

FERRYMEAD

Tram Tracts



The Journal of the Tramway Historical Society

Issue 7—July 2016



FRONZ Conference 2016—The Tours

Part Two of our coverage of the 2016 FRONZ Conference in Auckland

The Trolley Trundle

John Shanks recalls... The Great Blackball Track Salvage

Moving Forward for the Future

Graeme Richardson and John Shanks report on the regeneration of the Society

President's Piece—Graeme Belworthy



Last month I was unable to supply Alastair with my usual article as I was in Australia visiting my daughter and grandchildren. Had a great trip and the only downside was leaving Brisbane at 5.30pm with a temperature of 22, and arriving in Christchurch to 2 degrees.

The COTMA Conference planning is well in hand. Registrations have starting coming in including partners and those only wishing to attend part of the conference. All conference details, registration forms and accommodation booking forms are now on line at www.comta.org.au and follow the links. It's not too early to book as this will help us gauge support.

The attendance at last General Meeting was very disappointing with only about 10 members present. These meetings are organised for the benefit of the members but it would appear we are not catering for what the membership wants. With the AGM coming up this could be a good time for some new blood to join the Functions Committee.

The AGM will be held on 17th August. The Management Committee currently has vacancies and not all incumbents are re-standing. This is the time we need to consider joining the committee or approaching a member we think could contribute to the Society.

Alastair's Angle—Alastair Cross



Welcome to your latest issue of *Tracts*—and it's on time too! Over the past few months, it has been made clear that although delaying publication of each issue to the start of the following month is good for 'breaking news' reports, it's not welcomed by the Society's members who would prefer it to be published more promptly. I trust they will enjoy having *Tracts* out on time and I shall endeavour to ensure that it continues to do so in the future too.

This month is largely a 'catch-up' issue, for which I am ultimately responsible due to my leaving publication of last month's *Tracts* up to the proverbial last minute. In the haste to get it out there were a number of features left out, and I apologize unreservedly for this.

The big news this month of course is the ongoing need

A Membership Drive is planned for the 19th and 20th November as part of the on-going development of the Society. There is a more detailed article on the membership drive in this issue of *Tracts* and we ask that all members help as much as they can.

On a positive note, the Society income from Park admissions for June is the best since records started in the late 1990s. To capitalize on the increase in visitor numbers at the Park, the Society needs to be able to provide a tram service and to do this we need drivers. The current stock of active drivers is very small so ask all licenced drivers to help as much as possible, or do you know someone who would be interested in learning to drive?

The new Diesel Bus Barn is progressing with quotes received and a builder selected and foundation design details now being prepared. Once this design work is complete earth works and foundations and floor work can commence. Watch this space.

As mentioned before the Society AGM is to be held Wednesday 17 August in the Lions Hall, Ferrymead Park so please can we have a good turnout to ensure your society continues in the best way possible. New members on the committee bring fresh eyes which can bring fresh ideas.

Cheers,

Graeme

for the regeneration of the Society and thanks to John Shanks and Graeme Richardson, we have an update from the recent General Meeting on the need to continue this recovery. John has also contributed a historical photo from the Great Blackball Track Recovery of 1966. Barry Marchant has also added another historical photo with a call for names to those shown—please refer to the Back Page. One casualty of last month was the splitting of our FRONZ Conference notes into two parts—the actual Conference, and the Tours that are run in conjunction with the Conference. This month, the THS team who attended conclude their coverage with a look at the tours to Glenbrook, MOTAT and the renowned narrow gauge Driving Creek Railway.

Well, that's about all I have to report this time.

Cheers,

Alastair

In Memoriam: Ian Stewart and Paul Dillicar

Earlier this year, the New Zealand rail heritage movement lost two key figures following the passing of Paul Dillicar and Ian Stewart. Due to space and time constraints, their obituaries were held over to this issue.

