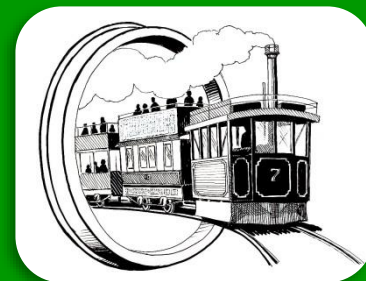


# Ferrymead

## Tram Tracts

The Journal of the Tramway Historical Society



Issue 36 – June 2019



### **The Story of Spiff**

*How Dunedin 11 gained its distinctive nickname*

### **Ferrymead News**

*Restoration, maintenance, and some more track work*

### **FRONZ Conference 2019**

*A brief update from this year's annual Conference*

The Tramway Historical Society

P. O. Box 1126, Christchurch 8140 - [www.ferrymeadtramway.org.nz](http://www.ferrymeadtramway.org.nz)

## First Notch

### President's Piece – Stephen Taylor



I write this report after returning from the annual FRONZ Conference – held in Timaru this year over Queen's Birthday weekend. A report back on the conference will be the subject of the Society's general meeting later this month, but one thing I would like to mention here –

the 2019 FRONZ Tramway Restoration Award went to the Dunedin Heritage Light Rail Trust for repatriating and displaying restored cable cars to Dunedin.

Last month's general meeting was at the New Brighton Museum - officially 'The New Brighton & Districts Historical Society and Museum Inc' which is located in the old Saint Enochs Church. This was the first visit to this museum for most of the Society attendees, and it was most interesting. They have many display boards of old photographs and lots of memorabilia of bygone days such as the old pier. Plus they made us very welcome and provided us with a nice supper. Well worth a visit if you happen to be in New Brighton and they are generally open between 1 & 3pm each day.

And now, back to the Ferrymead Tramway where there has been a lot going on over the last month. In no particular order, I will try and mention a number of these activities – and hope that some of them may be reported on in more detail elsewhere in this (or subsequent) issues of *Tracts*.

Firstly, a container has been setup in the Car Park at the end of the traverser – to be used as a “home” for Sydney Tramway's Yank - #12 – to live in between bouts of restoration work.

Next, we are expanding the engineering workshop area of Tram Barn 1 to make space for more machinery. Plus we have purchased more machinery to be located there, plus there will be a tidy up of

### Alastair's Angle – Alastair Cross



Welcome to another issue of *Tracts*. I won't be saying much this month, since I spent most of last month on holiday, exploring Japan. While I did manage to find a few tramway relics in Omiya

the engineering tools with additional cabinets etc. Much of this work and equipment has been funded from disposal of a lot of surplus scrap metal located behind the Trolley Bus Shed. A special thanks to Graeme Richardson who has arranged most of this. I would expect to see some photos of the results published once the work is completed.

Also, Christchurch Boon Tram #152 is currently visiting the Ferrymead Tramway and having its roof recanvassed – this work is being carried out in Tram Barn 3.

And the work on getting the truck on Brisbane Tram 236 back in action is becoming more involved than expected. Work is progressing on getting the truck repaired, but a few other issues with the truck have been discovered and these are currently being attended to.

Restoration work on Christchurch Hills car #24 is progressing well: the 'A' end motorman's platform canopy is now permanently attached and work is progressing on getting the remaining fittings needed to be prepared prior to the “lower” roof being re-canvassed.

And for Dunedin Mornington Grip Car #103, a veritable forest of pillars is being machined and fitted on to the chassis by Don McAra and his helpers. And Laurie Cooper is spending a lot of time with a shaper expertly machining the axle box fittings. I would suggest (request!) that Don may like to publish a few words and photos about the recent progress on #103 for *Tracts'* readers to allow those who have not seen the recent progress.

And lastly from me for this update, I would like to welcome a new member to the Society – Huba Nagy. Huba is keen to get involved in the tram driving amongst other activities and has already started driver training.

Regards,  
**Stephen**

and Kyoto, for the most part it was railways all the way! All in all, it was a wonderful adventure, and I thoroughly enjoyed myself too. So it seems a return visit may well be on the cards!

Back home, I am pleased to report that track work has begun around the points leading into the Hall of



Wheels siding after many years of discussion about how best to tackle this issue. As part of this work the track is to be re-levelled and improved drainage installed, hopefully ensuring that this track will remain in good condition for years to come. So far as I am aware, this is the last of the major outstanding works on our 'main line' to be carried out, but I am fairly certain that in having said that, someone else will be able to inform me otherwise!

