



# February 2015 Newsletter

PO Box 299 Oberon 2787  
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Well, it's now 2015 and already your committee has a meeting under its belt plus the general meeting in February where plans for the Steamfest were discussed. A considerable amount of work is taking place in the background to upgrade the website and the SMS documentation is receiving much attention. For this we have to thank Greg Bourne and Ian Davis – keep up the good work guys!

Plans are afoot to celebrate OTHR's 10<sup>th</sup> birthday year in a number of ways – one of which is advertised once again at the bottom of this page – don't delay, this tour is now filling fast!

## **Next Meeting**

### **General Meeting**

**7:30pm. 4<sup>th</sup> March. 2015**

Another event in the planning stage is an excursion to the Lithgow Valley Film Society for an OTHR fundraising outing – more of this later in the year.

Other ideas are in the pipeline, so make an effort to come along to the general meetings and have your say as to how we celebrate this milestone year! Don't forget our heritage railway display at Oberon station is open on the first Saturday of every month, where you can chat to members and catch up on the latest OTHR activities. We also now have a display in the Reliance Credit Union offices in the main street – check it out.

## **Insights      Tours      and      OTHR's      10<sup>th</sup>      Birthday**

OTHR is pleased to announce that Insights Tours of Thirroul have made a special offer to our group for OTHR's 10<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2015. Insights have a major rail tour running to Adelaide in May and are prepared to make a donation to OTHR for each OTHR member who signs up for this tour. We would encourage all members to take his opportunity to support OTHR on our 10<sup>th</sup> birthday – and have a fabulous tour into the bargain!

Details of the tour can be found at [www.insightstours.com.au](http://www.insightstours.com.au) but briefly, the tour is for 8 days starting at Thirroul and ending in Adelaide. The cost is \$3575 and is ALL inclusive – that means all transport, all accommodation, all meals (bar one) and all entry fees, guides etc. The train is privately chartered – exclusive to Insights, diesel-hauled with three vintage carriages, including buffet car and lounge car –

## **Working Bee News**

By the time you receive this Newsletter, the current February working bee will be in progress – provided all the volunteers have recovered from the Steamfest activities!. This working bee will continue the pinning and gauging of the points for roads one and two leading into the rolling stock shed. Greg Noble has kindly offered to assist us in this work.

Recent tasks completed include the check rails for the Albion St level crossing and the painting of the bogie plough van – see photos later in this issue.

Negotiations with Oberon Council are progressing to firm up a date for the installation of the level crossing. This will be a landmark day for OTHR when this occurs, so *watch this space!!*

## **Next Working Bee**

**Saturday, Mar 7<sup>th</sup> to**

**Wed, Mar 11<sup>th</sup>**

If you can join our band of happy volunteers and assist with the work during the **March** working bee – please contact our Track Manager, Graham Williams, on 0422 596 438. Graham is always keen to hear from members who can take part in our working bees.

- some meals will be taken on the train. All travel is in daylight and accommodation overnight is in excellent motels and hotels. **Deadline** for acceptance is **9<sup>th</sup> March** 2015... don't miss out! Insights Tours can be contacted on 02 42686581 (John Tuckerman) or 02 42672535 (Paul Tuckerman).

Please give this serious consideration – as it would be great to have an OTHR group participate in this tour. You will be travelling by rail, railmotor, coach, tram and launch. A fine way to celebrate OTHR's 10th birthday – on the rails!

If you take up this opportunity, please make sure you identify yourself to Insights as a member of OTHR and also let our Secretary Elaine know.

## **OBERON TARANA HERITAGE RAILWAY INC.**

### **A QUIET ACHIEVER**

*by David McMurray*

In 2015 OTHR will reach its **tenth year** of achievements.

The association was established with great enthusiasm in 2015 by a dedicated group of Oberon and district residents. Undaunted over the years these members have been steadily working through the issues in what was quickly realised to be a massive project.

