

Oberon TARANA HERITAGE RAILWAY INC.
NEWSLETTER

August 2017



.....bringing your rail heritage back to life.

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Email: admin@othr.com.au

Facebook: www.facebook.com/OTHR.Inc

GoFundMe: <https://gofund.me/2mhftk44>

Patrons:

**Daul Toole State Member for Bathurst, Minister for Lands and Forestry,
Minister for Racing**

Andrew Gee, Federal Member for Calare

Committee:

President: Tim Arnison

Vice President: Peter Culley

Secretary: Elaine Boxer

Treasurer: John Brotchie

Track Manager: Graham Williams

Public Officer: Elaine Boxer

General Committee:

David McMurray: Fundraiser, Newsletter Editor/Publicity

Ian Davis: Document Writer

Martyn Salmon

Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway Inc. Mission Statement

To operate voluntary run tourist trains between Oberon, Hazelgrove and ultimately Tarana.

To have the Oberon Station precinct as a vibrant Heritage Railway Display run by volunteers as a professional tourist centre.

Editor's thoughts

It's really great when your committee publishes a column or an item of interest that captures our reader's attention.

It's even better when you take the time to make a comment, good bad or sitting on the fence.

The Clyde Engineering Builders plate pictured in our June issue is a case in point. Steve Preston made a comment that was published in our July issue and this month we have received another.

Allan Leaver writes "The Clyde Engineering Builders plate shown on page 10 of the June newsletter is from NSW locomotive 5426 of the 53 class 2-8-0 goods locomotive. It was placed in service on 29.10.1915 and condemned on 24.1.1967 with a total of 1,322,508 miles in service, aged 51 years. It entered service as TF1149 and was renumbered in 1924 to 53 Class No 5426. It is surprising that the plate is dated 1916 as the locomotive entered service in 1915. I guess this plate is in someone's collection so they might find that information helpful."

Isn't it wonderful that items or snippets provoke such interest and it's amazing that people have the wealth of knowledge to describe history with such detail.

One of the reasons your committee publishes this newsletter is to not only inform our readers of current affairs in the Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway Inc. but to record snippets of railway history.

We encourage your comments, feedback and further points of interest; please keep them coming!

And another thanks to Steve and Allan for their input.

"I think it's very important to have a feedback loop where you're constantly thinking about what you've done and how you could be doing it better

Elon Musk."

Know Bob and Margaret Connors....

Bob and Margaret were with Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway Inc. from the beginning.

I didn't know them well but am told they were great assets to the organisation.

They were professionals in life and professionals when giving their time to OTHR. Both had a wealth of experience and years of research and professional tertiary qualifications in education and the law. If you wanted a carefully considered letter written or an application completed with due consideration to compliance with the law or appropriate regulations, Bob and Margaret were unbeatable. They were instrumental in our achieving full accreditation at the time.

Bob and Margaret represented OTHR at many heritage railway meetings in Sydney where they networked extensively with other heritage operators and government appointees. Bob spent

many hours preparing for his regular radio interviews with Peter Harrison, the local Bathurst radio journalist, organised television video footage of the railway corridor to be done with Channel 9's Orange office, wrote his monthly newsletters, worked hard each year to drum up support for the OTHR public clearing sale auction at the showground and liaised with the then local member Gerard Martin for ongoing help behind the scenes. Bob was responsible for the research and original writing of the drug and alcohol documents.

Both Bob and Margaret were true professionals when it came to helping administer OTHR's inner workings. It was a blow to the committee at the time when they finally decided to up stakes and move to finally retire.

Bob and Margaret Connors have been sorely missed in the organisation and we have never found anyone of their calibre to replace them.



*Snow at Oberon Station July 1965
Photo John Watters*

NEXT MEETING

General Meeting

2nd August 2017

7.30PM

General meeting

Reserve the date, 2nd August 2017 for the Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway Inc. general meeting.

Secretary Elaine has enlisted Peter (Bugs) Harvey as guest speaker for this meeting.

Bugs will delight us all with a talk on the history of Post Offices in Oberon. Bugs is also a philatelist and numerologist so he will also be talking about stamps and coins.

I know Bugs quite well and he definitely has the knowledge to talk with authority on his chosen subjects.

This will be an enlightening evening far removed from railways and it's definitely worth your while to attend the August meeting to hear Bugs talk. You will be fascinated.

Important Information.

Membership Renewals due 1st July!

