

All Aboard

News from the Friends of the North Australia Railway at Adelaide River
www.atr.org.au/fnaraar

August 2007

Stop Press!

THE POWER AND WATER CORPORATION on Friday (17 August) confirmed that it will gift the NAR Wheel Lathe Shed from Parap Workshops to the Adelaide River Railway Heritage Precinct.

Managing Director Andrew Macrides said that the corporation 'has approved the gifting of the welders workshop frame to your organisation for the heritage project'.

The shed is 120' long x 40' wide x 30' high and features three-tonne travelling crane rails.

In yet more outstanding news, McMahon Services have donated 2000m² of steel cladding for the walls and roof of the shed.

Stand by for yet ANOTHER major logistical challenge!

Our heartfelt thanks to Power and Water Corporation and to McMahon Services for their outstanding support of Northern Territory heritage.

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Rail trail success

ON THE QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY long weekend, some 60 people turned out to retrace the route of the North Australia Railway from Palmerston (13.5 miles) to McMinns Lagoon Station (20 miles).

Intrepid walkers included visitors from Melbourne and Sydney plus the Bushwalking Club, National Trust, Historical Society, Engineering Heritage and Friends of the NAR.

A special walker was Gerry Wood MLA, the member for Nelson, whose electorate we were walking through. Gerry (below, left) is a history buff and watches local developments closely.



The start of our walk as the 13.5 mile was a little uninspiring as we were walking through the stubble of recently burnt long grass. The rail formation had been 'borrowed' by kind souls in the past. Only the remnants of Bridge 16 sat proud amongst this scene of devastation reminded us of the railway.

Soon, however, we were in a shallow cutting, which not only curved to the right but formed the crest of a hill. This was the start of the one in 82 run down to Mitchell Creek via a

long earth bank and through the 15 mile cutting where we could see the marks of picks used in 1887 to trim the walls of the cutting.

The brave did a tight-rope jobbie across the five span bridge whilst other forded the creek. Whilst applying full steam up the next one in 70 slope we found 1887 fishplates, fractured sleepers and a modern era black snake. Unfortunately no mile posts or gradient boards are left. We did see the butt of one Overland Telegraph post.



Coleen Harris crossing a bridge with grace & agility

The rest of the journey was across relatively flat country with some detours through old 10ft concrete culverts. It was pleasing to record that no further theft of bridge steel seems to have occurred with only bridge #21 being completely missing.

We were glad to arrive at McMinns Lagoon station at about midday. We wondered about the WWII sawmill that Jim Harvey mentioned. Gerry Wood thought it may still be on Commonwealth property which is Cowandi Radio Station.

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Rail trail success

continued from page one.

It was wonderful to have NAR expert Mick Kent with us on this extended trek (more than 10km) - and inspiring to see him sticking it out when he must have been tired.

Mick brought along a pick that he had found along the NAR and successfully sized it up against the pick marks at the 15 mile.

A big thanks to everyone who helped to make the day a success.

Thanks to our three 'shadow' vehicles, which were driven by Mike Bowman (right), Estelle Harris and Ron Green (all members of FNAR). They provided a great service and were fully engaged.

Thanks also to Jim Harvey for spending 40 years recording the history of the NAR for generations like ours and a posthumous thanks to Henry G Mais, Chief Engineer of the SAR who designed the Palmerston and Pine Creek Railway, and to Charles Millar and his 'coolies' who built it so well.

Thanks also to the walkers who by their presence and commitment have provided a powerful piece of evidence for the government that the public really is interested in Rail Trails and railway heritage.



Below: the end of the line - walkers falling into a well earned heap at the completion of the trek.



Painting, anyone?

Jack from **NT Repairs and Painting** has donated paint in varying colours, which Chris Renehan delivered. Now we need volunteers to paint:

- the white shed;
- the Fairway potato sack scales;
- the concrete garden furniture;
- parking barriers;
- bottom half of flagpole (gloss white);
- the fitters shed; and
- wooden coffee tables/chairs (estapol).

Recording our assets

OUR PROPERTY OFFICER **Estelle Harris** has been on the job tracking down missing assets and recording new ones (forklift).

Given our losses during the recent flood, the task is not an easy one.

The journey took Estelle deep in to back-blocks behind the reservoir where she found 1888 sleepers, 1967 sleepers, VR broad gauge sleepers, QR sleepers and other wondrous stuff.

