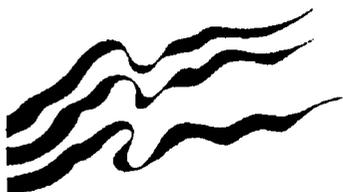


FARES PLEASE!

November 1993

Ballarat Trams are Ballarat History

Arts Victoria Grant



ARTS
VICTORIA

The Society has been recently notified that its application for the grant of a cataloguing kit from Arts Victoria has been successful. The kit consisting of storage equipment and cataloguing materials is valued at about \$1800.

The Board has recognised for some time that its cataloguing of collection is very poor. While the trams are well catalogued, detailed etc. our many small items are not well known. This is one area that the Society has been deficient in.

Implementation of this project will take place over the next couple of years. It will enable the consolidation of our collection. It is planned to eventually encompass our spare parts as well.

The assistance of Arts Victoria, a Division of the Department of Arts, Sports and Tourism is welcomed and acknowledged.

Annual General Meeting

The AGM of the Society was held as scheduled on Sunday October 24. About 30 members attended the meeting. To fill the sixth Board member position, Clayton Giles was nominated by Phillip Bertram and seconded by John Treloar.

The Board is:-

President - Richard Gilbert

Vice Presidents

Ballarat - Stephen Butler

Melbourne - John Phillips

Secretary - Peter Winspur

Treasurer - Carolyn Dean

News of the Ballarat Tramway Preservation Society Limited.

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Ordinary Board Members

Alan Bradley
Warren Doubleday
Frank Puls
Clayton Giles
Len Millar
Greg Rodgers

The Board welcomes the two new Board Members onto the Board. Richard Gilbert at the AGM thanked Peter Walker who retired from the Board this year, for his work over the last few years for the Society.

Season's Greetings

The Board takes this opportunity to pass onto all our members and supporters, the compliments of the Season. We hope you all have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year for 1994.

History Fair

The Society took part in the recent Central Highlands Historical Association History Fair, held at the Ballarat Drill Hall on Sunday October 31. The theme of the day was 'Australian Made'. About 25 local historical groups took part on the day.

For the day, we had a sales table, two display stands with photos and a video player and monitor. The tape

shown was a modified version of our main video, with some additional material added for the day, that followed the Australian made theme of the day.

A large number of people attended, and we made a number of sales of books and videos. Thanks to Warren Doubleday who put the exhibition together, John Phillips and Bruce Maclean who did the video and to Len Millar, Darren Hutchinson, Bill Scott and Neville Gower who assisted on the day.

New Sales Items

The Society has recently received our new Sprinter Railcar lapel badges. At least we got them before the railcars went into public service. They are now available at the depot or the other usual outlets for our badges.

We have ordered the about to be published, latest edition of Destination City. This expanded A4 size book is expected from the publishers, Transit Australia before Christmas. The book will be available in two forms, a soft cover version, and a hard cover version. The Society has ordered a small number of the hard cover versions. These along with the soft cover versions, will be available at the depot for sale.

RIPPING YARNS

By Alan Bradley

The late Herb Knight started with the Ballarat tramways as a car cleaner in 1937, and remained for the next 34 years until the closure of the tramway system. He was the rostered motorman to drive No. 40 on the last day, 19 September 1971. For many years Herb was an official with the local branch of the tramways union. His son Ron Knight was also a tram driver in Ballarat. This is an edited transcript of an interview with Herb & Ron Knight on 22 November 1981.

The service: The Union Hotel was at Grenville St when I started on the trams. Mt Pleasant, Victoria St, Lydiard St North, were three separate routes, Gardens and Sebastopol were routes on their own. They were all separate routes, until through routing came in. Then Sebastopol-Lydiard St. was combined, Mt Pleasant & Gardens-Drummond Nth, & Victoria St-Gardens Sturt St West. View Point came on at midday, worked from 12 till 2, then worked for two hours during the peak period. They used to run a tram up Sturt St West during the peak loading. But the main routes was run by four trams on Sebas, and six on the Gardens. Ten trams controlled 11 miles of track, and did a 20 minute service, for 18 hours a day.

They had two stand-bys at night time. The last one at night, used to go down to Sebas. The inspector would meet at Hospital corner. The last one at night left the city at 11.15, then left Royal Mail (Sebas) at 11.43, and was in the depot at 12.05. First man signed on at 5.59 in the morning, and signed off 12.15 at night. They had three shifts of course. There was afternoon shift, from 12 o'clock to 6 o'clock. They had a 20 minute basic service, with a 5 minute service up Sturt St, Boxing Day, Christmas Day, and New Years Day. That was in the early years. In later years they ran to a special roster holiday time.

The SEC: The best employers in Victoria, in the early days they were fantastic. Later on they became big and hard to get round. In the first stages here they were fantastic, they'd do anything for you. I had no complaints.

