

FARES PLEASE!

October 2007

News from the Ballarat Tramway Museum

The Ballarat Botanic Gardens Celebrating 150 years



Ballarat Trams are Ballarat History

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Decorated to celebrate 150 years of the Ballarat Botanic Gardens, No 40 waits for No 27 at Gardens Loop on Sunday 23 September 2007. As the drought continues the only flowers in the Gardens in 2007 are made from paper!
Photo: Warren Doubleday



Above: President Butler ensures that all glasses are full as *Friends of the Botanic Gardens* enjoy a tram ride to celebrate 150 years of the Gardens. 23/9/07
Photo: Warren Doubleday

Right: After the event the flowers are enjoying an extended life inside two of our single truck trams.
Photo: BTM collection 25/9/07

Cover photo: *Flight from Pompeii* Statuary Pavilion Ballarat Botanic Gardens 23/9/07 *Warren Doubleday*



The Ballarat Botanic Gardens Celebrating 150 years

This month we feature the Ballarat Botanic Gardens as it approaches one hundred and fifty years since they were established. In this issue the article on page four by Alan Bradley covers ground that many will be familiar with, but others less so.

Financial members will have received their 2007-2008 Membership card and this features a wonderful picture of the entrance to the Gardens at Carlton Street, our current southern terminus, taken almost one hundred years ago. Next time you pass pause for a minute and observe the changes which have occurred.

In December 1857 one hundred and two acres of flat bushland west of Yuilles Swamp (later to become Lake Wendouree) was gazetted for Botanical Gardens. The Municipal District of Ballarat had only been proclaimed on December 18th, 1855.

Today the gardens are still the envy of other regional cities, with their significant avenues of trees and plant collections, visitor facilities and attractions. The Ballarat Botanical Gardens Reserve covers an area of forty hectares and these are divided into three distinct zones.

The central Botanical Gardens preserve the 'gardenesque' style of the Victorian pleasure garden and feature the Prime Ministers' Avenue. On either side are open parkland buffers known as the North and South gardens, incorporating wetlands, the tramway museum, the fish hatchery and the Australian Ex Prisoner of War Memorial.

In the central gardens the Statuary Pavilion houses Ballarat's finest collection of marble statuary, the result of the Thompson Bequest. Charles Summer's Flight from Pompeii is an elegant reminder of Ballarat's wealth of the 1880s. Contrasted with the Statuary Pavilion is a modern temperature controlled Conservatory.

To help celebrate the 150 years, the Museum provided tram No. 40 and in association with *The Friends of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens* nibbles and drinks were enjoyed during a tour on Sunday 23 September. A function to launch a printed set of black and white postcards and a 2008 Calendar featuring the statues was subsequently held at the Conservatory.

The tram was decorated by the children of Ballarat Specialist School with paper flowers which they had made themselves. Some of the children also took part in the event. The school provided photographs of the children making the flowers and these were displayed in the tramcar.

The tour was a great success in renewing friendships with members of another vibrant community group and in providing links to other community groups.

After the weekend the flowers which were too fragile to remain on the outside of No 40 were placed inside trams 27 and 33 which are two of our regularly used single truck trams so that our visitors can also enjoy them and be reminded of the anniversary.

The Ballarat Botanic Gardens and its Trams

By Alan Bradley

The Botanic Gardens were Ballarat's first tourist attraction. The Gardens became even more popular after marble statues (imported from Italy as a gift to the city by two former miners) were placed there during the 1880s. These statues, especially the "Flight from Pompeii", are still an attraction today.

The Gardens were located on the western side of Lake Wendouree, some 3.5 kilometres from the city centre, and beyond easy walking distance for tourists arriving at the Ballarat Railway Station. In 1886 when the Ballarat City Council called tenders for tramway construction it insisted that the line to the Gardens be built first, even though few people lived around the lake in those days.

Horse tram services to the Gardens, operated by the Ballarat Tramway Co Ltd, commenced on 26 December 1887. There were two tram services to the Gardens. One ran anti-clockwise around the lake, via Ripon Street. It was known as "Gardens via Boatsheds", after the numerous boatsheds at View Point. The other ran clockwise around the lake, via Sturt Street West. It was known as "Gardens via Convent", after Loreto Convent opposite Victoria Park. During the 1930s the services were re-named "Gardens via Drummond Street North" and "Gardens via Sturt Street West".

