

# **FARES PLEASE!**

**June 2006**

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*News from the Ballarat Tramway Museum*

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## **The Museum Wins a MIRA Award**

The Museum's achievement in overcoming the failure of the substation in October 2004 and then publishing *The Golden City and its Tramways* in 2005 was recognised by the Victorian Museum Industry on International Museums Day, 25 May 2006.

At the gala function to celebrate the day, the presentation of the Museum Industry Recognition (MIRA) awards (the Oscars of the museum sector) was made to a range of small and large museums. The Awards recognise excellence and achievement within the sector. The Museum received the award for the most meritorious achievement by volunteers in the Victorian Museum Sector.

Quoting Museums Australia Press Release: "*Award winning projects included the Champions Australian Racing Museum program where the Melbourne cup winning horse Subzero, visits Victorian schools, and the magnificent work of volunteers at the Ballarat Tramway Museum repairing their small regional museum after it was struck by lightning!*"

MC for the night, held at National Gallery of Victoria was Andy Muirhead, comedian and host of the ABC *Collectors* program. The Awards were presented by Bruce Mildenhall MP and Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier, Steve Bracks.

The Award was received on behalf of the Museum by our President, Stephen Butler. Also representing the Museum was Warren Doubleday who prepared the submission.

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***Ballarat Trams are Ballarat History***

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Museum President, Stephen Butler, is congratulated by Bruce Milne MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier.

*Photo: Warren Doubleday*



It is unusual to see a large floral arrangement in the depot. The Award Certificate and flowers stand under the substation control panel in the Mess Room. 28/5/2006”.

*Photo: Warren Doubleday*

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## The Museum Wins a MIRA Award (continued)

The nomination was based on the following parameters:

- Good financial and administrative management – that met a major challenge
- Fund raising
- Rebuilding the Museum's electrical sub-station in just over two months so that the trams could be operated again for visitors
- The teamwork of our volunteers involved in rebuilding the sub-station and the publication of the book beyond their normal tasks
- Publishing, a large book for the first time that has been well received by the local community and tramway enthusiasts with good reviews being received locally and from overseas
- That much of the work was carried out by our younger volunteer members who joined the Museum in their teens or earlier and are now playing a vital part in enabling the Museum to continue to move forward

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- The benefit and ease of selecting photographs for the book from the Museum's computerised Collection Management System.

In concluding the nomination we submitted:

“The period October 2004 to Sept 2005 was both a stimulating and challenging period for the volunteers of the Ballarat Tramway Museum. Replacing the power supply, publishing a book and continuing to run the organisation with excellent volunteer input as a whole over this challenging period makes a submission for a Volunteer Award of Merit for 2006 MIRA's appropriate.”

The success of the Museum in gaining the achievements for this Award was due to the volunteers who worked tirelessly on the projects and our financial supporters, our Members and Friends who donated generously to the project for the rebuilding of the substation. We thank them all.

## A Significant Donation

A very recent significant donation to the Museum was the Electric Supply Company of Victoria, Tramway Traffic Employees Wages Book for the period August 1919 to December 1924. The book gives the fortnightly wages paid to the Traffic staff, Senior Drivers right down to the Points boys.

The book demonstrates aspects of the Ballarat Tramways in the 1920's and in an

employee's daily working life – eg their hours, wages, deductions etc. It even shows Stamp Duty deductions payable to the State government.

This is an excellent acquisition for our Collection. While the leather bound cover is in poor condition, the pages are excellent. It will be invaluable for research into the lives of Ballarat workers of the period.

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## The Museum Turns Thirty Five

This year celebrates our 35<sup>th</sup> year of coming together to form the Ballarat Tramway Preservation Society, which has ultimately led to the Ballarat Tramway Museum of today. In some ways it seems a long time ago, and a lot of time has passed since those early days and in other ways some memories and day to day issues of the present time seem to have had the time flash by.

Bill Jessup can be credited as the one who got us together in Melbourne, in April 1971 to form a group to save portion of the interesting and unique Ballarat Tramway system. In those days I worked in the timetables office of the Victorian Railways and a few of us railway/tramway interested people would congregate just inside the north door of head office, prior to starting work, to discuss any railway news. I recall it being said that Bill had called a meeting, to be held at the Victorian Railways Institute, Flinders Street Station, with the aim to form some sort of group to preserve the trams at Ballarat. I said "It should be a bit of fun, so I'll go". Well, what fun, 35 years later.

