

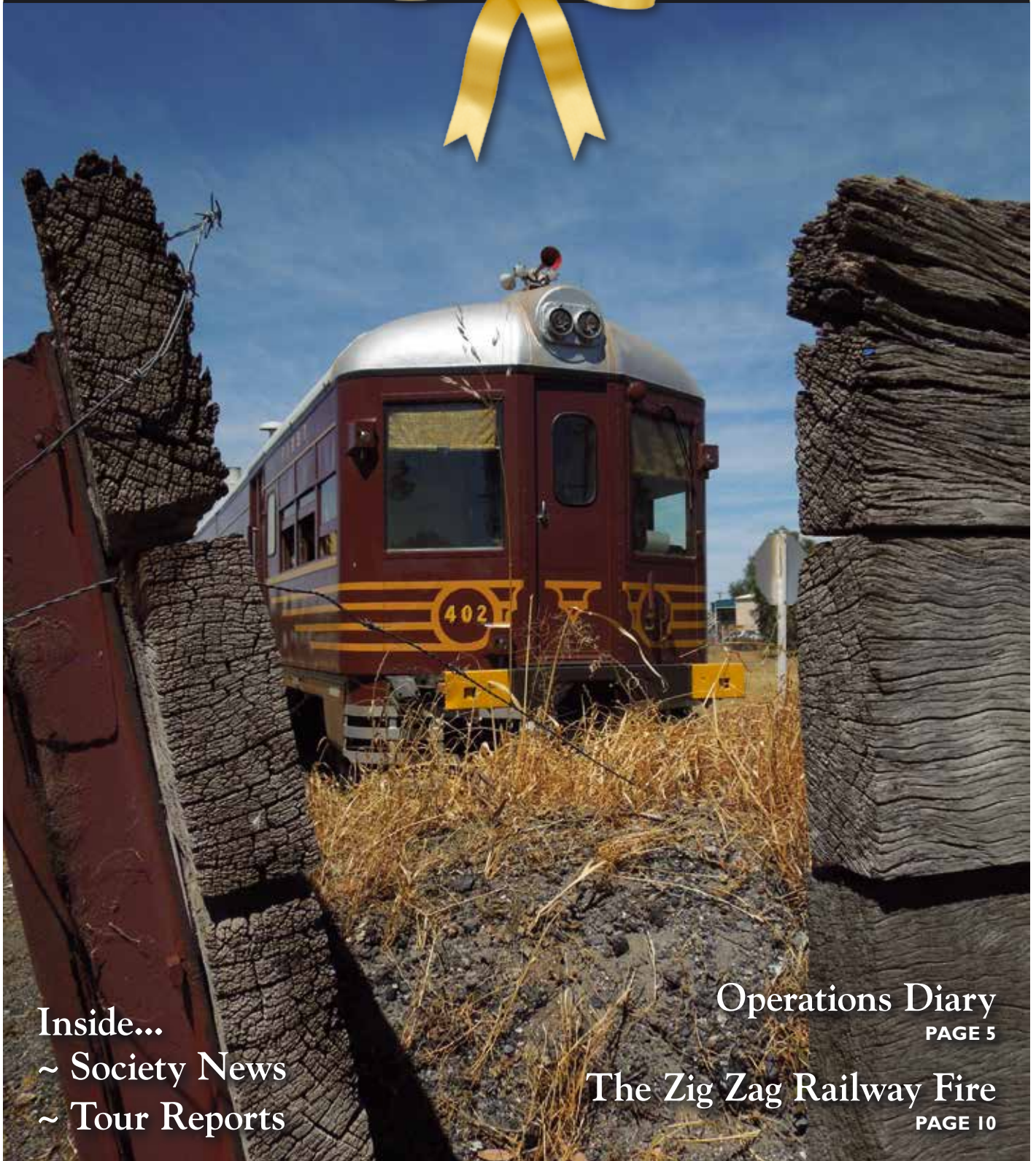
Paterson Points

NEWSLETTER OF THE RAIL MOTOR SOCIETY INCORPORATED



DECEMBER 2013

Patron ~ Rear Admiral Peter Sinclair AC



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Standing at the end of the line, HPC 402 is framed between the timbers of Coonamble's ash buffer stop.

Photo: Spencer Ross

Society News

2013 Annual Volunteer of the Year Awards

Last year the Society established its own "Volunteer of the Year" awards to recognise the achievements of Society members. The awards are voted on by the workers at Paterson Depot and this year were presented by the President, Arthur Burgess at the Society's Christmas function held on 7 December at Club Macquarie, Argenton.

