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*Australian Narrow Gauge Railway Museum Society,
trading as the Woodford Railway, is located
25 km west of Caboolture in Woodford, Queensland*

Volume 34

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September/October 2013



The sleeper recovery team with bundles of round hole sleepers ready for transport. Ryan Thomas photographer.

Running Days: First and Third Sundays

**Trackwork Saturdays: 14 Sep, 19 Oct and 16 Nov
(Note changed weekends)**

Work Days: Every Saturday; Light Duties on Third Wednesday

Our Safety Goal - No Injuries

ANGRMS: Margaret Street, Woodford (PO Box 1135, Woodford Qld 4514)
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Terry Olsson	President, Operations, Sales and Marketing	m: 0429100911 terryolsson1@hotmail.com
Gordon Anderson	Vice President, Safety and Training	(07) 3205 6109 gha383@bigpond.com
Bob Gough	Vice President	(07) 3848 3769 (7 pm - 9 pm only) bundybob003@bigpond.com
Ian Thompson	Secretary	(07) 3848 5611 ianthompson359@gmail.com
Steve Baker	Treasurer	m: 0428572495
Greg Stephenson	Track Day Coordinator	(07) 3844 9269 or m: 0423417326 greg.stephenson@uqconnect.net
Neil Trevorrow	Roster Clerk	(07) 3263 6761 or m: 0402051546 trevorrow26@optusnet.com.au
Brian Webber	Special Running Days, Group Bookings	(07) 3354 2140 bwebber5@bigpond.com
Lynn Zelmer	Webmaster, DRB Editor	lynn@zelmeroz.com
	ANGRMS web site	www.angrms.org.au
Woodford	Station Master's Office	(07) 5496 1976

Scheduled Activities

General Meetings: *Third* Friday: Feb, Apr, Jun, Aug, Oct, Dec; combined with LRRSA at the BCC Library, Garden City Shopping Centre, Mt Gravatt; 7:30 pm, entry from 7:00 pm (after hours entrance at rear of Library).

Light Duties Work Day: Third Wednesday of each month. The gates open 9.30 am to 4.00 pm.

Donations and Bequests

Donations to the Society's Museum Fund are tax deductible. Please make cheques payable to the 'Australian Narrow Gauge Railway Museum Society' and mail to the PO Box above or deliver in person. Remember to include a note indicating that it's a donation, plus your name and address so that a receipt can be posted to you.

We appreciate your help and support now, but also consider mentioning the Society in your Will. Donations/bequests can be for a particular project or for museum development (restoration or infrastructure). For details, contact the President

President's Report

Terry Olsson, President

By their very nature heritage railways are labour intensive operations. Even though we use volunteers it is still important to improve the way we do things and where possible work towards reducing the amount of hard yakka type input required – without reducing safety and even improving it where possible.

With this in mind, during July a number of ANGRMS members spent nearly a week up north collecting concrete sleepers for use in our track extension as well as for day to day maintenance. This, along with some steel sleepers we are obtaining for use in points etc, means ANGRMS is now able to revolutionise our track work. While it will take many years and many more sleepers, we can now move towards reduced track maintenance in the future.

I would like to thank Greg Stephenson, John Parnell, Steve Baker, Ryan Thomas, Wayne Harman, Graham Wilson and Dave Caruzzo for their incredible help and efforts up north, as well as Tony Lindsay and Jim Itzstein for their help in unloading back in Woodford. I would also like to thank the staff at Victoria Mill for their invaluable help and assistance.

We have decided to keep other news to a minimum in this issue and focus on the sleeper gathering trip. Greg Stephenson has provided more detail in his report covering this trip.

In addition to the concrete sleepers, we also took delivery of a quantity of used 1067mm gauge steel sleepers on the 14 August. These will be used for sets of points where standard concrete sleepers cannot be used. A big thank you to Greg Stephenson, John Parnell, Morrie Mason, Geoff Westcott, Kerry Rassmussen and Tony Lindsay for their help on this day.

Remember – safety first!

