

# *Mortdale Matters*

AMRA NSW 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
Special Edition - November 2006

Welcome to a Very Special Edition of Mortdale Matters!

This is a special edition of Mortdale Matters in honour of the AMRA NSW 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. This Edition of *Mortdale Matters* is devoted entirely to the events celebrating our *Golden Jubilee*, held from October 27<sup>th</sup> to October 29<sup>th</sup> 2006.

The list of people to thank for such a great weekend is huge. For starters, I'd like to thank my colleagues on the 2006 Management Committee for putting so much time and effort into organising the weekend. I'd also like to thank everyone who came along to some or all of the weekend's events, which is why the weekend was so special. A special thanks to the Guildford Model Railway Group for providing their *Moss Vale* layout, Hobbyco and Casula Hobbies for their sponsorship of the commemorative medallions, Anniversary Dinner Guest Speaker Stuart Sharpe and 3801 limited and Barry Tulloch for a great day out on the *Golden Jubilee Express*.

I apologise if I've accidentally left someone out.

*Chris Winston*

Mortdale Matters Editor



*The Golden Jubilee Express approaches Hurstville Station – Oct 29 2006.*

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

After a day of playing trains watching DVDs and slide shows on our new home theatre system, members and guests boarded two coaches to depart for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner at the Mortuary Station. The weather was not kind as there was a very cool breeze blowing through the platform. So much so that Marilyn had to call the club to organise to have masking tape brought along. Covering the tables with tablecloths became a fun activity for the guests before dinner was served.

I apologise, on behalf of the committee, for the PA system not working. I will try to recap what was said, and have included the documents that were presented.

The evening commenced with a welcome to members and guests and apologies. Our guests included George Bray and Robert & Rosemary Gorrell from Queensland. Robert Gorrell was at the first meeting of AMRA NSW in October 1956. Our other guests were Stuart & Susan Sharp. Stuart was our after dinner speaker.

We received an apology from Tim Dunlop, who is AMRA member number one. See the next page for a copy of his letter.

Graham Larmour, Federal President, presented the NSW Branch with a plaque commemorating our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and Brian Tyson, Federal Secretary, presented us with a cheque to help towards the costs of the celebrations.

A fine dinner of roast chicken or beef and vegetables was served. A time to talk amongst ourselves and enjoy the view.

I next addressed the group with a short history of the Branch. This is also with this edition of *Mortdale Matters*. The committee decided to follow the lead of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and have a 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary medallion struck, to be given to those who participated in the anniversary events. We sought sponsorship from the hobby shops to help defray the cost, and I am happy to say that Joe Callipari of Casula Hobbies, and Hobbyco came on board. Thank you to both of you.

This was followed by desert consisting of chocolate mud cake or apple strudel, and then tea and coffee.



*Branch President Barry Wilcockson introduces Guest Speaker Stuart Sharpe at the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner at Mortuary Station*

Our after dinner speaker, Stuart Sharp was then introduced. Stuart then leapt into uncharted waters and gave us his insight on why we men “play trains.” It was a lively, unusual and very entertaining talk.

After the festivities were over, we packed up the tables and chairs, boarded the coaches and headed for home to rise early for the *Golden Jubilee Express* next morning.

Sunday morning arrived much too early, thanks to daylight saving, but this did not deter the hardy band of travellers who turned up at Central to travel on the Golden Jubilee Express to Berry. The train consisted of a water gin, three cars and steam locomotive 3112, which sported a very handsome *Golden Jubilee Express* headboard. Thanks to Chris Winston for manufacturing the headboard, ready for the signwriter to apply the final touches.

The train departed Central at 9:06am and stopped for pick ups at Hurstville and Sutherland. There was a stop at Kiama, where the train departed into a siding to allow for operation of the normal Bomaderry to Kiama service. This allowed a number of passengers to stay at Kiama for a leisurely lunch. The train returned to the platform and picked up the remaining passengers to carry on to Berry. All but a hardy few, who went on to Bomaderry with the train, alighted at Berry and enjoyed wandering around the town and finding somewhere to eat lunch.

Back to the station by 3:00pm to wait for the train as it returned from Bomaderry. The usual crew, with their video and still cameras, were waiting at the end of the platform for the return of the train. All aboard, except for two who were late, and we were homeward bound.

When the special souvenir tickets were produced by the committee, we managed to put the wrong date on the them. The tickets were remade and Marilyn and I handed out the correct ones along with the anniversary medallions for those who had not attended the dinner. Special thanks to Marilyn for organising the seating arrangements on the train. Despite the fact that the seating plan that was supplied was wrong, I feel sure that all the problems were ironed out in a jovial way and I also noticed that most people spent a lot of time out of their seats visiting the buffet or other people on the train, or standing near a door with their heads out all day.

