

# FARES PLEASE!

November 1998

*Ballarat Trams are Ballarat History*



Museum Accreditation Program  
Accredited Museum

## Annual General Meeting

The fourth AGM of the Museum was held on Sunday 11 October 1998 at the Robert Clark Centre. About 30 people attended the meeting. To fill the vacancy on the Board, Simon Jenkins was appointed by the meeting following the nomination of Darren Hutchesson and Anita Bagley. The model tramway was on display and very favourable comments were received from those who had not seen it in operation previously.

Craig Tooke, the Executive Officer for the Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia attended the meeting and on behalf of COTMA thanked our President Richard Gilbert for his work as the previous Executive Officer.

## New Members

The Museum welcomes the following new members:

No. 716, I. Wall of Dandenong

No. 717, A. Paroissien of Forest Hill

## New Fares & Sign Boards

On November 1 1998, the first fare increase since July 1991 took place. This has become necessary because of slowly increasing costs and further investment that needs to be made, particularly in the repair of tramcar motors. Fares are now \$2 Adult and \$1 Children.

New tram stop boards have replaced the old time worn boards. The new boards have a different layout. They were made by Darren Hutchesson and Len Millar with the assistance of Alastair Reither, Paul Mong and Dave Macartney. Discounted timber was provided by Mitre Ten Coltmans and the sign writing completed by Signs of the Times. The boards are quite different to the previous ones and really catch visitors attention.

## Charters

The Museum has been busy over the last couple of months with a number of school charters and a wedding charter. Nyah District School had 50 children, Creswick Primary 90 and about 30 from Ballan Primary. Thanks to the crews who run the tramway and make it a worthwhile event for our visitors.

# Ballarat Tramways News

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## Ponderosa Bungaree

The museum property at Bungaree has now been fenced with an agricultural farming fence. This now sees our 5 acre property fenced to a standard that can allow cattle to graze on the sumptuous grasses that have taken hold with the spring rains. A telephone call to our neighbour, Mr. Trigg, saw us strike up a deal for his 50 head of heifers to graze on the land. On his instruction the adjoining property gates were swung open and a few cattle treaded cautiously outside the usual perimeter of land they had been used to. The others saw this and followed ending up in a stampede when the cattle had thought they had escaped their fenced paddocks. To their dismay they careered to the front gate of our section only to have their escape thwarted. They ambled back through the property munching the grasses and most of our prized small Blackwood tree. Since getting used to our paddock they have pushed their way into the fenced house block and found our Agapanthus absolutely delicious. The same applied to our geraniums and roses. Their rough trample around the house block saw two sections of the paling fence demolished in the desire to eat all the Agapanthus bushes. At least the 5-acre paddock is being trimmed back and will soon look well managed, though now needing some house fence repairs.

**Cattle Grazing:** We take this opportunity to say to our members that if you visit our Bungaree property, please keep the gate closed as cattle are grazing and the last thing we want is to have Mr. Trigg's cattle escaping to the wider world from our property.

## Springfest

The now annual Springfest Festival was held on Sunday, 1st November and attracted very large crowds. Market stalls are set up around the perimeter of Lake Wendouree and a shuttle bus runs continuously around the circuit. In addition the trams provide a service in a similar manner for the distance our line covers. On this day the great majority of tickets sold were 'one way' journeys. The fares were put up from this day and the single fares of Adults \$1 and Child 50c are still understandably cheap. The return fare of \$2 and \$1 respectively is hardly an uncomfortable rise when the cheapest thing on sale at the Springfest was a Coffee for \$2. It is a fact that the fare rise, by chance falling on this day, had no impact on patronage.

Throughout the day two trams were used. No. 40 and 26 provided variety in tramcar style and people fully patronised both. It was found that if the tram 'laid up' at the St. Aidans Drive terminus it encouraged impulse travel by those walking the lake circuit. People were pleased to put the shopping and the kiddies on the tram and have a welcome break from walking.

We had plenty of staff that day and thanks is offered to them for putting in and helping on such a busy occasion. This event is much easier to run, as a tram service, than the Begonia Festival as the patronage is mainly single journey, predominantly from north to south, and the road traffic blows much better as people are not focussing on the Gardens as they do at Begonia Festival time. For the record, we carried 793 passengers, the highest Springfest so far and we think the highest non-holiday Sunday.

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## The Ballarat Tramways in 1912

By Alan Bradley

In 1912 the Titanic sank, Douglas Mawson explored the Antarctic, the Commonwealth Bank of Australia commenced operation, and the design competition was held for Canberra. Six of Australia's leading test cricketers refused to tour England due to a dispute with officials (not surprisingly, England won the Ashes that year). On the tramway front the Geelong system commenced operation and a major tramway strike occurred in Brisbane.

