



All Aboard

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

September 2008

It's all go at the River

THURSDAY 28 AUGUST was a very big day in the precinct. First, we received a UK Parliamentary delegation which included three serious railway buffs, one of whom, Lord Faulkner of Worcester, has been Director of West Somerset Railway in the UK.

They were very keen on our set up and were most impressed by various of the display items, including the elevated 5000 gallon water tank and, of course, the wheel lathe (duly noting that it is from Manchester).

Another of the visitors, Lord Peter Snape, who worked as a railway guard before entering politics in the UK, had quite a chat to Caretaker John Nixon who was a Fireman/Driver on *The Flying Scotsman* in the UK.

The visitors having moved on to their next destination, Caretakers Des and Laura Thompson and John Nixon, together with Robyn Smith waited for the next exciting event: the arrival of a 20-tonne bogie wagon, formerly cattle wagon NACDF 4587E, which has been majestically restored by Mick Kent at Porky's Berrimah yard.

It was a very exciting time - and the delivery process was the mechanical equivalent of poetry in motion. No crane was used, but the City Wreckers long low-bed tilt trailer driven by Roy was superb for the job.

But that wasn't all. The crew of three (Roy plus Brian and Chris of Darwin Container Services), returned to Darwin, loaded the 22,000 litre oil tanker wagon NTO 730 and delivered it to Adelaide River.

This was the first rolling stock to arrive at Adelaide River in 32 years.

More photographs overleaf.



Poetry in motion as cattle wagon is delivered



ONCE AGAIN, WE ARE indebted to master tactician Peter 'Porky' Cornell who is ever vigilant about 'windows of opportunity' in his work schedule and manages to have extraordinary things moved all over the country - in this case from Darwin to Adelaide River.

This extraordinary feat was backed up the next day by delivery of the original Wheel Lathe Shed in pieces. It will be reconstructed on site at Adelaide River before the Wet Season.

We extend grateful thanks to Peter Cornell.



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Lots of Picnic Day fun

MONDAY 4 AUGUST was another memorable day at the Rail Heritage Precinct at Adelaide River.

Our wonderful caretakers had spruced the place up after the Rejex event on the Saturday so that once again it looked superb.

Even a very hardened local was moved to comment that he noticed the significant changes and developments at the precinct.

Mick Kent was there at 0730 running his whipper-snipper along between the rails to finesse the image. Mick also hid the clues for the Treasure Hunt.

By 10am the place was ready and visitors started to pour in, especially motor home drivers who were resident at Mount Bundy.

The venue came alive when *The Fettleers* launched the world premiere of their latest hit single *The Adelaide River RRR*, a reference to the Railway Refreshment Rooms. They found the underlying words in a 1939 railway magazine. The chorus commences 'Pour on the gravy...' and that's what *The Fettleers* did all day. They were immensely appreciated and there were many enquiries about the long awaited CD.



At about 11am Games Director Mick Kent and his assistant Des Thompson called the kids to order and ran the egg-and-spoon race with decorated eggs, the sack race and the Tug-o-War. The winners were presented with a special certificate and a refreshing prize.

Meanwhile, John Bellinger was running pony rides and Anthony Nielsen was acting as Casey Jones by taking the kids for rides in *Ben Parry*. One passenger turned out to

be Ben's grandson. Before it was pressed in to service *Ben Parry* needed quite a bit of maintenance (including cleaning rust out of petrol tank, fitting a new pneumatic tube, and attending to drive chain issues). The ever-patient Anthony dealt with this with a smile and was ably assisted by Garry Holmes.



time (ex Rejex) and so we programmed the commissioning of the 1885 Smith & Coventry wheel lathe for 1.15pm. This turned out to be the thing that everyone wanted to see.

We could have had 150 people in the Sidney Williams hut waiting to see the bloody great wheel turn.



Hungry Picnic goers were provided with some incredible railway delicacies expertly prepared by Alf Williams and daughter Chris Whalan.

Joan Moore and Helen Bate were our cashiers and handled merchandise sales.

A special feature of this event was that we were had volunteer attendants in both the station and the Exhibition Hall. Sue Ross and Judy Richardson minded the station collection for us whilst Gloria Holmes kept an eye on the Exhibition Hall.



Mick Kent hosted a guided tour of the precinct which people always appreciate.

Guest of honour Leo Izod arrived at lunch

We provided a commentary on the history of the machine and its function before calling on Leo to perform the deed.



Leo Izod at the ready to fire up the lathe. Leo is a legend in his own right and has been awarded an Engineering Heritage Award by Engineers Australia in recognition of his outstanding tinkering at his Parap hangar (and elsewhere).

Sandfly restoration

The crowd cheered as Leo pressed the start button and the big machine screeched into life and started to roll. They were obviously appreciative as they cheered again when it was stopped.

We missed Owen Peake on this special occasion as he has done a large slab of the restoration work and it was his project. Owen was overseas at the time of the commissioning and left Darwin permanently soon after.

Leo spotted the wheel lathe and recommended that we save it from the scrap dealers in 2002. Norm Cramp (AKA Hawk), Richard Summerauer and Kerry Moran all helped with the rescue and restoration and they all visited the precinct on Picnic Day.



Local historian Pearl Ogden

We should make a special mention of Mick Kent's contribution to this event. Mick goes quietly about his business but in fact worked very hard to make the precinct beautiful and safe. On top of this, he puts a lot of thought and effort in to presenting the picnic games. Mick has collected and painted dog spikes, Maxine boiled and decorated eggs. Mick also prepared certificates for winners, plotted the Treasure Hunt and all the myriad things it takes to make the games happen.

