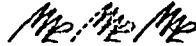


FARES PLEASE!

July 1996

Ballarat Trams are Ballarat History



Museum Accreditation Program
Registered Museum

Annual General Meeting

Notice is given that the Annual General Meeting of the Ballarat Tramway Museum Inc will be held at 2.00 pm, on Sunday 13th October 1996. The meeting will be held at the Museum's tram depot in the South Gardens Reserve, Ballarat.

Nominations are called for the following positions which will fall vacant on the Museum's board of Management on that date:

President

Vice-President (two positions)

Honorary Secretary

Honorary Treasurer

Ordinary Board Members

(six positions)

Any two members may nominate any other member to serve as an Office Bearer or Ordinary Board Member, provided that no person who at the time of such nomination is an unfinancial member.

Members must be financial to be entitled to be a candidate for election,

as must be the proposer and seconder in accordance with the Rules of the Association. Any nomination is to be sent in writing to the Returning Officer, to reach him not later than 5.00 pm, on Friday 20 September 1996.

Nominations may be sent to:

The Returning Officer

Ballarat Tramway Museum Inc

PO Box 632 Ballarat Vic 3353,

or may be placed in the Ballot Box at the tram depot. Envelopes forwarded by mail should be endorsed "Ballot Material" on the back of the envelope.

The nomination is to be signed by the proposer and seconder and consented to in writing by the candidate. Nominations may be accompanied by a statement (of not more than 500 words) setting out the candidate's policies and record of service.

A member may be nominated as a candidate for more than one position on the Board, provided that upon election to any position on the Board, the member's nomination for any other position shall forthwith lapse.

News of the Ballarat Tramway Preservation Society Limited

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At the Depot

Work continues on a number of projects. Some of the recent ones have been:

- Installation of a water line to the front of the depot. Long thought about, it finally has happened.
- Repair of a broken water supply pipe outside the building after wondering why a wet patch was constantly there? It was a slow leaking crack in a piece of plastic pipe.
- Installation of more shelves in the Archives Room.
- Continuing our archiving effort. Some 280 items, many of them multiple sub items, have been catalogued during the past financial year.
- Some minor repairs to 671's truck and other components, following its sojourn to Melbourne and repainting damaged areas.
- Stripping down tram 28, taking both sets of driver's windows out so that they may be repaired and resealed. Sanding down the windows for varnishing, repairing doors.
- Continuing the manufacture of the two new main corner posts required for ESCo Tram No. 12. This is a highly involved task.
- Making up timber walkways for use as pit crossovers.
- Cleaning the track after the Council's resurfacing operations.
- Installing the 4th panel of photographs etc. in our Museum

Display area. This panel features the SEC operated tram system between 1945 and 1971.

- Installation of rodent proofing around the archives room.

School holidays

The July school holidays saw some pretty miserable winter weather, especially during the second week. As a result loadings were down. But we ran every day and carried passengers. Thanks to all the crews who worked during the period. Working conditions on the Parade can be pretty cold at these times.

COTMA Conference

Preparations for the forthcoming COTMA conference are going well. Five Board members are attending the conference to be held in Hobart during the first week of September.

Forthcoming Events

- Sunday September 15:* BTM commemorates the 25th anniversary of Ballarat's Tramway System closure.
- Sunday October 13:* BTM Annual General Meeting.
- Saturday, Sunday October 26, 27:* - Central Highlands Historical Association Fair at the Curtis St. Drill Hall.
- Sunday November 3:* Springfest around Lake Wendouree.

How it all started - Part 1

Alan Bradley

In 1971 the Ballarat Tramway system was about to close and a group of enthusiasts tried to save the section of track around the lake. Twenty five years later it is time to reflect on how the BTPS (now the BTM) started. Part I of this article looks at the growing interest in preserving this part of Ballarat's heritage during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

For many decades the line around the lake to the Gardens was used by locals and visitors alike, whether travelling to and from a picnic, or simply having a day out. There were plenty of attractions to enjoy up to the end of the 1940s: the Gardens with their statues, the lake with its birdlife, the paddle steamers, a zoo and a maze, not to mention the frequent band recitals on weekends. But during the 1950s the zoo and maze were closed and in 1964 the last paddle steamer on the lake ceased operating. By then the tram line was also under threat.

