



Whispers from the depot

Newsletter of The Rail Motor Society Incorporated

5 Webbers Creek Road,
Paterson NSW 2421

www.trms.org.au

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From the Board Room

The Society welcomes new members: John Lindus from Adamstown Heights and Graeme Turner from Thornton. The Society bids farewell to Robert Cromie who is moving to Townsville. We are especially grateful to Robert for his assistance in replacing scratched windows in 621/721.

Due to 402 being engaged in ground penetrating radar surveys in Sydney, we had to postpone the July Safe Working / Preparation training for Fitters and Operational staff for members who missed out, until a date to be decided. A video will be recorded of this training for future usage. We will let those involved know as soon as a suitable date can be arranged.

As it will be CPH 3's centenary in December this year, a new Rail Motor Book will be produced to mark this occasion. Spencer Ross will be responsible for its production. A celebration for this milestone will be organised and held on 17 December 2023.

As mentioned in previous publications, train announcements for CPHs and 621/721 have been composed and narrated by Todd Sargent from radio station 2NURFM. The recordings will operate by Bluetooth through the train phone. These were successfully trialled on 621/721 on its last outing.

Roles and Responsibilities for Principal Driver Trainer, Driver Trainer, and Driver, have been added to our Safety Management System (SMS) documentation. Driver Assistant and Trainee Driver descriptions are yet to be completed.

Rod Short is investigating security methods for our trains whilst on tours following damage suffered on some of our recent trips.

TRMS is to have one only Post Office Box, that being PO Box 4268, Edgeworth. All other PO boxes will be closed.

Thanks to the efforts of Trish Short, a grant to fix the roof on the 600 class was obtained and work is soon to be undertaken on this repair.

Quotes have been obtained on the installation of an emergency evacuation siren and firefighting infrastructure in the depot. Grants will be sought for these projects.

All staff who assist as additional personnel with the operations of our trains will be paid out-of-pocket expenses, the same as if they were part of the actual crew.

2024 is the TRMS 40th year anniversary and suitable celebrations to mark the occasion will be arranged. Spencer Ross has volunteered to co-ordinate these. Spencer would appreciate any input or assistance any of our members can offer.

Mick Walsh has been appointed as Project Manager for the Restoration of NPF629 and NTC729 with Stephen Harper as Assistant Project Manager. They are answerable to the Rolling Stock Manager and the Board of Management.

Following an ONRSR Audit held in August and recommendations from that audit, TRMS has implemented, prior to receiving the final audit report, the formation of a subcommittee to be known as "SMS and Trip Review Committee". This committee will meet weekly on Wednesdays and has two functions:

1. To review SMS documentation presented to it by the Operations Manager, and recommend to the Board the need for any changes, or not.
2. Receive and review details of all trips requested in line with our set parameters. Consult with Rolling Stock Manager, Operations Crewing, and Customer Service Manager, regarding the availability of rolling stock, crewing, and accommodation.

Mick Walsh – Secretary / Public Officer

"Off the Rails"

At the time of this Whispers newsletter being prepared, the Society was aware that Spencer Ross, Christian Rice, Ted Dunbar, and Ray Kildey were "off the rails". We wish them all the best on their return to good health.

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

Bruce Gehrig – Welfare Officer

Operations Report

On the June long weekend, 621/721 operated a five-day tour to Armidale and Gulgong for the Australian Railway Historical Society's annual tour. Due to a change in direction for heritage tour operations by the ARHS (NSW Division), this will be the last rail motor tour operated by the Society for them, ending a 30+ year association with the ARHS.

In June, a one-day Hawkesbury River and a three-day Christmas in July tour to Bundanoon using 621/721 was operated by the Society. On the middle day of the Bundanoon tour, some local trips were arranged between Medway Junction and Calwalla. All of these trips proved highly successful and thanks and congratulations must go to Trish Short for managing the arrangements.

621/721 again set off on 25 September for Cruise Express's "Swing into Spring" three-day tour to Moss Vale. Our 620 Class set also featured in Insights Tour's seven-day Southern Tour commencing on 5 September.

On the October long weekend, CPHs 1, 3, and 7 travelled to Sydney to participate in Transport Heritage NSW's 2023 Transport Expo. Our three CPHs operated two return trips to Botany via Sefton Park Junction each day with full passenger loadings across the weekend. Our runs proved extremely popular, selling out in just five days.

7344 assisted with Transport Heritage's *Newcastle Flyer* service on 24–25 June and 22–23 July. Each day, 3801 worked a six-car set from Sydney to Newcastle Interchange single-handed. As there is no engine release road at the new terminal, 7344 was deployed to haul the carriage set to Broadmeadow while 3801 was turned on the Islington Triangle. 3801 was reunited with its cars at Broadmeadow and then 7344 hauled the entire consist back to Newcastle Interchange ready for the return journey to Sydney.