The winner of the "Volunteer of the Year" for 2013 was Margaret Pantlin; and the runner-up was Eric Larkins. The "Encouragement Award" was awarded to Cheryl Davies.

Clockwise from right: "Volunteer of the Year" Margaret Pantlin; "Volunteer of the Year Runner-Up" Eric Larkins; "Encouragement Award" recipient Cheryl Davies; Mick Cross presents a donated new format photo to President Arthur Burgess.



Membership Renewals

Members are advised that their membership renewals are due on the 1st January 2014, membership fees remain unchanged for 2014. A renewal form and envelope is enclosed with this newsletter for your convenience.

New Member

Keith Howard of Bolton Point is welcomed to the Society.

Work Days

Regular work days are usually held each Wednesday, volunteers are always welcome. If you are not a regular volunteer at the Depot and would like to participate contact the Secretary, Bryan Hicks, see the Directory for further information.

Changed your address?

If the details on the address label on your newsletter are incorrect, please advise the Secretary as soon as possible.

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Society News



From the President's Desk

~ **Arthur Burgess**

Well another year is rapidly drawing to a close and The Rail Motor Society has excelled once again in its efforts to keep going throughout the year.

It is also that time of year when I thank many people for their continued support and help in maintaining the benchmark we had set for ourselves.

Firstly, the gardens and surrounds. The brilliant upkeep of our premises was managed by Barry and Ron. The 'Transition to Work' group from Castle Personnel assisted in the work effort also many regulars from the Wednesday work group. To all I thank you for your splendid efforts.

Thanks to Eric and his Infrastructure Group for their splendid work done on repairing our tracks, sheds, carriages and general maintenance duties.

The many scheduled tours throughout 2013 meant extra effort was required from the Rolling Stock maintainers. To have 621/721, CPH 1 and 7 and HPC 402 all going at the same time was quite a rewarding sight to see. This meant many hours of complex and difficult duties were required to meet this target. I wish to thank Stafford and his maintainers for their continued efforts shown.

Without the efforts of our group of dedicated ladies the tours would not have been the success that they were, they accepted the tasks of supplying the trains with the entire sustenance required to meet each tour as required. They had the trains in a prestigious condition when they were due out, they also managed the Station Master's Cottage and Museum including our souvenir collection. Thanks must go to Cheryl (catering),

Margaret (Train Presentation) and Beverley our On Board Crewing Manager. All the other personnel I thank you sincerely for your continued efforts for the Society.

The operational side of our organisation led by Manager Bruce played a large part in making this year a very successful one. Firstly, our Train Crews worked many hours and days to meet our tour commitments, I thank you for your combined efforts in meeting our programs, Eric was pleased to lead and roster these staff members who sacrificed many of the days required to run on these tours.

The On Board Crews had to double up on many train trips to fulfil our tour requirements, Beverley had her hands full in trying to roster crews. I thank you all for the efforts shown.

There may have been members I have not mentioned by name however; they all know I appreciated their work and commitment.

We all agree "Paterson Points" would not be a great document produced without the well organised and combined efforts of Geoffrey, Stephen and Karina. I thank you all for your splendid work.

The Board of Directors cops plenty of criticism at times rightly or wrongly however, without their management we would not be in the good position we are in now. I thank them for their efforts in 2013.

To all members and their families of The Rail Motor Society, I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Vale ~ Sue Angel

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Suzanne Angel, wife of member Keith Angel, on Tuesday 10 December 2013 after a long battle with illness. Our sincere condolences are extended to Keith, Anthony, Phillip and their families; and to Sue's brother-in-law member Barry Angel and family.

