

All Aboard

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

November 2006

Latest exhibit: a steam pump for the reservoir

TO SATIATE THE THIRST of steam locomotives, watering infrastructure was installed every 30 miles on the NAR.

At Adelaide River this consisted of a large storage reservoir, a 26,000 gallon elevated tank, a delivery system and a pump to lift the water from the reservoir to the elevated tank.

In 1888 the technology to undertake the pumping task was a steam driven pump. To produce the steam, a boiler is required. The vertical boiler (shown here) was fuelled by wood. It would have taken hours to stoke up a fire and keep it going to produce steam for the time necessary to fill the elevated tank. Presumably this was only done once a week in anticipation of the weekly train to Pine Creek.

The reciprocating steam pump is a recent addition to development of the water system. This "special" pump was manufactured by John Martin and Sons of Gawler in South Australia (remembering that the NT was part of SA until 1911). The pump and other items such as the elevated tank were issued to the railway construction contractor Charles and Edwin Millar.



This pump was kindly gifted to the precinct by Bob and Maris Petersen of Katherine. Bob was the "copper" at Adelaide River in 1972 and thankfully collected stuff like this pump over the years in the hope that a use like this would evolve. Bob has seen too much good stuff go to the dump.

To operate this pump, steam at 30 psi is required from the boiler. Steam is admitted to the valve chest which directs the steam to the appropriate end of a 7" piston to create reciprocating motion. In

fact there is a starting lever which must be rocked back and forth manually to commence the motion. After starting, the valves move appropriately to maintain the motion. A shaft connects the steam engine to the water pump. The pump sucks water from the reservoir and delivers it to the elevated tank. The large bulb on top of the pump is a surge chamber to dampen any water hammer and surging.

Restoration of the pump was a significant project. Leo Izod dismantled the pump (100 year old bolts came free easily). Sand Blast-

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Another outstanding donation: the Neil McQualter collection

MR NEIL McQUALTER WAS PASSING through our precinct this Dry Season and left these photographs with our caretaker, John O'Donohoe. Thank you, Mr McQualter, for your generous donation. May our newsletter entertain and uplift you. We look forward to seeing you again.



Hul-ooo, sailor! Well, more correctly, airmen. These fellows are from 112 ASRF Catalina Base at East Arm in Darwin. We think ASRF is the Australian Search and Rescue Force, and we think they are US airmen. (1946)



One Neil McQualter with 'dial-a-croc' at East Arm. No matter the time or circumstance, boys will be boys....



The remnants of the bombed Bank of New South Wales in Darwin, now the facade of the Westpac Bank in the Smith Street Mall.



Jetty at East Arm Catalina Base, Darwin, 1946



A subtle - and most Darwinian - of messages in the Botanic Gardens. The sign reads: Any person cutting trees in this garden will be shot. Enough said!



The remains of the Neptuna, which was sunk at Darwin Wharf and converted into a refuelling station, 1946. The overhead sign reads: Submarine Pipelines. Do not drag anchor.

Vale Kevin Louis Gould

KEVIN LOUIS GOULD (it's the French pronunciation of Louis, not the English Lewis) departed the railway platform and joined his Maker on Sunday 23 July.

Kevin was a special member of FNAR, being a former driver and pay master.

We were saddened to learn at his funeral that in his post-retirement-retirement, he planned to spend more time at the Adelaide River Railway Heritage Precinct (damn!).

Kevin suffered a short but extremely debilitating illness and passed away peacefully at the Hospice at Royal Darwin Hospital surrounded by family and some very close friends.

Mercifully, he was in no pain and was



unaware of his condition.

Our thoughts are with his widow Betty, and children Paula, Helen and Patrick and their families at this sad time.

Kevin was a multifaceted individual whose talents included amateur theatre, music, singing, printing (in the traditional sense), railway heritage, politics and current affairs.

He was involved in a number of organisations, and was heavily involved in his local parish church, including singing in the choir.

It was fitting, then, that his funeral was peppered with his great loves: Latin, hymns

(one beautifully performed by his granddaughter, Lenora), and readings about the greater place to which he has ascended.

Flash, bang, whallap - what a picture!



