

FARES PLEASE!

March/April 2005

Ballarat Trams are Ballarat History



Museum Accreditation Program
Accredited Museum

2005 Begonia Festival

As reported in the last issue of *Fares Please!*, the Museum was again asked to provide free rides for this year's Begonia Festival. Even though the Festival was not able to find a suitable sponsor it felt that the provision of free transport within the Gardens precinct was sufficiently important to cover the cost itself. An agreement was reached between the Museum and the Festival to provide a service from 9:45am to 6:00pm on each of the five days of the Festival.

Two bogie trams operated all day every day and during the weekend they were supplemented by a shuttle of single truck trams between Gardens Loop and Depot Junction or Carlton Street depending on the demand. During the late afternoon seated loads of weary, potplant holding, visitors were carried back to the carpark and Carlton Street. Four trams were in use each day during the weekend.

It was all hands on deck for the Museum and in all twenty-six members gave their time which varied from four hours to forty-six hours over the five days. Five were there every day! Two came all the way from Perth! (Thank you so much Lindsay Richardson and John Shaw). As usual it was quite hard work for our crews, but great cooperation and happy passengers made it an enjoyable although tiring five days. Neil Lardner, our youngest member, admitted that he slept very well after it was all over.

The usual Saturday night barbecue at Merle and John Clowes' residence at Smeaton was attended by everyone who was able to come and the night finished with a fascinating slide show of Ballarat trams in much earlier times. This year Simon Green persuaded the proprietors of the Bridge Hotel at Bungaree to put on dinner for us on Monday night and the excellent three course meal washed down by a few ales was a great way to end the weekend.

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2005 Begonia Festival *continued*

Initial reports in *The Courier* suggest that approximately 20,000 people passed through the gates of the festival. The trams carried over 7,000 people which although fewer than last year was a superb effort. Tickets were issued to every passenger and Roger Salen managed the record of 560 for one day.

Our thanks must go to everyone who participated in what is always the busiest and most important time for the Museum. As is the case every year, we were ambassadors for Ballarat and the Festival. Outside the gates of the Festival we are always the most prominent people within the gardens to give assistance and directions. It was a job well done.

New Members

- 757 Phillip Work of Ballarat
- 758 Eric Cooper of Wendouree

Resumed Member:

- 6 Neville Gower of Ballarat

New Junior Supporter:

- 5034 Campbell Cox, son of member Andrew Cox of Wantirna

2005 Tram Pull

On Sunday 20 March the Museum participated in the third annual "Tram Pull". An event organised by Rotary – Young Ambition its primary purpose is to raise money for charity. This year money raised will be distributed to the breast cancer support network in Ballarat.

Eight teams representing various organisations in Ballarat competed through a series of heats to see who could pull one of two trams along the loop and reach the finish line first. TGM Engineers ultimately won in a narrow finish from B&D Technologies to retain its title from last year.

A sausage sizzle kept competitors and spectators nourished whilst other activities included a break dance demonstration and face painting for the children.

It was another successful event and has become a permanent part of Ballarat's calendar. In the past the Museum has been happy to participate at no charge as it's contribution to a worthy cause. This year Rotary announced on the day that there will be a donation made to the Museum. Given the disaster which struck last year it will be more than gratefully received.

PHOTO BALLARAT COURIER



In the Workshop

Steady progress has returned to the workshop in recent times following the unplanned activities required to get the museum back in operation at the end of last year.

Work on the preparation of No. 40 for repainting has accelerated with several replacement sections of guttering being installed and the new front aprons being manufactured by our local engineering contractor. While the work of scraping and sanding the bodywork moved to the interior of the tram this work also revealed a section of wood rot in one of the pillars that form the doorways in the drop centre. Further investigation showed that the extent of the rot was much greater than could be repaired with simple patching and in fact the entire pillar would need to be replaced. This task has introduced some of our more recent weekday members to the intricacies of coachbuilding and, while occupying several weeks of effort, has provided a valuable boost to the skills and knowledge of our team.

With the bodywork of No. 40 progressing rapidly, the work on the mechanical components has also been stepped up and much work has been undertaken on overhauling and repairing various parts of

the brake rigging in readiness for reassembly. At present it has still not been possible to test the rebuilt motor due to the interim procedures currently in place for isolating the traction power. However once this task is completed, the tram will be able to be returned to an operational state very quickly.

