

FARES PLEASE!

March 1992

21st Year Celebrations

The Board has been getting on with the task of planning the Society's 21st year celebrations. Plans are in their early stages but the aim is to have some functions for Members and the public over three weekends in the latter part of September 1992. We will be celebrating the formation of our Society and recalling the closure of the S.E.C. operated Ballarat Tramways which saw our tram, No. 40, provide the last service on 19 September 1971.

One thing we can tell you is that a members buffet dinner will be held at Lake Lodge, in the Botanic Gardens on Saturday evening, 19th September 1992. Keep the date free!

We also aim to release our long considered video tape production during this period. The tape will detail the history of the Ballarat Tramways.

The actual dates of the various route closures in Ballarat were:-
Victoria St. - Gardens via Drummond St. North - Sunday, 23rd August 1971,
Mount Pleasant and Gardens via Sturt St. West - Sunday, 5th September

1971, and Lydiard St. North to Sebastopol on Sunday, 19th September 1971.

There is sure to be plenty of old films, slides etc on the Saturday evening to remember the days when S.E.C. trams wound their way around Ballarat's Streets.

Collection Policy

Our Board has been formulating a collection policy for the Society's tram fleet and other collectable items, including spare parts, photographs and archives of the operating days for the actual trams and ourselves. When completed the document will be a formal policy setting out our aims in what the Society should collect etc. The Board has met on at least four occasions to develop ideas and discuss the many views which are all to be taken into account in laying down this collection policy. Before finalisation, details will be available to members for comment. After the completion of this policy, it is intended to formulate a heritage policy which will address the way we present and operate our fleet.

News of the Ballarat Tramway Preservation Society Limited.

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Traffic

After over 15 years as part of our Traffic Staff, Peter Hill has decided to hang up his (rather sodden) uniform so as to give himself more time for his other interests. We can only thank him for all the time and effort he has given the Society over the years.

Despite glorious weather, our patronage during the Labour Day weekend was disappointing. Attendances in the Gardens for the Begonia Festival were lower than usual, particularly on the Monday when a World Cricket Cup match was played on the Eastern Oval.

For the first time in many years we were unable to run every day during the Festival owing to a lack of staff.

Again the Board thanks the members who assisted over this normally very busy period, when as usual our resources are stretched.

Arthur Hugh Whittle

The Society has had a request for information about an Arthur Whittle, born 1875, who possibly worked as a driver in Ballarat between 1908 and 1912. He later moved to Melbourne and worked at Malvern Depot. He subsequently became an Inspector at South Melbourne Depot. If any reader knows of Arthur, our historian, Alan Bradley, would like to hear from you.

COTMA Conference

The 1992 Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia conference to be held in Perth during June has all the planning arrangements now coming together to provide what is sure to be a very good conference. Five delegates from our Society will be attending.

In readiness for the conference will be the draft report of the Electrical Rules Committee. The last conference directed that the Victorian Tramway Museums meet and draft a standard set of electrical rules. A final draft of the rules has been circulated to museums in readiness for the conference. Matters of this type show the importance of conferences where we can all meet and work together in defining policies and procedures on matters of importance such as a common set of electrical rules.

Many other topics such as tram restoration, occupational health and safety issues, archives, sales, and our cultural significance are likely to be discussed too.

Overseas Visitor

Trevor Burling, a member of Wellington Tramway Museums Board visited us on Sunday, 8th March and saw at first hand the Begonia Festival arrangements. Trevor was quite involved in the 1990 COTMA conference in Wellington. We were very pleased to entertain our guest and catch up on news from Wellington and the overall New Zealand tramcar preservation scene.

Will Today's "Hands On" Museum Still be with us Tomorrow?

Warren Doubleday

In October 1989, our Engineering Manager, Warren Doubleday, presented a paper to the Museums Association of Australia Inc. National Conference in Melbourne. The theme of the conference was 'Museums Towards Tomorrow - Serving the Future Public'. Warren's paper examines the future of operating museums such as ours, and some of the pressures on them to ensure their survival. His views expressed within the paper are not necessarily those of the Board or of other society members. The MAA Victorian Branch recently published the papers presented at the conference, and their permission to reproduce it is acknowledged.

