

TRAM LINES

NEWSLETTER OF THE WELLINGTON TRAMWAY MUSEUM INC.

No. 2020/4

JULY– AUGUST 2020

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“The Crossing Job”

JAAM Tracks

- A history of tram tracks in the crossing area

The Himatangi Beach Tram

Memories of the Aro Street Route, Pts.1-3

Disposal of Wellington’s Trams

- Stevens, the scrap merchant at Rongotai



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Assembled by the WTM production team:

Henry Brittain & Keith McGavin

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Contributions welcome

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WELLINGTON TRAMWAY MUSEUM INCORPORATED – N.Z. Registered Charity No.CC38985

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COVER – THE CROSSING UPGRADE AND TRACK RELAY PROJECT

Top photo: The crossing prior to the upgrade for heavy farm traffic.

Photo by Mike Flinn

Lower photo: 3rd July 2020: First tram on the upgraded crossing, also showing some of the re-laid track. Mike Flinn (left) and Steve Porter observing.

Photo by Allan Neilson

See "from the President's Workbench" page 3, plus article and photos commencing on page 9.

As members will read elsewhere in Tramlines Operations will, over the next two weeks, be gearing up to recommence public tram operations. Refresh of drivers and advice as to new, cancelled, and existing track and driving requirements are to be advised. Saturday the 18th July is the target date for operations to commence but if all goes well, we may carry fare paying passengers on the 11th and/or 12th of July. Sunday the 19th of July will see us having an "Official" first tram through the upgraded crossing. We will be inviting GWRC, PCL (the contractor who carried out the work for GWRC), members and of course their whanau to celebrate the reinstatement of our improved track.

Members may have noticed that the usual members' midyear dinner has not occurred yet. The Board had decided to

defer this members' event until we were back in business. Russell will have an announcement elsewhere in Tramlines about this function. I hope to see you all there!

The effort to upgrade the road crossing adjacent to the Chief Ranger's Office has been an immense one. I have kept a running record of the members who attended on the various days, of the work done and of the progress at each stage. By assuming each person's daily involvement was five hours (average) I have come up with a conservative member involvement in this project of at least 790 hours "coal face" activity. Well done everyone. I am sure that in time your muscles and joints will settle down. The Kango hammer that we have used to tamp ballast died with six sleepers still to be tamped but we will manage somehow.



Above: Members hard at work on the road crossing track relay on an overcast and showery 17th June. This view is looking west, towards the Beach. PCL Contractors had just arranged the ballast delivery and placement.
Photo: Mike Flinn

From the President's Workbench, cont.

For those who have not been able to get to site and see or participate in the work here are some of the statistics of the crossing:

There is a crossing slab which used 13 cubic metres of concrete being 16 metres long, 350 mm thick and 2.3 metres wide. The road either side of the crossing has been sealed with hot mix bitumen. Drainage (sumps and pipes) have been installed and so what was a low-lying wet part of our track is now significantly less likely to be a puddle. To further reduce the likelihood of a puddle, we took the opportunity to raise the rail level in the area by at least 240 mm.

The rail in the crossing was conventional rail of 50lb per yard. As part of the upgrade that rail has been replaced with tram girder rail of approximately 104 lb per yard. The transitions from tram rail to 50 lb were to the east of the crossing and now are to the west of it.

In total 49 metres of track was refurbished with 33 metres of 50lb track being replaced by tram rail.

The opportunity to install boards and weed mat to segregate the grass and topsoil from the ballast has also been taken and this action while improving the appearance of the finished job should also help reduce the speed at which the ballast is fouled by fines.

As we bring this project to a close and reinstate tram operations, I urge all members to remember that our trams and equipment (and our members!) are all getting older and need to be treated with respect. Keep speeds down, close doors rather than slam them etc etc.

Some members have reflected as this project reaches completion "What next?" Obviously, we must soldier on with tram 17. She is tantalisingly close to fruition! After that, as has already been advised, we will be working toward the restoration of tram 207.



Above: Rails all connected and screw-spiked, road crossing formed and concreting complete. Track bonding, ballasting and tamping underway as the project nears completion. Looking east, back towards the tram barn, 24th June 2020.

Photo: Mike Flinn

On the infrastructure side your Board does see replacement of the Palace as the next project. Preliminary work has commenced on getting the required consents. Once this has been achieved funding and then foundations will follow. Members should think about size, layout, door and window location and size and should we have a sheltered entrance. Are there any members who would like to be part of the planning and implementation of this 'Palace Three' project?

Once again thank you to all who were able to bring their efforts to bear in the crossing upgrade project. The result speaks volumes for your work!

Steve Porter
President
29th June 2020

COMING EVENT

**OFFICIAL OPENING OF NEW CROSSING - All members, families and friends invited,
Sunday 19th July, gather at 1pm at the Museum**

Celebration.

Wellington Tramway Museum members including families and friends are invited to participate in celebrating the completion of the project wherein the road crossing of our track by the Chief Rangers Office was upgraded.

GWRC staff and their families and friends have been invited to join with the Wellington Tramway Museum Board on the afternoon of Sunday 19th July to celebrate the successful completion of the crossing and track upgrade. We have also invited the GWRC civil works contractor and his staff and their families to this celebration. PCL staff were particularly helpful in assisting us to achieve a rail outcome in the upgrade that will serve us well in years to come.

Guests, including WTM members and their families and friends, will be met at the tram barn from 1.00pm and members will show guests through the barn and workshop. At approximately 1.45 pm guests and members will be carried by tram to "Little's Lurch". Attendees will then disembark to inspect the upgraded crossing, the new bridge over the Whareroa Stream, and the re-formed road between them. At approximately 2.15pm guests will be asked to gather at the crossing to hear short addresses before Daran Ponter (Chair of Greater Wellington Regional Council) "breaks" the ribbon by driving the "Official" first tram across the upgraded crossing. Guests will then re-join the trams and after riding to the beach terminal will then be brought back to Kotare for afternoon tea.

RSVP: Please if you, or members of your family, or friends are intending to accept this invitation to attend the celebration please advise Henry or Russell accordingly so that adequate catering arrangements can be made.

Henry Brittain: email: secretary@wellingtontrams.org.nz or ph. 04 293 8929

Russell Jenkins: email: rjenkins@xtra.co.nz or ph 04 239 9482

Member Involvement in Official Opening of Crossing.

If you can help by providing assistance with: tram driving, showing guests around the barn/workshop, the provision of a plate (finger food), or with the preparation and serving of tea/coffee. Please advise Russell or Henry.

WINTER DINNER

Our delayed "Winter Dinner" (usually held in May) will now be held at the:

Waikanae Club, Elizabeth Street, Waikanae, on Saturday August 15th. 7pm –meet in bar from 6.30pm.

So please mark this date in your diary.

The Club in Elizabeth Street is just three minutes walk from the Railway Station.

KCET REOPENING

After a shut down of almost three months due to Covid-19 and subsequently the Crossing Relaying Project we can advise that it is planned to reopen the Tramway to the public on Saturday July 18th.

