



# Whispers from the depot

Newsletter of The Rail Motor Society Incorporated

5 Webbers Creek Road,  
Paterson NSW 2421

[www.trms.org.au](http://www.trms.org.au)

Vol.7, No. 14, **March 2024**

## From the Board

The Society would like to welcome new members: Moira McAlister and Brad Gradwell from Newcastle, Maree Beard from Valentine, Paul Bird from Singleton, Frederick Baker from Lake Cathie, Mark Bennett from Clarence Town, James Talevski also from Clarence Town, Nathan Moore from Langley Vale, and Graham Perry from Tenambit. I trust all are looking forward to a long and rewarding time spent working with us at the Society.

In January this year, the usual trip to Coffs Harbour took place and again was very successful. During our stay, we trialled the security cameras that had been sourced by Warwick Erwin and these were proven to work as intended. We are now looking at installing these for all future operations when our train is stabled away from the depot. The Board would like to thank Warwick for his time and effort put into sourcing and setting up these cameras. After Coffs Harbour, we went on to Kyogle for a weekend of running during the Annual Pumpkin and Watermelon Festival. As has been the case on past visits, our train tickets are “hot property” as everyone wants to travel the Border Loop line to Glenapp. However, on that Saturday afternoon, we ran into some difficulties with a track circuiting problem and were unable to sort this out with ARTC (Australian Rail Track Corporation). As a consequence, we were forced to cancel our Sunday runs which was extremely disappointing for not only us but the many passengers that had booked. This issue is ongoing with ARTC and we look forward to a solution soon.

A committee is looking into where our trains can pick up and drop off, other than at Central, due to the unavailability of stabling locations. The Board is currently looking into the upgrade of our website, with expectations of something a little more interactive and user-friendly.

We have begun organising the celebrations for the Society's 40th Anniversary in November 2024 and if anyone has any suggestions or thoughts please put them forward in writing to Spencer Ross (via The Secretary, PO Box 4268 Edgeworth NSW 2285). Currently, we are thinking along the lines of a member's dinner on the Saturday night, followed by train rides and activities at the depot on the Sunday.

Following on from our ONRSR audit held last August, when some of our Safety Management Systems were found to be out of date, these are currently being updated.

We have been busy behind the scenes collating and preparing our Annual Report and Financial Balance Sheet in time for distribution before the AGM to be held on 11th

May. You should receive your copy around the end of this month.

A gentle reminder to those who have yet to submit their membership renewal. If we do not receive your remittance by the end of March your membership will lapse. It is important for administration purposes to have the membership finalised before the AGM.

**Rod Short – President**

## Operations Report

Tourist operations in 2023 concluded with a 7-day Western Circle tour for Scott McGregor's Railway Adventures. The trip commenced on Friday, 8 December, with 621/721 travelling to Sydney to commence the tour. Saturday, 9 December, was one of the hottest days of 2023 with temperatures reaching more than 40 degrees Celsius. Due to an extensive derailment at Bylong on the Ulan Line, the trip was rerouted via Werris Creek, with a consequent later arrival in Gulgong. The remainder of the trip was relatively uneventful with a near on-time arrival back at Paterson Depot.

Sunday, 17 December, saw the Society celebrate the 100th anniversary of the entry of CPH No.3 into NSW Government Railways service. Over 500 people attended the event with CPH 3 leading four return trips to Maitland during the day. All trips operated at maximum capacity. [*The June 2024 edition of Paterson Points will feature this event—Ed.*]



2024 opened positively with 621/721 travelling to Coffs Harbour where a number of local runs (*The Rainforest Rattler*) were operated for the Christmas holiday tourists. The Society operated two evening dinner tours in support of the Coffs Coast and Clarence CanDo Cancer Trust where significant funds were raised for the Trust. These proved highly successful with most services operating at capacity.

