

FARES PLEASE!

JUNE 2024

\$2.50 incl. GST

NEWS FROM THE BALLARAT TRAMWAY MUSEUM

CUTHBERTS 939 IS BACK



Setting up for the Shared Table Topsy High Tea. Photo: Peter Waugh, May 2024



Outside the depot, Mothers' Day 2024.
Photo: William Grenier



St. Aidans Terminus, birthday party trip.
Photo: Alastair Reither, May 2024



MEMBERSHIP NEWS

New Members

1132 Mr Rohan McMaster of Wendouree
(Formerly Junior Supporter)

1133 Mr Christopher Donald of Wendouree

1134 Mr Michael Massarotti of Sebastopol

Returning Members:

788 Mr Matthew Massarotti of Sebastopol

831 Mr Greg Keogh of Tamworth NSW

The Mc Master family (Ainsley & Rohan)

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Renewal notices for 2024-25 will be posted on 1 July. They will include Tax Receipts for those members who have donated to the Museum during 2023-24.

VALE

Member No. 80 Bill Pearce passed away on 21 May. He joined the BTPS in July 1971.

Member No. 92, Ronald Bridger, passed away in April. He had joined the Ballarat Tramway Preservation Society back in July 1971.

Member Ross Baird passed away in December 2023.

Several members of this Museum recently attended the funeral in Geelong for Steve Dalton aged 54. Although not a member of the Museum he was a popular identity who worked in public transport for a number of organisations. He was a friendly, considerate person and was most welcome on his visits to us. In his volunteer activities he was President of the Bellarine Peninsula Railway. His passing is regretted.

TRAM NO. 12

Behind the scenes there has been a lot of work happening on No. 12. This is the only surviving original ESCo. tram from 1905. Recovered from a property in Nerrina in 1996, lack of money has meant restoration has taken a long time. Two generous bequests have enabled work on the tram to advance rapidly. The funds have been used to restore the tram car body which is now almost complete. The original truck was scrapped in the 1930's. With funds from the bequests the BTM have been able to get new patterns made, and have cast all the parts for a new truck. Local firm Harrybilt Engineering are assembling the truck at the moment.



*Parts for No. 12's new truck loaded for delivery to Harrybilt Engineering
Photo: Paul Mong*

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.



APRIL and MAY 2024



*Mikelle, James, Rohan, Richard and Alastair. 2024
Photo: Paul Mong May 2024*



*New floor in No. 14.
Paul Mong, April 2024*



No. 14 wheels and axle at Finlay Engineering. Photo: Paul Mong, May 2024

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NEW CONDUCTORS

The BTM has a new group of conductors in our Operations Crew. All our conductors undergo at least three days of training, learning the operational and safety requirements for all our tramcars. Once they are trained, they must undertake a medical test as required by the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator. Becoming a conductor is one of the first steps if you then want to become a motorman. If you are interested in joining the team, please contact the Museum.

New conductors are Andrew Purvis, Rohan McMaster, Kieran Jones, Choong Kit Tang, William Grenier, Joseph Mazzetti, and Matthew Massarotti.



*Above: Rowan McMaster
Top right: Matthew Massarotti
Middle right: Choong Kit Tang (CK)
Bottom right: William Grenier*

Photos: Lynley Quedley and Peter Waugh



ANOTHER AUSTRALIAN TRAMWAY

ROCKHAMPTON'S PURREY STEAM TRAMS

CHRISTOPHER DONALD

The Purrey steam trams, named after their French designer, Valentin Purrey, ran in Rockhampton, Queensland from 5 June 1909 to 24 June 1939.



*The Purrey steam tram at Rockhampton.
Photo: Gary Davey*

According to author Judy Nicholson: “One of the most unique features of the Purrey trams in Rockhampton was their nickname – ‘old pie carts’ or ‘puffing billies’, so dubbed because of the bursts of flame and smoke that often shot from the little chimneys when the trams were stationary. Affectionately bestowed, the trams never lost their nicknames, and elsewhere have been described as ‘truly delightful’ – looking back they were certainly a quaint feature of the Rockhampton streetscape, as well as being an effective mode of transportation.”⁽¹⁾

EARLY PLANNING

One of the similarities between the tramways of Ballarat and Rockhampton is that they started after the prosperity from a gold mining boom.