Slightly further south, Don McAra has been informed that a suburban Dunedin home has come onto the market – which would normally be rather unremarkable, except this home has a Dunedin Tramways 'Cavvy Car' displayed prominently out front! Even more interestingly, the real estate agent who informed Don of this owns a holiday bach, which incorporates a Dunedin Sydney Bogie tram as

one of its main features! There are no plans to acquire either tram for our collection, though Don is hopeful the 'Cavvy Car' will be assured of a good home and certain future.

And back in Christchurch again, our Society Facebook page is humming along quietly, with both Jonathan Day and me overseeing the day to day operations. We are always looking for new material to post, and while we do already have some contributors (thanks, Alex and Dave!) we could always do with some more. You can get in touch with either of us through the *Tracts* address published elsewhere.

Well, that's it from me this month!

**Alastair**

## Notices

### NEXT GENERAL MEETING

The Society's next General Meeting will be held on Wednesday 26 June in the Lions Building at Ferrymead, starting at 7:30PM. This month's topic will be the recent FRONZ Conference held in Timaru over Queens Birthday Weekend, including the member site visits to Pleasant Point and the Plains Railway at Tinwald. Supper will be provided; please bring \$2.00 to cover costs.

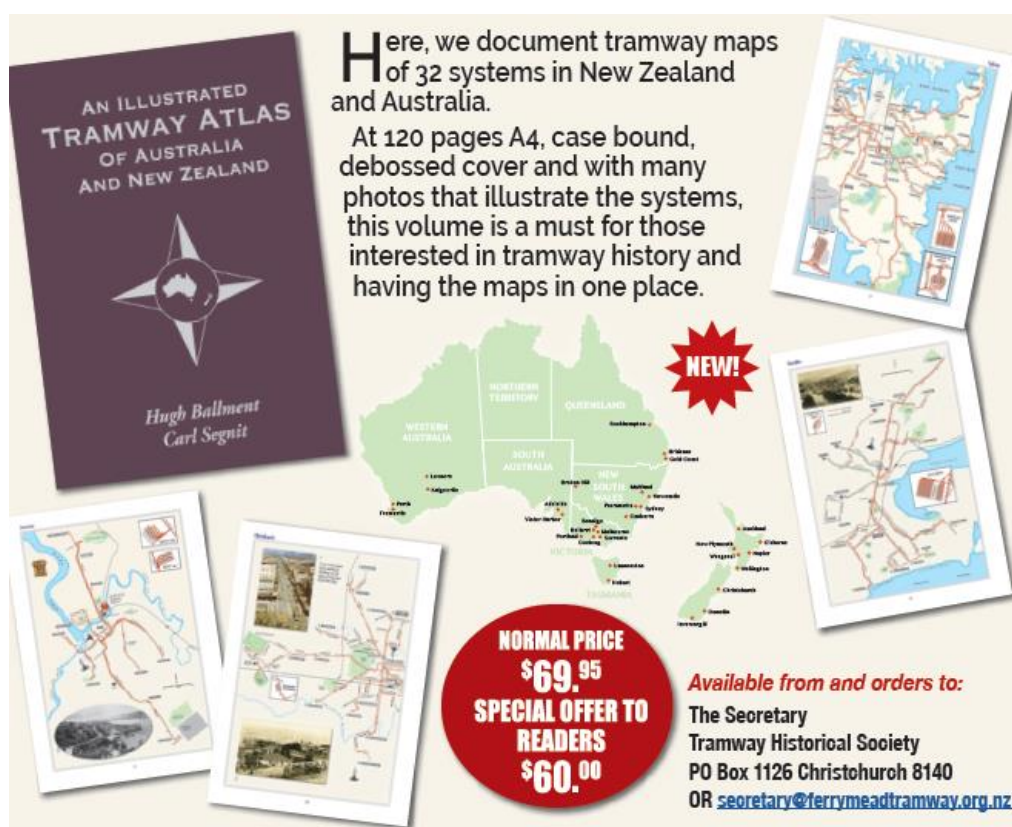
### WORK DAY – ADVANCE NOTICE

This issue of *Tracts* will not be out in time for the June Work Day; however, the next Work Day to be held will be on 20 July, starting from 9am. Catering (morning tea, lunch, and afternoon tea) will be provided for those attending; as always, there will be plenty to do, and we encourage all members who can to come down and lend a hand, even if only for part of the day.

