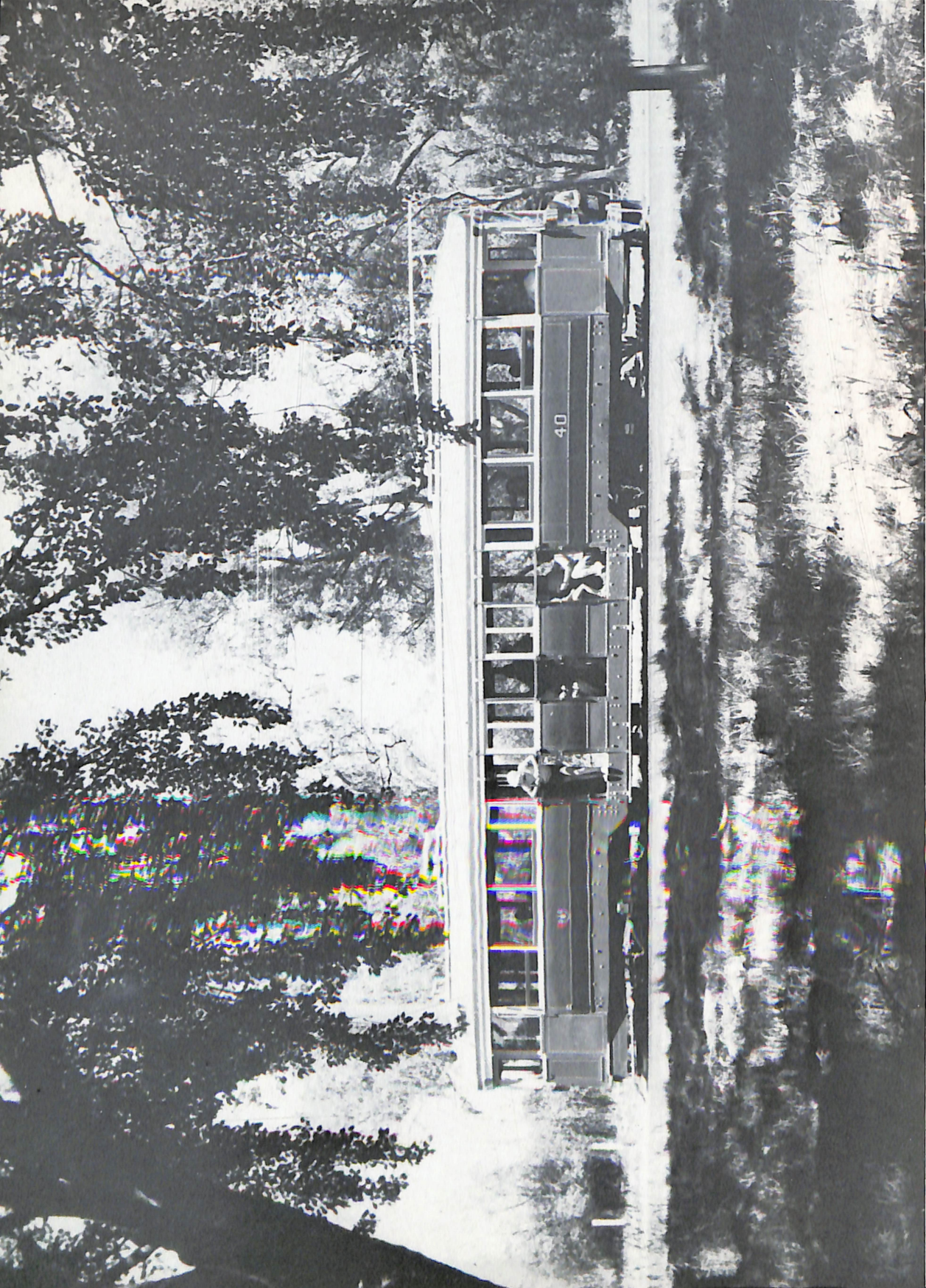


# BALLARAT VINTAGE TRAMWAY







# BALLARAT VINTAGE TRAMWAY

Revised by  
**William F. Scott**  
from the original editions by  
**Campbell O. Duncan**  
published as  
**Ballarat's Tramway Preservation Project**  
1973 and 1976

Photographic credits  
**Frontispiece by Richard C. Gilbert**  
**All others by William F. Scott**



**Ballarat Tramway Preservation Society Ltd**  
1983

National Library of Australia  
Card Number and ISBN 0 9591918 0 1





Number 28 about to continue north. The floral clock is across the parade in the Botanical Gardens near this point. To the left of the tram is a lakeside area where picnics can be held.

