



*Newsletter of the
Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway Inc.
Issue 3 – December 2005*

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Website: www.ozsite.com.au/oberonrailway

Welcome to the third issue of the OTHR Newsletter. The period since July has been a busy one for the Board and many of the local members. We will attempt to fill you in on our progress. At times it seems very frustrating that so much of the progress is tied up in paper-work and red tape. However, we have persevered and it all seems to be paying-off at the end of the year.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be held in conjunction with our Christmas Party on Sunday 11th Dec. at the Oberon Railway Station and Museum.



There will be a brief meeting at 12 noon followed by a barbecue Christmas lunch – we ask you to b.y.o. food and drink and we will supply the barbecue for cooking.

Grant Success:

The best of news - we were successful in obtaining the Australian Tourism Development Program Grant which was applied for earlier in the year. There were only 40 successful applicants across Australia within our category and only 7 were allocated to NSW. Coupled with the matching grant from Oberon Council, this makes up the \$200,000 over 2 years. The project is for a combined railway/ walking & cycling track in the rail corridor between Oberon and Hazelgrove. The rail portion of the project is \$100,000 and will largely be expended on re-sleepering the line in that section. The

funding is not for road crossings which will need to be reinstated by a co-operative effort between OTHR, Council, local Business and the community. What does this mean for you? It will mean that we will be asking for volunteers to help in the physical jobs of lifting the old track and replacing sleepers. Keep fit!

The Lease:

This is a key part of the whole project. We have to have official permission to lease or occupy the rail corridor in order to perform restoration work on the track. Until recently we seemed to be hitting our heads against the proverbial brick wall. We looked close to being granted an “Interim Licence” to occupy the rail corridor by the ARTC. However some members of the 355 Committee have approached Council to request that Council take out the Licence rather than OTHR.

It remains to be seen what happens at the next Council meeting. From our perspective it should make little difference except that we won’t have the responsibility of paying for the Public Risk and Volunteer Workers’ insurance policies. What other ramifications are involved in this decision will be evident soon.

The work done in applying for the Licence to Occupy has gone for nought but that seems to fit the pattern of 2 steps forward and then 3 back! We have contacted Council to advise them of the type of Volunteer Workers insurance that we require in order to safeguard you – our volunteers. We think it advisable to have death & disablement benefits; domestic help & home tutorial benefits; out of pocket expenses; funeral expenses; non-medical expenses etc. Something which is suitable for retired and student volunteers as well as full time workers.

Weed Spraying:

Along with the original good news about the lease, ARTC agreed to supply 80 litres of glyphosate based weed spray. We have picked that up from Bathurst and have commenced spraying operations from Matt McMahon's utility. So far the areas which have been well cleared by Arthur Robinson have been sprayed, along with most of the yard at Hazelgrove and beyond. We also managed to spray the cattle yards near Albion Street.



As you can see, we needed to be slightly creative in getting the spray into some areas!

With the likelihood of Council having the Licence to Occupy, it would seem that they will also assume the responsibility of maintaining the Corridor. Perhaps our weed spraying tasks will be reduced which will allow us time for other work.

Weed Spraying – Good News:

I am pleased to advise that we have had a very generous donation of a Suzuki LJ80 spraying vehicle to help us control the weeds. This vehicle is complete and operational with pumps and spray reels. It has been donated by the principals of Chemcoag, Ray & Laurie McMahon and we thank them very much for their generosity.

Matt will be carrying out a conversion on the vehicle to make it suitable for use on the track. It also needs a replacement tank as the current alloy tank has an adverse chemical reaction with the weed spray. If you know where we may be able to obtain a 400 to 600 litre plastic tank free or at minimal cost could you please let us know.

Accreditation:

The Board has worked very hard to assemble our application into a very professional document. This document was forwarded to the Independent Transport Safety and Reliability Regulator (ITSRR). The granting of accreditation confers on us the rights and responsibilities involved in running trains on the line. In the first instance, at least for a 2 year period, we will be operating in construction mode and not carrying paying passengers.

This will enable us to get rail vehicles down the line to facilitate rebuilding of the track and infrastructure. In order to comply, we have provided detailed policy in the following areas:

- our organisational information.
- the scope of the operation.
- definitions appropriate to our project.
- competency and capacity of the OTHR Board and members to undertake the project.
- risk management framework.
- high level risk areas.
- emergency responses.
- infrastructure & rolling stock maintenance standards and inspection procedures.
- standard operating procedures.
- certificates of competency.
- rail safety worker training.
- assessment and certification.
- change management processes.
- incident notification.
- internal investigation.
- annual audit process.
- fatigue management.
- drugs & alcohol policy.
- training.
- health & fitness.

