

FARES PLEASE!

December 2008

News from the Ballarat Tramway Museum



Mark McKay guides No 27 past the always busy playground on Sunday 7 December 2008. Unlike the 1960's, the Museum believes in keeping our decorations simple. In this issue Alan Bradley recalls the Santa trams which ran from 1964 until 1970.

Photo: Peter Winspur

Seasons Greetings!

Ballarat Trams are Ballarat History

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Organised by Eureka Orienteers, students from St Patricks College attempt to pump water into No 8. *Photo: Roger Salen 29 November*



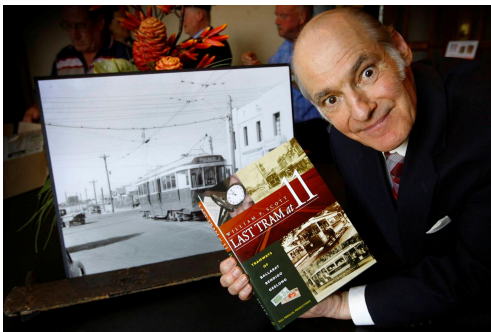
Alan Snowball hard at work on 25 November
Photo: BTM Collection

“Last Tram at 11”

After many years of research by its author, W. F. Scott, this wonderful 208 page story of the provincial tramways in Victoria has finally reached the book stores and is now available from the Museum at the RRP of \$59.95.



The Board at lunch after the December meeting.
Photo: Sarah Johnson 7 December



Bill Scott displays his new book “Last Tram at 11” which was launched in Geelong on 8 December. *Photo courtesy Geelong Advertiser*



Richard Gilbert wearing another of his many hats as he speaks at the launch of *Last Tram at 11*. Richard spent many hours assisting Bill in the production of his book.

Photo: Roger Salen

Copsnkids 2008

Ballarat turned on a delightful day of late Spring weather on November 24th, after a somewhat wet week-end, for the end of the annual Copsnkids weekend, a highlight for young children suffering from cancer who have a few days respite from the rigours of their troubles riding fire engines, aeroplanes, and generally having a good time under the custody (?) of members of the police force and other carers, headed by Sgt John Moloney.

As for the past seven years, we hosted rides for the children for most of whom a tram ride is somewhat of a novelty. Driver Dave O'Neil (who initiated the BTM involvement) and Conductor Austin Brehaut, who willingly and enthusiastically give their time each year to help the cause, were almost overwhelmed by the rush of kids to get aboard W4 671 for their trips through the Gardens. Thankfully in 2008 the Gardens are a little more colourful than recent years, even if the Lake is still empty. A few were even keen enough to take a second ride, and proudly showed their tickets to the Conductor on the next trip.

Their day finished clambering all over the Gardens Playground (Dave and Austin wondered whether the children were actually prised away from it before sunset!), while our intrepid crew returned to the Depot well-satisfied with what we as a Museum continue to be able to do for these young people, even in a relatively small way.

An added bonus this year was the presence of a WIN TV news crew who conducted an interview with Dave on the general state of the Museum activities and hopes for the future -- good publicity-- together with the

the obligatory shots of 671 with Dave driving and Austin issuing tickets, while also showing a few seconds of the kids on board. We hope the message got through to the viewers that evening, and that BTM will be well kept before the public and help keep our patronage up despite the present economic situation. *Austin Brehaut*

New Board

Two vacancies on the Board were filled at the AGM. Alastair Reither was elected as Vice President and Simon Green and Gavan Dorian were elected as Ordinary Board Members. Congratulations to Alastair on his promotion from Ordinary Board Member and we welcome Gavan as a new member of the Board.

New Members

The Museum welcomes the following new members and junior supporter.

789 Ms Sarah Johnson of North Shore
790 Mr Sean Cleak of Boronia
5049 Lorelei Giles of North Shore

Patronage & Publicity

The report in the Annual Report that patronage has dropped to a record low led to an interview with Richard Gilbert and article in *The Courier* on 29 November. WIN TV visited on Monday 24 November whilst Dave O'Neil and Austin Brehaut were hosting the annual Copsnkids visit and this led to a prominent news story for the Museum.

The good news for the Museum is that since September patronage appears to have settled back closer to average numbers. We can only hope that the reduced cost of fuel over the holidays sees many more people visiting the Gardens.

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Santa Trams in Ballarat



Between 1964 and 1970 the Myer's store in Ballarat sponsored the "Santa trams" in Ballarat. Children could ride a specially decorated tram and meet Santa. One of my first tram trips in Ballarat was on a "Santa tram".

Late in 1964 No. 18 was repainted gold for the Sebastopol centenary. After the centenary celebrations it was then repainted white to become the first "Santa tram". It was publicised by this advertisement in the "Ballarat Courier":

"See Santa arrive by his special tram at Myer's tomorrow! Be in the fun! Meet Santa at 9.10 am. He will be accompanied by BTV6 personality Max Bartlett, and the Christmas Band... See him arrive right in front of the store on his Santa Special Tram... then follow Santa and his band

through the store to the gala opening of Santa's toy kingdom".

The advertisement announced the date and times for Santa and Max to leave the Victoria St, Lydiard St and Barkly St termini, and the Wendouree depot, over the following Saturday mornings.¹

In 1965 The "Courier" ad announced that Santa would be accompanied on the "gaily decorated" Santa special tram by BTV6 personalities Rob and Scotty [Rob was the ventriloquist, Scotty was his puppet].²

In 1966 Santa visited the Ballarat Orphanage [at the Victoria St terminus] to hand out sweets and balloons. The "Courier" pictured Santa making farewells to parents and children "before boarding a specially decorated tram in which he made his official entry into the city".³

In 1967 Ballarat had two “Santa trams”. No. 32 was sponsored by Myers, and No. 17 by the Bridge Street traders.

