

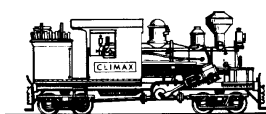
THE  
M<sup>c</sup>IVOR TIMBER &  
FIREWOOD COMPANY

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TOOBORAC, VICTORIA

By

Frank Stamford



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## CONVERSION TABLE

1 inch (in)	= 25.4 millimetres
1 foot (ft)	= 0.305 metres
1 yard (yd)	= 0.914 metres
1 chain	= 20.11 metres
1 mile	= 1.609 kilometres
1 pound (lb)	= 0.454 kilograms
1 hundredweight (cwt)	= 50.80 kilograms
1 ton	= 1.016 tonnes
1 pound per square inch (psi)	= 6.89 kilopascals
1 horsepower (hp)	= 0.746 kilowatts
1 gallon	= 4.536 litres
1 cubic yard	= 0.765 cubic metres
1 super foot	= 0.00236 cubic metres
1 acre	= 0.405 hectares
£1 0s 0d	= \$2.00 in February 1966

12 pence = one shilling, 20 shillings = £1 (One Pound)

5ft 3in gauge	=	1600mm gauge
3ft gauge	=	914mm gauge

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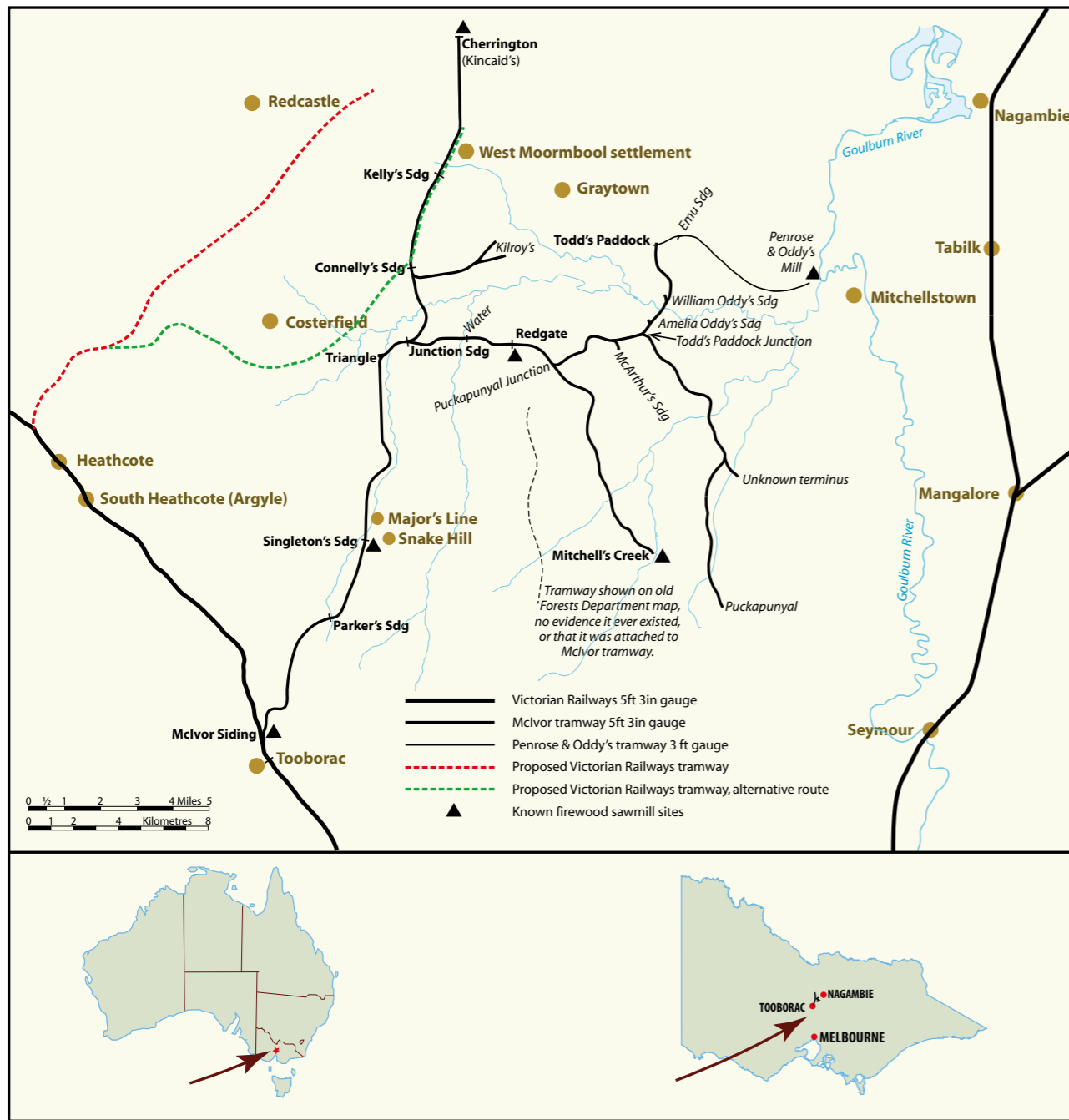
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**Front cover:** The locomotive *McIvor* on a train of sleepers during the construction of the McIvor tramway in 1906. In front of the tender W.N. Hedges – the Company’s biggest shareholder – is standing on the left, and the Traffic Manager, James McCarthy, is on the right.  
*Prince album, courtesy Mavis Prince*

