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**PRG 101/16 Research note on the career of Frederick Estcourt Bucknall  
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**Part 1 Typescript by Mabel Phyllis Hardy, granddaughter of Arthur Hardy.**

The Career of Frederick Estcourt Bucknall from his arrival in South Australia, in 1860, to his death in 1896 (with special reference to the North-South Railway, and his proposal for a Southern Terminal and Canal, at Grange, South Australia).

17/6/65 Mabel Hardy

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In dealing with the period 1860-1887 it is helpful to consider for a few moments the state of England, especially with regard to commerce and finance. Arthur Bryant<sup>1</sup> in *English Saga* speaks of the amazing revolution brought about by the great railway age of 1830-1850. 'England', he says 'was on the make'; 'trails of smoke marked every sea coast horizon.' (The first British steam boat was built in 1811 and over 600 were constructed during the next 30 years.) He continues 'History has never recorded such an expansion of wealth and opportunity as came to Britain in the first half of the nineteenth century. . . .In that torrent of opportunity nothing seemed to matter but getting rich. Whoever could do so was honoured; whoever failed was passed by and trampled under foot.' Humphrey House<sup>2</sup> in his *Dickens World* agrees with Bryant. He emphasises how quickly and surely Dickens<sup>3</sup> sensed the mood of his time. 'The new mood and atmosphere', he says, 'are very largely caused by the railways' and he refers particularly to *Dombey and Son* whose publication coincided with the railway mania of the middle forties. 'Practically the whole country was money mad; the public attitude to investment was quite altered, and it then first became clear that Joint Stock companies, however imperfectly managed, were certain to become a permanent and influential feature of finance.' The reader of Dickens will note that his misers were not the conventional old men, gloating over

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<sup>1</sup> Sir Arthur Wynne Morgan Bryant CH, CBE (1899-1985) historian, author of many books and columnist for the *Illustrated London News*. *English Saga 1840-1940* was published in 1940.

<sup>2</sup> Arthur Humphrey House (1908-1955) literary scholar. *The Dickens World* was published by the Oxford University Press in 1960.

<sup>3</sup> Charles John Huffam Dickens (1812-1870) was an English novelist, generally considered the greatest of the period. *Dombey and Son* was serialised 1846-1848 and *Little Dorrit* 1855-1857.

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a hidden hoard of coins, but completely ruthless financiers in a large way, who amassed great wealth at the expense of others, men like Merdle in Little Dorritt and Carker in Dombey and Son. The descent of such financiers into dire poverty was to them a shocking disgrace.

It seems to me then that it was highly probable that the English Capitalists whom I shall be referring to would have been quite ready to turn their attention to the prospects of money making on the other side of the world, as the English boom subsided and opportunities at home were curtailed, but, unfortunately, I can find no proof of that. Throughout the railway negotiations of South Australia it seems apparent to me that the Australians were a little suspicious of the English financiers, and this suspicion spread as time went on, and the Capitalists and their agents seemed more and more reluctant to show their hands. One wonders whether the works of Dickens, very widely read in Australia, had anything to do with this attitude of suspicion. Personally I think it had.

The leading characters in this rather inconclusive enquiry, Frederick Estcourt Bucknall, Arthur Harvey and Richard Dalrymple Ross, were Englishmen who were reputed to have come to South Australia with the specific intention of promoting plans for railway development or for other schemes, on behalf of certain English Capitalists. I will deal first with Bucknall.

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Frederick Estcourt Bucknall was a spectacular figure who streaked across the South Australian scene, rather like meteor which makes a temporary sensation and then suddenly vanishes. I have found so little definite information about him that it has been extremely difficult to assess the part he played in the development of South Australia. One is beset with questions to which the answers can only be guessed. He arrived in the colony in 1860 at the age of twenty two and I have been told that a brother accompanied him, but have no confirmation of that. My informant (Mr H. Begg, his step-grandson) says that the young men were sent to South Australia because they were troublesome at home. Their father was William Bucknall, a London merchant, related to a well known county family named Estcourt, and living at Southend in Essex. Young Bucknell is said to have been instructed to enquire into the possibilities of constructing a Transcontinental Railway Line from Adelaide to Port Darwin. If, as seems possible, William Bucknall was connected with the Ellerman Bucknall Steamship Line, one can imagine that such a scheme might appeal to him, for this Company was trading with the East and would probably have welcomed the opportunity of extending its trade to Australia and, at the same time, avoiding the long voyage round the Australian coast. If this was so it seems strange that Bucknall apparently did nothing to fur

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further this plan for over ten years.

He seems to have had no profession or training and I cannot discover how he earned his living from 1860-1869. It may be that his father supported him. He lived at Port Adelaide where he did much to encourage an interest in all boating activities. He built a boatshed near the site of the Jervois Bridge which became the headquarters of the Port Adelaide Yacht Club. His father had been Commodore of the Royal Thames Yacht Club and the son was later Commodore of the Royal South Australian Yacht Club and, with his 28 ton yacht Enchantress, won a valuable prize. But, one wonders whether he did anything else in these years.

In 1869 he turned the galvanized iron boat shed into a hotel, calling it the Australian Club House Hotel, and he managed this for five years. (It was known locally as The Kerosene Tin). In 1874 he married the widow of a well known brewer, H.H.Haussen. His wife brought with her to the marriage a large sum of money (reported to have been £40,000) and nine children. The

money did not last long and twelve years later Bucknall was in serious financial difficulties from which he never recovered. It is easy to see where some

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of the money went. He built Estcourt House at a cost of at least £12,000 and entertained there on a very lavish scale, and he subsidised the building of the Marine Residences at the Grange, which are said to have cost ££0,000, [*X6 in pencil in the margin*] and it is possible that he helped to finance other projects in that area. But he was not entirely dependent on his wife's money for, on his marriage, he had entered the brewing firm of Haussen and Company. One is forced to the conclusion that he was not a practical business man. But he was popular and likeable and he seems to have treated his step children and his own four children very kindly and his encouragement of boating among the youths of Port Adelaide showed him to have been a public spirited man. The Minutes of the Hindmarsh District Council from 1881-1883, during which time he was Mayor of Hindmarsh, confirm this view of him. He was most energetic in Council matters and throughout these three years the meetings, under his chairmanship, were most harmonious and he was obviously popular. One does wonder a little whether his acceptance of the office of Mayor was in part due to the hope of using it perhaps as a lever to further his private ventures, but that may be unfair. In 1881 he did try to get the Council to persuade the Government to place Grange Road and Military Road under the Main Roads Board, and this would have been of great assistance to him in the building of Est-

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court House, but it is only fair to add that it would have also benefited the whole district. In his Annual Report at the end of that year there is definitely a sign of petulance in his reference to the Military Road which was then not formed at all south of Glanville, 'while', as he said, 'the road from the fort northward, leading nowhere, or to where private companies are trying to establish private harbours or jetty schemes, is not only made, but macadamized.' Incidentally, this is exactly what Bucknall himself was trying to do.

At the end of his first year of office he was re-elected and congratulated by the Council who thanked him for conducting their business in a very impartial manner. At the end of 1882 he had intended to resign the mayoralty on account of poor health, but was so urgently pressed to stand again that he agreed to do so. During the next year his health deteriorated and he was several times absent from meetings, and appears to have had quite a serious illness while in Sydney on business, for the District Clerk was instructed to wire to him a message of sympathy. At the end of 1883 he was obliged by the constitution to retire and did so, to the evident regret of the Councillors whom he thanked in his Report 'for your kind sympathy during my illness and for your continued courtesy.'

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This episode in his life has, I feel, very little value among municipal records, but it does give some indication of the kind of man he was, and this impression is heightened by the fine oil painting of Bucknall, in possession of the Hindmarsh Corporation. It portrays a handsome man with an amiable and kindly expression, and his work for the Council showed him to be, in addition, very energetic and reliable. The portrait was a gift from admiring citizens.

