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DownsSteam Historical Railway. ABN17 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.*

**July 2017**



## “It’s a boy’s dream isn’t it?”

### Re-discovering the DP 13

If there is such a thing as ghosts of objects, Alan Guy thought he’d seen one the first time he walked into the shed at Downs Steam.

The Tasmanian former engine driver had spent thirty years of his working life steering all sorts of trains along the frosty rail lines of the island state.

Some of his fondest memories were of sitting at the controls of the DP 13 rail motor, guiding it along the island’s picturesque North West Coast line where, at times, the chop of Bass Strait was so close it was almost lapping at the ballast.

But Alan had retired a few years back and, last he heard, a band of vandals with a few matches had turned that proud old rail motor into a sorry lump of scrap metal.

But on holidays visiting his daughter in Highfields recently, Alan found himself walking through the gates of Downs Steam and about to get the shock of his life.

“I walked in there and told them I was an ex-driver from Tassy,” he said.

“And they said ‘you should have a look at DP13. I didn’t know that’s where it had finished up.’”



## Model Train Show

Downs Steam held another successful at the annual Toowoomba Model Train Show in the Founders Pavilion at the Toowoomba Showgrounds last month.

Our display of the two “pumper bikes”, section cars, historic photographs, and videos about Downs Steam’s restoration projects attracted an enormous amount of interest.



## **“It’s a boy’s dream isn’t it?” *continued..***

Once he’d recovered from the shock, Alan was relieved the rail motor was on its way to being resurrected and full of praise for the team behind the project.

“Your crowd bought it, at some considerable cost I would imagine, and you’re doing it up,” he said.

“You’ve done a good job too.”

Alan remembers the the DP 13 as a very easy engine to drive.

“You’ve got the one brake handle, forward and reverse and then you have your gears,” he said.

“The key is knowing the track you’re on and driving it accordingly.”

He said the DP13 was one of the few trains where passengers could see into the driver’s cabin as the train was moving.

“The driver is usually shut off behind a door,” he said.

“But (on the DP 13) passengers could actually watch us drive and look out the windscreen. You couldn’t have a mob up there but you could let three or four up at a time and they’d take it all in. They just loved it.”

Alan is no longer licensed to drive a train. But he’s still keen to return to Downs Steam whenever he can and looks forward to one day sitting in the driver’s cabin of the rail motor - even if it is only as a passenger this time.

“But I could maybe offer a little bit of advice,” he said.

When Alan became a member his teenage grandson Rueben did the same.

While he wouldn’t necessarily describe himself as a “train buff”, he has a passion for engineering but also for design. The Downlands College students is part of an art group that created an intricate metal sculpture that took two years to build.

Alan hopes Reuben can learn skills from the more experienced members that could help him find a job in the future.

“I told him anything could happen,” he said.

“You could be taught to drive the DP, you never know. It’s a boy’s dream isn’t it - driving a train?”



### **Wanted**

#### **Skilled Tradesman with Time on their Hands**

Rail motor restoration project supervisor Ian Muller says to get the DP13 on the rails he needs people with the right set of trade skills.

He’s currently seeking volunteers skilled in metal working but also with creative skills due to the lack of project plans for much of the work.

Volunteers are needed each Tuesday and Thursday from 8am - 2.30pm.



## Member Profile

### **Corbin Pratt:**

**1/. Growing up, I thought I would be?  
A mechanical engineer working with trains.**

**2/. My first job was?  
On my family's Angus cattle property in Northern NSW, working as a stock hand/computer tech.**

**3/. My most treasured possession is?  
My photography equipment.**

**4/. The words that best describe me are?  
My family and friends have described me as an inventive problem solver, a realist, dependable/reliable, trustworthy, empathetic/kind, a pragmatic researcher and a computer geek with a 'don't take myself too seriously' sense of humour.**

**5/. I relax by?  
Taking photos of interesting people/objects and situations, spending time with my family and friends, and restoring unique vintage machinery (ok, so the last one isn't always "relaxing").**

**6/. The thing with trains is?  
Whether they be from the steam age or the modern diesel era, trains are marvels of engineering and industrial design that exude power, movement and ingenuity even when sitting still.**

**7/. The question I'm most often asked is?  
"Can you fix my computer?"**

**8/. The meaning of life is?  
The Conductor in The Polar Express (voiced by Tom Hanks) eloquently sums up the meaning of life for me: "The one thing about trains" he says. "It doesn't matter where they're going, what matters is, deciding to get on."**

**9/. If money were no object, one of the great train journeys of the world I'd most love to take would be.?  
A toss up between riding the "California Zephyr" & "Lake Shore Limited" in a privately chartered restored vintage coach or a grand tour of Switzerland taking in the "Glacier Express" & "Bernina Express".**



### **The Great "Re-sleepering"**

Around 200 railway sleepers were in urgent need of replacement as soon as possible as they had almost become historical artefacts in their own right.

