



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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“Plug Pulled” on Trike Rides

Steam Scene reported in the August issue that a temporary reprieve had been given for trike rides, pending further advice. The first Sunday in August would normally have been a “trike day” however it was decided to operate steam on that day.

ITSRR representatives visited STARPS at Valley Heights on Wednesday, August 29. They inspected the operative trikes making notes of their particulars.



Trikes—are these now only to tinker with but not use? Are they the subject of “over-kill?”

After this, the operating line was inspected. Following on, a dialogue took place regarding operational aspects, including risk assessments. A formal questionnaire was also given answer. After a private discussion, the ITSRR reps suggested that it might be better if the trikes did not run on the September running-day or thereafter. A voluntary cessation was effectively tendered to them.

It appears that the questionable operation of trikes came about because of an accident in New Zealand in

2004. In this, a trike was being operated with a trailer attached, carrying a number of passengers. It appears that the connecting link between the leading trike and the trailer worked adrift with the result that the link dug into the road bed, “pole-vaulting” the trailer. A number of injuries occurred with one woman sustaining fairly serious injury. The woman happened to be a passenger seated between two others. There was no grip available from her position.

Salient points arising from the subsequent enquiry were:

- The speed being travelled
- The nature of the coupling
- Containment of passengers

Following the Ariah Park tragedy (see SS, June 2006) the society was required to review its rolling stock coupling procedures. These included coupling procedures for trikes and trailers as well. This review was carried out, a Safety Notice covering the points of concern issued and subsequently forwarded to ITSRR. As a result of the NZ accident a coupling bar had previously been designed with a split-pin arrangement to prevent joggling loose.

It is a little surprising that the general operation of the trikes, at least as far as we are concerned, was not reviewed at that time, in line with the NZ enquiry outcome.

A risk assessment will need to be carried out and submitted to ITSRR before trikes can even be used for rail maintenance work. So far as passenger carrying is concerned, they will probably have to be equipped with speedometers and passenger restraint or containment of some design with a risk assessment carried out thereafter.

A Berry Nice Day-Out

Sunday August 26 dawned fine with some fog around. Thus the scene was set for our annual rail day-out.

The “CPH’s” had delay in leaving Valley Heights which is under the control of Springwood. Strange, this seems to be a frequent happening whenever heritage operators are under the control of Springwood.

By the time the rail motors reached Westmead for passenger en-trainment, they were running a good half-hour late, having been put behind an “all stops” suburban. After Parramatta, we had a good run through the “Y” link and along the main South line. The countryside looked magnificent after recent rains and the temperature such, that windows could be opened fully

to take in the sounds and smells. Some time was gained in not going fully into Moss Vale platform but rather, going directly onto the link to the Unanderra line.

The countryside was truly delightful with everything fresh and wild flowers blooming.

A stop of 10 minutes at Summit Tank was much appreciated as all took in the splendid vista to the coast. Our time in Berry was a little over a hour. Most made there way to town for lunch.

It was good to see the parties of Bill and Elaine Evans, John Withers and family and members Geoff Geele and Peter Carlino. We hope you all enjoyed yourselves.



Member David Hunt, encapsulates the spirit of the day.
(photo, courtesy, Col Burne)



*From
the
Editor*

With the A.G.M. coming up in November, it will again be time to elect a quota of directors. Again, I am sure the retiring board members will be re-elected to their positions.

The question of succession has been addressed in S.S. previously; how it is essential for a healthy organization to develop successional arrangement for executive positions. The difficulties associated with gaining new directors has also been addressed.. Although not perhaps occurring this year but highly likely next year, a least one director will be retiring and will not be available for re-election. I don't think I am letting any “cats out of the bag” when I say that Peter Stock and I, do not intend to carry on executive function past our seventieth year at the latest. Accordingly, we will need to have replacements coming on stream. If you would like a shot at the job of director, we can ease you into the function at the “easy end” .

If nominees do not come forward during the next couple of years, the very viability of the society could be at risk, through lack of executives.

Bruce Irwin. Editor.



This photo taken at Castle Hill c. 1912 clearly shows IA with a "straight" foot plate and apron with "cut-outs".

