entire set was not continuous, air brake equipped; this was a fact I recently picked up on my old image. The white painted square symbol on 40X, indicates that although compressed air pipe flowed through this car, no brake equipment was fitted to it. The inverted U symbol on its sister car, 30Y, indicates that this car was fitted with the compulsory compressed air equipment. The final vehicle in the set, a combination passenger and Guards van unit, would also have to had braking equipment fitted.

Below is an old image of this set of cars in action, being haled by an E Class steam locomotive at Spencer Street. The E classes have all long gone now, for nearly 50 years, but were the main motive power of Melbourne's steam suburban trains. When these cars are hauled around today, it is usually behind a surviving Y class engine from the same era.



I have had the unfortunate experience of having to run these abominable six wheeled bouncing bone busters, on several occasions at displays.

Thank goodness these archaic vehicles are not around any more, but it's great that one set has survived into modernity.

These carriages disappeared off the Yea, Alexandra and Mansfield lines about 1913. Any image after this date, tends to show more modern rolling stock.

From the implementation of a train service into the Alexandra township in 1909, passenger accommodation on the thrice weekly mixed train (passenger and goods combined) was by means of an ABL class carriage, now also long gone.

All gone, but not forgotten.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea

An ABL car at Lilydale
Lance Adams Collection



AN ARDUOUS JOURNEY

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 29 AUGUST 2019

Beech Forest Station and refreshment rooms circa 1915

Lance Adams Collection



Taking a train journey from the scattered isolated communities to somewhere else was a feat to be undertaken only with considerable planning and preparation.

In early history the Dutch had this problem covered by offering passengers on their slow travelling canal barges, sustenance and refreshments on their arduous journeys. The railways soon tapped in on this idea with refreshment points springing up in the most unlikely places such as Beech Forest, Cressy and other change-points around the growing Victorian network. The Upper Goulburn branch to Yea-Alexandra and Mansfield was no exception.

When the line opened in 1883 as a spur line from Tallarook, things were pretty simple. With the extending of the line beyond Yea in 1889, things needed changing.

Some of the more obscure refreshment locations, disappeared from the network quite early and some of the more larger stations were operating into the 1970s. With steam motive power

at the head of the train, when it was necessary to change or water locomotives (known as a drop on*), there was usually a refreshment room to attend to the needs of passengers, to distract them from the lack of progress on their journey and to coax a little coin from them on a drink, food or reading material.

Old refreshment rooms at Kerang

Lance Adams Collection



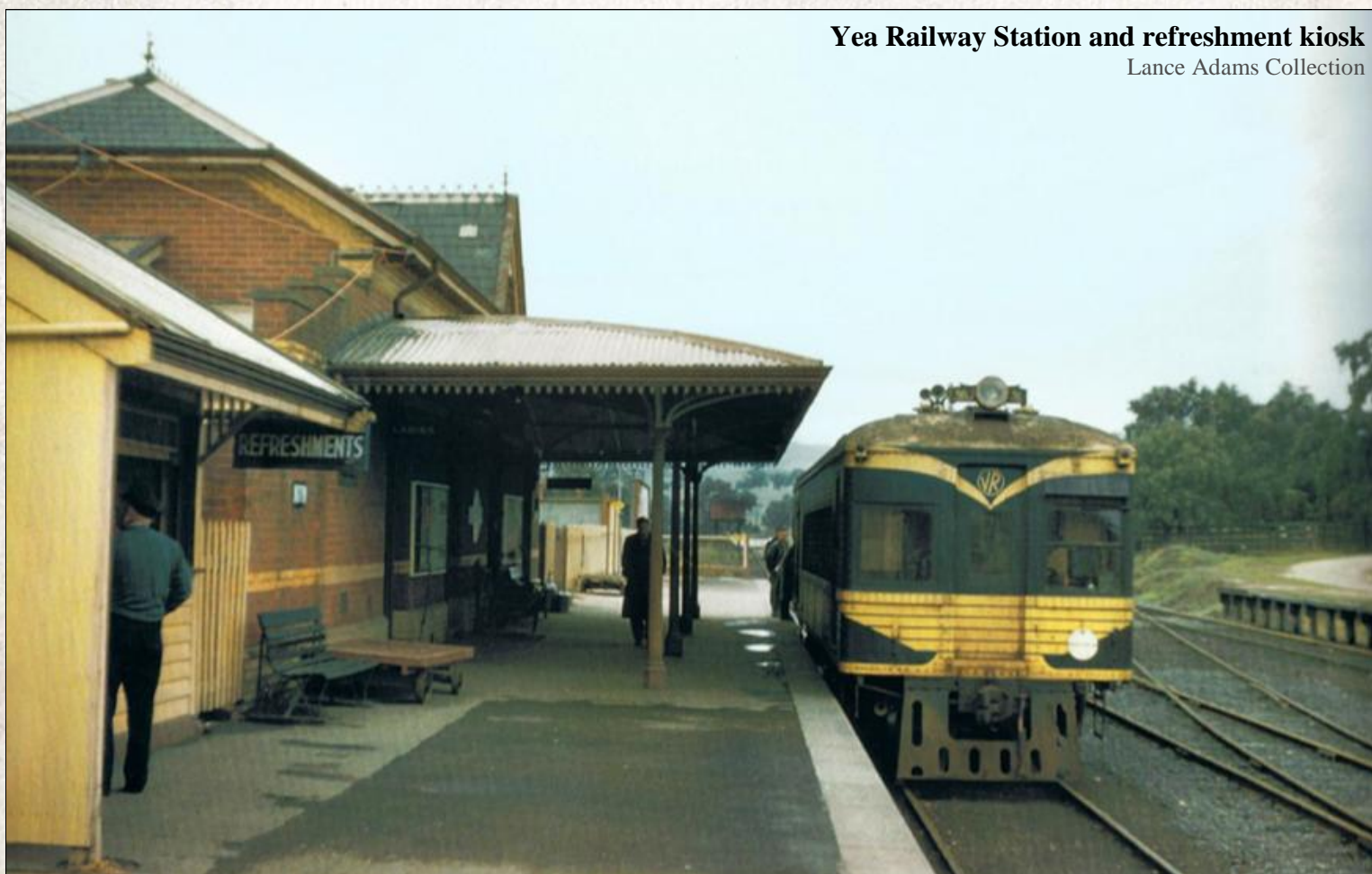
Serviceton Railway Station

Lance Adams Collection

On the Upper Goulburn branch to Yea, Alexandra and Mansfield, there was a refreshment kiosk at Yea. While locomotives were changed or were otherwise watered and coaled, passengers took the usual 20 minutes stop over to collect a well needed beverage and sandwich. Before the provision of a designated refreshment stall, passengers used to hurry over to the Commercial Railway Hotel in Yea (now the Peppercorn Hotel) opposite the station to fulfil their requirements. Seeing a need, around 1920 a purpose built refreshment Kiosk was provided on the Yea platform to provide customers with a vital service.

From the mid 1920s this kiosk/refreshment stall was run by a Miss Eadie Logan, who lived in a small house next to the Peppercorn Hotel in Station Street (where the Yea State School is today). In the mid 1940s the running of the kiosk passed to a Mrs May Bennett and her daughter Irene (an accomplished singer). Irene ended up the caretaker station mistress at Homewood while May's husband, Jack Bennett, became the senior Locomotive driver at Yea. When Jack retired in the early 1960s, the refreshment stall was closed as they couldn't find anyone willing to run it.

The usual procedure was to collect orders from 'through' passengers at Tallarook, and ring them through to Yea for everything to be ready upon their arrival. A similar procedure took place upon the return journey in the afternoon at Cathkin. If you think the 6 o'clock swill was bad, you should have seen these passengers go at it in 20 minutes. Slip off the train, race into the refreshment area, then slam down as much as you can in the allotted 20 minutes! Actual crockery and utensils were used and returned to Yea by the next train for cleaning and re-use.



Yea Railway Station and refreshment kiosk

Lance Adams Collection

When the Yea Locomotive shed was demolished in 1966, after the removal of steam-motive power from the line, the vacant building was used as an administration area and locker room for Yea's three resident locomotive crews, until they were also transferred to Seymour in February 1978. The building survives today and is serving refreshments on the former platform at the monthly market days or special events in the former station grounds.



The refreshment kiosk/stall at Yea in winter 2019

Lance Adams Collection



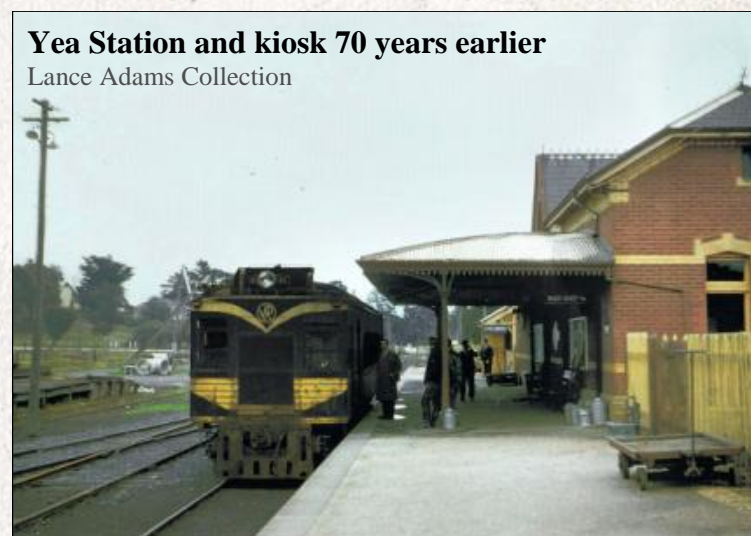
The refreshment kiosk/stall at Yea in winter 2019

Lance Adams Collection



The refreshment kiosk/stall at Yea in winter 2019

Lance Adams Collection



Yea Station and kiosk 70 years earlier

Lance Adams Collection

With modern day train travel, refreshments are provided by on-train catering and the requirement for refreshment stops along the journey are no longer required, as the need to water or change locomotives has been removed with the introduction of diesel-motive power.

I can vividly remember refreshment points at Warragul, Seymour, Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Korumburra, Wodonga, Camperdown, Colac, Nyora, Kerang, Korong Vale, Maryborough, Stony Point, Frankston and Footscray, operating well into the late 1960s and early 1970s. At their zenith, refreshment facilities existed at a lot of other locations, usually junction stations around the VR network. Some of these locations had liquor licences as well.

Some refreshment rooms served a full simple meal, and I used to partake in one of these meals (steak and kidney pie) when as a Yea crew, we would find ourselves in Seymour on a

Friday evening around 6.00 pm. Fifty cents was the going rate for this culinary delight. One rule applied to railwaymen on duty; that we were not to enter any premises where alcohol was being served.

In the early days, there was the famous railway coffee (made of milk), tea of course, and ham sandwiches. In the later years a railway meat pie was available, made at the railways own bakery at Lauren Street in Melbourne. The railway pie was absolutely delicious to eat!

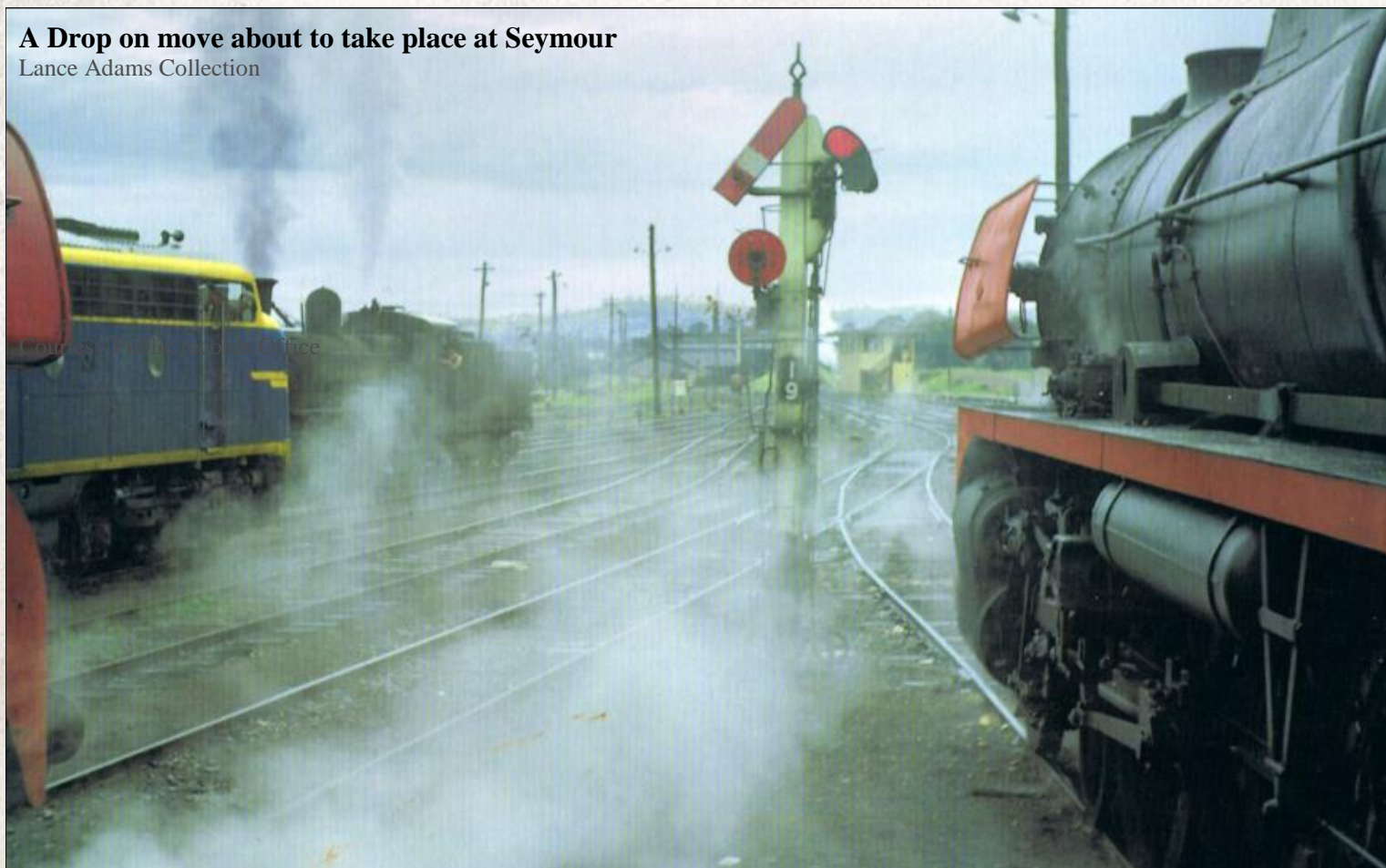
The railway refreshment rooms are now just a distant memory in a part of journeying around the State. It is remembered by many, but will sadly not be experienced by this generation.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman, Yea

* 'Drop on' is a railway term for the replacing of the engine that brought the train in, rather than delay the train further while the Locomotive was re-oiled, coaled and watered. On long journeys it may have been necessary to arrange a second subsequent drop on. It was a common move to drop on a fresh locomotive at Yea, for the journey to continue to Mansfield.

A Drop on move about to take place at Seymour

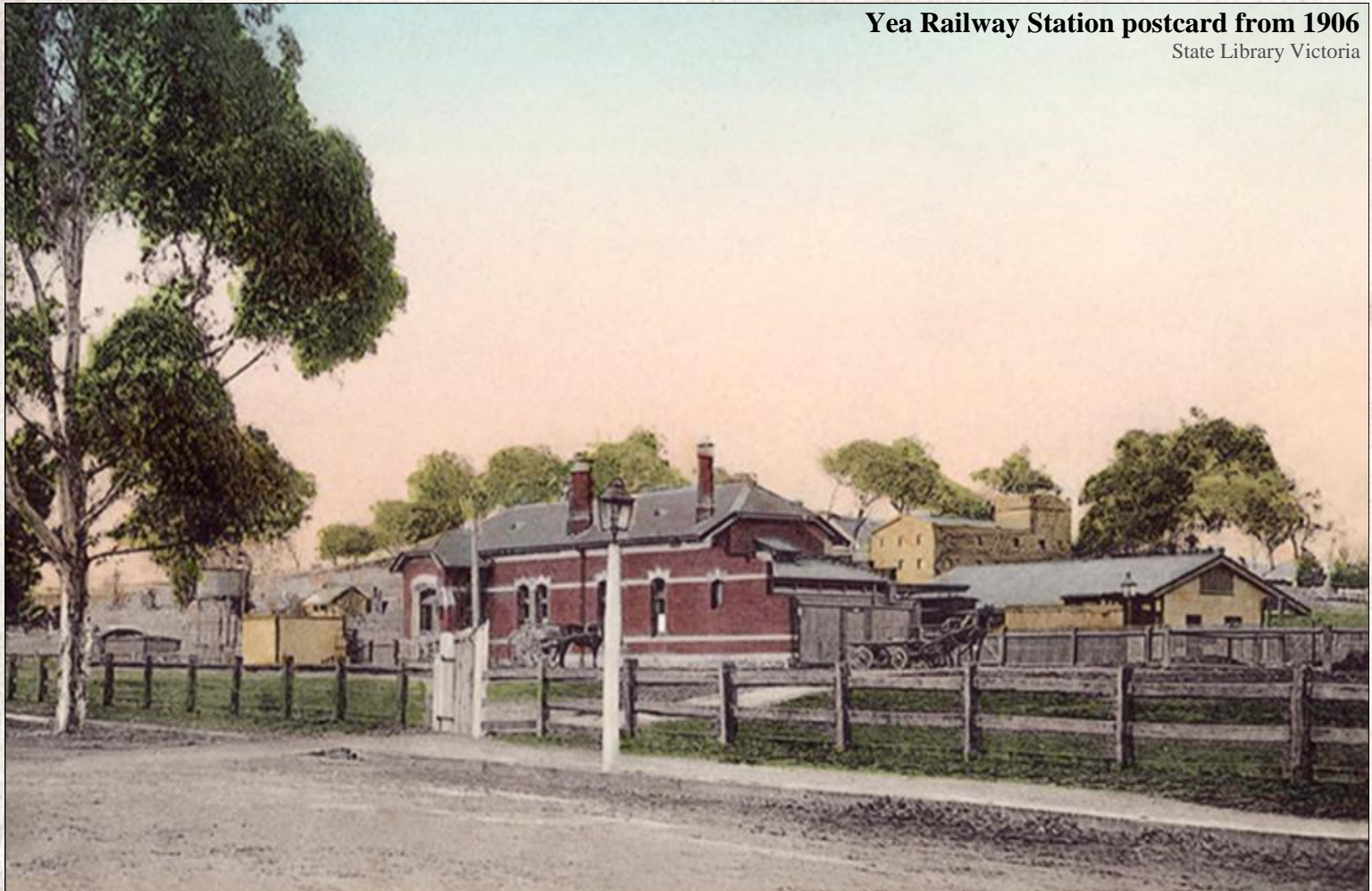
Lance Adams Collection



A TALE OF TWO STATIONS

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 14 AUGUST 2018



Yea Railway Station postcard from 1906

State Library Victoria

When the railway line reached Yea in 1883, the station building was two portable type buildings joined by a verandah. It was of a very basic construction identical to many others across the Victorian Railway. Around the time of the construction of the extension of the line from Yea–Mansfield in the late 1880s, an impressive gothic style building was constructed at Yea, which still stands sentinel today. This impressive station building was identical in design to that at Clifton Hill, on the Melbourne metropolitan system, and Maldon in Central Victoria. Both buildings survive to this day.

With a new station for Yea being built, its opening was to coincide with the opening of the line beyond Yea. The two portable type structures were knocked down, flat packed and transported to Mansfield by rail. These became the original station buildings there for the opening of the new line. These two temporary portable buildings remained in use at Mansfield until the current station building was constructed in 1923. They would have been relocated to another location for further use, but I am not aware of where they ended up. These type of structures were common, and found everywhere!

Lance Adams Collection



View of the original Mansfield portable style station around 1900. This was the former Yea building from 1883–89.

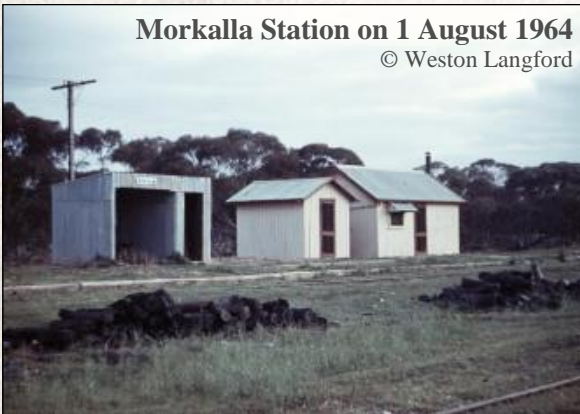
Lance Adams Collection



A photograph of the Mansfield Station in the mid 1920s.

