

# FARES PLEASE!

**February 2009**

*News from the Ballarat Tramway Museum*

## **Our Weekday Workers**



Santa (Alan Snowball) enjoys a beer with Peter Perry and Phillip Work on Monday 22 December 2008. It is thanks to these three weekday workers and our other local workers such as Dave Macartney, Daniel Edwards, Al Reither and Paul Mong that so much is achieved around the Depot.

*Photo: BTM collection*

***Ballarat Trams are Ballarat History***

## 2. FARES PLEASE!

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### The Tortoise which crossed the road

I have been driving trams at Ballarat for nearly twenty five years. In this time I have been held up by cars on the track, trucks, buses, one ambulance, one fire vehicle and numerous garbage trucks. But on Friday January 2<sup>nd</sup> I had a “first”.

On leaving Saint Aidans Drive with a fair load of passengers on board I travelled one hundred metres only to be stopped by a tortoise, a very large tortoise, sitting by the side of the track. On pulling up and informing the passengers who just HAD to take photos (me too!) our wayward tortoise decided that underneath the tram was a good spot to camp.

This led to a dilemma. How to get him out. Nothing was going to move him and as I had a little bit of clearance I got one of the passengers to lie on the grass and keep watch on him. Another passenger stood at the rear of the tram to watch for oncoming traffic as the only way to clear our wayward tortoise was to reverse.

This done the tortoise was grabbed by another passenger and deposited out of harm's way over in the swamp. All the passengers then reboarded and we went on our merry way. Total lost time to the service was fifteen minutes.

*Dave O'Neil*

### New Members

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

791 Bill Redfern of Ballarat

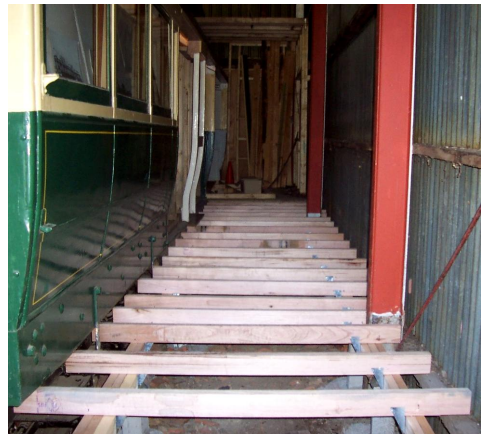
792 Hedley Thomson of Ballarat

### COTMA Conference – 2010

The next COTMA Conference will be held in Wellington in September 2010. Bryce Pender has been appointed by the Wellington Tramway Museum as the Convenor with Henry Brittain providing an oversight role. A committee is being formed and the first steps to arrange the conference administration are underway.

All participants of recent conferences should have received either an e-mail or a letter advising preliminary conference details and the post conference tours. Bryce is seeking suggestions for activities and workshops at the Conference.

Simon Green, our representative, will pass on any suggestions. He can be contacted at [spg72@bigpond.com](mailto:spg72@bigpond.com) Information can also be found on the COTMA website [www.cotma.org.au](http://www.cotma.org.au).



Rebuilding the display area continues. Since this photo was taken on 19 January 2009, the floor has been installed and the walls are taking shape.  
*BTM Collection*

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## At the Depot

Alongside Tram No 39, which is the centre piece of our display area, the new concrete stumps and new flooring have been installed and construction of the framing for the rebuilt room has begun.

Recent discussions at the Board have established principles for the re-design of the display. It is intended to tell our story through the eyes and stories of some of the trammies from the various eras.

Work on No. 38 is progressing. The wheels are at the AETM being re-profiled and the armature from the motor which was not previously re-wound by the Museum is being baked and dipped. The body has received some attention, with sticking doors at the No. 1 end being traced back to a sagging platform. The cream paintwork on this car is in the process of being re-done. Our workshops team continue with the never ending succession of tasks to keep the fleet running. Young Daniel has taken on the task of cleaning down the undersides of the fleet, an often neglected area, and a good excuse to get really dirty.

With the Christmas holiday running due to start, Alan Snowball spent many hours in December welding cracked rail joints in the Parade. Work on the worst of the joints that require excavation should be tackled during autumn. Anyone who does not mind getting their hands dirty by assisting should contact Richard Gilbert.

