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Inside: Rothenburg to Munster Last Trains to Kingston RRP \$4.95 Incl. GST

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GEOFF LAMBERT

<u>ROTHENBERG</u> to MUNSTER VIA SLOW TRAIN THE LAST SOUTH EAST NARROW GAUGE 3 12

DAVID HENNELL



Rothenberg ob der Tauber to Munster, via the secondary lines **GEOFF LAMBERT**

HERE CAN'T BE TOO MANY towns on the planet where its citizens dance and hold parades in celebration of the cessation of the Black Death. Rothenberg is one of them.

Rothenburg was my destination on 4th May 1977. I travelled 70 km of the 407 km "romantic route" on a tourist bus that runs along the lesser roads from Wurzburg to Fusen.

Rothenburg-ob-der-Tauber (literally, the "red castle on the Tauber") is the kind of medieval town that even Walt Disney might have thought too picturesque to be true, with half-timber architecture galore and a wealth of fountains and flowers against a backdrop of towers and turrets. Rothenburg is perhaps the best-known of all the medieval "sights" on the Romantic Road. It is a prime example of a walled medieval town - one of the few left in Germany - and its beautiful buildings, walls and alleys have led to it becoming one of the most popular tourist destinations in Bavaria. It has a kind of Pythonesque "Away from it all" twisted travelogue air to it.

I did not record the times of my bus trip and I do not remember how many



pick-ups and set-downs we did. The standard driving time for these minor roads in 2023 seems to be between 42 and 48 minutes, depending on which site one consults. I think my trip probably took about an hour.

I wandered around town and the surrounding countryside for a few hours and then headed for the town's railway station (top photo on our cover, and below). There, I was able to have lunch and a refreshing lager, before joining the driver of the branch lines railcar (415177) for the 1409 (#6358) service for Steinach.

The driver was quite friendly and chatty, although the language barrier was a bit of a hurdle. I did manage to get a couple of photos of the line ahead and some more at Steinach, where the service terminated, and I changed trains to a diesel-hauled











through train to Wurzburg.

Then, it was back to the home of my host Klaus Buff in Veltshochhelm, a suburb of Wurzburg. [see November The Times]. After refreshments, and for reasons now forgotten, I made my way to the Veltshochhelm railway station for an 8-minute trip back to Wurzburg Hbf and back again to my lodgings. This brief and short trip is not shown in the table at the top of page 4.

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| Day | Section Start | Section End | ORM Line# | Trip Length | Line Length | Line name | Tir | nes | Elapsed | kph |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|------------------------------------|-------|-------|---------|-----|
| 4-May-77 | Rothenburg ob der Tauber | Steinach | 5251 | 11.0 | 37.3 | | 14:09 | 14:23 | 0:14 | 47 |
| 4-May-77 | Steinach | Wurzburg | 5321 | 57.1 | 140.2 | 5321 Treuchtlingen - Würzburg | 14:29 | 15:03 | 0:34 | 101 |
| 1 | | | | 68.1 | | | | | 0:48 | |
| 5-May-77 | Wurzburg | Gemunden | 5200 | 37.8 | 89.3 | 5200 Würzburg - Aschaffenburg | 11:32 | 11:53 | 0:21 | 108 |
| 5-May-77 | Gemunden | Flieden | 3825 | 54.3 | 54.3 | 3825 Flieden - Gemünden | 11:54 | 12:32 | 0:38 | 86 |
| 5-May-77 | Flieden | Bebra | 3600 | 74.4 | 247.7 | 3600 Frankfurt (M) Hbf - Göttingen | 12:32 | 13:21 | 0:49 | 91 |
| 5-May-77 | Bebra | Baunatal Gunterhausen | 6340 | 44.3 | 210.4 | 6340 Halle-Bebra Railway | 13:25 | 13:59 | 0:34 | 78 |
| 5-May-77 | Baunatal Gunterhausen | Kassel Hbf | 3900 | 13.5 | 199.8 | 3900 Kassel - Frankfurt | 14:00 | 14:14 | 0:14 | 58 |
| 5-May-77 | Kassel Hbf | Warburg | 2550 | 52.3 | 343.6 | 2550 Aachen - Kassel | 14:31 | 15:03 | 0:32 | 98 |
| 5-May-77 | Warburg | Altenbeken | 2970 | 37.2 | 136.0 | 2970 Altenbeken - Warburg | 15:05 | 15:27 | 0:22 | 101 |
| 5-May-77 | Altenbeken | Himmighausen | 1760 | 9.3 | 180.8 | 1760 Hannover - Soest | 15:32 | 15:40 | 0:08 | 70 |
| 5-May-77 | Himmighausen | Herford | 1700 | 47.3 | 176.4 | 1700 Hannover - Hamm (Westf) | 15:40 | 16:26 | 0:46 | 62 |
| 5-May-77 | Herford | Rheda | 2990 | 40.3 | 115.6 | 2990 Minden (Westf) - Hamm (Westf) | 16:36 | 17:12 | 0:36 | 67 |
| 5-may-77 WU 5-May-77 Ge 5-May-77 Flie 5-May-77 Bel 5-May-77 Bel 5-May-77 Wa 5-May-77 Wa 5-May-77 He 5-May-77 He | Rheda | Munster | 2013 | 50.1 | 50.1 | 2013 Warendorff Railway | 17:13 | 18:13 | 1:00 | 50 |
| | | | | 460.8 | 1804 | 11 | | | 6:41 | 69 |



Thursday May 5th 1977

I think I slept in on this morning and then caught a local bus to the <u>Wurzburg Hbf</u>, bought my ticket to Munster (DM56), and wandered around to watch the trains go by. There were quite a few to see.

My train was # D584, the Passau-Hamburg (?) train and had left Passau at 0742. It was hauled by loco <u>111-117</u> <u>-2</u>, with 3 schlaffwagen (sleeping cars) and 14 passenger cars. Given the time of day, the Schlaffwagen were probably an empty balancing movement, returning to Hamburg, because the opposite number was a night train. For me, it was to be a "Day Train".

