



STEAM SCENE

Newsletter of the Steam Tram and Railway Preservation (Co-Op) Society Ltd.
t/a Valley Heights Steam Tramway.
Proudly associated with the Transport Heritage NSW (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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We Celebrate 140 Years of Government Street Transport !

29th September 1879 was an auspicious occasion for Sydney-siders. On that day, a Government steam tram service was inaugurated between the Old Central Station and Hunter Street servicing the monumental International Exhibition in the Domain. It was only supposed to be a temporary line and was to be removed when the exhibition finished however, such was its success, that the public clamoured for more lines. Thus was born the beginning of the Government's street transport system that we know so well today.

We celebrated the centenary in Parramatta Park in 1979 and similarly to the 140th celebration, no Government representative was anywhere near it.

Sunday, 29th September 2019, was a fine day for the event at Valley Heights. It was delightful to see some special guests turn-up. Among them were: **Bruce MacDonald** (he acquired 103A originally), **Don Loughry** and family (Great grandson of Edward Loughry who escorted first motors from USA to Sydney and first drove them) **Susan Templeman** (Federal Member for Macquarie) **Margaret Simpson** (Transport Curator MAAS) and husband. It was disappointing that no one represented the State Government or Transport Heritage NSW.

Chairman Craig gave an address on the introduction of steam trams to Sydney. Don Loughry gave an interesting insight into the significance of his great-grandfather's contribution to that introduction. Bruce MacDonald provided a fascinating account of the saving of motor 103A.

A commemorative cake was cut by member Don Loughry. A small exhibition of artifacts and ephemera was on display.

A commemorative trip on the tram was also taken by invited guests.

Although not as large or as representative as we would have liked it, in all it was a very pleasant gathering and those attending, obviously enjoyed it.

Perhaps the 150th anniversary will attract more attention but probably some of the older hands of the society (including moi) will be past celebrating.

Many thanks to all those who helped set-up the event and carried it to success.

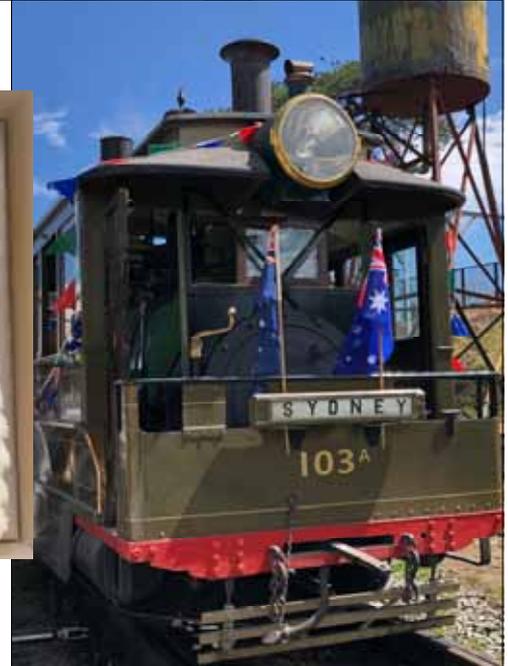
(Rt) Bruce MacDonald stands alongside Peter Butler's "A" model Ford. Bruce saved the motor from extinction and is now in his nineties.



(Above) Invited guests and the public listen to Chairman Craig's address.



(Above) The commemorative cake, (Rt) 103A decked out to celebrate.





STEAM SCENE



(Above Lt) Susan Templeman MHR, and Chairman Craig. (Above Rt) Don Loughry cuts the commemorative cake, (Rt) One of the regulars at Valley Heights. (Left) Our Secretary and Chairman in period dress. (Below Left) Barry Wilde (Mayor of Parramatta) cuts the commemorative ribbon at our celebrations in 1979. A more hirsute Chairman (now Treasurer) stands on the motor's footplate. (Below right) Some idea of the numbers attending the centenary at Parramatta Park in 1979 can be gauged by this pic. The tram has a crush load on board.



