



STEAM SCENE

Newsletter of the Steam Tram and Railway Preservation (Co-Op) Society Ltd.
t/a Valley Heights Steam Tramway.
Affiliated with the Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia and
Rail Heritage Australia (NSW) Inc.

"Preserving the past,
enriching the future"

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2005—What a Magnificent Year!

"I've never had so much fun since the cat sat on the flypaper in grandma's parlour!" A year reviewed by Secretary, Peter Stock.

The by-line above was a witty comment made to me by a visitor to our tramway on the 2006 Australia Day open day. Later that day, the jovial senior lady's remark made me reflect on how such a drama could be a "fun" activity. On conjuring mental images of the spectacle, an hysterical cat racing around the parlour, trailing flypaper stuck to its backside, being pursued by a family with a pair of snipping scissors. Yes, that would be one of unexpected excitement for grandma's granddaughter.

To me, this scenario could in a way, be likened to the frantic yet "fun" activity members experienced during the magnificent year of 2005; the year our steam tram returned to service. In conjunction with the NSW

the tram on the workshop floor with tools in hand, grunting, straining and sometimes cursing! Yes, on reflection, it did seem at times like trying to catch grandma's cat. There was so much to be done in so little time. Once the work was done and the celebrations began, the museum was on top!

During the times leading up to the return to service, a plethora of major activity took place. In the locomotive area, Stepho undertook its 10 year boiler inspection and all that entailed.* About the same time, motor 103A was being readied for its initial boiler inspection on August 24th.* The inspection was successful and a short trial and testing opportunity was availed of. Painting of the motor's bodywork continued. Concurrently with all these activities, welding repairs to the cylinder yoke of 1022 continued.*

In the tramcar arena various bogie and brake components were prepared for tramcar 93B. The bogies and the brakes were re-assembled and installed under the tramcar.§ Glazing of doors and compartments was completed as was the huge task of painting the car. New aprons were fabricated and fitted. Once these tasks were completed, the tram was ready for the initial Compliance Inspection on September 16th.*

Additional to these activities, further involvement with Museums and Galleries NSW, centred on succession. Their recommendations were initiated with the result that several new members have been admitted during the year. Nothing is more attractive than success. Our approach to compliment and enhance interpretation has progressed with a mannequin dressed as a loco driver (sound to come), examples of parcels and goods traffic by tram exhibited and our first small audio interactive installed. (See end page)

Apart from these matters, safety refresher sessions took place whilst several members attended a boiler attendants' course. A contract has been let for the new shed. A low level platform has been constructed (Continued End page)

From the Editor

There are quite a few ladies in our membership and I guess for them, this newsletter is generally pretty "blokey". Just to banish this notion, this month we have a "food" article. Unlike the women's magazines however, it is not quickly followed up by an article on dieting.

With the new calendar year ahead of us, what do we hope to achieve? There are still small jobs to be finished off with the motor and trailer car. With the tram motor coming on stream, we now have two steam locomotives to look after and maintain. As with most ancient equipment, they require constant attention and adjustment apart from outright repairs. This will keep the works department busy. Even so, we hope to make a start on remodelling the "S" truck to enable it to carry passengers when used with Stepho. Depending on progress, a start on the double-decker is also likely. We are keen to get some interactive displays underway as well. Then of course, the new shed will come into being. If we haven't raised a sweat by then, the track work down to the ash roads is a bit "ordinary" to say the least and could do with a make-over. For a group our size, some quite formidable tasks ahead and no time to rest on our laurels of achievements past.



VHLDHM Chairman Ted Mullett, is assisted by Peter Stock installing a very appropriate "next train" panel to the indicator.

Railways Sesquicentenary Celebrations, it was decided to open the Museum for an extended period. Track maintenance vehicles ("trikes") and the steam tram would be operated for visitors during a three week period. The decision proved sound. The effort to bring back the tram was not unlike trying to catch grandma's cat. Should society activities in completing the necessary work on the tram be described as fun? Picture the little band of workers, sometimes crawling over the top, sometimes rolling around underneath

Tramway Passes Audit

Entirely forgot to mention this important item in the last issue. On September 16, 2005, the tramway had its first audit by the Independent Transport Safety and Reliability Regulator. The audit was under the charge of Mr. Alan McVay.

The audit coincided with the initial run of our trailer car 93b. Alan checked it out from stem to stern, from top to bottom and pronounced it "A1". The

car had previously been given a conditional approval to operate without through braking.

