

TROLLEY WIRES

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SOUTH PACIFIC
ELECTRIC RAILWAY

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RAIL MOTOR IN SERVICE... WE'RE OPERATING!

At 4.30 pm on Saturday 26th October, our newest item of rolling stock, the Cadillac rail motor from J. & A. Brown's Pelaw Main to Hexham railway, arrived at Loftus. Our thanks go to Eric Law for his efficient handling of this difficult transfer, and for his temporary storage of the car at his home. By skilful reshuffling of the tramcars, and the removal of couplers and destination boxes to gain a few more inches, just, and only just, enough space was made available for the rail car on number 4 road of our depot.

Although the vehicle had been out of service since 1949, our mechanic, Dennis O'Brien, and his assistant has it ready for service the following weekend., and at 10.30 am on Sunday 2nd November the rail car left the depot for the first journey down the track to "South" terminus. Thus operation commenced on the S.P.E.R. tramway.

Regular operation will commence on Wednesday 1st January 1964, with tabled journeys on every "first Sunday of the month" and other special occasions.

Since the arrival of the Cadillac, a few missing parts have been replaced, while the rear end of the bod, damaged by a railway "D" truck in a shunting accident some years ago, had been entirely rebuilt. To provide a greater degree of safety in passing over pointwork, Richard Clarke has had the flange thickness turned down to tramway standards. More substantial footboards have also been fitted.

Don't forget we hope to see you all at the museum on New Year's Day to sample rides on your tramway.

CHAIRMAN RESIGNS

We regret to record the recent resignation of the Chairman of Directors of the S.P.E.R., Mr R.E. Murray. Ron was elected President of the A.E.T.M. in 1956, and on the registration of the museum as a Co-Operative Society in 1959, became Chairman, in which office he has remained until now. He has thus been at the head of the museum for virtually the whole of its existence as an independent body, and the progress which has taken place in that time is testimony to his leadership. Ron is remaining on the Board and we trust that we shall be able to call upon his advice for many years to come.

NEW MEMBER

The Board and Shareholders welcome the following new member to the museum:

Russell J. Willis 98

WORK DAY AT RANDWICK

On Saturday 2nd November the disused Randwick Tramway Workshops which once carried out all major repairs for the Sydney and suburban tramway systems, again echoed to the sound of tramcar maintenance. On this occasion a SPER work party repainted “O” car 1030 and BCC 180 with a protective coat of paint which should prevent any body deterioration for the remainder of their time in temporary storage at Randwick. A grey enamel was used on 1030 while 180 received a new coat of silver. We hope to announce shortly the progress of work which will culminate in these two cars joining the rest of the fleet at Loftus.

It is interesting to note that the De Leuw, Cather report has recommended the use of Randwick Workshops as an electric car workshops for the Eastern Suburbs Railway, a proposal which we feel is unlikely to be implemented.

THE BOARD AND THE RAILWAY COMMITTEE
EXTEND TO MEMBERS THEIR WISHES FOR A
MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR

SUBSCRIPTIONS FALLING DUE

In the near future we hope to have “Trolley Wire” registered for posting as periodical. This will prevent us from informing you when your subscription is due by way of this magazine. As a result Ben Parle has been appointed to the new office of Subscription Officer and it will be his task to inform members in future of the state of their subscription.

CAR REPAINTING

On Saturday, 26th October, work commenced on the preparation of “K” car 1296 for repainting. The Railway Committee and the Board have decided to use the grey, olive and fawn scheme on this car, and Ted Davies is currently arranging for the original colours to be matched to ensure a faithful reproduction of the car’s former appearance. Laboratory staff are carrying out an analysis of the composition of paint chips of these long forgotten shades, but in the meantime your donations of pink primer will be very welcome.

TRACKWORK AND LINESIDE STRUCTURES

Since last issue of “TW” appeared a further 25 yards of track have been laid on the end of our main line, resulting in the rail head now being 275 yards beyond the depot “Yard Limit” sign. In addition, 10 yards of heavy grooved rail has been located in the depot yard siding. Our policy of laying the entire museum trackage in tee rail has only been departed from in this instance for historical reasons.

During early November the signal box was shifted to a point near the base of its elevated frame and it is intended to have it lifted into its permanent position in the near future.

We thank David Rawlings for his generous donation of 21 cwt of light 20 and 30 lb tee rail. This material should prove useful for many purposes on the site.