His Parliamentary career as House of Assembly Member for West Torrens from 1881 to 1887 appears to have been uneventful on the whole, but he did make one memorable speech in October 1886 on the Transcontinental Railway Bill of that year. There was, however, nothing new in it, for he merely repeated what had already been said many times by supporters of this and other similar Bills. It is significant that, as far as I know, it was the only time that he spoke openly of English Capitalists being ready to find the necessary money. He seems to have been

a fluent and rather over-dramatic speaker and was criticised at this time by a writer in the Observer, under the nom de plume of 'A Scribbler', who wrote. 'Lounging in his place, with eyeglass properly posed, the Member for West Torrens, when merely couchant, impresses the casual visitor.' Again one wonder whether his parliamentary

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career had in it something of self interest.

The building of Estcourt House may throw a little more light on his character, and it is also connected with his canal and harbour plan and the development of The Grange.

I was greatly interested in seeing over the house just recently. It has necessarily had many institutional alterations, but these have been carried out with taste, and one gets quite a clear impression of what the house was like in the full flower of its existence as a wealthy colonist's mansion. It is still beautiful with its large, lofty rooms, the lovely cedar staircase and the fine plaster work on the ceilings, with the Bucknall coat of Arms engraved on the glass fanlight over the front door. It is said that his yacht lay at anchor 'a pistol shot from his mansion', ready, presumably, to take his friends to and from Port Adelaide, for the Military Road was nearly always unusable. The view from the house across the lower reaches of the Port River to the hills is very lovely.

Authorities agree that Estcourt House was built in 1882, but a stone by the front door is dated Aug.31,1883. This may not be a Foundation Stone, but a Completion Stone, which appears to have sometimes been a feature of buildings

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of that time. I have been told that Bucknall intended the house to be used as a hotel later on when he expected his proposed harbour to be constructed, and that the Marine Residences were to be a housing project for the men working on the harbour scheme.

Early in 1886 Bucknall and his wife left for England, he having been given six months leave of absence from Parliament on account of ill health. It is said that he also hoped to raise money to further his canal scheme, and it is likely that he intended to interview English Capitalists concerning the financing of the projected North-South Railway. He probably hoped in some way to improve the extremely doubtful state of his own finances, but, whatever his purpose was, the voyage had a sad ending. While in England he had news of the financial depression that had struck South Australia, causing many insolvencies, a bank failure and much unemployment. He returned immediately, to find himself a ruined man. He remained at Estcourt House until 1888, when he had finally to abandon it. He had resigned his Parliamentary seat and thereafter lived in retirement at North Adelaide, until his death in 1896 at the age of 58.

Estcourt House remained empty until 1894, being known as

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Bucknall's Folly. In that year it was bought for £3,000 by the James Brown Memorial Trust, as a home for aged blind persons and crippled children. The first Matron and Superintendent were Mr and Mrs James Adamson, who remained there for eighteen years, and, when Mr Adamson died, his widow stayed on as Matron for another six years.

The first Medical Superintendent was Dr Curtis of Port Adelaide. He could see the house from Jervois Bridge and, as he went on his rounds, he always looked for the flag which the Matron hoisted whenever he was needed.

In 1931 Estcourt House ceased to take blind patients and in 1956 it was taken over by the Adelaide Children's Hospital as a Convalescent Home for Children.

The history of Estcourt House must have been largely influenced by the state of the Military Road. This road had been roughly formed in 1864 for military purposes, at the time of a Russian scare. (There was another Russian scare in 1882, which led to the building of Fort Largs and Fort Glanville, the purchase of a gun boat – The Protector – and of large guns for the two forts, besides two more that were placed on the sandhills at North Glenelg.) By 1878 the road was badly neglected, for there were no houses between the Grange and the Semaphore, so that, when Estcourt

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House was being built, Bucknall is said to have had to construct a light railway from The Grange to transport his building materials.

In 1896 the road was placed under the control of the Woodville District Council, who were quite overwhelmed by the problems caused by sand drift and flooding. They accepted the responsibility most unwillingly and protested, but without avail, that the road should be taken over by the Government.

In 1902 the Crown Lands Department threatened to withhold the subsidy usually paid by them to the Council to assist in road maintenance, if the Council did not remove the sand drifts and repair the road. To this the Council replied that to do so would cost £1700 and they had only £90 in hand for the work. The dispute continued until the next year and nothing was done.

In 1903 the Military Commandant for South Australia took a hand in the affair and complained that the road would be needed in an emergency and, as it was several feet deep in sand, it was quite unusable. Negotiations followed between the Council and the Army, but these were quite inconclusive and ended in 1907 with the Defence Department regretting that 'we are unable to make the Military Road trafficable.'

Early in 1908 there was much public criticism because a

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patient at Estcourt House was reported to have died because the doctor who had been summoned had been held up by the heavy sand drifts on the road. A deputation from the Council asked the Crown Lands Department for help and was given £50. This drop in the bucket was of little value and, by the end of the year, the road was worse than ever, so that notices were inserted in the Government Gazette warning the public that the whole of the Military Road was unsafe.

Ten years went by and the Woodville Council, again overcome by the magnitude of the problem, appealed once more to the Defence Department, to be told, 'The Commonwealth Government does not consider the road important enough to warrant a grant.'

So the story continued, with frequent appeals for government help and an occasional niggardly response, while Estcourt House remained uncomfortably, and often dangerously, isolated, so that, even as late as 1934, tradespeople were unable to deliver goods to the hospital. The Woodville Council's long struggle ended in 1935, when the Military Road was placed on the Main Roads Schedule and thereafter, if never a good road, it was at least usable.

I turn now to Bucknall's scheme for a harbour on the lower reaches of the Port River (or Grange Creek). South Australia had always lacked a really satisfactory port. the origin-

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al Port Misery was abandoned quite early and the site of the present Port Adelaide took its place. Wharves, cargo sheds and the railway from Adelaide made it quite convenient for the ships that could get up the Port River. But, as steamers took the place of sailing ships, they were often too large and too difficult to handle in such a confined space. It therefore became the custom for overseas ships to discharge their South Australian cargo in Western Australia, for transshipment to Port Adelaide by coastal vessels, an expensive and inconvenient procedure, or they anchored off Glenelg where there was no protection in stormy weather. To offset these disadvantages various plans were suggested and these were summarised in The South Australian Register of 28/9/78:-

- 1 Dredge the Port River, so that large ships can enter.
- 2 Erect harbour works at Light's Passage (entrance).
- 3 Cut canal through Lefevre's Peninsula.
- 4 Construct jetty and breakwater at Largs.
- 5 Construct jetty at Glenelg.
- 6 Construct breakwater at Marino.

The newspaper favoured any one of the last three, but made no mention at all of Bucknall's plan which had been published in the paper on June 26 of that year.

This Prospectus of the Wharf and Land Company of Port Adelaide South gives its aims as constructing a wharf on Section 929, deepening the river and making approaches to it and

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laying out the adjoining blocks in allotments, to be sold, let or built on. It was proposed at a later date to construct a Graving Dock and Patent Slip and to connect the site with Adelaide by rail. The promoters intended to seek expert engineering advice as to the practicability of cutting a canal to the sea.

Sections 903, 927, 928, 929 were to be purchased on a mortgage of £8,000, and Section 924 was to be bought for £2,380, half to be paid for in cash, and half to be left on mortgage. The total area was 523 acres. It was proposed to issue 30,000 shares at £3 each, the Directors of the Company being Sir John Morphett, G.H.Catchlove, J.B.Spence, J.S.Lloyd, D.Murray, H.Simpson. The Secretary was Arthur Harvey.

There seems to have been very little interest in the scheme and, when the Company was wound up in 1886, the number of unsold acres was approximately the same as the total number quoted in the Prospectus. It looks as if not even one allotment had been taken up. If, as seems likely, Bucknall had lent money on this land, his financial difficulties can be understood, but one would like to know what or who induced him to embark on such a patently unsound plan at the age of forty. He himself obviously expected it to succeed or he could hardly have risked building his large mansion in such an isolated and inconvenient place, but again one asks why did he build it four years after the issuing of the Prospectus of the Wharf and Land Company of Port Adelaide South, if, by then, the Company

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showed no prospect of succeeding?

