

FERRYMEAD

Tram Tracts



The Journal of the Tramway Historical Society

Issue 9—September 2016



Bruce Maffei presents... The Standard Trailers

A look at Christchurch's distinctive 'Standard' trailers

Vale—Geraldine Bowman 1915-2016

John Shanks pays tribute to the last Christchurch tramwaywoman

Last Call for COTMA!

Coming to COTMA? There's still some openings for the Conference!

President's Piece—Graeme Belworthy



Hi All,

The Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia (COTMA) Conference is finally upon us. The first day of the conference on Friday (14 October) is being hosted in the city, and the rest — Saturday 15, Sunday 16 and Monday 17 October — will be hosted at Ferrymead. From about 2.15pm on Saturday conference attendees will be on a behind the

scenes tour of Ferrymead and on Monday after lunch it will be play time for everyone. We would ask that as many members as possible be present to show our guests around our site. This is our chance to show like minded enthusiasts what we have achieved.

We are still working on the areas we have identified that need attention. This will be ongoing until we have a site we are proud of, and any help is appreciated. A lot of work has been done and the site is starting to look better already.

The plans for the Diesel Bus Barn are a stage where we can go for funding but need our accounts audited. This is the first year of a new auditing requirements and is taking a little longer than anticipated. In the meantime the area is being cleared. Ferrymead Trust is moving the octagonal (the original entrance) building down to Coronation Park. The Society will dispose of the Hiab truck and the Dangerous Goods Store will be relocated to a suitable location.

On the 19 & 20 November the Society will be holding a membership drive and to kick this off we will have a table set up at the Model Train Show to be held at Pioneer Stadium over the weekend of 1st & 2nd October. We will have displays and items for sale and generally advertise the Society.

Along with the site clean up the normal day to day work continues that enables the trams and buses to operate in the normal way which is the public face of the Society.

Cheers,

Graeme

Alastair's Angle—Alastair Cross



Welcome to your latest issue of *Tracts*. Hopefully most of you will receive this in time to make most of Graeme's above spiel relevant, particularly the part about the Big Model Train Show. As a regular attendee — when work schedules allow — I'm looking forward to seeing what the Society has set up for this year's show. It's always well worth attending, if not just to see what Colin and Barry have produced (if they're exhibiting their tramway models).

Over the last month, work has progressed to get our site ready for the upcoming COTMA Conference, and for those of us who haven't been down recently to see what site improvements have been made over the last month, we will have to take Graeme's word for it.

On a sadder note, we record the passing of members Geraldine Bowman (101) on 20 August, and Allen Harbrow (72) on 4 September. Allen was a Management Committee member, a member of our Bus Team and the creator of the Society's two Facebook pages (one each for trams and buses), while Geraldine was one of the last living persons to have been employed by the CTB on its

trams pre-1954. Not only that, but she went on to conduct both at Ferrymead on our THS tramway, but on the Christchurch Tramway as well! I don't know anyone else who can claim the distinction of working on three separate tramway systems, and all in the same city. Due to time constraints we were unable to publish an obituary for Allen, which will follow in next month's issue.

This month marks the start of a new series from Bruce Maffei, who has written up a short history of the CTB's "Standard" trailers. Just two of these trailers are known definitely to survive—126 and 202 in our collection at Ferrymead — though I would be pleased to hear from anyone who can confirm the continued existence of 'Last Tram' trailer 201 at Lake Ohau.

There's still plenty to do at Ferrymead in the run up to COTMA—which still has some last-minute openings for those who wish to come—and we encourage you to come down and lend a hand if you can. Thanks to you, our members and volunteers, we are not only hosting a world-class event, but taking steps toward the revival of our Society.

Cheers,

Alastair

Traffic Notices — THS Work Days and COTMA 2016

Ferrymead Work Days

As noted in Graeme Belworthy's editorial piece, the Society is continuing its regular Saturday Work Days with the goal of having our Ferrymead depot site cleaned up sufficiently for the COTMA Conference in October and the Membership Drive in November. With the Conference coinciding with the third Saturday of October—which would usually be our major Work Day, Alan Roi has informed that there will not be a formal Work Day this October as a result.

Our regular Work Days are not only a means of getting regular maintenance and infrastructure upgrades done around Ferrymead Park and along our tramway, they are a great means of getting together and sharing in a bit of camaraderie and banter. Alan also provides refreshments and a full cooked lunch for all who attend.

COTMA is almost here!

