

FARES PLEASE!

November 1997

Ballarat Trams are Ballarat History



Museum Accreditation Program
Registered Museum

Trial Mid-Week Tram Service

Less than 48 hours after the Museum Board's decision to trial Wednesday afternoon running, I found myself leaving the depot in tram 27 armed with half a dozen temporary paper tram stop signs proclaiming our new mid-week service. The trial involves running on demand from the depot to St Aidans Drive between 1pm and 4pm.

At 12.30 on Wednesday November 19, Simon Jenkins and I ran the tram out to place the usual warning signs and the new signage. Our first passengers were two ladies who happened to be waiting at Depot Junction as we crossed Wendouree Parade. They boarded the tram and were delighted that we were "open". As it was Ballarat Cup Day, most of the City was "closed".

When we arrived at the loop from St Aidans Drive we were hailed by a lovely petite Italian grandmother asking "What time the tram went to the Railway Station?" "I'm sorry, the last tram went to

the station 26 years ago!" Apparently the last time she visited Ballarat was in 1966 and she and her family had visited the Gardens by tram. Hopefully the tram will return to the railway station one day in the near future!

Shortly after the first trip, the *Ballarat Courier* arrived. Len Millar and Paul McDonald had prepared a media release that was sent out the previous afternoon, but it was *Me* that had to *Meet the Press*. We got off to a good start when she said that "It was a slow news day" and that we would quote everything I said "Oh No!!, I'd better get it right then!" We started with the correct spelling of Simon's and my names./ That's always safe! She asked if this was anything to do with the street tramway proposal. "No, this is the first step towards the Ballarat Tramway Museum's long term goal of running seven days a week." Simon and I were then 'snapped' a few times by the photographer at the front of tram 27 on the depot fan. One of these photos appeared on page 3 of *The Courier* the following day, along with some good text.

Ballarat Tramways News

2.. Fares Please!

Some Brisbane tourists inspected the museum display area, enjoyed the ride, purchased some souvenirs and commented that they were sad that Brisbane had scrapped its tram network in 1969. Of course we all know now that the Queensland Government has just announced plans for a \$200 million 15km “tram” track around Brisbane streets, starting by 2001.

The last trip of the day started at 4.05pm with just one passenger. He was a Ballarat High School student “commuting” one way to St Aidans Drive on the way home. It was my first ever School Tram run. So ended Day One of a “brave new world!” Like the reporter from *The Courier* said at the end of the interview, “I hope the trial is a success!”

Darren Hutchesson

The Trial Itself

The Board at its November Board meeting after discussion determined that it would operate a service on Wednesday afternoons from November to May. This period already sees us running many weekdays with school holiday, Christmas and Begonia Festival operations. Some additional purpose built signage advertising the service near depot junction will shortly be made up, as well as advertising the service locally.

Corrections to the Annual Report

This years annual report suffer a gremlin attack, including the date on the back page photograph of MMTB E41 at St Kilda. It should have read January 4, 1943, not January 1.

Law & Order Exhibition

A successful and favourably received exhibition was prepared for the recent Central Highlands Historical Association’s Annual History Fair on the second weekend of October. The exhibition, consisting of two display panels with photographs, printed notes and press cuttings has been placed in the Museum Display Area for the next few months, along with a exhibition brochure. The most eye catching item was *The Courier’s* headline of 30 July 1971; “TRAM HIJACK”. You don’t know about the tram hijack in Ballarat in 1971? Well then come and see our exhibition.

New Tramway for Ballarat

The well known engineering consultancy of Maunsell Pty Ltd was recently appointed to carry out an engineering feasibility study of building a new tramway in the central part of Ballarat and extending it out to both Sovereign Hill and the Gardens. A number of meetings have been held with the consultants and the Museum has provided information, along with costs etc as well as showing them over the depot and explaining to them the differences between Ballarat’s tramways and that of Melbourne. Their report should be given to the Tramway Steering Committee during January.

Annual General Meeting

The third AGM of the Museum was held on Sunday 19 October. Attended by about 35 members and friends, the meeting was a pleasant event and after the presentation of reports, members enjoyed the traditional tram ride and afternoon tea.

