

Ed Morgan

Working as a fireman and locomotive driver

Working at the Railway Roundhouse

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Track 01

I was hand-wheeling in the pit bottom at Rhondda [coal mine] when I was 16 when the war was on and then I sat for the Railway Exam and I was admitted to the Railway in July 1945 and I was there a fortnight before peace was declared in the Pacific. I went on from there, from a cleaner, I was there until 1947, I went out to Roma on an exchange. I was there for 12 months and came back to Ipswich in 1948 and fired in Ipswich. I was a class driver to Hughenden in 1956 and then transferred to Charleville. I was there for a little over a year, then transferred from Charleville to Laidley and thence back to Ipswich in 1958.

We'd better go back and get a few explanations. You said that you fired in Ipswich. What did that mean?

Oh - you fired the steam locos, I was a fireman.

What did that involve?

Well the old Round House - in those days if you were the fireman or driver of the steam engines - and Ipswich enginemens were noted state-wide for being the best enginemens because we had so much affiliation with workshops. The engines were assembled there and being so close, some depots only had particular type of engines. Ipswich had all types of engines, B18s, BBs, C17s, C16s, PBs, you name it, Ipswich had it, and that was how we became known as the best enginemens because we worked on so many various engines.

From there on in, it entails us getting engines ready in the Loco Shed and filling the lubricator for oil. The driver oiled up - you were allowed a 1/2 hour for that. Out on the turn table and then you went up to the pit and

cleaned the fire, blew the boiler down. The scale used to get mixed up in the water, you had to have clean water, otherwise when the engines used to start to prime and then that would wash all the oil out, the cylinders etc and make all the people's clothes dirty.

And then afterwards, go down to the coal stage and we'd take sufficient coal and then you'd start your journey, whether it be on a passenger train to Shorncliffe, Petrie and then later on, as time went on we worked steam engines to Toowoomba. Earlier than that, right from the early beginning, we worked through to Yarraman. We branched off at Wulkuraka, Toogoolawah, Linville, up the Linville Range to Yarraman. It was a pretty arduous trip actually. By the time you got to Linville, you were on duty for about 10 hours and you were looking for somewhere to lie down but you had to climb the Linville Range then, that was the hardest part of the trip all together.

You had to keep shovelling all this time - when you were a fireman.

All the time. Yes, there was no let up. If you weren't shovelling, you had the injectors on all the time, the water supply for the steam to be made to go down the cylinders to propel the engine up the range. We'd have 8 hours off then, and coming home wasn't so bad, it was all down hill, practically. By and large it was an interesting job.

The main thing I found about it in Ipswich was the comradeship. Sometimes it drifted away a little bit with the advent of dieselisation and electrification but by and large the men haven't changed. They were good men back in those days. And there are a good couple of lads in



The Roundhouse (courtesy Val Vogel)

Ipswich these days too. Good class of chaps. It doesn't change. They say times change, people change, - loco people haven't changed a great deal.

We've been assimilated in with the Traffic now. We used to be an autonomous body at the Round House. The workshop was under a CME. We were under a Loco Foreman and had our own autonomy. There was a little bit of jealousy there, we didn't like any one coming into our establishment and likewise with the CME.

The station also, was under the Stationmaster. We never saw those men at all. As I said, we were autonomous and we'd get the engine ready and take off and go to the station, we never came into contact with the CME much at all. We were always under a loco foreman who came from the fitters grade. The men appreciated it because you could align yourself with them because they came up through the grade. Sometimes it got a bit awkward when we went to the station.

I think it was in 1969, November 1969 that the Loco closed down. Men were apprehensive about going to the station because they were just a little bit uptight about being in the jurisdiction of a Station aster who had no affiliation with a loco man. But by and large, they got assimilated in and here we are today at the station.

The old round house -there would still be people would know it was there of course. There are all these palm trees growing there.

Track 02

They weren't easy days and on a Sunday night we used to light up all the steam engines.

What does that involve?

You used to have wood and waste to light them up and we used to light 45 up. There would be two of us on the 4pm shift - two of us, one to cart the wood and light the fires up and by morning, North Ipswich would be covered in a pall of smoke. How those people lived - I lived there myself, I was born there actually, in 1928. I don't know how we lived there with the pall of smoke, used to head from the wood fires and used to just hang a pall from Down Street through to Woodend. You just couldn't see the place for wood smoke. It was pretty arduous work too, lighting 45 steam engines up and two people. One chappy used come on at midnight, the midnight shift, the cleaner. The boiler used to take about, well that would depend upon the class of the engine but approximately 2 hours to get anywhere near steam, then you could turn the blower on and you could start to feed the coal in and get your steam up ready for the men who used to come on duty all hours from midnight until midnight the next night. We used to work 8 hours shifts there and that was quite sufficient too in those days.

You still remember the chappies that were there in those days and every time I go past the old loco, a few thoughts come back. You know you never forget. There is a park

over there, named after my grandfather in Smith Street. He was born in 1854 and there were a lot of Morgans over there and so the council decided in 1994 to name the park after my grandfather. I go over there and mow it or what I can do for it.

By and large the steam era it was good era. But there weren't too many men over there with tears in their eyes for the last steam engine. It might look glamorous with excursion trains but it wasn't, it was hard work,

We used to go to Grandchester and bank the Toowoomba trains over the hill. From Grandchester to Yarongmalu and down to Laidley of course and then back the trains back over again from Laidley to Yarongmalu and then you'd run down to Grandchester. Sometimes that shift would involve ten or eleven hours and you'd bank 14 or 15 trains over the range and well only little PBs and you never stopped, if you weren't shovelling coal you were rocking the fires down to blowing the boiler down. Coming down sometimes you wouldn't have to go right through to Laidley. You'd come tender first instead of engine first, back to Grandchester and on winter nights it was freezing.

