



# 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 7 Issue 5**

**October 2010**

## Motor Bites Boiler Tube (But wait, there's more !)

On the operating day of August 22nd at around 12.20 p.m. the driver and fireman of the tram picked up on an unusual sound coming from the firebox. Craig, our Works Manager was summonsed and on inspection it was evident that a boiler tube had developed a very small leak. Boiler pressure was reduced and the trip completed. The fire was then dropped and the motor put away.

During the ensuing week, an inspection of the tube plate revealed as a precautionary measure, a dozen tubes should best be replaced. A search for a boiler tube supplier at the best price, located 'Boiler Tube and Pipe Specialists P/L' at Geebung in Queensland. A supply was arranged and tubes delivered. Although a tube expander was probably available in the fire affected gear brought from Parramatta Park, it was thought best to buy a new one.

The replacement of tubes in the motor is not just a matter of taking the front of the smoke box off then dropping the fire-bars to gain access to the fire-box. The front apron has to be removed as well. The ash box design only allowed for limited access to the fire-box and as a result, the ash-box had to be modified to allow a sliding floor to be installed. This now provides excellent access to the fire-box.

With this preliminary work done, so commenced the laborious task of removing twelve tubes. Over the weekend of 17-19 August, the twelve tubes were replaced. A cold water "squeeze" showed three of the newly installed tubes, to have a slight dribble into the smoke-box and one with a dribble in the firebox.



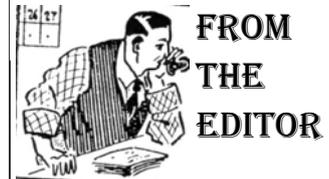
**(Above) No, its not a 38 class smoke-box but tube replacement still entails hard work.**

All the banging and rattling of the compressed air tools must have disturbed another old tube for it began to leak also. This was the 13th tube and proved to be the most cantankerous to remove, taking most of the Saturday afternoon to do so. On the following Saturday, the tube was replaced, all the other tubes checked for sealing and the boiler town-water pressure tested—all was O.K.

The next day was Operating Day. The test was on under full operating pressure. Not a sign of a leak!

Congratulations to Craig and all who worked on removing and replacing the thirteen tubes. It was a huge job for a small band of men. Craig was leading the team every day.

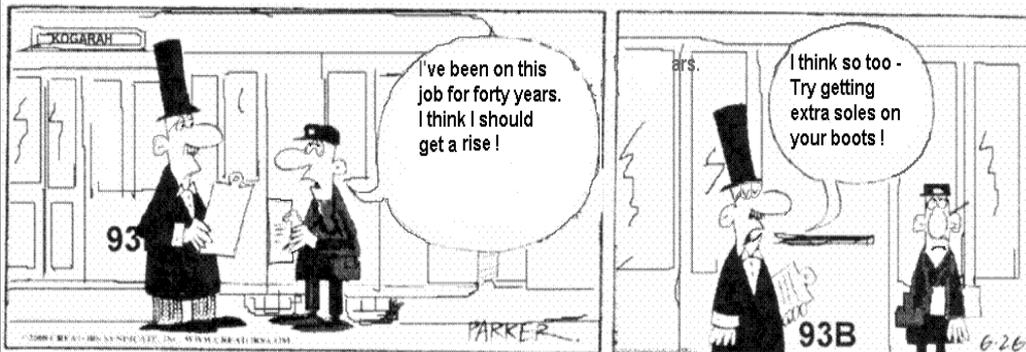
The plan is now, that over the Christmas Holiday period, further tubes will be replaced as a precautionary measure.



*With the AGM looming on November 6, I notice that as usual, the number of nominations for positions on the Board, equals the vacancies i.e. four. All nominations are existing Board members with the fourth, Ralph Boesel, the Board appointee to replace the late Frank Millier for the balance of Frank's term. It has been quite a number of years now since the number of nominees exceeded the vacancies. Peter Stock and I are now the Board 'elders' with a seventieth birthday coming my way next year and for Peter, the year following. I have been nominated for this year's appointments and I am happy to continue in the role of treasurer. However, having been in this position for some 23 years, although I might be competent enough in this role, I sometimes wonder if a younger person would have more enthusiasm and vigor to engage in the other matters that are part of management and board deliberations? Whilst I am happy to continue on in the short term I would stress that the generational change that has started to take place with the Board should continue apace and that members other than those presently on the Board, seriously consider nominating for Board positions next year. I certainly don't want to eventually have to resign for some unexpected reason, without the opportunity in the meantime, to mentor a replacement to effect smooth transitional change.*

