

FARES PLEASE!

January 1994

Ballarat Trams are Ballarat History

Museum Accreditation

The Society has been advised that it has been successful in its application for registration as a Museum with the Museums Association of Australia. Registration is the first step in the accreditation process, which has just been commenced for Victorian Museums. The formal accreditation phase will be undertaken within two to three years. The Registration stage required a fair amount of work to put together, including answering a large questionnaire.

Registration under the Museum Accreditation Programme is an important step in the Society's development. It gives us a recognition that the Society is professional in the way that it undertakes its operations.

One of the aims of the programme is to improve the standards of museum practices. The Accreditation programme will result in the general public being more aware of good museum practices and museums being more strongly motivated to achieve them. More next issue.

Traffic

Passengers numbers over the Christmas - January period have been poor to fair. The period immediately after Christmas suffered some atrocious wet weather which Victorian residents and visitors would rather forget about. Unfortunately like many outdoor attractions, it affected our figures too. So much so on Monday December 27, only five passengers travelled! Though there were five staff members on duty, there were no passengers by mid afternoon. A car containing five South Australians pulled up at about 3.30p.m., inspected and were urged to take a ride. They were even taken down to the Parade in 33, so they would not escape!!

Christmas day itself was good. Frank and Jenny Puls who manned the tram carried 110 passengers. Thanks to Frank and Jenny who we gather had an enjoyable day. During January, the figures have been up on last year, but still not as good as previous years. Hopefully we may be turning the corner in passenger numbers.

News of the Ballarat Tramway Preservation Society Limited.

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No Smoking

At a recent board meeting the issue of smoking in the depot was finalised. It has been discussed for some time and the final decision was made to prohibit smoking in all parts of the depot building and on our trams operating outside the building.

A lot of discussion has been had on the matter and it was finally moved by a 'smoker' board member that the ban be implemented.

The value of our trams and our facility for both the Society and the public cannot be put at risk by smoking in the depot area. A number of discarded butts have from time to time been found in the workshop area, where flammable materials are kept, along with wood shavings, materials etc. on the floors.

The decision was not taken hastily or purely as an anti-smoking bash but to responsibly safeguard our trams, depot assets, archives and photographs on display and be in line with current trends for our members health, particularly in the mealroom and office.

Begonia Festival

This year's festival will run from Friday March 4 until Monday March 14. It should be as popular as the newly revamped festival was last year. The parade will be held on March 14.

We were well patronised at that time as Wendouree Parade was made a pedestrian mall and our society had the task of transporting people to and from the centre of the attractions. The festival taxes our resources to the limit and we ask that all our members, particularly those qualified to drive or conduct on the trams to assist us.

We need you! - telephone Gavin Young 629 2206 or Peter Winspur 699 2631 to offer some dates. Members who have through the effluxion of time become unqualified will be retrained. Please help carry the workload.

Tram Shelter

Our shelter that was recovered a number of years ago from Victoria Street and stored has been placed into position at the Gardens Loop. The structure was one of a number of wooden ones that once graced the tram routes. It consists of two parallel seats for four people on each side, back to back, with a metal gable roof. The City of Ballarat subsequently installed a number of similar looking shelters, but made out of metal instead of wood with plastic sides, in Victoria St. and Sturt St.

After being re built and painted in the shed, it was taken down to the loop in two major sections. Our team of workers erected the shelter on Saturday 8th January, a day of rain squalls and a generally a miserable

day, whilst ironically New South Wales suffered 40 degree heat and catastrophic bushfires. The shelter completely blends into the Gardens environment and is painted green with some fancy ironwork that supports the roof painted cream. The shelter matches the colours of the other new Gardens signage.

A large 'interpretive' sign describing the history of the tramway, accompanied by photographs from the gardens tramway through the years, is being prepared to be placed above the seat bench. This will tell the visitors to the historic gardens area, the story of the tramway and be placing our tramway in the view of visitors even if we are not operating. A number of other interpretative signs are now placed in the Gardens area and they tell the history and detail the wild life.

Bushfires at SPER

The newsletter from the Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia has told us of the bushfire damage sustained by the Sydney Tramway Museum. The damage was luckily confined to the National Park end of the line only. It resulted in the loss of one pole supporting the overhead, some sleepers and a wooden toilet block. We were all heartened that their collection of Sydney Tramway Heritage was not damaged in these disastrous fires.

Destination Eaglehawk

Hot on the heels of the release of Destination City, one of the editors has met with us to get information for their next publication. This will be the update of the long out of print 'Destination Eaglehawk'. This book will record the fleet of trams used on the Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo system and give a short history of each tram system. The book will have a new name and will take all of 1994 to compile and edit.

Sales

Destination City 5 has arrived at the depot. This A4 size book is priced at \$29.95. Unfortunately it has a number of errors regarding our ex MMTB trams, including many omissions. However it is a good book for updating the situation on cars in Melbourne.