They were all open, you had some sort of blind at the back but it didn't keep the rain out and it didn't keep the cold out. You used to have to press yourself against the boiler to get a bit of warmth. It was a job and we thought nothing of it at the time because we were there, bills to be paid and it was just a way of life. We didn't know anything else.

When the diesels came along well, we thought, oh this is it and it did make the job a little bit easier but you still had to maintain concentration, your concentration was still there, more so with the diesel actually. I have no regrets about it.

Life goes on and we go on and I don't think that sometimes when people say this. I say oh don't you remember this, I forget that I'm getting up there a little bit now too. I consider that they should remember, which is a bit facetious of me, and I look back and by cripes, you're getting up a bit too boy, now.

That's what life was all about at the loco. The boilers used to be washed out there, they'd have to wash 'em out.

How often would that happen? What would be a weekly routine with the locomotives?

As far as our crew was concerned?

Or as far as the particular locomotives. You lit them up on Sunday nights. Were they lit up for the whole week then?

Oh yes, they'd stay lit all week and then about once a fortnight they'd have to wash them out as a lot of scale used to form in the boiler and that scale had to be removed and we had washout men on there. They had big long rods that they'd push through the boiler and they'd wash them out and it was a very grubby old job actually, but

those men were there and they had a job to do and that was it. The men took pride in their engines. They think they're old steam engines, being a rough old thing, but men had those engines spotless inside and the gauge glass where you could see the water and all that type of thing and it was quite a pleasure to get on some of them. Some weren't really that particular about it and we'd say, why can't he clean this engine, but anyway we used to get to it and clean it up. It was quite good.

Track 03

The most interesting part of my life was out in Roma. I was there in 1947 and we used to work 165 mile to Charleville. In those days, it was kerosene lights, not only in the kerosene headlight but also in the gauges - like where you could see your water. Put a bit of white paper behind the gauge light so you could see the water bobbing up and down. If you could see the water bobbing up and down you were in trouble because they had steel plugs in the boilers and if the water got past a certain point - a drop down point - this lead plug is referred to as copper crowns, this lead plug would fuse and pour all the water into the fire and put the fire out and you were in real trouble if you dropped the plug in those days because it was a pretty serious affair. Sometimes it would burn the copper plating and what have you not.

I found it very interesting there, in Charleville. It was a long way from Roma to Charleville - 165 miles with a PB. It was the littlest thing we had but we've done it and it was just about it. Very interesting facet of my life, then. When I got back to Charleville, there as a driver in '56 well the same thing happened again, only they had the bigger engines from Roma to Charleville and visa versa.

Then we used to work from Charleville to Westgate, we turned right and then go back to Quilpie, 137 miles to Quilpie and they were bigger C17 engines, nothing bigger, and to Cunnamulla it was 119 but still PBs. They used to have to fire against an injector all the time - you had to keep the injector on while still firing. This injector to keep the just that bit of flow into your boiler. That wasn't easy work because once you get to Charleville, then there is a bit of a brow of a hill but then it was flat and you just used switch the regulator and your reversing lever and that was it, you could forget about it and away you went.

More times enough if you were on the Westlander, we'd have a water gin behind us and that was connected to your tender, just in case of an emergency and if we were running late, well it was a bit reckless, we used to climb at the back of the tender while we were going along and cut the water gin in and cut it into the tender so you miss the water tank and that would save a bit of time so you could get back to Charleville on time. It was a bit hair raising climbing at the back of the tender to cut the water gin.

That's the sort of thing you see in the movies.

Exactly the same thing. Yes exactly the same thing. But



The Roundhouse shortly before it was demolished

there, we done it and we dropped the fire down on the wing, they used to call it, shake the fire down on the wing they used to call it. There weren't too many watering tanks, Wyandra, Mangalore - there were only about three all told going through Cunnamulla. Oh very interesting part to see all the wild life over there, very different part.

The part I like about Cunnamulla was that of a night time, you'd get there at dusk, the cockatiels and cockatoos and all the finches and budgerigars they wouldn't come over in hundreds, they would come over in thousands, upon thousands, upon thousands and they'd just keep on coming because they used to feed on the plains of a day time and they'd come back to camp on the river of a night time then. Very interesting part of my life.

And then it was closer back to home again, back to Ipswich?

Yes. Back to Ipswich. I don't know sometimes why every one comes back to Ipswich but Ipswich was my home, you know. I liked Charleville and Roma, but in those days it was a little bit rough and ready. When you look back in hindsight at all those things it was a way of learning, an experience and a big experience. I like to think it held me in good stead all through my life. A good experience to get in those places at such a young age. When you look back and you say, "Did I do all those things?" "Yes I did." Interesting then and as I said a very interesting part of my life, yes.

Hughenden, we got to Hughenden and there were 52 of us back in 1956. We were all classed up there together, 52 drivers and they had a place called Hollywood Quarters. Oh it was a terrible place, but we used to work from there from Hughenden to Richmond and Hughenden back to Torrens Creek and then across to Winton was 139 mile and then I can't get away from PBs - there were PBs there again - and that was very hard work. Things have

evolved these days with the hard work gone but still the concentration is there these days, the whole thing has swung around.

