



Friends of Archer Park Station & Steam Tram Museum Inc

URL: [QldRailHeritage.com/ArcherPark](http://QldRailHeritage.com/ArcherPark)

PO Box 573, Rockhampton, Qld 4700 Australia

Ph: 07 4922 2774 Fax: 07 4927 0120 E-mail: [archerpark@bigpond.com.au](mailto:archerpark@bigpond.com.au)

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# TRAM TRACKS

## Date Claimers

1 October: *School Holiday*, 10:00 am to 1:00 pm

28 October: Carriage Shade Capers (*Family Fun Day*), 9:00 am to 1:00 pm

Fourth Wednesday each month, 3:30: Friends monthly meeting

## Friends of Archer Park Executive

President: Dot Marshall

Vice President: Wilma Coghlan

Treasurer: Ross Carter 07 4922 2774

Secretary: Phil Augustine 0429 094377

Meetings of the **Friends of Archer Park** are on the fourth Wednesday of the month in the refreshment room, so the **next meeting is 3:30 pm, 25 October 2012.**

## Museum Activities

### Recent Events

The Family Fun Day on 26 August ran very well with plenty of Friends and Volunteers to help plus plenty of stalls and Double Decker Bus rides for variety. The numbers of visitors at just over 300 were not as good as we had hoped, but probably fair considering the number of competing events around the Region that weekend.

The Bush Poets night on 5 September was OK with a good programme of entertainment and plenty of helpers... but the event was poorly supported by the public.

Perhaps we need to be more active in advertising and getting brochures out to public notice boards etc – particularly for the Poets night. This, plus a need to introduce more variety into programmes, will be a challenge with our existing resources – but let's address the issues and keep the museum a favoured venue for the community.

## The Friends

At the last monthly meeting on 22 August (we had good attendance for a change) the main items included:

One new member – Trevor Morgan,

Dave Shultz' suggestion for power outlet on face of platform for charging tram and Billard batteries – to avoid a hazardous extension lead from over the Coach. Dennis to follow up.

Advice from Peter Owens that there may be a change to Blue Card requirements.

Do we change the name of our main event from "Family Fun Day" back to the old "Carriage Shade Capers"?

Since then our senior Guide, Bill Head, has been very ill with flu for a couple of weeks. Hope to see you back on deck soon Bill.

We note that Alex Limkin recently won a free Council fuel voucher – lucky beggar.

## Museum Issues

**Coal Stockpile:** After some recent turmoil over the loss of the last of our coal stockpile, another 15 tonnes has been delivered from the Clermont Mine. The coal was donated by Rio Tinto but Council has had to fund the significant transport cost. This coal differs from the lumpy Blair Athol product we've used for years, so we hope it will burn as well.

**Track Infrastructure Audit:** The Rail Transport Safety people recently audited the Museum's performance on Track Maintenance. Their report takes a bit of interpretation; while they gave an OK on the state of track we have a bit of tidy up required on the paperwork side.

**Train Crews:** It is now time for reassessment of Tram Crews' skills – required every 2 years in accord with the Safety Management System.

Andrew Simpson will be catching up with each of us in the near future.

**The C17 Steam Loco:** External restoration is slowly happening:

the cow catcher and headlight are now attached,

the access steps are installed,

painting is in progress,

Jim Abrahams is beavering away at the controls in the cabin,

and Hugh Hartwig is away taking photos of similar locos in service elsewhere for guidance.

**PS:** Dennis now has a quote for a power outlet on platform face, "ordered" repairs to the timber cover on the interlocking trench, and decided to go back to Carriage Shade Capers as the name for our family fun days.

#### **Something Different – the Mysterious Disappearance**

Fleur O'Tube has gone missing – last seen in tram room mid-September. Initial enquiry has found no trace, no clues, no witnesses. Because

of our French Connection we may hire Inspector Poirot to investigate????

*Submitted by collaborators Dennis and Phil*

#### **Images from the Past – Carriage Shade Capers, October 2003**



Section car rides were popular with the younger set. Lynn Zelmer photographer [05/10/03 8759]



QR freight passing Archer Park. Lynn Zelmer photographer [05/10/03 8753]

## **Trans-Australian Railway Centenary**

Five competing rail companies united on 21 September to form a single train that travelled from Adelaide to Port Augusta and return to mark 100 years since the first sod was turned to build the Trans-Australian Railway.

CFCLA, Genesee & Wyoming, Pacific National, QR National and SCT Logistics each provided a locomotive for the event with Great Southern Rail providing passenger cars.

The centenary event was open to the public at the Port Augusta Train Station. [Information courtesy ARA via ATRQ]

## **Zig Zag Railway Services Suspended**

The Zig Zag Railway, Lithgow, one of NSW's premiere tourist railways, suspended passenger services in June for an indefinite period. The railway's engineering is quite unique but just as interesting to Tram Tracks readers, many of the locomotives and rollingstock were sourced from Queensland Railways... the rationale for the gauge change during the 1970s restoration.

Zig Zag's steam trains and diesel rail motors have operated seven days a week, primarily with volunteers, for many years. Unfortunately a 2011 accident identified a number of safety issues and as a result passenger services have been suspended until NSW accreditation issues are resolved.

## **Web Site Update**

The Friends' web site has been updated, making it easier for visitors to find information and resources on the site. Look there for historical notes and collection information so you can explain the area's rail heritage to our visitors.

