

Ferrymead

Tram Tracts



The Journal of the Tramway Historical Society

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***Modelling Blackpool's Trams
Roof Shout for Mornington 103?
More Trolleybus Progress***

The Tramway Historical Society
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President's Piece – Stephen Taylor



So, welcome to the first *Ferrymead Tram Tracts* for 2021. Hopefully 2021 will be a little more “normal” than 2020 was.

From a Ferrymead Tramway point of view, it was pleasing to see we had a good number of tram tickets sold over the period from

20th December through to the end of January when the tramway running seven days a week i.e. every day that Ferrymead Park was open. I would like to thank all those members who helped run the trams during that period, and special note needs to go to John Harris for making sure that the roster was full. Operating the Ferrymead Tramway brings in the majority of the funds the Society needs for the day-to-day operation of the Society.

From a Tram Barn workshop point of view, there have been a number of activities on the go. Work by HTT staff on #24's trucks is proceeding well, and they have restarted work on the body of #24 as other activities permit. Also, work is continuing on re-tubing the Kitson boiler and also on the roof of the Dunedin Grip Car #103. And after the HTT guys returned from leave in January, they have been giving the Society's Case loader a bit of TLC. This was mainly to fix a major oil leak in the transmission, but as this needed the loader to be substantially dismantled, work is being done on fixing a number of problems – mainly caused by general wear and tear over the last two decades or more – that have been discovered during the stripping down process. Other activities that have been happening include ongoing work in and around the Trolley Bus shed – which I understand will be reported on elsewhere, work on getting Trolley Bus 210 back into operating condition – including fixing and refitting a broken leaf spring and then a good servicing over the pit in Tram Barn 2.

We also had over 20 members and their families join us for the annual Sunset Tour on Wednesday

27th January. For this we chartered a modern double decker bus from Ritchies Coach Lines. We understand Ritchies had brought this down from Auckland, in part to try and interest ECan in using double decker buses on timetable services in the future, but also for charter work. The route included travelling around the ring road (in an anti-clockwise direction) to Harewood Road, involved a brief stop at the old Papanui Railway Station – which was also the Papanui terminus of the Papanui Cashmere line. We then travelled down Papanui Road and Colombo Street – pruning the odd road-side tree as we went. The bus then travelled up Dyers Pass Road (pruning even more trees) to the Sign of the Takahe where members had another leg stretch (see picture), before the bus proceeded down Hackthorne Road then back to the Tram Barn via Centaurus, Port Hills and Bridle Path Roads. It was interesting to see how the bus performed – there appears to be no issues in going up Dyers Pass road for instance. But at just under 4.2m tall, there were a few interesting moments as it travelled under the Moorhouse Road overbridge on Colombo street, and also under the Tunnel Road overbridge on Port Hills Road – where the clearance was advertised as being 4.3m!

Membership Renewals Update

These went out to all members in January – the vast majority by e-mail plus by NZ Post to those without e-mail addresses. These have all been sent to the e-mail address or street address that we have on file for you. If you haven't received a membership renewal, please get in touch so that we can re-send one through. We have also had a number of members send us a donation for their favourite projects with their renewals.

We have received a number of membership renewals already from members – over 50% at last count, but that means we are still missing quite a few. And remember, for New Zealand based members, if you pay by 28th February, your annual subscription will be discounted as detailed on the membership renewal form.

SINCERE CONDOLENCES

As this issue of *Tracts* was going to press, we were saddened to hear that the mother of our former President, Graeme Belworthy had passed away. On behalf of the Society, our sincere condolences go out to Graeme at this time. The funeral will be held at 2:00PM at St. David's Anglican Church, Belfast on Monday 15 February.

Notices and News

WORK DAY

The Society's next Work Day will be held – coronavirus alert levels pending – on Saturday 20 February. There will also be a post-Work Day Zoom meeting; NOTE: For technical reasons a ZOOM link has not been able to be provided in TRACTs – please e-mail Dave Hinman @ secretary@ferrymeadtramway.org.nz if you would like to attend.

STOP PRESS – THE MARCHANT COLLECTION

As this issue of *Tracts* was going to press, the Society had been gifted and taken delivery of a model tramway layout built by long-time Society member, Barry Marchant. This layout, along with a collection of related books and tramway-interest items, were safely moved to on-site store at Ferrymead on Tuesday 9 February. We will run a more detailed story on the acquisition of the Marchant Collection next month.

FROM THE CHRISTCHURCH TRAMWAY

No major news to report this month, but by the time you read this Dunedin 11 will have returned to Ferrymead for some maintenance work.

