

# FARES PLEASE!

March 2001

*Ballarat Trams are Ballarat History*

*MAA MAA MAA*

Museum Accreditation Program  
Accredited Museum



The Gold Tram in Wendouree Parade – 2 March 2001 – *Photo Warren Doubleday*

## **The Gold Tram**

This issue features Ballarat Tramway Museum's exhibit for the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the discovery of Gold in Victoria. The tramcar known in Ballarat as No. 45, is on loan from the Central Deborah – Bendigo Tramways for a period of two years. It is their No. 18 painted in gold.

The tram has been decorated in a manner very similar to that done by the State Electricity Commission of Victoria to their Ballarat No. 23 in 1951 to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Len Millar's article commencing on page 2, details the background of the tram being painted in gold. The Museum sees the tram as an active method of celebrating 150 years since the discovery of gold, that led to the founding of Ballarat and Bendigo.

# Ballarat Tramways News

# 2..Fares Please!

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**GOLD! GOLD! GOLD!** - Len Millar

*It's been the excited cry in Australia for a long time - at Olympic Games and at "the diggings"!*

Gold was discovered in the Ballarat and Bendigo districts back in 1851 - and the two thriving provincial cities that followed in gold's prosperous wake grew their populations and sprouted tramway systems. In 1951 the then operator of the two tramways (the former State Electricity Commission) decided to celebrate the Centenary of the discovery of gold by suitably decorating two of its single truckers - finished off with a gold paint job!

As 2001 is the 150th Anniversary, the BTM Board endorsed a plan to celebrate the 150th Anniversary in a similar manner. Discussions with our colleagues in Bendigo led to a formal lease agreement whereby their "saloon" bogie car, No. 18, runs on our tramway for two years as the Gold Tram!

On Thursday, March the 1st, Darren Hutchesson supervised the loading of this specially painted and sign written Gold Tram in Tramways Avenue, Bendigo. A few hours later he watched it lowered on to our rails. Within a few minutes, the tram was operating and ran a trial trip along Wendouree Parade. Some 25 Bendigo volunteers and workers came by bus to enjoy the event, and Stephen Butler supervised a great barbecue for them.

No. 18 was temporarily surplus to Bendigo's traffic needs and it is capable of one-person operation - which made it ideal for our type of operation. Inter-operator discussion and suggestions have led to a magnificent beast - which will certainly attract extra passengers, and allow us to expedite some wheel-profiling and other overhaul work on some of our fleet over the term of the agreement.

A successful application was made for a grant from Country Victoria Tourism Council for \$4,000 from the "Gold 150" fund (an off-shoot of the Community Support Fund). Then we "welcomed on board" Sovereign Hill and the Ballarat Tourism Board with their two year \$2,000 sponsorship. Initially our good friend, David Haymes, the Managing Director of Haymes Paint generously offered to donate the paints. His paint engineers subsequently advised that the company's gold paint was not (exterior) UV ray proof. Fine inside, but not out! Then Col Wilkie, of Ballarat's Paint Right outlet and Solver Paints in S.A. came forward with the primers, undercoats, gold paint and UV ray-screening clear finishing coats.

The project is revenue-neutral for our coffers, and when we hear local 3BA exhorting its listeners to go up and have a ride on the Gold Tram, we are entitled to be optimistic for our patronage figures.

Traffic Manager Peter Winspur, mindful that we already have an "18" in our fleet, suggested the Gold Tram's original Prahran and Malvern Tramways Trust number - 45 for its fleet number while in Ballarat.

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The tram has air-operated folding doors which are individually controlled from a small panel in front of the driver. It has Brisbane City Council "RC" controllers and self-lapping brakes.

It has double tip-over timber seats, and turning indicators and hazard lights. The Bendigo on board sound system even picks up local radio stations. What comforts! The crews are of the opinion that it will be a great tram to operate on those cold, wet, windy days we occasionally have in Ballarat!

