Eveleigh Railway Workshops Field Day Report

Appendix to Eveleigh Railway Workshops Interpretation Plan

February 2012

Redfern Waterloo Authority

Only human communication™

ARTSCAPE the nature of sculpture

Eveleigh Railway Workshops Field Day Report

February 2012

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CONTENTS

Eveleigh Field Day - Synopsis

Artscape and Only Human conducted the Field Day on Saturday, October 30th designed to bring stakeholders together on the site to recall the site's rich heritage. Artscape-Only Human worked closely with the RWA to finesse a day which balanced the need for bringing all stakeholders together for input into the Interpretation Plan and the gathering of archival material based on the stories of former rail workers.

This gathering constituted a discovery process to source workers and families who should be interviewed in depth for any future, more intensive, oral history initiative.

The day was designed to have an open celebratory flavour and included:

- Display of Trains of Treasure exhibition panels
- Soundscape by artist Nigel Helyer
- Heritage Painter Jane Bennet working on site
- A bush band playing rail ballads
- Story boards, photographer, and videographer
- Blacksmiths workshop demonstration by Wrought Artworks

The focus for the day was a structured facilitated story telling/story eliciting process conducted amongst the atmospherics of the Blacksmith Workshops and Davy Press in Bays 1 & 2.

Based on careful research prior to the day, former workers were identified for interviews and photographs throughout the day.

The focus of the photographer Dean Golja was to capture images of former workers in their old work setting. The focus of the videographer Josh Burns and journalist Moya Sayer Jones was to record workers sense of meaning around their memories of working at Eveleigh

It was regarded as extremely important to ground the day in the historic fabric of the site in order to stimulate memory and connection

Facilitator Merran Morrison & Victoria Clayton with former ERW workers Ian Mair & Bob Rhymes

Facilitator Merran Morrison Moya Sayer-Jones

Blacksmiths Workshop

Bruce Lay & Ruby Matthews

Summary—invitees
Approximately 50 people participated including a number of former workers and former workers families.
See appendix for list of those contacted & updated contact details.

Summary
The quality of the experience for participants was generally very high. A colourful, accessible, diverse and important archive was created.

The key outputs were:

- 137 extremely high quality photos of activities and participants
- 6 x 20 minute high quality videos of former workers being interviewed by a professional journalist of their Eveleigh experience
- Full transcripts of footage, plus edited highlights
- Edited highlights of previous oral histories conducted by Joan Kent
- The Eveleigh Family Board – a visual representation of participants to be built on in future years

The success of the outputs delivered – both pictorial, moving image and text, was in breaking away from a more traditional approach to gathering oral histories.

The material produced is different from more traditional oral history, and creates a model for generating colourful stories in a more accessible format.

Recommendations

1. Consolidate the visual & oral history archive created at the Field Day
2. Build on the oral history archive before its too late
3. Continue the Field Day on an regular basis
4. Explore innovative ways to communicate narratives as part of site development and interpretation.

Bob Rhymes, Richard Butler & Ian Mair

Bill Driver & Richard Butler

Greg Ryan & Ruby Matthews

The material generated from the Field Day constitutes a high quality colourful archive that could be translated into an exhibition which would be affordable, portable and be a useful ongoing marketing/communications tool .

With the material now created, an exhibition of former workers photographs and stories could be held. The photographs are evocative, and moving and tell part of the story of the site over time and its meaning for former workers.

It is recommended that the participants photographed as well as the City of Sydney and the State Library be provided with copies of the material generated.

A follow up project is recommended to capture remaining stories of former workers while they are still alive.

Many NSW politicians have had an association with Eveleigh and these should be followed up as soon as possible. A former Premier of NSW whose father worked at Eveleigh, was contacted for this project and should be followed up for a personal interview. Similarly a NSW Minister for Transport, was also contacted.

Although the day was most enjoyable for those who could come, future interviews should recognize the physical obstacles the elderly have.

Guido Gouverneur (centre) & blacksmiths from Wrought Artworks

Artist Jane Bennett

Greg Ryan

Continue the Field Days on an regular basis

Regular Field Day's should occur and build on the 2010 model as a means of:

- generating more stories
- engaging Eveleigh neighbours, including new ones
- creating an ongoing conversation on the relationship between material and social heritage
- building on ideas from one year to the next
- keeping stakeholders informed and engaged.

The celebratory-festival day approach is recommended and could include:

- next year's proposed Rail Film Festival
- theatre/performance events with Carriage Works Theatre
- Workers reunions, heritage conferences
- Walking tours
- Rail art and music festival
- Blacksmithing and restoration experiences

Explore innovative ways to communicate narratives as part of site development and interpretation.

Highlight the best interpretation ideas already generated by stakeholders –
Including building on concepts that already have champions such as the work of Nigel Helyer and the Performance Space - 'Ghost Train".
This type of interpretive experience augmented through mobile phones and the 3G network is an exciting opportunity for non invasive interpretation.

Wrought Artworks concept for denoting Red Square – the place on site where stop-work meetings were held outside Bay's 14 & 15. The concept relates to the humorous story of a dog that is believed to be the only canine ever to have taken part in a vote in an industrial dispute.

Interpretation of the history and culture of Aboriginal people in Redfern and their role in the workshop should also be undertaken

Digital Storytelling

As there is no physical incursion into the heritage fabric, accessing interpretive information through mobile phone technology is affordable, uncontroversial, and dynamic. Digital storytelling can be developed as markers through the Rail Yards and ATP with sound and images. A digital platform means material can be built on and updated any time at little cost.

Public Art

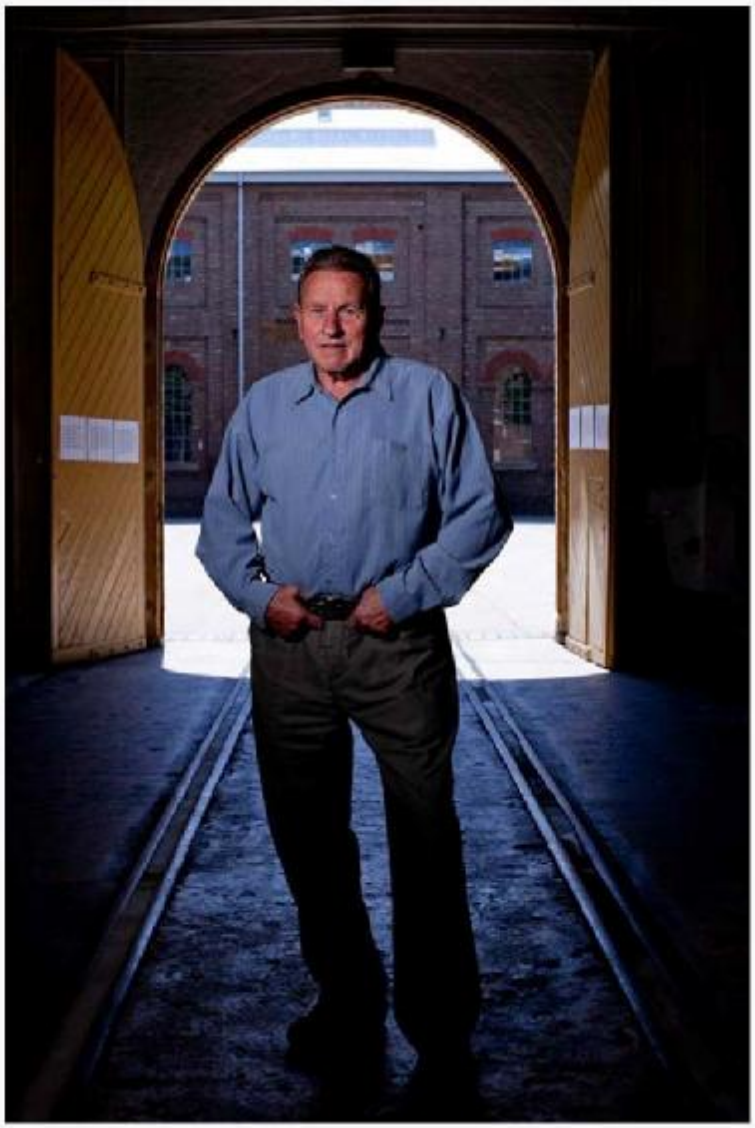
Explore the role of public art in innovative interpretive concepts. Public art has a long successful history in historic interpretation, being increasingly utilized as an evocative public memory tool in to mark shared memories in the absence of physical fabric.

Part of the City of Sydney's "Eora Journey" is an interpretive public art strategy whose links with the Aboriginal history of Eveleigh should be explored. Redfern is identified as the 'bookend' of this symbolic journey designed to explore the intersection of heritage and public art.

Any materials on site which have no intrinsic heritage value may be identified as potential material for interpretive artwork. The basis of sculptures would clearly carry the material memory of the site. This raw material could be kept on site and used as the media for artworks which are strategically placed in and around Eveleigh.

Eg the "Foreign Orders" could be the basis of a public artwork where a sculptor or group of sculptors work with unwanted pieces of steel or leftover tools to create artworks which tell the story of this amusing aspect of how Eveleigh workers manage to make and smuggle out anything from car parts to lawn mower blades. Even a dog kennel was made!

Bill Driver DOB: April 22 1939



Bill Driver

"This place was an industrial city within the City of Sydney. We did not have to get any equipment in from anywhere else: we manufactured everything ourselves. We had our own gasometer, we had our own electricity at White Bay Power Station: we had our own water system, we had our own electricians. We had the biggest foundry in the Southern Hemisphere was just over the road here. Yep, we could make anything. Our files, our saw blades, all made here on site. We had the best locksmith workshop anywhere in the Southern Hemisphere: the best locksmiths and security people ever. There it was, an industrial city within a city and we were self sufficient, absolutely self sufficient…"

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B: I started in this workshop as a boy, straight from school, 14 years of age as a first year apprentice on the 13th December, 1954 and I was petrified, as all young school boys were. That was the start of my career and I loved it and I worked in most workshops, like right through and worked in the country depots as well.

M: What made you decide to become an apprentice here? Was it your family?
B: My parents said they want to send their two boys out to do something better than they were because my Dad was a workshop labourer and tram driver and a crane driver in the government trams, and he said, I want my boys to be something better than me.

M: Was he proud of you?
B: Absolutely, yep. We both succeeded in joining the railways. I first and my brother second, he's 3 years younger than me, so we enjoyed it. We took pride in being able to be trained by the railways, one of the best centres in industry.

M: Did you discover any stories this morning? What did you talk about?
B: We talked about, we talked about what we were doing, what we were going to do. We talked about music because we were all members of the Railway Band, in my era.

M: Tell me about the railway band?

B: Well the NSW Railways had a band, they met every fortnight down at the Railway Institute and different fellas from my era, plus oldies, we all played instruments and we used to play in the Railway Band. We would march at ceremonies and things like that, but I got sick of that so I played the harmonica after, which wasn't part of the band.

M: Did you always work at Eveleigh?

B: It was Eveleigh here, yes. No, I worked at Eveleigh for about 4 years, then I started to move. I went to the country depots and then back to Eveleigh where I was fortunate in getting a cadetship. Cadet Engineer, that meant that I had to get rid of the overalls ultimately, and put on a tie, so I did.

M: What was it like going from overalls to office?

B: Very, very subtle, very, it was like cutting off one part of one's life and going into something different. Different circumstances, different controls, whereas the workshop was a disciplinarian type environment being in an office was more so. Very regimented, everybody was Mr, you could not call anybody by their first name. It was very, very strict but, we slotted in and we worked our way through the system. We did all our tech courses and ultimately we became engineers and that started us on the mammoth rise of going through the various ranks to become ultimately, production managers, maintenance managers, assistant managers of workshops and works managers.

M: Did your relationship change with others?

