

The British origins and the transformation of work culture in Australian industry

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This paper considers the notion that ‘diaspora’ — a term generally used in relation to the migration of identifiable populations (holders of a common language and culture) from one place to one or more distant destinations — might equally be applied to ideas and systems. It is certainly true that — as a result of a physical and cultural diaspora from the North-Western fringe of Europe — ‘Australia’ was constructed as a ‘British’ nation in the Asian region; however elements of ‘British-ness’, introduced at different points in post-settlement Australian history, constitute another type of diaspora. Of these ‘British’ elements, industrial complexes have left a clearly distinguishable imprint upon the landscape. The case study that is the focus of this paper is the Midland Railway Workshops in Western Australia; consequently, the form of ‘diaspora’ being examined here is that of the nineteenth century British railway workshop.

Whether the complex was constructed in Glasgow or Swindon, 1840s, Christchurch or Dunedin, New Zealand, in the 1870s and 1880s, or any of the major railway workshops constructed around Australia — including Ipswich, Queensland, 1860s, Eveleigh, NSW, 1880s and Midland, WA, 1910s — there arose the industrial geography of saw-toothed rooves, cleverly designed to maximise available light in an age before electricity; above long, wide buildings divided into bays for tools and machinery. It is easy to imagine that, because of the similarity of the layout and the fact that British engines and rolling stock were employed, a worker could have travelled around the

British Empire and felt relatively at home in any railway workshops. Likewise, in Australia, the skilled British tradesman would have had little difficulty in fitting into the system of industrial labour organization.¹

The ‘British’ origin of skilled industrial trades and trades unionism in Australia

British labour historian Eric Hobsbawm has observed that the 1880s and 1890s saw the development of ‘a new set of strategies, policies and forms of organization for unions’ as well as ‘a more radical social and political stance’ that unions adopted in the ‘context of the rise of a socialist labour movement’. This was accompanied by the rise of ‘new unions’ of unskilled workers. These changes constituted ‘New Unionism’. Furthermore, comparative studies have shown that ‘New Unionism’, characterised by these features, developed simultaneously in other countries, but that the British movement was unique within Europe in one feature — the existence of a well-established ‘old’ trade unionism — comprising conservative and elite groups of skilled craftsmen.² In the Eastern States of Australia — or colonies as they were prior to 1901 — a similar development occurred.

Despite the simultaneous development of British and Australian trade unions from the 1850s, undoubtedly the most powerful influence on colonial Australian trade unions in the nineteenth and early twentieth century came from Britain, in the form of personnel and ideas.³ Many of the trades that these unions were formed to protect developed in the factories of the British industrial era; others, such as the stonemasons and coachbuilders, were much older, but likewise originated from Britain. Tony Lane states that working class attempts to organise against oppressive employers began with agricultural workers, such as the followers of ‘Ned Ludd’ (c. 1812) and ‘Captain Swing’ (1830s). It is worth

noting that 481 of the Swing rioters were transported as convicts to Australia. While these riots were among the more extreme reactions to mechanisation and declining working conditions, Lane points out that ‘resort to fire and the sword’ was not a typical response from a growing body of workers, the urban craftsmen, who preferred the ‘humble’ petition as a means of expressing grievances. Another method, favoured particularly by miners and textile workers, was the strike or ‘direct action’. Skilled craftsmen (such as cabinet and coach makers) so jealously guarded their elitist status that they ‘tended to see other workers as their enemy’ rather than the bosses.⁴ This was also true of Australian unions until the major defeats of the 1890s forced them to consider political power, and then arbitration, as alternatives.