The train arrived at Central ahead of timetable and unloaded the weary travellers. The trip was a great climax for our anniversary celebrations. I am sure that there is plenty of video and photographic evidence of it. It will also be featured in a soon to be released DVD by Peter Cartwright.

Thank you to the Management Committee members for all the hard work that they put in to make the weekend a success. And thank you to the members and guests who attended each function which made all the organising worthwhile.

The anniversary has come and gone, and so starts the next page in our history. There is still much to do and much fun to have. (Maybe we should look at putting having fun into the constitution)

**HAPPY 50<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY AMRA NSW**

*Barry Wilcockson*

NSW Branch President





HAPPY VALLEY R.R.

DIVISION OF  
VICTORIAN PACIFIC R.R.

I.S. (Tina) Dunlop,  
President,  
AMRA Member No 1.

P O 5046  
Alphington. Vic. 3078  
Australia

22<sup>nd</sup> September 2006

Mr. Geoff Lanham,  
Secretary, AMRA (NSW) Inc,  
18 Calvados Street,  
Glenfield. NSW. 2167.

Dear Geoff,

Through the kindness of the Federal President, Graham Lamour in keeping us informed my wife and I arranged to come to Sydney for the Branch's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations.

I remember when the then Federal Committee rather depleted our somewhat meager funds to send Keith Wilcox ten pounds, to help him with the formation of the Branch, and on a later visit to Sydney to pick up the books from Dr Tim Moss, who had resigned as Federal Treasurer, the astonishment when I suggested that the Branch hire the Sydney Town hall for the next exhibition.

Unfortunately, my left ankle has developed a very painful condition, and after X-rays, M.R.I's, C.T's and a Nuclear Bone Scan, three medicos have been unable to tell me exactly what is wrong, so I am now on an ongoing treatment of very painful injections for some time to come. On this basis, I have to advise that we will not be able to come to Sydney next month.

Graham has told me that Margie and I were to be your guests at the celebrations, and for this we thank you all most sincerely. We would appreciate your assistance in conveying to the Committee and all members of the NSW Branch our appreciation of the offer.

It would be an understatement to say we are very disappointed, particularly after all our personal preparations for the trip.

We both wish the NSW Branch all the very best for a successful and enjoyable weekend.

Regards and best wishes from us both,

*Tina*

## AROUND THE CLUBROOMS DURING THE ANNIVERSARY WEEKEND

The Golden Jubilee weekend began with facility fee free general activities at the Clubrooms on Friday night, October 27<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, October 28<sup>th</sup>. All of the fixed layouts were operating, as well as *Moss Vale* and *Binnabri*. The weekend also marked the debut of the AMRA NSW theatre in the main meeting room. A continuous selection of rail related DVD's was played on the big screen.



*A vintage Tri-ang Stephenson's Rocket operated briefly on the HO layout before disgracing itself and being retired to Peel Ridge Yard*



*Denis Gilmore sets up his Amtrak Superliner train in Yerriyong Down yard.*





*Operations are in full swing on all of the fixed layouts Upstairs*



*Ben Gilmore, Phil Andrews and Matt Gray solve a shunting dilemma in Peel Ridge Yard.*





*Norm Davies and Charlie Weathers discussing operations on the O Gauge layout.*



*Ron Sharpe and Phil Andrews watching the passing trains on the O Gauge layout*



*Ross Verdich operates his O scale layout – Binnabri*



*A 19 class is shunts amongst the weeds on Binnabri*





*Moss Vale in action*



*An 82 class takes a wheat train through Moss Vale's down platform*





*The Downstairs meeting area at lunch time with the AMRA theatre in action.*

*Photo: Barry Wilcockson*



*Keith Bowles, David Bennett and John Bain cooking the BBQ lunch.*

*Photo: Barry Wilcockson*



## THE AMRA NSW 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY DINNER

At 5pm on Saturday, October 28, buses arrived at the Clubrooms to take us into Mortuary (Regent Street) Station for our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner. While the weather could have been a bit warmer, a good night was had by all.



*The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner gets underway at Mortuary Station*



*An overall view of the Mortuary Station platform and the seating arrangements as guests arrive.*





*Barry Wilcockson begins the speeches. Photo: Glenn Percival*



*Robert Gorrell, who was present at the first meeting of the NSW Branch, gives a brief speech.*



## THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH

To quote an extract from Journal November 1956. "Sunday, 28<sup>th</sup> October, 1956, dawned normally over Australia, yet this day was destined to become the birthdate of the New South Wales State Branch of A.M.R.A. The formative meeting was held at "Austral Railway Models", Balgowlah, by courtesy of Frank Slovnick, and those present included, besides Frank, Norm Read, Ted Gray, Bob Gorrell, and David Ellis, with Dick Gutteridge, A.M.R.A. Publicity Officer, as a kind of official observer and advisor.

