



Friends of Archer Park Station & Steam Tram Museum Inc

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TRAM TRACKS

Q150 Steam Train

A lot of the locals enjoyed their rides on the Q150 Steam Train while it was in Rockhampton and BB18 1/4 1079 went light past Archer Park on its way to Mackay (Monday, May 25). It was fortunate at the time we had about a dozen visitors who were able to take some pictures of the steam engine as it went past, with many

remarking it was a bonus to come to the museum and see a steam engine go up the track.

The local area trips had all been headed by steam but the Q150 train had proceeded to Mackay the previous day headed by English Electric 1620, also part of the heritage fleet. (You can find a photo of BB 18 1/4 1079 crossing Stanley Street later in the newsletter.)



Q150 Steam Train with English Electric #1620, northbound at Rockhampton Park Station 24 May 2009.

Happenings and Coming Events

A black and white photo of the original 1877 Rockhampton Railway Station known as "the Stanley Street Railway Station" was given to Archer Park by the Mayor of Rockhampton, Brad Carter. The photo was presented to council for their involvement in the Q150 celebrations.

As the newsletter is being prepared plans are coming together for the Centenary of the Purrey Steam Tram in Rockhampton. Friday, June 5 will be a Wine and Nibbles Night, and Sunday, June 7 will be the Anniversary Carriage Shade Capers Day, hopefully with the public wearing period costume of the 19th century.

Visitors numbers are still well down on previous years but we are not alone in this aspect with all tourist spots feeling the effects of the economic downturn plus the devastating bushfires in Victoria, both of which would have some impact on the caravan and mobile home owners coming North for the winter.

The Central Queensland Combined Rail Groups Network representatives are going to Childers on June 20 for their regular meeting. The day is being hosted by the Childers Historic Complex, it should be a good day with a lot see around Childers.

There are no bookings for tours or functions Archer Park for June except for our Tram Anniversary.

July will see twenty two members of CILTA in Victoria (Chartered Institute Of Logistics & Transport Aust.) come to Rockhampton and Archer Park for a tour and a ride one the Purrey Steam Tram, while in Central Queensland the group will go to the Mt Morgan Rail Complex for a visit.

The light above the platform high up in the carriage shade has finally been fixed. Council electricians have also been asked to do a costing on replacing all the down lights throughout the museum (roughly 50) with fluorescent tubes.

100 Years of Purrey Steam Trams

The weekend of 5-7 June saw several hundred people at Archer Park celebrating the centenary of steam tram operations in Rockhampton. The Friday evening reception allowed the Friends to thank a number of people who had worked on the tram's restoration, and the general public joined in at Sunday's Carriage Shade Capers

with gold coin admission, market stalls, bush poetry, karaoke music, heritage events and automobiles, Coast Guard, and tram rides.



Doug Press, retired RCC bus depot manager, and RCC Deputy Mayor Rose Swadling cut the birthday cake at the Friday reception.



Archer Park volunteer and life member, Dot Marshall, serving birthday cake at Sunday's Carriage Shade Capers.



Some of the hundreds of visitors riding the Purrey steam tram on Sunday, 7 June 2009.

There are more photos on the last page of this newsletter, and colour versions of over 100 photos from the two days are on the web site.

Volunteer Activities

The volunteers clocked up 812 hours in March and 710 hours in April of work at Archer Park. This doesn't include a similar number of hours for executive and other duties which don't get clocked. Social History activities such as scanning the museum's photo collection, for example, would likely have added at least another 40+ hours.

Sleeping Car JCS 1007 is looking good with Dave and John now into a lot of the woodwork along the side of the coach. Brett Hartwig did a good job with the rotten timber along the top of the coach and worked one Saturday with John Cole to fit new timber for a length of three metres.



Hugh Hartwig (above) helps his father, Brett (below), repair the coach.



Mrs Ashton has donated four motor quads to Archer Park and through our volunteer, Keith Cartwright, got them delivered. Keith also arranged for CQ Cranes to lift the quads off the truck.