The tram got a lot of use, and exposure, during the recent Begonia Festival - and we are marketing the tram as being ideal for charters, product launches, etc. And did I mention that it looks positively striking!!

A formal launch for the tram is being arranged for sometime during April. More next issue.

## **New Members**

The Museum welcomes the following new members.

Gregory Keogh of Redhead, NSW (No 733)

John Cook of North Geelong (No 734)

Resumed Member - Robert Aspinall of North Fitzroy

## **Donation Receipts**

Unfortunately time restrictions have held up the issue of the Donation Receipts in this issue of Fares Please! as planned. They will be in the May's envelope.

## **Begonia Festival**

Another successful Begonia Festival was held from 2 – 12 March. The highlight for the Museum was when the Premier Steve Bracks drove himself to the opening in our brand new gold tram No 45 on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> March. Mr. Bracks was overseen by Stephen Butler with Austin Brehaut as conductor.

Patronage for the eleven days was marginally up on last year and we had one of our busiest days for quite a while on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> when 1138 passengers were carried. After the traditional procession on Labour Day four trams operated to carry visitors back to the car park in the south gardens reserve. With careful supervision, particularly from our youngest supervisor, Sam Boon, no cornfield meets occurred! Sam possibly put in more hours than anyone and will be roped in to conducting as soon as he is fourteen. Thanks to the rest of the regular crew who worked so hard to keep the trams running. John Clowes set a record by being on duty for ten of the eleven days.

Chef Gilbert was dispatched to Bungaree early each evening and excelled himself by providing large, varied and delicious meals for the hungry workers. The evenings at Bungaree with a meal, a few drinks and a slide show add greatly to what is a hard weekend's work on the trams.

## 4..Fares Please!



Scrubber No. 8 makes its first visit to the Gardens Loop on Sat. 17 March 2001 during commissioning trials. Photo Warren Doubleday.

The day before the Gold tram was delivered, W2 249 which was stored at Clarendon was loaded onto a truck and taken to Bendigo to be stored prior to going to Sydney Tramway Museum. Photo Warren Doubleday



On 16 Feb 2001, trams 11 and 32 were relocated from the depot at Ballarat to our off site storage facility at Bungaree. Photos Austin Brehaut



In 1951, the SECV decorated Ballarat No. 23 as a Gold tram to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Gold in Ballarat. Photo Ron Fluck, BTM Archives.

No. 45 arrives as the Gold tram in Ballarat. Photographed by Austin Brehaut in Gillies St. prior to unloading on 1 March 2001.

## Fares Please! ..5



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## President's view of the Begonia Festival

The activity needed to operate the tram service during the festival period was equal to previous years. This year being one that covered new ground in that tram 45 was being delivered from Bendigo, to be used as part of the Begonia Festival attractions, the day before the festival commenced. In addition to this major task, was that arrangements were made for the Premier of Victoria, Steve Bracks, to drive the tram into the Gardens as part of the Festival Opening Ceremony.

The amount of work required in the area of Rail Safety Legislation to allow for the operation of this tram was considerable but ably carried out by Greg Rodgers, Peter Winspur and Warren Doubleday.

The whole arrangement, managed by Len Millar and Stephen Butler, came together in time to see tram 45 painted in the gold livery, delivered to Ballarat and made operable, and then for the Premier, Steve Bracks, to drive it into the gardens. This was the culmination of much effort we could all be proud of.

The intensity of crewing and traffic arrangements during the festival is a time when we focus at the tramway to put in their best effort. Shifts covering the full span of the day in which we operate see us commencing at 8am and finishing around 8pm. Crews are signing on and off at times during that time span and the whole operation has an air of "big tramway" about it. The briskness of business being conducted on the tram sees our Conductors working at full pace and the amount of tram working over our single line is remarkable.

## Richard Gilbert

Possibly my best memory of this year's event was travelling out from the Gardens Loop to Carlton Street in a fully laden drop centre maximum traction car and seeing the Conductor working his way through the crowded car selling tickets and attending to the bells as more weary passengers joined, clutching their pots of Begonias with children and prams in tow heading to the car park on their way home.

