

Merry Christmas



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).

“Peace of Earth and Goodwill to all Mankind”

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A Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to You,
Our Members and Good Friends.

Annual General Meeting- Operational changes signalled

The society’s AGM was held on Saturday November 10 at the Valley Heights Depot. A good roll-up of members attended.

The three board vacancies were re-filled by the former incumbents, uncontested, i.e. Peter Stock (Secretary) Craig Connelly (Chairman) and John Webb (Director).

In his address to the meeting, Chairman Craig made mention of the present difficulty with the first Sunday of the month open day. With the use of trikes for passenger rides having effectively been “killed” by ITSRR, alternatives for providing rides was being sought. The use of the motor and car on first Sundays was thought to not be a good alternative, if only from the point of view of wear and tear. Stepho had been used on the November first Sunday however, being limited to cab rides was an awkward alternative. What was needed was a carriage to go with Stepho. Our “cowboy” car is still a long way off from being serviceable. It had been suggested that perhaps VHLDHM’s ETB stainless steel car with our “S” truck used as a match-truck, could be a viable alternative. This combination has its draw-backs.

Another alternative being considered, is gaining access to a “cowboy” car recently returned to RTM from loan. This car would not require a match-truck and would look far better in consist than the stainless steel car. To this end, communication had been made to RTM with the support of the Chairman of VHLDHM. If one of these cars is not available, perhaps another may be.

In any case, steam operation on the first (second) Sunday of the month, looks to be the only way to go. The effective ban on trikes by ITSRR, now means a greater commitment from those involved in operations, much higher running costs and overall greater wear and tear. The use of trikes previously was an attractive alternative that featured novelty for the public and low operating costs for the society.

Interestingly enough, we note that in New Zealand where the initial “trike” accident took place, the Pleasant Point Railway and Museum are currently using a “Sheffield” type jigger (as they term them) for rides on steaming days.

Operating and Museum Open Days to Change

After consultation with the Board of the Society, the Management Committee of VHLDHM, at their meeting of November 10, determined that operating days change from the first and third Sundays of the month, to the second and fourth Sundays. This has been brought about because of difficulties in staffing the first Sunday. Several key museum members are committed to operating the Wascoe miniature live steam operation on first Sundays of the month. Another consideration is the prospective regular operation of steam on the first Sunday. Minimal support staff was required when trikes only were operated however, more staff are required for steam operations.

The new arrangement will start with the second and fourth Sundays of February. Members and visitors should refer to the web site for special notification when the new operating days fall of Mother’s Day and

Public Holidays and immediately post Christmas.

On the recommendation of STARPS, a revised admission and ride charge will also come into force. Admission and ride charges will rise by 50cents each component. Pensioner admission will rise by 1.50 and a rides by 50cents. The family fare will rise to \$35.00 for two adults and two or more children. One Adult and three or more children will also qualify for this concession. Steadily rising costs have necessitated the rises. The new admission charges will be as follows:

Admission and Unlimited Rides

Adult	13.00 (Up 1.00)
Pensioner/Senior	11.00 (Up 2.00)
Child	9.00 (Up 1.00)
Family	35.00 (Up 3.00)



From the
Editor

It’s that time of year again where we all indulge too much and with a moistened eye, wish one another a “Merry Christmas”. I guess we can’t fail but be impressed by the ever more spectacular street-scapes of house lighting displays and indeed touched by the shopping centre carol singers, the tinsel and all that leads up to THE day. Come 6 o’clock on Christmas Day, there’s a line-up of toys that wont work , need new batteries or need repairing already and we’re ready to wrap-up the whole thing and get back to “reality”.

Apart from the “plastic” debt and the extra kilos added to our waistlines, do we take anything else away from Christmas? If you are a Christian, it is a time for renewal, to start afresh, to be re-born if you will. To others it will have other connotations ranging down to no impact whatsoever.

No matter what your religious persuasion or lack of, I think we can all bring something positive away from Christmas, not just the negatives. That little bit of goodwill that was shown in the lead-up, maybe we could carry that over for a bit longer. That smidgeon of extra consideration– would we look too wimpy if we put a bit more of that into the work place? I know we are all supposed to be assertive nowadays but do we get a bit too dogmatic at times, a bit less inclined to listen to the other blokes point of view?

