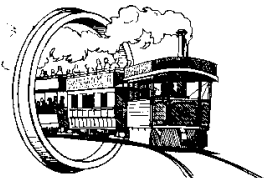


# Ferrymead Tram Tracts

Newsletter of the  
Tramway Historical Society Inc  
P. O. Box 1126  
Christchurch.  
Website  
[www.ferrymeadtramway.org.nz](http://www.ferrymeadtramway.org.nz)



August 2010

## Birney progress continues



Top: Invercargill Birney No 15 is now starting to look pretty much like a tram again.

Above: Brian Fairbrass at work on the roof.

Photos: Roy Sinclair

### Annual General Meeting

NOTICE IS HEREBY  
GIVEN that the  
**48th Annual General Meeting of the Tramway Historical Society Inc**  
will be held on  
**Wednesday 18 August 2010**  
at  
**7.45 pm**  
in the  
**Ferrymead Lions Building.**

The purpose of the AGM is to review the activities of the Society since the last AGM, to approve the annual accounts for the previous year, to elect the Management Committee, to consider and deal with any notices of motion (these must be in the hands of the secretary no later than 21 days before the meeting and may be posted to the Secretary at PO Box 1126 Christchurch or emailed to [secretary@ferrymeadtramway.org.nz](mailto:secretary@ferrymeadtramway.org.nz)).

**Supper will be provided.**

### Next work party

The next work party is scheduled for **Saturday 21 August 2010**. Formal work parties are held every third **Saturday of the month** and Alan Roi provides a cooked midday meal. There are also activities every **Saturday** and on **Monday evenings**.

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## Letter to the Editor

In the April Edition of *Tracts* I wrote the following: "What I am not happy about is the commercialism that sees the original concept of those who gave of their time, their families and commitment, lost. It is all very well for Christchurch to use the trams as a tourist attraction, but this legacy given to the city by those (and many have passed on) is yet to be recognised by the Christchurch City Council'. In a spirited reply the Secretary of the THS took me to task on the necessity to 'develop' commercialism. I am sorry Dave, but you appear to have misread the tenor of my comments. Essentially what I was saying was that the City Tramway, owes its very existence to the original concept and applied dedication of a central group of people, who like yourself have been actively involved over for close on fifty years. Where is the public acknowledgement of this great achievement? Do the visitors who ride the trams have any knowledge of how a dream became not only a reality, that of a working museum, but expanded to run once more in the city streets. Sorry Dave, but the THS constitution 2.1 does not embrace, nor do I believe could even have been contemplated, that its objectives would see relics of the past gracing the streets of other than Ferrymead.

I have in front of me a letter dated 17 June 2010, from the Office of the Mayor. In it he writes: 'I absolutely agree with you that all those involved in the establishment and development of Ferrymead Heritage Park have made a contribution to the city'. Well I consider that typical political speak. The embryo was an old relic found by a couple of young men, not far from the old tram sheds as I understand it. THAT and not the greater complex of Ferrymead, that saw the hard-core members of the THS carry the dream is what I am talking about. They are the men that I want to seek some recognition for. THEY ARE THE UNSUNG and as unpalatable as it may sound the fact is that the commercial aspect takes precedence and they are forgotten.

Whilst I acknowledge what Dave Hinman is saying and that the trams provide much needed finance to furnish ongoing projects, I lament the fact that what started out as voluntary and altruistic contributions have evolved into avenues of red tape, bureaucratic control and commercialism to the extent where the original concept has been swamped.

I smile though at the spin placed on the THS's constitution clause 2.1. A town planner, a pioneer tram enthusiast, a dream, an input and a rebirth.

Nothing gives me a greater thrill than to see the trams, out of the museum and running in the streets, not of Ferrymead, but where they belong ... in Christchurch. However that came about and for whatever reason, I congratulate those who brought it to fruition ... but do not continue to forget the forgotten.

Bruce Whiteside

## Forty years ago...



Bruce Whiteside found this photo in the December issue of *Tramway Topics* of our Birney No 15, South Invercargill's last tram, being used as a bedroom on a farm at Waimatuku, Southland.

Photo: Gary Lang

## ...and a few weeks ago



Photo: Alan Roi

Murray Sanders at work restoring the compressor for Hills car No 24.



Photo: Ken Henderson  
28.06.2010

Bore da (good morning) Alex or Kia ora mate? Ken meets up with Alex at the Ffestiniog Railway Boston Lodge Works, Porthmadog, Wales where Alex has landed a plum holiday job. Loco Taliesin in background.

## THS involved in murder mystery!

**STEPHEN TAYLOR** reports that a group has started running "Murder Mystery" evenings in the Park—normally on Friday or Saturday nights—based out of the Friendly Societies Lodge building. They have approached the THS about supplying a tram for these shows to give their punters a tram ride as part of the experience. Naturally we have agreed, and so a tram ride is planned to feature as part of these evenings.

They will also inter-work with the Tamaki shows on those nights when both organisations are running their events. So far there have been four shows—one in May and three in June. We wish them well and hope this will provide another ongoing revenue stream for the Society.

## From the track officer

**KEN HENDERSON** reports that the four monthly track inspection in July revealed a number of loose fishplate bolts which are originals and seized with rust. Two Saturdays have resulted in the offending bolts being gas axed (thanks for your help Larry) and new bolts inserted. Further "little" jobs will occupy the track gang over the forthcoming weeks. Another reminder to motormen to Please grease the track to prevent unnecessary wear on the rail and tram wheels.