SUMMER HOLIDAY

By Alan Bradley

With the Christmas / New Year holidays approaching it is interesting to look back on how Ballarat people spent this holiday period during the 1920-21 summer. After World War 1 more people owned cars than before the War, but for most people their choice was dictated by the availability of public transport. One could take a trip by tram around Ballarat, probably to the lake and Gardens, where in those days there were the added attractions of the paddlesteamers, the zoo and the maze. Alternatively there was a train trip to a country destination, which probably involved catching a tram from home to Ballarat Station in the morning, then home from the Station afterwards.

The *Ballarat Courier* of 4 January 1921 stated: "There was a nice strong breeze blowing at the lake and Gardens on New Years Day, but doubtless due to the oppressive atmosphere the attendance there seemed small by comparison with the immense crowd that was there on Boxing Day. There is a sort of fashion about it of course. Boxing Day is the day for the family picnic at the Gardens, while on New Years Day a trip into the country is indicated as the proper thing. Therefore while last Saturday's weather contained something of a hint that those who went far a field for their pleasure would do it at some risk, the morning saw but a moderate gathering at the lakeside and the road to Burrumbeet was thronged with holiday makers. But after dinner the stay-at-homes began to move to the local beauty spot. Every tram was full, and a swarm of vehicles brought their contribution.

The Gardens, although the hot spell and the lack of watering facilities have had a bad effect, present a charming appearance, and they were full of admirers., The swingboats and other amusements were well patronised and hot water was in great demand. As usual comparative solitude was obtainable by the lake away from the western shore, and especially on the northern side there were many fishermen engaged in the thrilling occupation of smoking and watching their lines, the rods pegged down by the water's edge. A fair number of boats were out and the white sails dotted here and there over the surface of the lake added considerably to its picturesqueness".

During the holiday period several local racecourses had their once-a-year meetings. On Boxing Day 1920, 538 people travelled from Ballarat Station to Buninyong (probably to visit the Buninyong Gardens), and 512 travelled to Bungaree Racecourse, which had its own branch line. 208 people travelled on the Waubra line to Learmonth, where there was a choice of watching the Learmonth races or to picnic beside Lake Learmonth.

More people travelled by train on New Years Day 1921. 4759 people travelled from Ballarat Station to the Burrumbeet Racecourse, which had its own branch line, either to watch the races or to picnic beside Lake Burrumbeet. The rival race meeting at Lal Lal, next to the famous Lal Lal Falls, attracted 610 passengers - this racecourse also had its own branch line. 346 travelled to Buninyong. At the Miners Racecourse

4. Fares Please!

(now called Bray Raceway) there was a harness racing meeting - known as "trotting" in those days. This racecourse was in Ballarat South, several blocks away from the Skipton St (Sebastopol) tram line.

On New Years Day more people than in previous years went by train from Ballarat Station to "distant parts", especially 'seaside resorts and Melbourne'. Presumably this meant a trip by train to Geelong or Queenscliff, or to the various bayside beaches around Melbourne accessible by suburban train or cable tram. There was also the Australia v England test match on at the MCG, commencing on December 30 1920.

In 1997-98 you can still travel by tram around the Gardens, but not around the lake. The lake and Gardens are still a great attraction, but the zoo and maze have long gone. The Buninyong Gardens are still there, but the rail line to that town long since closed. Bray Raceway is still there, and the Burrumbeet Racecourse still has its holiday meeting, but the Lal Lal and Bungaree courses are now closed, as are the various branch lines to the racecourses. One can still travel by train to Melbourne and various suburban beaches, but the Geelong-Queenscliff line has closed and the Ballarat Geelong rail service replaced by a bus. The Boxing Day test match at the MCG is still an annual event. The natural attractions of the Ballarat district are still there but mostly accessed by car - the Lal Lal falls and Lakes Learmonth and Burrumbeet.

The Rail Lines to the Racecourses

Lal Lal Racecourse: Opened 1/1/1886, closed 1/7/1940. Line dismantled during 1942.

Ballarat Racecourse (Waubra Jtn): Opened 11/8/1881; junction closed Jan. 1972.

Bungaree Racecourse: Opened 23/12/1900, out of use by 5/9/1949, when points at Bungaree spiked.

Burrumbeet Racecourse: Opened 1/1/1904, out of use by 26/2/1946 when points at Burrumbeet Park Racecourse Junction spiked for the main line and signals arms removed.

