

OBERON TARANA HERITAGE RAILWAY INC.

NEWSLETTER

June 2017



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

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Facebook: www.facebook.com/OTHR.Inc

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

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 Salmon

Editor's thoughts

In life, every important task we do needs to have the mark of professionalism.

Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway Inc. is no different. It's a privilege to be a member of OTHR and every member should strongly support our vision of "bringing your rail heritage back to life", at every opportunity.

Each committee member brings a set of skills to the table and we are constantly looking for people with a unique set of qualifications that can help move us forward in a professional way.

Likewise it is incumbent that your committee presents as a professional unit at all times.

So what qualities do your committee have?

In our case the committee of Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway Inc. is absolutely dedicated to the restoration of a railway line that was conceived as early as 99 years ago, was the life line to Oberon's early development and prosperity as we see the town today. If we are not careful that line will slip into annals of time and become a mere moment in history.

We intend to survive by becoming a tourist attraction for our benefit as well as Oberon's.

So your committee has developed:

- A specialized knowledge of the Oberon branch line by building expertise.
- Competency; we try to be always prepared, focusing on management and planning so we are always in control. We try to get the job done with reliability and try to keep our promises even if circumstances don't work out, try our best to make the situation right
- Honesty and integrity by keeping our word and are trusted amongst our peer groups as a result. We never compromise our values and always try to do the right thing by our members even if it sometimes means taking a harder road.

- Respect; your committee works hard to keep the respect of everyone we deal with whether that is any level of Government, our members or our local community.
- Accountability; we always own our words and actions, especially our mistakes. Accountability is closely tied to honesty and integrity and is an essential part of being professional.
- Self- Regulation; it is essential to remain professional under pressure. We always try to show respect to people around us and we don't let a bad situation impact on how we treat others.
- Image; Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway Inc. and its committee must look professional. We therefore exude confidence and others gain respect for the association.

There is so much more to achieving our objectives and everyone plays a part in our success.

"Have a bias toward action – let's see something happen now. You can break that big plan into small steps and take the first step right away."

Indira Gandhi.



Bullock team loaded with railway sleepers for Oberon Tarana railway line in Oberon Street outside Church of England.

Know Shane Moorhead...

Anyone with a long term association with the Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway Inc. couldn't help but have come across Shane Moorhead.

A born and bred local, it was Shane together with Rick Fletcher who recognised the value of rebuilding the Oberon – Tarana railway line and operating it as a tourism venture both for Oberon and railway enthusiasts alike.

He was the founding President of OTHR, an ideas man with boundless enthusiasm and a knack for achieving the seemingly impossible.

Shane fought to overcome insurmountable odds when dealing with bureaucracy. He also had the contacts and could get all sorts of work and donations of machinery use from other local businesses.

I'm told that Shane could keep five projects bubbling along at once.

He was the man to take the project to council and seek their support.

He was originally unconvinced that he should be the first President of OTHR but was persuaded to take the role because of his local contacts. It was also said that he had plenty of charisma and sway in getting things done.

Shane was instrumental in purchasing our two locomotives and having them appear at Oberon station as if by magic and a lot of help from local businesses.

Older hands than me tell me Shane and Rick came very close to obtaining an operator's licence but were beaten by the good people at State Rail and their manager John Holland Group. Ten years on and how familiar is that statement!

Certainly the modern OTHR owes Shane a debt of gratitude and his excellent hard work in the formative years of OTHR will never be overlooked.



Shane Moorhead looking resplendent in the fashion of the day.

NEXT MEETING

General Meeting

7th June 2017

7.30PM

General meeting

Reserve the date, 7th June 2017 for the Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway Inc. general meeting.

Secretary Elaine is enlisting a mystery speaker for the June meeting.

You'll have to attend the meeting to find out who he/she is and hear his/hers entertaining story.

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.

A membership renewal form is located at the end of this newsletter for your use.

Some Oberon Facts.....

- Oberon is at the centre of New South Wales' timber industry.
- Pine forests grow as far as the eye can see.
- Oberon's timber industry employs around 500 people
- Oberon's three timber complexes manufacture everything from high density fibreboard to MDF to dressed timber and treated timber that are used in all facets of the home building industry.
- Oberon's pine forests are a great place for fun activities.
- Local pine forests have great cycling trails whilst in autumn; the forests are a haven for mushrooms.



