

Paterson Points

NEWSLETTER OF THE RAIL MOTOR SOCIETY INCORPORATED

DECEMBER 2025

Seasons Greetings!



Inside:

- ~ Our new demountable meal room building opens for business
- ~ Cruise Express' September Griffith Tour
- ~ Brisbane 'Take 2': The rescheduled event proves popular



RAIL MOTOR SOCIETY PATERSON

www.trms.org.au

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New Members

The Society is pleased to welcome the following new members: James Willis (Werris Creek), Ashley Foster (Paterson), Rebecca Burgess (Tenambit), Dudley Oakes (Bongaree, Qld), and Anthony Sewell (Beresfield).

Donations

Please remember that the Australian Tax Office has approved the Society issuing receipts for gifts and donations (not testamentary) which will be allowable deductions for income tax purposes.

Open Days

The Society's Depot at Paterson is usually open to the public for inspection between 10 am and 2 pm on the third Sunday of each month, except in December. Entry is by gold coin donation. The Society will endeavour to run a CPH shuttle service to Dungog and return, departing at 10.45 am.

There may be times when our staff are engaged on rail tours or otherwise committed, and it may not be possible to open the Depot on a given day. Intending visitors should always contact the Secretary to confirm that staff will be in attendance on the day concerned. Group tours can also be arranged at other times by contacting the Secretary.

Advertising

It is possible to place an advertisement in this magazine for a fee. Inquiries can be made through the Secretary.

Correspondence

All inward and outward correspondence for the Society should be via the Secretary using the Society's postal address as specified in the Society Directory. Correspondence should not be addressed to individual Society members and where email is used all messages should be copied (cc'd) to the Secretary.

'Off the Rails'

As this issue was being prepared, the Society is aware that Kevin Judd is presently 'off the rails'. We wish him all the best on his 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

Supplying Digital Photographs

Paterson Points contains many great photographs submitted by our members and the general public. We highly encourage people to submit their images and really appreciate the support we receive. Please provide the date and location of your image and your name so that we can acknowledge you in the magazine. If you can suggest a caption for your image, doing so would be very helpful. Image files may be emailed directly to the magazine editor via the email address provided in the Society Directory.

Donations Sought for 600/700 Class Restoration

The Rail Motor Society has embarked upon a project to restore its 600/700 class two-car diesel train (602/702) to running order and eventual heritage train operation. In doing so, it will become the only 600/700 class two-car diesel set in operation.

The Society has a team of skilled volunteers who are capable of bringing this project to fruition, but like similar restoration projects of this nature, the rate of progress is largely determined by available funding. To assist the Society in this regard, readers who may wish to donate money to help restore this historically significant set are invited to do so.

If you can provide monetary assistance, donations can be made by Direct Deposit to,

The Rail Motor Society Inc

BSB 062-806 Account 00907487

When paying by Direct Deposit, it is important that you include your **Name** and the text "**602**" in the description. This will greatly assist in identifying these donations. If you require a receipt, please email your contact details to: secretary@trms.org.au or post them to the address below.

If paying by cheque, please make it payable to The Rail Motor Society Inc and send your donation to,

The Rail Motor Society Inc

5 Webbers Creek Road

Paterson NSW 2421

Please remember that the Australian Tax Office has approved the Society issuing receipts for donations which will be allowable deductions for income tax purposes.

SOCIETY NEWS

From the Boardroom

Fellow members and friends, welcome to 'From the Boardroom' in this edition of Paterson Points.

The Board is saddened to report the passing of our long serving Life Member Stafford Payne on 3 December. A tribute article will be prepared for inclusion in the next edition of Paterson Points.

For our members, the Board of Management would like to thank you for your ongoing support throughout 2025. A reminder that your Annual Membership Subscription for the year beginning 1 January 2026 is payable by 31 December 2025. Depending on how you receive your copy of Paterson Points, you will find either a notice regarding your 2026 membership subscription and payment options attached or enclosed.

I want to thank the Board Members and Line Managers for their tireless dedication to everything that happens behind the scenes and for the day-to-day running of the Paterson Rail Motor Society. It takes considerable time and effort, and is truly appreciated.

I also want to thank our members for their efforts at Paterson and for crewing our trains throughout the year. Without your support, the Society would not be able to function as successfully as we do.

Our depot resident caretaker keeps working hard on the gardens and grounds to make a good impression on visitors. Thanks, Lance. He has also been busy planting a garden in front of the new platform next to the TAM and BR carriages.

The Board of Management and members extend our sincerest condolences to any member who has suffered a family bereavement during the year.

Numerous projects have been finished this year. Our new demountable meal room building is now in use. A big thank you from the Board and congratulations to Mick Walsh on a great job with the lunchroom. The new TAM/BR platform has been concreted and is ready to receive an awning and other embellishments to add authenticity. A major upgrade to the site's power supply has been completed. CPH 3 has recently received new bogies. Our line and project managers will have more to say in their reports.

Regarding funding grants, our Grants Committee, consisting of Graeme and Sharyn, applied for a grant to repaint the old Station Master's cottage (now our museum and caretaker's residence) but were unsuccessful. However, we did apply for S2 funding to replace the worn draw gear on 621/721, and we were successful. That project has been completed, but is awaiting a final report before we can claim the funds. As grants are a key revenue source for the Society, I encourage all members to assist in finding funding opportunities where possible. The Grants Committee and the Executive will review and prepare grant applications for submission. I invite any member with ideas for potential grant projects to contact the committee or myself. Providing some background information about a proposed project would also be helpful to the committee.

We welcome our new members for 2025. Those who have joined since our last Whispers newsletter, published in September, are listed on page 3 of this magazine.

Our last working day will be Wednesday, 17 December 2025.

On behalf of the Board of Management and myself, I wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, and I look forward to working with you again next year.

Anthony Dunn

Secretary



The scene on the first day of occupying the new meal room.

