

FARES PLEASE!

April 2016

News from the Ballarat Tramway Museum

A New Venture



Photo: Warren Doubleday 5/4/2016

**Inside: The launch of "Cuthberts 939"
"Two Way Traffic" – E.S.Co & the H.T.T.**

Ballarat Trams are Ballarat History

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“Cuthberts 939”

Tuesday 5th April 2016 marked a new era for the Museum with the launch of *Cuthberts 939*, our new function tram.

In 2014 the State Government provided grants to several of the regional transport museums under the *Transport Investing in the Regions* initiative. Through the Registrar, Tourist & Heritage Railways, Adrian Ponton, the Museum was granted \$40,000 to reconfigure and rehabilitate former Melbourne Restaurant Tram No 939 (*Valentine*) so it could be used as a multi purpose function tram in Wendouree Parade.

The tram was originally designed to serve prepared meals with the most basic of facilities. It was also very tired after many years in service. Over the last eighteen months an ingenious, fully compliant, kitchen has been installed. The tram has been repainted and the interior rehabilitated. The smaller end has been altered to provide a small lounge area. A major task was to replace much of the air conditioning system. The paperwork to accredit the tram to operate on our tramway took a horrendous amount of work over a period of fourteen months. In addition to the grant, the Museum invested almost \$15,000 in the project.

Representing the Minister for Public Transport, Jacinta Allan, local MLA, Sharon Knight officiated at the launch which was attended by the Mayor, Councillor Des Hudson, the federal member for Ballarat, Catherine King MHR, Joshua Morris MLC, several city councillors and other distinguished guests and many of the Museum's volunteers who assisted to bring the project to fruition.

President, Greg Rodgers, in his introduction, emphasised the contribution that the project had made to the local economy.

The launch of *Cuthberts* also gave the Museum the opportunity to launch a very ambitious plan to create an Interpretative Centre alongside the current building in conjunction with the Ballarat branch of the Returned Service League.

Representatives of the RSL were invited to the event and Alexandra Tascas, President of the Ballarat Branch, spoke along with the Museum's Vice President, Paul Mong, about the project.

Following the formalities, invited guests boarded the tram to enjoy morning coffee whilst they travelled at a very sedate pace through the beautiful gardens. Peter Waugh and family excelled themselves in providing some twenty five espresso coffees and cake in what was a very new experience for them. They looked very professional in their black BTM aprons.

Following extensive use of the new dishwasher and a quick wiping down of the tables, members and friends were invited to travel on a second journey and also enjoy the experience.

There was excellent coverage of the event in the local media.

Our thanks go to Tim Westcott, Maree McNeilly and Angela Daraxoglou of the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources for their assistance.

Why *Cuthberts*?

Avid readers of this publication will recall the article in the October 2015 edition of *Fares Please!* which recounted the story of Sir Henry Cuthbert and the major roles he played in Ballarat and in the politics of Victoria in the second half of the 19th century. His role relevant to the Ballarat tramways was that he was the first chairman of the Ballarat Tramway Company. As to be expected he was on board when our Horse Tram No 1 first visited the gardens on 26th December 1887.

The Museum has created a new business name for the venture, *Cuthberts 939*, and a web page www.cuthberts939.com.au. There you will find information detailing the various hire options.

Bookings are at bookings@btm.org.au

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939 on 28 January 2015



939 on 5 April 2016

The Launch of “Cuthberts 939”



Above: Sharon Knight, MLA addresses guests, members and friends. President, Greg Rodgers is standing alongside.



Above: Invited guests enjoy morning coffee and cake.



Above: Our first crew



Left: Careful planning was the order of the day.

Photos: Peter Winspur, Warren Doubleday, Roger Gosney, Peter Waugh

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An Interpretative Centre

For many years, the Museum has considered the possibility of developing a suitable display hall with proper public facilities. It would need to be built on the south side of the existing building. In the current building we are very constrained as to the way we can properly display our collection. The project has always been a very long term objective due to the cost and its complexity.

