

FARES PLEASE!

March 2003

Ballarat Trams are Ballarat History



Museum Accreditation Program
Accredited Museum

Begonia Festival

Poor weather, rising petrol prices and a generally scaled back Festival lead to the quietest Festival for the Museum since 1992. Operationally it was a great success with our crews and trams performing faultlessly. The traditional street parade was held at 5.00pm instead of 12.30pm on Labour Day and this allowed Wendouree Parade to remain closed to traffic all day. This is the first time that this has occurred since 1998 and showed how much more pleasant the gardens precinct is without cars. It is also much safer. We thank all those who worked so hard to keep the trams operating.

With our friends at Whiteman Park unable to operate their trams until next month due to the public liability fiasco, Ballarat members Lindsay Richardson and John Shaw decided to travel all the way across the desert to lend us a hand. They both worked very hard during the entire long weekend and we are very grateful for their assistance. We suspect that they thoroughly enjoyed themselves though!

On the Saturday night of the long weekend the hungry hordes were hosted by John and Merle Clowes at their Smeaton residence

and treated to a delicious barbecue followed by a slide show. On the Sunday night a sumptuous three-course meal was served at our Bungaree residence by Simon Green and assistants. Following dinner John Phillips presented a video highlighting the many achievements of the BTM over recent years.

Bungaree Historical Society Visit

Each year the Bungaree Historical Society holds an annual picnic excursion and on this occasion opportunity was taken to visit our Museum on Monday 17th February. The group of 26 started arriving at 6.30pm and enjoyed their picnic meals within the old No. 1 road area. Many of their members appreciated dining inside W4 671 which was specially set up with tables for people to shelter from the unseasonably cool evening. After their meal a tram ride was enjoyed on board No. 40 followed by a tour of the Depot led by Bungaree Historical Society member Richard Gilbert. Following the tour of the Depot a 'cuppa' and was enjoyed along with two cakes brought out to celebrate two of their members' eightieth birthdays. An enjoyable night was to be had by all. Thanks must go to new BTM member Michael Foley for his assistance.

Ballarat Tramways News

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The Electric Supply Company Saloon Cars by Alan Bradley

Introduction

The Electric Supply Company of Victoria (ESCO) operated electric tramways in Ballarat and Bendigo prior to their takeover by the State Electricity Commission of Victoria (SEC) in 1934.

The ESCo's largest class of tram in Ballarat were cars 1 to 18. They were a "California combination" type with saloon in the centre and open seating at each end. They were however known in Ballarat as "saloon cars".¹ The ESCo also operated two types of crossbench car in Ballarat.

The Ballarat saloon cars were interesting, in that they were an electric tram type rebuilt from an earlier form of street tramway vehicle. In this case they were converted former Sydney cable trailers and electric trams. The Ballarat Tramway Museum (BTM) is currently rebuilding saloon car No. 12 to operating condition. This article deals with the history of the Ballarat saloon cars, and the rebuilding of No. 12.

Recycling of old trams

Electric traction swept away most of the horse, cable and steam tramways around the world during the 1890s and early 1900s. Numerous tramway operators tried to prolong the life of the surplus rolling stock by converting them to electric trams.

The earlier cars were lightweight so they could be easily hauled by straining horses, steam motors or cable car dummies. But electric operation led to higher speeds, and more vibration and wear on the bodies. Thus the converted cars usually had a short operating life and were replaced by trams of more robust construction. For various reasons the Ballarat saloon cars ran for up to 30 years as electric trams.

The first Australian conversion from old rolling stock to electric cars was carried out in Brisbane, where the first electric trams ran in 1897. Many of the horse cars were converted to saloon, combination and crossbench electric cars. The odd car was later converted to service stock after its passenger-carrying days were over.

In Bendigo the ESCo electrified the steam trams in 1903. The first twelve cars were built new. The next three cars (and possibly a fourth) were converted from steam trailers – an ominous sign for what was to come in Ballarat. Probably too much money had been spent in Bendigo, because the electrification in Ballarat was done "on the cheap". The horse tram depot became the electric tram running shed, and the power station used part of the walls of an old flour mill. The initial order of twenty trams consisted of only two new cars, crossbenches 19 and 20. The remainder were the eighteen saloon cars that were converted from second-hand Sydney trams.

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¹ They were called "saloon cars" in H P James' article "Conductor 23", reprinted in *Trolleywire* February 1997.

The Ballarat conversion

The conversion of the ex-Sydney trams into “new” electric rolling stock was carried out by Duncan & Fraser. This firm had built Ballarat’s horse trams and the Bendigo electric cars. The venue for the work was the Exhibition Buildings in Grenville Street, Ballarat (north of the Alfred Hall), which were normally used for mayoral functions. This forced the Mayor of Ballarat’s return ball to be postponed for a month.²

Twelve of the Sydney cars were cable trailers built between 1886 and 1898 by various builders for the King Street and North Sydney cable lines. The North Sydney trailers were transferred to the King Street cable lines after electrification in 1900. The King Street lines were electrified in January 1905. The cable trailers became Ballarat cars 1, 4, 6, 10 to 18.

