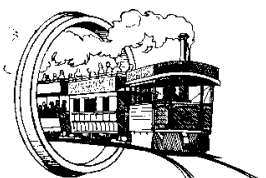


Ferrymead Tram Tracts

Newsletter of the
Tramway Historical Society Inc
P. O. Box 1126
Christchurch



September 2006

Goodbye John Bettle



Your editor returned from Dunedin on Tuesday 29 August to discover that he had just missed the funeral of one of New Zealand's leading lights in the tramway movement. John Bettle, longtime tramway enthusiast and historian and former president of the Tramway Historical Society, renowned for his collection of tramway and railway related postcards and memorabilia, made a huge contribution to our hobby over many years. Nobody contemplating writing a book about trams in New Zealand would do so without consulting John's collection which he made readily available. Many memories have been stirred and many tributes have been paid to John in recent days and we reproduce a couple of them here.

Memories of the Victoria Pharmacy STUART HOBBS, John's son in law, recalls some early events

Dianne joins me in thanking the members who participated in John's funeral and sent messages. We also apologise on behalf of Emily. She is John's ten month old great-grand daughter, who obviously felt the need to take part in the funeral proceedings. I'm afraid that her baby-noises rather overwhelmed one of the speakers. Unfortunately her usual baby-sitter was at another funeral.

Several of John's 'contacts' sent messages, all of whom indicated the high esteem which they held for him. In one such letter the writer (a fellow postcard collector) said that he had known John since the 1960s when, as a teenager, he visited the Victoria Pharmacy to buy 'certain products'. Doubtlessly others who read this will have made similar

purchases while there on the pretext of talking about trams.

In the 70s and 80s when I was employed at the Museum I frequently went to visit John some days at lunchtime. Often our conversation was broken while a customer's needs were attended to. After having made a sale, John might turn toward the storeroom door and say "Stuart's out the back", indicating to the 'customer' that I might appear from behind the partition, when it was 'safe' but there were occasions, when, in order to get back to work promptly, it was more tactful to unbolt the back door and depart through the alley leading on to Durham Street. Of those occasions, all I can say is that my lips are sealed. The silence will remain. Please send bank notes only in a plain brown envelope addressed to Geo. Bettle,

Box 531 Chch.

In the early days the Heathcote Valley Hotel was an unofficial Saturday evening meeting place for 'Tramway Society' members, but during the week, Victoria Pharmacy was always a sort of 'Tramway University'. As Graham Stewart said in his tribute there were often postcards and recently acquired books to see. I well remember being told not to mention one recent arrival when visiting at Normans Road, "If Joan hears about another book coming she will hit the roof"! They had not long returned from England and it seems that some of the holiday budget had been diverted to other purposes.

The Victoria Pharmacy and the tram rails outside it have long been replaced by the hotel but we will always remember our visits there to see John.

Next work party

The next work party is scheduled for **Saturday 21 October**. Formal work parties are held every **third Saturday of the month** but there are also activities **every Saturday** and on **Monday evenings**.



152, full of Society members, has been borrowed from Worcester Street, where it was making a demonstration run several evenings before the official opening in February 1995.

Composite from John Bettle & Stuart Hobbs Collections.

...and from Graham Stewart

Dear Di and Stuart,

I would like to thank you for telephoning us last night to tell us that your father John had passed over. This gesture was very much appreciated—a dear friend of over 50 years. My memory immediately went back many years to when I first used to call on John at his Pharmacy in Victoria Street and we would have a chat.

Often our conversation would be interrupted by a passing tram. If it was not a Hills tram towing a Boon trailer or one of the double-bogie trailers, heading for Papanui it would be a Yank or a Boon bound for Fendalton. Once I watched 'Wet Willie' bouncing its way past John's Pharmacy.

Lovely warm memories we shared so many years ago when trams were still in control of our daily journeys. There were the times when John with a sparkle in his eyes, would produce from behind the counter a gem of a postcard he had just tracked down.

I will always remember John as a good friend, a generous and caring person—and in more recent years on his way to Wanganui, his visits to us in Wellington for a chat.

John... Enjoy the great tramway in the sky—but watch the trolley pole on the tight curves between the clouds... Anne joins me in sending our sympathy

to you and to your family on the passing of John. A father, a grandfather, is a very special person, so beloved within the family circle, making it hard for friends like us to find the right words at the time of parting.

As time passes, it will be the lovely memories you will have of John and the fun times you had together as a family that will mean so much to you in the years ahead.

We send you our warm thoughts and understanding. Our prayers are with you all at this sad time.

I will miss John.... Christchurch will not be the same for me. God Bless.
Sincerely,

Graham Stewart

Editor's note: We will have a full obituary for John in our next issue.

And on another sad note

Our fondest thoughts are with Ted Harrall whose wife Mary died on 11 September. Our warmest condolences go to Ted and all his family. When this was announced at the AGM there was a spontaneous gasp of shock, sadness and sympathy from all present.

New committee elected

AT THE CONTINUATION of the annual general meeting on Tuesday 12 September a new committee was elected as follows.

President Graeme Belworthy

Vice Presidents John Honeybone and Max Taylor

Secretary Dave Hinman

Treasurer Stephen Taylor

Immediate Past President Graeme Richardson

Committee members John Atkinson

Murray Sanders

Alex Hunter

Graeme Clephane

Linda Fox

Dave Carr

Alan Roi

Auditor to be arranged

Note that, as proposed in the new constitution, there are now two vice presidents, one for Administration and one for Operations. The incoming committee will decide which of the two vice presidents will be given which role.

The revised constitution which had been circulated to members previously was adopted.

