



## SteamRanger's Heritage - an insight into our past

### BACKGROUND

Copy of the Victor Harbor line passenger timetable towards the end of its operation as a public railway.

The article also includes a record of a special public meeting at Goolwa on 13<sup>th</sup> March 1980 called to discuss the future of the line

The line was eventually closed as a public line in April 1984 and operated by SteamRanger under various restrictions until 1990 when major physical upgrading of the track began, continuing for the next 4 years.

### VICTOR HARBOR LINE

ARHS Recorder Vol 17 No 6 April 1980 pages 115, 116

The new passenger timetable was brought into effect on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1980. The timetable for the services is given on the next page:

The new service has been reasonably well patronised. Head-end powered trains worked on 7/3/80, 8/3/80, 10/3/80, 15/3/80 and 17/3/80 when 953, 1 700.2 600, CD; 930, 3 700, CD; 933, 5 700, CD; 940, 3 700, CD; and 934, 3 700, CD were the respective consists of the trains. The remainder of the trains were worked by Bluebird railcars. Single cars ran on 3/3/80, 14/3/80, 21/3/80, 24/3/80 and 31/3/80; two cars on 9/3/80, 22/3/80 and 28/3/80; three cars on 23/3/80 and 30/3/80 and four cars on 16/3/80 and 29/3/80.

On 28/3/80 the Goods to Victor was worked by 840 and 846. On its return journey the locos hauled 3 DWF vans, MG, AOWY and brake 8320. The goods service has been given another reprieve to the end of April, 1980.

On 23/3/80 the 1630 hrs. train ex Victor comprising cars 252, 101 and 259 did not depart until 1650 hrs. The late departure is believed to have been caused by the late arrival of the taxi transporting the crew to Victor.

A public meeting was held in the Goolwa Town Hall on 12/3/80 to protest over the altered timetable and possible closure of the line. About 400 people including politicians from both sides of the House, the General Manager and Assistant General Manager, Engineering and Planning from ANR and local dignitaries.

A special Bluebird railcar set comprising cars 252, 101 and 259 was hired by the Branchline Travellers Association to enable residents from Adelaide to attend the meeting. The return fare was \$5.00, 20 cents cheaper than the regular return fare to Goolwa.

The first speaker, Mr. Tilbrook, President Victor Harbor Tourist Association suggested that the State Government should subsidise the line. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition said that local communities should make an effort to use the services if they wanted to retain them and the Minister of Tourism, Mrs. Adamson, said that she had only received one letter on the topic of the Victor Harbor line.

No. 331			No. 804			
Sunday, Monday, Friday, Saturday			Sun. Mon. Fri. Sat.			
(Tues. Wed. Thurs. when necessary)			(Tues. Wed. Thurs. when necessary)			
Adelaide	dep	0850	Victor Harbor	dep	1630	
Goodwood	pass	0856	130.47 km (Adare)		+	
Mitcham	arr	0903	Port Elliot	arr	1640	
	dep	0904		dep	1641	
Eden Hills	pass	0911	Middleton	arr	1646	
Blackwood	arr	0919		dep	1647	
	dep	0920	Goolwa	arr	1700	
Belair	arr	0925		dep	1701	
	dep	0926	288 W.N.	Currency Creek	pass	1713
Long Gully	pass	0934		Gilberts		—
Mt. Lofty	arr	0942		Finniss	pass	1725
	dep	0943		Strathalbyn	arr	1744
Aldgate	arr	0950	314 Weekdays		dep	1746
	dep	0954		Bugle Ranges	pass	1818
Bridgewater	arr	0958	338 Weekdays	Mt. Barker	arr	1833
	dep	1000			dep	1835
Balhannah	arr	1011		Littlehampton		—
	dep	1012		Mt. Barker Jct	pass	1845
Mt. Barker Jct	pass	1018		Balhannah	arr	1851
Littlehampton		—			dep	1852
Mt. Barker	arr	1026				
	dep	1027		No. 804	No. 804	
Bugle Ranges	pass	1040		(M & F)	(Sat. & Sun.)	
Strathalbyn	arr	1102	Bridgewater	arr	1904	1904
	dep	1103		dep	1905	793 (Sat.)
Finniss	pass	1118	Aldgate	arr	1909	803
Gilberts		—		dep	1913	797 W.N.
Currency Creek	pass	1130		arr	1919	1910
Goolwa	arr	1140	Mt. Lofty	dep	1920	1916
	dep	1142		arr	—	1917
Middleton	arr	1151	Long Gully	arr	—	817 (Sat.)
	dep	1152		pass	1927	1923
Port Elliot	arr	1157	Belair	arr	1934	1931
	dep	1158		dep	1935	1932
130-47 km (Adare)		⊖	Blackwood	arr	1939	1936
Victor Harbor	arr	1206		dep	1940	1937
			Mitcham	arr	1952	1947
				dep	1953	1948
			Goodwood	pass	1958	1953
			Adelaide	arr	2005	2000

Dr. Williams, General Manager ANR, started his speech by quoting freight and passenger figures for the period 1977-1979 which were not very encouraging. A total of 2599 tonnes was carried as Inwards freight to Victor Harbor in 1977-1978 and the 1978-1979 figure was much the same. Outwards freight totalled 505 tonnes for the year 1977-1978 with engines hauling one-fiftieth of their rated capacity, passenger figures were also discouraging with off-peak trains averaging 28 passengers per journey. Most questions during question time were directed at Dr. Williams. In answer to a question on the cost of upgrading the line so that trains could run at reasonable speeds he quoted a figure of \$1.4 million but within five or six years \$8 million would be required to replace obsolete rolling stock. Dr. Williams assured the meeting that grain would continue to be transported by rail from Strathalbyn.

Footnote:

The same issue of the "Recorder" noted that ANR has seen fit to demolish the passenger shelter at Finniss Station. The shelter was built in 1868 to service the original Strathalbyn to Middleton horse tramway and was the last of that design of shelter remaining on the System. The design with some variations, was used extensively on the SAR from the late 1860's onwards.