Over the past few years, Paul Mong has worked hard to arrange plans and obtain the necessary heritage permits to enable the Museum to seek funding for what would be the largest and most expensive project the Museum has embarked on. Several stumbling blocks continue to occur. The cost will be in the millions of dollars and funding can only be raised with government support. To obtain suitable grants of this magnitude, the facility needs to be open every day and there needs to be a business case that it will contribute to the economy of Ballarat. An article about the proposal was published in the April 2014 "*Fares Please!*"

Concurrently with the Museum seeking a solution, the Ballarat branch of the Returned Services League is also looking for a suitable home for its extensive collection.

Preliminary discussions led both organisations coming to the conclusion that the two could come together to provide a facility which would be open every day and would lead to increased tourism to the south gardens. The facility would be near the Ex Prisoners of War Memorial and also the Arch of Victory. It would allow us to properly display the most historic of our trams and provide more flexibility in the current depot.

Recently the Museum and the RSL have signed a Memorandum of Understanding which is the first step towards progressing the idea. Plans for an enlarged facility have been approved and both organisations are now in a position to seek funding for the project. It is envisaged that it would be managed separately from the day to day operations of the tramway.

Around the Museum

Begonia Festival

Great weather led to another very busy three days over the Labour Day weekend. Last year the Museum broke the record on the Sunday for the greatest number carried on one day ever. This year we still carried 2733 passengers and at 3009 passengers the Monday was the busiest since 2004. Considering that trams do not operate all day due to the procession and people tend to leave earlier on the last day this was a wonderful result. A total of 7788 people travelled on the trams over the three days.

Twenty-five of our members volunteered their time, twelve of them for the whole three days. They worked for a total of over 400 hours. Many of us unwound at a suitable pub on Saturday and Sunday evening with a meal and a few drinks. The weekend remains the best opportunity for our workers to get together, 'play real trams' (always hard work) and enjoy each other's company.

Fire protection

Through much hard work and a few major headaches, Neville Britton has overseen the installation of a high tech fire monitoring system in the depot building. We can only hope it is now never needed. The installation was funded from the Bill Kingsley bequest.

The Summer Power Bill

The Keith Atkinson bequest was used to fund the installation of the solar panels on the roof of the building and in conjunction with this a further upgrade to the substation. Recently, the treasurer received the regular three monthly electricity account. Even with the extra extended running and a much busier workshop the total bill would have been the envy of most domestic power users.

New Badged Clothing for Volunteers

To better identify our volunteers when they are not working in the traditional SEC uniform on the trams a range of clothing items with a BTM logo has been designed. Regular volunteers have been issued with an item of their choice and we hope to have a range available for sale soon.

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Operations

For the first time trams ran every day from the Begonia Festival until Easter. Results were mixed. Good Friday was the 60th anniversary of the closure of the Geelong Tramways and the Museum noted the occasion by running former Geelong trams Nos 13 & 14 over Easter. School holidays followed Easter and patronage was quite good. As usual, a very small band of volunteers kept the trams 'on the road'.

Recently joined member, Andrew Martin, has qualified as a conductor and Hugh McKelvey has completed his training as a driver. Liam Davies is our most recent assistant conductor.

“Mentors”

With the influx of an encouraging number of new volunteers over recent years, it is imperative that the Museum takes steps to ensure that they believe they are welcome and that they feel that they fit in. To that end the Board agreed that it should develop a mentor system. The mentor oversees the new volunteer's orientation and training in the area they choose to work in until they feel 'at home'.

Neville Britton will mentor workshop volunteers, Peter Waugh our Depot Guides and Geoff Gardner those who wish to work in traffic. Operations Manager, Peter Winspur, is always available to assist with any queries.

The Depot “Fan”

Beautification of the area in front of the Museum, considered by the Board to be one of the most pressing projects, commenced on Monday 11th April when our contractor, John Shaw, and his work team assisted by our weekday workers, commenced to dig up the area and replace of most of the sleepers under the track.