Morkalla Station on 1 August 1964

© Weston Langford



A view of one of those noxious portables at Isolated Morkalla out from Redcliffs, near Mildura. The building was in use as overnight resting quarters for train crews. A night in one of these Spartan buildings was a memory to cherish for life. One such portable was situated on the extreme down end of the platform at Mansfield, used as overnight resting quarters for train crews. This structure was placed there in the late 1940s and wasn't actually too bad, considering. The possums that used to gather in the large pine tree above it, could give you plenty of sleepless nights.

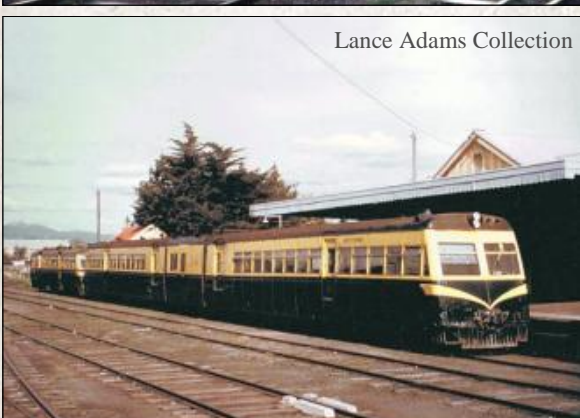
Mansfield on 26 September 1971

© Weston Langford



View of the Mansfield Station from the early 1970s.

Lance Adams Collection



View of the Mansfield portable captured in the 1970s.

THE LONGEST DAY

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 12 OCTOBER 2019

**D3 698 on the infamous pinch on
an Up Balranald goods in 1960**

© Alan Wilson



Many moons ago, while still a junior Fireman, I was sent to Echuca relieving and soon found myself rostered for the dreaded 1430 Friday only Balranald goods. The goods train to Balranald ran on a Friday and Moulamein on a Monday and Wednesday, while the railmotor ran on Monday afternoon with a DERM returning Wednesday, and Thursday returning Friday. The job was to sign on at 1400 and relieve the day shift pilot, which had made the train up and conducted train examination and run a 1430 Balranald goods to rest and return Monday morning at 0015.

With the train duly made up and examined, we blew out at precisely 1430. It was a scorching 114°F, with a high hot wind howling around us, as I put the final bank of coal to the back corners of my fire. Then the gates swung open and the signals somersaulted to proceed. There was also heightened activity from the housewives in the adjacent railway residences, with infants under their arms, they were retrieving washing from the clothes lines, before this black chariot of fire began to spew ash, cinders and rubbish everywhere.

Several huffs and chuffs had us heading towards the Murray River combined road rail bridge. In this bridge is a small short sharp pinch, and just as we neared this short sharp pinch an enormous gust of wind blew causing all the tarpaulins on the empty vehicles to billow up like the sails on an old sailing ship. The train came to an ungracious stop just yards from the infamous pinch.

With the driver frantically winding the wheel to reverse, three short whistles were sounded, cylinder cocks opened and a set back move was initiated.

This caused another frantic round of activity from the railway women, knowing that another onslaught of hot ash, cinders and debris was on the way, they were retrieving their clean washing they had just rehung, with angry looks and infants on their hips. We set back to the distant signal on the Bendigo line and then made a loud, fast assault on the River bridge over the Murray. With ash, smoke and dust flying everywhere and a deafening noise, I peered out of my violently shaking window to observe the protecting home signal for the hand gates that were towards the down end of the Echuca yard was at proceed. But the gates were closed across the railway! An emergency stop was made and the train was again in a similar position as to what it was originally sometime previous. Another set back move was initiated towards the distant signal on the Bendigo line, with the railway females making a third attempt at retrieving their washing, holding their little ones and stretching their necks to see who were the two incompetents on the engine causing all this commotion and extra work.

This time the move was successful and we eventually made it over the pinch and out on to the line to Moama around 1630. It's a heavy long drag, of the River flats of the Murray River up to Moama and onward to Barnes (what an isolated desolate place). We eventually got the wheels of 161 on to the border railway branch around 1715. A long seven hour slog in hot conditions saw us arrive at the Wakool tanks around 0030. I was just 17 and exhausted by this time. I sat under the tanks with water dripping over me, when the old driver I was rostered with put his arm around me and patted my sweat soaked cap and said 'never mind son, you're half way', and he was right. We continued on our way, shunting at the various wayside sidings and Burraboi which we seemed to move every truck in the yard three times each.

By around 0700 on the Saturday morning we were ready to depart Moulamein, heading for a 43.25 km, 15 mph (25 kmh) dash to Balranald. With things beginning to get warm again already, I was dead on my feet, trying to heave shovels full of black diamonds onto an insatiable fire. I was very hungry as I had run out of food several hours earlier I used to only carry food for a 12 hour shift.

The driver drew my attention to the silver shining silos in the distance across the Yanga salt flats and informed me that they were the Balranald wheat silos. I thought 'beauty we are here', but that was not the case as the line crosses the Yanga salt flats on a series of S curves, which were laid on the hardest pieces of salt. Kangaroos and emus paced the train around this salt lake and one minute the silos were visible on the Fireman's side, and then on the driver's

View of the then disused Balranald Station in 2002

Lance Adams Collection



side. I lost sight of these silos and then all of a sudden we were traversing a final long straight section, paralleled by a grove of Gum trees on the driver's side. I reached to pull down the pricker (fire iron) to push the fire forward, when the driver challenged me with 'What do you think you are going to do with that?'. He then told me to put it back where I got it from and to give the fire a light sprinkle of fresh coal all over. We then commenced to shunt and pace the yard, going over the pit and signing off at 1132 Saturday morning, 21 hours and 32 minutes after signing on the previous afternoon.

I collapsed in an exhausted heap in the barracks immediately, while the driver and guard walked the two miles (3.5 km) into the Balranald township where they got a skin full of the demon drink. I was woken by these two drunks returning about 1900. The sun was going down and I had run out of food in the early am of that morning.

I knew the town was two miles away, but I didn't know in which direction and the two men in the barracks with me were not in any fit condition to tell me. Hungry and thirsty I managed to get to sleep and when the pair of old geriatrics went back for another session on the Sunday morning, I made sure I went with them. We returned to Echuca on Monday morning at 0015 and arrived back into Echuca around 1500. Another 17 hour marathon shift. We had worked 38.5 actual hours in two shifts.

I made many more trips to Balranald over the years, as a fireman, loco' driver & railmotor driver, but this first one would have to be the worst. I look back on my Junior days, and consider the whole thing as a trial, while we were basically kids, we were doing a man's job in a man's world. Perform like a man and you were treated like a man. Act like a boy and you would be treated like one—or worse. I survived, but some did not.

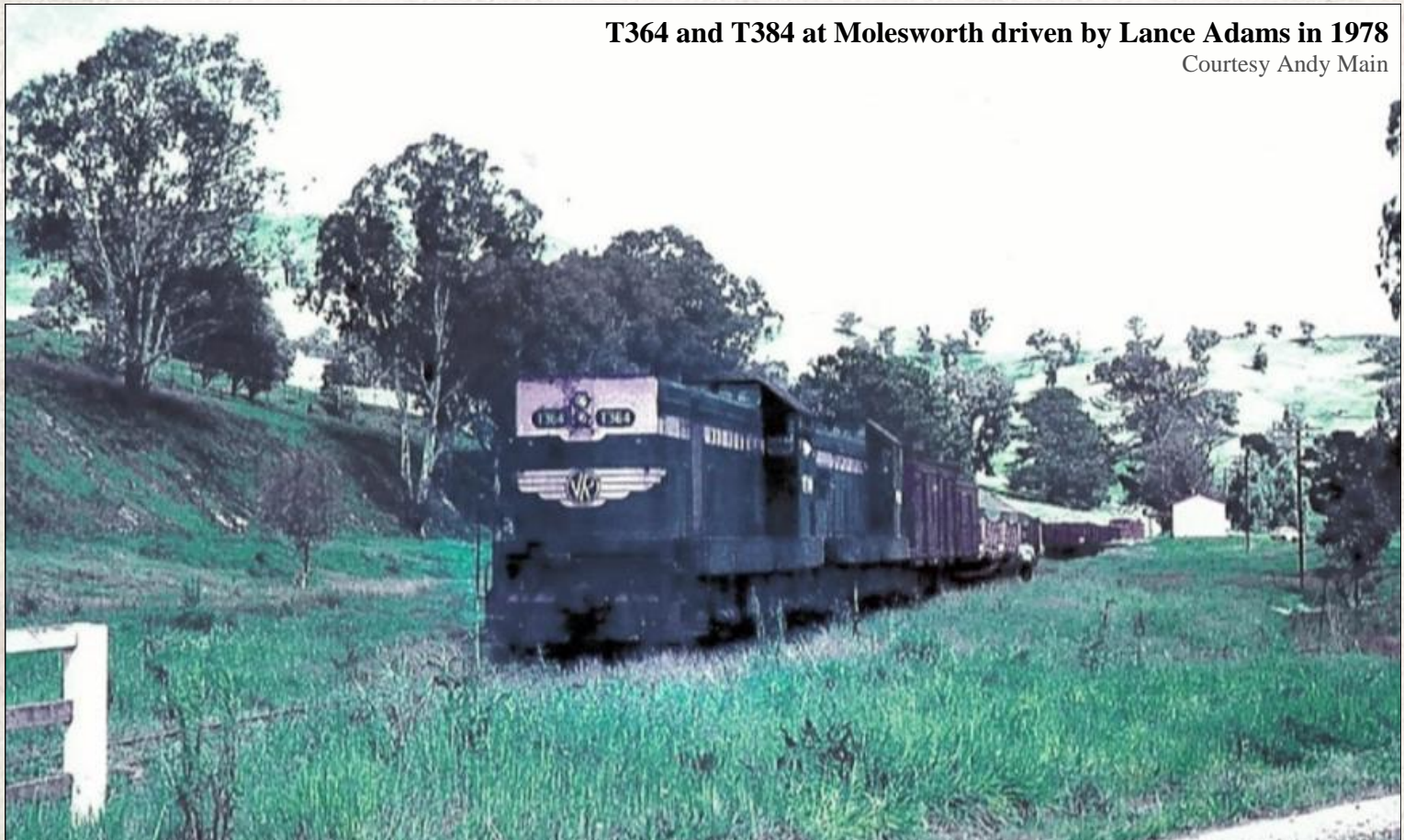
On 3 October 1978 I ran the longest train I ever ran on the Mansfield line, placing unwanted RY & IA vehicles at various stations, to be used as drop off bins for superphosphate after the lines closure. The train was 65 vehicles in length and the first time I saw the guards van, after departing Tallarook was at Flynn's Creek near the nine mile gatehouse.

The photograph (below) was captured by Andy at Molesworth during a shunt there, and was taken from the down end points and crossing. To the best of my memory of the day, we stayed overnight in Mansfield and returned as a double-headed BONA the next day. The length of this train made it extremely difficult to run, especially on this slow speed line.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea

T364 and T384 at Molesworth driven by Lance Adams in 1978

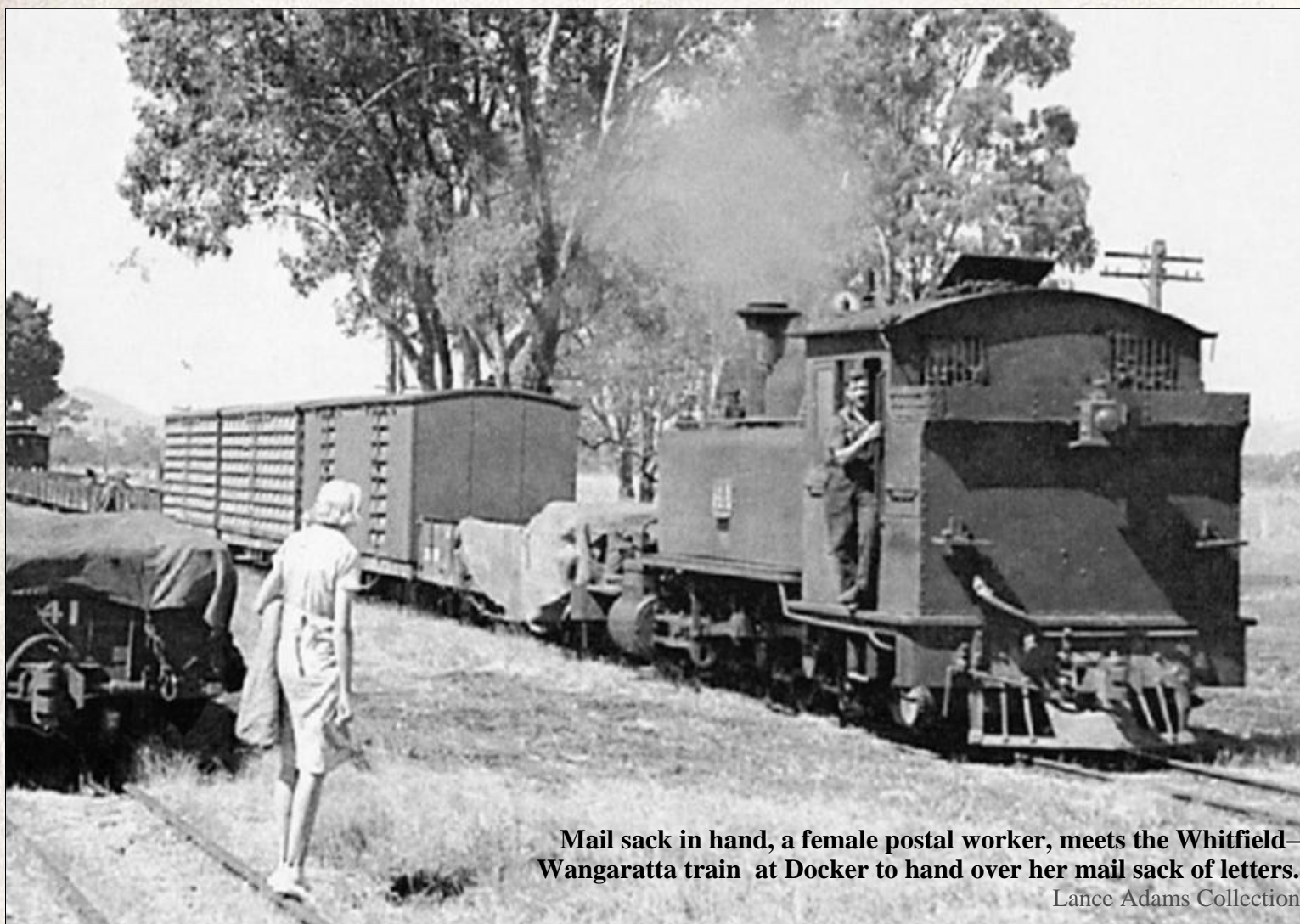
Courtesy Andy Main



GETTING A BIT NERVOUS ABOUT MAIL BAGS

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 27 MAY 2018

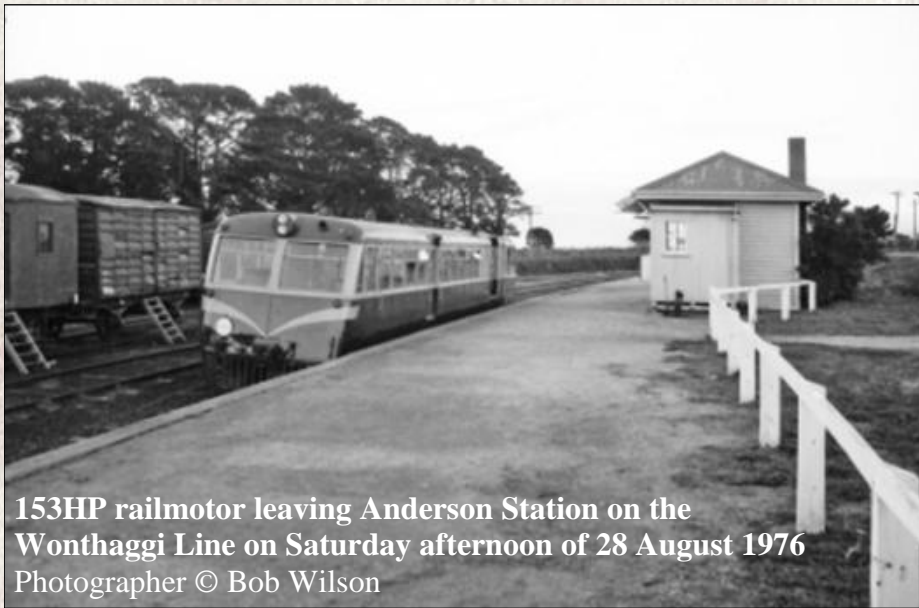


Mail sack in hand, a female postal worker, meets the Whitfield–Wangaratta train at Docker to hand over her mail sack of letters.

Lance Adams Collection

I was running the 4.10 pm Up Wonthaggi 153HP Walker railmotor from Wonthaggi one afternoon in the mid 1970s when this incident took place.

This Wonthaggi service regularly operated one man (driver only) with the driver performing the duties of a traffic guard. This service carried the PMG (Australia Post) mail on it, and this entailed the filling in of a large yellow list of items picked up and put out. Very complicated and together with the other railway related paperwork in "running sheets" etc it was just a little over the top for me, so I didn't bother with it. I don't know if the other drivers did it either.



On this particular day, I received the mail bags from the postal employee and just threw them in the corner of the van area. He sheepishly looked at me, requesting to sign my mail consignment list. I brushed him off, and he insistently requested to sign my mail consignment sheet again. That is when he informed me that there was a large amount of cash money, about \$80,000, being conveyed in the mail bags present and we had better do it

right. I filled in the mail consignment list that afternoon and I did it right every other time thereafter.

I was very nervous all the way to Nyora, jumping at any sudden noise behind me within the engineroom. There was only a simple square key locked door, between the passenger section and the van area, and only a simple flimsy door, which I never locked between the engineroom and the van area. Somebody could gain access and be all over me before I would hear them over the din of the Gardiner engine as well as other banging and crashing.

I was present at the railmotor depot at Spencer Street some months later, when the Spirit Of Progress's mail van was robbed near Benalla and several sacks of cash were thrown off the train. This incident culminated in a shoot out with police in the mail transfer tunnels beneath Spencer Street Station in an area near the depot.

I wonder how many times large sums of money were transferred like this and I just didn't know.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea

TARNAGULLA APES

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 4 SEPTEMBER 2019

Lance Adams in front of a B Class engine at Yarram

Lance Adams Collection



During the wheat season of 1982, I was sent to the Central Victorian depot of Korong Vale as part of additional manpower to shift a bumper grain harvest. The usual four outstation crews had swelled to 16 crews, to accommodate the additional traffic.

On this particular morning, I was rostered to run an additional grain train from Korong Vale to Dunolly at 3 am with a B Class Locomotive. My assistant on this occasion was a young new start 17 year old trainee from Ballarat, probably away from home for the first time.

We rumbled out of Korong Vale right on the appointed time, struggling desperately to maintain alertness for that small hour of the morning. With several stations accounted for, our wheels

ventured on to the cross country goods link from Inglewood at a little bit before 4 am.

Around Tarnagulla, my young lad assistant let out an almighty scream, as a now irate and disturbed Koala fell on to the bullet nose of our growling B class. He was clutching on to the off side windscreen wiper for grim death, snarling and spreading saliva everywhere, before eventually toppling off the nose of the loco'.

My very terrified young assistant turned to me and asked ‘What was that’, to which I replied that it was ‘one of those ferocious Tarnagulla Apes, and that there were lots of them around here.’ I thought little more of the incident until a little further along the line when we blew a brake pipe hose on one of the vehicles. As was protocol, the driver must remain on the engine, so I got the 12 inch shifting spanner and deposited it on the floor, with instructions to the lad, to ‘go and find and fix the rupture’. The young lad, with terror in his eyes, looked at me and said. ‘I am not going out there, as there are Apes out there’. With implicit instructions not to leave the engine, under any circumstances, I ventured off to swap the ruptured flexible brake pipe.

Look out for Tarnagulla Apes if you’re ever up that way, and watch out for the level crossing at Tarnagulla, as it is the worst in the State by a long way. To venture across this crossing on a train, I used to close my eyes and open the throttle, then wait for the BANG!

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea



GOING UP IN A PUFF OF SMOKE

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 1 NOVEMBER 2019



Courtesy
Bernard Hermant

During my junior firing days in Bendigo, I was usually assigned to menial firing jobs with junior drivers. On this occasion I was given a senior job, with a senior driver to cover a short notice sick relief.

The job I was allocated, required me to be the fireman on the 7.00 am morning express to Melbourne, returning with the afternoon (1.30 pm) train to Bendigo. I was over the moon at getting my first attempt at something more challenging. The driver I was rostered with was one of the senior driver's in the depot, and a notorious show pony, with a huge, well groomed handle bar mustachio. He was renowned for putting on a show for anyone that cared to look.

