

WORKSHOP SESSIONS

in the Workshop

1. THE MUSEUM BUSINESS

David Rawlings (SPER), acting as chairman, opened proceedings. He welcomed the delegates and in his opening address made the point that he detected that museums seemed to be moving away from being a hobby to developing into a small business. To survive, David said, we had to be aware of this factor and educate our members to the fact that for the hobby to prosper, a sound business plan was required. In asking for reactions, David asked that a number of museums make comments on the feelings of their members and the effect on their organisations, seeking comments from museums who operated in various environments, those that were part of a museum complex, those that operated on former operational tramways and those established in unconnected sites. He stated that the meeting would be interested in hearing how the various groups operate and their philosophy towards operating the museum as a business.

Michael Kerr (THS) spoke on the situation at Ferrymead. Michael stated that the tramway group was one of seventeen organisations operating in the Ferrymead complex. The groups covered a wide variety of activity such as fire engine groups, farm machinery, historic buildings, etc. The tramway group is part of the overall Ferrymead complex. Michael explained the organisational structure. The complex as a whole is controlled by a Trust Board which is elected. There is a Management Committee which consists of 50% Trust Board members and 50% Membership Council members and this committee does the day to day decision making. There is also a Membership Council where any member of any Ferrymead society can make an input. Michael explained that it was a complex arrangement and it is quite involved, but it did allow the grassroots member an opportunity to have a voice in the operation of the museum. However, he explained, actual policy and financial decisions were made at a higher level.

With regard to the feelings of the members of the tramway group to the concept of the museum as a whole, Michael explained that because the tramway was the largest group in the complex and the oldest, they had one of the most difficult jobs of the lot. Most of the members are volunteers yet they are required to provide a seven-day-a-week service. To achieve this objective, the Trust employs a tram driver to operate a tram Mondays to Fridays and Society members operate the site on weekends. This has all sorts of complex problems, especially when it came to maintenance of track and vehicles. As a Society, the tramway group does not employ anyone, the only employees are employed by the Trust itself, filling such positions as director, secretary, tram driver, ticket sellers, etc. There are some tensions between the paid staff and the volunteers regarding the overall administration. The multi-strata administration nature of the management structure had some good things about it, but there are also tensions. Michael explained that the main areas of contention arise when volunteers feel they want to do certain things or feel certain things should happen. There are also problems with communication where, with such a complex administration structure, getting information back to the membership is a problem. Members who attend the site regularly generally get the picture, however, providing information for the member who can attend only occasionally presented problems. Many methods have been tried to keep people up to date, none of which were totally satisfactory.

There are also frustrations within the Society because the employed tram driver is answerable only to the Trust Board and not to the Society. The Society had also been trying to get some agreement with the Trust Board over the provision of tramcars and maintenance, so far without success.

As for the question of the members regarding their participation in Society activities as a hobby or a business, Michael felt that the majority still considered it a hobby. He stated that there were a number of members who had had exposure to the administrative side of the operation and who could see the broader concepts. He further stated that it was difficult for those who attend the Society only once a month or once a fortnight, and whose interest is only trams and not the site as a whole, to appreciate the marketing and

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financial considerations, and the decision making, when all they were interested in is running trams and enjoying themselves. There were members who attended every weekend and on Monday night working bees but they only spent their time working on one facet of the complex. There were some who are enthusiastic about the workings of the whole complex, but others are not, being interested only in trams. That was their right but it does make for tensions in other ways.

David Rawlings thanked Michael and asked for further comments.

Lindsay Richardson (PETS) rose and thanked David for the opportunity to speak. Lindsay stated that the museum in Perth sat rather in between the situation Michael Kerr had just described as the Ferrymead experience. He stated that the goal in Perth was to enjoy the tramway hobby yet develop a very commercial arm. The development direction of the museum had changed greatly since the museum was first conceived, and the changes had been forced upon them. When the opportunity arose to move to Whiteman Park, the invitation came from the State Planning Commission, a powerful government body. They had ideas about how a tramway should develop, and like Topsy, tended to grow in concept. They had to be fairly flexible in their aims, and it did create some conflicts within the membership as to how they could fit in the hobby aspect with what was to be a tourist tramway. Happily, Lindsay stated, they had achieved that aim. However, the cost they had suffered is in the restoration work, which by necessity had been very slow. The first consideration was to achieve the goal that was set for them, and that was to provide a tourist tramway with a passenger-carrying capacity within the park zone, committed to Saturday, Sunday and public holiday operation. Having come to grips with that, the museum now found itself in a position of sitting between a viable commercial operation, generating good traffic receipts, yet still acquiring Western Australian tramcar bodies. The ten year plan was that they would be able to enjoy the fruits of their labour later for the expenditure being made now.

