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February 2008 Newsletter

Annual General Meeting

It is that time of the year again. OTHR's Annual General Meeting will take place on **Wednesday, 5th March at 7.30 p.m. at the Oberon RSL Club.**

All Board positions will become vacant and elections will take place to elect a new Board to steer our organisation throughout what will prove to be an exciting year. OTHR members are urged to attend this important meeting to show their support.

Future Working Bees

- The next working bee will be held on **Saturday, 1st March**. Meet at the shipping container at 7.30 a.m. for an 8.00 a.m. start. Jobs include pinning sleepers, level crossing work and installing timbers in a cattle stop. *Catering help is needed.*
- Remember there is a working bee **EVERY FRIDAY** starting at 4.00 p.m. at the container.
- A working bee will be conducted on **Saturday, 15th March** from 7.30 a.m. Our policy of working bees on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of each month will continue until the track is restored from Oberon to Hazelgrove. *Catering help will be needed.*
- *The next weeklong working bee is set down for **Saturday, 19th to Saturday, 26th April.** Some Sydney members have already organised their holidays to join the April fettlers' camp. The commemoration of Anzac Day will be observed during this working bee. *Catering help will be needed for the week.**

Annual Memberships

OTHR memberships are due to be renewed after the March AGM and subscription fees will remain the same as for 2007. Family memberships cost \$20.00 and for individuals or concession cardholders the fee is \$10.00.

The 2008 membership form should be available to download from OTHR's website after the AGM.



For our long-term viability, OTHR must continue to increase its membership numbers so we have set 250 as our minimum membership goal for 2008.

Welcome to new members

Jim Hagan - Austinmer, Hugh and Sue Webb & Family - Edith, Raymond and Robyn Prendergast - Oberon, Bruce and Cary Webb - Queens Park, Peter and Melinda Cocks & Family - Oberon, Jim Hall - Jamisontown and Ian and Dawn Douglas - Woodford. We look forward to seeing you at our activities and know your involvement will enrich our organisation.

February working bee report

Numbers were down a little because of the proximity of this working bee to the weeklong one held in January. However, as usual, wonderful progress was made on the line between the fence at the boundary of Oberon station and Albion Street.



Photo by Harry Shannon

Metre high undergrowth was cleared from the track and surrounding area, sleepers were removed and replaced on both lines, points were cleaned and made serviceable and levels were established in readiness for the level crossing to be built across Albion Street.

Thank you

Many thanks are due again to Garrick Hawkins of Mayfield for the loan of his excavator, Kevin and Stella McGrath from the Big Trout Motel for making free accommodation available to out-of-town volunteers, to Wayne Barker for the donation of sausages, to Leanne and Steve Barlow for the donation of bread and rolls and to Cheryl and John McKinnon for their donation of Ripple Spring Water. The support of these businesses is indicative of the wonderful support the Oberon business community is providing to OTHR.

Napoleon famously said that “an army marches on its stomach.” He sure hit the dog spike right on the head. Lynette Ireland and her catering assistants kept our fettle in fine mettle every day. Fifteen volunteers served or cooked delicious food during the week and we thank everyone for another great effort. Competitors in the cooking sections of the Oberon Show had better watch out for the OTHR catering team in 2009!

OTHR’s Display at the Oberon Show

At the recent Oberon Show Lynette Ireland co-ordinated an interesting pictorial display that featured the history of the line and our current restoration work. The stand attracted a great deal of interest and resulted in quite a number of new memberships and the sale of sleepers for the Sleeper Club. We enjoyed hearing fascinating tales about the steam trains from some of Oberon’s “old timers” who were keen to share their experiences with us.

A big thank you to all of the members who donated their time and energy to look after the display.

OTHR’s “Men’s Shed”

A team of OTHR members has been meeting regularly at Ross Allen’s shed to restore a Wickham four-wheel trolley (or section car) with a 12.5 horsepower Wisconsin air-cooled motor. For readers who are interested in the finer details of this type of rolling stock, we suggest you have a close look at the photos of the Wickham on our website. The trolley was imported for the NSWGR from the UK in 1955 and it appears that the current engine was installed in or after 1977.



Ross and his offsider are hard at work on the trolley

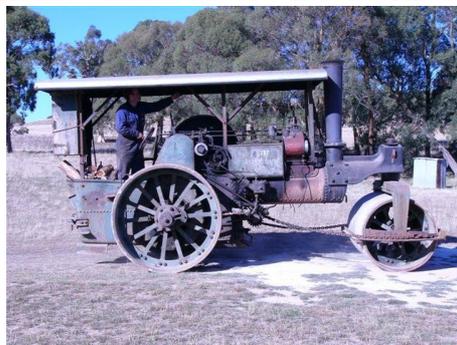
The team of Ross, Charles Hazlewood, Harry Shannon and Col Bembrick with able assistance from Tony Thackray and Arthur Robinson have so far spent 200 hours working on a non-operational machine that was in sad disrepair. Mechanically, all engine parts were stripped down, the head was removed, the valves refurbished, the suspension repaired, the carburettor was made serviceable and worn wheel bearings and housings were rebuilt.

All of the woodwork was stripped and is being repainted in “railway red”. The group is indebted to Charles who supplied a new battery. They plan to have the Wickham in showroom working condition very soon and eventually it will be used by maintenance crews along the line. Congratulations to the team for their research, resourcefulness, enthusiasm and what will be an excellent end result.

Contamination of our water tanker

Someone out there doesn’t like us! During the Christmas period a person or persons deliberately contaminated OTHR’s water tanker. A sample of the contaminated water has been passed to the Council’s Director of Engineering, Leigh Robins for testing. The Council has offered a \$1,500 reward for information leading to a conviction for those responsible for poisoning the water tanker.

Steam Machine Men and Women



Shane in his 1928 Aveling & Porter steam roller

President Shane Moorhead and Systems Manager, Matt McMahon co-ordinated a vintage and veteran heritage rally at the recent Oberon Show. Over 130 vehicles and items were on display and drew large crowds of fascinated onlookers. With the help of OTHR’s Track Manager Peter Culley, Matt used his centurion tank and Bren gun carrier to keep the troops in order. However, Shane showed he was not one to roll over when he brought his 1928 Aveling and Porter steam roller along.

OTHR’s website manager Rick Fletcher was Chief Judge of the various vintage and veteran vehicles and machinery classes. Other OTHR members to be involved were Jim and Lyndle Hawkes and Tony Thackray. What a versatile lot we are! This is another example of OTHR’s growing contributions to the Oberon community.

The Sleeper Club

Recently OTHR sent a letter to all business houses in the Oberon district seeking support for the Sleeper Club. Responses are now coming in with \$1,000 received in the last few days for sleepers. We are confident the generous Oberon community will continue its support for this exciting tourist project which will benefit not only Oberon, but also the wider Central Tablelands region.