



Whispers from the depot

Newsletter of The Rail Motor Society Incorporated

5 Webbers Creek Road,
Paterson NSW 2421

www.trms.org.au

Vol.8, No. 16, **March 2025**

From the Boardroom

Fellow members, welcome to this edition of *Whispers from the Depot*.

The Society would like to welcome new members: Christopher Rayfield from Seven Hills, Trevor Solomons from Rutherford, and associate member John Aitken from Wahroonga. I trust all are looking forward to a long and rewarding time spent working with us at the Society.

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 10 May 2025. You should receive your copy in early April. After the meeting, members can take a guided tour of the Depot and gain exclusive behind-the-scenes access to 629 and the 602/702 restoration, the CPH bogie overhaul, the new meal room, and other ongoing projects. Members of the Board will not meet separately after the AGM but remain on hand to answer any questions you may have or just chat. With the additional arrangements, we hope to get a good roll-up. A gentle reminder to those who have yet to submit their membership renewal. Your membership will lapse if we do not receive your remittance by the end of March. It is important for administration purposes to have the membership finalised before the AGM.

The new website is now up and running, and the feedback has been very encouraging. Our Webmaster reports that visitors' average time spent on the site is up 14 per cent compared to the old site. Members, please note that details of forthcoming events and train excursions can be found on the site.

An online meeting with Transport Heritage NSW in February (held every six months) saw THNSW share updates on the 620-class bogie overhaul by contractor Kings Engineering. We stated that the project is critical and urgently needed for 621. THNSW also provided an update on the overhauling of a Voith 211r transmission and a Cummins NTA-855-R4 engine, as well as the replacement of radiator and fuel tanks, all for placement in the 620-class spares pool. Our Rolling Stock Manager gave an update on the S2 Project: 621/721 drawgear remediation. The Society has offered to sell an air compressor to THNSW. The Society was invited to speak at the next Sector Development Day, and our Rolling Stock Manager volunteered to give a presentation on our maintenance record keeping and reporting system.

On the grants front, we are always looking for new ideas to help our grants application team. Suggestions for potential

grant-eligible projects would be well received or you are welcome to reach out to our grants application team for further information via our secretary. We have two projects currently underway: 621/721 drawgear remediation and new platform beside the TAM/BR carriages, which are covered elsewhere in this newsletter.

In February, we attended a six-monthly meeting with ONRSR (Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator) with TRMS and ONRSR providing regular updates. One outcome of our discussion on the bogie overhaul interval was for TRMS to change from every six years or 50,000 km, whichever comes first, to every 250,000 km. The former criteria were considered too frequent given our trains are not in regular traffic.

We also met with representatives from ARTC (Australian Rail Track Corporation) in February to discuss the results of recent track circuit testing, as outlined in the Operations Manager's report.

The Board has endorsed the creation of two new roles within our Roles and Responsibilities: Tour Leader and Train Host. Persons appointed to these roles will be on a trip-specific basis, where the nature of the trip and/or the passenger demographics dictate such a need.

Some members with an email address, who are only able to view Paterson Points and Whispers on small handheld devices or who lack a computer monitor, have requested printed copies. The Board is sympathetic to your situation and will mail a printed copy if you advise our secretary. With the rising cost of printing, the Board asks for your discretion in this matter. Those who receive a print copy will not receive an e-copy, and vice versa.

Last but not least, it is worth noting that the depot grounds are being maintained in superb condition, thanks to the efforts of our resident caretaker, Lance, and the support of



the other members of the outdoor crew, to help make a favourable impression upon our visitors.

Anthony (Tony) Dunn – Secretary / Public Officer

Operations Manager's Report

On the weekend of 6-8 December, we ran a Christmas Tour for one of our long-time customers, *St. James Rail*. This involved working two separate day trips out of Sydney Terminal to Tarana (on Saturday) and Robertson (on Sunday). On Friday, a number of St. James' regular supporters also travelled with us on the Paterson to Sydney leg of the operation as well.