MUSEUM PEOPLE

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Thanks to Spencer Naith (email: sdnaith@hotmail.com) for volunteering to take over the duties of Membership Secretary from Robert Hatten.

Spencer is commencing a review of our membership database and surrounding systems to ensure they are fit for purpose.

NEW MEMBER

Welcome to new member Shannon Osborne, who resides in Hamilton.

PERSONAL

Robert Hatten's wife, Beth, has not been well and members will be pleased to hear that she has returned home after a spell in Wellington Hospital. We wish her a speedy recovery back to good health with Robert at her side.

Condolences are extended to member Bryce Pender whose father passed away recently. Our thoughts are with Bryce and his sister.

Congratulations to Michael Boyton, our Treasurer, who qualified for his "gold card" in early July.

BOOKS FOR SALE

The Museum has a number of books for sale – all brand-new and featuring a number of "hard-to-get" titles. If you are interested in acquiring any of these, or in obtaining further information, please see the details below.

Author Graham Stewart:

When Trams were Trumps	\$25.00
From Rails to Rubber	\$25.00
The End of the Penny Section	
1993 reprint	\$20.00
Fares Please	\$25.00
Napier's Royal Blue Trams	\$36.00
Crossing Ahead (newly released)	\$30.00
The Kelburn Cable Car	\$15.00
Around Auckland by Tram in the 1950's	
	\$25.00
Around Wellington by Tram in the 20 th Century	\$25.00
Christchurch, a Portrait of Yesterdays	
	\$10.00

Other Authors:

Wanganui Corporation Tramways, 1908-1950	
	\$25.00
New Plymouth Tramways, 1916 – 1954	
	\$25.00
A Ride down Memory Lane – the trams that served Wellington	\$7.50
Motor Omnibuses of Eastbourne	\$11.00

Postage and packing – please add \$5; overseas on advice.

To place an order or for more information please contact Henry Brittain:

Email henry.brittain@outlook.co.nz

or by mail at P.O.Box 2612, Wellington 6140, N.Z.

Henry will advise payment details.

WRITTEN AUCTION

A ONCE ONLY OPPORTUNITY

The last-ever brand new copy of that “go-to” book on New Zealand’s street trams and tramway systems

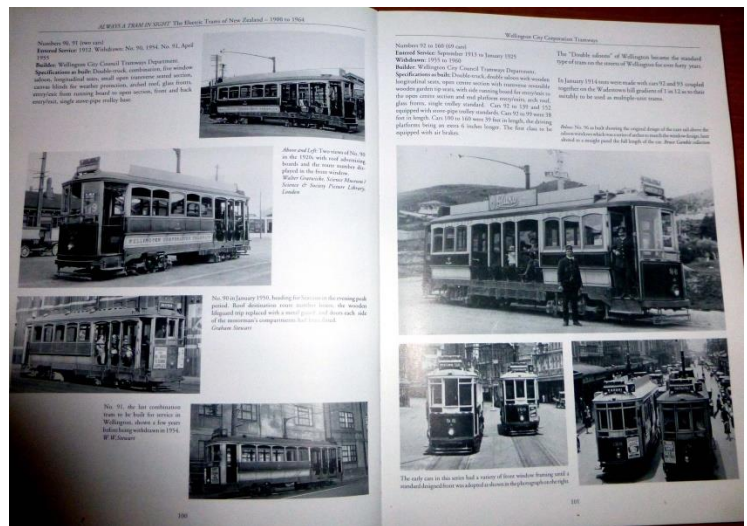
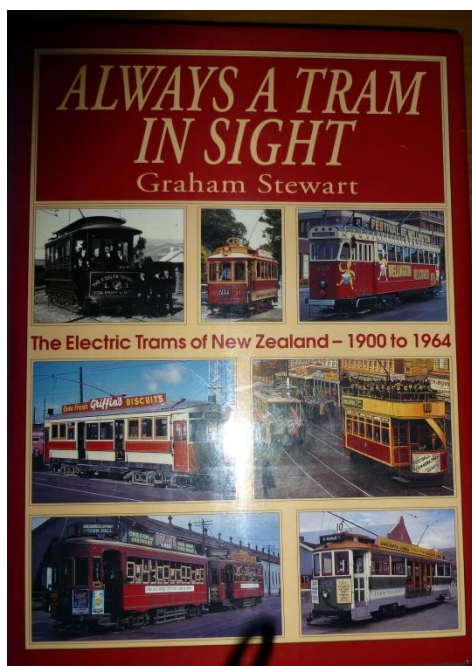
“ALWAYS A TRAM IN SIGHT” by Graham Stewart “The Electric Trams of New Zealand – 1900 – 1964”

This book, published in 1996 *and long out-of-print*, is always sought after

***It contains full details of every electric street tramway system in New Zealand,
plus technical details of every tram that ran on them***

An essential reference work for all those interested in NZ’s trams

208 pp, profusely illustrated with every type of tram. Hard cover with dust jacket



THANKS TO THE GENEROSITY OF AUTHOR GRAHAM STEWART the Wellington Tramway Museum is privileged to offer a brand new copy of this book, by written auction to the highest bidder.

All proceeds will go towards the Museum’s next tram preservation project, Wellington double-saloon tram No.207

Reserve price is \$60 (incl. GST)

CLOSING DATE FOR OFFERS, FRIDAY 24th JULY 2020

Please email your offer to info@wellingtontrams.org.nz or post to Wellington Tramway Museum, c/- Keith McGavin, 27 Havelock Street, Wellington 6021, to reach him by closing date.

Winner will be notified, and non-winners will be advised of the amount of the winning offer. If the book remains unsold it will be placed on sale in the Wellington Tramway Museum’s kiosk.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

From David Jones, (WTM and THS member, Woodend, Christchurch)

31st May 2020

Re May/June Tramlines

".....Many complimentary things were said over the dining table (at Ferrymead) about WTM Tramlines as to its presentation, interesting content etc.

I was personally impressed with Russell Jenkins' childhood memories of making tram cars out of matchboxes and safety pins. I can relate to that. My grandparents lived alongside the Kloof Nek trolleybus route in Cape Town and when we visited I used to make trolleybuses out of toothpaste tube boxes. They came complete with a "V" shaped cardboard insert which made the trolley poles when sellotaped to the 'roof' on one side of the box. Hours of happy play time pushing them around the pattern on the carpet. "

TRAM DIORAMAS DONATED

As mentioned in Russell Jenkins' Marketing and Operations notes, renowned Tramway Historian and Museum mentor, Graham Stewart, has very kindly donated five of his Dioramas to us for display.

They depict scenes in Wanganui, Dunedin, and a tramway workshop scene with various trams.

Our intention is to put them on display all together in one of our big display cabinets in the barn where they can be seen and admired by our visitors. Our grateful thanks are extended to Graham for his kind donation.

Tram Dioramas donated cont.

