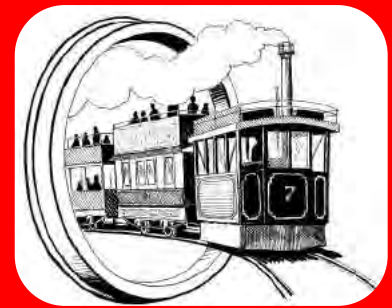


FERRYMEAD

Tram Tracts



The Journal of the Tramway Historical Society

Issue 18—September 2017



Farewell New Plymouth—50 Years Ago

Alan Roi looks back at the end of the New Plymouth trolleybuses

Here Comes Sydney 1808

CTL's newest arrival lands at Ferrymead for some attention

Restoration Report: Invercargill 16

Dave Hinman reports on progress with Invercargill 'Birney' 16

President's Piece—Graeme Belworthy



Hi All,

The last general meeting was the Annual General Meeting attended by about 25 members. The Management Committee is now three members short following the death of Allan Harbrow. If you or someone you know would be interested in joining the committee please come forward and help run our Society.

Following the formal part of the meeting Dave Hinman presented a presentation about the new tram for the city, Sydney R-class No. 1808. The tram is at Ferrymead so the HTT staff can make a few minor repairs and give it a repaint, and it is due in town for the summer season.

The Diesel Bus Barn Resource Consent is currently being formally drawn up and will be submitted to the Council very shortly. The fence along Bridle Path Road is now complete securing the site. The current Project Leader for this project is John Atkinson, but John has asked to be relieved of all his administration positions by the end of 2017, which means we need someone to take over the Diesel Bus Barn project. John has stated he will help the incoming person in any way he can.

The problem with flooding around the ring road may

have been solved. Graeme Richardson used one of his community workers to dig up and expose the drain pipes between two of the sumps on the outside edge of the road and this resulted in all the water. We followed this the other Saturday by removing the pipes between those sumps, cleaning them and relaying them and concreting joints to prevent soil and other material entering the drain and cleared the pipe under the road. The next heavy rain will tell if we have solved the problem.

We now have four new tram drivers that have passed all the requirements to drive and have two more ready to start the process. This is very welcome, as it makes John Harris' job of filling the roster much easier.

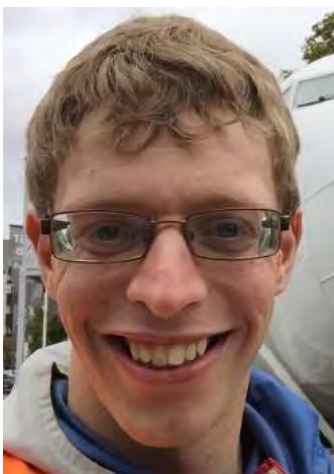
Infrastructure and vehicle maintenance continues across the whole fleet. The Kitson steam tram is undergoing its 10-year survey and it has been found that the current boiler needs a great deal of work doing to bring it up to standard. The second boiler we have in Tram Barn 1 is in better condition and a better option to repair and install in the tram. Unfortunately, this will take some time and expense. Work is presently continuing on the restoration of 'Hills' car 24. More detail on this subject will follow in next month's *Tracts*.

The Society's annual Dinner is to be held this month. More details on this elsewhere in *Tracts*.

Cheers,

Graeme

Alastair's Angle—Alastair Cross



Welcome to another issue of *Tracts*. This month, we are trying something different, and in particular with the front and back covers. Yes, they're not the traditional Christchurch green that I'd normally use! To honour both fifty years since the end of the only provincial trolleybus service in New Zealand and the arrival of Sydney 1808 at Ferrymead, their colours—or a rough

approximation thereof—have graced this month's covers. I do hope they are close enough, as my software probably doesn't have an exact match.

As Wellington looks to discard its trolleybuses (where's the common sense in that?), it's timely to remember that their October demise will be shared with the

anniversary of another trolleybus closure—fifty years since New Plymouth closed its single trolleybus route down. Consideration has been given to having our ex-New Plymouth trolleybus, No. 3, in working order, but with the anniversary looming and a lapsed COF, help will be needed if this is to happen. You can read about this on p. 6.

Please note that this weekend we have our annual get-together and dinner—if you are coming but haven't RSVP'd yet, please do so urgently. Please also make a note of our upcoming Work Day, which has been absent from *Tracts* due to my absent-mindedness. This is an essential part of keeping our Society running, and thanks in part to my missing it out of the last few issues, we haven't had as great a number turning out to help.

