



Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia Inc.

www.cotma.org.au

News Update June 2015

From the Chairman

Hi everyone

Suddenly we are half way through 2015 and it's been quite a while since the last news update.

At the end of last month (Queen's Birthday weekend) I attended the annual conference of the Federation of Rail Organisations of NZ (FRONZ), this year held in Blenheim and hosted by the Blenheim Riverside Railway, a 2ft gauge line which runs some 5kms from the centre of town to Brayshaw Heritage Park and recently extended a further kilometre to the Air Museum at Omaka. Those COTMA members who were on the pre-conference tour from Christchurch to the Wellington conference in 2010 will remember the interesting ride on the railway much of which at that time was under water!. Not so this time because Blenheim has been suffering from a drought, (which may have been broken a few days ago with the severe weather conditions that have hit the whole country!). On that occasion we ran out of time to see Omaka, and I have to say that seeing it now, it has been worth waiting for. It now features an amazing, world class WW1 aircraft display, largely thanks to the efforts and generosity of film producer Peter Jackson and Weta Workshop. With over 100 (mainly railway folk) in attendance, the tramway community were well represented by attendees from Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch and as usual there was an interesting and useful programme of speakers and activities. Of some concern is the increasing emphasis (some would say over-reaction) on some elements of health and safety, in part a spinoff from the West Coast Pike River coal mine disaster in 2010 (29 miners lost) which is now having impacts for example on running passenger trains through tunnels, particularly heritage rolling stock. There are changes coming to the H&S legislation which may also place increased liability on volunteer groups and individuals, currently on hold while subject to internal debate within the governing National Party. The Heritage Tramways Trust (Ferrymead) was the FRONZ Tramways Award winner this year, with its refurbishment of Dunedin Box Car 11, now back operating on the City Tramway.

I have also been rather busy over the last while with the part of my day job I enjoy the most - project leader for the tram reinstatement and completion of a first stage of the tram extension in central Christchurch. Now successfully achieved but having to cope with the ongoing challenges in a city in the midst of a major rebuild, which won't be finished anytime soon! If not before, you will all have the opportunity to see this for yourselves in October next year, when Christchurch hosts the 2016 COTMA Conference (first conference bulletin below)

There have been a number of other Australasian tramway happenings and highlights since our last Update, and these are itemised below. I am looking forward to being in Melbourne again in August, for the COTMA AGM, as described elsewhere in this update.

Dave Hinman

Omission

In the December 2014 Update we listed the Achievement Award winners announced at the Sydney Conference....except we failed to mention MOTAT as an Achievement Award recipient for its restoration of Melbourne SW6 906. This error has also occurred on the Awards page of the COTMA website, but has now been rectified. Our apology to MOTAT.

COTMA 2015 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 2015 Annual General Meeting of the Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia will be held at 94 McPherson Street, Essendon, commencing at 10.00 am, Saturday 22nd August 2015.

The following business will be transacted at the meeting:

1. Confirm the Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting.
2. Receive and adopt the Financial Statement and Auditors.

Rod Atkins
Executive Officer
19th June 2015

COTMA EXECUTIVE MEETING

A meeting of the COTMA Executive Committee will be held at 94 McPherson Street Essendon on Saturday 22 August 2015, immediately following the completion of the 2015 COTMA Annual General Meeting. Any items of business for the meeting are to be advised to the Executive Officer.

COTMA 2016 CONFERENCE - CHRISTCHURCH - Bulletin #1

From the Conference Committee: -

The date has now been set for the 2016 conference, to be hosted by the Tramway Historical Society and Christchurch Tramway Ltd.

Mark your diaries for: **Thursday 13 October - Monday 17 October 2016**. A conference planning committee is now in place and is currently investigating appropriate venues for conference sessions, the conference dinner and accommodation, as well as some interesting field trips. There is a shortage of venues in the city due to earthquake demolitions and we are looking at a combination of central city hotel and meeting options (near the tramway) and the use of facilities at Ferrymead Heritage Park (near the other tramway!)

Pre and post conference tours are also on the agenda. With the post-conference tour once again in the expert hands of Richard Gilbert, this is likely to be a South Island tour, featuring the West Coast. We are in discussion with our North Island colleagues about a pre- Conference tour which may start in Auckland, visit Wanganui and then Wellington. In addition to the tramway operations in those cities other attractions you may enjoy are the Auckland Rail Electrification (current and future), what seems likely will be the last months of the Wellington Trolley buses, and some great World War 1 displays at Te Papa (Gallipoli) and the former Dominion Museum (Great War Exhibition). The tour would conclude with a ferry trip to Picton and Coastal Pacific Train to Christchurch.

ATHRA NEWS

The Association of Tourist and Heritage Rail Australia Inc. (ATHRA) advises that the Rail Heritage Conference 2015 will be held at **The Workshops Rail Museum, Ipswich, Qld, from 25-28 July**. For further details see page 8 below or go to the following webpage:

<http://www.theworkshops.qm.qld.gov.au/Events+and+Exhibitions/Events/2015/07/Railway+Heritage+Conference>

IATM NEWS

John Radcliffe advises: The General Assembly of the International Association of Transport and Communications Museums meets in Porto on 30 June. Andrew Moritz, Director of the Workshops Rail Museum, Ipswich QLD, is to join the Board.