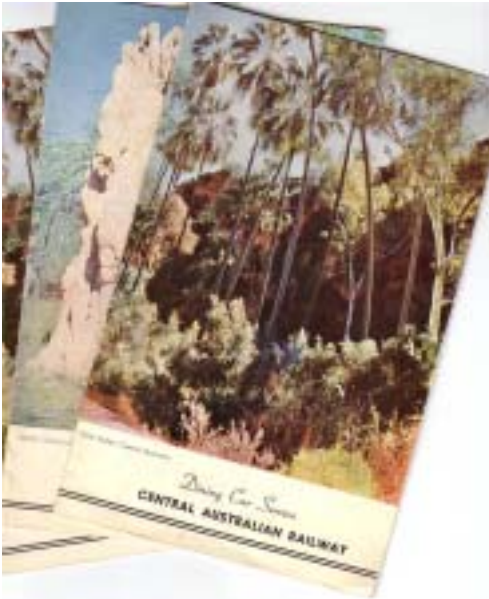
Our record keeping was checked out and a number of oral survey questions made. Altogether, we passed the audit quite well with only a couple of minor matters to be adjusted.

Alan McVay pauses in his inspection duties to pose for the camera. (Photo courtesy of Phillip Longley)



Railway Dining Menus—a guide to our changing tastes?

On browsing through some old railway refreshment room and dining car menus, it is interesting to see how our tastes have changed over the years. I thought it might be interesting to check out some of the "delights" of yesteryear and see what has survived into the present and what has not.



Quite a lot has been written about Railway Refreshment Rooms, Dining Cars and eating with the "Railways". Not much however, has been written about the actual food. Certainly the quality of the food, though occasionally praised has been more often criticized. Mark Twain, when traveling in Australia in the late 1800's, once quipped, "*Sheep dip is not fit to drink. However, if added to railway coffee it improves the flavour.*"

A refresh room in outback W.A. was legendary for its "cold pies and hot beer". But getting back to the topic, the type of food that appeared on menus. Some menu items have survived into present day, some leave one scratching one's head as to what they were whilst others make

you positively wince.

Perusing a menu for the Mudgee Refreshment Room for 1925, "Haricot Stew" is listed as an entrée. Haricot beans we are familiar with so at first I thought "A stew of beans? No. can't be right." On checking an old Common Sense Recipe Book and a dictionary, I found that "haricot" can also mean a ragout or stew of mutton or lamb with vegetables. In other words a "throw together". Now to have this as an entrée to a main course?...hmmm.

Moving to the main course, there was a choice of "*Roast sirloin of beef and horseradish, Roast lamb and mint sauce or roast mutton.*" Roast lamb has certainly survived into present times and so has roast sirloin etc. if somewhat on the expensive side however, roast mutton? This was quite popular once but has now largely disappeared from the city butchery. One still comes across mutton occasionally in a country shop, usually as a pickled leg or the like. Mutton has a stronger flavour than lamb and unfortunately usually a stronger texture! Moving to the vegetables—one could have either baked or boiled potatoes, cabbage and vegetable marrow. I don't have much trouble with either baked or boiled potatoes however my preference is for roast potatoes with a roast. The cabbage and vegetable marrow? Remembering my youth and early working life, vegetables were usually boiled for ½ hour whether they needed it or not! I still remember the smells (not aromas) around hotels in the 1950's. It was beer and cigarettes out front and boiled cabbage out the back! Domestic cooks generally knew little better either. My grandmother used to say, "God sends the food and the Devil sends the cooks!" Marrow was usually cooked to a tasteless sog encased in a skin. A generous dowsing with salt and pepper together

with a dollop of butter was the best that could be done to inject a little flavour back into the unfortunate marrow. Cabbage suffered a similar fate. It is little wonder that regular cabbage seems mostly now to find its way into coleslaw. Seldom does one find it on a menu. Seems to me, little was cooked rapidly in the old days apart from water for the tea.

Moving right along to dessert. Here we find on the menu "*Steamed sultana pudding. Baked tapioca and banana custard*" These would have been cooked on the premises. No picking up a packet of custard or ready mixed pudding at the supermarket in those days. Baked tapioca (we used to call it "frogs-eyes") or tapioca pudding in general is something that has largely passed on into culinary oddity. I've had it not that long ago at home and really, I think it warrants a revival like the baked bread and butter pudding we now find regularly in "all-you-eat" restaurants.

