
BRIEF HISTORY.

Train services commenced in November 1883, with a morning service daily, from Tallarook-Yea, with a return working around 1230pm ex Yea. In 1889 the service beyond Yea was commenced towards Molesworth, & train operations were shifted to Yea from Tallarook. The service was again extended in 1891 when through services began to Mansfield. By this time Yea, was being serviced by a morning & evening train to Melbourne (Change trains at Tallarook) and a late morning train to Mansfield returning as an early afternoon train to Yea & Melbourne. (With connections to Alexandra Road, later Rhodes, Lily & Koriella (At Cathkin) This arrangement continued until 1943, when due to a wartime coal shortage, services were reduced, & the morning services to Melbourne several days a week, were removed, along with rail passenger services to Alexandra in 1945. The service to Alexandra remained as available to goods train only, until the last train operated to this location in October 1978. Mansfield line services continued, with the above, service working, until railmotor services, were introduced over the length of the line in 1949. This provided a morning train ex Mansfield (Change at Tallarook for Melbourne) & returning to Mansfield, in the early evening ex Melbourne & Tallarook. This arrangement lasted many years, with minor alterations due to the introduction of the larger 280HP Walker railmotors to the line in 1951 & Through train workings to Melbourne, until passenger services were removed off the line in 1977. The line operated as a goods train only operations, until regular goods train services were withdrawn in Feb 78. Goods trains still operated, but on an as required basis, until total closure in November 1978. The last train, Hauled by Diesel Locomotive, Y 158, departed Yea at 6.30pm on Monday 06/11/78, causing Yea to become devoid of railways from that date. No train ever visited the Yea area again.

THE CONTOUR OF THE LINE.

The line branches away from the main North East Railway on a 20 chain curve, at 56 miles 15chains & 11links (Altitude 1299 Feet above sea level) from Melbourne, and while descending a long steep drop on some grades as steep as 1 in 40, traversing School House Lane & several 50 chain curves, before crossing Reedy Creek near the historic homestead "Landscape" sporting picturesque gardens. This property cannot be appreciated, from the view gained from the main road. This location, "The Reedy Creek bridge crossing", was the site of a serious derailment in the late 1920's when the morning train from Melbourne, arrived at the bridge, simultaneously with an inland Tsunami thundering down the creek. The Dd Locomotive made it across the creek crossing, with the passenger cars stranded on the Tallarook side of the bridge, whilst the goods trucks in the middle of the train, were swept clean off the line. Attempts to get the train driver's attention by local residents were unsuccessful. Their efforts were in vain, & the incident was inevitable. When the line was constructed, a

timber trestle bridge would have spanned Reedy Creek, but was replaced in the mid 1940's, by the concrete & steel bridge, standing here today. From here, the formation continues on basically level terrain, traversing a consecutive, 40 chain & 30 chain reverse curves, before climbing a short 1 in 40 upgrade. The line then drops sharply, down a short 1 in 40 gradient, traverses 2 reverse 40 chain curves & crosses "Cow Creek". After a slight up gradient, it crosses an old Road Crossing (long disappeared) on a right hand sweeping 30 chain curve, after commencing as a 25 chain curve before dropping sharply & undulating.

Rounding these curves, we come to the site of the 5 mile gatehouse at 62miles 50 Chains from mileage 0 in Melbourne The former main road used to cross the right of way here, the site being extensively modified in the 1920's with the main road re-aligned to stay on the right hand side of the trail. The former main road was abolished, & consequently the site, gatehouse & gates were removed, with the alterations. This site was one of a number of locations, in the state of Victoria that had hand operated gates, not protected by lineside signals. These gates were normally closed, against road traffic, & when it was required to open the gates for road traffic to be let through, the road user, had to rouse the gate attendant, who after contacting the Signalmen at both Tallarook & Yea, to find out if there was a train in the section. & its approximate whereabouts, would then operate the gates, allowing the road user to go over the line, at his own risk, this arrangement, common in this era, was signified to Drivers of trains, by the attaching of a small white triangular shaped board, to the advance crossing approach board, placed twice the distance out, than normal. This arrangement became unworkable in the late 1920's with the consequent increase in road traffic, with more cars hitting the Victorian road system. This location featured in a Railway awareness campaign to increase level crossing awareness in 1923 titled, "Stop, Look & listen" An early Red "Austin A7", featured in the promotion as well. This unusual safety procedure remained in force in Victoria till into the 70's, when the last two locations at Paddy & Lonsdale Streets, Mentone, just out of Cheltenham in the Metropolitan area of Melbourne, were converted to a boom barrier, type arrangement. Paddy Street however was blocked off altogether.