The other six were early Sydney electric cars, which had become surplus by 1905 due to the building of more modern tramcar types. Experimental cars Nos. 1 to 3 (Sydney’s first overhead wire electric trams) were built by John Stephenson of New York in 1890. They became Ballarat cars 2, 7 and 9. Sydney C-class cars 14 to 16 were built by Hudson Brothers in 1898. They became Ballarat cars 3, 5 and 8.

The conversion process was similar to that used on the Bendigo steam trailers. The saloons were placed on long underframes, and the roof was extended.

The window spacings in the saloons were altered from six windows each side to three. The former Sydney “C” class had seven windows per side, so the middle windows were larger than the others. The bodies were placed on short wheel-based six feet six inches Brill trucks.

The saloon cars in Ballarat, like the cars in Bendigo, were of a light construction. The Ballarat saloon cars weighed between eight and nine tons.³ According to *Destination Eaglehawk* the ex-cable cars weighed ten tons, the other saloon cars weighed twelve tons, and the Bendigo cars weighed eight tons. The later SEC-era single truck trams weighed about 12 tons. The problems of light construction would only become apparent in the future. Meanwhile the “new” electric trams made a favourable impression. The Ballarat Courier published this report a month before commencement of electric services:

The new electric trams present quite an artistic appearance. Each car will carry about six electric lights at night time, apart from the headlight, and the electricity will be supplied by an extension of the current from the motor on each vehicle. Furthermore, the trams will be supplied with revolving street directories. These will indicate to passengers the name of the cross street they are approaching. An up-to-date brake is also installed, which the driver will be able to apply quickly and effectively.⁴

2 *Ballarat Courier* 5th July 1905

3 Testimony of ESCo Manager P J Pringle at Arbitration hearings

4 *Ballarat Courier* 21st July 1905

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Left: Opening day for the Electric Supply Company. Cr. M. Barker, the Mayor of Ballarat drives No.1 along Sturt Street on 19th August 1905. Alongside him are the late Mr. B Deakin Manager of the ESCo, and Major General R E Williams. Photo: George Netherway collection, BTM archives.

Below: No.2 passing Electric Supply Company power station on Ripon Street circa 1907. Note the tram is now fitted with windscreens, which made life much more comfortable for the Motormen. Photo: Len Denmead collection, BTM archives.



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Above: Alan Snowball, Len Millar and Paul Mong hard at work with the trackwork at the north end of our line. Saturday 22/3/03.

Right: Whiteman Park (WA) and BTM member John Shaw earns his keep while on a 'working' holiday to Victoria. Fellow Western Australian Lindsay Richardson also provided us with valuable assistance during the Begonia Festival. Sunday 23/3/03. Both photos: Warren Doubleday.



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Vale

John Bullen

John Bullen passed away on 2nd March after a short fight with cancer. Many of us met John on our trips to Bendigo. He was an extremely hard worker and powerhouse of ideas in the tramway's workshop. He will be sadly missed.

Brian Brooke

Former BTM member and prominent member of the Horsham community Brian Brooke passed away on 30th January. Brian was a foundation member of the BTPS.

Jim Dowel

Running Journal reports the passing of well-known former M&MTB Inspector Jim Dowel on 17th November 2002. He was seventy-four.

Membership

The Museum would like to welcome the following new members:

No. 746 Peter Fitzgerald of Enfield Vic

No. 747 John Kelly of Hepburn Springs

We also welcome back former Member Sharon Puls (No. 669).

Happy Birthday

One of our more "active" members, Daniel Edwards turned 13 on Wednesday 26th February. On Saturday 22nd February to celebrate the occasion a party was held at the depot. Daniel and his friends then chartered No. 13 for a tram ride. We wish him many happy returns.

In The Workshop

Elsewhere in this issue you will have seen articles regarding the Wendouree Parade trackwork and the move of Ballarat No. 21 to Bungaree. Both of these tasks, along with the Begonia Festival running, have taken up a considerable amount of time for workshop staff and therefore the recent achievements may appear limited.

Work has begun on striping paint and rust from scrubber No. 8 in preparation for painting and general body restoration work. It is currently proposed to paint this tram in the MMTB green and cream colour scheme which it would have carried during the 1940s or 50s. The proposal also provides for some rearrangement of the lighting to be more in keeping with that time period but still retain some of the additional lighting that was added in later years.

The second traction motor for No. 27 is almost completed with wire replacement and bearing assembly now in progress, hopefully by the next issue of *Fares Please!* both motors will have been completed and tested ready for reassembly of the tram.

Routine servicing after the school holiday and Begonia Festival running is now all completed and the workshop team will now have a good deal more time to spend on restoration and major mechanical works.

Traffic

Despite the drought and the hot weather in January slightly more people visited the Museum during that month than for the same time last year. February proved to be about average.

