

FARES PLEASE!

April 2012

Celebrating 40 Years

News from the Ballarat Tramway Museum

Begonia Festival 2012



The 60th Ballarat Begonia Festival was celebrated in perfect weather over the Victorian Labour Day weekend. Attendances were the best in many years and excellent rainfall a week or so beforehand ensured that the Gardens were looking superb.

Photo: The Begonia Parade has just concluded and there is not a motorcar in sight. Our trams are full and await the all clear to recommence running. For a while, except for walking, they are the only means of transport within the Gardens.

Alastair Reither 12/3/12

Ballarat Trams are Ballarat History

2. FARES PLEASE!

Horse Tram to Run on Heritage Weekend

Although not central to this year's celebrations, the Museum will be marking Ballarat Heritage Weekend by operating for extended hours over the weekend and by running Horse Tram No 1 on Sunday 13th May. There will also be an augmented display of memorabilia at the Museum.

To cover the cost of hiring the horses special fares will be charged to ride on the horse tram, but they will include a ride on the electric tram as well.

Full details of the weekends activities can be found at:

<http://ballaratheritageweekend.com>

We are listed under both 'Activities' and 'Other Attractions'.

This year the theme of the weekend will be 'Your Childhood Memories'. What was Ballarat like in the 1930's, 40's and upward?

Around the Museum

The reconstruction of the tram shelter at the Loop was completed on the 5th of March with the pouring of a concrete base. Unfortunately this reduced the height from the seat to the ground, but it should be suitable for people of limited stature. Meanwhile, on the initiative of the Ballarat Council another shelter in the same traditional pattern is almost complete at the Carlton Street terminus.

After a prolonged dry period the 28th of February was arranged for the move of our W class trams into the new shed at Bungaree. As what always seems to be the case, heavy rain ensued and our workers were saturated and the crane bogged as cars 998, 924 and 865 were moved from the open and to the bottom of the three roads.

On 2nd of April No. 13 was fitted with a full set of the new brake blocks from Queensland, joining No. 33, fitted in December. These have proved to be very effective, and will eventually become standard equipment.

Aaron McDonald became a welcome addition to our ranks of drivers when he passed his final examination on 26th February.

The Begonia Festival

Superb weather for three days saw one of the most successful Begonia Festivals for many years. We were again contracted to the Festival to provide a free service and our crews worked tirelessly, some of them for the whole weekend. It is always the most difficult time for our drivers as they avoid kamikaze car drivers and errant pedestrians.

Our crews continue to be frontline ambassadors for the festival. This year we carried the second largest number of passengers on record for the weekend and the Sunday was also the second best on record with 3050 people carried. Over 7800 rode the trams in three days.

Alastair Reither and Paul Mong arranged a barbecue to christen the new shed at Bungaree on the Saturday evening and on the Sunday we relaxed with a few drinks and a great meal at the Wallace Hotel.

New Members

The Museum welcomes the following new members and Junior Supporters:

- 832 Wayne Braybrook of Alfredton
- 833 Matthew Ellen of Boronia
- 5059 Samuel Dutli of Alfredton
- 5060 Liam Howlett of Ballarat North

We also welcome back foundation member number 46, Christopher Phillips of Ballarat, after a long absence. We hope they all find their membership fruitful and enjoyable.

