OPENING CONFERENCE SESSION

UNITED SERVICE HOTEL

SATURDAY, 22 APRIL 1978 AT 1 P.M.

INTRODUCTION

Dr. Radcliffe introduced the first session of the Conference and the first speaker, Mr. D.D. Hinman, inviting him to present his paper "Historical Flashback - Trams in the Streets - How Far Can Museums Go in Recreating History", in place of Mr. G.C. Stewart who was unable to attend and was originally to present this paper.

It was explained that Mr.Hinman was, at short notice, presenting his interpretation of this topic and that Mr. Stewart still hoped to present his interpretation of this subject to a COTMA Conference at a future date.

HISTORICAL FLASHBACK - TRAMS IN THE STREETS - HOW FAR CAN OUR MUSEUMS GO IN RE-CREATING HISTORY?

Presented by D.D. Hinman

FOREWORD

Our speaker today was to have been Mr. G.C. Stewart, who is generally acknowledged as New Zealand's foremost tramway historian. His book *"The End of the Penny Section"* is a must for all students of New Zealand urban transport history and is based on 30 years of superb photography, personal experience and painstaking research both during and since the latter days of tramway operation in New Zealand.

Unfortunately, because of the serious illness and subsequent passing of Mrs. Stewart, Graham is not with us today and I would like to read to you a letter received a couple of weeks ago.

"I would first like to thank you for asking me to deliver the opening paper at the first ever conference of COTMA to be held in New Zealand.

I can truly say that I felt very honoured to have been asked to deliver this paper and my dear wife had insisted that I travel south to Christchurch on Anzac weekend to be present at this conference as she realises how dear to my heart the subject has been for so many years.

I regret to have to inform you and your members that Dawn's life is fading very fast and it may be a matter of weeks or now may be only days. This has been a rather shattering turn of events for myself and my two dear daughters and you will understand that owing to this family sadness I will no longer be available to deliver this address.

Nevertheless, I would be deeply grateful if you would extend my warmest best wishes to all conference delegates and I trust that this conference is a great success and paves the way for future co-operation and understanding between the Museums specialising in urban transport-ation in this part of the world.

Perhaps at some future date it will be possible for me to be given the opportunity to address COTMA members on the subject I had planned to speak about as it is one very dear to my heart and having carried out a lot of initial research on the subject I would like in time to have this paper recorded.

I was fortunate late last year to visit a large majority of the museums in Australia with my wife and was overwhelmed with the hospitality and warmth we received from all the museum Societies.

In closing would you please pass on my regards to all the delegates for a successful conference in New Zealand.

Sincerely,

GRAHAM."

In Graham's absence, it has fallen to me to attempt my own interpretation of this topic, but this will not, I hope, pre-empt Graham's offer for a future occasion. Having picked up this topic at a relatively late stage I must freely admit to having drawn heavily on *"The End of the Penny Section"* for inspiration rather than a great deal of my own research.

While I have a reasonable understanding of Christchurch tramway history, my knowledge of other New Zealand tramways is sketchy indeed and because of this you may well detect a slight local bias, for which I make no apology! I hope our Australian guests will bear with me if on this occasion the emphasis is on New Zealand alone rather than Australasia.

INTRODUCTION

This paper will aim to do the following things: 1. Briefly summarise some of the milestones in New Zealand tramway history and in so doing endeavour to bring back to life a little of the period of which we are speaking. 2. Discuss the extent to which museum projects can or should attempt to recreate past history and to consider some of the problems likely to be encountered in such endeavours.