B: No, it didn't change with the people on the shop floor. You had to show respect for both parts. You do, when you go from being a shop employee to manager it's a subtle transition but if you don't change everything is good and you get the respect that you should get when you are a budding manager, a budding engineer or whatever.

M: What stories did you tell? The story about greasing the machines...

B: As a young budding apprentice, or as an apprentice, putting the fire hose on the person who greased the machines. As a tradition, us young blokes used to grease the machines of the other people that came in, the junior boys, so that they worked their lathes and they'd get black axle grease all over their hands, so they would go crook. One of them in particular tipped a bucket of water over me, he knew who it was, so I said I'll fix you, I'll give you a good wash, so I grabbed the fire hose didn't I? Turned the fire hose on, but the fire hose didn't come through straight away, by the time it came through the workshop supervisor had walked past and copped the full brunt. I was carpeted, I thought I was sacked. I thought the world had come to an end, but it was good, it was good. I learned my lesson, yeah I learned my lesson but it was all part of the system. Like music, we loved music, certain supervisors didn't like music and we'd play our mouth organs behind machines in the afternoon about half past two and the subforeman used to come around looking for this music and we would move and he would follow us and he'd move and so on. He never did find us but it was good fun and we sit back now and laugh and say hey, it was part of growing up and part of our existence.

M: Are their other stories to share?

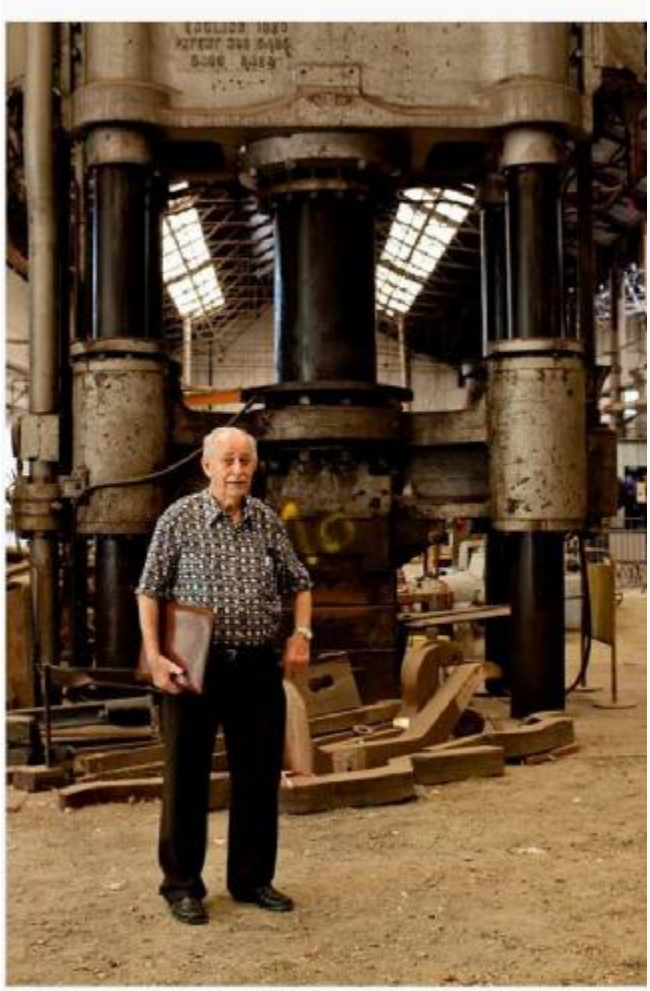
B: Well there are a couple of stories, particularly in the workshops where over in Carriage Works Eveleigh, which has got nothing to do with Loco. As an engineer, a young engineer, they used to play tricks on the management and engineering staff and we loved that but, Bill Casley, he mentioned something about running naked down Eight Road, which was great. We had a similar incident where it was either the foreman carpenter, who was under my direction, or myself, to strip down to our undies and run down Eight Road if things didn't go right, but fortunately they went right and I didn't have to do it, but as an engineer you feel well hang on, I should show a bit more finesse, but it was part of growing up and it was part of our railway heritage because it was here.

This place is an industrial city within the City of Sydney. The Railway Hospital Fund started here, it is now the R&T, one of the most respected hospital funds in the, in New South Wales, and Australia for that matter. The Railway Credit Union started almost in this workshop where two of the clerical officers who started it, that's the Railway Credit Union. Two of our clerical officers formed the Railway Building Society, which St George ultimately took over and are now running. We here, did not have to get any equipment in from anywhere else, we manufactured everything ourselves. We had our own gasometer, we had our own electricity at White Bay Power Station. We had our own water system, we had our own electricians. We, the biggest foundry in the Southern Hemisphere was just over the road here, yep. We could make anything. Our files, our saw blades, all made here on site. We had the best locksmith workshop anywhere in the Southern Hemisphere. The best locksmiths and security people ever. There it is, it is an industrial city within the City of Sydney and we were self sufficient, absolutely self sufficient. We had to get paper, we had to get all those other odds and sods, the ancillary things and like consumables but nevertheless this is how this workshop operated. We had a full blown first aid sister, and a doctor on call. We used to run first aid courses and we used to run competitions, when you completed your railway ambulance corp badges each year, after you got your life membership, you were credited with one extra day on you annual leave, just for going every year for 10 years to do your first aid, and there was a lot of people did first aid.

END

Bill Driver & Richard Butler

Richard Butcher DOB: April 16, 1936



Richard Butler

"It was hard going: the work there was very hot. In that section near the Davy Press, when the ingot of steel came out, the core was glowing red and white heat. In that era you were sooks if you wore any protective clothing, so your clothing would be actually on fire. It'd be smouldering while you were doing the work and there'd be hot pieces of steel laying around your feet.

....now if you went to the other hammer, which is called a double arch hammer, that was all fire and brimstone because every time the hammer hit, the sparks would fly from one end of the shop to the other end of the shop. If you got hit by it you couldn't stop work. There may be twelve pieces of steel in the furnace and you had to keep working and it wasn't until it was all over that you kind of came back to earth.

You'd look down your arms and you'd see blood running down because the heat of the steel when it hit you. It'd be another 2 or 3 hours before the next lot of steel got hot, you waited for it to come out and then you'd start working again."

R: My name's Richard Butcher and I started as a country apprentice in a little depot called Casino and that was in 1950. You had to do workshop experience, I was transferred to Sydney, which I started in Blacksmith shops No. 1 and 2, which were the oldest there, 1884, heritage value too down there, and from there I did a lot of hard study. I was elevated to positions of welding engineer for the New South Wales Government Railways at the Wilson Street testing laboratories, which was just on the other side, the carriage works side. This was the locomotive side.

M: You obviously know a lot about Eveleigh
R: Yes I know everything from the foundations up, which most people don't.

M: How do you know so much?
R: Well, I've just had a great involvement. When I went to school I wasn't that bright at school, but when I joined the railways, the Railways Institute nurtured and fostered me and in no time I was holding a senior engineer's position in the railways department there. Dad started here in 1925 really, so it was kind of imparted in the family, following family tradition. But then my grandparents, Pop as we used to call him, Pop Radley, he worked in the green house at Wynyard. After I left the railways and went to TAFE I discovered that the chief engineer, a famous man name of Edward Lucy, that my grandparents were related, parents were actually Lucys and I was never told that. Little boys should be seen and not heard.

M: Did your father talk much about his work here?
R: Not really, he talked more about the depot at Enfield, not at Eveleigh. No he wasn't much about Eveleigh.

M: As a child do you remember him getting up in the morning and going to work?
R: Oh yes, well that was during the War, because when the War started we were transferred to Casino because he was an essential service and of course, as a young child we used to go to the locomotive depot because you wouldn't see your parents, he'd be away 7 days a week, and I was very privileged at 10 or 12 years of age, driving the steam locomotives around there, which, in the books I've written I can't say anything about that, you know.

M: You were not allowed to because it was illegal?
R: Oh no, not illegal. Same as taking photographs, you weren't allowed to take photographs, that was a no no. But thank god a person did take photographs and it was Eveleigh, it was Casino, and this is very important there, because I know my depot at Casino, we've got the coal stage and the depot on the National Register, it's got to be preserved forever. And I fought for this place too, at Eveleigh in the same way, since 1991.

M: What happened in 1991?
R: I wrote a 56 page report for Federal and State governments about why Eveleigh, one of the world's greatest railway workshops, and why I say that, I was a member of the Smithsonian Institute, and the Smithsonian Institute quoted where Eveleigh was the finest Victorian Era Steam Railway workshop left in the world, and I've pursued that ever since.

M: Passionaltely?
R: Absolutely yep.

M: The smell of the Davey press room.. The way it can take you back to the past, where you worked..
R: It was hard going. The work there was very hot. When they ingot the steel, which was 5 ton, there was a big crane in that section near the Davy Press, when the ingot of steel came out the core was glowing red and white heat and in that era you were sooks if you wore any protective clothing, so your clothing would be actually on fire. It'd be smouldering while you were doing the work and there'd be hot pieces of steel laying around your feet. You had to wear safety shoes, you may walk on a hot piece of steel. Even the weight of the tools. to pick a tool up and put it underneath a press, it was only a squeeze action, a slow action, not like a drop hammer, which is much faster to, but it was hard toil and hard work. There was a gang of 5 people and a man driving the overhead crane, Ted Bocock for many years there. Tough going. Now if you went to the other hammer, which is called a double arch hammer, that was all fire and brimstone because every time the hammer hit, the sparks would fly from one end of the shop to the other end of the shop. If you got hit by it you couldn't stop work, and there may be 12 pieces of steel in the furnace and you had to keep working, but after you finished you'd look down your arms and you'd see blood running down off your arms because the heat of the steel when it would hit you and they had all of the blocks to release the job from the blocks, it would fly and hit you and you had to keep working and it wasn't until it was all over that you kind of came back to earth and you waited until the next heat, it'd be another 2 or 3 hours before the next lot of steel got hot, to come out and start working again, very fascinating. The other thing too, was that people that worked there, a lot of them were from overseas countries, new Australians there, but they were wonderful people. They had new haircuts and we had ways to cook new meals, we learnt a lot from those people and a lot of them became wonderful Australians, a credit to our country.

M: A lot of Italians?
R: Not so many Italians, no, no, Czechoslovakians and Malta. Germans, I had a chap who was standing in Shop No. 2, not far away from here, one day, I looked at him, if he had a Nazi uniform on, but I was a blacksmith and said, you stand that side of the anvil and I'll stand this side and that was it, but he never smiled, but that was fun really, that was fun. I had another bloke, Jack Fele, Jack was in No. 2 workshop there, he was a blacksmith striker and I used to have 2 of those for the work I used to do. Jack was always worried about the Bolsheviks and the Mansheviks, and I didn't have a clue what he was all about, ha ha ..!

M: Would you mind telling us about the books you have written?
R: Okay well the first book I wrote and produced and published was Steam Days on the North Coast of New South Wales. It's all about railways but it does include aircraft because the aircraft industry was very young,

plus the shipping industry on the North Coast, on the Richmond and Clarence Rivers. Then I got involved with the great photographer David Moore, and a lady called Caroline Simpson, who produced a book to help save Eveleigh. What we could do because she was a philanthropist and Caroline kindly had an exhibition with David at the Sydney Art Gallery, with Edmund Capon and company, and I went and looked at the photographs there, which were beautiful photographs, he was a real expert in what he was doing, and I said, all of your captions that you're writing is totally wrong. There are a lot of people out there who follow railways around the world and they would pick that to pieces, so Lady Caroline rang me up one Sunday and I was out on my garage roof painting my roof and she said, would you be good enough to edit my book? I said yeah, okay, that'll be good, I'll do that. So I went ahead and done that, but then I'd lay in bed at night saying magnificent photography but this isn't the story of Eveleigh. So 7 years later at great expense to me, I produced a book, Richard Butcher's Reminiscences of the Great Eveleigh Railway Workshops, and it came out in 2004 and it's still selling extremely well. Only yesterday a driver rang me from Flemington saying, can I get that book?