(Photos, with the exception of those below, are by Peter Butler, Susan Templeman and Andrew Tester. The society thanks them for their permission to use.)



(Further pics on page 6)



PETER! WHAT'S WRONG WITH GIRLS AND CARS?

Unreliable memoirs from 60 years ago (Part 2)



Considering their verdict:

After the initial introduction Bob took me to the tramway many times where I enjoyed being accepted as part of this great adventure. After time a verbal invitation was extended suggesting I consider writing an application for consideration to be granted probationary membership. The formulae for the invite included attending a certain number of working days and being present at members' meetings should I be invited.

After an unspecified time and only when the probationer conformed to those vague membership rules it was deemed suitable to extend a formal invite to apply for full membership. Then I was required to be present at a specified members' meeting. The next step entailed standing before members assembled and publicly declare one's interest and sympathy in the aims of the society. Once that declaration was delivered, the applicant then waited outside while the members considered their verdict. Some applications apparently went on to be decided by a postal vote, but my oration of declaration must have satisfied those present and was accepted on the spot, the date being 23rd March, 1960. I was in. However when later relating to a neighbour about my new status he quipped 'Peter, I am pleased for you, good on you . . . but what's wrong with girls and cars?'

Generally having a good time . . .

Several senior members owned a car. Not many had one but being from memory a Morris Oxford, Standard Vanguard (with sleeve cylinder liners!), a Hillman Hunter station wagon and other marques would be seen. On a few occasions a straight-eight Packard graced the scene. Those without private conveyance would either hitch a ride or travel to Westmead station and walk from there over the park.

Just what a variety of building materials and locomotive parts these cars carried to the site. Some days it was like a Nock and Kirby's market day! Bagged coke for the fireboxes was often transported from the Mortlake Gas Works whilst a continuous arrival of posts and panels from rotted paling fences to burn comes to mind. The most memorable was a job lot of bankrupt stock of chocolate and cream gloss enamel in what seemed to be hundreds of rusty quarter-pint tins for eventual use on the tramcar.

After gaining my drivers licence I had access to a 1956 series 2 Morris Minor. So Bob and I were then able to pool transport for the trip, still calling in to pick up Mal if need be and occasionally his mate Frank. But when a number of the young ones were there with their cars naturally the talk would get around to trumpeting who had the better vehicle. A test for this evolved using the unpaved pathway from the lower road up to what was not far from the end of the ever-expanding tramline along the upper level of the park. But much to the alarm of our elders and the vexation of park users trying to enjoy a quiet walk down this path it was amazing how fast these internal combustion rattletraps could be made to climb the short course, forwards and reverse!

Out and about . . .

To be fully accepted and settled within the group took time. Other preservation societies were beginning to emerge and physically preserve railway and electric tramway relics and were a fleeting temptation to join. Those interested in electric trams had one or two examples but with nowhere to house them. Another embryo group began to make noises to preserve and run locomotives on the Camden line. Years later I found in society minutes that Parramatta

and the electric devotees did engage in periodic dialogue and correspondence aimed to somehow combine their locations and collections. These initiatives always fizzled out. More is the pity, probably on the basis of misguided, mutual suspicions of each other, all scrambling to claim ownership of the fast disappearing tram and train equipment!



(Above) The luxury of a front end loader opening up the ground for a track extension.



Back to those early workdays at Parramatta. I can recall the young ones, me included, were not adverse to giving a bit of lip to our elders. We could rely on Mal, the two Franks, Lew, Bud, Ken or the Reverend when he was there to make representations on our behalf and smooth the feathers of the insulted elder. I recall two, amongst many other earthy descriptions from the aggrieved, as being insulted by these pimply-faced youths as "bush lawyers" or those being described as "being born out of wedlock".

