



Australian Canefield Locomotives (petrol/diesel) 2004



Tully #12 (Comeng 0-6-0 DH) at Tully Mill, 18 Sep 2002. Chris Walters photographer.

Originally developed by Chris Walters c2004 and posted with permission.

This information and related images on contemporary motive power, ie diesel and petrol engine locomotives, came from a site on Geocities developed by Chris Walters. It was rescued prior to the demise of Geocities and is presented here, albeit in a slightly different format, to preserve this valuable record of representative locomotives serving the Australian canefields at the turn of the millenium.

Use cw- or ex-Geocities as a search term in the Image Collection to retrieve a complete listing of Chris' locomotive photos ex-Geocities. Search terms for a particular builder's locomotives are indicated with each essay below.

Some photo captions may be dated, particularly with reference to the current location and status of individual locomotives, but was generally correct c March 2004 when last updated. Photos were generally taken in 2001, 2002 and 2003, although there are some later updates where the images were lost from Geocities. All images were taken by Chris.

Locomotive Builder Essays

Missing builder essays were never posted to the Geocities web site.

EE Baguley, UK (Search: cw-baguley)

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EM Baldwin (Search: cw-baldwin}

EM Baldwin, makers of industrial equipment based in Castle Hill NSW, was almost a

backyard operation. They entered the cane field locomotive market modestly with a number of new and rebuilt 0-4-0 and 0-6-0 units, beginning with a unit for South Johnstone Mill in 1961 that was later numbered 18 on the fleet roster.



Babinda Mill: Fishery (Baguley/RPM 0-6-0 DM), 16/9/02.

In 1965 the firm delivered 0-6-0 DH Bli Bli to Moreton Mill at Nambour. Here was a locomotive designed to offer better competition to market dominators Clyde and Comeng. Between 1965 and 1972 thirteen more 0-4-0 and 0-6-0 units followed, but Baldwin was still struggling to make inroads. In 1972 it delivered the first bogie locomotive to the industry in the form of Kilrie to Kalamia Mill. Although the unit and subsequent bogie units exhibited teething problems, here was finally the tool with which Baldwin would almost take over the market. Between 1978 and 1983 the company had no competitors in the market.



Mackay Sugar: #774 (EMB 4WDH), Calen Depot, 21/9/02.



Racecourse Mill: #7 (EMB B-B DH) North Eton, 22/9/02

Baldwin's final cane field delivery was Tully 7 in 1983, and by that time the company had delivered forty five bogies locomotives to the Australian sugar industry. In addition, one 2-2-0, one 4-2-0, sixteen 0-4-0, and thirteen 0-6-0 units made it into the market, either directly or via other operators and customisation

Of this total of seventy six new and rebuilt locomotives, only the pioneering South Johnstone 18 has been confirmed as being scrapped (this occurring circa 1975). Two others are also believed to have been disposed for scrap, although no confirmation has been forthcoming. These are Plane Creek 9 and a former Millaquin Mill unit originally built by Tulloch (002 of 1959) as a mining locomotive before being rebuilt by Baldwin in 1962.

Of the remainder:

- Stored and/or dismantled - 6 units
- Preserved - 5 units
- Available for service - 62 units.

Although production ceased in 1983, Westfalia Australia constructed a new locomotive based

on the official Baldwin patents and designs in the form of Invicta Mill's Strathalbyn in 1991. Despite this, a potential new era of Baldwin designs was not forthcoming, sadly. However, it will be a very long time before the last operational Baldwin locomotive is retired from the industry.

Clyde Engineering (Search: cw-clyde)

Of those builders who have delivered locomotives to the Australian Sugar Industry, perhaps Clyde is the most well known. Clyde were responsible for completing Australia's first locally built mainline diesel locomotive in the form of GM1 for the Commonwealth Railways in 1951. The company still exists today as part of EDI Rail and is currently producing locomotives for operations around the country.



