

FARES PLEASE!

October 2020

\$2.50 incl. GST

News from the Ballarat Tramway Museum

Geelong No. 2 arrives in Ballarat



Photos: Alastair Reither



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Annual General Meeting

This was planned for Sunday 22 November. COVID restrictions mean other options are now being considered.

Letter to the Editor: Re. Old Photo

From: Paul Nicholson:

The picture in the August "Fares Please" of W7 1028 and W2 504 at West Maribyrnong was taken on the AETA Good Friday 1961 tour. I was a passenger! 1028 was a last minute choice because the original plan was to use PCC 980. I seem to recall trolley wheels were reinstalled on 1028 so it could go to Footscray. It certainly went to the depot in Buckley Street.

The tour was designed to appeal to AETA members on their way to the Easter Convention in Adelaide. They travelled on The Overland on Good Friday night. I was not quite 11 years old! I can't remember the numbers of the trams used on the local lines tour but Jeffrey Bounds is sure to know. Maybe Graeme Cleak was a passenger on the AETA tour?

Workshop News

Some work has been going on behind the scenes with a couple of small workgroups. Mick Duncan and Gordon Bentley have been busy and the compressor on Tram 671 has been replaced with a refurbished unit.

Simon Jenkins, Len Millar, and Alastair Reither have been working on Tram 1029, which is one

of the W7 class trams from Newport. The roof canvas has been removed, and the side panels have been stripped and prepared for repainting. Chris Phillips has been working at home stripping the paint from the brass window frames, and Greg King is sandblasting some other sections.



Unloading Tram 28. Photo: Alastair Reither

Tram moves

There have been some major tram relocations during September. Geelong tram No. 2 was finally completed at the Bendigo Tramway workshops, and was delivered to Ballarat where final inspections and testing can take place. To make room in our crowded depot, Tram 28 has been relocated to off site storage. This tram does require some major body restoration, so taking it out of service can allow that to happen.

To make our storage area accessible for heavy vehicles during wet weather, 150 tonnes of crushed rock have been laid along the drive-

The Ballarat Tramway Museum acknowledges the Wadawurrung as the Traditional Owners of this land and pays our respect to their Elders, past, present, and emerging.

way. Tram 661 has also returned from Bendigo and has gone into storage. A detailed assessment of the accident damage has shown that the costs of having the tram repaired at Bendigo are currently beyond our available resources. The Board are looking at other options before making a decision on the tram's future. Organising the logistics of these tram movements has kept



Tram 1029 ready for repainting. Photo: Alastair Reither

Paul Mong and a small group of volunteers very busy.

Track work

Track maintenance still needs to be done to ensure that we are ready to operate when the restrictions are lifted. We are planning track welding over the next month.

New regulations

The responsibility for rail safety has moved from the Victorian government to a new federal body. This requires that we now have to meet national rail safety accreditation, and several of our policies have to be updated to meet the new rules. This has kept Peter Winspur and Greg Rodgers, and Warren Doubleday, busy during the winter months, ensuring that we will meet the standards during the next audit.

Reopening—?

At the time of writing, COVID-19 restrictions mean that we are still not able to reopen. Peter Waugh has been busy and prepared our COVID safe reopening plans, so everything is in place for an eventual return to operations. However,

the COVID requirements will mean that it will be a long time before we can run the “normal” tram service that has been going since 1974.

With the total loss of revenue, the Museum is under financial pressure, as we still have costs and expenses to meet. Our Treasurer, Carolyn Cleak, is making sure that we can remain financially viable in the long term. This pressure has been felt by all heritage rail operators, so we are not alone.

Extension plans

Plans for our proposed extension were approved by Heritage Victoria. Tenders for detailed construction plans and building were called for in September. A number of companies have submitted tenders which are currently being evaluated. Hopefully the next issue of “Fares Please” will be able to give full details of the proposal. Thanks to Paul Mong, Virginia Fenelon and Warren Doubleday (and several others) who have worked hard to get the project to this stage.