*Till December issue,  
Bruce Irwin, Editor*

## The Adventures of Old Dad Stock and the Troubador



**Reminding members that the "Santa Claus" operating days this year are November 28 and December 12. Tell your friends.**



## Candlesticks, Spades and other Baubles Those ceremonial presentations of long ago—where are they now?

The 30th July this year saw the 100th anniversary of the official opening of the extension of the steam tramway from Baulkham Hills to Castle Hill. Some months prior to this, some interested persons contacted me to enquire if I knew if the local Council were planning anything by way of commemoration. To my knowledge they had not. Not long after, I was contacted by Christopher Snelling of the Powerhouse Museum Discovery Centre at Castle Hill, enquiring if I would be prepared to do a talk relevant to the centenary, at the Centre on August 14. Christopher told me that the museum had come across a 'candlestick' that had an inscription on it. The inscription indicated that it was given to the Hon. W.J. O'Sullivan, Minister for Public Works, on the occasion of the turning of the first sod for the construction of the Parramatta-Baulkham Hills tramway on March 19, 1901. He thought it would be a good idea to have it cleaned up and displayed adjacent to motor 1A in the display hall as it had particular significance for the local area. Christopher asked me if I knew of the circumstances of the gifting of the candlestick to Mr. O'Sullivan.

The giving of commemorative gifts to visiting dignitaries presiding at official openings and the like, was quite a common practice during the tram era. In this case, I went back to the description of the event recorded in the Cumberland Argus and Fruit-growers' Advocate newspaper. To paraphrase, it describes the Minister :

*'armed with a suitably inscribed ceremonial spade, (he) lifted the first sod for the new tramway. Amidst cheers and applause, he tossed it into the air. After three cheers for the King, he went on to point out the benefits awaiting the Hills District.'* At a subsequent banquet he was presented with a silver and glass fruit bowl. No mention of the candle stick!

On mulling this over, I thought that it is more usual for candle sticks to come in pairs and if this was the case, what had happened to the other one? Further, what would the inscription be on the second one, seeing that the event was well covered in the inscription on the first one? A close-up photo of the candle stick shows that the actual candle holder was detachable. It was then that the 'penny dropped'. The candle stick had not started out life as such. It was originally the base of the silver and glass fruit bowl! Somewhere way back, the glass bowl portion must have been broken and the silver stem fashioned into a candle stick.

I ran this by the Powerhouse manager and although my surmise appeared to be the case, he would have the matter checked further with conservators etc.

I delivered the talk on August 14 to an audience of about 30. The emphasis was on the opening of the Baulkham Hills-Castle Hill extension on July 30, 1910.

It is interesting to note that when this extension was opened, the Baulkham Hills Shire President, Mr. Hopkins, presented the presiding Minister, Mr. C.W. Lee, a pair of 'golden scissors' with which to cut the ceremonial ribbon. With the official party on board the first tram, the local M.P. Mr. J.C. Hunt, blew a specially presented silver conductor's whistle. The local newspaper tells us *'bits of the ribbon were eagerly rushed for, as mementos of the great occasion.'*

The remains of the fruit bowl gifted to the Minister for Public Works at the turning of the first sod survives but what about the "ceremonial spade", the "golden scissors" the "specially presented, silver conductor's whistle" or for that matter the bits of ribbon? Are these still stored away somewhere in a forgotten

attic or in the case of the smaller items, at the back of a drawer somewhere? Who when going through the personal effects of a deceased grandparent, have come across some apparently worthless piece of fabric, an unlabeled lock of hair perhaps and thrown them away because the significance of the piece was unknown. Such may well have been the case when pieces of that ceremonial ribbon were perhaps found lying in the bottom of a drawer, faded rust-marked and useless.

Some ceremonial presentations have no doubt survived from other official openings but where are they? When the Minister for Public Works, Mr. Lees, officially turned the first sod of the Maitland tramway, he was presented with a ceremonial spade. From the photo shown, it is very handsome indeed. Enquiries indicate it is not known to the Maitland Historical Society. Does it still reside with some scion of the Lee family along with the 'golden scissors' from the Castle Hill line opening? With the amount of tramway expansion done in the late 1800's early 1900's, Messrs. O'Sullivan and Lee would have accumulated a number of these presentations. What a marvelous addition to a museum collection they would make today. Perhaps this article may spark a response from someone with one of these articles in their possession or at least knowledge of where some of them may repose.



