



# STEAM SCENE

Newsletter of the Steam Tram and Railway Preservation (Co-Op) Society Ltd.  
t/a Valley Heights Steam Tramway.  
Proudly associated with the NSW Rail Transport Museum ( Blue Mountains Division).  
Affiliated with the Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia and Rail Heritage Australia (NSW).

**"Preserving the past,  
enriching the future"**

**Volume 4 Issue 1**

**February 2007**

## Another Milestone Passed on the Information Highway.

### Health Assessments for RSW's

(By Peter Stock)

As members are aware from the editorial in *Steam Scene*, October, 2006 the society has been experiencing pot-holes in its journey down the Information Highway, in particular with health checks for the Rail Safety Workers.

Quite some time ago the society submitted a comprehensive document for approval to the "regulator" in which we nominated a Category 3 classification for its RSW's. This category was subsequently approved. Difficulties were experienced in attracting a suitably qualified health worker to undertake the cat. 3 examinations. Ultimately a medical practitioner's services were secured to assist the society in that regard with the aim of completing such health checks by the final date of 31<sup>st</sup> December. To our dismay last year the society was informed that this category had been approved in error and now did not comply with "national standards". It was deemed that our RSW's must be category 2 for drivers and firepersons. The conductors were not mentioned. The society immediately appealed to the "regulator" for a review of this direction. A compliance officer visited the tramway on the October steaming day. The society was able to demonstrate our reasons to retain category 3 status. This was in vain as the "regulator" would not consider such a reversal of their direction.

The conductors were also drawn into the net with a verbal direction that they, too, will now be category 2! The society had no other alternative than to reluctantly accept this verbal direction.

This meant another application was to be prepared and sent in for re-approval. This was duly done along with a letter strongly protesting the direction. It was reasoned that our 1-kilometre, twice a month operation was not in the same league as larger isolated heritage operators, that we had gone to the expense

of printing the health check forms on the regulated coloured paper indicated in the regulations, etc. Print your own government forms you may well ask? Yes! government instrumentalities seem not print/issue their forms anymore, the poor old customer does it for them! (One society cynic asked whether The Mint allows you to print your own banknotes or whether City Rail will allow you to knock out a couple of yearly tickets.)

But we did receive a concession. An extension was negotiated for the finalisation of health checks due to this change of documentation. The health checks had however, to be in place and completed by 31<sup>st</sup> January this year.

Thanks to the efforts of VHLDHM Chairman, Ted Mullett and Andrew Tester, a local medical practitioner and railway enthusiast, Dr. Andrew Krzyszton was invited to conduct our category 2 health checks. These were completed before the new deadline and the results subsequently advised to the society. Eighteen RSW's were eligible for attending a health check. Fifteen presented and were assessed "fit for duty". And our letter? . . . no reply has yet been received.

The society sincerely thanks all those who journeyed with us down the Information Highway: the local friendly forces, the doctors and their staff and the involvement of the RSW's.

As a footnote the whole of the documentation had to be printed by Officeworks on a rainbow-like range of papers, then prepared and posted to the medicos and the RSW's. This exercise took in excess of 18 hours over two days. But that does not include the now useless category 3 forms, which demanded 7 hours of preparation.

(Continued Page 6)



## From the Editor

An excellent editorial appeared in *Railway Digest*, February issue. In general it outlines how difficult it is to maintain railway heritage without the input of substantial government funding for major projects. It further highlights the increasing regulation of the industry and the strain this is placing on volunteer resources. To quote in part: "Today's bureaucrats seem less interested in helping these organizations in properly caring for and operating their objects, and more intent on ensuring that the right paperwork has been filled out. The paper trail might be acceptable for a commercial organization with staff paid to chase the paper, but less attractive to a small group of volunteers who simply want to turn up one or twice a month to maintain and operate their railway." It goes on to say that although some help is provided by ATHRA, a number of groups are complaining it's all too hard.

