

FARES PLEASE!

April 2008

News from the Ballarat Tramway Museum

Another Busy Begonia Festival



Labour day weekend 2008 proved to be particularly hot and dry with every day over 35°C. The lack of rain saw the Gardens a pale brown without a flower to be seen in the flower beds. Lake Wendouree continued to resemble an unkempt paddock. In spite of all this the number of visitors to the Begonia Festival was substantial. The free tram service sponsored by the Festival again proved popular and with four trams in service for much of the weekend 5335 passengers were carried in the three days.

Twenty five of our members contributed some 430 hours of their time. Some were there every day. This year on the Monday a very welcome simple lunch was provided to our crews.

The weekend is always an opportunity for our workers to get together and this took the form of enjoyable dinners at the Gordon Hotel and the Great Britain Hotel. The Saturday evening concluded with a video screening at Bungaree House.

Photo: Peter Winspur 9/3/08

Ballarat Trams are Ballarat History

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The Target



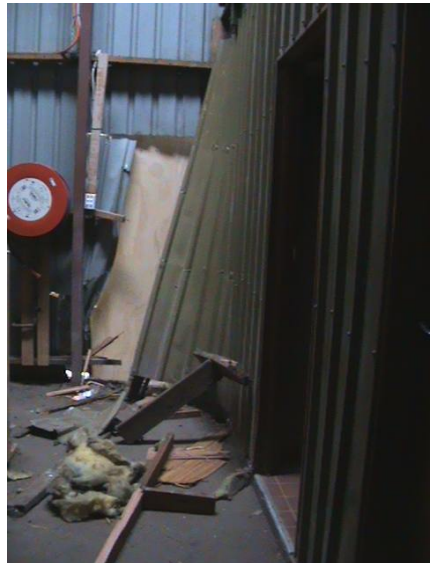
The Trajectory

The Depot under attack!

The Culprit



The Damage



*Photos: Paul Mong 27/3/08
Except The Trajectory: BTM collection 27/3/08*

Crash!

In the early hours of Thursday 27th March a P plate driver with an over inflated idea of his ability managed to launch himself over the roundabout in Gillies Street, some 100 metres north of the depot. Completely losing control of the car, he managed to avoid colliding with the pole carrying the depot's Powercor transformer before burying the car in the back wall of the shed.

Police attended and arranged for the depot to be made secure. Dave O'Neil, the rostered driver, arrived around 9:00am to find that the change room had suffered the brunt of the damage, with the uniform rack collapsed and all the junk piled on top

scattered. The rear fire escape door was demolished, with some damage being done to the fire hose plumbing.

As the building is on Council controlled land it is insured through the Council. Their claims officer attended and arranged for Council workers to make the building more secure and set in train the process of the inevitable insurance claim.

In all, the outcome could have been far worse for the Museum, particularly if the transformer had been damaged. The job of repairing the damage to the internal walls has already begun.

Horse Tram to Run

It is intended that Horse Tram No 1 will operate during the afternoon of Sunday 11 May 2008 as the Museum's contribution to the Ballarat Heritage Weekend.

This year the Ballarat Heritage Weekend will be held on Saturday and Sunday 10 & 11 May. Many grand institutional buildings, gardens and historic private residences will be open to the public.

Further information can be obtained by calling 5320 5819 or by visiting:

www.ballaratheritageweekend.com

The Tramway Museum will be open early on both days and guided tours will be available. Visits to the Museum will be free. Horse Tram rides will cost \$10 adult, \$5 children and concession and \$25 family. The fare will also cover rides on the electric tram.

New Sunday Bus Service

In recent years there have been substantial improvements to regional public transport in Victoria. The frequency of train services has increased dramatically and V/line tickets now include travel on Ballarat bus services.

A trial Sunday and Public Holiday bus service was introduced recently between the Ballarat Railway Station and the Botanic Gardens.

Buses leave Ballarat Station at 9:50, 11:00, 12:05, 1:40, 3:00, 4:35 and 5:35 for the Gardens. They return from the Gardens at 10:05, 11:15, 12:20, 2:00, 3:15, 4:50 and 5:50 for the station.

To visit the Museum it is now possible to leave Melbourne at 8:28, 9:28, 10:28, 12:08 and 13:28 with a connecting bus to the gardens. A far cry from the days of the Sunday excursion train!

