

FARES PLEASE!

June 2007

News from the Ballarat Tramway Museum

Tram No 14



*Tram No 14 approaches what is now known as Depot Junction. 22 May 1971
BTM collection (From N J Simons collection)*

For many years the Museum has been carrying out a program of preventative maintenance on its tram fleet. One by one the trams have been lifted and any parts beyond repair have been replaced. When necessary the wheels have been sent away for re-profiling, and in the case of Tram No 40, new tyres fitted.

In recent years, a program of “baking and dipping” the motor armatures has begun. Unfortunately, with ninety year old vehicles we are never sure what the outcome of any inspection will be.

Earlier this year, Tram No 14’s motors were sent away in the expectation that they would soon return refurbished and ready to go. Unfortunately, this will not be the case as tests have shown that one of the armatures has reached the end of its life and will require a complete rewind. Suddenly a budget of \$8,000 for the project has blown out to at least \$16,000.

Such are the perils of maintaining and operating historic vehicles. At present a suitable quote is being sought and No 14 waits forlornly to be reunited with its motors.

Ballarat Trams are Ballarat History

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Richard Gilbert (right) congratulates founding member John Radcliffe on the AETM having attained 50 years. COTMA Treasurer, Howard Clarke (left) looks on.

Below: The 'good old days' in Adelaide. Dropcentre tram 250 scoots along the 4 track section, which saw the Glenelg and Colonel Light Gardens routes run parallel for some distance.

Photos: Richard Gilbert collection

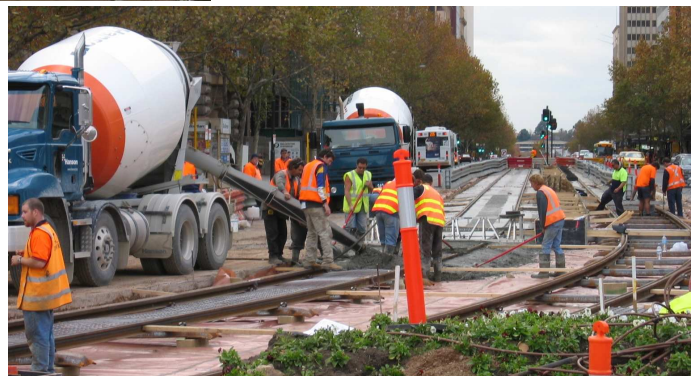


Below: Adelaide today. Tram No 110 arrives at the soon to be removed Victoria Square Terminus. 16 June 2007. Will John Radcliffe still be a member of the AETM when this tram joins the AETM fleet?



Right: Track laying in King William Street. 9 June 2007. The new line will run along the western side of Victoria Square.

Photos: Peter Winspur



Fiftieth Anniversary of the Australian Electric Transport Museum

The AETM has been preserving the tramway, trolleybus and bus history of the Adelaide tramways now for 50 years and to celebrate the occasion festivities were organised for the weekend of 26th/27th May 2007. Our museum was represented by Richard Gilbert, Alastair Reither and John Shaw. John is of course more closely located to the Perth Tramway Museum, but he is also an active member of our group and joined us in Adelaide for this event. Representatives were attending from the tramway museums at Sydney, Bylands, Bendigo, Perth and Auckland. The Saturday saw some tram rides and then the official celebration where the Hon Trish White, the Member for St Kilda, cut the celebratory cake with five of the founding members present.

Celebrations moved into the evening and a barbecue and social night of tram rides, old 16mm movies and lots of discussions took place.

The next day was a public running day and the ABC did a morning live broadcast from the museum, which saw many people arrive during the afternoon. The crowds filled the trams and it was quite a carnival event accompanied by many tram fans as well as those who had attended the night before.

We also called in to the city centre of Adelaide to see construction progress on extending the Glenelg tramline from Victoria Square to Adelaide Railway Station. It is pleasing to report the tramlines are laid for the length of the line, except for final track layout at the finish of the route in North Terrace. It is pleasing to have such a weekend at a progressive tramway museum, which has accomplished fantastic restoration projects, then to go into the city and see new trams operating and the tramline being extended. Tramways are certainly at their zenith for many years in South Australia.

