

# FARES PLEASE!

---

May 1992

---

## Running a Tramway

Dave Macartney

The first week of the April school holidays went well, with the trams performing faultlessly; what a contrast to the second week!!

On Sunday, 19 April, some English visitors arrived and a few trams were run out for them to photograph. No. 28 managed to dewire itself and knock most of the 7 road contact wire out of the ears, so the rest of the afternoon was spent putting all this back together again.

On Easter Monday, 20 April, the crew, for reasons best known to themselves, decided to run No. 40. Halfway through the day, the line breaker popped out and the tram was filled with pungent electrical smells. Blue smoke was also rising from No. 1 motor. The motor was isolated and 40 limped back on the other one. It now languishes in the shed until the cause of the problem is identified. (See At the Depot). A message was left for the Engineering Manager on his answering machine.

On Tuesday, 21 April, No. 14 was being shunted from No. 3 road when the close proximity of the wire to

the troughing at the shed entrance, caused the pole to leave the wire. The recoil of the spring (at its maximum of course!) brought the pole down violently across the first span wire. When Dave got out to examine what should have a routine dewirement, he discovered a short stump sticking up where the trolley pole had been. But where was the wheel? It couldn't be found anywhere on the ground. Eventually it was located up on 14's roof, somewhat worse for wear. It has since been relegated to static display on the end of 39, while the pole from No. 11 now graces No. 14. Another phone call to the Engineering Manager.

On Wednesday 22 April, Barry McCandlish was allocated No. 13, and told not to break it. An hour later, he discovered that the compressor had failed, and he was running on the last few pounds of air. Needless to say, the tram was full of passengers at the time. No. 28 was hurriedly sent out to finish the shift, while Warren got his third 'bad news' phone call in three days. At this rate, the tramway would be lucky to see out the week!

Jackie looked in for afternoon tea on Thursday, during which Dave dropped his jar of jam of the mess room floor

---

News of the Ballarat Tramway  
Preservation Society Limited.

# 2-- Fares Please!

---

and so had nothing on his toast, while two year old Daniel amused himself by bopping Meadowbank the cat in the nose with his fist! Things were bad all round. When the phone rang that night at the Warren's home, no doubt some foreboding thoughts were passing through his mind, when he realised who was on the other end of the line.

The problem on No. 13 turned out to be worn brushes in the compressor failing to make contact, the first such failure in 17 years of operation. A chance in a million. Except exactly the same thing happened to No. 14, six days later. At least we knew what the problem was by then. The rest of the month and May has been normal. Thank goodness!

## Collection Policy

As reported in our last issue on *Fares Please!*, the Board has been formulating a collection policy for the Society's tram fleet and other collectable items. The Board has completed its task, and the policy will be published in July's 1992 *Fares Please!*. There was not quite enough time to get it out for this issue.

## New Members

The Society welcomes the following new and junior members.

No. 665 Mr. T.Jeffery Hawthorn  
No. 5004 Mr. C.Reither Ballarat

## Traffic

Frank Puls has passed his driving examination and Travis Jeffery has joined our traffic staff. Traffic over the Easter period and school holidays was down on previous years, although over 200 passengers were carried on each day over the Easter period.

## COTMA Conference

The 1992 Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia Conference looks like being a very popular one, with over 50 delegates attending, including five from our Society. Richard Gilbert will be presenting two papers, co-authored by Warren Doubleday on the Society's new Collection Policy and our Cultural Heritage. The later paper examines the part tramway museums play in preserving part of our Cultural Heritage in Australia.

## Traction 87 Yearbook

The Society has received advice of the next issue of the Traction Yearbooks, the one for 1987. Also recently published is Traction Extra #2, an 144 page, 390 all colour photo essay on the PCC car. The books are beautifully produced, and well worth purchasing. Each is 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 11" in size. The cost of TY87 is \$US42.95, and TE2, \$US64.95, plus packaging and postage. Available from Traction Extra, P.O.Box 123, Bank Plaza Station, Merrick, New York 11566. U.S.A. Further details available from the Society at our address.

## Cars Versus Trams in Ballarat

(Continued from November 1991)

When the SEC reconditioned the Ballarat tramway system during the 1930's the track was relaid basically as it had been before, except for the position of some of the loops. This meant maintaining a track layout designed for the horse tram era, and this created difficulties in the post war era of heavier motor traffic.

### Kerbside track

The track in Sturt St West and Wendouree Parade was laid on the side of the road in 1887, and the SEC relaid the track this way in 1936. Concession was made to modern traffic conditions by laying the track closer to the road edge (up to two feet in some cases) to allow a wider roadway. At the same time the Gardens gates (at both ends of our operating line) were removed, and the lakeside pillars at both locations were shifted closer to the lake.

