Background Notes - *Steam Times 3*

(Compiled September, 2004)

Welcome to ***Steam Times 3***, the third in a series of video tapes/DVDs looking at railway operations in NSW, other States of Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Germany, at various times during the period from the late 1950s to the 1980s. The main subject of the series is steam in normal everyday duties, before the final moves to full dieselisation and/or electrification. ***Steam Times 3*** looks mainly at the Southern Line in NSW, and some of its branches, from 1959 to 1969, but also includes sections looking at operations in the Sydney Suburban area, the Illawarra, and on Private railways in NSW. Like the **TRAINS ALIVE** ***RailView*** series, ***Steam Times*** productions look at operations from a trackside point of view.

First of all, a few remarks about archival films, their transfer to video, and some other matters (owners of earlier ***Steam Times*** productions have seen most of this material already!).

(1) ***Steam Times*** productions were all mastered from the non-professional film, Standard 8. Standard 8 is a very small gauge and runs at 16 frames per second, as against 16mm's 24 frames per second and TV's 25 frames per second, so that definition and steadiness will not be up to 16mm and TV standards, but viewers will find it quite satisfactory as long as they do not sit close to the screen. Most of the very few extant movies of the steam era were taken by amateurs, not professionals, and most of us simply could not afford the relatively huge cost of 16 mm; 8mm was the norm.

(2) All film can deteriorate with age, and, as the original footage in ***Steam Times*** tapes varies from 26 to 46 years old, there are scenes where it is obvious that deterioration has occurred, especially with colour rendition in Agfa or Ansco films. Kodachrome's keeping qualities were much better, as it has turned out, but it was more expensive! There is a limit to how much one can digitally remedy deteriorated colour, any enhancement often having unwanted side effects! Some shots have had to be converted to black and white. In addition, like most of my few contemporaries who were taking movie film, I rarely used a tripod. But I had a reasonably steady hand, so there is relatively little unsteadiness!

(3) Because the 8mm movie film spool ran for only two minutes before you had to reverse it to continue, and because all movie film was relatively expensive, most shots were short, focussing on the things that were most interesting to us, i.e. the locos. The full length of a goods train was not a priority, although a number of goods trains are shown in full in ***Steam Times 3***. Railway modellers will get more from photos in books than from movies.

(4) **Sound**: One of the most important motivations when I started taking movies was **to capture the sound as well**; both sight and sound are important, especially in portraying steam! Unfortunately, most of the amateurs (and the very few professionals) who were taking movies, as opposed to stills, did not capture the sound as they were shooting. I can understand this, considering the great difficulty there was with the cumbersome and complicated equipment needed before transistors came out, and then the rather crude mini transistor tape recorders in the early 60s. I was determined to capture sound, however, even if, very often, I cursed my decision to do so. I was unsuccessful in my efforts on quite a few occasions: if I suddenly came upon a train to capture, the movie camera was often all I could get ready and the sound had to be missed. Also, there was difficulty with the microphone, which you had to try to

put some distance away from where you were standing to avoid camera noise; you sometimes, therefore, had the sound not absolutely consistent with the movie. Playing back on later recorders also occasionally led to a slightly different speed of the tape, the sound not always matching up exactly with the visual! Thankfully, this has been "remedied" to an extent through the marvels of the digital era! The sound in ***Steam Times*** productions is mono and is not hi-fi, and there are the inevitable occasional pops, clicks, distortion and tape hiss that occur with recordings made with older generation consumer equipment and with the poor quality tapes that sometimes had to be used. With so many scenes in the production, it was found to be impossible to "doctor" every pop, click or hiss However, I trust that viewers will be happy with the quality of most of the sound and will certainly be pleased that it is there, anyway, instead of what is often offered as an alternative in archival productions! Where there was no sound simultaneously recorded (in a minority of shots), a lot of effort has been expended in selecting "takes" from my large collection of tapes, in order to come up with an acceptable substitute. As I have found in conversations with viewers of ***Steam Times 1*** and ***2***. I would be very surprised if more than very few could tell which shots have simultaneously recorded sound and which do not!

(5) It is suggested that viewers refer to a book like *Locomotives of Australia*, by Leon Oberg, for details of the various loco classes portrayed in ***Steam Times 3***.

(6) Some features of ***Steam Times*** tapes/DVDs: (a) Each shot has a number appearing for a few seconds, usually in white and usually on the upper right of the screen; this can vary, depending on the background. The numbers refer to the information given in these **Notes** for each shot. (b) Train numbers are often given, but they are a real problem with archival material; there are some trains that will have a numbers with a question mark and some with no number at all (it was felt better to give no number than, say, two alternatives with a question mark when neither is actually correct!). Loco numbers are also given, where possible. When one is shooting movies, the priority is to make the shot as good as possible; engine numbers are irrelevant while the shooting is proceeding. If you don't have anyone else present who can assist you, you have to rely on viewing the movie later to try to determine the number, and that's often difficult, because some trains are in the distance and, even when close, numbers on grimy and/or quickly passing locos can be almost impossible to decipher. (c) Gradients are a relatively easy matter (if you have access to the New South Railways *CURVE and GRADIENT DIAGRAMS* book), and, where significant, they are given in these **Notes**. (d) Dates of the shots are given, where they are known, but, frequently, only the year or part of the year is given, and that could be wrong! I didn't keep a diary (!) and it is only occasionally that I have the exact dates! Generally, in each Part in the video, the shots are in chronological order. (d) We have endeavoured to keep the sound at a reasonable level throughout, i.e. the viewer will not have to keep altering the volume level (which should be set reasonably high) as the tape progresses.