Members should pay fees for 2017/18 now. The fees are used in the day to day administration of Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway Inc. so it is important to send your renewal in as soon as possible.

Any member who has not renewed by 1st September 2017 will be deemed to be unfinancial and their membership cancelled.

You can apply to re-join any time after 1st September but a joining fee in addition to annual membership fee will apply.

About Oberon.....

Winter in Oberon is about cool climate activities and romantic stays.

When in Oberon why not spend an hour in Coopers Antiques in Oberon's main street or view the winter beauty of the water garden at Mayfield Gardens or ramble through the wonderful Oberon Common, or call over to Oberon Station and view our progress to date. For the more adventurous there's High Country Trail Rides for horsey fun or try dirt bike action at Learning to fly MX at Shooters Hill.

You know the fabulous motels in Oberon, so try some of our Bed & Breakfasts. Our cosy accommodation establishments can be found within a short distance of the town centre. Here are a couple of ideas: McKeown's Rest, Jenolan Cabins, Duckmaloi Farm, Melaleuca Cabins, Avaleigh Elms or Buddens over in Rockley; every one different and every one available to spend a romantic getaway. Don't forget Oberon's hearty meals, to be had in places like the Long Arm Café, Monkey Bean Café, DJ's café or O'Connell Hotel or Tarana Hotel.

There's no shortage of activities in Oberon in winter. Come and give us a try – you might even experience a snow fall.



*Nearly buried in snow at Oberon Station July 1965
Photo: John Watters*

Our fund raising isn't dead!

Donations are still required to help achieve our aim of putting a train back on the track. The immediate aim is raise \$20K to fund a couple of essential

studies to allow us to apply for big funding that will help us achieve our ultimate target.

Nothing can happen unless you rail gunzels donate.

Wouldn't it be a shame if the project didn't reach its goal and languished as a static museum – or worse?

We have a saying here at OTHR:

“You don't know what you've got 'til it's gone.”

Don't look back in years to come and wish you should have made the donation of the dollar that would have allowed the Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway Inc. to bring your rail heritage back to life.

We are keeping all donations so far especially to move the project forward. All donations are tax deductible.

Make that donation and do it now!

There are two ways to make a donation:

- Go to our GoFundMe page and make your donation there.
- Or send a cheque to our Post Office Box 299, Oberon NSW 2787 marking your envelope “fund raiser”.

If you are a business person large or small and would like to sponsor OTHR, please contact our Secretary for information on how you can help.

Next Working Bee
Saturday 5th August 2017
To
Wednesday 9th August 2017

Working Bee News

August working bee will again be in accordance with the priorities list taken from the latest Strategic Plan and will follow on from last month. Tasks to be tackled include:

- Completion of the store room. This has been under construction for the last couple of months and is almost complete. Finishing touches will be made to the store room during this working bee.
- Commence work on the Plough Van
- Reposition the Signal ladder.
- Start to move stored items from station area to the new storage shed.

This is an ambitious task list so it would be appreciated that anybody up to it comes along and helps out.

Remember too, the old saying: “many hands make light work.”

Remember also the conditions of offering up your labour for a day or two:

- Morning and Afternoon tea.
- A great lunch
- Accommodation for out of towners at Oberon Men’s Shed
- Cabin style accommodation at Jenolan Caravan Park for very reasonable tariff.
- Hot showers at the caravan park.

Come on, be a part of it; you won’t regret it.

We always need volunteers to help out even for an hour or two and that extra pair of hands really makes a difference.



*Loading produce at Oberon Station on a winter's day July 1965
Photo John Watters*

How does one get the train underway and keep it on track?

Previously we have exposed you to our business plan but, of course, than plan can only be implemented once our operations come into being. So how does that happen? Our Business Plan alludes to a long term plan and that plan has recently been updated.

Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway Inc. (OTHR)’s mission statement says that we plan to operate a tourist train from Oberon Station to the Oberon branch line siding at Tarana Station. A number of planned steps are required over a period of time to achieve this aim.

Those planned steps are divided into short and long term aims; this is called the plan. Any plan is not set in stone, so a plan can move either way according to circumstances.

