

FARES PLEASE!

January 1993

Ballarat Trams are Ballarat History

Museum Grant



ARTS
VICTORIA

The Society is pleased to announce the receipt of a grant from Arts Victoria for a sum of \$1600. The grant is for financial assistance for interpretative display signs in the vicinity of Gardens Loop.

The Society has felt for sometime that there is a lack of interpretation of our tramway, especially when we are not operating. There is nothing saying why the track is where it is, and what the significance of the tramway is to Ballarat and its residents. To assist in overcoming this problem, it is planned to erect a former tramway shelter from Victoria St. and position a sign explaining the tramway within it.

The assistance of Arts Victoria, a Division of the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism is welcomed and acknowledged.

Bob Prentice

We wish to record the passing of Mr. Bob Prentice, one of our senior and long time members. Bob, a well known and respected tram historian for many years, had been a member of our Society from the beginning in 1971. Bob was always keen to see our concept flourish and he became a tram driver, enjoying the atmosphere of guiding the quaint four wheeled trams through the Gardens. He had great pleasure in being the tram driver in the film 'The Getting of Wisdom' which was shot along our tramway and he took much interest in the reconstruction of Horse Tram No. 1.

We often called on Bob as a source of information when seeking details of tramway operation or maintenance procedures of the SEC era. His knowledge, experience and support for all of use was something we have all appreciated.

His long and interesting tramway journey is now over - the controller key is neutral - but his memory will live on in the many tangible ways that he has contributed to the Society.

News of the Ballarat Tramway Preservation Society Limited.

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Video Tape

The documentary video tape production 'The tramways of Ballarat' is now completed. The production has been held back because some archival film that had recently been offered to us was too good to leave out. This meant parts of the script had to be re-written, all adding to the time required to make the production, but it has been well worth it. The tape runs for approximately 50 minutes, contains very interesting archival film, and concludes with film from Bob Prentice and Peter Duckett showing a journey around Ballarat by tram. The tape is professionally narrated by Bruce McLean. It is a concise documentary on the history of the tramways of Ballarat and is available by mail order, for \$39.75 or \$34.95 at the tram depot. It will be available in Ballarat and Melbourne when stocks are available.

We have decided to complete the production in a professional manner so that it can be sold in retail outlets. It will be packaged in a heat sealed container with a fully printed cover for the box. This will take up to a month before it is mailed. When you receive the production, we are sure you will agree it has been worth the extra production time.

Postcard

A meeting was held recently at which the Board made a choice from a selection of slides and prints for a photograph of Horse Tram No. 1 to be produced as a postcard. The same photograph may be used in the production of a fridge magnet.

Souvenir Handbook

The re-writing and production of the updated souvenir book that describes our tramway is proceeding well. It is expected to be at the typesetters during February. The project is being led by Bill Scott and a much updated text will be accompanied by a broad selection of photographs, with some in colour. The book should run to about 28 pages.

Oops!

Our reference to sanding down the tumbledown panel on the side of No. 12, should have referred to the 'rocker panel'. Tumbledown itself was incorrect too! It should have been tumblehome. O.K. you may ask what are all the definitions? J.H. Price in 'A source Book of Trams' Ward Lock Ltd., London 1980 gives the following definitions:

Rocker Panel - the lower side panel of a car with waisted side construction.

Waist Panel - the upper side panel of a car with waisted side construction.

Tumblehome - contraction in width of a tramcar below the waist.

New Members

The Society welcomes the following new member:-

No. 671 Mr. N.J.Fraser Ballarat

RIPPIN' YARNS (Part 2)

by Alan Bradley

Les Edwards was old enough to remember horse trams running in Sebastopol. He worked for the Ballarat tramways initially on the traffic staff, then worked for 21 years on a farm, and later returned to work on the maintenance staff at Wendouree Depot, until his retirement in 1968. I interviewed Les in 1981 and found him to have an excellent memory, and many funny stories. Les died a few years ago. This is an edited version of the interview, featuring some of his stories.

When the electrification was completed they used the horse trams as trailers, behind the electric trams for different occasions. Then some were sold around the country and they were very handy. When we were connying one or two of the trailers used to go up to the High School, to pick up the girls, and the girls used to give you a rough time, I'll tell you! If you fell down they'd knock you down, if you didn't fall down they'd knock you down and hold you with their feet! They were characters, they were funny. The new fellas were terrified of the girls, it was always the girls that attacked them, that was the funny thing.

I've got one or two funny stories. Once there was the officer, Mr Curtin. A pole came off within 200 yards of the depot. The pole came off, right in front of Curtin's place. The pole was wrapped around the stanchion bars, on the pole. You've never seen anything like it in your life. So he

couldn't make it go anywhere. So he had to send his conny back to the depot to send a tram to pull him off. Mr Curtin came back and said "What are you going to do now?" He said "Back to get a tram to pull it out." He said "Not until I get my camera. I'll never get a photo like this again". That was one funny incident.

