

FERRYMEAD

Tram Tracts



The Journal of the Tramway Historical Society

Issue 10—October 2016



Bruce Maffei presents... The Standard Trailers (Part Two)

Christchurch's 'Standard' trailers in service and a few modifications

The Membership Drive is Coming!

We're looking for help to get ready for the weekend

The Bill Kingsley Award—Mornington Trailer 111

Mornington cable-car trailer 111 wins the Bill Kingsley Award from COTMA

President's Piece—Graeme Belworthy



Hi All

Well, after all the organising for the COTMA Conference, it is now all over. From those I spoke to, everyone seem happy with what we had arranged and everyone left satisfied. The Organising Committee will hold a debriefing meeting and identify any areas that could be improved on. The next conference will be held in Perth, Western Australia in 2018

and we will pass on any help we can as we received assistance from the museums with running ours.

Work is still continuing on areas we that have been identified that need attention. A list of some of the work we would like to get done is on the notice board in the lunch room as is updated as jobs are completed and others are added. This work is all part of our effort to increase our appeal and attract more visitors and even new members.

We are still waiting for our annual accounts to be finalised to enable us to apply for funding for the new Diesel Bus Barn. The Ferrymead Trust has started moving the octagonal building and it should be gone by the time

Alastair's Angle—Alastair Cross



Welcome to your latest issue of *Tracts*. It's been a busy last month with the COTMA Conference and the annual Labour Weekend open days, and we are now counting down to the Membership Drive in November. I apologise that this sounds a bit odd—we are in November, after all, and the Membership Drive is but a few weeks away—and I admit that this comes down to me once again and various circumstances of my own making. Oh well!

While the Membership Drive is our big focus now, we have already begun attracting new volunteers thanks to our recent presence at the Big Model Train Show in early October. Don McAra, Colin Loach and Sandra Cron manned our stall—my apologies again if I have missed anyone out. To any new members who may have joined after visiting our stand, we warmly welcome you aboard, and look forward to getting to know you better.

Don has also recently been in the news again, this time as the leader of the Mornington cable-car restoration

you read this. We are still looking for someone to buy the Hiab truck which we will put on TradeMe. That will leave only the Dangerous Goods Store which we believe we have a suitable site we can relocate it to, that's still a work in progress.

The next big event for the Society is the Membership Drive that is being advertised as a Tramway Open day which will run over the weekend of the 19th and 20th November. To help run this event we ask that as many as possible of our members are present to host the visitors. There is more about this event elsewhere in *Tracts*.

With all this activity going on the normal day to day works continues to ensure the trams and buses keep operating which is the public face of the Society. To ensure this we need to support Phyllis who has taken over the roster on a temporary basis whilst John Harris deals with health issues, and we wish him a speedy recovery.

All visitors are always welcome and we ask that you make yourself known to one of the members on site so we can look after you.

Cheers,

Graeme

project. The team won the Tramway Restoration Award from FRONZ in 2014 for their outstanding restoration of Mornington cable-car trailer 111; now, two years on, the same team has won the Bill Kingsley Award from COTMA for their work on trailer 111. Well done Don & Co! Thanks to the efforts of John Shanks, we have a media release from the *New Zealand Railway Observer* on this well-deserved award in this issue; next month, we'll feature one on Christchurch 'Hills' tram 24, which is nearing completion, along with the promised obituary for Society member, the late Allen Harbrow, which could not be organised in time for this issue.

Mention must also be made of the work Joe Pickering has recently performed, making a video on the Society's history. It's available on YouTube—search for 'Tramway Historical Society' — and Joe has said he can provide DVD copies for those who want. It's an excellent piece of work and thank you very much for your efforts Joe.

Cheers,

Alastair

Traffic Notices — THS Membership Drive

Our Membership Drive on Saturday and Sunday the 19th and 20th November is now drawing very close. The public are being invited to join us between 10 A.M. and 4 P.M. on both days.

Don McAra has done a wonderful job of interesting the media in this coming event so that, even before you read this, you will have been reminded of it by a news story. We can confidently expect a crowd of visitors on both days.

Graeme Richardson is organising the Membership Drive. He is most anxious to have the enthusiastic support of members.

Helpers are needed on tasks from now until the week-end of 19 and 20 November. Please see Graeme, who will be able to direct you to what is still needed.