The line then continues to undulate, heading slightly uphill, traversing a series of curves, some as tight as 15 chain radius, before a major heavy climb of 1 in 40 into Trawool Station, (Altitude 1246 feet above sea level) crossing the Main Goulburn Valley Highway on a right hand curve of a 30 chain radius, which sweeps through the entire station & platform area. Note the tall conifer, pencil pine trees on the platform, planted in the 1930's. From here the line drops sharply, before a tight pinch, & meanders its way down behind the Trawool Hotel via a series of 40, 25 & 30 chain radius curves & into the Station of Granite, originally named Wrights Siding, & later Trawool Falls (Altitude 1215 Feet above sea level). Granite was a small wayside siding & station, opened after the line commenced running, to serve a small granite quarry, specialising in monumental products, with a small human powered push cart tramway, to bring the quarried product from in the quarry, above Trawool Creek,(Formerly Falls

Creek) down to the rail siding at Granite. There have been 2 wooden platforms over the lifespan of Granite station, both now having been long removed. The first one being on the Trawool side of Trawool Creek, situated on the left side of the line, with the replacement platform erected on the opposite side of Trawool Creek, closer to the Trawool Hotel on the right hand side of the line. The station ceased to exist after quarrying became un-economical in the late 1950's. Several historic photographs adorn the walls of the Trawool Hotel, of the Granite Quarry & its operation, & are well worth a quick look & visit to this establishment.

From here the line rises acutely by a 1 in 40 upgrade, through a series of tight curves, some as tight as 15 chains radius. If ever a train would have stalled, with an inability to take the whole train forward a/c too much weight between Tallarook – Yea, it was here. Many a train has been divided into 2 pieces here, with half the train going on to Kerrisdale (the next station) & returning for the rear portion, to clear the section & unite the train.

After topping the grade here, it is only short, sharp down hill run, via reverse 15 chain curves, to the 9 mile Gatehouse, where the Goulburn Valley Highway crosses the railway formation once again. Locally known as “the house on stilts”, it was worked under the same rules as the 5 mile gatehouse, but lasted slightly longer before being abolished on the 27/03/47. This unique building that was here, was situated in the small triangular piece of land, backing on the railway formation, & facing the main road. If you leant out of a train here, you could almost touch the roof of the house. A feat often attempted by passengers from a passing train.

The rail trail now goes under the main road, via an underpass at this site. Once through the underpass, the railway is rejoined on a series of 15 chain radius curves, on an embankment, & a drop is made towards “Flynn's Creek”, with the remains of a local hops farm on your left hand side. A steep downgrade for a short distance is encountered, hugging the sides of the “Warrigul” rocks, traversing many tight curves above the river flats. A short sharp rise is encountered, & through a series of 15, 25 & 35 chain radii curves, past the old ballast quarry at 67miles 20 chains circa 1888 & 20 chain radius curve Kerrisdale is reached through a long 50 chain right hand Curve. Kerrisdale (Altitude 1240 Feet above sea level) is an interesting place, as when the line was constructed in the 1880's it was the major construction point for the growing railway, with a major construction camp situated near the King Parrot Creek, just beyond the Kerrisdale Station proper. This camp, at the time, was a larger settlement than Yea, & boasted hotels, schools & a hospital. Nothing now remains of this temporary settlement, but it will be mentioned, as it is passed. Kerrisdale is now home to the “Kerrisdale Mountain Railway”, which houses many operating exhibits from a bygone era, including the original Kerrisdale Station Building & well worth a visit.

Leaving Kerrisdale, the complete railway formation has been regraded & changed from the time the railway operated. An overbridge, built in the 1960's conveying the Goulburn Valley Highway over the railway, has been removed, the Highway re-aligned, and the whole area regraded to suit this new alignment. The rail trail only vaguely reflects the original course of the line.

Once you are back on the original Railway alignment, the King Parrot Creek Bridge is crossed by a modern concrete & steel construction, replacing the original wooden trestle bridge. The area under the bridge & to the immediate right was the site of the temporary construction camp when the line was built in the 1870's that was mentioned earlier, in this document.

From here, the line leaves the King Parrot Creek area by means of 2 right hand & 1 left hand, 15 chain curves, heads downhill & heads into a level area. A sweeping 35 & 40 chain curves, which take you into a series of 3 15 chain curves. From here, the trail rises up a short 1 in 40 grade. On top of this grade, is the local wildlife refuge, called "The Haven". A refuge for Native Wild Animals requiring special attention, before being released back into the wild, worth a visit, particularly if you are accompanied by children?