Motor IA : A Museum Treasure...

But is it a trick or treat?

Motor IA was imported into NSW from America in 1879 along with three other motors and trailers, to commence a tram service that was to be the progenitor of the mighty Sydney tram system. The motor was saved from the scrapper, substantially by the efforts of early preservationists but is !A the real thing?

The notion of preserving artifacts from history is well established in our present times. We are concerned about our past and what constituted it. In general, folk are fascinated with exhibitions of artifacts and ephemera from our past, even our very recent past. Take for example the recent Power House Museum exhibition featuring the various stage outfits of Kylie Minogue. This was quite a hit, even though the costumes seemed to have been with us barely (no pun intended) yesterday.

It occurs to me that it was not always so. Yes, there were pockets of concern about our past back in the late 1800's and early 1900's with well established state museums and some local historical societies but it didn't perhaps touch upon the more common place, everyday things. Rates of change were quickening. There was a great desire to improve, modernize, be free from the shackles of the past with little concern about preserving elements of those shackles that were rapidly disappearing. Ordinary people were more intent on improving their lot, not pining over what was passing from their ken. I hasten to add, this is just a personal view and not in anyway based on a scientific analysis.

Collecting and preserving the past today, is common place in many levels of our society, it is just not left to the level of the state or related strata, to consider what is worthwhile collecting today, for the erudition of everyone tomorrow.

Harking back to the past, in the early 1930's when a group of men got together with a common interest in railways, to form the Railway Circle of Australia, they were probably seen by a lot of people as being high on the eccentricity dial. Today they would be considered quite normal. It is fortunate for us that this group, who subsequently became the Australian Railway Historical Society, had this love of railways and what was rapidly passing into obscurity in that industry.

On the 23rd August 1935, the Honorary Secretary of the "Railway Circle", A.H. Dunstan, wrote a letter to the Commissioner of Road Transport and Tramways, expressing regret "...that steam tram motor No.1A, for several years past stationed at Kogarah, has completed her extended term, and is to be scrapped." Mr. Dunstan requested that the motor concerned be preserved and perhaps, "mounted on a bank at Bridge St. yard....as a memorial to the men who worked these motors in Sydney's early tramway history." He went on to say that, "...the steam motor is held in great esteem by many thousands of older people, who recall with sympathy the efforts of these fine little engines..." Here was a rare view that something was rapidly passing

away from the common ken and was worthy of being preserved, if for nothing else, sentiment. The steam trams had been with folk since 1879 and had performed a great service. They were now seen by most people as antiquated and ready for the scrap heap but not so for Arthur Dunstan and his associates.

Records do not exist as to the Commissioner's response to Mr. Dunstan's letter. It would appear however, that the Commissioner of Road Transport and Tramways Department, undertook in June 1936, to preserve IA until arrangements could be made to transfer it to the Technological Museum, Sydney. The next reference existing is a copy of a letter from the Curator of the Museum (A.R. Penfold) to the Secretary of the Department. In this, Mr. Penfold generally enquires what the department was intending to do with the motor in view of the pending closure of the Kogarah system. Mr. Penfold added; "As you are aware, it is the general practice these days for the public to mutilate public vehicles when they are being withdrawn from service and I am a little disturbed that something similar might happen to this steam motor on its final run." As can be seen from the article, last issue, on the Kogarah system closure, the public did run amok and severely vandalized the old rolling stock. Mr. Penfold's concerns were indeed most real. The department considered it would be able to take care of the motor and transfer it to the museum some time after the closure.

As it transpired, IA operated on July 2nd, the day before the tramway closure and arrangements made for it to be transferred from Kogarah to Randwick Workshops and placed into store. A note dated July 5th says: "This motor is to be safely stored in the Steam Motor Section of the Truck Shop-all windows and doors to be secured to prevent unauthorized entry".

It is at this point that the plot thickens. For many years it has been rumoured that motor 28A was substituted for IA, in particular, the cabs being swapped. Why this would have been done has never satisfactorily been explained. Never-the-less there are interesting facts to take note of.