I was getting used to the Wurzburg-Veltshochhelm section by now, having traversed it once in January and three times in May. This was the Wurzburg –Aschaffenburg railway, Line 5200, but we were to branch off at Gemunden, 38km and 21 minutes further north. Here we made an end-on connection with 3825, the Flieden Gemunden line (right).

We followed this line for its entire

length of 54 km to Flieden. The line pretty much followed the Sinn River. Just north of Obersinn, we crossed the Bavaria-Hesse border, plunged into the Ruppertsberg tunnel and emerged into a different world at Jossa. The next 23 km to Elm was uppy-downy and twisty-curvy and even featured a horseshoe curve near Elm. Elm railway station (which is 108 metres above the town centre) is the junction for the 4.1 km Route 3826 single-track connector to near Schlüchtern Ziegenberg on Route 3600 (the







Frankfurt–Göttingen railway), which my train was to join 3 minutes later. These days, the ICE train burrows below the whole shebang.

Flieden station was opened in 1868 with the Kinzig Valley Railway. The mountains between Flieden and Schluchtern initially led to the decision to build a zig zag line in order to avoid building an almost 4 km long tunnel. This required all through trains to reverse at Elm, which led to increasing congestion, especially after the arrival at Elm in 1873 of the Flieden-Gemunden railway (the line my train was on). Tunnel-building technology had improved significantly by the beginning of the 20th century, notably with the increased availability of dynamite. Thus, in 1909, construction of the 4 km Schluchtern tunnel eventually began under Distelrasen. The tunnel was completed





on 14 February 1914 and put into operation on 1 May that year. In 2009 a second tube was opened and the old tunnel is now being rebuilt as a singletrack tunnel. The drawing I made as we passed Elm is at below left.

We barely paused at Flieden, before making our way towards Fulda, where I noticed a line-up of 20 American Army tanks at a level crossing and a roundhouse still with Dampfloks stored inside. These days, north of Fulda there is a tourist attraction -"Trainspottingstelle Niesig-Lehnerz". The main attractions here now seem to be the ICE trains.

I detrained at Bebra and let the sleeper train go on its way to Hamburg. I noticed that a nearby park had a "stuffed and mounted" 2-8-2 steam loco D120. This park now appears to be a rail museum with a miniature



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Old box 1228 3 Forcel reundhouse, olda. Fulda 124 1247-FAF D -Pass 251 Waboch

railway. The old roundhouse now appears to be a carpark.

My next train, Zug# E2672, with Lok N^r 141.316.6, and a measly 3 cars, got underway six minutes after I got off the sleeper train at Bebra. This was line #6340, the Halle-Bebra Railway, which would take me to <u>Baunatal</u> <u>Guntershausen</u> in the first instance. This was only a half-hour journey, but an interesting one, as the line wound back and forth alongside the Fulda River, through what was clearly fertile farming country.

At Beiseforth, a private railway crossed above the DB line on an overbridge. The bridge is still there in 2023, but the railway track has vanished. Further along, at Melsungen, a 0-4-0 diesel shunter, #333 of the 200 -4 class was at work in an industrial area which included a large pharmacutical (Braun) and a produce wholesaler, with many silos served by rail.

Gunterhausen was approached from the south by a large stone viaduct (above right).

Parked in the sidings at Williamshohe, just south of Kassel was an unusual sight—the Mobile Criminal Museum train.

At Kassel, a "lager city" of 200,000





The junctions at Fulda and Bebra



<u>Hessians</u>, the locomotive changed ends, while the cars stood in the station, a process which took some 17 minutes. The platform where this happened in 1977, now serves tram line 890.

The city is connected to the national rail network at two stations, Kassel Central, and Kassel-Wilhelmshöhe. The traditional central station (Hauptbanhoff) has since been reduced to the status of a regional station since





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Change direction Kassel ~r 1 dep з 3 4 6 3 8 ومساليا enstein -gelsmar 5 2 #berse Lomerden 456 - poss (4 curs) Liebenaa 458 500 502 Le real 503 1508 15 1 5 Ø 5 2 7 5 2 5 3 537

the opening of the Hanover-Würzburg high-speed rail line in 1991 and its station (Kassel-Wilhelmshöhe) on the high-speed line at which the InterCityExpress (ICE) and InterCity services call as well as Nightjet and Flixtrain.

We were now on line 2550, the Aachen-Kassel line, heading northwest towards Warburg — 52 km and 32 minutes away. The only station stop I recorded was at <u>Hofgeismar</u>, a popular tourist town on the <u>Timber Frame</u> <u>Road</u>.

Just short of Warburg, we crossed the <u>Diemel River</u> on a famous "Viadukt" (lower right) and thus passed from Hesse to <u>North Rhine-</u> <u>Westphalia</u> ... I never noticed this at the time.

In looking at a Google Earth image of this Viadukt, as it is in 2023 (see right), I noticed a curious thing—there appears to be only one active track. This, I discovered, holds true for the entire length of the line today. The most recent Wikipedia page on the line (July 2022 ... the first was written in September 2010) says this of it: "*The* route is classified as a main line railway and has two tracks for its whole length. It is classified as track class D4, which allows axle loads of 22.5t and a linear load of 8.0 t/m. The entire route is equipped with the





Punktförmige Zugbeeinflussung (PZB 90) train control system and the Geschwindigkeitsüberwachung *Neigetechnik (GNT) speed monitoring* system for Tilting trains (ZUB 262).

The photograph, above (left and middle), of the station of Humme was taken on 12-Feb-2012 and seems to show two different classes of track, even then. This station was the junction for "Carl's Railway" opened in 1848 and closed in 1986 (map upper right). The 2006 photo at middle right shows the branch diverging to the right. The track plan is shown above. I am tempted to say that the line is now "twin-track", rather than "double track" and that freight trains use only the "heavy duty track". The safeworking system may allow for this?

