

Paterson Points

NEWSLETTER OF THE RAIL MOTOR SOCIETY INCORPORATED

JUNE 2024



CONGRATULATIONS

CPH3 Train

On the occasion of your

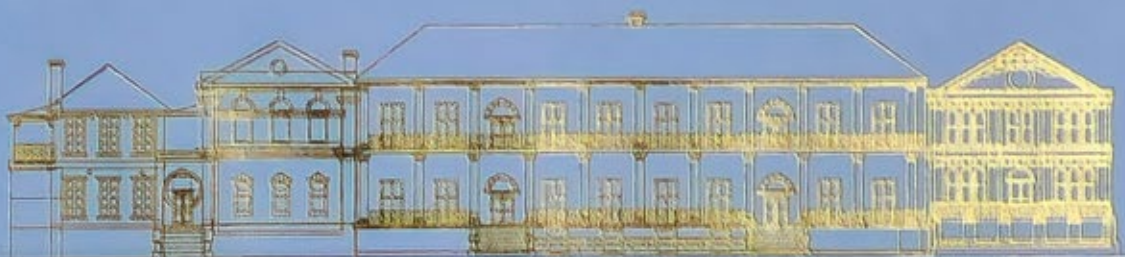
100th Birthday

In December 2023

From its humble beginnings the CPH3 train served the people of New South Wales faithfully for over six decades. A product of innovative design and engineering it revolutionized rail travel with its practicality and reliability.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jenny Aitchison'.

Jenny Aitchison MP
MEMBER FOR MAITLAND
MINISTER FOR REGIONAL ROADS AND TRANSPORT



RAIL MOTOR SOCIETY PATERSON

www.trms.org.au PRINT POST APPROVED PP100028431

MAITLAND

Hunter Valley

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SOCIETY NEWS

New Members

The Society is pleased to welcome the following new members: Joel Zbagar and Kasumi Nishio from Raymond Terrace, and James Willis from Werris Creek.

Donations

Please remember that the Australian Tax Office has approved the Society issuing receipts for gifts and donations (not testamentary) which will be allowable deductions for income tax purposes.

Open Days

The Society's Depot at Paterson is usually open for public inspection between 10 am and 2 pm on the third Sunday of each month but closed in December. Entry is by gold coin donation. The Society will endeavour to run a CPH shuttle service to Dungog and return, departing 10.45 am.

There may be times when our staff are engaged on rail tours or otherwise committed and it may not be possible to open the Depot on a given day. Intending visitors should always contact the Secretary to confirm that staff will be in attendance on the day concerned. Group tours can also be arranged at other times by contacting the Secretary.

Advertising

It is possible to place an advertisement in this magazine for a fee. Inquiries can be made through the Secretary (see Society Directory).

Correspondence

All inward and outward correspondence for the Society should be via the Secretary using the Society's postal address as specified in the Society Directory. Correspondence should not be addressed to individual Society members and where email is used all messages should be copied (cc'd) to the Secretary.

'Off the Rails'

As this issue was being prepared, the Society is aware that Charles Smith, Neil Ranford and Steve Bruty are presently 'off the rails'. We wish Charles, Neil and Steve all the best on their return to good health.

To any other members who may not be enjoying the best of health, the Society extends its best wishes for your recovery.

Bruce Gehrig
Welfare Officer

Supplying Digital Photographs

Paterson Points contains many great photographs submitted by our members and the general public. We highly encourage people to submit their images and really appreciate the support we receive. Please provide the date and location of your image, as well as your name, so that we can acknowledge you in the magazine. If you can suggest a caption for your image, doing so would be very helpful. Image files may be emailed directly to the magazine Editor via the email address provided in the Society Directory.

DIRECTORY

The Rail Motor Society Incorporated Depot & Museum

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Contributions of articles and/or photographs for future editions of Paterson Points are most welcome and may be forwarded directly to the Editor.

**Correspondence to be addressed to:
The Secretary
PO Box 4268
Edgeworth NSW 2285**

SOCIETY NEWS

Donations Sought for 600/700 Class Restoration

The Rail Motor Society has embarked upon a project to restore its 600/700 class two-car diesel train (602/707) to running order and eventual heritage train operation. In doing so, it will become the only 600/700 class two-car diesel set in operation.

The Society has a team of skilled volunteers who are capable of bringing this project to fruition, but like similar restoration projects of this nature, the rate of progress is largely determined by available funding. To assist the Society in this regard, readers who may wish to donate money to help restore this historically significant two-car diesel set are invited to do so.

If you can provide monetary assistance, donations can be made by Direct Deposit to,

The Rail Motor Society Inc

BSB 062-806 Account 00907487

When paying by Direct Deposit, it is important that you include your **Name** and the text "**602**" in the description. This will greatly assist in identifying these donations. If you require a receipt, please email your contact details to: secretary@trms.org.au or post them to the address below.

If paying by cheque, please make it payable to The Rail Motor Society Inc and send your donation to,

The Rail Motor Society Inc

PO Box 4268

Edgeworth NSW 2285.

Please remember that the Australian Tax Office has approved the Society issuing receipts for donations which will be allowable deductions for income tax purposes.

Board of Management and Line Managers 2024/2025

Office Bearers

President	Rodney Short
Vice President	Stephen Harper
Secretary & Public Officer	Michael Walsh
Treasurer	Patricia Short
Assistant Secretary/Treasurer	Anthony Dunn

Board Members

Bruce Agland	Bruce Greenham
Ross Goodman	Graeme Holloway
Spencer Ross	Robert Spencer

Line Managers and Assistants

Operations Manager	Bruce Agland
Assistant Operations Manager	Stephen Harper
Rolling Stock Manager	Robert Spencer
Rolling Stock Coordinators	Kevin Judd
	Ross Goodman
Infrastructure Manager	Rodney Short
Assistant Infrastructure Managers	Graeme Holloway
	Bruce Greenham

Subsidiary Positions

Train Crewing Coordinator	Graeme Holloway
Operational Crew Roster Clerks	Rodney Short
	Stephen Harper
Fitters Roster Clerk	Michael Walsh
Customer Service Manager	Trish Short
Assistant Customer Service Manager	Anthony Dunn
Safety Officer	Lance Nelson
Assistant Safety Officer	Paul Horder
Public Relations Officer	Trish Short
Assistant Public Relations Officer	Anthony Dunn
Publications Officer	Robert Spencer
Assistant Publications Officer	Bruce Gehrig
Tours Liaison Officer	Trish Short
Assistant Tours Liaison Officer	Spencer Ross
Accommodation Officer	Trish Short
Assistant Accommodation Officer	Anthony Dunn
Catering & Souvenirs Officer	Kaye Burgess
Welfare Officer	Bruce Gehrig
Archives Officer	Spencer Ross
Grants Officer	Graeme Holloway
Assistant Grants Officer	Sharyn Noll
Finance Officer	New Position TBA
Internal Audit Operations	Arthur Burgess
Internal Audit Rolling Stock	Brett Williams
Internal Audit Infrastructure	Bruce Agland
Project Manager 629/729	Michael Walsh
Project Manager 602/707	Jon Derry

From the Boardroom

Our AGM was held on May 11th; the members elected as Office Bearers and subsidiary positions are listed elsewhere in this publication. There were some changes of note.

New Board Members Anthony Dunn and Ross Goodman were elected. Stephen Harper is Vice President, and Anthony Dunn has filled his former position as Assistant Secretary / Treasurer.

Kaye Burgess and Paul Horder indicated they would not be renominating for positions on the Board of Management. Kaye will still be looking after our souvenirs, and Paul will continue his electrical tasks around the depot. The Board would like to thank Kaye and Paul for their assistance, efforts, dedication, and input to the society's operation during their service on the Board.

The Society is very happy and grateful to have received a grant from Glencore to partially fund the emergency alarm system for the rail motor storage shed. By the time you receive this publication, the installation should be well on its way to completion.

We also received a grant from Museums and Galleries NSW to carry out repairs to the steps and handrails leading to the front of the Cottage / Museum.

For the Society's 40th Anniversary and CPH 7's 100th Anniversary, we are planning for a momentous weekend on the 16th and 17th November. On that Saturday, a combined Society's 40th anniversary and Christmas Luncheon will be held at Club Macquarie. CPH 7's 100th Anniversary celebrations will be held the following day at our depot, a Sunday, also being a regular Open Day. There are plenty of festivities being arranged for Sunday, including train trips to Maitland and return, HO gauge miniature operation trains on display, a flyover by a tiger moth from Phil Unicom (weather permitting) and a static display from Brimble Rail. We will approach the 2NUR FM radio station to ask if they will promote this event. Look forward to further announcements on these events.

Behind the scenes, our website update is progressing; an article on this update appears elsewhere in this publication.

An important part of any organisation is to have a strategy for their future. TRMS did not have a formal Strategic Plan. The lack of such hinders us if we are to advance forward as an organisation, so the documentation of a plan is vital. The task of drawing up a plan was allocated to Bruce Agland, Robert Spencer and Mick Walsh. A draft plan has been drawn up and submitted to the Board for approval. Robert and Mick contributed, but most of the coloration and hard work was carried out by Bruce. Feedback has so far been positive. This plan, in conjunction with our business plan, sets out our short and long-term aims for the next five years. Such a plan will require periodic review and updating.

Both our 'Work Days' are still experiencing very good roll-ups. Our thanks go to these members for their continued support and efforts to maintain the depot and rolling stock. I would also like to make special mention of the new members who have brought much-needed knowledge and experience to The Rail Motor Society over the last twelve months.

Our Open Days have been experiencing good patronage, and the Board thanks all those who have assisted on these days.

The Society was saddened by the untimely passing of Life Member Stafford Payne's daughter Michelle, aged 51. We extend our sincere condolences to Dawn, Stafford and their extended family.

The Society was also saddened by the passing of long-time Member Number 16, Paul Crollick.