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Contributions of articles and/or photographs for future editions of Paterson Points are most welcome and may be forwarded directly to the Editor.

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Operations Report

With the Central West Explorer charter having run in November, operations for 2025 are almost complete.

The last Open Day, on 16 November, included an additional afternoon trip for a tour company.

Our 7344-class locomotive was tasked with shunting the Newcastle Flyer cars on 29 November from Newcastle to Broadmeadow. Earlier, 7344 assisted in shunting V-set carriages in Broadmeadow Yard in preparation for eventual scrapping.

The last tour for the year was to Brisbane from 24 November to 5 December. This was a rescheduled tour of one that was cancelled in early 2025 due to flooding along the North Coast and ARTC's decision to close the rail line. This tour conducted daily trips from Roma Street (Brisbane) to Casino, Coffs Harbour, Glenreagh and Urunga. All trips were sold out.

TRMS' 2026 calendar is already looking very healthy, starting with the Rainforest Rattler, based at Coffs Harbour from 2 January 2026, running for nearly three weeks before returning to Paterson on 19 January.

After a very busy year in Operations, my team is looking forward to another successful year in 2026.

Steve Harper
Operations Manager



On Saturday, 29 November, 7344 passes through Hamilton while assisting the 'Newcastle Flyer' consist to be turned ready for its return journey to Sydney (Ethan Yiu)



Rail motor HPC 402, equipped for testing overhead wiring, sits ready for action beside XP2002 at Sydney Terminal at 8.40 pm on Sunday, 6 July (Trevor Hooker)

SOCIETY NEWS

Rolling Stock Report

CPH 1, 3 and 7

Our bogie overhaul team, overseen by our Maintenance Coordinator, has completed the overhaul of a second 2QG bogie for CPH 3—the final one needed to finish a major bogie overhaul programme for our active CPH fleet. Meanwhile, as CPH 3 sat elevated on stands giving easy access underneath, the team took the opportunity to thoroughly check all brake and relay valves for proper operation, while one of our electricians refurbished the solenoids that control the transmission (converter/neutral/lockup).

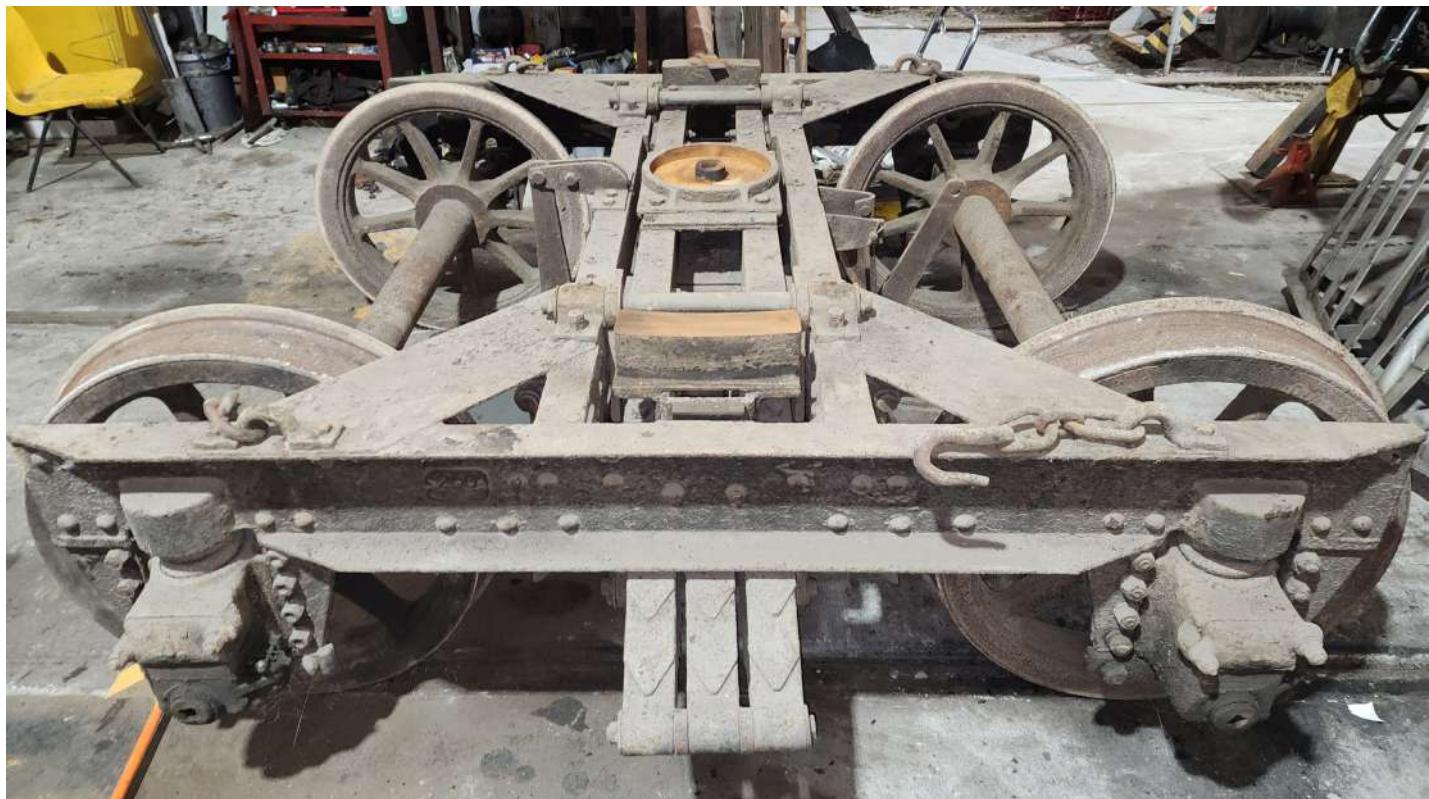
CPH 3 received its second bogie (leading end) in mid-October. It was then moved to the inspection pit to carry out other tasks, including performing a single-car brake test. When investigating the cause of the brakes occasionally becoming 'stuck on' after sitting idle at the depot, we discovered that the brake cylinder piston rod had distorted and would occasionally foul, preventing its immediate release. The bushings through which the rod passed were also worn, which exacerbated the problem. Attempts to straighten the piston rod were unsuccessful. A new piston rod is now being fabricated from a stronger grade of steel (4140), and the worn bushings will be replaced. These delays are currently preventing CPH 3 from returning to service.

