

# FARES PLEASE!

JUNE 2023

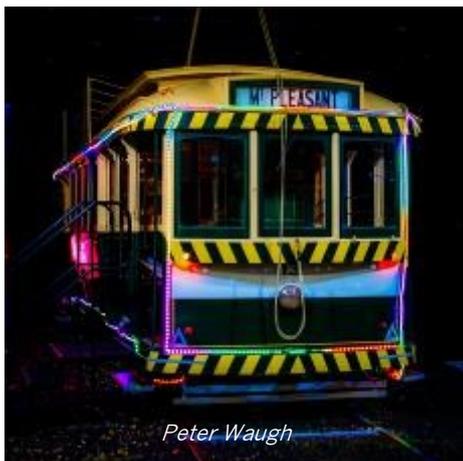
\$2.50 incl. GST

News from the Ballarat Tramway Museum

## THE NEON TRAM RETURNS



*Benjamin Boehle-Mitchell*



*Peter Waugh*



*Benjamin Boehle-Mitchell*



*Christine Hickson*





### MEMBERSHIP NEWS

The Museum welcomes the following new members:

- 1075 Mr Colwyn Quedley of Tullamarine
- 1076 Miss Lynley Quedley of Tullamarine
- 1077 Mrs Nicole Stewart of Eureka
- 1078 Mr Kieran Jones of Ballarat
- 1079 Mrs Lynne Jones of Ballarat
- 1080 Mr Daryl Smart of Mt Pleasant

### DIGITAL DISPLAYS



*One of the new touch displays  
Photo: Peter Waugh*

With funding from the State Government we have been able to install two large touch screens and a number of small digital tablet displays. These provide an opportunity for visitors to explore many photographs and items held in the museum's archives. We have been working with a local Ballarat company, ASCET Digital, to develop software to

operate the screens. The interpretive team of Warren Doubleday, Pamela and Peter Waugh have spent hours preparing information to add to the digital displays.

### MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Renewal notices will be mailed in July. At the last Annual General Meeting it was resolved that the rates be increased by \$5.00. This is the first increase since 2016. If you have made a donation during the year your receipt will be enclosed.

### THE VR TRAM



*VR 41 test run. Photo: Tony Smith*

The Victorian Railways tram, No.41, belongs to the Melbourne Tramcar Preservation Society. It is currently on loan to the BTM and is on display at the Museum. In May, the tram was successfully taken out onto Wendouree Parade for its first test run on the new track. Planning is underway to hold a special day for members of the BTM and the MPTA to enjoy a ride on the tram.

### VALE

We received news that Dr Robert Edwards AO passed away recently. In 1985 the Museum won a 'Certificate of Merit' at the Museum of the Year Awards. Dr Edwards, as Director of the Museum of Victoria, and his wife visited

The Ballarat Tramway Museum acknowledges the Wadawurrung as the Traditional Owners of this land



to present the award. Bob was so impressed that he joined as a member and remained so even when he moved interstate.

Richard Gilbert reports that former foundation member Ralph Durr passed away in early May. For many years Ralph had operated a plant nursery and railway memorabilia store at the Talbot Railway Station

Photographer John Ward, well known to our archive and interpretation team for his excellent Ballarat photos, passed away in June. Some of his photos are featured in this issue.



*Tram 36 at the Lydiard Street shelter.  
Photo: John Ward, March 1970*

### OUR ROYAL CONNECTION



*No. 965 in Denmark. Photo: James Proctor*

The Victorian Government presented Princess Mary of Denmark with a W class tram as a wedding present. She then gave it to the Danish Tram Museum. In this issue read about BTM member James Proctor's connections with this most unusual gift.

### LYDIARD STREET TRAM SHELTER

The old tram shelter from Lydiard Street north has been removed from the APEX Club of Ballarat's yard and moved to our offsite storage at Bungaree. At this stage we don't have long term plans for the building, but we had to ensure its long term preservation as the APEX Club are redeveloping their site.

### OVERHEAD WORKS



*Replacing the poles in Wendouree Parade.  
Photo: Paul Mong*

Seven new poles have been installed along Wendouree Pde from Depot Junction down to the floral clock and two new bracket arms have been installed. Another five poles will be installed in July.

### VOLUNTEERS

BTM is a volunteer organisation that relies of the efforts of many individual members with a range of skills. Contact the Museum for more information on joining the team, and become an active participant.



