

FARES PLEASE!

October 2025

\$2.50 inc. GST

News from the Ballarat Tramway Museum



No. 33 reflecting on its long life in Ballarat. Deputising for No. 40 for the closure anniversary, 19 September 2025. Photo: C. K. Tang



54 YEARS SINCE CLOSURE



No. 40 at St Aidans Drive, 19 September 2025. Photo: Rohan McMaster



No.33 getting its wheels wet during the closure re-enactment, 19 September 2025. Photo: Ben Boehle-Mitchell



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Members are reminded that the Annual General Meeting will be on Saturday 29 November 2025, starting at 2.00pm. Nominations for Board positions close on Sunday, 9 November 2025.

NEW MEMBERS:

- 1158 Laurence Savage, Colac
- 1159 Brett Cleak, Healesville
- 1160 Jodi Swinn, Healesville
- 1161 Karen Goodwin, Ballarat East
- 1162 Mark Osborn, Golden Point

CRICH TRAMWAY VILLAGE

In September our Secretary visited Crich Tramway Village, the United Kingdom's National Tramway Museum. His last visit was back in 1967! Photos from that time show how the members at that time faced similar challenges to those we had to meet in the early days of the BTPS. What has been achieved since is a wonderful working display of Britain's tramway history. See accompanying photos on back page.

AROUND THE MUSEUM.

A range of activities have kept the maintenance staff occupied over the last two months. On the infrastructure front the main feeder cables have now been installed at Depot Junction. Roads four and five at the depot have been fitted with local isolating switches. These switches will make it possible for the maintenance staff to safely work on the

trams whilst trams are operating in the street. More possum proofing of the depot as taken place and cameras have been installed to see if the work has been successful. At this stage it seems it has been successful as there have been no recorded brush tail possums recently.

The workshop crane has always been difficult to move but it has now been fitted with eight-inch casters and is able to be moved more easily. After a long autumn and winter the new points in Wendouree Parade and the king points at the museum have been cleaned. Whitford Liquid Waste brought in their suction truck and removed all the accumulated debris.

SALES

Several new souvenir items have been added to the sales area – including a 'Meccano' style model of NSW locomotive 3801 and the Flying Scotsman, as well as many new kits, jig saw puzzles and placemats. Well worth a browse when looking for Christmas presents.



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TRAM MAINTENANCE AND RESTORATION

NO. 8.

There has always been a tangle of hoses on the scrubber car, so a new base has been welded onto the side of the tank and a retractable hose fitted. This will make the car safer to use as there was always a risk of hoses getting caught in the brake rigging.

NO. 12

The bogie has been returned from Harrybilt Engineering after being modified to carry the brake cylinder, brake rigging at one end and resistors at the other end. Originally No. 12 did not have air brakes and the lightweight chassis will not accommodate this equipment.



*Karl installing new isolators on Road 5.
Photo: Tony Smith*

NO. 13 AND 33

Both have been fitted with rebuilt trolley bases and their old bases are now in the process of being overhauled so they can be put in to storage as spare parts.

NO. 18

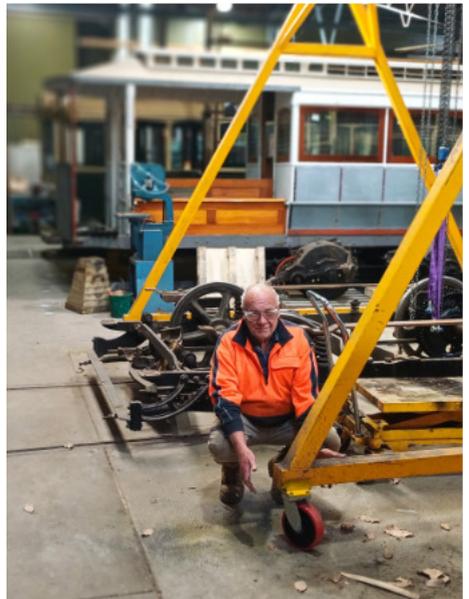
The tram is undergoing major body repairs prior to being rewired.

