

Whispers from the depot

Newsletter of The Rail Motor Society Incorporated

5 Webbers Creek Road,
Paterson NSW 2421

www.trms.org.au

Vol. 4, No. 8, **March 2021**

Secretary's Report

Fellow members, welcome to this edition of Whispers.

Although COVID-19 restrictions have eased somewhat, the Board is still very conscious of its obligations to our members and to the general public with our approved COVID-19 protocols in place. We ask all members to make sure that they are familiar with these protocols and adhere to them. Please practice the social distancing guidelines as far as practical, use the hand sanitiser located throughout the Depot and please make an effort to keep our eating areas clean and tidy by cleaning up after yourself. If you are feeling unwell, please do not attend the Depot.

Our regular Wednesday 'Work Days' have had very good recent attendances. Some members are also attending on Mondays. From the large numbers attending on Wednesdays, issues of parking congestion and fouling of running lines have emerged. Members are requested to give some consideration of where they park to prevent these issues. Open Days and Depot tours are now back up and running and we encourage you to stay updated via our website and Facebook pages.

It is also pleasing to report that we are able to provide suitable work, within our Depot activities, to support two new members with a disability. We welcome these members and their accompanying carers to our Society and we look forward to a long, happy and productive association with them. They are already making a positive contribution towards the progress of our Society.

There is still plenty happening on the administrative side of the Society. All previous policies relating to the crewing of Society trains and rostering have been rescinded and replaced by, what the Board believes to be, a fairer and more equitable 'Policy for Crewing Society Trains'. This new policy is displayed adjacent to the Jobs Whiteboard on the FZ exterior, and the Notice Board inside the FZ, as well as in the kitchen area of the TAM/BR.

A well-attended, refresher course for our train crew passenger attendants was held in February. Twelve members also recently participated in a course in the Responsible Service of Alcohol, which was held onsite.

A sub-committee has been formed to investigate appropriate safety isolation procedures for all of the Society's equipment. This sub-committee held its first meeting in March and invites any input or suggestions from all members.

After a long search for an assistant to the Engineering Manager (Rolling Stock), and on Robert's recommenda-

tion, Michael Halls has been appointed to the position of Rolling Stock Coordinator. The Board encourages all maintenance personnel to assist Michael in transitioning into this role. The Coordinator's role has been defined and added to the Roles and Responsibilities in our Safety Management System.

The interior of the Station Master's Cottage is soon to be painted and refurbished. To allow this, all items inside the building will have to be moved or stored. After completion, the display area is to be increased. Unfortunately, this leaves little room for a resident. The Board informed our Caretaker, Jim Foster, of this decision and suggested to him that this may be a good time for him to look for alternate accommodation. Jim moved out on the 6th of March. We thank Jim for his efforts during his time with us and wish him well for the future.



Fellow Board members surprise Spencer Ross on his 80th birthday

The Society's Annual General Meeting, including the election of six Board Members will be held on Saturday 15th May 2021 in the Rail Motor Storage Shed, commencing 1000 hours.

The Society is pleased to welcome our new members: Craig Sills, Alan Green, Glen Rose, David and Julie McCosker, Jeffery Sorenson, David Cordery, Graham and Julie Phipps, Henk and Virginia de Wright, Andrew and Vicki Hudson, Bradley Alderton and Toni Cochrane.

Secretary Michael Walsh has been granted leave of absence for a period of approximately six months, from late March 2021. He will be 'Grey Nomading' around Australia. During that period, Bruce Agland, (Assistant Secretary/Treasurer), shall assume the position of Acting Secretary. Spencer Ross will assume the position of Interim Assistant Secretary. The Society's main business phone will be diverted to the Interim Assistant Secretary. To alleviate the extra workload on Bruce Agland as the

Operations Manager and Acting Secretary, Bruce will, wherever possible, distribute some of his operational duties to the Assistant Operations Manager, Graeme Holloway.

Michael (Mick) Walsh
Secretary

Operations Report

Our operations program for 2021 started quietly. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and the lack of available tourist activities, the Board decided to run two Open Days in January to coincide with the Christmas School Holidays. These proved highly successful with 60 visitors on Sunday, 10 January and 108 on Sunday, 17 January.