Finally, he has provided most of the displays at the precinct. For all of this we say a big thank you, Mick, and Happy Birthday for Picnic Day.

Finally, a thought for our then caretakers Des & Laura and Gary & Gloria who were left to dispose of the garbage, bring in the highway signs and tidy up all the other loose ends.

BEFORE SUNRISE ON THE morning of Friday 11 July, a work crew (and an interested observer) attended Stokes Hill Wharf to collect *Sandfly* and move her to Leo Izod's Qantas Hangar at Parap to undergo restoration.

Sandfly has suffered corrosion from the salt air in her new position on the wharf.

Restoration works on the 19th century American Baldwin locomotive will include a full strip down, clean, repair as necessary, lubricate and preserve, check all components, re-assemble and paint.

This work is being done by Leo Izod, Tim Bertenshaw and Kurt Messenger. Like all good restorers, Tom is photographing the entire process. Tom completed his apprenticeship with WA Railways at the Midlands workshops. He has pointed out items that have been replaced or repaired during the 122-year life of *Sandfly*.

Everyone who sees *Sandfly* in its disassembled state is impressed by the heavy engineering practised in 1886.

At present, there are two burning questions: should *Sandfly* be restored to steam capability?; and where should the restored *Sandfly* be displayed?

We are heartened by the views expressed by the Motor Vehicle Enthusiasts Club that *Sandfly* should become part of the collection at our railway museum at Adelaide River.

Visitor Comments re Precinct

ONE SUNDAY AFTERNOON, a woman from Darwin (with interstate visitors in tow) made a point of seeking out Caretaker John and commending FNAR for transforming the place from what she had seen six years ago. She was quite lavish in her praise and left a generous donation.

A woman from Wollongong asked: 'How do you maintain the beautiful gardens?' There is no simple or single answer to that question (apart from 'sweat'!!). A lot goes into it by a number of people - thank you, all.

More Rejex food, fun and frivolity

ON SATURDAY 2 AUGUST, we hosted a visit by the 2008 Rejex Rally.

The biggest surprise of the day was when we walked inside the station and found that **Alf and Ethel Williams** had made the effort to come all the way from Hermannsburg to assist at the event. What a pleasure it was to see them again! It was even better news when they indicated that they may be able to rejoin us at the end of the month.

The first job of the day was erection of the large marquee that Rob Knight MLA loaned us. This was unfamiliar territory, but with some trial and error, we got there. Our good friend Barry Sharpe from Larrimah walked in at the wrong time and was roped in to help erect the big top. All in, the crew involved in setting up the venue included Mick Kent, Anthony Nielsen, Ross Cowells, Alf Williams, Des Thompson, Gary Holmes, John Bartlett, Barry Sharpe and Peter Bate



Leo Izod's 1915 Studebaker on its first run in more than 50 years

More than 60 fine cars from the Motor Vehicle Enthusiasts Club were participating in the three-day rally to Hayes Creek and Katherine. They started from Mindil Beach (breakfast) and did some motorkhana events at Hughes before arriving at the River at 1230.

We were particularly interested in Leo Izod who was taking the 1915 Studebaker out for its first run in more than 50 years (1915 was the first year that Studebakers were produced). Leo has restored this car from a bucket of rust over 18 months. It ran sweetly

on the way down and was cruising at 55 kph. We thought Leo was entering the grounds a little fast, but he explained that it was simply a matter of having no brakes (as you do).

Over the next hour, we fed and watered almost 150 participants in the Rally. Nola Smith's arrangements worked perfectly. The crew in the kitchen did a superb job and at the risk of missing someone we'll try to record the volunteers who were involved with the food - Nola Smith was there in spirit and was mentioned many times, Estelle Harris, Del Ainslie-Cowells, Jan Adamson, Jan's daughter Nicole and friend Mel, Renate Mohrbach, Sue Ross, Helen Bate, Christine Whalen, Karen Nielsen, Ethel Williams, Laura Thompson and Gloria Holmes.

Our patrons were complimentary about the luncheon choice of chicken or lasagne, each served with salad.

The venue looked sensational and for that a big thanks goes to Mick Kent, Des Thompson and Gary Holmes. The fact that our visitors hung around for much longer than usual, nearly 1430, was an indication of how relaxed and comfortable they found the place.

A special guest was Bob Foster, author of *Birdum or Bust*. Bob personally autographed several copies of the book that were sold by our merchandising team of John Bartlett, Helen Bate, Sue Ross and Gloria Holmes.

Another valuable effort was put in by the



Our small army of volunteers in a somewhat relaxed de-brief mode following departure of the Rejex participants to their next destination.

Rejex (cont)

Parking team which included Des Thompson, Alf Williams, Bob Petersen and Peter Bate. They diligently and diplomatically shepherded the special cars (eg 1915 Studebaker), ordinary cars and cars with caravans in to separate stables- people can get very funny when they are asked to park in a sensible place and order.

Meanwhile, Anthony, Gary and Mick were working on the *Ben Parry* Fairground train for operation on Picnic Day two days hence.

A big thank you to everyone who contributed to making this day the success that it was.

Many people travelled from Darwin at their own expense which is much appreciated. From observation it seemed that the team enjoyed the day as much as the rally people. We hope so.

And we saw the southbound *Ghan*, headed by NR75, followed by a southbound freight train, headed by FQ04.