Dear Bill passed away a long time ago now, far too young, and many who attended the VRI meeting and subsequent work parties at Ballarat have drifted on to other activities and interests in life. Some of us are still there.

We duly attended the VRI that night, on 29<sup>th</sup> April, 1971. About 30 people turned up and after many ideas and suggestions were made, a committee was elected to pursue the idea of forming a tramway museum to preserve the unique Ballarat trams.

Bill announced there was a group in Ballarat with similar aims and we should meet with them. We duly met with the Brown Hill Progress Association at a meeting chaired by the late Melton Foo, who eventually became the Mayor of Ballarat. This meeting, after sorting out a few egos and cautious responses between Ballarat locals and the 'City' folk, decided to call a public meeting at the Lower Civic Hall in Doveton Street North to further the aims of both groups.

On Sunday, 30<sup>th</sup> May, 1971 a well attended public meeting agreed to form the Ballarat Tramway Preservation Society. The meeting was preceded by a tram trip from the city around the proposed route in tram 36. A fare of 20 cents was set and it was hoped people would turn up and show their interest by paying such a princely sum. Let's not forget a pie cost 20 cents then and a glass of beer was 18 cents. One could stay at the Provincial Hotel, as we did, for \$4 bed and breakfast.

From this meeting the pressure was on. Meetings were held between the groups, and sub committees at least every fortnight. We had to convince the SEC and the Ballarat City Council that we were the legitimate body to deal with in pursuing our aims. A meeting of the city council approved our application for retention of the tramway in Wendouree Parade. The SEC agreed to donate six trams and various components to assist our aims. The next issue was the Depot. Bill Jessup announced that we would lease the tram depot in Wendouree Parade from the SEC. We soon learnt that would not be the case.

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We looked around for a suitable site to build our own and the late Eldon Hogan can be credited with choosing the site we now occupy. Most of us had tunnel vision when travelling along Wendouree Parade in a tram, and didn't look too much right and left. Eldon got our attention to look across the park to an unkempt section, and we met at the site and agreed to seek approval from the city council to lease it. To our joy, this was agreed to, and we set about raising funds to build a Depot.

We entered a quick learning curve on forming a Co-Operative Society, raising Share capital and borrowing against that with funds from the State Savings Bank of Victoria. We raised the \$20,000 and engaged a builder to erect a 'hay shed' type building.

We were now quite involved in the myriad of tasks and effort to get our museum up and running. Track was laid to connect the Depot with Wendouree Parade, a transformer (made famous last year) was purchased and re-worked to form the basis of a power supply. All things were coming together, and three years later, on 12<sup>th</sup> October, 1974 a test run was made across the park and it all worked. Public services began on 26 December and the Official Opening was held on Saturday, 1<sup>st</sup> February, 1975. We have now strived magnificently forward to today, far beyond any perceptions we had at that VRI meeting in 1971.

*Richard Gilbert*

## From the Archives

The committee of the Ballarat Tramway Preservation Society formed at the public meeting on 30 May 1971 first met in Ballarat on Sunday 20 June 1971. Ten of the eleven members coopted by the meeting to the new Council were in attendance. It was chaired by the late Melton Foo. Melton and the late George Netherway declined nominations for the position of President as both felt they were engaged in other activities in Ballarat. The position was left vacant.

Nominations were called for the position of Vice President. Bill Jessup and Hal Cain were nominated. On a show of hands both candidates received three votes. The meeting decided that as one candidate lived in Melbourne and one lived in Ballarat they would both be elected.

The positions of Ballarat Resident Vice President and Melbourne Resident Vice President remained until the Society was incorporated and renamed in 1995. Two positions exist to this day. There are still eleven board members.

Campbell Duncan was elected Treasurer, Neville Gower Secretary and, in his absence, Paul Nicholson Publicity Officer. Richard Gilbert was one of the eleven members.

Thirty five years later to the day, Richard was present at the Museum's monthly Board meeting. In that time he has served as Secretary (twice), Traffic Manager, General Manager, President and Vice President.

*Peter Winspur*

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## The SEC Birney Cars

The mention of the Geelong Birney cars in the April "Fares Please" article "The Geelong Tramways - 50 Years Ago" did not give a complete picture.

There were six Birneys in all. Some have been much travelled and some were renumbered. Miraculously, all still exist. Nos 14 & 15 were imported from the USA and assembled at Geelong Depot in 1924. Unlike the other cars, they were fitted with longitudinal seats and bulkheads behind the driver. No 14 is now Bendigo No 11. Nos 27-30 were originally MTT (Port Adelaide) Nos 303, 304, 302 & 301. Also built by J. G. Brill & Co (1925) they were purchased in 1936.