"Some of the sleepers on the eastern line date back to 1914," he said.

"The white ants haven't left too much at all really."

Peter thanked Queensland Rail who have kindly donated 170 sleepers that, although second hand, are in much better condition than the ones they are replacing.



## A Busy Six Months for the Catering Crew

For the catering crew the first half of the year has been quite busy, but welcoming Chef Ashleigh to the team has eased the load.

From January until the end of June we will have prepared and served at least 1100 customers, either breakfast, morning tea, lunch or dinner.

Large numbers of guests and minimum staff have posed challenges, we successfully hosted 54 members of the Nambour Probus Club for morning tea and lunch and packed picnic lunch boxes for 70 at the Glennie Pop-Up Picnic to create memorable days for all.

It was all hands on deck early to prepare to feed 92 paying guests at the Mothers Day Breakfast which was probably the most smoothly run breakfast we've held.

A big thank you to Madonna for washing and ironing all of our tablecloths and tea towels, also to Marijke, Glenda and Tony who we call on when especially busy.

*Gwen Cooper ...*

## **Something for Everyone**

There's more to volunteering at DownsSteam than what goes on in the shed.

The organisation also relies on a band of female volunteers who give their time in return for rewards they probably never expected.

Office manager Nellie Van Der Vliet had been studying dementia care but was "burned out" and craved a job with purpose, new experiences and new people.

A friend suggested she volunteer at DownsSteam, which she'd never heard of.

"Like a lot of people, I'd driven past the place and seen the carriages and just thought it was a storage yard for Queensland Rail," she said.

"So I was just amazed to see what was hidden behind that hedge."

As well as enjoying the camaraderie, Nellie is excited about where the organisation is going.

"One day we'll get the trains rolling and I just want to be a part of that."



Above:  
Val Maker and Gwen  
Cooper





## Project 106 Update

Work on C16-106 has been slow and steady.

The first batch of the loco's wheels have returned from Condamine Drilling with their journal profiles adjusted slightly and returned to a mirror finish to ensure the driving and leading bogie wheels run with little friction inside the overhauled axle-boxes.

The machining process involved was long and complicated as the 1.5 tonne wheel sets must be set up concentrically in the lathe and a considerable amount of weight added to remove the effect of the counter-balance weights.

Attention will now focus on riveting the drag box together again. We have elected to proceed with the more traditional hot riveting method due to the complex corners and method of assembly.

Then we will finally commence placing the wheels back into the frame and making C16-106 look like a steam engine again.

We should see some strong developments for the loco's ash pan in coming weeks, so keep an eye out for the next newsletter.

We're seeking more help to finish several outstanding jobs.

Progress on several jobs has been severely hampered by limited funds and this has delayed the project overall.

While we have improved the way we promote this restoration, we want to build our fund raising efforts. We'll need to raise an estimated \$130,000 to finish and this has been broken down into three fundraising goals:

**Goal 1:** Complete frame overhaul - \$16,000.

This will return C16-106 back to its wheels and will include a complete overhaul of the leading bogie

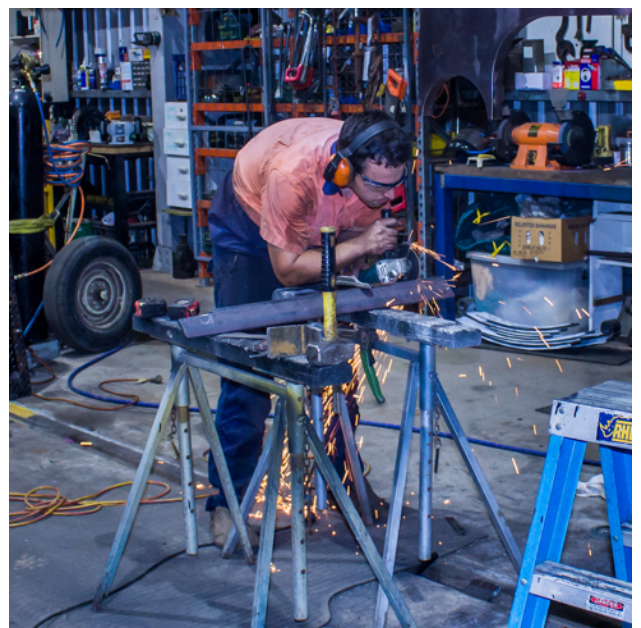
**Goal 2:** Motion Gear and Tender - \$30,000. This will cover the specialist machining of the motion gear as well as fitting the parts and accessories to the tender and includes the internal repaint.