It takes a special type of person to stay on the case with stocktaking and we are fortunate to have Estelle.

Isn't she just the prettiest thing?

OUR 'NEW' HYSTER four-tonne forklift (which **Peter Cornell** said that we needed) certainly proved Pete's point. Caretaker **Alf Williams**, who has a forklift operator's licence, has spent many hours on the machine already. First, he shifted four tonnes of steel sleepers on pallets from where they were dropped during a rain storm in February to their proper home. Then we shifted the fettlers trolley and curved spoke wheels and the five panels of 1888 rail track to make way for the new Visitors Information Centre carriage.



In between, we recovered the steel stub for the home signal that we hope to re-install this year. Finally, we set about unloading Peter Cornell's trailer which contained building materials and the QR long steel sleepers. Earlier, Alf had strategically relocated our new concrete garden furniture. We are not sure how we lived with a forklift. Many thanks to Peter and Alf.

National Trust heritage festival



Nola Smith & Estelle Harris on duty at the fair.

MANY THANKS TO Robyn Smith for all the preparation that she did for the Heritage Fair at Myilly Point which was part of the National Trust's *10 Days at the Top* heritage festival in June. Rob prepared large colour posters, newsletters and a fledgling FNAR brochure to handout and publicise our activities. Robyn and Nola Smith, Judy Richardson and Estelle Harris staffed our stall.

Estelle was asked by Darwin High history teacher Judy Boland to address her students on what it was like to live in Darwin during the 1960s.

Fettlers shed repairs completed

SOME PEOPLE MAY BE familiar with the little green fettler's shed across the track near Dorat Level Crossing. Its been neglected for too long and lost its roofing iron in a storm last year.

Alf has installed a missing piece of roof joist. Now it needs a good cleanup and a coat of paint. **Trevor Wardrope**, who was OIC Police at Adelaide River 1991-93 reported that a slightly eccentric fellow called *Sandfly* lived in the shed until recent years. Trevor recalled:

'He was a quiet fellow who never caused any trouble and never came to the Police Station to conduct any sort of business, so we never knew what his name was.

'I was frightened that one night he would be knocked over by a truck and we would have trouble finding out who he was.

'I recalled having a talk to him one day and asked him his name which I remembered putting in my note book... you can now record that *Sandfly* is in fact Ronald John Cameron born 1944. He did leave and...I was told is the same as yours, he went South to live with a sister'.

NAR Katherine house donated

IN THE 1950s, THE NAR BUILT four fettlers houses in a row from the Adelaide River Railway Station towards the Dorat Road level crossing.

Following closure of the railway in 1976, the houses were disposed of and now make fine residences in Darwin's rural area.



Before the cleanup began...

We have had a long-term objective of replacing at least one of the houses and have reserved a spot north of the Sidney Williams Hut.

Bob Petersen in Katherine has been on the lookout on our behalf and has now advised that Tanya and Laurie Brown have donated one - many thanks to the Browns.

Our major Easter project was to clean out the 1950s Florina Road house at Katherine and prepare it for relocation.

Bob Petersen had done a power of work by himself before we got there at 1430 on Good Friday. Bob had brought in the backhoe and demolished the carport and a set of rock steps that were in the way of progress.

He had pushed a large WasteMaster skip up to the side door of the house and proceeded to load half the contents of the house in to the skip. Judy Richardson and Nola Smith spent the rest of the day loading the junk in to the skip.

On Saturday and Sunday we spent time disconnecting services and measuring the place accurately so that we can have stumps ready

by **JUDY RICHARDSON**

at Adelaide River.

The house had originally been located in Mannion Street in Katherine and was owned and moved by Steve Dalton. Mannion Street was named after James Joseph Mannion, Chief Inspector of the NT Police.

Whilst serving in Katherine as a Sergeant he heard shots coming from Katherine Terrace. On investigation, he found his fellow officer Constable Bill Condon shot dead and his attacker still armed. Sergeant Mannion advanced on the rifleman who fired twice before he lost his nerve and fled into the bush. He was tracked down and arrested the next day. Jim Mannion later won the George Medal for bravery at Tennant Creek. He walked through a blazing store to make sure no one was inside. Chief Inspector Mannion died in September 1968. The street name was gazetted in May 1969, the year after Inspector Mannion died.



Trevor and Nola during the cleanup. Don't you think they're in SERIOUS danger of a new fashion trend?