We had first commenced laying two road outside the building in September 1972 using second hand nine foot long sleepers obtained from the railways. Each one was cut down by hand to seven feet using a huge cross cut saw. We were young then! Suffice to say there was little left of them when the track was exposed this month.

The opportunity was taken to replace the curved rails leading into three road with new rail which was purchased from *Yarra Trams* and bent by them for us. This replaced a rather unsuitable section installed when the points to the original servicing track were removed after the new pits came into service in the new shed.

John Shaw will return in late May to continue the resleepering of 4 to 7 roads. If you would like to assist with a shovel, Warren Doubleday would be really happy to hear from you.



Above: April 1973. The 'horse' used to cut the sleepers is visible. In 2013 we captioned a photo that 2 road had never been touched. In 2016 we found little was left of these sleepers

Photo: Peter Winspur

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Signage

At its February meeting the Board approved the designs for the replacement and enhancement of all our signage. Some of the proposed signs will require heritage approval. The first step was to replace the very tired 'A' frames used at the major stops along the line. Three new style signs have now arrived and have been pressed into service.

Horse Tram Display

New descriptive panels have been mounted on the wall alongside Tram No 1. In keeping with the panels in the display area, they look superb.

Communications

The Museum has moved into the 21st century with the installation of an electronic Eftpos machine and broadband has become available to enable us to move beyond dial up internet. Arrangements can now be made for intending passengers to prepay their fares if cash is short.

Below:

Out with the old, in with the new. Even with machines there is still a place for navvies.

Photo: Peter Waugh 12/4/16



Membership News

The Museum welcomes the following new members:

- 901 Mrs Sue Sainty of Alfredton
- 902 Mr Nathan Fletcher of Dereel
- 903 Mr Carl Mahoney of Sebastopol

and Junior Supporters:

- 5081 Master Thomas Sainty of Alfredton
- 5082 Master Jack Sainty of Alfredton

We have received word that long term member, Harry Whitton of Richmond, NSW, has passed away. He was approximately ninety years of age. Harry had been a member since 1971.



Above:

Laying the second hand sleepers for 2 Road in about September 1972.

Andrew Cook is on the left, possibly Geoff Cargeeg on the right. Former foundation member David Wischer is the shirtless gentleman.

*Photo: BTM Collection
Photographer uncertain
(probably Richard Gilbert)*

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Two-Way Traffic

Over the years, the Ballarat Tramway purchased a large number of second-hand trams from Melbourne and other places, beginning a tradition that recently saw our acquisition of former Colonial Restaurant Car 3, now our exclusive function tram “Cuthberts 939.”

With the centenary of the opening of the Hawthorn Tramway Trust (HTT), a number of visitors will be making the trip to the Museum to see our collection of surviving HTT trams. However, the relationship between the Ballarat Tramway and the Melbourne tramways was not one sided, and there was traffic in the opposite direction.

The Hawthorn Tramway Trust began in 1916. It was created under the Melbourne to Burwood Tramways Act, 1914, with the purpose of building and the operating an electric tramway in the City of Melbourne, Richmond, Hawthorn, and Camberwell. The Trust took over the Melbourne Tramway and Omnibus Company's horse tram route which ran along Riversdale Road to allow the new electric line to be constructed.¹ The new line meant that the HTT was the only early electric tram operator to have a route to the city, which was then only served by the Melbourne cable tramway system.²