Well, that's about all from me.

Cheers,

Alastair

Notices

MONTHLY WORK DAY

Our next workday is this coming Saturday - 16 September, and all members are encouraged to come along and help. Morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea will be provided. Even if you can only make part of a day you will be made welcome and given something useful to do.

Final Notice—September Function

September Function

Sunday September 17th

Our annual dinner

Time :- Meet at 6pm to eat at 6.15pm

Where :- Garden Restaurant 110 Marshlands Road

Cost Adults \$31.50, Seniors (i.e. 60plus) \$29.50

Can you please let Phyllis know by September 13th;
either ring (03)352 4872, Txt 027 227 0343, or email
- trixiebell@xtra.co.nz

News In Brief



Fences in Armagh Street—another obstacle for trams to negotiate. Turn overleaf for more... Photo: Dave Hinman

News In Brief

FROM THE CHRISTCHURCH TRAMWAY

Commencing on Monday 4 September trams now have to negotiate yet another building site, this time in Armagh Street where the northern half of the road, including the tram tracks, has been fenced off as part of the refurbishment of Victoria Square and the adjacent roadway. As a tram approaches the Armagh St bridge a set of road cones are removed and then a gate opened to let the tram through, with a second gate at Colombo Street for it to exit. Road traffic is now east bound only, with all parking removed from the south side of the street. This work, which will also include the reconstruction of the south side of Armagh Street, is expected to take until March 2018 to complete. As in the case of the on-going road works in Oxford Tce/ Worcester Bld, the contractors and tramway are working well together to minimise disruption to tram operations.

SYDNEY 1808 ARRIVES AT FERRYMEAD

After sitting on a Lyttelton wharf for a few days, Sydney tram 1808 finally arrived at Ferrymead on the afternoon of Monday 14 August, at a time following heavy rain and some flooding, including some of the Ferrymead township tram track. It was off loaded in the township and then towed to Bridle Path Rd and the tram barns by "The Beast" (5W), as the poles, bases and lifeguard equipment had been stripped for travel. 1808's wheelbase is slightly smaller than our other Australian trams and was able to fit (just) on the traverser for relocating to Road 4 in tram barn 1. However, to get it on to the pit in tram barn two is a different matter - as was discovered by the team, barn 2 is located too close

to the pit and jacking the far end truck on 1808 would be necessary due to the length of its body.

BUS NEWS WITH ALAN ROI

Over the last few months bus 538 has resided in the spray booth. We have replaced all the window rubbers as they had reached their "use by" date and some of the windows were at risk of falling out. A team led by John Atkinson with Brian Fairbrass and Graeme Belworthy have replaced all these rubbers. John obtained a die to enable us to make the appropriate rubber for this type of bus. All the red paint from window line upwards looked really tired, and it was decided that this red part of the bus should be redone. Thanks to Brian and Graeme Richardson the bus looks 200% better. There are still one or two jobs to do on this bus before it is ready to be used again.

Bus 510 has been parked up with an electrical fault. We received some assistance from Norman Cook, who worked on these buses and has found the fault. He still needs to come back to complete the job.

Bus 612 has had tyres replaced and other minor work to enable it to obtain a new COF. This bus is needed for a couple of Society jobs shortly.

Currently resident at Ferrymead is Dunedin Leyland

BELOW: *Touchdown! Sydney 1808 has arrived safely at Ferrymead. Shortly after it was unloaded, CTL team members David Maciulaitis, Ken Henderson, Larry Day and Alex Hunter (all CTL) pose with 1808 to formally record its arrival.*

Photo: Barry Marchant



News In Brief

Leopard No 180. This was Dunedin's prototype Hess bodied bus and is owned by our friends, the Otago Heritage Bus Society. One of their members (and a recent new member of the THS) has been giving the bus some much needed TLC. Bringing the bus to Christchurch was easier for Anthony than him travelling to Dunedin. We hope that when the bus is operational we can run a society trip in it. Our current thinking is that we will travel over the former CTB trolleybus routes. To ensure we get a good look at the former trolleybus routes, we will be doing this on a Sunday afternoon. As this may come up at short notice we may not have time to advise this trip by mail and may have to resort to email only.

The trolleybuses continue to operate on Steam Sundays with Wellington 103 carrying the brunt of the work. Christchurch 210 is road legal but is going to need a replacement leaf in one of its springs before it passes its next COF. This is not completely unsurprising in a bus that is 86 years old.