Ballarat No. 21 on the move

As many of you will recall, some years ago the museum acquired the body of ESCo Ballarat crossbench car No. 21 from a property near Daylesford. This tram has been in covered storage since then at the property of member Len Millar who generously offered to house it when we had no other suitable facility. Recently Len has begun to acquire other tram bodies for his own projects and so we agreed to move No. 21 to our Bungaree storage sheds which were originally intended for just this purpose. After some initial discussions it was suggested that we should coordinate our move with the move of a Z class tram from Melbourne to the TMSV site at Bylands and the move of Ballarat bogie car No. 42, which has been privately acquired, from Bylands to Newstead. This seemed to be a sensible proposal and would allow us some cost savings on crane and truck hire.

More phone calls and discussions later, the date was set for February 19th and the necessary work got under way to make everything ready for that date. On the Saturday prior to the move a small group travelled to Bungaree to remove some non tramway items that were inhabiting the shed where No. 21 was to reside and to lay the two panels of track needed to set the tram body down and roll it inside. Two days later another group assembled at Newstead to lay the track needed to roll the tram out of the shed ready for lifting onto the truck for transfer to Bungaree. Needless to say both of these work parties ended up being on hot dusty days and everyone was well pleased when the job was done.

While the Monday session of tracklaying was in progress, a series of phone calls advised that the move would actually have to occur on the following day, Tuesday 18th, due to problems with availability of trucks for the original date.

Tuesday came and everyone headed to their appropriate places and then waited patiently until some hours later when advice came that there were problems loading the truck at the Melbourne end. Everyone waited some more and eventually the plan was revised so that the move of No. 21 would actually occur on the original Wednesday 19th. With some trepidation we fronted up again on Wednesday and this time it all went to plan. The unloading, moving and reloading of tram bodies at Newstead was handled easily by the very professional crane operators and the road transfer of No. 21 to Bungaree went without a hitch. Once there No. 21 was unloaded with only a small delay by another crane and pushed inside with less than a millimetre of clearance to spare on the shed door.

Ballarat No. 21 will now rest peacefully undercover at our Bungaree property until such time as there is time and money to undertake a major reconstruction back to operating condition.

Wendouree Parade Trackwork

The weekend following the Begonia Festival saw the Museum commence track repair works in the Wendouree Parade north of Gardens Loop, in conjunction with the City of Ballarat. Tram services north of the Loop were suspended while works were undertaken. The first weekend was spent repairing a broken and undergauge joint about four pole lengths north of the loop. The following weekend about three pole lengths of roadway was excavated and some forty-four new sleepers inserted.

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Electric Supply Company Saloon Cars *continued from page 3*

The first trial of these trams took place on 31 July 1905. The official opening of the electric tram service took place on 19 August 1905. A convoy of trams was headed by saloon car No. 1 driven by the Mayor of Ballarat, Cr M. Barker. A few days after services commenced the Ballarat Courier noted some faults that had become apparent under traffic conditions:

Complaints are being made as to the height of the tramcar steps, and one or two minor accidents have already occurred owing to the difficulty of stepping gracefully from the car to the ground. There is another point to which attention has been called. People sitting on the end seats are cautioned to hold on. If they hold the backs of the seats they are likely to meet with a surprise when a jolt comes, because the backs are not fixed, but are so arranged as to allow passengers to face inwards or outwards.⁵

The Courier even noted the sign writing inside the cars. They were "liberally adorned with warnings not to get off while they are in motion, not to talk to the conductor, to hold on (this while travelling in the open compartment)".⁶ Another report listed the signs as "Wait till the car stops", "Beware of the swing at curves".⁷

Next issue: Initial operation, one-man operation and the 1920s.

5 *ibid* 22nd August 1905

6 *ibid* 9th August 1905

7 *ibid* 27th December 1907

Alastair To The Rescue

It was Sunday 2nd February, and Alastair Reither was on one of his many ice cream expeditions. He also decided on a tram ride, and on approaching the kiosk stop he saw three 'damsels in distress' with an elderly gentleman trying to change a flat tyre on a red jazzy sports car. When Alastair spotted this (or the three damsels) he dived out of the tram to help; (if he says the tram driver pushed him out this is not true!) The three damsels were standing around wondering what to do. The look on Alastair's face when the elderly gentleman turned around was a classic to behold. The gentleman was none-other than the Fire Truck Driver who also operates rides on Wendouree Parade.

Did Alastair shirk his duty? No! Did he walk away? No! He rolled up his sleeves, took another mouthful of ice cream and went to work.

The tram crew were not helping anything by breaking out in fits of laughter and with a cheery "pick you up on the way back Al" cleared out. When we returned, our hero had done his bit to cement public relations and completed his duties.

Trackwork *Continued from page 7*

A lot of work remains to be completed and the weekend of 5th/6th April will see the track lifted by about 50-60mm to bring it up above flood level. Volunteers for this work weekend will be most welcome. A more detailed report will appear in the next issue of *Fares Please!*

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.

E-mail: btm@netconnect.com.au

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