“The wealth generated by the Mount Morgan gold

rush of the 1880s skyrocketed Rockhampton to a bustling and prosperous town,” wrote ABC journalist Erin Semmler in 2019.⁽²⁾

Mount Morgan is some 39 kilometres south of Rockhampton, and the Mount Morgan mine was named after three brothers who were members of the original syndicate that opened the mine.

Mount Morgan was called the “mountain of gold.” The “Glory Hole” yielded more than 100 tons of gold and 250,000 tons of copper between 1882 and 1982.⁽³⁾

From that era, as early as 1883, “a horse-drawn tram system [was] planned for the transport of residents on the north and south sides of the Fitzroy Bridge [of Rockhampton]”.⁽⁴⁾

In 1900 and 1901, reports from Mr Hewitt, “recommending construction of four electric routes,” and Trackson Bros electrical engineers, “regarding an electric traction system, with the estimated cost being 57,000 pounds,” were submitted to the Rockhampton Council.⁽⁵⁾

The planning and debates at Council level continued until: “Queensland’s chief railway engineer Henry Charles Stanley was commissioned by the Rockhampton Council in 1907 to investigate the feasibility of a steam tramway system in Rockhampton”.⁽⁶⁾

A steam-driven tram, designed by Valentin Purrey of Bordeaux in France, which was then in use in Paris, was Mr Stanley’s recommendation, as he said, “The type of self-propelled steam cars recommended by your engineers is altogether different from the highly objectionable, noisy, dirty and dangerous steam tramways which ran in Sydney”.⁽⁷⁾

This advantage of the Purrey steam trams have been described in this way: “The generator was designed to provide a vehicle which had low weight for use on light trackwork, was silent and emitted no fumes, but at the same time was as easy to drive as an electric tram since the boiler operation was automatic”.⁽⁸⁾

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THE LAUNCH OF THE ROCKHAMPTON TRAMWAYS

Queensland Premier William Kidston, the MLA for Rockhampton, officially opened the Rockhampton Tramways on 5 June 1909, saying: “not only would the tramway provide people with speedy and comfortable travel,” as an “unmistakeable element in the cause of development and progress”.⁽⁹⁾

Two hundred people on two tramcars and trailers took the first ride on the Botanic Gardens route through “a decorative arch and a ribbon with the words ‘Success to the Rockhampton Tramways’”.⁽¹⁰⁾

The Rockhampton Morning Bulletin of 7 June 1909 reported on the eight-minute return trip: “Despite the heavy loads and the unfinished state of the track in places, each car, with its trailer attached, ran smoothly and without a hitch of any kind”.⁽¹¹⁾

PROBLEMS WITH IMPURE WATER SUPPLY AND MAINTENANCE

After the excitement of the launch, the Purrey trams faced “major breakdowns and stoppages,” and “serious maintenance problems,” the main one caused by “impure water damaging the boiler tubes,” which author Judy Nicholson attributed to the Council taking “a rapid and somewhat cavalier approach, rushing ahead without sufficient preparation”.⁽¹²⁾

A lack of spare parts also hampered the efficient running of the tramways in its first year.

It was noted by engineer John Graham, the first Tramway Manager: “ a complete set of spare parts ought to have been imported at the same time as the cars,” and no “drawings, specifications or blueprints of these car engines or boilers” were available to do maintenance work on the rolling stock.⁽¹³⁾

Mr. Graham’s honest appraisals and seemingly genuine efforts to keep the trams running were



The official opening in 1909. Photo: State Library of Queensland.



