

THE TRAMWAY MUSEUM SOCIETY OF VICTORIA LIMITED  
REGISTERED OFFICE: 332 FLINDERS STREET, MELBOURNE, 3000 VICTORIA

NEWSLETTER - APRIL, 1973

MEMBERS' DAY

Sunday, 18th March, 1973 saw one of our members and friends travel to Bylands by luxury coach or private car. All of us would like to have this number present at our site, an even greater effort would have been more encouraging! Newcomers expressed pleasure at the location, set among the rolling hills of the Great Dividing Range, while there were many commendations to the workers who have advanced our project to its present state of development. Visitors are always welcome, especially on Sundays. If you call during the week or on Saturdays, please report to caretaker George Wilcock at the house and introduce yourself. George becomes a little uneasy when he sees someone wandering around the site, and would be within his rights in taking "defensive" action! Apart from that, he's a very interesting person to talk with. As he spends the week on the property (with his wife), with limited contact with people, he undoubtedly would like to meet you and have a chat. Reverting to Sunday, 18th, the various groups ate their picnic lunches under differing situations and set the pattern for the future. Some were in the Ford bus, others in their cars, some set up picnic tables and chairs while others sat on the Sheffield's trailer. All wandered about in groups and inspected the works, stores, plant and equipment, while a number also walked the whole length of the line. All told, an interesting and pleasant day, and something that will be repeated from time to time. Our thanks to B.C.S.V. secretary John Masterton for providing and driving the coach at Grenda's.

SOCIETY PROPERTY.

The Society has accumulated a very large quantity of items in the ten years of its existence, and they are stored at many locations. An effort started late last year to transfer much of this material to the storerooms at Bylands, and will doubtless take many months to complete. As much as possible will be transported by member's vehicles heading north for normal work parties, but the heavier items will require special efforts involving motor trucks. We take this opportunity to ask members holding Society property to kindly notify the Secretary by writing down the details and mailing them to 332 Flinders Street, Melbourne. This will help us to organise the transport plan and overcome the problem of anything being missed. Concurrently, Bill Johnson is sorting out the library material and associated items referred to as "the archives". Similarly anyone with library or archive items is asked to also advise the Secretary details of what they hold. It would be appreciated if details could be to hand before 30th April, 1973.

PETITION

Our Board recently decided to open a Petition to State Parliament to assist our case for the four tramcars, spare parts and historical items which we seek from the S.E.C.'s, the closed Bendigo tramway system. Such have been promised to us for some years by the S.E.C.'s staff, but the recently formed local Bendigo Trust are using considerable pressure in their demand that they receive everything. The Petition has had an encouraging start, with many people signing it at "332" and at the Exhibition. One sheet of the Petition will be forwarded to every member with this mail-out, and it is asked that you, your family, relatives, friends, acquaintances, etc., sign it. If more sheets are needed they will be gladly supplied by Ron Scholten at 332 Flinders Street, Keith Kings (83.4932) or Len Millar (29.8727). One member took some sheets a couple of weeks ago and is obtaining signatures at a remarkable rate (he must be on a commission basis!). We commend this matter to you as something very serious and deserving of your support and attention. All those members who are unable to help at the work site can seek signatures quite easily at their homes, when visiting friends, at the tennis club, amongst football supporters, when out shopping, from the neighbours, etc. Please help, and return completed forms by the end of June to the Secretary at 332 Flinders Street, Melbourne.

SOCIAL MEETING.

The next social meeting will be held in the Lecture Room, Malvern Town Hall, on Monday, 2nd April, at 8.00 p.m. Tony Cooke will screen colour slides of various tramway systems taken in the 1955 - 1965 period and Keith Kings will screen movie films depicting early Society tours and activities. The Sales counter and Refreshment stall will be operating before and after the meeting. All their respective staff are in good form after the Exhibition and look forward to being kept working at top speed.

