



**AUSTRALIAN RAILWAY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

MELBOURNE BRANCH

ARHS Melbourne Luncheon Outing Group, Violet Town &
Southern Aurora Memorial Gardens Thursday 7th December 2023.

9:00	Meet at Southern Cross Waiting room opposite Platform 5.
9:26	Depart on Shepparton Service arriving at Murchison East arrive 11:38.
11:38	Private Bus Charter to Violet Town, may include visit to crash site depending on time available.
	Lunch at Ellen Frances Hotel.
13:00 approx	Walk to Southern Aurora Memorial Gardens, Violet Town Signal Box and Platform to wait for Up VLine Service to Southern Cross.
14.23	The VLine Service to Southern Cross Departs.
16:36	Train arrives Southern Cross.
	Tour finishes here.

If you wish to contact Geoff or John on the day of travel only, Geoff's mobile is 0412 056 033 or Johns mobile is 0418 384 718. These numbers are for use on the day of travel only.

Violet Town is a town in north eastern Victoria, Australia.

The town is in the Shire of Strathbogie local government area, 174 kilometres (108 mi) northeast of the state capital, Melbourne on the Hume Highway. At the 2021 census, Violet Town had a population of 936.

The town is on Honeysuckle Creek and has many early streets named after flowers, e.g. Lily Street, Rose Street, Orchid Street, Tulip Street, and Iris Lane.

Violet Town and District is bounded by Arcadia-Tamleugh Road, Clancy Road, Honeysuckle Creek, Fishers Lane, Bridge Road, Camerons Road, Croxfords Road, Dookie-Violet Town Road and the Broken River in the north, Benalla Rural City, Leggat Lane, Baddaginnie-Goomalibee Road, Depot Road, McPherson Road, McEwan Lane and Benalla Rural City in the east, the localities of Strathbogie, Kelvin View and Euroa, Collier Road and Lawrence Road in the south, and Moglonemby Road, Murchison-Violet Town Road and Violet Town Boundary Road in the west.

History

The Yorta Yorta are the traditional custodians of this land.

In 1838 the New South Wales Government surveyed the town site which they called "Violet Creek" – the first inland surveyed town in Victoria. The following year land was put up for sale. Squatters took up land at Honeysuckle Run soon after. The town remained empty in spite of the sale of town blocks until 1846 when the Royal Mail Hotel was opened and then a village began to grow. By the 1860s the town had expanded to include three hotels, a bakery and a school. Buildings went from bark huts to timber construction. Its principal thoroughfares then were Hyacinth, Tulip, Cowslip, and Rose streets. The town was an important coach stop on the Melbourne to Sydney road, as it was at the conjunction of the Sydney road, the overland telegraph and the tracks to Bendigo and the north-eastern gold fields. In 1873 the railway arrived and the village moved closer to the line. In 1895 the Shire of Violet Town was gazetted. In 1994 it was amalgamated with adjoining shires to become part of the Shire of Strathbogie.

With its proximity to the Honeysuckle Creek, development in Tulip Street began early with the first surveyed block in Victoria, on the corner of Rose and Tulip Streets. The first hotel was in this site precinct and the first designated crossing of the Honeysuckle Creek was on Baird Street.

Until 1980, the Sydney Road/Hume Highway ran through Violet Town, and much early history is centred on this road, now called High Street. Major Thomas Mitchell and his party stopped on the banks of Violet Creek, now called Honeysuckle Creek on his way back to Sydney. In this Australia Felix exploration of 1836 he noted that the swamps and marshes in the area had a profusion of wild violets and named the district Violet Ponds. The explorers Hume and Hovell also camped near this spot (6.4 km away) in 1824. Some existing houses and cottages in High Street, previously used as tea rooms or coaching inns, date from the 1880s.

Cowslip Street is the main commercial street of Violet Town. It developed after the railway arrived. However, many of the early buildings were made of timber and burnt down. There are two strips of shops surviving from the end of the 19th century, plus some single buildings worth visiting.

The Post Office opened on 1 July 1852 although closed from early 1854 until early 1859.

Near the town was the site of the Southern Aurora train crash in 1969 that caused the deaths of nine people.

Violet Town Magistrates' Court closed in 1977.

On 12 November 2003 the Victorian State Government announced plans to locate a toxic waste dump in the district, and threatened to acquire local farming properties. In 2004 the residents of the town and district successfully campaigned against the proposal. The local history group holds a library of photos.