The war years: I came on in 1937. They took us up in rotation, as they could spare us. They knocked me back for war service in 1942, medically unfit. They wouldn't take me. I was probably the youngest driver on the trams during the war. We had a lot of traffic of course. There were 3000 Americans here. We had 24 conductresses. We had conductors the whole time, 6 o'clock

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in the morning till 12 o'clock at night. Most of the time in my career was one man operation. You'd work from 6 in the morning till 8 before you had a conductor, and you'd work from 6 o'clock at night till midnight, on your own. But during the four years of the war it was two man operation, controlled of course by 24 conductresses. They did a miraculous job, fantastic. I've said it lots of times, they were as good to work with as any man. They were reliable, they did a very good job.

The Yanks: They were here for many months. They got on the trams, used to be a penny fare. It used to be one man operation early in the piece, and you used to pick up about 50 Yanks from Victoria Park. Had no worries with them, they were fantastic too. I was very impressed with the way they would get all the fares for you. The last bloke would say "get these fares for my buddy" and they'd get the whole lot for you. They fitted in very well.

Bogie cars: We had bogies here. Pony bogies they were called, had pony wheels, we had 8 or 10 of them. They were a good tram, unless they derailed. They were hard to get back on, the pony wheels gave you a bit of trouble. They were very efficient trams. You could fit 150 passengers I suppose in peak loadings. They tried to convert one to one-man and we refused to drive it, because it was too much to

control. They were big fellows, as long as Melbourne trams. One of the reasons we didn't run it, if someone got in and walked straight up to the back of the tram we'd have to chase them for me fares. That was something we did protest strongly against, they seen it our way, and didn't go on with it. Of course we had enough single truck trams to handle one-man operation. They only brought the bogies in when there was two-man operation. They'd run them from 8 o'clock in the morning until 6 o'clock at night, then they'd run them in and bring out the single truckers.

Signalling system: The tramway system in Ballarat was run very efficiently. I've heard it said it was the best single track operation in the world, and I believe it was. It was light operated, with the loops from one loop to another was controlled by lights. (Forrest City System ed.) That was in the later days, in the early days it was controlled by staff. They had to hang the staff up on a post. Same as the trains do. We ran with a staff for years, until the signals came in. It was very effective, except when power went off the lights went off and it wouldn't come back with the power. That was the only drawback. They only way you'd get trapped between loops was if the power went off, and the light would go off! But we had no trouble. It used to be operated on

the overhead wire by the pole of the tram. It would hit it (the contactor ed.) and knock it on, and knock it off when it was going out. It was very well done wasn't it?

It was fairly foolproof. There was no argument who got the light. You'd wait for the green and that was it. First car in the morning, you'd have to be careful how you got the lights. You didn't know what was down there, (at the terminus ed.) it could be the cleaning car down there. It would leave the depot and you wouldn't see it go out. It would probably go out about half past 5. Six minutes past 6, you'd get down Sebas and there's the cleaning car down there. You wouldn't even know it was down there. If you had the red light you'd proceed with extreme caution. You'd give a couple of minutes and see what was coming.

The scrubber would go and clean the tracks, go over all the routes. Couple of times a week it would go out, depending on whether the council was doing its road work or anything.

The last tram: I drove the last tram in fact for 10 hours, No 40. I drove it from 3 o'clock to midnight- 1 o'clock, when we got back to the depot. I left Sebas, and they estimated a crowd of 7000 people. The Mayor of Sebas at the time, he drove it from the Royal Mail Hotel

to Rubicon St, the Superintendent, Les Denmead, the Mayor of Sebas and myself. At Rubicon St it was taken over by Jack Chisholm, who was City Mayor at the time, and he drove it to Sturt St corner. Then I handed over to Lou Walker, who had more service than me. He drove it, and him and I went into the depot. It was well after midnight, about half past 12, I suppose, when we got back in there. There was hundreds of people there too. I'll never forget it. Old Lou has passed on now, and he had about 41 years of service. He had the most service of the drivers of that time. He had more service than me, I had just on 34 years. I felt it was his privilege to drive it to 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 10 hours, he was the connie and I was the driver.

TO BE CONTINUED...

Traffic

Clayton Giles, our new Board Member has recently commenced his driver training. We have a couple of charters recently. Though not as many in previous years due to cut back in school staffing, they are still welcome. These were St Pauls College of Walla Walla on October 22, West Melton Primary School on November 5, and Newwale Primary School on November 23.

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Visit to Isle of Man

Richard Gilbert

I recently returned from an overseas tour in which I took part in the centenary celebrations of the Manx Electric Railway on the Isle of Man. This wonderful 18 mile, 3 foot gauge double track electric railway was opened in 1893. It still has the original rolling stock in service. It traverses steeply graded coastal terrain from the town of Douglas to Romsey.

During the year there has been an extensive centenary programme which culminated in the main functions being held in September 1993. Tramfans from many parts of the world attended and our hotel, the Metropole, was booked out by the followers of the hobby. It was nice to catch up with David Menzies, a well known resident in Melbourne some years ago.

The Isle of Man was also served by a 3 foot gauge steam railway system which now has only one line operating. This runs from Douglas to Port Erin. The 2-4-0 locomotives built by Beyer Peacock date back to 1874. One of these was transferred to the electric railway to run parallel with special trips by the original electric trams numbers 1 and 2.

