



STEAM SCENE

Newsletter of the Steam Tram and Railway Preservation (Co-Op) Society Ltd.
t/a Valley Heights Steam Tramway.
Proudly associated with the NSW Rail Transport Museum (Blue Mountains Division).
Affiliated with the Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia and Rail Heritage Australia (NSW).

Preserving the past,
enriching the future

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Supplementary Funding for New Shed Approved

Members will recall that in 2002 a grant of \$240,000 was made by the Ministry of Transport for the replacement of an old timber retaining wall and the construction of a new shed at Valley Heights. The shed is to house a substantial part of the tramway collection. This grant was made following the bush fire of Christmas Day 2001 that destroyed our Newcastle steam trailer car 44B. In effect, the fire made it patently clear how vulnerable to bushfire, the museum was.

The grant unfortunately came when fundamental departmental reorganization, with all that entails for decision making, impacted on the completion of the wall and a start on the shed. In the interim, the value of the grant was decreasing as costs escalated. Added to this were unexpected project management costs that were shouldered by RTM.

With this basket of woes, VHLDHM Chairman, Ted Mullett went to see our Local Member, Bob Debus, earlier this year, presenting a solid case for additional funding.

The result from much "midnight oil burning", negotiating and lobbying has been that John Watkins, the Minister of Transport, has approved an

additional grant of \$66,000 towards the shed project. This was not all however.

Anyone who has visited the museum will recall that although the latter part of the road that services the immediate entrance to the museum is bitumen paved, the entrance off Tusculum Road is a dirt track that is always pot-holed. This is despite the best efforts to maintain the road by museum volunteers.

The Minister also announced that Railcorp would contribute \$30,000 toward the upgrade of the entrance road. These funds will be made available when agreement has been reached with the Blue Mountains City Council to provide a contribution. Adjacent to the museum is the Springwood Girls and Boys Club. They also share the common entrance. It would thus seem right that some community funding be contributed towards the project.

The grants are a wonderful achievement that will see the new shed looking great.

Well done Ted and all at the Rail Transport Museum.



From the Editor

During the July school vacation the museum had extended opening including mid-week Wednesdays. The period saw 537 people coming through the gate with many having noted the publicity organized by Andrew Tester in the media. We can safely say that it was the best school vacation opening to date.

Whether it is because of the price of petrol or perhaps people like the "feel" of the museum, I don't know, but folk seem to be making the museum their prime destination, rather than driving further on up the mountains. There are more picnickers. If people are staying longer, we need to find or expand ways in which to encourage them to spend money. As mentioned previously, the sales area needs to move to a new level whereby there is an expanded range of items for folk to spend money on. The ideal visitor to the museum is one who has paid their admission, purchased food and drink, bought a souvenir and goes away enthralled and happy to tell their friends about their experience. Entry to the museum and riding on the tram is affordable for most. We need however, to continue value adding their experience whilst at the same time finding new ways to entice them to willingly spend more money.

Go kindly,
Bruce Irwin.

Special points of interest:

- Open days for October School Holidays are:
Wednesdays: 4, 11
Sundays: 1, 8, 15
- The Annual General Meeting is on Nov 4 at Valley Heights.



Gift of Historic Documents

As mentioned in the last issue of Steam Scene, the society has been the recipient of a gift of historic documents. These have been made available by long time member and tram sentimentalist, Vic Solomons.

Many of the documents date from the 1880's-1890's and relate to some early history of the Sydney steam tramways. Some of the matters included in the files are;

- Disposal of some King Street Cable Trailers
- A complaint regarding tram trailer construction quality .
- Correspondence re the second batch of steam motors from USA.
- A mass of data by a former member and others regarding placement/disposal of steam tram trailers and motors.
- Several other tramway related matters.

These documents are an invaluable addition to our limited archival resources. What makes them especially valuable is the fact that very little departmental paper-work has survived from the era concerned.