Military history

Violet Town was represented in the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1901) and the town's war memorial in Cowslip Street was built in 1901.

The town has both a World War I Avenue of Honour (Cowslip Street) and a World War II Avenue of Honour (Hyacinth Street) maintained by the local RSL branch.

During World War II, Violet Town was the location of RAAF No.13 Inland Aircraft Fuel Depot (IAFD), commissioned in 1942 and closed on 14 June 1944. Usually consisting of 4 tanks, 31 fuel depots were built across Australia for the storage and supply of aircraft fuel for the Royal Australian Air Force and the United States Army Air Forces at a total cost of £900,000 (\$1,800,000)

Today

The town's streets are tree-lined and uncongested by traffic. The town has public reserves, with a bowling green, football and cricket oval, tennis courts and a caravan park near Honeysuckle Creek. There is also a memorial hall, swimming pool, library, museum and several art galleries. The Strathbogie Ranges are visible to the south.

Violet Town holds a Community Market on the 2nd Saturday of every month at the Recreation Reserve in Tulip Street - it has been going since 1978 and features local producers. Volunteers make pizza in the community wood fired pizza oven.

The town has a range of local businesses including agricultural store, cafes, hotel, chemist, hairdresser, supermarket and petrol station, and is surrounded by rural land used mainly for cropping and cattle and sheep grazing, although some horse studs are present. The town's Bush Nursing Centre provides residential aged care for up to 64 people. Murrnong is a permaculture farm and training facility.

Some features of the area include the Honeysuckle Creek Walking Track, Shadforth Reserve with community forest (originally a racecourse), the community built Violet Town Swimming Pool and the local Peranbin primary school.

Violet Town has connections with Australian rock music - during the 1980s a song by The Church was named for the town, and more recently the town has been known for being the home of Jesse and Ella Hooper, members of rock band Killing Heidi. Their best known single Weir was written about the local railway reservoir weir.

Violet Town is one of few small rural towns (population under 1000) that has shown growth. The town's population in 2016 was 684.

Violet Town Football Netball Club plays Australian Rules football and netball in the Kyabram District Football Netball League.

Transport

Road access to town is via the Melbourne to Sydney Hume Freeway or through the Violet Town-Murchison Road from the west (from Bendigo), or the Nalinga/Dookie Road from the north.

The passenger railway station is serviced by daily V/Line services between Melbourne and Albury.

Date & info	What was done	WON or WN Info
Violet Town Thu, 20 Mar 1873	Line opened from Longwood.	(Waugh 1989, VR to 62, Victorian Railways Chronological Index)
Mon, 18 Aug 1873	Line extended to Benalla.	(Waugh 1989, VR to 62)
Tue, 11 Aug 1885	17 lever frame provided, including 3 spares.	(Waugh 1989, Interlocking Register)
Wed, 7 May 1890	Baddaginnie opened as staff station, new section Violet Town-Baddaginnie.	(Waugh 1989, Victorian Railways Chronological Index)
Thu, 30 Oct 1890	Alterations for (or provision of?) Staughton's Siding.	
Mon, 22 Feb 1897	Provide tablets in lieu of train staff and ticket to Euroa and Benalla.	(WN32/1897)
1898	Catch with point indicator at down end of No.3 road. Catches with point indicators at up end of No.3 and No.4/No.5 roads.	(Waugh 1989, 1898 General Appendix)
Mon, 9 May 1898	Track and signals altered, loop extended.	(WN45/1898)
	Loop Extended	(Waugh 1989, Interlocking Register)
Sun, 21 Feb 1909	Yard rearranged so that the platform is on the main line. New 26 lever frame provided, with 10 signals, 7 points, 6 lockbars and 3 spares.	(Waugh 1989, Interlocking