These days, this station receives a regular terminating railcar service from Kassel, as shown by the two images at right and below, as grabbed from the tracking website "Zug Finder". The far right image shows the railcar emerging from the car sheds, backing into a dead-end platform at Kassel, then making its way north to Humme. Alstom describes its Kassel facility in these terms: "Manufacturing Facility, Services Centre & Engineering Office Production, testing and service of locomotives". Alstom (aka. Bombardier) designed here what was later to become V/Line's V/Locity railcars.

From Kassel to Warburg-on line 2550-we had been slowly climbing. The climb—now on line 2970steepened after leaving the Diemel Valley at Warburg. Line 2970 is part of the "Hamm-Warburg Railway", comprising (in order from the northwest):

- 2930 Hamm-Soest- 25 km; •
- 1760 Soest-Altenbeken- 70 km:
- 2970 Altenbeken-Warburg- 37 km.













Altenbeken, at 270 metres, was the high point and lay nestled under the Egge hills which reach about 420 metres—see Google Map above right.

I made no particular note about the railway as it approached Altenbeken from the south, but it was notorious for the number of times it had been blocked by rockslides. This section of line has since (2003) been bypassed through safe terrain to the west. The bypass includes the 2872-metre Egge Tunnel and the 230-Egge Gallery - a snow shed-like affair, to protect the line from rock slides. This was such a significant project that it became the subject of an engineering paper "Refining the mix on the Egge Tunnel" in the journal "Tunnels and *Tunneling*". The old line is barely



visible in Google Earth these days.

We arrived at Altenbeken at 15:27. My notes say "*change direction, attach diesel electric loco*", but I did not record, and no longer recall, how this was achieved. I began to think I must have had some sort of a brain snap on the day because the OpenRailway track plan (page 8) shows that line 2970 bifurcates here, with line 2970 terminating where it meets line 1760. But then ... Bingo! ... I suddenly realised that the bifurcation didn't exist in 1977. My train, did exactly what I had written in my notebook.

We were destined for line 1760—or, at least, a very short segment of it. Wiki says this of the lines near here: *The Hamm–Warburg railway is a 131 km long main line railway in the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia. It is part of an east-west line, known as the Mid-Germany Connection, and is served by InterCity trains between the Ruhr and Kassel, Erfurt and Berlin. In addition, there are dense freight and regional services. The line was opened between 1850 and 1853 and is one of the oldest railways in Germany. The most important stops are in Soest,* Lippstadt and Paderborn. Altenbeken station is also a major point for train connections. In Warburg the line connects with the line to Kassel. Between Hamm and Paderborn the track allows speeds of up to 200 km/h.

We departed Altenbeken on line 1760 at 15:27 and passed quickly into the Rehberg Tunnel, of 1632 metres, emerging near Langeland to find a flyover, where route 2904 split off to the right from 1760 to run downhill to Holzminden and, eventually, to Kreiensen. We veered left and downgrade towards Himmighausen Hbf, where we again veered left onto line 2983, the Herford-Himmighausen Railway.

According to Wikipedia: The Herford-Himmighausen railway is a 48 kmlong line from Herford via Detmold to Himmighausen (leading to Altenbeken) and is a single-track and electrified main line. In Herford this route is known as the Lippische Bahn (Lippe Railway).

The line was built in 1880 by the Cologne-Minden Railway Company (branching off its trunk line between

Bielefeld and Minden. Construction started in Herford and followed the easy course of the Werre river uphill. On 31 December 1880, the line was opened for freight only and only as far as Detmold. A short time later, the CME was nationalised and the route became part of the Prussian state railways, along with the Hanover-Altenbeken railway built by the Hanover-Altenbeken Railway Company in 1872, which connected to the Hamm-Warburg railway built by the Royal Westphalian Railway Company. To create a link between these two railway lines, the Herford-Detmold line was extended from the Were Valley to the Egge hills. On 12 June 1895, the whole line was opened to the newly constructed Himmighausen station on the Hanover -Altenbeken line. The new terminus at Himmighausen was a changing point to trains towards Hamelin station.

The line had been electrified four years before my trip, so that it could be used as an emergency bypass line, when other lines were blocked. [I must have been working from some pre-1973 document when I passed through and expected a diesel.]

In 43 km, we began our drop down to Herford (right) in what we might call the "German component" of the "Low Countries". This being a single line, I was interested to see how crossings were made. The logbook shows we went through Leopoldstal at speed and has the notation "Frt" This freight train must have been in the dead-end siding, because there never seems to have been a crossing loop.





At Detmold, which had an island platform, we crossed a passenger train heading south. Detmold didn't have much to interest me—but this hadn't always been so. In 1946, the British Army of the Rhine took over the line from Deutsche Reichsbahn and set up a training track where railway engineers could learn how to operate a German railway. Subsequently, the British took over the operational management of the line, both passenger and freight traffic and the



operation of the signal boxes. 3 Railway Operating Group of the Royal Engineers was in charge. The management was undertaken by the 153 Railway Operating Coy, which was specifically stationed in Detmold for this purpose. The British Army operated British war locomotives of the Austerity class (wheel arrangement 2-8-0) to Detmold, but they were soon supplemented by seizing Reichsbahn locomotives and the Austerity locomotives were abandoned in 1947. The line was returned to German control in 1948, shortly before the founding of Deutsche Bundesbahn.

Our next cross was at Bad Salzuflen-Sylbach, where we met the opposing service, also hauled by a 141 class, #075-2.

Thence to Herford ... Herford, a rather large station, was another instance of "change locos, change ends, change directions", the third for the day. This process took 10 minutes. Now we were finally headed south, along line 2990, the double track Hamm–Minden Railway. This line is an important and historically significant railway in Germany. It is now (2023) completely quadruple track. It is a major axis for long distance passenger and freight trains between the Ruhr and the north and east of Germany. It is the part of the trunk line built by the Cologne-Minden Railway Company (German, old spelling: Cöln-Mindener Eisenbahn-Gesellschaft, CME) from Köln Deutz to Minden. It was opened in 1847 and has been modernized and developed several times since then [Wikipedia].