HISTORICAL FLASHBACK

When we think of the tramway era in New Zealand we tend to consider that it began with horse and steam services in a few towns in the 1880s (and cable cars in Dunedin) expanding into an electric tram heyday in the early years of the 20th century. Almost forgotten are the earliest passenger tramways of New Zealand - the Dun Mountain Railway of Nelson and the vintage "inter-urbans" of the West Coast and Thames goldfields, all of which pre-dated their more well known city counterparts and a few of which were still running when the first of the "jazzy electrics" were treating their citizens to speedy mass transit. Time permits me to refer in detail only to the Dun Mountain line which, with its opening in May 1862, had the honour of being New Zealand's first street tramway. The line was but one mile in length, being the city section of a 13½ mile tramway built by a mining company to transport horse drawn wagons carrying chrome ore from mines in the Dun Mountain region to ships at the Port of Nelson. In return for allowing horse-trains from the mines to rumble through the town streets, the Town Council had insisted that the mining company provide a passenger service to the port. Sydney-built, to the same design as cars which had commenced running in Pitt Street the previous year, this primitive one-horse tram continued to run for 39 years, its length of service outlasting lines on many of the much better known municipal tramway systems of other centres. The remainder of the lines lasted only until 1872 but it took a Council road widening programme of 1901 to bring about the demise of the passenger tram - the first and certainly not the last time that roading improvements have been used as the excuse to get rid of trams!

It is perhaps ironical that of all the original planned colonial settlements in New Zealand, Nelson, having pioneered a tramway service, was the only town not to develop a comprehensive electric tramway system. The first City to adopt the street tramway, had become the first to dispense with it.

It occurs to me that those of our museums which are including horse trams in their projects could find that the tiny Nelson tramway with its short single route was rather more akin to museum style operation than the more sophisticated city systems we are probably trying to represent and emulate. It is therefore a pity that our knowledge and records of this fledging tramway are rather scant. Before moving forward to the mainstream of tramway development, I would like to quote a passage from *"The End of the Penny Section"* which I think vividly brings back to life some of the atmosphere of the period:

"In design the early horse trams were influenced by contemporary vehicles of the period, their appearance revealing a mixture of railway, tramway and stage coach origins. The word 'Bus' which was painted boldly on the side panels of the Nelson vehicle may explain why it was always known as the 'City Bus', or the 'Port Bus'. Very seldom was the true description, horse-tram, used by the patrons.

These were the years when one horse-power was represented by one horse and everything moved at a slow tempo, the horses plodding along at a walking pace. On arrival at its destination, the whole outfit would come to a jolting, swaying halt, with brake shoes screeching in protest as the passengers descended. With a seating capacity for 40 passengers, including a back-to-back seat along the pitch of the roof, there was no fear of the poor horse breaking the four-miles-an-hour speed limit. There was no spiral staircase for the roof-top riders, but steel footholds were provided for the more athletic patrons. As there was only a footboard open to the passing scene, for weary feet, the upstairs passage was strictly for men. Modesty boards to hide ladies' ankles did not come into vogue on double-deckers until the 1870s."[1]

Moving forward to the late 70s and early 80s we find the urban transport revolution has arrived and the major towns discovering the tramway as the means to move people en masse around the city relatively cheaply. Iron wheels on iron rails made for smoother and speedier travel than cartwheels on rutted roads. In a period spanning less than six years tramway services had commenced in Wellington (steam and horse), Dunedin (steam, horse and cable), Christchurch (steam and horse), Invercargill (horse), and Auckland (horse) and this development was going to have profound effect on the future growth of the towns. Until the advent of mass transit the spread of cities was generally limited by the distance that people were prepared to walk - between home and work, home and shops etc. and while there were small outlying settlements the bulk of the population lived within a mile or two of the centre of the town. The early tramways and their electric successors changed all this and the towns began to grow out along the tram routes in a "ribbon" form. Areas between the routes often remained undeveloped however, and had to await the coming of the motor car a little later into the 20th century. Some of the early tramway companies were themselves involved in the land development business, extending their tram lines to enable urbanisation of their land holdings and thus creating traffic for their tramways.