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Watching the Parade

Photo:
Alastair Reither
12/3/12



This year the flowers almost hid the Conservatory

Photo:
Peter Winspur
10/3/12

2012 Begonia Festival

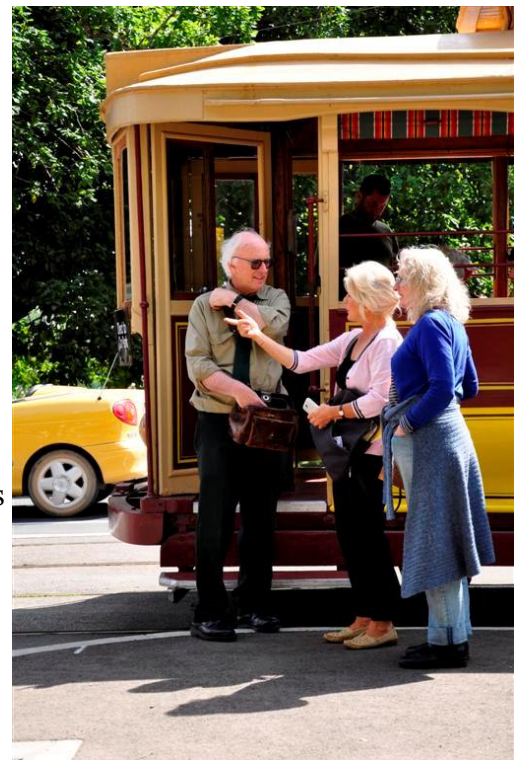


It was a glorious day on Monday Photo: Stephen Butler



Right:
Greg Fitzgerald
assists visitors
Photo:
Alastair Reither
12/3/12

Left:
Simon Jenkins
skilfully negotiates
the traffic
Photo:
Peter Winspur
10/3/12



4. FARES PLEASE!

Geelong Tramway Centenary

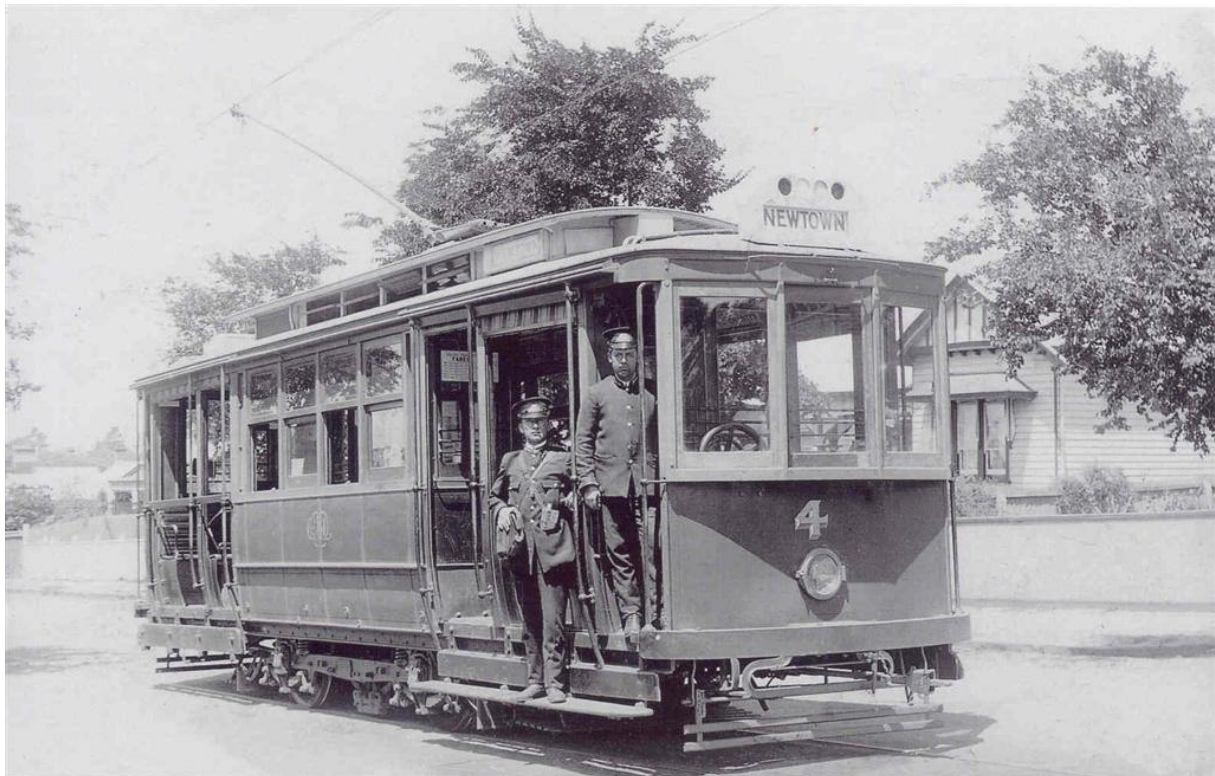
March 2012 marked the centenary of the opening of the Geelong tramway system. It also was the month of the closure in 1956.