The location is adjacent to the large Evacuated Railway Workshops, which may have only been cleared in the 1960s. In fact, NFB88 was still there in the 1960s, which may give a clue to the vintage of the houses.

A million thanks must go to Bob Petersen for making this all happen from sealing the deal with Laurie and Tanya Brown, organising the backhoe and skip to loading the dusty junk himself.

NAR Katherine house donated

Former Ganger at Adelaide River North, Don Smith, reported:

'In your photo of the interior of the railway house I could see no sign of the wood fire stove we used to have on the right of the back door.

'We (my wife) used to clean the ash out and then lay paper and twigs at night time ready to light up for our morning cup of tea.

'Gangers, North and South (at Adelaide River) used to set aside one afternoon a week to collect wood for the stoves of the four houses there.

'We had a good chopping block set up so that we could have the wood in the right size lengths for the stove.

'I never lived down the fact that I bought my wife a new axe one year as a Christmas present. Shame on me!'

Shame on him, indeed! It is wonderful to have comments such as Don's from someone who lived in one of the houses.



The reward: AFTER the cleanup!

The next part of the project is going to be a major logistical exercise, not to mention expensive!

Provision of stumping at Adelaide River to receive the house will be a major item. The optimum solution seems to be bored concrete footings with a cast-in steel plate at ground level, after which it will be a matter of driving the house in and welding steel stumps on to the footings.

It will require some major fund raising by the

Friends. This is a very important house for our precinct, because it represents similar houses that were demolished or sold off.

Big or small, every donation counts so please think about donating to this very worthy cause.

We welcome any donations to our 'House Removal Fund'. If anyone has some spare time, perhaps they could canvas for funds for this very valuable addition to our Heritage precinct.



The house in situ in Katherine.

Donations and Bequests

The Friends of the North Australia Railway is a not-for-profit organisation and all donations over \$2.00 are tax deductible. You can choose a restoration project to which you would like to donate, or it can be used more generally for restoration projects.

To make a donation, please make a cheque payable to:

Friends of the North Australia Railway
PO Box 3504
DARWIN NT 0801

Donations can also be made in the form of a Bequest.

Next event: 64th commemoration

THE LAST TIME THE TOP END was bombed during WWII was 12 November 1943 - at Adelaide River, as it happens.

Saturday 10 November this year will be used to commemorate the event at Adelaide River.

Norm MacMahon (the creator and re-discovered of the 'Hole in the Hill') was with 17 L of C Signals and has a vivid recollection of the episode:

In relation to the Raid on 12 November 1943, yes I was there and remember it well.

At the time, I was detached from 17 L of C and on loan to the Anti-Malarial Control Unit which was stationed at the Army Farm. I am still puzzled as to why I was loaned to them.

At the time, I was either a supernumerary, or persona non-gratia with the RSM?

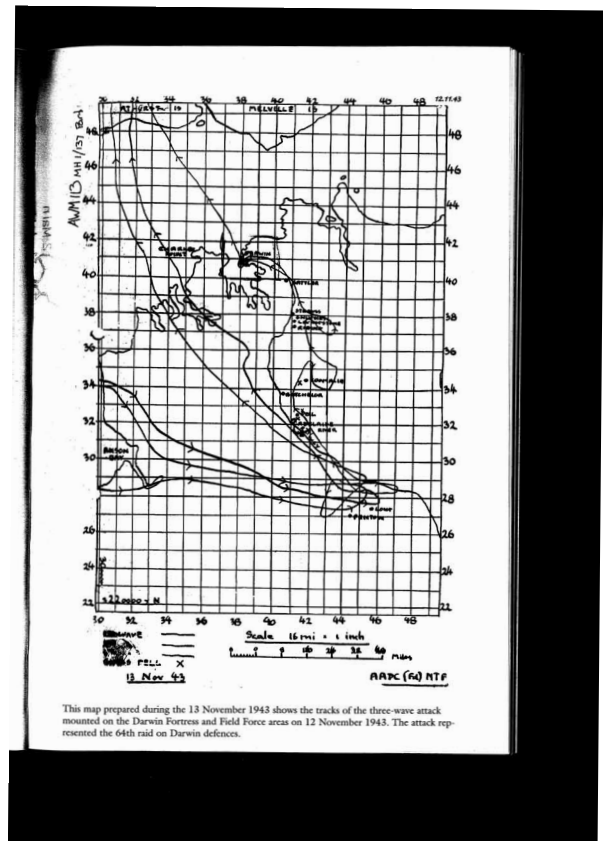
It is true that the Japs used moonlight nights to come over and pay us a visit. Probably because of their poor eyesight? Anyway, the fact remains, that except for the first few raids, they used up a lot of petrol and time for meagre results, they were lousy bomb aimers.