Our plan is divided into three terms and the results so far are recorded in red:

5 Year Plan.

- Obtain Heritage Operators Licence (HOL) for Oberon yard.
- Obtain track certificate of the Oberon yard.
Oberon Yard certification completed (October 2015)

- Obtain Accreditation for rail operations, Rail Infrastructure maintenance, track maintenance vehicles, and rolling stock restoration within the Oberon yard.
ONRSR Accreditation for track maintenance, rolling stock restoration (July 2017)
ONRSR Accreditation for the use of track maintenance vehicles (July 2017)
- Increasing OTHR profile as a tourist destination.
- Increase the number of days that tourists can view/enter the Oberon Yard precinct.
- Increase the number of displays/activities for tourists to view.
- Rolling stock acquisitions/restorations.
- Increase the number of volunteers of OTHR.
- Maintain Oberon yard, station and rolling stock, sheds.

10 year plan.

- Obtain Heritage Operators Licence (HOL) for the Oberon branch line from the Oberon yard to the Oberon branch siding at Tarana station.
- Obtain track certification for the line between Oberon yard to Hazelgrove.
- Obtain Accreditation for rail operations, rail infrastructure maintenance, track maintenance vehicles from Oberon station yard to Hazelgrove.
- Maintain as per the 5 year plan and include the line/activities to Hazelgrove.

15 year plan.

- Obtain track certification for the line between Hazelgrove and the Oberon branch line siding at Tarana station.
- Obtain accreditation for rail operations, rail infrastructure maintenance, track maintenance vehicles from Hazelgrove to Oberon branch line at Tarana station.

Each point contains many tasks within that requires hours of time and effort to achieve.

The plan can be completed a whole lot quicker provided we have volunteers to help out.

Manager Bathurst Regional Museums pays a visit.

Janelle Middleton, Manager of the Bathurst Regional Museums, accepted our recent invitation to view the Oberon station precinct.

She provided some valuable tips which will eventually allow us to display our memorabilia at a museum standard.

It's not all straight forward at Bathurst with the council dealings with TfNSW but they are working through the issues.

Janelle reaffirmed her commitment to work with Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway Inc. as she sees the two museums having points of difference that will appeal to visitors wishing to visit both locations in future.



*Snow drifts Oberon Station July 1965
Photo John Watters*

Welcome New Members

Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway Inc. is always looking for new members.

Interested in railways or the Oberon to Tarana line in particular, why not give your support by becoming a member?

Not so well....

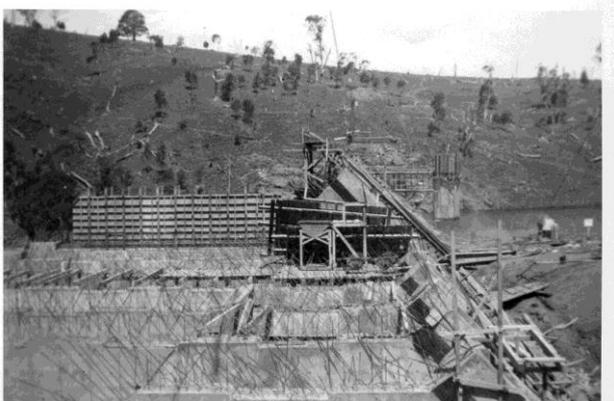
If anyone hears about any member on the sick list, please let the editor know via Secretary Elaine so we can send get well wishes on behalf of the association.

In Memorium.

If anyone hears of the passing of one of our members please let the editor know via Secretary Elaine so we can make a special mention.

Say Whaat???

1. I have a fear of speed bumps
I'm slowly getting over it.
2. Have you heard about the restaurant on the moon?
Great food.... No atmosphere!



*Construction of the dam, Oberon 1943
Photo John Watters*

Maitland Steamfest 2017

Maitland Steamfest was run over the weekend of the 8th & 9th April 2017. Once again the presentation was a huge success for Maitland and surrounding district.

Rachael MacLucas from Maitland Council advised that "4,466 tickets were sold including sales on both steam trains (of which they had two) and vintage diesels.

Financially, the event receives income from stalls, train ticket sales, sponsorships and since this year a financial contribution from Council. In addition to this Council covers the cost of staff wages involved with the planning and delivery of the event. With these factors in mind, the aim is for the event to reach cost neutral status.

The estimated economic impact of the event is around \$12 million (based on REMPLAN system modelling)"

This event attracts more than 60,000 annually from around the world according to Maitland Council.

Whilst OTHR could never expect to attract these crowd numbers to Oberon, it proves the value of railways as a tourism attraction.

These facts together with annual visitation to Tenterfield Railway Museum confirm that the OTHR Business Plan of 9500 visitations per annum to Oberon is totally realistic. If Maitland Steamfest injects around \$12 million into their economy, then it's reasonable to assume that the OTHR attraction, when operational will initially inject around \$2 million into the Oberon economy.

