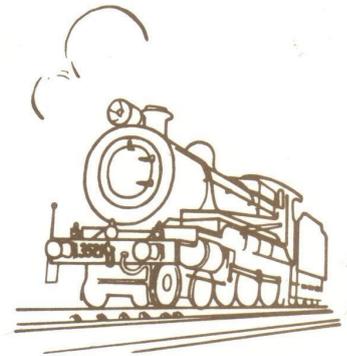


Sydney Live Steam Locomotive Society

Anthony Road, West Ryde, N.S.W.

'Newsletter'

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Ray Lee's latest creation, a magnificent Victorian Railways A2 resplendent in period colours.

November Running Day

Our November running day was very hot and humid. We all appreciated the comfort of our air conditioned club house as did the signal box staff and the ticket seller in their air conditioned places of work. It was also our Redkite Day and we had two of their volunteers, Vicki and John, to help on the gate. They had the big Redkite banner which was displayed on the foot bridge and a smaller free standing sign near the path. Vicki had helped last year so she knew what the rules were. Some of our visitors made extra donations as they were aware of the work undertaken by the Redkite organisation. With the warm day we had to be vigilant with the footwear issue, but our regular visitors were well prepared having their train riding shoes in their carry bags. The shady places were well patronised and we had a steady crowd entering all afternoon. Despite this our ride total was 1929 for the day which was about 150 less than the November average. Setting up was looked after by Barry M, John and Ar-

thur, Mark, Vic and Graeme K.

We had some extra locomotives and drivers for the day. Peter Shiels was down from Toronto with Adam Kinkade from Edgeworth and Adam's 442 Clyde GM locomotive. From the Central West Barry Potter was here with his friends from the Orange society. Barry had his new D5915 for its first run on the SLSLS tracks and likewise Roger Kershaw with his new C35 class locomotive. Greg and Les Bird were along with Z2708, owned by Les. Craig Hill from Yarramundi assisted with some driving during the afternoon. At lunch time we saw some examples of works in progress. David Thomas had the inner firebox, combustion chamber and tube assembly for his SA 620 class boiler. Max has continued to make progress with his 3½" gauge C38 tender, the frame now sits on its two bogies. Barry Potter showed us the tender frame for a Z24 class locomotive, a smart piece of design uses the well tank as part of the frame to provide support between the drag beam and the buffer beam. Craig Hill is one of a group following Barry's direction and I saw his



Martin Yule at the regulator of Mountaineer on the inner main on the November day.

pled in front of the 4-6-0 B1 "Impala" driven by Garry Buttel. They made up for the easy start with some very good loads as the afternoon progressed. The second elevated train started off as a triple header. Z2708 was running in front with Les Bird at the regulator. The second locomotive was the 2-6-0 B10 driven by David Thomas and the train engine was the Rawlinson "Blowfly" 0-4-0 with new owner Brian Kilgour at the regulator. The B10 suffered some injector troubles and was

tender frame, going well a bit behind the leader.

Before running started for the day the Way In sign for the new elevated station was set up and more suitable information was placed on the Destination Indicator. With the extra locomotives some of our more usual runners were given a spell for the day. Lionel's TGR R class and Ray's new VR A2 class were in the ground level loco, while John H's 2-8-0 "Nigel Gresley" graced the elevated depot.

On the elevated track the first passenger train to depart the new station was hauled by a new locomotive combination with three passengers and John H as guard. Jim Mulholland had his 0-6-0 pannier tank cou-



Les Bird and the Z27 class leading Brian Kilgour and "Blowfly" with a lengthy train on the November running day.

forced to retire back to loco leaving the other two locomotives to continue for the rest of the afternoon. This train had six cars behind the locomotives and carried some very full loads during their running time.

On the outer main Adam and the 422 were out early and ran for most of the afternoon. When Adam was finished his train was taken over by John T with the J class 2904 and Arthur and

John Lyons and RedKite Vicki manning the gate on the November charity day.



the heritage 2-8-2. John and Arthur ran this train till the end of the day. The second train on the outer was the Central West set with the Orange locomotives and drivers in charge. Barry Potter driving D5915 was train engine and Roger Kershaw, C3510 was pilot engine. During the afternoon Roger had Greg Bird and Craig Hill assist with the driving.

The inner main was served by two of the larger scale locomotives. Warwick steamed the WAGR V1224 and during the afternoon; the driving was shared with Andrew. The second train was hauled by "Mountaineer" 2-6-2 driven by Barry T and Martin with some assistance late in the afternoon from Peter Dunn. Andrew was driving the V on the last train of the day and failed with a lost pin from the combination lever. Andrew was able to make a repair to get underway using a coupling split pin secured with a piece of nylon hose. There is an advantage in using standard size pins!