Young drivers these days with the electrics, not so much the diesel, we could adapt to the diesels but the electric was just that little bit extra concentration and well luckily we got a lot of good young blokes in Ipswich and I can only speak for Ipswich. A lot of good young men. They will handle the situation right. But in regard to long shifts or too many shifts, I think it might tell on them as years go on, yes it might tell on them because you are heavily concentrated all the time. We had a chappy, I heard just recently, that came from Inglewood. Out there, you might see a signal every 20 mile and he came down here and said, I'm completely lost because you would have a signal every 50 yards and around corners and you have to see the road speed and with every signal, where you're going and that gentleman found it very awkward. I think he may find it awkward too. Other than that, that is just about it I would say.

Track 04

Tell me about the round house, it's not there but there is a lot of interest in it. What was it like?

Well we had four bays. The first bay they used to call it was for the passenger engines. They were the prime engines. Had to keep them in the first bay.

The second bay - the majority of the steam engines, the locos were in traffic there but the third bay was mainly for repairs and the boiler makers and fitters.

The fourth bay was made up of the steam cleaners. We used to have to go down underneath there and the pits and an engine was provided up the top to provide steam, they had big steam hoses and it was a very arduous job

and a very dirty job. They'd equip them with overalls which didn't do much good but they had to get in the pits and steam cleaned all the undercarriage of the engines prior to going to the shops for a complete overhaul. That wasn't a very nice job at all. You used to have the sand bays there.

Then there were the fitters, there were about six fitters on the day shift but in the 4pm shift there would only be one fitter and his mate, his TA [Tradesman Assistant] and then on the midnight shift there would only be one fitter and his TA. That's how the running shed got its name because they were on running repairs. If anything happened to the engine, lets say an injector used to put the water in the boiler, if it went and became defective or a big end on an engine were too loose, the bearings got too loose, that was a major job, that would be done through the day - but mainly minor repairs on the 4pm and midnight shift.

So the minor repairs and running repairs were done in the round house? The workshop itself would do the major overhauls? If something went wrong, day to day, it would be fixed in the running shed?

Yes but the drivers in those days had a manual, they had to pass an exam, how to take the rods off. Say if you were up at Yarraman and something happened and you had to work back on with one side, you had to disassemble one side and place the rods up on the engine and make sure you had one side not working against the other side. That's how you got home. There were many repairs carried out by the drivers in those days because you had to, you just had to get home, it was as simple as that.

You couldn't have fitters, because we had no transport. The fitters couldn't come out and that. Once the driver left the shed to go to Yarraman, he was on his own, there was no-one else to assist him with repairs. The driver - he was the main man. He'd make do with the repairs with the engine. Sometimes it wasn't too bad but we were always on the alert for anything that was to go wrong with the engine on your trip to Yarraman.

I think it was, if my memory serves me correctly, about 117 mile, I'm not real sure about that, but it was over 100 mile to Yarraman. When you got there you used to have 8 hours off, which wasn't very long - you'd be cold and frosty morning in Yarraman and by the time you rocked the fire out and then you'd have a meal and then try to go to bed up there - and they were frosty mornings up there. There was no electric blankets there. The majority of blokes used to wear their pyjamas under their uniform. By the time you'd take your uniform off and get in your pyjamas, you were cold again so the only chance you had was just wear your pyjamas under your uniform and then go straight to bed.

Just digressing a bit. Out at Quilpie it got that blooming hot out there that men wore very little clothes actually and the only chance you had of getting any sleep out there was Quilpie when the old DC3s would land there,

there would be red dust everywhere and it would be about 110 degrees. The only chance you had was the mosquito nets, at Quilpie it is a real hot bore, boiling hot bore. You put the mosquito nets in the bath and hang them up on your bed and try to get some sleep that way, you had no other chance otherwise. Hot breeze coming through you mosquito net would give you some form of relief. That was the only chance you had.

Those days, the main thing I found with men was only having 8 hours off, hard work and lack of sleep. Lack of sleep and you got pretty uptight. In my days at home, you wouldn't have a fan, the only fan you got was something coming through and by and large that was the worst feature of the job. Summertime, hard work and then trying to only have that 8 hours off work when you'd have to go back for another 8 hours.

Would you have to start the engine, the locomotive again?

There used to be cleaners on there and they'd have sufficient steam for you then. The cleaners, there used to be a cleaner on to look after what they called the fires of a day time and when you would come on duty you didn't have to light up, it was already lit up. The cleaner used to have sufficient steam for you, say 140 or 130 pound and you'd prepare your engine. The driver used to oil it up and the fireman would fill the lubricator, clean the injector screens - big screens from your tender to your boiler and they used to have strainers in them - and then you'd clean that because otherwise all foreign matter would get in the boiler and clog the injectors up and then you were in all sorts of trouble. But it took they said 30 minutes, but it took every bit of 30 minutes and then you were around your turntable up to the pit, rock your fire and blow the boiler down and then that was the most essential one of your engine preparation, blowing your boiler - making sure you had a clean boiler - blow all the scale out of your boiler before it got down in the cylinders and you'd get up the fence, go back down the old tin fence, down to coal stage, take your coal and then you started work.

After all that? - You would start work.

Some engines were very rough, very rough. Some you'd have to put a fire on, and stand back in the tender. The tender was always smooth. There was no movable parts. With an engine you have got the rods there and they were clanking and banging and what have you not and the vibrations used to go through you. Then besides putting the fire on, looking after the water in the boiler, keeping a check on signals, sometimes on a curve you would have to jump off the engine and go and see the guards right away and back on the engine again. There was no time to spare, but it was a job and we knew no better. The bills to be paid and that was what the loco life was all about.