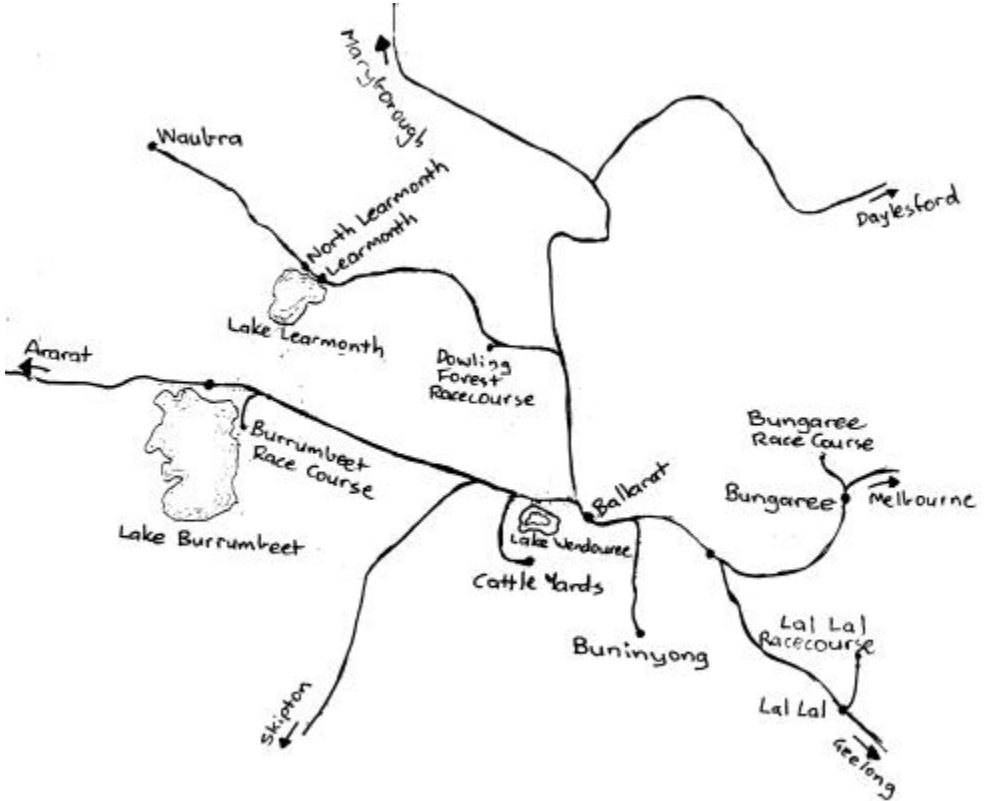
The Bungaree and Burrumbeet lines saw their last trains soon after the commencement of the second world war, halted as a wartime austerity measure. (References for these dates are *VR to 62*, *Weekly Notice Extracts 1894-1994* and Wal Larsen's book, *Change Here For*) There are some differences in the dates given.

It is interesting to note that three of the four racecourse lines were opened during the Christmas / New Year period; no doubt with a rush by the construction crews to finish off in time. The Bungaree Racecourse line was authorised in an 1897 Act. Its construction involved some local political problems concerning land acquisition. Tommy Bent, a Victorian Premier noted for deals, was highly involved in the construction of the Burrumbeet Racecourse line. As Minister for Railway Construction he officiated at the official opening. Files on the construction and operation of these lines are in the Public Records Office.



In the horse tram era, life was certainly more leisurely compared to today's. No mobile phones, or hoon zooming around in Wendouree Parade. Or may there was the 1900's equivalent? A (seven window) horse tram loads passengers in Wendouree Parade, possibly near Windmill Drive north. *Photo from a stereo pair of Geo. Rose, donated to the Museum in 1996 by the Blacksmith's Cottage and Forge Museum Committee, Bacchus Marsh.*

6. Fares Please!



Map showing the location of the railways in the Ballarat district and the race courses.
Alan Bradley

New Members

The museum welcomes the following new members:

No. 711 Lindsay Richardson - Perth
No. 712 Paul Pavlinovich - Taylors Lakes

and Junior Supporters:

No. 5010 - Bianca Brehaut - Ararat
No. 5011 - Josef Greene - Delacombe

Our Internet Address

After some time consuming delays in the system, Andrew Cox has succeeded in obtaining an Internet address for the Museum, rather than using his own personal address. Our new address is: <http://www.btm.org.au>

For our non Internet familiar readers it tells you that we can be found on the **world wide web**, at **ballarat tramway museum** and that we are an **australian organisation**, using the **hypertext transfer protocol**.

