



April 2009 Newsletter

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****May monthly meeting will be held on Wednesday, 6th May at 7.30pm at the Oberon RSL Club.**

****June working bee: 30 May-6 June**

With a touch of winter in the air it's time to visit the line and be invigorated with some gentle exercise gauging and pinning sleepers and rebuilding culverts.

From the President's Cabin



Like President Shane, we will soon be "flying" high. Fasten your seatbelts for an exciting ride.

As the months progress, our year seems to get bigger and bigger! April has been a very successful month with many movements on our rail front. I have been working almost full time for the railway over the past couple of weeks, and I am excited to tell you about the progress being made.

Firstly, I can officially announce that we will be handed over the lease of the Oberon Station from 1 June with the Oberon Museum transferring to the south-west corner as per the original agreement with ARTC who manage the line on behalf of RIC.

Roof Trusses

I have visited the Eveleigh Carriage Works site to meet with Peter Boyden from RailCorp to discuss the removal of the roof trusses that have been allocated to OTHR. The fabulous heritage steel trusses were built in the 1890's and will be used to build a shed 18m x 80m in the Oberon Station grounds to house our rolling stock. The painful bureaucratic hoops and paperwork we have to go through to extract the trusses will be well worth the effort as they are an unusual and beautiful truss design. They will be a real heritage feature in the rolling stock shed, not to mention being worth over \$100,000 if we were to manufacture them today. I am sure our members with shed building skills will be champing at the bit to come and give us a hand with this project.

Rolling Stock

There has been some really encouraging progress in April in procuring items of rolling stock for our operations. Bill Muldoon's negotiations with Australian Railway Historical Society (ACT Division) for Rail Motor #13 has paid off with it being allocated to us for restoration and use on our line. We are currently working on the custodial agreement for this and we hope to see it in Oberon in the next few months. This will be our 2nd item of rolling stock after our Wickham section car and will be instrumental in generating income with tourists riding the line. Even though railmotors never ran on our line, they are an historical piece of equipment and

we think the most cost effective to start our tourist operations.

We have also been offered some rail carriages from the Rail Transport Museum (RTM). Tim Arnison, Tony Thackray, Harry Cole, Rick Fletcher, Peter Culley and I travelled to RTM at Thirlmere recently to inspect rolling stock that has been offered to OTHR on a long-term custodial agreement (loan). We are very excited about these items which we found to be in fairly good condition. There are 2 end-platform cars in restored condition ready for service located at Port Kembla, an insulated container van requiring some restoration work as well as 3 S-trucks. These are 4-wheeled wagons that were used to transport local produce such as peas and potatoes out of this area, as well as mine props that were sent to Broken Hill to the Cotton family timber yard.

Another item which has been offered to us by RTM is a bogie "tender" which carried water and coal for the 1957 steam locomotive. This is of particular interest to OTHR as it was part of the last steam service that came to Oberon and is very rare- in fact only one of its type remaining. There are two other wagons belonging to RailCorp's core fleet, located in Broadmeadow- HS-36, a passenger carriage with a guard's van that ran on this line for 40 years and requires a fair amount of restoration. The other is HCX-868 passenger carriage, offered to us through RTM. It is envisaged the carriages will travel behind a diesel locomotive when we procure one later on.

The downside of all this rolling stock excitement is the huge price tag of well in excess of \$40,000 we need to find to transport them all home to Oberon. This sounds a lot, but we are confident that it's achievable with the help of our members and the community.

We need your help

Come forward and offer us your skills and time to help us achieve our goals. We are at a stage where we need more helpers in many different areas to keep our project moving forward as our focus expands from track restoration and re-sleeping to include rolling stock and tourist operations.

We urgently require a person located in or near Oberon to distribute, collate and file our safety documentation and we also need an Operations Manager to oversee the whole operation. I appeal to our members to let me have names of people willing to fill these positions.

Thank You

Finally, I'd like to thank Peter Culley for the great idea of running a "bottle auction" at the April working bee social night. A simple and fun idea which raised over \$150 for our cause. Many thanks also to Jenny Cole and Lynette Ireland for the work they are putting in to organising the Trivia Night. Please support us and book a table. Congratulations to Lorraine Fielding, Lynette Ireland, Jenny Cole, Lyndle Hawkes and Keith Jones for a fantastic job in raising over \$975 for the Easter raffle. A special mention must also be made to our hardworking volunteers who turn up to work on the line. I encourage more members to come along and help us turn this dream into a reality.

Shane Moorhead

May Working Bee: 2nd – 9th May

We will be working not far from the Carter Holt Harvey timber complex where Track Manager Peter Culley will be using the excavator to replace all old sleepers and the fettlers will be trying to keep up with him with their dog spiking skills. This working bee will build on the April one where 420 sleepers were replaced and 120 pinned among other activities. All workers report on their great sense of achievement felt when working close to town.

An historical excursion

On Saturday, 9th May (last day of the working bee) we have a day off and will be led on a visit by Richard Webb to the Tarana granite quarry to see where the pink granite came from for the Sydney Opera House steps. After this visit we will journey by 4-wheel drive vehicle to inspect the steel bridge and railway line over the Fish River. The excursion will finish with lunch at the Tarana Hotel. What a great way to end our working bee!

Meet at 9.00 am at the Carlwood and Lowes Mount crossroads. Please let Peter know (ph: 0427 042 448) if you will be joining us for lunch at the Tarana Hotel.

Office of Rail Heritage (ORH) brochure

We have received very colourful brochures from ORH that highlight the history of our line, our restoration work and the exciting tourist experiences for visitors who come to the beautiful Oberon district. They can be downloaded from ORH's interesting website at www.nswrailheritage.com.au.

On the home page click on NSW Rail Heritage Network box, then click on our name.



Our brochure (shown here) can be downloaded in PDF format from the ORH website.

Thank you to our Printers

Chris and Kathy Segart of Permanent Press Printers, Chatswood have been generous and long term supporters of OTHR. They print all of OTHR's brochures and as well, supply free of charge all the notepads which help us to generate income. Kathy also helps out with her delicious home-cooked and much appreciated cakes for the working bees. Thank you both for your generosity.

Membership renewals: final reminder

Fees are \$20 per family and \$10 for individuals, concession cardholders and students. Please send your forms and fees to The Treasurer, OTHR, PO Box 299, Oberon 2787.

Good quality garden sleepers for sale

Contact Bill Muldoon at Oberon Thrifty-Link Hardware on 6336 1438 for more details.

Trivia Night on 12th June at 7p.m.
at the Oberon Golf club. Tickets- \$10
per person and there will be a light
supper afterwards. Phone Jenny Cole on
6336 5338 to book a table of 8 or for
individual tickets. Great prizes!

Members please bring a plate for supper

The Fettlers' Lament

'Twas the 'Bee before Easter
 And down on the tracks
 All fettlers were gathered,
 In spite of sore backs!

With compressor a 'rumbling
 And drills a 'spinning,
 "Now you lot get going",
 Said Peter, grinning...

Trolleys were trundled,
 Air hoses connected,
 Sleepers were pinned
 Just as directed...

When smoko time comes,
 Head for the chuck wagon
 Mouths might be dry
 But feet are not dragging'.

Chow time is over
 It's back to the grind,
 Sleepers to pin
 And dog spikes to find.

At the end of the day
 Sighs of relief,
 The jackhammer is silenced
 And from Peter... no more grief!

Col Bembrick (OTHR's Poet Laureate)