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The "Short North" (Sydney to Broadmeadow/Newcastle) was certainly the busiest non-metropolitan line in NSW (and still is!), but the Southern Line somehow seemed to be the archetype of "the main line", possibly because it has the longest stretch of double track in Australia, has by far the largest number of branches and leads to the second most populous state in Australia. Locomotive working is quite vigorous, as there are many long 1 in 75 grades and, on the Down, quite a few 1 in 40s, but there are also a number of stretches where trains can get up to the maximum NSW line speed, unlike

the Western Line (and the North Coast Line). In the earlier post steam days, the South was also noted for having the lion's share of first generation GM locos, and this was certainly a draw card back then! The South, in the time covered by ***Steam Times 3***, had no 35s and relatively few 59s and 60s, but there were a few 30s, plenty of 30Ts, 32s, 36s and 38s, Standard Goods and, until September 1961, some 57s.

While the Southern Line from Sydney to Goulburn (the "Short South") was not dieselised until the very late 60s, the line beyond Goulburn (the "Deep South") was, for main line running, dieselised in the early 1960s. In general, the footage of the "Deep South" is early and, therefore, as mentioned before, colour deterioration is present in a number of shots. The predominantly earlier footage means, also, that the sound has occasional distortion because of the less sophisticated equipment available to the consumer in the early 60s; there is a limit to what one can do digitally to overcome flaws like distortion!

The first Part of ***Steam Times 3*** looks at the "Short South". This stretch of the Southern Line is notable because the ascent to reach the Southern Highlands, from Picton (82 kms from Sydney) to Bowral (133 kms), is predominantly graded at 1 in 75. Now this is not steep, in railway terms, but, when there is little let up along the way, in the steam days it was quite a challenge for driver and fireman, especially with maximum or near-maximum loads and perhaps, especially towards the end of steam, with engines not in the best condition! The landscape is, on the whole, very pleasing, with wooded areas alternating with tracts of green grazing land, orchards and pleasant towns and villages. Before the opening of the Hume Freeway, the Highway ran beside the railway for much of the journey from Picton to Mittagong, and one almost always saw some steam hauled train.

The first eight shots, in black and white, were taken in the Autumn of 1959.

[1] 5056 resumes its journey south from Picton (82 kms from Sydney) with a Down Goods, a long climb ahead of it! In ***Steam Times 3***, the railway terminology of the time: "engine" rather than "locomotive", and "Goods" rather than "Freight", is mostly used in these **Notes**.

[2] The original main Southern Line ran fairly directly from Picton to Mittagong, but with a ruling grade of 1 in 30! It was not long before the deviation was built, with a 1 in 75 ruling grade, making the section to Mittagong about 5 kms longer, but a much easier climb. Most services on this line were worked by CPH Rail Motors, with the *Mixed* and the occasional substitute for the Rail Motors worked by 13 class, or, if none was available, 30 class. There was one through loco hauled service in the Up direction on a Sunday afternoon. On this particular day, we see 3070 (probably borrowed from Campbelltown) working an Up passenger service off the main line at Mittagong Junction, about 1.5 kms north of Mittagong (129 kms) and starting its run to Picton; it is climbing from the main line on a short 1 in 66, one of only a couple of climbs on the Up.

[3] A 55 class is seen with a Down Goods on a short 1 in 100 down grade about 4 kms north of Mittagong. 55 class seemed to be more common on the South than most other main lines.

[4] It is then seen climbing the 1 in 75 from Mittagong towards Bowral (133 kms).

[5] 3818 heads the *Up Southern Highlands Express* (No. 22) out of Mittagong.

[6] Not long after the *Southern Highlands*, the Up *Melbourne Express* (No. 4) races past, headed by 3816.

[7] The 38 on the Down *Riverina Express* (No. 15) is seen, almost in silhouette, steaming up the 1 in 75 between Mittagong and Bowral.

[8] In the last of these 8 shots we have taken a position beside a cutting not far south of Yerrinbool (113 kms). A 36 is seen heading the Goulburn *Passenger* (No. 13) up the 1 in 75 as a Standard Goods comes down the grade with an Up Goods. One can hear road noise from the Hume Highway, which is just a short distance in the Down direction. One can also hear comments from the photographer's family!

[9] On the occasion of an outing on a special train hauled by 5713 to Moss Vale on 25.10.59, the train stopped at Campbelltown (51 kms) for a short while, during which time enthusiasts took the opportunity to photograph the Up *Melbourne Express*, headed by 3824.

[10] Another shot of a 55 class on an Up Goods between Mittagong and Bowral, taken around April, 1962.

[11] The same train is seen between Bowral and Burradoo, the shot taken from a high vantage point on the western side of the line.

[12] A 38 vigorously accelerates the Up *Southern Highlands Express* (now No. 20) out of Campbelltown in August 1963. The difference in the light between the two sections of this shot is striking.

[13] The Down *Riverina Express* heads around the curve leading to the Picton Tunnel (c. 85 kms) on 23.5.1964. The enthusiasts beside the line were on a special on the Loop Line. 1 in 75.

[14] In Spring, 1964, the Down Goulburn *Passenge*r is seen again, this time headed by a 38, 3827(?), as it heads out of Bargo (100 kms). 1 in 75.

[15] The same train is seen after Yerrinbool, where the line crosses over the Hume Highway, at this time a very busy road. 1 in 75.

[16] We see it again near Aylmerton (121 kms), where the gradient eases from 1 in 75 for a short distance.

[17] 3668 and another 36 head a Down Goods from Bargo on the same day. 1 in 75.

[18] On the same day 3823 heads a Down Goods towards Bargo, the shot being taken from the moving car. 1 in 75

[19] The train is now past Bargo. 1 in 75

[20] In late March 1967, a 38 is seen with a Down School Special a kilometre or so south of the Picton Tunnel. This service conveyed students back to the numerous private schools in the Southern Highlands after Easter. 1 in 75

[21] The Special is now seen between Mittagong and Bowral, From the car, one could occasionally see bodies poking far out from the windows, a real hazard on a busy line!