On behalf of the Board and Members of The Rail Motor Society, we offer Paul's family and any other member who has suffered a bereavement our sincere condolences.

Rodney (Rod) Short

President

Michael (Mick) Walsh

Secretary



621/721 at Narromine Station, 9 June 2024 (R. Spencer)

PHOTO GALLERY



621/721 beside grain silos at Trundle, 8 June 2024 (Phil Smith)



A bridge in dense forest on the upper level of the Border Loop Spiral. 621/721 has crossed this bridge, travelling from left to right. The track then spirals 360 degrees, including through two tunnels in the hill behind the bridge, to emerge on the lower level where this picture was taken, 621/721 again travelling from left to right of the picture, toward Kyogle (R. Spencer)



621/721 seen coming into Narromine during the Central West Explorer Tour, 9 June 2024 (Wayne Coleman)



621/721 seen approaching the Bogan Way road crossing, 8 June 2024 (Phil Smith)

Operations Report

Hunter Valley Steamfest was held on 13 and 14 April, where we ran all three of our rail motor sets. Our three CPHs operated four Maitland to Paterson shuttles each day, while 621/721 operated two shuttles to Saxonvale Junction each day. HPC 402 worked three trips to Walsh Point (two on Saturday and one on Sunday). 402's trips sold out in less than 24 hours of going on sale! Over the weekend, we carried 1,062 passengers on 15 services for a very successful event. The Mayor of Maitland, Philip Penfold, personally expressed the Council's gratitude for our continuing support of this event.

Sunday, 28 April saw 621/721 travel from Broadmeadow to Willow Tree for the District Freemasons Association. An excellent lunch was served at the Graze Willow Tree Inn for our passengers. This group is planning future trips.

621/721 travelled to the North West over the weekend of 4–6 May to transfer Scott McGregor's Railway Adventures passengers from Moree to Armidale. This operation was part of a larger tour based out of Brisbane, which visited historical railway sites and infrastructure across southeast Queensland and northern NSW.

On 17 May, 621/721, and our three CPHs, travelled to Scone for our annual Scone Cup Races tour. Both trains operated at capacity, which proved to be another very successful operation. We greatly appreciate Maitland Rugby Club's continued support in chartering 621/721 for this event.

621/721 journeyed to Casino for Beef Week over 22–27 May.

A small number of passengers joined the trip from Maitland for the six days with a number of local tourist activities being undertaken while our 620 operated eight local shuttle trips from Casino to Glenapp (Queensland) via the Cougal Spiral. These proved highly successful with all trains operating at maximum capacity. Planned signal and level crossing track circuit testing as part of this trip was cancelled at the eleventh hour by ARTC due to internal communication issues between their departments.

Stroud Road day trips have proved popular with our regular customer, Southern Cross Coaches, who ran trips in March, April and May. We also operated two birthday specials to Stroud Road using 402 on 25 May, while CPHs 1 and 7 did the honours to Dungog on 1 June.

Our regular Open Days were held on 21 April and 19 May with local trips to Dungog. The May event was very well supported with over 60 passengers, with smaller numbers on the April trip.

The fallout from the January cancellations at Casino is still being negotiated with ARTC. Their initial reluctance to provide logs and documentation for the Kyogle level crossing to enable us to make an informed evaluation has finally been overcome and our Signalling Consultant is reviewing them. Positive results from this review have indicated that the fault lies with the level crossing infrastructure and not 621/721. This issue is still open and ongoing; meanwhile, block working still remains in place for 621/721 and 402. It is hoped that this will be lifted shortly.

Following the Kyogle incident, we have lodged a Notice of Dispute with ARTC under the terms of our Access Agreement



In the late afternoon, CPHs 1, 3 & 7 and 621/721 occupy the centre platform at Maitland for the 2024 Hunter Valley Steamfest, before returning to Paterson (R. Spencer)

SOCIETY NEWS

Operations Report.....Con't

detailing our concerns at the 'knee-jerk' reaction by ARTC Operations Staff. We were advised they would be progressed by ARTC's Integrity Officer. Their Integrity Officer is currently unavailable, and ARTC has subsequently appointed an independent consultant to lead the investigation. We have submitted a document detailing all of our issues (both current and historical) and these are currently being investigated.

As an outcome of the Kyogle incident, the general consensus of the Society's Management at this stage is that we will probably have to fit Track Circuit Assistors (TCA) to all of our rolling stock in the longer term. ARTC is assisting us by progressing inquiries with a UK supplier on our behalf.

ARTC's ICE radio 4G upgrade program is proceeding. The planned closure of the Telstra 3G network has now been postponed from 30 June to 31 August. However, all of our fleet

is now equipped with 4G compliant radios, thanks to a loan unit from ARTC and the use of our spare unit. We were one of the first operators to complete the upgrade program. All of our ICE units have now been upgraded by the manufacturer, Base2 Communications. As this project draws to a close, ARTC have offered their loan radio for sale at a discounted price and the Board has decided to proceed with the purchase of this unit.

Our two Access Agreements with Transport NSW for the Sydney Trains and Country Regional Networks have been extended to 30 June 2026, while ARTC's Access Agreement has been extended to 30 June 2025. All agreements continue with existing terms and conditions.

I would extend a special thanks to all crews and maintenance staff for their support and assistance over this period.

Bruce Agland

Operations Manager



Rail Motor Society Western Adventurers Tour, leaving Bogan Gate for Condobolin on 8 June 2024. Phil Smith sets the road (Wayne Coleman)



With mid-winter shadows lengthening, 621/721 catches the late-afternoon sunshine at Condobolin before returning to Parkes, 8 June 2024 (R. Spencer)



On the Central West Explorer Tour, 621/721 crosses Gunningbland Creek, west of Bogan Gate, 8 June 2024 (Wayne Coleman)

Rolling Stock Report

CPHs 1, 3 and 7

Adrian Tanner's successful modification of the bodies of twelve spare diesel fuel injectors, upgrading them to 'N-series', was a significant achievement and fortuitously completed in time for the Maitland Steamfest. The improved engine performance and reduced smoky exhaust emissions on CPHs 1 and 7 was highly encouraging. Our drivers' positive feedback, coupled with the potential for lower fuel consumption, further underscores the success of this initiative. I plan to extend this programme to include CPH 3 and HPC 402, as well as our stock of spare injectors.

Oil samples were carefully taken from CPH 7 for testing, following a concern about possible metal fragments in the oil. Fortunately, the test results came back clear. We plan to extend this rigorous oil sampling and testing process to include all rail motors on a regular basis.

The engine and transmission in CPH 3 were severely damaged while in traffic, presenting a significant challenge. Our maintainers, assisted by Adrian with his extensive Detroit engine experience, are working tirelessly on the repair. The damage occurred when an attempt was made to resolve a transmission problem, believed to be free-wheeling at the time, when the drive shaft actually engaged both the engine and transmission in reverse. Once back at the depot, the main bearing and thrust washers were discovered to be broken and the crankshaft immovable. When the transmission was removed, the crankshaft could be turned by hand, which was a good sign but not so good for the transmission. As this report is being written, our fitters are busy installing our only working spare. Their hard work and persistence are a testament to their determination to get CPH 3 back into traffic as soon as possible.

Taking advantage of CPH 3 being out of traffic, the small fridge and associated cabinetry were removed. In their place, a custom wooden enclosure will be installed to accommodate a full-size refrigerator, similar to the new set-up in CPH 7.

Two broken seat-back roll-over mechanisms were replaced, one in CPH 3 and one in CPH 7.

NPF 621 and NTC721

Our carriage builders have worked hard to replace over 20 scratched windows with new glass before 621/721 recently resumed touring. Otherwise, the set has generally only required regular post-trip inspection and servicing.

We have engaged outside expertise to overhaul an unserviceable half-size coupler. It requires adding material to worn faces, grinding it down to restore a specified geometry, and fabricating and installing new pins and bushes. Spare unserviceable plunger bars and spring packs, which work in conjunction with the coupler, must also be overhauled. The currently installed components are worn and noisy and need replacing.

The set will receive its Annual Inspection and Scheduled Maintenance in July. We will also attend to any outstanding matters reported in the vehicle log book.

HPC 402

Our rolling stock maintainers have concerns over the state of the bogies under 402. Excessive radial clearance (side bearer

clearance between upper and lower centre castings) and bouncy ride must be investigated. Until we learn the cause, determine a plan of action, and correct the problem, 402 will remain out of service.

The sliding doors and ancillary equipment were removed from the #1 end of the middle section to allow for the installation of auxiliary diesel fuel tanks, which have been obtained but have not yet been modified to suit.

The Operations Manager will make arrangements for a technician to finalise the installation of the Data Logger, assisted by our electricians who are familiar with cabling installed from the various data senders.

CTC 51 Trailer Car

Work continues on the toilet plumbing. We are also looking to install a generator to provide the car with electrical power. Four spare axle/wheel sets were sent to Sulzer for machining to restore the full flange and tyre profile—wheels specifically earmarked for CTC 51. The bogies will require assessment and remediation, but only after the current CPH bogie overhaul programme is finished..

Loco 7344

Both turbochargers were replaced with reconditioned units when the repair of splits in the casing proved unsuccessful. At this time, the opportunity was taken to remove, clean, and reinstall the aftercooler, which was also believed to have contributed to the loss of full engine power. A crack was discovered in the elbow of a coolant pipe, which could not be repaired. A spare was obtained and fitted. A problem switching between forward and reverse propulsion was diagnosed and rectified. Engine and transmission oil samples were taken to establish baseline test results. The transmission oil exhibits elevated levels of lead and copper and will need its oil changed. The locomotive is otherwise ready for service.



Loco 7344 engine, showing one of two turbochargers that needed replacing, still to be removed and connected to the aftercooler, also later removed for cleaning.

