

PRESENTING YOUR TRAMWAY MUSEUM TO THE PUBLIC

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Firstly I must apologise for the absence of John Menzies - the Sea World Group Managing Director. As your Conference Agenda shows, John was to present this paper on "Presenting your Tramway Museum to the Public" but unfortunately unexpected company commitments have prevented him from attending. John is recognised as one of the most capable men in the Australian tourist industry and I know you would have found his address both informative and entertaining. He sincerely regrets being unable to be with you and has asked me to tender his personal apologies. I am therefore something of a last minute rake-in and I hope that what I have to say will be of interest to you.

Given more time I would have supported this address with an audio-visual display but as this has not been possible I have circulated a number of Sea World and Bird Life Park souvenir booklets - these illustrate the standard of presentation of many of our displays and facilities. I would ask you to look at this aspect very closely as we place more emphasis on this one particular aspect of our operation than all others combined - and it relates directly to much of what I will be saying.

I must say that I am delighted to again meet the Honourable the Deputy Premier, Dr Llew Edwards and I must tell you that Dr Edwards is looking far more relaxed today than he was the last time I saw him - which was when he performed the opening ceremonies of our newest attraction at Sea World - Australia's first water borne roller coaster - the Vikings' Revenge Flume Ride! In fact Dr Edwards did not only not look relaxed - he looked absolutely terrified as he became the first to enjoy the thrills of this \$1,000,000 ride tearing down a 40° slope at around 60 km per hour. As befits an experienced politician capable of dealing with any situation that faces him I should stress that Dr Edwards took it all in his stride and even managed a smile for the media. The fact that he had a couple of scantily clad lady Vikings - (or Vikingesses, I'm not sure which) with him undoubtedly helped!

So that you may fully understand the points I will be making, I think it appropriate that I first detail a brief history of the company I work for. I am referring here to the entire Sea World Group and not just Bird Life Park of which I am General Manager. This information is not intended to be a huge free plug for either Sea World or Bird Life Park but if it does arouse your curiosity enough to pay us a visit we will of course be delighted!

Many of the Brisbane Tramway Museum members and their families have visited one or both attractions and I hope that those of you from interstate and overseas will have the time during your stay to come to the Gold Coast - Australia's holiday and tourist capital. I am certain you will enjoy it.

Our group is totally Australian owned by Mr Keith Williams and the fact that it IS totally Australian owned and operated in the true spirit of free enterprise is one of which we are extremely proud.

Keith Williams started his working life as a telegram delivery boy for

the Postmaster General's Dept. in Brisbane in his early teens. Within a short period of time his determination and ability, now well known right throughout the tourist industry in this country, to "get the job done" became evident and as a very young man he had his own manufacturing operation marketing a range of soft toys and other goods. His talent for capitalising on particular situations at the right time was also effectively demonstrated when he became, I believe, the first Australian to manufacture Davey Crockett hats and suits in the days of the Davey Crockett craze - he was also one of the first to make leather saddle-bags for motorbikes during the "bodgie and widgie" era.

Always a keen boating man Keith was among the first water skiers in Queensland and he decided to create an Australian equivalent of the world famous Cypress Gardens in Florida - the home of professional water skiing throughout the world. He purchased a couple of hundred acres of dairy farm on the banks of the Nerang River a few miles west of Surfers Paradise and imported palm trees and a variety of tropical vegetation to create a water skiing paradise. Starting with weekend and ski shows for Gold Coast tourists and Brisbane visitors the "Ski Gardens" as it came to be known, grew to be the most successful tourist attraction on the Gold Coast with world class ski shows every day and host to the 1965 World Water Ski Championships.