As in Ballarat and Bendigo the Geelong tramway was constructed by the local electric supply company and actually ran through several separate municipalities. An agreement was signed which provided that after thirty years the Geelong City Council, in conjunction with the other councils could purchase the assets.

The first routes opened on the afternoon of 14 March 1912. Guests boarded trams at the depot at 2:30 pm and, with the Geelong Mayoress driving, the first tram left at 2:40 pm. After the cutting of the ribbon at the Queen Victoria statue the trams travelled to the new terminuses at Newtown, Chilwell and Geelong West. On return to the depot speeches were made and refreshments served. After the guests were taken home on the trams, ordinary services commenced at 6:00 pm.

The State Electricity Commission took over the *Melbourne Electric Supply Company* in 1930 and, as in Ballarat and Bendigo, this included the tramways. Unlike the Ballarat and Bendigo systems, the track was in good condition and so was not refurbished during the 1930s after the takeover. By the 1950s it was in need of major expenditure. For most of the time the tramway was operated by the SEC it had lost money heavily.

In 1953 the Transport Regulation Board, after a series of hearings in Geelong, recommended that buses controlled by a public authority replace the trams. With the election of the Bolte government in 1955 the new minister for transport determined that private enterprise would run the buses and despite extensive public protests the last tram ran fifty-six years ago on 25 March 1956. No 4 which had been the first tram to test all the routes on 12 January 1912 led the procession of four tramcars in a noisy late night send off.



Geelong "Butterbox" No 4 at Newtown terminus in 1912. The driver is George Winstanley. *BTM collection. Two copies held from the Dave O'Neil collection & W. F. Scott*

5. FARES PLEASE!

In 1936, after the SEC takeover, tram Nos 27 (1st), 28 (1st), 29 (1st) and 30 (1st) were transported to Ballarat where they continued to operate as Nos 12, 11, 13 and 14 until closure in 1971. In 1956, trams 37, 39 & 40 arrived in Ballarat and were renumbered 42, 41 & 43. Today trams 11, 13 and 14 are in the Museum's fleet.

In March 2012, to celebrate the centenary, Ballarat Tram No 13 carried the Geelong destinations of Chilwell and Humble Street. The tramway had been extended to Chilwell in 1927 and Humble Street had been the terminus of the East line for a short time in 1923. Suitable notices were placed inside the tram to remind our travellers that trams once operated in Geelong as well as Ballarat.

References:

- "Last Tram at 11"* by W. F. Scott
(A superb history of the three provincial tramways and available from the Museum)
- "History of the Geelong Electric Tramways"*
by David J. O'Neil
- "Destination Eaglehawk"* K. S. Kings
Edited by J. Richardson (1965)

Bendigo Anniversary

Monday 16th April 2012 marked the 40th anniversary of the closure of the tramway system in Bendigo. Proactive support from the City of Bendigo saw the reopening less than nine months later on 9th December of most of the Golden Square to Bendigo North route as a means of linking the city's tourist attractions.

The last tram to leave Eaglehawk on Sunday 16th April 1972 was bogie car No 26. The flotilla of motor cars which followed had to be seen to be believed and an enormous crowd was at Charing Cross and in Pall Mall to farewell the trams as they returned to the Depot along Pall Mall for the last time.

Today, No 26 is still in the 1972 colour scheme and just after 5:00 pm on 16th April it recreated the last trip along Pall Mall. It was crewed by Bendigo Tramways volunteers Stephen Kirkpatrick and Joseph Gould who were dressed in the appropriate SEC uniform.



