



Tarana Valley Self-Guided Tour

**A self-guided road tour of the
Tarana to Oberon
Branch Line
- with an emphasis on railway history -**

**Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway
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<http://othr.com.au>**

TARANA Valley Tour

A self-guided road tour of the Oberon Branch Line

Oberon/Tarana, abt 31km

Km	Instruction
	Start from the main street (Oberon St) in front of the shops and proceed towards Goulburn. Turn right at the Shell service station into North St. Signposted TARANA
0.0	Zero your tripmeter at the Shell corner.
0.2	Notice the Oberon railway station buildings on your left . This was the terminus for the 24km Oberon Branch Line from Tarana, at the junction with the main western railway. The line opened in 1923 and served the community until 1979. The station and the railway yard are in excellent condition and are listed under the NSW Heritage Act. The Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway Inc (OTHR) will operate Tourist Trains from here to Hazelgrove in Stage 1 of the restoration project. Our two 73 class diesels may be seen next to the platform here.
0.5	<p>On your left, just before the roundabout, notice the large new rolling stock shed – built by OTHR volunteers - the first new railway infrastructure in Oberon since 1942. At roundabout – go straight ahead - This is now Lowes Mount Rd.</p> <p>Notice the old railway stockyards on the corner. There are very few railway stockyards like these now existing in NSW. Immediately west of the stockyard the main line has now been re-sleepered and the Albion St. level crossing (just west of the roundabout) has been re-instated by OTHR and Oberon Council.</p>
1.0	<p>You are now travelling north, past Carter Holt Harvey sawmill on the left and the recently extended Borg Panels factory on the right. The branch line crosses Lowes Mount Rd diagonally here in front of the Shell fuel depot. This level crossing has now been re-built by OTHR and installed by Oberon Council.</p> <p>The old railway formation can now be seen on the right close to the road. From here to Hazelgrove, reconstruction work can be seen on the line with virtually all sleepers being replaced and smaller level crossings re-built. The line was constructed as a Pioneer Line which meant that the sleepers and light rail were laid directly on the earth formation or permanent way. Although services were suspended in 1979, the line was never officially closed.</p>

At both Clover Lane (2.3km) and Rutters Ridge Rd (3.1km) you can turn **right** and see the re-built crossings and view the re-sleepered line.

3.8 In the vicinity of the Garbage Tip, the line veers away from the road. If the tip gate is open, you may venture a very short way along the tip road to see the restored cattle stop and crossing built by OTHR volunteers.

5.6 More reconstruction work can be inspected by turning **right** onto Black Bullock Rd and continue **eastwards** to the site of Hazelgrove Station.

6.9 Just past the end of the tar lies another re-built crossing. To the **left** of the crossing is the site of the former Hazelgrove Station. This can be inspected on foot.

The old station name board is in place – but this is not the original. Here the trains from Oberon to Tarana stopped to wind on handbrakes for the very steep (1 in 25) descent of some 283m to Carlwood station. The remains of the loop line are still in place here, but the points have been removed. The line was straight railed in 1973.

From here back to Oberon the line has been re-sleepered by hard working OTHR volunteers – some 10 500 sleepers being replaced. You can see where the re-sleepering starts and the condition of the old sleepers at the station site – which will shortly be re-developed with a picnic area and toilet facilities. Some of the old concrete piers of the Pc1 shelter shed are to be seen poking out of the grass near the signboard.



8.2 Return to Lowes Mount Rd and turn **right**.

9.5 Pass Faugha Ballaugh Rd (pronounced “Fogger Boller”) on your left.

12.0 Descend Lowes Mount. Snakes Valley can be seen on the right. The steam trains overcame this steep pinch by means of deep rock cuttings, 5 chain curves and 1 in 25 grades (some of the steepest in the State) on their way from Tarana to Oberon. Outgoing loadings were made up of produce such as peas, beans, potatoes, livestock and timber.



