

**OBERON TARANA HERITAGE RAILWAY INC.**  
**NEWSLETTER**  
**FEBRUARY 2017**



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

**PO Box 299 Oberon NSW 2787**

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**Facebook: [www.facebook.com/OTHR.Inc](http://www.facebook.com/OTHR.Inc)**

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

**Proudly sponsored by**



**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, Acting Newsletter Editor/Publicity**

**Ian Davis: Document Writer**

**Martyn Salman**

## Editor's thoughts

Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway is not all about its people; an eclectic bunch if ever there was. Some true gunzels, some passionate, some energetic, some not so much, some into restorations, some into administration. They are all there for one reason - to get the Oberon to Tarana branch line restored and trains running, just as in olden times.

But is that the only reason? You see the Oberon to Tarana branch line is so much more. The line was built at a time when Oberon was starting to really develop as a town; its economy was growing and life was good.

Oberon in the 1920's was pretty remote and the only way to get produce and manufactured goods to market was by road, often by horse and cart and in later years by truck over roads that were nothing more than tracks that became impassable in rainy times.

So as time passed the branch line became the life line of the town with peas and potatoes and fat lambs sent to Sydney markets and mining props to Broken Hill. Oberon locals came and went as passengers starting journeys to far flung reaches of New South Wales

The line oversaw the boom in the timber industry and the best years of agriculture until finally the roads and road transport became so good that in 1979 the Oberon to Tarana branch line was suspended.

So I believe that the OTHR members are doing so much more than restoring the line and infrastructure, there is a greater history involved here.

The line was instrumental in the development of Oberon so by preserving the track OTHR is actually helping to preserve Oberon's history.

OTHR members are preserving Oberon's history whether they realise it or not.

Politically there is a greater need than ever to complete the task at hand as we fight to save our community from being swallowed into a leviathan of a council with little or no care for Oberon's history.

Leaving behind a working vestige of our history will be absolutely imperative to Oberon's future generations.

To not try to save our past will be Oberon's loss.

Let's get it done!

"The most effective way to destroy people is to deny and obliterate their own knowledge of their history"

... George Orwell.



*Walking towards 2017  
Oberon.....Simply Spectacular!*

*Photo Stewart McMahon.*

## **Know Arthur Robinson.**

There are few better known and dedicated volunteers in the Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway Inc. family than Arthur Robinson.

A long- time local and enthusiast, Arthur would be one of the few members who have actually seen and travelled on the Oberon to Tarana line in its heyday. He has a vast interest in everything mechanical and is an avid collector of historical items.

Arthur joined OTHR in its formative days and has been a volunteer ever since. He has never sought to become a committee member but has preferred to support the group in an active role. Want the grass mown or the grounds kept tidy – Arthur’s your man!

Lay sleepers, dig out culverts, lay tracks, weed control – Arthur’s your man again!

Want a bit of colour at open days, need someone to talk to visitors, want to hear tales of Oberon – again Arthur’s your man!

Background volunteers like Arthur should never be underestimated as OTHR couldn’t survive without him and others like him. Arthur would be the first to tell you he is just a team player but we need many more Arthurs in the team if we are going to get ourselves on the track.

Arthur is also a long-time and valued member of Oberon Men’s Shed.



*Arthur Robinson, colourful local and dedicated member and volunteer of OTHR*

## NEXT MEETING

General Meeting

1<sup>st</sup> February 2017

7.30PM

## **General meeting**

Janelle Middleton, Museum Manager, Bathurst Regional Museum will be the honoured guest this month.

Amongst other items of interest she will be addressing the proposed Railway Museum that Bathurst Regional Museum is about to launch.

Rather than seeing this as competition to us, we will have a discussion on how it will work in both our interests.

## **Oberon Passenger Run Ends Monday**

**Western Advocate August 25, 1971.**

“All passenger train services on the unique Tarana –to-Oberon line will cease from August 20 because patronage has become almost non-existent, according to railway authorities.

For many years carriages attached to the three-times-weekly goods train had provided a service for passengers between Tarana, on the main Western rail line and Oberon, 19 miles and three chains away.

The Tarana-Oberon line is recognised as unique in the New South Wales railway system.

It has a sequence of steep grades and sharp curves as it winds from Tarana to Hazelgrove, Carlwood and Oberon.

The cancellation of the passenger service will have no effect on staff employment on the line, which will continue to be engaged in association with the present goods train service.

### **Rail Tour**

There are a number of fettlers and station staff at Tarana and Oberon, but Hazelgrove and Carlwood are unattended stations.

The cancellation of the passenger service will not be allowed to go unnoticed, however.

The NSW Rail Transport Museum has organised a tour from Sydney to Oberon on September 6.

This will be the last opportunity to travel as a passenger on the Tarana-Oberon run.

