

BYWAYS ⁵ OF STEAM



EVELEIGH PRESS

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BYWAYS OF STEAM 5

On the Railways of New South Wales



Please support the author where possible

Eveleigh Press



Published October 1992 by

Eveleigh Press

A.C.N. 000 558 574

PO Box 345

Matraville NSW 2036

Phone: (02) 311 2036

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Robert Booth, Ian Wallace, Lloyd Holmes, Leon Oberg, Fred Saxon and Wal Jenkins.

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National Library of Australia Card Number and

ISBN 0 646 09998 1

Co-ordinated by Ray Love. Production by Bob Gallagher, Ian Dunn and Bob Booth
with assistance from Ian Thorpe, David Taylor, Graham Pegg, Ian Wallace and Nicki Verdich.

Typeset by the publishers and

printed by

Newey and Beath, Printers,

10 Belford Street,

Broadmeadow, NSW 2292,

Australia.

Front Cover: *On a bright summer Saturday, 7 January 1967, Mudgee engine 3224 hauls No.22 pick-up goods from Gwabegar towards Binnaway. The train is passing through cleared and cultivated land near Murrawal. The high peaks of the Warrumbungle Range can be seen above the engine and the Castlereagh River is on the left of the picture. The loading of No.22 contains numerous loaded RU bulk wheat vehicles from silos along the line, as well as several empty bogie fuel tankers from the bulk fuel depots at Coonabarabran. Note the water tank behind the tender of 3224 and the driver's canvas water bag hanging from the tender handrail.*

R.D. Love

Back Cover, Above: *Bathurst yard shunter 3013, light attached, and 5177 depart Bathurst yard for Georges Plains on a down goods in May 1965. It was quite unusual for the yard shunter to assist goods trains in either direction out of Bathurst, however 3013 was hitching a ride to Georges Plains, in order to work a special train later that day.*

Ian Dunn

Back Cover, Below: *The ravages of the 1966 drought are clearly evident as 3607 and 3666 round Maldon Curve at the head of No.339 afternoon goods from Enfield, Goulburn bound on Saturday, 27 August 1966. Severe drought conditions prevailed throughout the state during 1965, and continued well into 1966. By the end of the year, the drought was over, bumper harvests returned and a few 36 class engines were reprieved from the scrap road.*

Graham Ball



On 29 September 1947, green Pacific 3817 was just four weeks old and immaculate in the passenger livery reserved for the 38s alone after the war. The occasion for the throng in our photograph is the opening of Junee's new depot, the last major steam depot constructed in New South Wales. Surrounding its unique 100 foot turntable was a forty-two stall brick and concrete roundhouse with all modern facilities, while outside was a large elevated coal stage. Forty-five years ago, Akubras were still de rigueur for the male population, although the official party is bareheaded. Commissioner Hartigan is well pleased with his day's work and no doubt Junee loco's fitters and other staff are glad to leave the old, cramped and dilapidated facility in the fork of the junction between the main South and the South-West branch lines for the relative cleanliness and spaciousness of the new depot.

SRA

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By mid 1966, the severe drought conditions which had applied throughout the state during the previous year were almost over. Various locomotives were returned to service after a period in storage, others were sent from workshops to country depots in anticipation of the forecast bumper wheat harvest. Such was the case on 7 August 1966, as 6014 works No.67 goods near Yeoval, on the Molong to Dubbo line. The engine had been in store at Enfield and was working west to take up its allotment at Dubbo.

R.D. Love

Introduction

In this issue of *Byways of Steam*, we focus, quite fortuitously, upon the human element in the railways. While the enthusiast is attracted in the first place to the mysteries of the machine, it soon becomes apparent that machines are dependent to a great extent on man for their functioning. Magnificent though a large steam engine is, it is nought without the guiding hand of the driver and the encouraging shovel of the fireman. Again, no railway other than the most primitive can function without a sophisticated array of systems to control all facets of its activity, from train running through maintenance to personnel management.

The New South Wales Government Railways were, for many decades, the state's largest single employer, offering an enormous range of skilled and unskilled trades and professions, many unique to the railway situation, but many, too, common with other large enterprises. In the country, in particular, 'the Railways' was a major employer, and some towns, notably Werris Creek, Junee and Parkes, were known as 'railway towns'. In such places, the well-being of the citizenry depended almost totally on the level of railway traffic activity, which generated lean or fat pay packets according to the bountifulness of the season.

Such towns, too, exemplified the twenty-four hour nature of the railway's activity. It was probably the railway, in the mid-nineteenth century, which became the first land-based continual operation. Such a situation was forced upon it by the need to move large amounts of traffic long distances, and to do so in a relatively short time, at least compared with its predecessors, the stage coach and the bullock dray. So the men and women who worked for the railway were rostered for duty at all hours of the day and night, and, until recent decades, for often unconscionably long shifts. Records show that drivers on the Blue Mountains in the 1870s regularly worked for twelve or more hours, in winter in conditions which no-one would tolerate for a moment today. Similarly, the driver and fireman of a slow goods trundling its way from Bourke to Nyngan and Narromine in the high noon of midsummer had no cause to celebrate the arrival of the thirteenth hour on duty. No doubt, the morning shift signalman at the bleak, lonely outpost of Gresham needed no encouragement to hasten through the snow from his isolated cottage to the signal box, where a meagre coal fire struggled to heat the freezing draughts seeping in from all corners.

Floods, fires, droughts and other natural disasters, as well as accidents and medical emergencies, all demanded and received a level of dedication from the railway worker which was not required of most of the rest of the workforce. To some, it was 'just a job', but many took pride in doing their utmost to ensure that the traffic got through, no matter what the odds, and no matter how little head office in Sydney seemed to appreciate their difficulties. The railwaymen and women formed a solid group of peripatetic citizens, united by an *esprit de corps* which welcomed challenge and thrive on adversity.

Today's railway workers would, quite rightly, not tolerate the conditions their predecessors bore. We can but admire the old-timers' tenacity and marvel at their doggedness in attaining long terms of service in the employ of the Commissioner.

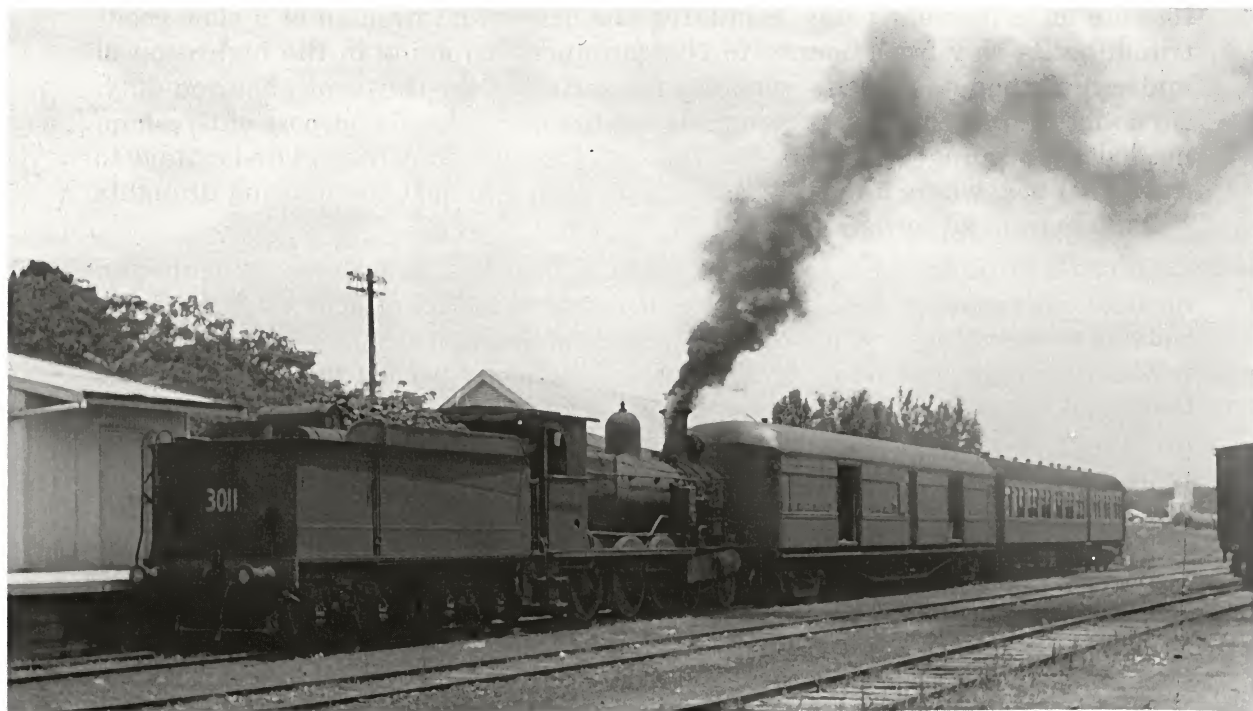
Ian Dunn



No.63 Mail has come to Ulamambri on Friday, 29 December 1961. A local family is waiting to retrieve some parcels from the guard in the MHO and the assistant stationmaster on the platform. Behind the train, headed by 3011, can be seen the impressive grain handling facilities at Ulamambri. The Ulamambri platform complex has since been entirely removed.

Above Right: *No.63 Mail has reached the end of its journey on Friday, 29 December 1961. 3011 leading MCE and MHO stands at Coonabarabran station. Note the loop, gantry and goods siding at left of photo.*

There being no turntable remaining at Coonabarabran, the engine on No.54 up Mail had to return to Binnaway tender-first. Here the fireman is attending to the fire on 3011 prior to departure from Coonabarabran for the 30 mile journey to Binnaway. The relocated air-reservoirs on 3011's ex T (50) class tender can be seen as it stands at Coonabarabran station with load comprising MHO and MCE. Friday, 29 December 1961





To Coonabarabran and Return

Ian Wallace

Coonabarabran is a medium-sized town in the Orana region of New South Wales at the junction of the Oxley and Newell highways, the latter being the shortest route between Brisbane and both Melbourne and Adelaide. The name "Coonabarabran" is an Aboriginal word meaning "an inquisitive person". It is also believed to be derived from another translation, "a peculiar smell", resulting from the pungent odour given off by dense masses of river weed that used to grow in the river near where the local Aborigines had their camp. Coonabarabran is located adjacent to the Castlereagh River, one of the major inland rivers of New South Wales. The Castlereagh River has its headwaters in the spectacular volcanic peaks of the Warrumbungle Range to the west of Coonabarabran and flows south through Binnaway and Mendooren before swinging around to follow its northwesterly course across the plains through Coonamble to the Macquarie River, eventually reaching the Darling River. Coonabarabran is a busy, progressive and attractive town in the middle of an area that is known for its rural produce, timber production and its scenic beauty. Tourism has assumed an increasingly important role in recent years. The town is the centre

of Coonabarabran Shire which has a population of about 7500, more than 3000 of whom reside in Coonabarabran. Other significant but smaller towns in the vicinity are Binnaway and Baradine.

Coonabarabran is located on the Wallerawang to Gwabegar railway line, some 315 rail miles north-west of Sydney. However, in recent years, Coonabarabran's railway significance has been less than many other NSW towns of comparable size. Passenger train services to Coonabarabran ceased in September 1975, while the last goods train, a load of timber sleepers from Baradine and Coonabarabran, ran on 28 February, 1992. In steam days, the Wallerawang to Gwabegar line was a significant branch line, transporting a range of rural produce, particularly wheat, livestock and timber as well as mineral products to the eastern seaboard. The line passes through such important centres as Baradine, Coonabarabran, Binnaway, Dunedoo, Gulgong, Mudgee, Rylstone, Kandos and Portland. The two last named of these have been particularly important for their cement production, major cement works being located at Kandos and Portland, while a cement works at Charbon has been closed for some time. Each of these cement

works was connected to the railway, only the large Kandos works remaining in operation in 1992. In addition to the significant goods traffic, the railway played an important role in providing passenger services to the many towns and villages on the long stretch of line.

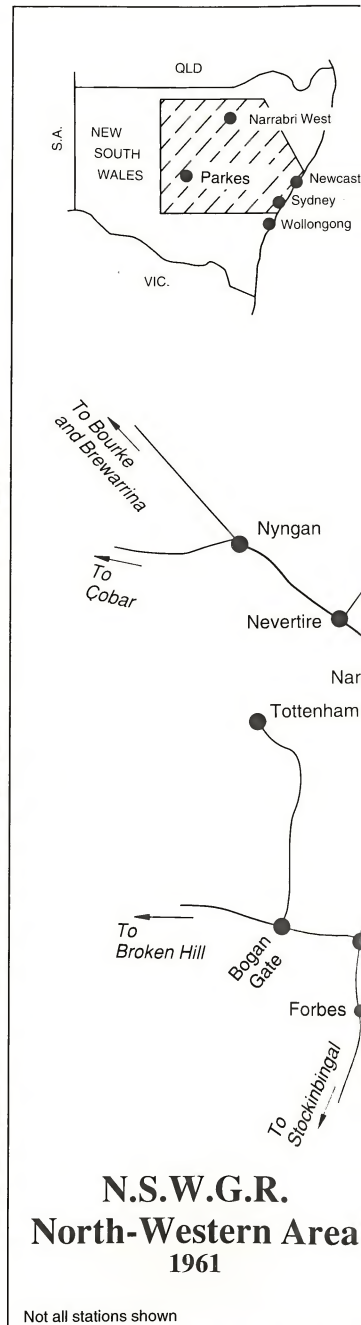
The junction on the main western railway line for the Gwabegar line is just to the west of Wallerawang station, some 107 miles by rail from Sydney. The first section of the branch line, between Wallerawang and Capertee, was completed and opened for traffic in May 1882. The second section, from Capertee to Rylstone, was opened in June 1884 while the third section, from Rylstone to Mudgee was opened in September 1884. It was not until April 1909 that the section from Mudgee to Gulgong was opened while Gulgong to Dunedoo was opened in November 1910. In August 1911 the Committee for Public Works passed a resolution recommending the construction of the line from Dunedoo to Coonabarabran, in response to substantial representations from the citizens of the general Coonabarabran area. Their argument for the railway was that, in addition to opening up the country in that direction, it would also tap the valuable timber resources of ironbark and cypress pine in the Pilliga Scrub. The work commenced in April 1912 by day labour, the line being officially opened to

Binnaway in April 1917 and to Coonabarabran in June 1917. In the book "Binnaway on the Castlereagh", a pictorial history of Binnaway, there is a fine photograph of a (K) 294 class 2-6-0 tender engine standing at Binnaway station at the head of a down mixed train. It is stated that this was the first goods train to arrive at Binnaway in 1917.

At the same time as the Dunedoo to Coonabarabran extension was approved, the extension for the cross-country line from Dubbo to Werris Creek was also approved. This line was constructed by the Public Works Department and was opened from Dubbo to Merrygoen in April 1918 and from Binnaway to Werris Creek in April 1923, the common section between Merrygoen and Binnaway having been in operation since 1917. The line which now terminates at the village of Gwabegar was intended to proceed from Coonabarabran to Burren Junction through the village of Pilliga. However, crossing the



In steam days, it was always a pleasure while at Lithgow to watch the 26 class 2-6-2 saddle tank engines shunting the yards. Here, on Tuesday, 26 December 1961, 2620 with its S match-truck goes about its work.







In light drizzle, Mudgee engine 3240 steams out of Lithgow station, past the rear of the Hotel Lithgow, with No.67 Mudgee passenger service which connected with the down Central West Express at Lithgow. Behind 3240 are LFX, CX and CHO. On this day, 26 December 1961, the steam hauled train has replaced the usual two-car diesel train. .

All photographs by the author unless otherwise mentioned.

whilst visiting for the first time Mudgee, Binnaway, Werris Creek, Armidale and Narrabri West depots and revisiting those at Lithgow, Bathurst, Parkes, Dubbo, Port Waratah and Broadmeadow. A highlight of the trip was the return journey between Binnaway and Coonabarabran by 30T class locomotive which provided the main focus for this account.

In my high school years between 1957 and 1961 I was a keen train spotter or, more particularly, an engine spotter. In the space of five years I had seen most of the steam locomotives of NSW, but many remained elusive. Most of these were based at country depots such as Parkes, Dubbo, Narrabri West, Moree, Werris Creek and Casino. There was the occasional bonus for me of country-based engines coming to Sydney for workshop attention or for transfer, as well as a visit to a country depot to see previously unspotted engines. I always looked forward to a long country trip such as the one undertaken in December 1961 as an opportunity to observe and photograph some of the elusive engines not yet spotted. However, a feature of this particular trip was that at several of the country depots visited, instead of rare engines, we saw engines previously allocated to Eveleigh depot which had featured heavily in observations and photographs around Sydney in the period 1957 to 1961. Most of these were 32 class engines. It frustrated me that at

Parkes, Dubbo and Binnaway many of the 32 class engines seen were former common Eveleigh engines. At the time this was a great disappointment, travelling hundreds of miles to the country to see engines that were recently based at Eveleigh. The main reason for the large number of former Eveleigh engines in the country was that Eveleigh depot had suffered a partial closure in August 1961 resulting in many engines, particularly 32 class engines, being transferred to Parkes, Dubbo and Enfield depots. Another reason for seeing these former Eveleigh engines at work in the country was that many of the "rare" 32 class engines attached to country depots had old frames and were at the end of their working lives. As they came to Eveleigh shops for workshop attention, storage or scrapping, they were replaced in the country with former Eveleigh-based engines made surplus due to electrification and dieselisation. Many of these had newer frames or were more serviceable.

The trip started at Strathfield station on the morning of Boxing Day, Tuesday, 26 December 1961. We departed on No.31 Central West Express at 8.05am, one minute late, heading for Lithgow, our first setting off point. The express, composed of BS plus six car, air-conditioned HUB set, was hauled by 4618 between Sydney and Lithgow. On arrival at Lithgow at 10.45am (18 minutes late) in



Looking across Lithgow loco's 90ft. turntable from the cab roof of stored engine 2608 are, from left to right, 5451, 5325, 5333, 5432, 5154, 2605, 3666, 3618, 3617 and 2619. The main road from Bell to Lithgow can be seen in the background. Tuesday, 26 December 1961.

It is Boxing Day and Lithgow loco is crowded but not very busy. Waiting their next call to duty are, from left to right, 5262, 5449, 5480, 3039, 3619, 5460, 5117, 5454 and 3378. Tuesday, 26 December 1961.





overcast conditions and drizzle, the 46 was replaced by Pacific 3822 for the journey to Orange. This was the first time I had observed a 38 on this express west of Lithgow, all previous sightings having been 36 class engines. At the time, both classes were sharing the Central West Express roster. The work-

ing timetable specified that No.31 was timed to be worked by a 36 class engine with a load of 310 tons between Lithgow and Orange.

We moved about 100 yards west of Lithgow station to photograph the express departing, still in light rain, shortly followed by 3240 on the connect-



Above: It is still drizzling as 3652 at the head of No.25 passenger service stands at Wallerawang station en route to Bathurst on Tuesday, 26 December 1961. Wallerawang is the junction for the line to Mudgee and Gwabegar and was generally busy in steam days.

Left: A view from the fireman's side of the cab of 3652 as it is about to take No.25 Bathurst passenger over the bridge crossing the Macquarie River at Bathurst. Tuesday, 26 December 1961.

Above Right: Even though it is Boxing Day, there is still some steam action at Bathurst loco. Here Dubbo engine 3387 and Bathurst engine 5437 await their next duties as they stand at the western end of the large galvanised iron engine shed. Tuesday, 26 December 1961.



ing passenger service to Mudgee, No.67, composed of LFX, CX, CHO. Normally a two-car diesel train, at holiday times No.67 was commonly changed to a steam-hauled passenger train. This was my first experience on this trip of "Eveleigh engines revisited". During the late 1950s, 3240 had been a very common Eveleigh-based engine which I had photographed numerous times on the Short North and Illawarra lines. The experience was to be repeated many times as this trip unfolded.

We had until 1.54pm before we were to catch No.25 passenger to Bathurst, so, in intermittent drizzle we made our way by foot to Lithgow loco, which is quite a distance (about 1½ miles) east of Lithgow station. We passed 2-6-2 saddle tank 2620, complete with its S match truck, shunting the yards near loco. It was always a treat to watch the 26 class engines at work. Also in the yards was Lithgow engine 5171.

Present at Lithgow loco were:

2605, 2616, 2619, 3039, 3075T, 3360, 3378, 3617, 3618, 3619, 3652, 3666, 3670, 5117, 5154, 5238, 5262, 5325, 5333, 5432, 5449, 5451, 5454, 5460, 5480.

These working engines were based at either Lithgow, Bathurst or Mudgee depots. 3039, a 4-6-4 side tank locomotive, had recently been transferred from Broadmeadow depot to replace stored 26 class engines 2607 and 2608.

Stored were 2607, 2608, 2610, 3126T, 5021, 5305, 5313, 5348. At the time Lithgow depot's allotment

of working engines was: 4/26, 1/30, 3/32, 11/36, 2/38, 10/superheated 50 and 5/53.

We walked back to Lithgow station in time for the arrival of No.25 passenger from Sydney which was to take us to Bathurst. Still in drizzle, a 46 class, leading cars MFE, FR, BR, RBR, FR, EHO, was replaced by 4-6-0 express passenger engine 3652. At Wallerawang we crossed No.26 up Bathurst passenger train hauled by 3641. During the five minute stop at Wallerawang, junction for the Mudgee line, and still in light rain, we were permitted a cab ride in 3652 for the remainder of the run to Bathurst. Between Wallerawang and Tarana the dark clouds and rain were left behind and we moved into more sunny weather. After a really good ride to Bathurst, we disembarked on arrival at 3.54pm. We proceeded immediately to loco, situated west of, but quite close to, the station and from there photographed 3661 on No.28 up Central West Express which arrived at 4.14pm, two minutes early.

Present at Bathurst loco were:

1056, 1919, 1942, 2606, 3087T, 3124, 3143, 3251, 3346, 3387, 3603, 3614, 3632, 3649, 5240, 5241, 5261, 5336, 5343, 5400, 5421, 5437, 5445, 5476, 5484, 6029, 6030.

Stored were 2532, 2602, 2603, 2615, 2618, 3329, 5055, 5371, 5383 and 5467, representing a sad and forlorn graveyard. Of the ten engines stored, I had seen seven in steam before and had fond memories of seeing 2532, 2603, 2615 and 2618 at work in previous years shunting in Bathurst yards. Tank

engines 3124 and 3143 had been transferred to Bathurst to replace these four older engines. 3087, a Mudgee engine, was undergoing repairs at Bathurst. The gradual replacement of Standard Goods locomotives with 36 class engines was well under way and would increase during the 1960s. It was interesting to note that 5336, 5343 and 5484 were fitted with specially balanced driving wheels and that 5336 also had a Wampu tender. 5336 was one of the few 53 class engines remaining in service at that time fitted with both. The allotment of working engines to Bathurst depot at the time was: 1/10, 3/19, 1/26, 2/30, 1/32, 22/36, 31/53 and 4/60.

In the late afternoon we caught the up relief Central West Express between Bathurst and Lithgow, with 3675 leading BS and seven-car SOB set 102, a very neat looking consist behind the "Pig". En route to Lithgow we saw 3670 near Locksley on a down goods, 1957 at Tarana on the down Oberon mixed and 5238 near Marrangaroo at the head of a down goods to Mudgee. Our arrival at Lithgow was in darkness and we had to wait until 1.18am (next morning) to catch the down Mudgee Mail to Mudgee. This was a daunting wait so, after partaking of some refreshments, we set off again on the long walk to Lithgow loco. In loco we observed the same engines as in the morning with the following exceptions - 2620 was in loco from the yards, 3334, 3629, 3641, 3661, 3675, 3822 and 6025 had arrived since the morning and 3652, 3670 and 5238 had departed. 3822 had returned from Orange on No.308 Fruit and Meat Express and was being prepared for departure on one of the evening mail trains. Several "Pigs" were also being prepared for the night shift. It was relatively quiet in loco at night but with sufficient action to maintain one's interest; we certainly had no better way of filling in time. I remem-

ber spending some time in the cab of 2608 stored outside with 2607 on one of the turntable roads and recalling, with sadness, the times I had seen 2608 in action shunting the then busy Lithgow yards. I have always had a soft spot for the 26 class and enjoyed watching them working. From time to time we rested on seats of greater comfort, such as those in the 36 class engines.

When we became tired of the night life in Lithgow loco, we walked back to the station so that we could recline in greater comfort in the waiting room. While waiting at Lithgow station we saw 3822 take out No.45 down Coonamble Mail, hauling MFE, BS, TAM, FR, KP, MHO, TP. I found the sight of the TP interesting as I was unaware at the time that the diesel parcels trailer was through-worked from Sydney for attachment to the rear of the 900 class DEB set on No.41 Far West Express at Dubbo for the journey to Bourke or Cobar. An engine I found elusive in daylight hours, 3672 arrived from the west on an up wheat train (possibly No.34 express goods), again evading the opportunity for me to photograph it. Just on midnight No.59 down Through Mail departed with 3675 at the head of MFE, FS, BS, TAM, FS, MHO, the relatively light load probably explaining the 36 class engine at the head. The working timetable specified that No.59 was timed to convey 390 tons worked by a 38 class engine. At about 12.40am 3619 took No.49 down Forbes Mail out of Lithgow leading FS, MAL, TAM, BS, FS, MHO, DH. Again, I was interested in the DH diesel parcels trailer. The DH generally formed part of the consist of the Silver City Comet. It was commonly through-worked from Sydney on the Forbes Mail and shunted onto the Comet cars at Parkes. A shorter train with definite branch line character was No.61 down Relief Mail to Cowra



Mudgee engine, saturated 3087 is undergoing repairs at Bathurst loco as it stands outside the eastern end of the large running sheds in company with 5240 and 5336, the latter being one of the few remaining 53s fitted with both specially balanced driving wheels and Wampu tender. Tuesday, 26 December 1961.



The early morning summer sun brilliantly illuminates the side of No.63 down Mudgee Mail as it stands at the historic Mudgee station having just arrived from Lithgow and Sydney. Behind engine 3378, which brought the train from Lithgow, are MFE, VAM, MCE and MHO. The facilities for boiling foot-warmers are situated outdoors, behind the engine, at extreme left of picture. At the time there was a level crossing for vehicles at Church Street and a pedestrian overbridge across the railway lines. Wednesday, 27 December 1961.

which left Lithgow behind 3617 with FR, MCE, ACS, MHO, just before 1.00am. No.61 ran only when required, generally at holiday times.

Shortly after 1.00am No.63 down Mudgee Mail arrived and after the 46 class was uncoupled, 3378 backed onto the ancient looking short train comprising MFE, VAM, MCE, MHO, a load of about 165 tons. I had been hoping for 3360, a Mudgee engine which we saw earlier in Lithgow loco. Instead we had 3378, a Mudgee engine, but also a former very common Eveleigh engine. Furthermore, we had travelled behind 3378 the previous May between Harden and Cowra. Disappointment then but, 30 years on, it doesn't really matter all that much; we still had a 32 class to Mudgee. We left Wallerawang, the junction for the Mudgee line, just after 1.45am and at Portland crossed 3240 hauling the four-car No.54 up Mudgee Mail. I have little further recollection of travel on this train except that we were in rather comfortable accommodation in the MFE and we were feeling tired. The comfortable old padded seats were conducive to sleep as were the pace, the rhythmic motion and the sound effects. I do recall seeing the stations at Piper's Flat, Portland and Ben

Bullen and, later on, Lue. In the meantime I must have dozed off but wakened when the train drew to a stop at such places as Lue for safeworking purposes as well as to drop off mail bags and parcels. I was intrigued by the short station name, seen in the glow of the pre-dawn, and wondered whether Lue had the shortest name on the system. I subsequently discovered that Gap and Nea, which we saw later on the trip, also had only three letters. It also occurred to me that many of the station buildings were constructed of brick and were more substantial than I had expected. This was confirmed later on the return trip to Lithgow in daylight where impressive station buildings were seen to be serving small villages.

We arrived at Mudgee in early morning light at about 5.45am. The train had stopped at virtually all significant stations between Wallerawang and Mudgee, taking just on four hours for this journey (some 85 miles). We disembarked quickly to photograph the train before 3378 was uncoupled. In this we were successful and it made a great sight in the early morning sunshine with the low angle of the sun brightly illuminating the train. An appropriate



After the MFE was detached from No.63 Mail at Mudgee, superheated 3011 with bogie tender accelerates the VAM, MCE and MHO towards Binnaway and Coonabarabran on Wednesday, 27 December 1961. The location is the western outskirts of Mudgee.

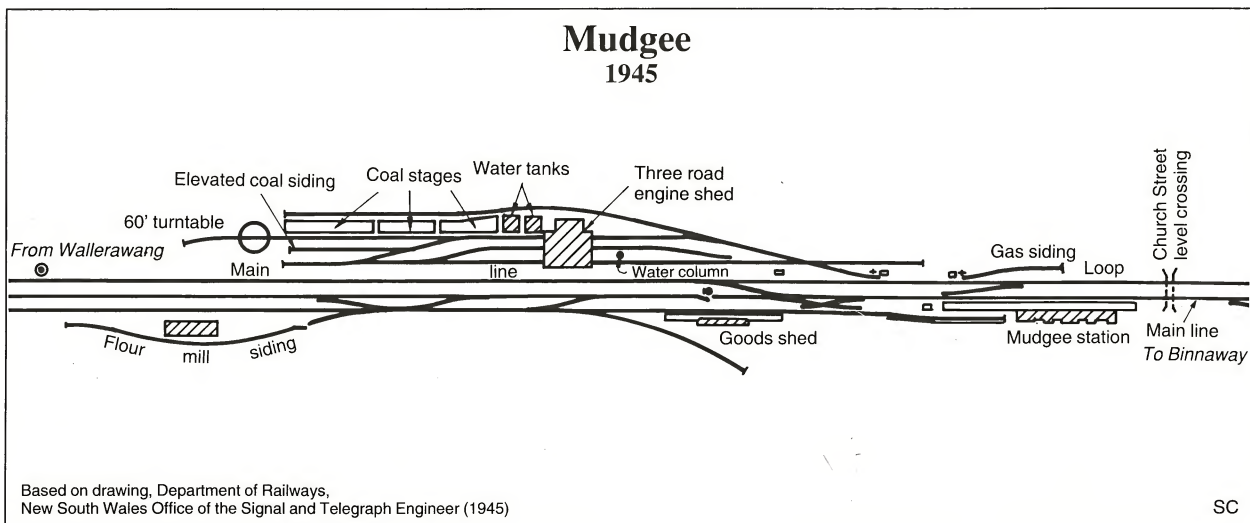
touch of antiquity was provided by the MFE and MCE with crown lights and the VAM sleeper, positioned in front of the old, impressive, brick station building which was opened in 1884. Three VAM sleeping cars were constructed in 1903 and they survived in service until 1965. They simply looked old with their end vestibules and brass handrails. Our particular VAM had its original crown lights boarded over with plywood which, unfortunately, did not enhance its appearance.

Between Mudgee and Coonabarabran this train (No.63) was still classified as 'mail' in the working timetable and was commonly termed the Mudgee Mail (or "the Mail") throughout its length of travel. It was worked by a 30T class engine, typically a superheated 30T, and was timed to convey a load of 190 tons between Mudgee and Gulgong and 150 tons between Gulgong and Binnaway. In previous years, the sleeping car used to be detached at Gulgong (rather than Binnaway) and was housed in a carriage shed at Gulgong between trips. The timetable allowed 22 minutes at Mudgee for engine and crew changing and for breakfast in the Railway Refreshment Room. The MFE was detached at Mudgee by 3378 which proceeded to loco after stowing the car. We walked further along the line towards Gulgong

in order to photograph the train in more open country. I can still recall this walk along the line in hot, humid, oppressive conditions with numerous flies. Considering how early in the day it was, the temperature was surprisingly high. At about 6.10am superheated 3011 with bogie tender accelerated past us with VAM, MCE, MHO on its way to Binnaway and Coonabarabran. The sleeping car would be detached at Binnaway. I was surprised to see 3011 at Mudgee as it had been a Parkes engine before its recent sojourn in Eveleigh Workshops.

The town of Mudgee is set in a picturesque location in the valley of the Cudgegong River. The hills that surround Mudgee in several directions form an attractive backdrop to the town. The word "Mudgee" is Aboriginal for "nest". At Mudgee, the locals extend this to "a nest in the hills" which appears apt.

We made our way back to Mudgee station and then to Mudgee loco, some 300 yards east of the station, still very much aware of the heat, the humidity and the flies. Superheated 30T, 3142, complete with cowcatcher, was shunting the yards near the station. 3142 was one of the few 30 class engines which still carried a large Eveleigh Works builders plate on the side of its cab. Fellow Mudgee engine 3144 was another. In loco were 3210, 3309 and 5238





Superheated 3142, complete with cowcatcher at the front and Eveleigh Works builder's plate fitted to the cab side, shunts Mudjee yards. Taken from the Sydney end of Mudjee station, this photograph shows the dock platform at left and Mudjee loco in the distance. The peak of Mt. Frome is in the distant background. Wednesday, 27 December 1961.

as well as 3378 off the mail. 3309 and 5238 were both Lithgow engines while 3210, a former common Eveleigh engine, was attached to Bathurst depot. Mudjee depot's engine allotment at the time was four 30T and three 32 class locomotives. With Mudjee's saturated 30T, 3087, under repairs at Bathurst, Mudjee depot had four superheated 30T class engines, namely, 3011, 3075, 3142 and 3144 at its disposal. Mudjee's 30Ts all had bogie tenders, formerly fitted to 32 or 50 class engines, with relocated air reservoirs fitted to the top of the tender.

Mudjee loco was relatively small and fairly basic. It possessed a three-road corrugated iron engine shed and a 60ft. turntable manufactured by Sellers of Philadelphia. The engine shed had a store constructed on its southern side, and each of the shed roads had an external engine/ash pit. There were two elevated water tanks at the Sydney end of the engine shed. At the time of our visit, coaling of engines was accomplished by shovelling coal from S trucks placed on a slightly elevated coal stage siding. I remember thinking how primitive this was considering the amount of traffic through Mudjee depot. In later years, a three-ton steam coal grab was allotted to the depot for coaling engines. A slightly depressed ash road was provided next to the coal stage. This was also used for storage of water gins from time to time. Mudjee depot's fitters and facilities could accomplish minor repairs and adjustments, more major repairs requiring the engine to be sent to Lithgow or Bathurst, or to Eveleigh

Workshops if a substantial overhaul was required.

From Mudjee loco we heard the distant sound of a steam locomotive whistle to the east, so we walked along the line towards Lithgow to find a suitable location to photograph the arrival of what we thought would be a goods train. At about 11.30am we photographed Bathurst engine 5451 as it steamed past the main Mudjee-Sydney road crossing with S truck and PHG brake van on what we assume was No.117 goods, which terminated at Mudjee. Standard Goods engines were not permitted beyond Mudjee due to their higher axle loading. At about 1.30pm superheated 3144 arrived at Mudjee slowly with No.12 up Coolah mixed which we photographed on the western outskirts of the town. The mixed was composed substantially of loaded four-wheel stock vehicles (GSV and CW) which would surely have provided a memorable trip for any passengers in the trailing passenger car. We followed the mixed back to Mudjee station to wait for the diesel train to Lithgow due to depart at 2.20pm. Shortly, Bathurst engine 5480 arrived on No.51 pick-up goods from Lithgow and Lithgow engine 3242 eased its way into town on No.42 pick-up goods from Binnaway conveying a mixed load, but mainly loaded RU wheat wagons.

No.51 Mudjee line pick-up was an interesting train. It was a regular train and departed Lithgow yards at 3.57am, timed to be worked by a Standard Goods engine. On Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, No.51 continued on to Binnaway, where it was



timed to arrive shortly after 1.00am, generally being hauled by a 32 class engine. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, No.51 ran between Binnaway and Gwabegar, also behind a 32 class. It was tabled to depart Binnaway at 4.15am and to arrive at Gwabegar at 12.20pm on those days. No.51 was the sole timetabled down goods service between

Binnaway and Gwabegar, its return being No.22 pick-up goods to Binnaway, which departed Gwabegar at 7.00am on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. A conditional fast stock train, No.240, was tabled for Tuesdays and Saturdays between Gwabegar and Flemington yards in Sydney. This train, too, when run, would probably have been



Above: A rear view of 3142 as it shunts Mudjee yards on Wednesday, 27 December 1961, looking towards Mudjee station. A rail pay bus can be seen in right background, opposite the station. The hills behind form an attractive backdrop to the town.