WATTRAIN CONFERENCE

The World Association of Tourist Trams and Trains is planning to hold its second international congress in Japan from **24-30 October 2015**. For details about WATTRAIN and the congress go to: <http://www.wattrain.net>

BUY, SELL, EXCHANGE OR GIVE AWAY TO A GOOD HOME

Forest City Signals

The Brisbane Tramway Museum currently has in store almost all of the Forest City single line signalling apparatus (except overhead line contactors) ever used in Brisbane. It is the type that counts cars into and out of sections to allow following movements in the single-track area.

It is taking up valuable storage space and serving no useful purpose being locked away in the store shed. We would like to donate some of it to any kindred Museums who might be interested in using or displaying it. Please contact the Secretary info@brisbanetramwaymuseum.org

Melbourne W2 Step Brackets

The THS needs to activate both side entries to W2 244 for the City Tramway and needs 4 genuine (or close copies) hinged_step brackets. One side is currently fitted with fixed brackets. Hinged type that have been welded up may also be ok (if able to be "un-modified") Please contact: secretary@ferrymeadtramway.org.nz

RECENT TRAMWAY MILESTONES/ EVENTS

23 January- public announcement by **Auckland** Transport of proposal for light rail system comprising four lines. See: <https://at.govt.nz/projects-roadworks/light-rail-network/> and <https://at.govt.nz/media/1138513/LRT-background-and-investigation-report-May-2015.pdf>

Late January - Ballarat Tramway's new solar panels, installed last November, begin to feed power back into the network, making a significant difference to their power bills

12 February - opening of first stage of **Christchurch** Tramway Extension by PM John Key

13 March - The **Wellington** Tramway Museum to give to the Tramways Wanganui Trust, ex Brisbane dreadnought 133, alias the King Kong New York street car created by Peter Jackson

15 March - **Sydney** Tramway Museum celebration of 50 years of operation at Loftus. LP154, first tram on 13 March 1965, again did the honours, being driven through a gold ribbon by principal guest Howard Collins, CE of Sydney Trains.

18 March - Canberra - the ACT government has shortlisted two consortiums to submit detailed bids to build, own and operate the 12km tram line from Gungahlin to the city, including a price for a 3.2km extension to Russell. The first is Canberra Metro, led by Leighton subsidiary Pacific Partnerships, and includes Mitsubishi and John Holland, and German firm DB International GmbH, and the second is Activate, led by Downer EDI, which would design and build, and includes train-building company Bombardier and Keolis Downer, which operates the new Gold Coast tram and Melbourne's tram network. The line is expected to cost \$780M.

20 March - advice from Wellington Tramway Museum that the future of **Tramway Topics** is under review because of high production costs and the difficulties in finding a new editor

21 March - Bylands - Special General Meeting of TMSV leading to establishment of new Board under the chairmanship of Tony Sell. Trading name "Melbourne Tramway Museum" name has been relinquished and replaced by "Bylands Tramway Heritage Centre". Recent (June) edition of Running Journal indicates a number of initiatives to resolve issues and get the Society back on its feet.

13 April - Brisbane - Night operations at Ferny Grove to mark anniversary of tramway system closure. So successful it will be repeated on 28 September for anniversary of destruction of Paddington Depot.

15 April - Auckland -100th birthday of NZ's oldest tram conductress - Nellie Macown (Auckland)

22 April - Bendigo - ANZAC Centenary Tram no. 45 (previously no. 18) officially launched, ahead of 100 years of ANZAC commemorations, and now operates a one hour tour each day at 10:00am.

6 May - 5 million passengers on **Gold Coast** Light rail in first 9 months

12 May - Christchurch - Prince Harry has a tram ride with PM John Key.

- **Christchurch** - 100th birthday of Geraldine Bowman, oldest Christchurch tram conductress

21 May - Brisbane - 5 additional span poles erected at Ferny Grove in preparation for wiring of Workshop access track.

24 May - Dockline Tram (Auckland) suspended (for the second time) for road works etc. Expected to reopen late in 2016. Tram 258 (ex- Melbourne W2 421) is no longer required and has been returned to Bendigo.

24 May - Ballarat. "Tram Showcase", part of the three week National Trust Heritage Festival, saw every operable tram in the fleet out and running one or more trips during the day. Good progress is also being made on the refurbishment of the ex-Melbourne Restaurant tram No. 939, to convert it into a function tram and the extension of the upstairs area to form a new General Purpose room to be used as an office for the archives area and meeting room.

28 May - Sydney - detailed construction schedule released for the 12km CBD and South East Light Rail project - from Sept 2015 to completion in April 2018. "The full construction program is available on Transport for NSW's website at: <http://www.sydneylightrail.transport.nsw.gov.au/> "The project is on schedule to be delivered ahead of its original forecast and will be up and running in early 2019."

29 May- Sydney's 17 year old Variotrams have now all been replaced by 12 CAF Urbos 3 trams. Last to run was 2102 which ran a 22:30 service out of Dulwich Hill on 28 May. Together with 2107 it has now completed the move off site of the 6 surviving trams to storage in Paramatta pending sale by tender. See: <http://www.railwaygazette.com/tenders/details/show/sale-of-light-rail-vehicles.html>

4 June - Invercargill - Another Birney preserved? The body of another Invercargill Birney, believed to be No.16 was found a few weeks ago near Te Anau. It was seen in the same locality by John Radcliffe in 1960, but never later found by THS. It appears to be in remarkably good condition considering the time spent out in the open, and today its ownership has been secured by the Bill Richardson Transport Museum in Invercargill. The museum curator is in contact with the THS re. its future (probably static) restoration. Other than 15 (restored and operating) and New Plymouth 8 (body in storage at Wanganui), this is the last survivor of NZ's nine Birneys.