The case in favour of substitution:

- A photo purported to have been taken on July 2nd, 1937, shows a shabby motor with a well defined "IA" painted on it's apron and side. Looks suspicious but far from convincing.
- Viewing IA today, there is a mixture of motor numbers appearing on various parts, the predominant number being "28A". As time progressed, there was a lot of cannibalisation of motor parts. 103A has other motor parts on it also however, the predominant parts are still branded "103A" This is not the case with "IA" but again, in itself, this is not conclusive evidence.



Taken in 1937, this photo shows IA's apron without "cut-outs". It must have been replaced at some time. The foot-plate continues to appear "straight".



A 1937 photo. IA has a straight footplate but the apron shows a slight curve. Note different desto box rolls.



Continued from page 5:

- Many early photos of IA show it as having “flat” aprons rather than the rounded types, presently on the museum “IA”. There is a strong case (early photos of Nos. 1 and 2. History card of No.3) that the first four motors imported into NSW were “square end” motors. It is most unlikely there was any variation in the first batch of motors.
- In 2004, former member Trevor Edmonds, informed the Power House that he believed a swap had taken place. He based his case on the following: Motor 28A was the “pet” of a former driver Oscar Jones. It appears that Jones centre-punched his name “OSCAR” above the smoke box door of 28A. The museum confirms that the name has indeed been centre-punched.

The case against substitution:

- What purpose would it have served? *If old Oscar Jones did arrange for a swap of cabins so as to preserve his beloved 28A, he must have had a lot of “pull”, for the dismantling of a cabin entails a lot of work and effort. If a substitution was semi-officially done, it can only have been because something had happened to the main frame or mechanics of IA otherwise, why bother? A simpler method would have been to paint over the existing numbers. The photo of 28A on Rotten Row does not look as if the number had been recently re-painted i.e. painted over IA.*
- In the correspondence between the Museum and the Department in May/June 1937, the department, under the initials of W.S. Corner, makes the comment; “Am wondering whether we had better advise Mr. Penfold that only the design and number is left.” *With IA being the first motor commissioned in 1879, it would not be surprising if a large number of part substitutions occurred, particularly during its later history. Alternatively, this comment could substantiate the case that at that point in time, the substitution had already occurred.*

Perhaps some clarification could occur if we looked at the history of 28A. The original 28 (re-numbered 10) was a “9 inch” motor and sold to a “J. Newman” in 1905 along with several other motors of limited “9 inch” cylinder capacity.



Motor IA photographed in 1937 at Kogarah depot. The number looks quite fresh and the end apron appears to be of the “round” type. Did a swap of motor bodies take place at this depot?

The 2nd 28 was built by Vales of Auburn in 1891 and as mentioned, scrapped in 1939. From existing records, it appears that Vales constructed all the motors under contract as “round-end” motors.

It is interesting to note that after IA was transferred from Kogarah depot in July 1937, it was laid up in Randwick Depot until c. May 1940. It was then transferred to the Tech. Museum.

With 28A scrapped at Randwick Depot in 1939, this makes both the motors at Randwick for a concurrent period. This period provided ample opportunity for part substitution. However, it appears more likely that any swap of the cabins that may have taken place, took place at Kogarah in line with folk lore. Legend has it, that the swap took place about five weeks before the closure of the line. (See IA photos below showing body and apron section) Looking at the photo of 28A depicted as being in “Rotten Row” Randwick, this shows it appearing to have a square end. Could the underframe be that of the real IA?

The full truth may never be known unless “IA” is fully dismantled and any extant numbering checked with records existing. There will always be a lot of conjecture and it is easy to jump to conclusions based on a modicum of what appears to be fact. Photos taken at the time of both motors, including depiction of the “ends”, are subject to optical distortion. Frustratingly, a peculiarity picked out in one photo can’t always be compared to another for some reason or other e.g. no extant photo of same side, etc. The men gathered together in the photo of IA (lower left) probably knew the circumstances, however all these possible witnesses are now well and truly gone.