FROM THE TROLLEYBUS SHED

As reported in previous issues of *Tracts*, we have simplified the overhead structure at both ends of the Trolleybus shed. This will make the overhead lighter and not put so much stress on the poles that support the overhead. It also lessens the risk of stalling on dead sections or dewiring. Since then Larry Day, assisted by others, has gone through the whole of the depot area taking out all the kinks and imperfections in the contact wire. The main running wires at the front of the shed have been readjusted to final tension and the depot connection is also about to receive the same treatment. In doing the rebuilding of the overhead all the bolts clamps and other fittings are treated with copper cote or zinc paint which will make it easier to undo should this be necessary in the future.

Philip Murphy and Mark Hibbs, assisted by others have had a massive clean-up along the east side of the shed. There are windows on the East wall of the shed that need repairing or removing. We intend to get the tower wagon alongside the shed to achieve this. There was a lot of growth and some tree stumps in the area. Once the shed is repaired we intend to lay weed mat and gravel the area. This will give us storage space for items from the aborted

Power House project, and which are being saved for potential re use.

Trolleybus 210 was taken up to the tram barns, to replace a broken spring leaf. This turned out to be multiple cracks and was repaired by Bellamy and East Ltd. Anthony Holliday has replaced it in the bus. At the time of writing the bus is over the pit having a full service, but may have to be brought outside as tram 11 is due to arrive from the city for work. While 210 is over the pit we hope to identify an earth leak on the bus. Thanks to the Post & Telegraph Society we had use of their 1947 Ford V8 Jailbar tow unit and used this to tow 210 to the pit.

The kitchen in the trolleybus shed has been receiving attention. We have obtained a dishwasher and a smaller and more practical fridge have been obtained. These have been fitted into a rebuilt kitchen bench. A decent cupboard has been installed above the bench. The stove has been moved alongside the bench and Dave Sanders has rewired it in to place. Jonathan Day was able to obtain a quantity of vinyl planks and these have been fitted in the front of the room by the bench. Stephen Taylor has tidied up the carpet and joined this to the vinyl. The other room in the upstairs area had been the repository for a large amount of "junk". This has been sorted and the useful bits put into storage, either downstairs in the Artefact room or in Cranmer. The old and damaged carpet has been removed. Our intentions are to wall off the front end of this room and use it as uniform storage. Craig Bullen has spent time sorting out the uniform items.

MORNINGTON 103 – TIME FOR A ROOF SHOUT?

Society Editor, Alastair Cross received the following email from Don McAra:

Attached are three pics in which Bill Perry is removing G-clamps from the now almost completed outer roof rail of Mornington 103. Due to lack of a spreader bar when 103 was originally brought to THS from Cromwell this rail and much of the roof was smashed. We hope to install the rebuilt clerestory roof on top of 103 soon. It's all one step at a time!

Also during the holiday break, Don received an email from the foundry team at A & G Price of Thames, informing him that all four wheels had been cast and were now undergoing stress relief before machining. It is hoped that the wheels will be delivered sometime this month.



ABOVE: Work in progress – the front room in the Trolleybus Shed, soon to become the new uniform store. Photos: Jonathan Day (left); Alan Roi (right).



With the trolleybus overhead now approaching the stage where it could be tested, the Post & Telegraph Society's Ford Jailbar tow vehicle has arrived at the Tram Barns with Christchurch 210 for mechanical attention and to trace an unwanted electrical 'leak'. By the time you read this, 210 will be on its way back to the Trolleybus Shed to make room in Tram Barn 2 for Dunedin 'Boxcar' 11, and the next trolleybus – most likely Wellington 103 – will follow in due course when space becomes available. Photo: Jonathan Day.

TRAM DRIVING TIPS WITH DAVID JONES

A reminder that traffic staff and members of the public are not permitted at any time to be underneath tramcars, or to place hands or limbs across the rails anywhere near the wheels of a tramcar. Only workshop staff in compliance with set procedures may work underneath tramcars.



TWO PHOTOS: Bill Perry at work, removing the G-clamps from Mornington 103's roof rail. Also visible are 103's reinstated front aprons and parts of the window frames – it's starting to look like a real cable car again! Two photos: Don McAra.



ABOVE: All I want for Christmas is... four shiny new wheels, and that is what Mornington 103 will get, courtesy of A & G Price's foundry in Thames. The above photo was kindly supplied by Price's Mechanical Engineer, Chris Harison, and was passed on to us by Don. We now eagerly await the finished product!

Modelling Blackpool's Trams

During last year's coronavirus lockdown, Society member **David Jones** had a unique opportunity to work on a fleet of '00' scale model trams – his chosen subject: Blackpool, home of England's last original tramway system. This article was produced by David for Tracts in April 2020, but was not chosen for publication at that time.

