

# All Aboard!

News from the Friends of the North Australia Railway (FNAR) at Adelaide River  
February-March 2004

## Annual General Meeting

The second Annual General Meeting of FNAR will be held on Sunday 21 March 2004 at 11.00am at the Adelaide River Railway Station and will be followed by a sausage sizzle. All members are urged to attend and consider a Committee position.

Please note that only financial members are eligible to vote. Subscription renewal is now due and the 2004 rates are \$30 per person of \$15 for pensioners. Please see membership renewal form below.

## SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address (if changed): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (if changed): Work: \_\_\_\_\_

Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby enclose my cheque/cash in the amount of: \_\_\_\_\_

Donation \_\_\_\_\_

Total \_\_\_\_\_

Please post to FNAR, GPO Box 3504, Darwin NT 0801

# FNAR News in brief

## Presentation to History Society

ON 25 FEBRUARY, **TREVOR Horman** addressed the Historical Society of the Northern Territory at its monthly meeting. With the theme of *transport and communications* for 2004, Adelaide River filled the bill admirably. A PowerPoint presentation was used to describe the work that has been done by the Friends in the past 30 months. **Mick Kent** kindly brought along several displays of railway hardware to add flavour to the evening. It was interesting to see many friends in the audience. Several new members joined after the presentation, one being a current member of Pitchi Ritchi.

## Sidney Williams Hit progress

IN DECEMBER 2003, **CHRIS Renehan** brought along his dumpy level and we spent a day levelling up the Sidney Williams hut by jacking and propping at various points. Meanwhile, the white ants continue to eat away at the wooden pallets holding up the shed. In February we finally managed to sink the holes for the stumps in ground, which was impenetrable in the Dry Season. We now find that the high powered auger (courtesy **COATES HIRE**) drilled in to the ground as though it was butter. It took a whole day to clean out the sodden holes. The water table is evident in the bottoms of the holes so it will be a while before we can get a concrete truck in. Meantime, we are proceeding with connecting electricity to the shed, ready for our caretakers to arrive in the Dry Season.

## Wreath laying on ANZAC Day

ON ANZAC DAY 2003, **TERRY Pailthorpe** laid a wreath on the memorial at the station to the railway workers who toiled and those who fell during WW2. We would like to build on that experience in 2004 and invite others who share the sentiment to honour the memory of those who fought at 0730 on ANZAC Day.

## Honouring WWII Nurses

RECENTLY, WE SPOKE WITH **JANIE Mason** who is involved with the Nurses Museum at the Darwin Hospital and who arranged dedication of the wonderful brass plaque at the Cenotaph in Darwin honouring the work of nurses. The plaque is quite different from others at the site and contains quotations from Nurse Lorna who worked at 119 AGH (Army General Hospital) at Adelaide River (out along Haynes Road). We are discussing the possibility of dedicating a duplicate plaque at Adelaide River. Janie believes that funds exist to manufacture the plaque. The nurses had a strong connection with the railway via the ambulance

train that used to ship injured soldiers from 119 AGH to Katherine via the cattle siding.

## Response to Christmas newsletter

IN THE CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER, we published a list a gear that we would like in the event that someone knew where to lay hands on it - and we have good news:

- A set of gates (covering a 11.5m roadway) have been donated by **ASCOT TRANSPORT** as part of their upgrading works in Berrimah Road. **Darwin Container Services** have offered to deliver them. They will be used on our entrance from Dorat Road where we have recently discovered the survey pegs.
- **Mick Kent** has donated a Victa Mower to help with the smaller areas. Thanks again, Mick.
- **Bob Petersen** from Katherine has managed to source two corrugated iron water tanks to help us to replicate the 1888 set-up at the station. Somehow Bob managed to get them uplifted and transported over 1000km. The tanks are very close to the original size (600 gallons) and are in great condition. Many thanks to Bob and **Pandion Haulage** of Katherine.

## Painting the BIG bridge

IT IS ESTIMATED THAT THERE IS about 4,000sqm of surface area on the big bridge. It is a massive task to contemplate restoring it to its original glory (you already think Trevor is nuts for mentioning it). Settle. The wrought bridge is in excellent condition and has been assessed by senior bridge engineers. The new railway considered using it. To get a better understanding of what will be involved in this task, we are fortunate to have found **Mr Bronte Henning** from **International Marine Paints**. Bronte is conducting a series of tests on small patches of the bridge to work out the best adhesion and what will be a practical method of attack.

