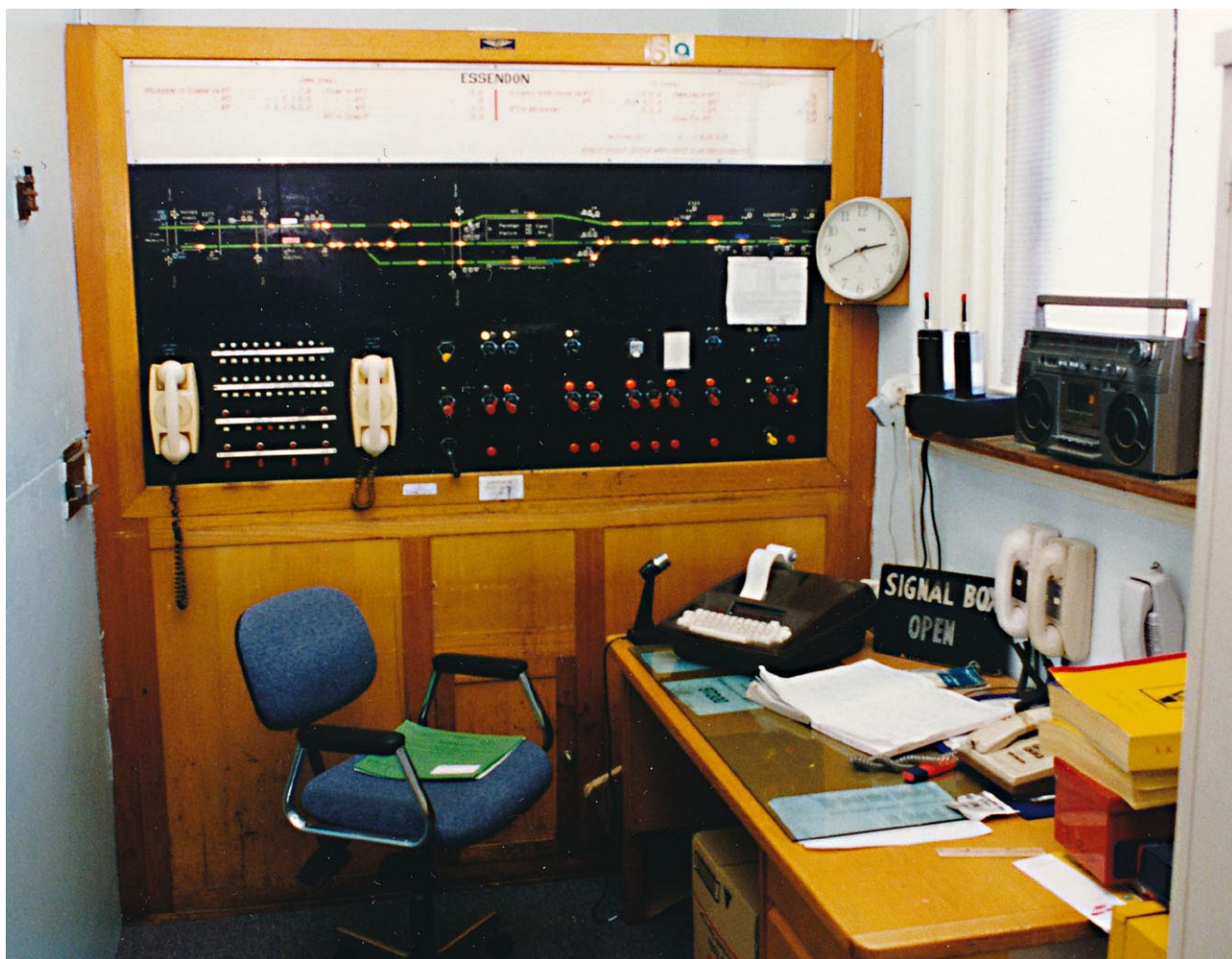


SOMERSAULT

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SIGNALLING RECORD SOCIETY OF VICTORIA INC



Recently Andrew Overton published on the internet the results of his major study into panel and relay interlocking designs in the UK. It would be very interesting to undertake similar research into Victorian panels to identify the major design changes and manufacturers. This is the panel at Essendon at the time of the SRS tour of 2 November 1996. The panel was commissioned on the 16 November 1969 and is, I believe, typical of its era. The panel frame and fascia are of wood and the fittings primarily appear to be sourced from McKenzie and Holland. Like most Victorian panels it is a unilever panel - what in the UK is referred to as a Individual Function Switch (IFS) panel. The panel itself is divided into three sections: the track indication diagram, the telephone concentrator (below left), and the panel switches (below right). One curiosity is that at the left hand end of the low speed push buttons is a small crank handle labelled 'Emergency Ring' - I have no idea what this did (or does)! On the table in front of the panel can be seen more equipment of the signalbox - a train register book, the teletype used as a train describer, and various phones. On the wall behind the desk are the two control phones. Photo: Andrew Waugh

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MINUTES OF MEETING HELD FRIDAY 18 NOVEMBER, 2011, AT THE SURREY HILLS NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE, 1 BEDFORD AVENUE, SURREY HILLS

- Present: - Noel Bamford, Wilfrid Brook, Glenn Cumming, Graeme Dunn, Steven Dunne, Vance Findlay, Michael Formaini, Ray Gomerski, Andrew Gostling, Chris Gordon, Judy Gordon, Keith Lambert, David Langley, Laurie Savage, Brian Sherry, Rod Smith, Andrew Waugh, Andrew Wheatland and Bob Whitehead.
- Apologies: - Mark Bau, Graeme Cleak, Bill Johnston, Steve Malpass, Tom Murray, Greg O'Flynn and Peter Silva.
The President, Mr. David Langley, took the chair & opened the meeting @ 20:07 hours.
- Minutes of the September 2011 Meeting: - Accepted as published. Vance Findlay / Graeme Dunn. Carried.
- Business Arising: - Nil.
- Correspondence: - Letter to Bill Uren at Metro Trains Melbourne thanking him for granting permission for the signal box tour.
Letter to Keith Lambert thanking him for his assistance with the suburban signal box tour.
Letter to Francis Noonan of South Kingsville welcoming him to membership of the SRSV.
Brian Sherry / Michael Formaini. Carried.
- Reports: - Glenn Cumming reported that the signal box tour on the Frankston and Sandringham Lines might have been a success but he could not prove it because he failed to attend the tour that he organised.
- General Business: - Keith Lambert provided details about various works in the Metropolitan District. A summary of the discussion follows: -
- * The new Signal Box and stabling sidings at Craigieburn have been commissioned.
 - * The tramway catch points at Gardiner will be straight-railed this weekend.
 - * The commissioning of the Keon Park - South Morang duplication commences this coming Wednesday. Lalor and Thomastown will have Home Signals that do not protect points. The old Epping station will be demolished and four new stabling sidings will be constructed on the site. Trains to the new Epping will commence on Monday 28 November 2011. The passenger service to South Morang will commence in April 2012. Local control panels at Keon Park and Lalor will be abolished.
 - * Commissioning of the new arrangements at Westall will commence on Friday 27 January 2012. The control panel at Springvale will be abolished and Dandenong will operate Westall and Springvale by remote control.
 - * New signalling arrangements at Sunbury will be commissioned in July 2012.
 - * Electric trains will commence running to Sunbury in October 2012.
- Chris Gordon advised that construction of the Greensborough - Hurstbridge re-signalling will commence in January 2012.
- Bob Whitehead advised that a tie renewal gang is currently working between Dimboola - Rainbow. This gang will then work between Toolamba - Echuca. This will then be followed by Shepparton - Seymour and finally Craigieburn - Seymour.
- Bob Whitehead noted that the Signaller at Elphinstone Tunnel was withdrawn in 1876.
- Bob Whitehead described how rails recovered from a foundered ship at Queenscliff in 1887 were used to extend No.1 Road at Queenscliff.
- Bob Whitehead reported that between 1886 - 1887, four gate men or women were employed on the Warranook ballast tramway. They lived in tents alongside the line.
- Andrew Waugh advised of a reference in the proceedings of the Electrification Committee in 1915 that mentions yellow arms on upper quadrant automatic signals.
- Andrew Waugh described arrangements at South Yarra in 1915 where the new Signal Box used DC

power because AC power was not available. The AC power was to be provided after the running of the Caulfield Cup in 1915.

Andrew Waugh described a recent UK RAIB report where a six car electric train on the Hastings (UK) Line overshot the platform by 2.5 kilometres due to adhesion problems. The train ran out of sand.

Syllabus Item: - The President introduced member Roderick B. Smith to present the Syllabus Item.

Rod presented the 22nd annual screening of slides from the collection of the late Stephen McLean, this year featuring views of Spain in early 1980. Views of Madrid, Majorca, Barcelona and Valencia were seen. A variety of trains and motive power were viewed. The presentation was thoroughly enjoyed by those present.

At the completion of the Syllabus Item, The President thanked Rod for the entertainment & this was followed by acclamation from those present.