Operations Report

~ **Bruce Agland, Operations Manager**

Operations for 2013

2 October	Stroud Road (402), TRMS trial
8-10 October	Acacia Ridge (402), ARTC
13 October	Murrurundi (620), Rotary
16-20 October	South/West (402), 402 Club
20 October	Kiama (620), Trish Ede
26 October	Hawkesbury River (620), Maitland Rotary
26 October	Stroud Road (CPH), Lindsay
2-6 November	South/West (CPH), ARE Victoria
16-17 November	Gulgong (CPH), Peter King
28 November	Kilbride (402), ARTC
15-16 December	Werris Creek (CPH), Cancelled

Operations for 2014

4 January	Dungog (CPH), Archer
19 January	Nowra (620), ARHS
25 January	Tamworth (620), Maitland Rotary
22-23 February	Metro Freight Lines (620), Epping Model Railway Club
28-29 March	Gulgong (620), Gresford Parish
4-6 April	Orange (620), Travelscene
12-13 April	Steamfest, The Rail Motor Society (TBC)
3 May	Denman (620), Kalverla
3 May	Denman (CPH), Ede
28-29 May	TBC, (CPH), Matthews
2 August	Gulgong (620), Red Cross
30 August	Rail Motor Roundup, ARHS (TBC)
September	Canberra Floriade (620), ARHS
26 October	Murrurundi (620), Stanford

Around the Depot

More Depot flooding

~ **Bruce Agland, Operations Manager**

Heavy rain over the weekend of 16 and 17 November and again in the early morning of Monday 18 November has resulted in another round of flooding at our Paterson Depot. Again, refuse from the recent works and from the developments on the hill on the western side of Webbers Creek Road has flowed unchecked into our property and blocked our drains. Fortunately, some works to alleviate this problem following the last round of flooding prevented the pit from being filled yet again. However, substantial flooding did take place in the yard as a result of the blocked drains.

Repeated requests to Dungog Council to provide assistance to pipe the culverts under Webbers Creek Road into our drainage system, have fallen on deaf ears. As a result, we are again left to clean up everyone else's rubbish and are again losing valuable volunteer time and effort cleaning up instead of being directed to more useful tasks for the Society.

The Society has expended around \$50,000 on drainage improvements over the past few years and all Dungog Shire Council has done in recent times is to kerb and gutter Webbers Creek Road in front of the Station Master's cottage with the result being an increase in the velocity and flow of the stormwater running into our property. Hopefully, a meeting is being arranged with Dungog Shire management to discuss these ongoing issues.



With the drains blocked by debris the flood water backed up covering 2 and 3 Roads to rail height and continued through the western side of the depot and adjacent areas. The volume of water and extent of the flooding is very apparent in the photos above, taken by Ron Pirie.

Operations Diary

Every which way, and sometimes twice!

Since the last edition of Paterson Points the Society's fleet has ventured out on no less than 13 occasions with a combination of charter and test/trial trips covering many miles across a large percentage of the NSW network. The journeys travelled along sections of the Short North, the North Coast, The Great Northern Railway, the Main West, The Main South, The Illawarra (including "The Mountain"), Riverina and Far Western lines resulting in a total of 22 operational days and exceeding a staggering 10,300km covered over the nine weeks. As the Editors have been overwhelmed with opportunities far in excess of this issue's reporting capacity the following Operations Diary will attempt to provide a suitable "snapshot" of each event in addition to some stand-out events which are independently reported on. The accompanying photographic "essay" will also convey memories in lieu of thousands of words.

Clearly what this recent period shows is that the demand for the Society's operations and services continues to grow, due in no small part to the excellent and untiring service provided by its officers and volunteers. Only positive feedback continues to be received from Patrons, as well as future and repeat bookings.

22 September 2013

Maitland Westpac Rescue Helicopter Support Group to Hawkesbury River (620km)

Always a popular destination, Hawkesbury River saw the return of not one but two Society services on Sunday 22 September, the outing arranged to raise funds in support of the wonderful Westpac Rescue Helicopter. Due to the over-subscription of the first train, 621/721 and CPH 1 and 7 travelled south in convoy for a relaxing lunch by the water with both trains stabling within a stones throw of the Brooklyn eateries. The success and enjoyment of the day was reflected in the letter below received from organiser Jo Woodberry:

Hi Bruce and a big THANK YOU to you and all your volunteers!

You helped make our trip to Brooklyn a most enjoyable and profitable day. We heard nothing but laughter and great comments on the way the whole trip went from beginning to end! We made a total profit of over \$3,000 from ticket sales and the on-board raffles. We had people asking us on the return journey when our next trip will be and where. It made for an interesting meeting last Wednesday. One location that was brought up was the Scottish Festival at Aberdeen next July.

Thank you

Jo Woodberry

Maitland Westpac Rescue Helicopter Support Group)



Photo: Bruce Gehrig

28 September 2013

Gresford – Dungog Anglican Parish to Hawkesbury River (310km)

Starting from Paterson, members of the Gresford – Dungog Anglican Parish congregation enjoyed magnificent weather during a lunch trip to Hawkesbury River using 621/721. This destination always provides positive comment and a great day was reported to be had by those on board.