Browsing over to the liquid refreshment area of the menu, beer, spirits and liqueurs are available but look at the wines! "*Hock, chablis, claret, port*—by the 'baby', pint or quart" Chablis and port are well known to us today but the hock and claret? I remember having hock as a young man and admittedly my taste buds were still immature, however to me, hock would have passed as a substitute for white vinegar! I dare say one might be battling to find hock today. As for claret—this was virtually all that was available in red wines for common people. One still finds it today in casks but generally (and undeservedly), it is looked down upon when compared to a cabernet sauvignon or merlot blend. Mind you, wines have come a long way since 1925 and just as well. Most people in those days would have settled for a good cup of tea to accompany their meal.

All in all, for a slap-up three course meal, a tariff of Two Shillings was charged. Bearing in mind the rush and bustle of the Ref Room, to down such a meal in 20 odd minutes, was an indigestible feat in itself!

Moving on 30 years, we look at the dining car menu on the old "Ghan" c. 1956. For breakfast we have a selection of three cereals then we are offered "*Fried Fillet of Whiting*". I have had fried fish for breakfast but not since I was a boy. I seem to think that fried fish for breakfast has fallen away from our palates. Alternatively, you could have, "*Grilled steak and egg*" "*Lamb's fry and bacon*", "*Bacon and egg*", "*Sausages*". A serving of "*Mashed potatoes*" could be added to any of these. Most of these items have survived to present day palates, though I think most people find "Steak" first thing of a morning, a little heavy going.

At dinner time, we start off with "*Spanish Olives*" and "*Soup*" of the day. The "olives" nowadays probably have expanded into *antipasto*. *Barley broth*, probably very nice mid-winter but not something you would find on menus much today. *Boiled schnapper with parsley sauce* was the alternative to a plethora of roasts and more roasts.



Staff at work in a buffet car c.1945

Baked schnapper? - yes, but boiled? Uhh! Hopefully, they meant poached. In any case, I doubt if it was done with a subtle mix of garlic, herbs and white wine. With the roast we still find the alternative of either boiled or

baked potatoes and vegetables in season. Dessert sees us finishing off with *pears and cream* or *creamed rice*. Both of these items have perhaps become passé when eating out though both have survived in domestic desserts. In concluding the meal, Commonwealth Railways caters to the simeon in us with a selection of nuts and raisins. *Cheese savoury* is also on offer.

Back to the Refreshment Room. At some stations, hampers were available to the traveller. These were in the form of baskets originally but later, cardboard boxes. Wandering down the list of contents of one of these I see listed *two slices of ham or ox tongue*. Ox tongue has largely passed the way of most ofal with the younger generation. They generally turn their noses up at the very mention of say *lamb's brains* or *ox tongue*.

I remember though as a young person, when ofal was a regular part of the family diet, even ox tongue. Over the years, my wife has on occasion served me up a lashing of *hot tongue* to be followed by a generous serve of *"cold shoulder"*. On checking the supermarket nowadays, you still come across "Brontë" lamb's tongues. I don't know who buys them but there must still be a solid base of little old pensioners still savouring the table fare of their youth and buying these delicacies. *Steak and kidney pie or pudding* was something that was a frequent guest of the country refresh room. I personally delight in it. You still find it cropping up occasionally on a club or boutique menu but it seems seldom to be purchased by anyone less than 30 years old.

I think it would be safe to say refreshment room and dining car menus of the past closely resembled the fare served from the middle class kitchen of their time. It was not adventurous. People of those times were seldom adventurous when it came to food. The food

revolution that came about largely with the influx of migrants to this country, was yet to find its place on the table of the mid-fifties. Folk were still eating largely what their parents and grand-parents had on their menus. *Eggs benedict* for breakfast or a *parmegiana* for dinner would have been seen as "foreign muck" (as my father termed it). Our palates were far less sophisticated than they are now.