What ever your beliefs, Christmas is a good time to make a change for the better, to make an effort to be just a little better person than the one we were this time last year. Who knows, we might at some point in our life-journey, start to feel a little more satisfied with our lives and maybe, just maybe, even glimpse a better meaning to our lives!

Till next time, Bruce Irwin, Editor.

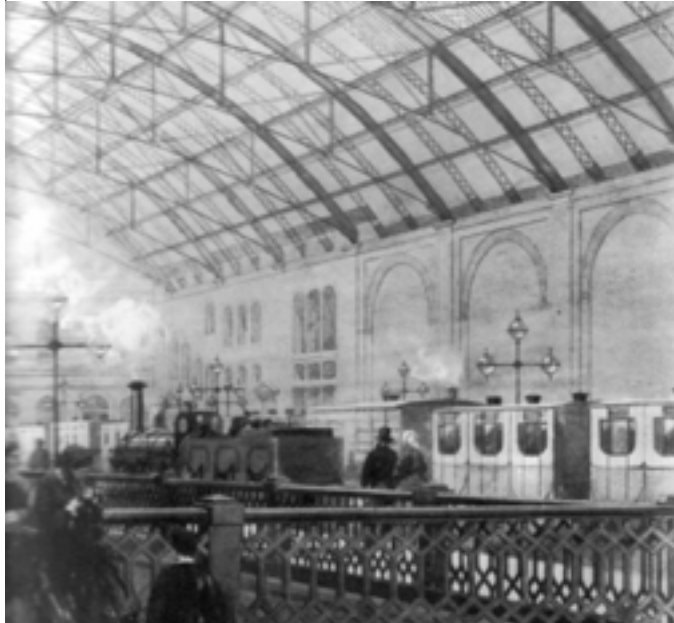




The Great Train Robbery

When one hears or reads this phrase, it is generally assumed to refer to that event staged so daringly by Ronald Biggs and his gang in 1963. There was one however in England in 1855 that was perhaps even more daring in its concept and execution, than that carried out by Biggs. We perhaps think of crimes of theft in the 19th century in terms of those petty events that landed people into transportation to Australia. The cunning and craft that lay at the core of some of the great theft and fraudulent scandals of the 1800's were indeed equal to anything perpetrated nowadays, as the following tale will show.

With the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester railway in September 1830, the first modern railway



began and thus said goodbye to the tentative puffings of earlier experiments. Private railways soon sprung up everywhere with over 5,000 miles of track being laid by the time of the "Great Train Robbery" in 1855. The available network, speed and relative security of railways was quickly availed of by banks and other markets to transport gold b u l l i o n . Throughout the ages, the criminal element has always been able to keep pace with techno-

logical advancements and accordingly, it did not take long before villains found a loophole in the railway advancement. In 1848 a strong box arrived by train in Bristol UK. The box was found to have been forced and the contents of £1,500 (a very considerable sum) in gold, missing. The case was never solved.

In 1854, England, together with France her ally, was at war with Russia. The campaign in the Crimea began in that year and involved thousands of British troops. The war continued into 1855. With the siege and subsequent taking of Sebastopol in September 1855, the war for all hostility purposes came to a virtual end, although a treaty with Russia was not signed until the following year. It was an expensive war in terms of lives and money the latter amounting to the stupendous sum of £77,000,000! Troops and supplies had to be paid for. Payment was made by way of a regular bullion shipment from England by rail then transshipped to France for subsequent relay to the forces.

Pierce picked up on these regular shipments however, what he learned was not at all promising. The South Eastern Railway was one of numerous private lines. At the time, it operated 80 miles of track, connecting London with the coastal town of Folkestone. With no central London railway station, it shared facilities at London Bridge station with another company. It was to the S.E.R. that the bullion shipment was entrusted. The dispatch of the bullion was organized by the bankers, Huddleston and Bradford. The bullion was taken to London Bridge station under armed guard in iron bound strong boxes. Here it was placed into two safes within a brake van. The safes were fixed to the floor and required two keys to open them. One was held in London and the other in Folkestone. After placement in the safes, the bullion was under the charge of the guard en route to Folkestone.