Left: Bathurst engine, high-framed 3210 has moved to stand outside the western (Binnaway) end of Mudjee loco, waiting for its next call to duty. Several S trucks loaded with coal for locomotive use can be seen on the siding behind 3210. Wednesday, 27 December 1961.



A view of the eastern (Sydney) end of Mudjee loco showing, from left to right, 5238 and 3210 in the iron shed, and 3142 at right shunting Mudjee yards. At the extreme left are the two elevated water tanks (of different height). Between the engine shed and 3142 can be seen the goods shed and crane. Wednesday, 27 December 1961.

Lithgow engines 3309 and 5238 stand alongside the elevated coal siding at Mudjee loco on Wednesday, 27 December 1961.





Left: 3309 simmers in Mudgee loco while standing on the single road beyond the 60ft. turntable. In the foreground are facilities used by permanent-way staff. The photo was taken from the main line. Wednesday, 27 December 1961.

Right: At the head of a very short down goods train, Bathurst engine 5451 with S truck and PHG van steams into Mudgee and is about to pass over the Mudgee-Sydney road crossing. Behind the train are goods vehicles standing on the, then, stock siding. Wednesday, 27 December 1961.

headed by separate 32 class engines between Gwabegar-Binnaway and Binnaway-Mudgee.

Our diesel train, No.68, duly departed Mudgee at 2.20pm with a timetabled arrival at Lithgow at 5.34pm. En route to Lithgow we passed the various sidings and localities between Mudgee and Rylstone where carbonate rocks such as limestone, dolomite and magnesite had been quarried and hauled to the railway for despatch. In former years marble building stone had been quarried in large rectangular blocks in the Cudgegong-Rylstone area and had

been hauled to the goods yard at Rylstone. Here the blocks were lifted by crane into S trucks for delivery to Sydney where the stone was sawn and polished. Just after passing Kandos station we saw 5460 and 5432 "locked in" at the Kandos Cement Company's siding waiting to depart at 4.05pm for Wallerawang and Lithgow with No.8 goods composed of loaded cement trucks. It was typical for single or double Standard Goods engines to travel from Lithgow to Kandos with empty cement wagons and turn on the 60ft. turntable just off the cement works siding prior



Superheated engine 3144 with bogie tender crests the rise on the western outskirts of Mudgee with No.12 up Coolah mixed, conveying mainly loaded four wheel livestock vehicles. One could feel for any passengers in the passenger car at the rear of the train on this hot summer day. Wednesday, 27 December 1961.

Right: 3144 at the head of the up Coolah mixed stands on the loop in front of Mudgee's historic and impressive railway station on Wednesday, 27 December 1961.



to working back to Wallerawang and Lithgow with loaded wagons. The working timetable provided for a conditional light engine movement from Mudgee to the Kandos Cement Company's siding to assist No.14 goods to Lithgow on weekday evenings. It also provided for the working of full single engine loads

of 360 tons and full double engine loads of 720 tons between the cement works and Wallerawang/Lithgow. Conditional light engine, and engine and van, movements were scheduled between Lithgow and the Kandos works to work or assist in the haulage of these loads. Although at-





Lithgow engine 3242 pauses at the Perry Street level crossing, just to the west of Mudgee station, waiting for a clear road into the yards with No.42 pick-up goods train from Binnaway, conveying mainly loaded RU bulk wheat vehicles. Note the four-wheel water gin behind 3242's tender. Wednesday, 27 December 1961.

Below Right: *The down Forbes Mail (No.49) has made a scheduled stop at Bumberry, between Molong and Parkes, allowing photographs to be taken in the early morning sunshine. Here 3644 is at the head of MHO, FS, BS, TAM, FS. Thursday, 28 December 1961.*

tended and provided with substantial station buildings, goods loop siding and goods shed, Kandos was neither a staff station nor a crossing place, being an intermediate station between Clandulla and Rylstone, the nearest staff stations and crossing places. At the junction of the Kandos Cement Company's siding with the main Wallerawang-Mudgee line, the ground frame operating the main line points was released by key staff and, to allow trains to stand in the sidings for considerable periods while other trains passed on the main line, an intermediate electric staff instrument was provided. The turntable originally installed at Kandos was of 75ft. diameter but this was removed and installed at Muswellbrook loco depot, being replaced with a 60ft. turntable. One could not fail to be impressed with the scenic beauty of the Mudgee line, particularly between Rylstone and Ben Bullen. The spectacular rock formations and interesting landforms to the north of Rylstone and the different but dramatic scenery of the Capertee Valley were a delight to the eye.

We passed 5262 and 5484 at Wallerawang on separate up goods trains, 5449 shunting at Wallerawang and 5454 at Marrangaroo on a down goods. After arrival at Lithgow station we photographed 3608 heading west on No.353 goods to Orange and 3619 bringing in No.28 up Central West Express at 6.05pm in very bright light with the sun low on the horizon. The express had a BS at the rear of the 6-car air-conditioned HUB set. Again we had

to spend a considerable period of time at Lithgow before our intended train was due to leave, in this case No.45 down Coonamble Mail scheduled to depart Lithgow at 10.30pm. So, again we trekked to Lithgow loco, passing 2619 and 2620 working in the yards. Excluding the stored engines previously recorded, the following engines were in loco on the evening of Wednesday, 27 December 1961.

2605, 2616, 3039, 3075T, 3240, 3334, 3611, 3619, 3639, 3641, 3649, 3661, 5117, 5154, 5171, 5261, 5262, 5325, 5333, 5408, 5418, 6025.

Whilst at Lithgow we noted 3809 and 5484 arrive on separate up goods trains, No.308 Fruit and Meat Express from Orange and No.192 pick-up goods from Bathurst respectively. In what to us was becoming a familiar routine, 3809 was serviced in loco prior to taking out the down Coonamble Mail later in the evening. Back again to Lithgow station by foot and we were feeling rather weary. We left Lithgow on No.45 Coonamble Mail with 3809 hauling SBX, FS, FS, BS, MAL, FS, KP, EHO, MHO, TP, 10/375 tons, almost a full load for the 38. No.45 was timed to convey 390 tons worked by a 38 class engine between Lithgow and Orange. However, between Bathurst and Wimbledon the maximum load for an unassisted 38 on a passenger train was 310 tons. On this evening the load of 375 tons was well beyond the capacity of a single 38 up the 1 in 40 grade of Tumulla bank so we figured that assistance would be required between Bathurst and Wimbledon. After 3809 made good time to Bathurst, this assis-

tance duly came in the form of our fine steed of the previous day, 3652. In the advertised eleven minute stop at Bathurst for 3809 to be serviced, the assistant engine to be attached and refreshments to be taken by passengers, we again looked through Bathurst loco, this time hurriedly. We were becoming quite experienced in night time loco viewing and there were further experiences of this type in store for us later in the evening and later in the trip. Apart from the stored engines mentioned previously, present in Bathurst loco in the very early morning of Thursday, 28 December 1961 were:

1056, 1919, 1942, 2606, 3087T, 3346, 3360, 3387, 3603, 3631, 3632, 3634, 3670, 3672, 5240, 5241, 5311, 5343, 5346, 5353, 5379, 5434, 5440, 5445, 5468, 5476, 6029 and 6030.

We managed to arrive back at Bathurst station with sufficient time to board the train comfortably prior to departure. We looked forward to the performance of the two engines at the head of the mail between Bathurst and Wimbledon. To facilitate this, we opened the windows in our FS so that we could lean out and better savour the sounds, the smell of coal smoke and the sight of the two engines on the curves. This was most impressive indeed as we ascended Tumulla bank with vigour, the sight of the red/orange glow from the open fireholes and the funnels of the hard-working engines being a highlight on the curves. Unfortunately, we became increasingly dirty as we were hit in the face with hot cinders on this warm evening and as we rushed to an open window on either side to get a better view on the curves. The performance ended all too soon as the mail was brought to a stand at Wimbledon station. After 3652 was detached at Wimbledon, 3809 took the mail into Orange without incident. Arrival at Orange was on time at 3.07am and we noticed 5424 at work in the yards. A very early

morning inspection of loco in darkness revealed the presence of 3618, 3629, 3644, 5330, 5331, 5364, 5381, 5415 and 5486. Of particular interest was 5415 which, until shortly before our trip, had been the sole working engine on the allotment of Harden depot. However, some time after the closure of Harden depot, 5415 had been transferred to Bathurst. For many years, Orange depot had only one engine, a 32 class, on its allotment. This was 3213 for about ten years during the 1950s but, in December 1961, it was 3269 still fitted with its original low frame. However, we missed seeing the 4-6-0.

The down Forbes Mail (No.49) arrived at Orange at about 4.30am with 3619 in charge of EHO, FS, TAM, BS, FS, MHO. On arrival, 3619 and the EHO were uncoupled from the western end of the mail and 3619 proceeded to loco while 3644 coupled to the MHO at the other end of the train for the run to Parkes, a distance of 76 miles. We obtained a cab ride in 3644 between Orange and Parkes with a very supportive crew who were happy for us to do a lot of firing. Between Orange and Parkes, the 5-car train was composed of MHO, FS, BS, TAM, FS, weighing 200 tons. At Borenore we crossed 5473 on No.62 fast stock train. It was a hot, humid morning, particularly after the sun rose high above the horizon. Between the pair of us we did most of the firing which, on this train, was a good deal of work and we were feeling pretty weary by the time we arrived at Bumberry, after climbing several stretches of 1 in 60 grade between Manildra and Bumberry. We crossed No.52 pick-up goods at Bumberry, with Lithgow engine 5118 in charge. The crew allowed us sufficient time at the scheduled stops at Bumberry and Cookamidgera to take photographs. It had been a really good cab ride and, as we neared Parkes in the hot, humid conditions, we were feeling the effects of lack of proper sleep and of firing the





Cookamidgera station is the setting as 3644 stands at the head of No.49 down Forbes Mail on the morning of Thursday, 28 December 1961.

Right: Cootamundra engine 3350, with an Eveleigh Works builder's plate on its left sand box, passes the landmark beside Parkes loco at the start of its journey to Forbes with the down Forbes mixed, which connected with No.49 Forbes Mail at Parkes. The mixed is returning a large number of empty K and S trucks to country destinations as well as conveying other mixed goods vehicles. Behind the goods brake van are MHO, FS, BS detached from the mail. Thursday, 28 December 1961.

"Pig". We had also become very dirty and clammy and were wondering how we would get ourselves clean as the coal dust was ingrained. I had gained a new respect for the stamina of firemen. I'm sure there would have been much harder tasks than firing a "Pig" on the Forbes Mail with 200 tons, but this seemed like hard work.

We arrived at Parkes at 7.32am on Thursday, 28 December 1961. Shortly after the timetabled 20 minute stop at Parkes for the cars from the mail to be reassembled for the remainder of the trip to Forbes, Cootamundra engine 3350 departed with the Forbes mixed (No.49). This was composed of a long string of goods vehicles, mainly empty K and S trucks, goods brake van and MHO, FS and BS from the recently arrived mail. We had walked from Parkes station down to the landmark on the line to Forbes opposite Parkes loco where we photographed the mixed. While we were inspecting Parkes loco we again met up with the crew of 3644 who, in response to our need, suggested we "clean up" by accompanying them to barracks to have a bath or a shower. We

did just that and it was good to feel relatively clean again, even if it was not to last for long.

Engines present at Parkes loco were 3005T, 3008T, 3041T, 3049T, 3055T, 3106T, 3249, 3271, 3316, 3358, 3366, 3644, 5200 and 5403 in the round-house area and Beyer-Garratts 6011, 6014 and 6040 near the coal stage. A number of these were Dubbo engines, evidence of the cross-country traffic between Dubbo, Narromine and Parkes. At the time, the working allotment at Parkes depot was 4/30T, 7/32, 6/49 and 3/60. The 49 class diesels had already taken over a significant amount of working on the Broken Hill line from the 32 class engines. Parkes depot had formerly been a 32 class stronghold with 20 members of the class on its allotment in 1957. As recently as 1960 there were still 17.

We left Parkes at 11.50am on No.36 diesel train, a spare Silver City Comet set, which connected with No.11 rail motor from Cootamundra and No.6 rail motor from Tottenham. No.36 diesel train connected with the up Central West Express at Orange, arriving at 2.15pm. At Manildra we crossed 5331 on

a down goods to Parkes and we noted 5473 running into Molong as a down light engine. In Orange yard on our arrival were Bathurst engines 5381 and 5424. 3822 had arrived on No.31 down Central West Express from Lithgow and 3619 was waiting with the cars to work No.28 up Central West Express to Lithgow. 3619 was certainly earning its keep at the time, sharing the evening mail and Central West Express workings with its Lithgow stablemates 3809 and 3822. We stayed in the same diesel train, which was now No.27, to Dubbo, departing Orange at 2.30pm. The journey to Dubbo was uneventful except for the time taken in attempting to recover from a hiccup near Farnham, a "when required" stop between Orange and Wellington. Farnham platform is situated at the foot of a short section of 1 in 80 followed by a relatively long section of 1 in 40 grade against down trains. Just after leaving Farnham platform, the diesel train faltered and came to a halt. After several attempts to restart the train, the driver had to roll the train back to the platform to try again, but this attempt, too, was unsuccessful. The train then reversed back through to the other side of Farnham and "rushed" the hill, this time making it, to the relief of all concerned. Shortly after this piece of excitement, we crossed 3673 on an up goods at Stuart Town and, later, passed 5486 on No.253 goods at Wellington.

On arrival at Dubbo at 5.03pm, 15 minutes late, we quickly went to loco with a view to getting as many photos as we could before shadows and light became difficult. We moved quickly through loco up to the Dubbo East triangle to photograph the arrival

of the up Coonamble passenger train which was due at 5.35pm. Soon 3098T, a saturated engine with an old six-wheel 16 class tender rounded the curve with MHO, FS, BS and drifted into Dubbo station to join the rest of the cars in the platform which would compose No.46 up Coonamble Mail, due to depart Dubbo at 6.05pm. The mail departed for Sydney a little later and, with the sun very low on the horizon, we photographed 3809 as it led seven cars, namely FS, MAL, BS, FS, MHO, KP, TP around the curve. Shortly after the departure of the mail, 5486, which we had seen earlier at Wellington, arrived at Dubbo on its down goods. 5486 was uncoupled, turned on Dubbo's 60ft. turntable, and serviced prior to its next running duties. Longer engines such as members of the 36, 38 and 60 classes had to be turned on the Dubbo East triangle. It was common for two engines to be coupled together for turning on the triangle.

Observed in Dubbo loco were 1061, 3009T, 3018T, 3020T, 3032T, 3098T, 3122T, 3202, 3203, 3239, 3248, 3267, 3272, 3281, 3332, 3359, 3385, 5486 and 6018. Stored were 3029T, 3341, and 3384. Dubbo depot's working allotment at the time was 2/10, 8/30T, 25/32 and 1/60. 1061, a three-ton coal grab was employed in the coal storage area near the large coal hoist. 3202 was fitted with a six-wheel tender as were all of Dubbo's 30T class engines, so that they could be turned on a 50ft. turntable such as at Coonamble or Nevertire. Although 3359 had been recorded as officially set aside in April 1961, it was not clear, on inspection, that it was in fact stored. It appeared to be in working condition; how-



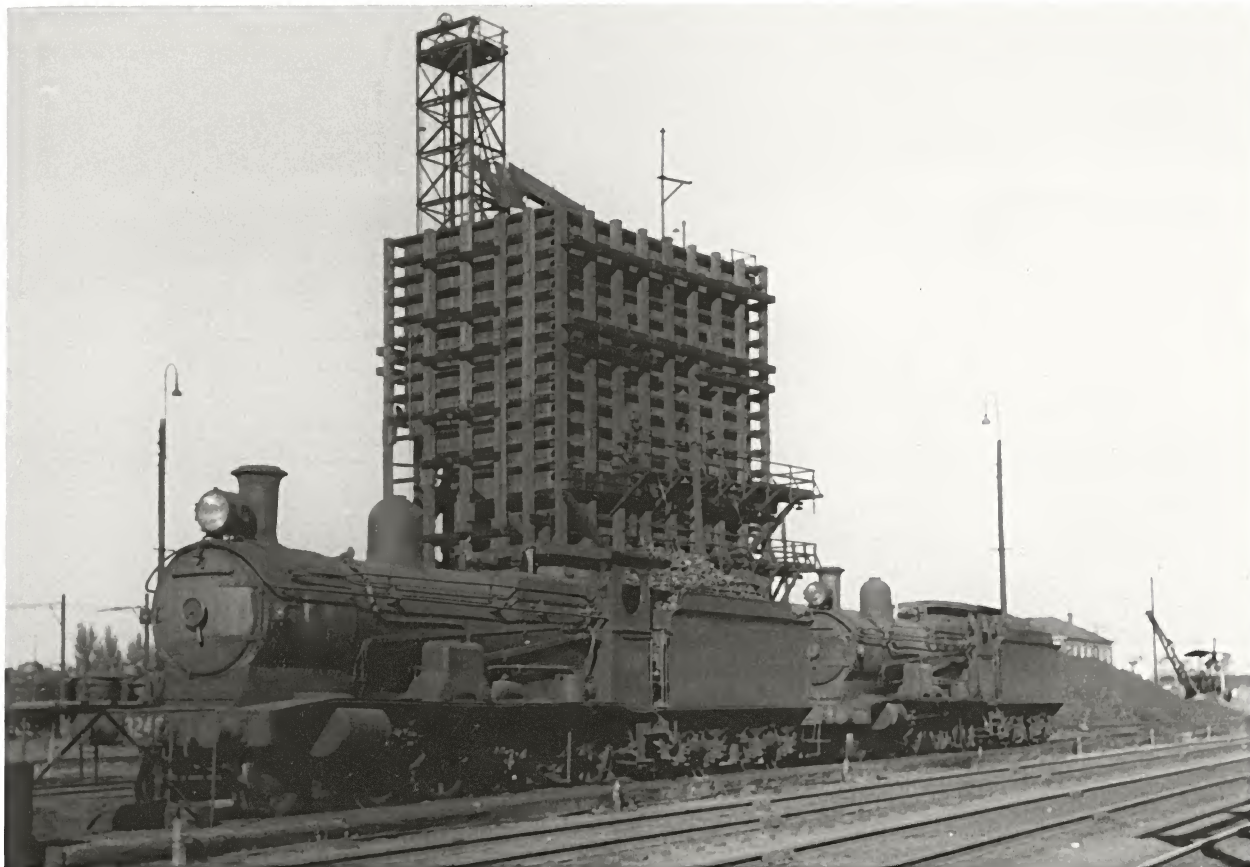


3358, 3055 and 3249 stand on adjacent roads radiating from the 75ft. turntable at Parkes loco. Note the coal stage and roundhouse in the background. Thursday, 28 December 1961.

Above Right: Low-framed 32 class engines 3248 and 3359 stand in front of the large coal hoist at Dubbo loco on the afternoon of Thursday, 28 December 1961. Three-ton, steam coal grab 1061 is located at the coal storage area at extreme right of photo.

Superheated engine 3020 stands outside the western end of the iron shed at Dubbo loco late in the afternoon of Thursday, 28 December 1961. 3020 was being prepared to work a train westward during the evening. 3020 was one of eight superheated 30Ts which did not have the common drumhead smokebox. Like all Dubbo-based 30Ts, 3020 is fitted with a small tender, this one being a former 32 class tender.





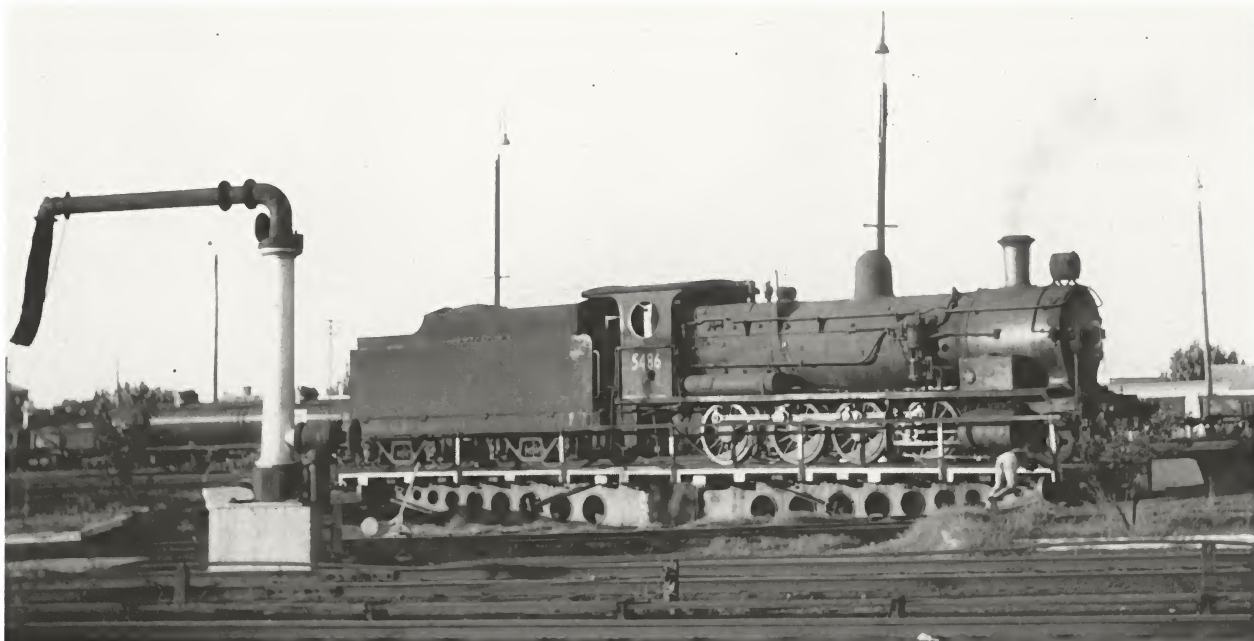
ever, as far as I am aware, it never worked again. Many of the 32 class engines seen at Dubbo were formerly Eveleigh engines.

We stayed overnight in a budget motel at Dubbo, thus getting at least one night's decent sleep. As it turned out, it was to be the only one in five nights away! There was no chance to sleep in though as we had to set off early in the morning of Friday, 29 December on the rail motor service to Binnaway (No.3), departing Dubbo at 7.30am. A quick inspection of Dubbo loco early on the Friday morning revealed that a good deal of action had occurred. The following engines had departed overnight: 3009, 3020, 3032, 3122, 3385 and 3618 while the following had arrived: 3031, 3235, 3245, 3274, 3387 and 3822. It would be fair to assume that 3822 had arrived from Lithgow on No.59 Through Mail. One of the superheated 30Ts would have departed Dubbo at around 3.45am on No.91 pick-up goods to Nevertire and Warren.

The rail motor on the service to Binnaway was replaced by a 2-car diesel train and, after departure at 7.30am, we sat through a long uneventful trip. At Merrygoen, the junction where the line from Dubbo joins the line from Mudgee to Binnaway, we crossed Mudgee engine 3144 on an up goods. This was probably No.44, a conditional goods which ran between Binnaway and Mudgee, tabled to fast stock speed. Merrygoen was an important staff station and crossing place with a crossing loop, goods siding

with loading bank, silo siding, back road, stock siding and an elevated engine siding with a 60ft. turntable. On most steam-hauled trains, engines took water at Merrygoen's ample watering facilities.

When we arrived at Binnaway at 10.50am, we noted former Eveleigh engine 3244 in the yards at the head of a goods train. Behind 3244's tender was a four-wheel water gin and a load composed essentially of loaded RU and BWH wheat wagons. This goods left shortly after, bound for Werris Creek. The diesel train pulled up at Binnaway station just behind No.63 Mail which had arrived earlier and detached the sleeping car. Its load for the run to Coonabarabran was now MCE and MHO, the MCE still retaining its crown lights and looking suitably old and majestic. At the head of the train was superheated 3011 with large, bogie tender. 3011 was one of eight 30Ts which, when superheated, did not receive the common drumhead smokebox. Rather, this group, consisting of 3011, 3020, 3049, 3051, 3058, 3064, 3089 and 3090 had their frames built up to give full length support for the smokebox. As such, the front had a more "modern" look, not unlike the final version of superheated 50 class engines. In the recent past, 3011 had moved around quite a lot throughout NSW, being successively allotted to Cootamundra, Parkes and now on loan to Mudgee depot. It was still officially allotted to Parkes depot but after going through Eveleigh workshops late in 1960 was loaned to Mudgee, pre-



3098, complete with small six-wheel 16 class tender, drifts around the curve near Dubbo East Junction at the head of the up Coonamble passenger connection to No.46 Coonamble Mail, soon to depart Dubbo for Sydney. Behind 3098 are MHO, FS, BS. Thursday, 28 December 1961.

sumably while Mudgee's 3087 was undergoing repairs at Bathurst. It was later transferred to Mudgee and continued to work out of that depot for several years.

A new crew, from Binnaway depot, took over 3011 on the mail for the trip to Coonabarabran and return to Binnaway. We departed Binnaway on this train at 10.55am for the 30 mile 68 chain journey to Coonabarabran. Over this distance the line rose

from 1339ft. above sea level to 1669ft., though with its light load of about 85 tons, one would not expect the superheated 30T to be overtaxed. Yet the timetable allowed 1 hour 10 minutes for this journey. A good deal of the countryside traversed by the line between Binnaway and Coonabarabran is quite scenic as it follows closely the course of the Castlereagh River. There were three "stations" en route, namely Murrawal, Deringulla and Ulamambri, the last of



The early evening shadows are lengthening as 3809 rounds the curve at Dubbo East junction with No.46 up Coonamble Mail, composed of FS, MAL, BS, FS, MHO, KP, TP. Note that the signal is cleared for the line to Orange via Wellington. The 38 will work through to Lithgow with a crew change at Bathurst. Thursday, 28 December 1961.



The fireman has been busy attending to the fire of 3018 as it reverses past the water column near the coal stage while shunting in Dubbo yard. The yard shunters at Dubbo were usually 30T class engines and they typically faced the west. Thursday, 28 December 1961.

The late afternoon sun shines brightly on Bathurst engine 5486, which is being turned on the 60ft. manually operated turntable at Dubbo depot, after having worked in No.253 goods from Orange, via Wellington. Thursday, 28 December 1961.





Werris Creek engine 3244 with four-wheel water gin behind the tender stands in Binnaway yards waiting to depart for Werris Creek with a bulk wheat train. Friday, 29 December 1961.

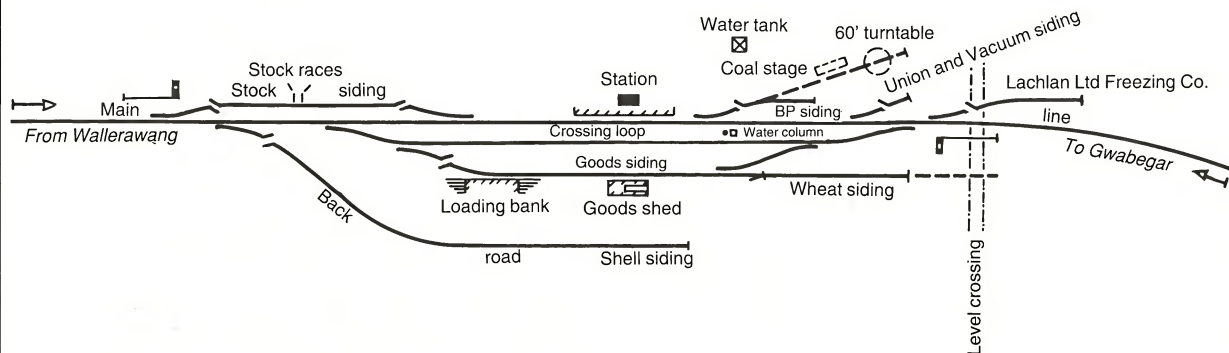
these being the only one attended. Although manned, Ulamambri was not a staff station. We stopped only at Ulamambri on the outward journey for several minutes for a local family to pick up some parcels which the guard retrieved from the MHO. Ulamambri had much in common with many western NSW country railway centres with its single small platform, minimal facilities for the assistant station master and intending passengers, corrugated-iron water tank, goods siding with gantry and impressive grain handling facilities, including large concrete wheat silos. Several BWH trucks were alongside the silos to transport the wheat harvest that was being brought to the terminal by a large number of motor lorries. The crew of 3011 permitted us a cab ride between Ulamambri and Coonabarabran, arriving at the latter at 12.05pm.

Coonabarabran had a fairly modest station for a town of its size, the necessary buildings being of timber and corrugated iron construction. The platform itself was faced with hardwood. The railway complex at Coonabarabran included a crossing loop, stock siding, goods siding with large goods shed and petroleum sidings. There was no longer a turntable

at Coonabarabran (the original 60ft. turntable had long been removed together with a small coal stage) so 3011 had to return to Binnaway tender-first. In preparation for this, 3011 simply took water at the water column at the Gwabegar end of the yards, ran around the small train and coupled to the MHO, prior to departure at 1.30pm. Due to the slower tender-first running, the train was allowed 1 hour 41 minutes for the return trip to Binnaway, even though much of the run was downhill. The working timetable specified a maximum speed of 20mph running tender-first for a 30T with bogie tender.

The crew invited us to return to Binnaway in the cab of 3011, an offer we gladly accepted. With tender-first running it was quite a different experience looking forward over the tender and looking back along the engine to see the small train. I can clearly remember the leisurely run back from Coonabarabran, particularly when steaming slowly past the Castlereagh River, little more than a creek at this locality. The line runs very close to the river in places and I recall one instance where the driver called out to us, "Look, there's a platypus". I hurried across the cab from the fireman's side to look but

Coonabarabran





saw only ripples. The Castlereagh River valley is particularly attractive and we enjoyed the "air-conditioned" run back to Binnaway on this very warm day. We helped with the minimal firing required to get the small train from Coonabarabran to Binnaway.

Shortly after arrival at Binnaway, 3011 stowed

the MHO and MCE, uncoupled, and proceeded to loco for servicing. Shunting in the yards was 3378 which had worked in from Mudgee on what appeared to be a special goods. We were anxious to inspect Binnaway loco as we had insufficient time to do so on the outward journey and we could see that there were quite a few 32 class engines there.

Above: *The sleeping car has been detached from No.63 Mail, the crew has been changed and super-heated 3011 stands at the head of MCE and MHO as No.63 prepares to depart Binnaway station for Coonabarabran. In the foreground (left) are refuelling facilities for diesel trains and rail motors while Binnaway station's supply of coal for heating purposes can be seen at left centre. Friday, 29 December 1961*

Right: *3011 stands at Ulamambri station at the head of No.63 Mail to Coonabarabran on Friday, 29 December 1961.*





Left: A view from the fireman's side of the cab of 3011 as it trundles along, tender-first, hauling No.54 Mail between Murrawal and Binnaway. Friday, 29 December 1961

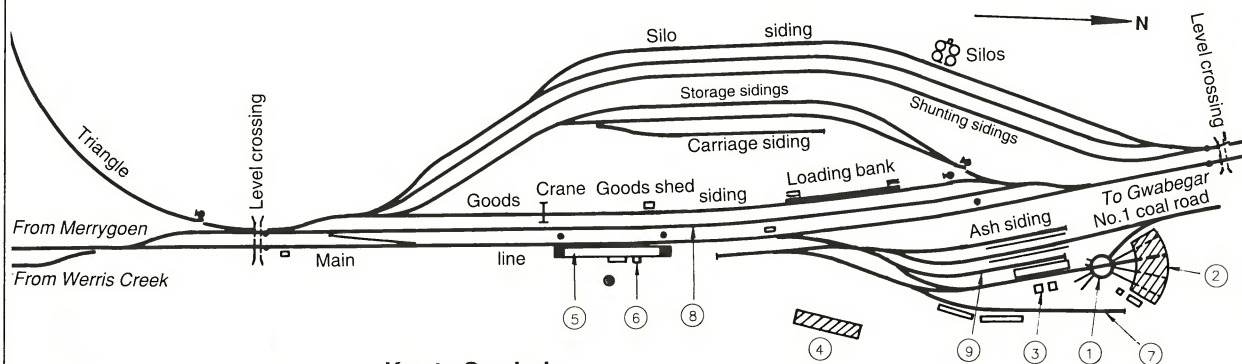
Right: Having just arrived from Coonabarabran with No.54 Mail, 3011 stows the MCE and MHO prior to proceeding to loco for servicing. Binnaway loco can be seen in the background at left of photo. Friday, 29 December 1961

Below Right: Dubbo engine 3298 stands on one of the roads radiating from the 60ft. turntable at Binnaway loco on Friday, 29 December 1961. Note the S trucks laden with coal on the road behind 3298. These trucks supplied coal for locomotive purposes and were placed alongside three-ton coal grab 1064 which was used to coal steam locomotives at Binnaway. Friday, 29 December 1961.

Binnaway had an impressive loco, reflecting its status and location at the centre of lines radiating to Gwabegar, Werris Creek, Mudgee and Dubbo. We were not surprised, therefore, to find engines based

at Mudgee, Dubbo and Werris Creek depots either in loco or working through. While at Binnaway loco the thought crossed my mind that this was the last stamping ground of the Baldwin-built 23 class, the

Binnaway 1946



Key to Symbols

1. 60ft. turntable
2. Four road sector engine shed
3. Water tanks (2 x 20,000 gallon)
4. Barracks
5. Station
6. Signal box

7. Repair siding
8. Crossing loop
9. No.2 coal road
- Water column

Based on drawing, Department of Railways,
Office of the Signal and Telegraph Engineer (1946)



first 4-6-0 locomotives on the NSW system. They were introduced in 1891 just before the P class but did not survive anywhere near as long, the last 23 class engine, 2304, being withdrawn in 1946. Several of their tenders survived longer, together with the tenders from other scrapped Baldwin-built engines, accompanying some 12, 19 and 30T class engines. One in particular was 0-6-0 engine 1942 which was employed for many years on the steeply graded and sharply curved Tarana-Oberon line.

Binnaway loco depot was constructed in 1925.

The roundhouse was a four stall sector shed with other roads radiating from a 60ft. turntable. Each of the four roads in the roundhouse had an inspection pit, the No.1 road being equipped with a drop pit. Also in loco were two elevated water tanks, coal storage roads, an ash siding and a vertical bin for storing dried sand. This sand bin was positioned next to No.1 coal road which had an ash pit; engines were typically serviced on this road. At the rear of the depot, furthest from the main line, was a repair siding with inspection pit. The accident van was







3011 is being serviced at Binnaway loco prior to taking out No.54 Mail to Mudgee. Here three-ton coal grab 1064 replenishes 3011's tender while other hands are at work de-ashing and cleaning the locomotive. Note the bin of dried sand at right of photo (between 3011's tender and the water gin). This sand bin is believed to have been constructed from the oil tank removed from the tender of an oil-burning 55 class engine. Friday, 29 December 1961.

Above Left: *Class leader 3001 is at the head of No.63 Mail as it approaches Binnaway on Easter Saturday, 25 March 1967. The sleeping car will be detached at Binnaway and 3001 will proceed to Coonabarabran and return to Binnaway with the CS composite sitting car and MHO van.*

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Left: *Superheated Mudgee engine 3001 runs tender-first between Coonabarabran and Binnaway at the head of No.54 Mail on Saturday, 7 January 1967. The delightful old MCE composite sitting car with crown lights and MHO van form the normal load for this train. A maximum speed of 20mph applied to such tender-first running. The train is shown passing through open country between Coonabarabran and Ulamambri.*

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usually stored on this siding. Binnaway had no engines of its own but had 1064, a three-ton steam coal grab on the books of Dubbo depot, used for coaling the many engines from other depots which visited Binnaway. Most of these were 30T and 32 class engines but, at the time, 50 class engines were permitted to work into Binnaway from Werris Creek and Dubbo. It was not until later in the 1960s that 50 class engines were permitted to work between Mudgee and Merrygoen at a maximum speed of 20 mph. 60 class Beyer-Garratt engines, of the "light" axle load variety, were also permitted to work between Dubbo and Werris Creek. At the time of our visit, present in the roundhouse were Dubbo-based 3203, 3224 and 3281 while 3298 was standing outside. Every one of these was a former Eveleigh

engine, much seen and photographed in and around Sydney several years earlier. 3203 and 3281 had worked in to Binnaway during the day from Dubbo. A highlight of our stay at Binnaway was watching 3011 being coaled by 1064. These vertical-boilered steam coal grabs at work were a sight and sound to behold. I remember being enthralled watching similar coal grab 1058 in action coaling 3082 and 5597 early one morning at Cootamundra loco one year previously. After coaling and other servicing was complete, 3011 was turned ready to resume the journey to Mudgee at the head of No.54 Mail.