At the time the Electric Supply Co of Victoria (ESCo) operated the power supply and electric tramways in Ballarat and Bendigo, and the horse trams in Sebastopol. In 1912 the Arbitration Commission considered for the first time the wages and working conditions on the Ballarat and Bendigo tram systems – prior to 1912 the tramway operators paid what they liked. The transcript of evidence given by ESCo employees and officials during the 1912 hearings (a document now held in the Melbourne University Archives) is a fascinating account of how the Ballarat and Bendigo tramways were operated in those distant pre-World War 1 days.

There were 170 employees in the tramway departments in Ballarat and Bendigo, of which in Ballarat there were 26 permanent motormen, and 26 casual motorman and conductors employed.

An employee took 14 days to qualify as a motorman – the first five days were spent in the shed studying undergear and were unpaid, the remaining days were spent driving under tuition and were paid. Permanent motormen averaged 105.5 hours per fortnight – at least this was less than horse tram drivers who had been required to work for 65 hours per week. There were also casuals who turned up looking for work (usually vacancies arose if someone else was suspended). Youths under 21 were employed as car cleaners and conductors, the ESCo believing that youths were smarter and quicker than men doing the same work.

Motormen were supplied by the Company with one tunic, waistcoat, pants and cap per year, but had to pay for overcoats at a discount rate. These overcoats were imported blue military coats described by one employee as a sponge during wet weather, as they were not waterproof and absorbed moisture. Motormen also had to supply their own watches.

Employees were allowed free tram travel while in uniform (which of course maintenance workers did not have). Free passes had been recently withdrawn owing to ESCo's financial position, so off-duty employees were

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charged one-third of the normal fare. Power station employees got their lighting at half rates, and had tram fare concessions.

Horse trams were used as trailers behind the electric trams during busy periods. The conductor on the horse tram had to use the old ratchet brake when stopping, as the trailers were not connected to a power brake.

In Ballarat trailers were used each Saturday and Sunday during summer, in Bendigo trailers were only used on holiday Sundays. On normal summer Saturdays 16 cars plus one trailer were used. During March-April there were two heavy traffic days – on Railway Picnic Day (when numerous special trains carried visitors to Ballarat from all over Victoria) 20 cars and seven trailers were used, and on Regatta Day (rowing on Lake Wendouree) 18 cars and two trailers were used. At the time, ESCo had 20 electric trams, thus these heavy traffic periods required every tramcar to be used. In October on the day of the Band Contest Final (held at the City Oval) 19 cars and six trailers were used, the heaviest peak being after 10.45 pm. On winter Saturdays there was heavy traffic to and from football matches. The Christmas and Boxing Day week was the busiest time of the year, the only time that revenue matched that of capital city tramways.

Ballarat trams started running later and finished earlier than Melbourne's, so there were no "broken shifts\*", only the morning shift and afternoon shift. The first cars left the depot at 6.50 am. Morning shift employees signed on at the Wendouree depot, and afternoon shift employees signed on at the large tramway office at the corner of Sturt and Grenville Sts. The traffic staff worked a straight eight-hour shift without a meal break, and had to eat their meals on the trams. The Grenville St office had a meal room but no time allowed for meals, plus a stove that was never alight.

Cars 1 to 18 (which were like our own No. 12) had no side bars, so passengers could enter on either side. A "glass shield" (ie windscreen) was fitted in 1911, but was unsuitable as an opening let the rain in. No seat was provided for the motorman, as management felt that the hand brake could only be operated properly while standing. The magnetic brake could only be used in emergencies, as it harmed the motors. Air brakes were not fitted. These cars weighed between eight and nine tons, compared to 12 tons for "J" class and "M" class single truckers in our present museum fleet. The other type of tram then used were the open crossbench type, Nos. 19 and 20, in which the seat backs had to be turned at the terminus.

\* *broken or split shift, where an employee could work about half their shift in the morning and the rest in the afternoon.*

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A heavily loaded ex horse tram trailer is towed eastbound along Sturt St. during one of Ballarat's busy traffic days. Possibly taken soon after the tramway opened, as there are no destination boxes on the electric tram. From a postcard loaned recently to the Museum by Mr. Norm DePomeroy.

If a charge was laid against an employee a notice was placed in the Grenville St office, asking the employee number (not name) to attend the Traffic Superintendent. A report would be read out to the employee, and he would be asked for an explanation but was not allowed to call witnesses. If his explanation was unsatisfactory he could be suspended or dismissed. One motorman was dismissed for smoking on a tram, but after the union intervened a witness was called, and he was reinstated.

Employees were not allowed to enter hotels while in uniform (and could be sacked for doing so), but often had to do so to use toilets as none were provided by the ESCo.

An "Assistant Pitman and Greaser" at the Wendouree depot worked 53.5 hours per week, but at least had a one hour lunch break. He was paid at two rates, one for greasing oiling and pit work, another for wheelwork. It was dirty work, but he was not provided with special clothing (such as overalls).

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Depot employees were frequently called out to work on the trams during the busy summer holiday periods.

