

FARES PLEASE!

February 2011

News from the Ballarat Tramway Museum

Celebrating 40 Years



The fortieth anniversary of the public meeting at which the Ballarat Tramway Preservation Society was formed is on the 30th May 2011.

The event will be celebrated on **Saturday 28th May**. The details of the celebrations are being finalised but all interested members should keep the

the evening free so that they can join us in commemorating the anniversary.

Above: On Wednesday 31 March 1971, two months before the formation of the BTPS, No 32 is in Wendouree Parade rounding the curve from St Aidans Drive. Three senior tourists are enjoying the day. One is even carrying a camera. This year the park is almost as green, but kerbing and white lines now spoil the scene. *Photo: Peter Winspur*

Ballarat Trams are Ballarat History

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ANOTHER HAZARD

Right: Quadricycles for hire were a new hazard for our drivers this summer

*Photo: Peter Winspur
16/1/2011*



PREPARING FOR THE WORST

Left: Alan Snowball sandbags the rear doors. The park was already awash and our pits full.

Photo: Paul Mong 14/1/2011

IN THE WORKSHOP

Right: Alan Snowball, Neil Lardner and Alastair Reither reassemble one of No. 38's bogies

*Photo: Warren Doubleday
14/2/2011*



Around the Museum

Development of the new display continues. A computer based touch screen has been installed in the old drop centre area of No. 39 and interested visitors can gain access to the Museum's Collection and can view a large variety of photos and movie film of the tramway system. The new interpretative panels have been proof read and are about to be made up. Security cameras have been installed in the public area of the Museum and with the wonders of modern technology they are able to continuously record and store for one week clear images of all activity.

The Museum's Collection has been recently enhanced with scans of some eight hundred of Bill Kingsley's collection of slides taken from the early 1960's until recent times. They are a wonderful record of the tramway both in SEC and BTM times. Thank you Bill. The Museum has one of the best collections of photos of the streetscapes of Ballarat and is always keen to enhance it. All donations are properly catalogued and the source properly acknowledged in any publication. A recent COTMA Newsletter recently reminded us that *'Many collections have been "binned" by relatives when they clean up, not realising it could be of value to your Museum or another collecting institution.'*

The recent OH&S audit of the Museum identified that there should be a Safety Co-ordinator. Paul Mong has agreed to take on the role.

Tram No. 27, always the hardest working tram in the museum fleet is once more set up for decades of trouble free running

since returning to service after its repaint. It has led something of a charmed life, having been designated as a candidate for withdrawal, along with No. 16, in the early fifties. In the event, No. 24 collided with the Bucks Head Hotel after a runaway, so it and No. 16 were the two cars written off in 1956. In the following year No. 27 had an entire end ripped off following a collision with a truck. but was repaired and returned to service. The join where the new cab was attached can still be detected at the No. 2 end of the tram.

Following the completion of No. 27, attention was turned to a program of floor repaints, with Nos. 13, 14, 18, 27, 28, 33 and 39 all receiving attention. The full availability of all our single truck trams allowed Nos. 13, 14 and 33 to be withdrawn one at a time over the holiday period to have their drop end seats sanded back and revarnished.

The two motors from Tram No 38 have been electrically tested under 600 volts. The truck frames have been fully stripped back and repainted by our weekday workers Bryce and Jacob and they have now been reunited with their wheel sets. The next job is to reinstall the brake rigging and then the motors. The intention is to have the tram running in time to remember the 40th anniversary of closure in September.

The weekday staff are currently cleaning and undercoating overhead scrollwork in preparation for it to be re-erected in Wendouree Parade, a long promised project.

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Operations

A full lake and generally mild weather have seen patronage this year remain significantly higher than recent years. The second week of January was quite wet and the week culminated on the Friday in the very serious flooding in the west and north west of the state. Wendouree Parade flooded and trams did not run on the day. Luckily, the water subsided very quickly and we were back to normal next day.

Few tourists were around for about a week as people delayed their travel plans. In spite of this January saw 2015 passengers, the best result in seven years. In December 1052 people had travelled, also the best result in seven years.

Special thanks go to Richard Gilbert who gave up his Christmas to run the tram, the first time this had occurred since 2003. With little to do on Christmas day, Ballarat families who visit and picnic in the Gardens really appreciate the tram's presence.

