



Home of The Downs Explorer

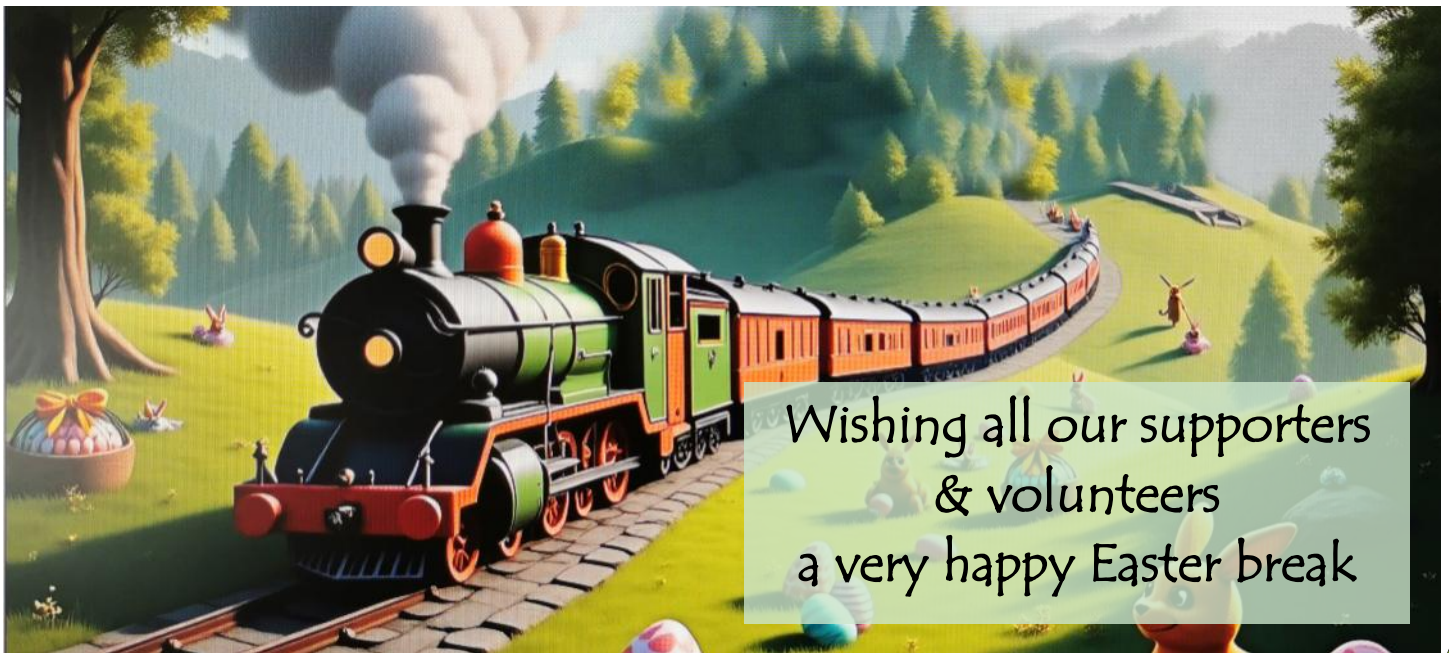
April 2025 News Update



Since the last news update, our C17 locomotive number 971, has had the refurbished wheel sets and axle boxes replaced and will now have the final bits and pieces re-fitted ready for a long awaited return to duties. Well done the hard working engine shed team!



Thank you to the Warwick Chamber of Commerce for the recent recognition of our endeavours in the local community and towards maintaining a growth in regional tourism



Wishing all our supporters & volunteers a very happy Easter break

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

As we move into the autumn months, our railway is gearing up for an exciting winter season of heritage rail tours. Sales continue to perform strongly, and we are delighted to see our upcoming Roma tour in June selling well. Charters and scheduled rail tours are also in demand, and the diverse mix of experiences we offer is proving popular. The return of steam operations will only further enhance our offerings and attract even more passengers.

Warwick Railway Station – Renovations in Full Swing

Renovations at Warwick Railway Station (WRS) are advancing well, with Stage 1 nearly complete, see below. This includes demolition work, new toilets, repairs, patching, painting, electrical upgrade, and major plumbing improvements. Stage 2 will commence soon, focusing on the restoration of the large tea room at the southern end of the building. Over the next two months, WRS will remain our top priority, and we encourage anyone available to lend a hand when needed.

C17 971 & Alternative Locomotive Options

Restoration of C17 971 continues, though there is still a considerable way to go before it returns to service. In the meantime, we are working with Downs Steam to lease their BB locomotive for our April and May tours, ensuring we can continue delivering high-quality heritage rail experiences.

Behind-the-Scenes Administration

Behind the scenes, significant work continues on the regulatory aspects of our operations, ensuring compliance and future-proofing our heritage railway.

Upcoming Projects – Institute Complex & More

Following the completion of work at Warwick Railway Station (WRS), our next major focus will be repairing the Railway Institute Complex, which has suffered significant damage due to a termite infestation. Other projects, including carriage restorations, museum complex upgrades, the Precinct Café, and Mill Hill, are temporarily on hold while WRS remains our primary focus.

C17 802 – Boiler Removal Imminent

Progress on C17 802 is steady, and we anticipate removing the boiler soon as part of its ongoing restoration. This marks a significant step forward in bringing another steam locomotive back to life.