In 1970 the whole operation was shifted in 48 hours to its new home at Sea World, a 50 acre site set among the sandhills of the Southport Spit, with the Pacific Ocean on one side and the Southport Broadwater on the other. Sea World which is a marine orientated entertainment or "theme" park is now recognised as the most spectacular tourist attraction in Australia. Bird Life Park is located on the former Marineland of Australia site just to the south of Sea World. We opened our doors to the public on Boxing Day 1977 and I am pleased to report that the Park certainly has an assured future. At Bird Life Park we display a variety of Australian wildlife in a daily series of shows, informative talks and feeding presentations, twelve in all. In fact we do more shows per day at Bird Life Park than they do at Sea World. My staff and I sometimes unofficially refer to the Park as "Australia's Wildlife Entertainment Centre", and this in fact sums up our format and concept very well. You will notice that I used the word ENTERTAINMENT. Bird Life Park is not a zoo, nor is it a wildlife sanctuary, it is a place where we entertain our visitors by introducing them to this country's unique fauna. The Park is unique among animal parks around the world in the way we display our wildlife. We seek to entertain, and it doesn't matter whether you are displaying marine mammals or koalas and kangaroos or restored trams, the essential criteria for a successful operation is to entertain. I will come back to this vital aspect again later. Suffice to say that our format has been so successful that I am frequently responding to requests from some of the big overseas zoos for details of how we go about presenting our wildlife; they have heard about it from visitors or staff and are wanting details.

In addition to Sea World and Bird Life Park the Group operates Surfers Paradise International Raceway, has an interest in the Lakeside Motor Racing Circuit to the north of Brisbane and operates the Adelaide International Raceway in South Australia. We are currently developing Hamilton Island in the Whitsunday Group on the Barrier Reef, when the project is completed I believe it will be the most sophisticated Barrier Reef resort island; and we have Sea World Aviation which charters a fleet of helicopters and executive prop and pure jet aircraft.

Should those of you who are presidents of your tramway museums wish to

despatch your technical people on fact-finding missions to other museums I put it to you that you have them travel in style and comfort aboard our pure jet Cessna Citation! Seriously it is a magnificent aeroplane and if your petty cash tin can afford the charter fee I am sure that Mr Williams would be delighted to hear from you!

Current plans within the Group include, naturally, the on-going development of Sea World, Bird Life Park, and our Hamilton Island project and the construction of a licensed tavern directly opposite Bird Life Park.

I enjoy working within the Group I think mainly because of its free enterprise nature. Keith Williams is both an aggressive and dynamic individual and we get things done. Frequently if we can't find the appropriate expertise to build something we don't run around wringing our hands but sit down, look at the problem and go ahead and do it ourselves. A classic example of this is the Viking Revenge Flume Ride I mentioned earlier. Although naturally similar to water borne rides in America, the Viking Revenge was totally designed and built within the Sea World complex. Another example is our Free-Flight Aviary at Bird Life Park; until the construction of a new aviary at Melbourne Zoo recently, the Free-Flight Aviary was the largest aviary in Australia. Almost 300 feet long and 50 feet high, it is a massive construction for something for a bunch of birds to live in and, again, totally designed and constructed within our own group.

In these times of inflation, unemployment and generally gloomy prophecies we in the Sea World Group make a habit of adopting positive attitudes, which of course is not always easy. From time to time we have our problems the same as any organisation has but we try very hard to see past the problem. I am reminded of a slogan used by the American based personnel company, Drake International, probably only known to most of you because Drake was the company that Ainsley Gotto left John Gorton to go and work for. The personnel industry is an extremely tough and high pressure industry and Drake is run on very aggressive American principles. I am not one for cliches but Drake has one which to me is appropriate in these times and it also reflects the sort of thinking we have at executive level within the Sea World Group. It is this: "when the going gets tough, the tough get going"!

No doubt many of you have been listening and thinking: "this is all very well but how can you relate the principles of running a multimillion dollar professional tourist enterprise to running a volunteer based tramway museum?" I can assure you that the principles are exactly the same and, particularly, in presenting either enterprise "to the public".

Whether you are presenting a pound of butter for sale in your corner store, a sophisticated Cockatoo Bird Show or a collection of restored trams and equipment, the principals of doing it successfully are exactly the same.

I am going to break up the criteria for presentation as I see them into a number of areas but before I do that I would like to detail my company's involvement with the Brisbane Tramway Museum for those of you from interstate and overseas.

