

FARES PLEASE!

January 1998

Ballarat Trams are Ballarat History



Museum Accreditation Program
Registered Museum

Vale

The Museum records with regret the recent passing of two its long standing members, who have assisted us and other museums over the years.

Bill Harding - proprietor of C.W.Harding & Sons Foundry, Doveton St. Ballarat, passed away suddenly on November 30, 1997 Bill's foundry, run with his brother Alan, cast our brake blocks and other iron parts. The foundry also cast the brake blocks for many other railway operators such as Puffing Billy and West Coast Railways. The foundry has a long association with us and the SEC tramways. Bill cast the blocks for Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong tramways.

Noel Gipps - passed away on January 3, 1998 after a long illness. Noel was a long member of the Museum, assisting in the early days of our setting up. Noel was an active member of the Melbourne Tramway Preservation Association at Haddon and many other organisations such as the St. Johns Ambulance. As a younger person, he recorded the operation of the Geelong

tramway system on movie film, which was fascinating to watch. The Museum expresses our condolences to his family and his friends.

Traffic

Passenger numbers have been good during the summer holidays in spite of the drought. Ballarat has actually had quite a lot of rain, always at the wrong time for use, of course! People do not seem to visit the Gardens when it is hot even though there are always cool shady places under the trees and the lawns are all very green. We ran Christmas day as usual, thanks this year to Darren Hutchesson, but for once, it was not that busy. During non holiday periods, we are running every Wednesday until the end of April as a trial. Our operation is different in that the signs have been encouraging visitors to the Depot and offering tram rides on an as required basis. Our recently fitted "function" trams, 671 & 661 (or 38 if required) have been very successfully christened and are now available for pre-wedding breakfast "drinks & nibbles" trips to fully catered functions and parties. Marketing Manager, Len Millar can supply details.

Ballarat Tramways News

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Overhead Renewal

The section of overhead trolley wire between Depot Junction and Carlton Street was renewed on Monday Dec. 8 and Tuesday Dec. 9. Based on our previous experience earlier this year, the work went fairly well, though some problems were encountered in getting both wires at the same tension. Although only a smaller work team was available, it was completed within the allotted time. A new section insulator was installed at depot junction.

The northbound wire had well and truly reached its use by date, while most of the southbound wire still has life left in it. The good section of this wire, about seven pole lengths was recovered by re-winding it back onto one of the new cable drums, a first time experience for us. Previously the wire has been cut up into about 3m long sections. This wire will be stored for possible use around the depot fan to replace some sections which have an excessive number of joiners in them, the only wire available to us at the time of construction.

Thanks to the following people and groups for their assistance over the two days; Melbourne Tramcar Preservation Assoc. at Haddon for the loan of equipment, Bendigo Trust for the loan of the cable drum holder frame, Peter Winspur, Warren Doubleday, Len Millar, Alan Snowball, Alastair Reither and Paul Mong.

We still have about 500m of new wire yet to be installed. This will be installed later this year in the section between Gardens Loop and Depot Junction.



The new overhead cable has reached Carlton St, but awaits more poles before heading towards Sturt St. West and the City.

The view of the Parade from the tower truck with the new wire in position and the old one yet to be lowered.

Photos Warren Doubleday



At the Depot

Tram 13 has been lowered from the jacks after completing its motor changeover and bearing machining. Some minor work to tighten up some bolts remains to be done prior to return to service.

Tram 33 was out of service for a couple of weeks when it was noted that one of the axle bearings was just about to reach its "use by" date. This was the bearing the renewed some 12 years ago after it collapsed while in service. The brass section of the bearing was remetalled with white metal and re-installed. After doing a couple of bedding in trips, the tram was given a full days running and came up cool. At the same time, the opportunity was taken to touch up some of the paintwork on the tram, especially around the windows.

Tram 14 has been temporarily withdrawn from traffic to have its bumper bar support woodwork, known as "summers" renewed at No. 1 end. The wood around one of the door posts had split, allowing the handrail to become loose. The opportunity will be taken to replace a number of poor pieces of timber around the bumper bar.

Work on touch up painting on No. 26 has been completed, while the reconstruction of No.12 of course continues. A start has been made on removing cabinets and tidying up materials at the rear of No. 2 and 3 roads, in order that the part of the depot floor may be "hot mixed" during Feb. or early March.