NO. 40

This tram requires work on its number two end trolley base before it returns to service.

NO. 407

Clear glass in the bulkhead has been installed, replacing the frosted glass to improve driver visibility when crossing Wendouree Parade.



*Dave fitting the new castors
to the depot crane.
Photo: Tony Smith*



Top. Karl and Don fitting the rebuilt trolley bases to No.33.
Bottom. Some heavy lifting involved in the overhaul of No. 18.
Photos: Tony Smith



CHRISTOPHER DONALD

Archive team member Christopher passed away in July 2025, two days after his 58th birthday. I first met Christopher in 1980 when he was a student in one of my Year 7 Music class at Wendouree High Technical School. Not a gifted musician, he loved his sport, especially swimming and football.

After leaving school he got a job as a cadet reporter with the Herald-Sun. His passion for football led to him writing several books, including the biographies of football legends Hayden Bunton and Kevin Sheedy.

He was a devout Christian and he left Australia to work as an English teacher and missionary in rural China for many years. On his return to Australia, he would walk around Lake Wendouree most mornings, and on Tuesdays he would call in to visit his former music teacher and talk about the good old days.

Christopher's grandfather was a tram driver and conductor for the SEC, which gave him a personal connection and interest in the work of the BTM. Christopher signed on as a volunteer and worked on researching tramway history and writing articles for "Fares Please."

His entertaining anecdotes about life in the back-blocks of China kept us all amused on Tuesday lunchtimes. I will miss him as a student, colleague, and friend.

Peter Waugh



SEC NEWS

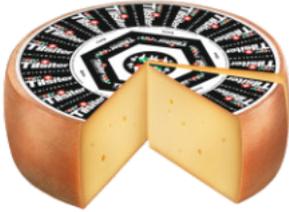
The SEC published a staff newsletter frequently. In October 1971 Lou Walker, the longest serving trammie, was featured on the front cover being farewelled by admirers whilst the Inspectors look on. Lew was also given the honour of driving the last service tram, No. 40 on its final trip to the depot. Photo: BTM archives.





WHERE'S THE CHEESE?

a drawing expressing the term cheese. They initially thought it was a joke.



This was a well know expression by TV celebrity cook Peter Russell-Clarke of the 1980s, when he was promoting the edible cheese.

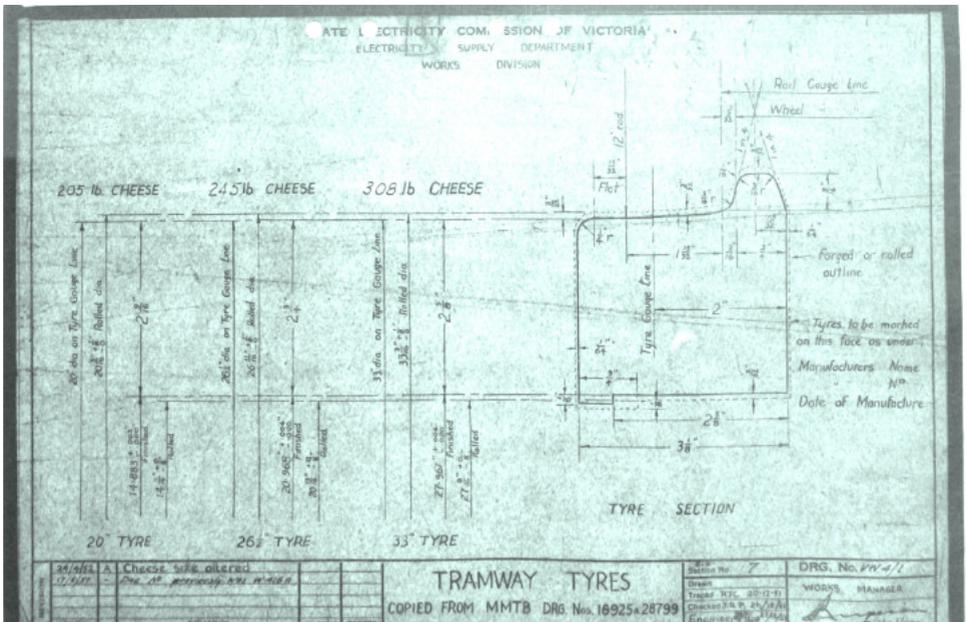
The term was used to describe the weight of a steel ingot that was first heated in a furnace and then rolled into a tyre for a tram wheel. It would look like a large block of cheese! The tyre, like a car tyre, was then fitted to a wheel centre to give a new wheel for use on a tram. The weight of the block of steel, the cheese, would vary with each wheel size. For example, the weight of a 33" or about 840mm diameter tyre, the most common wheel size on our fleet, is 308 pounds or 140kg.