New members

- 992—Sam Daly of Vermont and Junior Supporter (5099)Henry Daly

Keeping in touch

The Museum has been making an extra effort to keep in touch with the our volunteers and the public through social media. Articles in this issue show what has been happening on Instagram, Facebook and WhatsApp.

Fifty Year Celebrations

Our 49th Anniversary passed quietly, but noted on our social media pages. Next year, 2021, marks 50 years since the Ballarat tramway closed, and 50 years since an intrepid band of volunteers established what is now the Ballarat Tramway Museum. John Whiting is drawing up plans for a grand celebration.

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Simon Jenkins at work on the roof of Tram 1029. Photo: Alastair Reither



Track maintenance and cleaning are still taking place, so we can be ready to operate when restrictions are lifted.

Photo: Paul Mong

The Ballarat tramway during the Great Depression 1932-33

By Alan Bradley

Preamble

In a previous article I wrote about the Spanish flu epidemic of 1919, which had some similarities with today's COVID-19 epidemic (Fares Please, April 2020). Another consequence of the current crisis has been the sudden increase in the national unemployment rate. Comparisons have been made to unemployment during the Great Depression of the 1930s.

While the current crisis began with a pandemic, the Great Depression began instead with the Wall Street stock market crash of October 1929. Prior to that Australia during the roaring 20s had a high level of overseas loans to pay for various infrastructure projects (such as the building of the Sydney Harbour Bridge), paid for by the primary exports such as wheat and wool. A global oversupply of these commodities during the late 1920s led to a fall in prices. The stock market crash led to Australia, and many other industrialised countries, falling into Depression.



The Sydney Harbour Bridge, commenced in 1929.

Photo: State Library of New South Wales

After the stock market crash hundreds of thousands of Australians lost work. Registered un-

employed in Ballarat rose from 150 to 1030 between January and August 1930, and to 1600 in January 1931. Even those employed did it hard, as wages were cut by 10% in 1931. The Ballarat North Railway Workshops rostered single men to work two out of three weeks, and married men to work seven out of eight weeks with staff reduced by 50%.



1930s Ballarat gold rush, from Frank Thring Senior's film "Provincial cities of Australia: Ballarat, Victoria".

By 1933 the unemployment rate in Ballarat was 26.9%, while in Sebastopol it was 32.3%, the seventh highest municipality in Victoria. During the depression many of the unemployed turned to mining, creating a new gold rush in the Ballarat district.

Like the current pandemic, the rise in unemployment led to great social misery. Unemployed men would "jump the rattler" (jumping on to a goods train) to look for work in other towns. So many needed the comfort of alcohol that the Ballarat Brewery continued through the Depression with only occasional rationing of work.⁽¹⁾ Recently-released new data shows one in five Australians have bought more alcohol than usual during the COVID-19 pandemic.⁽²⁾

The tramways during the Depression

The Electric Supply Company (ESCo) had been running the Ballarat electric tramway system since 1905. In February 1929 (not long before the Wall Street crash) the ESCo reached agreement for the State Electricity Commission of Victoria (SEC) to take over the Ballarat power

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Sturt Street, 1930s. From the BTM Collection

supply and tramways from 1 July 1934. The ESCo would still operate the tramways until then – during the early years of the Great Depression.

Early in 1931 wages on the Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong tramways were reduced by 10%. Early in 1932 the ESCo laid off some of its "point boys", who rode the trams westward in Sturt Street from Grenville Street and turned the points at Lydiard Street. Only one point boy remained, from 11 am to 7 pm. Before and after those times drivers had to stop the tram on a steep grade and turn the Lydiard Street points themselves. The tramways union fought for the re-employment of the point boys, as well as the restoration of the 10% wages cut the previous year.

The 1932-33 year, when unemployment was at its peak, began with an unusual incident:

Obstructions discovered on the Ballarat tram lines on Wednesday night are believed to indicate an intention to hold up the last tram from Sebastopol, which takes the cash to the Company's strong-room. Fortunately the spikes driven in near the Macarthur and Drummond Street intersections were seen by the driver before the tram could reach them.⁽³⁾ (The ESCo's office was at the View Point Power Station, and the

last tram took the takings there to the "Company's strong-room".)