When I rejoined the Group in 1977 to accept the position of General Manager of Bird Life Park, Keith Williams told me he wanted to have a horse drawn tram ride for our visitors. At first this to me seemed to be a relatively easy sort of project to set up. All I had to do was build an old style tram

car, buy a couple of old draught horses off a farm, lay down a track and presto I had a tram ride. Progressive investigation into the project revealed it was not going to be that simple!

John Menzies took over the job, (thank God) of building the tram car and laying the track and I was responsible for acquiring the horses and harness and building stables, feeding facilities and so on. John and I looked originally into building a replica of an early Australian horse drawn tram and this of course brought about our contact with the Brisbane Tramway Museum. Alan Ward we already knew as he frequently drove coachloads of tourists to both Sea World and Bird Life Park and naturally our first approach was to Alan. Over a period of several weeks Alan produced copies of plans and illustrations of early trams used in Melbourne and Brisbane together with the history of their operation and technical details and he also responded to a stack of enquiries and questions. It no doubt came as something of a surprise to members of the Museum here that we finally decided to build a copy of the horse drawn tram cars used at the Disneyland attractions in America. The main reason for this decision was that we felt that the LOOK and aesthetics of the Disneyland tram car fitted in best with the Bird Life Park image. Notwithstanding this decision Alan and other members of the Museum continued to provide John Menzies with technical information on running gear and so on. Many Museum members were of great assistance to us on the project and though I have previously placed on record our appreciation to those people I would again reiterate our appreciation to Alan Ward, to President Bill Daniells, to Tom Carter and to Garry Ford in particular. I am sure that those of you that have seen the finished product would agree that it is a tribute to John Menzies and to his master carpenters and engineers who built it in our Sea World workshops. The tram car is illustrated on the inside back page of the souvenir books I have circulated and the track layout is shown in the aerial shot on the inside front cover.

John was able to arrange for the track to be laid by two professional track layers from a sugar mill in Northern N.S.W. The rails are the lighter sugar mill rails and they are set flush with the ground on a 4'8½" gauge. We have poured a very rough finish hot mix bitumen between the rails for the horse to walk on and a 12" concrete apron outside the rails to finish it off. The track is exactly a quarter of a mile in length, is oval in shape and is completely flat all the way round. One of our two pure bred Clydesdale geldings can pull the fully loaded tram very easily. Normally the horse is driven at only a walking pace but both our horses are capable of trotting and cantering with the fully loaded tram on the back.

It may interest you to know that much to our surprise, we discovered a few months ago that the horse can also gallop with the fully loaded tram on the back! We have a couple of Emus at the Park that until a little while ago were kept in an enclosure where our visitors could only see them by looking over a fence. I have had a lot of experience keeping Emus and they can be extremely unpredictable creatures. If one has them in a free-roaming situation where visitors can walk among them, sooner or later even the most apparently quiet Emu will show its unpredictable nature and lash out at a visitor, which as you will appreciate I can't have them doing.

I noticed that one of our Emus, "Fritz" by name, was a very quiet individual, you could almost jump up and down on Fritz' head and it wouldn't worry him. After observing Fritz for some months, I decided to take a punt and let him have the whole Park to roam in and I kept my fingers crossed that he would be able to tolerate the attention he would get from our visitors.

Fritz didn't just tolerate the attention, he absolutely loved it! Even small children could go up to him, put their arms around his neck and cuddle him. Fritz would go into a state of ecstasy, sit down, snuggle in close to the child and just drool. He became one of the most outstanding attractions at the Park and some visitors came in specifically to see the Fritz they had heard about. Everything with Fritz was just terrific until one day he was standing on a slope overlooking the stationary horse and tram. Until this day Fritz had never shown even the slightest interest in the horse or tram. Emus are often fascinated by bright shiny things and the sun must have glinted on the highly polished brasswork on the harness. Whatever it was, Fritz took exception to it, tore down the hill and attacked the horse, violently kicking it and biting it on the rear end. I have been kicked by an Emu before and I can assure you it is a very painful experience! Just as Fritz started his attack the horse had just been set in motion and was getting down to the job at his normal walking pace. When he felt this crazed creature attacking his behind, and with blinkers on he couldn't see WHAT it was, he took off! He didn't just trot, he didn't just canter and he didn't just gallop - he BOLTED! You can imagine the reaction of the tram load of tourists all thinking they were about to enjoy a peaceful ride around Bird Life Park! Luckily they couldn't do anything else but hold on for dear life!

