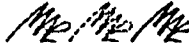


FARES PLEASE!

March 1996

Ballarat Trams are Ballarat History



Museum Accreditation Program
Registered Museum

Our Busiest Time Ever!

This year certainly saw many passengers on our tramway. The Sunday of the long weekend saw us beat our previous best day ever (1455 on Monday March 10, 1975), by quite a good margin.

Festival attendance on the first Saturday, the day of the Federal Election, was well down compared to the previous year. However, everyone came on the Sunday. The two days combined were just above that of 1995. The weekdays were poorer this year than last year. The Saturday of the long weekend was down, mainly due to lower attendance, but the Sunday wow! - 1718 passengers carried. The Monday was also well above the previous year, 1320 passengers. This day has about a two hour gap in the service due to the Begonia Festival Parade. Over the whole Festival period, we were up about 500 passengers. Total passengers for the weekend was 4030. The weather was excellent, which made for a very successful time.

Again Wendouree Parade was closed off to traffic, with the area near our depot being used as the main car park. Although we carried more passengers, the revenue was about the same as last year, due to the lesser proportion of full round trip ticket sales. On four days, we operated three trams, with two trams doing a full round trip and the third shuttling between the loop and Depot Junction. Often the shuttle would have a full seated load when it left the junction. We found a street ticket seller at this point made things a lot easier for the conductor on the shuttle in regard to collecting fares.

Thanks to all those crews who worked over the festival. Our staffing position was made difficult by some of our regular helpers being required by the Public Transport Corporation to work on the massive tram movement for the Grand Prix.

During the Festival, the day starts at 8.00am for some; arriving to put out

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the barriers and safety witches hats. It finishes after 9.00pm for the OIC/Revenue clerk by which time the pay ins are done and conductors outfits readied for the following day. This time of the year really has us operating as a full on passenger carrying tramway. Thank goodness it is not full time though!

The Museum is following up with a meeting with Festival managers and Council Officers to discuss any problems that arose during the Festival so that these may be overcome in the future. The Festival this year appears to have been a great success.

The Begonia Festival - Some Lighter Moments

1. Parked on the opposite side of 'the Parade' to our passing loop was a wonderful Grand Concert Street Organ called "Australia Fair". It was a joy to see on the its trailer - with whistles, bells, pipes, trumpets and acres of gold leaf. A quiet petrol engine provided power for the beast, which operated like a player piano with slotted cardboard "rolls". There was a huge range of tunes available and the entrepreneurial owners (from Sydney) asked bystanders for the "next selection" CD's of the tunes were available for sale!

Each night they carted the beast away with a Ford van. Occasionally the "tug" had to prop somewhere to wait for a break in the traffic, to hitch up. Our loop was the usual spot the driver chose to prop.

What else could our driver's say to ask the fellow to move out of the way of our trams, but'Advance Australia Fair'.

2. Some traffic crews did five days or more of work on the roster, and (by the Monday night of the long weekend after we ran the trams in) some folk were just a bit bone weary.

Darren Hutchesson was heard to say, "My legs ache, my arms ache, even my hair aches!!!"

3. Because the passing loop is not in the middle of our Gardens route, the south-bound service car often would have to wait a few moments at the loop for the north-bound service car (and the shuttle car).

Many a passenger on the waiting car for Carlton St. was placated with the phrase "We wont be a few minutes! Wer'e waiting for a tram coming from the other way. We prefer to pass on the double track."

4. For the first time, we used a hand-held loud hailer (known as "Hogaphones" in Victorian rail fan parlance). It was used mainly at

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Depot Junction to entice pedestrians heading north up to the Begonias to hop on the Shuttle car. It was also used later in the day at the loop for the "homeward-bound crowds".

The user of the loud hailer usually spoke in terms of "Catch a tram up to the Begonias. There will be a tram leaving in a few minutes. Adults only 50 cents one way. Save your legs for later in the day!!"

On Monday afternoon as the crowds headed home, Warren Doubleday was heard to alter the message (at Depot Junction) to "Avoid the walk up the long steep hill". He was referring to the slight rise to the south up towards Carlton Street! And he nabbed quite a few grateful weary people!