While conducting the Annual Servicing of CPH 1 and CPH 7 in late November, and considering CPH 3's situation, a thorough inspection of the brake cylinders on these two units also revealed some distortion of the piston rods and worn bushings, although not yet so badly to affect the brakes' ability to release after a stop. To reduce the risk of brakes sticking, their piston rods and worn bushings will also be replaced during the Annual Servicing.

We have recovered draw hooks from CPH 14, along with spares taken from the KB storage van, and our workshop 'master-blaster' has sandblasted the hooks back to bare metal, in preparation for non-destructive testing (magnetic particle) to check for fatigue cracks or other defects. Tested draw hooks will replace those in current operation, with the latter to undergo similar testing. Each draw hook is a safety-critical item that connects each car by the chain coupling links.

After being unable to find a local repairer, the CPH transmission that failed earlier this year has been sent to Twin Disc (Pacific) Pty Ltd in Brisbane.

CPH 7 has experienced several recurring alternator drive belt failures. Believing a failed alternator to be the cause, it was removed and replaced with a new unit. Later testing showed the previous alternator was functioning correctly. With no clear reason for the belts to fail prematurely and intermittently at that, we will continue to monitor the situation. We have checked for pulley wear, belt misalignment, and any abnormal load on the alternator—the hot water urn, which was thought to be the culprit, has been inspected, tested, and cleared.



The 2QO bogie after its removal from CTC 51 and before disassembly.

Rolling Stock Report.....Cont'd

HPC 402

The carriage maintenance crew has installed new floor linoleum in the No.1 end driver-assistant cab, skilfully cutting the lino to fit the irregular floor shape.

Our fitters attempted to increase the tension of the air compressor drive belt to reduce slippage, but the adjustment mechanism was found to be at its limit. Instead, they switched to a smaller belt size. During testing, the air compressor was heard to make a harsh 'knocking' noise and it will need to be replaced. Once CPH 3 has been addressed (new bogies tested and passed), we plan to lift 402 to remove and inspect its other bogie (No.2 end) and carry out repairs as needed. While it is on stands, and with good access, we will replace the air compressor and likely revisit the drive belt tensioner.

One of our electricians is working to upgrade the 240-volt 'shore' power supply system to modern standards. The system independently powers the battery chargers, general power outlets, and internal lights when the rail motor engines are not running.

One task that has been stalled for quite some time, involving getting the vigilance control on 402 operational, is soon expected to make progress thanks to a new volunteer with experience installing such systems on other trains. So, we should see progress shortly (not before time, as Mick would quickly add).

NPF 621 and NTC 721

Our electricians have installed a new battery isolation switch on 621. The previous switch was the subject of many complaints for being stiff and difficult to operate, especially when the train was stabled beside a platform.

The set underwent a test run to check the operation of the refurbished intermediate drawgear, which received a 'thumbs up' for being much quieter than before. S2 funding for this project was secured from Transport Heritage NSW (the owner of this set).

New air hoses have been installed, replacing those that had worn out.

Our Maintenance Coordinator and his team have replaced a brake control valve after our drivers reported that the brakes sometimes take longer to release than they should. They also checked and tested the brake system's overall operation.

The fitters have removed a leaking water service filter housing on 721 in order to carry out repairs. It filters water supplied to the toilets



Peter Macfarlane captured filling his paint spray gun as he continues to undercoat NPF 629.

SOCIETY NEWS

and hand basins. After sandblasting the filter housing in preparation for patching and discovering large holes, repairing it was considered impractical. Currently, the filter housing has been bypassed while we wait for the fabrication of new stainless-steel housings. Anticipating that 729 will also require them, I will arrange for two sets to be made.

One of our fitters has refurbished the trumpet horns to replace those previously damaged by impact or vandalism. Considering their rarity, he is also thinking about having a trumpet horn made using a 3D printer. Who would have thought?

Loco 7344

Finally, the opportunity arose to position 7344 over the inspection pit to change the oil in the remaining three differentials, thus completing its service.

A persistent coolant leak has been rectified.

Adrian Tanner has been engaged to fix a fuel pump problem that might be stopping the locomotive from reaching full engine power. He is currently checking which parts are needed. We will also investigate the engine throttle operation for sufficient air supply.

CTC 51

With the unexpected delay in returning CPH 3 to service for its brake-cylinder repair, the bogie overhaul team shifted their focus to CTC 51 and removed its leading bogie. This was our first genuine look at this type of bogie, of type 2QO for trailer car use, which is noticeably of a 'lighter' construction than that used under the heavier CPH power cars.

The bogie has been stripped down. The frame and related structural members were sent away for professional sandblasting to expose bare metal, preparing them for non-destructive testing to identify fatigue cracks or other flaws. We are currently seeking documentation on a change in axle journal sizing from the original design specifications to that observed in current use.