[22] From "The Gib" (Mt Gibralter) between Mittagong and Bowral, one has a magnificent view of the surrounding countryside, including the railway line. In this shot, taken around the same time as the two previous shots, a 36 is clearly seen and heard working hard up the 1 in 75 on a Down Goods.

[23] Closer to Sydney, but still in early Autumn, a 38 heads the Up Moss Vale *Passenger* (No. 50) between Campbelltown (51 kms) and Liverpool (32 kms)

[24] On the same morning, another 38 heads the Up *Southern Highlands* from Menangle (62 kms) towards Menangle Park (59 kms).

[25] In March 1968, the Down *Moss Vale Passenger* (No. 49), headed by 3813, crosses Menangle Viaduct, between Menangle and Menangle Park.

[26] We then see it climbing Spaniard's Hill, glinting in the late afternoon sun. 1 in 70.

[27] It has stopped at Douglas Park (70 kms) and is now on its way to Picton. A mare and her foal take our attention for a few seconds! 1 in 100.

[28] From Mt Gibralter again, we see the 3813 hauled Up Moss Vale *Passenger* as it leaves Bowral.

[29] Later in 1969, a 36 heads No. 31 *Mixed* south from Moss Vale (143 kms). This train's original number/name was No. 9 *Express Mixed* and ran to Junee, from where it became a Goods trains, but with a "Composite carriage" Junee to Albury, which it finally reached over 27 hours after leaving Sydney! I wonder if there was ever anybody who did the whole trip! In 1969 it ran only as far as Goulburn, and was only to last another few months, being discontinued at the end of January, 1970.

The next four shots are of 3647 on a Down Goods in the Autumn of 1969. Steam has not long to go on the South, and one could hardly say that 3647 is in peak condition as it slowly wends its way between Bargo and Aylmerton (122 kms). Nevertheless, it is still doing its job, as steam usually does, despite minimal maintenance, and makes quite an attractive subject for a sound movie!

[30] The first shot is not far south of Bargo. Note the interesting waggons. 1 in 75.

[31] Further on, the train is in a cutting near the vantage point for [8]. 1 in 75.

[32] A little further on. 1 in 75

[33] After the Aylmerton Tunnel (c. 118 kms) the grade eases considerably for about 1.5 kms and we see and, especially hear, the change in pace and effort needed for 3647 as the train approaches Aylmerton.

[34] At around the same time in Autumn, 1969, a 36 and a 59 head a Down Goods (No. 339?) from Picton, the vantage point being the same as for [20].

[35] On Saturday 24th May, 1969, The Down *Intercapital Daylight* (No. 65), with a special car attached at the rear, heads away from the Picton Tunnel, hauled by a 44 and 422. Only the GM can be heard.

[36] The Up *Southern Highlands* approaches the Tunnel on the same morning.

[37] Still the same morning, 3526 and 3801 head a Special to Goulburn, with a 36 class compressor sounding in the background at Picton station.

[38] On Saturday 11th October 1969, 3801 is seen soon after leaving Menangle Park with the last Up steam hauled *Southern Highlands Express.*

The next Part of ***Steam Times 3*** looks at operations south of Goulburn (often termed the "Deep South"). For the first 150+ kms, we are still in the "Southern Tablelands" meteorological division, with some opportunity for fast running on the 8+ km long

stretch of the Breadalbane Plain, but with most of the remainder of this area more restricted, and with some 1 in 40s in the Down direction and long 1 in 75s on the Up. The scenery is pleasant, the countryside undulating, with some substantial hills. The Tablelands gradually give way to the large "South West Slopes" meteorological division, the countryside becoming less hilly and the average altitude lower. Most of the towns south of Yass are in this area, and it is in this area that almost all of the footage in this Part was taken! The countryside is undulating, and pleasing to travel through, with wide panoramas to be viewed, the open country, with its many crops, broken, however, by some quite hilly, wooded country.

There are opportunities for fast running in this area, especially further south and west, but there are still some heavy gradients and sharpish curves to be negotiated. Train working was (and still is!) interesting throughout, with quite a variety of trains and motive power. As mentioned before, steam on the main line finished quite early on the "Deep South", meaning that there has been little movie footage released of regular operations in the early 60s. It is to be hoped that the footage here will give viewers a real experience of what it was like down here in steam times!

[39] It was often said in the very early 60s that the "South was already totally dieselised". Arriving at Cootamundra (427 kms) on a steam hauled Special (Last Steam train to Batlow) in early 1962 and then seeing Cootamundra Yard, one could only stare at the sheer volume of regular service steam engines sitting there waiting for the next call to duty! This shot is a little out of sequence, having been taken on Saturday 31st March, 1962, but it is a fitting start to Steam in the "Deep South". Steam did not have long to go, however, at least on the main line, if not on some of the branch lines.

[40] On Saturday 23rd September, 1961, a Special train (hauled by 1210 and 1243) was run from Sydney to Junee (483 kms) to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Junee Municipality. At Illabo (465 kms), the Special paused, and this shot was taken out of the window as 3816 headed the Up *Riverina Express* (No. 36), with an extra "box carriage" added (!).

[41] The big rail event of the day was the running of 5711, the last of the class, on an Up Goods. This was the last revenue run of 5711 and, for this photographer, the only chance to get a movie of a 57 on an Up Goods train. Until 1962, I had no car, and, with heavy equipment, I usually had to rely on getting a lift with my parents to do any movie work. Getting to the South to shoot 57s, most of whose running in their latter days was beyond Goulburn, was virtually impossible, much to my lasting regret! At last, here was a 57, performing vigorously. 1 in 75 < 66.

