



Home of The Downs Explorer

September 2021 News Roundup

AGM 2021

Thanks to everyone who contributed to our recent Annual General Meeting Peter Gregory gave us his yearly round up of events happening around the railway, whilst it was good news on the financial front with Brenton Witt telling us what a difference a year makes. From near bankruptcy due to Covid, to very healthy passenger numbers over the first six months of this year is quite an achievement . Our guest speaker this year was Ron Bellingham, a past mayor of Warwick and local businessman, Ron is also a long time supporter of rail travel and recounted his passion going back to his childhood. He also kindly accepted our offer to join us as one of our Patrons.



Ron Bellingham entertains the crowd

Treasurer Brenton Witt chatting with ever helpful Jane Pollard from Catalyst Accounting

SDSR Management Committee for 2021/22
Probably the most members we have had to date



INCOMING COMMITTEE

Murray Sondergeld. Brenton Witt. Nick Geraghty.
John Goonan. Kelvin Hutchinson. Dave Laker.
Chris Freeman. Kevin Patterson. Karen Shepherd.
Peter Gregory & Trevor Costin [+ John Brady, not present]



John Brady with Gloria, receiving a small token of our gratitude for his 20 years hard work in keeping steam alive for future generations

There have been a few changes of roles and a couple of new recruits.

After a year of getting the finances into shape, Brenton has passed the Treasurers baton back to Kelvin.

Kevin is going back to his role as historian and visitor supervisor, whilst the ever youthful Karen is taking on the Secretary position and we all better behave ourselves!

Nick Geraghty also joins with a wealth of driving & technical expertise.

John Goonan was offered twice the pay to take on a kind of Leading Hand role around the site and lets face it a beard as good as John's demands respect.

So thanks every one for past efforts and taking on future challenges.

On The Move



I suppose we should have told the occupants!

First, the demountable office gets moved alongside the carriage shed



Mick & the boys put up our new front fence



Next, Cottonvale Station gets lifted from its site alongside the main track, put onto a truck and driven around to the front entrance, where it becomes a new focal point for visitors. The original Parcel Shed will now go alongside, to the left.



Cottonvale museum curator Kevin Patterson and mastermind of the move, looks on. "It's now in a place where visitors can safely walk in from the street, before they had to cross the working tracks" he said. Once again our friends from Bellingham Cranes did an outstanding job!

STOP PRESS

A few seats left for Carnival of Flowers trips Toowoomba to Wyreema
Sunday 26th September 8:00am 11:00am 2:00pm

From derelict heap of scrap to smart member of the carriage fleet....NUMBER BL573

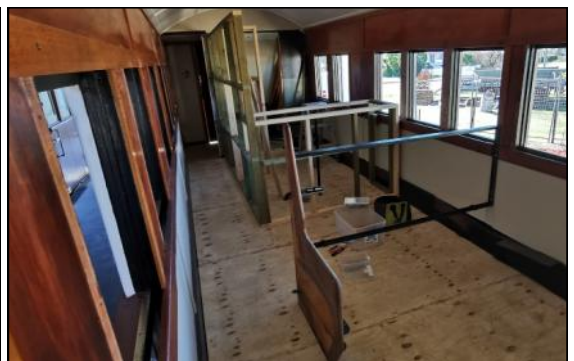


Who would have thought that the pair of old wrecks rescued from a paddock near Aratula could have produced this fine piece of railway heritage. Originally obtained to save them from rotting away completely, we assumed some parts could be salvaged for spares. But Rob Hoffman took up the challenge along with other volunteers and made one good one out of the two. Whilst it is stripped of seating it was decided that now would be a good time to design a whole new café bar for this carriage, as the present one is way too small.

Having a clean slate also allowed for other much needed improvements, like a mobile power supply to run proper fridges and provide boiling water for beverages. There is already an original water tank up in the roof space.

The windows have all been refurbished and glazed, so the next jobs are new vinyl floor covering and fixing the restored seats.

The end verandas and steps are now fitted with sets of beautifully made steel gates. These were designed and welded by Garry Briscoe with help from Terry and they really look the part.