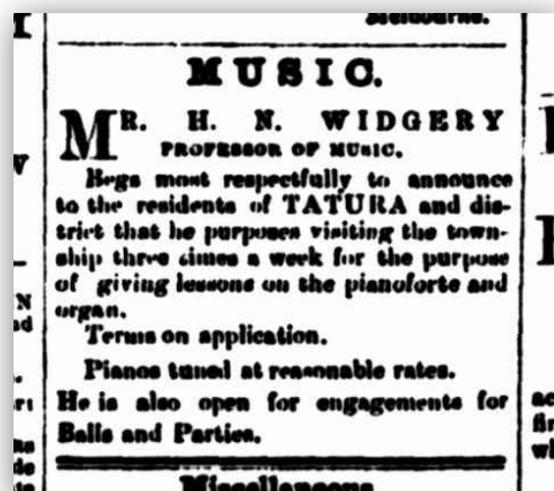
The HTT built the Hawthorn tram depot which today houses the Melbourne Tramway Museum. To run the tramway, the trust purchased 10 small single bogie and 10 large double bogie cars from Duncan and Fraser, Adelaide. This company had built Ballarat's horse trams in 1887, and, in Ballarat, had converted the second hand trams which became Ballarat's first electric trams in 1905.

At the time the HTT was being planned, the Ballarat Tramway was in financial difficulties. The Electric Supply Company of Victoria (ESCo) was running at a financial loss and was looking at ways to reduce expenditure. Their treatment of employees was harsh, for example no lunch breaks and a high rate of suspensions for minor breaches of the company rules.

Hector Norman Widgery became a casual conductor with ESCo, and by January 1913 he was appointed as a casual motorman. Arthur Hugo described the working conditions for a casual at this time:

“(He)...would report for duty at 6.00am hoping for work. If there was no work he would report again at noon, and maybe again at 3.00pm. When he did obtain a permanent position he worked from 6.00am to 11.45pm, seven days a week, on tram without windscreens...”³

Widgery, born in Tatura in 1890, was the son of music teacher Hector Widgery and his wife, Louisa Poole.⁴ The family moved to Ballarat in about 1903 where they were living in Compton Street. Widgery's older brother, Ernest Albert Widgery, had been employed by ESCo as an arc lamp attendant, and became a motorman in 1912.



An advertisement from the Kyabram Union, 1888 for H. N. Widgery (Sen).

Widgery was made permanent in 1913 when ESCo electrified the tramway to Sebastopol. However, the company introduced changes to save money, including the operation of one man trams. This allowed 37 conductors to be sacked in 1915. Drivers were not paid any extra for the increased workload until 1919.

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Against this background it is not surprising that a position with a new company, with new trams, would be attractive to men from Ballarat. In 1915, with World War One taking available manpower, the HTT must have been searching for experienced tram crews to operate their new tramway. Widgery, and a large number of other Ballarat tram employees resigned and moved to Melbourne.⁵

Widgery was a competent and popular employee on the new HTT tramway. Everything must have been looking promising; he married in 1915, and a daughter, Thelma, was born soon afterwards. With his experience and background from Ballarat, he was soon working as an acting inspector. On Wednesday September 4, 1918, three years after leaving Ballarat, Widgery was tragically killed in a work place accident at the Hawthorn Tram Depot, when he slipped and fell into a maintenance pit.

“Tragic Death of Tramway Motorman. Slipped from Car in Shed and Fractured Skull.

Employees of the Hawthorn Tramway Trust paid their last respects to their former workmate, Mr. Hector Widgery, by attending the funeral which took place at Burwood on Sunday. Mr. Widgery was a motorman and had been marked by his officers for early promotion. He had on several occasions fulfilled the duties of acting inspector. Death came to him in a tragic way. On the previous Wednesday he was getting a car ready to depart from the depot. He slipped and fell into the pit, and fractured his skull. For three days he was unconscious in the Melbourne Hospital, the end coming on the Friday evening. Mr. Widgery was 28 years of age and leaves a young wife and a month old baby girl. Fifty of the tramway employees, in uniform, headed by Mr. C. T. Galway (the traffic superintendent), Mr. J. Abfalter and Mr. T. Jewell (secretaries of No. 1 and No. 2 Branches of the Australian Tramway Employee Union), with 40 other employees in mufti, marched in front of the hearse, which left deceased late residence at 2 Inverleith street, Auburn. The pallbearers were Messrs. C Bourke, C. Whitelaw, W. Simpson, W Higginbotham, C. Barr and T. Lennon and

