



Mornington 103 makes more progress...

Don McAra reports on the latest work by Team Cable Car in the restoration of ex-Mornington grip car 103.

The latest work on Mornington 103 has focused on the reassembly of the chassis which up until now has been in pieces for repairs to be completed. Don sent two photos of the recent work as well as a short description:

One shot shows the chassis of 103 as presently laid out with work well under way. The cross pieces (new wood beside the old) are in positions showing where the cabins are set apart from the gripman's compartment. At the rear you can see the tram's roof supported on scaffolding. Stored under the roof are the cabin's sides, some of which have had old paint removed ready for reinstatement.

The other shot shows some carefully restored axle boxes sitting in the position where the axles will be fitted when wheels and axles are made. The space between the central wooden bearers is where the gripper will sit. A new one is to be constructed from scratch, with some profile cutting involved. To the right the two large (original) pieces of angle iron will form the bases of the wheel and track brake levers. The casting at bottom right is part of the track brake mechanism.

The cable cars had wheel brakes that were applied to the wheel running surfaces, as in railway vehicles. The track brake consisted of a casting which pressed a soft wood shoe on to the running rails.

As the photos and Don's blurb speak for themselves, we haven't added explanatory captions to them as we have to other photos in the past.

Top left, shows the work on the chassis with the roof in behind;

Left, the chassis showing two of the restored axle boxes remounted on the chassis in their original positions.

Photos and text courtesy Don McAra.



President's Piece—Graeme Belworthy



Firstly I must apologise to everyone because I was late getting this to Alastair holding up the release of this edition.

The COTMA Conference committee is still working hard and Registration Forms should be out by the end of the month. The program is all but complete with only a few minor details to sort out such as fitting in the different

speakers and finalising the timing of some away trips.

The usual work continues around the site with all the maintained, repairs and general upkeep required to keep the whole operation running smoothly. Most of this work is not seen by the public or in fact by some of the membership, but without the dedication of these members it would be a different story.

The current society restoration project is still Hills Car 24, which I am sure will be reported on in more detail else were in *Tracts*.

We are still getting a lot of visitors particularly from overseas. One such was Gunter Mackinger who had been brought over to New Zealand to talk to those in Wellington about the pros & cons of various public transport systems. Having spent a considerable amount of his working life in the transport business, he is a very respected authority on the subject and very much pro trolley buses and trams or as they are now called Light Rail vehicles. While addressing us he was talking to the converted but we are not sure about those in Wellington.

One final thing, please when borrowing anything from the Tram Barns record what it is, your name and the date on the white board above the dangerous good cupboard. The same goes for items borrowed from the library please record the details in the book provided.

I think that's about all I have to report.

Cheers,

Graeme

Alastair's Angle—Alastair Cross



Welcome to another issue of *Tracts*. Things are quieting down now as we all adjust back to work and study, but that doesn't mean work has been standing still either! There's still lots of work going on with the restoration of 'Hills' car 24, Mornington grip tram 103, and (hopefully) the repaint of Dunedin trolleybus 79. It will be nice to see this bus running again—and yes, I do like buses and trolleybuses just as much as trams. And there's nothing wrong with that!

As most will know, Christchurch Tramway Limited hasn't been able to run the full circuit through New Regent Street following concerns about that dreaded 'E'-word—earthquakes. Several shops owned by businesswoman Helen Thacker hadn't been restored at the same time the others were, and thus became a concern after the Valentine's Day shake. After being barricaded off for safety reasons, the good news is that Mrs. Thacker has now reached an agreement for the restoration and strengthening of the shops, which means trams can start running the full loop again very soon and even better, an

increase in patronage for the shops on New Regent Street. With no trams running through, it's as if the street doesn't exist anymore and businesses have had a 60% decrease in trade as a direct result.

By the time you receive *Tracts*, Easter will have been and gone, with the next public holiday on the cards being ANZAC Day. What we have planned, I don't know; but if previous ANZAC Day events have been much to go by, it should be quite interesting. No doubt we will hear more about this in due course.

Well, that's about all from me this month as I prepare to go back to University for my Masters degree. The topic? It was to have been trolley buses and still could be, though if not, it will keep rolling as a suitable 'background project'.

That's enough from me for now.

Cheers,

Alastair

Catch Point—Erratum

BUS-TED!

Another gremlin crept into the last issue of *Tracts*—on page 4, reference is made to bus 512 being repainted by the Heritage Tramways Trust with volunteer assistance. Unfortunately this is incorrect; and the reference in fact was to another Bristol RELL, 510, which happily is in our collection (does anyone know what happened to 512, by the way?)

(My apologies for the terrible humour! — Ed.)

CABLE-CAR CORRECTIONS

Some people may have noticed an odd blue tinge to Don McAra's fantastic painting of the Mornington cable-car line on page 5 last issue. The original image as supplied had a pronounced blue colouring, and was reduced to the 'tinge' shown through correction. Once this was done, the image was more acceptable for publication

though we regret not being able to produce the image in its original state as published by Don in 2007.

CITY TRAMWAY TO REOPEN FULL ROUTE SOON

Not quite a correction, but a development of our front-page 'Breaking News' last issue about the closure of New Regent Street to trams following concerns about five un-restored shops, privately owned by local businesswoman Helen Thacker.

Shortly before this issue went to press, the Christchurch *Press* carried an article stating Mrs. Thacker had reached an agreement to have the five shops restored, allowing trams to once more continue around the full circuit. The date set for completion is April 8.

This will be music to the ears of the New Regent Street business owners, who have witnessed a decrease of 60% in trade due to the loss of tram services down the street.