## Ferry Road and tram accidents

Ferry Road seems to have had its fair share of serious tram accidents over the years. Among the more notable would have been the famous Kitson boiler explosion outside the Heathcote Arms Hotel in 1886 and the capsizing of a double deck trailer at the same location in 1919. **TREVOR CRAIB** has been delving into the newspaper archives and has found this report of the latter incident in the *Grey River Argus* of 16 May 1919.

### TRAM SMASH

#### IN CHRISTCHURCH

LARGE NUMBER INJURED.

TRAILER CAR RUNS OFF.

AND COLLAPSES ON SUMNER LINE

(Press Association.)

CHRISTCHURCH, May 15

Late This afternoon there occurred the biggest accident which has yet taken place in the Christchurch tram ways, a large number of people being more or less seriously injured.

A car, with two double-deck trailers attached, left Sumner for the city at 4.10 p.m. All the cars were fully loaded, but were not over-crowded. All went well until reaching the loop in front of the Heathcote Arms Hotel about half way to town, when the rear trailer left the lines, and after a couple of lurches, fell over on its left side. The passengers on top were violently flung to the road, and those inside were inextricably mixed up, and showered with broken glass.

It was at once seen that between twenty and thirty people were more or less injured, out of the fifty contained in the car. Ambulances and doctors were summoned from town, and those unable to move were carried into the hotel. All who could hobble along, were taken by electric car direct to the hospital, where they were at once attended to. Some of the injured, however, preferred to go to their own homes, and the drivers of passing cars were very good in the transport of such cases.

Ambulances removed the more seriously injured.

Nine adults and five children went to the hospital.

No cause is assigned for the trailer leaving the rails, but an inquiry is to be held.

There followed a list of those injured and in hospital.

On 12 June 1919, the *Poverty Bay Herald* published the following report:

### OVERCROWDED TRAM

#### THE SUMNER ACCIDENT

(Per Press Association.)

CHRISTCHURCH, last night.

The adjourned inquiry into the death of William S. Brunton, a victim of the tramway accident at Heathcote, on May 15, was resumed today. The only evidence called was as to the cause of death.

The finding of the Coroner, Mr S. E. McCarthy, was as follows: "I find that the deceased died on May 17, by reason of hemorrhage [*sic*] due to laceration of the brain and fracture of the skull, being injuries inflicted by a trailer attached to the 4.10 p.m. tramcar from Sumner to Christchurch, in which, on May 15, deceased was travelling, it having jumped the points between Heathcote Bridge and the Heathcote Arms hotel, whereby the said trailer became derailed and was overturned." Riders were added as follows: (1) The evidence as to the speed at which the car was travelling is inconclusive, but the fact that the trailer jumped the points and after overturning was dragged on its side for a distance of about 17 feet is indicative of excessive speed. (2) The tram consisted on a motor and two trailers, each with an upper deck, and was controlled by a motorman and a conductor. (3) The tram was built to seat 130 passengers, whereas, at the time of the accident, it was carrying about 250 passengers. All the passages, including the stairs, leading to the upper decks, were blocked. There were about 90 passengers on the overturned trailer of whom 52, including the deceased, were injured, most of the injuries being slight. (4) The conductor was in the middle vehicle when the hindmost car became derailed. Had there been a conductor on the derailed car at the time of its derailment, the death of the deceased or injuries to other passengers might have been averted. As it was, valuable moments elapsed before the conductor became aware of the derailment, and when the knowledge reached him the car in which he was for the time being travelling was so overcrowded that he could not reach the buzzer, and had to rely on his whistle, which the motorman did not hear. (5) The practice of running overcrowded cars, as this one, of a motor and two upper deck trailers, controlled by only one conductor, albeit it is authorised on the Sumner line by the Tramway Board by and Order-in-Council, is an extremely dangerous one. (6) That some provision should be made for limiting the number of passengers which a tram vehicle can lawfully carry.



# Yank in Papanui Road



*Above: Ken Henderson came upon this interesting photo of a Yank crossing Bealey Avenue en route to Papanui. The photo must have been taken just before the Fendalton line was opened as the rails are in place into Bealey Avenue but there is no overhead.*

## Remembered with gratitude...

Who remembers those fledgling days when THS was busy obtaining tram bodies and other paraphernalia for Ferrymead?

Tram bodies are bulky and heavy to cart round and we had plenty to cart—often from places as far away as Invercargill. In those days we were fortunate in having the services of Brightlings Transport, a large trucking firm with headquarters in Chapmans Road.

We were even more fortunate in having the good will of the managing director, Mr Ralph Higgott, who regularly made his trucks available to us at no charge. Trevor Craib would ring Mr Higgott, often I suspect with some

trepidation, with yet another request for a truck to go maybe somewhere local or perhaps to Dunedin or Invercargill to pick up an item that had been donated to us for preservation.

Though we stretched his generosity to the utmost, he only ever said no if there was simply no truck available at the time.

The Society received much support from generous people like Mr Higgott in those early days and it's good to remember and acknowledge the huge contribution they made to helping us to get where we are today.

Forty years ago the Society acknowledged Mr Higgott's contribution by making him an honorary Life Member.

## Amphibious Brill



*178 approaching the Victoria Square stop where heavy rain and poor drainage had created a large puddle.*

**Photo: Roy Sinclair**