## HORSE TRAM DAY



*Some of the Horse Tram crew. Photo: Benjamin Boehle-Mitchell*



*Gary, Arthur, and Alice working the tram. Photo: Benjamin Boehle-Mitchell*

**100 YEARS OF THE GHAN**

John Wilson wrote in his book, *The Train to Oodna Woop Woop – “A Social History of the Afghan Express”*, that The Ghan was a scallywag of a train, so it is quite in character that she should miss her 100th .

**HOW THE GHAN GOT ITS NAME****JOHN WILSON****PREAMBLE**

The Ghan is undoubtedly the oldest named train in Australia, and probably the most famous. In August this year we will celebrate the centenary of the naming of The Ghan. But don't expect to see it publicised, or parties attended by VIPs, or functions with champagne and brass band celebrations. The story here told is not embraced by official sources and there is an alternate claim that the name was coined in 1929 when the railway was opened to Alice Springs.



*Afghan cameleers in 1891.  
Photo: State Library of South Australia*

There is general agreement that the name is derived from Afghan and the Afghan Camel-eers who had once provided transport to the outback. But that is where fact and fiction have a parting of the ways. The popular (and fictitious) version is that the train was named out of respect for those Afghan cameleers. That has a credible ring about it, which goes a long way to explain why the story has become entrenched. But consider this. In 1920, The Commonwealth Railways, which was the operator of the train, had banned the Afghans from travelling on their trains. We don't know why, but there is general agreement that the Afghans were treated as second-class citizens at the time. One theory is that it was customary for the men travelling on the Trans Australian Express to wear a tie in the dining car. When we search through the 1929 newspapers we find no reports of a ceremony or announcement when the railway was opened to Alice Springs. We also find that in 1924 a newspaper report in the Register “The Oodnadatta train comes in, in ribald fashion, the Afghan Express”.

Now to the story that has enough evidence to put it beyond doubt. Prior to August 1923 it took three days to make the train journey from Adelaide to Oodnadatta, as it required passengers to stay overnight in hotels at Quorn and Marree. On 30 August 1923 the journey time was reduced to nearly half by adding a sleeping car and cutting out the overnight stops. This was an innovation by the American Chief Commissioner of the South Australian Railways, W.A. Webb. This was quite an event for the railway workers at Quorn and for those who travelled the line and there was quite a gathering of spectators looking on to see who was travelling aboard the sleeping car.

The railway to Oodnadatta had been built by the South Australian Railways and opened to Oodnadatta in 1890. It had been the southern section of the proposed great north-south



*Steam locomotive at Quorn  
Photo: Peter Waugh*

transcontinental railway. Ownership of the railway had passed to the Commonwealth in 1911 as part of the assets handed over by South Australia when the Northern Territory was handed over. There was an arrangement with South Australia to provide rolling stock and staff to operate the line. Operation of the line by the Commonwealth was from 1925.

When the connecting train arrived in Quorn from Adelaide there was only one passenger for the sleeping car. He went over to area on the west of the Quorn station yard, took out his prayer mat and prayed for a safe journey. Amongst the onlookers was one Ernie Smith,

a locomotive driver and proud unionist. Smith commented “Struth! If that is all that is coming aboard, we’ll have to call it the Afghan Express.” And within a few years the train’s nickname had been contracted to The Ghan.

There was a third story. From the early 1930s, the Commissioner of the Commonwealth Railways was a Mr Gahan. But the name, The Ghan was well established before he arrived on the scene.

This could have all disappeared into the black hole of historical misinformation, but for a young fireman called George Williams, who had been on duty on that night of 30 August 1923. In later years George had a clunky old typewriter and typed out many stories about Quorn and The Ghan. By the 1960s the Ghan was attracting quite a few tourists and someone in the Publicity Office of Commonwealth Railways decided that their publicity literature needed an explanation of the name of The Ghan. So, he made up the story about the 1929 naming. By this time George Williams had risen to a senior position within the ranks of the Quorn locomotive crews, and he protested. He was told that if he persisted with the Ernie Smith story his services would be terminated. But he kept on with his clunky old typewriter.



*Ghan passengers stretch their legs at Finke, 1948. Photo: Dorothy Pyatt*



*Railway workers cottage on the old Ghan line at Coward Springs, SA. Photo: Peter Waugh*

There were many versions or editions of George's story. Ernie Smith had left Quorn long ago. With the passage of decades his name had faded away, and by 2021 no-one had heard of him. That was when plans were underway to celebrate the centenary. There had been many of George's typed sheets that told the story but there were only two that included the name Ernie Smith. Now, it is no easy task hunting down a Smith. It was fairly easy to follow Ernie for the next couple of years, but he had left Quorn about 1926. This is where a good genealogist comes useful. Pam McAllister set out to follow the trail of Ernie Smith. All that was known was that he was a lefthanded cricketer, hence the name 'Googly'. At first Pam thought she had found mention of him in Broken Hill but that wasn't our Ernie. Then some real excitement when she found a report in 1954, of Ernie Smith driving a train from Ararat to Geelong one night and they were attacked by a flying saucer! But again, it wasn't our Ernie.