We have a shed built over the track at one point in which we store the tram car at night. The horse tram and visitors went through the shed at full gallop! Fortunately, Gordon Bell the driver had the presence of mind to initially concentrate on steering the horse and keeping him on the track. Once he had made it through the shed Gordon got the brake on and slowed him down.

We tell this story to any visitors who pose the question: "can the poor old horse pull this heavy load?" Needless to say, Fritz has been banished, but this time to an enclosure where the visitors walk in and pat him but he can't get at the horses!

The harness was made by a man in Adelaide, one of the few saddle makers in this country who are capable of producing heavy horse harness. It is very flash with loads of brasswork, bells and plumes which we import from the U.K. and which from memory, cost in the region of \$1,500 a set and the two horses are pure bred registered Clydesdale geldings. They are not "old draught horses" - Supreme is five years old and Cavalier is a three year old and he won't be fully grown until he is five. Cavalier is a huge horse standing 17.2 hands now and he should reach 18 hands when he finishes his growing. They were both bred in Victoria and were prolific winners in the show ring prior to our purchasing them from Don Ross of Glenross Clydesdale Stud here in Brisbane. Don is known to the Brisbane Museum members as I believe he supplies the horses for you when you operate your horse drawn car on the section of track still left at Belmont. He is considered to be the heavy horse expert of Australia and is best known for supplying, training and driving the massive team of 20 Clydesdales for the film "The Irishman" which starred the English actor, Michael Craig.

Both our horses are magnificent animals, extremely docile and quiet and more than happy to tolerate small children walking between their legs, tugging at their long hair, posing for photographs and so on.

No expense is spared in providing the very best of food, facilities and general care for them. I have two tram drivers as we are a seven day a

week operation. Gordon who I mentioned before drives two days a week and a man who is both a Cockney and a true gipsy, Lee-Jon Souten, drives five days a week and is responsible for their total care. Lee works a ten to eleven hour day starting at six in the morning with feeding, washing and grooming. Lee is quite a character, and you may have seen him on television or in the press as we have got a lot of media exposure on the whole tram operation.

From time to time I use the horses promotionally outside Bird Life Park towing a buggy, carrying T.V. personalities, our Gold Coast Mayor and so on. The entire operation has been extremely successful and we get a marvellous visitor reaction to the tram car and horses, they would be easily the most photographed subject in the Park. I was asked to tell you how much it cost to set it all up but to be honest I do not know, but by the time we look at the cost of the tram car, the track, the horses, harness, stables, tram shed and other facilities I doubt that there would be much change from \$50,000!

A couple of people here today asked me earlier where we got our horses from. As some of you will no doubt have horse drawn tram cars in your collections, I should like to make this point to you. Should you want to operate these cars from time to time I suggest that you get hold of horses that have had experience in the show ring. The big advantage of this is that horses that are used to being shown are already used to a lot of noise, public address announcements, people milling around them and general confusion. It can be a mistake to use a horse that has a working background on a farm. A farm horse may well be able to tow a huge load and be an experienced and willing worker but he will not be used to the noise and confusion of traffic, people and so on. Putting such a horse in that situation is dangerous not only for the horse but for anyone around. If a big Clydesdale weighing up to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a ton panics and bolts he is capable of killing people. That may sound very dramatic, but I can assure you it is true.

Now to the essence of this address: "How to present your tramway Museum to the public". When I arrived I overheard someone questioning what I, with my experience in the tourist industry, would know about tramway museums. Well I can assure you that I know absolutely nothing about tramway museums so I trust that confirms that doubt for that person.

Whether I know anything at all about tramway museums is not in the slightest bit significant. What is significant are the essential criteria I have come to understand from my experience in the tourist industry that are necessary to present ANYTHING to the public.