We then travelled on to Casino to work some local services around the Cougal Spiral to Glenapp in conjunction with the Kyogle Giant Pumpkin and Watermelon Festival. These operations were terminated abruptly when ARTC chose to cancel further operations due to a level crossing incident on Saturday, 20 January. This decision by ARTC severely affected some 400 intending passengers booked on 20 and 21 January trips and detrimentally impacted our revenue from the weekend.

Subsequent to the cancellation, ARTC would not let 621/721 return home under its own power, requiring it to be loco hauled with a mainline locomotive. This was clearly unacceptable with the potential to cause damage to the unit due to the long distance involved. The 620 set was marooned in Casino for five days, until after lengthy negotiations, some level of common sense prevailed inside ARTC, and it was agreed that 621/721 could return home under its own power, in daylight, operating under block working conditions at 50 kph. This required a two-day return trip, incurring additional costs to the Society.

The fallout from the cancellation is still being negotiated with ARTC, however, they have been resistant to providing relevant information about the level crossing and the incident to enable our team to conduct a proper investigation. This issue is still open and ongoing.

Our regular Open Days were held on 21 January, 18 February and 17 March with local trips to Dungog. The January event was well supported, with smaller numbers in February and March.

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 1, 3 and 7

During routine servicing, the welds securing two underframe cross-bracing straps were found to have failed, which were repaired by our welders (the “two Garys”, Odgers and Rowarth). CPH 1 was found to have developed arrises on its wheels. An arris is formed when flange metal has rolled towards the tip of the flange, causing a step with a sharp point at the flange tip. A temporary repair was made by removal of the arris by grinding—proper repair will be done during the bogie overhaul. Work has effectively finished installing a full-size fridge in CPH 7 and its power supply, with only cosmetic tasks left to tidy up.

Kevin Stobbart and Steve Watt have conducted post-trip inspections and servicing, assisted by other maintainers as necessary.

### NPF 621 and NTC 721

When repairs were made to 721’s intermediate coupling in late December, and 721 then recoupled to 621, the spring

pack in 621’s coupler was discovered to have been inadvertently installed upside down, resulting in a small misalignment between sets of couplers. The heavy spring pack was reinstalled by Kevin Judd and Ross Goodman the right way up, correcting the alignment.

Since its return from the North Coast in late January, 621/721 has remained in our depot (see the Operations Manager’s report). This hiatus has facilitated a determined effort from Warren Mills and Brett Williams to replace scratched window glass with new glass. Efforts to polish out less badly scratched windows proved unsuccessful. At the same time, they are attending to several windows reported to be partially jammed and very difficult for our passengers and crew to lift.

### HPC 402

Nothing to report—ready for a test run following its recent engine “tune-up”.

### Loco 7344

In early January, the leaking turbocharger on 7344 was removed by Les Davey, to be replaced with our only spare. On further inspection, Kevin Judd found a split in the casing on both the leaking turbo and the second installed turbo. All three turbos were removed and sent to BaxtersMTQ, to be stripped, and inspected, before the two failed units were to be overhauled. One was deemed unrepairable and the other needed costly new parts, so two reconditioned turbos were procured instead, and our spare was reassembled and returned with a record of work to be done at some future stage to restore it to full operability.



In parallel, the opportunity was taken to remove the aftercooler for internal cleaning, which along with the leaking turbos, was the cause of the engine power loss. And it was indeed found to have been badly in need of a

clean. Adrian Tanner kindly allowed us to use his industrial-strength parts cleaner at his Morisset workshop, and I must also thank Jeff Sorensen for transporting and retrieving the aftercooler, along with the gaskets needed to reinstall both turbos and aftercooler (also sourced through Adrian).

### CPH Bogie Overhaul

Ross Goodman and Mark Bennett took to the drive bogie taken from CPH 7 with gusto, and had it completely disassembled by early February. New coil springs will be fabricated by *Lovells Springs* (located at Carrington), who will also refurbish and recertify two 7-leaf elliptical springs. I wish to thank Anthony (Tony) Dunn for transporting the

elliptical springs to *Lovells*.



