

FERRYMEAD

Tram Tracts



The Journal of the Tramway Historical Society

Issue 13—April 2017



A Generous Gift from Bremca

The Society's new switchboard is formally commissioned

To Varnish, Or Not To Varnish...

That is the question—for the restoration of 'Hills' Car 24

It's Long Term Plan Time Again!

But the Christchurch Tramway isn't getting any extensions yet... Can you help?

First Notch

President's Piece—Graeme Belworthy



Hi All,

The Official Switching On of the new switchboard was held on Wednesday 15 March. Society members and representatives from Bremca attended the function followed by lunch in the Friendly Society Lodge. More on this is featured elsewhere in *Tracts*, including photos.

We are still welcoming visitors from all around the world and in

fact this month's social function was courtesy of some visitors from England.

Progress on the new Diesel Bus Barn is happening with discussion with the City Council regarding the fence on the road boundary. Once this is signed off, which is expected in the next day or so, it will be included with an application for a Resource Consent. Prices for drainage alterations and moving of the Fire Sprinkler main have been received; once the consent is approved, we will

submit funding applications.

As part of an upgrade of the plant and equipment around the site the HTT has purchased a new high-tech lathe to enable more precise work to be undertaken. More about this next time including a photo. As part of the upgrade all plant and equipment will be reviewed and where it is found to be unsuitable or not fit for purpose it may be disposed of making way for more new replacements.

We are still getting people turning up offering their help around the site and this is great so if you would like to help and even learn a new skill come and see what we are doing. You don't need any special knowledge or skill just an interest in what we are doing and a willingness to learn a new task with on the job training as most of us did.

That's about all I have for this month.

Cheers,

Graeme

Alastair's Angle—Alastair Cross



Welcome to another issue of *Tracts*. Last month, I am sure many of our readers will have noticed a change in style to their newsletter; well, due to a wee bit of pressure, and a then-thought to be pending thesis deadline, I made the hasty decision to switch to an older style format first used when I took over from Joe Pickering as Editor. As it turns out, that deadline wasn't quite so close as was thought. Talk

about a 'phew' moment! So, back to normal then...

There's been quite a lot going on down at Ferrymead recently. The most notable event has been the formal commissioning of the new switchboard donated by Bremca Ltd., which is featured elsewhere in this issue. On the City Tramway front, Invercargill 'Birney' N^o 15 returned to Ferrymead for some cosmetic touching-up, the first time it has been back in the four years since it was restored. On the same subject, it's Long Term Plan time at the Christchurch City Council—but there is no funding projected to finish the tramway extension down High Street. If we want the extension to happen, we must lobby—and lobby hard. So please, *please* consider submitting in favour of its completion!

Back at the tram barns, work is continuing on a number of fronts, and in particular on Sydney Tramway Museum-owned 'Yank' 12. This tram is now being stripped in preparation for restoration, and in the process is starting to regain something of its 1905 appearance. Well, OK, it has some way to go yet—but it's getting there. Take a look at p. 7 for yourselves, and you'll see what I mean.

Finally and on a more nostalgic note, I am sure that many of our readers will no doubt have seen John Shanks' article on the Great Blackball Track Lift of 1966 in the recent *New Zealand Railway Observer* (Issue N^o 342). The tail end of it is from the same article written by John for the July 2016 issue of *Tracts*, but considerably expanded. Surprisingly, John isn't the only member to be reminiscing about Blackball lately! Fellow THS member Bruce Dale, one of those involved with the Track Lift, has also sent a copy of the original 1966 *Tramway Topics* article on the Track Lift. It will be published in next month's *Tracts*. Until then, John's *Observer* piece will have to suffice—can we expect more such stories from the marvellous Mr. Shanks and his fellow early members? Only time may tell!

Cheers,

Alastair

Notices

Ferrymead Heritage Park News - Farewell Kim, Welcome Shaun

Kim Dunkley has now completed his time at Ferrymead, staying on for a week to mentor his successor, Shaun Horan, previously at Willowbank. We very much enjoyed working with Kim, who has been a breath of fresh air at the Park, and from what we have seen so far of Shaun, this is likely to continue! The weekly Park newsletter has reported that in excess of 3000 tickets were sold for the Nostalgia Festival on Saturday 4 March, their biggest crowd yet, and on this occasion THS provided trams (just to the Church) as well as a bus shuttle from the city.