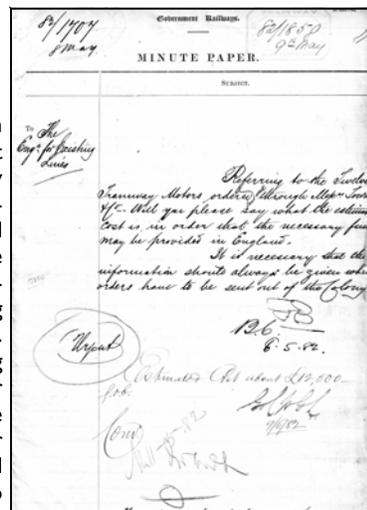
The reason for this is that the majority of old transport related files were destroyed/recycled during the war years. A sampling found their way into State Archives. Far fewer found their way into private hands.

This makes the ones we now have especially valuable. When the files have been thoroughly viewed, I am sure there will be the makings of an article or two for future Steam Scenes.

In order to preserve the paper for the future, we will be purchasing some acid absorbing material to progressively interleaf the document files.

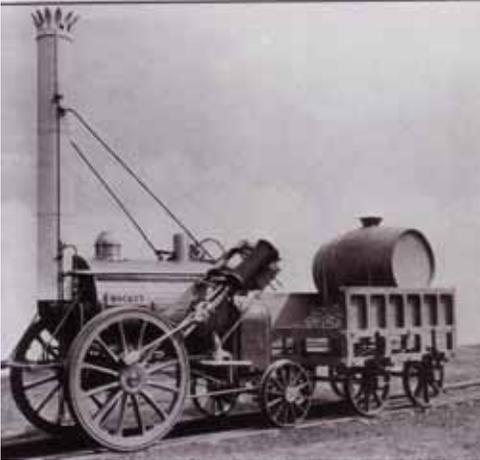
A sample document re the purchase of twelve motors is depicted above.

Thank you Vic for a wonderful gesture.



Replicas—the good, the bad and the ugly.

With our double-deck replica car on the cusp of a rebuild, I thought it would be an appropriate time to take a look at the notion of replication. John H. White Jun. retired Senior Historian of the Smithsonian Institution USA has some interesting ideas on the subject. I have quoted him before regarding his ethos of restoration. Considering his quite conservative views on this subject, his ideas on replicas might be a little surprising.



The magnificent replica of “The Rocket” housed in the Ford Museum, Michigan USA.

“When we build, let us think that we build forever...let it be such works that our descendants will thank us for.”

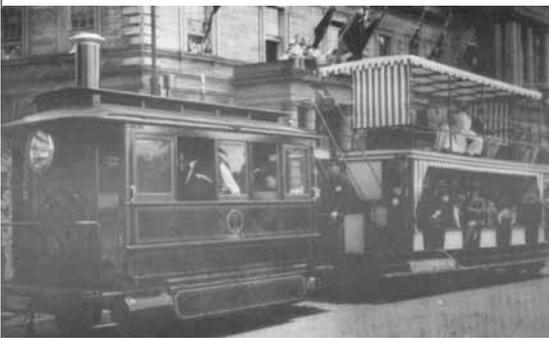
*John Ruskin
(1819-1900)*

The greatest value of replicas is their honesty. There is no pretence, no sham, no razor thin qualifications— they are simply and openly fakes. Take it or leave it, they send out no phony messages about being the real thing. They look similar to, but are not in fact, historic objects.

Regrettably, we can not always speak so well of the supposed original objects on display in many museums. The shiny, well polished prototypes are often in fact, largely reproductions. Some have been so over-restored that scarcely ten percent of the original exists.

Replicas surprisingly receive little credit or appreciation and museums in all subject areas tend to shun them. Astute collectors will pay almost anything for a rare original yet, offer nothing for a high quality facsimile. No one wants to go to a museum to see reproduction paintings or statuary. Curiously, these same discriminating people willingly accept reproductions in many other areas of life. Further examination reveals that we are actually surrounded by the duplication of renowned designs and influences. *How many public buildings do you recall with reproduced classical columns and capitals. There has been a trend for much recent housing to be based on styles of up to a century ago and beyond. Much of the past, e.g. the Renaissance and Classical periods, was a looking back to the past and recreating it or at least a notion of it.*

In addition to fashion and tradition, substitution is surely the strongest justification for replicas. Most railway replicas are built to represent originals that were melted down years before in a less preservation minded age. Missing links are thus restored. In place of prints or small models, we can watch a full size mockup as though the dead had arisen.