The line drops for a short distance on a 1 in 40 grade, rounds a left hand 20 chain curve, a right hand 20 chain curve & enters the flood flats of "Dairy Creek" via a sweeping 40 chain curve. After passing a road crossing, the "Dairy Creek" is crossed with a low level, modern, concrete & steel bridge constructed in the 1940's.

From here, the line basically continues in a downhill direction for a short distance, meeting 3 curves in its progress, a 40 chain left hand curve, a right hand 20 chain curve & a final 40 chain curve heading up hill, via several short level sections before a 1 in 40 climb takes the trail towards Homewood. Here the Railway again meets the Goulburn Valley Highway on the top of the gradient. This area is also unrecognisable from when the railway operated, with the re-alignment of the Goulburn Valley Highway in the 1990's. This caused the Highway, at this location to now traverse the former Railway line into the Homewood station area (Altitude 564 Feet above sea level)

After rejoining the railway proper, leaving Homewood by a 30 chain curve, the line rises drastically on a long climb, starting out at a gradient of 1 in 50 & steepening to 1 in 40 towards the top of the gradient, after going through 2 reverse 40 chain curves. This hill is known locally as "Box Hill", & is the severest climb between Tallarook & Yea. A long, tough climb!

After topping "Box Hill" a steep downgrade, is met with drops of 1 in 40, a 40 chain curve, sharpening to a 30 chain curve, before crossing "Hamilton's Road", & immediately after crossing "Hamilton's Road" a 30 Chain curve is reached on a sweeping curve, & the trail continues downgrade through another long 50

chain left hand curve, before reaching the bottom of the grade. The trail now continues, undulating but slightly uphill through a 50 chain, left hand curve before negotiating the Aldous Avenue, Road Crossing.

The line rises again here, through a long 50 chain, left hand curve, crosses “Boundary Creek” & North Street in the process, & enters the Yea Township via a sweeping left hand curve of 50 chains

Heading slightly uphill, Melbourne Road is crossed after which the line rises sharply on a 20 chain right hand curve, before crossing another road, which up to the closure of the line, was protected by hand operated Wooden Gates at Lyon Street

The Yea Railway Station is situated on a level area of ground, between the Lyon Street Gates, & the Melba Highway. The area at the Mansfield end of the Railway Station at Yea, including the Station area at this end, was drastically altered in 1971 to re-align the Melba Highway, with later regrading work done in the 1990's when the Yea Hospital helipad was constructed on the site of the Yea locomotive depot, 53 foot Turntable & coal stage. Nothing now remains of this previously bustling area. The original Yea Locomotive shed was moved to Wallan in 1892, & a new running shed built in 1910, which remained on site till the abolition of steam motive power, off the line. The shed was removed, but the attached oil house remains in Yea as a garden shed, at a private house in the Yea Township today. The 80 mile post, formerly positioned outside the Yea Locomotive Depot, underneath a watertower, also has found a new location in the rear of a private residence in the Yea township.

The Yea Station area (Altitude 1265 Feet above sea level) is left, through the site of the former “Oliver Street” hand operated, wooden gates, via a 20 chain right hand curve, & basically undulates on a 1 in 997 gradient, for about two kilometres, going through 2 reverse 80 & 100 chain curves, until it reaches the Yea River bridge, which was built to replace the original bridge, replaced in 1945. Opened with the line, early ballast siding, used in the construction of the line, branched off here, for the collection of river ballast from the Yea River then known as Muddy Creek. No trace of this short ballast line can be found today, just stories lost in time. The pile remains of the original bridge can be clearly seen to the immediate left of the trail formation. This bridge was locally known as the “long bridge” as the original water crossing, was 1 one long wooden construction, like the bridges at Yarra Glen & Orbost, rather than the way it is today, separated by several earthen embankment sections, separating several individual Bridge Spans, The river is crossed via the bridge, on a 30 chain radius left hand curve. From here, the line rises sharply leading to the climb to the tunnel, some 9+kilometres ahead. This climb, on severe grades, was a challenge, to engine crews, operating Steam Locomotives, over the decades, the line operated, using this form of traction. The grades start out as an easy 1 in 80, but get tougher towards the tunnel's Southern portal, steepening to 1 in 40 gradients.