Senior driver Bill Kingsley is back at work and fully repaired after surgeons replaced both his knees. Our next most senior driver, Roger Salen, returned to duty before Christmas and spent five days over the holidays giving joy to our visitors. Gavin Young spent a staggering nine days at the Museum during the holidays and drove all day on several of these days.

Len Millar single-handedly coped with 189 riders just after Christmas and Peter Bruce with 138 late in January. One feature of our operation has always been that there is no way of predicting when it will be busy. The Operations Manager kept his hand in

by spending five days on the road.

Our thanks to all those who made the holiday operation possible. As usual, Dave Macartney was there every afternoon to ensure that the trams were clean and serviceable for the next day. At the end of the month he was proud as there had been not one changeover for defect during the period.

Greg Fitzgerald has commenced driver training and is expected to join the ranks of qualified drivers very soon. He will be a welcome addition to our small band of drivers.

Our next busy time will be the Begonia Weekend (12-14 March) when the Museum is again contracted to Council to provide free transport within the Gardens.

Members

The Museum welcomes the following new members and Junior Supporter: . We hope they find their time with us is long and rewarding.

820 Ms Nadine Cranenburg of Ballarat East

821 Mr Greg Dixon of Maidstone

822 Mr Trevor Penn of Oakleigh South
5055 Master Thomas Heyes of Ballarat East

We were saddened by the recent news that Dennis Culloty has passed away. He had been a member since 1971.

Oops!!

The photo on this year's membership card should have been credited to Bruce Dixon and not Peter Winspur.

40 Years Ago: Formation of the Ballarat Tramway Preservation Society By Alan Bradley

Forty years ago the Ballarat Tramway Preservation (BTPS) was formed to preserve a part of the Ballarat system, which was shortly to close. In 1996 I interviewed foundation members Richard Gilbert and the late Neville Gower for their memories of those important first few months of the BTPS. Included are some quotes from the "Ballarat Courier" for a contemporary touch.

***Ballarat Courier 8 April 1971:** Retention of trams in Wendouree Parade is to be discussed at a meeting in Ballarat on Sunday April 18. The meeting has been organised by the Brown Hill Progress Association. Several Melbourne tram enthusiasts are expected to attend, and they will organise a meeting in Melbourne later this month. An organisation similar to "Puffing Billy" may be formed. A circular stated that trams could run on weekends and holidays, employment could be provided for some former SEC employees, and the tram sheds could be retained as a transport museum.*

***Ballarat Courier 19 April 1971:** Yesterday a steering committee was formed, initially known as the Lake Wendouree Tramways Museum Committee, at a public meeting attended by about 50 people. The intention is to establish a working tramway museum in Wendouree Parade. Encouragement will be given to any move to re-establish a ferry service on the lake, to provide a round-ticket attraction in conjunction with the trams. A sub-committee of 9 was formed. The meeting occupied the full*

afternoon, and followed a ride on a chartered tram.

Neville Gower: I dropped a note that ended with the Greater Ballarat Association, that it would be a great idea that they should keep some of the trams, keep some of the track, and maybe put in a transport museum over in the sheds. The idea was that if you had a shed at least you could preserve things, I didn't like the way the "Y" stood behind the Civic Hall¹. Then Melton Foo told me there's a meeting to try and save some of the trams at Brown Hill, and I think it was on 18 April in the afternoon at Brown Hill. There weren't a lot of people there, there was a group of what I thought were very enthusiastic young boys who had come from Melbourne on the train, and a group of historical people. And the Brown Hill Progress Association, who were very keen people, and they put up the hall, and the oval, and the swimming pool, and they thought it was time they did something else for the city. They called the meeting in this back room to the Brown Hill Hall, which if you go there today is no longer a back room, because another room has been added on since then. We met there, and it was decided that perhaps we could preserve some of the trams in Wendouree Parade, knowing it was going to be difficult because we had virtually a hostile council. Remember in '71 Sovereign Hill had been going only a few weeks or a few months, so this was something rather novel. We got together and formed some sort of committee. Melton Foo was one,

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three or four from Brown Hill were others. We called it I think the Lake Wendouree Tramways Preservation Society.

Question: Was there any thought in those days to preserving the track along Main Road to Sovereign Hill?