The 1951 Jubilee Parade. Motor “IA” hauling the replica double-deck car built on the frame of K746.

Replicas also offer a solution to railway relic restoration and conservation questions. The present scheme of massive, 90 per cent new restoration really satisfies no one. The historian feels that the piece is being destroyed, not preserved. The operating museum or tourist line doesn't want antiques on it's roster. It would prefer dependable, economic equipment for its operations.

In countries like USA and UK where so much railway technological development occurred, replicas of “missing links” are frequently seen. In countries such as Australia, much of the technology was inherited albeit on occasion improved or altered to suit local conditions. There is also

the matter of available resources. Accordingly, the instance of replication in this country is no where near that which occurs in the former countries and indeed, European countries.

For many years I have advocated a greater conservation awareness, with respect for the original integrity of historic artifacts. During this time, many have claimed that my notions of conservation are impractical. Considering operations a priority, they see conservation as a time impediment and an additional cost. Perhaps so, but I would like to counter that the 90 per cent restoration process is equally impractical. Just about any building contractor would advise a home owner not to restore a house where only 10 per cent of the structure is salvageable. It would be cheaper and more practical to start afresh. Likewise, if a car or locomotive is beyond restoration, it would be better to salvage a sampling of relics as a record and build a replacement replica.

The quality and accuracy of railway reproductions is critical. One might suppose that a well equipped workshop and skilled artisans are enough to produce first-class replicas. Actually, the collection of good information, photographs, drawings and specifications, is as important and in some cases, more important than the actual fabrication process. Often we have reproductions based on poor information, yet exhibiting wonderful workmanship. Rarely is it the other way round.

The article mentions and details many replicas made both in UK and USA ranging in quality from the magnificent reproduction of the “Rocket” (built 1929) now in the Henry Ford Museum, to some other quite inaccurate reproductions. The Ford Museum representation is all the more extraordinary because not only does it possess accurate detail in design, it was also made using original techniques. As a result, wrought iron and not steel was employed for the frame, guide bars etc. Every pipe and tube was forged from strips of wrought iron! At the other end of the spectrum, lies the “John Molson” a latter day reproduction of a Canadian engine originally built in Scotland in 1848. Exemplifying great workmanship but poor interpretation is the 1929 version of “Tom Thumb”. Here, information available was ignored because it was simply inconvenient. As a result, “Tom Thumb” is much larger than the original.

Some replicas, although displaying important technical innovations, also represent important historic events. Symbolizing turning points when railroading headed in a new direction, their value is in the understanding of the history that they evoke.

The article goes on to speculate the future of replicas and mentions some rolling stock peculiar to America, worthy of replication.

Replicas are broken down into three classes or grades. Least or all is the shabby and poorly made

reproduction that is called **RE-PEL-I-CA**. There are unfortunately a number of “replicas” around in the railway world. Second, is the common replica. This is the ordinary, average variety of reproduction. It is acceptable but not remarkable in any way.

Finally, there is the very finest and most accurate class, the very rare and spectacular reproduction that is referred to as a **RE-PLIK'-CA**. The Ford museum's “Rocket” is in this class.

Replica Terminology

Although the word ‘replica’ is often used in a free and unambiguous manner, it does have a precise meaning.

A true replica is an exact copy made by the original artist or maker. Words such as ‘duplicate’, ‘facsimile’ and ‘reproduction’ possess more loose and interchangeable meanings.

The traditional museum exhibit consists of the following items in order of their importance:

1. **Original objects** (or at least old objects that are partially original).
2. **Scale Models** (antique or modern)
3. **Images** (prints, photos, films etc.)
4. **Replicas** A fourth sub-class that offers and alternative not often explored by American museums. With replicas we can show important specimens scrapped long ago and fill in the missing links of American Railroad history. Hence, the collecting mistakes of the past can in part, be repaired. It's not cheap or easy but it is an alternative and one that is deserving of more careful consideration. There is of course, no substitute for the real thing and that should remain the focus of all museums.

