

W3 661 Tram Tour -

"Melbourne Revisited"

Rail Tourist Association Inc.

Saturday 27th. May 1989.

For a limited period only, the Ballarat Tramway Preservation Society's W3 class tramcar No. 661 is currently in Melbourne, to operate a series of special tours. This tram has been brought back to Melbourne by a group of enterprising and well-known tramway enthusiast identities (Ron Sholten, Peter Bardho, Bob Campbell, and doyen Bob Prentice), who are calling themselves "Yappa Tours". ("Yappa" refers to the Y and Y1 class trams, where passengers can converse with the motorman, hence the name).

Considerable negotiations took place between the 'Met', the B.T.P.S., and Yappa Tours for many months prior to any official approval being given. Included in these negotiations were an inspection of W3 661 at Ballarat, by Preston Workshops engineers, to ascertain its 'roadworthiness'. When all parties were satisfied with the arrangements, W3 661 was loaded onto a low-loader, early in April, for trans-shipment to Preston Workshops. After being reunited with its bogies, and electrically checked, 661 would become the FIRST "standard" W3 to carry passengers in Melbourne for over 20 years.

The W3's were constructed during the Great Depression, hence it took 5 years to build the 16 new cars. The body itself is not unlike a W2 in appearance, however, the W3's have an all-welded steel frame and supports, considerably improving the strength, whilst at the same time considerably reducing the overall weight. In an attempt to reduce the noise inside the car, as well as wheel wear and rail corrugations, the W3's were built with large 33 inch wheels (W2's have only 26.5" wheels) and (for its time) a revolutionary new bogie design, a feature of which includes mounting of the brake cylinders on the trucks.

The end result was a tram that sat very high on its bogies and thus high off the roadway as well. In comparison to the W2's, it was certainly a big step up into the W3's. The drop-centres were raised towards each saloon, to reduce the overall internal step height. The large step height, for which these cars were not popular with the travelling public, earned these cars the nicknames of "F...y Stretchers" (This is a rude word pertaining to certain aspects of the female anatomy. Please insert the appropriate letters according to your upbringing.) This factor, coupled with the alleged poor braking, and a spectacular stress fracture failure in one of the cars, caused their early demise in 1969, when they were placed in storage at Brunswick and Malvern depots.

Early in 1976, the W3's were eventually recommended for disposal, and after languishing unused for seven years, they ran under their own power to Preston Workshops to be either scrapped or sold.

Car W3 661 entered service in November 1932, and saw service at Camberwell and South Melbourne depots, however for the last 25 years of its working life, it was allocated to Glenhuntly Depot. It was overhauled in 1968, less than one year before being placed in storage. W3 661 was selected for preservation by the B.T.P.S. in 1973, basing its assessment on a combination of body and mechanical condition. It was transferred to Ballarat in 1976 and as the depot extensions had not, at that stage, been completed, 661 spent several years in covered storage

at the Sebastopol depot (a disused stable and milking shed). Improvements carried out since arriving at Ballarat include the replacing of the side destination boxes, the removal of the route number boxes, clear glass being refitted to the motorman's bulkheads, and the stripping back of many layers of paint to reveal the natural woodgrain finish. By far the biggest change occurred when the tram was completely rubbed back and repainted in the chocolate and cream colors of the early M & M.T.B.

Since its introduction into regular service at Ballarat, it has proved extremely popular with crews and public alike, many of whom comment on the quality and finish of the restoration.

W3 661 is one of only FOUR members of the once 16-member strong W3 class (654 - 669) that have survived complete. Apart from W3 667 at Bylands, 661 is the only W3 capable of operation at the present time. Other preserved W3's are 663 at Haddon, and 668 at Newcastle.

The Rail Tourist Association has arranged with Yappa Tours to operate an exclusive tour with W3 661 on Saturday, May 27th 1989, travelling over many different lines. Some of the highlights will be an exhilarating run to East Burwood terminus (opened only in 1978), FIRST EVER run of a W3 over the new double track in Truganini Road to the Carnegie terminus, a run 'down' Bourke Street, the 'back blocks' run to Footscray complete with its extensive sections of open ballasted track, and the little known (and very rarely used) Napier Street siding at Essendon. No tour would be complete without a run along Swanston Street, together with the usual rarely used curves and crossovers. It may well be a once in a lifetime opportunity to travel in a W3 in Melbourne.