M: Thanks so much Richard.

R: As I said it's a long story, a very interesting story. I've been fighting for this place, it's cost me a fortune. I'm on a pension these days. I went down and bought electrodes for the job last week, $147.
Well inside the firebox you've got C36 type boilers out here, this is a 59 type class locomotive, American born, it came into the country in 1952. It's never had new boilers in them so you are trying to keep the machines running. To buy a new one would be over $2 million worth, so a crowd called Lachlan Valley Railways have come to me and said, with my welding experience here and in TAFE and as a senior educationist in the Education Department with TAFE, that's not the first job but I've helped many organisations out over, in 2000 the Powerhouse Museum came to me and said, we're restoring a locomotive, 3265, beautiful painted maroon colour, and they said no one knows how to metal cross heads so things will go really fast. There's something behind us UNCLEAR pump room, but also all the bearings of the locomotive, so over 4 years I did all that type of work there. Then the Parramatta people had some old steam trams and cable trams that used to run around the streets of Sydney in the 1860's and I've done major work for them, because the skills aren't taught. We don't teach what we used to teach, it's called progress. END

Richard Butler

Davy Press, Blacksmiths Workshop

Ian Andrew Mair DOB: 27/7/60

Ian Mair

Ian Mair – The Foreign Orders

Oh, I couldn't tell the story about the SP bookmaker..... The less said about him the better. He was at the carriage works. Bill my sub foreman said 'Lucky (my nickname), how thirsty are you?' He liked a drink and he wanted company. We'd go to the Royal Hotel down Wilson St. Sometimes we'd stay so long I'd just get back in time to do the newspaper run and the buckets. 2-3 hours at the pub! Billy's

Look everything was OK if it was wrapped in newspapers. You've got to understand, the Foreign Orders were not for the railways. If you said Ian, I need a set of blades for me lawnmower, these were the Foreign Orders. The Spring Shop used to be the place. There was a guy who had a tiny dog. Well, we built him a kennel. It was huge! Took 6 guys to lift it. Couldn't wrap that in newspaper. But you could get your floor pans for your cars, I even made clutch rods for Leyland 700 buses. A friend of mine had a bus company. Next thing we've got a dozen clutch rods. I've still got 11 at home. That first one was so well made, it lasted forever!

My name is Ian Mair, I'm a former Eveleigh locomotive railway workshop employee. I was first employed here on the 23rd of the 3rd Month, 1976 as a shop boy in the Millwright section. The shop boys job was like a junior labourer and his job was to go around to get the morning tea orders, lunch orders, to clean the washing up buckets, to go and get the newspapers and just general duties, office duties. Running errands for the boss and things like that. I then progressed to the position of Junior Labourer, then I was a brickie's labourer, then I was a fitter's assistant, all in the Millwright's section, and then I became the youngest acting overhead crane driver in the Eveleigh Locomotive Workshops. I also drove the cranes in the foundry and I also drove the cranes in the Large Erecting Shop, lifting locomotives off their bogies and putting them onto stands. Sadly, I wasn't there for the same era and the skills that I acquired, not only here, but also at Chullora Bus Workshops, I employed those skills when I was working for the private bus industry. And also, I still employ those skills when I was, when I worked as a volunteer for the Sydney Bus and Truck Museum. I'm basically what you'd call an understudy of a tradesman.

M: You were telling before about a boxing ring..

I: Yes, the boxing ring. I've got to be careful here, is it all right if I name someone? Okay, my sub foreman's name was Jimmy Jefferies and Jimmy was a wonderful man, but he didn't take kindly to fools. I'm being careful in what I'm saying here and, Jimmy was also an amateur boxer and he was damned good at what he did, and anyway, for any of the shop boys or any of the apprentices who got too cheeky, he'd say well come on son, we'll put a set of gloves on and we'll go up the Large Erecting Shop and sort this out and I'll tell you what when Jimmy had been through them they didn't give any more cheek, yes.

M: Did management ever interfere with the way people dealt with each other and those things?

I: No, no it was the done thing in those days, it was a pretty strict regime, you know like you had to lift your docket at a certain time, you put your docket back on at a certain time. If you got caught being away from the work location, you'd get a bung, as was already discussed, if you got a bung you could lose 15 minutes of pay. If it was really bad you could be even sent home and you'd lose whatever time. Say like you got done, you could lose anything up to half a day's pay. In fact it was so strict at one stage, especially when I first started here, you used to have to ask the foreman if they'd give you permission to go and use the toilet, yes. And the washing up buckets, I used to wash 20 buckets by 3, which is 60 buckets per day for our trades and non trades staff because washing facilities and showering facilities were pretty limited here, and the management believed in getting the maximum production out of the staff.

M: I read some things about people hiding their buckets so you could wash up early?

I: You were gone. If the foreman or the Works Manager caught you being off your job or washing up early, you'd be bunged. You'd have a real, please explain, yes.

M: We were going to also talk about the overhead cranes.

I: The overhead cranes? When I'd just turned 18, which was 1978, there was a position that became vacant for a crane driver and I thought yeah, beauty this might give me some sort of qualification in life and anyway, I became the youngest acting overhead crane driver. I drove all the overhead cranes in the main workshops, the Large Erecting Shop and also the foundry. My favourite crane, which sadly no longer is here anymore was L33, down at the foundry and I used to be on the metal pour there and what used to happen there was all the core boxes would be from, made up thanks to the pattern shops supplying the patterns. Everything that was made in Eveleigh for anything to do with the railways, all had an Eveleigh pattern behind them and anything that was cast here at Eveleigh always had the part number that started with E, which stood for Eveleigh, and at 2 o'clock in the afternoons, at the foundry, I would be called upon, and L33 would be called upon to lift the big ladle up to the furnace and then the big furnace lid would open. Then the big molten cast iron would be poured, it was like, just liquid, like a boiling hot tea, yeah, just all melted down and it'd go into a ladle and then what I'd have to do was then lift the ladle up, cross travel, long travel, head north down the foundry to where the moulders were and we'd then pour this big ladle into a series of little ladles, being very, very careful not to vary the temperature of the molten cast iron, otherwise it'd flash up everywhere. It'd spark and people would get burnt and everything. Like as has already been said today, the working environment here at Eveleigh, in those days, it

was very hot, in the summer, it was very hot in the summer. In the winter time it was freezing cold. We didn't have such luxuries as air conditioning or fans or anything like that. We had a number of wooden fires in the place to try and keep the place warm. Later in the piece we had diesel fired like stoves to try and keep the place warm and that was where we made the little racks to go on the side of the chimneys of them and we used to cook our toast on it, yeah. And, of course to get these diesel fired stove things going, until the diesel actually caught alight the workshop would be covered in smoke, in diesel smoke, yes. But yeah, down the foundry, poor old L33, which is now no longer with us, we used to be on the metal pour and on the afternoon shift at Eveleigh Foundry there'd be 500 casts, cast iron brake shoes cast, and what would happen is it'd go through the UNCLEAR machine, go through what they call a shake out, which would shake the sand and the plumbago moulding back into one hopper and the red hot cast brake shoes would be all rattled along into a skip, and there'd be 500 brake shoes made in an afternoon. Then what would happen is whatever we'd cast during that day would be allowed to cool and we had a dressing shop and the parts would go to the dressing shop and there'd be a dresser there, which had a big grinding wheel and he would dress the dags off the castings and then of course, whatever had been dressed, if it required machining it would go to 10 Bay to the machine shop. We used to have our own Oliver Shop here, our own coppersmiths. We used to have a wheel section where we used to have a sweat, would you believe train wheels do have tyres? We used to sweat the tyres off the rim, off the wheel, and then of course we used to heat the new band up and then we'd shrink the train wheel, the train tyre back onto the train wheel.

In fact, in the 1940's Alexandria, like this is the area of Alexandria, Alexandria was known as the Birmingham of Australia. Like Birmingham in London, in the 1940's was huge industrial and this is what Alexandria was and sadly, I think I've already made mention of the Boundary Hotel. Now I'd like to do this because the Boundary Hotel, I'm an alcoholic, I've been an alcoholic since I was 15 years of age but, the Boundary Hotel, I used to drink in there with men, and I do say men, that were a lot older than me, that were old enough to be my own father. In fact I had my 18th birthday party in the Boundary Hotel, and the lovely late and great Jimmy and Jean McLaren who were the publicans at the time, she said to me, Ian, well Lucky as they sometimes called me because that was my nickname in the Millwright Section, you are 18 today. I said yes, Jean, she said well prove it and so I pulled out my driver's licence and oh yeah, okay son, because we all used to drink out in the hen's pen, which was the Ladies' Parlour, and I can remember seeing elderly women up there sitting there with a bag, and they'd be having a beer and a cigarette, peeling the potatoes, peeling the carrots, getting ready to cook this evening's dinner. And sadly, only about 2 weeks ago, the Boundary Hotel closed its doors.

Yes, yes the Boundary Hotel had many, many a railway send off as I already said earlier on today, I've seen the Boundary Hotel at lunch time, 4 deep with uniforms and overcalled men. I've seen men come in there after working in the foundry, after working in the blacksmiths and drink 10 schooners in half an hour, yes. In my short period of living and working around here, for only 34 years, I have witnessed and I can name the pubs, 14 hotels that have closed because sadly, this area, this area, because they've taken the manufacturing away. They've taken the railway workshops away, they've taken, this is by the way successive governments, both Labor and Liberal, have done this. They have basically deskilled the workforce. They have turned this area into, they're saying oh we're trying to gentrify it and we're trying to yuppify it, no, they've killed this area, because there's no more industry. The amount of industries that are out there suffering today because sadly, Redfern, Waterloo, Alexandria is made up of 3 kinds of people. One, the people have got expensive mortgages, they can't afford anything. Two, people that are paying very, very expensive rent, they've got no money. And poor people like myself who live on a Disability Support Pension, live in Department of Housing high rise accommodation, and they've got no money. This area sadly, because of the raping and the pillaging that has gone on by successive governments is cash starved. People are living in poverty because of it. I wish that Eveleigh could reopen again as a fully functional workshops so we could start up apprenticeships, so we could give the young people today, that deserve a fair go. Instead of throwing them on the dole and going oh, you're a dole bludger, give them a job. Give them a trade, give them an apprenticeship, give them some kind of skill, because we were once the lucky country. We're not no more, because who was the man that once quoted it, Australia has become the arsehole of the world. I think it was the great Paul Keating wasn't it? Right, and that's what we've become, that's what we've become and I do work within the Redfern area with the Aboriginal people. I have a young Aboriginal friend who is something like 17 years younger than me, when he and I met 14 years ago, that young man couldn't read or write. With my limited education, I don't have any high school education or School Certificate, I was able to give that young man, Aboriginal man, reading and writing. I taught him and I used what they called the old Rote System, which is, you read something, you memorise and then you get the student to read it back to you and I've got him reading and writing to the point now where that has given that young man the confidence to be able to go to

