



Whispers from the depot

Newsletter of The Rail Motor Society Incorporated

5 Webbers Creek Road,
Paterson NSW 2421

www.railmotorsociety.org.au

Vol. 3, No.7, **September 2020**

Secretary's Report

By Michael Walsh

Fellow members, welcome to this COVID-19 edition of *Whispers*. All the members of the Board hope you have been keeping safe and well during these COVID-19 restrictions.

Since the last edition, our AGM was held on Saturday 25 July 2020. To enable social distancing guidelines to be met, the meeting was held in the Rail Motor Storage Shed. The change of venue worked out very well. There were 26 members in attendance and 9 apologies. Along with Annual Reports being presented by the President, Secretary, Operations, Infrastructure and Rolling Stock Managers, the Balance Sheet was presented. Treasurer Patricia Short gave a summary of her report and stated that despite there being no income, the Society's finances are healthy and the projects being undertaken have been fully budgeted for. President Arthur Burgess advised of the passing of Board Member Eric Larkins and that there were five (5) vacant positions as per the Constitution. Five nominations were received for the five positions and therefore no ballot was required. The result was declared as follows: Kaye Burgess, re-elected; Spencer Ross, re-elected; Rodney Short, re-elected; Michael Walsh, re-elected; Paul Horder, elected. The President congratulated the nominees on their election and welcomed Paul Horder to the Board. Thanks and appreciation from those who participated must go to the Ladies who catered for a beautiful morning tea that was held at the conclusion of the meeting.



TRMS AGM meeting concludes for refreshments

Immediately following the AGM, a Board meeting was held to allocate positions for the following year.

The election of Office Bearers for 2020/2021 was held with the following being elected:

Patron	Rear Admiral Peter Sinclair AC
President	Arthur Burgess
Vice President	Rodney Short
Secretary and Public Officer	Michael Walsh
Treasurer	Patricia Short
Assistant Secretary / Treasurer	Bruce Agland
Engineering Manager (Infrastructure)	Rodney Short
Operations Manager	Bruce Agland
Engineering Manager (Rolling Stock) and Publications Officer	Robert Spencer
Assistant Operations Manager and Train Crewing Manager	Graeme Holloway
Publicity Officer, Customer Services Manager and Accommodation Officer	Patricia Short
Tours and Liaison Officer	Spencer Ross
Safety Officer	Paul Horder
Catering and Souvenirs Officer	Kaye Burgess
Welfare Officer	Bruce Gehrig

Since the Board decided to reopen the Depot to our Volunteers for our 'Wednesday Work Days' from 17 June we have had very good rollups. Some members are also attending on Mondays. We have a COVID-19 plan in place at the Depot and welcome all of our Volunteers back. We request, on your return, to please adhere to the plan, and to 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 at our website and Facebook pages.

On the administrative side of the Society, we have been working on applying for the following grants:

- Two applications to the Royal Australian Historical Society (heritage grants). One is to repaint the interior of the Station Master's Cottage and install some interpretive signage around the cottage and carpark. The other is for the refurbishment of both bogies on CPH 7.

We are hoping to learn the result of these applications in October.

- Another two applications have been made via the 2020 Community Building Partnership Program (NSW Government). The first is to extend our Rail Motor Storage Shed by a further three bays, toward Maitland. The other is for refurbishment and re-establishment of depot precinct pathways. Existing pathways will be concreted to provide easier and safer access in and around the depot precinct.

We will not know the result of these applications until November at the earliest.

We have successfully applied to Transport Heritage NSW for S2 funding for Rail Motor 621/721 to refurbish the exterior cladding to prevent water ingress and to repaint the exteriors of both cars. Another successful application has been for the Essential Energy Community Choices Program. I would like to thank all the members who took the time and made the effort to vote on this programme. It would appear that we ran second in the voting, making us eligible for a \$2,000 grant. This should soon arrive into our account.

While the State and Federal Governments have put plenty of incentives in place for business recovery, not much has been available for the not-for-profit sector, most of whom are struggling due to a lack of income. However, we have been fortunate to receive a grant through the NSW COVID-19 Recovery Program for Small Business, administered by Service NSW. The grant of \$3,000 will assist to cover the costs of restarting our business operations including funding of our insurance, cleaning materials, personal protective equipment and signage.