Craft unions had been active in the Australian colonies since the 1830s and made early gains, such as the eight-hour working day achieved in 1856 by the Melbourne Stonemasons Union, and a six and a half day week gained in the 1870s. Australian skilled trade unions closely paralleled the British craft unions from which the bulk of their membership was drawn. Like their British counterparts, Australian craft unions protected their interests by ‘restricting entry through the apprenticeship system, by establishing wages and conditions of work appropriate to the craftsman’s dignity, and by providing financial help in case of unemployment, sickness or death’.⁵ Craft union membership tended to be politically moderate or conservative, although traditionally affiliated with the Australian Labor Party (ALP). Unions of unskilled workers, such as at the Waterside Workers Federation (WWF), were frequently militant and, — as the twentieth century wore on, — more likely to be led by Communists.⁶ The WWF fitted the pattern of ‘New Unionism’ in that it was formed of unskilled and previously unorganised manual

labourers in the 1880s. In most Australian states, as in Britain, unions were affiliated with independent Trades and Labor Councils (TLCs). Whilst the peak body in Britain, the Trades Union Congress (TUC) had been formed in 1868; however, Australia's peak union body, the Australian Council of Trades Unions (ACTU), came on the scene relatively late in 1927. Henceforth, the TLCs became the ACTU's representative in most states; the exception was Western Australia, which did not establish an independent TLC until 1963.⁷

Another Western Australian distinction was that, prior to the era of 'New Unionism', as defined by Hobsbawm, there was very little trade union activity. The WA labour movement developed amid very different circumstances from those in the eastern colonies. Upon its foundation in 1829, the colony had inherited legislation enacted during the reign of George IV, including the 1825 Conspiracy Law, and laws conferring illegality on all trade union activity, to which the colonial government added other oppressive laws that remained in force until the beginning of the twentieth century. Under the Master and Servant Act (1842), servants could be jailed for up to six months for failing to perform their duties properly. Convict transportation commenced in 1842 and continued until 1868 — long after its cessation elsewhere.⁸ Yet despite being denied legal status, the unions that formed in the 1880s and 1890s in Western Australia were not suppressed. Early craft unions included the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, formed 1884; the Locomotive Engine Drivers' and Firemen's Union (1885), and the Typographical Society (1889). The Fremantle Lumpers Union (FLU), the colony's predecessor to the WWF, and the first major union of unskilled workers in Western Australia, also formed in 1889. Five craft unions formed a Trades and Labor Council in

Perth in 1891, but coastal labour solidarity was severely weakened by strong parochial rivalries between Perth and Fremantle, and a conservative prejudice against ‘dabbling in politics’. Fremantle’s enmity towards Perth increased when the railway workshops were relocated from there to Midland Junction in 1904.⁹ In this vast, rural state, the Midland Railway Workshops would become the most significant industrial work force, a closed shop which employed 2,500 to 3,000 workers in its hey day in the 1950s and 1960s.

The Impact and Significance of Local Differences

Although the British influence has been strong in the formation and development of the Australian trade union movement, the appearance of some distinctly local features resulted in an industrial system that was unique to Australia. The compulsory arbitration system, adopted from New Zealand at the beginning of the twentieth century, permitted representatives of registered unions and employers’ organisations to argue their case before a Court President, without legal counsel. The distinctiveness of the Australian system was increased by the 1907 Harvester judgment, which introduced a basic wage — based on the living expenses of a married man with two children.¹⁰ This judgment served to ‘gender’ the wage system, as it assumed that women were not ‘breadwinners’; thus even females with dependents were paid approximately 50 per cent of the male wage, rising to 75 per cent in many cases in World War Two, with the first Equal Pay legislation being passed in 1969. The Basic Wage was for unskilled workers; margins were added for skills, thus reinforcing the hierarchy of skilled craftsmen.¹¹

