

Flegeltaub's mulberries had a particular attraction for me. Sweet and tasty, and whenever my mate Alfie, who drove Flegeltaub's delivery van, offered me a trip around with him, I would call in at the homestead where we would regale ourselves in the spacious fruit garden in which Alfie was given full freedom the year round. On an occasion such as this, and laden with parcels, the van proceeded round the lake toward the tram sheds, and a consultation took place which was to decide my life's purpose until forty years at least had slipped by. The fateful day was November 1st, 1905. I said to Alf "I'll go and see if there is a job to be had". So he wasted some of Flegeltaub's time whilst I interviewed Mr. S.H. Smith, the Tramway Superintendent, who wore spectacles, looked up over the rims and enquired my business. "I am looking for work and wondered if there was a vacancy" I said. Mr. Smith held a pen and began to write first my name and then the address. When I had told him these he said "Well" because our home in Scott Parade was a fair distance away. "Well", said Mr. Smith, "all I can offer you at present is a car-cleaner position, the rate of pay is 10/- a week and you will be required to work night shift in your turn." I accepted.

On the 2nd. Nov. at 7.30 a.m. I was handed a cane broom, and with two other boys commenced to sweep the shed floor. Well! a new broom sweeps clean so 'tis said, the next task, washing trams! Hot water, soap and scrubbing brush, now cleaning brass work. The driver's brake handle called a 'goose-neck' was a special job. This went on for the rest of the week and on the Sunday night I started three weeks night shift. Mr. Walton, the foreman, instructed me to report to Mr. Odgers at 10 p.m. I spent Sunday afternoon trying out a new routine of going to sleep in the daytime. This was an utter failure at the first try, for I had had my night's sleep to the full by lying in bed Sunday morning. Being a working man, past seventeen years, I felt justly entitled to this labourer's right and therefore my afternoon's siesta was frustrated. There is a technique to everything as I was to discover. Yes, even to sleeping.

On the 18th of August in this same year, the Electric Tram Service commenced, rather well, considering; and there were at first ten trams in service, then, very soon, eleven. Six on Gardens route and two on Lydiard Street North and one each on Drummond Street South and Victoria Street routes, although the latter route was termed Orphanage and Mount Pleasant. It would be recalled that a separate system of horse trams was retained on Sebastopol and Ballarat South in Skipton Street and Drummond Street South for some four years in the main, and in Sebastopol itself a Horse Tram continued until 1913 when this last remaining section was electrified with some elan and flagwaving.

I commence night shift!

At nine o'clock on this Sunday night I sallied forth on my trek to the tram sheds. You may ask, "Why not take a tram?". Ha, there's the rub, for at this time there were no concession fares nor passes for employees, though Councillors and Press representatives were supplied with passes, and at the rates operating it would have taken almost all my night's earnings to travel by tram at one shilling for fares---more than half, anyway. Later on penny fares were granted to employees and were gladly availed of. Of course, there was no fare at any time if you were in uniform, but the car cleaner had no such apparel.

At 10 p.m. Mr. Odgers gave me, with two other cleaners, Gordon Tait and Ned Whitla, the night's programme. Scrubbing roofs to begin with. This scrubbing of roofs demands some explaining, and I am just the one to do this, having a very vivid recollection of the precarious footholds on slippery soapy canvas surfaces sloping over the canopies. I have always held a high (very high) regard for slaters ever since.

In the days (and nights) of which I speak, the overhead pole connection with the trolley-wire had a wheel on a swivel-head attachment, and the wheel's lubricant was a frequent application of black oil, or at least, it soon ran black and spilled itself over our white tram tops very freely. (It hit the roof) A ladder was kept at the Grenville St. terminus for motormen to oil the wheels. One early driver was so addicted to the application of the oilcan, he became known as "Trolley-wheel Jack".

