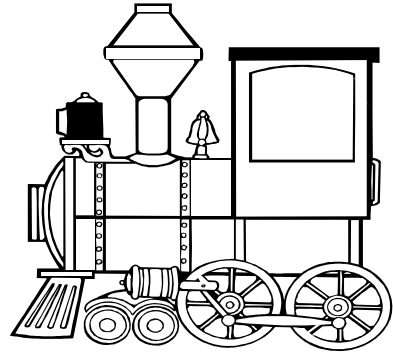


**Friends of the
North Australian Railway
at Adelaide River
July 2003 Newsletter**



Welcome to our fourth newsletter for 2003. Contributions to this newsletter are welcome.

Fresh livery for NSU63. Under the careful guidance of Project Director Mick Kent, diesel-electric locomotive NSU63 has been transformed during June 2003 into a gleaming icon and a landmark at the southern entrance to Adelaide River.

This major project was achieved with inputs from a lot of volunteers and generous in-kind corporate support. Vic Martin and his staff from Territory Transport Refinishers did a superb job in preparing the body (inside and out) and for the painting. Bronte Henning from International Marine did a special deal on the paint, Peter Cornell from Darwin Container Services transported the many tonnes of equipment needed to execute the project, Derrek Sperrer from Redline Towing carried some of the equipment back to Darwin, and Fielders Steel Building Products provided the new window inserts.

Even with all of this support the project has still involved substantial expense and we are deeply appreciative of the financial support provided by the Community Benefit Fund. We thank the fund and its advisory panel members for providing this critical injection in to the project.

The personal commitment and contribution of Mick Kent to this project should not go unrecorded. Mick has carried this project through every phase from its uplifting at Wishart to its reincarnation on 21 June 2003. Mick has spent hundreds of hours on this project and considerable personal expense. And he is still working on it.

One feature of the NSU that we hope to unveil on 4 August is the Coat of Arms traditionally mounted on the front of the loco. Chris Renehan has loaned us an original, Jared Archibald has created a fibreglass replica of it and Chris has carefully painted the replica.

Many thanks Mick for a job very well done.

NSU to stay near the highway?

During the month, indications were received that Minister Kon Vatskalis had agreed that the locomotive could remain near the highway, albeit under a

stringent set of conditions. At this stage we have not seen this in writing and remain anxious regarding the bureaucratic push to shift the loco from its prominent position beside the highway to cater for possible highway duplication in the next 20 years. Tourism experts tell us that it makes an imposing ENTRY STATEMENT to Adelaide River. Trucking industry representatives tell us that it is a welcome LANDMARK for their members and tourists see it as an ICON for the railway heritage precinct. We may yet have to resort to a petition and perhaps media support. You could help us by raising this matter with your MP.

Bonding with Larrimah.

Another tie with our Friends at Birdum Historical Society was forged in July when Mick Kent delivered a brand new reproduction kilometre sign for installation at the 501 km mark in the Larrimah Railway yard. Mick carried a June 1976 photograph showing the last train leaving Larrimah with the 501km clearly visible in the photograph. Mick reports that Anne Kanters and Barry Sharpe were delighted with the gift and they plan to reinstall it exactly where it belonged, on a white post consisting of a piece of railway line planted in the ground.

Our thanks to "We're About Engineering" for fabricating the aluminium sign and Norsign for the sign-writing.

Invitation to become a Friend. If you have not joined yet, we invite you to consider it now. Not only are the modest subscription fees useful in helping to meet our administrative costs, the evidence of a significant number of Friends (committed enough to fill in the form and send money), is very helpful as supporting documentation in our funding submissions. Naturally we do not divulge individual details, just global numbers. A membership form is attached to this newsletter.

Donations of excess equipment. We were blown away with the response to our notice last month re the prospect that you may have something in your shed which may be of value to the precinct. First to call was Shannon from the Darwin Railway Sports and Social Club, followed by Jeff Colver (Mataranka), Howard Young (Kununurra), Grant Miller (Top End Solarhart) and Ian's BarberShop (Darwin). Friend Lawrie Feehan is currently checking the donated fax machine. Thankyou to each and every one of you.