This elitism was nowhere more evident than in the large industrial factories, including the Midland Railway Workshops. Many examples can be found among the reminiscences of

past employees.¹² At the end of the 1930s, Jack Emery's family made sacrifices so that he could train as an apprentice turner and iron machinist, because of a strong belief that 'they can't take a trade off you'.¹³ To a working class who had suffered bitterly in the economic Depression of the 1930s, a 'trade' offered security and the promise of on-going employment in hard times when unskilled workers lost their jobs. Apprenticeships, too, were part of the industrial system that Australia inherited from Britain. From 1901 apprentices' conditions were regulated by either State or Commonwealth Acts, under which the minimum age was lifted from twelve to fourteen years and the maximum working week set at forty-eight hours (except for farm workers and domestic servants).¹⁴

The second half of the twentieth century saw massive changes to the trades' apprenticeship system in both Australia and Britain.¹⁵ In 1952, the first National Enquiry into Apprenticeships, headed by Mr Justice Wright, recommended shortening Australian apprenticeships from five (or in some cases six) years to four years and extending opportunities for off-the-job training courses.¹⁶ Under the standard training methods — which persisted in many workshops until the 1970s — apprentices were expected to learn chiefly by watching their tradesmen and then doing the task themselves. Changes to the apprenticeship system in Australia, especially since the 1980s, have resulted in a wide variety of training schemes being made available to young women, as well as men, in a range of trades and occupations. In 2000, 31 per cent of apprentices were female, compared with 16.5 per cent in 1995. Traditionally, the apprenticeship system was focussed exclusively upon trade certificate or equivalent qualifications; today, it has been extended to cover all levels of vocational qualifications. Apprenticeships now range from a few months to more than three years duration, but the majority of trainees prefer the longer apprenticeships.¹⁷ Evidently, the

traditional, male-dominated, blue collar work culture — where status was determined by the practice of a skilled trade — has largely been replaced by a broader, more inclusive and less class-based system of vocational training. These changes formed part of the dismantling of the arbitration system that was the hallmark of Australian industrial relations for almost a century. A similar expansion of the apprenticeship system occurred in Britain, especially after New Labour gained government in 1997.¹⁸

Despite its overall homogeneity, there are marked regional differences in Australia; however, to present an overall picture of how these changes impacted on the blue-collar work force is beyond the scope of this paper. The remainder will, therefore, concentrate on worker's responses to one set of changes in one particular workplace — the change from steam to diesel, which occurred in the 1960s and 1970s.

The Impact of Changing Technology at the Midland Railway Workshops

In its role as the foremost trainer of industrial apprentices in Western Australia, the Midland Workshops was the largest of only three or four major factories where boys learned a range of trades such as blacksmithing, boiler-making, fitting, mechanical and electrical engineering, machining, coach building and carpentry. These were skills required to build and repair locomotive engines and rolling stock, but which also fitted the men for a wide range of trades outside the railways. The Workshops was a tightly knit community, within which a range of sub-communities, centred on the different trades, thrived in a proud and highly competitive working culture. Kathy Bell observed of the Midland Workshops employees:

... a large proportion of the craftsmen [during the inter-war period], especially the older men, were immigrants from Britain. This would explain the apparent similarity between the attitudes

and customs of the workshops' tradesmen and those of the 'respectable' section of the British working class.¹⁹

Bell suggested further evidence of British influence in the closed shop that existed at the Workshops and in the dominance of 'moderate' views. The so-called 'Communitistic crowd' were a small minority.²⁰

During the two decades between 1960 and 1980, major changes occurred in the Workshops: dieselisation; the phasing out of steam locomotives; the use of metal, rather than wood in the construction of rolling stock, and the adoption of new technologies such as bulk wagons. This meant that some trades either disappeared or became much less significant in the scheme of things, whilst others grew in prominence. Related to these changes was the re-structuring and shortening of the apprenticeship system. Surprisingly, during all this change, no major strike erupted in the Workshops.²¹