Vale Bill Lane

BILL LIVED AT Stapleton on Coach Road and was one of our quiet supporters. Sadly, Bill recently passed away and after a service at Holy Family Church in Karama he was buried in the 'new' Adelaide River cemetery.

Bill was a regular visitor to Marko's Country Store at Adelaide River and one of the local characters.

Living adjacent to Stapleton Railway station, Bill kept an eye on the NAR in that region for us. We suspect that Bill actually disturbed the bridge thief in 2005. Bill was really peeved off that the thief had also taken a heap of steel sleepers that he had carefully stacked. Last year, Bill donated a concrete communications pillbox which had been installed by the NAR in 1972 at Stapleton.

Bill moved in to Adelaide River in the last 12 months where Mark and Sue O'Hagan looked after Bill and his wife, as did Bob Reid and others. Thanks to each of you. We will miss Bill.

Vale Albert Albany

ALBERT DIED ON 9 April as a result of a car accident two weeks earlier. The story of Albert Sydney Albany is probably one of the legendary stories of the NT. He was larger than life in many ways.

Leo Izod reported that after WW2 when Leo was 16 (about 1951 when Albert was about 21) Leo assisted Albert at Fenton Airfield where they cut up all of the hulks of WW2 planes, took the aluminium to Darwin for shipment to Perth. Aluminium was in short supply after the war and in Perth it was used to make compressors. The chopped aluminium was actually melted down in Darwin on the site occupied by Port Darwin Motors until recently. The incredible bit of the story is the method used by Albert to chop up the old planes. He used an axe!

Albert was originally a Pom but must have come to Darwin soon after the war. He was a mate of Leo's. Being very enterprising, Albert took it upon himself to search the land titles around Darwin, most of which was vacant in the 1950s and 1960s. He found that many were owned by deceased estates and many were in England. He did the paperwork and bought up lots of land cheap.

In the early 1970s Albert lived in a humble fibro house sitting all by itself beside the then Stuart Highway, 'The Track'. It would have been close to the position of the Shell servo in Rowstona Avenue, Yarrowonga. Albert owned all of the land around it. He had visions of creating a satellite city and actually had a business card mentioning the satellite city.

In 1972, the federal government commenced compulsory acquisition of the area in order to build Palmerston. There was a long and protracted legal case. Albert won, based, he said, on the words on the business card and walked away with more than \$7m.

It must have been in 1983 when the rails on the NAR were being pulled up that he had a contract for the section from Berrimah through Winnellie to the RAAF gates.

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A big win for heritage - and common sense

ON 19 JULY THIS YEAR, the Northern Territory government (in full-swing election mode) announced that the proposed World War II Military Museum will be sited at East Point.

All Aboard welcomes this news and congratulates the government for seeing and adopting what we consider to be the bleeding obvious.

Initially, the museum was proposed for the old Supreme Court site adjacent to Parliament House in the CBD.

The initial announcement (for the site, not the museum) drew howls of protest from heritage, service and veteran organisations, including the Legacy Widows and Ex-servicewomen, not to mention old Darwin folk to whom it made plain common sense to site the museum at East Point where there is already significant World War II infrastructure and interpretation.

Parliament House is on a significant World War II site - that of the Post Office which was bombed - but East Point is a far more evocative and relevant site, given the infrastructure and interpretation - not to mention its reserve status.

Chief Minister Paul Henderson has allocated \$11.5m over five years for heritage sites around Darwin.

This includes \$10 million to expand the current museum's building and enhance its

displays, including new interpretations and displays, audio-guides, virtual connections to other World War II sites around Darwin and Australia, and improved power and water services.

Mr Henderson said a management group involving current operators of the East Point Military Museum, heritage and museum experts, the Darwin City Council and representatives of the tourism industry will be formed to help determine the scope of work to be carried out at East Point.

The Chief Minister's announcement include commitment of an extra \$1.5 million to upgrade the Darwin Aviation Museum on the Stuart Highway.

The Government will also develop an improved interpretative visitors' experience to commemorate the sinking of the *USS Peary*.

"91 men were killed when the *USS Peary* was sunk by Japanese aircraft on 19 February 1942 - it is one of Darwin's most significant World War II sites," Mr Henderson said.

"I want to see an interpretative visitors' experience that highlights this important part of our history."

In our view, the museum is well overdue. Not only does it give the Northern Territory yet another unique tourism opportunity, but it promotes Australian history and heritage, which has to be a good thing.

And on matters heritage

SPEAKING DURING A Ministerial Statement on the economy during the Budget sitting of the Legislative Assembly in May, the Minister for Heritage, Len Kiely, said:

Cultural and archaeological heritage will be identified and a Heritage Management Plan produced that will outline out how heritage sites will be managed.

I expect these sites to include sites where there is evidence of

pre-contact Aboriginal activity, and also those with contemporary significance, including collection of traditional foods carried out in the marine and surrounding areas - such as underwater shipwrecks, plane wrecks and the antisubmarine boom net remaining from World War II.

This is more good news for heritage in the Northern Territory. We shall watch with interest.

John Nixon in recovery mode

CARETAKER JOHN NIXON is well on the road to recovery following a nasty accident at the River on Sunday 29 June.

John was working in a team of three - the others being Mick Kent and John Bartlett - pulling on a rope they were using to slew the Ransomes and Napier five-ton yard crane around to facilitate restoration and painting when the rope snapped and the three of them fell heavily to the ground.