One of the features of early tramway operations, which in some instances followed through into the electric era was the deliberate effort to create attractions at the end of tram routes and then to run special excursions at weekends or evenings and thus create patronage. In Christchurch for example, there was intense competition for the traffic to the beaches (three different companies in the 90s were running to the local beaches of New Brighton and Sumner) and rival companies would advertise special excursions on their line with the promises of band concerts etc. on arrival as well as the usual beach attractions. Wattle Park in Melbourne would be a much later example of this technique. I would suggest that some of

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[1] G.C. Stewart *"The End of the Penny Section"*, pp 7-8

our museum operations, particularly where we are endeavouring to provide a "passenger service" rather than just a "there and back" joy ride would be rather more like the special excursion trip than the day to day commuting which was the bread and butter of the working tramway system. To give more historical accuracy and period atmosphere to our operations this could perhaps be emphasised - e.g. We could do this at Ferrymead when there are special functions at the Truscotts Road site - we even have the element of competition: the Ferrymead Railway running to the same place!

The tramway vehicles of those early days varied from town to town but in almost every case the pattern of development was the same. The original vehicles would be imported usually from either the United States of America (often John Stephenson - eg. Christchurch and Wellington) or England (e.g. Starbuck - Auckland) with later cars being closely copied replicas made by local coachbuilders. Later still local designs appeared, often very different from town to town. To use Christchurch as an example, the first 9 cars of the Canterbury Tramway Company were imported from John Stephenson, New York, in 1879-80 and as far as is known all subsequent double deckers of both this and the other Christchurch tramway companies were copies built by the local firms of Moor and Company, Boon and Stevens and Booth McDonald. While the tramway purist can usually identify a locally built car from a Stephenson, the copying was remarkably exact, even to the inclusion of "S" (for Stephenson) matchstrikers (for wax matches) and "JS" door handles. The double decker restored by the THS as New Brighton Tramway Company No. 10 and at present on display in the Hall of Wheels is a local car thought to have been built by Boon and Stevens, but it has these Stephenson "trade marks".

From the point of view of our museums, where the opportunity exists to preserve these early vehicles, and there is a choice, should we go for an imported original or a local copy? - the tramway purist would probably opt for the original every time but from the local history point of view perhaps local craftsmanship should be preserved for posterity. If the bulk of the fleet was locally built it would be more representative to preserve a local car.

In Christchurch we haven't needed to make this rather difficult decision as we have been able to preserve both local and imported cars, and the main argument has been about how many of the local coachbuilders we should try to represent - there are still sufficient early bodies around for a whole fleet of double deckers to be reconstructed, and some of our members would like to see this done! I could perhaps sidetrack a little here to explain that in Christchurch the majority of the early tramway vehicles survived well into the electric era, with the old double deckers still being pressed into service on special occasions such as race days right through to the final years. Unfortunately, when they were disposed of the running gear was always scrapped and only the bodies survived - but that is another story. I am not aware of any other tramway system which kept so many of its pre-electric vehicles through the electric era and this was probably because in Christchurch, unlike all other New Zealand centres except Auckland, there was no change in gauge at the time of electrification and thus the vehicles could continue to run without undue difficulty on the new system. Also Christchurch, with a flat terrain, was admirably suited to trailer operation.

The old cars (and there were more than 60 of them) readily converted to electric trailers - at a price rather less than that of building new vehicles. In fact, eventually, new trailers were built and some of the old cars scrapped, but a good many were retained for those special peak uses such as racing and trotting meetings that occurred only a few times each year when the "modern" fleet could not cope. Even in the early 1950s these were patronised by large numbers of people who either did not own or chose not to use their motor cars, and opted for public transport.

We were also particularly fortunate in that the steam trams survived so late in this city. The Tramway Board found them useful firstly until electrification was complete (e.g. the line to North Beach was operated by the Board as a steam tram service until 1914). They saw occasional peak service use until 1925; they were used as shunters for trailers in the Square and then, finally, a few were retained for ballasting and other service duties. Three of them (Nos. 6-8) were still usable in 1939 and they were reconditioned so as to be able to provide a skeleton service should there have been a power failure due to enemy action! Fortunately that never eventuated.