### BOOK ORDERS

Dave Hinman has now received a supply of Hugh Ballment's recent Tramway Atlas for sale, as advertised in previous issues of *Tracts*. At \$60.00 plus \$7.00 post and packing to any New Zealand address, this is a very good deal indeed. Some 25 copies have already been sold and Dave will be bringing more to the June General Meeting. This will be an excellent opportunity for those who are considering buying a copy to have a look and make their decision. It will also be a good chance to save on postage costs!

Graeme Stewart's new book is currently also in publication, with arrival anticipated in mid-June. If it arrives in time, Society members will be able to collect their copies at the June Meeting too. This book is only available to those who have pre-ordered a copy.



Here, we document tramway maps of 32 systems in New Zealand and Australia.

At 120 pages A4, case bound, debossed cover and with many photos that illustrate the systems, this volume is a must for those interested in tramway history and having the maps in one place.

**NEW!**

**NORMAL PRICE \$69.95**  
**SPECIAL OFFER TO READERS \$60.00**

Available from and orders to:  
The Secretary  
Tramway Historical Society  
PO Box 1126 Christchurch 8140  
OR [secretary@ferrymeadtramway.org.nz](mailto:secretary@ferrymeadtramway.org.nz)

### 2019 FRONZ CONFERENCE AWARD WINNERS

The Federation of Rail Organisations of New Zealand (FRONZ) has recently posted images of their 2019 award winners, as announced during their conference over Queens Birthday Weekend, on its Facebook page. They are:

- Paul Dillicar Memorial Award for Innovation: Sean Heenan and his fellow Glenbrook Vintage Railway volunteers, for their Counties Power Christmas Lights event.
- Paul Heighton Memorial Award for Excellence: Bryan and Marian Blanchard, Pleasant Point Railway and Museum.
- Young Achievers Award: Bradley Hill, Dunedin Railways and Ocean Beach Railway
- Steam Locomotive Restoration Award: MOTAT, Auckland, for the restoration of steam locomotive F 180 (Yorkshire Engine Co., 1874)
- Motive Power Award (Non-Steam): Goldfields Railway, Waihi, for the restoration of diesel shunting locomotive DSA 551 (originally D<sup>SA</sup> 253; Hunslet Engine Co., 1954)
- Rolling Stock Award: Mainline Steam Trust, Christchurch, for the restoration of former Tranz Scenic passenger carriage AO 60 (originally A 1976; NZR Otahuhu, 1939)
- Tramway Restoration Award: Dunedin Heritage Light Rail Trust, Dunedin, for repatriating and displaying restored cable cars in Dunedin.

We would like to congratulate all of the above award winners. Photos of the award winners can be found at:

<https://www.facebook.com/FRONZ.inc/photos/pcb.2447126961992096/2447124238659035/?type=3&theater>

### TRACK WORK UPDATE – HALL OF WHEELS

Since early June, our Infrastructure team has been working on rebuilding the points leading into the Hall of Wheels siding which had sunken due in part to inadequate drainage causing water to collect under the concrete slab supporting the track. At the time of writing, the track had been removed and most of the slab broken out under the frog and point blades, revealing the sections of worn-out and crystallised rail that had supported it. During the removal process, it was noted that the flangeway on one of the point castings was damaged, and this will be welded as part of the rebuilding process, hopefully making it good for many more miles to come. The next jobs will be to refill the holes created under the track where the slab was removed and compact the fill; install new supports and pour a new track slab; reinstate the frog and point castings with new fishplates; and finally, reinstate the roadway. A new drainage channel will also be cut through to the pond behind the Blacksmiths Shop, hopefully preventing this issue from recurring.

### YANK 12 GETS A NEW TEMPORARY HOME

As part of its ongoing restoration, Sydney Tramway Museum's 'Yank' 12 has been given a new temporary home to reside in between bouts of restoration work: a forty-foot shipping container adjacent to the end of the traverser pit in the carpark. It has been mounted on piles to be at the right height for 12 to be rolled into the container for storage, with the help of a temporary bridge between container and traverser. Photos of this will be posted on our Society Facebook page in the next few days.

### TRAM DRIVING TIPS WITH DAVID JONES

WHEN CHANGING ENDS to drive in the opposite direction, please make sure that the trolley pole is properly set in the trailing position. It's always a good idea to ensure that rope of the front pole (on two-pole trams) is properly tied to the side. If you see a trolley rope hanging down in front of you as you drive along or as you prepare to drive off, you will know that the pole has not been changed or turned, and you will know to stop immediately and remedy the situation. When a leading pole dewires, it can damage not only the overhead but the pole base or the roof of the tram.

