

All Aboard

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

August 2005

Latest acquisition: NDH 6 - formerly a royal

JOHN SPELLMAN'S *Mississippi Queen* railcar is now the property of FNAR after Mr Spellman decided to gift it to the precinct at Adelaide River.

There were originally six railcars in this class, ordered in 1952 and delivered in 1954. They were built by Gloucester Carriage and Wagon Company Ltd.

They accommodated 34 first class and 16 second class passengers and featured reclining seats, reading lights and iced water dispensers.

The railcar is 62' 6" long over the couplers. It is 12' 9" high and 9' 3" wide. Each GM 6/71 engine was rated at only 140 HP.

The hydraulic transmission was an Allison 600 and hydraulic final drive was David Brown. Top speed was a respectable 50 mph.

The units operated on standard gauge in South Australia from 1960 to 1970 and were then designated as DH5 and DH6.

In 1971, a commuter service was announced for Darwin and two railcars were fitted with 3'6" bogies and rebadged as NDH5 and 6.

By the time the railcars reached Larrimah from south, the idea of the commuter service had been scrapped. The drive shafts were removed and they operated as air-conditioned carriages on the mixed train until 1976.

John Spellman purchased his railcar from Richard Fong Lim who was running a Rice Mill at the 17 mile.



The railcar at its former home at the Mississippi Queen restaurant in Darwin

The Friends of the North Australian Railway would like to thank John for his very generous gift.

A huge vote of thanks goes to Peter and Estelle Cornell, Fox and Brian from Darwin

Container Services who organised the logistics for removal of the railcar. It was no mean feat, and we can testify to that. Peter and Estelle give generously of their time and resources for many community projects and we are fortunate to be a recipient of their generosity.

A big thank you also to Damien Collis of **Steelcon** who provided their new Tandano Crane and its gun operator Nick to gently lift

the precious heritage railcar, which was a very delicate operation.

The Steelcon crane was connected to the front of the railcar and lifted it from its bogie. One of Peter's large Kenworth prime movers was backed under the front and connected with a pre-existing King Pin from similar previous moves.

The action then moved to the rear and the Steelcon crane swung the end of the carriage on to a "dolly" for

road transport.

Everything was lined up neatly ready to roll. At 2pm and with many photographers in position, the NDH6 rolled again after being at this stop for 21 years.

A certain amount of listing occurred as we crossed the uneven ground at the site, but once NDH hit the highway, it travelled well, albeit with some modest crabbing.

Estelle Cornell blocked the road and NDH6 sailed serenely out to the road, much to the relief of all who gathered to watch. The car now has pride of collection at Peter Cornell's yard. As it stopped at Berrimah in 1971 to take school students to Batchelor, it has stopped for running repairs *en route* to Adelaide River.

Unauthorised passengers - in the form of a mouse and possum - jumped ship along the way.



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A bloke called Mick...

THERE'S A BLOKE CALLED Mick Perrin, see? He reckons he's retired. Lives in Canberra, see, but comes to Adelaide River each year with his good wife, Marie.

Now, while they reckon they're there to escape the misery of the Canberra winter, see, Mick's a bit of a worker and can turn his hand to a thing or two.

Take the state of the Sidney Williams Hut, which has progressed in leaps and bounds, thanks to Mick, over the last couple of months. So advanced is it, we are starting to refer to it as the 'Exhibition Hall'!

Don't get us wrong - there was lots of prep work done by lots of others, see, but Mick has made the SWH his mission, and he certainly has succeeded.

He has painted the outside of the hut a bronze olive and the inside gray academy.

Our contractor *Grog* (very Territory-esque) has completed the concrete floor and as soon as that has time to settle, we hope to bring the Railway Wheel Lathe down from Darwin as the first exhibit in our newly refurbished hut.

Our heart-felt thanks to Mick, Grog, the earlier volunteers and workers.



Stunning progress: the interior of the Sidney Williams Hut

Completed, the SWH will be a master example of heritage interpretation and will add enormously to the value of the precinct.

Our 'Exhibition Hall' was donated by Bluey Foster and his wife Joan who should be thrilled with the refurbishment.

And, yes, Mick, you may now return to Canberra and have the summer months off. See you and Marie next year (we're already scheming about a list of jobs)!