A Busy & Productive Time Ahead

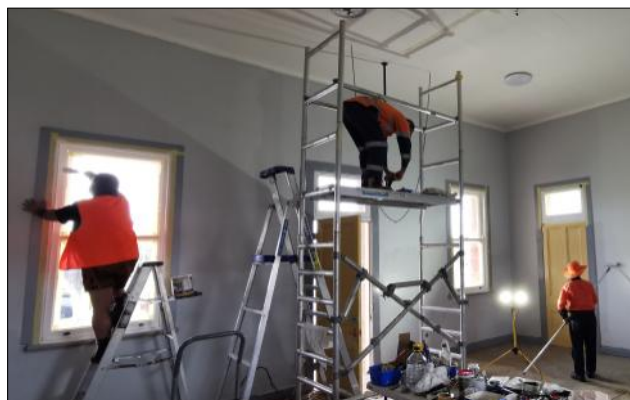
There is no shortage of activity at the Precinct and Warwick Railway Station, keeping all of us engaged and focused. We extend our gratitude to every member, volunteer, and supporter who continue to contribute their time, skills, and passion to SDSR. Together, we are ensuring that heritage rail remains a strong and thriving part of our community.

Thank you to the volunteers for your dedication and our passengers for your support. Best wishes, Kelvin Hutchinson



WARWICK STATION MAKE-OVER

Clockwise:
Cleaning area for catered events.
Brand new washroom facilities.
The old waiting room – to be expanded into the new functions area.
Final painting of the entrance and the gift & snacks shop.



“Warwick Rose” as grown by our very clever gardeners— Barry & Ken Martin

The fragrance is divine!

MUSEUM & OTHER WARWICK NEWS

Museum visitors have been quiet since Xmas, but there are signs of improvement with a booking for a vintage car club to visit after Easter. They will be having a tour of the museum and precinct with morning tea in the museum's café carriage. The museum is in the process of having a facelift. Two new glass cabinets have been installed and have lights installed in them. The other glass cabinets now have lights also to help visitors have a better look at the contents. New photos are in the process of being created to enhance the viewing experience for our visitors. The mini children's train has been working overtime lately, with the Warwick show and school holiday rides in the park. Some new volunteers have been assisting with the driving and I wish to say a big thank you to them. The old saying many hands make light work certainly applies to the mini train operations.

HAPPY EASTER, Kev Patterson



Steam in action....on lease from our neighbours Downs Steam at Drayton, Toowoomba. Taking our carriages on a private chartered trip last week and another one planned for May. No.1037 was constructed by The Vulcan Foundry, Lancashire and entered service with Queensland Railways in July 1951. It was retired from Mackay in March 1970, becoming the last QR steam engine in service in the region. It is beautifully presented in its green livery and enjoying another life in the hands of the Toowoomba volunteers.



Congratulations to Chrissie Hayes who has taken over the role of Events Co-ordinator with the retirement of Lindsay Carlier. Also, welcome to our new Events team members, Karalyn Ruddy and Lynda Vernal.



A tasty boxed lunch is provided for passengers on our trips to Ballandean after line was repaired and now offers another option on our trips south



Thank you to Lindsay Carlier & Robert Hoffman for your fabulous efforts over the years at Southern Downs Steam Railway. Enjoy your retirement!.



Not long until it's festival time again. We will be doing our usual weekend trips with snacks and jazz on the platform. Full details on the website

<i>Tour Timetable</i>	<i>April to December 2025</i>
Saturday, 19 April 2025	Children's Special—Warwick -> Wheatvale Children's Special—Warwick -> Hendon
Friday, 2 May 2025	Warwick -> Goondiwindi
Saturday, 3 May 2025	Goondiwindi -> Toobeah
Friday, 13 June 2025	Toowoomba -> Roma, Chinchilla & Miles
Saturday, 28 June 2025	Children's Special—Warwick -> Wheatvale Children's Special—Warwick -> Hendon
4–6 July 2025	Toowoomba -> Stanthorpe return—Snowflakes tour
19–20 July 2025	Jumpers & Jazz—Warwick -> Hendon Jumpers & Jazz—Warwick -> Wheatvale
Saturday, 26 July 2025	Jumpers & Jazz—Warwick -> Hendon Jumpers & Jazz—Warwick -> Wheatvale
Saturday 2 August 2025	Warwick -> Clifton day tour
8–9 August 2025	Toowoomba to Warwick return with lunch
Saturday, 23 August 2025	Warwick -> Stanthorpe -> Ballandean
12–14 September 2025	Chinchilla & Miles—"Back to the Bush Festival"
Saturday, 27 September 2025	Children's Special—Warwick -> Wheatvale Children's Special—Warwick -> Hendon
Saturday, 4 October 2025	Warwick -> Stanthorpe -> Ballandean
Saturday, 18 October 2025	Warwick -> Clifton with 2 course lunch
Saturday, 1 November 2025	Warwick -> Stanthorpe -> Ballandean
Saturday, 15 November 2025	Warwick -> Stanthorpe -> Ballandean
Saturday, 6 December 2025	Warwick -> Stanthorpe -> Ballandean
Saturday, 13 December 2025	Children's Special—Warwick -> Wheatvale Children's Special—Warwick -> Hendon
Saturday, 20 December 2025	Warwick -> Clifton 'Santa Special' + 2 course lunch option

HOW TO BOOK A HERITAGE TRAIN TOUR

Go to our website at www.downsexplorer.org.au/bookings
Click on a date or Tour Destination to read details on the Tour