



Whispers from the depot

Newsletter of The Rail Motor Society Incorporated

5 Webbers Creek Road,
Paterson NSW 2421

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Vol. 3, No.6, **July 2020**

From the Secretary's Desk

By Honorary Secretary, Mick Walsh

Fellow members, welcome to this abridged edition of *Whispers* [there will be no mid-year edition of Paterson Points with normal operations having been suspended since 21 March—Ed.] The members of the Board hope that you have been keeping safe and well during the COVID-19 restrictions.

You will find enclosed with this edition, a notice in relation to the holding of our **Annual General Meeting**. The AGM will be held on Saturday, 25 July 2020, commencing at 1000 hours. This is subject to any Public Health Order in force at that time. To enable social distancing guidelines to be met, the meeting will be held in the Rail Motor Storage Shed. Also included with the mail-out are a Board Member Nomination Form and a Proxy Form. Please ensure that when you attend you bring your copy of the already distributed Annual Report and Balance Sheet as we only have a very limited number of spare copies.

The Board has decided to reopen the Depot to our Volunteers for our Wednesday Work Days as from 17 June. We will have a COVID-19 plan in place at the Depot and are eager to welcome back our Volunteers. We request, on your return, to please adhere to the plan, and practice the social distancing guidelines as far as practical. If you are feeling unwell please do not attend.

Open days and Depot tours are constantly under review, but at this stage those activities will remain suspended until further notice. We encourage you to stay updated via our website and/or Facebook pages.

At a date to be set some time in spring we will be holding a **Members Family Day** at the Depot. This will give the members the opportunity to bring along their partner and family to see what we do. Although the logistics are still at the planning stage, the day would include a 'sausage sizzle' and a train ride.

Arrangements are being made for our **Christmas Luncheon** to be held at Club Macquarie on Saturday, 5 December.

The Board wishes all members the best. Please stay safe during these unprecedented times. We hope to see you at the AGM in July.

Rolling Stock Report

By Mick Walsh, Rolling Stock Manager (Acting)

It has been relatively quiet on the Rolling Stock front due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, some activities have been undertaken with very limited staff during this period.

CPH 1

CPH 1 has been undergoing repairs to its front and rear body ends thanks to funding secured from the Transport Heritage Grants Program. These repairs are almost complete. The radiators, pipework and headlights were removed to allow the repairs to be carried out. Glennbuild Carpentry was engaged to carry out the carpentry side of the work. More 'wood rot' was discovered than had been expected. The rotted sections were refurbished, necessary repair work undertaken and two coats of Emer-Clad (a protective waterproofing coating) were applied to the roof. Peter Macfarlane, assisted by Bruce Greenham, have commenced painting the outer panelling.

The radiators have gone to Maitland Radiators to be refurbished and will be refitted upon their return. The cooling system pipework is being flushed and cleaned. Headlamp brackets were sand-blasted and painted whilst removed. Before going back into operation an overhauled transmission will be fitted and a 12-monthly service performed.

HPC 402

After some very frustrating months, the No. 2 Engine's refurbished transmission has been refitted and 402 taken for a successful test run. It took some time to overcome sealing issues within the transmission along with air supply problems on refitting. The assistance provided by Bruce Greenham was invaluable and it would appear that he has found a new vocation as a Trades Assistant.

Warren Mills and Paul Heron have undertaken some roof repairs and accessible areas have been coated with Emer-Clad.

Electrical

Two of our electrical gurus, Paul Horder and Trevor Hooker, have been keeping themselves busy setting up LED marker lights on the outer ends of CPHs 1 and 7. They have also converted CPH 1's headlight to LED.

Issues we are experiencing with two exploding batteries and premature failures of some others are also being investigated.

There will be a more expansive Rolling Stock report with photos in the next edition of Paterson Points.

Operations Report

By Bruce Agland, Operations Manager

My last report concluded with the Cruise Express Brisbane Tour on 12-16 March. This was our last operation prior to cancellation of services due to COVID-19. The pandemic has resulted in the cancellation of 14 planned services and this will have a flow-on impact to our operating revenue for this year. Only one planned service (with Insights Tours) was rescheduled from May to late October. The upside of the virus, if there is one, is that many tour operators are now looking for domestic options to kick-start their businesses. This means our calendar from September through to the end of the year has rapidly filled with multi-day operations.

We have been engaged by Sydney Trains to operate inspection trains on their network using HPC 402 to test the overhead wiring. This will require the fitting of a special pantograph and work has been underway with engineers contracted by Sydney Trains to design a suitable mounting arrangement. The work was originally planned for May, but has been postponed given that some of the technical people involved will be coming from Germany and have yet to receive entry permits into Australia. The work is currently planned for an October start.

On the accreditation front, our application for a variation to our accreditation for operations in South Australia and the rest of Victoria is proceeding well. We have received a draft Notice of Accreditation for review and comment. We have advised that the proposed Notice is acceptable and we now await the final approval.

The tour program for the rest of the year:

Dates	Destination	Customer	Units
18-21 September	Canberra	Cruise Express	CPH
24 September	Stroud Road	Coastal Liner	CPH
3-5 October	Gulgong	Greenhills Travel	CPH
8-12 October	Griffith	Cruise Express	621/721
18 October	Aberdeen	Centenary Committee	621/721
25-29 October	North & West	Insights Tours	621/721
29 Oct -2 Nov	Griffith	Cruise Express	CPH
3 November	Taree	Maitland Rotary	621/721
3 November	Muswellbrook Cup	TRMS	CPH
November	Hawkesbury River	Healing Wave	621/721
November	Willow Tree	Bowditch Earthmoving	621/721
December	To be agreed	St James Rail	621/721

Drainage Progress Report

By Bruce Agland, Project Manager

Since the last *Whispers* edition, probably one of the largest projects undertaken by the Society since its formation has been the installation of over 100 metres of stormwater drainage pipes in preparation for construction of No. 4 Road. The work commenced on 31 March and is nearing completion as this issue of the *Whispers* newsletter goes to press. There have been a number of problems associated with the construction including extensive underground water seepage and large areas of rock excavation, interspersed with periods of wet weather. However, the work is proceeding and will be completed in accordance with the timeframes associated with our Commonwealth Grant.

We had anticipated the co-operation of Dungog Shire Council in providing pits on their drains under Webbers Creek Road to connect to our new works, but this has not been forthcoming. This necessitated some quick redesign to construct a holding pond to collect the flow of road stormwater, thus preventing water intrusion into the shed. The co-operation and expertise of the contractor, Greg Mexon Excavations, is greatly appreciated in facilitating this change of plan on the fly.

Positions Available

Mick Walsh has elected to stand down from the role of Rolling Stock Manager (Acting) due to the demands of other roles. Accordingly, the Society seeks expressions of interest from members willing to help manage this vital activity. Two roles are envisaged going forward: a Rolling Stock Manager, who will focus on administrative matters (i.e. planning and paperwork), and a Rolling Stock Supervisor, who will coordinate maintenance personnel and tasks.

Also, one Board position is presently vacant.

If you are interested in any of these roles please contact the Secretary.