



STEAM SCENE

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

"Preserving the past,
enriching the future."

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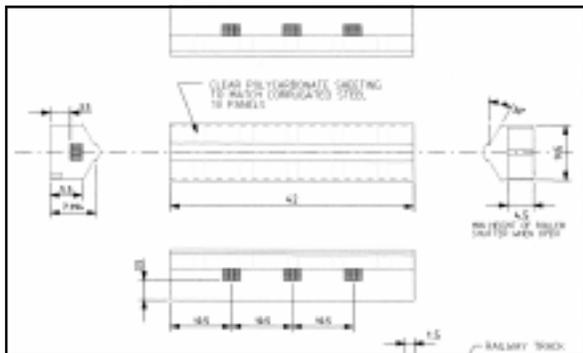
New depot shed contract let

It has been a long time in coming to fruition but at last, the new shed for our rolling stock will shortly become a reality.

A contract has been let to Byrnes Steel Fabrication for the construction of a two-road shed on the ash roads at Valley Heights. The cost will be about \$100,000 plus GST. I say "about" because the builder has consented to us making some purchases to our cost advantage. The building will not be an architectural icon but it will be sympathetic in design to the rest of the depot. e.g. it will have a clerestory roof and quasi small-paned windows. Cladding will be corrugated heavy-gauge metal sheeting. Two roller-shutters will grace the front and two service doors will be located at the back and side. The length of the building will be 42 metres. A feature will be the installation of a large water storage tank. Signs of the times!

have to trim the budget to enable some savings. This will enable provision of power and a n extension of the present museum security system.

Our old mate Cliff Currell, would have been pleased



The above gives some idea of the new shed. Since this drawing was made, some alterations have been made e.g. the windows have been raised.

Since the original funding announcement, building costs have risen considerably with the result that we



School's in!! (for trainee firemen)

An intensive theory and hands-on boiler attendants course will be conducted at the depot by our boiler inspector Russell McKenzie, on Sat 18th June. There are seven participants, Steve Lanyon, Col Burne, Bruce Coxon, Ted Dickson, Steve Tolhurst, Peter Stock and Dave Hunt.

Most participants have had practical experience on "Stepho". The course will prepare them for a limited application fireman's ticket at a later date. The course will address a shortage of qualified fireman and provide a base from which to draw local drivers at a later date. A driver's course has yet to be set up.

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Special points of interest:

- 150th railway centenary celebrations at Valley Heights between 19-9-2005 to 7-10-2005. More detail next issue.
- "The Saturday Afternoon Excursionist" book recording our early touring history, hasn't been forgotten. A better production is being sourced.



Further fall-out from Waterfall

National implications and more homework for operators.

On March15, Secretary Peter Stock and Treasurer, Bruce Irwin, attended a seminar conducted by the Regulator at the old Mint Building, Sydney.

This was conducted to alert operators about flow-on as a result of the Waterfall inquiry report and the adoption by

government of most of its recommendations. The seminar covered:

- Regulatory framework
- Operator implications
- Implications for ITSRR/OTSI
- Implementation process.

Within each of these categories was a string of issues including emergency response, safety issues, rolling stock design and much more.

As with most of these seminars, one had to work constantly at paring down the information overload to suit our particular situation. e.g. egress from trains in a crash situation. A big issue and rightly so, but for heritage operators such as us with a "toast rack" tram car, not particularly so.

Never-the-less, there will be matters that will have an impact on us, in particular, the relevance and effectiveness of our Safety Management Systems and the monitoring of effective training of RSW's.

As previously, once we have had time to absorb what is relevant to our situation and with some wise counseling from underlings within ITSRR, we are confident we will come through it all.

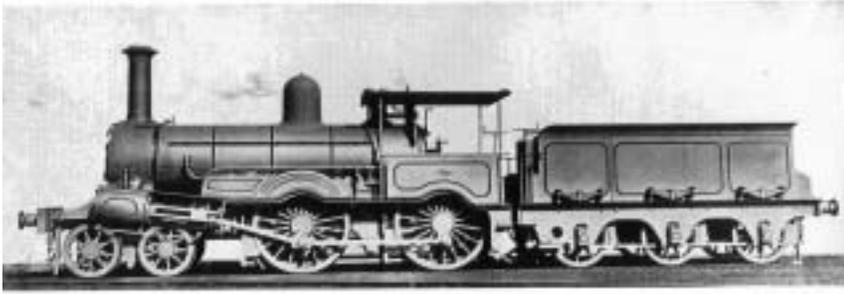
The Peat's Ferry disaster

Last issue in part featured, the story of Thomas Wilson whose memorial stands in Rookwood cemetery. Wilson was the driver of a runaway train that careered down Cowan bank on 21-6-1887. Little was it realized at the time of writing the article for Steam Scene, that member Kevin Loughry's grandfather Edward Loughry (see SS v1 No.4) was involved in the aftermath of the accident. Kevin has forwarded further detail of the accident and interesting reference to his grandfather's involvement.