A m a n d a ' s M e r c h a n d i s e S t o r e



Southern Downs Steam Railway, preserving our railway heritage

The trip that never was

Miles "Back to the Bush Festival" September 2021

Months of planning by SDSR and a huge amount of time, money and effort by the wonderful people at Miles, was to have seen one of the best trips of the decade.

The train and crew were to spend the night in Toowoomba ready for an early departure carrying dozens of excited passengers on the trip out west.

From there the festival organisers had arranged train excursions and rail activities. Attendees had travelled from far and wide and pre-booked accommodation months in advance.

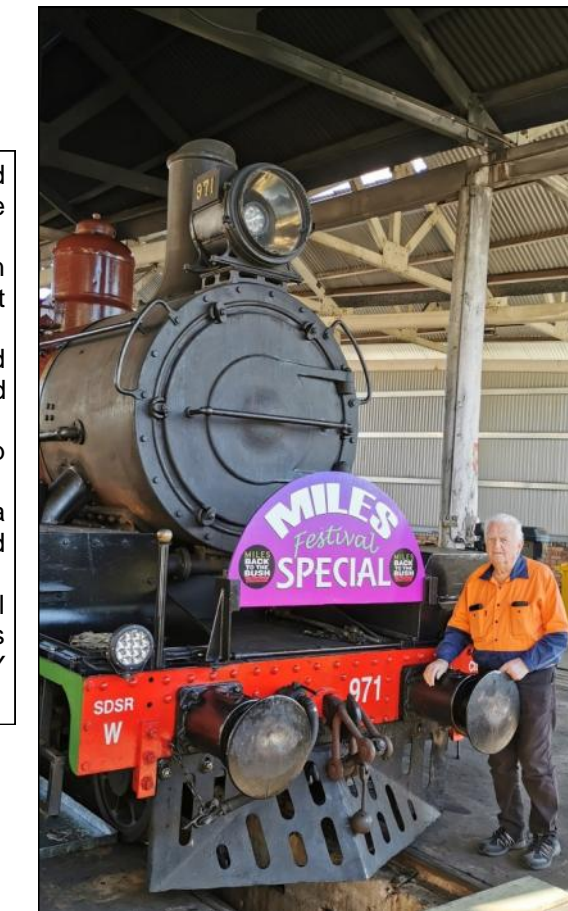
Imagine the disappointment and frustration to have the whole trip cancelled the very day we were to depart Warwick.

An overlooked piece of Health & Safety paperwork was the cause in a government regulatory office. Everyone including Queensland Rail, tried to do their best to resolve the issue, but to no avail.

One would think that as we operate safely and efficiently on other rail track, a quick phone call and a few assurances between departments could have seen us underway.....well what can we say, except SORRY to all those people who had their plans ruined. We did our best.



A shout out to the hard working folks in the background who keep the wheels turning. Like Brad, seen here literally oiling the bearings for smooth running.



STANTHORPE & WALLANGARRA

Undoubtedly one of the best railway trips in the Southern Hemisphere, which makes this route so popular. We have had solid bookings since we resumed running, with many passengers taking one of the two options....a winery tour at Stanthorpe or a bus ride around Giraween National Park.

Both include a lunch and add an extra dimension to this outing into the Granite Belt hills. If you want to dress up for the occasion, so much the better!

WHERE'S BOB?

I'm afraid he has been in the shed for a while and not feeling too good.

Doctor Dave says he has transmission problems and is awaiting surgery.

Fear not Bob fans, he'll be back!

Southern Downs Steam Railway

Home of The Downs Explorer

www.downsexplorer.org.au

for all timetables & bookings

Phone enquires [limited hours only] 07 4661 9788

email: info@sdsr.com.au

TOOWOOMBA SPECIAL

Sunday 26th September

Toowoomba to Wyreema 2hr return trip

8:00am 11:00am & 2:00pm

\$40 Adults \$20 Children

One way from and to Warwick

Saturday 25th & Sunday 26th (see website)

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