



# All Aboard

News from the Friends of the North Australia Railway at Adelaide River

December 2010

## Season's greetings

IT HAS BEEN ANOTHER busy, productive and satisfying year for the Friends of the North Australia Railway at Adelaide River (and elsewhere).

Thank you so much to everyone who helped in so many ways and to those who have participated in our events.

Next year marks the 10th year of our efforts to save some of the fabric and story of the NAR.

It also marks 100 years since the NT was given to the Commonwealth by South Australia, complete with a promise by the federal government that they would complete the North-South link.

They did give it a go, getting to Katherine in 1917 and to Birdum and Alice Springs in 1929. But it was 2003 before it finally happened.

A number of activities are planned for the 2011 anniversary of the Territory's transfer to the Commonwealth, not least of which is a Constitutional Convention on

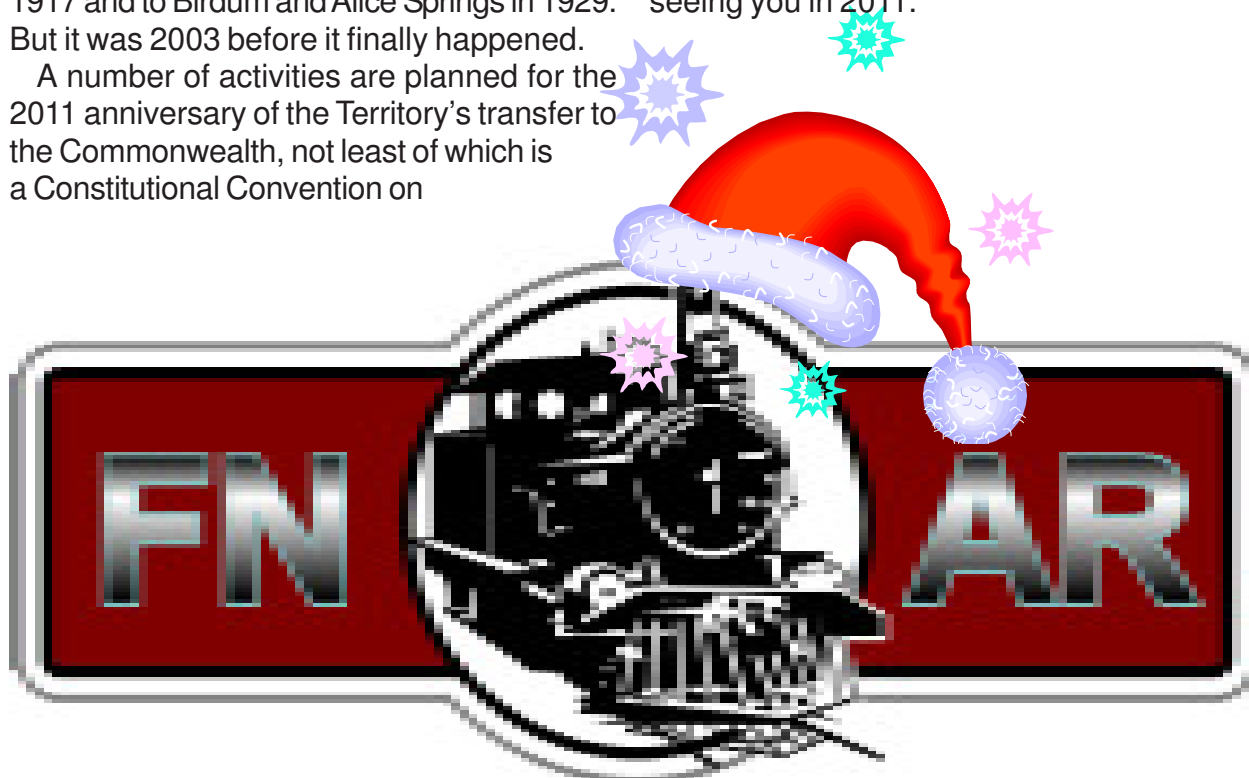
the matter of statehood in November.

And whilst we're on the subject of flagging anniversaries and forthcoming events, 2012 will mark the 150th anniversary of John McDouall Stuart's crossing of the country from south to north.

There is a range of commemorative events planned up and down the track for this historic occasion, and we will ensure that we keep you posted as we receive news of them.

Our good friends at the John McDouall Stuart Society in Adelaide are beavering away on a number of events and publications, and they will definitely be in on the action in 2012.

Enjoy a safe and happy Festive Season with your loved ones. We look forward to seeing you in 2011.



# Katherine activities

EARLIER THIS MONTH, we visited Katherine's 1926 Railway Station for a number of reasons including, (1) to deliver a 1000 gallon water tank to replace the original 1926 tank that we see in images; (2) to collect some railway artefacts that had been donated by Katherine Museum; and (3) to thank our friends in Katherine who had assisted in various ways during the year.

Many thanks to Mick Kent for the loan of his trailer to cart the water tank to Katherine.