Paul Dillicar (1944-2016)

For over 40 years, until suffering a major stroke five years ago, Paul was the driving force behind the Federation of Rail Organisations of New Zealand (FRONZ) and led the organisation from small beginnings to the successful organisation it is today. Paul set high standards of performance and encouraged others to achieve the same on their respective railways or tramways and was willing to assist with achieving their goals. Paul was in his element at the annual FRONZ conference inspiring members to continue the good work and contribute to the preservation of New Zealand's rail heritage which he loved. Paul died on 6 May, aged 71. (**Grant Craig, FRONZ President**)



Ian Stewart (1927-2016)

Ian, son of railway historian, photographer and painter W.W. Stewart and older brother of tramway historian and photographer Graham Stewart, passed away on 15 May aged 89. Ian was one of a small group of men who established the Old Time Transport Preservation League in the late 1950s at their site at Matakohu, 150 km. north of Auckland with the objective of saving historic New Zealand trams for posterity. This in turn led to the move to The Museum of Transport & Technology (MOTAT) in 1963, and of which Ian was one of the founders. For many years he served as Chairman and General Manager of the museum's tramway division and successfully argued for and led the construction of the dual gauge line which now links the two MOTAT sites.



COTMA 2016—Are You Coming?

COTMA CONFERENCE CHRISTCHURCH 2016

Registration is now open for the conference and we urge those intending to come to let us know as soon as possible. Go to <http://www.cotma.org.au/conference.html> for registration forms and other details. If you wish to attend only part of the conference, wish to bring your partner just to the dinners, etc., contact us at cotma2016@ferrymeadtramway.org.nz or phone Dave Hinman on 027 431 4774 or Stephen Taylor on 027 436 8510. This will be a great opportunity to showcase rebuilding Christchurch and its tramways (Ferrymead and the City), to hear some great speakers and also to meet and socialise with fellow tramway operators, enthusiasts and museum people from around NZ, Australia and beyond.



Moving Forward — The Recovery of the Society

At the members' meeting on 20 July Graeme Richardson and John Shanks were asked by President Graeme to speak to those present about the need for a Membership Drive. Graeme's comments were in essence what he had said previously to a meeting of the Management Committee and were printed in Tracts last month. John's comments to the Members' meeting follow:

"Why do we need a MEMBERSHIP DRIVE? Well – look around the room – there aren't as many of us as there used to be – and we're all getting older. Some of us have been coming to THS meetings like this for more than 50 years!

It's getting harder to find people to man all the activities that need to be done.

President Graeme has asked us to help him to bring these concerns before you, our Members.

Here and now – tonight – wouldn't be too soon for us, the Members, to begin talking about what we want for our Society and where we go from here.

We – the Members – are the Society. If we want it to continue, we must be prepared to help with the tasks involved with undertaking a membership drive and with all the various activities that are part of the complex organisation that we have become.

For example, we need:

- Help with the site tidy-up for COTMA, for our Membership Drive and to improve our image with the public, that is, visitors to our site.
- Help with leadership roles – people prepared to act as team leaders for projects and to see them through – projects like the site tidy-up, the Membership Drive and for site preparation and clearing up to allow construction of the new bus barn to proceed.
- Help to set up for the membership drive, to man areas of interest and to be meeters and greeters for interested visitors.

Above all, we need a discussion about where the Society is going: – where it is going from here and, indeed, whether we want it to continue. WE are the members of this Society and, if it is to continue, it is simply up to us to make sure that that is what happens.

This is properly an AGM discussion item for the meeting next month but it is so important that we should be talking about these things right here and now – tonight!

Our Management Team need our help and support – but members need to be talking about our situation. Sheer overload on our executive team is slowing things down and is one of the reasons things don't get done or followed up as effectively as we would like. This became apparent at the meeting held last Saturday to plan for the membership drive. We have COTMA here in October making the overload on senior Committee members even worse. The Management Committee is below strength in numbers and the burdens of running the Society are not being shared fairly. Three Executive members of the Committee appear to be carrying more than their fair share of the burden. We need to do something about this!

The AGM is next month. As members we need to seriously consider what we can do to support our leadership. Please seriously consider whether you yourself could volunteer to help on the Committee or whether you should approach someone else to allow their name to go forward for nomination. This process should start now. To leave it to spring a nomination upon an unsuspecting person at the AGM is simply leaving it too late and the person you spring it upon will almost certainly be taken by surprise and will probably decline to be nominated!