11 June - High Street Cable Car Society launched in **Dunedin**. First major task will be a fundraising drive for a \$2M museum building to include cable cars leased from Christchurch.

20 June - Devastating floods in **Wanganui**. Photos taken on 21 June showed flood waters all around the tram shed, and after finally getting access through the cordon to inspect the inside of the shed, the Tramways Wanganui Trust have advised (24 June) on their facebook page:

"Unfortunately due to flood damage we will not be running the Tram for the foreseeable future and the museum will be closed. A lot of mud has been found everywhere in the tram shed and the tracks are not visible due to river debris. Thankfully No.12 was not majorly damaged, mainly just a little bit dirty. Further updates will follow and hopefully we'll have some pictures to post." Check for updates on <https://www.facebook.com/wanganuitramways>

24 June - Report in Gold Coast Bulletin stating that the **GCLR** is driving \$6Billion worth of new development along the tram route. See <http://www.goldcoastbulletin.com.au/realestate/gold-coast-tram-drives-6b-development-boom/story-fnjdgobq-1227411432206> Still no decision on funding for extending the line to a heavy rail station in time for the 2018 Commonwealth Games.

Meanwhile in Melbourne...

On the Yarra Trams front there have been some very noticeable changes around Melbourne since December. - In quick summary:

22 E class trams are in Traffic (6001- 6022) on Route 96 and 2023, 2024 & 2025 are in the running in stage in the streets.

E class trams have displaced a similar number of five section Combino's for running out of Brunswick Depot on Route 19 in Elizabeth Street.

The B class have cascaded to Essendon & Preston Depots and the Z3 & A class cars have moved to Glenhuntly Depot to replace Z Class cars. To date five Z class have been scrapped.

LaTrobe Street has gone the way of Chapel Street at Christmas time and is now run with A class cars. Only "City Circle" have W class cars. The plan to reduce the City Circle to one direction only as

been abandoned by PTV/Yarra Trams. This will put pressure on the need to do more W8 conversions. Still only two in traffic.

Kew Depot celebrated 100 years in May. W8 946 gave rides and E 6005 and W1 431 from Hawthorn Depot were among some special trams on display.

4 May - The latest Vic. State budget has provided future funding for a further 20 E class trams to take the order to 70. See <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-05-04/victorian-government-2-billion-on-trams-trains-budget-surplus/6441788>



Last of the Sydney Variotrams



Kew Depot Centenary



Prince Harry with PM John Key in Boon 152



Flood waters surround the Wanganui Tram Shed

DOES
THE PAST
HAVE
A FUTURE?



Railway Heritage Conference 2015

Coinciding with the 150th anniversary of rail in Queensland, The Workshops Rail Museum is pleased to announce that it will be hosting the 2015 Railway Heritage Conference.



About the Conference

Heritage railways and rail museums are a key heritage experience across the world. Yet they face constant challenges around funding, operation and perceptions of being only for trainspotters.

Exploring the theme 'Does the Past have a Future?' this conference puts the spotlight on the field of rail heritage and explores the challenges, enjoyment, engagement and opportunities for those involved in the sector.

Where: The Workshops Rail Museum, Ipswich QLD.

When: 25-28 July 2015

To find out more information, access the draft program or register your interest, please visit our website.

<http://www.theworkshops.qm.qld.gov.au/Events+and+Exhibitions/Events/2015/07/Railway+Heritage+Conference>

Next Update - September 2015



Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia Inc.

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News Update December 2015

From the Chairman



Hi everyone

Hard to believe that the end of the year is almost upon us - and it's been quite a year for the tramways of Australasia. On the positive side, such highlights as the long awaited first stage tram extension in Christchurch, important anniversaries commemorated in various cities, and in the modern tramway world, the confirmation of the long sought Gold Coast extension in time for the 2018 Commonwealth Games, the start of physical works for the CSELR in Sydney, and, following the leadership change to a very pro-public transport Prime Minister, the renewed prospect of Federal Government funding for tram/light rail proposals in other parts of the country. Not such good news has been the closure (temporary - yet again) of the Auckland Waterfront tramway, floods in Wanganui damaging the newly opened tramway, the National Park tram storage shed fire in Sydney, and the recent announcement of the closure of NZ's tramway journal - Tramway Topics. Sad also to record the passing of a number highly regarded and hardworking members of some of our tramway groups (see pp.10-11).

This bumper issue (our largest update so far?) covers some of the more recent of the above matters in more detail, describes some relevant international conferences, as well as reporting on COTMA Executive activities over the past few months, and other matters of tramway interest around the regions. More updates in the next issue including from those areas not mentioned this time. Contributions welcome.

Best wishes to all for the coming festive season and enjoy successful tram operations over the coming holiday period and summer season.

Dave Hinman

COTMA AGM

The COTMA Annual General Meeting was held at the home of Deputy Chairman Mal Rowe, in Essendon, Melbourne on Saturday 22 August. It was attended by the Executive Committee, together with Auditor, Hugh Ballment and past Chairman Warren Doubleday. Apologies were received and accepted from Janice Seymour, Archer Park; Kym Smith, Haddon; David Ferrier, Hobart, Henry Brittain, WTM; Bob Pearce, PETS. Main purpose of the meeting was to approve the Treasurer's report, and receive and approve the Auditor's report, as required by the Articles of Incorporation. This was duly done and in general business it was resolved to move some of the COTMA accumulated funds into a term deposit to earn interest. The meeting then concluded and a meeting of the COTMA Executive followed.