The menus served in buffet cars today still largely reflect what people eat at home even though, the buffet car offering is mass-produced. The "roasts" still appear but thanks to our more cosmopolitan mix "lasagne" and "quiche" and other items able to be re-heated have been added. The premier train dining cars (e.g. The Queenslander) are certainly at least a cut above and have left the domestic table fare far behind. These meals are quite sophisticated and are certainly on a par with what one would expect to find when eating out. Meals nowadays are not quite so heavy as they used to be. And what of the *railway pie*? I believe these originally were baked at Central station and despatched far and wide. An old pie-eater friend tells me they tasted much like the original Sergeant's pie. Such was their fame, when they died out, they were resurrected for NSWGR by David Hill. I suspect they were then produced by contractors. A railway pie today seems much the same as any other commercial offering. Nevertheless they still serve to "fill a hole" when travelling by country train.

So now we come to the end of this little by-way of the railways. Not an exhaustive study by any means but one whereby we might reflect on our past and recall what we ate. Sometimes we relished it, sometimes we were aghast but always I am sure, we were thankful that we had something at all.



The Great "Triple R"

The Railway Refreshment Room was an institution in itself within the monolith of the Railways. The following verse turned up in some papers of our late Secretary, Cliff Currell. Originally it appears to have been a song with chorus but what the song or tune was is unknown. The author is also unknown but I thought it appropriate as a follow-on to the previous article.

When I was a boy, my greatest joy,
Was going away by train.
In a corridor carriage, my parents' marriage
Was lucky to stand the strain.
My brother and I would demand a meat pie.
Our mum would wish on a star,
And Dad would say, that he blessed the day,
They opened the great "Triple R"
Yes, you could get piping hot coffee, tea or a toffee,
Bacon and eggs or a cake,
A sandwich or beer, all served with good cheer,
Assorted cold lunch or a steak.
When steam was king, the stations would ring,
With a rush and the roar of the crowd.
The great "Triple R" was known near and far,

Best value that money allowed.
Be it at Binnaway small or flash Junee tall,
Mt. Vic or old Broken Hill.
When travelling by train, in the sun or the rain,
At the great "Triple R" get your fill!
At midnight or dawn on a cold frosty morn,
At breakfast or dinner or tea.
The ladies in grey, would brighten your day,
Yes, they bring back fond memories for me.
Now they've nearly all gone, but the legend lives on,
Of golden days long in the past,
When you could easily get by, on hot tea and a pie,
And eat like each bite was your last!

A view of the famous Junee Refresh Room in its hey-day, all set for table-service. Junee was famous for its breakfasts. This facility is now a privately operated cafe/restaurant.



The Challenge—Every Visitor a Supporter

The following article is based on one that appeared in "Locomotive & Railway Preservation" in 1989. Although many years have intervened, the substance of the article is as relevant today as it was then. The American political scene is a different edifice to ours and so the notion of lobbying in their context does not quite apply here, never-the-less there are lessons to be learned. The article has been edited and amended to relate to local conditions.



The pose of the tram crew looks decidedly somber as befitting a photo take of the early 1900's. It belies a readiness to engage the customer and make them part of the "show". (Photo, courtesy Peter Butler).



A youngster helps the "old" conductor change the points. Hands-on experience gives connectedness to the museum.

Visitors are taxpayers, legislators levy and expend taxes and railway museums need government funds. Every visitor is a potential lobbyist for the railway museums and every railway museum should be seeking government appropriations.

In this country (Australia), the financial structure doesn't quite work that way. Governments here don't directly fund volunteer museums as a budgetary item. Mostly, funding is available through their agencies.

Both railway museums and taxpaying visitors seek to preserve the nation's cultural heritage. Legislators love to do what their constituents want. They also enjoy taking credit for significant allocations that develop areas, create employment, stimulate tourism and preserve the past. Government and local Members react to what people want. The only problem is, with a limited "money pie" they cannot satisfy

everybody. Rail and tramway museums can gobble up huge amounts of money yet despite the fact they give great value for every dollar invested, most live a hand to mouth existence. There is never enough money to go round. The reasons for this are many and varied, including the fact that perhaps there are too many in the rail heritage business.

Let us explore one facet however. Despite the fact that everybody is aware of railways, their day-to-day impact is far less now than it was generations ago. Not surprisingly though, there are still large numbers of people who have recollections of steam trains, trams or some other contact with the power of steam. They are aware of museums seeking to preserve that heritage and overall want to see them flourish. Yet, they do not beat a path to the Local Member's office demanding financial support for their favourite rail transport museum. So what's wrong?

Take a cold critical look at the rail and tramway museums you know. What happens to the visitor that is not a railway buff? Typically, he or she comes to the front gate, parks in a dusty parking lot and follows amateurish or aging signs alongside dead equipment. Rail museums like these can easily be seen as dust bowls for metal dinosaurs. They are filled with massive deteriorating objects that, except for their variance in size, do not seem particularly different from one another.