Some Civil Notes

Greg Stephenson, Track Day Coordinator

Sources of Track Materials

A fundamental part of any railway track infrastructure is the sleepers. These are placed at approximately 600mm centres, which means to lay track from Peterson Road to Chambers Road we will need ultimately need about 2,500 sleepers. Added to this, the planned works at Storeybrook Station,

replacements in Woodford yard and mainline maintenance can easily use another 1,500 sleepers. To minimise future long term maintenance, we have been aiming to use more durable sleepers than the conventional timber sleepers. The challenge has been to find "economical" sources of prestressed concrete and steel sleepers.

Prestressed Concrete Sleepers

Following a series of leads and negotiations, Wilmar Sugar Australia Limited's Victoria Mill near Ingham in North Queensland offered us reclaimed "obsolete" prestressed concrete sleepers. However, it was our responsibility to sort, stack and strap the sleepers into pallet size bundles and arrange for road transport. The call for volunteers was answered by Steve Baker, Dave Caruzzo, Wayne Harman, Terry Olsson, John Parnell, Greg Stephenson, Ryan Thomas and Graham Wilson (from Cairns). Our accommodation was the Station Hotel and travelling by various means we gathered there on Sunday 14 July 2013. A grand old Hotel of its era, it is ideally situated for railway enthusiasts with the Victoria Mill Cane Railway crossing the Queensland Rail mainline directly outside the Hotel.

Monday, 15 July 2013, we headed to Victoria Mill for the "Contractor Safety Induction" where the safety rules and procedures were explained. This reinforced our own practices with which are we familiar from working under our own Safety Management System. It was late morning, before we were introduced to the mountains of sleepers that were stockpiled. The first task was to relocate one of the crew wagons close to the work site. This became our shelter, store and recovery area for our time at the Mill.

It soon became apparent that there were two main types of sleepers available – those with round holes for bolts and plates to hold the rails to the sleepers and those with square holes for elastic gauge spikes – different plates or gauge spikes allow the sleepers to be used for a range of different rail sizes. In removing the rails from the sleepers, at least 2 of the connections had been cut off. We decided to remove cut bolts from the round hole sleepers but leave any intact fittings in place – these were stacked with timber packing between the layers of sleepers. With the square hole sleepers, all gauge spikes were removed by placing the sleepers upside down and driving them out with punches and jack hammers – this had the advantage that any sleepers where the spikes could not be removed without damaging the sleeper were rejected on site and not transported back to Woodford. These sleepers would be ready for immediate re-use at Woodford on arrival.

With the guidance and support of the Mill staff, we soon had a production line going to process the sleepers and stack them into bundles that were bound with steel strapping before moving them to storage awaiting transport. The

process was repeated over and over and over again through Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Friday morning was mostly taken up with final clean up of the area and stacking rejected sleepers.

We arranged with "Micky" Mina of M & L Mina Transport to organise the transport back to Woodford – they are long term contractors to the Mill and used to working within the Mill and with their staff. This made these arrangements much easier for us especially as some materials were not transported until after we had left Ingham.

Whilst the Mill loaded the sleepers for us, the challenge then became to get them unloaded at Woodford. The original plan was to have Norm Bradley, a retired logging contractor, unload them but in the weeks prior to our departure his loader suffered a chronic transmission failure and was not be available. Jim Itzstein offered to bring in his spare backhoe with forks from the farm and leave it at the museum for us provided we had an operator. When the sleepers were scheduled to arrive, family health problems prevented Bob Gough from operating the loader as originally planned. We were extremely fortunate that Tony Lindsay was able to answer our desperate calls from Ingham to unload the sleepers at short notice. Both Tony and Jim provided great support in unloading the sleepers and particular thanks go to Jim for his overnight repairs to a leaking hydraulic ram on his backhoe to ensure that unloading of the truck was not delayed. Special thanks also go to those other members that assisted with the unloading.

We also need to remember that having 8 people in Ingham as well as those involved in unloading activities, stretched our resources. Thanks are also due to those that stayed at home to maintain our normal public running days, releasing some operating people for the sleeper recovery activities.

As well as obtaining vital track materials for our future needs, it was a very valuable experience for us to be exposed to maintenance and operation practices of a very busy operating cane railway. We saw many new techniques, practices and materials that we can incorporate into our activities at Woodford. The opportunity to work alongside the experienced "navvies" was also invaluable. The guidance and support offered by the many Mill employees was far beyond our expectations and was pure North Queensland hospitality at its finest. To all those people that made our time at the Mill both productive and enjoyable mere words cannot convey our gratitude.