Mulgrave Mill: #18 (Clyde 0-6-0 DH, HG-3R), 16/9/02

Clyde's cane field output were all 0-6-0 DH types, split between the initial model DHI-71, and the later, slightly heavier and more powerful HG-3R. The first Clyde built locomotive for the Australian sugar industry was DHI-71 model Hambleton 1 in 1954. This locomotive continues in service today as Macknade 16.

The first delivery of a model HG-3R occurred in 1961 with three units for Farleigh Mill, all of which still operate in 2003. Clyde's last cane field delivery was Isis Central Mill HG-3R No.9 in 1975.

Following this the company opted out of the sugar industry and did not return. Talled up, Clyde built eighty locomotives for the industry between 1954 and 1975; this included fifty six DHI-71 model units and twenty four HG-3Rs.

The disposition of the eighty Clyde units as of late 2003 is as follows:

- Available for service - 65 units
- Stored/Dismantled - 6 units
- Scrapped - 0 units
- Preserved - 2 units
- Transferred to Fiji (ex Isis Central Mill) - 6 units
- Converted to brake wagon - 1 unit.

Commonwealth Engineering (Comeng or Com-Eng) (Search: cw-comeng)

Comeng's first locomotive for the Australian Sugar Industry was Mulgrave Mill's 1955 built No.2 (A1001), an 0-6-0 DM that was first of a batch of five such units built for the mill at that time. South Johnstone Mill also received a similar unit at this time. Of these six locomotives, all except Mulgrave 4 are still available for service, the latter is stored out of use at the mill, yet could be returned to service at any time.



Invicta Mill: #1 (Comeng 0-6-0 DH), 20/9/02

The final cane fields locomotive from Comeng was Tully 18 (AO60113), built in 1977. This unit was re-engined in 2002 and continues in service to this day. In that 22 years, Comeng provided the industry directly with 75 locomotives. 72 of these were A or F series 0-6-0 type units, with an additional two 0-4-0 locomotives and a one off NA model B-B prototype in the form of Cattle Creek Mill 4 in 1977. This latter unit is still in service today as Racecourse Mill's 51 Finch Hatton.

An additional eight locomotives built for other operations also found their eventually way into the industry. Six of these were Queensland Railways DL12 Class Innisfail Tramway units,

which it could be argued were within the industry already despite QR ownership. The other two originally worked for the Aramac Shire Tramway and the Dept of Supply NSW (St Mary's) respectively. The former was a fairly standard Comeng 0-6-0 except that it originally was designed for 1067 mm operation, while the latter was a tiny model GA 0-4-0 DH shunting unit.

As of the end of 2003, the 83 Comeng locomotives that have seen service in the Australian Sugar Industry have progressed as follows:

- Scrapped - 2 units
- Rebuilt as brake wagons - 2 units
- Stored and/or dismantled - 5 units
- Preserved - 1 unit

Available for service - 73 units.

Of those 73, not all are employed in the regular seasonal cane haulage, some are held purely as back-up or spare units, while others are retained for use by the navy crews who maintain the tracks and railway infrastructure.

Eimco/Professional Engineering (Search: cw-eimco)

Eimco's involvement in the construction of locomotives for the Australian Sugar Industry lasted little more than 12 months in the early 1990s. That year saw the importing of Nyleta from Professional Engineering for South Johnstone Mill and the construction of a locally built unit for Fairymead Mill.

Nyleta caused untold problems upon arrival and had to be rebuilt by both Eimco and the mill, while the Fairymead unit proved to heavy for the mill's requirements so was sold on to Mackay Sugar for use at Farleigh Mill without being used by Fairymead.



Marian Mill: Gargett (Eimco B-B DH), 18/9/02

Later that year, the company constructed three new, slightly larger locomotives for Mackay Sugar's Marian Mill, which proved far less troublesome. During 2003 the Farleigh Mill unit (now known as 33 Farleigh) was transferred to Marian to join them.