My recollections of those days and the smell of kerosene and the stinging knees on sloping tops are not happy. Some years later the wheels were kept functioning smoothly by Vaseline syringed into the hollow axles, and even this advance was improved upon by graphite, it's imperviousness to friction creating heat,

Before passing over this phase I am compelled by fact to add that the old Electric Supply Company had, at times, to pay compensation to indignant ladies, who, being seated on the top of the old horse trams, would get a splash of oil on a silk or muslin frock. A case of, the good oil, not so good. The horse trams were drawn as trailers on busy traffic days, behind the electric trams. Many tasks were allotted me in those far off days at the tram depot. I worked there for some months, assisting the painter, and the blacksmith as striker, and, somewhat crudely, the armature repairer, an American named Twist. Our very primitive methods bear repeating. The armature, or motor, would be revolved, by Alf. Twist twisting whilst I held the binding wire taut by having a hessian bag wrapped around my foot, around which the wire coiled and thence round another bag wrapped round my body and arm. I was "In the Bag" well and truly. At various stages Twist would seal the wire with his soldering iron. (We were Primitive Methodists) In such sundry ways I earned my ten shillings, until came the day when the ~~xxxxxx~~ scene was rapidly changed.

I was in the smithy wielding the 12lb. hammer, when, about 3pm. Mr. Smith came for me and said I was to go conducting on the Sebastopol horse-tram temporarily.

Now, I was rather fed up with blacksmith striking and complied more readily than usual. I was outfitted with a makeshift uniform coat, surely not one passed by any judge. (the shoulder and arm of one side being larger than the other) a vest with cross rows of pockets, a pill-box cap, and a silver badge was buttoned upon my coat. It bore the number "TWENTY-THREE" and that was me. I had never been to Sebastopol in my life, and here I was at the corner of Sturt and Armstrong Streets.

A conductor named Cochrane spotted me standing on the kerb and made for me like a shot. "Are you the chap James?" he asked. I said "Yes". "well, You are to do a trip with me and then take over. I am working extra, the other fellow has tossed it in".

I boarded the tram, and received an outfit of tickets, which Cochrane arranged for me. Then, as the tram proceeded outward, he gave me a hurried series of instructions, urging me through the tram, telling me which tickets to use, as I clumsily tried to keep my feet on the curves. The floor of the tram was, as was the custom on the horse trams, covered with straw for comfort. Very often I fumbled the small change and was hard put to maintain a balance whilst bending to recover small silver coins; for a change when the tram gave an unexpected lurch I would fall upon some-one's lap unless I was lucky enough to catch a strap in a hurried grasp. Well! we got to Sebastopol and I was given a quick lesson in unhooking traces, throwing them over the horses backs and removing the swingle bars to replace them on the opposite end for the return trip. The journey back was a repetition of the outward trip---full of surprises. Then, at the city end, after one trip's experience, I was left in charge, passed as competent, although I didn't feel it.

I learned that my driver's name was Bill McPherson. a dour Scot.

He examined my trip journal to see if I had collected and issued tickets for all fares. The rest of the trip was a rare education-- people calling out to me to stop, as I had no idea they were getting carried beyond their destination, the regular conductors being familiar with most patrons. Now and again the driver blew a shrill blast on his whistle---this, I found out, was to warn cabmen and drivers of all manner of buggies and other conveyances, for Sebastopol, and Skipton St. in particular was then a busy locality-- most of the mines being actively operated for twentyfour hours a day by three shifts of men.

The first shift I worked on Sebas. was sometime early in 1906, and, being a temporary hand, I was given instructions from day to day, and my duties were remarkably varied; one day I would be allotted to the grooms to assist in feeding the fifty-odd horses, and in the early hours on an evening it was a job to find one's way round in the dimly lit stables. An odd kerosene lamp threw a pale glow round it's own immediate vicinity, but if you got under a horse's heels, that was your own business.

I can recall Mr. Shelton giving me a warning about a certain animal and it's viciousness. "Look here, boy," said the foreman, he will bite your hand off, so whenever you fill up his bin, drop the chaff over from the next stall". I remembered the warning, but so poor was the light, I made a miscalculation in distance one evening, and heard a hoarse whisper calling me to "Come out of there" I was filling from Midnight's stall (and he the outlaw) a docile mare's bin over the partition. This gained me some status combined with much banter: all the time I appeared to be making friends by my mistakes. The other employees enjoyed a bit of fun, and I was providing merriment.