In 1886, when Bucknall was in England, he received a letter from Arthur Harvey containing an amazingly naïve proposal. After telling Bucknall that both the Grange Land and Investment Company and the Wharf and Land Company of Port Adelaide South were in difficulties and would have to go into liquidation, if no help was forthcoming, he offered to sell to Bucknall all the assets of the latter company, consisting only of land (proof that nothing whatever had been done to carry out the plan) for £15,000. This letter, written on April 14, left the offer open until May 14. Perhaps it is not surprising that there seem to be no reference in his letter book to any reply to this extraordinary letter.

Bucknall was definitely involved with Arthur Harvey, not only in the harbour scheme, but also in the development of the Grange and Henley Districts, although his name does not appear among lists of shareholders or directors. The Grange Land and Investment Company was floated, with Arthur Harvey as Secretary, in 1878. It seems probable that Bucknall helped to finance this very expensive undertaking. He almost certainly financed the building of the Marine Residences at a cost of £20,000, 'the most magnificent seaside residences in Australia', for, in the letter from Harvey just quoted he says, 'The Marine Residences are in a fix.' But Bucknall was not only a provider of finance

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for he cooperated with A.Harvey and F.George in laying out the Township of Henley Beach.

I have spoken of the establishment of the Grange Township being a very expensive venture, and the following list of expenses incurred by the Grange Land and Investment Company is proof of the statement:-

Railway	£40,402
Roads	7,000
Marine Res.	20,000
Jetty	3,500
Water Supply	3,000
Hotel	4,500
P.O.Store	200

The Company had expected to be largely reimbursed for this expenditure by the S.A.Government, but there appears to have been some misunderstanding in the matter, for, after lengthy negotiations, they received only a small proportion of what they asked for

I turn now to the attempts to have a North-South Railway constructed, a venture in which Bucknall, Harvey and Ross were all concerned. Its history dates from almost the very beginning of the colony, for H.Mildren, in speaking in Parliament on the Northern Territory Estimates for 1872, said, 'Some ingenious

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persons, as early as 1837, talked about the possibilities of a Trans-Australian Railway', and he went on to say that the idea was taken up later by Judge Boothby, 'but', he continued, 'it became rather a matter of joking at the time.'

Thirty years were to pass before any more serious suggestions of the kind were made, but, in the meantime, the North Australian Land Company was formed, with offices in London and in Adelaide which were opened on March 1, 1864, for the sale of land in the Northern Territory. The land was to be paid for on application, and, as it was not yet surveyed, the purchasers were given five years in which to choose their selections. By 1868 the land was still largely unsurveyed, so the Government granted another five years grace before a choice was made, and, as there was naturally a good deal of dissatisfaction among the purchasers over the delay, they were now allowed to choose twice as much land for the same money. Many of them demanded their money back, with interest and compensation, and the Government was put to great expense in reimbursing the dissatisfied purchasers. This fiasco delayed for a long time the development of the Northern Territory and would, I should imagine, have somewhat deterred the English Capitalists so often referred to in the railway negotiations. An article in the S.A.Register of 2/1/73 accused the Government of 'adopting an outrageously mistaken policy, in accepting payment for land which was not surveyed, and was, in most cases, extremely inaccessible.'

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The history of the early railway bills is very conveniently summarised in an article in the Adelaide Observer of 19/1/78. In 1886 the subject of a North-South Railway was twice mooted in Parliament, and this led to the appointment of a Royal Commission which recommended the construction of a line of 200 to 250 miles in length northward from Port Augusta. This was to be financed by private enterprise and subsidised by a land grant, or a guarantee of interest on money actually expended, or a combination of both these expedients.

In November 1867 the first of the Transcontinental Railway Bills was passed, embodying the recommendations of the Select Committee, but, at first, no one seemed willing to take on the contract. Later, however, two contractors entered the field, H.R.Fuller of South Australia and W.Shrimpton of London. Negotiations were in both cases unsatisfactory, the South Australian contractor withdrew and, although Shrimpton sent his agent, a Mr Wallace to South Australia, his terms were too high to satisfy the Government and the Bill was finally repealed.

In 1869 another Select Committee was appointed which recommended that Capitalists should be given the right to select mineral or other land in payment for constructing a railway for at least 200 miles, to be completed within 5 years.

A Bill on these lines was introduced in September 1870 but was defeated. A fortnight later another Bill was moved by

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Mr Watts. This authorised the survey of the proposed 200 mile line by the Government, and, when completed, the calling of tenders from English and Australian contractors. The Bill was passed and the survey was carried out during the next year, but, unfortunately, it revealed that the project would be very much more expensive than the Government had expected, for 64 bridges would have had to be constructed, and the subject was therefore shelved for the time being. During these early negotiations we have proof of interest shown by overseas capitalists in letters received by the Chief Secretary. J.W.Robertson, Accountant, of Melbourne wrote on 20/7/1870 'I am prepared to lay before you a plan by which the railway can be constructed by a Company formed in London, in consideration of a concession only of land, the railway, when constructed, to be the property of the Government, or of the Company, as agreed upon.' To this the Chief Secretary replied on 9/8/70 'The Government has no intention of carrying out such a scheme.'

In 1871 the discovery of gold in the Northern Territory brought the matter of the railway once more to the fore, and in 1872 the Government authorised a

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survey of the Northern portion of the proposed line, from Port Darwin to Pine Creek, and, in the same year the awakened interest is shown in the formation of the Port Augusta and Port Darwin Railway Company. The Adelaide Register of 23/4/72 contains this paragraph, 'For several weeks past efforts have been made to form a private company in Adelaide for the express purpose of placing upon the English market a scheme for running a railway across the Continent. Mr R.D.Ross informs us that these efforts have been successful.' Parliamentary Paper No.87 of 1872 gives the names of 56 shareholders and of the first Directors, these latter being E.M.Bagot, A Hay, D.Murray, W.H.Charnock and W.W.Hughes. R.D.Ross was Managing Director.

During 1872 and 1873 there was much interest in the whole subject, and it is perhaps not too fantastic to assume that some at least of the negotiations were due to the three mystery men of the time, Bucknall, Harvey and Ross. I quote again from letters received by the Chief Secretary. On 5/5/1872 J.M.Main of Ballarat, wrote, urging the construction of the line, and saying, 'Letters recently received from London are very encouraging.' He wrote again on 6/1/73 'I have received intimations from gentlemen in London, Liverpool and Glasgow who are prepared to provide money up



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to 20 million pounds if necessary.’ The Government seemed to be not very enthusiastic about this offer. On 16/7/1872 F.Chapman of Melbourne wrote on behalf of ‘a Committee of influential gentlemen’ to urge the construction of the railway. He renewed the offer in August of the next year, but the South Australian Government remained unimpressed.

The Trans-Australian Railway Bill of 1872 was the most important of the early Bills. It was introduced by Arthur Blyth, the Chief Secretary (who was accused later of allowing himself to be too easily influenced by outside interests). He advocated offering 200 million acres of land, to be chosen on a chess board pattern along the route of the railway, to encourage contractors to tender for its construction. The Bill was much too vague and appeared to have been hastily and carelessly drawn and there was a great deal of opposition to it, because of the vagueness of the terms, the anonymity of the Capitalists who were reported to be prepared to tender and the alienation of so much land. In Parliament the opposition was led by Mr Bunday, who objected to the giving away of so much land, Mr Carr, who called the scheme ‘a gigantic swindle’, and Mr T.Reynolds, who complained that, though a Company of 56 persons was said to have been formed with

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the object of tendering for the work, no-one knew who they were. The Bill was defeated and the Speaker subsequently ruled that it was a Private Bill. Opposition came not only from Parliament, as is seen from a letter from ‘South Australian’ printed in the Adelaide Register of 18/6/72 which reads ‘It is not at all likely that our legislature would pass an Act, allowing any party of speculators to make a bargain of this kind.’ The writer then went on to quote from the English Spectator, as follows, ‘Australians had much better wait a few years, or even raise the money by loan, than mortgage their entire future in this preposterous style to private individuals.’ There was also much opposition to the scheme in Victoria, due apparently to interstate jealousy, which had been fiercely awakened by the success of the Overland Telegraph Line. The Melbourne Argus, as quoted by the Register of 2/1/73, said, ‘South Australia would get all the benefit at the expense of the rest of Australia and would receive a magnificent public work, costing 10 million, in exchange for 200 million acres of unoccupied, unapproachable, and consequently valueless land.’ The Argus went on to advocate a combined scheme to be carried out by all the Australian Colonies, except Western Australia,

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by which a great trunk line would be constructed, with branch lines to each colony. But the time was not yet ripe for that.