Please think and talk about these things – even in a few minutes time in the context of this meeting.

We need to plan for a recovery. A Membership Drive is an aspect of a recovery strategy.

But first, Graeme Richardson will brief you on his thoughts and plans for the membership drive."

— **John Shanks**

The Great Blackball Trolley Trundle



Those halcyon days: The Great Track Salvage of 1966 on the Blackball branch with two materials trolleys posed on a bridge on the upper section of the line. The line was closed by the NZR in November 1966 after unexpected flash flooding demolished several spans of the Grey River bridge. Photo: John Shanks collection.

Back in 1966, the THS was given part of the former Blackball Branch to build part of our current running line at Ferrymead. **John Shanks** recalls the days of the great Blackball track salvage parties—and the fun that was had in the process.

Being a THS member can be great fun – despite all the hard work!

This amazing photograph was taken – probably by Bruce Dale – of a “trolley trundle” during one of the Blackball track lifting work parties in 1966. The Minister of Railways, the Hon. J. K. McAlpine, had gifted the Society three quarters of a mile of the former Blackball branch railway line, which had closed suddenly and unexpectedly when the Grey River flooded and washed away a section of the road/rail bridge that connected Ngahere to Blackball. Luckily for us, the line had not deteriorated or become run down. The rails were rolled in 1905. They have provided most of the rails now in use on the Ferrymead tramway. The sleepers were mainly silver pine – a water resistant native timber sourced from the West Coast bush – with some hardwood sleepers. These were the original sleepers on the Ferrymead tramway, although most have now been replaced.

The work at Blackball was hard. We uplifted 1760 sleepers and handled them several times as well as hundreds of lengths of rail. Every fishplate had to be unbolted, every dog spike pulled out and every screw spike encouraged to release its grip on its sleeper!

But there were rewards! Apart from the whole effort giving us a great sense of achievement and exhilaration, we treated ourselves to a small “reward” after all the hard work – a “trolley trundle”. The rail trolleys lent to us by the Railways were pushed up the line for a mile or two to where the rails ran out at a great wooden viaduct – Soldiers Creek I think it was called. Then the weary workers climbed on to the trolleys and trundled downhill – all the way to the Blackball bridge – a considerable distance and at quite some speed!

Visible in the photo are: Bruce Maffei, John Shanks, Murray Sanders, Neil Andrews and Ian Spicer. The photo is taken on one of the lesser bridges on the upper section of the line. The date was some time in October or November 1966.

—**John Shanks**

FRONZ Part Two—The Tours

Following on from last month, we conclude our coverage of the 2016 FRONZ Conference by looking at the various tours offered during the conference. **Dave and Dot Hinman, Bruce Maffei, Alan Roi, Murray Sanders and Stephen Taylor** all attended and compiled the following report.



On Friday, 3rd June, we visited the Glenbrook Vintage Railway, who operate a 6km. line to the perimeter of Waiuku township. Pulled by steam locomotive W^W 644, recently restored 'Parlour' car A^A 1452 with its enlarged viewing platform and lounge-style seating, was officially introduced into service for our trip. A buffet lunch was served at the local Cosmopolitan Club. In the GVR's Pukeoware workshops, among many other projects, was dismantled steam locomotive W^W 480, awaiting a new boiler.

On Sunday, 5th June, our second field trip (after lunch) was a visit to MOTAT, hosted by the Railway and Tramway sections. One highlight was a most impressive turnout of seven trams and immaculately-dressed operating crews, with trams shuttling between the main MOTAT site in Great North Road and

the MOTAT 2/Sir Keith Park Airfield site in Motions Road. We observed that Wellington 'Big Ben' double-decker N^O 47 has the same steep stairs, and some of the same loading and unloading issues as our Christchurch double-decker, N^O 26. We were also able to catch up with Bruce Pullar and Leyton Chan and see progress on ex-Wanganui trailer N^O 21.