(Above) The motor has just crept out of the shed. Somewhere beneath the grass lies the track. An assortment of makes and models makes up members' cars at the perimeter.



Steam Scene

Recalling those working days. Circumstances re the isolation of the project required members and others to bring by their car or even by public transport their own hand tools, paint brushes, etc. The emphasis was on hand tools as the tram shed was devoid of a connection to the electricity supply. Therefore any work which could have been made easier with mechanical help had to be undertaken by what was referred to by Len as "the Armstrong method".

Some uprights of the shed had been used for the initial uprights and were purloined from an SV flat wagon which had been slowly dismantled on the spot. The flooring by then had been sold to someone in need of such historical material. Boring holes with an ancient brace and (blunt) bit for hinges was precarious. The only ladder available was a 6' wooden one with round rungs that rotated when being stood on. Boring holes in the uprights was to extend the tram shed.

Laying that early track.

Track construction was done by the pick and shovel method. The soil in the park was either rock hard in summer or sloppy during winter. And to make matters worse mostly comprised of not grass but clumps of the local Parramatta nut grass and/or paspalum clumps. Sleepers were hand-me-down or second-hand ones scrounged or begged from private sources. The treasurer was conned from time to time into releasing a bit of lucre to negotiate the occasional purchases from the tramway authorities at Randwick second-hand sleepers, fish-plates and bolts with a few dog spikes thrown in. And on one conspicuous occasion a back hoe was engaged from a tame contractor to excavate a length of ground. That luxury it was partly financed by an excavations deep into members' pockets if the treasurer could catch them.

In those far off days the Park Trust decreed that the rails will be set into the ground with the running head level with the surrounding grass. Therefore the sleepers had to be buried deep enough for the rail to achieve that standard. This method was a contributing factor to assist termites and rot to reduce sleeper life as was the very limited use of gravel or ashes for ballast.

Drilling holes for the dog spikes into these pre-loved sleepers was the domain of the younger set. The hand contraption supplied certainly challenged the muscles! And the rails always had a different web profiles, if indeed the web was still intact. This deficiency often brought on the horrors when trying to connect these rails together.

Eventually this was overcome by simply using a technique exclusive to Parramatta Park, creating fishplates using oxy to re-configured heavy gate hinge leaves.

At the lunch break . . .

At lunchtime those still wet behind the ears would spread out on the grass at the feet of the elders to listen to and absorb their tales of railway experiences working on trains or the steam trams. But looking back on these weekend lunch breaks there was a danger. The resident Park Ranger Mr Simms let his friendly, untethered equines wander about in the surrounding parkland to poke around and make friends with every picnic party. These friendly creatures would hone into and devour any unsupervised lunches given the chance.

On several occasions one of the more adventurous nags would nuzzle into the trammies food bag to scavenge for an apple or two. But once it became a bit hairy when the lead animal ate a complete lunch, plastic bag and all. At that time these plastic bags were few and far between and being a new innovation, were much thicker than now. It was alarming to hear the horse trying to cough up the bag caught in the throat. But a quick sprint to the rangers house behind the tram shed brought out Mr. S carrying a small stool. Being a short man, he needed to ascend the stool so as to put his arm down the nag's throat and haul out the offending bag. In retrospect probably not the first occurrence. That was one such bag that couldn't be returned to home for re-use, the excuse given being a nag ate the bag!

More horse dramas concerned member Ken. He took on the task of beautifying a paling fence west of the tram shed. Every attendance Ken would physically lug a large quantity of flowering plants over the park from Westmead.

station to plant them alongside the fence. There was plenty of manure available either in the horse yard or just nearby in heaps around the tramway. Sad to relate these plants had a limited life . . . the horses who supplied the fertiliser scoffed the lot! This showed Ken's dedication as one of the early members as he seemed to do this activity day after day.

