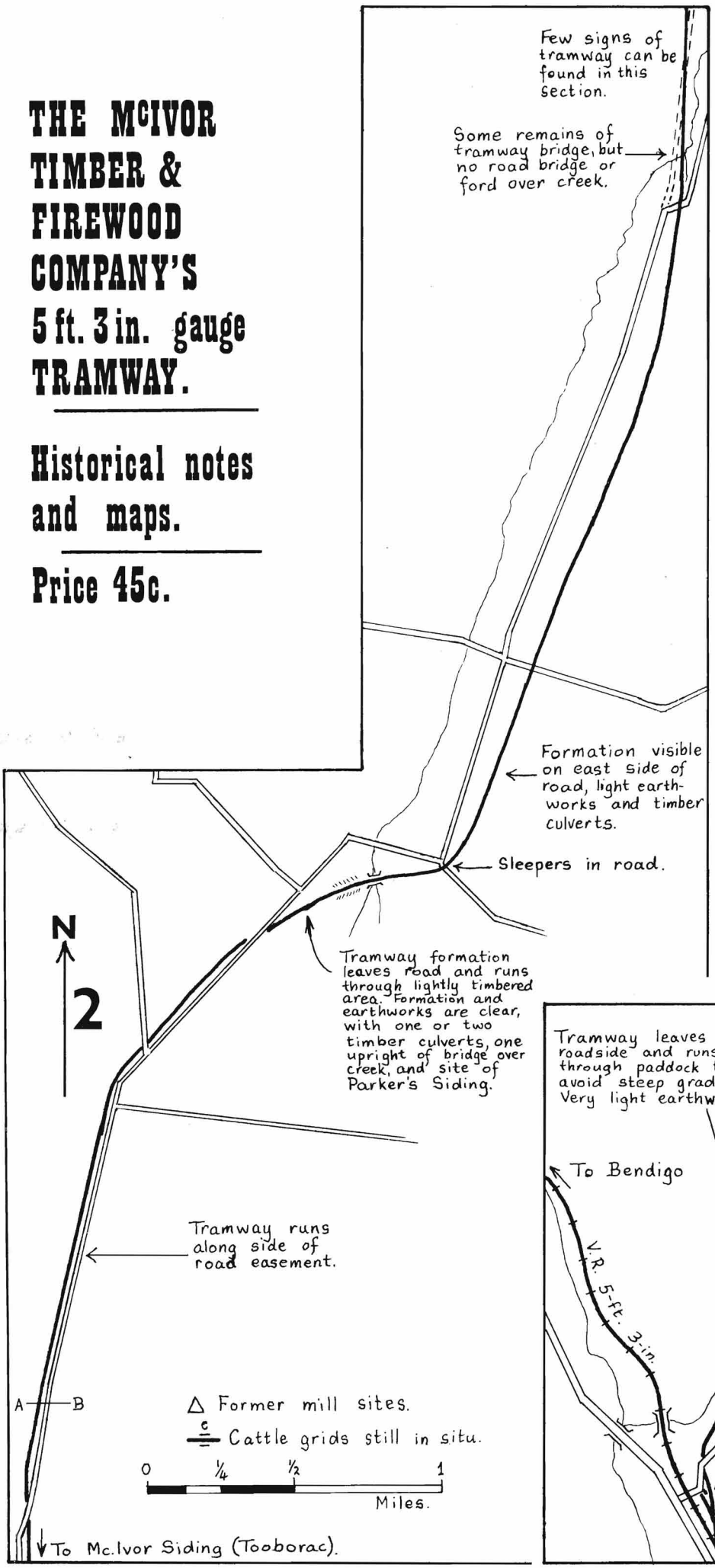
THE McIVOR TIMBER & FIREWOOD COMPANY'S 5 ft. 3 in. gauge TRAMWAY.

Historical notes and maps.

Price 45c.



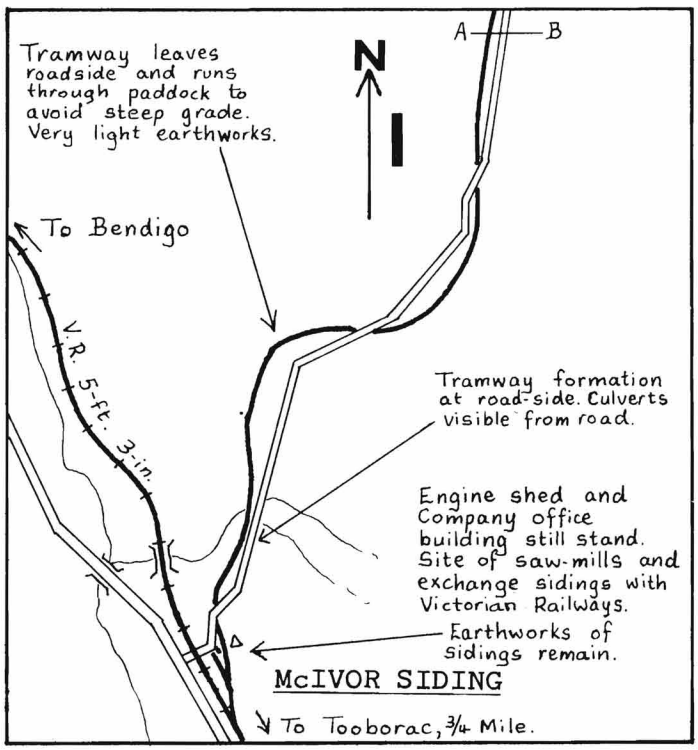
NOTES ON THE MAPS

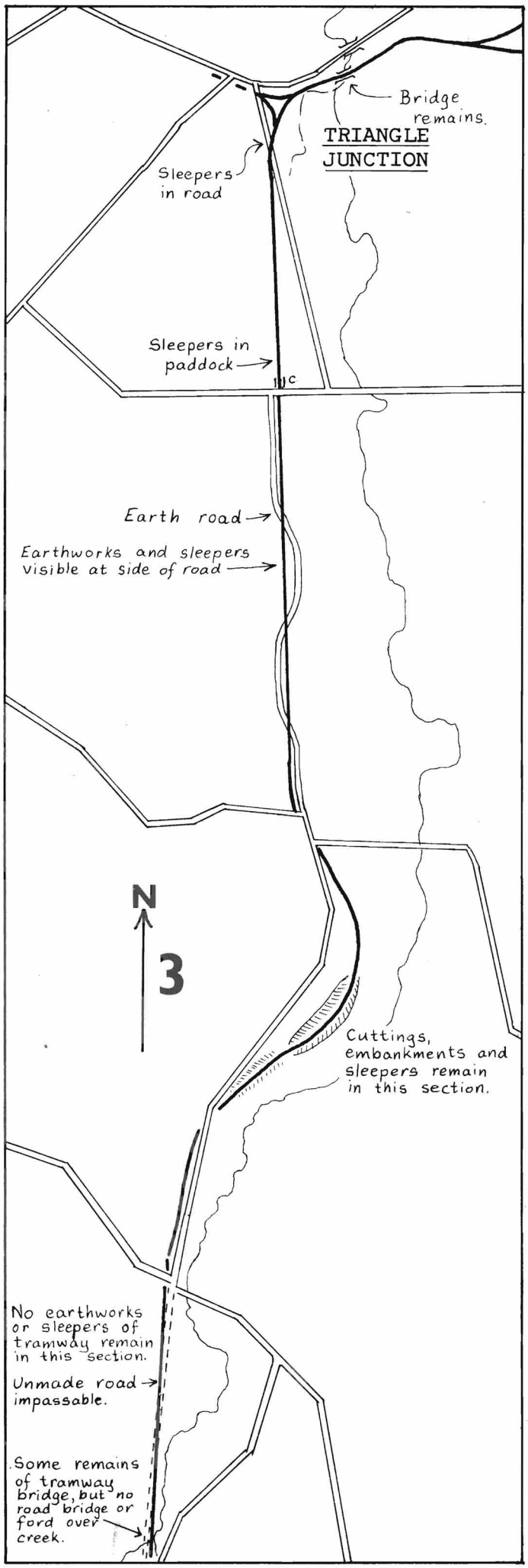
All sections of the detailed maps are to the same scale (two inches to the mile). Details of roads and main creeks are from the Australian Survey Corps one-inch/mile "Heathcote" map No.808 of 1947, and the 1:50,000 "Heathcote" and "Pyalong" maps of 1966.