It was pretty boring-I think I fell asleep-but I did see trains on the other line, near Brake, Brackwede and Gutersloh. Then we were at Rheda and veered off, and under, line 2990 to join line 2013, the single track Warendorf Railway. Wiki describes this line thus: The Warendorf Railway (is a singletrack branch line from Münster via Warendorf to Rheda-Wiedenbrück in the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia. It is now served by a train that continues from Rheda-Wiedenbrück to Bielefeld. The line is a section of the former Münster-Rheda-Lippstadt railway and is now operated as part of Deutsche Bahn's Münster-Ostwestfalen regional network, based in Münster.

According to Deutsche Bahn, it is the most <u>accident-prone</u> railway line in Germany.

This last stretch to Munster is the ONLY section of the trip which I can remember—it was dull, grey, misty and depressing. These days, one can fetch out of the archives what the weather was REALLY like. The weather record for the Munster-Osnabrook airport confirms that my memory has served me well. Why I cannot remember a single thing about the first 95% of the trip is a total mystery to me (a neuroscientist!).

Waiting at the station were Margaret and Robert Mrongovius, former fellow Ph.D student colleagues at Melbourne University. They knew I was coming and on what train, because I had sent them an aerogram (remember them?) from New York. <u>Ah, but we were so</u> <u>much older then ../we're younger than</u> <u>that now"</u> Robert and Margaret now live near Kingston, South Australia the subject of our next story.

Note on Sources

Back in the days when I collected EVERYTHING, I had a number of copies of DB's PTTs. I don't seem to have them now. However, the British organisation "<u>Timetable World</u>" has

| | 197 | З РТТ | 1977 | Actual | 1985 WTT | | |
|----------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|----------|--------|--|
| Station | Arrive | Depart | Arrive | Depart | Arrive | Depart | |
| Wurzburg | | 11:31 | | 11:32 | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| Gemunden | 11:54 | 11:54 | 11:53 | 11:54 | | | |
| Jossa | | | | | | | |
| Fulda | 12:42 | 12:44 | | | | | |
| Flieden | | | 12:32 | 12:32 | | | |
| Hunfeld | | | | | | | |
| BadHersfeld | | | | | | | |
| Bebra | 13:19 | 13:22 | 13:21 | 13:27 | | 13:10 | |
| Rotenberg | | | 13:32 | 13:33 | 13:14 | 13:15 | |
| Melsungen | | | 13:47 | 13:48 | 13:32 | 13:33 | |
| Guxhagen | | | 13:56 | 13:56 | 13:42 | 13:43 | |
| Bauntal-Gunterhausen | | | 13:59 | 14:00 | 13:46 | 13:47 | |
| Wilhelmshohe | | | 14:08 | 14:09 | 13:54 | 13:55 | |
| Kassel | | | 14:14 | 14:31 | 14:00 | 14:17 | |
| Hofgeismar | | | 14:47 | 14:48 | 14:25 | 14:26 | |
| Warburg | | | 15:03 | 15:05 | 14:41 | 14:42 | |
| Altenbeken | 15:29 | 15:37 | 15:27 | 15:32 | 15:05 | 15:15 | |
| Himmighausen | | | 15:40 | 15:40 | 15:23 | 15:23 | |
| Horn-Bad Meinb | 15:58 | 15:58 | 15:47 | 15:49 | 15:30 | 15:31 | |
| Detmold | 16:06 | 16:06 | 15:57 | 16:00 | 15:38 | 15:39 | |
| Lage | 16:15 | 16:15 | 16:07 | 16:10 | 15:46 | 15:47 | |
| Bad Salzufle | 16:25 | 16:25 | 16:17 | 16:20 | 15:56 | 15:58 | |
| Herford | 16:33 | 16:37 | 16:26 | 16:36 | 16:05 | 16:12 | |
| Brake | | | 16:42 | 16:42 | 16:17 | 16:18 | |
| Bielefeld | 16:47 | 16:49 | 16:24 | | 16:47 | 16:49 | |
| Rheda | 17:10 | 17:10 | 17:12 | 17:13 | | | |
| Warendorf | 17:42 | 17:42 | | | | | |
| Telgte | 18:00 | 18:00 | | | | | |
| Munster | 18:13 | | 18:13 | | | | |
| Elapsed | 6:42 | | 6:41 | | 3:39 | | |

begun a long-term project to digitize a range of timetables from around the World and, so far, has put up two DB PTTs summer 1967 (International edition) and 1973. These are astonishing documents. Of some 1400 pages each, which appear to have been scanned at 300 dpi. These documents are available as downloads only to paid-up members of Timetable World (ATA thought about this, but got cold feet). However, a screen-grab of a sufficiently enlarged image of a page produces a good image that can be OCR'd and turned into a text document. This is how I managed to

produce my "actual versus scheduled

table" above . That table also contains a schedule taken from the 1985 WTT illustrated on our page 2.

Next month "Across the Channel."





Comment on this article – <u>Letter to</u> the Editor



The Last South East Narrow Gauge **DAVID HENNELL**

HERE ARE A PAIR OF TOWNS in South Australia that share the name 'Kingston'. They are Kingston-upon-Murray and Kingston S.E.

Unsurprisingly, Kingston-upon-Murray is located on the Murray River, and east of Morgan. Kingston S. E., which is the name usually used for Kingston South East, is located on Lacepede Bay north west of Robe (always railwayless) and still further north west of Beachport (railway 1879 - 1956). The port at Kingston S.E. is known as Port Caroline. Only one of these 'Kingstons' was served by rail and SAR logic was that the station serving Kingston S. E. was simply known as 'Kingston' and this name will be used throughout the rest of this railway article.

The South East of South Australia is that large basically triangular part of the state bounded by the South Line (the Adelaide to Melbourne railway), the border with Victoria and the coast south east from the mouth of the Murray River. The largest town by far in the South East is Mt. Gambier.

Historically, the South Australian Railways' system had much in common with that of the Queensland Railways in that many railways were constructed inland from ports, rather than from the capital city. Over time, most of these developmental, agricultural and mineral lines were connected to form the railway systems with which we (well, some of us) grew up, although SAR's large Eyre Peninsula system (the Port Lincoln Division) remained geographically isolated.