[42] While not as exciting (and emotional!) as 5711's last departure from Junee, 3829's departure on the Down *Riverina* was a highlight of the day. We see it accelerating on the level and then on a grade that gradually steepens to a short 1 in 40, which, however, it doesn't reach until after the shot has finished.

The next 21 shots were taken over a period of four days from Tuesday 19th to Friday 22nd of December, 1961, when, having the family car to take my mother and her sister on a trip "down south", I resolved to cover as much as possible of the steam scene on the main line and some branches around Cootamundra and Junee. Unfortunately, the 57s and 34s were gone, but there were still other classes of steam around to capture, maybe for the last time in the area. These days turned out

to be a priceless festival of steam, albeit with one major disappointment, which will be referred to later.

[43] The first train to be "captured" is a 30T running a Down Goods beside an irrigation canal near Yanco (603 kms), on what was then called the Junee - Hay line.

[44] The *Riverina Express* ran two days a week to Griffith and return, the services on the other four days being operated by a *Rail Motor*. Between Narrandera and Griffith a 32 class was employed, and even it was limited to 30 m.p.h. between Yanco and Griffith (658 kms). We see a 32 on the Up *Riverina* (No. 36) attacking the 1 in 75 soon after leaving Yanco on its way to Narrandera.

[45] Some 18 kms further on, the 32 is again working hard as it tackles a last stretch of 1 in 55 just before Narrandera (580 kms).

[46] The 32 is replaced at Narrandera by 3658 for the run to Junee, and we see the train about 3+ kms from Narrandera as it climbs a 1 km. stretch of 1 in 50, the only such grade on the Up journey. This (then) important "South-West Branch" was one of the few non-main lines in NSW on which 36 class engines were allowed to run, at least as far as Narrandera. With reasonably heavy passenger trains, like the *Riverina Express*, this enabled better times to be maintained on the 1 in 50s than with 32 class engines.

[47] A number of cars off the *Through Mail* at Junee continued as the *Griffith Passenger* (No.23). This train crossed the *Riverina* at Matong, some 29 kms towards Junee. We move just a couple of kilometres east, to the other side of the crest of the 1 in 50, where there ia a similar grade facing Down trains. On time, the 36 is vigorously climbing the last grade before Narrandera. It will be replaced by a 30T at Narrandera.

We now move to Wednesday 20th December, the rest of the previous day having been taken up with family activities as well as some still photography. From Cootamundra there are branch lines running south and north, the one to the north splitting into a number of other branches. We start the day's activities at Temora (486 kms), a sizeable town on the line running north from Cootamundra to Lake Cargelligo (666 kms).

[48] We station ourselves just outside Temora, from where a branch line goes to Griffith. Until fairly recent times, this line to Griffith saw less traffic than that from Junee. Probably the reason was that, even though it is 21 kms shorter, it serves a smaller population. The Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday connection from, or truncated continuation of, the *Temora Mail* was in the hands of a 30T, which we see with its small train (No. 1) ambling out of Temora, the speed limit being just 35 m.p.h.

[49] A 50 class engine lifts its Down Goods train up a medium grade between Stockinbingal (451 kms) and Temora.

[50] North of Temora, the line continues to Lake Cargelligo with branches to Rankin's Springs, Burcher and Naradhan from Barmedman, Wyalong Central and Ungarie respectively. A 32 is now seen slowly wheeling its Up train not far from Temora, the speed limit for a 32 north of Temora at the time being just 20 m.p.h.

We now move back to the main line.

[51] The Up *Riverina* is seen, a few kilometres north of Cootamundra, climbing Morrison's Hill, with a 36, probably "dead attached", assisting a 38. Morrison's Hill is a long climb, starting soon after Cootamundra North Junction and gradually steepening, over some 5 kilometres, to 1 in 75, which continues then, almost unbroken, for about 9.5 kms. The sound in this shot is quite poor, and not much could be done to remedy it!

[52] Soon after, a 36 heads an Up Goods from Cootamundra on the first and easier stretch of Morrison's Hill before the long 1 in 75 begins.

[53] Two Standard Goods engines, the second one a saturated 50, probably on its way after Shops to Albury for yard work, leave Cootamundra on a Down Goods, the sturdy, reassuring beat of the two old engines making a pleasant sound as they knuckle down to their task..

[54] The Down *Riverina* approaches Cootamundra, having probably reached the maximum line speed allowed at the time (Campbelltown to Junee - 60 mph) coming down Morrison's Hill.

[55] We now see one of the two connections at Cootamundra off the Down *Riverina,* this one heading north. A 30T heads the Temora/West Wyalong *Passenger* (No. 33) a kilometre or so past Cootamundra West. This train ran on Monday and Wednesdays to West Wyalong and Fridays and Saturdays to Temora only. It will soon have some 1 in 75s to climb, to reach Meemar, some 9 kms distant, but it is a light train, limited to 100 tons. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, No. 33 was a 2 car *Diesel train* and ran the long trip to Lake Cargelligo. Interestingly, on Tuesdays and Thursdays there was a *Rail Motor* service (No. 11), connecting off the *Through Mail* (No. 23) at Cootamundra, all the way to Narromine, beyond Dubbo on the Western Line, connecting there with a *Diesel* service to Dubbo. On Saturdays, this service started at Stockinbingal (451 kms), connecting off the *Temora Mail* (No. 5). The distance from Cootamundra is about 310 kms! In later years, it was even longer, the *Rail Motor* running the extra 36 kms to Dubbo! Some enthusiasts have done this epic trip, but not myself, unfortunately!

[56] It is now Thursday, 21st December, and we first of all see 3830 hurrying the Down *Through Mail* soon after leaving Cootamundra.