621/721 presents a fine sight stabled in Hawkesbury River Goods Siding while crew and passengers enjoy lunch at the nearby eateries. Photo: Bruce Gehrig

2 October 2013

TRMS 402 Trial to Stroud Rd (107km)

Following repairs and adjustments including a torque converter change HPC 402 was trialled between Paterson and Stroud Road in preparation for its upcoming tour duties. Apart from minor adjustments the trial was declared a success and a clean bill of health issued.



Photo: Bruce Gehrig

Operations Diary

8–10 October 2013

ARTC North Coast corridor Inspection (1,599km)



402 rolls along the concrete viaduct approach to Grafton's Clarence River Bridge. The ramp structure in the background elevates the road to pass over the railway on the bridge span shared by both road and rail.
Photo: S. George

With 402 returned to service the ARTC North – South Corridor again chartered 402 for a three-day inspection tour of the North Coast line between Maitland and Acacia Ridge. ARTC Senior management including CEO John Fullerton, Corridor Technical and Maintenance staff as well as Rail operator representatives from Pacific National, Aurizon and NSW Trains joined the train for a trip along the North Coast line to inspect the various project work sites and initiatives currently underway. Curve easing and distant signal relocations, level crossing monitoring system trials, bridge works as well as wash away repairs required after recent heavy rains were observed and left no doubt of the financial commitment being made by ARTC to maintain and improve operations.

Day 1 saw the train picking up guests at Maitland and travel to Grafton with the final run into Acacia Ridge completed by midday on Day 2. Upon arrival at Acacia Ridge, 402's guests "changed over" with a group of ARTC Network Controllers and audit staff from the Broadmeadow Network Control Centre North who retraced the same path back to Paterson ending their journey on Day 3. 402 performed well on this trip, its first tour outing in many months.



With pre-trip preparations completed Fitter Mick Walsh and Driver Doug Bennett pause for a photo at Grafton yard prior to heading south back to Paterson.
Photo: S. G. Preston



ARTC CEO John Fullerton records the scene of 402 standing at Glenapp loop alongside the former signal box and CountryNet Train Radio tower. Photo: S. G. Preston



During a "leg stretch" break at Gloucester platform the ARTC inspection group pose for a group photo. Photo: S. G. Preston



Refused at Kyarran, ARTC's network control staff stood trackside to inspect the ground infrastructure and perform a "roll by" on a north-bound freight service. Photo: S. G. Preston

Operations Diary

16–20 October 2013

ARHS 402 Club Tour (2730km)

Less than a week after its North Coast run 402 headed out again for a five-day round-state tour with the ARHS NSW “402 Club”. Individual day destinations included Dubbo (via Gulgong and Merrygoen), Nyngan (via Coonamble), Parkes via Cobar, Narrandera (via Temora and Griffith), and Paterson (via Junee, Wollongong and Enfield). 402 performed well and provided comfortable travel during the extensive travels only suffering a problematic starter motor on the final day of the tour.



Driver Ray Sullivan takes another train order from John Holland control while crew member Bruce Matthews has his ears “tuned” to confirm the instructions.
Photo: Spencer Ross



Prior to the departure from Parkes the operations and on board crew posed for a group photo.
Photo: Bruce Gehrig



20 October 2013 Private Charter to Kiama (661km)

Chartered by Trish Ede as a fundraiser outing for Maitland Palliative Care this trip utilised 621/721 and ventured down the Illawarra line to visit the popular Kiama Markets and partake lunch by the famous Blow Hole. Raising almost \$3,000 all on board enjoyed a relatively uneventful trip until the return trip caught up with and were forced to “shadow” home a late running HPC 402 beyond Epping.



26 October 2013**Maitland Rotary to Hawkesbury River (398km)**

The Maitland Rotary Group again chartered 621/721, this time for an afternoon run down the "Short North" disembarking at Woy Woy for a Murder mystery night at a local venue. Due to the lack of sidings at Woy Woy the train continued on to Hawkesbury River to stable and wait for their late night return path. This tour operated via Branxton in both directions and all patrons and crew are believed to have survived.



Following an evening of murder, mystery and celebration 621 and crew stand at Woy Woy platform ensuring that their passengers embark safely for their return trip home.

