

Association of Tourist Railway Inc.

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The Electric Telegraph

**An Electronic publication of Heritage Railway and Tramway
News from Victoria.**

Issue No 1.

This is a new initiative of the ATR to bring the news to our readers of happenings on Heritage Rail within Victoria. These news items are compiled from the publications of our members and are published at regular intervals. We hope that you enjoy our first issue. You can contact the ATR electronically by sending an email to secretary@atr.org.au or by mail to PO Box 271, Queenscliff 3225

National News

ATHRA - Association of Tourist and Heritage Rail Australia

The March 2009 meeting of ATHRA was held in Queenscliff over 19 - 21 March. A tour of Heritage Rail prior to the conference took place with visits to the Victorian Goldfields Railway, Ballarat Tramway Museum, Puffing Billy, the Yarra Valley Railway, Steamrail and the ARHS Museum. The Bellarine railway acted as hosts to the conference and as special surprise T251 met us at Queenscliff station.

The next ATHRA General Meeting will be held in Brisbane in October 2009.

Victorian News - ATR

Bush Fires

Victoria suffered one of the worst bushfire seasons on record in February 2009. There were three days of excessive heat each day over 40° C and it escalated on Saturday 7 February 2009. This day was 46° and with the high winds it resulted in huge fires all across the State with great loss of life, property damage and destruction of the bush and wildlife.

Heritage Rail did not escape as the Yarra Valley Tourist Railway lost track and a number of bridges but the running section was spared from the flames which licked at the Yarra Glen Station building. The Tramway Museum Society was threatened at Bylands but the winds spared the line and Museum but the flames were so close. The Daylesford Spa Country railway also was damaged as while the town of Daylesford was spared, the line lost 2 miles of track. Other lines threatened that day were Puffing Billy with a fire at Tecoma and Alexandra which was surrounded by flames.

We were glad that none of our volunteer families lost their lives but several of their members lost property.



Yarra Valley Railway.

Meetings

The March meeting of the Association was held in conjunction with the ATHRA meeting. The next ATR Meeting, No 111, will be held in Seymour on Saturday, 16 May 2009 commencing at 2.30pm at the Seymour Rail Heritage Centre (For detail of the meeting arrangements see the ATR May Newsletter)

Address

The postal address for the ATR and the Records Officer has changed recently. Please make sure your records have the correct address as follows:

PO Box 271
Queenscliff 3225

News from our Members

Australian Railway Historical Society - Victorian Division.

MUSEUM NOTES

12AB has now taken priority as it has now reached quite a state of disrepair having been outside for so long. The roof has deteriorated badly as well as sections of the walls so that a major rebuild is the only option. This will be a long term project taking up both time and man hours but it has become a priority task

Other long term projects such as the model room have seen good progress made during 2008 and hopefully, this will continue into 2009 and on to completion at which stage the Museum will have a model railway display to be proud of. The Hitachi car has been another of these efforts which has seen the car goes from normal suburban appearance to the polished stainless steel finish it entered service in. Work on this car is still continuing with more polishing on the outside and a clean up inside.

We have had another good month of trading over the holiday period in January with the Museum being open every Wednesday during January. While this is less open time than some previous years it was all we could manage with our dwindling numbers. Unfortunately the Museum isn't alone in this lack of volunteers and this is where you come in. If you can spare just one day a month we would love to hear from you.

On the works side B83 is finally nearing completion of it's' re-paint in VR blue and gold. It is taking a bit of time to complete but the lettering and lines are being done as time allows. There are too many other jobs that call for attention at the same time and of course, not enough bodies to throw at them. Work has also commenced on the repaint of W243. Yet another of our blue and gold locos.

GORDON STATION

Maintenance has been undertaken on this station building.

Newsrail

The January Issue has an interesting article on engine driving in the steam era and the results of the photographic competition together with an interesting yarn about the State Governor and his special train. The February issue highlighted the VR trams and English Electric engines. Also the Seymour Wodonga conversion to standard gauge. The March issue has a story on 150 Years of Government railways and a history of Geelong's Depots. Pictures of the bushfire damage at Yarra Glen are shown.

Alexandra Timber Tramway & Museum

Accreditation update

On 11 and 12 January the ATT became the first open-to-the-public Tourist & Heritage Railway to have its Safety Management System audited under the Victorian *Rail Safety Act 2006*. Twenty-seven points were raised during the audit, most of which related to minor items and many of which were helpful suggestions as to ways in which we might simplify the SMS and create a small number of additional forms to assist us with the way in which we manage safety at the ATT.