## Rail Trail progress

DOWN SOUTH, MANY OLD RAILWAY corridors are experiencing a new lease of life as rail trails. They are used for walking, horse riding, mountain bike riding, etc, and have the major benefit of having only modest grades, making them accessible to all forms of human transport. A walk from Adelaide River to Stapelton along the old NAR corridor will convince anyone of the wonderful experience that is in store. In 2002, we floated the concept with Coomalie Community Government Council who were interested. Recently the concept was raised with Litchfield Shire Council and received a warm response.

# FNAR News in brief

You will have observed that the NAR corridor has been developed as a cycle path from Winnellie RAAF gates to Palmerston. So we could eventually see it snaking through Howard Springs, the 19 Mile, Noonamah, Darwin River, Rum Jungle, Batchelor and Stapelton to Adelaide River (124 km from Darwin).

An initial task is a title search to determine how much of the corridor remains in public hands. Another urgent task is to stop the destruction of the remaining bridges (please report to the police any destruction that you see or hear about. The Director of Heritage is also interested to know).

There is lots of information on Rail Trail at [www.railtrails.org.au](http://www.railtrails.org.au) for those with internet access. We need a project officer to pick up this exciting project!! Think about it!!

## Steam Boiler progress

MODEST PROGRESS IS BEING made with the steam boiler. In brief, here is the report:

- more gunk and beer cans have been extracted from the water jacket;
- all threads have been cleaned with Leo's taps and dies;
- a steel chimney has been fabricated thanks to Kerry Moran, Peter Cornell and Clive Mainland;
- A facsimile of the brass name plate is being made (as a precaution);
- Leo has fabricated a facsimile water level sight glass;
- One thing that it desperately needs is a large safety valve to mount on the top (6 inch pitch circle diameter).

## Station Building to be repaired

RECENTLY, WE WERE VERY PLEASED to receive a Heritage grant from the NT government to help us to repair some elements of the building.

With the assistance of heritage builder **Wayne Morris**, we have compiled a specification and schedule of work. We will need to purchase a quantity of cypress pine to replace some missing and rotten members of the buildings frame.

The work will include properly stumping seven verandah columns around the southern end of the building. An initial job will be the injection of termite treatment.

## 25,000 gallon elevated tank upgrade

ANOTHER PROJECT BEING supported by the NT government heritage grant is restoration of the tank. This work will include:

- Proper concrete support for the inlet pipe which is hanging from the floor of the tank

- Installation of the top half only of the ladder
- Installation of a water level indicator board (0 to 8 feet)
- Reconstruction of the conical iron plug for the outlet pipe (chain operated from the ground).
- Installing more stiffening to the top panels of the tank.

## Short Tom carriage

SOME PROGRESS IS BEING MADE with our 1909 vintage Short Tom carriage. We've stripped the malthoid from the roof in preparation for a new coating. We have discovered that the bogies are the late model (after 1904) bogies being 5ft between axles. The stairs at each end have been disassembled, blasted and straightened. New wooden treads are being manufactured by **Barry Slingsby** along with new decking at each end of the carriage.

We went to the National Rail Museum at Port Dock looking for original plans for the Short Tom. Sadly, all of the SAR drawings were held by a private company and they folded in mid-2003. Fate of the drawings is unknown. The good news is that Pitchi Ritchi may have drawings.

Help is needed to assist in the restoration of Short Tom 450. Phone Trevor on 89245093 or mobile 041783578.

## New member from KALANGADOO

WE LOVED THE FOLLOWING NOTE from **Peter Savage** at Kalangadoo (near Mount Gambier SA) :

*Dear FNAR people,*

*Good luck with what you are trying to do. It's all good fun with a lot of hard work attached.*

*Don't know how come I got one of your newsletters. I've found it again after 6 weeks so here's my 25 smackers.*

*I have a "small" private museum here at the Kalangadoo Railway station. Being the last SM, I took what I could back in '85 and have been back in the station here now for 4 years. It now serves as a timber sales outlet (for Auspine). So I brought back all the gear that I "lifted" and have spent a few quid and added shitloads since.*

*I was a local Kalangadoo boy and "in training" for 13.5 years. Most valuable (to me) item is the Kalangadoo brass station seal.*

*Anyhow, enough from me. Waiting for your next newsletter.*

*Regards,*

*Peter Savage*

*Station Master*

*Kalangadoo*

*Clayton's Siding – the station you are having when you aren't having a station.*

## Oral History Program

WE WOULD LOVE TO INITIATE an oral history program to record the stories of former NAR employees. Together with **Shannon** at the Railway Institute at Parap, we have identified more than 30 living former employees. **Francis Good** at the NT Archives has offered to assist and advise us. Is anyone interested in running this project?