Photo: Bruce Gehrig

26 October 2013**Stroud Road Private Charter**

CPH 1 and 7 were hired for a private charter trip to Stroud Road with a lunch stop over at Dungog on the return leg of the outing. Fine weather provided a great day for the trip, prior to their journey north a group inspection of the Paterson Depot and rollingstock was facilitated by Operations Manager Bruce Agland. During the lunch stop at Dungog the CPHs were stabled in the loop whilst the local Hunter service occupied the back platform and the XPT the main platform, providing a three-way "rail motor" cross.



Bruce Agland escorts the group for an inspection of the Paterson Depot prior to the commencement of their journey North.

Photo: David Clark

2-5 November 2013**ARE Western Circle Tour (2293km)**

The Victorian-based Australian Railway Enthusiasts (ARE) are well-known patrons of Society outings and for their 2013 Melbourne Cup "Escape" they utilised CPH 1 and 7 for a Western Circle Tour of NSW over four days. Commencing from Telarah, the outing travelled north to Muswellbrook, then Gulgong, Merrygoen and Dubbo before terminating at Gilgandra on Day 1. An early second day start saw the tour travel to the very end of the Coonamble line before retracing its steps to Dubbo and then heading east to Orange. Heading on a western route again the Day 3 timetable saw the 'motors head for Parkes and then across the "Goat track" to Cootamundra before returning to Stockinbingal and taking the Riverina route to Griffith. The fourth and final day saw a run to Junee via Narrandera and then up the Main South to Sydney utilising the ARTC Southern Sydney Freight Line (SSFL) to run into the state capital during the afternoon "curfew" peak period. After escaping the "metrop" the tour returned to Paterson late on Day 4.

A more detailed report of this epic trip will be provided in a future edition of *Paterson Points*.



CPH 1 and 7 stand at Merrygoen's platform during their reversing move to head to Dubbo. Merrygoen's surrounds still retain infrastructure from earlier eras including the signal box, water tank, turntable and semaphore signals.

Photo: James Brook



Dubbo cross.

Photo: Phil Smith

Operations Diary



Coonamble station building and Platform are the only surviving passenger facilities on the branch line and were put to good use during the ARE visit. Photo James Brook

16–17 November 2013 Mudgee Miniature Railway to Merrygoen (949km)

The annual charter for the Mudgee Miniature Railway organised by Peter King again hired CPH 1 and 7 to run to Gulgong and then operate local trips for locals up to Dunedoo for Dinner and on to Merrygoen. Another shuttle to Dunedoo operated on Sunday morning before the return trip to Paterson. This group has been a regular charterer of Society tours for many years and their trips always result in a good run for their members and locals.



North-bound the regular CPH duo of 1 and 7 head towards Gulgong and beyond. Photo: Bruce Gehrig

28 November 2013 ARTC Signal Test Train to Kilbride (20km)

Short in comparison with its other recent outings, HPC 402 ran to Kilbride and return at the request of ARTC to perform testing of the level crossing operation. Witnessed by ARTC staff on board and on the ground a number of run pasts performed using both the Main line and loop routes confirmed the correct operation of track circuits and level crossing equipment.

The Western call car – Some volunteers are never off duty!

As the last reporting period progressed your Editor received many reports and photographic contributions (as usual) from Society volunteer Bruce Gehrig including the following account of his “coincidental” evening encounter with 402 on tour at Parkes. An extract from Bruce’s email is reproduced below, a tale which conveys the commitment to the Society of one of our dedicated volunteers.

Bruce wrote:

I did not go on the tour. My wife Ann and I had gone to Parkes for the weekend to paint her brothers grave. It was just coincidence that it was the same weekend as the ARHS 402 tour.

As you probably know by now, the train was three hours late arriving at Parkes, due to crossings, and 40km running from Narromine to Parkes, due to the state of the track. It arrived at 9.10pm and passengers were quickly sent to the motel for their somewhat late tea. Spencer also got me to run three of the passengers up to the motel, to save time waiting for the mini taxi to come back.

Arthur Burgess, Bruce Matthews and Bryan Hicks, together with Ray Sullivan (Parkes driver), then took 402 up to loco to refuel. I went up in my car in just case there was any problem. And sure enough Spencer rang me to ask me to drive Ray to his bosses place to get a key to unlock the fuel pumps. However before we could do this, Rays boss came to loco with the key. Hence my photos of 402 refueling at loco.