The day dawned, a 40 degree scorcher. I presented at the appointed time of 5.35 am, read the engine allocation board and it informed me that we had been assigned an R class steam locomotive for the task. We went about preparing the engine for service and had the engine on the train and train examination completed, waiting for 7.00 am to come around, with me building a good fire base.

Right on departure time we set off, with a blazing sun already beaming down quite a bit of heat. Frank always had two black Russian cigars for the trip to Melbourne. The first he puffed on as he put on quite a show departing Bendigo, wave to the boys in the passenger carriage sheds, wave to the boys at the engine depot, and wave to the boys on the A box pilot. Then it was two hours and 25 minutes of pandemonium, when he would light up his second small cigar, which he had slid into the pencil pocket of his overalls upon our departure from Bendigo.

Somewhere around North Melbourne, he put his feet up on the reversing wheel and took out and lit his second beloved cigar, all the while trying to look cool, calm and collected, after having a pleasant leisurely trip down from Bendigo. Wave to the signalman at North Melbourne, wave to whoever might be watching on the North Melbourne platform, wave to



the boys on the No 1 bank pilot, wave to the signalman in No 1 box, and wave to the yard master in his cabin. Arrival at Spencer Street at 9.25 am. What a trip. Keeping up steam for this driver was no mean feat for a young lad still in the throws of learning the secrets and mysteries of the steam locomotive, albeit with the aid of a standard B mechanical stoker.

We eventually arrived at the North Melbourne depot and had some free time for a sandwich. With the day getting progressively hotter, it was now up to around 45 degrees and rising, we ventured out of door B at the North Melbourne loco depot (the exit road) and headed across to Spencer Street in readiness for the 1.30 pm return working, this time with a different R class steam locomotive.

With train examination completed, we departed Spencer Street precisely on time. Frank pulled out one of his renowned black Russian cigars and lit it, and slid the other into his overall's pencil pocket. With Black Russian cigar in mouth he proceeded to wave at the boys at the rail motor depot, wave to the signalman at Franklin Street signal box, wave to the boys at North Melbourne loco' depot and wave to anybody who cared to look at the North Melbourne platform, throw the remaining cigar into the roaring inferno in the firebox of 724 and hang on here we go.

By the time we had ascended the great divide between Macedon and Woodend things were not going to Frank's satisfaction and he gestured at me to cross the cab and that he would take over the firing side of things, in attempt to get the vital steam and water back to where he wanted them. He was the man in charge, as far as I was concerned I had things where I wanted them, but he was the experienced man, I was still learning the craft. Perhaps he just felt the oppressive weather conditions might be a little too much for a green lad.

Around the Golden Square vicinity, we swapped back on to our respective side of the locomotive and he slipped out his sole remaining Black Russian cigar and put it in his mouth and lit it, in readiness for his pending arrival into Bendigo. The cigar instantly combusted itself entirely, setting fire to his lovely handle bar moustache. I immediately sprung to my feet, throwing a Billy of fresh water at the flaming hair on his face, accelerated by waxing. He was upset with me, and accusing me of doing something to interfere with his cigar. He was trying to strangle me, and I was attempting to get to the A6 brake handle.

With burns to half of his face, and half a moustache we un-ceremonially arrived into Bendigo not wanting to wave at anyone. I never fired for this driver again, and I bumped into him at a re-union day some years later and he still blamed me for tampering with his precious cigar. I don't know when or where he thought I had the opportunity to do so, if even I had thought of it. I think that the cigar must have absorbed massive amounts of heat from the incandescent fire over several hours and just exploded and disintegrated when lit.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea

KNIGHTS OF THE IRON HORSE

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 8 NOVEMBER 2019

Euroa, Railway Station



Euroa Station Postcard
State Library Victoria

Due to a staff shortage in Seymour because of additional traffic, I was brought over from Yea to Seymour Loco depot for a single night's rostering on a Friday evening. The job I was allocated was to be the Fireman on the evening passenger express from Seymour towards Benalla, changing over with an evening goods train back to Seymour.

The quick trip to Benalla went without anything out of the ordinary happening, and we met our return working at Baddaginnie, and commenced our return journey around 9.30 pm. We arrived at Euroa around 11.00 pm where we were required to pick up several vehicles to add to our growing train.

It was during this shunting movement, that two teenage girls appeared on the Euroa platform, seeking a train to get to Avenel which was a few stations up the line.

With no passenger train scheduled until the morning, our ramshackle goods train appeared quite attractive. As it turned out, they had been in the company of several local Avenel lads, who after driving them to Euroa on some flight of fancy, had abandoned these young lasses in a foreign town. They had heard the sounds of trains at the station and followed those unmistakable sounds until they arrived at the station. The guard of the train refused to allow them to travel in the guards van of the train, as they were too young to sign an Indemnity 'TR 88' form. That just left one option, the footplate of a living, breathing dinosaur chariot of fire, which was completely unsuitable for two young ladies that were not suitably attired for such an experience. Surprisingly my driver agreed to have them on the engine and convey them back to the safety of Avenel.

I duly ushered the first girl with totally the wrong footwear for a trip on a bouncing, bucking footplate, into the Fireman's seat and gestured for the second lass, with slightly better footwear, to stand in the gang way on the soon to be bouncing and banging flap plate between engine and tender, with specific instructions to keep both feet on the flap, if she didn't want to have any broken toes. Both young ladies were given clear instructions to keep clear of me when it came to swinging the shovel.

Around 11.45 pm on quite a cold evening, we headed out of Euroa, putting on quite an effort to get our train rolling again. With the night sky being lit up by the glow of our fire and steam swirling around the cab area, our two passengers were scared out of their senses. They did not enjoy their experience in the slightest.

Dropping off the Monea Hill, the lights of Avenel came into view and to the two lasses came a sense of relief that their ordeal by fire and steam was over. They were stunned that we did this every day, and wanted to know how and why.

Looking back on the incident, the driver probably had teenage daughters himself, so felt for their predicament. I will bet any money these two young lasses, now probably grandmothers, would never have forgotten their brush with 'Knights of the Iron Horse' and the fire breathing dinosaur.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea

TRAVELLING TO THE END OF THE LINE

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN
© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 14 JULY 2019

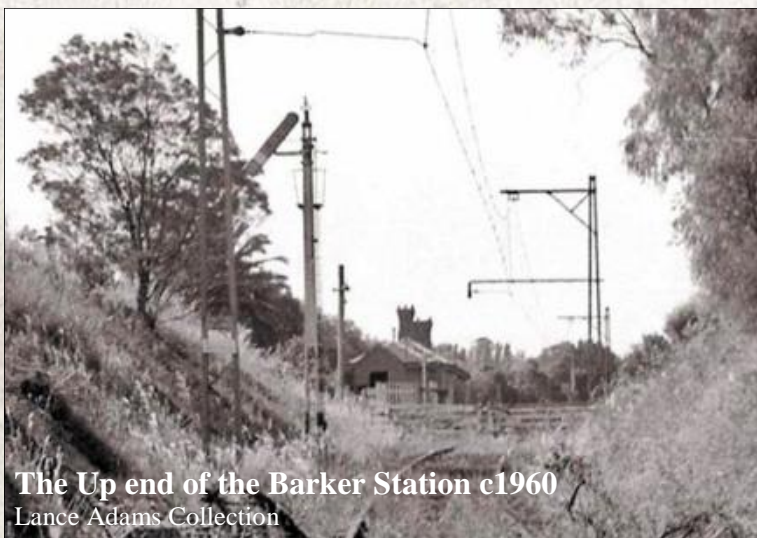
Around the expansive metropolis of Melbourne are scattered the remaining signs of various relics of Melbourne's lost railways, which are namely:

The outer circle a folly constructed in 1888, which ran from Fairfield on the Hurstbridge line to Oakleigh on the Dandenong line, abandoned and closed as early as 1897, with only a small section operational to this day, from Camberwell to Alamein. Remnants of this construction folly litter the Eastern landscape with the former railway now a walking trail. Another piece of the former outer circle from Riversdale to East Kew (Balwyn) was used up to the 1940s when it too was abandoned.



A later day snap at the Alamein terminus
Lance Adams Collection

The Rosstown Railway, which ran from Oakleigh on the Dandenong line to Elsternwick on the Sandringham line, was another construction folly. It was built in the 1880s by private speculator and politician Thomas Bent. The railways ran an inspection tour train across this railway and travelled on the only train to run on this line on 14 November 1888, to inspect the line in consideration of its purchase. After traversing the line in one direction from Elsternwick–Oakleigh, the dignitaries had lunch at an Oakleigh Hotel, travelled back to Melbourne, and decided not to purchase this rag tag railway. The line was not used again. It too is now retained as parkland with a number of telltale leftovers still locatable in those Southern suburbs it traversed. I have never seen a photo of a train on this section of line.

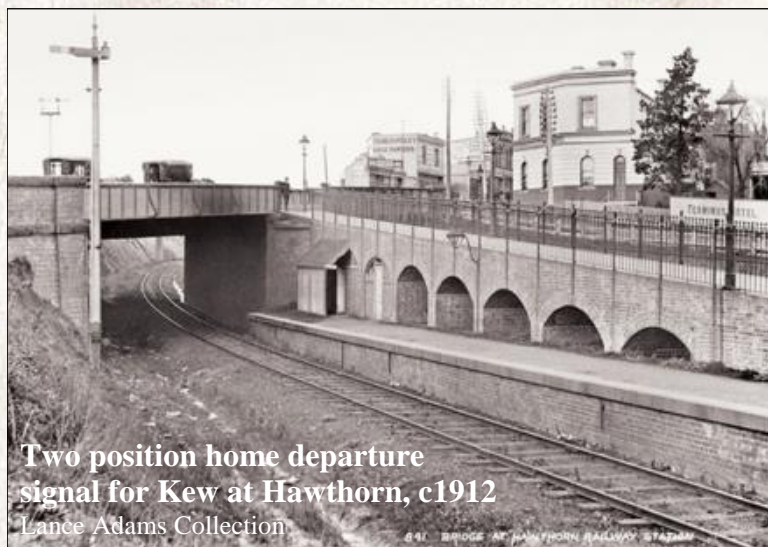


The Up end of the Barker Station c1960
Lance Adams Collection

The Kew Railway which ran the short distance from Hawthorn–Kew, with one intermediate station at Barker. This line operated and lasted into the late 1950s. As a young person, I grew up in the Camberwell area and we regularly used the train to visit my great grandmother, who resided in Kew. When passenger services had finished, but goods trains carrying domestic fuel supplies

still ran three days per week, my brother and I would often head to the station to watch the little E Class electric loco's (aka black loco's) shunt. The last train I can recall on the Kew line, was a dismantling train, hauled by a J class steam locomotive on the portion of line immediately behind the Glenferrie oval. The track there, which was not removed, but was just buried in the deep cutting.

The California Motel now occupies the former site of the Barker Station. Prior to electrification in 1922, when steam hauled suburban trains were operating on the Kew line, it was operated by 2 M Class loco's in a push pull arrangement, with two Firemen, one on each loco' and one driver who changed ends. The 1 M Class was based at Kew, while the other M Class was based at Burnley. When the line was electrified, it was operated solely out of Hawthorn.



Two position home departure signal for Kew at Hawthorn, c1912
Lance Adams Collection

Graham Station c1950

Lance Adams Collection



Graham to Princes Pier this short branch line veered off the Port Melbourne line via the back roads at Graham, with possibly a back platform there at its zenith, ran through scrubby terrain through the Swallow Street hand gates and via left hand curve into Princes, which boasted an impressive imposing Interlocked signalbox in its day. In the time I worked over the line, it had been relegated to a single line, de-electrified, and serviced by the Port Melbourne pilot engine (yard shunter)

The Princes Pier line was to the rear of the Down side station building. The Port Melbourne line was converted to a light rail system in the 1980s and the former Port Melbourne goods yard and the area around Swallow Street has been totally redeveloped.

While the Port Melbourne line is being discussed here, we had better mention both the St Kilda and Port Melbourne branch lines, which were both converted to light



The 'Boat Train' at Princes Pier c1925
Lance Adams Collection

rail in the 1980s, but with much former railway infrastructure still on them both.

There was no regular train service to Princes Pier, but a special Tait train with illuminated roof signage operated to connect with arriving International passenger ships as required. This train was called the 'Boat Train'.

Macleod to Mont Park was another short branch which ran off the Hurstbridge line at Macleod, and ran to the Mont Park mental institution. This line had some very steep gradients, with the early tests on L Class main line electric locomotive dynamic brakes being conducted over this line. Errant children released the hand brakes on some goods vehicles in the Mont Park yard, resulting in a number of vehicles rolling away, up to considerable speed, until they derailed and wrapped themselves around an overhead power stanchion, in the Macleod yard.

Train services on the line from its inception, were by steam hauled switch trains to and from Heidelberg and early photographs clearly show an engine shed there, however it seems extremely unlikely that an engine crew and a locomotive would be stationed there, as it would be more logical to use the Heidelberg crew and engine. Electrification was installed in the 1920s, and the train services were then provided by the Hurstbridge ABM car, which hauled the few goods vehicles offering. The line ceased operation in the late 1950s.

Note on the Mont Park photograph the overhead stanchions in the yard, and a clearly visible locomotive shed. This photo I estimate to be around 1925.

The Inner Circle railway which ran from Royal Park to Rushall (Northcote loop junction) with a



Port Melbourne A signal post
Lance Adams Collection



Dog Box train at St Kilda
Lance Adams Collection



Passengers waiting on the Mont Park platform c1915
Lance Adams Collection



Mont Park around the time of electrification c1925
Lance Adams Collection

separate branch line to Fitzroy. This line ran through deep cuttings and overhead bridges through the top end of Melbourne. All trains going to Whittlesea ventured out via this route as well as all locomotive hauled goods trains. The direct connection that exists today from Rushall to Merri wasn't installed until quite late as an after thought.

This line was electrified in the early 1920s, with electric suburban services withdrawn in the late 1940s. Goods trains however still traversed the line up until the 1980s en route to Fitzroy. In the 1880s a suburban shuttle train was operating on the Fitzroy line. I have had a number of runs as a driver over this historic line, including two trips to Fitzroy on DERMs. It was talked about re-commissioning this line in the 1960s for suburban football traffic at Princes Park as the North Carlton Station is situated to the side of the arena. However, nothing ever eventuated of this proposal.

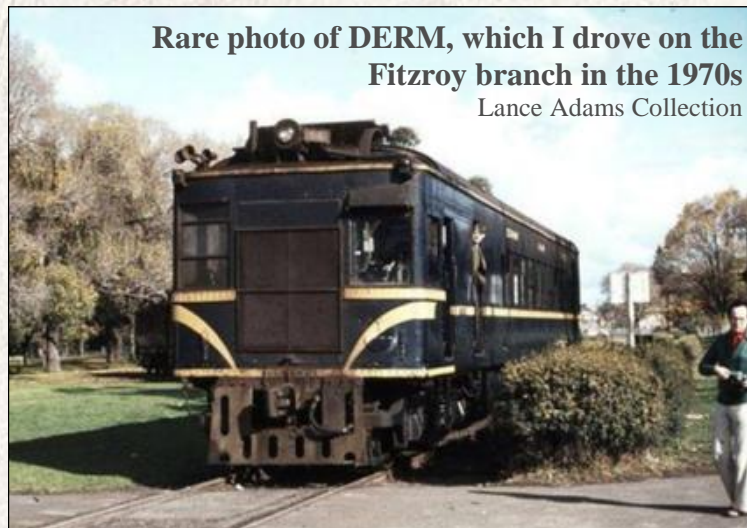
North Fitzroy Station c1970

Lance Adams Collection

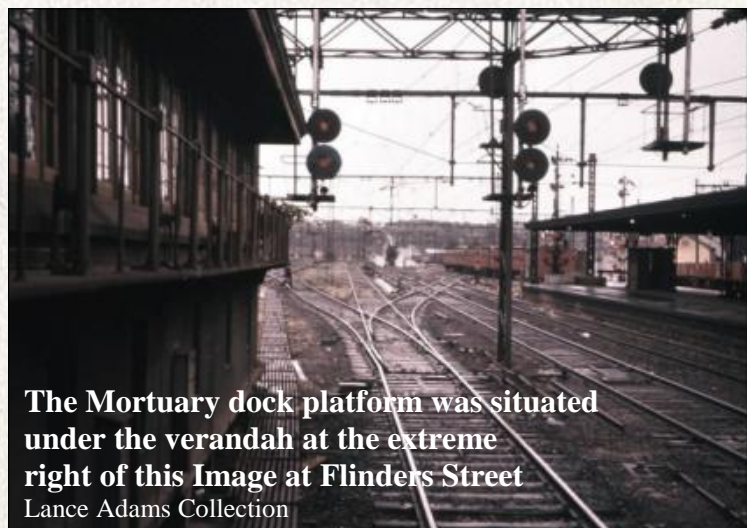


While much has been written on the previous mentioned lines, there is a final line that not much has been written about, that few people are aware of. This is the **Springvale cemetery line** to the Lawn Cemetery at Springvale. Other cities though out the world had a rail link to a cemetery, so Melbourne did not want to be left behind. Sydney, had a designated mortuary station, which is still standing at Central station to this day. Melbourne had a designated platform situated

Rare photo of DERM, which I drove on the Fitzroy branch in the 1970s
Lance Adams Collection



The Fitzroy branch went right through the Fitzroy Botanical Gardens and was very picturesque. When electric suburban trains operated on the line, they would run out of Princes Bridge Station and terminate at North Carlton, with only three trains per day making the complete circuit back to Flinders Street. Because these trains were now facing the incorrect way, they immediately made the return journey back to Princes Bridge via North Carlton and North Fitzroy.

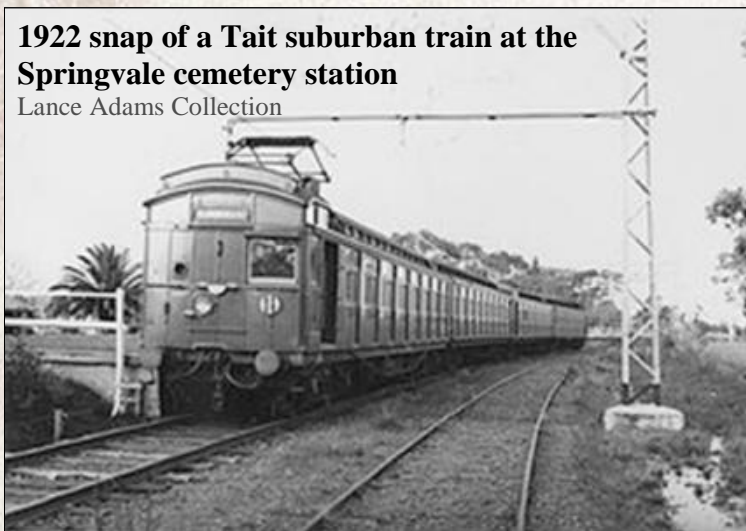


The Mortuary dock platform was situated under the verandah at the extreme right of this Image at Flinders Street
Lance Adams Collection

between platforms 10 and 11 East, known as the 'Mortuary Dock', with that name being used by railwaymen well into modern times. This dock road/siding was being used to stable black locos' for years, but was removed in recent times when Federation Square was constructed.

1922 snap of a Tait suburban train at the Springvale cemetery station

Lance Adams Collection



The line was constructed in 1904 and was 1.87 km long, terminating at a purpose built Necropolis Station for the cemetery. No trace can be found of that station today. Trains were initially steam hauled, carrying coffins in purpose built Coffin cars as shown left.

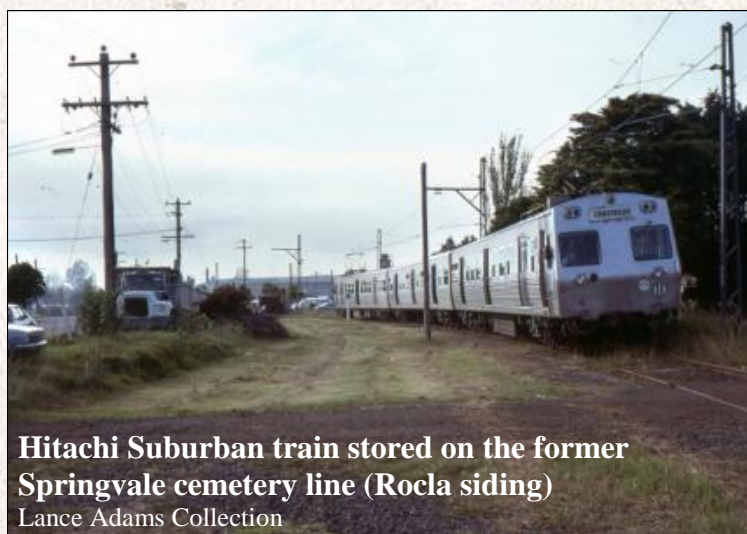
This historic vehicle is on display at the Fawkner Cemetery to this day, but it did not convey any coffins to this location. When the line was electrified in 1922, these vehicles were fitted with through train cable

equipment to allow them to be Marshalled between the Tait motor cars. Electric trains were time tabled to run on Sundays only, and on other days as required. The last train ran on the line in 1947, with the line being officially closed in 1951. Remnants of the line were used as a concrete pipe siding by Rocla Pipes for years, as well as the former line being used to stable electric trains when not in service.