- These criteria are:
1. Definition of objectives
 2. Site
 3. Promotion - Advertising
 4. Providing information
 5. Involving the visitor
 6. Sell it - don't show it

Definition of Objectives

I can understand that this sub-heading may not appear to relate to what we are talking about. You all know that your objective is to present your museums to the public. Is that the end of the story? No, it is not! If all you want to do is present your museum to the public then all you do is stick your restored trams and equipment on display, open the gates and let 'em in!

If on the other hand, you are serious about getting the largest possible number of visitors to your museum thereby creating the highest possible amount of revenue for future improvement, there are a number of steps to be taken to maximise your opportunities. This seriousness must be recognised in your case as an organisation and not just as individuals. As with all employers, we are able to instruct our staff as to what we want them to do. Because the people in a volunteer organisation such as yours are not employed you are less able to instruct. Natural enthusiasm for achieving your objectives must be there, and if not there it ideally needs to be created by your President or Executive or whatever.

This of course is the major difficulty of all volunteer organisations and I am very much aware of this because I am involved in a few myself. Inevitably the enthusiasm, and the workload, comes back to a handful of people often a few percent of the total number of people involved. Unfortunately I cannot give you the answer to that problem.

The most commonly made mistake I have seen in my twelve years in this business is that individuals and organisations who have a passion for a specific object or group of objects imagine that everybody else, that is the general public, has the same passion for the same objects. That is an absolutely fatal mistake and I can illustrate it by giving you some examples that I see continually in my industry.

As you know many people are keen on birds, of the feathered variety. The hobby or pastime of aviculture is a very popular one and private collections range from a lone canary, budgerigar or cockatoo to backyards full of aviaries. As with any hobby it becomes to some enthusiasts an absolute obsession and their main interest in life.

Occasionally one of these keen aviculturists decides that what he should do is borrow some money from the bank, buy a couple of acres on that corner just outside town, transfer his aviaries and birds there, throw in his job and open his gates to the public, and he wonders why he has never thought of it before. He thinks he will have achieved the double objective of (a) earning a reasonable living and (b) being able to follow his hobby full time.

Certainly some visitors/tourists will part with their money to look at his birds but not enough to develop and improve it and after a couple of years he will probably be forced to close. To the public all they see when they walk in is row upon row of aviaries that all look the same and that is of very limited interest to the non bird enthusiast. The visitor hasn't really enjoyed the visit, and was probably bored by it and certainly doesn't recommend it to others, and regardless what the advertising agencies and public relations consultants will tell you, the most effective form of advertising is free - word of mouth.

The mistake our aviculturist friend made was his assumption that because he is fascinated by row upon row of the one thing, in this case birds, everybody else will be too. He has failed to see past his own obsession, and obsession is not too strong a word.

The relationship of this situation to your tramway museums is obvious, DON'T have row upon row of trams and equipment that to the layman all look the same. To you as enthusiasts there are no doubt subtle and very interesting differences, but not to the general public; the people you want to encourage to

spend their money to come in and look at your museum.

Despite my promise to President Bill Daniells that I would stop by the Brisbane Museum on my way here today I was not able to do that. I was late leaving Bird Life Park as I had to unexpectedly help my snake keeper worm an 8' Taipan! I am not overly fond of snakes and I can tell you that before I had to get involved with them as part of my job my hair was jet black!

However I have been told that the Brisbane Museum has a number of fully restored tram cars and a couple of sheds full of unrestored cars. Don't open these sheds to your visitors. Show them the restored vehicles and even one that is partly restored, keep the rest out of sight.

Many organisations or businesses that display collections like yours' think that because they have only a few completed vehicles that is not enough for the public to look at and "let's open up the sheds to give them something else to do", I suggest to you strongly that you DON'T do that. Two fully restored and hopefully operating vehicles are far more likely to hold your visitors interest than forty that are not.

If you are going to be visiting the Gold Coast I suggest you have a look at Gilltraps Auto Museum on the Gold Coast Highway at Kirra. This attraction has proved its viability by being one of the longest established in our area - and even though it is clearly not a volunteer based organisation like your's it does relate because it is a collection of restored vehicles. The Gilltrap family have a wide cross section of very different types of vehicles and with the exception of a bunch of antique motorbikes there is little that is the same and they do daily shows showing some of the vehicles actually operating and this brings us back to the entertainment aspect I mentioned before.