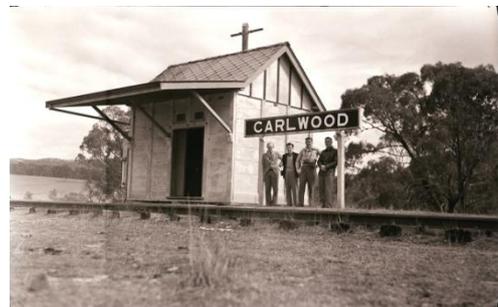
The Evans Crown Nature Reserve can be seen in the distance on the right, with its distinctive granite outcrops.

- 17.2 Crossroads (Carlwood Rd) with signpost indicating “Bathurst” and “Carlwood”. Notice the historic information signboard which explains the route of Cox’s original road from Sydney to Bathurst in 1815. The road past Carlwood station largely follows this route.

Turn **right** to inspect the Carlwood station site. Follow the tarred road until the tar gives out just before a small timber bridge. Cross the bridge and veer left then right. As you veer left **look to the left** into the paddock to see the smashed remains of the concrete drinking water tank from the original Carlwood station.

- 19.0 The old railway line crosses Carlwood Rd here – make a **U turn** and park wherever it seems safe to do so. The Carlwood station site can be inspected by a short walk through the gate along the old vehicular track. Please **close the gate** on leaving – there is a simple chain and hook.

Walk about 100 metres south along the old vehicle track – you are now at the site of the Pc1 shelter shed – marked by white survey pegs in the ground. Looking south towards Oberon one can see to the right of the line a silver painted steel post marking the site of the original toilet block.



A walk along the line of a few hundred metres brings you to the Snakes Gulley timber trestle bridge. Although this bridge is in fair condition, you walk across it **AT YOUR OWN RISK!!** Across the bridge either side of the line is private property. The bridge is quite photogenic!

- 20.8 Return to Lowes Mount Rd and turn **right** to Tarana. Signposted “Tarana 10km”.

- 25.3 Just past the steel stockyards, the railway formation appears in the valley to the **right** with the old iron bridge over the Fish River just visible (to the left) in the distance. This bridge is a transom top plate girder bridge (1923) and is still in very good condition.



Evans Crown becomes clear on the horizon on the **right** at 90 degrees to the road. (Enquire at the Tarana Pub for directions to the Evans Crown Nature Reserve as this is a good place to visit. There is a fairly easy climb to the summit with interesting views).

- 26.3 Having just passed St Peter Anglican Church on the crest (on your **left**), turn **right** at the T junction – signposted “Tarana 4”. This is now Mutton Falls Rd. Pass the function centre on the right (“Mutton Falls” 1840), just before crossing the (unlabelled) Fish River bridge (27.0km).
- 27.3 Cross the Tarana-Oberon railway line at the level crossing. To the **right** it is only a short distance to the massive bridge across the Fish River. To the **left** the line can be seen wending its way to Tarana and the main western line.
- 28.7 Evans Crown can now be seen straight ahead on the skyline. The large granite tors are very prominent.
- 30.9 Turn **right** at the T junction, the Tarana Rd (signposted “Lithgow”). This is the historic village of Tarana – a railway town on the main western line, which was a busy place when the Oberon line was operating.
- 31.2 Tarana Hotel – the end of the tour and a must-stop location, where you can sample the liquid refreshments and enjoy the delightful beer garden. The pub food is recommended



Steps from the beer garden lead down to the nicely repainted Tarana Station where some relics of the steam era can be seen. (The XPT will stop here on request).

A good view of the tracks of the main line can be obtained from the pedestrian overbridge. At the western end of the platform the double track can be seen heading to Bathurst. The double tracks used to extend through the platform

area and on to Lithgow, but this has now been single tracked from here to Wallerawang.

The old iron water tank is still in place and the old water column stand is near the Sydney end of the “up” platform. The water tank used to be filled by a steam pump situated in the creek below and to the north of the station. The cast iron riser pipe to fill the tank is still there as is the large discharge pipe to supply the water column.



The signal box is still in place but with mesh over the windows – you can see some of the original levers (about 31 in all) still inside. The western end of the signal box was extended with the opening of the Oberon line and the extension which was joined on can still be seen.



Also at the western end of the “down” platform the fenced off platform for the Oberon line can be seen, together with the loading bank and associated points in the distance. The old 2 ton goods crane can also be seen from here.