The Rail Motor Society is now using its own domain for emails. The new email addresses relate to specific positions rather than individuals and will remain consistent even though the position holders may change from time to time. The new email contacts are listed below.

Arthur Burgess	President	president@trms.org.au
Michael Walsh	Secretary	secretary@trms.org.au
Patricia Short	Treasurer	treasurer@trms.org.au
Rodney Short	Vice President	vicepresident@trms.org.au
Bruce Agland	Operations Manager	operations@trms.org.au
Robert Spencer	Rolling Stock Manager	engineering@trms.org.au
Rodney Short	Infrastructure Manager	infrastructure@trms.org.au
Robert Spencer	Paterson Points Editor	editor@trms.org.au
Depot	TRMS Depot	depot@trms.org.au
Graeme Holloway	Train Crewing Manager	rosters@trms.org.au

I have to apologise that for some time we have not publicly welcomed our new members. The Society welcomes the following new members for this year: Rob

Lougher (Grafton), Allan Beard (Valentine), Geoff Small (Muswellbrook), Michael Chubb (Mallabula), Dr John Gambrell (Marsfield), Faye Edwards (Waverton), Glen Corrigan (Edgeworth), John Cowper (Duffy, ACT), John and Kay Summers (Glass House Mountains, Qld), Tony Dunn (Cameron Park), Michael Halls (Carey Bay), Kevin Judd (Cardiff South), Andrew Gowanlock (Naremburn), and Fredrick Bell (Shortland).

It has been brought to the attention of the Board that members are not adhering to the protocols in place regarding entering the Depot outside of our normal Wednesday workdays. The following procedure must be adhered to when doing so:

Contact the Caretaker, Jim Foster, either in person on arrival or by telephone 0481 202 737, to alert him of your presence. Sign on to the COVID-19 register in the FZ Training Car and before leaving site, sign off in the register. Contact Jim to let him know you are leaving the depot precinct.

As Jim is not familiar with all members, we request that you do not take offence if you are challenged by Jim for identification, as he is only carrying out the instructions as directed by the Board.

If you are working alone, please ensure you are familiar with and carry out the procedures laid out in our '**Working Alone Policy**', which is displayed on the FZ Training Car notice board.

The Board wishes all members the best, and please stay safe during these unprecedented times.

Rolling Stock Report

By Robert Spencer, Engineering Manager

As the new Engineering Manager I must confess some trepidation upon taking on this role, but at the same time welcome the new challenge. My role will focus on the scheduling of rolling stock maintenance and inspections along with accurate record keeping.

With COVID-19 restrictions, activity has been subdued, but nevertheless progress is being made albeit with fewer maintenance personnel than normal.

CPH 1

Work on the front and rear body ends is now complete (see separate report). The radiators have been returned and refitted, and the cooling system pipework has been flushed and cleaned. External cooling pipes connecting to the roof mounted radiators were lagged with titanium wrap.

Mick Walsh and Grahame Pantlin fitted an overhauled transmission in late June.

New exhaust 'flappers' were fitted to all three CPHs. These prevent rain water from entering the vertical exhaust pipe, where it vents above the roof.

Greg Duncan and Charles Smith have stripped old paint from the ceiling and applied two coats of white paint to protect as well as smarten up the ceiling appearance—physically hard overhead work, made more difficult by having to manoeuvre around fixed seating!



This rail motor is due for its annual inspection.

STOP PRESS!

On Monday 14 September, CPH 1 was moved outside the Main Shed to allow the MHO van to be shunted over onto No. 1 Road. Whilst idling on the departure road, the recently installed transmission was spotted leaking fuel oil. With this rail motor due out on tour over the October long weekend, the mechanical team had to set about urgently replacing the failed transmission.

Grahame Pantlin, Steve Watt and Kevin Judd removed the transmission in very short order! Our recently overhauled 'spare' transmission was delivered to site on the same day, just in time to be quickly pressed into service. On the following day, Mick Walsh, Steve Watt and Bruce Greenham installed the spare transmission. As you read this newsletter, Mick Walsh and Kevin Judd will have completed the mechanical work, reattaching fuel-oil lines, drive lines, etc. It must then be tested and hopefully receive the all clear. All involved are to be commended for their hard work and dedication, especially in view of the very tight timeframe.

CPH 3

Grahame Pantlin had been conducting this unit's annual inspection whilst not attending to CPH 1.