1996 COTMA Conference

Details have recently been received from Tasmanian Transport Museum Society Inc. of Hobart who are the organisers for the 1996 Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia conference. The conference will be held in Hobart at the Westside Hotel from 31 August to 4 September. The programme is quite extensive including tours in and around Hobart, a visit to the TTMS Museum, a trip to the Bush Mill Railway and Port Arthur as well as the normal extensive conference sessions, dinners and Museum reports.

Extensions of the conference tours are also offered to Launceston and Don River. The Cost for the Hobart portion of the Conference is \$480, (registration before 30 June - \$530 afterwards). The cost of the additional days to Bush Mill and Launceston are \$60/day, plus accommodation. Further information for this important conference can be obtained from Richard Gilbert on 9580 8270 or from the Conference Organisers, TTMS GPO Box 867J, Hobart, Tas. 7001.

New Sales Items

The Museum has recently taken delivery of a fridge magnet, measuring 90 x 56mm. It features the Horse tram and No. 14 at the loop, priced at \$3 each. We also have taken delivery of the City Circle tram badges. These are available at \$4.50 each.

Our Internet Connection

We have received favourable comment about our new Internet Web page produced by Andrew Cox. At the first meeting of the Feasibility Study group in Ballarat, one of the people from the University of Ballarat was pleasantly surprised to find such a well prepared page. Before attending the meeting, he thought he would look up trams in general, not thinking there would be much if at all, about Ballarat. For our internet address see the bottom of page 8. Thanks again to Andrew for preparing and keeping the page up to date.

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671 Goes to Melbourne

As many of our members would by now know, 671, as the "City of Ballarat" tram is running around Melbourne on the City Circle route. At the time of the printing of the last issue of Fares Please!, we had received the verbal approval but not in writing. Upon receipt of the letter, we were advised that Minister for Transport, Alan Brown, was contributing up to \$3000 to meet the transport expenses. This was very received welcomely.

The tram left Ballarat on Friday Feb. 23 aboard a long extendable low semitrailer operated by OD Transport. Loading commenced soon after 8.30am and it was on its way shortly after 10.30am. Cranes were supplied by Barry James, who supplied their normal, very professional, no problem is too hard, services.

Unloading at Preston Workshops took some time, partially due to the recently consolidated workshop reducing working space. Backing a long truck into the loading bay was no easy feat. The truck driver after some mutterings, did it without too many problems and did not hit any wood working machines etc. that are located close to his path. In off loading the tram, it was placed on a set of No. 15 trucks for a while. This allowed the No. 9C trucks to be then off-loaded.

The tram fitted on the lower No. 15 trucks without the lifeguards hitting the ground even with the smaller wheels.

Following re-assembly, the tram was transferred to South Melbourne on Wednesday March 28. Following driver familiarisation with the

"City of Ballarat"
tram, the Museums
W4 671 runs by
the famous
Flinders St. Stn.
entry on Thursday
March 7 1996.