The perplexing question of what to replace the life-expired and now banned lead gap filler was resolved with the application of *ChockFast* to fill the gap between the horn cheek casting and the bogie frame. The axleboxes slot into the horn cheeks, which allows for vertical movement between each axlebox and the bogie frame, which is necessary for the springs to act. After fully setting, the compound appears to have produced the desired result. The compound is non-shrinking and has very high impact and compressive strength.

The drive bogie frame and associated axleboxes were sent to *Advance Rail* for inspection, repair as necessary, and full overhaul. The four (4) wheel/axle sets were sent to *Sulzer* for machining to restore the wheel's full flange and tyre profile. Arrangements are currently being made to conduct Magnetic Particle Testing of critical components to test for stress fractures and I thank Ross Goodman for drawing my attention to this requirement.

### CTC 51

As *Dorrigo Steam Railway and Museum* are not interested in swapping trailer car bogies, we will now embark on a path to overhaul CTC 51's current bogies and swap its spoked wheels out with a set of spare solid disc wheels. Arrangements are being made to have the axles on the spare set ultrasonically tested and then machined to restore each wheel's full flange and required tyre profile.

Work has recommenced on CTC 51 which has been emptied of the seats that had been stored in it. Paul Heron is working on the plumbing and planning for the installation of a generator.

### NPF629 / NTC 729 Refurbishment

The worn mini-coupler, recently removed from 721, was installed in 629 to temporarily replace its missing "borrowed" coupler. This will enable 629 to be towed to the inspection pit when required or transferred onto other roads within the depot. Removal of the fibreglass shroud around doors and steps on the 729 driver's end revealed rusting in chassis members. All other steel door surrounds on both units must be checked.

After filling both radiators, the #2 radiator was discovered

leaking from its middle flange. The radiator has to be removed to make permanent repairs. Our electricians are working through the electrical systems, identifying any faulty components or circuits.

Test running of the engines had been conducted. The #1 engine fired and ran successfully. The #2 engine also started and ran, but only with manual operation of the fuel solenoid.

### WFP 602 / CT 707 Restoration Project

The remaining seats were returned from the upholsterer and stored along with all other refurbished seats in the new shipping container. No work has been carried out on 602 so far this year with all efforts being directed to 707. The long and laborious task of window restoration has continued. Paul Heron has restored or replaced all the window springs ready for the windows to be reinstalled. Stephen Davies, Brett Williams, and Jon Derry have been busy disassembling, stripping, and replacing or restoring the glass, and replacing all rubber seals in each window—there are 52 of them! Geoff Small has continued to restore the seat frames to working order.

### Other Matters

The Board approved the purchase of a one-person controlled hydraulic jack system, to be used when lifting a CPH during a bogie change, following safety concerns over the current system's lack of finesse when lowering the car onto its bogie. The system was specified by Neil Dein and supplied by Rutherford-based company *PERSAS* (fluid power specialists). In addition, Neil has fabricated a pair of improved off-centre stands for our two 25-tonne hydraulic jacks, that won't foul the axleboxes when the bogies are extracted.

When enquiring with *AnglomOil* (our lubricant supplier), after cutting fluid for our workshop radial drill and lathe, Jeff Sorensen learned that *AnglomOil* was about to close their Beresfield warehouse facility. Before the imminent transfer of the remaining stock back to Sydney, the opportunity was taken to obtain goods at bargain prices negotiated by Jeff. This included several 20-litre containers of cutting fluid, degreaser, and compressor oil.

Our 1500+ collection of engineering drawings is now available as stored digital images which may be viewed on the "engineering" computer located in the MHO goods van, after having been transitioned into an Access database.

Ross Goodman, Mark Bennett, and Jeff Sorensen attended a training day course held at Paterson to learn correct train preparation procedures, travelling fitter duties, and track awareness, along with the various inspection forms that must be completed.

