



*Home of The Downs Explorer*

# December 2022 News Roundup



*A lot of  
heavy lifting*



Anyone passing our yard last week was in for a spectacle of sheer lifting power. Watco took delivery of a couple of ex-Queensland freight locos returning to this country after a spell in South Africa. They will undergo upgrades at Warwick before heading to the north of the state to earn their keep. On the same day, Bellingham Cranes lifted our steam loco off it's wheel set. This is to allow SDSR to undertake essential planned maintenance over the next few weeks. The wheels will go for re-shaping to remove wear, meanwhile the whole undercarriage of springs, bearings etc can be refurbished. Our heritage Diesel, DH45, will step up to haul our weekend trips for the next couple of months. The cast iron water tank is returning to it's original site at Tannymorel. It had developed some dangerous cracks, so unfortunately had to be taken down.



*Southern Downs Steam Railway, preserving our railway heritage*

# Toowoomba to Wallangarra Special 29&30 October

## Events Coordinator team for overnight tours

Introducing your new team, Lindsay Carlier and Lynda Vernal

Having been appointed, we hit the ground running with our first tour being Toowoomba to Wallangarra return with an overnight stay at Stanthorpe.

Taking over the pre-planning from Karen, we both settled into confirming, bookings and organising this tour.

On the Friday prior to the tour, all volunteers and crew for the first leg of trip travelled to Toowoomba for an overnight stay and readying the train for the next day.

Saturday morning the train was prepared and guests began arriving. Each guest received their lanyard which had the details of name, accommodation, and carriage number. After check-in we were off to Clifton where guests and volunteers enjoyed a morning tea on the station.

After morning tea we are off again on the rails to Warwick station for lunch and entertainment on the station and then to Stanthorpe for afternoon tea. This was followed by a roast dinner on the station at Wallangarra.

After dinner it was steam power back to Stanthorpe where buses were waiting to take guests and crew to their accommodation.

The next day passengers and crew breakfasted at The Jamworks in Stanthorpe and then off on a tour of the area, including the lookout, Christmas tree farm and other items of interest,

Morning tea stop at Stanthorpe railway station followed by a lunch at Warwick Station with entertainment and then train back to Toowoomba, where it all started and our tour ended.

All guests commented that it was a great tour, and commended the volunteers and crew. However, many said they would need to join weight watchers after the tour!

Some comments from our guests feed back forms:

*'Volunteers were excellent'*

*'Great Trip'*

*'Fantastic trip'*

*'Such a fabulous couple of days. Loved the 2 day adventure cannot wait for our next trip'*

*'Loved it wonderful time'*

*'Thanks to all for an enjoyable weekend would not have changed a thing'*

*'Excellent trip'*

A big thanks to all the Carriage Attendants, locomotive crew, fire patrol, and all volunteers who helped in preparing the train and Warwick station for this event which was an outstanding success.

*Lindsay Carlier & Lynda Vernal*



Lynda & Lindsay found that preparation is the key to a successful event. SDRS volunteers put many hours into these trips

Peaceful end to the first day  
Supper was taken on the station at Wallangarra

Lunchtime Entertainment  
Warwick Station  
Thanks to Errol & Diane 'Silk & Gravel' for the appetising melodies!



Tilly & Grant provided a most welcome tasty roast lunch for 120 passengers and crew on the return journey from the Granite Belt high country en route to the starting point in Toowoomba.



# Money matters and future plans

## Chairman's Report

SDSR held its AGM recently and I am humbled that I was voted in as Chairman again. Our railway has an amazing mix of volunteers that turn up weekly to perform tasks that exceed most expectations. SDSR is evolving constantly and the Warwick Rail Precinct is a busy workplace with our crew, Watco and occasionally QR operations making the Precinct a really business rail hub.

Our biggest challenge as an organisation is encouraging existing and new volunteers to step up into essential roles. We have no paid employees performing full time roles so the tasks of keeping us operational falls onto volunteers, willing to give their time, experience and dedication to see SDSR continue to improve and remain viable long into the future.

SDSR is led by a board, all of them volunteers, who are active and perform many tasks... all essential in keeping us viable.

Regulatory, health and safety, maintenance matters etc are escalating and are a challenge, but we now have a hard working administrative team that is assisting in keeping the dream alive.

I encourage you all to continue your support of SDSR because without your contribution of ideas, skills, work ethic, and shear hard work this great organisation, that gives back so much to us, the community and many businesses up the line, would not exist.

I wish you a very happy Festive Season and look forward to many enjoyable days ahead with you all.

*Peter Gregory*

## Treasurers Report

It's been a big year... SDSR has transformed from a club to a substantial multifaceted business.

We have 14 volunteers now in administrative roles. Approximately 20 involved in restoration, repairs, maintenance, building, cleaning, catering etc.

Train operations have over 20 personnel performing substantial roles on weekends and occasionally throughout the week... our volunteers are amazing and despite the complexities we all constantly excel.

The way SDSR promotes markets and sells our products is now world class and feedback is good.

This all results in us being in a relatively good financial position. Despite us having costs of \$45,000 to renovate carriages and tens of thousands to fix mechanical issues (some major) we finish the year well ahead of where we started financially.

2023 is shaping up to be our biggest, event and tour wise.

We are on most occasions booked out months ahead of tour departures.

We now have national regulator and QR approval to tour out on the western line to Roma.

We have approval to renovate, maintain and operate Rail motors...which could be a possibility!

I can't express enough our admiration and constant amazement how in just two days a week, what evolves, gets maintained and built by the SDSR volunteer team.

Thank you everyone.

*Kelvin Hutchinson*



John Holloway in the drivers seat of the Little Train

This occasion was the Rodeo Street Parade. During school holidays, the train can be found giving rides in Leslie Park in the heart of Warwick.

Thanks go to Kevin and his helpers for setting up this initiative, which provides so much fun for the younger folk.



John has also been keeping our site looking very smart with his new toy..... Don't even bother trying to get a go!



# Nuts and bolts and stuff



This year has seen some great improvements to our facilities. Thanks to persistent reminders at every meeting from a certain member of staff (!) the engine shed now has a proper rear wall to keep out the hot sun and cold winds. The site also looks so much tidier.

To enable servicing of their largest locomotives without having to turn them on the turntable, Watco have extended the length of the inspection pit.



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Bookings via our website  
Essential phone enquiries  
(office hrs only)  
07 4661 9788



*From all the volunteers at Southern Downs Steam Railway, we wish our members, supporters and followers a very enjoyable festive season ahead.*

*We look forward to sharing your company in 2023 Timetable for the first six months is now available on our website*

[downsexplorer.org.au](http://downsexplorer.org.au)

Thanks to Kelvin Hutchinson for the impressive drone shot of the big crane in action