On 26 July, 7344 journeyed to Branxton to assist *Lachlan Valley Railway (LVR)* with the transfer of their 47 Class locomotive, 4703, from long-term storage at North Rothbury to South Maitland Railways at East Greta Junction.

HPC 402 undertook some ICE radio testing for ARTC to West Tamworth and Spring Ridge over 2–3 August. Following this operation, 402 was prepared for a round of ground penetrating radar survey runs on the Sydney Trains network for UK firm Zetica. This involved the fitting of the radar equipment on the front of 402's buffer beam. A significant amount of time was spent in negotiations with Transport NSW's Asset Management Branch to obtain concessions for 402 to operate with this equipment attached. Following a trial run to Dungog on 7 September, survey operations got underway on 9 September when 402 set off for Eveleigh Workshops, which would become its base for the next three weeks. Over 14 operating days, HPC 402 travelled the length and breadth of the Sydney Trains network (Nowra, Macarthur, Lithgow and Newcastle), covering some 3,158 kilometres to complete the survey project. Thanks go to the maintenance team for their efforts to ensure 402 was ready and to our resident caretaker, Lance Nelson, for managing the deliveries of a considerable volume of equipment to the Depot.



During the last quarter, two day-trips were operated: to Dungog on 31 August for *Linuwel School* and to Stroud

Road on 24 September for *Newcastle Restored Vehicle Club*. Our regular Open Days were held on 18 June, 16 July, 20 August and 17 September with local trips to Dungog being well supported.

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

Bruce Agland – Operations Manager

Rolling Stock Report

CPH 7 now rides on recently overhauled bogies, which were successfully tested on a trial run to Dungog in late September. The crew reported the ride in CPH 7 to be much improved and the bogies much quieter than before. I wish to record the fact that many of our volunteers put in an extraordinary amount of effort to ensure CPH 7 was able to resume passenger operation and participate, along with CPHs 1 and 3, at the 2023 Transport Expo held barely one week later.



While CPH 7 was out-of-service for its bogie change, the opportunity was taken by Peter Macfarlane to remediate failing outer wooden cladding before repainting both the exterior and interior. In parallel, new air connecting hoses were fitted front and back to replace those that had become life-expired. In addition, the mini-bar fridge and cupboards were removed and new cabinets, custom made by Tony Price to accommodate a full-size refrigerator and provide additional catering storage, was installed. CPH 1 and 3 will be similarly modified at a later stage.

621/721 received its Annual Service during July. This work was coordinated and undertaken by Kevin Judd, assisted by Neil Dein and Steve Watt. Kevin Stobbart repaired the damage inflicted to the front of 721, caused when a large kangaroo was unfortunately struck at speed. A new attachment pin and bush was installed in 621's intermediate coupling as the existing parts had become very worn, allowing movement and causing noise. Unfortunately, when 621 and 721 were recoupled, an electrical receptacle connector was accidentally damaged when caught between

carriage buffers. A new spare cable and receptacle connector, which came supplied with 629, was substituted to enable the old connector to either be repaired or replaced.

Bruce Agland and Trevor Hooker have been working intermittently to install wiring for HPC 402's vigilance system, subject to the inspection pit being free of other rolling stock, to gain access underneath. As yet still incomplete, the installation of the vigilance system is a vital and urgent task.

A Detroit 6/71 engine overhaul kit and other related items have been obtained through Detroit engine specialist Adrian Tanner for our spare 6/71 engine overhaul. In addition, Adrian has also cleaned and made operable a set of twelve (12) diesel injectors needed to restart 602's engines.

In late August, Bureau Veritas conducted ultrasonic axle testing on all our active rolling stock except for HPC 402, and I thank Ross Goodman for being in attendance while this work was carried out onsite. No faults were found and it will be another six years before the next round of testing will fall due. Due to time constraints, it was not possible to include 402 in this round of inspections. Arrangements will be made to catch up with it and possibly test other units such as 629/729 in the near future.

The old bogies removed from CPH 7 have been relocated to just outside the Rail Motor Storage Shed, ready to be cleaned using a high-pressure water jet. A suitable work area within the Rail Motor Shed must be found to dismantle each bogie in preparation for their overhaul—likely only possible after inactive rolling stock is relocated onto 4 Road to free up space in the shed.



629/729 Restoration to Service

Project Manager, Mick Walsh, has prepared a Scope of Works for the restoration and return to service of 629/729. The Project will be undertaken in the following stages:

1. Mechanicals and electricals; examination and required repairs to:

- engines/transmissions and drive components,
- electrical systems,
- cooling system,
- replacement of main batteries,

- bogies,

2. Interior refurbishment, consisting of:

- removing rubbish and redundant equipment,
- cleaning and examination of interior walls,
- best scenario for luggage rack carpeting,
- flooring to be made suitable for new vinyl floor installation,
- reinstall internal fittings and seats.

