

Vol. 32. No. 1.  
February 2004.

### Running Day Reports

#### November 2003

It was certainly a stinking hot day. I was not home in time to see the news and what the temperature climbed to but it must have been 40°C if not close to it. The footplate crews certainly cooked and in fact held up extremely well through the afternoon, and the guards and stationmasters also had a very hard time. There were really only just enough members present to run the day, and as things turned out we were stressed by a couple of troubles.

It was the Malcolm Sargent Cancer Fund day where the proceeds all go to them. Only a couple of helpers turned up. Craig helped John Noller on the gate while Alison helped Vernon with the ticket sales. Craig



David Thomas and the B10 leads John Tulloch and 2904 on the inner main on the November running day.

explained that a couple of volunteers telephoned in sick. I reckon they decided the beach or pool would be a better bet for the afternoon!

We gave 1989 rides which was a good result, and about average for a November. There were a number of party groups which obviously boosted the numbers, There were no derailments at all that I was aware of, which is a good result. All cars are now fitted with ballast weights, and I am sure this helps. Mark Gibbons had also repaired 3 bogies on the Pullman set that morning, so we were in fine running fettle for the day!

Andrew was first in steam before lunch, and ran the Pullman set plus an additional car and guards van, making a train of 40ft length, and the equivalent of 8 5ft cars. This ran on the inner, initially with David Thomas and the B10 up



Scott Murray on V1224 waits in the station.



**Max Gay on Bitza, and Graeme Kirkby on 2401 double head up the outer main grade on the November running day.**

front assisting, the V being driven by Scott Murray. It was good to see Scott again after he had been laid up with a broken foot. Scott and Andrew took turns as guard and driver throughout the day. Eventually John Tulloch turned up with the J and David then assisted John on the inner, leaving the V to handle the big consist alone.

On the outer we had Max Gay with Bitza assisting Graeme Kirkby with 2401. This train ran consistently well all afternoon. The other train on the outer was the Mountain with John Hurst snr. and jnr. blasting up the hill! They came off mid afternoon with injector troubles. John jnr made a hasty trip to the shops and returned with two large bags of ice which were emptied into the tender. This fixed the injector troubles! John snr. was looking pretty hot himself.

Andrew also noted that the V class tender sides were almost too hot to put your hand against!

On the elevated we had two trains only with Mick Murray and Tinkerbelle on 2 cars. Mick ran very well considering the heat. He eventually stopped due to fuel vaporisation. Later he resumed running with the engine cowling open to assist airflow.

The other elevated train was Jim Leishman with the Ps4. John Lyons

teamed up with Jim and took turns driving and acting as guard. We did have a lady lean over on Mick's train with a crunch! Fortunately the safety rail saved the day! - certainly a worthwhile installation. The guards did a sterling job in the heat. Henry, Bernie, Tony, and Jack, as well Greg, Steve and Don on the platforms suffered the heat. Brian, Bill and Barry handled the signal box and train operations. Many thanks for the excellent service and anyone I have forgotten to mention!

There were a number of point troubles, probably exacerbated by the heat, including one micro

switch failure.

The ladies in the kiosk also had a hot time. Diane, Gaye and Joy did very well. It was great to see Laurel again with her friend Bettie.

### **December 2003 Running Day**

The weathermen got it wrong and the high temperatures and showers did not eventuate. It turned out to be an overcast day, with light cloud that held the sun back and maintained mild conditions and the rain didn't eventuate until well after everyone went home.

We gave 1072 rides which is not a December record, but is well up there and ahead of what we usually do. There were plenty of locos in attendance but there were also plenty of problems, two with injectors, one ejector, one lubricator, and one carburettor. In the end most of the problems were solved and everyone had a



**A NSWGR double header 2904 leading 3112 with drivers Tulloch, J and Lee, M rostered for this December shift.**

run of sorts. The hauling capacity was well ahead of the crowds, and it was a lazy, gentle day. At one time early in the afternoon Graeme Kirkby's D50 class was the centre of attention in the ground level loco. With all the experts around I am sure Graeme was happy to not have to pay consultancy fees; would have cost him a fortune!

The inner main was handled by Andrew Allison and Scott Murray with the V and a train of 5 6ft cars, plus an additional 5 ft car and van. Andrew said on one train there were 31 on board. John Hurst made an appearance briefly, but retired with loco problems. (Was it you

John who stocked the freezer with crushed ice for those cantankerous injectors?)

The outer main started with Henry and the R and Max and Bitza as usual. After Max retired Henry doubled with Graham Kirkby and his 50 class. The other train on the outer was the Tulloch J class and Ray's 3112. After 3112 came off, The J kept on going and was the last loco off the track with Greg Croudace seeing what it could do!

The elevated had Mick with Tinkerbelle, (complete with Santa driving). Jim Leishman had a couple of festive teddy bears as crew on the Ps4 (good heavens it must be Christmas). Ken Baker ran Simplex and David Thomas came on late but ran very well with one car, and had a good time.

I think the ladies were busy serving more members with tea than public (at least when I was there).

We had a famous visitor in Thomas Kenneally. I was with Brian at the gate when a number were leaving, and they were very appreciative indeed and we had some good feedback.

### January 2004 Running

Saturday morning at West Ryde started off rather wet. Jim Leishman thought the day would be spoilt but as the weather forecast had predicted the cloud cleared and with a bit of a breeze the humidity was not too bad. There was a reasonable crowd for a January running day. The party groups had quickly taken up the shady spots leaving the sunny places very empty. One group were well decorated with balloons and



**We are not sure if the lable says it all, but we certainly have a good time before we started running on the January day!**

streamers in the trees. Gatekeeper Peter Sayers had a relatively easy time, apart from the initial rush there were no queues for the rest of the afternoon.

