



*This is an occasional newsletter from **Engineering Heritage Victoria** sent to all members on our mail list. Enquiries, discussion or correspondence should be directed to ehv@engineersaustralia.org.au If necessary, contact can be made through the Victorian Divisional Office of Engineers Australia at 21 Bedford Street North Melbourne.*

Upcoming Talks

The following talks form part of our Speakers' Program for 2007. These talks are usually every two months and are held at Engineers House (21 Bedford St, North Melbourne). They start at 6.00 PM sharp (light refreshments from 5.30 PM) and last for about one hour. Unless otherwise advised, admission is free. Full details relating to each talk are provided in an email flyer - circulated about a fortnight ahead of the event.

The Murray Darling Basin - The History behind how we got to where we are now.

This will be a rare opportunity for a briefing on the background to our present water dilemma. The Speaker is John Forrest MP, the Federal Member for Mallee (Nationals). John was born at Red Cliffs and has a Master of Science and Bachelor of Engineering degrees. Before entering Parliament in 1993, he was a Consulting Engineer with offices in Swan Hill and Mildura. John served a term as a Swan Hill City Councillor and was also a Member of the Swan Hill Water Board. In short, John knows his subject. He is also one of the few professionally qualified engineers in any Australian parliament - and arguably the only one in Federal Parliament.

The talk is scheduled for Thursday 19 April 2007 in Engineers House, North Melbourne. It will start at 6.00 PM (with light refreshments from 5.30 PM) and last for about one hour. Further details will be provided via an email flyer in early April.

Peter Scratchley - Certainly a Colonial Engineer

In June 2007, Major General Mike O'Brien CSC will give a talk on the life and times of an early Colonial Engineer - Capt Peter Scratchley (Royal Engineers - born 1835, died 1885). Further details will be in the May Newsletter and event flyer.

Motor Industry in Australia

Dr Laurie Spark OAM, Director - Holden Innovation, is scheduled to be our guest speaker in August. He will talk on the "*History of Holden and the Motor Car Industry in Australia*". Further details later.

Gas Producers

The recording of oral histories of people who were involved in using and/or building gas producer units has commenced. It is hoped that these audio clips will soon be made available as Podcasts or MP3 files - downloadable via the internet.

A talk on "*Producer Gas and Alternative Fuels*" is still very much on the list of topics. The main problem is finding a venue and a time-slot. As the use of producer gas covers a broad range of equipment and interests (not only motor cars), we are likely to schedule this talk for a joint session with one or more special interest groups - probably some time in May or June. Further details will be circulated as soon as arrangements have been finalized. Anyone with ideas or suggestions on groups that may be interested in combining for the talk - or wish to suggest candidates for oral history interviews - is requested to contact Don Bartlett by email at donb@consuleng.com.au - before 18 March or after 31 March 2007.

Upcoming Events

The following events are in the pipeline for EHV during the coming months.

Maribyrnong River Heritage Cruise

We have options to charter the "Blackbird" for a Heritage Cruise on the Maribyrnong River - on Easter Monday 9 April 2007 and Saturday 14 April 2007. The Charter on each occasions will be from 1.00 PM until 3.30 PM. A heritage/engineering commentary will be provided by the Blackbird skipper (Peter Somerville).

There will NOT be a charge for attending these cruises however, numbers will be limited. EHV members (anyone on the mailing list) may bring a partner or guest. You could pack a picnic lunch to eat before or during the cruise. You will need to take your own drinking water. A flyer will be out soon, giving details of booking procedure. One or both of the cruises may be cancelled - depending upon demand.

Miles Lewis Library Visit - May 9 & 10

Prof Miles Lewis AM (Faculty of Architecture, University of Melbourne) has kindly invited members of EHV to visit his private library. Miles has a substantial collection of books - including significant volumes on structures, mortar, bridges etc. The invitation is for Wed 9 May or Thursday 10 May 2007 - commencing at 5.30 PM and concluding about 7.00 PM. Miles has suggested that we gather at a nearby restaurant for dinner afterwards. Numbers will be limited. There will be no charge for attending the function but if you stay for the meal - that cost will be on you.

An event flyer will be circulated in early April giving details of how to book for this event.

State Library Visit - June (tbc)

The State Library has invited us to view a selection of heritage drawings relevant to engineering. Details are yet to be finalised but the visit is likely to be in early June. Further details will be provided in the May Newsletter. However, to help us judge the level of demand, expressions of

interest can be sent to ehv@engineersaustralia.org.au with "Proposed State Library Visit" in the Subject Line.

There will be no charge for attending the function. An event flyer will be circulated in early May giving details of how to book for this event.

Bendigo Trip

A visit to Bendigo is being planned for later this year. Please contact ehv@engineersaustralia.org.au (with "Bendigo Trip" in the Subject Line) if you would like to register an interest in this trip. The Trip Organizer(s) will assess the potential of the trip on the basis of the expressions of interest received. You may care to indicate your preference for a one or two day trip - along with preferences for meals and accommodation etc.

Daylesford Railway Trip

Please send an email to ehv@engineersaustralia.org.au (with *Daylesford Train Visit* in the Subject line) if you are interested in joining an EHV group visit to Daylesford to ride on the recently restored 63RM (see article at the end of this newsletter). The Rail Motor trip from Daylesford to Bullarto (and return) takes about one hour. Please state preference for a one day or overnight visit. You may also care to nominate other places of interest in the district or on the way to Daylesford. We will assemble the responses and see if we can cobble together an itinerary for a visit to the Central Highlands before the end of June.

