



# All Aboard

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

April 2008

## Web site launched

IT'S TAKEN A LITTLE WHILE and a lot of effort (owing to lack of technical expertise), but we now have an official FNAR web site.

Launched by the Minister for Heritage, Len Kiely MLA, on 3 April at the Northern Territory Library at Parliament House, the site will be developed into a comprehensive resource for FNAR fans and visitors alike.

You'll find us at [www.northernexposure.com.au/rail](http://www.northernexposure.com.au/rail)

At present, we have a variety of suites including history, news (which is where future newsletters will be posted and back-issues will be uploaded), events, c o n t a c t s , merchandise and, of course, our all important sponsors.

It even features Positions Vacant.



*Minister Kiely launching the site against the backdrop of a stunning sunset on the Darwin Harbour.*

*Thanks to the NT Library for the fabulous venue and to John Richards of NTL for acting as Photographer.*

*Below: it was too irresistible to remain inside during the function; Speaker's Green (the lawn of Parliament House) was a most inspiring venue.*



We also have a new e-mail address: [rail@northernexposure.com.au](mailto:rail@northernexposure.com.au)

This is a generic address to where mail should be sent in the first instance. Don't worry; other addresses will still work - in case it takes you a while to become used to the change.

The site was 'developed' by Robyn Smith with *lashings* of assistance from Internet guru Quito Washington who calmly undid a string of disasters - remotely from his own computer several suburbs away!

Most photographs that appear on the site were taken by Judy Richardson and/or Marie Perron over the past several years. Naturally, more will be added as we have more to say on various topics. Yes, the 2008 schedule of Devonshire Teas also appears on the site.

What are you waiting for? Check it out!

# Another precious donation

EARLIER THIS YEAR, Trevor took a call from a bloke who seemed to want to be as anonymous as possible. He reported that Stan and Audrey Kennon had called in and told him about a set of railway scales that might be of interest to us.

The bloke said that the only reason he was ringing us was because Porky (Peter Cornell) did a good deed for him some years ago and because Porky is so honourable and credible, we must be, too (that's a big call!).

The scales turned out to be a railway weighbridge capable of weighing loads up to 50 tons. The machine was made by ASCo, which we suspect is the Australian Scales Company of Sydney. Porky immediately offered his assistance that of his friend Macka.

Trevor then called on Stan Kennon to make doubly sure that he had gifted the weighbridge to us. When he arrived at Stan's place, Peter Cornell's driver Doug was already there and into the job. Stan confirmed his very kind offer.

We are talking about several tonnes of heavy castings all pushed together in a heap. It took several hours to carefully unravel it, load it, tie it down and then unload it. It was very hot work and we are again indebted to Peter Cornell.

One interesting find was the delivery instructions painted on some of the items:

MANAGER,  
NORTH AUSTRALIA RAILWAY, DARWIN  
ORDER NUMBER 7990.

The parts are all now laid out at Pete's yard waiting for the Avery man to inspect them and tell us how it all fits together. If you look inside your bathroom scales, you'll get the idea.

Many thanks to Stan and Audrey Kennon, Peter Cornell, Doug, Macka and the bloke who wishes to (and shall) remain anonymous.

Peter Cornell kindly put us in touch with Jeff McAlpine at Weights and Measures. Jeff used to work for Avery and serviced this weighbridge when it was in service at Frances Bay goods yard.

## HERITAGE OPEN DAY Monday 5 May 2008



Bring the family for lots of fun - treasure hunts, sack races, the running of the Adelaide River Gift, train rides for the kids (big and little), eats, drinks, Devonshire teas and tours of the precinct. Entertainment by the *Fettlers Four*. Inspect our latest exhibits. Open from 10am until 3pm.

# Water column reinstalled

RECENTLY, ONE OF THE TASKS we attempted was to reinstall the Water Column.

This has been a project on the books (and progressively happening) for four years. We knew roughly where the Water Column used to be from photographs (eg Widgee Nelson in 1912) and from observation before ADrail came through and we knew from plans that a 6" cast iron pipe joined the elevated tank to the Water Column.

As you might expect, it took a lot of searching with ground penetrating radar and diving and a backhoe to find the pipe. We could not put the column in the original position (under the ADrail track now) but have located it to the west of the track adjacent to the pipe. We excavated a big hole for a foundation during the year (by hand as in 1888) and formed and poured a concrete foundation this year.