[57] The *Griffith Passenger* (No.23) is seen again, but this time the 36 is close to Junee, climbing the long 1 in 63 < 1 in 50 from Old Junee (490 kms).

[58] Back to the main line, we see the Up *Riverina* climbing the Bethungra Spiral. We get two brief views of the train, first at the beginning of the Spiral, about 1.5 kms north of Bethungra (453 kms) and then on its second "round", both at 1 in 66. The Spiral was built at the time of the duplication of the line between Cootamundra and Junee to eliminate the 1 in 40/45 for Up trains. The Down line is the original line. The Spiral means that the Up main is about 3.8 kms longer than the Down. Viewers will catch just a glimpse of a 60 heading a Down Goods in this shot. Unfortunately, we did not see a 60 class that we could capture on movie on any of our excursions to the South!

[59] The Southern Line has a number of 1 in 40 grades against Down trains between Goulburn and Demondrille (389 kms), that between Murrumburrah (386 kms) and Demondrille being the last, except for one a short distance south of Junee, which is really a momentum grade. Demondrille Bank is certainly not a momentum

grade, there being severe speed limits at its start. In this shot, taken near the top of the Bank, 3821(?) heads the Down *Riverina*.

[60] Soon after, from the same spot, a very different train is seen, as the Cowra connection (No. 48) off the *Riverina* (timed for 32 class haulage) is headed up the Bank by a Standard Goods!

[61] Back to Cootamundra, we now catch the *Riverina* we saw in [59] hurrying out of town. We were able to get ahead of it, despite waiting for the Cowra connection, because the 38 was serviced, including taking on coal, at the large facility at Demondrille.

[62] It is now Friday 22nd December, the sparkling very early morning of our last day in the Cootamundra/Junee area, as a 32 heads the Down *Temora Mail* (No. 5) at a good speed from Cootamundra West. It is quite a train for a branch line!

[63] The branch line to the south of Cootamundra was the Tumut (531 kms) line (now closed), from which another line branched off at Gilmore for Batlow. Here was my only disappointment for the week! It was my great desire to take movies on the Batlow line, with its 14+ kms of unbroken 1 in 25 grades, very sharp curves and 19 class haulage. However, an inaccurate road map led me astray, and I found myself having to backtrack quite a distance from near the start of the 1 in 25, because the road gave up, and by the time I reached Batlow, the train had arrived! No further opportunities ever came my way. Perhaps some compensation was that the *Mixed* consisted of a van only, so it would not have been working very hard. However, I did record something of this Tumut branch. On **Fridays** only, the Tumut connection off the *Through Mail* was a *Passenger* train rather than a "*Diesel Train* ***Mons., Sats"*** or a "*Mixed* ***Tues., Weds., Thurs.***". Including all stops, The *Diesel* was allowed 2 hrs and 19 minutes, the (steam) *Passenger* 2 hrs and 51 minutes and the *Mixed* 4 hrs and 39 minutes. The speed limit for the 2 car Diesel was 10 to 15 m.p.h. higher than for the 30T. No wonder passengers liked the "Diesels" throughout rural NSW, but, for those who appreciate steam, can anything on a rural branch line really improve on 3082(?), as it sturdily lifts its train up the last stretch of 1 in 50 of a 6 km climb from just past Califat (510 kms) to Reka (516+ kms)? The driver shuts off as the summit is reached.

So the four days "Steam Festival" comes to an end! This week was not the only time that I was able to capture steam at work on the "Deep South", as can be seen in the next 10 shots, but never again was I able to see so much steam in so short a time!

[64] It is now Sunday 15th April, 1962, and the inaugural *Spirit of Progress* is waiting at Table Top (628 kms) to cross Nos 1 and 3 *Melbourne* and *Melbourne Limited Expresses*, hauled by 3808 and (black) 3801 respectively. We catch No. 1 as it slowly comes past the big crowd and 3830 and 3813 at the head of the long blue train.

The next four shots were taken in May 1962.

[65] We are back in the Cootamundra area again as a 38 and 32 lift their Goods train up Morrison's Hill. The 38 leading the 32 rather than the other way round seemed to be the norm with this kind of combination.

[66] The Up *Riverina* (now No. 16) is seen on Morrison's Hill, this time headed by the usual single 38, and making its usual vigorous ascent.

[67] It's back to Demondrille as 3822(?) nears the top of the climb with the Down *Riverina*, the speed being quite slower than the earlier shot [59].

[68] Once again, it is a Standard Goods that is heading the Cowra *Passenger*.

[69] In May 1963, a 38 is charging up the long 1 in 75 Cullerin Bank with the Up *Riverina*. The shot was taken near the top of the unbroken climb from Razorback, where the (former) Hume Highway crossed over the line. This was a favourite spot for photographers, but not such a good one for sound movies, the Highway rarely being quiet for more than a few seconds. With the Hume Highway deviated extensively to become the Hume Freeway for a large part of its run, the old highway here is now a very quiet rural backwater road. The road bridge is a great place to shoot trains, but there's only the very occasional steam special. At least there are some interesting diesel loco combinations to be seen and heard now!

[70] On the 9th of November, 1963, green 3801 seems in good fettle as it speeds the Down *Riverina* not far out from Cootamundra.

[71] In January 1964, we move quite a distance south to the "speedway' beyond Wagga as a 38 heads the Down *Albury Mail* (No. 7) near Yerong Creek (562 kms), the train having the usual conglomeration of rolling stock, but depleted here, because the Griffith cars would have been taken off at Junee,

[72] We now move back to Demondrille, on a dark day in early Spring 1967, as a Standard Goods lifts the Down Young/Cowra connection off the Down *Riverina* up the 1 in 40. The small complement of steam left on Southern Line branches has a short time left before final withdrawal!