END

Les Coghill DOB: 13/09/38

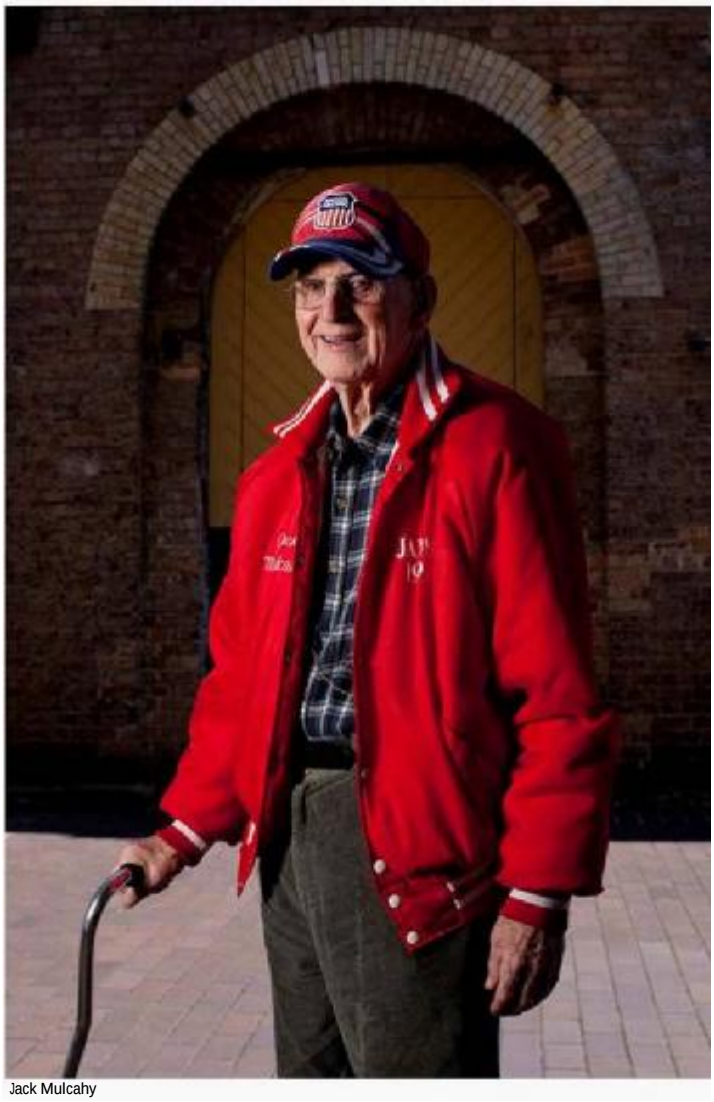
Les Coghill

Les Coghill – On How to Stuff up a Railway

I worked in railway catering – the buffet, when they sold beer, cigarettes, books at all the outlets. I was the beer man. I had superiority. So I said this particular Tuesday to the girl on the train out of central to Armidale, 'we got no beer'. So she stopped the train at Hornsby, I went across the road to pub and bought the beer for the train at counterprice. And that messed up the whole rail network at peak hour. Lucky i didn't get into

"Every day work was the same. You gotta try and get along with everyone. You could have a blistering argument with someone, then you'd go off to the rubbedy-dub and wash it down. The dispute was over. We were all family. It had to be that way. "

Jack Mulcahy



Jack Mulcahy

Jack Mulcahy
Did you work here Jack?
No not here on this side, over there, across the tracks at the Carriage Works back in 1940 or so. It was like different worlds each side of the tracks. I used to sneak across the tracks at lunch time to look at the locos. Wild horses couldn't drag me away. But one day I took off and went down to central to look at the trains. I was checking things out and someone said 'Hey, do you work here at Eveleigh?" I said "Yeah". He said 'Well, you're fired!

J: My name's Jack Mulcahy and I first got an idea where Eveleigh was when I was 12 years old. Before I got to Eveleigh I used to go to a place outside of the Central Station, it was called the Mortuary, and I would sit there and watch the trains shunting back and forth and the drivers got to know me and one day one of the drivers came over and said, look I've got some photos, penny for plain and twopence coloured. I said oh gee, that's great but I couldn't afford it because a penny was a tram ride in those days and I used to walk in from a place called Kingsford, which was a distance to save a penny, so I could buy a penny pie, which I used to consume while I was often on the Regent Street, Mortuary Station and it was interesting that a lot of the Mortuary Station was removed into a cathedral in Canberra. The spire I think it was.

M: I remember the Mortuary Station...

J: I got to know all the classes of engines and later on when I was old enough I got a job over in the carriage works, which was across the way from Eveleigh. And of course, being an engine lover I would sneak over during lunch time to have a look at the engines and the people over there, I'd talk to the enginemen and the firemen and I got to know the drivers there and I had a great respect for the early drivers because they were the top class, top class men. They'd work the Flyer to Newcastle, the South Coast Daylight, the Southern Highlands, the Fish, the Chips and a lot of these trains were worked by my favourite engine, the type of engine, the 32 class. The 36 class was another engine that I liked and I later on, I decided I would get a job in the railways, which I did over in the carriage works and unfortunately one day I took a sickie and I went back to my haunts at Central, now not the

Mortuary, but over in the UNCLEAR and I was taking the numbers of the engines and the composition of the trains and a fella came up and said, you work on the railway and I said yes, and he said what are you doing here, it's a work day? I said yes, he said where do you work, and I said over at the carriage works and I got sacked. Yeah because I was absent without,

M Was that the end of your association here?
J: well yes, because I was doing the naughty thing and later on I joined the Tramways and became a conductor out at Dowling Street. The biggest tramway shed in the Southern Hemisphere.

M: When you used to sneak over here, were you received well? Was there a lot of camaraderie?
J: Oh yes, they knew I was an engine, they spotted me straight away because I was taking the engine numbers and everything like that and I could go back to the time before they were classified in the 1920's to class numbers. They used to have all their numbers like and then there was a 35 class, a P, a P6 was a 32 class and a PIG was a 36 class, all those sort of things and they sort of adopted me to a great extent and they would, anything that came around that looked like an official, they'd give me the word to buzz.
Absolutely, I'm an avid collector of railway timetables, both work and public and they go back to the 1890's, and it was interesting in the 1890's that when you went to Melbourne and changed at Albury, that the passenger from Sydney would be required to change their watches by 5 minutes because when you were in Victoria, according to Greenwich time, you're 5 minutes difference between Victoria and New South Wales. Later on I believe they came to an arrangement that the 5 minutes was neither here nor there and so everybody would be able stop altering their clock or watch by five minutes.

M: Is there anything else you would like to share with us?
J: Well it was more or less a great nostalgia for me, particularly when I knew they were going to be hit over the head because of diesel and it was going to be so much cheaper and all the rest of it, and I just feared for the engines and luckily they saved some of the engines that I love and it was great to see 3265 back on the tracks again, with the name plate Hunter, which was used originally on the Flyer, which was normally called in the 1920's and early 30's, the Northern Commercial Limited, but still retained the same number, 21 and 24.
END


Jack Mulcahy with his daughter, Francesca [illegible], Antonetta

Bob Rhymes DOB: 19th February, 1923

Bob Rhymes

R: Prior to a Federal Election we always had speakers here prior to election time and Bill Hayden was the Labor Party leader, and that's an election he should've won. Anyway, Bob Hawke gave a good address and we adjourned up to the local pub after and a few sandwiches, and they had a half a yard glass, ale glass and of course Bob Hawke was noted, he was in the Guinness Book records because he drank a yard of ale, so they tried him out on that but on that day he declined. He said, any of you back horses and someone said oh yeah, and he said I'll give you a winner tomorrow in Adelaide, it won. I was in the process of writing one story and I did write the two because Ditty, and the second part is about the winter time in the workshop. In the days I wrote it we had cast iron stoves in the machine shop for heating and they were bloody awful. They were fired by coke and/or coal and most people had no clue how to get them going, consequently the smoke was horrific and most blokes went outside the workshop until it cleared, which some days took an hour and a half, yeah.. Now, you want to hear the ditty? The first one refers to two fitters who worked on a bench in 10 Bay, Sam Barker and Don McKinnon. When it rained there was a leak over their bench. After complaining at length with no result they put up their umbrellas. The problem was fixed within a few days. Now the other part was about the heating in the winter. Now the ditty goes like this:

here we are in Eveleigh Loco, working hard and drinking cocoa.
All the blokes are bonza fellas, when it rains some put up their umbrellas.
The winter days are dark and dreary and all the blokes are very weary
With coal and coke fumes in profusion they could hardly see to put their boots on

M: do you do a little bit of poetry writing?

R: I used to do quite a bit, we had a workshop newspaper called Eveleigh News and I was I suppose, rather modest character because I never kept any of it much, only what I've got in there, yeah. Well there's another story about the workshop dog. Now one day in the mid 70's a mongrel dog walked into the workshop through the Boundary Street gate and there was a fitter that was located alongside Boundary Street gate. The other little workshop, and he took the dog under his wing. He fed it, and with cans, he left food with the watchman, who also stationed at Boundary Street gate, and at annual leave time he left money for the watchman to feed the dog. Naturally, this dog became a one man dog. He followed Bobby Barr, the fitter, everywhere he went, even if

he went to a mass meeting, the dog would, it would be during lunch time, the dog would sit there alongside him. Occasionally, meetings were held at Boundary Street gate, if we felt they would be extended over the lunch break because that meant you weren't allowed to meet on workshop premises. This day there was a very contentious meeting and the meeting was, took a vote, which was very close and someone called out, a Division Required, so the chairman said, right, Ayes to the left of the chair, No's to the right. So this fitter, Bobby Barr, he had to cross over to vote with the group he wanted to vote for, so the dog went with him, the only dog in the history of Australia that voted at a mass meeting. Now fortunately for the chairman, he didn't have to count the dog's vote because it wasn't close, so there you go.

On another occasion we had extremely heavy rain over this area and due to the fact that the drains could no longer cope, they needed attention, one of these fitters who I mentioned in the ditty, Don McKinnon, he went round on the back of an industrial truck with a makeshift fishing rod. It was that sort of approach to problems that on occasion, brought quicker dividends than walking out the gate on strike, and we had very few strikes at Eveleigh Loco. We generally planned a method, which got through to the management very quickly.

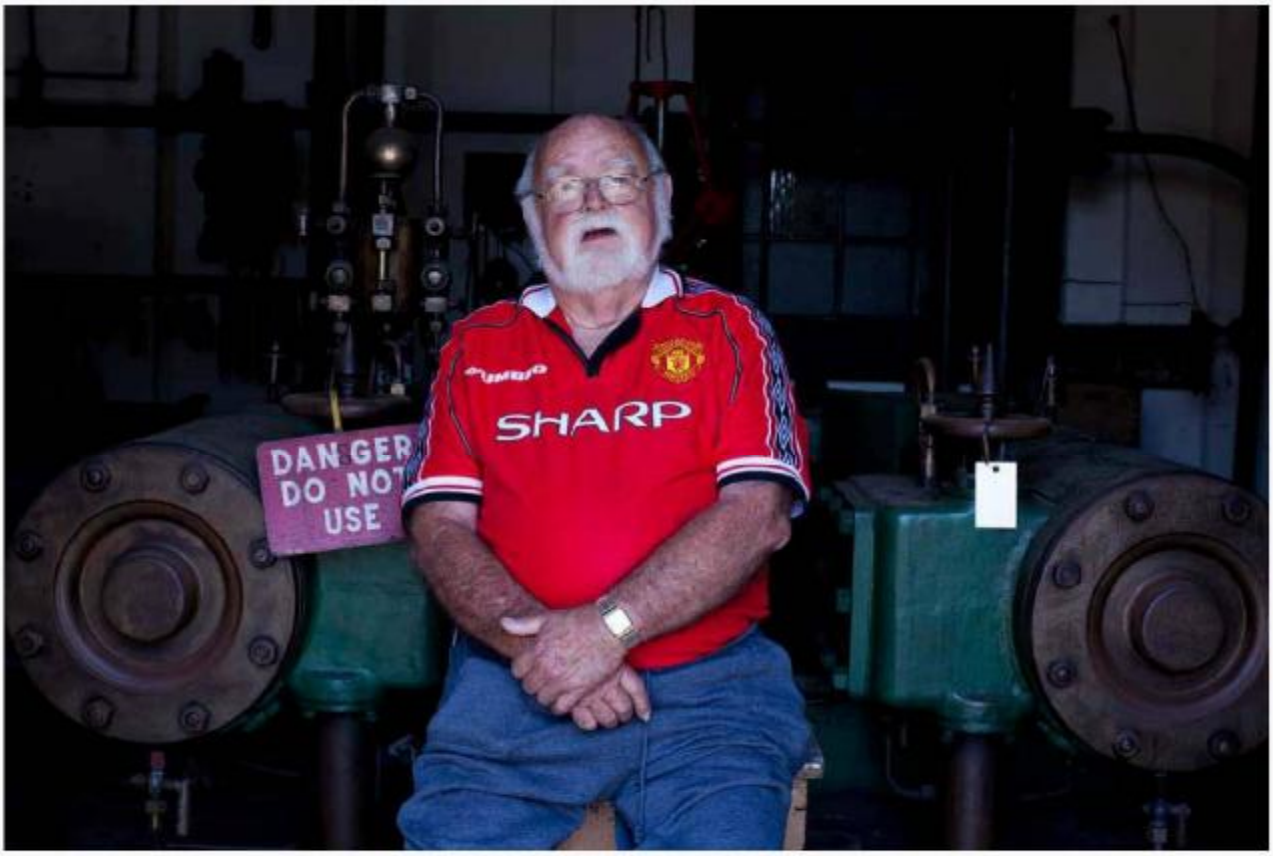
Bob Rhymes

M: Were you a part of the union?