Herein lay the nub of the problem. Agar decided it was too difficult and dropped the idea. He returned to his former profession of forgery.

In 1854, six years after Agar had dreamt up the notion of a bullion robbery, Pierce fortuitously made the acquaintance of the station master at Margate, William George Tester. Persuading Tester to assist, it just might be possible to gain duplicates of the keys involved. Agar had recently arrived home from America. He became re-involved in the plot, in light of this new possibility that added considerably to the prospect of success. Agar and Pierce set off for Folkestone, the railway terminal. Taking rooms, they spent a lot of time around the terminal trying unobtrusively, to ascertain where the second key was kept. They were not as unobtrusive as they thought for they were picked-up by police on suspicion of being pick-pockets. Winkling their way out of the situation, Pierce high-tailed it back to London. Agar stayed behind having ingratiated himself with the clerk in charge of the keys. The problem was to locate which key accessed the safe. The police were not completely satisfied with Agar's demeanor and alerted the key-clerk to their suspicions that Agar was not what he appeared to be.

(Above and below) South-Eastern's Charing Cross station c. 1864. The roof collapsed in 1905 with considerable loss of life. This station replaced London Bridge as S.E.R.'s city terminus.

As such, it attracted the attention of a reasonably successful forger by the name of Edgar Agar. It appeared to him that with careful planning and a bit of daring, he might be able to pull-off a bullion robbery and thereby settle back into a life of luxury rather than eke out his existence as to date, with floating fraudulent cheques.

Agar was introduced to an unimpressive fellow by the name of William Pierce. Pierce worked as a ticket printer for the South-Eastern Railway. Pierce had "champagne tastes but only a beer pocket". When Agar therefore hinted an interest in gold shipments, the shifty ticket printer indicated a ready like interest. From then on, Pierce set out to gain as much intelligence as possible on the comings and goings of gold shipments. In 1850, Pierce was discharged by the railway company on suspicion of theft. In an impecunious state, he determined that a ready solution lay in implementing the robbery.





The clerk needed no second warning and quickly terminated his acquaintance with Agar.

Agar now determined a scheme to access the all important key. He arranged for £200 in gold to be sent from London to Folkestone to be delivered to a "Mr. Archer" (alias Agar). The scheme should have gone awry for the keys-clerk knew Agar and would have recognized him when he turned up to take receipt of the gold off the train. By chance, the clerk was off-duty the day the gold arrived. When Agar turned up at the desk to take receipt of his consignment, the relief clerk went to the key-cupboard and closely observed by Agar, withdrew the all important key that would unlock the bullion safe in the train van. With this intelligence to hand an important piece of the plan was set in place.

Another fortuitous happening took place when the Margate station master was transferred to London. He soon found opportunity to take a wax impression of the first key. Pierce and Agar went back to Folkestone and anxiously awaited the arrival of the boat-train. On its arrival, the office staff went into a flurry of activity and deserted the office to attend to luggage. Pierce went behind the counter, located the necessary key in the cupboard and scuttled outside to Agar with it. Agar quickly took a wax impression of the key whereupon Pierce scurried back to the office, replacing it, with no one the wiser for the event. The two villains casually left the station area.

Another important piece of the plot-jigsaw was the regular bullion train guard, James Burgess. For a share of the takings, Burgess agreed to give a signal to the villains when a gold shipment was aboard the Folkestone train. The signal took the form of wiping his face with a handkerchief.

Impressions of the keys were made but it was not a straight forward process. It took no less than eight attempts to refine the complicated design to fit. At long last over a period of months, the keys finally fitted. Pierce and Agar now moved to new lodgings with Pierce changing his name and assuming a disguise.

Another problem to be solved was that of obtaining as much delay as possible before the eventual discovery of the robbery. With the bullion planned to be taken from the train whilst it was en route, it was necessary for the bullion to be replaced by a similar weight. This was to escape the obvious deficiency when it was weighed at Folkestone before being loaded onto the cross channel ferry. If the deficiency was discovered at Folkestone, too little time would have elapsed since the robbery and subsequent flight. To counter the problem, Agar and Pierce bought two hundredweights of lead grape-shot from the Shot Tower near Waterloo. This was packed into carpet bags and the pair struggled back to their lodgings.

