

West Australian Rails

NUMBER 9 A free monthly photo e-Mag of railway happenings in WA during September 2020

PUBLISHER Peter Donaghy

Email: peterdonaghy2@bigpond.com

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Q4012 & 2819 at UGL Bassendean, 18th December 2009.

Photo: the late Jim Bisdee

This issue is dedicated to the memory of Jim Bisdee, who passed away in late October after a long illness. This e-mag was the brainchild of Jim, who ran it under several different titles and formats from January 2009 to December 2017, when a deteriorating interest in the hobby led to his decision to close it down. Not wanting to see it lapse after everything Jim had put into it for so long, I offered to take over and continue production of the e-mag. Jim gave me his blessing to do so and provided guidance through the first few months as I found my feet.

My first encounter with Jim was back in early 2010, soon after my return to Kalgoorlie. Jim himself had worked here with Australia Post many years earlier. We'd catch up several times each year when Jim would come to town for photos of something new coming through, until his health issues became too great – delivery of new Aurizon GE's, delivery of MRLs, leased CFs and VLs. Jim would always call me in advance of such workings so I could get away from work for some photos myself. He was always ready and willing to share his knowledge with others.

Thanks for the friendship you so readily gave, Jim; rest in peace, mate. Sincerest condolences to Sue.

Peter Donaghy

I first knew Jim Bisdee during my late teens in the early 1980s. Sometimes we would bump into each other trackside, and I also had the chance to visit his house on a few occasions to see some of his slides. As I was just

starting in the rail photography hobby then, it was interesting to see his slides which didn't just cover Western Australia, but also included images from his overseas trips.

We had indirect contact as well. Jim was one of the editors of a magazine called *Western Rails* which covered the rail scene in Western Australia. I recall learning a lot about railways from reading the magazines, and I remember that Jim himself contributed some articles. On a trip to Dwellingup with Hotham Valley, I spent much of my available student money buying all the back issues they had there, and I still have every issue bar the first two!

Jim was more than just a rail photographer of course. He had time with the ARHS, and was one of the driving forces behind WALRPA. The Bennett Brook Railway stands as a memorial to those foundation years. Jim also spent time as an employee of the HVTR, organising bookings for its many rail excursions.

Jim maintained his interest in publishing following his *Western Rails* years. He contributed to the *Westland* magazine, and also to *Motive Power* when it commenced. In later years, he started an electronic magazine to record rail happenings in Western Australia. This has since been continued by Peter Donaghy.

We did a few trips out over the years, heading to places such as Merredin, Bunbury and sometimes beyond, and the lines radiating out of Avon Yard and Toodyay. I recall on a couple of occasions that his wife Sue would come on a Bunbury outing, and she would then spend the day with her sister Yvonne who lived in Bunbury.

It is difficult coming to terms with the fact that Jim is no longer with us. His legacy will live on in so many ways.

Vale Jim Bisdee.

Simon Barber.

I first met Jim in 1978 and from that point on we were friends who kept in regular contact and I went with Jim on many outings trackside, a popular location then was known as the "Gantry" off Waterhall Road, Hazelmere. Some of the areas we got to include Koolyanobbing (in the last days of the BHP operation), which we did in a lengthy day trip, something I am always glad we did.

A distinct memory is the Saturday evening slide nights when a group of us would get together to show our photos, many times this was at Jim & Sue's place in Forrestfield. These nights were entertainment in themselves as so many times Joe Moir and Jim would get into animated discussions about the railways. They would raise their voices at each other as the night went on, but they were the best of mates and the next Saturday might be at Joe's place and off they would go again!

In my student days with a fair few free days I would get out trackside with Jim and "get the coverage". We never had a cross word between us and enjoyed our catch ups. For a period these catch ups were even more frequent as I had moved to Queens Park, so was just down the road. Joe also lived a few streets a way in Wharf Street for a while. We would head out either locally or further afield sometimes to get something specific like the G class diesel derailment at Muja Junction.

A group of us would also do "Valley trips" and spend a night near Jimperding Brook in the Avon Valley to watch (and sound record) the trains passing through. In those days you could see 20-30 trains pass during the night and the sound of double headed L class on the Kooly ores would echo for ages through the valley and are a lasting memory. Jim was always an integral part of these valley trips and we always seem to be able to talk right through the night!

Despite my many moves we always kept in touch even after I moved to Geraldton with Jim making several visits to see the trains and visit us. If I was heading to Perth I would give Jim a call and often catch up with him trackside most likely at the old Midland Platform or Hazelmere. Jim would often give me a call when the Collie- Narngulu coal train had something a bit different on it so I could get a photo the next morning.

Jim was also very quick to share his photos and I for several years got duplicates of his prints. Making his photos available stayed with Jim right through the years and in December 2018 really delivered with his photos of locomotives in the International Orange livery for an article put together by Rob Clark, Jeff Austin and myself. They were just what we needed!

Although Jim was sick for many months I was still shocked when I spoke with Sue and she told me Jim had passed away.