David thanked Lindsay and asked for any further contributions.

Colin Seymour (AETM) stated that the museum in Adelaide now had some of its members thinking in terms of a tourist tramway. Colin stated that it was a follow-on from the members' hobby, originally set up as a tramway museum by volunteers, without government assistance. He stated that in fifteen years of operation, they had learned a lot and were now benefiting from the experience gained. While the museum still only operated on weekends, there were now sufficient retired members available who could open the museum for charter groups. While the original concept was for Sunday operations only, they were now looking at the commercial gains to be made by operating during the week. This was to be explored further.

Colin stated that the museum was lucky in that it could muster a fleet of thirteen tramcars and, as weekend operations generally require four to five cars in operation, they had a certain degree of flexibility. If seven-day-a-week operation occurred, the wear and tear on the cars would be heavier. There could also be conflict over decisions to fully restore a car to authentic standards or restore only to the extent to allow the car to be used in tourist service. Adelaide dropcentre car 264 was cited as an example, where this car was being used as a workhorse and was sufficiently authentic to satisfy the public, and also have a fully restored and authentic example available for inspection. The main thrust was to have workhorse cars and a parallel line of authentic cars.

John Radcliffe (AETM) spoke on the concept of creating a commercial museum and handing it over to a group of volunteers to run. The History Trust of South Australia consisted of a series of museums, each with a different theme. The Trust was created by the government as a result of the lobbying of a group of historians. There was the National Motor Museum which was currently being put before the Commonwealth Government in the hope that recognition would bring some financial assistance, similar to the results achieved by the Maritime Museum in Sydney. There was a degree of volunteer input with the museum, but the fact remained that the average motor enthusiast would own his own car, restore it and keep that asset for his own purposes.

John stated that, in the case of the maritime museum at Port Adelaide, there were several collections of marine artefacts throughout South Australia which were grouped together in one site by the Trust. Several old warehouses in the Port Adelaide area were obtained and, using C.E.P. grants to fit out the areas, the museums

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were opened. The Trust employed a volunteer organiser who was to attract volunteers and had proved to be very successful. Much work had been done by the volunteers for what is in essence a government museum.

The second model John spoke about concerned the railway museum. This had been located at Mile End, an industrial suburb that was not a tourist area. The museum had its engines under very little cover and had spent the past twenty years painting their engines on a circular basis. The History Trust decided to obtain a Bicentennial grant to relocate the railway museum and, after considerable searching, it was decided to set-up the museum at Port Adelaide, quite near the maritime museum. The Trust had supervised the project and employed the President of the Mile End museum as the principal employee. They then started negotiations to get the Mile End museum to change its constitution and agree to move to Port Adelaide. The thing that attracted them was the under-cover location of the new site. Organisationally, the railway museum would be a commercial operation, run in essence by the Mile End group. There would be government nominees on their board of management and the revenue they generate must be sufficient to pay employees to run it during the week; the volunteers run it on weekends. This could be a high risk enterprise as far as the History Trust is concerned and the Mile End people may have some problems as well. Consider the fact that they had let their enterprise fall into the hands of the government and had lost their independence, while on the other hand, they had received a new facility over which they still had some control. In effect, the History Trust was capitalising a volunteer operation in the hope that it could continue to operate basically on a volunteer management system. The Trust hoped that it would eventually be out of it again, except for having a couple of representatives on the management committee.

David thanked Colin and John and asked for further comments.

Leslie Stewart (WTM) addressed the forum. Leslie stated that he had given much thought to this question of the museum business and how it could be managed. He stated that he had doubts that a group that had grown out of an enthusiast preservation group, and the management structure that ran that sort of organisation, was actually capable of extending that into the commercial world. Leslie raised the point that perhaps a solution may be to supplement our organisations with people from outside, such as nominees from organisations like the History Trust, to gain that other input. Using his experiences at Wellington, Leslie made the personal observation that their organisation lacked people with skills in the entrepreneurial and public relations side of the business, and in the business of getting out to raise the money and do the future planning. He stated that we needed to be able to extend ourselves to bring these skills into play if we were really going to run our museums as businesses.

