

Bill Webb's 30th Anniversary

All Aboard Modellbahn at Mittagong in the NSW Southern Highlands was closed for the day as family and friends celebrated with Bill and Marj Webb on their 30th anniversary of being commercially involved in the model railway hobby. The day, which was MC'd by Vic Bernasconi, opened with a railway themed musical interlude by the 'Webb Family Orchestra'. The simple ceremony then saw Bill pass the chair over to his daughter Christine and Marj pass the key of the business over to Victor. Bill and Marj were then presented with a memorial plaque specially made by staff member Charles Watkins. Afterwards all the invited guests enjoyed the light refreshments and the company of the Webbs at a barbeque.

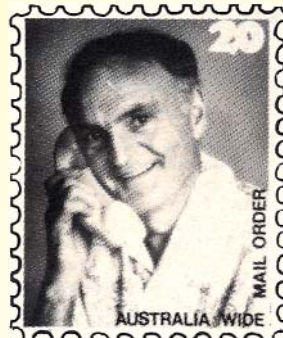
Like a number in the hobby in the early 1970s Bill Webb, a Fleischmann fanatic, was having difficulty in getting the locomotives and rollingstock he wanted for his own hobby needs. Again, like many, he chose to import his requirements direct from Europe and, after stepping down from the banking industry, he made the first importation to his Figtree residential address. Over time Bill imported not only to satisfy his own needs but also helped many others who were also frustrated by the lack of the marque on the local scene. To cope with this Bill, and wife Marj, commenced a mail order business advertised through the pages of AMRM and, with his photo part of the public image of 'Bill Webb Mail Order', he became a well known personality in a very short time.

With demand for his imported products increasing Bill obtained the Fleischmann franchise for Australasia and, under the new organisation

Euromodel Distributors, commenced supplying the trade with this famous German product.

The Webbs also became well known on the busy exhibition scene; Bill always seemed to appear with a new operating layout at each event. It was at the exhibitions that we also met Marj and their three daughters. The youngest would eventually meet a young Vic Bernasconi who would become part of the Webb family. Vic very quickly learnt the ropes of the hobby and business and, in producing a family, would give the

Webbs the opportunity of creating a model railway dynasty. Christine and Vic's eldest daughter, Melissa, are now also on the staff at All Aboard Modellbahn, the Webbs' current business and hobby centre.



The price on the Bill Webb stamp is a good indication as to the period when this trademark was in constant use.

With an ambition to open a model railway display the Webbs moved to the NSW Southern Highlands in 1986 and, when the wholesale business grew with the addition of new products, Bill Webb Mail Order was sold off. In 1995 the Euromodel Distributors business was sold and a new name introduced. All Aboard

Modellbahn was located north of Mittagong. While the core business of being sole distributor for Fleischmann, LGB, HAG and PC Rail remained, a retail outlet and model display was developed and opened in 1996. Titled All Aboard Braemar the shop has steadily grown so that it can now supply the needs of almost every model rail enthusiast, no matter what prototype is followed. The locomotive and rolling-stock emphasis however remains.

All Aboard Braemar is now a Southern Highlands tourist attraction. It can be found at 68-78 Old Hume Highway, north of Mittagong and on the righthand side after leaving the freeway from Sydney.

It is now a model railway paradise; the large shop has a number of model railway displays, a small fee gaining entry to each. The garden railway, hand built by Vic, is of world class standard. No doubt it benefits their business, which now includes the LGB range.

Bill and Marj Webb are to be congratulated for their energetic determination in commencing a small 'backyard' business and building it into a profitable small company, which provides employment for a number of people from outside the family. This country offers opportunity, but it can only be taken advantage of with hard work and the ability to get on with people.

On behalf of AMRM readers we will say loud and clear:

Thanks Bill.

Thanks Marj.

Happy retirement.

Bob Gallagher



Bill and Marg Webb and the special 30th Anniversary plaque..



LGB models feature on the garden railway at All Aboard Braemar. Vic Bernasconi, event MC and a garden railway 'Station Street' scene.