2 curves are negotiated between the river crossing, & Cheviot. The first a sweeping long gentle left hand curve, of 60 chains, with the second being a little sharper, a right hand curve of 40 chains, which takes you across a local road crossing, & into the Cheviot Station on a 1 in 200 upgrade.

Cheviot (altitude 1265 feet above Sea level) is a location steeped in local history, & was the Northern most terminus, of an extensive timber tramway network that worked across the ranges through the Murrindindi Forest to Healesville. The tramways were extensive, in the hills North & East of Melbourne, & in their heyday, it was possible, to travel cross country, right through to Healesville via this mode of transport. Timber sourced from these light tramlines & local sawmills were loaded, on to the Victorian Railways network, here at Cheviot, for eventual transshipment & cartage to Melbourne, via the Upper Goulburn Rail Link. This whole area was devastated in the January 1939 tragic bushfires, & never fully recovered. Sawn timber, was loaded on to rail wagons at a loading point, near where the remains of the superphosphate shed is now standing, after running parallel with VR line, from a point some 2 kilometres on the Molesworth side of Cheviot station, after it crossed from the right hand side, by means of an underpass set up, the scars in the earth, can be seen in this area, to this day, as you head on towards the Balham hill tunnel, & Molesworth.

In the 1960's, in an attempt to reduce superphosphate dust & noise in the confines of the Yea Railway yard, during unloading, superphosphate traffic was diverted to Cheviot, and the remains of the Superphosphate unloading shed, can still be seen, on the left hand side of the former siding.

This area, in & around the Cheviot Station present, was totally devastated in a Bush Fire, that went through this area, in January 1969. The charred trees in the area are the result of this devastating fire event.

Cheviot is left, after passing over a road crossing and negotiating a 30 chain left hand curve. Now the assault on tunnel hill (Balham hill) up to Kunningham's gap, commences properly, with long gradients of a 1 in 40 inclines, going through a series of mainly 30 chain curves as the trail climbs to the Tunnel mouth. A 50 & a 30 chain curve as the tunnel is approached via a straight section of line & numerous cuttings.

The, tunnel is at an altitude of 1627 feet above sea level, is 666 feet in length, built on a 1 in 40 uphill gradient outside the tunnel, easing to 1 in 60, up gradient, inside the tunnel proper. This easing of the gradient, immediately inside the Tunnel, gives an optical illusion of the gradient going down hill but it doesn't. When you proceed through the tunnel itself, you will feel the gradient rising, until exiting its confines.

The area around the tunnel was devastated, by the January 1969 bushfires, resulting in many roads in the area having to be deviated. These deviations can still be seen today, with many roads still trunkated to the 1969 profiles.

The bricks for the construction of the tunnel, were kilned on site, with the actual brick kilns, being in an area to the left of the line (about 250+ metres) from the line, behind a woolshed, approximately 200+metres before the tunnel itself. The kiln site is still in existence. The site where the clay was quarried for the bricks, is now a grazier's dam, & can be easily identified today. The kiln complex was connected to the Tunnel construction site, by a push powered tramway, delivering the finished kilned bricks to the work site as required. The formation of this construction tramway can still be identified today at the Yea end of the Tunnel at certain times of the year, due to soil disturbance, & the changing of grass colour.

During the construction of the tunnel for the advancing Rail Head, a blasting mishap occurred at the Tunnel, causing the immediate death of one worker. A second worker died of his wounds received in this mishap, in a Melbourne Hospital, sometime later. The worker killed immediately, in the blasting accident, is buried in the Old Cemetery in Yea, with a suitable Headstone (made of wood) erected at the time, by his fellow workers on the lines construction.

The tunnel is exited by a deep cutting on a 30 chain right hand curve, easing to 40 chains on a steep 1 in 40 downgrade, crossing a disused roadway, deviated by the January 69 Bushfires & into the former Balham station on a 1 in 200 downgrade.

Balham was built as a construction siding during the construction of the line. The only apparent user of this installation was the nearby BALHAM HOMESTEAD, so that when they applied in the early years for the facility to be upgraded, to full station standards, the Railways Department insisted that the HOMESTEAD finances foot the bill, which they refused to do, with the Railways Department responded by removing the siding completely, obliterating the site, off all maps.

Leaving Balham behind us on a 30 chain left hand curve, after crossing over a roadway, we enter Harvey's Gully, still descending long drops of 1 in 40 gradients.

Harvey's Gully was the scene of a fatal Train Smash in 1911, when an axle broke on the Morning train to Mansfield, causing a carriage to tip off the bridge, into Harvey's Gully, causing the death of a passenger on the train.