Want to be a really smooth driver? There are two things you can do to ensure this. One is to always cut the first notch just before you release the brake. This will give a nice gentle jerk-free start. The other is to ease the brake off slightly just as the tram comes to its final stop. The coefficient of friction between the wheels and the brake blocks increases as the tram slows so that the braking effect seems to increase, creating a nasty jerk at the end. A gentle easing of the brake as the car slows will counteract this—but make sure that you apply it fully when the tram has stopped. Don't leave air brakes on lap; the air can bleed off causing the brake to release.

## The Story of SPIFF



**ABOVE:** Dunedin 'Boxcars' 10 and 11 on being permanently coupled together for trial in 1922. No. 11 carries the SPIFF advertising on its roof panels; No. 10's roof panels advertise '4040' British Lavender Water. The two cars would be separated four years later in 1926. Photo: DCCT, Graham Stewart Collection.

When the Tramway Historical Society retrieved Dunedin Boxcar No. 11 from Pine Hill in 1966, local Dunedin people informed us that it used to be known as "Spiff" because of roof advertising boards promoting "Spiff" boot polish affixed to the car during the 1920s. For a while this name stuck but today it is probably only our longstanding older members who still remember the name and are familiar with the connection. A recent discovery by Graham Stewart of another "Spiff" tram has prompted Bruce Maffei to do some research about this product and how it was advertised.

No.11 had been coupled together with sister Boxcar No. 10 in 1922 and remained so until 1926 and a photo of it appears on p.150 in Graham Stewart's book 'Always a Tram in Sight' showing the car joined with its twin outside the Dunedin tram barn and with the SPIFF advertisement on its roof. As far as we knew, this was the only picture of "Spiff" showing the "SPIFF" advertisement.

Now Graham Stewart has located a photograph of an Auckland tram, E class No.56, in Upper Queen Street, city bound at a stop near the still existing Baptist Tabernacle and showing a 'SPIFF' advertisement on its roof mounted side advertising board. This is identical to that on Dunedin 11. Each shows a tin of SPIFF polish at either end and between the words **"It's a Better Shine "SPIFF" Boot Polish"**. Again, only one tram so far has been found in

Auckland – and none in any other cities that we have been able to find – so far.

SPIFF boot polish was a local New Zealand product which came onto the market in 1919 and was sold throughout New Zealand. It was regularly advertised in daily newspapers over the years 1919 to 1923 often featuring a cat! In most cases it refers to "boots" rather than "shoes", reflecting the common footwear of the time, though with one advert also claiming "- Spiff keeps new shoes new and makes old shoes bright and smart." The polish came in circular tins and also in bottles, in three colours - black, dark tan, light tan or white and was obtainable in all grocery shops. In 1920 you could buy three tins of SPIFF boot polish for 1/5d (a little less than 15cents). The Auckland agents were C.E. Hooper in the Brunswick Buildings, Auckland. The Wellington wholesale agents were W.E. Caldw, Cooper's Buildings, Wellington.

The word "Spiff" had been adapted by the shoe polish company from the word "spiffy" a slang term of the day which meant smart or well-dressed. A few light touches with the brush gave your boots and shoes a brilliant deep polish that made them look like new for two or three days. No-doubt it was used by many a trammie at this time to make them look spiffy. But by the mid-20s the advertising seems to have stopped. – What happened to SPIFF boot polish – perhaps it was taken over by another company? Did it fail in its claims to keep boots



bright? But to our knowledge, no other boot polish was advertised on trams? And why was it only ever advertised in Dunedin and Auckland?

The term “spiffy” seems to have returned to favour in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with a number of applications, one being the name for a North American on-demand car cleaning technology and services

company. It comes complete with a Spiffy App that will “Make your car feel new again – at work, at home”. There’s also a Spiffy Blue App which allows you to find out what’s wrong with your (modern) car by plugging into its OBD (On Board Diagnostics) port! How times have changed!

*Bruce Maffei & Dave Hinman*



**Puss, in Boots**



Bobby  
"Spiff" Cat  
Bobs Up!

“Hullo! This must be  
that New Boot Polish!”

**SPIFF**—the new Boot Polish for brown  
and black boots.  
—Makes a quicker, brighter, longer-  
lasting shine.

—That's why it was brought out!