We wholeheartedly agree with the editorial. The danger with over-regulation is that it becomes kept more in the breach than the observance. This is not in anyone's interest. The regulation of operational standards etc. needs to be commensurate with the size and scope of an operation. This is clearly not the present case. Common sense must prevail. When the national standards were drafted, I don't think the participants realized the full implication on isolated heritage operators in particular.

With the discontent that is abroad at the moment, I think it is time the isolated operators got together to push for a review of their situation with the ultimate aim of obtaining legislative isolation for all heritage operators.

Best wishes,

Bruce Irwin (Editor)

### HAGAR THE HORRIBLE BY CHRIS BROWNE

Courtesy Chris Browne & King Features Synd. 2006

Well Doc, how did my driver's Cat 1 health assessment go?

You drink too much, you eat too much, you're short of breath, you don't get enough sleep, you don't exercise, you have bad knees, you need glasses, your teeth are bad, your hearing is going, you have a sinus condition, your hair is dirty and ... you have dandruff...



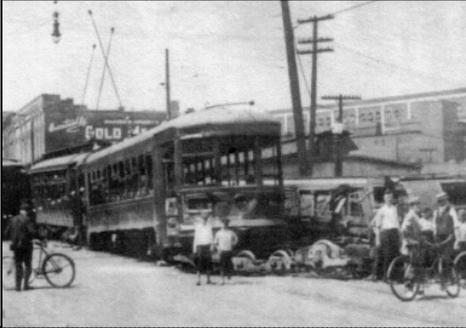
Do you think I'd pass for a cleaner?

CHRIS BROWNE 11-24

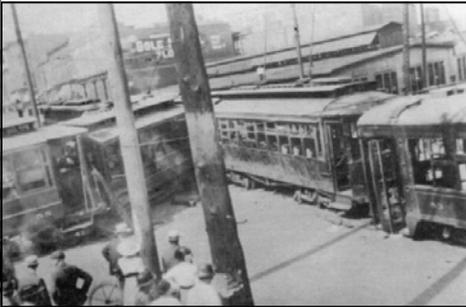
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## Riot Broke Out When Fares Went Up One Penny.

This month, the pensioner fare for a ride on the steam tram was increased by one dollar. When fares were increased by one cent on the Muskegon trolley (tram) system in Michigan U.S.A. in August 1919, a riot broke out with disastrous consequences.



Photographs of some of the damage perpetrated on the Muskegon trams by the angry mob.



One of the most unusual events in tram history occurred in Muskegon, Michigan, early in August 1918. Here, the Muskegon Traction and Lighting Co. operators of the local trolley or tramway system, announced a raise in fare from six cents to seven cents.

Normally, such an announcement would have been greeted by nothing worse than verbal protests. The evening of August 4, the day of the one cent increase, was rainy. Undaunted, at about 10 p.m. a mob of about 1,000 people unexpectedly swooped down on the car barn at Franklin and Michigan streets. With the yards and streets packed with onlookers, the irate mob stormed into the depot area systematically wrecking trams. From here they moved into the streets. Some trams were violently thrown over, others were driven into one another and at least one was burned.

Of 30 cars in service and stored at the depot, 12 were destroyed with other being damaged. It was about 3 a.m. before city officials restored order. By that time, the down-town area was a shambles with damaged and toppled trams blocking the street. At least one death was recorded. A 22 year-old man jumped from a car nearly severing his leg in the process. He died three days later in hospital.