ABOVE IS A PICTURE OF our absolutely gorgeous refurbished kitchen, courtesy of a grant from Tourism NT (thank you, thank you, thank you!!). The kitchen has gone from a snake-friendly haven to a workable, sensible and practical establishment from whence we can serve a range of manna from heaven, as it were. On the right is the assembly line of construction for the Rejex Rally lunch. It's all very easy, very clean and very modern - particularly for an 1888 facility! It ain't all engineering, you know! We thank the ladies involved in all the catering services - particularly Nola, Di, Estelle, Rilla, Judy, Judy (it's not a typo - there were two of 'em)....

Picnic Day at the River

DESPITE LARGE CROWDS at Fannie Bay and Harts Range (3000) for annual races, we had a great roll-up at Adelaide River for the traditional Railway Picnic.

Casey Jones (alias Peter Hateley) turned up at 0800 to service the fairground loco *Ben Parry* and ran regular rides for the kids all day. One child was seen grass surfing behind the train, which speaks volumes about the condition of the grounds. Peter was decked out in striped overalls, engineman's hat and the indispensable fob watch with locomotive engravings.

Geoff Goodrich took on the job of Games Director, ably assisted by Merry. Kids (big and little) were encouraged to join in the sack race, the dog spike throwing, egg and spoon race and tug-o-war.

Entertainment throughout the day was pro-

vided by the *Fettlers Trio* (Peter, Tony and Fritz) and as the day progressed, Robyn joined in with her piano accordion. This musical aspect of the event – with specially selected and written railway tunes - makes the day truly unique and enjoyable.

Nola Smith, Estelle Harris, Fred Williams, Harcourt Phillips and Rosemary Hateley and the crew did a sterling job with food and refreshments. Steak sandwiches, railway snags, chicken salad, Devonshire teas and coke in traditional bottles were all well patronised.

Thanks so much to everyone who helped to make this such a great event. A particularly encouraging sign was the number of locals who dropped in.

Patsy's stand of homemade goodies was well patronised - and rightly so!



Fritz, Peter and Tony playing for *The Ghan*



Casey Jones (Peter Hateley) had the '*Ben Parry*' loaded and ready.



There were games for little kids...



...and games for big kids...



Patsy Fawcett's home made goodies stand.

Below: traditional railway picnic entertainment.



Latest exhibit

Continued from page 1

ing and priming was carried out commercially. Leo and Tom Bertonsshaw reassembled the pump and fabricated the stand that it is on. Peter Soulos fabricated the curved copper pipes. Peter Cornell applied the two-pack black enamel and the colourful fittings.

Indications are that the steam driven pump was used from 1888 until 1913. It was then replaced by a Hornsby oil engine which had been en route to New Guinea which was a German Protectorate in those days. In view of the WW1 situation the Hornsby was diverted to the NT where it would have been welcomed at Adelaide River. The Hornsby oil engine has been restored by Leo Izod and can be seen at Qantas Parap.

The final stage of restoring the water infrastructure will come with the installation of the Water Column.

A magnificent gift of cloth

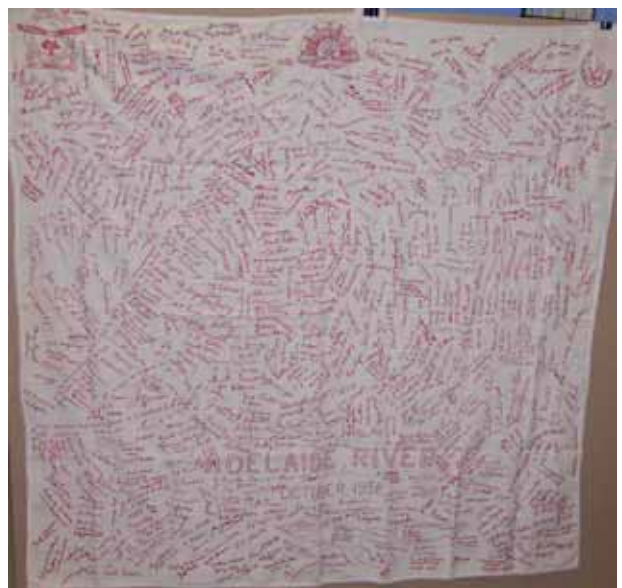
EVE SACK WAS THE TEA LADY at the Adelaide River Refreshment Rooms in the 1930s, during which time she created a name cloth (pictured).

Visiting persons of note would sign the cloth and then Eve would carefully embroider the signature in red cotton. In more recent times, other people did the embroidery including Sue Gullefer.