**(Above) The 'candlestick' at the Powerhouse Discovery Centre.** (Photo, courtesy Powerhouse Discovery Centre)



**(Above) Detail of the inscription on the 'candlestick'.** (Photo courtesy, Powerhouse Discovery Centre.)



**A photo of the ceremonial spade shown in the 'Town & Country Journal'. The first sod on the Maitland Tramway was turned on July 19, 1907**



# Tram Motor Capsizement—A Driver’s Worst Nightmare

In the February 2010 issue of Steam Scene, the story was related of tram driver Samuel Wyche. Sam was the victim of a tram motor capsizing after derailing. What happened was that the driver was crushed between the boiler and the motor cabin as it went over onto its side. Sam Wyche was not the only victim of a capsizing tram as we shall read.

Thumbing through the pages of the various historical records of Sydney’s steam trams, I have been struck by the number of accidents that occurred involving the derailment of a motor and the subsequent death of its driver and or fireman.

With the driver’s station being just inside the cabin door alongside the boiler, it is not hard to see that if a motor capsized onto his side, he could well be crushed between the relatively flimsy timber cabin and the steel boiler and water tank. Sam Wyche’s case was described in February’s issue but his was far from an isolated instance.

### Botany Line Derailments

On Thursday, 27th March 1902, a steam tram left Bent Street Sydney at 10.50 a.m. Christopher H. Mead was the driver and Horace Blaney was his fireman. Everything was going well until shortly after leaving the Coward Street stopping place. Suddenly the motor (No.86) left the track, breaking the couplings of the immediate attached car in the process. The trailing cars remained on the line. The motor travelled some distance before it turned over. In the process, the driver was scalded to death. The fireman was badly injured but was still alive and was taken to hospital.

As was the custom in those times, an inquest was initiated on the following day. Evidence was given that the track was straight, level and in good condition. No cause could be adduced for the tram leaving the track. The inquest was adjourned until May 14th when it was hoped that the injured fireman might then be well enough to give evidence as to the possible cause and circumstances of the fatal derailment. A Departmental inquiry was postponed until the finding of the inquest.

Unfortunately, despite making some recovery over the days of his early hospitalization, fireman Blaney suddenly deteriorated and died on April 4. The coroner resumed the inquest but was unable to determine the cause of the derailment.

The subsequent departmental inquiry was more successful. The board of inquiry consisted of four senior railway and tramway men. Considering the evidence and the results of their inspection of the accident site, they concluded that the accident was caused by a piece of blue metal being lodged in the groove of the right hand rail, causing the motor’s wheel to ride up out of the groove onto the carriageway. How the blue metal came to be in the groove of the rail was not known but it was suspected that pushed into the groove by a passing dray or cart. From the distance travelled by the motor after it derailed and its slewing round and capsizing, the board were of the opinion that the tram was probably travelling at excessive speed.

Christopher Mead was buried in Rookwood Anglican Cemetery whilst the fireman, Horace Blaney was buried at Waverley Cemetery,

By strange coincidence, this was not the only fatal capsizing of a Botany tram. On February 6, 1890 James Ross Logan was driving his Botany bound tram. About 200 yards from Gardeners’ Lane Botany, the tram motor and cars left the track with the motor capsizing.

Logan was caught between the cabin and the boiler and was crushed to death. (This story was previously related in the March 2005 issue of Steam Scene.)

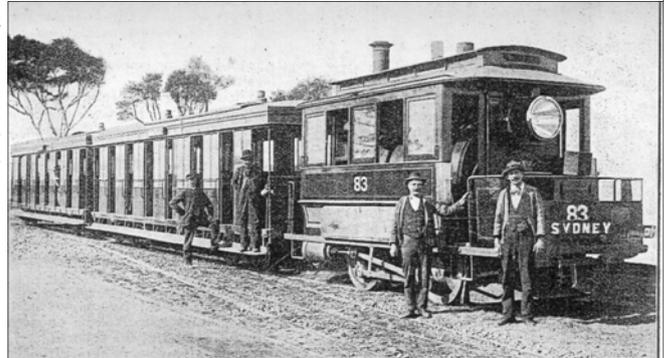
### A Lucky Escape

On Friday, 15th December 1922, at 5.26 p.m. a motor and two cars driven by veteran driver, Ted Swain, left Parramatta railway station bound for Castle Hill. Half an hour or so later, between Excelsior Avenue and the Old St. Paul’s church Castle Hill, the motor suddenly left the rails. Travelling a short distance and hauling a car behind it, the motor lurched over onto its left hand side. The car, though much damaged, remained upright. Fortunately, Ted Swain’s driving position was on the right hand side and thus he was not crushed between the boiler and the cabin. He escaped with barely a scratch.