Well, did posterity (including us) have a “trick” played upon them. Was an artful substitution made or have we been bequeathed an authentic “treat”? The evidence on balance, suggests a substitution to some extent, did take place but this is not conclusive. Perhaps in the final analysis, the most important matters are these; really, what’s in a number? All motors in the end, carried bits and pieces of other motors. With this in mind, perhaps the Power House motor is what Arthur Dunstan originally sought: a memorial to all who served on them. If IA is really 28A, it is significant and unique for another reason - it is the only surviving Australian made motor. In view of the attitudes of the times during which they became redundant, let us be thankful any motor was saved at all!

Continued on page 6.



An early photo of 28. No doubt about it, it had a “round end” in common with all Vale and Son engines.



A photo of 28A in “Rotten Row” Randwick. It’s end appears to have become square.

(Rt.) Detail from IA photo adjacent. The foot-plate end is “round”.





“Shooting Through Like a Bondi Tram...”

The final part of a series on the Steam Trams of Old Sydney.

In this edition, “Transport Authority” H.J. Hayman tells us of the origin of this famous colloquialism. The original text is taken from the Eastern Suburbs Advertiser of August 19, 1948. Comments or supplementary information by the editor is written in italics.

The saying, “Shooting through like a Bondi tram” still has currency in today’s vernacular. Its use though, is waning and generally used only by the older generations who knew trams. Strangely, it is one saying that has been used Australia wide. There is variation of interpretation as to how it came into being.

If one is lucky enough to recall a Bondi electric tram, the trip to and from that destination was far from a “shooting through” experience. The term however, came from the days of the steam tram era and according to Mr. Hayman, a specific tram service.

“If you lived at Bondi, Watson’s Bay, Double Bay or Randwick in the good old days,

you could post your letters on the trams and be assured of an express delivery service. Even before this, you could post your letters on the old horse trams.”

It should be pointed out at this juncture, that the express mail trams did not just carry letters in a tram letter box. They carried the mail bags from the district’s post offices. The post was under the control of the states until federation in 1901.

Tamarama Non-Stop

Upper Tamarama, was the terminus of the Bondi express mail tram that ran almost non-stop to Bridge Street, Sydney. In so doing, it thus coined the phrase “Shooting through like...etc.” The mail tram departed at 7.45 a.m. and returned from the city departing at 5.50 p.m. They were reported to achieve speeds of 80 kph in

places! The only stops were, Tea Gardens and Paddington Post Office, the latter being a mail stop. These trams had first and second class accommodation. First class accommodation had leather seats, red carpet and water bottles provided. Carried on the front on the motor, was a red sign “THROUGH TRAM”. The line was kept clear by time-tabling the all-stops trams into loop sidings. They were assisted up Barrack Hill

by an additional engine. Six car trams at Christmas mail time had a third engine at the rear to help them up the hill. Telegraph operators at Paddington Post Office kept head office posted with a tram’s ‘up-hill’ progress. Victoria Barracks’ soldiers would travel on the express trams to avoid being posted ‘A.W.L.’

So there we have it, it was just not an ordinary tram service but an express mail tram.

Express mail trams also operated to and from Waverley Cemetery, Coogee Beach, Botany and several other suburbs to the West.

The Finest System

“Sydney, in its day, had the finest steam tram system in the world. Dowling Street depot was the largest. It had 27 inside tracks and 8 sidings making a total of 35 tracks in all. Central station (at the time) had 23 tracks.”

The Fishing Specials

Another recall of the Mr. Hayman is about the introduction of ‘Fishing Specials’. Amateur fishing in those days was a common practice, with fish requiring less complicated procedures before surrendering themselves and indeed, being more plentiful. “The ‘Fishing Special’ was an express tram from the city to the top of Bellview Street, Tamarama. This tram would leave the city at 10.00 a.m. Fishermen would board with the tackle and spend a day on the rocks with rod and line.

Whistles and Telegraph

Drivers, many of whom had been royal navy signalmen, used a code of whistles as emergency signals. This was the code:-

One long - acknowledgment—“T”

Three shorts - I’m stopping—“S”

Long, long, short, long—wait—“Q”

Long, short, long—Go ahead—“K”

Three shorts, three longs, three shorts—trouble “SOS”

Short, long, short—repeat—“R”

On the telegraph system, a message like this would be sent: ‘Aquarium ISQK report SOS, will R message to Bridge Street., H. TGDN.’ The deciphered message read:- ‘Bondi Aquarium terminus No.1 whistling. I’m stopping comma told to wait then go ahead report trouble will repeat message to Bridge Street. [H] Tea Gardens.’ The Paddington operator would send: ‘OK GNFU’ - which reads ‘OK got nothing for you.’ From the above, it would appear that the No.1 tram run at the Aquarium was code whistling and this was being relayed by a telegraph operator.

