Welcome to our second newsletter for 2003. Contributions to this newsletter will be welcome.

**Progress on NSU63 locomotive.** In the past month Project Director Mick Kent has made good progress with the NSU. During a visit to Pitchi-Ritchi, Mick determined the appropriate paint colours to use. Work has started on fabricating steel panels to cover the openings in the body which were originally filled by radiators, cooling fans and access panels. Vic Martin from Territory Transport Refinishers is preparing to prepare the body for painting and to paint it with paint donated by Spies Hekker. Chris Renehan has been actively assisting with research, drawings and restoration of components. Meanwhile we are still seeking relief from a push to shift the loco from its prominent position beside the highway to cater for possible highway duplication in the next 20 years.

**Grounds Maintenance at the Railway Heritage Precinct.** Mowing and Slashing contractor CS Services did an excellent job at tidying up the precinct on Tuesday 2 April in anticipation of a visit by Heritage and Tourism Minister Chris Burns on 4 April. The clean-up was very timely in view of trenching work that had just occurred. Proprietor of CS Services Cameron Stone has an interest in heritage railways and has become an official Friend. Thanks for your efforts Cameron and welcome on board.

**Ministerial Visit deferred.** Unfortunately Minister Chris Burns was unable to make it on 4 April and has rescheduled the visit for Easter Monday afternoon 21 April en route from Katherine to Darwin.

**Undergrounding services.** On the last weekend in March, a big working bee was held to continue with the undergrounding of power and telephone services to the precinct. About 200m of trenching was undertaken by Bill Waldie from Two Jays Trenching. Working with Bill, our volunteers installed a 10 pair telephone cable to the railway station along with conduits for an underground power cable. Trenches were also dug to the toilet block and the Sidney Williams hut for power supplies, etc. Great care was needed to avoid damage to existing underground asbestos and cast iron water pipes. The work exposed the water pipe connections between the elevated tank and the town in the 1960’s and also the 2” cast iron main that brought water up from the river to the elevated tank when the reservoir was low in 1913?
Association of Tourist Railways. On Thursday 11 April we were invited by Geoff Everett (President of Bellarine Peninsula Railway) to attend a meeting of the ATR in Melbourne. This is the Victorian umbrella association for tourist railways with 22 members. Public Liability Insurance was a major item on the agenda for the meeting. This body is leading the push to incorporate a national organisation to lobby on issues such as PL insurance, safety standards, etc. The meeting noted that no state organisation existed in the NT and the meeting agreed to consider an application from Friends of Adelaide River to become an Associate Member. ATR Secretary John Frost was most welcoming and it was good to meet him after previous e-mail contact.

Profile of a Friend. We are constantly amazed at the support that we receive from distant Friends. In this newsletter we profile Stephen Leach from Alice Springs. Professionally, Steve is an Electrical Engineer. Steve has done a lot of work with the Ghan Preservation Society. Last year Steve was kind enough to provide us with a soft copy of the extensive documentation that we need for the Rail Safety Manual that we will need to gain accreditation. Recently Steve drove up to Adelaide River from Alice Springs in the “Yellow Peril” and spent two weeks working for us at the precinct. Steve enjoyed the experience so much that he has applied for a position in Darwin so that he can be a little closer to the River. Many thanks to Fran Briggs for accommodating Steve during his visit.

Timbers for the BIG bridge. Following our work on cleaning up the BIG bridge earlier in the year, we noted the need for wooden sleepers to replace the burned sleepers. It is pleasing to report that Darwin construction company STEELCON has donated a large heap of heavy timbers which it has salvaged from a restoration project on the Darwin Wharf. These 8” x 6” timbers (possibly jarrah) are long enough to stretch from side girder to side girder to facilitate the future decking of the bridge for a walkway. Our Friend, Peter Cornell for Porky’s Pickups has offered to transport the timber to Adelaide River. Thanks to Steelcon and Porky’s.

Recognition of the Engineering Heritage of the BIG bridge. The Institution of Engineers, Australia has a program of recognising national engineering landmarks. The Overland Telegraph has been recognised and plaqued as a national engineering landmark in 1997 (during its 125th birthday). Our Friend, Owen Peake, has just about finished the extensive documentation on the bridge that is required to submit its nomination to Canberra for national assessment. Thanks go to Owen, Janice Lake and Fiona for this major work.

Heritage Conservation and Management Plan. Director of Heritage, Steve Sutton, has announced that the Architects Studio has been awarded the major consultancy to prepare our C&M plan. Consultant Peter Fletcher is well known to us and comes with excellent credentials for this important project. Part of the consultancy involves consultation with all of the relevant stakeholders.
**Grant Applications.** In March we lodged a number of applications with the Community Grant committee seeking grants of up to $5,000 for minor projects. This followed our major submission to the federal Regional Assistance Program. Applications are now open for the Regional Museums Grants Support Program (Sue Harlow) and the Heritage Grants Program (Steve Sutton). Preparation of grant applications is time consuming and needs to be well done. Offers of assistance in this area will be welcome. Soft copies of much material is available to ease the effort.