He felt that the majority of the members in most of our museums still regard it as a hobby only. There were only a few who had been involved in the administration work who recognised the business elements that go make up what we do in our spare time. Leslie stated that most of us do not have the time to put in to explore all the avenues required to make the museums function as successful businesses, as growing enterprises. He felt that somehow the democratic centralised decision-making process of an enthusiast group was not entirely appropriate to a museum business and there needed to be some other way to achieve the aim. Just what that process was, Leslie was not exactly sure, and suggested that the subject needed to be examined in some depth. Leslie concluded with the question, how do we adapt our museums' structures to become more commercially orientated.

Trevor Burling (WTM) mentioned that the evolution of our museum movement found its nucleus amongst the ground-level members, the ones who conceived the idea way back. Our museums had gone through several evolutionary changes. Some groups had progressed further forward than others and we could all learn from this. Trevor stated, however, that we must not lose sight of a number of basic factors and the main one was the feelings of the ground-level member. He stated that if we alienated them, we may as well give it away. Being in the business of entertaining tourists, we certainly needed to manage our businesses along those lines, but mentioned that we should always be aware of the ordinary member because if they feel alienated and go away, the museum will crumble and go away. They are just the same as the person who walks into your workshop and enquires as to what you are doing, as part of our entrepreneurial outlook, we include these people and talk about what we are doing. It is this ongoing dialogue which helps our people to look forward to extending the museum to attract further people.

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David thanked Leslie and Trevor and in his concluding remarks suggested that this discussion may be useful as a topic for the next conference. It could be useful as we all seemed to be going through some form of transition and there were many views one way and another. He again thanked the speakers and concluded the session.

2. MAINTENANCE

David Rawlings introduced Bill Parkinson as chairman for the session on Maintenance, by stating that Bill would not be talking about Whitworth threads and 3/8th taps but would cover the ways of maintenance, those things we need to do to keep the whole show going to get those people through the door.

Bill Parkinson (SPER) said that maintenance was very important and something we could all learn from each other. He was hoping to gain from feedback on the experience of the other museums present. He stressed the importance of having a professional attitude towards the ongoing problems of maintaining old equipment. How important did they think maintenance was? Was it a necessary evil? Was it something they enjoyed doing....

Michael Kerr (THS) said it was something that could not be let go. It would blow your capital right out if you did not carry out regular maintenance.

Bill Parkinson said the company he works for considered maintenance a necessary evil and they placed him, as the professional, in the same boat as the museum would here. The company did not make sufficient funds available for maintenance and the museum didn't have any money, so it was much the same sort of thing. Maintenance was not being carried out when it should be. You had to have a maintenance programme, as you had to be sure the reliability of the cars is going to be maintained. The S.P.E.R. only had three operable cars available at the moment, possibly four, as capital works had taken precedence over maintenance during the last twelve months. The museum had few facilities available at the present time, although delegates could see what would be available in the months to come. The workshop building was to be for major restoration work and the day-to-day running maintenance would be carried out in the running shed which was to be equipped with a pit to facilitate this work. Did anyone have views on this? Was it a good idea to have both functions separate or should they be lumped together?

Tony Griffin (SPER) thought that the functions should be segregated.

Bill Parkinson replied that it was a good idea up to a point but you ended up with a certain amount of duplication of facilities. It depended on the size of your museum, the number of cars you had and what you intended to do with them.

John Radcliffe (AETM) responded that it was not so much a matter of separating functions but keeping bodywork separate from mechanical work.

Bill Parkinson said that the Loftus workshop building would have body work being carried out side by side with mechanical and electrical work. This was dictated by site availability, and the museum had to make the best use of the space it had.

Another major problem was the talents of the people we have. Where could we learn these skills today? He was fortunate in working on diesel-electric locomotives which have DC traction motors and had gained his skills through his employment. Has anyone had problems in knowing what to do, when to do it and how often it should be done?

Richard Gilbert (BTPS) said that the advantage we had, as museums, was that we were dealing with vehicles which were around eighty years old and that basically the technology was simple, it amounted to just

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brute force! If you had cars like the technically advanced Z and A cars in Melbourne, you needed a degree to be able to maintain them. In a museum situation, it was like an apprenticeship. You got involved with those doing the work and they taught you what to do and how to do it. It was simply carriage building, simple mechanical work and basic bogie construction. That was how those in Ballarat learned the trade. When he first became involved with the trams in Ballarat he wasn't even a tramway enthusiast, he was, like others, a railway enthusiast who wanted to do something about saving the trams in Ballarat, and didn't know all the technical data pertaining to them.