Ted Gray was elected Organising Chairman and David Ellis Secretary/ Treasurer, and it was decided that meetings would be held in the evenings of the fourth Thursday of each month. The location will be rotated to the different members' homes, the next meeting being at Ted Gray's on 27<sup>th</sup> December '56 where it is hoped more members will be able to attend."

As membership grew the meetings changed to Saturday afternoons. Meetings were held at the homes of members scattered all around Sydney; those without cars arranged to be collected at convenient locations.

This system continued for a number of years until one wet Saturday when about forty people turned up at Harold Warren's place and the need was seen to acquire a home. Scouts were sent out to seek suitable spots on vacant railway, Water Board and Electricity property. A portable pre-fab aluminium school building was purchased, dismantled and stored. During this time the Burwood Police-Citizen's Boys Club was used as a stopgap meeting place.

Early in 1968, Ivo Bunker saw an advertisement in the *Sydney Morning Herald* about a building in Rockdale for sale. It was a large galvanised iron building surrounded by rubbish, with block-and-tackle hanging from the roof and the remains of fifty years' occupation.

The premises were purchased, rubbish cleared, toilets constructed, kitchen and office installed, and the hall lined with fibro. The ceiling was lined, the roof replaced, and the floor resurfaced.

Later the building was re-sheathed with concrete blocks and the hall extended to provide an annexe for a large HO scale layout. Construction of this layout began in 1987.

2002 saw the Branch on the move again, as imminent acquisition of 7 metres of the clubrooms by council for road widening made our position at Rockdale too uncertain. After much searching and a few false starts, our then President, Ian McLeod, found a double factory unit at Mortdale. We took vacant possession of the Mortdale property on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2002. The interior was fully stripped out by members and then rebuilt to the design provided by David Bennett.

The clubrooms that we now enjoy are a legacy of those who worked so hard to establish the club and to us newer members who have built up the current clubrooms, and now enjoy the benefits that are provided for us.

Membership is steadily growing, and that is because of the fact that you people sitting here have something to offer, and your hospitality to newcomers makes them want to come back again and again.

So on our 50<sup>th</sup> birthday, we can rightly take pride in our model railway club, as I believe that we have a club that is second to none, made up of people with all types of backgrounds and skills but one common interest – MODEL RAILWAYS.

*Barry Wilcockson*

NSW Branch President



*Glenn Percival presents Marilyn Wilcockson with a token of appreciation for her efforts in organising the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary weekend.*







*An atmospheric view of Mortuary station at night. Photo: Glenn Percival*



*Mortuary Station towards the end of the evening. Photo: Glenn Percival*



*The Golden Jubilee Express at Kiama Station. Photo: Glenn Percival*

## THE GOLDEN JUBILEE EXPRESS

Sunday October 29<sup>th</sup> was the day that many of us had been waiting for. For the first time in over a decade, AMRA NSW had chartered a steam train. What's more it was a sell out. Departing Central at 9am, the *Golden Jubilee Express* took us to Kiama and then Berry in time for lunch and home again in time for dinner. Thanks to Glenn Percival for the series of shots of the carriage interiors