Ballarat A Power Station

By the time you read this, the former Ballarat A power station in Wendouree Parade will be virtually no more. Sold late last year, the demolition of the building is virtually complete. The foundation stone laid by the Electric Supply Company has been saved by the SEC. The Society has written to the Regional Manager asking if we can display it at the depot as a link between the tramway and the provision of power to Ballarat in 1905.

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RIPPING YARNS

Alan Bradley

Interview with Herb & Ron Knight - Part 2) - continued from November 1993 *Fares Please!*

Closure of the tramways

So that was that, that was me end of the penny section, and they shouldn't have lost them. I feel that they should have got rid of trams, but the SEC should have been made to control buses under public transport. I feel they should have, they were big enough. They were coping, they were just as competent as the Melbourne Tramway Board. They should have been made to control public transport in Ballarat.

We tried but we failed. The public of Ballarat didn't rally behind us as they should have, otherwise I feel we wouldn't have lost them. They've lost public transport now. They'll never get it back now. Nothing will expand a city or town quicker than public transport. Private transport will only retard it, because they will only run if it's paying. If it's not paying it goes out. But that doesn't apply with public transport they'll go anywhere. If it's only one house they'll still go to it. And this is why I feel the city lost everything when they lost public transport.

The Commission were power producers, not transport operators. This is the argument they used. I feel the government of the day should have said to them: "You've had the service. You've had 40 years in public transport". They were big enough. The SEC is probably one of the biggest undertakings we've got in this state, and they should have been made in my opinion by the government of the day to control public transport in Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong, whether it be trams or buses. I feel that not only the government of the day but the forefathers of this city, Ballarat and Bendigo were weak in my opinion. They should have maintained that the SEC control public transport in the three cities.

The lack of public support

The trammies, 95% of them wanted the trams to keep going, probably 100% of them did. They all wanted trams to keep going. I think they did, I think generally the public did, but they didn't show the support. We held them for 14 years, I think we could have held them for another 14 years if we had the public of Ballarat behind us. But they didn't, they were only concerned the night they finished. But it didn't sink in until then, and I feel this is where they fell down.

I don't know why. We ran quite a few meetings. The first two or three were well attended. But the last couple, if you'd taken the trammies and their wives out of it there'd have been no-one there. And this is where they fell down. Too much trouble to save something that belonged to Ballarat.

Bolte was the Premier of Victoria at that time, and I can remember him saying: "Give me power in both houses and I'll get rid of your trams". The public gave him power in both houses. So what was wrong with that? What more could they say? They probably would have went three years before that, and we held them for three years. But when Bolte won power in both houses that was it for the trams.

When the council had Mr Pittard and quite a few of them on our side, then we'd have never lost trams. But I don't know whether it was the weight of money or what it was, something swayed it. By the Commission subsidising private enterprise for five years, whether it was the weight of money or what it was, I believe it turned the tables against public transport in Ballarat. I'm only forcing my own opinion of course, I was constantly in touch with it. As I say we fought tooth and nail as a union and as a body of tramwaymen generally, we tried everything in our power to save public transport, and

we failed. Not because we didn't try but because felt that somebody let us down. Anyway, that's my opinion and I'll say it in front of anyone.

This is not the same city without trams. Trams give a city a big appearance. I felt they were on the wrong side of the road. They used to come on the left hand side of the road into a loop, which was dangerous to oncoming traffic. I'm not arguing that trams should have been maintained. But I feel that the SEC was big enough and should have been made to run Government-controlled buses.

Collisions

I hadn't hit more than 4 or 5 cars in my 34 years of tram driving. As I say, you're a fixed transport. You can't get out of the way, if they're coming at you you've got to let them hit you. You can't dodge around them! If you're driving a tram you're an open target for anyone, because you can't get out of the way. I feel they were very lucky, and I feel this was because the travelling public did respect the trams, and they did keep out of their road. Or tried to, because there were very few accidents, as far as motor accidents concerned with trams. There were one or two bad ones, but not too many.

G. Fares Please!

The accident to No. 20

That was up Victoria St. The chap's still alive who was driving that. He was only a young chap and he's still in Ballarat. And he was the luckiest man I've ever seen. He said he didn't jump but he must have, otherwise he'd have been killed outright. He wasn't marked. He hasn't worked since, I don't think. It played up with his nervous system. He hasn't been very much good since.

There was a passenger on that tram, a girl. She sat on the opposite side on that particular night. If she sat on the side she normally sat on she'd have been killed. She wasn't marked either. Part of the window fell over her, and she wasn't even marked. It was miraculous, it smashed the tram to pieces. You wouldn't believe it unless you'd seen it, what a mess it made of the tram. Yet there was no-one killed.

