



The Squeaky Wheel



The MOTAT Society Newsletter
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50 YEARS ON THE TRAMS

50 years on and their enthusiasm has not diminished - some of the original members hold the same model as was used in the opening ceremony - from left, Alan Curtis, Martin Layzell, Ollie Scott, John Wolf, Kerry Bennett, Barry Phillips, Ian Mison and Mark Kilpatrick. See pages 4 and 5 for a coverage of the 50th birthday celebrations.

David Cawood photo



The original opening ceremony group photo - Front row, from left, Jean Hansard, Sophie Swann, Dave Russell, Roger Stanton, Ellen Butland, Ian Stewart, Mark Kilpatrick and Alan Swann. Back row, Eddie Hansard, Ian Mison, Alan Curtis, John Wolf, Ollie Scott, Martin Layzell, Kevin Swann, Gary Tinkler, Gary Saunders, Carl Busing and Peter Greener.

Graham Stewart collection photo



The MOTAT rail precinct is all colour and reflections as it lights up for Christmas during the MOTAT Nights, Christmas Lights celebration

Evan James photo

VOLUNTEERS RECOGNISED AT COMMUNITY AWARDS

Three MOTAT volunteers were recognised at a Waitemātā Good Citizens Awards evening recently.

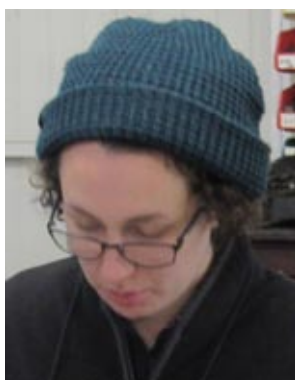
They were Makyla Curtis, Paul Gourley and Joan Goodwin who were among 40 people from the Waitemātā local area who were awarded for their contributions to the community.

Makyla Curtis is a member of the Printing Section; Paul Gourley is a long time member of the Tram Section; and Joan Goodwin has been maintaining the gardens, and is a trainee conductor in the Tram Section. Makyla has been concentrating her energies recently in promoting te reo Māori, both through her work at the Print Shop and her Research and Teaching Assistant position at the University of Auckland.

This has resulted in the Print Section acquiring special Māori type faces, and printing booklets in the language.

Paul has been active as a tram motorman/trainer, and is also active in restoration.

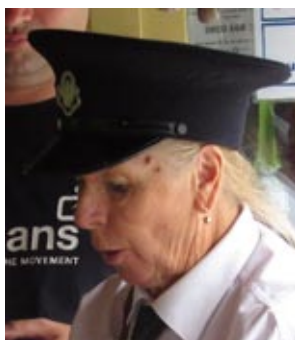
However, his main contribution has been on the electrical side, where he has maintained certification he gained while working on Auckland trolleybus electrical systems and also on the recovery of broken down trolleybuses and motorbuses.



Makyla Curtis



Paul Gourley



Joan Goodwin

He learned about tramway overhead at MOTAT from Ian Stewart and from trolleybus overhead linesmen of the ARA.

Joan was rated as MOTAT's most active volunteer last year for her work maintaining the gardens, and is now a trainee conductor on the trams.

MOTAT's Stacy Busek, writing in the latest issue of the Tram Section's Controller magazine, said that after 54 years volunteering remains at the heart of so much of what happens at MOTAT, and the three recipients were wonderful examples of the passionate, hardworking and dedicated people MOTAT has in its team.

NEW SOCIETY COMMITTEE MEMBER

One of two vacant positions on the MOTAT Society's committee, has been filled with the appointment of the Military Section's John Tutchin to the committee.

Society chairman John Syme said the appointment was made at a recent committee meeting.

The vacancies were left after the resignations of previous committee members Andre Pointon and Nick Taylor.

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LIGHTING UP FOR CHRISTMAS CHARITY

MOTAT continued a decade-long tradition by becoming one of Auckland's leading Christmas light displays, raising money for charity.

The festival, which has become an Auckland tradition over the past decade, raised money for the Auckland City Mission and Auckland Womens Refuge.

With queues waiting to get in stretching back along Great North Road to the park, people were attracted by the especially illuminated buildings, and other activities including the blacksmith at his forge, the boiler house in operation, open air movies outside Cropper House, which included "How the Grinch Stole Christmas", "Elf", and "The Polar Express", and Santa Claus in his grotto.