A lot of those men, I recall, when the loco closed down, 1969 officially, November 1969. There were still fitters there, only 2 fitters, they were still there, checking, taking parts off engines and what not.

Track 05

But there is an old honour board there, it is now at the Tarpaulin Sheds the Historical Centre there. I was chairman of the AFULE at the time. I said to the person that was the leading hand at the time - I happened to be over there on the Saturday or the Friday before it was being bulldozed over. Here was our honour board, remarkably enough 1914 to 1919 and I thought 1914 - why 1914 - 1919? The war was 1914-1918 and then the thought came to us well as far as those men were concerned or the people who saw the wisdom of making the board, they considered the war wasn't over until all those men got back.

It was a beautiful big board, it is still over there on display. They were all drivers and firemen and I would say without fear of contradiction that that is the only loco board in Australia made up of solely drivers and firemen of the AFULE. I think there was 43 all told. I've never seen one and I've never heard one again.

I said to him what is going to happen to our board? He wasn't affiliated with the board like we were. He said it was going to get bulldozed tomorrow. I said, "What?". He said, "Yes." Well I won't tell you what I said to him of course, but I said "That is our board". Well he said, if that's your board, then you take it. I said, "I will." So Mr A J Collins living next door here and he was the secretary of the RSL and Mr Bert Trotner was the treasurer. I said to Bert, "Can we get our honour board?" - and I explained to him the whole situation. He said, "certainly, Ted."

So I got the next morning, a guard, an ex guard, John Kinnane, a great man John Kinnane (he drowned at Caloundra a couple of years ago). He had a Holden utility. So I said, "John, come and give me a hand, we've got a problem here". Well he couldn't offer quick enough. Off we went on the Saturday morning and we got the board in the utility truck. How we got that board in the utility truck I don't know. Some years later, I tried lifting it and I couldn't. But we did it and we took it down there and it remained there until just a few years ago when we got it back. It served its purpose there.

We had to find a home for it and then approximately 3 to 4 years ago there was Mr Graeme Bushnell, and his son Matthew, Mr Barry Murphy (they were all drivers) and Mr Len Collins and myself. We retrieved that board and we got permission from the RSL to retrieve the board and bring it back over the river again to its final resting place which it is there now at the Historical Centre. That's where it is now.

I found that very rewarding after being told it was going to get bulldozed under. That's how you have affiliations with things. All drivers and firemen and they do have other honour boards in Queensland, they have them at the workshops, but they were all fitters and different grades, but this one is quite unique because it is all drivers and firemen.

Track 06

With the old round house, once again there were a lot of people worked there, there were driver, loco foreman and clerks. All up I would say going back to 1957/58 there were 14 shunt drivers in Ipswich.

What was their job?

They were shunting around the yards. Oh we had a big shunting area and they were three shunting engines into the shops. But the rest were outside, on the bottom, up the north yard, south yards, the one you see there with the coal stage shunt and all up there were 68 main line drivers and firemen and 14 shunt drivers and firemen. I don't know what the extent is these days, I don't know the extent of the depot but it wouldn't be that many now.

The shunt drivers are all gone now of course, they're gone but the main line men at a rough guess there would be 50 drivers. They are all drivers these days because they have to be drivers because just in case someone falls by the wayside. Not too many firemen and the guards these days, they have come up on the engine. That was a little bit of a sore point for a while, with the Loco men being so used to the firemen and like east was east and west was west and never the twain shall meet. Of course we were an autonomous body and we didn't take too kindly. But as we go on there was a lot of good men amongst them too, the guards and they will do the job quite well enough too.

One of the terms you used - you talked about 'the loco' and you use the term 'round house' and 'running shed'. What is the difference between all the terms?

Nothing much at all actually. It was only a term. Some used to call it the Round House because it was a round house. A lot of chappies would come down from the shops, they'd come down to "the Running Shed" when they were relieving the fitters down there. The loco that was a locomotive - it was called a locomotive so it was called a loco shed. The running shed, envisaged running repairs and the round house, being round was a round house. The turntable, it was round and that's how the different point of view, name categories came into it.

I have a photograph here of this turntable? How did it work? When a locomotive came towards the running shed, what happened?

Well you set off the rails and then there was a compressor on the end, an air compressor. It was hooked up to the engine and the pump on the engine used to supply the air to the compressor. It was only compressed air and you spun around that way. You had to get the engine properly balanced also because you could have too much weight on one side and sometimes you might have too much coal in the tender and it would be different positions. Some engines were harder to turn around than others because they just weren't properly balanced. That's the main thrust of it was that on the turntable, the compressed air hooked up with hoses to the compressor there and that was used to spin your engine around.



An early photograph of the Roundhouse (courtesy Whiteheads Photographers)

So, they came in, went onto the turntable, spun around and went into one of the bays?

Yes that's right. Same principle and that's how it worked.

Were the bays covered over?

Yes the bays were covered over, just a tin roof. But there was nothing in the front of course. Just the tin roof there.

Sometimes there was more than one engine that fell in the pit too. Yes they finish up in the pit. I think there was an engine on there one night and somebody shut the cylinder cocks on it and that used to allow the steam get away from the cylinders but it must have been disturbing somebody because it was what they call blowing through- it was blowing through your regulator down to your cylinders. One of these chappies must have shut the cylinder cocks and the mere fact he shut the cylinder cocks it built up pressure in your cylinder and the engine took off, finished up in the turntables. They wouldn't finish up there too often but I can remember that one.