He suffered a badly broken leg - two breaks of the tibia and one of the fibula - and it was some time before an ambulance could be sourced from Darwin to get him to hospital. Fortunately, a doctor was visiting the precinct at the time and made herself available to assist.

John's leg has been pinned but not cast in plaster and he is temporarily a resident of Royal Darwin Hospital.

Mick Kent and John Bartlett were battered and bruised from the ordeal, but did not require hospitalisation.

A range of Friends have been visiting John on a regular basis, for which we thank them.

Unfortunately, John Nixon was the only

Caretaker at Adelaide River and, during the height of the tourist season, we were left without an on-site Caretaker at the precinct.

Fortunately, our motley crew turned out to be not so motley, and we are most grateful to the following individuals who opened the station during John's incapacitation: John Bartlett, Nola Smith, Judy Richardson, Joan Moore, Mick Kent, Estelle Harris, Di Lunn, Jan Adamson, Bob Foster (of *Birdum or Bust* fame), Owen Peake, Des and Laura Thomson, Patricia, Sparra, Garry and Gloria Holmes and Trevor Horman.



It is a credit to everyone that in the period 30 June to 22 July, the station was only closed on one day because we had no one available.

It is a further credit that nearly all these volunteers live in Darwin and travelled down to Adelaide River to open the station - a sensational job. Congratulations to everyone involved.

John is now recovering well at Adelaide River and undergoing regular checks by the Nurse from the Adelaide River Clinic.

Vale Albert Albany (cont)

They were using rattle guns and jackhammers to remove the rails. Someone stopped to ask for directions and Albert lifted the jackhammer with one arm and used it to point to Darwin. This is another indication of the man's immense physical strength.

In the last decade or so, Albert had been resident at Albany Park near Coomalie. He said that he was planning a repeat of his satellite city venture. This time, it seemed to be based on Gould Airfield at Batchelor. He was planning a five-star rural subdivision with underground power using the WW2 airstrip as the theme. He planned to market the project to wealthy American retirees.

Albert was no stranger to battles with the bureaucracy. A Google search indicated that he had a legal settlement with the Development Consent Authority only in September 2007.

Albert was good to FNAR and donated the Rail Bender that Leo restored and that we have on display at Adelaide River. We understand that Albert was cared for by his daughter Elizabeth and that Elizabeth was badly injured in the car accident, too. Elizabeth returned from hospital in Adelaide and was here when Albert died. Our condolences go to Albert's family.

Heritage briefs

Heritage building sold

THE SUE WAH CHIN building in Cavenagh Street, which was constructed in 1888, has been sold by the Chin family company, Stone Houses Pty Ltd, to Gwelo Developments. The building was reportedly sold for \$3 million.

The building is protected by heritage listing and, whilst Gwelo's intended use of the building is not known, we do know that they have commissioned a Heritage Interpretation of the site and are in discussions with the Heritage Branch.

The Heritage Branch has expressed interest in excavating the rear of the site, and Gwelo has given permission for that to happen in stages.

We commend Gwelo Developments on their responsible attitude to the building and their interest in preserving it.

Yet another Heritage Minister

WE'VE LOST COUNT of the number of Ministers for Heritage we've had since the 2001 General Election. We have a new one again since Len Kiely lost the seat of Sanderson at the August 9 election. Chief Minister Paul Henderson announced the new ministry on 18 August. The new Minister for Heritage is Alison Anderson who holds the Central Australian seat of MacDonnell. We note with interest that the government's seven top priorities included: 'supporting our lifestyle, sport, natural assets, culture and heritage'.

We - again - remind the government that the promised new Heritage Act is no more a reality for the heritage community than the Min-Min light. For those of you who have forgotten how disgraceful the present *Heritage Conservation Act* is, it provides for damage, desecration and demolition of heritage sites under the auspices of 'heritage works' - note the word 'conservation' in the title of the act. One heritage academic described the act as 'emasculated'. We agree and urge the new minister to repeal and replace the *Heritage*

Conservation Act with contemporary best-practice legislation that: (a) serves the public interest; (b) features transparency; and (c) truly reflects the input that stakeholders had to the original consultations undertaken by Richard Woolfe in what seems like last century. In the latter category fall third-party appeals and serial listing, among other things.

On the lighter side

WHOSE NAME WAS MUD for organising a ladies weekend to Bali on the Darwin Cup long weekend? That weekend just happens to be the busiest in the year, with the Rejex Rally on Saturday and annual Picnic Day on Monday when it is a matter of all hands on deck. Not only was *SHE* absent, but several deck-hands accompanied her. Mea culpa! It was **Robyn Smith** who has engaged in an appropriate level of forelock tugging and grovelling and has promised never to have such a stupid idea again (or to move it to another long weekend...).

Doc Doherty

DOC WAS BASED at Hayes Creek and offered fossicking and heritage tours to Fenton where his father was based during WWII. Doc often called in to the station in 2002 and 2003 to promote his business. Then with the demise of the Hayes Creek roadhouse in recent years, Doc moved on and is now at the Douglas-Daly caravan park. Doc attended the Dawn Service at Adelaide River this year where we had a chat about the new gas pipeline from Port Keats to Fountainhead. Doc advised that he had found the contractor clearing the route (two blades wide) through Fenton. He managed to get them to avoid at least two significant WW2 sites (including a radar station about to receive signage).

Doc is now working with Heritage Conservation Services to ensure that all WW2 sites are saved. If it wasn't for the vigilance of people like Doc there would be no heritage left.