Neville Gower: No. As a matter of fact there was one letter, someone wrote from Sydney suggesting that we should keep the track right around the lake, up Ripon St and back along Sturt St to Hamilton Avenue, in a continuous loop. But there were problems with that, because unless you go one-way, which was westwards, there was always going to be ongoing traffic. And it was a highway, and VicRoads, or CRB as they were in those days, weren't keen on the idea. But it was never suggested going out to Sovereign Hill, because it then had only part of the main street and the bluestone entrance hall, there wasn't much else in those days. There were the Ballarat Times, the blacksmith, the bank, and the joss house. They were just in their infant state too. So no, there was no thought of going to Sovereign Hill.

Question: Was the original intention to keep the depot and powerhouse?

Neville Gower: No, there was none of that. We were just too small to do anything. All we could try and do was keep some trams in the town. We also tried to make it a historical group, but also an educational facility, which I don't think we've done as much as what was originally intended. We also thought it would be great to do something with steamboats. Unfortunately there were no steamers here, so we couldn't keep half the track. The original intention was for a transport museum, we didn't have all those facilities

back then. Today of course we have two ferries, one being an original, and now we have the "Y" working again.

***Ballarat Courier 30 April 1971:** A meeting in Melbourne last night decided to preserve part of Ballarat's tramway system. About 60 people attended the meeting, called by members of an interim steering group set up in Ballarat on 18 April. It was decided that the track in Ripon St and Hamilton Avenue should also be retained.*

Richard Gilbert: I was very active when I worked with a group of friends at Railway Head Office in Spencer St. Graham Evans at the time was President of the ARE², and we all used to take an interest in the trams in Ballarat. We went to work one morning, and we all used to meet at the door. I remember Graham Evans saying there's a meeting on at the Railway Institute in Flinders St tonight organised by Bill Jessup to save the trams in Ballarat, could we all go, and we all said yes, it could be interesting. We went to the VRI that night to Room 11 on the 3rd floor. There were some people there promoting the cause, and there were some people there knocking the cause, that might have been from another tramway museum that was setting its roots in the ground at that stage! But we were very vocal for it, and we were whipped into enthusiasm by Bill Jessup, Campbell Duncan and Paul Nicholson. From there we decided to form a society, but there was also a parallel move in Ballarat by the Brown Hill group. I got elected onto the committee that night at Room 11, and I remember there was all this yelling and shouting. There were going to be eleven positions and there were thirteen nominations, and the only way to

resolve this impasse was to create thirteen positions!

***Ballarat Courier 31 May 1971:** The Ballarat Tramway Preservation Society was formed yesterday at a meeting of the Lake Wendouree Tramway Preservation Committee with a membership of 55 local, Sydney and Melbourne supporters of a proposal to retain a tourist tram system for Ballarat. More than 80 people attended the meeting in the Lower Civic Hall, including two from Sydney and 60 from Melbourne. A council of 11 members was elected, and it was specified that at least four members were to be resident within 30 miles of the Ballarat GPO and four within 30 miles of the Melbourne GPO. The Melbourne visitors chartered a tram before the meeting. It was reported that last week Mr Foo and Mr Gower discussed the proposals with various officials. Possible alternative sites were discussed, including areas near Sovereign Hill and the former zoo, Eureka Stockade, Russell Square, and the Gillies Street frontage of Victoria Park.*

Richard Gilbert: We all went to the Greater Ballarat Association rooms one Sunday and met Melton Foo, George Netherway and Barry Ward who were involved in the proposal at Ballarat. From there we decided to have a public meeting in Ballarat and form a society dedicated to saving the trams. So we did have a meeting in the Memorial Hall, and that's another story! Being out-of-towners we were told the meeting was at the Town Hall, we all turned up at the Town Hall and there was nothing there, it was all as dead as a dodo. Someone advised us it was the Memorial Hall in that cream brick place up the road.

Prior to the meeting we had a tram tour around Ballarat in a bogie tram, whatever the number of the tram is. So we had the meeting there, and I remember one political bone of contention, we had this committee meeting prior and decided that the membership fee would be one dollar. When we got to the meeting it was announced that the membership fee would be two dollars, and there was a bit of an uproar then because people felt they hadn't been consulted. In realistic terms two dollars was ideal to cover the running costs of the Society. From there we elected Maurie Calnin as the President.

Question: Do you remember the alternative off-street proposals?