Rail and tram museums have to get "smart". "Smart" museums succeed primarily because they meet the needs not only of ardent rail fans but the

needs of the average visitor as well. "Smart" museum personnel give their full attention to the visitors. Public relations are extremely important. It might be pleasant to talk to your fellow member but it is far more important to be talking to the visitor.

"Smart" museums have started installing automatic theatres and conducting self-guided tours that are of interest to a broad population. They emphasize sound, motion and human interest. "Smart" museums emphasize the human element of the museum experience. When a museum does this successfully, education and entertainment go hand-in-hand and friends are won.

What museums need are a lot of "Louies". (*Sorry, I can't seem to find an Australian equivalent. 'Museum mate' doesn't seem to fit. Ed.*) Louie has done more to convert the public to the concept of supporting rail and tram museums than anyone can imagine. Louie dramatically improved the quality of the visitor experience and didn't cost a cent! Louie volunteered his time and was willing to clone himself through board-supported training and development programmes within the museum. Is Louie one particular fellow with a public relations bent? No, not at all! "Louie" is a whole way of thinking and acting. Every museum has "Louies" but often doesn't recognize them and put resources at their disposal.

The museum in which "Louie" was active had provided some very important tools to allow him to operate successfully. Firstly, it had a well established training programme for operating staff. It included not only car operation but training in preparing the museum for the public, scrubbing up, loading vending machines, sales technique, heritage rail knowledge and so on.

"Louie's" museum has further established a "host" policy in operations. Folk travel on rail/tramway museum vehicles because they want to, not because they have to. Further, museums should be in the business of engagement. Accordingly, old transport policies such as "Don't speak to the driver" are jettisoned in favour of greater communication between operators and travelers. The driver or conductor in particular, now become responsible for the visitor experience throughout the trip.

So what happens at a "smart" museum with trained "Louies"? There were signs from the moment the visitor arrived, that "Louie" was in charge. The parking lots were tidy and weed free. The iron "dinosaurs" and miscellaneous iron collection were away from the general view. The arrival gave an air of expectancy. If this initial impression was important, the next was especially so. The visitor met the ticketing agent. The agent warmly welcomed the visitor with a friendly patter. He knew the answers to the most frequent enquiries and gave the necessary information to enable the visitor to commence their visit knowing exactly what to expect and where to go. Some folk are born "people" interactive, some have to learn the skill and

a few should keep well away from it. Management must be alert to the skills of its volunteers, placing them appropriately. Everybody who interacted with visitors was uniformed and wore a name tag. They could answer any visitor query. No matter what the size of the group or how few might be traveling on a hot summer's day, all were attended to graciously and swiftly.

The ride was something else. It was the beginning of the bonding process between the visitor and the museum. As soon as a trip had arrived and good-byes or further directions given, the crew's full attention was given to the next batch of travellers. The focus of the crew was on the visitors not chit-chat between themselves. Older folk and young children were assisted aboard and "Yes, you may leave your stroller over there...it will be quite secure". Above all else the welcoming and patter never stopped. "Hot day...where are you from...are you local?" Interestingly, it is amazing what information can be gleaned from these little exchanges. Information as to where the bulk of customers come from, how they come to know about the museum etc. can be a good source in gauging the effectiveness and direction of advertising. The "all aboard" were loud, dramatic and very friendly. Two or three quick safety rules (no horror stories) and then a description taking the visitor back to the past and telling them what they were going to experience. Enthusiasm for the ride permeated the atmosphere as though it was the first for the crew also. The crew was winning friends and influencing people. They shared the excitement and newness of the ride through the eyes of the visitor, personalizing the museum rather than institutionalizing it. There was banter between the crew. This extended to the traveller but never to the point of obtrusiveness.

"Louie" was the expert in "micro lobbying". In effect, he was preparing the psychological and emotional climate among large numbers of taxpayers for support of the unique endeavours of rail heritage museums. It became second nature to "Louie" to maintain strict standards for himself and others in areas such as cleanliness, timeliness, humour, enthusiasm for the subject and a personal interest in the safety and comfort of visitors. As a result, visitors found themselves treated to an experience far more delightful and informative than anything they had expected. They found that rail and tram museums were for everyone, not just for "rail fans".