402 was then brought back to the platform and I helped Bryan get rid of the rubbish off the train into the bins at the station. They then stabled 402 in the siding, and I took the three crew to the motel for their very late tea, and then took Ray home. After that I went back to the motel and waited until our three crew members had finished their very late tea, with Bryan wanting all three courses. I then drove the three of them back to their accommodation on the south side of town. I got back to my motel at 11.15pm.



After a long day’s run 402’s tanks are replenished at the Parkes loco fuel point, the crew still to receive their “fill” at the motel restaurant expedited thanks to the efforts of Bruce Gehrig and his “Call car” operation.

Tour Report

Travelscene Maitland tour to Gulgong/Mudgee 28–29 September

By Beverley Redman



We departed Paterson Depot at 8.25am but were held at the loop to main line points while 621/721 loaded passengers at Paterson station from Gresford Parish for their day trip to Hawkesbury River. Once they departed south towards Telarah and cleared the section we “got the road” and headed for Maitland to pick up our passengers with CPH 7 leading CPH 1.

On arrival at Platform 3 we were greeted by a few well-known celebrities such as Cher, Diana Ross, Austin Powers and the other 32 passengers all dressed in 60s theme for the trip to Gulgong. With CPH 1 now leading we departed at 9.25am with all passengers in CPH 1 and their luggage loaded into trailing unit CPH 7 to make more room for food and drinks.

A parade to decide who had the best outfit was held before our arrival at Muswellbrook station for the usual leg stretch. Prior arrangements had been made to meet Ray and Bev Barry to present them with a Certificate of Appreciation for their 10th Anniversary Trip to Gulgong (see page 5, October *Paterson Points*).

The journey west along the Ulan line to Gulgong was punctuated by the usual number of full and empty coal trains while morning tea and lunch were served, a 60s-themed game of trivia was also held.

Arrival at Gulgong was at 2.05pm where our passengers detrained onto a Chapman's Coach for a short tour of Gulgong and an inspection of a local hostelry before departing for their overnight accommodation at Mudgee.

The crew were accommodated at the Gulgong Ten Dollar Town Motel where they learned of the passing of the owner, Lindsay Swadling, a long-time supporter of the Society (see page 3 October *Paterson Points*).

On Sunday our passengers visited the Honey Haven Cheese Factory and a few vineyards before lunch and returned to the train at Gulgong station for a 3.10pm departure, again utilising the trailing unit for luggage also extra items of Mudgee wine, cheese and honey.

The run to Maitland was a relaxed and happy time with much singing and rehydration with water, arrival at Maitland was ahead of schedule our passengers detrained and we headed for Paterson.

The Society crew for the weekend were Rodney Short, John Ridden, Stafford Payne and John and Beverley Redman.

Photos: Roger Schmakeit

Depot Visit by Oatley RSL, 17 October

By Beverley Redman

The party of twenty visitors and bus driver arrived at 10:00. They had intended to stop for morning tea in a park en route from Adamstown but, because of a change in the weather opted to head directly to our depot.

Prior to their arrival the weather had started to deteriorate at 0930 when the westerly wind started blowing with a vengeance and the temperature started to climb rapidly. We decided the previous day to set up for their lunch in the Station Master's cottage which was a wise decision under the circumstances.

After a conducted tour of the depot lunch was served at 11:30. The BBQ chefs braved the wind and 38c heat to cook chicken patties, sausages and onions which was served with salad followed by a dessert of fruit salad and ice cream.

Alf (their leader) thanked us for our efforts under difficult conditions, he was supported by several other party members.

Society members who ventured out to help on such a woeful day were: Rodney Short, Trish Ede, Lorainne Corcoran, Mick and Bev Walsh, Ron Pirie, Bruce Gehrig and John and Bev Redman.

The Zig Zag Railway Fire



By Graeme Bedwin

At midday on Wednesday 16th October, a detonation on the Army Depot site at Marrangaroo (west of Lithgow) began a fire that would have disastrous consequences for the Lithgow area and in particular the Zig Zag Railway.

Fire has ravaged the Zig Zag many times but this fire would have the most disastrous consequences for the railway.

The fire travelled along the Newnes Plateau making its way towards Clarence and Bell.

Overnight and on Thursday 17th, it made its way down the mountain on the northern side of the main western railway line encircling the State Mine Heritage site (where it curiously became known as the "State Mine Fire") and coming perilously close to houses and businesses in Inch Street and Bells Road.

