

FARES PLEASE!

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At the Depot

Since our last report, work has continued on a number of projects at a steady pace. This is as well as keeping the rolling stock and other equipment operational. In this regard some work on the telephone system has been undertaken. Repairs to the cable in the vicinity of St Aidans Drive was necessary after the Council excavated the cable while carrying out drainage works. These works will hopefully mitigate the flooding of the north end of the track following heavy rain. A number of the telephone boxes were repaired and refixed to the poles.

The repaint of No. 13 continues. Dave Macartney has sanded down the sides of the car around the windows and primed these areas.

One end canopy support frame for the horse tram has been completed. The other is now being made up. Roof slats for the car have been ordered. Warren has roughed out the stairway at one end of the car using various pieces of pine, cardboard, nails, and ply.

This has enabled the stairway to be mapped out. The various supports, end canopy and other pieces were placed to establish their various relationships, and relative sizes. The various components are now being drawn up so the materials can be cut to size and shaped.

Barry MaCandlish has recently completed the lining of the leading and centre compartment ceilings of the museum display car. The lining in these areas was badly damaged by water and required replacement. At the same time, the lighting cabling was replaced to enable 240V light bulbs to be used instead of 120V bulbs in series. These have been temporarily connected to a power supply. They most certainly illuminate the interior now. Other work in tidying up the leading compartment of the car is being undertaken as well.

Not Another One

Another one of our SECV/tramway poles was hit by a car on Tuesday 24 April. Fortunately the pole was not damaged and was able to be straightened and put back in position.

News of the Ballarat Tramway Preservation Society Limited.

Unfortunately it damaged the overhead by pulling the trolley wire out of the supporting ears and distorting the position of the bracket arm. As the job was a bit bigger than our on-scene staff could undertake, the tramway service was shortened for a week and half during the school holidays. Peter Winspur was on holidays at the time in Tasmania! Thanks to the SEC who fixed the pole.

Tram Postcard Collector

Mr. John Woodman an avid collector of postcards and materials from tramway museums recently wrote to the Society seeking our current postcards and brochures. The Society has forwarded these to him. In his letter he said that he would be happy to exchange cards from his collection of British and American Museums with our members who also collect postcards etc. If any members are interested, John's address is P.O. Box 436, Chappaqua, NY 10514, USA.

Membership Renewals

Membership Renewals for the 1990-91 financial year will be sent to all members in early July. The Board has reviewed the membership rate for the forthcoming year. Since our last rise two years ago, postage has increased as well as other printing costs etc. Given the foreshadowed postal increase in September, and the possible higher increase in bulk postage rates, the rate has been set at \$12. The rate basically covers the servicing costs of members and leaves a little for restoration costs.

New Members

The Society welcomes two new Junior Supporters.

No. 5002 A.Reither Ballarat
No. 5003 A.Jessup Mt Waverley

Anthony Jessup is the son of one of the Society's founding members, the late Bill Jessup.

Model Railway Exhibition

As our labour resources needed to operate the tramway will be stretched during June, because a number of us will be in New Zealand for the COTMA conference, or on holidays, our involvement at the Ballarat Model Railway display has been cancelled. We have in the past operated a stand at this popular Queens Birthday weekend attraction at the Drill Hall in Ballarat. Unfortunately we cannot do everything. We do however recommend to our members that if they happen to be in Ballarat over the forthcoming Queens Birthday weekend, do go to the Model Railway Exhibition.

W3 661

This tram is at present at Malvern Depot, having just completed its Melbourne running. It is intended to transfer it back to Ballarat sometime after the COTMA conference. The tram will become part of the operating fleet once again on its return to Ballarat. Having nine operational Ballarat trams it does not see a lot of use however.

Commuting by Trolley In Italy

This month's article is another from the U.S.A. Electric Traction magazine. It was in the January 1919 magazine, just after the end of the First World War. The story concerns a trip on a tramway between Rome and the town of Frascati, which is to the south east of the Italian capital. In the Editor's reprint of Bradshaw's August 1914 Continental Guide, the town is said to have a population of 8453. Other details were "A delightfully situated summer resort - though attractive at all seasons - 1056ft above sea, on the north slope of the Alban Mountains. Several beautiful villas belonging to wealthy Romans - Villa Torlonia, Villa Lacellotti, Villa Aldobrandini and others - a few accessible to the public." As well as showing up old conceptions and prejudices, it gives a different picture to what we normally see from the enthusiast viewpoint.