When the steam locomotives were phased out at Midland, many of the workmen genuinely regretted their loss. Lucas Pitsikas, a Planner in the Boiler Shop in 1950 when the process of introducing diesel engines commenced, spent fifteen months in England studying designs for diesel engines. While he, understandably, was very positive about dieselisation, he recalled that some workers left because of the change. Most received on-the-job training in handling diesels but the more ambitious augmented their practical work with study at night school, where Pitsikas taught tradesmen up to the level of foremen. Courses were available at the Railway Institute or at the Perth Technical College, where the lecturers included UWA staff and the courses adequately covered the requirements for both tradesmen and theorists in the changeover from steam to diesel.²²

Neil McDougall, who began as an apprentice fitter in 1961, and worked through the end of the steam era, recalled the fitting shop as being:

... divided virtually into two halves ... a diesel shop that only did diesels and probably only about a quarter of the tradesmen worked in that. The majority of the work going through the fitting shop was steam engines, and probably 100 out of 150 men were engaged in steam engines, and they were men who were experts in their trade; some of them would have worked there for 30 or 40 years ...²³

McDougall recalled a dichotomy in the fitting trade, which occurred because, 'the old steam fitters didn't want to know about [diesels] ... [and] the young diesel fitters didn't want to know about steam'. Furthermore, the poor quality of many of the early diesels did not endear them to the 'old' tradesmen. The 48S class had been designed 'using a British Navy submarine engine as a basis' and as a result 'for ten years they gave nothing but trouble'.²⁴ Eventually, as the technology improved, it was a different story. Steam locomotives required continual maintenance. Although diesel engines required a greater degree of high precision work, once the problems with early models were overcome, their reliability meant that they did not need to be overhauled or repaired nearly as frequently as steam locomotives.²⁵

One of the trades most affected by the transition was that of boilermaker. Steve Smith, who began as an apprentice boilermaker in 1972, because he wanted to learn about steam engines, recalled:

[B]oilmakers ... were the king, they were the guys who built these steam engines and the fitters just used to fit the components, you know ... With the demise of steam, boilermakers now were structural workers. We were building wagons and bridges and all sorts of things. [With] diesel engines, the fitters became king. Now, we [boilermakers] used to call fitters boilermakers with their brains bashed out, and blacksmiths [we regarded as being] boilermakers who couldn't quite make the grade. Yeah, there was a lot that used to go on about which trade was more important or more skilled or more craft-like than the other, but I think it was during this period of transition from steam to diesel that the whole hierarchal structure of the Workshops changed. [Some trades vanished completely, for example] the ladders, the guys who used to lag steam locomotive boilers. With no steam there was no work. You saw other trades such as electronics begin to emerge; in the steam days there were no electronics. So you had this major shift occurring.²⁶

The changing technology also affected blacksmiths. When a steam 'loco' came in for a refit, everything had to be cut off with an oxyacetylene torch, con rods lengthened or shortened, the wheels fitted with new tyres that had to be shrunk on by the blacksmiths before being machined. Initially, nothing ever fitted, so every little bracket had to be machined to fit. Consequently, the change to diesels meant a steep decline in the range of tasks performed by blacksmiths. According to Don Underdown, a blacksmith at the Workshops from 1949 until 1993, once the 'steamies' went, the number of blacksmiths operating individual fires in the main shop was reduced from eighty-seven to nineteen.

The effect of the removal of their craft status was devastating for some workers, but blacksmiths were able to 'reinvent' themselves. The Workshops began replacing old wooden wagons with aluminium ones; thus work that had traditionally required carpenters' skills became blacksmiths' work.²⁷ Dieselisation brought in another change, perhaps more subtle but nevertheless very much in the tradesmen's consciousness. Although the Workshops continued to manufacture items ranging from heavy machinery and bridge girders to small precision tools, and undertook repair of diesel locomotives, new diesel engines were imported — not manufactured on site as the steam locomotives had been.²⁸ Thus a new trades elite arose. According to Bill Kirkham, the Workshops' last Master of Apprentices, the most promising applicants were encouraged to take up apprenticeships as electrical fitters.²⁹