RAIL TOURS

Following a recent meeting of representatives of the various railfan groups in N.S.W., a co-ordinated program of rail tours for 1964 has been drawn up, and copies will be distributed to members in the near future. The S.P.E.R. tour for 1964 is set down for Sunday 28th June, and tentative plans provide for an attempt on the Sydney – Newcastle speed record with a 38 class. The present record is 130 minutes set by 3603 in 1938. Activities during the stay in Newcastle have not been decided. We are also waiting for a reply from the NSWGR regarding a possible tour with the first double deck car before it enters service. Members will be notified as soon as arrangements are completed.

OUR MUSEUM IN “TRAMS”

Members will be pleased to learn that an illustrated article about our Society prepared by our Secretary, Clyde Woodside, has appeared in the current issue of “Trams”, a magazine published by the Tramway Museum Society of Crich, England. We are endeavouring to obtain a supply of this copy of “Trams” for shareholders. If successful, these will be available towards the end of January. Please advise our secretary immediately if you are interested, as only a limited number will be available. The price will be about 4/- per copy, and restricted to one copy per member.

BALMORAL LINE REERVATION

One of the most attractive stretches of route on the Sydney tramways, the reserved track section from Beaconsfield Road to The Esplanade, Balmoral line, is to remain in its present condition as natural bushland. It had been intended to subdivide the land for housing, but following protests from a number of interested bodies including the S.P.E.R., the area is to remain undisturbed. The shallow cutting linking Gordon Street and Beaconsfield Road is already the site of a private house.

C.E.B.S. CAMP

The Golden Jubilee national camp of the Church of England Boys; Society will be held in the Royal National Park close to the museum depot from 10th to 20th January 1964. Special trains will run from all parts of the state, and from Melbourne and Brisbane to bring boys to the camp, and will unload at the platform beside our depot yard. Several thousand boys will attend the camp, and a post office and two banks will be established to cater for them. Clearing of undergrowth for the setting up of the hundreds of tents required has already commenced.

The duration of the camp will be a difficult time for the museum, and any members able to be present on the weekdays 13th-17th January are asked to contact the general manager as soon as possible. It is hoped to provide rides on the Rail Motor at the weekends for those attending the camp, and for visitors. The attendance of members on the two weekends would also be appreciated as it is expected that the whole area will be swamped with visitors on these days.

TRAM DEPOT NOW MUSEUM

Trams returned to Ultimo Depot on November 2nd when "O" 805 and "R" 1738 arrived from storage at Randwick to become the first exhibits to enter the future transport annexe of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences. Occupancy of the depot building by the Museum was gazetted on 1st November and the two cars left the repair shop at Randwick, where they have been stored since their withdrawal, on the same day. Next morning at 6.30 am they were moved from Brambles' depot at Marrickville to Ultimo, where two large cranes were used to unload the cars onto the disused track in the depot yard. They were then rolled inside on No. 12 road, which has been reconstructed and is now useable for the whole of its length. S.P.E.R. members were on hand to record the event on film, and were able to give assistance during the unloading and subsequent movement of the cars into the depot.

The previous occupants of the depot, Cleland's Bonded and Free Stores Pty Ltd, were to have vacated the building by 30th November, to permit the start of renovations by the Museum which are expected to take about two years.

MUSEUM PUBLICITY

The S.P.E.R. HO gauge tramway layout was once again the centre of attraction when it was exhibited on 30th November in a church fete held at St. Luke's, Enmore, the parish of our member the Rev. John Green. As with previous exhibitions we were able to help a worthy cause while at the same time publicising the museum. Further publicity was obtained when the A.B.C. repeated their TV film of the museum, "Journey's End", on the children's session recently.

Members can bring the museum project before the public by buying copies of our calendar, produced jointly with the NSWRTM, and sending them to friends or potential new members. Copies are only 6/-, available at meetings. From the depot of by mail from the secretary at an additional cost of 1/6.

BOSTON 396

Seashore Electric Railway, well known to members for their ownership of Sydney "P" car 1700, made museum history last February when one of their cars was used in the making of a film. Entitled "The Cardinal", it is adapted from a novel about a young New England priest who becomes a cardinal, and the early part of the story is set in Boston in 1915, where the priest's father is a streetcar conductor.

