

Crn Ball & Cambooya Streets,
Drayton.

PO Box 11106
Centenary Heights Qld 4350.

P: 07 4630 2358

F: 07 4614 0914

E: info@downsteam.com

W: www.downsteam.com



Darling Downs Historical Rail Society Ltd. ABN 17 097 691 177

DOWNSTEAM
tourist railway & museum

Patron: Kerry Shine LLB • Chairperson : Ros Scotney : Treasurer : Graham Darbey

DownsSteam - *On track for the future - in touch with the past.*

MAY 2016



Downs Steam: One of Toowoomba's Top Attractions

Downs Steam Tourist Railway is currently ranked #8 in the top 25 "things to do" in Toowoomba.

According to the world's largest travel website and mobile phone app "Trip Advisor", which bases its rankings on reviews submitted by users, our vast collection of carriages and rail memorabilia, especially the Dreamtime Coach, keeps Downs Steam high on the list of Toowoomba's most popular draw cards.

The overwhelmingly positive reviews on the site were full of praise with one visitor calling it "one of Toowoomba's best kept secrets" and another writing of the Dreamtime Carriage: "I honestly don't think I've been so emotional about a train."

DownsSteam life-member Peter Eldridge would love to see the ranking rise even higher.

"We're now getting visitors from all over the world," he says.

"Just this week, I've shown people through from Taiwan, the UK and Malta and another day there was a family from Chicago."

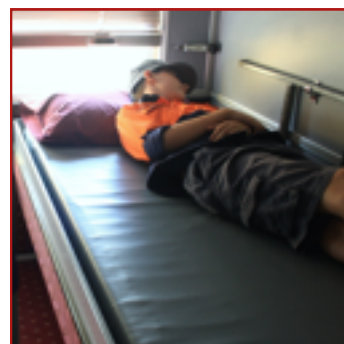
With progress towards our first carriages carrying paying tourists along the main line edging ever closer, this month we've purchased another two first-class sleeper cars including a "composite car" with accommodation for staff working on the planned overnight trips, as well as an office.

The latest acquisitions, from Queensland Rail's Sunlander and Inlander services, will be transported from QR's Ipswich storage sheds to Drayton by road later this month.

These will almost complete the fleet of carriages needed to begin overnight trips to Stanthorpe by next April, after the December arrival of the two first-class sleepers, one club car and one lounge car kindly donated by QR.

The next step comes mid-July when a bold band of volunteers will put the carriages through their paces during a Saturday night "sleepover" to ensure the beds are comfortable and the air-conditioning and hot water systems can cope with the demand.

Meantime, Peter and his team are working on costings and designing package deals for the trips and fine tuning the online booking system.



PROJECT 106

The Pride of Toowoomba

C16-106 has seen a steady amount of work over the last few months. Work has continued on the axle-boxes with four out of eight axle boxes completed. The next two require minor machining at a reduced cost and the final set will require re-babbitting. The funding for these works is the main focus and priority for Project 106 as the sooner this is done, the sooner we can lower 106 back onto its driving wheels. We can then recommence work on the boiler after moving it into the shed out of the weather for protection.

The Project 106 fundraising program has raised a continuous and helpful amount of funds towards C16-106 progressing. Project manager Andrew Caldwell would like to thank all those who have made contributions and would like to encourage all members to contribute what they can, from five cents, to working on the locomotive itself. Why not pledge a cup of coffee a week? A small contribution over a long time can make a huge difference to our progress. Let's get this significant steam locomotive back on its wheels and closer to completion.



All work on C16-106 is working towards reuniting the mainframe with the driving wheels and lowering the main frames off the concrete blocks. The locomotive needs to be trammelled, this is when the driving wheels are set perpendicular to the connecting rod, set parallel to each other and set at the exact coupling rod spacing. This is a critical and important stage, because if not done correctly the axle-boxes, coupling and connecting rod bushes will run hot and wear excessively.

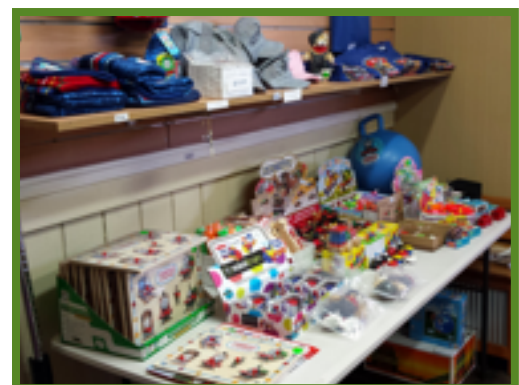
The boiler has finally been rescued and placed on a new cradle built by Bob, this will allow the boiler to be inspected and placed into dry storage in preparation for future works. The long-term intention is to build a platform around the boiler to allow for the significant amount of work required while ensuring safety for those who carry it out.

Lets go shopping!