Before we leave those pioneer tramway days, I would like to refer to another aspect of early tramway operation that today we tend to overlook - and that was the tremendous backup service needed to keep the system going. This is still, of course, necessary today with a modern tramway system like the M&MTB, but those of us who aspire to be horse tram operators, for example, tend to think that all we will need is a tram or two and a horse or two and we will be able to run a horse tramway. It wasn't like that at all, as the following quotations from *"The End of the Penny Section"* will show:

> *"'Animal Power'*
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> *The trams were served by robust animals which were changed three times a day. But the human material was held more durable, and the same driver had to stay on duty throughout the three horse shifts. In Auckland horses were required to walk eighteen miles a day, getting a quarter-hour spell between each trip. Hauling was a heavy task, particularly when the three-ton trams were overcrowded. An average of 200 horses were stabled at each depot ....*
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> *Special departments at the depots prepared the food for the hungry horses. Most companies grew progressive crops to keep up a steady supply of maize, oats, and chaff from out-of-town farms. The daily ration for one horse consisted of 10 lb oats, 3 lb maize, 1 lb beans (weighed after crushing), 14 lb chaff, and 4 lb hay, 2 lb bran, or an equivalent of green food, carrots were also included.*
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> *Harness was always a costly item, having originally been imported from America, but local harness-makers later fulfilled orders. Each groom had a team of horses, ranging from fifteen to twenty, under his care to feed and keep tidy with glossy coats and manes brushed. Grooms oiled the many sets of harness, made reins pliable, and kept collars and traces to a high standard. In the smiths' department stacks of iron shoes for the steeds and iron tyres for the buses reflected the glow from the forge fires. The health and general wellbeing of the animals were always foremost. A small horse hospital was part of a depot, and veterinary attention was considered as important as maintenance expenditure on the trams. Big money was invested in the horses, each car requiring between seven and eight animals to work the shifts."*[1]

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[1] ibid P.35

A point to be made here is that the tramways played a rather greater role in the community than just carrying passengers, important as that was. Along with other transport modes of the times their effect on local employment and the economy was considerable and perhaps in our present day preservation efforts, this should be acknowledged.

I have really only skimmed the surface of this fascinating topic of pre-electric tramways in New Zealand, but with time moving on must now turn to some of the highlights of the electric tramway era. As the majority of our exhibits are of early to mid 20th century vintage, this is no doubt where our greatest interest lies and in the time remaining I would like to discuss particular aspects of electric tramway days and relate these to our museum projects.

> *"At the startling speed of 20 mph, the first electric-powered line in New Zealand between Roslyn and Maori Hill at Dunedin, created something of a sensation when opened in October 1900. The first electric trams represented the height of enterprise and luxury, as such a swift form of travel had been unknown to city dwellers. They were described at the time as noiseless and graceful, with the comfort of a drawing room. People flocked to ride in these speedy wonders which glided with such ease along the hilltop ..."*[1]

The three 20 seater cars built by J.G. Brill Company, Philadelphia, were the smallest electric trams to be used in New Zealand and were a scaled down version (including their gauge -3 ft. 6in.) of the more numerous box cars, also Brill built, of the main Dunedin system. The bodies of two of the three cars are now preserved: No. 1, found in excellent condition a few years ago entombed inside a house, where it had been since the line closed in 1936, is held by the Dunedin Museum of Transport, and No. 3, which in latter years as No. 81 had been a works car on the main Dunedin system, can be seen in the tram barn at Ferrymead.