A local visiting the scene of the fatal accident, at the time of the incident, souvenired a splintered surviving piece of wood from the ancient 6 wheeled carriage, made a wooden collection box, with handle attached from it, and that

box, is still in position at Saint Lukes, church, in Yea. This church is situated near the Yea Railway station, thus preserving an historic piece of Yea, Railway History into modern times.

The small bridge where the carriage toppled off the bridge, was destroyed in the January 69 Fires, & replaced by a steel pipe culvert, still recognisable today. While this Steel culvert was being constructed, the line was temporarily deviated to negotiate the culvert crossing, by going through the creek, like crossing a ford.

The line continues downgrade on a 1 in 40 gradients, over another road crossing, through a series of short 40 & 60 chain curves, coming out onto one of the longest straight sections of track, on the line, a 33 chain curve, emerges onto an area, above the old Main Road, & Sheepwash Lagoon, on a 25 & 21 chain curve, hugging the side of a ridge, before continuing downgrade on more 1 in 40 gradients. A series of short 25, 21 chain curves and 2 left hand curves of 38 & 20 chains respectively, bring you into Molesworth on a 1 in 78 gradient, with the Railway Station area, being on level territory,

Molesworth Altitude 1269 Feet above sea level is a small settlement, boasting a Store and a Hotel. The Hotel has a selection of photographs, of the Railway in operation, on display in the Bistro area. Well worth a visit for a look. One small anecdote, about the Molesworth Station, is that when it was constructed, the constructing engineer was dismissed, for using excessive quantities of explosives, in blasting out the goods yard area, rather than building the design the other way round, using only a fraction of the explosives & thus reducing costs. The results of excessive blasting are clearly visible today.

As Molesworth is left behind by a 40 chain right hand curve, taking you onto the flood flats & Main river Crossing of The Goulburn River you head onward via level terrain on to a 30 chain curve on towards "Home creek". Home creek was a lineside watering point in the early days of the Railway for the old antiquated "O" & "Q" class engines, later "W" & "S" Locomotives that used to work the line in the early days

The watertanks at this location were replenished regularly by running the Cathkin based engine out from Cathkin, pump water from out of the "Home" creek" into lineside tanks, for use by the through trains, from a Steam Driven pump assembly attached to the Locomotive. These pumping duties for the Cathkin engine appear to be the main duties, the Cathkin based Locomotive performed, clocking up the lowest Engine Miles worked per week in the state. These arrangements appear to have remained until 1909, when the line finally reached Alexandra from the intermediate temporary terminus & tanks at Cathkin were commissioned. At this point in time, the Cathkin engine & crew were removed & added to the Yea work roster, which had now been allocated working, the newly opened line into the Alexandra Township.

The line continues on, on a slightly rising gradient of 1 in 2649, sweeping through two long reverse curves, one of 30 chains radius, the second a short distance in advance, of 40 chains radius. The area through here was totally destroyed, in 1973, when a freak flood caused a lot of damage to the track, causing the track to be totally reconstructed from Molesworth through to Cathkin, the formation now heads up a slight gradient of 1 in 3000, & via a left hand long 60 chain radius curve, & another right hand 60 chain radius curve, which after crossing a local road, enters the Cathkin Station area, beware of Tiger snakes here!

Cathkin, altitude 1281 Feet above sea level, was the changing point & junction for trains heading to Alexandra. The man who was the Station Master here for 38 Years, James Dunn, was a successful published poet, with many of his poems relating to railways & trains on this line. One of his books of Poetry “Beside a Mountain Stream” is readily available from shops in the local area.

From here, Cathkin is left, after crossing the main road to Alexandra, the formation takes a sharp left hand curve of 15 chains radius, & begins its ever sharpening rise before entering a lengthy right hand 60 chain curve, goes into a lengthy straight section, where after entering a 40 chain curve, crosses underneath the re-aligned Maroonda Highway from Alexandra, via a modern bridge, constructed in 1971.

The formation heads in downward direction for about 2 kilometres, before it again begins to rise up a 1 in 220 gradient. The assault on the Merton Gap has begun!. The line continues its steady upward climb, heading straight, until 2 reverse 30 chain curves takes the journey into Yarck.