### The Ramsgate Fatality

On April 1, 1926 a three car tram left Kogarah bound for Sans Souci. It had five passengers, two conductors and a driver attending the motor. The tram was making speed between Carroll’s and Clarke’s Hill. A few yards from Margate Street, the tram motor left the rails and collided into a telegraph pole. The motor capsized pinning the driver, Leslie Walter Slatyer (aged 40) beneath it. He was scalded to death by escaping steam. Fortunately as mentioned, there were minimal passengers on the trip and thus when the second carriage was almost cut in half by collision with telegraph pole, no one was injured from this car. One of the conductors was also severely injured.

Those previous, are four cases of motor capsizing following derailing. There are more but the examples given show (Continued on page 6)



(Above) A tram at Botany terminus c.1891. Incidentally, the person standing on the foot-board of the tram is reportedly “King Billy” of the local aborigine tribe. He held a ‘life pass’ and was a regular patron of the tram.



(Above) The well known head stone for James Ross Logan at Rookwood Necropolis. The effigy of tram motor 37 is just below the monumental urn. (Editor’s photo)



Dismantling motor 83A. The extent of the damage on the lower side readily makes apparent how a driver could be fatally injured.



## It Could Only Happen on the Railways ! (Part 7)

More strange but true stories from the early days of rail travel.



### A Rare Storm—America 1848

The vast open spaces of America terrified the earliest settlers who clung for generations to the safer counties of New England and the East. The great unexplored regions of the West were too much for a society that still looked back to the smaller, more densely populated societies from which their ancestors had come from in Europe. The Wild West was a vast unknown and was therefore better avoided.

It wasn't until well into the nineteenth century that the railway companies finally began to push into the unexplored territory. Despite attacks from landowners and the seemingly insuperable difficulties of the terrain, the railroads gradually moved out into even the remote corners of the country. But there was a price to pay. Accidents were frequent; railway workers often disappeared into the bush never to be seen again; supplies and equipment vanished or were stolen. On one or two occasions, whole groups of workers were besieged by native tribes for days on end. On one or two occasions whole groups of workers were besieged by native tribes for days on end. Occasionally they were massacred and never heard of again. The most extraordinary disappearing act played out in the Wild West of America however, had nothing to do with workers, their supplies or equipment. It concerned a whole train.

A huge (for the times) freight train owned by the Kansas Pacific Company was making its way across country in the 1840's when it got caught in a ferocious thunderstorm. Normally this would have been a relatively minor inconvenience but the storm turned out to be one of the worst of the century. At its heart was a giant waterspout with all the power of a whirlwind. More than 16,000 feet of track was washed away when the eye of the storm passed over a particularly remote part of the railroad. Unfortunately, the train was somewhere on that stretch of track when it happened. Whether it plunged into a canyon with a vast and very deep river at the bottom of it or simply came off the track and was quickly buried in deep sand driven by the extraordinary winds, no one knows. Forty years later, after numerous careful searches, the last rather perfunctory attempt to locate the train was carried out. Not a trace of it could be found. To this day, its whereabouts remain a mystery.

### The Battle of the Railway Companies—1849

The Manchester, Sheffield and Lincoln Railway Company shared a station in Manchester with the North Western Railway company. At a time when each railway company invariably had its own stations and track, this was a cause of endless trouble. In fact, it got so bad that on numerous occasions when a group of staff from one company bumped into a group of staff from the other company, either on the platforms or around the booking hall or goods yard, they would shout abuse at each other or even come to blows.

Fighting was thankfully rare but individuals from either company would at the very least ignore each other if they happened to meet. Late in the 1840's what had always been a bad situation, suddenly became much worse. A M.S & L train arrived at platform 6 early one July morning and the staff of North Western were ready and waiting.

As the passengers climbed down from the train, they were arrested and taken to a large waiting room where they were held under lock-and-key for several hours!

