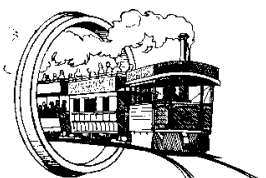


# Ferrymead Tram Tracts

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



October 2006

## Track work saga almost finished



Poto: Barry Marchant

FURTHER TO THE REPORT on track work last month, we can now report that the final lift and pack of the track was completed on 30 September. I estimate that at least 400 man hours have been put into this job from the preparation of lifting the track to the final lift. This was unplanned work except for the 15 sleepers which were to be replaced at the crossing for the heavy machinery and had been budgeted for. This is an example of the magnificent efforts made by volunteers in time of need, of course despite this the work we would have been doing has been delayed so there will be no holidays!

—Ken Henderson

### Coming events

#### A night not to be missed!

Bruce Dale recently visited Switzerland's main railway workshops and travelled extensively on Swiss Rail. Come and hear Bruce recount his adventures and watch two DVDs of Swiss rail travel and the workshops.

#### Moorhouse Railway Station

**7.45 pm, Wednesday 15 November**

*All welcome! This is an evening's entertainment with general appeal as well as railway interest so will appeal to everybody. Bring your friends.*

Mark the diary now!

### 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**.

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## OBITUARY

### A Tribute to John Bettle

John Bettle was the second President of the Tramway Historical Society. He took over this high office about October 1964, immediately following the successful "Tram Week" at Papanui with the horse tram. Under the Society's first President we had achieved remarkable successes. However, the Society in those days looked remarkably like a "kid's club"—a rather strange kid's club with an old fashioned passion for conserving derelict trams! We needed a mature image, a more senior front man and lots of wise counsel. John graciously agreed to accept the position of President and continued in this position for the next six years. John had experience—which our youthful Society needed. He had already served as Chairman of the Canterbury branch of the NZ Railway and Locomotive Society and was well known to many people in the city. He had contacts with people in many different fields—St Andrew's College, pharmacy circles, Returned Servicemen's contacts; and he was well respected as a railway historian and collector of railway and tramway post cards and memorabilia.

John became our wise but enthusiastic President. His style as President was quiet and low key, sometimes almost diffident. He presided over a young and vigorous committee of enthusiasts, each with his own agenda and passions. It was the time of our greatest progress. The Society believed in itself and had a strong "can do" attitude.

Over it all, John acted as a wise and moderating influence, with varying degrees of success. Even I was reined in from time to time!

These were the years of our success: Ferrymead was being set up, the

John played an active role in all of these events, in spite of the commitments of a business to run and a young family. He took part in the famous "THS Tram Hunts" of the time. His daughters and wife Joan would be joined in the family's BMC station

wagon by one or two THS members and off we would go. The Duckhouse trailer was discovered and negotiated for on one such work party and rescued on a subsequent one. The property owner's lettuces were all run over by Tom Gilroy's truck in the process—but that was accepted in good grace as part of the process of rescuing a garden shed for turning back into a tram!

Brill 178 was first visited and assessed late in 1964 or early in 1965 (see the photograph) on another such trip. John took his part in the sheer hard work—but great fun and comradeship—of the Blackball track lifting work parties. Remember those "trolley trundles" down the length of the track which we lifted over the following three



*John Bettle, left, with Frank and Betty Gilmour, donors of Brill 178, at Milford near Temuka on the occasion of our assessment of the condition of the body, which was enclosed in a bach, late 1964 or early 1965.*

**Photo: John Shanks**

Society had moved its operations from the old tramway paint shop in Moorhouse Avenue to the tram barn at Ferrymead at Labour Week End 1967, the tramway was being built, Kitty, double decker 10 and Duckhouse 115 had all been rescued and were being restored. Trolley bus 210 had been rescued and was under restoration.

The Society had played its active role in the Ferrymead Queen Carnival Fund-raising, making construction of the tram barn possible. The opening of the tramway on 6 January 1968 was the highlight of this period, an event and a period presided over by John.