Restoration of WPF 602 and CT 707

Jon Derry has been appointed Project Manager, succeeding Charles Smith, who has taken indefinite leave for health and travelling distance concerns. While work continues, Jon has focused his team's attention on 629/729, which can be returned to service much sooner than 602/707.

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Work currently in progress on these units includes replacing scratched windows and perished window rubbers, guides and catches; refurbishing window frames; and checking and repairing all seat roll-over mechanisms before painting.

NPF 629 and NTC 729 Refurbishment

The wooden flooring has been repaired and is ready to be covered with linoleum. New underfloor sound insulation was installed where required. The toilets and associated plumbing are being checked and made serviceable. The windows and seat frames have been tested, repaired, or replaced to ensure their smooth operation.

CPH Bogie Overhaul

Steady progress is being made to overhaul the bogies taken off CPH 7. While awaiting the return of our drive bogie and axle boxes from Advance Rail, the trailing bogie has been stripped, inspected, and critical components have been magnetic particle tested to check for fatigue cracking. Our boiler makers made the necessary repairs. We have received eight new pairs of coil springs from Lovells. Each pair consists of a large spring, inside which resides a smaller diameter spring. Our Maintenance Coordinator has been checking on Sulzer's wheel machining progress. The team is eager to get all components back on site to begin reassembly.

Electrical Projects

The electrical team generally attends on Mondays when access to our rolling stock doesn't clash with our fitters working on Wednesdays. They monitor the health of the many batteries in our rolling stock and ancillary equipment and charge them.

The team has looked into the impact on batteries if rail motor saloon lights are switched on while our carriage cleaners are at work. They believe the battery drain is small and can be negated by using our battery chargers on the 5A setting. But it is up to our cleaners, or those making internal repairs, to do the right thing. For periods of more than one hour, externally powered portable LED lights should be used.

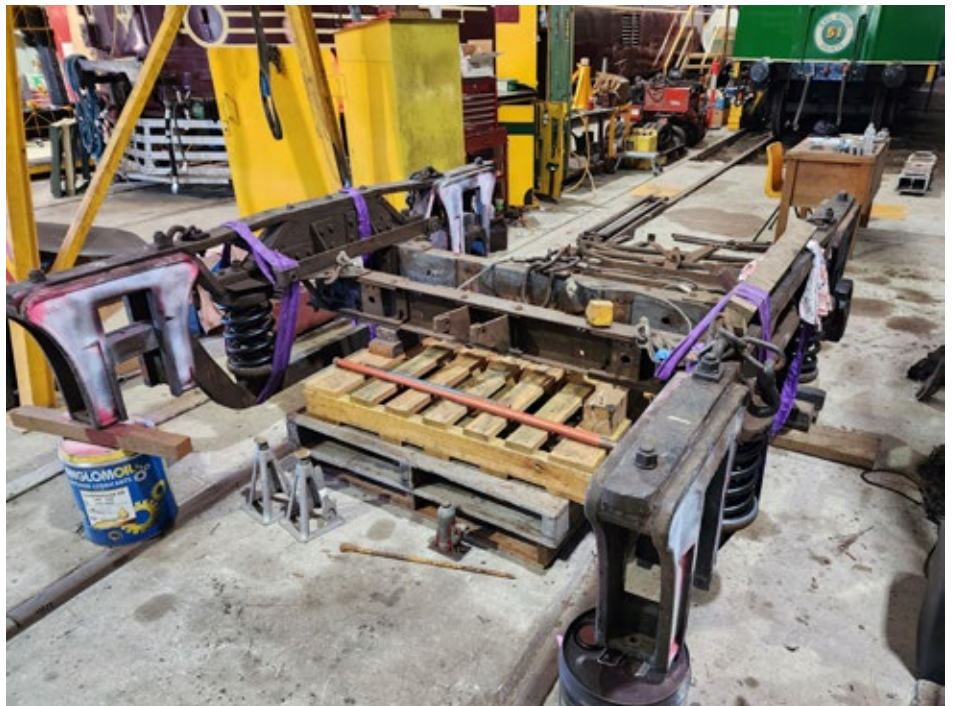
They are also working to install a control box for flashing ditch lights on 621/721. With the power supply to the full-size refrigerator in CPH 7 now finished and working, CPH 3 will soon receive similar attention.

Robert Spencer

Engineering Manager (Rolling Stock)



A fabricated component on the bogie bolster showing failure of the weld seen before repair by our boilermakers



CPH trailing bogie seen during reassembly. The white die on the horn cheeks was used to check for cracks. New coil springs are in position.

Infrastructure Report

Once again, things are not standing still as we continue to work to improve the infrastructure in and around the depot. Many jobs have been completed and I would like to mention a few.

I would like to thank the boilermaker team for their efforts with the steps into the FZ, which have made the area much safer for entering and exiting the carriage. Resident painter Allan Beard has now completed their painting.

We have secured a suitable building for our new toilets, and Noel Price is going to reconfigure them to suit our needs: two ladies' toilets, two gents' toilets, and a toilet for disabled persons. This will be located near the mower shed to allow wheelchair access from the path.

The new meal room is in progress and will be on site soon. Once Noel Price delivers it, we will fit it out, and this should make a great area for all volunteers to enjoy lunch as a group.

A new workshop lathe has been donated to the Society. It will replace the green Torrent lathe and be more beneficial to us for the work we need. We have donated the Torrent lathe to Brimble Rail, who will make good use of it.

Jeff Sorensen donated a metal cut-off saw, Neil Dein donated a 100-ton press, and Brian Kilgour donated a radial drill. These items are of great value to Society, and we thank these people for their generous support.

The MHO and FZ have been moved to 4 Road, which will be their final resting place. Tee Pee Roofing has installed a new roof over both, preventing everything from getting wet and protecting these carriages.

We had a few dangerous trees in and around the area where the meal room will be situated, which also threatened the main shed. These were removed.

This may be the last report on the TAM and BR improvements as the flooring in the BR is now complete, the wall-mounted TV is installed and working, and the lounge chairs are in. This has been a milestone in the making.

The fire hydrant and emergency evacuation systems have been completed. It took a while to make this happen, but now everyone's safety is ensured.

Rodney (Rod) Short

Infrastructure Manager



A new roof protects the FZ and MHO carriages. The FZ has improved step access.



The finished members lounge room in the BR carriage.



Preparing the site for a new meal room



100-ton hydraulic press and radial drill

SOCIETY NEWS

CPH 3 Centenary Celebration

By Bruce Gehrig

On Sunday 17th December 2023, The Rail Motor Society celebrated the day CPH 3 entered regular service for the NSW Government Railways exactly one hundred years ago in 1923. CPH 3 was based at Culcairn in the south of the state in the Riverina district, 368 miles from Sydney on the line to Albury. It ran thrice weekly services on the 17-mile branch line from Culcairn to Holbrook, and the 33-mile branch line from Henty to Rand. Henty is 10 miles north of Culcairn. These lines have now been closed for decades.

Months of organising and planning by Trish and Rod Short and their team were required to ensure a highly successful day. The basic plan was to run four shuttles with CPH 3 leading to Telarah, however these were extended to Maitland on the day. Two runs were to be made in the morning and two in the afternoon, interspersed with an official ceremony and cutting of the cake being held at 1.30 pm. Items to be organised and prepared included; food in the form of sausages and bread rolls and the official cake, water, soft drinks, tea and coffee, printing of souvenir tickets, arranging attendance of official guests, timetable paths for the shuttles, media coverage, preparations of the Society depot grounds and setting up tents and BBQs.

The event was advertised on our Facebook page, emails to members and in the local community. There were no charges payable for tickets on the shuttles, nor for the BBQ sausages. Passengers and members were required to prebook the number of seats they wanted with Trish, to ensure that there was an even spread of passengers over the four shuttles.

The celebration day dawned cloudy and overcast, which was much appreciated, considering the day before, the temperature in the Hunter area had exceeded 40 degrees Celsius in many locations.

Visitors began arriving around 9 am and were welcomed at the top gate near the cottage by a Society member. Parking was available along Webbers Creek Road and in the empty grassed area opposite the depot. They could then look around the depot, museum, etc. until their allotted train departed.



Society President Rod Short being interviewed by a reporter from the local NBN television station (Shaun Kalverla)



People line up for a free sausage sizzle and drink (Brenton Elsey)



Society President Rod Short begins the official ceremony as Jenny Aitchison NSW Member for Maitland, and Minister for Regional Transport and Roads awaits her turn to respond. On the table is an elaborately decorated 100th birthday cake for CPH 3 (Brenton Elsey)



Four free shuttle trips were run to Maitland and return. Here, passengers have alighted and make their way to the marquee area beside the TAM and BR (Lance Nelson)

CPH 3 Centenary Celebration.....Cont'd

Recently opened Paterson business, Long Horn Country and Apparel, also had a stall selling their country merchandise. The free BBQ operated from 10.30 am to 2.30 pm. Also visiting were Society life members Bryan Hicks and Stafford Payne, who were longtime mechanical workers and travelling fitters on the rail motors over several decades.

The shuttles were loaded and unloaded in the depot shed for expediency. Trish met passengers for each shuttle at the entrance to the shed to mark their names off the manifest and hand them their souvenir tickets. The two morning shuttles each carried approximately 95 passengers in the three CPHs.

After the return of the second morning shuttle from Maitland, our President and Operations Manager were interviewed by the local NBN Newcastle television station in front of the carriages in the shed.

Just after 1.30 pm the official ceremony was held. President Rod Short welcomed and thanked everybody for coming and also acknowledged the following official guests for their attendance:

Jenny Aitchison NSW Member for Maitland, and Minister for Regional Transport and Roads,

John Connors Mayor of Dungog Shire Council, and

Peter Garnham, Councillor representing Maitland City Council and the chair of the annual Maitland Steamfest Committee.