A somewhat similar Bill was introduced, again by Blyth, in 1873, and, although it was considered an improvement on the earlier ones, it also was defeated. The Register of 4/12/73 said of Blyth’s speech, ‘It is an excellent homily upon the benefits of the proposed railway, but it is very little more.’ There was much public opposition to the Bill and many public meetings were held throughout the Colony, where most of the speakers were violently opposed to it. It certainly seems as if the South Australian public was becoming more and more suspicious of the motives of the unknown financiers and their sponsors. It is interesting to find the Register reporting, after the defeat of the Bill, that Cobb & Co. were enquiring the possibility of running coaches between Adelaide and Palmerston (Port Darwin).

By 1876 the Government had decided to finance the construction of the line themselves, and the next Transcontinental Railway Bill, the sixth, authorised the calling of tenders for the first 200 miles of the line, from Port Augusta to Government Gums (near Beltana). The successful tenderers were a South Australian firm, Barry, Brooks & Frazer, the cost being £578,820. (In 1873 the

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Engineer in Chief's estimate had been £383,187, but this was for a horse-drawn train.) The ceremony of turning the first sod was held at Port Augusta on Jan. 18, 1878, and the line was opened on May 17, 1882 at Quorn, with a lavish official lunch and many speeches. In 1883 the Palmerston to Pine Creek Railway Bill was successfully carried through the House of Assembly by J. Langdon Parsons.

The mysterious English Capitalists had, however, not given up hope of achieving their land grant deal, for, on November 12, 1881 (Parliamentary Paper 190) J.G. Pitcher of Adelaide wrote to the Chief Secretary that he 'was prepared to treat for the construction and maintenance of the line on behalf of certain London Capitalists.' The terms he offered were 4% interest on Capital called up during construction, plus 57 million acres of alternate land grants, (these to be sold, half the proceeds going to the Company and half to the S.A. Government). The offer was rejected, but Pitcher was not so easily put off, and, three years later a letter from him, published in the Register of 12/6/84, states that the English Capitalists will not hesitate to lend 7 million pounds and suggests that the Government should borrow this money, get a contract for the whole line and offer 'fair, workable land leases to bona fide occupiers'. He then went on to

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prophesy the result of this policy, namely that 'millions of Asiatics will pour their labour into Australia, until every European will become a master or a superintendent.'

In 1886 the cause of the English Capitalists was again officially revived and the seventh Trans-Australian Railway bill was introduced in the House of Assembly, Bucknall being one of the chief speakers in its favour (13/10/1886). He pointed out that, in the present financial state of the Colony the Government could not possibly afford to provide the money for the construction of the line, and he, therefore recommended having recourse to private enterprise, on a land grant concession scheme. He went on to say that, if good harbours were made at Port Darwin and Port Adelaide, South Australia could become the leading state of Australia. He knew that English Capitalists would be interested in the scheme. There was a good deal of opposition from both parties, on the same grounds as before, the debate dragged on until the end of the session and was finally shelved.

Another Parliamentary Commission in the next year again advised construction by private enterprise on some kind of land grant system, although the Commissioners were not unanimous, and, as public opinion was still on the whole firmly opposed to the plan, the idea of constructing the whole line at once gradually faded into the background, in favour of the piecemeal methods that had so far prevailed.

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That was the end of the attempts to get the line constructed with the help of English capital on a land grant system, and one feels that some of the suspicion openly expressed against the English Capitalists must also have fallen on their South Australian supporters, though I can find no criticism of their motives. One is inevitably led to the conclusion that they were not practical business men.

I have dealt with the Railway bills rather fully because I feel that the whole subject is full of unanswerable questions such as, - Who were the financiers, English and Australian?, Were they a Shipping Company, such as the Ellerman Bucknall Steamship Line, which was an amalgamation of shipping firms based on the ports of London, Liverpool and Glasgow, and, if so, is there any reference to this shipping firm in Main's letter of 6/1/73 which speaks of 'gentlemen in London, Liverpool and Glasgow being prepared to provide money up to 20 million pounds'? Had the Duke of Manchester anything to do with the anonymous financiers? He paid a visit to South Australia in 1884 and was interviewed by the Register on June 14. He

told the reporter that he owned a considerable property in Australia, he had a large interest in a London Syndicate formed to take over extensive pastoral property in the Northern

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Territory, including several important stations, the main one being Glencoe. The nominal capital of the Syndicate was one million pounds. He had, at that time, never visited the Territory and did not seem to intend doing so. He was back in England in May 1885 and, at a meeting of the Royal Colonial Institute, of which he was Chairman, he referred to a visit he had recently paid to the Northern Territory of South Australia, being much impressed by its mining and pastoral prospects. It seems very likely that he would have been interested in the negotiations for a North-South Railway.

And, finally, to what extent were Bucknall, Harvey, Ross and Blyth involved in these attempts to get a railway constructed to unite Adelaide and Port Darwin? There is very little definite information about Bucknall, but Arthur Harvey is less of a mystery. He was also an Englishman and came to South Australia in 1870 at the age of 42 (he was 10 years older than Bucknall), having been sent out, according to his grandson, Mr Vernon Harvey, by a group of English Capitalists to try to arrange for a railway from Adelaide to Port Darwin on a land grant system. But he was also interested in copper mining and in land development and laid out the East Adelaide district and the townships of Grange and Henley. He represented

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West Torrens in the House of Assembly from 1884 to 1887. In 1885 the Pictorial Australian in an article giving details of members of the South Australian Parliament said of Harvey, 'He has been connected with many movements, some of which have been successful. He is best known for his work in connection with East Adelaide and the Grange.' He was a man of great energy and enthusiasm and of a genial and sanguine disposition and had many friends. His grandson was not able to tell me anything of his life before he came to South Australia, but he must have been an experienced accountant, and must also have had a knowledge of surveying. At a time when most townships grew up in an entirely haphazard way, he is entitled, because of his work at East Adelaide and at Grange and Henley, to be called one of our earliest town planners.

Sir Arthur Blyth had come to South Australia while in his teens and can therefore be considered to have been less in touch with England than were the other three. He entered politics in 1855, becoming what one could call, without any derogatory meaning, a career politician. He was in Parliament until 1877, having been three times Premier. In 1877 he was knighted and became Agent General

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in London for South Australia. Blyth seems to have been an efficient and versatile member of the Government, and his rather ill-advised sponsorship of the Trans-Australian Railway Bills of 1872 and 1873 was to some extent proof of his great interest in the progress of the Colony. His speeches on that subject do not give a good impression of his ability, but he was a busy man and one supposes that he had to accept information given to him by others who had persuaded him to sponsor Bills that were unwise and badly drawn. No mention is made of the names of the promoters who sheltered behind him, but, in any case one feels that a little more discretion would have been to his credit. He seems to have later realised the futility of the railway schemes and, of course, by 1877 he had left South Australia.