COTMA EXECUTIVE MEETING

This meeting which followed the COTMA AGM on 22 August was attended by the COTMA Executive, together with Warren Doubleday and for part of the meeting by Auditor Hugh Ballment. A wide range of matters were discussed and key decisions included:

- Approval of COTMA membership application for Hobart Electric Tramways, as documented by Jeremy Kays.
- ARA membership – this is an expensive item and the Executive having reviewed the value of the membership resolved not to renew.
- Review of the Rules: The rules need to be updated because of changes in the law in Victoria (where COTMA is incorporated). Since the meeting the new rules have been developed and will be available in early 2016 for museums to review and respond before we take them to the CGM in Christchurch in October to vote on any changes. They are based on the ‘model rules’ specified in the Victorian law, but have been adapted to make them as close as possible to the old rules in their effect.
- Executive appointments – roles and titles will be reviewed as part of the rules review. We will not seek an interim assistant executive officer before the next conference. The ‘immediate past chairman’ position is also vacant. The meeting noted Warren Doubleday’s valuable contribution in this role and others over a long time with sincere gratitude.
- COTMA Awards - Achievement and Volunteer Awards will continue. We will monitor take up of Volunteer Award applications and try to clarify the criteria and system. A set of guidelines and pro-forma will be provided.
- Review of the (Australian) Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Act 1986 is in process. Rod is engaged in the review on our behalf.
- PTV - Changes to policy and people in Victoria has meant changes to the process and priorities for disposal of tramway assets no longer required. Victorian based museums with operational accreditation get advised of what is available, but not all items are necessarily offered. The Executive is working with the Victorian members and PTV / VicTrack to see if we can get back to something like the earlier arrangements.

One example of items ‘missed out on’ is that the two shorter traversers at Preston have been removed, and presumably gone for scrap, without being offered for preservation.

The next meeting of the COTMA Executive Committee will be held in Christchurch on **Saturday 5 March 2016**. Any items of business for the meeting are to be advised to the Executive Officer. Coincidentally the FRONZ Executive will be meeting in Christchurch on the same day and we are aiming to get together later in the afternoon.



Preston Workshops traverser - now gone?

COTMA 2016 CONFERENCE - CHRISTCHURCH - Bulletin #2

Thursday 13 October - Monday 17 October 2016.

Planning for the conference is progressing well.

Hotel accommodation will be central city with a budget option offered. Details early next year.

Pre and post conference tours are being planned. A Partners tour will be offered.

Draft Programme (as at November 2015)

Thursday 13 Oct. 2016

Evening Registration and drinks at Conference Hotel.

Friday 14 Oct.

Conference opening and sessions in the Central City, including a visit to the Arts Centre (post-earthquake restoration project), and dinner in the evening.

Saturday 15 Oct.

Conference sessions at, Ferrymead and trip to Lyttelton for tour of town and harbour cruise

Sunday 16 Oct.

Further sessions at Ferrymead, Air Force Museum visit, Afternoon at Christchurch Tramway, Conference Dinner at the Gondola Restaurant.

Monday 17 Oct.

Sessions at Ferrymead, followed by COTMA Conference General Meeting. Free time at Ferrymead. The post conference tour follows.

Further updates on the COTMA Website <http://www.cotma.org.au/conference.html>

Early in the New Year there will be further information and a call for papers/presentations

For more information contact the conference organisers, the Tramway Historical Society Christchurch - cotma2016@ferrymeadtramway.org.nz

ATHRA NEWS

COTMA prepared a submission during mid-November to the Australian Rail Safety Regulator about their proposed Level Crossing Policy. While the Office of National Rail Safety Regulator does not cover Queensland (it will in about 18 months or so) or Victorian Tramways, they cover South Australian and New South Wales tramway / light rail systems. The major issue addressed by our submission was about the draft policy statement that "there should be "no new railway level crossings". In the Act, the definition of a railway includes a tramway and for that of level crossings it states "where a road and railway tracks meet at substantially at the same level". By virtue of the definitions it would appear a level crossing includes the situation where a tramway or light railway shares the same road as other traffic, both vehicles and pedestrians. In the Victorian Rail Safety Act and the New Zealand Act, tramway level crossings are defined differently. COTMA has pointed this out before to the National Transport Commission and the Regulator staff during the drafting of the Act.

The implications of this policy towards any new tramway or light rail system could be quite substantial.

COTMA recommended:

1. That the policy as drafted be applicable to "Heavy Rail Operations" and not for light rail, tramways, tramway museums light railways. There could be an exclusion clause like the RISSB standards contain for its standards.
2. A separate policy document is prepared for Light Rail and Tramways that addresses the many issues of sharing roadways with other vehicles and risks that are confined to light rail systems. This would include the case where motor vehicles do not actually drive along the tram or light rail track itself, but cross it at some points.

WATTRAIN CONFERENCE - Peter Hyde attended and reports:

"WATTRAIN (World Association of Tourist Trams and Trains) held their triennial conference in Tokyo in October this year with the theme "Sustainability, Inspiring the new generation".

Tram preservation is very much a minor element in the totality of rail heritage so the bias of the conference towards railways in general and steam railways in particular was not entirely unexpected.

The issue that dominated was the concern that the EU would shortly move to ban the burning of coal. Even without a formal ban, coal consumption is dropping. In the UK for example, all remaining coal-fired power stations except the three most modern, will close in 2016. T&H railways are thinking along the lines of trying to obtain an exemption from any proposed prohibiting regulation on the basis of history and the insignificant pollution contribution of a small number of locomotives.

However, if all or most other coal usage ceases, the supply of coal will become extremely difficult. (A similar scenario is developing in NZ according to the latest FRONZ Journal). One of the T&H railways visited by the conference delegates in Japan has converted their locomotives to operate on pelletised coal imported in containers from Australia.