A tram shuttle between MOTAT and the zoo was operated by three trams, 44, 321 and 906 which had been especially decorated for the occasion.



In a scene reminiscent of the heyday of trams, queues of patrons waiting to get into MOTAT surround tram 44 as it, prepares to take another load of passengers on the run to the zoo and back.



Regent Street shops lit up for the festive season.



Boiler operator Pete Cairncross explains the workings of the pump house machinery to John Wallis and his dad Jonathon, accompanied by grandfather David Wallis



Josephine and Mona Tolungamaka help tram conductor Tony Messenger change the pole of tram 321, at the zoo for its run back to MOTAT.



Charles Richards, complete with Christmas hat, at the controls of tram 44

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF VOLUNTEERING

A celebration of 50 years of volunteer activity at MOTAT was held by members of the tram section on December 16 and 17 last year. This marked the 50th anniversary since the tramway was officially opened with a re-enactment of the original opening ceremony, which included several of the original volunteers, several of whom are still active.

At the original ceremony a ribbon was cut by the the Minister of Transport, the Hon J. B. Gordon outside the fire station, in front of tram 253.

The anniversary ribbon was cut by Ian Mison in the same location, in front of tram 248, 253's sister tram, with 253 awaiting restoration.

This was followed by a parade of the museum heritage trams and a morning tea On Sunday evening a formal dinner was held where Graham Stewart, tram historian and a MOTAT founder was guest speaker.

Opening the weekend, MOTAT's General Manager, Museum Experience, Steven Fox, said the tramway the volunteers created was now an essential part of the museum, carrying more than 200,000 passengers a year, and growing.

John Wolf, speaking at the morning tea, said that between 1964 and 1967, a team of volunteers, lead by the late Ian Stewart, had built a dual gauged system from scratch.

He said the success of the system was entirely due to the leadership of "Chairman Stewie" and the lasting friendships that had developed among the volunteers.

Guest speaker Graham Stewart brother of Ian Stewart, said that with the 50th Jubilee of the Western Springs Electric Tramway it was time to pay tribute to the pioneer members of the Western Springs Tramway - and to all the volunteers who have followed over the decades.

"50 years ago, I was writing the MOTAT notes for Tramway Topics - which cost then, 25 cents a copy.

"In the December 1967 issue I wrote about the first trial run of 253 within the museum grounds - and I quote:

"Full credit must go to the team that has laboured for the past two years - toiling with track laying - digging - drain laying - lifting sleepers - bending rails - painting - just to mention a few of the heavy tasks - these are the men who, under the direction



ABOVE: Ian Mison (centre) cuts the ceremonial ribbon, held by Alan Curtis (left) and Colin Zeff, in front the MOTAT fire station. This was the site of the original opening ceremony.



LEFT: Guest speaker Graham Stewart.

Albert Chan photo

of Ian Stewart, have been responsible for the return of working electric tramcars to Auckland.

All present were given the opportunity to drive 253 over the line.

Roger Stanton took the handles with the confidence of a man driving with two

trailers on behind, and drove in the typical Christchurch manner, in full control.

Ian Mison enjoyed his first experience on the broad gauge, after his service with the Wellington tramways. John Wolfe fanned the air brake lever like a veteran, not to mention the up and coming driving talents displayed by Alan Curtis, David Russell, Martin Layzel, Brian White, Kelvin Swann and Kerry Bennett." (So, ended my report at the time)

"It is only right and proper - not because he was my brother - that Ian Stewart be given first mention tonight...

"As John Wolf said yesterday... Ian played a pivotal role from day one in the creation of this electric tramway - he gave of his life -

"Ask his wife Margaret who became the first living tramway widow of this tramway! Not only did Margaret give him every encouragement and support over the years - so did his sons Leslie, Garth and Malcolm.

"I think back to Merv Sterling (my late wife's cousin) , who made it all possible at Matakoho - 60 years ago... before the birth of MOTAT.

"They say when you start to mention names it can be dangerous as there are always people accidentally left out, so I apologise if I

"To Wally Hudson, Jeep Halling, Dave Hinman (here tonight, all the way from Christchurch with his wife Dot - they were married at MOTAT), Don Larsen, Dave Leitch, Barry Phillips, Ollie Scott, Alan and Sophie Swann, David Russell, Professor Al Stockley and son Paul, Jeff Thoms, Peter Greener, Ellen Butland, and many more - all pioneers who joined the ranks and gave valuable service - when it was all blood, sweat and tears! - in those early days.