The first 5 years of the 20th century saw electric tram services established in the four main centres (Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin). Between 1908 and the first World War, electric traction reached the provincial cities of Wanganui, Invercargill, Napier and Gisborne. The final tramway system to be opened was that of New Plymouth (1916). At the time that Borough claimed it was the smallest municipality in the world to run an overhead trolley system. Gisborne was unique among New Zealand tramway systems in that it opted for the Edison-Beach storage battery system, using 4 cars, two imported from the United States of America, and two built by the Christchurch tramcar builders, Boon and Company. This company which, as Boon and Stevens, had been building horse trams since the 1880s, built the majority of the Christchurch Tramway Board fleet (all except 22 Stephenson cars imported for the opening of the system and the last 2 Brills which were built in CTB workshops), and also built cars for all of the provincial cities. The firm, less grand today, still survives, and as seen during the tramway historical tour earlier in the Conference programme, can be found in Ferry Road, building truck bodies in the same building in which many of the trams were constructed.

The heyday of the electric tram in New Zealand was in the 1920s with fleet additions, including trailers, totalling more than 200 for the decade and, in some cities, further route extensions being opened. The peak year for track mileage was 1929, when 170 route miles were open to traffic, and the

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[1] ibid P56-57

total patronage of 160,559,313 passengers for the year 1928-29 was only exceeded during World War II.

However, by the 1920s the effects of the motor car were already beginning to be felt and this, as well as the private bus competition which was rife until legislated against in 1926, created a need for transport operators to cut costs wherever possible. One-man trams were introduced in the smaller centres with the new American Birney cars in New Plymouth and Invercargill and existing cars were converted to one-man operation incorporating many of the features of safety car design both in these and in other towns. Of the main centres only Christchurch joined the "one-man" band, with the conversion of three trailers to a local version of the Birney safety car in 1927, and the operation of these on the St. Martins Line. With the need to economise still further in the depression of the 1930s, Christchurch converted its near-new double-bogie "Brill" cars to one-man operation. Our No. 178 is an example. In Wellington, the new prototype "Fiducia" car which appeared in 1933 was designed for one-man operation, but this was never proceeded with, presumably because of the narrow congested streets of that city and the delays that "pay as you enter" operation would have caused.

The onset of the depression also saw the beginnings of tramway closures. In Christchurch the first to go was the Northcote extension of the Papanui line (1930) more particularly because a road rebuilding programme about to be implemented by the local Councils would have cost the Tramway Board too much. (Shades of the Nelson horse "Bus".) Then in 1931 the line to North Beach, the last to be electrified and, because of the vast tracts of open country between the City and the Beach, never profitable, was replaced by Trolley Buses. The Richmond line underwent a similar conversion three years later. This was the first true trolley bus "system" in the country, although there had been a "trackless tram" running between the Wellington suburbs of Thorndon and Kaiwarra between 1924 and 1932. *"The venerable ancestor of all the trolley buses to follow, this archaic vehicle was described as 'a lumberer with built-in discomfort' and was said by some unkind types to be a hybrid to a piecart."*[1] With a top speed of 17 mph the bus, which would have been a tramway but for legislation preventing competition with the adjacent Government railway line, was not a great success and succumbed to motor bus competition in 1932. Meanwhile, the depression and other disasters were taking their toll in the provinces. The Gisborne battery trams had never been a roaring success and, despite track extensions as late as 1925 (never completed and opened), the trams ran for the last time in July 1929. Then on 3 February 1931, the Napier earthquake killed 256 citizens and the town's tramway system and, although the tram cars never ran again after that fateful day, the fleet remained intact in the depot for several years until formal closure proceedings were concluded.

By 1939 decisions were being made to scrap the trams in a number of centres but then came World War II. The trams of New Zealand were both the heroes and casualties of the War. With petrol rationing and tyre shortages restricting the mobility of private motor cars, the electric trams had to carry passengers as never before, as more and more motorists put their cars up on blocks and returned to public transport.