From the perspective of the SAR, the South East consisted of the narrow gauge network bounded by, over time, Bordertown, Serviceton, Mount Gambier, Kingston, Glencoe and Beachport. Government 3 ft 6 in trains did operate into Victoria from 17th July 1885 but the third rail to Serviceton was out of use from 1894. [This gives us a good railway trivia question, viz:- What are the 4 gauges used by government (at any level) public revenue trains in Victoria?] The third rail from Wolseley to Bordertown was removed during 1924 after serving just the locomotive depot since 20th April 1915.

The Victorian Railways broad gauge line west from Heywood to Dartmoor was extended to Mount Gambier on 28th November 1917 but with SAR ownership west of the border despite it being worked exclusively and logically by VR. This was the first incursion of broad gauge into the real South East. VR's Heywood to Mt. Gambier passenger service was withdrawn on 2nd February 1942 as its roundabout route to Melbourne via Ararat couldn't cope with the direct buses from Mt. Gambier to Port Fairy or Warrnambool where connections were made with trains to/from Melbourne via Geelong. [Aside: given the combined populations of Koroit, Port Fairy, Portland, Heywood and Mt. Gambier nowadays, if only a railway had been constructed west from Port Fairy to Portland, then we'd have a V/Line rail passenger service from Melbourne to Mt. Gambier. A railway was authorised between Port Fairy and Narrawong, about halfway to Portland, but not constructed.]

Transhipping between broad gauge and narrow gauge occurred at Wolseley, similarly to that at Terowie where transhipping for Peterborough, Quorn, Port Augusta (also Perth and Alice Springs) and Broken Hill occurred. Both these towns are virtually ghost towns today.

SAR meddled with country horse tramways in its early years, both broad gauge and narrow gauge (were horses of different gauges used?), but with varying degrees of success. The narrow gauge (3 ft 6 in, 1067 mm) Kingston to Naracoorte horse line opened on 1st June 1876. Horse operation was unsuccessful due to the distance involved (52¹/₂ mi, 84.5 km) and survived only a matter of weeks, ceasing on 2nd July 1876. The tramway reinvented itself as a lightweight steam railway using 35 lb/ yd (17.5 kg/m) rail on 22nd July 1876. [The actual conversion factor is to divide lb/yd by 2.002 to get kg/m so halving is a very good approximation.]

With work commencing in November 1945, 197 miles (317 km) of the South East were converted from narrow gauge to broad gauge, although the short sections Wandilo to Glencoe and Millicent to Beachport were instead abandoned. The first mixed gauge operation was from Wolseley to Naracoorte, with broad gauge working commencing on 5th February 1950. Conversion generally involved regrading, bridge reconstruction and relaying with heavier rail, although some sensible deviations were introduced in the low sandhills near Bangham, north of Frances.

The final section to be converted was from Naracoorte to Kingston, with work commencing in late 1955. This conversion required a complete rebuild of the narrow gauge railway as the very light rail, weak bridges and poor formation were quite unsuitable for broad gauge trains. The largest bridge requiring replacement was that over Bakers Range Drain, near Lucindale. Geologically, this region consists of flat, often swampy, land punctuated by many long parallel sand dune ridges that were former seashores. The narrow gauge line tended to go over the ridges whereas the broad gauge line instead went through them.

Narrow gauge line speeds shown in the 8th January 1956 Murray Bridge Division WTT are 25 mi/h for locohauled trains and 35 mi/h for rail cars (40 km/h and 56 km/h respectively) but these were super-optimistic, given the state of the track. Ron Stewien states that they were 15 mi/h and 20 mi/h respectively (24 km/h and 32 km/ h) – he was one of the SAR civil engineers involved with the gauge conversion so these maximum speeds are highly likely to be correct and their introduction would have been covered by a circular issued by the SAR

AUTHORIZED STOPPING PLACES.

NARACOORTE - KINGSTON.

| | Mileage. | Stopping Place No. | Locality. |
|-------------------------|---|-----------------------|---|
| Naracoorte Stewarts | 240 $247\frac{3}{4}$ $260\frac{3}{2}$ | 1 2 3 4 | 245 miles 60 chains (McMorrons) 246 miles 40 chains (McEacherns) 253 miles 20 chains (The Gums) 257 miles 40 chains (Bakers Range) |
| Reedy Creek Kingston | | 5 | 289 miles 00 chains (Peepinoo) |

Nos. 393 and 56 must stop, if required, to pick up and/or set down passengers at stopping places Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.



KINGSTON AND NARACOORTE .--- UP. MONDAYS TO SATURDAYS (INCLUSIVE.) Train Order System under Train Control between Kingston and Naracoorte. Mixed Running Time and Rail Turntables-04 Between Stations. Goods Kingston. Motor Loads. and G.B. Conds Nuraber. Goods Stations. Mon., Thurs., Class. Tues. Wed., Sat. from (loods. Fri. Wx. Mxd Frgt Miles 5 в 70 56 108 туре алд To'ns. Mín a m a m a m **⊢ACE** KINGSTON 180 198 777 04PX l Fageoi dep5 30 5 30 9 00 D 171 198 113 Reedy Creek PX 33 ап 5 57 6 00 dep ___ 216 234 7 Bull IslandW 201 25 an -6 19 raj dep ----6 20 CHIS. ____ _ AvenueX 10 231 6 29 ari 6 30 dep 171 198 7 24 Lucindale APX 314 7 47 11 17 arr 6 49 Wx engines. 6 55 7 25 7 27 7 45 8 17 dep 11 47 7 216 234 Stewarts PX 443 38 ягг dep NARACOORTE ¥[]AC $52\frac{1}{2}$ 99 9 30 1 00pc arr EJOPRWX Perisbable Goods, and small packages of Goods of an urgent nature, will be carried on No. 56. For Authorized Stopping Places see Page 108

engineering powers-that-be.

