

FARES PLEASE!

December 2009

News from the Ballarat Tramway Museum

Thirty five years of service



Thirty five years ago this month the Museum finally achieved its primary goal of operating trams in Wendouree Parade. In this issue Alan Bradley, who was a young teenager at the time, recalls the activity which led to the first trip into the street and the commencement of public operations.

Above: No 27 was the first tram to venture around the Depot Junction curve. The historic event was captured by photographers on Saturday 7 December 1974. *Photo: W. J. Kingsley*

Ballarat Trams are Ballarat History

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Left: No 28 is about to be re-railed on to the temporary track. 15/7/72.

(Note the SEC accident damage)

Photo: BTM collection from the Eldon Hogan collection

Below: No 40 returns to Wendouree Parade 7/12/74.

(Note shed staff on their knees whilst traffic staff look on!)

Photo: W. J. Kingsley



Left: Nos 40 & 27 cross at Gardens Loop. 7/12/74. (Note the trees)

Photo: Peter Winspur

Goodbye, Philip

It came as a great and unexpected shock on 30th October when news reached the depot that long time weekday volunteer Philip Work had died suddenly of a heart attack. A keen fisherman, he had been digging for worms in his backyard prior to his annual pilgrimage to the river in search of the elusive Murray Cod.

Ebullient would be a good word to describe Philip, he was larger than life, forever cheerful and upbeat, and boy, could he talk! He had worked on the railway bridge gang for twenty eight years, and had a fund of stories from those times, usually involving hairsbreadth escapes from disaster whenever the total occupation they had been promised turned out to be rather less than total.

His tales of his workmates were equally

entertaining, from the member of the bridge gang who suffered from vertigo whenever he was more than six feet off the ground, to the time at Ouyen when the foreman got so plastered at the pub after work that they carried him down the main street in the bucket of the backhoe and dumped him unceremoniously on the lawn of the motel for the night.

At the tram depot Philip was always ready for the dirty or difficult jobs. His last job had been preparing and painting the underfloor of No. 38, while trackwork he always handled with ease. Rebuilding the end floors on 33 was another of his projects.

Philip's other passions were fishing, harness racing and the Red Devils soccer club, where his son played for some years.

He was the most prolific distributor of advertising material to the letter boxes of Ballarat, serving some 700 addresses as far a field as Buninyong. He would head out with his distinctive red Holden Ute piled high with pamphlets, and a bicycle for the final distribution. With all that activity, he still found time for us on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons. Philip will certainly be missed. He was 59.

Dave Macartney



Philip standing in front of the tower truck on which he spent many hours restoring the bodywork. *Photo: BTM Collection 30/4/07*

Late 1974

By Alan Bradley

Thirty-five years ago during November and December 1974 three important events in the Museum's history occurred. First came the laying of the access track across Wendouree Parade. Next came the first running of trams across the new access line to the existing line on Wendouree Parade. Finally came the beginning of passenger-carrying services. I witnessed some of these events as a 14 year old.

To look back on those events 35 years ago reference has been made to the Museum's annual report of 1974-75. Recently Bill Kingsley (the Museum's then Engineering Manager) was interviewed. Further input was made by Richard Gilbert, Peter Winspur and Warren Doubleday.

Background

The Ballarat Tramway Preservation Society (as the Museum was named then) was allocated six Ballarat trams: Nos. 14, 26, 27, 28, 38 and 40. For nine months after the closure of the Ballarat system these trams were housed in the old SEC tram depot on the north side of the lake. The trams then needed to be moved, as the Museum's depot was ready and the depot property was soon to be sold.

On 16 June 1972 the old depot property was auctioned. That same day No. 26 was towed along the old running track in Wendouree Parade and then derailed at the current depot access road. It was dragged along the access road and then turned at right angles with the assistance of Bob Davies' crane, then onto steel channels and

onto steel channels and into the shed. The right-angled move of No. 26 through the mud was slow and difficult and was not completed until the next day, at the cost of a broken lifeguard. The Museum then decided to build a temporary access track across the park, roughly on the alignment of the present access track.

The other five of the trams were moved in to the depot on the temporary access track. They were towed to a point opposite the access line, and then turned at right angles to the tramline. A tree winch was used to pull the trams across the road. Channelling was laid to lift them onto the guttering. Holes were broken in the guttering with pick axes to guide the wheels through. The trams were then jacked up onto the temporary track and laboriously winched by hand to the depot. The transfer of trams was completed on 18 July 1972, and the old depot was demolished soon afterwards.

Over the next two years a permanent depot fan was laid, then an access track as far as the kerb at Wendouree Parade. I have vivid memories of using a sledge hammer to break clay pipe off-cuts (like a convict on the rock pile at an old prison) to build up the floor of the depot. A substation was built, and overhead wiring constructed as far as Wendouree Parade.

Several milestones came in late 1974. On 14 July 1974 600 volts DC flowed through the overhead for the first time since late 1971. Tram No. 14 had its lights and compressor tested, and it was moved and stopped by air. On 12 October 1974



Above: BTPS President Maurie Calnin speaks before the launch on 12 October 1974.