On the outer Max, Bitza, and Henry, TGR R class were back in combination after a break of a couple of running days. When Henry retired for



**Everyone likes to take photos of the trains. John Tulloch has stood aside so the photographer has a clear view of the 2904 + 5903 combo. (Is this word permitted for the steam age?) Robert Smithers is on 5903.**



**V1224 crosses 2904 + 5903 near the Signal Box. Oh Oh!! Was this photo taken from a moving train!!**

an early departure, Barry Tulloch with D5902 took over as train engine. When D5902 suffered from a “flame-out” the train was rescued by the second train on the outer track. This was Warwick’s V 1224 , it coupled to the rear of the failed train and with the help of Bitza on the front successfully lifted the two trains to the station. The V class was driven by Scott Murray early in the afternoon and Warwick finished the shift.

Robert Smithers with coal fired D5903 doubled with John Tulloch’s J class on one of the inner trains. When Robert returned to loco John and the J continued and easily covered the light passenger loading. John Hurst with the 4-8-2 mountain ran the second inner train till he retired and Ray Lee with C3803 then ran the train till C3803 suffered safety valve problems. Brian Muston’s Springbok was in loco during the afternoon.

On the elevated Ken Baker made short work of three cars, initially double heading with David Thomas and the B10. Jim Leishman and the Ps4 ran for a time with three cars and a van but as the patronage was rather thin a number of laps were run without any paying passengers. When Ken took Simplex off, David and the B10 with one car kept the elevated running till the end of the afternoon.

Mick tried Tinkerbelle early on, but did not continue once his problems were evident; he packed up early before the passenger hauling got under way. I had planned to run the Z19 but with

about 50 lbs. on the gauge I was showing Mick Murray how well the whistle sounded in its new position only to have the whistle valve stuck open. The little plunger sitting on the ball was dislodged so it was drop the fire, blow the boiler down and after some refreshments help Jim with the Ps4. At least it was not out on the track as has happened to some other members so I was saved that embarrassment.

The public were well behaved and there were no incidents. We finished with a passenger total of 1145 which is about average for a January running day.

A special mention must be made to Di and Bernadette who handled the kiosk and alone and without them we certainly would have been in a tizz!

We sold 5 anniversary books (demand seems to be increasing) and we will soon be out of stock of these!

### **Christmas Party**

The Friday rained all day, and doubts must have been held for Saturday, but as it turned out, the day was grey but the rain stayed away. In fact when the party started the sun came out!

Barry Potter and Roger Kershaw were in attendance early. Roger brought down his O class and the detail is continuing to be added! The boiler is complete and mounted and some fittings as well, including a plastic Westinghouse Pump!



**Roger Kershaw's O Class 4-6-0 seen at the Christmas Party.**

jnr ran the King, and it zoomed around the elevated the wrong way! There was the V class, and GE tram (complete with flat battery), David Lee's Ruston (with fortunately an unflat battery!), Max Gay and Bitza, and David Thomas with the B10 which hauled a small WA goods train wrong way around the elevated! In total 7 locos, not counting Roger's in the clubhouse! At 1600 a selection of the group left to see C3112 pass through at Denistone. The group was led by local David ("Just another 5 minutes") Thomas. It was a bit late and when it arrived

Ray Lee was up during the day with 3801's little end, discussing the finer points of corrective action with Bill.

There was a good selection of pre party activity including the cutting down and disposal of a Grevillia which had split and fallen over. Ken Baker, Barry Millner and Brian Rawlinson worked hard and used up the remainder of the sleepers on the elevated track. This work certainly makes the track look good. Brian Hurst was seen up the ladder painting some gantry signals. Later in the day I watched the green reflect off the shiny paint. Mighty fine!!

There was a good role up of locomotives. The first on site was Henry's R class having a boiler test and ticket renewal. John Hurst

we noted that Barry was yakking on the other side of the loco! It was a fine spectacle with some fine black smoke! (Editor's note: I watched C3112 from the up platform at Denistone station, it was a spectacular sight on the left-hand curve



**SLSLS members ready themselves for the passing of 3112 on Denistone bank. This location is "just another 5 minutes away"!**



**3112 storms Denistone bank. A fine display.**

running into the station. As it started to slog into the grade the smoke poured out and its train was lost in a smoke screen that Jellico would have been proud of at Jutland, before the train should have been out of sight around the corner.

On return the BBQ was lit and fires were also lit in some locos. Trains commenced running in earnest and after a while the snags and meat hit the BBQ and the evening was well and truly on! The most exotic I saw this year was BBQ asparagus (with bacon)! For some reason after tea, the men seemed to congregate, and then the ladies also (why were they all wearing red?). I think that over the day there

were about 60 people at the grounds. There was certainly a lot of footplate swapping going on, and I think a lot of people had a very good time! People started to wend their ways about 8pm although the V was still on the track at 9.30pm!

### **New Years Eve Report**

Happy New Year to all! Our NYE run was attended by one loco and about 12 members (at various times). A very pleasant evening BBQ was had and the overcast conditions towards the end of the day cooled the evening, although things were still a bit humid. The train was of 17 cars which made a good load once the slippery rail head conditions were overcome and a few people had a good time trying out the V with full regulator and notching up with the heavy load coming up the grade. The tram was on hand but with a flat battery it was not much use until it was discovered that the motor regenerated power very well and provided a quite powerful headlight. We enjoyed the video '3112 in 2003' which was very well put together with excellent sound.

We watched the 9pm fireworks and then packed up and everyone was home to see the new year!

### **What's Doing! Clubhouse**

A DVD player has been purchased for the society. It can also display .jpg picture files. So if you have photo CDs that can be showed around, then we now have the facilities! It is amazing how popular this unit has become, not least due to Barry Millner's unending supply of quality DVDs to play on it. The quality over a video player is very marked and a number of members have seen the light and purchased their own units!