I treasure my 40 years of friendship Jim, RIP mate and I am still trackside with you.

Phil Melling



ABs 1503, 1501 & 1502 run an empty grain through Hazelmere, 24th January 2010.



Near-new AC4302 passes Midland with a loaded grain, 9th February, 2010.

Both photos: the late Jim Bisdee



An empty grain passes through Hazelmere behind AD1521, 5th March 2010.



SCT015 & CLP13 lead a westbound SCT service through Midland, 14th May 2010. Both photos: the late Jim Bisdee
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After repeated failures and problems, freshly overhauled Q4004 was sent back to the Gemco workshops at Forrestfield at the beginning of October and spent a further six-seven weeks inside.

VLs 357 and 361, de-hired by Watco in May this year, finally commenced their trip home in late October when they led FL220 on a loaded railset to Hampton, where they were stabled for almost a week. On 3rd November, they ran light to West Kalgoorlie, where they were added “in the shafts” of 3PM4, hauled dead by two NRs. They were removed at Spencer Junction, and VL361 was sighted through Broken Hill on 7/11, hauled on YN2.

Distributed power modules are being fitted to MRL and CF class units for the Koolyanobbing ore trains. To date, CFs 4405, 4406 and 4408 have been equipped, with CF4407 still to follow. MRL005 was fitted, MRLs 001 & 006 were outshopped on 18/12 with a module installed and re-entered ore traffic at Kalgoorlie on 20/12. MRL002 was sent to Perth on 18/12 for the same, leaving MRLs 003 & 004 to be fitted. This will allow any unit other than the NRs to lead or be the mid-train receiver on DPU ore trains.

Ore is once again being loaded at Mt Walton from Mineral Resources’ Carina operations. At present it’s only been a couple of trains from Esperance, which have to be reversed at Mt Walton to access the balloon loop and load, then run to Koolyanobbing balloon loop to be turned back to Esperance. Shortly, regular services will commence from Mt Walton to Kwinana, to supplement the Kooly-Esperance trains. Five CM-class locos are rumoured to be coming over from NSW to haul the MHPY bottom-discharge hoppers. The three ACB class locos which were sent to NSW for Hunter Valley coal traffic are also apparently set to return to WA shortly, presumably to replace the three NR class which are currently used on the Kooly ore trains. WOC and WOD hoppers have been reactivated ex Avon storage.

After much speculation over previous months, LZs 3119 and 3120 were retrieved from storage at Avon yard, and towed to Gemco Forrestfield for reactivation; they are apparently set for NSW, Cobar - Newcastle ore trains though rumours abound that three will also end up in NSW for grain haulage.

The pre-Christmas rush proved troublesome for the rail operators, with numerous failures and late running through October to December, especially for SCT. A bogie collapse under 5PM5 at Ooldea on 18/12 closed the line for three days.



3PG1, Parkeston, behind CF4410 & CSR004, 2/9. CSR004 caught fire near Cook, late Nov. Photo: Peter Donaghy



SCTs 006 & 002 on 2MP9 cross CF4410 & CSR004 on 3PG1, Parkeston, 2nd September.



Fresh from overhaul, Q4004 waits as two NRs shunt the West Kal fuel sidings, 3/9.

Both photos: Peter Donaghy



CF4403 & CSR010 lead 3MP9 through Bellevue, 4th September.

Photo: Simon Barber



Ps 2514, 2504 & 2515 climb towards Nola with 7721 loaded Mt Gibson ore, 5th September.

Photo: Phil Melling



7720 empty Mt Gibson is led through Tenindewa by Ps 2502, 2505 & 2508, 5th September. Photo: Phil Melling



Qs 4016 & 4006 haul two ammonia tanks and two flat wagons, 1027, Kalgoorlie, 6/9. Photo: Peter Donaghy



Rescue unit Q4008 hauls failed Q4004 with 1438 ex Redmine on approach to Hampton, 6th September.



Q4008 hauls 1410 Hampton-West Kalgoorlie acid through Binduli, 6th September.

Both photos: Peter Donaghy



AC4304 and CFs 4406 & 4405 ease 1041 loaded ore around Binduli triangle, 6th September, as CF4410 passes in the background on 6MP9. The east leg (at right in below pic) was rebuilt in late October. Both photos: Peter Donaghy





CBHs 011 & 010 at Geraldton Port with 4G56 empty grain to Carnamah, 9th September. Photo: Phil Melling



4419 & 4336 (DPU 4380 & 4329) Mt Whaleback to Port Hedland, Jimblebar Junction, 10/9. Photo: Sean McGarraghy



The fuel train from Nelson Point to Jimblebar runs through Jimblebar Junction behind 4468, 10th September.



Tom Price ore winds through the hills north of mine behind 7064, 7075 & 7068, 11/9. Both photos: Sean McGarraghy



9146, 8146 & 8111 Cape Lambert to Paraburdoo, Spring Creek, 11th September.