Our good friend Brian Murphy (top photograph) helped us to retrieve the heavy artefacts from the 'graveyard' at the Museum and transport them to the Railway Station.

The second image shows the people who have helped save the NAR at Katherine in the past 12 months.

The 'tall' bloke on the platform scales is the local MLA Willem Westra Van Holthe who is keen to be kept informed of our activities (he is 'tall' because he's standing on the scales!).

Some people are from the Visitor Centre and others from the National Trust.

Willem mentioned that there are moves afoot to supply cracker dust for the 5km Rail Trail to the north of Katherine.

John Leo has already spent two voluntary days with his backhoe clearing the formation of rocks.



## National Archives search

OUR PRESIDENT, MR HORMAN, is presently in Melbourne and this week had an appointment at the National Archives at Burwood to review the 'as constructed' drawings of the Palmerston to Pine Creek Rail.

His last visit in August was quite productive and he expects this one to be, too. We are still looking for drawings from the Commonwealth era (post-1911) which will include the extensions to Katherine (Emungalen), Mataranka and Birdum.



**Editor:** Robyn Smith

**Copy writers:** Trevor Horman

**Chief Photographer:** Judy Richardson

**Proof reader:** Diane Lunn

## All Aboard

**E-mail:** [rail@northernexposure.com.au](mailto:rail@northernexposure.com.au)

**URL:** [www.northernexposure.com.au/rail](http://www.northernexposure.com.au/rail)

**Postal:** GPO Box 3504, Darwin NT 0801

**All Aboard phone:** 08-8985 1909

## WWII power station progress

DURING BREAKS IN THE rain last weekend, we managed to get the purlins on the roof of the WWII power station at Adelaide River.

Many thanks to caretaker Barry White and Judy Richardson for help in executing this work at height.

When the rain was particularly heavy, Barry, Judy and Trevor kept themselves busy wire-brushing the inside of Sidney Williams Hut #2.

What we need now is sheets of pre-loved corrugated iron in the following terms:

- 16 sheets 8ft long (2.44m) for the walls of the WWII power station; and
- 10 sheets 2.7m long for the roof.

Weathered iron will be fine (even preferred) so long as it is sound. Short lengths will also be fine.



## Gamba grass gladiator

RICHARD LUXTON HAD offered to come and treat our gamba grass outbreak. No sooner said than done, Richard was there and did the job. Many thanks to Richard for this prompt action.

## Gifting thanks

MANY THANKS TO Dave 'Frosty' Smith for donating a large square of carpet which is bound around the edges. Thanks also to Bob Reid for donating a workbench, a stainless wash trough and a BBQ.

## Lack of legislative progress

IT'S BROKEN RECORD TIME again (not that we think anyone is listening).

We are *STILL* waiting for the new Heritage Act.

This waiting has been going on since 2003 and represents an appalling state of affairs in Northern Territory heritage.

Consider, for a minute, what effect seven years of 'drafting' (the excuse offered up every year at Estimates time) would have on legislation such as the annual Appropriation (budget) Bill. We'd be stone-motherless broke!

We shouldn't be feeling too victimised, though. The *Pastoral Land Act* has been under review since 2004 and those with an interest in that legislation find themselves equally frustrated.

It may well be a coincidence, but the same department (Natural Resources, Environment, the Arts and Sport) has carriage of both legislative reviews. In the spirit of Christmas, perhaps we ought to be generous and conclude that NTRETAS is *uber* cautious...

## We are connected!

DURING THE YEAR, WE were fortunate to have a visit by Rex Hales (former drag racer and now vintage car enthusiast). Rex guided us in the installation of telephone cables to the Visitors Centre and the caretaker's donga and other locations. This was a full day's work and, with Rex's knowledge, has set us up for the 'information age'. We will now be able to have internet access in the Visitors Centre and our Research Centre. Again, it was a project that has been in the making for many years with conduits being installed progressively as trenches were open. Apart from expertise, Rex supplied lots of hardware.

A side benefit was that we ran a Public Address line from the station to Sid Williams so that we can communicate better with our visitors at our major events. Rex said that he enjoyed himself during the day, but we still want to thank him for a wonderful effort.

# John Crossing Collection unveiled



FOR MORE THAN A YEAR, Mick Kent has been restoring and interpreting a collection of South Australian Rail artefacts that were bequeathed to FNAR by John Crossing.

Mick completed the project on ANZAC morning and we prevailed upon him to explain it to the assembled crowd.

He did a great job at telling the audience the story about John Crossing and about the items in the collection.

As usual, Mick did the whole job from go to whoa, including sourcing the display cabinet, modifying it and fitting legs, doing the sign-writing, restoring the items, adding interpretive signage, fitting the protective perspex sheet, etcetera.

This is a significant addition to the museum and we are both proud of Mick for developing it and grateful for his generosity and time that he has invested in it.

Thanks so much, Mick.