The gift shop's supplies of girls and boys' engine driver caps has been topped up with children's and adult sizes now available.

There are also more kids "I'm a Toowoomba Treasure" T-shirts to buy for the grandkids along with fresh stocks of the popular wooden train whistles (with a complimentary pair of ear plugs for Mum and Dad!)

There's also a new run of postcards and prints of our Dreamtime Carriage available framed or unframed - the perfect gift for friends and relatives overseas to show off the awe-inspiring treasure we have here at Downs Steam.



The Jaguars Come to DownsSteam

Last month when the SE Queensland Jaguar Club dropped in for brunch and a look around, it was probably the only time the cars parked outside DownsSteam were worth more than the rolling stock inside.

The Jag owners were just the latest in a long line of groups and families to hold their celebrations and gatherings with us including a family 70th birthday, a Rotary Club fundraising breakfast and a Lions Club luncheon.



Facebook

DownsSteam's Facebook page continues to grow and generate more interest. The Mother's Day advertisement was viewed by over 10,000 people. We now have 385 subscribers receiving regular updates on activities, news and events we upload to the Facebook page which we currently run as an electronic, continuous news letter. Our multimedia publishing, which includes videos and photos, are the best performing posts/news events. They tend to capture the public's interest within the first five seconds and provide a quick and effective way of engaging with a growing audience.

DownsSteam encourages all members to pass on photos/news of happenings to Andrew Caldwell for upload to Facebook, as this is one of the best ways we can communicate with the public and show off the great work being achieved at DownsSteam.



Saving our Treasures

We are just weeks away from having a massive sunshade hoisted above both the Memory Coach and the Dream Time Carriage to protect two of Downs Steam's most popular attractions from the ravages of the sun.

Bob Naumann (AKA Bob the welder!), Neil Cooper, Jeff and Warren Smith and their team of volunteers have raised the support poles, generously donated by Ergon, and the canvas shade will be tied in place in the next month. Labour costs for making the shade are being covered by Pittsworth business Whatever Tarps and Upholstery and owner Matt Follington.

The sun shade will help cool the interiors of both carriages and preserve Dom's Dream Time masterpiece for future generations to enjoy.

The project will be capped off with the installation of an air conditioning unit donated to Downs Steam by Ian Hall.

This work is the first step in a larger plan to extend the existing station awning over the remainder of the platform's northern end to offer more shade for guests and more all-weather space for larger functions.



Hello to all our members.

Firstly, may I acknowledge most gratefully the volunteers for the amazing work you are all doing at DownsSteam.

Whenever I call in (hopefully it will be more often as I have now "retired" from Local Government after 22 years) I look around in awe at the progress in so many areas on our site.

We all share the same dream to see us becoming a moving tourist railway and I feel confident we are nearing that vision.

The Easter weekend was a great way to showcase our site and to be a part of the Toowoomba Laneways Music Festival certainly created interest.

Thank you to the volunteers who gave of their time on the public holidays.

Our piano bar carriage proved very popular with our two guest pianists.

Our primary source of income still lies with our catering team and I cannot thank them enough.

I will be away for a few weeks from the 16th May to have my knee replacement surgery but will certainly keep in touch.

Fond regards.

Ros Scotney (Chair)





BEN'S STEAM STORIES

Hi, my name's Ben and I have recently become the youngest tour guide at Downs Steam Tourist Railway. I am now ten years old and I want to tell you how I became a tour guide.

As I wrote in the last newsletter, I wanted to get involved.

One afternoon, Peter Eldridge rang my Dad to say that if we wanted, we could both start working as tour guides on a Saturday. Peter said I would be ideal for the job because I have an extensive knowledge and a passion for trains. I was delighted. It was one thing I would be really good at.

So the following Saturday morning, we tagged along with Derek as he took some people through the collection. We listened and Dad took notes so we could learn the routine and the facts about the different coaches and locomotives. I thought Derek did a really good job but I couldn't wait to have a go at doing it myself.

That day, Peter gave me my official tour guide uniform - a high-vis work shirt. It was a bit too big so on our way home, we dropped into Hannah's and changed it over for one the right size.

One day during the week, Dad came home with a surprise. It was my personal official tour guide badge with my name on it that had been made especially for me. I felt really happy to have it.

Later that week, I also got my engine driver's cap that came in with a shipment of new items for the gift shop which made me really happy because it looked terrific with my shirt.

The next Saturday, we tagged along again with the first tour Derek took that day. But about three quarters of the way through, Derek had to go and meet someone at the gate, so he asked us if we could take over.

By the end of that tour, my Dad and I thought we had done really well - so the next group of visitors that came through the gates, we showed them through the whole collection by ourselves.

And that's how our tour guiding career at Downs Steam began.

I'm really looking forward to the volunteer sleepover which is still three months away. I also really love the sleeper carriages where we'll be spending the night because Queensland Rail fitted a lot of things into a very small space. The seats are comfortable and I like the beds as well.