Heritage gong for Horman

FNAR PRESIDENT TREVOR HORMAN was this month presented with an Engineering Heritage Award - and he chose to tell no one about it.

Could it be that the advent of skyscrapers (well, high rise) in Darwin city have led him to believe that the Bush Telegraph is dead? He could *not* be that naive.

Well, Trev, mates being what mates are, and mates being honour-bound to reward excellence with a classic Aussie razzing, it's payback time!

Here's a transcript of Mr Horman's Award of Merit from Engineers Australia:

At the end of the twentieth century, as the plans for a standard gauge railway from Alice Springs to Darwin took shape, it became increasingly urgent to focus on the preservation of the remnants of the North Australia Railway.

Much of the railway was threatened by overbuilding by the new line whilst facilities such as the Adelaide River Station were threatened by the close proximity of the new railway to the old facilities. Trevor Horman took up this challenge, formed the Friends of the North Australia Railway in 2002 and has been President since.

The North Australia Railway started as the Palmerston and Pine Creek Railway in 1888/89. It was later extended to Katherine then Birdum. The railway closed in 1976.

Trevor Horman has been active in the Darwin community since the early seventies when he supported motor sport, leading to the construction of the Hidden Valley drag strip. Trevor was a founding member of the Motor Sport Council which developed Hidden Valley which now hosts a round of the V8 Super Car Series. Trevor is Deputy Race Director of the V8 Super Car Round, is very active in the

Engineers Australia Northern Division Heritage Committee and is a councillor of the National Trust.

The Friends of the North Australia Railway have refurbished the Adelaide River Station and Refreshment Rooms and the site is open to the public. The 1888 wrought iron railway bridge over the Adelaide River has been preserved and carries an Engineers Australia marker. A museum has been created at Adelaide River Station celebrating The North Australia Railway, The Overland Telegraph Line and the role of Adelaide River in the Defence of Northern Australia during World War II. The "Friends" have restored a steam locomotive, several carriages and other rolling stock, an elevated

cast iron water tank, an 1888 railway wheel lathe, have carried out preservation at Birdum and have accumulated a large collection of railway equipment and memorabilia.

Trevor excels at persuading individuals and organisations in the community to assist and participate. This, plus his extremely vigorous hands-on approach has resulted in an exceptional

display of engineering heritage and the saving of many relics of the North Australia Railway.



His Honour the Administrator, Tom Pauling QC, presenting Trevor with his award during a ceremony at Government House.

ALL OF WHICH IS fully endorsed by the Friends of the North Australia Railway at Adelaide River.

It is a thoroughly well deserved award and recognition of a man who has worked tirelessly for years out of his various loves for all things mechanical.

Now, Trev, before you get too sooky, your Editor can promise - hand on heart and all - that NO member of FNAR was involved in putting you up for this. It was entirely the work of Engineers Australia and, whilst we wholeheartedly support the award, we were not instrumental in it.

By popular demand...a rock-star poster!

THE LATEST ADDITION to our merchandise catalogue is a chronology of bombing raids over the Top End during World War II.

This is a product unique to FNAR and of vital interest to veterans, their families, history enthusiasts and run-of-the-mill tourists alike.

The A3 poster comes laminated and depicts whether it was a full moon or near-full moon at the time of the raids.

Research for the poster was donated by World War II Military Historian Bob Alford, who collated the material using Australian military records and the log books of Japanese pilots.

A cautionary note for WWII buffs: there are many web sites about the bombing of the Top End and, whilst well intentioned, there are many errors on them. For example, one site claims that Point Stuart near Koolpinyah Station was bombed in May 1943. As it happens, it was Point Stewart near Millingimbi that was the target of what wasn't really a bombing raid (so you won't see it in our poster).

History is, of course, a matter of interpretation based on the facts we have in the circumstances in which we have them.

We believe that our WWII Bombing Raids poster is the most accurate account of the raids over the Top End that is available, and we are indebted to Bob Alford for (a) his research and (b) his generosity in allowing us to use it (his poster is in the mail).

Photographs on the poster are primarily from the Owen Bennett Collection, which was donated to us by Mr Bennett a couple of years ago (his poster is in the mail, too).

The posters retail at \$20, come laminated AND presented in an Australia Post cylinder so that purchasers don't have to try to keep them flat in motor vehicles or caravans (the bulk of our visitors).

If you wish to order online, you may do so at: <http://northernexposure.com.au/rail/merch.html>

There is a \$5 postage fee within Australia for which you will *NOT* be sorry. Enjoy!

Welcome to our new caretakers

JOHN NIXON'S INJURY was not a good catalyst for urgent recruitment of new caretakers, but a catalyst it was!

We welcome **Des and Laura Thompson** from Tewantin in Queensland (who are really Kiwis, but honorary Aussies because they've been here for 27 years). Des is a Builder/Joiner and those skills will come in very handy at the precinct. They have two children, three grandchildren and one four-legged friend, two year-old *Cindy*. They are outdoorsy folk who enjoy stuff like hiking, fishing, hunting and kayaking - their next project cited as Cradle Mountain in Tassie!



Gary and Gloria Holmes (left) and Laura and Des Thompson on Picnic Day

Welcome (and farewell - they've already continued their travels) to **Gary and Gloria Holmes** of Caloundra in Queensland who were on the road for a month *en route* to the West when we snaffled them. Gary is a Panel Beater/Spray Painter/Plumber (and we have already used the latter skill in the precinct). They love fishing but are apparently not enamoured of crocodiles.

