



*Newsletter of the
Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway Inc.
Issue 4 – January 2006*

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Website: www.ozsite.com.au/oberonrailway

Welcome to the fourth issue of the OTHR Newsletter. This is a brief issue to keep you in touch with recent developments

Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be held in Wednesday 4th February 2006 at 7.30pm.

The venue has changed and will be at the old Hazelgrove School. This is located adjacent to the Hazelgrove Rural Fire Brigade shed and is approximately 300m north of our previous venue. From Oberon, travel towards Tarana on the Hazelgrove Rd., for approximately 5km. Pass Black Bullock Rd and 300m further on turn left into the school (signposted Hazelgrove RFS). The toilet facilities are clean but primitive (a long drop) so bring a good torch. Tea and coffee making facilities are on hand but bring your own plate of refreshments and cold drinks.

Annual General Meeting:

The Annual General Meeting of the OTHR Inc will be held on Wednesday 1st March 2006. All positions will be declared vacant and elections will be held for new office bearers. Nominations must be made in writing, signed by 2 members, and accompanied by the written consent of the candidate. Nominations must be to the secretary by the 22nd of February 2006. Forms are available from the sec. – 02 6336 1787.

Hazelgrove Station:



The photograph shows Hazelgrove Station in its heyday (*photo 1956 – Michael Bannister*). A clearer photo is on the website. Our plan is to rebuild the station building to the same design. It is a prefabricated design based on standard size concrete panels. Of interest is the rain water diverter between the guttering and the tank showing that the idea of flushing the first dirty water from the roof dates back to at least early last century.

The small timber platform to the right will need to be rebuilt with some concessions to the 21st Century, viz. a ramp for wheelchair access; some safety railing and a longer platform to cater for the focus on passenger carrying rather than freight.

The Licence:

When is a Lease not a lease? Answer - when it's a Licence. The document which gives authority to occupy and work in the rail corridor is now called a "Licence to Occupy". In its final form it will be known as a "Heritage Licence".

At the Council 355 Committee meeting on the 5th December 2005, the...

"meeting agreed unanimously to support OTHR applying for a licence. Oberon Council is not in a position to apply at this stage due to insurance reasons."

Unfortunately that position seems to have been overruled and we understand that Council has now applied for and received, from ARTC, an Interim Licence for 6 months dating from the first of January. The Council Insurance cover has been adjusted to allow such an application.

We had been assured that multiple licences could be held but it also now appears that this was based on a false premise. It needs to be pointed out that we applied to ARTC for an Interim Licence as long ago as the 11th

November 2005. We have taken action to ascertain why that application was ignored.

It needs to be made clear that we have failed in our attempts to obtain much needed surplus equipment from RailCorp, ARTC and RIC because we *don't have a Licence to Occupy*. This equipment is urgently needed to allow us to proceed with the laying of sleepers and track in the funded project between Oberon and Hazelgrove. This was made clear at the 355 Committee meeting in December.

Accreditation:

As previously reported, our documentation for Accreditation was forwarded to the Independent Transport Safety and Reliability Regulator (ITSRR) in October 2005. We were given to understand that all was in order and the application was approved in principle on the 28th November. It then went to the CEO for approval and unfortunately, this was not completed until the 6th January 2006. In the intervening period, ITSRR had taken a policy decision not to grant Interim Accreditation documents any more. In the past this was the usual first step. (Catch 22 for OTHR!).

In fairness, this decision was forced on ITSRR by the need for all Safety Regulators to follow National guidelines. Our application is now being re-processed as a Fully Accredited operator. The first stage assessment of our application has been completed successfully and it is now again before management for a final decision. My belief is that we will be approved subject to some fine tuning of our policies and procedures.

Raffle:

By the time you read this, our recently run raffle will have been drawn. Congratulations to the winners who will be travelling to Newcastle on a cruise catamaran and returning on 3801 from Newcastle. Second and third prizes are lovely framed prints courtesy of our professional photographer, Doug Booker. Many thanks Doug.

In order to legally run such fund-raising events, we have to have official Authority from the department of Gaming and Racing. OTHR has such an authority (No. CFN18549)

and can legally raise funds by means of such appeals.

Framed Prints:

If you missed out on winning a prize, we will have a small number of limited edition prints from Doug Booker available for sale. These prints are all individual photographs which are produced in small numbers by Doug. Some feature 3801 and others feature railway infrastructure at Tarana. They are all beautifully composed and will be fast selling items. They have all been framed at no cost to OTHR by members Bill and Mary Long – many thanks to you both.

They will probably first appear for sale at the next Monthly Meeting.

Weed Spraying:

We have been offered a replacement tank to suit the donated Suzuki weed spraying vehicle. Sincere thanks to *Woodchem* in Oberon for this generous donation. A small team of volunteers have offered to help Matt carry out some spraying operations on the line.

Coming activities:

Preliminary work needs to be done on the line as soon as the licence is clarified. 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.

Volunteers are needed to coat all the nuts and bolts holding the rails together with “sump” oil. This will be in preparation for dismantling each joiner along the line to assess its condition. This operation starts from Oberon and finishes at Tarana!

Meetings:

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