No 4 outside the Geelong depot on Sunday 25th March 1956, the last day of operation
BTM collection. From the Travis Jeffrey collection. Photographer unknown

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Passing of Jack Evans

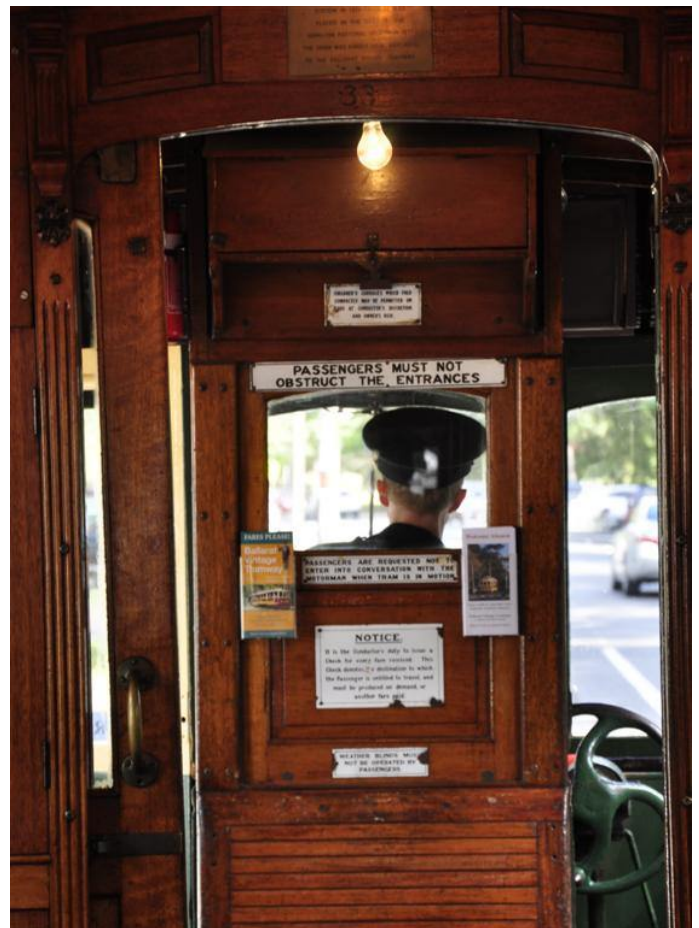
Many will remember Jack Evans former SEC driver in Bendigo who went on to volunteer as a driver for the *Bendigo* Trust for many years after closure. Jack sadly passed away, peacefully, on Saturday 24th March aged 84.

In advising Bendigo Tramway members and friends, Anita Bagley wrote:

Jack commenced Conducting for the State Electricity Commission of Victoria in 1966. Jack went on to be the last person to be trained as a Tram Driver in 1970. He continued to work on the tramways until they ceased as a public transport service in 1972. In 1973, Jack commenced working for The Bendigo Trust, as a Tourist Tram Driver. Jack retired in about 2000, but his love for Bendigo's trams continued from then.

Our sympathies go to Jack Evans' family and friends at this sad time. Jack will be dearly missed.

Ballarat member Phillip Bertram attended Jack's funeral on Wednesday 28th March and writes:



Above: Only the brochure racks suggest that this was 10 March 2012 and not 1962. Simon Jenkins is the driver. The tram is No 33.

Below: Richard Gilbert and John Clowes in earnest conversation. 12/3/12. *Photos: Alastair Reither*

I attended in full SEC uniform as did two others, six others wore the Bendigo Tramways Blue. A guard of honour by all Tramway staff farewelled Jack into the hearse.

He was married twice and out lived both wives. The eldest of four, the surviving youngest, his sister Nancy, and his youngest brother along with nieces, nephews, other family and friends attended the pleasant funeral of about seventy people, Jack's SEC Cap adorning the casket along with a magnificent bouquet. He had no children to either marriage. A modest simple man, of quiet disposition, with a wicked sense of humour, who enjoyed his music and garden but as was obvious to all, his Tramway.

Our last SEC Bendigo Driver. His full name was Kelvin John Evans otherwise known to all as "Jack".

7. FARES PLEASE!



The finished shelter at Gardens Loop
Photo: Peter Winspur 10/3/12



The new shelter at Carlton St
Photo: Dave Macartney 18/4/12



The first trams in our new shed. They had just come in from the rain
Photo: Paul Mong 28/2/12



Neville Hesketh obliges



Robert Paroissien in No 671
Both photos: Alastair Reither 10/3/12

Bendigo – April 1972



Above: No 26 passes No 18 on Sunday 16 April 1972 the last day of SEC operation

Below: It was difficult to get the final photo as the last trams travelled along Pall Mall

Photos: 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.

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

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