How would you get it out?

They had cranes and the fitting staff would disassemble it. The tender and the engine were two separate identities. They were only hooked up with a pin, draw bars. They disconnect the draw bar between the tender and the engine and they disassemble it and get it out with a crane. There was no worries then once they got it out.

Track 07

Those men knew their job too. The loco foreman, he knew his job. The first loco foreman I came in contact with, Mr Robert Deighton, he was the first loco foreman that I came in contact with in '45. There were other good men. They were all fitters as well, we recognised them as part of our way of life. One chap there, Alf Robinson was

a real rough diamond, Alf. Anybody wasn't doing their job, he'd tell them, but he wouldn't do the wrong thing by you, he'd stick by you.

Mr Barney Tracey. He was another loco foreman and he was a real fire eater, Mr Tracey. He'd stick by you too but he was a man in Ipswich that taught all the majority of fireman to become drivers in regards to breakdowns they call them. We'd get over there on a Sunday morning and we used to have to take all the rods off and he'd be there supervising, in his own time, and in the fireman's own time for our own benefit. He'd tell us how to do the breakdowns, take the rods off and put them back on. When you'd have to go for your driver's exam you had to do the same thing and an inspector used to come up and put you through your drivers' exam - you used to have to strip down the engine and check all the points and get us to do an exam - take the eccentric rod off or take a lifting arm off and you'd do it and remember what Mr Barney Tracey told you. That early learning came back to you. These days it's more theory of course but in those days it was more practical, it had to be because the theory part of the exam was somewhere near it in the steam days, but the main point was the practical side of it.

What was your training as a driver? Did someone come out with you or did you go to Tech College?

No. You learnt with the likes of Mr Tracey, the loco foreman who showed you different things. By and large, whatever you done, you picked up along the way. There used to be drivers there that would take you through the Westinghouse [the Westinghouse brake system] Mr Cyril Perrett was one of them. He was one of the past masters of all the young blokes there, going through the drivers exam. He puts you through the Westinghouse and then you'd have to, when the exam would come on, an inspector would come along, to interview you, you had to remember what Cyril Perrett told you in regards to which way the air travelled down through the air pipes and what purpose did the triple valve serve and all that

type of thing. That's how we learned.

By and large you were on your own. A lot of drivers were very good and they'd tutor you. Those days you used to have your own permanent mates and everybody used to see what their own who they would consider suited their flexibility and they'd work in with one another and it was a great affiliation with them. Some never used to have mates, some used to freelance but the driver himself would teach you, you'd see how he'd operate and you'd take on board how he operated steam engines and what he told you along the way and gradually a little bit would flow back to you and that's how.

It was more practical and you had to be willing to learn. There was no point being with a steam engine if you weren't willing to learn because they soon found out that you were, they'd soon shunt you off and it just wasn't on. To be on a steam engine, you had to be on a steam engine and willing to partake of that steam engine and be part of it.

I found out that a lot of chappies found it a bit awkward on an engine because they weren't interested. If you are interested in a job then it would make it a lot easier and it makes it a lot easier for your mate too and everyone got on famously. Some of the chappies you used to get with was a real circus, and it was just like going to the pictures with them. They'd tell you yarns and go on and it was a real bit of a picnic. Make light of the job. Some you get with, they make it very awkward. They'd open the regulator too far, and the reverse lever too far and all you did was work and you were flat out keeping time but when you get with the chappy who had a different attitude altogether then you could drive an engine, the work was still there but it made light of the work.

Track 08

How did you get over to work? Did you come in the worker's train? Did you live near the workshops?

Yes, I lived near the workshops. I was born over in Smith Street and then we moved over to Gulland Street - that was not far from the workshops. When I married I moved to Pine Mountain Road near Steinhart's Store. We used to walk around the back of the workshops. Pushbike in those days. If you had a motor bike you were going somewhere, and if you had a car you were made. One of my friends that joined the job with me, a Mr Keith Jorgenson, he lived out at Mihi Creek and he had a Triumph Motorbike and if he saw I was on an early job in the morning or any time during the day, he'd wait outside my place with his motorbike and I had a pushbike and he'd have a bit of a rope and he'd pull me up to the top of Pine Mountain, up near St Joseph's which was all downhill to work then.

A lot of people rode pushbikes?

Yes. When the workshops got out of an afternoon with 3,000 men there, I would say there would be 1,000 pushbikes. It was real catch as catch can with traffic.

Was it a real community in North Ipswich? There must have been a lot of people who lived there who worked at the workshops.

Yes, a lot of people who worked there. The mere fact of being brought up in that locality. My grandfather was a blacksmith, but my father was a fitter in the workshops.

The majority of the people, in those days, if you were around in that area you quite naturally joined the railway. It was as simple as that. There was a driver Fairweather there, and Bells and the majority of the men were all railway men too at some point of time. That was in Smith Street but on the flat there was the Stacks. A lot of Stacks worked there, it just escapes you as you go on. When you look through the old board at the railway centre you see all those name there now. All the names come back to you. There was Smith Stanley, he was number 1 on the board and all those names. When you go through them you think there is a story behind every driver. When you knew their little traits, one used to go fishing, some played cricket, golf was too expensive - you couldn't play golf. By and large you had 8 hours off in those days. You never had much chance to do anything.