Paul has continued to work steadily on assembling the final components required to complete the substation reconstruction work including the manufacture of steel cabinets to hold new circuit breakers and overload detection devices. One of our members arranged a donation of a suitable quantity of heavy gauge electric cable from his employer and this will allow us to replace all of the main traction feeders and earth returns within the depot. It is expected that once the April school holidays have passed we will schedule a couple of days to bring all of this work together and install the remaining components.

With the “quieter” part of the year approaching we seem on track to have a very productive year and look forward to reporting the progress of a number of other projects over the coming months.

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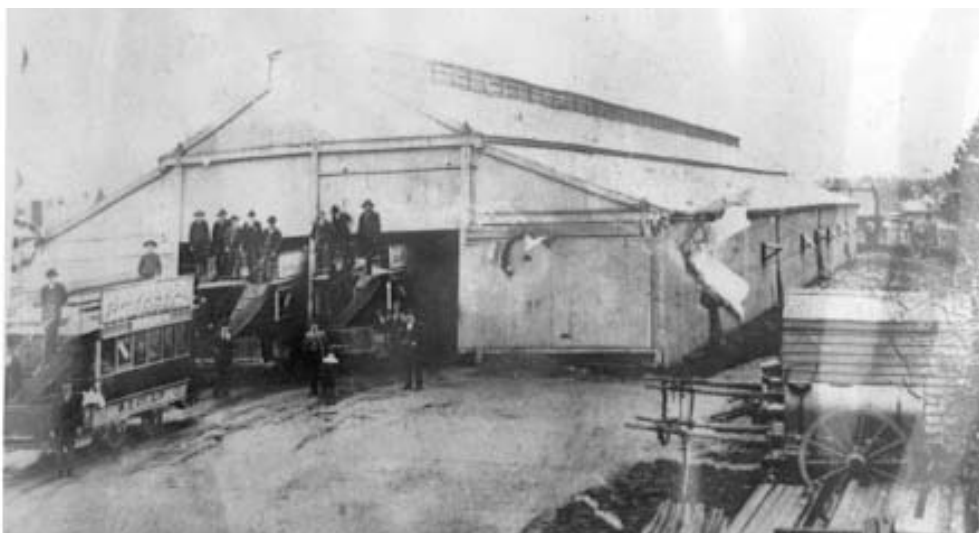


Above: Begonia Festival homegoing patrons board No. 661 at the loop on 12/3/2005.
PHOTO – CAROLYN DEAN

Below: Jack May, the conventions organiser for the Electric Railroaders Association (ERA) in New York visited the BTM on 26/5/2005. **PHOTO – WARREN DOUBLEDAY**



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Above: Wendouree Depot in the horsetrams days – c1900, two tracks with stables on either side. PHOTO – BTM COLLECTION

Below: The SEC depot, converted to four tracks, with a fifth 'O' road on the left hand side. The trams in the photo are Nos. 40 and 25. PHOTO KEITH KINGS – 13/1/1957.



G. Fares Please!

The Building of the Horse Tram Depot in Wendouree Parade – 1887.

Source:

The handwritten letter reprinted below is contained within a record or note book prepared by Ballarat ESCo, SEC Inspector H.P. James who was the Vice President of the Ballarat Historical Society at the time. The name of the letter writer is not known at this time. The book, donated to the Museum in 1996 by the James family contains many interesting items of Ballarat Tramway history which we hope to bring to you over the coming months. The letter is dated 11/10/1937. Some very minor editing has been done.

“I was asked by Mr. James to write up what I knew about the tram sheds at Wendouree. When the sheds were built I had just started at my trade as a plumber in Sturt St. I was asked to put in a tender for the plumbing work at the sheds. It was rather a big job as I was single-handed. Anyhow, I chanced it and was successful. Messrs Thompson & Moore of Adelaide were the Contractors, there was plenty of applications for a job. As there was plenty of time, I only put on 1 man – as he was a Carpenter I thought he might be useful. But he was there only one week as he was too slow for the price I had. Of course it was all straight sailing and no frills, I couldn't keep him on.

I had an improved (person) Bob Marshall from Golden Point and working into one another's hands the iron just flew on. One trouble we had was in respect to the screws and washers, it was impossible to drive them into the hard timber and eventually we had to use the flat point gal nails. I think we did a record job. It was a lot of iron to handle. I didn't want rocking when I went to bed at night.