Sir Robert Dalrymple Ross had a most varied career. He was born in the West Indies where his father was a Planter, was educated in England and took up Army life as his career. He saw service in the Crimea, West Africa, China, New Zealand and Ireland and spent two years, from 1860 to 1862, as Aide de Camp and Private Secretary to Governor Daly, and, when he

resigned from the Army he came back to South Australia to settle there. He had for several years taken a keen

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interest in the Colony and had advocated such measures as the establishment of a Remount Depot at Darwin for the Indian Army, the construction of the Cable to Australia and the Overland Telegraph Line and the formation of a Trans-Australian Railway on a land grant system. One would think he would almost certainly have been in touch with English financiers in connection with all these projects and therefore it is only reasonable to assume that he was one of the instigators of the Railway Bills (perhaps the leading one). He was a most public spirited man, was President of the Royal Agricultural Society of South Australia from 1875 to 1881, was a Member for Gumeracha in the House of Assembly, where he was Speaker from 1881 until his death in 1887. Towards the end of his life he was deservedly knighted for his services to the country of his adoption. In a Government Despatch dated 27/2/85 Governor Sir William Robinson spoke of him in the highest terms as 'a cultured English gentleman of generous sympathies and of irreproachable honour' who had served as Speaker with tact and dignity.

It is unfortunate that this little piece of local history is so largely a record of failures, but, after all, we did get an Outer Harbour, thirty years after Bucknall's abortive plan, and, if we have never made a complete North-South Railway, it is perhaps not only be-

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cause of the expense involved, but was also due to the problem being partially solved in other ways. The introduction of camels in 1866 by Sir Thomas Elder did much to help in the development of North and Central Australia and, by the end of the century, according to George Farwell<sup>4</sup>, they did most of the outback carrying, so that it was usual to see strings of up to 60 camels travelling to and from the big Queensland and Northern Territory cattle and sheep stations. As motor and air transport developed the railway seemed less important. But, even if the leading actors in this story of the Railway Bills were not very successful, they must at least have added some picturesqueness and originality to contemporary life, for they were not nonentities.

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(Addendum to Mabel Hardy, "The Career of Frederick Escourt Bucknall").

It now appears from information supplied through Henry Bucknall & Sons Ltd., London, that the subject of this Paper was born on 6<sup>th</sup> July, 1835, being the second son of William Bucknall. The latter was the eldest son of Henry Bucknall, whose younger brother took over the business of Bucknall & Sons, later incorporated under the above title. No doubt the London financiers referred to by Frederick Escourt Bucknall were his cousins, the owners of the Bucknall line of steamships.

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<sup>4</sup> George Michell Farwell (1911-1976), author and traveller, particularly of outback Australia/

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**101/16 Part 2 Information gathered on the subject of the North South Railway, and a draft of Mabel Hardy's paper. Typescript.**

[page 1]

List of Railway Bills

1862 No 28 This is not included in my paper on Bucknall, I have an impression that it was not a N.S. Railway Bill but may have been connected with such.

1866 Royal Commission appointed – recommended line 200m-250m from Port Augusta – to be financed by private enterprise, subsidised by (a) land grant, or (b) guarantee of interest on money actually expended, or (c) a combination of (a) and (b)

1867 North South Railway Bill, embodying recommendations of above Commission. No progress, no satisfactory contractors, Bill repealed.

1869 Select Committee appointed. Recommended construction by capitalists, to construct 200 miles within 5 years, to select mineral or other land in payment.

1870 Bill introduced embodying above recommendations – defeated Second Bill passed authorising survey by Govt of c200 miles and later calling of tenders for line

1871 Survey completed – revealed much greater expense than anticipated Discovery of gold in N. Territory

1872 S.A Govt authorised survey of line from Port Darwin to Pine Creek Formation of Port Augusta and Port Darwin Railway Co. (See S.A. Register 23/4/72 and H.A.Parl.Paper No 87 of 1872) Trans Australian Railway Bill – contractors to be granted 200 million acres. Much parliamentary and public opposition – Bill defeated.

1873 Second Bill on same principal – great opposition – defeated

1876 Transcontinental Railway Bill authorised Govt to construct line

1878 Line started Jan.18 at Pt Augusta

1882 Line from Pt Augusta to Quorn opened May 17

1883 Palmerston and Pine Creek Railway Bill passed

1886 Trans Australian Railway Bill – land grant scheme – much opposition Bill shelved

1887 Royal Commission appointed – recommended land grant scheme – great public opposition – scheme dropped

[page 2]

[*handwritten note*] 1<sup>st</sup> part of this paper dealt with career of Frederick Estcourt Bucknall & has little about railway projects.

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North South Railway

The history of the various attempts to have a railway constructed from Adelaide to Port Darwin dates from almost the very beginning of the colony, for Mr H. Mildren in speaking on the Northern Territory Estimates for 1872 spoke of 'some ingenious persons who, as early as 1837, talked about the possibilities of a Trans Australian Railway, and he went on to say that the idea was taken up later by Judge Boothby, but, he continued, 'it became rather a matter of joking at the time.'

Thirty years were to pass before any more serious suggestions of the kind were made, but in the meantime the North Australian Land Company was formed, with offices in London and Adelaide which were opened on March 1 1864 for the sale of land in the Northern Territory. The land was to be paid for on application, and, as it was not yet surveyed, the purchasers were given five years in which to choose their selections. By 1868 the land was still largely unsurveyed, so the Govt granted another five years grace before a choice was made, and, as there was naturally a good deal of dissatisfaction among the purchasers over the delay they were now allowed to choose twice as much land for the same money. Many of them demanded their money back, with interest and compensation, and the S.A.Govt was put to great expense in reimbursing the dissatisfied purchasers. This fiasco delayed for a long time the development of the Northern Territory and would, I should imagine, somewhat deter the English Capitalists so often referred to in the Railway negotiations. An article in the Register of 2/1/73 accused the Govt of 'adopting an outrageously mistaken policy in accepting payment for land which was not surveyed, and was in most cases extremely inaccessible.' What really led to the settlement of the Northern Territory was the discovery of gold there from 1871.

The history of the various railway Bills is very conveniently summarized in an article in the Observer of 19/1/78 [pencil note added:] Refer Act No 28 of 1862

In 1866 the subject of a North South Railway was twice mooted in Parliament and this led to the appointment of a Royal Commission which recommended the construction of a line of 200-250 miles north of Port Augusta, to be financed by private enterprise and subsidised by a land grant, or a guarantee of interest on money actually expended, or a combination of both these expedients.

In November \1867/ the first \2<sup>nd</sup>/ of the Transcontinental Railway Bills was passed, embodying the recommendations of the Select Committee, but at first no one seemed willing to take on the contract. Later, however two contractors entered the field, H.R.Fuller of South Australia and W.Shrimpton of London. Negotiations were in both cases unsatisfactory, the South Australian contractor withdrew, an, although Shrimpton sent his agent, a Mr Wallace, to South Australia, ~~but~~ their terms were too high to satisfy the Govt and the Bill was finally repealed

In 1869 another Select Committee was appointed (P.P<sup>5</sup>.119) which recommended that

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recommended that Capitalists should be given the right to select mineral or other land in payment for constructing a railway for at least 200 miles, to be completed within 5 years.

A Bill embodying these suggestions was introduced in Sept 1870 but was defeated. A fortnight later another Bill was moved by Mr Watts This authorised the survey of the proposed 200m line by the Govt and, when completed, the calling of tenders from English and Australian contractors. The Bill was passed and the survey was completed during the next year. Unfortunately it revealed that the venture would be very much more expensive than the Govt

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<sup>5</sup> P.P. stands for Parliamentary Papers.

had expected (e.g.64 bridges) and the whole subject was shelved for the time being. (Letter ~~Robinson~~ Robertson [*handwritten correction*]) B [*red pen*]

The discovery of gold in the Northern Territory brought the matter of the railway once more to the fore and in 1872 Govt authorised a survey of the Northern portion of the proposed line from Darwin to Pine Creek, and in the same year the awakened interest is shown in the formation of the Port Augusta and Port Darwin Railway Company ^ (see details) C [*red pen*]

During 1872 and 1873 there was much interest in the whole subject and it is perhaps not too fantastic to assume that some at least of the negotiations were due to the three mystery men of the time, Bucknall, Harvey and Ross. From P.P. and Register articles I have collected some details of relevant correspondence (letters) D [*red pen*]