Blackpool was Britain's last operating street tramway dating back to the era of first generation electric trams. Between 1962 and 1992 it was the only operating street tramway in Britain. Today the tramway is operated by modern light rail vehicles and a sprinkling of heritage trams from the earlier generation.

By the early 1930s street tramways were starting to look their age and the modern motor bus was being aggressively marketed as an alternative. An engineer, G. J. Rackham, was responsible for the advances in motorbus technology. On his return from the USA in the mid-1920s he went to work for Leyland where he was responsible for the Leyland Titan and Tiger models. He soon returned to the company he worked for before going to the USA – AEC, long time makers of London buses. There he was responsible for the AEC Regent and Regal models. These buses were advanced for their time and many tramways succumbed to pressure to purchase buses instead of trams.

In Blackpool the tramway manager, Walter Luff, swam against the tide and from 1934 replaced and upgraded Blackpool's tram fleet with modern rolling stock. The first new trams were the 'Boats' – twelve open top single-deckers, named after their appearance (**top right**). All but four are still in existence either in Blackpool or museums around the world. The class leader, 600, has been named 'Duchess of Cornwall'.

A large fleet of 45 single decker 'Railcoaches' built by English Electric with a top up order of a further 20 by Brush were obtained from 1937 onward (**centre right**). In addition a fleet of 12 Brush 'Sun Saloons' – convertibles – was obtained at the outbreak of war but they were immediately pressed into troop transport service. After the war the 'Sun Saloons' were fully enclosed and fitted with VAMBAC electrical equipment and used on the Marton route. All but one of the 'Saloons' were scrapped when the route closed in the early 1960s; the sole survivor is now preserved at the East Anglia Transport Museum. I have never been able to find a photo of a Sun Saloon in as built condition.

(Editor's note: VAMBAC - Variable Automatic Multinotch Braking and Acceleration Control – was a unique type of lever-operated British controller equipment designed for smoother, faster and quieter acceleration and braking. Blackpool was the most notable user of this equipment; a short clip of the remaining Sun Saloon's VAMBAC equipment in action can be found on Beamish Museum's YouTube Channel.)

Next came twenty-seven double-deckers – thirteen open top 'Luxury Dreadnoughts' and fourteen closed top double-deckers, latterly known as 'Balloons' (**overleaf top**). The 'dreadnaught' name came from an earlier generation of open top trams that they replaced. The 'Luxury Dreadnoughts' were fully enclosed during the war. One reverted to open top condition in the 1980s and is named



'Princess Alice' (**right**). Walter Luff is remembered by 'Balloon' 717 which now bears his name, unveiled by his daughter Daphne Luff.

And so to a couple of models I modified to represent a 'Boat' and a 'Luxury Dreadnaught'. The original models are Corgi Classics 1:76 ('00') scale Blackpool tram models of a 'Railcoach' and a 'Balloon'.

BELOW: *The finished fleet on Dave's tram shed diorama. From left: 'Boat', 'Luxury Dreadnaught', 'Balloon' and 'Railcoach'. The latter two models are out-of-the-box models produced by Corgi – part of the famous Hornby Hobbies modelling empire.*



LEFT: *The noble art of 'kitbashing' – the modelling term given for modifying a proprietary item into something else. In this case, the chosen item to 'bash' is a Corgi Blackpool 'Railcoach' with the upper saloon body removed, using a photograph of one of the Blackpool Heritage Fleet 'Boats' as a guide.*

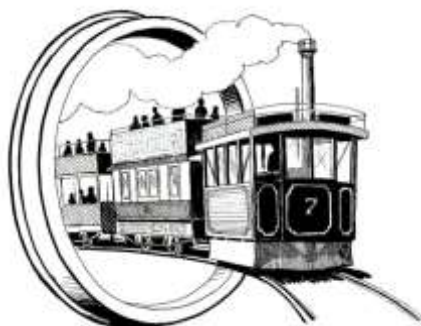
Dave used a kitset for the tram's pole tower and base, and repainted the tram body himself. The interior needed little attention beyond the installation of the passenger figures shown; being Chinese-made 1:87 ('H0') scale, Dave wryly admits that they did not have to be chopped off below the knees to fit into the tram!

All photos: David Jones; Alan Robson ('Balloon' car)



ABOVE: Dylan Roberts at the controls of 26 while learning to drive a tram. He is being observed by Operations Chairman John Honeybone. Photo: David Jones.

FRONT COVER: Sign of the Takahe, and Ritchies double-decker bus, alias the 'Tree Trimmer' (!) lays over for THS members to inspect. Time will tell if double-deckers catch on in Christchurch more than sixty-six years after its last double-decker public transport vehicles – the remaining horse- and steam-tram trailers converted for electric tramway services. In the meantime, both Auckland and Wellington possess fleets of modern double-deck buses. Photo: Stephen Taylor.



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