

Platform track relaid

KEN HENDERSON tells of a big weekend



Top photos: Barry Marchant. Bottom photos: Murray Sanders

THE TRACK GANG and helpers had a big weekend on 21/22 April when the platform track at the Square Shelter was lifted and new ballast and sleepers laid. Most of the old sleepers were completely rotten but there are a number of good landscaping quality ones for sale. Heavy machinery driven by Dave Carr and Graeme Belworthy was called

in (thanks to Cam for his Porter Hire loader). Work commenced at 7.30am on the Saturday and continued through till 5.30pm.

On Sunday a smaller team continued fastening the track such that it was open for trams to run over it by 4pm. There is further work required due to problems fitting some of the bed plates due to the

variable width of the foot of the tram rail (which apparently originates from the Brighton line).

All work on the tramway now has to fit in with the Tamaki Heritage Village operations and the necessity for midweek running.

Thanks again to all those who helped with this major task.

Next work party

The next work party is scheduled for **Saturday 19 May 2007**. Formal work parties are held every **third Saturday of the month** but there are also activities **every Saturday** and on **Monday evenings**.

A puzzle solved

JOHN SHANKS sheds light on the Clifton Bay conundrum

I SUSPECT THAT THE PHOTOGRAPH of the tram line deviation at Clifton Bay was taken at the time the CTB undertook repiling of the Clifton Bay tram bridge, which was done at about the time that photograph would have been taken. The bridge had been inherited from the Christchurch Tramway Co Ltd and was built for the Canterbury Tramway Co Ltd, probably about 1887. No doubt by the early twenties it was in need of strengthening and repairs. Ironically, not long after the bridge was repiled one of the great storms that sweep the coast and alter Sumner Beach arrived and filled Clifton Bay with sand — just the way it still was when you and I were young. Do you remember that the road in those days ran round the edge of the bay, as in the photo, and only the tram line ran across the bay? A concrete remnant of the original road remains in place at the western end of the bay, partly hidden under bushes.



Thank you, John. Dave Hansen, long-time Sumner resident, confirms that the beach can change suddenly and dramatically in the right weather conditions.

Last rites for Boon 41



On Thursday 5 April, Trevor Craib, Colin Loach, Bruce Maffey and Murray Sanders participated in a raid on parts from Boon tram No 41 near Geraldine. The inset photo shows Trevor, Bruce and Colin sitting in the saloon of 41 feeding their faces (as Murray puts it). The side of the tram is missing. Quite a few interior fittings and the truck sector plates were obtained.

Photos: Murray Sanders



Old tram tracks in High Street—could they become part of an extended City Tramway?

DAVE HINMAN unveils on a “cunning plan”

In March the Christchurch City Council and its contractors discovered something which most tramway historians are well aware of—tram tracks in High Street! As in other parts of the city where “new” tracks set in concrete had been laid from the mid 1920s, there was an agreement between the CCC and the CTB to allow these tracks to remain in situ. (The CTB had been responsible for that portion of the roadway containing the tram tracks plus 18 inches beyond the rails and in the case of sleepered track had been required to remove and make good.)

As part of the investigations for the redevelopment of City mall (High and Cashel Streets) the Council decided to dig a number of trenches across the road to check the location of services. A Council resolution in December had decreed that the new design in High Street include a concrete base for possible future tram tracks and the Council’s engineers were advised by THS sources that this base and most of the tracks should still be in place.

Sure enough this proved to be the situation, although the track has been cut in places to allow for new services, planting trees etc.

With the discovery and inspection of the track a new cunning plan has emerged—if a decision is made to extend the tramway along High Street its location in the street would be approximately where the old southbound track was/is located! While the tram is likely to run in the opposite direction (ie towards Colombo Street) an option has emerged of retaining and reusing those existing rails. To test the feasibility of this a piece of rail from the adjacent (northbound) track has been excavated and removed for analysis to test its suitability for reuse. A visual inspection has shown plenty of “meat” left on the rail head, but some rusting and pitting, thus requiring some track grinding to restore a smooth surface. The means of doing this together with a check of the metallurgical qualities of the rail are still being investigated.

Part 2 of the cunning plan would be to replace the missing pieces of track with rail from the old north bound tracks adjacent. This track would be removed and reused as necessary during the mall reconstruction.

Whether the tram is to be extended



Top: gas cutting a piece of tram rail unearthed in High Street during the investigation.

Above: a piece of the removed rail.

Photos: Dave Hinman

or not awaits the outcome of a study now commissioned by the Council and due to be reported at the end of June, after which a decision is likely to be made. It does seem likely however that if the rail proves to be suitable for reuse it will be incorporated as a feature in the mall anyway, because of the timing of the start of the project (High Street will be the first section to be tackled and is

due for construction later this year!) There is still to be public consultation soon about the mall, and this will be about what traffic (including the possible tram) should be permitted, rather than the design which is moving towards completion and final approval.

More about the tram study in future issues of *Tracts*.

Congratulations to MoTaT on a magnificent achievement

MURRAY SANDERS and DAVE HINMAN report on the occasion

ON FRIDAY 27 APRIL the Prime Minister, Helen Clark officiated at the opening of the 600 metre track extension at the Museum of Transport and Technology in Auckland. The new construction begins at the zoo, crosses Motions Road, passes Western Springs College and follows the driveway leading to MoTaT 2, thus linking the two sites occupied by the Museum.

It has been a wait of over 20 years for this last section to be constructed. Financial support, which made it possible, was obtained from corporate sponsorship, local and national charitable trusts and the museum's income source. There was a substantial contribution from the Auckland City Council in respect of related roading improvements. The new line, as with the all the trackwork is in mass concrete and the traction poles, (old Auckland tramway poles filled with concrete and cut short) are bolted to large concrete slabs set in the ground. The overhead is all set at 6 metres to allow for future double decker operation. The terrain varied from hard rock to land fill. All curved rails were rolled off site to the required radius, from drawings. There is a set of traffic lights at the road crossing, operated by magnetic loops set in concrete between the rails.

T.H.S. members Dave Hinman, Alan Roi and Murray Sanders and Steve Lea, (also representing Christchurch Tramway), travelled to Auckland for the event. The weather was kind and a large crowd were entertained in a marquee by an old time band, as we waited for the magnificent tram 44 to appear, driven by the Prime Minister. After short speeches, the P.M. unveiled a plaque and the tramway was officially open.

Rides were then the order of the day. At this stage the new track is a bit noisy and needs some grinding, with all the curves squealing. For a four wheeler No.44 is not excessively noisy, no different to No.1. Following the events of the day we were invited by the Tramway Section to an enjoyable get together and restaurant meal.



Dave Hinman, Steve Lea, Murray Sanders, Les Stewart (WTM), Ian Stewart (MoTaT), Alan Roi at the new terminus.

Photo: Murray Sanders



Auckland car 44 crossing Motions Road.

Photo: Murray Sanders

How well do you remember?

- How many turning circles were there in Christchurch?
- Which were to the right of the track and which to the left?
- Did the trams go clockwise or

anticlockwise?

- How many turning "wyes" were there and in which direction did they point?
- Did the trams run forwards into the wye and reverse out or vice-versa?

Send your answers to the editor at the address at the foot of the front page. Photos would also be most welcome.