On that night, they had been down to visit Fenton, and on the way back, one of them apparently got a bit off course and spied the long strip of cleared and cultivated land along the Adelaide River bank, the Army Farm. Apparently thinking it was an airstrip, he unleashed a string of four or five 250 pounders which added a bit more cultivation to the farm but didn't do any other damage, but it was close to where we were camped, so we were a bit pissed off with that particular Jap!

You could always tell when they were going to have a go, as their engine note changed from a drone to a higher pitch as they commenced their dive. That was the time to bail out of bed and into the slit trench, provided it wasn't full of water, and then you stood alongside ready to jump in anyway if things got too close.

A long time ago, but still vivid in the memory.

As planning progresses, we shall keep members informed. Our only enemy might be one that is equally familiar to Norm: rain! However, our planning will take potential weather conditions into account...



These were the routes of the bombing raids of 12 November 1943

Remember this little bloke?



WE LED OUR LAST NEWSLETTER with the *Manna from Heaven* story of the Hudswell Clarke 928 engine from 1910 donated by the Rotary Club of Mt Isa.

We are delighted to report that good progress has been made in recent months.

A small team of volunteers is working under Project Director Mike Bowman in Peter Connell's yard in the Darwin suburb of Berrimah. 'Bush ingenuity' has given rise to some innovative solutions to problems of missing parts, etc.

Baby! Look at him now!

One such problem was how to replace the many missing brass oilers from the locomotive.

Mike found that Onga Pump non-return valves use a similar brass casting, so he has set about modifying them to fit the locomotive and to operate as oil dispensers. Mike was also able to convince Humpty Doo Hardware to donate the brass castings, as the non-return valves frequently get bunged up and binned if used on bore water systems.

Work was in progress machining 18 brass oilers for the locomotive by late July.

To assist with dismantling the Stephenson valve gear underneath the loco, Peter Cornell organised a large crane on 2 August to lift the locomotive, which enabled Owen Peake to disassemble the left hand reversing gear and to take the cover off the valve chest and start freeing the valve mechanism.

Like the rest of the locomotive, this all seems to be in reasonable condition. Mike has manufactured a steam whistle from brass castings, which works well and has a genuine locomotive sound.

Mike has freed up the regulator, which involves a long rod which passes through the length of the boiler from the cabin to the smoke box and enables the driver to control the supply of high pressure steam to the drive cylinders. Mike also experimented with some paint colours (black on the smoke box cover with red clamps and Brunswick green on the body).

Ron Redman, author of the original Hudswell Clarke locomotive book, has written to Mike with a photograph of the original stock model of our loco from the 1903 Hudswell Clarke catalogue.

In addition, Henry Noon, the archivist sorting out the Hunslet/Hudswell Clarke records, has advised that he will search out the original 928 drawings from the archive for the FNAR.



The story of *Sandfly*...

SANDFLY WAS MANUFACTURED by Baldwin Locomotive Works in Philadelphia in 1886 and designation No 7860. It was one of eight such locomotives delivered to Australia between 1884 and 1891.

This one was purchased new by Charles Millar to build the NAR and was shipped to Darwin in May 1887. It entered service immediately and was used primarily for yard and jetty work.

It is a small (9 ton) saddle tank locomotive (330 gallons in the water tank saddling the boiler). After the railway was completed, Millar sold *Sandfly* to the South Australian Railways (who built and ran the NAR in the NT) in February 1890.

On 1 January 1911 the Commonwealth took over the Territory from SA and *Sandfly* was included in the deal. *Sandfly* continued to work for the NAR (primarily at Parap) for more than 60 years.

During WWII most railway functions were 'evacuated' to Katherine and this included *Sandfly*, which was observed in Katherine October 1944 by Jim Harvey. It was completely rebuilt and fitted with a new boiler in 1943. *Sandfly* was officially withdrawn from service in June 1950, aged 64.

Future railways Commissioner Keith A Smith observed the derelict *Sandfly* at Parap on a visit in 1950 and made a point of rescuing the engine when he became Commissioner in 1959.