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Our society is in possession of one of the few tramway replicas to be found in this country. To recap its history, the double deck car (99DD, our classification, 98 was the last double-decker built) was built at the Randwick Workshops in 1950-51. It was constructed for the Waratah Spring Festival, an annual event held in Sydney. In conjunction with a facsimile tram motor body placed over a Macy-Ferguson tractor, the “tram” was hauled through Sydney's streets on flangeless wheels, with the hind bogey fixed and the leading bogey mounted so as to swivel. It replaced an earlier reproduction that had been built in 1938 but had been scrapped.

The construction of “99DD” was built on the frame of an electric car “K746” The well-known photograph of a steam motor and two double-deckers at the corner of Market and Elizabeth Streets was used in planning the pattern of construction of the original. Unfortunately, the print that was used had been

laterally inverted with the result that the stair cases to the upper deck face the wrong way!

This original error was repeated in the 1950 construction. Another blow to replication came about in the overall dimensions of the car. The original “A” class cars built by Brill and Co. (USA) in 1879, had a lower deck capacity of 60 persons in 6 compartments with upper deck seating of 30 persons. In the case of the reproduction, in utilizing the “K” car frame, the lower deck seated only 40 persons in 4 compartments, with a corresponding reduction in the upper deck seating to 20 persons.

At the conclusion of the parade on January 29, 1951, the double-decker was placed in store, to await an annual appearance in successive years. The last occasion it was utilized was in the final parade in October 1973. The car subsequently found its way into the keeping of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences.

Our society came into possession of the car under a programme of deaccession by the Power House Museum, in 1997. Since that time, the society has done some work on the car including the following. Replacing the footboard slats. Replacing the nominal headstocks with the “real” thing. Fit bumpers and draw-gear. Other necessary hardware including vacuum brake diaphragms, are awaiting installation.

The overall lower deck section is lightly constructed and will need strategic strengthening. Safety concerns with the upper deck and stair cases will also be addressed. The most practical representative era for 99DD will be to modify it as was done to the originals in 1880, a year after their introduction. This includes replacing the canvas roof and end-panels of the top deck with timber. (Motor cinders and canvas are not a good combination!) Whilst there is quite a lot of work to be done, including re-painting, when compared to say the “CBI” it has less to be done overall. When completed, it will be a stronger car capable of many years of running on the Valley Heights tramway.

So where does it stand in terms of “replicas”? Using John H. White's criteria, it is not a good example, indeed, it could be described as a bad example. Though replicas are not the original article, they do accrue a certain respectability in their own right, with age. They, like everything else, develop a unique history. Thus “99DD” 56 years old, has its own unique history and most importantly, points us to the vision of the original double-deckers. Despite its shortcomings, it will give a more than adequate idea of what double-deck steam tram travel was about. It will be a unique adventure for the traveling public and if 93B is anything to go by, when finished, it will be an achievement that we can be justly proud of.

(This article was compiled by the editor from one appearing in “Locomotive & Railway Preservation. Sept-Oct 1992. Portions appearing in italics have been condensed or adapted. The end stanza is also by the editor).



Our double-deck car (99DD) as it is today. The footboards have been modified to greater authenticity.



Secretary, Peter Stock takes a seat in the double decker. (Can't get him out of bowler/top hats!)

Delivering the Dearly Departed

A look at that Newcastle phenomenon—The Tramway Hearse Service

Operating at a time when motorized road transport was either non-existent or in its infancy, the steam trams of New South Wales carried a variety of commodities including the mails, parcels and goods in a limited degree. The carriage of the dead by tramway hearse was something unique to the Newcastle system. The following is the fascinating story of that service.



A casket has just been unloaded from the tramway hearse which can be seen at the rear of the electric tram.



An external and interior view of the hearse. A set of rollers can be seen upon which the caskets roll. Barriers are placed at either end. Is the conductor looking for fare scalers?