Ken it seemed had some sort of effect on the horses. This story, believe it or not, was related to me by those who were there. Ken sported a top quality genuine panama hat said to have been purchased from David Jones. With the initial appearance of the celebrated hat, the original working drawing of the tram shed had been affixed on the paling fence with drawing pins to assist those engaged with the shed construction as reference. Ken made a fatal error by hanging the hat, with his coat, over one of the fence posts which were higher than the surrounding palings so to clear a string of barbed wire. A horse watched and waited for the flowers to be planted, then when the coast was clear, wandered over to devour them. (Cont. on page 6)



(Above) An early scene at Parramatta Park with Jack Midgeley perched in the motor's window sill.



(Above) Oops! What happened here? Something has collided with the shed door.. Not to worry—it will be fixed before the day is out.



STEAM TRAMS AND PAKAPU TICKETS

It's a term that the usage of which, like a lot of our old vernacular sayings, is in decline. Back in my school days, it was frequently used by school teachers to describe the work of some hapless pupil, that was messy and probably contained ink blots to boot. None of us knew what a pakapu ticket looked like and such was the antiquity of the term, probably the teacher didn't either. Ian Heather of STM has put together this interesting story of the legendary pakapu ticket.

On 30th October, 1997, at the Museum of Sydney, I attended the launch of David Burke's book *Juggernaut"- A Story of Sydney in the Wild Days of the Steam Trams.*

Included in the book is reference to the sale on the Botany steam trams of "pakapu" tickets by the Chinese market gardeners. The Botany Chinese market gardens, or the remnants thereof, have lately been the discussion of preservation orders.

The term "pakapu ticket" rung a distinct bell (no pun intended) for from my childhood, I recall it being applied to something written in an extremely messy and illegible manner; i. e. "that looks like a pakapu ticket".

With a connection between that expression and the Chinese market gardeners thus established, my curiosity led me to the State Library of NSW to find out if an expression which has so long been part of the Australian vernacular had an oriental origin.

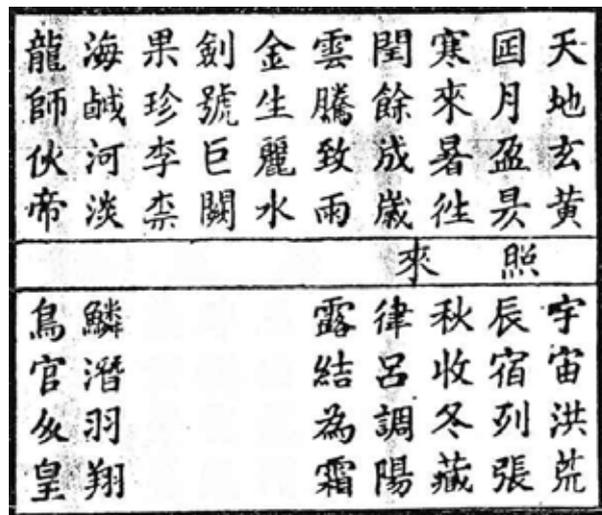
Consequently, inserted between pages 130 and 131 of my copy of David Burke's book, is my State Library request number 012, NOV25 '97, Title of Item, "Korean Games : with notes on the corresponding games..." For the record, the location number is S791.9519/IA. The ancient book, dating back to the 1/h century, was sealed in plastic, and, on page 152, BINGO!!! (again, no pun intended). An illustration of what David refers to as a PAKAPU ticket. FIG. 134 - TICKET FOR PAK KOP PIU LOTTERY. KWANTUNG, CHINA, AND CHINESE IN THE UNITED STATES. The tickets were square and covered with Chinese numerals in columns from top to bottom, and the origin of our term for messy penmanship obvious.

The game, which was obviously taken to foreign shores by the Chinese immigrants, was a game of bingo, lotto, or whatever, wherein tickets of numbers were sold, sometimes even to unsuspecting steam from passengers. Much to the obvious chagrin of the

passenger tram conductor and, inevitably, the revenue clerk at the depot.