**The signal arm display in the clubhouse.**

The restored distant signal arm should be erected by the time you read this. The restoration work by Jim Leishman and Jack Grierson is outstanding and it will be a lovely feature on the clubhouse wall.

### **Loco and Rolling Stock News**

Components have been seen at the grounds for boilers for Warwick Allison's 26 class, Andrew Allison's 21 class and Barry Tulloch's K (55) class. The 26 class boiler and the K class have now been tested and the 21 class won't be far behind. Also tested is a pair of traction engine boilers from Vic Scicluna. David Thomas has shown us some very nicely constructed components for his South Australian 620 class



**One of Vic Scicluna's 1 inch scale traction engine boilers amidst our plastic sleeper store.**

loco. Some of us have also seen email photos of Greg Croudace's Hielen Lassie looking very nice and quite advanced. (Yes there is an advantage for being on line!)

### **Presidents Breakfast and Sick Kids Day 1 May 2004**

This scrumptious annual event is on again! Come down early and bring your loco. The BBQ will be in steam and if past events are anything to go by, all the food will be consumed early, so go to bed early the night before and come on down as dawn breaks. Later we will be hosting our premier charity event where a special day is put on for the kids themselves supported by the Malcolm Sargent Cancer Fund. This event has come to be a really entertaining day with tribal drumming, dancing and face painting being interspersed with train rides. This deserves all our support.

### **Vacuum Connections**

At the February meeting it was decided to expand the use of the small pipe vacuum

connectors between carriages previously put on by John Hurst. These little devices will permit the actual hoses themselves to remain on the carriage (where it is a bit difficult to ensure they are correctly applied), and the line will be separated at these connectors. They consist of a piece of ¼ inch tube about 1½ to 2 inches long with a small brass washer silver soldered in the middle for your fingers to grip. The ‘washer’ can be made by drilling a hole in a piece of brass rod (it could be steel), and parting off. It was suggested that everyone make one, then we would have more than enough! Hopefully this little initiative will prevent the hoses going missing. We shall see!

### Griffiths Bros. Teas.

As I grew up I was always intrigued by the difference in the miles on the Griffiths tea signs and the railway mile posts. Then one day I discovered where Griffiths teas were, just a bit further on from Central Railway Station. The building is still there, as the photo shows. It is situated at the rather complex intersection of Wentworth Avenue, Commonwealth Street and Hunt Street in Surry Hills.

## Works Reports

### Elevated Track

Ken Baker & Co have cut a large amount of treated pine for elevated sleepers. This project makes great strides on a production line basis. They certainly make the track look and ride better, and at the rate they are being installed, we should see the whole track done in record time. The construction of a frame to carry the interpretive signs for the elevated railway has been completed and installed near the ground frame. This displays 6 signs, one describing the

### Electrical Inspections

All our portable electrical equipment has been inspected and tagged. During this process a number of items were disposed of and some others repaired. We found some bodgy gear, so the process was worthwhile in terms of member’s safety. Members are reminded that a portable RCD is available in the top clubhouse, and should be used when using extension leads and electrical equipment in the grounds. Thanks to Scott Murray for providing the fancy test gadgets.

elevated signalling, and the other 5 for locomotives. This means there will be more room to display ground level details on the clubhouse. There are more frames for interpretive signs. If your loco type is not already on one of the signs, then please contact Warwick and these things can be arranged.

Mark Gibbons attacked No.1 stub point, and substantial long overdue adjustments were made. Both bump stops were fitted with strong backs to reduce their tendency to bend. The actual point drive escapement was adjusted to provide equal spring for either side. A frozen sliding rail was



John and the King passing our own half scale Griffiths Teas sign. The loco is older than the driver!



Renowned by their advertising signs that were a notable part of the NSW wayside steam railway, the Griffith’s Teas building still exists near Central Railway.

eased, and the whole given a good oiling.

The head-shunt rails on the ground level loco side of the grounds was removed pending reconstruction. The concrete posts and beams here are riddled with concrete cancer!

### Ground Level Railway

The painters are still at work with more work done on the signals and also on the buffer stops on the ground level loco depot. Its amazing how new sleepers make the place look that much better! On

the ground level, some lifting and realigning was done at the trailing end of 19 points to take out the dip. Later four panels of track were resleepered with plastic sleepers on the outer main track. These were relaid on rebuilt formation and weed mat, and then all new ballast applied. The great advantage of this job was that it was completely in the shade!

No more dangling wire sockets and broken wires! A number of point motors have been adjusted and now seem to be working fine. They were cleaned out and the lids reoiled before replacement in an attempt to reduce condensation internal to the mechanism. A problem point machine on 10 points needed a replacement microswitch. The diode insulation was a bit suspect, and when replaced it was certainly much improved! The other end was adjusted and then attention was given to 44. The armature seemed solid, so it was also dismantled. A good clean ensued and the mechanism was replaced.

**Diary**

28, 29 February	Birthday Run Lake Macquarie Live Steam Locomotive Society
2 March	Directors Meeting
20 March	Running Day
6 April	Members Meeting
9-12 April	AALS Convention Bunbury Western Australia
17 April	Public Running Day
1 May	President's Breakfast and Sick Kids Day for Malcolm Sargent Cancer Fund.
4 May	Directors Meeting
15 May	Public Running Day and next newsletter!

Henry has accumulated some bits, to attach a vacuum switch to the vacuum pump for automatic operation to ensure it does not suck itself inside out. The vacuum pump was relocated to the compressor house. It will be plumbed to both ends of the carriage shed for brakes testing,

The ground level cars with soft seats had the missing upholstery tacks replaced.

Andrew replaced the telephone plugs and sockets (these had been troublesome for some time) and also relocated the telephone mounting brackets on the posts. This allows the phone to be mounted and plugged into the socket which is now secured to the post (in a temporary way).