As we walked back to the station later in the afternoon, around 5pm, we noted that Dubbo engine 3340 had worked in from Werris Creek on a goods. 3340 had a bogie water gin behind its tender and



Above: Having just uncoupled from a goods train from Dubbo, 3267 proceeds up the grade into Binnaway loco for servicing. It would appear that 3267 may have a borrowed tender. The building at right of picture is the barracks. Friday, 29 December 1961.

Above Right: A view of Binnaway loco showing the four stall sector shed containing from left to right, 3203, 3224 and 3281. On the 60ft. turntable, 3011 is being turned in preparation for its return to Mudgee at the head of No.54 Mail. Friday, 29 December 1961

Below Right: Looking impressive in the late afternoon sun at the head of No.54 Mail, 3011 stands at Binnaway station just prior to departure for Mudgee. 3011's load is ACS, MCE and MHO, forming the basis for the up Mudgee Mail. Friday, 29 December 1961.

detached itself and the gin from its train before proceeding to loco for servicing. Also in the yard positioning its load was 3267 which had arrived on a goods train from Dubbo. Again, 3267 was a former Eveleigh engine. It, too, uncoupled from its train and proceeded to loco for servicing. The yards at Binnaway appeared very substantial and are, in fact, larger in size than at other locations on the Wallerawang-Gwabegar line. In addition to the locomotive facilities, the yards contain a crossing loop, goods siding, carriage and storage sidings, silo sidings and shunting sidings. Binnaway has always been an important staff station and crossing place. A major problem for through-working of trains between Dubbo and Werris Creek is that the lines from both Dubbo and Werris Creek enter Binnaway from the same direction. Just to the south of Binnaway station a triangle was constructed, mainly for the reversal of whole trains to and from Werris Creek to facilitate through-working. It is understood, however, that such working was abandoned at a very early stage owing to the danger of propelling trains over level crossings out of sight of the driver.

Returning to the station we partook of some refreshments from the small facility at the rear of the platform. In the meantime, 3011 had marshalled the train for the journey to Mudgee, due to depart at 5.55pm. The load now was ACS composite sleeping/sitting car, MCE and MHO, about 130 tons. The working timetable specified that No.54 was

timed to be worked from Binnaway to Mudgee by a 30T class engine (fitted with electric headlight) with a load of 170 tons. An interesting feature of Nos 63 and 54 mails was that each train was to stop at mileages 220 miles 0 chains and 226 miles 50 chains to pick up or set down school children. These children would have had an extremely long day as No.63, on the forward journey, was due to pass these stopping points (between Puggoon and Birriwa) at about 7.30am while No.54, on the return journey, was due at about 8.20pm. On the day we were there, No.54 Mail looked very impressive standing at Binnaway station with the late afternoon sun streaming down on it. We would have liked to travel on this train but we had to catch No.5 diesel train to Werris Creek which departed at 6pm. Reluctantly, we left Binnaway on this "lesser" form of transport for the next facet of our tour, looking forward to more steam action later that night between Werris Creek and Armidale aboard the down Brisbane Express via Wallan-garra. This was by no means a certainty as major trains normally worked by steam locomotive were occasionally and randomly worked by a diesel. Nevertheless, we were hopeful.

The 2-car diesel train service between Werris Creek and Gwabegar and return ran on Mondays and Fridays. The numbering of this train en route must have been somewhat confusing for the railway staff involved. On Fridays, the day we travelled, this diesel train, as No.6, departed Werris Creek at





Facing towards Glen Innes, 3322 simmers quietly in the poorly-lit engine shed at Armidale loco on Saturday, 30 December 1961.

Werris Creek engine 5182 arrives at Armidale in the morning of Saturday, 30 December 1961 with a down goods, composed substantially of empty CW cattle trucks. On arrival at Armidale 5182 was detached and proceeded to loco.





A view of the Sydney end of Armidale loco depot showing the three through road engine shed and the road with drop pit on the right. The coal hoist can be seen at the extreme left. In the shed are 3322 (in the dark) and 5192, while 3503 stands in the open behind the shed. Broadmeadow engine 3503 had brought in No.17 Brisbane Express via Wallan-garra from Werris Creek earlier in the morning. Saturday, 30 December 1961.

Armidale engine 3284, complete with special shunting truck L163, shunts the down goods train which had been brought into Armidale yard by 5182. At extreme left, 5182 can be seen in loco while the station is on the extreme right. Saturday, 30 December 1961





Above: Uralla station was the timetabled location for No.24 up Northern Tablelands Express to cross No.13 down Glen Innes Mail. Here, 3534 at the head of No.13 can be seen passing the four-car DEB set of the Express which is standing in the loop. Saturday, 30 December 1961

Right: Three-ton, vertical-boilered, steam coal grab 1075 has been at work in the coal storage sidings at Werris Creek loco depot. Here, it is idle on Saturday, 30 December 1961.

Below: Werris Creek depot's 30-ton accident crane 1050, its jib support vehicle and the accident vans stand in a siding at Werris Creek loco on Saturday, 30 December 1961.



6.15am and arrived at Binnaway at 9.25am. After a 30 minute stay at Binnaway for loading, refreshment and comfort purposes, the same train departed as No.5 for Gwabegar. It arrived at Coonabarabran at 10.55am to await the arrival of No.63 Mail at 12.05pm. After exchange of mail, parcels and minor goods items, the diesel train (still No.5) departed Coonabarabran at 12.35pm for eventual arrival at the Gwabegar terminus at 2.24pm. On the return journey, as No.6, it departed Gwabegar at 2.45pm and arrived at Binnaway at 5.40pm. It departed Binnaway at 6.00pm as No.5, scheduled to arrive at Werris Creek at 9.02pm.

The diesel train ambled along, covering the 92½ mile journey in a little over three hours, most of which was in darkness. During this time we chatted with the driver who eventually stopped and dropped us off at Werris Creek South Box, close to Werris Creek loco. Our arrival at Werris Creek was shortly after 9pm and we had about 90 minutes to wait until No.17 Brisbane Express via Wallan-garra arrived. It was a little cooler than it had been earlier in the day. We made another of our night-time inspections of loco, this time at Werris Creek. Present were 1050, 1075, 3038T, 3244, 3503, 3527, 3534, 3535, 3674, 5056, 5088, 5133, 5165, 5212, 5351 and 5446. Stored were 2705, 3072T, 3078T, 3351 and 5231. 5393 was yard shunter.

After walking to Werris Creek station we observed 3624 bringing in No.17 with load of TRC, TRC, TRC, CS, FS, TAM, BS, MHO, HKL at about 9.54pm. The "Pig" would have worked through from Broadmeadow and was detached at Werris Creek

along with the three TRCs during the thirteen minute scheduled stop for refreshments and for engine and crew-changing. I understand it was regular practice for No.17 to bring up to three empty TRCs to Werris Creek where they were detached and taken further north, to the meat works at Guyra or Tenterfield, by goods train. Similarly, the up Express, No.18, typically conveyed one to three TRCs loaded with refrigerated meat all the way from Tenterfield or Armidale. Broadmeadow engine 3503 replaced 3624 at the head of No.17 with the load now reduced to CS, FS, TAM, BS, MHO, HKL, six cars, approximately 235 tons. The HKL was an interesting, "old looking" postal van, with provision for two men to sort mail, plus a guard's compartment. An HKL was normally attached to Nos 17 and 18 mails between Werris Creek and Glen Innes. Being Christmas holidays, the HKL probably came all the way from Sydney.

We departed Werris Creek at 10.07pm feeling tired but looking forward to the 104 mile trip to Armidale, even though it was late at night. 3503 was immediately working hard after leaving Werris Creek as the train ascended Warrigundi bank. After a short stop at Currabubula, we arrived at Tamworth at 10.56pm where ten minutes were allocated for refreshment purposes at the R.R.R. During this stop, we asked 3503's driver for a cab ride. He replied "Come on up at Kootingal", which was about 11 miles distant and 1381ft. above sea level. At Nemingha we crossed No.12 up Glen Innes Mail with 3513 hauling six cars.

It was a pleasantly cool evening when we joined



the crew at Kootingal at about 11.30pm during a stop lasting five minutes while 3503 took water. This turned out to be a really good cab ride, my first long ride in a "Nanny". It was made even more memorable by being at night. At Limbri we crossed an up goods hauled by a Standard Goods engine. This was probably No.50 fast stock train tabled to cross No.17 express at Danglemah, the next station further north. Just after Limbri tunnel, the steep climb over the Moonbi Ranges commenced. 3503 worked hard on the grade between Limbri and just beyond Wollun, with the fireman glad of some extra help with the firing. Over this lengthy stretch of track, it was an almost continuous uphill slog, with grades typically between 1 in 40 to 1 in 50, punctuated with several short downhill runs and stretches of easier grades. It was a great experience to respond to the fireman's request to "put on a quick fire" on the grade and watch the orange/red-tinged smoke erupt from the funnel and stream back over the tender and train in the coolish night air. This was mid summer and I could only imagine how freezing it may be in mid-winter on this train. I remember the fireman giving us instruction on how and precisely when to work the injectors and the particular care he took in keeping the floor of the cab in spotless condition as well as settling the dust on the coal in the tender by liberal use of the hot water hose. Five minutes only were allocated for locomotive purposes at Woolbrook where 3503 took water. This was between 12.39am and 12.44am. After a stop at Walcha Road at about 1.00am, some more climbing took us to Wollun (3555ft. above sea level) from which it was then an easier run into Armidale (3265ft. above sea level) but with several adverse stretches of 1 in 50. It was about 2.15am when we arrived at Armidale where 3503 was detached and replaced by Armidale engine 3279 for the long run to Tenterfield and possibly on to the border at Wallan-garra. The working timetable specified that No.17 express was to be worked by a 53 or superheated 50 class engine from Tenterfield to Wallan-garra, timed to convey a load of 350 tons. I have been told that, in earlier days, a number of goods vehicles were conveyed on this train, running virtually as a mixed, between Tenterfield and Wallan-garra, hence the use of the Standard Goods engine. It is a pity we never went further north on this train. It must have been one of the great rail journeys in NSW in steam days.

Although we were very tired, we made a quick inspection of Armidale loco in the pre-dawn darkness. In the shed were 3322 and 5192, both recently allotted to Armidale depot while 3284, also an Armidale engine, was outside along with the recently arrived 3503. At first light we saw more clearly the layout of Armidale station, yard and loco all in close proximity. The depot was relatively small, comprising a galvanised iron engine shed with three through roads and one part road with drop pit. At about 8am, 3284 left loco to shunt the yards. Armidale engine 5047, with small tender, was stored in a siding nearby with some four-wheel

timber ash trucks. 5047 had been in and out of storage at Armidale for some time and appeared to be in reasonable condition. However, it never worked again. Armidale depot's working allotment at the time was: 4/32, 4/50 (superheated). This was a significant decline on the 5/32 and 8/superheated 50 in June 1958, before diesels had made a major impact.

Later in the morning, around 8.30am, Werris Creek engine 5182 brought in a lengthy mixed goods composed mainly of empty CW cattle trucks. This was probably No.119 goods which would have departed Werris Creek around 11.00pm the previous evening. After stopping opposite the station, 5182 was uncoupled and proceeded to loco. Just before we left Armidale, 3284 with special shunting truck L163 coupled to its front drawhook commenced shunting the goods train.

We departed Armidale at 9.10am aboard No.22 Northern Tablelands Express, a four car air-conditioned diesel train (DEB set) between Armidale and Werris Creek. Shortly after, at Uralla, we crossed No.13 Glen Innes Mail hauled by 3534 which we had seen the previous evening in Werris Creek loco. Behind 3534 were MFE, TAM, BS, LFX, MHO. Between Woolbrook and Kootingal we saw the rugged terrain of the Moonbi Ranges that we had passed through in darkness the previous evening while in the cab of 3503. It was not difficult to be impressed by the construction of the line through such steeply sloping country. The line is characterised by numerous cuttings through solid granite, countless embankments and almost continuous curves, many of relatively low radius. As we passed West Tamworth we noted 5446 in the yard. We eventually arrived at Werris Creek at 11.48am.

We had until 2.04pm before our diesel train to Narrabri departed so we again inspected the impressive loco at Werris Creek, this time in broad daylight. Present at Werris Creek were: 1050 (30-ton accident crane), 1075 (3-ton coal grab), 3038T, 3244, 3513, 3535, 3624, 3630, 3640, 5056, 5088, 5133, 5165, 5210, 5212, 5361 and 5385 while 5393 was still shunting the yards. While we were inspecting loco, 5393 was replaced in the yards by Armidale engine 5210. At the time Werris Creek depot's working allotment was: 2/10, 3/30T, 1/32, 1/50 (superheated) and 14/48. The 48 class diesels were employed substantially on the north-west branch lines radiating from Werris Creek, Narrabri and Moree. Before the introduction of the diesels Werris Creek depot had the following working allotment (as at 1 June 1958): 1/10, 4/30T, 6/32, 7/50 (superheated) and 6/53.

We caught the diesel train to Narrabri, a 3-car DEB set from No.23 Northern Tablelands Express, departing Werris Creek at 2.04pm in the middle of a severe cloudburst which had moved in from the north-west. When we reached the Breeza plains we found a great deal of flash flooding had occurred in the low lying land. There were torrents of water banked up behind and, in places washing through, the lightly ballasted track. The line appeared to be



5056, 5212, 3630 and 3244 stand out in the open at Werris Creek loco on roads radiating from the 105ft. turntable. Saturday, 30 December 1961

in some danger of washing away but, after the driver stopped the train for a period, the guard walked ahead of the train to ensure the track was safe for a slow, cautious passage. The diesel train eased its way gingerly along the track in this flooded section and resumed normal speed once this had been safely negotiated. It was still very dark and threatening outside and our much looked-forward-to part of the trip to Narrabri West was looming as a disappointment. That is precisely how it turned out.

We finally arrived at Narrabri Junction at about 4.54pm, 37 minutes late, and walked to Narrabri West, a distance of about half a mile. It was not raining but was very dark indeed. Photography was almost impossible with the camera and film I possessed, and all my photographs were under-exposed, so much so that they cannot be reproduced satisfactorily to accompany this essay. Busy shunting the yard was Narrabri West engine 3019, a saturated 30T with six wheel ex-16 class tender. The only other engine seen in steam was Narrabri West engine 3040 which arrived at about 5.10pm on a goods from Narrabri. It was a shame to see the many stored engines at Narrabri West, showing that an end had come to the days when the 12 and 27 class engines worked in and out of the depot. Stored were 1232, 2701, 2703, 2704, 2707 and 2708. At the time, Narrabri West depot had the following working allotment: 1/10, 2/30T. We saw no evidence

of 1063, a three-ton steam coal grab which was supposed to be on Narrabri West's allotment. To illustrate the impact that the 48 class diesels had made to steam working in the far north-west of NSW, in June 1958 Narrabri West depot's working allotment was 1/25, 6/27 and 3/30T while Moree depot had 8/30T, 2/32 and one saturated 50. In December 1961, Moree had no steam engines allotted to it.

Disappointed with the premature darkness and the minimal steam action at Narrabri West, we boarded the up diesel train from Walgett which departed Narrabri West at 6.33pm and arrived at Narrabri at 6.40pm. There we caught the up North West Mail (No.8) which would take us through the night as far as Broadmeadow. From Narrabri to Werris Creek, No.8 had 4805 in charge of EHO, FS, BS, TAM, FS, MHO, KP. At Werris Creek the 48 was exchanged for 4412, departing at 10.48pm. As the train was diesel-hauled throughout it held no real interest for us. Besides, we were very tired, having skimped on sleep over several days. We tried to get as much rest as we could, trying also to keep our compartment in the carriage free from "intruders" so that we could stretch out. We managed this only as far as Singleton where several army personnel joined our compartment in the FS. We dozed but could not sleep properly as we had to stay awake to ensure we detrained at Broadmeadow. Also, it was hard to sleep knowing a burly soldier was stretched



Above: It is a full house at Port Waratah on Sunday, 31 December 1961, New Year's Eve. Here, in the roundhouse are 5164, 5169, 5148, 5203, 5121 and 5157, all except 5169 being saturated engines. It can be seen that 5203 and 5121 are still in steam, presumably after working the previous evening. A notable feature of the roundhouse at Port Waratah was that the engines almost invariably faced the turntable, in contrast to most other roundhouses where engines faced outwards.

Above Right: Armidale engine 5210 has just relieved 5393 as yard shunter in Werris Creek yards. Here it is photographed near Werris Creek South Box. Saturday, 30 December 1961.

Right: Port Waratah depot had a custom of painting the numbers on its own engines vivid white. Former Dubbo engine 3314, recently transferred to Port Waratah, has been so treated. To the right of 3314 is 3343, formerly from Goulburn depot. Both were at the depot "for coal road working only". They were photographed idle at Port Waratah loco on Sunday, 31 December 1961.

Below Right: Saturated 50 class engine 5201 works a pick-up goods train composed of bulk wheat vehicles to Port Waratah on the morning of New Year's Eve, 1961, photographed at Islington Junction.

out in the luggage rack above where I was sitting. Eventually, around 4.20am, the 44 class engine brought the train into Broadmeadow where we disembarked. At Broadmeadow, a second 44 class was added to the mail, presumably for engine balancing purposes, and the two 44s took the train further south. Meanwhile at Broadmeadow station, 4-6-4 tank engine 3048 was waiting on a two-car passenger train to Newcastle.

In the early morning, we walked the 3½ miles to Port Waratah following the rail tracks. It was Sunday, 31 December 1961, New Year's Eve. Accordingly, there was very little activity at Port Waratah loco or yards when we arrived, although the loco was chock-a-block with engines, most of which were not in steam.

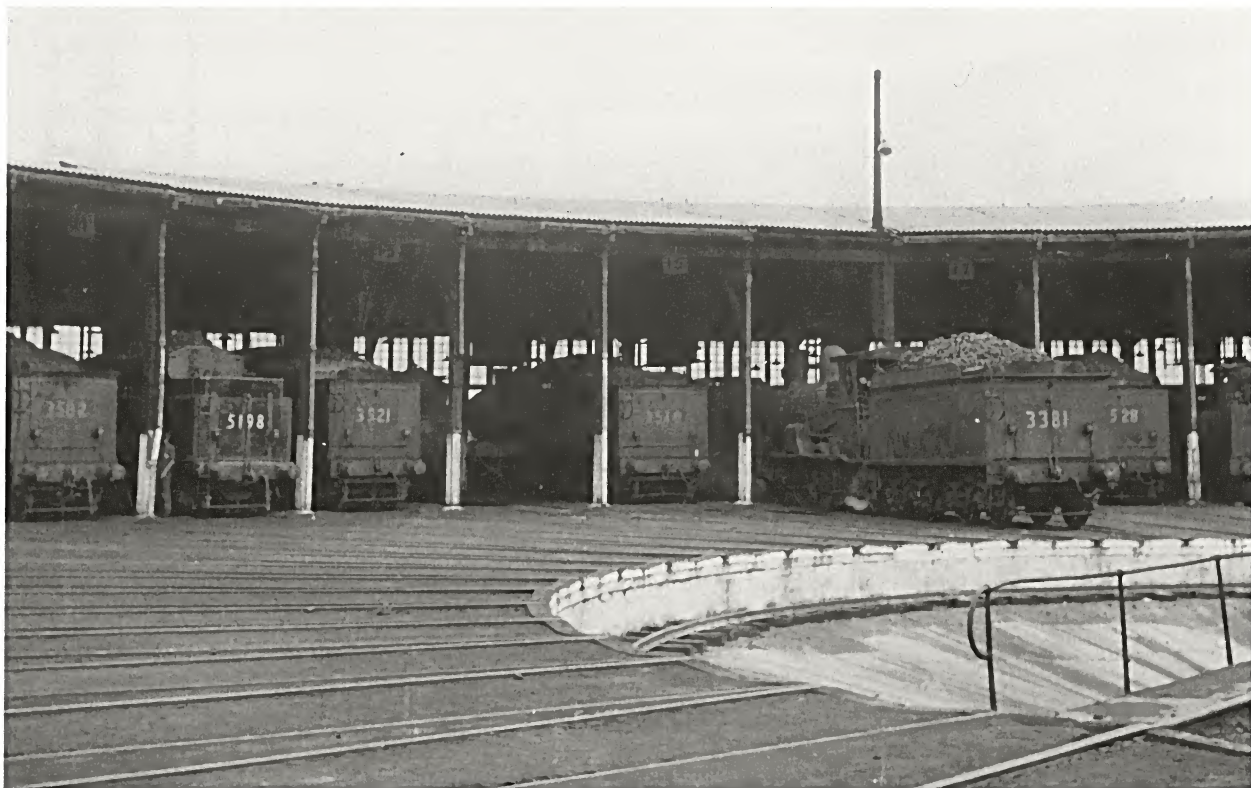
Present at Port Waratah were: 1904, 1959, 3292, 3314, 3315, 3343, 5032, 5034, 5061, 5069, 5074,

5093, 5094, 5095, 5096, 5100, 5104, 5108, 5121, 5134, 5135, 5141, 5147, 5148, 5157, 5164, 5169, 5176, 5179, 5180, 5181, 5183, 5186, 5195, 5203, 5208, 5222, 5242, 5251, 5260, 5275, 5280 and 5387.

Stored were 3234, 3259, 5045, 5050, 5113, 5136, 5236 and 5277. Port Waratah depot had the following working allotment at the time: 3/19, 4/32, 24/ saturated 50, 13/ superheated 50, 1/53.

Most engines present were based at Port Waratah though it was common for some Broadmeadow engines also to be there. Of particular interest in any visit to Port Waratah loco or environs were the four saturated 50 class engines with extended smokeboxes, namely 5179, 5180, 5186 and 5195, 5180 being fitted with a distinctive shunting tender. Also characteristic was the presence of several 32 class engines specified "for coal road working only". It was common at Port Waratah to see 32 class





Above: A view from near the turntable in No.1 roundhouse at Broadmeadow loco, showing 3502, 5198, 3521, 3076, 3510, 3381 and 3528. Note the Mort's Dock turret tender on recently out-shopped 5198. Sunday, 31 December 1961.

Above Right: In the late afternoon sun, 3001 accelerates No.54 Mail away from Binnaway on Saturday, 7 January 1967. A sleeping car has been added to the composite sitting car and MHO van at Binnaway, this consist proceeding to Mudgee where the engine will be changed. The line on the extreme right is the cross-country link to Werris Creek.
R.D. Love

Right: There is much in this picture that typifies the Gwabegar branch line. Engine 3224 is seen on Friday, 6 January 1967 at the head of No.51 pick-up goods at Bugaldie. The 32 class locomotives worked the majority of trains between Binnaway and Gwabegar. The lofty peaks of the Warrumbungle Range can be seen at the left of the picture while, behind the train are cypress pine and ironbark trees, vegetation typical of the Pilliga Scrub. In the foreground is the loop at Bugaldie. The light 60 lb rails on unballasted formation can be seen to advantage. The hardwood sleepers have been laid directly on a slightly raised embankment formed of sandy loam.
R.D. Love

engines from distant depots awaiting workshop attention or on their last legs. I was pleased to see 3314 and 3343, formerly from Dubbo and Goulburn respectively, both still having the covers over their crosshead slides, which was common at some country depots, particularly western depots such as Parkes and Dubbo.

Walking the four miles from Port Waratah to Broadmeadow loco, again carrying our luggage, we were passed at Islington Junction by saturated 5201 on a pick-up goods to Port Waratah. On arrival at Broadmeadow loco, we noticed a long line of stored engines, (many more than on my previous visit to the depot in 1960), on the roads near the roundhouses. Shunting the yards was 5420.

In loco were: 1021, 1072, 1944, 1948, 3013, 3044, 3054, 3067, 3076, 3091T, 3093, 3125, 3134, 3135,

3138, 3229, 3276, 3303, 3372, 3381, 3383, 3386, 3501, 3502, 3508, 3509, 3510, 3515, 3516, 3517, 3519, 3521, 3522, 3527, 3528, 3530, 3531, 3532, 3625, 3664, 3815, 3817, 3819, 5039, 5149, 5150, 5159, 5174, 5175, 5189, 5198, 5235, 5239, 5244, 5253, 5254, 5264, 5266, 5268, 5303, 5338, 5345, 5367, 5376, 5410, 5426, 5456, 5458, 5465, 5469, 5478, 5483, 5485, 5911, 5912, 5915, 5916, 5920, 6006, 6010, 6016, 6017, 6019, 6023, 6024, 6026, 6028, 6035, 6037, 6042. Broadmeadow depot's working allotment at the time was: 2/10, 3/19, 10/30, 2/30T, 9/32, 24/35, 6/26, 4/38, 25/ superheated 50, 1/saturated 50, 25/53, 3/59, 15/60.

Stored were: 1939, 2402, 3057, 3079, 3085, 3095, 3111T (complete with cowcatcher), 3504, 3507, 3511, 3514, 3518, 3520, 3526, 5001, 5196, 5272, 5380, 5382, 5396, 5398, 5430. Three of the stored



53s, namely 5382, 5398 and 5430, had specially balanced driving wheels, illustrating that even these engines were being withdrawn. This was sad to see. It was particularly depressing to see so many "Nannies" stored; only 3520 and 3526 worked again.

After a fairly thorough inspection of Broadmeadow loco we made our way back to the station and caught No.18 up Brisbane Express via Wallangarra which departed Broadmeadow at 9.41am arriving at Gosford at 10.58am where I de-trained. Typically, this train was diesel-hauled on the Sunday, so it held no real interest for us. In fact, so uninterested and tired were we, that neither of us can recall the number of the engine or any details of the trip. So ended a long, arduous but highly rewarding trip which I would dearly love to be able to repeat today, with greater knowledge and a better camera.

Reflections

Looking back on this trip, after the passage of 30 years, I am impressed with the way we somehow kept going even though we were extremely weary, mainly from lack of sleep. Geoff remarked to me recently, when we were reviewing the amount of walking we did from one locality to another, often carrying our luggage, "We must have been mad!". Possibly that sums it all up, but in so doing we had some wonderful experiences that can never be repeated and we captured on film scenes that, also, can never be repeated. We couldn't really complain about the price of our tickets either. We each paid £3/9/6 for the six day trip!

During April 1992, I took a sentimental journey by car over parts of the trip we made in 1961, covering the entire length of the Wallerawang-Gwabegar line and the line between Binnaway and Werris Creek and Werris Creek to Armidale.

Many changes to the railway system have occurred since 1961. Coonabarabran is no longer served by rail; the line between Binnaway and Gwabegar has been "mothballed" since 28 February 1992. The last train, a load of timber sleepers from Baradine and Coonabarabran, was hauled by three 48 class locomotives at a maximum speed of 20 km/h to Binnaway. The former busy railway centre of Binnaway is simply a minor railway junction now. The locomotive depot has closed and all crews have been withdrawn from Binnaway. The roundhouse has long since been demolished, but the turntable, elevated water tanks and sand bin still remain. The whole depot area is overgrown with grass and weeds. I understand the pumps that were used to pump water from the nearby Castlereagh River to the storage tanks at the locomotive depot are still present. These pumps used to be steam-powered. The large brick barracks still exist, receiving limited use from the small number of railway personnel remaining at Binnaway. Binnaway station was closed on 5 June 1990. Safeworking on through goods trains is accomplished by the train crew. The track between Binnaway and Merrygoen has been upgraded but, typically, does not carry a large vol-

ume of traffic on a regular basis. The track between Merrygoen and Gulgong has also been upgraded and this is used to convey a significant amount of traffic from Dubbo and points further west which is proceeding to the eastern seaboard through Ulan and Muswellbrook. The line between Gulgong and Kandos has been "mothballed", services being officially "suspended". The old locomotive depot at Mudgee has been demolished and all track removed, only the turntable remaining. Between the Kandos cement sidings and Wallerawang, the line now conveys a reasonable volume of traffic, mainly block coal trains and cement trains. This track, too, has been upgraded.

Major changes have occurred at once important railway centres such as Portland, where the entire station and exchange sidings for the cement works have been removed. Even the junction station, Wallerawang, with its beautiful old sandstone building and impressive blue and white enamelled station name board "Wallerawang Junction" is showing signs of abandonment, though remnants of the locomotive watering system can still be seen. Former manned staff stations such as Clandulla, Rylstone and Lue have been abandoned, safeworking where required now being undertaken by the crew of each train. Only at Kandos and Merrygoen are the stations manned, a station master still being present at each, though the future at these localities is uncertain. Even the grand old Mudgee station is no longer used strictly as a railway station as, for some time, regular trains have ceased running between Kandos and Gulgong. Fortunately, the station building with '1884' proudly displayed above the front entrance, has been well-maintained as a tourist attraction.

I spoke with the station master at Merrygoen, Mr Bob Bridges, who has been there since 1972, after steam working ceased. He remarked that, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, about 22000 tons per year of refractory clay, from the pit adjacent to the railway yards, were loaded into S trucks at Merrygoen for transport to Newcastle. In those days the silo road, the stock siding and the goods yards in general were extensively used. Merrygoen was an important railway centre, particularly in steam days. The 60ft. turntable and the ash pit remain at Merrygoen. The turntable has been rendered inoperable and it has numerous small cypress pine trees growing through its foundations. Bob Bridges was assistant station master at Ulamambri in 1967 and 1968, during which time about 45 tons per week of superphosphate were unloaded regularly and up to 5000 bales of wool each year were despatched from the small goods yard. The extensive grain handling facilities at Ulamambri received and despatched very large volumes of wheat during the wheat season. He reported that, during his time at Ulamambri, virtually every passenger train brought about 30 parcels, generally small items, to the populace of the small settlement there. He went on to say that the station at Ulamambri had been removed by 1971. Now there is almost no trace of



Dead oil-burner 5920 has been shunted onto Broadmeadow No.2 shed's 105ft. turntable by 3134, the 30 class deputising for normal shed shunter 1021 on Sunday, 31 December 1961. On the extreme right is 1948, a recent replacement from Eveleigh depot for Broadmeadow's stored 1939.

where it was, only the foundations for the large loading gantry remain. The grain handling facilities have been enlarged, but are no longer served by rail. Bob Bridges also spent part of his career at Coonabarabran station as an assistant station master. He remembers well the freezing cold mornings when he was on duty at Coonabarabran 'as No.1 shunter' in 1963, particularly around 6.00am in mid-July with a thick frost on the ground, waiting for the arrival of No.51 pick-up goods from Binnaway. No.51 generally spent about one hour at Coonabarabran, shunting. On arrival, he would climb into the cab of the engine and put on a fire for the crew whilst planning the shunting movements.

I also spoke to Mr Russell Bright who, during his long career with the railways, had worked as a guard at Binnaway in the late 1950s, then as an assistant station master at Binnaway between 1959 and 1963. Later, he "settled down" as station master at Coonabarabran in 1970 where he remained until the station was closed in March 1990. He has many memories of steam working out of Binnaway depot and, particularly, between Binnaway and Coonabarabran and on to Gwabegar. The normal train working between Binnaway and Gwabegar was outlined earlier in this essay. The regular down pick-up goods, No.51, was worked by a 32 class engine which, typically, took water at Coonabarabran (sometimes at Yearinan) and Baradine and then worked the train to the terminus at Gwabegar. The fire on the 32 was banked over-

night while the crew went to barracks. He recalls that the fireman would generally "keep an eye" on the fire on several occasions during the night and, next morning, the engine would work No.22 pick-up to Baradine where the fire would be properly cleaned before proceeding on to Binnaway. There were three watering places on the Binnaway-Gwabegar line, namely at Coonabarabran, Yearinan and Baradine. He reported that the water supply at Yearinan, just "over the mountain" from Coonabarabran, was fed from a natural spring, enabling the tank to be filled by gravitation.

Russell Bright recalls that the 60ft. turntable at Baradine received plenty of use, as many trains started and terminated there, probably at least as many as went the full distance to and from Gwabegar. Baradine had substantial timber-cutting and sawmilling capacity as well as much greater grain handling capacity than Gwabegar in steam days. Accordingly, many 32 class engines were turned and serviced at Baradine. In the wheat season, the silos at Baradine required a great deal of emptying, so numerous up and down specials were run. Owing to the steep grade on the up between Bugaldie and Coonabarabran (a total of about 13 miles of 1 in 75), the load that could be hauled by a single 32 class engine was limited to 445 tons, thus requiring a large number of trains to clear the silos. Sometimes, one or more fast stock trains (generally No.240) would be seen during a week, either from Gwabegar or Baradine.



It is the end of the road for a long line of stored locomotives at Broadmeadow depot, photographed next to several out-of-steam 60 class engines on Sunday, 31 December 1961. At the front of the line is former Werris Creek engine 3111, still retaining its cow-catcher. Behind 3111 are 1939 and several 35 class engines. Metal caps, such as that on the funnel of 3111, were used at Broadmeadow on stored engines to exclude rain.

Russell believes that he was at Binnaway towards the end of its heyday and can remember seeing as many as 10 or 12 engines in Binnaway loco on some weekends. During this time, Binnaway had 23 sets of enginemmen and 16 guards. These crews would work to Werris Creek, Mudgee, Dubbo and Gwabegar, or points along those routes. He recalls seeing a 12 class engine from Werris Creek working regularly into Binnaway, and later returning to Werris Creek, with a light load, generally two cars. In his book "Tender into Tank", Ron Preston recounted a trip in 1955 in the cab of Werris Creek engine 1235 hauling CX and EHO between Binnaway and Werris Creek. It is recommended reading.

While our 1961 trip did not take us beyond Coonabarabran on the line between Binnaway and Gwabegar, I inspected what remains of the branch line by car in April 1992. The railway line is still intact though it is rapidly becoming overgrown with grass and weeds. The railway route between Coonabarabran and Bugaldie is quite spectacular, particularly the section "over the mountain" between Coonabarabran and Yearinan which is characterised by steep grades, sharp curves and very narrow, steep-sided rock cuttings through the Pilliga Sandstone. The working timetable issued a special instruction concerning train-working over this section, as follows:

"Owing to the danger involved to Fettleers by trains running before time between Coonabarabran and Bugaldie, through the steep grades and sharp curves, trains on the section named must not (except in cases of mishap) be run before Timetable time during the ordinary hours that Fettleers are on duty. The conditional trains could run at any time, and Fettleers and all concerned must keep a sharp look-out and be prepared for their running, whether advice has been received by them or not."

The station, loop and watering facilities have all been removed at Yearinan. The removal of virtually

all facilities other than the main line and essential loops and sidings at Baradine and Gwabegar has taken place over the entire section between Coonabarabran and Gwabegar. At Baradine, while the station and watering facilities have been removed, the Sellers 60ft. turntable remains although a kurrajong tree is growing through the centre of it. The turntable siding has been disconnected. Little remains at Kenebri, the station having been removed, but its large nameboard has been relocated to beside the main road in the centre of the village. The terminus, Gwabegar, has not fared much better. The station has been removed, but the main line and crossing loop remain, along with the timber siding. The triangle, formerly used for turning steam locomotives, and sometimes the entire train if it wasn't very long, is still intact.

It was interesting to view the track formation at several points along the line between Coonabarabran and Gwabegar. Most of the rails I saw carried the marking

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along with the date of manufacture, which ranged from 1917 to 1922. The rails I observed were the original 60lb. variety, still apparently in good condition. The rails were laid on hardwood sleepers, of which there would be no shortage in this area where ironbark trees abound in the Pilliga Scrub forests. Some sections of the line had been re-sleepered and lightly ballasted with blue metal track ballast. Other sections of the line featured mainly old sleepers laid on a simple earth embankment fashioned out of the sandy loam with no ballast at all. Part of the yard at Gwabegar has been laid with 60lb. rails manufactured in 1894. The Gwabegar branch must surely rate as one of the truly pioneer branch lines. Numerous timber trestles and simple light, unballasted track characterise the line from Binnaway to Gwabegar.

Of all the former stations on the line between

Binnaway and Gwabegar, Coonabarabran has fared the best. When I viewed it in April 1991 (the first since after our 1961 trip) it had not changed greatly. The station buildings were still present and were occupied by railway personnel. The yard was partly overgrown but the main line, loop and goods siding were in good condition and showed signs of recent use. The goods shed, the loading gantry, the elevated water tank and the water column still remained. It was not hard to close my eyes and picture a superheated 30T at the head of an MHO and MCE waiting to haul, tender-first, No.54 Mail back to Binnaway. At that time (April 1991) the occasional goods train ran on the line. Now, they too, have gone . . . I suspect forever!