The Trans Australian Railway Bill of 1872 was the most important of the early Bills. It was introduced by A.Blyth, the Chief Sec. (who was accused later of being too easily influenced by outside interests) He advocated offering 200 million acres of land, to be chosen on a chess board pattern along the route of the railway to encourage contractors to tender for its construction. The Bill was much too vague and appeared to have been hastily and carelessly drawn and there was a great deal of opposition to it, because of the vagueness of the terms, the anonymity of the Capitalists who were prepared to tender and the alienation of so much land. [*a pencil note in margin* 'Quote Reg re Blyth' has been crossed out with the red pen] The opposition in Parliament was led by Mr Bunday who objected to the alienation of the land, Mr Carr who called the scheme a gigantic swindle and Mr T.Reynolds who complained that though a Company of 56 persons was said to have been formed with the object of tendering for the work, no one knew who they were. [*Handwritten note in margin*: N.B. 56 shareholders – list of Pt A & PD RwyCo.] The Bill was defeated and the Speaker subsequently ruled it was Private Bill. A letter published in the Register of June 18, 1872 under the name 'south Australian' says 'It is not at all likely that our legislature would pass an act allowing any party of speculators to make a bargain of this kind', and he goes on to quote from the London Spectator as follows, 'Australians had much better wait a few years, or even raise the money by loan, than mortgage their entire future in this preposterous style to private individuals.' There was also much opposition to the scheme in Victoria, to judge by a quotation from the Argus given in the Register of 2/1/73, 'South Australia would get all the benefit at the expense of the rest of Australia [*pencil note in the margin*: due to jealousy] and would receive a magnificent public work costing 10 million in

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exchange for 200 million acres of unoccupied, unapproachable and consequently valueless land' The Argus went on to advocate a combined scheme to be carried on/ by all the Australian colonies except W.A., by which a great Trunk Line would be constructed with Branch Lines to each colony. But the time was not ripe for that yet.

[*red pen E in margin*] A somewhat similar Bill was introduced, again by Blyth in 1873 and, although it was considered an improvement on the earlier one, it also was defeated. At this time there was much public opposition and many public meetings were held throughout the Colony, most of the speakers being violently opposed to the Bill, as was also the Register, which, incidentally, after the defeat of the Bill reported that Cobb and Co were enquiring into the possibility of running coaches between Adelaide and Palmerston.

By 1876 the Govt had decided to finance the construction of the line themselves and the next Transcontinental Railway Bill, the sixth, authorized the calling of tenders for the first 200 miles of the line from Pt Augusta to Govt Gums (near Beltana). The successful tenderers were a South Australian firm, Barry, Brooks & Frazer, the cost being £578,820 (In 1873 the Engineer

in Chief's estimate had been £383,187, but this was a horse-drawn train) The ceremony of turning the first sod was held at Port Augusta on Jan.18,1878 and the line was actually opened on May 17,1882 with a lavish official lunch and many speeches at Quorn. In 1883 the Palmerston to Pine Creek Railway Bill was successfully carried through the H. of A. by J. Langdon Parsons. Correspondence Pitcher [*hand written addition*]

[*red pen F in margin, followed by pencil note: Depression Bank failure*]

In 1886 the anonymous promoters and financiers raised their heads again and a seventh Trans Australian Railway bill was introduced in the House of Assembly in October of that year and was hotly debated, Bucknall being one of the chief speakers in its favour, pointing out that the Govt could not possibly afford to provide the money for the construction of the line, in the present state of South Australia, and he therefore supported the Bill which again recommended having recourse to private enterprise on a land grant concession scheme. He went on to say that if good harbours were made at Port Darwin and Port Adelaide South Australia could become the leading state He knew that English Capitalists would be interested in the scheme. (He had only recently returned from a visit to England which is supposed to have had some connection with his harbour scheme, or with the Railway, or both.) The Debate dragged on till the end of the session and was finally shelved.

Another Parliamentary Commission in the next year again recommended construction by private enterprise on some kind of land grant system, although the Commissioners were not unanimous, and, as public opinion was still on the whole opposed to the plan the idea of constructing the whole line at once gradually faded into the background, in favour of the piecemeal methods that had so far prevailed. I have dealt with the Railway Bills rather fully, because I

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[*red pen G in margin*]

feel that the whole of the negotiations are full of unanswerable question. Who were the financiers, English and Australian? Were they a shipping Co (e.g. Ellerman Bucknall) Had the Duke of Manchester anything to do with the anonymous financiers He paid a visit to S.A. in 1884 and was interviewed by the Register on June 14. He told the reporter that he owned a considerable property in Australia, he had a large interest in a London Syndicate formed to take over extensive pastoral property in the Northern Territory, including several important stations, the main one being Glencoe. The nominal capital of the Syndicate was one million pounds. He had at that time never visited the Territory and did not seem to intend doing so. He was back in England in May 1885 and at a meeting of the Royal Colonial Institute, of which he was Chairman, he referred to a visit he had recently paid to the Northern Territory of South Australia, being much impressed by its mining and pastoral prospects. It seems likely that he would have been interested in the negotiations for a North South Railway.

And, finally to what extent were Bucknall, Harvey, Ross and Blyth involved in these attempts to get a railway constructed to unite Adelaide and Port Darwin? I have dealt as fully as I can with Bucknall, and he still remains to me rather a mystery. There is more definite information about Arthur Harvey. He was also an Englishman and came to South Australia in 1870, at the age of 42 (he was 10 years older than Bucknall), having been sent out, according to his grandson, by a group of English Capitalists to try to arrange for a railway to Port Darwin on a land grant system. But he was also interested in copper mining and in land development and laid out the East Adelaide district and the townships of Grange and Henley. He represented West Torrens in the House of Assembly from 1884-7. In 1885 the Pictorial Australian in an article giving details of Members of Parliament said of Arthur Harvey, 'He has been connected with many movements, some of which have been successful. He is best known for his work in connection with East Adelaide and the Grange.' He was a man of great energy and enthusiasm and of a



genial and sanguine disposition who had many friends. His grandson was not able to tell me anything of his life before he came to South Australia, but he must have been an experienced accountant, and must also have had a knowledge of surveying. At a time when most townships grew up in an entirely haphazard way, he is entitled, because of his work at East Adelaide and at Grange and Henley, to be called one of our earliest town planners.

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Sir Arthur Blyth had come to South Australia with his family while in his teens and can therefore be considered to be less in touch with Engald than were the other three. He entered politics in 1855, becoming what one could call, without any derogatory meaning, a career politician. He was in Parliament until 1877, having been three times Premier. In 1877 he was knighted and became Agent General for South Australia in London. Blyth seems to have been an efficient and versatile member of the Government, and his rather ill advised sponsorship of the Trans Australian Railway Bills of 1872 and 1873 was undoubtedly due to his very great interest in the progress of the Colony. His speeches on that subject do not give a good impression of his ability, but he was a very busy man, and one supposes that the information was given to him by others who persuaded him to sponsor Bills that were unwise and badly drawn. He seems to have realised the futility of the Railway case, and, of course, by 1877 he had left South Australia.

Sir Robert Dalrymple Ross had a most varied career. He was born in the East Indies where his father was a Planter, was educated in England and took up Army life as his career. He saw service in the Crimea, West Africa, China, New Zealand and Ireland during which period he spent two years, 1860-1862, in Adelaide as Aide de Camp and Private Secretary to Governor Daly, and, when he resigned from the Army he came back to S.A. to settle there. He had for several years taken a keen interest in the Colony and had advocated such measures as the establishment of a Remount Depot at Darwin for the Indian Army, the construction of the Cable to Australia and the Overland Telegraph Line, and the formation of a Trans-Australian Railway on a land grant system. I should think he would almost certainly have been in touch with English financiers in connection with all these suggested projects and therefore it is only reasonable to assume that he was one of the instigators of the Railway Bills (perhaps the leading one). He was a most public spirited man, was President of the Royal Agricultural Society of S.A. from 1875-81, was a member for Gumeracha in the House of Assembly, where he was Speaker from 1881 until his death in 1887. Towards the end of his life he was deservedly knighted for his services to the country of his adoption. In 1885 Governor Sir William Robinson said of him.