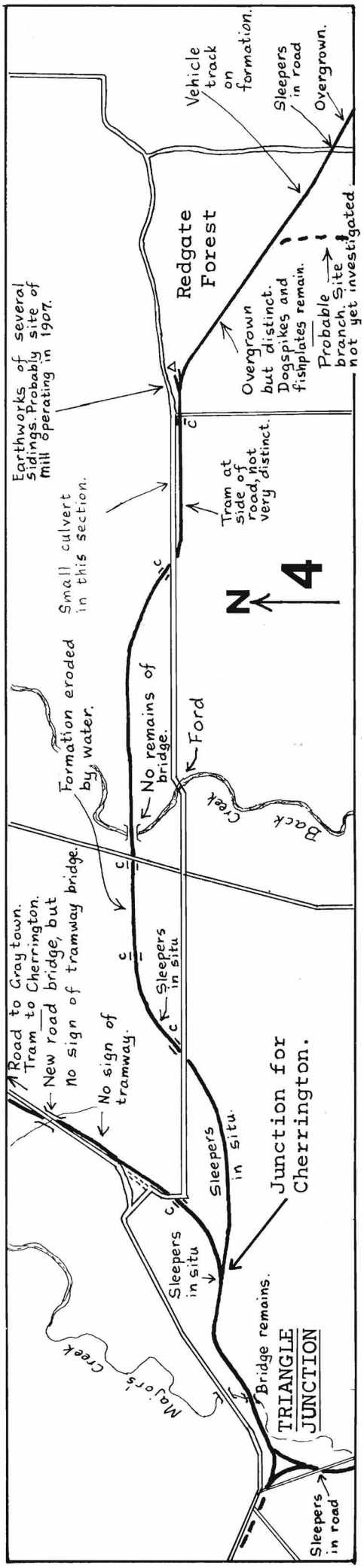
Details of the tramways have been obtained from the personal observations of LRRSA investigators, made during several visits to the area. No accurate maps dating from the era in which the tramways operated have been found, so that extensive site surveys were necessary to plot the routes found so far. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the maps, errors and omissions may have occurred. In view of the impending Army take-over of the area it is considered desirable to publish the maps in their present form to encourage others to visit the site whilst access is still available. If any user of these maps can make any corrections, or add details of missing branch-lines please advise the Society, so that more detailed maps can be prepared.

Write to - McIvor Survey Group,
LRRSA,
Box 21, P.O.,
SURREY HILLS, Vic.3127.

Published by THE LIGHT RAILWAY RESEARCH SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA




Bridge remains.
TRIANGLE JUNCTION
Sleepers in road
Sleepers in paddock
Earth road
Earthworks and sleepers visible at side of road
N
3
Cuttings, embankments and sleepers remain in this section.
No earthworks or sleepers of tramway remain in this section.
Unmade road impassable.
Some remains of tramway bridge, but no road bridge or ford over creek.


Vehicle track on formation.
Sleepers in road
Overgrown.
Redgate Forest
Overgrown but distinct. Dogspikes and fishplates remain.
Probable branch. Site not yet investigated
Earthworks of several sidings. Probably site of mill operating in 1907.
Tram at side of road, not very distinct.
Small culvert in this section.
N
4
Formation eroded by water.
No remains of bridge.
Ford
Back Creek
Road to Graytown.
Tram to Cherrington.
New road bridge, but no sign of tramway bridge.
No sign of tramway.
Sleepers in situ
Sleepers in situ
Junction for Cherrington.
Sleepers in situ
Bridge remains.
TRIANGLE JUNCTION
Major's Creek
Sleepers in road

LIGHT RAILWAY RESEARCH SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA

McIVOR TRAMWAY TOUR SATURDAY 15th JULY 1972

Welcome to the Society's first tour for some eighteen months. We are hoping to make up for this deficit with some interesting sights today.

It seems incredible that the major discoveries made in this area in the last few months - 2 junctions, 2 siding sites, 4 bridges, numerous cattle grids - were not made years ago. Perhaps the relative inaccessibility of the region is mainly responsible for this, although all these"finds" involved a certain amount of walking (about 35 miles all told !). However any walking involved today should not prove to be too strenuous.

By consulting your copy of the relevant maps you will see that the actual routes of the branch lines vary considerably in places from those suggested on page 26 of L.R. No. 35. The whole area east of the Triangle has been accurately recorded as far as possible, despite limitations presented by Army firing ranges. The alleged branch lines west of the Triangle to Costerfield and Redcastle have not been located yet let alone being mapped, so there is still plenty of scope for primary research of this type.

Since the route of the tramway's main line from Tooborac to the Triangle was covered fairly well in the Society's first trip to the area in December 1970, it is not intended to spend time looking at that again today. However, as we travel from Tooborac, many signs can be seen and details have been added to the maps.

The tour as planned will begin at "Cherrington Junction" (for want of a better term.) This junction was discovered in April this year by literally falling over it. You may find it hard to believe when you see the remains for yourselves, but it serves to reinforce the point that to find anything in this type of country you have to get out and walk.

The straight branch continues up the hill on a steady gradient and then heads east towards the Moormbool State Forest some miles away. The curved/ left hand branch turns to the north-east and heads along the present Graytown road for about half a mile before curving away to the north just after crossing a deep creek bed. We will not be seeing this as part of today's tour, but you may wish to inspect this particular section if you return to Melbourne via Graytown and Nagambie this afternoon.

The Graytown/Puckapunyal line.

After leaving "Cherrington Junction", the eastern branch passes through fairly poor country which has become heavily eroded in places. What was perhaps a small channel beside the formation when the tramway was operating has weatheredgreatly to the point of forming a ditch 2-3 ft. in depth and about 6 ft. wide leaving the spindly remains of the few remaining sleepers suspended in mid-air for abou half their length. The cattle grid marked in the middle of the paddock is almost completely exposed to its foundations by erosion of the one-time drain to the north of the formation.

Although the formation is traceable to Back Creek, it is very indistinct on the eastern side. As the formation curves back towards the road, its route is made clearer by the row of stumps etc. which has been bulldozed at some time as the land was cleared. The cattle grid marked near the road is visible from cars.

Just as the line enters Redgate Forest, very low earthworks indicate the probable site of one of the original mills. The branch curves away into fairly thick but scrubby forest which is an indicator of the original source of the line's wealth - sleepers, some telephone poles and thousands of tons of firewood.

Somewhere in this forest area is another branchline which appears on a Forests Commission map. The actual route and junction have not yet been found, but the general direction of the branch fits in fairly well with a proposed branch which was marked on the original map of proposed lines attached to the agreement between the McIvor Firewood and Timber Company and the Shire of McIvor, although the original proposed branch is shown as being along Back Creek and not through the forest.

After emerging from the forest, the line travels gently downhill to .....