Our tour operations resumed with a private birthday special to Hawkesbury River on 30 January, while Karuah RSL Sub-Branch enjoyed a day trip to Gloucester on 5 February. The Erina Happy Wanderers Group joined a trip to Stroud Road on 11 February.



We ran our first Children's Birthday special to Wallarobba on 13 February. Despite local heavy rain on the day, the children thoroughly enjoyed themselves. This was followed by another successful Open Day on 21 February with 76 visitors joining the train ride to Dungog.

A further Stroud Road trip ran for a new customer, Southern Cross Coaches of Gosford, on 9 March. This time the passenger group was Charlestown Ladies Probus Club. This was originally scheduled to Stroud Road, but was terminated at Monkerai due to a late running track patrol in the Stroud Road section. We welcome Lindsay Stacey, proprietor of Southern Cross Coaches.

Our first long distance trip for the year was a five-day Western Circle tour commencing on 27 February. We are pleased to welcome a new customer, TV personality Scott McGregor and his organisation, to our operations. After an early start, the train commenced in Sydney and travelled to Paterson for lunch in our Depot before travelling on to Gulgong overnight. The following day was a lay day in Gulgong and three local trips were run to Dunedoo and

Merrygoen. Passengers re-joined the train at Gulgong and travelled to Orange, via Narromine and Parkes (due to track work) on the third day. The next day saw the train run to Wallerawang with stops at Millthorpe and Bathurst. On the final day, the train ran to Rylstone and Kandos before returning our passengers to Sydney.

A booking by the Rotary Club of Dubbo for a musical festival at Armatree provided the opportunity for our ever-watchful Tours Officer (Trish Short) to pull together a tour to make use of the empty running required. The tour departed Maitland on Friday 12 March with 58 passengers for a four-day tour to Dubbo. Weekend activities for our passengers included the Dubbo Zoo, the Royal Flying Doctor Service, the old Dubbo Gaol and other local attractions, while the train was occupied on other duties. Saturday saw 115 Rotary passengers travel from Dubbo to Armatree where they were entertained at the music festival put on by the local hotel. Meanwhile, our three venerable CPHs travelled back to Gilgandra to operate a dinner trip to Coonamble and return with 84 patrons, before returning to Armatree to take the Rotary group back to Dubbo. Sunday saw the CPHs run to Mendooran with 102 local Dubbo passengers, before returning to the hotel at Ballimore for lunch. The train departed Dubbo early on Monday due to a closure for rerailling in the Elong Elong-Merrygoen section. Passengers were coached from Dubbo to Gulgong where they joined the train for the run home to Maitland. A very successful weekend combining four separate tours into one operation.

As this report is being written, Mother Nature has again impacted on our operations. Torrential rain resulted in ARTC closing the North Coast Line between Telarah and Grafton at 1500 hours on 18 March. With further heavy rainfall forecast for the weekend of 20-21 March, the prospect of any reopening of the line had faded and we reluctantly cancelled a local family trip to Stroud Road and our March Open Day. Following lengthy consultation with Cruise Express and further advice of the closure of the Main Northern Line between Sulphide Junction and Fassifern by Sydney Trains, we had to also reluctantly cancel their Griffith Tour, due to depart Paterson on 21 March.

Work is well underway for our tri-State tour to Broken Hill, Adelaide and Melbourne. This 10-day tour will depart on 24 May and will be our first operation into South Australia.

While COVID-19 had impacted our 2020 operations, the flow-on effects of Government restrictions on international travel has meant that our operations calendar for 2021 for the year was filled by the end of January. The only additional operations that can now be contemplated are day trips. The tour program for the rest of the year follows:

Dates	Destination	Customer	Units
3-4 Apr	Bathurst	Bathurst Council	620
18 Apr	Dungog	TRMS Open Day	CPH
24-30 Apr	South West Branches	Cruise Express	620
2-5 May	Moree-Armidale	Scott McGregor	620
14 May	Scone Cup	TRMS	CPH & 620
16 May	Dungog	TRMS Open Day	CPH
24 May-2 Jun	Adelaide-Melbourne	TRMS	620
2-4 Jun	Rylstone	Cruise Express	CPH
10 Jun	Stroud Road	Tuncurry Coaches	CPH
11-15 Jun	Binnaway, Dubbo	ARHS	620
18-20 Jun	Gulgong	Greenhills Travel	620
20 Jun	Dungog	TRMS Open Day	CPH
25-28 Jun	Casino-Brisbane	Vintage Rail Journeys	620
5-11 Jul	Dubbo-Nyngan	Cruise Express	620
16-19 Jul	Casino-Brisbane	Vintage Rail Journeys	620
18 Jul	Dungog	TRMS Open Day	CPH
30 Jul-2 Aug	Casino-Brisbane	Vintage Rail Journeys	620
5-19 Aug	Adelaide-Melbourne	Cruise Express	620
15 Aug	Dungog	TRMS Open Day	CPH
28 Aug-1 Sep	North Coast	Insights Tours	620
9-14 Sep	Sydney-Armidale	Scott McGregor	620
11-12 Sep	Paterson Shuttles	Steamfest	CPH & 402
17-20 Sep	Canberra Floriade	Cruise Express	CPH
19 Sep	Dungog	TRMS Open Day	CPH
7-11 Oct	Griffith	Cruise Express	620
17 Oct	Dungog	TRMS Open Day	CPH
21-24 Oct	Brisbane	Francis	620
25-27 Oct	Brisbane	Cruise Express	620
29 Oct-3 Nov	Western Circle	Scott McGregor	CPH
12-15 Nov	Rylstone (Mudgee)	Cruise Express	620
21 Nov	Dungog	TRMS Open Day	CPH
21-28 Nov	Western Circle	Captain's Choice	620

Bruce Agland
Operations Manager

Rolling Stock Report

After a slow January, the need to make our rail motors available for tour operations has gained pace. A glance at the list of forthcoming tours, as reported by the Operations Manager, indicates the rolling stock maintainers will be 'kept on their toes' attending to inspections, servicing, and carrying out repairs as needed, in order make our trains available when required. 621/721 is in particularly high demand this year, and some of its tours will entail many days of travel, covering long distances.

CPHs

A major task that we must accomplish this year is the overhaul of the CPH bogies—a task that falls due every six years. A quote has been obtained to inspect, repair and re-machine the bogies back to specification. Another quote was obtained to check and refurbish the springs. We are presently formulating a work plan that will commence with the recovery of the bogies from CPH 19. By firstly refurbishing this set, it will enable us to progressively swap the 'spare set' among the fleet, thereby permitting each bogie set to be overhauled in turn whilst keeping rail motor downtime to a minimum.

We hope to have rectified a problem with CPH 1's transmission, which was showing oil pressure in neutral when it should not be doing so. The transmission actuator rod was repositioned to allow more adjustment, and by doing so we are confident we have rectified the problem.

CPH 3's coolant system was drained, flushed and refilled. A starter motor was retrieved from storage and reconditioned after a starter motor failure on CPH 3 last September. It has been placed on board CPH 7 to carry as a spare. Ray Kildey did an excellent job constructing four purpose-built wooden boxes to store and protect our stock of reconditioned starter motors.

CPH 1 and CPH 7 toilet systems require attention, likely due to worn or damaged 'duckbill valves' which have probably caused a loss of vacuum integrity. CPH 3 may be okay but will also be checked.

621/721

The exterior refurbishment of 621/721 has continued post-Christmas. Most of the missing rivets have now been fitted, but some work remains. The rivets secure the metal outer cladding to the carbody frame. A start has been made to remove scratches from glass in passenger windows and where unsuccessful, to replace the glass. The exterior has been repainted by Peter Macfarlane and his helpers. The refurbishment has vastly improved the look and durability of the exterior, plus improve its impermeability to rain water entry.