These suggestions have now been incorporated into the SMS.

Centenary of Rail to Alexandra (CORA)

The Alexandra Timber Tramway will be celebrating the Centenary of Rail to Alexandra (CORA) on Sunday 25 October 2009. We invite the community to share their recollections of when the railway was operating. The ATT is

looking for photos of the station during the past 100 years and, if you would like to share your photos, they will be carefully copied and returned to you. The copied photos will be displayed on the day with an acknowledgment given to your generosity.

Market Report

January's market on 10 January was extremely successful with an increase in the number of stalls and, due to the holidays, there were twice as many visitors to the market. The combination of stalls, train rides and BBQ ensured the ATT had a very profitable day.

Greenhouse gas emissions

The main greenhouse gas produced by the ATT is Carbon dioxide. In Victoria, Carbon dioxide released from the generation of electricity from brown coal is equivalent to 1.4kg per kWh. In 2008, the ATT consumed 2,730 kWh of electricity (down from 3,779 kWh in 2007) leading to a contribution of 3.822 tonnes of Carbon dioxide. In 2008, the ATT used 245 litres of petrol (@ 2.4 kg per litre = 588.0 kg Carbon dioxide) and 305 litres of diesel (@ 2.7 kg per litre = 823.5 kg carbon dioxide) thus contributing 1.412 tonnes of greenhouse gas, down from 1.743 tonnes in 2007.

Since our steam locomotive burns only waste wood and is essentially carbon neutral, this brings our total greenhouse gas contribution from all sources to 5.234 tonnes of Carbon dioxide. This is a reduction of a little over 25% on the previous year's result of 7.033 tonnes. This reduction is mainly due to the more careful use of electricity on the ATT site and the fact that the Fowler steam locomotive was returned to service in late 2008, reducing our reliance on fossil fuels. These greenhouse gas emissions will once again be fully offset by the purchase of local farm forestry credits, expected to cost around \$65 at current prices.

Ballarat Tramway Museum

The tramway reports that services had to suspend in January for a short time. This was due to the presence of a large tortoise on the side of the track. When the tram pulled up for passengers to get a photo it decided to crawl under the tram and for the tram to reverse. This done, a passenger grabbed the tortoise and deposited it in the swamp. The service was delayed for 15 minutes. Patronage over January was encouraging but owing to the heat on 7 February normal operations were suspended that day. As a corollary, Wendouree Lake is dry and the grass growing there caught fire twice the first in late December and the second time in late January.

Other News

Alongside display tram No 39, which is the centre piece of the display area, new concrete stumps have been placed and new flooring installed. The display area is to tell the story through the eyes and stories of the trammies from the various eras.

Work on tram No 38 is continuing and the wheels are with the AETM in Adelaide for re-profiling and the armature of the motor is being baked and dipped. The body is receiving attention and the cream paintwork is being re-done.

Out on the track cracked rail joints are being re-welded and those joints that require excavation are to be tackled in the autumn. The overhead has been inspected and work done. Car parking is no longer appropriate in the front near the depot and has been closed off with all car parking at the rear of the depot.

A grant has been received for training and first aid courses for volunteers.



Ballarat No 27

Photo J. Frost

The Bellarine Railway

The railway was a host to the March meeting of ATHRA and delegates were shown over the workshops and new shed and taken for a trip to Drysdale. And were entertained on the Blues Train.



T251 on its first test run.

Photo J. Frost

Daylesford Spa Country Railway

The fires on the evening of 23 February 2009 at Daylesford have burnt out 1.6 km (1 mile) of track between Daylesford and Musk. This is the entire forest section between the 73 and 74 mile post.

DSCR members that have inspected the damage have an initial assessment of 80-90% of the sleepers (approx. 2000) having been totally destroyed along with the pit logs near the 74 mile post.

Rail operations continue at the DSCR with a shuttle service from Daylesford to the beginning of the burnt area.

During the past week one of the Daylesford signs which is attached to the platform lamp posts was stolen. It would have taken a fair effort as the bracket has been twisted until the steel fatigued.

If anyone may happen to hear of it or come across it (it is one of the small black and white enamel ones) in your travels or at an auction could you please let the railway know.