But what is a cheese in rail wheel terms?

Drawing VW4/1 below refers to the quantity of cheese required for each wheel dimension.

When sorting drawings held by the Museum, the archives team came across

Warren Doubleday



The State Electricity Commission drawing of wheel cheeses held in our archives.



Left. Shortly before departing the Lydiard Street North terminus for the final time, Driver Herb Knight and Conductor Lou Walker may well be discussing how to manage the crowds aboard their tram.
(Photo: Greg Triplett, BTM Collection)



Right. With a much more well behaved group of passengers, Driver C.K. and Inspector Ryan wait for Ben to "take that darn photo" before leaving St. Aidans Drive.
(Photo: Benjamin Boehle-Mitchell)

FIFTY FOUR YEARS SINCE "THE END" THAT WASN'T THE END

Ryan van der Zweep

Friday 19 September 2025 was the 54th anniversary of the closure of the original Ballarat tramway system. Despite the anniversary occurring on a Friday, we decided to mark the occasion with an extra operating day and a Members Evening.

On that final day in 1971, only the Lydiard Street North to Sebastopol line was left open to passengers, as the three other lines had been closed earlier in August (Victoria Street to Gardens line) and early

September (Mount Pleasant to Gardens line). Due to the high patronage expected from locals and enthusiasts wishing to farewell the trams, services were operated exclusively with the larger bogie trams. As the day turned to night, trams continued to run full to the brim, and they were frequently followed around by enthusiasts in cars capturing the trams on film.

The final run from the Lydiard Street North terminus to the City was operated by tram Nos. 34 and 42, with a crowd of around 100 people there to watch the trams depart (including the Ballarat Mayor, Cr. J. Chisholm). Tram Nos. 39 and 40 became the last trams to and from the Sebastopol terminus, with over 200 passengers crammed aboard No. 40 in



anticipation of it becoming the very last tram of the evening.

Over 5,000 people watched the proceedings at the terminus outside the Royal Mail Hotel, where the Mayor of the Bourough of Sebastopol, Cr. N. Donald ceremonially drove No. 40 on its final departure at 11:02pm. The Ballarat Highland Pipe Band greeted No. 40 near Rubicon Street at the municipal boundary, where Cr. Donald handed over the tram to City of Ballaarat Mayor Cr. Jack Chisholm, who then drove the tram to the Sturt Street hospital corner.

All passengers left the tram here, as the final part of the journey was reserved for tramway employees. Motorman Herb Knight invited his Conductor, Lou Walker, to take the controls for the rest of the trip back to the Depot. He later recalled:

“...Lou had the most service of all the drivers of that time. He had more service than me [about 41 years], I had just on 34 years. I felt it was his privilege to drive it into the depot, not mine, and I handed over at the Hospital Corner to him. He appreciated it too, and he drove it into the depot. We were always good workmates. He had to work for ten hours, he was my “connie” and I was the driver.”¹

After many delays by speeches and pranks along the way, No. 40 finally arrived at the depot on Wendouree Parade around midnight. The tram was driven through toilet paper streamers into the shed at 12:03am. The depot

doors closed, revealing a sign: “THE END”.