In 1887, construction of the Hawkesbury River bridge had begun. The new southern section of rail line, known as the "Homebush to Waratah Railway", had recently been completed.

To make this new line pay and to help win public support for the huge expenditure involved, the railway authorities commenced running excursion trains to Peat's Ferry. A coastal steamer was boarded there for the return back to Sydney.

The 21st June 1887 had been declared a public holiday to celebrate the 50th year of Queen Victoria's accession to the throne.



Locomotive No.178. Similar type to that which went out of control down Cowan bank.

Crowds turned out to Redfern station to join one of three excursion trains bound for a day's outing to Peat's Ferry.

The third of these excursion trains left Redfern at 10.27 a.m. The train consisted of locomotive No.178, two imported American carriages with two locally built "Redfern" cars together with five old style four-wheelers. The train carried about 400 passengers. All were eager for what was thought was going to be a splendid day-out.

The crew of the train were driver Thomas Wilson, fireman John Pye and guard, Alfred Clissold. The driver and fireman had only travelled over this new line once each. The guard had never travelled on the new line beyond Ryde.

After crossing the Parramatta River and commencing the climb North, the engine was finding the going very heavy. Driver Wilson decided to divide the load at Beecroft. Two carriages were left at this point and the balance of the train continued to Hornsby. Depositing this portion of the train there, Wilson returned to Beecroft to pick up the remaining two carriages.

When the train finally left Hornsby, they were running 2½ hours late. About an hour after leaving Hornsby, the excursion train commenced its descent down the 1 in 40 grade of Cowan Bank. Through deep rock cuttings and four tunnels, it was about 5 miles to Peat's Ferry. At the first tunnel,

driver Wilson applied the air brakes. They responded well. When the train approached the second tunnel, the train's speed suddenly increased. Wilson applied the air brake this time, with no response. Fireman Pye quickly realized the train had become a runaway. He applied the tender's hand-brake the only result being, showers of sparks from the tender's wheels.

At this stage, the passengers were blissfully unaware of the impending danger.

As the runaway approached the third tunnel, Wilson would attempt the dangerous emergency procedure of putting his locomotive into reverse. This attempt failed. It was estimated the train at this stage was travelling between 50 and 60 mph (80—kph). It was beyond belief how this speeding train cleared the last tunnel.

At Peat's Ferry station, the station master was anxiously awaiting the arrival of the late-running third excursion train. In the mean time, the first and second excursion trains were ready for departure back to Sydney. It was only when the people on the station heard the warning blasts of the whistle of the third train, they realized something was wrong. When the hurtling train came into view, the horrified spectators could see the carriages lurching violently as it speed past the platform, sparks flying in all directions. The passengers were screaming hysterically. In a matter of seconds, the locomotive had plowed through the buffers and plunged into the river. Its wrecked carriages were in a tangled heap. Screams and groans came pitifully from trapped and injured occupants.

Railway personnel and construction workers from the bridge rushed to accident scene with crow-bars and axes to rescue the trapped passengers from the mangled wreckage.

Resulting from this disaster, six people lost their lives including the engine driver, Wilson. Seventy passengers suffered serious injuries. The fireman, John Pye, was severely scalded by escaping steam.

The Department of Railways immediately set up a board of inquiry into the disaster. There was also a Coroner's inquest into the loss of life. The findings of both inquiries were released on the same day, the 15th June 1887, 24 days after the accident.

The railway inquiry placed the blame of driver Wilson for not keeping a check on his brake pressure and allowing the air brake reservoir on his engine to become exhausted.

(Continued on Page 6.)

Gunpowder, cordite and tram tracks.

Toward the upper reaches of the Parramatta River in Sydney lies "RANAD" or the Newington Armaments Depot. It has a fascinating history and within its boundaries, contains a unique narrow gauge tramway. Despite a "motsa" of money being spent on the facility in recent times, it is not well known of and is infrequently visited by the public for various reasons. The following is a "potted" history.

