



Passengers wait for the driver to receive the 'right away' at the tram's base at Archer Park Station, Rockhampton. It runs north along Denison St with the QR mainline tracks beyond. The Rockhampton system had nine tramcars and six trailers.

Rockhampton Purrey steam tram centenary

STEAM trams built by the company of Monsieur Valentin Purrey of Bordeaux, France, carried passengers for the first time on 5 June 1909 in the Queensland regional city of Rockhampton and over the weekend of 5-7 June 2009 centenary celebrations were held, reports *Andy Plunkett*.

Starting on the Friday evening with a reception in the dining room of Archer Park station and Steam Tram Museum, invited guests connected with the original trams



Doug Press and Rose Swadling cut the centenary cake.

and those involved with the rebuilding of one tram between 1984 and 1988 convened with past and present volunteers and representatives from Rockhampton Regional Council.

Doug Press and Rose Swadling cut the centenary cake. Doug is a retired manager of Rockhampton Transport Dept. Under his guidance the tram was rebuilt in the bus transport workshops using some original parts and the project was funded under the 1988 Australia Bicentennial projects. In her role as the current Deputy Mayor, Rose supports the running of the tram and other museum projects in the Rockhampton region.

Sunday morning's celebration at Archer Park saw the unique Purrey tram in steam for an earlier than usual start. There was a warm winter sun as the last Queensland Rail freight train went through at 9am on the adjacent track. The tram track in Denison St is beside the mainline rail track and the tram



The crossing signs are there to warn motorists! The Purrey steam tram is running in Denison St and crossing Cambridge St. The nearest track is the line into Archer Park station. Australian rail safety requirements mean that the tram crew are dressed in high visibility clothing, rotating beacons are attached to both tram ends and there are also electric horns with back-up compressed air horns. The original conductor and driver bells are still used for inter-crew communication. ALL: ANDY PLUNKETT

cannot run on this section of tram line when QR trains are due to pass by.

Families queued up for the first run at 9.30am and by 1pm more than 400 people had enjoyed a centenary tram ride. There were several drivers and conductors in

attendance, so crew relief enabled rapid turn-around, with the tram running faultlessly.

■ A short technical history of Rockhampton's Purrey steam trams, written by Derek Rayner, appeared in OG 153. For further information visit qlcheritage.com/archerpark