We are also looking for people to take the oral histories. You need to be (a) interested, (b) patient and (c) have the necessary time to conduct interviews. The NT Archives have offered training to our volunteers, so you also need to be able to spare a day for that purpose.

## Women who ran our Tea Rooms

OVER THE YEARS, SOME incredible women must have kept the Tea Rooms operational under some very trying circumstances.

We're aware of **Widgee Nelson** in 1912, **Mrs Eve Sack** during the war and perhaps **Vera Wyatt** after the war. There is ripe grounds for some research on this matter. Mrs Sack was living in Charters Towers a couple of years ago. Does this sound like an interesting project for you?

## Back to Birdum, 4–5 September 2004

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF THE NT has expressed interest in this proposed event (75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the NAR reaching Birdum).

Director of Heritage Steve Sutton has also endorsed the event. It is 500km from Darwin to Larrimah so we recommend that attendees should try to get to Katherine on the Friday night.

We will need at least some 4WD vehicles to get through the last stretch of sand to Birdum. If there have been grass fires during the Dry Season, we should have the optimum conditions for identifying the various elements of Birdum.

We may have some very knowledgeable people with us to help us to understand how it all worked. To check the place out, we may organise a reconnaissance visit on Darwin Show weekend (27 July).

## Guided walk to Stapelton

WE HAVE ASKED NAR EXPERT **Mick Kent** to be the guide on a Dry Season walk (perhaps on the Queens Birthday long weekend) from Adelaide River to Stapelton along the old NAR formation.

This is a most interesting walk in itself, but with the knowledge that Mick has (and his eye for rare pieces), it will be very educational. It will take half a day and an early start is recommended. Footwear suitable for walking on railway ballast is recommended (eg walking boots or robust sneakers). More news on this anon.

## National Association of Tourist Railways

JOHN FROST FROM MELBOURNE is steadily progressing with the evolution of the national organisation that is needed to represent us adequately on issues such as Public Liability insurance. In February, the ATR passed constitutional changes which broaden its membership base.

## FNAR Business Plan

JUDE MULCAHY AND IAIN GOVAN are pressing ahead with the important stakeholder analysis for our Business Plan.

## Get Well Wishes

SEVERAL OF OUR FRIENDS HAVE endured some trying times recently. Our best wishes go to **Estelle Cornell**, **Kris Smith** and **Jude Mulcahy**. We wish them a fast and comfortable recovery.

## Thread by Thread

DURING THE 2002 DRY SEASON, we unbolted more than 1km of the NAR track which involved about 800 fishplates and 2400 large bolts. The bolts were very difficult to undo, as those present will attest. We used torque multipliers, very long spanners and even truck tyre rattle guns to get them undone. Some of the bolts had damaged threads as a result of the heavy handling. They are expensive and specially shaped bolts that we want to reuse. Over the past 12 months, **Mick Kent** has been quietly working on them with a 7/8" BSW die nut. This should not be all left to Mick and we wonder if there is anyone else who could take a few bolts and run a die nut over them. It's the sort of job that gives you time (and cause) to contemplate the meaning of life. Please speak up if you can assist with this physical job.

## Heritage News

WE ARE THRILLED BY THE RESURRECTION of *Northern Territory Heritage News* by the Office of Environment and Heritage under the stewardship of the new Minister for Environment and Heritage, **Marion Scrymgeour**.

The newsletter is available in hard copy and electronically. The contact for the newsletter is **Michael Wells** in the Office of Environment and Heritage, and you may contact him through the Government Switchboard on 8999 5511. To access an electronic copy, go to [www.nt.gov.au/ipe](http://www.nt.gov.au/ipe) and follow the prompts to the heritage area.

