

HASTINGS TRAMWAYS CLUB

Newsletter
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NEXT STOP ... STAPLECROSS!

THE FIRST OF OUR TRAMS IS HOISTED ONTO THE LOW-LOADER AT ROBERTSBRIDGE BEFORE IT'S MOVE TO STAPLECROSS SHRUB NURSERY

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WELCOME

Welcome to the 53rd newsletter of Hastings Tramways Club! Happy New Year and thank you to you all for your continued support into 2013. Below is an article from Roy which he wrote before Christmas. As you will have seen on the front cover, things have already moved on!

THE MOVE FROM ROBERTSBRIDGE *By Roy Austen*

What News at present regarding our Trams at Robertsbridge you may ask – Well! As I write this, just days before Christmas, the news is that both the Trams are still on site at Robertsbridge although all the railway lines have now been removed and wooden sleepers taken up. I have been told by Derek that most of the ballast has also been taken up.

I have been in touch with Tony Deeprise, the man who (I hope) will do the removal of our Trams to their new site at Staplecross Shrub Nursery, near Cripps Corner in East Sussex. I will be arranging another site inspection with him shortly. Now at a time when the weather is so unsettled with rain and snow being forecast and heavy rain already soaking deep into the soil, it's not the best time to be moving!

I have been in contact with Guy, President of the Brighton Tram 53 Group about the tram truck which they are buying from us and made arrangements for them to collect some of the smaller items from the truck. The wheel set, main truck and motors are, as yet, to be collected.

The Staplecross site is gradually taking shape with the old shed made good and being used as our tea room. From this, an extension has been built using some of the fence panels and concert slabs for flooring from Robertsbridge. But of course the weather is still our main concern and we have had to dig some trenches to help drain the water away. We need the ground firm to be able to unload the Trams safely.

STAPLECROSS UPDATE FEB 2013

At Staplecross, steady progress has been made as concrete blocks have been laid in position to accommodate the trams. Visitors have been arriving at our new site from Robertsbridge with several RVR members interested in joining as members. Bob and Jack Evans helped to rebuild and fit our old 'Cozy Club' door, with plenty of tea being offered by Derek!

The platform and ramp, plus gardens and old apple tree were removed a couple of week ago at Robertsbridge. This meant that the site was ready for us to lift the trams. The date was set for Monday 4th February. Despite the heavy rain prior to the lift, it was a success! Both trams were moved to the new site in just under 5 hours! Our only property to remain at the RVR now is the truck, which we are waiting to hear from Brighton about. All of our efforts can now focus on Staplecross.



MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL REMINDER

Please note that memberships come up for renewal in March. If you wish to continue with us into 2014, please complete the renewal form on the enclosed insert and return to Derek Masters.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The club will be holding it's AGM at Mike Turner's Studio at 17 Priory Road, Hastings at 7:30pm on Monday 4th March 2013. The meeting is open to all members.

Council Seafront could be first to run mini-trams

Mini-tram seafront link could be just the ticket

BY SOL BUCKNER
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HASTINGS and St Leonards could become the first resort towns in the country to operate eco-friendly mini-trams along its seafront.

The exciting concept could see two of the state-of-the-art vehicles run from the Old Town to West St Leonards.

Hastings and St Leonards are believed to be the only resort towns in the country that do not operate a public transport system along its entire seafront.

Council officer Kevin Boorman recently visited the Severn Lamb factory in Alcester, Warwickshire.

The company specialises in making light, urban transport

such as monorail systems.

The council has been considering a transport link along the seafront for several years but were recently spurred on by St Leonards businessman Naz Uddin.

Mr Uddin lobbied the council for a rail or bus link along the entire seafront and last summer presented a 430-name petition.

A rail link extension of the Hastings Miniature Railway was dismissed for not being practical or economical.

But the council agreed to investigate sustainable transport links.

On Monday evening, Mr Boorman will present a four-page report to the council's cabinet committee asking it to consider the feasibility of a seafront link.

In his report, Mr Boorman has considered three types of

transport, a Datto train similar to that currently used in Eastbourne, a dedicated seafront bus service and a mini-tram. Mr Boorman recommends the battery powered mini-tram is given further consideration as it is the most attractive option.

The 22ft-long trams can accommodate 28 people and only require one driver. They are double ended and do not need to turn around.

The plan would see two mini-trams operating every half-hour potentially throughout the year if there is enough demand.

Mr Boorman states that the potential opening of Hastings Pier by 2015 could have a significant impact on demand.

He also states that financing the project would be difficult.

"It is clear that financing a major project of this type will

be difficult especially in the current economic climate.

"If robust business case can be developed and a suitable model found the earliest a mini-tram service could be operation would be 2015."

Speaking to the *Observer* before the meeting Mr Boorman said: "We must give credit to Mr Uddin.

"He was the catalyst for us to give the scheme further consideration and galvanised us into looking into it.

"We get quite a lot of complaints that there is no public transport service up and down the seafront. People have to go into Hastings to get another out along the front.

"We can't do anything until the pier is finished but that will be a major factor.

"Lots of people will be drawn here and the mini-tram could take them to the pier."



The mini-tram made by Severn Lamb