**Robert Spencer – Rolling Stock Manager**

### Infrastructure Report

I would like to take this opportunity to remind our volunteers that if tools or equipment are found broken or

damaged, to please bring it to my attention as Infrastructure Manager so I can arrange for repair or replacement, to ensure our items are in a usable condition at all times.

Jim Lambkin and his clan have commenced work on the foundations for the shipping containers. We have purchased another container for the storage of our spare parts.

The FZ and MHO have been moved out onto #4 Road and this now provides more work space in the main shed. This move was completed by *Wheeler Cranes*. We are currently looking to extend the main shed roof to cover these vehicles.

Construction of the fuel trailer is now complete and it is in use. Signwriting proudly proclaiming it as a TRMS asset when out and about was done by Peter Macfarlane.

This latter part of the year has been very productive seeing the fruition of some major work nearing completion. *Cotton* electricians have been on site and have installed new wiring and a new sub-board ready for the FZ and MHO. They have also provided wiring for the new proposed meal room. Now that the move has been completed, *Cotton's* electricians will return to finalise this work.

Final preparations have begun for the placement of CPH No.14 near the main entry gate. It will be painted in cream and green CPH colours and prominently placed there as a static display as a much-loved item of interest.

The spare bogies and engines 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 for sleeper laying training in our depot, so we have taken them up on their offer and hopefully, the loop siding will be part of this training and get upgraded by the participants.

Thanks to our boilermakers, the new stairs into the FZ have now been completed, along with handrailing, making it much safer for all entering and exiting the FZ. These are currently receiving their “coat of many colours” by resident painter Allan Beard.

Presently, progress on the new meal room is well underway and we hope to have it on-site shortly. Mick Walsh went to inspect it and was pleased with its condition. The new facility will provide a good area for all to enjoy their lunch together. Mick Walsh has also suggested that we set aside a specific workday to fast-track the site preparation necessary for these projects to progress.

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

Jeff Sorensen has generously donated a metal cutoff saw to the Society—thank you, Jeff.

**Rod Short – Infrastructure Manager**

## Off the Rails

At the time this issue was being prepared, the Society was aware that Kaye Burgess and Gwen Gurr are presently off the rails. We wish Kaye and Gwen 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**

## Memorial Wall

In 2020 the Board decided that there was a need to recognise the valuable contributions of our long serving members who have since passed away. After reviewing a number of options, it was decided that a Memorial Wall would be erected below the Station Master's cottage. The wall was constructed by our resident bricklayer, Greg Duncan, in the garden adjacent to the pathway past the cottage. Engraved stainless steel plaques were obtained for each individual to be honoured. After lengthy consideration, the following members and supporters have been honoured on the wall.

Richard (Dick) Payne 2000	Robin Dixon 2001
Clive Corbett 2002	Henry Varcoe 2002
David Cooke 2003	Ron Preston 2006
Harry Wright 2006	Ivor (Ken) Winney 2007
Ken Williams 2011	Jim Lowe 2011
Sue Angel 2013	Ken Butt 2013
Peter Kitcher 2014	Grahame Heggie 2015
Ron Pirie 2016	Elsie Kingsford 2017
Barrie Kingsford 2018	Robert (Jerry) Jerome 2019
Eric Larkins 2020	Max Dixon 2022
Cecil Jones 2023	

Sadly, we will shortly add another plaque to the wall as a memorial to our recently deceased foundation member and past President, Geoffrey James Murray, who passed away in October 2023.



**Bruce Agland Achieves 50 years as a Justice of the Peace**



*Justice of the Peace*

COMMEMORATIVE CERTIFICATE

This certificate has been issued to

**BRUCE AGLAND**

in sincere appreciation of your outstanding dedication to the community upon completing

*50 Years of Service*

as a Justice of the Peace for New South Wales

On 29 January 2021



*Mark Speakman*

Mark Speakman  
Attorney General

Back in 2021 our life member and Operations Manager, Bruce Agland, achieved 50 years of service to the community as a Justice of the Peace. Due to the Covid pandemic at that time, the official ceremony presenting him with his NSW Government commemorative certificate, a photo of which is shown, took place some time afterwards.