By 1932-33 the tram track in Ballarat was in a poor condition, especially in Albert Street Sebastopol. In August 1932 a tram derailed in Albert Street and collided with a tree. The tramways union asked the Sebastopol Council to consider "the removal of trees and other objects adjacent to the tram tracks which are likely to cause too sudden a stop in their flight off the rails". The Councillors were amused, and one said

that the trams should be fitted with wings.⁽⁴⁾

The ESCo's "Ballarat Tramways report for year ending 30th June 1933" portrays the tramways at the height of the Depression. The most interesting sections of the report are quoted here.



Lydiard Street North, 1930s. From the BTM Collection

Services

The tone of the report shows from the first page: "The year just concluded has been a continuance of the general depression and consequently our traffic has been somewhat on a par with that experienced in the previous year".

Later it states: "The reduced services enumerated in my last report have continued throughout the year, and there appears no likelihood of

traffic warranting an increase in the immediate future”.

During weekdays the number of cars running ranged from 10 in the mornings to 17 in the afternoon and evenings. After 8.00 pm on week nights, the minimum service of 10 cars was supplemented by three cars for theatre traffic 10.30 pm to 11.00 pm.



No. 22, one of the “Brush cars Two Man Type”. BTM

On the Gardens lines on Saturday and Sunday afternoons three cars ran the service during winter, and 5 during summer. On the busiest days the traffic was “carried by circular running to the 5 car schedule with cars running in duplicate and triplicate”.

Nearly all of the fleet of 23 trams were needed on holidays and main traffic days, even in those Depression days:

The heaviest demands for rolling stock during the year under review occurred on Christmas Day (Friday) 21 cars, (Saturday) 19, Boxing Day (Monday) 22, (Tuesday) 18, New Year’s Day 23, Regatta & Railway Picnic Day (wet) 16, Eucharist Celebration at St Patrick’s Cathedrals (Sunday) 21 (including 9 chartered), Saturday February 11 1933 heavy Picnic traffic 22 (including 8 chartered). Band Contest Saturday 21 cars.

Band contests had re-started in Ballarat, and the South Street competitions continued to draw crowds. But “football traffic locally has so de-

teriorated due to lack of interest as to be practically negligible”. The Agricultural Society held its last show at the Wendouree Parade site (corner of Haddon Street) during the year, but there had been a notable decrease of patronage at the Show during the last few years. The next Show was due to be held in Norman Street, some distance from the lakeside tramway.

“ANA Day” (26 January) was named after the Australian Natives Association, which had campaigned for 26 January to be celebrated as Australia Day on a Monday, making a long weekend. It had been a Public Holiday in Victoria since 1931. The traffic on ANA Day was ruined that year by rain.

Even during the Depression people wanted to enjoy themselves. But comparisons of takings for each of those days in 1932-33 compared with 1929-30 showed there had in fact been a decline during the years of the Depression. (The symbol “£” means pounds, which was the main currency in those days.)

- Show Day: 1929 £105, 1932 £90.
- Christmas Eve: 1929 £149, 1932 £129.
- Boxing Day: 1929 £183, 1932 £157.
- New Year’s Day: 1930 £204, 1933 £166.
- ANA Day: 1930 £135, 1933 £51 (wet).
- Regatta & Railway Picnic: 1930 £236, 1933 £116 (wet).
- Easter Sunday: 1930 £101, 1933 £78.
- Easter Monday: 1930 £138, 1933 £111.

There was a noticeable loss of theatre traffic since the conditions became depressed, although theatres were still well patronised. “It is obvious that the economy being practiced is to save tram fares. At one time six to seven extra cars were needed on Saturday nights to deal with the exodus from the theatres, but since the depression we generally use only three”.