Graytown Junction

In many ways, tracing the Graytown line has been very difficult. This is because it was closed in March 1912 according to the "McIvor Times" of that month. This would explain why the earthworks - which were very light anyway- are almost indistinguishable after 60 years. The second and most frustrating reason is that the formation coyly disappears into the Army firing range, but a southward turn can just be seen from the boundary fence. Where the line actually finished is still a mystery, especially since evidence gleaned from the "Nagambie Times" concerning a proposed line from Heathcote via Costerfield to Graytown settlement indicates that the settlement was 5or 6 miles from the tramway. Aerial photographs of the region are being obtained in an attempt to determine the actual route within the range area, but they have not arrived yet.

One tangible remain of the Graytown line is what appears to be the smokebox off a traction or portable engine. Since the junction is located on land once owned by Mr Thomas Tehan, an original shareholder in the Company, it seems probable that a mill would have been nearby. The discovery of this smokebox would seem to confirm this.

The right hand leg of the junction eventually heads southeast and climbs gradually through lighly forested country before reaching the ridge of the low hills. The tramway seems to finish here, or further traces have been obscured by a fairly new road. Almost without doubt, this is the elusive Puckapunyal branch which until now was alleged to diverge from the main line some miles to the south of the Triangle.

The Cherrington Line

This line was opened by the McIvor Company about 1907 and was the last to close - in 1926. Since remains on this branch have had to weather the elements for only 46 years, there is much more to see !

The research concerned with this section of the line has been most productive in terms of relics found. Relatively heavy earthworks were involved in crossing Major's Creek as well as two bridges - one which is still standing and showing the typical type of construction evident on timber tramways, but showing an application with 5 ft. 3 in. gauge. Unfortunately, the larger of the two bridges has almost disappeared apart from the stumps of a few piers. The length of the main bridge is difficult to estimate after erosion of the approaches for almost half a century, but it must have been 60-80 feet long and about 15 ft. above the water level of the creek.

The line soon regains the side of the road and continues northwards. A slight deviation as shown on the map soon brings the line back on the east side, north of the present main road between Graytown and Costerfield. It is now that the tramway enters an area providing further mysteries.

Despite an obviously easier gradient along the present sealed road, the tramway continues along a steadily steepening grade. A Forests Commission map shows the line following this particular road. The reason for this deviation is not yet clear.

Even more surprising and mysterious is the fenced easement through which the formation runs for several miles. The line eases gently downhill and crosses a creek at the bottom of the grade by means of a 4 span trestle. The bridge is crossable, but fairly ricketty, as the piles have been heavily scoured by the creek over the years. Once again the construction of the bridge is typical of timber tramways of narrower gauge.

Immediately north of the bridge a rather savage grade begins - about 1 in 30. After continuing for about 150 yards, the gradient steepens to at least 1 in 20 or less! Although this "mountain" favoured loaded trains coming from Cherrington, it must have been quite a spectacle to see a Baldwin struggling up the hill tender first with a rake of empties.

At the summit there are many relics of a social nature rather than specifically related to the tramway itself. Unfortunately, most of the ancient bottles have been smashed, but several small "Dr. Morse's Indian Root Pills" bottles were discovered still in one piece. An interesting aside is that the pill bottles are marked - "Bottle made in Japan" (sic).

Another interesting thing about this particular site (which we think was Kelly's Siding) is the number of tree stumps still in evidence. It is perhaps the most accurate guide to the appearance of the area as it was during the twenties, with many charcoal burners engaged in making some money from the remains of the timber left by the firewood cutters. About 200 yards northwest is an old charcoal burner with several areas of ash around it.

About a mile further north are the remains of a small trestle bridge which has collapsed. Traces of the line are very indistinct near the road, but north of it there is nothing left because of ploughing. As roadworks have obliterated the tramway formation along the Cherrington road, the actual point at which the formation emerged from the paddock has not been located, but we have mapped it as accurately as possible where it seems most likely.

The terminus of the line was covered fairly quickly on the Society's first McIvor trip in December 1970. With a more thorough investigation, some further relics could be found.

The tramway operations of the McIvor Timber & Firewood Company.

Through an agreement signed on 22nd March 1906 between the Shire of McIvor and the McIvor Timber and Firewood Company Pty. Ltd.; the company was empowered tobuild their tramways along roads within the Shire boundaries at an annual rental of 2/6 per mile. The company agreed to operate the tramway for a minimum of 15 years with an option of renewal for a further 15 years.

The company established itself at a site about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile north of Tooborac. Extensive sidings were laid and connected to the V R Heathcote Junction - Bendigo line, the final portion of which closed in 1968 (Junction to Heathcote). The company had its offices, workshops, locomotive shed and sawmills located here at McIvor Siding. The former manager's residence and the old loco shed are still standing. The major revenue earner for the company was the cutting and milling of firewood for industrial and domestic use in Melbourne and Bendigo, although much traffic involved sleepers for the V R as well as 5ft. and 7 ft. timbers for the Bendigo gold mines. A certain amount of traffic involved the cutting and carting of telephone poles as well as an extensive charcoal traffic - especially during the early 1920's.

As shown by the maps, the main line followed the road fairly closely for 12 miles to the Triangle. Between McIvor Siding and the Triangle, several sidings were laid to serve mills established at those points. Parker's Siding, with a capacity of 20 wagons, was 4 miles from McIvor Siding. Other sidings were : Singleton's Siding (7 miles, 25 wagons), Triangle (12 miles, 25 wagons), Connelly's Siding (16 miles, 20 wagons), Kelly's Siding (18 miles, 18 wagons), and Cherrington Terminus (20 wagons). Within a few years all milling was concentrated at McIvor Siding, with the company buying timber from the forest workers on a royalty basis per truck load.

An indication of the royalty payments and the high turnover of labour can be seen in advertisement which is typical of those which appeared fairly frequently in the local newspapers. eg. From the "Nagambie Times" 28/7/1911 -

"Firewood Cutters. Wanted fifty cutters, £1 per truck for Millwood. 21s. per truck 5ft. boiler wood. Maiden paddocks. McIvor Firewood Co. Tooborac."

Inwards freight for the mills and cutters' camps was carried free, as were employees and other passengers offering, although passenger accommodation was never provided by the company. The line was laid for $15\frac{3}{4}$ miles along roads, 1m. 10ch. in a Government Reserve, $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles in forest reserves and 4m. 10 ch. on privately owned land. When the company's agreement with the Shire expired in 1921, the company did not take up its option. Instead it continued to operate at an annual rental to the Shire of £1-6-11, with various other amounts to private landowners. (£1, £1, £2, £10, £13-10, £53 respectively. In addition, £18-4-0 was paid to one of the private landholders for a water-right.)

In 1926-7 there were 33 charcoal burners employed along the line, and over a 3 year period prior to this a total of 8,055 tons of charcoal was taken out to markets over the tramway. A Mr Jeffrey of Bendigo was the lessee of 102 retorts, eighty of which were still operating about the time the tramway closed. Freight charged by the McIvor Company was £1-13-0 per 11 ton truck, and £2-17-3 per 16 ton truck.

Motive power on the tramway network was first provided by two Baldwin 2-6-0 tender engines which were purchased second hand from the estate of the late John Robb. Robb had imported the locos from America for construction work at the Victoria Dock and work associated with widening the Yarra river near the Port of Melbourne. Both engines were identical and built in 1889. When purchased by the McIvor Company they were named "Major" and "McIvor" after creeks in the district.

The engines weighed 40 tons roadworthy with 14in. x 16 in. outside cylinders and a 140 lb. boiler pressure. Of typical American appearance, they had slide valves mounted above the cylinders but operated via exterior rocker arms from inside valve gear. Bar frames, extended smokeboxes and large sand and steam domes complete the basic specifications. The steam domes carried two safety valves and large, deep-toned whistles. Mounted forward of each tall stovepipe stack was a large kerosene headlight similar to those found on V R engines of the period.