That's 2 million reasons why Oberon community should stand behind our endeavour.

Oberon-Burruga Railway Inspection by Minister for Works.

“BATHURST, Saturday. The Oberon Railway League has been informed, through Mr G.S. Beeby MLA. That the Minister for Works will visit Oberon and Burruga after the Easter holidays to inspect the routes for the proposed branch railway. Arrangements have been made to suitable entertain the Ministerial party.

The length of the line necessary to be contracted via Tarana and Oberon is considerably less than by the rival Rockley route. The mileage distance to and from Sydney is more than 30.8 miles less by the Oberon route. On the Rockley road high mountainous country has to be traversed, whereas the country between Tarana and Burruga, with one exception, is comparatively level. It is estimated that a population of 9056 will be served by the proposed line. The productiveness of the district is well known, as much as 50 bushels of oats, 40 bushels of wheat, 4 tons of hay, and 10 tons of potatoes. There is an abundance of good timber in the district, and a line would open up one of the largest timber industries in the State. Owing to the good rainfall and excellent grass to be had in the summer, starving stock would be sent from drought stricken districts, if a line were available. The expenditure of 80,000 pounds per year at the Burruga Copper Mines was lost to the district and the State owing to the lack of suitable means of transit and the procuring of fuel, causing the mine to close down.”

Evening Star (Sydney NSW) Saturday 27th March 1909, page 9.

Note: More than 14 years passed between this newspaper report on the Minister’s visit and the line opening as described in the next article.

Oberon Railway Station Building.

The building of the Oberon to Tarana line begins.... And it’s over again to Stuart Sharp.

“The Sydney Morning Herald, 21st June, 1921, p7 refers to the Oberon project as an employment scheme reported that:

‘A plough team and eight drays made a start on the Tarana-Oberon railway this morning. About 15 men from the Labour Bureau, Sydney, arrived at Tarana on Saturday, and 50 more from Bathurst presented themselves this morning. The engineer, however, had no authority to start the latter batch, but it is probable that work will be found for them in a few days. The men are working about two miles and a half from Tarana, near Mutton Falls Creek.’
The Bathurst Times, 22nd June 1921, P2 had the following report:

‘TARANA-OBERON RAILWAY Over eighty men are already engaged on the preparatory work in the construction of the Tarana Oberon railway, and the engineer in charge Mt. Thorne states the number will be increased to about 300 in the next fortnight.’

Not only were there fundamental differences between railway operations in Sydney and rural NSW, there were also differences between rural locations. A year or so after work commenced, the Herald, 15th March 1922, P16, wrote

‘The tragedy that took place on the Tarana-Oberon railway construction work on Saturday last suggests the lack of moral tone that characterises navy camps in recent times more so than in previous years. The lax supervision by both Public Works and Police Departments in regard to the camps is nothing short of deplorable. At long intervals of time, a mounted constable may ride on some routine business or other, his stay being only a few minutes duration. “Two Up” while day light lasts and “Nap” until the small hours of morning are the order of gambling, to the accompaniment of drink, foul language, curses, and imprecations. Where the Commissioners for Railways, carry out deviation and duplication work in connection with existing

lines through parts more populated, a little stricter supervision is exercised but, on lines through country hitherto untapped by railway communication and known as “construction” work, next to no camp control at all is in force. It can easily be understood that the camps are seldom visited by anybody other than a few itinerant hawkers and vegetable vendors, although a Government motor car having Messrs. Dooley and Johnstone, Parliamentary candidates, as passengers suddenly appeared on the scene a few weeks ago and posed in strong contradistinction to the bag and calico village wherein the candidates bought votes.’

Two years after the turning of the first sod trains were operating. The Sydney Morning Herald, 12th June, 1923, P9, contained the following report:

‘ A report from Hazelgrove states that the first lot of goods carried on the new Tarana to Oberon railway passed Hazelgrove station last Friday, when several truckloads of merchandise were despatched. The line is not completed, and goods are conveyed from Tarana to Oberon at an owners’ risk and only by truckload. It is, however, a great convenience to storekeepers, especially at present, when the roads are bad.’

News of the completion of the line was conveyed by many regional newspapers. Typical was The Voice of the North, a newspaper based in Newcastle, on 12th November, 1923, P8, which reported that Oberon was a “delightful spot” and stated that “the railway to Oberon was opened a few weeks ago, and this should serve to make known to many people, as yet in ignorance of it, the beauties and the delightful natural Australian conditions in and around that centre.

