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The old and the new dray wheel

From the President

The winter is again upon us and volunteers and visitors are enjoying our heating system powered by solar credits.

Progress continues in a number of areas at the museum. By the time you get this there should be a timber frame on our new reception annex. To date this has been held up by backlog problems but these are now cleared, and it should be full steam ahead.

The new machinery shed is slowly being filled with implements. The old Council grader and the little red F14 tractor which have been in the open for nearly 20 years are now under cover. Interpretation has been added to most of these items so visitors can find out their provenance and use.

Jim Hawkes has been able to locate a vertical boiler for the museum. This was delivered a couple of weeks ago and has been repaired and installed next to the hay steamer. The boiler completes the story of how this rare piece of local machinery worked.

Visitors will now notice our restored entrance gate. This has been made possible by the donation, by Highland Pine Products, of large posts from the old Timber Industries building demolition, and funding from a Stronger Country Communities Grant. The new posts, combined with 120 year old galvanised iron, and a coat of paint on the old

gate, have now given us an entrance we can be proud of. A big improvement! Thank you Markus.

Work on the Robinson Dray has continued, and a rear wheel has been completely restored in the traditional manner. This involved hot shoeing the rim onto new fellows. See the story attached. The museum is now confident of completing the other three wheels, and has the timber to complete a heritage appropriate restoration of this 100 year old piece of Oberon's local history.

There are other projects still to come including the restoration of the slab hut. To all our local supporters come and see some of these improvements.

Col Roberts



The Robinson Dray restoration

A trial was undertaken to see if the enormous dray wheels could be restored to their former glory. This involved the cutting of seven new fellows from a large slab of dried hardwood. Suitable timber was found amongst the beams being demolished at Timber Industries. These were taken to Oberon Engineering together with a template. The template was digitised, to guide Oberon Engineering's high pressure water cutter to cut each fellow. This was very much a trial to see if modern technology could improve on a traditional process of cutting these curved sections. The water cutter did a magnificent job, and each fellow was identical and perfectly cut. The fellows were taken to the workshop where 40mm spoke holes were cut in the fellows so they would fit over the spokes.

Once fitted to the spokes, the fellows needed to be shaped to the profile of the rim which has a curved cross-section. The rim was then heated up to nearly 300°C so that it expanded enough to stretch over the profile of the fellows. The Rusty Restorers helped on the day and the rim was just the right temperature to squeeze over the wheel. When cooled the whole wheel was as tight as new, no bolts, screws or glue! We are now more comfortable about the other wheels and the dray restoration project which will continue.



Heating the rim, carrying the hot rim, seating the rim, cooling the rim, finished product with Col on front page

Excursion to Molong Museum

Twelve Oberon folk recently travelled to Molong to visit the Molong Museum. This very interesting museum was originally built as a hotel. It comprises many very interesting rooms full of wonderful displays.

One room is all about Fairbridge Farm School which used to be just outside of Molong. At the moment there is a fantastic photographic exhibition.

After this visit we had an enjoyable lunch at the Lime and Stone Cafe and then the "girls" had a bit of retail therapy in the interesting shops there.

The photograph is in front of the Fairbridge Farm bell.



Oberon Museum's restored entrance

