

Lithgow State Mine Railway

Route of the Black Diamond

Newsletter Number 2 - October 2012

From the Desk of the Chairman

Greetings

This is the second edition of our Newsletter and I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Editor, John Clifton, for his hard work and dedication in striving to deliver this organisation with a first class and professional publication. The newsletter is a very important and unique medium to communicate with the membership about developments and happenings going on within the organisation. As such between the Newsletter, our website and our interactive Facebook page I believe we have all the bases covered to keep you as members well informed. I would commend you all to familiarize yourselves with all of our information mediums.

The last issue was met with praise from all over with most people eagerly waiting for the next edition. We are planning to have an issue out every two or three months but as with most well laid plansthey do come unstuck occasionally. However I don't think you will be disappointed with this latest issue.

As most of you would be aware the Local Government Elections have come and gone and I would like to pay particular tribute to our city's former Mayor Neville Castle and Deputy Mayor Howard Fisher. Both of these individuals opted to retire after giving long and stellar service to our Council and community. Both Neville and Howard have been no strangers to the Lithgow State Mine Railway, in fact both men have been about since LSMR's inception in the 1990s when we were a part of the Mining Museum. They have always been very supportive of our objectives and have been at the forefront in providing assistance and support when required from Lithgow City Council. On behalf of the Board and members of the Lithgow State Mine Railway and its sister company COC Limited I would like to acknowledge their efforts and wish them well in their future endeavours and hope they may continue to have an active interest in our affairs.

We have modified the frequency of our working bees to every second Sunday until further notice. Those dates are now listed in the Newsletter and are continually updated on the website. I look forward to seeing you about the site in coming weeks. If you have not been to site in some time you will be pleasantly surprised as to the changes that are taking place the details of which you will see in this newsletter.

Finally there are two events coming up in November you should note in your diaries. Our AGM will be held on Saturday 3 November at 10am in our Workshop at State Mine with morning tea being provided after the meeting. On Sunday 25 November commencing at 10am we will be taking part in the Celebrate Lithgow festivities for the first time. We will open up the Eskbank Station area to the public for displays of railway equipment, model trains and will officially launch the Eskbank Rail Heritage Centre as the centrepiece of the long awaited rail and industrial heritage tourism plan for Lithgow.

Kind Regards

Michael J Wilson



Good Public Response at LSMR Open Days

Attendance was encouraging at the two open day events held at LSMR during May 2012. Firstly on Sunday 6 May an Information Meeting and BBQ was held at the Workshop to provide visitors an insight to the current projects underway and our vision for the future. Visitors were given a presentation by our Chairman, Michael Wilson, and General Manager, Tim Elderton, on our plans for our future direction followed by a tour of the workshop and the various restoration projects underway.

These included Steam Locomotive 2605, former-BHP English Electric Locomotive D23, ex-SAR Car BE 343 and our two LCH four wheel coal wagons, one of which had been completely restored.

Then on Saturday 19 May in conjunction with National Volunteer Week's program of open Museums we were on show once again. Public interest on both occasions was strong and many visitors expressed interest in becoming involved with our activities, several becoming members of LSMR.



LEFT: Former-BHP Locomotive D23 served as a display board as LSMRL Chairman, Michael Wilson, outlines plans for the future to a group of the visitors to the Workshop on Sunday 6 May.



RIGHT: Against the backdrop of our Steam Locomotive 2605 Chairman Michael Wilson welcomed Lithgow Deputy Mayor Councillor Howard Fisher and Councillor Col Hunter to the Information Meeting.

Lithgow State Mine Railway Limited **– Home of the “English Electric Locomotive”**

The Lithgow State Mine Railway Limited is committed to preserving, maintaining and operating BHP's unique English Electric locomotives on our rail system which skirts around the site of the former Hoskins Iron and Steel works. Our loss was to be Port Kembla's gain when the steel manufacturing business moved from Lithgow to Wollongong in 1928.