Our regular *Rainforest Rattler* services operated from 2 to 17 January, based on Coffs Harbour. Over 70 individual services were operated out of Coffs Harbour with over 3,100 passengers carried. Unfortunately, a couple of trips had to be cancelled due to a rail fatality at Coffs Harbour. Due to the



fatality, 621/721 was terminated at Coramba and our passengers were transferred back to Coffs Harbour by coach. 621/721 later returned to Boambee Beach to stable overnight. A feature of the event was two catered evening fundraising tours from Coffs Harbour

to Grafton for the *Coffs Coast and Clarence Can-Do Cancer Trust*, which raised \$11,440 for the Trust.

621/721 then travelled to Casino on the afternoon of 17 January where it was based for the *Kyogle Giant Pumpkin and Watermelon Festival*, where six very successful runs from Kyogle around the Border Loop (Cougal Spiral) to Glenapp were operated with almost 600 passengers carried.

On 29 January, 7344 travelled to the Plasser Australia plant at St. Marys to transfer a track machine to East Greta Junction for Swietelsky. We welcome Swietelsky as a new customer.

Our January, February, and March Open Day runs to Dungog have all proved popular, with a good number attending each day (see separate report).

On Thursday, 27 February, 621/721 operated a trial run to Dungog to test the train following brake system maintenance.

On the block working front, ARTC Signal Engineering requested additional track circuit testing with 621/721. Extensive circuit testing was carried out on 11 December by our Signalling Consultant, John Aitken, under the supervision of ARTC Signal Engineers and Regulator (ONRSR) representatives. Testing was undertaken in the

Craven-Gloucester Section of the North Coast Line. John Aitken's testing results proved that our rolling stock met or exceeded the ARTC operating specifications. We continue to negotiate with ARTC to finally resolve this issue. The Board extends a special thanks to John Aitken for his assistance with this issue.

I would also 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

It has been a busy start to 2025. We have been working hard to reassemble and install 402's leading bogie, perform urgent maintenance on the 620's brake system, and perform routine post-trip inspection, servicing, and maintenance tasks.

The rolling stock maintainers were reminded of their obligation to attend to train log book repair requests as soon as our trains return to the Depot and to sign off on the repair in the log book once it is complete.

CPH 1, 3 and 7

A blocked radiator overflow return line from the roof-mounted radiators on CPH 1 was cleared of internal corrosion buildup. After testing the coolant and finding it unsatisfactory, the system was drained, flushed with radiator cleaner, and refilled using 'green coolant' additive to inhibit corrosion. The coolant quality was checked in CPH 3 and CPH 7 and found to be okay.

The mini-bar fridge, associated worktop bench and cupboards were removed from CPH 1, ready to install a full-size refrigerator and its associated power supply system. Once completed, all three of our CPHs will have undergone this modification.



Ray points where the new fridge will go in CPH 1

A malfunctioning toilet vacuum system on CPH 7 was removed and replaced with a working unit. The failed unit has since been repaired and stored.

The Scone Cup on 16 May will be CPH 3's last job as its bogies are scheduled for an overhaul. It will not return to service until it receives new bogies. Although we had begun stripping the bogies removed from CPH 1 for overhaul, which CPH 3 will receive, progress has stalled, pending urgent attention to 402's leading bogie during December through February.

HPC 402

402 is getting fitted with two auxiliary above-floor diesel fuel tanks, which replace the two 44-gallon fuel drums we used to carry onboard. Our boilermakers have fabricated the tank stands and brackets to secure the tanks to an interior wall. Just tank painting, plumbing and fuel sight glasses to go.

With its leading bogie back under 402, it was moved over the inspection pit to reinstall its cowcatchers on both ends. The rail motor will shortly be taken for a test run, during which it will be turned on the Telarah Triangle so that upon return to the rail motor shed, the No.2 end can be lifted for attention to its bogie.



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Reassembled bogie ready to be installed under 402 (No.1 end)

NPF 621 and NTC 721

In response to our driver's reports of brakes being slow to release, our rolling stock maintainers have methodically checked each brake valve (removing, cleaning, and changing out when necessary), and purging air pipes of contaminants. The train passed a test run in early April to check the effectiveness of the brake system. Brake valves needing overhaul were sent to our Westinghouse brake expert in South Australia.

