

# FARES PLEASE!

December 2006

*News from the Ballarat Tramway Museum*

## The 2006 COTMA Conference



*Conference delegates at Haddon on Sunday 19 November 2006 Photo: Jeremy Honeyman*

The Council of Tramway Museums of Australasia biennial conference was held from 17 November 2006. Titled “*Celebrating 100 years of Melbourne’s Electric Trams*” it was held in Melbourne to mark one hundred years of Melbourne’s electric trams. One hundred and twenty people attended the various events. The location was the Batman Hill on Collins Hotel, on the corner of Spencer and Collins St, a great tramway watching location. It was an outstanding success.

Hosted by COTMA, the BTM and the MTPA, a number of our members were involved in organising and running the Conference. Regular Conferences are a great meeting point for friends from the various tramway museums and enable valuable business to be conducted. Workshops on a great variety of topics lead to useful learning and friendships are rekindled and cemented. *(continued page 3)*

***Ballarat Trams are Ballarat History***

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## Conviviality ..... and Music!



Lindsay Richardson  
Peter Khan  
Stephen Butler and  
Richard Gilbert enjoy a  
Pre-Conference dinner  
drink on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup>  
November 2006

*Photo: Richard Gilbert  
collection*

No Conference would be complete without the opportunity to get together over a few drinks.  
Was the live music provided before the dinner by “The Saxophone Sam Big Band” a first?

BTM member Sam  
Boon and his  
musical partner  
Olaf Scott  
strike up some  
well appreciated  
tunes during the  
welcoming drinks  
*Photo: Richard  
Gilbert*



## The 2006 COTMA Conference

*(continued from page one)*

The Opening Address was presented by Geoffrey Claydon, Vice President of the Tramway Museum Society (based at Crich in the UK) who spoke about the nature and value of umbrella bodies such as COTMA. Winstan Bond, the recently retired Treasurer of the TMS (UK) prepared a paper looking at achieving sustainability in independent museums such as ourselves. Unfortunately he was unable to attend due to health problems. His paper was presented by Howard Clark, Chairman of the Sydney Tramway Museum. Also attending was Mikael Lund of the Danish Tramway Museum, the proud custodians of ex Melbourne W6 965, the Royal Danish Tram. He reported that the tram is very popular with visitors and ran virtually every day during the operating season.

A visit to our tramway was included in the program and two bus loads of Delegates arrived on the busy Springfest day, which on its own normally taxes our resources fully, but when combined with the COTMA visit became quite a task. We rose to the occasion.

Each Museum is encouraged to present a "Brag" of what it has achieved since the previous conference. This year the BTM's Brag was a DVD presented by Richard Gilbert. It was in the style of a Movietone Newsreel, once such an integral part of going to the movies in Australia. It was very well received.

On Tuesday, 21 November, the Conference General Meeting was held at which the work of the COTMA Executive was

reviewed, concerns of Member organisations gathered and future directions ascertained. Warren Doubleday, the BTM's Manager Museum Services, was re-elected as Chairman of COTMA for a further two years.

The Official Dinner was held at the Savoy Hotel in Spencer Street, Melbourne and this grand occasion was topped off with music supplied by 'The Saxophone Sam Big Band' where the talents of one of our members, Sam Boon, and his musical partner, Olaf Scott, played selections in the foyer whilst the guests arrived and partook of drinks.

This dinner was attended by officials from Yarra Trams, the Department of Infrastructure, our COTMA overseas guests from England and Denmark as well as the conference participants from New Zealand and around Australia.

The following day saw a tour in Melbourne using trams VR 53, SW6 909 and D2 5006 – the latter two painted to celebrate 100 years of Electric Trams in Melbourne. Yarra Trams are thanked for their co-operation in enabling the trip. That night, over fifty people travelled on the Restaurant Tram and had a great time. The following Thursday saw trips by about seventy delegates to the Tramway Museum Society Victoria's venue at Bylands and to the Bendigo Tramways. The final event was a two day tour to Portland organised by Richard Gilbert to visit Portland Cable Trams. Some fifteen took part in this trip and had a great time.