[red pen H in margin]

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14 Conclusion [*handwritten*]

I am sorry that this little bit of local history is largely a record of failures, but, after all, we did get an Outer Harbour, thirty years after Bucknall's plan was suggested, and, if we have never made a North South Railway, it is perhaps not only the expense involved, but because the problem of outback transport was solved in other ways, such as the introduction of camels by Sir Thomas Elder in 1866. By the end of the century according to George Farwell they did most of the outback carrying and it was usual to see strings of up to 60 camels travelling to and from the big Queensland and Northern Territory Stations. Their place was, of course, taken later by motor transport. And even if the leading actors in this mystery story were not very successful they must at least have added some picturesqueness and originality to contemporary life, for they were not nonentities.

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[two torn pieces of paper have been stuck on this page]

1. P.5 [ink] A [red]  
RUSSIAN WAR SCARE 1882  
Govt. Despatch 31/3/82

Caused by visit of Russian Squadron and statement by French impostor (H.de Beaumont) who declared that he knew they had designs on Australia. deB. a criminal in New Caledonia and in Melbourne.

Result stepped up defence measures in Vic and S.A. - volunteers- Forts Largs and Glanville- guns for these and for Glenelg H.M.S. Protector

- 2 NORTH SOUTH RAILWAY CORRESPONDENCE  
P.10 [ink letter, red number]  
1870 July 20 J.W.Robertson, Accountant, Melbourne to Chief Sec.

P.P.138 'I am prepared to lay before you a plan by which the railway can be constructed by a Company formed in London, in consideration of a only of land, the railway when constructed to be the property of the Government or of the Company, as agreed upon' 1873 concession  
[red letter B in margin]  
Reply – Aug.9 'The Government has no intention of carrying out such a scheme.'

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[two pieces of paper have been stuck on this page]

- 1 C [handwritten] Ross Reg.23/4/72  
For several weeks past efforts have been made to form a private company in Adelaide for the express purpose of placing upon the English market a scheme for running a railway across the Continent. Mr R.D.Ross informs us that these efforts have been successful.

Pt Augusta and Pt Darwin Railway co. 1872

Directors- E.M.Bagot, W.H.Charnock, A.Hay,  
W.W. Hughes, A.Murray

Managing Director R.D.Ross

56 shareholders, names do not include Harvey or Bucknall

- 2 1872 May 5 J.M.Main, Ballarat to Chief Sec.  
P.P.32  
1873 Urges construction-letters recently received from London are very encouraging.  
[four times along margin handwritten P.9 is overwritten by red D]  
1873 Jan.6 J.M.Main to Chief Sec.

Has received intimations from gentlemen in London, Liverpool and Glasgow who are prepared to provide money up to 20 mil. if necessary

1872 July 16 E.Chapman, Melbourne to chief Sec.

Writes on behalf of a Committee of influential gentlemen, suggest rwy shall be constructed from Pt Ad. to Pt D.

1873 August Offer renewed under name Chapman & Lloyd

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[three pieces of paper have been stuck on this page]

1 [red p11 has been written over ink p9, red E written below]

BLYTH Reg.4/12/73

Blyth's speech on the Railway Bill 'is an admirable homily upon the benefits of the proposed railway, but it is very little more.'

2 [red p 11 has been written over ink p10, red F written in margin for both 1881 and 1884 notes]

1881 J.G.Pitcher, Adelaide to Chief Sec.

Nov 12 Prepared to treat for construction and maintenance of line to Pt Darwin on behalf of certain London capitalists.

P.P.190 Terms 4 per cent int. on Capital called up during construction (6 years allowed for this) plus 57 million acres of alternate land grants (these to be sold, half money to Company and half to S.A. Govt)

1884 J.G.Pitcher to S.A. Register 12/6/84

English capitalists will not hesitate to lend 7 Million

Suggests –

Borrow money

Let contract for whole line

offer fair workable land leases to bona fide occupiers

[handwritten note] Result-Millions of Asiatics will pour their labour into Australia until every European will become a master or a superintendent

[red G1 has been written over ink p11 ,and then crossed out. red H written over the following note]

R.D.ROSS Govt. Despatch 27/2/85

Was the first to advocate construction of railway from Ad. to Port Darwin- work of national importance which is now being gradually pushed on from either end of this great colony.

As a cultured English gentleman of generous sympathies and of irreproachable honour Mr Ross naturally hold a high place socially in in this community. His fine presence and dignity of manner have brought dignity to the Chair, while an absence of any difficulty between the two Houses is an evidence of the tact and conciliatariness with which he has administered his Office.

W.C.F.Robinson Governor

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**101/16 Part 3 Letters and notes relating to Mabel Hardy's paper.**

[page 1]

Item 1 Letter from Norman Ford [*handwritten*]

40 Hannay St. Largs 31-8-66

Dear Miss Hardie

I have read with considerable interest your account of Frederick Estcourt Bucknall and his activities in this State.

There are one or two inaccuracies which you might like to correct, should you use the matter again. Bucknall called the meeting that resulted in the formation of the South Australian Yacht Club on 5 Novr 1869 at the Club Rooms of the Royal S. A Yacht Squadron there is to be seen

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[page 2]

a photo of the portrait at the Hindmarsh Town Hall, together with five of the six men who attended the meeting, which was held in the Club House Hotel. But alas, his association with the Club was of very short duration. What his offence was, the minutes do not disclose. He was expelled on the motion of a member who lived to see the Club celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. So Bucknell was never the Club's Commodore.

The Yacht "Enchantress" was built for Sir Thomas Elder, to beat Mr. W. H.

[page 3]

afterwards Sir W. H.) Bunday's "Zephyr". The yacht's name embodied that of her builder Chant. I have no record as to when Sir Thomas parted with the "Enchantress" but in 1888, fourteen years after launching, she was owned by A. Cunningham which might suggest that Bucknall had her up to say 1886 when he & his wife left for England.

The Glenelg Yacht Club was established on 21 August 1874 but lasted for some seven or eight years \only/ & throughout its existence F. W. Bucknall was its Secretary. I suggest that it was under this Club's

[page 4]

auspices that "Enchantress" won for F. E. B. the valuable 'prize' – in all probability "The Glenelg Yacht Club Cup", which I think may be in the possession of the Begg family – the late Willie Begg brought it in to our -present rooms in T & G Building for my inspection some years ago.

Finally, speaking \out/ of some 75 years memories of Bucknall's Folly, I have learned from you of the Jetty, and I cannot believe it ever existed.

Thanking you

Your's sincerely

Norman Ford

[page 5]

Item 2. Letter from J. Y. Harvey [*handwritten*]

[*in another hand*] A 11/5/65  
A 11/8/66

8 Marian Crs,  
Blackburn  
May 4<sup>th</sup> 1965

Dear Miss Hardy,

Keith Borrow has given me your name with respect to the matter of one Bucknall who was involved in one of the many north south transcontinental railway proposals.

I am a member of the Australian Railway Historical society and a present I am making a study of the North Australia Railway which runs from Darwin to Birdum.<sup>6</sup>

This railway was originally the Palmerston to Pine Creek Railway of the S. A. Railways which in turn was part of the projected transcontinental railway. As part of the study I

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2

want to know something of the various north-south proposals. I have knowledge of many but I cannot find any reference to Bucknall's proposals in Melbourne.

Consequently I am taking taking the liberty of asking if you can help me. All I require is an outline of the proposals, the \names of the/ promoters, the date of the proposals and their subsequent fate (i.e. to what stage of actual promotion did the proposal reach). Were they just submitted to the Gov's & rejected or were they seriously considered etc?

As the work is of a semi technical nature I do not require much in the way of legislative and proposal matters. I would say about 100 words on Bucknall would be sufficient.

I trust I will not put you to much inconvenience with this request but I

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would appreciate help in matter.

Yours faithfully

[hand written signature]

J. Y. Harvey

[page 8]

Item 3. Photograph of Estcourt House.