Another possible side effect of the destruction of trades and trade status was the rise in violent incidents during initiation ceremonies and pranks at Workshops. Historically, apprentices had been subjected to pranks and initiations, which were often humiliating but seldom life threatening. From the 1970s until the 1990s, there were

incidents of apprentices being suspended from a crane in a cruciform position and pelted with rubbish, threatened with rape, and having their genitals smeared with fibre-glass resin, which caused severe burns.³⁰ The rituals certainly were grounded in British industrial tradition. In his classic book, *Life in a Railway Factory*, first published in 1915, Alfred Williams described similar experiences endured by apprentices at Swindon — though it was sometimes psychological, rather than physical, cruelty.

The boys were always frightened at the thought of one painful ordeal, which they were told they would have to undergo. They were seriously informed by their new mates in the shed that they would have to be branded on the back parts with a hot iron stamp containing the initials of the railway company [GWR], and very many youngsters firmly believed the tale and awaited the operation with dreadful suspense. As time went on, however, and they were not sent for to the offices, they came to discredit the story and smiled at their former credulity.³¹

Williams also mentioned pranks very similar to those experienced at Midland, whereby unsuspecting apprentices were sent to the engine-house for a ‘bucket of blast’ or a ‘toe punch’ — the latter being a kick in the backside.³²

Steve Smith, who worked with both ‘old’ and ‘new’ tradesmen at Midland, imputed the rise in violence largely to the frustrations brought about by changing circumstances — the move from an old craft-based system where value was placed in the skill of an individual to a mass-produced product created under assembly line conditions. Consequently, he believed, the younger tradesmen lost their respect for the craft and adopted a careless attitude to their work. The discipline on the shop floor declined and this was reflected in initiations ‘getting out of control’.³³

Did similar shifts occur elsewhere in Australia, in English-speaking nations overseas and in Britain itself?

To return to the theme introduced at the beginning, this paper will conclude with the question of whether these trends were reflected elsewhere. Technological change at

Midland roughly paralleled that in the Eastern States and overseas. Lucy Taksa has observed that, from the mid-1950s, ‘technological change associated with dieselisation’ at Eveleigh Workshops, Sydney, ‘led to a gradual decline in Eveleigh’s workforce, so that only 300 remained by the time the shops were closed in 1989.’³⁴ According to records, Midland staff numbers appear to have peaked at 3059 in 1957, with the highest number of apprentices (557) also being registered in that year. This figure included 206 salaried staff. In 1989, although the salaried staff numbers were only slightly fewer at 196, ‘blue collar’ numbers had dropped to 949 — about one-third of the 1957 number.³⁵ Addington Railway Workshops, at Christchurch, New Zealand, was constructing its own diesel engines during the 1960s, having built twenty-six shunter Dsc class engines between 1962 and 1967. Like Midland, staff numbers at Addington were severely reduced during the 1980s, and the Workshops closed in 1991.³⁶ While much of the trauma of ‘downsizing’ occurred in Australia and New Zealand after dieselisation, in Britain, the introduction of diesel engines in the mid to late 1950s was soon overshadowed by the 1963 Beeching recommendation to close as much as one third of all British railway lines.³⁷ An underlying factor in these reductions, however, was that governments in each country — whatever their political persuasion — saw road transport, rather than rail, as the way of the future. In Western Australia, non-Labor governments, in particular, pursued a policy of closing railway lines, including suburban commuter routes, but this policy was not to be the downfall of the Midland Railway Workshops; rather, it was the preference for privatisation, embraced by both sides of politics in the 1980s and 1990s.