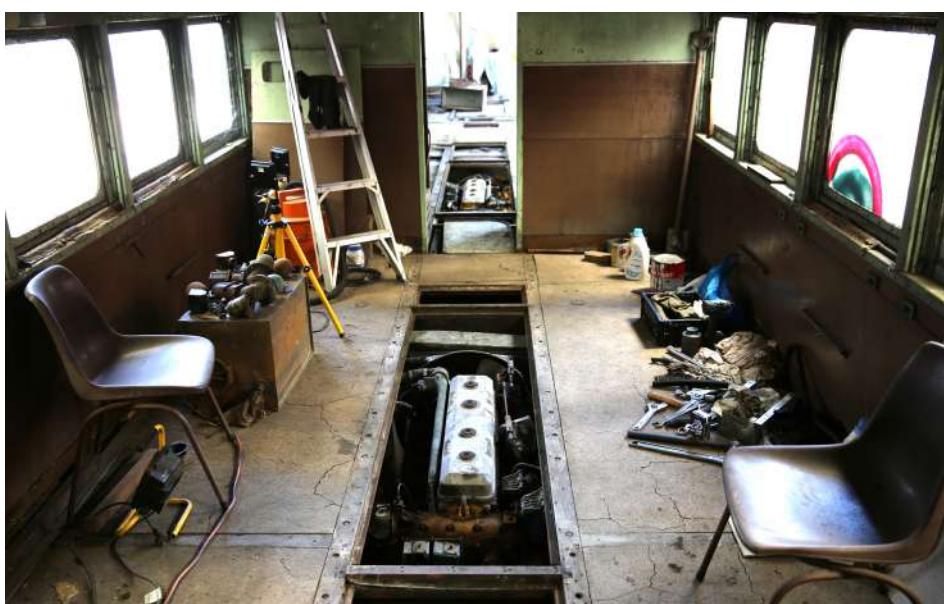
We need to finish HPC 402 now that the 2QO bogie has been moved out of the workshop, but our members will no doubt be pleased to hear that work has finally started on CTC 51's bogies.



The 2QO bogie frame shown here, after sandblasting back to bare metal, is ready for non-destructive testing to check for structural damage.



CPH drawbar hooks cleaned and prepared for non-destructive testing.



The interior of 602 as work continues on its engine refurbishment.

Rolling Stock Report.....Cont'd

NPF 629 and NTC 729 Refurbishment

Refurbished windows have been temporarily reinstalled, with missing catches to be fitted later.

Having patched and sanded the car body exterior, undercoating and final painting of 629 is currently underway and will continue into January. I thank Society member 'Pete the Painter' Macfarlane for his considerable time and effort, working mostly single-handedly, in undertaking this daunting task. The end result, as with all your work on other members of our fleet, looks great and is admired by all who see our trains in operation.

WFP 602 and CT 702 Restoration

The Project Manager reports that all work by our carriage builders on 702 has been scaled back to concentrate on refurbishing 629/729, beginning with its windows (as noted above).

However, fitter Jeff and diesel engine guru Adrian are making further progress on 602's engines, which were recently successfully restarted. The coolant header tanks have been refurbished and reconnected to the engines, and the coolant system has been thoroughly flushed and cleaned. Filters, belts, and fuel lines are being serviced to enable the engines to be started regularly. Instruments and controls in the driver's cab are gradually being repaired or replaced. The missing brake gauges in the driver's cab, the emergency brake application valve under the driver's seat, and the control air solenoid on the No.1 engine transmission have all been replaced.

The interior of 602 is still a mess, but it is hoped that new floor panels and engine covers can be installed next year.

Robert Spencer

Rolling Stock Manager



629 with refurbished livery at the time of publication.

SOCIETY NEWS

Infrastructure Report

This year has been quite productive, with many tasks within the depot precinct either completed or well underway.

A couple of major projects deserve special mention. The platform being constructed alongside the TAM and BR carriages is quickly taking shape, thanks to Project Manager Graeme Holloway and considerable assistance from the infrastructure team.

Another milestone was the completion and occupation of our new meal room building. This demountable building arrived in two halves. A lot of work went into this project, including laying foundations, joining the two halves, and its full renovation. Members moved in on 19 November. Thanks to everyone involved, especially Project Manager Mick Walsh, assisted by Tony Price, who handled most of the renovation, and all other members of the infrastructure team. [A separate report by the Project Manager follows.]

Bruce Greenham

Assistant Infrastructure Manager

Below: The new platform, alongside the TAM and BR carriages, takes shape.



Timber sleeper replacement in the depot yard under close supervision!

Centenary of the CPHs Book

The production of the new book is now reaching the photo selection stage.

The layout of pages will commence shortly. Steve Preston is assisting with the project as his busy work schedule permits.

Previously unpublished photographs are still being sought 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.

Also, any operational anecdotes from former CPH drivers for inclusion in the supplementary text would be most welcome.

Spencer Ross

Demountable Meal Room Project Update

The lunchroom fit-out is nearly complete, with furniture and equipment—including a new hot-water urn—installed following the kitchen's completion in mid-November. The interior painting, led by Peter Macfarlane (who kindly donated the paint) and Greg Duncan, is finished. The laminated timber floor, donated split-system air-conditioner, and general power outlets have been installed. Remaining internal tasks include painting the 'sign-in' bench and skirting boards.

Special thanks to Tony Price for his exceptional craftsmanship and dedication in meeting the project's changing requirements, and for his patience in turning well-meaning suggestions into reality. Externally, the building still needs painting, which will be done in a light colour to blend with the surrounding landscape. Allan Beard has painted the handrails in 'safety yellow' after installation by Gary Odgers.

Graham Perry, with help from Tony Price, has installed guttering and downpipes at the front of the building, and plans are underway to build an adjacent BBQ area with an awning and fire extinguisher. Once finished, the BBQ will be set up in this space.

My thanks go to all our volunteers for their efforts on this project. Sorry to anyone not named. The team's combined effort has fostered a more harmonious environment for our volunteers to utilise.

Mick Walsh

Project Manager



Demountable meal room building, December 2025.



OPERATIONS DIARY

Sydney Trains Overhead Wire Testing

As part of the Society's contract with Sydney Trains, rail motor 402 again travelled to Sydney to prepare for another few weeks of inspecting and measuring network overhead wiring.