It was restored in the Port Augusta workshops and put on display on Port Augusta railway station. *Sandfly* was removed for further restoration work in 1982 and was placed on display at Keswick in May 1983.

Somewhere along the line, ownership seems to have passed from CR to ANR to GSR, although perhaps not with a lot of deliberation according to some reports. On July 26, 2004 at age 118, and some 44 years after it left the Top End, it suddenly returned with little fanfare, a gift to the Northern Territory from GSR.

In March 2005, *Sandfly* was installed on Stokes Hill wharf in a small fenced enclosure.

In the NT Budget this year...

AS USUAL, THE NT BUDGET is a mixed bag and reaction usually depends on one's perspective.

However, this year's budget (brought down in May by Treasurer Syd Stirling), contains a couple of heritage items of interest.

Speaking during debate on the Appropriation Bill during the June sitting of the Assembly, the Member for Daly, Rob Knight, said:

'In Adelaide River, \$40 000 has been allocated for the development of the Adelaide River Railway Heritage Precinct car park and railway station.

'There is a great deal of work is done down there by a great many volunteers.

'I have been along to a few of their dos and I receive constant e-mails from Trevor.

'I certainly commend them for their work.'

There was also an allocation of \$600,000 for landscaping work at Myilly Point, including the preservation of Flagstaff Park.

This money is understood to have been earmarked for a range of improvements, including boardwalks down the cliff face to the site now known as 'Little Mindil' below.

The 'Little Mindil' site is being developed as a tourism resort by SKYCITY casino, although public access to the beach has been guaranteed.

The pool for heritage grants remains static at \$200,000 per year for the whole of the Northern Territory, which has been the case for close to 10 years now.

And, as noted elsewhere in this edition, we appear to be no closer to seeing a new or revised *Heritage Conservation Act*.

Birdum beckons again

THE FIRST TRAIN TO BIRDUM arrived late at 4am on the freezing morning of 4 September 1929. Passengers huddled in the carriages to keep warm until their road connections to Alice Springs arrived the next morning.

In September 2004 we celebrated the 75th anniversary of this historic event. It's become an annual event since then, with visitors from all over Oz and, last year, from New Zealand.

Local hosts have been Barry Sharp and Ann Kanters at the Larrimah Wayside Inn with overnight camping at Birdum. Last year, we even had flush loos and a band in the Starlight Ballroom at the old Birdum Hotel. Descendants of the original inhabitants joined the group and told their stories around the campfire.

The railway was intended to go to Daly Waters, but it was the height of the Great Depression and it ceased after crossing Birdum Creek. A railhead township grew at Birdum. There was no Larrimah until WWII.

This year, we hope to find some evidence of the survey from Birdum to Daly Waters. We have the plans.

Richard Luxton has visited Birdum and, accompanied by Barry Sharpe, located the airstrip. Richard was armed with knowledge and a chainsaw, and they re-established the strip centrelines. Barry is now going to 'find' a bulldozer and clear the 1930s strip. It should look great by September.

Richard reports that the 'Birdum Hotel' is suffering from the ravages of white ants and may need some renovation for this September. Richard and Barry are plotting the transfer of three Sidney Williams trusses to the Birdum Hotel site.

Back to Birdum this year will be over the weekend of 8-9 September.

Another mystery unravelled

LOCATED NEAR OUR FLAG POLE at Adelaide River there is an old four-wheeled railway wagon. We have long wondered what it was as it has been extensively vandalised over the years.

Brian Sneddon from Geelong Steam Preservation Society has now identified it as Commonwealth Railway NBS158 10 ton 11 cwt.

It is a QR design ballast wagon, probably a VTS. It has been Vacuum piped, probably during 1940s or 50s, and it could have been a CR unit or one that came in the early 1950s from Queensland to replace those damaged by the RAAF.

SAR had somewhat similar vehicles, as did WAGR, but the W Guard outside the frame and the shape of the axle box cover is a dead giveaway.

Fifty of these wagons were delivered by Barbats in 1916 with 10 being immediately converted to open wagons soon after arrival (as the hoppers were easily removed).

Another 12 WAGR pattern types were purchased from contractor Teesdale Smith in 1915 and appear to have been dedicated to use on the Emungalen construction.

"Teesdale Smith" is punched in to the axles of the adjacent bogie.

None of these wagons were reported in stocktakes after 1964.

In 1956-57 the RAAF purchased 17 of the wagons from Queensland to cart rock for Darwin airport from a quarry at Darwin River Dam.