Another very successful event has been the Toddler Thursday which we witnessed on the day of the Switch Board commissioning, when the Park was bustling with Mums (mainly) and their small (pre-school) age children. This is to be repeated next Spring. Easter is coming up and we have been advised that there will be an "English Electric Double Feature." While this is referring to our railway friends at CRS and the Diesel Traction Group, the THS have English Electric vehicles as well - but with rubber tyres and two trolley poles! Alan Roi is working with the Park to make sure we are part of the action! Have a look at the Park's Facebook page - you don't need to be an Facebook member to view it. <https://www.facebook.com/events/1876282962590060/>.

March Work Day - Fire extinguisher training

We had a good turnout for our work day on March 17 with around 20 people crowded into the lunch room for an Alan Roi cooked lunch. One of the features of the day was a training session in the use of portable fire extinguishers, led by Murray Hobbs and Graeme Richardson. Following a presentation by Murray on the different types of fire extinguisher and the dos and don'ts of using them, around fourteen of us assembled at the traverser pit, where Graeme (with some initial difficulty) managed to get a fire going (diesel oil in a large tray) and everyone had a turn, using time expired dry powder extinguishers, to put out the fire. Educational

and enjoyable with no damage to persons or property! Other achievements on the day included Don's Dunedin team rail-cutting exercise (see Don's report) ongoing work on 24 and 12, with 12 being temporarily being shunted outside at the end of the day, general tidying up, track maintenance, et cetera.

FRONZ ANNUAL CONFERENCE - DUNEDIN

Bookings are now open for the annual conference of the Federation of Rail Organisations of New Zealand (FRONZ) this year being hosted by the Otago Excursion Train Trust and featuring trips to the Taieri Gorge and Oamaru, where Oamaru Steam & Rail will be operating. Don McAra will be one of the THS members in attendance and will be doing a presentation on the Dunedin cable cars. See the FRONZ web site: <https://www.fronz.org.nz/conference.php>

—*Dave Hinman*

Welcome to our New Members

We are going to include a new section in each copy of Tracts where I will welcome new members. To get started I will list all new members since my last Presidents Report presented at the 2016 Annual General Meeting.

I would like to make a warm welcome to the following members, Neville Armstrong, Dale Budd, Wayne Fisher, Piri Maraki-McGrail, Andres Portillo Aramendia, Philip Riley, Caleb Ward, Brian Welsh and also Dylan Roberts who has re-joined. The last but by no means least new member I would like to welcome is the new Editor of *Tracts*, Alastair Cross.

- Graeme Belworthy

April Work Day

As our normal monthly Work Day (15 April) happens to be Easter Saturday, and because Alan Roi will be out of town, there will be no cooked meal this month. There will however be a normal Saturday work day for those would like to come to Ferrymead and lend a hand. The next work day with meal provided will be Saturday May 20.

Vale — John Petersen 1950-2017

It is with much sadness that we report the unexpected passing on John Peterson on March 13, in his 67th year. John was Chairman of the National Rail Museum of New Zealand, a director of Ferrymead Park Ltd, Secretary of FRONZ, and was active and highly valued in all of those roles. Outside of Ferrymead he had been a professional broadcaster, with a particular interest in country music, and had also founded the American Club of Christchurch, soon after his arrival here. He played a major role in the obtaining of the materials for and the installation of the National Firefighters Memorial near the Kilmore Street bridge, following the 9/11 tragedy in New York. John represented the Park and the Ferrymead Trust at our recent COTMA conference and gave an interesting and informative talk entitled "Ferrymead Heritage Park Regeneration, including National Rail Museum Development" at our Saturday morning session. Our sincere condolences to his family and friends.

On the Buses



PHOTO: Alastair Cross, 24/10/16

From Alan Roi:

We have recently had some more visitors coming in to see, amongst other things, the trolleybuses. On 26th February, Andrew Fieldsend and his wife visited. Andrew is an Englishman now living in Budapest. He is also the proud owner of Cleethorpes trolleybus 54, which is almost fully restored to operating condition, at the Sandtoft Trolleybus Museum in the UK. His bus is a 1937 AEC 661T vehicle fitted with a 56 seat Park Royal body. We brought bus 103 out and ran a couple of trips for them.

