



May 2008 Newsletter

2008 is nearly half over and we are increasing the pace of our work while simultaneously conducting a variety of activities to complete the line to Hazelgrove before the end of the year.

News Flash!

An Increase in Number of Weeklong Working Bees

- **Friday 6th, Sat. 7th and Sunday 8th June**
- **28th June to 5th July**
- **9th August to 16th August**
- **6th September to 13th September**
- **4th October to 11th October**
- **1st November to 8th November**

NOTE*

Working bees on the 1st & 3rd Saturday of each month are now cancelled and Friday afternoon working bees will only take place before a weeklong working bee.

Report on the 3-9th May Working Bee

What an exciting week we had! Members came from the Central coast, Maitland, Sydney, Bargo, Moss Vale and Bathurst to join the local volunteers for a week of fun and great achievements. Throughout the week 600 sleepers between the Tip Road and Rutters Ridge Road were dog spiked and 150 sleepers were laid and pinned north of the Tip Road. A large pine tree growing in the middle of the tracks at Hazelgrove siding was felled and cleaned up with an excavator loaned by "Mayfield."

Preparations for further restoration of the level crossings were undertaken. The 12 -18 fettlers who worked on the line everyday were once again spoilt with 5 star catering by Lynette Ireland and her sous chefs. A big thank you to all who worked on the line or cooked and donated delicious food.

OTHR recognises the strong and growing community support our project receives. Again we are indebted to the McGrath family of the Big Trout Motel for providing free accommodation for the out-of-town fettlers, Ripple Water for supplying water, "Mayfield" for the loan of an excavator and Oberon SES for the loan of a tent and other materials.

Saturday 10th May was declared a "rest" day to give our volunteers an opportunity to walk down the line

from Hazelgrove to Carlwood. The walkers commented on the spectacular scenery and can hardly wait to start work on this section of the line. When the group reached Carlwood they were rewarded with a wonderful picnic lunch prepared by Zsuzsanna Handelsmann.

OTHR Members become Film Stars

During the May working bee, filmmakers Shannon Green and John Frost spent 4 days in Oberon interviewing and filming a documentary on the history of Oberon, the history of the railway track and the heritage reconstruction work of OTHR.

Local historian Allan Brown, former Oberon station master Cyril O'Keefe, Athol Hardy who worked on the line, Terry Carter an ASM at Tarana, George Schurr who drove engines on the line and Ossie O'Brien who controlled signals along the line were all interviewed. How does he do it? OTHR member Arthur Robinson was interviewed and filmed for over an hour and we are told by reliable sources that he is already looking for a Hollywood agent.

The film crew return in Aug./Sept. for more interviewing and filming. We are looking for anyone with past associations with the line who would like to be involved in this project. Please contact Publicity Officer, Bob Conners on 6336 1211 with any names.



Arthur Robinson is interviewed by the film crew.

Mt Victoria Great Train Weekend

This exciting event was held on 24th/25th May and OTHR again set up a promotional display. Team leader Charles Hazlewood was assisted by Lynette Ireland, Arthur Robinson, Lyndle Hawkes and Keith Jones. Our display created much interest with the professionally mounted photos and our miniature train set attracting groups of admiring children. Keith and Lynette showed great entrepreneurial skills by selling heritage dog spikes from our line.

Many visitors to our stand discussed OTHR's project and took our brochures, while 3 new members joined

up. Our display attracted the attention of another group who have invited us to put on a display on 5/6th July at a Train Expo in Richmond. A big thank you to Charles and his team for the time and effort they put into promoting OTHR.

Our latest wood raffle

On Saturday, 17th May OTHR raffled a truckload of wood in Oberon. The sales team of Keith, Arthur and Bob proved irresistible and the group raised \$520 in the morning. Arthur showed great talent as a “roving ticket seller” and hardly anyone escaped his scintillating sales pitch.

The lucky winner of the raffle was local resident, Robyn Prowse. OTHR thanks the community for its wonderful financial support.

Collecting sleepers from ARTC

OTHR was successful in a tender to the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) for sleepers removed from the Rydal to Wallerawang section of the main line. Assistant Track Manager Tim Arnison organised a team of volunteers and sleepers were collected near Rydal on 24th May. Many thanks are due to Mangan Logging for the loan of a prentice loader, to Peter Dwyer for the loan of two trucks with dog trailers, Richard Webb for the loan of his truck and to Peter Moore for the loan of a tractor.

Thanks are also due to Karl Rummans and Ian McNeil who were our protection officers on the line. There are more sleepers to be collected from the track, but in the meantime, one of our working bee tasks is to sort and grade the collected sleepers. Well done Tim and gang!

Member's Profile – Ross Allen

Ross was born in Merriwa N.S.W. and moved to the Cooma district at age three where he grew up on a grazing property breeding merino sheep and mixed cattle. At a young age Ross took over the running of the farm and established Dorset Horn and Poll Dorset studs. He became involved in many activities in the Monaro district including becoming a Councillor and then Deputy President of the Monaro Shire. He was also very involved in skiing clubs. We hope that Oberon has a better snow season for Ross in 2008!

After his rural life Ross moved into the financial service industry, working in Canberra and Sydney for many years. Following his retirement the call of the land has proved strong and Ross and his wife Alison's move to Hazelgrove has been OTHR's gain. During the past two plus years Ross has been a tower of strength in OTHR showing his versatility by laying sleepers, painting, using brush cutters to clear the line and heading up the team restoring our 1955 Wickham rail car (or section car) in his workshop. We hear tell the trolley is almost ready for a trial run.

Congratulations to Ross and his team members for their superb restoration work. Will Alison soon have her garage back? Readers are urged to check out the Section Car Restoration Report from Ross and the photographic record on OTHR's website.



Ross in his OTHR workshop

Ross prepares the surface of the section car before repainting



A final thought – since Ross is the only member of OTHR from Hazelgrove, will he be appointed as the first stationmaster at Hazelgrove siding when our train is operating?

Welcome to our New Members

Welcome to new members Ian Dodd (Mosman), Anne & Henry Herron (Rydal), Ossie O'Brien (Wallerawang), Roger Dohnt (Kingswood), Dennis Simmons (Lithgow), Clive Morris (Portland), George Schurr (Lithgow), Peter Kerr (Mt Druitt), Kyle Rollinson (Belconnen), Markus Truninger (Neutral Bay) and Sue & Gavin Christie (O'Connell).

Excavator help from Oberon Council

Oberon Council has voted to buy an excavator and when it is not being used by Council it was stated that it could be loaned to OTHR. We are thrilled about this news and greatly appreciate the support of the Council and its officers in again providing help for this community tourist project.

An excavator is invaluable on the line and there is much work to be done with this machine, including removing old sleepers and replacing them with “new” second hand ones. Track Manager Peter Culley can remove and replace a sleeper in 30 seconds.

At the same Council meeting the Councillors voted not to extend the walking/cycling track past Hazelgrove siding. This decision is very welcome as it will remove the potential safety problems when rolling stock is using the track.