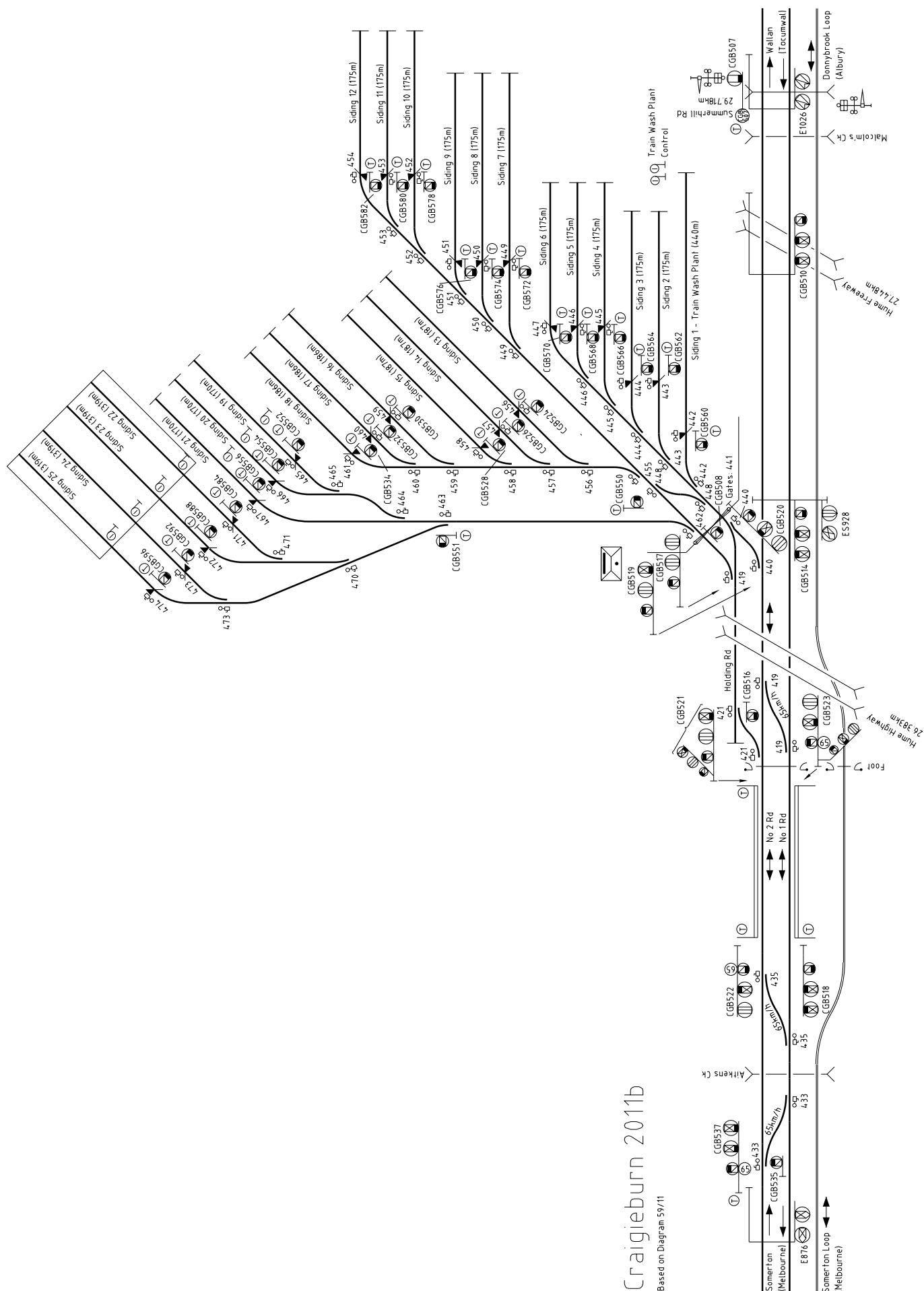
Meeting closed at 21:45 hours.

The next meeting will be on Friday 17 February, 2012 at the Surrey Hills Neighbourhood Centre, Bedford Avenue, Surrey Hill, commencing at 20:00 hours (8.00pm).

SIGNALLING ALTERATIONS

The following alterations were published in WN 40/11 to WN 50/11 (the last issued for 2011) and ETRB A circulars. The alterations have been edited to conserve space. Dates in parenthesis are the dates of publication, which may not be the date of the alteration.

- 04.10.2011 **Hopetoun** (TON 258/11, WN 40)
On Tuesday, 4.10., the portion of line between 410.121 km and the end of line at 410.291 km was booked back into service. The baulks at 410.121 km were removed. TON 210/11 is cancelled.
- 07.10.2011 **Galaquil** (TON 266/11, WN 41)
On Friday, 7.10., the siding was booked out of use due to sleeper condition.
- 10.10.2011 **Sunbury** (SW 355/11, WN 40)
Between Saturday, 8.10., and Monday 10.10., Posts SBY12 and SBY14 were converted from multi-aspect to tri-colour LED heads. Derail and Crowder 35 on the lead to the decommissioned Sidings A and B was replaced by a baulk with a buffer light. The crossing bells and boom barrier arms at Gap Road were replaced.
- (11.10.2011) **Footscray, Darling, Berwick, Elsternwick, Brighton Beach, Sandringham** (SW 357/11, WN 40)
These signalboxes are staffed by Customer Service Signallers and are separated from the station buildings. When an Absolute Occupation has been granted it will not be necessary for the Signaller to remain in the signalbox during the period of the Absolute Occupation. The Signaller may return to the Station Office provided that he or she has so informed the Track Force Protection Co-ordinator and the Signaller at the other end of the section. The times the Signaller is not in the signalbox must be recorded in the TRB. The Signaller must give priority to signalling duties and return to the signalbox whenever movements of plant trains or track machines are required.
- (11.10.2011) **Tottenham** (SW 119/11, WN 40)
The Standard Gauge Siding is provided parallel to the broad gauge Up Independent Goods Line at Tottenham. Due to limited clearances between the siding and the goods line, the following precautions must be taken when any train preparation or stabling activities are undertaken in the siding. The standard gauge train crew must obtain permission to foul the Up Independent Goods Line from the V/Line Brooklyn Loop train controller. Prior to granting this permission, the train controller must block the Up Independent Release and Home TOT34,
- 13.10.2011 **Underbool** (TON 265/11, WN 41)
On Thursday, 13.10., the siding at Underbool was booked back into service. TON 152/11 is cancelled.
- 17.10.2011 **Craigieburn** (SW 354/11, WN 40)
On Monday, 17.10., the signalbox was relocated from the station buildings to a new location at the Up end of the train maintenance sidings. The signalling associated with the Train Maintenance Sidings 19-21 and Train Maintenance Facility Sidings 22-25 was commissioned. Sidings 19 to 21 are 170m in the clear, while sidings 22-25 have 111m outside the workshops and 198m inside.
Dwarfs 550, 551, 552, 554, 556, 584, 588, 592 and 596 were provided. These Dwarfs have LED lights and show purple for stop. Points 462, 463, 464, 465, 470, 471, and 473 were provided. Derail and Crowdors 465, 467, 470, 471, 472, 473, and 474 were provided. All points and derails are operated by dual control point machines.
Sidings 19-25 will remain out of service until all civil engineering works are completed. The overhead power over these sidings is isolated and Points 463 are secured normal.
Diagram 59/11 (Craigieburn) replaced 21/11.
- 23.10.2011 **Altona Junction - Laverton** (SW 371/11, WN 42)
On Sunday, 23.10., TC2 LED lights were fitted to Automatics G630, GG630, G631, and GG631.
- 25.10.2011 **Newport** (SW 363/11, WN 42)
Between Friday, 21.10., and Monday, 25.10., Newport Workshops No 1 Lead and Stabling Sidings 9-17 were brought into use. The data in the Newport Front End Processor and the Westcad were updated.



SW 205/11 is cancelled.

- 26.10.2011 **Ballarat - Maryborough** (SW 122/11, WN 42)
 From Wednesday, 26.10., the following procedure will be used when users wish to cross at the following occupation crossings: Kilkenny Lane (196.300 km), Adams Track (199.746 km), Bochland Lane (205.209 km), and Walters Rd (216.335 km).
 Locked hand operated gates will be provided on each side of the line. The keys to these gates will be held by the land owner, nominated local service providers, and track maintenance personnel. Signs will be provided on each side of the crossing signs requiring users to obtain train running information from Train Control before crossing with heavy machinery or livestock, and to inform Control when the crossing is clear.
 Before crossing the user must contact the Train Controller by mobile phone and obtain train running information. The Train Controller does not give permission for the user to cross, simply whether there is a train between Ballarat and Maryborough. The Train Controller must endorse the Train Graph with the information supplied, including the contact details of the user. The user must unlock, open and secure both gates before crossing. When the vehicle is clear of the railway boundary on the other side of the line the user must close and lock both gates and then contact the Train Controller to inform them that they are clear. The Train Controller must so endorse the train graph.
- 04.11.2022 **Chinkapook** (TON 303/11, WN 43)
 On Friday, 4.11., the siding at Chinkapook was booked out of use account sleeper condition.
- 07.11.2011 **Manangatang BP - Robinvale** (SW 126/11, WN 43)
 On Monday, 7.11., the Train Section Order sections Ultima BP - Manangatang BP - Robinvale will be replaced by Ultima BP - Manangatang. The line is baulked on the Down side of Manangatang at 457.300km and the line beyond to Robinvale remains booked out of use.
 Manangatang BP and all associated signage will be abolished.
 Manangatang will be an Unattended Train Order Terminal location. Commence and End Train Order Working boards were provided at 456.000 km on the Up side of the Mallee Hwy. A location board was provided 2,500 metres on the Up side of the End Train Order Working board. No change was made to the point locking or flashing light controls at Manangatang. Stabled trains at Manangatang must be stabled in No 2 or 3 Roads.
 Robinvale was abolished as an Unattended Train Order Terminal location, and the Commence and End Train Order Working boards were removed.
- 10.11.2011 **Clunes** (SW 129/11, WN 44)
 On Tuesday, 10.11., boom barriers was provided at the passive level crossing at Boundary St (192.286 km) on the Up side of the future Clunes station. An Up two position automatic signal was provided 20 metres on the Up side of the platform. The signal will normally be at proceed, but can be restored to stop by a V5PSW keyswitch at the end of the platform to suppress operation of the boom barriers.
 Trains travelling at more than 50 km/h at the predictor boards may increase speed before entering the level crossing. Remote monitoring equipment will be provided and consequently a healthy state light will not be provided.
- 11.11.2011 **Mildura** (TON 314/11, WN 45)
 On Friday, 11.11., the Turntable/Car Shed Road was booked out of use due to collapse of part of the car shed roof.
- 14.11.2011 **Arnold BP - Korong Vale Loop - Mysia BP - Quambatook BP - Ultima BP** (SW 127/11, WN 43)
 Between Monday, 7.11., and Monday 14.11., the signage at these locations was changed. The existing location boards and block point boards were abolished. New block point boards were provided consisting of a white reflective triangle with black lettering were provided. New location boards were provided 2,500 metres in the rear of each locations. These consist of a yellow reflective triangle with black lettering. Location clearance signs were provided on the rear of the location boards.
- 14.11.2011 **Westall** (SW 377/11, WN 45)
 On Monday, 14.11., Automatic D679 was replaced by a new LED signal located 34 metres in the Up directory on a signal gantry at 22.200 km. Automatic D634 had the 'b' light bracket altered. Dwarfs 48, 50, 70, 72, and 74 had the tinted signal lens replaced by a clear lens. Track circuits were altered.
 Diagram 164/11 (Westall - Yarraman) replaced 17/11.
- (15.11.2011) **Hopetoun** (SW 135/11, WN 45)
 Operating Procedure 78 was issued to cover the operation of two trains at Hopetoun and the use of the Iluka loading platform.
 When two trains are at Hopetoun, the driver of the second train to arrive must contact the driver of the first train when the second train has passed the location board. The two drivers must come to an understanding about the movements to be performed.
 The Iluka loading platform is on the Down side of the Austen St level crossing. The platform is 57 metres long and is on the Down side of the line. The Up end of the platform is 400 metres from the crossing and the Down end is 284 metres from the baulks. A board lettered "No rail activity beyond this point" is erected at the up end of the platform. This board is normally not displayed. When it is necessary to clear any spillage, the loading supervisor must unlock and display the board.
- (15.11.2011) **Dunolly - Robinvale** (SW 134/11, WN 45)
 Diagrams 136/11 (Dunolly), 138/11 (Llanelly - Kurting), 140/11 (Korong Vale Loop - Borung), 142/11 (Boort - Oakvale), 144/11 (Quambatook - Meatian), 146/11 (Ultima - Chillingollah), 148/11 (Chinkapook -

Annuello), and 150/11 (Bannerton - Robinvale) were issued. Diagrams 20/09 (Dunolly) and 126/11 (Inglewood - Korong Vale) were cancelled.