## BALLARAT VINTAGE TRAMWAY

### INTRODUCTION

Although transport in Australian cities and towns is now largely dominated by motorbuses and private cars, the scene was once very different. Many cities and towns and all State Capitals formerly operated tramways. Melbourne's extensive system and Adelaide's solitary inter-urban line are the only ones still in operation.

In Victoria tramways ran in the provincial cities of Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong, as well as in Melbourne. The provincial systems had a total length of about 35 miles (56 Km), with over 60 tramcars. The Ballarat Vintage Tramway route is all that remains of the Ballarat system, operating ten of the tramcars over nearly a mile of track.

The Vintage Tramway is the only purely volunteer-run tramway museum of its kind anywhere in the world, operating in a public road over a section of the original system. This Handbook tells the story of Ballarat's veteran tramcars, the growth, operation and eventual decline of the little system, and the return of some of the vintage tramcars to the roadway by the shores of Lake Wendouree.

*FRONTISPIECE: The tramcar that started it all, at the quiet silvan setting of St. Aidans Drive terminus. Number 40 was the last car to carry passengers on the S.E.C. system and it opened the Society's services in February 1975.*



Car 14 takes on a group of passengers spanning a wide age range! The boy on the rear step appears to have four feet! The begonia glasshouse is just visible to the left of the tram.

### BALLARAT'S TRAMWAYS

For over eighty years, until 1971, Ballarat pulsed with the rumble of trams and was one of the last Australian provincial cities to enjoy this type of service. Now these rolling museums, all over half a century old, have given way to the motorbus. The tramcars were not switched off without due concern for their historic value and tourist appeal. The Ballarat Tramway Preservation Society was formed by a popular desire to retain at least a part of the system which had its start in 1887 as a horse tramway.

In December 1887, six horse-drawn tramcars conveyed some 300 dignitaries from Ballarat City to the Gardens and an awaiting banquet. This procession, which must have presented a strange sight to onlookers, heralded the coming of a mode of transport which was to serve Ballarat for the next eight decades.

The horse tramcars were double-decked, could carry 44 seated passengers and like all subsequent trams in Ballarat travelled on 4'8½" (1,435 mm) gauge track. The depot constructed to house the horses and their trams was located in Wendouree Parade, just north of the Gardens. This large iron and timber building continued to house trams until July 1972, almost one year after closure of the system and 85 years after the building was erected.

The days of horse tram operation demanded much difficult and time-consuming work from tramway staff. There were always at least 50 horses at the Wendouree Parade depot, which were well cared for. They were rubbed down continuously and open boxes for sick horses provided.