Many were damaged in a derailment.

If anyone has a spare hopper in his or her back yard, we could restore this wagon to its original appearance.

Heritage open day success

WHILST DIFFERENT FROM previous years, our Heritage Open Day in May was quite successful, particularly in view of the fact that it was able to be staged at all following the flood in March.

Mick Kent spruced up his displays in the Sidney Williams Hut and then served as the learned attendant.

The trip to the WWII Signals Station 'Hole in the Hill' capably led by Trevor Wardrope (also a Signaller) was the first such trip and was very well patronised.

Caretaker Alf Williams' grandson-in-law Anthony played Casey Jones all day taking kids for rides in the *Ben Parry* fairground train.

Thanks to Chris Renehan for preparing the locomotive for service.

Alf and Ethel and their extended family did a sterling job all weekend in preparing the site and staffing the various stalls, BBQs. etc.

Nola, Estelle and Jan ran the kitchen all day, which the patrons much appreciated. It is becoming a serious Refreshment Room.

A big thanks to everyone who contributed to make the day a success.



A group, led by Trevor Wardrope, heading into the 'Hole in the Hill' for a closer inspection.

Strangers bearing gifts are not always scary...



International entertainer Clarence Ormsby

SOME OF OUR MEMBERS were recently on duty at Government House on Open Day. Nola Smith and Di Lunn were on the Devonshire Tea table and Judy Richardson was helping to mind the silver.

We met some very interesting people, one of whom was Clarence Ormsby originally from New Zealand. We got to talking about heritage and how we struggled to get enough funds for restoration work.

Clarence offered to give us a gift to raffle to help boost our funds. That weekend, he turned up at the precinct with said gift, which were his own CDs.

Clarence stayed for a while and chatted and then headed off to Katherine.

Judy was showing Caretaker Alf Williams, who also comes from New Zealand, the CDs that Clarence had left as a gift.

Alf took the CDs to have a look and suddenly said: 'I am sure that I know his brother Ted!' What a coincidence. Alf (who was over in the paddock putting

a roof on the fettlers shed) was very disappointed to have missed meeting Clarence. FNAR thanks you, Clarence. Your beautiful voice graced our precinct all afternoon.

Adelaide River briefs

1926 Katherine Railway Station

WE HAVE BEEN WORKING for some time to get Katherine's 1926 Railway Station opened again. Thanks to **Merle Barry** we have been able to achieve this. Merle is opening the Station whenever her busy schedule allows, but she would welcome any help with this. Come on Katherine, show your support for this wonderful Heritage property.



Heritage News

THERE IS SOME GOODS NEWS on the heritage front. The Sue Wah Chin has been heritage listed.

The former Commonwealth Bank in Bennett Street is the subject of an interesting heritage proposal, and a massive tower. The developers propose to retain the original part of the bank but demolish two parts that were added later. It is all subject to Heritage and Development Consent approval, so we shall watch with interest.

There remains no news on the appearance of a new heritage act. The existing act was mooted for overhaul in 2001, and that exercise was anticipated to take 18 months. It's been six years so far and the stock-standard answer is: 'It is with Parliamentary Counsel', meaning that it is being drafted. It's starting to sound like a broken record. We note, too, that Parliamentary Counsel are very efficient operators so this is probably not where the real log-jam is occurring. With bated breath, we wait...and wait.

Katherine Outback Heritage Museum

THIS MUSEUM has a Sidney Williams Hut which was formerly the Buff Hall. **Simmone Croft** at the Museum does a great job and has been very helpful to FNAR over a number of years. When we heard that Simmone needed to get the Sidney Williams Hut stumped and in place, we felt a need to assist (after all, we have done two already and are experts in this field!).

On Easter Saturday afternoon we set out the 70ft x 20ft shed and local identity **Brian Murphy** started drilling (with a Massey Ferguson 35EX tractor that he had purchased new in Katherine in 1958). Brian is a gentleman, a bushman, a wit and generally very pleasant to be with. We enjoyed his company (and Simmone's hospitality) over many hours on Easter Saturday, Sunday and Monday as Brian drilled the 37 holes - in between other charity jobs and domestic obligations!

BELOW: the finer technical points of stumping a Sidney Williams Hut....



ANZAC Day

ANZAC DAY AT ADELAIDE River was once again marked by a very special and moving Dawn Service followed a wonderful breakfast at the ARSS Club with a game of two-up to follow. We welcomed many visitors to the precinct on the day.