'rewarded' by dismissal in April 1910, but two months later "reference [is made] to Purrey's mechanic being sent [from France]".⁽¹⁴⁾

This led to a marked improvement in the steam trams' service, as Judy Nicholson wrote: "After the arrival of Monsieur Boussignon from the Purrey works in Bordeaux in July 1910, and the arrival of spare parts and a water purification system, the Purreys were soon running again. Boussignon recommended the immediate purchase of two additional cars from Purrey, which became Cars No. 5 and 6, commencing service in 1911".⁽¹⁵⁾

The Rockhampton Daily Record on 29 June 1912 commented on this: "It is significant that as soon as the 'French expert' came on the scene he was given everything he asked for or desired in the way of plant and spare parts. When the local engineers were struggling to make order out of chaos, they were expected to perform some marvellous conjuring tricks and manufacture plant and spare parts out of thin air".⁽¹⁶⁾

In 1911, there were four routes that the steam trams were serving: Dawson Road, Botanic Gardens, Canning and Archer streets, and Showgrounds, for a total route mileage of 9.3 kilometres.

"This system formed a loop or 'belt line' around the inner city, with double track along East Street and balloon loops for turning cars around at the suburban terminals".⁽¹⁷⁾

By 1922, with the opening of a fifth route through Wandal Road, which increased the total route mileage to 10.34 kilometres, the rolling stock

had increased to "nine cars and six trailers which was to comprise the entire fleet until operations ceased".⁽¹⁸⁾

THE STAFF OF THE PURREY TRAMS

Mr. Cec Murphy worked for 21 years on the trams from the age of 15 until 1939 and recalled the conditions when driving: "You'd cop the weather. They supplied us with oilskin coats but we used to cop it the same. You'd go along in the rain and just let the cap take the weight of the water".⁽¹⁹⁾ Summer driving was hot, because the boiler was directly behind the driver.

The quality of the coke would often determine the speed that the steam trams were able to travel, on average 25 kilometres per hour.

Judy Nicholson wrote: "Uphill was...worse, chugging for a short distance then coming to a stop if the tram lost steam – it was sometimes all out and push by the passengers!".⁽²⁰⁾

However, one anecdote in the book describes a race between two "empty trams after their last runs...along the parallel tracks of Dawson Road and the Gardens route" coming to "an abrupt halt one evening when the Dawson Road tram left the rails and ended up in the gutter," resulting in both trams only returning to the depot by 3.00 am. Because both drivers had to start their next shift at 6.00 am, "all attraction had been removed from the races".⁽²¹⁾

In an amusing story, according to Mr Murphy, one evening a policeman, mocking the "pie cart" nickname of the Purrey trams asked the driver for a pie and peas. The policeman received the reply: "Well I haven't got any, but here you are I'll give you the gravy," and copped him "fair in the face with any oily, dirty rag!"⁽²²⁾

For a fare, the trams would deliver parcels, including medicines to the local hospital, and also throw news-papers to the shops, with conductor for 13 years Jim Henkel noting, "You'd get [to be] a good short after a while".⁽²³⁾

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MAJOR ACCIDENTS

On 7 June 1909, just two days after the official opening of the tramways, track worker John Chapman was struck by a tram and died at the corner of Murray and William Streets. "The driver did sound his alarm when approaching the group of track workers and all except Chapman, who apparently did not hear the warning, stood clear of the line".⁽²⁴⁾

"The most notorious incident occurred on 28 September 1913 when three people were killed when a tram car capsized on a sharp bend at the corner of Ward Street and Dagmar Street after departing the Rockhampton Botanic Gardens following an afternoon performance by the Lakes Creek Brass Band".⁽²⁵⁾

"The driver was William Babbs [who]...was employed as a workshop fitter and he was driving that day due to the large amount of traffic and shortage of qualified drivers".⁽²⁶⁾

According to eyewitness statements of passengers, the speed that the tram was traveling towards the corner was a key to the accident.

"A young man, Rene Pastourel, was killed instantly, with injuries to the chest and liver, broken ribs and leg wounds," while two of the four injured people later died.⁽²⁷⁾

"Another serious incident occurred on 8 January 1919 when a tram collided with a train at the intersection of Denison Street and Archer Street where the tram tracks intersected with the main railway line in Denison Street. Although 15 passengers were injured, there were no fatalities".⁽²⁸⁾

The tram, driven by Mr A. McTavish, had left the city for the Showgrounds.