During the trip, steam engine “buffs” will be able to travel on a train drawn by a 40-class type engine which is being phased out.

During the trip arrangements will be made for photographic runs by the last passenger train to Oberon concentrating on the spectacular sections of the route.

Local tours will be provided at Oberon.

Arrangements have also been made for luncheon for those taking part in the Oberon trip.”



*Not the last passenger train to Oberon but in fact  
the very last train to run on the Oberon Branch Line*

*4901 crosses the Snakes Valley Creek trestle bridge*

*27<sup>th</sup> September 1979*

*Photo Dennis O'Brien.*

## Some Oberon Facts.....

- Winter is the perfect time for visitors to come and enjoy the enchanting snow-laden countryside, rug up and hunt for truffles under a clear winter sky or snuggle up with your partner by an open fire and watch snowflakes drift by your window.
- Spring is a wonderful time to experience the region. Go for a bushwalk, visit local cafes and restaurants or sample local food and wine, or simply see the countryside come to life, with newborn lambs and calves in the fields.
- Summer days are to relish with temperatures reaching mid 30's at the warmest. Cooler night time temperatures make for an energetic start to the day ,including fishing, fossicking, horse riding, cycling and camping in Oberon's gorgeous outdoors, or just relaxing on a temperate summer evening after a delicious feast at a local restaurant or hotel.
- Autumn is a perfect time to prepare for the cool Oberon winter, with sunny days, lovely coloured leaves and a time to venture into the local pine forests and hunt for mushrooms.

*OberonAustralia.com*



*Autumn leaves in one of Oberon's spectacular parks.*

## Analysing our business

Last month we discussed how Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway Inc. would create demand in our potential tourism business.

So why would visitors come to a railway tourism operation and why does your committee believe we can create that demand.

To find out we need to analyse the business model to see what would bring visitors to Oberon in the first place.

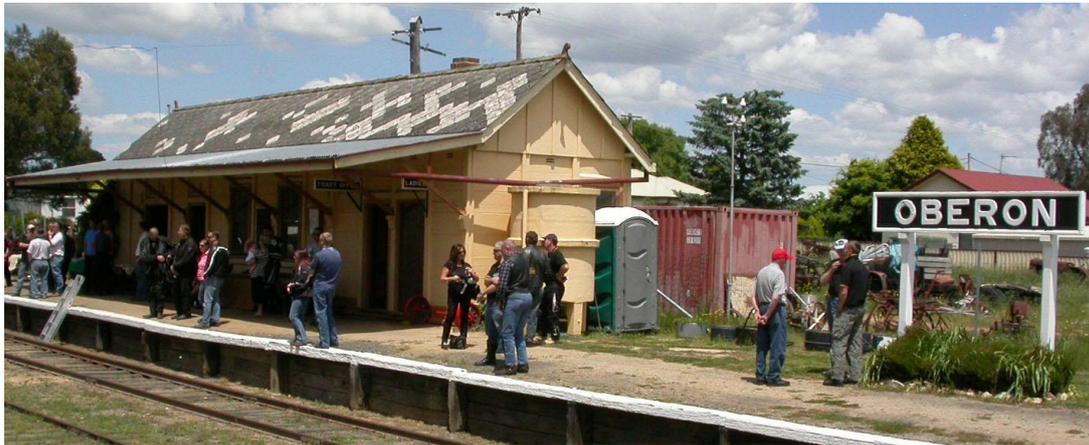
We know, from the Oberon Business and Tourism Association and Oberon Visitor Information Centre, that enquiries year on year show a growing interest in Oberon and its environment.

- There are several established and new tourism attractions in the local shire that are instrumental in attracting visitors.
- There are long standing attractions including mushrooming and fossicking that brings visitors to Oberon.
- Mayfield Garden is now open daily with the larger garden open twice yearly. Many of the visitors the garden attracts would also be interested in a railway experience.
- Hydro Majestic Resort is now open and is about 50 minutes from Oberon and attracts hundreds of new visitors to the area weekly. Their customers are likely to look for a tourist railway experience.
- A new international airport will be built shortly and is within two hours of our attraction. With new hotels and resorts to be built around the airport, there are potentially huge visitor numbers within a short travel time of OTHR.
- Oberon has a very mild climate that most people would enjoy.
- Oberon experiences a growing tourism market. Better road systems across the Blue Mountains/Central west are bringing our potential market closer to us.

- Oberon sits almost centrally to the major population areas of New South Wales.
- Major attractions on the Blue Mountains, Lithgow and Oberon area includes Katoomba and all its attractions, Hydro Majestic Resort at Medlow Bath, Jenolan Caves, Mount Panorama to name a few.
- Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway sits comfortably in the middle of all those attractions and yet offers a totally different experience for visitors to the area.
- OTHR plans to work with the other attractions because we offer something different and do not compete.
- The promoters of the other attractions should direct visitors to OTHR to complement their attraction.