## **QGR Loco Men in the 1950s, Part 3**

[This completes these recollections by an unknown author and received from the ATRQ. They've been included to remind us of Queensland's railway history.]

The railway had a one line phone system; wind the handle a series of short and long codes to make contact with a particular station. Crossing loops were also on this system and the driver or guard could report any abnormalities or needs.

For curiosity alone, everybody near a phone listened in. Much of the conversation was routine matters, but some people make more requests than others. It might be a crew who were arriving soon, wanted a couple of meat

pies or fish and chips or a loaf of bread. This could be rated a normal request and payment would be made on arrival.

However, some people like to push the boundaries when they find a night officer whom they can utilise. People sometimes cooperate because they want to be popular and usually such practises grow, in time, to be larger. To get bottles of beer from a nearby pub, a special code would develop; some items of food would be requested and the system operated and was well known to most interested people.

Occasionally, a new person on transfer received the coded message and on arrival the crew received the grocery items they had asked for. The knowledge of such incidents spread quickly and it would become great amusement to all.

Beer, for taking away at the time, was only in large bottles and allowing them to be seen on the job was not wise. So to overcome this, coat sleeves were turned inside out, tied on the bottom ends and then returned to normal shape. One bottle of beer could be placed in each sleeve and carried by slinging the coat over the shoulder and holding on to the collar. The surge uniforms issued were made from strong quality material and the coat could be hung on a hook in the loco cab.

Deferment notices were delivered to homes or the barracks. In some instances, it paid single time for the delayed period and if more notice was given, they started later and there was no extra payment. Meal breaks were calculated from when work started. It was 10 minutes between the 4th and 5th hour and every 4 hours from then. It was up to the engine crew to decide or demand when the train would stop for their meal break.

There were no meal breaks when working passenger trains. The train working notice mainly specified staff or ticket sections, trains to cross and any special instructions, such as a station where they were to ring Control.

Some instructions were given to the driver verbally by the guard. Speed restrictions and a range of factors to be aware of were listed on a noticeboard near the sign on sheet; drivers were expected to peruse and be aware of this information.

Steam trains were dispatched 10 minutes apart during daytime and 30 minutes at night time.

Fettler's trolleys and motorised trolleys used by line inspectors were not mentioned on train notices.

When train crews discovered a fettler gang working on the line, drivers gave long whistle blasts and placed their hand on the train brake because they often continued working right up to the last moment. Safety signals for fettler gangs working on the line were mainly used when trains were required to stop. (Fettlers were often called Lizards because they work in the sun all day.)

Sometimes a line inspector would tell the crew by phone where he was and asked them to keep a sharp lookout. Constantly, crews would expect to meet him and later find that he travelled ahead of them and they posed no danger to him. When challenged he might reply, "What if I later changed my mind and decided to travel in the direction towards you?"

(Drivers regarded fettlers, particularly those who checked the line, as the most important people in the railway.)

Loco engines in hot dry times threw sparks and caused grass fires. For this the fireman was criticised as incompetent.

Humorous things done by crews, often in the telling got exaggerated. Example, for fun a crew consisting of young men might crouch down while slowly passing (ie Crossing) a stationary train and not be seen by them. It could generate talk about a ghost train seen at a particular station that travelled all the way without having crew members on board. When in effect all that happened, was that when they were no longer foul of points, they stopped and attended to staff workings.

There were a lot of old grouches in the job who could generate feelings of unhappiness and such incidents, while not desirable and bordering on larrikinism, did generate an element of life and uplift to a job that consisted of employees who always seemed to be in the wrong.

Newspapers and radio announcers informed the public with constant unfavourable reports about railway operations. This resulted in the local employees who were involved in train operations, being despised and the subject of jokes in the towns where they lived. This arose because towards the end of the 1950s, roads

were improving and road transport was competing with the railway for business.

It was the old story of private enterprise being more efficient than government departments. (Road transport and airlines too worked selected profitable routes and the railway provided for all existing destinations.) This was not helped by the railway running at a loss.

The various managers, large clerical staff and officials in charge of the railway seemed to have similar contempt for the employees who operated the trains.

At night loco staff walked in the dark without a torch, they used small flush lamps fuelled with power kerosene that gave a lot of flame and black smoke, with limited vision of only a few feet ahead. The flush lamps had to be held high above the head, even to achieve this limited vision.

It was easy to have a stumble or to step into a pit between the rails used for fire cleaning at loco watering tanks. External lighting around such areas was often non-existent. Even these pits in loco sheds at depots had no walkway crossings, employees just took a large step to get across.

At the time there was limited medical recognition for employees suffering shoulder and back disabilities. They received no sympathy or consideration for light duties or additional sick leave.

The steam feed pipe to the Westinghouse pump and the lubricator were on the same line and both were turned off when the lubricator had to be cooled and refilled. There were no safety devices on locos for warning and preventing accidents to employees doing repairs or preparation duties.

The adverse conditions that existed in the 1950s were numerous and the list could amount to many pages if everything was mentioned. These employees who worked in the 1950's were not offered superannuation; they worked until aged 65 years and then retired on age pension.

Changes and so called improvements are always happening, so they probably talked to friends about the good old days. In retirement they would have had time to help mind children, but they would be grandchildren and the locos they operated would be called Thomas Tank Engines.