A truck load of gravel was purchased during mid January and had disappeared into the depot by the end of the following week through some eager shovelling and barrow work. This was used to fill up the area where the tables and cabinets for use in the bogie trams are being stored and over other parts of the floor which are still a bit low. A few more truck loads to go yet!

Along with all this work, the normal jobs at this time of the year have been undertaken, such as painting tramcar floors, servicing, removing rubbish and those other never ending tasks.

From our Internet Page

One of our recent correspondents, or surfers that commented on our Internet page was Roger DuPuis, a US grad student and tram fan studying in Canada. He said he has 'a positive addiction for Melbourne's trams and was beginning to discover the other wonderful tramway preservation societies" He is interested in corresponding with other fans over the Internet. His Email address is riid@networx.on.ca By the way, he liked our page. Andrew Cox is busy working away in his occasional spare time reconstructing our page.

Meanwhile don't forget to visit us at <http://www.btm.org.au>

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Launceston Trams

Information for this city's trams and its new museum has been taken from the Launceston Tramway Museum Society's web page at <http://scofa.muse.com.au/tram/> The page is authored by Ian Kershaw for the LTMS. As well supplementary material from "The Tramways of Australia", Samuel Brimson, published by Dreamweaver books in 1983 has been used.

The City and its Trams

Launceston's first tram ran on June 28, 1911, with the official opening on August 16. The fleet of rolling stock grew to consist of 26 four wheel, single deck units which were manufactured by local builders and timber merchants J. & T. Gunn (1 to 14) and Launceston Municipal Tramways (L.M.T.) Workshops (15 to 26). These single bogie trams were to serve on their own until 1930, when three double bogie "drop centre" trams, also manufactured by L.M.T. Invermay Workshops, were brought into service to supplement the fleet. These three trams were numbers 27, 28 & 29, which were to serve until the demise of the tramway on December 13, 1952. At that stage the trams were offered for sale and all were taken by their new owners without bogies, as they were destined to become just play houses, shacks and garden sheds.

The system had a route length of about 20 kilometres, comprising both single and double track, double track to the Racecourse, the Showground and to just past the Howick St. depot. A track map is available on LTMS's home page. The track gauge was 3'6". After its opening in 1911, the network

of tracks continued to grow 1937 when a short extension to Mowbray heights was opened. The first route to close was the Kings Wharf line in 1947 and more routes followed slowly over the following five years. Initially trolley buses replaced the trams, but diesel buses replaced these in 1968.

Ian writes about the trams in the period after the second world war and how they were looked upon by the general population.

"Back in the 1950's trams were looked upon as being the scourge of city streets everywhere. Motor cars were expensive and beyond the resources of the average working man of that era, so public transport was relied upon for transporting people to and from work, and also their social activities. The humble bicycle was then a common mode of transport too. Many a cyclist suffered injuries when the front wheel of their bike fell into the groove of a tramline and lost steering. Relying upon steering for stability usually meant a nose-dive into the tarmac using the nose for a brake. Ouch! The ribbons of steel also played havoc with the narrow tyred cars of the day when trying to brake; particularly when the road surface was wet and the wheels on one side of the car were on a tramline! The cars would skew out of control, heading off in some unplanned direction!

Trams were also a pest for other reasons, as cars had to stop and wait for trams as passengers embarked and disembarked, unless the tram had a Safety Zone (a place for passengers to wait for the tram in the centre of the road, usually protected by concrete pylons and steel rails).

It was decided in many cities that trams had had their day and rather than refurbish worn tracks and rolling stock, the tramways would be disbanded and bus services would take their place. The initial solution was often seen as electrified trolley buses, taking their power from twin overhead conductors, but these soon gave way to the smelly diesel buses we are stuck with today.

As a youngster in Adelaide during the 1950s, I experienced the same situation that occurred in Launceston, and at that age (not yet a teenager) I too agreed that trams had to go, after skinning my nose a few times! Even my dad suffered the indignity of running into the side of a tram on his motor bike when distracted by something; probably a floosie (1950s terminology here), but he has never owned up to that! He'd spent the whole afternoon picking blackberries and lost the lot from his billy can (a tin slung under a wire handle, something like a paint tin, for the overseas readers), all over the road. Obviously trams were dangerous and had to go!"