A dash mounted digital video camera (or 'dash-cam') was tested out on 621/721 during a recent trip to Hawkesbury River. The camera records the view ahead as seen from the driver's cab, which may prove invaluable should there be an incident. The device has a 32GB memory card which will retain the past 320 minutes of



Peter Macfarlane surveys his handiwork

footage before progressively being overwritten. The train location is determined using GPS (global positioning satellites). During testing it was discovered that satellite acquisition was not always 100%, possibly due to shielding from the carbody, prompting further testing. All rail motors are to be similarly equipped with dash-cams.

621 has an exhaust manifold coolant leak. We suspect a welding fault. A temporary repair was made using Belzona (a special bonding material). As soon as the opportunity arises, we must remove the manifold to effect a permanent repair. Being made of stainless steel, it will require specialist welding expertise. We have retrieved and are holding the 'good' manifold from the last engine change-out in reserve just in case the current manifold cannot be repaired.

HPC 402

New volunteer, Craig Sills, who is a qualified boilermaker and metal fabricator, has immediately set to work fabricating and fitting an axle-box cover to HPC 402 (No. 5 wheel). A temporary cover had been affixed after it was discovered missing whilst 402 was working in Sydney late last year.

7344

With the installation of new glass in the cab windows, the exterior refurbishment of locomotive 7344 is now complete, bring this project to a close. A report was prepared that documents the return of 7344 to its original livery.

The small oil leak on the turbocharger has been fixed.



New illuminated number boards being tested

CTC 51

The carriage crew has attended to CTC 51 (trailer car) by rectifying a potential structural weakness that was a cause for concern last year. They have securely fixed the wall studs to the bearer by installing longer bolts as well as addressed other shortcomings. The plywood side cladding has been reattached and secured in place. Work will now turn to the undercarriage.



An example of the short stud bolts found on CTC 51 that required longer bolts

Maintenance Personnel

After his absence during most of 2020, I am pleased to report that Les Davey has returned after completing his medical and cleared to return to work. He returns to resume rail motor maintenance and inspection tasks as well as share his wealth of knowledge with our recent recruits. Michael (Mick) Halls has taken up the opportunities, as they arise, to accompany the rostered fitter on local rail motor trips, as a 'fitter-in-training', so that he too may soon join Kevin Judd in becoming eligible to register for the Crew Roster.

As the Secretary has reported, the Board accepted my recommendation to appoint Michael Halls to the position of Rolling Stock Coordinator, reporting to myself. He will play a vital role in coordinating and directing rolling stock maintenance tasks and vehicle inspections. This will allow me to better focus on regulatory tasks and administrative matters, as my role requires.

Maintenance History Database

Our rail motor maintenance and inspection history has now successfully transitioned to Microsoft Access. Regular Wednesday volunteer, Charles Smith, has played a pivotal role in the development of the new system. I anticipate the database will readily yield hitherto difficult-to-extract information that will help identify trends or recurrent maintenance issues.

Robert Spencer

Engineering Manager (Rolling Stock)

Infrastructure Report

The new guttering has been installed along the western edge of the rail motor storage shed and the downpipes are nearly completed. The drainage system has proved to be very effective, having coped extremely well during the recent deluge of rain we have just experienced. No storm water entered the shed.

We have purchased two new tanks that have been installed to harvest rainwater captured from the shed roof. The stored water will be used around the Depot precinct.

Work has commenced on No.4 Road from the carpark, but was halted due to recent torrential rain. As soon as the weather permits, work will resume in earnest. We aim to complete this project as soon as possible.

We have retrieved two bogies from storage and set them up ready to be placed under CPH 19.

After Easter, CPH 14 and CPH 19 will be lifted and the wooden body from CPH 14 will be transported away to its new home at one of our member's farm property. CPH 19 will be placed onto 600 class bogies and stabled back in No.3 Road.

The fitter's change room area has been completed in the MHO and I would like to thank Kevin Saunders for all his work in this area. An adjacent vestibule has been set up with a desk for the Rolling Stock Manager to attend to his paperwork.

The boilermakers have been busy installing a mezzanine floor adjacent to the roller door. The area created has enabled less frequently used materials and equipment to be stored up and out of the way, freeing up floor space. With some portable step ladders no longer deemed safe and fit for purpose, the boilermakers have fabricated additional new portable stairs to safely access our trains from ground level.

