

Tarana Valley Tour

– or an alternative way to Sydney with an emphasis on Railway History

Distance – Oberon /Tarana / Hampton / Oberon - 107km

(longer with extended options – Revised 2009)

These are country roads – take care, drive slowly, most bends have no advisory speed signs.

Km	Int.	Instruction	(Int. = Intermediate distance)
		Start from the main street (Oberon Street) in front of the shops and proceed towards Goulburn. Turn RIGHT at the SHELL service station – signposted TARANA.	
0.0	0.0	ZERO your tripmeter (odometer) at the SHELL corner.	
0.2	0.2	Notice the Railway Station on your LEFT. This was the terminus for the 24km railway from Tarana at the junction with the main western railway. The line was opened in 1923 and served the community until 1979. The station and most of the railway yard is in excellent condition and is listed under the NSW Heritage Act. OTHR (Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway Inc. will operate from here to Hazelgrove in Stage 1 of the restoration project)	
0.5	0.3	Roundabout – go STRAIGHT AHEAD on Lowes Mount Road. Notice the old railway stockyards on the corner. There are very few railway stock loading facilities preserved in Australia. This is being maintained by OTHR. The track to the west of the stockyards is cleared and will be re-sleepered soon.	
		You are now travelling North, past the Carter Holt Harvey sawmill on the left and the new Customwood, Moulding & Pineboard factory on the right. The railway line crossed the road from left to right in front of the Caltex service station. The new crossing may be visible by a line marked on the road.	
		The old railway formation can be seen on the right close to the road. From here to Hazelgrove, reconstruction work can be seen on the line with most sleepers being replaced. The line was constructed as a Pioneer line which meant that the sleepers and light line were laid directly on an earth embankment. Although services were suspended in 1979, the line was never closed. It is possible to turn right into Clover Lane and Rutters Ridge Road to see the new crossings installed across each road. The line can be viewed from these stops as well.	
2.9	2.4	In the vicinity of the Garbage Tip, the line veers slightly away from the road. If the Tip Gate is open, the new rail crossing and cattle stop can be seen by venturing a short way up the Tip Road.	
5.5	2.6	More reconstruction work can be seen again by turning Right into Black Bullock Rd.	
6.8	1.3	Follow Black Bullock Rd. (CAUTION – sharp curves – no signs) and travel just past the end of the tar to the site of the old Hazelgrove Station. It is possible to enter the station area via the railway line but watch for snakes in summer. Trains going to Tarana stopped near here to wind-on the handbrakes for the very steep descent to Carlwood. A picnic area is to be built here. The re-sleepering starts here and extends to Oberon to the South	
8.1	1.3	Return to the Lowes Mount Rd and turn Right.	
9.4	1.3	Pass Faugha Ballaugh Rd (“Fogger Boller”)	

- 12.0 2.6 Descend Lowes Mount – Snakes Valley is to the right – the railway struggled at 1 in 25 up (or down) this valley. One of the steepest climbs in the state. The old Hazelgrove Station is at the top of the hill and Carlwood at the bottom. Produce such as peas, beans, potatoes, stock (sheep & cattle) & timber made up the outgoing loadings.
- Evans Crown National Park & distinctive granite rock formations can be seen on the far horizon to the right. Sidmouth Valley opens to the left with O’Connell some 13km in the distance and Bathurst beyond that.
- 17.1 5.1 **OPTIONAL DETOUR TO VISIT CARLWOOD STATION SITE**
Crossroad – (signposted “Bathurst” / “Carlwood”) Turn Right to Carlwood Station locality. This road follows William Cox’s Western Road which connected Sydney to Bathurst in 1815.
- 18.9 1.8 Follow the road across a timber bridge on a dirt road. The road veers left here and it is best to park just past the bridge and as far off the road as possible. Walk up the hill to the station area and railway line. This site has undergone rehabilitation.
- It is possible to walk along the line back towards Hazelgrove until you get to the old Snakes Valley Creek trestle bridge. *Don’t attempt to walk across the bridge as it is UNSAFE.* Beyond the bridge is private property
- 20.7 1.8 Return to the Lowes Mount Rd and turn Right (signpost Tarana 10km)
- 25.3 4.6 The railway formation reappears on the right with the old iron bridge over the Fish River visible (just before the signposted Left Hand Bend). This bridge is a transom top web plate girder bridge (1923) and is in excellent condition.
Evans Crown becomes clear on the horizon on the right at 90 degrees to the car. This is a good place to visit as there is a fairly easy climb to the top with spectacular views.
- 26.3 1.0 Just after St. Peters Anglican Church (1871) turn RIGHT at a Tee Junction (signposted “Tarana 4”)
- Pass a nice Restaurant on the right (“Mutton Falls” 1840) just before crossing the (un-named) Fish River. (the restaurant opens only for pre-arranged bookings)
- 27.2 0.9 Cross the Tarana – Oberon railway line and watch the progress of the line winding towards the main western railway line at Tarana
- 30.7 3.5 Turn RIGHT at the Tee Junction (signposted “Lithgow”) This is the historic village of Tarana (Ta-Ra-Nah – emphasis on the last syllable) – a railway town on the main Western line & junction of the branch line to Oberon.
- 31.0 0.3 Tarana Hotel – an important stopping place – **mandatory pause for liquid refreshment & or lunch!** Wash away the strains of your long journey from Hazelgrove. Have a drink – the beer garden is nice. Also take the chance to walk down the hill to the railway and see the Heritage restoration at the station. Steps lead to the station from the back of the pub.
There is a good view from the pedestrian overbridge. The original water tank is in place and the remains of a water column stand near the Sydney end of the platform.