Steve Watt has serviced the axle boxes on all three CPH rail motors. Whilst servicing CPH 3, metal shavings were recovered from one axle box, necessitating further investigation. Removal of the axle brass and close inspection of the axle fortunately revealed no cause for alarm—the shavings were not from the current axle.

Peter Macfarlane has recently commenced repainting the external front cladding on the No. 1 end.

When the headlight at either end was switched on, the headlight at the other end would also switch on. Trevor Hooker tracked the problem to wiring run from each headlight switch to the data logger where both were connected to the same input. A diode was installed in each wire going into the data logger input to prevent current flow into the other relay coil. The headlights are now working properly.

CPH 7

An annual inspection has yet to be conducted.

621/721

Our radio installer has fitted GSM-R antenna for the ICE radio to enable communication within the Sydney Trains metro network. The ICE radio provides for communication between train driver and Train Control Centre.

A purchase order to refurbish the exterior cladding has been placed with Noel Price who will perform this work. Due current work commitments, Noel has yet to commence this project.

This rail motor is also due for its annual inspection.

CTC 51

Paul Heron has steadily worked to reinstall air pipes and mechanical controls into the driver's cab. Where necessary he had to scavenge parts from storage or pilfer from defunct vehicles. The task has turned out to be quite a challenge, sometimes requiring adaptation of parts to fit the trailer car cab. Differences in rail motor pipework and fittings have probably resulted from many decades of varied modifications over these vehicle's long service life.



The driver's cab in CTC 51 slowly regains its control equipment

HPC 402

This vehicle has not seen much activity. An LED marker light conversion project is on hold due to wiring access issues and whilst the electricians focus on other priorities.

Refer to the Operations Manager's report for plans to fit overhead wiring inspection equipment.

Locomotive 7344

The following is a brief Project Manager's report on the refurbishment of 7344's paint and bodywork. A more comprehensive report and photos will appear in the next edition of Paterson Points.

Since the last report, most if not all of the exterior painting has been completed. Side numbers (7344) have been added and Peter Macfarlane, with the assistance of Rodney Short, have painted the black 'below the gunnels'. Rodney repainted the train horns which have now been remounted on the locomotive, but await 'plumbing in'. The remaining work includes refitting the locomotive number into the illuminated number boxes and the reinstallation of all the cabin glass and windows. The window and glass replacement will be carried out by contractors as we do not have the expertise to undertake such a task.



On the electrical side, the short end headlight has been converted to LED via a 32/24V converter. The long end one is currently being converted by Steve Bruty. Incandescent bulbs have still to be fitted in the number boards, step lights and coupler lights. Once these tasks have been completed we can then apply to Transport Heritage NSW for reimbursement of our costs.

Outside of the grant project other tasks have been undertaken. Bolster seats have replaced the original seats and a battery charger is in the process of being fitted in the short hood.

Rail Motor Battery Capacity Monitoring

What began with the discovery that one of 402's starting batteries had failed to reach full capacity after charging has prompted the electricians to initiate the periodic checking of all batteries installed in our rolling stock. The condition of each has been recorded to discover how they

are aging and when necessary trigger a deteriorating battery to be moved to a less critical role, or ultimately replaced before failure. Each battery was assigned a serial number so that its location and any issues could be duly logged.

When the initial list of batteries was reviewed it was pointed out that additional batteries exist on 621/721: exciter batteries connected to the auxiliary alternator and others within the saloon kitchen area. When the electricians checked these, two exciter batteries were found to be dead, probably due to a failed electrical connection. After being briefed on the background to the current wiring arrangement, Paul and Trevor set about repairing the wiring and fitting new batteries where necessary.

A total of 26 batteries have been identified between the CPHs, 402 and 620. With each costing upwards of \$400, this monitoring initiative will realise considerable ongoing operating cost savings by maximising battery life. The recently purchased 'Smart Chargers' have also proven their worth by restoring all batteries to full capacity.

CPH 1 End Wall Refurbishment Project

The following is a brief Project Manager's update on the refurbishment of CPH 1's End Walls, with a more comprehensive report and photos to appear in the next edition of Paterson Points.