Many trams have survived in varying states of disrepair, but a couple of the older single bogie types have been renovated, with the body of one (No. 11) being the centre point of the Tram Bar, in Launceston's Great Northern Hotel at 3 Earl Street, Launceston. The Great Northern Hotel is now on the actual site where this tram was built by J & T Gunn. The other (No. 16) was recovered from a Launceston backyard and renovated, but a diesel engine was fitted to the bogie after problems were encountered when the operator wanted to use electrical propulsion and overhead wire under a steel bridge. No. 16, now operates at the Penny Royal complex

Launceston, to and fro over a 1km single track. This is the only Launceston tram currently carrying fare paying passengers, but the diesel motor with its smell and noise does detract from the experience!

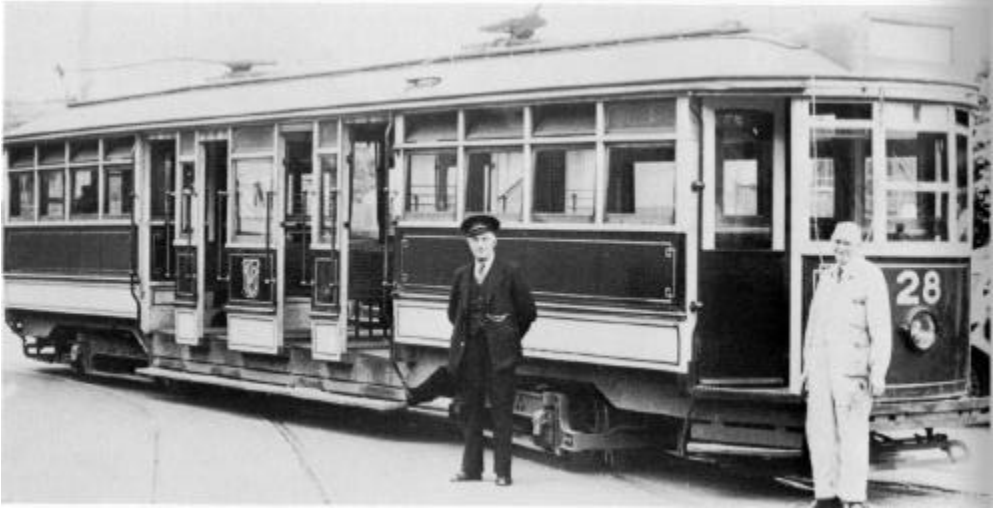
The Tramway Museum

In the early 1990's Marcus Hall rescued bogie tram No. 29, Launceston's last built tram from a wood storage shed near Devonport. After enlisting support from the Launceston City Council, the body was moved to the Inveresk Railyards, a suburb of Launceston. The Museum was formed in October 1995. Following security problems, the tram was moved in May 1996 to the old Invermay tram depot, which still existed, complete with rails and a pit! This was the place the tram had been built in 1930. As part of the move, it was mounted on bogies supplied by the Don River Railway. Reconstruction of the tram is proceeding well, by means of obtaining funding assistance to employ a small full time workforce for a six month period. Sourcing of materials to form the narrow gauge bogies is a major task.

Other tram bodies the Museum has obtained have been single truck trams No 12 (frame or chassis only) and in May 1997, the body of No. 8, used as a playhouse since 1951. The museum notes say that after they removed the corrugated iron sheeting from the roof, it revealed that the Huon Pine roof was in suprisingly good condition.