The walkway bellows (enclosing the inter-car thoroughfare) at the rear of 621 have been securely attached after becoming loose, although their condition is such that we are endeavouring to find a suitable replacement. The No.2 engine cooling system was drained, flushed with radiator cleaner, refilled, and 'green coolant' concentrate added to inhibit corrosion and increase its freezing/boiling point.

We have concerns about the condition of 621's bogies. Kings Engineering is overhauling a set of bogies for Transport Heritage New South Wales, which are earmarked for 621, but with no definitive completion date, this raises a concern. As a contingency, we will investigate the condition

of our stored 620 spare bogies to ascertain whether, with a modicum of attention, they could be used under 621 as a temporary measure until new bogies can be fitted. As this newsletter was being prepared, discussion with the new owners of a three-car DEB set proved fruitful, with the Society being able to obtain a set of its bogies that are in better condition than our spare sets.

Loco 7344

After testing the Voith transmission oil and finding it unsatisfactory, we needed to find suitable fresh oil that met Voith's stringent specifications. The only suitable oil was Shell Tegula V32 Transmission Oil, which we obtained through Action Plant Support (Tighes Hill). I thank Managing Director Adam Barry for arranging the free delivery of two 205L drums of transmission oil and one 205L drum of 15W40 engine oil. Additionally, we've changed the oil in one final drive, with three more to do when we can move the locomotive back over our inspection pit to complete the servicing.

CTC 51

A new vacuum pump housing has been fitted beneath CTC 51, and a vacuum pump has been installed. We are considering our options for generating power for the pump.

NPF629 / NTC 729 Refurbishment

Our electricians have been working on the main isolation switch in 629, and the interior is being prepared for painting. Our carriage maintainers are otherwise occupied working to free up windows on 621/721, along with fitting new window rubbers.

WFP 602 / CT 702 Restoration

We are now referring to 707 as 702 for the convenience of designating a matching car set in the eyes of the public. The real 702 was vandalised at the Mortdale Maintenance Centre, resulting in it being burnt out and withdrawn before the Society was able to take delivery of it.

The second engine in 602 has been successfully started. All debris in the coolant header tank compartments in 602 has been removed. Cement sheeting was purchased and cut to size to create new flooring in these compartments, and the compartment interiors have been painted black. The header tanks themselves have been repaired and are currently being temporarily fitted (see photo) before painting. Once plumbed in to provide coolant fluid, both engines can be started periodically.



Coolant header tank in 602.

Eighty (80) light fittings for 602/702 and 629/729 have been purchased and stored. They have glass shades and are very similar to the original fittings. Our electricians will

install them later.

Seat frame maintenance is ongoing, with approximately 60 per cent completed. This includes rubber replacement, lubrication, and repainting. Window frame and window catch restoration continues at a slow pace. The aluminium window guides are slowly being stripped of paint and sandblasted.

Other

The S2 grant project to overhaul the intermediate and end draw gear on 621/721 is progressing satisfactorily. Noel Price is working on the half-size couplers and spring packs and is fabricating new plunger bars. Lovells Springs has made new coil springs for the plunger bars. This six-month project must be completed by 30 June.

Robert Spencer – Rolling Stock Manager

Infrastructure Report

Work has commenced on a platform beside the TAM. Holes have been dug, and rails cut, ready to be placed in position. We received a \$15,000 grant for this project. Graeme Holloway is the Project Manager.

Thanks to Tony Price, the new meal room is progressing well. Electricity and water have yet to be connected. The cupboards will then be installed, and the meal room will soon be ready for use.

We have now completed the concrete crossing in our rail yard. The fuel truck, loco 7344, and our CPHs have tested it, and it is taking the weight. While this job was being done, we took the opportunity to form a concrete pad for the lawn shed and construct another for placing a planned toilet block.