On one wet morning, being unused to the sway of the tram, I fell off the rear end and looked a sorry plight. I was aroused by a kindly voice calling me. This proved to be Miss Campbell of the Gem Hotel who had witnessed my upset. In a quick way she conducted me into her hotel, loaned me another coat, and told me she would dry and brush my own ready for the next trip. I afterwards ascertained that this lovely lady had been very popular at Craig's Royal, and had herself, become the hostess of the Gem in Armstrong St, on the corner of Bath Lane. Miss Campbell was a "lady". I met many likeable folk on that Sebas. run.

There was a strong Irish flavouring in the staff of the trams. Twinkling eyed Charlie Conroy was very popular as a driver. Charlie would feel the heat and open his collar and shirt-front on a blistering hot day and, sitting astride the three-legged stool provided for drivers, would comment thusly "It will be a Godsend when evening comes, for the night is the best part of the day". Tom Finucane and I shared the rail cleaning job which we did in conjunction with various tasks such as digging out drain boxes or adjusting rubbers in the loop points. The rail cleaning device was a shovel with a long handle, on the shovel was bolted an iron spike to run along the rail groove. Sometimes we rode on the rear of the tram with a leg over the handle to keep the pressure on. This procedure was frowned upon and if caught we were apt to be dealt with severely.

The conductor's wages were fourteen shillings per week, and my week consisted of seven days because I was temporarily employed. Other conductors, like the drivers had a full day off a month. Another task allotted me in my spare time between doing meal trips for the regulars, was assisting the farrier, and I was rather a poor assistant at horse-shoeing being somewhat chary at close quarters, and a recollection of an unpleasant swish in the eye from Alarm's" tail was a constant reminder of trouble. Yet I can say that there was some degree of regard I felt for the farrier himself. Without ado or concern he set about his job and adroitly adjusted the shoe; the tang of the sizzling hoof had, in itself, an aroma all it's own, and my brief stays in the smithy were, at least, changes from the heavily busy of the Tracks. On the Railway Picnic day March 1906 the conductors, dissatisfied with their (wages?)

which was eighteen shillings per⁴ week on the electric trams, made a somewhat hasty decision to strike, so a meeting with the management was held at the Wendouree Depot. Having to walk from my home to Wendouree and suffering from a bout of influenza was no light task, and I was in a bad way when I reached the scene. There was great excitement, and the manager, Mr. Benjamin Deakin, made an offer of an immediate increase to £1-0-0 a week. A red headed conductor named Britt put the terms to us, making a speech to the effect that it was something gained, and the public had to be considered; so after some parley we resumed. To my chagrin, the increase did not apply to those conductors operating on the horse trams, so we remained on fourteen shillings for some time after.

I continued on the Sebas. route for a while longer and eventually was able to do quite a good job. The jog-jog of the trams and the dimly lit interior at nights, were not enlivening, but there was a cheeriness in the atmosphere. The miners used the trams considerably, and were, in the main, jovial, but one recollection I have stands out. It was the custom for men to be paid in sovereigns (happy days) and the miners off duty, would come in, and after being paid, do some celebrating on the way home. Each in turn would offer a sovereign for his fare, knowing full well that after two or three had been attended to, the conductors change would run out. The horse trams had accommodation on top, and up I went on one such occasion to collect. I was almost out of change. Then, from a smart guy I took his sovereign, pretended I had run out but making sure, all the time I was adding up the fares of those who were still to pay, then I took for the whole five from this one joker. He was in a rage and threatened to throw me over the side, off the tram. However, everyone joined in the fun and reckoned the thing a good act and I was able to carry on in triumph. So the days went, and the busy Saturday nights were a feature.

