

FARES PLEASE!

April 2006

News from the Ballarat Tramway Museum

The Queen's Baton Travels by Tram



Proudly holding the Queen's Baton, champion basketballer Ray Borner poses with Peter Winspur and Stephen Butler. He has just alighted from Tram No 671 after the short journey from St Aidans Drive to the pedestrian crossing in the centre of the Gardens. Ray continued to the Conservatory before handing the Baton on to the next participant. It was carried on a lap of a miniature athletic track inside the Conservatory before continuing past the Depot to the Ex-Prisoners' of War Memorial and beyond. *Photo: Alastair Reither 9 March 2006*

Ballarat Trams are Ballarat History

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Up before dawn on 9 March 2006 Tram No 671 waits for the Baton to arrive at St Aidans Drive.

Photo: Peter Winspur

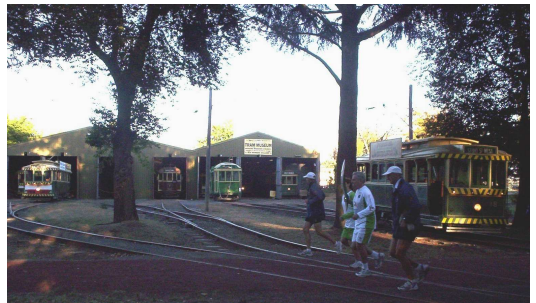


Ray Borner gives the thumbs up to our photographer Alastair Reither.

BTM Collection

The Baton passes the Depot on its long journey to the Commonwealth Games in Melbourne.

Photo: Paul Mong



The Queen's Baton Relay

Before dawn on Thursday 9 March 2006, Stephen Butler and Peter Winspur arrived at the Robert Clark Centre in the Gardens for an interview on local ABC radio. Meanwhile Gavin Young, Paul Mong and Alastair Reither were preparing Tram No 671 for the Queen's Baton Relay. After a successful interview and a quick coffee, Stephen and Peter ran out to St Aidan's Drive. As the relay was commencing here for the day the Baton arrived about 7:30 carried by three burly security guards in running gear.

Soon after the media, Ray Borner, who was to carry the Baton, and the support team arrived. A quick photo session ensued and at precisely 7:43 we were away. A couple of minutes later the tram arrived outside "Pipers on the Parade". More photos followed and Ray was off to the Conservatory. Our part was over. We must thank the Ballarat organisers for including the Museum in the relay. The tramway featured in the local media and on television as well in the "Herald Sun".

2006 Begonia Festival

After the excitement of the Baton Relay it was down to work for our crews. As usual our team of traffic staff rose to the occasion and for nine hours a day for five days our two W's ran without fault carrying thousands of passengers. They were supplemented by shuttle trips as required utilising single truck trams. Almost six thousand people travelled.

Despite unpleasant hot and windy weather the Sunday proved to be the busiest day with 1736 passengers. A wind change saw Ballarat enveloped with smoke that evening from serious bushfires nearby at Snake Valley. The first rain for weeks fell overnight settling the dust and leading to a very pleasant Labour Day.

Twenty four members volunteered their time and nearly 553 hours were worked. Gavin Young spent fifty seven hours and twenty five minutes at the Museum almost breaking his 2004 record. Five people were present for the five days. Others gave

as much of their time as they could and everyone's contribution was valuable.

Special thanks go to our Perth "boys" Lindsay Richardson and John Shaw. Without them we would have been struggling as several of our regulars were unavailable. Bruce Worthington also came down from Sydney to assist. Dave Macartney again spent hours cleaning the trams each night.

It was not all work, though, as sixteen members and friends dined at the Bungaree Hotel on the Saturday night followed by a fascinating slide show at the Bungaree residence from earlier times in the life of Richard Gilbert. Another gathering of ten shared a few drinks and dined in a Ballarat pub next night.

We must thank Begonia Festival and in particular Barbara Chalkley for their continuing support and recognition of the contribution the Museum makes to the success of the Festival.

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The Geelong Tramways - 50 Years Ago

In recent years the Ballarat Tramway Museum has been collecting and collating Geelong tramway history and taking on the mantle of being custodians of that history as there is of course no tramway group in Geelong. Being the third SEC operated tramway system we feel some form of collecting, monitoring and recording of the history and artefacts should be maintained.