# Former NAR driver John Sheppard

AT ABOUT MID-YEAR, WE HAD the pleasure of meeting former NAR driver John 'Shep' Sheppard.

Shep drove for the NAR from 1972 through to the end.

He then joined DCA and is still at the airport in Operations.

He recounted the operation of iron ore trains from Frances Creek in the 1970s.

They were slow.

They always took the Relay van for the Relief crew.

The van should have been on the end of the train but it swayed too much so they inserted it behind the three NT class locos.

Trevor enquired about work-related fatalities.

Shep recalled an accident at Mataranka one night when drunks had beaten up the publican and laid him on the tracks with the inevitable result.

And Shep reported that on show weekends in Katherine, they had to stop the Larrimah Mixed at the Yard Limit board at the southern side of town and the co-driver had to walk in front of the train to remove drunks.

As if the drivers didn't have enough on their hands keeping an eye out for wandering stock!

We related to John the padlocks that we have seen with 'S' and 'M' markings.

He remembered that they are Castle locks and that they were used for points and scotchblocks.

He also remembered that they were used to lock the Train Control pillboxes that we have at the River.

It is always gratifying to find people who were involved with the NAR in one way or the other and who are willing to share their stories with us.

We're back on the trail of the tea ladies and should have more information soon.

# ANZAC Day events at Adelaide River

THE DAY STARTED WITH the Dawn Service at the War Cemetery with probably more than 2000 people in attendance.

The event was very well put together by the small and dedicated team at Coomalie Council. Our friend Tim Baldwin was the MC and did a 100% job.

At 8am we held a small ceremony to remember the railway workers who helped the war effort when the shipping channels to Darwin had been cut. Up to 287 'volunteers' came from interstate railways to help with the massive effort.

Just after 8am, we were 'strafed' by Richard Luxton and friend in a radial engine Harvard. It sounded sensational and we'd happily be 'strafed' again.

At 10am we conducted a walk to the 'Hole in the Hill' which was, for a short while, a camouflaged Signals station during WWII.

This was attended by more than 20 people who enjoyed the stories that we told - passed on by Norm MacMahon who dug the hole in 1942. Norm was at the ANZAC service in Sydney and sent a message that we appreciated.

Members of Motor Vehicle Enthusiasts Club attended during the morning with their gleaming vintage cars.

Fortunately, we had good stocks of ANZAC biscuits and Devonshire Teas because we had lots of visitors during the day. Myrlene, Sue and Judy worked continuously keeping up with the demand.



*It was brisk business on ANZAC Day*

## ***Troops, Trains and Trades: the WAGR during WWII***

AT THE ASSOCIATION OF Tourist and Heritage Rail Australia (ATHRA) conference in Tasmania in March, the NT delegation met Dr Philippa Rogers from the Midland Railway Workshops in WA.

We found some common ground with Philippa who has indicated a number of ways in which we can co-operate.

But it was a surprise some time later when we found in the mail a copy of Philippa's 1999 book *Troops, Trains and Trades*, which covers the history of the Western Australia Government Railway (WAGR) during WWII.

Chapter 10 is particularly interesting because it covers the contribution made by the WAGR to the NAR during WWII.

We did not realise that the NAR was down to just three drivers, three firemen and three guards in 1939, but with minimal activity it's probably not surprising. The WAGR made the greatest contribution to the NAR of all the states.

The book obviously represents a power of research effort by Philippa and is a real credit to her.

The book will make a valuable addition to our small library and we are most grateful for her gifting of the book.

# Heritage open day in May

THE FIRST MONDAY in May is known as 'May Day' and is a public holiday in the NT.

We traditionally open our year with a Heritage Open day.

Much work had gone in to preparing the venue and the logistics for the event.

We heard lots of comments during the day about the beautiful state of the grounds and the quality of the exhibits.

Pleasingly, we actually delivered more than we had advertised. This included:-

- Devonshire teas in the historic Railway Refreshment Room;
- a gourmet sausage sizzle;
- a guided tour to the 'Hole in the Hill' and other Adelaide River points of interest;
- Fairground train rides with 'Casey Jones' on the *Ben Parry*;
- recitals by the Darwin City Brass Band in the gardens;
- pony rides courtesy of Mount Bundy station;
- guided tours of the precinct; and
- Mick Kent's new displays in the railway shed.

Every time we looked, the carpark was comfortably full and people were coming and going.

It was especially good to see locals attending, including Patsy Fawcett, Tommy, Bob Reid, Lexie and Rita.

Some people had come a long way; we hosted visitors from Wadeye and Pine Creek.

A huge thank you goes to everyone who contributed to the success of the event.

We are aware that many people contributed food and services at no cost and that extra generosity is deeply appreciated.



*Joan and Andy Fraser from Pine Creek*



*The ever-popular Ben Parry*



*Lexie and Bob Reid*

*Tina and Sue on the merchandise stand*

# Stories we heard on May Day

ONE OF THE PLEASURES of these events is the tales that people tell.