Pam continued to work on this with the tenacity of a terrier with a bone and after about ten days of solid research turned up the real Ernie. Then she set about tracing any descendants and whether they knew of Ernie's special place in history. Ernie had a son, Ted Smith

who had been a journalist for the Adelaide News and Sunday Mail. Ted had died in 1976. Pam and her circle of sleuths found his daughter, (Ernie's grand-daughter) and she was pleased to hear the story. It seems that the family had been unaware of Ernie's special place in history.

Now, Adelaide is a small place, and it seems that most people know somebody else who knows the person who is being sought out. Ernie's grand-daughter was able to tell the



*An abandoned diesel locomotive from the Central Australian Railway at Maree, SA. Photo: Peter Waugh*

research team that Ernie had been an active union member in the engine drivers' Union. Maybe that was why the Commonwealth Railways had preferred his story not to be told. Ernie died in 1966. He was a good family man, and the research team was soon able to sit down with his great-grandson in his office in the heart of Port Adelaide and talk about Ernie.

He was Hon. Mark Butler, Federal Member for Hindmarsh and our present Minister of Health. Mark told the group that on his father's side of the family was Sir Richard Butler, the first Liberal Premier of South Australia, and Mark, with a chuckle and a laugh, added that Sir Richard was known as 'Tricky Dicky'.

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*Mark Butler, MHR.  
Photo: via Facebook*

Sir Richard's son, Richard Layton Butler was Liberal Premier in the 1930s and also received a knighthood. But it is with some sense of pride that Mark Butler remarked that it was from his mother's side that he was brought up to respect Labor values.

Mark is philosophical about the way governments and large corporations often distort history for the sake of making a complex story easier for people to understand. Mark was able to tell the research team that Ernie had been born to an unmarried mother who could not look after him, and had a difficult childhood being shunted from one family to another. Ernie was eventually placed with a family at Peterborough, and that was where he discovered that he had finally found a belonging in the kinship of the railways.

It is heart-warming story that far outshines anything that could be dreamt up in a publicity office.

For more information about John Wilson's books, go to:

<https://www.sarlinesbooks.com.au/books/>



*The Ghan in 2012  
Roderick Eime from Australia, CC BY 2.0, via Wikimedia Commons*



## Pre Ballarat Tram Driving Experiences

### James Proctor

While I qualified as a driver at the Ballarat Tramway Museum just before Christmas, Ballarat wasn't the first place I have driven a tram.

### Wellington 1995

My first opportunity to drive a tram was at the Wellington Tramway Museum in 1995. Wellington's tramway museum is located in Queen Elizabeth Park, Paekakariki, about 45km north of Wellington. The museum has 2km of track on its own reservation.

It was a wet Saturday morning and I was the museum's only visitor. There was one tram running, Double-Saloon 159, built in 1925 and withdrawn in the early 1960's. It's a double bogie maximum traction car and was part of the largest class of trams to run in Wellington. The museum's sole volunteer for the day doubled as driver and conductor.

We took a ride to the end of the line, spending a considerable time at the end talking about trams and trolley buses. I was then asked if I would like to drive the tram back to the museum. Well, I certainly didn't need to be asked twice!



*No. 159 at Wellington.  
Photo: James Proctor*



*In the driver's cabin on No.956 at  
Danish Tram Museum  
Photo: Peter Biilmann*

I found driving the tram to be fairly straight forward. I received instructions from the driver on when to notch up and when to coast and before long could anticipate the instructions. I learned about series vs parallel; while I didn't know the technical details at the time, it was a case of trams go faster in parallel. The museum's Wellington's track had a good opportunity for parallel running. No.159 was equipped with manual lapping air brakes (It would be many years before I would learn about manual vs self lapping brakes), although it was originally built with rheostatic electric/magnetic track braking. Braking also seemed fairly straight forward, then again, I didn't have to contend with cars backing out on me! By the time I was back at the museum, I was getting the hang of both acceleration and braking. It was certainly the highlight of that trip to New Zealand.