If you are impressed by the work done by our volunteers, and you would like to assist, you can make a donation (tax deductible) or help by joining OTHR.

Membership forms are on our website (www.ozsite.com.au/oberonrailway) or Ring or Treasurer (Marjorie) on 02 6337 5835

OPTION 1: GO STRAIGHT BACK TO OBERON VIA HAZELGROVE (HALF DIRT)

- 31.2 0.2 Leave the hotel & turn RIGHT at the flagpole and monument then go RIGHT at the cross road – **but this is a DIRT ROAD** (12km of dirt requiring *careful driving*) and takes you back to Oberon on the Hazelgrove Rd. If you follow this route, travel for 24km and go right to the end of the road and turn RIGHT, then first LEFT which brings you back to Oberon Street – go RIGHT to the town centre.

OPTION 2: DO A LOOP VIA SODWALLS, LAKE LYELL, LITHGOW, HAMPTON

- 31.2 0.2 Leave the hotel & turn RIGHT at the flagpole and monument then go STRAIGHT AHEAD at the cross road (signposted “Sodwalls” and “Lithgow”) Don’t go under the railway line or up the dirt road.

You will pass Honeysuckle Falls Rd into Evans Crown should you ever return to do the excellent medium walk to the top of Evans Crown (excellent district views).

- 40.8 9.6 The village of Sodwalls – once, an important station on the main western railway. The station buildings have been removed.

After Sodwalls be CAREFUL of two narrow bridges with sharp bends. Between them, there is a CAUSEWAY – **SLOW DOWN!**

- 45.3 4.5 Turn RIGHT at the Tee junction and then immediately LEFT towards Lithgow

Enjoy the views of the country around Lake Lyell which provides cooling water for both Wallerawang and Mt Piper Power Stations The lake is used for sailing, water skiing & fishing.

- 51.0 5.7 Turn RIGHT into the Dam Viewing car park and have a walk around. Then proceed over the rest of the dam wall and up the hill. If you pull off to the left just near the overhead high voltage steel power pylons, there is an excellent view behind you of the whole area around the dam.

- 56.5 5.5 This is Bowenfels and the intersection with the Great Western Highway. Meals are available at the Shell service station and the Donnybrook Hotel is across the road. **See OPTION 4 OR...**

OPTION 3: CONTINUE AROUND THE LOOP TO OBERON VIA HAMPTON

Turn RIGHT towards Sydney.

- 58.2 1.7 Turn RIGHT onto McKanes Falls Rd.

- 63.3 5.1 Cross restored timber bridge – McKane’s Bridge – Cox’s River

- 65.7 2.4 Turn RIGHT – signposted Jenolan Caves 40

- 78.1 12.3 Township of Hampton & the Hampton Hotel – originally a halfway coach stop for trips from Katoomba to Jenolan Caves. Notice the Rydal Road off to the right – passes through the town and station at Rydal.

- 83.6 5.5 Turn RIGHT on the Duckmaloi Rd to Oberon

- 107.0 23.4 You have returned to Oberon – go straight ahead for the main street & shops.

OPTION 4: VISIT LITHGOW &/or ZIG ZAG RAILWAY/ BELL / MT. VICTORIA

Follow OPTION 2 then – at Bowenfels, turn LEFT to Lithgow (approx 3km) and explore Lithgow,

To get there, turn RIGHT at McDonalds and go straight through to the main street of Lithgow. The Lithgow State Mine Railway and Museum is found by going to the top end of the main street and turn left over the railway line. Then follow the signs.

By continuing through Lithgow on the Chifley Rd. (towards Bell and Sydney) for approximately 10km, you will arrive at Clarence which is the terminus of the ZIG ZAG Tourist Railway. Trains run every day (except Xmas day).

As an approximate guide: **Steam Services** operate on: Weekends and Public Holidays, Wednesdays and NSW School Holidays. Other days use vintage Rail Motors. The trains depart from Clarence at 11.00, 1.00, and 3.00 (subject to confirmation). The minimum return journey takes about 1.5 hours.

Phone 02 6351 4826 for recorded timetable information.

After visiting Zig Zag you can continue to **Bell** and either:

- go straight on via Bell's Line of Road to Sydney
- OR turn RIGHT at Bell and go to **Mount Victoria**. There is a museum in the station building at Mt. Victoria and several places to eat, shop and explore. The hotel has accommodation and serves meals. The Great Western Highway is intersected at Mt. Victoria – turning LEFT takes you to Sydney via Katoomba, turning RIGHT takes you back to Oberon, Lithgow or Bathurst.

Thank you for travelling through our scenic district – please enjoy the rest of your stay.

