

**Oberon TARANA HERITAGE RAILWAY INC.**  
**NEWSLETTER**

**September 2017**



**.....bringing your rail heritage back to life.**

**PO Box 299 Oberon NSW 2787**

**Website: [www.othr.com.au](http://www.othr.com.au)**

**Email: [admin@othr.com.au](mailto:admin@othr.com.au)**

**Facebook: [www.facebook.com/OTHR.Inc](http://www.facebook.com/OTHR.Inc)**

**GoFundMe: <https://gofund.me/2mhftk44>**

**Patrons:**

**Daul Toole State Member for Bathurst, Minister for Lands and Forestry,  
Minister for Racing**

**Andrew Gee, Federal Member for Calare**

**Committee:**

**President: Tim Arnison**

**Vice President: Peter Culley**

**Secretary: Elaine Boxer**

**Treasurer: John Brotchie**

**Track Manager: Graham Williams**

**Public Officer: Elaine Boxer**

**General Committee:**

**David McMurray: Fundraiser, Newsletter Editor/Publicity**

**Ian Davis: Document Writer**

**Martyn Salmon**

# Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway Inc. Mission Statement

**To operate voluntary run tourist trains between Oberon, Hazelgrove and ultimately Tarana.**

**To have the Oberon Station precinct as a vibrant Heritage Railway Display run by volunteers as a professional tourist centre.**

## Editor's thoughts

Passionate.....Has your Editor really gone off his tree? He wants to talk about passion, lust and love and most of us can't remember what he's talking about!

Well maybe but not quite; being passionate is also being enthusiastic or believing strongly in something. Everyone has a passion for something or other; it could be classic cars or planes, steam traction engines, trucks, stamps or even signs.

Members of OTHR really are passionate! You have an enthusiasm for all things trains and most particularly the Oberon to Tarana branch line. You are keen on rolling stock, on railway lines, on infrastructure, on the station and have a strong belief in achieving a heritage operator's licence and in seeing a train running on the tracks again.

You have a strong belief that the association will eventually overcome all obstacles and a train will ply the line all the way from Tarana to Oberon. A pipe dream? - some may think so, but OTHR members know better.

You are the passionate ones, the enthusiastic ones, the ones with the strong belief that the line will come to life again, you are the dedicated ones

So are you really passionate? It's a great word and it describes us perfectly.

"Nothing great in the world has been accomplished without passion."

*Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel  
German Philosopher*

## Know .....

This series on some past and present committee members is drawing to a conclusion. Should you wish to be remembered in this column for your contribution I would love to get background information; the column isn't meant to glorify some members over others but merely to recognise the hard work committee and general members alike have put in over the years.

Many, many members worked very hard in the early and intervening years to build a solid base on which the Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway Inc. can move forward in the future.

So it would be unfair not to mention some more of the early folk who contributed so much. People like Bill Muldoon, Marjorie Webb, Charles Hazlewood, Ray McMahon and from more recent times Col Bembrick, Graham Williams, John Brotchie and Martyn Salmon. There are others who have slipped into the annals of time and to all of them we owe a huge vote of thanks.



*Dedicated volunteers.  
Can you name them and the location?*

## NEXT MEETING

General Meeting

3<sup>rd</sup> October 2017

7.30PM

### General meeting

Reserve the date, 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2017 for the Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway Inc. general meeting.

Secretary Elaine has enlisted Buzz Sanderson, President of the Kandos Rylstone Railway Museum as guest speaker for this meeting. Buzz is heading up a new and exciting museum; he will talk about its formation amongst other interesting facts.

The August meeting drew a large group of members to hear Peter (Bugs) Harvey speak about the history of the Oberon and district postal service. He displayed stamps and postcards with postmarks from post offices and receiving offices in the Oberon district. Mail for Oberon originally arrived via O'Connell and there were about 30 post and receiving offices in the Oberon district. The offices are long gone and these tiny villages are now marked as locations in the area. Bugs' knowledge of such matters is wonderful and those present appreciated his talk. Thanks Bugs.

### Important Information.

If you haven't renewed your membership for 2016/17 you are now unfinancial.

You can apply to re-join any time after 1<sup>st</sup> September but a joining fee in addition to annual membership fee will apply.

### Big News for OTHR.

Our colleagues over at The Oberon Heritage & Collectors Club Inc. have announced that the annual Highlands Steam & Vintage Fair will be rested in 2018 to refresh and regroup.

Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway Inc. will stage a display to cover the gap year.

Our event is called the **Heritage Transport Rally** to be held on 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> March 2018 at the Oberon Railway Station Precinct. Display times are:  
Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> March, 12 – 4 PM  
Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> March, 8 – 12 noon.