Neville Gower: We had to spend a bit of time on this. Some people may think we acted incorrectly. When you live in a city that's anti-tram, you have to act quickly and agree to look at things without necessarily agreeing with it. I think it was Councillor Webb, who suggested that if we were interested we could have anywhere we liked in Victoria Park. It was suggested we could put our depot where the old lodge building used to be, I think it was a caretaker's building. It was about a quarter of a way up the main driveway after you come off Sturt St, on the right-hand side. So naturally we agreed to look at it. So Richard and myself plotted as best we could a very poor track, along the western side of the roadway, and we could see that it could run as far as the Cattle yards. In those days VicRail ran to the Cattle yards, so you could have had a gunzel express to there and come back. But we also realised that when we came to Sturt St we had to have a very sharp turn to run to the toilet

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block, and then another sharp turn to cross Sturt St to Hamilton Avenue, so that on special occasions we could run there. That was what we had to do. We were playing politics.

Richard Gilbert: I recall the council pushing for two things. They were interested in the prospect of having a diesel-powered tram. That idea never went far, it was certainly a suggestion. They were certainly more interested in having the tramway located in Victoria Park. Actually me and Neville Gower, there was only two of us, went to Victoria Park and walked along what could be called a proposed tram route, to have fairness in debate if we were going to talk about it, so that we could possibly know what could be done at Victoria Park. When we had a BTPS Board meeting the Board was very adamant in the majority that the tramway was going to be in the Gardens or nowhere else at all.

Question: Why was it decided to choose the depot site next to the Fish Hatcheries?

Neville Gower: I think we had to find somewhere in a hurry, because we had to get out of the other place. We looked for sites, by this time the City Council was with us. The nearest site we could get was the South Gardens, which has always been more decrepit than the North Gardens. Also it was not the area for Begonia Festivals to operate in. However we then faced the problem that we were going to face objections from next door, the Fish Hatcheries, because we were going to block their airflow and goodness knows what else. The other thing was that it wasn't too far to drag the trams.

Richard Gilbert: We decided that the section of track in the Gardens would be the ideal section to preserve. We always intended to see the tram run around to Durham Point, and even beyond, to View Point down by the Powerhouse. There was the original fanciful idea of having the SEC tram depot, that was scotched pretty early in the piece. So we in our minds looked at a site around the old zoo. It was only that we were riding around on an SEC-operated tram with Eldon Hogan, it must have been a railway fan trip. Eldon pointed out this site where our tram depot now is and said that would be an ideal site, it's a long way back from the road and plenty of open land there to build on. I remember coming back later that day and walking around that site and having a tram bobbing away in what was the setting darkness. We thought maybe it would be a good site for a depot.

1. A reference to "Y" class steam locomotive No. 112
2. Association of Railway Enthusiasts

The remainder of this interview will be published in the August edition of 'Fares Please!' as part of this year's continuing story of the closure of the tramways and the establishment of the Museum during 1971.

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LAKE WENDOUREE TRAMWAY MUSEUM COMMITTEE.

Formed at public meeting Brown Hill Hall 18th April '71.

Convenors - Brown Hill Progress Association.

Object - Authentic Preservation of Wendouree Parade tram tracks, some trams, and establishment of an historical transport museum as a tourist educational project.

Proposals - Adopted by public meeting 18/4/71.

1. Trams could be operated at holiday times and at week-ends and become a valuable addition to the tourist potential of Ballarat.
2. The tram sheds, in addition to housing those trams which would be retained, could be used as a transport museum housing various forms of mechanical transport or any other object of historic interest.
3. The trams and the museum would not only be of interest to tourists, but also of educational value to future generations.
4. The suggestion that a tram be fitted with a diesel engine and placed in some other area would be unrealistic, would have little historic or tourist interest, and would be as inappropriate as placing electrically operated winding gear in the engine house at the Sovereign Hill mining village.
5. As the S.E.C. is a public body and will be relieved of considerable financial loss by being allowed to relinquish its operation of the present tramway system, there should be no question of financial reimbursement to the S.E.C. by any organisation set up to put this project into effect.
6. The removal of the paddle steamers from Lake Wendouree has been a distinct loss from the tourist potential of Ballarat and every encouragement should be given to any other body exploring the possible restoration of a paddle steamer on the Lake to operate in conjunction with the trams.
7. The cable trams of San Francisco, recognised as a major tourist attraction, have been declared a National Historic Landmark and we anticipate similar recognition may be possible for the museum project.

