

FARES PLEASE!

May 2003

Ballarat Trams are Ballarat History



Museum Accreditation Program
Accredited Museum

Wendouree Parade Trackwork

Work to reconstruct the northern 440m of Wendouree Parade that contains our tram track commenced in mid March. Our portion of the work involved repairs to one broken joint and lifting of about 90m of track up to 70mm in order to lift it above flood level. Flood level one would ask at the moment – the Lake is at one of its lowest water levels ever.

The work to lift the track was spread over three weekends and a few weekdays. It involved digging out the track down to the top of sleepers using a backhoe. Fifty-five of the one hundred and twenty odd sleepers in the section were replaced. The track was lifted and lined, packed under the rails and finally filled with crushed rock to just above the top of the sleepers.

It was interesting that while, as expected, many of the sleepers had reached the end of their lives, many were still in quite good condition and able to provide support and hold their dogspikes. One change we made in the track, was the use of screw spikes instead of the traditional dogspike.

Although we had to buy the screw spikes, their installation was a breeze compared to dogspikes.

Some of the work took longer than expected, while other jobs were done quicker. We could not have done the work without our backhoe operator; Oedf Bylsma – a magician when it comes to putting sleepers in, lifting track and packing track. Many thanks to Alan Snowball, who arranged and picked up tools, materials and attended every day we worked on the project. Thanks to the various members who also assisted throughout the project.

The roadworks contractor, Mid West also assisted in the provision of roadworks signage and some materials. The City of Ballarat's Contract Engineer, Andrew Miller was also very helpful during the works.

The cost of the project will be in the order of \$9,000 to \$10,000 and that was for just some 90m of track. Doing tram track work in a roadway is a lot more expensive per metre than open ballast trackwork. However it was well worthwhile and the track will look great.

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Ballarat Tramways News

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Wendouree Parade – Trackworks

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The contractor had originally planned to have the works completed by the end of April, but bad weather (it actually rained a couple of times) and with difficulties at the St. Aidans Drive end with an old drain, the work was not completed until mid May.

No. 8 was used to test the packing of the track and then cleaning the railhead after the sealing of the road.

Tram services have been terminated at the Loop during the duration of the works. As a safety precaution, power was cut to the track by removing the bridging links in the section insulator just to the north of the Loop. Thanks must go to the City of Ballarat for resealing the roadway to the north of the Loop. Now for the rest of the track in Wendouree Parade!

Donations

Enclosed with this edition of *Fares Please* are receipts for those who have donated to the Museum Fund during the year. The Museum is very grateful to all those who have made a donation during the year no matter how small it was. Any further donations need to be in the hands of the Treasurer by the middle of June to enable her to process it by the end of the financial year. All donations of \$2.00 or more are tax deductible.

Membership

The Museum would like to welcome the following new member:

No 748 Robert Paterson of Ballarat.

Membership is now at the highest level for several years.

Membership renewal notices for the 2003-2004 year should be sent out as usual at the beginning of July.

Traffic

Balmy autumn weather has seen some excellent patronage, particularly at Easter and on Anzac Day. Even though it was late this year Easter proved to be the best for ten years with every day a very good day. The visit of the Austin Car Clubs on Easter Sunday swelled our numbers to 287 for the day.

On Wednesday 23rd April Frank Puls single-handedly managed to cope with 126 and then on Anzac Day Roger Salen faced a crowd of 212. He was lucky that they did not all arrive at once! We cannot remember an Anzac Day anywhere as busy as this. Our thanks to all those who worked so hard.

The track and road reconstruction has meant that our trips had to be curtailed to just north of the loop from Saturday 15th March until Sunday 25th May. There have been no complaints from our passengers about the shorter journey. Some in the Depot have been theorising about quicker turnarounds leading to greater productivity at less cost in electricity. Others who have been around since the beginning remember a very well known former Vice President who always had the whip out when he was conducting on the basis that the quicker the trip the more passengers would be able to travel in a day. Luckily these days we try to make a ride a pleasurable experience for all our visitors.