Track 9

The arduous part of our job I thought was the 8 hours off and the department, well they're a bit more on side these days, the department. Some men were working, we had to guarantee the shift 80 hours irrespective of whether we worked 60, we still get 80 hours pay. The department had you working 16 and 17 shifts. You'd come to work for five hours and go home, 8 hours off and then you'd come back and they'd taken nearly up to 80 hours, we were working 16/17 and not getting a penalty for it. That was one of the worst features. Then we had a very capable secretary/manager, Frank Doyle who later on finished up in parliament. Frank brought in the 10 shift fortnight and that's been in every since.

What is that?

You'd only work ten shifts and then you were paid for the 80 hours. If you worked up over the ten shifts, you got a penalty to it which you are entitled to. Prior to the 10-shift fortnight, the department used to work you the 17 shifts and you didn't know if you were coming or going. It caused a lot of discontent A lot of discontent but that's been overruled now and I don't know for how long that will last. That came in, I was on the executive at the time, that came in about 1974 I think.

The main feature, I did a little bit of union work, only honorary work. I was never a full time branch official. The most rewarding part of union as far as I was concerned was back in 1976 when I moved a motion down at our executive, when I was a Queensland executive that you retire at 65 years of age. Those days, prior to that you could be 65, work there the next half year and then you could have two extensions. That was brought in during the war time due to the exigencies of traffic. But the war

had been well over 20 years and I thought hello, something has got to be done here. So I moved at executive that when you turn 65, you stopped.

You see - if you were born on the 1 July and you turn 65 you could work to the end of that half year and then have two extensions. Some men were 66 1/2 and still on the job. That wasn't good enough. There must have been a man of great wisdom (Mr Alan Lee) our commissioner, because when it was taken to him, it was taken to CRU - Combined Railway Union then and he said, 'I'll go one better, we'll make it all railway men, not only 65 and worked that end of half year, but when a man turns 65 that will be it, including the commissioner and that has been ever since. Since 1976.

It created promotion, it created employment and it was a wonderful insert into the railway award. Cleaners became firemen two and a half years earlier. Firemen became drivers two years earlier and driver who could retire enjoyed a bit of life. Some didn't of course, because that was their whole life - the railway. I think those men might be appreciated if they'd left just a little bit longer by the mere fact that they finished in 65 years of age. That applies now to everybody in Queensland. That, I found that very rewarding. That's just aside from all the hard work and all the little bits and pieces that was done all on the way by dedicated men. Dedicated men who asked for nothing but something to do for fellow man. You weren't too popular being a union man because some blokes tried to, they didn't adhere to them. When you had to regiment some men for the benefit of all the men, then sometimes you didn't make too many good friends, but that's the unfortunate part of it. Well we used to say, that was their problem, if they can't accept the right thing by their fellow man, their problem not ours. That was the main part, rewarding part of my life.

What were the amenities like for the people working around the Round House?

Nil. Absolutely nil. Later on in life we got showers and when you finished work, you had a big old tub. It was years and years before we got hot water, some old boiler there to provide hot water for the men to have a wash. The old shower left a bit to be desired, the old loco. The amenities were atrocious, compared to these days, of course.

People accepted it in those days, didn't they?

People accepted them, well, we didn't know much else. We thought that was just a part of life, a part of our situation until such time as we got moving and some men got educated and said this is not good enough, we have to do something about this and later on the showers were improved. It was no good having a shower after coming off a steam engine because you still had to put your old clothes back on again. So there was actually no point, but still a lot of the fitting staff and those gentlemen they could wear different clothes to work and then change into old clothes and do their work and then have their showers and then change into their good clothes and away they'd

go. But the loco man, well you had the uniform and that was it. You had a bucket on the engine you'd have a wash in, you had a tap on the tank of the engine you would wash in or sometimes you'd pull the injectors half on and get some hot water out so you could have a wash and that was just about it. We got by.

Track 10

Were you on steam locomotives all the time during the railways or did you move on to diesels?

No I moved on to diesels. I don't know, but I would say for sure that I was on the first diesel, it was a General Electric, that came out of the workshop. I was only an acting fireman at the time. That is going back to about 1950, it would have to be, acting fireman. There was an inspector called Lewis. He came up and I was on, they used to have a 2pm till midnight shift and I went over to the workshops with Inspector Lewis and I think he knew less about the diesel than I did. We eventually got to Brisbane and I would say that I was the first one in Ipswich to take that diesel out of the workshops and take it down to Brisbane to be checked over down there. That was the first diesel to come out of, I don't think they had any other depots, but that was the first one to come out of the shops. They called them "old chums". They were big snub nosed chums. You had no vision at the back not like these days. Those days they were just a big snub nose thing. They used to work them on a passenger train.

The steam engines, they were assembled there. They were a bit meticulous. If you got over there at midday, and the boss didn't like to see you sitting around, he wanted to make sure he got his fitters on the job to get that steam engine out on time.

Then there are the motors, they serve their purpose, I suppose the little runs. I was never on the motors. I was a steam driver, I was classed in '56 and then the diesel came in, well they were there when I came back from Charleville in '58 not fully, but then when we had the diesels up to Toowoomba which was a godsend and also up to Yarraman and that was the main thing with the diesels. So the hard runs, very hard runs, we could at least sit in the cab and shut the windows on the diesel and put your heater on. We thought we were the world. Then we came again another form of traction with the electrics. What is coming next, I don't know but I think this might be just about it.

Everyone is very interested in the restoration of the steam engines.

Oh yes it is very interesting.

Did you ever drive a Beyer Garret?

No. I never drove them. They were never stationed here. I think there was one here when I was out in Charleville. They used to be up in the Central division, on those heavy coal trains up there. See, there was no point in having them down here because the traffic wasn't here for them.