Alf and Ethel Williams have arrived back in the precinct from an extended caretaking and maintenance contract at Ntaria in Central Australia, so we have a full caretaking complement at present, which is wonderful.

Sid Williams #2 arrives

LONG-TERM MEMBER and supporter, Cameron Stone kindly gifted to us an 80ft long Sidney Williams hut, which was on his property in Winnellie.

by **JUDY RICHARDSON**

The building is in excellent condition. The main difference from our first shed (apart from being 20ft longer) is that the windows in this shed are alternately high and low, as they were often configured, so we will have one of each.

Our next task was to separate 'Sid' from his foundations. This was hot, hard heavy work and we were grateful that Cameron loaned us some of his crew.

Peter Poole then put in extra wall bracing whilst another team put in the carry beams we would use to transport Sid. As Sid was too large to exit the gate in Cousins Street, Trevor sought permission from Terry and Ross Finocchiaro, who own the old brewery site, to exit through their yard.

They were delighted to assist, much to our relief.

Peter's Kenworth 650 truck arrived and Brian skilfully reversed the 24m long trailer in to the shed (the floor had been swept for the occasion).

Peter then suggested that we should 'just jack the shed down on to the truck' after which he would drive it out. Ho, ho,ho!

Frantic activity once again as we had to go along and jack every carry beam up about 150mm to allow two pallets to be placed underneath each beam as packing on to the truck tray.

This was particularly heavy work both in the jacking department and in the lifting of pallets on to the truck.

We loaded and stacked two piles of 15

pallets to support the door lintel. It was a great effort and once again Cameron helped with some of his staff.

The next morning Brian and Chris proceeded to chain the seven carry beams to the trailer and to cross strap the tops of the walls.

Meanwhile Mick Kent, Peter Poole, Judy Richardson and Trevor loaded the 'good' 44 gallon drums, the remaining wooden pallets and the sliding door of the shed.

At 0930 on Saturday 17 May, the composite load moved silently forwards, out through the back fence and took up residence in the Brewery. Several cameras recorded the incredible event with this Sid Williams hut smoothly cruising through Cameron Stone's yard.

Cameron and his boys then repaired the fence and cleared out the balance of the yard ready for the new shed contractor to start on Monday morning.

Our sincere gratitude goes to Cameron Stone for both gifting the shed and for assisting with its uplift and removal, and to Peter Cornell for supplying his incredible 24m trailer and operating expertise.

It was two weeks from go to whoa - perhaps a new world record for lifting and spirting away an 80ft long WW2 Sidney Williams hut. The task involved close to 500 person-hours and costs to date are \$128 for the 14 angle iron knee braces that were needed to replace the missing WW2 units. The hut has a length of 80ft (24.4m) and width of 20ft (6.2m). The width across the eaves is 9m and the height was 5.3m loaded and rolling.





ON SUNDAY 25 MAY, Trevor was dispatched to pay money at Darwin Police Station for the escort service, which is a story in itself – what a horrible job being on the front counter of a CBD cop shop on the morning after the night before!

When I arrived at the brewery, the police were there in force and I was greeted with the wonderful news that Sid had fitted under the 5.5m high breezeway (I knew that it was going to be close and dreaded an adverse outcome).

Getting Sid out in to Hickman Street was the easy bit.

Have you ever tried to turn a 24m long load through 90 degrees as you exit your driveway?

Peter, Brian and the experts did it with just a minor excursion into the neighbour's front forecourt.

We closed our eyes as we went under low voltage conductors at about 5.7m.

The highway was only 200m away, but the job required removal of several pesky *Keep Left* signs on islands that we needed to cross.

Finally at 1100, Sid Williams hit the highway and Brian notched it up a cog or two whilst others reinstalled the signs.

The first serious obstacle was the *Prepare to Stop* signs at the McMillans intersection. They are only 10.5m apart. Brian lined it up and breezed through with about 0.5m freeboard each side.

The next obstacle was at Tulagi Road, where we had measured the gap between traffic lights as 9.6m. The freeboard in this case was down to 100mm but nevertheless with skill there was no damage.

The final challenge was at the Arnhem Highway lights. They are 10.5 m apart and hence were relatively easily accommodated with our 9.0m beam.

Sid took a breather at BP Palms and Noonamah to allow unappreciative hoons to pass. We thought it was a wonderful piece of Australia floating down the Track.

Pete did a great job with the escorts and through the CB radio arranged for professional transport drivers to pull off and park road trains many kilometres ahead of the southbound Sid. Only caravanners and hoons did not seem to understand until Sid

appeared over the next crest and almost devoured them.

Finally, at 1400 Sid arrived at Adelaide River to a warm welcome from locals and the many visitors at the precinct - it was Devonshire Tea day.

The hard work then commenced. We had to jack and pack Sid so that the truck could be removed.

Unfortunately, there was only a small party assembled for this task which involved heavy lifting work. Mick Kent and Peter Poole were legendary, assisted by 70 year olds Tom, Leo



Izod and John Bartlett plus myself (unknown vintage).

By 1630 Sid was sitting up on pallets and the extendable trailer was hauled out and retracted.

We all settled down for a cup of tea and some of the scrumptious sandwiches and Devonshire Teas that Nola and Estelle had made for us.

