



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."

Volume 2 Issue 4

August 2005

Tin hares to the seaside; report on our Kiama excursion.

Sunday 29th May, was weather-wise, virtually a mirror image of our rail motor excursion last year. Crisp, clear and fine was the order of the day.

The "tin hares" from Patterson arrived at Valley Heights on Saturday afternoon and spent the night in the depot compound.

The "Tin Hares to the Seaside" excursion set out from the Valley Heights depot around 7.00. a.m. and made quick time to Westmead. Here, a further body of passengers was picked up. Off we went via the "Y" link to Moss Vale arriving there close to time. A quick ten minute stretch of the legs (I think most folks welcomed this) and a few "picias" then we were off to Robertson like a scalded cat. Unfortunately we were not able to stop at Summit Tank. This was disappointing. Never-the-less everyone enjoyed the view (as best they could see it) as we descended the escarpment. Reversing at Unanderra, we made our way along the coast line. At Shellharbour we were held in check waiting for a "local" to cross. Arrival in Kiama was close to time.

Some folk raided the local fish and chipery whilst others took their picnic lunch to a delightful park adjacent to the harbour. It was pleasant to lounge around in the sunshine and indeed, departure time came all too soon at 13.35.

It was delightful traveling along the coast line in the afternoon light with the CPH's making a spirited

performance. With the Westmead contingent being farewelled at their stop, our sprightly veterans made their way to the lower Blue Mountains. Close to 17.20 our little consist wound its way into Valley



**Our rail motor excursion photographed at
Heathcote by one of the Miller family.**

Heights depot. In short, it was a great day out. The rail motors performed faultlessly and as we have come to expect from the Rail Motor Society, professional execution of task and on-time running was the hallmark.

And where shall we go next? Thought was, out towards Cowra.

It's "all stops out" for the tram!

Can we make it for September?

With the planned local celebrations for the railways' sesquicentenary at Valley Heights it would be great if the tram could be made ready to coincide. An added incentive is a planned visit by the Parramatta Trust. It would be nice to show the folk of Parramatta what we have achieved since we left our old site basically, because of a lack of civic support.

Having set the target what remains to be done? The motor requires installation of the aprons, steam generator, bunker, head lights, side flaps, clerestory replaced etc. etc. Some of these are not huge jobs but are time consuming. Painting of the aprons and cab remains to be concluded. It appears the steam generator wont be re-wired in time for September.

This is not critical to operations. To top all off, the safety-valves have to be re-set and a ticket issued for the boiler. No problem is expected here.

What remains to be done to the trailer car? Painting is nearing completion. Seat sides, grab rails and doors remain to be fitted. A major job is the installation of the braking system.

We have been given advice by the Regulator that we may operate a limited service with the tram dependent on the degree of completion.

So at this stage it's "all stops out" to see if we can have our collection centre-piece up and running for the 3rd Sunday in September.



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Special points of interest:

- "150th" celebrations at Valley Heights, 18 Sept to 7th Oct, daily.
- Have you sent your subscription yet? Last date due was July 31st.
- **It's out!** - "The Apricot Mail—A History of the Rogan's Hill Railway 1923-1932". If you would like a copy, send \$30 (includes packing and postage) to Bruce Irwin c/- of our postal address.

When having the "Willys" is not such a bad thing.



Some vintage vehicles surround the "bull ring". The Willys cars are parked adjacent to the visitors centre. (Photo courtesy Peter Stock.

On the 15th May 2005, the museum had a visit from two car clubs. The Classic and the Willys, Whippet, Overland Clubs arrived mid-morning.

There were about 20 cars in all with 17 of these marvelous vehicles able to be accommodated in a semi-circle in the depot yard.

Members of the clubs were introduced to the museum by museum publicity officer, Andrew Tester and given a conducted tour. The Classic Club was provided with gas barbecues for their lunch whilst the Willys group had a more traditional picnic.

Overall, the visitors were impressed with the museum and thought it an excellent venue for a "meet". The Classic Car Club have indicated that they will be making a return visit at the end of the year.

Car Clubs are numerous and are always looking for venues for day-trips. Valley Heights is ideally situated for a veteran or vintage venue having the advantage of being relatively close to Sydney with not too many challenges for the "old timers".

Railways 150th celebrations—Valley Heights



"...apart from the dwindling band of enthusiasts on walking frames, who will care come the 175th..."