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[1] ibid P142

"Overcrowding, which in pre-war days was only expected at rush hours, now prevailed for a large part of each day, while at peak periods the trams and buses were unable, even when packed to their doorsteps to accept the numbers of passengers waiting... The 1943-44 figures for passengers reached the all-time high of 220,216,000."[1]

In both Christchurch and Dunedin, lines which had been closed in favour of petrol buses had to be re-opened as the petrol shortage worsened. The war also saw the introduction of conductresses on the trams of the four main centres as manpower became critical. As in other fields women in the war were able to undertake work always denied to them previously, and the first hesitant steps towards Women's Lib were thereby made! I would note, however, that women were never given the privilege of driving trams - that had to wait till the 1970s in Melbourne and in our museums. There are some persons who would maintain that because women never drove in service neither should they be permitted to drive our museum vehicles. I don't hold this point of view, although I suppose with my own wife being a licensed driver at Ferrymead, I guess I have a vested interest! I believe that there are times when we must make some compromise with history and, providing we acknowledge where we are deviating from the real thing, no harm is done.

After World War II, the heavy use of ageing equipment with minimal maintenance necessitated urgent decisions as to the future of public transport in New Zealand's cities, and following then current overseas trends, each city, often after a considerable amount of local soul-searching, opted to switch from rails to rubber. By early 1957 it was all over with the exception of Wellington, where new cars had been constructed as late as 1952, and the final battle to save the trams in that city was not lost until 2 May 1964 when 102 years almost to the day since that first tram had commenced running in Nelson, the last street tramway in New Zealand closed.

And now, following a still-controversial condemnation by the Ministry of Works, time has caught up with the last remaining line, the Kelburn Cable tramway, which has operated safely and continuously since 1902.

To conclude this rather rushed and not very adequate summary of the main aspects of New Zealand tramway history, I would like to quote once more from *"The End of the Penny Section"*:

> *"Seldom do public utilities and essential services endear themselves to their users and assume a personality of their own. The electric tram-car, however, was different. It had an individuality that reflected the city it served. To a visitor from Auckland, a Christchurch tram looked strange and exciting. A Wellingtonian found the Auckland cars bulbous, even huge, after the narrow-gutted cars he was accustomed to see inching their way through traffic in the confines of Cuba Street. Trams were unsurpassed in their ability to move great masses of people speedily at cheap rates, and to stand the day-in, day-out strain of dragging round corners and vibrating along streets. Often grossly overladen, they had to be built to stand abuse with the minimum of maintenance.*
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> *They were built to last - and last they did. Many were to survive for fifty years, a credit to their designers, but detrimental to the*

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[1] ibid P169.

image of tramways in an age of technological advancement. People would have refused to ride in a 1915 motor bus even fifteen years later, but because the tramcar was like an old soldier, and old soldiers never die, municipalities and companies kept the faithful old vehicles, seemingly gifted with perpetual life, plodding on. Standardisation of design often resulted in new rolling stock being built to the same layout as the original cars and powered with equipment that dated back to the Ark."[1]

MUSEUMS, TRAMS AND HISTORY

Throughout this paper I have, from time to time, tried to relate tramway history to our museum operations and in this final section I would like to explore this aspect a little further, with particular reference to authenticity of presentation of our museum vehicles, lines and surroundings. Where necessary, I will use our experiences at Ferrymead to illustrate the points made.

How our museums develop will, of course, depend on the particular philosophy of each group and it seems to me that we can either be a "tramcar museum" or a "museum tramway" or perhaps somewhere in between. I would suggest a simple definition of a tramcar museum might be "a collection of tramway vehicles and ancillary equipment for the purpose of their preservation and public display, perhaps including operation for the education and enjoyment of the public and the museum members". On the other hand, a museum tramway I would see as being rather more than this: specifically, it is an operating tramway using vintage vehicles and is, or should be, endeavouring to illustrate a period of our history when the tramcar was a prime mode of public transport, rather than just displaying and concentrating on the cars themselves. Some of us are beginning to move towards this "museum tramway" philosophy and I believe that it is in our interest, and in the public interest, to do so.

