

FARES PLEASE!

June 2009

News from the Ballarat Tramway Museum

Tram No 22 – Our latest acquisition



Photo: Peter Winspur 22 May 2009

An important addition to the Museum's fleet arrived at the Depot on Friday 22 May 2009. Shown resting on a temporary truck, Electric Supply Company Tram No 22 of 1913 becomes one of the last exhibits required to complete a representative collection of the tramcars which were acquired for Ballarat from 1887 until 1951. There is much work to do before the tram is fully restored, but after resting under a pine tree for over seventy years, No 22 is remarkably complete.

The Museum appreciates greatly the generosity and co-operation of Brett Hayes, grandson of the original owners of No 22, who donated the tram.

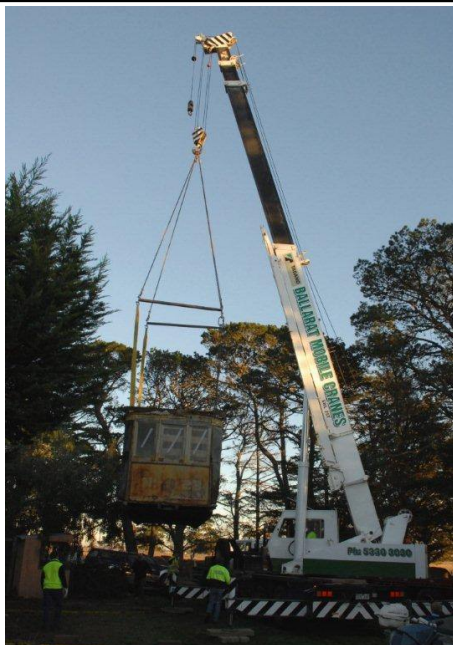
Ballarat Trams are Ballarat History

2. FARES PLEASE!



Above: No 22's former home

Photo: Austin Brehaut 16.5.09



Above: Indignity!



Above: Leaving home

Tram No 22's Journey



Above: Arriving in Wendouree Parade



Left: Meeting No 26 for the first time in many years. 22 May 2009

Photos: Peter Winspur

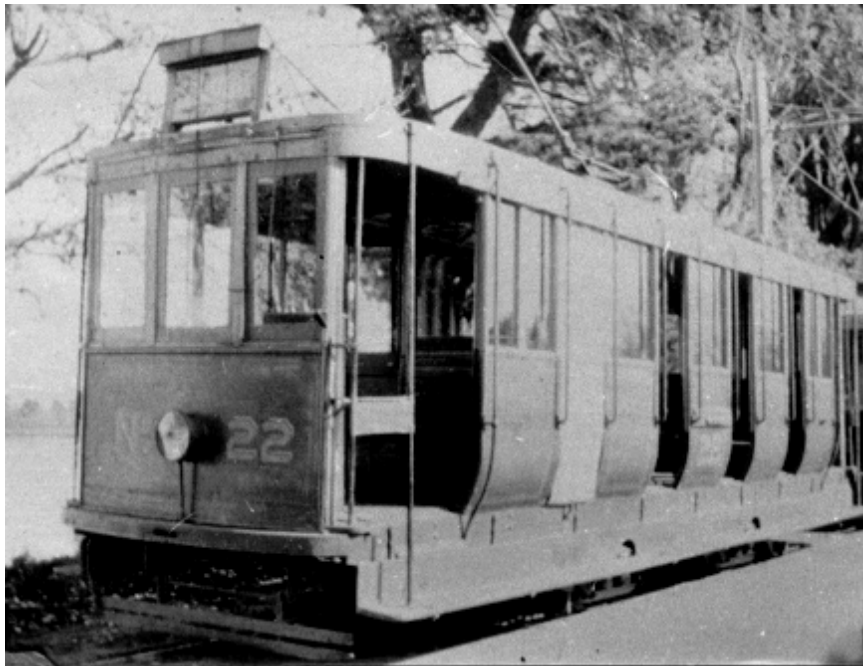
No. 22 Arrives

Sebastopol type cross bench car No. 22 arrived at the depot on 22nd May, following some thirty years of waiting since the first approach to the owners. No. 22 was in service from 1913 until 1935, when the last of the ESCo cars were withdrawn from passenger service. It found a new home with the Schreenan family, and was located on their property at Bonshaw, a mile or so due west of the Sebastopol terminus. Mr. Schreenan eventually set it up as his workshop, installing some shelving and a couple of workbenches. Although the seats were removed, they survived as shutters

over the tops of the doorways. Otherwise, the interior remained virtually untouched, with the original paintwork still very much in evidence.