Date & info	What was done	WON or WN Info
Mon, 15 Sep 1913	By this date, post 2 relocated to position adjacent to sidings B and disc provided thereon, siding B to No.s 2, 3, 4 roads or sidings A.	Register, WN08/1909) (WN37/1913)
Mon, 27 Oct 1913	By this date, provide miniature electric staff in lieu of tablets to Euroa and Baddaginnie.	(WN43/1913)
Tue, 11 Oct 1921	By this date, provide staff exchange box.	(WN41/1921)
Fri, 11 May 1923	Disc removed from post 2 and placed on new post 7.	(WN21/1923)
Tue, 16 Dec 1924	By this date, provide track locking on 1 and 2 roads between up and down distant signals.	(WN51/1924)
Tue, 10 Aug 1926	By this date, provide automatic electric staff exchange apparatus.	(WN32/1926)
Tue, 15 Nov 1927	Post 3 converted to bracket.	(WN48/1927)
Sun, 20 Nov 1927	Provide up and down departure home signals from 1 road on post 3 and new post 6B. Now 13 signals, 7 points, 6 locks, no spare levers.	(WN48/1927, Waugh 1989, Interlocking Register)
Wed, 9 Nov 1938	Track and signals altered, provide interlocked gates.	(WN47/1938)
Tue, 13 Dec 1938	By this date, staff exchange box removed.	(WN50/1938)
Thu, 21 Nov 1940	Lever lock added to lever 14.	(Waugh 1989, Locking Sketch)
Tue, 8 Apr 1941	By this date, right-hand road of sidings A abolished.	(WN14/1941)
Thu, 28 Jan 1943	Repeater provided for signal 42.	(Waugh 1989, Victorian Railways Chronological Index)
Tue, 1 Apr 1947	By this date, telegraph instrument removed.	(WN13/1947)
Wed, 1 Dec 1954	Provide yellow in lieu of green lights for calling-on signals.	(WN49/1954)
1957	Has 682 foot platform, 4 ton crane, sheep and cattle races, and ramped goods platform.	(Waugh 1989, 1957 Directory of Stations)
Mon, 23 Jun 1958	The motor tricycle provided at Violet Town, enabling the Group ASM to travel to Baddaginnie to relieve the ASM there, requires the electric staff for the section when travelling at night or in poor weather.	(Somersault Vol.15 No.6 pp.112, Block & Signal Inspector ACTM 20/189/4)
Sun, 29 Oct 1961	Provide manually controlled boom barriers in lieu of interlocked gates at Cowslip Street (105M 20C).	(WN45/1961)

ARHS Melb LOG #8 Violet Town Tour Notes

Date & info	What was done	WON or WN Info
Tue, 7 Nov 1961	Provide flashing lights at Town crossing (I04M 46C).	(WN46/1961)
Thu, 25 Jan 1962	Provide flashing lights on standard gauge line, station access road (I05M 20C).	(WN06/1962)
Wed, 15 Aug 1962	Up distant electrically lit.	(Waugh 1989, Victorian Railways Chronological Index)
Tue, 26 Aug 1975	Up distant motorised.	(Waugh 1989, Victorian Railways Chronological Index, Locking Sketch)
Tue, 29 May 1979	By this date, crane road removed.	(WN22/1979)
Wed, 13 Oct 1982	Staff balancing magazine provided Euroa - Violet Town.	(Waugh 1989, Victorian Railways Chronological Index)
Fri, 10 Jun 1983	Staff balancing magazine (B pattern) provided Violet Town - Benalla.	(Waugh 1989, Victorian Railways Chronological Index)
Thu, 15 Jan 1987	Boom barriers provided at Cowslip Road.	(Waugh 1989, Victorian Railways Chronological Index)
Thu, 18 Feb 1988	Signals 4, 6, 9, 12, 35, 37 and 38 electrically lit.	(Waugh 1989, Victorian Railways Chronological Index)
Wed, 2 Mar 1988	Provide closing lever 22. Boom barriers converted to automatic operation for mainline, remains manually controlled for platform road. Down home signal post 7 converted to light signal and controlled by 5P keyswitch. Provide staff exchange box.	(WN09/1988)
Tue, 14 Sep 1993	By this date, electric staff to Euroa and Benalla A abolished. Provide train order working Seymour - Wodonga. Establish as train order crossing station. Up and down distant posts 1 and 12 fixed at caution. Reversers on posts 2, 3 and 11 out of use. Down home signal post 7 must be cleared by 5P switch while in the process of switching out, then will remain at proceed.	(WN34/1993)
Tue, 21 Sep 1993	By this date, calling-on signals on post 2 abolished.	(WN35/1993)