Public Liability Insurance

There has been little progress in resolving the issue of public liability insurance for heritage rail operators in Victoria. The present Deed of Indemnity with the State Government is seen by it as only a bridging arrangement. After a detailed examination of the risk when the Transport Accident Commission is factored in the Victorian Goldfields Railway (at Maldon) almost obtained insurance through a Bendigo broker only to see the insurance company pull out at the last minute.

Most heritage operators are now covered by the Victorian Government Managed Insurance Authority through the Deed of Indemnity scheme with premiums which are related to total income rather than risk and which are not sustainable in the long term. The impact on the Melbourne Tramcar Preservation Association at Haddon has been such that the site is closed to the public for the time being. Any organisation which does not have a sizeable visitor base and which relies on other sources of income is very heavily penalised under the present arrangement.

While the issue remains unresolved the Museum is required to defer restoration projects and direct expenditure towards insurance premiums.

Safety Accreditation

Trisha and Michael from the Department of Infrastructure conducted their annual audit on Saturday 26th April. Two minor observations were made concerning written procedures and 'signing off' procedures in the maintenance area.

100th Anniversary Celebrations In Bendigo

On the weekend of 12th/13th April the Bendigo Tramways celebrated the 100th anniversary of electric operation. Peter Winspur represented the Museum at the official ceremony on the Saturday and numerous members visited on the Sunday. Thanks to the generosity of the Minister for Transport, every Birney car in Australia (seven in all) was in Bendigo for the weekend and our members took the opportunity to ride them. Hawthorn Tramways Trust car No 8 also visited as it had been Bendigo No 3 at one stage during its long life. A highlight of the weekend was the launch of X1 Class Tram No. 466, which has just been restored for Len Millar and Darren Hutchesson. It is like a new tram and proves that almost anything can be beautifully restored.

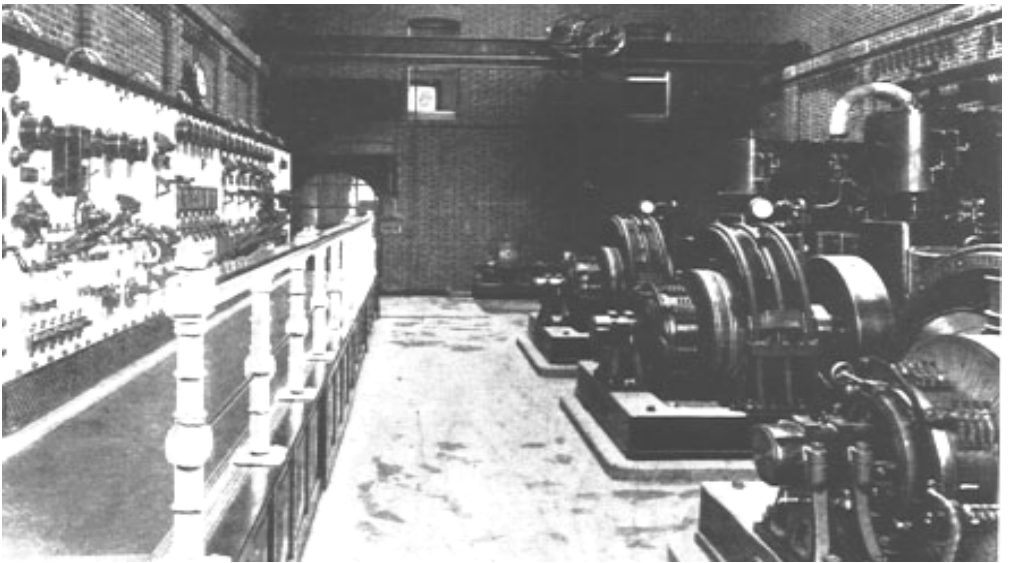
Begonia Festival Lost Property

During the Begonia Festival a passenger managed to drop her sunglasses down the saloon window cavity on No. 40, behind the sandbox.

The following Tuesday they were retrieved – removing the window and fishing with two pieces of beading proved a failure, so the front of the sandbox had to be removed. This appeared to have been undisturbed for many years, but eventually yielded, and the sunglasses retrieved.

On the back of the sandbox lid, inscribed in pencil in copperplate writing, was G. HOOD, MALVERN DEPOT, AUGUST 1924. Mr. Hood was well known for inscribing his name in Malvern cars of the period.