Today, we are used to seeing a funeral cortege containing a hearse and mourning coaches proceeding along the roadways. These vehicles and their train of mourners in motor cars, can travel quite long distances to get to the place of interment, without any travel discomfort. Before the motor hearse, there was the horse drawn hearse. These too could travel relatively long distances but no where in the same league as the motor hearse. Then of course, there was the matter of whether it could be afforded. My paternal

grandparent, George Irwin, died in 1927. Our family lore has it that his was the last horse drawn funeral (hearse, coaches and all) to go from Baulkham Hills to Rookwood Necropolis. For the times, this was quite a distance not to mention expense. But how did people manage before the age of the motor car when few had the luxury of their own conveyance or the money to spend on

hearses and mourning coaches? To some extent the railways came to the rescue. We are familiar with the old Mortuary Station, Regent Street, Central. From this point funeral trains, containing the caskets of the deceased (usually more than one) and a train load of mourners, plied to various platforms within Rookwood Necropolis. The involvement of railways in the funeral business is a fascinating study however for the purposes of this article, save for the end stanza, I will confine our study to the steam tramways involvement, in particular the Newcastle service.

A tramway hearse service was introduced on the Newcastle Tramways during 1896. It was an extension of the coffin delivery service provided on the railway system in both Sydney and Newcastle. In the latter city, coffins were delivered to the Honeysuckle mortuary platform in time for the departure of the regular funeral trains conveying caskets and mourners to Sandgate Cemetery. When the Government train which had departed Wallsend station at 2.31 p.m. was withdrawn during July 1896, a four wheeled hearse trailer, later numbered "27S" provided alternative accommodation for caskets on the Plattsburg tramway. The hearse trailer, which could hold three coffins, appears to have been built on an old cable-trailer chassis. It is believed that originally, the body comprised highly polished dark timber with doors at each end. These were locked by the conventional railway carriage key. The roof of the hearse was canvas.

While mourners and caskets could transfer to the regular Sandgate Cemetery train at Honeysuckle, they were now faced with an exorbitant fare compared to the former direct system. The return fare between Wallsend and Sandgate had formerly been One Shilling (10c). Mourners were now faced with a return fare of Two Shillings and Two Pence (23c.) In response to a deputation by the Mayors of Wallsend and Plattsburg on August 5, 1896, the Railway Commissioners agreed to issue special tramway funeral tickets costing One Shilling return for the tramway/railway journey between Wallsend and Sandgate. The timetable was also altered to enable funeral parties to return to Wallsend and Plattsburg by 5 p.m. instead of 6 p.m. each evening.

The hearse trailer was pre-booked and trailed the last vehicle on the trip carrying the funeral party. This permitted the coffin to be easily loaded and unloaded through the trailer's end doors. A second hearse trailer, 45S, to the same design of 27S, was placed in service in 1909. It is suspected that this hearse was attached to the Sutherland-Cronulla line for a short period prior to being transferred to Newcastle.

The question of selling funeral tickets on the Speer's Point line had arisen immediately prior to its opening in 1912. It was not until 1919 that funeral tickets and the hearse service was available to the Speer's Point line. This was at the same rate of charge as for the residents of West Wallsend.

The charge for the hearse on each occasion was Fifteen Shillings (\$1.50) compared to only Ten Shillings (\$1.00) East of Plattsburg or any other line. As an example, in 1911, the hearse service was availed of on four occasions on the West Wallsend Line.

Upon electrification of the Newcastle Tramways, the hearse trailers were fitted with dual Westinghouse/vacuum brake systems. Ten electric cars were equipped to haul the hearses.

Until 1933, the casket and mourners transferred to the Sandgate Cemetery train at the Mortuary Station located near Honeysuckle Station. Following its closure on April 1, the transfer took place in Scott Street outside Newcastle Station. In addition to Sandgate Cemetery the tramway hearse service was also used for some burials at Wallsend Cemetery. On such occasions, the coffin was unloaded from the Wallsend Line trams at Sandgate Road and transferred to a road hearse or carried by the pall-bearers to the cemetery, a distance of half a mile.

As roads improved and the financial situation for many of the working class families improved to some degree with more prosperous economic conditions, motorized hearses gradually replaced the need for the tramway hears service. Even so, it was June 1, 1946 before the last use of the service was made. Six electric trams were still equipped at that time to haul the hearse trailers.