Our visitor from Wadeye (five hours drive each way) told of his childhood at the Adelaide River Railway station in the 1960s.

In particular, he advised that he had met the 'gnarled old man' who lived in the humpy up behind the reservoir (mentioned by Jim Harvey in *Forgotten Volunteers*).

The old bloke lived with an Aboriginal girl and they got married in the Army chapel during WWII.

But then the story gets much more entertaining. The old bloke was shot with a 303 by a kangaroo and it was in the newspaper.

It seems that the old bloke shot the roo and was about to knock it out with the butt of the rifle when the roo grabbed it and hit the trigger.

The old bloke sustained a blow to the shoulder. As he always went without shirt, the scar was there for all to see for years.

And the old man's name was Jack Crosbie. The extract opposite from the *Cairns Post* indicates that the story is accurate.

Interestingly, Google reports on a book published in 1949 entitled *Kangaroo shoots man*, which is still worth \$50.

Another visitor identified the telephone switchboard at the station.

Not only that, but he worked on it when it was at Jock's store.

He is still with Telstra.

It seems that the board was known as a 'drop Indicator' switchboard because a flap would drop when an incoming call was on the board, indicating the line that wanted service.

There were 30 extensions and six trunk lines.

## N.T. KANGAROO SHOOTS TRAPPER WHO HAD SHOT HIM!

### Wounded Man's Amazing Experience

DARWIN, September 19.- A kangaroo has shot a man in the Northern Territory: He is Arthur Crosbie, a stockman employed on Tipperary station, near Adelaide River. He is in hospital with a bullet wound in the lower part of his right arm. From his bed in the Darwin hospital today Crosbie told how he shot and wounded a kangaroo at a waterhole near his camp.

He said: "I thought I might catch him alive, so I ran over, at the same time reloading my .303 rifle and leaving it cocked. When I reached the wounded animal he was on his back and I could see that he was badly wounded, so I decided to kill him.

"Instead of using the other bullet I put the butt of the rifle under his chin holding, his head down on the ground to render him helpless while I reached for big stick lying near his tail. Just as I began to reach, I saw the kangaroo put his right forepaw around the trigger guard and the ringer of the paw on the trigger. Before I had time to do anything about it he had pulled the trigger and I was shot through the right arm. I got my wife to drive me into Adelaide River and later I came into the Darwin hospital."

Crosbie said that he had lived near all his life in the bush and in that time had shot hundreds of kangaroos or wallabies. "This is the first time that one has ever shot me." he said.

*Cairns Post*, Friday 20 September 1946  
Extracted from the National Library of Australia newspaper archives.

## A valuable gift from faraway Canberra....

DURING THE YEAR, WE MENTIONED our need for a step ladder for a number of functions at the River, including light globe replacement in the station and cobweb removal. We were blown away when Peter and Rosemary Hateley from Canberra chimed in and offered to fund a brand spanker. Not only is such a gesture of direct immediate benefit, but it is also a big morale boost to people on the ground that someone so far away sees what is being done as important and worth supporting. We met Pete and Rosemary at The Narrows on 6 March 2006 when we ran the Fairmont at the Narrows during Clean-Up Australia day. They have a 7.25 inch Shay steam locomotive which we must get a report on. Thankyou very much for your membership renewal and the step ladder gift, Pete and Rosemary.

# Tindal to Katherine rail trail walk

ON SUNDAY 16 MAY this year, we experimented with a different form of Rail Trail walk.

It was over the 12km route from the Tindal RAAF base to Katherine along the Never Never Line.

Gill Banks from the National Trust organized a bus from Red Cross and the bus, for safety reasons, followed the walkers. It dropped us at strategic points and picked up walkers further along.

Some people were happy to stay in the bus.

The walk lasted two hours and worked well for the dozen or so participants.

We found rails embedded in Level Crossings, concrete culverts, the APPROACH sign to Tindal, one two-span steel bridge (see Image 6619 attached) and one six-span bridge, end loading platforms, one side loading platform, cattle yards along with fishplates and nuts and bolts.

## Birdum extension

Close in to Katherine, we visited the construction depot for the 'Birdum extension' and the concrete foundations that were intended for the Larrimah gantry crane (that never arrived).

The bus driver, Les Cox, remembers the Fujita Salvage Company coming through in 1960 and collecting up all the 'scrap' iron in town.

Lots of railway rolling stock went along with special items like the diving bell that was used to build the bridge foundations in 1926.

Les also recalled, with some trepidation, the walk across the Katherine railway bridge when it only had three planks between the rails and nothing else.

He recalled that women as well as blokes had fallen off and been killed.

Jack Wright recalled stories of railway workers at Larrimah taking orders for gear including a tractor that somehow disappeared from a locked and sealed container whilst in transit through Larrimah.

The image opposite shows the Never Never Line disappearing in to the secure area of RAAF Base Tindal with the clearing through the trees still being discernable.