Every evening, from early in May 1855, the two men drove to London Bridge station in a cab, with their carpet bags, each bag weighing about half a hundredweight. They then took up a position to pick up any signal from guard Burgess, that a bullion load was on board. With no signal being received, they would be driven back home again. This went on for a fortnight and they were beginning to be concerned that their furtive actions could gain attention from the railway police. On May 15th, they at last received the handkerchief signal from Burgess.

The two thieves immediately bought tickets for the train and went to the luggage van where Burgess stowed their abnormally heavy carpet bags. Pierce alighted from the van but Agar, covering himself with a leather apron, concealed himself into a corner.

As soon as the train started, Agar threw off the apron and immediately withdrew tools from a satchel strapped under his arm and concealed by his cape. With wedges, pincers etc. Agar commenced work whilst Burgess acted as look-out. One safe was opened with the bogus keys and two small wooden boxes, bound and sealed, withdrawn. Using his wedges, he prised up the iron bands then forced it open. Four gold ingots were removed and replaced with the lead shot. Quickly replacing the bands and a wax seal, the four ingots, now concealed in a carpet bag, were ready to be unloaded at the first stop— Reigate. Here, Burgess handed over the bag to William Tester who casually strolled off with it in hand. At this stop, Pierce joined Agar in the van. Underway again, the pair forced open the second box, containing American gold coins. A quantity of these were removed and replaced with lead shot. The second safe was then opened and was found to contain smaller gold bars. Because they were running out of corresponding weight in lead shot, only a few of these could be taken without early detection. The total value of the haul was £12,000.

On arrival in Folkestone, the pair detrained and proceeded to walk from the platform with their carpet bags containing the bullion. They caught another train bound for Dover. Here they arrived before midnight and decided to have a meal at a hotel. A train back to London, departed at 2 a.m. Whilst Pierce guarded the bags, Agar disposed of the keys and tools into the water at the dock. At the station, tension rose when a porter offered to carry their bags. The porter became suspicious when they declined and demanded to see their tickets. This contingency had not been overlooked by Agar however. He produced return ticket butts from Ostend. The porter thanked him but then recalled that there had been no boat from Ostend that day. On querying Agar, he replied that they had arrived the previous day and tendered the porter a tip. Tipping his cap, the porter bid them "goodnight" and departed. Two hours later, they were back in London. Still not content that they were not followed, they took three different cabs to arrive back at their digs. As dawn came, they were safely back, as was Tester with his bag, in the comfort of their lodgings.

The robbery was not discovered until the following day when the consignment had been ferried to Boulogne. Although the boxes had been weighed at Folkestone, it was put down to a clerical error when one weighed too much and one too little. At Boulogne, the authorities carefully weighed the boxes and found a serious discrepancy. Consternation reigned when the lead shot was discovered in the forced boxes.

In London meantime, some of the American gold was converted to £400 Sterling and divided equally amongst the quartet.



A passenger coach typical of the time of the robbery.



The remaining gold was then removed to Shepherd's Bush. Here, Agar was ensconced with a mistress, Fanny Kay. For the next week or so, Agar and Pierce worked in an upper room, melting down the gold into smaller, more manageable ingots. These less conspicuous smaller pieces were sold. Cautiously, Agar looked around for a buyer of larger amounts. Tester and Burgess were paid off and strongly advised to continue their jobs and life-style as previously, so as to not arouse suspicion. A fellow forger, James T. Saward or "Jim the Penman" as was known, bought £2,500's worth of gold.