We also worked on the Water Column to get it ready for installation. Mick Kent cleaned and primed the column and rescued parts from Burrundie. Leo Izod fabricated an authentic looking valve handle and Peter Cornell fabricated a steel plate to seal the bottom of the column.

Caretaker Alf and Anthony Nielsen then gently transported the Water Column with the HYSTER forklift and placed it on the four bolts that had been cast in the large concrete foundation. We were very pleased that the job went smoothly, thanks to the technology.

The Water Column base is level with the rails (as per the 1885 SAR drawings). It is square with the rails and it is the right clearance from

the rails. The recess that we cast in to the concrete for the connection of the water pipe seems to be adequately sized and located.

There remains much to do:

- Kerry Moran is contemplating the plumbing associated with the water connection.
- We need to lift the column temporarily whilst we install a mortar grout to softly bed the column.
- There is a small grated sump beneath the spout to be constructed (if we want to be 100% genuine). Leo Izod and Ron Green have offered to fabricate the grate.
- We are also contemplating a large grated cover ( about 4ft square) so that we can show visitors the underground plumbing.
- We need a 3m length of 6" canvas hose pipe to hang from the spout (to fill steam locomotives that pass).



*Alf and Trevor lining up the column to the south of the station.*

## WOW! Three cheers for Gwelo!

ONE OF OUR NUMBER attended a business luncheon recently and was presented with a cheque in the amount of \$2000 as a donation to the precinct from Darwin company Gwelo Developments.

Managing Director of Gwelo, Even Lynne, has a wee heritage soft spot and is a long-time Darwin resident who takes an interest in the history of sites on which he builds.

Needless to say, we were gob-smacked by this extraordinary generosity (but off like a robber's dog to the bank) and thank Even and Bernie from Gwelo.

The next job will be to take them on a tour of our Works in Progress at Porkey's yard. They're boys - *of course* they'll be excited; the joint is boy heaven! It's full of trains and wheels, cranes and wagons.

# Membership subscriptions due

SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE ONCE AGAIN due. We've retained the rates at a fairly modest \$40 per annum for a family, \$30 per annum for an Individual subscription or \$15 per annum for an Individual Pensioner subscription.

You may renew by EFT, but **PLEASE** include your surname in one of the indicators that will be displayed on our statements for payment so that we know who you are. Commonwealth Bank Darwin, BSB 06 5901, Account No 1045 3230. Donations of \$2+ are tax deductible.

In the alternative, download our Membership Form from our web site at:

<http://northernexposure.com.au/rail/membership.pdf>

Oh, aren't we getting flash!

## ALL ABOARD FOR RAILWAY REFRESHMENTS

Devonshire Tea will be served on the last Sunday of each month of the Dry Season between 11 am 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.

### 2008 Dry Season Dates:

Sunday 27 April

Sunday 25 May

Sunday 29 June

Sunday 27 July

Sunday 31 August

Sunday 28 September

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



## Look at this gorgeous creature!



This is the locomotive donated to us by Mt Isa Rotary Club in 2007. This is how the little fellow looked on arrival in Darwin. Below is how he looks at present after Mike Bowman has made a very particular project of him. Not only does he look very handsome, but bits that should move do move - it's all very impressive, indeed.



# Cyclone Helen gave us a hiding

CARETAKER ALF reported that on Friday 4 January, Cyclone Helen visited Adelaide River. He said that the eye went over during the night and lasted for 1.5 hours before the winds picked up from the west - and that is when the damage was done.

We lost several large trees, but fortunately there was no people or building damage.

Incredibly, 'young' John Nixon rode it out in his caravan overlooking the railway reservoir (it must have felt like the Flying Scotsman at full tilt).

Alf and Ethel took refuge in their Coaster bus along with grand daughter Karen, Anthony and three year-old Chloe. As fate would have it, another of Alf and Ethel's daughters (from Mount Isa) was visiting with her husband (en route to Kalgoorlie).

The police advised that the river would peak at 3pm and it did exactly that. National TV images showed the water lapping under the new railway bridge. Alf and Ethel made sure that all of our valuables were above the 100 year floodline. Thankfully, we had no water inundation through the station.

Alf and Ethel have never been through a cyclone and certainly did not expect one at

Adelaide River. It was quite stressful for them and we commend them for their bravery and great presence of mind throughout.