R: Yeah I was secretary of the Works Committee for 14 years and I was a representative on the Appeals Board, the Appeals Board was composed of an employees' rep, a departmental rep and a chairman with a barrister qualifications. Now a lot of men on appeal, after being sacked or suspended, got their job back. That was a great boon really for some men got a second chance, whereas in private industry there was no second chance.

END

Bob Wright



Bob Wright

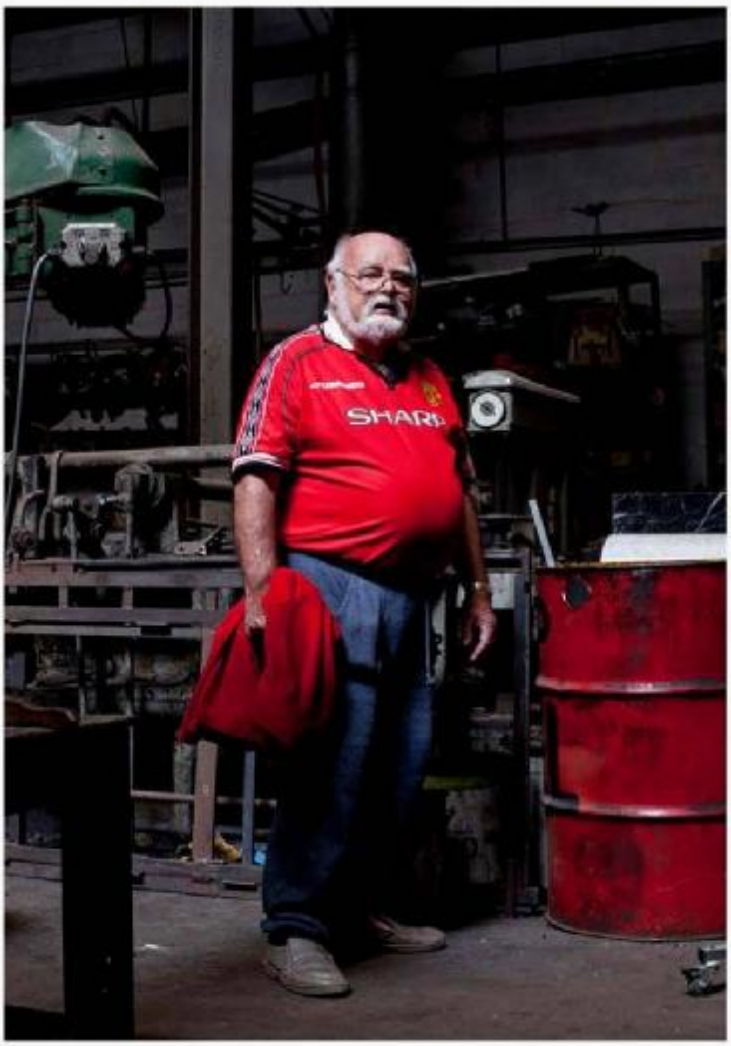
B: My name is Robert Wright, I started here in 1949 and I left in 89, 1989 yeah.

M: How did you come to work at Eveleigh in the beginning?

B: I always wanted to be a train driver, I think that's every kid's dream, which I'm pleased I never ever got on there. I came in as a shop boy and I first worked in the blacksmith's shop here, and at an early age I was scared of them steam hammers. They kicked back and you'd, I didn't like it and then what they done, they sent me up to what they called the Large Wrecking shop up the top, I was still a shop boy and I put in for apprentice and I got it. I can tell you a funny tale I was just telling them, I've got a mate, Freddie Martin, he's a very sick man at the present time but he, we used to have to go and get the coke of a morning for cooking the rivets. We'll we'd get in some terrible blues, we'd get in fights up there, all the apprentices, anyway we had this manager, Bill Futrell, and he got us all up there and he said we were all a bunch of louts. We couldn't do anything unless we were all in a gang, we couldn't fight on our own, and the next thing Freddie said, come on. He offered him outside, and Freddie got along with him pretty well after that (laughs).

M: What's your main memory of your working life here?

B: if you could, I wish I had taken photos when you were young. They'd have about over 20 boilers in there and there's wall stays, they had to be riveted over and the tubes, they were all beaded and they were done with a, rattle gone, like a rivet gun. They were smaller but more noisy. Well you can imagine there was about 50 people in there and that's what they were doing, all at once and the only thing they give you, you used to put bits of waste in your ear. You never ever got, and it took years before they give you earplugs. They were no good, they used to draw on your ears you know, so you took no notice of them, well it definitely ruined my ears and a lot of others. Up in the running shed I got another complaint, I've got 3 spots on my lung and it's not affecting me, it's asbestos. We used to, you get it in a powder form and we used to mix it up with water and we'd throw it at one another. No one knew what it was, yeah.



Bob Wright

M: What was your role in the picnics?

R I used to organise the picnics. I thought they were very good family days. We used to go to Bronte for a long while and we had running races and I bought in the idea, with the children. They used to only give them toys up to 5 years of age and I said no way, give them all a toy. I said even when they're 8 years of age they just don't understand so, they got that and plenty of milk. We'd work all the night before packing sample bags for them and there was approximately about 2,000 we used to cater for, it was ETA peanuts, Allens lollies. It hasn't slipped my mind.

Yes, they all had a good time, especially the one we went to, El Blanco, the one with the dancing stallions. Everyone showed up for that, it just about sent me broke. Yeah, everybody worked on the railway who was involved in a picnic had to pay for the day. We used to get a few that they'd challenge you, well we used to say well you don't want the day off they'll send you to either Chullora or, and they'd make you work for it, or come across and pay the fee, you know, which they got, they didn't have to go to the picnic but they got a free travel pass and the day off, and for a lousy $10, it was.

Bob Wright

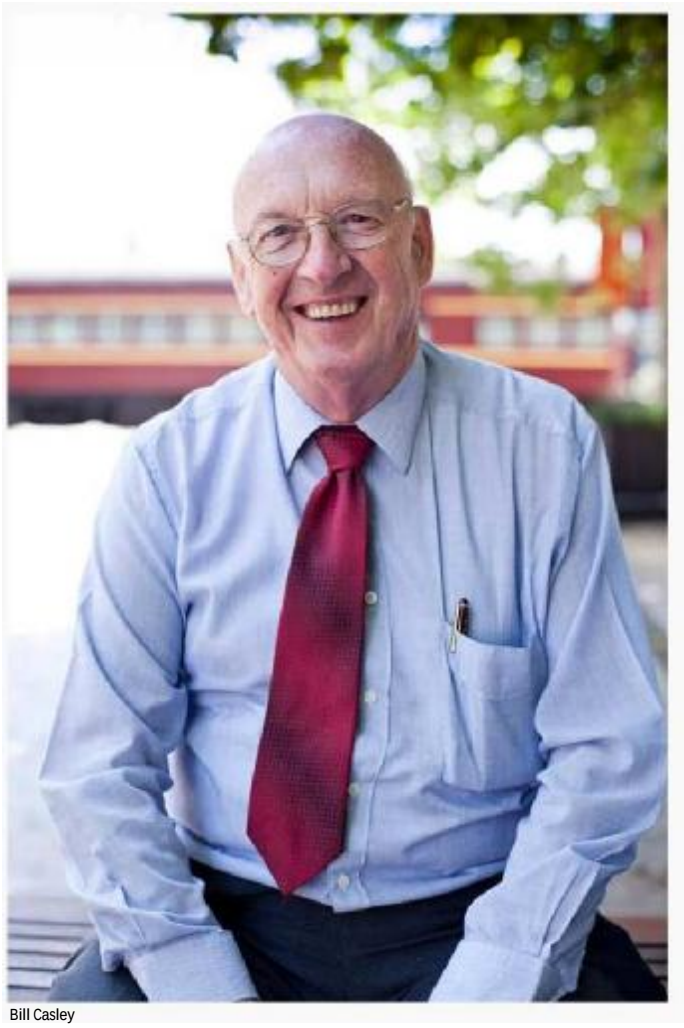
M: Can you describe your bosses

B: I never liked bosses. We had some hard ones you know and well you made a day of it trying to keep out of trouble, but you'd do a bit of trouble, but it was a hard job, heavy.

The one over at the carriage works, he was a little pearler and if you'd have hit him you'd have lost your job and he'd come up to you more or less and stand and challenge you, you know. He thought he had the right to call you names and everything like that and, well he wouldn't be alive.

END

Bill Casley DOB 17th April, 1937



Bill Casley

: I'll introduce myself, well I'm Bill Casley, I had the pleasure of starting in the New South Wales Railways in 19, in November 1952 and I eventually retired, December 31st 1998 and during that time I started off as a rail carriage builder and I rose to the position of Chief Mechanical Engineer in the mechanical branch. And then with the disbandment of the branches I got invited to be involved with the Rail Safety Group and look after the rolling stock side of it and having done that for about 18 months I was then asked, very politely, would I mind going on six months secondment to the Department of Transport and it'll only be for six months. Yeah, I know that, and 7 years later I retired. I had the pleasure there of writing the Rail Safety Act for New South Wales and had the legislation passed and it became the basis of rail safety legislation throughout Australia, so it was something I was very proud of achieving.

My first day at Eveleigh was probably in 1948, and I was here, how shall I describe? My brother, my elder brother, he was an apprentice boilermaker and it was the last working day of the year, Christmas 48, and he brought me in and of course children were brought in then, and he, we had a look around. He was in the boiler shop and then he took me over to the carriage works and we had a look around there and little did I believe that in years to come my, probably most favourite working location.

M: How old were you then?

B: Probably about 11. Oh yes, well everyone, even into the late 70's it was still a practice when the shop closed down for Christmas, it would not be unknown for people to bring their family in to see where Dad worked and everything like that, because in those days it was a very family orientated industry. My father was a railway man, my name sake uncle, he was a railway man. My brother was a railway man. I became a railway man, two of my daughters became railway women and in fact, my elder daughter she became the secretary to the Chief Mechanical Engineer and then when I got appointed Chief Mechanical Engineer she became my boss and so yeah it was a big family, a lot of people put a lot by it. It was an industry that you were proud to be involved with.

Bill Casley

M: Ive noticed today the unique warmth between you guys this morning.

B: Especially when you would've noticed there today a number of them were union delegates, we were management and the old story was management and union was never there, but you could, when the job was done and you stepped away, you were just railway people and you'd talk together. When you was in a particular negotiating situation you both had your particular role to play but I've always found, with people, provided you can have what I like to call a win win situation where, if you have a meeting with the union delegates and they, at the end of the day feel they've won, and you know you've won, that's the best solution you can have, and so they're willing to commit to what they've agreed to and you're willing to commit too, because you know you've achieved what you set out to do.