Note that there is a No 2 track visible in the image above, which was a throw back to the steam suburban days. A 1940's diagram of this location does not show this.

A general map showing the route of the line is shown on the following page.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea

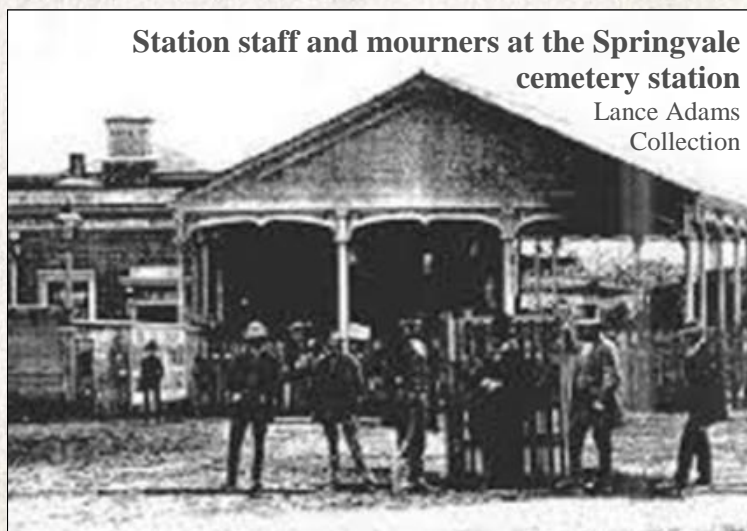


Hitachi Suburban train stored on the former Springvale cemetery line (Rocla siding)

Lance Adams Collection

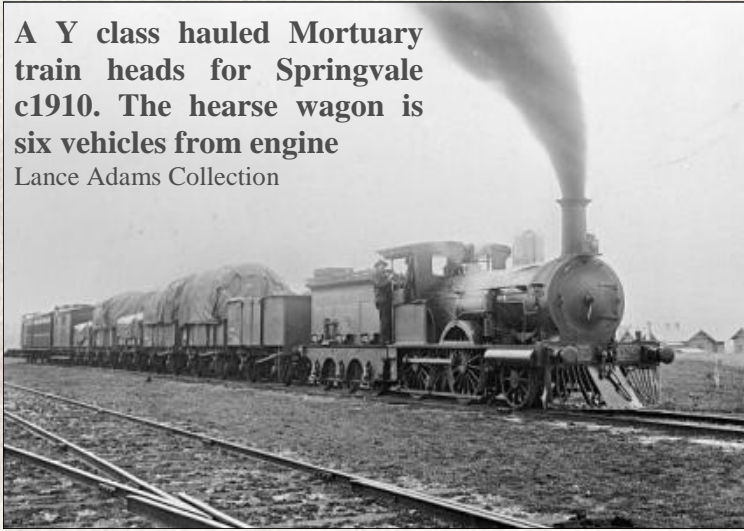
Station staff and mourners at the Springvale cemetery station

Lance Adams
Collection

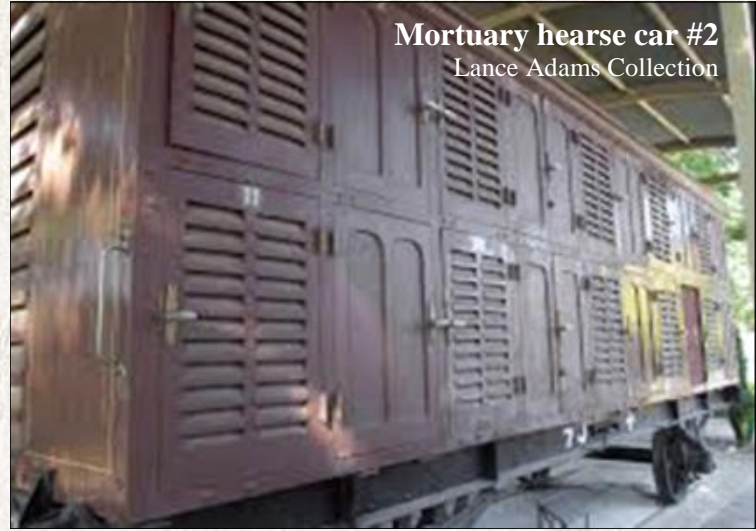


A Y class hauled Mortuary train heads for Springvale c1910. The hearse wagon is six vehicles from engine

Lance Adams Collection



Mortuary hearse car #2
Lance Adams Collection

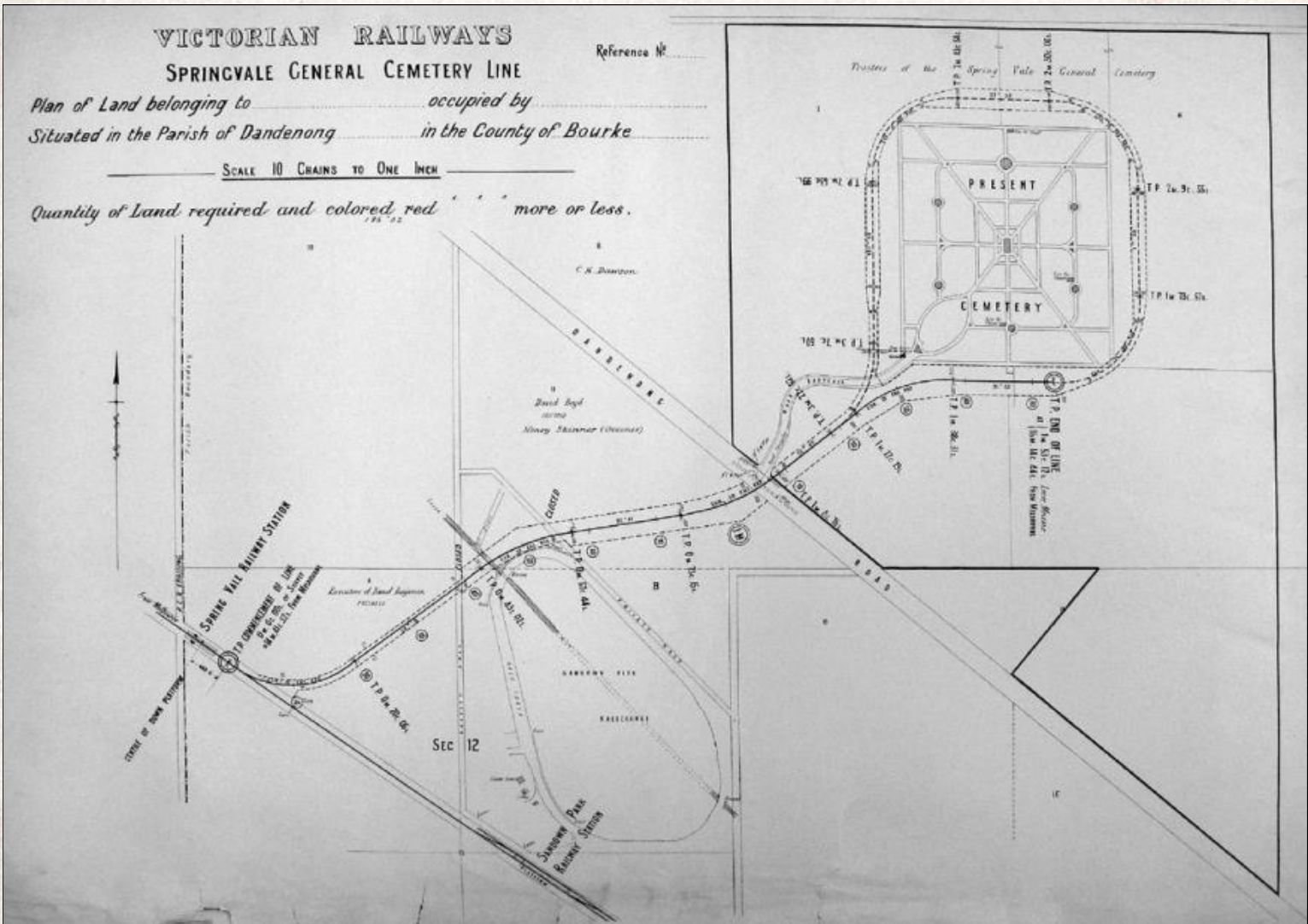


VICTORIAN RAILWAYS SPRINGVALE GENERAL CEMETERY LINE

Plan of Land belonging to _____ occupied by _____
Situating in the Parish of Dandenong _____ in the County of Bourke

SCALE 10 CHAINS TO ONE INCH

Quantity of Land required and colored red _____ more or less.



A general map showing the route of the line.

Lance Adams Collection

RED FLAGS DON'T STOP TRAINS

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 19 NOVEMBER 2019



Manor Station and signal
box on the Geelong line
Lance Adams Collection

From time to time, temporary re-deployment of staff to other locations was necessary. One Easter I found myself in such a position, and ended up firing at the North Melbourne depot.

The rostering section were not sure exactly what to do with me, so they decided to pair me up with a well known notoriously bad tempered driver named George Fosdyke. Most of the regularly Melbourne based firemen, would give George a wide berth. But I drew the short straw!

On the Easter Saturday of this particular year, George and I were rostered for a Geelong Football Special Ex Victoria Park. We were allocated R 712 for the task. During preparation of the engine for service, the trouble card from the previous crew, reported a defective Flaman speed recorder. We were instructed to take the locomotive regardless.

The job entailed running empty cars ex Spencer Street to Victoria Park, via Royal Park, North Carlton and the Inner circle line—to pick up those feral Collingwood supporters at Victoria Park Station and transport them to South Geelong for the football game.

All went well till around the Werribee–Manor region where we were really moving and bouncing along. I happened to catch a glimpse of the speed recorder, inconveniently located on George's side of the cab. It indicated a speed in excess of the maximum permitted 70 kmh. I became quite excited at this time, trying to attract George's attention to this fact that the speed recorder had sprung into action. His only response was to point back at the train, and screamed out that they were only Collingwood supporters! George just covered the speed recorder with a cloth, sat back in his seat, and wound it out some more. We were going even faster now. With everything crashing and banging around us, I just wedged myself in my corner and tried to hang on.

Approaching Manor, all the necessary two position fixed signals were at proceed, as we proceeded at a breakneck speed. We were really chewing up the miles.

Just as we approached the tiny—in the middle of nowhere—Manor signalbox, the signalman appeared from the signalbox casually holding a red flag. As we hurtled through the tiny wayside, nothing station, George just slid open his window and shouted out 'Red flags don't stop trains' and kept on steaming harder.

The Geelong Main Line was single line in that era, and with us really moving down the line, I was terrified as to what might be coming towards us. Again I struggled to my feet, and brought Georges attention to the errant signalman's flag efforts.

George just looked at me and said, 'I told you before, it doesn't matter, they're only Collingwood supporters' as he pointed back at the train. I pointed out that I was only 18 and I mattered. As I sat in my seat, I was mortified for the rest of the journey to South Geelong.

I don't know to this day, what that signalman was trying to convey to us, but the correct way to get us to stop, was to have the signals at danger, not proceed.

Nothing eventuated from this incident, but as a driver, I would have made an emergency brake application. As a foreman, I was not in a position to do so. A mutiny on the footplate would not go over well with old George.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea

IT BE MORKALLA

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 22 JANUARY 2020



N405 at Morkalla on the 7.00 am monthly train to Redcliffs

Lance Adams Collection

Over my years meandering around the Victorian Railway network, just trying to survive and make a living, I ended up in some quite remote, isolated places, namely Kulwin, Kooloonong and Balranald. But the most desolate hell hole would have to have been Morkalla.

What desolation! In the wheat season trains would run out there Monday, Wednesday and Friday, dropping off empty wagons, and return Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. This necessitated an overnight stay in spartan type conditions, at the tiny rail head (no town) of Morkalla. The barracks had no running water, electricity or hot water.

Away from the wheat season, the nothing-station was graced with accommodating one train a month. Miss that and you had a lengthy wait for the next one. Any items you wanted for your overnight stay in the wilderness had to be brought out with you on the train. Beer was always procured from the Werrimul pub on the way through that town, and kept in a cool state by

placing the precious amber liquid into the 'T' ice cooled wagon, that always made the complete journey to Morkalla, whether it was required or not. The beer was essential to try and get some sleep without being carried off by some of the local mosquitoes, which were the size of a small aeroplane and made a similar buzzing sound.

Sorting through my collection of things, I came across this old poem about this hell hole, and sat looking at it, thinking why would anyone bother to pen it. Morkalla was 403 rail miles from Melbourne, which was the furthest rail point you could travel to on the VR.

I have not been back to Morkalla or the Millewa District for more than 50 years, and I have no intention to re-visit it.

But allowing for my little rant, I do want to share the historic, epic poem with you, penned by railwayman and part-time poet Sean Kelly, who obviously had precious little to do. Perhaps he endured a long wait at Morkalla for the monthly train.

Desolation

Beyond the city lights,
Beyond the dizzy heights
There lays a most desolate place
It be Morkalla

Beyond the stars afar
Beyond a working bar
There lies a railway deeply un remunerative
It be Morkalla.

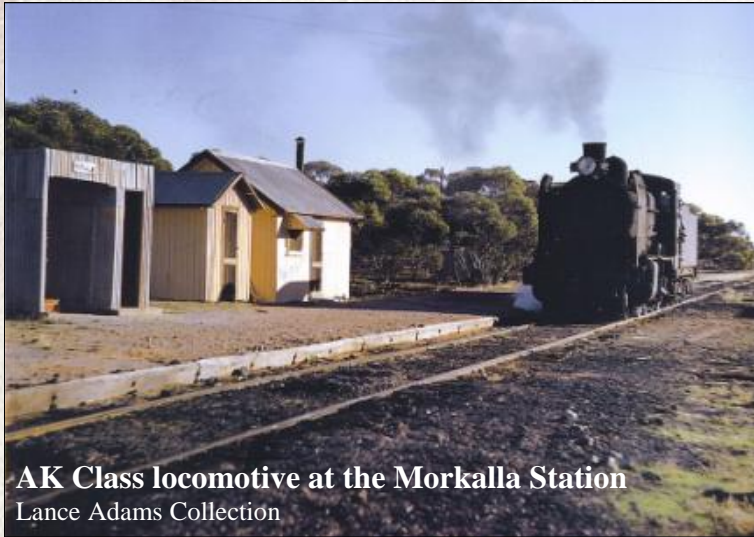
Beyond the 80 lb rail
Beyond the delivery of daily mail
There is a railway laid on ash, limestone and sand
It be Morkalla.

Beyond the soldier settlement blocks
Beyond the ladies with their flowing locks
There be a railway in yellow Mallee lost
It be Morkalla.

Beyond the pounding main line,
Beyond the land of time
There was a railway, that ran once a month
It be Morkalla

Beyond the Collins Street niceties
Beyond abandonment in the swinging sixties
There be a mile post 403
It be Morkalla.

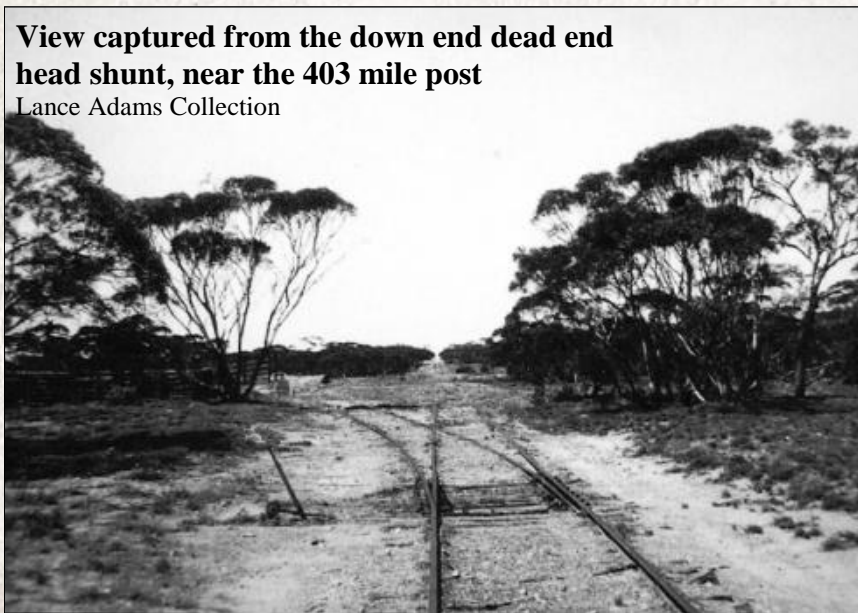
© *Sean Kelly*



AK Class locomotive at the Morkalla Station
Lance Adams Collection



The 403 mile post laying on its side at Morkalla
Lance Adams Collection



**View captured from the down end dead end
head shunt, near the 403 mile post**
Lance Adams Collection

Trips out to Yelta, beyond Merbein, were not much better, but at least you did not have to stay overnight. One consolation is that I will never have to endure another Spartan experience out there again.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea

MY BOOMERANG WON'T COME BACK

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 13 FEBRUARY 2020



Anna playing boomerang in Stockholm
Lance Adams Collection

In my junior trainee engineman's day (acting fireman), I chanced to end up in Wycheproof in North Central Victoria,. Here I got paired up with driver 'Bunny' Reid, running trains between Korong Vale and Kulwin.

Bunny had a very unique sporting talent, as he was the world's champion boomerang thrower. Under his expert guidance and tuition, I managed to gain confidence enough to regularly throw a boomerang.

On my regular annual jaunts to Sweden, I always took my be-loved boomerang along, which was always a big hit with the resident Swedes. On one occasion at Harga Parken in Stockholm, my boomerang was thrown and landed on top of a local building (known as the copper tent), and I could not get it down. It is probably still up there on the roof!

On another occasion whilst throwing one here in Yea with a visiting Viking, the boomerang returned all right, and landed on top of our heads.

This snap, shows Viking Anna about to throw and lose my lovely boomerang in Stockholm. 'Bunny' would have been disgusted with this effort.

Bunny Reid can be seen below in a five minute documentary where he is introduced before showing the audience how he makes and throws his boomerangs. Members of his family are also shown in this informative and historical video.

Today Bunny's daughter Leanne and her son Jeremy make boomerangs at their factory and showroom in Bendigo, Victoria. Their family boomerang business now represents three generations of boomerang makers and throwers. You can visit their website (below) for more history, a product list with prices, and to partake in courses.

www.boomerangsales.com

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea



MAD MAX

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 15 FEBRUARY 2020

Lance Adams (left) and trainee on S305

Lance Adams Collection



After the closure of the Yea branch in November 1978, I found myself stationed in Seymour locomotive depot, and given the task of North East class Instructor for Locomotives, as well as an on the job trainer, providing practical driving tuition to trainee drivers.

On this particular morning I had a trainee who had been rostered to me, as well as the regular rostered driver (so if I found the trainee unsuitable, I would have someone to work with). We were rostered on the 1.50 am fast goods from Seymour to Melbourne—to return with the 8.34 am Albury express to Seymour.

The regular driver rostered with me this morning was the notorious Mad Max, who had a reputation of being a bad sleeper. If ever Max slept in and was late in attending work, even his wife reused to wake him up because of his violent behaviour when awoken. These stories had been related to us for years by the depot call boy (caller up), whenever he had the misfortune to be sent around there with a message (call).



We had made our way to around Kilmore East on a double ended 'B' class diesel electric loco', when Max boldly announced that he was heading back to the non driving end to try and get a few minutes of extra sleep. We bid Max farewell and had an uneventful journey to Melbourne.

We arrived into the Melbourne goods yard arrivals without event. This was an area where incoming trains terminated, their loco's cut off, and the loco's moved ahead so they could proceed on a certain track. This would lead the loco in the opposite direction and to the loco depot for servicing. After detaching from our long goods train on this day, we drew forward behind a Home Signal, intending to reverse direction and continue to the South Dynon Diesel Depot. But upon changing ends to carry out this procedure, we found Mad Max sound asleep in the drivers seat with legs all over the driver controls.

My trainee and I just looked at each other, neither of us wanting to be the one to awaken Mad Max in a violent state. We gingerly operated the controls around him, and got the locomotive into the engine depot as required.

Upon arrival at the felling point at the Dynon depot, we just gathered our kit bags together and headed for the meal room for our breakfast, leaving the team of diesel maintenance staff to the un-enviable task of disturbing the sleeping Mad Max. We didn't hang around to observe the frivolity.

We met up with Max later that morning, for the run back to Seymour and nothing was said. So we never did find out what happened, but I know it would have been amusing, to say the least.