Tram runaways

Two trams went down, one through Dickens, the other through the Bucks Head Hotel. The first one, the driver wasn't there apparently, and something must have knocked the air off it or something, and away it went, down the hill. It ran across the road, didn't hit anybody, even with all the traffic in Bridge St. The first one went into Dickens, now Coles New World, the second, straight into the

bar of the Bucks Head Hotel. (On the site of the present Clarkes Rubber Building ed.)

The first one went in there, and we got the driver out of it (out of trouble ed.) because there was no points behind the tram. Know what I mean? There should have been spring points behind the tram, which would have made it run up Lydiard St, uphill. But there was no split points behind the tram on the Town Hall side of Sturt St.

The second one that went away, there were points in front of the tram, and they hadn't been turned against the tram. So we lost that case. Naturally we tried but he lost his job. The first one we saved but the second, well you can't win them all. We lost it because he was suspended and eventually sacked him because they felt it was negligence on his part. He should have turned the points against the tram, which would have sent it up Lydiard St. It wouldn't have gone down the hill at all. I mean you have to be sensible, you can only go a certain distance. These things which have happened in my time have been the two runaway trams.

We used to have an Stipendiary Magistrate, down here at the court. He'd get on at Brougham St. in the morning and say: "Straight into Dickens driver!" Straight into the shop! He was a very British sort of a chap.

The Sebastopol track

There was never a check rail from Rubicon St to Sebas. Most of that line had no check rail on it. When I talk about a check rail, it's a groove alongside the rail. Lots of the line from Rubicon St down to the bottom end of Sebas was devoid of a check rail. If we had a derailment down there we'd have some sort of lever, that the line didn't have a check rail. It was a good line, the only danger was that bit across the main road. This was a danger as far as traffic hazard was concerned. This is where I feel they should have kept going on the same side, why they took it across I'll never know.

I don't ever remember anyone ever hitting anybody there. I can't ever remember having a crash there at all. But they were telling me that the stables were over there in the horse days, and that's why they went across there. Of course there wasn't the traffic around that there is today, and I can imagine what would happen today if we had trams coming out on the wrong side of the road. They would be a traffic hazard today, this is for sure.

But that is no reason why they should have got rid of them. That is no reason why they should have lost public transport.

At the Depot

We occasionally get asked, how long does a set of brake blocks last for? Well we can finally answer it. Tramcar No. 14 had its four brake blocks renewed during January. Looking back through our car records, we found that it was last done in June 1983! Since then the car has travelled over 11,700km. Most of our single truckers have only one or two brake blocks changed at a time, it being unusual to replace them all four at the same time.

Work on a number of projects has continued around the depot as well as maintaining trams, cleaning them and the depot etc. Jackie returned from a couple of weeks off, and found the place a mess! As reported above, Dave finished off the pre-painting of the shelter, so only touch up painting was required after it was positioned.

Gary Wood has continued with the repair and reconstruction of one of the ends of No. 12. Around a broken wooden cross member, he has installed steel plates and bolted them to it, forming a sandwich. A new drivers bulkhead support cross member has been installed, and new end sills. Replacement of the end of one of the rotted joints will complete the floor framing at one end of the car.

8. Fares Please!

Work is underway on doing some minor repairs to the body of No. 40. One of the corner posts of No. 1 end apron had been found to be badly rotted out. A new lower section is being installed. As usual getting it was a major exercise in dismantling etc. With regard to the repair of the motor from No. 40, it appears that we may have found someone who is skilled in undertaking the repair of tramway motors. The only problem is that they are in Adelaide. Arrangements are being made to transport the armature over during the next couple of months for an examination and quote.

The repainting of No. 671 is continuing. Work has reached the stage where the outside of the car is being undercoated, and the interior is being rubbed back for revarnishing, or repainting.

Twenty Years Ago

From the January 1974 Issue of news sheet we find that it was the first issue under the name of *Fares Please!*. In those days, the news letter was printed on foolscap size paper, using a manual typewriter to cut a wax stencil.

Some items in the news-sheet were:

- . The incorporation of the Society under the Companies Act was finally complete. This was an important step and enabled us to run trams in Wendouree Parade. A special general meeting was necessary however to make some minor amendments to the articles to suit the Commonwealth Tax Office.
- . The access track to Wendouree Parade footpath was complete, No. 1 road had been completed, No. 3 road had been lifted inside the shed, and overhead wire was being strung over the shed fan and the access track.
- . A flat top trolley had been obtained from the Commonwealth Railways Port Augusta, and it was being used to ballast the track.
- . Arrangements were being made to install the points in Wendouree Parade.
- . A tour group to attend the opening of the AETM's St. Kilda Museum on March 13, 1974 was being organised. The cost of Economy class travel on the Overland, overnight accommodation and bus travel was \$30.

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,

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