Inside Oberon's Pine Forests - a winter wonderland

Gathering of the clans.

Saturday 13th may saw a gathering of all parties interested in moving the Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway Inc. project forward.

The meeting was hosted by the Skoda & Tatra Museum as part of its "meet and greet" programme.

Guests included Phil Stevenson, Central Tablelands Chapter Museums Australia, John Glastonbury, President RHA. NSW, Kathy Sajowitz, Mayor Oberon Council, John Hebblewhite, Chair Skoda & Tatra Museum, Tim Arnison, President OTHR, members of S& TM and OTHR.

The gathering of the clans allowed all parties with an interest in the Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway Inc. project to express their plans, hopes and frustrations in relation to getting a major tourism venture up and running.

Phil Stevenson of the Central Tablelands Chapter of Museums Australia spoke about how OTHR could be a part of his organisation and the fact that we can avail ourselves of workshops and advice on how to put together a professional museum. Phil is part of the Orange Museum project which was made possible with grants and funding from the three tiers of Government that allowed them to engage three paid employees. He was also a part of the outstanding Millthorpe Regional Museum.

Tim Arnison, President OTHR. gave a potted history of OTHR and development of the Oberon Branch line and of OTHR's ultimate aim. He spoke of the proposed HOL .and our ongoing negotiations with JHR and TfNSW. advising that this was a stumbling block for the S&TM getting their operation established.

OTHR's ultimate aim is to have the S&TM and OTHR museums run side by side to make a vibrant tourism precinct.

Tim also advised that OTHR had an involvement with the Tremain Mill project in Bathurst in that we are to provide a loan of a restored S-Truck as part of their display. Separately Bathurst Council has proposed the building of a railway museum around the historic Bathurst station area and OTHR would like to work with them in due course.

John Glastonbury, President of RHA. Spoke about Lachlan Valley Railway who has a very familiar problem to us. JHR and TfNSW are making life difficult in their access to the Orange East Fork to allow rolling stock to go on site.

He spoke of the need to perhaps approach the Minister for Heritage and Environment to work on a plan for the future and the Transport Ministry is not interested or helpful. He also argued that tourism might well be a better focus for our activities than transport; an area that OTHR is already exploring.

John Hebblewhite, Chair of the S&TM. plans to immediately commence an education programme for younger members of their group to bring them up to date on museum curation. OTHR will be invited to take part in that programme; something that we had had tentative talks with the local high school in the past.

John also broached a joint entry fee arrangement and that we both work towards making the precinct people friendly with landscaping, picnic tables and parking.

He also suggested that we explore joint funding applications as they may have more success in future.

Kathy Sajowitz, Mayor of Oberon Council says Council will advocate and lobby for the two groups, particularly in the interests of tourism. She suggested lobbying the Minister for Tourism and inviting a visit.

She noted that Council can have no influence with JHR and the implementation of the HOL.

Meeting closed at 1.00 PM with lunch to follow.

Your editor notes that the meeting was open, friendly and many positives came out of it that both OTHR, S&TM. and council can work with to achieve our ultimate goals.

It's also worth noting that in my opinion, the delays experienced over the years are seriously retarding Oberon's ability to develop potentially a major new arm of its tourism industry that is letting other towns in the region gain an advantage.

Don't be fooled by misinformation. Your committee is working very hard behind the scenes and those efforts and results often can't be readily seen.

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.

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 399, 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.



Oberon Loco Siding; Loco 1957, 23rd January 1963

When the train runs....

We’ve discussed what will happen when the train runs, in recent newsletters, but there’s much more to operating a vibrant tourism operation.

Your committee must also address technology and communications.

So to technology first; we will need:

- An extensive and detailed website and Facebook page, already in place, to inform the public of all developments at OTHR. These pages will eventually be modernised to present a refreshed image of OTHR.
- There is a MYOB accounting system in place to record daily transactions of our accounting procedures. This system will be expanded in due course.
- We will install point of sale technology with connectivity to MYOB software. This will be required to record entry fees and souvenir sales and any other sundry sales.

Then we see our communication channels as:

- Website linked to Facebook
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Email
- Internet blog
- Social media page including our own internet channel
- Landline
- Mobile phone
- Mail
- Shopfront and new premises
- Newsletter

Your committee is in no doubt that we will be running a totally professional operation.