Before the travellers left the tram, or at some other convenient point, Louie gave a talk about the line and the greatness of the tram industry. The talk was no anecdotal ramble, but a seamless construction that contained several key points. All the "Louies" of the museum knew the talk and presented it in their own personal style. A brief description of the equipment in which the visitors rode was also given. That wasn't the key point, however rare and beautiful the car may have been. It was a prop in the greater story about how railed transport changed and expanded people's lives from previous generations. In effect, how railed transport performed a social revolution. A lot of folk have never considered this aspect and it will be a revela-

tion. Before moving on, the visitor was told that the existence and work of the museum were products of their support and generosity. They were thanked for visiting and urged to tell their friends about their experience. Thus the conversion of every visitor to a supporter and potential lobbyist continued.

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All museums face a shortage of funding with little or no money for capital works. As can be seen, with a little training of personnel and appropriate placement, the impact on people can be immeasurable. The lobbying for funding in this country may not be the same as in the States but never-the-less you do not know who the next visitor to your museum is going to be. It could well be a staffer to an agency that has funding available. Alternatively, you never know who some visitor is going to have at dinner the following night. It could well be someone who has influence in moneyed places. A pleasant experience at the museum by the host could well have indirect benefits for the museum. A tangible spin-off from a museum visitation would of course be very nice. In most cases however, it will probably be less dramatic. In any case, we should be striving to give visitors a memorable experience so that at the very least, they will be hearty supporters who will praise the museum and recommend it to all as an experience not to be missed. Some might even make a regular donation!

At Valley Heights, our society and dare I suggest, our confreres at the museum, still have much to learn. Despite our society's 30 odd years operating experience at Parramatta Park, on looking back, I wince at some of our PR naivety and outright blunders. I recall an enquiry about membership once being greeted with "Well, we only want workers!" For all I know, the enquirer might have contributed handsomely in other ways e.g. with dollars! Not surprisingly, we have a different outlook nowadays though we can always do better. Perhaps we should formally train our up-front staff in presentation. We are not sure if the public leave the museum with a correct interpretation of what we are trying to present. The visitor book contains positive comments but still....

Harking back to the beginning of the article. The entrance to the museum gets better the closer to the visitors' centre one gets. Indeed it becomes quite attractive but the problem with keeping the "miscellaneous iron collection" out of sight still remains. The ticketing and sales area is good and improving with excellent potential. As with most volunteer works however, improvement takes a long time in coming. We still don't have a theatre or major interactive displays. Tram crews actively engage with customers but perhaps we still talk too much between ourselves. The museum in general is a work in progress. It is easy to perhaps plateau out at a certain level and leave it at that. To go to a higher stage takes so much getting together. Despite all, we have learnt and are learning new ways. Through the experience of others and our own unique joint enterprise, we are presenting a museum of ongoing improvement and quality.



"What came first, you chooks or the egg?" A little entertainment is another "connector" with the public. A smiling mum looks on with approval.

(Continued) Our "Louies" are not to the stage of the American recommendation but we are getting there in our own distinctive Aussie style.

Original article written by Raymond E. Crappo, "Locomotive & Railway Preservation" magazine, Jan-Feb 1989. End stanza by Editor, Bruce Irwin.

"Preserving the past, enriching the future"

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Steam Tram & Railway Preservation (Co-Op)
Society Ltd.
t/a Valley Heights Steam Tramway
ABN 46 193 707 109

Chairman and Works Manager, Craig Connelly
02 9729 3536
Secretary and P.E.O, Peter Stock
(02) 9587 9051
Treasurer and Editor "Steam Scene"
Bruce Irwin
(02) 9651 1707
Membership Secretary, David Lewis
(02) 9630 6304

The museum is located in Tusculum Road, Valley Heights. Ample parking is available. Public transport is available to Springwood. Valley Heights station is accessible for museum visitors but you must walk around to the Tusculum Road entrance and not attempt to short-cut across the tracks

The museum is open between
10 and 4 on the 1st and 3rd
Sundays of the month. Trike
rides on the 1st Sunday, steam
tram rides on the 3rd Sunday
only.

Last but not least...

Oops!

Apologies to John Webb and Steve Tolhurst. In the last issue they were left out of the listing of the Board of Directors for 2005-06. Something to do with the end of the page and unconnected boxes, etc..etc.