Bill Parkinson responded that, generally, it boiled down to basic common sense and that they [in Ballarat] were lucky to be living in a state where trams still run. There were people still around who would be able to pass on this sort of expertise to them.

Don Campbell (SPER) said the inhibiting factor, as a non-tradesman amateur, was that while he understood the principle, he was not skilled in the use of tools, with the result that if he undertake a job, he did not carry it out with the speed with which the craftsman would do it. This could lead to the situation where the tools would be taken from you and the work carried out more quickly by somebody else. This left you with the feeling that you could not do this and a reluctance to take on that sort of work again. What this boiled down to was, does the tradesman-type person have the time to suffer fools like us who are keen to hold spanners and do this sort of work, but are inhibited by the fact that we do not really know what we are doing, yet with a little bit of guidance we could probably do it.

Several voices confirmed they understood that scenario only too well.

Bill Kingsley (BT) said that they had an interesting situation in Bendigo where the maintenance is done professionally. They had two people working full time, Bruce Amour, a very competent mechanical person, and a good apprentice working with Bruce. When Bruce came to them three years ago to replace the person before, there was nobody to tell Bruce how to look after trams. So Bruce adapted what he knew in the automotive and other fields and he learned very slowly. He is doing a slow but very, very good job.

Bendigo suddenly had a small influx of volunteers from other museums, particularly from the Diamond Valley Railway down in Melbourne. These volunteers were not only keen on driving trams but were keen on getting under trams. This was quite unusual as up until then Bendigo had two groups, the people maintaining trams, and the volunteers and others driving trams. Now the tasks were overlapping and it was working really well. Bruce and the apprentice appreciated the volunteers getting under the trams and they were learning from the volunteers. The professionals and the volunteers were sharing their experiences and it could work. In Bendigo it was working very well.

Bill Parkinson continued by saying that we needed to plan our maintenance schedules and time-saving procedures were paramount. Time was our enemy. At Loftus it was virtually one day a week, and a normal week's work would normally take us seven weeks to complete, which was a long time. We should be able to plan what we were doing and how we went about it to make it more efficient. He thought that this came with experience. We might first do it one way but find out later that it could have been done another way, which would have been quicker. We learned from this experience. Those who have been in this business longer than others have probably had time to pick up these tricks. Bendigo was lucky in that they had professionals, and took over a complete system with a fully equipped depot. But the groups who were just starting did not have much in the way of equipment. How did they get on? How did they do these things? Were they prepared to spent money on facilities? This tied in with efficiency and what maintenance was all about.

If we needed something, do we say that it is a bit expensive and look at it to see if it can be done another way, which might take a lot longer. Because of that we have lost time and are running behind schedule. So should we spend some money and buy that extra bit of equipment which would make the job much easier?

Tony Griffin asked what dollar value do we put on the completion of that task? What is the value if the task is delayed by not buying the equipment?

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Don Campbell asked whether we actually had a dollar value for the work we carry out or whether our productivity was more a time factor than a dollar factor.

Tony Griffin responded with: Was it a case of doing it at all, or a case of delaying the task. If the task is not done what is the dollar value, and if it is delayed what is the dollar value?

Bill Parkinson asked if Tony was relating the task to a business type enterprise.

Frank Doherty (THS) said that we had to think of our commitment and the museum's commitment, if we were a seven-day operation and whether we had two cars or ten cars to operate that service....

Phil A'Vard (PBPS) put a dollar value on something we did not think about. Why not put a dollar value on volunteer time? It was our most precious asset. It should not be squandered on unproductive areas. If we spent five dollars on finding the extra bit of gear, we could make the volunteer do more for us.

John Radcliffe agreed by saying the same applied to the laying of a concrete floor. When we all started, we all grubbed around in the dirt and life was not easy when you had to work under those conditions.

Andrew Hall (TMSV) said he would be interested in when a museum should install a pit. At Bylands they had to grovel around under the cars to adjust brakes and so on. What depth should a pit be? He thought the pit at Ballarat was too deep and the Tramways Board's were now too shallow. What length, what depth....

Don Campbell commented that what we had to decide was, should the pit be Don Campbell size or Andrew Hall size....

Bill Parkinson remarked that the pit to be built in the Loftus running shed was to be a multi-purpose pit to cater not only for the trams but also for the museum's buses, tower wagons and other vehicles. The pit, in traditional terms, will be about 75 feet long and be bottle-shaped to accommodate the road vehicles at one end.