Kerbside track meant that trams often travelled against the flow of traffic. This was particularly hazardous in Sturt St. West, which being an interstate highway carried a high volume of traffic. At Hamilton Avenue trams had to cross both lanes of traffic, without the benefit of traffic lights. An additional hazard existed at the two loops, where city-bound trams swung out into the path of west-bound motor traffic. In January 1961 both loops were altered to allow trams to run on the straight track in both directions when not crossing another tram. The loops could still be used for passing trams by manually changing the points.

## Part 2

by Alan Bradley

Kerbside operation in Wendouree Parade was not as hazardous, due to the lower volume of road traffic. However, there was a danger at some of the corners where the passage of oncoming trams was obscured by trees. In particular there was a "blind corner" near Barrett Avenue marked by a warning sign. Ironically the only serious collisions in Wendouree Parade were between trams! These occurred in the days before automatic signalling.

### Albert St. Sebastopol

The reserved track in Albert St was mostly separated from motor traffic, except at the cross streets. But at the bottom end of Sebastopol, trams crossed from the east to the west side of Albert St, a carryover from the horse tram era that was continued by the SEC when the Albert St track was relaid. In October 1958 the Sebastopol Council sought advice from the Victorian Traffic Commission as to the placing of warning signs at this crossing. There had been several near-collisions, 'and recently the driver of a circus transport avoided a collision by driving his vehicle through a fence'. But the crossing remained unmarked until the closure of the system.

Another danger spot was at the municipal boundary at Rubicon St, where city-bound trams swung from kerbside track in Albert St to centre-road track in Skipton St. A large tree at the intersection obscured motorists' view of passing trams at this point.

# 4-- Fares Please!

---

## Bridge and Victoria Sts.

The SEC's traffic statistics showed that a large percentage of accidents occurred in Bridge St, which was only 46<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> feet wide (compared to 99 feet wide for major Melbourne streets like Bourke and Collins Sts). Two lanes of parked cars, two lanes of traffic, plus a single tram line made a tight squeeze! Ironically double track in Bridge St, which the RACV opposed due to safety concerns, would probably have been much safer.

The Victoria St terminus (like the Golden Square terminus in Bendigo) was located on an interstate highway. Conductors turning the pole on a single truck tram had to be careful! One evening in July 1963 tram No 12 was hit by a car while stationary at the terminus; the driver of the car was killed, and two passengers injured. The tram conductor was fortunate, as he had completed the turning of the pole eight seconds before impact. The City Council expressed concern over the lighting at the terminus, especially at times when the pole was turned and the tram's lights were off. Council suggested that flashing lights be installed at the terminus, but this was rejected by the SEC.

## Traffic lights

In 1940 the City Council considered installing traffic lights at the intersection of Sturt and Lydiard Sts. The SEC suggested that if installed they should include a green arrow to permit safe turning of trams into Lydiard St; this had recently been done at Domain and St Kilda Roads in Melbourne. But the plans did not

come to fruition, probably because of the war, and Ballarat would have to wait another 30 years for its traffic lights.

## Lighting

There were many collisions between trams and motor vehicles at night time, largely because of poor street lighting and the use single track. Initially the trams had only a single headlight, and no rear light. In 1952 red tail lights were fitted in each corner, and in 1956 white reflective tape was fitted to aprons, bumper bars and footboards.

During 1960-61 the illumination was greatly improved: tiger stripes on bumper bars, and dash canopy lighting with four white and two red lights at each end. This was far superior to the lighting of Melbourne trams at the time, which only had the single headlight until multiple head and tail lights were fitted in 1970.

## Casualties

Ballarat's wooden-bodied trams were able to withstand end-on collisions with cars, but collisions amidships, especially with trucks were a different matter! The following trams were scrapped following such collisions:

No. 22: collided with army car in Drummond St South, July 1944. The tram was struck on the front left side, derailed and hit a tree, resulting in injuries to 12 passengers. The motorman's cabin was shattered, the framework forced into the platform, and the roof extensively damaged. Preparations were made to repair the car, but it was scrapped when bogie cars became available.

---

**No. 37:** Collided with semi-trailer in Drummond St South, April 1954. The whole of the motorman's cabin was ripped off, and the motorman was thrown out onto the road and suffered a fractured leg. The conductor received slight injuries, the passengers were uninjured.

**No. 20:** collided with semi-trailer in Victoria St, September 1970. The tram was virtually demolished, only the front left-hand seating surviving intact. The motorman jumped out just before impact, and the sole passenger (seated in the only surviving section) was uninjured.