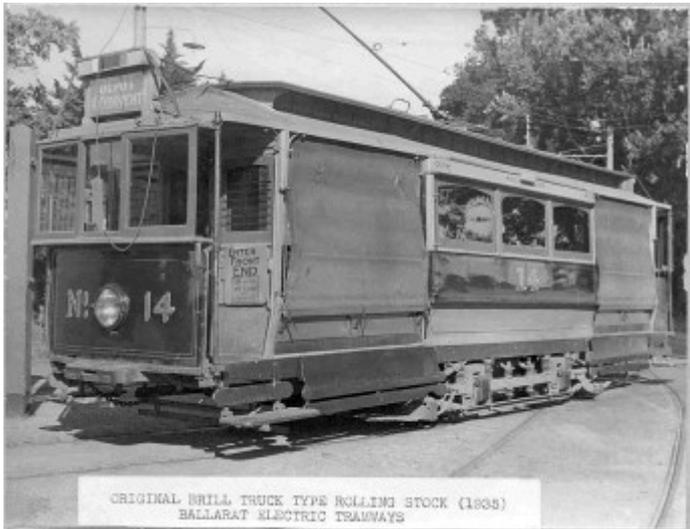
Trams

During 1932-33 there was a mixture of the older ESCo cars and former Melbourne cars. Car mileage was listed against each of the trams.

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The tram types as described in the report were:

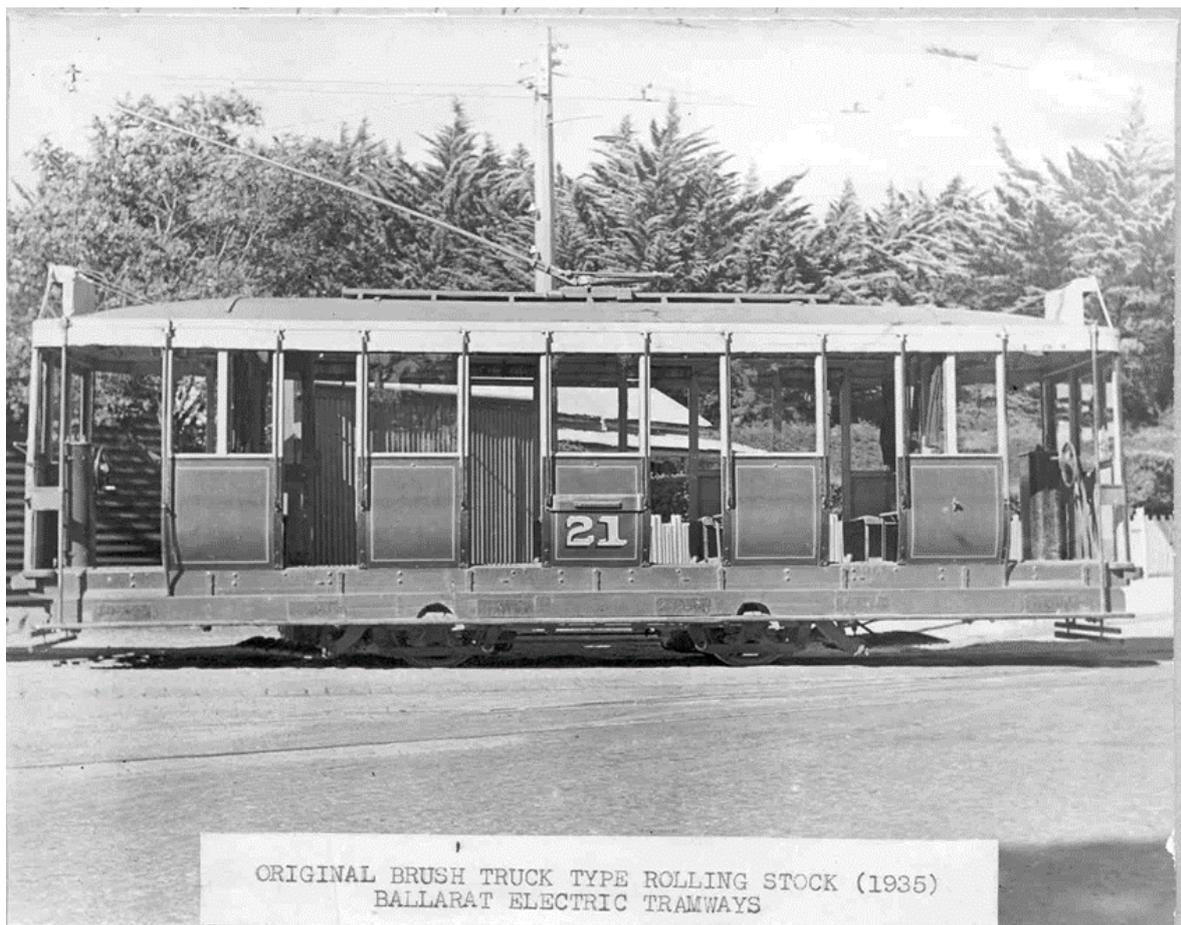
- Old Brill one man type – Nos. 1, 3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 17. (This indicates that our own No. 12 had been scrapped by then.)
- Brush cars two man type – Nos. 21, 22, 23.
- Melbourne cars panelled type - Nos. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28.
- Melbourne cars open type - Nos. 16, 18, 19, 20, 29. (No. 29 was later re-numbered 17.)