**Grounds Improvements**

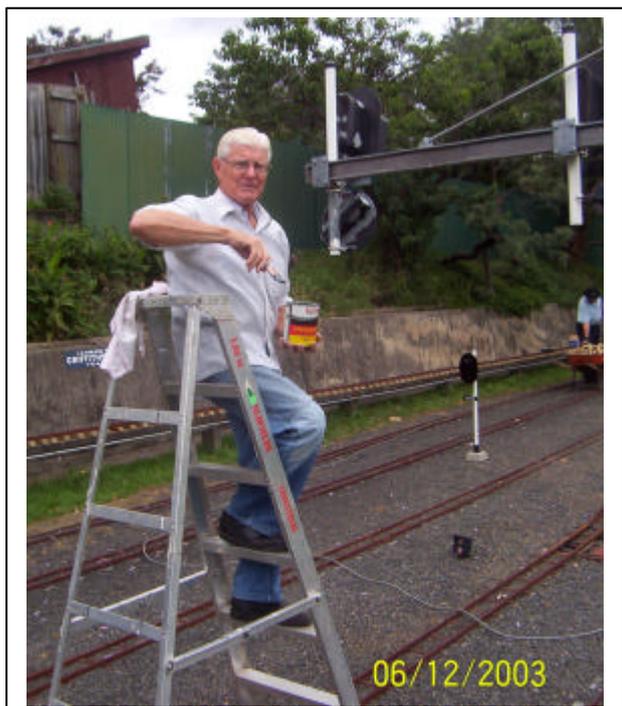
Jack Grierson has finished restoring a 'No Way' sign and this has been installed on a fence panel at the main entrance. It states "Penalty Ten Pounds". David Thomas continues to do some weeding and pottering around, with great results, and we noted that the crepe myrtles in flower look great.

There was a bit of soil moved around to level the grounds at the top end and bring the concrete for the new unloader level with the surrounding ground. No doubt as the soil settles there will be minor adjustments over time. Some has been carted to the bottom end of the grounds and used to correct some subsidence of the ground adjacent to the entry path and the large drain entry at the bottom curve. This has removed the mound at the northern end and the weeds have been mowed and it makes a big improvement to the grounds.

Bernie looks after the weed spraying. It is interesting to see how the weed mat prevents major growth on the track as at this time of the year as the vigorous growth elsewhere is very apparent. The old boiler test table was relocated into the ground level roundhouse area.

**Duty Roster**

The gardening groups didn't seem to be working terribly well with quite a lot of members not assisting where they can and leaving the work to the dedicated few. A few pointers are that there is a lot more physically demanding work to do in the summer months, and this takes it toll of our



**Brian Hurst painting the signals.**

older members. It would be appreciated if those who are able tackle the harder jobs (whipper snipping for example) did so. There are also many easier tasks available (such as making sure the rest rooms are serviced, or just weeding the gardens) that can be accomplished by less able bodies. Hence there is scope for all to assist when it is your turn on the duty roster. In theory, the roster applies all month!

We will be revamping the rosters to make the groups a bit more viable and members assistance in tackling the challenges with gusto would be appreciated by all. Please note your next date!



**Boiler Inspector Baker scrutinising the President's 26 class boiler during testing.**



**Barry and John seem well pleased with the K class boiler under test.**



**Working on the vacuum pump. From lower left, Brian, Mick, Henry and Andrew.**

### **Garden Roster**

- March '04. W.Allison, N.Amy, B.Kilgour, B.Millner, J.Mulholland, M.Murray, S.Murray, V.Scicluna, P.Shiels.  
 April '04. B.Courtenay, K.Baker, J.Grierson, M.Haynes, L.Pascoe, J.Sorensen, N.Sorensen, D.Thomas, P.Taffa, D.Lee.  
 May '04. J.L.Hurst, S.Border, A.Cottrell, J.B.Hurst, J.Leishman, J.Lyons, B.Rawlinson, M.Tyson, M.Yule.  
 June '04. B.Hurst, G.Croudace, T.Eyre, M.Lee, R.Lee, S.Mallitt, R.Smithers, B.Tulloch, J.Tulloch.

### **Gate Roster**

- March: N.Sorensen. April: J.Sorensen May: H.Spencer June: P.Taffa.

### **Editorial.**

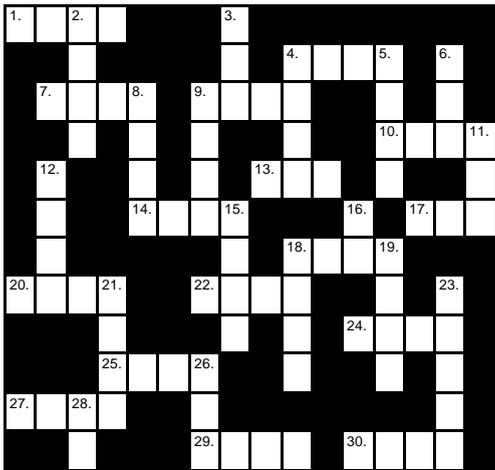
Many thanks for all the complements from the last Newsletter, it was good to have the publication so well received. The December members meeting gave approval for the extra expenditure for the continued inclusion of the colour feature. Members are encouraged to take some photos and submit them for the newsletter. If not digital, (and they would probably best be on CD, with as large an image size as possible) they can still be scanned with quite good results.

Hopefully this issue will be a trial of a two-column layout, which should make it even easier to read. Future ideas include changing to a software package that is more suited to this type of publication than Word. Hopefully this will result in less anxiety in production and an even better presentation. You may have noticed a trend to standardise on the content format with regular sections for running day reports, works reports, a 'What's Doing' section and features, as well as the usual diary, rosters and Editorial. Members contributions are encouraged, especially feature articles. Please!

John Lyons and Warwick Allison

# The SLSLS Crossword.

The BIG clue-all the answers are loco numbers!