Other Matters

Email Addresses

Out of date or incorrect email addresses are causing some problems and will inevitably lead to the loss of contact with members. At the moment, anyone who is on our email address is deemed to be a member of EHV. Everytime an emailout is conducted, six or so emails "bounce" for various reasons - sometimes quite inexplicably. The current practice is to remove the name from our list if the message bounces on two successive mailouts. Please remember to let EHV know if you are changing email address. On the other hand, if you feel that you have not heard from us for a while, take the initiative and send an email to ehv@engineersaustralia.org.au to see if you are still connected!

eMailing List

If you are not currently on the emailing list and wish to receive regular (about monthly) emails from EHV relating to upcoming Talks and Events, please send an email to ehv@engineersaustralia.org.au and place "EHV Subscribe" in the Subject line.

Aircraft Landing Grounds

Further to the query on landing grounds around Fishermen's Bend, the following clip came to light.

Harry Hawker was a pioneer aviator and aircraft designer who went to Britain for greater aviation opportunities but returned home in 1914 to try to sell the Sopwith

*Tabloid (his own design) to the fledgling Australian Air Corps. Hawker had married the sister of Bert Chamberlain (then Newport manager for Shell but later of tractor fame). The Chamberlains lived at Elsternwick. At night, Hawker kept his aircraft - with wings folded - in the Chamberlain garage. **He took off from nearby New Street.** Not quite Fishermen's Bend but interesting in the context of today's traffic! [ref : Go Well - One Hundred Years of Shell in Australia by Robert Murray].*

Engineering Heritage Conference - Call For Papers

Abstracts are invited for the 14th National Engineering Heritage Conference (19 to 21 November 2007 in Perth - WA) and will be received until 30 March 2007. Further details are available from engheritage@debretts.com.au

National Engineering Heritage Conference - Perth November 2007

Some advanced notice for anyone interested in Conferences. The 14th National Engineering Heritage Conference is to be held in Perth (WA) from 19 to 21 November 2007. Further information can be found at <http://www.debretts.com.au> or by email to engheritage@debretts.com.au

Definition of an Engineer

A few of us have been grappling with the definition of a Colonial Engineer. I note that, in 1931, the Institution of Engineers (Australia) published the following definition of an Engineer : "a man with the genius first to recognize the real conditions of the technical problem and then by careful effort to discover its adequate solution." (verbatim from page 53, "Brown Power - A Jubilee History of the SEC" by Cecil Edwards 1969).

Thoughts and comments will be happily accepted. An email to ehv@engineersaustralia.org.au (with "Engineer Definition" in the Subject Line) would be appreciated.

Meanwhile, the list of Colonial Engineers is growing. Late last year we decided to take in the years 1835-1885 plus "Iconic" engineers (such as Monash) who "practiced" between 1885 and the end of the Great War (1918). Please dig into the digital cupboard in the basement of your computer - and see what contributions you can make. As always, an email to ehv@engineersaustralia.org.au with "Colonial Engineers" in the Subject Line will be appreciated. It is still our aim to publish the list - when we have a bit more confidence in the comprehensiveness of the contents!

Daylesford Railway - RM 63 back in service

In 1928 the Victorian Railways expanded their fleet of railmotors with more powerful units designed by the Electro-Motive Company, USA. These were able to haul a substantial trailer and even some goods wagons. Ten of these units entered service between 1928 and 1931. They were powered by a single petrol engine of 220hp driving a generator that supplied power to the electric motors on the axles of the power bogie. Officially they were known as Petrol Electric Rail Motors, but they were also known as PERMs or PEs. In the 1930s these cars were running to places such as Geelong, Yarram, Lancefield, Hopetoun, Maffra and the branchlines radiating out of Bendigo. At

the height of the Great Depression between 1931 and 1936 they ran the service between Woodend and Daylesford.

In the early 1950s the petrol engines were replaced by two GM diesels and they became universally known as DERMs. They continued to run branchline services to places like Mansfield until these lines closed in the 1970s. After this they were often found on services to Sunbury, Bacchus Marsh and Seymour. They were gradually withdrawn through the 1980s with the last in 1991, 60 years after entering service.

Following an extensive four year restoration in which approximately 29 volunteers spent over 15000 man hours, the Daylesford Spa Country Railway's Diesel Electric Rail Motor 63RM returned to service during a ceremony in Daylesford on Sunday 11 February 2007. The railmotor has been restored to a mid 1930's livery of Indian red with diagonal silver stripes on each end. This is the first time this livery has been seen on a railmotor during the "preservation era". During the restoration, 63RM underwent an extensive mechanical overhaul, re-wiring of the lighting and other electrical components, extensive external and internal bodywork repairs, re-canvassing of the roof and the replacement of many rotten timber components. Further details can be found at <http://www.dscr.com.au/> A visit to the Daylesford Station and a trip on one of the Rail Motors is well worth while.

Don Bartlett
Chairman
Engineering Heritage Victoria

MEETINGS & NOTICES

EHV tries to limit the number of times we contact you by email. Speakers' Program notices are usually issued about a fortnight ahead of each session. However, availability of speakers, venues and unspecified emergencies often complicate this schedule. In general, the EHV Newsletter is issued every two months (in the odd numbered month). Event Flyers are circulated "as required".

DISCLAIMER

This newsletter has been prepared on behalf of Engineering Heritage Victoria which is a Special Interest Group of the Victorian Division of Engineers Australia and the Institution of Engineers (Australia). Any "historical" content is given in a topical sense and is not the result of exhaustive research on the part of the Editor. Where deemed to be relevant, references are quoted - if they exist. From time to time, there will be errors or misleading claims. However, the newsletter is also intended to promote discussion. Although mistakes are regrettable, the Editor (presently the Chairman EHV) is ready and willing to retract, clarify or argue the case - as appropriate - should anyone care to point out the alleged blemishes.