During cleanup operations, Alf spent many hours mowing and the place looked great. We have since worked on removing the very heavy fallen trees, and on planting new ones.

We always hoped that Alf and Ethel would enjoy their time at Adelaide River, but none of us envisaged this level of excitement.

Another site to suffer from Helen was Allora Gardens Nursery, Peter and Estelle Cornell's property at Berrimah. Major trees were felled which created havoc in the nursery - the very weekend they had advertised a large sale!

In his inimitable style, Pete got things organised at home and on the afternoon of Sunday 6 January, went for a ride to Adelaide River to see how things were at the precinct and AR generally.

From Adelaide River, Peter reported to Trevor (on Christmas holidays in Melbourne) in considerable detail.

Thankfully, no damage was sustained by the rolling stock at Allora Gardens, which is looking more impressive as each week passes.

# Cleaning up Australia, as we do

AS USUAL IN MARCH, we participated in Clean Up Australia Day and worked at The Narrows in Darwin.

Nola Smith and Estelle Harris set up the Registration Desk well before the sandflies had called it quits for the day.

A trailer load of rubbish was taken to the dump at midday thanks to the efforts of Nola, Estelle, Judy, Fran and a couple of people from Engineers Australia.

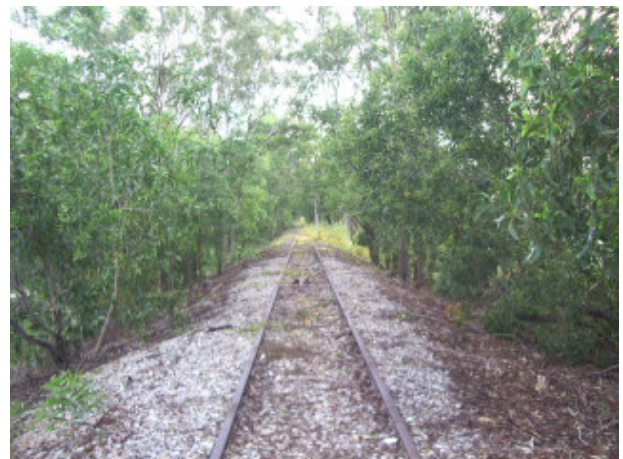
There is plenty of scope for future emu parades.

At lunch time a crew from the *NT News* turned up to see how we were going.

An interesting spin-off was the attendance by structural engineer Chris Gamble who offered to check and certify our structures –

such as the wheel lathe shed at Adelaide River. Very handy!!

See also story on re-sleepering the #4 Bridge on page 15. There's never a dull moment!



# Heritage briefs

## More on heritage ructions

THE NORTHERN TERRITORY government has fallen silent on the siting of the proposed World War II museum. As we reported in December, news of the museum itself was warmly welcomed by the community but its proposed siting adjacent to Parliament House raised hackles.

There has been no announcement to scrap the museum, and no confirmation of the proposed site since Paul Henderson assumed the Chief Ministership.

Problems cited in relation to the preferred venue of East Point include lack of road and electrical infrastructure, neither of which are insurmountable in this day and age.

We are unsure of the level of community protest that went to the government, but it must have been persuasive.

As we said in December, watch this space!

## And on matters heritage

WE ARE STILL WAITING for news of the new Heritage Act, which was promised to take 18 months in March 2002 - that was six years ago. It cannot be said that the heritage community hasn't been patient, but patience is running out. It is reasonable to assume that the hold-up arises from conflict between bureaucrats (that is, heritage bureaucrats and planning bureaucrats who, unfortunately in the past, have resided in the same department with the heritage bureaucrats being heavily outnumbered) in the absence of any information to the contrary.

## One more thing...

WE UNDERSTAND that the government has decided to move *Sandfly* from its present position on the Darwin Wharf where it is being corroded by the sea air. We just don't know where it is proposed to move her. As you know, we have a great venue for her where she would be in her natural environment and would be a star attraction!

## Farewell to Alf and Ethel

IT IS DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE, but we have said farewell to Alf and Ethel (perhaps it was Cyclone Helen) who have gone to Hermannsburg (Ntaria) for a period - guaranteed no cyclones there!

In the nine months since 16 April 2007, Alf and Ethel have given incredible service to the precinct and Adelaide River generally. They have been industrious and generous with their time and effort, and have become real friends.