Photographs of the time show that

months?

We needed John. We prospered tremendously under his kindly but wise presidency.

In these few words we salute and pay tribute to a greatly valued friend and former leader of our Society and extend our sympathies to his daughters Dianne, Adrienne and Jan and to their families. It was our great privilege to know John as a friend and as a colleague in Society activities. We enjoy happy memories of a remarkable man and of his remarkable times.

—John Shanks

## Multiple Brills

A few months ago we published a well known photo of Brills being built at Boons' factory, noting that there was no provision for multiple unit coupling. No one has come forward with an explanation but it did set me thinking.

When the Brills were converted to one-man operation, multiple running became a thing of the past.

However some of the Brills, including our No 178, retained the two sockets above the headlights right until the end of their days, presumably because removing them would have entailed filling in two large holes or replacing the aprons.

So why did some Brills lose their sockets? Did this happen when accidents forced the replacement of the aprons, or

did it just depend on who happened to be doing the job at the time of the conversion?

This leads to the next question: how many and which Brills retained the sockets to the end? And if you want to get really serious, did they all have them at both ends?

Come on folks, let's have your ideas.



## On a personal note

WARMEST CONDOLENCES to Brent Efford whose mother died recently.

Birthday congratulations to Bryan Leckie who has been a regular tram driver on our tramway, on celebrating his 80th birthday last Tuesday.

Welcome to Carl Pumpa who has joined the HTT work force temporarily.

## Research help wanted

I AM COMPILING a list of all officers & committee members of the THS from its inception in 1961.

I have the inaugural committee from February, 1961 as reported by John Shanks in Topics 186 of Jan, 1995 and I presume this committee continued until 1962.

I have all the Presidents and dates listed. I need details for the following years to complete my list: 1961-2-3-4 1965-6-7-8 1969-70 1971-2-3 1985-6-7-8 1989-90 1996-7-8.

If any reader can help with any info please contact me on phone 9817172 or email [barry-m@paradise.net.nz](mailto:barry-m@paradise.net.nz). As well as the info I need to record the source, written documentation, personal involvement etc.

—Barry Marchant

## Trolleybus overhead nears completion

THE TROLLEYBUS SYSTEM at Ferrymead is almost completed. The depot wiring at rear of barn has been put in place which means buses can be driven in or out. Only the points have to be set for the "right" direction of travel.

Landscaping has also been done around the rear of the depot. This was done by the IHC group.

As soon as the pipes at the front entrance are removed testing of the system can be carried out.

## 75/50 year open-closure of Christchurch system

As part of the opening of the system I was hoping to do a combined celebration of the 75 years opening—50 years closure of the Christchurch trolleybus system similar to the successful Dunedin celebrations held in 2001. However, due to a total lack of interest, help, and discussion at the AGM, I have decided not to proceed with this.