Photo: Peter Winspur

mobility occurred for the first time when No. 27 was driven by Bill Jessup through streamers onto the depot fan, and then made several trips to the end of the access track.

The next task was the design and construction of a curved track across Wendouree Parade to the existing line to allow trams to operate.

Design

The rails for the line across the Parade were bent by the Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramways Board (M&MTB) Civil Branch at the old South Melbourne Depot, now demolished.

Bill Kingsley recalled:

“We did a swap over of rails. We had good rails ex-Geelong. The M&MTB used their rails, bent to run over the Parade, and took the ex-Geelong type. I did a Stadia survey (using readings from a theodolite), a small area like

that is good for a Stadia survey”.

The Society had to work closely with two different areas of Government: the M&MTB and Ballarat City Council.

Bill Kingsley recalled:

“Our contacts at M&MTB were Allan Trist, Doug Lees, Ken Painter, and Stan Hewish. Council Engineer Gerald Jensen was our contact at Ballarat City Council; he had confidence in us even though we were re-profiling his road. Peter Rees planned the overhead”.

Bill Kingsley recalled the engineering difficulties in planning the curve:

“The difficulty was the curve on the Parade ended not in straight track, but in a curve. Luckily the curves fitted exactly. The gradient profile was tricky, as the track had to go down to the kerb, then up to the crown of the road, then down again to the points”.

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Laying the curve

On the morning of Friday 22 November 1974 the Council closed that section of Wendouree Parade for a week, and road traffic detoured along Windmill Drive. The pre-bent rails from the M&MTB were delivered. Work commenced, and the Museum's Annual Report summarized it as follows:

“The road was excavated by contractors to our surveyed alignment and levels. We cut the old rails and placed the special work, dumped, spread and tamped base material in the excavation, craned rails into their proper place, lifted them to level, welded, canted, packed and gauged them, and added checks to the special

work. We laboured by day and night until, with the assistance of Council workers under our control, the last batch of high strength concrete went in on the Monday afternoon. We had challenged the clock and won”.¹.

Bill Kingsley recalled:

“The main work was done over four days. The four people who worked right through the four days were Peter Winspur, Peter Rees, Geoff Cargeeg and myself plus lots of helpers over the weekend. Len Doull was working for CRB [Country Roads Board]. I specified 25 mega-pascal of concrete. Len's presence with the CRB testing equipment ensured the strength and consistency of the concrete”.



Prior to concreting the track had to be tested. Bill Kingsley recalled:

“The first vehicle to test the new track was the trolley (ex-Commonwealth railways) prior to concreting. The test went well. After concreting there was a wait of a week before Gerald Jensen arranged for council to lay the asphalt”.

The first trams

Track and overhead wire was now completed, and on Saturday 7 December 1974 trams ran on the new curved line for the first time. Bill Kingsley recalled:

“The first tram across was No. 27, driven by Gavin Young. There were two return crossings with No. 27, and then came No. 40. We took it out, and we decided to take it for a complete test of the track. No. 27 came out as well, and we had 27 and 40 crossing at the loop which was a wonderful feeling. Afterwards people were saying ‘Well done Bill we didn’t think we could pull it off’. I should mention that without Peter Rees’ work on the overhead we couldn’t have operated”.

Naturally there had to be a ceremony to mark the occasion, even though passengers were not being carried at this stage. The keys of No. 40 were handed over by Bill Kingsley representing the Engineering Branch to Clyde Croft representing the Traffic Branch. This meant that traffic operations would now become the most important of the Museum’s activities.

Photo previous page: Laying the rails
BTM collection

The first passenger carrying trip took place on 24 December 1974, when a trip was run for children from the Stawell Special School. Regular passenger carrying services commenced on Boxing Day 1974.

Reflection

At the time the successful completion of the new curved line was seen as a great feat. “Modern Tramway” magazine wrote: “The BTPS may possibly have been the first volunteer tramway organization to lay a track across a public road”.² The successful co-operation with two different levels of Government boosted the Museum’s credibility, and that has continued until the present.

Looking back at the work, Bill Kingsley recalled:

“I’m happy to say there has been no settling of the track. I didn’t put in drainage at the points because I didn’t want to complicate things. Now we sometimes have trouble turning the points”.

Since December 1974 countless electric trams and even a horse tram have travelled into and out of the depot via the curved road, so the line is taken for granted. However it is worth reflecting on the achievements of late 1974 that made subsequent tramway operation possible.

Footnotes:

- ¹ BTPS Annual Report 1974-75, p.4
- ² “Modern Tramway” July 1975, p.244

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Works

Over the last two months, work in the depot has concentrated on three principle areas. In the display area power cabling, lighting and other control cabling has been installed. The new building has been plastered and painting has commenced.

Work on No. 22 is progressing with new pillars or parts being made up for the weather side and scraping down of the ceiling is progressing well. Tidying up the depot around the back of five road has enabled us to find enough space to recommence work on refurbishing No. 38's motors. It also enabled the tower truck to be returned to the depot.