Stephen Ryan from the Sydney firm of Museum designers FRD presented an extremely well received paper. This firm is not particularly associated with "rail" though they are working on the new BN Museum in Texas.

The thrust of his paper was that "presentation" is the most important aspect. Thanks to the internet, people do not now usually go to museums for information - they go for an "experience". Having arrived for an "experience", they can then be presented with information - perhaps information that they were not seeking and did not know they would enjoy receiving. He stressed the importance of not assuming any knowledge on the part of the visitor. If knowledge of something is assumed and the visitor does not have it, they are likely to be made to feel inferior - a negative memory of their visit. He also mentioned the importance of presenting the context in which anything existed or operated.

These last few thoughts are probably ringing a few bells amongst readers in the NZ & Australian arena!

The next WATTRAIN Congress will be held in 2018 in Texas (hosted at the BN Museum mentioned above). For further details about WATTRAIN and the congress go to: <http://www.wattrain.co.uk/>

NORDIC CONFERENCE

This year the Nordic Tramway Museums conference was held in Stockholm from Friday 11th September until Sunday 13th September 2015, once again attended by Howard Clark. COTMA is accepted as an honorary guest member. All Museums made presentations of their activities during the year, and this year instead of covering a number of COTMA museums, Howard simply covered activities at Sydney Tramway Museum in the 10 minute slot allocated to us.

The interesting news is that the Swedish Tramway Museum Society, through its wholly owned subsidiary company, AB Stockholms Sparvagar, won the contract to operate seven new CAF Urbos AXL 40.6 m low floor cars over the 9.2 km Ropsten to Lidingo light rail line. At the time of the conference the rebuilt line had not been re-opened, however a visit by vintage bus to the rebuilt Aga

depot was arranged to have the new cars demonstrated to visitors. The Society already operates the other line in the city centre, and conference goers were treated to a ride over the tracks in one of the museum car and trailer sets, along with a ride on a new low floor car. To win the contract, against international competition from well-established operators, is a major achievement for the Society. We were informed that retaining the operating rights in the city and obtaining the operating rights for the new line removed any uncertainties for operating museum cars on city tracks, which may have arisen if an outside operator became involved.

The other highlight was a trip to Copenhagen and the Danish Tramway Museum at Skjoldenaesholm, hosted by our friend and the Museum Chairman, Mikael Lund. The Museum was in the process of erecting a 96 metre by 40 metre 10 road third depot building, along with a smaller building to house their bus collection. These activities also included acquiring a small section of land from the adjoining golf club. Completion of the buildings will enable the Museum to re house the balance of their collection, and vacate rented farm buildings elsewhere. The ability to construct these new facilities was achieved through a very large bequest from a deceased estate.

The Conference in 2016 will be in Oslo during the second weekend in September.

RECENT TRAMWAY MILESTONES/ EVENTS/NEWS

NEW SOUTH WALES

Sydney Tramway Museum - National Park Fire

On Friday night the 23rd of October 2015, around 11pm a fire was reported in the 'old site' shed. By the time the fire brigade had arrived, the shed was well alight and the firefighting consisted of ensuring the fire didn't spread in to the rest of the Royal National Park. The fire itself was too intense to control directly.

The shed and its contents were totally destroyed. The site is currently a 'crime scene'.

The fire has been widely reported both in social and traditional media.

The main museum site and all operational infrastructure is undamaged and the museum is operating as normal. The loss is restricted to the 'old site' and the 'reserve collection' items that were stored there. Howard Clark has provided the following detailed information about the destroyed vehicles and STM's conclusions about the fire, as included in his report provided to police and RNP management.

"Descriptions of the items destroyed are as follows:-

- (1) 1898 six window C type small 4 wheel saloon car 12, which was mounted on a rare 'Peckham Metropolitan' truck. This car had a sound roof, and replacement windows and doors had been made for it, pending planned offsite restoration in 2016. It is a sister to tram 11 in the Power House collection, with a few variations. The two restored operable 1896 and 1898 C type cars at STM are of a different size and window configuration. This tram is STM's greatest loss and it is hoped that the rare truck from beneath the body can be salvaged,
- (2) 1906 70 seat N type enclosed toastrack bogie car 710, purchased in 2004 from a property owner at Moss Vale for \$3,000, plus transport, which had its own purpose built protective corrugated iron roof, and was in reasonably sound body condition, and at last inspection had largely been unaffected by graffiti or vandalism, except for broken windows.. It duplicates N car 728 in the STM collection, and it was planned to restore it the pre 1910 open ended condition, without the drivers protection windscreens of 728,
- (3) 1913 50 seat open and closed 4 wheel K type toastrack car 1295, on an original Brill truck, inherited from a deceased estate in 1997, in derelict condition, which was one of two cars fitted with track brakes for use on the Neutral Bay line until 1954. Restored sister car 1296 is in the STM collection and it is hoped the Brill truck can be salvaged,
- (4) Three 1933-1935 R type Sydney bogie corridor cars nos. 1741, 1819 and 1917, two of which came from Sydney City Council in 2002 and 1819, which had been restored and fitted out for

bistro use by a club in Canberra and gifted to STM in 2007. They were held for potential restoration if a tourist tramway around 'The Rocks' area eventuated. Restored operating car 1740 is in the STM collection,

- (5) 1927/1938 Melbourne SW2 car 432 with operating equipment, including motored bogies, but in poor body condition, acquired in 1997 with other trams from the liquidator of a failed museum in Newcastle,
- (6) Two unrestored 1948 -1950 former Sydney double deck buses complete with operational equipment,
- (7) Two unrestored 1957 and 1959 former Sydney underfloor engine single deck buses complete with operational equipment,
- (8) The chassis and engine of a 1937 former Sydney Albion double decker bus in run down condition, and
- (9) Five pairs of Melbourne no. 1 trucks (four unmotored) which were under the five bogie trams in the shed, which it is hoped can be salvaged."