Images in *Tram Tracks* are black and white for optimal printing quality on our photocopier. Colour versions of most images can be found on our web site:

<http://QldrailHeritage.com/archerpark>

Personal Notes From the Coordinator

Preparations are well in hand for the Centenary weekend of the Purrey Steam Tram in Rockhampton. Starting with a Wine and Nibbles Night on the Friday night (June 5) and a Special Anniversary Gold Coin Carriage Shade Capers Day (Sunday June 7), we are asking that the public dress up in period costume of the early 19th century. There will be a prize for the best period costume courtesy of Bayview Towers Yeppoon. The Park Avenue Bottle Shop has donated five bottles of wine for the Wine & Nibbles Night.

The Purrey Steam Tram had a breakdown a few Sundays ago and wasn't run on that day. The reason I shut the tram down was that the boiler was giving inconsistent readings: one time the boiler reading was that it was full of water and then it would change to read that no water was in the boiler and we thought the float inside the

boiler had filled with water giving the wrong readings.

When the boiler had cooled down the inspection plate on the boiler was removed and water poured out, indicating that the boiler was full. The float was removed and put under pressure to see if it was leaking. The lever arm and internal fitting which attaches to the float were removed and sandblasted to clean all the rubbish of it. Two viton rubber rings were inserted inside the lever arm fitting and new gland packing was fitted.

The float did have a small leak in it and this was fixed by putting a new copper washer under the plug. A fire was put in the tram and a few test runs were made to see if the boiler was behaving itself and the new modifications were successful, everything worked perfectly.

A notice was placed in the Local Newspaper asking for volunteers to come and join the team at Archer Park but again no luck, it seems a sign of the times with all groups who rely on volunteers finding it very hard to get new members.

I would like to extend my thanks to Lynn Zelmer for putting the Archer Park Newsletter together every 2nd month and for the new poster he designed depicting all the various rail groups around Queensland.

Dennis Sheehan

Social History

In this issue of *Tram Tracks* Bill describes the operation of QR's ambulance rail motors. We also have another of Jack Desmond's letters back to his family in the UK.

Partial transcript of an interview with Bill Head, 15 Oct 2008 (prepared from the recorded interview)

BILL: Another experience I had when I was Assistant ASM in Blackall, out there, there would be no need for it now because they're pulling the railway line up, but they had out there a little, what they called a 'rail ambulance'. It was a little bigger than those little flat-tops we have out there [Archer Park]; about long enough that with a few inches to spare you could lay a person down.

It was a little four-wheeled, flat-topped sort of thing, covered over and everything, and had a T-model Ford engine in it. And it was mounted sort of in the middle and facing outwards, you didn't

get the draft. It was typical of the modern day motor car, like east-west. It had plenty of power; it was a bit of a character set up. And we got a call one Saturday; we'd just finished work about five o'clock. The station master come out and he said, "Would you like a trip out to Eurakka, it's a hundred miles out. I said, "out to Yaraka? There's a big rain out there. "



The Baralaba (later known as Blackall) ambulance rail motor, seen at Emmet in 1950s, F McKennarney collection (likely a newspaper photo) downloaded from <http://www.kenssectioncarshed.org/id110.htm> 18 Feb 2009.

This ambulance, as later modified, has been restored and is now on display at the Blackall Museum.

"Yes", he said, "there's a young chap out there". I remember his name, it was Stan Pytlik. He said, "he's had an accident with his motor bike, it caught on fire and he's badly burned. They've got him in bed over at the hotel. " So he said, "they want the rail ambulance to go out and fetch him in."

So we headed off just on dark. There was myself, the doctor, two ambulance bearers. We headed out for Yaraka, see.

Anyhow we two big four gallon drums of water and a big enamel jug. They didn't have a radiator cap on this T model Ford engine, it had a sort of a funnel fitted into it, see. Because of the lack of air it used to start to boil. So we took it in turns; we had to keep our eye on it. As soon as she started to smoke we'd get some water into this jug and some water into the funnel, and that would cool it down for awhile, see.

And we got as far as Emmet, that's about 60 miles out, and I found out the generator had thrown it in. So to preserve the battery we had to travel in the dark -- no moonlight that night, pitch dark -- out to Yaraka.

We picked this poor young fellow up and he was badly burnt. So all on the way back the doctor was giving him -- what's that stuff called? blood

plasma isn't it? And the doctor was giving him that all the way in, and we landed back in Blackwater about half past seven on Sunday morning.