**'Spiff'**  
It's a better Shine

**ABOVE:** Auckland E-class tram 56 in Upper Queen Street, sometime between 1918 when it received a major body rebuild and 1928 when the motorman’s platform was enclosed with the addition of ‘wings’ on either side of the apron and windshield. Upon its retirement in 1953, the body of No. 56 was sold and eventually ended up at a private property on the Coromandel Peninsula, from where it was rescued by Peter Berry and moved to the Driving Creek Railway, where it was partially restored. It is now in the care of the Auckland Electric Tramways Trust, awaiting restoration to working order.  
*PHOTO: Graham Stewart.*

**LEFT:** An example of a SPIFF Boot Polish advertisement, as reproduced from the online newspaper research repository, Papers Past. If the text of the advertisement is indicative, this was one of the first ads for SPIFF not long after its entry to the market in 1919.

*IMAGE: Bruce Maffei.*



**ABOVE:** As part of the installation of several new pieces of equipment in Tram Barn 1, two vehicles have had to be moved to make way. These vehicles are 'Standard' trailer 202 – now positioned beside the roller doors at the entrance to the tram barn – and 'Yank' 20, shown here in its new position almost hidden behind the parts racks. PHOTO: Dave Hinman.

**BELOW:** Graeme Richardson assisting Murray Sanders and Wayne Fisher (partly visible) with the installation of the new cabling being installed to power the new equipment. We hope to publish a description of what new equipment has been installed, and what prerequisites are required for using it (if any), in a future issue. PHOTO: Dave Hinman







**ABOVE:** As mentioned by Stephen, Christchurch 152 has returned home to Ferrymead for its roof to be re-canvassed by the Heritage Tramways Trust for the Christchurch Tramway. Currently parked in the paint booth in Tram Barn 3, the tram is shown here with the roof stripped down and ready for the new canvas to be laid.  
*PHOTO: Dave Hinman.*

**BELOW:** Further down the traverser pit, a 40ft container has been installed for 'Yank' 12 to live in between bouts of periodic restoration. Yet to be constructed is the bridge that will allow N<sup>o</sup> 12 to be rolled off the traverser and into the container, though this likely won't be too far away.  
*PHOTO: Dave Hinman.*







**ABOVE:** Jonathan Day and team hard at work on the Hall of Wheels siding points on Saturday 15 June; while the blade, mate and frog are out of the ground, the team will clean them up and weld up some cracks as noted previously. PHOTO: Dave Hinman.

**BELOW:** Last month we received a number of ex-Brisbane components from the Brisbane Tramway Museum. Now some of these parts are being fitted to one of the motors from Brisbane 236 as part of its ongoing truck rebuild. We hope to publish more news on this work in a future issue. PHOTO: Dave Hinman.







**ABOVE:** *A vision of High Street? Plans to revitalise High Street, published last month by the Council for public consultation, confirm the connection of the ‘missing link’ between the existing tramlines in Poplar Lane and High Street by a loop branching off Poplar and curving into High. As a side benefit, this would enable the return of trailers to the Christchurch Tramway for the first time since 2011. Unfortunately, this information was received too late for the May issue of Tracts and the closing date for comments (10 June) has now passed. The Tramway Historical Society has put in a submission of support. Council hearings and hopefully project approval is anticipated in August-September, with detailed design to follow and construction in 2020.*

*Details of the proposal, including a simulated “fly-through” are on the Council’s website at:*

*<https://ccc.govt.nz/the-council/consultations-and-submissions/haveyoursay/show/234>*

*IMAGES: Christchurch City Council.*

**FRONT COVER:** *Society Editor, Alastair Cross has recently spent two weeks on holiday in Japan enjoying the sights, sounds, and tastes – as well as the hyper-efficient transport networks operated by Japanese Railways and other private operators. During his stay in Kyoto, Alastair found at least eight trams preserved in Umekoji Park just ten minutes’ walk from Kyoto Station; of these, four were set up as information kiosks or rest areas, while another two looked to have been restored for operation along a short length of track from a nearby combined depot and cafe. The last two, N<sup>o</sup> 505 (nearest the camera) and N<sup>o</sup> 703, have been set up as a café and railway-themed gift shop respectively. Kyoto had trams from 1912 until 1978, and trolleybuses from 1932 to 1969. PHOTO: Alastair Cross.*

### **FERRYMEAD TRAM TRACTS**

**The Newsletter of the Tramway Historical Society**

**Editor: Alastair Cross**

**Contributions can be sent to the Editor at [tracts@ferrymeadtramway.org.nz](mailto:tracts@ferrymeadtramway.org.nz)**

***We welcome contributions of information for both Tracts and our Society Facebook page. Slide photographs and text are welcome by prior arrangement.***

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