Though the immediate site of the Sydney Olympic Games is familiar to most of us, the parklands which border the site are not quite so well known. A major legacy of the games are the Sydney Olympic Parklands. Larger than New York's famed Central Park or Hyde Park in London, this major Sydney open space may not be quite so well known or appreciated by Sydney-siders as the former. 432 hectares constitute the parklands and they are made up of a fascinating variety of flora, fauna and not least, history.

The history of the site is most interesting. White occupation commenced around 1807 when John Blaxland was granted some 1290 acres. He subsequently acquired further acreage. The site saw subsequent agrarian use but was eventually subdivided and thereafter saw a variety of uses and occupiers.

Our particular interest lies in the portion known as the Royal Australian Navy Armaments Depot (RANAD). Many will have seen this site when passing by on a ferry journey. Many more will have known of its existence from times past. But what lies behind its restricted boundary will be a mystery to most. A wealth of defence history, buildings and supportive infrastructure makes for an intriguing visit. Firstly let us examine a potted history of the establishment as an armaments depot.

In 1880, the government of the day acquired portion of the Newington estate for military purposes. Goat Island was already designated a powder magazine reserve. This was NSW's first magazine. Although the Newington site was considered as a magazine as early as 1870, Spectacle Island became the 2nd magazine instead.

In 1882, 248 acres were formally set aside for the Army and a depot set up.

In 1909, the first section of the 2ft.gauge tramway was laid. The tramway was laid in to provide safe transit of various explosive materials in particular, to the various bunkers and depots around the site. One can readily appreciate the delicate nature of any movement considering the extremely volatile nature of the substances handled. Over the years the line was progressively extended as required. Hand propelled trucks were the earliest form of transport for explosives and materials. Some of these still survive. They are a wooden framed wagons about 5ft long by 3ft wide. They are equipped with wooden dumb buffers and each wheel has six spokes.

The building where these wagons are presently also possesses a turntable (s?) They have "wooden construction with brass rails; 3 parallel tracks of brass flat strip fixed to hardwood, 2" wide by 2½" deep." The building also has a 508kg capacity traveling crane which utilizes 20lb rail for its travel.

A builder's plate fitted to a steel sleeper near building 20 is etched, "J. Toole and Co. Engineers and Machinery Merchants, Sydney". On the trackwork around the establishments, various point turnouts measure 1 in 3 or 1

in 4 with 4ft blades. Gauge of the track varied between 600 and 610mm (615mm on sharp bends). All track has 30lb rail. Some sidings and loops are fitted with 1 in 2 points with 2'6" blades.

In 1921, the base was handed over to the Navy and as the magazine became a fully fledged armaments depot, further extensions to the tramway took place. Carnarvon golf course was compulsorily acquired to become the southern end of RANAD. During 1895, the first wharf was built from the site into Parramatta River. It was repaired in 1924 and extended in 1940 during WW2. The first cranes appeared on the wharf in 1929 but replaced in 1962. A traveling crane from Garden Island was installed on the wharf for WW2 activities but was removed in 1989-90. The present cranes date from 1974.

When the tramway was first extended, it went eastward into the area between the woodlands and wetlands (Explosives Store B39). In the late 1930's extensions to the tramway were again added to reach HMAS Albatross bomb store (B 33). Subsequent extensions covered explosives stores 42-45, No.31 isolated in the woodlands, (Continued on Page 4.)



General view (2000) of central area of RANAD prior to clean-up.



Photo depicting building No. 20. It was built in 1897, The 4-wheeled flat wagons normally reside within.



Two electric locomotives stand outside storage facility No.42, prior to a track rebuild.



A Wingrove & Rogers B.E. loco with bogie flat wagons near building 30 (11-2-2004) All track has either been rebuilt or replaced. Naval Dept. maintenance was minimal. This section was new track (2004) to fill a gap.



First prepared train to carry passengers over new track formation. (30-9-2004)



A Gemco loco and trailers stand outside a workshop/depot (building No.30) on 30-9-2004.

46-49 at the eastern end of the site and finally, to explosives store B 18.

The present total length of the tramway (including some abandonments) is 6.1km.

Several 2ft. gauge battery-electric locomotives appeared in 1940, 1942 and 1948.

The depot reached its peak of operation during WW2, the Korean and Vietnam

wars. During these times, the area accommodated 185 buildings, the tramway and wharfage facilities. These supplied ammunition to Australian, U.S. and U.K. navies operating in the Pacific.