All five locomotives continue in service today, however the increasing use of Walkers rebuilds and an industry wide slump will probably ensure no further locomotives are delivered from the company in the short term at least.

Malcolm Moore (Search cw-malcolm)



Mossman Mill: Stumpy (MM 4wDM), 11/8/03

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Miscellaneous (Search cw-misc)

Some more obscure builders have delivered products to the sugar industry in Queensland.



Mackay Sugar: #6 (BFC/Jenbach 6wDM) 21/9/02



Mulgrave Mill: 'Pie Cart' (Mulgrave 4wDM), 16/9/02



Millaquin Mill: Elliott (BFC/Hunslet B-B DH) 24/9/02

Ruston & Hornsby, UK (Search cw-ruston)



Fairymead Mill: #9 (Ruston 4wDM), 24/9/02

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Motor Rail, Simplex (Search cw-simplex)

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Mackay Sugar: (Simplex 4w DM 9577), 21/9/02

Walkers Limited (Search cw-walkers)

Being based in Queensland and eventually developing a speciality in diesel-hydraulic locomotives, one would imagine that Walkers Limited might have been a larger player in the provision of units to the Australian sugar industry from a reasonably early point in dieselisation era. However the company's first attempt to enter the market - a solitary 0-6-0 DH built as a demonstrator in 1956 - did not reap the return they might have hoped for.



Pioneer Mill: Aramac (Walkers 0-6-0 DH) 20/9/02

The company had to wait a couple of decades before their second unit entered cane field service; this being a second-hand unit from the Aramac Shire Tramway purchased by Pioneer Mill - the only mill with a compatible track gauge. The beginning of the 1990s brought about a change however.

Fourth Generation locomotives were beginning to be delivered from builders such as Eimco,

however the cost of these units was high, and Walkers, the Sugar Industry and other companies began to investigate the feasibility of converting by then surplus government owned units for cane haulage.



Victoria Mill: Cairns (Walkers B-B DH ex-WA), 16/12/02

This began in 1991 with the conversion of former Queensland Rail unit DH23 into Victoria Mill's Clem H McComiskie. Although this design did not find much success in cane haulage and instead is used for bulk sugar trains to Lucinda, over the next few years designs were refined, and dozens of former DH, ex NWSRA 73 and ex Westrail M class locomotives were rebuilt for the industry.

Such was the success and economic savings of these conversions that no newly manufactured units have been built for the industry since 1991. Instead, former government owned shunters have been rebuilt by several builders and mills at a fraction of the cost of a new locomotive.

The industry however, is suffering a slump at present [ie c 2004] and the last Walkers rebuild was commissioned by Isis Central Mill as ISIS 6 in 2002. While it is believed Tully Mill maybe in the process of rebuilding a Walkers unit for the 2004 crush, numerous surplus representatives of the DH, 73 and ex Westrail MA class remain in store at various sites awaiting some form of use.

At present, Walkers units adhere to the following dispersal:

- In service - 45 (incl 44 rebuilds and the former Aramac unit)
- Preserved - 1 (the original 1956 demonstrator)
- Stored - 24 (several in at least semi-dismantled form)

Eventually some of the stored units should see rebuild and recommissioning, however time will tell.

Editor's Note

The search terms indicated in this article will retrieve the photos Chris took in the period leading up to 2004.

Additional photos, both by Chris and other photographers, can be retrieved by using some form of the builder's name (eg Clyde, EMD, Malcolm, Ruston, etc.) a loco's name, where it has a name, or the mill name.

Remember that searching using a loco name such as 'Cairns' will also retrieve any photos where Cairns was the location. Similarly using a mill name as a search term will retrieve every image from that mill.

Unfortunately, the search system is quite simple and will NOT retrieve any images using a composite search term such as 'Mackay Clyde' when trying to find all of the Clyde locomotives owned by Mackay Sugar.