20.11.2011 **Kooyong** (SW 387/11, SWP 7/11, WN 45)

On Sunday, 20.11., the wicket levers (13 & 14) were removed and operation of the pedestrian gates controlled through the boom control lever 15. The existing tram "T" signals were replaced by new LED "T" signals on VicRoads traffic light signal masts. The new lights have red, yellow, and white lights and operate in conjunction with the traffic lights. The signaller can hold the "T" signals at red when required by operation of levers 11 and 12. A U5A detector was provided to improve the reliability of the overhead power switching.

Rule 6b) and 6c) will not apply at Kooyong.

Burnley Group Operating Procedure 15 was re-issued, and Operating Procedure 15A was cancelled.

24.11.2011 **SwanHill** (TON 337/11, WN 47)

On Thursday, 24.11., the Shell and Mobil Oil Siding was booked out of use due to sleeper condition. The main line points at 345.453 km have been secured normal.

27.11.2011 **Keon Park - South Morang** (SW 394/11, WN 46)

From 1000 hours on Sunday, 27.11., the duplication between Keon Park and Epping was brought into service, the new Epping station was commissioned, the new line from Epping to South Morang was commissioned, and the existing SSI at Epping was replaced by a Westlock. The ATC system Keon Park - Lalor - Epping was abolished and Automatic Block Signalling was provided Keon Park - Epping - South Morang.

Keon Park. The local signal panel was abolished. Points 2 and 7 were abolished and Crossover 1 was provided. Homes KPK101, KPK102, KPK104, & KPK107 and Automatics T551, T554, & T567 were abolished. Homes KPK100, KPK101, KPK102, & KPK113 and Automatics T545 & T561 were provided. Home KPK103 was renumbered KPK111.

Thomastown. The new Up platform was brought into service. The pedestrian crossing at the Down end of the station was abolished and that at Messmate St was relocated 30 metres in the Down direction. Automatics T576, T581, T596, & T597 were abolished. Homes TN103 & TN104 and Automatics T595 & T596 were provided.

Lalor. The local signal panel was abolished. Points 2 and 7 were abolished. Homes LAL102, LAL104, LAL105, LAL106, & LAL107 and Automatics T614 and T615 were abolished. Home EPP106 and Automatics T613, T616 (and co-acting T616P), & T650 were provided. Home LAL103 was renumbered LAL105. The pedestrian crossing at Partridge St was relocated 15 metres in the Up direction and provided with pedestrian gates.

Epping. The new Epping station (with a 160 metre island platform) was opened at 22.816 km and the existing station was closed. Points 025, 026, and 027 were abolished. Points 074 were provided. Crossovers 011, 015, & 021 were provided. Derail and Crowders 022 & 033 were provided. Points 022 were renumbered 023. Homes EPP121, EPP122, EPP123, EPP125, EPP126 (with co-acting EPP126P), & EPP127 were abolished. Dwarf EPP124 was renumbered EPP122. Homes EPP108, EPP110, EPP111, EPP115, EPP116, EPP119, EPP121, EPP123, EPP126, EPP127, & EPP174, Dwarfs EPP124 & EPP173, and Automatics T733 & T742 were provided.

South Morang. The new South Morang (with a 160 metre island platform) was provided at 25.989 km, but not opened for passenger traffic. Crossovers 053 and 054 were provided. Homes SMG153, SMG154, SMG163, & SMG164 and Automatics T759 & T772 were provided. Friction arresting buffer stops were provided at the Down end of both platform roads.

All new signals are LED and low speed lights are provided on all Home signals. Note that signals controlling the departure from platforms over level crossings are Home signals to ensure trains can be held at platforms. All new point machines are dual control point machines.

Diagram 9/11 (Ruthven to Epping) replaced 121/10, and Diagram 96/11 (Epping to South Morang) was issued.

03.12.2011 **Clunes** (SW 137/11 & 138/11, WN 47)

On Saturday, 3.12., Clunes station will be officially re-opened for passenger traffic. A test train operated to the platform on Wednesday, 30.11. (SW11/6540). The platform is on the Up side of the line and is 100 metres in length. The centre of the platform is at 192.556 km.

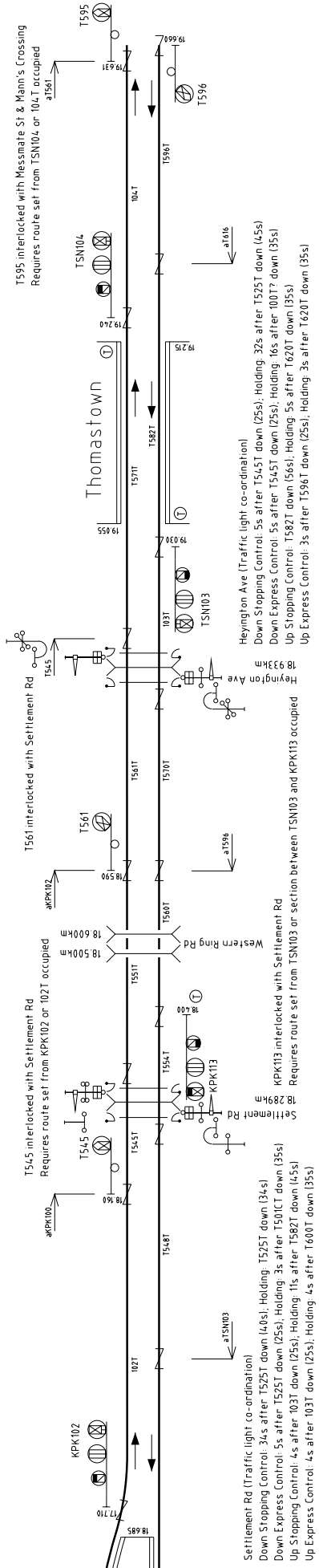
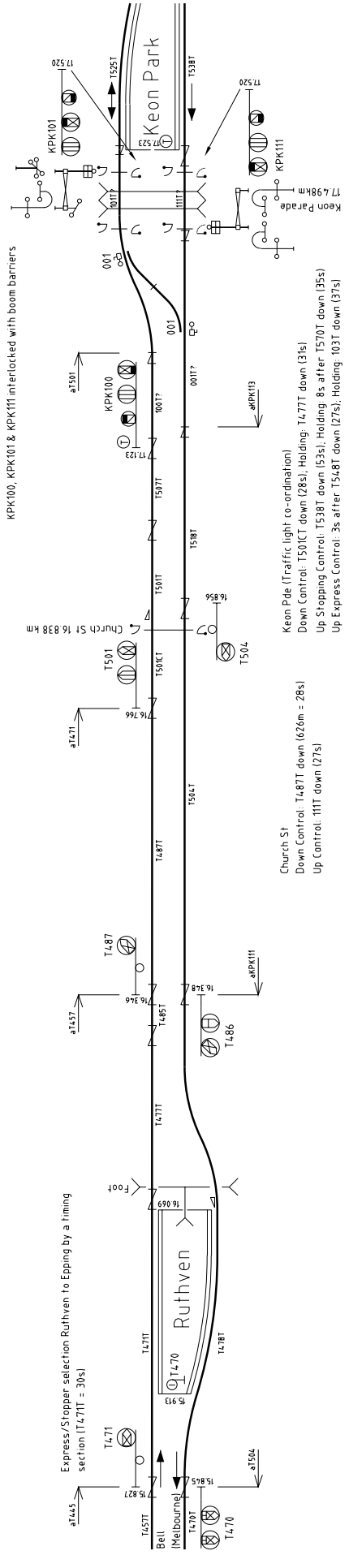
04.12.2011 **Flemington Racecourse** (SW 401/11, WN 48)

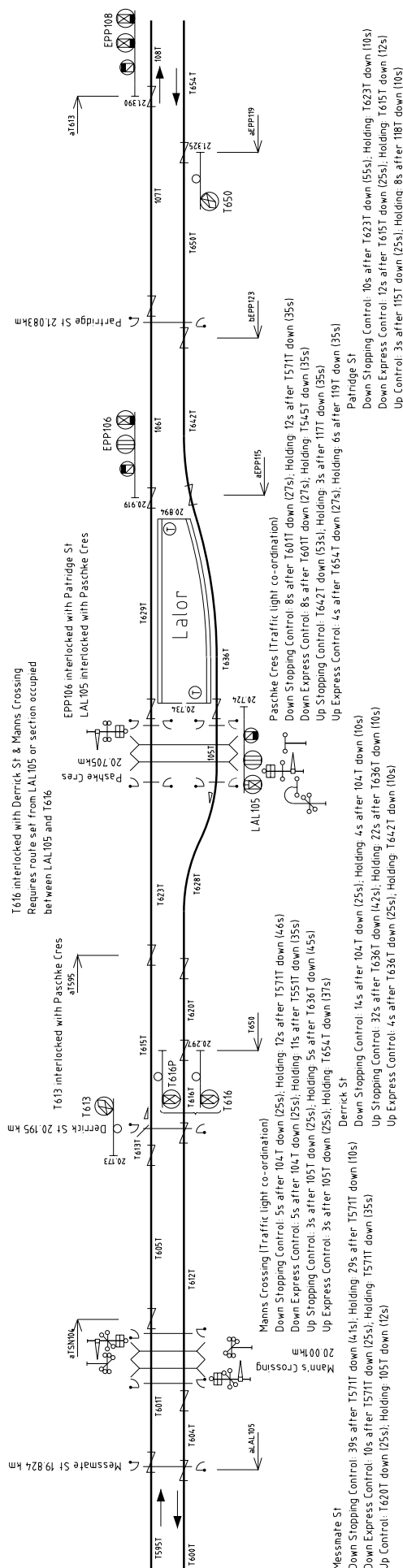
On Sunday, 4.12., 30 second approach locking was provided for Dwarfs 3 (Post 73) and 40 (Post 68). Normal and reverse indications were provided for Dwarf 3.