The cloth is very special and carries the signatures of many famous Australians.

It is being kept under temperature control at Darwin Museum (until we develop suitable storage and display facilities). It is regarded by the NT Museum as one of the best they have seen.

We have spoken to the museum about preparing a digital image of the cloth so that we can display a facsimile at Adelaide River.



Eve Sack's cloth photographed at the museum.

A royal rail trail weekend

WE CAN ONLY HOPE THAT one Betty Windsor had as good a weekend as we did for her birthday.

On Saturday 10 June, a group of about 14 intrepid Rail Trail walkers set out from Stapleton on the inaugural Rail Trail walk to Adelaide River along the NAR, a route surveyed in 1884, essentially following the Overland Telegraph route. The weather was fine and mild with a south-easterly Dry Season breeze.



It was a mixed group with at least two civil engineers, teachers, a taxidermist, a navy man and several who knew their flora, so it made for interesting commentary. Oh, yes - and there were a few railway fans.

The odometer indicated that the route length was about 11.5 km from the start of Coach Road.

First, we hopped across remnants of the wood posts of the stock yards at Stapleton Station. Harvey records that Stapleton was an original station on the NAR in 1888 and the 1885 design drawings that we were using showed Stapleton Creek Station Yards.

In 1878 a South Australian Parliamentary party visited Stapleton and was very impressed. Originally there was a single loop siding at Stapleton on the 'down' side. In 1914-1917, the loop was extended and dead end siding, cattle yards and loading race were added to facilitate cattle shipments to Vestey's new meat works in Darwin.

The yards were also used extensively during WWII to supply the troops fresh meat. The siding was extended to 730 metres in 1973 to facilitate Frances Creek iron ore train crossings. A simple corrugated iron station building was built and photos of it from WWII and the 1960s exist today.

Sadly, the site now seems to be in the middle of Coach Road. We found remnants of a short section of bitumen road surface which appears to be part of a level crossing when the railway was active - until 1976.

After about one kilometre, we came to the substantial NAR bridge across Stapleton Creek. Its three spans, each 20ft long, of wrought iron were built in 1887. It is in fine condition and is Bridge 111 from Port Darwin.



We searched for the reported stone pitched crossing from early Coach Road without success. Similarly, we could not find remnants of Stapleton Hotel (Our House Hotel). Indications are that the remnants are 50m from the road. There is a magnificent photo of the hotel (taken by Paul Foelsche in 1870) prior to the railway which shows the single wire of the Overland Telegraph across the photo and traffic on the Coach Road to Pine Creek.

Rail trail rediscovered

As soon as we left Stapleton, we were out of the worst gamba grass, but still had Turkey Bush and other growth to contend with. Walking on the ballast was hard work, too.

About 2km south of Stapleton, we noticed the foundations of the Stapleton approach sign which warned train drivers of the coming station.



Bridge 113 was missing steel beams missing. The beams and piers of the 1887 Bridge 121 were stolen in 2003. There were five spans of 10ft each. Bridge 122 is a substantial bridge across the Snake Creek. Its three spans, each 20ft long, of wrought iron were built in 1887. It is in fine condition although there is some erosion of the northern embankment. Bridges 123 and 124 have been stolen. Bridges 125 and 128 retained their concrete piers, but the steel beams have been stolen. Bridge 132, a substantial NAR bridge across Peter's Creek, is in fine condition.

Along the way, Peter Poole found a large lump of coal that must have fallen from a wagon before 1950.

We noticed a ¾ Mile post, which we thought was at 70.75 miles from Darwin. We found the 72-Mile post, which had been bent, and the 74-Mile post.

Several gradient boards were observed along the track, including one indicating a

change from 1:72 to 1:134. Another showed a transition from level to a grade of 1:140 near the 73.5-Mile point. The steepest grade we found was 1:60, which is very modest.



There were plenty of remnants of the Overland Telegraph along the way - dating from when it was realigned along the railway (1888 onward) and when it was substantially upgraded for the military in 1942.

Sadly, most posts have been hacked off with an oxy-torch to make fence posts.



The route passes through a number of cuttings up to 10ft deep, which are very special. In one cutting, the marks in the rock are attributed to the hard-working Indian Coolies who did the earthworks in early 1888. At another cutting, we found drill holes in the rock which

Rail trail rediscovered



then seemed to have been fractured by splitting wedges.