The Botanical Gardens were located within a public reserve. There were large iron gates at each entrance to the Reserve (at

present day Carlton Street and St Aidans Drive). At both places a fence ran from the gates to the lake edge to keep wandering stock from the Gardens. Initially the crew of the last tram each night would close the gates.¹ Within a few years gatehouses were placed at both ends of the Reserve. The gatekeeper locked the gates at night after the last tram went through. Occasionally trams collided with cows or horses in Wendouree Parade. This problem gradually ended with the spread of housing along Wendouree Parade.

A feature of Lake Wendouree is the birdlife, particularly the black swans. Experiments over the years in introducing white swans to Lake Wendouree have failed. This was mainly because of attacks by the native black swans. In May 1888 the Ballarat Council was told that the last male white swan had been run over and killed by a horse tram. This was allegedly due to the "criminal carelessness" of the driver. The council demanded that the Ballarat Tramway Co Ltd reimburse the cost of the dead swan. The Company ignored the request.²

During the years horse trams operated there were no motorcars. During the very busy Christmas-New Year holiday period the horses struggled to pull the crowded horse trams to and from the Gardens. Electric trams (operated by the Electric Supply Co of Victoria) began running to the Gardens in 1905, and they coped with large crowds far better than the horse trams did.

Special trams were used many times over the years to carry school, church or work groups to the Gardens for picnics.

Why were the Gardens so popular? As well as the Gardens with its statues and begonias, nearby were a zoo and a maze, plus the lake with its birdlife and paddle steamers. Refreshments were available at the Pavilion. Frequently a band played in the Gardens, enough in those days to draw a crowd. All this was close to home for the price of a tram ticket. The main alternatives in the days before mass ownership of cars were places close to a train line, such as the Buninyong Gardens and Lake Learmonth, or a day at the beach at Geelong or Queenscliff.

By 1911 some visitors to the Gardens came by motor car. The "Ballarat Courier" complained: "A visit to the Gardens yesterday afternoon showed crowds of people enjoying themselves in surroundings admirably adapted for that end; but there was and always is on such occasions one thing that is the reverse of enjoyable, and that is the ever-present stench and dust caused by the motor-cars. The former especially is most objectionable, and it really is a question of whether motor-cars, which after all are only enjoyed by a few, should be allowed within the Gardens reserves".³

The Electric Supply Co of Victoria had two open crossbench trams, known as "Gardens cars" or "summer cars", that operated between 1905 and 1930. They were very popular during fine summer days, but gave no protection to passengers during summer showers. A former Ballarat resident recalled how boys rode the summer cars to the Gardens for the picnics, and during the day gorged themselves on pies and ice

cream. On the way back on the swaying, vibrating tram they vomited on the seats!⁴

The Electric Supply Co of Victoria took some novel steps to increase patronage on the Gardens line. It engaged a brass band to play at the Gardens on Wednesday evenings during summer. At the Gardens jetty it operated a motor boat to carry passengers to a water chute with gondolas, in which an electric lift took riders to the top of a high tower. Tram conductors sold tickets to the water chute. However the lift sometimes stuck halfway to the top when full of people, so the water chute was removed on order of the Ballarat City Council.⁵

By the 1920s the gates at either end of the Gardens were still in position, but were no longer being closed at night. One tram driver was told by his mates (as a practical joke) that it was his job to close the gates at night. He stood in the rain, trying to close the heavy iron gates!⁶

In the mid 1930s the tram track in Wendouree Parade was re-laid closer to the lake edge, to allow road widening. The gates were removed, but the bluestone pillars remain to this day although they have been relocated further apart.

The State Electricity Commission took over the tramways in 1934, by which time motorcars were more common. During World War Two petrol rationing forced many people to leave their cars at home. In those years trams ran from the city to the Gardens every five minutes during the Christmas-New Year holiday period.

The Begonia Festival began in 1953, and trams to the Gardens were packed in March when the festival was on.