06.12.2011 **Ballarat East** (SW 142/11, TON 351/11, WN 48)

On Tuesday, 6.12., the tracks to the new Maintenance Shed will be commissioned. The three roads in the Maintenance Shed are numbered No 7, No 8 and No 9 Roads (following on from the existing roads). All points are operated by WSA levers, and hand operated Derails with flag indicators are provided on each road.

The turntable and Steamrail depot are accessed by a lead from No 9 Road. The points to the turntable road are secured by a Hand Locking Bar away from the turntable road, and hand operated gates are provided in the security fence. Access to the turntable and Steamrail depot will not be available until



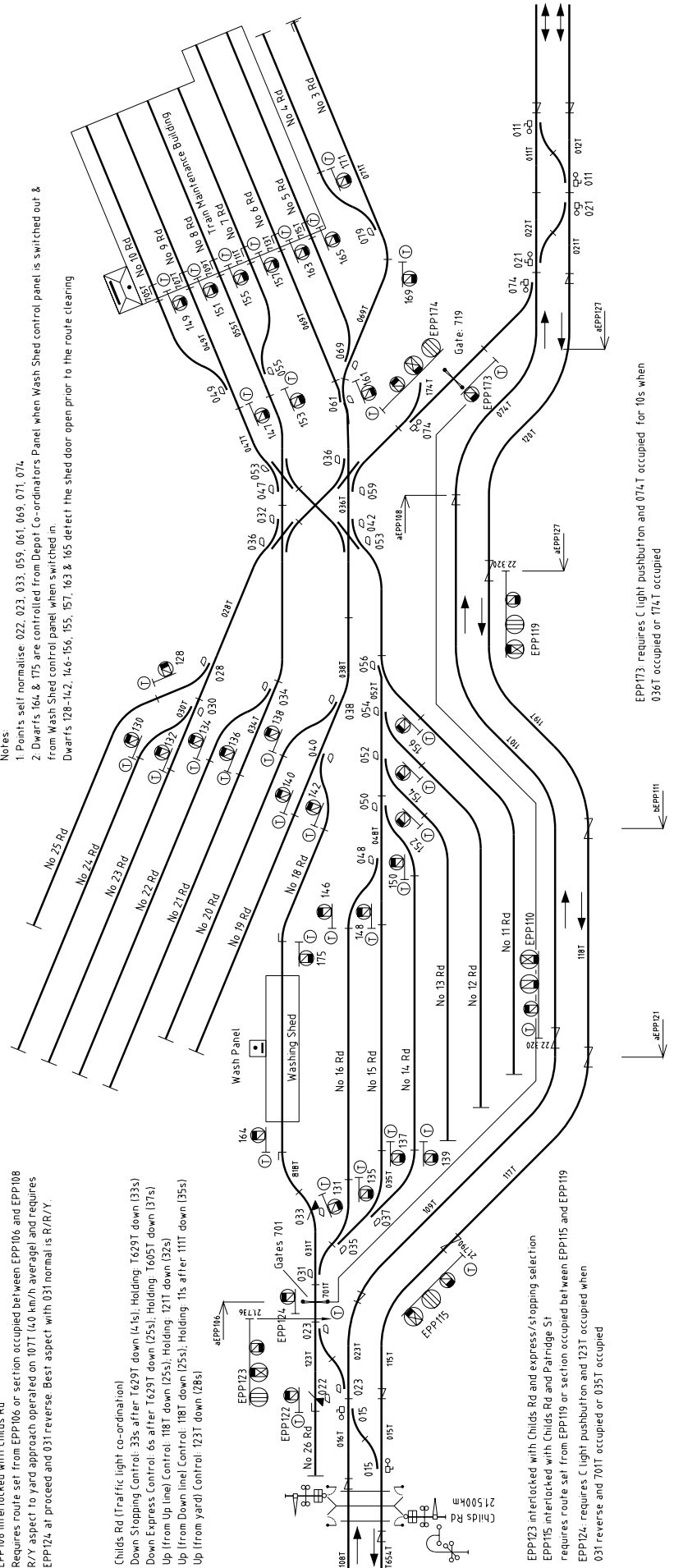


EPP108 interlocked with Childs Rd

Requires route set from EPP106 or section occupied between EPP106 and EPP108 R/Y aspect to yard approach operated on 1071 (40 km/h average) and requires EPP124 at proceed and 031 reverse Best aspect with 031 normal is R/R/Y.

Childs Rd (Traffic light co-ordination)

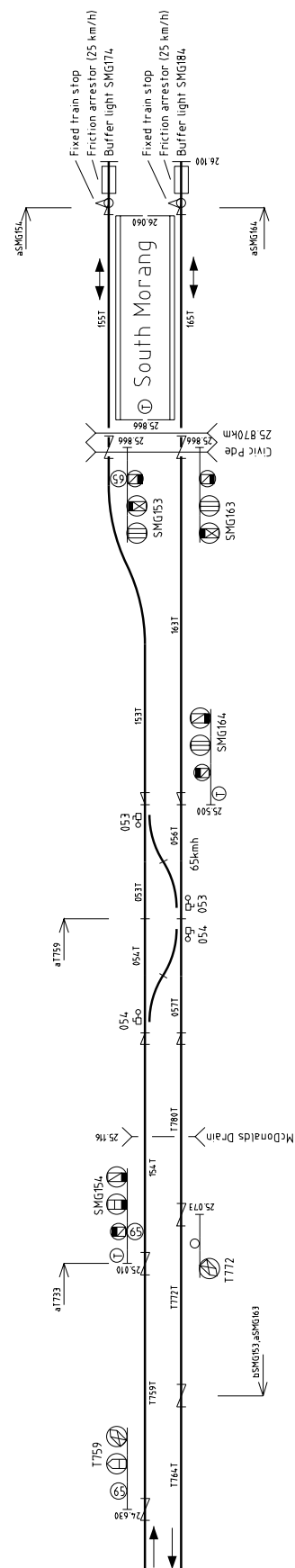
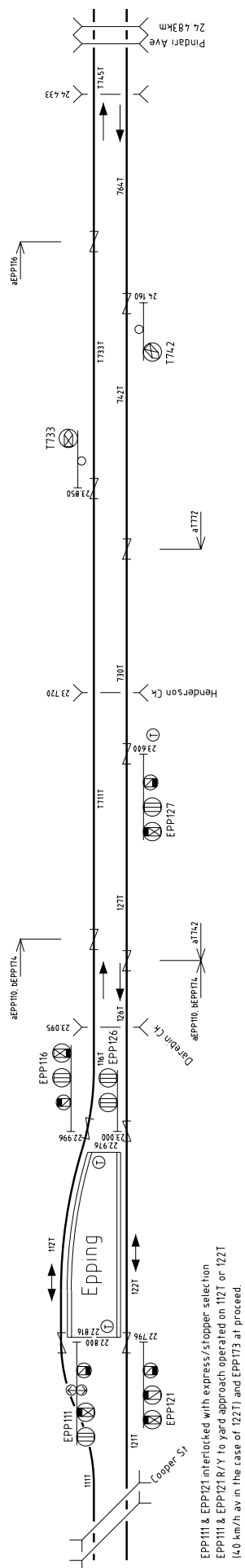
Down Stopping Control: 33s after T629T down (44s); Holding: T629T down (33s)
Down Express Control: 6s after T629T down (25s); Holding: T605T down (37s)
Up (from Up line) Control: 118T down (25s); Holding: 121T down (32s)
Up (from Down line) Control: 118T down (25s); Holding: 11s after 111T down (35s)
Up (from yard) Control: 123T down (28s)



EPP123 interlocked with Childs Rd and express/stopping selection

EPP115 interlocked with Childs Rd and Parridge St
Requires route set from EPP119 or section occupied between EPP115 and EPP119
EPP124 requires C light pushbutton and 074.T occupied for 10s when 031 reverse and 701T occupied or 035T occupied

EPP173 requires C light pushbutton and 074.T occupied for 10s when 036T occupied or 174.T occupied



further notice.

Diagram 188/11 (Warrenheip - Ballarat East) replaced 76/10.

10.12.2011 **West Tower** (SW 141/11, & 431/11, WN 50/11)

Between Saturday, 10.12., and Sunday, 11.12., the following lines were abolished to allow for RFR work: the Main Goods Line between Dwarfs 174/176 to Home 326, and Nos 1 and 2 Arrival Roads. The Up Coburg Goods line remains in use as a bi-directionally signalled line.

Home 178 was abolished. Dwarfs 170, 172, 322, and 324 were abolished. Home 326 was fixed at Stop. Signals 200, 208, 212, 258, and 260 were altered to only display Stop and Low Speed Caution indications (for moves towards the Arrival Roads). Points 181, 183, 193U, and 249 were secured reverse. Points 255 and 269 were secured normal.

No 3 Arrival Road is now considered to be a Through Road and is to be left clear for train movements.

Diagrams 73/11 (West Tower) and 166/11 (South Kensington) replaced 115/10 and 111/10 respectively.

12.12.2011 **Westall - Springvale** (SW 413/11, WN 48)

On Monday, 12.12., the following alterations took place. Controlled Automatic 44 was replaced by a new LED Home 44 located on a signal bridge. An illuminated letter 'A' was not provided. The new Home signal cannot display a low speed aspect. Down Home 4 was replaced by a new LED post located 10 metres in the Down direction. An illuminated letter 'A' was not provided on the new post. Dwarf 6 was relocated 2 metres in the Down direction.

Henceforward, Springvale must be switched in for all trains.

Diagram 77/11 (Westall - Yarraman) replaced 164/11 (sic).

