

SYDNEY NEWSLETTER



ENGINEERS
AUSTRALIA

RTSA

Railway Technical Society of Australasia
Sydney Chapter
Mail: PO Box 6238, Kingston, ACT, 2604

JANUARY 2007

EMINENT SPEAKER RTSA SYDNEY CHAPTER MEETING

Monday 29th January

Ed Zsombor, Director of Rail Projects, Saskatchewan Highway and Transport Agency

Ed is in Australia as a guest of RTSA, as the keynote speaker at the Wagga Symposium (see separate notice in this Newsletter and RTSA web site). Ed is doing an Eminent Speaker circuit and he will be here in Sydney on the above date to present on

Regional Rail Initiatives in Canada

This topic is one of considerable interest locally in Australia, particularly since the condition of regional rail across the country has deteriorated alarmingly over the last decade or so.

Venue: Room 2, Level 2, North Tower, 477 Pitt Street, Sydney (just around the corner from Hay St, opposite Belmore Park)

Commencing with refreshments @ 17.30 for an 18.00 start

Members and guests all welcome

RTSA expresses its appreciation of Rail Identity about town, **Dale Coleman, General Manager, Worley Parsons Rail**, who has kindly sponsored this meeting

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FUTURE MEETINGS

The meeting program for 2007 is developing nicely, with the following future meetings on the drawing boards. We will always despatch a newsletter, or in extreme situations a flyer prior to every meeting. In most cases the next couple of months are firm.

Monday 29th JAN: Eminent speaker Ed Zsombor from Canada will talk (at a city location) on the topic of short lines and regional rail. Ed is being brought to Australia as keynote speaker at the Wagga Symposium (see below) and will be doing the rounds of the various RTSA Chapters, starting with Sydney.

Thursday 1st FEB: at Wagga Wagga following the Regional Rail Symposium a joint Victorian and NSW meeting will be held over dinner at the Three Chefs Restaurant, Townhouse International, 70 Morgan Street, Wagga. Pre-dinner drinks will be at 18.30 for a 19.00 start.

The cost will be \$45 per person, payable on the evening. Speakers will be Piers Brogan, Austrack, on the new concrete sleeper manufacturing facility to be constructed in Wagga Wagga and a speaker from ARTC to be confirmed.

If you are planning on attending and have not already done so please advise the Secretariat, Nina Lenz, on 02 6270 6548 of your intentions.

Thur 1st MARCH at Chatswood: "Current Advances in Steam Technology" with examples of overseas research and trials, presented by Malcolm Cluett.

Thur 12th APRIL (following Easter) at a city location: a joint meeting with IRSE, on the topic of Assessing Risk at Level Crossings.

Thur 3rd MAY at Chatswood: tba

Thur 7th JUNE at Chatswood: tba

Thur 5th JULY at Chatswood: AGM and tba

Thur 23rd AUGUST at city location: joint RTSA / PWI / IRSE meeting, with a speaker arranged by PWI.

Thur 6th SEPTEMBER at Chatswood: tba

Thur 4th OCTOBER at Chatswood: tba

Thur 8th NOVEMBER (a week later than normal) on the Taiwan North – South high Speed Railway.

COMING EVENTS

RTSA WAGGA REGIONAL RAIL FORUM: *Future Frameworks for Regional Rail, 1st Feb 2007*: a joint initiative between RTSA and Charles Sturt University. Over 100 delegates have booked, and although the closing date has (just) passed, there is still some room for late starters. However if you are in the latter category please contact Nina Lenz **NOW** on (02 6270 6548) to let her know so that your attendance can be penciled in.

AusRAIL Plus 2007 will be back at the usual Darling Harbour location in Sydney from 4th to 6th December 2007.

CORE 2008 will be held in Perth between 7th and 10th September 2008. Themes will be around high volume bulk freight and the integration of rail as part of the export supply chain, and rail in an urban environment and the issues of integrated planning of land use and transport as the core of successful public transport (Eastern States take particular note)

Potential delegates, exhibitors and sponsors can register their interest by going to www.CORE2008.org

THE OBSERVATION POST

Welcome to 2007.

At this time of the year it seems appropriate to keep to a happy topic that not only is in tune with the season but might also act as something of an inspiration.

Last year, in April, I had to drive to Newcastle to pick a friend up and return with them to Sydney. As it happened I was rather early so I did the usual thing and dropped in to Sandgate to see what had happened in relation to the grade separation. Since my previous visit a few months earlier there had been track diversion, a temporary footbridge erected while the beginnings of site works were evident on the ground. For whatever reason I didn't get back to Sandgate again until this month, some two months after the project was completed. In that relatively short period of eight months or so the bulk of the work had been undertaken – an \$80 million rail project completed in well under one year would have to be something of an (east coast) record.

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The grade separation allows the coal business to operate quite independently on its own tracks while the adjacent main lines conduct their business. The grade separation basically was aimed at removing the impediment to coal working into Kooragang (where around 70% of coal activity currently takes place) by removing the main line flat crossing. A little remarked but quite important by-product of this project has been the opening up quite a significant capacity on the main lines by removing the 7 – 10 minute coal windows needed for coal train to cross the mains at Sandgate. In the short time that I was at Sandgate recently there was a perfect demonstration of this when an empty departing coal train from Kooragang passed under an

empty departing coal train from Port Waratah and an inbound grain train to Port Waratah. Not a passenger train in sight – just freight that not so long ago would have been captive to the coal lines since there was then no point in using the mains due to the Sandgate conflict.