When they arrived we were embarrassed that the grass had got away from us and was a metre high. Alf had it all neatly trimmed and it is an absolute credit to him. Further, he established incredible rapport with the locomotive drivers (managed to get a few rides, too) which is invaluable to us in terms of credibility with Freightlink.

Ethel's contribution was equally valuable and she had the museum ticking over nicely, providing a friendly welcome to travellers who stopped in (even whilst she was carrying injuries).

In addition to that, they brought in Darwin-based family members like Karen, Anthony and Christine, which seriously multiplied our workforce at busy times.

We will truly miss them and hope they will return before the year is out.

## Kiwi Greetings

ONE RESPONSE TO THE December newsletter came from David Whitehouse from Across the Ditch:

*I finished my book on the trip to Birdum in September 2006 with the Jacobsen/ Webb/Whitehouse mob as late as only a couple of days ago and sometime after the festive season I shall send out copies to the family and somewhere in the mail there will be one to yourself. It is called 'The Main lines of Birdum' and tells the story of the Mains, Jacobsens and Whitehouses in the town and the adventures of that visit in 2006.*

# Heritage briefs

*Needless to say our side of the family have already booked our flights for an expected **Return to Birdum** on **19th September 2009** to celebrate the first train arrival and my parents' wedding anniversary in Birdum, and with me will be my two sons and two grandsons, one of whom is Daniel David Whitehouse, named after his grgrgrandfather Daniel David Main, the original resident.. Exciting times ahead..*

*May I take the opportunity of extending my best wishes for the New Year and every success to yourselves and the FNAR group. The newsletters are just brilliant.*

*Regards*

*Dave Whitehouse*

**Editor's note:** our pleasure, Dave, particularly with feedback like this!

## South Aussie Greetings

*Hello Trevor,*

*Many thanks for the latest issue of the FNAR Newsletter All Aboard. And thank you for publishing my article. I hope it brings back memories for some, and stimulates new interest among others who were perhaps too young to have had the privilege of experiencing the old NAR first-hand.*

*Very best wishes for Christmas and 2008, to you, Judy and your tireless band of Top End volunteers.*

*Warm regards*

*John Evans*

**Editor's note:** again, our pleasure, John - and many thanks for your article. Keep them coming!

## The Moyle Trophy

THE DARWIN AMATEUR RADIO CLUB was in residence at the rail heritage precinct in February as part of their annual event wherein they attempt to make as many contacts as possible in 24 hours. Mike Bowman reports

that they made more than 180 contacts this year which was a high score. They reported a magnificent light show the night before in the south-eastern sky (possibly over Grove Hill).



## Tree Identified

ONE OF THE TREES IN THE foreground of the 1944 photo of the Ambulance Train (used for the Remembrance Day dedication of the nursing plaque last year) is still there!

FNAR Dr Brian Reid identified the species for us:

*The lovely salmon gums are Eucalyptus Bigalerita and it certainly does look as if the tree near the siding is the one in the photograph.*

Thank you, Brian. This is the photo:



# Heritage briefs

## Peaceful Dove

WE ARE EXERCISING GREAT care around the Short Tom carriages at the moment. A Peaceful Dove has made her very basic nest on an elevated work platform and she is sitting on two eggs. Through driving rain and scorching sun she sits there. Let's hope her dedication is successful.



## 120th Anniversary of First Train

IN JULY 1888, *Silverton* arrived at Adelaide River on the brand spanking new NAR (the bridge was not yet complete). Commercial operation commenced on Monday 30 September 1888. The bridge was officially opened on 3 December 1888.

## New Hot Water Urn

IT AIN'T ALL BEER AND SKITTLES. Late last year, Trevor went to look at some 1886 steel sleepers at Loveridge's Auction Yard where he ran into FNAR Richard Luxton. They happened to be standing next to a Hot Water urn, Lot #276. Trevor asked Richard to buy it for us if it went for a song. Richard wisely felt it would go for more. Trevor shot through to call at Stan Kennon's yard. The next morning, Richard turned up with the urn, donated it and confirmed that it is a goer. It was immediately pressed into service. This was a great gesture and a good bit of insurance for when we have larger events. Thanks, Richard.

## Centenary of First Crossing of Australia by car

WE HAVE BOOKED THE the travelling exhibition from National Motor Museum to stop at the River from 18-20 August prior to its arrival at Darwin on 20 August, exactly 100 years since the original crossing by a 1908 25-horsepower Talbot named *Angelina*. Harry Dutton and Murray Auger took 52 days to drive from Adelaide to Darwin at that time - another remarkable achievement in the Territory's history. Don't miss it!