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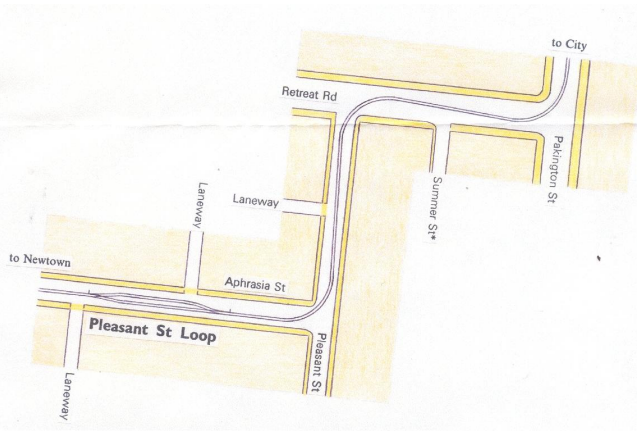
The Former Ballarat Scrubber Tram

Some of our members may have read items in two recent editions of *Running Journal* concerning the former Ballarat ESCo tram No 23 which was later converted into a scrubber car by the SEC. On closure of the SEC tramway in 1971 the tram became the property of the TMSV.

Late last year the Museum received a letter signed by the Chairman of the TMSV in which this tram was offered to the BTM. The offer included ten specific conditions which the BTM was required to meet for the tram to become the property of the BTM.

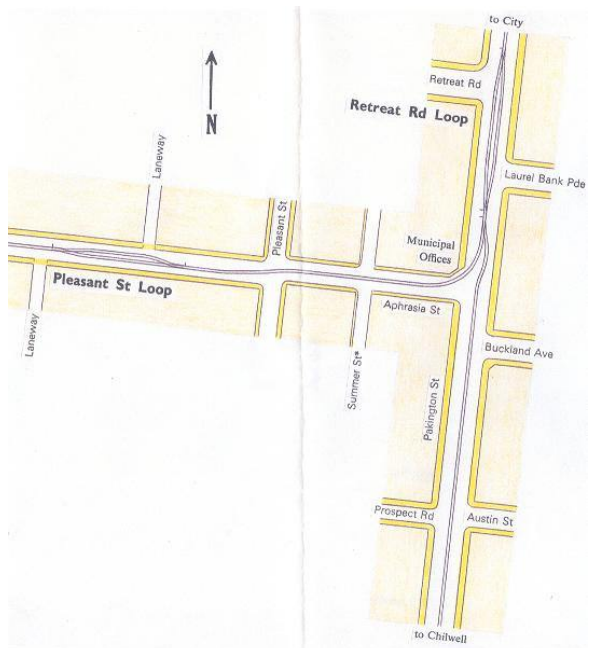
The BTM Board considered the offer and determined that it could not agree to some of the conditions. A letter responding to the offer in which the concerns of the BTM were indicated was sent. We offered to meet representatives of the TMSV so that the proposal could be further progressed.

A letter signed by the TMSV Chairman withdrawing the offer was received a few days later.



Tramway Rail from Geelong

The short lived route via Pleasant Street and Retreat Road of the Newtown line in Geelong is shown above. Below is the new route via Aphrasia Street. The new route to Chilwell with its unusual junction in Pakington Street is also shown. *(Diagrams courtesy Andrew Cook)*



The Tramway Rail from Geelong

It appears our recently acquired tramway rail from Geelong has an interesting history. Friend Andrew Cook, who has a great interest in the history of the tramways at Geelong, has sent us a lot of detail of the actual rails we now have in storage to be used in some repair work to our tramway in Wendouree Parade.

The story has two parts. The rail was originally located on part of the Newtown line which was altered in 1914 when the line in Retreat Road and Pleasant Street was abandoned in favour of a new line built along a new street opened between Pleasant Street and Pakington Street, known as Aphrasia Street. The rail in Pleasant Street was used for a relay in Malop Street, at Gheringhap Street, replacing badly sunken trackwork being the result of the original system being laid on concrete stringers with tie bars between the rails and no sleepers being used.

The rails were originally laid down in 1912 and when removed in 1914 were most likely re-used as a consequence of World War 1 and the resultant supply problems involved in purchasing new rail from overseas along with being quite new and serviceable. The original rail used in Geelong was Lorain (American) 80 pound grooved tramway rail. Later, rail rolled by BHP was used, especially on the East Geelong line. The Special Work (Points, Crossings etc) was by Hadfield (English).