Come and see:

- Heritage Rail Carriages
- Trikes
- Steam Road Traction Engines
- Cars
- Trucks
- Station Memorabilia display
- More

This is our first rally and is proudly presented by:

- Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway Inc.
- Oberon Heritage & Collectors Club Inc.
- Skoda and Tatra Museum
- The Society of Drivers, Engineers and Mechanics

Don't miss this one and spread the word!

See flyer attached.



## About Oberon.....

Here comes the sun and it's alright. It's September and Spring is here!

Spring in Oberon is another romantic season; chilly nights and warm days. Time for long walks on country lanes, grass is greening and newborns are in the paddocks. Hearty meals in our cafés and restaurants are a pleasure. Time to explore; not long 'til Mayfield Garden enchants us all with its Spring festival. Take a trip out to Jenolan Caves and lose yourselves in an underground fairyland and see wildlife up close.

Oberon's fabulous community market is held on the first Saturday of September where you'll find produce and handmade treats and gifts or even a treasure amongst the many stalls.

Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway precinct is open for inspection on the same day but don't forget the OTHR shop at the markets to be found at Oberon Men's Shed, before you leave the markets.

Spring is a wonderful time in Oberon. No doubt when the Sun comes out it's alright again.

## Our fund raising isn't dead!

The donations you make to get the track up and running are quarantined from the Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway Inc.'s general funds

Donations are still required to help achieve our aim of putting a train back on the track. The immediate aim is raise \$20K to fund a couple of essential studies to allow us to apply for big funding that will help us achieve our ultimate target.

Nothing can happen unless you rail gunzels donate.

Wouldn't it be a shame if the project didn't reach its goal and languished as a static museum – or worse?

We have a saying here at OTHR:  
"You don't know what you've got 'til it's gone."

Don't look back in years to come and wish you should have made the donation of the dollar that would have allowed the Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway Inc. to bring your rail heritage back to life.

We are keeping all donations so far especially to move the project forward. All donations are tax deductible.

Make that donation and do it now!

There are two ways to make a donation:

- Go to our GoFundMe page and make your donation there.
- Or send a cheque to our Post Office Box 299, Oberon NSW 2787 marking your envelope "fund raiser".

If you are a business person large or small and would like to sponsor OTHR, please contact our Secretary for information on how you can help.

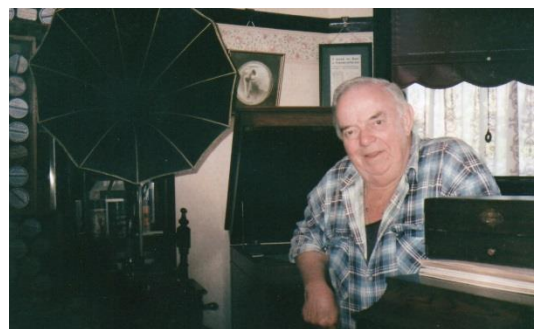
## Seeking further funding

Raising funding through GoFundMe isn't OTHR's only option.

Your committee is currently pursuing a number of grants to enable us to move forward.

Inspection and repair of carriage bogies and work on the locos is one such project for which we are seeking a State Government of NSW grant.

Member Wayne Dempsey is a past master in carriage works. Your committee is seeking a museum grant to professionally produce an interview with Wayne to save his experiences for posterity. The committee is also seeking museum funding to produce a DVD on the history of our railway for use in the proposed heritage display at Oberon Station.



*Long-time member Wayne Dempsey amid his large gramma phone collection*

**Next Working Bee**  
**Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2017**  
**To**  
**Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> August 2017**

## Working Bee News

September working bee is a little different this time round.

The store room is now completed.

Tasks to be tackled include:

- Remove all documents and surplus stored items from the station to the store room.
- Commence work on the Plough Van
- Reposition the Signal ladder.

This is still an ambitious task list so it would be appreciated that anybody up to it comes along and helps out.

Remember too, the old saying: “many hands make light work.”

Remember also the conditions of offering up your labour for a day or two:

- Morning and Afternoon tea.
- A great lunch
- Accommodation for out of towners at Oberon Men’s Shed
- Cabin style accommodation at Jenolan Caravan Park for very reasonable tariff.
- Hot showers at the caravan park.

Come on, be a part of it; you won’t regret it.

We always need volunteers to help out even for an hour or two and that extra pair of hands really makes a difference.



*View inside rolling stock shed showing the third line. The laying of this line was done at one of our recent working bees.*

## **Heritage Display one step closer.**

OTHR has many little projects on the go at any one time.

As the store room has now been completed and as of the September working bee all office equipment and excess memorabilia has been moved, we are now concentrating on preparing a professional railway display in the station.

Your committee is looking for ideas on displays and how best to display the memorabilia we have. If you have experience in preparing displays and you want to help out we want to hear from you.

