



Friends of Archer Park Station & Steam Tram Museum Inc

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TRAM TRACKS

Thanks from the Coordinator

I trust everyone had a good Christmas break and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers for a job well done for 2008. Here's hoping 2009 will see lower fuel prices and a return to more acceptable visitor numbers.

Happenings and Coming Events

Visitor numbers for 2008 are well down for 2008, seemingly due to the high fuel prices. Hopefully petrol prices, which fell dramatically in November 2008, will remain low long enough for the coming winter season when we generally see the bulk of our visitors.

In November 2007 Archer Park had a visit from David Mewes, acting curator of the Ipswich Workshops Museum. He and his son, plus two other friends, were on a tour up the coast to Cairns, stopping at the sugar mills and rail heritage attractions.

Other visitors to Archer Park included Kevin Wright, QR's Group General Manager Operations and responsible for QR's Heritage Division., and three Dutch rail enthusiasts who "filmed everything that moved".

A first for Archer Park, a Bush Poets and BBQ Night was held on November 12 to coincide with a museum tour by night. We are trying to establish a two monthly night tour of Archer Park but feel we need a little more for people to do or see to get the public interested in coming out at night. Forty people attended and all that Dennis talked to indicated it was "the best \$5 they had spent", with the recommendation that the event be repeated in 2009.

Dave has virtually finished work in JCS 1007 with one end toilet being relined; John Cole has finished painting the new ceiling outside the end toilet and has painted the new sheeting inside the toilet. The unrestored side of the coach is now having all the rotten wood taken off in

preparation for new sheeting. Dave and John are to be commended for a job well done.

Bronwyn Roper, the Museums coordinator for this region, held a Museum Networking Day at Archer Park on Friday, November 28. The all day event had guest speakers from the Heritage Village, CQ Military Museum, etc. Thirty museum representatives from CQ attended.

The Purrey Steam Tram ceased running after November 30, and will not commence running until February 15th 2009 so that boiler inspections, maintenance and testing can be carried out. The blow down cock will have to be removed and rebuilt as it has been losing boiler water for some time. Needing to refill the boiler with water each Sunday before firing up the boiler has been frustrating for the drivers.

Fourteen Girl guides from Biloela toured Archer Park one November Sunday and spent a couple of hours looking over the museum and riding on the tram. The ANZ Bank held a customer thank you night on Wednesday December 3 with two hundred and twenty guests. And Joan O'Neill was so impressed with her visit a few months ago that she organized a tour of Archer Park for fourteen residents from the Blue Care Centre.

The owner of JCS 1007 drove up from Brisbane on Sunday December 3 to look over the progress on the restoration of the coach and seems happy with what's been done so far.

Dennis has asked his up line manager to look into a problem with people who work in the vicinity of Archer Park parking their cars in the Museum car park, with anything up to thirty-five cars parking all day. The car park is designated parking for Archer Parks visitors, and council-owned private land, so it may be possible to have them move or charge them a weekly parking fee. This may be an on-going problem since the new OzCare building has done away with a big parking area.

We also need a guard rail system around both sets of points in Denison Street. Because these points are on the side of two roads they are often run into by motorists. It's not only a problem of the damage that cars may get from running into them, but in time the handles may get bent or the points bent out of shape.

Archer Park is looking forward to hosting the ATRQ meeting this year on the 28th February. The meeting is set down to run from the 28th Feb. to the 1st March 2009. ATRQ meetings see representatives from all sections of the tourist rail and tram industry throughout Queensland come together and discuss all aspects of the industry plus visit other rail infrastructure in the region. This should be a big event for Archer Park and a bit like the COTMA Conference we held in 2000.

Some monthly visitor numbers for last year to ponder over, these numbers were well down on previous years.

August 2008: Visitors 815; Tram Passengers 450.

September 2008: Visitors 824; Tram passengers 450.

October 2008: Visitors 822; Tram passengers 454.

November 2008: Visitors 357; Tram passengers 129.

Final numbers were not available when the newsletter was prepared but visitor numbers were also down in December.

Archer Park has received a shipment of new Tram and Train Books with photos and stories on the Purrey Steam Tram and the Archer Park Rail Museum. The two magazines in question are *On the Rails Vol 2* and *Trams Vol 2*.

Volunteer Activities

We don't know how other museum groups are faring with volunteer numbers, but at Archer Park it's becoming increasingly difficult to recruit new members, and when volunteers go on holidays or are ill it is very hard to find others to fill the gap. Maybe it's not a problem in the big cities because of the larger population but in the country centres we don't seem to have the population who have the time and interest for all the community work available.