There are several possible derivations of the name "Binnaway". Perhaps the most favoured is the Aboriginal word "binniaway" meaning "a peppermint tree". Whatever the true meaning is, the town of Binnaway, attractively located beside the Castlereagh River, is now showing the unmistakable signs that it was once a much busier and more important centre. Those were the days when steam motive power was at its peak. The opening of the railway to Gwabegar saw an enormous growth in the town of Binnaway. The numerous sawmills in the Pilliga Scrub forests produced vast quantities of sawn timber. At about the same time, the opening of the line from Dubbo to Werris Creek and the establishment of the locomotive depot at Binnaway saw an influx of staff from other parts of NSW to operate the new railway services. According to Robyn Bull, in her book "Binnaway by the Castlereagh", the population of Binnaway by the end of 1928 was about 750. This was an increase of almost 400 in five years. Twenty houses were erected in the town in 1927 and thirty more in 1928. The gradual curtailment of railway services has meant a great deal to the town of Binnaway. In

steam days, much of the town's employment was based on the railway. Generation after generation of many families derived employment from the railway at Binnaway. At the time we visited Binnaway on our trip in 1961, this employment would still have been substantial and Binnaway continued as an active steam depot through to the mid 1960s. In 1967, the 48 class diesels took over from steam locomotives and, from that time, a decline occurred in railway employment. This had a significant effect on the economy of the town. This effect has continued to the stage where minimal employment in the railways at Binnaway is now available.

While compiling this account of our trip, I asked former Werris Creek Special Class Driver Bruce Griffey, who had extensive experience in working the mail and express trains in steam days, whether he regarded the working of a 35 class on No.17 Brisbane Express via Wallan-garra as a hard trip. His reply was as follows:

"A hard trip on a 'Nanny' is hardly the word! The climb from Kootingal to Walcha Road was regarded by many as the hardest working in the state. Because the 35s could be temperamental, it was necessary for close cohesion between the driver and fireman. If you got a free steamer it was a breeze, but if you didn't you really knew it."

According to Bruce, the first five miles out of Werris Creek to Warrigundi on this train was hard working and, with the fire being "green" (i.e. not burned-through properly), care had to be taken that the driver did not "pull the fire". Some explanation of this term may help. The fire on a passenger engine was banked right up to the fire-hole door, the bank occupying about one quarter of the length of the firebox. The fire was flat for the remaining three quarters. If everything was going all right it was necessary only to place the coal on this bank and it would be sucked to the front sufficiently, needing



An O class (later 23 class) 4-6-0 passenger locomotive, with cowcatcher and marker lamps, stands at the head of two bogie refrigerator cars on the rabbit freezing siding at Coonabarabran. It is likely the photograph was taken around 1920, the period when the two different refrigerator cars were given the BRC code. In the right foreground are wheels off old horse-drawn wagons used on a light railway during the construction of the line.

Ian Cormie Collection.



In the late afternoon of Friday, 29 December 1961, Dubbo engine 3340 has brought in a goods train from Werris Creek. The engine and bogie water gin have just been uncoupled from the remainder of the train in Binnaway yards and are proceeding to Binnaway loco for servicing. Binnaway yards were busy at the time, 3267 having just arrived on a goods from Dubbo.

Right: *Standing out in the open on roads radiating from Werris Creek loco's turntable are engines 3535, 5385, 5165, 5088 and 5133. There are also several water tanks, of various shapes and sizes, used for providing an auxiliary supply of water to steam locomotives on such lines as Werris Creek - Binnaway as well as for topping up lineside fettlers' tanks. Saturday, 30 December 1961.*

only a few shovels-full down the front. Sometimes too much coal found its way to the front, causing a lump or heap which was not flat. This could be caused by a "pulled fire" where the driver was too anxious, opening his regulator too much too soon, bringing about wheel slip. This lump was called a "turned fire" where the bank was at the front rather than at the back where it should have been. A 35 would not steam properly with the fire at the front, it would simply "lie down" and you had a problem. A "turned fire" required much more work by the fireman who may have to use the fire-irons to straighten the fire and rebuild the bank below the fire hole. Bruce recalls that one Armidale driver had the habit of smelling the fire-irons at Tamworth when he changed over with the Werris Creek crew to see if they had tried to straighten out the fire in case it had been "turned over". Presumably he felt that this would give him a clue on what to expect from the engine in the ensuing hard climb.

Extra care had to be taken to ensure the fire was in good order at Kootingal, a normal stop for water on No.17, prior to commencing the hard working to Walcha Road. It was necessary to ensure you had a full head of steam and a full glass of water entering Limbri tunnel so that you had a fighting chance of making Woolbrook without "sticking up" (i.e. not having sufficient steam and water to proceed). If not, a stop would be necessary to raise steam and water. Bruce remarked that such a stop was fairly common on this run.

The crew-working on No.17 express varied over the years due to changed rosters. Rosters were

devised so that Werris Creek crews could work part of the way on No.17 and then change over with an Armidale crew who had worked either No.12 up Glen Innes Mail or a fast goods train from Armidale. The changeover generally occurred around Tamworth. In this way crews could work back to their home depot without having to "camp" (go to barracks). Some through working to Armidale did occur, however, on No.17.

In the heyday of the Brisbane Express, assistance from Werris Creek or Tamworth to either Walcha Road or right through to Armidale, depending on the load on No.17, was a regular thing. The assistant engine was generally a 32 class, though, on occasions, a 35 was used. Over the years, as the loading became lighter, the need for the assistant engine declined. According to Bruce Griffey, it was still common practice to roster an engine and crew at Werris Creek and Tamworth for such assistance, but generally they were not required. Crews were not notified that they would not be required until the early evening when the train reached Singleton and the signal box at Nundah would ring through to Werris Creek and Tamworth with information on the load on No.17.

Some interesting cars were conveyed on No.17. Bruce recalls that, on Wednesday evenings a BKD prison van was often attached, near the front of the train, this coming through from Sydney. It was either detached at one of the main towns along the route or went right through to Wallan-garra. It returned on the Saturday/Sunday working of No.18. One or more KKG or BKG horse boxes were com-

monly conveyed on No.17. These vehicles, also, may have been detached en-route or worked through to the border. Bruce remarked that one of the rostered regular duties for the Werris Creek shunter was to attach a KL or HKL mail van to No.17. This van typically conveyed two mailmen from Werris Creek (generally to Glen Innes).

While the timetable allowed only five minutes for the engine(s) on No.17 to take water at Kootingal and Woolbrook, Bruce remarked that quite often up to 15 minutes could be required for locomotive purposes, particularly at Woolbrook. It was common to take on half a tender-tank of water at Woolbrook and to clean the fire at the ash pit there. The driver also had to check the bearings and running gear on his engine to ensure there was no overheating. Drivers were supposed to make up the extra time in running which, he added, was quite possible on the timetable provided for the train.

I also asked Bruce Griffey to comment on the use of water gins between Werris Creek and Binnaway. He advised that the only water columns on this line were at Yannergee, almost exactly midway between Werris Creek and Binnaway. (The watering facilities at Yannergee were illustrated in "Byways of Steam - 2", pp 34,35.) Yannergee was "just reachable" with the tender tank, so the gins were carried as an auxiliary supply on all steam-hauled goods trains except fast stock trains. The fast stock trains were given priority in running over other goods trains so the time occupied in running was less, thus using less water. According to Bruce, a driver kept his eye on the water supply in the tender and would only cut the tank in if necessary. Sometimes it would not be used at all. When cut in, the water siphoned through and equalised the level in the tank and tender. For this reason, when taking water, it was necessary to close the cocks at the back of the tender and on the tank and fill each separately. Sometimes, due to a shortage of tanks, a train would leave

Binnaway or Werris Creek without one and meet another train along the route and take its tank. In this case the tank may only be partly full but, due to equalisation, the engine on the other train would have sufficient in its tender to reach its destination. Water gins were also used routinely on the goods services between Gwabegar and Binnaway and between Mudgee and Binnaway. The pick-up goods services, in particular, needed the additional water capacity due to the length of time the engine was on the road. In many cases, the tank was required to fill lineside fettlers' tanks along the route rather than for locomotive needs, particularly between Binnaway and Baradine where there were ample watering facilities en route. However, for trains proceeding beyond Baradine to Gwabegar, where there were no watering facilities, a water gin was usually attached.

Bruce explained further that the water tanks used to fill lineside tanks were not the same ones used for locomotives. The former were referred to as 'traffic' tanks and had a canvas hose coming out the side so that they could stretch to the tank top. They were not long enough to fill several tanks so the train had to be moved to fill each tank separately. A piece of board was laid from the lineside tank to the rail truck to support the flexibility of the hose as, when the valve was opened quickly, the hose would let go and catch the operator by surprise, giving him a good wetting. Depending on the quality of the water available, the water tanks conveying water for human consumption were filled from water columns or, as at Werris Creek prior to the filtration plant being installed, an ordinary hose was used, taking several hours to fill. The locomotive tanks were called, aptly, 'loco tanks' and had a brass valve fitted to each end with a screw-on connection to take the wire-reinforced hoses used as a connection.

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Our Rail Heritage

S Class in Sydney

Robert Booth

Two features of the accompanying photograph of Sydney Yard catch the eye - the preponderance of S class engines and the repeating geometry of the track layout. The photograph was taken not long after the present Sydney station was opened in 1906, probably about 1910. This third attempt to provide a railway terminal for Sydney was a vast improvement on its predecessors.

The main station building, complete with its elegant clocktower, has been the most publicised view of Sydney station, making it an enduring architectural symbol of the NSW Railways. However, the vital internal workings facilitated by the layout of tracks have gone largely unnoticed. This brief article examines the accompanying photograph and seeks to explain the layout of Sydney Yard and other ancillary features.

Financial restrictions delayed the completion of the main sandstone office building and clocktower for 14 years after the station had opened, explaining their absence here. Fortunately, such stringencies did not apply to the arrangement of tracks and signalling, meaning that Sydney station was well equipped to handle a busy timetable of trains in the steam era.

When the present Sydney station was opened, it was approached by three sets of tracks - the up and down Fast lines, the up and down Slow lines and the up and down Illawarra lines. The throat of the yard (known as the grand junctions) was located opposite the Mortuary station, where interconnection between the three sets of lines was provided. Thereafter the lines fanned out but still preserved strict up and down working (apart from shunting movements) until the scissors crossovers close to the entrance to the platforms. The photograph shows five of the six such scissors which accounted for access to twelve of the platforms. Additional pointwork was necessary beyond the right hand scissors to gain access to platforms 13, 14 and 15, but this has been concealed by the suburban train leaving platform 15 for Rockdale. Incidentally, the scissors crossover missing in the photograph is on the left leading to platforms 1 and 2.

The provision of middle roads for platforms 1 to 10 was something new and allowed engines off incoming trains to be released soon after arrival. This avoided congesting the yard by having to shunt the train to free the engine. Thus engines off up trains could be dispatched quickly to Eveleigh for turning

and servicing.

It was not necessary for all tank engines engaged in suburban work to return to Eveleigh between runs and a quicker turn around was made possible by having several water columns, ash pits and coal stages located strategically in the yard.

The closest engine is standing on the Illawarra Coaling Road and judging by the destination board and the headcode discs, it will take the next suburban train to Hurstville. The brackets on the front running plate hold three boards, each having destinations front and back - a stock of six names altogether. The S class (later 30 class) 4-6-4 tank engines hauling a set of American suburban cars were the mainstay of Sydney's metropolitan services during the period.

The adjacent track on the left is the No. 2 Slow Coaling Road. The next turn of duty for the S class engine standing there will be all stations to Homebush. An interesting feature is that the nearest coal stage appears to have been just completed and awaits its first supply of coal. The two coaling roads mentioned are connected to an engine or dock siding where reconditioned engines can wait before attaching to their train for the suburbs. This particular siding was not given a specific name but several others seen in the photograph were. The Fast Engine Dock abuts the end of platforms 2 and 3 and has a four-wheeled brake van stowed on it. The Slow Engine Dock abuts the end of platforms 6 and 7 and the Illawarra Engine Dock abuts the end of platforms 10 and 11.

The left hand coal stage is straddled by the Fast coaling Road and the No. 1 Slow Coaling road. The S class engine standing on the latter line carries a Homebush destination board. No dock siding is provided here, but this was later rectified by the provision of two separate engine sidings, one for each coaling road but these sidings were not interconnected.

Closer examination of the platform area reveals the following, starting from the left.

- Mostly side-loading carriages in the No. 2 mail and parcels dock.
- A CC class (later 13 class) waits to shunt a train out of platform 1.
- An R class (later 18 class) shunter working bunker first displays its exertions as it leaves platform 4 with a train of vans and carriages.
- Light engines, all S class, stand on the Slow

Engine Dock, 7 and 8 Middle Road and the unnamed engine siding.

- The building with two chimneys at the end of platforms 9 and 10 houses the furnace for heating the footwarmers in winter.
- A 40,000 gallon elevated water tank supplying the columns around the yards stands to the right of platform 15.
- The empty sidings beyond the train departing for Rockdale were officially called the Brewery Sidings, so named after Toohey's Brewery nearby. Some of these sidings were replaced later by tracks leading to platforms 16, 17, 18 and 19 which were added to the terminal to cope with peak hour suburban traffic. Their life was short, having to make way for Central electric platforms on a higher level when the City Railway construction was undertaken in the 1920s. The number of terminal platforms reverted to the original 15 which have lasted to the present time.

A view of Sydney Yard from any other angle at this time would have included some of the imposing semaphore signals, the principal examples of which had wooden arms 5 feet long. The signals at the ends of the platforms have been obscured by smoke haze exaggerated by cross lighting. Most of the shunting moves were controlled by revolving ground disc signals. A count of 38 ground discs has been made from the original print. The points and signals for such a large interlocking were power worked by the electropneumatic system from the station box where this photograph was taken. This freed the yard of point rodding and signal wires and permitted the use of miniature levers in the box. The electropneumatic system was devised by Westinghouse and the components were made by McKenzie and Holland, Signal Engineers of Worcester, England. Actual installation was carried out by the railway's own work force.

A feature of the track layout shown here which was relatively short-lived was the scissors crossovers. These were replaced by facing and trailing crossovers in tandem for ease in maintenance and cost of replacement. While there have been many changes to the track layout, the basic arrangements still remain. It reflects great credit on the railway's staff, whose foresight and planning have provided a track capacity which has served Sydney well for 85 years.

Even though the S class were probably the least altered of NSWGR engines throughout their ca-

reers, a number of earlier features are evident here.

- Large oil headlamps (later called marker lamps) placed back-to-front on their brackets during daylight when headcode discs were used instead.
- Countersunk rivets on the smokebox to give a smooth external finish making the engine easier to clean. However, countersunk rivets are harder to remove than the snaphead type during repairs in workshops.
- Cylindrical brass lubricators mounted on the running plate and the smokebox side. The lower lubricator supplied powdered graphite to the cylinder below when the engine was steaming. The smokebox lubricator was a Furness type, which fed oil to the cylinder below when the engine was coasting. These lubricators were superseded in the mid 1920s by Detroit type, sight-feed lubricators mounted in the cab.
- Although not visible in the photograph, the air pump at the time was mounted on the front of the side tanks. These tanks tend to move with the flexing of the engine in motion, causing leaks and fractures in the connecting pipes. The pump was later moved to the smokebox side for more rigid support.
- The lid for the sandbox is situated on the running plate beyond the lubricators. The sandboxes were located under the running plate behind the slide bars. The sandboxes were later positioned in front of the side tanks where the air pump had been.
- The feed water clack valve is mounted on the side of the boiler close to the smokebox.
- Oil containers for lubrication of the driving wheel axle boxes. These containers are mounted on the boiler side just above the hand rail.
- Ramsbottom safety valve. Latterly, some S class were fitted with pop safety valves.
- Whistle protruding from the cab roof. The top level of the whistle is shorter than the later pattern fitted externally in front of the cab and would have had a slightly higher pitch note. The gap between the two halves of the whistle is

greater than later practice.

- The width of the cab roof appears slightly shorter and has distinctly angled gutter strips.

So, even though the photograph does not arrest one's attention as would a classic action shot of a steam train, there is a great wealth of detail for the patient historian to explore.



Photograph overpage.

SRA.



REDFERN YARD



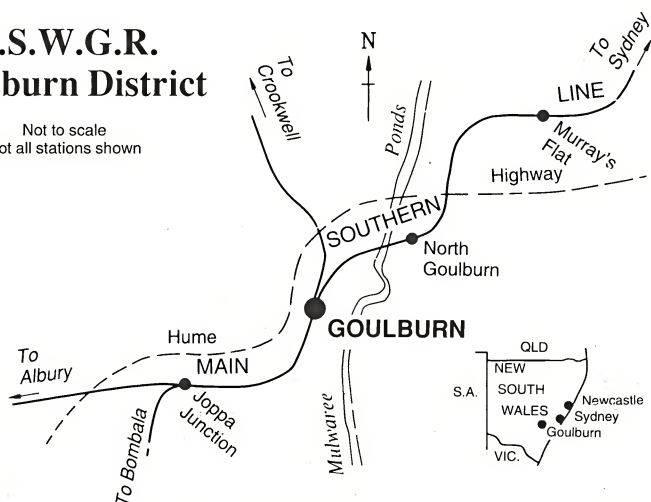
Left: Although George Goddard's regular signalling job during his 15 years in Goulburn was Station Box, most of his twilight working life was spent on the relief roster. That was why he spent his very last shift, on 21 December 1967, in Goulburn North Box. The author, Leon Oberg, was on hand to photograph George for the Goulburn Post newspaper moments before his shift ended.
Leon Oberg

Right: Trains like this one from Picton, hauled by drumhead smokebox 3329, pictured entering Casula station with American suburban set 68 during 1934, were the staple diet when George Goddard worked at Menangle.

W.A.J. Maston.

N.S.W.G.R. Goulburn District

Not to scale
Not all stations shown



RDL



Trials and Tribulations of a Railwayman

A Retired Signaller Recalls a Colourful 44½ Year Service

Leon Oberg

Eighty-four year old retired Goulburn signaller, George Goddard, still remembers his first few weeks of service with the New South Wales Government Railways as if it were yesterday.

Speaking to me from the comfort of his Goulburn home early in 1992, George can, in fact, recall most of his extensive and very colourful 44½ year service.

Raised in Goulburn, George successfully gained employment in his home town as a junior porter, commencing duty on 5 November 1923 on the princely wage of twenty-nine shillings and sixpence for a 48 hour week.

According to George, young junior porters were hired on a six months' probationary period and, to make matters even more nerve-racking, his immediate superior officer, one Clarence, took an instant dislike to his newest recruit. And, as if to reinforce that dislike, George was placed on indefinite night work.

"On the 6pm shift, I was a truck number taker and in those days, when practically everything moved by rail due to the poor state of the roads and lack of road trucks, I regularly had to deal with up to 40 trains a shift, particularly when both wheat and stock movements were at their height.

"In addition to taking the numbers of each train's trucks, their destinations and weights, the junior porter had to equip the brake vans with heavy tail

ropes, four sprags, a water bucket, and see that the tail lamps were full of kerosene and their wicks properly trimmed. As well, the vans had to be fully swept out and in a fit state to accommodate the guard for the trip to Enfield, Flemington or Darling Harbour, which could take up to 10 hours.

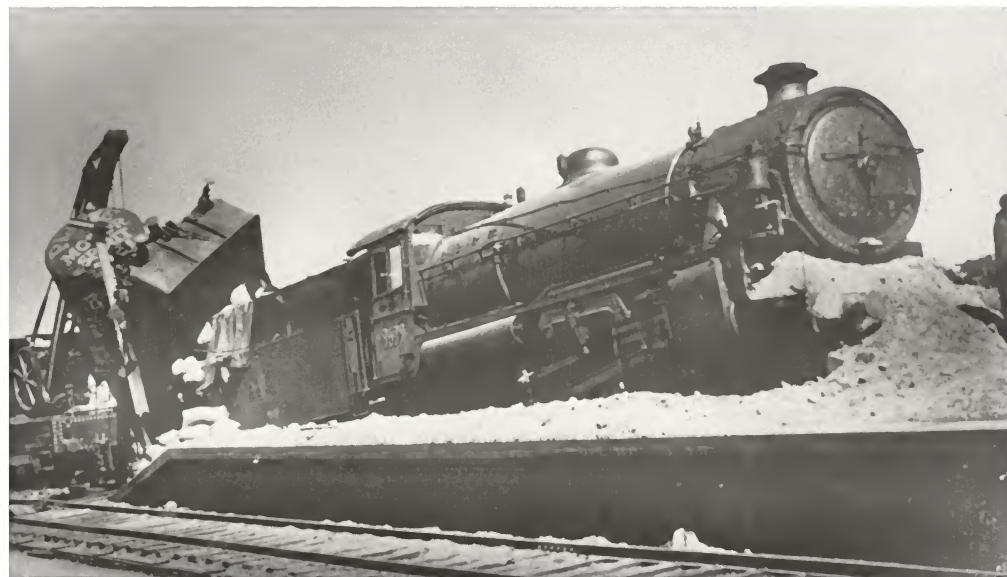
"Guards would not take dirty vans, for they would virtually be living in them due to the slowness of the trains at the time," recalled George.

At that stage, the bulk of the goods was hauled by Standard Goods engines of the T, TF and K classes. (George started with the railway just prior to the 1924 numbering system.) He recalled how the latest locomotive delivery at the time of his starting with the railway was K class No.1430 (which became 5578 the following year).

"And in the years I speak of, the bulk of the goods used to be carried in light four-wheel A, D and S trucks and if the load was not evenly distributed inside the vehicles, they were renowned for jumping off the track while running down some banks," he said.

"After carrying out these duties, the junior porter would return to the Station Master's office and send a telegram of the trains' formations to the next depot station," he added.

George also recalled how the junior porter working the afternoon shift was required to remove all of



Left: 3639, high up on the North Goulburn platform, after the driver mistakenly accepted the wrong signal. George was one of the first on the scene.

Leon Oberge collection.

Right: Throughout the early 1930s, George Goddard worked on several western suburban stations, including Harris Park, seen at that very time as a saturated 5172 and saturated 53 class storm through.

W.A.J. Maston.

the ashes and live coals from the Goulburn District Superintendent's complex (which was located a short distance from the up platform). This task, because of the large number of officers therein, would occupy 2½ hours of George's time, allowing the youngster to return to the station to take up barrier duty for the arrival of the 5.15pm terminating *Southern Highlands Express* ex Sydney.

"After collecting the tickets, I would then get on the train as it was being shunted into the nearby car sidings, sweep it out from end to end, fill all water bottles, replace soiled towels and re-equip the lavatories with toilet rolls. This job was made that much more difficult through the widespread use in those days of side-loading LFX, BX and CX carriages.

"After this job was completed, I would return to barrier duty, this time on the long-closed down platform entrance, for all of the south-bound express and mail trains, the last of which departed about 2.30am," recalled George.

With the sub-zero winter chills numbing his hands, George would then enjoy an hour-long meal break, returning to the District Superintendent's complex about 3.30am to reset each fireplace and equip them with a bucket of coal for the coming day's use.

At the same time, the spent ashes had to be wheeled down to the far end of Goulburn's North Yard (past the goods shed) in an old dilapidated iron wheelbarrow.

"One also had to walk around the goods yard picking up a piece of wood here, or coal there, and return to the offices and off-load the fuel in a fireplace or bucket. Having done this job for months on end, I am so pleased the young people of today do not have to carry out such inhuman duties," said George.

This last job would occupy George until his shift ended at 5am.

"On the 11.30pm to 7.30am shift, I would be responsible for calculating all of the tonnage awaiting despatch out of the city's three shunting yards,

the North, South and Wheat Yards. This was an extremely important duty and very few junior porters were asked to undertake it because, on the information provided to the Night Officer (there were no ASMs in those days), the entire programme for the coming day's trains, engine power and crewing would be set.

"I remember even now, some 61 years on, being on this shift week after week, with just one night off per week and, when walking through Belmore Park on my way home, I noticed the then District Superintendent, Tony Hudson, approaching from the other direction on his way to work.

"Thinking this was a great opportunity to get a little day shift, I said 'Good morning,' to him and asked if I could speak to him on a personal basis. I told him I had been on this shift for months whilst others were getting their share of day work and I asked him if I could be treated fairly and likewise.

"Mr Hudson replied in a very heated voice, 'Have you spoke (sic) to your station master in this regard?' When I answered in the negative, he roared out 'How dare you speak to me, Goddard, in a public place on such a matter! If you do so again I will charge you with insubordination.'

"Such were the conditions one was forced to endure on the railways in the early part of this century - and for just a few shillings a week! And, in addition to contending with these tyrannical officers, there was no night or Saturday penalty rates, nor sick pay," recalled George.

His early years in Goulburn (1923-1927) were, generally, the unhappiest of his entire 44½ years of railway service, for not only did he have to endure the constant night work, but the aforementioned Clarence, who was the Night Officer at the time, "tried every trick in the book to have me discredited or dismissed.

"I learned that it was due to his influence on the roster clerks that I never enjoyed my share of day work," he mused.



"Although Clarence was on day shift himself, being a single man with no ties, he would regularly return to the station at night on the pretext of finalising some correspondence. But he would spend most of the time spying on the staff. He would continually place articles on terminating train seats and hide behind luggage trolleys, in the toilet doorways or other darkened areas of the platform to see if the porters would hand the goods in.

"He was a real brute and I actually caught him carrying out this vile act but, since these were the days before union influence, we had absolutely no-one to turn to," said a still disgusted George Goddard.

"Clarence was the sort of man who disliked everyone. His belief was that only he was perfect and nobody else mattered. While he had it in for me, in actual fact he disliked everyone on the station and his actions caused a lot of juniors and some seniors to get the sack.

"When staff signed on for work, most would be handed a bung (a "please explain") alleging some 'misdemeanour' the hapless person had or had not performed the previous shift - due to Clarence's nocturnal spying," said George.

George's most memorable experience while working as a junior porter at Goulburn was the night in 1926 when a Sydney-bound goods train hauled by 3639 steamed up onto North Goulburn platform. In those days, North Goulburn station was manned 24 hours a day and Goulburn North Box and North Goulburn Box were linked by a relief line which

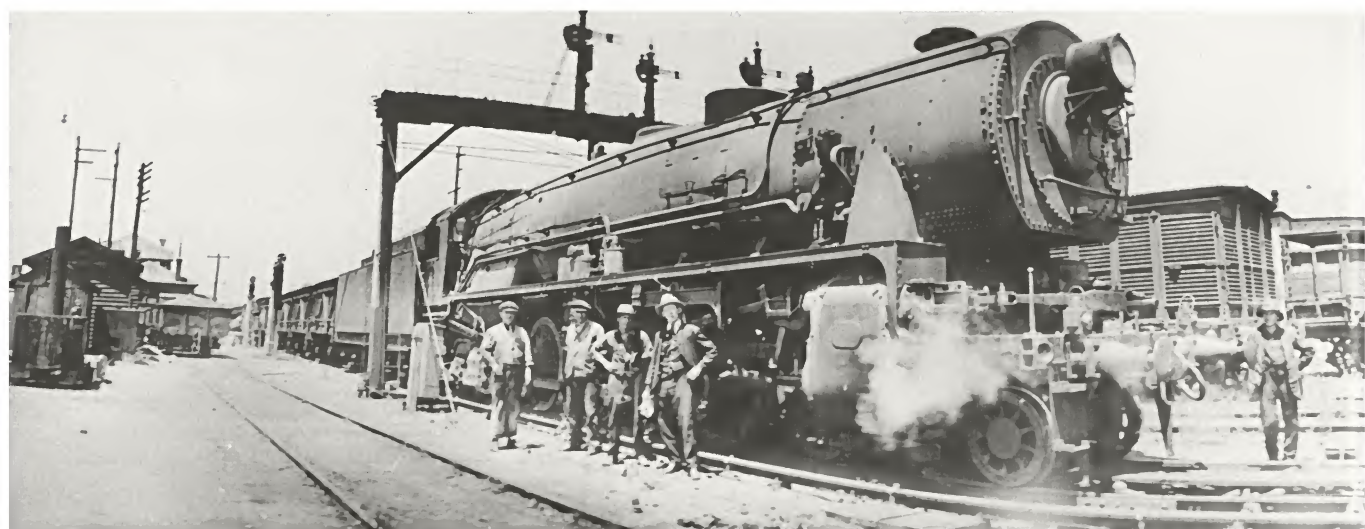
traversed the 1869-built single-line viaduct over the Wollondilly River (replaced during duplication in 1919 with a brick-arch bridge).

This night, the near new 3639 had been allowed to leave Goulburn on the relief line but was brought to a stand at North Goulburn to allow the up South West Mail to overtake. After a time, the mainline signals were cleared for the Mail but the driver of 3639 took them to be for him, so off he steamed, right up onto the up platform at North Goulburn.

"Most of us went out immediately to have a look at the mess and I remember how, as each wagon was re-railed, it would be hauled back to Goulburn North yard where its load of bagged chaff, wool and other produce would be transhipped.

"If my memory serves me right, I think this was the last time this line was used (apart from stowing wagons) and the incident caused an abrupt end to the career of the North Goulburn Night Officer, although he was completely blameless. In fact, it caused him to have a complete nervous breakdown and he never worked again. He died several years later," recalled George.

In August 1927, the young George Goddard was appointed to Menangle to replace a junior porter who had been transferred to Goulburn in exchange (in order to avoid the Department having to pay him a few shillings living-away-from-home allowance). However, when he reported for duty in Goulburn, it was found the youngster had no parents as he was from an orphanage and the Department was obliged to continue paying the allowance.



George remembered how the orphan asked to be returned to Menangle where he had been for two years so, after just one week at that location, George was sent to Queanbeyan to be in charge of the parcels office. But, because Canberra was then developing, with a huge influx of workers already in the town, George could not find accommodation so, after just three days, he was transferred to Moss Vale.

"Three months prior to my 21st birthday, I received a communication from the District Superintendent in Goulburn telling me that if I were not married by my 21st birthday, I would be retrenched, as the Department's policy, in the face of looming depressed economic conditions, was that only married men were to be retained."

"But, shortly after I received this letter, another was sent to me by the same Superintendent, asking if I would be prepared to go to Sydney for a Night Officer training school. It seemed the Goulburn district required ten junior porters to fill night officer duties and I was one of the chosen ten."

"I agreed, but a week later I was informed the school had been abandoned due to the ever-worsening depression. A month to the day after my 21st birthday, I was transferred back to Goulburn (much to the displeasure of Clarence) where, in September 1929, I was retrenched on the grounds that I was unmarried."

An interesting sideline to George's retrenchment was that, on the same day he finished work, another junior porter (and close school chum) was also dismissed. His name was Daniel Sellick who, like George, was later re-employed by the Department and retired in 1968 as Chief Staff Superintendent, Sydney station, after working as District Superintendent at, firstly, Lithgow and then Grafton.

After three months out of work, George Goddard was re-employed and sent to Wallendbeen. Initially he boarded at the local hotel but, when rationing was introduced in 1931, he left the pub to live in a room in the base of the nearby wheat silos, which was available rent-free! George recalled how in those

days it was the usual thing for the wheat shed adjacent to the silos to be occupied by young men seeking employment (in 99% of cases, unsuccessfully). Some of them were offered positions by local wheat farmers sewing up bags of grain at 10 shillings a week, plus keep.

"Not once while I occupied my room in the base of the silos was I ever approached in a menacing manner, assaulted or robbed, despite the hundreds of penniless men camped just a few yards from me," recalled George.

In fact, George was something of a hero to these men, for he possessed the only radio in town, one which he made himself. Its aerial stood high on the top of a silo, a distance of some 100' from the set. Wrestling was the most-favoured sport of the era, especially on Saturday evenings, and George smiled at the memory of how he could not pack another person into his modest room during such nights.

"I used to sweep hundreds of cigarette butts out of the room the following morning, but I never minded in the least as I was fortunate in having a job."

It was during George's time at Wallendbeen that the first 4-8-2 D57 class engine passed through en route to Cootamundra, the then limit of the class' track availability. Sensing it to be a moment of history, George hitched a ride on the stuttering monster and, accordingly, rode it the full length of the platform.

"While at Wallendbeen, I lost count of the number of times I received communications from the Goulburn District Superintendent telling me I was retrenched as conditions had worsened and all single men had to go. The crunch finally came and I was taken off the permanent staff and transferred back to Goulburn as a 'purely extra' person. My first job was to clean out 50 four-wheel CW cattle wagons at the stock yards."

"After a stint at Bargo, I received a communication from the District Superintendent asking me if I would be agreeable to returning to Wallendbeen in my former position as the man that replaced me there was married and there were no empty homes to

Left: This unknown 57 class 4-8-2 was among the first of its class to work south of Goulburn; the photo was taken by a friend of George Goddard, the late Jack Fowler, who was a keen railway photographer during George's early years at Cootamundra and Wallendbeen.

Leon Oberg collection.

Right: 5719 blasts by Temora Street Signal Box in Cootamundra in 1942 with a freight train for Goulburn. The picture was taken by RAAF photographer, N. Boddington. The RAAF at that time maintained a major base on the northern outskirts of the town.

Leon Oberg collection.

Below: A triple-headed up goods thunders past the signalman's cottage at Zig Zag in 1953. SRA

accommodate him in the town. I was further told that, if I did return, I would be placed back on the permanent staff. By this time employment was grim and, of course, I readily agreed," laughed George.

In March 1932 George transferred to Clyde Junction station from which he was sent all over the Sydney metropolitan area working for short periods on stations as diverse as Harris Park, Westmead, Wentworthville, Ashfield, Stanmore, Burwood and Macdonaldtown. While working in Sydney, George fell in love and, in 1935, married Gwendolyn. Faced with new responsibilities, he decided to undertake study for a higher position.

Accordingly, George attended the Railway Institute in Sydney, eventually graduating in 1937 with the B Standard Coaching Accounts certificate, which he obtained with the second highest marks in the State.

Despite his marks, George was not offered a



salaried job. Instead, promotion of another kind presented itself in the form of ticket inspector on the northern mail trains. For five months, George's job was to ride the mails to and from Gosford, checking passengers' tickets - more night work!

After these five months, George was appointed signalman 8th class at Clyde D Box and, when a signalling position later came up at Zig Zag Box, George accepted it, thinking the move would be a promotion.

"I could kill myself even now for taking my wife and one-week-old infant daughter there," a reflective George told me.

"The place, although just three miles out of Lithgow, was so remote that it may as well have been located on a desert island. The only way to or from town was either on foot (walking along the rough old railway line) or aboard a grimy bank engine.

"When we went shopping, the bank engine would stop outside our railway house and mum would hand the baby up to the driver. Her white shawl would immediately be covered with the driver's black finger marks. On the return home, it was impossible to



catch a bank engine because the goods trains used to leave from over in the back of Lithgow yard. So we were forced to carry our groceries to Zig Zag on foot, stumbling along the 1 in 42 gradient in all kinds of weather.

"If I had inspected the place before accepting the position, I would never have gone to Zig Zag and when Gwendolyn fell and broke her elbow in the dining room four months after we moved there, I managed to get a transfer to Cootamundra's Gundagai Road signal box.

"Travelling aboard the down Albury Mail, we arrived in Cootamundra about 7am and, because we did not have a home to go to, sat on the platform until the Real Estate agents opened at 9am. Fortunately, a house was available (on the other side of town) and we were able to move in that same day.

"But, reporting to work, you can imagine my horror at finding 'everyone's arch enemy at Goulburn', Clarence, was now the Station Master at Cootamundra!

"After I was at Cootamundra a few months, I decided to apply for a position on the salaried staff and, although I possessed goods and coaching qualifications in the highest grade, I was told I would have to sit for a clerical entrance examination in Sydney before I could be accepted.

"A week after I returned from that examination, I was given a host of salaried position vacancies throughout the State but, with the outbreak of World War II and its obvious uncertainties, and with two infants now to look after, I applied for a booking clerk's position at Cootamundra. This would also eliminate the need to shift home again, I thought.

"This was one of the biggest mistakes in my career because, right from the beginning, Clarence set his sights on contributing to my downfall and he did unbelievable things to help his cause. After some two months, my health began to deteriorate and I was off work with the worst case of shingles my doctor had ever seen - all brought about by nervous tension.

"Whilst off duty for four months, I applied to be taken off the salaried staff. The District Superintendent made a special trip to Cootamundra to persuade me to remain on the 'team' and said that since the Chief Traffic Manager was so impressed with my record and qualifications, he was reluctant to have me return to the wages staff. As a result, he offered me any location in the State, be it a clerical position or assistant station master's job.