An extensive inspection of the overhead was also carried out and some works are scheduled for the 5<sup>th</sup> of March. On

Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> February the bent bracket arm near Depot junction which was damaged by a falling tree was replaced by Alan and Phillip.

The car parking area at the level crossing in front of the shed been closed. Bollards have been placed at Wendouree Parade near the toilet block, so all staff parking is now at the rear of the building. The planned new full size rear door, construction of which was hastened by the damage caused by an errant motor car last year, fits in well with this change. Planning by Council for the proper construction of the car park is in hand.

## Operations

Patronage since Christmas has been quite good. January was particularly encouraging considering the continuing drought. Normal operations were suspended on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> February ("Black Saturday") due to the record heat.

## Victorian Government Grant

The Museum has been successful in obtaining a grant from the Department of Planning and Community Development. The Grant is from the Victorian Volunteer Small Grants program. The grant is primarily for training and first aid courses for our volunteers.

It will also cover the printing and distribution of the manuals and training programs which have all been updated as a requirement of the new Safety Management System to be implemented from next month.

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### Memories of Dave Kellett

*Former SEC Tramway Inspector, Dave Kellett passed away on 28 December 2008 aged 85 years after a long illness. His memory still lives on at the Museum as Dave donated his Inspector's uniform to the Museum many years ago and it fits our Operations Manager, Peter Winspur, perfectly. Peter is wearing the uniform in the photo titled "Senior Management" in the June 2008 edition of "Fares Please". Below Alan Bradley recalls an interview he conducted with Dave.*

I interviewed Dave Kellett and his former workmate, Norm Lorensini, on 22 December 1996 as part of the research for the book "The Golden City and its Tramways". The interview was a lot of fun as both men told funny stories and laughed at each other's jokes. The quotes in this article are from that interview.

Dave said: "I started on the tramways in about 1949, as a conductor, then a driver, then for the last four years I was an inspector. It was a lousy job, I'd rather have been driving trams than doing that".

Dave's worst moment as a tramway motorman occurred on 15 April 1954. He was driving bogie tram No. 37 in Drummond Street South when it collided with a semi-trailer at the corner of South Street. The "Ballarat Courier" summarised it as "probably the most miraculous escape from death ever recorded in Ballarat was the experience of a Ballarat tram motorman whose tram was involved in a collision with a semi-trailer". The semi-trailer capsized, and the motorman's cabin of No. 37 was torn off. Dave was thrown onto the road and suffered a broken leg.<sup>1</sup>

No. 37 never ran again and was scrapped a year later, but Dave returned to work. He recalled: "They wanted to send me connying for a while, I said no. I

driving, it never worried me at all even when I went past the same spot". He needed a knee reconstruction, and a plate remained in his leg as a life-long reminder of the accident.

Some of Dave's stories concerning drinking at hotels while on duty were included in the book "The Golden City and its Tramways". Dave like many of his workmates went into the Royal Mail Hotel at the Sebastopol terminus for a drink. He recalled that when he was an Inspector the Chief Inspector told him that the Royal Mail Hotel would be raided the next day. Dave tipped off a workmate, and no-one was caught. When quizzed by the Chief Inspector Dave denied giving a tip-off, and also denied ever entering the Royal Mail on duty!

Both Dave and Norm Lorensini worked on the tramways for over 20 years. Dave recalled: "I loved the job just as Norm did, but there were those who didn't give a damn at all, towards the finish. Blokes were recruited, they were here a couple of days and off they went".

Dave loved working with people, particularly on the busy Sebastopol line. However on the Sebastopol line young men played pranks, such as pulling down the trolley pole, or even removing light

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globes and throwing them out the window. He was scathing of some of the “snobs” that lived in Sturt Street West, “the Toorak of Ballarat”.

The trams were still busy during Dave’s first few years. He recalled: “It used to be great when the trams were packed. The bogies, you’d be going outside and taking the fares. A packed tram would have over 100 people on it”. Patronage greatly declined during the last few years, especially at night. “You’d go out Sebas on some nights and you’d only have 2 or 3 passengers after the pictures, we might carry half a dozen people that’s all”.