This year marks the 50th year since the closure of the Geelong tramways. Unlike Ballarat and Bendigo which commenced their tramway history with flimsy horse trams in the case of Ballarat and lightly constructed battery trams in the case of Bendigo, the Geelong tramways commenced with the full package of electric trams operated by a well managed and capable electricity supply company. The Melbourne Electric Supply Company went on to become the foundation stone of the government established State Electricity Commission.

After many years of tramway proposals for Geelong, permission was granted by the authorities in 1910 for the tramway system to be constructed. The first tram to run was No.4 which ran a test run on track outside the Depot on the late afternoon of 10th January, 1912. The system was officially opened on Thursday, 14th March, 1912. The usual fanfare and complimentary speeches were made and the residents of Geelong accepted to their hearts the well constructed system. As early as the next year track duplications were made and track extensions proposed in 1914. Extensions were made to the Chilwell, Belmont, North Geelong, Eastern Park and

Eastern Beach routes. The longest route was extended to Belmont on 16th December, 1927. This could be compared with the Ballarat system having its long line to Sebastopol and Bendigo with its long line to Eaglehawk. The last route extension was opened to Eastern Beach on 19th October, 1940.

The system commenced with seven single truck trams and four trailers built by Duncan and Fraser of Adelaide. Over the years additional trams were acquired from Pengeley & Co, Brill and the Meadowbank Manufacturing Co. Two of the famous Birney trams located in Bendigo commenced their SEC life in Geelong after arriving from Port Adelaide. Ten maximum traction trams arrived from Melbourne in the late 1940's and with the exception of two, all were transferred to Bendigo and Ballarat upon closure of the system.

The usual story leading to abandonment of the system was played out in Geelong as elsewhere and the system was gradually closed between January and March 1956. The last tram was No.4 which ran from Belmont to the City late on the night of Sunday 25th March 1956. This tram had been the test tram and first to run in 1912.

What is there now? Well – a bit. The Depot was contained within a fine brick building which surrounded it and the city powerhouse. The outer wall has been retained in a fine example of preserving the past. A Coles supermarket is discretely located within the walls. Some tram stops, painted on poles, are still visible and the Depot roof structure is used as a scrap

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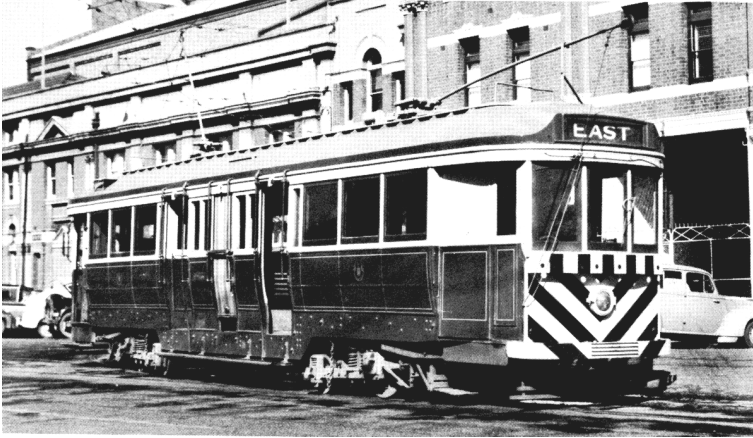
metal storehouse in the suburb of Moolap. Only recently a major road construction project saw the tram lines pulled up in Ryrie Street.

When you are next riding at Ballarat in No

13 or No 14, reflect on these trams having experienced an earlier life on this third SEC tramway system.

Richard Gilbert

(From information supplied by Bill Scott)



Tram No 37 outside the Depot in August 1955. It later became Ballarat No 42.

Photo: Keith Kings as published in "Trolley Wire" April 1976



The former entrance to the Geelong Tram Depot. Richard Gilbert, Clayton Giles and friends pause during a recent tour. *Photo: Richard Gilbert collection.*

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In the Workshop

Progress over the last couple of months has continued steadily on the final paintwork for No 40 in an effort to complete the work before the colder weather sets in and makes painting more difficult. In the meantime work has been busily proceeding on rewiring some of the lighting circuits including the headlights and dash canopy lighting so that the tram can be recommissioned and made mobile again. Once this stage is reached all that will be required is the final details of painting and finishing for the tram to return to active service.