Planning for local celebrations has been underway since June 2004. Unfortunately several items on the planned agenda have not materialized. e.g. The School Art Competition. Never-the-less despite some disappointments a programme has been put together. The museum will be open each day between Sunday 18th of September and Friday 7th of October. Special features will include:

- Museum open each day between 10 am & 4 pm
- The steam tram back??
- Stepho/tram in steam on Saturdays & Sundays
- HO gauge models on display depicting development of locomotives and carriages
- 5" gauge models on display
- New Springwood Historical Society display featuring the local impact on architecture following the arrival of the railway.

With the museum open continuously, there is a desperate need for personnel to act as Tour guides, Retail assistants, Model attendants, Night Security and General helpers. If you could help with any one

of these functions, please contact Andrew Tester on 4735 8601. With a minimum of 4 people per day and 2 overnight required any assistance, no matter of what duration, would be most appreciated. If family time at weekends normally precludes you from helping at the museum, now is a splendid opportunity to lend a hand during the week. We need your help to make it all work. P.S. Caravan accommodation available for overnights,

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A significant disappointment from earlier programming was the cancellation of overnight stabling of locos from local RTM shuttles. Evidently Railcorp have track possession during the period contemplated. I guess not even the significance of the Railways celebrating 150 years could stop this. Somehow I think nothing would have got in the way (certainly not track-work) of the Railways celebrating as they did on previous significant birthdays. It is just as well volunteer custodians are providing the "meat" of the present celebrations. With the changing face of railways, one wonders what will be left to celebrate in the future. For that matter, apart from the dwindling band of enthusiasts on walking-frames, who will care come the 175th birthday?

Refresher for Valley Heights RSW's

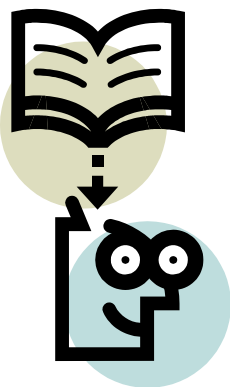
Our Operations Manager, Peter Stock convened a meeting of Valley Heights Rail Safety Workers on Saturday July 23. All present holders of Certificates of Competency were invited to attend. The meeting featured;

- Refresher session on the Operating Rules
- Presentation of draft safety notice re control of shunting movements.
- Sesquicentenary arrangements for locomotive/tram operation.

- Update on boiler course and assessment for Workcover.

The meeting discussed various matters concerning local safety issues. RSW's were made aware of the programme for the local 150th celebrations.

In all it was a valuable session. We can become a little complacent with things we are familiar with but quite often there is something that can be overlooked. A little refreshing is just the thing to bring us back up to speed.



Rail encounters of the first kind (Part 5)

This encounter concerns one method of travel by train through the Rocky Mountains, Canada, in the 1880's. It is sourced from "The Spiral Tunnels and the Big Hill—A Canadian Adventure" by Graeme Pole

First Lady on the Cowcatcher.

In 1886, Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald and his wife Agnes, crossed Canada by rail. For Macdonald it was an opportunity to gain a better understanding of the country that the Canadian Pacific Railway was helping to unite. Weary from the 14 years of bitter struggle that the completion of the railway had entailed, Macdonald was a recluse for much of the trip. Lady Macdonald was more inclined to venture forth. At Laggan Siding* she created a storm.

While pusher locomotives were engaged for the descent of the Big Hill, Lady Macdonald announced that she would ride on the foremost

pilot beam (cowcatcher) from "summit to sea". She reasoned it would provide "a delightful opportunity for a new sensation". Although the Prime Minister did not approve, his wife reportedly made good on her word, and in those days before liability concerns were rampant, riding the pilot beam became the rage.

* In the vicinity of the present spiral tunnels.



Obviously the Canadian Regulator of the 1880's was much more lenient than the one that presides over us today. Is there a niche market for Stepho?



Trike Report

The Museum now has an operational and accredited fleet of five trikes (track maintenance vehicles, section cars etc.) Three of these are motorized and two, manual. They regularly operate for public pleasure on the 1st Sunday of the month.