As I said before, the Board has been busy!

How will this affect you?

Hopefully you can see from the above policies that it's not just a question of jumping on the track and ripping away at the sleepers. All volunteers will be required to attend a Safety Introduction Course and to hold a Certificate of Competency in the areas where they operate. Our policies detail the requirements and they are there to protect you

and others against accident and injury. We have qualified people to run these courses and they will be operational in the New Year. This is to protect you rather than hinder you.

As a general indication, we will require all volunteer workers on the line to wear:

- safety vests (OTHR to supply)
- solid boots, preferably with a steel cap.
- safety helmets (we will try to obtain these by donation).
- long trousers (protection against snake bite)
- safety glasses where appropriate.

As we are not in a financial position to supply all of these items, it will be useful if you can supply as much as possible during the early stages.

Australia Day Raffle:

We are running a raffle to be drawn on Australia Day 2006. Obviously the purpose is to raise funds for restoration.

Now, all this time you have been saying – “I can’t wait to help out with the Railway” – **well this is your big chance.** We want each member to buy or sell at least one book of tickets. Please ring Marjorie on 02 63367 5835 if you need to order tickets.

If you received your “On Track” by mail a book of tickets will be enclosed. If you can’t sell the tickets, please contact Marjorie. Please return the tickets and proceeds to: M. Webb “Wonga” Tarana 2787

The cost of the tickets will be \$2 each (books of 10) and the raffle to be drawn on 26th January 2006.

The prizes are:

First prize - two tickets on the rail/sail trip conducted by 3801 Ltd on Sunday, 26 February 2006. Sail to Newcastle and return on 3801.

2nd & 3rd Prizes: large framed prints of the 3801 steam train taken at Tarana on 4th September 2005

Fathers’ Day Event:

Whilst the weather wasn’t kind, this proved to be a very successful day with over 500 people gathering at Tarana to welcome 3801. We raised about \$1600 on the day which will be a welcome contribution to our ongoing costs.

Perhaps it was just as well that it rained as we ran out of food during the morning anyway. The pub did a roaring trade all day and the pipe Band stayed there to continue the celebrations.



Above: some of the crew at work setting up the marquee and
Right: Christine and Peter look the part dressed in fine period costume.



The crew and passengers on 3801 were very impressed with the reception at Tarana. The Lithgow Highland Pipe Band was also very well received. We provided all of our major supporters such as the Pipe Band and local MLA Gerard Martin with a framed certificate of appreciation.

Coming activities:

Preliminary work needs to be done on the line as soon as the lease comes through. If you can help by devoting some time to weed control or line clearing please contact either:

Line Manager (Matt): 6336 1359
Secretary (Rick): 6336 1787
President (Shane): 6336 1991

Not all of this work is back breaking. Some simple tasks need to be performed such as collecting some of the line side dog spikes and other materials. We could also do with some help in preparing paper work.

Rail Motor:

We can't provide too much detail at this stage but we are negotiating with another group about a railmotor. It would not occur until mid 2006 or later but would be the ideal first passenger carrying train from Oberon to Hazelgrove.

Track Laying Machinery:

In the previous issue of "On Track" we mentioned that we are trying to get some obsolete sleeper and track laying machinery from ARTC / RIC. We are also trying to get good second-hand rail and sleepers.

It has been a frustrating exercise as we can't deal directly with ARTC at present and have to go through Rail Heritage Australia. It also seems that we can't really get anywhere until such time as we have the lease and possibly the accreditation! We *will* keep trying.

This photo shows some of the obsolete but labour saving machinery at work on the ARHS track in the ACT.



Hand tools: some of you may have contacts or access to old railway hand tools for track work.

We are going to require these very soon, so if you can help or have any sources, please let us know.

Tarana Valley Tour:

Our self-guided tour of the Tarana Valley with an emphasis on the railway features is now available. If you would like a copy please let me know as I can email or send you one. If you haven't seen the various stations and bridges, this trip might be of interest.

Logo:

We need to obtain some professional help in designing a logo for the railway. The logo will be used in our correspondence, website, documents, regalia etc. It will be with us for the life of the organisation. With that in mind, we need to get it right first time.

I have ideas of an image representing a locomotive builders plate, often oval sometimes rectangular. Perhaps with Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway Inc. around the border and a stylised 19 class loco in the centre. Any suggestions welcome.

Does anyone know where there is a co-operative graphic artist /designer willing to help out?

Meetings:

1st Wednesday of the Month 7.30pm
Hazelgrove Ph - 6336 1787

The January meeting will be on the 4th and whilst some members may be away, others who live away from the district may be able to attend.

***Merry Christmas
and Happy New Year
from the OTHR Board.***