STM as a wholly owned and operated volunteer Museum is deeply disappointed at the apparent wanton destruction of potentially restorable heritage assets. STM has no reason to believe the events were the work of a disgruntled member or friend.



STM accepted and recognised the risks involved in allowing the trams and buses to remain stored in such a penetrable and vulnerable location. However in circumstances where lack of funds by a volunteer organisation such as STM prevented moves to safer alternative storage and with reduced scope for securing the building in its later state, there was little option other than to trust that damage would be restricted to vandalism, which could be reversed in a restoration phase.

One little vandalised cable trailer car was rescued a short time before the fire, and plans were in hand for a complicated move to extricate 1898 C car 12 from behind two other trams for offsite restoration in 2016.

On behalf of Sydney Tramway Museum, we offer our thanks to emergency services personnel from the Police, NSW Fire Service, Rural Fire Services and staff from the NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service for their sterling efforts during and following this event."

CBD and South East Light Rail (CSELR) - Major construction began on 23 October 2015 in the section of George Street between King and Market Streets. To minimise disruption along the length of the corridor, works will be staggered across 31 construction zones. Major construction is due to conclude in April 2018, though finishing works will continue after that, with the line due to open in 2019. All bus routes using George Street were permanently removed from the street from 4 October.

Parramatta Light Rail - The preferred route for the Parramatta Light Rail project was announced by the NSW Premier on December 8. The 22 km line in the western suburbs of Sydney is intended to connect Westmead and Strathfield via the Parramatta business district and Sydney Olympic Park. In addition, the 7 km Clyde–Carlingford branch rail line, now operated by Sydney Trains is to be

converted to light rail. Work will now begin on a final business case and assessment, which will include detailed design and the final cost.

The NSW government has committed A\$1bn to the project, and is to discuss funding contributions with the federal and local governments. It will also consult on a dedicated levy, expected to be around A\$200/m² of gross floor area of new residential developments, to fund the light rail network and associated infrastructure.

A.C.T.

Canberra - In October 2015, the ACT Government released a plan for a city-wide light rail network to be built over a period of twenty-five years. The plan was open for public consultation from 26 October to 11 December and includes 6 further routes in addition to the initial line that is due to start construction next year (Gungahlin to the city). The Capital Metro Agency will be combined with ACTION (Canberra's bus service operator), to form Transport Canberra, from 1 July 2016. The new organisation "will ensure that buses and light rail are integrated with each other, and with other forms of transport including taxis, cycling and walking. It will also encourage innovative approaches to driving, parking and traffic management. Transport Canberra's broad mandate will be to provide a transport system for Canberra that is integrated, convenient, reliable and efficient." However the construction of a light rail network remains a major election issue with the opposition Liberal party having announced earlier this year that it would cancel any contracts for the light rail if it wins the 2016 ACT election.

QUEENSLAND

Gold Coast - The big news here is approval for funding from the Commonwealth Government for stage 2 of Gold Coast Light Rail to connect the northern end of the present line to Helensvale Railway Station. Work is expected to start in April 2016. The Qld Government has exercised its option to purchase an additional 4 trams.

And that's not all. The Gold Coast City Council has commenced a 6 week public consultation on Stage 3 - options for southern extensions beyond Broadbeach towards Burleigh Heads and Coolangatta Airport.

Ferny Grove - Restoration of the Valley Signal Cabin has just been completed together with a viewing deck so that visitors can see inside. An original "4 poster" tiled roof tram stop waiting shelter from the Stafford line has been donated by the Brisbane City Council and is currently being re-erected. The members' amenities rooms have been repainted and tiles laid in the changing room.

Very successful night operations were held on 28th September (anniversary of Paddington Depot fire). It is now planned to have two night operations each year 13th April and 28th September.

On Sunday 8th November, lightning struck a tree just outside the Museum fence and also the overhead. Fortunately no damage has been discovered to the overhead, but Phoenix tram 554 was in operation at the time and was affected. The damage fortunately was minor but difficult to locate being a short length of wire (inside the linebreaker box) leading to the holding coil. It was amazing that so much noise and smoke was caused by such a small piece of wire and that no burn marks were visible at the point of damage.

Rockhampton - The last steam tram operation before the annual maintenance shutdown was Sunday 29th November with restart hopefully on Sunday 24th January. The museum is open for static displays during the shutdown.

The president of the Friends of Archer Park & Steam Tram Museum, Phil Augustine, died suddenly in July. Dennis Sheehan has taken over the position for the remainder of the term.

The Museum has an application pending to become a registered Rail Infrastructure Manager.

VICTORIA

Melbourne - The re-development of the tramways workshops at Preston is proceeding according to plan and the new depot, to hold up to 75 E class trams, should be operational in January. Great care has been taken to preserve much of the site heritage while bringing facilities up to 'state of the art' standard.

Below is a pic showing the Western face of the workshops, viewed across St Georges Rd from the site of the former FN&PTT depot.



Ballarat - Ballarat Tramway Museum is refurbishing one of the former Melbourne restaurant trams (939) with a view to using it as an additional attraction and source of revenue. (pic of interior below.)