*Trevor marshalling the walkers*



*Ew. That's a long way down...*



# What next - *Sir Porky*?

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR friend and fantastic supporter Peter Cornell on being awarded an OAM by the Governor-General.

Pete is a very positive person and always has a can-do attitude in spite of many calls on his talents.

Adelaide River and FNAR would not be where we are today without the unstinting efforts of Pete over the past decade, including allowing us to safely store plant and equipment on his block and allowing us to work there.

Peter received his OAM for: 'Service to the community through philanthropic contributions to a range of charitable organisations'. Further:

Mr Cornell is a supporter of a range of charities and community groups including Variety Club: the Children's Charity, Riding for the Disabled, School of the Air and the North Australia Railway at Adelaide River.

Mr Cornell has been recognised for his philanthropic contributions through numerous community awards, some of which include the International Presidential Citation, Variety, the Children's Charity, 2007. Local Hero Award (Northern Territory Metro), Australian of the Year Awards, Australia Day 2007 and The Small Business Champion Northern Territory Award 2007.

Nearly every day we have a laugh with and about Porky.

Ironically, his nickname is quite undeserved. He purchased a carrying business called Porky's Pickups and seeing as it was his business, everyone assumed that his name was Porky. He takes it very kindly.

In fact, he eats very wisely and is a good cook himself.

Being in the transport industry, Pete carries some big loads for us at times. Everything in railways is big and heavy. Over the years he has carried hundreds of tons of gear over long distances.

For example, 1888 wooden carriages from Victoria to Darwin, a 1910 steam locomotive from Mount Isa to Darwin, and two complete Sidney Williams huts from Darwin to Adelaide River.

He is a specialist in moving heavy and large objects.

Over the years we have developed a proto-

col with Pete in terms of the movement of these special loads (which he cheerfully does free of charge). Basically, it comes down to four basic principles:

1. Trevor, you tell me where it is.
2. You tell me how big it is.
3. You tell me how heavy it is; and
4. Don't tell me when you want it.

To date, everything that has required transportation has received it almost miraculously.

Pete is a very energetic fellow and its amazing what he gets done in a day. We sometimes ponder how he manages to do so much for charities but at the same time runs a successful business.



*Peter Cornell with His Honour the Administrator Tom Pauling QC at Government House in Darwin. Scrubs up all right, doesn't he?*

Some managers practise an approach called Management by Walking Around, which is a technique for keeping in touch with the shop floor. Pete has a variation on this, which is Management by Driving Around.

Once, he invited Trevor to jump in his car for a simple trip in to Darwin which should have taken 10 minutes. It took over an hour because they toured through the back blocks of Berrimah and Winnellie to make sure that Pete was up to date on everything that was happening around the place.

Even at home, he is always driving a forklift around the yard to make sure that everything is progressing satisfactorily.

*continued on page 10*

# Sir Porky (continued)

And the picture is not complete without the mobile phone permanently attached to his ear.

Pete's love of fine cars and especially classic hot rods is well known. The smile on his face when he fired up the 'big block' V8 Ferguson tractor (that he had built) and drove it around the yard was joy personified.

Recently, Pete's son Christian gave him a father's day surprise by fitting a four-inch stainless steel exhaust to Pete's new Landcruiser business ute. Pete found this most agreeable. It inspired him sufficiently to suggest to wife Estelle that they should go in to town for dinner.

As this does not happen every night, Estelle readily agreed and prepared for the evening appropriately. When they got to Mitchell Street, Pete did a lap to see how the new exhaust sounded. Then another lap. Then another. Estelle delicately ventured to enquire about dinner. By then Pete was satiated and just wanted to go home and have a sandwich.

Estelle still dreams of having a quiet, relaxing (somehow more formal) dinner with Pete.

Apart from his enormous energy, Peter has a few rules for himself and those that are close to him. These include:

1. Put it back where it came from after you have used it
2. Keep the workplace clean.

This means that the workshop is always spotless and that trucks are cleaned inside and out every night.

But it does not stop inside. Everything in Pete's yard is either in a container or on a pallet. This means that everything is moveable (with a forklift), including large trees in large pots which are on pallets. So it is al-

ways easy to clean-up or sort things out in Pete's yard.

In fact, sometimes when you visit the yard it takes a while to get re-aquainted with it as everything has moved, including the trees.

Recently, Pete told us that what we needed at Adelaide River Rail heritage precinct was a forklift.

Having long experience with voluntary organisations and their propensity to break expensive mechanical plant, we were hesitant.

Then we asked Pete to move a couple of demountable toilet blocks that had been donated to the Railway Museum.

Only one of the demountables turned up at Adelaide River. When we enquired with Pete he delicately advised us that 'they were both stuffed and so I did you a favour by trading one in for a forklift'.

He was right. The reason they were given to us was that that they were beyond economic repair.

So he gave one to a demountable business for their rental stock and took a broken forklift off their hands.

