



Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia Inc.

P.O. Box 61
Carlton South Vic. 3053
www.cotma.org.au
A0030417B
ABN 81 315 085 479

News Update – July/August 2007

From the Chairman

1. Donations and Loans of Historical Assets and Items

In many museums or heritage organisations, the problem of who exactly owns what; was it donated or loaned or of who donated it sometimes arises. The lack of records or written agreements, especially where loans are involved can come back and haunt you. While it may be considered that who owns your locomotive, carriage or tram is not a safety matter, it is becoming a matter that the Regulators are now taking an interest in – do you have a written agreement re its use, maintenance etc?

A recent court case over a Delaware Lackawanna & Western Railroad donation of a locomotive to the Lackawanna Chapter of the Railway and Locomotive Historical Society (RLHS) in 1939 highlights the need for written agreements on who owns what and how. In 1952 the RLHS offered the locomotive (a humpback locomotive) for permanent exhibition to a then-private Missouri Museum which was subsequently taken over by the Museum of Transportation owned by the St Louis County. The Appeals court returned the case to the District Court for a review of its decision. The matter is still ongoing. The case has resulted in a lot of expense for both parties.

For a discussion that roams around a bit on the matter, see “Railway Preservation News” website: http://rypn.sunserver.com/forum/viewtopic.php?t=23615&postdays=0&postorder=asc&topic_view=flat&start=15, or for the actual court decision: <http://www.ca8.uscourts.gov/opndir/07/08/063662P.pdf> Have your legal dictionary to hand.

2. Accident Reports (See Page 2)

This newsletter features two items reporting on tramway accidents on heritage tramways. These could be important to your organisations operations. They should be reviewed and considered by your Safety / Operations managers and staff.

Chairman’s Recent Visit to Denmark

For a report on the Chairman’s recent visit to Denmark for the FEDECRAIL Conference see [ATHRA’s latest newsletter](#).

Annual General Meeting – Report

The Annual General Meeting of COTMA – necessary to satisfy Victorian Incorporated Association requirements was held as scheduled on Wednesday 8 August 2007 at VicTracks offices. A copy of the Annual Financial Report is enclosed with the mailed version of this newsletter.

ATHRA Alerts

There has been one Association of Tourist and Heritage Rail Australia (ATHRA) alert issued since the last News Update: It concerns the death of a person undertaking shunting duties on a UK heritage railway. Don’t forget you can directly subscribe to the [ATHRA website](#) for these alerts and newsletters. [ATHRA Alert No. 35](#) - Fatal Accident Report – UK Heritage Railway July.

UK Study into the Tramway Wheel and Rail Interface.

In the last News Update (June 2007), we noted the extensive [report](#) on this subject. Mike Crabtree of the Tramway Museum Society, Crich, advised that regarding the heritage tramway section based on the NTM at Crich, he was the author of this section. Further work is now being done on this subject by Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU). In particular the aim is to establish wear pattern characteristics on both tram and track and when to take remedial action on both a cost effective base or safety requirement - does a partially worn wheel settle down and stabilise a pattern wear and is there a crucial point when it is prudent to re-turn the profile?

Seaton derailment

The derailment of a tram on the narrow gauge heritage tramway at Seaton UK was reported in - http://www.raib.gov.uk/cms_resources/070703_R212007_Seaton%20Tramway.pdf The report concluded "The immediate cause of the derailment was the left hand switch of the points lying open, which may have been caused by the placing of an object between the switch and stock rail by persons unknown. A contributory factor was the lack of visual indication to the driver of the switch position at the approach to Seaton station. Another contributory factor was the design of the weighted lever at the points, which provides the opportunity for unauthorised persons to open the switches and place a stone between the switch and stock rail". **Australasian Operators with weighted turnouts are advised to read the report and review their operations.**

Christchurch Accident Report

In November 2006, an ex Melbourne W2 operating on the Christchurch Tramway ran over a track safety cone (witches hat) protecting adjacent road roads. This in turn managed to be jammed under the tram and then open the air release valve to the air cylinders resulting in the loss of air braking capacity. The tram then collided with the rear motor vehicle in a line of cars stopped for a traffic signal. The impact pushed the car forward into a nose-to-tail collision with two cars ahead of it. The tram sustained minor damage and three motor vehicles were extensively damaged. There were no injuries. A safety issue identified was the lack of consultation between Christchurch City Council, its contractor and Christchurch Tramway Limited. The location of the air dump valve under the running board was also an issue. The report can be downloaded from: <http://www.taic.org.nz/rail/06-112.pdf> **Operators with air-valves in similar locations as the involved tram should reconsider their location. Other considerations that should be reviewed are the need for consultation regarding any adjacent works to the track and driver's awareness of swept path and knowledge of emergency braking procedures.**

For Sale and Available upon request

Included within this mailout and on the email version is a separate sheet advertising items available for pickup or sale. These are:

- Melbourne Conductors bags, ticket wallets and journal covers – advertised during 2006.
- COTMA cups, bags and caps from the 2006 Conference – advertised in June.

Exhibition Guide – MA guide

A very good small publication on putting together exhibitions, including on-line exhibitions is available from the Museums Australia National office. Visit Museums Australia web site for ordering and information: <http://www.museumsaustralia.org.au/publications.php> Price \$28.50.

Oct Exec Meeting.

The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be held in Melbourne on Saturday October 27 at Hawthorn Depot. Would you please advise the Chairman of any matters you would like to be included on the Agenda.

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