It would appear that during the service life of the hearses, structural and other alterations were made. The last purported use of the tramway hearse was in 1947 and 1948! They were withdrawn from service and later taken off the rails in February 1949. At this time there was only a single door at one end secured by an iron bar and padlock. The roof was all timber. They had also been painted in the standard passenger car colour scheme. With their air-brake plumbing removed in 1949, they were then used as tool

boxes at the depot until 1953. 27S was reserved and is now preserved by the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney. 45S was withdrawn at the same time but its disposal is not recorded. 27S is presently in storage pending display at the Power Museum facility at Castle Hill.

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Not having seen any recent photographs of the hearse, I thought it would be nice to catch up with the hearse again, having last seen it in store at Alexandria, many years ago. Contact was made with our good friends at the Power House Museum and permission obtained for a limit of three members to visit and photo survey the hearse. The visit took place on a weekday and we were very well received. The hearse was already in the open ready to photograph. Some of the results are as shown. The most striking thing about the hearse today, is the colour of it. It is way, way out with the panel work in particular being almost lime-green! As mentioned previously, it should be in the tramway colours of the period e.g. olive green and "grey" or perhaps fawn. Apart from this, the hearse is in excellent restored condition.

(Continued on Page 6)



Two of our party, appropriately attired, demonstrate the placement of a casket in the hearse. Contrary to rumour, the hearse can only accommodate three caskets.

When 93B was part of a house

Mention was made in the February Depot Diary of our two trailer cars that originally formed a house at Berowra. Patricia Sparrow was casually searching the "web" and came across the article whilst searching for something else. It immediately triggered fond memories for Pat as she had often stayed at the house as a young girl.

"It is most interesting for me to come across this information on the web, I was at the time, looking for the exact date that the school in Hillcrest Road was opened. I could not believe my eyes when bits of your information cropped up.

The house that incorporated these cars was at one time owned by my grandparents, Charlotte and William Withers. I also lived in Berowra and was part of the move from the old school to the new one. It was all very convenient for me as my grandparents lived directly opposite the school and I could go over there for lunch.

Many times I slept in one or other of the two bedrooms that one of the cars (93B) was divided into. I remember lying in bed and studying the structure and luggage racks (?) till I fell asleep. That was down one side of the house. On the other side was the car used as the formal dining room and maybe the kitchen. The kitchen was there and was the same width as the dining room but I don't remember the structure. The kitchen was entered at the side of the house and a car (carriage) would have had to have been quite altered to cater for the fuel stove which was on the outside wall of the room. The bathroom was behind the kitchen. There were two large central rooms between the cars, the front one being the lounge room with main bedroom behind.

The house holds many romantic memories of childhood for me and somewhere I have an old photo of the house.

I do not know for how long Granny and Pop Withers lived there, at least the late 1940's early 1950's. Actually, I think my POP died in 1953, passing away peacefully in that house. Not long after that, Granny came to live near us in Woodcourt Rd. Berowra. For me (the tramcar house) was a 'grand' old home and will live on quite vividly in my memory. It is so nice to know where the cars rest. Oh, and incidentally, there was no toilet in the house when I knew it. Just a big china poe under the bed and a dunny down the back yard under the shade of a plum tree!"

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Both 93B and 72B came up for sale at Randwick in April 1932. They were both purchased by a Miss King and subsequently transferred to Hillcrest Rd. Berowra where they became the basis of a house. Two spinsters, Evelyn and Corbetta King lived jointly in the house until Corbetta died in 1934. Evelyn continued living alone in the house. In September 1945 title to the land was transferred to Charlotte Withers (Patricia's grandmother) wife of Bill Withers. Charlotte sold the property and moved to Woodcourt Road in 1954. Title was transferred to William R. Ward, wife of May

(Continued on Page 6)



(Above) Patricia's grandmother at work in the kitchen of the tram car conversion. This portion of the home was in 72B. (Below) The same area today. Sadly termites had infested much of this car.



Preserving the past, enriching the future

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The museum is located in Tusculum Road, Valley Heights. Ample parking is available. A train service 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.....

So You thought your job was full-on!