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## Springfest & the visit by COTMA Conference delegates

After the Begonia Festival, “Springfest” is the busiest time for the Museum. It is another day when we provide a public transport service to the public in addition to a Museum experience. This year Sunday 19 November was also the day chosen for the COTMA Conference delegates to visit the Museum. The day dawned warm and sunny and by ten o’clock market stalls had been set up all along the lakeside through the Gardens and beyond. Trams 661 and 40 (for the first time in several years) plied up and down enabling tired visitors to rest their legs. The fine weather enticed a large crowd to the edges of the (almost empty) lake. Just before two, ninety five COTMA delegates descended. Sufficient time was allowed for them to enjoy several special tram rides and to explore the Museum or even the gardens. Len Millar was on hand to operate Newstead Tramcars’ No 466 and this was of particular interest to the delegates. The scrubber car was also a hit. Meanwhile many rode the service cars or watched and photographed the day’s operations. The Officer in Charge was particularly busy at depot junction handling the numerous run outs and run ins and

ensuring that there were no “cornfield meets”.

Our thanks to those who worked to make it another successful day. We later received the following letter:

*Dear Stephen*

*I am writing to thank the museum for the enjoyable time I was able to recently spend at the site with the COTMA conference team. I was impressed with the facilities that the tramway has developed over the years and how professionally the operation of the service cars was managed.*

*I especially liked the turnout of the cars and the uniforms that the crews wore.*

*My previous visit to Ballarat was shortly after work on the current depot had begun and before the tramway was connected to the 'old' street running line. It was a pleasant surprise to see the growth (and the tramcar restorations) that had occurred over the intervening years.*

*Kind regards*

*Colin Perfect*

*Past President, Wellington Tramway Museum, Board Member, Rail Heritage Trust of New Zealand*

## The 2006 COTMA Conference continued

We all had a great time at the Conference and came away refreshed and enthusiastic by the amount of business conducted and social events attended.

After offering some years ago a surplus cable tram truck and tramcar end platform aprons to the Portland Cable Tramway, the Conference gave us the opportunity to finalise the gift and the equipment was re-

moved from our Bungaree site the following fortnight. This is a fine example of the fruitful business that can be conducted at Conferences.

(The Conference Papers can be viewed on the COTMA web site – [www.cotma.org.au](http://www.cotma.org.au) Click on the *Proceedings* tab There is also a high quality image of the group photo at Haddon)

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## Vale Neville Gower

On Thursday 9 November 2006 Neville Gower, the Museum's foundation Secretary, lost his long battle with cancer. He was almost sixty nine. Right up to the end Neville was active in promoting better public transport to Ballarat and he recently wrote to the Museum with a new idea for extending the tramway.

A note with Neville's proxy vote for the recent AGM stated in part:

*"Just a brief note to say, despite my continuing sickness, the highlights of BTM was being able to see the completion and launching of Alan Bradley's book and the privilege of taking the grandchildren for a ride on the horse tram. Both projects being dear to my heart – helping Alan get*

*started and working with Melton Foo to gain the body of No 1 for the BTM. Whilst I've never driven or conducted I've enjoyed helping in such admin struggles with the City of Ballarat with former Presidents Hal Cain and Maurie Calnin and the valuable work of Warren Doubleday with the Museum records, etc.*

*Thanks for letting me be part of the BTPS, BTM etc all these years"*

Austin Brehaut represented the Museum at Neville's funeral and he wrote later "By design or accident I'm not sure, but as we left the church, the clergy and altar servers preceded the hearse as far as Pleasant St along the old tramway alignment. Someone remarked to me that it would have been appropriate also to have had a tram in the procession". We extend our condolences to Helen and family.

## The Two Trammies

Recently the Museum was very pleased to receive a donation of the photograph shown on the left.

The photo shows two Ballarat trammies during the mid 1940's. Featured in the photo is Conductress Sylvia Mitchell and Driver Tom Young.

Sylvia won the "Most popular Conductress" fund raising competition held through the Victorian tram depots in 1944. The fund raising was to support the Red Cross Prisoner of War Fund. The photo shows in very good detail, the uniforms and aspects of the tramcars at the time.