8104, 9144 & 7077, loaded from Paraburdoo to Cape Lambert, Tom Price, 11/9. Both photos: Sean McGarraghy



4455 & 4474 on an empty ore cross grinder RG24 (ex-Aurizon MMY521), Tabba North, 12/9.



Loram RG24 (ex Aurizon MMY521), an RGS type 24 stone grinder, at Tabba, 12/9.

Both photos: Roland Depth



Empty FMG ore with 716 & 727 stops for a cross at Chapman, south end of a duplicated section, 12th September.



Roy Hill's 1026 & 1008 lead a loaded ore at Gillam Creek, 12th September.

Both photos: Roland Depth



Mid train units 1017 & 1010 at Gillam Creek, 12th September.

Both photos: Roland Depth



A loaded FMG ore transferring bank engines: 014, 721, 722 & 705 cross Gillam Creek, 12th September.



Former WAGR JK 4-wheel water tank at Gillam, a long disused BHP loading ramp, 12th September.



4363 & 4366 (above) lead 270 hoppers of lump ore at the 124km, 12th September.

Both photos: Roland Depth



Mid train remotes 4328 (BNSF orange) & 4461 at the 124km, 12th September.

Both photos: Roland Depth



Stabled tamper 5 watches 4441 & 4401 (above) lead an empty 270-wagon BHP service south through Abydos, 12/9.



4339 & BNSF orange 4330 are the mid-train remotes in the train at the bottom of page 18, 12th September.



BHP 270-wagon lump ore train at the 182km, led by 4419 & 4336, 12th September.

Both photos: Roland Depth



All three Speno grinders undergoing maintenance, Gidji siding, 12/9; RG3 (48 stone), RG5 & RG4 (both 36 stone).



A couple of track machines work on the new FMG Eliwanna line – looking north from Rio Tinto Gorge, 12th September.

Photo: Roland Depth



Looking east along the new FMG Eliwanna line, Firetail Loop at the top left. The pad at lower left holds the fuel tank for the construction equipment, 12th September.

Photo: Roland Depth



FMG's 003 & 902 stable their rail train at Firetail loop, start of FMG's new line to Eliwana, 12th September.
Photo: Roland Depth



8191, 8130 & 8159 lead empties from Cape Lambert through Possum, 12th September. Photo: Sean McGarraghy



Stored Robe CM40-8Ms 9422, 9419, 9418 & 9411 on the Cape Lambert quarry spur, 13/9. Weeks later, these were towed to workshops for reactivation for Rio's 166km Koodaideri line construction. Both photos: Pilbara Railways



8190, 8106 & 9129 run a loaded Autohaul (remotely controlled) Rio Tinto ore 30km from Cape Lambert, 13/9.



Loaded ore led by 7087, 9127 & 9120 at 38.5km, Cape Lambert line, 13th September. Both photos: Pilbara Railways



Table Hill forms the backdrop to Autohaul 7071, 9140 & 9132 at the 50km peg, 13th September.



8181, 8105 & 7043 power an empty Autohaul consist through Lockyer Gap, 13th September.



7090, 8158 & 8175 cross Lake Poongkaliyarra causeway at the 50km, 13th September. Both photos: Pilbara Railways
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Ps 2514, 2515 & 2506 lead 1721 loaded Mt Gibson ore near Wilroy, 13th September.



1721 loaded Mt Gibson ore arrives at Mullewa behind Ps 2514, 2515 & 2506, 13/9. Both photos: Phil Melling



67km on Cape Lambert line sees 8110, 8132 & 8143 approaching Green Pool, 13/9. Photo: Pilbara Railways



1MR1 loaded ore at the 638km with MRLs 006 & 005 leading NR104, 13th September. Photo: Peter Donaghy



Loaded ore at top of Chichester range, 100km on Tom Price line, 7059, 8116 & 8107, 13/9. Photo: Pilbara Railways



8111, 9146 & 8140 scream downhill at Benson Falls (91km, Tom Price line), 13th September. Photo: Pilbara Railways



1763 loaded Karara ore departs Tenindewa behind ACNs 4141 & 4170, 13th September. Photo: Phil Melling



An empty ore rake grinds upgrade at Benson Falls behind 9402, 7081 & 8127, 13/9. Photo: Pilbara Railways



ACNs 4147 & 4143 on 1762 empty Karara ore at Ardingley, 13th September.

Photo: Phil Melling



Another loaded ore screams downhill behind 9405, 9112 & 9128, Benson Falls, 13/9.

Photo: Pilbara Railways



An empty ore struggles uphill with 7073, 8186 & 8155, crossing the above train, Benson Falls, 13th September.



Another empty grinds upgrade at Benson Falls, 8159, 8130 & 8191 powering, 13/9. Both photos: Pilbara Railways



Preserved Governor class railcar trailer ADT9 now on bogies, Northampton station, 13/9.

Photo: Phil Melling



W945 & F40 on Hotham Valley's 1HV3 at Bergining, 13th September.

Photo: Simon Barber