Another view of Oberon Loco Siding; Loco 1942, December 1959

Next Working Bee
Saturday 3rd June 2017
To
Wednesday 7th June 2017

Working Bee News

June working bee will 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 completed.
- Commence work on the Plough Van
- Reposition the Signal ladder.

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
- 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.

Congratulations and thanks to the volunteers attending the May working bee.

With a group of enthusiastic volunteers the May working bee turned into a six day event with so many positive outcomes.

The storage shed is now almost complete with a little painting and finishing left to do; the third line has been constructed into the rolling stock shed; Sections of the station have been painted in original colours, plus many other minor jobs done. Daily volunteers numbered between 3 and 5 and with a little hard labour, lots of fun and good grace they achieved so much.

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???

I bought my friend, Ian, an elephant for his room.

Ian said “Thanks”

I said “Don’t mention it”

Oberon Railway League Arrangements for Parliamentary Visit.

(From a Correspondent)

“A largely attended meeting of the above League was held on Saturday last when Mr. E.A. Burcher, president, occupied the chair. Mr C.W. Johnston, M.L.A. wrote intimating that he had arranged in conjunction with Mr. J. Ryan, for a visit of members of the Legislative Council and Assembly to Oberon on September 13th. The visitors would include the Treasurer, Mr. J.C.L.Fitzpatrick, and Messrs Waddell, Hurley and Ryan, M’s.L.C., Mr. J. Dooley and himself, as well as other ministerial supporters. He also intimated that Mr. Hall, Minister for Works, has given a definite promise to have the Oberon-Tarana railway bill prepared and introduced during the present session of Parliament.

It was resolved that the visitors be entertained at a luncheon in Rutter’s Hall on the 13th instant at mid-day or a dinner at night whichever was the most convenient for the visitors. The matter of making the necessary arrangements was left in the hands of the president and Messrs Looby and Batcheldor. The price of the tickets was fixed at 6s. The matter of arranging for cars to tour the district was left in the Secretary’s hands.

The following gentlemen were appointed to accompany the visitors on their tour of inspection: Messrs E.A.Burcher, M.J.Looby, A.R.D. Cunynhame, A.Stevenson, P.J.Nunan, and G. Batcheldor. The matter of arranging the toast list was left in the hands of the president, secretary and treasurer.”

Lithgow Mercury Wednesday 27 August 1919.
Copy held by National Library of Australia.



*Opening day Wednesday 3rd October 1923.
Model T Ford in foreground.
Photo: Oberon Museum.*

Oberon Railway Station Building.

Back in 2014, Stuart Sharp wrote a paper on the Oberon Station.

His story continues from last newsletter.....

“The low infrastructure standards of the Oberon branch are explained by the knowledge of the NSW Railway Commissioner that rural branch lines did not and would not pay their capital costs or even working expenses. Yes, power forces combined to provide the line but the NSW Railways was not a willing player in the decision making process. The Commissioner showed his displeasure by providing low construction and infrastructure standards. He marked these types of branches as Pioneer Lines. So as not waste money, the Commissioner allocated the minimal expenditure to rural branch and connecting lines. He did this by:

- Mandating a maximum train speed of 25 MPH
- Building steep gradients – as high as 1 in 25
- Providing very tight, five chain radius track curves
- Eliminating any form of stone ballast
- Using of timber rather than steel for small openings
- Omitting fencing along railway boundaries, apart from station yards
- Eliminating intermediate safe-working staff stations
- Eliminating rail level platform structures for intermediate stations

- Avoiding initially platforms at intermediate stations, with later platforms made of second hand sleepers – waiting sheds remained at ground level
- Removal of turntable in 1927 for engine turning at Oberon after the decision was made not to provide one at Tarana
- Using relatively small, pre-cast concrete unit platform style buildings without some of the typical passenger facilities, and
- Ensuring the absence of an official residence for the Station Master.

At Oberon, the NSW Railways demonstrated pessimism about the financial viability by the allocation of the following goods infrastructure:

- Installation of the smallest size outdoor jib crane – two tons relocated from Girilambone
- The allocation of the smallest size of conventional goods sheds- 30 feet by 12 feet, and
- The absence of a cart weighbridge

It is as clear as Heaven and Earth that the Railway Commissioner thought that the Oberon branch would never be profitable. Unfortunately, that did not matter as the NSW Railways was then as it is today owned and managed by the government, not Railway Commissioners. It was a simple case that construction of the branch fulfilled government political and financial objectives.