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Above: Interior of the Electric Supply Company power station, shown here at the time of opening in 1905. The switchboard is on the left-hand side with its elaborate handrail. The DC current generating equipment is on the right. ALAN BRADLEY COLLECTION

Below: Side-on view of ESCo No. 8. It is shown here converted for one-man operation, though it appears that there is a conductor present at the rear. The tram still has magnetic brakes. Circa 1912. LATE GEORGE NETHERWAY COLLECTION, BTM ARCHIVES



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Above: John Phillips, Alan Snowball, Richard Gilbert and Oedf Bylsma are busy re-packing the track after fifty-five sleepers had been replaced. Saturday 5/4/03. CAROLYN DEAN

Right: Packing of the 440 metres of track has been completed. The north end of Wendouree Parade paints a very lonely picture. The Parade was closed to motor traffic for a few days while it too was lifted and re-surfaced. Sunday 27/4/03. WARREN DOUBLEDAY



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The Electric Supply Company Saloon Cars By Alan Bradley

Continued from Fares Please! March 2003

In operation

Some of Ballarat's double-deck horse trams were used as trailers (both in Ballarat and Bendigo) during busy periods. This was, of course, another easy way to re-use old rolling stock. Connection between saloon car and trailer was by a dog-legged bar, due to the different height of the bumper bars. There was no braking connection between the two, so the conductor of the trailer had to use the old ratchet brake used in the horse tram days. At night the trailer was lit by an adaptor from the electric car.

The end platform seating arrangements of the saloon cars were similar to those of the dropcentre of a Melbourne W1 class. The passengers sat back to back and faced outwards. If it rained the seats could be faced inwards and weather blinds brought down. There were no side bars, so passengers could board and alight on either side. Conductors were required at all times for fare collection.

The normal service brake was a handbrake, of the "gooseneck" type rather than the wheel type used in later cars. The Westinghouse magnetic track brake was only used in emergencies, as it damaged the motors. There was no seat for the motorman, because that would have interfered with use of the handbrake. The ESCo was unwilling to fit air brakes. Initially there were no windscreens to provide protection for the motorman against the cold Ballarat winters. Some motormen caught pneumonia as a result.

The destination signs were originally metal plates hung over the aprons. Next came square four-sided revolving boxes on the roof, and finally revolving linen signs in a square box on the roof.

One-Car Operation

In 1913 the ESCo completed electrification of the Sebastopol horse tram line. It launched crossbench cars 21 to 23, the last trams built new for Ballarat. But it also introduced one-man operation, due to disappointing financial results with its tramway undertakings. As the first electric tram operator in Australia to do so, it worked out its procedures through experience.

Hinged gates were placed on each doorway with a notice ENTER FRONT END. Notice plates were placed at the top of the dash at each end. A PAY AS YOU ENTER sign was displayed on cars running into the city, and PAY AS YOU LEAVE was displayed on outward-bound cars. On Sundays during busy periods this arrangement was reversed for cars heading to the Gardens. The procedures were designed to avoid having a large number of passengers paying their fares at once.

Ladies complained that during wet weather they were forced to stand on the platform while paying their fare. Windscreens were soon placed on all of the Ballarat saloon cars, to the relief of all concerned. It took several years before all Bendigo cars were fitted with windscreens. A comment, perhaps, on the milder climate of Bendigo compared to that of Ballarat. With the fitting of windscreens the 'gooseneck' handles were altered for inside use.

The seat bases on the end platforms were moved outwards, and the seat backs fixed to face inwards. The footboards were initially kept at their original length, and passengers frequently rode on the footboards on busy days. The motorman was, apparently, expected to collect the fares! Late in 1923 the footboards were shortened.

Fareboxes were placed next to the motorman. These were fitted with mirrors so that when coins were inserted they could be seen while they sat in a tray. If the amount was correct the motorman pressed a button and the coins fell down into the box. The saloon cars became known as 'farebox cars' to distinguish them from the five crossbench cars, which always required conductors. However the saloon cars still required conductors (usually maintenance staff pressed into service) during busy holiday traffic when trailers were used.

One-man operation was controversial. The Ballarat Council felt that it inconvenienced the public, and questioned its safety. It was unpopular with the tramways union. Many conductors lost their jobs, and there was more for the motorman to do. Eventually the simmering industrial issues that arose from one-man operation resulted in a two-week strike in 1922. However a detailed discussion of the strike and its causes are beyond the scope of this article.