On the two days of the Membership Drive, a large crew of helpers will be needed – tram and bus drivers, meeters and greeters, and enthusiastic members just to spend time talking to – and enthusing our guests. On these two days, it would be very helpful if members could arrive early – well before the 10 A.M. start time – in order to get everything set up and ready for our visitors. Helpers will also be needed in the week before the week-end to help prepare for the visitors.

Remember, from now on we need all the helpers we can find to get ready for the weekend. Just come down to Ferrymead and talk to Graeme as soon as possible about what you can do to help.

— John Shanks

For those who can't speak to Graeme in person before the event, please ring him at the Tram Barn: (03)384-1708.

The Big Model Train Show — 2016

The annual Big Model Train Show was held at Pioneer Stadium, Barrington over the weekend of 1-2 October this year. This year, the THS had a stand as part of its ongoing effort attracting new volunteers, manned ably by members from both our Tramway and Bus teams.

Apart from offering half-price memberships, the THS stand also offered a number of 'OO' scale bus and tram kits (1:76 scale) donated to the Society, as well as copies of the 'On the Move' series, other Society publications and the last copies of Don McAra's authoritative cable-car book, *Hold Very Tight Please!*, with all funds raised from the sale of this book going towards the ongoing restoration of Mornington grip tram 103. Don, who was present for the weekend, also offered postcard reproductions of some of the paintings featured in this book.

Also on display were several large-scale tramway models from Colin Loach and Barry Marchant, as well as a model of Dunedin 'Sydney Bogie' 59 from Don's own collection. Well done to all involved for a splendid effort!

Photos courtesy Alastair Cross.

ABOVE: Don mans part of the THS stand;

RIGHT: A closer look at DCCT 'Sydney Bogie' 59.



The Bill Kingsley Award — Mornington 111

The Tramway Historical Society hosted the biennial conference of the Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia from 13-17 October. This body includes virtually all of the tramway museums and heritage and tourist tramways in Australia and New Zealand. Representatives of most groups were present.

Achievement Awards were made to recognise significant heritage restoration work, with the supreme award, the Bill Kingsley Award being for the project judged the best in terms of degree of difficulty, quality of outcome, value to community and historical accuracy. The late Bill Kingsley was for many years the very active Executive Officer of COTMA. His input into the tramway museum movement was very great. This award honours his memory. The award was won by the Tramway Historical Society for the restoration of a Dunedin cable car trailer. This vehicle has been under restoration over the past five years by a small but enthusiastic team of volunteers led by Don McAra, a retired teacher and former resident of Dunedin. The award was completely unexpected. Called upon to say a few words as he received the award at the formal dinner which concluded the conference, Mr McAra, usually a most articulate advocate for his project, looked utterly astounded and confessed to being “completely blown away” by the honour bestowed upon the Society.

The award was given partly in recognition of the Society’s community spirit, because this trailer is to be placed on display in Dunedin in a new cable car museum at the Mornington terminus of the former High Street cable car line. It is a project of considerable interest in Dunedin, a city which had long prided itself on its cable car services. These services ran up very steep streets to provide public transport to the city’s hill suburbs.

The trailer, No 111, operated on the High Street cable car line, where it was hauled up gradients as steep as 1 in 6 to the suburb of Mornington. The towing car was a cable car or “grip car”, a tramcar with no power source of its own which derived its movement by gripping a continuously running cable laid in the street between the running rails of the tramway. Although a speed of only 10 mph was maintained, this was a considerable improvement upon walking up the steep hills of Dunedin on foot! After the award certificate was presented at the formal COTMA dinner, Mr McAra went on to explain to those present – not all of whom had a personal knowledge of the workings of cable cars – how the “pawl” or automatic run back brake on the trailer operated, in order to stop the trailer running away, in the very unlikely event that both the coupling and the safety chains should fail between the grip car and the trailer on the 1 in 6 gradient. Very simply, the run back brake was composed of a ratchet on each axle of both the trailer and the grip car, and pawls which the gripman dropped on to the ratchets when a stop was made while going uphill. However, should the trailer become detached from the grip car, a safety chain connected to the grip car and keeping the pawl disengaged from the axles would break when the trailer separated from the front car, and would release the pawl so that it fell on to the axle and prevented any backward movement. Going downhill the trailer was uphill of the grip car so had no danger of running away and no need for runaway brakes. Clever, and yet so simple!