Mr. Schreenan was approached in 1978 to enable an inspection of the tram to be carried out. At that stage the museum was not in any position to make an offer, as the depot extensions had yet to appear and other matters were taking priority. Mr. Schreenan had travelled on the tram during his school days, and related that the class gave a fairly stiff ride on their Brush trucks,

Continued page 4



Above: No. 22 in Wendouree Parade near the Depot, probably during the early 1930s.

Photo: BTM collection

4. FARES PLEASE!

which meant that students bouncing up and down on the rear platform had little effect on the ride, while to do that on the ESCo saloon cars would cause the motorman to immediately stop and go back to clip a few ears before the car was bounced right off the track.

In time, the museum made a more formal request to be considered should the tram become available, this time to the Hayes family, descendants of the Schreenans.

Approval was finally given earlier this year, as it was decided by the family that some redevelopment of the property was in order, and the tram had no place in it. The first requirement was for a four wheeled truck to be manufactured at the depot to sit the body on, and this was duly assembled from various bits and pieces acquired over the years. A working bee on Saturday, 16th May saw the body moved, with a little help from the tower truck, into a position where the crane could manoeuvre freely. At this stage the corrugated iron roof which had protected the body for so long was removed, revealing the original roof in excellent condition.

Removal day was on Friday, 22nd May, at the ungodly hour of 7.30 a.m., the only time both the crane and the truck were available. The body was offloaded near the old loop, attached securely to its new undergear and towed to the depot by No. 8. By lunchtime it was safely on the depot fan and undergoing a close inspection and removal of one or two non tramway additions. It has been allocated the middle spot on 3 Road, immediately in front of ESCo saloon No. 12, the first time these two trams have sat together in three quarters of a century.

The workers drifted off in ones and twos until the shed, now with a record seventeen trams in it, was locked up for the night: A great silence descended. Then the ghostly voices started.

"Long time, no see."

"Yeah, must be, Oh, about 74 years. What have you been up to?"

"I've been out at the Bonshaw, near Sebas, mainly as a home workshop, but also a bit of a tourist attraction to the restaurant.

How about you?"

"Oh, I was up at Nerrina for years, built into a house. I even had my own bathroom."

"No kidding!"

"What do you think they want us here for?"

"Dunno. The horse tram over there says we are going to be restored."

"Looks like a tart's boudoir. I hope we don't end up looking like that. Apparently it runs out in the street sometimes."

"We're not going to carry passengers again, are we?"

"God, I hope not. Have you seen the Traffic Branch? Terrible people. The workshop staff are even worse."

"I think I'll get a little shut-eye, it's been a long day for me. Goodnight."

"Goodnight."

Silence.

"Your own bathroom, Gee!" More silence.

Dave Macartney

Ballarat's "Sebastopol" Crossbench Cars

By Alan Bradley

Introduction

The Ballarat Tramway Museum (BTM) now has the body of former Ballarat ESCo tram crossbench car No. 22. As sister car No. 21 was delivered in 1994, the BTM now has two of the three trams of this class to run in Ballarat. This article examines the history of the three "Sebastopol" crossbench cars, as they were known locally.

Why were they built?

In 1905 the Electric Supply Company (ESCO) officially opened its electric tramway system in Ballarat. During 1907 and 1908 extensions were made along the horse tram lines in Ballarat South, leaving only the service in the Borough of Sebastopol as the last remnant of the horse tram service.

The ESCo commenced electric operation with a fleet of 20 trams. Nos. 1 to 18 were lightly-built "California combination" cars rebuilt from ex-Sydney cable and electric trams. Nos. 19 and 20 were open crossbench cars, known as "Gardens cars". In addition some of the old horse trams had been retained as trailers.

The fleet of 20 trams was inadequate on busy days on the Gardens line, such as Regatta Day and Ballarat Show Day. Passengers on other lines were annoyed when trams were withdrawn to cater for the traffic on the Gardens line. In December 1912 the Ballarat City Council complained to the ESCo about the service during the

recent Ballarat Show Day. The ESCo conceded that "this practice has gone on for years", but hinted at improvements to come:

"We have three extra cars being constructed for Ballarat of a new open type construction which will be suitable for winter traffic as well. We hope to have these in service about the first of February, when we shall be better able to cope with rushed traffic and avoid some of these inconveniences".¹

More importantly with the impending electrification of the Sebastopol horse tramway extra trams would be needed. Trackwork on the conversion started in November 1912 and proceeded around the same time as the "three extra cars" were being built.