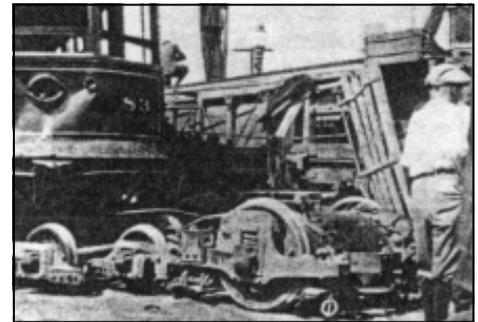
Nearly 20 persons were arrested after the incident and the supposed leader was charged under a new anti-Communist law. Only one of those originally arrested was acquitted. The others, charged with rioting, either pleaded guilty or were convicted by juries. The city officials also became targets of special investigators appointed by Michigan's attorney-

general. When the investigations ended, Governor Albert E. Sleeper found Muskegon mayor, John H. Moore and eight city aldermen guilty of official misconduct and negligence of duty in their efforts to quell the riot. All this over a one penny increase!

The city saw its first tramway built in 1882 as the Muskegon Street Railway Co. with 8 horse-cars, 30 horses and a capital investment of \$30,000. An electric service, instituted in 1889, was primarily a city operation but with later extensions to neighbouring Bluffton, Lake Michigan and Mona Lake.

Nearly ten years after the riots, the Muskegon tram system ended on October 19, 1929. A last-minute effort to allow the public to take over and operate the system was made in September, a month before the closure. It was defeated at the polls by a 5 to 1 vote.

Fortunately, the recent fare increase for pensioners on our tramway did not provoke a bevy of angry pensioners berating us with walking sticks and threatening to turn the tram over. Never-the-less, it is something for bead-counters at large to keep in mind. (Thank you Jim Hall for this article.)



Wheel sets from tram No.27. Tram No. 83 has ridden-up over some of the damage.



## Post ITSRR audit; re-writing our Safety Management Systems.

Having let off steam in the last issue about the audit of our operation by ITSRR, last November, we are now well and truly at work answering the report.

Early January saw a visit by Catriona Scott (Catriona Scott Safety Consulting). Catriona has been appointed by ITSRR in conjunction with Rail Heritage Australia to assist the smaller isolated line operators in the re-writing of their Safety Management Systems etc. to bring them into line with the new national requirements.

Catriona met with Peter Stock, Craig Connelly and Bruce Irwin and gave invaluable advice in writing up the process. She perhaps made the process

more clear than some of the seminars sponsored by ITSRR, that we have attended in the past.

Although we have a reasonable time frame to carry out this task, it is one we feel should not be put off. Under the new national guidelines, we are obliged to consult with our members in this process.

Accordingly, if you have any comments regarding matters of safety, our operation or for that matter anything touching the safe and satisfactory operation of the museum and the tramway, please get in touch with our Secretary, Peter Stock (phone number 9587 9051).





## That Tramway Hearse Service....some late information.

Members will recall the August 2006 article on the tramway hearse service in Newcastle. In that story it was stated that the service officially finished in June 1946 although it was purported that they may have been used as late as 1947-48.

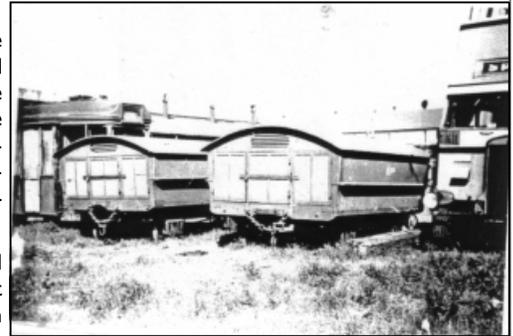
Some old correspondence has come to hand that shows there was official pressure to terminate the service in 1938. The text of the correspondence give a further insight into the detail of the operation. On April 6, 1938, the Chief Traffic Manager wrote to the Secretary of the Department of Road Transport and Tramways, proposed that the hearse service in Newcastle be discontinued. It stated that the Ten Shilling hire fee charged to undertakers was insufficient to cover expenses. It was further pointed out that the "LP" electric trams used to haul the hearses were only fitted with the necessary coupling equipment at one end only. As a result, dead mileage was incurred in having to utilise another tram to haul the hearse in an opposite direction. Added to this, it was stated, that it was necessary to roster a driver and conductor daily from 1.30 p.m. to 3.15 in case the hearse should be required! When the hearse was in use apparently, an additional officer had to travel with it to supervise shunting arrangements generally and to see that the tram hauling it ran at a reduced speed owing to the liability of the hearse to derail.