Photo:
Alison Wynd,
Ballarat Courier



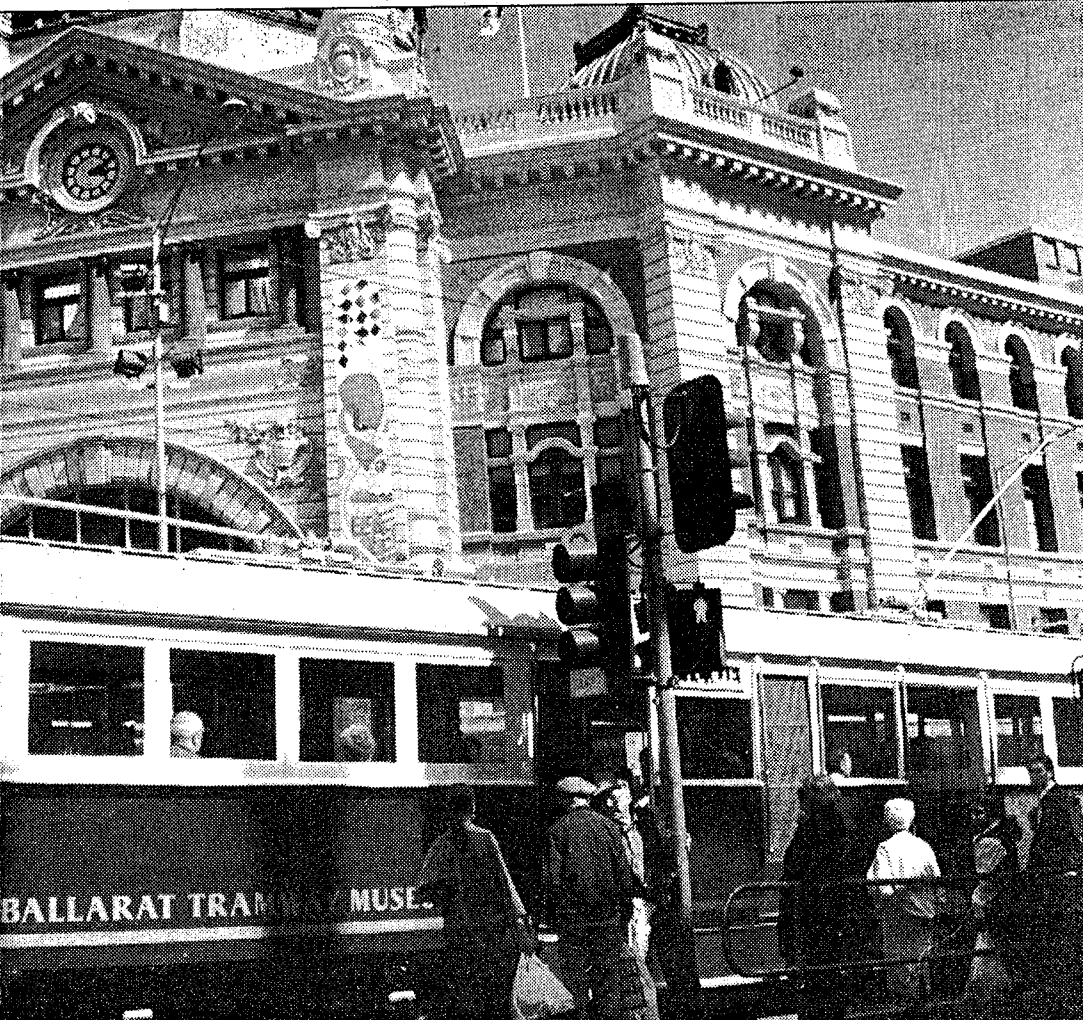
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controllers (K35's are no longer in use in Melbourne), it entered service on the City Circle route on Sunday March 3.

Unfortunately it managed to get a set of bad flats, particularly at one end. It ran until the evening of Friday March 8, when a loose motor

mounting bracket was found and one of the motor suspension bearings was running warm. The tram was transferred to Preston shops early Saturday morning driven at slow speed.

Repairs soon followed and it was transferred back to South Melbourne



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on Friday 15 March and was back in service the following day. A trip over the grinder took place on Monday 18, and following repairs to a sand pipe, it was back in service again and running OK at the time of publication.

Thanks to the Minister for Transport, Alan Brown for his support and Met staff who assisted in inspecting, transferring, re-assembly and running maintenance to the tram. It certainly does look different to the normal City Circle trams, with the dark blue and white livery really standing out.

Also thanks to our Ballarat Sponsors, the Begonia Festival, the Ballarat Opera Festival, Sovereign Hill and Haymes Paints for assisting. For the first week, the tram carried two large Begonia Festival boards, and after the festival, two smaller panels advertising the Ballarat Opera Festival. It is expected, that all going well, the tram will run in Melbourne until Easter.

New Member

The Museum welcomes the following new member:

No. 695 A.Reed, Ballarat

A New Tramway for Ballarat?

Yes things are happening. Following the public meeting in January, as reported in the last issue of *Fares Please!*, the first Feasibility Study group meeting was held at Sovereign Hill Lodge on Wednesday Feb. 28. The Society is represented by Richard Gilbert, Warren Doubleday and Len Millar. Frank Puls is also attending, representing the Victorian Trades Hall Council. The first meeting was involved in setting a Statement of Philosophy. The main points in this are:-

- Visitors to Ballarat are seen as the primary market, with public in the form of commuters as a vital secondary market
- Project must be economically viable (and self sustaining)
- Preference for authenticity in restoring a Ballarat Tram system
- Any new system should be comfortable and accommodating
- Must be safe
- Use existing equipment where possible
- Any new route should begin in the central business area.