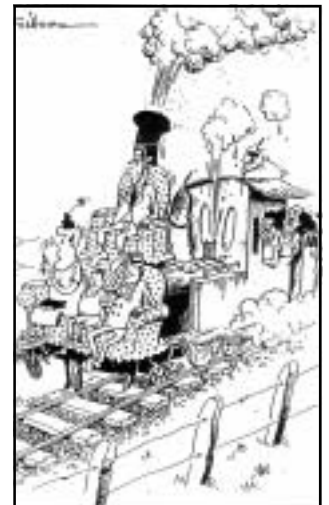
Latest completed project is a 1952 vintage S72 heavy-weight Fairmont. Restored over a period of three years, it is now performing very well after a few teething problems. It certainly is the most impressive sounding trike that we have. Its 1.35 litre single cylinder, water cooled, two stroke engine being a "ground shaker" without peer. Restoration of the Fairmont entailed being completely stripped down and restored from the ground up. All bearings, axles, gearbox, engine etc. have taper rollers and require careful adjustment with shims. Most of

the original bearings were quite serviceable, including those in the gear box. This was quite remarkable when considering the gear box had been full of water when the Fairmont was acquired! All seals were replaced as a matter of course. Engine components to be replaced were the piston rings. Being 4.75 inch diameter, these had to be specially made.

The engine is unusual for a two-stroke having a white-metal big-end bearing. This was replaced. The only other major

The Fairmont is reversed by running the engine "backwards"! It is started by a crank handle with the transmission including a 4 inch wide flat belt, the clutch action being simply to pivot the gearbox backwards and tension the belt!

Till next time, David Lewis (Trike Master)



Observation car, humph! - next thing they'll want a dining car!"



Some members about to take a "jolly" trialling a trike and trailer.



Some more boys with their toys. Ross Stenning and Works Manager Craig, check out the operator.

School visits; a new market coming "on-steam"?



Andrew Tester's organization led to an orderly flow of pupils for a cab ride. (Photo, P Stock)

advantage of the offer as parts of a studies programme on Transport.

On Thursday June 23, the museum played host to a visit from the Clairegate Public School. 109 students together with teachers and parent carers rolled up to the museum around 12.30 p.m.

The concept of visits by school groups was initiated by the Sesquicentenary of Railways Committee of VHLDHM. Clairegate took

only a small bit of encouragement from Ted Mullett, gave our engine driver the thumbs down and a boo when he didn't quite find the balance point first go. A rousing "three cheers" finished off the performance after which the school party left in high spirits.

Once again it was a great joint effort by the Society and VHLDHM and successfully pulled-off despite a pressing time table. Congratulations to Andrew Tester for a great job in organisation. He left nothing to chance.

It will be interesting to see how many further schools take up the Committee's offer to visit during the 150th celebrations. Already, Blue Mountains Grammar Preparatory School at Valley Heights has booked a visit to the museum for a group of 60 to 70 students and supervisors for Friday, 16th September. I am certain that if Clairegate School's experience was anything to go by, their word-of-mouth recommendation will certainly promote the concept to other schools in the district.

P.,S We had no idea Ted Mullett was a latent school teacher and showman!



Stepho is rotated on the turntable to the delight of children surrounding the bull pit. (Photo, Andrew Tester)

With less than two hours the group visited the model train layout, had a guided tour of the exhibits and a ride on Stepho. Our visitors were broken up into groups and each were progressed through each feature. Needless to say, Stepho was a great draw card and it was delightful to see the enthusiastic and happy faces peering through Stepho's "portholes". The grand finale to the visit was a demonstration of the engine being balanced on the turntable and rotated. All the children formed a semi-circle to the Southern side of the pit and with



"T'anks be to Thomas!!"

Looking much further ahead and harking back to previous articles re succession and volunteerism, the opportunity to positively impress children at an early age is an imperative if we hope to pick up members from future generations. It was quite alarming when on asking some of the Clairegate children if they had ever ridden on a train before, the number that answered "no". We are talking about riding on an electric train not a steamer! Whilst we may chortle at the naivety of "Thomas the Tank Engine" on TV, he is as close as many children get to a train or railway. When we (the 60 plus) were young, railways were a source of excitement such as their variation, power and

attraction. Today, they are a pretty bland affair by comparison and largely mentally marginalised in importance apart for the long suffering urban commuter. By default we really do have much to thank Thomas for. Not only does he alert children to the existence of railways, more importantly for us and our ilk, he awakens a very young cognizance, to that very rare phenomom, the steam engine. When the Revd. Awdry wrote his "Thomas" adventures little would he have realised how much influence he would have in sustaining the rail heritage industry.