December Running Day.

After a week of un-seasonably cool weather we could not have been luckier with how this December running day turned out. The morning was cloudy but not looking like rain and as the afternoon went on the clouds cleared. It started to warm up but the breeze was pleasant and there was no humidity. The early starters getting the grounds ready were John and Arthur Hurst, Barry M, Vic and Mick. Mick only had a couple of hours to spare as he had other commitments. The cooler weather had slowed the growth of our vegetation so it still looked very good after last week's gardening.

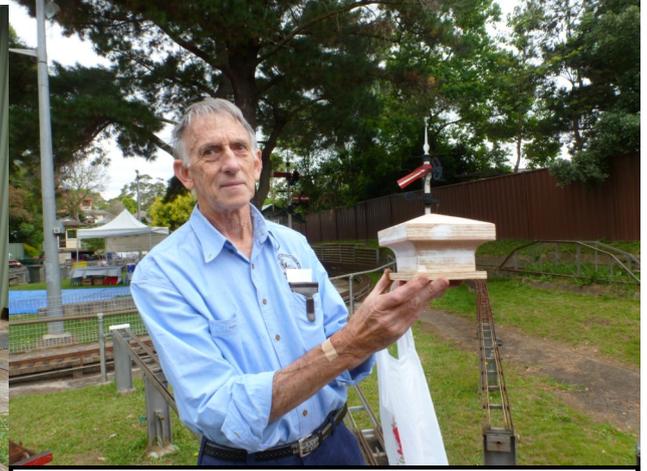
As we have had for the last two years the local child care group held their Christmas Party at our grounds. They set up their outfit at the top end of the grounds opposite the new elevated track station. That meant that we were well populated in that area while the rest of the grounds had plenty of free space.

We ran two trains on the elevated. John H ran his "Nigel Grealey" 2-8-0 with four cars and guards van while I ran 0-6-0 Z1915 with one car. We had full trains all afternoon but by 4.35pm. most started heading off and we were able to stow the carriages and retire to loco. John had the 2-8-0 working very well for most of the afternoon. There were a couple of times progress was slowed by low steam pressure, other than that a good run. I found that the 19 was not



Above & below: Jim Mulholland and Garry Buttell head out of the station on the November running day. The first time these locomotives have run together in revenue service. The train was impressive!





John Lyons and Barry Millner show off the new station name sign and post tops before December running starts.

steaming as well as usual and on investigation at the end of the run found that the blower was only working to one third of its capacity. I could build up sufficient pressure climbing the grade and only on one occasion I was forced to walk beside the locomotive till I had enough steam to include myself in the load. This run was my first using the new station, it was so much easier to get any load moving.

On the ground level the big locomotives were running on the inner main. Ross was driving 0-6-2 "Toneya" on one train while the second was "Mountaineer" 2-6-2 with Barry T and Martin sharing the driving. On the outer Warwick ran the WAGR V1224 on the Central West set. The V was running with new tender bearings and rolled much better. The second outer train was double headed by Lionel and the TGR R class running as train engine and Arthur with the heritage Mikado in the lead. They ran well till late in the afternoon when the 2-8-2 took a left turn at the diamond crossing, fortunately the R class stayed on the rails. Arthur was not hurt and the Mikado only suffered minor damage. The train continued with

the R class till the end of the day. With the bulk of the days visitors at the child care Christmas gathering at the top of the grounds the ground level trains were a bit lightly loaded all day. Ray steamed C3112 but did not venture out on to the track and John T turned up late with the J class and did not get to run.

The signal box was operated by Barry M, Mark and Steve. During the afternoon there were a number of members on guard and station master duty. These were Ray, Martin, Bernie, Paul, David T, Peter W, Ian, Lionel, Max, Wayne and Graeme K. Brian H sold the tickets, we gave a total of 1864 rides for the afternoon. Thanks to Elizabeth, Diane, Joy, Lee and Margo who ran the canteen and to Emily who actually had to treat a minor burn today.

January Running Day.

Our mid-summer running day was a bit of a let-down. We were forecast rain and sure enough we got it. At the

grounds it was steady all morning but in some other locations there were very heavy downpours with thunder. Despite the rain setting up was carried out by Vic, Barry M Arthur H and John H. After lunch it was still spitting. The decision was made to open the gates and not charge admission as there would only be a limited service. The grassed areas were very sodden and would not have been very comfortable for picnics.