This was not quite the end for trams in Ballarat, however. It is extremely fortunate that fifty four years later, we were able to mark the anniversary by running trams along the same line that No. 40 took on part of its final run to the depot.

In fact, most of the trams that operated the last runs from Lydiard Street and Sebastopol are in preservation: No. 34 was preserved by the Australian Electric Transport Museum near Adelaide and is being restored by the Bendigo Tramways to join our operating fleet in the future. No. 39 was converted for use as the display area in the Depot building. No. 40 was one of the six trams set aside for preservation by the BTM and is the pride and joy of our operational fleet.



No. 40, 2025. Photo: Benjamin Boehle-Mitchell



On the day of the anniversary this year, our Museum and trams ran to a “Tuesday timetable”, and No. 40 was rostered to run trips for the public, and for a couple of trips for members later that evening. Unfortunately, No. 40 only managed to run two trips in the morning before being disabled in an incident. Single truck tram No. 33 was quickly prepared and substituted for No. 40 for the remainder of the day.

Later that evening, 21 members and friends gathered at the Park Hotel on Sturt Street for dinner and a chance to socialise, before returning to the Museum to take No. 33 on a couple of

trips along the tramway to recreate that final journey in 1971. Despite the heavy rain, single digit temperatures and the hastily substituted tram, it was a pleasant evening and a suitable way of marking an important event in Ballarat’s tramway history. My thanks to all the volunteers who worked on the day, especially C.K. Tang and Andrew Bayley who stayed sober to crew No. 33 in the evening!

REFERENCES

1. Bradley, Alan, “The Golden City and its Tramways”, pg. 19, BTM, 2005



It is just after 2 o'clock and the trams have arrived in the city to take up running, 19 September 1971. Photo: Harvey Studios [this photo was taken with a camera which produced a glass plate negative.]



THE CITY LOOP ON THE FINAL DAY

Many photos have been published of the evening of the last day of tram services in Ballarat, but at times during the day extra trams were stored on the City Loop.



Trams 37, 43, 34, and 40 waiting for their turn. Photo: Warren Doubleday



Twilight sees No. 39 and three other trams waiting for the last evening. Perhaps it was the crews meal break time. Photo: Campbell. Duncan



I ALSO RODE THE LAST TRAM – BUT A DIFFERENT ONE.

Richard Gilbert

The 19th of September, 1971 was a momentous day for us enthusiasts of the tram, especially of the SEC operated tramways. Many arrived in Ballarat by train well in time for the first trams to appear on the streets about 2pm, a respectable time for those in Ballarat's more conservative times of attending church then partaking of the Sunday roast dinner.

But for the tram followers there was Georges Fish and Chip shop at the main city tram stop at the corner of Sturt and Lydiard Street. After gorging on 'the greasies' time soon elapsed and the parade of trams trundled into view heralding the start of the days tram running. Although this day saw less trams as there was only the one tram route running, being the Sebastopol to Lydiard Street North route. It was the last day of tram operation and the end was soon to come.

Back and forth between the two termini we rode, changing trams along the way, enjoying the last few hours of this wonderful old tram network, which by comparison with other long closed tram systems, had lived a lot longer than expected.

As time moved on, those who had to catch the train home departed for the station and those of us who had driven to Ballarat, on the old tortuous highway, had planned to be there to see the finish. It is worth pointing out that Ballarat had only one train from Melbourne on a Sunday, at

9.35am returning from Ballarat at 6.10pm. It is certainly a far cry from today's 40 minute service.

The night moved in and people were planning which tram would be the 'last' and it was soon worked out it would be No. 40. People positioned themselves to ensure a spot on No. 40 but I, along with a few others, thought it would be more to the point in history to ride the last tram from the City.