Diamond Valley Railway

The railway had a most successful night run on a very warm night on 8 March. Many thousands of people turned up for the event and trains ran continuously until closing time.

Friends of the North Australia Railway at Adelaide River

Now that the wet season is coming to an end the railway is getting ready at Adelaide River for the commencement of visitors to the railway.

HUDSWELL CLARKE #928

Mike Bowman is working diligently on #928. Much recent work has focused on the gauges and controls in the cabin.

FETTLERS TROLLEY SHED

PDQ Builders, a local firm, has fabricated the frames for the 2003 toilet block and the 2005 Disabled toilet block. Last year we asked Jeff if he could have a look at a shed to replace the original fettler's trolley depot at Adelaide River (the concrete foundation and the original rails are still in place). We provided dimensional details. We asked Mick Lone to help us with the setting up of the foundations for the fettlers trolley shed. Today Mick advised that he will be working in the area next week and that he will pour the foundations for us.

Power Supply

Underground power cables have been run to both carriage BC329 and to Sidney Williams Hut #2. They still need to be connected but the completion of the trenches with backfilling today was a milestone.

Wish List of Works.

- New motor on the COX mower (\$900)
- Repairs to saddle tank on the steam loco (\$2,000)
- Repairs to COX mower (expect \$200)

- Foundations for extra caretaker's shelters (expect \$1,000).
- Cleaning and painting Sidney Williams #2 shed (expect \$2,000).
- Progressive restoration of the steam locomotive (\$2,000)
- Restoration of Short Tom stairs and verandahs (\$1,500).
- Foundations for the fettlers trolley shed (say \$900).



Steel Sleepers Friends of the Northern Territory Railway

Photo Railway Newsletter.

Puffing Billy - Emerald Tourist Railway Board

As usual the busy period over the Christmas and New Year holidays saw six train running and large numbers of passengers carried. There were a number of scares in February when bushfires occurred to the north and later to the south of Belgrave and the main railway line to Melbourne was cut at Ferntree Gully. Fortunately the fire did not affect the infrastructure of Puffing Billy but patronage both in February and in March was markedly down.

Because of the great dry, as a precaution diesels were used on a number of trains beyond Lakeside and on one day only the 10.30 train ran only as far as Menzies creek hauled by a diesel. The railway received a number of request to help farmers in the Bunyip area restore fences and was able to supply a quantity of fencing material to them.

The railway is getting ready for the Great train Race which will be held on Sunday 3rd May 2009.

As part of the railways long term planning a changed Strategic Planning Committee is to be set up. Each year the railway provides a free influenza jab for its workers.

Work on 12A is continuing and G42 is to come out of service for its D examination. 8A is also undergoing a D exam. The Climax engine is receiving attention and calculations are being prepared for new axles to replace the existing ones. Over the years this engine has a history of breaking axles. New

support beams are being prepared and the new regulator rod is being hard chromed. The auxiliary steam pipe has had new components prepared. A proposal was received on the 1st April to return 3A to service.

Steamrail

BZ car 269 has been renamed as "Hobsons Bay" and had its first outing as a dance/observation car to Tocumwal in January 2009. The carriage was built as 9BZ at Newport Workshops in the period 1957-1960. The carriage was used by the West Coast Rail on the Warrnambool line and has been overhauled by Steamrail and repainted in VR Blue and Gold. The carriage complements another carriage Moorabool which is configured as a Club Car.

T356 has been the backbone of the diesel fleet lately and ran to Tocumwal with S313 replacing S301 which was damaged in starting without having the lube system pressurised. S301 received such engine damage that the engine may be terminally damaged. Examination has shown that the crankshaft is badly damaged and need either major repair in the USA or replacement.

S313 which was paired with T356 on the Tocumwal trip failed at Essendon on the way from Melbourne and was placed "off-line" for the rest of the trip with T356 hauling the consist and S313 to Tocumwal and return on its own. Steamrail T395 was dispatched to Seymour to assist T356 on the return but had problems and while it helped in the hardest part of the return trip had to be shut down at times.

Carriage 17BE has entered the paint bay for its four yearly overhauls and repaints.

The building known as No 12 Road was badly damaged in a fire in 1989 and had become unsafe to use. Victrack has let a contract for its repair and this is proceeding well.

The only trip run in February was the suburban rambler trip and following the dreadful bushfires it was decided to give all proceeds to the Red Cross Bushfire Appeal.