The 1920's

By the 1920s the lightly built saloon cars were in poor condition. In 1921 a Ballarat councillor said that the trams were not fit for the public to ride in.⁸ The *Ballarat Evening Echo* (a Union newspaper) stated:

"As a matter of fact a ride in a Ballarat car, as was recently remarked by a Brisbane visitor, is no joyful experience. If you successfully negotiate the entrance in the crush there is always a good chance of the machine's oscillating propensities precipitating one to the floor. Elderly persons know this unique feature by their own personal and painful experiences."

The Tramways Union stated its dissatisfaction with the cars in both Ballarat and Bendigo:

*"The cars on the Ballarat and Bendigo systems are makeshift cars converted from old two man cars and not embracing any of the modern devices and safeguards embodied in the cars on overseas systems. The driver is in the narrow passageway by which the passengers have access and there is no seat for him. The fact that he is called upon to give change prevents him from using gloves in cold weather. The nature of the uniforms provided the change pocket being inside his tunic necessitates his overcoat and coat being either left open or being very frequently opened."*¹⁰

The ESCo spent as little as possible on its Ballarat and Bendigo undertakings, due to the pending end of its franchise. The trams rocked and swayed on rough track, which had subsided in some locations. The cars sometimes ran with only one motor, and looked increasingly shabby. The three former Sydney "C" class cars had stiffening rods placed in their larger middle windows.

During 1927 the ESCo was trying to convince the Ballarat Council to extend its franchise. It stated that the lurching and vibration of the trams was due to track condition, rather than defect in the cars. It proposed to upgrade the existing saloon cars by moving the screens behind the motorman further back to make a wider entrance. It stated that the light design of the cars had helped to reduce the wear and tear of the track.¹¹ However the Council decided not to extend the ESCo's

8 ibid 3rd May 1921

9 *Ballarat Evening Echo* 22nd April 1922

10 Undated submission from Australian Tramway and Motor Omnibus Employees Association ESCo to Ballarat City Council 7th June 1927

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In The Workshop

With so much time devoted by the maintenance team to the Wendouree Parade trackworks over the past couple of months, progress in the workshop has remained slow but is now steadily returning to normal and things are beginning to get back on track.

Work on stripping down the woodwork around both cabs of scrubber No. 8 is well advanced and this has revealed some larger than usual gaps in between various sections. These are being dealt with by means of appropriately placed brackets to add strength and keep everything in place. Once the cab exteriors are completed up to the undercoat stage work will progress on stripping metalwork and removing some areas of rust resulting from this tram's lengthy storage out in the open while in Melbourne.

Both traction motors for No. 27 are now fully assembled and ready for installation. Work has begun on the other items of mechanical equipment such as spring posts, top plates and brake rigging. This work will form the final phase of the overhaul of No. 27 with the body and truck likely to be reunited within the next two months.

A particularly long-winded operation recently has involved the trolley pole on No. 33 which has developed a habit of leaving the overhead at a certain point more regularly than is appreciated. All the normal methods have been employed to date in an attempt to rectify the problem

such as adjusting the tension, realigning the angle of the wheel, replacing the wheel and even swapping the entire pole with a spare. None of these things have as yet made a difference, except the pole swapping which actually made things worse and was quickly swapped back. So, as of now, No. 33 continues to dewire just near the Lake Lodge on fairly regular occasions. Closer inspection of the point in question has revealed that the overhead at this point has an unusual vertical alignment (sort of an upside down hump) and the team will shortly set about realigning it in the hope of removing this problem. Why this appears to affect no other trams has been the subject of some debate and much discussion. Just another one of those things that makes preserving vintage trams an enjoyable pastime.

The Electric Supply Company Saloon Cars

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In hindsight, the proposed upgrade if adopted would not have been much of an improvement. The already worn-out cars would have been retained. There was no mention of badly needed improvements, such as air brakes and a seat for the motorman. In reality, nothing short of a total renewal was needed for the Ballarat and Bendigo systems.

Next issue: Disposal, Rebuilding of No. 12 and Reflection

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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