18.12.2011 **West Tower** (SW 147/11, WN 50)

On Sunday, 18.12., the Up Coburg Goods line between Points 195/197 to Home 114 was abolished. The Up Coburg Goods line had previously been booked out of service on 21.1.2007. Amend Diagram 73/11 (West Tower).

18.12.2011 **Gardiner** (SW 389/11, 400/11, & 429/11, SWP 8/11 & 9/11, WN 45, 46, & 50)

On Sunday, 18.12., tramway catch points 5 and 6 were disconnected and secured closed. The detection of these catches was removed from the signal control circuits. The green "T" light was removed, and the red "T" light converted to LED. The white "T" light was not changed. The tram signals were integrated into the traffic lights.

Burnley Group Operating Procedure 16 was re-issued.

(20.12.2011) **Southern Cross** (SW 432/11, WN 50/11)

Diagrams 83/11 (Southern Cross - MTM Passenger Lines) and 85/11 (Southern Cross - VLine Passenger Lines) replaced Diagram 27/11 (Southern Cross) as in service.

(20.12.2011) **Allansford** (TON 356/11, WN 50/11)

The level crossing at Station Rd (256.277 km) was closed.

THE LITTLE RIVER ACCIDENT, 1884

The Little River Accident occurred around 9.50 pm on the 2 April 1884 when the Up evening passenger train from Ballarat collided with a Down goods trains about a mile on the Up side of Little River. The Down goods had the staff for the Werribee - Little River section. The Up passenger had been allowed to depart from Little River after the stationmaster there had received a 'Line Clear' report purportedly from the stationmaster Werribee. In fact, the SM at Werribee was playing the organ at a choir practice and the SM's daughter telegraphed the 'Line Clear' message. Three people were killed in the accident: both drivers and Mrs Ellen Johnson, a woman passenger in the first carriage of the passenger train.

The following material is primarily taken from the Secretary's Branch correspondence (VPRS 421P0, Unit 2) and contains the official reports on the Little River accident on 2 April 1884. It is followed by an edited version of the article on the accident published by the Argus on the 4 April obtained from the National Library of Australia's TROVE website. The focus of the edited version of the article is a description of the accident scene and recovery efforts, and the information about the victims - accidents are about people.

The stationmaster at Werribee, Thomas Biddle, was charged with feloniously killing Ellen Johnson and Thomas Kitchen. He was acquitted of these charges in the Geelong Assize on 18 July 1884. To be convicted of manslaughter, the deaths had to be the immediate result of an act of the stationmaster. Clearly they were not - the evidence was that the daughter, Annie Biddle, sent the telegram without any instructions from her father. The jury ignored the strong hint from the judge that they could find Thomas Biddle guilty of culpable negligence for putting his daughter in such a position. It would appear that Annie Biddle could not be charged over the accident as she was not an employee of the railways and so had no duty to breach. One curiosity was that the telegraph operator at Little River that received the telegram was also a woman - the daughter of the station master there. In this case, she was the official telegraph operator, as the stationmaster could not operate the telegraph.

From P.P. Labertouche, Secretary, to Hon Duncan Gillies MP dated 3 April 1884

By direction of the Commissioners I have to express their regret that a serious accident occurred between Werribee + Little River last evening.

As far as can be ascertained at present the Goods train leaving Melbourne at 8.20 pm had the train staff handed to the Driver, and was allowed to leave Werribee for Little River, the latter place being the point at which this train is booked to pass the 7.10 pm Mail train from Ballarat. Immediately after the Goods Train had been allowed to proceed with the train staff, a telegram was transmitted from Werribee to Little River stating the line was clear and the Station Master acting upon it permitted the Ballarat up train to leave his station; the consequence was that the two trains came in collision with each other about 1 1/2 miles from Little River station.

Attached hereto is a list of the casualties so far as has been ascertained. I am sorry to add that two persons (one a passenger + the other the driver of the Ballarat train) succumbed to the injuries received.

Further particulars will be received as soon as they can be authenticated.

List of Casualties so far as known owing to the collision on 2nd April 1884, Werribee Collision

Driver Kitchen, Dead

Women unknown, Dead

Driver Jas Craik, Injured

Guard D McMurtie

[Nils?] Adams, Sandridge Road

W Davies, Brighton

Mrs Phoebe, Latrobe St

Fireman Walker

Several other passengers are more or less cut + bruised

Memo from M [Mabut?], Secretary, to The Crown Solicitor dated 4 April 1884 Secretary's Branch File 84/2987

I have the honor by direction of the Commissioners to forward herewith the reports of the various officers relating the recent collision at Little River between 7.10 pm up passenger train and 8.20 pm down goods train.

Memo from H. M. Barter, Actg General Traffic Manager, to The Secretary 3 April 1884

I have the honor to report for the information of the Commissioners, that a telegram reached me at 11 pm last night to say that a serious accident had taken place about a mile at this side of the Little River station on the Geelong Line, between the 7.10 pm up mail train from Ballarat and the 8.20 pm down goods train. I at once proceeded to Spencer Street where a special train was being got in readiness and all necessary appliances prepared.

Having secured the services of Drs Eccles and Ryan, the special started for the scene of the accident about 12.30 am and on arrival immediate steps were taken to transfer passengers and render assistance to those who were hurt. I regret to say the driver of the 8.20 pm was killed, also a female whose name could not be ascertained. After examination the doctors reported about 20 passengers were more or less hurt, besides the driver of the 7.10 pm, the guard, and the firemen of both trains.

The collision must have been very severe as both engines were thrown off the line and very much damaged, besides several goods trucks were off the road and much damaged; fortunately the carriages attached to the 7.10 pm kept the line and, with the exception of one next the engine, received hardly any damage.

After the transfer of passengers had taken place the train returned at once to Melbourne arriving about 4 am. Finding that the line could not possibly be cleared in time to admit of the working of next days traffic, I cancelled the 3.50 am down goods and arranged a special from Geelong to meet the 6.30 am down and transfer the passengers. Inspector Sadler and a gang of men being left in charge to superintend the carrying out of these arrangements. The responsibility of the accident rests entirely with Mr Biddle the Station Master at the Werribee. From his verbal statement (subsequently confirmed in writing) I ascertained he was attending a practice of the church choir. He left the station for this purpose about 8 pm. authorising his daughter to attend to his duties and instructing her if the 8.20 pm down was behind time it was to be placed on the siding and a "Line Clear" message was to be sent to the Station Master, Little River, giving him authority to start the 7.10 pm up. If the 8.20 pm reached Werribee on time it was to be despatched as usual with

POST OFFICE TELEGRAPHS.

No. Words 19
Check 15
By J C

This despatch has been received for delivery subject to the Regulations and Conditions under which Telegraphic Messages are authorized to be transmitted in Victoria.

NO FEES TO BE PAID UNLESS STAMPED HEREON.

Time recd. 9.10 From Werribee Dated 2/4/84

Telegram for S M
Little River

1	2	3	4
Please	send	on	7
5	6	7	8
10	p	m	up
9	10	11	12
I	have	staff	and
13	14	15	16
will	keep	line	clear
17	18	19	20
till	its	arrival	
21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28
29	30	31	32

ALL COMPLAINTS TO BE ADDRESSED IN WRITING TO THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL.

* * No pecuniary liability is incurred by the Crown by reason of any delay, default, or omission, in relation to any Telegraphic Message sent or received, or omitted to be sent or received, in Victoria.

(Signature) Thos Biddle

Time lodged at the Sending Station 9.30

This is either the original "Line Clear" telegraph received by Little River, or an exact duplicate made shortly afterwards for the files. Source: VPRS 421 P0 Unit 2. Copyright State of Victoria. Reproduced with permission.

the staff. The 8.20 pm did arrive to its time and was started with the staff; but through some unaccountable cause, the girl immediately afterwards sent a "Line Clear" message to Little River giving authority to despatch the 7.10 pm up after which a collision was inevitable.

The Station Master had no authority to place his daughter in charge of the Station and his fault is much to be regretted as his conduct while in the Department has been up to the present time most satisfactory.

Memo from S Mirs, Loco Supt, to the Railway Commissioners dated 4 April 1884

The 7.10 pm up Ballarat passenger train and the 8.20 pm down goods train came into collision near Little River station on the 2nd instant.

Cause: down train being started from the Werribee station with train staff and up train being started from

Little River with "Line Clear" telegraph order. Attached is the telegraph order to proceed which was obtained from the possession of driver J Craik by Mr [Troup?] Running Foreman Spencer St.

Attached are reports from Mr [Troup?] Running Foreman and Mr Jacks, Locomotive Inspector.

I cannot give at present an estimate of the damage done.

Memo from [J?] M [Troupe?] to Loco Supt dated April 4 1884

At 10.15 pm on Wednesday I got notice sent me of a serious accident at Little River. I came to station and got casualty van and men and started at 12 pm from Passenger platform with train to relieve passengers arriving at scene.

I found that No 82 Engine of 7.10 pm up from Ballarat had collided with No 92 of 8.20 down from Melbourne. I saw the guard of 8.20 down have the staff belonging to section and I got Telegraph order from Craik to proceed to Werribee showing the accident was caused by Werribee sending Line clear and starting the 8.20 with

staff before the arrival of 7.10 up.

After seeing all passengers removed to special train I proceeded to clear the line which was effected by 1 pm on Thursday. I gave telegram to Mr Jacks that I received from Diver Craik.

I [posted?] engines and two (2) carriages to Little River where they now are and will bring them to Williamstown on Sunday as they will require to run at a slow pace being very much damaged, both front framings are bent and smashed and motions - one link broken all valve spindles bent.

Memo from Edward Jacks, Loco Inspector, to S Mirs, on April 4 1884

I beg to report for our information receiving notice of collision between the 8.20 pm "down" goods and 7.10 pm "up" passenger train at 10.30 pm on Wednesday 2nd inst.

A special relief train with carriages, men, and necessary appliances was immediately made up, and as soon as medical assistance arrived was despatched for the scene of the accident.

On arrival it was found that the collision was of a serious nature and several of the people more or less seriously injured.

The engines No 82 and 92 are very much damaged also one guards' van is completely broken up, 12 trucks more or less badly damaged, one new carriage built by Messrs Pickles and Sons the body of which is completely destroyed, one second class carriage buffers damaged and panels shook.

The line was cleared of wreckage by 1 pm on Thursday, 3 inst. I will see to the removal to the workshops of damaged locomotives and vehicles.