One of the most importance sequences take place in a streetcar and at a suburban stop where the character board it. Instead of taking the easy way out and changing the story, director Otto Preminger insisted on authenticity, and in due course Seashore, which has a comprehensive collection of Boston cars, was contacted by Columbia Pictures about the loan of a suitable car.

After the contract was finalised, Car 396, a 25 ft saloon looking, to Sydney eyes, like a bogie version of a C car, was selected and was shipped to the Everett Shops of the Boston M.T.A. for a major overhaul of both the body and the electrical equipment. The car was thoroughly stripped inside and out and then restored to its 1915 condition in white and green livery complete with elaborate lining.

On Sunday 24th February at 5.30 am, No 396 was taken into Boston on a special transporter, and using a special ramp, Lizard style, was unloaded onto the

rails in the suburb of Belmont on the former Waverley line, closed on 5th September 1958. The track on this section was still in place, and trolley-bus overhead supplied the power. With a Seashore crew in charge and crowded with Seashore members, No 396 ran about half a mile on the abandoned line to the location of the filming, where it was turned over to the film Co. Following some initial difficulties, the M.T.A. motorman was tutored in the handling of the car, and the exterior scenes were taken, along with many feet of amateur film exposed by Seashore members. Carpenters then hung a large platform on the side of the car to mount an arc lamp, and flanked by two trucks supplying power for this and the cameras, No 396 made a succession of trips along the street while the interior scene was filmed.

At midday when filming was completed, the Seashore crew drove the car back to the ramp, and after the “rushes” of the film had been passed, no 396 returned to Seashore’s depot at Kennebunkport. For the loan of the car, Seashore was paid \$1. All other costs, including \$5,000 for the overhaul and restoration, were met by Columbia Pictures, a highly satisfactory arrangement from Seashore’s angle, who now have a formally nondescript car in immaculate condition.

The question arises, could it happen here? The lack of a suitable power supply and overhead wires virtually rules out any operation on the rapidly shrinking trackage in Sydney. However, there is still 600 volts in Melbourne! Anyone like to write a novel about an “O” car?

STEAM LOCO CUFF LINKS

Steam Products, 37 Perrone Ave, Clontarf, have announced that a matching set of gold plated cuff links and tie bar, embossed in black with the silhouette of an NSW streamlined 38 class, is now available. Prices; Cuff links 18/6, Tie bar 11/3, as a set 26/-. All prices include packaging and postage.

It is hoped to fulfil orders a fortnight from receipt. If demand is sufficient, sets depicting VR “S” (steam) and SAR 520 classes will also be produced.

ZOO TRAM IN SEA

On the 22nd of January next will occur the sixth anniversary of the last of the strange series of accidents at Athol Wharf terminus. On Wednesday 22nd January 1958, "R1" car 2000 running in the shuttle service between the wharf and Taronga Zoo top gates. Left the upper terminus about midday on a routine trip down the scenic, single track route. For some reason never publicly explained, the crew lost control of the car and it raced downhill at a speed greatly in excess of the 6 mph limit. To the woman in the kiosk beside the curve just below Ashton Loop, it was "going so fast it looked like a ghost" as it passed her shop. Careering rapidly round the curves, it sped through the terminal loop and crushed a motor car standing in its path, seriously injuring the occupants. At the end of the line stood a large buffer of ash and old sleepers, erected after the second runaway in 1952. The ash flew in all directions and sleepers splintered as the car headed relentlessly for the harbour. The driver and conductor (the only persons aboard) jumped clear as 2000 crashed over the rocks and came to rest at an angle of 45° with the front cab window under water. The front bogie ended under the centre door and all undergear was damaged, and the frame twisted. Breakdown car 143s was soon on the scene and the crew commenced to strip No 2000, a task which took several days. It was immediately decided to scrap the car, and preparations were made to burn it on the spot. However this plan was dropped, and the car was lifted by a floating crane and removed to Randwick where it was scrapped.

No. 2000 had previously made the news when it was delivered to the system at Taronga Zoo on 20th December 1951, the day of a total strike. During mid 1957, No 2000 and 1999 had been affected by a springing fault which caused a marked bouncing motion at speed. This was eventually rectified, but the memory was close enough to cause one driver to comment after the plunge that No, 2000 had "jumped into the harbour to try to get to Circular Quay". Soon after the accident, the line at Athol was cut back in preparation for buses, and the risk of runaways transferred to the diesel vehicles, which have, so far, preferred to stay on dry land.

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