Phil A'Vard suggested that perhaps a pit was ancient technology. Would not hydraulic jacks, which could lift the tram to whatever height was wanted, be more suitable? Puffing Billy had about 30 carriages and have developed the technique whereby they looked at them once every twelve months. They lift the cars and turn the bogies upside down to work on them, working on them hands down instead of hands up, rather than having a bloke on his back under the things. Certainly they did not have motors in them, but it is much easier to work hands down.

Bill Parkinson said it depended on whether the truck was to come out. A motorised truck is a more challenging and more difficult item to work on.

Phil A'Vard retorted that it was more challenging to get work productivity from ancient technology.

Don Campbell asked if there was a better way of doing this work.

Bill Parkinson replied that there was. Ideally, you could spend a million dollars on hydraulic lifts that can take the car up and you can walk around under it like they do in Adelaide [at the STA's Glengowrie Depot].

Mark Skinner (AETM) said that generally we knew how to maintain things twice as well as we can afford to actually do it and this showed the importance of the commercial side of the activity. Unless we could make ourselves commercially successful, we would continue to grub around on dirt floors and use improper tools for the job because we could not afford to have the proper stuff to do the job. It was important to ensure that both the commercial and maintenance arms of the museum worked in harmony, or at least didn't get in each other's way with petty jealousies or rivalries, or over some fiddly technical point. In some organisations, that happened.

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Jack Nyman (MTM) said he was at the planning stage of what to do and asked how much was the Loftus pit going to cost? (about \$17,000) and was it worthwhile sending stuff out rather than acquiring the machinery and doing it yourself? He realised it was expensive but it took a very long time to do it yourself. If you sent work out to, say, Comsteel or the Hunter Valley Training Company, it might be cheaper in the long run to spend the money, go into debt and have your vehicles back in service rather than trying to mess about doing it yourself. His mob tended to think it was better to send it out so they were not looking at buying heavy machinery, there was not all that much around to get and what little there is gets snapped up by others. He thought this was the better way to go.

Bill Parkinson said that Jack had raised a good point and he had planned to raise that matter later. We needed to ask ourselves what was our cut-off point? What do we think is not worthwhile doing ourselves, and could be better done by somebody else a lot quicker but for a price. We could acquire items like wheel lathes and retyring equipment but how often would we use it. We at Loftus have a space problem so we would not be installing gas rings and so on for retyring wheels and although we owned a wheel lathe, it was more likely to be used as an exhibit due to the space required to set it up properly.

Jack Nyman said that he had two sets of three feet six inch gauge railway wheelsets and he wanted them converted to standard gauge and turned to tramway flanges. The quote from Hunter Valley Training Company was \$1070 for two axles, Comsteel quoted \$1100 plus 25%, another place out at Cardiff quoted \$1370. These prices staggered him but was it worthwhile if it meant bums on seats, people drinking cups of coffee, etc, to spend that sort of money and use our volunteers to do something else.

John Radcliffe said that this was surely a matter of economics and the skills available. At St Kilda they could restore a tram for about \$25,000 to \$30,000, say, and the S.T.A. do the same thing. They take just as long to do the job for a cost of \$25,000 using paid labour. It is a matter of simple economics as to which way you did it.

Bill Parkinson said there had to be a cut-off point....

Ron Grant (THS) responded by saying that surely the cut-off point depended on the job you were doing, what it was worth to you, what time you'd got, the necessity as far as time goes. If it was straight maintenance and you were down to one car while still running seven days a week, then it would be worthwhile getting some work put out to enable you to keep going. But if you had several cars and you were restoring them, taking your own time, then what did it matter if it took five years as long as the skill and enthusiasm to do it was there. The situation you are in becomes a choice situation. You take stock of what your necessities are, what money you have and what you are going to do.

Trevor Burling (THS) said from time to time opportunities arose, like the wheel lathe which Ferrymead had got. It was offered to them and you didn't say 'no thank you, we are not into machinery'. You took it, and if the W.T.M. wanted some wheels turned down, send them down there. You could probably specialise in doing that for other museums.

Bill Parkinson agreed that if you have a particular area that might be in need for what you are doing, it might be advantageous to acquire this equipment if it is available at a reasonable price and if you have the room to be able to use it. He said that S.P.E.R. planned to put a lathe in the workshop behind where the delegates were seated. It is quite large and it was obtained at a very good price. It is quite a modern piece of equipment and came with everything, so they would be crazy to give it up. It would enable them to do many little jobs as they are needed, without the necessity to shop around for the best price from some engineering place to get it done for them.