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Retirements

After thirty one and a half years as a conductress and almost twenty nine years as a driver, Carolyn Cleak (previously known as Carolyn Dean!) has decided to retire from active traffic duties. She expects to be seen around the Depot as a Depot Guide on a regular basis and will continue to hold a tight rein on the Museum's purse strings.

Another retiree is Frank Puls who at seventy five has decided reluctantly that it is time to give up driving. For the past fifteen years Frank has been one of our most frequent drivers and in recent years, together with Austin Brehaut, has made himself available for almost all our weekday group visits.



We hope that Frank will continue to assist with our weekday group visits and that he will see his way to becoming a Depot Guide. His stories and his humour are always a delight.

A big thank you to Carolyn and Frank for your contribution over so many years.

Frank Puls ready to take out another group.
25 October 2006 *Photo: BTM collection*

Many, Many Years Ago!



At Carlton Street sometime in the late 1970's Carolyn Cleak poses for the camera whilst Barry Macandlish begins to swing the pole.

Photo: Richard Gilbert

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Tramway services from the city to the Gardens ended in 1971, but trams still operate today on a 1.2 kilometre section of track in the Gardens Reserve. Today it is still possible to ride a section of tram line that has carried passengers since 1887.

References:

1. *Ballarat Courier* 27 November 1888
2. *Ballarat Courier* 15 May 1888; Ballarat Council to BTCo 14 May 1888
3. *Ballarat Courier* 25 September 1911
4. Interview with Keith Foster
5. A. W. Walker "Electric trams did something for Ballarat" in the *Courier* 12 September 1970; A. W. Walker "When electricity and trams came to Ballarat" in *SEC News* February-April 1951, p 32
6. Interview with Keith Foster

The Ballarat Treasures Register

In the October 2006 issue of *Fares Please!* the Museum reported on the establishment of the Ballarat Treasures Register and that the Tramway Museum and our collection had been placed on the Register's initial list. It has taken some time for the City to finalise the list, the first in Australia.

A formal launch took place on 20 August 2007, attended by President Stephen Butler and Manager Museum Services, Warren Doubleday. The Register is a combination of items and sites nominated by members of the community and assessed by a nomination committee and sites already listed on the Victorian Heritage Register.

Speaking at the event, the Mayor David Vendy said "*This inaugural list shows the depth of treasures in Ballarat. The list is diverse including everything from historical records to landscapes and from*

Our Web Exhibition Celebrating the Gardens

The Museum's web site has recently been extended to facilitate on-line or web based exhibitions. Our first is one that features *Ballarat's Botanic Gardens and its trams; Celebrating 150 years of the Gardens*. The web address is:

www.btm.org.au/exhibition/

It features many photographs which have not been previously published and can be downloaded as a slide show. The photograph which features on our membership card this year can be viewed in greater detail on this web page.

Another exhibition featuring the Museum's postcards is under development.

pre-history to modern day and shows the breadth of experiences that Ballarat has to offer."

Under the category Pioneering City Structures the Ballarat Tramway Museum, its collection and remaining tracks have been listed. The front page of the *Courier* on 22 August featured a photograph of Austin Brehaut and Frank Puls with No. 27 at the Carlton Street terminus. The full list can be viewed on the Council's web site:

http://www.ballarat.vic.gov.au/About_Ballarat/Ballarat_Treasures_Register/index.aspx

The recognition by the City of our collection is important in assisting the Museum to achieve one of its Key Directional Strategies which is to *Motivate ongoing community interest and commitment*.

Why Ride on a Tram When You Aren't Going Anywhere?

There are many reasons that visitors have for riding on our trams. One is nostalgia for earlier days when life moved at a gentler pace, and we were all young. I find it delightful, as a crew member, to see an elderly couple sitting there holding hands and reminiscing about courting on a Ballarat tram. Sometimes our passengers are lovers of old vehicles and, naturally, old tram drivers and conductors.

It always surprises me to find parents from Melbourne taking their children for their first tram ride on one of ours. Most of our passengers admire the feeling of craftsmanship in the woodwork in both the original construction, when manufacturers took a pride in their work, and the present-day staff who take such care in keeping the bodywork of the trams in such good condition. (Perhaps I had better not comment of the condition of the bodywork of the drivers and conductors!)