## Massive Shade Structure

The 'steam boys' (Mike Bowman and Owen Peake) have assembled a massive shade structure which will be of immense assistance to their outdoor restoration efforts. Donated by Damien Gray (formerly Darwin Shade and Marquee) who is going to Canberra, the unit measures 9m x 5m and is about 3+m high. Its mounted on car wheels so that its portable. All the parts are heavy, requiring forklift assistance. As with all such jobs, fitting the pieces of the jigsaw together was a trial (and they are heavy pieces). At one point a return visit to Salonika was required to secure the 24 large bolts that hold it together. Peter Cornell thinks he may know where there is some slightly preloved shade cloth.

It has since been turned up the right way (it was assembled upside down) by the deft hand of Peter Cornell.

The reward will be better conditions for working on Hudswell Clarke #928. A great effort, Mike and Owen.

## Second Hand Books

MANY THANKS TO Lesley Hogan and Mike Bowman, Bruce & Lorna Webster for THE donation of books. They are very popular with travellers on 'the Track' and are a good fund raiser.

# Heritage briefs

## Allied Works Council Roller

THE TIRELESS MICK KENT has stencilled on to the newly painted WW2 McDonald road roller its Allied Works Council asset number AWC 124.

It now looks quite stunning and genuine. Apart from the concrete in the engine block, it could almost get out there and help the Allies build the Stuart Highway. The roller used to reside in a park in Nightcliff (near the pool) until liability concerns caused Darwin City Council to remove it and donate it to FNAR. If only they could see it now.

Mick is now looking for some wheels to fit on the WW2 Chev Blitz truck. Do you have any in your shed?

## Heritage Minister Visits

ON 30 MARCH, Heritage Minister Len Kiely called in to our restoration yard at Allora Gardens Nursery to announce that applications are now open for the 2008 Heritage Grants in 2008. The Minister was interested in our venue because they Heritage Branch provided funding in 2007 to restore the Cowans Sheldon railway crane.

It is noteworthy - and we were chuffed - that this was the first Ministerial visit to an FNAR site since former Chief Minister Clare Martin attended our inaugural Works in Progress Exhibition in 2006.

*Minister Len Kiely (centre) flanked by Trevor Horman (left foreground) and Mike Bowman (right foreground).*



The Minster's visit was preceded by a major clean-up at the WIP site, which entailed Pete and Chris Cornell tidying up the restoration yard and mowing grass. Mick Kent volunteered to come and do the whippersnipping around the edges and so an early start was programmed. Before it got too hot, the opportunity was taken to install several hundred of the infamous Tek screws in to the protective cover for the Short Toms. Then some unsightly torn tarps on several of our restoration projects were removed and/or tidied up. Short Tom #450 was shunted (via forklift) about 1.5m further under the protective shelter (it surprisingly rolled by itself until it hit a wooden sleeper deliberately placed).

Then Nola Smith, Estelle Harris, Judy Richardson and Peter Cornell hopped in to give the place the final workover. It looked sensational! Our celebrated laminated interpretive signs were freshened up, too.

## More news on donations

PETER POOLE has donated many artefacts to the FNAR in recent years.

Most recently, he has donated some iron work which appears to be the fancy iron work that was the handrail on the end of the early platform ended carriages. Pete found the material alongside the Winnellie Siding many years ago. They have suffered somewhat during their disposal but are capable of straightening up by a dedicated metal worker. Any takers? Thanks for the donation, Peter.

## New 1942 Maps

TREVOR MENZIES, who is our Survey and GPS expert, has recently returned from searching archives in Adelaide for maps.

He has presented us with excellent maps of Larrimah and Adelaide River in 1942.

On the Adelaide River map appears a Cemetery #2 near 119 AGH of which we were hitherto unaware. You see! *NO* news is too trivial - we want it all!

# Heritage briefs

## Hitch-hiking WW2 pilot

WE RECEIVED A SERIOUS inquiry recently from an Aviation Historian asking if we had any records of a train driver picking up a pilot from a military plane that had crashed near Daly River on 15 February 1942.