CPH 14 has had corrugated iron sheeting placed on one side (the side that won't be seen), thanks to the efforts of the outside crew. Hopefully, CPH 14 can be relocated to its 'forever home' near the Prince Street entrance to our Depot very soon. The next step will be installing a roof over it to offer protection from the elements.

Thanks to Ray and his assistants Brenton and Lance, the toilet in the lounge car is operational, and the BR car



refurbishment is complete.

The electricity upgrade from the mains to the shed will have to be done sooner rather than later due to termite damage in the power pole on our property. The power will be placed underground inside the boundary. This will eliminate any risks while using cranes, etc.

Looking forward to another busy year.

Rod Short – Infrastructure Manager

Off the Rails

As this Whispers issue was being prepared, the Society was aware that Leo Burgess, Bruce Storey, Glen Miles and Brenton Elsey were 'off the rails'. We wish them well 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.

The residents of Paterson were recently saddened to learn that their local Postmaster, Phillip Ellicott, passed away unexpectedly on Saturday, 15th March. Phillip was well known to the editorial team, as he efficiently assisted the Society over many years in the regular bulk posting of our Paterson Points magazines and annual reports.

To his wife Michelle and family, the Society extends its sincere condolences.

Bruce Gehrig – Welfare Officer

Open Days

In January, we had fifty-four people visit our Depot. There were initial doubts about holding the open day due to the damage caused by the preceding three days of wild weather, which had brought down several branches from trees around the Depot. However, depot resident caretaker Lance cut these down with a chainsaw, and fortunately, it stayed fine and dry on the open day. Fifty-one people travelled on the shuttle to Dungog, and the other three were given a tour of the Depot.

In February, we had thirty-four people visit our Depot, of which twenty-seven travelled on the shuttle to Dungog, and seven people only did the Depot tour.

In March, we had forty-eight people visit our Depot. Thirty-six travelled on the shuttle to Dungog, and twelve people only toured the Depot.



Green power!

Thank you, as always, to all those who helped out at the Depot and on the train.

Please note that the April open day will fall on Easter Sunday. On this occasion, several of our regular volunteers will be unavailable. If you can help out, please let myself or Trish Short know.

Bruce Gehrig

Update on CPH Centenary Book

The production of the Centenary of the CPH book is progressing, with Ron Preston's texts being revised and updated by Stephen Preston.

Previously unpublished photographs are currently being examined for inclusion. If you have any images you consider worthy of inclusion, please forward them to me, either by post to CPH Centenary Book, 5 Webbers Creek Road, Paterson NSW 2421, by email to bustopnsw@gmail.com, or by contacting our secretary.

A quotation for the layout cost of an 80-page A4-sized book is being assessed.

Also, I am seeking operational anecdotes from former CPH drivers for inclusion in the supplementary text.

Spencer Ross



Recycling

As this edition of the Whispers was being prepared, the Society had now processed 35,007 empty containers. The Society greatly appreciates the support of members who bring in their empty cans and bottles, as it helps offset the expense of supplying bottled water and drinks to members and passengers travelling on our trains.



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Members Years of Service

As reported in the December edition of Paterson Points, members' service pins and certificates, awarded in five-year increments, were presented to attendees during our 40th Anniversary and Christmas luncheon. Those eligible, in order of membership number, were:

35 Years

Spencer Ross*
Rodney Short*
Bruce Agland¹

30 Years

Mick Baczynskyj

25 Years

Stephen Davies*
Cheryl Davies*

20 Years

Grahame Pantlin*

15 Years

Warren Mills
Bruce Gehrig

15 Years cont.

Margaret Pantlin*
Ray Kildey*
Peter Macfarlane
Doug Bennett
Mick Walsh*

10 Years

Warwick Erwin
Trish Short*
Beverly Walsh*
Robert Spencer

5 Years

Greg Duncan
Steve Harper*
Bruce Greenham
Jim Lambkin

5 Years cont.

Trevor Hooker
Joy Kildey*
Brenton Elsey
Graeme Holloway*
Stephen Watt
Peter Russell
Leo Burgess*
Kaye Burgess*
Ted Dunbar
Paul Horder
Charles Smith
Gary Rowarth
Len Smith
Gary Odgers
Paul Heron
Steve Bruty

¹ Life Member

* Family Membership



These and the following images are supplied by the editor.