"However, my health was still poor and since I could not face up to another move of home, I was transferred back to my former position of signalman."

But Clarence did not always have everything his own way with George. He recalled one exchange when he was a booking clerk at Cootamundra. Clarence alleged George had failed to sign on and off and, as a consequence, would not be paid for the day. George looked at the book and found Clarence had not signed on or off either and, after this was pointed out, the matter was promptly dropped!

Many interesting things happened to George dur-

ing his signalling days at Cootamundra. He was in attendance at the town's North Box the Sunday morning (around dawn) when it and the Temora Road Box were joined with the second main line. This marked the final link in the duplication of the Sydney to Junee line.

He was also on duty the mornings No.4 *Melbourne Express* steamed by with a 57 class up front. Being war years and needing motive power to haul larger loadings, the 57s were trialled between Cootamundra and Sydney (in addition to at least one down movement). *"They were too slow and lost time. In addition, they left so much filth and soot all over everything, the sleeping car conductors and many passengers complained bitterly,"* George recalled.

During that period, Cootamundra was playing host to the RAAF and an air base was quite close to Cootamundra North Box. In addition, a signal some 60' high was located right outside the box. Part of a signalman's duty was to service the kerosene lamps in the signals and one sunny morning George was up this post when a four-engine bomber was circling the town while preparing to land at the base.

"The pilot spotted me up the signal and decided to have some fun with me. He deliberately lined up with the signal and came down so low I could have almost reached up and touched the landing wheels. As he swept past, I could feel the almighty blast of the huge plane's slipstream and, believe me, I have never forgotten that experience. It was frightening for I was almost torn off my perch with the buffeting."

George recalled how the box was on the regular landing path.

By 1943, George was due for promotion and, accordingly, accepted a transfer to nearby Harden South Box. While most of his days at Harden were 'pretty routine', he did recall an early morning communication from Goulburn Control which advised how the 36 class engine on No.3 *Melbourne Limited Express* "was wanted back in Goulburn in a hurry" and would be coming off at Harden.

"It is to be exchanged for a fresh engine due out of Harden loco at any minute now," said Control.

"As the time for No.3 neared, North Box asked me for the road, but I did not give him the accept but rather tapped out the bell-code to let the express come in on the call-on signal. This would allow the train to stop at the end of the down platform. At this moment, the relief engine was ambuling out of loco. Normally, when engine changes were to be made, I would bring the fresh locomotive across the up and down mains and into the goods road but on this night, by some act of God, I held him on the down main.

"By some very strange twist, Harden North Box could pull his distant off, despite the fact that I had not given a full road.

"Anyway, I saw No.3 come dropping down into Harden at a fast lick. He shot through the platform, rocketed through the crossover into the goods siding and continued on at a hell of a speed behind my box. At the end of this shunting neck was a 15 to 20 foot drop down onto a roadway. By some miracle, the



Although this view of 3016 rolling past Harden South Signal Box on a biting cold 2 June 1966 afternoon with No.45 mixed from Young was taken over a decade after George Goddard left the town, little had changed. The engines off the branch were the same, the S and K wagons of goods and wool and PHG van had long been an institution. Maybe the only thing different in George's day was that an LFX sideloading carriage would be bringing up the rear instead of an R type car.

Leon Oberg

driver stopped his train just two feet short of the buffer stop.

"A few minutes later, the emotional driver, his face still drained, stormed up into my box and demanded to know what phone he could use to summon the Station Master, saying I was not a 'fit and proper person' to be in charge of a signal box. Pointing to one of two phones he could use, I suggested he might care to look at the facts before he started to make too much more noise.

"I asked him how he got up that neck and the driver acknowledged that he 'must have gone through a stop signal'.

"You didn't go through one, you went through three," George told the hapless engineman, who then wanted to know how it was possible to get a distant when the full road through Harden was denied him.

George estimated that the train, loaded with service personnel, rocketed into the siding at about 50mph. *"It was a wonder it stayed on the road.*

"In a bid to hush up his mistake, the driver ran back to his 36 and backed out quickly to make the engine change without losing any more time. The relief engine crew were the only other witnesses, but no-one ever said anything.

In 1952, George was appointed to Goulburn Station Box (perhaps better known to most as Centre Box). This was to be his final move, for 15 years later he retired. George told me most of his final years

were spent in Station Box but he did see 'quite a lot' of relief work during his latter years on the job, working all of the area's boxes: North, South, Goulburn Loco and Joppa Junction.

When at Joppa Junction, George recalled one of the hardest jobs was changing the kerosene lamps in the signals.

"There was one signal in particular on the branch to Queanbeyan that was as high as the one I was nearly blown off by the bomber at Cootamundra. Gee, it was high and it used to rock badly in the strong winds often encountered at that location.

"I used to find it rather difficult to climb that signal for, by this time, I was nearly 60 years of age. After discussing the problem with the other signalmen at Joppa, I submitted a paper to the then District Superintendent, Tom Boyle, telling him I felt it beyond me to climb the signals at Joppa and would he sanction overtime for the younger men who were willing to perform the extra work. But Tommy would not agree to it so, since I could not do the job between trains, I used to go out in my own time on a Sunday and do the lamps," George revealed.

George said one had to keep one's wits when working Joppa Box. *"You could not accept a train out of Breadalbane (then a manned station) if you had a train coming off the branch because Joppa was at the bottom of a falling 1 in 40 gradient from the Main South and a 1 in 66 from the branch. Mainline*

trains, particularly heavy goods trains, found it difficult stopping at Joppa, so we always attempted to obtain a clear road through to Goulburn."

While George did not have any accidents while working at Joppa, he did have two trains in the Joppa to South Box section one cold, dark morning.

"On that occasion, a train just off the branch was held up for a prolonged time at Mundy Street bridge (at South Box's accept) due to another train ahead. The intention was to bring the branchline train from Cooma down beyond South Box and back it up into the city's wheat yard. Meanwhile, a train from the Main South had reached Joppa.

"Strange as it may seem, it was possible to have your starter hanging off at Joppa because there was no track link with South Box (because of the unmanned Loco Box in between). But, with the branchline train standing at South Box's accept, he was in no position to bell 'train arrival' or 'line clear' to Joppa. The mainliner simply rolled through Joppa, so I jumped on the phone to alert South Box, who quickly moved the branchline train out of the way.

"No-one ever reported the incident, nor did the two trains ever come in sight of one another on the mainline," said George.

Mention George Goddard's name to the old hands

in Goulburn today and all will recall fond stories of the man while working Station Box. Senior ASM, Brian Watt, remembers when he was a junior listening to George's distinctive, strong baritone voice wafting out over Goulburn yard on many warm evenings.

At that time George was a highly sought-after vocalist for weddings and stage plays. He also sang in eisteddfodau and saw his time in signal boxes between trains as ideal rehearsal time. Staff would thus hear the rising arias from Handel's grand oratorio, *Messiah*, come blasting out of the box, along with excerpts from Gilbert and Sullivan's *Trial by Jury* or *HMS Pinafore*.

And George would always be sharing the seemingly endless produce from his home vegetable garden with fellow signalmen and yard staff, recalled another retired Goulburn signalman, Bill Howard.

As mentioned earlier, by late 1967, George realised he was nearing his 60th birthday and contacted his old workmate of 1923, (now) Staff Superintendent, Daniel Sellick, in Sydney, saying he wished to retire. At that time, staff shortages abounded on the NSWRR but George managed to end his career.

His last shift was day-work relief at Goulburn North Box and he signed off at 3.30pm on 21 December 1967. When his long service ended four months afterwards, George had notched up some 44½ years with the NSWRR.

His own District Superintendent, Tom Boyle, did not want to lose George for, even in retirement, he tried on several occasions to recruit him into a relief position due to a chronic shortage of experienced men.

In retirement, George lived in his imposing brick home in Verner Street, Goulburn, where he nursed his sick wife and continued to grow some of the best tomato plants in the city.

It is with regret we have to advise that George Goddard passed away in Goulburn's St. John of God Hospital on 2 August 1992, after a brief illness.

Left: Goulburn's Station (or Centre) Box, where George Goddard spent the bulk of his signalling years whilst in Goulburn. The shunters' humpy at the extreme left of the picture has long been demolished. Goulburn's mechanical signal boxes were replaced by an electric complex in October 1979.

Leon Oberge

Right: A view of Goulburn yard in 1963, a few years prior to George Goddard's retirement. Taken from a now demolished flour mill, it shows 4206 and 4303 passing Goulburn North Box with a Rozelle-bound wheat train. The expansive South Yard can be seen at left, while the North Yard, with shunting engine 3243, is at right. Station Box was adjacent to the train's brakevan, behind which is the station and its major cluster of administrative buildings.

Leon Oberge







Introduction

The name Fred Saxon would be well known to many railway enthusiasts who have admired his photographs of railway scenes, particularly steam-working in New South Wales during the 1950s and 1960s. Many of his photographs have been published. I first saw some of Fred's photographs in 1959 while I was at secondary school. A mutual friend, Barry Tulloch, brought to school a selection of Fred's photographs featuring such scenes as 3402 at the head of the down South West Mail at Junee, 2531 at Cowra, 2601 shunting car sets in Sydney yards and "round-top" 36 class engines departing Central station. There were also pictures of 35s and 59s hauling goods trains on the North Coast of New South Wales, near Nambucca. This was steam-working I had never even seen, let alone photographed, and I remember being most impressed.

One photograph in particular took my fancy. That was the photograph reproduced on the opposite page, of 3501 and 5229 on a timber trestle at Nambucca, both engines displaying enviable smoke effects. I purchased a number of these photographs, of postcard size, in 1959 and they are still in excellent condition, a testimony to Fred's dark-room skills. It was not until several months ago, when I was preparing an article for *Byways of Steam*: 4, that I first corresponded with Fred. I

wanted to use in my article his photograph of 3513 at St Leonards station at the head of a miners' picnic special train from Newcastle. He kindly supplied me with details of the photograph and gave me permission to reproduce it. Since then I have met Fred at his home on the Gold Coast and seen at first hand the fruits of his railway photography hobby over several decades. He is still active with his cameras and in his darkroom. Fred has agreed to make many of his photographs available for publication in the *Byways of Steam* and *Australian Diesel Scene* series and is documenting details of both his photography and his long and interesting career in the New South Wales Railways.

Fred Saxon joined the railways in 1934 as a junior porter at Lawson station in the Blue Mountains. He retired in 1977 after 43 years of service. Much of this time was spent at the very busy complex of Sydney Station and carriage sheds during the years when steam working was the major force. In ensuing issues of *Byways of Steam*, Fred's photographs and his descriptions will depict a variety of railway life at Sydney and other localities in New South Wales. Fred has not only photographed locomotives and trains, but has captured the human side as well, the railway employees who made the railway what it was.

Ian Wallace



NAMBUCCA

Fred Saxon

Nambucca Heads is an attractive town on the North Coast of New South Wales, located on the northern bank of the Nambucca River near the Pacific Ocean. The Aboriginal word Nambucca means either "crooked river" or "entrance to the sea". For many years Nambucca Heads has been a

popular holiday destination. The Pacific Highway between Sydney and Brisbane used to pass through the town, but a recent re-routing of the highway to the west has bypassed the town.

Nambucca Heads railway station is located on the North Coast railway line between Sydney and

Above: *The crews of 3501 and 5229 are obliging with a fine display of smoke as they lead their down goods train, No.193, across the Boggy Creek trestle, just north of Nambucca station, on Thursday, 25 September 1958. In 193's load are vehicles for conveying perishable goods (LLV and MLV) being returned to the north. Both 3501 and 5229 were Taree engines at the time.*

Above Left: *Still a "round-top", 3661 at the head of an up perishable express goods crosses a down freight train at Nambucca in June 1957. 3661 was the last 36 class engine to be fitted with a Belpaire boiler and new cab, in December 1957. At the time this photograph was taken 3661 was one of four 36 class engines allocated to Taree depot. There is a water column and an ash pit at the Sydney end of Nambucca platform.*

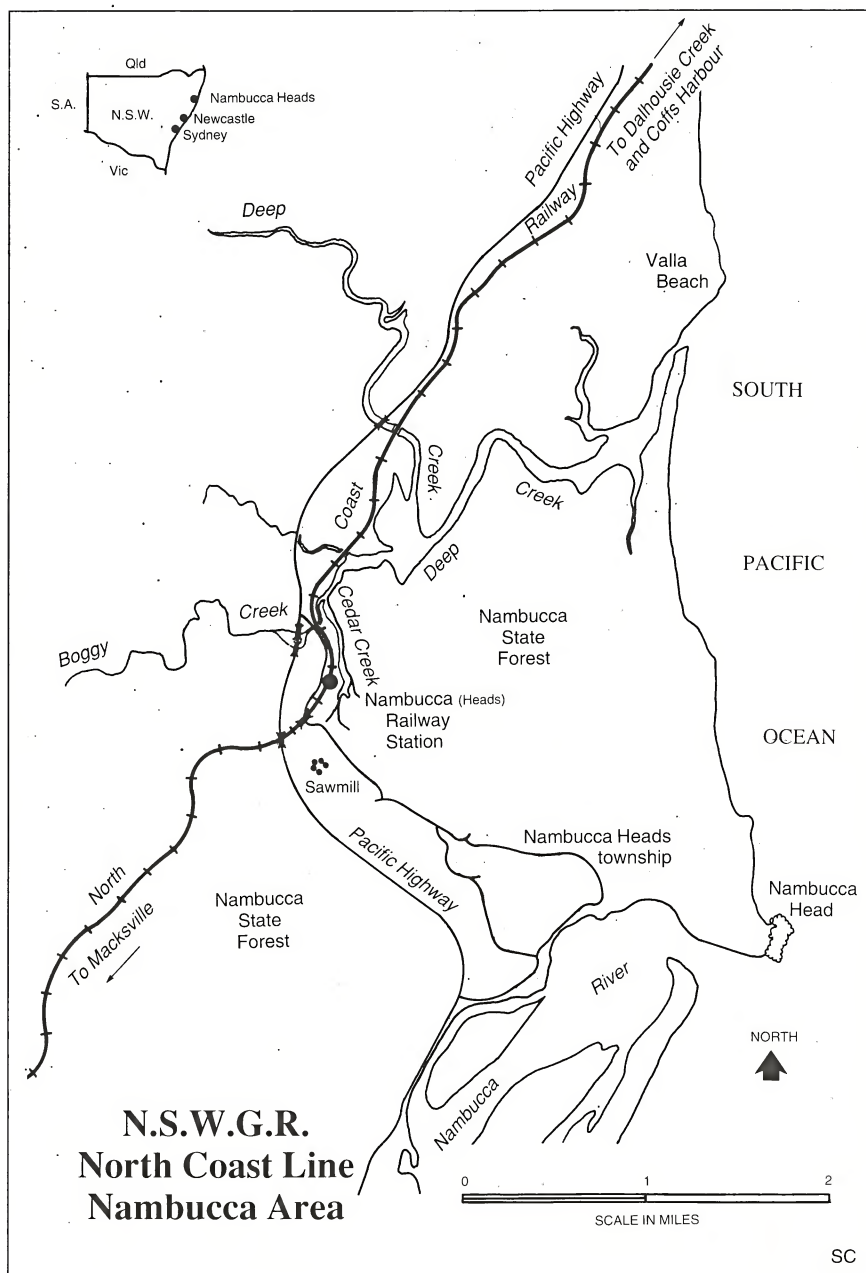
South Brisbane (via Taree and Casino), some 351 rail miles north of Sydney. Opened as Nambucca Heads in December 1923 as part of the line linking Urunga (to the north) with Macksville (to the south), its name was changed to Nambucca in October 1925. It was converted to a centrally operated, fully interlocked loop in 1934, the loop being 1345 ft long. A new brick station building was also opened in 1934. The platform was 684 ft long, on the up side of the line. In addition to the loop, a goods loop siding with small goods loading platform was constructed. A de-ashing pit was constructed at the up end of the platform in April 1945. A 12 inch water column was provided at both the Sydney end and the South Brisbane end of the platform. Nambucca was oper-

ated as an electric staff station, the relevant sections being Macksville - Nambucca (7 miles 69 chains) and Nambucca - Dalhousie Creek (6 miles 04 chains). In June 1964 the name of the station was changed back to Nambucca Heads. It is 15 feet above sea level, in a picturesque setting in a forest of tall native eucalypt trees.

During my employment with the railways, I liked to use my holiday pass, and often took my family to Coolangatta, Brunswick Heads and Nambucca. On occasions I would be train-chasing and my first recollection of visiting Nambucca for this purpose was in 1957. I made several visits up to about 1965, and used to carry on to Brisbane to visit my brother. In the early days we caught the Brisbane Express

or the North Coast Mail, but later travelled by the North Coast Daylight Express. As far as steam photography was concerned, the best years were 1957, 1958 and 1960. In June 1957 I was able to photograph 3661 on No.300 perishable express goods train. Shortly after this, 3661 went into Chullora workshops for reboiling with a Belpaire boiler, the last 36 to be so treated. At about the same time, this perishable express goods became No.400, a diesel roster.

The time I spent at Nambucca in September 1958 was particularly rewarding as it was just after the so-called dieselisation of the North Coast line. That term applied more to the passenger trains than to the goods trains. The passenger trains running through Nambucca up until that time were both diesel and steam-hauled. The Brisbane Limited Express (Nos 1 and 2) and the



Above Right: Oil-burner 5908 takes an up goods train across the timber trestle spanning Boggy Creek near Nambucca on Thursday, 25 September 1958, with an uncommon SRC refrigerator vehicle behind the tender of 5908.

All photos by the author.

Right: Taree engine 3523 makes a fine sight at the head of a down freight as it leaves Nambucca station on clear winter day in June 1957. The train is returning empty bogie louvered vans to the north.





Casino engines 3506 and 5919 put on a good smoke display as they leave Nambucca in the rain at the head of a down goods conveying mainly loaded coal trucks on Sunday, 21 September 1958.





This is a scenic view of 5911 and 5904 at the head of a down goods train, taken from the up distant signal at Nambucca on Thursday, 11 September 1958. The view of tall eucalypt trees close to the single track railway line is typical of much of the North Coast line, a line that also features numerous curves.

The sight of double-headed 59 class oil-burners was not uncommon on North Coast freight trains in the late 1950s. Here 5902 and 5906 round the curve near Boggy Creek at the head of No.193 down goods as it leaves Nambucca on Thursday, 18 September 1958.





Above: Well after the official dieselisation of the North Coast line, steam locomotives still worked some goods trains, such as the down pick-up photographed in the loop at Nambucca station on Wednesday, 2 November 1960, with Broadmeadow engine 5122 in the lead.

Above Right: On a bright sunny day in September 1958, 5906 arrives at Nambucca station with a down goods, returning empty bogie louvred vans to northern destinations. 5906 still retains its painted American numbers on the cab side. The level crossing with the old Pacific Highway is at the extreme right of the photo.

Right: On Wednesday, 10 September 1958 the crew of No.186 pick-up goods, with 5908 at the head, waits in the late afternoon shade beside the lineside water tank at Nambucca for the arrival of No.14 up North Coast Mail and No.27 down North Coast Daylight Express. On Wednesdays No.186 was scheduled to spend 85 minutes at Nambucca in order to cross these two passenger trains.

Brisbane Express (Nos 3 and 4) were diesel-hauled. The North Coast Daylight Express (Nos 27 and 26) and the North Coast Mail (Nos 11 and 14) were typically hauled by 35 or 36 class engines up until September 1958, after which they were diesel-hauled. I was able to photograph a variety of steam working on goods trains at that time. The express goods trains were either diesel-hauled or, if steam-hauled, were generally entrusted to 35 or 36 class engines, though the oil-burning 59s also handled some of the fast perishable goods. The 59 class had recently been transferred en masse to Casino depot. General goods services at that time, including the pick-ups, were usually hauled by 50 or 59 class engines, with 35 and 36 class engines making occasional appearances. Double heading was not uncommon, with some interesting combinations at times.

Most of the steam locomotives that passed

through Nambucca were allotted to Taree and Casino depots, particularly the former. At 1 June 1958, before official dieselisation of the North Coast line, Taree depot had the following working allotment of steam locomotives: 2/13, 1/32, 8/35, 4/36 and 11/superheated 50. Casino depot had the following working allotment: 1/19, 3/30T, 5/32, 9/35, 7/superheated 50, 4/53 and 4/59. Dieselisation caused a significant reduction in these numbers.

When photographing trains at Nambucca, I tried a number of spots, in addition to the general vicinity of the station. There are several coastal creeks near Nambucca and one I liked was Boggy Creek to the north, which the line crossed by way of a timber trestle. I took quite a few photos there, on the long sweeping curve. Care had to be taken to avoid shadows from the tall trees near the line.

I knew some of the railway staff at Nambucca. I





Left: Mrs. Keast, gatekeeper, is shown at the Nambucca level crossing, with the gates open for traffic on the Pacific Highway in September 1958. Mrs. Keast and ganger husband, Bill, lived in the gatehouse beside the level crossing.

Right: The up home signal has been cleared for 5919, at the head of a goods train, to proceed along the main line at Nambucca on Monday, 15 September 1958.

Below Right: Forest products, including sawn timber from local sawmills, used to be loaded into rail trucks at Nambucca yards by the old mobile crane known as the "grey ghost". Here it loads a sling of sawn hardwood into a K truck standing on the goods siding on 3 November 1960, while an LLV louvered van stands in the background.

Below: A view of Nambucca railway station as it was in the late 1950s. The brick station building is at the rear. In the foreground an MLV van and two S trucks are standing in the goods loop siding. Basic facilities for loading timber products and bananas can be seen.





have known Bill Sheldon, who was assistant stationmaster at Nambucca at that time, for about 55 years. He was at Nambucca station between 1950 and 1961, witnessing the change-over from full steam working to mostly diesel working. Bill has told me of the difficulties experienced with the 36 class engines on the Brisbane Limited in changing the staff at Nambucca with their automatic staff exchangers.

The station at Nambucca is situated on a short stretch of straight line with curved track at the approaches at each end of the platform. Apparently, the 36s used to really move around these curves approaching the station and, just at the point where the staff was to be changed automatically, the turret tender would lurch to straighten and the staff would be missed. This happened quite a lot so the message went out for these trains to slow down and exchange the staff manually until such time as the exchanging point could be relocated further down the platform. The same curves also contributed to the occasional derailment of vehicles, particularly on up trains. In one instance, the platform was wrecked

when a number of U trucks from an up goods were derailed and mounted the platform.

Another friend was a fettler, Cecil Keast, whose father, Bill Keast, was the local ganger. Bill used to keep bees and lived in the gatehouse beside the level crossing, where his wife was the gatekeeper. This important level crossing, where the Pacific Highway used to cross the line, was the site of several serious accidents and many near misses.

The locomotive water supply at Nambucca came from a reliable source in nearby Deep Creek, the water being conveyed to the elevated water tank at Nambucca station by asbestos cement piping. According to Bill Sheldon, the water supply never ran out. He said that, during drought times when the locomotive water supply at Kempsey and Coffs Harbour ran short, the Brisbane expresses were stopped at Nambucca to take water there. As with many water tanks elsewhere, the Nambucca tank was treated regularly with tannin and soda ash to inhibit corrosion, foaming and priming in the locomotive boilers. Samples of the loco water supply were sent to the laboratories in Sydney from time

Right: *No.206 rail pay bus has stopped at Nambucca on 20 April 1961. Several of the local railway workers have come to the pay bus standing in the loop. This was a regular occurrence on alternate Thursdays, "pay day" in the stretch of line between Coffs Harbour and Taree. The elevated water tank stands tall in the background on right. The fence at top of picture is beside the old route of the Pacific Highway.*

The up starting signal in the loop at Nambucca has cleared and 5911 gets its fruit express moving again on Wednesday, 10 September 1958. The front buffer beam of 5911 is almost level with the 351 milepost.





to time for analysis.

Although the permanent population of Nambucca Heads was only about 600 people in the 1950s, many hundreds of people would flock to the area in peak holiday periods. A large proportion of those holiday-makers travelled by train and, to cope with this holiday traffic, additional trains were run. Bill Sheldon can remember when, in addition to the regular service, No.11 North Coast Mail, relief mails 11a, 11b and 11c were run. These extra services sometimes provided safeworking headaches for railway staff. The reader is referred to the article by the late H.L. McDonald in *ARHS Bulletin* No.563, which provides an excellent account of typical steam-working on the North Coast line during a holiday period in 1955, before the diesels entered the scene.

It was interesting on "pay Thursdays" to watch the rail pay bus arrive at Nambucca, to be met by the local railway employees. It only stayed there about 12 minutes, but there was generally plenty of action during its short stop. Actually, the running of the North Coast pay bus is worth describing. On alternate Sundays, each "pay week" on the North Coast line, the "empty" rail pay bus, No.221, left the Transport Garage at Civic, Newcastle at 6.15am and ran through Maitland, Taree and Kempsey to arrive at Coffs Harbour at 4.45pm. There it was stabled overnight and, on the Monday morning, as No.203, departed Coffs Harbour at 5.36am and,

after a long stop at Casino, arrived at South Brisbane at 4.07pm where it was stabled. On the Tuesday morning, as No.202 pay bus, it departed South Brisbane at 6.46am and proceeded to Casino where, after a stop of about 75 minutes, it departed for Lismore on the Murwillumbah branch, and returned to Casino at 1.44pm, where it remained until next morning. On the Wednesday, the pay bus, now No.204, serviced the line between Casino and Coffs Harbour. It departed Casino at 8.35am, made lengthy stops around lunchtime at Grafton and South Grafton, then proceeded to Coffs Harbour where it arrived at 3.17pm.

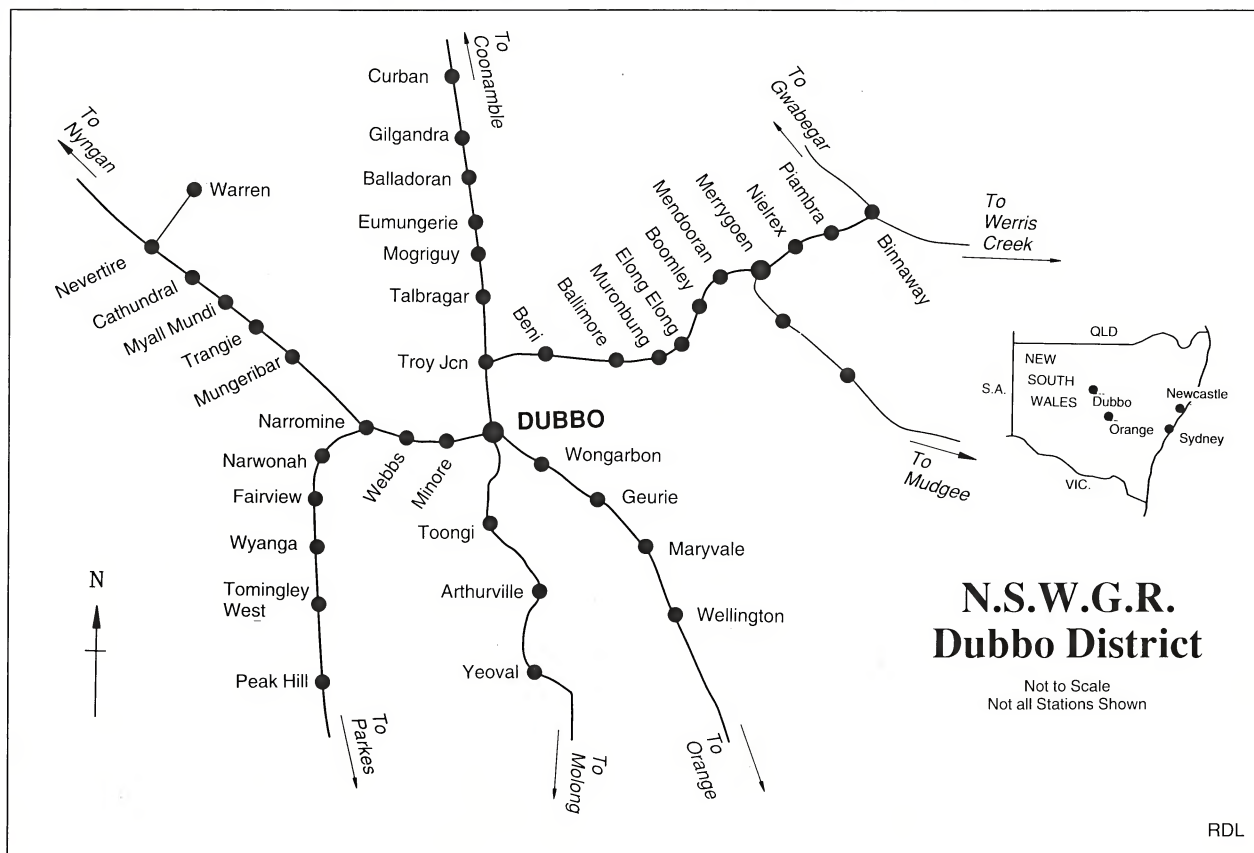
The next morning, Thursday, as No.206, the pay bus departed Coffs Harbour, stopped at all significant centres, including Nambucca, between there and Kempsey where it stopped for lunch before proceeding to Taree where it arrived at 4.14pm for overnight stabling. The pay bus would often stop in the section to pay fettlers and any other staff working out on the line. This overcame the need for such staff to travel to a station on a trike to receive payment. The running of the pay bus was accompanied by appropriate safeworking procedures. Then, to complete its long journey, No.208 pay bus departed Taree on the Friday morning at 7.40am for eventual arrival back at Newcastle at 3.25pm. It was thus that this essential service, the life blood of the many country railway personnel, functioned in the 1950s and 1960s.



Left: Early morning, Thursday, 5 January 1967, and 3810 works No.45 Coonamble Mail up the 1 in 55 grade out of Geurie and on to Dubbo. The load includes FS and BS sitting cars, a MAL sleeper, a KP mail sorting van, two brakevans and a TP parcels trailer, which will be transferred to the Far West Express DEB set on arrival in Dubbo.

Right: Engine 3290 has finished marshalling its loaded train and waits in the loop at Geurie for train No.665 hauled by 6040 to pass through on the main line. The 4-6-0 engine has a real job in front of it, a standing start at the bottom of 1 in 55 grade out of the platform with a load of 368 tons and an LHO passenger-type brakevan. New Year's Eve 1966.

All photographs by the author.





Last Days of Steam in Dubbo

Ray Love

Between the early months of 1965 and into the middle months of 1966, New South Wales and other parts of Australia suffered a severe drought. As a result, the wheat season failed in 1965, and goods traffic carried by the NSWGR fell dramatically as trains were cancelled through lack of goods loading. The usual pattern of wool and stock traffic during the winter and spring months, followed by heavy wheat loading in the November to February period did not eventuate.

Normally, wheat trains dominate the rails for many months of the year, the flow commencing in the north-west, followed by the west and finally, the south-west of the state. Because of the prevailing drought conditions, coupled with the recent transfer of diesel-electric locomotives to some of the western areas (45 and 48 class), the future of steam operations in many parts of the state did not look bright.

Of course, the planned dieselisation of certain areas was always on the agenda, but the drought conditions appeared to be bringing an earlier end to steam in locations where it had been expected to remain, at least for the time being.

The number of steam locomotives allocated to western depots declined during the early part of the

year 1966 as a result of the drought and this, coupled with the diesel allocations mentioned, seemed to indicate that full dieselisation would come to the west of the state 12 months earlier than planned.

All was not lost, and good drought-breaking rains came mid-year in 1966 and farmers all over NSW planted a huge wheat crop in order to recoup their earlier losses.

By late 1966, the number of steam locomotives allocated to Dubbo increased in anticipation of the wheat traffic. In December 1966, the allocation stood at 23, with six 30 class tender engines, twelve 32 class and five light-type Garratts. Also, Bathurst and Lithgow depots had additional steam locomotives returned to service there, all to assist with the expected wheat traffic.

All the indications were there for a bumper wheat harvest. Dubbo had remained the centre of steam activities on the main lines and the branch lines in the west, even though other nearby depots, Parkes, Orange and Bathurst had been affected by the influx of some diesels a few years earlier. Irrespective of the prospects for the 1966/1967 wheat season, dieselisation of the west of the state, including the Dubbo/Nyngan area was still planned for July 1967.



Right: During the morning of Wednesday, 4 January 1967, engine 3290 conveyed 29 empty BWH wheat hoppers to various silos on the Coonamble branch. In late afternoon, 3290 commenced its return journey to Dubbo, picking up any loaded hoppers along the way. With an S truck as a match vehicle between the hook coupling on the tender and the auto-coupled, bulk wheat hoppers, 3290 hauls No.8 goods across the Talbragar River bridge on the outskirts of Dubbo.

Above: Early morning on New Year's Eve, 1966 and 3313, with Lyndsay Brooks in charge, put up a brave fight on the 1 in 60 grade of Bourke Hill to the west of Dubbo. With a trailing load of 349 tons (S, 17 RU, 1 sheeted U wagon, 2 BWH, 1 sheeted BCH, 6 RU and a van), the old engine slipped all the way to the top of the hill on the dew-covered rails. The train was No.93 empty wheat, heading for the silos at Trangie.

Right: By the mid 1960s, passenger services on the Coonamble branch could be provided by CPH 42 footers, 600 class two-car diesel sets and even a 900 class DEB set. At holiday times, it was a different situation. The railcars could not handle the patronage, so a steam-hauled train was substituted. On Good Friday, 8 April 1966, 3004 steams through Troy Junction with two cars and a van heading for Coonamble with the connection off the Mail.

By the end of 1966, steam still continued to work all trains west of Dubbo, including the Nyngan/Cobar/Bourke area, all trains over the 'scenic' route through Yeoval to Orange and all trains on the Coonamble branch. On the Dubbo to Parkes section, via Narromine and Peak Hill, Dubbo to Orange via Wellington and Dubbo to Binnaway, slightly more than half the trains continued to be steam-hauled, the remainder were in the hands of 45 or 49 class diesel-electric engines with a few 48 class sneaking in from other areas.

The 45 class engines were Lithgow-based; the 49 class had long been residents of Parkes depot. They often strayed from their intended sphere of operations and could be seen in the Dubbo area almost on a daily basis.

We were entering the final period of intense steam activity in the area, the wheat harvest and resulting traffic seemed to ensure a variety of working which was not to be missed, so three friends

spent more than a week in the area.

When we arrived, the wheat had been moving from all six directions into Dubbo, there to be marshalled into block loads (in most instances) or added to other goods trains in order to build their loads up. This meant frequent trains in the area surrounding Dubbo and most were steam-hauled.

Generally, wheat gravitated toward Dubbo from silos on the Dubbo end of the main line through Wellington (Geurie, etc.), the silos near the north-west end of the 'scenic' route, the silos on the Narromine-Peak Hill line, those out toward Nyngan (Trangie etc.), silos on the Coonamble line and silos on cross country line to Binnaway. In the case of silos on the line to Binnaway, the main line and the 'scenic', only those which were relatively close to Dubbo sent their wheat back to Dubbo. On arrival in Dubbo, wagons were made up into block loads with other wheat hoppers from elsewhere and then sent down the 'scenic' route, through Yeoval to Mo-



long and on to Orange and the seaboard.

Almost every day, at about 6.00am, the empty wheat hoppers arrived in the yard. The whole of the wheat transport programme in the Dubbo area, for the following 24 hours, relied on the arrival of this train. It usually ran as No.327 or No.329 goods, and was often hauled by a 45 class engine right through from Lithgow, although 60 class also hauled the train on occasions. It was referred to as 'the bulks', meaning the empty bulk wheat hoppers. This term, 'bulks', was in common railway usage since the advent of RU type hoppers, to distinguish that form of wheat transport from that used to carry bagged wheat. It is still a common term throughout the state during wheat seasons. The train conveying the bulks consisted entirely of empty wheat wagons, RU type four-wheelers, BWH or sheeted BCH 40 ton bogie hoppers, often a mixture of hopper types.

In the small hours prior to the arrival of this train, activity in the yard was at a minimum, just sufficient to shunt the regular freight loadings and the traffic offering to local fuel depots and the goods sheds. A visit by us to 'B' Frame near the Fitzroy Street level crossing in the early hours to ascertain the programme for the day, revealed a quiet time, where the signalman and the shunters appeared to be observing the lull before the storm.

The location known as 'B' Frame in Dubbo is where it all happens, a situation which still exists today. All shunting moves, train movements in and out of the yard in all directions are controlled from there. In addition, the signalman has to control the nearby crossing gates for road traffic. In steam days, 'B' Frame consisted of an open-framed building at ground level, of very rudimentary construction, with a minimal amount of comfort for the men working from there. It was virtually the main signal box for Dubbo, although its appearance then gave no hint of its importance. Today, the building has been improved to a single storey structure with windows and flooring and small amenities for the men, but certainly not giving the appearance of an important signal box at a major traffic junction.