M: Did you tell any stories this morning that you could repeat for the camera?

B: Oh there's 101 stories, you'll have to read my book. No I'm in the process of doing it. A very good friend of mine, Ron Preston, he's a very prolific railway historian, he unfortunately passed away, maybe 3 years ago now, he was always on my back, you've got to write the story of the carriage works, you've got to, you've got to, you've got to. So, his wife and my wife went to school together and she used to say to my Joan, for goodness sake get him to agree to do it because it's really worrying him, because he was in the latter part with cancer, and so anyway he, I was talking to him on the phone one day and he said, hey, are you going to do that book? I said, yeah I've started on it and he said what have you got, and I said I've got a little bit of stuff put together. He said, you'd better bring it up and let me have a look. He lived up in Cardiff in those days, so I took it up there and his reaction was, bloody hell, you've got enough information for two books here. I said, yeah, that's all right for you, you're a penman, so I said, no we'll keep working on it and that's why I've been talking with Jean, because there's work that she and I had done previously. Eventually it'll get done but don't hold your breath waiting.

M: Would you tell the story again of running naked down the carriage works road?

B: Well no it's not so much there, it's one of those scenarios. There were two boilermaker delegates of the Shop Committee, and they were having a liquid lunch in the hotel one day and one said to the other, should, I reckon my horse will beat your horse in the Melbourne Cup. Anyway, to cut a long story short, they hoo haad backwards and forward with one another and eventually one said, if my horse doesn't come in ahead of your horse I'll run stark bollocky naked up Eight Road, which was the centre road of Carriage Works and so naturally the Melbourne Cup came and went and this horse came in about second last, so there they had their opportunity, well I understand there were buckets of water had been put in the refrigerators for 3 or 4 days so that almost frozen and there were people came, there were boilermakers from over this side. There was boilermakers from Loco, Chullora, from Wagon Works, Clyde and I'm sure there was even boilermakers came down from Cardiff to be there to see this chap. His nickname by the way was Antics, and I've, I won't mention his name but anyway his nickname was Antics, so anyway, they picked morning tea time for the time for this to take place. Now they did that deliberately because the management in those days used to have a management meeting at morning tea and it was called the Sunshine Club because they always met at the far end of the paint shop, which was the other end of the workshops and it was on, because it was morning, it was in the sunshine. I'm wandering up there to take place in this meeting and as I walked past the yard office, the clerk said, oh you're wanted on the phone. I went to the phone and this voice said to me, you'd better come down with No. 2 car, there's a riot going on down here, we can't control what's going on.

So yeah fair enough, so I went over to where the conference was being held and I grabbed the Chief Foreman Boilermaker and the fitter and one of the car builder foremen and they said come on, we're going up there, so I took off at a hundred mile an hour and they're walking very slowly. And I said, come on, and Allen Booth was the Chief Foreman Boilermaker, he said, I think you should be made aware what's happening and he told me what was going on and of course in those days I was one of the youngest appointed managers and so that, I wasn't going to have that happening on my shift, so down I go and the Eight Road was a sea of humanity.

You know like we had roughly 1200 people in the workshops and I guarantee there was the best part of 3,000 people. It was jam packed with people. Where they come from, Lord only knows and but anyway, I eventually, Bob Wright, who you've met today, I said to Bob, get him up into the manager's office and we'll sort it out up there. Anyway eventually we get up there and there's all the delegates there and we got him up there as well and the private phone of the manager, who was Bob Murray, in those days went, and when he answered the phone it was the Minister for Transport and, it was just a little bit of harmless fun Mr Murray, don't you think you can turn a blind eye to it? So old Bob was a pretty astute sort of bloke, he said, well Minister, I could if you'll authorise an additional $30,000 into my budget to make up for the lost production

that this Antics caused. Oh, I'll leave it in your hands, clunk went the phone. So I think, from memory, I think the perpetrator ended up with a week or two week's holiday without pay, but yeah, no, it, people talk and they say oh unions and this and that, okay, they were hard at times, but I always found that you could sit and talk with them. If they had a valid point there was no reason for you not to follow on. Equally if they had an invalid point you'd fight them tooth and nail and I suppose that's how I, it worked over the years, but they were, unionists in those days, and I probably see no reason why they're not the same today, were people who were genuinely interested in their fellow worker and they were trying their best to do better. They were trying to work lurks and everything like that, but who wasn't? But you know they were genuinely interested in trying to better the lot of their people and let's face it, the working conditions in those days were not very salubrious, they were less than what you'd say, you've only got to look around at some of this, and you think to yourself, hey, how can you work under those conditions?

No that was all over and done with, yeah no, he was very clean when I saw him, but yeah, no, no there was 101, lots of stories. Different ones say, oh you should write a book about it, I say yeah, nobody would believe you though. They'd say it's fiction.

M: Whats with all the nick names, yours was George wasn't it?

B: Everybody, most people had nicknames. Mine well, my predecessor, the chap I took over from he, a chap by the name of Steve Teir, his nickname was The Mad Dog, and poor old Steve, he was a wonderful man. I'll tell you another story about him in a minute but the, but poor old Steve he couldn't walk throughout the workshops and somebody would be hiding behind a pillar, Woof Woof and he'd react and try and find out who, and as soon as he'd react that way, somebody would start barking over there and I said to him just before he retired, we used to, he was showing me around setting things up and everything like that, and I said, don't react and he said I'll catch these mongrels, I'll catch em, and I said well you haven't had any luck so far, you're not likely to do in the future. So when I became the Works Assistant Rolling Stock when he retired, I'd be walking along and people would call out. They started off barking at first, and I'd just ignore it, and then people would call you, Hey Bill, Hey Bill, Hey Bill, and I'd just ignore that, and one bloke in particular, he chased me almost the full length of Eight Road and he said I've been trying to get your attention. I said, if you want to get my attention, speak to my face, don't talk behind me because I won't acknowledge you, so they stopped doing that, but Steve had a reputation amongst some people of being a mongrel. Here they thought he was, anyway one of the, I think it was the then President of the Shop Committee, one of the other chaps told me the story later.

One of the newer committee members was having a whinge about bloody Steve Teir and he said, hang on a minute, he said, whoa, you don't know the man. And he said, what do you mean, he said, that's Steve Teir the manager you're talking about, and let's be realistic, with us lot you'd have to be. Now I'll show you Steve Teir the humanitarian. He said you watch, and Steve apparently was walking towards them and he said, oh Mr Teir we're taking up a collection for so and so, his wife's been diagnosed with cancer, and while they're talking to Steve, out came a 20 pound note, straight away, and he said, oh no, you didn't get it from me, and he said I've got to go and he kept walking away and he turned to the other people, and he said, that's the sort of bloke he is. He's strong, but if people are in trouble, he's there to help. So that was Steve and then we had the Laughing Cavalier, that was Bill McEnally, he was the Works Manager and he, you never saw Bill without a smile on his face and that's how he got the nickname. Ron Emmett, he was the Ant, and of course with a name like Emmett, why wouldn't you be called the Ant? So yeah, no there was lots of nicknames around the places there, Antics I spoke about before and that was because of the nonsense he used to get up to, and there was a whole host of things.

The stories were there, you can, they had a young chap there, he was a shop boy and he was only about 2 bob in the pound and anyway, one of the tradesmen said to him, look, will you go up and get me a meat pie? Oh do I have to? He said look, here are here's the money, get two, you can have one yourself and here's the money for me. Oh all right, so off he went, and he came back and he's munching a meat pie, and the bloke said, well where's mine? He said they only had one, here's your change. That was a chap that was supposed to be a little bit mental, but anyway. But we had a whole range of people over there.

In the 60s we were probably the location where most migrants that had a limited English came to work, carriage works, and other railway locations as well but the, we had one chap he was a Polish, he was fighter pilot in the Second World War, and this poor fellow when he'd get agitated he would march, and the arms would be coming up and he'd march up Eight Road, turn around and march back and he'd salute every foreman as he went by, and everybody treated him there. It was lunch time and I was having a sandwich up in

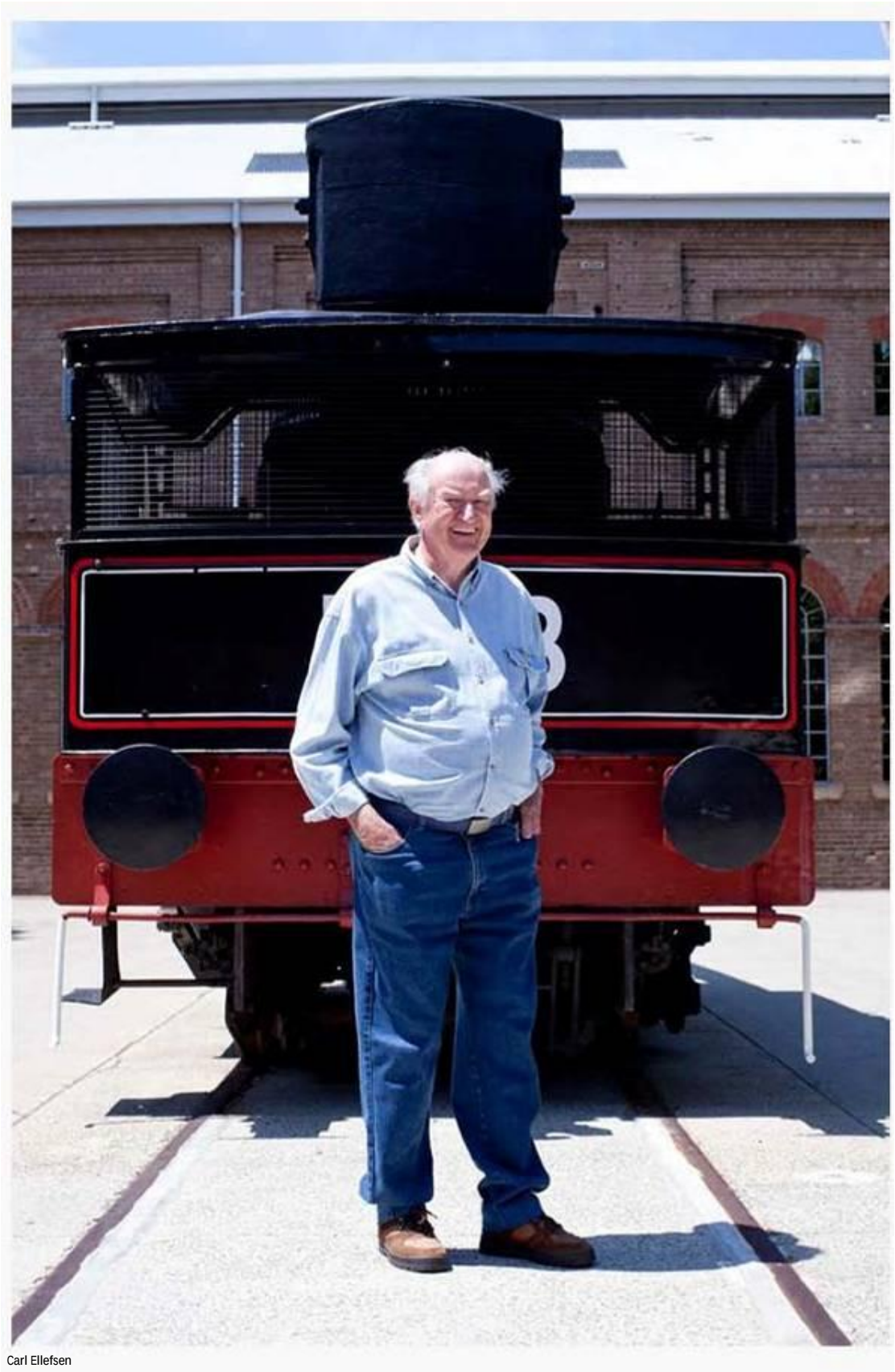
my office and the phone went, Doug Mueller, who was the machine shop foreman, he said, oh can you come down here straight away? I said, why what's the matter? And then bang, I hear this bang in the background, he said, oh, I forget the name of the Polish chap, he's gone berserk and I said, well what do you want me to do? He said, you'd better come down you might be able to fix it and, I said oh all right. I was half way down and I realised, what in the hell am I doing? So anyway when I get down to the No. 2 car, here's this chap, we used to have wooden chocks that were about 2 foot long, 4 x 4 oregon that they put under the wheels as the vehicles were rolled in and everything like that. Here's this bloke, he's got a stack of them on the floor, as anybody put their head up above a bench he'd throw one at them. Periodically he'd throw one against the wall of Doug Mueller's office and he's standing there shaking his hands in the air and everything like that, and I thought to myself, what am I going to do here? With that, in the background I noticed there was a German migrant, car builder, he discreetly just stood up and while I was talking to the bloke, he was slowly walking quietly behind him. I thought at least I've somebody going to help me, so I walked up to this bloke and I said, what's going on? And he said, it's all right boss, they've been driving me mad for months, it's my turn to get even with them, and that's all it was.