the coffin was borne to the grave by Messrs. G. Moore, J. Richardson H. O. Davies, J. Whiteside, C. Gihlit and R. Scott. Many floral emblems of sympathy were placed on the grave including wreaths from Hawthorn Tramway Employees, from the Tramway Social Club, from the Traffic Clerical and Rolling Stock staffs, from the tradesmen and from employees of Ballarat Municipal Tramway, where deceased was formerly employed.”⁶

Widgery was buried in the Burwood Cemetery, Plot: CE 4 D 443.



Hector Norman Widgery's grave in the Burwood Cemetery. Photo courtesy of Sue Maio, 2013.

Other Ballarat tramway men who moved to Melbourne included W. Allan, a former storekeeper who worked in the ESCo office. Allan became a motorman on the Ballarat Tramway on 22 August 1915, but soon resigned to start work with the HTT.⁷ E. J. Penhall and W. Simpson, two original electric tram motormen from 1905, left to take up positions with The North Melbourne Electric Tramways and Lighting Company at Essendon when it opened in 1906.⁸

In 1912 E. B. Williams became an inspector at Essendon. They were joined later by another original motorman, John Cottrell, who resigned in 1915 to start work at Essendon.⁹ F. Crossley, an experienced motorman from Bradford City

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Tramway, was offered a job in Ballarat, but turned it down to work with Prahran and Malvern Tramways Trust.¹⁰ A. A. Whittle, another of the original motormen, and Harry Wills (1906) left in 1910 to work with the PMTT.^{2,11} John James McHutchinson, a motorman with five years' experience, left in December 1915, to work with the PMTT.¹² Edward Stokoe, who had been a motorman in Ballarat for eight years, was working with the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board in 1919.¹³ John Eddy Tippett (1892-1948)¹⁴, a former Ballarat gold miner, worked for ESCo as a motorman from 1916-1920. He was dismissed, and then convicted for stealing coins from the farebox.^{15,16} Perhaps he did not include this fact on his resume, as he was working for the MMTB in 1924.¹⁷

The Melbourne tramway companies were amalgamated into the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board in 1919. As it renewed its tram fleet, many of the older cars were sold to the Ballarat Tramway. This included 10 trams from Hawthorn. The Ballarat Tramway Museum still operates three of these trams today, Trams 26, 27, and 28. Tram 26 has been restored back to its original configuration as it would have been operated by the HTT along Swan Street in Richmond. It certainly would have been driven by Hector Widgery, and perhaps it was the tram from which he fell. As I walk around our depot, I often think of him, and take extra care around the pits.

Peter Waugh

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4. Federation Index Victoria 1888-1901, Index to Births, Deaths, and Marriages in Victoria, 1890 Births, Ref. No. 28159, Macbeth Genealogical Services, 1997
5. Electric Supply Company Employee Register, p. 7, 19
6. 1918 'Tragic Death of Tramway Motorman—Slipped from Car in Shed and Fractured Skull.', *Richmond Guardian*, 14 September, p. 2.
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11. Electric Supply Company Employee Register, pp. 3, W
12. Electric Supply Company Employee Register, pp. 7, 19
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14. Ancestry.com. Australia, Death Index, 1787-1985 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com
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16. 1920 'COUNTRY NEWS.'. *The Argus*, 23 June, p. 10,
17. Victorian Electoral Roll, 1924.

Our trams built for the Hawthorn Tramways Trust

Three of the Museum's trams were built in 1916 by Duncan & Fraser of Adelaide for the Hawthorn Tramways Trust. They were purchased by ESCo for Ballarat in June 1930

No 26 Entered service as No 5. Became M&MTB M Class No 111.

No 27 Entered service as No 10. Became M&MTB M Class No 116.