MEMBERS SPOTLIGHT: RATA INGRAM

Although we have not had any further new members join the Society lately, David Jones has provided a short bio on one of our latest members and now qualified "motor-man", Rata Ingram. Rata is a university student studying quantum physics. Rata has lived in the Heathcote Valley most of her life and the earlier photo below shows Rata "driving" the double decker bus at Ferrymead when she was just eight years of age and accompanied by her grandfather Ron and father Michael Ingram. The more recent photo shows Rata driving No. 26 during training. Rata has taken an interest in Ferrymead and the trams since childhood. This is true of most of our members particularly the generation that established Ferrymead after trams were replaced by buses in the 1950s. Most of us developed an interest in transport during our formative years when we became fascinated with the familiar modes of transport in our environment.



Tram Driving Tips with David Jones

When changing ends on a two-pole tram (24 or 236) it is good practise to put the second pole up before pulling the first pole down. This maintains electrical continuity – eliminating arcing between the trolley wheel and the live overhead. It also allows the lights to stay on. The only exceptions to this are:

- (a) when the tram has stopped under a section isolator where there is then the risk that a dead section will be livened up if two poles are raised with the potential to cause serious injury or death by electrocution;
- (b) when the tram is inside tram barns 1 or 2 and there is the risk that putting a second pole up will short circuit the power supply and cause damage if one of the poles comes into contact with the building structure while the other pole is on the wire.

New Plymouth Trolleybuses—50 Years After Closure

As Wellington looks to discard its trolleybus network in October 2017, another former trolleybus network will reach fifty years since closure. Alan Roi looks at the end of the New Plymouth trolleybus network in October 1967.

Saturday October the 7th marks the 50th anniversary of the closure of the New Plymouth Trolleybus service, on both the same day and month. New Plymouth had operated electric transport for 57 years, being originally operated by trams. The Borough as it was in those days claimed it was the smallest municipality to operate electric trams on the overhead trolley system. This was also one of five provincial towns to run electric trams. The others were Invercargill, Gisborne, Napier and Wanganui. However, the New Plymouth system was the last to open, in March 1916. It boasted three tram routes: Fitzroy- Port, Liardet Street and Westown. The network had ten trams comprising four single-truck Boon trams, three double-truck Boons and three Birney Safety Cars.

By the late 1940s the Council was looking at replacing the trams and purchased four Crossley Empire TSD42/1 trolleybus chassis, of the same type and model that were being obtained in Wellington. As Crossley Motors were taken over by AEC around this time, it is thought that these were the last Crossley branded trolleybuses in the world. The council apparently got cold feet and unsuccessfully tried to dispose of these buses. They then bodied the buses in their own workshops copying the bodies used on the ones in Wellington and converted the Westown route to trolleybus operation. The last tram to Westown was on 6 October 1950 and the trolleybuses took over later that month, with the official first run being on Friday 27 October at 3pm. The four buses were based at the Electricity Department's yard in Liardet Street until 1964 when the yard was sold. They then were based at the motorbus depot in Rangī St, beside the Railway station. The buses were built with wooden framed bodies, and consequently did not have a long life. Bus No. 4 was withdrawn in 1964 but the other three soldiered on until the closure of the system.

New Plymouth had regularly copied the design of buses used by other municipalities, a good example being ten AEC Mk 4 buses of the same design used here in Christchurch. Therefore, they ordered three AEC New Reliances numbered 1 to 3 to replace the trolleys. These were built by NZ Motor Bodies and are copies of the Christchurch ones such as our 452. As part of a deal to obtain trolley bus overhead and the remaining three buses it was arranged with the New Plymouth Council that a team from the Wellington Tramway Museum and our society would dismantle the system. This was achieved over a five-day period with some of the running wire and fittings going to each Museum and the remainder being sold for scrap to cover the costs of the exercise. A good portion of our tramway uses former New Plymouth wire. On 6 October 1967, the day before closure, several of our members were shown how to drive and then successfully passed their trolleybus licence tests. The three remaining buses were all preserved, with Nos. 1 and 2 going to the Wellington Tramway Museum and No. 3 coming to us at Ferrymead where it was externally repainted in its original New Plymouth Tramways livery. All three buses were towed to Wellington where No. 3 was given an opportunity to operate under the wires before coming south. Then in 1999 the bus returned to Wellington to participate in a celebration of 50 continuous years of trolleybus operation. Currently No. 3, still in going order, is in storage in the trolleybus shed at Ferrymead while No. 1 resides at the Wellington Tramway Museum at McKay's Crossing in an unrestored state. No. 2 was sold to the late Ian Little who later got it mobile by putting a diesel engine in it. More recently, after spending several years stored in the open No. 2 was scrapped, with some parts retained as spare parts. These included its differential and rear axle, obtained for future use by the THS as the differential on No. 3 is very noisy.

