

Another Great Streetcar for San Francisco!

The Times learned during August 2009 that due to a deal between the City of San Francisco and the Australian Tourist Board, another fine streetcar (tram) will soon be joining the rapidly growing heritage fleet in San Francisco. This one is Melbourne tram 916. The car is shown in the next photo on a trailer enroute to San Francisco:



This is one of 120 class SW6 cars, series 850-969, built at the Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramway Board's (MMTB) Preston Shops between 1939 and 1951. Car 916 was initially put into service on June 21, 1946. Car 916 is 46'6" long, seats 52 passengers, stands another 102 and weighs about 38,550 pounds. It is 9.0 ft wide and should pose no clearance problems for the MUNI. The car is 10' 4" high. It is a four-motor car with General Electric 247 motors. The trucks are MMTB Class 15 with 5'2" wheelbase and 28" wheels. The truck kingpin-to-kingpin wheelbase is 28 feet. Obviously a two-man car, it will surely support a huge "crush" load and will be very useful on the F-line on weekends. Thanks to both Ian Green and Greg King of Australia for this information.

The Con-Cor HO scale Electroliner, Part II (Postponed)!

In this issue was to be our conclusion of the Con-Cor Electroliner review. We sent our unit to Train Control Systems for them to select or design an appropriate decoder for the unit. The unit was sent via our "marvelous" United States Post Office on July 22, 2009, via Priority Mail, insured for its full amount. Two weeks later, the Electroliner has not been seen since and no one at USPS showed any interest in attempting to track or locate it. Of course, they demanded 21 days to expire before a claim can be submitted, giving the culprits plenty of time to "get out of town". So we were about to conclude that the article had been lost, *stolen* or otherwise misappropriated while in the custody of USPS, now well known for their stellar performance in many areas. When we emerged from our vacation on August 21st, we found the Electroliner in the original box with both the original and return address missing along with most of the insurance sticker and a mailing label indicating that the parcel had ended up in the Mail Recovery Center in Atlanta, Georgia and had been returned to us. The package was sent to TCS by UPS on August 24th and arrived on August 28th. So our evaluation will be published in a future issue.

Modifying the Bowser 1250 Trolley Pole for use with the SCTC1 Pivot Base!

The Philadelphia Single-End Light Rail Transit Vehicle from IHP!

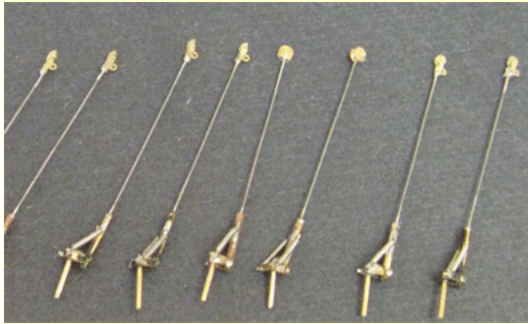
For the third time since 1997, IHP has released a model of the single end Kawasaki Light Rail Transit vehicle. According to the IHP web site, 112 of these 50' long vehicles were delivered to Philadelphia in 1981 replacing all remaining air-electric PCC's, ex-Kansas City, and ex-Toronto units still on the property. At the same time 110 of the remaining 1947 and 1948 all-electric PCC cars were given a General OverHaul (GOH) program. SEPTA abruptly ended PCC service on the three remaining PCC equipped lines in the summer of 1992. Fourteen of these cars escaped SEPTA's anti-trolley management and eventually ended up in San Francisco and were completely overhauled for the F-line. Another eighteen were rebuilt into PCC-IIs for the re-incarnation of Route 15, Girard Avenue, line. The Route 15 line has the distinction of having streetcars replaced more than once by busses only to have the streetcars return.

SEPTA had become notoriously anti-surface rail during the 1980s and started abandoning trolley routes for some of the most outlandish reasons. Route 6, Ogontz Avenue, Route 50, Rising Sun Avenue, Route 53, Wayne Avenue, and Route 60, Allegheny Avenue had already vanished as trolley lines. Substituting buses on the surface car subway was not possible so when the 1975 fire eliminated 60 PCC cars, some of them the newest in the fleet, replacement vehicles had to be found. These cars would be the last cars designed in-house by a transit system. Some of the senior managers at SEPTA never did accept these new cars when they were delivered. In fact, one of them called them "the new dinosaurs" when car 9000 was taken out for test rides back in 1980. Yet these vehicles have outlived almost all of those 'surrogate' managers and then some. Cars 9055 and 9012 are shown at 61st & Elmwood in their as-delivered scheme.



The cars were placed into service on the five subway surface lines during 1981 with Routes 11 (Darby via Woodland Avenue), Route 13 (Yeadon via Chester Avenue), Route 34 (Angora via Baltimore Avenue) and Route 36 (Eastwick via Elmwood Avenue) operating out of the new Elmwood Facility. Route 10 (Overbrook via Lancaster & Lansdowne Avenues) operated from the Callowhill Depot along with the PCC cars of Route 15. Car 911 is shown at Germantown Avenue & Bethlehem Pike during an infrequent visit to Route 23.

Within the last two years, the Bowser HO scale trolley pole has been upgraded with a new NMRA Specification S-5 compliant overhead wire contactor and stronger springs. Both the collectors, part 12507, and the new springs, part 12502, are available from Custom Traxx. Unfortunately, the pole still has the 3/32" base that it has used for many years. Now that both Custom Traxx and MTS Imports, Inc have embraced the 1mm pin base and the SCTC1 pivots are available, John McWhirter worked up a procedure to convert these poles to a 1mm pin base. The next photo shows 8 of the 15 poles so converted during an SCTC work session in July 2009.



The first four at left have been equipped with Miniatures by Eric HT-C4 trolley wheels; the next two have the new Bowser 12507 collector and the two on the extreme right have Miniatures by Eric HT-C3 trolley wheel castings. The SCTC also replaces the .025" pole stock with .020" spring wire and encourages a standard 15' length from the vertical pivot to the end of the pole stock before any collector is added. To download this complete procedure in MS Word, [click here!](#)



This arrangement was the norm until 1992 when PCC service stopped on Route 15 and the Route 10 cars were shifted to Elmwood Depot, out of which they would operate for the next 13 years. Finally, when the PCC-II streetcars replaced buses on Route 15 in 2005, the Route 10 Kawasaki cars returned to the Callowhill Depot along with the 18 PCC-IIs. Car 9000 is shown in the current scheme on 49th Street.



The SCTC has been operating the first version of this model for over ten years and has used the model as a test vehicle for the Bowser traction unit. The Times evaluated examples of the first version of the model initially sold in 1997, the second version sold in 2005 and just completed a review of this one. [For the complete review, click here!](#)