Down at Main Road one time a chap named Dalton, one of the drivers, Ben Dalton, a real hard tough character he was. He ran off the curve going out of Main Road into Barkly St. The tram ran off there, and he got out the angle iron to put under the wheels to get it on the line. Anyhow he left the current on one notch on the controller, and dropped down and put this angle iron on the rail and pushed it under the wheel. Well as soon as he did he got the current. Next thing this bloke's got him by the shoulders and said "Wake up, wake up!" If he hadn't he would have been gone. He didn't know mouth to mouth but he bumped him, shook him and got him going. Soon as he did that he blew the switch on the tram and it was dead then, there was no current. He was a tough man!

When the horse trams first started there were slats in the bottom of the trams, and they used to put straw on the bottom to walk on. The conductor, in a big crush, because a lot of people travelled by trams then, if he dropped his money in the straw, it dropped through onto the road. The boys used to follow the tram up from Rubicon

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St, follow the tram up the hill as far as Darling St, and back. When the connie dropped money through the floor they'd pick it up, and they used to come back to a lolly shop around the corner in Rubicon St, and they used to spend their money there.

In the company days a lot of lines weren't the best. They'd run off, perhaps after a flood, there'd be a lot of debris flow down the line and block the rails. Of course that would get a tram off the line. Fast drivers would come hurtling around bends and run them off the lines, and it would be hours getting them on.

Especially down Sebas, the Sebas line was never properly ballasted, there was only gravel. Especially after heavy rain the line would sink in it. The trams would come rocking down, especially on Saturday night when the young fellas were coming out from Ballarat, they'd get on the back of the tram, next thing it would be off! I remember one tram came off at Collins' and he knocked the pole right off.

The old Sebas crossbench cars, 21,22 and 23, three of them. There's still one down there in Crown St. One was turned into a scrubber car. There were only three of them, and they were good cars, so I'm told. They used to have a bar, a single bar each end. When you got to the terminus you put this bar down and put the other one up. There was an accident at the corner of Main Road. He was driving out when the Town Clerk's wife, old Mrs Jordan, was getting out the back. He started off, she was supposed to

get out at the front. He started off and she fell out. That meant that they had to put the bars right along.

No 21, I was coming down Drummond St one day, I got near Urquhart St. There were two older women sitting in the tram with their umbrellas, they were the only two in the tram. I got out and opened the door and the driver put on the magnetic brake. One of the old girls slipped off the seat and fell down. Luckily one of the blinds unfolded and let her out. She's hanging out over the side, legs up in the air in the tram and backside hanging out. She screamed like a pig. Of course I had to dash out and try to push her up. Eventually she got up and by jove she went crook. I got a couple of days holiday, stood down for a couple of days for laughing when she fell out! Only for the blind being unfolded she could have been killed, or run over by a car, though there weren't many cars about in those times.

There were the "Gardens" cars, No 19 was one. The seats were rolled over so that you could sit on that side and when you came back, sit on the other side. They had a gooseneck brake handle. Jack Maher, he used to drive it every time at Christmas. The kiddies used to sit out and hang their legs out on the road. They only brought them out on special occasions, like Christmas.

You used to change over when you came to a loop. You'd have a staff. I give you my staff and you take it on and when you take mine I carry on. Each loop has a staff and you couldn't

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go through that loop unless you had the staff. Your loop staffs were numbered. There was a dangerous position where we were supposed to stop and hand them over, but you got that way where you could twirl your leg around the dash, hang out and change it with one hand. Of course if you got caught, look out, we never got caught. It was a dangerous thing to do but we got away with it.

When they first put the lines down for the horse trams they were three

inches above the road. But they used to knock the devil out of the carts and horses because they'd run along them and try to cross them, but you couldn't. You'd have to go straight across them, otherwise you'd skid. The council made them put more blue metal up there to build the road up level with the rail, so that the horses could cross. Especially with the iron rim of the cart or dray or whatever it was, as soon as it touched the rail it would skid.



Les Edwards polishes No. 18, painted to celebrate the Centenary of the Borough of Sebastopol, 1964.

PHOTO The Courier

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At the Depot

Over the last two months a number of small jobs have been done, trams re-positioned and a commencement made on researching details of Electric Supply Co. tram No. 12.

Between Christmas and the New Year, the non-powered trams in the shed were re-positioned. No. 11, the museum display tram for many years was relocated to No. 7 road, the horse tram to the rear of No. 2 road where an associated display area will be made up, and No. 12 from the rear of No. 7 road to the rear of No. 5 road. Other changes made in the shed were that No. 3 road has become a bogie road, while No. 2 road has two single truckers and the Horse tram located on it.

One associated job was the provision of a length of overhead on No. 7 road, utilising some of the troughing and contact wire removed from the rear of No. 2 road where the horse tram is positioned. We have determined that visitors will not be allowed to climb aboard the horse tram unless supervised, primarily for safety reasons, in case they fall off the top or the stairs. Just in case we have taken the contact wire that was above it away, should someone tried to have taken hold of it.

Benches, cupboards etc and other associated 'junk' are slowly being moved around the shed to try and tidy it up. This will take some time.