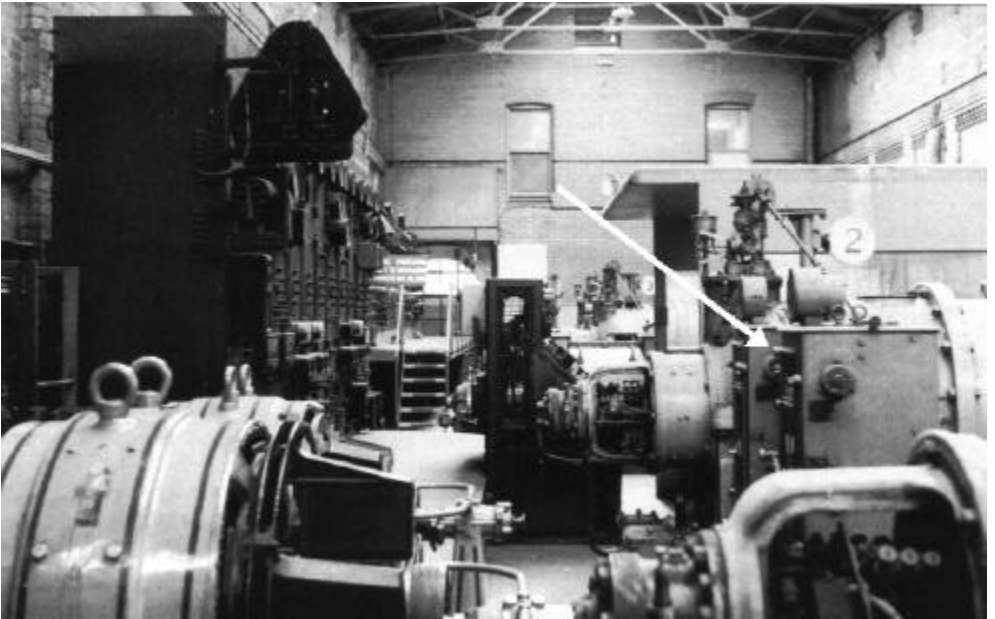
Tram 29 is open for inspection at weekends and most weekdays at the Invermay Rd. site at the northern end of the redeveloping old railway area.

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Launceston Bogie tram No. 28.

Photo Tasmanian Transport Museum Society.



Richard Gilbert's photo of the interior of the Lake Wendouree Powerhouse just before the system closed in September 1971, shows one of the units (arrowed) we recently received as a donation.



The Ballarat University recently donated this former piece of ESCo Lake Wendouree Power Station equipment to the Museum. Photo Warren Doubleday

ESCo Power Station Recalled

During mid December, Jeff Stewart of the Engineering Department of Ballarat University, who is also a member of the City Street Tramway Committee, asked whether we would be interested in a large item of electrical control gear, which he understood was destined for the rubbish “skip”. He thought it came from the Electric Supply Company of Victoria’s Lake Wendouree power station. We said yes!. After picking it up, we further identified it, with the assistance of Craig Tooke of MTPA as a DC face plate starter for, most likely, one of the Rotary Converters. A wiring diagram inside the front door identifies as a Brookhirst built “DC Hand Operated Drum and Multiple Lever Panel”.

At the same time, the November 1997 edition of Trolley Wire arrived at the depot, featuring an excellent article by Alan Bradley on the Powerhouse. In one of Richard Gilbert’s photographs taken just before the closure of the tramway system, one of these donated items is apparent in the photograph, easily identified by the ammeter mounted on top.

Thanks to Jeff for asking whether we would be interested. It adds another small part to our collection of ESCo power station equipment. Now that building itself has been demolished and replaced by houses, few reminders of the early power supply to Ballarat remain in existence.

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New member

The Museum welcomes the following new member to our workforce:

No. 713 Anita Bagley - Ballarat

Ballarat's Industrial Heritage Rally

A final reminder about the forthcoming Rally to be held at Ballarat's Showgrounds on Saturday, February 28 and Sunday March 1. Organised by the Ballarat Engine and Machinery Preservation Society, the rally will feature Ballarat produced machinery. The Museum is planning to be there with Horse Tram No. 1. Further information from P.O.Box 1139 Ballarat Mail Centre 3354 or call Ron 5335 8860 (W) or Ken 5332 7125 (H). The Ballarat showgrounds are the corner of Howitt St and Creswick Road.

Begonia Festival

This years Begonia Festival will be between Friday March 6 and Monday March 15. As in the past few years, the Parade will be closed off and the Museum will be offering an enhanced service in to transport visitors to and from the Car Park. As usual, it is all "hands to the deck" in running the service.

Accreditation

As members and readers would be aware, the Museum is busy preparing its Museum Accreditation documentation. At the time of writing, we have only one section, a large one, yet to be completed. This should be done by the end of February in time for a visit from the Assessors during March.

Rail Safety Accreditation is about to catch us up, with the Act amendments being recently proclaimed. A visit from three of the members of the Public Transport Safety Directorate during early January allowed them to find out a bit about us and to give us a copy of the Basic Safety Management System draft proposals for tramways.

This documentation needs to be completed for initial assessment during the early part of the second half of the year, in order for accreditation to be granted by the end of the year. A lot of work has already been completed in tramcar maintenance, procedures etc, but there is more yet to do, especially risk assessments and formalising many of the unwritten, but well understood procedures and practices we have in place. There is fortunately some common paperwork between both accreditations.

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>
