

# 3801



## IMPRESSIONS OF A RAIL TOUR

Dale Budd records some sights, sounds, and thoughts on the tour to bring 3801 back to Sydney on Sunday 6th November

The whistle blows on 4601 and we pull out from platform 16 at Central. Caution seems to be the watchword as we drop down under the city, pausing as required by the regulations in the Underground and groaning upgrade onto the Bridge. The whistle echoes on the cuttings near Wollstonecraft and Way & Works' men look puzzled as we pass them at Artarmon.

So to Chatswood, where crowds throng the station and two 38's wait beyond the platform. Leading is 3820, clean and black and shining, the cleanest blackest 38 I've ever seen. Trailing is 3830, clean and green and an old hand at tours. We whistle our way out of Chatswood and set off up the Shore, determined to remind this peaceful population that 38's are in the district. Lineside cameras aim, children wave and cover their ears as we whistle and whistle and whistle again. A middle-aged resident of Warrawee, pajama-clad to buy his paper on a Sunday morning, stands bewildered, swamped by camera-carrying passengers at a photo-stop. Barker College students come to wave at us. On the parallel Pacific Highway a TV cameraman is chasing us in a car; chasing him is a motor-cycle policeman. The policeman glimpses the 38's; promptly abandons his pursuit and stops to watch the train go by.

Hornsby, and we say farewell to 3820. The exhaust of 3830 barks as we leave the yard, prefacing an exciting run for the following miles. We make good time to Cowan, drop down the hill; fishermen look up and wave as we steam across the Hawkesbury. A wayward interurban ends our gains on the timetable, and light rain begins as we cruise into Gosford. This is the way to run the electrified North!

3830 leaves, to take the following Flyer on to Newcastle in place of the usual diesel. For our train are two 35's, and we hear that to provide a balanced working these have been worked to Gosford on the up Flyer - what a sight to see. 3529 is leading 3501 - this is certainly a day for class leaders.

We steam on to Tuggerah, and take refuge to allow the Flyer to overtake. Photographers cluster in position for a passing shot; a plume of steam in the distance heralds the coming of the express. 3830 whistles briefly for Tuggerah gates, then thunders past, wide open and awe inspiring, in the best tradition of 38's on the Flyers. The scene is marred only by a passenger who, oblivious of all safety instructions, almost steps in front of the express.

On we go with the Nannies, Hawkmount and Fassifern banks providing photos. From Broadmeadow yard we can get a glimpse of loco, and sure enough a patch of green is visible - 3801 is there all right.

Newcastle, and 3096 and 3093 come on at the rear. Soon we're off on a pleasant jaunt to Toronto, although speeds are disappointing and the smoke blows the wrong way at photo stops. A hurried lunch and away again; Fassifern bank, threatened as a major hurdle for our engines, is surmounted with ease.

And thus we come, with much diversion, to Sulphide Junction, alongside the workshops where "01" has been restored. And here she is in all her glory, coupled to 3830, facing south, ready to head for home. 3830 seems dingy alongside the fresh brilliant paint on the streamliner. Clicking camera record the scene as the twin Pacifics back onto the train. And what a sight is 3801: numbers painted across the buffer beam in the traditional style now being superseded; new builders' plates and staff exchanger; and the almost-forgotten "Newcastle Flyer" headboard attached for the occasion.

We climb aboard, chime whistles blow and we are off. The 38's pick up speed slowly. After hoping, planning and waiting for over a year, it is hard to believe that we are actually travelling behind 01 again, the engine which was once so common on tours. Fast running follows, and the feeling of unbelief vanishes as we make a first class photo stop; for 3801 and 3830 the setting back and steaming forward is almost second nature. Southward we race, and the two proud Pacifics run faster with every mile. The stopwatch men report a mile and a half at 75, and engines and passengers alike draw breath at the water stop at Tuggerah.

Gosford, and fun and games begin as we shunt the engines so that 3801 on its own can haul the train to the racecourse. During the shunting the entrancing sight comes for a moment of the two engines, the first and the last of their class, running parallel and side by side.

In light rain we amble round to the racecourse, with derelict platform and rustic track, this seems no place for a 38. Its a relief to regain the main line with its solid ballast and heavy rail, although 3801, running tender first, slips woefully on the wet track as it struggles back to the station at Gosford.



Above - 3093 & 3096 AT FASSIFERN - What better way to fill in time?  
Below - Cameras work overtime as restored 3801 & old faithful 3830  
head for home.



3830 returns and the same combination is re-formed with 3801 leading. But some confusion among the crew about clearance points for signals delays our departure. Eventually the light shows green and we are on our way again. The stretch into Hawkesbury River is of little interest, and Cowan Bank is climbed with ease, unsurprisingly when one considers the load of only 194 tons per engine. Along from Cowan we speed past lines of stationary cars on the Pacific Highway, and I wonder what the Sunday drivers think of our 38's as they stand there, trapped in traffic.

Down from Hornsby in the gathering dusk, it's a pleasant surprise to see that people have come down to stations to see us go by. And it's not as if it was their last chance to see 3801 - almost the opposite in fact. It's a real welcome for the class leader.

Strathfield, and home tracks for 3801 in recent years. Its dark now, but who needs lights for the last lap into Sydney? If the driver doesn't know the road the engine surely does.

Redfern; a maze of red lights with one route of yellow, and we're home. Passengers gather to talk to the engine crews, a few hopeful men with flashlights attempt a photo of 3801 at the bufferstops. Cleaners move in to tidy up the cars, ticket collectors at the barrier reluctantly let us pass without handing in those treasured pieces of cardboard.

Its been a good tour - rushed perhaps, a little crowded at photos, and we often seemed short of time. But for my money its enough to be able to look out the window and see a green streamlined Pacific up front - and to know that it's my money that helped to put it there. Its been a trip I won't forget for many a day to come.

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#### FIRE AT HURSTVILLE

We were very sorry to hear of the damage to Eddie Oliver's home on 12th January. Most of the personal possessions of Eddie and his grandmother, Mrs. Edwards, were destroyed, but the Museum Archives were relatively undamaged. Eddie has been a most energetic Tours Officer for the last year, and we hope to see him organising once more when his present misfortunes are past; meanwhile, tours are being temporarily handled by Bob Schroeder and Peter Neve. Mrs. Edwards and Eddie have our most sincere sympathy.

#### DON'T RISK IT

In Bankstown Court this month two railway enthusiasts were charged with offences arising out of an illegal visit to Enfield Loco. late last year.

The moral of this news item is this: although your intentions may be harmless, an over-enthusiastic photographic excursion on railway premises could mean the start of a criminal record. Your museum membership gives you no privileges in this regard. Be warned: keep off railway property unless you have obtained permission for entry through the proper channels.