Site

Most of you I would imagine already have your sites so debate on this point is not relevant. It is of course relevant to any of you that have either not selected a site or are perhaps thinking of moving. If so try to site your museum on a main road, even if it is only a suburban main road. If potential visitors can actually SEE your museum or part of it from their cars your chances of attracting them in are much higher. You can have the world's greatest attraction only 100 metres of a main road and will miss a very healthy slice of easily obtained revenue from traffic passing by.

Promotion - Advertising

I mentioned before that there is no more effective form of advertising than word of mouth, and the glory of it is that it is FREE. Being volunteer organisations you will not have, unless you are very lucky or very smart a lot of funds to devote to paid advertising. Apart from a couple of large easily read and well placed signs on the road outside your museum and possibly a newspaper ad in the weekend "what to see and do" classifieds in your local newspapers and tourist guide handbooks. I cannot see any value for you in even thinking seriously about buying paid advertising. There is however a lot you can do in generating word of mouth and in gaining free exposure. For the opening of the Brisbane Museum today I would imagine, or would hope, that the organisers have invited EVERY newspaper, radio station, television station, periodical, tourist bureau, visitors centre, local state and federal councillors and parliamentarians and so on. Clearly they will not all come but the more you ask the more you will get. That is for the opening. It becomes harder and harder when you are

operating. Pressmen and journalists that covered the opening will have little interest in coming back for other than a genuine news or "human interest" story and you have to become very inventive and imaginative. Contact all the journalists that didn't come to your opening, here in Brisbane for instance invite radio personalities such as Hayden Sargent, Wayne Roberts and Alan McGirvan and their families out. Your public relations or promotions officer should be able to devote all his time to this function and should not, ideally, be sidetracked into other areas of the Museum's operation. When these people arrive the P.R. man should stay with them for the whole of their visit and really look after them. If you can put a tea and scones on all the better.

Again not all will respond to your invitation but the more you ask the more you will get, and without becoming a pain in the backside be persistent! I know that many of you here in Brisbane feel strongly about the re-introduction of trams to Brisbane streets. Personally, I agree with you but I can't see it happening. That's beside the point. Push for it. No doubt you will have figures drawing comparisons of costs between the operation of trams and of motorised vehicles. Send these off with an article detailing your point of view to the media. Consider anything and everything that you feel has a story in it but be selective in what you send. Newspaper chiefs of staff and television and radio news editors can become particularly disinterested in organisations or attractions that keep sending in story after story after story that have little real "news" value.

Ideally cultivate and get to know at least some of the media editors. When you have established a personal relationship you can often ring up and suggest a particular story line. They may or may not be interested in doing something on it but at least you are keeping a line of communication open with the media. Frequently if the radio or T.V. Station or newspaper isn't interested in sending a reporter/photographer/cameraman out you can suggest that you take the photo and will send it in with appropriate copy. It is certainly in your own interest to have a competent amateur photographer in your group, that way you can supply him with film and pay the cost of processing the film. If you are selective enough to only send off good "newsy" or "human interest" photos you will get a percentage of these published and every little bit helps.

Newspapers like 10" x 8" black and white prints and periodicals like the same and/or colour transparencies - not colour prints.

Apart from F.O.C. media exposure, make sure that ALL your local visitor information centres, tourist bureaus, accommodation houses and the like are aware of what you offer, they are the people being asked by visitors about what there is to see and they MUST know what you have for visitors at your Museum. Again work on the staff of these places to physically visit your Museum; there is no substitute for their actually seeing it. You can have the glossiest, prettiest brochures and the best written literature available but it is NOT a substitute for a visit. There is a very real danger in making your advertising and promotional material too sophisticated. Keep it basic and keep it simple. Beautifully designed and laid out posters may win artistic competitions but they won't necessarily bring you paying visitors.

In your photographs and/or advertising layouts always endeavour to show visitor involvement. A photo of just a beautifully restored tram car does not have the same appeal either for media use or to help attract visitors as a photo of a beautifully restored tram car with a crowd of visitors looking at it, or, better still riding on it. The crowd around the car instantly

suggests that (a) there is an activity and (b) probably one worth going to see. There is no better way of attracting a crowd than having a crowd.