The Tramway Traffic Manager advised the Departmental Secretary that the hearse service had been utilized 88 times during the previous 12 months with revenue of £44-0-0 being earned as a result. The number of paying passengers accompanying the hearse was unknown however it was estimated that

given say 20 passengers paying a Five Shilling fare a further £22-0-0 should be added to the revenue figure. The estimated expenditure on the service during the period was given as £120-0-0. The Tramway Traffic Manager concurred that the service should be terminated.

The Departmental Secretary added in his submission to the next level that the no less than the Mayor Carrington had mentioned to him some time previous, that any withdrawal of the service would cause great hardship to the people of Carrington as they would be required to pay greater funeral costs in the event of a withdrawal of the service. The Mayor asked that nothing be done in this regard. The Mayor had been informed that there was no foundation for the rumoured discontinuance of the service.

The file is marked as "No direction. Re-submit at the end of the year (1938)" Nothing further seems to have developed in the matter. In view of the possible public backlash, it would seem that the matter was allowed to rest. A significant factor in the continuance of the service until 1946 (47-8?) was the intervening war period between 1939-45. During this time, fuel rationing was in full force and any withdrawal of the hearse service would not have been in the interests of the war effort, small as its effect may have been.



**(Above) The two hearses have been put "out to pasture" between a double deck bus and an old "LP" tram.**

**(Below) A close-up photo of one of the hearses after it had ceased to operate.**



## The Invention of the Locomotive Whistle

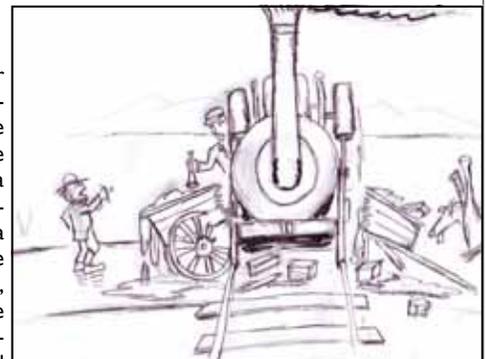
*The sound of a steam engine or locomotive whistle invariably cheers the heart. Like most people, I assumed that it was part and parcel of an engine right from the beginning. Evidently this was not so as the following article reveals. The article (suitably edited) is from "The NSW Railway Budget", Nov 19, 1896 and by courtesy of Peter Stock.*

When locomotives were first built and began to trundle their small loads up and down the newly constructed railways of England, the public roads were for the greater part, crossed at grade. The engine driver had no way of giving warning of his approach except by blowing a tin horn! As may be imagined, this was far from being sufficient warning.

On day in 1833 (so runs the story) a farmer of Thornton was crossing the railway track on one of the country roads with a great load of eggs and butter. Just as he came out upon the track, a train approached. The engine driver lustily blew his tin horn but the farmer failed to hear it. Eighty dozen eggs and 50lb. of butter were subsequently turned into cake mix and churned with the shattered remains of the wagon. The railway company had to compensate the farmer for the loss of his load,

wagon and horse.

It was regarded as a very serious matter and straightaway, a director of the company went to Atton Grange, where George Stephenson lived, to see if he could invent something that would give a warning more likely to be heard. Stephenson went to work and the next day had a contrivance which when attached to the engine boiler and the steam turned on, gave out a shrill discordant sound. The railway directors, greatly delighted, ordered similar contrivances to be attached to all the locomotives and from that day to this, the voice of the locomotive whistle has never been silent.