Now, moving out of control on a huge front, it closed both the Bells Line of Road and the main western railway line where it wreaked enormous damage.

During Thursday night it moved easterly up the northern side of the rail line and jumped the tracks in the vicinity of the Bottom Points area of the Zig Zag Railway.

The fire then moved up the Reserve towards the famous viaducts and entered the area adjacent to the Railway's Bottom Points Depot.

Some years ago the Zig Zag Railway constructed a siding on the original 1869 Bottom Road of the Zig Zag alongside the

workshop and members accommodation carriages. Surplus locomotives and rolling stock were stored on this siding which was known as "0" Road (Roads 1 to 4 were inside the depot).

This area, between the Bottom and Middle Roads of the Zig Zag, had always remained untouched by previous fires (it had always been vigorously defended by the members and staff) and, as a consequence, had become very thick with undergrowth.

The ferocity of this fire, and the fact that most of the rolling stock were vintage wooden carriages, meant the area didn't stand a chance this time.

The caretaker and members accommodation cars consisting of AM, EAM, LAM and VAM sleeping cars, as well as portable cabins used as toilets and meal rooms, were all destroyed. Six wooden vintage ex Queensland carriages stored on "0" Road were also utterly destroyed.

The intensity of the fire as it made its way in an easterly direction meant that the southern side of the depot and workshop was also devastated. This area consisting of elevated offices above a cage containing tools, lathes and drills etc., was destroyed.

Miraculously steam loco AC16-218, which was stabled alongside the cage, apparently received only superficial damage.

Meanwhile, beyond the six carriages on "0" Road, four ex QR rail motors and two ex Tasmanian diesel locomotives were stabled. Rail Motor 2016, which was next in line, suffered major fire damage but, miraculously, the remaining three rail motors



The devastating fires caused much destruction in their path including to ex Queensland rail motor 2016 which was gutted and structurally damaged by the extreme heat. Fortunately the fire did not spread to the Zig Zag Railway's other serviceable rail motors which only suffered minimal exposure. Photos: Shane O'Neil

2051, 2006 and 2011) and locomotives 1003 and 1004 escaped unscathed. It is thought a water carrying helicopter bombed this area preventing the fire spreading any further eastwards.

Although a major part of the Zig Zag Reserve was destroyed, the Bottom Points signal box and station, Top Points signal box and station, Clarence station and office escaped any damage. Carriages stored in the shunting neck at Bottom Points also escaped any damage.

The historic Clarence House behind the Clarence Station also escaped the fire's wrath, but two nearby houses and the Zig Zag Railway's open spare parts storage area were destroyed. Stored on this block was the shell of ex QR rail motor 2008. This unit had been a source of spare parts and it had been a dream of the General Manager to "marry" its front end to another "round end" unit thereby creating a single double-ended rail motor.

Alas, that will never be.

Although much has been destroyed, all locomotives, many items of rolling stock and three rail motors survived.

At the time of writing (late October), the fire is still burning as far east as Bilpin and, due to the enormous infrastructure damage, the main western railway line west of Mt Victoria remains closed to electric trains.

Editors Footnote

Since the time of Graeme's report the devastating fires have been extinguished and the massive clean up and rebuilding process has begun. Unfortunately the Zig Zag Railway's woes didn't end with the passing of the fires and attacks by looters and thieves has resulted in further losses of equipment including the lever plates from the Top Points Signal Box interlocking frame. The management of the Zig Zag Railway is now considering options to best facilitate the rebuilding and reopening of its operations.

After remedial works to perway and the removal of debris and damaged overhead wiring the Sydney Trains Western Main Line soon recommenced limited operations and was initially planned under Special Proceed Authority (SPA) working. Extensive damage to signalling equipment, communications cables and other track-side equipment meant restoration of normal operations and services could not resume until Monday 2 December, CAN block working being used between Newnes Junction and Lithgow during the later stages of infrastructure reinstatement. To maximise the work effort InterCity passenger operations between Mount Victoria and Lithgow were mostly replaced with buses, a total close down between the Down and Up XPT services being scheduled each day.

~ Parkes ~



Photos: Spencer Ross



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About to clear the first mile, CPH 1 and 7 throttle up as they power off the Paterson bridge headed for Stroud Road.

Photo: S. G. Preston



HPC 402 scurries across the grassy Western Plains towards Peak Hill during its 402 club duty.

Photo: Phil Smith