The book in the library, which is of American origin, describes the game and gives the English translation of its name as "Quick Way to Get Rich" !

Ian Heather



Arson Attack at Canberra Museum

Once again, a rail heritage museum has been the object of an arson attack. This time it has been the Canberra Railway Museum. During the early hours of Sunday, 6th October 2019, a privately owned carriage (pictured) was destroyed and two other vehicles damaged. The attack was no doubt committed to blight the Museum's first day back in business - opening to the public, later that day. With grit and determination, Museum members pressed on and indeed, did open.

One cannot wonder at the distorted mental processes that go on in people that commit offences like arson. The hurt that they cause to volunteers must surely give them some weird satisfaction. With the Parramatta Park fire case "still open" and probably most other museum fires likewise, one day, a word or action will be noticed that will join the dots to a perpetrator or perpetrators. Let us hope that no other Museum has to suffer the hurt of fire before the perpetrator's lapse is noticed. Our sincere sympathy to the Canberra Museum and to the owner of the carriage involved.





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The museum is located in Tusculum Road, Valley Heights. Ample parking is available. A train service is available to Valley Heights station. Turn right over traffic bridge and right to the Signal Box gate. Tram arrives regularly from approx. 10.50 a.m. Do not attempt to short-cut across the tracks.

The museum is open
between 10 and 4 on the
2nd and 4th Sundays of
the month. Steam
operations on both days.



Works Report: 72B: All side panels now installed and painted. **103A:** Brake diaphragm renewed: **DD99:** Further painting. **93B :** Two brake blocks replaced. **1022:** Wheels moved into place under frame. Bearing shims made in-house.



(Left) the tram is ready to go with another full load.. (Below) Two vintage buses including STM's half-cab, gave patrons rides circuiting the west of the Park. Unfortunately, the half-cab wasn't available for our 2019 event.



Last but not least.....



Pause to remember the life and work for the society of the late Life Member and former Director,

Ronald Herbert Mills

Obit. 20-9-2013

and long time member,

Barry Kenneth Gerdes

Obit. 7-10-2014



OTHER NEWS

Fire protection

As we all know, because of the nature of the business, including open-storage, rail heritage museums are particularly vulnerable to fire and not least arson. Transport Heritage NSW has recently funded the installation of a modern fire-hydrant system at the Museum. Hydrants and firehoses have been strategically placed at the Museum, giving much needed accessibility to emergency water services. Well done Transport NSW.

ooo0ooo

Building Security

Also recently installed, has been a back-to-base security system to the tram shed. This means that most of the Museum where exhibits are stored and business conducted, is now covered by this system. It cost the Society over \$3,000 to install but one break-in can cause infinitely more expense than this in theft and damage to priceless heritage items.

(Cont. from page 4) Not content with that culinary offering, took the hat off the fence post and bit chunks out of the crown. By this time these foul deeds had been detected and before the offending animal had been shooed away it took to the drawing on the fence and tore it off the fence and, as the story went, ate it in its entirety.

South of the shed across the parklands was the western line guaranteeing a constant procession of trains. One fascinating ritual only on a workday Saturday lunch break was the passage of a steam train hauling a rake of Waddington-built cars. Those who could, would jump up and shout out “Waddingtons”, the lame remaining seated or sprawled out. On my first day this ritual was a complete puzzle but on my second visit I jumped up and joined in this fun too. Even if everyone present was still working in the tram shed this pantomime was always observed. I later found out that Bruce had or was employed by the builders of those carriages, hence the ritual. (To be continued)

**HOT WEATHER
AND FATIGUE
REMINDER.**



A gentle reminder to RSW's now we are approaching the warmer weather.

**Keep your fluids up and
drink plenty of water
during the day.**

Remember there is the refrigerated water fountain within the roundhouse for drinking purposes and also to refill any personal container.

And don't forget the availability of assorted cold cans for sale in the lunch room refrigerator.