Charles Millar (construction contractor) stopped plate-laying at Stapleton Creek with the onset of the 1887-88 Wet Season. The first train got to Adelaide River in July 1888.

The route loosely follows Coach Road which dates from the Pine Creek gold rush in 1878.

The duration of the walk was about 5.5 hours.

Thanks to everyone who attended this inaugural walk along the Rail Trail from Stapleton Creek to Adelaide River.



Unique Adelaide River all-occasion cards are available from the Station (or Committee). Taken around the precinct by the talented Norma Allen, the cards are ideal for Christmas and will help raise money!

Nostalgia at Birdum in 2006

BIRDUM AGAIN CAME ALIVE on 2 and 3 September, and we were honoured to have descendants of the Main and Jacobsen families who lived in Birdum during the 1930s.

Descendants of Bill and Dolly Jacobson included Ethel Webb (daughter of Bill Jacobsen) and husband Russell Webb from the Gold Coast, Rose McRae (Ethel's sister, daughter of Bill Jacobson) and her husband Bernie McRae from Brisbane, Peter Cooke and Janet Honey (Ethel's daughter) from Sydney, John Webb (Ethel's son) and his friend Geoff Hills, and Rod Webb (Ethel's son) and Roslyn Webb from Perth. Also with us was David Whitehouse (Ethel's cousin) from New Zealand.

The remainder of the party comprised Bob Foster (author of *Birdum or Bust*) and Sparrow from Darwin, Bob and Maris Petersen from Katherine with friend Fran, Ted and Shirley Mummee from Berry Springs, Peter and Rosemary Hateley from Canberra, John Turner from Adelaide plus Brett, Trevor Horman and Judy Richardson from Darwin, Richard Luxton from Coomalie, Colin Wain from Batchelor, Ann Kanters and Barry Sharp plus the Larrimah mob, Len Hodson, the local train driver, Rob Knight (MLA for Daly) and his son Dakota, Darren Featherstone and partner from Mataranka Mango plantation, author Andrew McMillan and Bob the Birdman (Bob is researching the birds of North Australia for his PhD with ANU and has offered a presentation in 2007).

Those of us who travelled to Larrimah on Thursday enjoyed our evening meal with Ann and Barry.

On Friday, we viewed the extensive preparation carried out during the year by Barry and Ann and the crew. This year, not only did we have the flash flush loo, but also a glass fronted fridge, and, for the first time in more than 50 years, a liquor licence!

"Feather" had driven a tractor/slasher from Mataranka and slashed the full length of the track (8km) over a whole weekend.

Lenny had prepared *Oodnadatta* and has

become quite proficient with his responsibility as driver (for example, removing white ant nests that appear overnight and could derail the fettlers trolley).

We took the opportunity to visit two lonely graves at Pigeon Waterhole just a few kilometres west of Larrimah on the Birdum Creek. The oldest grave was that of John Pearson (29 May 1899) and the other was Charlie Garland from Weston Creek Station who loved this spot and by request was buried there in 1971 when he died at the age of 81.



Above: David Whitehouse at the Rockhole



In the afternoon we installed interpretive signs around Birdum and even located the original mile posts from 311 (Larrimah) to 316 (Birdum).

Richard commenced a serious reconnais-

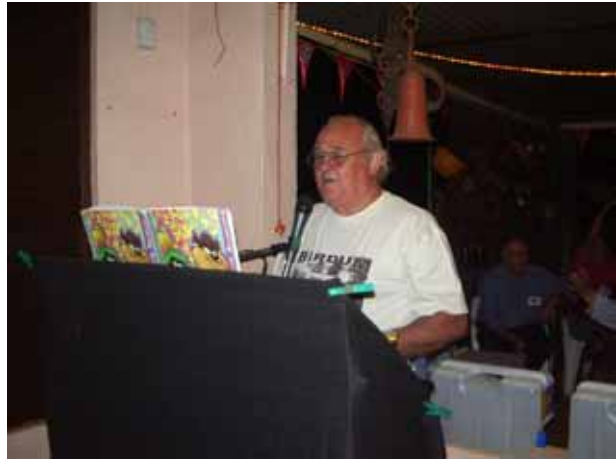
Nostalgia at Birdum in 2006

sance of Birdum Airport and Judy and Lenny mowed and weeded Birdum Railway Station.