We ran a limited service with one train on each track for the afternoon. Warwick steamed WAGR V1224 and ran on the inner main. Andrew was the driver for the early part of the afternoon and Warwick finished the run returning to loco about 5.00pm. Ross Bishop ran the Fowler 0-6-2 "Toneya" on the outer main sharing the track early on with Ray Lee and his fresh from paint shops A2 class. Seeing the A2 was easily the brightest part of the day. When the weather looked as though it

Graeme Kirkby was an outer main guard on the December running day!



would clear a little the locomotive was rolled down to the ground level turntable to pose for those of us that had our cameras. With the soft light conditions many of us managed some wonderful images. Ray lit a fire, raised steam and ventured onto the outer main with a set of cars. After a couple of laps Ray checked the lubricator to find the oil level had not decreased and returned to loco. Ray said it was an ongoing problem. The pump is giving plenty of pressure but the oil is not getting to the cylinders, I am sure Ray



Right: John Hurst and Nigel Gresley on the Santa run with the local playgroup on the December day.

Below: Our ladies show off their Christmas presents! From left—Dianne, Liz, Margo, Emily and Lee.



The signal box was attended to by Steve Border, Mick, Mark and Barry M. Mark set up one of the surveillance cameras on the aluminium ladder between the inner and outer mains near the fettler's shed towards the bottom of the grade. A number of members took turns as guards during the afternoon. These included Warwick, Andrew, Zac, Arthur, Graeme K and Ian Tomlinson. Diane and Margo kept the canteen going for us

**Below:
More December action in the ground level station. David Thomas is collecting tickets on V1224s train, while it is passed by Arthur and the Heritage 2-8-2 and Lionel and the R class, while Barry Tulloch and Mountaineer pass on the inner main.**

will have the trouble remedied very soon. Garry Buttell arrived a bit late but was very keen to run 4-6-0 B1 "Impala" as he had worked on the axle pump and wanted to give it a test. He had the loco in steam in no time and coupled up to two cars and a van and set out to enjoy a run on the elevated all to himself. John H acted as guard and station master. Even with our small crowd Garry had a good load all afternoon and was happy with the run. At about 4.30pm. the queue had vanished so Garry made a very quick run to return the cars to the carriage shed. Just before returning the cars it was discovered that a lubricator hand wheel was missing from the locomotive. There was a search around the track and while a couple of us missed it, eagle eye John H located it in some cut grass close to the bottom of the grade.





**Above: A big smile on Ray as he waits to set back into the platform.
 Below: Ray Lee and his magnificent VR A2 class locomotive passes Ross Bishop and his Fowler waiting in the outer station loop on the almost washed out February running day.**

and Emily had no one to patch up which was good. We gave 696 rides for the afternoon, not too bad considering the way the day turned out. It was very pleasing to have had so many members on hand despite the weather on the day.

Members Christmas Run and BBQ.

As this report is being prepared on a cold, wet Sunday afternoon it is very hard to imagine that only twenty four days earlier we had enjoyed such a lovely day for our Christmas BBQ. We were so lucky. Arthur had cut the grass on Friday, this was a big effort as there was a gear box problem with his ride on mower and Arthur did much of the cutting with one of the push mowers, thank

you Arthur. There was plenty of activity throughout the day. Warwick completed the lighting in the new elevated station by earthing the circuit. I fitted the finials I had made on the gables at each end of the station roof, Mick suggested that we need another two for the ticket office. Later in the day another CCTV camera, solar powered, was located on the signal gantry near the inner main station. Mick and Mark were working on this installation. Simon has extended the timber edging for the ticket office garden. Andrew had three boilers checked for his O gauge tram engine collection. There was an intention to steam "The Old Girl" but it was found that its boiler ticket had expired. As sufficient plugs could not be found the testing had to be put off for another time. Lionel had his 2-8-0 for testing and minor adjustments were made to



Brian M's 0-6-0 boiler record keeping. Ray ran C3112 on the elevated as did Nick with his "Maisie" coupled to one of the riding cars to try some passenger hauling. Various drivers had a turn with "Maisie" and Nick's Mum Kim arrived just in time for a ride around the elevated before tea. Zac had the Ruston shunter running on the elevated. I ran Z1915 with one passenger car with my younger grand children having a ride. This was the first ride for grandson Boyd. Lionel ran the TGR R class on the outer main and Arthur steamed the heritage Mikado also running on the outer main. John H was sighted having a drive of the 2-8-2 during the afternoon. David Lee gave his Commonwealth GM a go on the ground level.