The Lithgow State Mine Railway's association with BHP / BlueScope Steel's Port Kembla operations began in 1995 when D23 was donated to LSMR. This generous gift was made possible through the efforts of Jerry Platte who was, at the time, General Manager Iron and Steel making at Port Kembla. Jerry who had a passion for his craft as an “ironmaker” was also a keen historian and had a soft spot for Lithgow which was the birth place of the commercial iron and steel industry in Australia. He saw the irony in BHP's early diesels retiring to Lithgow to spend their retirement years hauling tourist trains around the former steel works site.

D23's arrival on the State Mine line on 23 December 1995 heralded the start of a new beginning and would define the role the Lithgow State Mine Railway would play in rail preservation. We are one of very few groups specializing in industrial short line operations and the preservation of industrial locomotives. We have combined both of these elements together to form an interpretive tourist operation based around the industrial themes of coal, railways and iron and steel. Lithgow at the turn of the last century was known as the “Birmingham of Australia”.

The arrival of an operational locomotive meant that much could be achieved in terms of restoring and maintaining the branch line and ultimately providing the motive power for tourist trains which were planned to operate between the State Mine site and Eskbank Station. Some 18 months later BHP had no further need for the remaining 400 hp locos at Port Kembla. Consequently both D20 and D21 together with spares were also made available to the project for restoration and operation.

It should also be noted that as well as Jerry Platt's influence from a senior level within BHP, LSMR was to also gain another friend in Bill Parkinson who worked at the BHP Diesel Maintenance Centre for many years. Bill was a keen preservationist and modeller and also shared a passion about the locos he worked on. It would be fair to say that we also owe Bill a debt of gratitude for the work he has done behind the scenes over the years to ensure that BHP's heritage will live on in the years to come in Lithgow. Bill continues to make his time and valuable knowledge available to the organisation.

In early 2011, LSMR finalised arrangements with BlueScope to remove both D24 and D6 from “rotten row” at Port Kembla. Both of these locos were previously donated to the Lithgow operation but money constraints had prevented them from being removed earlier. D24 will be purely for spare parts whilst D6 is destined to become a long term restoration project.

At the same time LSMR was invited to submit a tender for D34, a one of a kind 1900 hp English Electric locomotive, which was not included in the handover of locomotives to Pacific National when they took over rail operations in the works. It had been stored in the works and had not seen service for a number of years. In October LSMR was notified it was the successful tenderer and purchased the locomotive. Moves are currently being made to prepare D34 for her trip west which is expected to be before Christmas.

In some perverse way we consider ourselves very fortunate to be able to show case BHP's diesel rail heritage against the backdrop of the site where the Australian iron and steel industry had its birth on a commercial scale. As a result of Jerry Platt's generous

donation, LSMR had inadvertently found its niche in the rail preservation movement. LSMR takes a certain amount of pride in preserving BHP / BlueScope's diesel heritage against the backdrop of the site of the Lithgow Steel works which is where Port Kembla's foundations as a steel city came from 84 years ago. In terms of another theme LSMR can also claim the title as the “Home of the English Electric locomotive”.



LSMR Acquires D34 from BlueScope Steel

In April 2011 an onsite meeting was held at BlueScope Steel's Port Kembla works with Andrew Herlihen, Logistics Manager Rail Operations & Compliance. The initial purpose of the meeting was to inspect both D6 and D24 which had been previously donated to the organisation and to make arrangements for their removal from site. Whilst there we also took the opportunity to inspect D34 which had been out of service for a number of years and had been stored in the works. Fortunately D34 was not included in the handover and sale of locomotives when Pacific National took over the rail operations at Port Kembla in 2008.

The opportunity was extended to us to submit a tender for D34 as Bluescope were keen to dispose of this orphan. As an organisation we were not flush with cash and before submitting any offer we had to know first if we could raise the dollars to cover the offer we were prepared to make. Consequently a call was put out to our members for some financial support should our tender be successful. After receiving a very positive response we lodged the application with BlueScope and played the waiting game for a few months.