Suburbanites residing near large cities are generally of the opinion that commuting is a decidedly modern institution and many of them believe that the height of the practice is attained solely on the line on which they daily make the way back and forth. It will be quite interesting, therefore, to learn that commuting is not only an anciently established practice but also is today carried on quite extensively throughout the world. A picturesque description of commuting from Frascati to Rome, Italy, by Norval Richardson, Secretary of the American Embassy in Rome, is given in the current issue of Scribner's magazine, from which the following has been abstracted.

Italian commuting is conducted in quite a different manner from the American practice. To begin with, an Italian is never in a hurry - a delightfull quality unless one happens to have a business engagement with him; second his breakfast consists of a simple cup of black coffee which he usually strolls out to obtain at the nearest cafe; lastly, he is an early riser by nature, and during the summer months gets up with the dawn so that he may feel he has earned a right to the long siesta which every Italian takes during the heat of the day. Since the beginning of the war few Romans have cared to go far away from home, but when the parching sirocco begins to blow straight across the Mediterranean, carrying with it clouds of red sand from the Libyan Desert, some change of air becomes necessary. Frascati naturally suggests itself. It is only 17 miles from Rome and situated one thousand feet above sea level, the air is fresh and cool after the heat of Roman midsummer days. Indeed quiet little Frascati asleep on the western slope of the Alban hills, has suddenly become quite cosmopolitan. For the women the days pass in idleness in the fragrant and historical gardens open to the public; but the men - even in the land of "dolce far niente", - must attend to the various occupations in Rome. This means that all through the long summer months they commute back and forth from the Eternal City to the Alban Hills. There are two ways of going into town, one by train and the other by tram. The tram is more popular with the commuter, as it is both cheaper and

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cooler. it is not just an ordinary street car, but a great two-storied affair which managed to invest itself with something of Roman dignity.

The first morning that I joined the throng of commuters I rushed, full of American energy, down to the little Piazza from which the tram starts. It was due to leave at eight o'clock, and, though it was only 15 minutes before that hour, no tram was yet in sight. A group of fellow commuters were seated at little tables outside a cafe leisurely sipping their black coffee; a number of women and children with large black eyes, carrying odd-looking bundles tied up in newspaper, were sitting on benches under the trees near the tram station. They looked as if they had sat there peacefully for hours and would continue to do so all day, even if the tram failed to appear.

At last the tram arrived and instantly the square became animated. Every one prefers the places on the upper deck - "Imperiale" - and as those places are limited a mad scramble ensued. Diplomatic precedence goes to the wall in the rush up the narrow, winding stairs. A bersagliere (an Italian infantry man) in his plumed hat jostles a Roman prince; an alert vendor of fruit squeezes his basket past the rotund figure of a monsignor; a contadina, her head covered in a bright handkerchief, pushes her way regardless of every one, greatly hampered in her progress by a flask of red wine she carried under one arm and sack under the other from which issues a plaintive protest from invisible chickens - gifts she is taking to city

relatives. A large Roman matron, encumbered with a valise almost stops up the passage in her panting efforts to be the first one up the steps. A last every one is settled, though not seated. The prince, the monsignor, and the diplomato, are installed on the red plush cushions of the first class compartment below, as befits their dignity; the rest are stowed away on the wooden benches of the second class. Now an avalanche of newsboys appears, and every one is instantly hanging out of the window buying morning editions of *Il Messagero*. This flutter over, the conduttrice, a pretty young woman in long grey line duster and jaunty cap, finally tears herself away from what looks like a serious flirtation with the station master, mounts the platform and blows a blast on a small brass horn hanging about her neck. In response to this mild blast the motorman regretfully throws away his cigarette, takes his places at the steering gear, and, with a disconcerting lurch, the journey to Rome begins. The first stop is a "bivio" where connecting lines meet. Here a large number of commuters from the other Castelli Domani elbow their way into the already crowded tram. A priest from Castel Gondolfo, moping his brow with a bandanna handkerchief, respectfully salutes the Frascati monsignor; a fine looking young officer in the immaculate grey-green uniform doing his military service at Hannibal's Camp up on the Monte Cavo, is affectionately kissed on both cheeks by the prince; a contadina, carrying a pair of hens tied together by the legs and a basket of luscious purple figs, finds that she is not the only one taking presents to city relatives.