Official launch

The electric tramway service in Sebastopol was officially opened on 14 April 1913, and the occasion was used to show off the three new trams. The "Ballarat Courier" described the official function hosted by ESCo General Manager Mr Pringle:

"He took the City and Town councillors to the scene in one of the new cars, three of which, at a cost of £950 each, have been built in Adelaide and brought here. They are of a new type, designed for the company to meet local conditions. In summer a draught of fresh air sweeps the whole of the car. In winter spring blinds

6. FARES PLEASE!

can be drawn to enclose the car at the sides and the centre of the seats can be removed to make a passage down the middle. The councillors greatly admired the new vehicle, which is much smoother in running than the old cars”.²

The “Ballarat Star” described how “City and Town councillors and officials were met by Sebastopol councillors at Rubicon Street, where they boarded a special car which took them to their function”. The tram was “decorated for the occasion”.³

The three new trams were built by the Adelaide firm Duncan & Fraser, which built so many of the horse and electric trams that ran in Ballarat. They were numbered 21, 22 and 23. They were used mainly on the Sebastopol line, and so became known unofficially as “Sebastopol” cars.

Around the same time Duncan & Fraser built two new open crossbench cars for the ESCo’s other tramway system in Bendigo. Perhaps this contrast in style between the open and semi-open crossbench cars was the ESCo’s comment on the milder climate of Bendigo compared to that of Ballarat.

Technically speaking

According to “Destination Eaglehawk”, the “Sebastopol” trams were 31 feet 0 inches in length. They were the only Ballarat cars fitted with Brush trucks. They had 2 x 38 horsepower motors, compared to 2 x 30 horsepower motors for the standard ESCo cars Nos. 1 to 18. They seated 50 passengers in summer and 40 in winter.⁴

BTM tram restorer Dave Macartney has a healthy scepticism about “official figures”. He measured No. 22 and found that it is in fact 32 feet 0 inches long, and 6 feet 7

inches wide. He also measured the body of ESCo car No. 12 and found that it is 31 feet 10 inches long, and 6 feet wide. “Destination Eaglehawk” listed cars of its class as approximately 30 feet 9 inches long.

All the ESCo cars used “gooseneck” style handbrakes for normal service braking, with a magnetic track brake for use in emergencies. The “Sebastopol” trams were the first cars in Ballarat built with windscreens. The other ESCo cars were fitted with windscreens at about the same time.

Memories

What were they like to work on? The author interviewed several former tramway employees during the 1980s. Arthur Maxwell recalled the lightly built cars Nos. 1 to 18 used to sway on the track, but the “Sebastopol” cars were better:

“21, 22 and 23. They were extra good cars as far as the motorman was concerned. There was plenty of room in the front, the passengers used to sit right there with you. They used to run them as far as Rubicon Street, then one of the one-man cars used to pick them up down to the bottom of the track. They were run even at night. The motorman wasn’t on the small car all the time, as the motorman came down they’d change over. They only used to run to Grenville Street in those days”.⁵

Les Edwards recalled:

“There were only three of them and they were good cars, so I’m told. They used to have a bar, a single bar each end. When you got to the terminus you put this bar down and put the other one up.



Above: A side view of No. 21 at the depot in about 1935, shortly before scrapping.

Photo: BTM collection

There was an accident at the corner of Main Road [Main Road, Sebastopol]. He was driving out when the Town Clerk's wife, old Mrs Jordan, was getting out the back. He started off, she was supposed to get out at the front. He started off and she fell out. That meant that they had to put the bars right along".

Les Edwards also recalled an incident when he was conducting on No. 21 in Drummond Street South, near Urquart Street:

"There were two older women sitting in the tram, with their umbrellas, they were the only two in the tram. I got out and opened the door and the driver put on the magnetic brake. One of the old girls slipped off the seat and fell down. Luckily one of the blinds unfolded and let her out. She's hanging out over the

side, legs up in the air in the tram and backside hanging out. She screamed like a pig. Of course I had to dash out and try to push her up. Eventually I got her up and by jove she went crook. I got a couple of days' holiday, stood down for a couple of days for laughing when she fell out! Only for the blind being unfolded she would have been killed, or run over by a car".⁶