Our story is one of steady progress – not all of which is immediately visible to the townsfolk. In the ten years of our existence we have:

- Refurbished the branch line between Oberon and Black Bullock Lane (Hazelgrove Station site). In the process we have replaced 10 500 wooden sleepers over this 6km section of track.
- Purchased two 73 class diesel locomotives – in operating condition.
- Secured two 1897 historic end platform carriages from the Rail Transport Museum.
- Built a completely new rolling stock storage shed at Oberon Station
- Laid extra lines into this shed and re-located others within the station precinct
- Retrieved rail and points from Coolah and Leadville, NSW
- Assembled a collection of vintage rail freight wagons for static display - the latest arriving a few weeks ago from Bathurst.
- Completely restored an “S truck” freight wagon for display purposes.
- Installed a brand new flush toilet at the station for visitors comfort
- Commenced a collection of heritage railways memorabilia at Oberon Station

With all the above achievements under our belt it is disappointing to hear comments around the town such as...“It’s just a big boy’s plaything,” “It’ll never be finished” or “Never in my lifetime”. These types of negative comments reflect poorly on those who make them and obviously don’t

represent the truth of the matter. Any OTHR members who hear comments such as these should speak up and correct the ill-informed detractors. They don’t do justice to the many volunteers who have devoted thousands of hours over the last 10 years to this grand project - a project of which the entire community should be proud.

Plans are already in place and a date set for the re-installation of the Albion Street level crossing. Immediately following this, work will start on the Lowes Mt Rd level crossing – a much bigger job – which is expected to be reinstated in the very near future.

At the recent Annual General Meeting a new and vibrant ideas team was elected. An updated short term plan has been devised that will be well within the capacity of OTHR to complete.

Without losing sight of OTHR’s long term goals a new vision statement has been compiled:

- “To operate tourist trains run by volunteers between Oberon and Hazelgrove and ultimately to Tarana”.
- To operate the Oberon Station precinct as a vibrant heritage rail display, run by volunteers as a professional tourist centre”.

### **REMEMBER...**

The OTHR Heritage Rail Display at Oberon station is open on the first Saturday of every month from 10am till 2pm. One of our members is always present to act as a guide to the displays and numerous souvenirs are available for purchase.

Come along and learn about the fascinating history of the Oberon Tarana railway and the future plans for our tourist rail operations.



## Rolling Stock Restoration

Considerable activity has taken place in the rolling stock shed recently, with the cleaning out and painting of the bogie plough van. Graham Williams and his team have done wonders and the van is now looking quite respectable – see photos below of “before” and “after” shots...

before.....



The white undercoat applied...



The “Indian Red” topcoat finished...

## Steamfest...

The Highland Steam and Vintage Fair appeared to be a resounding success. It is estimated that over 200 visitors came through the OTHR heritage display and many more through the station precinct. The miniature train rides were a very popular draw-card with youngsters and the not so young enjoying the free rides. The coffee caravan was well patronised and much interest was expressed in the “Great Gatsby” heritage carriages.



Numerous comments were heard re the station area looking “neat and tidy and well cared for”.

## Albion St Level Crossing

In a flurry of recent activity by our volunteer fettlers, the prefabrication of the rail for the level crossing has been completed, with the check rail now firmly bolted in. We now await the Oberon Council to set a firm date for the installation – originally slated for February – this month! Watch this space for photo updates.



## Oberon Station

As part of the preparation for the Steamfest a working bee was held in the station precinct on Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> Feb. Carriages were cleaned, the displays sorted out and explanatory notices posted.

Barry Webb was seen wielding the whipper snipper to great effect. Prior to this Friday, both Barry and Arthur Robinson had been hard at work improving the station platform at the north end. A considerable amount of new crushed granite was laid down to improve the old platform surface. Great work guys!.. a job well done. The station yard looked extremely smart and tidy on the day of the Steamfest.



## Valley Heights

As part of the “Roaring Twenties” celebrations on the Blue Mountains, the Valley Heights Loco Depot is holding a number of fun events on the weekend of 21/22 February. They will be featuring the “Trains, Trams and Ts” weekend, with local T and A model car clubs participating. The unique steam tram rides are a must. Check out their website at...



[www.infoblue mountains.net.au/locodepot](http://www.infoblue mountains.net.au/locodepot)

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Our Ordinary General meeting minutes are now available on our website. You can also easily find us on Facebook at... [www.facebook.com/OTHR.Inc](http://www.facebook.com/OTHR.Inc)

## 2014 Xmas Party



The eager crowd waiting for the Xmas present  
“lucky dip”....  
The recently installed No 2 road runs behind the  
gathering...



The table of mystery presents gradually builds up ..  
as the hungry hordes gather around the food....



## Photo Supplement

The crowd begins to assemble in the rolling stock  
shed... tables of food are laid out and the BBQ  
fired up ...



Some fun presents were won in the lucky dip of the  
evening. President Tim Arnison draws the ticket and  
Glenda Bembrick collects one of the mystery presents...

Night shot after Xmas party – the illuminated points  
indicator besides the loco, the clearance lamp and the  
buffer stop red lamp can be seen in the distance behind  
the loco.