## Across:

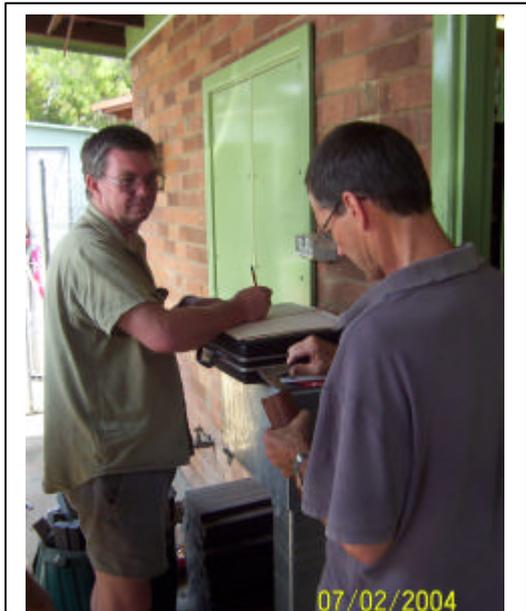
1. Last steam locomotive bought by an Australian government.
4. Crane locomotive preserved in Australia Technology Park, Redfern.
7. Last NSWGR steam locomotive.
9. Locomotive that hauled the first train to Canberra.
10. Harbour shunter recently restored to steam.
13. VR's 4-8-4.
14. Ben Chifley's engine.
17. Greenmount (WAGR).
18. Last 3-cylinder engine to run on the NSWGR.
20. Last 3-cylinder engine to be completed by the NSWGR.
22. Famous English locomotive that was in Australia during 1988.
24. Lead locomotive on the last "Camden tram."
25. The "grey nurse".
27. NSWGR passenger loco with a 60 class headlight.
29. Collided with 3817 at Geurie.
30. Ex-NWGR tank loco owned by SMR

## Down:

2. Last 2-6-0 Baldwin in NSWGR service.
3. Edward Henty.
4. Zig-Zag Pacific.
5. Australia's only Giesel Ejector application.
6. Famous GNR Atlantic .
8. RTM's working steam locomotive.
9. Ex-suburban tank loco owned by Nepean sand and gravel.
11. 3402's original number.
12. NSWGR loco fitted with A.C.F.I. apparatus.
15. Ex-NWGR locomotive sold to Portland Cement Co.
16. Green SMR 10 Class.
15. LVR Mikado.
19. Preserved "Crimson Giant".
21. Last NSWGR pacific.
23. Famous English pacific. (BR number.)
26. 1243's original number.
28. Ex-NWGR number 51's SMR number.

*Answers in the May Newsletter!*

## Answers for the November 2003 SLSLS Railway Crossword.



**Boiler Inspectors Kilgour and Courtenay at work documenting boiler components.**



### 3 DISEASELS

David Lee

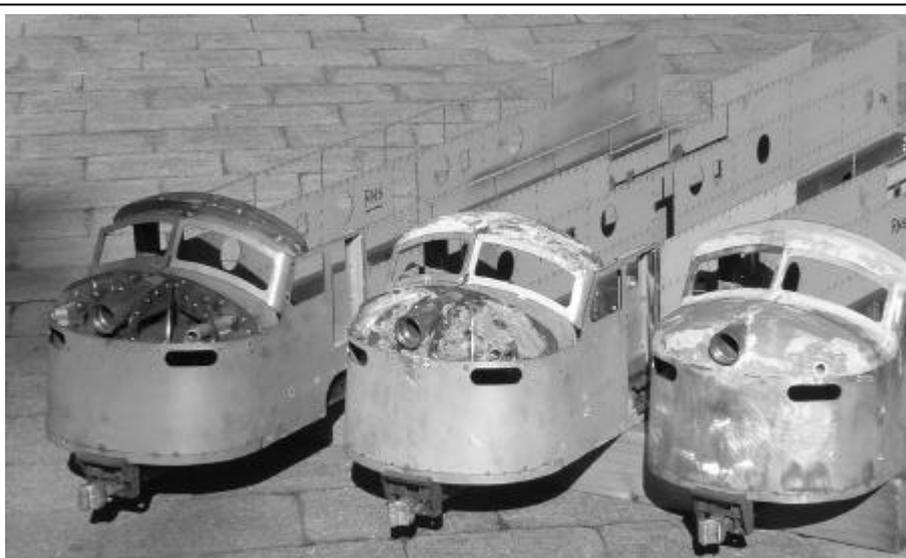
Well it's about a year since deciding to build something for fire ban days. Here are some photos of progress so far. The 42 class is being built by a friend from work. In keeping with my Commonwealth Railways scheme I decided on a pair of GMs.

One is a GM1 or F type, and the other is a GM12 or S type. F stands for 4 traction motors & S is for 6. The little beasts are just shy of 1800mm long and should be near the 200kg mark each.

#### The GM Class

The Commonwealth Railways GM Class diesels spelt the end for the C class steam engine, after only 14 years of service on the Trans-Australian Railway. GM1 was the first mainline diesel-

A variety of small external changes were made at this time, the most noticeable being the change from 3 portholes to 4, and the positioning of the sandbox fillers from the roof down to the sides in line with the windows. The two single horns on the roof were also