On 20 June 2011 we were notified that we were successful and arrangements were made to extricate her from her storage location within the works. D34 was taken to the UGL Diesel Maintenance Workshop where a preliminary inspection was undertaken. All was found to be in excellent shape despite the years of storage, although she would need a new set of batteries.

Before D34 could be taken out on the network for its trip to Lithgow, she would have to undergo a twist test which was to be undertaken by RailCorp's compliance branch. The first of the tests were

conducted in August and she failed. After analysing the data it was found the bogie springs on both bogies were too ridged and were not allowing the appropriate flex. As a result new a new set of springs were manufactured by Lovell Springs who came to the party with a very generous discount on the cost of the springs. The new springs and the new set of batteries were dispatched to Port Kembla. The new springs were installed by UGL staff in February in preparation for her next twist test which took place in April. Unfortunately there was some inconsistency with a reading on one wheel set which caused her to fail the test a second time.

At the present time we are waiting on RailCorp to produce some calculations to enable the situation to be rectified so a third twist test can be arranged. We are hopeful that D34 will be relocated to her new home in Lithgow by Christmas where she will be recommissioned and given a new coat of paint to prepare her for her new life in preservation.



ABOVE:

D34 as new in 1969. D34 was the heaviest locomotive on the Australian Iron & Steel (later BHP and now BlueScope Steel) Port Kembla railway system. Originally hauling coal trains, the arrival of larger and more powerful locomotives to carry out this duty saw D34 relegated to internal Steelworks service. In 2007 the rail operations within the Port Kembla Steelworks were outsourced and D34 was not included in the sale of locomotives to Pacific National.

RIGHT:

D34 in more recent times sporting the BHP blue and white livery during an inspection by LSMR.

BELOW:

D34 undergoing twist tests at Port Kembla.



IMAGES OPPOSITE PAGE

LEFT:

D20 hauling an S truck crosses the bridge over Farmers Creek on the State Mine Branch.

FAR LEFT TOP:

Bill Parkinson, Tim Elderton and Michael Wilson inspect D6 on "rotten row" at Port Kembla. The unit will be moved to Lithgow and become a long term restoration project.

FAR LEFT BOTTOM:

D24, seen here at Port Kembla, will become a source of spare parts for the other former-BHP locomotives at LSMR.

Next Issue

A short history and personal memories of former-BHP locomotive D34 by Bill Parkinson.

Photo Credits

This Issue

Scott Arnell John Clifton Tim Elderton Geoff Ivers
Steve Overmyer Bill Parkinson Michael Wilson

Projects Update

Restoration

English Electric Locomotive D23

- Rust repairs completed
- Gutters placed around windows
- Painting to be completed when weather improves
- Air compressor change
- Distributing valve change
- All cylinder heads removed, serviced and new head gaskets and inlet and exhaust manifold gaskets fitted
- Two seized fuel pumps replaced enabling the restarting of the engine, kicking the old girl back into life after many years
- All missing windows refitted
- Cab interior painted.

English Electric Locomotive D20 (our main shunting loco)

- Air compressor oil change and crankcase cleaned out
- Brake cylinders overhauled.