Some work on restoring the facility began in 1998 prior to the Navy moving out. The majority of the

work was put in place after the Sydney Olympics finished and conducted under the Burra Charter principles.

The original tramway did not lend itself to practical public operation. This led to additional track being laid in to make a circuit. Trackwork finished in early 2004.

It is unfortunate that after so much money was spent on restoring the site, buildings and the tramway, public opening has to date, been a rather desultory affair. Late information indicates however, that from May 8th, the facility will be open to the public each Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4.p.m. There will not be any tram rides. You are recommended to check with the Olympic Park authorities before venturing re parking and "just in case".

It is to be hoped that the administering authorities resolve whatever issues are outstanding and make this wonderfully unique facility fully available to the public at an early date.

(Sincere thanks to Len King for so generously supplying his notes and photographs to form the basis of this article. Editor -BSI)



Getting the low-down on getting our share

On Monday March 21, Chairman Craig Connelly, Secretary Peter Stock and Treasurer Bruce Irwin, went to Tocal House, Patterson, to attend a day seminar sponsored by Museums and Galleries NSW. The seminar was entitled "Access to Funding". Its aim was to give attendees insight into where and what funding was available to museums and galleries and to give advice on how to get it. Some interesting speakers addressed the gathering including three enlightening us with case histories from their own experience. A workshop concluded the seminar in which groups worked through a sample grant applications. Key strategies were identified relating to

their successful completion. Unfortunately there was insufficient time for this segment to be completed.

In all, it was an interesting day in the delightful surroundings of the historic Tocal House. As a result we intend to debrief in committee and work towards applying for funding in some areas we have not been too concerned with previously, e.g. display.

In general though, we learnt a lot about what and what not to do with funding applications.

I'll show you mine, if you show me yours... New mutual visiting arrangement with SPER

For many years we had with SPER (Sydney Tramway Museum) , a reciprocal visiting arrangement. Members from either group could visit the others' establishment and ride on one another's trams on a complimentary basis.

With our departure from Parramatta Park and relocation to Valley heights, this arrangement has gone a little askew.

With our society now operating in conjunction with VHLDHM, the arrangements was in need of updating to reflect our new situation.

It has now been agreed by the board of SPER that the previous arrangement will be now extended to include members of the Blue Mountains Division of the RTM.

This in effect means complimentary admission and rides are available to members of STARPS and VHLDHM to the Sydney Tramway Museum.

Likewise members of SPER will receive complimentary admission and rides as available at Valley

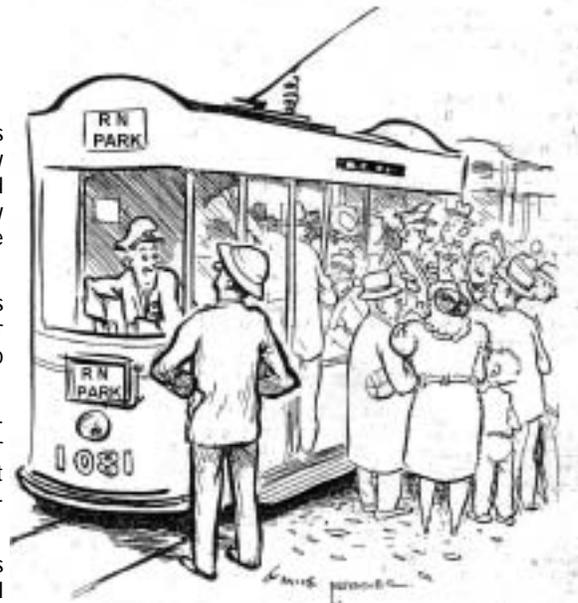
Heights.

It is stressed that this arrangement is only available to STARPS and VHLDHM. Ordinary membership of the RTM is NOT included.

On visiting,, members should present their current membership card for admission.

This concession is available only to the member concerned and does not extend to any accompanying party.

We hope members enjoy this additional benefit of belonging.



Ahh, don't worry about 'em Vic
When they're all on they'll help hold the old girl together!

Scenes from around the work-front.

A series of scenes taken around the depot over the last few months. They emphasize the diversity of tasks undertaken. Thanks to Ross and Carol Stenning for their candid photography and use of the prints



"In the footsteps of the father." Steve Tolhurst lubes-up a pin under Stepho. Son Luke is generally assisting. He is not afraid to get his hands dirty.



Reconditioned bogey ready for placement under 93b. New gunmetal axle box flaps and white walls complete the job. Craig tells us the original American steam tramcars were imported with white walls ??