This parallel running from Laxey to Dhoon Quarry a distance of $3\frac{1}{4}$ miles, was both a memorable occasion that I will recall for many

years. It was a historic event in that these centenarian transport modes pounded along the rails to thrill us as much as they must have done 100 years ago, at the dawn of the railway/tram technological age. There were other trips on the electric railway, steam railway and horse tramway, which runs the length of the beachside promenade of Douglas. The pub nights and slide nights capped off a great and memorable visit.

On leaving the Isle of Man, I sailed to Ireland and went to the Transport Museum Society's museum at Howth, a suburb of Dublin. A good collection of Irish trams is housed here and I was made most welcome. Travel to Howth was made by suburban electric train on the 5'3" gauge Dublin suburban system. This one man operated system opened in 1984 and it performed excellently.

Back in England I visited the National Tramway Museum at Crich and was made most welcome by Richard Clarke, Geoffrey Claydon and many others. Two full days allowed a complete look at the fine collection of trams and other historic material. The bookshop was pleased to stock our Ballarat Tramway video tape. I was glad to be relieved of my stock of 10 video tapes that I had carried across the seas.

One of the interesting highlights currently being undertaken at the museum is the reconstruction of the Red Lion Hotel which formerly stood in Stoke-on-Trent. I look forward to a further visit to Crich were I expect to have a pint or two or more in the said premises.

The transport museum in Glasgow was well worth it. This very professionally presented museum had on display a number of trams representing the era of tramway operation in Glasgow. A good selection of locomotives ably portrays the railway history.

A visit to Blackpool to ride the tram system completed my tramway visit to Britain. This electric tramway was the first opened in England (1895). The day I turned up was, by chance, the turning on of the famous illuminations.

The 18km route from Starr Gate to Fleetwood runs along the Promenade in the town centre of Blackpool and passes the Blackpool Tower. The fleet of trams is varied and the illuminated trams, run at night, add greatly to the "Illuminations".

Book Sales

Book sales are going well. Bill Scott has personally visited a large number of outlets. By about mid November, some 250 copies had been sold. We

thank Bill for his work in promoting the book, as early sales will assist us in recouping our high outlay for the publication of this excellent book. It is available to members for \$5.00 at the depot.

Other Books and Videos

We have been advised by the producers, Winning Post Productions, that two new Tasmanian videos which may be of interest to members are now on the market. These are 'Trams, Track and Trolleys', the story of Tasmania's electric tramway systems. Black & White and colour film of both Hobart and Launceston tramway and trolley bus systems are included. Unfortunately the press release did not include the running time. The cost of the tape is \$39.95 plus \$3.95 postage. Available from the producers at GPO Box 1100, Hobart 7001. Also available, but price unknown, is a production on the Mt Lyell copper mines. This video includes film of the ABT railway system.

Maritime Museum of Victoria

Nine Victorian museums, which have a maritime background have grouped together to form the 'Maritime Museum of Victoria'. The 'museum' was launched by Minister for the Arts, Hon. Haddon Storey, on

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the 19th of November. The museum comprises;

- Alma Doepel
- Echuca Wharf Museum
- Flagstaff Hill Maritime Museum, Warrnambool
- HMAS 'Castlemaine' Maritime Museum ship
- Queenscliffe Maritime Centre and Museum
- Polly Woodside Maritime Museum
- Port Albert Maritime Museum
- Portland Lifeboat Museum
- Steam Tug Wattle

Each museum retains its individual identity and autonomy, but as a member of the MMV combines to collect, display, conserve and interpret Victoria's maritime heritage in an integrated way. It will operated as a multi-site organisation.

A two colour brochure which details the MMV and each museum has been printed as part of the launch.

Readers may wonder why this item in an tramway museum's news sheet? It is interesting that a grouping of museums with similar themes, but diverse in themselves have formed a single 'museum' to enhance each of their activities as a group. Maybe something similar should be done for Victoria's tramway and railway museums.

At the Depot

Not a lengthy report for once. Work proceeds on a number of projects and of course the general maintenance projects. On No. 12, the stripping of the varnish, crud etc. on the roof slats has been completed as far as possible. Gary Wood has completed the strengthening of the underframe at the Gillies St. end. Steel plates were used to do this in a couple of places. He is now working on removing the rotted wood on one of the side bearer plates.

Work on the body filling and sanding of the interior of No. 671 continues. The varnishing of the interior of No. 40 is completed. The reconditioning of a former tram stop shelter is nearly completed. The initial painting of the shelter is about to be done, prior to placing it into position at the loop.

In the last issue of Fares Please! we reported that the pits were once again filled with water due to the recent rains and the inability of the sump pump to keep up. It was then discovered that the drain under the depot had been filled by a lost possum, and the \$110, 12 year old pump itself had failed. A larger unit has since been purchased and is now working.

Fares Please! is published six times a year in alternate months commencing in January and is distributed to members and friends of the Ballarat Tramways. For further information regarding the Society's activities and publications please contact:- The Secretary,

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