Max in later years went on to be a Senior Supervisor in Locomotive grades in the Bendigo District.

Lesson for all, 'Don't wake Mad Max if he's sleeping' or pay the consequences.

Mad Max passed away on 12 October 2020.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea

WOODPECKERS AND CALL BOYS

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 15 FEBRUARY 2020



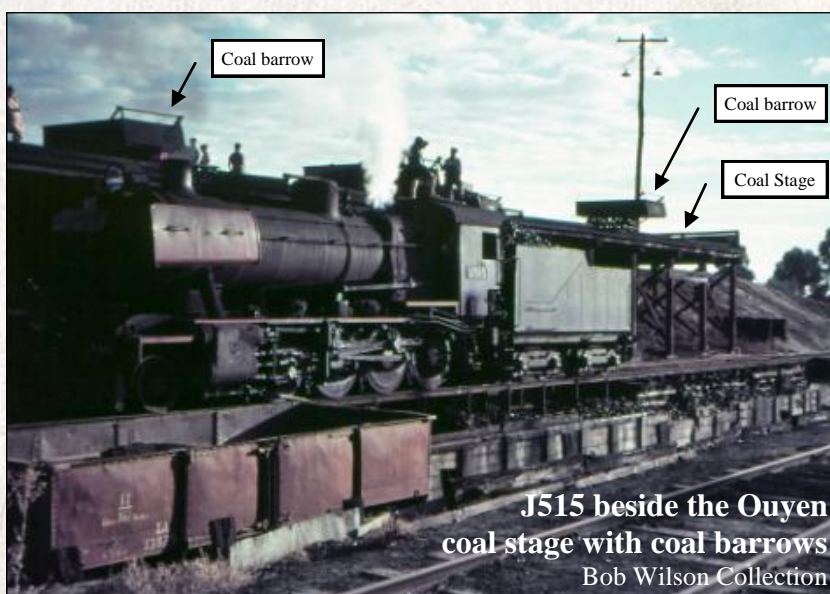
E371 in the North Melbourne loco depot

Lance Adams Collection

Going back to the very beginning of my railway career, my first job allocation on the Engine Cleaners roster as a Junior Trainee Engineman (aged 15) was a 'Woodpecker'.

This job demands a description, and that description is to barrow wood around the locomotive depot on heavy tubular metal barrows, to locomotives being lit up for service. I could not push a full barrow of wood as they were just too heavy for a 15 year old boy, but I did my best, much to the annoyance of the inside shed foreman, who always demanded more effort.

Other duties carried out by the engine cleaners were, The Sand House, clearing the ash pits, working on the coal stage (filling coal barrows), general work around the locomotive depot to keep it



J515 beside the Ouyen coal stage with coal barrows

Bob Wilson Collection



clean and clear of trip hazards, helping out in the stores room, splitting and stacking light-up wood, the cleaning of engines as directed, and the washing out of locomotive boilers.

The woodpeckers job, had a different connotation during the Second World War. During coal shortages of 1942, wood was substituted for coal as a fuel and main line engines had their brick arch removed. A second fireman, called a woodpecker, was

provided to toss the wood from the tender, into the cab and to the actual fireman. I was not around when this form of operation was in vogue, but the senior drivers that I worked with during my time as a Fireman were, and they talked about it often. A North East bound train used to have to replenish its supply of wood at Donnybrook. I have fired engines that had no brick arches and the heat just blasted back at the Fireman, and it was terrible! I cannot imagine what a trip on one of these wood burning brutes would have been like.

My next promotion was to a call boy, which involved riding a pushbike around to the various houses of engine crews, to advise them of what time they were required for work. At times the women of the household would take to us with a broom, so we couldn't deliver the call for a job on their day off. Other times the crews were not called until their trains were near, in an attempt to avoid long hours. The crews would tell the amount of time they required to get ready, and the appropriate call would be sent out at the desired time. The caller up was responsible for the crews to turn up on time. You knew the individuals who had grumpy dogs, and were hard to rouse. You also had to know how to wake them without disturbing the entire household.

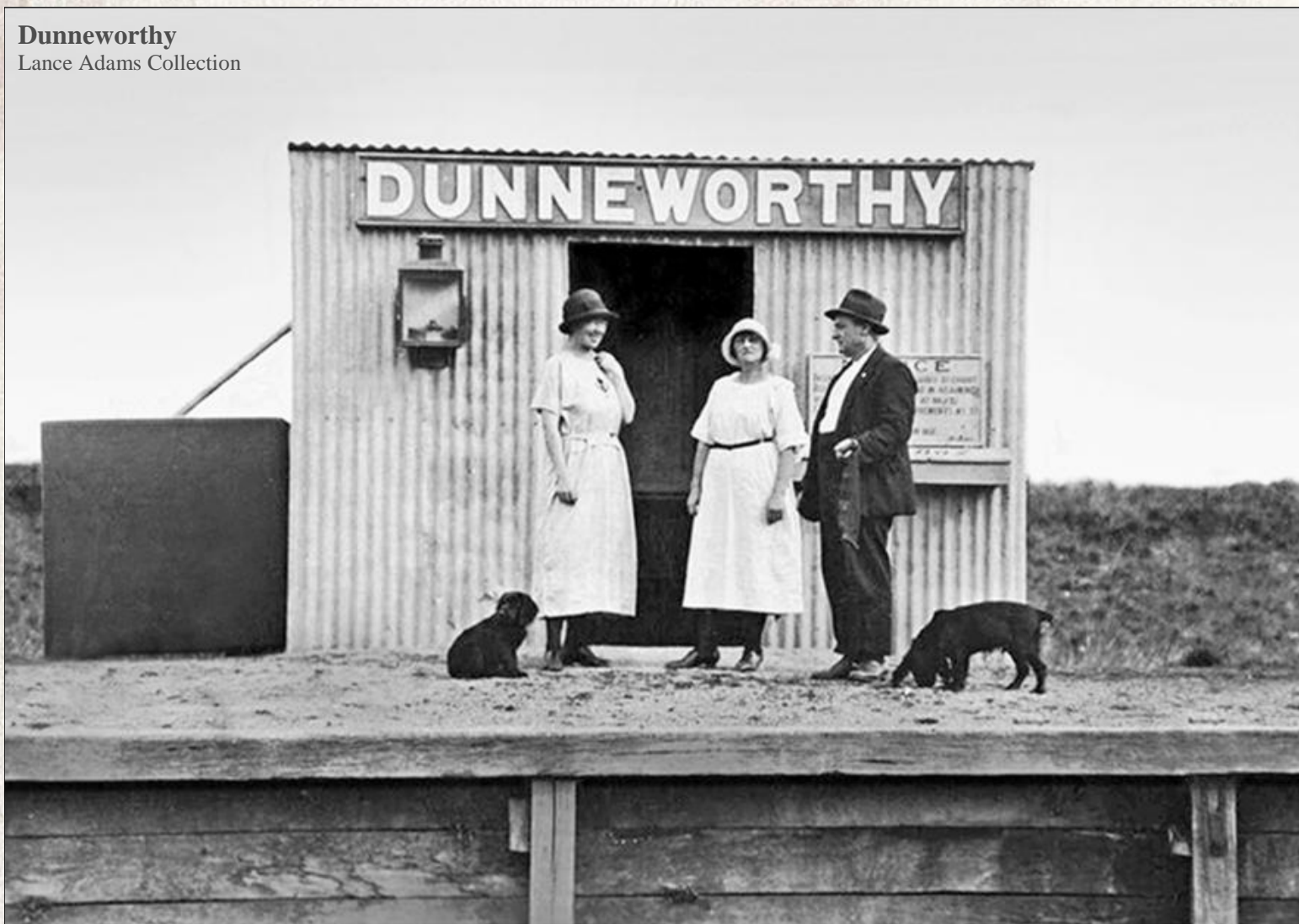
Looking back on all this, it is a way of life which is long gone.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea

CATCHING A TRAIN WITHOUT A NET

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN
© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 15 FEBRUARY 2020

Dunneworthy
Lance Adams Collection



Scattered around the former Victorian Railways Network were numerous isolated, no-one-in-charge stations, that consisted of the barest of facilities. Catching a train from these locations required the intending passenger to hail a train to stop, in a set manner. The above photograph captures the isolated location of Dunneworthy, near Ararat, on the cross country line from Maryborough and shows just that. This procedure was also used, should the station be unattended at the time.

A notice attached to the primitive corrugated iron waiting shelter, instructs intending passengers to exhibit a red flag, which was rolled up and kept in a round metal tube, particularly for this purpose. At night time or in inclement weather, a large kerosene lamp was provided (seen attached to the tin waiting room and to the left of the intending passengers in the photograph).



Intending passengers were to light the large kerosene lamp, with matches also placed in the metal tube, then slide a red glass shade to face an on-coming train.

This photograph clearly shows these instructions on a notice, to be carried out when wanting to catch a train at these tiny isolated stations. Koriella would have been one such station, when the Alexandra line experienced mixed train services up until 1945.

The last place I experienced this form of travel was at Bennison, between Welshpool and Toora stations, on the Yarram Line during the early 1970s. Today that line is the Great Southern Rail Trail.

The notice board (above) from the Bob Wilson Collection used to be on the Up (to Melbourne side) platform at Taradale, between Kyneton and Castlemaine, until the station closed for passengers from 8 November 1976. It was an unattended station at closure. The two items in the photograph are now with the Puffing Billy Museum at Menzies Creek.

A mode of travelling, from a bygone era!

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea, Victoria

THE ALMURTA CIRCUS ELEPHANTS

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 11 APRIL 2020

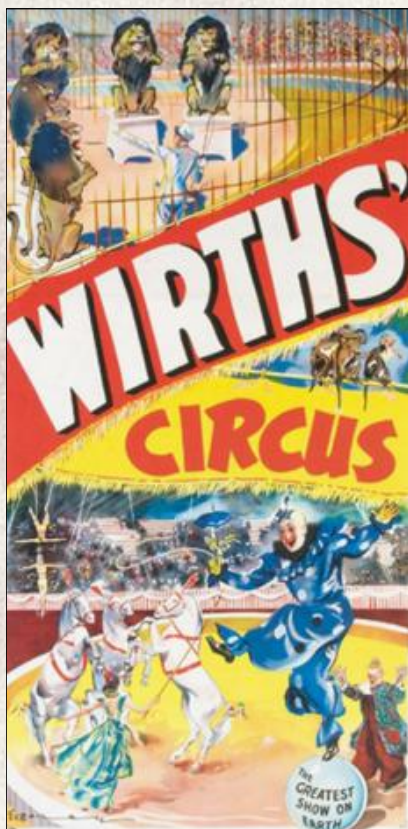
Dunneworthy
Lance Adams Collection



In my junior unappointed acting fireman days, I was catapulted from one end of the State to the other on the pretence of gaining experience on different trains and in different conditions. On one such appointment, I ended up at State Mine Loco' depot at Wonthaggi.

The regular State Mine job was to run the 12.45 pm Up coal train one day, and after staying overnight in Nyora, returning to Wonthaggi with a 4.30 am train the next morning. On this particular morning the train had been marshalled, the train examination completed, and we were just awaiting the departure of a livestock special. This was planned to run ahead of us on the Wonthaggi branch.

The Victorian Railways had a numerous amount of trucks that were specifically designed to convey cattle. These were classed as 'M' trucks or 'MM' as it was a bogie vehicle.



This livestock special train consisted of M class cattle trucks only, a number of which had the roof raised considerably, so they could be used on the Wirth's Circus Train to convey elephants as required. The image on the previous page is of some M trucks, marshalled next to the Loco' of a Cudgewa bound train, at the mileage 222 bridge. This bridge was sadly destroyed in the recent 2020 bushfires.

In the office at Nyora on this morning was a young and gullible relieving Assistant Station Master. On spying the different roof height of several of the M vehicles on the train, he enquired as to the difference, and to why they were in the consist of the stock special.

A Nyora based crew were rostered for the stock special, and they were in the station office too, enjoying a morning cup of tea. The Nyora fireman was quite a character with a fantastic sense of humour.

When the question was asked about the difference between the M truck roof heights, he immediately blurted out that Wirth's Circus had an elephant farm at Almurta, and that they were going to probably load elephants there today. Immediately he came out with this stupid statement, he advised the Assistant Station Master that there was a very low wooden overbridge between Almurta and Kernot (the next station) and that these special trucks, would not fit under it with the higher raised roofs. He advised that he had better arrange for the intended elephants to be walked to Kernot for safe loading there.

The Assistant Station Master sprung to his feet, blurting over the telephone to a confused train controller about getting the Wirth Circus elephants walked from Almurta to Kernot. We all had a bad case of the giggles on seeing the reaction to this ruse. elephants did regularly travel by rail, but not on this occasion.

I was running a train from Melbourne to Bacchus Marsh one day, and when I was passing a nearby Open Plains Zoo near Melton, I struck and killed a giraffe. I also know of an elephant that had escaped from a circus at Burnley, being struck by a Melbourne suburban train bound for Lilydale. It derailed the train and caused considerable damage, but the elephant lived. The train driver was quizzed as to his sobriety, when he called the incident in.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea, Victoria

THE CASH BAG SPECIAL

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN
© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 16 APRIL 2020

1RM in 3 Road at the Wonthaggi Station
Lance Adams Collection



Of all the interesting and humorous incidents that happened to me over my four-plus decades as engineman with the Victorian Railways, this incident, involving an unofficial cash bag run, would have to be the best.

I was relieving at Wonthaggi, on a holiday relief, as a rail motor driver. I was working alongside local Wonthaggi driver Andrew Main. I had run the 1610 Wonthaggi-Nyora service on the previous afternoon, without incident. Upon arrival at Nyora, I went back into the van (parcels) area to assist with the unloading of mail bags and parcels. It was quite dark on the van area, so I went for the light switches to illuminate the area, but nothing happened.

I immediately shunted the train into the siding, totally confused as to why I had no lighting in the passenger section, but everything was working fine in the engine end section.

Upon arrival in the siding, I squeezed myself under the train and discovered that the brass flexible coupling head had worked its way off. This left power to the front of the train (tractor unit) but no power to the rear of the train for lighting or control equipment. Drastic measure had to be taken to get the car fully operational again in readiness for its timetabled 2040 departure to Wonthaggi.

I obtained some masking tape from the Nyora Station office and proceeded to refit and secure the detached electrical coupling head to the main electrical cable. With this bush repair completed, I then requested permission to do a short test run to Loch (the next station on the main South East line) to see if my makeshift repair job would hold. It did, and the return trip to Wonthaggi was made without incident.

The next morning I went around to Andrew Main's house in Wonthaggi and informed him of what had happened to our beloved little 153 HP. There was an industrial dispute taking place that day, with the supervisors having travelled to Melbourne, so getting a replacement train was out of the question.



Andrew and I decided that we could make a more permanent repair job, based on my original idea of masking tape. We decided to remove the brass electrical coupling head, and using my portable gas BBQ, shrink fit the brass coupling head back on to the main electrical cable. Then secure it by drilling a hole and securing it with a grub screw.

This bush mechanics job worked a treat, so all that was left to do was to give it a test run to see if our handy work would hold.

A cash bag (a leather bag with a brass name plate) was required to be sent to the caretaker (Station Mistress) at Dalyston, which was the first station out of Wonthaggi. It probably contained her fortnightly wages. We took the staff for the section, the cash bag and bravely headed off, Andrew was driving and I was acting as the guard on the train.

On arrival at Dalyston, I alighted the train, only to be greeted by a pack of snapping aggressive dogs appearing from under the residence.

Old leather Glen Forbes cash bag. Glen Forbes was four stations up the line from Dalyston.



Pen for size comparison

© Bob Wilson

I made a wild dash back to the waiting rail motor, clambering in as the savage dogs snapped at my rapidly climbing heels.

We headed back to Wonthaggi, with our repairs holding steady, and the cash bag undelivered.

That train continued in service for sometime later, with our bush repairs probably still on it, until it was scrapped some years later.

Photography was quite expensive in this era, and unfortunately no images were taken of our unofficial BBQ setup in the Wonthaggi railway yard. The first image in the article shows the rough location of this unusual cook-up! Brass electrical coupling head, well done, over deep gas heat.

The things we did!

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea, Victoria

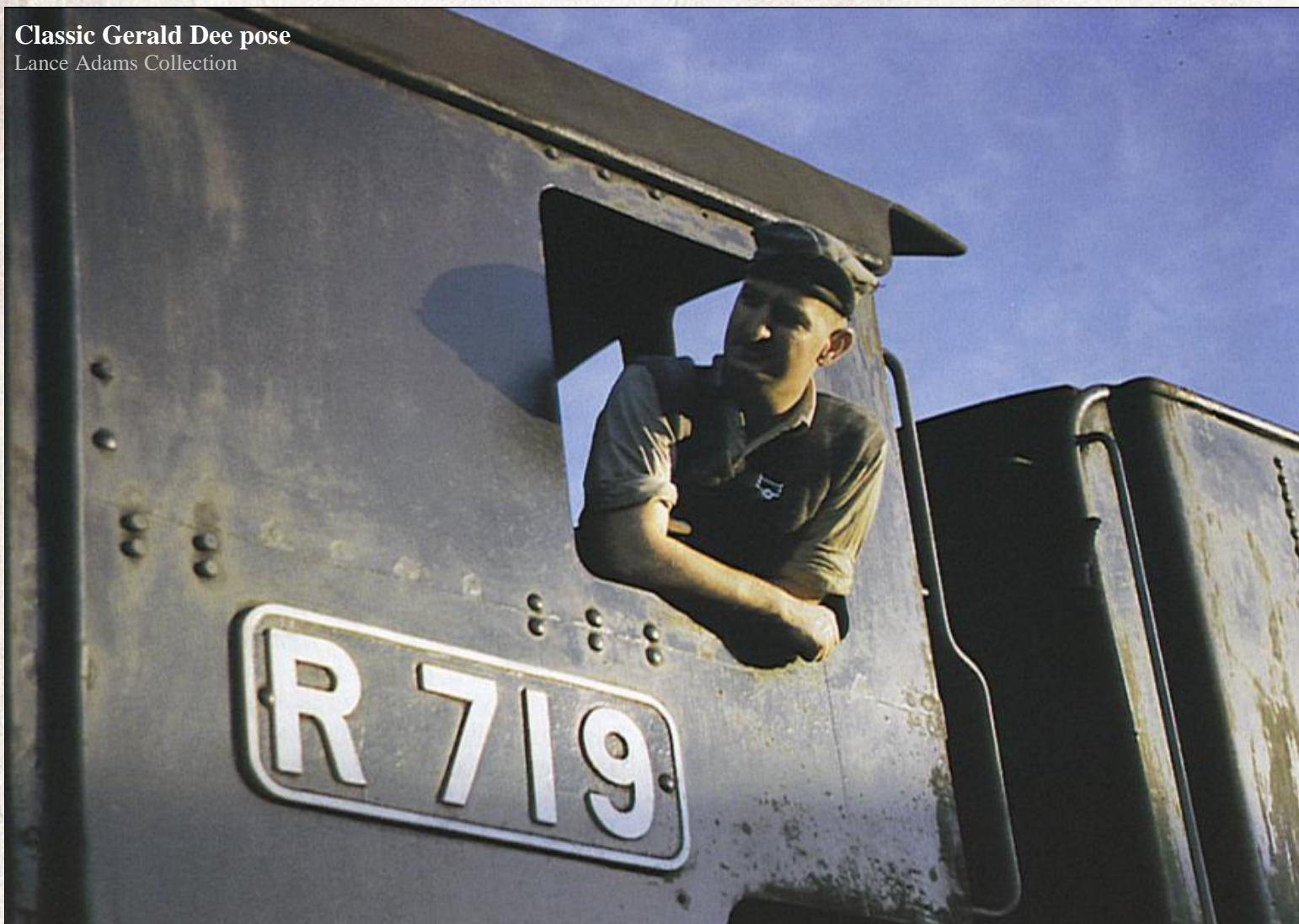
HERE SONNY, HAVE A LOLLIPOP

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 19 JUNE 2020

Classic Gerald Dee pose

Lance Adams Collection



In the early 1960s I found myself working out of the Melbourne locomotive sheds at North Melbourne. On this particular day I was paired up with North Melbourne driver and mentor Gerald Dee, and we were to run a Geelong return passenger service. We were allocated a B Class diesel for the down portion of the job, but were assigned one of the two oil burning R Class, 719 for the return working. The seventy R class locos were permitted to run at up to 115 kmh. 719 was a real racehorse and could really go, if you gave it its head!

We pulled out of Geelong considerably behind time, the train arriving from Warrnambool behind schedule. Things did not look promising, with a single line to negotiate for part of the 45 plus miles to Spencer Street. However, after getting a brilliant run over the single line, and 719 really stepping through its paces in great strides, we had recovered considerable late running by the time Spencer Street was reached.