Coincidentally, Janie Mason has just finished reviewing a book about the exploits of a Spitfire pilot called Ross Stag who was six miles high pursuing Japs when the Spitfire knocked out (May 1943). He glided towards the coast of Fogg Bay and baled out at 2,000 feet. He paddled his inflatable dinghy 10 miles to shore and waited to be rescued.

As a rescue didn't eventuate, he started walking overland and was found exhausted and hallucinating 16 days later near the Finiss.

They appear to be unrelated incidents. However, anyone interested in researching this matter will be offered every assistance.

## Speaking Engagements

OUR FAME GROWS! RECENTLY, we were invited to speak at the dinner meeting of the Rotary Club of Palmerston/Howard Springs at The Hub in Palmerston.

Copies of our PowerPoint presentation are available on CD for anyone who is interested. This club is a great fundraiser and sees Adelaide River a being in its domain. There seems to be scope to work co-operatively with this service club.

Since then (at the launch of the web site in the Northern Territory Library), we have been invited to be Guest Speaker at one of the NTL's regular forums which are well attended by history and heritage buffs.

We are deeply appreciative of any opportunity to speak to people who are unaware of either our work or the fragile and disappearing heritage of the Territory generally, and we thank everyone who has extended such courtesies to us.

We will do our best to represent the Territory's heritage the way it deserves to be.

## Short Tom protective shelter

ALLOW A GIRL HER INDULGENCE! Your Editor is a BIG fan of the Short Tom because she is a BIG fan of timber (yeah, okay - some are cat people; some are dog people..you know how it is).

On that basis, we are pleased to report that the Short Toms have protection! Many thanks to Peter Poole for supplying (and delivering) several sheets of corrugated iron for the project.

Thanks also to Fran Briggs for assembling hundreds of Roofing Screw Assemblies (#17 Tek screw with large steel washer and round neoprene washer).

Again, Peter Cornell's forklift saved a lot of effort in hauling the roofing iron on to the roof - and check out the result (this is where the Dove is nesting, by the way).



# FNAR helps out at Katherine Museum

OVER EASTER, connection of two halves of the 66-year old Sidney Williams Hut at Katherine Museum using 10 angle iron purlins was achieved.

Care was needed to make sure everything was a straight and vertical as possible and that the heritage status of the SWH was preserved as far as possible.

The locals who contributed to the effort were a pleasure to work with and Katherine is lucky to have such talented and experienced volunteers: Iain Locke, Brian Murphy and Bob Dennis , Noel Neal and Mr Mackie's boys all put in exceptional efforts on their Easter break to make this happen. They all brought their own tools and readily went off to purchase or acquire any necessary materials (presumably out of their own pockets).

After a full day's work, Brian Murphy then repaired the gate at O'Keeffe House.



*Clockwise from left: Noel Neal installing the extra truss that was required; O'Keeffe House (a National Trust property in Katherine); the halved Sidney Williams hut with Noel aloft, the halved SWH with Trevor aloft (red shirt), dealing with the innards of the connection, Mr Mackie's 'boys' whose names we apologise for not knowing! Thank you all!*

# Silkwood subdivision progress

DR JOHN COOPER (he's the dude who owns it) is in the process of subdividing land that was formerly part of Mount Bundy cattle station.

We lodged comments on the proposals about 12 months ago and subsequently met with Dr John who was keen to listen to the issues and to address them.

As a result, the plans for one of the subdivisions (on the eastern side of the Highway and encompassing the airstrip) have been modified and sent back for further comment. It certainly looks a lot better.

Dr John has not completely excised the airstrip, but has put in writing that he will ensure that it does happen. More importantly, he seeks to defer the heritage survey of the property until a later time. We are aware of very significant sites such as No.1 Depot for the Overland Telegraph and a lone grave (OT worker?) somewhere near Goodilla. Darwent was a contractor on the OT and Paquillan was a government contract supervisor. Two hills adjacent to Goodilla are named after them. We believe that the depot site should be public land and they should be heritage listed, along with the grave.

At Goodilla, there were tin mines in circa 1900. Goodilla is south of Adelaide River. We'd prefer to see the Heritage Survey done now.

# Donation of 80kVA generator

THE POWER AND WATER CORPORATION formally advised that we may collect a diesel generator that we have been discussing for some months. Within minutes of getting the news, Peter Cornell (we call him *Sluggish*) was around to pick it up.