Jenny Aitchison then responded and thanked the Society for its work in the restoration of our rail motors and presented Rod on behalf of the Society, with a NSW Government Parliamentary congratulatory certificate. The cutting of the birthday cake then concluded the official part of the day.

The first afternoon shuttle left at 2.30 pm and also conveyed Jenny Aitchison back to Maitland. This trip again carried nearly 95 passengers. The last shuttle at 4 pm had fewer passengers and only needed two cars to accommodate the number travelling. All the 350 souvenir tickets printed had been handed to passengers by the departure of the last shuttle.

The centenary day was not a money

CENTENARY CELEBRATION SOUVENIR TICKET

Paterson to Telarah and Return 17th December 2023

CPH Centenary of Operational Service
Entered into service on 17th December 1923

Operating three weekly services between
Culcairn and Holbrook and Culcairn and Rand.

Built at the Everleigh Carriage Workshops
Originally powered with Thorneycroft and Leyland
Petrol motors coupled to a manual gearbox
Now powered by a GM 6/71 Diesel engine and torque converter.

Restored to active operations by
THE RAIL MOTOR SOCIETY PATERSON



Centenary Celebration Souvenir Ticket

maker for the Society, but the resultant media coverage was priceless. The NBN news story covering the event was shown on the 6 pm news bulletin and was aired in the early part of the news before the first commercial break. Jenny Aitchison also mentioned the day on her two Facebook pages and Instagram site. A local rail video photographer from Steel Ribbons also recorded coverage of the celebrations and put together an eight-minute YouTube video, which was released three days after the event. By the end of December, it had been watched by over 10,000 viewers.

The Society is grateful for all the members who helped out on the day in many ways such as cooking, selling souvenirs, unpacking and setting up tents, and tables, liaising with the visitors, etc. The Society was grateful to the local Paterson Butchery, who supplied us with a portable cool room, which kept the sausages, bottled water and soft drinks cold. Special thanks to Trish and Rod Short and the team for all their hard work, and Lance Nelson for the immaculate preparation of the grounds and depot. The presentation of our depot and rail fleet was acknowledged by Jenny Aitchison in her address to the visitors and members.

SOCIETY NEWS

Historical Footnote

At the time, when CPH 3 was introduced into service on Monday 17 Dec 1923 as the first of 37 members of the CPH class, two experimental rail motors were running on trial by the NSW Government Railways. Rail Motor No.1 began life as a five-ton Moreland truck. After suitable modifications for rail service, it was shipped to Lismore on the isolated North Coast line in 1919, and worked services from there between Grafton and Murwillumbah. It was withdrawn from passenger service in 1925.

Rail Motor No.2 was a suburban end-loading carriage converted in 1922 to a rail motor. Driver's cabs were provided at both ends of the carriage on the end platforms. Extra doors were cut into the ends of the cars to enable passengers to gain entry. It entered service in October 1922 at Tamworth, running services on the Barraba branch. It was withdrawn in 1924 and converted back to a loco hauled passenger car in 1925.

When these two trial rail motors were withdrawn, their numbers were taken by the new CPH cars being built. Therefore, the entry into service for our rail motor trafficable fleet is as follows:

CPH 3 17 Dec 1923

CPH 7 12 Sep 1924

CPH 1 14 Dec 1925

CTC 51 3 Dec 1926

In the early post-World War Two period, CPH 1 and CPH 3 were painted in the green and cream paint scheme, as adopted by the Society for all our rail motors.

As continues today with trials for all new diesel locos and rail cars before entering regular service, so did CPH 3 run a successful trial from Sydney to Bombala and return on Friday and Saturday the 7th and 8th of December 1923.

Further reading on rail motors, railcars and self-propelled diesel trains, can be found in former Society member David Cooke's book, Rail Motors and XPTs published in 1984.

CPH 3 in its original delivery build at Eveleigh



CPH 3 leads CPH 7 and CPH 1 as they near Telarab. Just visible in the background is a brick chimney at Walka Water Works (Paul Bird)

Below: Source: Railways of New South Wales Volume 1 by Colin Heness



*On the main Sydney to Albury line was a small depot at The Rock which serviced the surrounding branch lines. In the depot this day we have awaiting their next trip out on the branch, rail motors CPH 3 and CPH 7
27th September, 1972*

Celebrating the CPH Rail Motor Centenary

By Spencer Ross

A publication is being prepared to celebrate the CPH Rail Motors centenary of operations. Thirty-seven Rail Motors were introduced into service between December 1923 and July 1930. They provided many connecting services on the States' branch lines and later worked in the Sydney, Wollongong and Newcastle Metropolitan areas until their retirement.

The Society is seeking any previously unpublished photos to add to our archives and consideration to be included in the new publication.

We are keen to hear your operational insights, travel stories, and any relevant recollections of CPH history. Your unique perspectives and experiences will greatly enrich our publication and be deeply appreciated.

Please contact Spencer Ross by Email: bustopnsw@gmail.com or Mobile 0428 333 443.



CPHs 3, 11, 19, 31 and 22 at Otford in 1982

85 Years of Service for HPC 402

While CPH 3 deservedly stole the limelight last year, celebrating its 100th Anniversary, it may have escaped people's attention that HPC 402 also achieved a significant milestone that same year, passing 85 years of service on 1 September 2023.

The following photos from our archives feature 402.



402 at Attunga on the Barraba branch line. Look very closely to spot the magpie decals beside the 'whiskers' which were applied by Werris Creek depot staff (date unknown, TRMS Archives)

SOCIETY NEWS



402 at Biniguy showing the guard on the platform changing the staff on an Inverell to Moree service (date unknown, TRMS Archives)



402, now owned, restored and operated by the Society, as seen in 2016 near Farley with ground penetrating radar attached for ballast testing. It also performs radio testing for ARTC and overhead wiring checks for Sydney Trains in new and unusual roles (Bruce Gehrig)



This January 1984 photo shows 402 and trailer stored at Werris Creek after its withdrawal from service a few months earlier in late 1983 (TRMS Archives)



402 at Waterfall, with pantograph raised, performing overhead wire testing in 2022 (Bruce Agland)

Monthly Open Days

By Bruce Gehrig

Our Open Days on the third Sunday of each month continue to attract regular visitors, some of whom tell us they are repeat attendees.

The visitor numbers for this year to date were 34 in January, 18 in February, 14 in March, 64 in April, and 72 in May. Most visitors are from around the Hunter area, with a few from Sydney, and in April, one gentleman visited from Hamilton New Zealand.

In April, we had a group booking from the Central Coast Mason clubs, while in May there were two groups, one from Newcastle Computer Pals for Seniors and another from a Newcastle Singles club. As CPH 3 was not available for the Dungog shuttle in May, we could not accommodate all visitors wanting to travel in the other two rail motors.

We're always in need of more hands to make our monthly open days a success. Any members who are willing to lend a hand would be greatly appreciated.



Rolling Stock Coordinator Ross Goodman discusses the bogie overhaul and other workshop matters with visitors at our May Open Day (Brenton Elsey)

Website Upgrade

At long last, a new website is being built and will soon be released with a fresh, modern look. Jon Sifflett has been tasked with this significant project under the direction of the Board. We want to preserve our rich history while sharing it with others.

The new website will feature:

- Announcements for upcoming tours and open days to attract more visitors.
- An online store where souvenirs can be purchased.
- Online membership payments with automated reminders.
- Integration with Instagram, allowing customers' photos to be automatically uploaded and shared, showcasing the fun on our tours.
- Digital versions of old photo galleries, providing a nostalgic journey through our history.

The new site will retain links to the treasure trove of technical information on our current site, which is the go-to source for many rail motor enthusiasts.

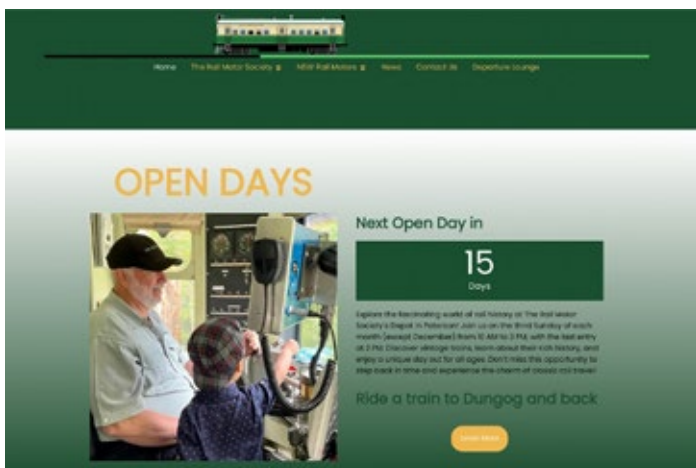
Board members have been granted a sneak preview of its development, and expect our members and the public will be extremely pleased with the result. Stay tuned for its release date.



Main page



Rail motor index page



Open Day countdown page example



Tour announcement countdown page example

OPERATIONS DIARY

Railway Adventures Western Charter, 8–15 December 2023

By Allan Beard

Scott McGregor once again chartered 621/721 for another Western Circle Tour, but in the reverse direction to last year. A lower number of passengers required only myself as carriage attendant, two drivers, Steve Harper and Phil Smith and Kevin Judd as travelling fitter. We departed Paterson at 11.30 am as empty cars on Friday 8 December for Central Station, to commence the tour the following morning. The trip to Sydney, with the temperature reaching near 40° Celsius, was a sample of further hot days ahead.

Before we left the depot, we also learnt that an empty Aurizon coal train had derailed near Bylong, starting a bush fire on the line to Gulgong and forcing its closure. Scott McGregor arranged for a Coach to convey passengers from Muswellbrook to their Gulgong overnight accommodation. The Coach would also parallel the train's path for the rest of the tour to convey passengers to various off-train tourist attractions on their six-day trip.