Yarck (Altitude 1269 Feet above Sea level) is the largest Lineside settlement along the Line, outside Yea, Alexandra & Mansfield, boasting a Café, General Store, and a Hotel, which has some of the widest selection of cuisine, in the district. A great place to put some fuel, in the human tank, before continuing the marathon journey, towards Mansfield,

Yarck is left behind, by a set of 2 reverse 30 chain curves, bringing the trail back on to an alignment, parallel to the Maroonda Highway. While continuing an uphill assault on the Merton gap, negotiating gradients as steep as 1 in 68, & 1 in 40, crossing several farm access tracks, in the process. This section, whilst uphill. has very few curved sections in it & after leaving the curves departing Yarck proper, the first curve that is encountered, is a long left hand curve of 1000 chain radius. Another curve of 60 chain radius is some distance ahead, while still climbing steadily, with another 100 chain curve & a small downhill section crossing one of the few wooden trestles left on the line, after they were all replaced by concrete & steel structures in the mid 1940's ready for the expected increase in heavy traffic, with the Eildon weir project getting underway in the

early 1950's. 2 reverse curves of 100 chain & 60 chain radius, admit you into the Kanumbra station area.

Kanumbra (Altitude 1281 Feet above sea level) is just a whistlestop, with no shops, Hotels or stores present

From here on, the formation swings away from the Maroonda Highway & the long climb to the top Of the Merton Gap begins.

After passing across a rural road, Kanumbra is left behind by a 30 chain right hand curve, and after crossing another rural road a left hand curve of 25 chains is met as the gradient continues & weave a path up a series of 25, 34 & 40 chain radii curves. Another series of curves can be experienced further up the incline towards the summit of the incline of 30 & 40 chains respectively, with a final curve of 80 chain radius, before you reach the summit. The Summit of the Merton Gap has now been reached,

Merton Gap (Altitude 2003 Feet above sea level) is the highest point on the railway from Tallarook to Mansfield, and it is the top of the Great Dividing Range. The disused road that can be seen in this location is the former Maroonda Highway, re-aligned in the 1950's.

From here, a steep drop is experienced down a 1 in 40 gradient, with the current Highway on the left & the disused old re-aligned Highway on the right. While enjoying the relief from the constant previous uphill gradient required, several rural roads are encountered, whilst swinging through various array of curves of 30, 40, & 50 chain radii, until a 3rd road is crossed. The bottom of the incline is near! After going round a 60 chain right hand curve, that leads you into a 30 chain right hand curve, the trail swings around the top of the hill, above the main road to the left, & the Merton cemetery, on the right. You are now outside the Merton General Store/roadhouse. There are no other establishments in Merton & anything that is required must be sourced at this location, now. The Merton station area is entered from a long 25 chain curve and was the temporary terminus of the line, during construction in the 1890's before the line finally reached Mansfield in 1891. Merton was a watering point for Steam Locomotives in the early years of operation, but had its water facilities removed, with the introduction of the more efficient "K" Class locos in the mid 1940's, to the line.

Merton (altitude 1765 Feet above sea level) has no facilities for travellers, passing through.

Merton is left after passing over a road crossing and going around a long 20 chain radius curve, a corresponding reverse 20 chain radius curve to bring the alignment up, parallel with the Maroonda Highway again.. It proceeds in a downhill direction for several kilometres, whilst negotiating 2 curves of 40 & 1000 chain radii, emerging onto a 40 chain radius curve, incorporating a crossing of the Maroonda Highway, which now swings to the right hand side of the trail,

continues downhill for 3 more kilometres, when 2 reverse 20 chain radius curves are met, as well as a 40 chain radius curve, when the formation rises for a short distance, crosses a rural road, on a 1 in 40 grade, the formation now drops into the Woodfield station area via a 40 & two 20 chain radii reverse curves. The beginnings of the Eildon Reservoir, will now be visible on the left hand side, should the Weir be at its high watermark, further on if it is not

Woodfield (Altitude 1673 Feet above sea level) has no facilities for tourists passing through.

The trail leaves Woodfield by crossing a roadway & heading straight on level terrain for about 2 kilometres, when a series of 3 curves are faced, a 40 chain & two 30 chain radius curves, and the trail swings to the right. It was at this point, to prepare for the construction of the Eildon weir, the original line formation was deviated in 1954, to service the re-located township of Bonnie Doon onto higher ground, secure from the rising waters of the Eildon Weir, with the swelling of the Brankeet Creek, which the original settlement was situated around. When the reservoir is low in drought conditions, as they were in the early 2000's, the remains of the original settlement, become visible again. The trail now continues in a slightly downhill direction, when a sweeping left hand 30 chain radius curve is met, and the trail arrives into the Bonnie Doon Station area, with the former passenger facilities on your right, & goods area facilities on the left.