2 x GMs and a NSW 42 class at Engadine Loco Works July-03



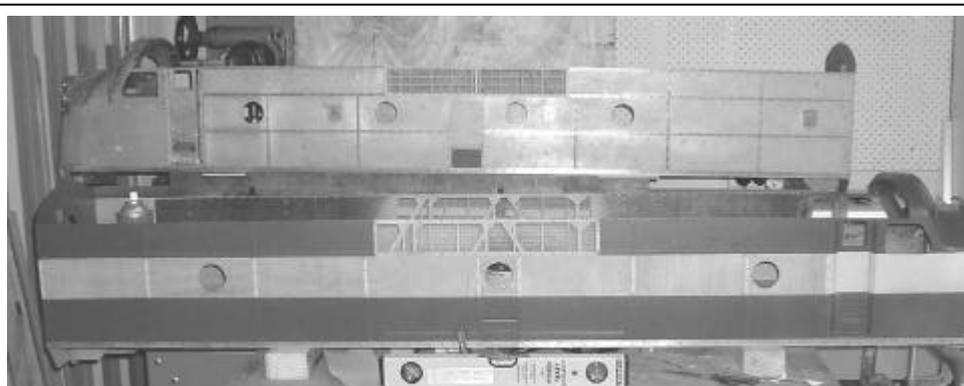
GM 9 painted in primer with a cardboard skirt.

changed to a five chime whistle mounted on the nose. One of the short comings of the Commonwealth Railways design was the absence of MU plugs (multiple unit) on the front. This meant that they could only double head back to back. From 1966 onwards MU plugs were fitted at both ends and dynamic brakes were added primarily to assist with working the Leigh Creek coal trains.

Some of these were named after a variety of important people:

- |       |   |
|-------|---|
| GM 1  | <i>Robert Gordon Menzies</i>                                  |
| GM 3  | <i>Ray E Purves</i> after a former<br>Clyde Managing Director |
| GM 22 | <i>Hubert Opperman</i> -- GNR 22                              |
| GM 36 | <i>C.J.Stomann</i>  |

electric locomotive to be manufactured in Australia, with the order being placed at Clyde Engineering in Granville. First built in 1951 the GMs had only 4 traction motors and GMs 1 thru to 11 were built this way, with a tractive effort of 41,400 lbs starting and 29,600lbs continuous. The end of 1955 brought the newer breed of GM with an additional 2 traction motors which brought the continuous tractive effort to 49 500lbs and changed its wheel arrangement from A1A-A1A to Co-Co.



GM13 in the background is nearing the same stage as GM9 at Maroubra Tram Works in January 2004

## N.S.W. Railways, "19" class. The Prototype. By Graeme Kirkby.

### (All photos from Greame's Collection)

I have been inspired to put pen to paper after reading John Lyons' story of his 5" gauge steam locomotive, No.1915, recently completed. (see Newsletter Vol. 31, No.4). It does my heart good to see this N.S.W.G.R. model loco at S.L.S.L.S. as memories are bought back of these gallant little engines on which I spent as a fireman, many long shifts, mostly shunting in goods yards.

As many of you would know, the N.S.W. railways 19 class 0-6-0 tender engines first entered service in 1877 as the 93 class when the state railway system was starting to extend its tentacles further inland from the coastal strip. At this time the lines were surmounting the steep hills of the central inland areas of NSW and many long steep banks of 1 in 40 existed north, south and west of Sydney. Tamworth was reached in 1878, Wagga Wagga in 1879 and Wellington by 1880. These grades and the longer distances now being traversed called for a tough and reliable locomotive to tackle them. Although other 0-6-0 tender types had preceded the 93 class, Chief Engineer John Whitton and his underlings turned again to England for a larger and improved type. The basic design of these "long boilered" engines went back as far as 1841 and was little changed by 1877.

At first, the new engines were known simply as the 93 Class, taking that number from the class leader. In 1889, during a general reclassification of NSW locomotives, they became the "A" class. They remained so classed until another complete reclassification occurred in August 1924 when they became known as the 19 class. However, railwaymen throughout the system, especially those involved in

outdoor train operations, continued to know them as the "A" class and this continued right up to the end of steam in March 1973, and indeed to the present day. Likewise, the terms, "P" for 32 class, "T" for 50, "S" for 30, "K" for 55 as well as many other examples, continues.

The "93's" were one of the first class of locomotives built en-masse for the NSW railways, finally some 77 being acquired. There was a replacement "A" built for one written off in an 1878 smash plus a couple of ring-ins. The 68, 79 class (later the 12 class) 4-4-0's also of 1877, preceding the "93's" by only a few months, were the first large class numerically. Builders of the "93" class were Beyer-Peacock of Manchester, 59 locomotives, and Henry Vale of Sydney, 18 locomotives.

Some of the early "93's" were allocated to the then isolated northern section of the NSW railway system, no doubt working many of the coal trains of the Newcastle district. The Northern section was finally joined to the main system with the completion of the first Hawkesbury River bridge in May 1889. Around 1894, some "A" class locomotives, (as they were then known) were shipped to the far North Coast to run on the then isolated railway based at Lismore. This system was not joined to the remainder until the opening of the double-deck bridge over the Clarence River at Grafton in May 1932. Although, for some eight years prior to this, train ferries were able to ship rolling stock across the river.

The "A" class were used principally for main line goods work and shunting over almost the entire system from 1877 into the early 1900's, tackling the long 1 in 30 and 40 grades. As the system expanded, the "A's" were joined by other goods type engines. Notably, these were the "little J's" (eleven 2-8-0's from 1879); "B" class (seventy 2-6-0's from 1881); a similar but slightly modified "B" class (twenty five 2-6-0's from 1891); "Big J's" (twenty 2-8-0's from 1891); and "T" class (two hundred and eighty from 1896).

Although still a strong and reliable engine, as these newer types entered service, so the "A" class were relegated down the pecking order of importance. Far too good and handy to scrap, they were kept on.

But in 1902, six "A" class were converted to 2-6-4 tank locomotives to become the "E" class. They were followed in 1909/10 by a further eight. These 14 tank locomotives were grouped with the 19 almost identical "E" class 2-6-



1938 in Eveleigh on the Wall Road, 20 April 1966.



**1925 shunting at Darling Harbour Goods yard lifting a load up the grade past the "Mainline" office. 3 February 1971**

4's of 1891 and 1911, and collectively became the 20 class in 1924.