Bendigo - The city celebrated 125 years of tramway operation on December 5th, 2015 with a full day of free tram rides, in conjunction with a local market and street party. Photo above of No.17 at the gold mine.

Walhalla Goldfields Railway who operate the northern most section of the old 760mm gauge railway to the Walhalla in Victoria have announced on their Facebook page (13 November) that they have bought a couple of X1 bodies from Newstead Tramcars. They say:

"We are pleased to advise that we have purchased X1 tram bodies 461 and 463 (both built in 1926) for the purpose of conversion to use as rail-motors. 461 is in quite good condition (it doesn't look too flash in the photo but it's actually very sound) while 463 is in need of considerable work. This is the first major rolling stock project for the railway in over 15 years and we look forward to the challenge and bringing 461 back to life to serve on the Walhalla to Thomson section (463 will be a very long term project and may be rebuilt as a trailer only)."

Light Rail 2016 - Transforming the Urban Transport Landscape - Melbourne 24-25 February 2016. "The Australasian Railway Association's 3rd annual Light Rail conference and exhibition is a unique opportunity for professionals involved in manufacturing, the planning and delivery of projects and operational executives, to hear cutting-edge case studies and learn from successful projects in Australasia and throughout the world.

Light rail is increasingly being adopted as a key component of effective integrated public transport in many Australasian cities. From the successful launch of, and now stage two development approved,

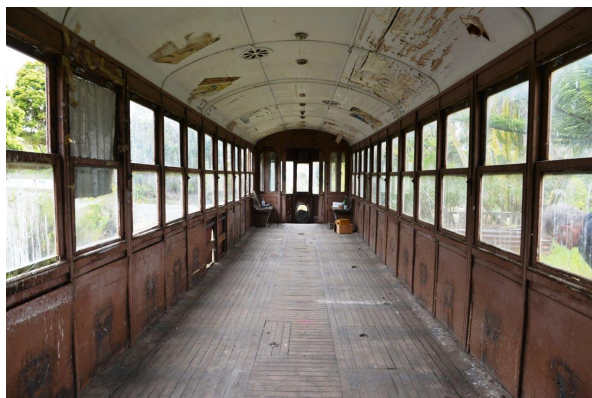
for Queensland's first light rail system, G:Link to Sydney's Inner West Light Rail Extension and the recent CBD and South East Light Rail project, renewed government investment is seeing a renaissance in light rail as a central and sustainable public transport mode." For further information go to: <http://www.govnews.com.au/events/light-rail-2016/>

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland Waterfront Tramway - Former Melbourne SW6's 852 and 881 arrived on 31 July last and are in the tram shed being prepared for service on the waterfront tramway, which is due to resume operation in late 2016.



Tram 235 - Dr Vincent Chan, member of the well-known MOTAT Chan family, has acquired the body of Auckland 1930 Class 'Big Car' No. 235 for eventual restoration to operating condition. It had been used as a sleepout and for storage in a Dargaville garden for nearly 60 years and on 9 November it was transported to its new temporary home at the Packard & Pioneer Museum in Maungatapere. Vincent plans to restore it in Auckland using ex Melbourne early W parts which he is currently on the lookout for. While to some Australians this body may look beyond restoration, not so to NZ tram restorers, as has been proven a number of times already. Vincent is proposing to apply to COTMA for affiliate membership in the near future.



Auckland Light Rail - " AT [Auckland Transport] has decided on the light rail route through the city centre. It has approved Customs Street as the route connecting light rail from the isthmus to Wynyard Quarter. The board has considered 2 options for the route; Queen/Quay or Queen/Customs. There were pros and cons including the co-location of an LRT stop with Britomart Station or having a vehicle free civic space when it is created following the City Rail Link works.

The AT Board has decided that the Queen/Customs option best meets the city's transport needs. It allows better local and regional traffic movement, will have less environmental effect, is shorter, will be quicker and more economical to build. It has also approved future proofing the CRL structures to accommodate light rail in Lower Queen Street if required in the future.

The Board decision provides clarity for other AT and Council projects in the area that will now be able to progress their investigation and design." (19 October 2015)

Kapiti Coast Tramway - The Wellington Tramway Museum is preparing for its celebration of 50 years of operation at Queen Elizabeth Park - to be held on site on Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 December. The restoration of tram 17 continues to make great progress, with Brill 22E truck frames acquired from the Ballarat Tramway Museum now having arrived as the first step towards constructing replica 4ft gauge trucks.

Demise of "Tramway Topics" - Following consultation with THS and MOTAT, WTM, publishers of "Topics" for most of its 52 year life have reluctantly decided to cease publication, due to increasing costs and the difficulties of finding a new editor. Over recent times the in-house newsletters in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch have taken over many of the functions previously the domain of Topics. As the current editor, Brent Efford, has for various reasons (including a period of ill-health) been unable to complete an issue since mid-2014, the final edition, No. 256 has been completed by former editor Alan Smith and will be out by Christmas. Arrangements have been made for tramway articles to appear in the New Zealand Railway Observer, which has been publishing since 1944 and which prior to the establishment of Tramway Topics, also covered tramway matters.

Christchurch - The last of the city's electric trams to return to operation post-earthquake is Melbourne W2 No. 244, and it is now back in town after refurbishment and a repaint at Ferrymead. Its new colour is deep crimson and cream, but it does acknowledge its Melbourne heritage with its original number and a couple of M&MTB logos retained.



At Ferrymead, work continues on repairing/replacing the concrete work around the traverser and tram shed forecourts as part of earthquake repairs and the extension of the traverser, and a recent arrival has been the body of Roslyn Cable Car No. 97, after temporary (earthquake related) storage at the Wigram Air Force Museum.