Although withdrawn about 1925 they were not immediately scrapped but put up for sale with the rest of the company's assets. A return lodged with the Registrar of Companies covering the period 1927-28 lists assets as including "Locomotives, trucks, steel rails and firewood, Dwelling and Office buildings, Loco sheds, stables, etc." In the same report it is recorded that some payment was made to the V R for maintenance of rolling stock, sometime within the period 4-2-1927 and 4-2-1928.

A later return showing the realisation of assets indicates the sale of "scrap iron" to Hanley Bros. on 26th October, 8th November and 6th December 1929 in lots of £100 each. On 20th December 1929 the Moreland Metal Co. Ltd. bought a quantity of brass for £51-12-5. Therefore it seems that the two Moguls survived at Tooborac for several years after closure and were scrapped only when a buyer could not be found for them, since the items mentioned appear very late in the process of winding up the company.

To replace the two ageing 2-6-0's, the McIvor Co. purchased a "W" class 4-6-0 Baldwin tender engine from the V R for £1500. This was W 227 and carried builder's number 6633 of 1882. This loco had 16in. x 24 in. cylinders (outside) 4 ft. 3 in. driving wheels, 140 lb. boiler pressure and an approx. Tractive Effort at 80% boiler pressure of 13,500 lb. The grate area was 15.92 sq. ft., wheelbase 40 ft. 3¼ in, overall length 48 ft. 11¼ in., adhesive weight 25 tons 18 cwt and a total weight of 61 tons 18 cwt.

Further evidence of the fate of the W class has been found in a return to the Registrar of Companies. In 1932 a locomotive , some rails and sundries were valued at £600-700. In a return dated 24th March 1934 the value had crashed to £100. A further reportdated 2nd July 1934 and covering the period 4-2-34 to 26-6-34 showed that the locomotive had been sold on 9th February for £50. A month later on March 9th, the V R collected another bargain the points and crossings at McIvor Siding for £20.

Rolling stock owned by the McIvor Co. consisted of some 65 wooden framed 4 wheeled trucks purchased second hand from the contracting firms of C & E Miller and John Robb. These vehicles had flat tops with iron uprights and crossbars at each end and were loaded with lengths of wood laid across them. These wagons were purely for internal use on the tramway. Two of these trucks were fitted with iron water tanks to supply water to outlying camps. Also included in the total of privately owned wagons were eight low-sided open trucks but their exact use has not been discovered.

Most of the "through" loading(compared to the timber destined for the blocking mills at Tooborac) was carried in V R wagons which were permitted to operate over the tramway network. Although most of the V R rolling stock used on the line consisted of I wagons of 10 tons capacity, a reference has been unearthed (see cover) indicating the use of bogie Q R wagons for the carriage of telephone poles. A 21 ton weighbridge was installed at McIvor Siding to cater for the through loading conveyed by V R wagons.

Safeworking on the tramway does not appear to have existed, although a telephone line was installed for communication. No evidence has been found of any serious accident occurring on the line, which was governed by a 15 m.p.h. speed limit. However various accidents of the type occurring to Mr Kennedy (see cover) have been found in local papers. (Mr Kennedy was hurt fairly badly but recovered!)

A certain amount of information reproduced below has been taken from the Report made to the Victorian Parliament by the Standing Committee on Railways in 1927, following the offer of the tramway to the V R by the McIvor Company. (see Victorian Parliamentary Papers. Vol. 1 , 1927 pp 759 ff.) The major portion, however, has been taken from files held in the Archives of the La Trobe Library, mainly involving returns lodged with the Registrar of Companies.

The McIvor file is No. 4025 and the shareholding details and the mine of information concerning the winding up of the company have has been taken from this source.

From the share allotments set out below, it can be seen that the company was essentailly local and was very profitable for the small number of shareholders involved. The original capital was £10,000 consisting of 20,000 shares at 10/- each. The directors at the time the company was formed, and the extent of their shareholding are as follows:

Herman Henry Schlapp	Investor	500 shares	Director
William Noah Hedges	"	500 "	"
William Knox	M.H.R.	500 "	
Thomas Tehan	Grazier	500 "	
John Langtree Reilly	Surveyor	1 share	

Within a very short space of time the situation was as follows:

		Shares payable in cash	Shares paid up otherwise than in cash.
W.Knox	Member of House of Reps.	800	
H.H. Schlapp	Investor	3999	
W.N. Hedges	"	5300	
T. Tehan	Grazier	500	
J.L.Reilly	Surveyor	1	1200
R.C. Anderson	Stockbroker	-	200

Unfortunately some of the returns are missing from the McIvor file and there is little indication of the extent of shareholding between 1906 and 1925 apart from notification of Directors of the company. eg. In a return dated 28-2-1914 the Directors were Messrs. Schlapp, Hedges and Tehan and the Manager at McIvor Siding was Mr W.E.Prince.

By 1925 however a rather interesting picture has emerged with over half the 42,000 paid up shares in the hands of two Directors and the West Australian Goldfields Supply Ltd. of Kurrawang, W.A. (The figure of 42,000 shares came about by the increase over the registered capital of the company- £10,000 - of 22,000 x 10/- shares on 19-4-1924.

The Return of Allotments dated 31-8-1925 shows the shareholding as below

			Preferential	Ordinary
Schlapp, H.H.	Collins St. Melb.	Investor		11,500
Hedges W.N.	Perth W.A.	"		5,750
West Aust.Goldfields Firewood Supply, Kurrawang WA				5,250
Prince W.E.	Tooborac	Manager		500
Klug G.C.	Collins St. Melb.	"		625
Hamilton R.	Boulder W.A.	"		625
Sutherland J.H.	Boulder W.A.	"		625
Nicolson Mrs A.C.	Sth Yarra Vic.	Widow		125
Tehan T.	Mitchell's Ck. Vic.	Station Owner		1,500
Reilly J.L.	Queen St. Melb.	Surveyor		3,000
Stawell W.	" " "	Solicitor		500

By confirmation on 4-2-1927 of a resolution made at a meeting on 18-1-27 the McIvor Timber and Firewood Company went into voluntary liquidation, with the Company's Secretary - Robert Norfolk - appointed as liquidator. The winding up of the company is clearly seen in the detailed returns shown below. The sale of rails naturally makes up the major portion of the realisation of assets

but the most interesting thing is the names of the buyers with their obvious connections with other private railways - eg. Hayden Bros. is almost certainly the Hayden Bros. of Barwon Downs, W.W. Gunn had connections with a tramway at Crossover, north of Warragul; and the MMBW purchase probably was connected with the construction of the Silvan Dam. There was obviously no mad rush to buy up rail judging by the steady sales of rail and material over 6 years.

