

MOUNT ALEXANDER TO MURRAY VALLEY RAILWAY

History

In June 1852 the Melbourne, Mt. Alexander and Murray River Railway Co. was promulgated to build a main line of railway from Melbourne to Mt. Alexander and the River Murray, at Echuca and a branch line to Williamstown. Its inability to raise adequate funds however led to its purchase by the government in 1856 and to the formation of the Victorian Railways during the same year. The Williamstown and the first section of the Echuca railway (to Sunbury) were opened simultaneously on January 13 1859. They were the first lines to be opened by the Victorian Railways department.

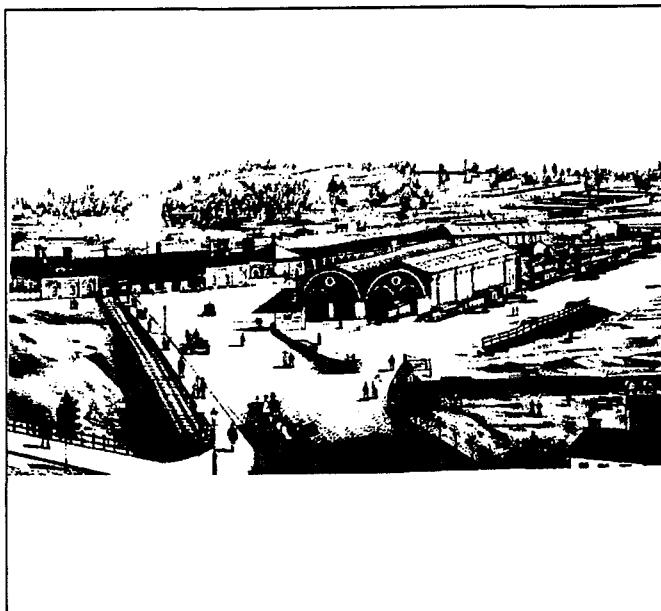
The balance of the Echuca railway was opened as follows:

Sunbury to Woodend 8.7.61
Woodend to Kyneton 25.4.62
Kyneton to Bendigo 21.10.62
Bendigo to Echuca 19.9.64

Description

..Important buildings and features along the railway line include:

'Jacksons Creek Viaduct' 'The Sunbury Bank,' commencement point Jacksons Creek 'Clarkefield Goods Shed' 'Bridge over creek on upside of Riddells Creek' 'Riddells Creek Station' 'Riddells Creek Bridge' 'Gisborne Station' 'Macedon Station' 'Macedon Bank and Water Tower' 'Calder Highway Bridge' 'Woodend Station' 'Bridge over Creek,' north of Woodend 'Carlsruhe Station' 'Kyneton Station' 'Bridge over Creek,' near Kyneton 'Coliban River Viaduct' 'Malmsbury Station' 'Daylesford Road Bridge' 'Back Creek Viaduct' 'Taradale Station' 'Elphinstone Station' 'Elphinstone Tunnel' 'Castlemaine Station' 'Various Brick and Girder Bridges with Local Granite Trim' 'Harcourt Station' 'Bridge over Barker's Creek' 'Local Stone Embankment Abutments and Dwarf Walls' 'Big Hill Tunnel' 'Kangaroo Flat Station' 'Golden Square Station' 'Elmore Station' 'Rochester Station' 'Echuca Station:'



3-59
c1891 view of railway station yard (Arnold)

Bendigo Sites

The Bendigo Station complex includes: notable brick station buildings, goods and carriage sheds, platforms, signal boxes, public garden reserve, Railways Association building and former station master's residence¹. The Golden Square station was developed from 1885²

The bridges include:

Railway Bridge Hunter Street brick and stone railway bridge.
Laurel Street Railway Bridge, 1862C? granite quoining keystones and cement-rendered lining on soffit.
Mcivor Road Railway Bridge, extensive brick abutments
Road Bridge over railway, Thistle Street, 1862C part of original works?

Significance

The historic importance of the Echuca Railway hinges on the number of extant structures dating from the opening of the line. They include the Elmore/Elphinstone design for station buildings, which is peculiar to this line, and the number and diversity of examples of the Carlsruhe group of buildings. The line also includes the largest and most spectacular collection of early stone and iron viaducts. The use of available local building materials adds interest to these structures. The construction of the line during the 1860s is the further interest in that it reflects such strategic economic issues of the day as that of providing a rail outlet for the lucrative river trade of the north-western plains and the New South Wales Riverina. The construction of the railway line and associated works, as the largest building enterprise in the colony at that time, was the focus of the battle for improved working conditions and the venue in 1859-60 for a strike against the principle of sub-contracting, for the direct importation of indentured German masons to undercut locally established conditions and rates of pay, for a partial alliance between German and local masons and for the final collapse of the established level of wages³.

1 see Site Schedule Vol.5
2 MUAJ
3 AHC citation