Trevor Burling commented that they were probably the only museum with a lathe that size and this could generate work for other museums.

Bill Parkinson responded that there was a benefit in that. S.P.E.R. could build bogies here if it wanted to,

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as a case in point, but it was more advantageous to contract the work out. It had contracted the Hunter Valley Training Company to build a pair of O class tramcar trucks. The museum had some equipment, wheel and axle sets and a certain amount of ironmongery, but found it more expedient to have the work done for them. It did not have to worry about it and they get back a basic truck which it would be able to complete, such as fitting motors. The Hunter Valley people rebuilt the counterweight dummy which was now on display. It was a job they asked for, a job they were very interested in doing.

Bill also mentioned overhead fittings, of which the museum had a fair number of patterns from the Sydney system. This work was also contracted out. Although they had some original fittings, more were needed and an offer at a reasonable price was accepted to cast a quantity of new fittings. The patterns were on hand, and they are the big cost. If they had not been available, it would have been a different matter.

Bill also raised the question of safe work practices and using the right equipment when doing maintenance work. It was important to realise that the job should be done the right way. This type of work was an industrial situation whether we liked it or not. In New South Wales, various safety acts apply and regulations must be observed. For example, with electric welding....

Frank Doherty mentioned face masks and safety screens, and museums should abide by the regulations applicable to their state.

Bill Parkinson said that it also covered the correct use of the equipment. All the safety measures in the world wouldn't help if you didn't know how to use the equipment properly. If you were not able use it properly, you might as well not have it.

John Radcliffe said you can get into arguments as to judgements of what was right and proper in these sorts of organisations. You tended to have a lot of experts, self-appointed, and it was often difficult to resolve their conflicting viewpoints without a lot of yelling and screaming, and even that didn't necessarily make for a profound judgement.

Bill Parkinson cited the case of a welder working on the museum's scissors crossover. He used the correct face mask, etc., but wore shorts and thongs and ended up with a bad case of 'sunburn'. You had to know how to work safely, not only for your own safety but also the safety of the people working around you. It all boiled down to having an industrial attitude to what you are going to do.

A New Zealand delegate said what each museum needed was the equivalent of a safety officer.

Trevor Burling said that when we talk of safety we probably needed to be more specific and recognise that some of the problems were job skills problems. Some of those skills were using the right equipment, using the right gear, and our museums have to be responsible and say you will do it properly. It should be a policy decision. Safety on its own is not separate, it is part of the whole concept.

Frank Doherty suggested that perhaps museums needed to be advised or lectured by a safety officer. Another point raised was the need to display around machinery at our museums safety posters about safety glasses, ear muffs, and so on. Many of us in our jobs, even if we didn't work in an industrial situation, had these around us. They have wire grills around machines and we should have them, too. We had to be seen to be working in a safe situation.

Phil A'Vard rose and said he was going to open a can of worms and probably frighten the daylight out of all of us. At the moment we cannot get any type of decent insurance coverage for a volunteer working in a situation like this. We could get him a personal accident coverage which might give his widow \$10,000 or so if he got killed and might give him \$10,000 a year if he was maimed. That was nowhere near a Work Care or a worker's compensation type claim. "Now I will frighten the hell out of you. We believe that a volunteer has exactly the same kind of squeeze upon the volunteer management or upon the organisation as does an employee. Our legal officers at Puffing Billy have got this to the point where they believe that this is

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absolutely so. Just think what would happen if a man injured himself industrially and decided to put that to the test. He would wipe everyone of us out of existence because there is no coverage for it. That, one day, will be tested. Believe it or not, the American disease is coming into Australia left, right and centre. Who can I sue, and for how much? That means that the duty of care, on us as managers of the organisation, is exactly the same as if we were employing these guys. It involves safety officers, it involves safety gear, it involves careful supervision. We're really in an awful spot, fellas."

John Radcliffe said where we should be heading was towards the New Zealand accident compensation scheme. He didn't know how well it was going.

Ron Grant replied that it covered the areas that Phil mentioned but the scheme itself is in financial difficulties. Just exactly which way it would go was of interest to all of us. In the meantime, the three New Zealand museums were covered in that situation.