During the afternoon some members left while a lot of others and friends of SLSLS arrived to enjoy the good company and the BBQ. It was good to see Bill Richards at the grounds for a couple of hours during the afternoon. After tea John H showed the new survey of the grounds on the big TV. It had been a great day.



Brian Hurst and Peter Wagner seem happy in the service of selling our tickets!

New Year's Eve Run and BBQ.

Early in the day with cloudy sky and a threat of rain some work was underway. Brian H continued the repainting of the seat timbers and Warwick prepared a couple of track panels for upgrading. These were on the inner main near the southern corner of the club house. Brian M bought along his Sydney Steam Tram and ran it double heading with his Planet. The steam tram is nearing completion and has the same mechanism as the Maxtrak Planet. Graeme Kirkby was at the grounds early and unloaded his goods train set, these were marshalled in the siding off the outer main south of the station. Graeme steamed his D50 class mid afternoon coupled to the wagons and ran on the outer main. Simon was set to have a run with the Simplex but injector trouble put paid to that plan. I ran the Z19 with my set of goods wagons. Since the December running day I had cleaned the blower so I expected a good run but poor steaming suggested that the seal around the blast pipe and steam pipe was leaking and not giving a good vacuum. David did some weeding near the public entrance and later helped with the track work. Running on the outer main was suspended while Graeme and Brian M gave assistance with the track work. David had a run on the goods train while Graeme continued with track work. Later in the afternoon the goods train crossed to the inner main and ran wrong road testing the track up grade. Warwick investigated a shunt signal with no lights and discovered it was full of ants and dirt. Dinner was at about 6.30pm. with about fifteen enjoying the BBQ. they were then entertained watching the Edinburgh Military Tattoo and the 9.00pm fireworks. As everyone was leaving Warwick switched on the lights for the new elevated station, it did look very good.

Members News.

On the last Saturday in November we had a special morning tea to say farewell to Brian Rawlinson. Brian and his wife, Janice, are re-locating to the UK, the birthplace of steam and the cradle of the Industrial Revolution. They will be living in Kent about forty kilometres east of London. Warwick farewelled Brian on behalf of the Society and some other members spoke as well, we were able to write a message on the two sheets Warwick had prepared. Brian has been a member since 1978 and has made a considerable contribution in his own quiet way to many of the projects that have built the society in that time. He put his mathematical skills to good use calculating the off sets for the milling of the curved track welding jig. Brian's "Blowfly" is now in the possession of Brian Kilgour. Brian and Janice arrived in the UK in early December and are now coming to terms with the

CCTV Camera testing with passing trains!





Top: Christmas party table scenes!
Middle Left: Andrew had one of his O gauge boilers tested.
Middle Right: The owners of Maisie and the Ruston have swapped locos!
Lower Left: Brian Muston and his R1 tank raising steam.
Lower Right: Boiler inspectors in conference!



Christmas Party Scenes





New Year's Eve Scenes



Top Left: In the morning, the opportunity was taken to resleeper some track.

Top Right: Brian Muston tests out his electric Sydney Steam Tram.

Above: Party time table scenes!

Right: Graeme Kirkby's D5035 simmers gently in the inner main station loop running "wrong road" on the NYE member's run





Members gather with our farewell to Brian Rawlinson. Below: Brian responds!

cold short days with weak sunshine. We have another interested young fellow, Travis, coming along to join us, when you meet him make him welcome.

Early in February we had a visitor, Frank Simpson, from Wales. He was keen to look at our set up. The club he belongs to is relocating for the third time. Could you imagine having to do that even once. While he has had a rather wet stay in Sydney the weather was rain free for his time at our grounds.

John H has looked after the disposal of the smaller tools and left over materials from Henry's estate. John conducted an on line tender

auction and van door sale. This was a big effort and John should be thanked for the time and effort he put into this exercise.

Works Report.

The week before the November running day, some track work was carried out on the inner main. Warwick lifted three panels of track at the back of the clubhouse and Barry T. replaced the old sleepers with plastic ones. The weed mat was removed to expose where some filling was required. There was discovered as well some tree roots growing above some clay, under the weed mat. Warwick worked on the foundation and then the track was replaced with Neal and Steve Border assisting. Arthur delivered the ballast. Throughout January the inner main has had more work carried out. Plastic sleepers have replaced the old timber ones and the foundation has been improved. Tree roots have been removed from under the weed mat and some depressions filled. The first Saturday in February saw work shift to the vicinity of points 23 and 19. Ray Lee cut the sleepers for the points and Travis helped fastening the sleepers to the track. There had not been any weed mat under this track and points till now. An ant nest was found under one of the sets of points, this was scooped out with a shovel, set aside and the Indian mynah birds had a feast. A rather healthy tree root was removed, with no tree in the immediate vicinity it was a puzzle where it was from. The formation was



Duty Roster.