Completed bogies about to be placed under 93b.



Some track maintenance underway as an empty "coalie" works on the "down".



Craig Connelly and John Webb ponder whether they have done it right. Actually they are demolishing 44b's frame.



Enamel is gradually enveloping 93b.

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enriching the future."

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

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

Last but not least.....

Some Valuable Gifts from an Old Friend

Chairman and Works Manager, Craig Connelly, visited Life Member, Ron Mills in early March 2005.

As some of you will know, Ron retired from the Railways having attained the position of Locomotive Superintendent. Ron was a director in the society for a period but apart from these services, his advice and guidance in regards to locomotive maintenance has been and still is, invaluable.

Ron has decided to deaccess some of his treasures with the society as the recipient.

Included amongst the items given to use are:

- Tyre profile pantograph
- 8ft. ground straightedge

- Levelling equipment for cylinder / frame aligning.
- Various books on air brakes and loco maintenance
- Diesel inspection schedules
- Boiler maintenance schedule.
- GM and ALCO manuals and much more.

In all, there is some quite valuable and rare material given to us. Whilst some of it does not relate to our type of operation e.g. diesel loco maintenance, we are quite happy to provide copies to those that are involved with this type of work.

Thank you Ron.



Hard yakka report

A total of 818¾hrs were worked during the January-March quarter 2005. Figures in brackets indicate hours spent on a particular activity. **103A:** (65hrs) Safety-ploughs fitted with drop-distance chains. Clerestory ends beaded. Firebox-end sand pipes fitted. Coal bunker progressing. **93B:** (189¾hrs) New gunmetal axle box flaps bored and hinged to axle boxes; fitted with spring-lifts. Bogey overhaul completed including painting. After some intensive machining to one set of king and queen castings (Steve Tolhurst), bogies are now in situ. End apron riveting finished. Painting continues. **1022:** (15hrs) Ralph Boesel has done some valuable work machining horn slides and axle boxes. **CBI 1073** (50½hrs) Painting recommenced. **44B:** (18½hrs) Final scrapping. **Other rolling stock:** (4hrs) "S" truck: Old timber flooring removed. (Thanks to Joe and James Guilfoyle) **Operations:** (182½hrs) **Admin & other activities:** (293½hrs) Clearing scrap timber, new shed site.

(Continued from page 3.)

The Coroner's finding found driver Wilson was not at fault. He considered the locomotive was not powerful enough to haul such a load and that railway supervision of safety was lax.

During the Coroner's inquest there were accusations made that the air-braking system had failed due to the possibility of the incorrect coupling of the pressure hoses between carriages or alternatively, that portion of the train had not been connected to the braking system.

Because of these accusations, the Railway Department decided to demonstrate to the Coroner and board of inquiry that the braking system was not at fault.

A train was prepared with the same type of locomotive and a number of goods wagons loaded with railway sleepers, similar to the calculated weight of the excursion train. Half of this demonstration train was deliberately left without air brakes. Edward Loughry, a traveling inspector with the Railways at this time, drove this train successfully down the Cowan Bank and showed that if the air brake system is correctly managed, no problem would arise.

With the results of these two conflicting findings, the media had a field day.

The New South Wales Premier, Sir Henry Parkes, promised to refer the whole of the evidence to a leading barrister for his opinion. Nothing ever came of the promise.

It was a far cry from the Waterfall Inquiry where every detail of every possible factor was examined in minutest detail.

Another Big Thank You

This time to Cliff Currell's son Grant. Grant has worked an oracle and supplied us with a coal bunker for the motor under the patent design of Connelly and Lewis. Thank you Grant. It is only through the help of people like yourself, that we are able to achieve so much with so little.

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Boring Machine Purchase

Thanks to the alertness of Steve Tolhurst, a successful tender was placed with Sydney University for the acquisition of a Kearns horizontal boring machine. This 1959 model machine (in excellent condition) will give us the capacity to bore such items as axle bearings and the like. The machine was brought up to the Valley on Monday evening 19th March. Our joint workshop sees

us with the capacity to do most of our scale of machining jobs without having to resort to outside providers. Thanks for the short term finance Steve and all who helped install the machine.

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Quotable Quotes for Museums

"It isn't the whistle that pulls the train"

"Rules and regulations were made for the guidance of wise men and the obedience of fools."

Vale

We regret to advise that the father of long time member Paul Kwiatkowski, passed away on March 13, 2005. The Kwiatkowski's made their home available for some early AGM's. Our sincere condolences to Paul and his family.