For the purpose of this paper, I have defined a "Hands On" operating museum as an Operating Transporting Museum, of which the Ballarat Vintage Tramway is an example. At these museums it is possible for the visitor to take a ride in a vehicle, or experience the transport mode, in the environment that the transport resource perhaps once operated. Some Victorian examples are Puffing Billy at Belgrave, Bellarine Peninsula Railway at Queenscliff and the Bendigo Trust's Talking Tram. These are generally small volunteer operated establishments.

These are a relatively new phenomenon in the museum industry, existing for only the last 20 years or so. Some of the Historical Parks to an extent fit into this grouping. They

range from operations who run daily to those who are primarily static museums who have specific operating days.

While these museums may be establishing themselves now, will they still be with us in a hundred years time as operating museums, or will they be vague stories of the descendants of the enthusiasts who established them? In 600 years time?

They may still be with our descendants, but probably as static exhibits. Steam locomotives for example have a finite operating life before the very foundation of them must be replaced, i.e. their frames. Boilers can be renewed, repaired, but when it comes to a locomotive's frames, you are talking almost about a new locomotive. Wooden parts in carriages or trams have a life as well, when the vehicle is operated.

To keep the operating hands-on museum going it must have visitors who will enable its upkeep. To do this, they must be seen to be relevant to the future generations. In this regard it is the presentation and interpretation of the exhibits and as an educational tool of our past history that becomes critical to their future survival. Without keeping these museums relevant and to be able to be appreciated by our children, they will become a mere passing phenomenon.

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Many of the physical problems these museums face are horrendous. For example, keeping the vehicles and track safe. What we consider safe today, may not be considered safe by tomorrow's regulators.

Preservation/Conservation - many museums have created for themselves, a huge future task by not conserving their exhibits from day one, let alone restoring them. Long term open storage leads to extensive deterioration of rooves, wooden parts and metal frames. To cover them is not easy. A 20m long carriage takes a lot of shed space.

Acquisition policies of many museums have been to grab everything they can get. Sometime the original parent operators, i.e. government railways for example, I think have viewed them as cheap junkyards. No longer can they burn carriages in the open, as they once did, so they literally give them away, and pass the problem onto someone else. Too many operating museums in my view have the policy of keeping too much, just in case it may be useful one day.

Maintenance of the vehicle or track to enable its operation is not easy either. These are subject to regulatory inspections in many cases. The cost of insurance to allow physical operation can be a sizeable percentage of the overall budget. The problems of presentation to enable interpretation are often ignored because of the physical ones. Working within a reasonably correct context i.e. keeping the exhibition relevant is an often encountered

problem. Too many tramway museums operate trams that were once confined to the cities or built up areas in a bush setting. These can be called demonstration museums, but then they do not even fully operate in such a manner that they actually once did. On the other hand many museums have created their own context, such as Sovereign Hill.

An example of an operational context is the roving conductor. They look like themselves passing into history in Melbourne over the next few years. The National Tramway Museum of England at Crich has recently re-introduced them as a trial. They felt people no longer experience the happening of paying your fare to a conductor as you board the tram. In Ballarat, we still battle with cars or other vehicles as a roadside tramway, collecting fares on the car with uniformed crews running the same cars in colour schemes that they once did.

Subjectivity of the exhibits within an well defined context of operation are important elements in establishing a framework in which to enable a good interpretation of exhibits and offer educational experience. Too often do we see museums try to present a bit of everything and there by do it very poorly.

Many of the hands on operating museums are struggling just to keep their exhibits, and operating infrastructure intact and as a result pay little attention to the ensuring that they will survive by attracting visitors. Visitors to Museums are becoming

more demanding. There are numerous high quality interpretative museums which are lifting the overall standards. The ones who do not lift their interpretative standards and set out to give their visitors a memorable trip, or visit will suffer. As we all know, word of mouth advertising is one of the best forms.

They can rely at present to an extent on visitor's own knowledge of the exhibits once operating in the past, and then wanting to ride to relive their memories, thereby interpreting them. As these people pass on, will their grand children understand what these vehicles once did? Or, will they be purely seen as some odd novelty, not worth visiting.