As we were sitting on the head end of the arrival train at Spencer Street, an elderly woman, shuffled passed Gerald's side of the cab. She was obviously impressed by the blistering performance she had just been lucky enough to experience, and paused next to Gerald before commenting on the great exhibition of train running (obviously appreciating it). She then slipped a two shilling piece (20 cents) into Gerald's hand. She then instructed him to have a beer on her after work.

Upon observing this scene from the other side of the 719's cab, and not to be left out of the transaction, I crossed the gangway and made myself obvious behind Gerald. She took one look at my young soot covered face, and presented me with a lollipop. She then proceeded on her way, leaving Gerald in taunting fits of laughter to tease me over the incident, which he did for years—whenever we passed ways.

I ate the Lollipop on the day, but I would have much preferred a beer, as it was quite a warm day.

Although this trip was over 50 years ago, I still recall this fabulous run, 719, and the elderly woman. Some things never go away.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea, Victoria

GETTING MY SPEED CHECKED

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 26 AUGUST 2020

28 RM on the Sale Wharf Line

Lance Adams Collection



Whilst doing a temporary holiday relief at Maffra, I had an unusual run in with Victoria Police. A group of Melbourne based railway enthusiasts had wanted to travel over the short distance, and rarely used Sale wharf line. To enable this to come to fruition, it was arranged for the Maffra Walker Rail Motor to alter runs with the through Gippslander train to Bairnsdale, and provide the service to Sale, doing a switch trip over the Sale Wharf Line during its layover in Sale.

I just happened to be in position to score that job. The connection was made at Traralgon with the Gippslander service and the run to Sale with the little Walker car was uneventful, with Sale being reached a little ahead of time.

At Sale, direction of travel was reversed, and the 28 RM headed slowly along the Sale Wharf Line as amazed locals looked on as a myriad of cameras clicked.

A level crossing was situated, not far along this short line, and approaching this crossing, I sounded the train's whistle intensely, to warn any road vehicles of a train approaching. At this stage I became acutely aware of considerable Police activity, in the vicinity of the crossing.

After experiencing some noticeable unusual crunching sounds from under the wheels of my train, I brought my train to a stand only to find myself amongst the Police operation.

I clambered down out of the cab, to be greeted by an agitated distressed young constable, saying that they had laid speed detection tapes over the roadway at the level crossing, and I had come along and chopped them up into pieces. He was under the impression that the line was unused and abandoned.

I enquired as to the speed that had been detected on their equipment, and I was informed 10 mph (16 kmh). I heard nothing more about this incident, but I think the Police were slightly red faced and the young constable possibly blue bummed, as he had to inform his superiors what happened to their speed detection tapes.

At the time, this incident made a small paragraph in the local Sale newspaper, as well as the *Melbourne Sun* a few days later, when it was reported that the Police had recorded the speed of a train, on the little used Sale Wharf Line.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea, Victoria

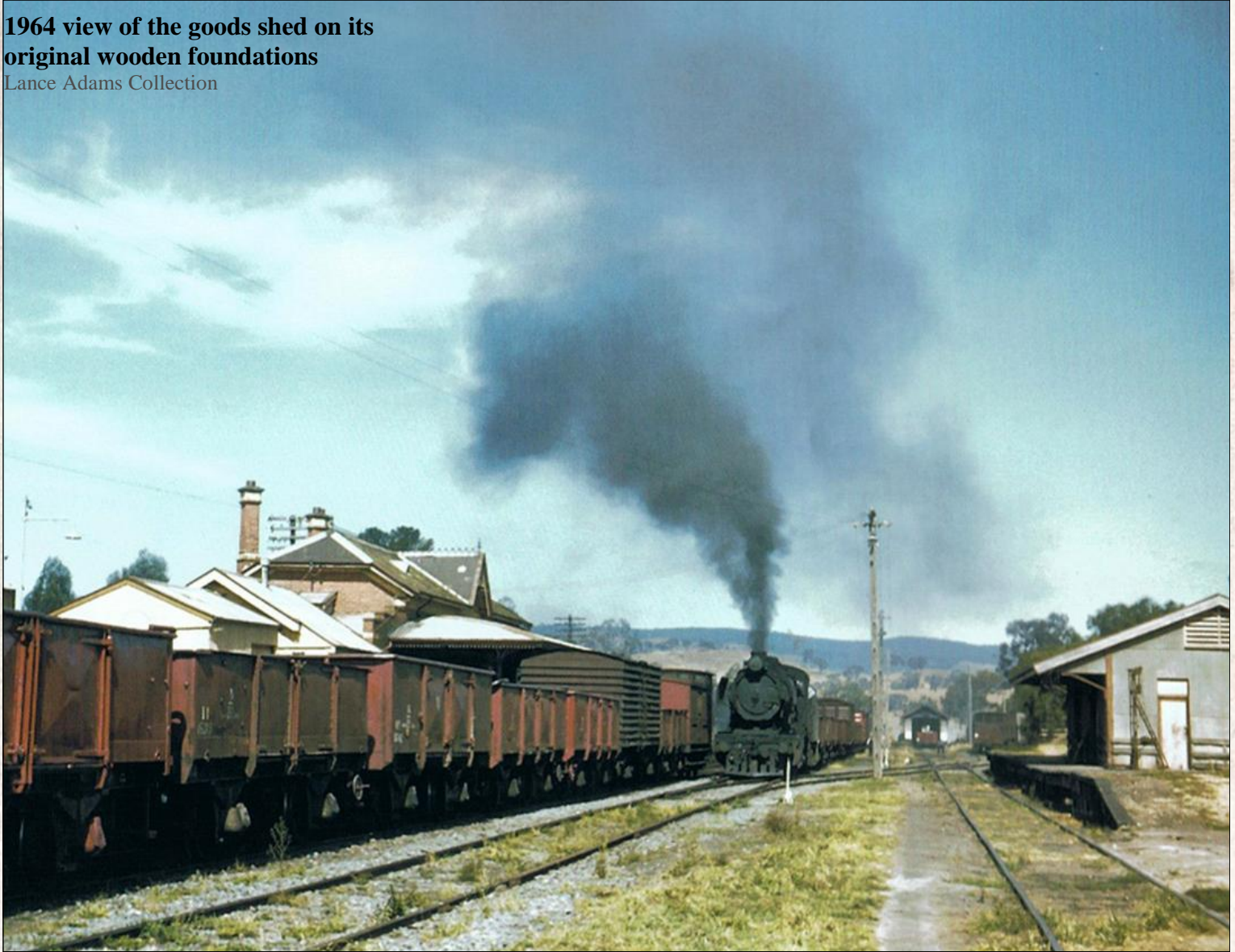
WHAT A DRAG

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 2 OCTOBER 2020

**1964 view of the goods shed on its
original wooden foundations**

Lance Adams Collection



The 19th century historic former goods shed in the former railway yard at Yea, is a story unto itself. Although the building itself is original, the rest is not. Originally the structure was located some 59 metres in the down direction (northeast) stand on wooden foundations. By 1970 the whole thing was about to collapse and something had to be done.

A new earthen base was constructed a little southwest of the original site, and concreted over. The goods shed was hoisted by jacks on to a series of rollers, a sizeable metal cable attached to the Yea based locomotive for the weekend, T 388 (usually the Yarram engine) and the whole thing was towed very slowly to its present position, where it sits to this day.

The day was a Sunday to cause as little disruption as possible to everyday railway operations. A special works gang was brought on to carry out this mammoth operation. This may have occurred at other locations, but I am not personally aware of it.

To perform this task, every goods wagon in the shed road, had to be pulled out, and placed in 2 road, and replaced upon completion of the task.

All up, the entire operation, from start to finish took 11 hours to complete, with countless hours of preparation and planning done previously.

The Yea goods shed still stands today and is used for various private events.

When you stand looking at it, look at where the station building is, and look straight across, and that is where the goods shed was.



Yea Goods Shed

Lance Adams Collection

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea, Victoria

DIRECT HIT

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA

29 OCTOBER 2020

**DRC42 with 600 Class Tulloch
car at Woodfield**

Lance Adams Collection



Back in the 1970s, I was running a 600 HP Tulloch railmotor on the late afternoon service from Leongatha–Dandenong. A sleeper discharge train had run previously, earlier that afternoon out of Korumburra, and newly discharged track sleepers littered the lineside.

Negotiating a series of curves near Whitelaw, with the main road many feet below my train, I clipped a sleeper not quite clear of the lineside, with my N01 Engine Control Box. There was a mighty bang, and the fault lights on my display panel lit up like a Christmas tree, causing my charge to immediately shut down. This errant sleeper now took off at a great pace, down grade towards the roadway below.

To my horror I spied a car running parallel below me, and it was in a direct conflict path with the speeding railway sleeper. I watched in frozen stare as my train came to a screeching stop,

and the errant railway sleeper collided directly with the road vehicle and took it off the road and down the embankment.

Luckily there were no serious injuries stemming from this incident, with just a couple of badly shaken motorists from the torpedoed car. My train was a basket case and had to be rescued from the section by a relief engine which was shunting in the Korumburra yard. I could just imagine the insurance claim describing the incident, it would have been quite interesting to read.

I heard no more about this regrettable incident and the matter ended up in the hands of the Victorian Railways legal people.

The 600HP Tulloch cars were a terribly unreliable beast at the best of times and you did not need much to happen to cause major problems. Clipping a foul railway sleeper and destroying a very large main fuse, did not do wonders for the performance of these deplorable machines. They looked good, but were a liability!

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea, Victoria

A TASTY BONUS

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 14 MAY 2021

I thought I had better recite this story from my spark days at Hurstbridge, where I spent my last 29 years.

I was running a late Saturday night service from Flinders Street in Melbourne to Hurstbridge, a 0002 ex-Flinders Street on the down (away from Melbourne).

At Ivanhoe when on the trip home, the Victoria Police decided to join the train and check on the behaviour of passengers. Obviously they must have detected a group of under age drinkers, using the train as their own personal drinking venue. The police duly confiscated their slab minus one can and came up to the cab when we arrived at Heidelberg and placed them inside the doorway of my cab on the Comeng train (suburban electric train operated in Melbourne) I was driving. This was for safekeeping and their consumption at a later time in their shift. They must have received an emergency call at this time, as they took off like startled gazelles down the passenger ramp, leaving me in charge of their confiscated booty. With the departure signal on to the single line displaying a proceed aspect, and the Guard ringing the bells for departure, I departed the station.



As I approached Hurstbridge, I was expecting to see a welcoming party of police officers on the platform, to lay claim to their treasure, But there were none in attendance.

I carried out DIC safe-working, shunted the train, and then headed quickly to the employee car compound with the 23 cans of VB under my arm. Later, I arrived safely back at my home in Yea with more than 23 VB cans intact. I had an enjoyable day on the Sunday demolishing the confiscated police booty. It was very tasty to say the least!

When I was a Fireman, I thought drivers' beer tasted the best. Then I worked out that other drivers' beer was better! But I can assure you, free beer is even better again!

Retired Train Driver and former Yea Fireman
Lance Adams
Yea, Victoria

RIDING IN THE EYE OF A HURRICANE

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 9 MAY 2021

A friend of mine once asked me to take him on a ride in the cab of a main line passenger steam locomotive, and I happily obliged him. As we were driving to commence work and pick up the locomotive, he asked me to tell him what the cab ride would be like. I replied *It will be like riding in the eye of a hurricane!* With 115 kmh achieved and the rural countryside absolutely flying past our roaring, bucking and heaving cab window, it truly was like riding in the eye of a hurricane!

We roared along with the wind howling into our semi-protected space and everything was whistling by the cab window. When we arrived at our destination nearly three hours later, we alighted from our chariot of fire onto the platform. I then turned to my wide-eyed friend and asked him 'what did you think of that?' He turned to me and replied it was *better than sex!*

R 752 leaving Swan Hill for
Bendigo in the 1960s



I don't know if that is a worthy description, and it maybe said heaps about his sex life, but it is a real experience for the uninitiated. I can still remember my first experience at this sort of run, and how I thought that the characters who did these runs were mad! But I never used his unusual terminology to describe it, albeit it was an interesting concept. I just took these runs in my stride and did them for many years without much thought on what we were doing.

The image (left) was taken from the cab of R 752 when it was leaving Swan Hill for Bendigo back in the 1960s, going for another ride in the eye of a hurricane.

When operating at those speeds, even an insect hitting you in the face could really hurt. In the grasshopper plague of 1969, I received many such wacks. I remember how one of the worst things was the smell of the splattered insects coming off the smoke box door. The stench would come wafting back into the cab and it was very acrid and pungent to say the least!

R 707 at Bannockburn. It was one of our race horses. These 'R' machines could really move it, and I had many 'Rides in the eye of a hurricane' with them. You had to wear goggles on these beasts of burden, and a bandana over your face, with another one around the back of your neck to stop hot cinders from going down the back of your shirt. One senior driver used to stuff a pair of his wife's old under pants down the front of his shirt in an effort to stop burning cinders getting down his chest. We must have looked a sight. We usually ended up quite black faced with our eyes white where the goggles had been.



During one of those plagues, I was running an express train with a diesel locomotive, and the build-up of insect gunk on the windscreen got so bad, that we literally could not see. So we had to make a special stop just to scrape a vision point hole in the fatty goo.

Early on in my relationship, I took my wife Ree for a ride on one of these steam locomotives and she absolutely hated it. Though admittedly it was a very dark evening and the incandescent glow of the fire lit up the night sky like we were in Hades. She never went within any distance of one of those dinosaurs of the rails again, and I don't blame her. It took me nearly a decade to learn 'how to train the Dragon'.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea, Victoria

ANOTHER FREIGHT ITEM DECLINED

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 22 APRIL 2021

Lance posing in front of a Comeng train at Hurstbridge Station on a Sunday evening in 1998, with his Swedish nieces Sofie and Anna, who were studying in Melbourne.
Courtesy Lance Adams Collection



I was running the second last Hurstbridge service on a Friday night, on a three car Comeng set, but it was a 'football at the MCG' night which we should have been running six cars at least. Room was going to be at a premium after Jolimont Station!

I pulled into Parliament Station to be greeted by two Asian men waiting for me, with the biggest photocopying machine I had ever seen! I stopped the train in their vicinity, immediately left the cab and challenged them as to what their intentions were. I was going to be hard pressed for space after Jolimont as it was, without the prospect of this huge machine rolling around freely inside the saloon of the carriage.

I informed them that their item in-tow was a Freight Item, that this was a passenger service, and that they would not be permitted onto the train. Furnished with this information, they began to abuse me, saying that the man upstairs said they were right to go and that I would

have to assist them in loading this monstrosity. I again declined to admit them onto the train, informed them that the bloke upstairs was not in charge of the train, that I was in charge of the train, that I had the final say, and my answer was final.

More objections and abuse were directed at me, but I departed Parliament Station minus these two passengers and their monstrous copier. As I departed they were letting me know they were coming on the next train, some 30 minutes behind me.

Not to be outdone, I knew Peter Mountney was on the last down service behind me at 0002, as I had talked to him earlier in the evening. I called Peter on his mobile phone (which by now we had been issued with) and informed him of the circumstances. I think they would have got a less sympathetic response from Peter than me. At least he had a six car set. I never did find out what happened when he arrived at Parliament that night—30 minutes after me. I must ask next time we meet up!

The crunch came the following week when I received a 'blister' about the event from local management. I quoted back to them the 'horse incident' at Wattle Glen all those years earlier, attached a photocopy of the memorandum from the Superintendent of Locomotive Running Office (SLR Office) about passenger service and freight items, and submitted it all. The SLR Office was the overseeing head of all locomotive and train running operations.

I didn't hear anything more about it, but I am under the impression that Fleet got a bit of a blue-bum over only rostering a three car Comeng set on a football night service.

I do not think I would have accepted the two Asian men with the photocopier for travel under any circumstances, and I am sure that if someone had got injured by that huge machine, I would have been negligent in my duty of care and they would have had no hesitation in referring me back to their original memorandum.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea, Victoria

A DRIVER LOSES HIS TRAIN

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 4 JUNE 2021

A W class Baldwin Locomotive that were common to the line in the early years. This Image is of Yea based W 217 at Mansfield, on the first train in October 1891. These loco's were removed from the line around 1920. They would have been an awesome sight, bashing their way through the Australian bush, around the Balham area. This probably would have been the type of locomotive on the train mentioned in dispatches later in this article.

Courtesy Lance Adams Collection



The topic of a driver losing his train in 1902 (as reported in the article on the following page) is a difficult topic to pass judgment on, as this was probably in the era prior to all trains being equipped with Westinghouse compressed air continuous braking. Prior to the mandatory provision of this equipment on trains (from around 1915) train speeds were controlled by the use of engine and guards handbrakes and the trains were a lot smaller and lighter then.

When I first came into the district as a fireman, there was an impressive huge wall gradient diagram, displaying in red and blue colours where the Engine handbrake and Guards handbrake, should be applied, to adequately control the speed of trains. This diagram was destroyed in the destruction of the Seymour Locomotive Depot administration building in a flash flood of Whiteheads Creek in February 1973. I never saw a similar diagram at any other location. That diagram would have been from that era. I never took a photo of it, or ever thought about it, just admired it. It had always been there and was always going to be there!

Branch line trains on the Upper Goulburn Branch to Yea, in that era, would probably have been hauled by a small Baldwin 'W' class Locomotive with no electric headlight, with the light train probably a set of six wheel, primitive XYZ cars with maybe two or three goods wagons attached.

That 9.00 pm train only had a 60 minute running time allocated, for its journey to Yea. In later years, admittedly with heavier trains and an electric headlight, we were allocated 70 minutes to complete this journey. It was a tough trip, and heavy fog at certain times of the Year, usually May–August, you did not get to see much of the track ahead. At times it got so bad, that switching the headlight off was the only solution to the white out conditions. The dim glow of the engine marker lamps providing all the illumination. The feral pigs and goats around Kerrisdale were a constant casualty of our nocturnal, invisible visitation. You would hear the bang/splat noise, and then hear ballast being thrown up under the locomotive. I cannot imagine what it must have been like, running this type of train, in those difficult situations.

Much water has passed under the bridge since those early fledgling days of railroading, and with Westinghouse compressed air braking fitted to all trains, if instructions are followed, losing your train (as described in the article to the right about a driver losing his train at Tallarook in 1902) could not happen. The drivers in the early days of continuous braking saw it as an aid to train running, and were quite blasé about it. Likewise the drivers in the modern era, view regenerative braking as essential to train running, where I viewed it as an aid.

I was running a very heavy 3,000 ton train to Melbourne one night, and just took a regenerative braking problem in my stride. When I handed over the train to a Melbourne driver at Wallan, he

A DRIVER LOSES HIS TRAIN.

—o—

One of the most extraordinary incidents that have ever come under notice in connection with the Victorian railways happened on Friday at Tallarook. The train from Yea is timed to leave Tallarook station at 9 p.m. On Friday night, owing to astounding carelessness on the part of somebody, the engine, at 9 p.m., moved out of the station and proceeded on its journey, leaving the carriages and a score of disgusted passengers behind it ! It seems almost incomprehensible that the engine could steam out of the station without the driver discovering that the train was not hooked on behind. Such, however, was the case. The night was rather dark, and by some oversight the couplings between the engine and the first carriage were never connected. The station master, at 9 p.m., walked along the platform to a spot opposite the engine, and asked the driver if he was ready to start. On receiving an answer in the affirmative, he replied, "Very well, you can go." The guard gave the signal to start, but instead of the train moving off, the engine steamed out by itself. The station master rushed to the end of the platform and shouted to the driver to know where he was going. The guard and railway porters whistled and called to let the driver or fireman of the locomotive know that there was no train attached. Their efforts, however were in vain, and the engine, gathering momentum at every turn of the wheels, raced out of the station past the signal box. Another remarkable feature of the affair is that the signalman apparently did not notice that the engine had no carriages attached, and no signal was given to stop it. It was not until the engine had been nearly a quarter of an hour on the way and had travelled six miles, that the driver discovered that he had no train behind. He at once concluded that the carriages had broken away, and he returned very slowly along the line for fear of colliding with his own train. It was not until he got back to the platform, and heard the very strong language of some of the passengers and the station officials that he was aware that he had driven the engine out alone. Owing to this remarkable mistake the train did not leave Tallarook until fully three-quarters of an hour after the advertised time. The incident is being inquired into by the Chief Traffic Manager.—"Age," Friday.

Kilmore Free Press
Thursday 9 October 1902
Courtesy National Library Australia

nearly had kittens when he found out that the regenerative brake was defective on the lead locomotive! He would not depart Wallan without switching the locomotives around to give him regenerative braking capability.

Years later, I relieved a train in similar circumstances with regenerative braking problems, which I even refused to run. I must have lost faith in George Westinghouse's beautiful brake.