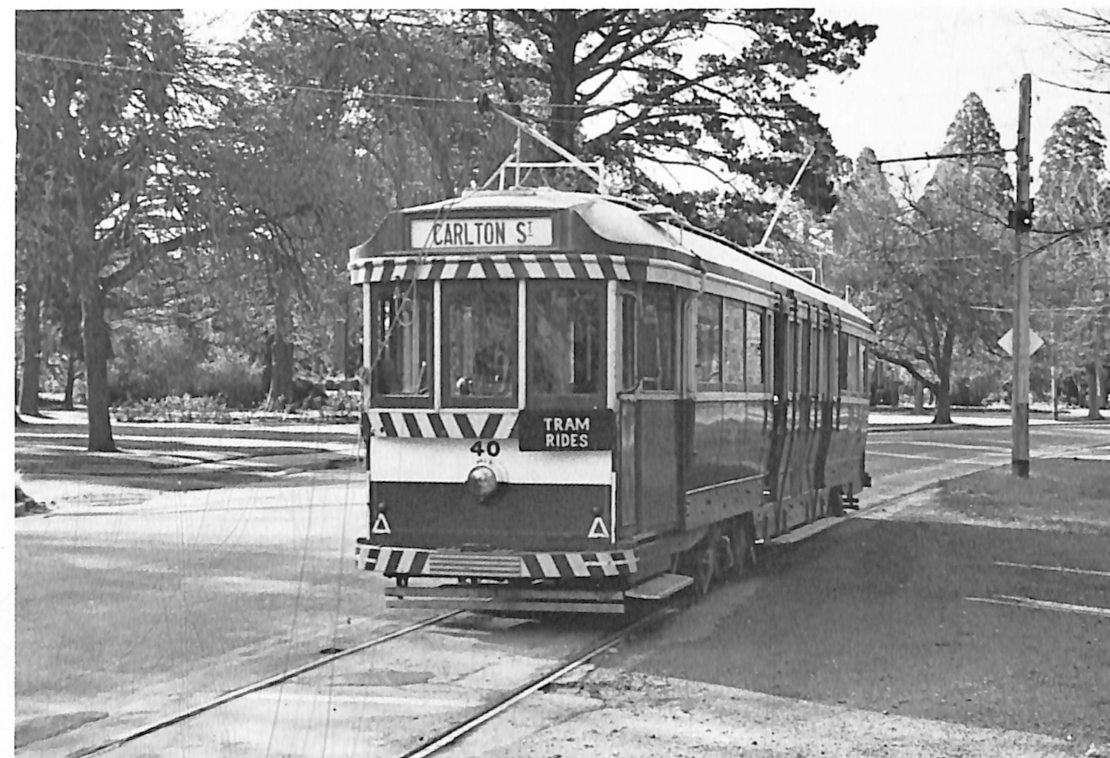
*This tramcar, number 661, was purchased from Melbourne by the Society. It is one of two Melbourne cars in the fleet. They are twenty years or so younger than the Ballarat cars and their operation from time to time helps to prolong the life of the vintage trams. Old motorcar rallies take place on occasions in the gardens near this scene.*

Gold mining not only raised the level of prosperity in the region but also produced some amusing incidents including the following, as reported in the Ballarat Courier. Sovereigns had become abundant and the miners, particularly the younger men, appeared to gain much pleasure in offering sovereigns for their fares. Of course a conductor's cash became exhausted and names had to be obtained. In one instance the conductor made a last desperate roundup of money and, gaining possession of another gold piece, took the remaining fares from one tenderer. Some excitement and amusement followed. The conductor was threatened with reprisals but not much gold was offered thereafter.

Ownership of the system was transferred from the Ballarat Tramway Company Ltd. to the Electric Supply Company of Victoria Ltd. in 1902. Following this transfer the tramways were extended and electrified in 1905. The new owners continued to operate the system until it was taken over by the State Electricity Commission of Victoria in 1934.

By this time the trams and track were in poor condition so in 1935 the S.E.C. embarked on a rehabilitation programme. By 1936 all worn track and overhead fittings had been repaired and replacement trams purchased from Melbourne and Adelaide. In 1937 the Lydiard Street North route was extended by a little over half a mile and the system assumed its final form.

In only two of the 37 years of S.E.C. operation was a profit made, and during the later years increasing costs and decreasing patronage led to mounting losses. The S.E.C. announced its intention to seek abandonment of the tramways in 1962 but in the face of substantial opposition did not proceed. Five years later following a Transport Regulation Board enquiry, a notice of abandonment was tabled in State Parliament. This, however, was defeated by the combined



*Shadows are long and the parade quiet as car 40 heads south towards the end of a midwinter day. The trams run regularly at weekends, during school holidays and most public holidays throughout the year.*

opposition in the Upper House. Finally in late 1970 another notice was tabled and this time permission was granted. Closure then awaited only completion of arrangements for substitute motorbus services.

The tramway system was closed in three parts. On Sunday 22nd August 1971 the service to Victoria Street, east of the city along the Melbourne Road, and to the Gardens via Drummond Street North, operated for the last time. Two weeks later it was the turn of the Mount Pleasant route, south-east of the city, and the Gardens via Sturt Street West route, to cease operation. On this day the last regular S.E.C. tram left the Gardens terminus over track on which the Ballarat Vintage Tramway now operates. Two lines only remained, those to Lydiard Street North, and Sebastopol. These closed on Sunday 19th September, 1971.

The last day provided a remarkable contrast to the usual quiet Sunday operation in Ballarat. Seventy people were at the depot to see seven large "bogie" trams start out for their day's work, and during the day hundreds more, many wearing "Save the Trams" T-shirts, rode and photographed them. Finally the time came for the last journey, the late night trip from Sebastopol to the depot. Tramcar number 40 was rostered for this run.