He then took the forklift back to his workshop, rebuilt it and presented it to the Railway Museum.

We have enjoyed the amenity of this four tonne forklift for several years now and cannot believe how we ever operated without it.

We are eternally grateful to Pete for his enterprise, mechanical skills and generosity.

And, of course, even Pete would acknowledge that he would not be able to do all that he does without the long-suffering and extraordinarily talented support of Estelle.

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**Professional Update: Seeing the values in large technology heritage: The conservation and curation of 'big things', 24–25 March 2011, ANU & the National Museum of Australia.** The conservation of items of large technology such as aircraft, large vehicles, engines and machinery require specialist curatorial, conservation, engineering and trade training methods and skills.

This professional update will examine the application of different values and practices to the successful and sustainable management and display of large technology objects. The discussion will be informed by a range of viewpoints and case studies presented by leading large technology heritage practitioners. Participants from different backgrounds will be invited to work with each other to challenge and extend their ideas. More info from the Institute for Professional Practice in Heritage and the Arts (IPPHA) or see <http://ippha.anu.edu.au/event-calendar>.

# Toyota tow motor

WE NOW HAVE A sparkalarkling (that means *really* sparkling) 'Platform Tug' following a paint job in July.

The colour is Chrome Yellow and was applied by Mike Wright (the fellow in the driver's seat). Mike paints Jim Cooper's Ford cars and did a great job on our tug.

The Tow Motor made its debut appearance at AR at the Railway Picnic on Monday 2 August.

Thanks to Tom Bertenshaw and Leo Izod for the restoration and Mike Wright for the painting.

O'Brien Glass did the windscreen. Darwin Container Services transports the beast for us.

Great Southern Rail gifted the tug to FNAR following years of service at Keswick and Darwin.



## STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS...

Mick Kent's outstanding work on the Overland Telegraph Line will soon - and finally! - be uploaded to our web site.

Technical difficulties (or, more particularly, technical 'challenges' for your Editor) have prevented it being uploaded before now, but it should be on our site before 1 January 2011.

Apologies to Mick for the l-o-n-g wait.

# Steam loco NFB88

NFB88 IS THE STEAM locomotive currently in Ryan Park, Katherine.

Many of you will be aware of its various movements around Katherine over the years.

- until the 1970s it was located on the site of the 'Evacuated Workshops' along O'Shea Terrace beyond the RSL (with the Lepers van);
- in 1981 it was moved to Rundle Park along the Victoria Highway (by Bob Holt);
- At some stage (maybe 1990) it was moved up to Railway Terrace near to the railway station; then
- a couple of years ago it disappeared to Ryan Park.



This aged locomotive was built by James Martin at Gawler in 1892 for the South Australain Railway, entering service on 20 September 1892.

During WWII it was purchased by the Commonwealth for 500 pounds (\$1000) and dispatched overland to Larrimah where it entered service with the NAR in December 1943.

It was converted to run on oil on 22 May 1950 and was still in service in November 1955.

As such, it was one of the last steam locomotives on the NAR.

It is not clear how NFB88 and two sisters escaped the Fujita Salvage company in 1960.

However, by 1964 the other two had been sold for scrap and NFB88 was sold to a private buyer who failed to take delivery.

# In brief...in brief...in brief...in brief..in brief

## Exploring Stapleton

STAPLETON WAS AN ORIGINAL SAR station on the Palmerston and Pine Creek Railway being at the 69.5 mile (whilst Adelaide River was at the 77 mile peg).

A few of us went out there to search for a variety of places including the cemetery, the 1874 'Our House Hotel', the old mail track, some fettlers cottages and the original railway station site. We were assisted with probably the best selection of maps and surveys that could be assembled, courtesy of Vern O'Brien and Mark Powell.

Although we were well aware of the possibility of finding nothing, we in fact found almost everything. It was not easy and it took six pairs of good eyes and lots of emu-pairing to find things. It took all day.

One of the highlights was the site of the railway cottages. Two of the cottage slabs are high on a rocky ridge with great views across the Stapleton Creek valley. A track through a break in the rocky spine of the ridge leads to an outhouse with an equally impressive view. We cannot imagine how tough it must have been looking after a brand new railway in 1888 when the only other person in the vicinity was a publican whose pub had just lost all of its patronage once the railway started.

## Presidential thanks

OVER RECENT WEEKS, some very positive comments from unexpected quarters have come in praising the appearance of the Adelaide River Rail Heritage Precinct and the displays.

A visiting pilot expressed amazement and admiration that many of our volunteers drive from Darwin regularly to look after the precious asset.

On a personal basis, I sometimes become aware of the financial contribution that some volunteers are making in addition to their many hours of effort. That is, volunteers are spending their own cash on FNAR projects that they are working on and then not claiming reimbursement.

This applies to more than one or two volunteers and it is deeply touching and indicative of an extraordinary level of commitment and passion.