Our second visitor, Stephen Oliver, was here on March 18th and joined the workday folk for afternoon tea. Stephen comes from the Manchester area but lived for a number of years in Australia. He also owns a bus, a Leyland Worldmaster.

Dave Hinman has recently been contacted by Richard Soper who we presume lives in Dunedin. He wrote, enclosing some photos of the last night of trolleybuses in Dunedin (*in March 1982*). He had seen reference to Trolleybus 5, which is currently in storage in the Linwood store. Trolleybus number 5 was purchased by Earl Ewers and was supposed to be part of a planned scheme to run trolleybuses in Dunedin on the Opoho route. When this fell through, Earl, who was living in Canberra, donated the bus to the THS.

Richard noted, "I don't know the driver's name, sorry. I'm fairly sure the night was organised by the Dunedin Museum of Transport and Technology, including decorations. The official last bus, no. 51 was well decorated, but no. 5, which I was on, only had a few streamers inside, as you can see. Oddly when no. 51 turned into the depot to finish the night, our driver didn't realise we were supposed to be doing that and headed out to St. Clair, so no. 5 was actually the last bus

on the streets."

For those interested in facts and figures, Dunedin No. 5 entered service in 1951. It is a BUT model RETB1 and has a 135 hp. Metropolitan-Vickers motor. The body was built by NZ Motor Bodies and seats 40 passengers. As noted above, the bus was finally retired in 1982.



ABOVE: Dunedin trolleybus N^o 5 on the last night of the trolleybus operation in the South Island, March 1982. One of six NZMB-built Dunedin trolleybuses to survive, it is owned by the THS but currently in closed storage.

Photo: Richard Soper.

Bremca's Generous Gift

Don McAra was the recent compère at a special event to commission our new switchboard donated by Bremca Industries. He kindly provided the following account of the day's events.

At midday on Thursday 16th March, outside the roller doors of Tram Barn 1, about twenty THS/HTT folk met six representatives of Bremca Industries Ltd, Christchurch branch, led by Managing Director and owner, Andrew McLean. General welcoming noises were made. President Graeme Belworthy, magnificent in full tram driver's regalia, spoke briefly and handed over to me as Guide to the Proceedings. I set out to build expectation by asking everybody to suspend disbelief and imagine that Tram Barn 1 with the power off was like a prehistoric cave I visited in Spain in which there are some very mysterious paintings shown to visitors under the flickering lights of lanterns. It was quite an awesome place to have been in, and later one of the party said they had visited the self-same cave.

Anyway, I said that in the inner recesses of our "man's cave" of Tram Barn 1 lurked millions of little mysterious creatures just waiting to be liberated. These mysterious things are part and parcel of us all, indeed of the whole world! Ancient peoples worshipped them in trees and stones. The Egyptians noticed them when stroking the fur of sacred cats. The Greeks gave them a name. Several hundred years ago European scientists learned more about them and in the last century at last controlled and finally utilised them for the benefit of humankind.

Having cautiously entered the "cave" guided by a tiny torch lent by Dave Hinman, everybody gathered around the inner sanctum of the Mighty Switchboard, and Andrew McLean was called upon to act as High Priest and to throw on the Main Switch. Gary Morris, Bremca's Business Development Manager, unveiled the plaque which celebrates the magnificent donation of this state of the art switchboard to our Society. The Electrons were declared as the mysterious creatures referred to earlier, and the Song of the now liberated Electrons was read. I called on Murray Sanders and workshop coordinator Gary Webber to speak and express our heartfelt thanks. With all appearing to be happy and the President at the controller we adjourned in double-decker tram No. 26 to the Lodge in the Township, where our hostess Phyllis Belworthy had prepared a fine luncheon.

Overall then, it was a memorable day. While no one from the media attended, there was a great headline and article on [Stuff.co.nz](http://www.stuff.co.nz) the day before and which included several photographs,

featuring, among others, John Shanks, Murray Sanders and Graeme Belworthy! See <http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/90118147/nzs-largest-switchboard-manufacturer-donates-25k-of-equipment-to-tramway-historical-society>.