## Ballarat today

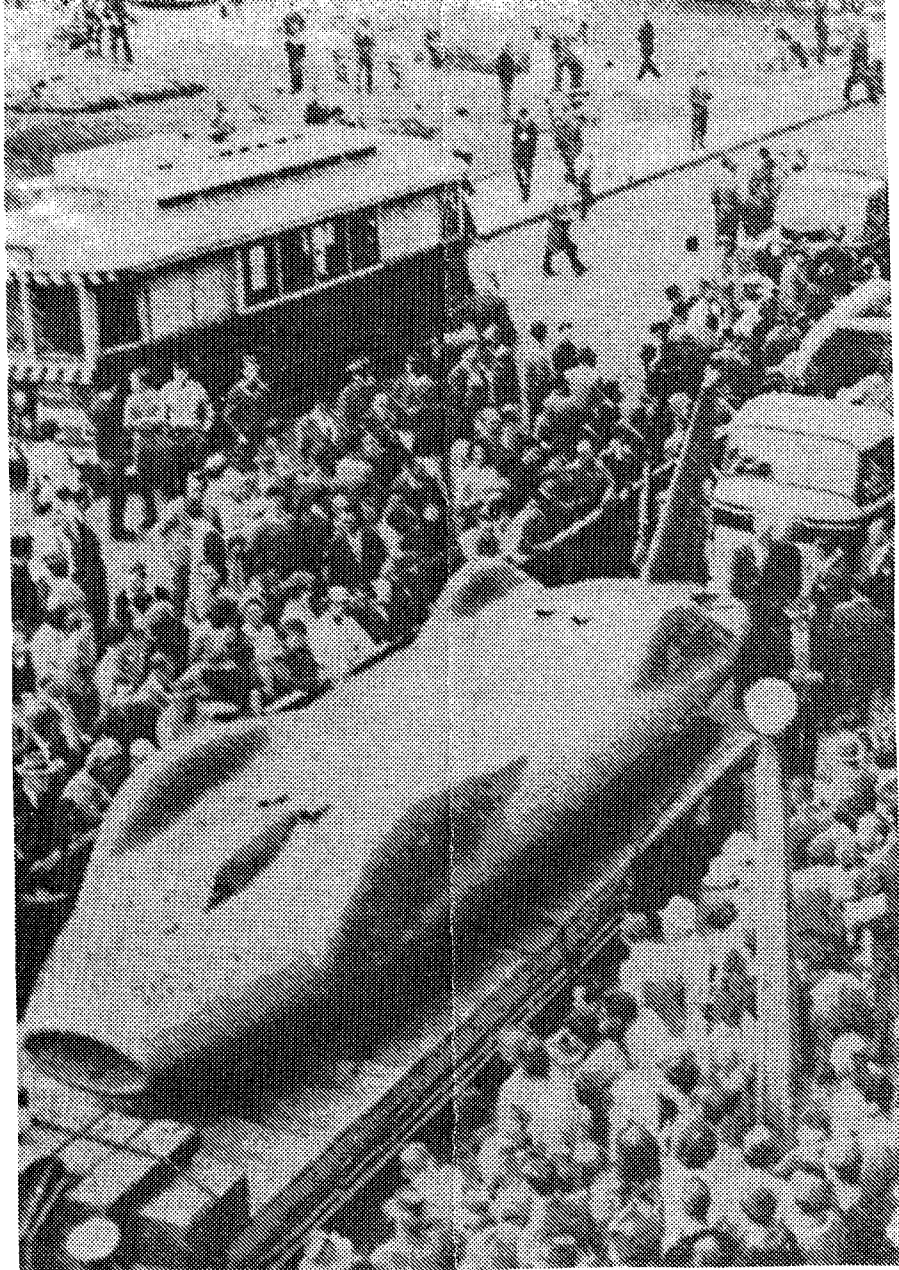
When electric trams commenced running in Ballarat in 1905 they were regarded as being too fast by some councillors. The world land speed record had just passed the 100 mile per hour mark at that time. In 1963 Donald Campbell's "Bluebird" passed through Ballarat on the way to Lake Eyre, where it broke 400 mph for the first time. But in 1963 the technology

of Ballarat's trams (and Melbourne's too for that matter) remained basically unchanged from the Edwardian era. Despite this Ballarat's trams survived to see mankind's ultimate technological triumph, the landing on the moon.

Since tram services ceased in 1971 Ballarat has changed in many ways because of the car. Bridge St is now a pedestrian mall. Sturt St West, Victoria St and Albert St are now four-lane highways with median strips. Other roads were widened when the tracks were removed. There are more cars on the road than during the tramway days. On the positive side the lighting has improved, at least in the former tramway streets.

The mix between trams and cars continues in the Gardens every weekend. Considering our impressive safety record over 17 years of operation, perhaps kerbside track is not as dangerous as some would reckon.