## Drafting Oversight Nearly Ran Trams off the Rails

*This story comes to us from that ancient (but not often tapped) store of NSWGR history, the NSW Railway Budget. Written up in the May 1, 1903 issue, it is a story not particularly well known so I thought it may be of interest.*



**“Tram Life in Sydney”, a depiction in Sydney Punch October 8, 1881. The steam tram certainly ruined life and limb not only of horses but of pedestrians too.**

*...the 1880 Act made no mention of the tramways being operated by steam motors..*

Most members and interested parties are aware of the foundational events of the Sydney steam tram system. For those who are not I will briefly recite the sequence of events.

With the coming of the International Exhibition at the Palace Gardens (Hyde Park) in 1879, there was a desperate need to transport visitors from the then railway terminus at Redfern. Accordingly a tramway was laid in from that

point to Hunter Street, a distance of about 1½ miles. It was originally intended to pull the tracks up after the exhibition but such was the success of the tramway venture, that petitions for an extension of the line to various suburbs were received by the Government. Everyone wanted this new form of public transport in their suburb. The Exhibition line was originally worked by horses because of the late arrival of the American made steam motors. It was not long however, before the steam motors made their appearance.

To enable the extension of the tramways, an Act entitled “Tramways Extension Act, 1880” was brought into being. All went well and the new tramways did a roaring trade, so much so that 1883 saw 25 miles constructed and 25½ million fares collected!

Also in 1883, the driver of a horse-drawn lorry was killed in St. James Road, when a tram motor collided with the vehicle. His widow subsequently took court action to secure compensation. When her case was dismissed however, she took it further on appeal.

In a Supreme Court judgement, the original lower court’s finding was overturned. The Chief Justice

determined that the main issues as question were: (1) Whether the injury was caused by mismanagement of the motor or through negligence of the deceased or (2) Whether the running of the steam motors was indeed permitted by the Act.

The justices found that the 1880 Act made no mention of the tramways being operated by steam motors. In effect, the Railway Act provisions for the use of locomotives, could not be attached to the tramways *per se*. Indeed such was the nature of steam locomotion *viz-a-viz* other road traffic, they could be deemed a public nuisance at common law! The Chief Justice was of the opinion *that this mode of traction (steam) was a very gross abridgement of common law rights of the public and was one which could not be used without legislative sanction in express terms.*

Three courses were left to the Government: (1) run the motors at any risk (2) to discontinue running them or (3) the seek from parliament express authority to run them. The Government of the day obviously chose the latter option.

Parliament was hastily re-summoned on May 29 and a Bill presented under suspension of standing orders, to permit the running of the motors. The Government tried to include all-embracing retrospective clauses protecting the Crown against compensation claims arising to date. After much haggling, Parliament limited the right to no recognition of any claim brought on or after May 18, 1883. Further, *that no claim existing previous to that day...shall be maintainable in any court...*This would suggest that the unfortunate widow’s claim was therefor lost. The Bill was finally passed in the small hours of May 31.

Thus it was that the steam motors were able to chuff on their merry way till the end of the century in the city. Never-the-less, they continued to be the subject of much controversy as they periodically cut their way through life and limb.

## The value of undies !

Attention Maintenance Staff! Be careful what you wear (or don’t wear) when working under a locomotive or tram, especially when in view of the public.

From the Sydney Morning Herald comes this story of a Central West couple who drove their car to K-Mart only to have it break-down in the parking lot. The man told his wife to carry on with the shopping while he fixed the car there in the lot.

The wife returned later to see a small group of people near the car, on closer inspection she saw a pair of male legs protruding from under the car.

Although the man was in shorts, his lack of underpants turned private parts into glaringly public ones. Unable to stand the embarrassment she dutifully stepped forward, deftly put her hands up his shorts and tucked everything back in place,

On regaining her feet, she looked across the hood and found herself staring at her husband who had been standing idly by! The mechanic however, had to have three stitches inserted in his head.

