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"...running down the Kingswood bank into Penrith - truly a sight to be remembered". (Photo: T.G. Harrison).

THE LAST RUN OF OUR "FLYING SCOTSMAN"
(by R.S. Fookes)

N.S.W.

New South Wales Railways

The first section of the electrification of the Western line was completed and opened to Blacktown (21m.) on the 26th February last and the story of the Society's special outing on this occasion has already been told in Bulletin 212 (June 1955). An electrified suburban service has been in operation between this point and the city since that date but, in the meantime, the work has been steadily pushed Westward by the contractors, British Insulated Callender's Construction Co. Ltd., with the result that the next section, to Penrith (34m. 19c.) was ready for official opening on the 8th October last.

On this day, in bright sunshine, the official 6-car multiple-unit electric train, conveying the Hon. the Premier, the Hon. the Minister for Transport, the Commissioner for Railways and other officials, left Sydney Station at 9.3 a.m., stopping en route at all stations from Blacktown onwards. On each occasion, the Premier was received with an address of welcome and the cutting of ceremonial ribbons, permitting the train to proceed. On arrival at Penrith, a civic welcome was extended to the party, speeches were made and

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the newly-electrified line was officially declared to be open for traffic. Penrith had a carnival air, business premises being decorated, appropriate displays staged in the windows of the shopping centre and a general celebration was held. The official train departed from Penrith at 1 p.m. and arrived at Sydney at 2.3 p.m.

The occasion called for some celebration by the Society and, accordingly, application was made to the Department for Locomotive No. 1243. This locomotive was one of the several engines displayed by the Department at the New South Wales Railway's centenary celebrations and had been enamelled with a beautiful mid-green shade of paint, appropriately outlined on the boiler bands, cab and tender sides, with contrasting colour lines. All brass and copper piping and the brass dome had been brightly polished, with the result that the locomotive was the cause of much admiration and comment, particularly from Society members. It had been our desire to use this particular locomotive and a sister engine, which had been undergoing overhaul, for our annual outing on the 18th September last, calculating that our usual train of four Pullman-type clerestory-roof cars, hauled by two 12-class locomotives to Newcastle and back, would be something to remember for many a long day. However, it was not possible to obtain the release of 1243 during the period of the exhibition, so we had to be content with 32-class No. 3201 for the Newcastle outing, the story of which has already been published.

No. 1243 was built by a Sydney firm of yesteryear, the Atlas Engineering Works, and went into service in 1882. This 4-4-0 locomotive has 5' 6" driving wheels, an overall length of 47' 6" and weighs approximately 58 tons. There were originally 68 locomotives of this class but only 10 now remain in service. With a tractive effort of only 13,100 lbs., their loading is limited and our train for the 8th October consisted of a five-car suburban set (code BAB) of 115 tons.

Accordingly, on the Saturday afternoon, members, friends and families assembled on No. 14 platform, with most of the camera-conscious members at the yard end of the platform, awaiting the arrival of 1243 from loco. In a short while, after running easily down the yard and on to the train in the platform, resplendent in shining paint and brasswork, 1243 was being photographed from every conceivable angle by half-a-hundred cameras. In the cab, as clean and spotless as the engine itself, were our member-driver, A.D. McDonald; member-fireman, George Ridden and Locomotive Inspector L. O'Rourke, an old friend, who accompanied us on our 1954 annual outing to the old Lithgow Zig Zag. Needless to say, in the guard's compartment of the train was another old friend, "our" Jack Elliott.

The Department of Railways printed a special ticket for the occasion and permission was given for ticket holders to retain their tickets as souvenirs. The ticket was inscribed thus:- "New South Wales Railways Centenary Celebrations 1955. The Australian Railway Historical Society Special Train. Sydney to Penrith via Bankstown and return via Strathfield. Saturday, 8th October, 1955."

Moving off smartly on time at 1.35 p.m., we set out through the Sydney Yard to the accompaniment of multiple engine whistles and passing by Eveleigh loco, the engine whistles saluted "Mac", for this was his last run as a driver, his retirement taking effect on the return of the train to Sydney.

To make the trip more interesting and to add more mileage to the run the route, on the down journey, was taken through Sydenham and Bankstown, out through Sefton Park and Lidcombe Junctions on to the main West at Lidcombe, a similar route to that taken in February last. At Parramatta, we stopped to pick up and to take water and then, as we steamed off to the West, one was amazed at the response to the publicity by the large numbers of lineside spectators between here and Penrith and the astonishing number of cameras in evidence - operated by people who were obviously not members of the Society, yet whose interest was much appreciated by all on the train.

Beyond Westmead, we started on the climb to Pendle Hill and passing through the latter station, a cock-a-doodle-do on the whistle signified our



An excellent candid-camera picture of Mr. McDonald, taken at Parramatta, on the return journey. (Photo: E. Kangur)

acknowledgement of the large whitewashed sign on the railway side of L.H. (Jock) Powell's back fence. This sign, which Jock and Ted Coker worked on until late in the previous evening, read - "The railways' best friend - The Australian Railway Historical Society" - a nice thought for the day and good publicity. Climbing up to Blacktown, our train then proceeded along the "speedway" through Rooty Hill and St. Marys, on to Kingswood, finally running down the Kingswood bank into Penrith - truly a sight to be remembered.