"There was a terrible crash of shattered glass and splintered wood, followed by screams from passengers. The trailer was knocked off the rails and the force of the impact was so great that the roof



*Purrey trams in Rockhampton.
Photo: State Library of Queensland*

came away".⁽²⁹⁾

The tramways had to pay out over £640 pounds in claims resulting from this accident.

In November 1928, Timothy Hardimen died "after he attempted to board the tram while it was moving...slipped...and fell under the wheels".⁽³⁰⁾

In April 1929, Reginald Bates died when he "lurched across the tram line and fell in front of the wheels".⁽³¹⁾

In February 1933, William Winslade was struck by a tram and died. According to the Morning Bulletin, "It was assumed that, after leaving his bicycle close handy, Winslade had gone into the lavatory, which closely adjoins the tram line, and on hearing the tram coming around the loop had rushed out to save the bicycle with disastrous results to himself".⁽³²⁾

END OF THE LINE

It was a succession of financial losses, deterioration of the tracks, mechanical problems for the Purrey steam trams, and the advent of buses that led to the trams being scrapped.

As early as 1923, "tramway returns experienced a serious set-back owing to the opposition by motor omnibus fleets catering for the traffic".⁽³³⁾



By 1936, “tramway returns had continued to decrease, not only suffering competition from buses but also contending with bicycles which ‘the public have gone extensively for,’ and an ever increasing number of private motor cars”.⁽³⁴⁾

It got to the stage in September 1937 where even Tramway Manager, Mr. Stenhouse had to admit that “the travelling public consider the present tram system has become obsolete...the time has arrived when a more modern transport system is essential”.⁽³⁵⁾

“The trams ceased operation on 24 June 1939, with only a dozen people present for a final farewell to thirty years’ service. Driver Herbert Lander

miles, carried 40,314,924 passengers and receipts totalled £355,476”.⁽³⁷⁾

RESTORATION PROJECT FOR THE 1988 BICENTENNIAL

By 1976, interest was stirred into restoring a Purrey steam tram for Rockhampton by the National Trust 18-35 group led by David Neish, who “began their search for tram components”.⁽³⁸⁾

The group had their work cut out for them, as Ken McCarthy wrote in a 1972 journal article that “the trams were progressively sold for use on farms and sporting fields and the chassis for use on railway sidings”.⁽³⁹⁾



Trams near the Post Office. Photo: BTM Collection

and conductor Joe Clayson steamed back to the depot on the 11 p.m. tram from the Post Office in East Street, tramcar No. 6 turning its back on the city for the last time”.⁽³⁶⁾

“In the thirty years the trams travelled 4,526, 932

Parts were recovered Milman, Port Alma, Biolela, among other places, and archive plans of the Purrey and plans from Queensland Railways were used by David Neish as well as old parts and photographs in the reconstruction.



The Rockhampton steam tram in Denison Street.

Photo: RegionalQueenslander, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

“The reconstruction of the Purrey was officially endorsed as a Bicentennial project” and funding was obtained from the Queensland Government and the National Trust, estimated to cost more than \$150,000. ⁽⁴⁰⁾

Volunteer tram driver Alex Limkin said : “We have rung around to make enquiries and this tram here is now the only working Purrey steam tram in the world. The only other one we could find is in a museum in Paris.” ⁽⁴¹⁾

The restored steam tram was recommissioned on 5 June 1988 and moved in 1999 to the Archer Park Rail Museum, in Denison Street between Archer and Cambridge Streets, Rockhampton, where visitors can ride it most Sundays between the hours of 10.00 a.m. and 1.00 p.m. ⁽⁴²⁾⁽⁴³⁾

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BALLARAT'S "LEAPING LENAS"

We are often told by visitors to the Museum that the city should never have closed the tramway. But how popular was it with the locals of Ballarat?