Instead of three trams running on Skipton St. Route, four would be introduced, giving a quarter-hour service in place of a twenty minute headway, and in addition, the fore-man would attach an extra horse to the team of two, to assist each loaded tram up the Armstrong St. hill then return to help the next. Ballarat was always a big draw on Saturday, the shopping night, when every man and his wife came to town, and made for Bridge St. to parade and shop and talk. A small separate run, that of Drummond St. Stn., was operated by a single-deck tram with one horse. The regular driver was Tom Brambrick, later of the "Earl of Zetland" hotel. Tom had no conductor and used a fare-receiver box. Mr. Peter Hodgetts, who had been manager of the horse-trams in Ballarat prior to the electric system, had been retained as a Traffic Inspector, but also acted as supervisor of the horse section for quite some time after.

Then came my order to leave the Sebas. sphere and become conductor in the electric division. This meant an increase in salary to £1 and very welcome. I found this work lighter and the hours far more reasonable; a straight-out shift of eight or eight & a half hours being very acceptable. There was, too, more variety in routes; certainly not in duties, for my services in Sebas. were very mixed. At last I was measured for a uniform of my own. The firm which ~~prey~~ provided the suits was Craig Williamson & Thomas, where Tunbridges now stands. Then better set up, I went to work rather more satisfied. The winter came on, however, and it was a long journey to the depot from my house, but a bicycle was quite out of the question just then for me, and although the going was rough in many ways, such as straight-out shifts without a minute off, no meal relief, early morning trips (tried for the train traffic, but little availed of) & stern inspectors. It seemed to be the way to encourage us, to inculcate fear into our hearts. Getting suspended for trifling breaches was a common experience, however, as there were many casual employees whose only chance of a shift was through the absence of a regular, these suspensions helped needy extras to earn a crust. On the 6th. August 1906, an extraordinary heavy snowstorm enveloped Ballarat. I was on early duty and when the time came to go to work at 6.a.m. on that crisp morning, a white world met my gaze. Bright glistening snow, and falling still. I was not taking any chances, so I donned an old overcoat; a heavy green topcoat, which had been my grandfather's, and this over my own; and here too, was a chance

I had been waiting for; I had a pair of brand new rubber galoshes! The snow was six inches deep in some places, but as I trod along Scot Parade the scene presenting was supremely beautiful, and majestic in grandeur. Trees with branches borne low with white mantles--The whole earth carpeted with snow; unmarked, unsoiled. Bridges decked likewise, roadways covered, clean and undefiled by traces of hoof or wheel. The old Eastern Railway Station appeared for all the world like a picture of a Russian fortress with it's solid outline.

I trudged, absorbed in the splendour, all those little stores near the Humffray St. crossing glistened in their chaste adornment; I was belogged with the growing weight of my coats and the heat generating because of my efforts in rubber galoshes; each footstep became now laboured and I began to get steaming hot! I felt I would burst into flames, but the beauty of the scene kept me enchanted. I said the Eastern Railway Station was transformed; so too, were humble dwellings, and I meditated here-as is my mood--now the problem of distribution is solved by nature itself, whose bounty has fallen on all alike and in good measure.

I met only one person in my first two miles, a pleasant-faced girl going to her service in Nolan St. We eyed each other suspiciously for a snowball attack, but we were both unarmed, and I required every ounce of my decreasing energy. Almost exhausted, I arrived at the depot but no tram had moved out, although quite a group of employees were standing around. The Chief Inspector Mr. Thomas Barn was calmly smoking and looking about, noting our presence. He was a striking figure at all times and his waterproof coat with shoulder cape gave him a military bearing. I asked "what was the delay?" and learned that the Postal Telegraph Department had requested the Tramway Authority not to put power on, as many of the Telegraph wires were resting on the street trolley wires. The clearing up ~~xxx~~ took some hours, and we had some fun snow-balling passing folk. It was 12 o'clock before the trams were sent out and slow going even then on account of the snow on the track.