The following are photographs of some of the dioramas:



Above: Some of the dioramas donated by Graham Stewart; from top: (1) a Dunedin sprinkler tram and single truck, single saloon tram; (2) a Dunedin "Takapuna" tram; (3) Three types of Wanganui tram and (4) a workshop scene with at least four Birney trams plus several other trams and workshop equipment.

THE CROSSING JOB

by Mike Flinn

Background:

The NZ Transport Agency wants to stop direct access from the Queen Elizabeth Park's farm onto State Highway 1 at the old Lynch's Crossing area north of the Tramway. To this end it has funded a new bridge across Whareroa Stream so the farm roads north of the stream can connect with an existing farm road which crosses the tramway at its intersection with Whareroa Road – the road that runs parallel with the Museum's tramway. This will enable farm traffic to access the State Highway via the MacKays Crossing interchange. To give safe access for heavy stock trucks and trailers a substantial upgrade of the tramline crossing was needed.

The Greater Wellington Regional Council appointed PCL Ltd as its contractors to do the crossing work adjacent to the Rangers Office. This contract included roadworks and water drainage in that area. The Wellington Tramway Museum's (WTM's) role was to provide an upgraded tramline which would be part of a crossing formed of a concrete slab. In addition, WTM wanted to upgrade its track on either side of the crossing with rail and sleeper replacement.

The Crossing Job:

In mid-March tramway profile rails were removed from the rail stack in the WTM depot area and cleaning and de-rusting started before the Covid 19 shutdown at Level 4 on 21 March stopped all work. It was 18 May before the change to Level 1 allowed members to restart work. It was decided that top priority for members would be the crossing replacement ahead of any work on trams 17 or 207 and tidy up work in the compound.

Sleepers were arranged next to the rail stack to provide a more suitable working height for rails to be de-rusted and cleaned. Four full length tram rails and two short

length tram rails were required. To fit these rails to wooden sleepers on either side of the concrete slab crossing 240 screw spikes and 240 plates were taken from stocks and had to be cleaned and de-rusted before use. In addition, suitable fishplates had to be found for each joint, either from the dismantled recoveries or from spare stocks. During one Wednesday there were ten members working on de-rusting or cleaning down the spikes, A-clips (plates), rails or fishplates.

Starting from the depot end of the crossing upgrade the first length of tram rail on each side was taken off the sleepers and put to one side for cleaning and reuse. The next length on each side included the transition from tramway profile rail to railway profile rail and these rails were taken back to the depot for checking, cleaning and reuse. Then came two lengths of railway rail with check rails on each side which had been included in the roadway crossing and these rails were lifted, unbolted and returned to the Depot for storage or disposal. There were then two lengths of railway rail on each side with one length returned to the Depot for storage and the second left on site for reuse. All the sleepers were returned to the Depot for disposal and spikes and fittings returned for inspection and reuse or disposal. See Tramlines 2020/2 (March/April 2020) and 2020/3 (May/June 2020) for photos to this stage.

When the prepared rails and fittings were ready re-assembly of the track started. The curved tram rails at the Depot end were placed on sleepers, fishplates fitted and bolted and spikes and A-clips used to fix the rails to sleepers. Then two lengths of straight tram rail were connected using fishplates, part supported on sleepers and part supported on concrete blocks in the area that was to be within the concrete pad.

On the Beach side of the crossing this was followed by laying sleepers and connecting the rails containing the transition joints and the retained length of railway rail. A small amount needed to be cut off the rail on each side to connect to the existing line of railway rails. The two short lengths of tram rail were used to ensure that joints matched on each side of the crossing.

The Crossing Job, cont.

With help from PCL staff the required rails and sleepers were taken from the Depot to the site and laid in the required sequence. WTM members joined the rails, established the required heights using ballast under sleepers or blocks under the concrete pad section. Within the concrete pad area tie bars were fitted between the rails to fix the gauge and bonding was done between the rails. The contractor arranged for the fitting of reinforcing steel and preparation of the boxing for the concrete pad. Concrete was poured on 22 June.

For members, the hardest part of the track job was the moving and spreading of the ballast followed by packing under each sleeper. Three piles of ballast were provided which had to be moved by digger as well as shovel or wheelbarrow to the sleepers, placed around the sleepers then packed, firstly by shovel then later by "Kango Hammer".

Outside the sleepers a timber edging strip has been put down to keep ballast and the surrounding earth separate to give a mowing trip and eliminate weeds eventually growing in the ballast. As the level of the rails in the new crossing is higher than those in the old crossing some changes to ground levels have been made to facilitate ongoing mowing by the GWRC contractor.

Work by the contractor on the roadworks and drainage proceeded and on Thursday 25 June the top bitumen seal was laid allowing the job to be completed before 30 June. WTM had further work on packing the track and bonding to complete while the concrete in the pad cured before test runs by the trams could proceed.

As can be seen the crossing relay involved a lot of planning and organisation by WTM and ongoing coordination with PCL staff to achieve completion within the required time. For WTM's part many of the members contributed time and effort to get a good result. Most credit must go to Steve Porter and Alan Neilson for their planning and organisation throughout the project.

PHOTO ESSAY of "The Crossing Job" - prepared by Keith McGavin Photos as credited

The following is a photo essay showing the preparations for, and the actual carrying out of the track relaying for the new road crossing – see "From the President's Workbench" (page 3) plus the preceding article for details.

Work up to 22nd May was covered in the May-June Tramlines.



23rd May – old crossing with railway rails still in place



27th May: Selection of rails continues.



**31st May: Removal of old ballast from site
Three photos above by Mike Flinn**

The Crossing Job in photos. cont.



3rd June (three photos above): Preparation of rails and fishplates, screw spikes and "A" clips etc. continues. *Photos: Keith McGavin*



5th June: Loading removed railway profile rails for return to depot. *Photo: Russell Jenkins*



6th June: Track-bed being prepared and drains laid by contractor. *Photo: Mike Flinn*



8th June: Track bed preparation continues. *Photo: Mike Flinn*



9th June: Weed-mat and sleepers placed. *Photo: Allan Neilson*

The Crossing Job in photos. cont.