The mileage figures for the “Old Brill one man type” were lower than the mileage for the other types. With the Melbourne cars in constant use “the service has been considerably improved on account of the comparative freedom from minor troubles necessitating withdrawal to the depot”. But the new cars were getting a bad shaking on the rough track. Some of the joints on the bodies were working loose, and life guards dropped and broke on the setts⁽⁵⁾ in the track.

The older cars had been strengthened where possible and “although not doing the work the new cars do, are in fairly good condition and being painted and clean are giving good service”. The Brush cars had been overhauled the previous year, and “these cars whose extra-long wheelbase is desirable on the Rubicon Street-Sebastopol section of track have been more consistently in service”.

While the Melbourne cars had already been fitted with air brakes prior to arrival in Ballarat, the older cars all had hand brakes with magnet-



ic emergency brakes. “On account of the heavy magnetic of the Brush cars causing numerous breakdowns it was decided to discard it and rheo-static braking installed instead”.

The “Melbourne cars Panelled Type” had not yet been equipped with locks on the trellis gates.

These, and the open type cars require considerable supervision on account of the ease with which entrance or exit can be made other than at the front end. Generally the Ballarat public are educated to the Cars, and the system, but with visi-



No. 26, one of the “Melbourne cars Panelled Type”, with the narrow doors that were part of Phase 2 conversion.

tors, especially on such occasions as Band Contests, Fire Brigade Demonstrations etc, they are apt to be more high-spirited and every vigilance is necessary to safeguard against loss of revenue.

One narrow escape from injury occurred when a destination box on a Melbourne car fell on a driver’s head. “Fortunately he had the windscreen open and the car was travelling slowly. The blow received was of a glancing nature and the box fell through the aperture to the roadway without damage to window. No injury resulted to the driver and steps were taken to make a repetition impossible”.

Track

The ESCo originally laid the track on “stringers” (concrete blocks), held in gauge with

tie bars. Bluestone setts were laid between the rails and for one row on the outside of each rail. By the early 1930s much of the track had subsided, creating hollows that filled with water.

Five men were constantly employed in repair work on the various routes. The track maintenance varied from laying of new rail near the corner of Sturt and Grenville Streets, to lifting of low sections of track and replacing broken tie rods. “High setts are rather troublesome and one man makes periodical inspections and lowers the high setts where necessary”.

The SEC trams

In July 1932 , at the beginning of that 1932-33 year, the SEC began an investigation into the best way to serve the transport needs of Ballarat and Bendigo. An examination of all assets in Ballarat and Bendigo showed that both conditions were in a deplorable condition, except for the poles and the recently-purchased Melbourne cars. To bring the Ballarat and Bendigo systems up to modern standard for 25 years would have cost £336,000. That amount was seen as too high for two provincial tram systems, but £170,000 would provide adequate service for up to 15 years.

The three options considered were:

- Recondition the tramways for an estimated life of 15 years.
- Replace the trams with trolleybuses, with an estimated life of 15 years.
- Replace the trams with privately-operated petrol buses, with an estimated life of eight years.