During the 1920's, a number of "A's" found a niche working some of the newly opened branch lines that had been constructed to a cheaper budget incorporating steep 1 in 25 and 30 grades and 5 chain radius curves. These branches were Gilmore to Batlow, opened December 1923; Tarana to Oberon, opened October 1923; and Glenreagh to Dorrigo, opened in December 1924. Strangely they apparently saw next to no use on the Camden line although their half sisters, the "E" class certainly did!

On these branch lines they fitted in well, the only real change required was the substituting their six-wheel, rigid wheel base tenders (wheel base 11ft) to a bogie tender (bogie wheelbase of 4'6"). The rigid wheelbase of the engines' driving wheels was 11'3". Alterations to the engines in their earliest years included a larger round top boiler which in turn was replaced by a belpaire type. Enclosed cabs for the enginemen, these being of two types, either a round

port-hole type or a cut-away type (same as John's 1915). Right hand drive position was changed over to the left during re-boiling. Air compressors for braking were added in their early years, likewise, wooden brake shoes were replaced by iron. Improved injectors and other small components were changed or fitted.

None were ever super-heated although the "A" class had a healthy

"dry" bark up the chimney. Towards the end of their careers some were fitted with electric lighting, four marker lights and a cab light! A few had been fitted with headlights for working on those steep and unfenced lines mentioned earlier. Many also received pneumatic rear sanding, those so fitted having a sandbox fitted on the footplate just ahead of the cab, while those still with manual sanding had two sandboxes in the cab on the tender footplate for reverse running. Manual sanding through levers still applied for the leading sands.

Over the years the "A" class were fitted with a variety of tenders. As well as the ex Baldwin engine bogie tenders mentioned previously, some retained their original six wheel tenders, albeit with numerous modifications such as raised shovelling plate and / or coal rails. Other six wheel tenders from a variety of obsolete classes, all with various mods were coupled to the "A" class over the years, making each one quite distinctive in appearance.

By 1962 there were still 35 "A" class on the NSWGR

books. Just under half of the class that first entered service 85 years earlier! Seventeen were at Eveleigh depot, seven at Enfield, one at Thirroul, three at Bathurst, four at Broadmeadow and three at Port Waratah. The longest serving "A" class were:-1904, withdrawn 8/1972, 95 years young and was the last "A" class overhauled by the NSWGR at Eveleigh L.E.S. in December 1970. 1903, withdrawn 4/1971 94 years; 1919, withdrawn 6/1971, 93 years, but went on loan to Bunnerong Power Station for a week in November 1971 and now, is being restored to running order at Glenreagh. On the 21<sup>st</sup> June 1971, 1919 was the last steam engine



**1925 at Eveleigh 24 November 1970. Photo: Dennis Mitchell**

on Eveleigh Running Sheds' allotment to depart the depot in steam. It ran light to Enfield for storage with the well known driver Harold Fowler in charge and the author as his mate. 1923, withdrawn 8/1972, 93 years; 1916, withdrawn 11/1970 92 years.

Even in their last years, the "A" class did great work in the shunting yards at Port Waratah, Darling Harbour, Darling Island (Pyrmont) and Alexandria. Capable of buffeting 1,000 tons of goods wagons on the level sections of the yards, on the grades of Darling Harbour they'd battle up hill with around 700 tons, having had next to no run at the grade and getting ever so slow near the top end of the yard. Likewise, when shunting out a load on the down hill, only the air-brakes on the engine, tender and a four wheel "S" truck would be holding that 700 tons. They had very good brakes.

Fitted with Stephenson valve gear with the slide valves mounted vertically between the two 18" by 24" cylinders and a boiler pressure of 150 PSI. (Some were 140lbs in the 1960's) they developed a tractive effort of 19,400 lbs. They would readily move off with only 20 lbs. on the gauge and were great engines for shunting at Eveleigh Running sheds. The small

the top" of the frames, there was just too many rods and eccentrics crowding the space between the frames for comfort. Springs were easily seen and accessible except for the rear driving spring which was under-slung. Many "A's" had no electric lighting and it was the fireman's duty to go around his loco and fill, trim and light the four kerosene lamps and set them to red as evening drew in. The only light in the cab, apart from the fire-light, was a small kero lit lamp mounted on the boiler water gauge glass. At night, your mate on the other side of the cab was just a dark silhouette. A hydrostatic, three bulls-eye lubricator was mounted up high in the cab and fed the steam end of the compressor and the right and left hand steam valves. The oil then blew through with the steam to the cylinders.

During the last years of their operation, the "A's" received just enough maintenance to keep them going in the very rough and tumble of Darling Harbour yard. (Darling Island yard shunting was generally a little more civilised and gentle.) There were regular hit-ups and collisions in that awkward, cramped and busy yard where, especially on the afternoon shift, it was rush, rush, rush. Many an "A" class limped back

to Eveleigh with a buffer or two broken off, tender stoved in, a broken spring or hanger, cast iron sand box smashed or smokebox door stove in. Darling Harbour, being partly a gravitational yard (grade approximately 1 in 70) and partly not, an engine was required to "catch" wagons dropped down the grade. Sometimes these wagons were dropped with too much velocity and a "big bang" would result, sometimes with damage, sometimes with derailment. The poor loco crew were thrown from pillar to post and on a few occasions, right out of the cab!