In 1968 No. 21 was spectacularly decorated in a paddle steamer theme as “Santa’s showboat”, complete with portholes for windows. Early the following year No. 21 was recycled in the same decoration as the Begonia Festival showboat!

In 1969 No. 18 appeared in a blaze of red, white and green with bunting. The photo on page 100 of *The Golden City and its Tramways* (which unfortunately does not do justice to the bright colour scheme) shows this tram on a charter for Nazareth Boys’ Home.

In 1970 No. 14 was the last Santa tram. By the time Christmas 1971 came along, the Ballarat tramway system had closed.

Alan Bradley

The Photos

The two photos on these pages were taken by Richard Jones and we thank him for permission for them to be published.

On the left No 18 is seen in December 1969 crossing Lydiard Street in Sturt Street on a short working to View Point. Richard wonders whether the girl in the red coat eventually went on to appear in *Schindler’s List!* Below No 17 is at Victoria Street terminus in November 1967.

The Museum is recognised as having one of the best collections of photos of Ballarat streetscapes. We are always keen to augment this collection and copies of photos received are catalogued and always acknowledged if published.

1. Ballarat Courier 12 November 1964
2. ibid 12 November 1965
3. ibid 21 November 1966



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Thirty Five Years Ago

I found recently a series of slides I had taken in early April 1973. The one chosen shows the Museum in its development phase. Every weekend there was plenty of hard physical work for our much larger and younger workforce. Many of us would arrive on Saturday for the weekend. After a day's work, dinner would be at the pub followed by a slide show in the depot. We would then settle into our sleeping bags on the seats of No 27 and No 14. There was no running water and the nearest toilet was down at Wendouree Parade.

Our bimonthly news sheet had yet to be called "Fares Please". Perusal through the year of 1973 yielded the following information.

As the photo shows work was proceeding on building the track fan. One road was not included as the points for it (the only short bladed ones we used) were still at the SEC depot. Weather and lack of workers slowed the project. The substation floor was poured.

At Easter a steam train tour by a number of rail enthusiast organisations saw 250 people visit the depot. \$200 was raised.

Track removal was proceeding "with all haste" including in Wendouree Parade. An appeal for support from Ballarat industry was launched. Tram No 32, which had been stored at the Ballarat North power house, went to Maryborough. We were looking for a bicycle to transport people from the station and to the "Gardens Tea House"! John Withers obliged.

The secondhand transformer arrived in June and the overhead poles were erected. Frank Hanrahan commenced the laborious

task of rewinding the transformer to make it suitable for our use. A secondhand ladder truck was purchased.

At the AGM on 29 July, elections were required for the positions of Ballarat and Melbourne resident Vice President and Ordinary Board member.

In addition to all this we ran a lunch time tram tour in Melbourne using former VR tram No 52 and entertainment meetings were held in the Flinders Street VRI. In conjunction with the Association of Railway Enthusiasts we found time to arrange to attach a special carriage to the goods train on Melbourne Show Day from Morwell to Mirboo North and return. Another tram tour was planned to run in Melbourne on 6 October.

A ten year loan from the SEC of \$3,500 was arranged to pay for the parts required for the substation and thirty five people were sought to lend \$100 each. This was seen as the last major financial obstacle to commencing operations.

Track laying continued and was down to Wendouree Parade by the end of September. Overhead was being strung and concrete wheel-barrowed in to lay the slab for the original open "office". Smoking was banned in the building.

On 4 October 1973 the Ballarat Tramway Preservation Society was incorporated as a Public Company limited by Guarantee. The Society had been an unincorporated association as the Incorporated Associations Act was still eight years away. It was recognised that such a body would not be in the position to enter into agreements to operate a tramway in a public street

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or to easily enter into contracts or own property. As a Company there were some rather onerous reporting requirements and all existing members were required to re-apply for membership.

It was decided to operate under the name "Ballarat Tourist Tramway" as it was considered a less cumbersome name than the BTPS Ltd. It was registered as a business name. Ballarat Tramways was considered as our operating name but it "did not communicate the nature of the tramway sufficiently for use in promotional advertising as it tends to give the impression that the tramway is simply a service provided by a public transport authority." (Thirty five years later occasionally the question "Is this tram going to the City" is asked of our crews.)

Suggestions for a name for the news sheet were sought from members. The prize was \$2.00 worth of goods from the Sales Department!

On Sunday 7 October the Vintage Train visited Ballarat. Approximately 800 people toured the depot.

By the end of the year track laying and the overhead on the fan and access track were essentially complete. The transformer rewind had also been completed.

It had been quite a year and yet it would be another twelve months before trams would be seen in Wendouree Parade again.

Peter Winspur



Who do you recognise?

Photo: Peter Winspur

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Sturt Street Circa 1906-1910

Recently added to our collection is this postcard, published by L. L. Simpson of Ballarat and printed in Germany. It is generally considered that the best colour printing of postcards at the time was done in Germany. This image shows cross bench tram No. 19 in Sturt St and the pleasant environment where people sat in the central median and watched the passing parade of people and horse drawn vehicles without the hurly burly of motor cars and buses. Unfortunately, the central median is no longer full of flowers.



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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