On a personal note, I would like to thank the other members of the recovery team. I know we all worked to beyond what we believed we were physically capable of and put in a Herculean performance to work from sun up to sun down to achieve what we did in the short time available. I believe that the way we conducted ourselves at the Mill and in Ingham reflected very well on the commitment and professionalism of our organisation.



Removing the bolts from round hole concrete sleepers as the loader adds more sleepers to the waiting pile. Greg Stephenson photographer.

Steel Sleepers

In our search for track materials, some time ago we sourced a good supply of ex-QR steel sleepers. Long periods of continued wet weather had prevented road access for their collection. A return to fine weather finally resulted in these sleepers being delivered to Woodford on Wednesday 14 August 2013. Fortunately, this coincided with the Royal Queensland Show (EKKA) public holiday so more assistance with unloading was available. Jim Itzstein's loader was still on-site from the concrete sleeper unloading and Tony Lindsay offered to unload the steel sleepers as well. During the unloading operation, the loader developed an electrical fault causing it to shut down.

When we were exploring options for unloading the concrete sleepers, we had approached CRT Woodford Country Store in Archer Street about the possibility of using their forklift. Whilst we had made other arrangements for those sleepers, they made their forklift available at short notice to cover the loader breakdown. Without this support, it would have been a very long afternoon unloading sleepers from the truck by hand. We are deeply indebted to CRT Woodford Country Store for responding to our desperate pleas for urgent assistance.

The steel sleepers will be initially used to fabricate pointwork required at Storeybrook Station using the weld-on shoulders and "e" clips donated by Pandrol Australia.

Whilst we have a good supply of both prestressed concrete and steel sleepers now available at Woodford, they serve little purpose unless we use them in the track. Our challenge is to now capitalise on our efforts in Ingham by stepping up our track construction and maintenance efforts. All help to achieve this goal will be appreciated.

Track Maintenance Work

As well as construction projects, the sleepers will be used for our normal track maintenance requirements. As we progressively do sleeper renewals in concrete, the maintenance requirements on existing track should significantly reduce as well.

The monthly track work parties will generally be held on the third Saturday of the month to allow some members to spend their weekend at Woodford with Saturday devoted to trackwork and Sunday to train operations. The track work days are scheduled for Saturdays 14 September (2nd Saturday), 19 October and 16 November 2013.

Operations, Sales And Marketing

Terry Olsson, Operations, Sales and Marketing

Public Running Days

As noted in my Presidents report, we are focusing this issue of the DRB on our trip up north so this report will only be a brief one this month.

Passenger wise, we continue to be down on last year so please help promote our running days when and wherever you can.

Date Claimers

Saturday 30 November 2013 - we now have two events on this day so need extra help! The Kilcoy District Historical Society will be holding an event in Yowie Park at Kilcoy to mark the Centenary of the opening of the QGR railway from Woodford to Kilcoy and we will need helpers on this day. The Nambour and District Historical Society at Nambour will also be holding an open day to mark 10 years since the closure of Moreton Sugar Mill.

Sunday 22 December 2013 - ANGRMS and the Woodford Men's Shed are also looking to hold another Open Day and special running day (the actual Centenary day) so we will be looking for a train crew as well as other helpers on this day.

Monthly Statistics

	May 2013	June 2013
Paying Passengers	205	140
Guards Sheet	263	198

Sales Items

History of Com Eng – Volume 5: By the time you receive this we should have this new volume in stock. This is the last in this excellent series on this now non-existent but well known rolling stock manufacturer. Price: \$65.00 plus postage if applicable

Locomotives of Australia – 5th Edition: We now have stocks of this excellent book on locomotives of Australia. Price: \$49.95 plus postage if applicable.

The Truckie who Loved Trains: We now have copies of this excellent new publication about Ken Thomas, founder of TNT which used rail to move a lot of their freight. Price: \$35.00 plus postage if applicable.

Facebook

ANGRMS now has a Facebook page -"ANGRMS - The Woodford Railway". If you are on Facebook please have a look. Contributions welcome.



Tony Lindsay operating the CRT Woodford Country Store's forklift to complete unloading of steel sleepers. Due to limited off-road capability of the forklift, they were placed into a temporary stockpile. Greg Stephenson photographer.