Some heavy work was carried out by the "A's" especially on the north-eastern or "reclaimed" side of the yard on afternoon shift. Some five hours solid would be spent fetching 30 or 40 wagons at a time, then "hitting them up" to make them run up hill 200 yards or so in rakes of one to perhaps ten wagons. When the last one was kicked off, you fetched another rake and in to it again! It was almost continuous "hitting up" vigorously, so the engine was worked hard and you would go through quite a lot of water and coal. The high buildings that overlooked the yard on the Western side echoed the sound of "A" class engines chuffing hard accompanied by the bang and crash of the wagons. In this busy yard there were normally four "A" class locomotives shunting around the clock with another two at Darling Island. They would stay in the yard for three eight hour shifts until the fresh replacement engine arrived from



1904 at Darling Harbour Goods Yard 27 September 1968.

firebox, 5'9" by 3'6" was not normally fitted with a brick arch, on engines employed in shunting duties such as those at Eveleigh. However, those engines working on main or branch lines were so fitted. With the original unmodified tenders, shovelling for the fireman was off the floor but this was not too bad in the yards as the demands of the work was relatively easy. Their small tenders held 2,000 gallons (some were only 1,800 gallons) and 4½ to 5 tons of coal. When shunting at Darling Harbour, a tank of water would last barely 4 hours while a tender of coal would just last 24 hours. Axle boxes were just plain friction journals. The driving boxes were oiled through the spokes and the tender boxes were accessed by a flap lid on top or a side oil well, depending on the type. Oil for "A" class shunting duties alone, was of the cheaper wagon axle oil. For the fireman, oiling an "A" class was often done "over



1952 on Main Line Shunter afternoon shift at Darling Harbour on 27 October 1965.

this gap. The ashpan was only a small hopper type with a slide for opening at its bottom, and supposed to be securely closed with a locking pin. This was rarely done because at Darling Harbour there were no pits where we could get under the engine. But with the pin out we could open the slide with a bit of dexterity using the “dart” through the spokes of the rear driving wheel. The slide would be slid open and the ash would fall out. Often we kept the slide open during the last eight hour shift and there would be ash and live coals dropping into “the four

the parent depot, Eveleigh. With the smaller tenders, especially those that had the shovelling plate raised some 10”, you would be just about out of coal, so prior to leaving to run light-engine to Eveleigh, you might put two engines side by side, away from the 1500 volt overhead wires and shovel some coal into the depleted tender to get home. When running light to Eveleigh we had to pass through No.2 platform, at Redfern, often this was around 3-30pm. when Redfern station was filling with the homeward crowd. We’d come crashing and banging through the station with our little “A” class puffing out smoke, all the eccentrics, rods and crossheads banging away out of tune and sounding for all the world like a blacksmiths shop in full swing. We felt like dinosaurs from another planet!

The cabs of the “A’s”, although vastly improved in appearance from the original, really provided little more shelter, especially the cut-away cab. The cabs were very narrow and shallow and little protection was given from the elements. When shunting in Alexandria yard with a wet south-easterly blowing, both crew would be saturated from the waist down, especially the driver. He was on the exposed side and was, of course, always leaning out of the narrow cab to see around the wider wagons coupled to the tender so to keep the shunters’ hand-signals in view.

Often towards the end of the second eight hour shift in traffic, the fire would be starting to thicken up. Perhaps the fireman would run the “dart” fireiron through the fire to break it up a bit and knock ash through the straight bars to the ashpan. There were no rocking grates on the “A”. Instead we had a bar-puller, a long iron with a specially shaped narrow hook to plunge through the firebed and bars, twist, engage a bar and PULL! We had to lift one end of a firebar against the weight of the fire (and clinkers), far enough to create a gap, but not too far to lose the bar altogether. The ashes were then punched through

foot”. Made a pretty sight at night, but nothing would catch fire – there was nothing on the ground that would burn at Darling Harbour! If an “A” was derailed in a yard as happened from time to time, provided it was not too serious, it was all hands on deck to get her back on again. Driver, fireman, shunters and anyone else around (providing it wasn’t a boss) would pitch in and gather a sleeper or two, blocks of wood, fishplates etc., and trying this and trying that usually with some uncalled for advice, she’d be got back on again. All implements would be scattered away, gouge marks and scrapes would be obliterated, and after a bit of an examination of track and engine---away we’d we go again. Not like the 73 class diesel-hydraulic locomotives that came in 1970 to replace the “A” class in shunting duties. When they got off the road, they stayed off until the bosses and derailment gang arrived to rerail and inquire as to who was to blame.

I was working on engine 1946 in Alexandria yard one night when we were derailed all engine wheels but curiously not the tender. We had been travelling tender first over a set of facing points that were connected to Erskineville signal-box. The signalman there was wanting to change the points immediately after us passing over them and had unclipped his lever and was just leaning on it gently, waiting for our flange wheels to clear the blade. He would feel this and then pull his lever. But what he didn’t realise was the large gap of some twelve feet that existed between the inner wheels of the tender and the inner wheels of the engine. As soon as the tender wheels cleared the point blade, he pulled his lever and we went clunk, clunk. Clunk into the dirt. We spent some minutes scratching our heads wondering how this could have happened, when out of the darkness appeared the Signalman full of apologies. Not half an hour was spent setting up makeshift ramps and we drove her back on again.

For enginemen on an "A" class, most of their shift was spent standing not sitting in the cab. It was far more convenient to operate the controls when standing, while for the fireman, it was safer to stand and hang on when being buffeted around when wagons were banging into the engine. Sitting down on the little round perch they gave enginemen for a seat, half in and half out of the cab was not so safe.

So endeth my ramblings of these wonderful little engines, the heritage of which go back to the very early days of



5112 on the far left ex shops, 1925, and 1957 at Eveleigh, March 1971. Photo: Dennis Mitchell.



David Thomas and the B10 running wrong road on the elevated track with a short goods train on the occasion of the Christmas party.

railway steam locomotion. It will be great to see and hear 1919 in steam at Glenreagh when its restoration is completed. I just wish we could build you a Darling Harbour goods yard on which to run your 1915, John!



The December running day is over and Scott Murray brings V 1224 back to the depot to stow the cars, drop the fire and blow down.

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Public Running Day is the THIRD Saturday in each month from 1.30pm. Entry is \$2 adults, \$1 children.

Rides are 50c each. To ride on the trains, enclosed footwear must be worn.