9th June: Using the screw spike driver – rails going in.
Photo: Allan Neilson



11th June: Getting the correct crossing height and the rails level.
Photo: Mike Flinn



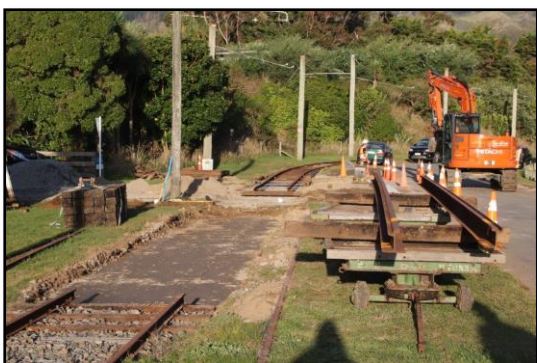
10th June: Rails and sleepers about to depart tram depot for site.
Photo: Mike Flinn



10th June: Rails in the crossing area – installing tie-rods. Other work in background.
Photo: Keith McGavin



11th June: Another pair of rails in place.
Photo: Mike Flinn

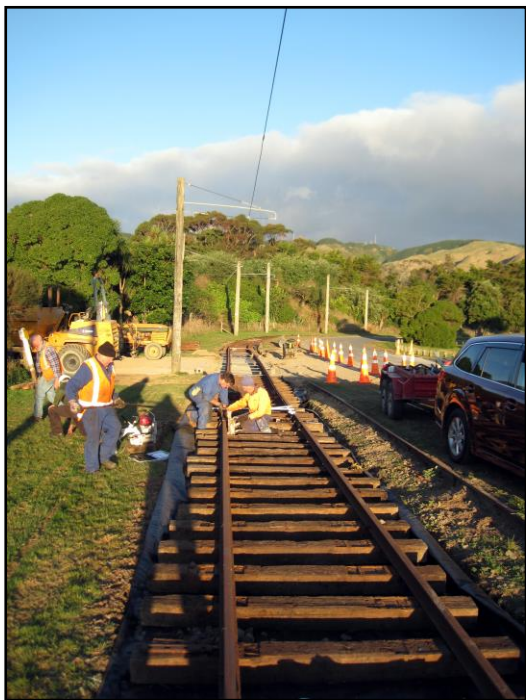


10th June: End of day scene.
Photo: Allan Neilson



11th June: Trackwork preparation: the transition from tramway to railway profile rail.
Photo: Mike Flinn

The Crossing Job in photos. cont.



13th June: More rails in place including railway profile rails in foreground. Working on transition rails in the background.

Photo: Mike Flinn



15th June: View of the crossing area. Rails raised to correct height. *Photo: Mike Flinn*



17th June: The main supply of ballast arrives.

Photo: Keith McGavin



17th June: Initial ballast spreading and packing.

Photo: Mike Flinn



17th June: Crossing area has been prepared for concreting by contractors. *Photo: Mike Flinn*



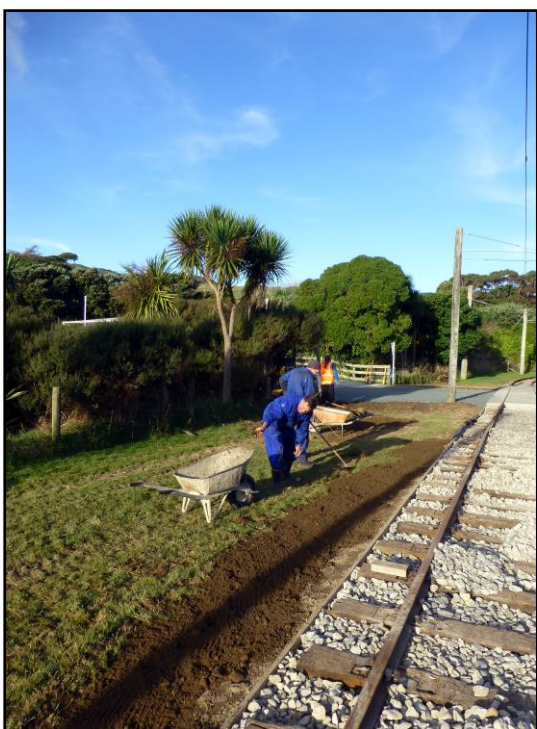
20th June: Final rails spiked. Ballast being used to support rails to correct height.

Photo: Mike Flinn

The Crossing Job in photos. cont.



22nd June: Contractors carry out concrete pour at crossing.
Photo: Mike Flinn



24th June: Edging and adding soil to slope to grass.
Photo: Keith McGavin



24th June: Ballasting and tamping continued.
Photo: Mike Flinn



24th June: Concreted crossing completed.
Photo: Keith McGavin



3rd July: First tram, No.260, approaches the rebuilt crossing.



3rd July: The crossing and the upgraded track.



Motorman's view of the track relay and crossing, 3rd July.

The above three photos are by Allan Neilson

JAAM TRACKS

by Alan Smith

The diverse history of the tram tracks in the Rangers Crossing area.



"The New Crossing", Photo: Lorraine Brittain

As in any half-century plus entity like our WTM, there are lots of odd stories and unexpected quirks that build up over time, sometimes without rational explanation.



JAAM TRACKS issue 23



The cover of "JAAM TRACKS", Issue 23 of August 2005. The caption to the photo reads "Cover photo by John Girdlestone is after the Animals' *Animal Tracks* album cover and features (from left to right): Irving Lipshaw, Apirana Taylor, Mark Pirie [the Editor of JAAM], Adrian Keneally and Michael O'Leary, with choreography by Jim Gardner, Victoria University of Wellington's inaugural Composer in Residence".

See accompanying article for more details.

One is the brief foray into the New Zealand fringe literary scene of our track in the area of the current big project "Relaying the Rangers' Crossing".

This foray was in 2005 - 15 years ago - when these rails adorned the front cover of JAAM (Just Another Art Movement) issue #23, a poetry collection published by Wellington-based JAAM Publishing Collective "with the assistance of Creative NZ / Toi Aotearoa".

In his editorial, Mark Pirie comments "Lastly, I continue my series of album cover remakes. This time The Animals' *Animal Tracks* provides the idea for JAAM 23's cover".

JAAM Tracks, cont.

If you Google the “Animals’ *Animal Tracks*”, you will get a very long url to a range of vinyl record album covers depicting ‘The Animals’ - *A UK group first formed in 1962 which, in the words of Wikipedia, “were known for their gritty bluesy sound and deep-voiced frontman Eric Burdon, as exemplified by their signature song and transatlantic No. 1 hit single House of the Rising Sun.”* Yes, that original vinyl cover featured the “real” Animals sitting in just such a pose on an un-named but similar curved stretch of railway line - flat-bottomed rails, possibly standard gauge, possibly on an English preserved line.

Small world! Today Irving Lipshaw and Michael O’Leary are Paekakariki characters running Kakariki Bookshop at the Paekakariki Railway Station Museum. ‘The Animals’ are still in business. Creative NZ is still supporting literary endeavours. Mark Pirie, born 1974, is still (according to Google) a leading figure in the NZ literary scene. Apirana Taylor can be found on Google but Adrian Keneally has by now

dropped below that horizon, it seems. James Gardner remains an active New Zealand music composer, while John Girdlestone is at The Beach Store, Paekakariki, and on the local wavelength Paekakariki 88.2 FM.

Those tram tracks are still there - right behind the photographer of the “JAAM Tracks” cover are now the upgraded rails and crossing of our latest big project (see *top photo, previous page*). Thousands of happy passengers have been carried through this very spot by our trams since 2005, as well as between 1966 and 2005 - Graeme Bennett’s 1967 photo of tram 207 (see *below*) at about the same spot shows the original tracks, and the “as built” overhead (leaning poles and all). The JAAM cover shows the track as rebuilt in 1987 when the curve (Little’s Lurch) was eased and the track and overhead between there and the loop were realigned (photo next page). And the overhead was replaced again in the big overhead renewal project of 2017. Life goes on.....