Unbeknown to Agar, his extraordinary luck which had held to this point, now began to run out. Although he was now a wealthy man, he continued in his old profession of "forger". He employed a young bright fellow by the name of Smith, to do odd-jobs. Agar's confidence in Smith grew when he satisfactorily delivered several large amounts of money. Accordingly, he employed Smith on a permanent basis. Smith was naively unaware that he was being used to cash forged cheques at various banks. Agar, cunning as ever, ensured that Smith never knew his real name and always met him at a hotel to do the necessary exchanges. Good as Smith appeared, Agar was unaware that he had served time for receiving and had run a brothel that had gone bankrupt. When Smith told a thief named Humphries that he had obtained a good job with Agar, Humphries advised him the tread carefully as he knew Agar to be a villain. Humphries had reason to be rancorous about Agar. Not long before, Agar had seduced Humphries mistress. Agar's live-in, Fanny Kay found out and there was hell to pay, especially as Fanny had borne Agar a child. Agar walked out on Fanny and promptly set up house with Humphries mistress, Emily Campbell.

When Smith realized he was a potential "fall-guy" he went to the police. The police arranged to set a trap for Agar. One day, Agar sent Smith to a bank to cash a £700 cheque. Agar followed at a distance. The bank, having been tipped-off, cashed the cheque and filled Smith's bag with farthings! Smith then met Agar (whom he knew as Captain Pellatt) and handed over the bag. The police pounced, arresting them both. Agar was charged with forgery. He was convinced that he had been framed by Humphries for stealing his mistress and claimed innocence. Various counterfeit notes and bogus plates in Agar's home soon convinced police they were dealing with a criminal. Agar was subsequently sentenced to transportation for life to Botany Bay. This was only five months after the bullion robbery.

Agar felt sorry for Fanny and decided provide her with a regular income after investing £15,000 he had in the bank. At this point, the old adage about "no honour amongst thieves" came into play. Agar arranged to entrust Pierce with the business of investing the money. Agar signed the appropriate deed of bequest whilst awaiting transportation. Pierce had no intention of investing the money, especially as Fanny knew nothing about the arrangement. Agar awaited transportation, trusting the investment had been made and that Fanny would receive her regular income.

Some time later, Agar wrote to Fanny, asking her to

buy two silver cups; one for their son and the other for Pierce's son. Agar told Fanny that Pierce would give her the money for the purchases. At this time Fanny was living with Pierce and his wife. Fanny asked Pierce for the money— he refused. In a rage, Fanny took off and went to the governor of Newgate Prison where Agar had originally been in custody. Fanny had known nothing of the bullion robbery but had suspected something was going-on in the upstairs room where the smelting of the ingots had taken place. Fanny was determined that Pierce should go to gaol as well.

When a solicitor arrived at Agar's place of detention and informed him of what was going on, Agar became furious. Encouraged by the solicitor, Agar confessed to the bullion robbery. Pierce was arrested and a search of his house revealed thousands of pounds stashed in his pantry and buried under his front door-step.

On January 12, 1857, Pierce, Tester and Burgess were arraigned at the Old Bailey and sentenced. Burgess and Tester were sentenced to 14 years transportation and Pierce amazingly, to only two years imprisonment. Pierce had been charged as a servant of the railway company which he was not at the time of the robbery. His solicitor arguing the technicality was able to wangle the lesser sentence for his client. The judge was critical of the situation but was bound by the law as it stood. Amazingly, Agar's money was assigned to Fanny Kay!

Agar served five years of his sentence and subsequently married the wealthy Fanny. It was hard for a "leopard to change his spots" however and Agar lapsed back to his old criminal ways. He was again sentenced to transportation. He died in Australia but apparently remained a legend in the London underworld. Fanny eventually died penniless in a work-house. Pierce's eventual fate is unknown however it is known that he was severely assaulted after he was released from gaol, probably courtesy of an arrangement by Agar. Tester, the former station master eventually made good. After his release from custody in Australia, he set up a grocery business and died a wealthy man. It is believed Burgess died in gaol.

The bullion robbery of 1855 was daring and clever in its execution. It has unfortunately, as previously mentioned, been over-shadowed by the Ronald Biggs affair in 1963. A novel based on the robbery has been written by Michael Crichton and published in 1975. A movie, starring Sean Connery has also been made of the robbery. Both have somewhat embellished the original story.