Date & info	What was done	WON or WN Info
Wed, 5 Jan 1994	No.3 road and sidings A and B abolished. Posts 4, 5, 6, and disc on post 11 abolished. Levers 4, 15 and 27 now pilots, levers 11, 12, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 25, 26 and 35 all sleeved normal.	(WN02/1994)
Wed, 8 Jun 1994	Down home signal post converted to motor operation.	(WN22/1994)
Line History		
Spencer Street to Albury		
Thu, 20 Mar 1873	Line Opened	Longwood - Violet Town
Mon, 18 Aug 1873	Line Opened	Violet Town - Benalla
Sun, 9 Nov 2008	Passenger Service Suspended	Seymour - Albury (Replaced with Coaches due to Upgrade works)
Sun, 26 Jun 2011	Passenger Service Returned	Seymour - Albury
Violet Town Loop		
Sun, 13 May 1962	Established as crossing station, sections Longwood Loop - Violet Town Loop and Violet Town Loop - Benalla Loop. Provide control panel in cabin at up end. Cripple road sidings spiked out of use.	(WN21/1962)
Tue, 12 May 1970	By this date, down end cripple road extended 390 feet for ballast loading.	(WN19/1970)
Thu, 23 Jul 1987	Renumber signals 27/2, 27/4, 27/U4, 27/U6 and 27/8 to VTN/2, VTN/4, VTN/U4, VTN/6, VTN/U6 & VTN/8.	(WN29/1987, A.605/87)
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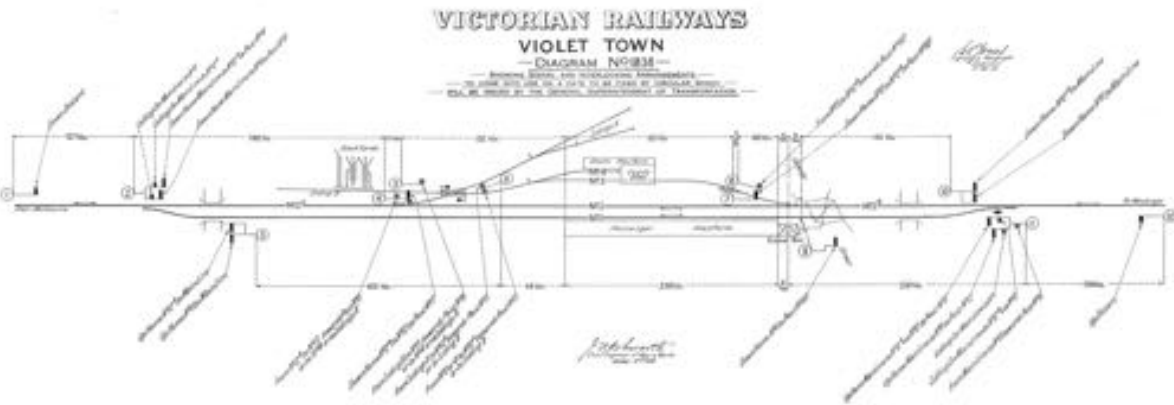
Cowslip St Violet Town c1938 Image source unknown came from Facebook?



Violet Town Station close up c1938 A blown up view of above image. Image source unknown came from Facebook?