Anywhere between 6.00am and 8.00am, the bulks would roll into town travelling via the Wellington line and the whole of the railway would come to life. It appeared as though this was *the* event of the day. Before the train had come to a stand (so it seemed), breaking up of the load commenced. Bulk hoppers were added to brakevans lurking in sidings nearby, and locomotives began to whistle out of loco.

Once the bulks had arrived, the men working 'B' Frame were opening and closing gates, pulling signal levers, answering the telephone (from Control, loco, the station master, the shunters on the yard phones - no radios in those days), giving hand shunting signals to men in the yard and keeping the train register up to date. It was no place for us to interfere with their concentration; an early morning enquiry to Train Control adjacent to Dubbo railway station revealed another centre of intense activity. Dubbo Control was located in a neat building across the road traffic driveway at the rear of Dubbo station.

The Train Controller sat in front of his control desk, his graphs spread out before him and plenty of pencils, erasers and straight edges at hand. The place was alive with other control officers, senior station staff (the station master came and went a number of times), clerks carrying out minor clerical and filing duties, continuous phone ringing and messages from the speaker set high on the control desk. The controller was moving constantly, operating the ringing tones to speak to remote signal boxes and stations, to loco, to crews on trains in remote crossing loops and the other controllers 'over the border' at Orange, or to Nyngan where a form of local control applied. Operation of the control desk was always interesting. Each signal box, station, depot etc., had a specific calling bell code. The train controller could actuate a small rotary key on the face of the desk, applicable to each location and the relevant bell ringing code would be sent out. When the appropriate bell code was received at the specific signal box and that phone answered, the controller could speak directly to that person, via microphone and speaker mounted on the desk, all actuated by foot button,



*Time for a rest at Elong Elong. 3326 and CV match van stand in the platform prior to coupling up to the S trucks loaded with railway sleepers standing in the distance. The sleepers had been cut from the ironbark forests in the Ballimore and Muronbung area. The driver was Lyn Brooks.
2 January, 1967.*



The full load for a Garratt in the Peak Hill - Narromine section was 1500 tons. 6015 is having no trouble with 16 BWHs and sheeted BCHs plus a van (1000 tons gross) as it steams along near Narwonah, south of Narromine on 5 January 1967.

Apart from the Mails and other passenger trains, a few goods trains ran on a regular basis in the Dubbo area. One such train was the Bourke goods, No.65 west. It sometimes ran as No.665 and was usually hauled between Orange and Dubbo by a 36 or a Garratt, with a 32 class engine continuing on to the west. In the New Year of 1967, 6015 drops downgrade towards Geurie with the Bourke goods. The load includes 5 LLV and 4 MLV ahead of the four wheelers and empty loco coal hoppers.



leaving his hands free. Therefore, the controller could make adjustments to the control graph spread out before him whilst speaking to remote locations. It was possible for the controller to actuate another rotary switch which sent out all appropriate codes simultaneously, allowing details to be given to one and all locations at the same time.

The wheat officer, a person in the control office designated the task of overseeing the control and distribution of the wheat hoppers, was a constant visitor (he had a desk in the nearby room), discussing plans with the train controller.

The wheat officer's duties included co-ordination of silo loading information, balancing the distribution of empty wheat hoppers, arranging for the loaded hoppers to be picked up and brought to the large yard, arranging for their transport by main-line train to the ports, and numerous other jobs associated with carrying the grain.

After a short period of intense activity, when we judged it was wise to say nothing and just enjoy the operations, the controller at last turned and in friendly tones said, "What can I do for you?"

We ascertained, from both word of mouth and the train control graph, the programme for the day.

The bulks for that day were to be sent to two

locations, silos at Trangie (43 miles west of Dubbo) and Geurie, back toward Wellington on the main line. Trangie would receive a mixed load of RUs and BWHs, the silos at Geurie would receive a small number of BWHs to load. In both cases, the loaded hoppers were to be worked back to Dubbo later that day and then marshalled into larger trains for transport via the 'scenic' route through Molong to Orange and on to Sydney. To the casual observer, it may seem strange to work loaded trains in the opposite direction before working forward to Sydney, but it must be remembered that Dubbo had the yard capacity for the correct remarshalling of trains and the established, fairly fast 'through' route to Orange and Sydney was via Yeoval and Molong.

In addition to these two wheat specials, the following trains were rostered either in or out of Dubbo during daylight hours.

- No.45 Coonamble Mail, due in 6.39am, engine 3827.
- No.312 pick-up goods to Orange via Wellington, due out at 9.35am, engine 6011.
- No.665 goods from Orange via Wellington, due in at 11.02am, engine 6040.
- No.46 Coonamble Mail, due out at 6.05pm, engine 3827.



On Wednesday, 4 January 1967, 3290 had a big day. At 8.30am, it departed Dubbo yard with an S, 29 empty BWH and a van, heading for the Coonamble line. It dropped nine BWH hoppers into Talbragar and continued on toward Gilgandra. On the long 1 in 75 grades north of Talbragar, 3290 is shown delivering the 'bulks'. It returned later that afternoon, picking up any loaded hoppers which were available.



With the Muronbung wheat silo in the distance to the right, 3326 and its load of four wheel water gin, CV and 10 S trucks of new railway sleepers plus a PHG van, head for Dubbo and home. Engine 3326 was fitted with a 'Sunbeam' type headlight in days gone by, the number of the locomotive visible in a panel on the sides of the light. This engine was also fitted with steam heating controls, having spent many years at Goulburn on the Cooma line duties prior to working in the Dubbo area.

As we had done on many occasions before and since, we thanked the train controller and as we were leaving, he remarked that a better idea for us to obtain the running programme (or AMBA as it known in railway language) in a less hurried atmosphere, would be for us to return to Control in the evening when the planning for the next day's programme was taking place. The term AMBA requires some explanation. In the days of railway telegraphy, various combinations of letters of the alphabet denoted a phrase or sentence applicable to an aspect of train running, crew rostering, etc. This permitted a saving in time and removed errors in message transmission. The letter combination AMBA denoted 'require the following train or trains to run', and was usually followed by the appropriate train numbers. So, the controller would give out the AMBA to the relevant stations at a pre-determined time, listing all trains due and their times, etc. The combination AMEX symbolised "Train will not run". In this case, the controller would ring the appropriate stations, signal boxes, depots, etc. and would say "The following trains are AMEX", and then would list them. In all, there were more than 300 codes in use.

Just prior to 7.00am, engine 3313 coupled up to No.93 down empty wheat special in Dubbo yard, bound for Trangie. The down Mail was due into town about the same time, but we considered the wheat specials to be of prime importance.

The train controller had told us that No.93 down

empty wheat would be returning to Dubbo from Trangie as No.94 wheat and would be assisted from Narromine to Dubbo (usually a 30 or 32 class engine carried out these jobs) and "would depart Narromine at 2.00pm".

No.93 empty wheat pulled out of town, across the Macquarie River bridge and commenced working up the long 1 in 60 grade of Bourke Hill. The engine appeared to be having difficulty handling the load on this long steep grade, slipping constantly on the dew-covered rails. The speed came down to less than walking pace but after much wheel spin and heavy steaming, 3313 gradually struggled to the top. At this point, as the train passed us, we got our first glimpse of 3313's driver, Lyndsay Brooks, wearing what appeared to be a sea-captain's cap. We were to see more of this gentleman during our stay in Dubbo.

We had to return to Dubbo station immediately for No.45 Mail. By the time of our arrival there, the Mail was standing in the platform, 3827 was being detached, the passengers leaving the station, and mail bags and parcels being unloaded. We had a bit of early breakfast as 6011 made ready to depart Dubbo yard with No.312 pick-up goods, heading back towards Wellington and on to Orange. This was to be our next objective.

Our activity for the remainder of the morning involved following 6011 on No.312 toward Wellington. At Geurie, 3290, which had brought out six or eight empty BWH wheat hoppers from Dubbo, tender-first, was shunting near the silo. This engine

was to work back to Dubbo later in the morning, conveying any loaded hoppers which were ready.

We left 6011 near Mary Vale to continue on its way and returned to Geurie, where 3290 had made up its load of two S trucks, three RU hoppers, six BWH hoppers and an LHO passenger-type brakevan and was standing in the platform ready to depart as train No.31 wheat special bound for Dubbo.

Generally speaking, the 30s and 32s which worked out of Dubbo were well used, spending a lot of their time on heavy goods and wheat trains all over the west, using questionable quality coal and water and on track which had not seen a lot of maintenance. Engine 3290 was one of those engines. It had been an Eveleigh-based locomotive from 1958 until 1964, being used on exacting passenger running in the Sydney area. It was then sent to Dubbo to work out its last days, actually being one of the modernised high-framed engines sent west to replace low-framed 'old campaigners' like 3231, 3271, 3283, etc. Now, after a couple of years of labouring in the west, it was showing signs of wear and, like its mates out there, 3326, 3313, 3236, 3224, 3245 and 3289, was looking rather tired.

Came time for departure of No.31 wheat, facing nearly four miles of 1 in 55 grade from a standing start out of the station. The guard, driver and the Geurie station master had a quick conference before departure and decided to knock two BWHs (124 tons gross) out of the load. Whilst this operation was carried out, Garratt 6040 rolled into the yard en-route to Dubbo on No.665 goods. A short conference with the crew and guard of this train, followed by some quick shunting, and the two BWHs were added to 6040's load and away went 665 goods heading for Dubbo.

The wheat special was now to follow No.665 as soon as the section to Wongarbon was clear, some 23 minutes later. We obtained a couple of photos as

3290 struggled out of Geurie, but were then forced by time constraints to leave it and catch up with 6040 and follow it through to Dubbo rather than wait for 3290. We had recalled what Control had said, "No.94 wheat will depart Narromine at 2.00pm" and we were still quite some miles from Narromine, so it was time to go.

We rolled into Narromine at 1.50pm, and No.94 up wheat, hauled by 3144 and 3313, was standing in the station ready to leave. At 2.00pm, on the dot, the driver on 3144 blew the whistle for departure.

As was usual with empty wheat trains to silos like those at Trangie, No.93 empty bulks, with 3313, was worked to Narromine 'engine-first' from Dubbo. At Narromine, 3313 had cut-off and run into the small depot, turned on the 60 foot diameter turntable there, returned to the train and proceeded out to Trangie, tender-first. This allowed the engine to return from Trangie with the loaded train 'engine-first'.

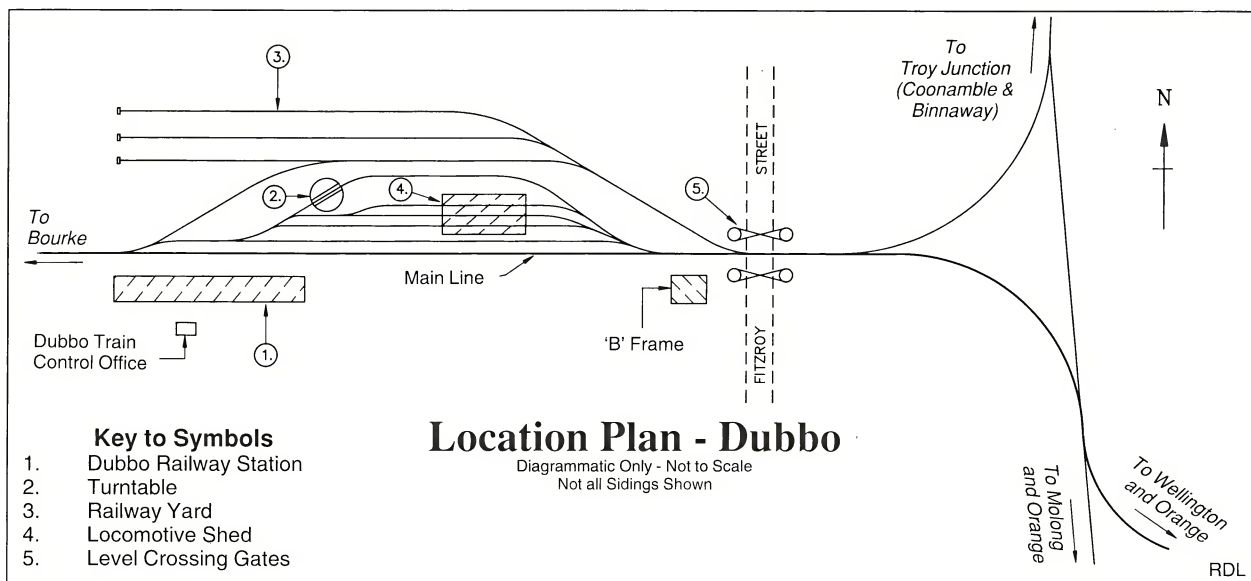
The loaded train commenced to move and within two miles of Narromine yard, 3144 and 3313 on No.94 wheat were travelling at 50mph in anticipation of the 1 in 70 grades ahead.

On arrival at Minore, the train came to a stand to change the staff, and we had a chance to talk to the crews and here we got to speak to the driver of 3313, Lyndsay Brooks.

He showed interest in our activities of following the steam around the Dubbo area and told us of the extensive work involved in moving the large harvest after a previously poor season.

With the staff for the Minore-Dubbo section obtained from the instrument, the crews got back on board and, with an exchange of whistles, away went 94 wheat special.

The grades through from Minore to the summit of Bourke Hill take their toll on the speed of fully loaded trains like No.94, mainly due to the restrictions over some of the wooden bridges and under-





Late afternoon and 6040 on No.680 wheat rolls over the Macquarie River bridge heading for Molong and Orange. This train conveyed the wheat loading brought in by 3290 off the Coonamble branch and by 3313 from Elong Elong and Beni on the Binnaway cross-country line. The Garratt would need assistance on the 1 in 40 grades out of Molong to Orange later in the evening of 4 January 1967.

As soon as the Mail arrived in Dubbo, No.312 pick-up goods commenced its long, drawn-out 87 mile trip to Orange. The engine will shunt most stations and sidings along the way and will arrive in Orange late in the afternoon. The pick-up is lightly loaded this day (unusually), but will have a full load by the time the train arrives in Orange yards.





Lyndsay Brooks worked all manner of trains in the Dubbo district for 30 years. On a hot January 1967 day, in Narromine yard, 6015 takes water from the column, having brought 1000 tons of wheat up from Wyanga. Lyn Brooks, complete with sea-captain's cap, and his mate, fellow driver Alan Armstrong, pause for the photographic recording of the event.

X64 NEW SOUTH WALES GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS

Nº 7760

Certificate of Competency as Steam Locomotive Driver.

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that

Lyndsay William BROOKS

is properly qualified to perform the duties of Steam Locomotive Driver.

GIVEN under my hand this 29th day
of July, 1957.

F. P. HEARD,

per 

Chief Mechanical Engineer

60968 7.55 A. H. PATTISON, GOVERNMENT PRINTER.

passes along the way. We managed a few photos in this section before the line and road parted company, and we then continued on to Dubbo as the up Coonamble Mail was due away at 6.05pm.

This Mail was one of the highlights of our stay in Dubbo. A very clean 3827 at the head of eight cars departed on time and headed for Orange in perfect late afternoon light conditions. We were able to photograph through to Mary Vale, a most enjoyable spectacle.

This ended our first day in Dubbo and after an evening meal, we went back to Train Control as had been suggested by the morning controller earlier that day.

We made ourselves known to the afternoon shift controller, a friendly fellow by the name of Ross

Lyndsay Brooks

Lyndsay Brooks was a Dubbo engineman for all of his railway career. He joined the then New South Wales Government Railways' service in 1950 as a cleaner in loco Dubbo and remained there for the next thirty years.

On 26 July 1957, he received his appointment to fireman/acting driver, which qualified him to drive steam locomotives and on 19 March 1965, he gained his driver's appointment. From Lyn's early days in Dubbo in 1950 until the demise of steam in 1967, locomotives of the 12, 24, 30T, 32, 36, 38, the three classes of Standard Goods engines and the Garratts were normal motive power in the area and he worked them all. Dubbo enginemen worked goods trains in the area bounded by Parkes (via Narromine), Nyngan, Coonamble, Binnaway and Orange (via both Wellington and Molong).

On one trip to the Dubbo area I made the acquaintance of Lyn Brooks and spent a few interesting hours listening to his stories of Dubbo during the steam days.

"Some years ago, the main line through to Orange via Wellington was cut by floodwaters. I had to work No.58 up Through West Mail to Parkes via Narromine and Peak Hill instead of the usual route, via Wellington. The rostered Bathurst driver travelled along as well, although, of course, he didn't know the road via Peak hill. The floodwaters were over the rails in many places for hundreds of yards and some bridges were 'pig-styed' up with sleepers. It was a horror trip and when we got to Parkes, the Bathurst driver told me he was scared and that I had done something he could not do. He didn't know how scared I was."

In 1979, after 30 years' service, Lyn Brooks retired from the railway and still resides in his home town of Dubbo.

Alan Armstrong, Lyn's mate on 6015 at Tomingly West and Narromine, died suddenly whilst playing tennis in Dubbo a few short years after our visit there. He was still a Dubbo driver at the time.

Look mum, no hands! 3144 assists train engine 3313 on the rising 1 in 70 grades out of Minore, as they head No.94 wheat toward Dubbo. Lyn Brooks has reason to smile, he will sign-off within an hour, after a hot day in the wheat areas near Trangie.



Troth. Ross was to be the control officer on afternoon shift for the next week and made us most welcome, inviting us to call in any time during the evening to obtain the information we needed.

For the next five days, we followed the same pattern. After an evening meal we would visit Dubbo Control, where Ross advised of all plans for the next day and if required, phoned Lithgow or Orange Control on our behalf to ascertain engines rostered for Mails, etc.

New Year's Day, Sunday, 1 January 1967 was a relatively quiet day, steam-wise, with only two Garratt-hauled trains arriving in daylight hours, but that had to be expected on Sundays anywhere in the state.

The empty bulk wheat hoppers continued to arrive in Dubbo, usually early in the morning and were then sent on their way to the outlying silos which were loading that day.

Monday, 2 January (a public holiday) was also quiet. The Lithgow-based 45 class engines obviously had no work to do at their end of the system either, and that morning two of them worked into Dubbo, one on the regular Through West Mail, No.59, the other on the holiday relief Coonamble Mail, No.45a. Only two steam-hauled trains were tabled, a special to pick up sleepers at Muronbung/Elong Elong and return, and the return evening up relief Through Mail, No.58a.

At 7.00am, engine 3326 with a CV match wagon, three empty S trucks and a PHG van departed Dubbo tender-first, bound for Muronbung. The driver was Lyn Brooks, his fireman this day being Albert Jones. This train occupied our attention for most of the day and we spent an enjoyable period at both Muronbung and Elong Elong, whilst shunting and loading of the S trucks took place prior to the

trip back to Dubbo in the afternoon. Crib was taken at Elong Elong on the return journey around midday and here, in the shade of the station awning, we listened to tales and events from driver and guard about their many years at Dubbo.

Lyn recalled, *"I was passing through Narromine one day on a P class and when the staff was brought up by the station master, he asked if I could do a small job for him. There was a Kurrajong tree about two feet in diameter growing on the platform and the SM wanted it removed. We put three wire tailropes together and around the tree, connected up to the front of the engine and as I eased back, out came the tree. Easily done and free of charge."*

Before departure from Elong Elong, Lyn Brooks went to the four wheel water gin, in this case a square water tank mounted on a KF flat truck, to 'cut it in' (thus supplying water to the tender) only to find it was empty. During the journey, all the water had leaked from the gin through a small rust hole in the bottom of the tank. Lyn then proceeded to tell us the tale of a recent trip on the Coonamble goods with a 32 class conveying a full load and, as usual, a bogie water gin. Along the way, it was customary to cut in the gin. He found it to be empty and assumed that it may have been that way before leaving Dubbo, it being someone else's job to fill it before departure. They made Coonamble on the tenderfull by using water sparingly, and went into barracks. For the return trip, he filled the tender and the gin to the brim. On the way back, again time to cut in the gin. Again . . . bone dry.

"We took an empty gin all the way to Coonamble and back (95 miles each way)."

Whilst sitting under the peppercorn trees at Elong Elong waiting for the load to be made up, we debated all the aspects of the elevated water tank



At 9.30am on Thursday, 5 January, 6015 and MHG van charge up the 1 in 60 grade of Bourke Hill, west of Dubbo, and head for the silos at Tomingley West and Wyanga. This train (running as F2) returned later that day with a full load of wheat, being given the train number K9 by Control. Engine 6015 was a light-type Garratt and was permitted to operate on the light lines beyond Dubbo. It was not fitted with dual controls and is actually running 'bunker-first'.

near the station, wondering why the crew on 3326 had not taken water from it, in lieu of towing a gin all that way. The indicator on the side of the tank was up near the top of the tank, and Bob said that meant the tank was empty. I stated that surely there would be a reversing-type mechanism within the tank itself and therefore the indicator would show it to be full. Barry solved the problem once and for all, climbed the steel ladder on the side of the tank and announced the tank to be bone dry with a very thick layer of caked, cracked mud on the bottom. This explained the need for the gin.

That evening, 3651 worked a five-car No.58a Relief Through West mail out of Dubbo, heading east. Photographing that train occupied the last available light for the day.

Tuesday, like Monday, was relatively quiet and we spent most of the day with No.92, the up Warren goods, hauled by 3122 en route to Dubbo.

A visit to Control on Tuesday evening and Ross Troth had plenty of good news. The New Year holiday period was now over, and the next day, Wednesday, would see a return to normality. Apart from the regular Mails in and out of Dubbo, wheat specials were tabled for Curban on the Coonamble line (two trains) and a wheat special to Elong Elong and Muronbung on the cross-country line to Binnaway.

At 6.00am next morning, the bulks arrived, train No.329 conveying 29 BWH hoppers and a van hauled by a 45 class diesel-electric.

At 8.10am, 3290 attached to the 29 BWH, with an S truck as match wagon plus a van (600 tons) and proceeded to Talbragar, where nine hoppers were dropped at the silo. The train continued on to Eumungerie, Gilgandra and Curban, leaving hoppers at each location.

Garratt 6005 then departed Dubbo at 11.00am, engine and van, also bound for the Coonamble line. It then picked up loaded hoppers from the ballast siding at Talbragar and proceeded to ballast the line further toward Gilgandra.

In the meantime, 3290 commenced its return from Curban, picking up any loaded hoppers from silos along the way and finally dropping the now empty BBW ballast hoppers, retrieved from 6005 at Curban, back into the ballast siding at Talbragar. Garratt 6005 had remained at Curban waiting for more wheat hoppers to be loaded.

At 8.00pm that night, a taxi departed Dubbo with a relief crew for 6005, waiting at Gilgandra. The Garratt had picked up all remaining loaded wheat hoppers along the Coonamble line, arriving back in Dubbo about 11.00pm. All loaded bulks were then marshalled into a complete block wheat train to

Pleasant company in agreeable surroundings. Lunchtime on Thursday, 5 January, and we enjoy a cup of tea with the train crew in the shade of the station awning at Tomingly West. When the 'crib' break is over, the crew will marshall all loaded wheat hoppers and head back to Wyanga and on to Dubbo. Road trucks at the right are awaiting their turn to discharge their wheat load into the silo.



depart Dubbo during the early hours of the next morning.

It had been a hectic day, with seven steam hauled trains around the Dubbo area.

Thursday, 5 January was just as busy as Wednesday. Empty wheat hoppers had arrived during the night and had been distributed to various silos in the surrounding area.

Again, the Mail (with 3810), the regular goods via Molong (No.668 with 6005) and the regular pick-up goods via Wellington (No.312 with 3636) gave us a busy morning, but the previous evening, Ross Troth in Control had revealed two trains would be running which were of particular interest to us and were good reasons not to stray too far from Dubbo on the Thursday morning.

Around 9.30am, 6015 (running bunker-first) and a van departed Dubbo and marched up Bourke Hill bound for Tomingly West on the Narromine-Peak Hill-Parkes line. The train was called F2 goods and the driver was Lyn Brooks. It was to return later that day to Dubbo as K9 wheat, picking up all available loaded hoppers from the silos along the way. As soon as the section to Minore was clear, a staff was drawn in Dubbo and handed to the driver of 3313 at the head of No.91 ballast. This heavy load was pushed by 3144 up Bourke Hill.

We then spent the rest of that day on the Dubbo-Tomingly West section of the line, enjoying lunch at Tomingly with Lyn Brooks, his mate Alan Armstrong and the guard, under the welcome shade of the station awning, whilst waiting for the BWHs to be loaded at the silo. Lyn's mate on 6015 was also a Dubbo driver, two drivers being used as Dubbo loco depot was experiencing a shortage of firemen at the time.

'Crib' over, the train, trailing eight BWH hoppers and a van left Tomingly West and proceeded to Wyanga, where eight more loaded hoppers were waiting and were shunted on, making 16 BWH plus van for 1000 tons gross load. Special wheat train K9 then proceeded to Narromine, where water was taken for the 1 in 70 grades ahead through Webbs and Minore.

Late in the afternoon, 6015 crept across the long trestle approaches of the Macquarie River bridge and into Dubbo yard.

The Garratt on this train did exactly what the railway administration had intended it for when it was ordered at the end of the 1940s: the operation of heavy wheat trains over light lines in the western areas of the state. This engine with its 1000 ton load on the 1 in 70 grades saved the use of two wheat trains each with a 32 class engine and each assisted by another engine. In this case, 6015 with a crew of three replaced four engines on two trains with a total crew complement of ten men.

An explanation is required on the use of the letters 'K' and 'F' when applied to various goods trains in the west of the state in steam days. It can be appreciated that confusion could exist in the running direction of a train travelling on cross country lines, such as that between Werris Creek and Binnaway, as to the whether it was travelling 'up' to Sydney or 'down' away from Sydney. To ease confusion, most goods trains travelling in the section between Parkes and Werris Creek, via Narromine, Dubbo and Binnaway, were given the prefix 'K'. Goods trains travelling the sections in the opposite direction, from Werris Creek towards Parkes, were given the prefix 'F'. No actual reason for using these particular letters is apparent; this author's best guess is that 'K' indicated Werris Creek-bound trains, 'F' indicates Forbes-bound trains. The fact that trains prefixed 'F' appear to terminate at Parkes, instead of Forbes, adds to the confusion.

On Thursday evening, 5 January 1967, we left Dubbo and headed for Coonabarabran, the intention being to spend a couple of days in the Warrumbungle Ranges with the regular goods train, usually 32 class hauled.

During our regular visit to Control on the previous evening (Wednesday), we had checked with Train Controller Ross Troth about the timekeeping of the regular Gwabegar pick-up goods (No.51 and No.22) in anticipation of our journey there on Friday and Saturday. *"You should watch out for that train, especially the up job (No.22). If the shunting is*





Above: A Garratt in full cry. 6015 is allowed 1000 tons on this section of the line between Narromine and Dubbo, having to contend with 1 in 70 grades. This engine has only a few miles to go on 5 January, 1967 before reaching the summit and then will roll down the long grade and across the Macquarie River bridge into Dubbo yard.

Above Left: Mail train working in the west during the late 1950s and into the 1960s was shared between the 36 and 38 class engines. On the long 1 in 40 grades, the superior power of the 38s was evident, especially with the heavier trains, and on New Year's Eve, 31 December 1966, Pacific 3827 climbs out of Geurie with the up Coonamble Mail.

Left: In years past, big things had been planned for the tiny hamlet of Mary Vale, situated on the main line between Wellington and Dubbo. It was to be the junction for the cross-country link to the coast via Gulgong and Sandy Hollow. However, on a sunny January afternoon in 1967, Mary Vale was just a crossing loop with minimal facilities. Garratt 6040 at the head of No.699 Dubbo-bound goods stands in the loop, whilst the Orange to Dubbo passenger, connecting off the Central West Express at Orange, passes through on the main line, the ill-fated DP 102 leading the Comet set.

completed in Gwabegar the previous evening, they get out of barracks early and buzz off as soon as they have had breakfast. It's a local arrangement up there!" The tabled departure time for the goods was 7.00am from Gwabegar.

On Saturday morning, 7 January 1967, we set ourselves up in the Warrumbungle Range and waited for No.22 pick-up in perfect morning lighting.

The local arrangement had worked well that morning. 3224 and crew had departed Gwabegar at 3.00am, more than four hours early and we missed it completely, waiting by the line for a train that was

already through Coonabarabran and heading home to Binnaway. Ross Troth *had* warned us, I suppose!

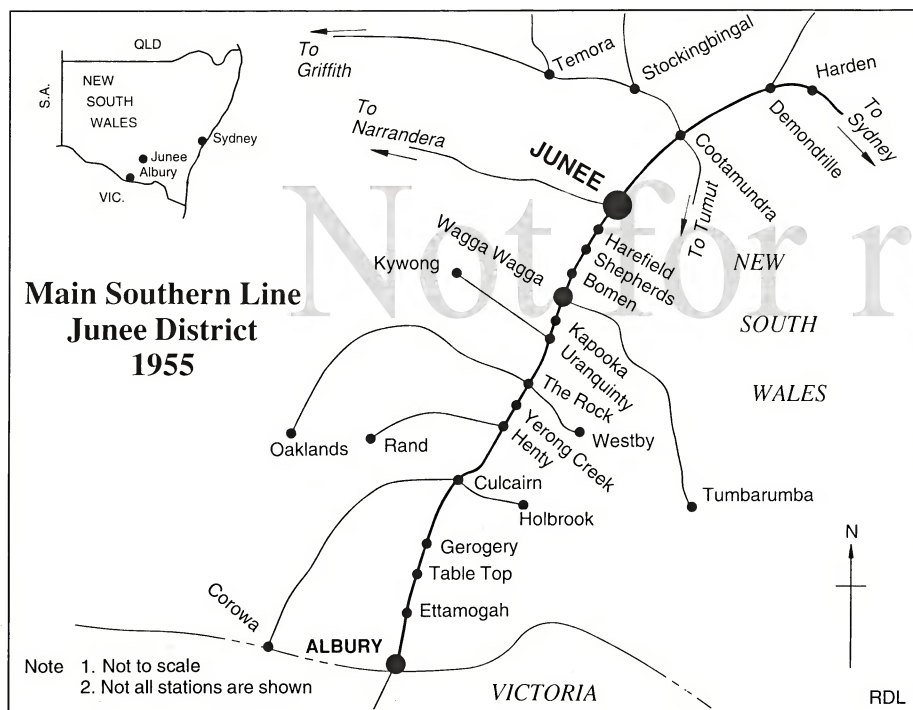
Epilogue

As scheduled, the far western areas of the state - Bourke, Brewarrina, Cobar, Gwabegar, Narromine, Peak Hill and other similar locations - were taken over completely by 48 class diesel-electric engines by the end of 1967.

Train Controller Ross Troth, later moved from Dubbo to Werris Creek Control, becoming Chief Controller during the 1980s. He has since retired and lives in Tamworth.



In the warm early sunlight of 16 April 1955, Standard Goods 2-8-0 5402, coaled up after running down from Junee, but yet to be turned, awaits its next assignment in Albury loco. 5402 still sports its Wampu tender, commonly fitted to these engines, and is one of the select group with specially-balanced driving wheels. This latter feature permitted its use on fast fruit expresses from the Southern border areas to the markets of Sydney. Albury depot's crude fuelling facilities, just a low coal stage, can be seen behind the engine, and at right, where an open S wagon of coal stands on a slight hump. No wonder crews were happy to recol tall-tendered 38s at Demondrille!



Above Right: The friendly shed crew stirs up the banked fire on 3804 and finds enough steam to run the engine onto the turntable for our photographic indulgence! Junee's 100', electrically-operated turntable was unique in NSW, and formed part of the modern depot complex constructed after World War 2 at this important junction. 3804 has forsaken the brilliant green of its youth for a more dowdy plain black.



JUNEE JUNCTION . . . 1955

Lloyd Holmes

The construction name of Junee was originally Loftus, changed to Junee (Aboriginal for green frog) in July 1878. It was renamed Junee Junction in February 1881 and thus remained until 1940. In April of that year, Junee Junction was again renamed - Junee, a situation which exists today.

On a cool April morning in 1955, it was no hardship to be on Albury's long platform watching a subdued 3802 roll in on No.3 *Melbourne Limited Express*, right on time at 7.30am after 399 testing miles from Sydney.

Behind us on the broad gauge side of the colonial platform, a B class diesel-electric locomotive chants its GM song on train No.34, Victoria's finest, *Spirit of Progress*, in all its blue and gold splendour. A bare six months earlier, the front end of this train would have been graced with one of the superb S class Pacifics but, alas, they are gone and the new order installed. The narrow alley-way between the two trains is soon thronged with embarking passengers as the border ritual of 'All Change' is again played out.

Absorbing as this scene of unnecessary confusion is, we tarry no longer. We have better things to do on this day and so we make our way through the throng, bound for Albury loco.

My companions are John Stormont and Doug

Colquhoun, avid railway photographers in these early unsophisticated days of simple cameras, black and white film and a push-bike, if you are lucky! John is returning to his signalman duties at Cootamundra and Doug, from Adelaide, is seeing the NSWGR for the first time.

We are bound for Junee on No.36 *Riverina Express*, due out of Albury at 8.53am, which gives us an hour to look around Loco and see what fate had landed there overnight for our cameras.

3809 off No.1 *Melbourne Express* has been turned and is over the ash-pit in the hands of a hostler. A brace of 40 class Alco diesels repose silently inside the Loco signal, having hauled an overnight all-bogie express freight from Darling Harbour.

Behind them, 5402 stands simmering in the early sunlight, awaiting its next turn of duty. Within the ancient two-road shed we find 2619, a vintage 2-6-2 saddletanker, as well as 3807 and 3657, the latter off No.9 Fast Mixed and the former off No.15 *Riverina Express* the previous night. The rostering



A picture of near-perfection: 3807 stands in Albury's imposing station on 16 April 1955 with No.36 Riverina Express, formed, as usual, of a tuscan and russet liveried RUB set. The loco's paint job was unique, as it was the only black-painted 38 to be given the more elaborate red and straw lining-out, when it was painted for Royal pilot duties in 1954. The adjacent dual-gauge yard is agog with transshipment activities as the overnight goods trains from Melbourne and Sydney are dealt with.

for these units northbound would be: 3807 on No.36, 3657 on No.54 Mixed, the pair of 40 class on No.406 Express Goods, 5402 shunt if required then work an afternoon overflow goods, 3802 on No.8 Mail, 3809 on No.4 Express and the 38 class off No.7 Mail to work No.2, the *Limited*.

We watch cars for train No.36 being pushed down from No.1 goods siding into the northern end of the platform and soon after 3807 sidles out of Loco, runs up the main and then back onto the train. In solid black, with attractive lining-out in red and gold, 3807 looks every inch the thoroughbred she is and at 8.53am that distinctive broken-note chime reaches us in Car 6 at the rear of the train, heralding departure.

Culcairn, 31 miles out, is our first stop and at 9.33am, after rumbling over the Billabong Creek bridge, we pause at this junction station. 5256 stands in the yard with a train of mixed freight, Albury-bound. Henty brings 5401 refueled with a

long train of black diamonds, much of which will be consumed in VR locomotives after transshipping at Wodonga's coal sidings.

A spectacular granite outcrop to our left presages our arrival at The Rock, 60 miles out, at 10.22am and here we find 4008 sidlined with a northbound goods, while 3822 slides past into the loop with No.7 *Albury Mail*, a neat crossing.

Wagga Wagga, on the Murrumbidgee, rates a five minute stop for passengers and 'out-ofs' and then 3807 begins to work harder, as is evidenced by the constant black smoke drifting by our windows. At times we can smell it, air-conditioning notwithstanding, and not a complaint passes our lips!

Bomen, Shepherds and Harefield slide silently by and suddenly we are dropping down the long grade into Junee on that sweeping left-hand curve; we sit forward for that first sight of the massive brick edifice and wooden coal-stage that is Junee Locomotive Depot. There atop the stage sits 3402, one of



3807 again, this time in the early 1960s, when its paint scheme was standard black with red lining, makes a spirited getaway from Tabletop with No.36 Sydney-bound Riverina Express, the RUB car set now in all-over tuscan with twin buff lines.