**Linkages to Bellarine Peninsula Railway.** Our already healthy relationship with BPR via Rob Davies was strengthened in early April when we met with President Geoff Everett and Rob Davies to discuss a number of areas of mutual interest. BPR has four steam locomotives, all requiring boiler work, and is in the midst of a major decision-making and investment program (involving funding submissions just like us). Peter Cornell (Porky’s Pickups) also took the opportunity to visit Ballarat and Queenscliffe during a recent business trip down south which included Tasmania, Zig-Zag railway and Cairns. Rupert Capper (Secretary of BPR) has also been helpful along with Col Jennings at West Coast Railways loco depot at Ballarat (which in its heyday included two turntables inside the loco shed).,

**Adelaide River School develops the herb garden.** The staff and students at the Adelaide River School have adopted the heritage railway station for a horticulture project. Work has commenced using recycled materials, plants donated by Greening Australia and top soil donated by Fawcett cattle Company. We look forward to seeing this project “blossom”. Many thanks to Trish Forscutt, Jane Ellem, Michelle McLean and the students at the school.

**Minister Vatskalis donates traffic control barriers.** During April the Minister for Infrastructure Planning and Environment (Hon Kon Vatskalis) donated 30 steel pipe barriers to us for use as traffic control measures within the precinct. These will enable us to stop vehicular movement close to the station. Many thanks Minister.

**Work on Dorat Road level crossing.** During the next few weeks, ADrail will be working at the level crossing. After building a bypass road, they will install a short section of standard gauge track across Dorat Road and will then ramp Dorat Road up to the new level (about 600mm higher than the present level). We are liaising with ADrail and the Roads Department (DIPE) to arrange lifting of the NAR to the same level at the same time. We have already spent one weekend unbolting fishplates (yes again!!) to enable about 100m of the NAR track to be ramped up and over the new level crossing. Our Mick Kent has established liaison with ADrail’s Steve Musgrave. It may be prudent for us to lift the NAR track over Easter.

**Good Response to invitation to become a Friend.** In our February Newsletter we included a membership form and invitation. We were delighted by the immediate response especially from some people who we know are very busy. If you have not joined yet, could we invite you to consider it now. Not only are the modest subscription fees useful in helping to meet our
administrative costs, the evidence of a significant number of Friends (committed enough to fill in the form and send money), is very helpful as supporting documentation in our funding submissions. Naturally we do not divulge individual details, just global numbers. A membership form is attached at the bottom of this newsletter.

**Linkages with Birdum Historical Society.** As you will know, Birdum was the end of the Never Never line (500km from Darwin). Work on the transcontinental dream stopped at Birdum during the Great Depression in 1929. BHS (including Anne Kanters and Barry Sharp) is valiantly trying to preserve and record what remains at Larrimah to Birdum (8km). We have struck up an accord to be of mutual assistance and Anne and Barry have become financial Friends of Adelaide River and several of us have joined BHS.

**National Trust Tour of Adelaide River Military sites.** On the Queens Birthday weekend, the National Trust Larrakeyah Branch has arranged for military historian Bob Alford to guide a tour of historic military sites around Adelaide River. A brunch is programmed at the station on Sunday 8 June for the visiting party. Volunteers to assist with this fundraising activity are needed (please contact Judy Richardson at 0439 843 747). Anyone wishing to join Bob on the tour should contact Robyn Smith on E-mail: women@northernexposure.com.au or by facsimile 8948 3566. Finalised details will then be forwarded to all those who have expressed interest.

**Draft Master Plan.** In order to start putting some of concepts down on a piece of paper. Chris Renehan has kindly prepared the first draft of our Master Plan for the Railway Heritage Precinct. A reduced copy of the draft Master Plan is attached. We would welcome comments that anyone may have on the plan.

**Annual General meeting (Inaugural)** As we are now incorporated, it is timely to plan our inaugural Annual General Meeting. The meeting will provide a forum for reporting on our activities and plans and also to elect office bearers for the ensuing 12 months. We are tentatively programming this meeting for the Queens Birthday weekend (possibly Saturday morning 7 June 2003). A formal notice of the meeting will follow. The venue for the meeting will be the railway station at Adelaide River. We know that this is the Adelaide River Show weekend and that locals may be committed there. However we should be able to get their nominations in before the meeting. Visitors from Darwin could visit the show after attending the AGM.

**HeritageWeek 2003.** Don’t forget our Railway Picnic Day on Monday 4 August. Bring you picnic baskets and relax at the station. Barbeque facilities will be available. A sub-committee to organise this event is needed and if it appeals to you please let us know.

**Caretakers.** Our caretaker (Ron Neist) from Narooma has advised that the Bass fishing was not so good this season and so Ron is heading north on Wednesday 16 April. Unfortunately Judy Rowland has commitments
Narooma and will hopefully join Ron at a later date. Please call in and say Gidday to Ron when he arrives after Easter.

**Volunteers to Open the Museum.** We need more volunteers to make the roster less onerous on the few. Tourists are starting to appear and we should be opening the station museum as often as possible after Easter. We would appreciate any time that you can give, whether it is a full day, half day or just a few hours now and then. Local residents of Adelaide River will be especially welcome. For more details please contact Judy Richardson 0439 843 747. After he arrives, Ron will co-ordinate the roster and the telephone number at the station is 8976 7101. Our existing volunteers (including retirees) report that the experience at the station is rewarding and appreciated by the travellers that drop in. So, come on folks and lend a hand to this worthwhile community project.

Please indicate your support for this work by becoming a Friend of Adelaide River. You can do this by filling in your contact details below.

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION:**

Name: .................................................................................

Mail Address: ........................................................................
...........................................................................................

Telephone: ..............................................................................

Fax: .........................................................................................

E-mail: ...................................................................................

Donations of $25 will be most welcome and will cover the costs of postage etc.
Our mailing address is PO Box 3504, Darwin NT 0801.
Phone (08) 8924 7093 or mobile 0417 838 578