Conclusion

Using the Midland Railway Workshops in Western Australia as a case study, this paper has examined the concept of Diaspora within the British Empire, with an emphasis on the way in which one particular form of ‘Britishness’ — the system of industrial trades — was both contested by and incorporated into community and self-identities within Australia. It has posited the theory that, while many features of the industrial system were, indeed, introduced from Britain, they were changed by local innovations such as arbitration. Furthermore, many developments — in particular reforms won by unions, such as the eight-hour day — occurred contemporaneously with, or even ahead of, similar developments in Britain. A brief comparison of railway workshops in Britain, New Zealand and the Eastern and Western States of Australia suggests that there are enough similarities in origin, work culture, physical structures and industrial organisation (including trades skills, apprentices and unions) to indicate the dispersion of a culture that had a common place or beginning — that is, a diaspora of British industrial culture.

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ENDNOTES

¹ As an illustration of this point, a past employee of the Midland Railway Workshops, who had completed his apprenticeship training in the latter part of the twentieth century, on seeing a photograph of the Swindon Workshops (c. 1915) remarked, ‘That’s just like Midland’.

² E. J. Hobsbawm, ‘The “New Unionism” Reconsidered’ in W. J. Mommsen & H-G Husung, eds, *The Development of Trade Unionism in Great Britain and Germany, 1880-1914*, (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1985), 13.

³ For example, Tom Mann, a leader of the 1889 London dock strike, spent several years in Australia, and visiting labour men included Ben Tillett and Kier Hardie. Many union leaders, including Mann, Tom Walsh and W.P. Earsman were British-born and, in some cases, were seasoned unionists by the time they arrived in Australia.

⁴ Tony Lane, *The Union makes us strong. The British Working Class, its Trade Unionism and Politics*, (Arrow Books, 1974), 34-36.

⁵ I. Turner, *Industrial Labour and Politics. The dynamics of the Labour movement in Eastern*

Australia 1900-1921, Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1979), 7.

⁶ See, for example, S. Macintyre, *Militant. The life and times of Paddy Troy*, (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1984). Troy was a prominent communist and militant union leader in Western Australia.

⁷ B. Oliver, *Unity is Strength. A history of the Australian Labor Party and the Trades and Labor Council in Western Australia*, (Perth: API Books, 2003), chapter 9.

⁸ I. H. vanden Driesen, 'The Evolution of the Trade Union Movement in Western Australia' in *A New History of Western Australia*, ed. C. T. Stannage, (Nedlands WA: UWA Press, 1981), 370; A. Gill, *Convict Assignment in Western Australia. The Parkhurst 'Apprentices' 1842-1851*, (Bayswater, WA: Blatellae Books, 2004); J. Williams, *The First Furrow*, (Willagee, WA: Lone Hand Press, 1976), 7-17.

⁹ B. Oliver, *Unity is Strength*, Ch 1.

¹⁰ S. Macintyre (1998), 'Basic Wage' in *The Oxford Companion to Australian History*, ed. G. Davison, J. Hirst & S. Macintyre, eds, (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1998), 62.

¹¹ See, for example: T. Sheridan, *Mindful Militants. The Amalgamated Engineering Union in Australia, 1920-72*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 57, 155.

¹² Between 1998 and 2004, the Midland Workshops History Project interviewed over 100 past employees. These interviews were lodged in the J. S. Battye Library's Oral History archive in the Alexander Library Building, Perth.

¹³ Jack Emery, 'Learning a trade: Memories of an Apprentice Turner and Iron Machinist, 29 January 1940 to 1 April 1945' in *Papers in Labour History No. 25, September 2001, The WAGR/Westrail Workshops at Midland, 1904-1994* ed. B. Oliver, 10.

¹⁴ NCVER, 'Australian Apprenticeships: Research at a glance', www.ncver.edu.au/research/proj2/mk0008/milestone.htm, accessed 28 November 2003.

¹⁵ For material on changes to the apprenticeship system in Britain since the 1970s, see, for example: A.L. Booth & S.E. Satchell, 'Apprenticeships and Job Tenure', *Oxford Economic Papers*, vol. 46 (1994), 676-95; Jonathan Payne, 'The changing meaning of skill and its implications for UK vocational education and training policy' (1999), and 'National Skills Task Force issues final report' (2000), *ironline: European industrial relations observatory on-line* <http://www.eiro.eurofound.ie/> accessed 27 April 2004.