ABOVE: *It's On!* Andrew McLean (Bremca) officially turns on the new THS Switchboard, 16/03/2017/.

BELOW: Gary Morris (Bremca) unveils the donation plaque gratefully recording the company's assistance in donating the new equipment.

Both Photos: D. L. A. Turner.



It's Long Term Plan Time Again



Despite one of the city's trams (our adopted ex-Melbourne 244!) featuring on the front cover of this year's draft Annual Plan, there is no good news inside the document about continuing the extension of the city tramway through Lichfield, Poplar and High Streets, to Madras Street and beyond, as originally approved and funded prior to the 2010-11 earthquakes.

The only other tram reference is to be found on p.54 – Proposed Capital Programme – New Services, where there is a line item, “Tram Base + Tram Overhead” showing \$102K planned for 2017/18 and \$72K forecast for 2018/19 and nil for 2019/20. We also understand that the current 2015/25 Long Term Plan (LTP) shows no further capital funding for the tramway out to 2025, although the LTP is up for review at the end of this year and will be consulted on again in 2018.

We have been advised that the current funding noted above totalling \$174K is required for completion of unfinished/temporary works related to the currently operating extension with some perhaps available for further design work but not enough for the purchase of materials or construction of further stages. This time last year we noted that while *“another year has gone by and there has been some indication from the Council that the next stage of the tramway will take it along High Street as far as St. Asaph Street....the draft Annual Plan... still makes no further funding available for the tram. The regeneration of this part of the city (the “Innovation Precinct”) is now well under way, with the major buildings in and near Poplar Street (Vodafone and Kathmandu) due for completion and opening and with good progress also with the Richard Peebles redevelopment of the McKenzie and Willis site (and façade). In another year or two, this will be a great destination so it's not too soon for detailed planning and a start to be made on further extension work. The New Regent Street issue has illustrated the importance of the tram to Central City business, so it would be good to remind the Council of this by putting in an Annual Plan*

submission suggesting that some funding, spread over say the next two years be set aside in the Capital Programme. The amount needed is understood to be approximately \$3M to complete the line (and overhead) to St Asaph Street.”

A year on and Kathmandu, Vodafone and the McKenzie & Willis development are complete and occupied, together with further buildings on the corner of Lichfield and Poplar, work has commenced on replacing the burnt out remains of the former Billens building and Richard Peebles is due to start work on restoring the heritage listed Duncan's buildings, also in High Street.

Some tram work was done during the year - central government agency Otakaro repaired and repaved Poplar Street, and at the same time installed the missing section of track at the Lichfield corner and extended the rails at the south end into Tuam Street, as well as installing light poles, designed for future tram use. At the Madras/St Asaph corner with High Street a new layout including provision for bicycles has been built, and designed to allow for the tram as well. It would seem to make good sense, and minimise future disruption if the tram rails at least were installed in the remainder of High Street ahead of businesses re-establishing there. This could be the basis of submissions to the Council on this year's annual plan, building on our comments from last year.

For those interested in following this up further, including making a submission, go to <https://ccc.govt.nz/the-council/plans-strategies-policies-and-bylaws/plans/long-term-plan-and-annual-plans/annual-plan-201718/>. This has links to downloadable versions of the 2017/2018 Consultation Document, or the Annual Plan itself and to an online submission form. Look at the questions being asked under Capital Programme - this may aid you in drafting your submission. Hard copies of the Consultation Document including submission forms are also available from Council Service Centres. **Submissions close on 28 April.**

In The Works

From the Dunedin Light Rail Trust

On Saturday 20th March we had a visit from Neville Jemmett, front man for stage 1 of the Cable Car Museum in Mornington which when complete will house three of our cable car vehicles. Neville came to select and cut up enough rails for the cable cars to sit on inside the Museum building. Don McAra, assisted by Ken Finnemore, new volunteer Laurence Cooper, and Colby James went with Neville together with gas cutter Colin from James Engineering to begin the process. After struggling for a while to move the rails well away from the dry undergrowth by using crow bars, we realised we'd need more than our own muscle power. Luckily one of Robin Ayers' men stopped by, kindly went back to the Ferrymead Stone Mason's yard just down the road and trundled up in the yard's forklift. Miraculously, it didn't turn over while lifting out one especially long 12 metre length of rail. The task was nearly complete when the forklift ran out of gas, but after a search back in the yard another gas tank was located and fitted. After the rails had been located in the middle of the road the gas cutting was safely completed and a neat stack of rail was left ready for pick up when Neville gets back to us with a suitable Hall's truck to do a backload trip to Dunedin. There the rails will be cleaned of old road metal and laid ready for a concrete pour around them. Once that has cured the small Totalspan Museum will be erected. So we are pleased to report that things are really happening with Dunedin's fledgling tram Museum for which there have been many unfortunate hold ups.