### Denmark 2015

My next opportunity to drive a tram was at the Danish Tram Museum (Sporvejsmuseet



*No. 275 with "School Car" sign. Photo: James Proctor*

Skjoldenæsholm). My partner Pete is Danish and this was my second visit to Denmark. On my first visit in 2014, I had persuaded Pete to take me to the museum (just under an hour from where he lived) and was keen to visit again on my next trip. Pete had drawn up a spreadsheet of 'tourist' activities for this visit. While the tramway museum didn't appear on the spreadsheet, one day was labelled "mystery day".

When the "mystery day" arrived Pete told me that we would be doing something mostly outdoors (and to dress for a Danish summer, i.e. be prepared for it to be either warm and sunny or cold and wet). As we started driving, I recognised we were on the road to the tramway museum. My mystery activity was tram driving lessons!

While the Danish Tramway museum is mostly dedicated to the preservation of Danish trams, it includes a number of trams from

Norway, Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland. It is also home to Melbourne SW6 965, which was a wedding present from the Victorian Government to Crown Prince Frederik and Crown Princess Mary.

Copenhagen and Odense used standard gauge, where Aarhus used metre gauge. Copenhagen abandoned its tram system in 1972, Odense 1952 and Aarhus 1971. Sadly, no Odense trams were preserved. Copenhagen used trolley poles, even on the Düwag articulated cars received in the 1960s where Aarhus swapped from trolley pole to pantograph operation.

The museum is in a beautiful forest setting with two sets of tracks. There is a metre gauge line, which runs 300m from the car park to the museum. This line is operated by Aarhus, Basel (Switzerland) and Flensburg (Germany) trams. The main track is 1.5km of standard gauge with turning loops at either end. While Copenhagen's



*James and No. 929. Photo: Peter Biilmann.*

trams (except the 1960's Düwag articulated trams), were double ended, they usually towed trailers and thus required turning loops.

It is one of the best tram museums I have visited in the world, with a large, well set out collection of trams, buses and trolley buses spread over a few different car barns. The museum end of the track recreated the feel of an early 20<sup>th</sup> century tramway, in addition, there is reconstruction of a 1950s Danish shopping strip. At the forest end, a former Düsseldorf Düwag tram doubles as a cafe car.

I was introduced to Palle, the museum's head driver and headed to my first of three trams, Copenhagen 275. This is a single truck, two motor car built in 1907 and withdrawn in 1966. The tram came complete with "skolevogn" (school car) signs. The acceleration was similar to Wellington tram I'd previously driven, although being a single

truck car, the ride was a somewhat rougher, not unlike Ballarat's SEC single truckers. It used rheostatic braking, which had a similar feel to self lapping air brakes. The handbrake was used for the final bit of braking and to hold the car after stopping. Hill starts afforded a bit of a challenge!

My 'training' required me to stop at the correct place at each stop on the way, which I got the hang of after a couple stops. The single main line through the forest is controlled by electric signals and it is necessary to request a green signal before leaving the turning loop, which is granted on a first come first served basis.

My next tram was Copenhagen 929, a four motor bogie car built in 1934. This ran until the closure of the Copenhagen tram system in 1972. It was also towing a trailer. Being a bogie car, this had much smoother ride than 275. The braking system was the same rheostatic system as 275. The lack of "skolevogn"

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*James receives his Diploma from Palle.  
Photo: Peter Biilmann*

signs meant that Palle had to deter a few potential passengers!

The next part of the mystery day was a superb lunch of smørrebrød, Denmark's famous open sandwiches, served in the Düwag cafe car.

My final tram of the day was Melbourne 965; Pete had made certain that this was one of the three trams I would be driving. This is a much bigger and smoother running tram than either of the Copenhagen trams I had driven. Braking was a different matter! I didn't know about self lapping brakes before driving 965 and quickly discovered that my Wellington (manual lapping) braking technique brought the tram to a rather sudden halt! After a remedial lesson in the use of self lapping brakes I learned how to bring the tram to a smooth halt, without going through the windscreen. After driving 965 Palle presented me with 'diplomas' for each of the trams I'd driven.

The final part of the mystery day was coffee and pastries served in one of the car barns. While English speakers refer to these as 'Danish' pastries, in Denmark they are known as wienerbrød (Vienna bread), after the Viennese bakers who introduced them to Denmark. It was here that I knew beyond

any doubt that a man who would buy me tram driving lessons was a 'keeper', so I proposed to Pete in the car barn. He said 'yes'.