Times and General Arrangements

During the tour, members and friends will be able to join the tour at a number of locations, details of which are set out in the text below.

Throughout its stay in Melbourne, W3 661 will be housed at Hawthorn depot, which is located in Wallen Road, just west of the Riversdale Road / Power Street intersection. (Melways Map 45, B12). Tram routes 70 and 75 will convey you to Hawthorn Depot.

W3 661 will "Car Out" from Hawthorn Depot at 9:10am and will travel via Swan Street, Batman Avenue, and Swanston Street to the Lonsdale Street shunt, before returning to Hawthorn depot via the same route. Members may, if they so desire, join the tour at the Batman Avenue tram terminus (opposite Flinders Street station - Melways 1A, J12) at approximately 9:25am, or at Hawthorn Depot en route to East Burwood at about 9:40am.

If you want to sleep in, provision has been made for the W3 to return to Hawthorn Depot at approximately 10:50am, or again at Malvern Depot at 11:10am.

The tour will terminate at Hawthorn Depot at approximately 5:30pm, having called at Malvern Depot at 5:15pm.

Car Parking

A LIMITED number of members' cars may be parked in the Hawthorn Depot area, however, to avoid overcrowding this facility, it would be greatly appreciated if members' cars could be parked in adjacent streets. Adequate parking is also available near Malvern Depot.

Refreshments

The usual R.T.A. on-tour refreshments will be available throughout the day. It is anticipated that a short luncheon break will be held at the 'new' Carnegie terminus. A LIMITED supply of Sandwiches will be on sale for your convenience, as take-away food facilities are limited at this location.

Photo Stops

Unlike our more usual rail tours, photo stops on tram tours are far less complicated and can be arranged at a moment's notice. Ample opportunities will be available during the tour to photograph the W3 "in action" at the many unusual locations that shall be visited.

Fares and Bookings

The fare of \$22 is slightly higher than our preferred fare for an all-day tram tour, but, as you will appreciate, costs associated with the inspection, transportation, and other related expenses of the W3's operation in Melbourne all have to be covered.

Bookings should be made on the attached form, and forwarded with your payment to the Booking Officer, Geoff Cargeeg, at the address shown. **Enquiries** may be directed to: Peter Jones (03) 379 7493, Robert Rossiter (03) 391 9427, or Bruce Dixon (052) 43 4904, all between 6-9pm.

Membership Renewal Reminder

If the address label on your envelope is endorsed "1989 Renewal Due", a copy of the 1989 renewal form is enclosed, in case you have mislaid the original. You may take the opportunity to renew your membership whilst booking for this tour - ONE cheque or Bankcard authorisation for the combined amount will be sufficient. Please complete the details on the form and return it to the Booking Officer for this tour, who will forward the form to the Membership Officer.

***** PLEASE BOOK EARLY** for this tour as R.T.A. tram tours in the past have proven to be **very** popular. **A MAXIMUM OF 40 PEOPLE ONLY** will be accepted for this tour so that conditions do not become too 'cramped'.

===== How about a Sydney 'P' class next time?? =====

"W3" Tram Tour

R.T.A. Tours,
c/o P.O. Box 11,
MENTONE, Vic. 3194.

Date / /1989.

BOOKING FORM

Dear Geoff,

Please find set out below my booking requirements for the "W3" Tram Tour. I have enclosed a stamped (39c) self-addressed envelope for the return of further information.

_____ ADULT Tickets	@ \$22.00 ea.	\$ _____
_____ CHILD (u/16) Tickets	@ \$12.00 ea.	\$ _____
_____ 1989 Membership	@ \$ 9.00 ea.	\$ _____
TOTAL		\$ _____

Cheques to be made payable to the RAIL TOURIST ASSOCIATION.

===== BANKCARD Details (Only if applicable)=====

Cardholder's Name: _____

Number: _____

Expiry Date: _____ Signature: _____

NAME OF PERSON MAKING BOOKING _____

ADDRESS _____

POSTCODE _____

PHONE _____

NAMES OF OTHERS IN PARTY (Show age if U/16) _____

I intend joining the tour at _____ (location)

at _____ : _____ am.

I hereby agree to sign the printed Indemnity Form to be circulated during the tour.

SIGNED _____ DATE / /1989.