- March** B.Courtenay, G.Croudace, S.Larkin, N.Lyons, L.Pascoe, S.Sorensen, D.Lee, D.Thomas, S.Miller.
- April.** J.Hurst, J.Leishman, J.Lyons,D.Mulholland, J.Mulholland, M.Tyson, M.Yule, R.Bishop.
- May.** B.Hurst, A.Hurst, T.Eyre, M.Lee, R.Lee, P.Wagner, P.Taffa, B.Tulloch, J.Tulloch, N.Bates.
- June.** M.Murray, A.Allison, M.Gibbons, W.Fletcher, G.Kirkby, B.Muston, J.Noller, P.Sayer, I.Tomlinson.

Gate Roster.

- March.** Mick Murray. **April.** Scott Murray. **May.** John Noller.

Election of our 2012 Board – Request for nominations

As required by our Rules, all current members of the board retire at the Annual General Meeting held in June each year. Nominations are required for all board positions for the incoming year.

Nominations need to be in writing, and provided well in advance so that all members can be advised of who is standing for election to the board.

Nomination forms are available in the clubhouse, and will be provided to all members for whom we have an email address. A form can be provided by mail on request to any Board member.

The nomination form gives an overview of the roles and responsibilities of each position. Each nomination must be signed by two members, and the person being nominated. The completed form **must** be provided to Simon Collier by **Saturday, 5th May**.

If you wish to stand, or intend to nominate another member to stand, you must follow this process. At the meeting itself, nominations from the floor will **not** be accepted, unless there are insufficient formal nominations. A vote will only be taken where there are more nominations than required for a position. There are a total of seven board positions: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and three Directors.

Details of all nominees will be provided to all members with the formal Notice of Annual General Meeting, sent a few weeks before the meeting itself. Should there be multiple nominations for any position, a Proxy Form will also be included, enabling you to vote for your Board even if you can not physically attend the meeting.

Of the current board, the following have or intend to nominate for next year:

- Warwick Allison President
- Mick Murray Vice President
- Simon Collier Secretary
- John Hurst Treasurer
- Mark Gibbons Director
- David Thomas Director
- Barry Tulloch Director

treated with ant sand to attempt to keep the insects at bay. While setting the points and signals on the elevated track John L discovered that #10 signal was not responding. Tracing the cable it was found to be rusted through in one place. On the day John cut a length of cable to replace the rusted length. The following Saturday, John with Brian M's help this was clamped into place. This got the signals working again but it was discovered that the chain was in desperate need of attention. Brian purchased some chain, luckily twice the length needed as we found the chain in the run to signal #6 also needed replacement. There is a piece of the replaced chain in the

clubhouse, you can see the extent of the corrosion.

The sign board for the elevated station has been completed but for the brackets to support the board when the posts are in place. John L is making the post caps, they will resemble the type used on the NSWGR cast concrete station sign posts. Brian M has had the mulcher cutters repaired so this piece of equipment will work efficiently once again.

Peter Wagner has put in a big effort to catalogue our growing library collection. This has been a big task and is nearing completion. Mick and Mark have been working on the CCTV set up to give the signal box staff a

Editorial.

At our last meeting a long discussion was held to try to decide how to best remove the climbing hazard on the ground level station foot bridge. We know that the bridge has given many years of good service but in the present climate of care it is not good enough to tell children, "don't climb on that you might fall off or slip off" it is our responsibility to remove the risk completely. Whatever we choose to do it will need ongoing maintenance but this is something we will just have to live with if we wish to invite the general public into our facility. We have to accept the fact that many in the community expect that anything that happens is someone's fault not theirs.

On a brighter note we can look forward to another year of progress at our grounds and sharing our model engineering experiences with our members. It is always inspiring to see new projects taking shape and progressing to conclusion.

John Lyons.



Above: David Thomas attends to boiler inspector duties for Stuart Larkin with the retest of Ron Larkin's old Atlantic before it went to a new home in Queensland. Right: Martin Yule mounts the elevated station Guards Indicator, donated by Graham Tyndale.

good view of what is happening in the parts of the ground obscured by the trees. This is slowly progressing and the results so far have been very good.