All were transferred to Bendigo between 1947 & 1949. Nos 27-30 retained their Geelong numbers. In 1965 Keith Kings wrote that No 27 was in a bad accident in 1956 and scrapped in 1958 and that No 15 was in a bad accident in 1959 and would probably be scrapped.

Thanks to the resourcefulness of our friends at Bendigo No 27 was resurrected and returned to Adelaide as No 303 and No 15 was restored. No 29 is again wearing its original number 302. All are still operable.

(Thanks to Bill Kingsley, Bob Lilburn and Keith Kings' "*Destination Eaglehawk*")

## Membership Renewals

Membership renewal notices will be sent out in early July. The Board has decided that membership rates for 2006/2007 should remain unchanged.

## Rail Safety

Some Members will be aware that earlier this year, a new Rail Safety Act was passed by the Victorian Government. While further changes to the Act are likely in the short term to align it with the National Model Act for Rail Safety, the outcome is more work for those who write the necessary documentation to go with the operation of the tramway.

The proposed Regulations have recently been published in draft form for comment by the Victorian Government and bring a vast change to the scope of our current Safety Management System. We estimate that over 600 person hours will be necessary to write and train all Rail Safety Workers in its various aspects. While we have the necessary skills to do this, the person hours we do not have. At \$40/hour – the hourly rate of a person on the average weekly earnings used in the Regulatory Impact Statement, that is about \$24,000 worth of work.

While we may have three years to comply, it still means a lot of work for the Safety and Incident Management Committee members. They could be spending their time better on other things involving the Museum's collection and conservation.

The Association of Tourist Railways is running a seminar at the end of July to help the Victorian rail heritage groups to come to grips with the changes and its implications. COTMA is working closely with the ATR who are both commenting on the regulations and its impact.

*Warren Doubleday*

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Council has recently installed a new seat at our stop at Carlton St. All we need now is a real time indicator!

No 27 waits time on 27 May 2006.

*Photo: Austin Brehaut*

New seasons lamb:

Quite peripheral to our tramway activities is the maintenance of our property at Bungaree. We have an arrangement with a work colleague of Simon Greens' to ageist around 20 sheep to keep the grass down. On calling in recently, it was pleasing to see at least 5 new lambs, some quite recently born, enjoying the fresh morning air.

*Photo: Richard Gilbert 1/6/06*



No 40 ventures out.

Fully restoring a tram with our small workforce is a slow process. Last time No 40 travelled past here was on 4 October 2003. Most of the hard work is now done and with the finishing touches to be completed soon we will again see No 40 in Wendouree Parade.

*Photo: Austin Brehaut 27/5/06*

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## Working on the Trams

As a BTM conductor of many years' standing (sic) I heartily endorse the remarks of "ATD" ("Fares Please" April 2006) regarding the joys of being involved in the Begonia Festival operations with the more intense activity on those days. It certainly contrasts with most of the time spent on Wendouree Parade during the rest of the year, and gives one a feeling of having been part something greater and being with crew members that we might otherwise see only a few times a year. Congratulations are certainly due to all involved up front or in the background.

However, while a driver on one-person operation duty has only himself for company, the beauty of being a conductor is that the poor driver does have someone else to annoy him when I'm rostered on, especially when business is slack, and having someone to turn the pole for him. But it also means that I'm not hidden away in the driving cabin for most of the afternoon, and have the opportunity of sharing the company and conversation of interesting people, and answering their varied questions about Ballarat, the level of

the lake, the age and architecture of the tram, the *modus operandi* of a tramway, and repeatedly saying "no Jimmy, that trap-door in the seat is *not* a toilet!". And this is more than a little compensation in my case for never being able to become a driver.

So for those out there who would like to spend a couple of interesting Saturday afternoons a month with all sorts and conditions of men (women, and children), even if driving is not for you, why not become a conductor, share the pleasures of the job, help keep our tramway operating, enable people to enjoy a wonderful experience, and fill in some of those blanks in the monthly rosters. I don't know what life would be like without it! — ATC29

## Donation Receipts

Receipts for donations to the Museum during the year 2005/2006 are enclosed with this edition of "Fares Please". It has been policy for many years to send receipts out at the end of the Tax Year as all donations over \$2.00 are tax deductible and this reduces the requests for duplicates. If you have any queries please don't hesitate to call the Secretary on 9699 2631 or e-mail [secretary@btm.org.au](mailto:secretary@btm.org.au) .



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