TRAFFIC

Things have been busy over the last couple of months with Springfest and a number of charters. Springfest, a street stall festival, in its third year, saw us carry a record number of 563 passengers. This day harks back to the old days of the Begonia Festival with cars, people and buses everywhere.

Our recent charters have been:

Sun 19 October: Institute of Engineers

Wed 5 November: Prescott Primary
Northern

Sat 8 November: Veteran Car club

Mon. 10 November: Simpson Primary
School

Tues 18 November: Newborough Primary
School

Sat. 29 November: Farewell party to a
local couple

The last charter saw us introduce arrangements for functions on the trams in association with Lake Pavilion. A number of functions are planned for December.

Functions on the Tram

Darren Hutchesson and Len Millar completed the building of cabinets and table for use in our bogie trams for groups who wish to have a function on the trams. It allows them to bring their prepared food and drink as part of the function.

The charter on 29 November gave us the chance for a trial run in tram 671. The whole event was a great success. The guests at the party were impressed with our professional approach to the operation. The music boomed, the cabinets and serving

area were ideal, the tables in 671 were perfect for use by the guests. The uniformed staff, including the uniformed *Tramway Superintendent* added to the professional *Restaurant* feeling. Whilst the event went on, we had our fingers crossed as little glitches were quickly corrected. The guests travelled back to the depot display area, where coffee and cakes were served in the atmosphere of a function held in an art gallery.

In all a successful night and a good start to our *Functions Aboard* project.

Overhead Renewal

The next section of tramway overhead to be renewed will be undertaken during the second week of December. This time we are planning to cut in a new section insulator just to the north of depot junction and replace all the trolley wire between this point and Carlton St., a length of about 300 metres. The work will be undertaken during weekdays and hopefully will be finished in time for our Wednesday running.

Archives Computer Equipment

The Museum over the last couple of months has been expending its Arts Victoria Grant to purchase computer hardware and software for its archive system. So far about 340 records have been placed on the Inmagic database system and along with some 200 photographs scanned as well. We are planning to make these available through our Internet page within the next 12 months. Our next major planned purchase will be a slide scanner that will allow us to scan the slides directly into system and make these available for public viewing.

8. Fares Please!

New Tramway Books

The Museum has been advised by the various publishers of the following new tramway books coming onto the market place. Most of these will be available through bookshops such as the Railfan shop, or the ARHS Sydney and other well known outlets. The Museum itself will be stocking the two Melbourne books.

JUGGERNAUT! A story of Sydney in the Wild Days of the Steam Trams. Author is David Burke. Publisher: Simon & Schuster Australia, (02) 9417 3255 RRP \$34.95.

MELBOURNE'S MARVELLOUS TRAMS Authors: Dale Budd & Randall Wilson. Available in bookshops 2nd or 3rd week of December RRP \$29.95.

VETERAN & VINTAGE TRANSIT
Author: Andrew D. Young. A guide to North America's mass transit museums and tourist trolleys. RRP US\$19.95.

TIME LINE HISTORY OF MELBOURNE'S TRAMS & GOVERNMENT BUSES. Authors Barry George, Don Story, John Birch. Gives information and dates about the important events or happenings on Melbourne's trams and government buses. RRP \$29.95.

COTMA 1998 Conference

Final advice has been received about the programme for the 1998 COTMA conference to be held in Christchurch NZ between Friday 29 May 1998 and Thursday June 4. The Conference proper includes a number of rail excursions, as well as the normal conference activities including visits to the Ferrymead Museum complex. The cost for the conference itself is NZ\$860 (staying at the conference venue). Also a six day pre-conference tour of the South Island is planned, visiting Queenstown, Te Anau, the Kingston Flyer, Milford Sound, Invercargill, Dunedin and the Pleasant Point Railway. The cost for the excursion is estimated to cost about NZ\$1100, depending on the number of participants.

Further information from the Conference Convenor, Tramway Historical Society, P.O.Box 1126, Christchurch, New Zealand, or from the Museum's President, Richard Gilbert.

Seasons Greetings

The Museum takes this opportunity to wish all *Fares Please!* readers, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. 1998 will be another busy year for the Museum, with many things to be done, so please do call in and see us.

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 Museum activities and publications, please contact : The Secretary, Ballarat Tramway Museum Inc. P.O. Box 632, Ballarat Vic. 3353. Phone / Fax (03) 5334 1580 or on the Internet:

<http://www.btm.org.au>