The 8th January 1956 Murray Bridge Division WTT (3 pages at left) shows the narrow gauge Kingston service (note the correct usage of the term 'service' here!). The Model 55 rail motor was based at Kingston and hauled a guard's brake for freight. The Wx class locomotives resided at Naracoorte and the goods trains included a compo brakevan, no doubt for any passengers brave enough to endure the painfully slow journey.

The rail motor used was number 111, it being the broad gauge number 10 that was converted to narrow gauge in 1944 and returned to broad gauge as number 4 in 1959. It was the only Model 55 to run on narrow gauge. Based at Naracoorte, a trio of tiny Wx class narrow gauge locos, numbers 18, 37 and 56, provided the motive power for Kingston goods trains until the end. And the Wx locos were dwarfed by some of the goods vehicles that they hauled – and these were smallish NG trucks. Also available at Naracoorte, but only for use when absolutely necessary, was the pair of Fageol rail cars numbered 107 and 108. These were originally part of the SAR's road motor coach fleet from 1925 and were converted to rail cars in 1931 and 1933 respectively.

The thrice weekly railcar journey took 2 h 25 min in both directions for the 52½ mi. Rather slow but not surprising given the line speed. Compared with the 3 roadside goods per week, it's quite fast. Connecting broad gauge Bluebird air-conditioned railcars departed Adelaide at 11 20 a.m. and arrived Naracoorte at 5 53 p.m. A Naracoorte Bluebird departure time of 8 09 a.m. gave an Adelaide arrival of 2 43 p.m.

The WTT lists 5 authorized (sic) stopping places for the rail cars and these remained available for use into the broad gauge era.

Lucindale is the only real town, albeit rather small, between Naracoorte and Kingston. Stewarts boasted a tennis club but not a great deal else.

The 1956 WTT gives no indication that the gauge conversion work was underway but this is hardly surprising as it had only just started. However, this is not the case with the 1st July 1957 WTT but you need to read the tables carefully. [Top two images at left]. Yes, you're right! Larger T class narrow gauge locos are now permitted to run to Lucindale. They were the largest narrow gauge locos to ever operate in the South East. Just compare the maximum loads between Naracoorte and Lucindale for a T and a Wx – both were NG locos – and you'll realise just how small the Wx locos really were.

The return workings for the goods trains in 1957 differs from those of 1956 in that they departed Kingston 1 hour earlier but were given the same times at Lucindale. Clearly, the narrow gauge track was only just holding together. Some of it was so bad that it had to be relaid just to keep the trains running.

Narrow gauge trains continued to operate as reconstruction occurred – none of this let's-stop-all-the-trains-for -many-months nonsense as happens in the 21st century. To permit this, a lighter third rail for them was laid between the new heavier broad gauge rails. This permitted mixed gauge operation during conversion and the third rail was removed upon completion.

The first broad gauge train reached Lucindale on 2nd September 1957.

The 6th July 1958 WTT [bottom image this page; top image on page 15] shows a broad gauge goods train operating from Naracoorte to Lucindale on a Saturday, the narrow gauge Kingston service being unaltered apart from the goods train departures from Kingston having reverted to their 1956 times. T class were still allowed only as far as Lucindale and it now saw broad gauge locos of the Rx and 750 classes being permitted. Note that the down load table states R class but the up one correctly lists it as the Rx class. The 750 class were VR N class purchased by SAR in 1951 and were obviously of non-SAR ancestry. Lucindale was very busy on a Saturday morning. Note, too, that Bull Island is no longer mentioned.

NARACOORTE AND KINGSTON. DOWN-MONDAYS TO SATURDAYS (INCLUSIVE) Train Order System under Train Control between Naracoorte and Kingston. Mixed Goods, Sectional Running Times. Rail Turntables-04 and Motor and G.B. trains Goods Adelaide Goods Loads Mon., Wed. Mon., Wed., compo, brakevan 18 on the Kingston Number. Stations. Class. from Goods. Fri. Fri. т Wx. Grade 55 type and Miles Gds. Mxd Frgt B 175 393 Ton s. Min a m рm must be worked line. CEIORWX 216 234 180 225 NARACOORTE ... 6 10 6 28 600 77 dep 8 40 Fageol rail Stewarts UX 22 2473 arr 6 30 7 00 dep 7 216 234X 39 9 53 ____ Lucindale 2603 arr 7 06 7 25 7 27 dep 10 30 _ cars. UX 2691 24 arr dep on Avenue a.11 7 7 36 7 37 7 55 7 58 8 25 10 Wx 180 225 Bull Island UW 2721 arr dep goods 225 234 7 25 Reedy Creek UX 2803 engines arr dep _ KINGSTON □CO4 2921 35 12 53pc arr x Perishable goods and small packages of goods of an urgent nature will be carried by No. 393. For Authorized Stopping Places see Page 108.

KINGSTON AND NARACOORTE. UP-MONDAYS TO SATURDAYS (INCLUSIVE.)

Train Order System under Train Control between Kingston and Naracoorte.

| 1 | Mixed and Goods Loads. | | | | igston. | Goods, Sectional Running Times. | | | Rail Motor and G.B., | Goods |
|-----------|---------------------------------|--------|-----------|------------------------|---------|------------------------------------|----------------|------------------------|----------------------------|--------|
| Class. | | Number | Stations. | | Goods. | | Goods Tues. | Mon., Wed., Fri. | Thurs., Sat. | |
| T | ſ Wx. | | ade | | les f | | | | | |
| ds. | Mxd | Frgt | ö | | M | В | | 70 | 56 | 108 |
| | Ton | 8. | | | | Min | | a m | a m | a m |
| Partner 1 | 180 | 198 | 7 | KINGSTON CO4X | - | 0 | dep | 4 30 | 5 30 | 8 00 |
| - | 171 | 198 | 7 | Reedy Creek UX | 113 | 33 | arr | | 5 57 | _ |
| | - | - | - | | - | - | dep | | 6 00 | |
| | 216 | 234 | 7 | Bull Island UW | 201 | 25 | arr | () | 6 19 | |
| - | - | | - | | - | | dep | - | 6 20 | |
| | - | - | - | Avenue X | 231 | 10 | arr | - | 6 29 | |
| - | - | - | - | " | - | — | dep | | 6 30 | |
| 600 | 171 | 198 | 7 | LucindaleX | 313 | 24 | arr | 7 47 | 6 49 | 11 17 |
| _ | | - | - | " | - | | dep | 8 17 | 6 55 | 11 47 |
| _ | 216 | 234 | 7 | Stewarts UX | 444 | 38 | arr | | 7 25 | - |
| - | - | - | - | | | 100 | dep | - | 7 27 | - |
| - | - | - | | NARACOORTE CEJO RWX | 521 | 22 | arr | 9 30 | 7 45 | 1 00pm |