For the technically-minded, it's a Detroit Diesel GM 4/71 genset (naturally aspirated). It has done a lot of work as a 24-hour a day generating set and was up for disposal. Such engines are okay for standby duty. It is rated at 80 kVA, which is sufficient to power about 20 homes. Pete reckons that after the next cyclone we will be out there restoring trains whilst Darwin tries to get itself together.

The unit weighs two tonne. *Two Stroke* Timmy Atkinson has been swooning over it (it's a boy thing). Pete says that these two-stroke diesels roar. They are heavy on fuel, but who cares in an emergency for a short time?

Of course the GM 4/71 means that the diesel engine has 4 cylinders each of 71 cubic inch capacity. Pete's Chamberlain tractor is a 3/71 and the NDH6 Gloucester Railcar had two 6/71s.

Thanks to Andrew Macrides and the Power and Water Corporation for their generosity.

# Wheel Press operations

WE ARE SLOWLY LEARNING MORE about our massive NILES railway wheel press. We've been introduced to Ian Seymour at the St Kilda Tram Museum in Adelaide who has an identical press (made in 1908) and although he has been unable to source technical manuals, he found the retired foreman from Hackney Tram depot and asked him how to operate the press.

He also visited New Orleans and made similar enquiries at the tram museum there. Ian has provided us with some basic instructions. He says that he has already pulled three wheels on his press. So a visit to St Kilda is a must one day.

Ian knew that our press had been modified at some point. Sure enough, the main valve block has the date 28/2/1972 punched into it. Grahame Treloar remembers the press when it was at Preston Tram depot.

# BOD commemoration 2008

ON FRIDAY 18 FEBRUARY, we received 90 WWII veterans who were on a three-day Top End tour to Tindal as part of the Darwin City Council's Bombing of Darwin Commemoration ceremony.

Nola Smith was the Project Co-ordinator and had things extremely well organised - including the weather. Things were a tad nervy during the week as the heavy monsoon persisted. We were looking for Plans B, C and D!

Through Nola's contacts she arranged for the monsoon to let up on Thursday afternoon so that there was no rain overnight and the Friday morning was a glorious blue sky. Conditions were as good as you could order.

Helpers on the day included Estelle Harris, Judy Richardson, Robyn Smith, Jan Adamson, John Nixon, Jeff Francis, Mick Kent, Ed, Lexy and Merle. Maxine Dowley was the tour leader for the Darwin City Council. Anna Harris from the National Trust baked the fresh scones.

The action started at 0700 (the girls stayed overnight at AR) and Mick made a valiant attempt to mow around the station (an amphibious mower would have been required earlier in the week). Jeff kindly helped to set up the tables.

The visitors came at 0900 and were on their way by 1000 to see the War Cemetery.

This was our first fund raiser for the year and it was very successful. All the work that has gone in to provide facilities and Disabled Access were well proven.

Many thanks to all who participated. The vibes that came out of this effort were most positive all around.

We look forward to seeing some images.

Oh yes, and the monsoonal rain returned soon after the veterans decamped.



Many of the veterans were accompanied by their children or carers, and this was most valuable - particularly on our occasional 4WD terrain. We are very pleased to report that notwithstanding the extremely Wet Season conditions that preceded the visit, the toilet facilities held up extremely well.

A noteworthy point is that staff from the Northern Territory Library and Northern Territory Archives Oral History Unit were on the tour - perhaps the Northern Territory is finally coming of age in recognition of its past. Congratulations to all involved.

# Tree clearing of NAR track

WITH APPROVAL FROM Freightlink, we launched in to the job of clearing the NAR track north of the River in February. Early starters included Wayne Parsons, Fran Briggs, Jack Devlin, Callum Moran and Sue O'Hagan's son Tony.

The objectives of the work are: (1) to clear trees that are actually growing through the NAR track to save the track being damaged if the trees fall over; and (2) to expose the bank adjacent to Finlay Road so that civil engineering people can make a proper assessment of the work that will be required to extend the embankment about 2m sideways to enable the NAR track to be at least 6m from the standard gauge track.

At 9.30, the temperature was 29.4 and the humidity was 82%.

The professionals from ASAP Trees got stuck into the job at the Finlay Road site opposite Marko's place. Jack Devlin put his quad bike (and riding experience) to good use by hauling logs to the waiting trailers. Some heavy woolly butt gums, ironwood trees and African Mahoganies were dropped. The chain saws needed to be resharpened regularly. We sprayed the butts with poison, again kindly provided by Murray Fuller of Territory Weed Management.