Trolleybus No. 3 has been in our possession for 50 years, close to three times as long as it was in service. At a recent committee meeting it was resolved to look at the possibility of running the bus on a special permit for the anniversary. Unfortunately, its registration has lapsed and it is not practical at this stage to remedy this. So please watch this space. Anyone who would like to assist with this is welcome to help.

This article was written with assistance from Dave Hinman and Graeme Bennett.

FACING PAGE TOP: *It's 7 October 1967, and New Plymouth trolleybus No. 3 has made its final run under the wires from the city to Westown. This picture was taken as the bus prepared to head back to the city, and eventually south via Wellington to Ferrymead. Photo: Courtesy Alan Roi.*

FACING PAGE BOTTOM: *A contrast in styles! New Plymouth No. 3, restored to its original livery, poses alongside exCTB Leyland RELL No. 510 outside the Trolleybus Shed on an unknown date. Today, only 510 is capable of regularly being used; No. 3 is parked in the Trolleybus Shed and needs some TLC before she can move again under her own power. Photo: Courtesy Alan Roi.*

New Plymouth Trolleybuses—50 Years After Closure



From New Plymouth to Ferrymead...



Restoration Report: Invercargill Birney 16

In March and April 2016, *Tracts* reported the rediscovery of Birney No.16 at Davaar sheep station near Te Anau and its subsequent acquisition by an Invercargill transport museum. Having heard reports about the progress of its restoration, Dave and Dot Hinman decided to travel on to Invercargill following the FRONZ conference in Dunedin.

We stayed overnight in one of Invercargill's oldest hotels, the Grand, these days operating as part backpackers, part permanent boarders, but still retaining some elements of its elegant past. This included part of the suite where Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip stayed during their 1953-4 NZ tour, with the royal chairs they sat on still in place and proudly showed to us by the hotel manager. The hotel, in Dee Street, is not very far from those other interesting historical Invercargill buildings - the former tram shed, and adjacent former MED building with the original plaque commemorating the start of building the Invercargill tramways in 1911

On to the museum. Located a short distance from the city centre further east along Tay Street, we met curator Graeme Williams and were treated to a detailed tour of the very impressive collection and display which comprises the Bill Richardson Transport World. The history of this museum which only formally opened to the public a couple of years ago is an interesting story. It is dedicated to the late Bill Richardson, whose family's interests in transport had commenced in 1878 when his great grandfather Samuel settled in Wyndham running a stage coach and livery business. Bill's grandfather, Robert, and father, Harold, established and developed R Richardson Ltd, a building business, and Niagara Sawmilling. Niagara spawned Southern Transport in 1946, with four trucks used to cart lumber for the mill. This was the spark that ignited Bill's love of trucks and trucking. He abandoned his joinery apprenticeship at the age of 20 after persuading his father to allow him to expand Southern Transport. In the mid 70's, after acquisitions of many surrounding transport companies, Bill was looking for a new challenge and decided to expand into ready-mix concrete. Allied Concrete was purchased in 1976, consisting of two plants, one in Invercargill and one in Gore. After the acquisition of many other ready-mix companies throughout New Zealand, there are now over 40 plants nationwide, but with the head office remaining in Invercargill. HW Richardson Group (HWR) also later entered the petroleum business and today Allied Petroleum also operates nationwide. In the meantime, Bill had begun collecting and restoring old trucks, starting in 1967 with the purchase of the remains of his grandfather's 1933 International truck. By the time of his death in 2005 he had over 170 vehicles, plus numerous petrol bowlers

and related memorabilia. What had been a privately housed available for inspection by invitation only has been expanded by his family and with the public opening of the new Bill Richardson Transport World in 2015 there are now more than 300 vehicles on display together with wearable arts, a fully equipped conference centre, café and gift shop and workshop facilities both on site and at various other premises around Invercargill. A large motor cycle collection, Classic Motor Cycle Mecca, was purchased in 2016 and relocated from Nelson to restored buildings elsewhere in Tay Street.

