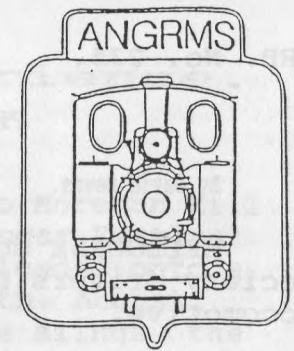


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RAILWAY
BULLETIN



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PRESIDENT'S REPORT.

By David Hewes.

MELBOURNE continues to operate well with all Society drivers now accredited to operate this locomotive.

The new side tanks were fitted to PLEYSTOWE No. 5 on Saturday, 7th. August. These were then filled with water and the loco was steam tested successfully. Sunday, 8th. August was spent preparing the locomotive for its trip to Nambour the next day.

PLEYSTOWE No. 5 was delivered to Nambour on Monday 9th. August. Due to a mix - up with the crane required for loading, the arrival in Nambour was considerably later than planned. The loco did a couple of test runs on Tuesday afternoon but there was not much traffic due to the rain. However, Wednesday through to Saturday saw our locomotive in intensive use hauling cane from Howard Street yard to the mill.

The locomotive was doing up to 8 trips per day starting at 9.00am. and not finishing until 6.00pm. The mill traffic office and the mill loco crews enjoyed our presence as it meant that the main - line locos could bring a load into Howard Street yard and then head straight out again with empties rather than spending an hour with COOLUM taking fulls up to the mill yard. Everything went faultlessly and the mill management were well pleased such that we have been invited back again. Keep an eye out for our visit in the year 2001.

The Nambour Experience.

By Paul Rollason.

August saw BFC No. 5 travel to Moreton Mill in Nambour to help celebrate the Sugar Festival from 9 - 14 August. BFC No. 5 was loaded onto a low loader at Woodford on Monday 9th. August. After debates on where to place the slings, the right place was found & the fowler was loaded. That afternoon, the boiler was filled, safety checks carried out & a fire lit.

Tuesday morning saw the staff undertake a safety training induction course & be signed on as mill employees. A number of members stayed in Nambour for the week ready to take turns in driving the locomotive.

Everyone was keen to get on & drive the locomotive, until your name was called. At this time, your legs turned to jelly; your heart was in your mouth and you started to think "Can I do this? What happens if we get stuck?" None the less, you approach the locomotive where George Hadley, the Mill Tramway Engineer, is waiting. You climb on board & George smiles & you can't stop thinking "Oh jolly gosh, here we go."

The signal comes through from the Traffic Office that we are right to go. You throw the reversing lever into full reverse & release the steam brake. You nervously roll down to the gate of the Mill yard and follow "Coolum" out with a load of empties. "Coolum" waits for the sequence of the traffic lights & picks the perfect moment to proceed. George instructs you to stay 2-3 bin lengths away but not too far & to watch out for suicidal maniacs that try to jump in between.

Now you coast down Howard Street following the empties and in the meantime, you try to avoid getting coal dust in your eyes from the bunker.

As you reach Howard Street Yard, the empties disappear onto one of the empty roads & you & the BFC No. 5 head onto another road.

At this time, you may shunt around a few bins, both full & empty & make up rakes of 45-48 cane bins. Now you couple up to a rake of full bins & you prepare the locomotive. You turn the injectors on & fill the boiler up to 4/5ths. of a glass. Next, you bomb up the fire so that you don't have to add more of the Blair Athol coal on your trip up the hill (including adding more water) to avoid losing precious steam.

A trick for young players. Don't add too much coal too quickly & smother the fire. Coal gas is explosive as I quickly learnt. All I heard was a "woof" and then being engulfed by a fireball as a result of a blow back. You don't ever forget that smell of singed arm & nasal hairs. My lesson was learnt.

Then comes the both anticipated & dreaded words from the Traffic Office & George of "Lets go." The reversing lever is pushed full forward, brake off, a pop is given on the whistle & you gently ease open the throttle. At this time, you realise that you are not at Woodford and you really have a heavy load behind you. At this stage, George informs you that you have 48 FULL road bins behind which are heavier than usual. That lump in your throat just got bigger & moved to the back of your tongue.

As you coast out of the Howard Street Yard, you start to pray, " Please Lord, help me up the hill." George pulls the whistle, activates the crossing lights with a remote control door opener (and you hope that all the neighbours garage doors don't open), the lights begin to flash & the traffic parts. At this stage, George says "Not too fast, the diesel won't catch up".

The thought crosses your mind that if I slow down I won't get up the hill: that diesel should have more power than me, what's the problem?