The following was written in the ARHS Bulletin No.108 of October 1946. It describes the duties of the person in charge of the Wallsend Tram Depot. "I never heard of a man with more varied duties than this person. He prepared engines, packed glands, unloaded coal from Wallsend Coal Company's trucks onto the coal stage between its line and the down loop, fueled engines, worked Elernore Vale crossing signal-box, acted as car examiner, cleaned up shed and yard (with a broom planted you know where?) signed crews on and off, acted as telephone boy and drove the relief engine when they had an engine failure. Classified as "Yardman" he was paid nine shillings a day!

So there you are. Just when you thought your job was getting on top of you, its nice to recall that most people did work a lot

harder and for a lot less than what we are attuned to today.

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Expanding the Connection

A recent initiative by Secretary Peter Stock is the issue of a little certificate to kids who operate the point lever at the outer terminus. Kids (and indeed many adults) love to do this job and small as it may seem, it is "hands-on" experience. The issue of certificates as an "Honorary Pointsperson" signed by the "Comptroller-General, Nigel Topper-McConney" (alias Peter Stock in top hat) have been received enthusiastically. They are another little museum/visitor "connector".

Sick List

Long-time member Peter Martin has been ill recently but is now making steady recovery. Col Burne's wife has not been the best either.

Works Report: Stepho: Boiler prepared for boiler inspection and 'boxed back up'. (Inspection passed 6 Aug) **93B:** Further doors installed (two sets to go). Brakes adjusted. **103A:** Brake hose coupling to No.1 end (now complete). **Other:** Two display cases set up with background display.



(Continued from Page 5) Whilst the transportation of the dead by rail might be considered a thing of the past in these times of good roads and air transport, it is not quite so in Queensland. One day in 2002, whilst filling in some time on holiday, my wife and I were casually awaiting the arrival of "The Inlander" from Brisbane at Barcardine. At the end of the platform was a battered black vehicle c.1968. On enquiry, it turned out to be the shire hearse and the attendants (in shorts), council employees. Eventually the train arrived. One of the leading vehicles was a van and on being opened, a large cardboard box was carefully unloaded. The "this way up sign" was noted. Some ladies later got off the train when it moved further along the platform. It soon appeared that they were associated with the deceased. The casket containing the body was within the cardboard box. All was loaded into the hearse. Eventually the hearse moved off to its destination.

Next day, a funeral cortege was moving slowly through the main street of town, the battered black hearse, leading proceedings. The two council employees were again in charge but this time, somewhat more formally attired. Older folk along the route of the cortege stood to attention with the men removing their hats as a mark of respect. This is a moving custom that seems to be dying out, particularly in the city. These days, hats and caps seem to be glued to young people's heads and seem never to be removed, even at the meal table.

It appeared that the poor deceased lady had recently gone to Brisbane by train, in the company of lady companions. Overnight, she apparently had died in her hotel room. After certain formalities, arrangements were made for her return to Barcardine by train but this time, in the van. With no disrespect for the lady concerned, we pondered at the time that her return in the van was probably more expensive than her return passenger ticket! Indeed, was the latter transferable under the circumstances?

When talking to the hearse attendants, it turned out that these duties regularly occurred in the course of their employment. It was explained that many smaller country towns cannot support a full-time undertaker with the result that the shire council fills the gap.

In a way, it was just one of those things that make outback Queensland seem that little bit more of what the rest of Australia used to be like.

(The portions in italics are derived from "Tramways of Newcastle" by David Keenan, Ken McCarthy and Ross Wilson, published by Transit Press 1999. Provision of the hearse for the latest photos, courtesy Power House Museum.)

Continued from Page 5

Ward. May continued living in the house until she died in 1995. Title was transferred to Kerrie Booth in March 1997. It was during this month that the society obtained possession of the tramcars.

Sincere Condolences

are extended to member Robin Stock on the passing of her mother Blanche, on August 7. By way of interest, Robin's father was Mal Baker, a past President of the unincorporated society. Mal passed away in May 1963. He had joined the society close to its inception.



The Operations Manager invests the "Old" conductor with the Grand Order of Ancient Ticket Punchers. Actually, he is placing a vintage Bell ticket punch around his neck. The punch was recently acquired and although it serves no practical purpose with present ticketing, it serves as a "connector" with our customers, with kids invited to help the conductor punch their tickets and hear the bell ring. (Photo courtesy, Peter Stock)