There are problems, however, in working towards this goal, including the real and practical problems of creating the "vintage" atmosphere required. By using local examples, I would like to share some thoughts on one aspect only: the restoration and presentation of our trams in a museum tramway situation. The first point I would make is that the "tramway era", which in our various ways we are trying to re-create, was not just a single epoch. In most cases electric trams were with us from 40 to 60 years and their horse and steam tram predecessors for 20 years or more before that. A great many changes occurred during that time, not only to the vehicles themselves, but to the surroundings in which they operated. Most of us have obtained tramway vehicles spanning a wide period of the "tramway era" and even those museums, such as Wellington and Ballarat, which obtained operable cars with the intention of running them as they were in their final days, have since expanded their horizons to include earlier periods.

As long as we simply have a line, one or two lineside accessories and the trams, it probably doesn't matter a great deal whether we concentrate on a particular period or present our cars at various stages of their active "life". But as our ambitions grow and we look towards creating a townscape or bringing in other transport and historical aspects, the

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[1] ibid P.111

need to concentrate on a particular period becomes apparent. If our fleets were large enough we probably should present some cars at different periods to illustrate tramcar development (i.e. the "tramcar museum" goal) but with the majority of the fleet conforming to the period selected for the overall project. Because many tramcars lasted so long, some quite significant body alterations as well as livery changes often occurred, but we should be careful to assess just how significant these changes were before endeavouring to represent every one of them. Part of this significance would be the length of time a particular feature or style was used - we should not allow ourselves to fall into the trap of assuming that every little alteration must be faithfully resurrected somewhere unless it was in vogue for a reasonable period or was introduced because of some important safety requirement or has some other historical significance.

Likewise we should not allow ourselves to be unduly influenced by our own memories of the trams. While in the initial stages of museum development one of the prime motives of many of us in getting involved was to preserve and operate the trams as we remembered them, as time passes this aspect must become less important. The time will come when our active museum restorers and operators will have never seen their town's trams in street service and this is already occurring in many of our museums. In the THS, for example, I would estimate that more than half of our current active membership is too young to recall the Christchurch tramway system. Likewise, while we may argue that the general public would prefer to see the trams running as it remembered them, a large and always growing proportion of the public doesn't remember trams at all.

One of the dangers of giving too much emphasis to the trams as we remember them is that our memory in most cases is of their latter years when, in many cities, the cars were old and run down, and often in an austerity livery. Do we really wish to preserve that sort of image of tramways?

The anti-tram lobbyists were very good at it, but I would suggest that this is one aspect which we don't need to preserve too emphatically! My own memory of the trams is that of a young primary schoolboy riding to Cranford Street on the Brills in their final years and along with the rest of our restoration team which worked on restoring 178 between 1968 and 1970, I was very pleased that we were doing the car as I remembered it. Fortunately, the Brills were probably less run down than the rest of the fleet, being much newer cars, but when one realises that that particular livery was in vogue for only 7 years (1946-1953), (i.e. the same number of years that 178 has been running on the Ferrymead tramway!) then the argument for "going back to the original" or to the livery and body style which pertained for the bulk of the working life of the vehicle, becomes very strong.

The decision to do 178 as a single-ended One-Man-Tram instead of the original double-ended multiple unit two-man form was, I am sure, the right one, because two-thirds of the working life of the tram was in this form and because it represents a particular development unique in this country.

Christchurch in later years became known for carrying prams on the front of trams ("pram hooks" were added during World War II to reduce congestion caused by prams inside the cars) and the Brill is probably the only car that will illustrate this!

This leads me to the next point, which is to raise the question of how far do we go to represent the range of car types and minor variations within car types in our museums. This is undoubtedly influenced by whether we tend towards the "tramcar museum" or "museum tramway" philosophy. If, for a moment, I can compare Ferrymead with the Wellington Tramway Museum, then the latter with its "fleet" of two basic car types generally representing latter day operation, is in some respects more of a "living museum" than ours with every car different and a restored fleet covering the period 1880-1950. However, unlike other cities, Christchurch never did standardise on one or two car types and I'm sure the range of vehicles selected for preservation can be fully justified!