The Argus of 21 February 1956 published the results of their street interviews about the future of Ballarat's trams, which it called the 'Leaping Lenas', a nickname for vehicles dating back to the 1930s.

An Australian example of this nickname for track vehicles was when journalist T. Southwell-Keely described the train from Darwin to Birdum as "Leaping Lena: Gallant Iron Horse of the North" in the Adelaide Advertiser of 31 March 1938.

The Argus article of 1956 noted: "A majority of people interviewed...were in favor of scrapping their 'Leaping Lenas' and modernising Ballarat's transport system with trolley buses. But 90% said that they would be sorry to see the trams go because of 'sentimental reasons.' The present 'Lenas' have been in service since 1905, when the first electric tram went on to the rails."

Mrs. B. G. Hayworth defended the trams as she said: "Our trams are as much a part of Ballarat as the Eureka Stockade, so leave them alone." Mr. Geoff Godfrey, vice-president of the Local Industrial Workers' Union, said: "They were alright when I was a boy, but now they are outmoded. They don't cater for the public. But I suppose I would miss them."

17-year-old clerk Brian Wilson said: "Trolleybuses should replace these antiquated crocks that are never on time."

Mr. H. W. Linaker, the branch manager of tram operator the State Electricity Commission, said, "We will run the trams until we get something better to take their place."

This story was adapted from an article in The Argus, Tuesday, 21 February 1956 page 7.



They certainly were leaping on the rough tracks to Sebastopol.

Photo: Mark Plummer, 1971.



NO. 939 IN MELBOURNE



No. 939 in MMTB service at St. Kilda, 1980. Photo: Paul Stokes



No. 939 as retired Colonial Restaurant Car No. 3, "Valentine". Photo: Alastair Reither



No. 939, “CUTHBERTS”

BY LEN MILLAR

In the Ballarat Tramway Museum’s active fleet there is a tram that is a whole lot different from when it was built! “Cuthberts 939” is our resident vehicle for sumptuous afternoon teas and birthday parties, with plush red velvet seats and ornate curtains – a bit of an up-grade from how it looked when it was built by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board at its Preston Workshops in 1948.

No. 939 was one of the 120 “SW6” class trams that were built at Preston, and it spent some 46 years trundling along the streets of Melbourne carrying passengers. There were 48 seats for passengers, and (with the aid of strap-hangers) could carry a further 54 standing passengers. One wonders how many passengers the tram carried in Melbourne during its normal format.

The “SW6” class trams were bogie cars with a drop centre and two open saloons. “Back in the days” the saloon seats were upholstered and were the preferred part of the tram by female passengers. However, the drop-centre section was a smoking zone, the seats were not upholstered but of timber and were the preferred part of the tram for male passengers. True!

Weighing in at 17.5 tonnes (as built), 939 measured 14.17 metres in length, 2.73 metres in width and 3.16 metres in height. 939 was allocated to several depots during its street transit life – Camberwell in 1948, Kew in 1961 and South Melbourne Depot from 1977 through 1991 until 1994 – when, along with 937, 939 received a major “renewal”. The Colonial Tramcar Restaurant company negotiated with the Met to secure two “W6” class trams to augment the original – “W2” class tram 442. The floor was made level from end to end, seating removed, half-drop windows removed



No. 939 in MMTB service, Melbourne. Photo: Raymond Marsh



Fitting the trolley pole base.

Photo: Alastair Reither

and the driver's cabin bulkhead doors were moved to one side to fit in with the new velvet-upholstered seating to create a straight aisle-way from end to end. Also the four air-operated sliding doors were removed and outward-swinging double doors on each side for patrons, meals and dishes to board or alight. One end had four tables and deep-upholstered seating for four patrons along one side – and another four tables for two customers. The other end of the tram had a capacity of 12 patrons.