"It was a fight against the elements as many of these historic tramway relics only had a canvas cover.



Kerry Turner with Margaret Stewart, wife of the late Ian Stewart, a MOTAT founder and driving force behind the Western Springs Tramway.

"The muddy, boggy paddock where the trams first rested... to steel rails on tar-seal, it was a dream that became a reality.

"These pioneer members gave of their time with much manual physical work, much of it was truly 'hard labour'. And never forget the wives, partners, and secret mistresses (mistresses had to be secret in those days!) who all played a vital role within the tramway to keep the wheels moving.

"Present tonight are the generations of volunteers including Bruce Pullar, Evan James, Paul Gourley, and many others who have followed over the years - giving of their time, their specialist knowledge, their trade skills - which has been invaluable in making the tramway what it is today - a museum electric tramway which is now acknowledged worldwide.

"Talking of specialist knowledge - imagine if the museum had had to pay in those years the salaries of highly qualified men with engineering degrees (many with Honours), such as the likes of the late Dr Bruce Gamble, Noel Ashley, Chris Cameron, Leyton and Vincent Chan, Tony Messenger, Colin Zeff and others who give of their time and expertise, all for the cause.

"So all of you present this evening have every right to feel mighty proud of what you as volunteers have achieved over the past 50 years.

"It has never been easy - and it continues to be a challenge, keeping to budgets; having to convince people that these historic treasures are worthy of restoration.

"As a country, we are still maturing when it comes to appreciating the saving of our history for future generations, to be able to see first-hand the past.

"But there is still that barrier - we seem as a nation to only wake up to the value of our past when the exhibit in question is a rotting skeleton. Sadly, so true.

"The mind boggles if over the past 50 years volunteers had been paid, (say), even the living wage rate - for their dedication to the cause - for their knowledge, their skills.

"Spread across all the divisions - I am sure MOTAT would not have survived those first 30 years if it had not been for the volunteers who gave millions of dollars of their time.

"They must never be forgotten - they gave to the Nation, our Nation, priceless museum exhibits that at the time had been rescued from near death," said Graham.



Originals Martin Layzell, Ollie Scott, John Wolf and Kerry Bennett with MOTAT founder Graham Stewart and nephew Leslie Stewart, son of the late Ian Stewart. Vincent Chan photo



Tony Messenger (centre) one of the organisers of the event, talking with Chris Cameron (left), MOTAT founder Graham Stewart and Joan Wolf, wife of long time volunteer John Wolf.



ABOVE: Ian Mison (left) with Dot and Dave Hinman of Christchurch and David Annan. Dave Hinman, now of the Tramway Historical Society, was an original Western Springs Tramway member

ABOVE LEFT: Leyton Chan (right) talks with Trish and Darcy Sterling, the son of Merv Sterling, a driving force behind the establishment of MOTAT.

LEFT: Don Webb (left) with Ian Greig and Paul Warner.

photos by Evan James unless otherwise acknowledged



TRAILER 21 ALL SET TO RISE FROM THE FLOOR

Trailer 21 is all set to rise from the floor this year, according to project leader Leyton Chan. He made the prediction after visiting Styrotech at Silverdale where the side pillars and saloon end pillars are being CNC machined.

The job was not without its problems, when one of the larger laminated timbers split in the machine, and a new piece of timber had to be prepared and sent to Silverdale. In the meantime, work has continued on seating slats.

Leyton said the seat base slats are a striking alternate contrasting combination of dark stained Australian red cedar and natural coloured American white ash, as per an original seat base being used as a pattern.

"The ash slats have been finished, with the final coat of varnish applied, and attention has now turned to the red stained slats.

"After some experimentation it had been ascertained that a mixture of Wattyl mahogany and walnut oil based stain would be closest to the original shade (most likely a potassium dichromate chemical stain), and production of those slats has now started," said Leyton.

TOP RIGHT: No. 21's new side pillars being manufactured by CNC machining.

RIGHT: The pillars showing the groove for the window and side panel runners.

Styrotech photos

TRAM NEWS



GETTING UNDERFRAME READY FOR CLEARANCE TESTS

A move to the mechanical workshop is being planned for the underframe of trailer 21.