Date	Purchaser	Item	Price	
24-1-1928	Hayden Bros.	Rails	£100	
16-2	" "	"	£139-18-8	
24-2	" "	"	£119-13-6	
12-3	" "	"	£119-2-3	
14-3	" "	"	£122-3-6	
19-3	Kilroy & Storry	Sale of Plant	£111-0-3	
3-5	W.W. Gunn	Rails	£222-13-11	
14-5	W.H. Cheverton	"	£ 50	
26-6	" "	"	£ 84-18-5	
17-7	M M B W	"	£781-6-7	
28-7	Lion Iron Rolling Co.	"	£250	
24-8	" " " "	"	£250	
24-9	" " " "	"	£250	
28-9	J.J. Ezard	"	£119-12-6	
23-10	J.F. Ezard	"	£119-17-5	
27-10	Lion Iron Rolling Mills	"	£250	
8-11	J.E. Toole & Co.	"	£299-8-3	
16-1-1929	Lion Rolling Mills	Rails	£250	
9-5	Toole & Co.	"	£132-3-1	
16-5	" "	"	£ 16-13-7	
25-5	Cameron, Sutherland & Seward	"	£133-2-3	
14-6	" " "	"	£121-14-2	
27-6	Toole & Co.	"	£572-2-0	
13-7	" "	"	£558-16-11	
19-7	" "	"	£557-8-0	
26-7	Hayden Bros.	"	£196-12-10	
1-8	W.W. Gunn	"	£100	
1-8	Toole & Co.	"	£275-5-7	
22-8	" "	"	£189-16-2	
26-8	Shire of McIvor	Coal	£ 28-2-5	
4-9	Cameron & Sutherland	Rails	£142-7-1	
14-10	Shire of McIvor	Coal	£ 4-3-3	
18-10	Cameron & Sutherland	Rails	£ 13-1-0	
26-10	Handley Bros.	Scrap Iron	£100	- locos ?
8-11	" "	" "	£100	
18-11	Cameron & Sutherland	Rails	£ 31-0-3	
3-12	W.W. Gunn	"	£126-11-3	
6-12	Hanley Bros.	Scrap Iron	£100	
13-12	Cameron & Sutherland	Rails	£ 18-5-6-	
20-12	Moreland Metal Co.	Brass	£ 51-12-5	- boiler tubes?
18-1-1930	Cameron & Sutherland	Rails	£ 5-18-11	
27-2	J.E. Toole & Co.	"	£203-9-3	
10-3	Lion Rolling Mills	"	£429-11-3	
31-10	Toole & Co.	"	£347-3-9	
8-11	Colonial Sugar RefiningCo.	"	£409-3-7	
5-2-1931	Hanley Bros.	Sale of Scrap	£ 68-11-0	
13-5	H. Richardson	Sale of Saws	£ 19	
20-5-1932	Lovig Bros.	Steel Scrap	£147-10-9	
1-6-1932	Miller & Co.	Rails & piping	£263-6-10	
22-6	Peninsular L&F Co.	Weighbridge	£ 26-10-0	
2-3-1933	Lovig Bros.	Scrap Sales	£ 14-6-10	
6-6-1933	Anderson Bros.	Log Jinkers	£ 22-4-0	

In a return dated 24th March, the Locomotive, Rails and Sundries were valued at £100.

Date	Purchaser	Item	Price
9-9-1933	W.N. Hedges	Rails	£425
27-9	" "	"	£140
Sept.1933	W.E. Prince	Old Buildings	£ 158-13-1
9-2- 1934	Victorian Railways	Locomotive	£ 50-0-0
9-3	" "	Purchase of Points & Crossingsat Tooborac and releasing all claims in regard to the siding	£ 20-0-0
4-4-1934	Mitsui Bussan Kaisha Ltd.	Steel rails & Scrap	£ 67-3-3
13-4	W.E. Prince	Balance of Scrap and Rails at Tooborac	£ 10-0-0

The McIvor Company was finally wound up on 25th June 1934 at 12 noon according to the final item in the La Trobe Library file - a declaration of Non-Attendance of Members at the Final Winding -Up Meeting.

..." the said meeting was not attended by two members of the said company."..

Thus closed another chapter in history of Victoria's private railways.

Other railway proposals in the area

As mentioned earlier in this booklet, when the decision was made to close down operations because of the declining mining industry in Bendigo and the inroads into the firewood industry by the new wonder fuel - briquettes; the whole tramway system was offered to the V R as a going concern - lock, stock and barrel- for £15,000; or £12,000 for the line and facilities alone. The McIvor company urged strongly for retention of the line since it would have cost only £1,500 approx. to recondition the W class.

Since the tramway was closing because of a decline in the market for the line's basic revenue earner, it is quite understandable why the V R and the Standing Committee on Railways were not interested in taking over the line! It was claimed by the V R that it would cost at least £12,000 to bring the line up to a standard sufficient to carry "DD" class locomotives at 10 m.p.h. Closure, therefore, was the obvious and inevitable fate.

It is interesting to note that this was not the first move to have a Government railway built in the area.

" On behalf of Mr McBride, Minister for Railways, who is ill, Mr McKenzie Minister of Lands, received today a large deputation of residents of Moormbool (introduced by Mr John Gordon M.L.A.) whose request was that a line should be constructed to the Moormbool settlement, either from the McIvor Timber Company's line, a length of 6 miles, or to connect with the Heathcote line via Costerfield, a length of 15 miles....." (McIvor Times 23/5/1912)

The first deputation to the Government was unsuccessful and the whole question was brought up again about fourteen months later. Further correspondence took place with the V R who replied in the vein that the railway was not justified by the traffic offering and "that the best course is for an arrangement to be made with the McIvor Timber and Firewood Company for an extension of their tramway".(to Graytown settlement - G.Inglis) (McIvor Times 20/11/1913)

The same controversy seen from a slightly different viewpoint by the "Nagambie Times". In the issue for 31/5/1912, a local protested that "if the tram company (sic) came in it would have a monopoly, as it would not put down a line unless the settlers agreed to sell all their wood to it. And as it gave a fixed price, and an unreasonably low one at that, for the wood, the people derived no benefit from any rise in the market. They desire an open market and a permanent line."

An amusing sideline to the second deputation made in August 1913 concern-

ed a comment alleged to have been made by a Heathcote businessman during the deputation, and reported in the "Nagambie Times" for Friday 15th August 1913.

" I am a Heathcote businessman, and send out a cart with goods to my customers. The wood carters make the roads very bad, so I would like a line laid down to Moorabool, because the carters would then go out there to work, and the roads would be better for my cart."

Needless to say, the line was not built !

Other jottings from local newspapers

Most of the extracts which follow breathe life into history of the McIvor Tramway. They also pose some problems as the comments in brackets indicate.

Nagambie Times 20/12/1912 "Graytown Jottings"

"The rumour is again about that the McIvor Tram Co. is going to build a line from the Triangle to the Costerfield Antimony mine.The mining company is going to erect smelters, and will require a railway to haul flux and other material to the mine and its ore,or rather,metal away. Possibly in the near future Graytown will be a suburb of Costerfield."(When was the Costerfield branch - if any - built?)

Nagambie Times 27/1/1911 "Owing to the shortage of railway trucks, the Tooborac Tramway Co. is only running one train per day, and it is said that the railway authorities will not guarantee to supply it with more than six trucks per day for the next two or three months".

McIvor Times 19/12/1912 "Mr R.Carr had the misfortune to lose his valuable sheep dog (Walleye) through being run over by the McIvor Timber Co's train, this being the fourth mishap at the same spot."

McIvor Times 13/3/1913 (In a letter to the Editor referring to the newly installed electric streetlighting in Heathcote being mounted on spindly "crooked looking sticks".) ..."Almost every second week one can see truckloads of handsome poles leaving the McIvor Tramway Co's siding to adorn the streets of Swan Hill, Murtoa, Hamilton, and various other towns in the state..."

"Onlooker".

McIvor Times 6/11/1913 "LATE TRAIN. The morning train from Melbourne due here (Heathcote) at 11-41 a.m. did not reach here until 1-35 pm. today - or 1 hour and 54 minutes late. The cause of the delay was the derailment of two trucks at the McIvor Timber Co's Siding, Tooborac."

Nagambie Times 15/1/1909

"It is expected that the strike of woodcutters at Tooborac is now at an end. The men were to resume work on Wednesday at an increased pay at 1/- per truck for millwood only. This is not all the men were asking for, but it was the only concession the company could see its way to accede, and if it was not accepted the company was quite prepared to close the tramway down for six months ..."

Nagambie Times 26/1/1912 Graytown Jottings" "The working of the State Coal Mine seems to have had a bad effect on the Bendigo 5 ft. wood trade. The McIvor Tram Co. is sending little, if any, 5 ft, wood away, while there are scarcely any drays carting to Heathcote..."