The interim executive was instructed by the meeting to approach local parliamentarians and the S.E.C., and to prepare a draft constitution, gather relevant information and report to a further meeting.

The executive invites the support of all interested people. Write to local members of parliament, the council or the committee.

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1971 Tramway News: Part 1 By Alan Bradley

2011 marks 40 years since the Ballarat tramway system closed. In the same year a group of enthusiasts tried to save part of the system for future generations.

Throughout 2011 we will look at a few interesting news items from “Modern Tramway” magazine, to see what else was happening in the tramway world in 1971.

January & February 1971

Australia:

- The bills for tramway abandonment in Ballarat and Bendigo were passed by the State legislature on November 25 1970, but no closure date has yet been published.
- The State Government is to make a grant of \$2 million to the M&MTB, the first subsidy in the system’s history.

Belgium:

- Further dismantling on three former Vicinal routes from Antwerpen has taken place. (*The Vicinal was an extensive system of metre-gauge country and city tramways in Belgium, which included goods services.*)
- Three tram routes in Bruzelles were diverted to the new subway, which opened on December 21 1970.

Cuba:

- The 131 km. interurban from Havana to Matanzas is still thriving. Passenger traffic is handled by American-style interurban cars running in pairs. Freight is operated by 1922-built British electric locomotives. (*In 2011 the interurban still operates.*)

Finland:

- About 40 articulated trams are to be ordered for Helsinki. (*In 2011 trams still operate in Helsinki.*)

Germany:

- The mobile library tram in Munich, which has operated since 1928, was recently replaced by two converted buses.
- The Neuss tramway system will cease operation in August 1971.

Hungary:

- New articulated cars are entering service in Budapest, Debrecen, Miskolc and Szeged. (*In 2011 trams still operate in all four cities.*)

Spain:

- Further closures have reduced the Barcelona system to two routes.

Sweden:

- A consultant’s recommendation that the Norrköping system be abandoned as soon as possible has been rejected by the planning commission. The tramways will be retained in a curtailed form until about 1990. Two routes will be curtailed, and one route extended. (*In 2011 the Norrköping tramways still operate.*)

USA:

- A tramway hold-up in Philadelphia by a present-day highwayman, who placed a log across the rails and demanded passengers’ wallets, was foiled when the motorman rammed and smashed the log without derailing his tram.
-

- The remaining wholly-surfaced tram routes in Philadelphia will be converted to bus operation, retaining the 2.5 mile subway route and its surface feeders. (In 2011 the subway-surface lines still operate in Philadelphia, and one “heritage” line operates.)

USSR:

- A 9 km express tram service is under construction in Kiev. (*Trams continue to run in Kiev in present-day Ukraine, but many lines have closed in recent years.*)
- A 9 km tram route has been opened in Krivoy Rog, and a further tram route is under consideration. (*In 2011 trams still operate in Krivoy Rog in present-day Ukraine.*)

- Plans are being drawn up in Riga for a high-speed tramway to connect two new suburbs, passing though the city centre in a subway with four stations. (*In 2011 trams still operate in Riga in present-day Latvia.*)

Yugoslavia:

- A BBC cameraman took some film sequences of the large crowds clinging to the trams on the day that the Dubrovnik tramways closed (March 20, 1970).

NEXT ISSUE: News from March and April 1971



Warren Doubleday visited Norrköping in Sweden on the 28th May 1975

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Fight to Save Ballarat's Trams

A group of young people set up a Ballarat tram-preservation society yesterday to fight against a plan for buses to take over the routes in September.

They took a freezing ride in one of Ballarat's 50-year-old trams. Members of the committee are shown taking pictures of driver Mr. Les Bird. In the afternoon they held a meeting in the town hall.

The tram-lovers hope to keep six trams operating around Lake Wendouree as a tourist attraction. The SEC, which has been operating the trams, has agreed

to give the group all the equipment it needs, except the depot.

The tramline will be operated on a voluntary basis similar to the system used with Puffing Billy.

Many of the group that braved the wintry weather were Melbourne students. The Ballarat contingent was conspicuously small.

At the town hall meeting members of the interim committee were elected to their official positions

The Age 31 May 1971



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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