Finally be wary of using professional public relations and/or promotional consultants even if your budget can afford it. It staggers me to see the number of volunteer based organisations and clubs that use professional consultants. With the greatest respect to the people in this profession that are sincere hard working and talented there are a lot who are not. It seems to me that many people who fail in business turn up the next day as either public relations or management consultants.

Providing Information

Clearly you have to inform visitors. You will want to tell them what you are doing, to point out features of vehicles, to tell them where the toilets are, where to park their cars and so on.

Simple directional signs that point out the location of the toilets, kiosk or whatever need to be just that, simple directional signs. Light colours on dark backgrounds or vice versa with plain block printing are in my opinion the most effective.

Providing information about your tram cars and tram rides - in other words the operating part of the museum - is the most effectively done personally by one of your own members either in response to questions from visitors or as part of a regular talk. If possible I suggest the latter. Rather than have a member stand by a car, or a group of cars or equipment all day, announce and/or have signs to tell visitors that you will be having "an informative talk on the tram cars and how they were operated" at 11 am and 3pm or whenever. Give them a brief concise and light hearted talk and invite a response or questions from them. Time the talks to suit the visitors and not the members.

I would imagine that most of your Museums would be open on weekends only. That being the case you should have talks or presentations both morning and afternoon on Sundays as it will be your main visitor day, and on Saturdays as you see fit. Certainly in our industry Saturday is consistently the quietest day of the week. We however have exactly the same format on Saturdays as on Sundays as we believe that visitors to our attractions should have the same facilities open and available to them on quiet days as on peak days. They are paying the same amount of money so their money should buy the same.

Signs that are located beside tram cars or museum equipment to describe them also should be to the point and easily read. Don't make the mistake of overloading the sign with too much information and don't lose sight of the fact that what may interest you as enthusiasts won't necessarily interest the general public.

At Bird Life Park I have gone right away from the traditional zoological practice of using signs crammed with information as to where the bird/animal comes from, how many eggs it lays and where, what it builds its nest from and so on. 98% of our visitors are not interested in that much information, and we know this to be true because we have surveyed them. I use a large colour photograph of the bird set up behind a transparent piece of acrylic with its name printed on the bottom. It is a very simple, clearly and quickly understood identification sign and it satisfies the most important question for a visitor - "what is it?"

survey your visitors from time to time and ask them what they liked, what they didn't like and what they would like to see. It doesn't need to be a complicated questionnaire; a few simple questions from one of your members will do. If you can work towards the dual objective of satisfying the public and yourselves as enthusiasts you will be on the road to success.

Involving the Visitor

A visitor will enjoy actual participation in your activities far more than being forced to stand and watch. You have with your tram cars an ideal opportunity to involve your visitors by providing rides. I visited an attraction which shall remain nameless some years ago that in many respects related to your tramway museums. I saw this terrific old vehicle fully restored and obviously able to operate and I dared to ask the man if I could be taken for a ride on it. The helpful gentleman replied "Christ ya can't ride on that sport - that's only for the members to ride on". Enquiring why I was told that it was the most special vehicle and was kept for the exclusive use of members because it was so good.

I can understand that you may have vehicles you won't want the public to ride on - but if that's the case put a rope around it to make it clear it is not going to be moving. If it looks like it can move the public will want to ride on it and will not be happy with the previous explanation.

Strive to involve the visitor as much as is practical. Encourage them to touch and feel, have a vehicle in your display that the kids can go berserk on and you will have some justification then in asking for "hands off" other vehicles. In situations where you simply cannot allow visitors to touch the object endeavour to have a member on hand to talk about it or respond to questions about it.

I have both an inbuilt fascination and frustration for museums. I love history and relics and reminders of days gone by yet I am frustrated by the indifference of museum staff. As a child here in Brisbane I can distinctly recall asking the Queensland Museums gestapo-suited attendants where the toilets were and the feeling I got from their reply was that if they actually had to speak for more than ten seconds a fate worse than death was awaiting them.

