

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Geoffrey Claydon, Vice President, Tramway Museum Society (U.K.)

Session Chair: John Radcliffe

Session Secretary: Bill Kingsley

G'Day. You must all be gluttons for punishment.

But it is great to be able to attend and address COTMA for the second time (The first being Christchurch in 1978).

In 1978 I had the privilege at seeing all the Museums first. Not so this time, coming directly from the U.S.A.

Note that Crich in Derbyshire is pronounced "CRYCH IN DARBISHEER".

The disused quarry of 1959 is now the National Tramway Museum, a charitable institution, with 50 trams, one mile of "1 in 20" track, 20 paid full time staff, 2000 members (of which 200 are active), 120,000 visitors per annum and an annual income of \$700,000.

About marketing

At National Tramway Museum, the basic offering is a tram ride along the middle of the street that then goes into "the outback".

But the total product is much more and you must identify:-

1. Active participation by visitors (but beware the white knuckle ride - the pink knuckle ride is slightly more relaxing!).
2. Passive interpretive displays
3. Level of interest, especially with other attractions at the Museum.
4. The demand by - Local residents.
 - Tourists (especially those staying with local families).
 - Groups and Schools.
5. Weather and protection from the rain (the sun always shines in Bendigo).
6. Price.
7. Size of the market.

The National Tramway Museum identifies two isochromes of visitors, being those 'locals' who can travel to the Museum within 60 minutes, and the 'further afields' who are within 90 minutes. For each you must identify the numbers and types of households, ethnic groups, lifestyle, unemployment.

The better the marketing, the higher percentage of groups attend. Groups should constitute 12% to 24% of visitors.

Groups have booked in advance, so poor weather alternatives must exist.

School children will often bring their parents along later.

Coach drivers and operators must be given free meals and entry.

12.5% of net turnover is spent on marketing. But don't throw money away.

The lower the admission price the more people will come, but the more staff you must employ. The higher the price, the less will come, but the less you need to employ.

You must have a marketing officer, who does not need to know about trams, but must understand the press, T.V., and politicians.

Avoid paid press and T.V. advertisements. Utilise special events such as the millionth visitor, awards, special visitors, for free press and T.V. coverage. The annual National Tramway Museum Extravaganza is now too costly and the novelty has worn off.

Try car rallies, Yorkshire bus rallies, street entertainers, Santa Specials, Santa in his grotto (National Tramway Museum needs two Santas!).

Charge people to be taught to drive a tram - theory, practice, the lot. Then present a Certificate. Comments such as "A marvellous experience" are frequent.

About Membership

Seek more members. The active will mean a larger workforce. The inactive are unpaid marketers.

Try induction weekends for new members, and special days for all who joined in the previous 12 months, with hands-on driving and social events. Look after and care for your members.

Nothing succeeds like success. Enthusiasts will work for the body with a proven record, as they can expect to see results by the end of the day (eg., Festiniog Railway).

New Management

Restrict the use of the term "museum", for such brings needs for curators, collection policies, safeguarding of exhibits.

Beware of the competition "Conservation" versus "Replacement", such as "we must keep the original brake blocks" versus "let's put on new brake blocks". Preserving the past is also about preserving the motion and movement of vehicles. To this end the most important item to conserve is "skills".

Use audio-visuals, exhibitions, "expositions of the past", library and archives, research. Safety is important. One accident can affect the other museums too.

There is no such thing as "absolute" safety. Establish procedures, counter risks, recognise hazards, and the role of the coroner. Keep histories of cars and crews. Train new crews by syllabus. Keep records.

It is hard to keep people enthusiastic about safety. Sir Richard Clark stated, "If you are dedicating your life to a project, make sure the project is the greatest".

Craig (Tooke) has helped with a 60 page Code of Practice for overhead wiring. Even Blackpool has asked for a copy.

There is a role here for COTMA. Unfortunately, COTMA is unique in the world. There is nothing similar anywhere. The National Tramway Museum leads the United Kingdom. The American Rail Museum in America is not really effective.

The interest of Delegates at this conference, the width of agenda, the enthusiasm, the encouragement, is all indicative of success.

Best wishes for the future.

Discussion

To a question by John Radcliffe about museums in Britain, Geoffrey spoke of too many stuffed animals where "hands-on" is really needed. There are too many competing attractions fighting to maintain market shares.

Don Campbell asked about paid employees. Half the income at National Tramway Museum is for wages, but the Per-Way Department is entirely volunteer. Vast numbers of volunteers are essential.

To an inquiry by Daryl McClure about new tramways in the U.K., Geoffrey mentioned 6 foot deep track foundations, encasing rails to deaden sound and overcome electrolysis, massive overhead requiring more poles and reduced aesthetics, and highly sophisticated car maintenance.

Bob Pearce queried the undergrounding of power. Indeed A.C. had to go under the tracks.