And this old rail ambulance... the way it was rigged up it had plenty of power, but you'd just have to hit it with a jug of water every so often or she'd start to boil.

While I was out there I held the record for trips on it. I had two trips to Eurakka, and another time I went out to Benlidi to fetch a pregnant woman in. She was close to having to go into hospital, but that trip was a little bit better because they'd modernised things a bit; they'd thrown the old T-model Ford engine out and they had a Ford Prefect motor in it and that was a little better set up.

It was a great thing for wet, for anyone out that way, if they could go into the railway line, we'd go out and fetch them in. So I had three trips on that.

But I don't know where it is now, but it would be something worth preserving because of the work that it really did, you know. They won't have it there now because the line's been closed from Blackwater to Yarakka and I believe that they've started to pull it up. That's another great experience I had.

[Editor's note: the ambulance was later rebuilt with a metal roof. It's been restored in that state and is on display at the Blackall Museum.

As well, electronic copies and transcripts of all the interviews to date have been deposited with the Capricornia Collection at CQUniversity.]

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

This extract from the letters back to his sister in the UK continues the letter of 17 May 1913 begun in the last Tram Tracks.

My Dear Sister and Arthur (continued)

Of course, the life is a little lonely at first but you would soon get used to it. The Money they pay for this work is 35/- or two pound per week, house and Tucker, that is the Australian term...

Besides he would be bestowing a blessing on the Children by coming here. They would not have the terrors of Starvation ever staring them in the face when they grow older, or in work one minute and out the next, as nobody is allowed to starve here (Thank God). You are among

Human Beings here, not Animals, and Masters grinding men down are unknown here as in that Starvation Country (Christian England) as she is called. [Emphasis in original]

Women here do the same work as Lou done get as much as 8/- per day here. We know a Woman here getting that cooking for the staff on the line, Barmaids at £2 per week and (Tucker) food that is something worth working for don't you think so. Boys get £1 per week, what would the boys say in England to that, and they find it hard to get them for that.

I can well assure you By God if Father only knows as much as I do today he would have been here years ago. I don't suppose he would have earned less than £10 per week for about 8 hours a day as nobody is allowed to work longer without special permission.

Of course if you think of coming out here I can get you out here by what is called Nomination. I should have to pay all your fares... and the Government pay the Rest and when you get here the Government Gives you a Substantial Grant of Money and find you work.

If you was willing to come out and I made application to the Government for you to come I expect you would come out about the same time of Year as we did which is the best time to come out here so just think it over. Look at the Conditions at home and in Australia and also think the Children. They will become Men and Women here (God knows what they will be like when they Grow up in England).

Take my case for instance. Honest, willing to work but not Wanted. That's how England treats her Soldiers and any Honest Citizen. Here it is different, all are on equal footing. As I said before one can go to work with a light heart and know he is getting paid for his Labour. I often think of your hard lot with little Money and a lot to be kept with it. Rent to pay and Coals to Buy and gas to pay for. I often ponder over it and pity you who are deserving of a better Fate, both you and Arthur.

[Editor's note: Jack Desmond was working on the construction of the Jerico and Blackall line and had himself been in Australia for only a few months when these letters were written.]



Archer Park is just one of the Queensland rail heritage attractions highlighted on the right hand poster of the colourful pair recently installed at the door to the Refreshment Rooms. QldRailHeritage.com, the host for the Friends of Archer Park's web site (<http://Qldrailheritage.com/archerpark>), has information on all of these attractions and provides access to over 6000 rail-oriented images from Queensland and around the world.



Q150 Steam Train crossing Stanley Street 20 April 2009. QR's BB 18 1/4 #1079 is one of several heritage locomotives that pulled the train during its several month long state tour.



Tram passengers wait patiently while the Purrey steam tram is refuelled outside the Archer Park station on Sunday June 7 2009. Andy Plunkett photographer.



Among the crowd being served the 100th birthday cake by Archer Park Life Member Dot Marshall is Graeme Pratt (centre), who won the Bayview Towers prize for his 'tie and tails' 1909 Mayor's costume.

View the photos in colour by visiting the web site (<http://QldRailHeritage.com/ArcherPark>) and clicking through to the photos page.

A pdf file containing the colour slides from the '100 Years' PowerPoint presentation can also be found on the photos page.