Further, I also sometimes become aware of the financial contribution that our wonderful caretakers make. They are aware that we run on the smell of an oily rag and like to make their own contributions to help the show reach new heights.

I am not aware of a culture like this in too many other organizations, or in society generally in 2010. It's very touching and it is a privilege to work with such generous people. Thank you.

## Presidential President

OUR PRESIDENT, TREVOR HORMAN, is now also President of the National Trust of Australia (NT). Just when we thought he could find no more hours in the day, he has to find them!

## Maggie Beer afternoon tea

ON THURSDAY 5 AUGUST, we hosted an afternoon tea for the Council on the Ageing (COTA) at which the special guest was Senior Australian of the Year, Maggie Beer.

Being a weekday afternoon, it was a challenge for us. But Graeme prepared the venue and Nola, Di, Margaret Kirkup and Estelle Harris did the honours.

It was especially pleasing to receive the following letter from Darryl at COTA at Batchelor:

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to FNAR and especially Di, Nola, Margaret and Estelle for the afternoon tea for Maggie Beer and the local people who wanted to meet her. The venue was sparkling and welcoming and the afternoon tea was commented on by a number of people as being just perfect. I know it was appreciated by all who were there. Also a double thanks because I know that to achieve this event, your volunteers had to give up much more time than the event itself in order to prepare and set up the tables etc and then pack up afterwards.

Regards

Darryl

# In brief...in brief...in brief...in brief..in brief

Darryl and Graeme do a great job running COTA at Batchelor and contributing to community life generally (eg slaving over the BBQ at the railway picnic).

A really big thanks to Graeme Stuart, Nola, Di, Margaret and Estelle for making this big effort.

## Gifting for Picnic Day

DURING THE TRADITIONAL railway picnic on the first monday in August, we were favoured with a number of gifts, which included:

- Robert Bell brought with him a large conical steel piece which is part of the Thermit welding gear for welding railway track. Robert found it near Grove Hill.
- Leo Izod donated 20m of heavy white polypropylene rope for use in the Tug-O-War.
- Bob Foster spent the whole day selling autographed copies of his two books *Birdum or Bust* and *Beyond Birdum*. Then he came and donated the total sales to FNAR. A true gentleman.
- Anne-marie Martin gifted a fine collection of railway luggage. It includes suitcases with exotic international stickers on them plus a round hat box. One suitcase has a tennis racquet frame attached to the lid and looks very oldish. This is a special collection that will enhance our displays.



*ABOVE: Bob Foster at the ready for book signings on Picnic Day in August.*

*BELOW: Anne-Marie Martin with the fine luggage collection that she donated to the FNAR.*



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## Short Course: Managing Small Museums at a Heritage Place

24 – 28 January 2011

Narryna Heritage Museum in Hobart, Tasmania

Narryna is winner of the small museums award in the ABC Radio National Regional Museums Award 2010.

This course focuses on developing skills in managing small museums located at heritage places. Participants will have the opportunity to learn practical heritage management skills and gain a thorough understanding of the issues relating to small museum and collection management. Narryna is both an historic house and home to a remarkable collection dating from the earliest European settlement of Australia. This includes a nationally significant art collection and one of the largest costume (dress) collections in the southern hemisphere. The course will be held primarily at Narryna and will include hands-on activities and engagement with Narryna staff, volunteers and the local community.

More information from the Institute for Professional Practice in Heritage and the Arts (IPPHA) or see <http://ippha.anu.edu.au/event-calendar>.

# Black tie ball success

THE SEPTEMBER BLACK TIE Ball at Adelaide River was a big success.

It was basically organized by two women, Michelle McLean and Donna Renshaw. They lined up the sponsors, sold the tickets, decorated the venue, lined up the catering and the entertainment, etc.

Michelle and Donna invited FNAR to be one of the beneficiaries of the proceeds from the ball.

The air-conditioning was superb with light breezes and moonlight.

Mike Foley and Jazzamatz played dinner music and Mick Renshaw played the dance music.

Grinners provided excellent catering.

Jeff Colver was the MC and he did a great job with his three-legged man jokes.

Tony Pickering ran the auctions and reportedly ended up with several thousand dollars in the kitty.

The locals dressed up for the occasion.

It really was very pleasant and good value.

During the evening they screened our Powerpoint presentation covering a trip down the NAR in days gone by (along with presentations from FERG and ARSS).

We congratulate Michelle, Donna and Deb Koch for the magnificent efforts.

Interestingly, there was a busload from Batchelor and it was surprising how many of them enquired when the Mississippi Queen is going to arrive at Adelaide River. This is Railcar NDH6 which was gifted to us by John Spellman.

We have done some work to waterproof it, but it needs a lot more tender loving care before it will be fit for public exhibition.



*Jude Payntor, Richard Luxton and Trevor Horman  
at the Black Tie Ball*

## Howley visit

IN AUGUST (it was a busy month!) we fulfilled a long term need to go back to Howley (100 miles on the Palmerston & Pine Creek Rail) and deal with a tree that had appeared to be threatening the 26,000 gallon elevated water tank in 2003.