Advice in the form of study documentation has been received from Dave Hinman of the Christchurch City Council. More next issue.

At the Depot

Not enough available hours is the principal problem facing our intrepid workers at the depot, who look after the trams, the tracks etc and still have plenty of ideas or know of things that would be great to be done. Yes this is the problem that many volunteer workers face and we are typical of if not all groups. Having said that, we have continued to very busy at the depot over the last two months.

Trackwork around the depot fan has been virtually completed, with some joint re-welding and other repairs undertaken. The telephone connection to St Aidans Drive was reconnected prior to the Festival. When our team of Garry Wood and Len Millar left to re-connect the phone, possibly using the old signal system wires, they thought they would have a final go at finding the break in the ground. Despite our attempts a year ago at finding the break, a Powercor trench broke our cable about two years ago, they found it easily this time! Murphys law again.

The sign board over the depot has been redone, using vinyl letters instead of painted letters. It was re-positioned during late February and has our soon to be implemented eight digit telephone number ready to go.

Garry Wood continues to make good progress on the reconstruction of the

sides of No. 12. Most of the minor vertical members have been cut on the bandsaw and various rebates, mortices etc cut into the timber. A start has been made on cutting out the two main corner posts which are to be replaced in the side that was exposed to the weather.

The tramcar fleet has continued to operate well, though with some minor faults and problems. No. 40 ran for most of one day during the March long weekend, until the compressor governor gave up the ghost and start to smoke. It was immediately run in and replaced by 661. Unfortunately despite the best efforts we were unable to get the governor back to the right settings. The following weekend, in calm coolness of course, a new leather washer was installed. Yes, we were able to get to operate to the right cut in and cut out points without great difficulty.

The major task undertaken during February was the modifications to the break shoe holders of No. 671 so it could operate in Melbourne. As we reported in the last issue, it was necessary to change the type of brake shoes from cast iron to composites as operated in Melbourne. Our initial thought was to get different brake blocks. Bendix Mintex of Ballarat advised that this was possible, but the cost was out of the question. The alternative was to modify the shoe

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holders and some of the adjusting rods. This was adopted with our Engineering Manager Warren Doubleday taking a week off work and co-ordinating the task. Assisting was Darren Hutchesson, John Phillips, Alan Snowball and after school hours, Paul Mong, Alistair Reither and Simon Jenkins. Thanks to all who assisted, for without them, it would not have been possible to run 671 in Melbourne.

The work involved dismantling the brake rigging to enable the shoe holder to have about 20mm cut from each end so as to fit the new composite blocks, cleaning up the rigging and then re-assembling it. There are 16 shoes in all. Each block had its end ground off to fit the nominal 33" diameter wheels rather than the 28" diameter wheels the blocks are designed for. The Met supplied a set of blocks for the purpose.

Prior to commencing the task, the tram was taken for a pre-change over emergency braking trial at which the stopping distance after about 8 pole lengths in full parallel was measured. After the change over, this was done again and the effect measured - about

18% improvement in stopping distance.

On Tues. Feb 20, Les Jean and Mal Ashworth from Met Tram visited us to inspect the tram and to test its braking capacity. The test is done using a paper recording accelerometer and was very successful, equalling the braking performance to that of Melbourne W's.

671 Tour

Included within the mailout is a tour circular, for a tram tour with 671 on Saturday April 13. This tour is being run in conjunction with the Rail Tourist Association and being organised by Clayton Giles. Book early as space is limited.

Swedish Visitors

On Wednesday 13 March, a group of eight tramway enthusiasts from Sweden visited our Museum. Frank and Jenny Puls hosted their visit and from all accounts they had a great time. They left with us a video tape on Swedish tramway activities, primarily Stockholm, which has a museum tram operation in the city streets. Thanks to Frank and Jenny.