Being Ballarat there were some cold days to endure. “One day I was Inspector and we had a decent downpour of snow. One of my trams got bogged up Lydiard Street. I had to brave the snow, or it might have been hail, near the finish”. Dave was probably referring to the hailstorm of 20 August 1971 that left piles of hail in the streets for two days.

Vale Dave Kellett, a real “trammie”.

*Alan Bradley*

<sup>1</sup> “Ballarat Courier” 17 April 1954



**Above:** Shortly before closure. The SEC Inspectors with Departmental Tramway Superintendent Les Denmead at the SEC Depot in front of No 33. At the rear is L. Welland and Dave Kellett. In front are Les Denmead, Theo Dunstan and Arthur Maxwell. The photo is from an unfortunately underexposed slide donated to the Museum by Dorothy Brown, daughter of Theo Dunstan.

**Below:** Dave Kellett in 1957. He is seen again with Inspector L. Welland and DTS Les Denmead. At this time Dave was a Motorman/Conductor. *Photo: Les Denmead Collection*



## 6. FARES PLEASE!

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### The Victorian Bushfires

Many of our members may not be aware of fellow Association of Tourist Railways member the Yarra Valley Tourist Railway which is based at Healesville and is gradually rehabilitating the railway back to Yarra Glen. On Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> February the President, Steve Huntley, emailed John Frost of the ATR. Below is some of what he wrote:

The disaster so far...

We have lost 5 of the 6 bridges including the heritage listed Yarra River Bridge from almost the start of the straight as Gas Works curve which is where the road veers away from the railway, right through to the Melba Hwy including the station yard has been destroyed by fire. Yarra Glen Station building survived by YVTR member Burnie Bragg who has lived at the station since it was last set on fire in 1998, fought the fire and embers away from the building until the CFA arrived to put out the hot spots including to the trolley shed at the Down end of the yard. All of our shed our Bridge Gang shed know affectionately as the "Snake Pit" for very good reasons, has been levelled and a majority of our serviceable sleepers and timbers are gone in the yard.

We were then stuck by a second fire front at Tarrawarra. We lost bridges 20 & 21 on the flat at the 33 1/2 MP on the railway. This fire took out all our track between Lubra Bend 32 1/2 MP to just short of the last curve into Tarrawarra. All up we lost 7 bridges on our line and around 3 mile of track so far.

Tonight Healesville has a fire that has been burning all day and has escalated into a major problem with residents being evacuated from the North and Northwest of the township. We are in attendance 24hrs at the moment at the Healesville station in case the worst happens tonight. With a good fire system at Healesville Station to protect the buildings and rollingstock as you can imagine we will fight like hell to protect. This is the one that could wipe us of the map if it turns which at present is unlikely at this

moment, but we are ready for it if it does.

Some of our members have lost their homes and tonight's fire flare up seems to have claimed our longstanding life member Arthur Payne who was our original crusader for the Lilydale Healesville Railway and has a priceless collection of railway film and pictures which is simply irreplaceable as he is to us. We are praying he got out but knowing how stubborn he is we are concerned as you can imagine. You can see the pain everywhere and it is just the worse feeling around here which is hard to put in words. The media have really failed to capture the death and damage here in the Yarra Valley which in two places has destroyed the railway.

As far as anything the ATR can do I just don't have any idea yet. The YVTRS has prided itself on being a community player helping out others in our area with all sorts of things such as bbq's in vineyards to supporting in many ways events such as Carols by Candlelight etc and are always at the ready to raise money for other charities so it feels strange being in this position.

The Yarra Valley Railway is now closed until further notice and will reopen in a few weeks with a mammoth task in front of it but we will be just that little more determined than ever to make our railway happen. The feeling within is positive and the work in the clean up just to make everything safe again going to take some major effort but we make it happen with the YVTR having a large supporter base in the wider community we will kick goals quickly as we do. Talking to most of our neighbours over the last few days has been an experience with most suffering losses in one way or another but in general the feeling of mateship is certainly evident.

In the meantime your thoughts and wishes are very much appreciated and although the next few weeks will be hard for us but we will save all that we can. As a member of 25 years and a person who has fought so hard to protect these bridges all this time only to watch them burn to the ground in hours was as you can see in the pictures is one of the saddest moments in my life.