Richard Gilbert



The Hon Trish White cuts the celebratory cake in the presence of five of the founding members of the AETM.

Photo: Richard Gilbert

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***“There’s a charter Wednesday week at 11am.
Are you available?”***

(Message from the Traffic Manager)

Such is a common call to tram crews as the Museum meets yet another commitment to one of the many charters booked with BTM throughout the year.

Over the years we have had a wide variety of people hiring our tramcars, groups large and small, from schools both from Ballarat and outside, coach charters which are generally senior citizens’ organizations or other community groups, or wedding parties who make use of trams for nibbles and drinks between the wedding ceremony and the reception. And we have the occasional birthday charter. Some just want the ride, others like to inspect the depot before or after. Sometimes there can be two charters on the one day, which puts pressure on the traffic staff, and it’s not always easy to find crews willing and able to cover the visits especially on weekdays.

Thank goodness for the local retirees!

It is fascinating to see the different reactions from our “charterees”. Young children, especially from out of Ballarat, may never have even seen a tram, much less ridden on one, and these strange vehicles can be quite a source of wonder to them. It is beyond them to relate to the days when trams were the common means of public transport in Ballarat in the days before cars were as numerous as they are now. But get them in the depot and they certainly know how to ring the drivers’ gongs!!

On the other hand the senior travellers may well have even ridden on W3 class 661 or W4 class 671 (which we generally use on such occasions) in Melbourne, and there are so many stories told and reminiscences shared.



No 40 stands at St Aidans Drive on 19 September 2006 during a visit by Tooleybuc Primary School.
Photo: Austin Brehaut

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“Jane” poses in front of tram No 671. Her husband of less than a few hours looks on from the driver’s cabin. 30 April 2005

Photo: Carolyn Dean

Despite the fact that the tram steps seem to get higher each year and the difficulty some of our visitors have in negotiating them, there is usually a great air of excitement amongst the elderly travellers. And since the more frequent crew for these visits are driver Frank Puls and conductor Austin Brehaut, both well into their 70s, passengers and crew can often relate to each other very well.

Recently we had a gentleman from Melbourne who had worked in the Preston Workshops, and who almost

certainly would have serviced these cars in years past.

Wedding parties are probably more interested in the refreshments offered than the actual trams, though we often have keen interest shown by some guests, and the bridal couple and their families are usually very appreciative of the facilities we offer on such happy occasions. For the crews it can be hard to have to decline a drop of “bubbly” in view of our zero alcohol situation. And the trams can find their way onto the wedding pages of the Ballarat Courier. (Good publicity!)

But to at least two of the traffic staff, particularly driver Dave O’Neil, the highlight of the year is the visit of the Cops’nKids camp members with Sgt John Maloney and the carers of children many of whom may not be about to enjoy the next camp. As Dave has previously written in this journal, there is something special in being with these littlies who make the most of every moment they have, and the Museum is glad to be able to offer them (at no charge) this brief time of enjoyment in their young lives.

Charters are important too in boosting the Museum revenue, and we encourage them. But it is this opportunity of helping to keep our significant part of Ballarat history before the wider public and enabling our venerable “old ladies” currently ranging in age from 73 to 94 years to give enjoyment to so many visitors to Ballarat that helps to make the Ballarat Tramway Museum such a vital and pleasurable part of our city life.

ATC (aka Austin Brehaut)

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Tower Trucks

Former M&MTB tower truck No 14 arrived from Melbourne on 15 February 1980. It was one of two the M&MTB obtained from Sydney after closure. Apart from some major mechanical work, since then it has received little attention. Dave Macartney submitted the following:

During the autumn months the tower truck came in for some modifications and a repaint. An additional rail was placed around the work platform, which involved the manufacture of six new and longer uprights and the installation of the new rail around the perimeter. This provides a much more secure environment for anyone silly enough to undertake overhead maintenance.