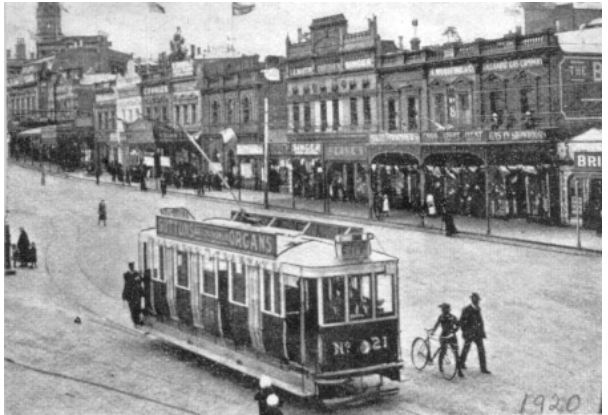
Scrapping

By the late 1920s the trackwork on many sections of the Ballarat system was in poor condition. Worst of all was the track in the gravel along Albert Street, Sebastopol where trams regularly derailed. The poor track took a toll on the lightly built cars Nos. 1 to 18, but even the more sturdily built "Sebastopol" cars suffered. The "Ballarat Courier" reported in 1930:

8. FARES PLEASE!

“A ride on No. 21 tramcar of the Electric Supply Company along Drummond Street South is not an enviable experience. All the windows in the car are loose, and the continual rattling noise is not calculated to popularize the trams. Probably if the windows were properly packed with rubber some of the noise would be eliminated”.⁷

During the early 1930s the State Electricity Commission oversaw



Above: No. 21 arrives at the Grenville Street terminus in 1920. It appears to be running the winter service, as the “spring blinds” have been pulled down. *Photo: BTM collection*



Left: A postcard shows two ESCO trams at the Grenville St terminus, looking west along Sturt Street. Second from left is a “Sebastopol” type tram. Note the lack of motor car traffic. *Photo: BTM collection, from a Rose Series postcard - Rose Number 1710, donated by Alan Bradley*

operation of the tramway system, before it took over officially in 1934. From 1930 onwards the original ESCo trams were gradually withdrawn and scrapped as more sturdy second-hand trams arrived from Melbourne. The old “goose neck” brake handles on Nos. 21 to 23 were replaced by a wheel type, and the motorman was provided with a seat. This suggests that the SEC intended to keep these cars in service for several years to come. Some of



Above: An early official photo in Wendouree Parade near the Depot. *Photo: BTM collection*

Bendigo's original cars (including the two crossbench cars) ran in service until the late 1940s. However the last of the ESCo cars (including Nos. 21 and 22) were scrapped during 1935-36. Some of the bodies of these trams were placed on properties throughout the Ballarat district.

The last survivor

The last surviving ESCo car in Ballarat was No. 23, which in 1934 was converted to a track cleaner and scrubber. It was fitted with a 2,000 gallon water tank, hoses for flushing track drains, carborundum blocks for rail scrubbing, and tines for track groove cleaning.

On 5 February 1936 the scrubber was involved in a serious head-on collision with passenger tram No. 26 that resulted in a death to a female passenger.⁸ Its original 2 x 38 horsepower motors were replaced in 1964 by 2 x 45 horsepower WH225 motors. In later years it was stored mainly in the open on "0" road beside the depot. The scrubber remained in use until the Ballarat system closed in September 1971.

A few days after the final closure of the Ballarat system the scrubber was transferred from the depot to the Tramway Museum Society of Victoria's museum at Bylands. Who in 1971 could have predicted that in 2009 all three of the "Sebastopol" crossbench cars would be held for preservation?

Preservation

The BTM was initially set up to preserve the SEC-style operation familiar to its members. Since the 1980s the focus has changed to presenting the overall history of the Ballarat tramway system. The body of horse tram No. 1 was retrieved from a backyard in Ballarat East in 1985, and that of ESCo No. 12 from a rural property at Nerrina in 1990.

The "Sebastopol" crossbench cars remained as a gap in the BTM's collection. The body of No. 21 had been placed on a property in Sailors Falls, near Daylesford, where a house was built into one side of it. Until the 1950s its slumber was occasionally disturbed by the occasional coming and going of the Ballarat to Daylesford train. During 1994 the BTM became aware that the property owner wished to build a new house on the site. On 31 October 1994 No. 21 was moved to off-site storage at Newlyn. A few years later it was moved again to the BTM's off-site storage in Bungaree.



Above: The scrubber in action at the Mill Street Loop in Drummond Street North, 28 February 1962. *Photo: Keith Kings (BTM collection)*

10. FARES PLEASE!

The body of No. 22 was placed on the “Bonshaw” property in Tait Street Sebastopol, close to the terminus of the line on which it regularly operated. The “Bonshaw” property had its own history, having been farmed during the 1850s, and later becoming the site of the Bonshaw gold mine. When the author inspected the body of No. 22 during the 1980s the area was still very rural in appearance, but now suburbia has crept closer and the owners wish to redevelop the site. No. 22 was delivered to the BTM depot on 22 May 2009.