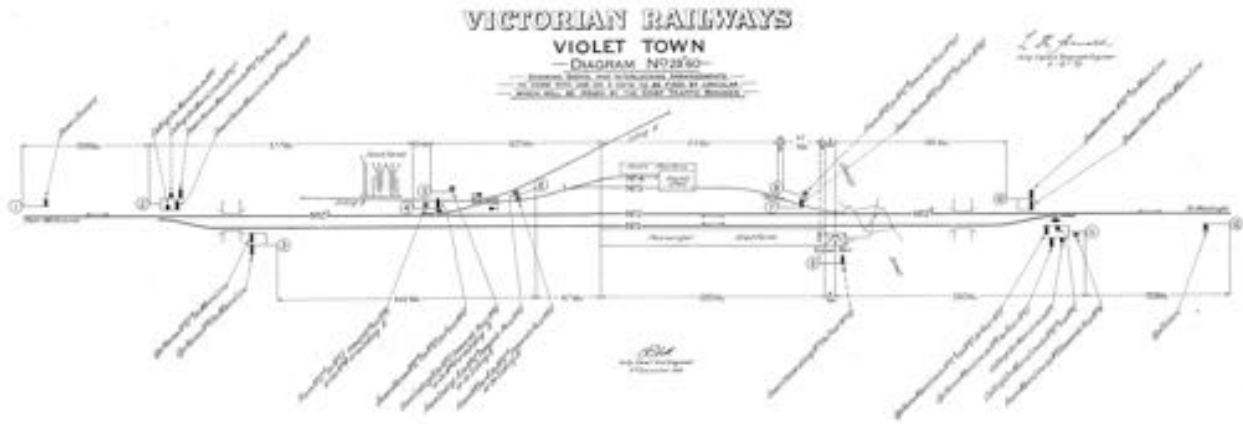
Violet Town 1919-051 GW Collection



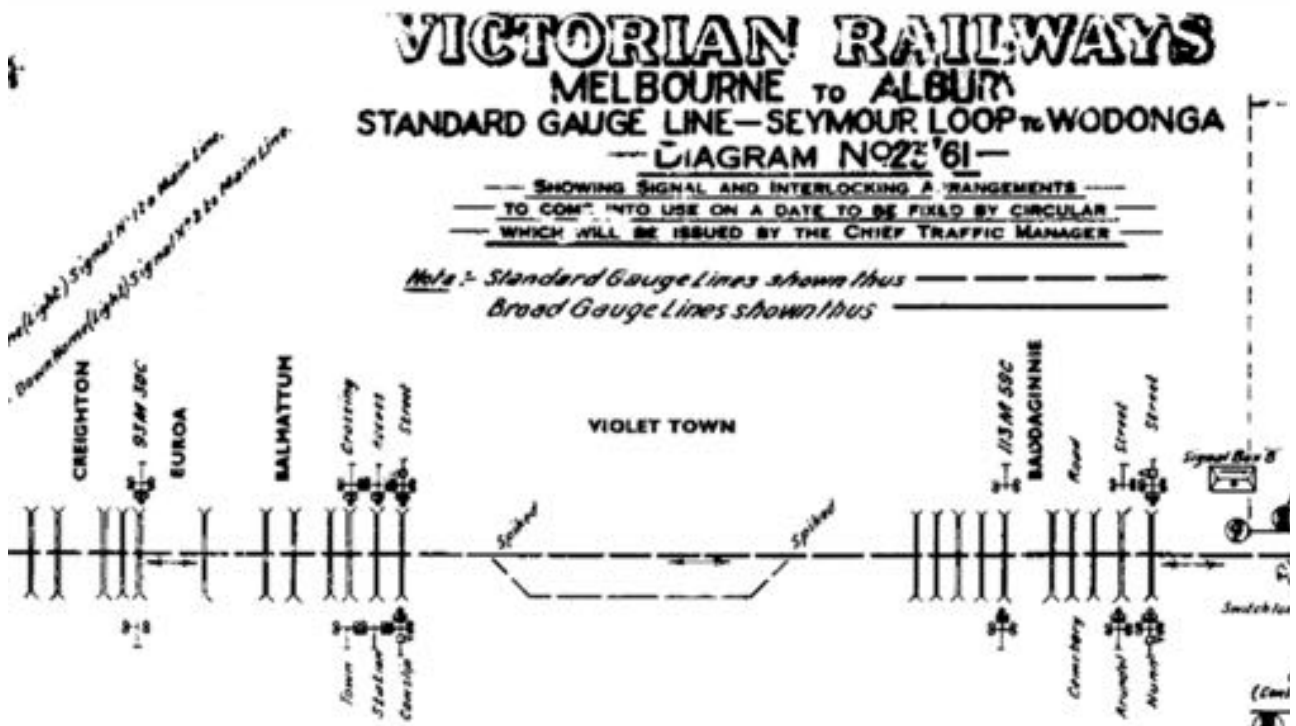
Violet Town 1938-018 GW Collection



Violet Town Signal Bay c1938 Note the Signal Diagram on the wall of the Signal Bay. Image Source unknown came from Facebook?



Violet Town 1960-028 GW Collection



Seymour Loop to Wodonga SG 1961-023 partial showing Violet Town GW Collection

Photos by Geoff Wallace, information from <vicsig.net> Chris Gordon, John Ruddock JR, A Walker Father of Lindsay Walker, Facebook & Wikipedia.

Notes compiled by Geoff Wallace

E&OE



A Soldier at the scene of the devastation. Southern Aurora accident, Violet Town 7.2.1969. (A Walker photo)



The sheer devastation of the wrecked cars at the accident site. Southern Aurora accident, Violet Town 7.2.1969. (A Walker photo)



Violet Town Southern Aurora Memorial Archway JR Image



Violet Town Southern Aurora Sleeping Car at Memorial JR Image