Andrew Simpson has put the reconditioned motor back into Tampa 6 No 016. Some

electrics yet has to be redone and a fuel tank will have to be fitted. Before it can take passengers it will also have to have safety rails fitted before the usual Qld Transport clearance.

Thirty-eight people attended the Melbourne Cup Day function, and almost fifty the annual Christmas dinner (see last page for photos).

A selection of photos from the Christmas Party are on the last page of this newsletter.

December 13 saw roughly 150 guests celebrate the 80th birthday of Friends of Archer Park President, Blair Jamieson. Best wishes, Blair.

Rail Safety

Hopefully by the time this newsletter is printed a safety barrier between the rail exhibits and the tram track will be sorted out, with several potential solutions being investigated.

Unfortunately, motorists often don't stop at the level crossings in Archer and Cambridge Streets. We have counted up to twenty cars a day that didn't stop, a concern for our tram drivers who have some close calls at times.

The police haven't got the manpower to sit all day watching level crossings. Our tram crews are trained to watch for these motorists and will begin to take the number plates of these cars so we can dob them in.

This is a real safety issue, we really don't want to see the outcome of a motorist running into the tram, especially if there are forty passengers on board.

Rail Safety Unit News

Julie Bullas, Qld Transport

The Safety Unit in Queensland Transport has undergone some significant operational changes over the past six months. Spot audits are just one of these changes as a result of recommendations to Queensland Transport in the Mindi double fatality rail investigation.

A spot audit program has been introduced to monitor compliance of Safety Management Systems of rail operators, including commercial and tourist/heritage railways in Queensland.

To enhance safety on Queensland railways, all rail operators will be subject to three types of audits:

- Spot audits are carried out to address specific rail safety issues or specific issues relating to the railway's Safety Management System

- Compliance inspections are carried out to mitigate risk and support audits of the Safety Management System. A compliance inspection may be done following accidents/incidents, major safe working breaches, if there is non-compliance of accreditation conditions, or if the safety regulator has other concerns
- Safety Management System audits are conducted on railway managers and/or railway operators approximately six months after becoming accredited and then annually to verify compliance with the accredited railway's Safety Management System requirements. These include national audits where railways are also accredited in other states within Australia.

Spot audits do not replace a Safety Management System audit but are an additional compliance checking process. They are designed to capture a snap shot of the railway operations at a particular point in time and will usually take two hours to complete.

When preparing to undertake a spot audit, Queensland Transport will give the railway at least 24 hours notice to ensure the railway has an appropriate representative available onsite to escort the Rail Safety Unit officer conducting the audit.

For the integrity of the spot audit to be maintained, it is important confidentiality is maintained. The Rail Safety Unit officer will conduct an entry and exit meeting with the railway representatives and provide a brief report to the railway shortly after the completion of the audit. The report will detail any safety directions or recommendations if required.

In other news, Queensland's Rail Safety Bill remains on hold, pending a national review into rail safety and workplace health and safety.

Discussions continue between industry, regulators, and the National Transport Commission around competency training and assessment for tourist and heritage operators and who is best positioned to do this training and assessment. The National Transport Commission is progressing this matter in consultation with the Association of Tourist and Heritage Rail Australia.

The development of the national Safety Management System guidance material for

tourist and heritage operators is continuing and will be released in early 2009 for public consultation. A reference group comprising of operator and regulator representatives is currently reviewing the material for consistency with the new National Model Rail Safety Legislation.

Source: *Tracks*, the ATRQ Newsletter, 3:2, November 2008.

Tidy Town/Tidy Museum?

Some motorists are pulling up outside the museum, having something to eat and drink, and then driving off and throwing the packaging out the window or dropping it on the other side of the car so we don't see them doing it.

We witnessed two incidents last year when a chap in a car opposite the museum (and outside his own house) threw his papers out the window and a motorist driving over the level crossing throwing a soft drink can out the window, and after he got over the crossing throwing more rubbish out the window.

Since we take a pride in our surroundings, and try to keep the area clear of rubbish, we don't think much of these yahoos.

Social History

Our social history project continues and we've now got several interview sessions taped, with some of them transcribed and checked for gross errors. Transcripts are prepared by listening to the interviews and typing up what was said, removing some of the "ahs", "ums" and other non-content. Since we seldom speak in written English, transcript often contain grammatical errors, incomplete sentences, etc.

The transcripts, along with selected audio segments, will be put on the web site, and some of the audio will be used to enhance the static displays in the museum itself.