Quite a triumph over us had the Sebas. Division because the horse-drawn section had run it's full programme of trips, and the "Boys" down south had a great victory over the more modern transport. I like to think of the picturesque people of these more spacious days. I had the opportunity of seeing and talking with all citizens. Some of these men used the trams regularly, what an army of the past the memory could conjure up, ~~but~~ distinctive figures emerge clearly. Dr. Cairns of St. Andrews, in his carriage, Dr. Higgins, Second Catholic Bishop, with his amiable "Good aMarning", Andrew Anderson, the tanner--~~sedate~~-- Mr. Purdue the Saddler, with his hurried walk, Alf. Tunbridge who gave the conductors tips. The stately "Woodrow Wilson" looking Mr. Pullum, Jimmy Tyler, genial and smiling; John McLeod, somewhat austere, but he told me of his early efforts and his attention to every phase of his business. Dr. Green, the Anglican Bishop of Ballarat and his ananuensis, Miss Tweedie, Mr. Tuthill, the aggressive lawyer, Geo. Slater the grumbling warehouseman, D...Thompson, his cigar, Dicky Foy, the mercurial clerk, Capt. Frank Dale with his curled moustache, Quaint Dr. Kent with a short clay pipe, taking little puffs. The gentlemanly silk-hatted Joseph Roff of Victoria St. & Main Rd. Geo. Crocker who was always gentle in manner and he walked very much the same way, giving me the impression that he had tender feet. Harry Davies was rather more assertive and vigorous. He travelled on the Drummond St Nth. route, together with the aristocratic pince-nez-wearing J.B. Pearson who almost became a judge. Sometimes the grim looking barrister H.A. Nevitt spoke, but very seldom, all he ever remarked to me, was "Webster St", as if I didn't know. Still, that grim countenance could relapse into a smile, as to my astonishment, I saw for myself when the lovable Dean Tucker went forward into the saloon of the tram to greet him. Dean Tucker was 'Tops' with we trammen, in fact, with everyone. He it was who first assured me of the coming of Radio Communication, so I was prepared. Brother Desmond who travelled

from St. Patricks College to the East Christian Brothers was very

friendly toward me, and I learnt that he was held in very high regard by everyone with whom he came in contact. The staunch R.T. ~~ix~~ Vale travelled on the Lydiard St. Route, and crossing the railway line his pipe gave out such volumes of smoke you were apt to think that a locomotive was travelling on the tram rails for a change. Of ladies who were regular travellers, I might respectfully refer to a hundred, and miss many gracious tram-users. I think I am impressed by 'friendliness' and confess to being made happy when important ladies of the town would recognise me. One of the sidelines which the old Electric Supply Company indulged in, was a water chute, which was erected, and ran for a couple of summers on the Gardens side of the lake. On holidays, many of the younger picnickers had a ride, and the fun was good, but so many got good dresses splashed and soiled that this means of attraction went out of fashion. Conductors from the Trams were rostered up to fulfil the duty of ticket sellers and threepence a trip was charged. We had some awfully busy times on special holidays, and long hours were the rule, rather than the exception. Seven in the morning until nine at night would not be an exaggeration on Boxing Day. What a feature the old Summer cars were, on the Garden's route, numbers 19 & 20 often carried 130 people. Collecting fares along the foot-board was precarious, and yet, it was better than scrambling through the saloon cars. The practise of pulling trailers, the old horse trams converted, has been commented upon, and it was quite a sight to see the loading on a holiday, people crowded aloft and on the stairways. The night traffic was also considerable as people would delay their departure from the Garden's until a late hour. I have

seen few prettier sights than a summer car and trailer illumined top and interior by means of an adapter from the electric tram, passing, crowded also, one of the steamers near Fairyland in its bowsey days, and bells ringing a cheerio message, whilst Bob Taylor replied with his whistle 'toot-tooting', all in holiday mood. Some citizens would take special trips on summer evenings to get the breeze. Mr. Rehfisch, the leather merchant was one such, he would hold his panama hat in his hand to enjoy the ozone, and a cigar for company.

Things began to happen to me in the year of grace 1907. I became a senior conductor, for which the remuneration was the princely sum of twenty-five shillings per week. I had, also, a trip to Bendigo with the tramway section of a combined Inter-city Sports gathering. Ballarat Senior Cricket Association sent a team to the sister City and I might have played with that, team, I was told, but I spent my time with the Electric Supply Coy. We defeated our sister Electric Supply. I made top score and felt elated. At a "Smoke-Social" at night the tram depot was decorated and we had a fine time. I recall the convivial tone, the mellowness of the air, men smoking long clay churchwarden pipes and quaffing ale without regard to quota.