Gardening at this time of the year is very busy with all the growth promoted by the rain and warmer weather. David T has spent much time tending to the entrance area and Simon is keeping the ticket office garden in check. The January garden roster was a bit light on but other members lent a hand. Over a few weeks Ray, Jim L and John L have cleaned the GL loco depot, it is amazing how quickly the leaves and bark accumulate. Andrew spent time giving the area under the elevated point rods and signal wire a very good clean. It has looked good now for a few weeks. John L has cleared the elevated station roof guttering on a number of occasions. He has fitted some fine mesh over the out falls to keep some of the finer rubbish out of the pipes.

John H has the tank that will eventually grace the elevated station complex. Planning is in hand for the tank sides and the gabled iron roof of the type that covered many water tanks in full size practice.

Locomotive and rolling stock news

Garry Buttel had a successful hydro and steam test the Saturday before the November running day. On the January running day the B1 had a very good run with two cars on the elevated after some work on the water pump. Martin has shown us the tender side plates for a C38 class he is building. The rivet holes have been CNC punched. David Thomas is making very good progress with the boiler for his SA 620 class 4-6-2. He is working on the inner firebox and other internals and should soon be putting the lot together with the barrel. Max continues to show off his machining skills with the dummy springing gear for the C38 class tender. Andrew continues to produce O gauge tram locomotives and boilers to suit, he now has quite a collection. He has completed some sus-

pension work on the 5" gauge 0-4-2 chassis he has and gave this a run behind Simon's Simplex recently. We have seen David T testing the boiler of the SA S class 4-4-0 locomotive.

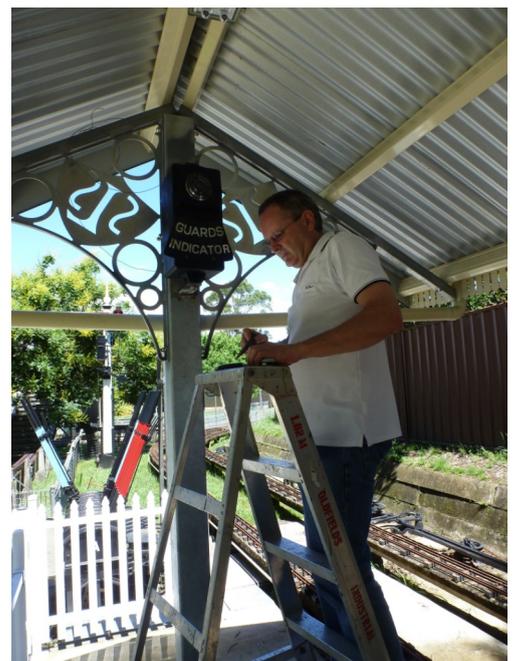
The new elevated station roof proved itself useful when on a slightly wet Saturday morning some shelter was needed to complete a hydro test and a steam test for Stuart Larkin on the Atlantic built by Ron Larkin. The locomotive had last steamed in 1999 and was tested successfully. Stuart took the loco for a few laps on the elevated, it is off to a new home in Queensland.

Peter Sayer has been testing his new battery powered locomotive. It now has twin power bogies and we may see more of it soon. Brian M is building a steam tram loco, battery powered using a Maxitrak mechanism. The tram motor will be ready for painting soon and has been seen running with Brian's Maxitrak Planet.

The high light since the last Newsletter is of

course Ray Lee's freshly painted VR A2 class. The locomotive looks

magnificent. Steve Border has shown us the plans and castings for a VR K class he is having built. This is a 2-8-0 wheel arrangement and a very attractive locomotive. We will look forward to seeing it progress.



Diary.

3 March	Members Day
6 March	Directors Meeting.
17 March	Public Running Day
3 April	Members Meeting
6-9 April	AALS Convention, Penfield, South Australia
21 April	Public Running Day
1 May	Directors Meeting
5 May	Visit to Brian & Sue Carters, Marulan
19 May	Public Running Day
2 June	Presidents Breakfast & Members Day
30 June	Bankstown LS Interclub Visit



Neal Bates finds a useful use for elevated tracks in accessing the underside of his traction engine.