The work on the new paths around the Depot precinct, for which we received a grant, has commenced but has been held up again due to wet weather. Please take care when moving about this area.

Rodney Short

Engineering Manager (Infrastructure)

Off the Rails

At the time of preparing this newsletter, the Society is aware that Arthur Burgess, Carol Rostrom and Bev Walsh are 'off the rails'. We wish them well on their recovery to good health. To any other members who may also not be in the best of health, the Society also extends best wishes for your recuperation.

Sidings

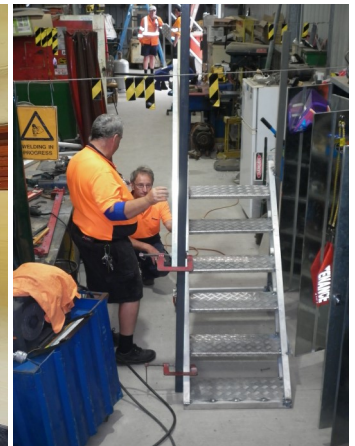
- During the recent downpours across the Hunter region, which put many areas on flood watch, our depot rain gauge recorded 250mm.
- Kevin Saunders has retired from regular Wednesday volunteer work to pursue travel and fishing interests. We thank him for his efforts and wish him well in his retirement. Under his stewardship, and often setting a cracking pace, new flooring was laid in the Goods Shed, walls were lined and storage shelves were constructed. He then turned his hand to the MHO van, installing a partition to divide off one end to create a secure storage room and repurpose an adjacent area for volunteers to store their possessions and change clothes.
- Amongst visitors to our public Open Day on 21 February were 23 members of the Morris Owners Club Hunter Region.



Public Open Day, 17 Jan 2021



Ray Kildey at work in the new BR lounge



Boilermakers fabricate new steps



Multi-tasking, Bruce Agland secures the safety barrier in place whilst working the phone



A superbly detailed historic Morris van in the carpark (Open Day 21 Feb)

Australian Railway Historical Society NSW Division

Binnaway, Coonabarabran, Baradine, Gwabegar.

A VISIT TO THE WESTERN PLAINS ZOO at DUBBO

Departing from Paterson and Broadmeadow via Maitland Singleton Muswellbrook Scone Murrurundi Quirindi and Werris Creek.
Returning via Merrygoen Dubbo Wellington Orange Bathurst Lithgow and Central to Broadmeadow and Paterson.

Friday to Tuesday 11-15th June 2021

Come and join the ARHS NSW Division and The Rail Motor Society for a new adventure to a former railway destination and a visit to the Western Plains Zoo at Dubbo for our annual Queens Birthday Weekend Tour.

Friday 11th June. Travel from Sydney on the 6.15am Intercity Train service to Broadmeadow to join our heritage 621/721 Rail Cars. Departing Broadmeadow at 9.00am we will serve a welcome Devonshire Morning Tea as we pass through Maitland and Singleton, passing the great moonscape of open cut coal mines to Muswellbrook, stopping there for a leg stretch. Continue north through Scone and Murrurundi climbing the 1 in 40 grades and through the Ardglen Tunnel, descending to Willow Tree and on to Quirindi before stopping for lunch on the station at Werris Creek. Take the opportunity to visit the Station Museum and Railway Memorial before re-joining our train and proceeding to Gap junction to travel on the cross country line to Binnaway. On arrival, transfer to our coach to follow the 51 km closed section of the Gwabegar Line to Coonabarabran where we will check in to the Matthew Flinders Motor Inn for a 3 night stay. Drinks in the bar before Dinner in the Dining Room.

Saturday 12th June. After a hearty country breakfast we will be joining our coach to travel to the Siding Spring Observatory. Meet our Tour Guide and visit the Exploratory Centre, also visiting Trig Point and Australia's largest optical telescope. Morning Tea in the Exploratory Cafe. Depart for the Warrumbungle National Park Visitors Centre to meet the local Rangers. Continue to the Canyon Picnic Area for a packed lunch. On our return journey visit the Whitegum Lookout and view the spectacular Warrumbungle Mountains and the iconic Breadknife. Pay a visit to the amazing Crystal Kingdom. Return to town for a Chinese Banquet Dinner before relocating to the Warrumbungle Observatory to view the Night Sky with a noted astronomer. (Weather permitting). Return to the Motel.