Ted Mumme set a new world running record from Birdum to Larrimah of 30 minutes.

As the sun set, we trolleyed back to Larrimah for the Welcome Dinner at Larrimah Wayside Inn where we welcomed the Jacobsen/Main clan from the Darwin coach - we wondered what the bus driver thought when 11 people alighted his coach at Larrimah.

Ann had prepared a tantalizing variety of foods for this dinner (including great deserts) and with entertainment from Colin Wain the party continued in to the wee small hours.



Colin Wain entertaining at Larrimah Inn



Descendants of the Jacobson family at the welcome dinner.

Below: David Whitehouse from New Zealand, whose parents were married in Birdum in September 1929.

Saturday was a big day. We were pleased that Rob Knight (Member for Daly) was able to join us on Saturday morning along with his



son Dakota. Rob kindly offered to escort some of our special guests on the morning tour.

The tour took us to the BIPOD, the railway turning triangle, the NAR houses, the 45 AGH wartime hospital and #2 bore. The whole area between Larrimah and Birdum was littered with WW2 camps which are detailed in Peter Dermoudy's 1987 report. Visitors are always struck by the extent of the military presence in the area in 1942. At #2 bore on the old stock route we inspected the remnants of the Comet Pattern windmill and tank before checking the 1871 well #3 sunk for the Overland Telegraph line in 1871 and the grave of young Angus McDonald who committed suicide at this site in July 1930. We then spread out and looked for any signs of the "Larrimah War Cemetery". We found quite a few WW2 remnants before Bob Petersen(former policeman) discovered a grave in the long grass.

This original track in to Birdum from the Stuart Highway had obviously not been used at all this year. Our convoy (including Bob Petersen's 1949 Chev truck) travelled very slowly over the hard baked black soil.

We then had a tour of the whole of the Birdum township which was very special for the visiting Webb/Main family.

On Saturday afternoon Ethel, Russell, Rose, Bernie, David, Trevor, Judy and Ted and Shirley made their way east across

Nostalgia at Birdum in 2006

VERMELHA cattle station for about 50km to find the rockhole that features in 1930 photos as being a picnic destination. Thankfully Lindsay the station manager had given good directions – we would never have found it ourselves. It was worth the long dusty ride (90 minutes each way) and David Whitehouse



Lennie and Trevor fettling at Birdum.

Below: Unloading Peter Cornell's trolley at Larrimah.



replicated the images recorded in 1930.

Judy and Ted shared the opening and closing of the gates across the cattle station and ended up covered in red dust.

Ted also stopped to photograph a brown snake that was not real pleased with his attentions and it struck out at the wheel of OUR car when we drove past.

On Saturday evening we made our way down to Birdum. Some went on the Fettlers

Trolley and other drove in, all carrying our tents for an overnight stay.

Ann prepared hot cauldrons of Aussie Bush Stew along with a light damper followed by plum pudding and custard.

Then “Colin and the Birdumaires” took to the stage of the Starlight Ballroom and provided dinner dance music. Interspersed with the music, various participants shared with the populace their Birdum Dreaming. This kicked-off with a moving speech drafted by Ethel Webb (nee Jacobsen) and read by her son Rod. It ended with the memorable crocodile story from Bob Petersen. In between we heard of dreams about steam on the NAR, aircraft landing at the field, recreating the Birdum Hotel. Several couples took the challenge of appearing in period costume, including Ted and Shirley Mumme and Bob and Maris Petersen.

Many of us camped at Birdum and enjoyed a fresh moonlit evening. Incredibly the only thing that non-camper Judy could find was not to her liking was the moonlight which was “too bright” and kept her awake.

Sunday kicked off with a full breakfast and lots of reminiscences about the night before. Slowly we packed and had our final rides on the Never Never line before heading home.

We produced special T-Shirts featuring the Jacobsen Store. We still have a few of the larger sizes if anyone needs one.

Peter Hateley produced some very smart name tags for all participants which proved to be both popular and helpful. Thanks Peter.

We received a very nice email from David Whitehouse when we returned home to New Zealand.

David said: *Having now been home a week or two and finally getting my desk sorted out, I would just like to express a thank you for the wonderful organising by yourself, family and crew that went into the weekend at Birdum.*

For me the return to where my grandparents lived and worked and to virtually the exact spot where my parents were married in 1929 was emotional and the end of a life-

Nostalgia at Birdum in 2006



Rob Knight, MLA riding the Never Never Line



Rob Knight (left) exploring the water tower.

long journey. As a family in New Zealand we have already determined to return to Birdum and next time I shall be bringing my two sons and grandsons with me for them to share in a little history of their family's heritage.