Estcourt House before 1898 [*hand written on verso of page 8*]

[page 9]

Item 4 Photograph of Estcourt House

Estcourt House before 1894 [*typed inscription beneath photograph*]

[page 10]

SKETCH PLAN SHOWING THE POSITION OF PROPERTY BELONGING TO WHARF AND LAND COMPANY, PORT ADELAIDE SOUTH

[*printed sketch*]

[page 11] [*typescript*]

[*red G in margin*]

ELLERMAN BUCKNALL STEAMSHIP CO.

Formed by the amalgamation of several lines—

1 John Bibby of Liverpool 1820 inaugurated shipping service between Liverpool and Mediterranean

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<sup>6</sup> The line reached Birdum in 1929.

2 Sir John Ellerman joined Board of F. Leyland & Co. of Liverpool, started service between Liverpool and Boston –1870–bought out Bibby line –called Leyland Line

3 1892 Became Limited Co. under name Ellerman Line, with Ellerman as Chairman

After opening of Suez Canal 1869 these lines traded with India and Australia

5 Bucknall Steamship Line – founded in the 1850s by Henry Bucknall and Sons of London– exporters of cork from Lisbon- traded with South Africa after 1869 amalgamated with Ellerman Line, trading as Ellerman Bucknall Steamship Co.

4 The City Line of Glasgow seems to have been a subsidiary of the Bibby Line– traded with India from 1830 and with Australia from 1873

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[typewritten on Company's letterhead. Handwritten date 22/11/65 at top]

HENRY BUCKNALL & SONS LIMITED  
ESTABLISHED 1750

CAROLYN HOUSE, DINGWALL ROAD  
CROYDON, SURREY

4th October 1965  
Miss M. P. Hardy,  
30 George Street,  
Hawthorn,  
South Australia

Dear Madam,  
re Frederick Estcourt Bucknall

I regret the delay, due to holidays and change of address, in replying to your letter of 7<sup>th</sup> September.

I am unable to trace in the Company's records any reference to the above named and cannot say whether he was connected with the Bucknall family which founded this business. However, I have sent your letter on to a late Director of this Company, Mr. J.A. Simcocks, now with British Cork Mills Ltd., of 176 Blackfriars Road, London, S.E.1., whom I know is in possession of records of the Bucknall family going back for many years and could therefore give a more reliable answer to your letter. I have asked him to reply to you direct.

Yours faithfully,  
For HENRY BUCKNALL & SONS LIMITED  
H. Jones. [handwritten]  
Secretary

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BRITISH CORK MILLS LIMITED 176 Blackfriars Road London SE1  
Cork and Polystyrene Manufacturers Telephone: Waterloo 8261/3 Cables: Micron London SE1  
Directors: J. A. Simcocks S. F. Bird

JAS/DMB  
6<sup>th</sup> October, 1965.

Miss M. P. Hardy.  
30 George Street,  
Hawthorn,  
South Australia.

Dear Madam,

The Secretary of Henry Bucknall & Sons Limited has passed me your letter of the 7<sup>th</sup> September, and a copy of his reply.

Although the bulk of the records of Henry Bucknall & Sons Limited were destroyed in a fire in 1915, I have been able to accumulate a certain amount of information and have a copy of the family tree which is fairly complete. Unfortunately, the records do not give any further details other than the date of birth of the three children of William Bucknall of whom Frederick Estcourt Bucknall, who was born on the 6<sup>th</sup> July, 1835, was the second son.

Frederick Estcourt Bucknall's father, William, was the eldest son of a Henry Bucknall but it was William's younger brother, another Henry, who took over the family business of Bucknall & Sons to form the present company with the name of Henry Bucknall & Sons Limited.

There can be little doubt that when Mr F. E. Bucknall spoke of "London financiers" who might be prepared to invest money in a railway in Australia, he had in mind his cousins who were, by that time, people of very considerable substance indeed with substantial interests in both the cork and shipping trade. It is a matter of history that their steamship line became bankrupt in 1911 and the family lost the greater part of its fortune with the liquidation of the Bucknall steamship line.

Whether Frederick Estcourt Bucknall's father was in the family cork business or was a London merchant on his  
2/ account

All correspondence to be addressed to the Company

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account I am afraid I do not know.

This is all the information I have available but I hope this will be of some small use to you.

Yours faithfully

[*handwritten signature*]

J.A. Simcocks

Director.

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[*handwritten notes*]

N S Rway<sup>7</sup>

H Mildred speaking – Parl re N.T. Est. for 1872

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<sup>7</sup> North South Railway

'Some ingenious persons as early as 1837, talked abt the possibilities of a Trans-Aus Rwy' – –  
– 'but it became rather a matter of joking at the time'

Ad Observer Jan 19 1878 article summarising early Rwy Bills

1866 N. S, Rwy twice mooted – Parl – Royal Comm appt<sup>d</sup> –recommended line 200-  
250m/ North from Pt Aug – to be financed by private enterprise – subsidised by (a)  
a land grant or (b) guarantee of int on money actually expended or (c) a combination of (a) &  
(b)

1867 Nov. 1<sup>st</sup> N.S.Rwy Bill passed embodying recommendation of ~~above~~ ~~commerce~~ \a  
select Committee/ appointed following rec<sup>ms</sup> of Royal Com. No progress made –no  
satisfactory contractors Bill repealed

1869 Another Select Committee recommended Capitalists to select mineral or other land –  
payment for cons. 200m. to be completed within 5 yrs

1870 Sept – Bill (1)– introduced to embody rec<sup>n</sup> of S. C. – defeated  
Bill (2) authorized survey of prop 200m & later calling of tenders for Eng or Aus  
contractors

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1871 Survey carried out, revealed expence to be much greater than anticipated

1871 Disc Gold in NT

1872 Govt authorized survey of Northern portion for Pt D to Pine Creek

Formation of Pt Aug & Pt Darwin Rwy Co

[SA Reg Ap 23,1872 S.A. \H.P./ Parl Paper No 87 of 1872]

1872 Trans Aus Rwy Bill \Pt Aug & Pt D./ – 200 mill acres of land 'on a chess board pattern  
along route' to be granted to contractors Much opposition both in Parl and by the Public  
Bill defeated

1873 Trns Aus Ry bill (2) rather similar same principal of land grants – great opposition  
Bill defeated

1876 Govt decided to cons line themselves Transcontinental Rwy Bbill authorized  
calling of tenders – Contractors Barry Brooks & Frazer

Started Jan 18 1878 at Pt Aug Opened at Quorn May 17 1882

1883 Palm & Pine Ck Rwy Bill passed

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1886 Trans Aus Rwy Bill – land grant scheme – opposition – shelved

1887 Another Royal com. again recommended land grant scheme but grt public opposition  
caused scheme to be dropped

1880 p.p. 233.

1887 . . 34,34A

Rwy Bills

1862 No 28

1867

1870 (1) defeated

(2) Authorized Survey

1872 Trans Aus Rwy Bill defeated

1873 " " defeated

1876 Transcont Rwy Bill

1883 Palm & Pine Cr Rwy Bill

1886 Trans Aus Ry Bill shelved



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- 1860 F E B & brother sent to S A.  
Pt Ad activities
- 1864 Offices opened – Ad & London to sell land at Pt Darwin G N. Aus. Co.
- 1869-70 Suggestions re Outer Harbour
- April
- 1872 Pt Aug & Pt Darwin Rwy Co on land grants P.B. A. Blyth
- 1876 Sel. Com on O.H.
- 1878 \Grange Land Co/ Wharf & Land Co of Pt AdS.  
Letter Reg 20/6/78 re rwy Pt D to Pt Augusta  
Grange & Military Rd Rwy Bill Private.
- 1880 Trans Rwy
- 1881 F E B Mayor of Hindmarsh also M P West Hindmarsh & Harvey
- 1882 Mayor of Hindmarsh
- 1883 Built Estcourt House Mayor of Hindmarsh
- 1884
- 1885 wharf & land Co & Grange [?] Co – liquidation
- 1886 to England more abt Trans R Govt asked for Commission
- 1887 F E B ~~resigned Mayoraty~~ \left Parl/ M.P.  
lost money gave up Est House Trans Rwy
- 1888 Private Bill re O. H.
- 1896 F E B died N. Ad.