Bonnie Doon (Altitude 1730 Feet above sea level) 101 Feet higher, more than the original foundation settlement, down in the now inundated valley. The township has all the facilities a tourist might need, except medical services, which are provided by Mansfield, some 20+kilometres away.

Bonnie Doon is left behind, by a sweeping right hand of 20 chain radius curve, & through several deep cuttings & tight curves, ends up at a location on the side of the Lake, behind a tourist Motel, rounds a sharp right hand curve of 20 chains Radius, which leads as the approach, for the modern Lake crossing.

The modern bridge, constructed between 1954-55 as part of the deviation required, for the Flooding of the Bonnie Doon Township & the Brankeet Creek. The whole area around where the lake now is situated, was totally changed in 1954, and has a different appearance completely to its original one. It is also a modern haven, for those interested in watersports, & water type recreational activities, including a large modern Hotel/Motel complex accessed on the Mansfield Side of the lake crossing. Worth a visit!

The Lake is crossed, on this modern concrete & steel bridge, opened in 1955, & heads sharply up a grade, steepening to 1 in 40 towards the top of the Gradient, in an area known as "Hangmans Gap", traversing a road by an old trestle overbridge arrangement, & rejoining the original formation from near this point.

The gradient apex is on two reverse curves of 18 & 30 chain radii curves, from where the trail, begins a downward descent of 1 in 40, with a long 30 chain curve at the bottom of the gradient, crossing a roadway at the same time, where a wooden overbridge used to stand. The formation now commences a further short sharp rise, with a lengthy 50 chain radius curve on the top of this rise. The trail now commences another downward direction, crosses a rural road on a straight section of trail, leads onto another roadway crossing, swings into two reverse curves of 20 chain radii each, which leads into another roadway intersection, & via a lengthy 50 chain radius curve, enters the Maindample station area.

Maindample (Altitude 1720 Feet above sea level) The Marronda Highway at this location was re-aligned to eliminate 2 Dangerous level Crossings in 1970 & the Highway now keeps to the right hand side of the trail, rather than 2 individual crossings as was the previous case. A Fully functioning modern hotel services this location, and can be found at the extreme Mansfield end of the town limits.

Maindample is left behind, as a 20 chain radius left hand curve is negotiated & a right hand curve of 50 chain radius leads into a small straight of 1.5 kilometres, intersecting the Midland Highway, before negotiating a right hand curve of 40 chain radius leads into a straight section, while gently rising on a gradient of 1 in 158, after crossing a rural roadway in the process. The formation heads straight ahead, whilst continuing an uphill gentle gradient, crossing another rural road, until a gentle 30 chain left hand curve is encountered, the trail levels off, and the formation heads in a downhill direction, on grades of 1 in 40 & 2 kilometres of straight running, crossing a major road,, negotiating a 60 chain right hand curve, midway down the gradient, & 2 reverse 40 chain right hand radius curves are met, just before the bottom of the gradient. Straightening the trail up. The gradient now eases to 1 in 200 & commences a long gentle approach to Mansfield over a rural road & Fords creek. This area was devastated by a bushfire in the 1990's. Before the trail starts to gently rise up a 1 in 137 gradient passed the site of a former phosphate siding. The trail now rises up a short rise of 1 in 50 enters the Mansfield Railway Station area by a 100 chain radius left hand curve, sharpening to a 37 chain radius curve, straightening up with a reverse 40 chain radius curve, before the final descent into the Mansfield Station Area on a gentle downgrade of 1 in 142.

Mansfield (Altitude 1736 Feet above sea level) population 3000 has all town facilities, including Cafes, Hotels & Medical Services. The end of the railway at 131miles 21 Chains & 65 Links from Mileage 0, in Melbourne.

Description of Terminology used:-

1 Chain = 22yards (the length of a cricket pitch) 20 metres

100 links to the chain

80 Chains to the mile.

8 Chains to the Furlong

10 Furlongs to the mile.

THE TRAIL FROM CATHKIN- ALEXANDRA.

The trail leaves the Yea-Mansfield trail, at the Yarck end of the Cathkin Railway site, crossing the main road to Alexandra at 93 miles 40 chains & 64 Links from Melbourne's rail mileage 0 by a sharp 25 chain radius right hand curve. The junction was moved 2 chains towards Koriella in 1949, heading up a rising grade of 1 in 60, into a deep cutting. As Cathkin is left behind, the area which comprised the Cathkin engine service area, (Turntable ect) abolished during a redesign in 1949, was in the portion of land between the Mansfield trail (sweeping away to the left) and the Alexandra trail to the right. The older style weatherboard house that can be seen, was the house occupied by the Cathkin engine driver, Patrick McCormack, who was shifted into Yea, along with his engine, when the line finally reached Alexandra, from the temporary terminus in 1909.