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Fire is every Museum's worst nightmare. The Board of the BTM has decided that all donations from the Donation Box in the display area at the Museum for the month of March are to be contributed to the YVTR to help them in the mammoth task of re-building.

Thankfully, as of the time of writing, there have been no further losses and the current running section is unaffected.

## **STOP PRESS:**

The tragedy goes on: We have just received word that the Daylesford Spa Country Railway has lost approximately 2000 sleepers in the latest fires putting one and a half kilometres of track out of use between Daylesford and Musk and closing the railway until further notice.

## **“The Lake’s on Fire!”**

Lake Wendouree has suffered two fires recently. For the third year in a row, the lake bed is dry once again and the long grass needed to be mowed. The first fire on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> December near Forest Street was the result of Council mowing operations to overcome the fairy grass problem.

A second and more substantial fire, this time near Durham Point, occurred on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> January very early in the morning. It took some time for the CFA to bring it under control, as it is only possible to drive light vehicles across parts of the lake's surface. *The Courier* reported that the second fire was believed to be deliberately lit. The Museum has not been affected on either occasion. On this occasion even though it was only 6:00am we had a man on the spot in Alan Snowball.

## **Thirty Five Years Ago** **(continued)**

In the last edition of *Fares Please* we mentioned that in October 1973 a competition to name the Society's newsletter was announced. "Fares Please" was launched in January 1974. The name was suggested by Barry Craig of French's Forest, New South Wales. Thanks were extended to the many other entrants.

In the first issue it was announced regretfully that from January 11<sup>th</sup> Warren Doubleday would cease to be a member of the Board of Management. At the time he was the Engineering Manager. Warren was about to leave for South Africa and was eventually away for two years. Quoting from 1974:

*Warren has played a vital part in the organisation and direction of work in Ballarat and, not being content with merely designing and supervising the work, has done a great deal of the work himself.*

*With his amazing head for heights and his apparent inability to fall off ladders he has virtually single-handedly erected the overhead from the depot fan to Wendouree Parade. He has also designed and directed the laying of the access track, track drainage, erection of poles, etc., and the myriad of other things that you only realise have to be done when you actually build a tramway yourself.*

Thirty five years later the only difference is that Warren is much more careful about climbing ladders.

I was co-opted to fill the vacancy on the Board when Warren left. Half a lifetime later I am still here!

*Peter Winspur*

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## Passing of another former SEC Trammie

The family of former Tram Driver, Ted Edmonds, called at the depot recently to purchase some books and other souvenirs, and were pleased to see, in the museum display area, a photo of Ted and some colleagues seated on a park bench in Sturt Street, outside the SEC tramway office in 1959.

They advised Ted had only recently passed away, aged almost 90. He had joined the tramways in the early 1950's and resigned in 1968 when the 'writing as on the wall' with the proposed closure of the Ballarat Tramway system. He found a job cleaning in schools, including the Ballarat High School, in Gillies Street which is diagonally opposite our tram depot. He finished his working life in a similar role at the Ballarat University at Mount Helen.

The photo can be seen in our book *The Golden City and its Tramways* by member Alan Bradley. It is on page 138 and Ted is the man standing on the far right of the photo. This excellent book is still available and can be purchased from our sales section or the Railfan Shop, corner Market Street and Flinders Lane, Melbourne.

## Rail Safety Accreditation

Work to enable the re-accreditation of the Museum's tram operations is continuing to schedule. The preparation of the paperwork is virtually complete with some tidying up still in progress.

Museum workers have recently been sent a copy of the current Museum's Orientation and Safety Induction Program and a consultation draft of the new Emergency Response Plan. One requirement of the new Act is that operators consult with their workers and keep them regularly briefed on safety related developments. During the Begonia Festival when the Museum always has the largest numbers of workers on site, Warren Doubleday will be talking to them about the new system.

Updated copies of the Operations Manual, Drivers Manual and Conductors Manual will also be sent out during March. There have been some minor changes to these documents. In practice, under the new accreditation there will be little changed in the way the Museum is operated.

The formal compliance audit by Public Transport Safety Victoria will be undertaken in late March.



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**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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