Rail Motor Society Paterson

A Winter Wonderland and South Coast Tour

In The Rail Motor Society's Heritage 621/721 Rail Cars

The Ski Tube and the Canberra Light Rail. By Coach to Cooma and Bullocks Flat, Captains Flat, Crookwell and Taralga. Follow the Closed Branch Lines. Queanbeyan to Cooma, Bungendore to Captains Flat, Goulburn to Crookwell and Taralga. Travel from Paterson, Maitland, Broadmeadow, Gosford, Hornsby, Concord West, Moss Vale, Goulburn, Canberra. Returning via Goulburn, Moss Vale, Robertson, Summit Tank, Unanderra, Port Kembla, Kiama, Bomaderry, Wollongong, Waterfall, Meeks Road Junction, Enfield, Chullora, Concord West, Broadmeadow and Paterson.

Thursday to Tuesday, 5–10th June 2025

Come and join The Rail Motor Society for a new six-day adventure on our annual Kings Birthday Weekend Tour. Explore a Winter Wonderland in the Canberra Monaro Region over a two-night stay, a day coach trip visiting Cooma and Bullocks Flat with a visit to the Cooma Monaro Railway Museum and the restored Cooma Heritage Railway Station. Travel on to Bullocks Flat to ride the Ski Tube Railway to Perisher and Blue Cow in the Snowy Mountains Region of NSW. Travel on the Canberra Light Rail System, visit the Australian War Memorial and follow the closed Captains Flat Railway before returning to Goulburn for another two-night stay. Visit Taralga and the Crookwell Heritage Railway to experience the life of a railway fettler riding the trikes at the station. Travel then by our train to Moss Vale, Robertson, Port Kembla and Bomaderry for the last night, crossing the Shoalhaven River into Nowra for our accommodation. Enjoy a wine-tasting and two-course evening meal at the Coolangatta Estate Vineyard at Shoalhaven Heads. Return rail travel via the picturesque Illawarra Coastline to Sydney and a return to Paterson.

Thursday 5th June. Our heritage 621/721 Rail Cars will leave from Paterson picking up passengers at Maitland, Broadmeadow, Gosford, Hornsby and Concord West. A welcome Devonshire morning tea will be served as we proceed through the South Western Suburbs of Sydney and begin our journey into the Southern Highlands with a lunch stop at Moss Vale. Continue on to Goulburn and join the branch line to the Monaro District at Joppa Junction, passing Tarago, Bungendore (former junction for the Captains Flat Line), Queanbeyan and into the ACT and Canberra Railway Station. A short walk to our accommodation at the Ramada Diplomat Hotel to check in for our dinner, bed and breakfast accommodation for our two-night stay. Drinks in the Bar before dinner in the dining room.

Friday 6th June. After breakfast, join our coach for our Snowy Mountains adventure. Following the Monaro Highway and closed Railway Line to Cooma stopping to visit to the Railway Station and the Cooma Monaro Railway Museum for Morning Tea. Continue on into the Snowy Mountains passing Berridale and Jindabyne to arrive at Bullocks Flat where we will join the Ski Tube Rack Railway to Perisher and Blue Cow. After a short look around Blue Cow, return to Perisher for lunch. Return to the Ski Tube for the downhill run to Bullocks Flat to rejoin our coach for the return to our Canberra Hotel for our second-night stay. Drinks and dinner in the dining room.

Saturday 7th June. Following breakfast, we will load our luggage onto the coach and then climb aboard to travel to the Civic Terminus of the Canberra light rail system. Travel the length of the track to the northern terminus at Gungahlin for a morning tea break. Return to Civic and rejoin our coach to proceed to the Australian War Memorial for time to inspect some of the exhibits and a light lunch at the adjacent Poppy's Cafe. A City Sights Tour on the way to Canberra Railway Station to commence our train journey to Bungendore, where our coach will be waiting for us to travel to Captains Flat. Inspect the remaining relics of the former Railway Branch with a look at the former locomotive turntable. Return to Bungendore to rejoin our train for the run into Goulburn. Our coach will be waiting to transfer us from the station to the Mercure Hotel for our next two night's dinner, bed and breakfast stay. Drinks at the bar and dinner in the dining room.