Those to thank

THIS WAS A FAST and at times complex project but it happened without fuss or injury (just a few muscle aches). We have many people to thank, including:

- Cameron Stone for gifting the 80ft long shed to FNAR and for extensive and generous assistance with the exercise;
- Cameron's men Cliff, Peter, Damien, Jamie;
- Mick Kent, for constant "heavy lifting" throughout the project from 8 to 25 May;
- Owen Peake for great support at the initial stage and in particular the special 7th carry beam;
- Peter Poole for contribution throughout including fabricating the knee braces, much pallet manoeuvring and jacking;
- Fran Briggs, Kerry Moran, Jared Archibald, Jack Devlin and Bas Meys for valuable assistance at critical stages;
- Leo Izod who was there at every stage from loaning equipment, to fixing jacks, to escorting the load and physically helping;
- Brian Kent for supplying and delivering 44 gallon drums;
- Viking Fibreglass for donating drums;



- Wolfgang Meike for loaning jacks;
- Terry and Ross Finncohiaro of Gaymark Investments and to Earle Williams of WA Freightlines for allowing transit through the Brewery;
- Al and Brenda Hocksiemer for drilling the 39 stump holes for Sid at Adelaide River;
- Nola and Estelle for sustenance par excellence
- And of course our huge thanks to Peter Cornell (Darwin Container Services) for providing the super-long extender trailer which made this job possible, for arranging all the permits for the job and for supplying experts like our driver, Brian, his brother



Chris plus escort drivers Brian and Ferg. It reinforces the reputation that Peter gained in 2005 when he was a finalist in the Local Hero category in the Australian of the Year as the NT Local Hero. Pete was crook with the 'flu for the last 48 hours, but still the job went on.



Cameron Stone, donor of Sid #2

Mention in dispatches

Mr KIELY (Sanderson): Mr Acting Deputy Speaker, as the Heritage minister, in recent weeks it has been my

On 7 May this year, the then Minister for Heritage, Len Kiely spoke about the Friends during the Adjournment Debate in Parliament. He was most complimentary, as you'll see from the *Parliamentary Record*.

alone they have completed some 3000 hours of volunteer labour. If you give that labour a value of \$15 per hour,

pleasure to attend two functions as the guest of the FNAR, or Friends of the North Australia Railway, a group of volunteers who maintain the Adelaide River Heritage Precinct.

I visited their Berrimah site to launch this year's Heritage grants. A few days later, it was my pleasure to launch their brand new - and as they described it - drop-dead gorgeous website. I think there is a little marketing involved in that badging!

It is great to see volunteers to dedicated to the Northern Territory's rich and diverse history and heritage. Mainly based in Darwin, the Friends have a block at Berrimah - courtesy of the most generous benefactors in the form of Peter and Estelle Cornell, whom the Friends describe as 'rolled gold' sponsors - at which they undertake extraordinary work on salvaging railway rolling stock with the ultimate aim of placing it all in the precinct at Adelaide River.

Not content with heritage alone, the Friends are closely associated with tourism authorities, and one of their works in progress is a 1936 rail carriage used as an ambulance train in World War II which will be fitted out to be the Adelaide River Visitor Information Centre.

Established in July 2001, the Friends are dedicated to the long-term goal of running a heritage tourism rail from Adelaide River to the World War II Snake Creek Government Depot some 4 km away. They will get there I am sure, and the Top End will be all the richer for it.

Like Robin Hood's band of merry helpers, the Friends are a small, compact and very diverse group. Their skills range from engineering, to media, to catering, and they achieve a great deal with not much very much more than human perseverance. This year

which is pretty cheap, a minuscule rate by any standards, it amounts to a contribution of \$450k to the Territory's heritage tourism.

Once a month during the Dry Season they have Devonshire teas in the precinct to raise money. They have regular newsletters and, as I mentioned, now have a website. They have developed close relationships with other heritage rail organisations and know an impressive range of World War II veterans who have donated photographs, anecdotes, uniforms and a range of other material which would otherwise be lost to the Territory. They also have an impressive range of former North Australia Railway employees in their network and these people range from drivers to gangers, fettlers and engineers.

They cannot function without the support of their very generous sponsors, organisations such as Tourism NT, the Coomalie Community Government Council, the residents and commercial operators at Adelaide River itself and, of course, without the support of the general public. In the past, the Friends have been recipients of Northern Territory Heritage Grants. I saw first-hand how an 1885 Cowans Sheldon Crane has been restored to its former glory in the Berrimah yard.

There are several talented individuals involved with the Friends. They include, but are not limited to: Trevor Horman, the President. Trevor is an engineer and a railway heritage fan. It is beyond doubt that this man's boundless energy drives the organisation. A man completely incapable of standing still, Trevor represents the Friends on a range of tourism, heritage, professional associations in addition to his tireless physical efforts in the precinct.

The Secretary and Treasurer is Judy Richardson. Judy not only takes care of the

Mention in dispatches

paperwork but gathers up material for the newsletter and helps out in the precinct on a regular basis. She wields a mean paint brush, is pretty good on the lawn mower, can turn her hand to waiting on tables, and manages to be the official photographer.

Vice President, Mick Kent, has meticulously documented the history of the Overland Telegraph and is responsible for what some visitors have called 'the best OT display in Australia' at the precinct. Mick has also lovingly restored a rail cattle car at the Berrimah yard and is always on hand to help out with lawn mowing and other more mundane but necessary work. On open days, Mick is games master and presents gold dog spikes to the winners of events.