In this issue of *Tram Tracks* Blair and Bill explain how they began their careers with QR some forty plus years ago. As well, we have another of Jack Desmond's letters from the Blackall area back to his family in the UK.

**Partial transcript of an interview with Blair Jamieson and Bill Head, 3 Sep 2008
(prepared from the recorded interview)**

BLAIR: I served my time as an electrician in what was then the Telegraph Engineer Section in Roma Street. I spent two years in the little machine shop in the Roma Street yard, and then we went and worked outside around the stations, round the signal cabins and automatic signalling around the suburban area of Brisbane and then power and light works, putting in power points, lights and all that sort of thing, in the Station Masters' houses and Stations.

And from there I think I was transferred to Rockhampton in 1950. I came here for 18 months and then I eventually went back to Brisbane, to Nambour, and I looked after the North Coast equipment and staff instruments, telephones, pumps, everything between Caboolture and Gympie.

BILL: Well, I joined the job first on the 2nd of February 1946, and in those days when you joined the railway as a 'lad porter' you had to do six months probation in the railway refreshment rooms before you went out onto the station platform. So, the job I was allotted was on the dining car stationed in Rockhampton -- we used to run between Rockhampton and Mackay. It was on the Sunshine Mail in the days of wooden carriages before we got the air-conditioned trains in 1953.

And my job allotted was as a junior worker on the dining car. We used to serve lunch and tea on the trip up, camp overnight in our quarters, and seven o'clock next morning we'd pick up the southern bound train, the Sunshine Mail, serve breakfast and lunch, be detached here in Rockhampton at two o'clock in the afternoon.

I was highly delighted when Dennis told me one morning that they were negotiating to get an old sleeping car which had to be restored. And he said, it's a JCS # 1007. I said, "Not 1007," and Dennis said, "why?" And I said, "well I can distinctly remember as plain as if it was yesterday. #1007 was frequently a part of the Sunshine Mail back in my days in 1946 and early '47."

And 62 years ago now, or over 62 years ago, many's the time I walked through the passageway of that old sleeper, announcing that, "the first sitting for breakfast is now being served in the dining car." "Second sitting for lunch," and so forth, and it really,... it takes you back years,... makes you feel so much younger. When you just reminisce in your own mind and think of those days -- it was really great.

Well, in early 1947 I completed me probation and was appointed a 'lad porter' in Blackall, out in the far west. And then with the 46 and a half years, I worked at various stations, 32 locations all told, all in the Central Division of the Queensland Railways -- only had one break; some may have only been for one day, but in the 46 and a half years I worked at 32 different locations. Only had one break from '61 till '62 up at Torrens Creek at the loco depot which was situated between Charters Towers and Hughenden, and other than that I spent all my time in Central Queensland.

And if the powers that be could turn the clock back and said, "Righto Bill, you're a lad of 16 years of age again now, you've got your whole working life in front of you, what would you like to do?" I'd say, "Turn it back to the 2nd of February 1946, and I'll do it all over again."

I loved every moment of it. Like all jobs, everything's not always straight sailing, you get your ups and downs and your busy jobs, but throwing it across the whole 46 and a half years, I wouldn't have wanted to do anything else. I've absolutely enjoyed every moment of it -- really did.

BLAIR: Well, as I said, I came to Rockhampton in 1950. I was here for 18 months and then I went back to Nambour, and from Nambour I went to Gympie and I looked after the signal cabin in Gympie. There were only two of those in Queensland, one in Gympie and one in Mayne Junction. I worked on the one in Mayne Junction when I was an apprentice and it had 125 levers, very small levers and the signalling was worked by 45 pounds of compressed air and about 20 volts.

And the one in Gympie had 65 levers. Unfortunately they're both all gone now, what a shame.

From Gympie I went to Cairns. I was in Cairns for about two years -- 18 months, two years -- and from Cairns I came to Maryborough in about 1965, and in 1967 I was transferred back to Rockhampton as 'in charge' and that's where I've stayed ever since. I've seen so much improvement in the railway working from the old fashioned signalling to some of the most modern stuff in the world and the basic signalling that controls the trains between Rockhampton and Caboolture is all French.

It comes from a company called Compagnie Signalling Electrique Enterprises and it's very good equipment and that's the stuff they use in France to control those high speed trains, the TGBs at 300 k. Of course, we haven't got up to that yet, but it's been a very interesting time and I wouldn't have swapped it for anything and a lot of that knowledge that I gained years ago and the work that I did in the workshop when I started work has come in handy because I'm still, to this day, restoring equipment, and, at the moment, I'm building another Morse Code table to go in the museum in Gympie. So it's a great thing. And, as I said before, the people we meet here really make our days.