Sunday 8th June. After breakfast, we will be joining our coach at 9.00 am to explore the former Branch Line to Crookwell and Taralga. Our hosts in Crookwell will be the Crookwell Heritage Railway Committee. Inspect the workings of the Rail Trike Museum and enjoy a fettler's day on the rails. A BBQ lunch is included. A mid-afternoon departure to return to Goulburn to our motel for our second night for drinks and dinner.

Monday 9th June. Following breakfast, we say farewell to our hosts and transfer to Goulburn Railway Station to rejoin 621/721 to embark on our next day of rail travel. Travelling north through the Southern Highlands to Moss Vale, where we divert to the cross-country line to the coast. A stop at Robertson for an early lunch, then back on the train passing Mount Murray on our way to Summit Tank and the scenic descent of the

escarpment through Dombarton to join the South Coast Line at Unanderra. Travel via the Allens Creek triangle to terminate at Port Kembla Station. We head again for Unanderra and follow the South Coast Line to Kiama, Berry and terminate at Bomaderry Station. A coach will be waiting to transfer us across the Shoalhaven River to the Archer Hotel/Motel in Nowra. We will then rejoin the coach to travel to the Coolangatta Estate for a Wine Tasting and two course dinner. Return to our hotel for our night's accommodation.

Tuesday 10th June. Enjoy a hearty Hotel Breakfast before joining our coach to transfer to Bomaderry Station to join our train for our final day on the rails. A packet lunch on board as we proceed on our last leg of the tour to Sydney. Enjoy some spectacular scenery along the coast as we travel toward Sydney. Fantastic views after leaving Thirroul and passing Stanwell Park, Otford and into the Sydney Metropolitan area at Waterfall.

Continue to Meeks Road Junction to join the Metropolitan Good Line, noting the conversion of the adjacent Bankstown Line stations to metro standards. Through to Enfield, Chullora, Flemington Junction and the Homebush Loop to arrive at Concord West to farewell our Sydney travellers. Our train will then return to Hornsby, Gosford, Broadmeadow, Maitland and home to Paterson to complete the tour.

You may wish to travel to Paterson or Maitland to join our train before our Thursday departure. Limited accommodation is available in Paterson and Rutherford (close to Telarah Station) for the preceding Wednesday 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 5 nights, lunches, entry to all venues, with morning and afternoon teas when on board our train and at Cooma Station. The train is now licensed for the sale of wine and beers together with other refreshments. Souvenirs are also available for purchase whilst travelling 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. You may wish to arrange your own domestic Travel Insurance for this Tour.

Please accept my Booking for this Tour by completing the booking form details below.

BOOKING FORM

A Winter Wonderland and South Coast Tour

Name

Address Post Code

Telephone Mobile Email

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

..... 6 Day All Inclusive Tour Package for TRMS Members and

Guests Twin Share Accommodation per person @ \$2,595.00 \$

..... Single Supplement available on request @ \$375.00 \$

If paying by Credit Card please add a transaction fee of 1.5% \$

TOTAL \$

Payment by instalment can be arranged on application.

Contact Trish Short on Mobile 0413 672408 or Spencer Ross on Mobile 0428 333443

Recommended and preferred Payment can be made by direct EFT transfer to The Rail Motor Society, Winter Wonderland and South Coast Tour. **BSB 062 749 A/C No. 1009 0293**

Please e-mail a copy of your Booking Form to: bustopnsw@gmail.com cc. treasurer@trms.org.au

OR Post to: TRMS Tours Officer, 5 Webbers Creek Road Paterson. NSW. 2421

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

Card No. Expiry/...../..... 3 Digit CVC

Signature Booking Date

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

The Rail Motor Society is not responsible for any last-minute changes to timetables or destinations due to unforeseen issues arising.

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