One final day of major effort was made to complete the installation of the new feeder cable to power Wendouree Parade and connect new negative feeds to the rails in the depot. Other than some final technical adjustments to the new circuit breakers and finalisation of operational procedures, this brings the work on the substation reconstruction to completion. This has been a long and very expensive project but the results have been well worth the effort and will serve the museum well into the future.

The weekday crew spent several days constructing and installing the wooden troughing for the overhead wiring along 7 road within the depot. This is the final road that remains unwired and once the trolley wire is installed in the next few weeks it will enable 7 road to be used for day to day operations as well as allowing easy access to the vast, and largely unused, south wall of the depot where we intend to construct a large storage space for the hundreds of spare parts we have in our collection.

With the substation project now completed

and wanting to maintain some of the momentum created by this work, we have turned our attention to improving other facilities within the depot and workshop. Planning is currently under way for improvements to storage, workshop space, member facilities and display areas and it is intended to keep at least one or two major projects going at a time over the next couple of years to utilise the downtime between various aspects of tramcar maintenance and restoration.

Working On The Trams

I have no doubt that our fearless Traffic Manager has mentioned elsewhere in this issue that we have recently been involved with The Begonia Festival. I should like to make my own comments on it.

As a crew member I find it the most exhausting, but enjoyable part of our year. Normally we work in isolation, particularly as a driver, when one often spends a winter Saturday with one's tram the only company in the park. By contrast at Begonia Time we work as part of a friendly team. It is great to experience taking over a full tram "on the run", or the wonderful feeling of being "taken by" the relief crew for a desperately needed lunch break. It's fun to jostle along a crowded tram trying to issue tickets between loading at the car park and emptying at the loop (what a relief that we don't have to handle money at the same time), or share a joke with passenger who are having a good time. We experience passing or following other trams, wow, it's just like a real tramway.

Thanks to all those who work so hard behind the scenes so that we crew members can have such a great time.

'Til next time, ATD

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A busy scene at Depot Junction as No 671 exchanges passengers on its journey towards the Begonia Festival entrance on Saturday 11 March 2006.

A well loaded No 661 heads north on Sunday 12 March. The free tram service is a major factor in reducing traffic volumes in Wendouree Parade during the Festival.



On its second outing since arriving in Ballarat Newstead Tramcars' X1 Class tram No 466 heads south in Wendouree Parade on Sunday 26 February 2006. As the tram is for sale its operation in passenger service will be very limited.

All photos: Peter Winspur

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New Members

The Board and Museum welcomes the following new Members and Junior Supporters and hope they will find some enjoyment from being part of our wonderful team of volunteers and supporters:

- 767 Sandy Payet of Clayton
- 768 Tim Blythman of Rochester
- 769 Annette Gervasoni of Ballarat
- 5040 Caleb Wallace of Ballarat
- 5041 Reuel Wallace of Ballarat
- 5042 Lewis Davis of Wendouree

Recent Acquisition

A recent acquisition for the archives is a 1920's produced book with Panoramic Views of Ballarat and district. The book with photos dating from the 1880's through to the Arch of Victory contains a number of views with trams in them. It includes a photograph (shown alongside) of a horse tram turning from Sturt St. (north side) into Lydiard St. North, while another approaches the intersection from the terminal at Grenville St heading west along the northern side of the street.

COTMA Conference

The forthcoming Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia Conference to be held in Melbourne is being planned with the assistance of a number of BTM Board Members. The COTMA web site, www.cotma.org.au has details of the proposed conference program, circulars etc. The Conference opens in Melbourne on Friday 17 November 2006. All Museum members are welcome to attend all or part of the Conference. If you are interested in attending, the booking form should be available mid May 2006. If you do not have web access, the booking form can sent to you upon request to COTMA, PO Box 61, Carlton South, Victoria, 3053.



Fares Please! is published by the Ballarat Tramway Museum Inc. (A0031819K) six times a year in alternate months commencing in February. It is distributed to members and friends.

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