Tony Messenger, project leader of the underframe restoration of the trailer, said that it is planned to get the underframe over the pit for access to fit the vacuum pipeline.

While the move is being made, a trial coupling to steam tram 100 is planned so tests can be made on the curve on track leading to 100's stable, the sharpest on the system. This would enable clearances for the towbar, side chains and brake pipes to be ascertained.

"If the couplings work there, there would be no problems

going around other corners etc on the system," said Tony. To enable this to happen, tow bases and other associated steel framing are being installed under the floor on both ends of 21.

This includes steel support bars which have been bent up in the MOTAT blacksmith's shop, which are designed to stop the tow-bars from dropping down when disconnected.

A wooden tow-bar has been made to test the clearances, and this will be replaced by tow-bars and couplers supplied by the Heritage Tramway Trust, of Ferrymead, Christchurch.

A study of photographs of the steam trams in operation in Sydney had shown up a feature which will necessitate a redesign of the side chains.

Instead of equal sized links as had previously been believed the photos showed the links to be various sizes, with a large link at the eye end where they are affixed to the headstock that the hook slots into when not in use.

Tony said that historian Graham Stewart had been

approached for photographs showing the hooks on the trailers when operating at Wanganui.



A photograph of a steam tram in operation in Sydney showing the chain hooked back on itself, and the brake pipe, with an end blanking disc held by a chain, sitting on the cowcatcher.



Blacksmith Richard Neville assisted by Tony Messenger (left) bend up a steel support bar for the couplers for trailer 21.

Evan James photos

SOLENT COVER-UP

Work has started on the restoration of MOTAT's Solent flying boat, with it encased in an envelope of scaffolding and plastic.

The Short Solent Mk IV "Aranui" is being restored to its "Coral Route" appearance.

This was when it operated Tasman Empire Airways Limited's (TEAL) routes between Auckland and the Pacific Island of Fiji, Samoa, Tahiti and the Cook Islands between 1949 and 1960. TEAL was the predecessor of Air New Zealand.

The aircraft was shifted outside during the move to put the Sunderland flying

boat into the Aviation Pavilion, because much of the planned work could not be carried out inside, including the repainting.

Aviation Section's Frank Hannay said that now that is covered from the weather, work can start in earnest, both inside and outside the aircraft. It has been estimated the work would take about five years.

The museum is currently fund raising the money required for the work, and has been helped by donations from Auckland Airport, and Air New Zealand.

The aircraft is one of only two still in existence, the other being a Solent 3, which was converted from the Solent's predecessor, the Seaford, which is at the Oakland Aviation Museum in California.



Aviation Section's Frank Hannay, is dwarfed by a wing and two of the four Bristol Hercules engines of the Short Solent flying boat as he stands on a work platform.



Protected from the elements, the Short Solent flying boat is wrapped in a cocoon of scaffolding and plastic.



Meanwhile work on other aircraft in the collection continues as Ron Wilson works on a gun turret for the Short Sunderland flying boat



Host Philip Cass explains aircraft restoration to members of the Beecroft family in the Aviation Section's workshop. They are dad Greg, mum Julia, and children, from left, Cooper, Mackenzie, Fletcher and Lachlan.

all photos by Evan James

RAIL SECTION

MEG ALMOST READY TO HIT THE RAILS

F.180, "Meg Merilees", is almost ready to hit the rails, as Jim Savage and his team put the finishing touches to the locomotive.

A recent steam test, which involved towing a dead diesel shunting locomotive, showed the mechanical restoration to be successful, with very little minor work to be carried out, and attention has turned to the final fit out, which includes headlights, a steam dome top and cab windows.

Painting has been completed on the superstructure, which has been restored to its 1910 appearance, with the running gear next on the finishing list.



all photos by Evan James



ABOVE: The front headlight, almost ready to mount. It was donated to the Rail Section by the Publicity and Advertising Branch of the NZR in the early 1980s and includes a kerosene burner. A rear light still has to be sourced.

RIGHT TOP: A mock up of the steam dome top in place, with the final fitting and soldering still to be done. The whistle features a unique twin lever system, with the main lever, giving a full blast reserved for the driver, and a smaller secondary lever, giving a half blast for the fireman to operate.

RIGHT: Project leader Jim Savage admires the steam dome top, soon after its arrival from Mt Roskill Metal Spinners.