No business can effectively operate without analysing its business; it needs to know where its customers come from and why they would be attracted to our tourism operation.

Next month we'll briefly discuss who our customers might be.



*Oberon Station general view looking from the North East.*

**Next Working Bee**  
**Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2017**  
**To**  
**Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2017**

## Working Bee News

February's working bee will concentrate on organising the Oberon Stations rooms for our open day on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2017.

Work will also continue on the store room currently under construction

Remember 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
- Hot showers at the caravan park.

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

## **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?

Welcome Patrick Copas of Old Guildford, NSW.

You will be most welcome

## **Not so well....**

A shout out to Alma Bouchier who's not feeling the best at the moment.

Here's to you being up and about very soon Alma.

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.**

On a sadder note we report the death of Anthony Woodland who passed away on 16<sup>th</sup> January. Tony was a long-time member who has donated photographs to OTHR and these are recorded on our website.

Vale Tony.

## **Say Whaaat???**

There's a simple way to tell the difference between an alligator and a crocodile:

One will see you later,

And the other in a while.....

Or

What happens if you get scared half to death twice?

Or

If attacked by a mob of clowns, go for the juggler!

## **And now the news.....**

The strategic meeting held last Sunday (15<sup>th</sup> January) determined OTHR's path for the foreseeable future. It was your opportunity to have a say in which direction we take and to establish goals.

The meeting determined the best way to move our activities forward. There was a need to identify what, how, who and our resources then prioritise them.

Seven broad activities were identified:

- Move the locomotives
- Plough Van
- Signal Ladder
- Caravan
- Station Display
- Store Room
- Heritage Operators Licence

Those activities and tasks have been placed in order of importance and will be pursued as much as possible in the following order:

- Complete Storeroom and obtain the Heritage Operators Licence
- Prepare station display and move locomotives
- Refurbish exterior of Plough Van and line the interior for use as storage or other use
- Reposition the signal ladder and repaint the signal.
- Reposition caravan to allow extra space in rolling stock shed. Minor repairs required.

There are many individual actions required on each task and it is envisaged that all the tasks can be completed in a relatively short timeframe.

In other news your committee made a decision to delay the draw of our offline donation prize until the Highlands Steam and Vintage Fair open day on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2017. It was felt that the actual draw would have more significance being drawn in conjunction with our major fund raising day.

As compensation we have added two additional prizes.

Delaying the draw also gives you an opportunity to donate if you haven't done so.



## Just who or what is the Skoda and Tatra Register

And how did they arrive in Oberon?

Formed in 1984, the Skoda and Tatra Register Inc. is dedicated to preserving the unique Czechoslovakian motor cars.

Skoda emerged in 1905 from the Klement Laurin Car Company in Czechoslovakia which began initially in producing bicycles in the late 1800's and moved to the production of motor cars in 1899. For some time the two badges were on the vehicles but in 1905 the "Winged Arrow" became the badge.

Tatra is another company and prior to and up to the Second World War were innovators in the technical production of car engines, of whom Hans Ledwinka was foremost.

The register directs efforts to support earlier vehicles being restored and maintained. This support is provided through the network of members with technical advice and spare parts.

The Register has harboured the idea of building a museum dedicated to the marques for about a decade.

Approximately four years ago the Museum committee was introduced to Oberon by the late Peter Stokes, a local member of the register.

The attraction to Oberon was the fact that Oberon sits within about 2 hours of every major population area in New South Wales and breathes a country town atmosphere.

Years of negotiating red tape and with the help of Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway Inc. a piece of land was released by OTHR to the Skoda club for the purpose of building that museum. That piece of land is located on the only non-heritage land that's leased exclusively by OTHR from TfNSW.

The Development Application calls for a single American Barn type building capable of housing up to five vehicles, memorabilia, an office, staff amenities and toilet facilities. It will be landscaped and be a very attractive building looking from Scotia Ave.

The Skoda and Tatra Register museum now named the "John Hebblewhite Museum" will meet the display standards of Museums Australia; it will have revolving displays and from time to time exhibit rare items from overseas.

OTHR has entered into a voluntary collaborative agreement with the museum and we will be presenting jointly an educational aspect to both our displays with emphasis on the early days of steam and motor vehicles.

OTHR sees a great opportunity in working with the Skoda Register to present a joint display and the sites are conveniently placed with a mutually agreed entry price enabling visitors to see both attractions.

Both committees are looking forward to working together for the benefit of the Oberon-Tarana railway line and the Skoda and Tatra marques.

It is believed that such a joint collaboration is unique in the Central West, is part of our vision to construct a working tourism operation and will be of enormous benefit to Oberon in due course.