402 left the depot on Sunday night, 15 June, at 10.15 pm. Work to install the pantograph started the next day at Eveleigh. Several weeks of night testing took place over the following weeks into July, as shown in the accompanying photos.

For a comprehensive overview of the preparation and testing activities involved, please refer to a detailed article in our December 2020 Paterson Points magazine.



Above: Outside Eveleigh carriage shed, the overhead wire testing pantograph is being fitted to HPC 402 on 16 June (Bruce Agland).

Below: HPC 402 photographed at night during overhead wire-testing, briefly stopped at Liverpool on 6 July. The pantograph is currently in its lowered position. The light assists live video capture (Trevor Hooker).



Cruise Express Griffith Tour 19–24 September

Cruise Express again hired our two-car diesel train for another charter to Griffith and the Riverina region in September.

Day one, Friday, 19 September, saw us depart the depot at 6.40 am to run 'empty cars' to Sydney Terminal to collect our passengers and Cruise Express staff. With a full train, we then travelled down the Illawarra line to Unanderra, before ascending the coastal escarpment into the Southern Highlands. A stop was made at Summit Tank so passengers could alight and view the spectacular Illawarra coastal scenery from this high vantage point. We continued to Moss Vale, where the Main South line was met, and then proceeded south to Goulburn for our first overnight stop.

On Saturday, we left Goulburn just before 9 am and headed to Junee, where the old railway refreshment room served as the lunch spot for our passengers. The train crew had a three-hour break at Junee. After the passengers enjoyed their meal, they were driven by road coach to visit the Junee Roundhouse Museum, then went to the Liquorice and Chocolate Factory. During this time, we refuelled the train and topped up its service water tanks at the Junee Roundhouse, part of which is still an active locomotive depot. Shortly after 3.30 pm, we departed on the three-hour journey to Griffith, our overnight stop for the next two nights.

On Sunday, our Cruise Express passengers toured the Griffith area by road coach, which included meals and wine tastings. Our train departed Griffith at 9 am, taking an eager group of 86 local passengers on a day trip to Hillston, 108 kilometres northwest of Griffith. At Hillston, they disembarked and walked to the local bowling club for a Chinese smorgasbord lunch. During the return journey, many passengers told us they had an enjoyable time travelling with our Society.



621/721 at Hillston on Monday, 22 September (Allan Beard).



621/721 at Hillston on Sunday, 21 September (Callum Bracht)



The Black Stump Hotel, Merriwagga, as seen from 621/721 on Monday, 22 September (Allan Beard)



Temora, Tuesday, 23 September 2025 (Allan Beard).

OPERATIONS DIARY

Cruise Express Griffith Tour 19–24 September....Con't

On Monday, our Cruise Express passengers reboarded the train, and we set off again for Hillston, where they disembarked and walked to a local club for a roast lunch. On the return journey, we stopped at Merriwagga for an hour. As there was no station platform, the crew set up our portable emergency steps so passengers could alight and walk to the famed Black Stump Hotel for an afternoon drink. With our passengers back on board, we returned to Griffith, where they disembarked. We, however, continued 'empty cars' to Temora to stable the train overnight and proceed to our own accommodation.

Tuesday was a rest day for the crew after attending to train maintenance and cleaning. It was originally planned to take the passengers to Lake Cargelligo by train. However, trackwork prevented this, and they were instead transported there by road coach from Griffith. They returned to Temora in the afternoon for a visit to the Aviation Museum, which included an evening meal. Afterwards, they rejoined our train, and we departed Temora just after 8 pm for the hour-long trip to Cootamundra, where the passengers would spend their last night of the trip.

Wednesday the 24th was the last day of the tour, and we were all up early for a 7:30 am departure from Cootamundra. Lunch was collected along the way and served to passengers. We arrived at Sydney Terminal just after 3 pm. After saying farewell to our passengers and stabling the train, the crew stayed overnight in Sydney so our drivers wouldn't exceed their allowable daily working hours. Thursday saw us leave Sydney for the run home, departing just after 9 am (following the morning curfew). We arrived back at Paterson just before 1:30 pm.

Allan Beard

Crew Member

Hawkesbury River Charter October 2025

On Saturday, 11 October 2025, East Maitland and Paterson Rotary Clubs hired our two-car diesel railcar 621/721 for a Charter to Hawkesbury River. The clubs had organised the trip as a fundraiser for Maitland Healthstays. This not-for-profit organisation provides affordable, quality accommodation for patients from Maitland Hospital and specialist patients with their carers.

The train departed our depot at 7:15 am with some club members already on board. The remaining members joined at Maitland and Broadmeadow, filling the train to 92 passengers. Upon arriving at Hawkesbury River just after 10 am, passengers headed to the ferry for a lunchtime cruise along the river.

The train was stabled in a nearby siding, and the crew enjoyed lunch at the Angler's Rest hotel. Afterwards, they returned to the train, to clean and prepare it for the return journey.

Although the ferry returned to the wharf just after 2 pm, our train was not scheduled to leave Hawkesbury River until 4:15 pm. This gave passengers time to walk along the Brooklyn waterfront or enjoy a drink at a local hotel before departure.

We arrived back at Paterson at 7:15 pm, having departed on time and dropped off passengers at stations where they had boarded. Club members told us they enjoyed their time on our train and their lunch on the ferry.

The Rotary clubs of Paterson and East Maitland were very pleased with the funds raised, which exceeded \$3,000 for the Maitland Healthstays project.

Allan Beard

Crew Member



After a long but rewarding day, passengers alight at Maitland Station as the sun sets (Bruce Behrig).

OPERATIONS DIARY



621/721 departs the depot on its 'empty cars' run to Gosford to pick up its passengers, 1 November 2025 (S. Adams).

Railway Adventures Western Circle Tour November 2025

Scott McGregor again hired 621/721 for a five-day tour of the western region of the state, starting on Saturday, 1 November. Our train departed the depot at 7.20 am and ran 'empty cars' to Gosford to pick up the passengers. Track work further south towards Sydney prevented the tour from starting at Sydney Terminal.