Yank 12 Update

The stripping of the 1920s and earlier additions has now been taken almost as far as it can be for now. The filled-in sides are now open again, and other modifications such as pram hooks, end apron lining and the emergency

brake pull cord mechanism fitted for hill operation have been removed. Compare the photo taken on the traverser this month with the one taken in early February and published in February Tracts! The tram is now starting to look rather more like its early form as in last month's picture. The only latter features not to be removed at this stage are the wooden pillars at each end as these are still needed to support the end roof canopies. Ultimately they will be replaced during the restoration with steel pipe stanchions, as on no's 1 and 26. No 12 is currently sitting outside for a short period of time while Invercargill 15 is back at Ferrymead for a paint touch up (*see elsewhere in Tracts*) and in the meantime the removed parts have been sorted and those being kept placed in the recently arrived container. Those parts not required for 12 in its original form and worth retaining are being put aside for future spares, replacements or patterns for Yank 11, proposed in the longer term for restoration in its final (1950s) form. Some of the Sydney team will be in Christchurch for a short visit in early April to view 12 and progress discussions on its future restoration.

Invercargill 15 Returns to Ferrymead

On the rather damp morning of Monday 27 March, following the removal of lifeguard equipment and roof advertising boards, Invercargill Birney No. 15 was loaded on to the BTR transporter in Cathedral Square, for the journey back to Ferrymead. There it was offloaded on to the extended traverser and placed inside tram barn 3 where it is now having some minor repairs and a paint touch up undertaken by the HTT. It is due back in service in the city in time for Easter so is a current high priority for the HTT team.

Don McAra and Dave Hinman



LEFT: What a difference two months can make! "Yank" 12 makes a rare appearance outside, 18/03/17.

The restoration of this tram is currently on hold pending further discussion with the Sydney Tramway Museum, which owns it—one of only two museum bodies besides the THS to own Christchurch trams in preservation, the other being the Yaldhurst Transport Museum.

Photo: Dave Hinman.

To Varnish, Or Not To Varnish?

When Hills car No.24 was chosen for restoration, the Society decided that this car would be restored as an example of a Christchurch tram in its later-day post-war style. As such it would be in a green-cream (light stone) external livery with its centre entrance sliding door, fixed sliding panels and windows in the former convertible section, pram hooks and streamlined destination boxes, while the interior would have upholstered seating, and be internally painted with lower panels grey, upper woodwork tramway tan (brown) and off-white ceilings.

This and the rationale for choosing this era are described in detail in the Conservation Plan prepared for No. 24 and Dreadnought Trailer No. 118 in 2008, and adopted by the Society.

Under the workmanship of Stephen Taylor, with limited assistance from others, including the watchful eye, guidance and assistance of Graeme Richardson, the tram was dismantled and is now being reassembled. To make its restoration authentic the decision was made for the original internal woodwork to be stripped back to its natural wood and then varnished and sign-written similar to its 1920 new condition. It was then planned to repaint over this varnished interior covering the varnish as was done in its later tramway days. The step of re-varnishing was partly for reasons of authenticity but also to protect the timber from paint absorption to allow for the option of later restoration back to original at some time in the future.

No. 24 is one of thirteen Christchurch Hills cars which were the hardest working trams operating on Christchurch's busiest line (Papanui-Cashmere). Due to the 1 in 9 gradient at the Cashmere Hills end of the line these were the only trams allowed on the line other than 5 of the 10 1905-built "Yanks" which although not as fast or as powerful had also been equipped with the special braking for New Zealand's steepest tramline when the line opened in 1912, and were sometimes described as "Old Hills" cars.