# Highlands Steam and Vintage Fair.

**10 – 11 February 2017**

Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway has a very important role to play at the Highlands Steam & Vintage Fair.

Plans are still being put into place but we will have a giant raffle with tickets available at the gate. The entire heritage railway precinct will be open for inspection and some members will be on hand to tell you about the displays and our achievements during 2016.

Memorabilia will be for sale at the station.

The boys from the Skoda and Tatra Register will be attending to tell you all about their exciting plans. Come and have a chat!

The station site will be open on Saturday February 11 from 9.00AM and is a major fund raising day for OTHR. Do make a point of coming along and give generously as every dollar helps.



OTHR Locomotives will be displayed at the Highlands Steam & Vintage Fair 2017

## We want to lighten your wallet just a little.....

- As the weekend of the Highlands Steam & Vintage Fair is a major open day and fundraiser for OTHR, it has been decided to push our offline fundraising draw back by 11 days. To compensate the draw now includes a second and third prize.

A donation of \$5.00 gives you an entry into the draw for the first prize of a fantastic painting by local artist Mike O’Kane, second prize is two tickets to Mayfield Garden and third prize is a hamper.

The draw will take place on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2017, so this is your last chance to make an offline donation and receive tickets in the draw.

An entry form is located on page 19.

- An offline donation with a prize in a draw was the brainchild of one of our members. He had surmised that this novel approach to fundraising was just what you members would go for. The draw will be conducted at the end of the Highlands Steam and Vintage Fair on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2017, so there’s still time to make that donation. Don’t prove our member wrong.
- Donations can be made on the open day at the entrance gate.
- All donations are tax deductible.
- Don’t forget a donation to the **GoFundMe** campaign where all funds raised go towards the completion of Stage 1 of our ambitious project – the Oberon to Hazelgrove part of the line and get a train running on that piece of track.



# **She's a Beauty!**

## **Hurry! last chance to be in the draw!**



The painting portrays an image of the type of loco that used to ply the Oberon Tarana branch line between Oberon and Tarana.

The painting is an image of the train about to cross the Snakes Gully Bridge north of Oberon, heading towards Oberon. It depicts a period around the 1930's.

Mike O'Kane, a local artist, is the painter.

And it could be yours!

Don't forget we have added a second prize of two tickets to Mayfield Garden and third prize of a hamper.

OTHR has launched an offline draw as part of our fund raising programme to get Stage 1, Oberon to Hazelgrove finished and a train running.

To enter the draw we need you to post by mail donations to our mail address:

- PO Box 299 Oberon NSW 2787.

We need:

- your name,
- address,

- email and
- phone number.
- Your donation needs to be clearly marked “fundraiser”.

Or donations can be made on the open day at the entrance gate

Your name and donation will be listed on the GoFundMe platform as an offline donation.

One ticket in the draw will be issued for each \$5.00 donation. Tickets will be mailed as soon as possible.

Cut off for mailed donations will be 4<sup>th</sup> February 2017 and the draw will take place at Oberon Station by President, Tim Arnison or his nominee on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2017.

All donations are tax deductible as OTHR is a registered charity.

Entry form can be found on page 19.

The draw came about as a result of a member suggestion and, if successful, we plan this form of fundraising to be ongoing.

## What's this thing called luv?



This strange bus-rail hybrid was designed to service minor rail lines in Sydney that did not have enough passengers to justify the larger rail motor. The first fleet of rail buses were produced in 1937. These vehicles were built at Waddingtons – Sydney's leading builder of coach bodies and therefore favoured a bus appearance rather than standard rail features which characterised the rail motor. The rail bus had driving controls at each end, much like a rail motor. The rail bus exhibits art deco features such as its two tone finish and curved body much like its road counterpart..

The only surviving example of a rail bus from the original 1937 fleet is housed in the Thirlmere Railway Museum in New South Wales.

*Poppy De Souza*

**Contacts**  
**For all enquiries**

Secretary: Elaine Ph. 02 6336-0441

Email [admin@othr.com.au](mailto:admin@othr.com.au)

## Offline Draw

### Win this:



**Complete this entry form for your last chance to win this fabulous painting.**

**Second Prize: Two tickets to Mayfield Garden**

**Third Prize: Hamper of goodies.**

**Drawn 11<sup>th</sup> February 2017**

**Donation: \$**

**Name:**

**Address:**

**Phone Number:**

**Email:**

Each \$5.00 of your donation receives one entry in the draw, i.e. \$30.00 donation = 6 entries. Mail entries close 4<sup>th</sup> February 2017 and draw conducted on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2017.

Entry tickets forwarded as soon as practicable. All donors acknowledged on "GoFundMe" platform as an offline donor.

Post entry and donation to OTHR, PO Box 299 Oberon NSW 2787 clearly marked "Fundraiser".

All donations are tax deductible.