The final report found that reconditioning of tramways was the most economical option, and trams were also better for dealing with peak-hour traffic. In 1933 unemployment was at its peak, and the report found that tramway reconstruction would provide work for nearly 50% of the unemployed in Ballarat and Bendigo. Trolleybuses or petrol buses would have had to be imported, taking money out of the country, whereas existing trams could be reconditioned locally.

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The £170,000 was to be funded as follows: £100,000 from Federal unemployment relief funds; £50,000 from the State Government; and £20,000 from the SEC. It was expected that of the 1,000 unemployed men receiving “sustenance”⁽⁶⁾ in Ballarat and Bendigo, 540 men (60 skilled, 480 unskilled) were expected to be employed on the project.⁽⁷⁾ Clearly, tramway reconditioning would never had happened if there had not been an unemployment crisis.



*Unemployed labour track laying in Sturt Street.
BTM Collection*

The SEC took over management of the tramways on 1 July 1934. Trackwork began four months later, in November 1934, when the first 23 unemployed men began relaying the track in lower Sturt Street.

Aftermath

By 1935 the economy began to recover. In that year the SEC introduced its standard one-man tram - the Stage 3 type with the wider doorways, painted green and operated by staff in green uniforms. By the end of 1936 the old Brill and Brush trams had been scrapped, except for No. 23 which was converted to a scrubber. By February 1937 there were 100 men employed, and altogether 500 unemployed men had worked on the project in Ballarat. The trackwork ended in August 1937, with the opening of the Lydiard St North extension.

It was the recovery of Australia's major trading

partners, especially Great Britain after it began re-arming from 1936, and Government public works that brought about the slow recovery from the Depression. By the start of the Second World War unemployment was down to 11%.

How does the unemployment in the COVID-19 crisis compare to the Great Depression? Australia's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate jumped from 5.2% in March to 6.2% in April 2020, due to business closures and lockdowns from the coronavirus pandemic. The number of unemployed surged by 104,500 to 823,300.⁽⁸⁾ During April Treasury forecast that the jobless rate would double in the June quarter to 10%. Those figures are much lower than the jobless rate during the peak of the Depression. But Treasury estimated that the unemployment rate would be much higher, and peak at 15%, had the Government not intervened with the \$130 billion JobKeeper wage subsidy program.⁽⁹⁾

According to Statista, the German online portal, the Australian unemployment rate will rise from 5.18% in 2019 to 7.62% in 2020, and 8.92% in 2021. Will these predictions be accurate? Only time will tell.

References

1. Weston Bate, *Life after gold*”, P. 84
2. YouGov poll of 1,000 adults commissioned by the Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education
3. Sun News-Pictorial 30 July 1932
4. Ballarat Courier 22 August 1932, 10 September 1932
5. Setts were bluestone paving blocks placed on both sides of the track.
6. "Sustenance" was the term used during the Great Depression for welfare payments.
7. Report “Reconstruction of Ballarat and Bendigo tramways”, 4 May 1933.
8. Trading Economics, Australia Unemployment rate. <https://tradingeconomics.com/australia/unemployment-rate>
9. Unemployment rate predicted to reach 10 per cent amid coronavirus pandemic, pushing Australia into recession. ABC News 13 April 2020.

Follow us on Instagram



A selection of photos by Peter Waugh taken from our recent Instagram pages. We have over 870 followers from around the world, so turn on your phone and see what is happening.



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TRAM 27

By Len Millar

Sitting quietly in our Depot is a marvelous collection of old trams. Most are just over 100 years old and they are anxiously awaiting COVID-19 to disappear, so that they can once again trundle along Wendouree Parade carrying our passengers. One of the trams, No. 27, is somewhat special – it was built in Adelaide in 1916, ran in Melbourne for 24 years and finished up in Ballarat. It has easily been the most used of our trams, having clocked up 57,698 kilometres in Wendouree Parade - on 2,052 days! And that's on top of 425,999 kilometres in Melbourne and 1,588,874 kilometres for the street tramways in Ballarat from 1930 to 1971!



A group from the Tramway Museum Society of Victoria on tour, Tram 27 at Grey Street.