The official who had locked the passengers up, spent two hours arguing with officials from the M.S. & L company before the police were called and the passengers released. The M.S. & L railway subsequently sued the North Western company. In court, the M.S. & L lawyers claimed that the North Western Railway had carried out a continual and flagrant war against their clients. They had, it was claimed, deliberately left a truck on a platform designated for use by the M.S. & L. Also, they had deliberately blocked a line used by the M.S & L and they had even, in the dead of night, employed carpenters to build wooden screens across parts of the station used by the M.S. & L company. Worst of all, they had bricked up an entrance to the M.S. & L booking office and then claimed it was an accident! The judge found for the plaintiff and the North Western Railway were ordered to pay a huge fine. In a case that was and is probably unique in legal history, the whole company, including its directors were warned that if they interfered again with the M.S. & L railway, their directors might find themselves in prison.

Whether the hapless passengers who were misprisoned made any claim against North and Western is not mentioned.

### The Case of the Barking Baby—1849

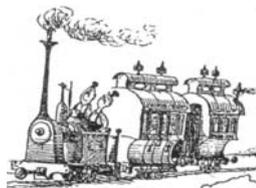
For the first thirty years of their existence, the railway companies charged very high fares for pets. The felling was that animals were a bit of a nuisance and might put off other passengers. High prices would ensure that only the absolutely determined would take "Rover" or "Tiddles" to accompany them on their railway journey. If they could afford the high prices, the idea was that pet owners were far more likely to turn up with a spotless poodle rather than a scruffy hound thus reducing the risk of complaints from other travelers.

An official who was employed by one company to find out what was going on reported the following incident to the governing board.

*'I was on board the down train for Nottingham, keeping my wits about me and observing the very mixed crowd in the second class carriage. We stopped at a country station and a woman got into the carriage carrying a ponderous looking babe. It was dressed in long clothes with its head entirely covered in a shawl. Several times during the journey the half-smothered infant made a noise very like the barking of a dog. The repetition of these unusual sounds aroused the sympathy of another passenger, an old lady, who remarked What a dreadful cold that child has got, to be sure. The woman with the baby replied that the poor thing had suffered an attack of the 'flu which she was afraid would turn to whooping cough.*

*At Nottingham, the ticket collector opened the door and shouted, Tickets Please!, The suddenness of this outburst clearly surprised the slumbering object in the woman's arms and there was an angry and unmistakable bark. The astonished ticket collector reached forward and before the woman could object, he lifted the shawl to reveal a not particularly attractive nor youthful Dachshund.'*

(Continued on page 6)





# Photo Gallery



Most times Scene Scene get too jam-packed to allow much in the way of members photos. In this edition I have endeavoured to catch up on arrears. (Ed.)



(Above) Member Bob Tebb is seen here nonchalantly holding up what appears to be a shrunken locomotive. He tells us it is a BB diesel hydraulic 125 HP built in 2005. It is seen here hauling 8 coaches. It operates on the 7 mile 15 inch gauge Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway. Bob is a volunteer driver. Max speed 15 mph on line with plenty of grades and curves.



(Above) Secretary Peter Stock, no matter how far he travels can't seem to be able to get away from shades of "the Valley." Seen here with Adelaide's version of "103A" (Top) Whilst trundling around Melbourne Lo and Behold! What should come behind but 1022!



(Above) Peter is giving the "all clear" but has he lost the motor or just gone plain loco? (Right) A group of 31 visitors from Europe are seen here having spent an all too short couple of hours at "the Valley".



(Left) During his last visit to us, Frank Moag just had to check-out Leila's only rival for Frank's affections. Stripped down for inspection lies 1022's boiler.