With 35 passengers and the two tour leaders aboard, we departed Gosford at 10 am for the return trip to Paterson and a crew change. The passengers' luggage had already been loaded onto a road coach, which headed straight to Muswellbrook. Morning tea, fruit and biscuits were served on the train once we were underway. On arriving at our depot just after midday, the crews swapped over, and the train was topped up with fuel and water. About 15 minutes later, we departed to set off for the Northern Line via the Telarah triangle, then headed to Muswellbrook for a lunch stop.

However, at Singleton we were held up for 10 minutes. We found out there was a customer disturbance on the Xplorer train heading to Armidale, which caused it to be held at the platform. Train Control allowed us to proceed ahead of the Xplorer, which would be held at Singleton for a further 30 minutes.

At Muswellbrook, the passengers disembarked, and our train continued empty to Werris Creek. Between there and Binnaway, we went through a hail storm, which was quite an experience. After arriving at Binnaway, the train was stabled in the Binnaway Yard and checked for hail damage. The crew stayed the night in the old railway barracks.

On Sunday morning, we left Binnaway just after 9 am and ran 'empty cars' to Gulgong. There, we picked up 70 passengers for a 12:30 pm shuttle to Dunedoo and return. A couple of the passengers took the 'bring your own picnic lunch' very seriously, which left some of us feeling food envy. All our passengers enjoyed the trip, and on the return at 2:30 pm, the train was stabled in the yard at Gulgong. Unfortunately, the crew's usual car transport to the motel was unavailable. So, in about 30-degree heat, four tired and now grumpy crew members with their luggage walked the mostly uphill trek to our motel. The only consolation was that it was downhill the next morning.

On Monday morning, the train was refuelled and cleaned, ready to welcome Scott McGregor's tour group back on board. We left Gulgong just after 8 am and travelled through to Dubbo with a quick stop at Dunedoo to view the impressive silo art. Although the tour initially had a scheduled lunch stop at the hotel in Ballimore, about 35 km east of Dubbo, this was changed, and we arrived in Dubbo an hour earlier than planned. After the passengers rejoined their coach to continue sightseeing around Dubbo, the train was stabled in the train yard at Dubbo.

Tuesday, being Melbourne Cup Day, saw crew member Sharyn wearing a purple fascinator all day, while Graeme Holloway shared his race tips as we travelled south from Dubbo. Upon arriving at Millthorpe, passengers disembarked for a three-hour lunch break, along with a walk along its main street and a coach tour around this historic village. Once they were back on board, we headed to Bathurst for our next overnight stop. After passengers alighted, we went to Kelso for refuelling, before returning to stable the train at Bathurst overnight.

OPERATIONS DIARY

Railway Adventures Western Circle Tour November 2025....Con't

Wednesday morning, we commenced the homeward run, departing Bathurst at 11.30 am. We made a stop at Tarana, where passengers disembarked for lunch at the local hotel while we waited at the platform. We left early and made good time to Lithgow, but then got held up there for quite a while. Luckily, we were at the station, so passengers could have a 'leg stretch' on the platform. The crew bid farewell to the tour group at Katoomba. Everyone seemed to have enjoyed their trip with us, sharing photos, handshakes, and hugs of thanks as they headed off for the final part of their tour.

We continued to make our way through the Sydney Trains network, arriving back at Paterson just on 10 pm.

Sharyn Noll

Crew Member



621/721 seen passing through Belford on its way to Muswellbrook, 1 November 2025 (S. Adams).



Getting into the Melbourne Cup spirit, Sharyn models her purple fascinator, which she wore all day (Rod Short).



621/721 at Bathurst on Wednesday, 5 November (Sharyn Noll).

Transport Heritage Weekend October 2025

The Society once again travelled to Sydney to participate in the annual three-day Transport Heritage Expo. Our trains departed the depot late on Friday afternoon, 3 October, heading to Sydney Terminal, where CPH 1 and CPH 7 would remain on display over the long weekend and be open to the public.

Our two-car diesel train 621/721 operated three fully booked shuttles each day to Waterfall, except for the Saturday midday trip, which was changed to Hornsby due to issues with a freight train at Tempe. Souvenirs were available for purchase from our members, who manned a stall next to our rail motors.

Crews stayed overnight in former Southern Aurora sleeping cars stabled in the platforms, and our trains returned to Paterson on Monday night after the heritage festival wrapped up.



Above: CPH 7, with CPH 1 attached behind it, are on exhibition at Sydney Terminal, with 621/721 mostly obscured in the background during the 2025 NSW Transport Heritage Expo (William Tang via Facebook).

Left: 621/721 just beyond Redfern Station, on Sunday 5 October (Neville Costigan via Facebook)

Brisbane and Coffs Harbour Tours, November and December

Following the cancellation of the Society tour to Brisbane and Coffs Harbour in May due to flooding and the closure of the North Coast line by ARTC, Trish and Rod Short and Steve Harper, with help from Brisbane member Ben Francis, managed to reschedule the trip for late November.

The idea behind taking the train to Brisbane was to facilitate day luncheon trips to Casino, and a four-day weekend tour to Coffs Harbour for Queenslanders. These two options proved so popular that the four daily luncheon trips to Casino were fully booked with a waiting list of nearly 200 people. There were also a few seats available for keen passengers to travel from Maitland to Brisbane and return to Coffs Harbour for the weekend.

After numerous changes and amendments that our organisers had to make over the weeks leading up to departure, the trip began on Monday, 24 November, with 20 passengers and six crew leaving Maitland at 7.03 am for the run to Grafton, where they would stay overnight. A light breakfast and lunch were served along the way. Two more passengers also joined the train at Coffs Harbour. With only two crossings involving an up interstate freight and XPT, and the elimination of a nearly two-hour wait at Wauchope for crossings, we still managed to reach Grafton early at 3:28 pm. Along the way, the train slowed, and passengers were told to look right for 'Teddy Bears Junction' (see picture) and later catch a glimpse of the ocean, where the train line ran close to the sea. A bus conveyed passengers over the Clarence River to their motel. The train was stabled in the old Grafton railway yards.