3. Examination of the exterior, including restoration and painting of bodywork where required.

4. Acquisition and installation of:

- operating equipment (train radio, data logger, etc.),
- fit out kitchen areas,
- replacement of auxiliary batteries.



602/707 Restoration

Project Manager, Charles Smith, reports that during an initial engine assessment, several of its diesel fuel injectors were found to be seized. A spare set of used injectors has been cleaned and made operable (for engine testing purposes only). A special Injector Height Gauge must be obtained before Grahame Pantlin can return to install these injectors and restart 602's No.1 engine. He will involve our maintenance staff so that they may perform the same actions to restart its No.2 engine.

Floor restoration in 602 has been completed and a temporary hold has been placed on 707 for the time being to allow for the re-organisation of rolling stock within the depot.

Window restoration has commenced in 602. The work involves removing the window, separating the frames, clearing the perished rubber and sealants used, cleaning the glass, or replacing if scratched, then installing new rubber with glue and sealing the window glass onto the frame. The frame is then re-assembled and all old paint removed. An undercoat is applied to the frame and it is placed back temporarily into the carriage it came from. As there are 50

windows to be refurbished it will take considerable time to complete.

All seat cushions and backs have been cleaned for both carriages and some remain to be painted in the near future. Geoff Small is working his way through the roughly 100 seat frames to ensure that they are mechanically sound and operating correctly.

Warren Mills, Ted Dunbar and Brett Williams have worked on the refurbishment of the Driver's seats and achieved great results so far.

Robert Spencer – Rolling Stock Manager

Infrastructure Report

Due to Tolsaf Cranes ceasing to trade, we have had to source a new crane operator. We have been in contact with Wheeler Cranes and they have been on-site to assess the task and confirm they can accommodate our lift requirements.

Cotton Electricals' electricians have been on site installing new electrical wiring and a new sub-board in readiness for the FZ and MHO relocation. This also includes new wiring for the proposed new meal room.

I extend my thanks to the outside crew for their cleanup of the rear of our depot in preparation for the movement of two storage containers in readiness to place a roof over both containers.

The spare bogies and motors for 629 have been delivered from Werris Creek as a "backload" by Highlands Lift 'n' Shift and are temporarily stored until a permanent home is found for them.

We have been approached by a training company to conduct sleeper laying training in our depot yard and have taken them up on their offer. Hopefully, the loop siding will be part of this training and thus made trafficable, courtesy of the training company.

Rod Short – Infrastructure Manager

VALE: Alan Green



Alan was born on 13 November 1957 and grew up in Sydney. After leaving school he joined the railways and started work as a car builder, then moved onto Mortdale suburban electric car sheds as a Train Driver and later transferred to Hornsby depot. In the 2000s he transferred to Newcastle and remained as a Train Driver in the Hunter for the rest of his railway working career.

Alan joined the Society a few years ago and was a regular volunteer, mostly on Mondays helping the electricians. He was also a keen motorbike enthusiast and rider and belonged to several bike societies, travelling around Australia.

Alan's last departure was on Thursday 10 August following a short illness. His service was held at Lake Macquarie Memorial Park and some 75 motorbikes followed his casket from Freemans Waterhole to Ryhope.

The Society extends its condolences to Alan's children and their families.

Steve Harper – Board Member

Open Days

In July we had 16 visitors, with 15 travelling in our rail motors to Dungog; in August we had 30 visitors, with 27 travelling to Dungog; and in September we had 18 visitors, with 17 travelling to Dungog.

On all occasions, after welcoming our visitors, they were taken on a conducted site tour, inspecting our rolling stock and TAM/BR carriages, as well as view museum exhibits. In addition to local Hunter visitors, others had travelled from the Central Coast and Gosford.

Thank you as always, to those dedicated volunteers who helped out on the train and at the depot.

Bruce Gehrig

Recycling

Five years after the Society started recycling in July 2018, the 20,000 number was passed in July this year. As at the end of September 21,151 plastic bottles and aluminium cans had been put through the return and earn facilities. Thank you to those members who bring in their bottles and cans to add to those recycled from our depot and train trips.

Bruce Gehrig

TRMS 621/721 Raffle for 2023

A reminder that raffle tickets are still available for a HO Gauge 620/720 Rail Car operating sound model, which has been generously donated by a TRMS member. Tickets are on sale at all open days and on all tours operated by TRMS throughout the year.

Additional prizes include Second and Third Prizes, each being \$100 Rail Motor Society vouchers. The Raffle will be drawn at our end-of-year function at the Museum in December.