

WORKSHOP A2

SOUVENIR SHOPS - WHAT DO YOU STOCK? HOW AND WHERE DO YOU SELL IT?

Chairman and
Recorder: Robert Thomson (BTMS)

This workshop highlighted the diversity of methods adopted by the member museums of COTMA in the marketing of souvenirs.

The workshop commenced with each member giving a brief outline of the items which their societies produced and the ways in which these items were offered for sale to the public.

All museums with the exception of MOTAT are actively engaged in the selling of souvenirs. In the case of MOTAT this activity is divorced from the tramway museum and is operated as a separate commercial entity.

AETM reported that fears had been expressed by some of their members that the marketing of souvenirs was becoming too commercialised.

The general consensus of opinion of workshop members favoured post-cards, badges, tie bars and bumper stickers. It was recognised that items of a specialist nature such as technical books would have limited appeal to the general public. However, it was felt there was an obligation to provide this service to members at a reasonable cost.

The following summaries give some indication of the wide range of souvenirs marketed by the respective museums.

AETM T shirts, steam records, books from outside publishers

BTMS Badges, tie bars, colour slides

BTPS Button badges, postcards, publications from kindred organisations

MOTAT Souvenirs of New Zealand in general

SPER Tea towels, T shirts, serviettes, address books, conductor's kits comprising bag, plastic money and sets of tickets drawn from discarded stocks.

THS Tramway and Railway Calendars, ball point pens, tea towels, colour slides.

TMSV Bumper stickers, glasses, caps, slides, postcards

WTM Pennants

The second topic to be discussed related to the facilities available in the marketing of the souvenirs. The reports furnished by the members highlighted again the diversity in this field of activity.

AETM Sales were conducted in a building which was inadequate for this purpose. It was only on rare occasions that sales were conducted away from museum.

BTMS Prior to the opening of the museum bookshop sales had been concentrated

at monthly general meetings and at exhibitions organised by kindred associations. The Society had also secured the services of agents at the three city council bus depots.

BTPS Owing to the poor attendance by members of the public in visiting the depot, sales were canvassed on the trams by conductors. A retail outlet was available in Melbourne and sales representatives were appointed in the various Melbourne tram and bus depots.

MOTAT The souvenir shop was incorporated into the entrance of the museum complex. All receipts were credited to MOTAT. There was no incentive for the individual museums to sell souvenirs.

SPER The bookshop was initially located in a tram but was now housed in in part of the main depot building. A mobile display in the form of a signal box is exhibited at hobby exhibitions.

THS There is now no separate bookshop for the tramway museum. All souvenir items produced by the member museums of Ferrymead are offered for sale at one central location.

Recommendations

1. Each museum to create the position of a sales officer
2. List of publications to be circulated to COTMA members
3. Investigate the feasibility of a joint approach in the production of postcards.
4. The production of an Australasian tramway calendar.