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## In the Workshop

With tram No 40 finally handed back to traffic, work has proceeded quickly on the overhaul of No 14. During November the wheels and motors were both shipped to Melbourne for work to commence on reconditioning. In the meantime attention has turned to repainting the roof and the cream paintwork around the windows as well as overhauling all of the brake gear and mechanical components. It is hoped that No 14 will prove to be a relatively quick overhaul as inspection has shown that most items are in quite good condition, unlike some previous jobs.

The weekday crew at the depot recently spent several days painting all of the metalwork in and around the workshop pits in bright yellow, this dramatically enhances safety in the pit area for both staff and visitors.

As part of the process to reorganise the depot and workshop facilities to provide a better overall environment for volunteers and visitors, a major clean up was held at our Bungaree property during October to make room for a truck load of parts and materials to be moved from the depot to the Bungaree storage sheds. The intention is to relocate many parts that, while needed, are rarely used and are more suited to off site storage, this will free up valuable floor space within the depot to allow improvements to proceed.

Also on the improvement front, the appearance of the old depot area, which provides most of our public viewing area, has been enhanced with the addition of new high bay lighting and the replacement of the old wooden beams which supported the

overhead troughing with new steel brackets.

The new lighting makes the whole area much more inviting for visitors and adds greatly to the presentation.

During the past week, work has commenced on a major refit of our display and sales area, the intention is to provide a more complete experience for visitors with high quality photo displays, interactive exhibits and audio visual presentations. The first stage of the project, which is planned to take around two years in total, involves closing the existing sales area and undertaking some structural works on the floor, walls and roof. A full article detailing the plans will appear in a future issue of "Fares Please".

As the end of another year approaches, I would like to take the opportunity to thank all those that have assisted in making 2006 a very productive and rewarding year and wish you all a safe and happy festive season. I look forward to seeing you in 2007.

*Garry Wood*

*We wish all our  
members and friends  
a Merry Christmas  
and a  
Happy New Year*

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## Where is it Now?



Earlier this year the Ballarat Lions Club wrote to the Museum to see if we could shed some light on a structure which sits on the boundary between the SES building and the Apex and Lions sheds in Abattoir Street, Alfredton. One of the photos enclosed is shown above. Within days Dave Macartney had sent them the following photo he took on 23 July 1961. Behind tram No 32 it shows the substantial waiting shed at Lydiard Street North terminus. The tram was on a Victorian School Railway Clubs Association Tour.



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## We had it (relatively) easy

Recently, Warren Doubleday, in his capacity as Chairman of COTMA, asked if the Museum could assist member museum Launceston Tramway Museum in the development of their tram driver training program. The last tram operated in Launceston on 13 December 1952 and there was always going to be a shortage of qualified local staff! In arctic conditions (the coldest November day ever!) in my capacity as driver training officer I spent Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> with Launceston members John Binns and Robert Quinn taking them through the first day training program. They then spent the following day with Richard Gilbert continuing to drive in Wendouree Parade. The intention of the exercise was to provide experience which could be taken back to Launceston so that a driving program acceptable to the Regulator can be developed.

When the BTPS was established in 1972 Safety Regulators did not exist in the rail industry. The Museum was also fortunate in having a core of experienced tram drivers from Melbourne and a very supportive management at the Melbourne

& Metropolitan Tramways Board. The Museum was able to develop its own systems, the tram driving part of which was validated by its drivers being examined by officers from the Melbourne training centre. By the time the Museum went its own way due to the lack of Melbourne examiners qualified in our type of tram the Museum had some fifteen years of experience and a member who was professionally qualified as a trainer and examiner.

In 1998 when safety regulation was mandated in Victoria the BTM had policies and procedures in place which were based on twenty five years of operation. Although time consuming it was a relatively easy process to establish a safety system acceptable to the new Regulator. In the current environment any museum planning to develop an operating tramway or railway is faced with hurdles which must at times seem insurmountable. We wish our friends at Launceston well in their endeavour to commence operations and hope that our contribution will assist them to achieve their aim.

*Peter Winspur*



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