Back to Ballarat and work... Busy Band contests crowds and the final night's bands marching down Sturt St... and the famous Prout's Band striking up "Waldermere", it's masterpiece.

As a conductor, I saw quite a few come and go; the tram job lost its appeal very quickly for many--working Sundays and Saturday afternoons never has been popular. Many times did I yearn to be free on weekends yet, perseverance has a merit and we gave service to the community; often-times, when I look back and consider, maybe, I did not miss so much after all.. We were always around and about seeing what was going on and taking place in the scheme of things. Changes kept taking place; men and boys moved on; one of them, Walter Simpson, a motorman, was to become Assistant Manager of the Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramway Board; Mr. Quise from our office is now Treasurer Drivers Whittle, Ferguson, Williams, Cottrell and Conductor Ballhausen all early Ballarat Tramway men, Inspectors with the Board. Good all round training being at least one reason for their preferment. We had to adapt ourselves to all sorts of conditions in Ballarat and it gave us some education worth while. All kinds of happenings occurred, such as derailments, and on one such event I got a shock,

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an electric shock! which sent a million pins and as many needles through me. Harry Rawlings was the driver. Harry was a dry ~~xxx~~ character if ever there was one. His quaint observations such as "Mind the curve" when a bow-legged man who used to travel with us was about to board, and again, a young woman who was always in a hurry and running late and invariably wore a red hat---Harry would say, "Here's the Scarlet Runner". He was one of the horse-tram drivers who had been drafted into the Electric service when the change-over at the Wendouree Depot took place, and it amused me to hear him tell of his "conversion". As far as I can recall, the dialogue ran; Mr. Smith, Superintendent. "Well, Rawlings, you have submitted your name to change over to the Electrical under-taking"

Harry. "Yes, Mr. Smith".

Mr Smith. "Your record is quite good, but you must ~~xxx~~ understand that a stricter rein will be held, and the occasional drink on duty must cease entirely. By the way, Rawlings, do you drink?"

Harry. "Well, Mr. Smith, I am not going to tell a lie. I take a drink at times, but not to success".

Harry served for many years on both horse and electric systems, he was a real "Trammie" and handled the public with skilful tact. In those days of electrical traction we had to learn a great deal by experience; I did! One very wet night, the points to go round, or the 'switch' to use the correct term, was blocked with silt: I supposed was washed down from the lake; Rawlings' tram, of which I was the conductor, ran back out of the rails on to the road. Everyone was ordered to stand clear, and during the efforts to right matters, some confusion in instructions occurred and I received the full 550 volts! I 'cracked hardy' but I had more toning-up than I required. Talking of electric shocks, not long ago I met an ex-Ballararat resident who had been having a re-union with himself and his native city. He recognised me as a tram employee of his earlier residence. "Hello" Jamesie" he greeted me, you're still on? You are looking old, it's time you retired." "You know me?" I said. Of course I know you, I was here when you started. I was on the tram the day you were elocutocuted". I said, "Well, you must have been toucheng wood, or else you're a non-conductor" He said, "Well, come and have a drink for old times sake".... I had to refuse, which I have done on hundreds of occasions, particularly at Christmas time. This Merry Christmas feeling was denied to tram crews. People who came home for Christmas and New Year were many, and usually in festive mood, but our work was more urgent still, and the traffic heavy. All tram were requisitied, extras on all lines, all hand at it for the long night of Christmas Eve, and what a sight it was! Ballararat in glad array. The shop-keepers almost entirely had large branches of gum tree lashed to the verandah posts, people greeted one another, Santa Claus moved about in red and wadding, small holly trees, Christmas trees in windows, commotion and stir, tin trumpets lost children, tin whistles, drums Christmas Stockings, dressed poultry, each buggy having occupants holding bulky parcels, talk of goose and plum pudding, friends wishing each other the compliments of the year; and tram bells clanging through Bridge St, the conductor's register punch ringing and running hot. Almost all the fares in those conducting days of mine were, in the main, as now, 3d. per. journey, but it took considerably less to pay our wages then. Slip tickets at 6 for 1/- & 8 for 1/- were bought by most regular patrons. We had 20 Electric trams and 7 trailers by this time, 1907, and were still using the horses on Sebastopol through, and Drummond St. St. but during the year, the Electric system was laid down south in Drummond St. as far as Darling St. where two trams ran a ¼ hour service daily, but the Skipton St. route to Sebas. by horse tram was maintained until 1909, when in October a disastrous fire occurred at the Sebas. depot, destroying valuable horses and trams. Soon The Skipton St. route was abandoned and the Sebas. end alone served by horse transport.