On Saturday morning with our passengers on board we headed north to Muswellbrook for a planned lunch stop. Due to the continuing heat wave with temperatures now reaching the mid-forties, ARTC had imposed an 80 kilometre per hour speed restriction on all trains. On the outskirts of Muswellbrook, Control held our train for 45 minutes to allow the Up and Down Xplorer trains to use the station. While we waited for platform access, we handed out over 80 bottles of cold water to keep our mostly senior passengers cool and hydrated.

On arrival at the platform, passengers walked across the road to the hotel for lunch while their luggage was unloaded and placed on the Coach. No doubt our passengers enjoyed the airconditioned comfort of the afternoon Coach trip. We would not have to load their bags onto the train again until the last day at Kandos.

With the Gulgong line closed, the now empty train had to travel via Werris Creek and Merrygoen, staying overnight in the old railway barracks at Binnaway. On Sunday, December 10th, we ran empty cars to Gulgong, arriving at 10.30 am, while our passengers continued touring the Mudgee area by Coach. In Gulgong, we also bought Christmas decorations to place on the train.

On Monday morning we departed Gulgong with our passengers and headed to Narromine. The trip included a one-hour lunch stop at the Ballimore Hotel after arriving there at 11.50 am. We also turned the train on the triangle at Dubbo, so that 621 could lead back to Sydney. On arrival at Narromine at 2.25 pm, passengers had a 1½ hour town Coach tour before we returned the short distance back to Dubbo for an overnight stop.

Tuesday morning, we departed Dubbo at 9.05 am and headed to Millthorpe for lunch. We stopped at Stuart Town for half an hour so passengers could walk around the small village. On arrival at Millthorpe, just after midday, passengers left the train for three hours to enjoy lunch and a village tour, while we took the train east to Polona, to wait in the loop and allow other rail traffic to pass. We then travelled west to Spring Hill to reverse the train back east to Millthorpe to collect our passengers for



Bernadette and Scott in Christmas Spirit (Allan Beard)



Passengers take a 'leg stretch' on Dunedoo Station's platform (Allan Beard)

the one-hour trip to Bathurst for their two-night stay.

Wednesday was a layover day for the crew after we refuelled the train at Kelso that morning. Passengers spent the day travelling to various local attractions including Abercrombie House and Mayfield Gardens.

Thursday 14 December, was the last day of the tour for the passengers. Leaving Bathurst we ran to Wallerawang, before reversing and travelling to Kandos for our lunch stop and a town tour and museum visit. Arrival and departure were an hour early due to no traffic on the branch. The early running continued to Katoomba, arriving there at 4.30 pm, only to be held for an hour by Sydney Trains. Passenger's dinners were picked up

Railway Adventures Western Charter, 8–15 December 2023.....Con't

and handed out as we continued the run down the mountains to Central Station. Arrival was 13 minutes late, and despite the extreme heat and disruptions, passengers told us that they had enjoyed their trip and had a great holiday. The train was then taken to Eveleigh to stable overnight.

On Friday 15 December, after retrieving the train from Eveleigh, we left Central Station at 9.49 am for the empty car run home to Paterson, arriving at 2.10 pm. My special thanks to Kevin Judd for his help as a carriage attendant throughout the tour.



Above: Lunch on Kandos' station platform (Allan Beard)

Left: 621/721 stabled at Binnaway (Allan Beard)

Coffs Harbour Rainforest Rattler and Kyogle, January 2024

By Trish Short

Well, another year has rolled around and we find ourselves heading back up the North Coast once again for another **Rainforest Rattler** trip.

On Thursday 4 January we set off from Paterson, and not too far up the line began receiving phone calls from our very excited Gloucester passengers led by one of our biggest fans Marli Zarb, wanting to know if we were on time. While we were waiting in the passing loop south of Gloucester, Marli was telling me he would keep everyone informed, and as I had some family members waiting there also, they said he did just that. We had 70 or so members of the Rainbow Warriors from Taree get on, and, as in years past they were all very excited, led by Marli and his best friend and artist Hayden. This is always a great highlight part of the trip.

We arrived in Coffs Harbour late in the afternoon and prepared for what is always a big two weeks of running, from the beaches up through the tunnels north and return. We had some 4,500 people ride from Coffs Harbour, with numbers down on the previous year. There just did not seem to be the holidaymakers around this year due to the economic downturn. Also, a large amount of accommodation was taken up by the road construction workers building a city bypass which may have also had a bearing on this.

We made the decision to head over to Casino to the Giant Pumpkin and Watermelon Festival a couple of days earlier than first planned. This was, as usual, very well supported, and we ran two trips from Kyogle to Glenapp and return on Thursday and Friday, and then the originally planned three trips on Saturday and Sunday, which had sold out long before Christmas. However, on the last Saturday afternoon run there was a level crossing activation issue. Regrettably, we were forced by ARTC to cancel our Sunday trips. This was very disappointing for the passengers who had tickets booked.



621/721 in the vicinity of Loadstone, as it climbs into the MacPherson Ranges toward the Queensland border (Mike Condon)

OPERATIONS DIARY



621/721 emerges from a tunnel on the Queensland side of the state border with NSW bound for Glenapp (Mike Condon)

Hunter Valley Steamfest, 13–14 April 2024

By Bruce Gehrig

Unlike 2023, when the Society could only provide our CPH rail motors, due to a changed date for Steamfest conflicting with committed Society hirings, all three of our trains operated at this popular annual event this year.

Our three CPH rail motors ran four shuttles daily between Maitland and Paterson and return, while 621/721 ran two shuttles daily to Saxonvale Junction on the Mt Thorley branch line. However, on the Saturday morning trip, the train was diverted to Singleton due to the branch being occupied by coal trains.

HPC 402 ran two trips to Kooragang Island on Saturday but only one trip on Sunday due to the running of the Great Train Race that morning.

The Kooragang Island trips with 402 sold out in less than 24 hours of going on sale. Our other shuttles ran at or near capacity. The Society also had a marquee outside Maitland station selling souvenirs and books which raised several thousand dollars for the Society.

The Society carried 1,062 passengers on 15 services over the weekend. The Mayor of Maitland, Philip Penfold, expressed his Council's gratitude to our Operations Manager, Bruce Agland for our Society's continuing support of the annual Steamfest event.

The Board extends its grateful thanks to all the members who worked over the weekend on our trains and at our souvenir stall.



On Saturday 13 April, rail motor 402 is about to cross the Hunter River on its way to Kooragang Island (R. Spencer)



On Sunday 14 April, 621/721 stops on the Mt Thorley branch, just beyond Army Camp Road, where the drivers will change ends to begin the return trip to Maitland (R. Spencer)



Above: CPH 1, CPH 3 and CPH 7 are heading north at Oakhampton towards the Hunter River Bridge on a shuttle to Paterson, Saturday 13th April (Brock Emmett)

Left: On Saturday 13 April, 621/721 has just returned to Maitland after its final trip to the Mt Thorley branch (R. Spencer)

Wedding Charter, 7 April

By Lance Nelson

It has been over 10 years since the Society has run a wedding special train, but on Sunday 7 April, 621/721 was hired to celebrate the wedding of Dan and Olivia. They had been married during the COVID pandemic, and because of health protocols at that time, were unable to celebrate with a reception for all their family and friends.

After running empty to Maitland, the wedding train left there at 9.00 am with the bride, groom and 90 family and friends for a trip up the North Coast line to Stroud Road. At Dungog we were put in the back platform for a crossing, so the opportunity was taken for the bride and groom to pose beside the front of the train with the wedding headboard (see photo), followed by all

the passengers joining the couple for a group photo.

The cost to hire the train included alcohol, so three RSA-qualified carriage attendants were needed to cater for passenger's needs. The return trip from Stroud Road ended at Paterson Station at 11.30 am, where everybody alighted and walked to the Paterson Tavern, which had been hired to hold the wedding reception. As four hours had been allowed for this social occasion, 621/721 returned to the depot to stable and allow the crew to clean the train and have lunch.

Just after 3.30 pm, the train left the depot and, after picking up the passengers from Paterson Station, returned them to Maitland. According to the passengers, they thoroughly enjoyed the celebrations with the Rail Motor Society. As the day went so well, they are looking at doing a similar event again in future.



Wedding couple Dan and Olivia pose in front of 721 at Dungog Station (Bruce Agland)

OPERATIONS DIARY

Willow Tree Charter, 28 April

By Lance Nelson

On Sunday 28 April 621/721 departed our depot at 7.15 am with 22 of the 92 expected passengers already on board. We travelled to Broadmeadow where most of our passengers joined the train to start their journey to Willow Tree. We also stopped at Thornton, Maitland and Singleton to pick up the remainder of our travellers.

With only a NSW TrainLink **XPLORER** to cross on the single line north of Muswellbrook, arrival at Willow Tree was some 45 minutes early just after midday. Most passengers chose to walk to the hotel for their lunch, but the hotel also supplied a minibus to transport those unable to make the walk.

After an enjoyable and leisurely lunch break extending over three hours, the return journey left just after 3 pm.

The day was arranged by the Freemasons of the Newcastle, Maitland & Lake Macquarie districts. The trip to the Willow Tree Hotel and return was in aid of Charity. The Freemasons raised approximately \$8,000 for the Childhood Diabetes Foundation.

On arrival back at Singleton at 6.30 pm, the drivers were relieved by a fresh crew, driven there by a Society member. Arrival back at Broadmeadow was just before 8 pm, with passengers telling us that they had enjoyed travelling with us and were pleased with the amount they had raised for charity.

For our passenger attendants, it was a long day of 14 hours. Arrival back at the depot was just after 9 pm.

Scone Race Train, 17 May 2024

By Trish Short

Yet another memorable day was marked at the Scone Cup on 17 May. The charter by the Maitland Rugby Club, a recurring event for this group, saw the 621/721 train bustling with a maximum of 98 passengers, all eager to partake in the festivities. It departed Maitland station at 8.10 am. The unwavering support of the rugby club members has been a testament to the success of this annual event.