[73] For the very last shot in the "Deep South" we head back to Temora around the same time, as a 30T is at work with the Temora to Griffith *Passenger* (now No. 91) not far out from Temora. Temora had steam longer than almost any other depot in the "Deep South", but 48s and 2 car Diesels had been at work there for years, and this train had been scheduled for a 48 since April 1962. Perhaps there was too much goods work to be handled by the 48s and the 30T was being given another chance at handling a passenger train. Whatever, it seems a fitting way to end the "Deep South".

The third Part of ***Steam Times 3*** takes a very brief look at the Illawarra Line and then a longer look at workings in the Sydney Suburban area. The Illawarra Line, running down the South Coast to Bomaderry (153 kms from Sydney and on the northern side of the Shoalhaven river from Nowra) is a very interesting line, but is, I'm afraid, one that almost completely eluded me in the steam days! At least I discovered it later on, in the diesel days, and this discovery made me regret what I had missed in the steam days! The six shots in the Illawarra were all taken in August 1963.

[74] 3221 heads an Up Port Kembla (90+ kms) *Passenger* not far from where the Port Kembla line joins the main Illawarra line at Coniston (84+kms).

The next four shots were taken around the sprawling Australian Iron and Steel works that straddle the Port Kembla line. A.I.S. is now called B.H.P., after the B.H.P. Newcastle Steel Works closed in recent years, and has quite a network of railways, which, of course, were steam worked in the early 60s, as were the complementary NSWGR activities in the area, also represented here. There is a complete Part of ***Steam Times 3*** devoted to NSW Private Railways, but it was

thought better to enlarge the meagre Illawarra offering by including the two shots of A.I.S. engines here; they worked in close proximity to the NSWGR engines!

[75] An A.I.S. B class saddle tank 0-6-0 is seen working a slag dumping train.

[76] Another A.I.S. engine, an 0-4-0 saddle tank (*Alison*) is then seen doing some shunting.

[77] Next, NSWGR 2619 does its share of shunting.

[78] Lastly in this industrial area we see another tank engine, this time a NSWGR 20 class (more examples of which we shall see later on in the next Part.).

[79] The last shot on the Illawarra was taken just north of Waterfall (38.74kms). A Down Passenger, headed by 3252 romps down the 1 in 122 as 3326 climbs up the slight grade up with an Up Goods.

The next Part of ***Steam Times 3*** looks at workings in the Sydney Suburban area. First of all there are shots, taken in the suburbs, of trains serving rather more distant destinations; second, the Campbelltown - Camden Branch is looked at in some depth, and third comes the Richmond Line. Then there is one shot, which, in a rather appropriate way, concludes this Part of ***Steam Times 3***.

The first five shots were taken at Hornsby station on a cloudy Saturday, 23rd January, 1960, the day of the inauguration of the Gosford electrification. What we see here are workings typical of the steam era, but ones which will cease in just a few hours.

[80] The *Cessnock Express* (No. 24a) arrives from the north, headed, as is usual in the Up direction, by a 38, this time 3827.

[81] Next, the Down Morning *Newcastle Flyer* (No. 105) arrives and…

[82] leaves.

[83] A very short shot of a Down service arriving headed by streamlined 3805.

[84] Lastly, an Up service, probably from Gosford, arrives with a 32.

The short Branch Line from Campbelltown (51 kms), on the Southern Line, and Camden (64 kms - but the line was closed before metrication!) has been the subject of a number of books, articles and movies, too many to list here. In ***Steam Times 3*** we are simply giving viewers a taste of what it was like not long before the end, which came on New Year's Day, 1963, and then some of the services on the very last day(s). There was some deterioration in the audio quality of some of these shots, as well as in some of the visuals; we have tried hard to overcome the difficulties, but some distortion etc. remains!

[85] Until 1957, the 20 class 2-6-4 tank engines had been the only class used on the branch for over 50 years, but were largely replaced by the 30 class 4-6-4 tanks for the last few years of the Line's existence. In Autumn 1959, the unusual combination of a 30 and a 20 heads an up Mixed soon after leaving Narellan (about 8+ kms from Campbelltown) and crosses over the Hume Highway level crossing, with its unusual "wig-wag" warning signals. The short train is double-headed because of the 1 in 19 to come on Kenny Hill (about 4 kms from Campbelltown), Australia's steepest adhesion grade.

[86] The date is Monday, 31.12.1962, and the official public end of the Camden Line is this very day! Because of the large numbers of people wishing to travel, the

trains were considerably lengthened and hauled by multiple engines, mostly 20s "for old time's sake". In this shot we see 2029 and 2016 on a regular, but much longer than normal, Up service (probably the 12.8pm from Camden) cantering between Camden and Narellan and then putting on a big effort to tackle the 1 in 23 of Graham's Hill before Narellan.

[87] The 1pm train from Campbelltown was an even larger train and was hauled by 2016 and 2029 with 3140 pushing at the rear for Kenny Hill, with its 1 in 20 grade. We see the train as it makes the final assault towards the top of the hill.

[88] For New Day's Day, 1963, the Department of Railways had agreed to the running of a special "Last Train to Camden". 2010 + 2016, with 2029 assisting in the rear, ran a nine-car train carrying more than 500 passengers. This shot, taken from the rear carriage, shows 2029's efforts in the stretch between Campbelltown and Maryfields (just under 3 kms from Campbelltown) with its heavy grades, having a maximum of 1 in 21.

[89] At Maryfields the train stopped to allow passengers to walk to the top of Kenny Hill to capture the train's assault. Despite the deterioration evident in the audio and visual over the 41 years since the shots were taken, viewers will still get a good idea of what the last ever charge on Kenny Hill was like!