John Radcliffe continued, and said it seemed the end point of this was community attitudes, and the museums are a community. He had a fair bit to do with farmers who by tradition have been very blasé about any matter of safety. You will find half the rural population are as deaf as a post because they have been driving tractors in the middle of the night for twenty or thirty years. The current generation of farmers is aware of this and they do wear ear muffs. You would find that any farmer under the age of thirty-five in fact does wear an ear muff. You can change community attitudes, even in communities which are not tightly oriented communities. It behoves us to ensure that our community attitudes are the best we can make them.

Voice: My sixteen-year-old son is far more conscious of ear muffs and eye protection than some of our forty-five-year-old volunteers, and when you approach those forty-five-year-old volunteers they tend to push you away and say "forget it".

John Radcliffe remarked that you could change that in time.

Bill Parkinson raised one last point with the hope of receiving some feedback. What would be the chances of producing an all-inclusive maintenance manual consisting of input from everybody for the use of all of us. Most of us here have common cars, those green things from down south. Most of us have got one somewhere or other, and most trams are much the same anyway. Having a uniform system of maintenance or a reference manual for any sort of car that might be of interest to other museums. Maybe in years to come we might have an exchange of cars and it would be nice to know that if your car went somewhere, the material for maintaining it was also there.

Tony Griffin remarked there were particular differences between various cars which would not be adequately covered by a common manual. Each car type should have its own manual.

Frank Doherty suggested supplements to cover such items as different truck types. A general overhaul manual covering, say, brake rigging with separate sections on air brakes, hand brakes, rheostatic brakes, or whatever.

John Radcliffe reminded the gathering that most of this material was available if you could get your hands on it. There had been a lot of work done on this and Don Currey did this for Seashore back in 1962. The Association of Railway Museums reproduced the New Orleans training notes four or five years ago; the notes themselves were done in the thirties. There has been a great deal of material put out by Brill and other people, handbooks of one sort and another, and much of this had been available from transit authorities when they cleaned out their shelves from time to time, and he suspected that between the lot of us, we would have a lot of this information. It would be a very big administrative effort to actually put it together and the people down in the pits trying to fix things also haven't got the time to cope with that administrative function.

Bill Parkinson said it was something that would be a long term project. Some would be able to make use of such information while others might have no use for it at all.

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Craig Tooke told the gathering he served his apprenticeship at Preston Workshops and the M.T.A. did have a set of maintenance instructions for the maintenance of all its trams. They were in the process of releasing an updated set which included instructions for maintaining the Z and A class trams. He did have the set he was issued with and could make copies if anyone was interested.

A voice asked how many pages it ran to.

Craig Tooke replied there were five sections, about sixty pages in all. It described, for instance, how to overhaul a controller, how to set the segments....

Bill Kingsley said it would be possible for C.O.T.M.A. to take a master copy from Craig's set and make copies available for any museum which wanted one. They in turn could copy it for their maintenance people.

Tony Griffin raised the point that the Melbourne manual was targeted for the commercial requirements of the M.T.A. and for the climate in Melbourne. We could not necessarily transpose those procedures from Melbourne to Brisbane, to Perth, to Adelaide or to Tasmania.

At this juncture, a number of delegates reminded Tony that it was a start, a step in the right direction.

Tony Griffin continued. He said all we could extract from the procedures were the general concepts....

Tony tried to continue, but was drowned out in the comments and general discussion his remarks brought forth.

Andrew Hall managed to get a few words in. He said that the S.E.C. maximum traction trams, the former M.M.T.B. ones, were an operating mystery to him at first and Bob Prentice researched the whole lot, from brake rigging to controllers and trucks. Much of the information came from a former S.E.C. depot foreman and they now had a thick folder of information on the S.E.C. maximum traction cars.

Bill Parkinson agreed that the information gathered was ideal for those who had S.E.C. cars. But for those who had, for instance, Brisbane cars, the manual as proposed would be invaluable.

John Radcliffe remarked that this appeared to be leading to a lot of euphoria for the generation of a manual through C.O.T.M.A. but he had to remind delegates that the performance and participation of member organisations in projects of this nature in the past had not been very good. We had set up, for example, formalised accident reporting and he asked the co-ordinators of that reporting how many museums over the last five years had advised any accidents they'd had.

David Rawlings replied there had been no reports received.