The tower was completely repainted as part of the upgrade, and is looking very smart in its cream livery. The colour is Arcadia, the same as that used on the recent restoration

of No. 40. Phillip even managed to insert himself inside the tower to reach those parts that were out of reach from the outside. Many gratuitous remarks about bears in cages were thrown his way.

A visitor to the museum during the work was most interested, as he had driven one of the Bedfords down from Sydney after the closure there. He informed us that the towers were not part of the deal, and had been removed prior to delivery. A perusal of the S.P.E.R. video tape, "Shooting Through", confirmed that the Sydney towers were of a different pattern altogether.

The photograph of overhead being checked for the Bourke Street opening in 1955 seems to answer the mystery. The towers carried by the M&MTB Maple Leaf Chev and pre-war Albion appear to be identical to ours. At a guess it would seem that these towers were transferred



Photo: BTM collection

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to the two slightly younger Bedfords on their arrival in Melbourne. At least the Bedfords had two windscreen wipers, compared to one on the Maple Leaf and none at all on the Albion, not to mention doors or bumper bars. Both of the earlier trucks, however, sport magnificent cable tram gongs on their cab roofs. Wouldn't that Albion turn heads in Wendouree Parade!

Membership Renewals

Membership renewal notices will be sent out in early July. After lengthy discussion the Board reluctantly decided that membership rates for 2007/2008 should be increased. This will be the first change for five years. The new rates are: Adult \$25.00, Pensioner \$18.00 and Junior Supporter \$15.00.

Donation Receipts

If you have made a donation to the Museum during the year 2006/2007 your Receipt should be enclosed with this edition of "Fares Please".

It has been policy for many years to send receipts out at the end of the Tax Year as all donations over \$2.00 are tax deductible and this reduces the requests for duplicates.

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to call the Treasurer on 9877 4130 or e-mail secretary@btm.org.au.

New Member

The Museum welcomes the following new member. We hope his time with us is long and rewarding.

774 Mr David Lyons of Maribyrnong



Above: The extended railings around the tower truck platform as seen on 27 May 2007 before the top coat was applied.

Left: The tower in original condition.
16 August 2005

Photos: Peter Winspur

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The Joys of Autumn

At last it has happened: RAIN! It was very moist in Wendouree Parade as I eased No 18 out of the depot on Sunday morning. The day started with sunshine, but this did not last for long. Lake Wendouree was starting to look a bit wet in places. The patches of water are not joined up yet, but it's going in the right direction. The deciduous trees are showing their beautiful autumn colours, but what a pity they don't keep their colours on the trees.

Wet leaves make the track very slippery. Sanders are useful to get a grip to stop the tram, but are of less use in starting since they spray the sand way in front of the wheels. Of course one learns to put sand down in the last bit of stopping so that there is some under the wheels for starting.

On getting to St Aidan's Drive I walked beyond the tram to place the warning sign at the end of the track and notice the air compressor running at about half speed. "I'll have to change trams" thought I until I noticed that the lights were dim as well. No18 was standing on a thick bed of wet oak leaves that was providing some resistance.

Fortunately the arcing must have burned through the leaves and the problem cured itself, although I was still very careful about how I swung the pole.

A little later it started to rain and I was reminded of the other bit of fun: swinging the pole in the rain. You reach up and pull the rope. The tension on the rope squeezes the water out of it and it runs down the rope and into the drainpipe otherwise known as your sleeve. The water is cold. And wet. It's more fun driving a tram in the rain if you have a connie. Austin where are you when I need you?

To add insult to injury there were very few customers about on a cold, wet day.

ATD your man at the front.

We Were Wrong!

In the April edition of "Fares Please" it was stated that Richard Gilbert provided the slides for the member's night at Bungaree during the Begonia Festival. They were in fact provided by Graeme Cleak.



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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