## "Preserving the past, enriching the future"

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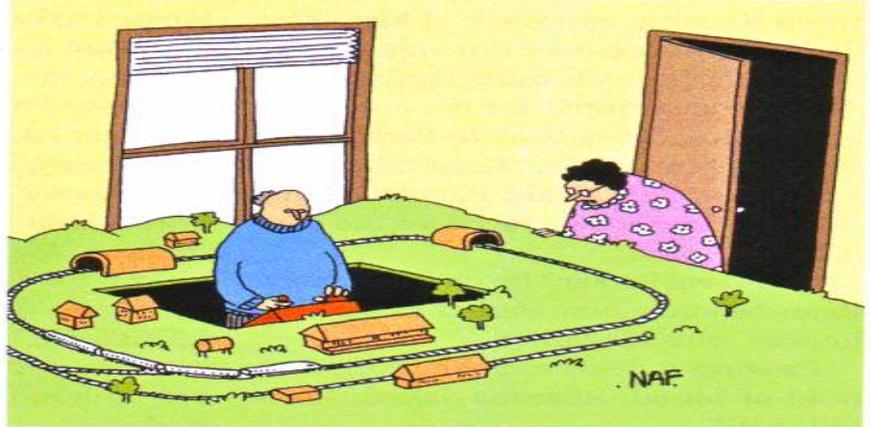
The museum is located in Tusculum Road, Valley Heights. Ample parking is available. A train service is available to Springwood. Valley Heights station is accessible for museum visitors but you must walk around to the Tusculum Road entrance and not attempt to short-cut across the tracks.

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



**Works Report: LFA 179:** Progress on cleaning bogey and wheel set.

**103A:** Thirteen boiler tubes removed and replaced. **Stepho:** 'Boxed-up' from boiler inspection.



**"Did you know there's a miniature woman tied to the train tracks who looks remarkably like me?"**

(Continued from page 3) how deadly a derailment could be for a driver and how the possibility must have been ever present in the back of their minds. A simple piece of ballast wedged in the groove of the rail was all it needed to send a motor off to who knows where. Nevertheless drivers did take risks as in the case of Sam Wyche and Les Slatyer, to make speed to gain the ascent of an opposing rise. Whether on the footplate of a motor or the footboard of a trailer car, there was ever present danger of pending fatality for tram crews at the most unexpected time. *References: The NSW Railway Budget 1/5/1902. Sydney Morning Herald (various issues 1902, 1926)*

(Continued from page 4) The official report does not say what happened next but it is easy to imagine that the poor woman would have had to pay the extra fare amid hoots of laughter from the other passengers.

## Last but not least.....

### PERSONAL



Sad to relate that member Steve Lanyon's mother Shirley, passed away suddenly on Sunday 26th September 2010. A service of cremation was held at Pinegrove Crematorium on Thursday September 30.

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On Saturday October 3, Board Member, Steve Tolhurst's father Arthur, passed away suddenly.

Our sincere condolences are extended to you both and your respective families at this time of mourning and remembrance..



obtaining the establishment of the school.

ooo0ooo

VHLDHM Chairman and dual member **Ted Mullett** is making recovery from a knee replacement operation. Our best wishes to you Ted.

### OTHER NEWS

Oops !!

Re last issue's article 'A Conductor's Life—Gabriel Dennis'. As pointed out by the collector of a large proportion of the material, Trevor Edmonds, Stanley Tisdell was the second fatality to occur on the Redbank Line, not the first. Sarah Thomas was the first on 8-8-1885.

### Christchurch Tramways and 'Quake

We have been advised by the principal carer of motor 100, Ian Mison, that the Christchurch Tourist Tramway and the Fairymead museum tramway did not sustain any real damage during the quake which rocked Christchurch last month. Indeed the city tourist trams were back in service on the following Monday

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### Visitors from Overseas

On Wednesday September 29, the museum and tramway were especially opened to host a group of overseas visitors. 31 person from Europe, eagerly took in the delights of our steam tram with their cameras running hot.

They had been alerted previously, that the tram may not be operational on account of the boiler tube situation, so you can imagine their delight when they saw the motor in steam.

The group was ably escorted around the museum site by Andrew Tester with the Museum's Jean Grundy serving a most appreciated light luncheon. The society's Robin Stock, operated the cappuccino machine.

Although the road signs were put out indicating that the museum was open, few public members visited the museum with the result that we closed early around 2.30 p.m.

### ITSR Closes off Outstanding Matters

Formal advice was received from ITSR on September 21, that all outstanding corrective actions arising from a compliance inspection on 11-10-2009, have now been "closed out.". One item 'Development & Implement detailed maintenance standards for tramway rolling stock' has been noted as a work still in progress but on advice from STARPS that it will be completed by 31-12-2010, ITSR have determined that it will also be closed off subject to future verification of documentation.

This has been a great achievement, particularly by Craig and Steve and they are to be congratulated.

**Frank Moag** turned 95 on 17th September. The Board and members congratulate you Frank. You are frequently in our thoughts. Frank, Leila and twin sister Concie, have been invited to attend the



**Members are reminded, society management holds a zero tolerance of alcohol and prohibited drugs for all Rail Safety Workers.**