**Goal 3:** Boiler Overhaul - \$80,000. This will cover the complete re-tube of the boiler, internal cleaning and coating, weld repairs, stay replacement, pressure and steam testing as well as its final installation back into the main frames.

Funds will come from a mixture of grant applications and fundraising events but we are keen for ideas from members.

I would like to create a small sub-committee to run fundraising activities both at DownsSteam and other local events.

If you're interested in lending a hand, drop me a line at [info@downsteam.com](mailto:info@downsteam.com) or [andrew@downsteam.com](mailto:andrew@downsteam.com)



## DP13 Update

We're making steady progress on restoring the Gatsby Flyer.

Volunteers have reassembled and reinstalled the rail motor's trailing bogie. The wheel sets were NDT inspected, wheel profiles turned, brake blocks adjusted and bearings inspected and greased.

This has given us a fully overhauled bogie with low rolling resistance.

After being reinstalled, the brakes were connected to the bogie, resulting in a fully serviceable handbrake from the No. 2 end which will soon be reconnected to the air brake system as we start reinstalling its components.

Our current priority is still completing the electrical and mechanical aspects of the No.1 end and returning the power bogie to beneath the rail motor.

We still need volunteers support to finish these jobs, particularly volunteers with trade skills and qualifications.

So if you know someone who may be interested, we'd love to talk to them.

The DP13's radio systems for safe working on the QR mainline network have also arrived.



Supplied by Tait Communications, it's identical to the system fitted to the QR heritage fleet in Ipswich, and fully compatible with the new QR digital network.

This system sends voice and digital data over the network, allowing network control to see the rail motor's exact location and current speed.

Our current work will culminate in the external testing of the power bogie where we will assess the motor, transmission and air system.

With this done, we can return the power bogie to beneath the Gatsby Flyer and have it moving around the yard under its own power.

This will free up more space in the shed and allow us to put other rolling stock over the pit for servicing and overhauling.







## 1172 Update

Volunteers would have heard 1172 revving its engine over the past few months, as the team focus on the finer details of its restoration.

We've made very strong progress.

The throttle notches have been repaired, resulting in the 650hp Cooper Bessemer engine moving through all throttle positions smoothly.

The fuel pump has been sent away for an overhaul and when its returned, it will make 1172 more reliable on the mainline.

With major work on 1172 coming to an end, we've not turned our attention to generating and overhauling spare parts for the locomotive.

The majority of these are being sourced from loco 1177 which has a seized engine and is beyond repair. The team will make an assessment on the 1177 traction motors and wheel sets over the coming months and we may overhaul these bogies to generate spares for 1172.

We are now about to focus on training and currency training for members, including driver assistants and shunters.

Initially, we will fit this in as part of our regular training days, but we will soon start yard operations for members trained and competent in operations.

This will allow those already qualified to continue to practice and revise their training to maintain competency, and confidence and gain experience, in a safe environment.

## **The Big Sweep**

Volunteers have had a good "Spring clean" of the sheds and the rest of the site - albeit in Autumn!

The team has combed through every nook and cranny to get rid of anything deemed "surplus to requirements" to make room for more rolling stock.





## Festival of Rail

In April, DownsSteam volunteers helped mark the 150th anniversary of the opening of the Toowoomba to Ipswich rail link at the inaugural Festival of Rail at Toowoomba Railway Station.

The event featured the arrival of two historic steam locomotives, tours of the historic station and talks by a host of rail experts including our own Robert Ketton and the DownsSteam team sold souvenirs, spread the word about our future plans and formed a guard of honour to welcome the trains.

## From the Chair

Hello members and friends - trust you are keeping warm and well as winter is certainly upon us. Our regular volunteers continue to do an amazing job and without their tireless efforts we wouldn't be progressing the way we are.

I know there are often comments of frustration about achieving our goals. But we must remember we're a volunteer organisation and sometimes the skills we need for certain tasks are not there.

I personally want to thank our team for their dedication. Visitors are often in awe of what we have achieved.

Dollars are an ongoing concern as we face some large expenses with rolling stock restoration. But thanks to the wonderful catering team, our functions income keeps the pot boiling.

We're always applying for grants and it's the luck of the draw if we're successful. But not getting a positive result means we are often restricted in our spending.

The lack of support from our three tiers of government continues to disappoint me. They visit, pat us on the back, say how wonderful we are and then we never hear from them again (although it's not for want of trying).

The board is currently speaking with Queensland Rail property about the large increase on our lease of the two sites. I thank our solicitor and member Pat Nunan for his professional advice regarding this matter.

Enjoy the Newsletter and keep spreading the word about DownsSteam.

Your Chair

*Ros Scotney*