Adelaide River briefs

Darwin City Council Grant

WE THANK THE DARWIN CITY COUNCIL for its grant of \$1089 to cover the cost of sleepers for NAR Bridge #4 at The Narrows.

We have started to place the sleepers, but help is needed. The bridge could do with a coat of paint, too.

We also received a small grant to publish a pamphlet covering the significant rail sites along the NAR route from the wharf to Berrimah. Unfortunately, DCC was unable to fund the installation of interpretive signs to which the pamphlet was intended to lead people.

Leo and Tom

IF ONLY THE UPCOMING generation had the go of retirees **Leo Izod** and **Tom Bertenshaw!!!** Apart from some seriously heavy work on the 1950s HOUGH loader, they have stripped the four wheels of their tyres and tubes. This is heavy and dangerous work, but they have the technology (like long tyre levers and sledge hammers).

Leo has supplied replacement tyres out of his own cache at Nightcliff and now they are searching everyone's cupboard for some brake shoes, as the well-used loader only had brake shoes on one side when they opened it up (that's novel).

Two-Stroke Timmy has also helped with this loader which was generously donated by **Bob Reid**. By the way - the missing brake parts are identical to those in a silver bullet caravan so if you have one in your back yard...

Grass at the Precinct

WE WORK VERY HARD trying to keep the grass down at the Precinct. After the flood and with the ground being so wet, the grass seemed to grow by the metre and it was a long time before we were able to coax someone in to try and make some headway. **Bob Reid** - bless his soul - brought his ride-on mower across and launched in to the long

grass, which was sometimes taller than Bob. Other volunteers regularly bring their mowers from Darwin.

Fortunately, our resident caretakers, **Alf and Ethel Williams**, could see the potential of the Precinct and were not put off by the long grass when they came to inspect the premises. Ethel also coped with a shower block that had no door until recently. The Precinct is fortunate to have two such professional people for whom nothing is too much trouble.

Sidney Williams Hut

OWEN PEAKE IS progressing with the electrics and has rewired all the existing power points, which should make display lighting easier (not to mention cleaning!). Owen is also working on providing wiring to the wheel lathe. **Mick Kent** is continually working on refining displays and adding new ones to the history of both the Overland Telegraph Line and the Narrow Gauge Railway. The Sidney Williams Hut is now attracting many visitors through its doors.

Flood Recovery

NOLA SMITH AND **Estelle Harris** have been giving our flood-damaged tables and chairs a coat of Estapol after all their good work cleaning up the station and have now started work on the garden.

Our Adelaide connection

A HUGE THANKS TO **John Turner** who once again visited Mick whilst he was in Adelaide for treatment. It is not easy being far from home when you are not feeling the best, so all of us in Darwin appreciate John visiting Mick and taking him out and about.

Mt Bundy change

FRAN BRIGGS HAS sold Mt Bundy! We welcome new owners, Scott and Sue Whitam.

Adelaide River briefs

New Member with a Story

WELCOME TO **RON GREEN** who also does duty at the Parap Qantas Hangar. Ron's father operated the Smith & Coventry wheel lathe at Parap Workshops. **Owen Peake** is restoring the lathe, which is housed in our Sidney Williams Hut. Ron's grandfather drove *Sandfly*. What with all this railway history, Ron thought that he should belong to our organisation. We are hoping that he will pen some of his stories

Clean up Australia Day

THANKS TO THE 13 people who gave up their Sunday morning for this worthy project. Thanks to Engineering Heritage Australia and to Toyota Landcruiser Club and **Murray Fuller** and his Territory Weed Management for bringing in the serious gear. Thanks also to **Peter Poole** for the first-aid services after a tree branch dropped on Trevor's head.

Gotta love a ute!

THANKS TO **ESTELLE AND JACK HARRIS** for the loan of Jack's ute so we could move a lot of steel sleepers before they 'walked'.

Rolling Stock at Berrimah

SOME MEMBERS MAY prefer to get involved at Berrimah. We have four carriages, one rail-car, one Tanker Wagon and one steam locomotive, all of which need restoration work. You may like to visit the site and select a project that is within your capability and interest. It would be our pleasure to show you around.

Searching for the Lepers Van

DURING THE 1960S, steam locomotive NFB88 was still in the Evacuated Workshops yard in O'Shea Terrace, Katherine. Coupled to the locomotive was the 1938 lepers van. We've spoken to people who moved NFB88

and many other people without success. Perhaps someone out there will recognise the van and know something about its fate.