I'm so excited about the sleepover that I've even made up a calendar so I can cross off the days until it arrives.

I really enjoy being a guide because I love meeting all of the people who come through and giving them an enjoyable tour.





Downs Steam

*When you want a day with a difference
Maybe something you've not done before
Take a drive out to DownsSteam
As a memorable time will ensure!*

*O have you seen the "Dream Time"
Or at the ANZAC carriage paused
To reminisce on over nation's cost
From our seemingly endless wars*

*The "Gatsby is in sick bay
(As is old "106")
Their day of truth draws closer
When they'll no longer be up on bricks*

*The station shop is open
Many items there to choose
Multiple memorabilia
So take your time and peruse*

*Their enthusiasm's catching
It's like the bloomin' flu
Most everything at DownsSteam
Affects you that way too!*

*And if you should get a mite hungry
You're able to have a snack
Sit, and have a drink, or a coffee
Let those memories come flooding back!*

*My, what a richness we have in rail history
What a sin if this heritage lost
We must preserve all that's there for our
children
And give gladly, to defray the cost!*

Chris Eldridge

Slashing our Power Bills with the Help of the Sun

Very soon, the plaintive cry of "for goodness sake, turn off the lights" will no longer be heard echoing around the buildings of Downs Steam, thanks to a set of 32 solar panels recently installed on the shed roof.

With the help of a \$28,000 grant from the Queensland Gambling Community Fund and Paul Lemming at Excel Solar, the panels were raised and put in place last month. All that's needed now is for Ergon to install some additional equipment in an adjacent junction box and Downs Steam will start to see its power bills plummet.

Until now, the almost constant welding work in the main shed, coupled with the energy demands of the catering equipment and air-conditioning has attracted some hefty bills.

But with solar power significantly impacting on the volume of electricity drawn from the grid, its expected bills will be slashed by around 70 percent.



DOWN'S STEAM

OPERATIONAL TRAINING REPORT – May 2016

It is important that members are aware of DownsSteam's obligations when it comes to the training and maintenance of the knowledge and skills required to perform the duties of specific roles required to run an operational railway.

Before we can operate a passenger tourist train, every volunteer working in an operational capacity requires a level of competency in the tasks required by that role.

For example, a volunteer Carriage Attendant working directly with our customers will require different skills when compared to a volunteer Train Driver, who will obviously need a more detailed skill-set.

DownsSteam's Operational Training Program aims to achieve this by providing **all** members with an opportunity to acquire the knowledge vital for a specific role prior to operations commencing.

If you're keen to assist directly with our operations, then NOW is the time to start learning!

A Training Matrix has been developed that clearly shows the competencies necessary to fulfil the duties of each operational role available. Competencies remain valid for a period of 2 years, after which they are renewed. Renewal doesn't necessarily mean re-training --- a "refresher exam" may be all that is required.

Up and coming training courses currently planned are as follows –



- Tue 31st May – Safely Access the Rail Corridor (SARC)
- Tue 26th July – General Operational Safety & Carriage Attendant
- Sat 6th August – Safely Access the Rail Corridor (SARC)
- Tue 16th August – Testing of Trains (braking systems)

Additional to these, the practical component of the Shunting Theory course already conducted will be completed over time with those members requiring assessment, as rolling stock maintenance schedules permit.

The schedule above is naturally subject to variation dependent on the number of interested members. Please register your intention to attend to **Peter Burkitt** as soon as you can to assist in accurate planning.

There is currently **no charge** to members for this training, except for SARC which attracts a \$30 fee per member to attain a new Rail Safety Worker ID card from Queensland Rail (if required).

Courses commence at **8:30 am sharp** and are held on-site at Drayton. They involve "classroom" style presentations with some practical demonstrations where necessary and are completed by a written exam.

Members can contact **Peter Burkitt** (Operations Training Manager) at any time to discuss specific options for obtaining the competencies required.

See you at a training course soon!



Railmotor DP13

DP13 is set to undergo a major facelift over the next few weeks, the sheeting for the rail motor was kindly donated by Mr Lionel Moore from Moore trailers. The aluminium roll is of a thicker gauge, making it easier to work with and will dampen the frame noise slightly.

The new tyres for the power bogie of the Rail motor have been ordered from South Africa and we should see delivery of them within the next 9-10 weeks, these will be heat shrink finish that will be ready to press on the driving and leading wheel. The majority of the work is now finished on the 6LW engine, with a seal being replaced on the fluid coupling, a minor repair to the thermostat and design and fitting of the alternator. Attention has now turned to the 24 volt electrical system, aiming to bring the rail motor back to 'life' by the end of July. This will include the wiring of the headlights, cabin lights, control desks as well as ancillary outlets for radios etc. Be sure to keep your eyes on the rail motor over the next few months during this exciting and busy time.



With the sheeting added to the rail motor, the workers can see their own images for the first time.... not sure if they are happy or not!