The Roundhouse can be seen in the bottom right-hand corner of this photograph. (courtesy QT)

I think they used to work down to Murarrie. By and large the traffic wasn't here for them. They didn't suit this type of working down here. Out in the central division, Rockhampton and places as Emerald, they had long runs and heavy trains and they used to work the mail, fair enough, but stopping and starting, it just wasn't on. You just couldn't work a passenger train with a Beyer Garratt, it just wasn't on. They were too big, too cumbersome and they didn't suit it. Beyer Garratts were here about 12 months by then.

One other thing, I haven't quite understood at the Workshops. They have got up in the workshops themselves, a little shed, the light 'em up shed. What was that for? Why did they have that as well as the round house?

Well when they used to have what they call trial engines, when the engine was assembled up in the workshops, trial engines, they used to have a lighting up pit there. They used to light them up and that was just to check that there was no steam blows and that was why the lighting up pit was there.

So it wasn't for steam engines going on runs, it was just to check them?

That was what it was all about. They would just light up the trial engines and later on I think they served as a bit of a shunting engine too. They just used to use

that for light up all the trial engines and there used to be two trial engines coming out a week, or overhauled or reconditioned. They were quite busy. That is why the lighting up pit was there to have trials running up and down the fence first of all and then check for any steam blows and then for the trial themselves, well the main line man used to take over then and you'd work it from - you'd pick it up from the Workshops and take them down to Brisbane. That was the main trial of the main line men. The shunting men used to just run up and down the inside of the fence themselves. Shunting men, they weren't allowed outside. Just wasn't in their province.

[Pointing to photo] That one there, that used to be the old Westinghouse shed there, but otherwise it was pretty basic the old loco. There are no frilly pieces there, it was all workable. It was all work.

Track 11

We had branch lines to Dugandan and to Mount Edwards. We used to cross off at Munbilla. You could turn right at Munbilla and go to Mount Edwards and instead of turning right you just continue on along the line and then go to Dugandan. That was a nice little run, scenic run to Boonah.



Excursion to Grandchester (courtesy Ed Morgan)

It is a pretty area.

Yes - if you had time to look at it. You'd go through Churchill and you'd go through Peak Crossing, Harrisville and all those areas there and you worked your way up to Flinders View and then up to Munbilla and then go straight ahead to Dugandan where you hold a set of points and then you go to Mount Edwards. Aratula in those days was a very prolific potato farming place. You'd get train loads of potatoes out of Aratula. Other than that there wasn't much doing at the line. Everybody knew it had to close. It was quite a redundant line.

Tell me about this photograph?

That was taken on the 101st anniversary of the line to Grandchester or Bigge's Camp. I must emphasise Bigge's camp. It was a pet theory of mine. I've been trying for about five years now to revert back to the name of Bigge's, its original name. I'm having no success whatsoever. The 100th anniversary of Ipswich to Grandchester or what we say Bigge's Camp was on a Saturday. Well that [photo] was the following year and that was on a Sunday. That black tank you see there - those black tanks were never supposed to go past West of Ipswich.

Why was that?

Limited water capacity. But I consider my mate, we'll get them back with no trouble, we're only going with what they call light engine. Just light, not carrying anything. In the 100 year anniversary, the Blue Babies were there, but no black tank, that was the only black tank that had been in Grandchester. We were on as required in the shed. I think we bought that excursion train up with that tank

from Roma Street to Ipswich and then we got an A10 engine ready, No.6 and we were to stay on as required. I said to my mate, Mr Bob Haidoff, we had better not go away, mate. He said, "Why?" I said those blokes are not going to get to Grandchester. How do you know? It is not going to get there. So anyway, about 20 minutes later, we got a call, they had broke down, and we had to come to the rescue at Rosewood and we took the A10 away while we affected repairs.

We took the excursion up to Rosewood, that black tank was never supposed to be there, never will be and never was again, and we took it back to Rosewood and they had to resurrect the A10 and we stayed at Rosewood the black tank and the A10 took off and they took me back to Brisbane that way. That was on the 101st anniversary. The historical society sent me some photos of the day and also a nice letter thanking me for the job I did in such a quick time and they sent me those photos and this would be about 10 years ago. They lay there from 1966 to (20 years) and it came on about the Black Tank, and I said I've got some photos here. So Inspector Shields, Mr Herb Shields, he became Inspector Herb. He said Ted, I'll get it done for you, so he got it blown up. It was in Grandchester for a few years until it was going to become unattended and they told me to bring it home and there it is now on the floor.

That's just another part of history and that was how it would be considered. It was no big deal in those days. We were there, the engine was there and all of a sudden it was c'mon Bob, we're going. We had it all primed up and we get the fire a shake, we had to get it all fired up. When the chappy from the Historical Society said by gee you're

very quick, I got a nice letter from him. I'll show you. I said yes, we're all ready, we thought something like this might happen. Then we got a bit of a speed run from Grandchester to Rosewood and they were very thrilled about that too. I thought the old Tank was going to fall to pieces actually. It was clanking and banging, rods were falling and but was as I said, we thought nothing of it. That was what life was all about.

A lot of things that we could have photographed, we didn't think things would come like this. We didn't think we'd ever see electrics and how fast we progressed.