Memo from John O'Malley, DTSupt, Ballarat to the Actg General Traffic Manager dated 3 April 1884

I have to report while proceeding up to Ballarat this day by the 7.20 am up train, Dudley, guard of the 7.35 am down told me about the collision at Little River last night between the 7.10 pm up passenger and 8.20 pm down goods.

I proceeded on at once by the first train, 11.30 am from Ballarat to Little River then to scene of accident at the Werribee to see for myself and make inquiries, through which I learned yourself was there with the necessary men and appliances also with medical men to render the required assistance to those who were unfortunately injured whose names I was unable to obtain and which no doubt you have by this with those who were killed.

The cause of this unfortunate accident was through the SM's daughter at Werribee sending a line clear message (copy attached) at 9.40 pm seventeen minutes after the 8.20 pm down goods had left the Werribee with staff. I attach copy of SM Werribee report of this collision to yourself who takes the entire responsibility and which of course he could not otherwise do, as there was no hitch whatever about the running of the trains or the staff regulations. The 8.20 pm down should carry the staff to the Little River, which it did, to take on the 7.10 pm. Had no "Line Clear" message been sent no accident could possibly occur. I see by report in the "Herald" that Driver Kitchen and one of the female passengers, name unknown, are dead and those injured are Driver J Craik, Fireman R. Walker, Guard McMurtrie, Miss Adams, Mrs Davies, Mr Hart, and several other passengers more or less. Dr Pincott told me today that he could not pronounce an opinion, one way or the other, as to Fireman Walker's case who was very bad and is in Geelong where this Dr is

attending him.

The Rolling Stock casualties as far as I could ascertain from the remains are as follows 69D, 158, 160, 143, 142, 45, 12, 22, 53, 75, 111, 18, 15, & 59L, all totally damaged with the exception perhaps of 18 & 15, two carriages also a first and second class A1 could not find number of second class.

This accident occurred about 28 1/2 miles from Melbourne between Werribee & Little River a little over a mile from the latter station where the line is perfectly straight.

I must say that I have always found the SM Werribee careful steady and attentive and much regret his misfortune.

(Annotation on above)

7.10 pm up passenger train Engine No 82 Driver J Craik, Fireman R Walker, Guard McMurtrie

8.20 pm down goods train Engine No 92. Driver J Kitchen, Fireman C Guest, Guard Best.

The line at the scene of the accident was cleared and made all right for the 11.30 am up to pass which it did not do as there was another train in waiting at Little River which took passengers and mails on after transfer from other train.

Memo from Thos Biddle to General Traffic Manager dated April 3 1884

Re collision between 7.10 pm up and 8.20 pm Special down. I beg leave to state that the whole of the blame is due to this station.

As organist of the church here, I have a practice of the choir every Wednesday evening when leaving the station after the departure of the 7 pm down and 3.25 pm up. I asked my daughter should the 8.20 pm down special be later than 9.30 pm in arriving to keep it here and give line clear to Little River for the 7.10 pm up. The 8.20 arrived here in time - left as per time table. How she could let the train go and then send line clear, is past my comprehension as she is thoroughly acquainted with railway work. I of course am solely responsible and place myself in your hands.

To try + express my grief and sorrow for what has occurred would simply be impossible so again committing myself into your hands.

(On above)

Telegram 2/4/84

To SM Little River

Please send on 7.10 train I have staff and will keep line clear till its arrival.

(sd) Thos Biddle SM

The Argus 4 April 1884 p5

THE RAILWAY DISASTER AT LITTLE RIVER
THREE LIVES LOST.

THE LATEST PARTICULARS.

CAUSE OF THE ACCIDENT.

THRILLING AND PAINFUL SCENES.

(BY OUR SPECIAL REPORTERS)

In The Argus of yesterday we were enabled to give some particulars of the collision on Tuesday night near the Little River station between a goods and a passenger train. The facts are now given in a more complete form of what in its cause is a most extraordinary as well as lamentable calamity. The passenger train was the mail train leaving Ballarat at 10 minutes past 7 pm which collects passengers from a wider area than any other train on the western line. It was required by the time table to remain

on the siding at Little River station until a goods train from Melbourne, which is timed to arrive there at about the same hour, had arrived. The stationmaster at the Werribee which is about eight miles from Little River, and is the next station to it, left his duty, without leave, and his daughter made a mistake in carrying on the traffic which resulted in the collision. About 16 persons were injured and the drivers of both trains, Kitchen and Craik, and a woman named Mrs Johnson, of Raglan-street South Melbourne, have died from their injuries. The sufferers were brought to town by a special train which was sent down as soon as the disaster was known. A large gang of workmen was employed under the superintendence of several foreman and inspectors all through Tuesday night and yesterday in clearing the line which was blocked by the telescoping of 12 trucks belonging to the goods train and a van and a second class carriage attached to the passenger train. The traffic was so far interrupted by the collision that no goods trains have been run since it occurred and the trains running to and from Melbourne and Geelong, have been rendered late from having to transfer their passengers at the point where the interruption of the line took place. The wounded persons are progressing as favourably as can be expected. The bodies of the deceased have been moved to Geelong, where an inquest will be held at 2 o'clock to day upon the remains.

It was a startling message that Mr Barter acting traffic manager received at half past 10 o'clock. The news was so utterly unexpected by those who were nearest to the spot. A few minutes before the stationmaster at the Werribee had been asked from Spencer-street to report the passing of the mail passenger train from Ballarat. All unconscious of danger, he touched the telegraph keys, transmitting the message, "Not yet in sight". He waited a few minutes, and then the train was fully due. What had become of it? Perhaps the bitter rain and sleet of a truly wintry night had made the wheels greasy, and kept the driver behind his time. The stationmaster, satisfied with thoughts like these, went on making up his accounts, but at last he "called" Little River station, and asked, "Is the mail train there?" Quickly came the answer, "The mail train left here a quarter of an hour ago, when you gave me the clear line signal". The reply had a stunning effect, and with good reason. Surely it was not; it could not be true? The station master had not given the all-right signal, but he had neglected his post, and what might not have happened while he was away? If the signal had been given by his daughter, whom he left to do his work, where was the mail train with the goods train travelling at 25 miles an hour in the opposite direction on the same line of rails. The suspense was sickening, but it was soon over. The stationmaster's daughter, when asked if she had sent the goods train away, and telegraphed "Line clear" to Little River, replied in the affirmative, and then, as it flashed across her mind that she had sent several score of men, women, and children to probable destruction, she became speechless and benumbed with terror. It was by this time known at Little River that some one had fearfully blundered. At that moment some where on the line the trains had crashed into each other out in the blinding rain and darkness, and succour must be instantly sent to the wounded. Mr Baxter, the acting traffic manager, was telegraphed to in the emergency, and preparations were set on foot for sending relief. Cabs rattled to Spencer Street with doctors, lint, bandages, cordials, and a large *posse* of porters, guards, and labourers, and a special train was made up and ranged along the platform. The news ran quickly through the town. The station had been about to close for the night, and a few friends of expected arriv-

als by the late train had faced the unkindly elements to give them their accustomed greeting. But as it began to be known that a terrible catastrophe had happened, the place became a busy centre of interest, and it needed a very close scrutiny on the part of the porters to keep back the curious would be visitors to the scene of the disaster. At last the shunting was over, the requisite number of carriages had been coupled, the lamps, which had been put away for the night, were re-filled and re-lit, and the special sped out into the darkness on its errand of mercy. It was an impressive time for those who had the responsibility of the work of succour in hand. The vague information which had reached them besought the utmost medical assistance that could be procured. It was direct and earnest in this, but every thing else was left to the imagination and the cheerless forebodings inspired by the sudden call of distress at midnight, the howling storm, and the sheets of rain rattling against the window panes. It was a gloomy ride, a fit precursor of the worst anticipations realised. Mr Baxter and Inspector Sadler were in charge, and Drs. Charles Ryan and Eccles, of Collins street, who had been roused from bed, were duly provided with instruments and every auxiliary which human skill could suggest for the relief of the sufferers. There were sub-officers in charge of the various lantern and litter parties, and the latter were so well manned as to give the assurance that the removal of the wounded would be accomplished expeditiously and with the most gentle handling. In the hurried but thoughtful preparation that was made, it was not forgotten that the mail train originally leaves Dimboola, so that in its long journey the carriages would probably receive a full complement of passengers. Hence every railway servant within hailing distance was brought into requisition when the alarm was given, and it is but just to say that they obeyed the call with the alacrity of men eager to work in the cause of humanity.

The special ran at a good pace to Newport, where it was obliged to wait a few minutes to allow the line to be cleared, and the same speed was maintained as far as the Werribee. In compliance with a special message sent by telegraph, a caution was given to slow down at this point, and approach the scene of the accident carefully, in order that if the lights of the trains which had collided had been put out and broken, the special might not run against the obstruction. The journey therefore occupied the excessive time of an hour and a half, but the caution was needless. After going a few miles past the Werribee, a lurid glow shining through the mist was reported from the engine, where a special watch was being kept. A little further on a huge black jagged mass stood up against the leaden sky, vividly outlined by the ruddy flames of the huge bonfires which were burning. We were now on the scene of the accident, which was appalling in its extent and horror. The time had come for action. "Get our lights and litters ready, boys," was the order, and as the special came to a standstill the willing helpers dropped knee deep into the slush, and advanced at the double along the line of goods trucks, stumbling in the dark over broken timber, wheels, axles, and ironwork of every kind, splintered, twisted, and shivered into atoms on every side. The further we got towards the front the more dreadful the havoc was seen to be. Twelve of the trucks were driven into one another or upreared, and resting pick-a-back, so to speak, in distorted shapes. The mass of *débris* rose higher than the telegraph posts on either side of the line, and covered a vast area. The force of the impact could not have been exceeded by an earthquake, or the explosion of a bomb. Timber was riven like tow, and trucks were crushed like

bandboxes under a sledge hammer. The fires, which were liberally fed with the broken woodwork, threw their fitful gleam to the highest points of the pile of wreckage, but left in grim fantastic shadow a great deal of the mischief that had been done. The engines, with their buffers broken and fronts smashed, had kept the rails and interlocked with each other. The solid weight of metal of the locomotives had been unyielding, while the frailer trucks and carriages had been crushed or shattered. The engines had apparently receded not a jot from the place of impact, but the tenders had not fared so well. The hinder part of the tender of the goods engine had been caught by the truck behind it, and pushed and held up on end in the shape of impromptu shears. The second and third trucks behind the tender were, strange to say, not much damaged, but two or three behind these two were broken to pieces. They were crushed so small that it was only by taking the numbers that it could be ascertained how many trucks the huge mass of rubbish represented. All the other trucks which were knocked about were thrown off the line, and breaking their couplings, ran up alongside the engine and tender, and toppled over in the mud. These were not smashed, as they had got loose and run to one side of the line when the wreckage in front rose too high to allow the telescoping to be carried any further.