We also ran the three CPHs for locals from Maitland this year, departing at 9:40 am. As usual, this train was also well patronised, with 84 passengers spread across the three cars. The CPHs were late into Scone due to network congestion. Both trains then stabled in the siding just north of the station until the afternoon Xplorer to Armidale passed.

When our trains returned to the platform, our dedicated staff prepared a warm meal of hot dogs for our passengers. A few other society members accompanied the passengers to the races to ensure they got on the right buses to get them back to the station after the races finished.

All arrived back from the track on time, and departure was close to time. The rail motors, which left first, followed by 621/721, arrived back at Maitland just before 7.30 pm. Recycling from both trains amounted to 650 cans and bottles!

Thank you to all the members who worked on both trains, ensuring our passengers had a great day to remember.



Above: Passengers alight at Maitland at the end of their day at the Scone races (Bruce Gebrig)

Left: Our trains stand at Scone station waiting for passengers to return from the races. Meanwhile, the crew prepare an evening meal of hot dogs for passengers (Allan Beard).

Stroud Road / Dungog Charter, 25 May

By Bruce Gehrig

On Saturday 25 May, HPC 402 was hired to help celebrate a 21st birthday. The group of 11 travelled from Gwandalan in a minibus, with the parents, their 21 year old son and eight of his friends to enjoy a different way of having a birthday.

Leaving the depot at 11 am, the group enjoyed nibbles and drinks they had brought with them for the trip to Stroud Road. On arrival back at Dungog at 1 pm, they had two and a half hours to have a leisurely lunch at the Bank Hotel in town. Departure was at 3.45 pm and after arrival back at the depot, the party was to continue at a local Paterson hotel.

The popularity of these Stroud Road / Dungog charters continues as two days earlier, another group of 48 travelled with a Central Coast coach company to do a similar trip. However, on this occasion, they travelled on the CPH rail motors and, on arrival back at Dungog, left the train to reboard their coach, which was waiting to convey them to lunch at the local RSL Club. On Saturday 1 June, another birthday party train ran to Dungog using the rail motors once again.

And yet again, this time on Friday 12 June, another group of 44 arrived in three minibuses from their retirement village at Cooranbong Gardens. They boarded CPH 1 and CPH 7 at Paterson railway station due to our depot car park being full

with cars belonging to members and passengers away on a six-day society trip to the Central West. A nonstop run to Dungog station ensued, where they alighted and spent two hours for lunch at the local bowling club.

On return to Paterson, the rail motors brought them into the depot where they alighted inside the storage shed. There they were able to inspect the workshop. Then they toured the depot and visited our museum before leaving at 3.15 pm on their minibuses for the trip home.



Passengers and crew watch the departure of the Grafton bound XPT, which would allow the two-car Hunter set standing at the other end of the back platform to depart for Newcastle Interchange and 402 to follow shortly after (Bruce Gehrig)

Casino Beef Week and Northern Rivers Tour 22–27 May

Part 1: Passenger Perspective

By Robert Spencer

This trip was arranged to enable 621/721 to return to Kyogle for track circuit testing by ARTC as a follow-up to having reported a level crossing incident earlier this year in which the train was believed at fault (not so). To defray train expenses, this trip would take passengers to Casino for the conclusion of the town's Beef Week celebrations and also tour the picturesque Northern Rivers area. In addition, eight fully booked shuttle services were run from Casino to Glenapp (Qld), proving highly popular with locals. Frustratingly, ARTC called off their testing at the 'eleventh hour'.

The train crew comprised drivers Rod Short and Mick Baczynskyj, travelling fitter Jeff Sorensen, train manager Trish Short, and passenger attendants Sharyn Noll and Greg Duncan. The train was worked under Block Working Requirements (needing authority to proceed between nominated sections).

Our adventure commenced on Wednesday 22 May with an early 5.50 am departure from Paterson, where about half of the 23 passengers began their journey. It was a foggy start to the day. The remainder were picked up at Maitland where the tour began in earnest. We all listened to the recorded safety briefing, which also provided information on the train and about the Society.

Passengers were served a toasted ham cheese and tomato croissant for breakfast as we journeyed north with fog persisting. We were held for 20 minutes at Kilbride to allow an approaching Hunter set to cross, followed by a southbound 'steel' train. At Dungog, a further 10 minute delay to cross a container train, and at Stroud Road, a further 20 minute delay to cross a second container train. After this early morning flurry of traffic, the road ahead was finally ours! The fog had cleared to reveal we were in for a sunny day as the cold morning chill slowly abated.

We had a clear run for the next 1½ hours to Wingham where a 20 minute stop was made to cross a NSW TrainLink XPT from Grafton. A brief stop was made at Taree to collect a sandwich lunch for passengers and crew. Curiously, an XPT set was seen stabled in the



The tour group gather for their photo with the alpacas (R. Spencer)

OPERATIONS DIARY

Casino Beef Week and Northern Rivers Tour 22–27 May....Con't

yard at Taree. Later inquiry revealed the set had been delayed about 4 hours due to an earlier level-crossing incident and the unavailability of a relief driver; its passengers being bused to Sydney.

Shortly before Kendall, Rod alerted passengers to look right as we approached the aptly named 'Teddy Bear' Junction, where many teddy bears had set up home. We continued to Kempsey and held for 30 minutes to cross an *XPT* from Brisbane. Resuming our journey, we passed through Macksville and Coffs Harbour before arriving and terminating at South Grafton Station at 3.30 pm. Passengers were transferred to a waiting Coach and taken to the Crown Hotel, situated on the bank of the beautiful Clarence River. This would be our 'home' for the next five nights.

The following day, 621/721 continued to Casino to run two fully booked shuttle services from there to Glenapp and back (96 passengers per trip) before returning to Grafton. Our tour group also travelled aboard 621/721 to Casino where a Coach waited. Our friendly coach driver, David, provided an excellent commentary. He informed us that although the Richmond River peaked on 28 January 2022, just below the deck of the Casino's town bridge, the town itself fared reasonably well in this flood, becoming a refuge for the people of Lismore and its surrounds. Leaving Casino and noting the rail trail conversion of the abandoned Murwillumbah line, we travelled to Nimbin, a quirky village full of colourful characters and eclectic 'new-age' shops.

We then continued to Lismore for lunch, followed by a coach tour of the CBD. Coach driver David recounted his experience of the devastating 2022 flood. From a vantage point in the hills, he described looking out over Lismore and the Clarence Valley to see only a complete sea of blackness; the one solitary light being the Byron Bay lighthouse on a very distant coast! The fact



Rob Sibson beside the railway hut that he and his late brother Dennis meticulously restored, carrying press coverage leaflets and restoration photos to hand out to passengers (R. Spencer)



Above: Eager passengers board 621/721 at Casino for their trip to Glenapp (R. Spencer)

Below: The Schaeffer House Museum in Grafton, which the tour group visited



OPERATIONS DIARY

that flood water had reached above the height of shop awnings in the CBD was a sobering reality check. We returned to Casino and to 621/721 for a 4.25 pm departure to Grafton, arriving there just before 7 pm.

On the third day, a Friday, 621/721 returned to Casino for a second day of shuttles to Glenapp. Our tour group instead boarded a Coach for local sightseeing with the aid of local tour guide Marie and coach driver Ray. Marie pointed out that the iconic Grafton 'bendy' road and rail bridge opened in 1932, the same year as the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Our first destination was the Wahgunurry Alpaca Stud, which overlooks the magnificent Clarence River at Lower Southgate. There, a scrumptious morning tea of scones with jam and cream awaited us. Our hosts, Pauline & Colin Glasser explained the farming of alpacas. Our group hand-fed the animals which appeared at ease with strangers.

After lunch at the Lawrence Hotel, we returned to Grafton to tour the town and its outskirts before a visit to Schaeffer House, home to the Clarence Valley Historical Society and its exceptional collection of memorabilia donated by district residents.

On Saturday, we rejoined the train at South Grafton for a 7.30 am departure to Casino. On this occasion, we continued to Glenapp, along with people who boarded at Casino, ensuring a full train. The highlight of this trip was to travel the Cougal Spiral, also known as the Border Loop Spiral. It was opened on 27 September 1930 with the completion of the line from Kyogle to South Brisbane. About 3 kilometres north of the spiral, the 1,160 metre long Border Tunnel exits into Queensland. Ben, an Acacia Ridge-based driver for Pacific National, familiar with this section of the line was our driver. Upon reaching Glenapp, and being greeted by Rob Sibson, the surviving sibling of the two 'Glenapp Boys' who restored the historic railway hut, it was a quick change of ends for our drivers and the start of the return journey. Each Casino–Glenapp–Casino shuttle lasted approximately 3 hours.

On returning to Casino, people eagerly awaited their turn on a second shuttle to Glenapp. Our tour group was taken by minibus to the centre of town where Beef Week celebrations were well underway. Our timing deliberately coincided with the Grand Parade down the main street of Casino. It was a popular and well-attended event. David, our previous coach driver, told us on Thursday that the Northern Rivers beef cattle industry was worth around \$200 million.

We returned to Casino Station in time to see 621/721 return from Glenapp and a throng of happy passengers alight. We boarded and settled back for the 1½ hour trip back to Grafton, arriving at 5 pm just as darkness fell.

On Sunday, 621/721 set off for Casino and the final two of the eight shuttle trips to Glenapp. Our tour group instead boarded a Coach that took us to Yamba where the Clarence River meets the ocean. We began by strolling the local street market to discover what goodies lay in store. At 11 am, the group boarded the MV Mirigini for a four-hour river cruise upstream to Harwood, enjoying the live music provided. It was a relaxing way to conclude our Northern Rivers tour.