On Tuesday morning, we left Grafton City at 8.57 am and crossed the southbound XPT from Brisbane at Lawrence Road. We continued on to Casino, where, due to track work ahead, passengers had over half an hour to stretch their legs on the platform. Additionally, Queensland drivers Ben Francis and Joshua Williams boarded the train here, as our crews are not qualified to operate within the Queensland suburban rail network area. The opportunity was taken to photograph the crew, and then the passengers while they waited for the line to be cleared after inspection. Away at 11.18 am, we departed heading north, with lunch being served again to passengers and the crew. Approaching the Queensland border, the train slowed as passengers were told about the spiral that allowed it to climb to the border tunnel. After exiting the tunnel, we gained an hour since Queensland does not observe daylight saving. A short stop was made at Glen App to see the historic signal box, which displays the history of the Glen App boys [see June 2024 Paterson Points, p.25]. With no further crossings, we arrived at Roma Street Station in Brisbane at 1.32 pm, and passengers walked to the Meriton Hotel for their next three night's accommodation. Our train was then stabled at the end of Platform 2.

OPERATIONS DIARY

On Wednesday, the first shuttle to Casino for Queensland residents departed for their trip and lunch at the Cecil Hotel, 700 metres from the station. The hotel also ran its courtesy bus for those who could not walk the distance in the warm weather. The 22 passengers from New South Wales, led by our tour manager Trish Short, spent the day sightseeing around Brisbane by road coach. Locations visited included the Port of Brisbane office, which has a viewing platform. A guest speaker shared the history of the Port of Brisbane. We then returned to the CBD for a tour of the Museum of Brisbane, including a visit to the clock tower. Lunch was at the Breakfast Creek Hotel, and afterwards, we caught a Brisbane ferry service to travel up the river for over an hour back to the Brisbane CBD. After rejoining the coach, we were taken to the local Mount Coot-tha lookout west of Brisbane. It was then back to our hotel, followed by dinner at a South Bank hotel, with the train crew who had arrived back from Casino.

After one lady passenger had alighted from our luncheon train at Roma Street, she handed one of our car attendants \$100 in cash as a donation. Trish also received an email from a couple thanking the Society for a delightful day's outing. This email can be seen at the end of this article.

On Thursday, another trip was made to Casino, once again with a full train. Our New South Wales passengers enjoyed a day out by coach to Mount Tamborine for sightseeing, lunch, and shopping. We received another email of appreciation from two passengers on the Casino luncheon trip, also included at the end of the article.

On Friday, 28 November, our train departed from Roma Street (Brisbane) at 9.07 am with a full passenger load, comprising our New South Wales contingent with the remainder Queenslanders. A good run was made to Glen App, where a 15-minute delay occurred due to track work wrapping up, and another stop was made shortly afterwards, so passengers could photograph a waterfall. With our drivers providing commentary, we crossed the state border, losing an hour due to NSW daylight saving, and began descending the border loop spiral. At Kyogle, we stopped for lunch to be brought aboard, and then continued south non-stop through Casino to Grafton.

At Grafton, the train was refuelled, and passengers stretched their legs on the platform. Emma Thompson from the Clarence Valley Independent, who had allowed us to publish her previous tour report in our June 2024 Paterson Points, took a photo of our Queensland drivers. After a cross with the Casino-bound XPT at Coramba, our train arrived at Coffs Harbour at 5 pm. All passengers and crew, along with their luggage, were transferred in two coaches for the short trip up to the Opal Cove Resort for their next three nights' accommodation.

During the weekend of the 29th and 30th, train passengers were split into two groups for sightseeing tours by road coaches around the Coffs Harbour area and the Dorrigo Plateau. Those on the Coffs Harbour coach visited local attractions, including the Mount Sealy Lookout and the Big Banana, where they enjoyed a tour and a video of the operation, and the bonus of free bananas! They also went to the Sawtell headland and had lunch at the Jetty Beach House overlooking the Harbour. Afterwards, they visited the National Holden Car Museum, the National Cartoon Museum, and the Botanical Gardens.



Just south of Kendall on Monday morning, the train slowed to allow passengers to see Teddy Bear Junction. The bears were set up by local resident Jan O'Neill some years ago, but she sadly passed away last year at the age of 82. Her husband continues to maintain the site in her memory (Bruce Gehrig).



Queensland Rail displayed this welcoming message on their platform indicator for our arrival in Brisbane on Tuesday afternoon.



Our train is being prepared on 27 November in the dead siding at Roma Street's Platform 2 on Thursday morning, before it departs for Casino after the end of the morning peak hour curfew (Mark Dorman via NSW Railways past and present's website).

Brisbane and Coffs Harbour Tours, November and December.....Cont'd

Those touring the Dorrigo Plateau enjoyed morning tea at Dangar Falls before visiting the Dorrigo Steam Railway and Museum, where a passionate member shared the museum's history alongside the stored steam locomotives. Lunch was at the local hotel, followed by a visit to the Dorrigo Rainforest Centre and a stroll on the skywalk. A shopping break at Bellingen was made on the way back to Coffs. The tour group alternated each day between destinations, with each coach chaperoned by a society member—Trish at Coffs Harbour and Lance on the Dorrigo coach. On Saturday, 29 November, a luncheon trip for 92 local Coffs Harbour residents travelled as far as Glenreagh before turning back to Coramba for lunch at the local hotel.

After dinner at Opal Cove on Sunday, a few speeches were given, with our president expressing his gratitude for the support our Society has received. He announced that funds raised from the weekend tour would be used to help restore our 629/729 and 600 class railcars.