There is a current instruction, that the Locomotive Assistant (co-driver) must exchange hand signals with the guard or conductor, as soon as possible after the train is in motion. I am uncertain whether this instruction was not complied with on this occasion, or that this instruction was a direct result of this 1900 incident.

Locomotives equipped with a No 4 brake were still being worked by handbrakes around shunting yards as late as 1973, but as the locomotive fleet was modernised with A6ET equipment being more widely used, things changed. No 4 braked loco's got either self lapping brake valves ex the tramways, with some older steam loco's receiving a No 17 straight air brake valve. Things were a lot better!

Trains were fitted with two white side lights which were checked regularly from the engine when negotiating a curve on that side, and a report to the driver in that the train was 'following in a safe and proper manner' to the driver. This was a mandatory duty, but whether it also has its origins following this incident, I do not know. Some of these procedures go back a long, long way.

In summing up the 1902 incident mentioned on the previous page, a number of critical things must have been overlooked to allow this to happen. That train would have departed Tallarook that evening from the now removed island platform, taking the sharp right hand 20 chain curve onto the branch. The Fireman must have failed to look back and observe that the side lights on the last vehicle were following safely. He probably would have been putting on a 'starting fire' in readiness to commence light steaming for the gradient beyond Reedy Creek and heavy steaming towards Cow Creek. It would have been about this location that the driver probably noticed the weight of his train was absent. Things are significantly down hill to Reedy Creek. It was quite a wild ride down School House Lane, out of Tallarook.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea, Victoria

THE WESTERN MAIN LINE

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 27 JULT 2021

K 190 at Stawell locomotive depot
Lance Adams Collection



In the early days of railways in Victoria, one of the main depots and operating points was Stawell, in Western Victoria. In the 1930s this was altered to be Ararat, and a new locomotive depot and service facilities were constructed.

Stawell was consequently wound down to a secondary outstation, with a gradual attrition of men, until there was just one engine crew remaining there, in a minor supporting role. The driver was named Ford Dunn, who had been at Stawell his entire working career as engineman, rising through the various grades from engine cleaner to locomotive driver.

In my early railway career, I was sent to relieve at Stawell as an acting fireman for Ford Dunn for four weeks. The job in those days was to run the day shift yard pilot (shunting trucks in the yard) and to push trains in the rear (bank) as required up the pink cutting on Scanlons Hill out of Stawell.

On the day that I arrived in Stawell, the down Dimboola train arrived into Stawell around lunchtime. I was met on the platform by an elderly Ford Dunn, who after informal introductions, shoved a well worn pocket watch into the palm of my hand and gave me some vague directions as to the location of the locomotive depot. He then let me know that he was going home for his lunch and instructed me to bring the engine back into the yard at 2.10 pm, sounding the whistle for the gates to be opened and for the signal to be placed at proceed.

I was very new at this railway business and not long out of school, and I had never driven a steam locomotive before. Luckily someone had taken me aside and taken the time to explain it to me.

I sat there just staring at the pocket watch in my hand, waiting for 2.10 pm to come around. I then nervously wound the engine into gear, released the engine brake and eased open the regulator. The beast sprung into life and I sounded the whistle as requested. To my relief the gates magically swung open and the tiny disc signal twisted to the side on its post. Ford was waiting for me and as we passed Stawell B-box, he bordered the moving chariot of fire and took up his position on the left hand side of the loco' as I scampered back to my allocated position. An uneventful remainder of the shift, including two trips banking trains Up Scanlons Hill, took place.



The safe-working procedure for assisting trains in the rear (bank engine working) was quite an intricate thing to set up, which I will attempt to explain here.

The train has to travel on a normal electric staff for the section, and while the assisting engine in the rear is protected while attached to the train. But once the bank engine has been detached from the through train in the section, it is then unprotected in the section, without any authority to return to its starting point in the rear. To cover this circumstance, a bank engine key is issued to the driver of the bank engine for his return journey and as protection of his engine until he safely returns and surrenders the bank engine key. Once removed from the electrical circuitry of the staff instruments, the staff instruments are disabled until it is replaced, thus protecting the bank engine movement.

Once a departure train is made up and ready for departure, and it is decided that assistance in the rear is necessary, a bank engine is added. The driver of the train engine is given the appropriate staff for the section and signs the TR8 bank engine key form, to state that he is in possession of the staff for the section, is aware that a bank engine is attached in the rear and that a stop is to be made at the point (stop board) where the bank engine will be detached. This Bank engine form and bank engine key must then be handed to the driver of the bank engine in the rear.

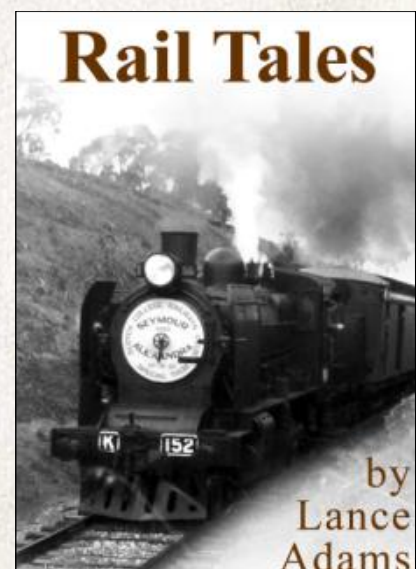
The train engine sounds one long whistle to move off, and the bank engine driver replies with a one long, one short, one long whistle (Morse code for K) to intimate to the driver of the train engine, that he is in possession of the Bank Engine Key & form.

The train now moves off, with the bank engine only to commence steaming once the train engine has lifted the entire train. The brake pipe was supposedly connected through the assisting engine, but this was seldom done.

The bank engine returned to its starting point on the bank engine key, which when surrendered and placed back in the electrical circuits of the staff instruments, allowed for normal staff working to resume.

I worked bank engine key working also at Lilydale, Hamilton, Avenel and Traralgon. We assisted trains in the rear on the Mansfield line, using a modified set of rules, on a different system. No bank engine keys on this line, but we used what we had, with special instructions.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea, Victoria



RIDING WITH 'CRASH HAT' BILLY

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 11 AUGUST 2021

**Beech Forest postal trolley at
Beech Forest, with regular driver
Billy (Crash Hat) Withers**
Lance Adams Collection



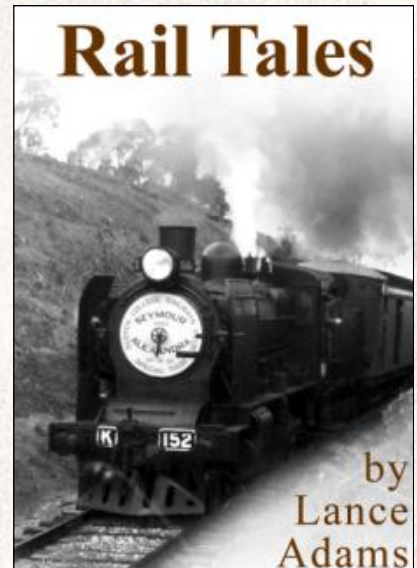
In the later days, the Beech Forest train used to only run once a week, on a Wednesday. So on the days that the train was not scheduled to run, a separate trip was made by a special NKS postal trolley, which left Colac at 0800, ran to Beech Forest and returned about 1430. This machine was usually run by a yard assistant from Colac, named Billy Withers, aka "Crash Hat".

What "Crash Hat Billy" could do with his little trolley was amazing. It was supposed to run at a sedate speed of around 15–20 kmh, but he used to travel well in excess of that. Level crossings were a constant frightening experience, and close calls with unaware road vehicles were a daily occurrence.

Billy's response to questions about his safety, was that he was wearing a 'crash hat'. As if that would have saved him. A ride with Billy on that frightening contraption of his, was really terrifying and unforgettable. Just how he survived as long as he did amazed everyone and they were always relieved when he arrived into Beech Forest or Colac. "Crash Hat" Billy Withers was a really unique character on the Otway Ranges railway, and probably scaring the daylights out of everyone, on that great railway in the sky. I will never forget my rides with Billy, how could you forget that!!!

Characters like "Crash Hat" Billy are a thing of the past, with the 'Nanny' state all but discouraging them. I am glad to have met and ridden with Billy, I am surely a better person because of it.

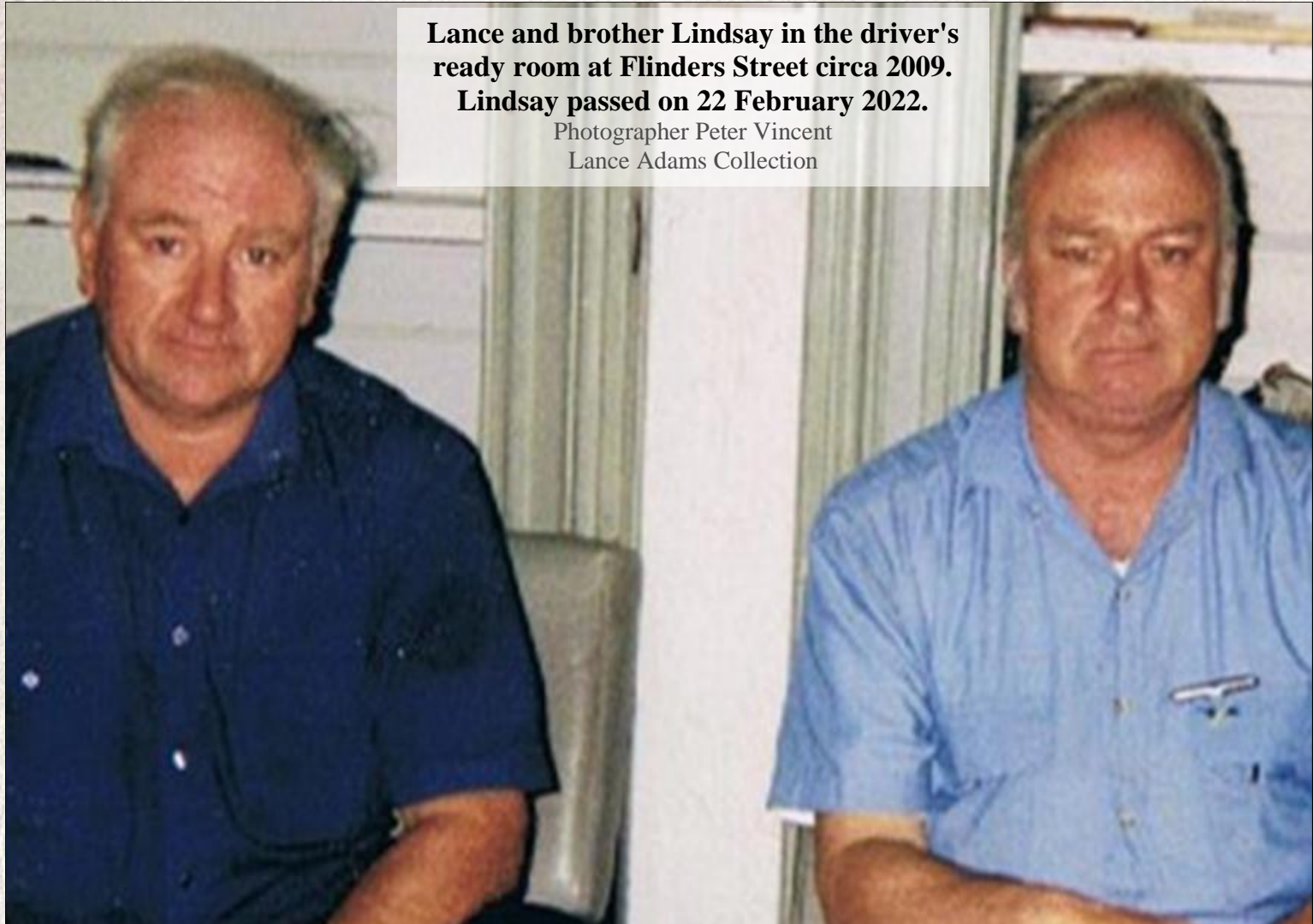
Lance Adams
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Yea, Victoria



TREATS FOR THE SENIOR DRIVERS

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 19 AUGUST 2021



In the Driver's 'Ready' Room at Flinders Street, one table was observed as 'The Senior Drivers' Table, and it was frowned upon for any of the juniors in the fraternity to indulge on this table unless invited. It was meant to be for the senior drivers stationed in Melbourne, but senior drivers from outlying outstations were always welcome to join in.

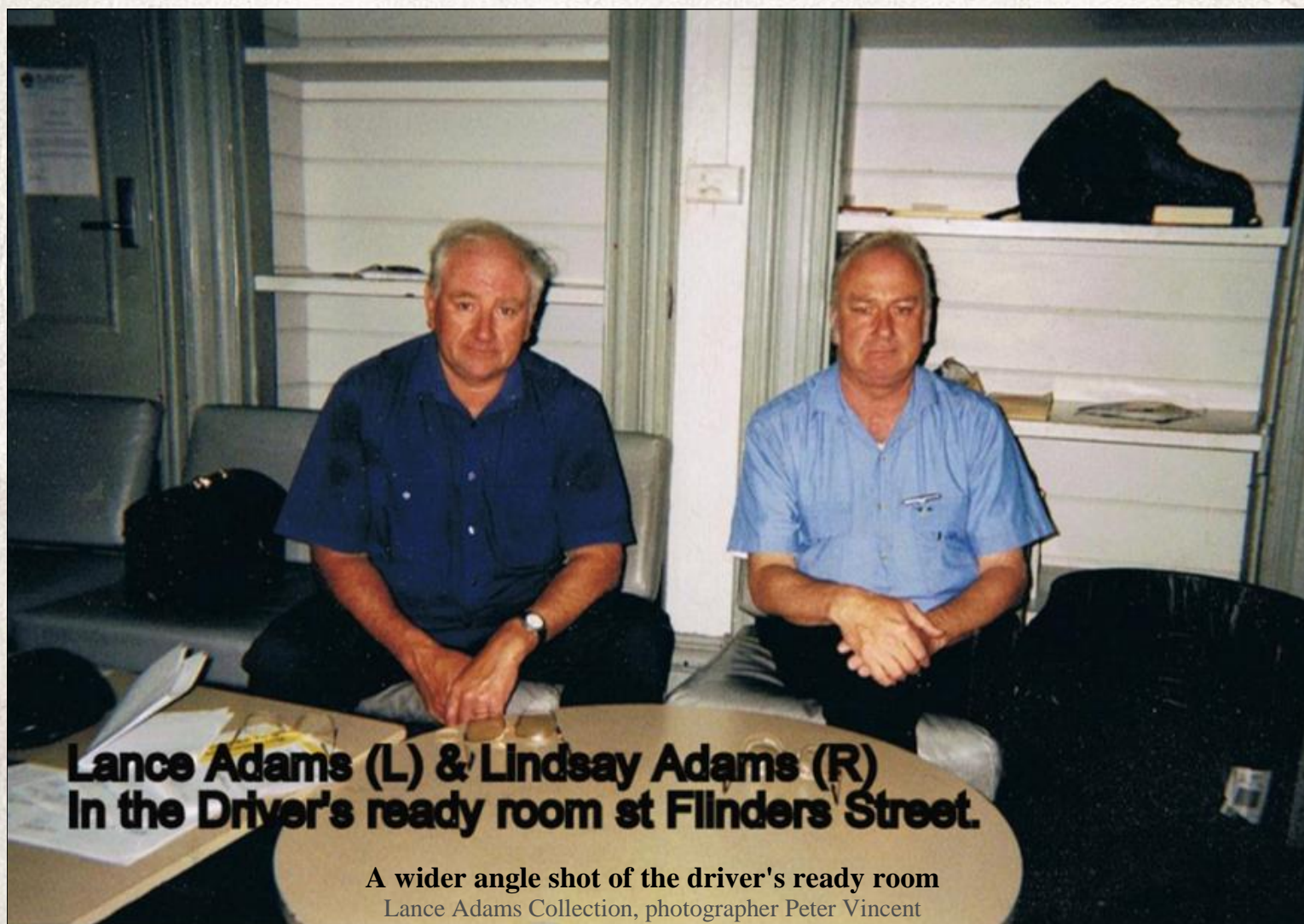
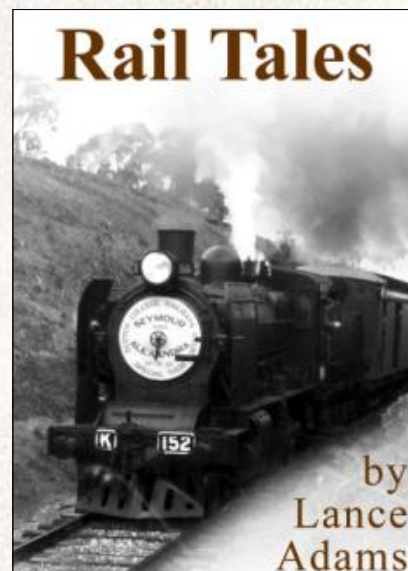
Drivers were issued a new grey overcoat every four years, and your length of service was measured in how many overcoats you had. you were referred to as a 'so many coat General'. It was expected that to sit at this table, you would have to be a five-coat General. In my case, I was a 12-coat General and extremely welcome to partake their company. Any trainee that might have been tagging along with me, would also be welcome at that table as a visitor. In the centre of this table was a single pine cone (the cone of silence) to signify any topic discussed at that table, would be treated as confidential, and never repeated.

On this particular morning, I arrived into Melbourne around 11.00 am and soon found myself seated with the senior drivers for morning tea. My brother (Lindsay) was amongst them.

As usual, whatever they were having for morning tea, was put in the middle of the large table and was shared amongst those present.

Morning tea duly progressed, with one by one the drivers present departed for their next assigned turns of duty. There was one small, empty, crisp white bag in the centre of the table, when a junior driver appeared at the head of the table and pointing to the crisp white bag, declared 'where are my doggy, chocolate treats'. The remaining men at the table, turned green, and bolted for the door. I think that they had the runs for a week afterwards! They were a ravenous lot, with anything on the table, fair pickings. Nothing was usually left over. They scampered quickly this day.

Lance Adams
Retired special class Locomotive driver
Former Yea Engineman
Yea



MY INVOLVEMENT WITH PUFFING BILLY

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 23 AUGUST 2021



5 NA class locomotives ready to run trains
on a busy day at Belgrave in 2010
Lance Adams Collection

When Puffing Billy first got underway in the 1950s, the railway was run by volunteer staff, with specialised qualified staff made available to run the train itself. With qualified steam crews in short supply in the metro' area, the railways called upon the Dandenong Firemen to work with the Lilydale Loco' drivers, to crew and run this service. As I had ended up being allocated to Dandenong, not long before qualifying to drive, this commenced a 40 year association with this organisation, where I made many long term friendships. Paid professional staff worked alongside the PBPS volunteers.

In 1977 the running of the popular little narrow gauge train, was taken over completely by the Emerald Tourist Railway Board, a government body being an arm of the Victorian Tourist Authority. The specialised qualified staff were asked to stay on in a casual working environment. I was one of those casuals. A number of staff were offered permanent employment away from the main railway organisation. These included, boiler makers, patten makers, fitters, and drivers.

Over the decades business grew, with the railway being very popular with international tourists as well as locals, all enjoying a steam hauled trip through the Dandenong Ranges.

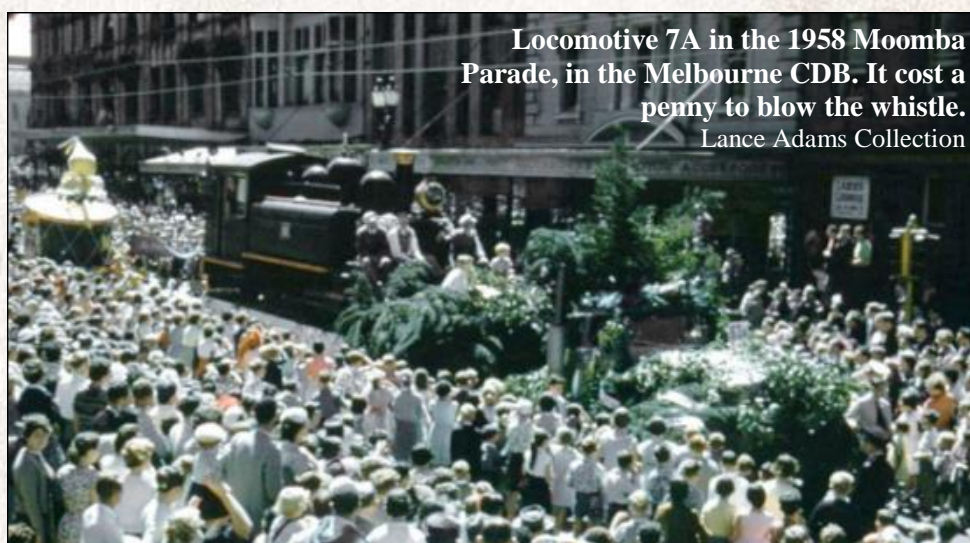
COVID 19 has hit the Puffing Billy Railway extremely hard, with train operations now down to a trickle, and with many of the long term specialised staff now just turning their backs and retiring. I know of three drivers who have decided enough is enough.