The trail continues to rise up the 1 in 60 gradient, rounds a 30 chain radius left hand curve, drops down a short 1 in 40 gradient onto level terrain & crosses Colonial Creek. The trail then rises sharply up a 1 in 40 gradient, rounds a 40 chain radius, long curve, & crosses a rural road. The trail now commences a continuous uphill incline, of 1 in 80, 1 in 78 & 1 in 40 gradients, that will continue all the way to the next location (Koriella). Several kilometres of straight track now are met, before entering reverse curves of 30 chain radius, crossing the Marroonda Highway that now bisects the trail, up a short 1 in 40 incline & entering the Koriella Station site.

Koriella (Altitude 1151 Feet above sea level) situated on a 1 in 400 upgrade, is an interesting location, having experienced several name changes over the decades. The location was named **Alexandra Road**, when the service commenced with the opening of the line in 1890, when it was then the terminus. Passengers were required to change to Stage Coaches to complete their journey to Alexandra from this point. The name was then changed again to **Rhodes & LILY** and when it was possible to complete the line, due to advances in civil & mechanical engineering, right through to Alexandra in 1909, it was finally renamed **Koriella**. The Cathkin engine was required to operate 1 return service a day, connecting with the Mansfield train each way at Cathkin, When the line finally reached Alexandra in 1909, the Cathkin crew, locomotive & train operations were moved to Yea, & remained that way, through to the running of the last train on the line in October 1978.

The line opened in 1890 to Koriella & 1909 from Koriella-Alexandra. The line was closed in its entirety in November 1978, after diesel locomotive "Y" 131, operated the last revenue train from Alexandra to Yea in October 1978. No train

has visited Koriella since! When the through service commenced in 1909, 3 mixed trains a week (Mon, Wed & Fri) connecting with the Mansfield train each way at Cathkin were scheduled ex Yea. This was reduced due to a coal shortage in 1945 when all passenger operations on the line ceased & the goods service fell to Mon & Wed only. The service basically continued like this until closure, except to better utilise traincrews & Locomotives at Yea, the Monday service was altered to run on Saturdays. This arrangement lasted till the service was withdrawn in 1978.

The trail leaves Koriella over a rural roadway & immediately begins the assault on Eglinton Cutting, going through a 20 chain radius reverse curve & another 20 chain radius curve in the process. The assault continues on the Eglinton Cutting with grades of 1 in 40 reasonably constant, with a series of 20 & 40 chain radius curves are met, before going through the summit on a sweeping 10 chain radius curve, leading into a deep cutting. It is from near this point that one of the best views of the surrounding area can be obtained. From near a modern house about 250 metres from the summit of Eglinton Cutting, heading downgrade towards the Alexandra Township, look to the right for an incredible view across the Cathedral Ranges. This view is not obtainable from the road route, as it does not have the elevation to do so, & can only be appreciated, from the Railway Route. Gradients experienced in this section, are equal to the steepest conventional trains are able to negotiate anywhere in the world! 1 in 30 gradients, which thankfully are few & far between.

The trail continues down a 1 in 41 gradient, through a series of curves of 40, & 20 chain radius curves, 2 reverse 15 chain radius curves, a set of 20 chain radius reverse curves, traversing a roadway, Crossing Crusoe Creek, & crossing another rural road & after a further downgrade section of 1 in 108, the trail again rises. Up on gradients of 1 in 30, crossing Johnson's Creek & enters Victoria gap via a 30 chain radius right hand curve.

After negotiating a short 20 chain radius right hand curve the Trail enters the Alexandra Station site by a long straight downgrade.

Alexandra (Altitude 1220 Feet above sea level) is situated on a 1 in 825 downgrade, & is situated 102 miles 7 chains & 65 Links from Melbourne mileage 0, on a 30 chain radius curve & is currently the operational centre for the "Alexandra Timber Tramway" who are preserving the heritage of the local timber industry, in the area. The Rubicon timber tramway, that transhipped loading from their operation that terminated in the confines of the Victorian Railways Alexandra yard. The first diesel locomotive in Australia operated on this line, & is preserved here. This operation suffered substantial losses after the 1939 bushfires, & they failed to fully recover from them. The operation ceased in the 1950's when its timber milling operation became un-economic.