The exterior timber bodywork on both ends was stripped down to frame level and any framing found subject to dry rot damage was replaced. The exterior sheeting was found to be intact and in good condition and was reused in the reconstruction of the body ends. When the No. 2 End panels were removed, extensive dry rot damage to the underlying frame structure was exposed. Additional damage to the roof ends was also revealed when the radiators were removed. This damage was much more than was initially anticipated, with the result that additional remediation works and costs were involved. The key challenge we faced was to keep the expenditure to a minimum while still carrying out the required repairs. This additional work resulted in a shortfall in grant funding and TRMS allocated additional resources from its own funds to complete the project.



Ted Dunbar and Warren Mills waterproof 402's roof with Emer-Clad

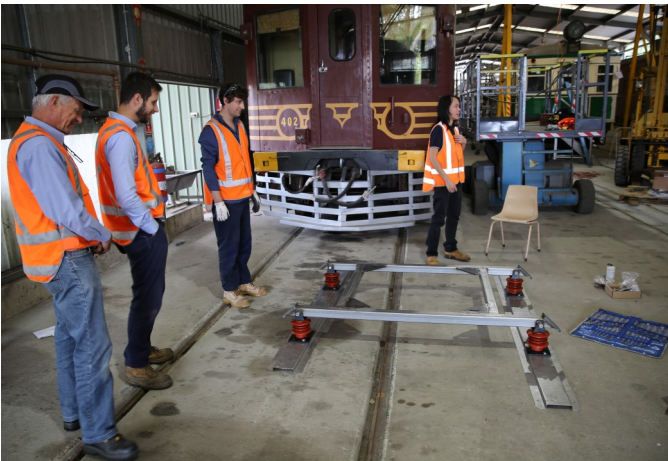
Peter Macfarlane has repainted the outer panelling, assisted by Bruce Greenham. Warren Mills and Ted Dunbar also applied two coats of Emer-clad to the repaired ends of the roof to waterproof it (in addition to 402). Headlamps, brackets and handrails were also repainted.

Operations Report

By Bruce Agland, Operations Manager

There has been little movement on the operations front since my last report. On 17 June, 621/721 went to the Endeavour Maintenance Centre, Broadmeadow to assist their local staff with rewiring and troubleshooting of the engine fire suppression system on Transport Heritage's set 623/723, while HPC 402 had a run to Stroud Road to test the newly installed transmission on 18 June.

Planning work is well under way for the Sydney Trains overhead wiring inspection train operations. The contractor's technical staff from Germany have received government approval to enter Australia and will enter their mandatory 14-day COVID-19 isolation period on arrival. HPC 402 is planned to be transferred to Sydney on Friday 2 October for the final fitting of equipment. The whole project is expected to last five to six weeks.



A pantograph frame is assembled, before being positioned on 402's roof

On the accreditation front, we have received our official Notice of Accreditation from the Regulator granting us the necessary variation to our accreditation to operate in South Australia and the rest of Victoria. Although our access agreement with ARTC covers most of the main standard gauge in South Australia and Victoria, we now have to negotiate access and safety interface agreements with V/Line for access to Southern Cross (Melbourne) station and many of the standard gauge Victorian country lines and with Great Southern Rail (GSR) for access to Keswick Terminal in Adelaide. Both V/Line and GSR have been very co-operative, but there is still a lot of paperwork to be completed. Arrangements are expected to be in place by the end of 2020. It is also pleasing to note a number of inquiries are already being received for operations into South Australia during 2021 including a number of 'grand

circle' operations, that is; Sydney–Broken Hill–Adelaide–Melbourne–Sydney.

As COVID-19 restrictions continue to bite, trip cancellations are continuing to be made. However, a number of operators are now planning to operate with COVID-19 plans in place and limited passenger numbers. The first of these will be Greenhills Travel to Gulgong on 3 October.

Tour program for the rest of the year:

Dates	Destination	Customer	Units
3-5 Oct	Gulgong	Greenhills Travel	3 x CPH
25-29 Oct	North & West	Insights Tours	621/721
29 Oct to 2 Nov	Griffith	Cruise Express	3 x CPH
3 Nov	Taree	Maitland Rotary	621/721
3 Nov	Muswellbrook Cup	TRMS	CPH
Nov	Hawkesbury River	Healing Wave	621/721
Nov	Willow Tree	Bowditch	621/721
Dec	St James Rail	To be agreed	621/721

Infrastructure Report

By Rodney Short, Infrastructure Manager

Although COVID-19 has put a stop to most things, we have taken advantage of this time to do some much needed clean-up work and sorting items from the infrastructure containers which has been a long and tedious task, however we are making some headway in getting this job done. We have been sorting and identifying parts which we did not know that we had and they are being moved and stored in the KB van. Also, the area near the back depot gate has been cleaned up, removing old building waste and scrap metal in the process.