The most exciting day in each year was Railway Picnic Day, usually in March. Then we were extended to capacity, and full fares charged from 9a.m. to 6p.m. causing much annoyance to regular users. but the thousands of Melbourne picnickers did not care what they paid these people, released from the confines of Melbourne's crowded by-ways came in their noisy thousands and stirred old Ballarat out of it's even tenor; drinking and singing and jocularly marked the day; all over the place, people sat, lunched and made merry. Up to the Gardens, the City Oval, out to Sebas. everywhere, packing and clattering to get a day's fun out of the dollar train trip. We were always glad to see the last of the Railway Picnic Day.

In a more sedate way Ballarat entertained visitors, and I can recall how our smoothest running tram No.7. was, on the occasions of visit from the Mayor and Councillors from Geelong and Bendigo, carpetted along the saloon floor and cushions, for special occasions, placed upon the seats, and also, for a final touch, the best appeared motorman; the afore-said Wallie Simpson more than once had white gloves on to operate his dignified tram.

White gloves for special occasions was a nice gesture, no doubt, yet it required something more substantial when winter came, for, it must be remembered, there were no protective shields on the trams in the early years, and I have seen drivers, saturated, standing on the open platforms; nearly every man had oilers, some had none but their own overcoats, and it was some ordeal to put in a shift thus exposed. Things are very different nowadays, with thermos flasks, meal reliefs and shields overcoats and screen-wipers, too.

In the horse-tram era uniforms were not strictly enforced, so, many men garbed themselves in accordance with the elements. Although my period with the Sebas. section was not lengthy, I observed that the drivers who worked long periods wore oilers and leggings; in fact, one Gerald O'Hara's leggings came up to his hips, buckled on like armour; felt hats with large brims were favoured. Only McPherson and one other bothered with full uniform, but the conductors were set out more in accordance with tramway procedure---one feature was, they were provided with hard straw hats for summer, 'boaters'. I never wore one of these, being a temporary hand.

It was not always raining, and in summer time quite a lot of variety in head gear was worn. The drivers had small bucket-shaped white helmets, half crown was the cost, and there were competitions as to who had the shiniest helmet(a preparation of whiting and alum was a good paste) We conductors still wearing our pill-box caps, had neckshades in all styles of pugarees, silk and cloth, but I, with some others cut quite a dash with our shaped honeycomb tape laced shields. Later on, we were able to wear khaki coats, and gradually conditions in other ways improved; on busy days men would be relieved for quarter of an hour to have tea and cake, provided by the company. Usually, J.M.Kline was the caterer. He was noted as an East Ballt. Councillor and famed as a caterer for big functions. Later, Mrs. Alf. Haymes carried out these duties very thoroughly.

Kindly Disposed Souls Whilst we are having a refresher course, it is fair to make mention of kindness and consideration, and I do so thankfully. When the Electric trams commenced, a good lady named Grubb(good name) was early on the scene, and at 11a.m. and 6p.m. a billy of hot tea was placed on her front gate-post. This she maintained for a long while, and the men were truly grateful. At Sebas. a similar service was performed by a Mrs. Morrison, and equally appreciated. Now, we come to a lady, who not only thought of the inner man's material needs, but to his spiritual welfare, too, and that lady, together with a few of her friends, would visit us and hold a short prayer meeting. Mrs. Murray, who had done much good missionary service among the poorer classes, the chinese particularly was the widow of the late J.P.Murray, a noted citizen. She was a big lady with a tremulous voice. Her constant donations to us of cases of fruit from Gunn's market were very acceptable. I expect some of us got more than our share, yet, on the whole, fair play was observed. Mrs. Murray would then call upon us by pre-arrangement, and several contentious fellows (I was one) would