*Mic Wade in action on the Golden Jubilee Express*





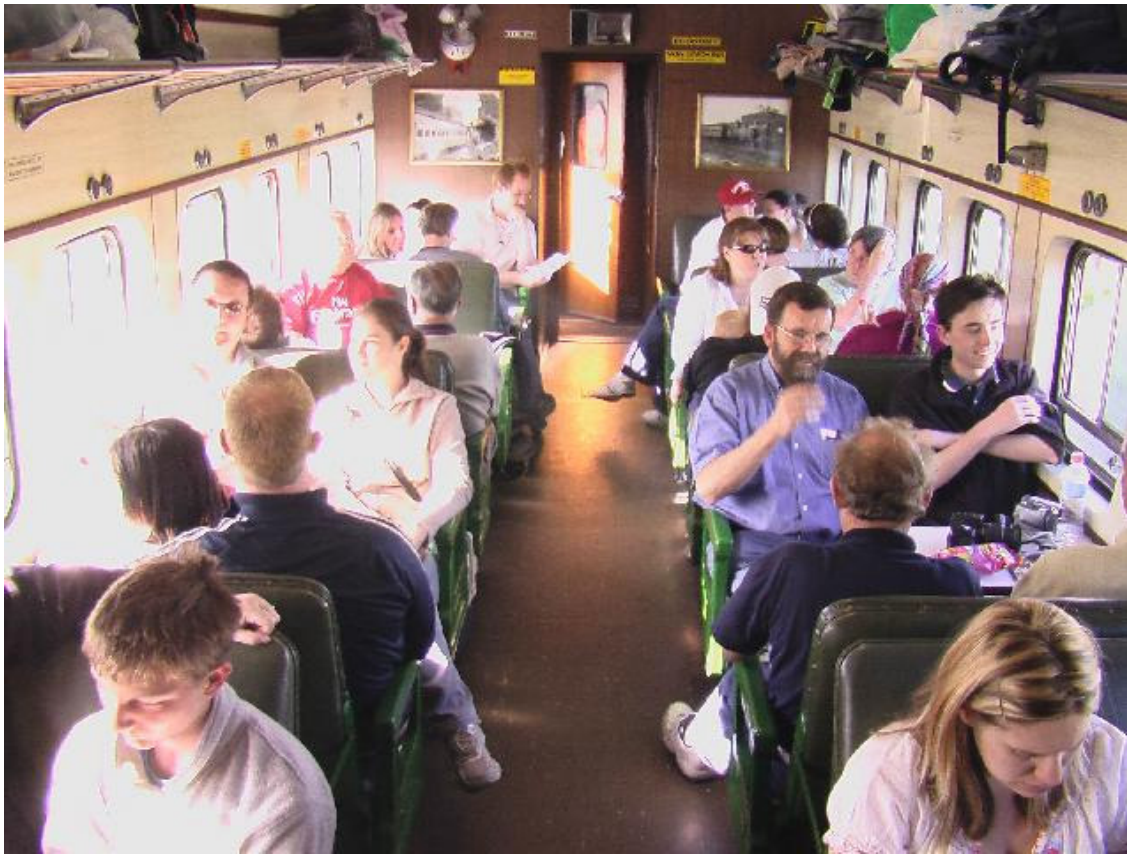
*Joe Callipari and Ross Stell get their shots of the Golden Jubilee Express at Kiama Station*

*Photo: Glenn Percival*



*The First of Glenn Percival's carriage interior shots*





*More of Glenn Percival's interior shots*







*Even more interior shots as we get further along the train*





*Finally up the other end of the train and the last of Glenn Percival's interior photos.*



*Summing up the way most of us felt by the end of the day is little Zach Feeney, his first time on a train, with his mum Narelle.*



## PLANNING THE GOLDEN JUBILEE WEEKEND

When June and Graham Larmour reminded the committee at the beginning of 2006 that this was our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year, it was immediately decided that we needed to mark the occasion with something special.

Many ideas were discussed, some of which were fairly unlikely but definitely special. Eventually though we came up with the idea of a 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary dinner and a train trip somewhere. Once Mortuary Station was suggested, it was hard to think of a more appropriate location. With cost and availability coming in favourably it was immediately booked.

With Mortuary Station locked in, thoughts turned to the train trip. The route was always going to be the Illawarra. Apart from being very scenic, it also ran through Mortdale and Hurstville, both near to the clubrooms. Steam was always at the top of everyone's list, but experience had shown it can be an expensive proposition. It was decided that Railmotors would probably be a more affordable option. The Railmotor Society in Paterson was asked for a price, while out of interest an approach was also made to 3801 limited for a price for 3112. When the two prices came back almost identical, the idea of a Railmotor trip was quickly dropped.

Now we had both a Station and a Train. A lot of discussion centred on how to bring the two together. Running the train on the Saturday and going straight to the dinner was a possibility but it amounted to a very long day. In the end it was decided to keep the two separate, but the idea of a taking a train into Mortuary Station on the Saturday night was far from dead.

One of the last pieces of the puzzle to be fitted into place was the transport to Mortuary Station. An approach to Historic Electric Traction (HET) was made for a heritage electric train (a W set) as a final effort to get a train to take us into Mortuary Station. When the quote came back at more than 15 times more expensive than the buses we finally had to admit defeat.

After that it was a matter of sorting out the details. Commemorative medallions were struck. Train tickets were designed, printed and then reprinted when an error was discovered. A headboard was made for the locomotive. It was a lot of work, but the small touches made sure that it wasn't just another dinner or just another train trip. In the end it was all worth it for a fantastic weekend for the NSW Branch.



*My main contribution to the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary weekend was towards the headboard for the Golden Jubilee Express. Completed on the evening of Thursday October 26<sup>th</sup> it was delivered to 3801 limited at Eveleigh the next day where it was test fitted to 3112. Thanks to Glenn Percival for organising the sign writing for the headboard and the photo. Before anyone asks – we did test fit the headboard on 3801 ( freshly repainted in green) as well...*