Austin and I saw one of the less common reasons for taking a tram ride a few weeks ago. A young woman was waiting at the stop with her young (about 3 years old) son. So far not very uncommon.

As I brought the single truck tram to a smooth halt with the door exactly in line with the stop, I gave my usual delightful smile and friendly "Welcome aboard. No, don't worry about the money, the conductor will deal with that when you are comfortably seated." At this point the son began to show a marked reluctance to get aboard. Still nothing out of the ordinary, after all a tram can be a bit fearsome when seen close up for the first time.

Usually a little persuasion from Mum does the trick, but not this time, it merely produced a loud outcry and a limpet-like hold on the handrail. Encouragement from the two bearded elderly ...er...um... gentlemen in the green uniforms only exacerbated the situation. In spite of all the resistance, Mum managed to finally force the child aboard and hold him on the seat as we continued our trip.

Why was she so persistent? She intended taking the lad on his first train journey in the near future and was not sure how he would react, so a short tram ride seemed like a good test run. At this point I imagined that the train trip was off. How wrong can you be? After a few minutes junior was all smiles, deciding that rail travel was O.K. after all. Not only that but they stayed aboard for three trips, and Mum had nearly as hard a job getting him off the tram as she had had getting him on.

I hope that he was not disappointed on the train, as they are not all driven as smoothly as our trams are.

Until next time, this your man at the front, A.T.D.

Long Service

At the Annual General Meeting on 21 October 2007 the President, Stephen Butler, presented Garry Wood and Greg Rodgers with badges in recognition of twenty five years of active service to the Museum. He congratulated them both and his comments were supported by acclamation from the meeting.

Strategic Planning at the Museum

In late March 2007, active members of the Museum and some friends undertook a Strategic Planning afternoon at the Royal Mail Hotel Sebastopol. The outcomes of these discussions have been presented to the Board for review and a plan for the next three years has been put into place.

The discussion provided many useful ideas and suggestions of small projects to improve the organisation as it moves into the future. A summary of the key directional strategies are:

1. Motivate ongoing community interest and commitment

- Through engagement with the Community seek new volunteers, retain our present volunteers and enhance their experiences and the importance of cultural heritage.
- Work towards achieving financial sustainability in the long term.

2. Care for and showcase our Collection

- Expand the interpretation, understanding and protection of our collection.
- Consolidate the appreciation of our fleet, our needs to house it securely and present our collection to the community within its precinct
- Put into place strategies to review and renew our aging Wendouree Parade infrastructure and the consideration of an extension of our tram line to enhance visitor experiences.

3. Be Professional in all we do

- Continue to build our reputation as a well managed and professional museum
- Devote resources to enhance our profile, our knowledge of our market and the way we receive our visitors.
- Operate the Museum in a safe and sustainable manner.

History Expo

Our Museum is an active member of the Central Highlands Historical Association. Every year the Association holds a themed History Fair. This year it was entitled “*Three Cheers for Volunteers*” and was held on the first weekend of October.

The Expo was preceded on the Friday night with a talk on the subject “*Who volunteers, Why do they volunteer, and How to keep your Volunteers*”.

During preparation for the Expo the CHHA was informed by several of its members that they were unable to set up and man a display because “*Numbers are low and we are all getting older*” A timely subject!

Richard Gilbert mounted a successful display for the Museum and manned it almost single handedly for the weekend. Yes our volunteer numbers are also lower than we would wish.

Part of the display has since been mounted in the display area at the Depot.

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Our Small Items Collection

As members would be aware, the BTM has been building and cataloguing its small item collection over the last 12 years. At the time of writing for example we have over 550 colour slides, 300 colour photographs and 600 black and white photographs. This number is being added to all the time. We also have an extensive collection of tickets, paperwork, uniforms, historical documents, newspaper cuttings, Ballarat booklets and employee registers which is available to researchers.

