



January 2009 Newsletter

PO Box 299, Oberon 2787

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***Meetings are held on the 1st
Wednesday of the month at 7.30pm
at the Oberon RSL Club*

Welcome to 2009. This year will be the most important and we hope, the most exciting in OTHR's existence as we are determined to complete the line between Oberon Station and Hazelgrove and have our first train running by the end of 2009. There is much work to be done but as a team I am sure we have the expertise and drive to complete this objective.

Welcome New Members

A very warm welcome to Paul Ferguson (Panania), Gabi & Rowena Cseh (Balmain) and David Ansen (Narara). OTHR appreciates your support and we hope you can visit the line and participate in our many activities during 2009.

February working bee: 7th – 14th

It is crucial to the achievement of our objective that every working bee is a success. We need your help in the following ways:

- ▶ The Catering Committee needs more assistance – if you can assist with catering at our caravan or can send food items such as cakes, biscuits, sandwiches, etc, please contact our secretary, Margaret Connors on 6336 1211.
- ▶ We are desperately in need of workers on the line as there are many jobs to complete. There will be a variety of tasks that do not require heavy lifting. However, most of the work will be replacing sleepers on the line. But remember, we now have the use of an excavator and all old sleepers will be pulled out and new ones inserted by the machine. Our main task will be to gauge and pin the sleepers. During the working bee we aim to pin at least 1,000 sleepers.
- ▶ If you have never been on the line before, now is a key time to assist OTHR. Workers can be inducted into our safety training course on the day, so come along, enjoy the camaraderie, good food and help to push the project ahead. If you can assist in any way at all, please contact Peter Culley, Track Manager on 0427 042 448.

Annual General Meeting: 4th March

OTHR's AGM will be held at our March monthly meeting on Wednesday, 4th March at 7.30 p.m. at Oberon RSL Club. It will be followed by an ordinary monthly meeting.

All management committee positions will become vacant and we urge all members who would like to contribute to OTHR's management to nominate. Nomination forms are available from the secretary and must be returned to her by 25th February.

Vale Jim Powe

Sadly we report the recent sudden passing of one of OTHR's Sydney members, Jim Powe. Jim was a very strong supporter of our project and made two visits to the line in the past 12 months. We send our condolences to Jim's partner, Linda and to his family.

Jim had a lifelong fascination with trains and trams. He became a cinematographer, worked in television and in his spare time filmed steam trains in Australia and New Zealand. Jim donated to OTHR his video that contains footage of the last train to run on the Oberon Tarana line in 1979.

In late 2008 Jim published a book "Trains and Railways of Australia" through New Holland Press. The book contains hundreds of photos with descriptive captions that provide a wonderful history of steam trains in all Australian States. Most of the photos have never been previously published. This will become a collector's item for all train enthusiasts.



*Goodbye Jim Powe.
We will miss Jim's
whimsical sense of
humour and his
great support and
interest in our track
restoration project.*

Christmas Raffle Results

A big thank you to all members and the generous Oberon community who supported our Christmas raffle. The first prize of an overnight's accommodation for 2 adults in the Jenolan Caves House and 2 caves tours was won by Felicity Webb. The 2nd prize, a gift voucher valued at \$150 from Birkenstock by Nature stores at Mona Vale and Neutral Bay was won by Maree Arrow. John Brochie won the 3rd prize which was a voucher valued at \$50 from the Green Fox Store, Oberon.

Many thanks again to the donors of the raffle prizes. Your continued support is greatly appreciated.

Priorities for 2009

OTHR's November/December Newsletter listed the group's highlights for 2008. Listed below are our key priorities for 2009 in order to have a tourist train running by the end of the year.

- Complete arrangements for a pressed concrete building to be erected at Hazelgrove Siding.
- Clean up Hazelgrove Siding area and build a platform.
- Finalise arrangements for CPH rail motor and transport it to Oberon.
- Transport 23 heritage trusses to Oberon from Eveleigh rail yards.
- Complete sleeper laying to Oberon Station.
- Work with Oberon Council in restoring all level crossings.
- Complete all accreditation documents before 30 June for the Independent Transport Safety & Reliability Regulator (ITSRR).
- Increase our membership to 350+.
- Increase the number of workers at working bees.
- Raise funds to finance the completion of Section 1 of our restoration project.

Well what a list of tasks we have to complete this year so that a train can be running in 2009! It will require dedication, hard work, a strong financial situation as well as membership and community support. We are confident that with our great teamwork, this goal can be achieved. Our motto should be:

COMPLETE THE LINE IN 2009!



OTHR workers remove sleepers in the days **before** Oberon Council loaned OTHR the excavator (now with a sleeper grab) which has helped to speed up & lighten the work.

2009 Highlands Steam & Vintage Fair: 20 – 22 February

This exciting event will be held at the Oberon Show Ground and in areas surrounding Oberon on the 20th, 21st and 22nd of February.

An enormous range of antique and vintage steam and other vehicles and machinery will be on display. OTHR will have on display its restored Wickham

Section Car and a photographic exhibition of our achievements to date.

For more information about the event and the Oberon Collectors Club Inc. contact the rally organiser and secretary, David McMurray on 6336 5331.



A stationary steam engine on display at the 2008 Oberon Show.

Photo courtesy of Harry Shannon

Exciting Steam Train Journeys

For steam train enthusiasts, the NSW Rail Transport Museum has organised an autumn program of steam train tours. Read below some of the planned trips:

1st March: Day trip from Sydney to Thirlmere with steam loco 3642 for the Thirlmere Festival of Steam.

14th March: Day trip *Rail & Sail* to Wollongong from Sydney on board the triple deck catamaran "Ocean Dreaming" one way and with steam loco 3642 the other or vice versa.

4th April: Day trip *Southern Highlander* with steam loco 3642 to the annual "Brigadoon" Scottish Festival at Bundanoon.

3rd May: Day trip on the *Thirlmere Flyer* with steam loco 3642 to visit Rail Heritage Centre, Thirlmere and a day out with Thomas the Tank Engine.

30th May: Day trip with steam loco 3642 to Katoomba or Mt Victoria and visit the Mt Victoria Great Train Festival.

28th June: Day trip to the Southern Highlands and South Coast with steam loco 3642-Bowral, Moss Vale, Robertson, Illawarra Escarpment, south coast beaches, Royal National Park then to Sydney.

Note: 10% discount available on ticket costs for groups of 9 to 42 passengers. For more information phone the Heritage Express office on 9379 1110 or visit the website at www.heritageexpress.com.au

Administrative Matters

- ☞ Next general meeting: 7.30 pm, 4th February
- ☞ Committee of Management meetings: 7.00 pm every 4th Wednesday of the month
- ☞ Exhibition at Oberon Show on 21-22 February
- ☞ March working bee: Sat. 7th – Sat. 14th March
- ☞ All meetings are held at Oberon RSL Club