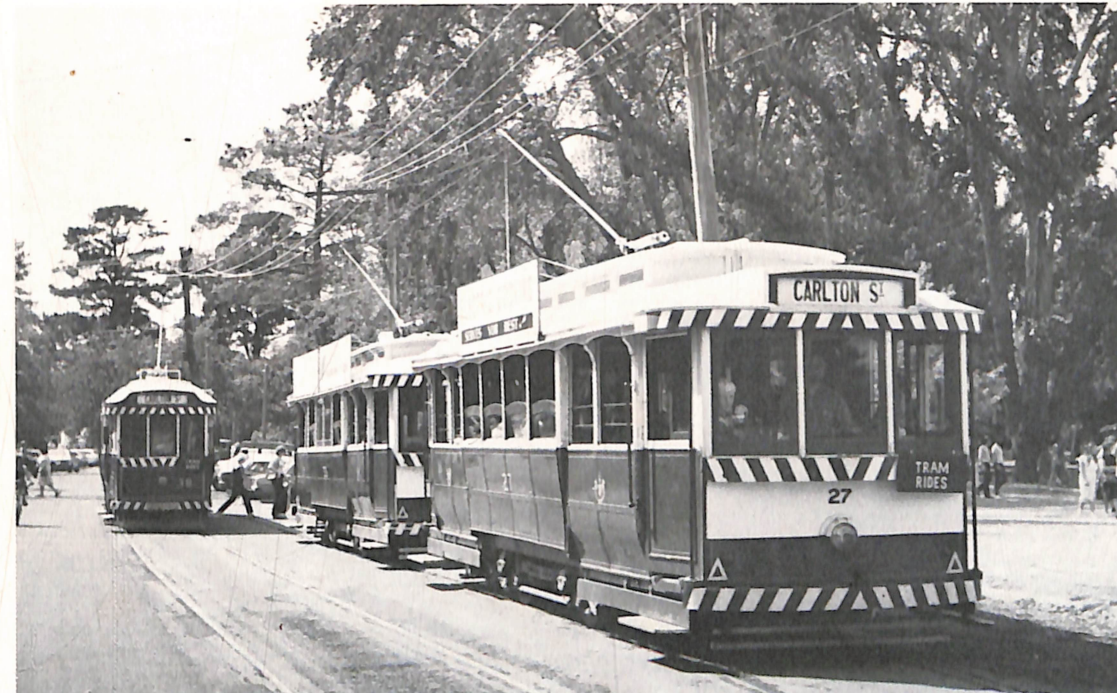
The event did not go unnoticed by the people of Ballarat, for a crowd of 5,000, a brass band and local radio station staff were on hand to say farewell to a mode of transport that had served so long. After a handing-over ceremony at the Sebastopol Borough and Ballarat City boundary, witnessed by another large crowd, tramcar number 40, fully loaded with 200 passengers, ground uphill to Sturt Street. Here all passengers disembarked, to allow pass-carrying tramwaymen to board for a last nostalgic ride to the depot.





ABOVE: Trams can be chartered by parties, touring groups and for weddings. The gardens are a popular location for wedding receptions and photographs. Sometimes, as here, the trams are included. In this view the groom seems unusually relaxed!

BELOW: A tight squeeze for number 27 during the famous Begonia Festival held annually on Labour Day! This scene shows clearly how well tramcars can operate safely in confined spaces.