Photo: Mal Rowe, June 1968

Alan Bradley wrote about No. 27, in the June 2019 edition of “Fares Please”. This covered the tram’s fascinating history in splendid detail. To read the article, go to btm.org.au, click on “About Us”, then “Our News”, then “Fares Please”, then “2019”, then finally on “June”. Hey presto!

But let me summarise – in 27 dot-points:-

- Built in Adelaide by Duncan & Fraser, for the Hawthorn Tramways Trust. Entered service on 16/5/1916;
- The HTT was formally taken over by the Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramways Board, 2/2/1920;

- Became M&MTB No. 16, of the “M” class and it was still allocated to Hawthorn Depot in 1928;
- After the electrification of the St. Kilda Road cable tram lines in 1925 the number of passengers coming into the city daily from the south-eastern suburbs grew very rapidly. More and more “W” class trams were being built to cope with the loadings;
- So, in 1930 34 of the 79 “California combination” cars were declared surplus;
- Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong tramway systems each took a share of them;
- HTT 10/M&MTB 116 travelled 435,699 km (270,731 miles) in Melbourne;



Lydiard Street, outside the Mining Exchange.

Photo: Mal Rowe, 1968

- Bought by the Electric Supply Company Ltd and railed to Ballarat station in early June 1930;
- Re-painted in ESCo’s red and cream livery and numbered 27;
- The State Electricity Commission took over control of the Ballarat trams on 1/6/1934;
- Altered to standard Ballarat one-man operator form by May 1938
- First Ballarat tram to be re-painted in the original SEC livery of dark green and cream, 3/1935;

- Re-painted in final SEC livery of Mid Bristol green and ivory, 5/1951.
- Reportedly clocked up one million miles (1,609,340 km) in Ballarat on 29/6/1968;
- The Tramway Museum Society of Victoria hired 27 for a celebratory tour of the system on that day;
- Our Dave Macartney subsequently estab-



TMSV tour in Barkly Street, June 1968. Photo: Mal Rowe

- lished that a “carry forward” miscalculation in the SEC’s records showed that 27 had actually done 158,525 kilometres (98,505 miles) less;
- On closure of the SEC’s Ballarat trams, 27 had travelled 1,588,874 km (987,283 miles) in Ballarat;
- 27 was towed from the old SEC depot to our newly-built one in July 1972;
- On 12/10/1974 No. 27 became the first tram to be driven down the depot access track;
- Then on 7/12/1974 it became our first tram to be driven on the Wendouree Parade trackage;
- 27 took part in our first passenger-carrying day on 1/12/1975;
- On the Australia Days in 1981 and 1982 No. 27 took part in the Melbourne Pageant, shuttling along Spencer and Flinders Streets and Wellington Parade;
- On 27/12/1983 27 finally achieved one million miles in Ballarat with Gavin Young at the controls;
- In 1984 27 was repainted in what was thought to be the original 1934 SEC livery of dark green and cream;
- But in 2010 the correct 1934 colour green was determined and applied to the tram;
- As at 30/6/2019 the BTM has operated on 2,052 days and it’s travelled 57,698 km;
- 27 has been our most-used tram – giving our passengers a marvellous ride through the Botanic Gardens alongside Lake Wendouree.

All of our trams have records kept of such things as distances run (on what days), minor and major technical problems (and their timely rectification), significant happenings such as re-painting or trips to Melbourne for Transport Pageants – or being a star attraction in the Moomba Parade. Up until quite recently, the Tram Record Books comprised two stout cardboard covers, between which were lovely old-fashioned blue-lined “foolscap” sized pages, held in order by the “Arnos” binder system. Each page recorded (from left to right) the date, the problem (or the fix), the person’s initials and, lastly, the number of round trips completed. This last detail helped dictate which tram would be next for a minor (200 trips) or a major service after 600 trips.

Our Museum Services Manager, Warren Doubleday, has recently scanned the contents of all the various trams’ record books – now a single lever arch folder with index markers. Tram 27’s records make for interesting reading, starting with the first entry:-

- 15/1/1975 Car out 11:05am. In 1:07pm. Out 1:50pm. In 5:22pm. Controller No. 2 end – sloppy in first two series notches. Otherwise OK.