The Western Springs Railway was running trains with locomotive Y 542, and had their workshops open to view. Located between the tram terminus and the railway station, some of our members visited the relatively recently-built Aviation Hangar and were really impressed. However, one of the museum's largest aircraft, the Sunderland Flying Boat, is still unfortunately sitting outside in the weather.

At the FRONZ Awards Dinner on the Sunday evening, this year's winner of the MOTAT Society-sponsored Tramway Restoration Award was the Wellington Tramway Museum for the restoration of Wellington 'Fiducia' 260, built in 1952 and currently the last street tram to be built in New Zealand. This has been a long-term project started as long ago as 1988, with the team led by Trevor Burling, whose early years of tramway involvement had been with the THS in Christchurch. A very well deserved award.

On Monday, 6th June, there was an optional field trip to the Driving Creek Railway, Coromandel. It was another fine day and some 40 attendees boarded the catamaran at the Auckland Ferry Terminal for the 2¼-hour journey by sea to Coromandel and the DCR, constructed over a 30-year period by well-known potter and railfan, the late Barry Brickell, who passed away in January aged 80.



This was a very impressive 3km trip to the terminus at the "Eyefull Tower" for great views across the Coromandel Peninsula and the Firth of Thames. Laid to the minimum gauge of 15in (381mm), the DCR runs using three home-built railcars, articulated units *Snake* and *Lynx*, and the smaller single-unit railcar *Possum*, which have recently been modified to improve door safety following an incident last year. The line

FRONZ Part Two—The Tours

itself includes five switchbacks or reversing points, as well as an impressive double-deck bridge. Retaining walls in some of the cuttings have been successfully made with recycled wine bottles or used rubber tyres.

Also on site was the body of ex-Auckland E class tram N^o 56, originally brought to the site by Peter Berry when he was working on the railway and now currently housing Barry's private pottery collection, plus some brand new 9kg (about 20lb) rail which Barry had imported from China a few years ago.

The THS contingent returned to Auckland by 6:40pm that evening in time for those members who were flying back to Christchurch that night—it was agreed that it had been a great day, and a good way to end a very enjoyable conference. Perhaps this might provide a few ideas for the upcoming COTMA Conference in October?



Photos on P. 6 provided by THS delegates; photo on P. 7, provided from FRONZ Journal No. 155, June 2016.

Advance Notice—September Function

September Function

Sunday September 18th

Our annual dinner

Time :- Meet at 6pm to eat at 6.15pm

Where :- Garden Restaurant 110 Marshlands Road

Cost Adults \$31.50, Seniors (i.e. 60 plus) \$29.50

Can you please let Phyllis know by September 8th; either ring (03)352 4872, Txt 027 227 0343, or email - trixiebell@xtra.co.nz





ABOVE: In 1968, John Shanks took this photo of a group of THS members during the recovery of 'Brill' 178 from its resting place at the Milford Huts near Temuka. However, with a lack of names of those present at the time, Barry Marchant is now seeking to identify those shown in the photo. Answers can be directed either to Barry or the Editor who will then pass them on to Barry. Photo: John Shanks, courtesy Barry Marchant.

FRONT PAGE: More than seventy years ago when the Papanui Road cut through Victoria Square, a photographer at the intersection of Victoria and Armagh Streets captured 'Hills' car 168 on a Route 2 working heading back to Cathedral Square. Most of the buildings in this picture are now since gone with the exception of the brick building to the right of 168, which is now awaiting strengthening and restoration works. Photo: Graham Stewart collection.

LAST MONTH'S FRONT PAGE: During his occasional trips into town, THS Editor Alastair Cross has sometimes taken his camera with him and chased trams after spending the morning—or part thereof—at Archives New Zealand's local office. In this instance, from 20 April 2016, 'Brill' 178 was stopping in Cathedral Square on another trip between the Museum and New Regent Street during the time when the street was closed to trams for building repairs.

Photo: Alastair Cross.

Ferrymead Tram Tracts

The newsletter of the Tramway Historical Society

Editor: Alastair Cross—tracts@ferrymeadtramway.org.nz

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.