[90] We move back to more "normal" working as we see 3801 leaving Strathfield (12 kms) on the Down *Goulburn Passenger* in August, 1963.

[91] 5373 almost hurries a short Down Goods up the 1 in 40 just after Denistone (20 kms) on the Northern Line in October, 1963.

[92] The Down *Goulburn Passenger* comes into view again, this time in May, 1965, with another green 38, 3813, and not far beyond Homebush (13 kms), its polished wooden cars shining in the sun. This shot was an experiment using a "wide angle" lens setting. We didn't use it again except in direct-side-on shots!

For the next five shots we move to Richmond (61 kms) passenger trains, with the first shot on the main Western line, but the rest on the branch, which diverges from the main line at Blacktown (34.5kms). The Richmond line was a late candidate for electrification, and in the late 60s was still running steam as well as rail motors and 2 car diesels.

The first three shots were taken on Friday, 2nd September, 1966.

[93] 3255 speeds its Sydney-bound commuter train from Seven Hills (32 kms) towards Parramatta (23 kms).

[94] 30 and 32 class engines shared the steam haulage of Richmond trains. In this shot, we see 3099 on a Down train soon after leaving Clarendon (57 kms). Morning fog is a common occurrence in this area.

[95] 3046 makes a rousing climb from Quaker's Hill (40 kms) towards Marayong (37 kms) on an Up train. 1 in 106.

[96] Late in 1967, 3255(?) is seen between Riverstone (46 kms) and Vineyard (49 kms) with a Down train. 1 in 50.

[97] 3229 appears out of the fog between Richmond and Windsor (55 kms) on an Up train in September 1969.

[98] In May, 1974, a Special steam train ran from Enfield to Thirlmere, (89 kms) on the Picton Mittagong Loop Line, where the NSW Rail Transport Museum was being set up after its transfer from the Enfield Locomotive Depot area. The train was moving the passenger cars now "belonging" to the Museum to its new premises. The train was headed by a 5461(?) and 5910(?) and made quite a loud departure.

The last Part of ***Steam Times 2*** visits three areas in NSW where there were private railway operations. The first of these is the Silverton Tramway Company, Broken Hill, which ran almost all operations in the area and as far as the South Australian border at Cockburn. NSWGR engines also did some shunting in the Standard Gauge Yard. All of the shots at Broken Hill were taken in late December, 1957. There was extensive rain during our stay.

[99] A diminutive Y class does some shunting in the Broken Hill city area.

[100] A much larger (and newer) W class comes into Broken Hill with an empty ore train. The W class were built to the same design as the Western Australian W class.

[101] Another W class leaves Broken Hill with a loaded train.

[102] A Y class puts on quite a show as it charges up past the Narrow Gauge Sulphide St station.

[103] Another Y does some shunting in the Broken Hill Yard.

[104] A W class backs onto the Adelaide-bound (actually Terowie, where the Broad Gauge starts) *Broken Hill Express*.

[105] With very slow Kodachrome film, no daylight saving at the time and film running out, anyway, it was impossible to capture the impressive departure of the *Express* from Broken Hill at the normal 16 frames per second. So 8 frames per second had to be used, which brought its own problems with playback! Some projectors cater for the slow speed, but there is still quite an amount of what would normally be considered unacceptable flicker etc. However, beggars can't be choosers - so it is to be hoped that viewers will overlook the poorness of the shot and get some real idea of what this departure looked like! It's a pity that the short amount of film left meant that I had to cut the shot, even on 8 frames per second!

The next Private Railway to be looked at is the Commonwealth Portland Cement Company Ltd's operation near Portland (181 kms), on the Wallerawang - Gwabegar line. The privately run railway moved the cement from the Works at Portland to the "main" line at Portland station, a distance of about 1.5 kms. The first two shots were taken in February 1974 and the last two in November 1974.

[106] 2605 (on hire from the NSWGR) does some shunting near the railway entrance to the Works.

[107] After completing this, 2605 lifts its load of one four-wheeled truck (containing bagged cement) and two loaded bogie (bulk) cement waggons up the short, but steep 1 in 38 grade from the Works to the summit near the road overbridge, which can be seen near the end of the shot. The normal maximum load for the operation was two bogie waggons, about 180 tons.

[108] One of the two remaining privately owned locos at the time, a Barclay 0-6-0 side

tank, No. 3 (Andrew Barclay, Glasgow, 1911), laboriously lifts its load up the 1 in 38. No. 3 was not in good condition by the mid 70s and was mainly used as a standby.

[109] No. 3 returns from Portland exchange sidings with some empties, an easier run than the forward journey. The crew in the engine are wearing the regulation hard hats. There is an excellent article covering the last decade of this interesting line by Peter Attenborough in *Byways of Steam 8*, published by Eveleigh Press in 1994.

The last of the three Private railways to be looked at was, at the time, the largest such operation in NSW. What follows is just a very brief description of a complicated network of coal mines and railways with a complicated history. The coal mines in the Lower Hunter around Cessnock were operated by a number of companies, but the railway serving most of them was the South Maitland Railways Pty Ltd, which had a network of lines that connected with the NSWGR just west of Maitland (192 kms on the Northern Line) at East Greta Junction. The S.M.R.'s main line went from East Greta Junction to Cessnock (25 kms). There was a another network of lines connecting with the S.M.R., but terminating at Hexham (175 kms), a suburb of Newcastle, where coal was loaded onto ships on the Hunter River or transferred to NSWGR haulage to Port Waratah coal loading facilities in Newcastle Harbour or to other destinations. This network was formerly owned by John Brown's group, but, like the S.M.R., was in later years owned by Coal and Allied. All but one of the operations seen in this Part are on the S.M.R., with one running on the remnant of the former John Brown's main line. Operations on both lines remained steam hauled long after steam had finished on the state system, with the former John Brown's line remaining steam until it closed. The S.M.R. line was finally taken over by the NSWGR, albeit in a heavily truncated form, and services were run with diesel traction (48 class) until as recently as this year (2004), when the only remaining colliery, Southland, beyond Cessnock, closed because of an underground fire. There are a number of books devoted to various aspects of the systems mentioned above, but one of the most interesting sources is the video/DVD entitled *Steel on Steel No. 2* from *Ted Dickson Video Productions* - (02) 4751 1198.