Double-glazed tinted windows were fitted along each side of the tram and reverse-cycle air-conditioning units were installed on the roof. The air-conditioning, as well as the kitchen, were powered by a 20kVa, 415 volt, 3 phase, 50 Hertz auxiliary power supply. Because the tram operates in the streets and must not delay normal service cars, drivers were selected who could brake and accelerate smoothly. Continuous smooth running at low speeds required additional resistance grids to be fitted under the floor. With the removal of the old internal seating, new external sand-box covers were fitted to the each end of the sides of the tram just behind the driver's cabins.

Under the patrons' seats, drawers were installed – to store drinks! Most food was delivered to the tram from the Company's kitchen and the trolleys with the stacked-up trays of dishes were wheeled into the kitchen (or galley) side of the centre of the tram.

939 was launched on February 8, 1995, along with sister 937. In 2008, 939 was re-badged as "Valentine" – and four years later (in May 2012) it was withdrawn from service, because it had not been fitted with track brakes like the other members of the "SW6" class, and it needed a major overhaul. The tram was acquired by the Ballarat Tramway Museum in 2014 and stored off-site. In August we received a \$40,000 grant from the Victorian Government as part of the "Transport Investing in the Regions" program. On October 29, 2014, 939 was moved in to our Ballarat Depot.

Stationary checks were carried out on No. 4 road over the servicing pit – and covered the compressor, brakes, controllers, line breakers, relay boxes and so on. The No. 2 end trolley base was replaced with a new unit. At the No. 1 end, the base for the pantograph was removed and a new steel trolley pole-compatible base installed. The lighting circuits were tested, and at 3.30pm the trolley pole placed on the wire, and the tram ran up and down No. 2 road to the Wendouree Parade footpath. In December the inverter was checked and then switched on, whereupon the tram was moved around the various Depot roads and down the access track to the Parade. On January 28, 2015 939 was driven along the whole Wendouree Parade track to check for clearances. Sanding of the external paintwork commenced.

On February 24, 2015 the No. 2 end apron and attached equipment in the driver's cab removed. Significant work was required to enhance the galley, provide space for (and install) a drinks fridge, dishwasher and sink. Externally, the tram obtained a "new" apron from Melbourne tram No. 908, new flooring in one driver's cabin and reconstruction of a driver's cabin. It was then repainted in a new livery of blue, with a grey roof and yellow lining. The decision was made to provide a local Ballarat link in the naming of our new "events" tram. Sir Henry Cuthbert (19829-1907) was the first Chairman of the Ballarat Tramway Company – the horse tram operator. Sir Henry (who was knighted in 1897) was a Ballarat-based solicitor, a member of the Legislative Council and a strong supporter of many Ballarat institutions!



*With the “new” apron in place.
Photo: Alastair Reither, 2015*

An important element for our refurbishment for “Cuthberts 939” was the extensive paperwork that was required to formally recommission the tram-car - so as to add it to the BTM operating fleet from a Rail Safety viewpoint. This also covered the training and maintenance aspects. Formal approval from the Rail Safety Regulator was needed, too!

The extensive refurbishment project was completed in March 2016, and it was formally launched on April 5, 2016. “Cuthberts 939” was ready for business! Aably managed by Peter and Pam Waugh, bookings were taken for birthday parties, Probus club afternoon teas, a murder mystery event, Mother’s Day and wedding anniversary celebrations, Christmas in July and so on. Over about

18 months we “did” a monthly “high tea” for a local caterer. The crew comprises the driver and two managing the catering functions involving coffee-making, waiter-ing, dish-washer stacking, etc. – although three people spreads the in-house functions!

It could be said that 939 has had a chequered history – earning many, many thousands of dollars as a (passenger) tram in Melbourne – and now as a revenue-earner in our hands! It’s now doing “a trip out of the ordinary”!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- “Destination CITY” - 3rd edition. Compiled by the late Keith Kings
- BTM’s Car Records
- Warren Doubleday. BTM Collection Manager.



*The new kitchen being installed.
Photo: Peter Waugh, 2015*



APRIL AND MAY 2024



New conductor, William Grenier, with Len Millar, April 2024. Photo: Courtesy William Grenier



No. 33 entering Wendouree Parade, April 2024. Photo: James Proctor



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