Nola Smith and Estelle Harris are legends who run the Devonshire teas every month, and on open days like the one held on Monday of this week which attracted several hundred visitors. They also keep the troops fed and watered, calling them in from the field when lunch is served or a well deserved cuppa is waiting. Nola and Estelle are also responsible for recruiting 'Grey Nomad' caretakers for the precinct by doing the rounds around Darwin caravan parks with position vacant flyers.

Owen Peake and Mike Bowman represent the 'steam team' and do a huge job of work on restoring steam locomotives. Peter Poole is a civil engineer and tree clearer extraordinaire. Trevor Menzies, a surveyor, has done a lot of work at the precinct on flood mitigation and exhibit positioning purposes.

There is also another individual who is a great help to the FNAR. That is Robyn Smith who is well known to quite a number of us here in the House. Robyn is currently on leave and is putting a lot of time while she is on leave into helping out with the FNAR. Robyn has contributed in a whole range of ways. She has written the precinct interpretive signage plans, and she researches historical stuff where necessary. She has developed brochures and helps Judy with the newsletter. It was actually Robyn who also got the website up. It is a very good website and I recommend everyone to

have a look at it. One of her more endearing works is that she writes the Brolga entries. Unfortunately, she never gets it up there but it does keep their name up in bright lights.

Mr Acting Deputy Speaker, organisations as the FNAR could not exist without such volunteers, and I commend them to members here for the work that they do. Their tireless effort in helping retain Territory heritage is something that will make us all so much richer as a community. On behalf of all members present, I put on the public record our thanks for their selfless and tireless efforts in helping to maintain Territory heritage.

ALL ABOARD

Devonshire Tea will be served on the last Sunday of each month of the Dry Season between 11am and 3pm. The cost is \$5 per person.

Drop in to say hello, enjoy a Devonshire Tea and inspect the latest exhibits and works at the Adelaide River Railway Heritage Precinct.

Only one 2008 Dry Season date remains:

Sunday 28 September

All our labour is voluntary and all proceeds go toward the continued improvement of the precinct.



Farewell to Owen Peake



Owen in front of the Smith & Coventry wheel lathe

OWEN AND HELEN PEAKE left Darwin on Saturday 9 August after 40 years residence.

In recent years, Owen has done an enormous amount for us at Adelaide River. He got the 1888 bridge recognized as an Engineering Heritage site of interest and then designed and built the concrete plinth holding the bronze plaque at the southern end of the bridge.

He played a large part in recovery and restoration of the Smith & Coventry railway wheel lathe.

He completely wired the Sidney Williams hut.

In 2007, he built the concrete plinth for the Nurses plaque at the Ambulance train siding. During the past 12 months he has worked with Mike Bowman (the steam team) in restoring Hudswell Clarke #928.

During the past several years he has helped clean up the NAR at the Narrows and played a key role in re-sleepering the Narrows bridge #4.

Recently, Owen helped us to lift and remove the #2 Sidney Williams hut in record time.

In all of this work, Owen has paid for parts and materials himself declining offers of reimbursement.

In another role, he has overseen the preservation and interpretation of Darwin engineering heritage.

Finally, on the international arena he has been active in ensuring the preservation, recording and modelling of many large stationary steam engines in Australia and South-East Asia.

The bad news is the departure our good friend and supporter. The good news is that Owen intends to return in the 2009 Dry Season for a few weeks to continue his special work. He may even bring his brother-in-law Colin Oberon who has enjoyed Adelaide River in other years.

Thanks again for everything that you have contributed, Owen. We wish you and Helen the very best for this new phase of your so-called 'retirement'.

Gear required for the precinct

- hundreds of #17 Tek screws to screw off the roofing iron on the SHORT TOM protective shed
- an extension ladder to leave at Adelaide River.
- a steel work bench (preferably with a vice) to store at Adelaide River.
- a block and tackle hoist (minimum one tonne) to leave at Adelaide River.
- pallet racking to go in the container that Peter Cornell has kindly placed next to the Hudswell Clarke steam locomotive project. The racking will enable parts to be stored efficiently.
- 6" x 2" hardwood timber for the running board on Caboose GB5588.
- washing Machine
- windmill
- money – we always need money
- people – Carpenters and Cabinet Makers especially
- concrete

If you can help out with any of these requirements, please let us know. We can collect!

Positions Vacant

AUSTRALIA BE BUGGERED! Adelaide River has a skills shortage! Are you into:

- Carpentry
- Cabinet making
- Glazing
- Signwriting
- Painting
- Bituminous roofing
- Electrical work
- Mechanical (bogies - new bushes, etc)

And there is lots of unskilled work including rubbing back flaking paint, cleaning, storing spare parts, making stencils, photographing parts before dismantling and recording progress etc.

Work can happen at any time to suit people's preferences. Early morning (eg 7am start) or late afternoon (finishing at dark) are all possible.

Remuneration? Well, actually, there isn't any - *HOWEVER* we can guarantee you plenty of laughs, a great sense of achievement and reward, a little sense of learning and historical appreciation and a network of friends so diverse that the *Karma Sutra* looks like a Kindy text.

Can money buy that? We don't think so.

Please contact us with your skills rating and we can put you straight to work - pronto! The beauty is that you suit yourself.

**FNAR
All Aboard!**

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



THE MAN IN THE executive suit (singlet) is one Peter 'Porky' Cornell with his employees Brian and Chris. This photograph was taken during the logistically challenging re-location of the Sidney Williams Hut donated by Cameron Stone.

We appear to be constantly thanking Porky and his men for helping us out - but they do so much for us so the thanks are well warranted!