



Home of The Downs Explorer

April 2023 News Roundup

New Café Car hits the rails



The Saturday 25th of March trip to Wallangarra saw the inaugural running of our newly completed café car.

Rob Hoffman and the team have put many months of work into restoring the old carriage and then converting one end into a brand new refreshment area.

240 volt power for fridges and hot water and so on is provided by a hidden underfloor generator.

This was always the problem with the previous carriage. Carrying ice in eskies during summer was never successful and passengers these days expect hot drinks and snacks of a higher standard.

Thanks go to all the volunteers who made such an outstanding job of bringing this old piece of history back to life.



Welcome to our news update for Autumn

Plenty of activity here at the railway as usual. The twice monthly trips are booking quite well despite a few hiccups with our locomotives.

Running a working railway on a part time basis, using volunteer labour is always going to be a challenge, so it goes with the territory as they say.

If you would like to join our maintenance team who work every Wednesday and Thursday at the yard in Hamilton St Warwick, please get in touch. We also have vacancies on our twice monthly rail trips for carriage attendants, if you would like to travel with us and help our passengers enjoy their heritage rail experience.

Happy Easter break to everyone, from all the SDSR volunteers



Stormy summer sky at the rail precinct



Kevin Patterson's birthday was a good excuse to try out the new onsite café. Built inside an old carriage, near our front entrance, when finished it will be open to the public as part of any site and museum visit.



Also celebrating another trip around the sun, was our long serving President, Peter Gregory. His wife Irene provided a cake, but wasn't saying how many 21st birthdays this has been!



LOCOMOTIVE WOES



SDSR loco C17 971 is still sitting in the yard minus its wheels.

It is the old story, when you start stripping bits of machinery of any sort, there will be lots of neighbouring parts that need attention.

So now we are waiting for axle boxes and springs to be refurbished, amongst other things.

The AC16 loco we leased from Queensland Rail as a temporary source of steam traction has also had some problems and returned to Ipswich.

We are hoping to get it back in time for our trip to Goondiwindi end of April.



Long weekend trips ahead



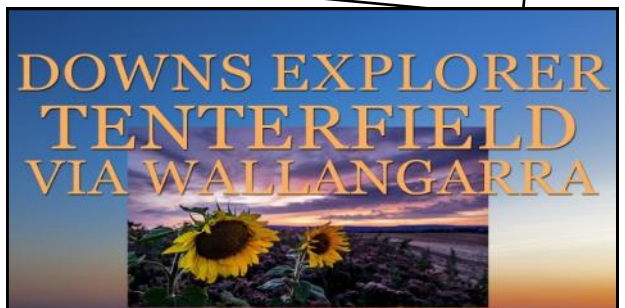
29th April -1st May

Another of our very popular 3 day trips out to Goondiwindi
Saturday departure from Warwick then we will be stopping at Inglewood for lunch en route, with evening meals and accommodation ready when we arrive at our destination.
On Sunday there are a couple of adventures planned;- morning and afternoon rail trips out to Toobeah, plus the option on the morning trip of continuing from Toobeah to Thallon by bus.



8 -10th September

A new adventure leaving from Toowoomba travelling via Dalby and Chinchilla to arrive at Miles for evening meal and overnight accommodation.
Next day free to enjoy the 'Back to the Bush' Festival.



13-15 OCTOBER

Exciting trip over the border into the wilds of NSW
Take our train from Warwick to Wallangarra via Stanthorpe.
Bus down to Tenterfield for an overnight stay including a bush Ho-Down and local bus tour.

**MILES
BACK
TO THE
BUSH
Festival**



LEFT

Colourful destinations for our coming events



With the new café car now in active service, the previous carriage BL522 is now having its original seating reinstated. Dave and Rob are seen here pulling things apart. That little corner bar has seen a lot of action over the years, even seen a few sing-songs start there we reckon.

Around the Yard



Anyone visiting or even passing our yard these days can hardly fail to notice the activity involving the large black and yellow diesel locos. WATCO Australia has a major base for their freight operations here in Warwick.

The sandstone goods shed next to the station houses their office and stores, with an internal rail track for some servicing.

Other maintenance is undertaken in our yard where we have the inspection pits and the locomotive turntable.



Another purpose built shed in our yard is used for fabrication work and painting.

Local tradesman Jake Sondergeld and his crew have been doing some impressive restoration work on ex South African locomotives, which themselves were originally based in Queensland, so these impressive engines have come back home to roost.

A few years ago it seemed like the future for rail transport was looking very gloomy. So to now see all this activity and the knock on effect it has for the local economy is very rewarding.



www.downsexplorer.org.au

info@sdsr.com.au

07 4661 9788

Newsletter editor Chris Freeman
membership@downsexplorer.org.au

Good to see Kevin Senz and the lads have been making a bit of progress with our C17 loco number 802. It is a very long term project and will be extremely expensive as it requires a complete boiler replacement....we would be glad to hear from any millionaires out there!

Southern Downs Steam Railway, preserving our railway heritage