The layout and descriptions of the various sites in Birdum, the transport, the meeting of the local MP and various members of your Association, the work done to clear the site and install all the equipment for the Starlight Social, the successful Emu Parade, the trip out to the Rockhole were all just amazing in such a place and for me especially, having never experienced the scrubland of the North before, it was exactly as I imagined and at the same time, totally alien to anything I was expecting.

I have already begun a book on my experiences and I look forward to the challenges of getting it to some readable form sometime soon. I shall be collating and editing over five hundred photo of my trip North, and in due course will share many of them with those who may be interested. I am sure, for instance, that Ted would love a shot of a very angry Western Brown.

Again my sincere thanks for your efforts.

The Friends of the North Australia Railway were proud to entertain members of the Main and Jacobsen families and we hope that you were able to take away some fond memories of Birdum. The 'Friends' trust that you will keep in touch and that we will see you again some time.

Heritage Open Day - June

ALTHOUGH IT WAS NOT widely promoted in advance, the June Open Day attracted a steady stream of visitors during the day, perhaps drawn by banners on display on the Stuart Highway and Dorat Road.

Nola Smith and Estelle Harris did a great job with their Devonshire Teas, with fresh scones produced by the inimitable Anna Harris of National Trust High Tea fame.

Aunty Patsy Fawcett set up her stall to sell home made chutneys and jams and her own Rosella cordial, which was a bit hit.

The atmosphere was completed by period music.

The precinct looked a million dollars and attracted favourable comments by many visitors.

Tourists on the northbound *Ghan* received lots of enthusiastic waves at 1450 as the train passed through.

Robyn Elliot, a visitor from Wodonga and keen volunteer, helped to host the event along with Nola, Estelle and Judy.

Adelaide River briefs

MAIN GATES

FOLLOWING INSTALLATION of the substantial gate posts our new heavy gates (donated by Darwin City Council) are now in place. They will be of particular benefit during the wet season when our road is subject to damage and will also give our caretakers some extra peace of mind.



Trevor and Darren working to install the gates running off Dorat Road.

ADELAIDE RIVER SIGNAGE

LARGE WELCOME SIGNS have been erected north and south of Adelaide River. The graphic image includes WAGR locomotive 110 hauling the ambulance train in 1942. Adelaide River is the first town in the Northern Territory to have these signs. The signs were erected by DPI with funding provided by Tourist NT. The work is one outcome of the endeavours of the Adelaide River Economic Development Committee which we are part of.

Other signs have been erected at the War Cemetery and WW2 power house station site. A large graphic sign featuring Tea Lady Widgee Nelson has been erected outside the Railway Heritage Precinct in Dorat Road. 16 other small interpretive signs are being progressively installed around the town to aid understanding the various WW2 sites.

The small signs are being erected by the Friends of the North Australia Railway and we would welcome help to drill the holes.

LEO'S STUDEBAKER

LEO IZOD GAVE HIS 'new' 1915 Studebaker a run on the 21 mile Sattler airstrip. It reportedly clocked through the traps at 45 kph. A few bits fell off, but that's what happens" said a smiling Leo. And on the subject of Leo, he's recently been 'released' from hospital (behaved like a caged animal from all reports) after having an infected shoulder treated. We understand he's not quite at 100% for tinkering in the workshop, but he's tinkering...

MICK KENT

AFTER MONTHS IN Adelaide for treatment, our Mick and his carer Maxine have finally returned to Darwin - just in time for the build up!

Judy Richardson and Phyll Gent went to visit him. All we can say is: Mick, that beanie is a hell of a fashion statement...



EDITORIAL APOLOGIES

THIS NEWSLETTER HAS HAD a longer gestation period than a planet! The reason for that is your Editor has had back problems and was warned off sitting at computers (not helpful). Jude Richardson, however, has been ever diligent and got it all together some considerable time ago. My apologies! Rob.