—Bradley Knewstubb

## From Colin Loach's camera

Colin and Win recently visited Surfers Paradise where they have a monorail



*The monorail in action*



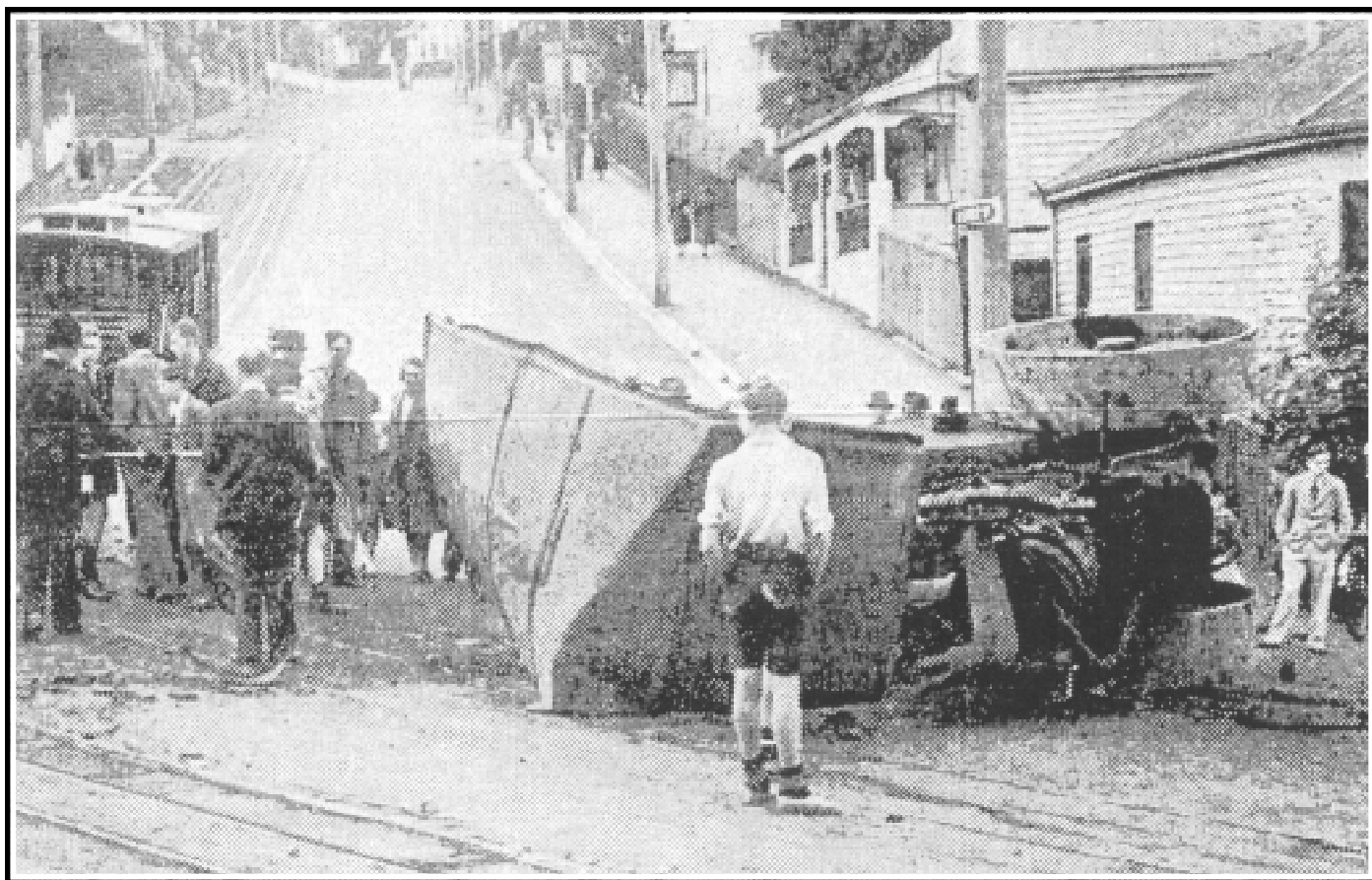
*Driver's controls*



*The monorail entering (above left) and inside (above right) the Oasis shopping centre.*

## A page from history: the story of a runaway steam roller

TREVOR CRAIB found this item in the *Otago Daily Times* of 27 January 1943. It looks as if it could have been a close call for the cable car in the background.



**RUNAWAY STEAM ROLLER.**—A photograph taken shortly after the tragic occurrence as the result of which the driver of a steam roller lost his life on Tuesday afternoon. The roller became uncontrollable as it was travelling down York place, and capsized in the position shown. It is assumed that the driver, in an effort to regain control of the vehicle, attempted to turn it up Albert street, which is seen in the background.