The roofs of both No. 21 and 22 had been covered during their decades in retirement, but No. 22 is a far better prospect for restoration. The panels on No. 21 had been removed on one side. No. 22’s panels were all intact, some of the “spring blinds” were still in good condition, and the plank for the trolley base is still there.

The BTM has not yet made a formal decision on No. 21’s future, and it remains in off-site storage at Bungaree. Whatever its future, it is hoped that one day No. 22 will operate again in Wendouree Parade in the red ESCo livery.

¹. ESCo to Ballarat City Council 9 December 1913, 18 December 1913

². Ballarat Courier 15 April 1913

³. Ballarat Star 15 April 1913

⁴. Destination Eaglehawk page 16

⁵. Interview by Alan Bradley with Arthur Maxwell 1981

⁶. Interview by Alan Bradley with Les Edwards 1982

⁷. “Ballarat Courier” 19 February 1930

⁸. Further details about this accident can be found in the author’s article “Beyond the control of the management” in the February 2008 edition of “Trolleywire”.

The Show Must Go On

Wild, wet weather saw few people in the Gardens in the afternoon of Anzac Day, but Driver Gavin Young and Conductor Austin Brehaut were still carrying a few brave souls when their progress was interrupted by a small branch which had fallen across the overhead behind them while No. 28 was at St Aidan’s Drive at about 1.45 pm.

After the mandatory safety procedures were implemented, No. 27 was soon brought out to replace 28 from Gardens Loop to Carlton St and later passengers were transferred from one tram to the other for their full journey. Eventually Alan Snowball, using the tower truck, was able to clear the debris, and after 28 ran in, 27 completed the afternoon’s service. Fortunately, the overhead wires suffered no damage. Bad weather notwithstanding, we still carried 37 passengers for the day.

In the true spirit of tramways, the show must go on. And it did.

Austin Brehaut.

New Members

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

797 Kevin Brookman of Wendouree.

Membership Renewals

Membership renewal notices will be sent out in early July. The Board has decided that membership rates for 2009/2010 should remain unchanged.

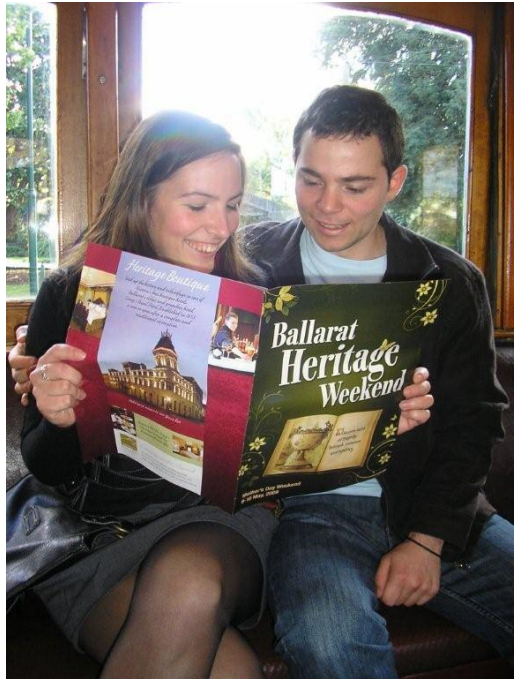
Donation Receipts

If you have made a donation to the Museum during the past year your tax receipt should be enclosed.

Right: Ballarat Heritage Weekend

Elspeeth and Adrian enjoy a ride back in time on Saturday 9 May 2009

Photo: Austin Brehaut



Left: Anzac Day

No 28 was stranded by a large tree branch which had fallen on the trolley wire.

Photo: Austin Brehaut

Right: Essential maintenance

Alan Snowball plans his next move. The replacement of broken rail joints is an arduous task. The legs belong to Neville Hesketh.

Photo: BTM Collection 5.5.09



12. FARES PLEASE!

Ballarat Heritage Weekend



Tram No 28 passes No 26 at Gardens Loop on 9 May 2009

Photo: Peter Winspur

The Museum was invited to participate in the 2009 Ballarat Heritage Weekend. As it was the aim of Council to ensure that events were free, agreement was reached for the Museum's operations to be supported for the weekend. Sunny weather and free rides saw 634 passengers enjoying

a ride back in time. Our two ESCo trams Nos 26 and 28 were utilised on the two days and they provided the rare sight of single truck trams crossing at the loop in service.

Our thanks go to Gail Smaniotto of Events Ballarat for her assistance.



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.

For further information regarding the Museum, its activities and publications please contact:

The Secretary, P.O. Box 632, Ballarat, Vic, 3353. Phone / Fax 61 3 5334 1580.

E-mail: info@btm.org.au

Our web page: <http://www.btm.org.au>