An article in the Geelong Advertiser of 4th August, 1914 states "*The old tramway track in Retreat Road and Pleasant Street, Newtown, which has been out of use since the deviation to Aphrasia Street from Pakington Street, is now being torn up. The*

company's staff commenced the work yesterday, and special jacks were requisitioned which gripped the rails and lifted them bodily from their firm bed of concrete. The process is decidedly effective, and its novelty was a source of attraction to many yesterday. When the rails are all taken up, the roadway will be restored to its former condition by the company. The old rails will be utilised in that section of Malop Street near Belchers fountain. Here a subsidence in the track, due to the marshy under-soil, has been discovered, and in order to avoid complications later, the company has decided to take up the rails at once for about 130 feet, and relay the line upon an underground bridge of concrete. This, it is expected, will withstand any future possibility of a sinking of the track".

Andrew's notes further state, regarding the Newtown deviation, that by the beginning of 1914, the Council had completed its survey for the new road. Arrangements were made to carry out the laying of the rails whilst the road was being made and on the 16th June the deviation was linked with the existing route. It had been the intention to remove the rails from the old route without delay, but at the request of the Borough Engineer they were allowed to remain in position until such time as certain reconstruction works in the streets in which they were laid were carried out. However these roadworks were not carried out until 1915, but the urgent requirement of the track repair in Malop Street saw the rails removed in August, 1914.

Thanks to Andrew for this most interesting article and Part 2 will be in our next issue.

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In the Workshop

On 13th February the concrete base for the storage shelving at the rear of the depot was laid. Unlike a certain other museum, which seems to consume vast amounts of concrete, this was the first concrete pour for over twenty years, since the mess room and office were done. Erection of the shelves soon followed; in the present configuration it provides some 510 square feet of storage space. Needless to say, this has been largely filled without making more than a token reduction of the amount of stuff to be accommodated.

During February a set of clear plastic weather blinds were fitted to No. 661 to assess their suitability, particularly with a view to charter work. They certainly brighten up the drop centre area on dull days when blinds are required, and it will remain to be seen if they are robust enough for tramway service.

The fleet have kept the maintenance staff busy over the summer period. No. 13 has had a sticking saloon door freed up, a very messy job in a restricted space. No. 27 required an axle bearing to be refurbished, while No. 40 was fitted with an L type compressor governor after repeated problems with the beetle back model, which itself had previously been fitted to No. 38. On 15th March No. 33 joined the sick list with electrical problems which are still being diagnosed.

On 2nd April the shed was rearranged, with ESCo. No. 12 being moved to the bottom of 3 road and No. 28 taking its place on No. 5 road, this taking place during a dust storm of biblical proportions. A motor needs to be removed from 28 and the field

coils attended to, as well as a compressor change. This will need to be done on 5 road, as the non completion of No. 14's motors will see 4 road tied up for some time yet.

1918 Christian Convention Badges

The Museum actively collects memorabilia that features trams in Ballarat. During June 2006 it acquired a 1918 Ballarat Christian Convention badge featuring an image of Sturt St looking west from the Town Hall, with an ESCo tram towing an ex horse tram in the bottom section of the badge.

Recently another badge for the same convention was acquired, this time Sturt St looking west from the Post Office, with an ESCo tram and an ex horse tram trailer in the bottom section of the badge.

These badges are significant in that they have a strong association with a major Christian convention in Ballarat just before the First World War ended and show how trams were often featured in meeting memorabilia.

New Member

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

783 James Hillis of Invermay

Donations

Tax Receipts are enclosed for those Members who donated to the Museum with their membership renewals. If you wish to make a further donation this financial year it needs to be in the hands of the Treasurer by early June.

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Two badges from the 1918 Ballarat Christian Convention. Both feature scenes of Sturt Street in which trams are very prominent.



Left:

No 661 at Carlton Street on 23/2/08. Daniel Edwards and family were celebrating his 18th birthday. The new weather blinds can be seen.

Right:

2008 Begonia Festival.

Crew change at Depot Junction Sunday 9/3/08

The two W class trams continue to be our workhorses during these days.

*Photos:
BTM collection*



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What Might have Been



Begonia Festival 1962? A story concerning the demise of the X1 & X2 class trams in Melbourne in 1962 has them suddenly withdrawn and disposed of whilst Sir Robert Risson, Chairman of the M&MTB was overseas. From 1930 until 1951 many surplus trams found themselves operating on the provincial tramway systems as their operators took the opportunity to replace worn out trams with

slightly younger and less tired ones. If the robust and very suitable, for Ballarat, X1 class trams had followed this could have been the scene in 1962 as they were hurriedly pressed into service still in M&MTB livery.

*Above: Newstead Tramcars' Tram No 466 in Begonia service in Wendouree Parade.
9 March 2008*

Photo: Peter Winspur



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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