| | | 1 | Mixed | | | | 1 | 120 20 20 20 20 | 1 | | 1 | 0000 | gi | |
|--------------|-------------|--------|-----------------------|------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|--------------|------------------------------------|------------|----------------|-------------------|-----------------------|--------|--------|
| Go | Goods | | and Goods Loads | | | | | Goods, Sectional Running Times. | | B.G. | N.G. | N.G. Rail Notor | engine | |
| | | Class. | | amber. | Stations. | m Adel | Goods | | Goods | Goods Mon., | and G.B. Mon., | s. Wx | | |
| | | T Wx. | | x. | le N | | s froi | | Sat. | | Fri. | Fri. | il can | |
| 750 | к | Gds. | Mxd | Frgt | Grad | | Mile | В | | 159 | 175 | 393 | ol rai | 11 |
| _ | | | Ton | s. | | | | Min | | a m | a m | p m | Fage | |
| 1900 1100 | 1000 780 | 600 | 216 180 | 234 225 | 777 | ★□CEJORWX NARACOORTE Stewarts | 240 2473 | 0 22 | dep arr | 8 00 | 8 40 | 6 10 6 28 | pe and | d tour |
| - | - | - | - | | - | | - | — | dep | | - | 6 30 | ty. | - |
| - | - | | | | 7 | LucindaleX | 2603 | 39 | arr | 9 20 | 9 53 | 7 00 | 5 | 1 |
| - | - | - | - | - | - | | - | | dep | | 10 30 | 7 06 | * | - |
| | - | | | | | | 2691 | 24 | arr | 100 | - 1 | 7 25 | Y | 1 |
| - | _ | - | 225 | 234 | 7 | Reedy Creek UX | 2803 | 39 | dep | | | 7 55 | les- | - |
| _ | _ | _ | | - | - | " ······ ···· | 2003 | | den | | | 7 58 | ab | 5 |
| - | - | | - | - | - | KINGSTON CO4X | 292 <u>1</u> | 35 | arr | - | 12 53pm | 8 25 | Lurnt | 4 |

| 'Frain | Order (| Syster | ո ոու | ler I | KINGSTO UPMONDAY 'rain Control between Kingst | NA STO | ND NARACO SATURDAYS (D Id Naracoorte. | ORT | E. IVE.) | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|--|----------------|--------------------------|--|--|---|--|------------------------------------|---|------------------------------|---|
| (loods 750 R | T T X Gils, | Mixed and Goods Loads. Class. W: Mxd ² 1 | x. Frgt | Grade Number, | Stations. | Miles from Kingston. | Guods, Sectional Running Fimes. Goods. | | N G Goods Tues, 70 | N.G. Rail Motor and G.B., Mon., Wed., Fri. 56 | B.G. Goods Sat. 103 | N.G. Goods Thurs Sat. 108 |
| | 00 690 70 Perishab | Ton'i 180 171 - 171 - 216 - - - - - - - - - - - - - | 198 198 | 7 7 7 7 | KINGSTON LJCO4X Reedy Creek UX Avenue X Lucindale X Stewarts UX NARACOORTE $\star \sqcap CEJORWX$ mall packages of Goosis of an g Places see Page 108. | 117 231 317 443 522 urgeo | Min 9 33 33 24 38 22 1 t nature, will be cau | dep arr dep arr dep arr dep arr dep arr | * tri 5 30 | 4 m 5 30 5 57 8 20 6 29 6 30 6 30 6 30 6 55 7 25 7 25 7 45 | a 11 11 00 12 30xm | 8 00 9 00 11 17 11 47 1 00; |

The field of broad gauge operation was extended from Lucindale to Reedy Creek on 1st September 1958 and then from Reedy Creek to Kingston on 16th March 1959. Whereas the original narrow gauge yard at Kingston was adjacent to the jetty, the new broad gauge yard was on the east side of the town. This avoided many level crossings in the built-up area and the confines of the NG station ground were no longer a problem as a very large area was now available. The distance from Naracoorte to NG Kingston was $52\frac{1}{2}$ mi (84.5 km) whereas the BG distance to the new station was 52 mi (83.7 km).

SAR Weekly Notice 9/59 gives initial broad gauge passenger service which commenced on 16th March 1959. The thrice weekly NG railcar service based at Kingston was replaced by a weekly quartet of through single BG Bluebird railcars based in Adelaide. The branch Bluebird ran attached to the Mt. Gambier cars between Adelaide and Naracoorte.

[table from Weekly Notice below]

'250 passenger motor' is SAR's internal generic term for the Bluebirds, irrespective of their class. (250 class powered 2nd, 280 class powered luggage and freight, 100 class unpowered composite 1st and 2nd driving trailer).

That's 1 h faster on the branch and no break of gauge. The extra walking distance from the shops was a small price to pay for the extra comfort and convenience. There was still plenty of time for refreshments at Naracoorte.

The final narrow gauge goods train from Kingston to Naracoorte was on 12th March 1959, thus ending revenue NG operation in the South East of South Australia. With the departure of this train, the railway was truncated at

| | | M, Tu, | | | Tu, W, |
|------------|---|-------------|------------|---|-------------|
| | | Th. F | | | F, Sa |
| | | 250 pass | | | 250 pass |
| | | motor | | | motor |
| | | a.m. | | | a.m. |
| Adelaide | d | 11 20 | Kingston | d | 6 30 |
| | | p.m. | Lucindale | | 7 14 |
| Naracoorte | а | 5 50 | | | 7 16 |
| | d | 6 10 | Naracoorte | а | 7 45 |
| Lucindale | | 6 39 | | d | 8 18 |
| | | 641 | | | p.m. |
| Kingston | a | <u>7 25</u> | Adelaide | d | <u>3 00</u> |

the new broad gauge yard.