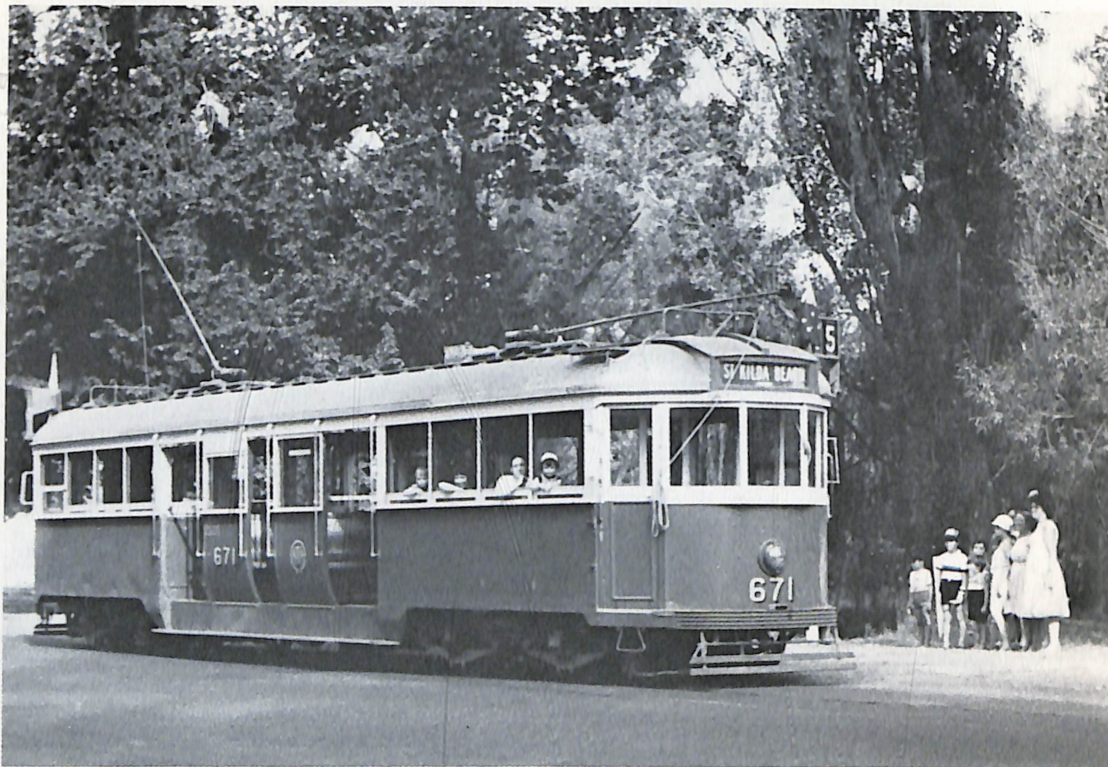


ABOVE: The tramline is single track with a passing loop near the midway point. The kiosk is nearby from where light refreshments can be obtained. Lakeside Lodge occupies the principal part of the same building and can be booked for functions. A paddle boat operates from the same area touring the lake, which was the venue for the Olympic Games rowing events in 1956.

BELOW: Several cars in the fleet have operated in Melbourne on Australia Day as part of the festivities. Car 27 passes Melbourne's famous landmark, Flinders Street Station, en route to East Melbourne.







*The other car purchased by the Society from Melbourne, number 671, to supplement the Ballarat fleet and displaying a Melbourne route name. The car heads south a short distance from St. Aidans Drive terminus. Swans and cygnets sometimes wander across the road in this area from the lake behind the trees.*

Just after midnight number 40 moved into the depot with L. Walker at the controls. He had worked on the tramway for forty years. As the doors closed behind it, they revealed a large sign reading "THE END".

This, however, was not the end, for number 40 and nine of the other tramcars now run for their present owners, the Ballarat Tramway Preservation Society Ltd.

### THE BALLARAT VINTAGE TRAMWAY

The tramway itself is called the Ballarat Vintage Tramway, and is operated by the Ballarat Tramway Preservation Society Ltd.

### THE BALLARAT TRAMWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY LTD

The Ballarat Tramway Preservation Society Ltd. was formed shortly before closure of the tramways with the aim of keeping about three miles of track around the shores of Lake Wendouree operating as a tourist attraction. This idea captured the public imagination and the Society's membership soon grew to over 300. The State Electricity Commission donated five tramcars and much valuable equipment. Shortly afterwards the Ballarat City Council agreed to the Society operating over the track within the Botanical Gardens and granted a site for the construction of the Society's own depot.



*When three or more trams operate at once, cars run in tandem. Cars 33 and 38 can be seen to have just arrived at St. Aidans Drive. The conductor of number 33 turns the pole through which electric current is drawn from the overhead wire. The Shell House is only a short walk to the left of this terminus.*

With this basic equipment for the operation of a street tramway museum available, the Society was now nearing the achievement of its goal. There remained, however, several necessary tasks to be completed before its fleet of tramcars could start running.