You now look behind to see if the whole rake of cane trucks are following as they should & "Coolum" is trailing closely. You now notch back & continue to coast down the hill once again saying a few prayers and hoping that all your knowledge comes together and that you've prepared the locomotive properly.

Now you start to climb that long hill up into the mill. You open the throttle & the little BFC No.5 starts to chuff nicely. It sounds good. Les & his crew have maintained it well. You notch it forward one more, cars start to part, apart from the few maniacs or temporary Australians that like to try & beat you. The climb suddenly gets a lot steeper & you notch it into full forward & we are really working hard now. The full weight of the 320 plus tonnes behind you starts to slow you down. The safety valves are lifting and the locomotive is chuffing like you've never heard before.

The Bundy Fowler has come alive. At this point in time, the second road crossing lights are activated and the traffic comes to a halt. All the shoppers, shop owners & pedestrians, both young & old, have stopped to watch you. Everyone is staring in amazement. That lump in your throat just got bigger. You are praying again, "Please don't slip; please don't slip" and you hope that "Coolum" is right on your tail.

The last stretch of street up to the Mill is all that is left and it is lined with photographers; train buffs & worst of all, your mates. Again you pray, "Please don't slip" at which time it does slip. You roll your eyes, swear under your breath, back the throttle off & straight back on.

You chuff up towards the Mill yard wondering if you're going to make it. "I think I can, I think I can" goes through your head. Only 200 m to go and you are met by another barage of photographers positioned in every nook & cranny they can find.

You ease off as you pull into number 3 road and you coast towards the hydraulic pushers where you come to a halt. A sigh of releif is given by you & George. That lump in your throat begins to subside, you uncouple & run around the rake. An amazing sense of achievement is felt and a large "Yes" emerges from your mouth.

You pull up at the end of the rake. George yells out "Next" and you can just see that lump rise in the next drivers throat.

What an incredible experience with the awesome power of steam. All that knowledge imparted by others all comes together all at once and you can't wait to do it again.

The week progressed, more experiences and confidence gained. The usual slipping, derailing of cane trucks, splitting of points & track was experienced but it was all in a day on a tramway. The week finished with the Sugar Festival and Street Parade of all the locomotives up Howard Street.

On behalf of the Drivers that drove at Nambour, I would like to thank the Mill Management & staff of the Moreton Mill for the opportunity to really drive a steam locomotive under trying conditions. In particular, a special thanks goes to George Hadley, Wayne & all the Mill loco crews for their friendship, support & experience we all gained; knowledge & memories that will be remembered forever.

President's Report, Cont.

Operation at Nambour has been a valuable exercise for our locomotive crews, learning how to handle trains of 250 - 300 tonnes under very difficult conditions - compared to our 5 - 6 tonne trains at Woodford travelling at only 10 km/hr. Congratulations to P. Rollason; T. Lindsay; S. Baker; S Yore; S. Malone; R. Gough & L. Beahan for your driving efforts during the week. Thanks to Mill Manager, John Finger; Mill Secretary, Ian Bloore & Tramway Engineer, G. Hadley along with Bundaberg Sugar for inviting us to the mill and co-ordinating the event.

The Locomotive was returned to Woodford on Monday, 16th. August and has subsequently had the side tanks removed so that the rest of the locomotive can be painted with 2-pack epoxy, the same as the side tanks. This, hopefully, is preparatory to the locomotive going north on its documentary film excursion. Our Rail Accreditation has been extended to cover this activity and now only a few other points remain to be resolved. We are also preparing two wagons to accompany the locomotive. No.8 all steel Douglas Shire Council 4-wheel open wagon we use for ballast is being cleaned and repainted. The axleboxes have all been lifted, bearings checked and new felt packing installed. The steel framed Douglas Shire Council 4-wheel wagon we currently use for sleeper transport is being fitted with a new wooden floor and sides. The axleboxes will also be lifted & checked on this wagon.

It was pleasing to see the large turnout of our rostered crews from running days who attended the reaccreditation training held at Woodford on Sunday, 29th. August. The few who were unable to attend will undergo this training on a date organised by the Safety & Training Committee.

Membership.

Martin Wiltshire - Woodford.
Neil Crellin - Ashgrove.
James Hutchinson - Kenmore Hills.

Our next monthly meeting will be held on :-
Wednesday, 6th. October commencing at 8.00pm.
at The Scouting Association Of Australia,
32 Dixon Street, Auchenflower.

This month, we have :-

This site has photos from some of Australia's top train photographers. Some 2 foot equipment may be included.

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