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- 31/3/1975 Car running OK – no faults. Richard Gilbert.
- 2/3/1980 Join in north-side bell cord restricts the bell ringing at times. Richard Gilbert. 30 trips.
- 1/11/1991 MAJOR SERVICE. Brakes checked and adjusted. Motor bearings, axle bearings and axle boxes cleaned and lubricated, controllers cleaned, checked and lubricated. Brake valves cleaned and lubricated. Compressor brushes checked. Compressor oil level OK. Tested – OK. Barry McCandlish. 2 trips.
- 24/8/1992 MINOR SERVICE. Brake shoes checked and adjusted. Controllers and brake valves cleaned and greased. Motor suspension bearings oiled. Car tested – OK.
- 11/2000 Withdrawn from service.
- 3/2001 Body jacked up and truck moved to Road 5 for dismantling.
- 6/2001 Motors and axle box bearings removed.
- 2/2002 Truck carefully measured to establish issues with springs.
- 6/2003 Motors re-fitted
- 8/2003 Body lowered onto truck
- 20/9/2003 Road tested. Fit for service.
- 1/2010 to 10/2010 Re-painted.

While preparing this article I realized that I had some sentimental attachment to No. 27. One day, as I was running out in to traffic, the life tray dropped down and fouled the pointwork. My bad! I hadn't properly re-set the life gate and tray after testing it. On another day, I ran out onto Wendouree Parade but "ran out of electricity" near the site of the old Loop. Funny, I thought, as I checked to see if the trolley pole was on the wire! It was! Or so I thought! Careful inspection revealed that the trolley wheel was actually some 25 millimeters below the wire. 27 had been out of



Tram 27 on the TMSV tour, June 1968, View Point Loop.

Photo: Mal Rowe

traffic for a while and one of the things that received attention was the trolley base spring. The tension in the spring, however, was less than adequate. Simple!

The Tram Record book shows that I have driven No. 27 on 102 separate days, doing 1,400 round trips – which equates to 3,640 kilometres. The tram is still going strong – in its 104th year! As Alan Bradley so aptly described the tram last year in his "Fares Please" article - A Great Survivor!





What's up on WhatsApp

The BTM uses the program called “WhatsApp” to communicate with tram crew members about rostering and other operational matters. During the COVID-19 Lockdown, Warren Doubleday has been using it to keep volunteers engaged, and involved. Everyday he posts photos and stories from the Museum’s archives. I have reproduced some here:

CLOSURE 1971— Selling the tram fleet

When the SEC called for applications for trams, they received 117 for the 43 Ballarat and Bendigo trams that were available for sale. For a fledgling body we were lucky to get what we got.



Ballarat Courier, 22 July 1971

Two trams went to Adelaide for the Australian Electric Transport Museum who were constructing their Museum at St Kilda. These were 21 and 34, the first, an ex-Adelaide tram. No 34, was a product of the Adelaide based tram body builder, Duncan and Fraser. We received photos by Dr John Radcliffe via a collection assembled by Lil Butler during 2016. John was



Trams 21 and 24 being unloaded in Adelaide, 24 September 1971. Photo: Dr. John Radcliffe

the first COTMA Chairman and remains active in both the tram and rail preservation scene.

On Monday 27 September 1971, it was the turn for 37 to leave Ballarat. The Sydney Tramway Museum has secured the tram, the only one which had operated on all Victorian electric tramway systems. The photo shows the tram being lifted off its bogies by two cranes in Wendouree Parade. No traffic controllers or hi-viz vests were needed in those days. Just a few traffic cones.



Tram 37, 27 September 1971. Photo: Lil Butler

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Ballarat received three cms of snow on Friday, 25 September. It fell steadily for over an hour from 1.00pm. These scenes were photographed by Richard Gilbert. This normally would have been an operating day, and we missed the chance for tram and snow pictures, but as it was the coldest September day on record, our volunteers are probably relieved.

Phillips, 17 and 1971. Photos: Reg Phillips



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