assemble in the men's room to "hear the message". When I ponder over these prayer meetings, I blush quietly, for some hard-boiled chaps were among us, and after Mrs. Murray would pray for us in her high-pitched voice, Mrs. Brokenshire would follow in lower tone and there were some strange expressions to be seen on the trammies' faces as the owners rose from bended knee; a faithful few.

J.T. Walker, the genial furniture outfitter would give ten shillings at times, for a 'shout', but the strangest benefactor of all was Fritz Wilson, the proprietor of the Buck's Head Hotel. He was a curious old chap and no doubt about it. His private residence was in Mair St. and he often went home on the last tram. He had curious moods, and made a practice of buying a ten shilling roll of threepences, then tossing the forty up in the air for the fun of seeing the scramble; another prank of this eccentric old gent, was when the old Supply Co., for policy more than gain, ran trams until two o'clock in the morning, for the patrons of the Mayor's Ball; scarcely anyone used the service, it was utterly unnecessary, because dancers had engaged cabs for the homeward trip, and the ordinary public was home in bed, but not Fritz Wilson! He would travel round and about on the otherwise unoccupied tram, laughing at the special privilege he was enjoying, of a tram being specially run for himself. Those of us who were working this extra service were in no mood for joking, as the affair was such a terrible farce, and wearisome. Regatta days were colourful events, and Lake View a magnet for all. We carried heavy traffic and the Police control was necessary to manage the road vehicles. A very prominent heavy-weight Constable was Serg. Barbour; he had charge, at this point. I was on an extra tram for the return loading, when a p.m. shift conductor asked me to ride his bicycle from Grenville St. to the Depot; I was not comfortable on the bicycle, but needs must go via the lake View route, and there I ran into, right into, Const. Barbour and sent him spinning. Thus again, I caused some diversion, and the Const. was looking very angry, but his good nature re-asserted itself and all was well, but the cycle was punctured by the impact. Well, it was easily repaired. So here we are getting along very nicely, when, in October of 1907, the then Superintendent, Mr. Jinks, gave me an instruction to appear before the Engineer. I was 'nt prepared quite for the surprize, for the purpose of the visit proved to be that my conducting days had come to an end, and I became Ticket Examiner James. So much had ~~xx~~ happened in less than two short years, and I leave the story of "Conductor 23" with mingled feelings.

 Read at the BALLARAT HISTORICAL SOCIETY meeting 13/11/45. -----

ONE MORNING

A pink glow over east was the pleasing sight that gladdened my eyes as I journeyed toward Wendouree. Rounding Barrett's Avenue, and ~~xx~~ entering an opening between trees, I saw the lake, and a rare vista Mount Warrenheip in most radiant garb. Day was breaking, golden shafts rose along the sky-line, whilst the mount itself, was, at once as it were, adorned and bathed in liquid fire, or pools of vivid crimson, foamy, ravishing to the eye, and restoring in phantasm, that awful grandeur of long ago. At the foot of this eastern sentinal, it seemed, were smoky-blue delphinium blooms, borne on swaying spikes, a misty veil floating before them. To the south, stood Buninyong, more subdued, surrounded by powdery pastel-shaded drapes.

With senses excited over such delightful prospects, my gaze lowered to discover a dispersing haze over mid-lake, revealing gentle curves and carrying, tranquilly, a gliding boat, its lone occupant acquisitively engaged.

I wished he would deign to but glance and capture that enthralling spectacle of the morning, but he remained abstracted with still deeper interests; yet, nearer the shore, effulgent fish broke the water to gleam, and disappear.

A magpie warbled; soon all manner of sounds filled the air, and, from a distant bell, sweet notes ushered in six o'clock .