IN MEMORIAM

It is with deep sadness that we report the passing of several long serving members of the Australasian tramway community in recent months.

Phil Augustine, President of the Friends of Archer Park Station & Tram Museum, Rockhampton, died suddenly on 1 July at the age of 75. After a 45 year career as an engineer with Qld Rail, Phil joined the Museum in 2002 and from that time gave 100% commitment to Archer Park, serving as general volunteer, Secretary, Track Supervisor, President and mentor. A detailed obituary appeared in the August 2015 issue of "Tram Tracks". <http://www.qldrailheritage.com/archerpark/news/1508-tramtracks.pdf>

Christopher Steele, (AETM, Adelaide) 21 July 2015. A Founding and Honorary Life Member, Chris designed and oversaw the construction of the original depot building and later the construction of the tramline to St. Kilda. In more recent times, Chris supported the demolition of the original depot and its replacement with a new structure. Chris was also involved with maintenance and restoration projects, most recently on his trolleybus. His legacy to the Museum will long be remembered.

Roger Stanton, (THS Christchurch, MOTAT Auckland, ARHS - Queensland) - 2 September 2015. Roger became a key member of THS after joining in 1962 and was Secretary through the early establishment years including the horse tram operation in Papanui Road in 1964. He subsequently moved to Auckland and was soon one of the leading lights at MOTAT as tram operation got underway, only to be lured to Brisbane in the 1970s to work for Queensland Railways. He developed his skills as a tour organiser which later focussed on excursion trains. In his later years he became well known and respected as the volunteer Chef in the dining car of the Sunshine Express Rail Tours. THS published a detailed obituary in Ferrymead Tram Tracts, October 2015.
http://www.ferrymeadtramway.org.nz/downloads/tracts_oct15.pdf

Dave Carr, (THS Christchurch) 9 November 2015, aged 57, untimely and unexpected following a cardiac arrest. He had been an active THS member for 26 years and had served on the Management and Operations Committee, was a trustee on the Ferrymead Trust, plus 15 years on the subsidiary Heritage Tramways Trust, 10 years as Chairman and longer as tram workshop supervisor and liaison person with the Trust's key client, city tram operator Christchurch Tramway Ltd. He enjoyed attending COTMA conferences and was known by many across Australia and NZ. He was looking forward to next year's Christchurch conference and was a key member of the organising Committee. For detailed tributes see November 2015 Ferrymead Tram Tracts.
http://www.ferrymeadtramway.org.nz/downloads/tracts_nov15.pdf

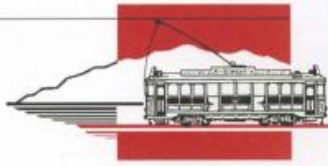
Rodney Hudson (various rail groups Vic.) 26 November 2015, aged 71. Rod trained as a fitter and turner at the M&MTB's Preston Workshops and had been active in tram preservation (early TMSV member), tram modelling, and also steam preservation. He established Windsor Publications, publishing railway pictorials, and established a shop in the city, trading in railway items. This was later taken over by ARE, and became the Railfan Shop. In recent years, Rod became a regular at the hobby nights on the third Thursday of each month at the Duke of Kent Hotel, then at the Celtic Club.

Bob Cornish (WTM, Wellington) who died on 28 November at the age of 75, was one of the small original group who in 1960 founded what has now become WTM. In just a few weeks' time (19th December) WTM celebrates the 50th anniversary of the opening of its first section of line at Queen Elizabeth Park, Paekakariki - Bob was on those early working parties and later was a regular motorman. Bob's father had been on the maintenance staff of the Wanganui Tramways (closed 1950) and in 1965 Bob was instrumental in saving the body of Wanganui's California Combination #8 for restoration. After many years in storage at WTM, #8 was gifted to Tramways Wanganui Trust and in due course it will emerge on that line, all thanks to Bob's foresight.

David Frost (TMSV, Ballarat, Hawthorn) - 28 November 2015 - aged 79. David first lived along the former VR St Kilda Brighton tram line in St Kilda Street and studied the VR trams, writing a book on the Black Rock trams in 2001. He originally trained as a fitter and turner, then as a technical draftsman and artist. David served as a tram driver in Ballarat, then a driver and guide at Bylands and then a guide at the Hawthorn Tram Depot. He prepared a colouring in book for the BTPS in the mid 1980's (recently reprinted by the BTM) and prepared posters for Train World. He was a very active volunteer for many other organisations as well, including the Sandringham Historical Society, his local Anglican church, Anglican Op. shops and as an announcer with Radio station 88.3 Southern FM. He had been in ill health in recent years and was living in a nursing home near Bendigo nearer to family.

Our apologies for anyone else we may have missed.

Next UPDATE: MARCH 2016



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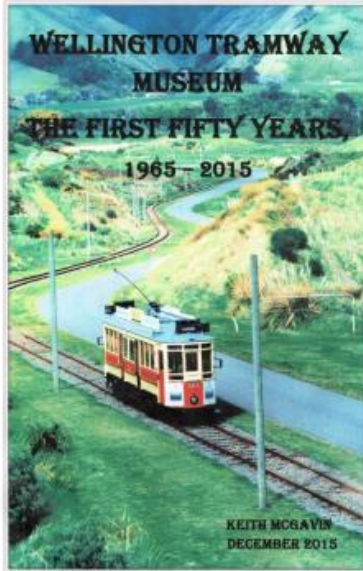
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