At Penrith, we had a stay of about an hour and a large number of members proceeded to loco to take further photographs, whilst the facilities of the refreshment room and bar were availed of by all and sundry.

When 1243 again backed on to the train prior to departure, an opportunity was seized to decorate the front of the engine with coloured streamers and tinsel in honour of "Mac's" pending last run in the service of the N.S.W. Railways. Finally, the decorators' work completed and the photographers satisfied, the train pulled into No. 3 platform, loaded and got under way at 4.18 p.m., commencing with the climb up the 1 in 66 to Kingswood, during which time the whistle worked overtime and the lineside spectators cheered.

Good steady running was recorded to Parramatta, with no spectacular speeds, and at the latter station, where we stopped to set down and take water for the loco, a very pleasing and thoughtful little ceremony eventuated. Having completed the taking of water, the train was backed to the centre of No. 2 platform where the Stationmaster, by means of the platform address system, addressed Mr. McDonald and the passengers on the train and platform and spoke of "Mac's" many years of service, his pending retirement and, on behalf of himself and the station staff, extended to "Mac" their best wishes for the coming years of retirement, wishing him good health and happiness in the future. A very nice gesture and much appreciated by all on the train.

Thirty minutes running brought us back to platform 14 at Sydney Station where, after gathering round the engine, as is usual on these occasions, and giving three hearty cheers for "Mac" and George, we then proceeded with a presentation ceremony wherein the thanks of the members, their families and friends were extended to Mr. McDonald for the great amount of pleasure he had

given us on the occasions of many memorable outings in the past years. Mr. McDonald was the recipient of a beautiful leather overnight bag and a monetary gift for Mrs. McDonald, both of which were subscribed for by members and their friends on the train, after which the gathering sang "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow" with feeling and gave three cheers which echoed and echoed throughout the station buildings. As one would expect, "Mac" is a man of action, rather than words, and confessed that he found it hard to say what he felt in his heart. He feelingly thanked everybody for the gifts and stated that our enjoyment had been his enjoyment and that he will still be with us on future outings ready, willing and able to get the same pleasure out of the trips as any other member.

Mr. McDonald has been our member-driver on every occasion we have had an annual or special outing over the past four or five years (with the exception of the Blacktown outing in February last, when we had the electric locomotive, No. 4501) and he has always been at great pains to focus his mind on the best spots for photographic purposes, has always endeavoured to give us some fast running somewhere along the track and set himself out in every way possible to make our outings enjoyable ones. To say that he succeeded in doing just that on every occasion is no mis-statement and he can rest assured that we will always be grateful to him for the glorious, unforgettable and enjoyable outings, which are imprinted in our memories and will provide many happy reminiscences in the years to come.

As L243 slowly moved off from the platform and out into the yard to return to Eveleigh loco, the whistles of the engines in the yard burst into life. So Mac "sailed" on, out of Sydney Yard, to the accompaniment of an ear-splitting crescendo of whistles from his fellow-enginemmen; a nice unforgettable send-off - which is as it should be.

The Society's thanks are extended to the Secretary for Railways and his officers and men for making available old L243 in its handsome and unique (for these days) appearance. None of us will forget our ride with this engine and some of us may never have the opportunity again, so our experience on the 8th October will be something to treasure. Our thanks to the Australian Broadcasting Commission, whose well-timed publicity once again drew many lineside spectators. Thanks are extended to our Hon. General Secretary, Noel Thorpe, for his successful organisation of the outing, and to Bob Clark and Bob Best, for the well-executed and colourful signs for the front and rear of the train.

The last run of our "Flying Scotsman" has been written into our history.

A ROYAL RAILWAY ENTHUSIAST

In view of the frequent newspaper reports of the interest taken by H.R.H. Prince Charles in railway activities, it was decided to offer a copy of the Society's book "A Century of Locomotives", for his personal use. The Governor-General, Sir William Slim, was accordingly approached as to whether he would recommend to Her Majesty, The Queen, acceptance of a copy for the Prince.

On the 8th July last, His Excellency's Official Secretary advised ".....His Excellency will be happy to recommend acceptance....". Information was then sought from His Excellency's Official Secretary as to the correct form to be used in the presentation inscription and, at the same time, to ask if His Excellency, in view of his previous association with British Railways (he was Deputy Chairman), would also accept a copy. By reply of 6th September, the Acting Official Secretary intimated His Excellency's willingness to do so.

Two copies were specially bound for the Society by arrangement with Mr. A. Cousins, Executive Director of Halstead Press, to whom the Society tenders its thanks for his special interest and assistance. The books were bound in red morocco, gold embossed on the cover with the No.1 engine motif only, but with the title on the spine. Special red rexine carrying cases