Source material for this booklet has been, and is still being, obtained from the files of the "McIvor Times" and "Nagambie Times" in the La Trobe Library.

Other references: A.R.H.S. Bulletin No. 43, May 1941 pp 56-59.
"Farewell to the Timber Line" - K.W. Turton.(A.R.H.S. Vic. Div.November 1968)
Company records held in the La Trobe Library Archives,Melbourne(File No 4025)
plus actual investigation of relics and remains in the area.

This booklet was prepared by Frank Stamford and Graeme Inglis , July 1972.

LIGHT RAILWAY RESEARCH SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA, McIVOR TOUR, 15th JULY 1972.

We cannot give you a ride on the tramway today, had we organized our tour 65 years earlier we could have - at least to Puckapunyal, as the Cherrington line had not been built then. What would we have seen 65 years ago? The nearest thing to a report of a fan trip that we have been able to find is the following article from the "McIvor Times & Rodney Advertiser" 23rd May 1907.

A TRIP ON THE TOOBORAC TRAMWAY

At the kindly invitation of the genial manager of the McIvor Timber & Firewood Co. (Mr.Prince) our representative accompanied several local townsmen on a visit to the Company's works at Tooborac, a few days ago. After a pleasant drive along the picturesque Tooborac road the party arrived at the headquarters of the Company which is situated about half a mile from the Tooborac railway station. After enjoying the hospitality of the officials of the company a hurried inspection was made of the operations at this end of the works, as we were informed that the train for Mitchellstown would be due to leave in about ten minutes. A visit was first paid to the building which is used as the office, from whence the operations of the company are directed, the tram line running past the door. It is neatly fitted up, the office being in the front portion, a comodious dining room leading off from the office. The building is also used as a dwelling for the officials, several bedrooms being provided, and their "creature comforts" are prepared in the rear portion of the house. A little distance away from the office is the engine-house and carpenter's and fitting shops, where all repairs etc are attended to, the building being a very spacious one. On the opposite side of the line is situated one of the Company's wood-mills, where the wood is sawn into blocks for household purposes. The mills are fitted up to permit of the handling of the wood with the least possible labor, and to effect this end, the company's trucks loaded with timber from down the line are run up on an elevated siding alongside the mills, and the blocks when cut fall into a large wooden hopper, under which the Govt. railway trucks receive it. The mills are run by two large portable engines, and are capable of turning out a large quantity of sawn blocks each day. The govt. trucks when loaded are run onto a weighbridge, which automatically registers the weight of the wood and they are then shunted onto the mainline for transport to their destination.

The engine with its empty trucks was now ready to start down the line, and "all aboard" was the order given. We scrambled into the truck next to the engine, some of the efforts of the party to clamber over the side of the truck causing a number of employees present to smile. However, all got safely aboard and with a blast of its big whistle the engine and its train started off. The line for some miles runs along the side of a road, and it is in reality a railway line pure and simple, the term "tramway" being somewhat of a misnomer. The line being on the downgrade going outwards the train travelled almost with its own momentum, but when the locomotive had to use steam we were made fully aware of the fact by the shower of soot and smut with which we were covered. "My word" said one of the party "She primes a bit!" but the engine-driver only looked back at us and smiled. We enjoyed the experience however, as we were conscious of the fact that riding in a railway carriage was an ordinary affair, but a ride in an open truck with the fresh air playing through his whiskers (if he's got any) did not fall to everyone's lot.

After travelling for 5 or 6 miles we came to the first woodmill on the line, which is used principally for sawing sleepers for use in extending the line. As the mill was not working we did not stop, but sailed along until we came to the second mill, where two empty trucks were detached from the train and left to be filled. It may be mentioned en passant that no time was wasted in shunting, the trucks are merely detached from the others just above the points where the siding runs to the mill, and the rest of the train resumes its journey, the detached trucks being left to run onto the siding by their own momentum.

The line here takes a turn off the road into private property and runs through cleared paddocks for a mile or two, when another mill is reached and the same operation is gone through of leaving empty trucks. A belt

of green timber is next reached (probably the forest at Redgate - Ed.) and the line then cuts through Mr. Tehan's property, where another mill is at work. On arrival at this part of our journey we met Mr. Tehan himself, and he requested the services of one of our party (a member of the medical profession) who accompanied Mr.Tehan to his residence, a mile away, to examine one of his fingers which had been badly bruised through a horse kicking him.

We were left here for a while whilst the engine proceded up a branch line (the formation which leads into the Military Range Area ? - Ed.) to get some trucks which had been loaded with wood ready to be taken back with us on our return journey. Off we started again and after a run of two or three miles reached the end of the line in this direction, being about nine miles from Seymour as the crow flies, the total length of the line being 22 miles. Another sawmill is situated here, and is kept busy all day long. All along the line from its turn-off the road miles of wood is stacked, ready to be loaded when the wet weather prevents carting it in from the paddocks. The methods of unloading the drays at the mills is rather unique, very little handling being necessary. The drays are somewhat similar to the ordinary wood dray, except that there are no standards at the front and rear, only on the centre portion and on arrival at the mill with his load the driver has simply to tip it up against the stack.

There are a great number of men employed by the Company, for besides thos employed in the working of the line, a large number of workmen are emgaged in cutting and carting the wood, and also at the mills, a large sum of money being disbursed in wages fortnightly.

Having reached the end of our run outwards, preparations are made for the return journey, and as the empty truck we rode in on our way out was to be left at the mill, we had to vacate it, which was accomplished with as much difficulty as that referred to in getting into it, two of the party alighting on thei hand and knees instead of their feet, to the amusement of the others. As we were to take back a train of loaded trucks room was made for us on the tender of the engine by shovelling coal into the bottom of the tender and placing bags of chaff round to sit on. This being accomplished we started homewards. The weather all the afternoon, to say the least of it, had been decidedly fresh, and when we reached the mill on Mr. Tehan's property we felt we could do with "something of a warming nature" and eagerly awaited the return of the "doctor" feeling sure that "something" would come along with him. Two sharp blasts of the whistle were given to acquaint our friend that we were waiting for him, and that if he did not wish to "miss the bus" he had"better get a move on,sure" Presently a buggy was seen coming through the timber, but our hopes fell to zero (very much zero) when we saw that our medical friend had come back empty handed, "and oh, it was so cold!" At this point Mr.Prince, the manager of the Company, who had been on business down the line, came aboard and we resumed our journey. We had now a heavy load of about 18 trucks of wood behind us, and it kept the fireman busy shovelling in the coal to keep up a good head of steam. From our observations on that journey home we came to the conclusion that if any man earned his money that fireman did. The only thing that caused us any regret was that we could only look at the glowing coals from our perch on the tender, but could not feel their genial warmth. Having picked up another couple of trucks of wood we speeded onwards, the first stiff grade being reache and the fireman had to carefully "nurse" his fire to keep up enough steam to enable our "iron horse" to reach the top pf the hill. But it was accomplished, and we then had a level run for a mile or two until we pulled up to give the engine a "drink". It may be stated here that the water for the locomotive is pumped from a creek nearby by means of an oil engine into tanks erected close to the line. Another start was made, and soon after another stiff pinch in the line made the engine "puff", and we kept the fireman busy. Darkness was now upon us, and as the firebox of the engine was opened every now and then the lurid glow from the fire lit up the tender, one of the party remarking that we looked like so many demons perched up amongst the coals and lit up by the lurid glow of the fire. It seemed so strange and novel to be riding on a locomotive amongst the green timber, the trees in many cases being quite close

alongside the track. Every now and then it seemed we would dash into one of them in the darkness, and as the light from the furnace lit them up the effect was strange and almost weird. Nothing could be seen ahead but darkness, and we had simply to sit still and trust to the "man at the lever", who by the way knew his business and we felt quite safe in his hands. Away at the end of the train of loaded trucks the man in charge (who acted as guard) could only be distinguished by his handlamp, and as he skipped from truck to truck his light looked like a Will-o' the Whisp darting about. No comfortable seat in a guard's van for him.