To get things started in the late 1950s to raise money for the railway's resurrection from the scrap heap of history, Puffing Billy in Steam, was loaded on to a low loader, and paraded through the streets of Melbourne, sounding its whistle, to raise interest with the general public. A penny was charged for children to have the opportunity to sound Billy's whistle. Enough money was raised to bring about the return of the train!!!!.

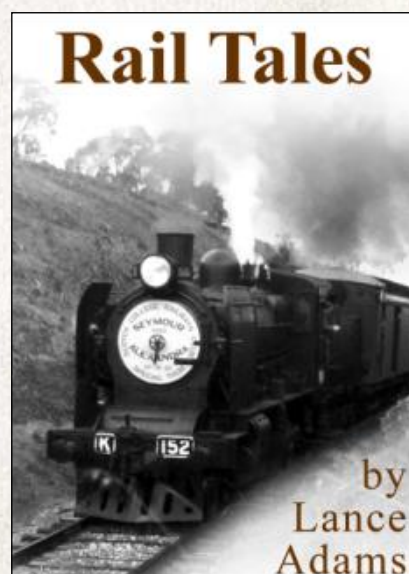
With Puffing Billy now risking its demise, it may be time to do something like this again. When this was done in 1958, driver Reg' Walton sat on the smokebox as the little engine was paraded down Swanston Street. Reg' was a regular driver on Puffing Billy in the early years, as well as on the former Narrow Gauge line out of Moe. Reg' was also our instructor when we were studying for our Drivers qualification. He was always a pleasure to work with on these narrow gauge Baldwin 2 – 6 – 2 Prairie Engines. They always behaved better for Reg', who retired to Mildura in the late 1980s and is now regrettably no longer among us. I took over his position as the driving grade instructor for steam locomotive enginemen on the Puffing Billy Railway.

Puffing Billy will require all the support it can get, if it is to survive into modernity. It is a unique piece of Victorian history, and I am proud that I was a part of it for 40 years.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea, Victoria



Locomotive 7A in the 1958 Moomba Parade, in the Melbourne CDB. It cost a penny to blow the whistle.
Lance Adams Collection



THE NIGHT I CAUGHT THE YEA GOODS

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA, 3 SEPTEMBER 2021



**2 X class diesel electric
Main Line locomotives**
© Bob Wilson 2021

It was a busy Friday night in Seymour, with lots of extra trains scheduled and the availability of engine crews at a premium. As was common practice, extra manpower could be brought in from satellite outstations to cover the shortfall.

I had previously done my week's allocation of work, on day shift, in the form of two runs to Alexandra and Mansfield respectively. I was offered an overtime shift to run the Up Albury express to Melbourne and return with a late evening empty steel flats train ex Long Island. It sounded like an interesting job, so I accepted it.

The regular Yea job on a Friday night was to travel in a taxi to Seymour, and travel per' the Up Albury train to Broadmeadows, to return with the regular Yea goods train. So I accompanied Yea driver Bob Crockett in the taxi and was rostered to travel back to Yea in the guards van, as a passenger on the 0115 Tallarook to Yea goods, No 113 down train.

The trip to Melbourne, with two main line S-Class diesel electric locomotives was uneventful, and I arrived at Spencer Street on time. We were relieved on arrival and given a note to inform me that my empty steel flats train was ready and waiting in the shipping sidings, behind Franklin Street signal box. After a not too long trek, we arrived at our waiting train, which consisted of two powerful 'X' Class diesels, and a consist of all bogie, empty express freight vehicles, that could run at passenger speeds. This was going to be quite a fast and exhilarating trip. I had had quite a long week from 0200 Monday morning and I was keen to get home.

We departed the shipping sidings around 2100 and following a blistering run across the suburban line through Essendon, saw us roaring through Broadmeadows, climbing towards Somerton to commence our assault upon the Great Dividing Range.

All was uneventful, apart from our rapid progress, until we approached Wallan, where we received a caution aspect on the Wallan distant signal. I immediately throttled off and arrested the speed of the train, with a light application of the Westinghouse brake. With dynamic brakes howling, I drifted into Wallan only to receive proceed aspects on all other signals. I once again knocked out the regenerative braking, made a full release of the Westinghouse compressed air braking system and commenced powering.

In no time we had crossed Lightwoods Crossing and we were rocketing up the gradient towards Heathcote Junction and the top of the Ranges with our light train and muscular steeds. I topped the hill at Heathcote Junction at near to track speed, throttled off, re-selected regenerative braking, and sat back to enjoy the exhilarating run.

With the dynamic brakes howling, I became quite alert to view the guards van lights of a train in front of me, which I immediately assumed were on the parallel interstate line adjacent to me. I then realised that this train I was observing, was not an interstate freight on another track, but a slow moving local train right in my path.

I threw the brake handle into emergency and hit the floor, screaming instructions to my locomotive assistant to do the same. Luckily the steel flats trains braking is very responsive when empty, and we managed to stop several engine lengths short of the train ahead of me. This result could have been, far, far, more catastrophic.

As it turned out, the regular Yea goods train with Bob Crockett at the controls, had been waiting at the Wallan starting signal for the line ahead to become clear. When my express goods train approached Wallan, the signalman there forgot that he had put the Yea goods train there, placed all the signals at proceed, and he now had two trains heading in the same section at the same time. A slow moving local train, and a fast moving express goods. If I had have been driving a train with not so responsive braking, the outcome would have been totally different.

The system we were working under at the time was the Double Line Block telegraph system, installed in the 1880s and still in use today (shudder!).

This event caused quite a stir at the time, with the Wallan signalman being stood down from his position. But in typical railway fashion, in later years he was promoted to a Senior Inspector's position. The VR was good at this.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea, Victoria



ALEXANDRA TIMETABLE CIRCA 1915

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA - 7 OCTOBER 2021

Table 59 TALLAROOK—CATHKIN—ALEXANDRA—MANSFIELD.						
READ DOWN.					READ UP.	
a.m.	a.m.	p.m.	Melbourne	a.m.	p.m.	
6 30	7 35	6 40	Lv. (Spencer-street) R Ar.	9 45	10 12	
8c35	9c3	8c47	Ar... Tallarook 57 ....Lv.	7 15	8 18	
8 55	9 10	9 5	Lv..... "Ar.	7c0	8c5	
9a12	9a27	a	..... Trawool	a	a	
a	a	a	..... Granite	a	a	
a	a	a	..... Kerrisdale	6a20	7a19	
9 46	10 1	9a53	..... Homewood	6a4	7aC	
10 5	10 20	10 33	Ar..... Yea T ....Lv.	5 50	8 45	
10 25	10 40	p.m.	Lv..... "Ar.	a.m.	6 25	
a	a	..	..... Chevlot .....	..	6a13	
a	a	..	..... Molesworth .....	..	5a47	
11 16	11 26	..	Ar..... Cathkin ....Lv.	..	5 39	
a.m.	a.m.	..	Lv..... Cathkin Ar.	..	5c12	
11 36	11 45	..	..... Koriella .....	..	a	
p.m.	p.m.	..	Ar... Alexandra ...Lv.	..	4 35	
a	a	..		..	p.m.	
12 24	12 33	..	Lv..... Cathkin ....Ar.	..	5 29	
a	a	..	..... Yarck .....	..	5 20	
a	a	..	..... Kanumbra .....	..	a	
p.m.	p.m.	..	..... Merton .....	..	4 42	
12 25	12 35	..	..... Woodfield .....	..	a	
12 40	12 50	..	..... Bonnie Doon ....	..	4 9	
12 55	1 5	..	..... Maindample .....	..	3a51	
a	a	..	Ar.... Mansfield ...Lv.	..	3 30	
1 40	1 55	..		..	p.m.	
p.m.	p.m.	..		..

The timetable for the Alexandra Line would have varied over the years, catering for traffic variations, and looked nothing remotely like this early timetable. But from my time on the line, there is a lot to be gained from reading between the lines.

Whilst this form of Read Up and Read Down timetable is difficult to comprehend, there is a lot of information to be gained from it on everyday operations. If you apply the way that things were done, then and now, some interesting information appears.

The train and car set, would have originated at Yea, with an early morning run to Tallarook and would have returned as the morning through mixed train (goods and passenger) to Mansfield, connecting at Cathkin for a local train to Alexandra.

A second mixed train would have departed Yea, ahead of the through Mansfield mixed train,

servicing, Cheviot, Molesworth and Cathkin en route. At Cathkin, the train would have been remarshalled so that it would now consist of Alexandra perishables, parcels, mail and passenger carriage. The train would have been then drawn ahead onto the Alexandra line.

After the passage of the through Mansfield train at 11.16 am, and the intending Alexandra line passengers changing trains, the Alexandra branch line train would have been reversed back into the platform and departed Cathkin at 11.29 am, running as a through to Alexandra, arriving at Alexandra AR 12.24 pm. Whilst the timetable shows the train laying over in Alexandra the entire afternoon, this would not have been the case. After placing the perishable vehicles at the goods shed for unloading, the locomotive would have been serviced and turned on the 53 foot balance turntable. Then a return trip to Cathkin made light engine (locomotive on its own), or any excess goods loading, to return with any heavy goods loading (rough trucks) for Koriella and Alexandra, due to the heavy 33 percent gradients in this section.

At 4.35 pm the mixed train departed Alexandra as a through train, negotiating the heavy 33 percent grades to Eglinton Cutting, and then the down grade run to Cathkin, arriving at 5.12 pm. Passengers would have changed trains and the branch line train set back on to the Alexandra line to permit the through Mansfield train to pass at 5.39 pm. Because of the fact that the engine crew off the Alexandra line train would have been on duty several hours longer than the engine crew on the Mansfield train, so on operating policy of first on, first off, they would have swapped over trains.

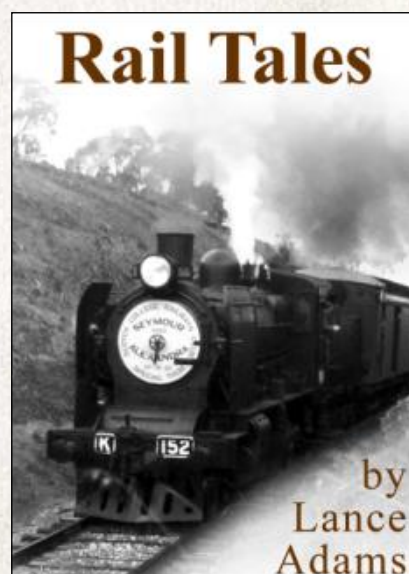
The branch line train, after placing urgent loading on the through train at Cathkin, would have followed it, one block section later, back to Yea, servicing Molesworth and Cheviot en route.

The through train would have continued onto Tallarook to connect with a main line, Melbourne train, before returning in the late evening to Yea.

Yea, was the operating location for the entire life of the line, with an engine crew and locomotive based at Cathkin for a short time from 1891–95, as this proved not to be successful. Long working hours were the order of the day, for engine crews working the line.

At its zenith, Yea boasted five engine crews, but had dwindled to three crews when I came on to the line as fireman, and to two crews when the line ceased operation in 1978.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea, Victoria



UP TRAINS AND DOWN TRAINS

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA - 17 NOVEMBER 2022

There is much speculation as to the origins of the term 'Up' trains, which run to Melbourne and 'Down' trains which run from Melbourne.

There are two different views on the origins of this terminology, being the following:

- Opinion 1 is that the terminology stems from the way that early timetables were written, in a read UP or read Down format, (example follows). I personally find this format difficult to read as I am not used to it.
- Opinion 2 is that it stems from the compiling of train graphs on paper, where the overseeing train controller would compile a graph on paper (using the horizontal scale in time) with the locations on a vertical scale to track the passage of trains. This method of accurately recording train movements creates a line sloping up, for 'Up' trains, with a line on a down angle for 'Down' trains.

I tend to go with the idea that both are correct, with one system eventually superceding the other.

The railways of today have stuck with the 'Up' and 'Down' terminology for local trains, but have gone into a different identification system for long haul trains. The railway is still evolving.

There was a fall down in the 'Up' and 'Down' system of identification, as an 'Up' train from Geelong, heading directly to the Main Bendigo line or North East line at Brooklyn, would have its direction from an 'Up' train changed ,to a 'Down' train, without stopping.

I have attached an early Alexandra timetable on the following page. The timetable is circa 1915.

Lance Adams
Retired Special Class Locomotive Driver
and Former Yea Engineman
Yea, Victoria



Table 59 **TALLAROOK—CATHKIN—ALEXANDRA—MANSFIELD.**

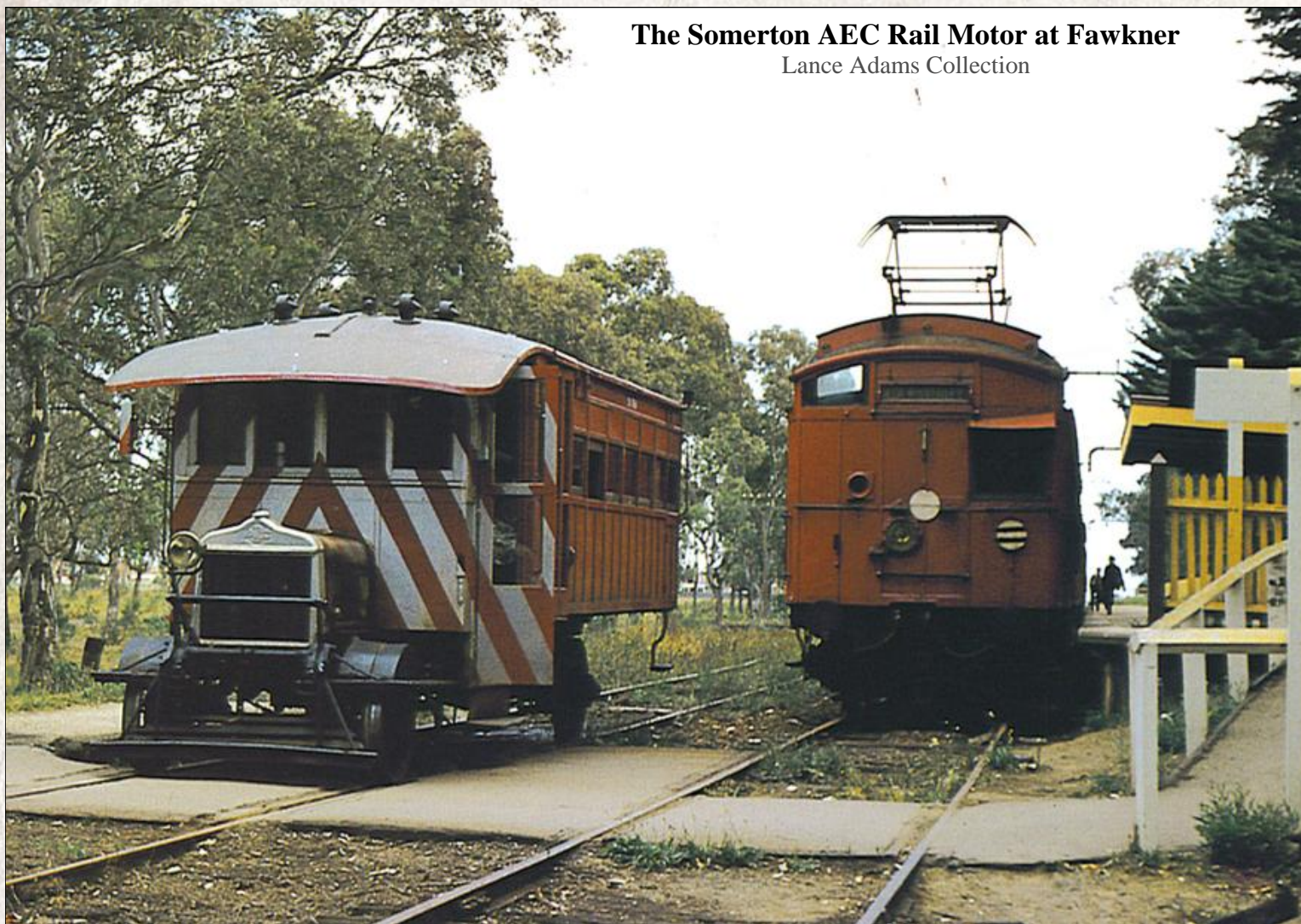
READ DOWN.				READ UP.		
a.m.	a.m.	p.m.	Melbourne	a.m.		p.m.
6 30	7 35	6 40	Lv. (Spencer-street) R Ar.	9 45	..	10 12
8c35	9c3	8c47	Ar... Tallarook 57Lv.	7 15	..	8 18
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9a12	9a27	a Trawool	a	..	a
a	a	a Granite	a	..	a
a	a	a Kerrisdale	6a20	..	7a19
9 46	10 1	9a53 Homewood	6a4	..	7a0
10 5	10 20	10 33	Ar..... Yea T ....Lv.	5 50	..	6 45
10 25	10 40	p.m.	Lv..... "Ar.	a.m.	..	6 25
a	a	..	..... Cheviot .....	..	..	6a13
a	a	..	..... Molesworth .....	..	..	5a47
11 16	11 26	..	Ar..... Cathkin ....Lv.	..	..	5 39
a.m.	a.m.	..	Lv..... Cathkin Ar.	..	..	5c12
11 36	11 45	..	..... Koriella .....	..	..	a
p.m.	p.m.	..	Ar... Alexandra ..Lv.	..	..	4 35
a	a	..				p.m.
12 24	12 33	..	Lv..... Cathkin ....Ar.	..	..	5 29
11 28	11 35	..	..... Yarck .....	..	..	5 20
a	a	..	..... Kanumbra .....	..	..	a
a	a	..	..... Merton .....	..	..	4 42
p.m.	p.m.	..	..... Woodfield .....	..	..	a
12 25	12 35	..	..... Bonnie Doon ....	..	..	4 9
12 40	12 50	..	..... Maingdample .....	..	..	3a51
12 55	1 5	..	Ar..... Mansfield ...Lv.	..	..	3 30
a	a	..				p.m.
1 40	1 55	..				
p.m.	p.m.	..				

Courtesy National Library Australia

HOW THE MELBOURNE TRAINS GOT THEIR SOUND

RETIRED TRAIN DRIVER AND FORMER YEA FIREMAN

© LANCE ADAMS, YEA - 11 JANUARY 2023



The Somerton AEC Rail Motor at Fawkner

Lance Adams Collection

In the 1950s the Melbourne suburban trains were fitted with a distinct, weak sounding pea whistle, which emanated from the bottom of a long air tube. It supplied compressed air from the air compressor and was used on the AEC Rail Motor above, pictured at Fawkner. This Melbourne suburban train shows the pea whistle arrangement fitted to the extreme left hand side of the carriage. This weak pea whistle was at the time a contentious issue with the train drivers union.

Only the Melbourne suburban parcel coaches at the time had an acceptable loud sounding whistle. One day a suburban Tait train (red rattler) arrived into the workshops at Jolimont with a defective pea whistle. With no pea whistles in stock as a replacement, a top mounted set of air horns were fitted. At the time, trains were marshalled in four carriage blocks at the

West End and three carriage units on the East End. This altered carriage was deliberately placed as the centre motor carriage of a seven car Block and Unit. All went unnoticed for some time, until the train was split into a four car block for a run to Frankston and return. The train driver on this run had a decent sounding whistle, and let every one hear it.

Within a short time space, the train drivers union became aware of the fitting of the louder and more appropriate whistle, and with the Victorian Railways agreement, the entire suburban fleet was converted to the top mounted trumpet arrangement.



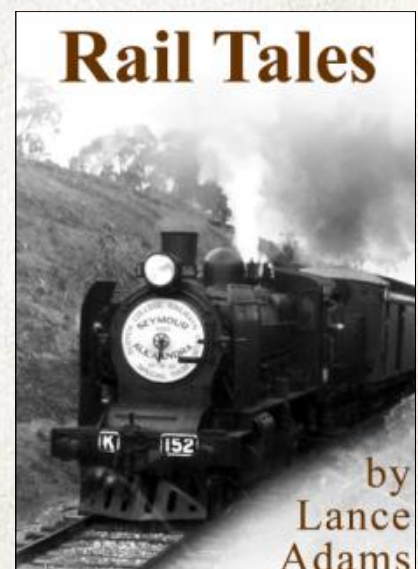
159 ABM on the last electric at Barker

Lance Adams Collection

On the left is a view of The top mounted air trumpets on a Melbourne suburban train circa 1957.

The Melbourne suburban trains have a unique sound today, because of this mid 1950s action by the fitting staff at the Jolimont train Maintenance facility

Lance Adams
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Yea, Victoria



A collection of articles written by Lance Adams
and published in the Artworkz eSplash Magazine

© Lance Adams



RECORDING OUR HISTORY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS TO UNDERSTAND AND ENJOY