The “Fitter and Pitman” performed work similar to an Electrical Mechanic – examining controllers and switches, making bearings for armatures, testing field coils, and assembling bearings and castings. Part of his work was performed at the workshop at the Powerhouse, which was a clean working environment, and part of it in the pits at the Wendouree depot which were “dark damp and draughty”. There was often water in the bottom of the pits, and the Pitman had to stand on grating to keep his feet dry. He could be called from home to attend to a disabled tram, on one occasion working from 11 pm to 1 am.

The power station next to the lake burned “Powlett slack coal” from the State Coal Mine at Wonthaggi, which was brought by rail to Ballarat. Slack coal was a lower grade coal and cheaper than high grade coal from Newcastle. Coal cost 40-50% more in Ballarat than it did in Melbourne, whereas wood, the main household fuel used, was 40% cheaper in Ballarat and Bendigo than it was in Melbourne. About one-third of the power generated at the power station was used by the trams, and about two-thirds for lighting.

The Commission stated during the hearings that ESCo employees would be paid at rates comparable to Melbourne cable tram employees, unless the ESCo could prove this was unaffordable. Naturally much of the ESCo’s evidence was aimed at proving that its Ballarat and Bendigo undertakings were unprofitable – that the populations of Ballarat and Bendigo had reduced, gold mining had declined and there was less prosperity. In 1912 there were 2.9 million passengers carried on the trams in Ballarat, and 2.6 million in Bendigo.

After 1912 wages and conditions were set by the Arbitration Court, and many changes occurred over the next few decades. In 1913 windscreens were fitted to trams. During the 1920s the Grenville St shelter was removed and trailers were withdrawn from service. During the 1930s the SEC took over from the ESCo, green uniforms replaced the blue uniforms and old military coats, all of the older trams were removed from passenger service, the tramway workshop was moved from the powerhouse to the Wendouree depot, and working conditions in the pits improved.

The “good old days” of 1912 were not really so good after all.

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## New Web pages

The revamped Internet web page of our Museum was recently launched. Prepared by Andrew Cox, the revision has taken some time and time being a premium with the arrival of a new son. The web page is hosted by Rail Page Australia on their Internet server free of charge. Thanks to Railpage who have an excellent group of pages and links to other Australian and

overseas railways. They host many other preservation groups pages as well. Their address is <http://www.railpage.org.au>

The black and white version of the first part of the main page is shown below. A red banner on the side, matches the colours of tram 26. Unfortunately we can't afford colour photocopies to bring you the colour version. We can be found at <http://www.btm.org.au>

## Welcome To The Ballarat Vintage Tramway



*Operated by the Ballarat Tramway Museum Inc.*



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The Museum's Mission Statement for its activities is;  
*Continue the development of a working museum to preserve the style of Ballarat's former street tramways and trams for the public benefit.*

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**Please take the time to sign our guestbook and rate our site**

The Ballarat Vintage Tramway is operated by the Ballarat Tramway Museum Inc., formed to keep alive the tramway experience that has otherwise disappeared from the streets of Ballarat.

The Museum's members are volunteers from all walks of life. They spend their own time operating and maintaining the tramway. The 1.3 kilometre track is located in the Botanical Gardens, on the



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## COTMA Conference

The organising committee will be visiting the accommodation venues in Ballarat on 21st December to start the process of choosing a suitable venue. A draft conference programme has been developed and the most likely date of the Conference will be the second weekend after the Melbourne Cup Race (the first Tuesday in November). This date has been advised to us by travel and accommodation experts because of travel patterns around the Melbourne Spring Racing Carnival resulting in heavy accommodation demands.

## New Lady Tram Driver

Although not the first, we are pleased to welcome, very much, Anita Bagley to the ranks of Tram Driver. Anita passed the exam recently and will be a welcome resource to our Roster Clerk. Anita has excellent customer skills and will be a good ambassador on mid week charters as well as Saturdays where these operations are usually run as One-Person Operation. This promotion to Driver will enable her to be more involved in operations where we often need a Driver rather than a Conductor.

Anita has been actively involved in other promotions and was a major force in the construction of our model tramway layout and its exhibition at the Model Railway Show and our Annual General Meeting.

## Rail Safety

The Museum has completed its documentation for rail safety accreditation. A desk review during mid November showed that the documentation was fairly complete with primarily a site visit to show what we said was being done was actually in place. This took place on Saturday November 28.

Generally there are only minor changes or additions to our current operating methods, and most of this comprises some additional recording of information. One new feature will be a new members sign on book, which is purpose made, that also doubles as a *Depot Diary* in order to record events and happenings at the depot.

## At the Depot

A short report this issue. Work has primarily focused around the tramcars, as well as finding the home of a lost cat. Some of the jobs undertaken were replacing a leaking piston packing leather on 671, painting tramcar floors, cleaning up the handbrake mechanisms of No. 40, replacing 26's trolley wheel, cleaning the bottom half of 33's motor cases and taking out the coils, continuing work on No. 28, 12 and numerous other small projects.

Work to install the fire main across Wendouree Parade was about to be undertaken at the end of November.

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E-mail: [btm@netconnect.com.au](mailto:btm@netconnect.com.au)

Our web page: <http://www.btm.org.au>

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