The passenger train, fortunately, was not nearly so much damaged as the goods train. The tender was thrown off the line. There was a van on either end of it, and the one behind the engine saved the train from utter collapse by falling on its side and acting as a buffer. It is the opinion of Mr Moss, adjuster of claims for the Railway department, and who was one of the passengers, that had not the van interposed in this manner on a level where the force of the collision was greatest, there would have been far greater loss of life. The second class carriage behind the van was annihilated. The whole of the body, roof, and sides were razed by the violence of the blow. Only the floor was left resting on the wheels, and the occupants of the carriage, the seats, and every thing moveable were shot out on to the ground clear of the *debris*, and were picked up without any difficulty in extracting them, as soon as the passengers who were unhurt could get out of their compartments. A first class attached to the second class carriage was slightly damaged, but by far the worst of the havoc had been seen by those coming from the special when they passed the matchwood like fragments and demolished line of sheep trucks behind the goods engine.

Major Smith was one of the first men seen by our party after traversing the 100 yards between the special and the damaged trains. The major eagerly scanned the new comers "Is there a doctor?" said he. "Yes," said Dr Ryan, stepping forward, "there are two; myself and Dr Eccles." "Will you please see to the patients in the carriage there?" said Major Smith, indicating the postal compartment, which had been converted into a temporary hospital. The doctors acquiesced with acclarity and immediately, with much ardour, did all that under the circumstances could be done for the sufferers, they were bandaged, and cordials administered to them. The bearers, under medical orders, tenderly lifted the poor people one after another on to the stretchers from the seats which had been used as couches for the wounded pending the arrival of the special. It was painful to hear the groans of the women when they were moved. Two infants escaped while their mothers were hurt. The men, as became them, were more stoical, and uttered few cries of pain. The fireman of one of the trains, with a blanched cheek betokening severe injuries, sat up, and watched the proceedings with much interest, looking like a figure

of death behind the window of a carriage. It was astonishing how quiet the people were. Women with infants walked through the heavy rain without a murmur. There was no confusion or excitement. The disaster was talked of in subdued tones, as if its awfulness and the narrow escape which had been experienced had repressed all disposition towards querulousness or indignation. Groups stood about, with desolation all around them and the rain wetting them to the skin, ready to lend a hand whenever it was required, or to give an inquirer full information as to what had occurred.

The occupants of the passenger train appeared to have had little or no warning. There was, we are told, a quick, shrill blast from one of the whistles, and then the collision came. Perhaps it was as well that there was no tension - no preparation for the shock - as the medical faculty are agreed that nervous shock is always aggravated when the danger which inflicts it has been apprehended. The catastrophe occurred at 10 o'clock, but when the station master at Little River tried to give the alarm at Geelong and get succour there, he found that the telegraph clerk had punctually left at 10 o'clock, and he could get no reply. Then followed three weary hours waiting for relief from Melbourne, which could have been shortened to one if Geelong could have been roused and informed of what had taken place. In this distressing interval all the help practicable was given to the wounded by their more fortunate fellow-passengers. They were carried from where they had been thrown to the carriages which were still sound, and all the cushions were collected to make soft couches for those who were prostrated. Kitchen, the driver of the goods train, was found insensible, jammed between his fire-box and the tender, and he died soon afterwards. A peculiar fatality attended the unfortunate man, as he is the same driver who was in the Box-hill collision some time ago. The female passenger who was fatally injured breathed her last two hours and a half afterwards.

The work of clearing the line was vigorously commenced as soon as Mr. Baxter and Mr. Sadler arrived. A number of other foremen and inspectors also assisted. Some of them came by the Geelong special, which steamed up about half an hour after the Melbourne contingent. The body of Kitchen, who was a Geelong man, was taken back to that station when the special returned there (about 2 a.m.) with the carriages of the passenger train which were fit to be removed.

By a quarter to 3 o'clock the sufferers had all been removed to the special, which then started for Melbourne. The fires burnt all night consuming many tons of the refuse material of the collision. An engine was employed to pull asunder the huge masses of broken trucks and carriages, some of which had to fall from a considerable height, to which they had been driven. The thickest of the ironwork was bent and twisted as though it had been soft copper wire. By day light all the sound trucks and carriages had been taken to Werribee and Geelong, and only the ironwork of seven trucks, a van, and a second-class carriage remained to mark the disaster. As the clearing party got closer to the engines then work became more difficult, as the rolling stock was inextricably thrown together, and it was cut up into the smallest portions. The engine would be coupled on to some jutting corner of the wreckage, and on being started it would bring a crumbling ruin with it, requiring timely warning and activity on the part of the men to avoid the fragments as they were scattered in every direction. Although the men had had no rations, and had been working all night they showed no signs of flagging till the line was perfectly clear. In the meantime

the passenger trains to and from Melbourne and Geelong were run as far as the obstruction on the permanent way, and the passengers walked past it, and exchanged trains. This caused the morning train to Melbourne to be a full hour late. No goods trains will be run until the line has been thoroughly overhauled, and placed in working order again.

Towards sunrise the rain, which had been so dismal an accompaniment of the catastrophe, ceased, but the scene by daylight, under a grey murky sky was more forbidding than ever. The bonfires had half shrouded the mischief and lent some glamour to the hustle of clearing the line, but when the track was surveyed in all its daylight realism, it was truly a sickening spectacle. How anybody could have escaped to tell the tale seemed more miraculous than ever, when the resistless force of the collusion was plainly visible. Here and there among the ruins were some strange relics, which contrasted strongly with the grim surroundings. A child's doll, some playing cards, scattered broadcast in all directions and some sweetmeats for the little ones, were trodden under foot in the dank turf, and served to impress upon the spectator, if, indeed, anything were needed to do so, the suddenness of the catastrophe and the total unpreparedness of those who experienced it. It was palpable that if the positions of the trains had been reversed, and the passenger carriages had suffered as much damage as the goods trucks, the loss of life would have been far greater than it was. The only reasonable theory to account for the passenger train getting off so well is that the application of the brakes had reduced its speed to about six miles an hour when it was run into, while the goods tram was going at nearly its ordinary speed. This is what the driver and fireman of the Ballarat train allege, and as they had only just steamed out of Little River station it is improbable that a high rate of speed had been attained. The guard of the passenger train states that he heard a whistle, and felt that steam was being shut off on the engine, just before the collision knocked him violently off his seat. Kitchen, of the Goods train, on the other hand, being in possession of the staff, which is supposed to ensure the line being clear, would feel quite justified in going at his usual speed. The misty weather would prevent the drivers of the trains from seeing each other at as great a distance as on a clear night. There is, however, no curve at the spot in question, the country about there being of the usual level character that lies between Melbourne and Geelong. It was expected that the line would be quite cleared by last evening.

ADMISSIONS OF THE WERRIBEE STATIONMASTER

After seeing all that was to be seen at the site of the tragedy, one of our staff about 11 yesterday morning went to Werribee. At that time the true cause of the accident was not generally known. The Werribee station master, Thomas Biddle, was on the platform. A remark was made that "Little River made a nice mess of it sending the passenger train on." Biddle looked grave, and said quickly, with a tremor in his voice, "It was not his fault, it was mine. It will all come out. I may as well tell you all about it. 'Line clear' was sent from here. I did not send it, but I am responsible. I should have been on duty, and I was not. The truth is, I am the organist of the Church of England church here, and we have a practice on Wednesday night. I went to it without being relieved of duty. It is a simple thing to see that the train was right. I heard it come in to the station. My daughter sent it on. I had told her that if the train came before half past 9 to let it go to Little River, if it came after half past 9, to keep it back till the passenger train arrived here. Goods trains do not run to time,

and stationmasters have a discretion to alter the shunting. The train arrived about 25 minutes past 9, and my daughter sent it on. That was right enough if she had done nothing else, but she sent 'Line clear' to the stationmaster at Little River. I don't know what possessed her to do it. She cannot tell me herself, as she is quite dumfounded at what has happened. I did not know she had sent 'Line clear' to Little River. I came in shortly afterwards, and was making up my accounts. Spencer-street asked me to report the time the mail tram left here. It had not come. I looked up the line for it, but did not see it. In a little while I telegraphed to Little River to know if the mail train was there. I got a reply back that the tram had been sent on, when 'Line clear' was telegraphed. I rejoined that I had not sent 'Line clear'. Little River said he had got it on his tape. Then it occurred to me that Annie might have done it. I called her in and asked her. She said she had sent the 'All right signal', and then she got so frightened at what she had done that she could not speak. I knew there would be a collision, if it had not already happened. I could do nothing. (Here Biddle broke down. After a pause he continued.) Almost immediately we got a message that the worst had happened. My poor girl, I feel for her as much as I do for myself. It was a slip of mine, and it has been terribly punished. I have been an officer for six years, and there is nothing against me, and now it has come to this. I told Mr Baxter the whole truth last night, and I am expecting my suspension by the next train. A relieving officer came in as Mr Biddle was speaking, and the latter handed over his books and the station to him. In the course of some further conversation, Mr Biddle said his daughter's age was 17, and she had been quite familiar with such work as he had entrusted her with. He could give no explanation, nor could he get one from her, as to why she sent the "Line clear" signal. [...]