### STEAM ROLLER TRAGEDY

#### INQUEST ON VICTIM

#### DECEASED'S BRAVE ACTION

"IT MUST BE AGREED that the deceased could have jumped clear, but instead he attempted to divert the course of the roller so as to avert injury or danger to pedestrians," said the coroner, Mr H. W. Bundle, S.M., yesterday at the conclusion of the inquest into the death of John Smith, a married man aged 58, who was killed on January 27 when a steam roller he was driving got out of control and overturned at the intersection of Albert Street and York Place. Sergeant O'Carroll associated the police with the coroner's remarks, and said that it was obvious that the deceased was prepared to sacrifice his life to save others.

Mr W. Ward appeared for the relatives of the deceased, Mr C. J. Robertson for the City Corporation, and Sergeant O'Carroll represented the police.

Medical evidence was given by Dr A. J. Aldred, who gave the cause of death as shock resulting from multiple fractures of the ribs, a gross compound fracture of the ribs, and severe crushing of the chest and abdomen.

#### Evidence of Eye-witnesses

Gilbert David White, a minister

of religion, told how, when coming down Albert street on the afternoon of January 27, about 4.50 o'clock, he saw the roller overturn at the York place intersection. He at once looked for the driver, and finally saw him lying under the rear of the machine, but not pinned. With the assistance of a soldier, witness lifted him clear of the roller, and later helped to place him in an ambulance, but he was of the opinion that the man was dead before the ambulance arrived.

Stanley Waite Booth, a tramway motorman, said that, as he was walking along Tennyson street he saw the roller, obviously out of control, career down York street at a terrific speed. Witness noticed that the right rear wheel was skidding, and that the driver appeared to be trying to get the machine under control. He made turn towards the Technical College, apparently to get a better turn into Albert street, but as he made the latter swerve, the front roller broke loose [and] the front part of the roller dropped to the ground. The roller the somersaulted and turned over on its side.

John Stewart gave evidence of having found a pin belonging to the left wheel of the roller lying in a water table about 20 yards below the scene of the accident. The pin, which was used to lock the wheel to the axle, appeared to be in good order, but he did not know whether it had been attached to the wheel or not. When not in use it was generally

kept in a box at the rear of the roller.

#### Mechanical State of Roller

George Arthur Green, who had been working on a road-sealing job in Belgrave crescent where the deceased had been rolling, said that the deceased had made no complaint about the roller which seemed to be in good order.

Details of the damage to the roller were given by William John White, a government machinery inspector, who said that after the accident the left heel was in the air, and the road pin mentioned by the witness Stewart was not in place. He came to the conclusion that it had never been in place, and the effect of this would be to allow the wheel to run free. The machine had been mechanically sound.

William Gilbert Dunbar said he had seen the roller going down City road, just above Queen's drive, about 4.40. It appeared to be under full control and was travelling at a normal speed.

Richard Mansfield, a roller driver in the employ of the City Corporation, said that the deceased was a capable driver. Witness considered it safe to drive down York place in top gear, but only if both road pins were in position. On the flat, it was usual to use one pin only, but both pins should be used on a steep grade, so that both wheels would get the full braking effect of the reverse gear.

#### Attempted Rescue Commended

Constable Brittenden gave

evidence of having traced the marks of the roller from Albert street up York place, and said they indicated that the machine had got out of control in the vicinity of the Rattray street intersection. The marks of both wheels could be seen, but that of the right wheel was much more distinct than that of the left.

At this stage Mr Robertson said he had been asked by the city engineer Mr S. G. Scouler, to mention that it appeared clear that the deceased had bravely remained at the controls of the roller and had, to some extent, sacrificed his life for the others.

It appeared, said the coroner, returning a verdict that the deceased died from injuries received when he was accidentally crushed under the roller, that the deceased, when he discovered that the roller was out of control, had decided to avoid trouble further down the hill by turning into Albert street. The reason for the machine getting out of control had not definitely been established, but the evidence tended to show that the road pin had been left out of the rear wheel, which was thus free to revolve, and could exercise no control in holding the roller. The action of the witness White and the soldier who assisted him to remove the deceased from under the roller, was deserving of every commendation.