"Tanks be to Thomas".



Subscriptions and gifts

Annual subscriptions for 2005/2006 are now rolling in and I would urge all our faithful members to send theirs in if they haven't already done so.

Each year (and this is no exception) as treasurer, I am always amazed and indeed humbled at the extent of the generosity of you the members. With few exceptions, most renewals are accompanied by a further gift toward the work of the society. I can only say thank you and thank you again.

If it wasn't for your generosity, our little ship would not be afloat. Revenue from operations as you know, is barely keeping pace with expenses. Nevertheless, with your help we are keeping in balance. Thank you for staying with us over the years and supporting the society so loyally.

A list of donors appears on the last page.

Sincerely, Bruce Irwin (Treasurer)

Get yer gear off and let's see what you've got!!

Words to this effect were said about Stepho by our Boiler Inspector a little time ago. Every five years our locos require a full strip down of the boiler clothing to enable a full inspection of the boiler shell.

On Saturday, June 25, a work team set about "getting Stepho's gear off". Water feed, dome cover, all the various attachments together with unfastening the cob and saddle tank were undertaken. Our Works Manager Craig, was assisted by Steve and Luke Tolhurst, Peter Goodman and Bruce Coxon. Further work was done by Craig on Sunday to enable a hire-crane to lift the cab and saddle tank on Friday, July 1. On the following Saturday, the boiler was painted and washed out. The boiler clothing was "Penetroled" by John Turner.

Boiler Inspector Russell and his son were up and at it early and had the inspection over before lunch. Russell was pleased with the condition of the boiler and a ticket was issued for another twelve months. A full external inspection won't be needed for another ten years in view of the limited work the loco does.

Next on this list was an inspection of 1022's boiler which has been out of its frame for some years. We are yet to receive Russell's written report however this was nothing unexpected in his assessment.

There is some wasting in two corners of the firebox that require repair. Some lower stays around the bottom need replacement. The tube plate has wasting at the bottom and will either need to be repaired or replaced. The rest of it is quite good considering its age. (Must be because of all that boiler

compound Frank Moag slung into it so liberally at Parramatta Park). We will keep you up-to-date on further developments.

Monday saw the crane back at Valley Heights to replace the saddle tank and cab. In the meantime Craig decided not to replace the lagging with conventional insulation but to go back to the 19th century and replace the upper part of the boiler with timber slats, tailored to fit. The conventional lagging tended to accumulate moisture at the bottom of the barrel so it was decided to sacrifice a little boiler efficiency and leave it with just timber spacers between it and the boiler clothing.

Work continued the following weekend getting the boiler "re-boxed up" and the water-feed etc. reconnected. Finally all was back together for steaming day. In all it was a mammoth and indeed expensive job; one thankfully that doesn't have to be done every year. Specials thanks to all those people that helped; the Valley heights lads (Bruce and Col), the Tolhurst team and Ralph Boesel. Last but not least, thanks to Craig for leading the effort. I hope I have not omitted anyone. If I have, my sincere apologies.

P.S. Well Stepho, you did get your gear off and for an old girl,, what we saw was pretty darned good!



Stepho with his kit off (and getting it back on)

(Left) Stepho with all boiler clothing removed and with new timber lagging in place.

(Right) Heavy duty crane about to lift the saddle tank back on. The crane was an over-kill



(Left) The cab being lowered into place. David Lewis assists.

(Right) The saddle tank is being gently rotated by Craig prior to being lowered into place. The timber lagging is quite prominent.

(Photos courtesy Col Burne)



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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...

Bon Voyage!

Member Josephine (Jo) Currell is heading off overseas during August. Jo is taking an extensive tour of Europe and U.K. via Pittsburg USA. Best wishes for a safe and happy journey Jo. Have a great time.

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**Quotable Quotes for
Museums**

"Running a site has to be a business, with proper business and marketplace goals, not a hobby. Stop the hobbyists from frustrating the efforts of the professionals."

"Deal with passengers courteously, but still sell the entertainment, nostalgia and novelty."

"Project the nostalgia adventure of using 19th century equipment and rolling stock."