Prior to mounting a display there are a number of issues to overcome:

- The station interior will have to be repainted
- Cataloguing of artefacts has to be undertaken
- Labelling of display items need to be labelled and a clear and legible story needs to be composed about them
- We need to think about bringing a number of items of rolling stock to the station for display.

Col Bembrick has developed a plan for the layout of the display:



- Parcels Room focus: History of Oberon – Tarana rail origin and steam era.
- Main Office focus: Diesel era and transport of freight.
- Station Master’s Room focus: Period reproduction of the office circa 1930.
- Ladies Waiting Room focus: OTHR work and progress to date.

Col and Glenda Bembrick are willing to take a role but require assistance.

Col also expressed the idea that the recently donated three lever ground frame would make an excellent interactive display at the station. Peter Culley suggested that adding points and a semaphore, all sited just north of the station platform, would be ideal for members and visitors. Members at the August General Meeting agreed to the initial plan, however if you have ideas for this project please let us know via Secretary Elaine.



*Oberon Station with new paint*

## Equipment Purchase

Your committee recently attended the auction in Canberra of the Australian Rail Heritage Association ACT Division rolling stock and equipment. We were successful in purchasing a sleeper inserter for narrow gauge track. This was a much needed piece of equipment.

There were a lot of suburban carriages and sleeper cars for auction; the highlight of the day was the sale of steam engine 3102 for \$37,000.

## Possible additional exhibit?

Just south of the rubbish tip level crossing lies a signal box. The box isn’t part of the original railway infrastructure but was built as part of a movie set filmed in Oberon some years ago.

Member Arthur Robinson raised the issue of ownership; as it is located on railway land leased by Oberon Council, could OTHR claim it?

It is gradually falling into disrepair but by moving it to the station precinct it could easily be another part of our display.

The building is not heritage and is a recent build, but nevertheless has a very interesting back story associated with it.

The signal box could add interest to the precinct as it has no significance to its current location.

## Welcome New Members

Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway Inc. is always looking for new members.

Interested in railways or the Oberon to Tarana line in particular, why not give your support by becoming a member?

## Not so well....

If anyone hears about any member on the sick list, please let the editor know via Secretary Elaine so we can send get well wishes on behalf of the association.

## In Memorium.

If anyone hears of the passing of one of our members please let the editor know via Secretary Elaine so we can make a special mention.

## Say Whaaat???

1. A bloke went to the ear specialist complaining of deafness.  
"Oh really" said the specialist, "can you describe the symptoms?"  
"Well" the bloke said, "Homer is fat and drinks beer and Marj has blue hair"
2. I never wanted to believe that my Dad was stealing from his job as a road worker. But when I got home all the signs were there.

## Station yard resurveyed

Col Bembrick has presented a new survey plan of Oberon station yard.

As it stands the plan is a scale drawing and doesn't include the ground frames. The survey requires all services to be included.

Col was assisted in the survey by Charles Hazelwood and his assistance was appreciated.

## The Oberon-Tarana Railway

**Lithgow Mercury Friday 12<sup>th</sup> October 1923**

"In the speeches at Oberon last week the note of congratulations was appropriate. Residents of the district for miles around had gathered to celebrate the successful culmination of forty years of effort and agitation. For many reasons it is to be regretted that the line was not constructed a generation ago. The capitol cost in those days would have been no more than half the amount required at present, while the rate of interest for State loans thirty years ago was about 3 1/2 per cent as against 5 ¼ per cent today. Had the line been built in the early nineties, many settlers would long ago have been attracted to the district and its production would have been doubled or trebled. It is futile, however, to dwell on what might have been. The past is beyond recall and the people have to make the best of the present. Oberon has got its railway at last, and is fortunate in getting it. We doubt if any similar project would now secure Parliamentary and Ministerial sanction.

The difficulty of obtaining money for uncompleted lines is very real, and the financial position generally is such as to compel the utmost caution in regard to new works. Moreover the feeling is growing every day in favour of good roads for motor traffic as against spur railways. Members of the Oberon Railway League, as well as those who rendered assistance in any capacity, may, therefore be congratulated on securing their objective while it was still possible to do so.

Both the Minister and other speakers at last week's function urged those who will be served by the line to do their utmost to make it pay. What is desired is to make it pay working expenses and interest on the loan money spent in construction. Together these will amount, according to the figures given, to about twelve thousand pounds a year. Unless production is substantially increased the receipts are not likely to reach this figure. Very few people expect that the line will pay for the first few years. Settlement cannot be greatly increased in one or two seasons, it must grow gradually. The best which can be hoped for is a steady development in the freight and passenger traffic. If this takes place the railway authorities will doubtless be satisfied. But the position, in common with that of other new lines, will be watched very closely. The aggregate deficit last year on non-paying lines exceeded a million pounds, and the Railway Commissioners are now curtailing expenses in every possible direction. The district railway superintendent, in his speech at the banquet, made it quite plain that the facilities provided by the line would be proportioned to the patronage given by the people of the district. It may also be inferred that the prospects of further extension towards Black Springs and beyond will be influenced by the results of the Tarana Oberon section which will better the chances of extending to Black Springs. The deputation to the Minister put up a strong case for extension. The country is good and there are no engineering difficulties. The people connected will be justified in pressing for a full investigation of their claims."