BILL: When I started in the railway in 1946 the Queensland Railways alone had a total population employment of about 26,000. Well, throughout the whole of Australia and all the other states, being the type of industry that it was, well they would have had big numbers too.

Well it's very strange really, you get those people who come in and very rarely you'll get those people who come in that haven't had their father was in the railway or their grandfather, or their brother-in-law and there will be no end of questions, queries thrown at you, particularly about the days of steam locomotives.

And you can tell the difference about how things have improved with the enormous trains that we drove now with electric locomotives in the coal traffic, whereas in the days when I joined the railway, in places with steam locos you'd have to have two steam locos attached to pull the load. Well, irrespective of the total capacity of the two locomotives, you might have to haul on the

train, in those days we couldn't drag a train any heavier than about 650 tons; that was the limit.

The structure of our road gear and the vehicles, you couldn't have it any heavier than that. Well, now we drag trains thousands of tons so that it's remarkable in that time since '46, the time that I was in the job and the drastic changes that we saw. For quite a few years, particularly in the post-war years, you didn't see a great deal of changes in the railway because to a large extent there was a lot of rehabilitation had to go on, because Queensland Railways got a heck of a lot of a flogging during the war years because everything from the south came up through Queensland Railways.

Well, it took us a long time to catch up but of course the last twenty to twenty-five years or so with all the coal traffic has come in, well, of course they've upgraded the tracks with heavier rail, blue metal ballast, concrete sleepers, and it's hard to imagine what we see and what we drag now that it is the same railway that I started working on in 1946.

Regional Rail History: John Edward (Jack) Desmond, Glenusk Siding on the Jerico & Blackall Line, 1913-14

Apologies to Elaine and Gordon Streeter of Brighton in the UK, who transcribed the handwritten letters, and didn't get credited in Tram Tracks 2:2 (July 2008).

This extract from the letters back to his sister the UK is from 7 April 1913 and may have been written with alternate paragraphs from Jack and his wife.

My Dear Sister

I received your letter quite safely and was very pleased to hear that you are all quite well as we are just the same. The weather is very trying as the sun is very hot. We had two days hard raining and we cannot go to work in the rain as we get very wet.

Dear Mary, this is a very lonely place as there is only one other woman besides Louis with her family camping out as I daresay by the time you get this letter you will know that we are living under canvas. It is very healthy outdoors but it is very miserable when it rains as we cannot have a fire inside the tent.

Dear Mary I should just like you to see us with our camp fire gathering up all the old trees and bits of stick to keep the fires going. I am very pleased to hear Father received my letter quite safe. I have not had an answer from him yet.

Dear Sister, I received the papers and also the Brush and Combs and Collars quite safely. The last paper I received was the News of the World.

Dear Sister, if you have received a letter without a stamp on will you let me know as they were given to a man to have the stamps put on but there was a mistake made with them - the stamps came to me and the letters must have got sent without the stamps on.

Dear Mary, the home and furniture are to be left as they are as we do not intend to stay out here longer than we can possibly help. As soon as we get our debts paid up and enough to go on we shall be coming home or you can tell Mother that you are keeping them until such time as we do not come home, which I hope will not be very long.

Dear Sister, the days are very long as Jack goes to work early in the morning and I do not see him again until 5:30 or sometimes 6 o'clock at night. We are up before 6 o'clock in the morning so you can guess how long the day is.

Dear Mary, it takes nearly all the wages to pay for food as everything is so dear. We have to pay 5d for every loaf of bread we have. 1/6d a pound of butter, 1/9d a lb for tea and 4/- is the cheapest price for a pound of coca. 9d a pound of currants, so you see how dear they are and we cannot have 1/2 lb of anything as they will not sell it, everything you spend has to be in pounds or else you do not get any at all. You cannot get a tin of milk under 9d, that is Nestle's milk. The salt you have to pay 2d a pound, soap you get 3 lb for 9d.

Dear Sister, I am pleased to tell you that little Mary is getting on lovely. She is getting quite fat, her face, arms and legs are getting quite tanned with the sun. She hardly requires any clothes on as it is so hot out here. All she has on is her little shirt and her frock. She has got nearly all her teeth through. She has got 16 up to now and she speaks quite plain and she is

getting quite saucy, if you call her a naughty girl she will say No.