Invercargill Birney 16 moves into preservation

Just as *Tracts* was being finally assembled, Michael McIlrath posted us a photo of an ex-Invercargill 'Birney' tram, asking whether it was our restored No. 15. At first it was thought to be No. 15 until David Maciulaitis said that it wasn't, and that the mystery 'Birney' was owned by the Bill Richardson Transport World museum.

After contacting BRTW via Facebook, Alastair Cross was put onto an article by the BRTW Facebook Manager which stated the tram in question is Invercargill 16, the last of the six 'Birney' cars built for Invercargill in 1921 and sister car to our own restored 15. On its withdrawal, No. 16 ended up in Te Anau owned by Mr. Ward Beer before moving to Davaar sheep station near The Keys in 1965 after the McDonald family brought it from Ward for £150.

The tram is to be restored by BRTW although whether for display only or operation hasn't been stated. The original canvas roof covering and internal tongue-and-groove ceiling are still intact and well-protected, as the *Southland Times* and What's On Invers website have reported. Thanks to the BRTW, Michael McIlrath and Alastair for uncovering the identity of the mystery 'Birney'.



ABOVE: Almost home —Invercargill 'Birney' 16, back in the city it served from 1922 to 1951-52.

Photo courtesy Michael McIlrath.

Driving Tips with David Jones

Tram crews are reminded that passengers wishing to visit the tram barns must be accompanied by a member of the tram crew. The tram barns are workplaces with many hazards and visitors need to be carefully supervised and warned of possible danger. This is particularly important where young children are concerned. Young children should not be taken into the tram barn when welding is being undertaken. Running sheet clipboards now have a laminated information sheet with brief histories for tram crews to read about the trams and tram barns.

Bruce Whiteside Reflects On... Restoring 178

Now back to a little history. As the old *Press* cutting reveals in my original picture old 178, had long since gone off the rails. In fact it was no more than a carcass, devoid of all the extraneous metal bits and pieces that makes a tram move. Never-the-less it was joy to those unsung pioneers who cast their eyes on the old girl languishing down in Temuka. Built in the 1920s, they were very similar to the H Class of Adelaide and originally often ran in tandem, with poles on both conducting the electric supply from above. Later they were converted to One Man trams and only thereafter travelled in one direction only—that meant either a loop or “Y” at the terminal.

Transported to the embryonic Ferrymead, 178 began the long journey back to life. What I recall was the long search world wide for part to make her go. You see unlike many cities that retain and pass on to museums the tired old faithfuls, Christchurch stripped all their old trams and set the scrap to Japan. To those who love trams, this was not only sacrilege but made grown men weep. What a mammoth job it was. I seem to remember that the controller was found in Sydney from a person who either used it or was going to for a model railway. Gradually over time the bits and pieces, coupled to the ingenuity of the dedicated men who fabricated many of the improvised working parts to make it a living tram. So where did we find the Brill 77E trucks ...well we didn't, we ran the body on W class bogies for years and eventually they managed to find a set of trucks from the Victorian Railways and overhauled and regauged them.

Over the years 178 has undergone many livery changes. Some I will produce here. From the original, to the later standard green and cream to the brilliant red. In fact at one time the idea of changing the whole system to red and cream saw 'Brill' 179 painted and it was seen spasmodically *en route* to Cranford Street, Lincoln Road or New Brighton. (*'Brill' 179 was repainted in red in 1937, but was later repainted green sometime after WWII—Ed.*)

The wonder of this story is the dream of boys to realise those dreams. From an old derelict Kitson steam tram, fired with the ambition and determination of youth that kernel has seen the realisation of the many trams that ply in their tourist capacity the streets of a city its self rising from its death throes. Christchurch is the city I have always loved having lived there for thirty years. For a short period I was a willing painter who actually got to drive 178 along the original track that ran alongside the Bridle Path Road. It is unfair to pick out any one member for the amazing dedication and on going devotion to the Tramway Historical Society, but two men, the most modest that you would ever find lifted a dream to a living monument for the kids of tomorrow, that we as kids took for granted. Two men, John Shanks and Murray Sanders were the driving force both mentally and electrically, who allowed the dream to keep running over 50 years on.

BELOW: The finished product! 'Brill' 178 restored to working order, sometime between 1978 and 1982. The tram is parked somewhere near the current depot—can any reader advise where? Photo courtesy Bruce Whiteside.



Bruce Whiteside Reflects On... Restoring 178



ABOVE: Bruce's paper clipping shows the recovery of three trams—'Brill' 178 from the Milford Huts near Temuka, 'Boon' 152 from South Brighton, and 'Duckhouse' 115. Photo courtesy Bruce Whiteside.

LEFT: 'Brill' 179 as it is today, running on the Christchurch Tramway. The photo was taken on the opening day of the new High St. Extension, 12 February 2015. The 'Brill' had just arrived in Cathedral Square behind 'Boon' 152, which was running as a Charter tram. For completeness, 'Duckhouse' 115 is stored at Ferrymead. Photo courtesy A. Cross.

Back of the (Tram) Barn



ABOVE: And now for something different on our back page—Mornington gripman Jack Johnston rings the bell on grip tram 101 as it crosses the Mornington Domain alongside Eglington Road shortly before reaching the terminus. Jack has his hand on the grip lever, with the wheel brake lever on his left and track brake lever on his right.

No. 101 was one of four grip trams built by Glaister & Carey at the time of the 1903 Mornington depot fire. The final disposition of No. 101 is unknown; however, sister car No. 103 is currently under restoration to working order at Ferrymead for the Dunedin Light Rail Trust. Photo courtesy Don McAra; original from the Dunedin Star.