An intrepid group of 11 set out from Adelaide River in five vehicles at 0830 and sauntered along a bush track between old mine pits until we were close to the railway.

Then we hit the first washed out creek crossing. Many hands were needed to make it passable. After 17km on the dirt track we got to Howley and found that the tree had done nothing but grow for the past 7 years. It was huge and it had grown around some of the wrought iron members of the 1888 tank stand. In addition there were more trees. But thankfully the tank was still standing.

But it took nearly 6 hours on site to bring the tons of black wattle to the ground.

One element of the plan bracing was broken by the tree and we will recover and repair that on another visit.

Whilst all of this excitement was going on, Trevor Menzies was busy with his GPS finding and recording all of the elements of the site plus working out where the surveyed town of KNUTSFORD had been in 1874.

This will all help to record the place and assist to get it Heritage Listed.

Thanks to Helen Menzies, Judy Robinson and Margaret for minding the fort at Adelaide River whilst the expedition was under way.

# Another great Picnic Day

PLANNING FOR THE traditional Railway Picnic had been going on for weeks. The kitchen crew had logistical meetings and had transported supplies to the River in preparation.

On the Saturday prior, we had a final working bee to prepare the place, and we must thank Mick Kent, Judy Richardson, Graeme Stuart, Harcourt and Margaret plus Brian Van Der Stelt for their fullsome efforts on that day.

The event was a great success with kids and their parents enjoying the traditional Railway Picnic games and rides.

Many people enjoyed sitting under the tree and listening to *The Fettleers*.

The crowd was equal with our best for this event. The day was fine and mild and the grass was still green after the late finish to the Wet.

We have a lot of people to thank for their contributions to the event. They include: Nola Smith, Di Lunn, Margaret Kirkup, Estelle Harris, Lexie, Graeme Cheater and Darryl Butler; Mick and Sue Kent, Graeme Stuart, Harcourt Philips and Margaret, Brian Van Der Stelt, Judy Richardson; Will and Tina Visser from Katherine and Helen Bate; Leo Izod, Tom Bertenshaw and Mike Wright for preparing the bright yellow Platform Tug; *The Fettleers* including Peter Bate, Tony Suttor, Fritz, etc. They did a superb job; and Sue and Scott Witham for providing the pony rides.



*Graeme and Darryl from Batchelor (the dudes who also run COTA down there) on the Sausage Sizzle during the Open Day (Mr Horman in background appearing to time them!)*



*Judy and Myrlene (sisters in arms...)*

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This advertisement recently appeared in an Australia ICOMOS e-newsletter:

## **Veterans Heritage Workshop, February 2011**

To be held at the Victorian Archives Centre (North Melbourne) on Wednesday 23 February 2011.

This workshop is a free one-day event for volunteers from ex-service organisations, local historical societies, community museums and other community groups who care for veterans heritage collections.

As this will be a repeat of the August 2010 workshop, preference will be given to organisations and people who did not participate in the August workshop. There is a limit of two representatives per organisation.

We think it is an outstanding idea and have asked the Northern Territory Archives Service whether anything similar has been or can be offered in the Top End. Obviously, the Melbourne workshops are extremely popular, and it would be useful to measure both interest and how many organisations have veterans' collections in the Top End.

# 17 Lines of Communication

OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS, WE HAVE developed a warm relationship with members of the WWII Signals Unit that was in Adelaide River, and in particular Norm MacMahon and Max Cathro. They have visited twice for the 19 February commemorations and led us to the 'Hole in the Hill' that Norm dug in 1943 (and is a great feature of tours on our open days).

Every year they have a small ceremony in Sydney on 19 February and they march in the ANZAC parade as their own unit. They send us their newsletter which often contains amusing stories that we share with you. The newsletter always contains a list of signalers who have departed since the last edition.

As with all things, time marches on and these fine diggers are now well in to their 80s.

Recently we received a most poignant letter from Norm advising that they were closing down their small association and operating under the auspices of a modern signals unit from now on. The colour patch for the unit has been given to a signals unit for custody.

Norm's letter went on to say that in winding up the 17 LofC they wanted to distribute their assets to kindred or close associations. Included with the well composed letter was a cheque with a very generous donation to FNAR. It is a most humbling gesture after what these blokes did for us during WW2.

In view of our close association with the 17 LofC, we will dedicate a section of our new WW2 Exhibition Hall at Adelaide River to the 17 LofC. We already have some of their photos and stories. We could complement that with some of the communications technology of the day (amongst other forms of communication, they used motor bikes and they had a pigeon loft). This exhibition would form an ongoing reminder of the work done here in 1942-1945.

Sadly, Norm also reported in the letter that Max Cathro has had some health problems. We wish them well.

**FNAR  
All Aboard!**

**If undeliverable, please return to FNAR, GPO Box 3504, Darwin NT 0801**