We had those, we had another Italian chap, a car builder, and he used to see angels in the roof. He saw angels everywhere and in those days, cigarette packets and matchboxes would be discarded everywhere. He would pick up a matchbox and you know the striker bar on the edge, he would get that, he would look at that and with a very fine paint brush he would turn it into some sort of religious icon and he was a marvellous craftsman, but nutty as a fruit cake. So you know, they had everybody. They had people that were, that went on to do marvellous things and they had other unfortunate people, so there was a full spectrum over there.

It was a very good place to work over there, and this place over here too. The people that worked over here, it was equally as important to them and that's what railway men were like in those days. They really made a commitment to where they were working.

Don Payne

Carl Ellefsen DOB: 10th April, 1936



Carl Ellefsen

I was an apprentice fitter and machinist on the railway where I started my career in 1952 and I finished the service on almost 42 years as a manager of City Rail Stores. In between, I'd worked on the manufacture of self propelled rail cars as a tradesman and then in later years I was in the production of those cars as a planner, production planner and that went for 20 odd years out of my 42 and I was transferred to Clyde Wagon Works, where I was there as the Control Planner looking after there, which I learnt my job as a production engineer while I was there, they elevated me to, and then I went to the CME's office, which is down in Wilson Street, Redfern, where I went there as a Supply Officer in 85.

M: Can you remember your first day at Eveleigh?
C: Yes, the memory comes very vivid. Each day we'd walk on, there was a special train you had to be on to get to work. We carried our bag and we walked in had a locker where we'd change in open space, into our overalls. Everyone's on view, then we had an introduction with the sub foreman, he knew we were coming because we were on an apprentice rotation program and that was my second stint. I'd been to Elcar and then came to Eveleigh as an apprentice in July, 1952. I'd just turned 16.

M: Do you remember liking it?
C: no, it was hard work, we were doing machining and you hadn't handled a machine up to this stage. You'd seen them many times but then you had to work it, but we had supervising tradesmen who showed us the ropes and we had a bit of a contract, as you say, between the groups of boys, each machine, you had to rotate each week and we'd say, how many did you do last week? And we'd have to try and outdo that number and so we had a manufacturing competition between the kids, but that, and then when it came to knock off time, you got a bucket of hot water, more cold water to have a wash in. If you warmed it up you was lucky, and you got a bit of a wash up and changed there with the locker next to you and got your gear off and back into gear to go home, and then the group of people that left the workshop after 4 o'clock and walked up the, outside the building, it was like a football match today, with the number of people that's going up those stairs, and that was a very impressionable time, very impressionable. But it was part of the training you got because we learned life at the hard face, because you met all sorts of people and you got good tradesmen, and you got tradesmen you didn't like, they had a different attitude in looking after kids and we were 16 year old, we didn't know the ropes. We weren't as smart as the kids are today, I don't think, but we at least learned our craft from the basis.

M: Can you tell me about people you worked who weren't good, and struggled with the work?
C: Some of the kids we had were trying but they just didn't have the speed. But then again some got onto a machine later on in life and became experts, but then other boys changed and went to fitting and they adapted, but you wanted to finish your time. That was the objective, you wanted to finish your time.

M: Can you tell us about the recycling?
C: when, later on when you went to Locomotive Overhauling, the locomotive was stripped bare to the frame. Anything that came off was brass, was sent to a brass section and they recycled it. If it couldn't be repaired it went down to the foundry. They'd pull it apart, recondition it and resend it back to you. If it was cast iron, it was probably worn out so it went down to the foundry and they'd recast one and machined it and made it to fit, the pistons were cast iron. The rings in the piston were cast iron. The connecting rods had brass bearings, they all went back to the foundry. We used to white metal them and the nuts and bolts all went into a big bin and they, a broken down tradesman or a labourer, and his job was to reclaim the nuts and bolts and the studs and the fittings that we wanted. The only thing we ever renewed were the gasket joints when they all come brand new and a lot of it was metal to metal jointed, red lead and goldcise, and good old putty, mixed through the goldcise, but the recycling never came to us as just recycling, but it come up second nature. If it didn't fit, into the foundry and you got another one that was cast ready to go on the job, nuts, bolts, forged, blacksmiths making nuts and special bolts. Cutting up tools, we used to cut up certain bits of tool steel to make all the chisels and the hammers and the hammersmiths used to do it down in the Olive Shop. That was continuous, they'd make special, little hammers, they'd make special heads and bolts for special parts of the steam locomotive. The, certain parts used to be machined down to a reclaimable size but then there was other ones that packed out with UNCLEAR packers that made up that worn part but it was never, into the foundry unless it wasn't reclaimable.

M: Its a fantastic notion of everything being reused...
C: Well it was inherent in that you had to reclaim that, that was part of the training. You reclaimed every part and tools, you didn't have a great tool range. If you wanted a tool that had to do a special job, you made the tool to do the job because you had to get it done. Now, if it was, there were certain spanners that they

supplied but mostly, in your apprenticeship, you didn't have a great tool box to carry around because when you got there you were doing heavy, special work so the tradesmen used to have the heavy tools but sometimes we'd make up our own tools, or they were made if we had to do it.

M: Tell us about the buckets

C: When we were finished the day, or the day out there, we had a bucket and we were all issued with this bucket and it was the idea to wash up before your morning tea, wash up before lunch and then a wash up when you left in the afternoon when you finished your shift. Now we had an issue of soft soap to go with that bucket and every fortnight you'd go up the store and he'd issue you a scoop of soft soap, which was the most obnoxious sort of material that looked like grease but it eventually helped clean the grease off, and as well, every two months you used to get a sweat rag, and the sweat rag was a rag that you used to wash up in the bucket as well, so that became like a face washer. It was, and that, we never objected to it, we accepted it. I mean that was part of the deal, you didn't realise it but you were working inside the shop. You had men all round you, you got to know them and the work they were doing so you, but they had a bucket as well. You wasn't on your own with a bucket, they all had their own buckets.

M: I heard the story about the introduction of the basins, but then how they weren't used because of union rules..

C: Before my time I wasn't there, it was an industrial thing, but in those days apprentices never got any industrial problems, we never got introduced to that until you came out of your time and you went and got a tradesmen's job and the workshop you went to, they made sure you were in a union and you got to the union meetings, it was part of the deal. Didn't get a lunch time meeting, you had to be out there with the boys, yeah, oh yes, and then they, if you wanted to speak they let you speak but then they groomed you too, so it was part of the thing. Another thing, if you wanted to become a supervisor, one of the training, expected training, you would go into the union to get a shop steward's job of the section, so you learnt the union side before you'd be able to get into the supervisor's side, so yeah, and that was part of the management, they suggested you do that. It wasn't the troops, it was the management suggested you learnt a bit about the union before you become a supervisor, and you wouldn't become a supervisor or leading hand in those days unless you had about 10 to 15 years service, and then by the time you got to 20 year's service you might've got what they called the sub foreman's position and you'd probably look after 20 to 40 people. You could have a leading hand, but then to get a foreman or a supervisor's job, was over the whole lot in the big section, you'd probably be the best part of 35 years.

M: When you think about how people change their jobs now, it was so different then.

C: I got into trouble when I was in the supervisor's, what I was the supply officer, I used to release orders to bring contractors into the system and I'd do the record and of course it was budgeted and all that, and we got this set of people come in to do a change and these were the experts, so called, to come in the supervisor that asked me to fix up the order, he was an engineer, and I said to him, those blokes on that letter you gave me, none of them's ever been in a job more than 5 to 7 years, and he said, you've got a hide to criticise him. I said, we've been here for 30 odd years and we could tell you twice as much as what they could, and he didn't like it. Yeah, I'll never forget it, I got roasted for it but I spoke me mind. END

Nerida:

Nerida

My name is Nerida and the main reason I'm here today is the history surrounding this place and also my grandfather and my dad worked for the railways and so there's quite a history with that as well, so that's my main reason for being here today, in honour of them really.

M: Tell me about your family connection with the railways?

N: Well my family connection is my grandfather worked for the railways and so did my Dad. My grandfather worked all of his life with the railways and he also retired from the railways. My Dad worked for the railways when he was a young man I think. I think he was about 15 or 16 when he started working for them and he did have an accident, I don't know how it happened but he started off as a shunter and he was shunting a train from what I understand, and the train, something happened and the train ran over his left foot and he lost all his toes. So he, in those days, when they went into hospital, they usually spent quite a bit of time in hospital, they didn't sort of come out of hospital as quickly as they do today, so I think from what I've been told, he spent like at least 2 or 3 months in hospital, because I guess it's to do with the healing and perhaps the rehabilitation and everything else but I do remember my family talking about that and saying he was in hospital for quite a long time.

M: Did your dad have lots of railway friends?

N: My Dad had some friends, to be honest, I didn't meet a lot of them. I'm sure he did have friends but we didn't, I was very young, like I was the youngest of 5 children, so that's why I don't remember as much as probably other members of my family might know. He did speak about the railways a little bit but not a huge amount.

M: Tell me about the railway picnics?