Above: Tram No.207 negotiates the original “Little’s Lurch” in 1967. The curve follows the road alignment. Note the original heavy concrete poles supporting the overhead wire.

Photo: Graeme Bennett



In 1987 the track around “Little’s Lurch” to and including the Loop was realigned. The curvature of “Little’s Lurch” was eased and new straight track between there and the loop, using light railway rails, was laid further away from the road. This view shows the old track when still in use and the new track under construction. Note the poles servicing the old track sprouting from the middle of the new track with new replacement poles behind. Much of the original, now disused, tramway track is still in place today. The crossing shown is very similar to what it looked like until recently. By the time the “JAAM Tracks” photo was taken in 2005 the new track would have been very much in use.

Photo: Mike Flinn



Above: Fast forward to 2020. This view shows the new crossing just after the concrete pour on 22nd June. The four overhead poles seen on the “JAAM Tracks” cover were replaced during our 2017 overhead upgrade project and can be seen in the background. A section of the original tramway profile track is in the right foreground. **Photo: Mike Flinn**

**MAINTENANCE AND ENGINEERING
DEPARTMENT from Allan Neilson**

Firstly, an update on progress re the new crossing – following on from Steve Porter’s “from the President’s Workbench” on pages 3 and 4:

Today (Friday 3rd) the following was carried out;

- Rail bonding at the crossing relay site sufficiently completed to allow trams to run;
- Clearing rails of overgrown grass from the arrival & departure roads up to pole 10 by use of the weed-eater expertly operated by Mike Flinn, so that trams could traverse section without any excessive wheel slip;
- Track inspection from the Depot up to pole 24 to okay track for running;

- Tram 260 was then taken to the Western Sector Park office (Chief Rangers office) level crossing to test the new track, and provide a photo opportunity for Tramlines. A number of de-rusting runs were made and it was found that track-wheel arcing was quickly minimized.

We were luck with the fine weather today.

The Kango has been fixed up (it had broken down last week) and there is a minor amount of tamping to be completed this weekend at the west end of the track relay. By the end of this weekend (4th-5th July) we plan to have completed the remaining track inspections which should then allow us to organize some de-rusting runs during the week down to the beach.

Maintenance & Engineering Department, cont.

Trams are being put through a routine service check (260 is completed) before they run again, and during July some annual brake and electrical tests which are due will have to be completed to keep the trams up to code.

Other Maintenance & Engineering Work from Keith McGavin

While work on the Crossing has taken priority that does not mean that work has completely ceased on other projects. In the past week or two it has been possible to progress with Tram 17 and other maintenance work around the site has also been carried out as opportunity permits.

Tram 17:

Work is progressing on fitting the destination boxes and their mechanisms; also considerable progress on installation of the main traction wiring.

Offsite, the construction of the two hand brake mechanisms is within a few weeks of completion at Tunley Engineering, Paraparaumu. In addition our consulting engineer, Leyton Chan, was at the Museum on Wednesday 1st July checking on chassis measurements for the design of the under-floor braking equipment.

Site Maintenance

Grass has continued to be cut as necessary (a big catch-up after the lockdown!) and growth has been cut back at the point and crossing storage area down the line.

Tram 207

Parts that were removed from this tram years ago continue to be identified and placed in documented storage. Tram 185, in the rear storage building, looks like it will be able to yield some long (saloon) leather seat squabs in good condition.

MARKETING AND OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT from Russell Jenkins

Things in the M&O Department have continued to be **VERY** quiet over the last 2 months.

With the Covid-19 Lockdown coupled with the Road Crossing Project, tram movements have been very limited. When Alert Level 4 was removed and we were allowed back into the Museum, 260 was taken off the pit road in the workshop and placed on Road 1. It was subsequently moved back to the workshop for its scheduled service so that it could be used for testing the new track before we returned to full service.

There is light however on the horizon with the recommencement of operations scheduled for Saturday July 18 and an “official opening” of the new road crossing on Sunday 19 July. It is planned to have all four operational trams in operation on the 19th and an afternoon tea will follow the opening ceremony. All members are invited to come along and enjoy the day and see the fleet in action.

Grand Pacific Tours

While no tours are possible as present due to the restrictions on overseas visitors to New Zealand, Grand Pacific Tours are planning to recommence their New Zealand schedule as soon as a “Trans-Tasman Bubble” is established. We hope that the position with regard to such a “bubble” will be clarified by the end of the year and that some tours will be confirmed in 2021.

In the meantime the Tramway will have to rely on local customers to support us.

New Tram Barn Display

A new display is being set up in the Tram Barn. The well-known Author and Photographer, Graham Stewart has donated a number of Dioramas featuring tram scenes from other New Zealand Tramways (see page 8).

Tram Driver Training

Our Driver Training Programme will recommence in late July so if any members would like to train as a tram driver, or know of anyone among their friends who would like to “have a go”, please get in touch.

Well with no operations to report on at present, that’s all from me.

Remember to keep up to date with the Tramway on either our webpage

www.wellingtontrams.org.nz Or the



Tramway Facebook page

The Himatangi Beach Tram from Henry Brittain



Above: The tram body at Himatangi, 2nd June 2020.

In May the Museum received a request from Auckland-based tramway enthusiasts asking whether somebody could have a look at a tram body last known to be at Himatangi Beach circa 2013. They wondered if it could be an ex-Auckland Dinghy or G type tram.

On 2 June Mike Flinn and I travelled to Himatangi and located the address where the tram was thought to be and found it still there.

We were able to have a look at the body and formed the opinion it could be the saloon component of a four wheel Wellington Double Deck tram, in the series 34 to 36. We based this opinion on the fanlight window arrangement above the saloon window which was different to the other four wheel deckers

plus its dimensions seemed to correspond with plans we had of these cars. In the mid

1960's Museum members had inspected a tram body at the Foxton Go Cart premises and we wondered whether this could be the same tram body, now at Himatangi. We know that tram 35 was written off circa 1950 whereas 34 and 36 were withdrawn circa 1931.

We were lucky to be able to ascertain the name of the owners, a Mr and Mrs Phillips. The next day I rang them and they advised

Photo: Mike Flinn

me that they were interested in getting rid of it so the upshot is we have agreed to take ownership of the tram body and take it back to the Tramway Museum for eventual display. It is anticipated that this will be undertaken in the Spring.

Our thanks are extended to the Phillips family for their kind donation.

Below: Wellington tram No.36 outside the old Lambton Station. *Photo: WTM Archives*



Memories of the Aro Street Route (parts 1 to 3) by Harry Berry

Harry Berry, who grew up in the Wellington inner city 'Aro Valley' suburb, (home to the Aro Street tram route) was an early active member of the Wellington Tramway Museum and was in charge of tram body maintenance and restoration for many years. He painted both tram 235 and 207 ready for the initial opening of the Museum in December 1965, and continued his active work until 1990, when tram 159 was brought into service.