The underside of No. 38 is being cleaned and some paint applied to protect the timbers from the ravages of the street running. One of the motor cases has been cleaned up, wiring renewed as needed and other work done.

Since the cycle path was installed some years ago many cyclists and especially those with narrow tyres have slipped when crossing the access track. Even after the installation of road markings and prominent signage, falls have continued to occur.

Recently, the City of Ballarat has painted a set of stripes over the road pavement between the tram rails where the tram track crosses Wendouree Parade and have painted additional warnings to cyclists on the roadway. They have also sand blasted the head of the rail in the bike crossing area to ascertain whether this may address the issue of cyclists slipping on the tram track.

New Members

The Museum welcomes the following new members:

- 803 Michael Martin of Sebastopol
- 804 Eddy Radics of Ballarat

Grants

Andrea Carroll, our fundraiser has been successful recently in obtaining several more small grants for the Museum.

These include \$3,850 from the Federal Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs *Volunteer Grants – Community Investment Program* for the purchase of small equipment items and/or fuel cost reimbursement and \$17,400 from the Victorian Heritage Grant program *Victoria's Heritage: Strengthening our Communities* which funds projects to repair, conserve and interpret heritage places and objects of importance to the community. This will be used to develop the interpretative display as part of the revamped display area at the Museum. A grant of \$500 has also been received from the CVGT Community Grant Program.



Who is the real Santa?

Visit the Museum's web page to find out.

The story of Ballarat's Santa trams is at:

http://www.btm.org.au/Santa_Trains/santatrams.html



The former SEC Bike Shed

After being severely damaged in a wind storm earlier in the year the former SEC bike shed which was donated to the Museum in 1999 and relocated to Bungaree was demolished on the 1st December by a small team of workers.



Wet Day in Ballarat

With Ballarat enjoying its best November rainfall this century, John Clowes and Austin Brehaut weren't worked particularly hard (only 8 passengers for the day) on Saturday November 28th; when 13 mm fell during the afternoon. While taking a brief lay-up at Depot Junction, your photographer decided to record the newly-painted hatching over the access track by the City Council (in the hope of preventing cyclists coming to grief as they pass over the rails), and in the process catching a car making a big bow-wave as it negotiated the flooding in Wendouree Parade. Fortunately the rain didn't hinder our progress, but certainly kept the crowds away.

Photo & story: Austin Brehaut

Note: Since the photo was taken the lines have been repainted bright yellow



Upper left: After the storm *Richard Gilbert 13/7/09*

Above: Neil Lardner photographed Richard standing in the rubble. *BTM collection 1/12/09*

Left: The shed is seen in its original location with No 40 waiting to run out in this photo by Ben Parle taken in January 1954. *BTM collection*

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“Copsnkids”

Each year Ballarat police run a four day camp for children who are being treated for cancer. Below Dave O’Neil reports on this year’s visit.

It was that time of year again for the “Copsnkids” visit on Monday 23rd November. On Saturday the weather was not looking good for the kids but on Sunday another fantastic day weatherwise. This makes it a “clean sweep” for fine days for this group of kids even the day we could not give them a tram ride when the substation was out.

Austin and I took 671 down to the roadway at 1:15 pm. By 1:30 no kids, no police cars with sirens screaming. Then out of the haze sixty four kids and carers walked up from the kiosk. Story goes that they had to burn off the McDonalds, and not only the kids.

We picked up the tram load and off we went. The usual photos were taken. On the tram was one little lad who had been on last year with his brother. We did two trips to St Aidans Drive and return and a great time was had by all. Some of the kids told me that they had never seen a tram like ours and really enjoyed the ride.

There is just a little bit of sadness about today and not by the kids. But by me. After twenty five years at Ballarat and six or seven years doing this “Copsnkids” charter I have decided to “hang up the handles” in March. I asked Roger (Salen) if he would take over from me and he agreed. I hope he does not scare the kids too much with al his “face fungus”. I am sure they will be well looked after.

Dave O’Neil



Dave, Austin, and Sgt John Maloney with two of the very happy children.

Austin Brehaut collection



Laying the curve.

Top left: One has to start somewhere. Graham Jordan & Geoff Cargeeg

Top right: The hard way. Bill Jessup is photographing Clyde Croft as he tamps the foundation

Bottom left: Adjusting the special work. Peter Rees, Peter Winspur & Geoff Cargeeg

Bottom right: Peter Rees looks on whilst Geoff Cargeeg and Peter Winspur assist the professionals.

Photos: W. J. Kingsley

Left: Boxing Day 1974.

No 38 climbs the hill towards Carlton Street late in the afternoon on the first day of scheduled services.

Photo: Peter Winspur



12. FARES PLEASE!



One day short of thirty five years after the first Museum tram ran in Wendouree Parade, Roger Salen is seen driving No 28 near Windmill Drive North. Since the tram arrived at the Museum sporting accident damage sustained under SEC ownership, it has been restored twice and run in two liveries. Currently, the tram is in its original ESCo colours. *Photo: Peter Winspur 6/12/09*

Seasons Greetings!



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.

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