Although there exists a placard which say sternly "completo", it is never used, or if it is no one pays any attention to it, just as that other equally stern sign, "vietato fumare", appears in Italy to be taken as an invitation to smoke rather than order not to; and the sign which is now found in all public places - "E vietato ai militari di parlare di qualsiasi cosa, anche lontana, che riguardi la guerra" (It is forbidden to soldiers to speak of anything which even distantly concerns the war) - impels every one to discuss in a loud voice his special opinion of the war.

The overburdened car now starts off again and the conduttrice begins to distribute the tickets. She does it very well, until, almost the last person, she comes to me. One "andata e ritorno", I say, and slip an extra two soldi into her hand. She give me a radiant smile, and in her confusion hands me her whole stub of tickets instead of my one round trip. She retires in worse confusion when she realises what she has done. Now begins an abrupt descent which the tram takes at a speed that makes one holds one's breath and pray that air-brakes may be faithfully to their charge. Vineyards rush past the agitated eye, the bamboo poles on which the vines are trained given the effect of rifles stacked upon a battle field.

The tram, safely down the vine-clad slopes, reaches the long, flat via Tuscolana and dashes across the campagna. What has from above appeared like a plain, now proves to be rolling country, with even here and there a deep valley full of shadows. The tram follows the ancient via

Tuscolana just as the commuters' litters did twenty centuries ago; and if one watches along the road one will see groups of contadini sitting under the vine-clad pergolas of wine shops playing mora, the very game which Cicero, in those far off days, passed away the time.

Suddenly a loud pounding is heard on the roof, and the tram stops. Every one springs to his feet. The motorman throws up his hands and let forth a series of picturesque oaths - "Corpo di Bacco!" The conversation of the of the commuters is animated, but less profane. The one word which I catch is "trolley." Evidently this important mechanism has slipped. Every one descends to the ground and watches with keen interest the futile efforts of the conduttrice to put the trolley back on the wire. No one offers to help her, except with suggestions made in a spirit of raillery which she answers in like coin. The motorman throws himself on the bank by the roadside, leisurely lights a cigarette, and unfolds his copy of *Il Messaggero*. But he is watching the conduttrice out of the tail of his eye. When he sees that her face is crimson with effort, her cap falling over one ear and the trolley still remaining recalcitrant, he gets up, muttering a few imprecations against the inefficiency of women in general, and nonchalantly accomplishes the connection in a moment. The conduttrice, still read and panting, is determined at least to have her woman's privilege of the last word. "You say that women are no good! If this war had been in the hands of women it would have been finished in one week!" The Motorman cuts her

short: "In carrozza, signori!" A worse scramble than at Frascati ensues; those who have been standing now hope to get a seat. Indeed, the contadina from the "bivio" manages to slip in the place of the Frascatana contadina. A battle of words begins accompanied by violent gestures. The rival chickens squawk, the basket of figs rolls unheeded to the floor, the wine pours of the fiasco as it is waved about to emphasise justice and right. No one interferes and all listen with wide, solemn eyes. Finally the Roman matron squeezes up a bit, makes room for the Frascatana, and the battle subsides. The conduttrice now puts her cap on straight, pats her hair coquettishly, and goes out to the front platform. "What a seccatura about that trolley! It really wasn't my fault," she says in a conversational tone to the motorman. He turns around for one moment, fixes her with a cold eye, and murmurs, "Che ti possino" and she retires in haste. Now the tram tears down the hill, sweeps past Santa Maria Maggiore, and stops at last near one of the most beautiful of modern fountains in the Piazza delle

Terme. The journey from Frascati to Rome is supposed to take one hour, and, notwithstanding all the casualness of procedure, is usually made on time.

The excitement and jostling to get off the tram is even worse than the impatience the commuters showed in getting in. One would think the lives of each depended upon he being the first to alight. An yet, as soon as all are on the side walk, they appear to forget their haste and have nothing whatever to do. The contadina stops and buys a paper of "nocciuolini Americani" (Roman for "peanuts"); the prince steps leisurely into his waiting Fiat; the rotund monsignor lifts himself heavily into a sombre, closed landau with two rusty horse, which carries him one fancies straight to the bronze doors of the Vatican; the Roman Matron contents herself with a common cab; and the bersagliere, who is met by his sweat heart, perhaps the very one who picked the feathers he is wearing in the hat from her favourite cocks -link his arm in hers and strolls over to a bench beneath the shady trees beside the Baths of Diocletian.

