

OTHR RAILWAY NEWS

The newly formed Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway has had its first general meeting as an Incorporated body. Incorporation provides a number of benefits but essentially we are now a “legal entity” with limited liability for the members. The group is structured as a not-for-profit organisation.

First steps towards Stage 1 of the preservation of the line will see members engaging in fund raising activities principally to cover costs associated with the various insurances which weigh heavily on community groups these days. On Saturday the 19th of March, we will be conducting a membership drive in the main street of Oberon during the morning and at 1.30pm members and guests will assemble at the Museum to conduct a tour of the preserved railway related equipment. Following that, the group will explore the first section of line from the station to the vicinity of the factory complex. If you are interested in joining the association, please feel free to come along for the tour and afternoon tea. Members are requested to “bring a plate”.

In the previous instalment I asked “where was the station named “Kierstone”?” Most locals would know that the answer to that question was Carlwood. When the line first opened construction plans showed the station name as Kierstone. One of our members has the original hand drawn and beautifully coloured plans from 1921 and these are clearly marked with the original name although it is crossed out and re-labelled Carlwood. The source of the latter name is interesting as it was derived from two of the given names of the Member for Bathurst at that time – Valentine Carlyle Ross Wood Johnston, better known as Carl Wood Johnston. He was known as the “father of the line” and was present at the turning of the first sod but not at the opening of the railway in 1923.

Appropriately, the next question would be “what happened to Carl Wood Johnston MLA and why was he not present at the opening?”

The attached photograph shows the “mile post” at Hazelgrove which marked the distance in miles from Sydney. These were once a feature of country lines and this one has been nicely restored by Arthur Robinson. There may be other items of original local railway equipment and signs which have been “preserved” by members of the community. If you have such items they would make a valuable contribution to the rebuilding of the line and would be gratefully received.

The next OTHR meeting for members and prospective members will be on Wednesday the 6th April at 7.30pm in the Oberon RSL conference room. You can join by paying the \$10 household subscription to Vice President Bill Muldoon at Thrifty Link hardware or contact OTHR Secretary, Rick Fletcher on 6336 1787.