



BACK on the tracks in Ballarat . . . lovable old tram No. 26. Built in 1916 it ran in Hawthorn and then Melbourne until it was sold to Ballarat in 1931.

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**YOU will be pleased to hear that the great tram revival is proceeding beautifully.**

The chairman of the SEC, Mr J. C. Trethowan, will officially open the Ballarat tourist tramway on Saturday, February 1.

Now this Ballarat tram comeback is the greatest return since Muhammad Ali. The last tram ran in Ballarat on September 19, 1971, and many a city father said then there was no way we would ever see them again.

But then you must remember that in the nostalgia stakes the most awe-inspiring of all fanatics are the tram lovers.

Three hundred of them formed the Ballarat Preservation Society, and only 10 per cent of them, mind you, came from Ballarat. They raised \$20,000, mostly out of their own pockets, built a tram depot, a sub-station, put down more track and restored a mile route around Lake Wendouree.

Members, like the society general manager, Richard Gilbert, and the vice-president, Bill Jessup, took a 40-hour tram driver's course with the MMTB.

So now, even before the official opening, it's all actually working. The rides aboard 60-year-old Ballarat trams are available for 20c or 10c for children, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays and from January 1 through January 5.

Richard Gilbert says tourists are flocking to the trams already. Maybe we should learn from this and restore the dear, old cable trams to Bourke St.

*As a tourist attraction they'd kill the floral clock and Captain Cook's Cottage.*

# Tourist trams preserve colorful local history

The initiative and foresight of the Ballarat Tramway Preservation Society had helped to preserve a most colorful part of Ballarat history, SEC chairman Mr Charles Trethowan said on Saturday.

He was speaking at the official opening of the Ballarat Tourist Tramway, an attraction which, he said, would be enjoyed by many thousands of people in the future.

The official ceremony, during which Mr Trethowan drove a crowded tram through a tape held by society members, attracted large crowds to the Botanic Gardens area.

They included about 60 members of the Association of Railway Enthusiasts, who came by special train from Melbourne, arrived at the Wendouree station, and were carried by tram into the gardens area.

Amateur photographers crowded the roadway as four gleaming trams stood together, waiting for the opening ceremony and the official first trip.

## CHARACTER

The trams, voluntarily staffed and maintained, will provide a regular weekend and holiday service on a length of nearly a mile of track through the gardens area.

Speaking of the history of the SEC's association with the Ballarat tram service, Mr Trethowan said the SEC had reluctantly taken over the trams, with other operations of the Electric Supply Company, in 1934, and continued to operate them until 1971.

In that period they made a profit in only two years, 1943, when Ballarat was "invaded" by American servicemen, and in 1946, in the immediate post-war period of car and petrol shortages.

"As one who has always been involved with the financial side of the SEC I can say our purse was very much relieved when they went, but from a personal point of view I was very sorry to see them

go, for they were a part of Ballarat's unique character," he said.

A Ballarat man, Mr Trethowan confessed to an unusually strong personal feeling for the city's trams — he met his wife when they were fellow travellers on the Mt. Pleasant trams.

"Whatever their faults, the trams nearly always ran on time, and we could set our clocks by the trams running up the Barkly street hill, he added.

Mr Trethowan commended the Tramway Preservation Society for its initiative in establishing the tourist tram service, and said the SEC had been happy to co-operate in donating trams, spare parts and the section of track and overhead wiring for use by the services.

## NOSTALGIA

The society was fortunate that the line was situated in the best possible situation in Ballarat, and possibly in Australia, with the lake and Botanic Gardens on either side of the route, said the Mayor, Sir Arthur Nicholson.

"The fares are very fair and reasonable, and the services to be provided voluntarily are really wonderful, he added.

There was no doubt, said the Mayor, that nostalgia was the predominant emotion of the occasion.

"These trams provided a passenger service all over Ballarat. Those days have gone, but we now have a vintage attraction."

The president of the Tramway Preservation Society, Mr M. Calnin, and the secretary Mr C. Croft, who presided at the ceremony, both thanked members of the SEC staff, the City Council, and others

who had assisted with the project.

Both the Ballarat Soldiers' Memorial Band and the Ballarat Highland Pipe Band took part in the proceedings, providing a program of music before the ceremony.

The speeches were followed immediately by Mr Trethowan's inaugural trip, during which two trams carried official guests along the length of track and another two were provided for other members of the audience.