Steam Locomotive 2605

- The trailing truck was dismantled twice to determine why it had a habit of derailing. In the end, there was nothing wrong with the trailing truck. Subsequent dismantling and inspection of the driving wheel spring gear found that the previous owner, Portland Cement, had modified the spring gear by inserting 25mm packing under the springs, thus making the driving wheels take more weight and reducing the weight on the leading and trailing truck. This was done to increase the tractive effort to pull more wagons up the hill as loaded cement trains departed Portland. In addition, when the wheels were sent away for machining a few years ago more tread was machined off the trailing truck wheels than the driving wheels, due to the thin flanges, probably caused by the sharp curves on the old Portland Cement branch. To cut a long story short, the trailing truck wheels were sitting 30mm lower than the driving wheels and as a result carried very minimal weight, particularly with no water or coal onboard. The driving wheel spring gear has now been adjusted and the trailing truck is now carrying weight. A big mystery solved!!
- Pitting machined off air compressor valves and valve seats
- Turbo-generator removed and serviced and awaiting steam test. Does anyone have a boiler we can use to test the turbo?
- Cab boiler fittings serviced and fitted
- Front and rear headlights overhauled and reinstalled.

Ex-SAR car BE 343

- Missing French polished wall panels manufactured and fitted; Eight in total.
- Rewiring of lighting circuits underway
- All seat backs and sides and armrests now installed.

Two LCH Hoppers

- New hopper doors fabricated and fitted, due to original doors being rusted out.

S Truck

- Restoration completed and awaiting lettering.

- 1:** Our former-BHP locomotives D20 and D23 moving around the Workshop Yard.
2: D20 at State Mine Station platform after bringing up a flat wagon and two RCH cement hoppers from Eskbank.
3: 2605 undergoing its boiler washout. Note the dome has been removed.
4: Steve Overmyer, Peter Goodman and Scott Linstead (with oxy) preparing to remove regulator in preparation for 2605's boiler inspection.
5: Our S truck has undergone restoration and is now awaiting lettering
6: The two LCH hoppers have been converted back from RCH and are also awaiting lettering.
7 and 8: Don and Karen Butler have been busy in our ex-SAR car BE 343 varnishing the interior and reinstalling seats. Period lighting will be reinstalled into this car in the near future.



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Projects Update

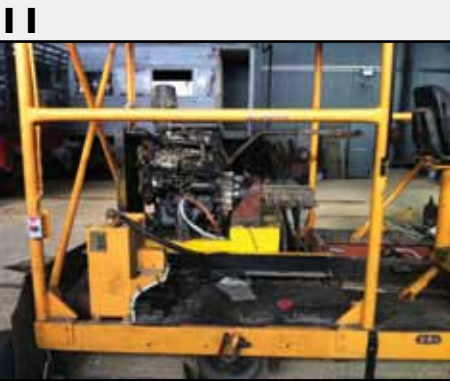
Workshop

- Earthworks alongside the shed completed and track installation progressing
- Shed floor has been filled and compacted ready for bitumen
- Additional lights have been donated by Delta Electricity and installed in the shed
- New two-lever frame installed in Eskbank Yard to allow easy access between State Mine Siding and Refuge Siding. (see News item page 4).

Yard Modifications

- Grass burned off along fence line
 - Points in the yard have been greased and neck points repaired.
- More details of the work around the Workshop and Yard will be presented in the next Newsletter.

- 1:** Fireman Ben Hudson directing volunteers during a controlled burn off of grass along the fence line.
2: Part of the floor of the Shed after compacting ready for bitumen.
3: Ben Hudson and and Chris Ray working on floor leveling in the Shed.
4: The points in the shunting neck have had some retimbering as well as more resleepering of the neck which has had the net effect of extending its capability.
5, 6: Chris Ray of (Christopher Ray Landscaping) clearing away 50 years of dirt and silt build up in the State Mine Yard in preparation for resleepering and rationalising tracks
7: New lighting and power outlets being installed between the roads in the workshop. The light fittings were donated by Delta Electricity from a recent lighting upgrade at Mt Piper Power Station. The fittings were cleaned and tested courtesy of RCR Positron who are based at Mt Piper and Wallerawang Power Stations.
8: The earthworks alongside the eastern side of the shed have been completed and made ready for laying track.
9: View of the new track progressively being laid along the newly completed earthworks.
10: Ballasting of the branch line has commenced with 300 metres of ballast placed waiting on the ballast tamper to have its new engine installed.
11: The new enging being installed in the ballast tamper which is on loan from the Sydney Tramway Museum, Loftus.