My thanks to Peter Stock for alerting me to the story in the first instance . The text of this article has been based on the account contained in "The Giant Book of Bad Guys" published by Constable & Robinson Ltd. London 2007. A further article on train and tram robberies in NSW is planned for a future issue.





Making Tracks to the Signal Box

- Another step closer

In the June issue of SS, it was reported that a meeting had taken place with Railcorp officials *apro pos* setting up of a formal agreement for access to the abandoned sidings to the Valley Heights signal box and the old ash disposal roads. At that time it was thought that an agreement could be in place "early in the new financial year". Well, we are almost half way through the new financial year and whilst the wheels of government and their instrumentalities might grind slowly, they are never-the-less grinding.

On Thursday December 6, a meeting was held at Valley Heights to further the agreement process. It was capably chaired by Robert McLellan, Manager (Safety Interfaces) Rail Corp. Interested stake holders including the society, the Valley Heights Museum, RTM (represented by Peter Berriman) and a bevy of Railcorp personnel attended.

A draft Interface Definition document was tendered to the meeting. This was updated and refined to cover the physical and operational aspects of the connection from the Down Refuge line and attendant connections and sidings.

Following this, a risk assessment document was presented and thoroughly worked through. Over three hours solid work was put in on the processing.

The result will be the production of a Safety Interface

Agreement (as required under the Rail Safety Act) between RTM and Railcorp defining responsibilities and access to the depot lines in the leased area. These agreements are required of all "private siding operators". After the agreement is set in place, RTM will be able to seek a licence to use the line down to the signal box. As was previously mentioned, the condition of the line is generally poor and there is a 20m gap in the middle that will need to be relayed with track. Some fencing separating the line from Railcorp's lines will also need to be installed and realignment made of the existing outer boundary fence. Access to portion of the line is urgently needed so as to gain access to our new shed by rail.

It was thought previously that a tripartite agreement involving ourselves, RTM and Railcorp would be the way to go however, this idea appears to have been abandoned. After due process and formal arrangements with RTM, who will be the licence holder, our society will gain access to the track as an accredited operator.

It is all quite complex, far more so than in former times. Never-the-less, this is the way it has to be done and December's meeting was a big step forward.



Small Grant Received

The society recently made application to Museums and Galleries NSW for a grant of \$1,500 to further the development of some displays. These were to include a display featuring the birth and demise of steam trams in NSW and a further one celebrating Stepho's 100th birthday in 2008. We have subsequently received a grant of \$750. Owing to the large number of applicants with high quality applications for grants, Museums and Galleries could reluctantly, only satisfy the

steam tram portion of our application. Even so, the small grant will be a great help in gradually improving the interpretive aspect of our operation. Thank you Museums and Galleries.



The horse-tram on the Isle of Man

- Job opportunity for high-flyer?

A little bit of transport news from the UK was received recently from a visitor to the Isle of Man. The implications of it would certainly give regulators in this country the jitters, however it seems to work on the Isle.

A well-known horse tram operates on the parade in Douglas, the capital of the island. This, together with the electric tramway have been features for many years. Evidently the horse tram at least, still uses a Conductor to walk the footboard to collect fares even though, there is a continuous stream of traffic encountered. The Isle of Man is a self-governing entity within the UK, thus the transport inspectorate of the UK has no jurisdiction there. The operators are free to conduct this style of operation exactly the same as they have done for years. This would just not do in this country where museum operators with footboard conducting operations are looked at very suspiciously by regulators.

A further item the UK visitor reported was regarding "guided buses", though not on the Isle of Man.

Apparently in April 2006, Her Majesty's Railway Inspectorate ceased to be responsible for guided buses, an area that was previously treated as a "railway". It appears the replacement for the inspectorate was absolutely nobody! It is rumoured that they just do their own thing as previously, minus the need for interminable inspections and paperwork. As the visitor said, "If they don't need them, how much does anybody else?!"

SS can't see that guided bus or tram situation lasting for long. There just has to be some unattached civil servant somewhere with a high speed safety background looking for a low-speed railway, tram or bus to wage a paper-war with.



A print of a Manx electric tram, "toast-rack" and no doors. What if??