FEATURE

Victorian Goldfields Driver Experience

Steven Border

29 November 2011

The Victorian Goldfields Railway preserves an original 1884 branch line between Castlemaine and Maldon in Victoria, 38km south west of Bendigo. The broad gauge (5'3") line traverses lightly timbered box-iron bark forest that saw some of the richest mining in Australia after discovery of gold in the district in 1853. Maldon railway station was originally opened on 16 June 1884, operating passenger services until 1941 and goods traffic until 1976. Maldon was reopened by heritage railway volunteers in 1986 with the line restored to Muckleford in 1996 and Castlemaine in 2005 after Pacific National relinquished movements over the diverging Maryborough line.

The Steam Driver Experience is a popular package operated by the Victorian Goldfields Railway to drive a real steam locomotive from Maldon to Castlemaine and return under the supervision of an instructor driver. On 29 November 2011 I signed on at Maldon locomotive depot at 0800 hours to meet the crew and our assigned loco K190, on loan from Steamrail Victoria. The VR K class 2-8-0 consolidations were reputed to have worked almost everywhere and almost everything, having low axle loading suitable for light lines and a compound Westinghouse air compressor enabling the train pipe to recharge quickly on difficult grades.

My first task was to get a fire going. The fireman passed me a pile of cotton waste soaked in kerosene which I shovelled blazing into the centre of the firebox. It then took nine wheelbarrow loads of firewood salvaged from discarded fence palings and condemned railway carriage sidings to get the fire going before coal could be layered in a pattern of nine heaps and raked over.

The instructor driver, Athol Graham, inspected the loco and turned on the blower at just a couple of pounds pressure. Our next task was to clean the spark arrestors and oil every lubrication point we could find. There were two types of oil, the round oil can, or 'kettle', for cylinders, and a square one for everything else. Each lubrication point had an L-shaped steel pin or cotton wick sitting in a hole, which the motion of the engine caused to bounce up and down to control the flow of oil. We ran short of oil, and borrowed some from the lubricators of steam locomotive K160 sitting operational in the next turntable road while the fitter sourced a new barrel.

The fitter was an extraordinary character, having a unique name for every part the engine from an astonishing array of expletives. With one of Australia's rarest jobs – a full-time steam locomotive mechanic responsible for five preserved engines – the fitter spent considerable time inspecting our failed blow-down pipe while describing its ancestry until there was not a single married mother in the locomotive's entire pedigree.

The next task was to climb down into the inspection pit below the steaming locomotive to bleed condensation from the air tanks and clear debris from the engine brakes and suspension. Scalded, grimy and covered in grease I returned to the cab to drain and refill the Westinghouse lubricator. This is a device fitted high up to the right of the driver's seat, having the primary purpose of leaking hot steam and oil on the driver, with the secondary purpose of lubricating the compressor. It took a few minutes to tweak the steam flow so that a bubble of oil appeared in the water sight about once every thirty seconds.

The instructor and I then retired to the workshop mess to review the operating regulations and procedures. We studied the gradient diagrams, line speed restrictions, Westinghouse brake operations, safeworking and staff and ticket operations. After a quick cup of tea and with the 175 pound safety valves roaring like hail on a tin roof, we climbed into the cab, signed the speed recorder chart and prepared for our first movement toward the sta-

K190 shunts a rake of passenger cars through Maldon station driven by Steven Border under the supervision of instructor driver Athol Graham.





the Muckleford River, so the instructor pulled the regulator closed and we coasted into Maldon platform on number one road. The next hour provided a good opportunity to get a feel for the engine, winding the reverser forward and backward and opening the regulator in short easy bursts as we assembled our train.

From the footplate it was impossible to see clearly when setting back, and I had to rely entirely on shunting signals from the ground crew and fireman. The instructor praised me on “not spilling even a drop of tea” as we coupled up the final car of our mixed passenger and goods consist. The confidence was short lived as I later set back too quickly, the instructor remarking it was

Instructor driver Athol Graham and driver Steven Border inspecting the train pipe at Maldon station while fireman Matt Cantle looks on from the cab of K190.



tion yard.

The K class has twin 20 x 26 inch cylinders, controlled by the reversing wheel in front of the driver. The screw thread is labelled at 3 inch intervals, from 6 inch to 15 inches, 18 inches fully extended in either direction being the length of stroke in inches that steam is applied. I wound the reversing screw full forward, sounded a quick whistle, released the independent engine brake, and cracked the regulator open about a quarter turn – and off I went driving a full-size steam engine!

Once the locomotive began to roll all it wanted to do was go faster. We would be soon be jumping for our lives into

“less like a cup of tea and more like the Commissioner’s lunch flung from his dining table to land on the rear wall of the Guard’s van.” After connecting the air

Right: Driver Steven Border (author) at the controls of Victorian Railways K190 at Maldon. Below: K190 driven by Steven Border entering Castlemaine station on arrival from Maldon.



hose between the tender and the first car, we left the independent engine brake on, released the train brake, and then examined the train swinging a hammer against each brake block. The impact made a bright chiming noise if the brakes were released properly; otherwise a dull thud. The fireman then applied the train brake and we repeated the inspection toward the engine.