The drainage work has been completed (see separate report) so we now need to install guttering on the western side of the side of the Main Shed roof to eliminate excess water running off and eroding the ground where the new drainage work has just been completed. The cost will be approximately \$2,000.

With volunteers steadily returning, Jim Lambkin and his team will commence work on the shower area in the TAM carriage and install a hot water system.

Weather permitting in the next couple of months, we hope to install donated solar-powered ventilation fans in the Main Shed, which will make the conditions for work during the summer months more comfortable.

A container stand has been erected down near the entrance to the Depot, next to the other infrastructure containers, which will house spare mechanical parts. I would like to thank the boilermakers for an excellent job.

The new fence has been erected to enclose the formerly abandoned railway siding within our Depot precinct. This siding will provide additional storage for our trains.



In mid-September everything from within the MHO van was moved out and over into the Goods Shed, which has now been set up as the new Carriage Builder's workshop. Following this, the MHO will be converted into a storage area and change room. The next project being considered is to look at removing the sleeping berths from the FZ Training Car to increase the worker's meal room area. This has become necessary due to an increase in the number of Wednesday volunteers, which we welcome with open arms.

We also intend to prepare and lodge a number of grant applications seeking to fund other major projects within the depot precinct. If successful, besides assisting financially, the following grants will greatly improve the appearance of our depot and surrounds:

- Concreting the path from the Station Master's Cottage to the Main Shed and across to a new platform when built. This will provide visitors and volunteers with safer access to our site.
- Painting the interior of the Station Master's Cottage to improve its appearance and thus be more favourably received by visitors upon entering our museum display.
- Extension of the Main Shed by three bays to ensure the majority of our fleet then resides under cover.

Lastly, but no means least, our new tractor has been a great asset over the last few months during the site clean-up, with workers making full use of its bucket and forklift tyre attachments.

Site Drainage Project

Bruce Agland, Project Manager

After a delayed start due to wet weather, our contractor, Greg Mexon Excavations, commenced work on site in March. The project involved the laying of 126 metres of concrete pipe varying in size from 750mm down to 300mm diameter, the construction of eight grated drainage pits, and the installation of one headwall. The open drain

located alongside the north-western side of the shed was graded and filled and the bank cut away to create the formation for No. 4 Road and an access road to connect both the ends of the depot. The new pipework was laid and connected to the existing drainage system.

Rock was a major issue in places and much jackhammering was involved in the construction. Fortunately, the work was well away from our neighbours and no noise complaints were received. After the pipe laying was completed a bout of wet weather drenched the worksite. This was fortuitous in that it helped to consolidate the ground around the excavations, but it did delay the completion of the works. The final grading was completed by the end of July and then the base for No. 4 Road was covered with geo-technical fabric to prevent mud and dirt rising to the surface and then finished with a light covering of ballast. The laying of rail for No. 4 Road is expected to commence before the end of the year.

Dungog Shire Council had previously committed to provide pits on the culverts under Webbers Creek Road so we could connect these directly to our system. However, this work was not forthcoming and we had to make some changes 'on the fly' to compensate. The contractor expertly constructed an earth berm around one of the new pits near the road to create a retention pond to collect the water from the road culverts and prevent it from entering the shed. Through the efforts of member Peter Macfarlane, Brent Redman of Buchanan Turf generously donated a palette of grass turf to cover the berm to prevent future erosion by stormwater.

VALE: Eric Larkins



It is with much regret and deep sadness that the Society advises Members of the passing of Eric Larkins—long standing and highly esteemed member of the Society, Board member, Infrastructure Manager and train crew regular. Members would be aware from recent newsletters that Eric had been 'off the rails' but most would be unaware that he was battling an acute illness. Tragically his treatment was unsuccessful and Eric passed away on 6 July 2020, age 76.

A tribute will be published in the December edition of Paterson Points.

Next Edition of Paterson Points

The submission deadline for the December edition of Paterson Points is 20 November 2020. Articles and photographs may be forwarded directly to the Editor, via the email address: editor@trms.org.au