Harry had been a painter at the old Petone Railway Workshops in the 1920's and 30's and at the time he joined the Tramway Museum in 1965 he had recently retired from Philips Electrical Industries at Naenae, Lower Hutt, where he had worked on, amongst other things, the large wooden cabinets that used to grace the old Philips television sets.

His "Memories of the Aro Street Route", published over several years in the early years of Tramway Topics magazine, portray not only the trams but provide a vivid social history of Aro Street back in those days.

Harry passed away on 5th May 1994.

We now propose, over time, to reprint his series of articles about the Aro Street tram route in Tramlines.

Part 1 (Originally published in Tramway Topics, June 1966 and reprinted in the July-September 1995 issue.)

The following article is entirely from memory, and although specific dates cannot be mentioned, certain periods give an indication of places and events. The writer lived near the Aro Street (tram) terminus from a very early age, and has had an association with trams for most of his life. In early years of the Great War he attended Mitchelltown School, situated on a hill overlooking the terminus, and in 1922 to 1925 was at Te Aro School, where they passed all day, either to or from Aro Street or Brooklyn.

The Aro Street branch left the main city to Brooklyn route at the junction of Willis and Aro Streets. It took a right hand turn, almost due west, ending at the top of the street with Holloway Road turning sharply to the left, and Raroa Road, along with Norway Street, turning right. To bring this article into perspective Aro Street follows the old stream bed in a large valley, Holloway Road and Norway Street being also large valleys forking off at the end. Off these were running numerous gullies, all of which ultimately became lanes or streets, some being continuous, others blind ends. It was not until about 1923 that Aro

Street had its first bitumen sealing and the opportunity was taken to relay and generally repair the rails, laid nearly 20 years before. Other streets leading into the main one were not sealed until the late 20's and early 30's.

Prior to sealing, and during heavy downpours of rain, the tramways suffered seriously with debris from swollen streams, formed in the gullies. Water would pour down from the hills, bringing rubble and silt, blocking drains and running freely down the streets. On one such occasion, the stream at the end of Holloway Road blocked with a matting of gorse, broke over the road, and joined with other streams which did likewise. A swirling mass of muddy water, the width of the street, descended on to the terminus, covering it with a foot of silt and boulders.

Up until 1923 this was no isolated case – it happened frequently, and on one wild winter's night a torrent caught a tram at the terminus and left it completely marooned in mud, sand and tangled roots of trees. It was not freed until next day. Gangs worked with only shovels, and horse drays, as there were not many motor lorries about then, with the faithful old horse still king of the road.

Younger members of the community were excited while on their way to school one morning after one of these periodic floods as the tram rails had been scoured out, leaving sleepers exposed for a hundred yards.



An early view of Aro Valley looking east towards Willis Street. Raroa Road is in the foreground on the left and Holloway Road on the right. The Aro Street terminus tram shelter can be seen near the road junction on the right.

Photo from the Graham Stewart collection

Mention must be made of the chivalry of male passengers and tram crews, when water was running ankle-high and sometimes deeper at the terminus. Trams stopped opposite a big creek, which when in flood, spilled over on to the roadway and lady passengers were often carried by willing 'Sir Walter Raleigh's' from tramcar to the footpath. Many of these passengers removed their footwear before leaving the tram for the shelter.

The line was the only real link to the city in those days and served a large area, including Highbury, Norway Street, Mt. Pleasant, Holloway Road, and a large section of hills both to the left and right of Aro Street. Population consisted mainly, as it was termed in those days, of the working class, and was a stronghold of the late Peter Fraser, who was a frequent traveller.

Part 2 (Originally published in Tramway Topics, August 1966 and reprinted in the October-December 1995 issue.)

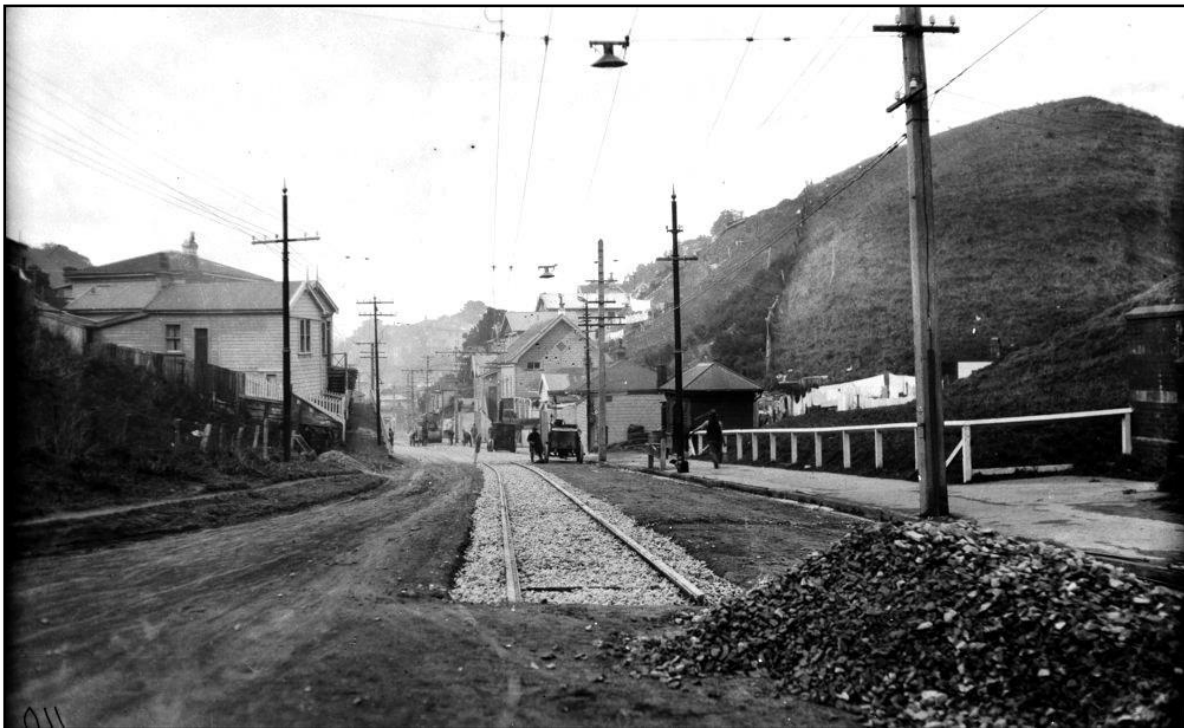
Having fully covered the geographical nature of the district, the actual tramway area will be explained. The service alternated between Aro Street and Brooklyn with the (Central) Post Office (at Post Office Square) as the departure and arrival base. It continued for many years into the early 30's.