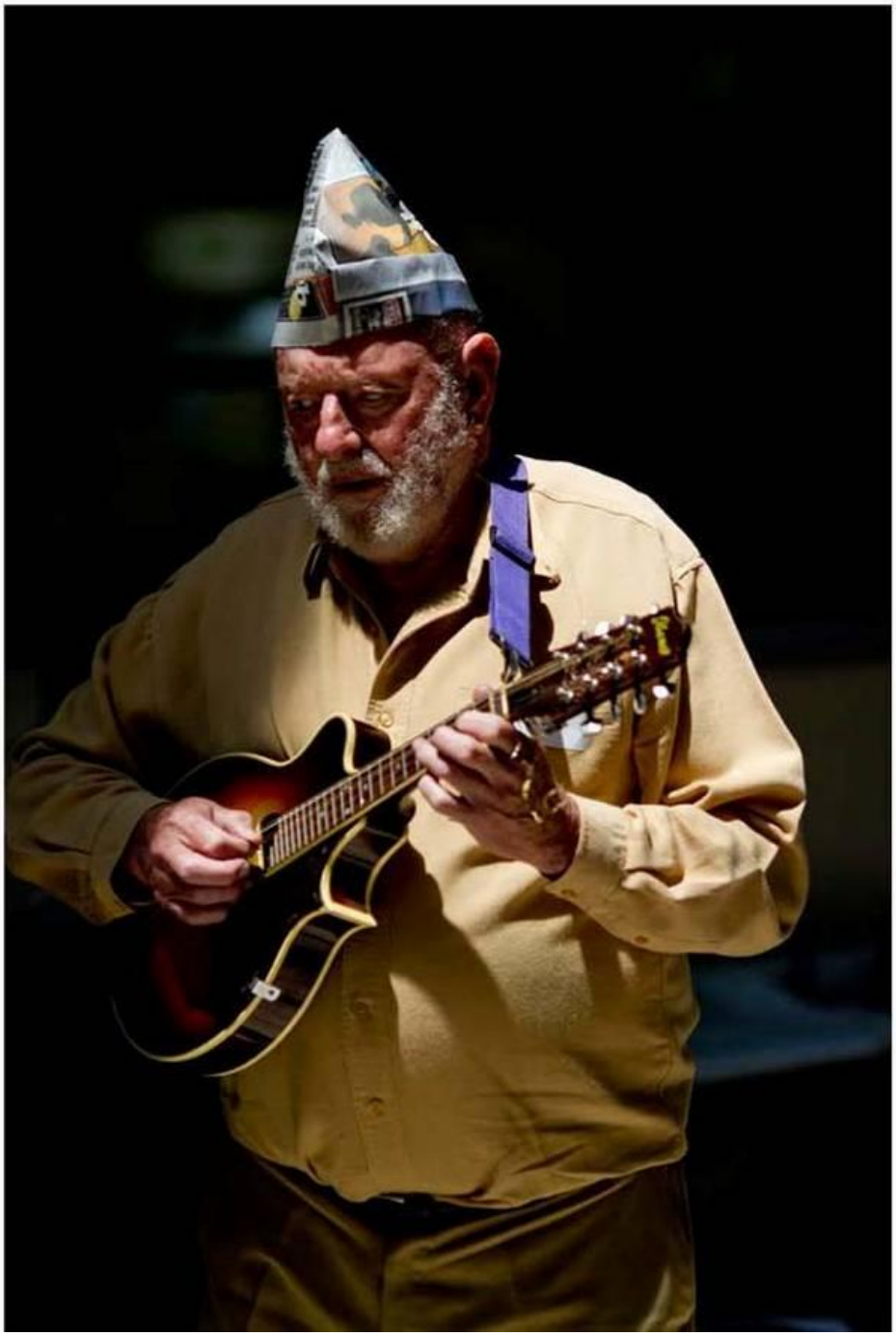
N: Oh yes we went to Neilsen's Park for the railways picnics and we used to have so much fun there, you know, you swim and they also had games organised for the kids, which we all participated in and they were a lot of fun and it was just a good family, fun day, you know, all the railway families there and the children and that, it was a very happy and memorable day. That's what I remember about it mostly.

M: What did your grandfather do?

N: My grandfather, he was, I honestly can't recall what he did when he first started for the railways but I have his marriage certificate, which indicates he was a clerk at the railways, but I think, I have a feeling he didn't start in that area. He may've started in another area before he graduated to becoming a clerk, so.

END

Brian Dunnett DOB: 30/3/35



Brian Dunnett

My father worked as a belt repairer in Eveleigh. He worked through the latter part of the war period and up until the 60's, probably about 20-odd years or so in his case.

He was secretary of the loco picnic committee so Eveleigh was a big part of his personal life. The Railways in general was a pretty social life for people really.

The picnics involved maybe up to 10,000 people at places like Luna Park and the Zoo. They were probably the highlight of the year especially for the kids.

But holidays were big occasions too. Workers got these holiday passes and they'd take their one or two weeks off and go up the north coast together - seaside places like Taree , Urunga and Harrington. It was like the workshops were shifted from Redfern by train up the coast. It was a continuation: the same people together. Their social life and working extended into each other.

People had a Railway identity, very strong and the sheer number of workers was part of that. There were 7000 people working on the locomotive side and there'd be at least another 3 or 4 thousand on the carriage side and the running sheds..

The Railways was who you were.

END

Edited story highlights from Joan Kent Oral History Transcripts read & displayed at Field Day

Don Payne

John Robert (Jack) Bruce
A fellow disappeared completely from the foundry. He worked on the loading stage. The loading stage was a staging of equipment that allowed them to feed the furnace and then barrow loads of coke and pig iron and scrap metal were fed in. One day, this fellow just wasn't there after the luncheon break. His clothing was in his locker, all his belongings were there but not him. He was never found. The only conclusion anybody could come to was that he went into the furnace. I don't think he would have fallen though. He might have decided (it was the best way to go). Nothing was ever recovered. Not a sign…

Hal Alexander
By and large, the leaders of the Shop Committees were unskilled workers in the sense of 'unskilled' so far as tradesmen were concerned. But they weren't unskilled. They were highly skilled. For example, when you dropped a huge bogey with all the wheels out under it and then had to clean it and scrub it up and then had to grease and do it all up, the wheels had to be sent somewhere to be turned and fixed up and then re-assembled and then put it all, nice and clean, under the train so it won't cause accidents.

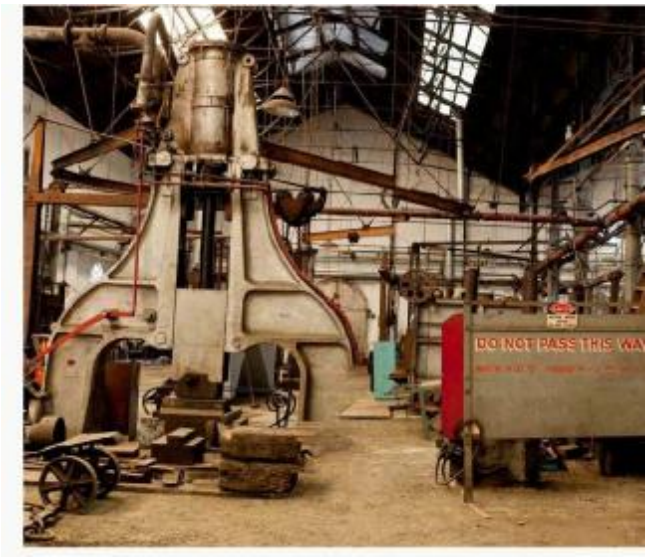
They were salt of the earth labour, human labour. The carriages were pretty bad, filthy. You can imagine the train going out to Broken Hill with people using the toilets and all that's got to go somewhere! And lots of animals get killed and the little ones got caught up. So when the train came in you had to get underneath and pull out all this equipment and for a couple of days , you had to hold your breath. Over at the loco site it was even dirtier..

The boss asked me would I air condition the Queen's carriage for the 1954 visit. He said, "What's your opinion of the Royal family?" This was his opening gambit. I said, "Them bastards!" He said, "I expected that from you but I was told to ask you the question. There will be lots of overtime!" It was a beautiful carriage: built about the 1900's. It's all the hand tooled scroll work. A lot of it is gold leafed. Even the Queen's shithouse is a great thing of beauty if you look at it from one point of view…
That was my great claim to fame. When I'd finished it, we had to go for a test run to see if it worked and all the larrikins got on the back and everywhere we'd stop, at every station, we'd all stand and give a royal salute to the mob..

A lot of people must have been injured in the running sheds because it was such a dangerous place – you've got the engines moving around and the smoke. I nearly got killed myself once crossing under. …I went to cross

Blacksmiths Workshop

Hal Alexander
I think it's rather common for railway blokes to have amicable relationships. They are a great fraternity. It's often said that you might leave the Railways but you never forget…



Blacksmiths Workshop

over from one pit to the other and these steam engines used to back and fill with no warning and I ducked down underneath the bumpers and I got half-way down and the bumpers came together over the top of my head…

There were always the smarties who always picked on a few of the others. If you showed any weakness you'd find somebody trying to make you feel silly. There were social groups, the boilermakers had a social group but they had a lot of drinkers and I wasn't a drinker. Luckily there was no peer pressure to smoke and no peer pressure to be up the pub….

Keith Johnson
We washed in buckets for thirty years and personally, it was disgusting. In the head office they used hand basins.. they never used buckets! And we were the ones out in the dust and grime and heat. I got caught washing up early once by these two managers. It was a big thing, a fella getting caught washing up early. They were pretty strict in those days. Imagine a manager wasting his time now catching apprentices doing that?

The sub-foreman in those days was God. He was the one you looked up to and he was the one who decided your fate/ If you got caught off the job you'd be docked fifteen minutes to half an hour. Or for something extreme, you could be sent home, dismissed for the rest of the day.

They had up to 10,000 people in these big organised workforce picnics. Families, wives, kids, everybody. They used to go down Gunnamatta Bay and before that to Neilson Park. They used to have running races and 'who could hammer the nail in better'…all those sorts of thing.

Bill Leech
"…it was close to the end of the war….and this is a strange memory of Eveleigh but when you walked out the top gate, there was this shop on the corner that used to sell nice food and he had Arnotts biscuits in there… Iced Vo Vos, Orange Slices. You could not buy them anywhere else in the metropolitan area except in that shop. You could buy broken ones or whole ones: we buy them and take them home. How he got them I've no idea. They were kept aside for the war normally. Whether he was doing something devious or not I wouldn't know…

Eveleigh was noisy. Every belt that goes on those drives – there was hundreds and hundreds of belts – and they flap and bang and go on and it was just this constant noise. Well, I've got industrial deafness now. I don't think anybody working in that environment could not get it to some degree. I can still hear okay but my wife would soon tell you that I've got it …I miss a lot of things she hears. She's always rousing on me!

Les Coghill & Richard Butler

When I first met my wife, to let her know where I worked, what part of the workshops, I'd put one of these little heart signs on the brickwork. I believe it was about 1956. It must have been good marking paint the Railway used because I believe it's probably still there, very faint, but it's still there after 35 years. Outside about 14 Bay. Between 13 and 14 on the railway side wall. It was still there 2 years ago because I took a photograph to show my wife it was still there. That's just one of the funny things Railway fellows do.

Blacksmiths Workshop

Hal? A lot of people must have been injured in the running sheds because it was such a dangerous place – you've got the engines moving around and the smoke. I nearly got killed myself once crossing under. I went to cross over from one pit to the other and these steam engines used to back and fill with no warning and I ducked down underneath the bumpers and I got half-way down and the bumpers came together over the top of my head…

The foreman was god…
There were always the smarties who always picked on a few of the others. If you showed any weakness you'd find somebody trying to make you feel silly. There were social groups, the boilermakers had a social group but they had a lot of drinkers and I wasn't a drinker. Luckily there was no peer pressure to smoke and no peer pressure to be up the pub.

Keith Johnson
Another club was the flower club. They had a good flower club in Eveleigh loco workshops. I remember there was some pretty keen gardeners. They used to bring in dahlias and all those flowers and later on, the shop committee used to have things for sale. You could buy your fertilisers and sprays and things like that. You were able to do it in working hours later on: though in the 40's you probably had to do it in the lunchtime.

We washed in buckets for thirty years and personally, it was disgusting. In the head office they used hand basins.. they Keith Johnson

They had up to 10,000 people in these big organised workforce picnics. Families, wives, kids, everybody. They used to go down Gunnamatta Bay and before that to Neilson Park. They used to have running races and 'who could hammer the nail in better'… all those sorts of things.

I remember he was an Italian, a good fitter. And a good fellow. I remember he said to his own mates, "Look, when you're talking amongst the Australians here, talk English!" I suppose he might have been a bit against those other fellows though: he said that when they grabbed the hammer, they 'choked' it. (They grabbed it up near the head instead of down the bottom and giving it a good swing) Looking back, we were all pretty tough on those New Australians. There they were…they migrate to a new country, they've got to get a job and they've got to make the best of it and try to get a job as a tradesman and some of them perhaps…they just weren't too good at it!

The first hand basins that were put in, perhaps on the western side…or the railway side of 10 Bay… those basins stood there for years without being used. They were locked up because the management and the unions never got together to form a common policy. The unions wanted perhaps ten minutes to wash up and the management wouldn't give them ten minutes… Those wash basins stayed locked up for years…