Donald Campbell's 'Bluebird', the first car to reach 400mph, on display at the Town Hall in March 1963, watched by tram No. 14. (Photo Ballarat Courier)

Photo page 5

No. 42 crossing Albert St. Sebastopol, October 1969. (Photo Ballarat Courier)

## Membership Renewals

Members will be receiving in early July their membership renewal for the year 1992/93. The Board has determined that rates will remain the same as last year, despite increases in postage costs. Your early renewal will assist the Membership Officer and our Treasurer.

## At the Depot

As you will have read on page 1, No. 40 has developed some electrical problems in No. 1 motor. Preliminary tests indicate a blown armature. That sounds expensive and a lot of work! With 38 withdrawn because of defective brakes, the Society is at present without an operable maximum traction bogie car. A decision has been taken that as soon as the Horse Tram is completed, No. 38 will be examined further in detail to see if the problem of No. 1 end truck locking up when travelling south bound can be solved. If it can, then this car will be available for limited service. Work to lift No. 40 to remove the motor from the truck could be started in October this year.

The Horse Tram is nearing completion, with the final jobs now being planned out. The handrails are well advanced. It is hoped to complete these by the end of June, and finish the two end catwalks by the end of July. Small jobs then to be completed will see the fixing of the stair treads, and the small bars protecting the glass in the end windows from standing passengers.

Dave is well advanced with the painting, aiming to have the vast majority finished by the end of June, when a couple of months of non-painting season comes to Ballarat. The base coats for the end aprons, and the stairs have been completed, and lining out is now occurring. The sides of the tram have been completed except for the final detailing.

Tram 33 has been returned to service after fitting the new motor suspension bearings to the No. 1 axle. This is the first time in 18 months that all our seven operable single truck trams have been available for service. Dave Macartney's article on page 1, shows how easily we can run down in available tram numbers.

New brushes for the compressors are being obtained, following the wearing out of two, within a week of each other. No doubt it will be a few more years before we wear some more out, and by that time, maybe we will be unable to find the new ones.

The fitting out of the Museum display area is continuing. The laying of the carpet has been held up, due to a delay in getting some more glue delivered in Ballarat. The TV has been fitted into position in the front passenger saloon. The video player unit has been ordered. A five minute or so video is intended to be made to give visitors an introduction to our Museum and the tramway.

A stairway to the rear storage area above the changing room has been

# 4- Fares Please!

---

## At the Depot cont.

built by Barry McCandlish. He is now constructing a joining walkway between this storage area and the one above the crew room.

The first set of photographs for the display area which will depict the horse tram era, have been ordered.

Work on the repainting of W4 671 continues, with sanding back, more body filler, more sanding back and yet more filler going on. Jackie Edwards has started on the sanding back of the saloon windows, to enable their repainting, and repair if required.

## ARE Magazine

The December, 1991 issue of the magazine, *Australian Railway Enthusiast*, has an excellent coverage of tramways in Australia. The front cover has a fabulous colour photo of tram No. 40 in Sturt St. during 1970 and shows the Driver 'winding the handle around' to keep pace with the road traffic. There is an excellent nostalgic article on the Ballarat tramways as reminisced by Chris Wurr.

The *Times Past* article shows early views of Hobart and Adelaide trams and offers very descriptive captions of more than one paragraph. The centrespread shows four photos of Brisbane Tramways with nostalgic

captions. The magazine is available from our Sales Department at \$4.95 plus postage. It can also be bought at the Railfan Shop, Transport House, Collins St. Melbourne.

## Perth Tramways

With the atmosphere for the Perth COTMA Conference building up, our Society reference library has unearthed some Annual Reports from the West Australian Government Tramways. The 1948 Annual Report, for instance reveals that there was some 17 miles of single and 17 miles of double track. About two miles of track was closed during the previous year. Car numbers were: - four wheel - 50, Bogie - 68, trolley buses - 40, and motor buses - 34. Staffing was just over 1000 people. The loss for the year was some 140,000 Pounds.

During 1948, two representatives from the MMTB, Mr. B Misson, Assistant Manager and Mr. H. Bell Jnr, Engineer were brought to Perth to prepare reports on the timetable and roster system, and the future of the system respectively.

Fifty new trolley bus chassis were on order from England, with bodies being built in Perth and the Eastern States. Tenders were to be planned for 50 new motor buses to convert the Victoria Park and South Perth tram routes.

---

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:-

The Secretary,

Ballarat Tramway Preservation Society Ltd.

P.O.Box 632

ACN 005 021 312

Ballarat Vic 3353

Phone (053) 34 1580

---





The conductor of No. 31 at Victoria St. terminus, turns the pole with his back to the traffic, August 1971. (Photo Ballarat Courier)



The remains of No. 20, September 1970. (Photo Ballarat Courier)