*(I have not seen the original story as this has been transcribed from November 2005 issue of “Torque Tube”. Is it true or urban myth?)*



## Obituary to the late Mr. Common Sense

Today we mourn the passing of a beloved old friend, Common Sense, who has been with us for many years. No one knows how old he was, since his birth records were long ago lost in bureaucratic red tape. He will be remembered as having cultivated the following valuable lessons:

- Knowing when to come in out of the rain;
- Why the early bird gets the worm;
- Life isn't always fair and
- Maybe it was my fault.

Common sense lived by simple, sound financial practices (don't spend more than you can earn) and reliable strategies (adults, not children are in charge).

His health began to deteriorate rapidly when well-intentioned but overbearing regulations were set in place. Reports of a 6-year old boy charged with sexual harassment for kissing a classmate; teens suspended from school for using mouthwash after lunch and a teacher fired, for reprimanding an unruly student, only worsened his condition.

Common Sense lost ground when parents attacked teachers for doing the job they themselves had failed to do in disciplining their unruly children. It declined

even further when schools were required to get parental consent to administer Calpol, sun-lotion or a band-aid to a student but could not inform parents when a student became pregnant and wanted to have an abortion.

The will to live wilted for Common Sense as the Ten Commandments became contraband; churches became businesses and criminals received better treatment than their victims.

Common Sense took a beating when you couldn't defend yourself from a burglar in your own home and the burglar could sue you for assault.

Common Sense finally gave up the will to live after a woman failed to realize that a steaming cup of coffee was hot. She spilled a little in her lap and was promptly awarded a huge settlement.

Common Sense was predeceased by his parents, Truth and Trust; his wife, Discretion; his daughter, Responsibility; and his son, Reason.

He is survived by his three step-brothers; I know my rights; Someone Else is to Blame and I'm A Victim.

Not many attended his funeral because to few realized he was gone. If you still remember him, pass this on. If not, join the majority and do nothing.



### Fares Please!

#### The Story of the Sydney Tram Ticket

*This might appear to be a rather bland by-way in transport history but when piecing the various sources of information together, it really became quite fascinating and I thought, worthy of relaying.*

There is a current promotion with Sydney Buses that encourages people to pre-purchase their travel tickets at an agency before getting on the bus. It is going to save the traveller time, save the bus driver time and possibly save money too. It sounds really great—a new initiative in keeping with today's innovative, smart thinking administrators. The only trouble is, it is far from a new idea. In fact it is virtually repeating history—Sydney's first ticketing system.

The story of Sydney's first government tramway commencement is well known. Suffice to say, 1879 saw the inaugural steam tram service in Sydney and this rapidly spread to the suburbs. But how was the ticketing done?

Initially, there were no tickets sold on the trams. That is not to say that you couldn't purchase your ride on the tram.

There were two ways of purchasing your ride. (1) You purchased a ticket from a shop/agent or (2) You paid cash to the conductor for your ride. The former way was cheaper and thus encouraged. On boarding the tram you gave the ticket to the conductor who tore it in half to cancel it. He then pulled the lever on his Bell punch machine thus recording the fare on a counter and automatically sounding a chime that indicated to the traveler, that his fare had been recorded. By the second method, you paid cash to the conductor who recorded receipt of the money on his second Bell punch recorder. The obvious flaw in the system was that in either case, having tendered your ticket or fare, you were left with no evidence that you had done so. No doubt there were frequent disputes as to whether a fare had been paid or no. At the end of the day, figures on the cash Bell punch should equal the cash held on hand by the conductor and the figure on the ticket only recorder equalled the chads collected. I am not sure if these were seriously counted, if they were...phew!!

It didn't take long however for the less scrupulous conductor to work out a way to fiddle the system. The extent of some of the conductors' fraudulent conduct was so great, that it eventually led to a Royal Commission in 1888. But of this and later developments, we shall read in the next issue.