*This historic image of a Copenhagen tram driver shows a grooming style James might need to cultivate in the future.*

*Photo: Stockholm Transport Museum*



*Inside the Danish Tram Museum.  
Photo: Leif Jørgensen, CC BY-SA 4.0  
via Wikimedia Commons*



### **Ballarat Tram Driver keeps Halberstadt trams on time**

**Jeff Gill**

Thursday 14 July 2022 dawned bright and sunny over the attractive German town of Halberstadt, a town noteworthy for its several churches with twin towers. The heat wave then gripping Europe was continuing and this day was obviously going to be another uncomfortably hot day with none of the local hotels, houses, bars, Restaurants, trams, trains etc possessing air conditioning that was up to the task that was facing it.

To the driver of the 09.12 Route 2 tram service ex Sargstedter Way to the railway station – an end-to-end journey of only 20 minutes – air conditioning was the least of her worries. Her designated vehicle, Tram 167 an ex-Stuttgart GT4, was showing signs of age and the mechanical closing procedure on the most used door was completely refusing to function. At each stop she had to leave her seat, walk half-way along the tram, manually operate the override button to close the door and then return to her driver's seat! Her "scheissens" were growing louder and more frequent each time she had to do this.

To make things worse several passengers were starting to show signs of anxiety about the possibility of missing their ongoing train connections at the station.

**SHAZZAAM!** Salvation was closer than the driver and the passengers would have dared to hope as, travelling on this particular tram, was none other than Ballarat Tram Driver and ex-Melbourne Tram Driver Gary Davey! Gary boldly went where few men had gone before and showed everyone on the tram that not only did he know how to operate an override button but he proceeded to do so at every stop for the rest of the journey. The tram arrived at the station only ten minutes late and the anxious passengers fled to the platforms to catch their trains – without a word of thanks – though with somewhat less connecting time than they were used to!

The driver tried to express her gratitude but, as neither she nor Gary spoke a word of each other's language, it had to be left to body language and that sufficed quite well!

Halberstadt will probably never be aware of the debt of gratitude it owes to the first class training techniques instilled into Gary by tramway instructors at Camberwell and Ballarat but Gary can drive his trams alongside Lake Wendouree satisfied with a job done well.



*The fateful day on Halberstadt 167, July 2022. Photo: Jeff Gill*



**MAY AND JUNE 2023**



*Richard Gilbert cleaning up after the horses.  
Photo: Benjamin Boehle-Mitchell*



*Lifting the old Lydiard Street Shelter  
Photo: Paul Mong*



*Restoration work in No. 1029. Photo: Alastair Reither*



FROM THE ARCHIVE

TOY TRAM TICKET SET

The Museum recently received a donation of a set of items associated with playing a tram conductor. Consisting of a cardboard ticket wallet, four sets of tickets blocks, with each ticket individually numbered, a conductors badge and cardboard cutout coins. The ticket is in the style of a Melbourne tram ticket. Based on the coins some of which have the Queens head on them, they are dated mid-1950s. The donor, who lived in Melbourne when a child, remembers them along with a conductors cap and a bag.

For more details of the item see : <https://victoriancollections.net.au/items/63f6a7fa0939295aba59cb63>



Items from the set, left tickets and wallet, above coins and below the conductor's badge.



Quite an interesting set of ephemeral items and amazing that they have survived packed away for so long.

**DON'T WORRY' BALLARAT—YOUR TRAMS ARE SAFE**

<p><b>Mr. Bolte, Premier, last night denied the Government intended to replace Ballarat trams with privately operated buses.</b></p>	<p>posal, and had no intention of scrapping Ballarat's trams, he said.</p>	<p>He denied also a statement by Mr. C. P. Stoneham (Lab., Midlands) that the Government had increased railway freights.</p>
<p>The Government had not even considered such a pro-</p>	<p>"This is a rumor being spread as political propaganda to injure the L.C.P. in its election fight for Ballarat Province," said Mr. Bolte.</p>	<p>The last Government to raise railway freights was the Cain Government, said Mr. Bolte.</p>

Is this an early example of "fake news"? From the Argus, March 1956.



JOHN WARD PHOTOS



*No. 17 crossed Lydiard St, August 1971*



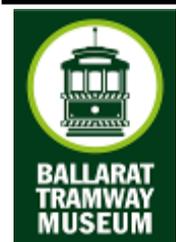
*No. 31 in Sturt Street, February 1971*



*Nos. 14 and 37 in the depot, June 1968*



*Nos. 40 and 39 in Lydiard Street, August 1971*



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