THE SCENE AT THE SPENCER STREET STATION

As soon as it became known that an accident had occurred on the Victorian Railways, most anxious inquiries were made in every conceivable direction by persons who expected friends or relatives from the country and at one time the scene at the Spencer-street station was most animated and pathetic. The station was at intervals thronged with anxious looking men, women, and children of every description, who sought to ascertain the names of those who had been killed or maimed in the collision and although their anxiety could not be wholly relieved, their excited feelings were in a great measure relieved by learning officially that those whom they sought were not numbered among the dead. This in itself was a great source of relief, but many who were unable to wholly control their fear and anxiety, first searched the hospitals and the morgue, and then proceeded by the first ordinary passenger train to the scene of the catastrophe with the view of clearing up their doubts, forgetful of the fact, in their excitement and hurry, that a properly directed shilling telegram would have settled the matter in half an hour probably. This state of things existed throughout the day, and everything within the bounds of reason was done by the officials to relieve and allay the public anxiety. The officials had their work cut out for them from the first notification of the occurrence, and they responded promptly enough to the urgent and unexpected call to duty, and continued at work up to a late hour last night. The ordinary traffic was carried on with but slight interruption, and with the exception of the cancellation of a few special goods trains which were to have run on the Geelong as well as the Sunbury lines no serious inconvenience resulted. Prompt measures were taken to remove the debris and repair the lines, and the work was so

satisfactorily completed that the ordinary traffic was resumed on the Ballarat and Geelong line at half past 1 pm, and on the Sunbury line at 22 minutes past 1 o'clock [shortly after the Little River collision, a locomotive hauling a goods train burst its boiler at the foot of the Sunbury bank killing the fireman and seriously injuring the driver]. Until this was completed, however, [...] a "changing" station was formed at the scene of the accident. By this means a good deal of time was saved, and public inconvenience spared. The commissioners were busily engaged the whole day inquiring into and dealing with the matter and their offices were surrounded by a goodly crowd, anxious to obtain the latest information, until a late hour in the afternoon. They were officially visited by Mr Gillies with whom they held a lengthy consultation, and later on by Mr R. A. Sutherland, the Crown solicitor, whom the commissioners consulted on the legal aspects of the cases, more particularly as to what steps should be taken with regard to the holding of the inquests, the official departmental inquiry, and any other civil or criminal investigation that might be deemed necessary.

THE STAFF SYSTEM

[...] It appears that when the regulations were adopted by the Governor in Council authorising the use of the staff system a good deal of latitude was allowed to the responsible heads of the branches such as the traffic manager and by means of which an order was issued, first in 1875, and again in 1883, giving stationmasters power to use the telegraph in connexion with the staff system in cases of emergency. This was in direct contravention of the original regulations as well as of those issued under the auspices of Mr Gillies at the beginning of the present year. It was intended that when trains broke down or were late, the stationmaster might be enabled to bring on the train from the other end of the section by telegraphing "Line Clear," at the same time taking the necessary precautions to prevent the late or disabled tram passing the station until the incoming train had arrived. In this particular case it appears that there was really no necessity whatever for the telegraph system being substituted for the more secure block effected on the line by the staff. The goods train arrived at the Werribee station up to time, and on leaving the staff was properly handed over to the driver, and he proceeded on his way. Had it not been for the use of the telegraph system the passenger train would have remained at the Little River station until the arrival of the goods train with the staff and as a natural consequence the accident could not have occurred. When, however, the stationmaster at Little River received the wire "all clear" from Werribee he concluded that the goods train was late, and that as is usually done on such occasions recourse was had to the circular permitting, the use of the telegraph to prevent unnecessary delay. The railway commissioners learnt for the first time yesterday of the existence of the circulars, dated 1875 and 1883 permitting the use of the telegraph and Mr Speight at once issued a peremptory circular discontinuing the use of the system for the future.

[...]

THE GEELONG SUFFERERS

[BY TELEGRAPH]

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT)

GEELONG, THURSDAY

The only known Geelong sufferers are Robert Walker, fireman, and Samuel Best, guard of the goods train from Melbourne. Walker has four ribs broken, his right lung is injured, and from certain symptoms shows that he is internally injured, and Dr Pincott, who is attending him, states that his condition is rather critical. Best is injured in the

spine and left leg, but is able to walk about. Walker states that Kitchen, the deceased engine driver, received the staff from Miss Biddle at the Werribee station, and was told to go ahead to meet the passenger train at Little River. The goods train was travelling at a moderate rate, having a very heavy load. The night was exceedingly dark, thick misty rain obscuring at intervals every thing ahead. When approaching Little River, a dim light was seen straight in front, and it was thought that the passenger train was stationary at Little River. Soon afterwards the driver called out to put the brakes on and to look out for himself, and almost at the same moment the collision took place, Walker being thrown with great violence against the tender. Best says that his attention was aroused by hearing the engine giving a shrill whistle and on looking out from the van he could discern nothing, but he immediately applied the brake and was getting down from his seat to ascertain what was the cause of the alarm when he was violently thrown from one end of the guards van to the other.

The late Mr T Kitchen, driver of the goods train from Melbourne to Geelong, has left a widow and four children, the youngest of whom is two and a half years of age. He was a member of the Corio Division of the Sons of Temperance. His life was insured for 100 in the Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Company, and also for a similar amount in the Australian Widows' Life Assurance Company, the renewal premium of which was paid last Friday. He has a wound on the left temple and a cut under the left ear, and severe scalds on the right arm, whilst the left arm is broken above the elbow. The wound on the temple is said to have been the cause of death. [...]

IDENTIFICATION OF MRS JOHNSON.

[BY TELEGRAPH]

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT)

HORSHAM, THURSDAY

The railway accident created a great deal of interest here, more especially tonight, when it was almost certainly stated that the lady who was killed was a passenger from Horsham. Her name was Mrs Johnson, a widow, residing at 24 Raglan street, South Melbourne, and she was on a visit to her relations here. She left yesterday, and would have been in the train which met with the accident. Her relatives became anxious and communicated with her friends at Emerald-hill, who replied that she had not arrived there. They then telegraphed to the police for a full description, which answered most accurately that of Mrs Johnson. Mr Alfred Meredith, of Horsham, a brother of the deceased, proceeds to Geelong by the special train to-morrow morning.

LIST OF THE DEAD

The occurrence has proved to be more serious than was at first anticipated, no less than three deaths having occurred up to a late hour last night. The fatal cases are as follow -

Thomas Cole Kitchen, the driver of the "down" goods train, was aged 34 years, and resided at Geelong where he was removed in an insensible condition after the occurrence. He sustained fearful fractures of the left thigh and hip and the left arm, a large abrasion and extensive discolouration on the left breast, several large bruises on the left temple, and severe scalding about the arms and legs. He never regained consciousness and died about three hours after the occurrence. The deceased entered the Railway service on the 10th of September, 1873, and always held a good position in the opinion of the officers in charge of the locomotive branch of the department. It will be remembered that he was the driver of the special train from Box-hill which collided with a passenger train

between Burnley-street and Hawthorn in December, 1882. He was the son of Mr Thomas Kitchen, tailor, Latrobe terrace, Geelong West and leaves a widow and four children. The inquest on the body will be formally commenced today and adjourned for a week for the collection of the necessary evidence

James Craik, the driver of the "up passenger tram, was 47 years of age. He sustained a fracture of the thigh and of several ribs. He was so severely shaken and bruised that he lingered until 6 o'clock, when death ensued. He joined the Railway service in 1862, and has ever since held a creditable position in the department.

The third victim is a woman about 40 to 50 years of age named Mrs Johnson of Raglan-street, South Melbourne. The lady was brought down to the Melbourne morgue, but subsequently returned to Geelong where an inquest will be held at 2 o'clock today.

LIST OF THE INJURED

It is quite impossible at present to compile a complete list of the persons who sustained injuries, but the following comprises the more serious cases as far as can be ascertained -

Samuel Best, about 28 years old, the guard of the 8 20 goods train, was severely shaken and bruised about the body.

Charles Proctor Guest, aged 24 years, the fireman on the passenger train, was also severely injured. He joined the Railway service on the 15th October 1877

Walker, the fireman of the goods train has his ribs fractured and complained very much of the pain and loss of blood through a [cut?] on the head. He was permitted to return home to Geelong.

Mrs Phoebe Hart is 47 years of age and resides at 162 Latrobe-street east. She is badly bruised about the body, and complains of pain in her head but the medical attendants cannot find any injuries there.

Mrs J. O. Cummins, Ferrars-street, South Melbourne, is suffering from a wound on the knee and back, and has been terribly shaken. She complains of severe pain at the back of the neck and is bruised in several places.

Mrs Milne, who lives with Mrs Cummins, has a black eye and cut over the forehead, and is very much shaken.

Mr Richards who resides in Bridport-street west near the gasworks has been seen by Dr Barratt, who reports that he is suffering from an abrasion on the knee. He also is shaken and bruised on the body.

Mrs Katherine Beatty, aged 40 years, living at 31 Latrobe-street west, has a fractured thigh, and is bruised on the lower portions of the body.

Mrs Ann Pell, widow, 47 years of age, gatekeeper at

Somerton, has sustained severe injuries about the chest, and several scalp wounds.

Miss A C Moon and Miss Elphinstone Dick, directresses of the well known ladies' gymnasium, were passengers in the train. They were in a second class carriage (not the one which was smashed), and just before the accident Miss Moon fell asleep. Miss Dick says that she had no warning of the collision, and the first she knew of it was a terrific crash which threw her violently from her seat to the opposite side of the compartment, her head striking the woodwork. She soon recovered and saw that her companion was more seriously hurt; her forehead being cut in three places over the right eye. Miss Dick assisted her to alight and attended to her wounds, and to those of two other ladies in distress. On their arrival in Melbourne, they were driven to Dr Geo. Teague's and thence to their residence, Abbotsford where they are now confined to their rooms under strict injunctions from their medical adviser to remain quiet for a few days.

David M'Murtrie, the guard of the passenger train, has his collar bone broken, a nasty scalp wound and is bruised severely all over the body.

Miss Adams, who lives at Dahlke's Filter Works, Sandridge-road, near Prince's-bridge, is suffering from shock causing hysteria, but the doctors are confident there are no bones broken.

Mr Dawes, the landlord of the Council Hotel, Brighton has a deep wound at the back of the head, and is injured in the neck and on one foot.

Miss Dawes, daughter of above, severe shock and bruises.

R. B. Thompson, a new arrival from England, has received a severe injury to the knee joint, and was badly shaken. He is at present at the Sydney Arms Hotel, William-street

P. W. Donnelly, staying at the Royal George, Elizabeth-street, head badly cut.

Mrs Woodburn, of Dunkeld, near Hamilton, Western district, nose fractured, contusions on various parts of the body, and badly shaken.

Mr Ettleston, 5 Victoria-street, Queen-street, Melbourne, badly bruised, and suffering from severe shock.

John Peel, a resident of Geelong, suffering from some contusions and shock.

David Bird, cattle dealer, several cuts and bruises

Mr W. Davies, Meredith, Mr Brach, butcher, and other passengers, complain of slight injuries.