Delegates to the 2016 COTMA conference will begin arriving in Christchurch from around 10 October, with the first event (registration and welcome gathering) kicking off on the evening of Thursday 13th, following a meeting of the COTMA Executive. In the meantime there's still lots to do at Ferrymead in preparation both for COTMA and the Membership drive which will follow in November. SO if you have some spare time over the next two Saturdays we would love to see you on site. We are also looking for volunteers to help with the conference itself - including assisting with registration (Thurs evening and Friday morning), getting involved with our partners' programme, helping set up (and or later dismantle) our conference venue at Ferrymead and being on a special driving and conducting roster at Ferrymead on the afternoons of Saturday 15th and Monday 17th when we are going to have most of the fleet out and operating for our guests. And if anyone not yet booked in who would still like to attend some of the sessions and dinners etc., it is not too late so long as we know by early next week. Contact us as soon as possible on cotma2016@ferrymeadtramway.org.nz, or call Dave H 0274 314 778 or Graeme B 021 023 25989.

Vale—Geraldine Bowman 1915-2016

Geraldine Bowman, the very last of the old “trammies” has gone – and we pay a special tribute to her for she was a very long-standing member of our Society – and for many of us a very special friend. Geraldine passed away on 12 August 2016 at the age of 101. She was proud of her association with us and even more proud of her years of service as a tram conductor.

Geraldine's husband David was in the Medical Corps during the war and stayed to look after wounded soldiers after Crete was invaded. As a result he was captured and spent the rest of the war as a prisoner in Stalag 8B in Germany. It was a worrying time for Geraldine, with two young children and, for a time, no news of her husband. A friend suggested that she seek a job with the Tramways to take her mind off her difficulties! With many men away on war service, the Tramway Board, for the first time, was taking on women as tram conductors. Geraldine joined up in 1942 and continued in the job until the very last day of the trams on 11 September 1954.

Geraldine lived in Sumner. Her father-in-law lived next door and was able to look after the children while she was away at work. The hours were long and demanding – tram services began very early in the morning and ran until very late at night. Although there was a tram depot at Sumner from which the very early and late services had once operated, by Geraldine's time all services were



ABOVE: Former CTB conductress Geraldine Bowman in her former uniform, seen at Cathedral Junction with 'Brill' 178 to mark its 100,000th trip on the Christchurch Tramway. Photo: Roy Sinclair, courtesy Joe Pickering.

based at the main depot in Moorhouse Avenue. Her morning involved biking in from Sumner to Moorhouse Avenue ready to be on the first tram out of the depot – back to Sumner! The afternoon shift involved biking home from the depot after 11 o'clock at night all the way back to Sumner – and in all weathers! There was no

Vale—Geraldine Bowman 1915-2016

petrol for cars during those war years. It was a pretty demanding schedule. Geraldine would sometimes claim that she had had enough and wouldn't go back in the morning – but she always did! Coupling and uncoupling trailers she found frightening! She was afraid of being squashed, but she learned to cope. She even had to do stints as the pointsman in the middle of Colombo Street at the “Bottleneck” of the Square: a chilling experience in bad weather! There were rarely problems on one of Geraldine's trams – she had the charisma to quell unruly behaviour, although sometimes with a little difficulty – it was the days of six o'clock closing! Sometimes her children would board the tram on a cold night at Sumner to bring their mother a drink of hot chocolate. When the Sumner line closed at the end of 1952, Geraldine transferred to the Cashmere-Papanui line until it closed on 11 September 1954.

We remember Geraldine, dressed in her conductor's uniform at the “old trammies” days that we used to hold at Ferrymead, at many other functions and commemorations and, in particular, on the day the City Tramway opened – 4 February 1995 – when Society members were invited to help out because of the crowds expected. Immaculate in her real CTB uniform, Geraldine enjoyed herself and – she knew what to do, being an experienced hand at the game. How many of

the rest of us could still fit trimly into a uniform 40 years after retirement?

When Geraldine turned 100, she received the usual birthday card from the Queen and other congratulatory cards from a range of national and political figures. One card, however, was very special. It was from Prince Harry, who was visiting Stewart Island at the time. Geraldine's daughter-in-law who lives there asked Prince Harry if he would mind signing a card for a hundredth birthday. She expected something minimal. What Geraldine received was this, in the Prince's own handwriting:

“Dear Mrs Bowman,

Congratulations on reaching such a fantastic milestone. I hope you have a lovely day.

Best wishes,
Harry”

Geraldine's family tell wonderful stories of her long and adventurous life. Society members, also, recall her wonderful stories and a wonderful charismatic person with a zest for life. She was a greatly valued member of the Society and we shall miss her greatly. To her family we extend our deepest sympathies while remembering a life very well lived.

- John Shanks

Latest News from ‘Hills’ Car 24



ABOVE: Earlier this month, Stephen Taylor and his team restoring CTB ‘Hills’ car 24 completed the installation of the roof pillars and seat bases in the convertible section. Photographed on 12 September 2016, shortly after the last parts had been finally installed. Photo: Stephen Taylor.