On the question of whether to try to preserve a particular tram (because that vehicle was first of a class or opened a particular line or whatever) or just a class representative I would say that unless a particular vehicle has a real historic significance then the car in best condition is the one to go for. Sometimes, however, one doesn't realise the significance of a particular car until it is too late. In our own case, I would mention "Boon" tram No. 36 which, until a few years ago, was restorable, although not quite as good as our No. 152, the car we were able to obtain. Only comparatively recently did we realise that No. 36 was the first of the "double saloon" and "drop centre" type of tram which later became standard in many Australasian cities and that its appearance as early as 1906 pre-dated by many years the adoption of the design in such places as Dunedin, Wellington, Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane and Sydney. No. 152, the car we are about to commence restoration on, is a "third" series Boon (built 1910). If we had been making our selection now I am sure we would have given greater consideration to obtaining either No. 36 or at least one of the other 11 cars of the first series.

I might add that it is proposed to restore No. 152 to original style, one of the reasons being that this fits in with pre World War 1 era chosen for the Ferrymead Township. The body of the tram, as you will see it at Ferrymead at present, well illustrates the final run-down austerity style of latter day Christchurch tramways, and this impression, of course, has not been helped by a subsequent 18 years out in the weather. The infilling of the open centre portion which took place in the 1920s (as it did on other car classes both in Christchurch and other New Zealand towns) is of course, to be removed, but the other main body alteration which occurred just prior to the First World War may be less easy to reinstate. I am referring here to what we know as the "centre aisle regulation", and a requirement under the Tramways Amendment Act 1913 to provide a corridor throughout the length of the car so that Conductors would not have to proceed via outside steps. This effectively outlawed the cross bench or "toast rack" style of seating arrangement which had been common until that time and as the Tramways Act 1908 and the Tramway Carriage Regulations 1947 are still in force we (and any other New Zealand museum) would need to obtain Government exemption should we wish to operate a car with cross bench seating.

In view of the attitude of the Ministry of Works in recent years concerning the Kelburn cable car, I suspect that the time is not opportune to seek such an exemption.

I would conclude these remarks by observing that while the day of the street tramway as we have known it is well past in New Zealand, and most parts of Australia, our museums, along with such excellent publications as Graham Stewart's *"The End of the Penny Section"* are playing a vital role in ensuring that this fascinating era is not forgotten. The modern Melbourne tramway system will, particularly as its fleet replacement programme progresses, inevitably become less and less like the tramways of the past, and the good work that our museums have begun must never be allowed to stop. Nostalgia for the past has been the "in thing" for some years now, and we need to make the most of this and encourage the public interest in what we are doing to continue and grow. Trams, after all, were built to carry people and, as Bill Kingsley said at last year's conference, our task is *"to preserve the tramways of the people in museums for the people by volunteers from the people"*.

REFERENCES

Stewart, G.C. *"The End of the Penny Section"* (A.H. & A.W. Reed Ltd., Wellington, 1973).

Tramway Historical Society. *"All Fares Please"* (1967).

Kingsley, W.J. *"About People"* (Paper presented to 3rd Conference of Australasian Tramway Museums, Adelaide, 1977).

DISCUSSION ON MR. HINMAN'S PAPER:

Dr. Radcliffe stated that evidence, at least in Adelaide, was that John Stephenson and Company Limited did business through agents. In Adelaide this was Duncan and Fraser Limited, which marketed Stephenson products and later made them under licence and imported hardware for these vehicles from the principals, John Stephenson and Company Limited. This did not appear to be so in Christchurch.

Mr. A.G. Lightfoot, Chairman of the Canterbury Branch, New Zealand Railway and Locomotive Society Inc., pointed out that early Christchurch trams have survived, not only because of the lack of change of track gauge but also because of the relatively dry climate in Christchurch.

Mr. Hinman was thanked with applause.