You would be wrong to think our collection of photographs only show $\frac{3}{4}$ close up views of trams in the streets of Ballarat. Many of our photographs have the street scenes in which the trams ran, people getting on and off trams showing what they were wearing at the time of the photograph (fashions of the day) and motor vehicles or individual buildings and many other elements of daily life in Ballarat until 1971.

Our paperwork and document collection shows the way the companies operated the Ballarat system, employee names (although not as extensive in the SEC era as we would like) and correspondence with other authorities. We have also collected extensively on the Ballarat Tramway Preservation Society days and now the Ballarat Tramway Museum itself. The BTPS/BTM have now been running the trams along the Wendouree Parade section for almost as long as they were operated by the State Electricity Commission.

Our collection is growing all the time, and we are always on the lookout for material associated with the Ballarat and other Victorian provincial tramways and our-

elves. Any offers of donations of material, photographs, small items, tickets etc would always be welcome. Every offer is assessed against the Museum's Collection Policy.

The collection is accessible by appointment. It is catalogued using the db Textworks system. This is relatively easy to use after a short demonstration.

Any queries should be directed to our Museum Services Manager, Warren Doubleday – tramwad@alphalink.com.au

New Members

The Museum welcomes the following new members and junior supporters. We hope their time with us is long and rewarding.

779	Mr John Bonello of Kynton
780	Mrs Heather Davis of Wendouree
781	Mr Conah Brown of Ballarat has graduated from a Junior Supporter
5044	Master Benjamin Boele-Mitchell of Delacombe
5045	Master Daniel Schultz of Doncaster

Annual General Meeting

At the Annual General Meeting on 21 October 2007 nominations were called from the floor to cover vacancies for the position of Ordinary Board Member.

Three nominations were received and as the nominations of Clayton Giles, Simon Green and Paul Mong equalled the number of vacancies the three were declared elected.



Two photos from the Museum's Small Items Collection

Forty five years ago. Busy Bridge St – No, not just tram 21, but people, buildings and motor cars – all adding to the scene of this once busy shopping strip. *Photo: N. J. Simons 24/11/1962*



The launch of Ballarat 21 on 28/3/1969 as the travelling showcase for the Base Hospital's \$50,000 appeal, shows the way the trams formed an integral part of the community.

The Ballarat Courier's cutting caption was "*Inspecting the tram in the photo were public relations officer, Mr. David Rees, Dr I. C. Goy and Mr. K .J. Neerhut with nursing staff members, SEC painters and carpenters who shared in the work.*" *Photo: Ballarat Courier*

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Renewing our Rail Safety Accreditation

Under the Victorian Rail Safety Act 2006, all tourist and heritage rail operators in Victoria are required to undergo a Re-Accreditation process and update all documentation to conform with the new Act.

This is an enormous process for all the Victorian heritage organisations and will consume many hours of volunteer work that has to be diverted from other activities. The Sydney Tramway Museum for example has had to upgrade its documentation to another standard and another Act that is not entirely the same as the Act which applies in Victoria. They are nearing completion and so far it has taken over 1100 volunteer hours of work to put into position!

Fortunately in Victoria, the Department of Infrastructure has appointed a safety consultant to assist the various organisations to achieve the required date of 1 July 2009. The implementation date started out at 1 August 2009, but recent proposed changes have seen the date be brought forward by one month.

The Ballarat Tramway Museum has commenced the process and is revising documentation which began its life just on ten years ago when Rail Safety Accreditation was first introduced.

We can look forward to many hours of toil as we work through the requirements of the new Act.

There are many new documents to be put into place on items that were not considered at the time of the original system, such as Security Management, Safety Performance Targets, Management of Change, Safety Culture and Safety Interface Co-ordination Plans.

One of the requirements of the new Act is that we must formally consult with our workers. This will be done through the roster and other means and we seek their active assistance in giving feedback.

Following consultation, the Museum Board has recently completed and authorised a "Safety Policy" for the organisation. This can be seen at the depot and will shortly be forwarded to all our workers.



Fares Please! is published by the Ballarat Tramway Museum Inc. (A0031819K) six times a year in alternate months commencing in February. It is distributed to members and friends.

For further information regarding the Museum, its activities and publications please contact:

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