"Peace of Earth and Goodwill to all Mankind"

Steam Tram & Railway Preservation (Co-Op) Society Ltd.
t/a Valley Heights Steam Tramway
ABN 46 193 707 109
P.O. Box 571, Springwood NSW 2777

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. 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 (until 31-1-2008. Steam tram rides both days.

Last but not least...

A Big Thank You!

Member Darren Stock, recently completed the numbering on trailer car 93B together with repainting an "open" sign for road side usage. Thank you Darren, the car is just that little bit more complete and the gold numbers look splendid.

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Steam Attendants Pass Exam

November 27 was an auspicious occasion. For the first time since we left Parramatta, two candidates for a boiler attendant's certificate passed their oral, written and practical examination at Valley Heights. Congratulations to Ted Dickson and Steve Tolhurst on a great achievement.

The process of gaining a certificate is not as straight forward as it used to be, with private examiners now doing the testing. It has taken the society a considerable amount of time to organize both the tutoring and examining sides

of the steam ticket process.

Further candidates in lots of two will be processed as soon as possible.

Our thanks to David Rothery for carrying out the examinations and to Russell McKenzie for his tutoring.

The provision of additional firemen will take a lot of the load off our existing qualified men.

For Ted and Steve, the next step will be to "driver". This examination will take place probably next March. At this time, the next two candidates for qualification as firemen will also be tested.

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Attention all Rail Safety Workers

By now you should have your latest medical assessment forms. Please note that you should have presented to the medical examiner and have your paper work completed by January 31, 2008



Works Report: 103A: Boiler prepared for inspection. Passed test. Boiler "boxed-up" **Stepho:** Boiler "boxed-up" after boiler inspection. 9 crown stays re-washed. **99DD:** New letter boards, mouldings, shaped and fixed. Further mouldings shaped and undercoated. Bogey timbers routed and component fitting commenced. **93B:** Compartment numbering and external numbers painted. Tail lamp repaired.



NEW MEMBER ROUND-UP!

Our membership generally remains steady at around 60 plus. The foundation of any organization is its membership and growth in membership is a healthy sign that the organization is growing. Its simple but true. We need a constant stream of new members to make up for gradual attrition and to grow the pool of talent and finance. We thank you, our older members for sticking with us through thick and thin. We also thank later members for maintaining their association with us. We hope you all continue to enjoy the heritage journey with us.

The time now is ripe for a further expansion of membership. If each member could introduce another potential member, our membership would double! That's extreme, but it is possible. Would you try and introduce a new member?

An approach to some former members a couple of years ago yielded next to nothing. Now we are asking you, the active membership. Do you know of someone who might like to join us? Remind them of some of the benefits: Free entry to the museum at Valley Heights, free entry to the tram museum at Loftus, free entry to the bus museum at Tempe, financially helping preserve priceless rail transport. They might even like to lend a hand on occasion. If you know of someone, who might just have a flicker of interest, pass on the enclosed membership form. Alternatively, with Christmas just around the corner, you might even like to buy them a membership for Christmas!

Art Collection Getting Closer for Exhibition

With completion of the restoration of the DLI's building, work has been quietly moving along on installing a series of original classic train paintings by noted artists of the genre e.g. Phil Belbin. The paintings formerly belonged to the collection of Museum member Neil Cram. They have been gifted to the museum and number around 20. Together with an attractive display of builders plates and train name boards, the display will be something different.

The building is progressively being air-conditioned and electronically protected to secure the collection. The collection will be available for public viewing in the near future.



That Time of Year Again- (No, not Christmas but the Annual Safety Audit!)

On the 15th November the society underwent its annual safety audit by ITSRR. It really seemed like no time since the previous grueling affair. Steven Ford and Vikram Ahi conducted the audit. Craig Connelly, Peter Stock and yours truly, represented the society. We must say that the conduct of the audit was far more amicable than the one previously conducted which seemed more like a session of the "inquisition". Much of the audit worked around the discharge of outstanding matters. The steady work put in on the development of the Safety Management System and associated documentation largely satisfied the outstanding matters.

The track infrastructure was inspected and a couple of lesser defects and "housekeeping" matters were noted for correction. The formal report had not been received at the time of printing.