As the old depot was demolished and the site sold for housing development, a new depot had to be constructed. A programme for training drivers was put under way, greatly assisted by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board which made available the facilities of its drivers' training school. Also, a new depot approach track had to be laid and the electricity supply reconnected.

The first movement of a Society tramcar under its own power occurred on Saturday, 12th October 1974. From here the major project was the laying of a connection across Wendouree Parade, linking the depot with the former S.E.C. track. This occurred over one weekend in November 1974.

The Ballarat Vintage Tramway was officially opened on Saturday, 1st February 1975, by the Chairman of the S.E.C., Mr. J.C. Trethowan, with the Mayor of Ballarat as an official guest. Following music from brass and pipe bands and speeches from official guests, Mr. Trethowan drove tramcar number 40 through a barrier of streamers. The Society's aim of an operating tramway museum had been realized.

The tramway now operates every Saturday, Sunday, and most public holidays and school holidays throughout the year. A museum display is also available for public inspection, located in the depot.





*Tramcars should be protected from the weather in the depot when not in use and properly maintained. This view shows car 33 on jacks while the wheels are changed. The tyres consist of solid steel so there are never any problems with punctures! Car 40 is about to receive similar treatment and a mechanical overhaul.*

The Ballarat Tramway Preservation Society Ltd. is a non-profit company. Work is carried out by volunteers from all walks of life who enjoy seeing the trams running again. There is no requirement for members to assist in volunteer work parties, although their assistance is of course much appreciated, and new members seeking just to keep in touch with the Society's activities are welcome. Members receive newsletters several times a year.

For further information about the Society please write to the Secretary, BTPS, P.O. Box 632, Ballarat, Victoria 3350, Australia, or enquire at the depot.

## THE FLEET

The State Electricity Commission of Victoria donated five tramcars to the Society. In addition, the fleet comprises five other Ballarat cars and two trams purchased from Melbourne by the Society.

Of the Society's fleet, eight trams are of the "single truck" type, that is, they have four wheels, and four are larger "bogies" trams, with a four-wheel bogie under each end. The distinctive striped bumper bars, canopies, and marker lights at each end were added from the late 1950s to make the tramcars more visible to night-time motorists.



*The tramway has featured in a film and on television. This scene was taken on the tenth anniversary of the Society's formation. With speeches made, a procession of cars begins a tour of the system led by number 38. The two men on the left comprise a Channel 6 television crew. The whole depot complex containing seven tracks is in the background. It was built for the Society, as the original depot location lies beyond the present northern terminus, and has now been redeveloped.*

### Number 11:

Built in 1915 by the Meadowbank Manufacturing Co. for the Prahran and Malvern Tramways Trust. Became Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board "J" class car number 65. Purchased by the Melbourne Electric Supply Co. Ltd. in 1928, becoming Geelong number 28. Transferred to Ballarat in 1935. On closure of the Ballarat tramways, was assigned to the Daylesford Historical Museum. Retained by them until acquired by the Society and moved to the depot in 1979.

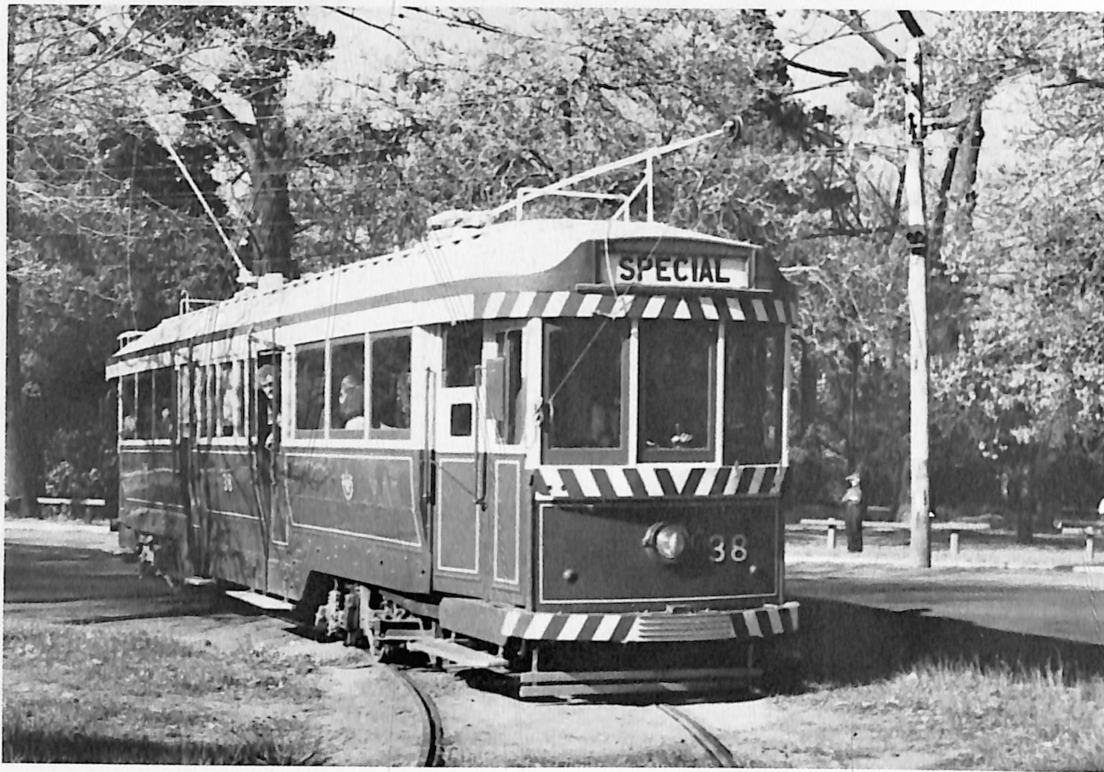
### Number 13:

Built in 1915 by the Meadowbank Manufacturing Co. for the Prahran and Malvern Tramways Trust as number 68. Classed "J" when taken over by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board. Purchased by the Melbourne Electric Supply Co. Ltd. in 1928 and became Geelong car number 30. Transferred to Ballarat in 1936, becoming car number 13. On closure of the Ballarat tramways, this car was donated to the Lake Goldsmith Steam Preservation Society and returned to Ballarat in 1983 on loan to the Ballarat Tramway Preservation Society.

### Number 14:

Built in 1915 by the Meadowbank Manufacturing Co. for the Prahran and Malvern Tramways Trust. It ran as number 75 and retained this number when classed "J" by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board in 1920. Sold to the Melbourne Electric Supply Co. Ltd. in 1927 and ran in Geelong as number 29. Transferred by the S.E.C. to Ballarat in 1936 where it became number 14. This car was the last to be overhauled and the last to run under its own power during S.E.C. ownership. This car is the property of the Ballarat City Council and on loan to the Society.





*The Society's Annual General Meeting is held at the depot. Here car 38 is about to return to the depot after a members' tour following a Meeting. Near the right background of the view is an area set aside for barbecues.*

#### **Number 18:**

Built in 1913 by Duncan and Fraser for the Prahran and Malvern Tramways Trust and became number 63. Retained this number when classed "H" by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board. Transferred to the Electric Supply Co. of Victoria Ltd. at Ballarat in 1931, becoming number 18. In 1964 this car was decorated for the centenary of the Borough of Sebastopol and donated to that borough in 1971 by the S.E.C. and returned to Ballarat in 1982 on loan to the Society. This was the last car to run in the city area of Ballarat.