During the summer season the opportunity is taken to conduct all the necessary tests of the steam locomotive fleet. D³ 658/639, K153, K190 and R761 have all had boiler examinations. R711 is ready to run but can not receive approval so is in storage. Y112 is also in dry storage. A²986 is slowly being restored and the wheels are at Puffing Billy being turned.

ELECRAIL

DIVISION

Still unable to run in Melbourne. This year is the 90th year of electrification and the division would like to be able to run a train again. Work is continuing on 12BT[^] and 341T.

The Victorian Goldfields Railway

The Wooden Carriage Collective

The railway is a real example of the hard work, talent and dedication of an awful lot of people over a number of years. The very fact that we have been able to re-build the line all the way from Maldon to Castlemaine and to operate trains regularly is a huge effort. What's more, we are operating heritage trains, lovingly restored to their operational condition. However, most of us have stood on a platform on the railway and thought "if only we could do more". We often look across at the rolling stock that hasn't been restored and sits forlornly in the elements deteriorating slowly. Preservation and restoration to their original condition is something we'd all love to achieve, however it remains a distant dream, given the huge financial cost of operating the railway in its current condition, let alone moving forward with further restoration. We aren't alone in this situation - all tourist railways ponder this problem; how do we save these precious carriages, yet continue to run a railway?

Late last year, representatives of all the broad gauge tourist railways met with representatives of the Seymour Rail Heritage Centre to discuss the problem. After much discussion, the concept of the Wooden Carriage Collective was born. The basis of the collective is that each railway would pool a number of carriages in one location that would be restored centrally and then allocated out to the various railways on an "as needs" basis. The collective would also work with the government to fund restoration of these carriages so much more would be achieved than could be if we tried to restore carriages on our own. It would also allow railways to use carriages other than their own, that may be more suitable to their operations.

The Seymour Rail Heritage Centre has graciously volunteered to house the carriages and to co-ordinate the restoration of the carriages. We are fortunate to have this offer from our friends at Seymour as they have the facilities to safely store and restore these carriages - facilities that we lack at Maldon! The board has discussed our current collection of carriages including those carriages that are not trafficable, with other railways. The board has carefully considered our needs over the coming years and has decided that we will contribute our three "E" carriages to the pool, being 15BE, 20BE, 2BCE and possibly 18AE. These carriages were designed as express passenger carriages and were some of the finest produced for the Victorian Railways. Our "E" cars haven't been used for many years and currently sit as easy targets for vandals, souvenir hunters, termites and the wind, the rain and the sun. By moving them to Seymour, they will be preserved and then restored to their former glory to run either on the mainline or on either the Victorian Goldfields Railway or another Victorian Tourist Railway. Carriage 25BCPL sits forlornly with severe weathering clearly visible to the roof the carriage may be salvageable now but not in three years time if not moved under cover. Carriage 2BCE clearly shows the effects of the sun, the wind and the rain with peeling paint, missing windows and deteriorating timber work.

Locomotives

Restoration of J549 is well under way and it is hoped that this engine will be in operation again this year. K160 is receiving repair to the compressor and J541 is to have some firebox stays renewed.

February Shutdown

This year saw the Muckleford Bridge receive attention and 8 piles were replaced and the deck levelled and the track straightened on the bridge. On the section of track which runs parallel to the V/Line track in Castlemaine sleeper replacement was also done. 120 sleepers were replaced on the Forest Creek and Johnson Street bridges.

Tramway Museum Society

Owing to the few volunteers that are available to regularly open the museum, commencing on the 1 January 2009 it has been decided to only open the museum on the **1st and 3rd Sundays** in the month from 11.00am to 4.30pm.

The open day for members of the Mitchell Shire was most successful with many visitors from the municipality. There was great interest in South Australian tram H 373.

To improve the electrical efficiency of the tramway the Bendigo Tramways have installed additional earth returns and pole bonds and repaired broken welded track joints. After this work was completed further electrical problems have occurred and it has been difficult to find the cause of the problems being experienced.

The fencing of the right of way has been replaced on the Northern side. A deliberate vandalism attack affected the museums water supply and most water was lost. After repairs were completed water had to be purchased to provide a supply.

Walhalla Goldfields Railway

The railway has taken delivery of a new 2'6" tamper. The unit is housed at Thomson.



Tamber on its way to Thomson