Sunday 13th June. Join our coach again after breakfast spending a day on a journey following the 95 km closed railway line to Gwabegar. We will check out the station locations along the line at Yearinan, Bugaldie, Wittenbra, Baradine, then Kenebri and Merebene. Gwabegar, created in the 1920's, is located nearby the Pilliga Scrub where timber cutters exploited large stands of the termite resistant white cypress pine. Return to Baradine for a Country Pub Sunday Roast lunch and visit the Pilliga Forest Discovery Centre. Return to the Coonabarabran Visitor Centre to view the Australian Museum Diprotodon Exhibition and Aboriginal Artefacts and Art Display. Take a stroll around the town before for our third night dinner at the Motel.

Monday 14th June. After breakfast, a return transfer in our coach to Binnaway to re-join our train for a morning run to Dubbo. We will be met at the station to be transferred to the Western Plains Zoo for lunch and an afternoon amongst the amazing variety of wild animals. Our Coach will have an on board guide as we travel around the zoo to view the natural locations created to see the amazing variety of animals. Check in to the Dubbo Comfort Inn International for our last night stay. Enjoy a Happy Hour with drinks in the Bar before our dinner in the Dining Room.

Tuesday 15th June. Following breakfast we return to Dubbo Station to join our train for our homeward bound journey. Following the main western line through Wellington to Orange for a leg stretch and on to Bathurst for lunch at the Victoria Hotel. Continue eastward to Lithgow and a run down the Blue Mountains to terminate at Sydney Central Station. The train will then return to Broadmeadow and Paterson.

You may wish to travel to Paterson or Maitland to join our train before our Friday departure. Accommodation is available in Paterson and Rutherford (close to Telarah Station) for the preceding Thursday night at your own arrangements and cost.

The Tour cost is all inclusive of Rail travel in 621/721. Coach travel and transfers, Dinner Bed and Breakfast accommodation for 4 nights, lunches, Entry to all venues with morning and afternoon teas whilst on board our train. Please use your Opal Cards for travel to Broadmeadow.

Refreshments and Souvenirs will also be available to purchase on board our train.

Drinks at Motels and venues and items of a personal nature are at your own expense.

Tour Notes will be distributed on departure from Broadmeadow.

COVID-19 social distancing regulations will apply to all travel.

... 5 Day Tour Package for ARHS and TRMS Members and Guests Twin Share Accommodation @ \$1575.00	
... 5 Day Tour Package for Non Members Twin Share Accommodation @ \$1695.00	
... Single Supplement available on request @ \$ 275.00	
	Total (GST Incl) \$.....

Mail Booking to ARHS Tours P.O. Box 206 ALEXANDRIA NSW 1435 or Book Online
Book in person at ARHS Book Shops at Grand Concourse Central Station & 5 Henderson Rd Alexandria

BOOKING FORM

Tour Name..... Tour Date Tour Cost \$.....
Name..... Membership No.
Address Post Code
Telephone Mobile E-mail
Accompanying Person(s)
Please Note any Special Dietary or Accommodation requirements
I require Twin Share Double Single Supplement Accommodation
I will join this tour at

PAYMENT BY CASH/CHEQUE/MONEY ORDER/EFT/VISA/MASTERCARD For \$

Card No. Expiry/.../....

Signature Booking Date

Final Tour Information and Tickets will be posted to your address within 10 days before tour departure date.

Contact: ARHS NSW Division Tours Infoline: (02)9699 4595 or 0428 333443 ABN No. 96 000 538 803

ARHS NSW Division is not responsible for last minute changes of motive power or destinations by the tour or train operator.

Refund Policy: Cancellations up to 30 Days prior-100%: Less than 30 days to 14 Days-90% Less than 14 Days, Regret no refund.

OFFICE USE ONLY

Date Booking Processed Tickets Sent/.../.... Car No. Seats