[110] An Up (loaded) coal train, in mid 1961, is seen through the trees descending an easy grade just a couple of kilometres from East Greta Junction. The train is double headed by two 10 class engines, separated from each other by a brake van. The 10 class 2-8-2 tanks, based on the NSWGR 50 class, were the workhorse of the S.M.R. Note that all but the latest trains in this Part are composed of unbraked privately owned 4 wheel hoppers, imposing low speed limits.

[111] From the same vantage point on the same day, a NSWGR 30 class heads a Cessnock bound passenger train.

[112] In May 1970, No. 25 slowly lifts its full load of coal near the top of the 1 in 70 Caledonia Bank, 22+ kms from East Greta Junction.

The next four shots were taken in May 1972.

[113] No. 31 rounds the curve near Bellbird Junction, in Cessnock, with an Up train and starts the 1.5 km climb of Caledonia Bank.

[114] On the former John Brown's line, No. 24 (one of 13 engines for John Brown that were part of a class of over 500 engines built to the British Great Central Railway's J.G. Robinson design for service in World War One under the

Railway **O**perating **D**ivision) lifts a loaded coal train up Blanche's Hill on the 9+ kilometre run from the Stockrington Colliery near Minmi, an outer suburb of Newcastle, to Hexham. This stretch of line was the last remnant of the much larger network.

[115] Back to the S.M.R., and about 20 kms from East Greta Junction, as No. 17 lifts a Down (empty) train up Neath Bank towards Caledonia. The grade varies from 1 in 86 to 1 in 50, but since all the coal trains are empty, there is no problem with the Bank and engines take the climb fairly casually!

[116] No. 17 now has a loaded train and approaches the start of Caledonia Bank at Bellbird Junction, near the vantage point for [113].
The next five shots were taken on Tuesday 17th December, 1974. The vantage point for all of them was the former East Greta station, about 3 kms from East Greta Junction. All movements here were fairly slow, loaded trains needing to be controlled carefully on the downhill 1 in 94 grade and Down trains not needing to be going faster, with subsequent greater fuel use, since the movement of coal was not ordinarily time sensitive.

[117] No. 20 heads a Down train.

[118] No. 19 lifts another Down service.

[119] No. 18 on the Up.

[120] No. 20 on the Up.

[121] No. 30 on the Down.

[122] On another day late in 1974, an Up train is seen through the wooded hills near the vantage point for [110] and [111].

We now move to June 1983 for the last four shots of this Part and ***Steam Times 3***. We also move from Standard 8 to Super 8 film. With this newer technology we have the considerable advantage of having a camera that records the sound as well as the visual images, but it is also technology where the sound is recorded on a very narrow strip of tape on the film, compared with the much wider tape on reel to reel tape recorders. Hence the fidelity can be less true, and there is the possibility for things to go wrong! Super 8 also has a slightly larger image area, which should enhance the quality of the picture; but, in fact, the results seem to be about the same as Standard 8, and, in addition, even Kodachrome film seemed to have not so reliable lasting qualities as Standard 8!

The decade since the earlier shots on the S.M.R. has seen 4 wheeled unbraked stock replaced by NSWGR bogie hoppers. This has meant for the one major grade for Up trains, Caledonia Bank, trains making a fast run at the grade. In fact, the assault on this Bank became a real drawcard for enthusiasts, as they captured the truly impressive spectacle of sight and sound, with most trains now being double headed and lifting a respectable load of 1,500 tons. The rather pedestrian image one could have of the S.M.R., one I did not share, was certainly thrown out by Caledonia Bank!

[123] Nos 18 and 22 make the still normal casual climb up Neath Bank.

[124] But 30 and 31 (in green!) show us the new way of attacking Caledonia Bank!

[125] The same train is seen further on, near the site of Bee Siding, 9.5 kms from East Geta Junction. There was some haze in this area, but there seemed to be some deterioration in the film, as well.

[126] The sound recorded in this last shot suffered damage, and an amount of work had to be done to repair it, not all of which was really successful. This is a pity, but is to be hoped that the final shot in ***Steam Times 3*** will still give viewers an impressive last picture of another attack on Caledonia Bank!

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The assistance of a number of people, especially Ted Dickson, in determining the location of shots taken a long time ago and sundry other matters, is gratefully acknowledged. We have striven for accuracy in these **Notes**, but there can always be errors; please write or fax to the address/number below if you have any observations/corrections you would like to make, or if you would like to express an opinion about ***Steam Times 3***. Please contact us, also, if you would like to be kept up to date with the release of future productions.

Yet to come in the ***Steam Times*** series are: **NSW:** the **"Deep North"** (Broadmeadow and points north) to complement ***Steam Times 1***, with plenty of 35s at work, including the *Northern Tableland Express* - an early convert to diesel. Also featuring are, for example, a 32 climbing past Bluff Rock with a maximum load No. 17 (*Brisbane Express via Wallangara*), Moree, the near North Coast Line and the Merriwa Branch. Then there are the **other States of Australia, New Zealand**, **U.K.** and **Germany.** So there is much to look forward to!

A. Astle

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Steam Times 3
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TRAINS ALIVE

"This is what it was like!"