¹⁶ NCVER: 'Australian apprenticeships'.

¹⁷ NCVER, 'Australian Apprenticeships'.

¹⁸ Jonathan Payne 'Government seeks to expand and revitalise modern apprenticeships' (2002), *ironline: European industrial relations observatory on-line* <http://www.eiro.eurofound.ie/> accessed 27 April 2004.

¹⁹ K. Bell, 'The Midland Junction Railway Workshops, 1920 to 1939', *Studies in Western Australian History XI; Western Australia between the war 1919-1939*, ed. J. Gregory, June 1990, 35.

²⁰ Bell, 35.

²¹ L. Layman, 'Labour Organisation at the Workshops: an industrial stronghold for the Unions' in P. Bertola & B. Oliver, eds, *The Midland Railway Workshops*, (publication currently being negotiated with an expected publication date of 2005).

²² L. Pitsikas, interviewed by G. O'Hanlon, 17 December 1997 and 7 January 1998. Pitsikas was a Planner in the Boiler Shop then, became Works Manager in 1968, CME 1976-80 when he retired

²³ Neil McDougall, interviewed by Bonnie Mitchell, 12 March 2003, Midland Workshops History Project Archives (to be lodged with Battye Library Oral History collection).

²⁴ McDougall, interview. See also, Nic Doncaster, 'The Crossley Engine', <http://users.chariot.net.au/~nidoncas/nicspages/crossley.htm>, accessed 28 April 2004 for a more detailed discussion of the problems of these early diesel engines.

²⁵ Don Manning, interviewed by the author, 24 September 2003.

²⁶ Steve Smith, interviewed by Maxine Milne, 24 February 2003.

²⁷ Don Underdown, interviewed by Maxine Milne, January-February 2002. For details of the decline in numbers of apprentices taken into these trades and increases in the newer trades, such as electrical fitters, see B. Oliver, 'Transforming labour' at the Westrail Workshops, Midland WA, 1940s and 1990s' in B. Bowden & J. Kellett, eds, *Transforming Labour. Work, Workers, Struggle and Change, Proceedings of the Eighth National Labour History Conference, Brisbane, 3-5 October 2003*, Brisbane Labour History Association, 2003, pp. 247-52.

²⁸ Don Manning, interview 24 September 2003.

²⁹ Bill Kirkham, conversation with the author, 25 March 2004.

³⁰ Individual incidents at the Midland Workshops are described in B. Oliver, 'The Peanut King and other pranks', a paper presented to the Joint UK/Australian Labour History Conference, Manchester University, 16-18 July 2003; also Mae Jean Parker, interviewed by Helma Lowande, 20 March 2003; Smith, interview.

³¹ A. Williams, *Life in a Railway Factory*, (Allan Sutton Publishing Ltd, 1986), 243.

³² Williams, 253.

³³ Steve Smith, interview with Maxine Milne, 24 February 2003.

³⁴ Lucy Taksa, 'Spatial practices and struggle over ground at Eveleigh Railway Workshops', in P. Griffiths & R. Webb, eds, *work. Organisation. Struggle. Papers from the seventh national labour history conference. Held at the Australian National University, Canberra, April 19-21, 2001*, Australian Society for the Study of Labour History, Canberra Region Branch, 2001, p. 231.

³⁵ Midland Railway Workshops Staff Ledger 1940-1966, held by the Midland Workshops History Project; also *Annual Report of the Western Australian Government Railways, 1921-1994*.

³⁶ 'Addington Railway Workshops' <http://www.embassy.orgn.nz/awsh3.htm> accessed 28 April 2004. The author identifies himself only as a former tradesman at the Workshops.

³⁷ 'A History of Rail transport in Great Britain', http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_British_railway_system#The_railways_in_the_post-war_world, accessed 28 April 2004.