The Tramway Historical Society is holding an open week-end for interested persons on 19 and 20 November at the tram barns in Bridle Path Road. The Society’s vehicles, including the Dunedin cable car trailer, will be on view. Visitors will be shown round the tramway workshop areas and invited to try their hand at tram driving, if they would like to do so. There will be no admission charge for this week-end visit. The Society also welcomes new members and will particularly look forward to showing those interested in membership around the workshops and facilities. —John Shanks

BELOW LEFT: *The underside of Mornington trailer 111, showing one of the brake ratchets on the axle nearest the camera. Photo: Don McAra.*

BELOW RIGHT: *Mornington 111 in service with grip tram 103, running down to the Exchange and passing grip tram 101 on its way back up. Photo: Graeme Stewart, courtesy Don McAra.*



Bruce Maffei Presents—The Standard Trailers (Part Two)

In Part Two of Bruce's history of the Standard trailers, we look at the second batch, some of the modifications made following in-service experience, and the three 'St. Martins Cars' conversions.

In September 1918 it was recommended that a further ten new 'Standard' trailers be ordered. Boon and Company again won the tender in July 1919 each costing £635. Then, in September 1919 after comparing tender costs for trailer trucks, Richardson McCabe and Company's tender for Brill Radiax trucks was accepted. These were of an improved design.

In September 1920, thirteen of these new Brill trucks arrived from America, ten of them destined for these 'Standard' trailers. By August 1922, several cases of rupture had been caused by conductors shifting their aluminium blinds; the principal difficulty was on the platforms of these new trailers as they were extra wide, being 39 inches. Boon and Company supplied the price for making doors in their place, and so folding doors were installed on all Standard trailers.

For the next three decades these trailers were used often in pairs on most lines, including the Sumner line. Three of the newer trailers numbers 203, 204 and 205 were converted in 1927 to be used as one-man safety trams on the St. Martins line. Three of them Numbers 128, 129 and 133 were badly damaged in the 1949 head on collision on the Sumner line when two one-man trams met head-on in the fog at Woolston when visibility was only 25 yards. All three were repaired. By the time the three St. Martins trams (formerly 'Standard' trailers) were no longer needed, two of them were in poor condition. The best of them, No. 205, was reconverted in 1945 to trailer operation with folding metal concertina gates replacing the former folding doors which had been altered for air operation during their time as trams. No. 204 was in poor condition and so was sold in 1948 for only £10, while No. 203 was stripped out and converted for carrying bicycles between the two tram sheds in 1947.

The next instalment will look at the end of the 'Standards' in regular service, their subsequent sale and final disposition, and the preservation of two examples by the THS.

CENTRE RIGHT: 'Standard' trailer 139 and an unidentified sister trailer in Colombo St, crossing Hereford St, on 31 Dec. 1950. The tram is a 'Hills' tram. Photo: Graham Stewart.

RIGHT: One line the 'Standard' trailers were associated with was the Sumner line. On 8 January 1950, Graham Stewart photographed 'Brill' 174 pulling 'Standard' trailers 206 and 138 on a city-bound service. Instead of showing the 'Square' destination of 'SQ', 174 is instead displaying the outward destination number '3' for Sumner. Express services on this line carried the destination number '3x'. Photo: Graham Stewart.

—Bruce Maffei



ABOVE: 'Standard' trailer 142 being shunted back to Falsgrave Street depot after workshop attention. Clearly visible are the later platform doors fitted to all 'Standards' after 1922. Photo: Graham Stewart





ABOVE: The latest work on 'Hills' car 24 has been to reinstate the 'A' end motorman's platform, seen here on Labour Day 2016 with the framing and roof canopy in place. One of the platform doors has already been rehung while the pillar for the other door can be seen lying across the platform. Out of view to the right were various components for the car's interior including some of the seats for the convertible section. Photo: Alastair Cross.

FRONT PAGE: The last day of the COTMA Conference, 17 October 2016, saw a chance for many of the delegates to have a drive of some of the Society's trams before returning home. Christchurch 'California Combination' 1 had just performed a round trip with a COTMA member on the handles; the other trams on duty that day were double-decker 26 and New Brighton trailer 10, Kitson steam-tram 7 and 'Cage' trailer 74, plus Brisbane 236 and Dunedin 22. The latter two trams saw little use until the end of the event when both were brought out for those who wanted to drive something different. 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.



The Tramway Historical Society

P. O. Box 1126 , Christchurch 8140 - www.ferrymeadtramway.org.nz