No 28 Entered service as No 7. Became M&MTB M Class No 113.

Tram No 33 was commenced in 1918. Wartime supply issues saw an incomplete tram delivered. The HTT was suffering from serious financial issues and sold seven cars to the Footscray Tramways Trust for their yet to be completed tramway. Delays saw the trams run by the M&MTB at Hawthorn for two months in 1920 as Nos 33-39. They went to the isolated Footscray system (by then under the M&MTB) in 1921 before transferring to Essendon in 1923-24. Our No 33 was renumbered by the M&MTB from 39 to 189 and classified as an M Class. It was bought by the SEC in 1935.

See: Destination City 5th Edition (1993) p.58, Bob Prentice - Tramway by the River (c1993) p.16

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COTMA Conference

The 2016 Conference will be held in Christchurch New Zealand from Thursday 13th to Monday 17th October 2016. Planning is well advanced. Hotel accommodation will be in the central city with a budget option offered. Pre and post conference tours are being planned. A Partners tour will also be offered. Renowned for his great tours, Richard Gilbert is the organiser for the post conference tour.

Following the devastating earthquake in 2011, Christchurch has become a very interesting place to visit as it undertakes an almost complete reconstruction of the city centre. The city tramway has been extended and is a wonderful way of learning about the disaster and the plans for the future. Every tourist dollar will go towards helping the city recover from the catastrophe.

See: www.cotma.org.au

Queries about the Conference should go to:
cotma2016@ferrymeadtramway.org.nz



Above: “No 111 lifted off by Station Crane”

BTM collection

Late member, George Netherway was there in 1930 to capture a bogie less No 26 as it was unloaded at Ballarat station.

Launch of restored Ballarat Tram No 37

Following closure in 1971, Tram No 37 was acquired from Ballarat by the Sydney Tramway Museum along with No 12 to enhance the ability of the museum to represent the various tramway systems from all over Australia.

Over the past twelve years, the museum has completely refurbished No 37 and plans to launch the tram on Sunday 5th of June 2016. Photos of the tram suggest that the restoration has been superb.

No 37 commenced its life with the Hawthorn Tramways Trust as No 13 and later as M&MTB No 119. Much travelled, it went to Geelong in 1948 as No 35 and then Bendigo as No 1 before finally reaching Ballarat in 1961. The launch coincides with the tram’s centenary year.

The day will be entitled an “All Victoria Day” and all the trams planned to operate or be on display will be from Victoria. They include Bendigo 11, W2 249, Y1 611, Z2 111, Grip Car No 322 and No 37. The STM is hoping to encourage Victorian fans to visit for the day.

Further information is at:

www.sydneytramwaymuseum.com.au

Isle of Man Horse Tramway

We reported last issue that in January the Douglas Borough Council had decided to no longer operate the historic horse tramway which runs along the promenade in Douglas due to substantial losses.

Following an extensive campaign to save the tramway, the Manx government has announced that the Department of Infrastructure will take on responsibility for the operation of the Douglas Bay horse tram service for the 2016 season. This will give time to find a long term solution.

Anyone who has visited the Isle of Man would strongly recommend tram and railway enthusiasts to consider a visit to ride the three separate historic tramways and the preserved railway.

See: www.friendsofdbh.org/

11. FARES PLEASE!



Relaying the Depot Fan

Below:

The condition of the old sleepers showed that their replacement was certainly due.



Above:

Our 'Tram Tuesdays' volunteers had plenty to do. 12/4/16



Left:

Understanding the new fire panel. 12/4/16



Above: A test run of *Cuthberts 939* just before Easter required hot cross buns. 22/3/16



Left: Soon the crews will be demanding a special coffee tram to provide refreshment. Hugh McKelvey. 5/4/16

Photos: Peter Waugh & Roger Gosney

12. FARES PLEASE!



Begonia Festival 2016

*Photos:
Peter Winspur &
Alan Bradley*



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