On Monday, all passengers and their luggage were bused back to Coffs Harbour railway station. The twenty people who had boarded initially at Maitland would take the XPT home.

The 67 Queensland guests joined 621/721 and travelled south as far as Nambucca Heads, before the train turned back north towards Brisbane. They crossed the southbound XPT at Raleigh. During a stop to refuel at South Grafton railway station, passengers enjoyed a leg stretch on the platform and lunch was brought aboard the train. A raffle to raise funds for the Society was also held after lunch, with prizes being distributed shortly afterwards. A good run continued towards Brisbane until the train was held in the suburbs for the afternoon peak-hour curfew to lift. The train arrived back at Roma Street station at 6.45 pm.

The Casino trip on Tuesday, 2 December, had 91 passengers who enjoyed a pleasant day. A raffle was held, raising \$270, and around \$120 in donations was also gratefully received.

The final Casino luncheon trip on Wednesday, 3 December, also carried 91 passengers and marked the end of our activities in Queensland.

As it is impossible to cover all the hiccups in organising this tour, the Society is grateful to all the organisers and train crews for ensuring its successful conclusion. Also appreciated were the specially printed tickets by Ben Francis and the lineside notes, prepared by one of our passengers, Robert Peoples, covering the Maitland to Brisbane line and the Brisbane to Casino route for the daily luncheon tours. Our Society is confident of a ready market for any future tours to Brisbane.

621/721 would return to Paterson empty on Thursday and Friday, with an overnight stay at Grafton.

Bruce Gehrig



While waiting for clearance at Casino to proceed after trackwork, a group photo was taken of the passengers travelling from Maitland on the second day of their eight-day tour (Bruce Gehrig).



While waiting at Casino for clearance to proceed after trackwork, the crew took the opportunity for a photo. L-R: Trevor Hooker, Tony Dunn, Rod Short, Trish Short, Steve Harper, Lance Nelson, Josh Williams, Ben Francis (Bruce Gehrig).

OPERATIONS DIARY



Our train has just arrived at Platform 4 at Roma Street Station, Brisbane on Tuesday afternoon, and the luggage has been unloaded. Our train will be stabled in the dead end on platform two each night. The headboard is in place for the first of four luncheon trips to Casino starting the next day (Bruce Gehrig).



On Friday morning, Queensland Rail displayed our train's departure for the four-day weekend tour to Coffs Harbour on their station indicator.



This was the disheartening sight that met the crew on the morning after 721's last night in Brisbane. The graffiti was cleaned off before departure (Steve Harper)

Below: During the day trip from Brisbane to Coffs Harbour on Friday, 28 November, the train was refueled at Grafton, while all passengers enjoyed a leg stretch on the platform (Bruce Gehrig)



OPERATIONS DIARY

Brisbane and Coffs Harbour Tours, November and December.....Cont'd

Postscript

When our crew arrived at Roma Street station on Thursday morning (4 December) to prepare the train for return to Paterson, they were absolutely shattered to find 721 had been graffitied! With much hard work, the entire crew hastily cleaned off the damage shown in the photo.

Customer Feedback

Hello Trish,

I would like to congratulate The Rail Motor Society on the wonderful tour we did to Casino on Wednesday, 26 November.

The staff on the rail motor were wonderful—Tony, Trevor, Lance (quite the character), Rod and the drivers. They were awesome in their knowledge, their customer service and friendliness. We felt very welcomed and looked after wonderfully.

Thank you! We look forward to sharing in more rail motor journeys with you.

Yours thankfully,

Wendy & Ian Leabeater

To TRMS,

I wish to congratulate your crew on the Brisbane to Casino and return [trip] for outstanding and professional service given to all passengers on Thursday, 27 November 2025.

To everyone in the management of The Rail Motor Society Paterson, you should be very proud of the professionalism of your volunteer crew, including drivers who invited and enlightened passengers on their duties and how the rail motors work.

I also congratulate the Society on organising a hotel in Casino for a fantastic lunch, which everyone I spoke to on the return to Roma Street could not stop talking about how great the meal was.

I can't wait for next year as I have five friends wanting to travel after seeing and hearing about the tour who wish to go next year.

Keith King

PHOTO GALLERY



621/721 at Gulgong on 2 November 2025, during a Western Adventures tour (Tom Cooper via NSW Railways Past & Present).



621/721 at Dubbo on 3 November 2025, during a Western Adventures tour (Tom Cooper via NSW Railways Past & Present).



A close-up of the 2QO bogie identification plate, stamped No.3. Very few of these bogies, being specific to a CTC trailer car, were made (TRMS).



CPH 1, 721, and 7344 on Open Day, Sunday 16 November 2025 (Bruce Gehrig).

PHOTO GALLERY



621/721 powers through Victoria Street Station on a charter to Hawkesbury River, 11 October 2025 (unknown).



Above: Detroit 6/71 diesel engine in railcar WFP 602, recently cleaned, as seen from above with the floor inspection hatch cover removed (TRMS).

Left: 621/721 at Casino on Tuesday, 25 November 2025 (Bruce Gehrig).



Railcar 721, CPH 1, and HPC 402, as seen in the rail motor storage shed in August 2025 (Robert Spencer).

FROM THE ARCHIVES



621/721 was the last 'non-candy' liveried set, seen standing at Telarah on Saturday, 30 November 1985 (Ed Tonks).



621/721 in Broadmeadow yard, in 'candy' livery, on Sunday 10 September 1989 (unknown).



CPH 7, CPH 1, and 621/721 at Sydney Terminal for the NSW Transport Heritage Expo, October 2025 (Nathan Dunn).



Progress is well underway to restore the heritage livery on NPF 629, with its 'whiskers' to be detailed soon. Note the massive effort Peter Macfarlane has invested in single-handedly masking the windows and in making other preparations (TRMS).