Stumping SWH in Katherine

THE FRIENDS HAVE ALSO been busy in Katherine helping the Katherine Branch of the National Trust. We helped deliver a Sidney Williams Hut to its new location at O'Keefe House in June (see story, page 17) and on Saturday 16 September, we returned to Katherine to be part of a 'Stumping Crew' for it. First, we checked that the shed was level. It was a relief to find that the diagonal measurements confirmed that the building is as square as any Sidney Williams hut has ever been.



Jan Hills grinding.

Work then commenced on handing the angle iron 'intermediate' stumps in to post holes that had previously been drilled by Brian Hill. The stumps were connected with 12mm high tensile bolts supplied by Jan Hills. Some fine customising of post holes and steel stumps ensured a perfect fit.

A site conference was held mid-morning lubricated by some fine coffee and muffins provided by Gill Banks. The primary resolution of this conference was that concrete should be ordered for 1pm. It was felt that hanging of stumps and customizing would be completed by then. Brian Hill whizzed off to source two wheelbarrows, and a final check on levels got the thumbs up.

The Good Construction Fairy was smiling on us and, miraculously, the job was essentially ready for concrete at the appointed hour when the Rowland ready-mix truck arrived.

Activity on the work site then went in to over-drive, with everyone contributing to getting the concrete in the right holes. We had people pushing heavy barrows of concrete, helping to shovel the concrete, ensuring that concrete was not wasted, checking that stumps were vertical with a spirit level, watering to dampen the holes and the concrete, and trowelling the concrete to a dome around the stumps. Even the Ready-mix man grabbed a wheelbarrow to assist!

After a sumptuous late lunch provided by Gill Banks, we loaded Porkey's trailer with a load of rubbish for the Katherine dump.

On Sunday morning, minor works and packing up were undertaken before we enjoyed a final lunch with Gill and Ian Banks. Harcourt managed to free up two Acrow props, which will be pivotal to the next stage.

Thanks to our volunteers – Gill Banks, Jan Hills, Brian Hill, Ray Eiszle (from Hobart - that will teach him to visit Brian!) Harcourt Phillips and Robyn Elliot, Judith Richardson, Trevor Horman from FNAR.

A very successful weekend with achievement well outstripping expectations. The Sidney Williams hut at O'Keefe is now firmly held in position via 13 of its 'intermediate' stumps. It is square and level. The volunteer participants were all well satisfied with the outcome. It was good to see "old Sid" sitting up there firm and level and with much construction site debris removed.



The 'stumping crew' outside the SWH at O'Keefe House.

Our beloved caretakers

IT WAS WITH GREAT regret that we farewelled our Dry Season caretakers – John and Judy O’Donohoe and Fred and Jennine Williams.

We also farewelled Harcourt Phillips and Robin Elliot who helped us to dig holes and install signs around Adelaide River. Harcourt cooked at our fund raising functions and Robin did a fantastic job of welcoming visitors to our precinct AND entertained our guests by playing the accordion in our gardens.

There is something supremely special about our caretakers BEING tourists and yet entertaining tourists and educating them about the history of the Northern Territory, don’t you think?

Most recently, Bob and Liz Reid were our Caretakers for September and October.

Thank you, all for your commitment to our little part of the world. You will be sadly missed. We hope to see you all back in soon. Don’t feel under any pressure, but don’t forget your mates at Adelaide River!



Harcourt Phillips and Fred Williams taking time out after the departure of the Rejex Rally crew. Harcourt acted as parking supervisor and Fred was a general hand about the place. Scrub up well, don’t they? Their respective partners were at work in the kitchen, by the way...

And the smiley boy below is none other than John O’Donohoe (once the Darwin Station Master) who regaled visitors to such an extent that they referred to him as the current ‘station master’ in our Visitor’s Book! He scrubs up well, and all! In the background is Estelle Harris browsing the brochure rack. Below left: Harcourt Phillips, Trevor and Fred Williams.



Hero status

THIS MAN, IT HAS TO BE SAID, is one of our greatest fans and benefactors. A man of few words, Peter (Porky) Cornell does a mountain of work for the Adelaide River Railway Heritage Precinct and a bunch of other organisations besides. No wonder he was recognised as a Local Hero nationally. The sign on the front of the truck refers to the load on the back, not to Porky...

Rallying for Rejex

ONCE AGAIN, THE Railway Refreshment room was the lunch time venue for the 'Rejex Rally'. The 'Friends' catered for 120 people for lunch which was prepared and served by Nola Smith (caterer extraordinaire) Robyn Smith, Estelle Harris, Di Lunn. Where would we be without our wonderful volunteers who work so hard to help raise funds to maintain our Heritage Area.



