

MARCH 1985

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NEWS OF THE BALLARAT TRAMWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY

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Community Employment Program: The project is 'rocketing' our Society ahead at an amazing pace. The regular attenders at the Depot are astounded at the amount of work that has been completed due to 3 people working full time on our tramway project. Warren Doubleday, Society Engineer, heads this project which commenced on 4th February. Three people were chosen from the Commonwealth Employment Service and they are really a fine team to have working for us. Ken is a Fitter, Steve is a Carpenter and Jackie is a Trades Assistant to both. David Macartney has been supervising the project on a day to day basis whilst Warren has recommenced University studies.

During March, and during the Begonia Festival, Society volunteers were also generally around the Depot area and combined with the work output of the 'full time' staff a lot was achieved. Number 7 Road, the final road to be constructed at the Depot, was completely laid, ballasted, welded up and made available for traffic. The maximum traction trucks for tram No.40 were received from Miller Brothers Engineering Works, checked over, adjusted and placed under No.40. These trucks required a bit of modification to allow the brake blocks to fit securely into the hangars. New axle and motor bearings have also been installed in the trucks. The tram was lowered onto the trucks and test run, all within a matter of a few days. No.40 was given trial runs for two days and then re-entered service on the first Sunday of the Begonia Festival, 3rd March 1985.

Tram No.27 has been placed in the workshop for the C.E.P. workers to conduct a full body overhaul. Because of the 5 day a week attendance Steve and Jackie, along with Dave Macartney, have been setting a pace that far outstrips that which we are used to as weekend volunteers. The interior panelling has been taken out, rubbed back and varnished. The saloon windows have been removed, stripped back to the wood and varnished externally and internally. The saloon sliding doors have received a much needed overhaul and some new woodwork has been installed in parts of the tram such as the drip rail along the roof line above the centre saloon. Whilst renewing the mirror panels at the end of the saloons the names of the S.E.C workers who last put them in place during 1935 were discovered, written in chalk, on the rear of one panel. Our workers responded by placing their names and the date on another panel of this 'time capsule'. The tram is to be repainted in the 1930's S.E.C. colour scheme of a lighter green, cream rocker panels and externally varnished window frames.

The trams were shunted about the Depot to keep up with the pace of the C.E.P. workers. Tram No.13, from the Lake Goldsmith Steam Preservation Society, was hauled from No.1 Road to No.4 Road where a start was made on restoring this tram to service. As soon as it arrived on No.4 Road the body was lifted from the truck, the truck taken outside the Depot and cleaned down with a high pressure water hose machine. The traction motors were removed and dismantled and the truck was fully dismantled. The wheel sets were forwarded to the Preston Workshops for reprofiling. We were pleased to use Barry McCandlish, Society Member, who has just commenced a small trucking business in this task.

Again, all this was done in a matter of days - astounding isn't it!

Maximum traction tram No.39, sitting on the Melbourne cable tram trucks, was hauled from the bottom of No.6 Road to the bottom of No.7 Road which was a fairly tricky task using the 'dinky' cable tram trucks, a maximum traction tram body sitting on them loaded with stores and other spares and our not too well run in new Depot trackwork, but all went well. Some minor maintenance work has also taken place on tram No.14.

A new sand hopper has been placed in service, being constructed from a former domestic home heating oil tank, and this replaces the 'sand pit' between No.3 and 4 Roads. Our Depot cat seemed somewhat distressed at the removal of its giant 'kitty litter' tray. Many other incidental tasks have been undertaken by our C.E.P. workers and we are very impressed by the good workmanship they have completed. We are most fortunate in obtaining this scheme for six months as it has advanced our maintenance and restoration program quite considerably.

Tram No.40: As mentioned earlier, this tram re-entered service on Sunday 3rd March and has performed very well. The tram has run quite a lot over the recent Begonia Festival and created a lot of interest as it was the first time the two maximum traction trams (No.40 &38) had been in service together. Number 38 has now been restricted from heavy running duties due to the worn condition of the wheels. The Society has spent around \$12,000 on the project to restore No.40 to service and it was out of use for 4 years.

Tram No.18: The Borough Council of Sebastopol attended the official Re-Commissioning of tram No.18 at the Depot on Saturday, 23rd March. The weather was fine and the Mayor, Councillor Collins, Lady Mayoress, Mrs. Collins, Borough Councillors, the Town Clerk, Mr. Cook, the Deputy Town Clerk, Mr. Shearer and their families, along with Society Members, enjoyed the open air ceremony to re-commission the tram.

The Mayor drove the tram from the Depot, through a barricade of streamers to the point where the guests were seated. Society Secretary, Richard Gilbert, welcomed everybody and gave a speech on the history of the Society, followed by Society President, Frank Hanrahan, who gave a speech about tram No.18. Society Engineer, Warren Doubleday, gave a speech on the work required to restore the tram to service. The Mayor, Councillor Collins, spoke on behalf of the Council and handed the controller key and brake handle to Frank Hanrahan. Frank responded by presenting the Mayor with a large colour photograph of tram No.18 which we understand will be placed on display in the Council offices.

The assembled crowd responded with acclamation and all were invited aboard for a ride on the Wendouree Parade tramway. A ride on No.40 was also enjoyed. The guests returned to the tram depot where a sumptuous afternoon tea was served. Thanks to all the Members who assisted to make the function such a success.

Begonia Festival: The Festival ran for two weeks this year from 2nd to 17th March and the trams ran every day. The patronage was considered worthwhile but was short of an expected target as the Vintage Train did visit Ballarat this year and the Monday of the Long Weekend was very hot which always reduces our patronage.

The total passenger figure for the festival was 865. Sunday 10th March was the busiest day with 685 passengers travelling. The Tram Depot was a busy place on weekdays, as well as weekends, because of the attendance of the C.E.P. workers and a few Society members who were on holidays at this time to help in work tasks at the depot as well as running the trams. A few school groups took advantage of the weekday running whilst they were visiting the Gardens and travelled as groups on the trams.

During the forthcoming Easter period the trams will run every day from Friday 5th to Tuesday 9th April inclusive.

Entertainment Meeting: This was held on 6th March at the Steamrail Rooms in Melbourne and was attended by a good number of Members. Slides of the C.O.T.M.A. Conference in Auckland were shown. Another meeting will be held later in the year.

New Zealand Tramways Series Postage Stamps: Member, Dave Mickle, has advised us that the Philatelic Bureau of the New Zealand Post Office has released a series of six stamps featuring trams. The brochures show them to be very fine stamps and all collectors should be impressed at the artwork. The issue is on sale as a 'stamp issue' until 23rd April and as a 'presentation pack' of pre stamped envelopes until 30th September. If you are interested write to B.T.P.S. Secretary at the address on the top of this newsheet for a copy of the brochure or write direct to the Post Office Philatelic Bureau, Private Bag, Wanganui, New Zealand.

No.15 Re-Commissioned at Bendigo: The Bendigo Trust invited representatives from our Society to the re-commissioning ceremony for Birney tram No.15 on Thursday, 23rd March. Richard Gilbert and Stephen Butler attended at the Tram Depot along with City Councillors, Politicians and members of other tramway museums. The Mayor of Geelong, Councillor Inglis, officially declared the tram returned to service after giving a speech on its history. It was delivered to Geelong in 1924 from the manufacturer and ran there until 1945 when it was transferred to Bendigo. In 1959 it suffered a serious accident and was left at the back of the depot. The Bendigo Trust embarked on the rebuilding program and the tram has now been restored to its 1924 condition. Congratulations to the Bendigo Trust for the effort in restoring this tram to service.

Next 'Fares Please issued in May