This article written for the Lithgow Mercury just nine days after the opening of the Tarana to Oberon line seems to be a mixture of fact and opinion. All historical articles presented in this newsletter so far seems to point to excellent lobbying by the members of the Oberon Railway League and some luck in obtaining NSW State

Government funding (but apparently not enough) when Government funds were in short supply. So did the Tarana Oberon line ever turn a profit?



*The first carriage to arrive in Oberon 1923  
Photo Alan Sharp*

## Building Oberon Railway Station.

Stuart Sharp continues his history of the Oberon Tarana line....

“The amazing feature of railway operations in NSW in the period 1910 to 1930 is that the NSW Railways correctly assessed where to place its limited capital funding. It chose urban areas, not rural NSW. The Railways provided better trains, stations, safeworking, workshops and all sorts of other initiatives to serve the growing manufacturing sector in urban areas where the economy and population were growing, rather than the declining rural locations. The extant facilities at Oberon tell that story.

Concrete building construction had been in use in America and England from 1900. The Americans preferred mass concrete while the British went for pre-fabrication. NSW Railways followed the system adopted by the Queensland Railways in 1913. The NSW Railways commenced concrete building construction in 1917.

The introduction of concrete construction was made by the Railway Commissioner, James Fraser, who was pro-efficiency and anti-trade union. The objective of the concrete unit system was to minimise the need for skilled tradesmen for the construction of buildings, especially for new branch and connecting lines in rural areas. The initiative was all about cost control, though some comments were made about the advantage of being able to

relocate buildings, if required. As it turns out, not one platform structure was ever relocated between 1917 and 1932. Fraser knew that concrete construction was not suitable for urban areas as the buildings did not mirror any beauty. As Paul Horder, the specialist historian on NSW railway concrete buildings said, “the buildings were functional with little aesthetic appeal” By some unexplained miracle, two stations were in fact built in Sydney, one at Toongabbie in 1919 and at Croydon in 1923.

The Toongabbie and Croydon buildings do give a hint of what was happening within the NSW Railways about concrete building construction – chaos. The whole history of pre-cast buildings is a statement in bureaucratic mismanagement or incompetence or both. So many bizarre things occurred that it can only be concluded that those men who were supposed to be in charge of construction policy had well and truly taken their eye off the ball. There were so many random events occurring with concrete buildings that the concept of having a standard construction system was, in fact, almost the total opposite.

The buildings at Oberon, Toongabbie and Croydon were all approved in what is loosely known as the early period of concrete building construction. The NSW Railways did not really understand how and where to use the product. Within the organization, there was no universal support for concrete construction and, in fact, more buildings were built in brick and timber than concrete in the 1917 to 1932 period when concrete buildings were constructed. Paul Horder considers that this statement needs a little clarification. Yes, most of the branch lines opened in that period had concrete buildings but the NSW Railways opened new stations and rebuilt buildings on existing lines and this latter group were much larger in number than the total of concrete buildings.”

We constantly see with historic hindsight that the Oberon to Tarana line was opened in trying circumstances and with little funding available. I am of the opinion that we must appreciate what we had and the hard work of our forebears and, in future, preserve that past by any means possible.





*OTHR's new storage room located within the rolling stock shed. This was a project of the working bees of the past three or four months.*

## What's this thing called luv?



Who's got one of these in their collection?  
If you have you are a railway fanatic!

This is a limited edition official plate issued to commemorate the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of railways in NSW (1855 – 1980) it is one of a limited edition of 5000 plates issued worldwide by Australian Collectors Treasury, made of Fine China. These items can still be readily purchased via local auction sites and retail these days for about \$50.00.

**“Passionate** people always think positively about the future. Their minds are always looking ahead, looking at what can be instead of what is. This has its good sides and bad, but nevertheless, they are always thinking about their next move.

The one great outcome is that they always have something to look forward to and are excited to make it happen. As long as they remember to hang around in the present from time to time, they don't run into too much trouble.”

*Paul Hudson*

## Contacts For all enquiries

Secretary: Elaine Ph. 02 6336-0441

Email [admin@othr.com.au](mailto:admin@othr.com.au)



## Heritage Transport Rally

March 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> 2018

Where: Oberon Railway Station Precinct

When: 12-4pm Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> March

8-12md Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> March

Heritage rail carriages, trikes, steam road traction engines, cars, trucks, station memorabilia display and more!