"Operators of museums should not think they lead charmed lives"

New Member

A sincere welcome to Greg Stock, we are pleased to have you with us.

Greg is Peter Stock's elder son and has been keen on things railway since he was a nipper. With Peter for a father could he be otherwise?

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A Little Bit of Wisdom

Sometime, when your feeling important,

Sometime, when your age is in bloom,

Sometime, when you take it for granted,

You're the best qualified in the room.,

Sometime when you feel that your going,

Would leave an unfillable hole,

Just follow this simple instruction,

Restoration and work update



Voluntary hours worked for the April -June quarter 2005, totaled 1044¼. Respective hours logged for each project or activity are shown in brackets. **1022:** (57hrs) Dick Butcher has now finished the welding of the two halves of the yoke that supports the front end of the boiler. The work team will "tidy-up" the castings and prepare them for face milling. This will have to be done by an outside source. **93b:** (200½hrs) Rodding (ex 74b & 191B) for the brake system has been located and dressed up for installation. Some new levers and pins have been made. Hand brake spindles fitted. Members will recall that vacuum brake pans and diaphragms were made some time ago. Interior painting has now been completed. **103A:** (111hrs) Dave Torr and Col Burne have successfully swung the final door on the motor cabin. Thank you men. Four sand pipes fitted. **Stepho:** (34½) A full strip-down for boiler inspection. (See page 5 for full report) **CBI1073:** (41¼) Greg Rudd continues to paint strip the ceiling. **"S" truck:** (32hrs) Remove old flooring, start de-scale frame. (Thank you Lee Hawkins, James and Joe Guilfoyle) **TMV's:** (3½hrs) **Admin, Operations & Other Activities:** (564½hrs)

Gifts (Donations) Received

The society gratefully acknowledges the generosity of the following persons. Without your support we could do what we are achieving. The listing is entirely alphabetical and does not reflect in any way the relative value of the gift.

Bounds L, Burne C, Connelly C, Coxon B, Currell G, Currell J, Dickson T, Eade W, Fielding B, Gerdes B, Goodman P, Hall R, Hunt D, Irwin B, Lewis D, Longley P, Loughry K, Moag R, Naunton R, Payne C, Ragg M, Rudd G, Rowling B, Saunders B, Solomons V, Stock P, Tolhurst S, Torr D, Turner P, Withers J,

Flotsam and Jetsam from "across the ditch"

At a conference of FRONZ it was agreed to appoint a new Convenor to prepare a purchasing guide for members. A data base is to be prepared that will list suppliers for things railways/tramways need to purchase from time to time. This will range from the small such as brass wood screws to luggage rack netting to the major such as new boilers. Conference members were urged to record local supply knowledge to add to the web-site. A great idea and one that could be adopted in this country. Even slotted brass wood screws are not easy to come by nowadays. There are other news items but these will have to wait until next issue.

And see how it humbles your soul,

Take a bucket and fill it with water,

Put your hand in it up to your wrist.

Pull it out, and the hole that's remaining,

Is a measure of how you'll be missed.

But stop and you'll find in a minute,

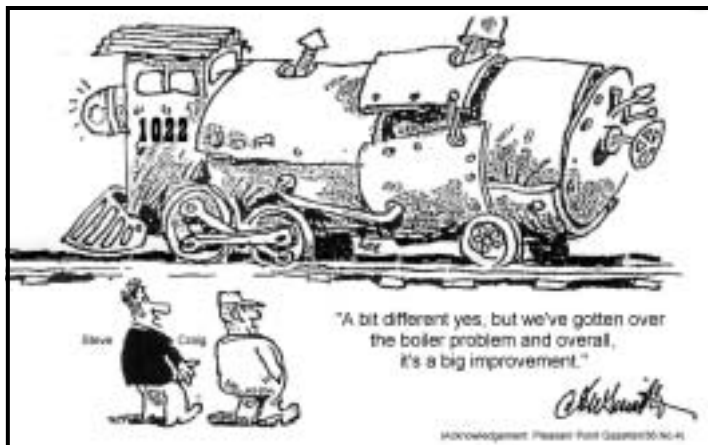
That it looks quite the same as before.

The moral of this quaint example, I do just the best that you can,

Be proud of yourself but remember,

There's no indispensable man!

(This bit of verse turned up in some of Cliff Currell's papers. Ed)



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