



May 2009 Newsletter

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****June monthly meeting - Wednesday, 3rd
June at 7.30pm at the Oberon RSL Club.**

****July working bee: 11 - 18th July**

Railway Station News

There has been a delay in OTHR taking control of the Oberon Railway Station – we hope these delays don't continue. We now move into the station on the 1st of July. As many members know, the Oberon Museum group had locked OTHR out of the railway station for the past two and a half years.

However, an agreement that was reached by all parties with the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) last November will allow OTHR to have access to the station and track and the museum group will relocate from the station buildings. When we move in, it will be a great step forward and what work we have in store!

It will be exciting times as we refurbish the railway station which is listed on the NSW State Heritage Register. OTHR will work closely with the Heritage Branch of the Dept. of Planning so that the station, built in 1923, will again become the operating headquarters of a working branch line. Space will be required for management, ticket sales and rail operations.

OTHR plans to use the 23 heritage trusses from Eveleigh rail yards to construct a storage shed for our rolling stock. Access to the station means that we can start restoration work on the items of rolling stock that need attention and we can also start setting up static historical railway displays. This will include for example, a donated 1880's heritage cattle wagon. Historic carriages and a tender that was used on the Oberon line will be located in the station yards. One of the carriages was the actual one used on the Oberon to Tarana line for some 40 years.

There will many opportunities for all of OTHR's carpenters, painters, coachbuilders, electricians and plumbers to help move our project along so that we can have a rail motor running as soon as possible.

Lachlan Valley Rlwy Visits to Tarana

Well what an exciting 2 weekends we have had. On Sunday 17th May three joined CPH rail motors left Bathurst for a return run to Tarana. Twenty OTHR members and friends enjoyed the leisurely trip and gained a different perspective of the countryside from the railway line.

Saturday 23rd was an all day train event which saw 35 OTHR members and friends board the trains at Lithgow station. Lunch was eaten at the Tarana Hotel before heading off again for the next stop at Rydal. Passengers were met by Rydal's Daffodil Festival

Committee members who provided us with interesting information about the history of the village and buildings. We then spent an hour exploring Rydal, including its famous hotel before heading off to Wallerawang for an hour's stop.

OTHR members enjoyed an hour's shopping in the beautifully restored Old Wallerawang Station which houses a very popular lolly shop, florist shop, gift shop and art gallery. We climbed on board for the final leg back to Lithgow loaded with bags of lollies. Those bulls' eyes still haven't lost their flavour.



Lachlan Valley Railway's railmotors wait for their passengers to explore the Old Wallerawang Station.

What an exciting day it was for us all. Riding a "tin hare" brought back memories of past trips for lots of passengers and gave insights into the fun we are going to have when our own CPH railmotor is running between Oberon and Hazelgrove.

A big thank you to the friendly Lachlan Valley team who shared their knowledge of CPHs with us and encouraged us in our railway endeavours.

Trivia Night - Friday, 12th June

OTHR's first Trivia Night commences at 7pm at Oberon Golf Club. Thanks to the hard work of Jenny Cole and her team, the night is a sell-out. I hear there is a great mix of questions from elementary maths to esoteric knowledge about Oberon. We will let you know the champion team in our next newsletter.

Mt Victoria Great Train Weekend

For the 3rd year OTHR arranged a display at Mt Victoria and our thanks go to Lynette Ireland who co-ordinated our photo display with the assistance of Keith Jones. Lynette reported there were many interested rail enthusiasts who visited our exhibition with a number reporting they were keenly following our progress on OTHR's website. Lynette and Keith gave out many brochures and were congratulated on the photographic display. We are grateful to them

both for keeping OTHR's name in the forefront among train enthusiasts.

May Working Bee's Achievements

Track Manager, Peter Culley reported that at the end of the working bee, all sleepers from Hazelgrove to Gate 6 have been placed under the line. Around 200 sleepers at Gate 6 have to be gauged and spiked, then re-sleeping of this section is complete. The fitters also repaired the fire-damaged culvert just north of Gate 6 and Peter says, "It looks good." We are grateful to Peter, Tim and all the volunteers for their sterling work on restoring the line.



Our Track Manager, Peter Culley removing and replacing sleepers with the sleeper grab.

June's Working Bee: 30th May-6th June

The June working bee is now in full swing with work being done replacing culverts. Later in the week there will be gauging and pinning of sleepers near Gate 6. If time permits, sleepers will be replaced near the heritage-listed trucking yards. During the week we have quite a few of our out-of-town members joining us and they are staying at the Big Trout Motel. Thanks go to the McGrath family for providing free accommodation for all visiting OTHR workers.

Working bee dates for the rest of 2009

We have set out dates below for the remainder of the year. This will assist members who want to plan holiday breaks to come and work on the line. When we shortly move into the Oberon Station there will be many refurbishment tasks to undertake. These will be listed in a future newsletter with a call for volunteer assistance from our members who have been unable to work on the track.

2009 Working Bee Dates

July: Sat. 11th – Sat. 18th
August: Sat. 8th – Sat. 15th
September: Sat. 5th – Sat. 12th
October: Sat. 17th – Sat. 24th
November: Sat. 14th – Sat. 21st
December: Thurs. 10th – Sunday 13th
 Note: Our Christmas Party will be held on the evening of the 13th December.

Audit by the Independent Transport Safety & Reliability Regulator (ITSRR)

An audit team from ITSRR visited OTHR on 21st May to review the progress we are making with the

mountain of safety documentation we must develop before we are allowed to run a train on the line.

Systems Manager, Rick Fletcher, with the assistance of board members had spent hundreds of hours developing a very professional set of safety documents. OTHR was complimented by the audit team for the thoroughness of its preparation. Well done Rick and the team.

OTHR's New Document Controller

Thank you and welcome to Laurie Evans who has agreed to take on the role of Document Controller for OTHR. Laurie will assist our Systems Manager, Rick Fletcher in organising and distributing our safety management system documents.

Wood Raffle News

There will be another wood raffle on the 5th & 6th June. The winner of the last wood raffle lives in Newcastle and her prize was generously taken to her by Ian Christie-Johnson. Our appreciation goes to Lorraine Fielding and her team of enthusiastic ticket sellers for helping to enhance OTHR's profile with the public.

Donation of Railway Platform Trolley

Our reputation as a rail heritage group continues to grow and through our website many rail enthusiasts are watching our progress. One such observer is Mr Shawn Rannard who recently contacted us to donate a railway platform trolley to be displayed when we gain access to the Oberon Station. Many thanks Shawn for your generosity.

Historical Excursion a Great Success

More than 20 members enjoyed a ramble down memory lane after the May working bee when Richard and Marjorie Webb of Tarana, took them to see the former quarry which supplied the granite not only for the Sydney Opera House steps but also for the new Parliament House in Canberra.

The group then took time out to visit the wooden trestle bridge over Snakes Valley Creek and the site of the old Carlwood siding before inspecting the steel railway bridge spanning the Fish River at Mutton Falls. They were pleased to see that the steel bridge is still in very good condition and should only require the timber sleepers being replaced.

Membership News

Our 2009 membership continues to grow as our members renew their memberships and numbers are already standing at 225. We welcome the following new members: Farida Khoury (Strathfield), Maikha Ly (Wagga Wagga) and Lawrence & Janette Vran and Family (Lake Haven). We will keep you informed of all of OTHR's activities and hope you have time to visit Oberon and participate in our restoration work.