Track 12

The Black Tank, they just worked mainly suburban areas. They were mainly stationed at Mayne Junction or at Woolloongabba. There was a depot there also. They were on little short runs. They came up from Mayne, up to Roma Street, back up to Darra, down to Roma Street, take water, out to Zillmere, take water, back to Roma Street, take water, out to Ferny Grove, take water, you were for ever taking water. They had no water carrying capacity. They were good, they were fast off the mark, surprising. They knew how to get in and out of the station. The trick was with those, that you'd fly in the station at 35/40 mile per hour and slam the brake on and after a while you'd gauge how much air you'd have to put on to stop the train. Then to take off, they were very slippery on the take off, and away you'd be gone. You'd be in and out of the station. That's what they were all about.

Then they got the diesels down there. But they served, just like anything else, they served their purpose in time and they were just like all of us. Serve your purpose and something else changes and away you go again. That was quite good.

My mate that day, Mr Bob Haydock, we used to call him George Washington Haydock, affectionately. He'd spin you a bit of a yarn. We knew he was telling us a bit of a yarn, but it was all in good fun. I think we went from Grandchester to Rosewood, I think the express time now is 13 minutes. The safety officer on the train, the chappy controlling the train, he said, "Mr Morgan your having an interrupted day". I said yes. "Give us a bit of a speed run will you from Grandchester to Rosewood. I'll tell the guard not to book the time" (Mr Billy Wilson is the guard) and I said to Bob, "Bang a bit of fire on, a good fire". We used to steam out of Grandchester and then you'd shut off then and you'd run right to Rosewood. I was still steaming at Lanefield and we went from Grandchester to Rosewood in 9 minutes. We cut 4 minutes off the express time and I can still see Bob – they had what they call pricklers. They used to be iron with a hook at the end and if you had a lot of green coal in the fire then you'd used to get the prick and rake it through the fire when you were going along, break up all the green coal so it would burn. I can still see Bob, he had a pipe and he was white, Bob, and I wasn't too far behind it myself. Now I'm this far, I

was frightened to shut off because it had got to the stage if you shut off completely, the pressure on the rods would start clanking. We just had to ease the steam pressure off the rods and that's how we got there. "By gee", he said, "we just made it". We just went home and forgot about it the next day, went to work the next day as if nothing had happened. Now we come along 30 years later and here we are. A very short space of time, it doesn't seem like 30 years. Time is nothing.

I was hand wheeling on the pit bottom at Rhondda while the war was on, and I went to college at night time. The exam was pretty tight in those days to get in the railway and I used to go and brush up on the college work to pass the exam. When I did pass the exam, there was a Mr Vince Smith, he was the underground manager at Rhondda. He said, Ted Morgan, I don't have to let you go, you know. He said the war is on, but I won't stand in your way. We look like we are winning, so you go. So that's how I joined the railway, a fortnight before peace was declared in the Pacific. He didn't have to let me go.

So you preferred the railways to mining?

Well, I could see, at that point in time, that the railways did always intrigue me. Being born over the north side, seeing engines going up the fence. I worked at Rhondda and lived in North Ipswich and we used to have to ride a pushbike down to the ferry. Had my own dinghy there, rowed across the river - In flood times and then pick up a utility truck., a chap used to pick us up and drive us down there to Rhondda. We worked overtime during the war, Thursdays and Saturday mornings. Used to have to ride your pushbikes out through Cooneana out there to get to Rhondda and it was a pretty long week too. When I passed the exam, there was only about 4 of us, about 150 of us sat and they took 4 in. Luckily I went to college at night time to pass the exam and that's what stuck to me.

I have no regrets. A few bumps along the way but that is par for the course. You get through. As I said before, I don't consider the chaps any better than they are these days, but it is just their tuition - the men that they can look up to and tutor them, that is the main failing I find these days with those young chaps - they have no one to tutor them properly. We had men, they were men and you looked up to them. Whatever they told you, you could rest assured that was it and you respected them, whatever they do and that's how we got along. That is the only failing I find with the system these days. These young chaps don't have the men to tutor them that fortunately we had. I have great respect for the men in those days. That is the way, another lifestyle.

(Looking at a photo of hyacinth blocking the river) You have a photo of the Bremer River, here, can you tell me about that?

Yes, that is my brother in the foreground there. He could walk across the river. There were frogs and snakes, you name it, they were there. And that's me there. I think we came from Sunday School in those days too, if my memory serves me correctly. That is my sister, Phyllis.

and that is my sister Ivy.

You could walk right across the river?

Yes you could walk right across. You had to be a light boy of course. That was Charlie Dancer's boat there. It was marooned there for months. They had a boom at Booval Butter Factory and also one at the town bridge, because they could hold the hyacinth in place. Then the farmers used to come down, there was a gully here. The farmers used to come down with their drays and trucks and we used to hook it out the river and it was full of nutrients, the hyacinth, and they used to, in very dry times, they'd just take it home and feed the cattle. And that was it.

Where was that photo taken?

That was taken at Gulland Street. That is this side of the Tivoli Bridge where the sewerage pumping station is. It has come back but they say those days, that hyacinth needs nutrients and in those days Redbank Meatworks used to flow in there and then the Booval Butter Factory, they used to discharge the milk there and that's how the hyacinth became so prolific.

The Bremer wasn't all that clear at that time?

No. It was a lot clearer than it is now. But the bulbs, they were big bulbs. But the hyacinth used to feed off the nutrients. That's how it became so prolific. It hasn't come back ever since then. I doubt if there are too many nutrients in the river now. There are too many poisons there I think, kill the hyacinth. That's just another little bit, where you don't throw anything away. Sometimes you think of throwing it away and you have a look and you don't throw it away at all.