It was a good effort put in by all.

## Visitors

Four members of Orange Empire Railway Museum in California spent the day with us on 10<sup>th</sup> February. They had a good day and it was great to catch up with them and learn a little about their museum. The museum has some 250 vehicles and if a major shunt is required it has to be prearranged in writing!

A recent visitor from Germany was Philipp Reindl who later sent us a wonderful book on trams in his home city of Munich. Thank you Philipp. We believe you had a good day with us.

On 1<sup>st</sup> March the arrival of tram No 45 from Bendigo was accompanied by a busload of the workers from the Bendigo Tramways. After they had supervised the unloading and put the tram together again a barbecue was provided in the park followed by the inaugural trip of the tram along Wendouree Parade. Thanks to Stephen and Bryan for arranging the barbecue.

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## **With regret**

A former Secretary of the Launceston Tramway Museum, Phillip Archer, passed away in February. Phillip was a prominent member of that museum and very committed to seeing Launceston trams on the move once again. He attended a number of COTMA Conferences and was in attendance at the recent Conference hosted in Ballarat. We pass on our condolences to the Launceston Tramway Museum and sincerely regret the passing of such a fine gentleman.

## **Rub a dub dub, I've had a scrub**

Our Scrubber Tram No.8 has had its first trial at scrubbing the track. On Saturday 17th March after completion of the sand piping at No. 1 end by Alan Snowball. Warren Doubleday and an enthusiastic number of workers took No.8 out into Wendouree Parade. They lowered the blocks, turned the water on and scrubbed their way to the Gardens Loop. The result has been fantastic and the ride of the service tram has been greatly improved. The flange ways were clean and the rail head lacked any compounded leaves and road surfacing that can usually be built up on it.

## **Driver Training**

Recently this has concentrated on putting all our drivers through a familiarisation course for our latest tram Number 45. Rail safety accreditation requires the Museum not only to create and document a training course but also to carry out a risk analysis on running a new tram. Our thanks go to our Examining Officer, Greg Rodgers, for carrying out this task.

## **The President's Dinner**

In keeping with past traditions, the President cooked a roast dinner for 12 of our hard working members at the Museum house at Bungaree. Everyone had a good night, which included a slide night of interesting, rarely seen slides of tramways around Australia. On the previous night the annual barbecue was held at Bungaree and 17 members and friends attended. John Clowes has been hosting this occasion in the past and has offered to host the next one at his house next year. This takes the pressure off the house at Bungaree and offers a bit of variety in differing venues.

## **At the Depot**

Some of the happenings at the depot over the last two months have been:

- Relocating 11 and 32 to Bungaree
  - Welding up broken rails in Wendouree Parade
  - Completing No. 8 so it could be tested.
  - Undertaking major re-arrangement of trams in the depot three times
  - Assisting loading in W2 249 with Bendigo workers, so it could be transported to Bendigo for storage
  - Accepting tram 45, commissioning and learning about it
  - Testing No. 8 in the Parade
  - Placing stone fill between the tracks in the shed
  - Preparing and then keeping the trams operable during the Begonia Festival
  - Hosting visitors from other Museums
  - Keeping the depot operational, fixing up defective equipment and looking after the crew's needs.
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## 8.. Fares Please!



Above: BTM Vice President Stephen Butler greets Victorian Premier, Steve Bracks upon arrival at St Aidans Drive while Ballarat's Horticultural Officer, Ian Rossiter looks on. The Premier later drove the Gold tram around to the Gardens, prior to opening the 2001 Begonia Festival.

Left: The front of the Gold tram with the pick and shovel very similar of that of No. 23 in 1951.

*Both Photos: Warren Doubleday on 2 March 2001.*



**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. (A0031819K), P.O. Box 632, Ballarat Vic. 3353. Phone / Fax (03) 5334 1580.

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