Peter Cornell visited and Jan Hills offered her trailer. By 3.30pm the temperature was over 34 degrees and the humidity was 58%. We were all fagged out.

Of course, then it rained – and blew - and there was lightning.

For those not familiar with the area, our NAR track runs parallel with the new standard gauge track from the railway station until just opposite Jock's store (about 1.3km).

The railway track is in place all the way except for the last 200m where it was 'too close' to the new track and we were asked to pull it up in 2003.

Many people today are surprised that the track was there and in such good condition.

Ultimately, we need to extend the embankment sideways by 2-3m (over about 150m) to enable the two tracks to be 6m apart. It means that a number of trees must be removed (all new since 1976) so that the earthworks can be priced and executed.

In terms of importance to our overall objective, this work ranks up there with the Dorat Road Level Crossing job that we completed in 2005.

Thank you very much to all of those who attended and who worked so hard in those oppressive conditions. They include the professionals from ASAP Trees, John Peric and Sharon Williams plus their 'boys' Leroy, Justin, Micha and Kahlin.

From an historical point of view, we were working in the vicinity of the 123km post on the NAR which in other times was about the 76 mile.

We uncovered the formation for the WW2 'petrol siding' just opposite Marko's place where the BIPOD was. Sadly, the Overland Telegraph poles in this vicinity have long gone (as evidenced by insulators on the ground).

## 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!

# Re-sleeping Bridge #4

CHARLES MILLAR'S bridge building crew constructed Bridge #4 at the Narrows in 1887 using wrought iron from Dorman Long near Newcastle in the UK.

The bridge has had no TLC in the last 32 years and probably for some time before that. In recent years the wooden sleepers were deteriorating and were being stolen.

We received a small grant from Darwin City Council to re-sleeper the bridge in 2007. The sleepers were stored at Peter Cornell's yard.

Jared Archibald helped remove the many 3/4" bolts that fixed the old sleepers in 2007.

On Clean Up Australia Day, Sunday 2 March, Owen Peake pre-drilled the wooden sleepers so that they could be bolted on the steel bridge, then a crew of four fettlers got stuck in to replacing the 30 wooden sleepers.



*Owen Peake and Wolfgang Meike beavered away on the bridge*

It was hot and dirty work. The crew started at 0700 in fine weather and had all the new sleepers in position by 0900. Then came the hard work of installing the M20 galvanised bolts and fixing the wooden sleepers to the bridge.

Sometime after 1100, when it was getting very hot, they started installing the dog screws to fix the rails to the wooden sleepers. Using basic hand tools, they got enough in to fix the rails at gauge before the sun won the war, as it were.

The 3'6" gauge was checked using a genuine 1885 'gauge rod' that Leo Izod found in a junk heap near Burrundie.

Many thanks to Wolfgang Meike, Owen Peake, Peter Poole and Sumesh for a fine piece of team work.



*Peter Poole, Trevor Horman and Wolfgang Meike on site at the Narrows.*

Owen, Peter and Trevor Horman later returned to install the final 29 bolts to fix the sleepers to the 1887 bridge steel. The job took about two hours in more tolerable weather than the last outing.

There was a pleasant surprise in the form of a former NAR train driver, Howard Bailey-Green, who said he started driving for the NAR as a young man in 1968. He drove NSU and NT class locomotives.

He recalled Station Master John O'Donohoe and Paymaster Kevin Gould, and said that Felix Cigobia had been the Ganger on the Darwin-Wishart section in those days and would have looked after this section. Felix may still be around.

Howard said that speed restrictions applied in this section.

He confessed that 20 years after the railway closed, he has nightmares about bringing an unloaded ore train down the 1 in 77 hill from Snell Street (with the wagons pushing the locos) and seeing a road train stalled on the RAAF gates LX. He applies seven pound air pressure to the brakes, but the train speed increases - he's a happy camper when he wakes and realises he's been dreaming.

# 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

## More Positions Vacant

We need Caretakers again! If you're a Grey Nomad heading to the Territory with your own van and some sensational people skills, we need to hear from you.

Check out our web site:

[http://northernexposure.com.au/rail/top\\_job.html](http://northernexposure.com.au/rail/top_job.html)

We'd LOVE to hear from appropriately qualified and sensible people...