Last issue featured an article on locomotive 1022. The author of that story, Steve Tolhurst, was inadvertently not credited as such. Sorry Steve.

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New Tramway Platform

The terminus area for the tram at Valley Heights had an inconvenient slope from rail level to the surrounding yard level. This made boarding and alighting from the tram car awkward and a possible hazard for passengers. Dave Torr and his team got to work and designed and built a timber platform with railing that now provides a level boarding

stage for passengers. A great job men. Our grateful thanks for all the hard work put into the job.

P.S. The platform is demountable to allow truck access to the coal heap etc.

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Congratulations to the team that keep the Valley Heights grounds so immaculate. It's not an easy place to look after and it is so easy to take the well kept appearance for granted. Thank you Jim Hall, Roz and Keith Reynolds and periodic off-siders.

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Another New Member

Andrew Brique has re-joined the society after an absence of some



Works Update: 93B: Vacuum brake system installed. Floor and footboards, further coats of paint. **103A:** Lining out finished. Rehabilitation started on a desto. box for the motor.

Not just your ordinary brakes

The work item above "Vacuum brake system installed" certainly sums up the job. It is however, worthy of a more detailed account. Vacuum brakes on trains are not that common nowadays, certainly in Australia. They work on an opposite physical principle to those mostly encountered, e.g. Westinghouse. A Westinghouse system uses air pressure. The "Eames" vacuum system works on the opposite, a vacuum of air pressure in effect. Sydney steam trams were vacuum brake operated. Vacuum brakes are quite effective in their application however their major failing is if they sustain a break in the system, depending on the size of the leak, the system fails. Our Chairman and Works Manager, Craig, on pondering this and the need for enhanced safety where possible, came up with the following improvements. Each bogie on 93B is attended by a vacuum brake diaphragm. On the application of the brakes by the driver in the motor, air is sucked out of the diaphragm which in turn pulls a chain and then a series of levers to activate the brakes on the trailer car. Craig has come up with a series of isolating cocks similar to those used with air pressure systems. These enable the system not to entirely be crippled or weakened in the event of a leak. As originally fitted, the vacuum hoses at either end have a flap and rubber seal system. The installation of an isolating cock at either end near the beginning of the pipe system enables the trailing end to be doubly secure against leakage whilst the leading end is through connected to the motor. Two further cocks associated with each diaphragm enables either to be isolated in the event of a tear to the diaphragm. Craig has also installed a vacuum gauge (temporarily under the car) to enable testing. This will eventually be installed near the conductor's station at one end of the car. Thus the conductor will be able to detect any leakage by a reading of the gauge. Whilst not original equipment, it is a measure to address present day safety issues. All isolating cocks are out of sight. Of course, all new pipe work, jointing etc. had to be cut, threaded etc. Members will recall new diaphragms and associated hangers, were cast some time ago. Congratulations Craig on working up an unobtrusive improvement that enhances a system of 19th century technology. Sincere thanks also to Assistant Works Manager, Steve Tolhurst (and son Luke) for their help and advice.

years. Andrew is well known in railway circles. He has a collection of rolling stock both full size and in model form. Welcome aboard Andrew, we hope your association with us will be a long and happy one.

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Australia Day Running

A very rewarding day with over 200 people coming through the gate. A best ever open day. Andrew Tester (VHLDHM) did a great job in publicizing the day. An informal quizzing of visitors indicated that they were first time visitors and had found out about the museum from the local newspaper, road signage or the web site. Thank you Andrew!

The "black and white" period dress theme is spreading. Driver Craig now sports a pair of "Alf Garnett" type glasses. Also noted on the day- the caged chooks on the end platform were kicking up a ruckus. They now have an interactive censor !

Peter Stock was having great fun with the little kids. Something about the eggs in the cage and roosters. The kids are enjoying changing the points (under supervision) out near the gate during their ride. The conductors of course, make a great fuss looking for kids who have had their Weet-Bix for breakfast and other nonsense. The kids like it and so do the parents.

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and a drop-down "next train" indicator installed. The tram crew have been decked-out in Edwardian costume.

Our aim is to imbue that good-time feeling to our visitors, entertaining and educating them. With that experience behind them, our hope is that they will tell their friends what a great time they had and that they too, should visit.

Yes, it has seemed like a year "pursuing grandma's cat" but it has been worthwhile and indeed, fun.
** Steam Scene, Sept 2005. \$Steam Scene May 2005.*