

All Aboard

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

March 2005

Excellence honoured

IN EARLY DECEMBER last year, Chief Minister Clare Martin unveiled a plaque at the Big 1888 Railway Bridge that recognizes the engineering heritage significance of the bridge.

The day of the ceremony, 3 December, marked 116 years to the day that the bridge was officially opened.

The ceremony was attended by about 100 people including some 40 students from the Adelaide River Primary School, Chief Minister's Heritage Advisor Dr Mickey Dewar, Bob Alford, Chair of the Heritage Advisory Council, Greg Lambert and John Blockey from Lands, Bob Cush from Freightlink, Brendan Lawson, Deputy CEO of AustralAsia Railway, NT Tourist Commission staff including Chris Bond, Maria Purvis and Sally Patterson.

The locals included Patsy Fawcett, Mark and Sue O'Hagan and Lee O'Hagan. Of the former NAR employees were Robin Jessop, Kevin and Betty Gould.

In attendance representing the Friends of the North Australian Railway were Mick Kent, Marion and Barry Slingsby, Judy Richardson, Fran Briggs, Ann Kanters, Mark Powell and special friends Leo Izod, Tom Bertonshaw,

Ken Frazer, Ingrid Van Oostrum and Barry Sharp from Larrimah.

Engineers were represented by Owen Peak, David McHugh, Peter Poole, Fred Finch and Trevor Horman.

The event was organised by Engineers Australia and the Friends were contracted to provide morning tea. We were delighted that Fran Briggs organised this for us. Fran

always puts on a great spread and this was no exception. With tea, coffee and cold drinks on tap, a variety of scones and Christmas cake, it was a superb spread - and it was served in china cups and saucers (no disposables for this replica 1888 show).

What goes unnoticed is the effort required to organise such an event

so that it runs smoothly. Ann and Fran in particular put in days of effort to get the venue and the morning tea ready.

On the day, it was 4pm when the last cup was washed and returned to its normal place of abode at Fran's conference centre.

As part of the preparations, Mick Kent was out early patching the Dorat Road Level crossing in readiness for the big day and Ann was out cleaning out the very flash country dunny. More pics overleaf.



L to R: XXXXX, Trevor Horman, Chief Minister Clare Martin and Owen Peake.

FNAR Annual General Meeting

The 2005 AGM will be held at the station on Sunday 27 March at 1000 hours. The new *Associations Act* requires us to alter our Constitution. The amended Constitution has been approved by the Committee and will be put to members at the AGM. Please ensure that you are financial so that you can vote! See you there.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone - Work: _____ Home: _____

Mobile: _____

Postal Address: _____

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I hereby enclose:

\$30 (\$15 pensioners) - Membership Subscription
\$____ donation (all gratefully accepted)

Please return to FNAR, GPO Box 3504, Darwin NT 0801.

Excellence honoured



Brolga Awards

MEMBERS MAY BE aware that we submitted an entry in the Heritage Category of the Brolga Awards for Tourism Excellence last year. Fran Briggs and Robyn Smith attended on our behalf. By all reports it was a gala event with 60 people on the waiting list for tickets.

Fran reported that we did not win the Heritage Category, but received the Tourism Minister's Award for Special Recognition for Contribution to Tourism. This was announced close to midnight and Fran did the honours in accepting the award on our behalf.

This is an important milestone and will be most useful in promoting our cause. It means that our efforts have been acknowledged and that Adelaide River is placing itself firmly on the tourism map. Many thanks to Fran and Robyn.

The great bridge heist

THANKS TO GERRY WOOD, we have been receiving support on our disappearing bridges. The bridges are on the old railway line between Darwin and Noonamah and some are rather remote, so it can be some time before theft or vandalism is discovered.

This is very valuable heritage and we urge everyone to be on the lookout and report any suspicious to the police, who have also been working on tracking the thieves.

The bridges were built in the 1890 and were an integral part of the North Australian Railway which closed in 1976. Built mainly by Chinese workers in the 1890s, the rail was Darwin's most important transport link to the Territory's gold mining towns.

During World War II, the rail transported vital munitions, supplies and troops.

The sad fact is that even if these people are apprehended, we will never be able to put the bridges back as they were. A valuable part of our heritage has disappeared.

Calendar 2005

The Committee has proposed the following programme for this calendar year. Please make a note of the dates. We will send further info in due course.

Sun 24 Apr	Possible outdoor movies at the Railway Precinct
Mon 25 Apr	Anzac Day – Dawn Service – Activities at the ARSS
Mon 2 May	May Day and our traditional Heritage Open Day
Sat 4 Jun	Adelaide River Cup
Sat 11 Jun	Adelaide River Show
Mon 13 Jun	Queens Birthday Holiday – Heritage walk with Bob Alford or rail trail walk with Mick Kent
Fri 22 Jul	Darwin Show Day – Adelaide River Gift?
Mon 1 Aug	Picnic Day – Railway Picnic at Station
Sat 3 & Sun 4 Aug	76 Anniversary of the first train to Birdum
Sun 12 Nov	Anniversary of bombing raid on Adelaide River, the last raid in Australia

Adelaide River briefs

PLACE NAMES

OUR PRESIDENT has been researching street and place names in Adelaide River:

DORAT Road – an acronym for Darwin Overland Road Authorities Transport, which was a collection name used to describe the various state authorities who constructed the Stuart Highway in the early 1940s.

Michael Terry, in his 1945 book *Bulldozer: the war role of the Department of Main Roads, NSW* wrote of the road:

...got together, planned and instituted their men, transport organisation and called it Dorat – abbreviation for "Darwin Overland Road Authorities Transport" and started business in March 26 (1942).

The road was formerly a section of the Stuart Highway, named under the *Military Roads Act* of 1942. (source: www.lpe.nt.gov.au/place)

DONATIONS

BILL ROMAN, a former NAR employee, has kindly donated 10 items of NAR history including fettlers tools. Bill said he has lots more on his Humpty Doo property. Thanks, Bill.

BOMBING OF DARWIN

THE STATION was visited by veterans from the Bombing of Darwin.

Hosts for the day were Marion and Barry Slingsby, Kay Goon and Richard Luxton who reported that it was a very successful day and our visitors enjoyed our museum and gardens.

ADELAIDE RIVER RAILWAY HOUSE VISIT

FOLLOWING A committee meeting at the Slingsbys, we visited an old railway house that belongs to Shirley Hollingsworth at 3335 Virginia Road. The house was relocated from Adelaide River by Roy Jansen in May 1980 and, according to Shirley, in one piece. Shirley has original plans dated 1950, which is the date of the standard house drawing

but is not indicative of the construction date of this particular house.

Keith Smith's 1965 photo of three houses in his book *Railway Odyssey* suggests that the houses were quite recently constructed at that time.

Shirley reported that the price of the house was \$1 and Roy's price to relocate it on to Besser block stumps installed by him was \$5999.00.

BEST WISHES

HERITAGE MINISTER Marion Scrymgeour has been unwell following recent surgery. We wish her all the best for a speedy recovery.

OUR VOLUNTEERS AT WORK



FNAR
All Aboard!

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