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## Foreword

THIS publication was originally inspired in 1971 when it was announced that the Army wished to take over a substantial portion of the land in which the McIvor tramway had operated. At that time Graeme Inglis, the late Bill Jessup and I decided to form the LRRSA McIvor Survey Group, with the object of making a concerted effort to map as much of the McIvor Tramway as we could find. Although a fair amount of material had been published on the McIvor tramway, the only maps we could find were either vague or misleading. The one map we found which had the aura of authenticity – a Forests Commission map showing the Cherrington line – caused us to spend several hours looking for the route it showed, which turned out to be incorrect. Since that time a number of maps have been found showing various parts of the tramway, and these confirmed our findings.

During 1972-73 we plotted the tramways by taking compass bearings, pedometer readings and cross-checking known landmarks with their locations on survey maps. Further cross-checking was done against aerial survey photographs. As we had no idea where the various branch tramways were leading us, the whole operation became very interesting as we came upon junctions, bridges, cattle grids, siding sites, long stretches of formation still with sleepers in place, unbelievable gradients, charcoal retorts, a sign reading “WARNING UNEXPLODED BOMBS” in the Redgate Forest, tank tracks, and finally the Army Firing Range, which had a very secure fence and numerous “KEEP OUT” signs.

Beyond the Army Firing Range we did not go, but another LRRSA member – Ken Renshaw – traced a tramway on the Mitchellstown side of the Firing Range, which he believed to be the McIvor tramway.

In 1985-86 Geoff Thorpe, Jack Stock and I formed another McIvor Survey Group, initially with the intention of looking at the tramway Ken Renshaw had found at Mitchellstown. When we arrived at the Mitchellstown end we found that it was now occupied by the army, but since there did not seem to be anybody about we went through the fence and started probing about, going deeper and deeper into the army land. The formation and sleepers looked too narrow for 5ft 3in gauge, and in due course we found a sleeper still with dogspikes, which showed the gauge

to be 3ft. Subsequent research revealed this to be Penrose & Oddy's tramway.

To get back to where we started we decided to take a short cut along an army road. This was a mistake, as in due course an army Land Rover appeared on a daily patrol. We were bundled in the back and carted off to be questioned, and we had to hand over the films we had taken. We were told they would be processed and returned to us if the pictures were not of anything sensitive. In due course they were posted back to us. We were also told that we could probably get permission to visit the army-occupied land if we made the right approach.

John Ritter then joined the new McIvor Survey Group, and he knew the right people to ask at Puckapunyal to get access. As a result one or two further visits were made when we traced the routes of McIvor tramway shown on maps 4 and 5 in Chapter 4. Unfortunately the evidence became too indistinct to trace the routes on Map 6.

In very recent years Google Earth has become available to give an aerial view of the tramway routes, and this has enabled some corrections to be made to the mapping we did on the ground in 1972-73 and 1985-86.

What we, and Ken Renshaw, failed to find was any trace of branches running towards Costerfield and Redcastle. Although claims have been made that these branches did exist, we came to the conclusion that they probably did not, since we were unable to find them on the ground, nor could we find any contemporary written reference to them. The few people we found who worked on the line had no memory or knowledge of them, whereas the lines to the east of Cherrington were remembered, although only vaguely. Unfortunately the McIvor tramway closed so long ago that it was difficult finding people who knew the line in its operating days, and impossible to find anyone with first hand knowledge of the lines which had closed by 1917, ie all the lines to the east of the water tanks at Back Creek.

I think it likely there were other branches which we did not find. Some possibilities are discussed in Chapter 4, under the heading “Enigmatic spurs and feeders”. Possibly there are cattle grids still buried in the ground as the last remaining evidence of these lines. Cattle grids seem to outlast bridges and sleepers, as they are protected by the earth.

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