Treasurer Stephen Taylor presented the financial reports which showed that, while there appeared to be plenty of cash in hand, there was a shortfall of some \$46,582 to complete the projects to which

the Society was committed. To address this problem it is proposed to set up a working committee called the Promotion and Fund-raising Committee. This committee will comprise a small group but they would be calling upon the wider membership to help with the practical tasks of fund-raising. Anybody interested in being a part of this committee should contact **Dave Hinman Ph 366 4903**.

Stephen also pointed out that membership subscriptions currently covered only such things as newsletters and *Tramway Topics*. An across-the-board increase of \$5.00 was suggested, taking the full membership from \$60.00 to \$65.00. This was carried.

Dave Carr, chairman of the Heritage Tramways Trust, gave a report outlining the activities of the HTT and emphasising that, although there was a substantial income from the City Tramway, no one should get the idea that this could be used to fund tramway operation. Dave pointed out that the HTT had taken on financial responsibility for many tasks including staff overheads (tea, coffee, towels, safety gear, first aid equipment, workshop equipment, cleaning materials, etc), Kitson repairs, tram parts from Bendigo, workshop expenses, the Bedford tower wagon and work on tram No 22.

Tracts to be available on email

IT IS NOW POSSIBLE to receive *Tracts* by email. Those who opt to do this will get a full colour version which will reach them a little earlier than the posted version. They will also help reduce Society expenses. Those wishing to continue to receive *Tracts* by snail-mail may, of course, do so.

If you would like to receive *Tracts* by email please email Barry Marchant barry-m@paradise.net.nz

Sorry we're late

APOLOGIES FOR THE FACT that this issue has appeared a little later than planned because of unavoidable delays due to unexpected events. Next month's issue should be on time.

High Praise for our Operations Sub Committee

MURRAY SANDERS, acting general manager, reports that it is a matter of considerable pride that our standing with our auditors and with Land Transport New Zealand is very high.

THIS YEAR the Operations Sub Committee has continued being responsible for implementing legislative requirements, preparing submissions, investigating accidents and incidents and hosting visits by Land Transport New Zealand Safety Assessor and other staff.

Following the requirements of the Railways Act 2005, the Sub Committee has been drafting a new Safety Case. This was submitted in April. To assist, the LTNZ published a 60 page handbook.

During February, LTNZ staff, Mr. Graeme Hudson and Ms Anna Clary visited, to maintain touch with our operation and meet some of our officers. Our proposals for a temporary level crossing for machinery and lights and bells at Truscotts Rd. were discussed prior to our written submissions.

Each May we have been assessed for compliance with our Safety System, (a folio of guidelines about safe operation with check forms, schedules and standards). Mr. Ian Jenkins has carried out this assessment in recent years, and subsequently reports his findings to LTNZ.

Which brings me to the reason for writing this piece and commending to you the performance of the Operations Sub Committee, acting on your behalf. I quote extracts from this year's assessor's report.

"Given that the period between December 2005 and March 2006 was to some degree in a state of flux with regard to management of the Society, there has been a genuine effort to ensure compliance with the Safety System."

"Reported incidents were followed up and action taken to avoid any repetition."

"Risk management is taken very seriously by the Tramway Historical Society Operations Committee."

"There are satisfactory procedures in place to manage the safety assessment programme, including the outputs from both LTNZ external assessments and internal audits. Follow up action by the Society on any problems is very good."

Mr Graeme Hudson of LTNZ in the letter to us approving the Assessment Report commented

"Judging by your assessment report you appear to be running a well maintained tramway operation."

However, we cannot now sit back and enjoy the fruits of our hard work, but must continue to be vigilant to maintain our good standing with the authorities.

Editors' note: *All members owe Murray and everyone involved in the operation of the tramway warmest congratulations for such a favourable report.*

A Matter of Safety and Security

FOLLOWING concerns expressed by a senior driver, the last meeting of the Operations Committee discussed safety / security of the rostered tram driver. This person is often the only Society member on site on a Sunday, or the Monday of school holidays and public holidays. Currently there is no backup, in the event of injury or security problems.

We are therefore calling for members and other persons, who are not necessarily drivers or conductors, to put their names forward for a list of volunteers, prepared to spend the occasional day providing support to the duty tram driver, either on the tram or in the depot. The first priority will be to cover the relevant Mondays.

If you are prepared to assist, please contact **Linda, phone 9801877:** or **Barry, phone 9817172.**

Murray Sanders,
General Manager.



Photo: Barry Marchant



Photo: Ken Henderson



Photo: Barry Marchant



Photo: Ken Henderson



Photo: Ken Henderson



Photo: Ken Henderson

THESE PICTURES show some of the damage to our track by erosion following the heavy rain in early August, and repairs under way today. These involve the removal of seven track sets, cleaning silt runoff and contaminated ballast, spreading ballast and relaying track sets on 4 September. Still a lot of finishing work but a good day's effort by Graeme Richardson, Ces Tucker, Brian Fairbrass, Brian Taylor and Ken Henderson. The work was agreed to by CCC due to the damage caused by the silt from their landfill capping and landscaping project. About 100 metres of track was affected. Our track team removed all fishplates, bonds and tie

rods. The contractor lifted the track sets and removed the contaminated ballast, then spread new ballast to a depth of 100 mm and replaced the track sets. We now have the big job of putting it all back together, lifting, levelling and completing the ballasting.

Meanwhile the work on the Big Curve has taken a back seat but that job is almost complete due to some hard work by the track gang at weekends.

(Notes supplied by BARRY MARCHANT and KEN HENDERSON)