The line up Willis Street was double until the turnoff to Aro Street becomes single length, with two passing bays – one near the William Booth Memorial in the lower section – and the other between Adams Terrace and the terminus. At this time there were only two stops on the way up, the first being just below Epuni Street, and

Memories of the Aro Street route, cont.



Above: The Aro Street tram terminus in 1930 prior to construction of the short track extension to the intersection with Holloway Road (left) and Raroa Road (right). The future bus (previously trolleybus) turnaround area is in the background.
Photo: Wellington City Council Archives collection



Above: This photo shows the almost completed short extension to the route. July 1930. The same waiting shelter as in the top photo is adjacent to the third pole on the right, at the end of the white fence.
Photo: Wellington City Council Archives collection

Memories of the Aro Street route, cont.

the other on the corner near Durham Street. First on a city bound run was also near Durham Street, another by Devon Street, and a third on the corner leading into Willis Street. Most of the street remains unchanged in general appearance, but an area occupied by the Blythswood Flats, was till 1929, a large vacant section with sloping concrete walls on the Willis Street and Aro Street sides. A large hoarding surrounded it, and sometimes horses grazed there amid a good growth of elderberry trees.

Another interesting sight was Fitchett's Blacksmith Shop on the corner of Ohiro Road, now occupied by flats. Further up (Aro Street) between Epuni and Durham Streets, horses and hansom cabs were kept by a Mr Mason. The land now occupied by the Wairarapa Butchery and the Catholic School was a stream with a concrete retaining wall. St. John Street had a suspension bridge over the water and served as a boundary to a large orchard. Some of the trees in the school are part of the orchard, and the tram stop nearby was added some years later.

After the turn off into Aro Street, from the junction to the terminus, the single track followed the left side of the street, leaving a very narrow passageway for horse and motor vehicles. At the approach to the Durham Street stop there was no freeway at all. Traffic had to wait for the tram to move and then follow it to the end of the road before overtaking. The right side of the road was wide and I consider that a double track must have been planned in earlier times. Conversations among the elders of the community, about a tram tunnel through the end of Norway Street, to connect with the Karori line near the Kelburn Viaduct can also be recalled. The terminus used by trolleybuses was an extension built in 1930. Previously the line finished below the valley on the left, the shelter being just above the stop (*as shown in the photograph, previous page – Ed.*).

The valley was known as Pole Hill Gully, deriving its name from the tall white flagpole on a rise at the left. To the right, on another rise, stood the Mitchelltown School. The

gully was Defence Department property, and a properly constructed track followed the creek on the left, up to a rifle range, where many of the First World War soldiers did their musketry practice. The small stream that flowed down was notorious for its flooding, and during heavy downpours the grill covering the culvert quickly blocked, forming a miniature lake which, after reaching a certain level, would flood over on to the tram rails.

About 150 feet above the terminus at the junction of Holloway and Raroa Roads was some waste land, used by residents as a dumping ground (at night!). It was about 1920 that this eyesore was developed into the tiny park, with its war memorial, still there, in its neat condition. The quarry was the main source of metal for the Council in those days, and there was little blackberry or gorse, the principal vegetation being elderberry, native undergrowth, and broom. On the banks of the school hill were beautiful clumps of rambling roses, and native plants.

In the next part of these Memories trams, and their crews, will be discussed.

Part 3 (Originally published in Tramway Topics, October 1966 and reprinted in the October - December 1995 issue.)

Trams on this route were the standard types of the times. In the late teens, combinations and palaces were regularly used, and the early twenties saw the introduction of the first double-saloon. An all-day service operated at about ten minute intervals, running alternately between the G.P.O, Aro Street, and Brooklyn. During peak periods practically every type of tram in the corporation fleet found its way to the terminus.

On many occasions both types of double-deckers were seen, and also a little four-wheeler which somehow escaped rebuilding into an early combination. A never to be forgotten sight was to see four trams near the terminus at the same time. There would be two at the railhead, discharging and taking on passengers, one waiting on the loop outside the Methodist Church hall, with the fourth heading city-wards.

Memories of the Aro Street route, cont.

We, as school children, would wait at the shelter shed for teachers to come up on the car, and it was on these occasions that so many types of vehicles were noticed. What all tram fans now call the “Big Bens” the only name we knew them by was the big double-deckers or the four wheeled deckers. The car we know now as the “Palace” was referred to as ‘cars with open middles’. Besides passenger cars the water tank car, luggage car, and rail grinder were seen on this section. Another had scrapers that lowered on to the rail to clean out the grooves. Large rotary brooms were also attached and operated with an outward movement, sweeping the scrapings clear. These vehicles were used prior to the tar-sealing of the road.



Above: A “Palace” type tram at the Aro St. terminus.

Photo: WTM Archives

The streets were not sealed up in this area till the early and middle twenties, so it is not hard to imagine the condition of the surface, with wash-outs, potholes, and with the waterworks or the Gas Co. always digging trenches or pits up and down the full length of the street. Often a trench ran straight across the road with a miniature tunnel under the rails, sometimes with heavy timber to take the weight of the tram. Then would come the rain, filling the trenches, to the delight of the local children, for here was a ready-made pond for their toy boats, plus a dip in muddy water.

The tramways employed a man on most weekdays to clean the groove of the rails, his implement being a long shovel like tool with a scraper in the centre. Equipment of this type can be seen in use today (*ie. 1966 – Ed.*) up at the Tramway Museum at Paekakariki.

The reader will now have a fair idea of the existing conditions of the time, hence the use of the water tank car to lay the dust that was constantly blowing into the track grooves. That just about every car used Aro Street there is no doubt – for at the terminus the two newsboys, one selling “Dominion” and the other “N.Z.Times”, kept numbers in a notebook over a lengthy period. There were very few that had not been entered. Incidentally, one lad was selling the

“Dominion” and the other the “N.Z.Times”, which was later merged with the former. During the evening peak hours a news-seller with the “Evening Post” was there, and in those days, all the newsboys used the tram shelter as their base, before moving away

on their deliveries.

In the next instalment the colour scheme etc. will be explained along with other details.

(Footnote – these articles are strictly from memory and if any information appears incorrect the writer would be grateful to hear from any old member, per letter to the editor, for correction. It is also hoped that per the medium of “Tramway Topics” others can supply information vital to the young men who will ultimately use articles in their scripts for future reference in the compilation of books and papers.

HISTORIC CORNER

Stevens, the scrap merchant at Rongotai

By Henry Brittain

In the May/June issue of "Tramlines" I covered the disposal of Wellington trams up until the late 1950's when the authorities changed the method to calling tenders for the bulk purchase of surplus trams to "as is where is".

The successful tenderer was a Wellington based scrap metal dealer, G R Stevens, who paid £22/10/- (22 pounds, ten shillings which equals \$45) for each tram. In today's money - based on that being a 1963 price - the equivalent is approximately \$1,000). Although his main premises were in Vivian Street, he opened a bigger yard at Rongotai which was closer to Kilbirnie depot where the trams had been stabled.