Other important parts in the presentation of the museum are buildings, staff, and amenities. A problems that occurs in this area for example are amenities. Smelly pan toilets once common on railways of the past, are unacceptable today, even with perhaps special interpretation, but so in the sight of a modern toilet block on the old railway platform. Compromises are often needed, and this generally promotes internal debates.

Public Education through school visits and the like is an important source of revenue, and to ensure repeat visits of school groups, presentation with the correct context is required. People with a knowledge of the museum, its history and ability to answer questions to give a good introduction presentation are essential. School visits however, are very hard on all

types of hands-on exhibits as we know. Trams are no exceptions, bell chords, seats, all suffer from the general abuse of children, just as they once suffered when actually transporting their parents to and from school. A continual reconstruction team is required.

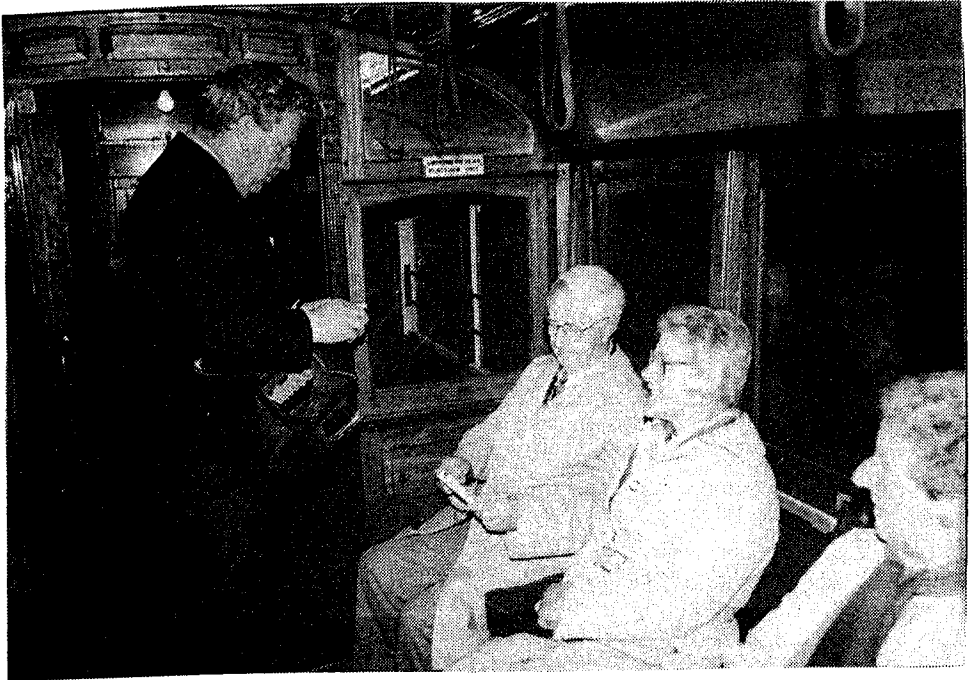
To continue to maintain these exhibits we will be relying on people who never know them in their real operational life. Even to attract these future workers, is dependent upon the way we interpret them to new generations. We also must hand on our specialist knowledge, before it becomes a lost art. If us by the time we become old fogies or living treasures do not do these things, the exhibits will die as we do. Steam locomotives seem to be attracting the young workers who did not know them in the their previous life.

In order to ensure a operating museums long term survival, it must not only look after its vehicles or structures but its volunteer workers as well. These workers generally form the back bone of such organisations. As they grow, and become established, they commence to employ people. This then brings other pressures of ensuring continuity, and harmony within the organisation. They must be able to enjoy their task, but within an often demanding environment of safety to themselves and the visitor. "Playing trains" or using the railway as a large model railway is fraught with dangers.

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Finally, the question that "Will today's hands on operating museum still be with us tomorrow?" is dependent upon the way today's museum's operators establish a structure not only to enable operation, preservation and conservation, but the way they present the exhibits to be interpreted by the visitor, and offer a public education at the same time. If they do not serve the future public, there may not be a tomorrow.

Copies of the Museums Association of Australia's Conference record, which contains some 42 very interesting papers are available from the Victorian Branch of the MAA for \$12.00 per copy, plus \$2.20 postage, Private Bag No. 1, City Road Post Office, Vic. 3205.