The 15th November 1959 WTT [images on page 16] is arranged differently from those preceding it. Earlier issues' timetable pages were, in order, Murray Bridge – Tailem Bend passenger and fast goods, Serviceton, Pinnaroo, Murraylands (Barmera and branches) and then the narrow gauge lines. The 1959 issue has the now BG Mt. Gambier and branches tables immediately after the Serviceton table, then followed by the Pinnaroo and the Murraylands lines ones.

The service here is somewhat predictable – departure from Adelaide is still 11.20 a.m. with an unchanged arrival at Kingston although the return Bluebird now departs Kingston 50 min later and arrives Adelaide at 4.00 p.m. The altered running times don't occur on the Kingston line. BG line speeds are 55 mi/h (88 km/h) for Bluebirds, 50 mi/h (80 km/h) for steam passenger trains and 35 mi/h (56 km/h) for goods and livestock trains. Just compare the loads of the broad gauge locos with those of a Wx shown in earlier issues. Note, too, that the distance from Adelaide is that of the old NG station rather than the new BG one.

The passenger service to Kingston evolved over time and, towards the end, the Sunday and Tuesday night Blue Lake overnight Adelaide - Mt. Gambier passenger connected to Kingston and a through 250 class car was detached at Naracoorte from Friday's Bluebird from Adelaide. The return workings were a through car from Kingston to Adelaide Monday and Wednesday morning and a connection with the Blue Lake at Naracoorte on Friday night. So one could live in Kingston and spend the weekend in Adelaide, and with a sleeping berth each way, too. Single 250 class Bluebirds were detached and attached from the Adelaide trains as required at Naracoorte so as to maintain, after stabling, the branch connections. This significant change occurred in 1962.

Comment on this article – <u>Letter to</u> <u>the Editor</u> Surprisingly, the Kingston Bluebirds survived the 1968/1969 SAR country passenger service withdrawals but succumbed on 21st July 1978. The branch line closed on 4th May 1989 in Australian National times.

Answer to the trivia question:-

2 ft 6 in (762 mm), 3ft 6 in (1067 mm), 4 ft $8\frac{1}{2}$ in (1435 mm) and 5 ft 3 in (1600 mm)

- Fluck, R. E., Sampson, R., Bird, K. J. (1986)
- Steam Locomotives and Railcars of the South Australian Railways, Mile End Railway Museum Inc., Roseworthy
- Stewien, C. R. (1973) One Rusty Rail, ARHS (SA Division), Torrens Park

"Map" below from "*Australian Railway Routes*", by Quinlan and Newland (2000).





NARACOORTE AND KINGSTON.

DOWN-MONDAYS TO SATURDAYS (INCLUSIVE)

| Go | Goods | | | laide. | Goods, Sectional Running Times. | | | | 250 Pass. Motor | |
|-----|-------|------------|------------------|------------------|------------------------------------|-----|---------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| 750 | P., | de Number. | Stations. | s from Ade | Goods. | | Goods Mon. | Goods Wed., Fri. | Mon., Tues., Thurs., Fri. | |
| | пх | Grad | | Mile | В | | 25 | 175 | 455 | |
| | | | | | Min | | a m | a m | рm | |
| | 1000 | | * CEJORWX | 0.001 | | | 11 40 | 0.00 | 0.10 | |
| 100 | 1000 | - | Stowasta | 2404 | | dep | 11 40 | 9 00 | 6 10 | |
| 100 | 700 | ' | | 2414 | | arr | | | 0 00 | |
| | | - | Tusindala 🛛 | 0003 | | dep | 10 40 | 10 00 | 6 22 | |
| | | ' | | 2004 | (| arr | 12 40pm | 10 00 | 0 09 | |
| | | | | - | | dep | 1 20 | 10 50 | 6 41 | |
| | | | Avenue UX | $269\frac{1}{4}$ | | arr | | | 6 51 | |
| | | - | •••••••••••••••• | - | (Page) a | dep | | | 6 52 | |
| | | 7 | Reedy Creek UX | 2803 | | arr | | | 7 08 | |
| - | -1 | - | " | - | | dep | | | 7 09 | |
| | | _ | KINGSTON CO2X | 2921 | | arr | 3 15 | 12 50pm | 7 25 | |

KINGSTON AND NARACOORTE. UP-MONDAYS TO SATURDAYS (INCLUSIVE.)

Train Order System under Train Control between Kingston and Naracoorte.

| Goods | | | | gston. | Goods, Sectional Running Times. | | 250 Pass. Motor | Goods |
|-------|-----|-----------|----------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|-----|------------------------|-----------------|
| | | le Number | Stations. | s from Kin | Goods. | | Wed., Fri., Sat. | Thurs., Sat. |
| 750 | Rx | Grad | | Mile | В | | 538 | 108 |
| | | | | | Min | | a m | a m |
| | | 7 | KINGSTON DCO.X | | | dan | ·* 90 | · 19 15 |
| | | 7 | Reedy Creek UX | 113 | | arr | 7 36 | / 10 |
| | | _ | | -4 | | den | 7 37 | 10000 |
| | - | | Avenue X | 231 | | arr | 7 53 | |
| 2002 | - | | " | _ | _ | den | 7 54 | |
| 960 | 700 | 7 | LucindaleX | 313 | | arr | 8 04 | 9 30 |
| | _ | | " | - | | dep | 8 06 | 10 20 |
| 600 | 970 | 7 | Stewarts UX | 443 | | arr | 8 23 | |
| | - | | | - | | dep | 8 24 | |
| - | - | - | NARACOORTE | $52\frac{1}{4}$ | 1984 | arr | 8 35 | /11 200 |