The continual wet weather has seen the pits fill partially with water again,

then be emptied out, only to fill up again a few weeks later. This has held up a start on the repair work on tram 40.

Museum display area fit out planning is continuing. The photographs for the ESCo panel have been determined and orders placed for their reproduction. Alan Bradley in his researches has found a newspaper report on the opening of the Electrification of the Ballarat system. We have ordered a copy of the page, so it can be displayed as well. Photographs for two new photo display leaves have been sorted out, and will be installed over the next couple of months. Visitors to the area have commented favourably on the area, and are very impressed with our five minute video presentation. Visitor flow patterns have been observed, and appear to be working reasonably well given that not all the display panels are yet completed.

Work on the repainting of tram 671 is continuing slowly given the period of the year, staff availability. Undercoating should be commenced during February.

Another task recently carried out was a walking survey of our track joints in Wendouree Parade. It was noted that there are about six bad joints and six poor joints requiring some work. It is planned to carry out some work over the Australia Day weekend at the Carlton St end of the track.

Horse Tram Display Area

A proposal for a horse tram display area has been prepared for the end of No. 2 road. To improve the natural lighting a skylight will be positioned over the tram. The existing skylight on No. 3 road side shows the benefit of this. Two photo display boards will be made up, one showing the reconstruction work in its various stages over the years. A side panel off the original car which was not re-used showing the lettering will be located on the side wall of the substation, above a future planned window. One corner of the original car body has been re-assembled (it was the best condition of all the rotted corners) onto a steel underframe to illustrate the construction of the tram body. After the installation of the skylight, and the displays, additional lighting as required is proposed.

New Sales Items

We have received stocks of the 'Directory of Australian Tourist Railways and Museums 1993' (\$7.95) and the latest book by David Keenan on Sydney Tramways, featuring the South Western lines. This 76 page book is priced at \$19.95 and is another excellent publication by Transit Press in the series on Sydney, most of which are still in stock at the depot. The latest book covers the tram routes that served Rockdale, Earlwood, Petersham and Canterbury.

No. 12

As mentioned in 'At the Depot' research work on the car has commenced. This has entailed removing all the wood etc. that was fitted to the car when it was made into a room of a house in the 1930's. So far we have found:-

The original car body is likely to have been North Sydney Cable Trailer Car No. 18 (two pieces of wood with 18 stamped on it behind the door frames at either end of the central saloon. If this is the case, it was then built by B.Carne in 1892.

The cable trailer body was placed onto a new wooden frame with a steel plate running the full length of the car bolted to the outside. The floor of the cable body was removed, the doorstep where the sliding door ran was simply cut through, and the two inside doors lengthened by three inches. On one side of the tram, where the body was exposed to the weather in the house, the original bottom side rail member of the trailer has completely rotted away, along with side pillars etc., but the new frame by Duncan & Fraser (the 1905 re-builders) is still in very good condition. The sliding doors in the drivers bulkhead appear to be of 1905 vintage, as they have not been extended by three inches.

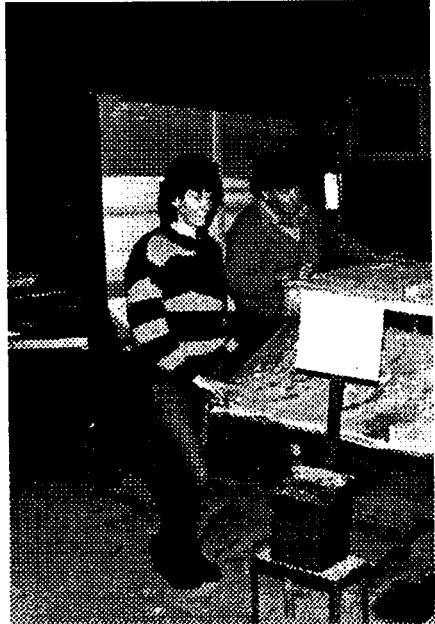
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No. 12 cont.

- Window lifting fittings inside the tram are cast brass with builders names embossed into them. The names are 'Duncan & Fraser', 'Carne' and 'Jones'. From the NSW Tramcar Handbook (SPER 1976), Jones would have been 'J.M.Jones Manufacturing Co., New York', who built North Sydney cable trailers Nos. 1 to 4 in 1886.
- The inside seat base panels were relocated to the inside walls of the trams by the house owners in the 1930's. We have also found pieces of seating, support pillars etc., and the holes in the frame where they were fitted.
- Original paint colours of the floor (grey) and the sides of the car have been discovered.
- The two ends of the car roof are of different shape, one rounded, and the other square with rounded corners. The result of an accident perhaps?
- The circuit breakers for the tram appear to have been located under the floor of the tram at either end, accessed by a centrally located hatch under the drivers feet.

When the body was rebuilt from a six window saloon section to a three window section, the modifications to the framing were very simply made by sawing out the necessary pieces to get the larger windows to drop down and then leaving the rest.

A 4d ESCo ticket, orange in colour.



Bob Prentice discusses the roof of the horse tram with Jacqui Edwards in 1987.

PHOTO Richard Gilbert

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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