The late Dave Carr had business dealings with HWR, including current Managing Director Jocelyn O'Donnell, daughter of Bill Richardson and this resulted in the THS receiving considerable assistance from the Group with the provision of concrete for the construction of Tram Barn 3, post-earthquake. Dave C. was also involved and provided advice in the rediscovery and subsequent acquisition of Birney 16 by HWR which Jocelyn has an enthusiastic interest in, and she continues to drive its restoration.

The tram restoration project, which includes part time volunteers as well as museum staff, is located on a separate site a couple of street blocks away where there are some old sheds, ideal as a secure and covered work space for the project. Key project team members include Arthur Warren and Bob Stevenson and several of the team's members have visited Christchurch and Ferrymead to learn more about Birneys and tram restoration generally. We were taken to the site by Graeme on arrival in Invercargill and met some of the team hard at work and had a good discussion with them. The project is progressing well with its future display and location still being determined. We understand it is to be a static exhibit with part of the interior likely to be fitted out for public use as part of the Museum café/ restaurant. The body of the tram appears to have been in rather better condition than our No. 15, with less of the metal work (e.g. the chassis) having to be replaced. However, its interior had been stripped more than 15, so less of the woodwork was still there and the team were keen to learn more about what was missing. This resulted in Dave downloading some of our Birney photos overnight to assist them in parts identification, etc. and a second visit the following morning while Dot checked out the local main street shopping opportunities.

The THS are pleased another NZ Birney has been saved and is being restored, and Dave (and others) have offered to help our Invercargill friends wherever we can. Since returning home Dave has been seen chasing Birney 15 around the streets trying to get photos and taking measurements of features such as the doors, interior

Restoration Report: Invercargill Birney 16

panelling, lighting etc, to assist them in their project accuracy. We are also in touch with some Australian colleagues for parts such as headlights and handbrakes.

We will keep you posted!



LEFT: In October 2016, several months after being rescued, exInvercargill 'Birney' 16 still looks to be in good condition, thanks in part to the efforts of its previous owners. The photo was taken by Museum Curator Graeme Williams during the disassembly process prior to restoration starting.

Photo: Graeme Williams.

RIGHT: Eight months later, No. 16 is starting to look more its old self once again! The most notable sign of progress is the rebuilt front apron and windows, soon to be followed by new steel body cladding (not shown).

Photo: Dave Hinman.



LEFT: Once was home to trams! The former Invercargill MED building and tram barn in Dee Street, June 2017. Today the tram barn, a Category II-listed Historic Place, has been turned into a Godfreys vacuum-cleaner store.

Photo: Dave Hinman.

When 1808 met 236...



ABOVE: *New, and—well—newer! For the first time since 2010, Sydney R-class tram 1808 is paired with a Brisbane 'Dropcentre' tram. After being unloaded at Ferrymead on 14 August, 1808 (built 1934) was posed near the Ferrymead tram stop side-by-side with Brisbane 'Droppie' 236 (built 1925) for a quick photo stop en route to the tram barns.*

Photo: David Maciulaitis

FRONT COVER: *Farewell New Plymouth trolleybuses! It's closing day for the New Plymouth trolleybus network, 7 October 1967, and all three serviceable trolleybuses are lined up for the ceremonial Last Run to Westtown. Today, just two of the buses shown have survived into preservation, out of a total fourteen Crossley trolleybuses imported to New Zealand for New Plymouth and Wellington.*

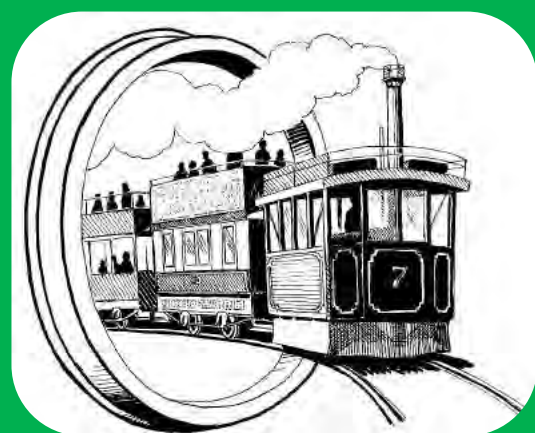
Photo: Dave Hinman

Ferrymead Tram Tracts

The newsletter of the Tramway Historical Society

Editor: Alastair Cross—tracts@ferrymeadtramway.org.nz

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.



The Tramway Historical Society

P. O. Box 1126 , Christchurch 8140 - www.ferrymeadtramway.org.nz