The nature of the infrastructure along the branch line and at Oberon was not only the response to a conscious decision to minimise capital expenditure, it was an act of departmental revenge against the NSW government for making the NSW Railways build and maintain a knowingly unprofitable branch line with inadequate public funds.

The line between Tarana and Oberon was opened in 1923. C.C. Singleton described the line as “an unfortunate political accident” Its completion was being attributed not only to the power brokers in Sydney but the strength of the rail lobby in Oberon. Research of local newspapers would probably reveal who were the key, local power players and why they wanted the line constructed and why it occurred between 1919 and 1923.”



*Opening day 1923.
The ribbon is about to be cut by Mrs Burcher as the
tender of A369 (1953) approaches.
Photo Oberon Museum.*

This paper by Stuart Sharp and the preceding article titled “Oberon Railway League” really starts to fill in the history of our branch line. Isn’t it amazing that the description of the branch line is as we know it some 84 years later?

It’s a telling reason why Oberon has to preserve the historic Oberon – Tarana line.

New book for Gunzels

The Puffing Billy Preservation Society’s Publications Committee is about to publish a new book, **Speed Limit 20 Plus**. The book is essentially a reprint of Ted Downs’ iconic **Speed Limit 20** published in 1963. It is reprinted as a definitive book on the story of the narrow-gauge branch lines of the Victorian Railways, from the late 1880’s to 1963.

For further information on **Speed Limit 20 Plus** please contact publications@pbr.org.au or contact Phil Matthews, Speed Limit 20 Plus Project Manager on 0418 521 439.

Railway adventures with Martyn Salmon

"I called into the Tenterfield Railway Museum on Monday and below are some of my observations.

Firstly, Tenterfield is on the New England Highway, on the Northern Tablelands area and at 900m above sea level it gets the odd fall of snow. The railway station is on the western side of the town, around 2Km's from the main street (New England Highway) so you can't see it if you are driving through the town. But the museum attracts **some 6,000 visitors per year** and has done so now for the past few years.

The station/platform is similar in appearance and size to Bathurst; it has a tarred car park which can accommodate 50 plus cars. The overall heritage site would be the same length as Oberon yard but twice the width. The museum is opened 7 days, from 9.00am to 4.00pm with two volunteers rostered each day to man the station. The entrance fee is \$7.50 per adult, no charge for children. The museum is well represented with the station offering some 14 rooms of displays, model railways, photos, etc. There are some 17 rolling stock items to look at, plus a number of out buildings (goods shed, barracks, trike shed, etc.)

The group operates a souvenir shop selling caps, post cards, stubby holders, painted dog spikes, mounted dog spikes on timber, other items as well as drinks, tea and coffee. They have the odd tourist coach calls which, apart from the entrance fee, they sell the passengers tea, coffee and biscuit for additional income.

Working bees are held Wednesday morning and Saturday morning with 20/30 people attending; all are locals!! (Tenterfield population is around 3,500) Main activities are maintenance of the site, rolling stock maintenance and restoration. They do have a number of trikes; some are operational and they get the odd test run.

The museum has been operational since 1991 after the last train ran in 1998"

Here's an example of what Oberon can achieve in the future.



Tenterfield Railway Museum

What's this thing called luv?



Here's another beauty for you gunzels (love that word).

Can't guess what it is??

Answer:

This item is a NSW brass builders plate "The Clyde Engineering Co. Ltd. / Granville & Sydney, No 175 (Phoenix) NSW 1916 with the Australian Coat of Arms.

Contacts
For all enquiries

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Email admin@othr.com.au

OBERON TARANA HERITAGE RAILWAY INC

PO Box 299, Oberon, NSW, 2787

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL/APPLICATION

Name:.....

Address:.....

Telephone No:.....Mobile:.....

Email address:.....

Enclosed cheque/cash/Money Order: \$20.00

Donation: \$____(optional but very welcome)

Total: \$

Or by Direct Deposit: BSB: 062-632 Account #: 1004-9851 quoting your name as reference

Receipt # (Office use only)