There was a good variety of vehicles entered.



Rally entrants enjoying their lunch in the garden.



This dear little 1927 fire truck was not the fastest entrant, but the most striking.



Some of the luncheon ladies having a well-earnt break.



You could be forgiven for thinking this is a Parisienne cafe, but, no; it's our little piece of paradise at Adelaide River! Pictured are Robin Elliot (ostensibly a visitor and volunteer) providing the music for Rejex Rally folk in the gardens of the precinct. Note the couple at rear in period dress to match their vehicle. They are none other than Ted and Shirley Mumme of Berry Springs. They actually ran into some bother with a wheel of their vehicle that day, but they were unperturbed and enjoyed their luncheon.

Sid Williams rides to Katherine

A SIDNEY WILLIAMS HUT from the Shell Depot in McMinn Street which was destined for the scrap yard was kindly gifted to the National Trust by The Shell Company.

All that was required was to move it there. So, on 24 June, the tireless Peter Cornell up-lifted the hut in Darwin - his team of experts securing it so it would survive the 300km trip - and headed to Noonamah where a fortuitous rendezvous with a house being moved to Fergusson River was encountered. It suited the police and road users generally to run the two wide loads in convoy, the Sidney Williams being about 9m wide and the house 10m.

The following morning, the convoy was off to a good start at 0845. With Trevor Horman and Judy Richardson conscripted as escort drivers, it was non-stop to Adelaide River at about 70kph.



The convoy at Emerald Springs

It was an interesting exercise with the Highway Patrol car in front with flashing driving lights followed by Peter Cornell with *Wide Load* sign and flashing lights (straddling the centreline), followed by the Escort Landcruiser with *Wide Load* sign and flashing lights and, finally, the motorcycle police officer with flashing blue and red lights forcing recalcitrant drivers right off the road.

Some of the sights were unbelievable. Some drivers only realised what was happening as Sid Williams was about to engulf them.

The Escort drivers were somewhat taken aback when the motorcycle policeman instructed them to drive more aggressively at the on-coming traffic, but knew that he was right. As you would expect, they had no trouble at all with experienced professional drivers.



At Adelaide River, allowing traffic to pass.

Roadworks and highway detours south of Adelaide River added to the task and tested the skill of the drivers of the over-sized rigs.

The convoy passed a closed Hayes Creek Roadhouse at about 1100 and stopped at the closed Emerald Springs roadhouse at 1200. The next pause was at the Fergusson River where they parted company with the second big load, which immediately became bogged. The expletive on the two-way radio was expressive and accurate, by all reports.

Relishing the newfound freedom, Sid Williams was soon flying along at 90 kph. At 1415, the convoy eased across the Katherine River Bridge with Sid just fitting between the guardrails.

This was followed by a difficult right turn in to the Victoria Highway with lots of onlookers, capped off by a local police paddy wagon, siren wailing, trying to pass the convoy in pursuit of something urgent.

The convoy arrived at O'Keefe House in Katherine 1435 after a relatively uneventful trip. No damage was apparent to the hut.

Brian Hill from Manbulloo met the crew on

continued over

Sid Williams rides to Katherine

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site and came well equipped. The chainsaw was handy to trim a couple of branches and modify wooden pallets. The very skilful Terry carefully reversed to the appointed spot and lined up exactly with the pre-drilled holes for the future stumps. Those who cannot back a trailer were suitably impressed.



This is impressive by anyone's standards!

Jacking the hut progressed through the balance of the afternoon to reach a point where the truck and trailer could be extracted. The last vehicle left O'Keefe House at 1800.

The National Trust now has an outstanding example of a Territory icon at O'Keefe House in Katherine (see photo at right).



Harcourt Phillips on the job in Katherine.



Driver Terry checking out the dynamics of the reversal procedure into O'Keefe House in Katherine with Porky and Trevor looking on.

Below: Sid Williams in situ at O'Keefe House in Katherine. It's great to see another of these iconic buildings saved and put to good use.



*'Tis the season!
As we enter the Christmas season, the Committee of FNAR extends its best to you and yours. We thank everyone who has helped and supported us through the year, wish you a happy and restful (ho, ho, ho) festive season, a great new year, and we look forward to seeing everyone in the New Year.*



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