A week earlier I had to drive to Melbourne and dropped by to have a look at the new bridge over the Murrumbidgee at Wagga – actually on the day after it opened. In fact as chance would have it I arrived 5 minutes before the northbound XPT on its rather unenterprising summer timetable trundled across.

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When I last went past this site, after CORE in May 2006, there were few signs of any work apart from a bit of preliminary clearing, yet now the job is finished. .

If all the ballyhoo surrounding this bridge had been converted into a structure there would have been a monumental bridge, whereas the finished product looks to be a large version of a quite simple structure – if anything understating its importance to the rail corridor. Once again this project, in this case \$16 million in value, was well under one year in execution. Even more impressive was that from the day work started the completion date and time was fixed and adhered to

For the last two years the unfolding of north – south corridor upgrade plans and the associated funding has been something of a teaser. Now that improvements have started to appear on the ground there has to be a renewed sense of optimism that not only are the funds

starting to produce results but that the execution of major projects is in good hands.

NEWSLETTER FORMAT

You will notice that the front page of the newsletter has the 'Next Meeting' notice done in poster style. Where the opportunity arises consider printing off this front cover and placing on your work or other suitable notice board – more attendees at meetings means better informed people engaged in the industry.

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MEMBERSHIP – JOIN UP A NEW MEMBER

While this newsletter is primarily intended for members it is distributed more widely than that. Readers who are not members of RTSA should seriously consider joining the organisation. Details of membership and how to join will be found in the RTSA website at www.rtsa.com.au

Although RTSA is a technical group under the auspices of Engineers Australia it is open to everyone who has a real interest in railways. It is the only technical group which covers all disciplines (civil, mechanical, electrical, signalling, communications etc.) and as such is one of the most rewarding rail technical networking groups in the country. The annual cost is very reasonable, and the rewards are considerable.

RTSA offers a number of regular activities for its members, including meetings, visits and technical tours. The every other year Conference on Railway Engineering (CORE) is a highlight. A number of awards are made annually to encourage recognition of meritorious activity in support of the rail industry. A particular RTSA attribute is that it engages in considerable well reasoned and structured lobbying in support of the rail industry with regular submissions and presentations to policy study groups and enquiries. Membership, in support of this activity alone, is very worthwhile. Consider joining RTSA now if you are not yet a member, or if you are a member see if you can introduce a friend as a new member. Remember www.rtsa.com.au

JUST A THOUGHT

A very self-important first year uni student attending a recent football game, took it upon himself to explain to a senior citizen sitting next to him why it was impossible for the older generation to understand his generation.

"You grew up in a different world, actually an almost primitive one," the student said, loud enough for many of those nearby to hear. "The young people of today grew up with television, jet planes, space travel, man walking on the moon, our spaceships have visited Mars. We have nuclear energy, electric and hydrogen cars, computers with light-speed processing and....."

Pausing to take another drink of beer.....the grey-haired senior took advantage of the break in the student's litany and said,

"You're right, son. We didn't have those things when we were young.....so we invented them. Now, you

arrogant little sod, what are you doing for the next generation?"

MORE WORDS

SALAD DODGER. A phrase for an overweight person.

TESTICULATING. Waving your arms around and talking bollocks.

MYSTERY BUS. The bus that arrives at the pub on Friday night while you're in the toilet after your 10th pint, and whisks away all the unattractive people so the pub is suddenly packed with stunners when you come back in.

THE SKILL OF ENGINEERING

There was an engineer who had an exceptional gift for fixing all things mechanical. After serving his company loyally for over 30 years, he happily retired.

Several years later the company contacted him regarding a seemingly impossible problem they were having with one of their multimillion dollar machines. They had tried everything and everyone else to get the machine to work but to no avail. In desperation, they called on the retired engineer who had solved so many of their problems in the past.

The engineer reluctantly took the challenge. He spent a day studying the huge machine. At the end of the day, he marked a small "x" in chalk on a particular component of the machine and stated, "This is where your problem is".

The part was replaced and the machine worked perfectly again. The company received a bill for \$50,000 from the engineer for his service. They demanded an itemised accounting of his charges.

The engineer responded briefly:
One chalk mark \$1.
Knowing where to put it \$49,999.

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NOTICEBOARD

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Andrew McKay	Committee	Chris Venn-Brown	Committee
Andrew Honan	Committee	John Watsford	Committee

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SYDNEY NEWSLETTER

Part of the function of RTSA is to keep members in touch with what is going on in the industry and with each other and to that end we are only too happy to publish items of interest. Articles or editorial comment for Newsletter are very welcome. We have several hundred members locally some of whom have stories, events or developments of interest that could make an interesting item for Sydney Newsletter.

Contact details are –

The Editor, Max Michell, e-mail to samrom@bigpond.com, phone 02 9331 5662 or post to P.O.Box 279, Potts Point, NSW, 1335.

For all other matters relating to RTSA Sydney Chapter contact Malcolm Cluett (Secretary) or Bill Laidlaw (Chairman) as above.

CPD CREDITS

Engineers Aust members who attend RTSA meetings and events will qualify for CPD credits as per the Engineers Australia criteria. Members are responsible for recording their own CPD for audit.

NOTICE TO MEMBERS RECEIVING RTSA NEWSLETTER BY MAIL

If you should receive this Newsletter by post but would prefer to get it by e-mail (quicker and more reliable) then please let the Canberra know (address in the page header). E-mail saves time for you and costs for RTSA, which in the end can only mean better service to our members

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