Many Victoria Barracks signalmen who rode the trams, often sent heliograph messages to post offices for the tram men who operated a Bigby shutter lamp



The famous Bondi tram. Seen here discharging a three car load.



This portion of a map by the late C. Singleton, covers the district, subject of this article. The express mail trams departed from Bondi Aquarium (Upper Tamarama)



or plug signaled a message to tram drivers who understood them. It was not uncommon to see tram drivers semaphoring to sailing vessels from the Bondi terminus.

Any tram that reported troubles, was quickly succoured as special engines and trucks stood in sidings ready to lend mechanical assistance.

There was always a pilot engine kept on the run in traffic to replace any disabled engine. A few emergency motors were also on the siding at Darlinghurst gaol. Another waited at Tea Gardens and a further one at Waverley Junction.

Language Influence

Harking back to the "shooting through..." vernacular. Our everyday language still remains influenced by the parlance used by the tram crews of old. Some terms have dropped from use or are in decline but others, I have been surprised to learn, have been corrupted from the original and are still widely used.

Here are a few slangy short-cuts in use during the days of the steam tram. Suggested present day derivations are in brackets.

"Running on smoke signals" - Watching for the smoke of the tram ahead, to avoid collision. (Operating with the barest of information to go on.)

"Working Points" - Getting an easy job changing the line points. (Crafty, minimal effort worker.)

"Double harness" - Two-engined trams. This slang was a relic

of the horse-bus era. (Generally now used in terms of marriage.)

"Four point landing" - Leaving the rails and landing on four wheels. (I thought this one was derived from the aircraft industry! Sometimes it is mentioned as a 'three point landing'. It generally denotes a safe arrival after an incident)

"Airing the wash" - Cleaning route symbol plates. (This one has dropped from general use now.)

"Hill for lather" - Clapping on speed to mount a hill, causing a lather of smoke and steam. (This one has been popularly corrupted into "Hell for leather" and still means 'going fast' or 'flat-out'.

"Horsing her over" - Reversing the motor. (Dropped out of use.)

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And so we come to the end of Mr. Hayman's fascinating reminiscences of the old steam tram days of Sydney. Some of the events related might be a little "tongue in cheek" nevertheless, I think they make a good read and no doubt, there is a good deal of truth in them. Certainly in matters such as destination signs, he is spot on.

In concluding, I would like to thank member Vic Solomons for making these interesting articles available to the society and Peter Stock in realizing their potential and forwarding them on to me.

Fatal Shunting Accident– UK Heritage Railway

A lesson in the Inherent Dangers in Coupling.

The society recently received an ATHRA (Association of Tourist and Heritage Rail, Australia) Alert (#35). The significance of the circumstances of the accident bears repeating.

In July 2006, a fatal shunting accident occurred on the Gwili Railway in Wales. A volunteer guard was fatally trapped between two carriages as they were being coupled together at Bronwydd Arms station. The full report is 36 pages in length however the ATHRA Alert summarizes the immediate causes and contributory causes.

- A misunderstanding of hand signals between the driver and fireman.
- The guard stepping in between the carriages in the belief they would not move.
- The guard acted as a shunter earlier and probably believed he retained this responsibility.
- The fireman, when taking over the duties of shunter, had not positively advised the guard and received acknowledgement.
- Lack of operational supervision on the day.
- A custom and practice of volunteers multi-skilling and helping each other in safety critical activities without coming to a clear understanding of their limits.

Key Messages:

- The inherent dangers in our activities, in particular shunting rolling stock, must never be underestimated.
- Clear communication is vital in controlling shunting movements.
- Hand signals should be clear and consistent and variations not allowed to creep-in.