All donations will be gratefully received and credited appropriately unless the donor expressly wishes to remain anonymous.

Volunteers to Open the Museum. We need more volunteers to make the roster less onerous on the few. We would appreciate any time that you can give, whether it is a full day, half day or just a few hours now and then. Local residents of Adelaide River will be especially welcome. Our caretaker, Ron will co-ordinate the roster and the telephone number at the station is 8976 7101. Our existing volunteers (including retirees) report that the experience at the station is rewarding and appreciated by the travellers that drop in. So, come on folks and lend a hand to this worthwhile community project.

Old items return to the Station. Last newsletter we reported that Jock Gilmartin kindly gifted to the Museum the **telephone switchboard** that had been used in Adelaide River from the 1960s until automatic exchanges took over in the 1980s. Its one of those patch chord switchboards with a wooden case and about 12 manually selected lines. It comes complete with the operator's headset. In the last month, our specialist wood-working Friend, Barry Slingsby, has created a free-standing display module to enable the telephone exchange to be displayed.

Railway Picnic Day. 4 August 2003 Back in the 1920s an annual railway picnic was held in Adelaide River. The whole railway closed down for the day and went to "The River". There are three photos on the NTLIS website (www.ntlib.gov.au) showing a decorated train setting out for Adelaide River and stopping at Darwin River for water. There are other photos of teams playing tug-o-war etc underneath the old railway bridge. This year we are planning to re-establish the RAILWAY PICNIC and to do it on Picnic Day, 4 August. Peter Bate and Tony Suttor, our highly praised musical duo from our Open Day in 2002 have offered their services. We are looking forward to a great day. We hope that you can join us.

Corporate Supporters. We would not be able to do the things that we do without some very generous corporate support. We therefore have much pleasure in acknowledging:-

- Porky's Pickups and Darwin Container Services (Peter Cornell)
- CS Services (Cameron Stone)
- Mount Bundy Station (Fran Briggs)
- Territory Transport Refinishers (Vic Martin)
- International Marine Paints (Bronte Henning)
- Redline Towing (Derreck Sperrer)
- Ian's Barber Shop
- Clayton Utz, Lawyers (Margie Michaels and Ben Lee)
- Fielders Steel Building Products
- Norsign
- We're About Engineering (Spike and Darren)
- Top End SolarHart (Grant Miller)

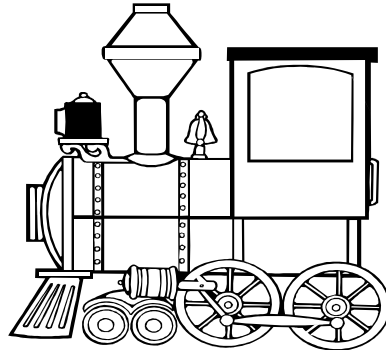
Heritage Week is 8-16 August culminating in the Heritage Dinner and Awards on Saturday 16 August at the historic Larrakeyah Army Barracks. Guest speaker will be the Hon John Ah Kit on "Growing Up in Parap Camp". Tickets are available from the National Trust 8981 2848.

Its our second birthday!!

31 July 2001 was the date of the public meeting called by Claire Edwards and Coomalie Council to ponder the future of the station and the Visitors Information Centre that Claire had established. From this meeting the Friends was formed.

Batchelor Visitors Information Centre

During June 2003, a permanent sign was installed at Batchelor information Centre, to tell visitors to Litchfield about the Railway Heritage Precinct. Many thanks to Fran Briggs and Coomalie Area Tourist Committee.



Please indicate your support for this work by becoming a Friend of Adelaide River. You can do this by filling in your contact details below.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION:

Name:

Mail Address:

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Telephone:

Fax:

E-mail:

Donations of \$25 will be most welcome and will cover the costs of postage etc.

Our mailing address is GPO Box 3504, Darwin NT 0801.

Phone (08) 8924 7093 or mobile 0417 838 578