## First Arrivals

WE HAVE NOW EXPERIENCED the first goods train and The Ghan itself pass by our station to arrive in Darwin with much fanfare and butterfly stomachs. The arrival of the Ghan was a very moving experience for some.

It was great to see one of our newest Friends, in the form of **Tim Fischer**, aboard the first freight train as it passed through Adelaide River. He saw the banner saying "Welcome, Tim" that was strategically placed at the north end of the station and thanked us for it as the train went through.

### Dunny Detail

OUR NEW ABLUTION BLOCK new ablution block is well underway in the design and we are sure that we all await, loo-paper in hand, the opening ceremony or, should we say, The First Flush.

### Membership Renewal

SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE NOW DUE. Your committee decided to raise the fee from \$25.00 to \$30.00 to help with costs, and we have introduced a pensioner discount of \$15.00 in the hope of encouraging more membership and participation from the community.

### Thanks

WE ARE VERY GRATEFUL TO **Cameron Stone**, who does the slashing and mowing for us, but we also need some extra mowing and slashing done in between the times that Cameron can do it for us. Any help will be much appreciated.

Thanks also to **Estelle** for the donation of many plants from **Allora Gardens Nursery**, and to **Nola Smith, Di Lunn** and **Jewel Lynagh** for their hard work on a design for the garden and the identification programs they are setting up.

Thanks also to **Marko** who has cleaned up the old drains with his backhoe, and in doing so has alleviated much of the water problem on the precinct and to **Fran Briggs**, who has organized with the Tourist Commission to have some new display shelving for all the brochures we display.

We now have a complete inventory of our exhibits and stock, thanks to the hard work of **Trevor Horman, Mick Kent, Joan Moore** and **Judy Richardson**. If I have left anyone out, apologies for the omission and many thanks to you.

### Names Wanted

WE ARE LOOKING FOR SUITABLE names for our heritage train, which will run from the station to Snake Creek. Come on; don't be shy! Let us know what you think. I will stat the ball rolling with something quite simple: *The Snake Creek Line*.

### Newsletter contributions

THIS YEAR, WE ARE SEEKING YOUR input to the newsletter—things like recipes, poetry, cartoons, tips on anything from A to Z, information on the history of the station, characters associated with the station, profiles on those you think need some exposure.

You can send your articles to Kris Smith, PO Box 302, Palmerston. N.T. 0831, or fax them to 08-89247222. If you get them in by the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of each month, I will endeavour to include them in that month's newsletter.

### Donations Required

DOES ANYONE HAVE A WIG (hair)? We need two donated to adorn the heads of a couple of mannequins that will be dressed in period costume to exhibit at the station.

### Security Issues

ON A MORE SERIOUS NOTE, we had a break-in just before Christmas. Stolen were Mick Kent's camera, valued at \$200, and a dome tent with vestibule entry and a camp stretcher belonging to Kris Smith, valued at \$500.

If anyone has or knows of anyone who has either of these items that they aren't using and don't need, we would be most appreciative.

### It is cricket, and it is on

THE MEMBER FOR NELSON AND FRIEND **GERRY WOOD** has been beavering away on some WWII history and has found surviving relatives of **Strauss**, after whom the WWII airstrip and cricket ground (SCG) were named. Those relatives will be present for the annual Army v Litchfield Shire 11 cricket match on ANZAC Day at the SCG kicking off at 1pm. Tickets are available for a fully catered marquee at the match for \$50pp with all proceeds going to **Legacy**. **Robyn Smith** is the contact on 8985 1909.

### RECIPE: Penny Pinchers

These biscuits may have been baked at the station in its heyday. Recipe makes approximately 60 biscuits. Extracted from *Cookery Can Can* by Vo Bacon.

Cream together  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of butter or margerine 1 cup of brown sugar [light] packed firmly. Add and blend well 2 eggs-unbeaten, 2 cups plain flour,  $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp salt,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup evaporated milk [undiluted]. Stir until blended, then add 2 cups rolled oats,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup chopped walnuts, 1 cup seedless raisons or mixed fruit and 1 tsp lemon rind.

Mix thoroughly. Drop by level tablespoon onto a well greased biscuit tray.

Bake at 375 degrees F in a [moderately quick] preheated oven for 12 to 15 minutes. Quite delicious.

Food for thought:

A volunteer who gives of their time  
Reaps twice as much of that, that is given.

**FNAR**  
**All Aboard!**

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