In response to this report the Operations Manager draws the attention of all Rail Safety Workers to the following. The coupling of rolling stock is an attractive observation point to all. Every body would like a piece of the action. This in itself has inherent dangers as there is always a tendency for an unauthorized person or even a crew member, to make a call that something or other is, should or has been done. This in itself can confuse the driver or other persons directly concerned. If you are not directly involved in the mechanics of coupling,, uncoupling or driving, PLEASE RESIST THE URGE TO SPEAK FOR THE PERSONS INVOLVED! In any coupling procedure, as per our Safety Notices, one person is appointed or nominated to control the shunt from start to finish. The actual process itself is controlled by Safety Notice No. 2005/01. Any hand signals that are given must be in accordance with those authorized under the Operating Rules.

In shunting operations, your life is at stake. Keep the "3C's" in mind when conducting every shunting movement i.e. Control, Conformance and Communication.



"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. Steam tram rides on the 3rd Sunday only.



Works Report: Locking device improvement fitted to turntable. **103A:** Brake adjustment. **1022:** Cylinders transferred to DCL Engineering for machining. **Stepho:** Boiler prepared for boiler inspection. Inspection done Sept 21. Nine crown-stay nuts removed for copper washer replacement. **93B:** Wheels and axles to DCL Engineering for testing and re-fitting.

Cont. from Page 3: Sincere thanks to Frank Moag and Andrew Grant of the Power House Museum for their contribution to this article and not least to Peter Stock who initiated it.)



Motor IA as it was displayed in the Power House museum some years ago. Certainly is a "round end" motor.

Cont. from Page 1. A dominant chord that ITSRR has made apparent, is that trikes were never used for public transportation. Nevertheless, they were made for carrying people be they personnel or passengers. Why have a differentiation?

As the society does not own outright any trikes, it will be up to the individual owners to modify their vehicles if they want them to be used for passenger carrying or indeed any transportation. It really is overkill.

The withdrawal of trikes on the first Sunday operation has set in train a review of operations for this day and options will be canvassed from stake holders. In the meantime, trikes are grounded.

Frank Moag's 92nd Birthday



(Above Lt) Members Frank and Leila Moag. (Above, LtR) Dave Hunt, Bruce Irwin, Frank Moag, Peter Stock and John Webb. (Above Rt) Frank Moag, 92 years young.

Last but not least.

Protection of Railway Workers

On July 16, an accident occurred at Singleton whereby two rail infrastructure maintainers were killed by an empty coal train. The fatalities are still being investigated and pending a formal report. In the mean time, ITSRR has alerted operators of the need to properly manage risks to safety of RSV's and others when walking or working in the railway danger zone.

In our case, whilst our operation is only tiny in comparison with most others, RSV's and any other persons are never-the-less reminded that they are **legally** required at all times to wear a safety vest when walking or working near the operating line on operating days.

This rule applies to any STARPS or VHLDHM member working anywhere around operations on steaming days.

P. Stock. Operations Manager

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A Very Memorable Birthday

On Monday, September 17, it was the very great privilege for a group of retired members, to attend a birthday luncheon in honour of Life Member, Frank Moag. The luncheon was held at the Ocean Beach Hotel, Shellharbour. In all, 19 guests attended including not least Frank's wife Leila, son Arthur and several other relatives and friends. A delightful afternoon was had with great food and conversation. Frank was delighted to be presented with a new "old style" driver's badge, the number of which was of course, 1022.

It was lovely to catch up with Frank (who never seems to look any older) and his good lady-wife. You wouldn't guess Frank was 92, he looks closer to 72! Thank you Frank and Leila for being so generous and being the cause for such a memorable occasion. You are both held in the greatest esteem by all your society friends.

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Sick List

Member Peter Butler, recently had a brief stay in hospital to have a cranky shoulder sorted out. Good to see you throwing punches again Peter!

Member Karen Connelly (Craig's wife) has recently been hospitalized. She is now home recuperating. Our thoughts, prayers and best wishes are with you at this time Karen and Craig.



The second of 1022's cylinder castings is lowered onto a truck en route for machining. The Treasurer looks on, not so much as to help but to ensure value for money!