On Monday, 27 May, we departed Grafton at 8.20 am for our journey home, starting off in heavy fog, which by Glenreagh, had cleared to reveal clear blue skies. Our train ran express through Coffs Harbour, Macksville, Kempsey and Wauchope before stopping at Pembroke for 20 minutes to cross a freight train. At Taree, we stopped to cross an XPT on its way to Casino. We then had a clear run to Dungog North where we waited another 30 minutes to cross a second XPT, this one on its way to Grafton and finally a local Hunter Line train depart Dungog ahead of us. Due to impending trackwork and the inevitable delay between



One of the key trip objectives was to attend the Casino Beef Week and to witness the spectacle of the Grand Parade down the main street of Casino (R. Spencer)

OPERATIONS DIARY

Paterson and Maitland, the tour was cut short at Paterson just after 4 pm. Fortunately, sufficient spare seats could be found in cars travelling to Maitland for those who had boarded there. Thus concluded a memorable and thoroughly enjoyable six-day trip to the Northern Rivers area.

We all had a great time with the friendly rail motor crew. This tour opportunity was largely brought about by Trish and would have required many hours of planning. Her meticulous work ensured its resounding success.

Part 2: Crewmember Perspective

By Sharyn Noll

Over four days we had a full train for every shuttle trip. Our souvenirs were popular with healthy sales. On the first day, we almost sold out of all our bottles of port, and we even sold a clock!

Everyone on every trip commented on having a great time and liked reading about the history of Glenapp (notes provided by one of the 'Glenapp Boys' himself). Lots of retired railway people reminisced about 'in my day...' and had great chats with the drivers.

Kids, big and small, loved the chance to meet the drivers and blow the train horn. Our oldest was a grandma whose husband used to be on the rails in the steam days. She had the biggest smile of all when she got to sound the horn.

Lots of people asked us to return next year for Beef Week, and the Kyogle customers asked us to return for the Pumpkin and Watermelon Festival next year as well.

For my first big trip as a volunteer, it was big days, tiring, but so much fun. I really enjoyed myself.

Part 3: News Coverage, Clarence Valley Independent (reproduced with permission of Editor John Warden)

Volunteers track local success with tourist trains

By Journalist Emma Pritchard

As they stood in the shadow of the heritage 1960s 621/721 class rail motor at Grafton City Station, volunteers from the Rail Motor Society reflected with heartfelt pride and passion on the unequivocal diligence and resoluteness of their ongoing work which enabled railway enthusiasts to experience the unparalleled sensation of travelling in historic style during their tour throughout Northern NSW earlier this year.

Based in the Hunter Valley village of Paterson, the Rail Motor Society operated several sold-out tourist trains between the regional city of Grafton in the Clarence Valley, the Richmond Valley township of Casino, and the Border Loop from May 23–26.

A number of passengers also utilised the service to travel between Grafton and Casino during Casino Beef Week 2024, which ran from May 18–26.

It was a timely attraction with the 63-year-old 621/721 class rail motor visiting Northern NSW during National Volunteer Week, which was celebrated between May 20–26.



The last of the passengers board at South Grafton Station for their homeward journey (R. Spencer)



Ben Francis (Emma Pritchard)



Rail motor passengers (Emma Pritchard)



Rail Motor at the platform (Emma Pritchard)

Casino Beef Week and Northern Rivers Tour 22–27 May....Con't

"It is incorrect to say our trains run on fuel as it is merely consumable, they run on the work and tireless dedication of our volunteers," said President of the Rail Motor Society Rod Short.

"We have just over 200 volunteers, and every one of them put their hands up to do something. A lot of people want rail based tourism, and without our volunteers we simply couldn't operate or give people the experience they're looking for."

Speaking with the Clarence Valley based community newspaper the Clarence Valley Independent on May 25, Mr Short, who has been a volunteer with the Rail Motor Society since its inception in the 1980s, said the continual success of the not-for-profit organisation relies on the goodwill of their members who selflessly contribute their time, energy, and individual skillsets across a diverse range of roles to assist in the preservation and operation of the historic fleet of NSW Government Railways rail motors.

Six volunteers including two drivers, a fitter, and attendance staff, travelled to Northern NSW for the running of the tourist trains in late May, with many passengers, especially families with young children and Clarence Valley railway fanatics, readily embracing the opportunity to learn about the history of the 621/721 class rail motor and admire the beautiful scenery throughout the region as they journeyed up and down the line.

Treasurer of the Rail Motor Society Trish Short said the tourist trains have always been well supported, and every dollar made through ticket sales assists volunteers as they undertake further restoration projects and ongoing maintenance of the current fleet.

While the Rail Motor Society shared their current plans to host additional rail journeys throughout Northern NSW with the Clarence Valley Independent earlier this year, they are extremely thankful to their volunteers for their ongoing dedication, and to regional communities including Grafton and Casino for their continual support which allows them to remain on track for future success.



Rail Motor Society volunteers, L–R: Jeff Sorensen, Sharyn Noll, Ben Francis, Greg Duncan, Mick Baczynskyj and Rod Short (Emma Pritchard)

Central West Explorer Tour, 7–12 June 2024

By Robert Spencer

The six-day Central West Explorer Tour was a tour originally conceived and planned by Spencer Ross for the Australian Railway Historical Society. However, when the ARHS decided to pull out, the Rail Motor Society stepped in. The June King's Birthday Long Weekend tour again proved very popular thanks to the efforts of Spencer Ross and Tours Liaison Officer Trish Short.

Day 1: Friday 7 June

On a cold June pre-dawn morning, passengers boarded 621/721 at Paterson depot, assisted by crew, as final preparations were being made for a 6.07 am departure. The train crew included drivers Phil Smith and Rod Short, train manager Trish Short, travelling fitter Mick Walsh and passenger attendants Spencer Ross and Allan Beard. A brief stop was made at Maitland to pick up passengers before arriving at Broadmeadow on time at 7.25 am to pick up Newcastle passengers. On departure, our train was diverted onto a relief road in Broadmeadow Yard to await an Intercity V-set and a freight train to proceed before entering the Short North to Sydney.

Passengers enjoyed a toasted ham cheese and tomato croissant for breakfast. Brief stops were made to pick up passengers at Mt Colah, Hornsby, Pennant Hills, and a large group at Concord West, before branching onto the Main Western railway line. Spencer Ross welcomed passengers aboard, introduced the Rail Motor Society crew, and distributed comprehensive tour notes. Our last passengers boarded at Penrith, observing that the Nepean River was in moderate flood. On this tour, we carried a passenger and crew complement of 73. While there were many familiar faces (from past ARHS-chartered trips), the Society had attracted new travellers via its tour notification mailing list and advertising, reflecting an evolving demographic.

During the ascent of the Blue Mountains, passengers were served scones with jam and cream. 621 performed capably on the



Pre-dawn, Mick Walsh and Phil Smith contemplate the day ahead as driver Rod Short gets 621/721 ready to leave the storage shed and begin the trip (R. Spencer)

OPERATIONS DIARY

Central West Explorer Tour, 7–12 June 2024....Con't

arduous 1 in 30 rising grade from Valley Heights to Katoomba, arriving ahead of schedule. From Wentworth Falls to Mt Victoria, the journey took place in cloud cover. Lithgow was passed at 1.34 pm, 10 minutes up on our table. A sandwich lunch was provided and consumed while travelling. Passing Bathurst at 2.42 pm, 35 minutes up, we continued our good run to Orange East Fork, by then almost 1 hour ahead of schedule and just in time to avoid being held for an **XPT** service due to depart Orange for Sydney. However, with our destination almost in sight, we had to wait in darkness at Bumberry for a Manildra-bound wheat train that had just left Parkes to ascend the Bumberry Range from the west. This delay brought us back to our timetable, arriving Parkes at 6.44 pm, still only a creditable 10 minutes late. Passengers were accommodated in two motels for their four-night stay.

Day 2: Saturday 8 June

Passengers arrived at a foggy Parkes railway station ready for a scheduled 8.30 am departure, but seeing 621/721 still on a siding where it had been stabled overnight, we soon learnt Train Control had prioritised a westbound freight train over our departure. To make matters worse, the same train would proceed the short distance to Goobang Junction and then shunt to the SCT intermodal facility. Thus, we departed Parkes 1 hour late, proceeding west to Bogan Gate for the junction with the Tottenham Branch. Also travelling with us were additional travellers from Parkes who had joined us for the day, along with Parkes-based relief driver Col Monkerud. The fog had cleared to reveal a cool, sunny day by the time we finally departed.

We were previously advised that due to 10–20 kph speed restrictions on the 87 kilometre section between Bogan Gate and Albert due to poor track conditions, our journey on this sector would terminate at Trundle. On arrival at Bogan Gate, our drivers set the road for the branch. We departed Bogan Gate at 10.08 am, arriving at Trundle, only 25 kilometres away, at 11.25 am. After a short 15-minute stop for our drivers to attend to safeworking duties and change ends, we retraced our outward journey back to Bogan Gate, before proceeding further west to Condobolin. On arrival at 2.50 pm, passengers alighted for a sausage sizzle lunch provided by volunteers from Condobolin's SES and Rotary. In addition to sponge cake, a chocolate train cake, albeit of the steam train variety, was later sliced and served. Both groups were very pleased to receive us. A reporter from the Condobolin Argus was on hand to gather all participants for a collective photo we were told was sure to make their front page!

After satisfying our appetites, we reboarded 621/721 for a 3.55 pm departure. Our arrival back at Parkes was at 5.10 pm, only 10 minutes down on our table. Due to a shortage of touring coaches/drivers over the King's Birthday long weekend, the Society hired a minibus to shuttle passengers to and from the railway station and motels.

Day 3: Sunday 9 June

The destination on this day is Warren (in reality, the Auscott siding, the present-day limit of travel due to fire-damaged bridges). Our drivers are Phil Smith and Ken Schmidt. Once again, a few extra Parkes passengers have joined us for our trip to Warren. The day started out sunny, but by mid-afternoon, the skies will turn overcast.