Be interested in the visitor, be helpful and be friendly; it will pay dividends.

Sell It - Don't Show It

The final criteria I believe is important, and probably the most important of all. It is absolutely essential in my industry, and I believe it should be essential in what you do, because we are both "presenting something to the public".

Sell it - don't show it! What does it mean? It is the difference between one of my staff saying: "yes, sir, the crocodile feeding will be at the crocodile enclosures at the far end of the lagoon at 3.30 pm. Have a nice day!" or "yeah, I think they'll be feeding the crocs soon!"

It is the difference between my horse drawn tram driver sitting on his backside reading the paper while a family are patting the horse or him walking up to the group saying hello, asking them where they are from and suggesting he can take a photograph of them all standing beside the horse.

There is a huge gap between simply going through the motions and going out of your way to ensure the visitor is happy. It applies not only to how your on-duty members respond to your patrons but as to how you present your tram cars and equipment, your rides, your displays and so on. You should always be conscious of what your visitors want to see. Ask yourselves is that the best way to do it? Can we make that more effective? Can we involve the visitors more? Even though you are a less commercial attraction than we are I go back to my opening question: how serious are you about encouraging visitors? If you are happy that a few people find their way to your Museum, part with a dollar or two for the privilege of watching your members go about pursuing their own interest and then go home, you will have no interest in what I have been telling you.

You should be serious, in fact you owe it to yourselves to be serious. It is a very basic situation. The more people you get through the gate, the more money you earn, the more you are able to develop the Museum, the more, therefore, potential enjoyment for you as members.

When giving rides on the trams, encourage the driver to chat to the visitors, have the kids up front with the drivers hat on and so on. Ensure your drivers are dressed in the appropriate uniform. Encourage ALL your on-duty members to be as friendly as possible, think of ways to entertain the visitors. I am not suggesting that, for instance, the Brisbane Tramway Museum should have Bill Daniells, Alan Ward, Tom Carter and Garry Ford doing song and dance routines on the hour in the aisle of their number one tram, but if you think about you will see ways of entertaining often just by doing the same thing but doing it differently.

It amazes me when I see staff of businesses on the Gold Coast where tourism is our main money earner, treating visitors/customers as though they have the plague. Keith Williams founded the Gold Coast Visitors Bureau some years ago to achieve a number of things, one of which was to increase local awareness of the need for visitor satisfaction. The Bureau has been effective in this area but there is still much to be done. The Bureau recognises the performance of people in the industry here and makes regular awards for outstanding service to visitors and I am pleased that my staff have won three of these awards to date.

I want to finish by telling you a couple of stories about my experience with trams in Brisbane. My family lived in Brisbane when I was aged between 8 and 14 at Rosalie, opposite the Milton State School at a time when trams were the main form of public transport. I used to ride into the city every Saturday afternoon to watch the matinee movies at one of the city theatres. The Hopalong Cassidy and Tarzan shorts were a great favourite. I was waiting one Saturday to catch the Rosalie tram when another tram pulled up at the stop. A drunk leaning on one of the doors of the tram saw me and yelled out: "How much pocket money d'ya get son?" I told him I got a shilling a week. "Have this then" he said and threw pocketfuls of two shilling pieces at me. He must have had a win at the races because when I had picked it all up and counted it, it all came to four pounds seven shillings!

At that time my father was with the E.S. & A. bank at Woollongabba as an Agency Officer. Every day he had to take several thousand pounds out to the suburban branches on the Belmont tram line. He had just left the Woollongabba office one day when the tram lurched and Dad fell over. His gun came out of its shoulder holster, hit the floor of the tram, went off

and put a bullet through the plate glass window of the National Bank!

Police came from every direction, grabbed Dad and took him off to the 'Gabba police station. You have to imagine it, here is this bloke with an unmarked brief case with three and a half thousand quid in it, no identification and had just shot up the National Bank! To make matters worse when the Police phoned Dad's bank a new girl was on the switch who hadn't met Dad and she told them there was definitely no Max Harris working there.

My father is a very persuasive sort of person but it took him a few hours to get it sorted out.

Ladies and gentlemen - thank you.