John Radcliffe continued by saying that we had to be quite clear about whether we follow up the proposal at all seriously. We got very enthused at these meetings, supporting each other and so on, but when we went home we tended to go very much back to our set ways, to our own little dunghills. Back in those dunghills are people whose vision wasn't broad enough to come to a conference like this, so if we were to move to this, it would need to be a firm commitment. He said we were capable of getting things done and mentioned the co-operation of various organisations to get outstanding conference proceedings completed, even after eight years in one instance. He reminded delegates that persistence would be necessary to get the job done and that should be borne in mind with any decision we were to make.

Jack Nyman requested that a start be made by having Craig Tooke's manual duplicated for those who would like a copy. That would be a start in the right direction as it would cover the W cars from Melbourne.

Craig Tooke asked whether they would like copies of the new manual to be released and thought it would be quite comprehensive.

Workshop Sessions

Ron Grant thought this was a matter of each museum stating what they had available for what, and circulating copies for museums to copy at their own expense what they wanted.

John Radcliffe thought that was a reasonable approach although even getting museums to do that wouldn't be easy. He mentioned attempts to obtain from each museum a listing of their trams, a seemingly easy task, but even that proved to be difficult to organise. He thought it would be reasonable to get the Executive to ask each museum to provide a list of what maintenance references they had. It might just be the International Correspondence course one, which was quite useful in some ways, or Brill manuals, or local M.T.A. or S.E.C. material, or whatever. But if we did that, we must be prepared to really do it when we got home.

Michael Kerr thought that was rather like putting the cart before the horse. He would much rather see the material Craig had, being distributed from this venue. He knew that Christchurch had very little to go on and the overhaul of controllers was entirely trial and error. It had been going on like that for over twenty years. He had not been aware there was a controller overhaul manual and stressed that such material was of inestimable value to those who had no information at all. He wanted the material distributed now rather than have to wait for lists to be circulated. Ferrymead had a crying need for information such as that right now as they had absolutely nothing to work from.

Craig Tooke suggested that what was needed was a co-ordinator to push the museums to provide the information needed.

Richard Gilbert suggested that we stick to the tried and true method of information dissemination and use the Executive Officer's memoranda to advise museums what was available, just like the Railways do in the Railway Weekly Notice.

John Radcliffe covered the various points and suggested that details such as who had what, if it could be made available, cost, and so on be listed. All that information could be found out, could be circulated and we could order what we wanted. All we had to do was decide what we wanted, and just as importantly what we didn't want. He knew that Michael wanted everything but a manual on overhauling a Sunbeam trolley bus might not be much use to us, either in terms of maintaining a trolley bus or giving you the text for the day, or whatever. He could provide a big list of stuff but we would need to pick out what was useful to us.

Ron Grant asked if it would not be possible to put together a 'shadow' list of what was available before the general meeting tomorrow. He thought that most museums would have some idea of what they had available.

John Radcliffe replied that it might be possible to do that.

David Rawlings closed the session by reminding delegates that lunch was the next item on the agenda and it was being served at the Sutherland Masonic Bowling Club opposite the northern terminus of the museum's tramline.

AFTERNOON ACTIVITIES

At noon, all delegates and friends gathered for a group photograph next to San Francisco PCC car 1014 which had been brought from the depot and parked in Tramway Avenue adjacent to the Sutherland-Lakewood Picnic Area. After the group photograph had been taken, the party adjourned for a leisurely lunch at the Sutherland Masonic Bowling Club, located across the highway from the northern terminus of the museum tram line. PCC car 1014 conveyed the C.O.T.M.A. party to the luncheon venue, and S.P.E.R. member Laurie Gordon acted as flagman at the Pitt Street and Army Depot level crossings to enable a non-stop run to be made at speed. This was the first time the PCC car had operated with passengers other than members of the S.P.E.R. and it ran very smoothly with its full load. It was the first time a 70 to 75 km/h non-stop run had been made along the full length of the museum's line and the ride was quite exhilarating.

After lunch, delegates and friends returned to the museum by regular service tram for inspection of the museum's facilities and display hall. An optional tour of about an hour's duration, covering the Sutherland Shire's historic sites and the route of the former Sutherland to Cronulla steam tramway, was undertaken in the Museum's AEC double decker bus No. 2619 for friends and families.

Tram riding, photography, inspections and socialising filled the afternoon. At 5.00pm, when the last of the Museum's visitors had departed, supervised tram driving was undertaken by delegates, using a number of cars including PCC 1014.

A barbecued evening meal was partaken in the workshop building, after which the riding and driving of trams continued until shortly before the last train from Loftus at 10.57pm. Delegates who caught this train had to change at Mortdale and arrived at Kings Cross at 11.43pm.