The way the timetable was set out, saw the third last tram from Sebastopol run through to Lydiard Street terminus and form the last tram for the night from there. The second last from Sebastopol ran into the City and shunted on the crossover outside the Post Office to form the last service from the City. The last tram from Sebastopol ran to Hospital Corner then over Sturt Street to Drummond Street North and onto the Depot.

And so, in the company of about 15 others, I joined the last tram, which I unfortunately didn't record its number, and absorbed the importance of the occasion in being on the last tram from the City and along Sturt Street to Hospital Corner. This had been the case that trams had run past the Town Hall since 1887 and now I was on the last one.

I had my car positioned near Hospital Corner and as all passengers were required to leave the trams there, I got into my car and moved at a relative fast pace along Sturt Street West and Wendouree Parade to the Depot to join with the crowds to see No. 40 'The Last Tram' – but I'm glad I rode the Last Tram from the City.



No.40 formed the second last tram from Lydiard Street North, Richard's tram arrived shortly after to form the final service from the terminus. Photo: Greg Triplett BTM Archives

WE SPEAK CHINESE

A recent Charter by a group of 26 Chinese young people saw us excel in our abilities. There was an obvious language difficulty and the tour organiser translated for the group to a good degree. Then our tram driver and Board Member C. K. stepped forward and announced he spoke Mandarin. This is the modern Chinese language.

From that point the charter and museum visit flowed excellently as C. K. told the group of the museum collection and some history of the Ballarat trams. The tour organiser was given the museum microphone, and it was awesome to hear the Mandarin language broadcasting around the museum area, added to by C. K. The extremely successful charter ended

up with a group photo of the jubilant crowd.

Richard Gilbert



C. K. Stepping forward!
Photo: Peter Waugh



BALLARAT'S SHUNTING HORSE - PRINCE

The Ballarat Goods Shed is now a significant heritage building which has recently been transformed from a railway freight depot to a collection of restaurants, a distillery, small live theatre and function centre.

From 1862 until the end of 'less than car load' freight in the early 1980's the goods shed was a thriving freight centre. Early photographs show horses and drays collecting goods until replaced gradually by motorised trucks in the mid twentieth century.

When constructed for the opening of the Geelong to Ballarat railway the Goods Shed consisted of two platforms and three roads inside the building. Presumably one platform was for inwards goods and the other outwards freight. The centre road would have been for the secure storage of freight wagons. The three tracks were connected with a ground level traverser and in the twentieth century this was driven by mechanical means between the roads. As the traverser was not in a pit the flanges on the wagon wheels sat in a pair of slots rather than the wheels sitting on a rail head.

As the shed was not a suitable place for a steam locomotive, shunting horses were used to move wagons around into and out of the shed and on to the traverser.

The horses used were Clydesdales and were quite capable of moving a large wagon on level track. The last horse used was 'Prince' who retired from shunting in 1971 [just before the closure of the Ballarat Tramway system.]

In 1966, the ABC made a short film of Prince in action at the Goods Shed [this clip is available on the ABC Ballarat Facebook page.] The clip shows 'Prince' being attached to a wagon by his wrangler, and hauling it into the shed, another scene shows 'Prince' hauling a louvre van out of the shed and the van being moved across the tracks on the traverser.

You might notice the bling on Prince's bridle. Prince, the rock star, began performing his songs in the late '70's so he wasn't the trailblazer choosing bling on his leatherwear!

Chris Phillips



Photo: Victorian Railways

5TH SEPTEMBER 1971

On the 5th September the Gardens via Sturt Street West to Mt Pleasant lines closed. Thus ended 84 years of public transport services through the gardens. Photos: Chris Phillips



*Top. Tram No. 26 follows No. 27 towards the Gardens Terminus.
Bottom. No. 39 and No. 27 pass each other at the Russell Street Loop.*



CRICH TRAMWAY VILLAGE



*58 years of development at Crich Tramway Museum in the U.K.
Photos: Peter Winspur, 1967 and 2025.*



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