Our departure from Parkes was on time at 8.30 am. At Goobang Junction, our train ventured onto the Parkes–Narromine railway line, which had recently been upgraded as part of the Inland Rail Project. The new ballast / concrete sleeper / heavy rail construction assured a fast, smooth ride in stark contrast to the Tottenham Branch. A new connection on the north side of the SCT intermodal facility now allows trains from Broken Hill to proceed directly to Narromine, bypassing the City of Parkes. Passing mostly through cattle, sheep and cropping farmland, and generally away from major roads, the only town we encountered was the small settlement of Peak Hill at 9.10 am. At Narromine passengers could alight for a brief 'leg stretch' on the station platform while our drivers attend to safeworking duties and set the road for Nevertire (on the Cobar railway line).

Train Order Working prevails on the UGL-controlled line from Narromine to Cobar. With authority granted, our train now proceeds west as far as Nevertire. Mid-journey at Trangie, there is a short delay to cross an eastbound containerised wheat train before arrival at Nevertire at 11.40 am. This is the junction for the Warren railway line. We can travel only as far as Auscott (siding), which serves an



On its return from Trundle on 8 June 2024, 621/721 waits at Bogan Gate North for mainline traffic to clear. During the break, driver Phil Smith made several trips with passenger's cameras to record the scene above (this one using the author's camera)



By 3 pm, the shadows are already advancing, 8 June 2024 (R. Spencer)

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adjacent cotton processing facility. The terminus (Warren) is approximately 11 kilometres further north. A short 7-minute stay is all it takes to complete safeworking and for our drivers to change ends, thus beginning the return journey to Nevertire. We stopped short of the Oxley Highway level crossing to learn that we could not proceed into Nevertire until a freight train had cleared the main line. Taking advantage of the delay, driver Phil Smith kindly offers to take a picture of the train standing beside a pool of water in which the train is reflected, making multiple trips to accommodate the desires of all passengers with cameras.

When authority to proceed is obtained, we continue to Nevertire, where our train is stabled for passengers to alight for lunch. The crew attach a portable flight of stairs to detrain passengers for the short walk across the road to the Nevertire Hotel. Soup and sandwiches are provided during this one-hour stopover.

Before long, the train whistle warns of an impending departure, and passengers return from the hotel to reboard the train. The portable steps are stowed, and we depart a few minutes ahead of schedule at 1.40 pm. Just outside Narromine Yard, our drivers must fulfil a Train Order to leave the UGL Network and re-enter the ARTC Network. We depart Narromine 5 minutes ahead of our table and arrive back at Parkes at 4.15 pm, some 15 minutes ahead of schedule.

Day 4: Monday 10 June

This was an 'off-train' day for the tour group, as we instead boarded a Coach for various local destinations, including HARS Parkes Aviation Museum, housed in a former RAAF hangar, CSIRO Parkes Radio Telescope, Lachlan Vintage Village Café for lunch, and McFeeters Motor Museum, where over 60 vehicles, from veteran and vintage to classic machines, are on display.

Parkes-based drivers, Col Monkerud and Ray Sullivan, took 80 enthusiastic Parkes locals including 10 from our group to Bribbaree, a small village located on the Parkes–Stockinbingal railway line. Lunch was at the Rusty Horse Hotel, situated close by the railway line, where hoteliers awaited their arrival and undoubtedly welcomed their custom. Car attendant Allan reported all passengers had a great time. He said his carriage was well behaved, while many in Trish's carriage were in 'party mode'. Warick Erwin, from our tour group, was on this trip. He reported the venue and lunch were fantastic. His feedback in conversation with fellow train passengers was that many were surprised to see a two-car diesel train like ours 'still running'. The older generation reminisced about travelling on similar trains in bygone days and thoroughly enjoyed the trip, asking when we would next return.

Although held briefly for a freight train cross on the return journey, the trip ran close to the table, terminating back at Parkes about 20 minutes early. Apparently, it took some coaxing to get those in 'party mode' to leave the train on arrival at Parkes!

Day 5: Tuesday 11 June

Last day in Parkes and the start of the return journey via Temora and Cootamundra for an overnight stay in Goulburn. Departing Parkes as tabled at 8.48 am, we journeyed via the 170-kilometre Parkes-Stockinbingal railway line, initially retracing yesterday's train path.



Passengers, rail motor crew and SES / Rotary volunteers gather in the forecourt of Condobolin railway station, where a reporter from the Condobolin Argus will record a similar image (R. Spencer)

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Passing through Bribbaree at 10.23 am, 621/721 tooted its train horn to rouse those in the Rusty Horse Hotel. At Stockinbingal, where the line joins the Lake Cargelligo railway line, drivers Phil and Rod completed the necessary safeworking duties for travel westward back into UGL Territory while passengers rotated their seatbacks for the continuation to Temora. Arrival there was at 11.45 am, some 40 minutes ahead of our table. 621/721 was stabled in a siding to allow a wheat train to enter Temora Yard (out of sight). Temora was a scheduled stop for lunch, with a sausage sizzle, cake, and tea/coffee provided by Rail Museum volunteers. The main building, dating from 1893, housed a Station Master's office, ticketing rooms, and waiting rooms. In 1912, a refreshment room was added beside the main passenger building. In the kitchen, we could see the original coal-fired oven was still in use.

Departing Temora at 1.35 pm, 20 minutes ahead of our table, we hoped for a good run to Goulburn. Continuing past Stockinbingal, we arrived and waited at Cootamundra West for a late-running Sydney **XPT** on the Main South followed by a freight train which we would follow. Once Cootamundra railway station became free, we entered via the southern fork. This was done to position 721 in the lead so that on eventual arrival back at Paterson, the set would be correctly positioned within the rail motor shed. Departure from Cootamundra was at 3.20 pm. Passing through Yass Junction at 5.05 pm, the countryside disappeared in darkness. Despite making good time, we were held at Joppa Junction for a NSW TrainLink Xplorer from Canberra returning to Sydney. We disembarked onto a cold and blustery Goulburn railway platform at 7.05 pm, still a creditable 20 minutes ahead of our table. A Coach awaited to transfer the tour group to our motel.

As proceedings neared their conclusion at dinner that evening, Assistant Tours Liaison Officer Spencer Ross thanked the group for their patronage. He especially acknowledged the Rail Motor Society crew for preparing, managing, and maintaining the train throughout its six-day journey. Passenger spokesperson, Mr Bill East reciprocated the passenger's appreciation, thanking the Rail Motor Society and commending the crew for their tireless efforts.

Day 6: Wednesday 12 June

Final day! An overcast, cold and windy day met travellers, with even more blustery conditions forecast for Wollongong. Departure from Goulburn at 8.45 am was 14 minutes late as we awaited an Xplorer service from Canberra to stop at Goulburn. Once underway, it was a non-stop run to Summit Tank on the Unanderra-Moss Vale railway line. A brief stop was made to alight onto a purpose-built platform for the short walk to a lookout for its spectacular view over the Illawarra coastline.

The journey continued down the scenic escarpment, our drivers being extra vigilant for fallen trees due to the windy conditions. At the junction with the Illawarra line at Unanderra, we entered the Sydney Trains Network. Here, further progress would be governed by passenger and freight traffic on this busy line. Passing Wollongong shortly after noon, at this stage well ahead of schedule, we made slow but steady progress toward Sydney, falling back to our table by Waterfall as we entered the metropolitan network. A quick stop was made at Hurstville for southern-Sydney passengers to alight. At Meeks Road Junction we branched onto the Goods Line to travel via Enfield and Flemington to rejoin the Short North at North Strathfield, arriving on schedule at 3.05 pm. This is where the majority of our Sydney passengers alighted. Further passenger set-downs were made at stations where people had initially boarded. All stops were very brief. Passenger luggage had been tagged to expedite unloading via the middle door while passengers were asked to alight via an end door.



Passengers disembark via portable steps the crew have set up to make their way to the Nevertire Hotel for lunch, 9 June 2024 (R. Spencer)



621/721 is dwarfed by grain silos in Red Bend Railway Yard (south of Forbes), 10 June 2024 (Phil Smith)



Auscott Siding Warren 9 June 2024 (Wayne Coleman)

Central West Explorer Tour, 7–12 June 2024....Con't

Arrival at Broadmeadow was at 5.25 pm, followed by Maitland at 6.05 pm. Fortunately, we did not have long to wait at Mindaribba for an approaching **XPT** train. Our arrival at Paterson depot was only 10 minutes late, at 6.50 pm, where depot resident caretaker, Lance Nelson, was there to meet us. Lance had thoughtfully set up extra LED lighting to illuminate the depot carpark where our remaining passengers had parked their cars.

Thanks go to The Rail Motor Society for their hospitality and a highly enjoyable tour.

Special thanks to Col Monkerud for using his ute with fuel pod and pump and assisting Mick in refuelling the train each day while in Parkes, and also to Rod for cutting into his leisure time and driving a minibus to transfer passengers and crew to and from the motels and station each day.



Narromine water scheme crossing 9 June 2024 (Wayne Coleman)



Above: 621/721 stopped at Bribbaree, where passengers are having lunch at the Rusty Horse Hotel, just visible in the background, 10 June 2024 (Phil Smith)

Below: Passengers alight at Goulbourn on the final night of the tour, eager for the warmth of their motel accommodations, 11 Jun 2024 (R. Spencer)



621/721 in a siding at Temora, with Pardey & Co. Ltd Flour Mill in the background, 11 June 2024 (R. Spencer)





On Saturday 13 April 2024, rail motor 402, seen here at Sandgate, will pass under the Pacific Highway at Sandgate on its way to Kooragang Island, on the first of three shuttle services for the 2024 Maitland Steamfest. An empty Aurizon coal train is returning to the Upper Hunter for its next load (R. Spencer)



621/721 on the Central West Explorer Tour coming into Nevertire near the Mitchell Highway Crossing, 9 June 2024 (Wayne Coleman)