Motorcar Consortium Ltd holds induction workshop weekend at LSMR

Motorcar Consortium Ltd. is a not-for-profit company established in 2008 by a group of railway motor car (speeder or "trike") owners who wish to gain access to the New South Wales and New Zealand Networks.

With much of the hard graft nearly complete, the group held its first induction weekend for members at Eskbank Railway Station and in the railway yards at Lithgow State Mine. The weekend was an opportunity for some members to meet face to face for the first time with members travelling from Queensland, South Australia and Victoria as well as from around New South Wales.

Group co-ordinator Nic Doncaster presented the safety management systems, operating and car standards as well as a host of other material required for accreditation with the railway regulators in NSW and New Zealand to the assembled group.

When up and running, MCC Ltd intends to host regular excursions for motor car operators to run legally in safe and managed events. This will commence in NSW on the many seasonal and under utilised rail lines and in the future, runs are planned for New Zealand.

MCC Ltd wishes to extend its gratitude to Michael Wilson, Tim Elderton and the board of LSMR for the use of their facilities and we look forward to an enjoyable arrangement between the two groups including running on the State Mine branchline in the near future and LSMR offering the group a local base from which to operate.

If you are interested in operating section cars at Lithgow and elsewhere, check out the MCC Ltd website at <http://motorcarconsortiumltd.org.au> or email Steve Overmyer (LSMR) at stephen.overmyer@gmail.com



Two views of the MCCL group on the weekend. **LEFT:** The MCCL group in front of SSRE workshops with 4911 and Chairman of LSMR Michael Wilson. (L-R) Michael Wilson, Manfred Melchett, Albert Melchett, Nic Doncaster (crouching), Steve Overmyer, Ken McHugh, John Peterson, Peter Goodman. **RIGHT:** Nic Doncaster, Peter Goodman, Albert Melchett, Manfred Melchett, Steve Overmyer pictured with Steve Overmyer's restored Ex-NSWGR Fairmont M19.

Easier Access to State Mine Branch Line

As reported in the RailCorp Weekly Notices recently a new 2-lever Ground Frame "F" was provided during May 2012 operating points facing up trains leading from the Up Refuge Siding to the State Mine Siding and the associated derailer. The frame is unlocked using a key from Releasing Switch "F" in the Lithgow Yard Signal Box.

Prior to this installation advance notice had to be given to arrange the manual operation of the points to allow access to the Branch. The new installation will facilitate short notice movements to and from the State Mine Branch and enhance the overall operation of the line.

The assistance given in this matter by the Minister for Transport The Hon Gladys Berejiklian MP is gratefully acknowledged.

LEFT:

A view along the Up Refuge Siding showing the State Mine Siding veering off to the left.



RIGHT:

A closer view of the new 2-lever Ground Frame "F".



Celebrate Lithgow 2012

As part of the Celebrate Lithgow 2012 program

**Eskbank Rail Heritage Centre
Lithgow State Mine Railway Limited
Lithgow & District Model Railway Club
Lithgow Railway Workshops
Southern Shorthaul Railroad
Lithgow Living History**

will present a number of displays and activities centred around the Eskbank Railway Station, the forecourt and the Goods Shed area.



- **Plans for the development of the Eskbank Rail Heritage Centre**
 - **Heritage rolling stock and locomotives**
 - **Model Trains Layouts**
 - **Antique Hot Oil Engines**
 - **WW2 Equipment**
- **A photographic display of the Eskbank area as it was at the turn of the last century and extensive plans showing the proposed development of the Eskbank Precinct as the centre piece of the long awaited rail and industrial heritage tourism plan for Lithgow.**

Sunday 25 November

10am till 4pm

Eskbank Railway Station and Goods Shed

Volunteers will be required to assist on the day – contact Ben Hudson for details