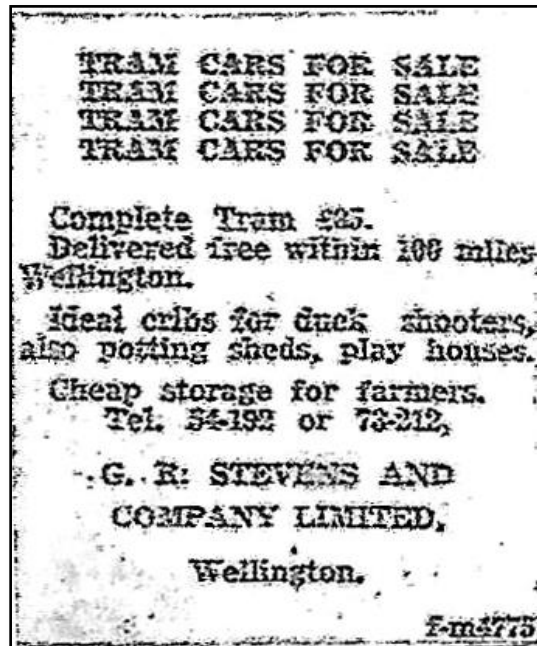
The trams were moved from the barn into the workshop on the Traverser and then lifted off their trucks by the overhead crane. Fittings under the tram were gas axed off and the body was lowered onto a jinker at one end and a tow truck at the other end and taken to the Rongotai yard. See photo below.



Above: the body of a Mk1 double-saloon tram being moved from Kilbirnie to Stevens' Rongotai yard for scrapping.

Photo: Graeme Bennett

Once there the trams were stored and advertised for sale. The advertisement below from the Evening Post of 1 March 1962 lists a complete tram body at 85 pounds each (\$3,700 in 2020 dollars), delivered free within 100 miles of Wellington. There was limited uptake and most of the trams remained unsold.



Above: Stevens' Evening Post advertisement of 1st March 1962 offering "tram cars for sale" at £85 each. The actual offer covered the body and chassis only, trucks and items such as controllers, compressors etc. having first been removed.

When the trams were separated from their running gear at Kilbirnie depot, the trucks were taken separately to the Rongotai premises and stored in bulk, (see photo on next page). These were later exported to Japan as scrap metal. At Rongotai each tram had its controllers and hand brake stands removed which also ended up as scrap. Two controllers were purchased from Stevens by one of our members for Wanganui tram number 8 and he had to pay £22/10/- for each one, ironically the same price as Stevens paid for a complete tram.

Historic Corner, cont.



Above: Anyone for a Brill 62E truck? What a mouth-watering sight to anyone involved with Wellington tram preservation today. Trucks from withdrawn trams at Stevens' Rongotai yard in the early 1960's, awaiting shipment as scrap to Japan. *Photo: Don Larsen*



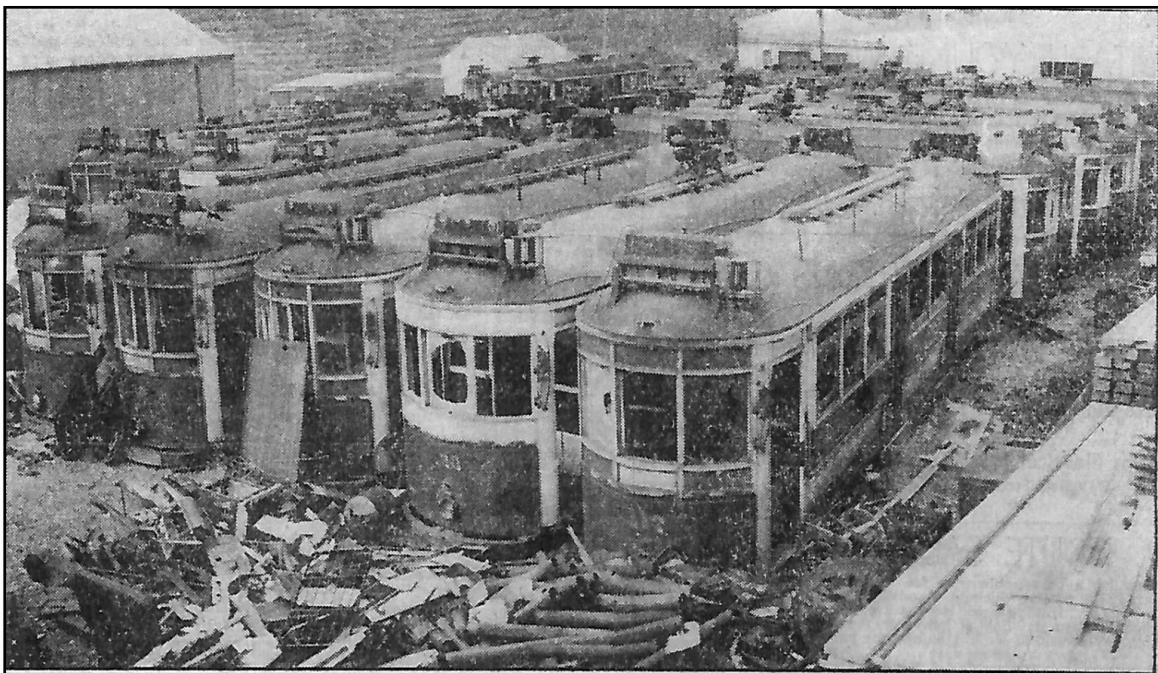
Above: Mark II double-saloon body No.186 being burnt at Red Rocks on Wellington's southern coast.

Photo: Graeme Bennett

As time went by with little interest being shown for the purchase of a complete tram, Stevens chose to break some up and try and sell some body components separately and when this in turn proved to be too much trouble, they adopted the practice of taking a tram body around to Red Rocks on the southern coast and disposing of it by burning. See photo above of tram 186.

Those tram bodies that were broken up were dumped at the Council tip at Houghton Bay.

In the next two instalments I will cover firstly the final destination of those tram bodies that were sold and in the second, the disposal of trams from Newtown depot to Stevens' yard at Ohiro Bay.



Above: An 'Evening Post' photo published on 13th October 1961 of the trams in Stevens' yard. The caption reads:

"THEIR SECOND TO LAST STOP - the stop before the last for 60 old Wellington tramcars near Wellington Airport. The trams, after motor, chassis and wheels are removed are being sold for farm buildings and baches where, if bylaws allow, they will find their last stop." (In actual fact the chassis was not removed – just all the equipment attached to it – Ed.)



Above: Another view of some trams in Stevens' Rongotai scrapyard.

Photo: Graeme Bennett

"Tramlines" is the bi-monthly newsletter for members of the Wellington Tramway Museum Inc. Its aim is to keep members in touch with practical notices and the details of current developments and it also includes articles on matters of historic tramway interest, especially Wellington. Please also see our website and Facebook page which are our instantly-updated Museum fact resource and notice to the wider world. Contributions and notes weed. Contact details are on page 2.