At last we reached the end of our trip, arriving at the office at about 7-15 pm, and as we walked inside the clerks must have thought that the remnant of a tribe of aboriginals was paying them a visit, as our faces and hands were black from the coal dust and soot, and each one of us was looking at the other and shaking his sides with laughter, forgetting that we were all "tarred with the same brush". However, after a wash and an appetising hot meal, so kindly provided for us, we felt new men, and around the cheery office fire, preparatory to our start for home, "jokes went round and harmless chat", and under the soothing interest of the "pipe" we all agreed that the trip had been a most enjoyable one, despite the raw state of the atmosphere.

With grateful feelings for the great kindness and hospitality extended to us, we drove home with the firm conviction that we had spent a very happy afternoon.

In the course of conversation with one of the officials we were informed that the company has orders for firewood six months ahead, and intend extending their lines towards Rushworth through the Moormbool forest (i.e. the Cherrington line - Ed.), arrangements have been made with the government in the matter. The management of the whole of the company's operations is ably carried out and reflects great credit on all concerned. The company has also a large wood business in West Australia, on even more extensive lines than this one. Our district is therefore fortunate in having such a large and progressive concern in its midst, and the company's enterprise deserves the highest commendation.

THE MAPS

A general locality map is shown on the back page of the cover.

The two-inch/mile maps are as follows -

No.1 McIvor Siding and the first few miles of the tramway.
2 A northwards continuation of map 1. This map includes the sites of Parker's Siding and Singleton's Siding.
3. A northwards continuation of map 2, commencing around the site of Singleton's Siding, and showing the route of the tramway to Triangle Junction, and Cherrington Junction on the top right hand corner of the map.
4. Commencing at Triangle Junction, shows most of the Puckapunyal line, and the first portion of the Cherrington branch.
5. A continuation of the Puckapunyal line, also showing Graytown Junction and the first section of the Graytown line.
6. Shows the first section of the Cherrington line from just north of Cherrington Junction, the Puckapunyal line can be seen in the bottom right-hand corner of the map.
7. A continuation of the Cherrington line to its terminus.

Connally's and Kelly's Sidings were in the area shown on map 6, but their precise location is not known.

From the "Nagambie Times" 21/2/1913

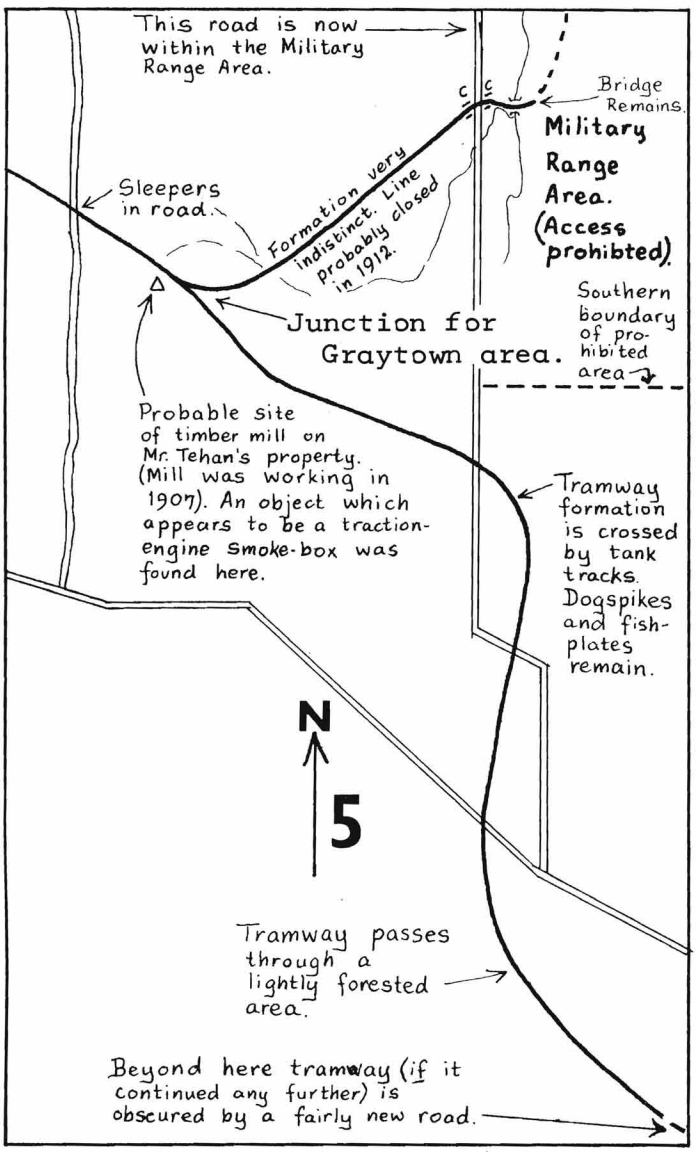
"Graytown Jottings"

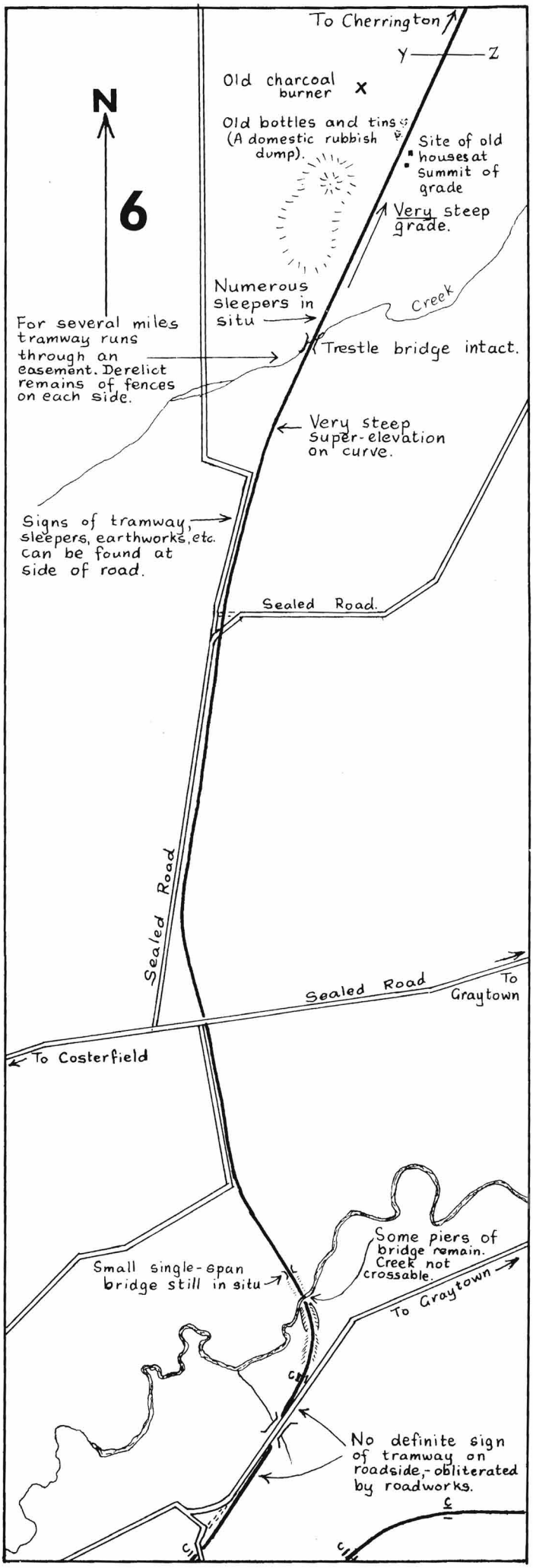
A serious accident occurred to Mr. and Mrs Kennedy whilst travelling to Heathcote.