FNAR Roll of Honour



- Darwin Container Services – Peter and Estelle Cornell
- Steelcon Cranes – Damien Collin
 - RS Gardening Care – Robbie and Lynde Douglas
 - Hanson Building Products – Mick Loone
 - Dick's Concrete Pumping
 - Taubman Paints
 - *Grog* and Co

WE'RE ON THE LOOK-OUT FOR...

a windmill (we're serious!)
any railway memorabilia
whipper snipper
gardening implements
large bequests/donations of cash...

Sandfly an NT icon



If it was EVER in doubt that Sandfly is an NT icon, here's the proof: a recently wed couple had their cake themed on Sandfly because they met whilst working on the Alice Springs to Darwin railway project! SURELY that makes it official! Cake builder, by the way, was Karen Sheldon.

BC329: a work in progress



WORK CONTINUES ON this 1936 first class passenger carriage. At present it is stored at the ADF yard, courtesy of Bernie Valaidan. It has been externally sandblasted and painted by Vic Martin. The inside was also sandblasted and revealed a spectacular timber ceiling. We were so impressed that it will be varnished to highlight the timber.



BC 329 has been painted a Claret with silver stripes and looks great. Trevor has been painting the roof of the carriage (and himself) with Silver Shield and Judy has been vacuuming the inside to prepare it for the carpenter. The windows are almost ready for installation, after which the carpenter will finish the inside walls and flooring. Then it will be ready for the Tourist Commission to establish as a visitor information centre at the 'River'. If you know of a good carpenter, we would like to hear from you.

Rejex rally luncheon

FNAR was asked to host a lunch on 30 July (Picnic Day weekend) for 150 visitors from the Rejex Rally.

Never one to miss an opportunity to raise much-needed funds for our beloved station, we all took a deep breath, muttered to ourselves and decided that we could do the job justice.

This is the second time we have played host to a large group, the first being the Variety Bash last year.

Our little group of intrepid caterers got together to plan the event. Mike Bowman (curry chef extraordinaire) announced that he could prepare a curry for 80 people. After looking in stunned amazement, we accepted his very generous offer.

Nola Smith, Di Lunn and Rilla Kerr organised chicken and salad as a cold dish and Fran Briggs prepared lasagne, which was warmed up by Sue O'Hagan and Bob Reid.

Our kitchen had only just been refurbished with stainless steel tables, new sink and fridge - the sink installation courtesy of our multitasking Mike Bowman who also supplied orange shade tents for the day.

At 1230 a fleet of 55 old and unusual cars arrived and Mick Perrin, replete in Hi Viz vest, supervised the parking.

Lunch was served to ralliers in our beautiful grounds.

The new kitchen was voted a great success and was certainly put to the test.

Thanks to all our helpers who willingly gave their time: Rilla Kerr, Mike Bowman, Nola Smith, Di Lunn, Joan Moore, Kay Goon, Mick and Marie Perrin, Ron Neist, Mick Kent Richard Luxton, Judy Richardson and Trevor Horman.



So much to do; so little time!

In the next issue of *All Aboard*, we'll bring you extracts of Tim Fischer's paper presented to the Railway Heritage conference in Tamworth next month.

Annual railway picnic

MONDAY OF THE SAME WEEKEND as the Rejex Rally was another very busy day for our hard-working volunteers.

On 1 August, we were back at the River to run our annual traditional Picnic Day.

Mick Kent was there bright and early putting the final touches to his display in the Sidney Williams Exhibition Hall (see story page 3 - about another Mick).

The display was first rate and enjoyed by many of our visitors. The ever-thoughtful Mick and even provided a chair and table so one can study the associated documentation in comfort.

The venue looked great after the spruce up by Robbie and Lynda Douglas of RS

Gardening early in the week.

Peter Bate and the *Fettlers Four* were a great hit - again. We think they should make a CD. Everyone enjoyed their music, especially their song about the Beautiful Adelaide River. Thanks, *Fettlers Four*, our day was more enjoyable for your presence.

The catering crew - Nola, Di, Mick and Marie and Judy Rowland - did a superb job with devonshire teas, chocolate mudcake, steak and sausage sandwiches and Ron moved between work stations rendering assistance wherever he could.