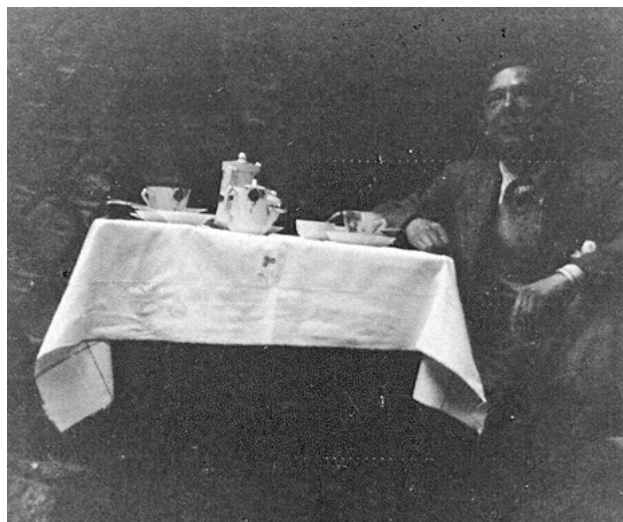
Dear Suster... Give my love to Mother and Jim and when you see Father you can give him my love and also Louie. Give my love to all the children and also to Arthur and yourself, and Louie sends her love to all. Kiss all the children from me and Louie and tell them we shall come home as soon as we can when we get enough money, then they will have little Mary to play with them as she will be able to run after them then.

Dear Mary would you be kind enough to send me a box of hairpins and a couple of reels of cotton, not thread, we can not get a bit of cotton under 1/- a reel. I think this is all I have to say at present.

*From your Loving Brother & Sister and Baby,
Jack & Louise & Mary*

PS Kisses for all (48 Xs written)

Hoping once again that you are all quite well and that Arthur has got plenty of work.



Jack Desmond, born 21 July 1878, was great-uncle to Elaine Streeter, and emigrated from London to Australia in February 1913 His last letter to his sister, Elaine's grandmother, was April 1915, and efforts to trace him further were unsuccessful. Further extracts from his letters, transcribed by Elaine and Gordon Streeter, will appear in future issues of Tram Tracks.

Friends Christmas Party, 22 November 2008



Almost 50 people from the Friends, Emu Park Museum and Mt Morgan Historical Centre enjoyed the festive dinner prepared by the Friends' kitchen crew.



Colour versions of these and other party photos are on the web site: QldRailHeritage.com/ArcherPark.

Blair Jamieson's 80th Birthday Party, 13 December 2008



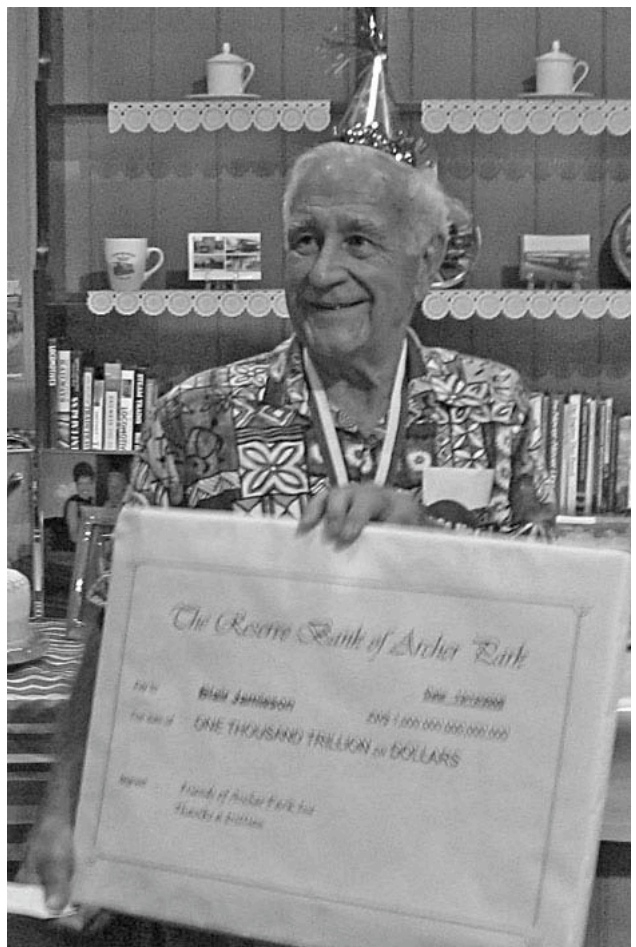
A family celebration...



Congratulations from colleagues and friends...



Cutting the cake...



As requested, a "big fat cheque"!