From 1936 the Tramway Board began modernising the 13 Hills cars fitting streamlined destination boxes and upholstered seating. It later began painting the interiors of these and other trams to help reduce the time they would be out of service during overhauls and save costs.

By 10th September 1954, the last day No. 24 ever ran, all the internal varnish work had been painted over and both inside and outside it was looking quite shabby. Russell Kent remembers the peeling ceiling paint, revealing the varnish still underneath.

Under Stephen Taylor's meticulous work the bulkheads have now been fitted once again to the frame and these have been beautifully varnished and sign-written

showing the wood grains of the native and exotic timbers used by Boon & Company in its construction. The whole roof assembly now lying beside the tram is currently being painstakingly stripped back for revarnishing as well.

Society members and the public are already admiring the parts of the bulkheads having a preliminary varnish finish and some of us are now thinking that, after hundreds of hours of Stephen's and others' work it would be a great shame to paint over all of this just for the sake of latter day service authenticity.

No changes are being suggested to the external post-war features of the tram, or the upholstered seating which had been installed only in the Hills cars, Brills, St. Martins cars and Boon No. 36. However maybe some internal compromises are needed so that some of this varnished natural woodwork can be retained. Several ideas have already been suggested such as varnishing the seat backs and perhaps the bulkheads and sliding doors. Another option would be to varnish all the enclosed saloon, while painting the former convertible open section. This could show the tram in both as new and in its final (1950s) form. And of course it would also be an option for all of the interior to be shown in its varnished condition.

The CTB in painting the interiors of their tramcar fleet was not entirely consistent. Some like the boxcars never were painted, while the Brills, Standard trailers and North Beach trolleybuses for example while mostly painted internally often retained some internal varnish to the end. When the THS restored Brill 178 and Duckhouse 115 some varnished features were retained and when they were both overhauled for city tram service more varnished features and brass work were added to both, to enhance the plain look of the painted interiors. There is no doubt that varnished natural wood work is admired and commented on by the general public and society members. As John Shanks often quotes "*we have some of the finest restored tramcars in the world*". Society members will want the finished No. 24 to have that 'wow' factor that the rest of the fleet have to be 'raved on' by visitors and other enthusiasts alike. The question is how much varnished interior should be retained?

We would be keen to receive comments from members and readers on this question. Decisions to retain varnishing will need to be made soon, before the ceiling and roof now being worked on are finished, so that it can be re-attached to the car. Please send an email to secretary@ferrymeadtramway.org.nz or send a note to PO Box 1126, or have a chat with Stephen Taylor, ph. 027 436 8510, or when he is at the tram barn.

Bruce Maffei

To Varnish, Or Not To Varnish?



ABOVE: The internal bulkheads on Hills car 24 as they were pre-restoration. The original Restoration Plan called for the tram to return to this state when completed—but the question remains: should we do it?

Photo: Dave Hinman

Then and Now

BELOW: The internal saloon bulkhead on Hills car 24 as it currently looks, showing the different types of wood used and the original Boon & Company transfer above the door. At right are the remains of the original car number.

Photo: Dave Hinman





ABOVE: On 20 April 2016, ex-Invercargill Tramways 'Birney Safety Car' 15 has arrived at Cathedral Square from New Regent Street on one of its shuttle trips. At the time New Regent Street was 'out of bounds' due to earthquake-related strengthening work on several shops; the Birney, like the other in-service trams at the time, was limited to running the High Street extension, as well as the New Regent Street—Canterbury Museum section of the main tramway loop.

Photo: Alastair Cross

FRONT PAGE: During the THS Membership Drive in late 2016, Christchurch 1 was used for 'driver experience' trips along the Reserve Line. Early in the morning—when the clouds and wind hadn't yet moved in—the 1905-built tram waited for custom near the Square Shelter. The motorman at the time was David Jones; later in the day, Joe Pickering took over for a spell.

Photo: Alastair Cross.

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The newsletter of the Tramway Historical Society

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We welcome contributions of material for publication in Tram Tracts—if you have anything tram, bus or trolleybus-related you want to share with us, please email it to the Editor at tracts@ferrymeadtramway.org.nz or post to 17 Huntingdon Dr, Rangiora 7400.



The Tramway Historical Society

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