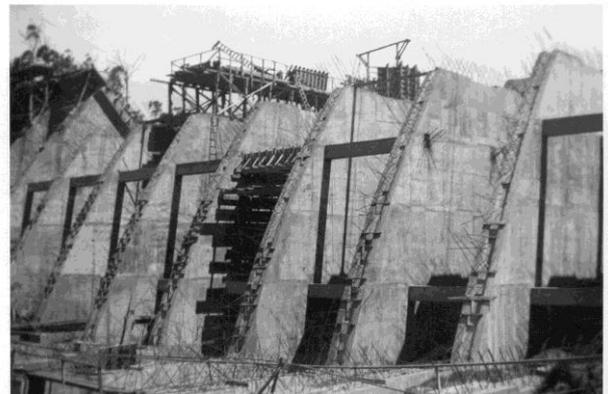
Oberon was a beautiful spot but it wasn’t necessarily a bountiful spot. Some rural residents seemed at times to be in fantasy land or at least a state of excitement about the benefits that a railway could bring. Before the opening on 3rd October 1923, the Construction and Local Government Journal, 14th February, 1923, P7 reported:

‘Residents in the Bathurst (NSW) district are agitating for the extension of the Tarana-Oberon

railway line to connect with the Blayney-Harden line at Garland.’

As the Oberon line was never extended, it may be concluded that some level of sanity did exist within NSW governments in the 1920’s. It was a cause of no political push and no shortage of local political pull.”

There appeared to be constant underlying resentment by all sides to the building of our line and it seems we were lucky to have it built back in the early 1920’s



Oberon Dam construction 1943

The dam was commissioned to supply water to Glen Davis near Lithgow to assist in extraction of oil from the shale deposits in the district during the war years.

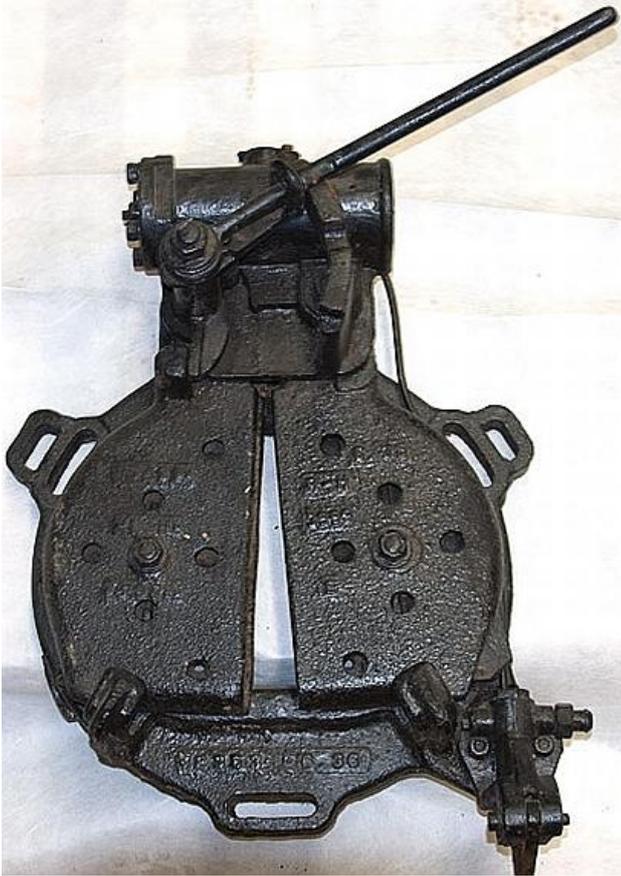
The water was gravity fed all the way to Glen Davis.

After the war water was made available to Lithgow and the upper Blue Mountains as far as Leura and the power stations at Wallerawang.

These days there is a much lesser dependence on Oberon’s water but the dam remains as the source of Oberon’s water supply.

Photo John Waters

What's this thing called luv?



Contacts For all enquiries

Secretary: Elaine Ph. 02 6336-0441

Email admin@othr.com.au

Another item for the gunzels.

Give up?

It's a steam boiler fire box door.
Overall size is 78 x 59 x 13cm. with a 52 cm long handle.

Believed to be from an NSW.G.R. Loco.

Who can tell us more? Any further information send to the Editor via Secretary Elaine.