



## Book Reviews

### Wheels in Motion

by Andrew K Roberts

152 pages, A4 size. Card full colour cover; twelve colour and 169 black and white photographs. One diagram and 23 maps. Published 1998 by the author, c/- Post Office, Eton QLD 4741. (Phone (07) 49541206)

At last - an attractive general guide and introduction to Australia's sugar mills and their railways. This production is a simple idea, effectively achieved in a short timeline by a person of obvious enthusiasm and determination. The formula is straightforward: each mill was asked to provide a brief history and a tramline map. Old drivers and other tramline personalities were sought out for their memories and whatever old photographs could be found, and this material was supplemented with a current loco list and contemporary loco photographs for each mill.

Contact details for each mill, and details of memorabilia (including some mill histories) available from each, are useful additional features. It was all put together in a few months with the obvious assistance of the mills, and reflects favourably on the sugar industry as well as the author. Andy Roberts is a locoman at Farleigh Mill, and his book is intended to entertain as well as inform. There are 60 historic loco photographs, nearly all steam, and 97 contemporary ones mostly taken during the 1997 crushing season. There is plenty of interest, especially in the historical anecdotes and photographs.

It would be easy to be critical. As the mill histories and tramline maps were contributed by individual mills they are patchy in quality (as could be expected) with some contributions excellent. In other parts of the text, proper names are not always accurately rendered. Although providing a good range of subjects, many of the contemporary locomotive shots suffer from the scourge of the cane train photographer, taken in the lengthy middle part of the day under a bright summer sun, which means that most detail below the footplate is hidden in shadow. One would also have hoped for slightly less "muddy" photographic reproduction in many cases. Some basic information including facts about track gauge, route mileage, number and type of cane bins, and

notable operating, engineering or scenic features of each mill network would have been a worthy addition.

However, it would be churlish to make too much of these imperfections. The subject is vast, and the challenges of accuracy and comprehensiveness correspondingly daunting. No wonder that others have found the challenge too difficult. Andy deserves every congratulation for his enterprise and imagination, and for having done a good job.

With a limited print run of 500, those wishing to get hold of a copy of the book should not delay unduly in ordering one from the author at the address shown above. At \$36.45, you are paying a little over \$1.50 for each mill, which is value indeed, but remember to add postage costs for 650 grammes. Recommended.

*John Browning*

### The Australasian Railway Association Inc 1998 Yearbook and Industry Directory

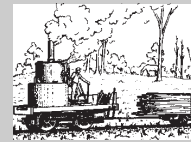
72 page magazine style all colour A4 size publication.

Not too many years ago, industrial railway operations in Australia seemed fairly severely marginalised by comparison with the massive government railway operators. Complacency and political strictures ensured that railways had a minimal public profile and almost no public sympathy. The advent of privatised and corporatised operators to government systems (or former government systems) has seen the railway industry emerge as a high profile and active lobby group whose mouthpiece is the Australasian Railway Association. This includes a range of "traditional" industrial railway operators as can be seen from a close look at this organisation's 1998 Yearbook and Industry Directory, which contains a number of the operators which are featured from time within the pages of Light Railways.

Although individual sugar mills are not currently members of ARA, they are represented by the Sugar Research Institute in Mackay, and sugar industry statistics feature in the operations data which is provided. These show that after the Pilbara Iron Ore lines, QR and Freightcorp, the Sugar Industry collectively transports the fourth greatest tonnage of Australia's railway systems (followed by the BHP steelworks systems) and has the third most numerous locomotive fleet. With 54 000 cane bins it also has more items of rolling stock than all other Australian railways combined.

This attractive publication, on sale at newsagents, contains much interesting data, and a wealth of colour photographs of an impressive variety of railway operations. It would be a valuable reference to give an overview of contemporary rail operations in Australia (and New Zealand). Recommended retail is \$9.50.

*John Browning*



## LRRSA NEWS

### MEETINGS

#### MELBOURNE: Annual General Meeting and Slide Show

After the usual brief AGM the now traditional members' slide show will be held.

Bring along a choice from your collection, but remember no more than 20 each!

**Location:** Ashburton Uniting Church Hall, Ashburn Grove, Ashburton.

**Date:** Thursday, 13 August at 8.00 pm.

#### SYDNEY: "Menangle Sand Company Railway"

Paul Simpson will be presenting an illustrated talk into the history and operations of the quarry railways of the Menangle Sand Company P/L.

Paul has been researching this topic for some years and has uncovered a wealth of information.

**Location:** Woodstock Community Centre, Church Street, Burwood. Woodstock is a five minute walk from Burwood railway station and parking is available in the grounds.

**Date:** Wednesday 26 August at 7.30 pm. Contact Jeff Moonie for details (02) 4753 6302 for further details.

#### ADELAIDE: "Tasmanian" Night

John Meredith will be showing videos of railways in Tasmania.

**Location:** 150 First Avenue, Royston Park.

**Date:** Thursday 6 August at 8.00 pm. Contact Arnold Lockyer for details (08) 8296 9488.

## MEMBERS' ADS

### WANTED

20lb/yd rail any quantity up to 8 ton; must be re-layable.  
2 lever ground frame.

Kerrisdale Mountain Railway  
Phone: 03 5797 0227  
Andrew Forbes

### WANTED

Film or Video, in any format, of narrow gauge railway operations, or pre-1980 standard gauge, for forthcoming video production. Terms of use negotiable.

Contact Graeme Belbin  
Phone: 02 9477 2994  
Fax: 02 9482 7303