Bruce Maffei Presents—The Standard Trailers

Bruce Maffei presents the first part of a history of the CTB 'Standard' trailers. In this issue: The origins of the 'Standard' trailers and the construction of the first ten.

Following the opening of the Christchurch Electric Tramways in 1905 the Tramway Board urgently needed more rolling stock so as a stop gap measure (which ultimately lasted the life of the tramway!) converted most of the former steam and horse trams into trailers to be hauled behind the electric trams. Their engineer, Mr. Scott Symington immediately began to design new trams and trailers. The first new trailers he designed were the Duckhouses, these being Palace type trailers, six of which were built in 1908. Their next engineer Mr. Nelson designed the outside sliding aluminium panels which were fitted to the next trailers constructed, these being the eight large bogie Dreadnought trailers. However, these trailers proved extremely heavy, so they followed this by building two four wheel versions with the same aluminium sliding panels known as the 'Big Berthas'. Several similar trailers were later built for the Wanganui Tramways.

However, by 1916 the Tramways needed more new trailers and so were looking at several different trailer types. Type D had end entrances, type E had side entrances, type F had the whole side open, type G had straight sides with one side entrance. Type D was eventually chosen. These had a single saloon with end entrances with sliding aluminium panels in the end doorways. This became the new 'Standard' trailer. They were built with semi-steel sides below the lower rocker panels and were fitted with anti-over-rider bumpers the first vehicles so fitted. These trailers proved very successful and saw fewer body changes than any other Christchurch Tramway vehicles. The only changes were to be the removal of the aluminium sliding door panels.

In August 1916 seventeen new 'type D' trailers were recommended to replace some of the aging steam tram trailers. Tenders were called in September and in December the tender of Boon and Company was accepted with delivery in four months. The first trailer would cost £585, 16 more at £555 with delivery in 17 months. Cooper and Duncan's tender for Peckham P21 trucks was accepted. The cost of each trailer was £555 (body) plus £262 (truck), total £817. By June 1918 seven of these new Standard trailers were completed and on the road.

The next instalment of Bruce's series will focus on the entry to service of the next batch of 'Standard' trailers and some of the design modifications made to the fleet after the CTB's experience with the first batch.



ABOVE: The first of a new generation. The first 'Standard' trailer, No. 126 at Falsgrave Street depot on its entry to service, c. 1917. Originally fitted with the same aluminium blinds as the 'Dreadnought' and 'Big Berthas' on its end platforms, these were later replaced by two-part doors. Withdrawn in 1954, No. 126 was sold for use as a holiday home on Banks Peninsula before being acquired by THS for preservation. Photo: Graham Stewart collection.



ABOVE: A closer view of the aluminium sliding panel and window arrangement on the end platform of No. 126. Less than reliable in service, they were soon taken out and replaced with normal doors.

Photo: Graham Stewart collection.



From the Graham Stewart collection...

ABOVE: Parked in the sidings at the Falsgrave Street depot on 28 January 1951, 'Standard' trailers 139 and 127 show a marked difference to the third vehicle present, ex-'Standard' trailer 203. One of three rebuilt in 1927 for use as one-man cars on Route 12 to St. Martins, No. 203 was the last of its type in service following the withdrawal of No. 204 in 1949 and the reconversion of No. 205 to a 'Standard' trailer in 1945. The end platforms on 203 have been visibly altered by removal of the standard front aprons as modelled by Nos. 139 and 127, and replaced with a shorter, flatter version to accommodate air-operated folding doors, since removed for 'Bike Tram' duties. Photo: Graham Stewart.

FRONT PAGE: Over a year earlier on 2 January 1950, renowned tramway historian Graeme Stewart found 'Bike Tram' 203 and trailer 103 turning into Colombo Street from Moorhouse Avenue. The second 'Bike Tram', 203 was converted to fill this role following the withdrawal of the first 'Bike Tram', former Luggage Tram No. 30 in mid-1947 after it collided with a 'Boon' and trailer on Moorhouse Ave in dense fog. Upon closure of the last tramway routes in September 1954, the 'Bike Tram' was replaced by two 'Square' Ford buses, Nos. 244 and 246. In the background can be seen part of the railway-type signal which controlled tram access across the busy Colombo Street level crossing. Photo: Graham Stewart.

Ferrymead Tram Tracts

The newsletter of the Tramway Historical Society

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We welcome contributions of material for publication in Tram Tracts—if you have anything tram, bus or trolleybus-related you want to share with us, please email it to the Editor at tracts@ferrymeadtramway.org.nz or post to 17 Huntingdon Dr, Rangiora 7400.