The first mention made of preserving the lakeside track came in 1962, at a time when the SEC was lobbying the State Government to close the Ballarat and Bendigo tram systems. It was suggested by a Ballarat Councillor that the lakeside track be preserved "for historical reasons" and the SEC offered to give the line to the Ballarat Historical Society.(1) Not

surprisingly the offer was refused, but in any case the trams continued running and the idea was soon forgotten.

By mid-1968, when the State Government wanted to close the Ballarat and Bendigo systems, there was an increasing interest in preserving aspects of Ballarat's history, such as tree-lined streetscapes and iron-laced verandahs. Occasionally the *Ballarat Courier* reported discussion concerning the possible preservation of part of the tram system and made references to the retention of cable cars in San Francisco as an example.

In September 1968, when it looked as if the tramway system would soon close, the Ballarat Council decided to support the concept of retaining trams in Ballarat as a tourist attraction, the section of track in Wendouree Parade being most likely to be chosen. Councillors and civic-minded bodies alike considered that this would prove to be "a big draw-card for tourism". Cr. A. E. Mills, who had recently returned from an American tour, was "one of the chief trams-for-tourists advocates". He said that in St. Louis the trams were so popular that there were more tourists than locals riding (2). But the motion to allow closure failed in the Upper House of State Parliament, so the matter was not pursued.

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By late 1969 the Ballarat Council had called on the State Government to close the tram system in favour of private buses (as part of a secret deal in which the council would get more money for track removal and road works). The *Ballarat Courier* in an editorial called for "some enterprising businessman" to build a track on the south side of the lake, so that trams could carry "thousands, possibly millions(!) of tourists" on a complete circuit of the lake.(3) A survey of 20 people showed that 3/4 of those surveyed wanted track to be kept around the lake.(4)

But the then Mayor of Ballarat, Cr. Mills (who was obviously not an enthusiastic trams-for-tourists advocate any more) said that any tourist tram would "definitely not be around the lake", as it "would cause too many parking problems and we already have those on the east side". He suggested a north-south track could be built outside the Gardens. "This would cater for tourists who want to say they've had a ride on a tram. They don't want to go anywhere, they just want to say they've had a ride on a tram."(5)

In September 1970 State Parliament approved the closure of the Ballarat and Bendigo systems, at around the same time that Sovereign Hill was opened. It was seen as ironic that Ballarat had gained one tourist attraction, but was about to lose another.

With only a little while to go before its temporary retirement, future BTM Tram No. 18 pauses at the Carlton St. loop in June 1970.

Photo:
Ballarat Courier



By early 1971 it was confirmed that the Ballarat system would close during August and September that year. An unexpected supporter was the Transport Minister, Mr Wilcox, who in March 1971 came to Ballarat to discuss tram track removal. He said: "I have always been impressed with



Ballarat's many beautiful gardens and I feel that the city should investigate the possibility of a tram being available for trips around the Gardens area, before it is too late."(6) The following month concrete moves were made to preserve part of the line around the lake, culminating in the

formation of the Ballarat Tramway Preservation Society.

At this point it is worth looking at the railway/tramway preservation scene in 1971. The San Francisco cable trams, which were seen as an example of what could be done, were operated by

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municipal authorities. The only place in the world where enthusiasts had preserved a length of street tram was Montevideo, Uruguay. There were no "talking trams", as the SEC still operated the Bendigo system. There were no Maldon or Daylesford tourist railways, as both branch lines were still operated by the Victorian Railways. The only operating tramway museum in Australia was SPER which operated on a few hundred metres of track in the Royal National Park in Sydney. Other tramway museums like AETM (Adelaide), BTMS (Brisbane) and theTMSV (Melbourne) were in various stages of developing their off-street museum tramways.

The greatest local success story was "Puffing Billy", which operated on a section of a former VR narrow gauge line on the outskirts of Melbourne. Many younger enthusiasts who later became members of the BTPS worked as volunteers on "Puffing Billy" gained valuable experience in trackwork and operation.

Next issue: Looking back at the first year of the BTPS.

- (1) Ballarat Courier 22-2-1962.
- (2) Courier 3-9-1968
- (3) Courier 30-9-1969
- (4) Courier 1-10-1969
- (5) Courier 8-10.1969
- (6) Courier 20-3-1971.

Editor's Note:

While preparing this article, the editor was reading in *The Age* of 23/7/96 of another "it seemed like a good idea at the time" (page A3). "1966: Melbourne City Council passes a resolution to ban trams from the City. One of the councillors believed a recent tram strike proved the city was better tram-free. Proposal later put on the back-burner."