**What the well-dressed conductor was wearing in the early 1890's. Note the two Bell punches suspended around his neck and the cash bag on his left hip.**



**Three examples of early tram tickets. The ticket at the top is quite rare.**

**“Preserving the past,  
enriching the future”**

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

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



**Update from the Salt Mine: 1022:** Further work on axle boxes. Trunion bearing (valve gear) welded. **93B:** Final two door sets installed. Door installation now completed. Second desto box and roll installed. Internal signage frames under construction. Brake rigging return springs (No.2 bogey) fitted. Project complete. Brake adjusting rod repaired. **99DD:** Roof ribs completed and installed. Two smaller end ribs shaped and ready for fitting. Steel corner bracing brackets made.

**PHOTO GALLERY**



**(Top left)** Santa Claus caught in the act exiting a chimney. So that's what he looks like after going up a down so many of them! Actually it is director, John Webb in the firebox of the motor preparing for boiler inspection time. **(Top Rt):** Trevor Arundall installs a roof bow on 99DD. **(Bottom Lt)** Bogie repair underway 21-10-06 **(Bottom Rt)** An unusual shot of the motor leading 93B into the yard. The motor is actually “dead-engine” Stepho simmers in the background.

**Last but not least...**

**Track Safety Awareness Course**

A Track Safety Awareness Course was held at Thirlmere on Saturday, Feb 17. Members, Bruce Coxon, Col Burne, Peter Butler, Peter Stock, Steve Tolhurst and John Webb attended and subsequently passed the course. Our sincere thanks to the NSW Rail Transport Museum for their most generous invitation to include our RSW's at Valley Heights, in the course.

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**Another Wedding Photo Shoot**

Another wedding photo shoot has been booked for Saturday, March 10 at 4.30. p.m. It is anticipated that the tram will be in steam for the occasion. Full report next issue.

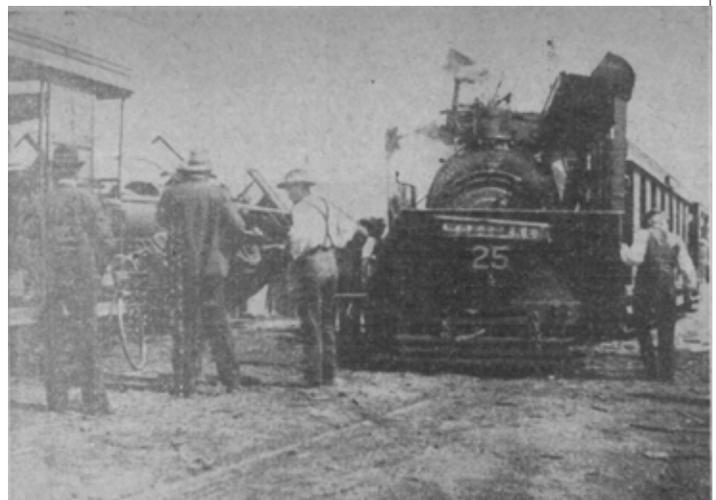
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**Steaming Days over Easter School Holidays**

As has become our custom, an extended number of steaming days has been scheduled for the next round of School Holidays occurring in **April**. They are: **Sun 8, Wed 11, Sun 15, Wed 18, Sun 22**. If you can't come along yourself, tell a friend and encourage them to visit.

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**Cont. from Page 1:)** In all the forms cost your society around \$104 plus envelopes and postage costs. Still it would be nice to be able to obtain sufficient forms from the authority who require this documentation. Surely our time and money could be better expended in heritage activities, not feeling like Road kill on the Information Highway.



**Sick List**

That very hard toiler around the museum grounds, Keith Reynolds has sustained further health impairment. He still Labours on with the grounds chores however. Our best wishes to you, Keith, for a full recovery.

**We knew one of our regular conductors was old but really, 1907 at the Stanley St. explosion? (See extreme right)**