Bruce has indicated that he would be willing to witness documents as a JP for our workers who are at the depot on Wednesdays. Please talk to Bruce to make a suitably mutual time for the signing of any documents.

**Group Visit**

On Saturday 13th of January, 18 members of the “Rattlin Bones and Engine Groans Machinery Society” from Dungog arrived at around 10 am for a group visit. They were given a tour of the depot shed and our rail motors, followed by a talk covering the mechanical aspects of our fleet by Bruce Agland. They then proceeded on a tour of the sleeping car, BR, cottage and museum.

Following the depot tour, they gathered in the FZ to hold their monthly meeting, which included morning tea they had brought with them. After the meeting ended at 11.45 am, they departed for lunch at the Paterson Tavern.

**Bruce Gehrig**

**XPT Driver Ian Gregory Retires**

On Wednesday the 13th of December last year, Ian Gregory retired from the Railways after 39 years of service. Ian was well known to many of our retired railway members at the depot and had spent his last 34 years driving the top rail services such as the XPTs, etc.

His last run on this Wednesday was driving the XPT from Taree to Sydney. The Society was able to arrange with ARTC control on the day, for the XPT to run through the loop at Paterson. This allowed most of our members and his former working colleagues to wave farewell to him, as he slowed to drive through the loop.

As is traditional with last runs, detonators were placed on the track, ensuring that any passengers dozing in the first carriage would remember passing Paterson.

The accompanying photo shows members farewelling Ian as he drove past the depot.

**Bruce Gehrig**



**Raffle Winners**

The winners of last year’s 621/721 model raffle were:

- 1st Prize – Trevor Hooker from Telarah
- 2nd Prize – Les Cook from Port Macquarie
- 3rd Prize – Sue Bolton from Wauchope



The Rail Motor Society
Beef Week and Northern Rivers Tour

6 days - 22 to 27 May 2024

Cost \$1890 per person twin Share – Single Supplement \$250

Itinerary

Day 1 – Wednesday 22nd, 6.25 am. Board the train at our depot at Paterson, or get picked up at Maitland Station. Travel to Grafton, our home for the next 5 nights, with a light lunch provided on the train. Our accommodation will be at the Crown Hotel in Grafton. Our welcome dinner will be held at the hotel.

Day 2 – Thursday 23rd. Breakfast will be served at the hotel. Join our train to Casino and then a coach tour of the area, including a visit to Nimbin and the hinterland. Lunch is at your own expense. Dinner venue to be advised.

Day 3 – Friday 24th. Breakfast at the hotel, then a coach tour starting in Grafton with some points of interest, then off to Wahgunurry Alpacha farm for morning tea. Lunch is included at the Lawrence Hotel. A visit to Schaffer House on our way back to town. Dinner at a venue to be advised is included in the cost.

Day 4 – Saturday 25th. Breakfast at the hotel. Transfer to the train station for your visit to Beef Week in Casino—this parade day. Also included is a train trip to Glenapp, travelling the scenic "Border Loop". Lunch at own expense. Dinner venue is yet to be advised but cost is included.

Day 5 – Sunday 26th. Breakfast at the hotel. Bus tour to Yamba markets and board a ferry for a music cruise and BBQ lunch on the Clarence River. Our farewell dinner will be held at the Hotel.

Day 6 – Monday 27th. Breakfast at the hotel, then transfer to the train for your return journey to Paterson. A light Lunch will be provided.

Booking information

Name.....

Address.....

Contact Phone No.....email.....

Accommodation type.....

Special Dietary needs.....

Deposit of \$1000 by Friday 19th April 2024

Deposit by direct deposit to The Rail Motor Society Tours

BSB 062749 – Acc 10090293 Please reference your name

Or by cheque 10 Elizabeth Street, Telarah 2320

If you have any further questions please call Trish Short 0413672408

Some things may change depending on numbers but I will keep all travellers advised.