



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

BACKGROUND

Part of a "Recorder" series on SA Railway Stations - Part 3

Victor Harbor is the southernmost station on the SteamRanger Tourist Railway and houses the SHR souvenir shop, Ticket Office and Station Master's office.

The building was refurbished by SteamRanger in 2007 and 2008 and will be further restored in future years as a part of a broad Council redevelopment of the railway precinct. Additional tenants will be accommodated whilst retaining the historic fabric of the building.

### SA RAILWAY STATIONS - VICTOR HARBOR

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<b>Name Derivation:</b>	Named by Captain Crozier in 1837 after his ship, H.M.S. Victor.
<b>Distance from Adelaide:</b>	131 km.
<b>Height above sea level:</b>	5 metres.

The South Coast railway was extended to Victor Harbor when it was found that Port Elliott previously chosen as a harbour and railhead was too dangerous for shipping

The Port Elliott - Victor Harbor section was opened for goods traffic on 1st. April 1864. The line was officially opened by Mr Dobson, chairman of the District Council of Encounter Bay on the 4th. August 1864. The ceremony was held on the jetty at Victor Harbor which was named Victoria Pier.

The railway shed built in 1864 to cater for the volume of traffic on the horse drawn railway still stands to this day

On March 24th 1985 the first steam motor arrived at Victor Harbor and on the 1st. April loco hauled trains were used. The present brick station and passenger platform were built in 1926.

Victor Harbor is one of the few places in South Australia which has the word "Harbor" as part of the name. There are two spellings of this word. The Collins Dictionary defines a Harbour as a shelter for ships; give shelter, protection to; entertain and also states that the word is spelt "Harbor" in the United States.

Visitors to Victor Harbor will have noticed that the station nameboard spells the name "Victor Harbour" while the name "Victor Harbor" is used in the town proper. Which is correct? To answer this question it is necessary to study history.

As we have seen earlier in this article the area was named by Capt. Crozier in 1838. A letter from the Captain was published in the S.A. Gazette and Colonial Register on 20/1/1838 and in part it read:

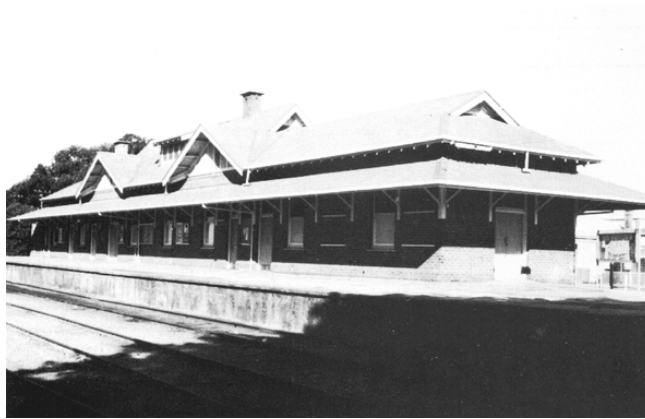
"This really appears to be a splendid harbour, with an outer roadstead or sound which I have named "Capel's Sound" after my worthy commander-in-chief; we being the first ship that has been here I named it "Victor Harbor". I understand two rivers run into part of Encounter Bay with bars of sand at their mouths ...."

The name "Port Victor" was given to the port on 28/6/1838. The use of the word "Harbor" in official circles has been a long standing practice in South Australia. Maps compiled in 1865 use "Harbor" when referring to the South Coast area. In the Marine Board and Navigation Act of 1881 the position of Harbormaster was defined as the officer of the Marine Board charged with the administration of the Act at any port of the Province and it could be assumed that the Harbormaster was in charge of a Harbor.

The District Council of Franklin Harbor on the West Coast was proclaimed on 5/1/1888 and when the new berths for Port Adelaide were opened in 1908 it was called "Outer Harbor". That harbour was originally known as the Outer Harbour of Port Adelaide and the confusion was settled by the Harbors Act of 1913 which classified all harbours as "Harbor".

The Corporation of the Town of Victor Harbor was formed on 28/5/1914, the area prior to that date administered by the District Council of Encounter Bay. The present local governing authority for the town is the District Council of Victor Harbor.

It would be safe to say that every time that the word Harbor is used as a proper name in South Australia it is spelt without the "u"



Victor Harbor Station in 1984 Photo: R Coombe

## **FOOTNOTE**

The following article was published in the September 1987 issue of "The Recorder"  
(Vol 24, No 11, pg 198)

### **Victor Harbor or Harbour**

A recent national conference of the Style Council, a group of linguists including publishers, academics, education workers and members of the Macquarie University's Dictionary Research Centre have agreed to disagree on a uniform spelling style for Australian English. Victoria, Tasmania and SA argued for the dropping of the letter "u" from words such as harbor and replacing the "z" with "s" in words such as recognise, but were forced into a tie by NSW, Queensland and WA which want to stay with the Oxford English Dictionary spelling of the words.

Both the Primary School and Railway Station spell 'harbour' while the local Council and Post Office favor (or favour?) the name without the "u". A spokesperson for the Education Department's English Language studies said that the Department will continue to resist the idea of a correct and incorrect way of spelling "our" and "or" words on the grounds it could put an end to free expression. While the Department's publications branch has adopted color, program and recognise as its officially correct spelling it did not insist on a uniformity of spelling styles in the classroom.

As far as the Editor is concerned the spelling of harbor will be without "u". If any reader is concerned about this decision I can only say that the best way to put "u" in Victor Harbor is by steam train.