#### **Numbers 26, 27 and 28:**

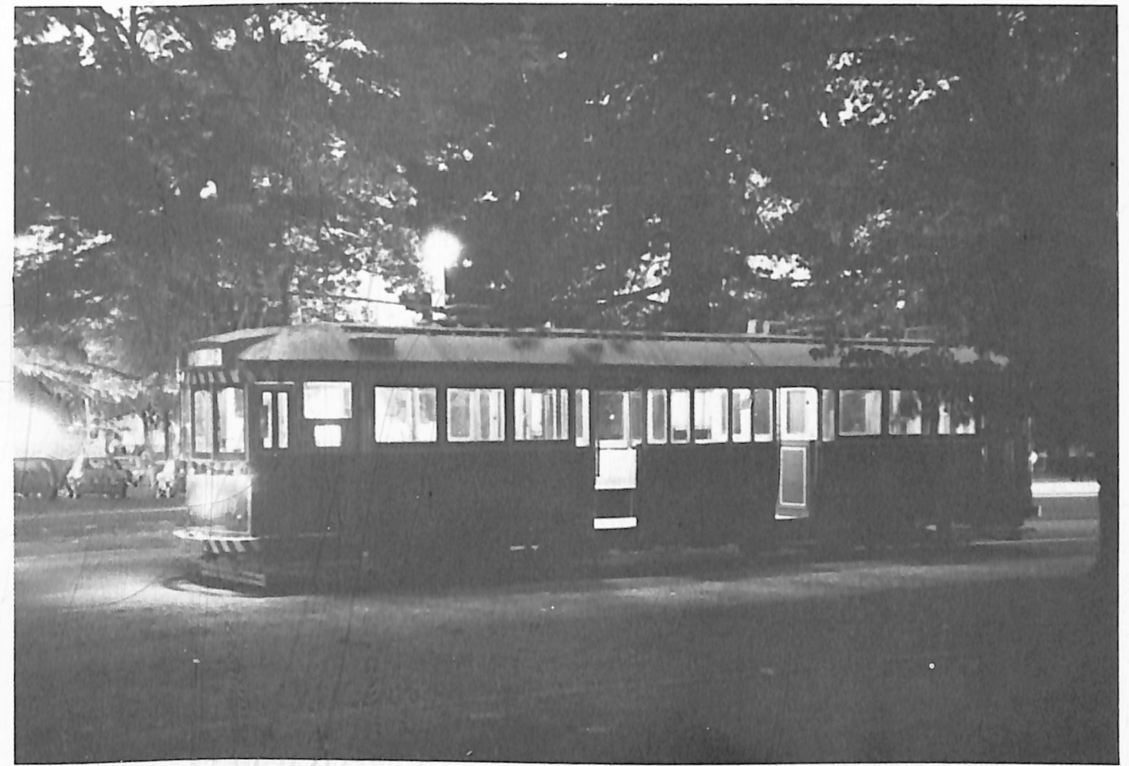
Built in 1916 by Duncan & Fraser for the Hawthorn Tramways Trust where they ran as numbers 5, 10 and 7. Renumbered 111, 116 and 113 and classed "M" by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board in 1920. Sold to the Electric Supply Co. of Victoria Ltd. in 1931 and received their present numbers, passed on to the S.E.C. in 1934.

Number 27 had the distinction of running 1,000,000 miles (1,609,300 km) while in service in Ballarat by June 1968.

Number 28 suffered extensive accident damage to a vestibule in 1971. This was replaced by the Society with one from withdrawn Bendigo car number 10, followed by complete external repainting in early 1950s' livery.

#### **Number 33:**

Built in 1920 by Duncan & Fraser for the Footscray Tramways Trust, but delivered to the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board who had by then taken over the Trust. The car was classed "M" 189 by the Board. Purchased by the S.E.C. in 1935. In 1971 this car was acquired by the Hamilton Pastoral Museum and held by them until procured by the Society in 1977.



*And so to the end of a glorious day during the Begonia Festival when trams run late. Here car 38 waits north of the loop where an amusement fair is being held for the entertainment of all who wish to attend.*

#### **Number 38:**

Built in 1914 by Duncan & Fraser for the Prahran and Malvern Tramways Trust and ran as number 41. Retained this number when classed "E" by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board. Sold to the S.E.C. in 1951 and renumbered 38. Altered to its present form in 1951 to permit one-man operation, but was not used as a one-man car due to Trade Union opposition.

This car was repainted by the Society in the final S.E.C. livery.

#### **Number 40:**

Built in 1913 by Duncan & Fraser for the Prahran and Malvern Tramways Trust, and entered service as their number 35. Retained this number when classed "C" by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board. Sold to the S.E.C. and renumbered 40 in 1951. This car was the last to carry passengers in Ballarat, on 19th September 1971.

Additionally, two tramcars as described below were purchased direct from the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board by the Society. They share the traffic with the vintage cars as part of the ongoing plan to ensure the latter remain operable for posterity.

#### **Number 661:**

One of 16 cars built by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board between 1930 and 1934 and classed "W3". This was the first class of Melbourne drop centre cars to have all steel framing. Purchased by the Society in 1975.

#### **Number 671:**

One of 5 cars built by the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board between 1933 and 1935 and classed "W4". This was the first class of Melbourne cars to have wide bodies and transverse seating in the saloons. Purchased by the Society in 1975.



National Library of Australia, card number and ISBN  
0 9591918 0 1

Baxter & Stubbs, Printers, Ballarat