Queen's Birthday Model Railway Exhibition

The Museum was represented at the recent Ballarat and District Model Railway Exhibition held over the Queen's Birthday weekend. The exhibition was well attended. We were positioned near the turbo gas heater. Though a bit noisy, we were nice and warm!

The Museum's display was put together with the assistance of the Model Traction Association of Victoria. Darren Hutchesson provided a model tram layout; small in comparison with many others on display. However, we had lots of interest shown, as we were the only layout with trams.

A sales counter, stocked with the assistance of the ARE, gave us a number of railway items for sale. This provided a satisfactory level of

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income for the three day weekend. We had a small display on what the Museum actually does, including a computer presentation. Thanks to all those members who assisted on the day.

All in a day at the Depot.

@%it Happens! On Sunday 21 July, about seven of our members were busy working peacefully in the depot. Some were working on stripping back 28's windows and other parts. Two others were undertaking some miscellaneous jobs, such as finishing off the making-up of a new wandering lead, using parts obtained off the former Melbourne Welding truck. Another was doing attacking the paper warfare.

A breathless conductor comes to the depot at about 4.30 to announce that No. 14 is at St Aidans Drive terminus and won't go. He had a lift to the depot. Oh No! Not again, visions of blown motors etc. etc. and other expensive faults pass through people's minds.

What happened? Well they got to St Aidans OK, but then when they went to leave, no power to the motors. Tried out a few things, but no go. So grab a few tools, a tow bar, pump up 671 as the "breakdown tram" and head out. The OIC pumps up 27, just in case we need a changeover and there are passengers.

Sitting in 671 rolling along to Gardens Loop, brings to mind odd (well that depends on your state of mind) questions, "I could be elsewhere doing less stressful things on the weekend!" Arrive St Aidans, do a few checks, 14 is dead as a dodo. Hmm. Probably something simple, but it is too cold, wet etc. to do much around here, so tow it back in.

Towing goes OK, and after a couple of dewirements on the access track (it only happens at moments like this) we get 14 back into the shed, over the top of the pit, where it had started off the day.

Look under, easy, there is a lead off a resistor grid bank. That easy in fact, it was almost waving a flag. Hmm why? Part of the metal of the clip has broken off, looks like ages ago and finally the lead itself has come adrift. Replacing it with another one takes a few minutes, with mud coming off the motors and dust from the resistor grids itself. What a way to end a pleasant Sunday afternoon. All back together and check it out. It now goes. Ok. Pack up, coffee, write up the log book and let's go home!

No names you will note, but things seem to happen to this driver when someone else is around. More investigations into the tea leaves and other entrails are necessary.

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25th Anniversary

All members, former members and friends are invited to join us on Sunday September 15 for a low key commemoration of the closure of the SEC operated Ballarat Tramways. We will have a BBQ or sausage sizzle at the depot from 1pm onwards, an augmented tram service and general get together. We hope to see you there. We will have our internet site available for inspection on the day.

Rail Safety Accreditation

Coming soon to Victoria is Rail Safety Accreditation, as well as Museum Accreditation. Fortunately there are some overlaps between the two. The Museum has reviewed the Bill amending the Transport Act which will impose a Statutory control upon our operations, as well as seeing us undertake seemingly mountains of paperwork. The Museum has sent its comments to the Department on the proposed Bill that will involve us in a similar system to which all Victorian rail-based systems (600mm gauge and over) will have to adhere. From our Museum's perspective, the proposed amendments to the Act are as expected, however we have some concerns and we will seek to have these addressed.

The Museum also reviewed, and made comment to, the Standards Association on the proposed Australian standard on railway safety and management systems. The standard has been written in a manner that was intended to include urban street tramways, but then concentrated primarily on heavy interstate rail operations. One thing we liked was the seemingly unattended requirement to have a formal separation system between all rail based vehicles. Fine for trains, but for an urban street tramway? We can just imagine a whole squad of signalmen instituting a separation or block, e.g. double line block system between Melbourne's trams in Swanston St. The problem that arises when these things are run from Sydney, who we see, are about to rejoin the enlightened with a new tramway system.

Our Internet Site

It is possible to visit our Internet site and using its links to other sites, visit other tramway Museum's sites as well. Most Victorian libraries now have a low cost internet link and are happy to show you how to use it. Please visit and leave a message that you called.