Peter Walker as conductor on tram 13, gives a demonstration of the conductor's function to long standing members George and Noelene Netherway and Nancy Kierath. The photo was taken in September 1988 by Richard Gilbert.

Sales Items

The lapel badge of the new PTC double deck train is on the way. Unfortunately a production hold up has delayed deliveries, but we are hopeful of getting them in the next couple of weeks.

Our spoons remain very popular items, and new stocks have recently been ordered. If you know someone who collects spoons, let them know. We have gone through many designs so far, varieties etc. featuring our trams. A spoon featuring the horse tram is most likely to be produced later in the year.

Just Like a Big Tramway - part 2.

You may remember in our last issue of *Fares Please!* we reported on the tramway being held up by a car fire, a couple of weeks later, we had a similar incident when a lady collapsed in a mini bus near depot junction.

The friends of the lady asked our driver Len Millar where the nearest phone was. He immediately rang the depot staff on the track phone, who then called the ambulance. The first ambulance blocked the track for a few minutes while the crew tried to revive the lady. A second ambulance was later called, for some specialised equipment. Unfortunately we don't know the outcome of the situation. It did not look too good. Working on the tramway often has its boring moments, but on occasions our crews have to be ready for any eventuality.

At the Depot

The bearing shells for the No. 1 axle of tram 33 have been cast and are now at Miller Bros. workshops getting turned to size. It is still planned to fit these over the Easter period.

The second end canopy has been completed for the Horse tram and fitted off into position. The end apron has been refitted to the tram as well. The next job to be done to the car is fitting the handrails to the upper deck. This will allow the handbrakes to be finally fitted as well. Following this will be making up and fitting the catwalk over the end canopies that joins either side of the car and allows access to the stairs.

The Society had only one gooseneck handbrake staff. The second one was provided by the TMSV, along with some handrail components from the old Beaumaris double deck horse tram, in return for some overhead bracket arms. Although the length of the two horse trams differed, the Beaumaris car will provide some important components, the methodology and material sizing for making up the new hand rail components. It also adds to the heritage of our tram.

Detail painting of the lettering along the side of the car, *Ballaarat Tramway Co. Ltd.* is now being done by Dave Macartney. He is also planning the painting of the front aprons and stairs. This is by no means a simple feat, as extensive lining out was employed. We have found photographs with a vine painted onto the staircase sides.

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At the Depot cont.

Work on the Museum display continues. Carpet is at present being laid throughout the majority of the tram and the associated display area.

Various trial layouts of photo captions, photograph sizing, headings etc are being done on trial display boards in order to work out the best method of presentation and lighting arrangements. At this stage, it would appear a painted masonite type board, with the photographs etc. mounted on this, overlaid with a sheet of perspex to protect them will be adopted.

Tramcar maintenance is one of those jobs that never stops, though it fluctuates in intensity. Each serviceable car is checked over, oiled etc. every two hundred or so trips. Faults which occur between these times are attended to on as need basis. This job has recently been taken over by Barry Macandlish from Warren Doubleday. Barry is an expert at keeping old motor vehicles going, so he is now applying his skills to even older vehicles.

Another job that has been started is a set of stairs to the upper storage area over the office, mess room and change room. This will allow this area to be set up as storage area for light stores and get a lot of the 'junk' off the floor and generally tidy the place up.

Len Millar is continuing the restoration of W4 671. The seeming never ending task of body filling, sanding back etc. the extensive panels of the car is continuing. In between this tiresome task, he is cleaning the trucks down, which is an equally yucky job. It all has to be done though.

Oops!, almost forgot, Jackie Edwards has finished off the sanding and varnishing of the slatted sunshades of the horse tram. These have been varnished and fitted to the tram, adding that extra item means that this important restoration is nearing the end.

21 Years Ago (well almost!)

From our August 1971 newsheet comes the following item.

'Our main problem is finance, or lack thereof! At the moment, we have 130 financial members. Most Melbourne members have been asked to give some indication as to how much money they could donate to the Society in the first few weeks after operations commence. A telephone appeal was conducted, and over \$800 was raised in four days. Your Council is very mindful of the need to conserve cash, and our expenditure over the past few weeks has been kept the lowest possible level'

{ \$800 in 1971 would translate in 1992 dollars to be \$4,200. Not bad! ed. }

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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