"When near the Triangle, and at a point where the line runs very close to the main road, the train passed them. The dense smoke from the locomotive getting in front of the horse caused it to turn and back towards the line so close to the train that one of the trucks struck the gig and smashed it to pieces...."

From the McIvor Times, 16/4/1914.

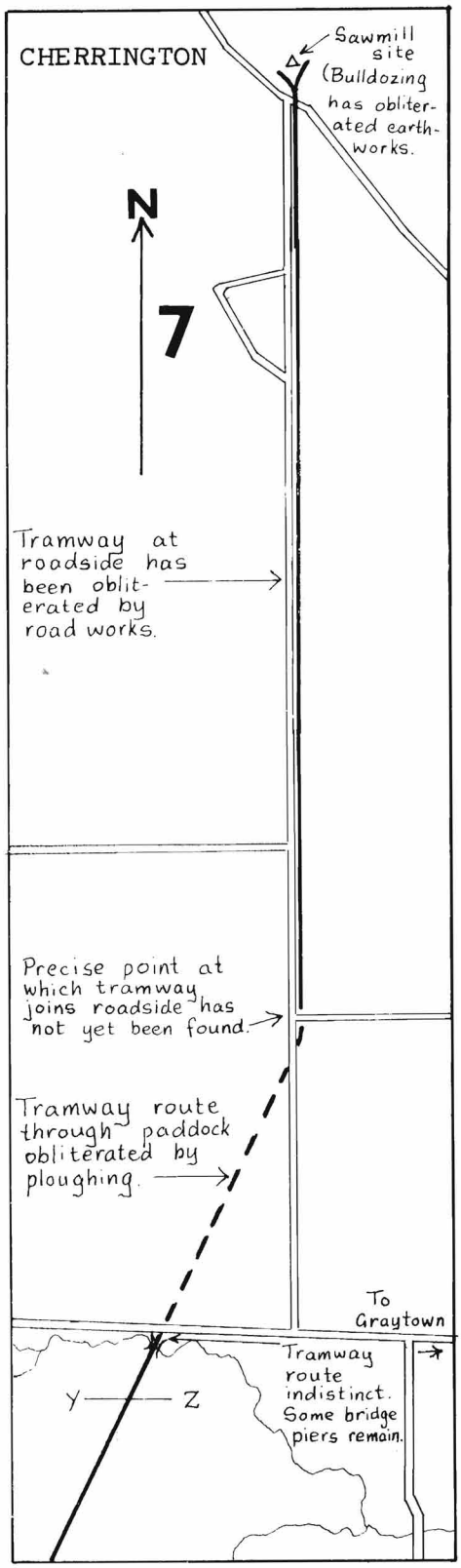
Mr. J. O'Dea of Major's Line wrote to the Council complaining that "wood stacked adjacent to his property on the McIvor Company's tram line for three years and more was a breeding place for rabbits". Council decided that "the Manager's attention be drawn to the complaint and he to be requested to remove the wood without delay".

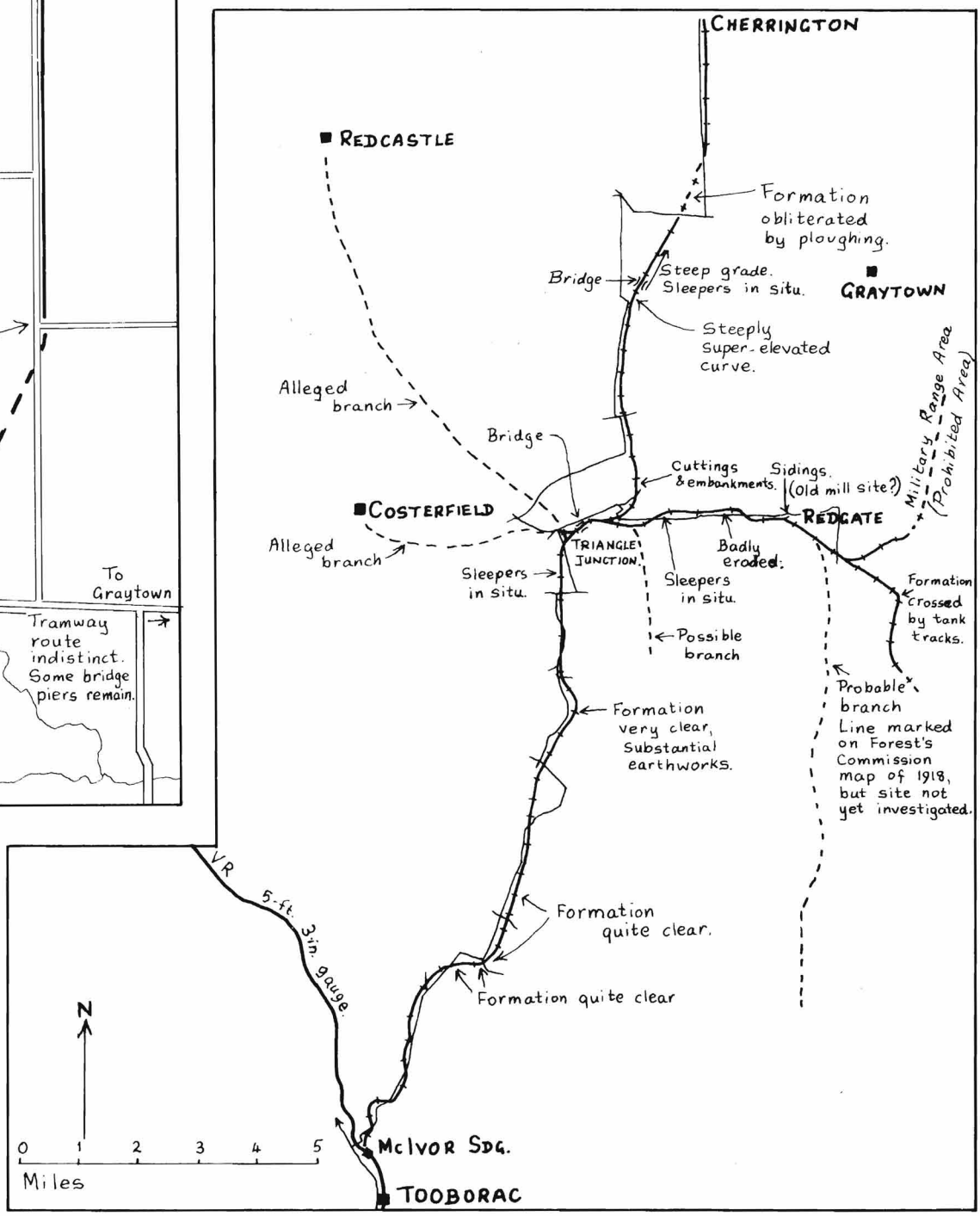




From The McIvor Times and Rodney Advertiser - 20th March 1919

"At 10 a.m. last Saturday (15/3) Mr Alex Anderson, an employee of the State Forest Dept. had one leg broken at Singleton's Siding on the McIvor Co.'s tramline. With a gang of men, Mr Anderson had just finished loading a QR truck with poles, and was pushing it along to attach it to some others for transport to Tooborac. When the truck had gained some pace Anderson got on the step to work the brake. From this position he was unable to shift it, and as there was a space between the end of the poles and the truck he climbed into it that he might use both hands to operate it. Despite his efforts,he could not get the brake on,and the truck dashed into the others with considerable force. So great was the compact (sic) that it caused the poles to jump forward,jamming him against the end of the truck, the end of which had to be cut out to release him...."





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