FUNDS

We have had an extremely healthy bank balance for some months but it took a battering at the March Board Meeting when accounts totalling some \$2,400 were passed for payment. Most of this amount was to pay for the corrugated galvanised iron for the roof and west wall of the Depot building. Although not making a special call for donations at the

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moment, it is pointed out that the Building Appeal and Operation Exodus (tramcar transport) are still open. Any donations will be gratefully received, as, the Society is always short of ready cash to pay for developmental work, that is materials for the construction or completion of buildings, purchase of electrical sub-station equipment, transport charges on cartage of materials and equipment, purchase of tools or implements to enable work to be carried out (where these are not available on loan from members), paints for tramcars and buildings, etc. Don't forget, donations of \$2.00 and over are tax deductible and June 30th approaches.

#### WORKS REPORT

The past few weeks have seen Bylands inching closer toward its goal. Our old "tin shed" has been painted a louverly shade of puce green by Bill Johnson and family. In fact all it needs now is a few stripes of brown, and it would be so well camouflaged you'd never see it. Not a bad thing either, some would say. Seriously though, it's a vast improvement. On the depot itself our more agile members are still scaling around the roof trusses securing purlins with steel straps - to make doubly sure it doesn't blow down in a Pretty Sally gale. This job is nearly complete, which brings us to the most important task of putting the iron on the roof. It has been decided to make this coming weekend 31st and 1st a Saturday and Sunday affair to try and complete the entire roof in one go. So again we are calling for volunteers, we will need at least 12 members. It is anticipated that most will stay overnight, and for these that do, a cook will be present and everybody will contribute to the cost of the food. So anybody who intends staying, only needs to provide a sleeping-bag and probably an airbed. For those that can only make it on one day, transport will still be provided and a normal pick up will be done at Batman Avenue, at 9 a.m. on both Saturday and Sunday.

Any member who will be coming, would they please ring Mike Cornwall on 67-9972 between 9 a.m. and 5.15 p.m. on Thursday or Friday to check that arrangements haven't been altered. This will also give us an idea of how much food to buy. So any of you who haven't been up to Bylands, here's your big chance to build a real depot. It is hoped to plan a programme for the six day break over Easter - from Friday, 20th April to Wednesday 25th. (Anzac Day). Volunteers are also needed for this.

#### BENDIGO TRUST

Subsequent to the October, 1972 issue of "Newsletter", one member has objected to the use of the word "alien" in the report on the Bendigo Trust.

In case any other member is in doubt about this word, the Concise Oxford English Dictionary defines it as:- "Not one's own; foreign; under foreign allegiance; differing in nature (from)".

It was factually used in this sense. As briefly explained, the Bendigo Trust did not originate from an enthusiast group; their intention is to provide tourist attractions at Bendigo that will bring people to their city so that the businesses will benefit.

The Bendigo Trust therefore does differ from our Society and every other tramway preservation group in Australia. It fits the above definition: it is not of our type of origin, it is different to us, its allegiance is different, its purpose is different.

The word "alien" was not used in a derogatory manner. It is unfortunate that war-time speeches and writings as well as inter-race incidents in recent years have planted in some people's minds the wrong meaning of this word. It was not used in such a manner, for obvious reasons. (Our Society does not consider itself at war with the Bendigo Trust even though the Trust has gone to considerable lengths during the last year to deprive us of the four trams and spare parts which the S.E.C. has promised to us for several years. These actions have caused our Directors to expend scores of hours on reports and counter moves. This has all been negative work, and it is considered that this time would have been much better spent on positive work - such as building Bylands! However, it is part of the thrust and parry encountered in life, and has to be met and handled as best as possible from time to time. Obviously a round-table conference would have been the ideal solution to the problem in the first instance. Unfortunately, the theoretical did not happen, so the rough and rocky road of life is running its course.) On Monday 23rd October, 1972, our South Australian contemporary, the Australian Electric Transport Museum, jacked up Bendigo Birney car No. 29, ready for a semi-trailer to arrive the next morning and take it to Adelaide. (They had previously received a letter from the Minister for Fuel and Power, The Hon. J.C. M. Balfour, donating the car to them). That evening the most extraordinary event of the last few months took place. As reported in the Bendigo Advertiser, capital city dailies, on radio and TV, members of the Bendigo Trust lowered the tram, pushed it back into the Depot, welded a pipe across the rails in front of the wheels, changed the locks on the Depot doors and took the S.E.C.'s lifting jacks away.

There were subsequent protests at these actions and State Cabinet decided that the whole situation should be investigated. No decision has yet been announced.