We were delighted to welcome Patsy Fawcett with her home-made pickles, chutney and jams. Tommy presented us with a brass sprinkler head ex-Army Market garden in Haynes Road in 1942.

Competition Director Mick Kent was well organised for the Railway Games 2005. The day started with the Egg and Spoon race (won by David Wall), and was followed by the sack

race (Jack Frazer), tug-o-war (the blokes), treasure hunt (Laura Sullivan), dog spike throwing contest (David Wall, Rebecca Wall, Tina 'Princess' Bayliss and Mick Perrin) and ended with the Adelaide

River Gift (Jack Frazer, David Wall, Josh Sullivan and Chris Renehan).

Chris Renehan and Sue Morely, with the trusty *Vegemite*, turned up with the glistening *Ben Parry* fairground train in its new Stroudley's locomotive green livery along with pin stripes and brass fittings. Upholstery by Sue. It's a magnificent effort and a great credit to Chris and Sue. To top it all off, they were dressed in traditional 1929 gear. The engraved brass sign on the side of the loco *Ben Parry* with black power coat insert was special. To top it all of, Ben himself appeared with the Rejex crew in mid-afternoon.

Thanks to everyone who came and had a picnic in our grounds and joined in the fun. As always, thanks to our wonderful volunteers, and a special thanks to John Bellenger (Mt Bundy Pleasure Rides) who provided pony rides for the kids.



Adelaide River briefs

GREETING CARDS

THANKS TO THE TALENTED Norma Allen and Nola Smith, we now have a range of greeting cards with images of the Adelaide River Railway Heritage Precinct.

LEVEL CROSSING

DORAT ROAD LEVEL CROSSING is complete. We had to get an outside contractor to complete the job as DIPE was threatening to dig up our railway line. Thanks to Cornish Pacific. We had to spend precious dollars to get this done and were disappointed to learn that Emoleum were in the area doing work for the Coomalie Council.

CARETAKER

WE ARE SEEKING A CARETAKER from about September onward. This may be for the Wet Season or beyond, and we are keen for expressions of interest for next Dry Season. If you know of anyone, please put them in touch with us. In the first instance ring Trevor on 0417 838 578.

AMATUER RADIO EVENT

THE MULTI-TALENTED and hilariously funny Mike Bowman arranged an amateur radio event on VP Day, 15 August, based at the railway heritage precinct.

Operators displayed vintage amateur radio equipment to complement the military radio collection of Fred Chambers.

HERITAGE VANDALISM - AGAIN!

A CONTRACTOR, presumably hired by DIPE, has ripped up the concrete slabs of the former railway employee cottages along the highway side of the rails at Adelaide River.

Whilst the slabs were not exactly in the heritage listed area, they were very close and critical to the integrity of the precinct.

The remnants were important to the size,

scale and layout of the railway history of Adelaide River and the number of people that it employed.

ORIGINAL RAILWAY BRIDGE

THERE REMAINS NO action in this respect. We were hoping that some work would have been done on the damaged pier, but that is not the case.

TOURISM TOP END

WE ARE DELIGHTED TO REPORT that we have joined Tourism Top End, our representative tourism industry body, and were welcomed to at their meeting and dinner in July. Our neighbour, the ARSS Club, has also joined.

NEW ASSOCIATIONS ACT

OUR AMENDED CONSTITUTION, following our AGM earlier this year, has been accepted by Department of Industries and Business. This ensures our compliance with the new *Associations Act*. Thanks to Judy for her work on it.

DGR STATUS: HUGE NEWS!

IN ADDITION, IT IS GREAT GOOD NEWS to announce that our Constitution is compliant with Australian Taxation Office standards to render us a Deductible Gift Recipient - yay!! This means that for every dollar donated, the donor can claim the equivalent dollar amount as a tax deduction, which has not hitherto been the case. A HUGE thanks to Kay Goon for her patience and perseverance with our good friends at the ATO.

YOUR SKILLS AND US!

WE HAVE LOTS OF jobs that need doing. If you can weld, sew, deal with steel, pour concrete, construct, draw, take minutes, draw plans, write funding submissions, keep books, etcetera, we want YOU! Call us, please!



Tug-O-War at the Railway Picnic

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



The Fettle's Four hard at work