The leper van, delivered to the railway during the late 1930's and which had not been classified, saw little use during the War as most of its regular passengers fled to the bush at the time of the first air raid. However, it suffered damage as shown in the photograph.

The availability of brakevans was right right up until traffic began to ease in 1944. They were not only

ed. The frames had been built by the Perry Engineering Co. of Adelaide and the bodies at the Islington shops of the S.A.R. They were coded NHA.

All the bogie vehicles were listed in 1945 with the exception of the NHT van, which is believed to have been destroyed by fire.

The goods stock roster saw a host of changes of



Shrapnel holes can be seen clearly in the sides of the leper van. The van saw little use during the war as most of its customers 'went bush' after the first air raids. (Photo: Elmore Schultz)

That's Show Biz

DURING THE DARWIN SHOOTING of **Baz Luhrman's Australia**, we received a call for a heritage crane to lift **Nicole Kidman's** bags from a pontoon onto Darwin Wharf. We have the original 1885 Cowans Sheldon railway crane under restoration. All it needs is a boom, and we have the plans for that. However, it was all too heavy, too expensive and too hard for the film people. In any event, their suggestion that it might be needed in Sydney was over the top. As they say, that's show biz!

Tea Lady Research

KAY GOON HAS BEEN patiently researching this matter for a couple of years whilst trying to do many of good things for animals and heritage. Kay has been looking for someone to take up the cudgels and its great to see that she is now discussing the future of the project with **Yvonne Forrest** and **Bev Phelts** (members of FNAR and Historical Society of the NT).

Bush ingenuity

A SERIOUS PROBLEM has developed over the past three months concerning a large gum tree that shades our white demountable.

White ants have kindly ringbarked the tree and it has died. It looked very dangerous and Alf and Trevor were seriously worried about the crunching impact that it would have on our very useful building if it fell.

There was also the prospect that if they pulled it down, it would clean up both the shed and the new caretaker's shelter.

They devised a plan to attach two Landcruisers with ropes pulling at 90 degrees to control the fall.

As a prelude, they decided to pull off a couple of branches that were not threatening to drop on the buildings to lighten the tree a bit.

With long snatch ropes they pulled those branches with Landcruisers at a distance. The action of the snatch ropes was to fling the snapped branches toward the distant Toyota.

It was quite a sight to see heavy dead boughs being flung through the air and out of harm's way.

Job's right and both the demountable and caretaker's shelter remain in tact.

ALL ABOARD FOR RAILWAY REFRESHMENTS

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.

2007 Dry Season Dates:

Sunday 29 April

Sunday 27 May

Sunday 24 June

Sunday 29 July

Sunday 26 August

Sunday 30 September

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



All Aboard

Editor: Robyn Smith

Contributors: Trevor Horman, Judy Richardson & some who prefer to be anonymous...

Chief Photographer: Judy Richardson

Other Informants: Entirely welcome

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BECOME A MEMBER!

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\$30 Individual \$15 Pensioner \$40 Family
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Please post to FNAR, GPO Box 3504, Darwin NT 0801

OR EFT details: BSB: 065 901 Account No: 1045 3230

PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR SURNAME WITH AN EFT TRANSACTION.

And apropos EFT payments....

WE ARE LOOKING FOR the following benefactors:

12 February 2007 Netbank
Transfer FNAR Family \$40.00

25 June 2007 – Periodic Payment
2007 Membership \$40.00

We would love to send you a receipt and Membership card, so please identify yourselves.



*Another of our recent acquisitions.
This is a Hough H25 front-end loader and will prove extremely useful around the precinct.
Bob Reid of Adelaide River donated the loader, for which we are most grateful.
We are ever mindful of the generosity of both our sponsors and members, and we do appreciate your commitment to the precinct and the NT's history (and the boys are pretty excited about this one!)*

2007-08 Committee

We held our 5th Annual General Meeting on 27 May 2007. After the meeting Nola and Estelle made us delicious sandwiches and Devonshire Teas. The Committee is:

Trevor Horman	President
Mick Kent	Vice-President
Judy Richardson	Secretary/Treasurer
Trevor Horman	Public Officer
Nola Smith	Committee Member
Estelle Harris	Committee Member
Mike Bowman	Committee Member
Robyn Smith	Committee Member

**FNAR
All Aboard!**

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