Uniform Clothing

An area where some people may be able to help our Society is the collection of pre-owned MET uniform trousers. We use MET trousers which match the SEC uniform well. Through knowing of resignations of MET staff, some of our members may be in a position to collect this clothing that would otherwise be disposed of. Richard Gilbert has been able to get quite a few items of this clothing from resigned train drivers in the first part of this year. The clothing is dry cleaned at the placed in our uniform store.

When we first commenced running, we had to get our trousers made to order. Since the advent of the MET, it has been a useful source of trousers. We could always do with some more, as we often have new staff who need outfitting. The good image of the Society members in uniform staffing the trams is often commented upon by our visitors.

Video Update

John Phillips has made a video tape for the forthcoming COTMA conference which will give a twelve minute look at the progress of the Society over the past two years. At each conference there is a session devoted to a 'review of your museums activities'. The format has been changing from slides to video. We are appreciative of John for his expert help in making this tape. Richard Gilbert wrote and narrated the script.

Operating Agreement

Our tramway operates with the sanction of the City of Ballarat, by the means of an operating agreement. This document after 15 years is in need of updating. Recently Richard Gilbert, Chris Jacobson and Warren Doubleday met with Council Officers on this matter. A lot of good information was exchanged and decisions on ideas to update the agreement was made. Campbell Duncan in association with Warren is now rewriting the agreement to review at a further meeting with Council.

Information Sought

Member Bob Lilburn is seeking information on the scrapping dates of Geelong Trams, 1 - 10, 16 - 23, 26, 28, 31, 38 and Scrubber Car. Bob would be grateful for any information and can be contacted at 4 Mitchell Court Bacchus Marsh Vic 3340.

Those Cats

Our black fluffy kitten, Meadowbank is becoming quite friendly. He mixes with Puss although at times he is a bit spritely for our ageing resident. It is quite amusing too see how a three legged cat, missing one of its front paws tries to take a swipe at Meadowbank. It is a bit hard with the missing leg, and your really do need your other leg to stand on. At meal times it is a bit of a rush to the plate. We solved that problem by having two, but fighs still break out

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Traffic Report.

Our buoyant patronage has continued into April, despite indifferent weather, and we have posted the second best result since the halcyon days of early 1975.

Board Member Alan Bradley celebrated his thirtieth birthday in style on Saturday the 17th of April by chartering tram Number 38 for a pre-barbeque tour on which drinks and nibbles were served. Thirty-four people travelled; mostly friends from Alan's non-tram enthusiast interests. A good time was had by all.

Charter bookings are still coming in at a good rate and we have entertained students from Avoca, Maryborough and Melton West Primary Schools in the last two weeks as well as staff from National Mutual. Many of the country school children have never travelled on a tram before.

Both schools were on the same day, and we had 170 passengers, which will be probably the best day in May for traffic. Our thanks to Barry McCandlish and Graeme Young who crewed the tram, and helped to explain how trams worked. Tram 38 did the task of carrying these young passengers who tend to take them as very large hands-on exhibits.

But, they stood up to years of carrying school children around Ballarat and prior to that, in Melbourne. While as tram enthusiasts we often see restored trams as objects which should not be touched and only looked upon they are really very large hands-on exhibits in which our passengers are able to experience the ride, in the way it once was. With grinding spur gears, the rattles and draughts on a cold day, our ride, albeit short, gives a demonstration of tram running in its proper environment.

On several days recently we have been particularly "light on" in traffic staff and although during quiet times two people are quite sufficient to run the tram and man the Depot, on busy Sundays and Public Holidays we can usually make use of one or two others.

There are a few faces amongst our traffic Staff whose company we would like to enjoy a little more frequently. There is always room for more Conductors or just staffing the depot, museum and sales area. This releases other people for traffic. Most of our Conductors later choose to progress to the position of Motorman. If you are interested in joining us please free to ask anyone at the Depot or contact Richard Gilbert or Peter Winspur care of Box 632, Ballarat, 3353.

Fares Please! is published six times a year in alternate months commencing in January and is distributed to members and friends of the Ballarat Tramways. For further information regarding the Society's activities and publications please contact:-

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