The station master handed us our staff for the section Maldon to Castlemaine and our guard signalled to proceed. I wound the reverser full forward, gave a good pull on the whistle, released the train brakes, opened the regulator a quarter turn, and with a huge hiss of steam from the drain cocks we were off. The fireman relayed ‘second tip’ and we repeated the whistle, acknowledging the guard’s second wave of the green flag that all remains well after departure – a safety procedure that could usefully be applied to miniature railway operations.

The Maldon station yard is level but the line drops

quickly after the starting signal, the train gathering momentum quickly on the falling grade. I shut off steam but the train began to run away. This was my initiation in the art of engine driving – to always remain in control of the train! I slammed the brake on full emergency as the engine pitched around the curve, pounding us from side to side, bruising my legs, knees and arms against the cab fittings – some blisteringly hot. The Westinghouse air brake gave a deafening roar and the train reeled to a dead stop. As the ringing in my ears subsided, the instructor explained the most important thing when driving is to apply the Westinghouse brake early, sparingly and quietly. It takes me a few more miles of stopping and starting on the downhill grade before I get the hang of the brakes. The trick is to keep a constant eye on the air pressure gauges, listening to the exhaust gaining or losing tempo and adjusting the regulator or train brake just enough to maintain a steady beat.

After we ease over a narrow creek spanned by a timber trestle, the instructor tells me to open the regulator all the way and K190 powers up the first really steep hill. Finally I hear the definitive sound of a mainline steam locomotive working hard. The momentum picked up suddenly over the crest into the falling grade and the train reached 28 miles per hour (45 km/h) on the unsteady old single line. I put the brakes on gently, with a little more to hold it steady, which reduced the speed down to our regulation 15 miles per hour (24 km/h). As the grade levelled out I pushed the regulator wide open and kept pace by winding the reversing screw between nine and six inches, edging off the regulator only below six. The K class were not fitted with snifter valves, nor were many Victorian locos, and every time I close the regulator I have to quickly wheel the reverser full open. The same with the train brake; every time this is applied I have to release the independent engine brake shortly after to reduce wear on the expensive locomotive brakes.

Everyone was looking forward to lunch when we arrived at Castlemaine station on platform three, especially after slipping on some wet approach tracks and priming the engine as the sudden steam flow lifted the water. The signalman joined us from Castlemaine 'A' Box having protected our standing train, and we all piled into the station office for a tremendous feed with the railway's administrative staff. Following lunch I enjoyed a tour of the restored signal box while the fireman detached the loco ready for turning. It took a couple of attempts to balance the loco on the turntable and it was quite exhilarating to move 120 tons with my bare hands. With a short burst of the whistle I ran around and reversed onto the train with precision, much to my relief given the audience of local commuters and rail fans now gathering on the platform.



Left to right: Fireman Matt Cantle, Driver Steven Border and Instructor Driver Athol Graham with K190 in the locomotive depot at Maldon, Victoria. Sister operating locomotive K160 sits in the next road.

The return journey to Maldon was easier, the line more uphill than down, providing plenty of opportunities to work the locomotive hard up 1 in 40 grades. K190 had a terrific 'knock' in the reverser travel in both directions above 16 inches and had to be wound in a little, which we later wrote up and reported to the fitter on return to Maldon. The fitter described more of the loco's unmarried family history, decided the engine was too hot to work on and it being five o'clock was time for a beer. We filled up the tender, dropped the fire and ran the engine back into its home turntable road. Hot, dirty, and exhausted after an extraordinary day of steam, I finally came to understand why every country town has a pub within staggering distance of the railway!

More information on the Victorian Goldfields Railway and the Driver Experience program can be found at www.vgr.com.au

K190 with a mixed assortment of vehicles on arrival at Castlemaine station.





Les Bird and his 27 class leads David Thomas B10 and Brian Kilgour driving the ex-Brian Rawlinson Blowfly on the November charity day.
Below: Our new station complete with lights at night!



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Web Page Address: <http://www.slsls.asn.au>

Public Running Day is the **THIRD** Saturday in each month from 1.30pm. Entry is \$2 adults, \$1 children. Rides are \$1 each.
To ride on the trains, enclosed footwear must be worn.