There was a goodly number of men employed on the works and they gave me a good deal of assistance in putting up scaffolding and benches to work on. The contractors supplied the iron. My tender was labour only with the exception of the centre, which was 10g iron, slightly curved which I had to supply. Messrs Ellsmore and Hare, Armstrong St curved it for me. The King posts and beams were of box and hard as a bone. But anyhow we managed with a little persuasion and elbow grease.

In due course the job was finished and I received the cheque for the sheds. But there was another job and that was the cottages which were built for the employees. These ran from the sheds to the back of street behind where the “Jubilee” church stands. I complained to the Contractors about the purlins as I did not think they would stand gales of wind, the very opposite of the sheds. I told them if the wind got under the eaves which stood over about 1 foot, it was likely to blow them off. But no notice was taken and I thought I was alright as I had drawn their attention to it.

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The time came when the cottages were also finished and I was squared upon the Saturday and everything OK. A few days after there was a little bit of a breeze came across the lake, went up the skillion roof and got under the curved room – it being almost 3ft high and a mess it made. It broke the King posts off and carried the beams with the iron attached across to the railway line. A thing you would have thought impossible. I was going up to the sheds in the morning and I met Mr. Thompson coming down and his first salute was the “B” roof of the shed has blown off. I thought he was joking. But when I found he was in earnest I said, well if you had said the iron on the cottages was blown off, I could have believed you. But sure enough when I got up I found that it was true.

I then had the pleasure of straightening out the fist of the iron and putting it through the rollers and putting it on again. The Contractors asked me if there was any remedy so that it wouldn't occur again. I said the only thing I could suggest was to put “louvers” in the space which was eventually done. Before it could be finished, another gale very nearly repeated the performance. Ropes chains, wire, anything was hurriedly brought into use and saved the situation, by lashing the dome roof down.

After I had finished the work there, I had the job to put the iron round the miners racecourse for the same contractors. With the two jobs, I handled some tons of iron. The iron on the fence was put on with lead headed nails.

The youngsters found it was an easy job to pull the lead head off the nail. That was another problem. When all the iron was on the youngsters found that by putting a piece of wood between the sheets of iron they could see in alright. Then I had to go all over it and rivet the edges. The cutting of the pickets on the top of the iron was a cow of a job as it had to be done with the snips. Nearly all the houses in the vicinity had new roofs. I used to mark the iron and turn the case over, but it made no difference it used to disappear all the same.

I had to give them a price for making the cash boxes which used to be hanging by the side of the conductors over their shoulders indented on one side to fit. It was an awkward job to get the lid of so it had to open longways, so that the coins could not slip out.”

Some comments:

The photos of the horse tram depot shows the “louvers”, but the photos of the SEC era refurbished depot show that these have been covered over or removed. It is not known what steps the SEC took to keep the roof on at the times of high winds across the Lake. The photos show the transition. It would appear that when the ESCo converted the sheds into the electric depot, it removed the front wall, while the SEC built a new front wall with doors.

8. Fares Please!

Bye Bye Jacqui

by Dave Macartney

The Museum's long suffering cleaner, Jacqui Smith, has finally decided to call it quits. Jacqui Edwards, as she then was, signed on as a Trades Assistant with the Commonwealth Employment Program in February, 1985. Initially, she was told that she would be employed for six months. With careful budgeting, this was increased to seven months. Eventually, after 241 months, she has finally broken free.

She worked initially on No. 27, sanding down windows and even doing a bit of paintwork. The conductor's bells were beautifully restored from a very careworn state and are still a feature of the car today. This was followed by work on No. 26 and the horse tram.

Her career in trackwork was shortlived, sustaining a whack in the ankle with her first blow with the sledgehammer. The language was appalling.

Eventually she settled into a routine of comprehensively cleaning the weekends' cars each Monday. One of the strengths of the Museum is the presentation of the trams to the public, free of dust and windows sparkling. Keeping up that standard won't be easy. With Jacqui's marriage to Tony Smith at Haddon and her commitment out there, as well as actually living in a converted tram, it was only a matter of time before she retired.

Her son Daniel still spends two days a week at the Depot, so we can expect to see Jacqui's cheerful face around the place for a while yet.



We turn back the clock to December 1985 to see Jacqui, Kelly and Garry Wood hard at work restoring the horse tram.

DAVE MACARTNEY

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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