At the end of long, but undistinguished, life wooden-headstocked 3402 greets us at Junee loco on 16 April 1955, an unexpected and rare find. At this time, 3401 and 3402 were the sole survivors of the five-strong class, built to supplant the P (C32) class on the expresses, but themselves overtaken by the NN (C35) class. Short stints on the Main North and North Coast lines were followed by semi-retirement in the south west, running to Albury and Narrandera. Modifications from 3402's original state include a 35 class tender, reshaping the Thow porthole in the cab to a squarish shape, and some strengthening plate along the valance at the rear end.

two remaining members of the five strong C34 class ten-wheelers, built in NSWGR shops early this century, supposedly as a more powerful passenger engine after the C32 class. Apparently, the C34 did not fit the bill, as soon after it was to be shoved sideways by the C35 and then C36 classes of the same wheel arrangement. It seems the southern line was home to this rare breed for most of their working lives and, for the period from 1910 to 1927, its five members were allotted the task of hauling the interstate expresses between Junee and Albury.

Today's chores for 3401 and 3402 are far more mundane: loco shunter, yard work in Junee and Wagga, an occasional sprint out to Narrandera on the *South West Mail* and the odd mainline jaunt with a pick-up goods.

We farewell John at Junee and walk up to watch 3807 taking water as a pair of fuelmen shovel the coal forward and the outgoing driver lubricates the motion gear.

Junee station was opened in 1878 as Whitton's Great Southern Railway pushed south to the Murrumbidgee. The name, taken from a pastoral station, is alleged to be native for 'green frog' and one source claims that the Aboriginal pronunciation was 'chew-nee'. The present massive station buildings were completed in 1893, this date being embossed above the entrance.

Almost opposite the level-crossing at the northern end of the platform, an ancient two-storey hotel catches our eye, its weathered sign proclaiming it to be the 'Loftus'. This name was associated with the site during the railway construction period. As we admire the early architecture, the aura of days long gone is intensified as a horse-drawn sulky clatters by, in the charge of a bewhiskered old gent of ram-rod-straight spine! "*Shades of the old wild west,*" Doug gasps as the outfit rounds a corner and disappears from view.

As befitting such a busy depot and junction station, the yard is quite full, but the 'big power' we have come to see is conspicuous by its absence. Chanting away in the depths of the yard is that unmistakable Alco grumble which, upon inspection, is revealed as blue and gold 4002, southbound on a long goods.

Pressing on towards Loco, which is a good 'country' half-mile from the station, we are passed by 3655 running tender-first and we correctly assume that the engine is to bank 4002 out of town. A short time later, an exchange of whistle signals takes place and we set ourselves up to record the scene on film. Just as I am about to press the shutter on my Agfa 'Billy', I am unnerved by an anguished groan from my companion, who has just realised that he has failed to reload his camera after the last



In a turn of duty no doubt not envisaged for its type when introduced in 1925 as main-line passenger locomotives, 3655 shoves hard at the rear of a southbound goods leaving Junee for Harefield. Head-end power is 4002, and the Alco's smoke output rivals that from the steamer.

shot!

The present Junee roundhouse of 42 stalls was opened by Commissioner Tom Hartigan on 29 September 1947, a flag-bedecked occasion preserved for posterity in a photograph in the NSWGR Annual Report for 1948, in which a seemingly brand-new non-streamlined 38 class locomotive, number obscured, stands on the 100' long turntable, the centre of attention. Research has indicated that the engine was in fact 3817.

A modern steam depot now, one wonders what miracles the wartime staff performed at the old shed, in those hectic times of frantic activity, meagre facilities and long, long hours.

Our quest for 'big power' in attendance is rewarded as we note the massive tender of 5717 jutting out into the sunshine. 3804 snoozes passively beside the 4-8-2, garbed in black and having completed a nocturnal run from Sydney on No.23 *South West Mail*. The engine of 5714 resides in one stall in an advanced state of dismemberment. A pair of driving-wheels is missing, its side-rods grace the brick floor, the cylinder-covers are gone and the smoke-box door is wide open. Its tender occupies the adjacent stall. 3603 is also enjoying 'board and lodgings', my first view of the locos' new look with Belpaire boiler and modern cab. I thought this modernisation enhanced their good looks.

A number of 'dead' K class 2-8-0s occupy stalls like slabs in a mortuary. Draught-horses of the system, the battle for these old warriors, unique with their Southern valve-gear, is probably over as new motive-power renders them redundant.

Fanny, the shed's pit-pony, peeps from another stall, an ancient X10 class tank engine that shuffles dead and disabled locomotives and tenders around the premises as required. Other interesting occupants are a pair of C30T class light 4-6-0s, both sporting boiler-tube cow-catchers and six-wheel

tenders. I failed to record their numbers; I think one was 3049, but I certainly would never have qualified as a British engine-spotter!

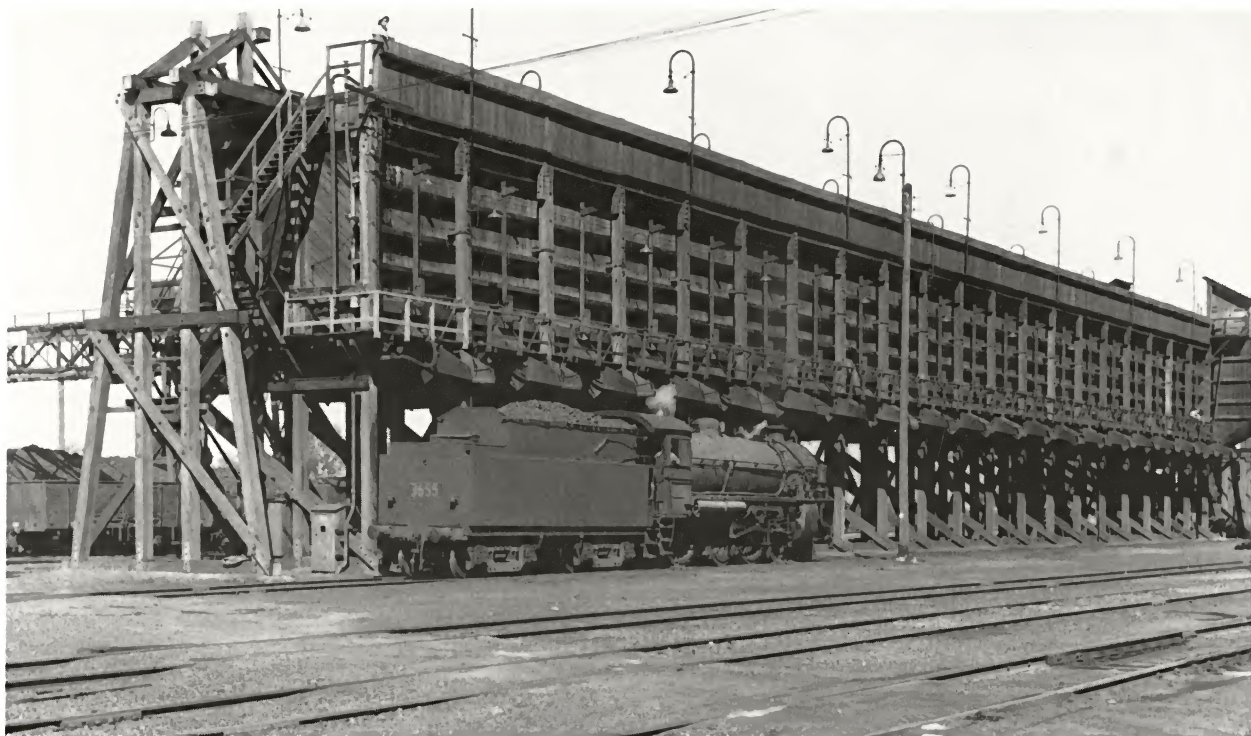
The friendly shed staff, somewhat bemused at our presence and evident interest, offer to run both 5717 and 3804 onto the turntable for us to photograph, an offer we lose no time in accepting. We pass through a large, well-equipped machine shop and out past an open bay containing a sizable saw-bench. Here the lighting-up wood is cut to length as required from stacks of dry box-wood, an nice touch of detail in a well thought-out steam facility.

Outside, at the southern end of the building, is 'rotten row', resting place for a number of steamers in derelict condition. On this weed-grown spur stands D55 class oil-burner 5581, attached to the tender of 5582. Stripped of any vestige of dignity, her headlight gone, main and valve-motion rods and links dismantled and roped to the running boards, the old *Katy* presents a sad sight in the bright sunshine. The cab is rusting and smells of stale oil, the steam-gauge needle is frozen at zero for all time and her plates will never again tremble to the roar of heavy oil igniting. Ahead lies the torch and the closing of the register for engine 5581. Farewell, old timer!

In mid-afternoon, we saunter across to the main line hoping to photograph No.54 mixed arriving, but a bleat of melodious air-horns signals No.406 fast freight barrelling down the bank behind Alcos 4014 and 4003. A 'blue ribbon' freighter is 406, and it will pause in Junee for two minutes for crew change, then off again, bound for Darling Harbour.

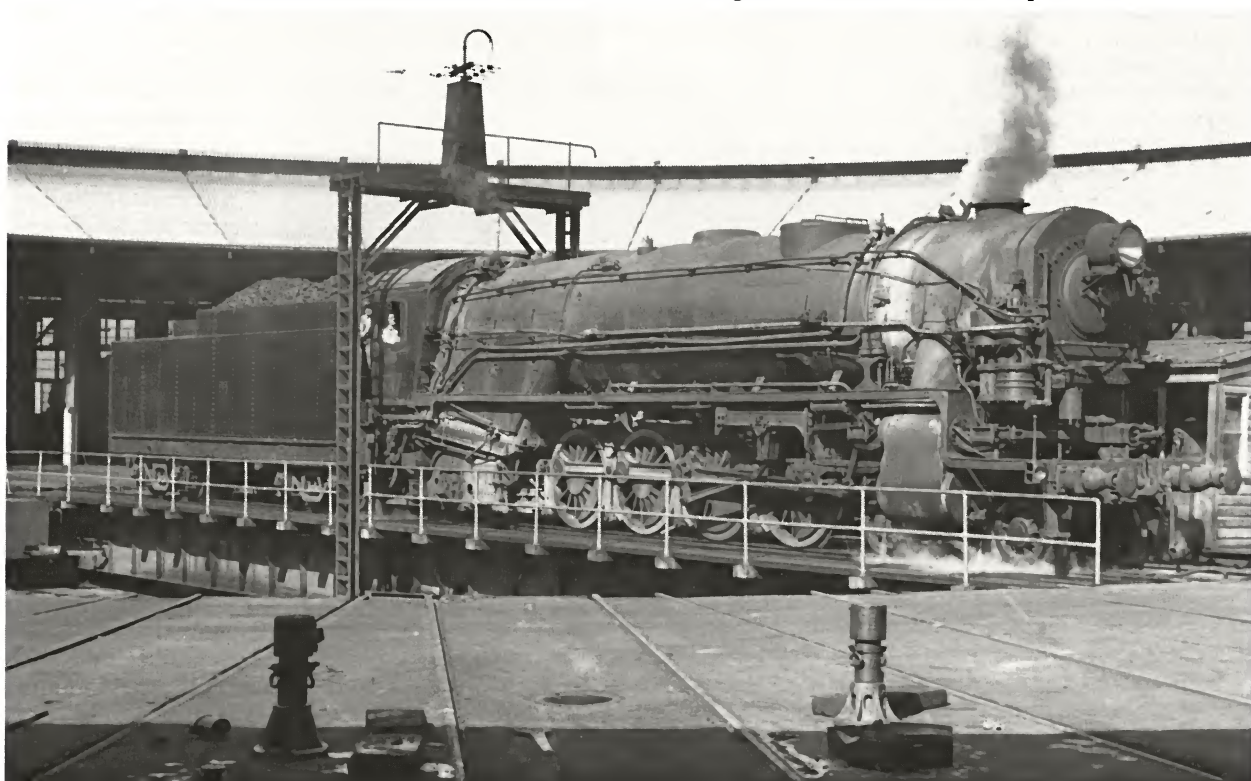
Back at the roundhouse, we watch 5717 clump onto the turntable then pass outside to top-up the tender water. At 3.45pm, the big fellow 'whistles out' and then proceeds into traffic.

As your indomitable but now weary enthusiasts hoof it back towards the station, we notice a dark



Bank engine duties over for a while, 3655 retires to take sustenance. In complete contrast to Albury's meagre facilities, Junee's massive coal stage was provided as part of the new depot, opened in 1947. 3655 soldiered on with its round-top boiler for two more years until, in 1957, it was rebuilt with a Belpaire boiler.

Nothing is too much trouble, it seems, and 5717 is also stirred into life and eased onto the turntable. Consequently, we can record for posterity the Mountain-type's rugged and impressive lines, within the all-encompassing confines of the 42 stalls in this, the state's largest roundhouse, on 16 April 1955.





With polished tan shoes, smart sharp-creased slacks, stylish sports jacket and nifty brown fedora, the urbane Doug Colquhoun gazes at the sad sight of 5581 on Junee's 'rotten row'. The railway enthusiast of the mid-fifties was seldom as well turned out!

object descending the bank into Junee from the north. Its attendant flurry of smoke and steam suggests another big engine and, sure enough, as it swings off the main and into the yard, we are confronted by 5810. It is the first sighting of this unhappy breed of Mountain type for both Doug and I and, though only four years old at the time, it will have but another two years of service to fulfill before permanent withdrawal.

3651 rolls into the yard right behind 5810, conveying an all-bogie trainload of sheep, bound for the jumbuck empires that lie out on the great South-West branch line.

5717 comes ambling up the middle road between the platforms, its train, No.56 Goulburn mixed with CX car attached, standing in No.2 platform.

A wailing whistle from the south heralds the proximity of our tardy mixed, No.54, and soon 3657 rolls into the main platform. After disgorging the few passengers from the dogbox car, the train is lifted up the main and then stowed in the now near-full yard. Your intrepid enthusiasts have now summoned their reserves of extra stamina and climbed up the main line to a vantage spot near the Junee barracks. Here we hope to record, for all time, the 4.20pm departure of 5717 Goulburn-bound.

A hoarse bellow startles pedestrians using the level-crossing a few yards from his massive front end. The boom-gates drop, bells ring and lights flash. A semaphore drops and steam rushes into three great cylinders as 5717 drags forty unwilling charges into motion. Few in Junee town will be unaware of No.56's departure - an awesome display of power in both sight and sound.

No sooner has its LHG brakevan passed us, than another mixed is rolling down the grade from Cootamundra behind 3611. It threads its way across from the down main to No.2 platform, where passengers and the inevitable few cream-cans are un-



If Junee's 34 classes were undistinguished, they at least lived reasonable life spans. The ill-fated 58 class Mountains didn't even manage a decade. 5810 clanks to a halt in Junee yard on 16 April 1955, allowing us another unexpected photo opportunity. The 58s' good looks belied their indifferent performance, legacy of untried design features.

loaded. This is No.9 Fast Mixed, shown in the WTT as a daily, except Sunday, runner departing Sydney at 1.45am. What a train to ride!

For me, the glamour expresses could never conjure up the romance and intrigue of a nocturnal 'Fast Mixed'. What a way to experience the railway from the grass-roots of the lowly tasks: newspapers, cream-cans, cartons of fruit, urgent goods consignments, parcels and mailbags, schoolkids, paymasters, interesting passengers joining and leaving at tiny halts. The menial day-to-day chores so necessary to the small, often unseen communities.

I am indeed sorry that I never rode No.9 in the days of steam.

Our full day's sojourn at this busy and fascinating southern depot is over, as 3827 slides into the main platform on time, with No.15 *Riverina Express*. The nine minute pause here allows the locomotive to take water for the 99 miles to Albury, the crew to change and passengers to avail themselves of the delights offering in Junee's large and ornate Railway Refreshment Rooms.

We are again booked in Car 6 which, in this direction, is marshalled second from the engine behind the guard/power-van, ensuring we miss little of the animated sounds of 3827 rushing us through the Riverina evening.

Flopping wearily into our seats, we drink in the pleasant decor of these relatively new saloon cars and, at 4.49pm, a gentle tug signifies No.15 is mobile again.

A fleeting glimpse of Loco against the setting sun and our ties with Junee are broken. We settle back

comfortably into our seats and contemplate the complexities of the Aboriginal paintings that grace the walls of Car 6. Understanding eludes us, but we do agree that the overall results, in black, ochre and white, harmonise nicely with the car's stained-timber panelling.

At Kapooka, the last rays of sunlight glint off the green contours of 3802, sidelined with No.8 Mail, the engine crew on the ground taking a blow from the warm cab.

The novelty and sheer pleasure of riding a steam-hauled passenger train is again raised by my companion, remarks spurred by snatches of smoke drifting continuously past our windows and that chime whistle clearly invading our insulated cocoon.

A feeling of contentment and well-being takes over as we speed across the gentle undulations of the eastern Riverina. Why, even the lonely farmhouse lights, winking distantly in the darkness, seem to bear out the validity of the steam-hauled night train.

All too soon, Albury's lights and its famed illuminated War Memorial on Western Hill fill our windows, indicating journey's end and, at 7.20pm, train No.15 ceases to exist.

Our visit to one of the renowned citadels of steam, still in its heyday, has been enjoyable in the extreme. To be treated to more than ten different locomotive classes in one day, including a couple of rare species well and truly on the endangered list, is indeed a bonus. Less than ten years later, steam would be gone south of Goulburn and Junee Junction would never be the same. ▴



Exerting maximum tractive effort, 5717 stutters noisily out of Junee with No.56 Goulburn mixed trailing out of the yard in the background. Assorted steam leaks around the Mountain's front end are drowned by the blast from the three cylinders as the train attacks the bottom of the three mile, 1 in 66/70 grade out of town. The important branchline to the south-west can be seen diverging into the bottom right corner of the photograph.



Left: Assistant Station Master Wal Jenkins near the office doorway on Telegraph Point railway station on Monday, 20 September 1982, a few months before its official closure. Wal spent 42 years in the New South Wales Government Railways. During his 27 years at Telegraph Point, the station won the State Championship of the Railway Garden Competition in 1963, 1964 and 1965 as well as many other prizes over the years.

Photo Courtesy 'Port Macquarie News'

Right: Edward James Jenkins, Wal's late father, joined Lithgow loco in 1925 as an engine cleaner. In 1937, he attained the rank of fireman. In this photo, taken in Lithgow depot about 1930, Ted, still an acting fireman, stands beside the driving wheels of 5704. Driver Brown, being the senior man, occupies the more prominent pose at the front of the engine. It was to be another 15 years before Ted would be able to hold on to the shunter's pole. Engine 5704 was only a couple of years old when the photo was taken, the compressor still being in its original location on the running plate.

Photo Courtesy Jenkins Family

Introduction

On 8 April 1987, I retired from the State Rail Authority after 42 years' railway service. I was a Traffic Branch employee for that entire period and worked on stations, in signal boxes and goods yards in many parts of the state, spending my last years as 2nd class Assistant Station Master at Telegraph Point on the North Coast.

It was inevitable that I become a railwayman. My grandfather, Alexander Jenkins, began his career in the latter part of last century as a fletcher, at March (later Clergate) about 8 miles north-west of Orange. Alexander's wife, my grandmother, was the "24 hour gatekeeper" at the adjacent road crossing.

In 1911, at the age of 15, my father, Ted, joined the NSWGR as a junior porter at Orange, on a wage of four shillings and twopence per day.

When his family moved to Lithgow, my father resigned from the NSWGR and in 1915 he joined the huge Hoskins Steelworks in Lithgow, where he remained until 1925. He did, however, have a small break from 1917 to 1919: war service in France with the 1st AIF.

His main job in the steelworks was a shunter-driver on the small standard gauge tank engines within the complex. The works were extensive, more than 20 miles of railway line within the works area and each of their locomotives was named after a native Australian animal, *Koala* and *Wallaby* were both there in my father's day.

Another small locomotive was fitted with a jib crane and called appropriately *Shifter*.

On 1 April, 1925 my father began work as a cleaner in Lithgow locomotive depot on a starting wage of one shilling and nine pence per hour rising to two shillings, one and 5/22 pence per hour in June 1937, when he attained the rank of fireman. He remained a fireman until October 1945 when he gained his driver's appointment in Orange, his original place of employment.

He transferred back to Lithgow as a driver in 1948 and stayed there until his death in 1953.

During his career he drove and fired all classes of locomotives from Lithgow to Enfield, Mudgee, Bathurst, Orange, Parkes and Dubbo. Amongst the men who worked with my father were Harold Fowler (later to become the state's No.1 driver by 1984) and his well-known engineman father, Pierce Fowler, known throughout the west in steam days.

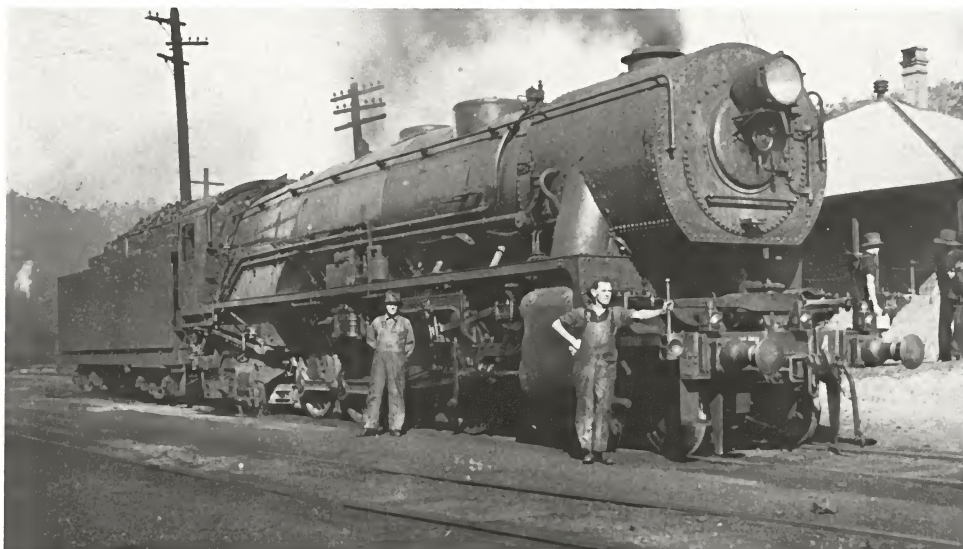
My earliest recollections of his railway days are those of being woken up many times over the years by the call boy calling my father to work and the futile attempts by my mother to keep us kids quiet during the day, so father could have some sleep before his next call.

I joined the NSWGR myself in 1945 and the following chapters detail my experiences in 'country' NSW as seen from the Traffic Branch.

The ASM

42 Years
'On The Job'

Wal Jenkins



Lithgow and the Early Days

I was born in 1929 in the mining town of Lithgow, 97 rail miles west of Sydney in the Blue Mountains. With my father employed as a fireman at the Lithgow depot, and with various members of our family also within the railway system, it would appear that my destiny was to be a railwayman as well.

As a small lad, the conversation in our little cottage seemed to be always centred on railway talk and from this I was to grow up understanding many of the mysterious terms that were bandied around.

It was only the proverbial 'hop, step and jump' from our cottage to Lithgow station, which is still situated in a cutting. Many happy times were had watching the movement of all types of steam-hauled trains. About 100 yards east of this 'new' station was located the 'old' Eskbank station which, once every year, saw the arrival of Wirth's Circus from Sydney.

The circus train occupied all the up track next to the station and, from our vantage point on the bridge, much childish joy could be had watching the elephants unload the complete train and then hauling the lions' and tigers' cages down to the circus ground.

My complete education, from kindergarten to high school, was centred in the one complex and, as high school time approached, I decided to take a pre-apprenticeship course with a view to joining the railways, not in the locomotive or traffic section, but as a car and wagon builder. I loved the feel and smell of good timber and I felt that my career lay in that direction.

My marks through the three-year high school course were sufficient to obtain the railway position of car and wagon builder, but this was not to be, owing to an influx of lads wanting these jobs.

On leaving school at the end of 1944, I gained a position with the Post Office and decided to wait until I was 16 and then join the Traffic Branch of the Railways. A notice in the *Lithgow Mercury* caught my attention, stating that written examina-

tions for entrance to the Railways would be held in the Railway Institute at Lithgow.

I, and another twenty-odd nervous boys, sat for this mathematics and dictation test and after a few days we were notified of the results, with myself and another lad receiving rail passes to attend 509 Pitt Street, Sydney for a medical checkup.

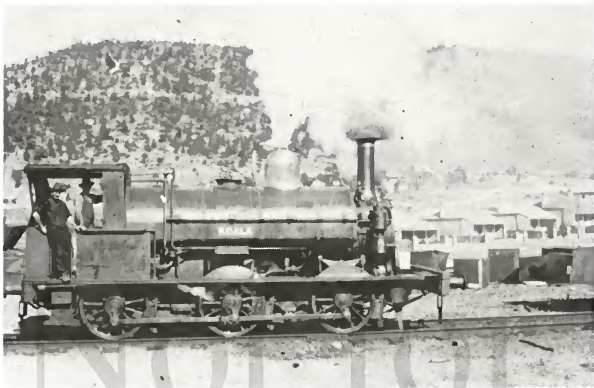
509 Pitt Street was the Railway Employment Office, situated opposite Central Station. After waiting with other 'poor devils' for the unknown, we were ushered in separately to see the medical officer at 9am.

The first order from the doctor was, "OK, son, strip everything off." When I asked, "You mean the lot?", he answered with some disdain, "Can't you understand English?" And when he said, "Bend over", I reckoned it was time to get out of there! "Haemorrhoids, lad, that's what I want to see." After checking heart and lungs, I was asked for a urine specimen.

With everything knotted up inside, I knew deep down that this was the ultimate test. Could I or could I not go behind that curtain and pass water? After some considerable time had elapsed the doctor yelled out, "For God's sake, turn the tap on over the basin!". This was the catalyst and, with this part over, all that remained was the eyesight test.

The eyesight test was carried out by a different officer in another room and entailed a 'colour light' test of white, red and green lights to ascertain if a person was colour blind. If this was found to be the case, and he could not distinguish between the primary colours, he was considered to be colour blind and could not be employed in any capacity where colour light signals had to be read.

Another part of the eye test was the reading of the 'Ishihara Confetti Book' in which numbers are superimposed on mixed up coloured pages. If you could not pick out the numbers, this went against you. A chart had to be read from a distance with and without thick lenses and also with eyedrops inserted.



We were told that these drops would affect our vision for a few hours. They weren't wrong because, after being released from the building into Sydney traffic, most of the time was spent groping our way around, avoiding cars and people and blinking our eyes trying to get them to focus.

We weren't advised of the results of the our tests in Sydney and we arrived back in Lithgow from the 'big smoke', prepared to wait for notification of our acceptance or otherwise. A written notification did come through eventually and I was advised to commence duties at Lithgow on 11 June 1945. This letter also stated that my duties would be explained to me by the Staff Clerk in the District Superintendent's Office.

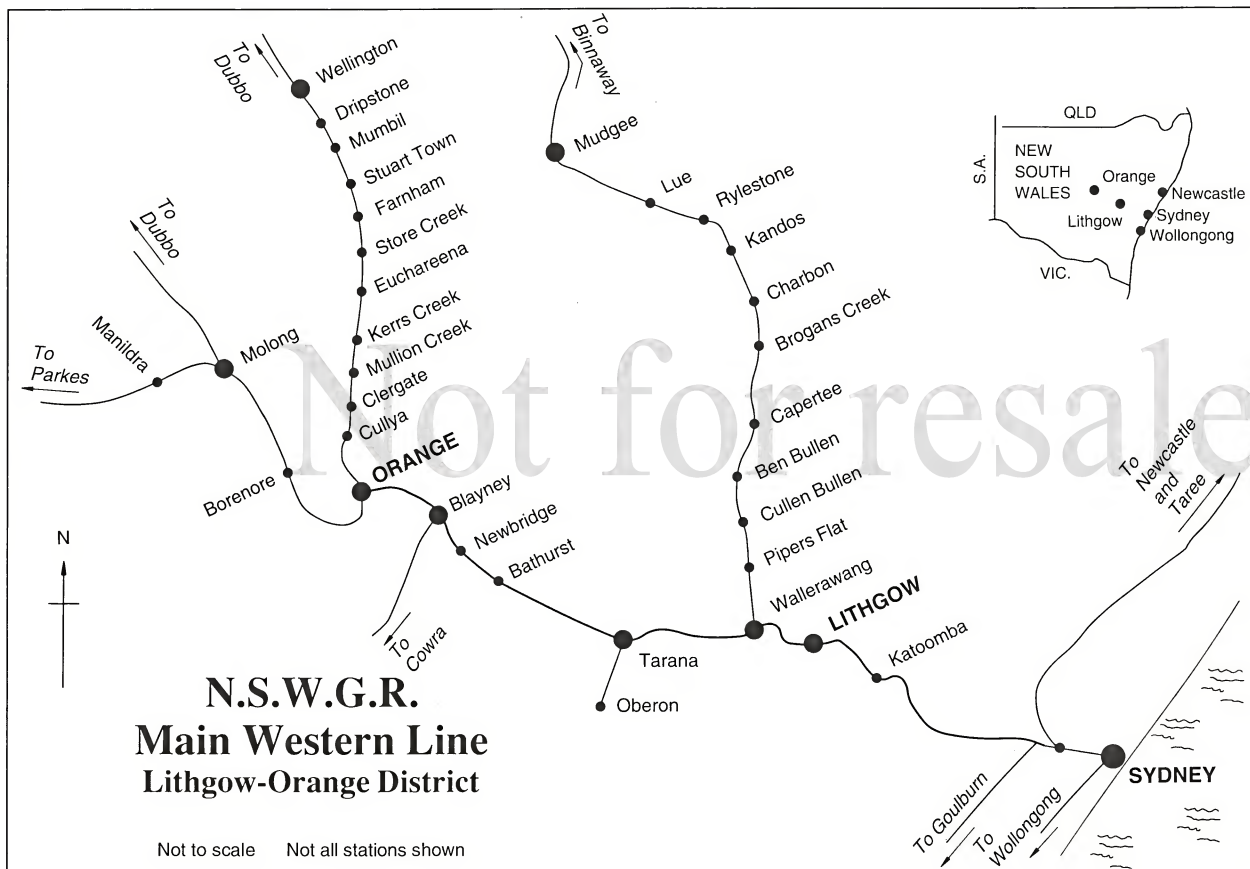
Prior to joining Lithgow loco in 1925, Wal's father, Ted was a shunter / driver at the giant Hoskins Steelworks in Lithgow. In the photo taken about 1920, Ted Jenkins (on the right with his hand on the throttle) and his mate pause during the shunting. The engine is 'Koala', a Beyer, Peacock 0-6-0 saddle tank of 1873 and it spent about nine years at the Hoskins Steelworks before transferring to Port Kembla. It was scrapped in 1956.

Photo Courtesy Jenkins Family

An apprehensive lad walked into this hallowed place and asked to see the Staff Clerk, who explained to me that there was no set position available for me as yet and until such a position came up I was to learn as much as possible.

My elder brother was a shunter in the 'new yard' at Lithgow and, as we had to wait some time to be measured for a uniform, I borrowed parts of his uniforms which consisted of black pants, coat and waistcoat. The coat and waistcoat were fitted with silver buttons showing 'VI' for King George the Sixth, with a chain connecting the top buttons of the coat. I felt very proud to be fitted out as a railwayman, but it was some time before I had my own personal kit.

With a second-hand uniform to wear, I was all set to go, my very first learning position being in the Parcels Office at the new Lithgow station. This entailed 'booking-out' and 'entering-in' parcels for





Lithgow has been an industrial city for many years, being a centre for coal mining, steelmaking and railway operation. In this 1952 view from the lookout to the east of the town the principal landmarks may be observed. The prominent feature is the large locomotive depot and roundhouse in the near foreground, with huge coal dumps on either side of the row of empty trucks. The roadway crosses the main line at the Oakey Park level crossing on the far right and Lithgow 'New Yard' occupies the centre of the scene. Hoskins Steelworks has long been demolished, but the giant works was located on the flat areas beyond the railway yard. H.J. Wright

In 1945, young Wal Jenkins joined the Railways Department in Lithgow and some of his early years were spent working on the old Eskbank Station, located about a hundred yards east of the 'new' station. In 1952, near new Alcos 4006 and 4005 pass Eskbank platform as they back through the crossover from the down main line to the up yard. In the early years of their operation, the 40 class worked in consecutively numbered, coupled pairs and remained that way for some time. H.J. Wright



despatch and on receipt from the various passenger trains. Incoming and outgoing parcels were loaded onto four-wheel barrows for loading and unloading into train brakevans.

After a period of a few weeks, my next learning job was as a clerk in the goods shed near 'old' Lithgow station. Most of this was 'double Dutch' to me as a young lad but in later years I began to understand the complicated issues involved in the accounting procedures in which 'Goods' accounts meant items carried by goods trains and 'Coaching' accounts meant everything connected with passenger traffic.

The coal stage signal box situated in the 'new yard' was to be my next port of call, in which I was utilised as a phone boy. This was a bit of a misnomer, because other duties consisted of polishing every day the 60-odd levers, keeping the box neat and tidy, cleaning the brakevans of trains in the yard, checking and replacing the light globes in the tall shunting yard lamps and supplying stores to Mrs. Sefton, the lady gatekeeper at the Oakey Park level crossing near the locomotive depot. Stores for her and the box were obtained from the old station

and were mainly kerosene, lever cloths, Bon Ami for windows and Brasso for lever plates.

The next temporary job selected for me was as a telephone assistant in the telegraph office, situated on the first floor of the District Superintendent's offices across from the 'new' station. For some reason lost in antiquity, these Super's offices were always known as 'The Pie Shop'. As it contained the office of the Superintendent, among all the other clerks and chief clerks, this pie shop was looked upon with much trepidation because many railway-men were carpeted there.

My main duty in the telegraph office was to answer phone calls and take down in longhand telegrams from numerous stations and to pass them through a window slot to the Morse operator for transmission, the reverse applying when messages from them were phoned through to stations.

Apart from receiving and sending telegrams, it was up to me to collect those for the various rooms in the building and deliver them to the clerks, and also to walk across to the new and old stations to receive and deliver 'wires'. These walks were a bit of a break, enabling me to get away from the stuffy

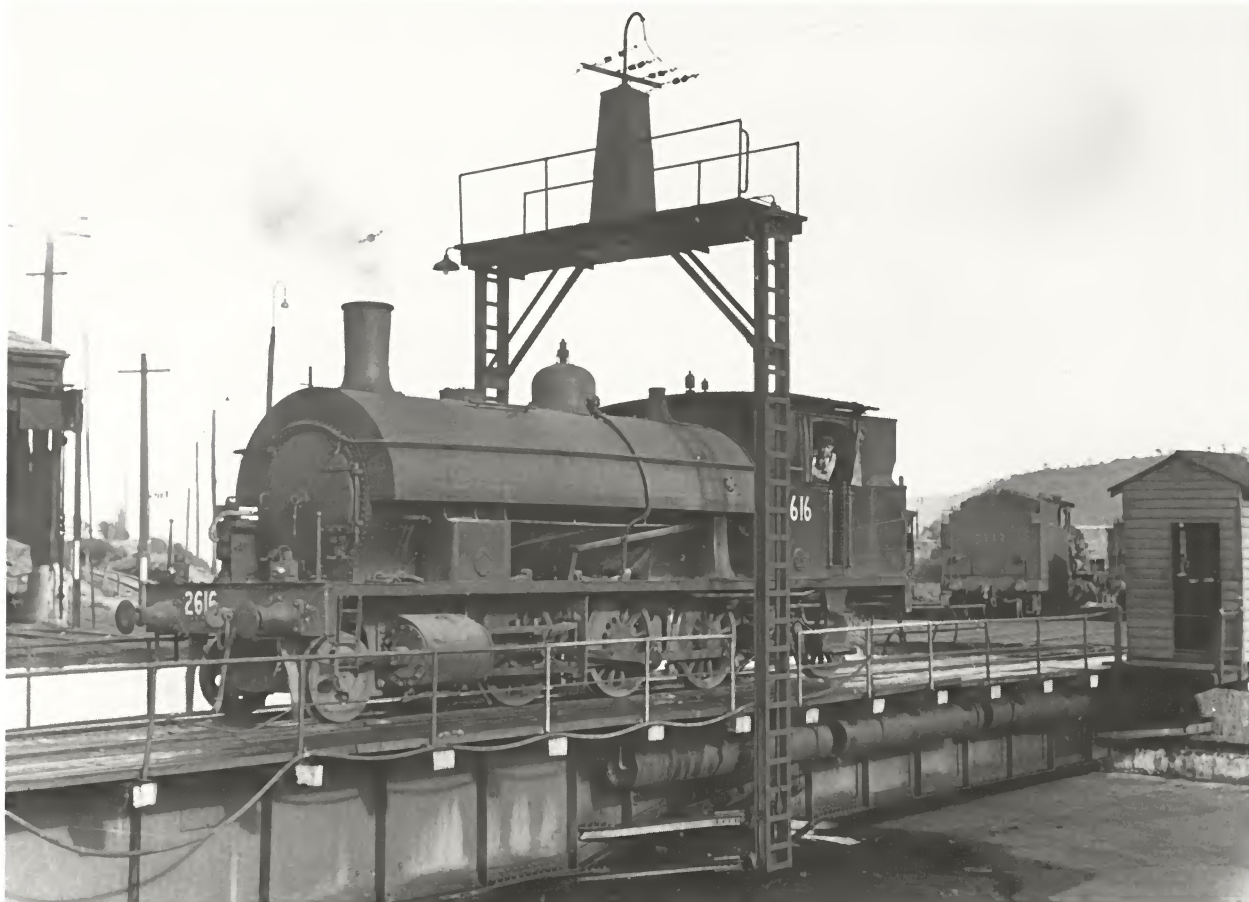
Right: *Big turntable, little engine. By the 1950s, six or seven of the 26 class 2-6-2 saddle tanks were allocated to Lithgow depot. They were used on push-up, shunting and local trip working in the Lithgow area, jobs they performed for more than 50 years. 2616 sits on Lithgow's 90ft. turntable in July 1959.*

I. Wallace

The 58 class 4-8-2s worked into Lithgow for only seven short years before electrification sealed their fate. In this 1953 photo, engine 5813 rests on an outside road, whilst 5801 is turned on the 90ft. turntable in the roundhouse. At the time, Wal's father Ted was a Lithgow driver.

H.J. Wright





office atmosphere for a breather. Sometimes I used a bike to get around, and one time this was squashed flat by an Air Force truck whose driver agreed to pay for the repairs.

The war years made it very difficult to obtain bike parts and naturally tyres and tubes were on the rationed list. At times we had to fill our old tyres with grass, which never improved the ride much.

My classification on joining the Railways was as a junior porter, with a starting wage of 10 and 7/11ths pence per hour for a 44-hour week. From this amount I was able to pay towards my board at home and actually somehow managed to save a little to have a sixpenny milkshake now and again.

It was a well-known fact amongst the new lads that you had better behave yourself in the early days or you would suffer the indignity of being 'initiated' into the service. More by good luck than management, I somehow avoided this mystery but any junior hanging around the parcels office would be grabbed and have nice thick glue applied to various parts of his anatomy.

Now, this disgusting glue stuff was the most horrible looking concoction ever devised and was made from lumps of 'Gum Arabic', a type of resin from trees that, when dissolved in water in a pot, was used to stick stamps and labels to parcels, etc. I was to make up many gallons of this gruel during

my career.

These were the days of pens and pencils which were supplied by the Department, together with pen nibs and red and blue ink powder which was also mixed with water to make a very serviceable product, although it seemed to perish the rubber cylinder in our fountain pens.

There was a small telephone exchange in the telegraph office which was 'manned' by a girl operator on day duty and this plug-in exchange was taken over on afternoon shift and backshift by junior porters.

Afternoon shift began at 4pm and ceased at midnight when the operator was relieved by a lad who worked through to 8am. To all railwaymen, this backshift was always known as the 'dog watch', although in our office we never got around to watching out for dogs, even though a mournful howl could often be heard outside on those bitterly cold Lithgow mornings.

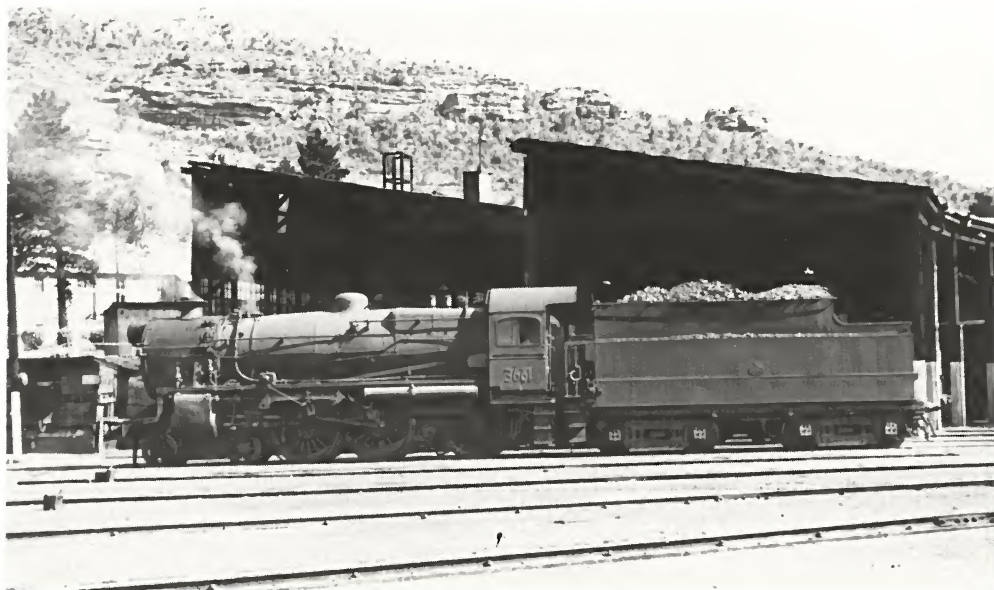
Some old-timers reckoned that the first 40 years of shift work were the worst. I came to agree with them as time went by.

On 29 October 1945, I received a pay rise which took me to a rate of 1 shilling, 3 and 21/22 pence per hour. How in the heck the timekeeper managed to work with those figures without a calculator is beyond me.



In September 1935, six-year-old Wal Jenkins could well have been looking over the fence of the family home watching his fireman father, Ted in action as 5351 and 5711 struggle out of Lithgow Old Yard with a Sydney-bound goods. A bank engine shoves hard at the rear of the train, its smoke being visible to the right of the shunting engine. The goods vehicles on the far right are standing in the original railway yards, with the tracks leading away into the former Eskbank locomotive depot.

Late John L. Buckland



The 36 class engines worked the principal trains in the west of the state for more than 35 years. With the withdrawal of a lot of Standard Goods engines in the late 1950s, many 36 class were sent to Lithgow and Bathurst depots from Eveleigh to replace the old 2-8-0s. Late one afternoon in October 1962, engine 3661 stands at the eastern end of Lithgow round-house.

R.D. Love

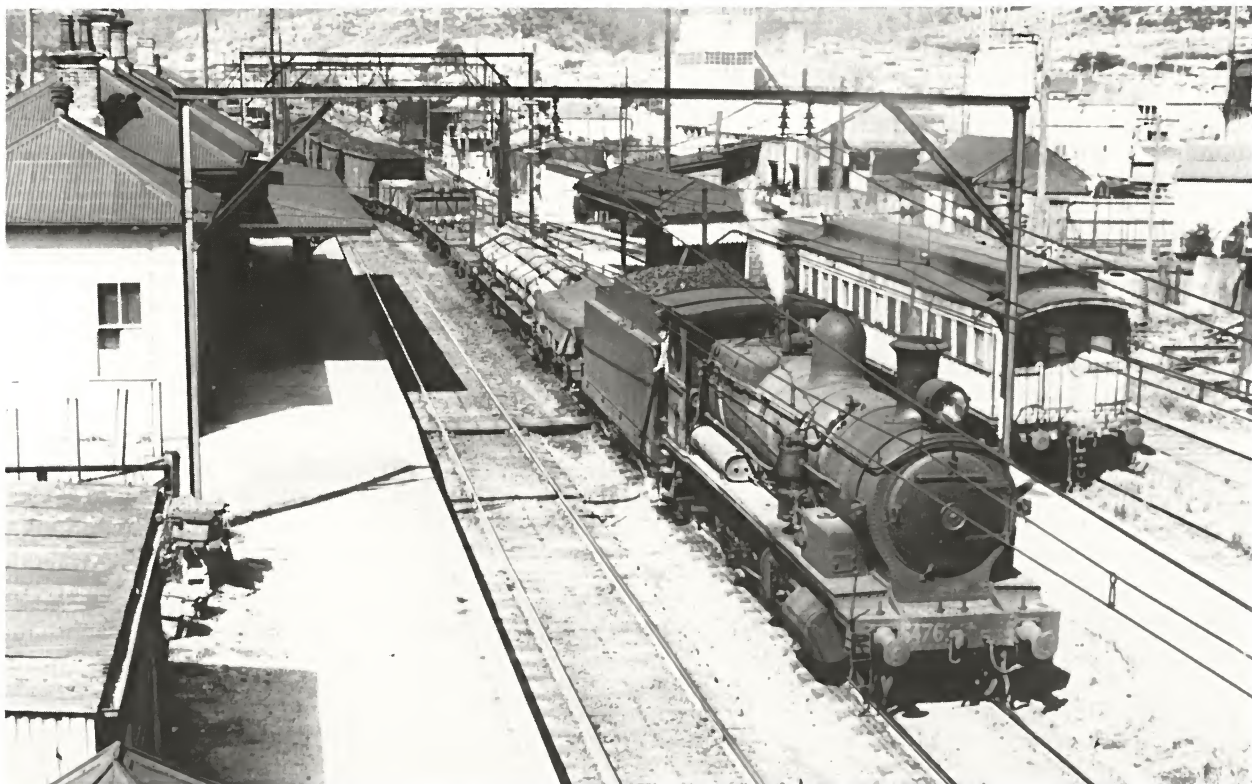


A typical western line-up of engine power in Lithgow loco, October 1962. From left, 3661, 3378, 5135 (saturated), 3087, 5468, 3822, 5400 and 3240 represent the types of locomotives used in the Lithgow-Bathurst-Mudgee area during the period. The roll-call of engines would have been complete, had a 26 class and a 60 class Garratt also been present.

R.D. Love

Main line electrification came to Lithgow in 1957 and many of the old railway facilities were demolished as a result. Eskbank station remained, however, and in this photo, 5476 at the head of No.321 down goods departs the 'old' yard and passes Eskbank heading for the west in October 1962.

R.D. Love



This princely amount was classed as an 'Away from Home' allowance and the rise came about due to my father, a fireman at the Lithgow depot, after shovelling coal for 20 years, taking a promotion as a driver at Orange. My brother and I had batched together for a while after our parents' departure and we got well and truly sick of cooking, so he decided to get married and I decided to 'blow through' and placed an application for transfer to Orange.

One particular event that occurred during my stay in Lithgow is still as clear in my memory as on the day it happened. It may not be well known, but in those days, visiting court judges and magistrates were always allowed a whole compartment to themselves in the dog box carriages to enable them privacy to continue with their paper work. The compartments were in fact locked to keep this privacy intact.

On one particular morning at the 'new' Lithgow station, the judge was placed in his compartment by the station master, and the door locked, as usual, with a carriage key in preparation for his journey back to Sydney. As the train slowly began to pull out, a plump junior porter, due to travel down the mountains on relief duty, was running late and grabbed at the nearest door handle, which happened to belong to the judge's compartment. The window was down, so the lad dived in it, got partly stuck and then, like a popping champagne cork, landed in the lap of the judge.

They had each other's company until such time as the junior could get out at the next stop. There's no doubt that this learned gentleman would have had much to relate to his colleagues, but the young fellow did not live down *his* embarrassment for years after.

In Lithgow, and elsewhere on the system, all new employees were encouraged to attend first aid courses run by the Railways as part of their training in order to help not only injured work mates, but any person needing immediate attention. I attended one of these classes run by an employee and was awarded my certificate on 7 August 1945.

Over the years, much learning of first aid techniques was gained from experienced men, which was put to use on numerous occasions. The instructors running these courses were only paid a small allowance depending on the number of students. However, they gained much satisfaction when their pupils were put through their paces once a year by a visiting head instructor, and gained passes in bandaging, treating broken limbs, etc. and received their certificates.

My application for transfer to Orange was approved and all that was required now was for me to pack all my worldly possessions and *Head west, young man!* It was a wrench to leave my birthplace to travel to a strange location, and memories would be left behind but not forgotten.

Many railwaymen came to know of this experience as they chased promotion throughout the state in an effort to benefit their careers and, in some cases, the families suffered distress with these up-

heavals, with their children having to attend many different schools.

West to Orange

My appointment to Orange was dated 2 May 1946 and, after moving in with my parents, I began work at Orange station. For a period, my new duties differed to those at Lithgow as, being a junior porter, the main area of work was on the platform.

I worked three shifts: day work, afternoon and backshift. The daywork consisted of signing on at 3.30am on a freezing morning and ceasing at 11.30am. This shift was timed to enable us to attend to the early morning mail trains from Sydney. In order, these consisted of: No.45 Coonamble Mail, No.49 Forbes Mail and No.59 Bourke Mail. (All trains from Sydney were numbered in odd numbers and those to a capital city, Sydney, were in even numbers.)

Our main job was to unload and load parcels from the brakevans of these trains. The parcels were taken on a four-wheel barrow to the parcels office to be entered in the appropriate books. On one particular train, No.45 Mail, it was my job to walk alongside the carriages and, with a most melodious voice, yell out, "*Any passengers for Cullya, Clergate, Kerrs Creek, Store Creek or Farnham?*" These were small unattended platforms west of Orange on the Wellington line and if there were any passengers on board for these locations, I had to advise the guard and the driver in order that a stop could be made. It was a sight for sore eyes on a frosty morning to see a head poke out of carriage and mutter "*Kerrs Creek, please.*"

Sometimes a coffin would have to be unloaded from a brake van and the local undertaker would give us two shillings each to place the coffin, body and all, into his hearse. I can truthfully say that we earned our 'two bob' because there were certainly some heavy cadavers around.

Nos 45 and 59 mail trains travelled by the Wellington route via Dubbo to get to Coonamble and Bourke respectively. The Forbes Mail had to have the steam engine placed on the rear of the train at Orange in order to be hauled through Orange South Junction on its journey to Forbes via Parkes.

Cleaning duties took up most of our time and, after the last train had departed, they began. First, ashes had to be taken out of the open coal fires in waiting rooms and offices, fresh coal was piled on and within a short time they gave out a beautiful heat, together with smoke and stink. The ash used to fly everywhere and settle on those who found it too cold to leave the rooms. If they still wouldn't leave, we had to sweep around their feet.

Toilets had to be cleaned in both the men's section and in the ladies' waiting room. This was accomplished with a hose, scrubbing brush and sandsoap. The men's toilets had cubicles in which a penny inserted in a slot released the catch to open the door. Now, naturally we lads were not going to pay to get in to clean these cubicles, so ingenuity came to the forefront and a teaspoon was placed on the rail line



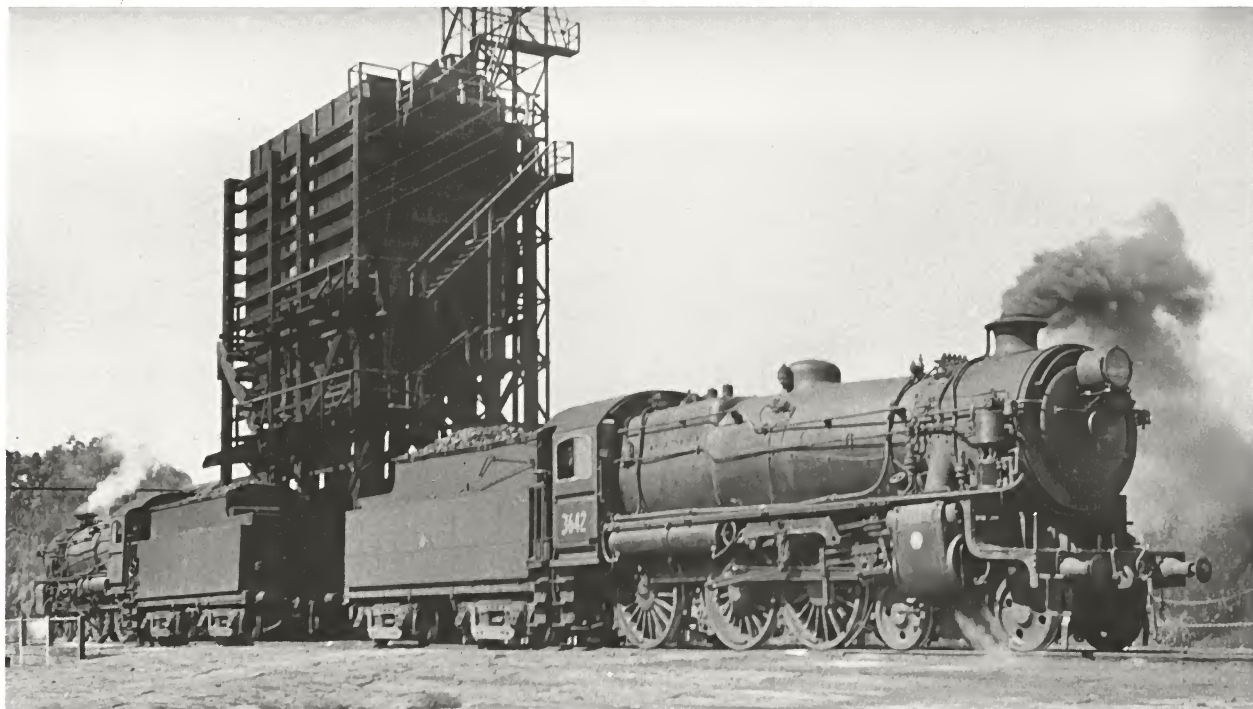
In years gone by, the transport of livestock by rail was so important that these trains were given running priority over all other goods traffic. In the mid-1950s, 5013 assists a 53 class at the head of a stock train including ten GSV sheep vans, up the 1 in 42 grade toward Zig Zag Signal Box. Above the engines are the arches of the former Zig Zag, whilst in the foreground is the fibrolite pipe supplying water to Lithgow Locomotive Depot. These stock trains have long gone from the NSW rail system.

SRA Archives

An impressive signal gantry heralded the arrival into Orange marshalling yard, and 5460 draws slowly into the yard under the gantry with No.67 down goods on 26 October 1963.

R.D. Love





The Holmen coal hoist was built in Orange in 1938 and in this 1960 photo, 3642 and 3661 stand on the 'loco arrival road', dwarfed by the large timber structure. Wal Jenkins' father, Ted, was a driver in Orange depot from 1945 to 1948. He then transferred back to their home town of Lithgow. Young Wal himself only remained in Orange for a short period, before transferring to Merrygoen.
Barry Millner

to be squashed by a train, and the big end, which was shaped like a penny, was inserted into the slot and activated the catch to open the door. I always carried this device with me on holidays to get free entrance.

The Station Master made an inspection during the morning and 'woe betide us' if our work wasn't up to scratch, with all dust removed and water mopped from the floors.

Orange station also boasted a Refreshment Room and, after the last Mail had departed, and before we began our clean-up, we all retired to these rooms and enjoyed an early morning cup of coffee laced with underproof rum which we called 'Coffee Royal'. This sustained us as we ventured back out into the bitterly cold winter mornings.

After warming the 'cockles of the heart', and with platform cleaning done, another clean-up had to be carried out in the guards' rest barracks, which were located across the shunting yard. A coal fired stove was always kept going for the men to cook their meals on and our job was to clean out the ashes from this stove and refill the coal bucket. Sometimes a kind guard would clean up as they reckoned we made too much mess.

On our return to the station, another dirty job awaited us; this consisted of raking out the ashes from a firebox in the 'boiler room'. This room was located at the eastern end of the station building and consisted of a large vat of water sitting above a firebox. Old-fashioned metal footwarmers were sus-

pended in the water and the water was brought up to boiling point and kept there throughout the day and night in the winter months. It was our job to attend to this fire by raking out the ashes and re-stoking with coal.

These footwarmers were of metal construction and were about 2ft. long, 1ft. wide and 4 inches thick. They were permanently sealed and were filled with Sodium acetate which solidified when cold. When they were boiled for many hours they re-liquefied and retained the heat for long hours. There was a handle at one end for carrying and when a mail train was due, we loaded these warmers from the boiling water onto a four-wheel barrow and on arrival of the train, each compartment received two warmers.

It was one hell of a job and although we wore thick gloves, the heat still came through. The only consolation from this task was the warmth received from the boiler room on freezing days and nights.

All the early morning mail trains were allowed sufficient time at Orange for brakevan traffic and service from the Refreshment Room. It was during these breaks that at times thumpings and shouts of rage could be heard from the carriages as passengers bashed their footwarmers up and down to try to liquefy the chemical. It never did work, but it gave the poor cold travellers plenty of exercise that probably *did* warm them!

The up Orange passenger train, No.26, departed from Orange in daylight hours and this had to be



With the electrification to Lithgow in 1957, the premier train on the West, the Central West Express, ceased running through to Dubbo and Parkes on alternate days. Instead, it terminated in Orange, thus performing a return trip from Sydney on the same day. Connections to Parkes and Dubbo were made using a spare Silver City Comet set. In this August 1959 photo, 3618 gets under way from Orange with No.28 up Central West Express. The connecting service to Parkes, a Comet set, is standing in the platform behind the express. A Bathurst crew normally worked the train from Bathurst to Orange and return and on this day, salaried Bathurst driver Rube Whitton and his mate, Des Loydell should have no trouble with the five car load.

Barry Tulloch

loaded with footwarmers. In later years, steam pipes were connected to the steam engine up front and carriages became much warmer.

A junior porter had to be in attendance at the doorway of the general waiting room to collect tickets from incoming trains and to nip with clippers all outgoing tickets having the special Orange number. A push button was placed above his head and three minutes before the departure of a passenger train this button was pushed to activate a bell in the Refreshment Room. It was tough luck if you were halfway through a pie or a cup of coffee when the bell sounded. You either gulped them down or rushed back to the carriage to make sure that no-one had grabbed your seat.

The Assistant Station Masters kept a weather eye out for stragglers and usually got them all on board without delaying the train. Their melodious voices yelled out, "All aboard please." Under our breath, we lads would mutter, "If you can't get a board, get a stick."

Wal Chapman was one of the Assistant Station Masters at Orange in my time. He had been a Captain in the First World War and when he raised his voice he had all those last minute stragglers

from the 'Ref' room marching in quick time back into the train.

Our afternoon shifts, after signing on, consisted of loading consignments of fruit and vegetables into the brakevan of what was known as the 'School Train'. The main items to be loaded were, in season, apples and cherries, boxes of butter, cartons of small goods, etc. These had to be loaded in readiness for the train to depart on arrival of the school children. One carriage was provided for them to travel to such places at Millthorpe, Spring Hill and any other small platforms in between.

No.31 *Central West Express* was due at 3.30pm and as the western rail system was single line, if this train was behind time, the school train had to await its arrival. This used to irritate the children no end and the poor guard had to maintain some sort of discipline amongst them while they cooled their heels waiting.

As the guard had his own brakevan with no connection with the carriages, the kids really let fly once the train was on its way, knowing that they could not be reached by the guard. Many were the tales that trickled back about the doings that went on, and I guarantee that there are some around



When leaving Orange Station and heading east, trains face a 1 in 50 grade for almost half a mile. On 20 January 1961, engine 3665 hauls No.28 up Central West Express (seven car HUB air conditioned set and an extra non air conditioned car) out of the platform and heads for Bathurst.

I. Wallace

Right: *At the Wellington end of Orange yard, 5311 assists train engine 3631 to get under way with No.99 down goods, bound for Dubbo and ultimately Nyngan and Bourke. The 1 in 50 falling grade makes life easy for the crew at this point, but a few miles further on, the numerous 1 in 40s will require both engines to work a lot harder. 26 October 1963.*

R.D. Love

today that were conceived on that train!

Sometimes we had to load and unload trucks and brakevans of goods trains which were standing on the main line. I can recall very vividly the time when I had unloaded some earthenware pipes from a truck. I placed and packed all the consignment onto a four-wheel barrow and as it was a very heavy load I put my head down and began to push. I hadn't gone more than a few yards when a terrible scream rent the air. I stopped pushing and thought to myself, "Someone had been run over for sure." How true that was; I had run over all the fingers of one hand of the head shunter as he had been getting ready to jump from the ground to the platform. The iron wheels of the barrow had squashed his fingers almost flat; the shunter was off duty for many weeks on compensation and when he resumed duty he always kept his eye on me.

The shunting yard at Orange was very large as it had to cater for the remarshalling of trains as they arrived from the west via Wellington, west via Parkes and east from Bathurst. There were numerous stock trains passing through with a drover in attendance and, at times, the stock was 'spelled' at

the stock yards. Rogers' Meat Company had a siding three miles, 24 chains west of Orange on the Wellington line and, as they slaughtered mainly sheep, many a shunting trip was made with loaded sheep vans in and empty vans out.

As my father, Ted Jenkins, was now a 'fully fledged' driver at Orange depot, we were able to see each other now and again on the job. How different were these locomotives he was now driving compared with what he drove at the Lithgow Steel Works prior to joining the Railways in 1925. Those had all been tank type small locos, and were given Australian animal names such as *Koala*, *Dingo*, *Possum*, *Wallaby*, *Wombat*, *Platypus*, *Kangaroo*, *Bunyip* and *Bandicoot*.

The staff at the shunting yard ranged downwards from the Yard Master, Head Shunter, Senior Shunter and Shunter or 'Sprag'. This nickname was derived from a thick piece of hardwood 3' long by 6" square with pointed ends which was placed through the spokes of a truck wheel to act as a second brake.

When a train was fully marshalled for departure in the yard, a junior would walk alongside each vehicle and, from the tickets, record on an X2010

form, all details such as loading and destination stations and weight. This information was then forwarded to the telegraph office for transmission.

Because of my previous experience in the telegraph office at Lithgow, I was utilised on occasions in the same 'pie shop' office at Orange. This was a similar situation, only this time I would relieve the switchboard girls for annual leave and rostered days off, and also act as an office assistant receiving and sending telegrams.

The switchboard held about 50 lines and became very busy during the daytime when all the offices were occupied. Naturally, the District Superintendent, Roger Sparkes, occupied the best office on the ground floor. We were instructed that when his 'shutter' fell on the board, that indicated a call from his office and we were to give it top priority. One time I was a little slow in answering his call and he flew up the stairs to lecture me on slow responses.

We also worked around the clock, with afternoon shift starting at 3pm and backshift at 11pm through to 7am. This late shift was preferred by us because of the quietness due to an almost empty office, except for the train controllers next door, though the only time we had contact with them was when passing telegrams through a small window.

Whenever possible through the night, we tried to snatch a few minutes rest on the floor with the help of some cushions. An alarm bell was fitted to the switchboard and if a shutter fell, it would activate and frighten the hell out of us.

During the quiet times at night, and when I wasn't asleep, I would practise with the Morse Code keys and became fairly proficient at sending and receiving with the boys in the Sydney telegraph office. Mr. Harold Sharpe was the Chief Morse Operator and was in charge. He was a very gentle and friendly man, well respected by all the staff, and he encouraged us to practise with the Morse equipment at night.

Located in the store room of the building was a Morse tape machine, consisting of a large roll of thin paper on a drum which rotated at a set rate and each time the key was pressed, an ink pen left an impression on the tape which indicated a dot or a dash. This machine also worked at some railway stations when attended or unattended and, when activated, would leave a record on tape to be read by the officer on duty.

These days, this machine would be classified as an antique and I'm sure it was the forerunner of the modern teletype machine. By the 1940s it was an old machine, and never used. However, Mr. Sharpe gave me a test one day when, as he read from the *Sydney Morning Herald*, I was required to tap out in Morse for him to read and correct.

To combat the Orange winters, a water heating system was located in the basement of the Superintendent's office from which steam passed through pipes to all offices in the building and into radiators. It was part of our duties on the 3pm and 11pm shifts to stoke the firebox with coke and to





When 4-6-4 tank engine 3039 was loaned to Portland Cement Works for shunting and transfer work in August 1962, saturated 5135 was sent from Eveleigh Workshops to Lithgow as a replacement. Together with sister 5201, it took over the heavy yard shunting in Lithgow and remained there for another six years. 5135 and match truck rest during the night shift in the depot, June 1965.

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make sure the boiler never blew up with too much pressure. To assist the day work lady cleaner, we polished the telegraph office floor during the night.

When there was no more staff to relieve in the telegraph office, I resumed work back on the platform where we worked in conjunction with the Guards' Roster Clerk to deliver call notes to guards on day work to advise them of their next sign-on. On the afternoon and backshifts, it was the duty of juniors to hop on their bike and travel to the guards' residences and give them an hour's call to enable them to sign on at the station for their train.

The Station Master was Bill Webber and he had his own office on the station. He was treated with much respect by all and sundry and, with his little bow tie, was a gentleman of the first order. The other main office, apart from the booking office, was just called 'the Office' and was occupied by the officer on duty at the time, and the Roster Clerk. This room also doubled as a general sign-on section for all the staff.

Life at Orange did not consist wholly of work and no play; we relaxed with plenty of sport, etc. The Railway Department provided recreation for the staff in a Railway Institute building at the side of the Superintendent's office, which consisted of a well-equipped library in the front section, with the rear section divided into one large room and one small room. Three billiard tables occupied the large room and a table tennis table was located in the small room. Many a happy competitive time was spent on that 'ping pong' table.

A few of us lads formed a Railway Cricket Club; we battled to get enough railwaymen into the team and, being a kind-hearted mob, allowed a few out-

siders in to let us put up a good performance now and again. Whilst forming the club, we canvassed most business houses in Orange for donations to purchase equipment. Some gave money and one or two supplied trophies.

In no time we had all the gear - bats, gloves, pads, etc. As a club, we all contributed to new balls and petrol costs for transportation to distant fields. Our set ground was located next to Bloomfield Mental Hospital on the eastern outskirts of Orange, and many an enjoyable game was played, with patients looking through a 10ft. high mesh fence and yelling out encouragement. If they became too boisterous, they received a clip around their legs with a leather strap wielded by nurses.

Sometimes we travelled on the back of a flat-top lorry to little towns such as Cudal for a game. Looking back, I think the boys always liked to play in towns

which boasted a small pub. The game went OK up to lunchtime, but from then on, for some mysterious reason, the match fell to pieces with blokes trying to catch balls that weren't there, hitting runs without a ball being bowled and falling over around the field laughing their silly heads off.

On the way home on the back of the lorry after the match, the boys with full bladders would, every few miles, yell out, "Black Rabbits". The driver would skid to a stop and blokes would dive off the tray and head in all directions for the bush. I never did find out the connection between black rabbits and converted beer.

My parents moved back to Lithgow in 1948 and I boarded with one of my mates and continued studying the various safeworking systems. Examinations carried out by traffic inspectors were oral and not written. By the end of 1948, I was qualified in Block Telegraph, Track Block and Automatic, Electric Staff and Tablet, and Shunting Duties.

These qualifications were sufficient to enable one to be promoted at a later date when the mandatory age of 19 years and 6 months was reached. This age was shortened when, on 11 October 1948, at the age of 19 years and 4 months, I was promoted to the position of Porter Class 1 at Merrygoen with a commencing wage of 3 shillings, 5 and 2/5 pence per hour.

I realised that the transition from a Junior Porter at Orange to that of a more senior position of a Porter Shunter at Merrygoen would be an experience necessary to gain a knowledge of all aspects of railway workings.

Many incidents had occurred during my period at Orange that added to my knowledge of 'gained

experience', in which there is always a right and wrong approach to just about everything. All employees made mistakes and it is only when a mistake is repeated that it can be said that nothing was gained from the first error.

I'm quite sure that two of my junior porter friends learned a very important lesson one day whilst watching an Examiner working on the brake gear underneath a sheep wagon in Orange yard.

The Examiner had carried out all safeworking aspects of this particular job, placing a red flag at both ends of the string of wagons as well as telling all and sundry that he would be working under a truck and that no shunting operations were to take place.

The two lads were sitting on a rail looking at the Examiner working underneath when all the wagons began to move; one lad fell backwards away from the wagon and his arm hit the other lad, knocking him back just as the wheel grazed his coat. The Examiner hung on for dear life to the Westinghouse gear until the wagons stopped rolling and then went helter skelter to abuse the shunters.

Of course, Confucius may have said, "*He who sits on railway track may have short life*". However, there were two very frightened boys around for some time with one having wheel marks still on his coat.

Another no-no that had to be learned the hard way was never to get on a moving vehicle, as stated in the rule book. However, at times this rule was 'bent' and, if you had to do this dangerous act, you had to have a firm grip on the hand rails before getting on board; in other words, never just jump on and hope that you grabbed something. I watched in

horror one afternoon when a junior jumped on a slow-moving passenger train at the platform, missed his grip and went very close to going under. He learned from his mistake and never did it again.

There are accidents that I suppose are controlled by what must be fate. Take the case of the young shunter carefully carrying out his duties when the bottom of his trousers caught on a protruding 'dog spike', tripping him up and causing the loss of his lower leg when a moving truck passed over it.

Night shunting had to be carried out with great care in the days of kerosene hand lamps. They were wont to go out at crucial moments and a match had to be found quick smart. An experienced driver or his mate would stop when he could no longer see your light.

Many a hairy moment was had when coupling two 'hook' type carriages together, when the shunter, whilst stooped down at the end of one carriage, lifted up the hook coupling and placed it on the hook of the other carriage as they came together. This move was frowned on, but sometimes had to be done to squeeze the buffers together.

There were lighter moments during my term at Orange, especially when one of the juniors went up and down the platform in full view of waiting passengers swinging a condom filled with water. I swear that this then-unmentionable object was at least one metre long. His nickname was 'sexy Collins' and I'm sure he wouldn't mind me mentioning his name.

At the end of 1948, I left Orange to take up duties at Merrygoen, only 145 rail miles from Orange, but a totally different railway job in all respects. ▲

The 'School Train' (actually No.34 up mixed), departed Orange as soon as the Central West Express cleared the platform and usually consisted of 'dog box' cars marshalled ahead of the brakevan. The fact that no heads or feet are visible in this view does not mean there are no activities in the cars amongst the school kids, but, unlike Wal Jenkins, we will give them the benefit of the doubt and hope they are studying for their exams. No.34 mixed (CV, ten GSV sheep vans, one BSV bogie sheep van, four S trucks, MBC bogie van, two 'dog boxes' and a brakevan) climbs out of Newbridge and heads for Bathurst in the early months of 1961.

R.D. Love



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND REFERENCES

The authors wish to make the following acknowledgements for assistance with preparations of their essays, and cite references.

Ian Wallace

To Coonabarabran and Return

Acknowledgements

The author wishes to thank a number of people who have provided assistance with this essay: Geoff Percival for providing information and checking the manuscript, Ray Love for assisting with maps and information, Bruce Griffey, Russell Bright, Bob Bridges and Bob Tomlinson for sharing their extensive railway experience and providing valuable information, Maureen Bartlett for typing and altering many drafts of the manuscript and Sandra Chapman for the line drawings. The author also appreciates the assistance given by Aileen Bell of the Coonabarabran Visitors Centre, and the officers of ARHS/NSWRM Archives for making available working timetables.

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Robert Booth

Our Rail Heritage: S Class In Sydney

Acknowledgements

Michael Collins, Ian Dunn, Robert Henry and Barry Tulloch

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Ray Love

Last Days Of Steam In Dubbo

Acknowledgements

The author wishes to thank Bob Booth and Barry Tulloch for companionship on many trips to all parts of the state. Thanks are also extended to Graham Pegg for special assistance as well as the friendly train controllers, signalmen and loco crews in the Dubbo area during steam days. We all wish we could relive some of those days.

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**Fred Saxon
Nambucca**

Acknowledgements

Thanks are extended to Ian Wallace and Ray Love for their assistance with research of the text and to Bill Sheldon for supplying information on Nambucca.

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Wal Jenkins

The ASM - 42 Years 'On the Job'

Acknowledgements

Thanks are extended to the various photographers, who kindly assisted with the illustrations used in this essay.

Units of Measurement

Since the essays in this book deal with a period when the Imperial system of measurement was used in Australia, that system has been retained. As an aid to conversion for those who are so minded, the factors in the accompanying table may be used.

Furthermore:

A mile could be divided into 80 chains (ch) of 22 yards (66 feet) each.

At the date of currency conversion (14 February 1966) £1 equalled \$2. However, inflation both before and after this date makes conversion of monetary amounts meaningless unless various economic indicators, including such inflation factors, are known.

1 inch	=	25.4mm
1 foot	=	305mm
1 yard	=	0.914m
1 mile	=	1.609km
1 gallon	=	4.546L
1 pound (lb)	=	0.454kg
1 ton	=	1.016t
1 horsepower	=	0.746kW

