

FARES PLEASE!

December 2012

News from the Ballarat Tramway Museum

Celebrating 125 Years



Photo: Bruce Dixon 9 May 2010

Horse tram services to the Ballarat Botanic Gardens commenced on 26th December 1887. On Boxing Day, 26th December 2012, the Museum will be celebrating the 125th anniversary of this event by operating No.1, one of the trams which opened the service. In this edition of *Fares Please!* Alan Bradley looks back to the early days of the horse trams in Ballarat.

Ballarat Trams are Ballarat History

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Around the Museum

During the last two months the amount of work achieved by our tiny team led by Alastair Reither has been little short of heroic. Most of the effort was concentrated hundreds of kilometres away at Bowser, just north of Wangaratta. Public Transport Victoria through the efforts of Hughie Gaynor had offered the Museum four kilometres of railway rail through a program where heritage rail operators are offered surplus materials. The rail was piled alongside the main Albury railway line and was in 100 metre lengths. Before it could be transported it needed to be cut into 13 metre lengths to fit on a semi-trailer. The job proved to be the biggest ever undertaken by the Museum. Later in this edition, Richard Gilbert tells the story.

Once loaded, five semi-trailers left for Ballarat in convoy and three and a half hours later Paul Mong, assisted by Alan Snowball and Geoff Gardner, was confronted with the task of unloading the rails by forklift and stacking them neatly. Forklifts with six and half metres of rail sticking out either side are rather hard to drive on uneven ground and keep balanced. It was dark before the job was complete.

The exercise was also one of the most expensive ever undertaken. Not only was there equipment and truck hire, but our workforce is not large enough to enable us to do such tasks without assistance. This must come at a price. The upside is that the team of paid workers led by John Shaw of Puffing Billy worked extremely well alongside our volunteers.

The Museum now has sufficient rail to replace all the rails not renewed by the S.E.C. in the 1930's and provide for a considerable extension when this come to pass. The initial job will be to replace a section of the access track.

At the December Board meeting this magnificent achievement was noted by acclamation from all present.

Trams

No. 13 was jacked up on 31st October for the replacement of the leaf springs which steady the overhang of the body. Needless say, to the job turned out to be far more complicated than just a straight replacement, but work is continuing steadily. We have had to make special brackets to get the springs to fit in their holders. Once the springs are in place and a few other matters attended to while the body is in the air, the car can be reunited with its truck and the repaint continue.

Tram No. 18 was selected for local volunteer Daniel Edward's annual Christmas decoration extravaganza. Much of the decoration is on the inside this time, and gives us a good excuse to run No. 18 on a more regular basis since the tram's wheels were turned on the lathe at Preston Workshops. A major overhaul is still planned for the tram after it celebrates its 100th birthday next year.

Track

The project to relay part of the access track is planned for after the January school holiday running. If you have not been part of our work parties in the past we would be more than happy to have any assistance you can give. Alastair Reither will be leading the project.

Depot

In addition to the rail retrieval, our workers found time to concrete a large section of the area around five road in the maintenance area. This is for the new mobile crane which is to be obtained with grant money obtained through the City of Ballarat Community Impact Grant scheme. As usual, before the concreting could be carried out, an enormous amount of 'junk' was moved.

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Operations

The annual “*Springfest*” market was held in glorious weather on Sunday 4th November. The number of, mainly local people visiting the stalls which are to be found all the way around the lake would have been the greatest for many years. The tramway did brisk business and carried 649 passengers, more than twice the 2011 figure. This is now the only major day in our calendar when our conductors feel they are ‘real’ conductors as they sell a variety of tickets as people board and alight along the line. Their ‘grey matter’ is given a good work out as they compute a great variety of fares.

In the middle of this, another ‘Tram Pull’ was held at Gardens Loop. Run by *Rotary – Young Ambition*, this year’s was the biggest and best yet. It is always a lot of fun. This year ten teams from local Ballarat businesses participated in heats to see which one can be the first to pull a tram over the line. This year the cup was won by C B Fitness Ballarat.

Springfest’ is managed by Ballarat Rotary and all proceeds from the events are later distributed to worthy causes in Ballarat.

Several schools have visited in recent months and, led by Geoff Gardner, our team have now developed a more ordered way of dealing with the children while they are in the depot. The nature of our display is such

that for the students to gain an appreciation of what we are attempting to achieve they need to be split into small groups so that we can then tell our story. Unfortunately, this also means we need up to five volunteers to be present.

Now that the *Begonia Princess* is sailing Lake Wendouree again, we are finally able to enter into joint arrangements for groups visiting Ballarat. The second of these occurred on Saturday 8th December when the Rail Tourist Association travelled by train to Wendouree. They then braved the waves (it was very windy that day) on Lake Wendouree. Lunch was served on board. Several tram rides and afternoon tea were to follow.

A slight technical hitch saw the boat disabled not long before disembarkation. The wind then came in handy as it placed the boat in an ideal location to offload the party by plank! The group were then met by tram No 38 at Carlton Street to enjoy a couple of trips in it and No 26 before inspecting the Museum over a cuppa. The *Begonia Princess* was seen cruising later that evening with the next booking. We thank the new owner, Anthony Kierce, for initiating these joint ventures.

General

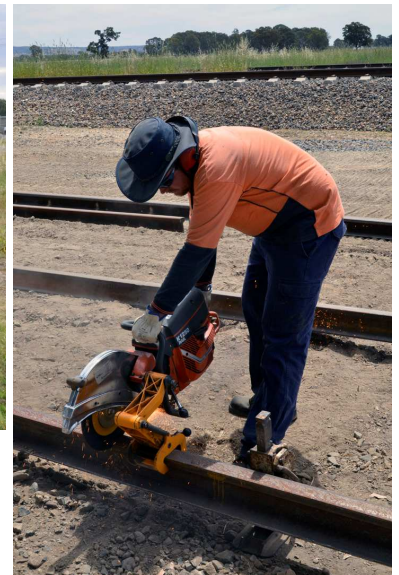
Dave Macartney reports that on 23rd October a motorman from the Fort Collins, Colorado operation paid a visit. He was disappointed not to find any Birney cars here (wrong city), but bought a copy of our DVD plus a copy “Last of Tram at 11” anyway. He invited any of our people visiting Fort Collins to come for ride a on his Birney.



Left: The winning team

Photo: Peter Winspur 4/11/12

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Rail Recovery at Bowser



Clockwise from top:

1. The rail extends as far as one can see
Photo: Alastair Reither 5/11/2012
2. Alastair at work
3. Beginning the stack
4. The stack grows larger – Jake and Harley bar the rails across
5. Loading one of the trucks
6. Alastair still at work assisted by Richard

*Photos: Peter Bruce & Alastair Reither
20-22/11/2012*



125 Years Ago: The Launch of the Ballarat Horse Tram System

By Alan Bradley

In 1887, 125 years ago, Queen Victoria was on the throne. There was no Australian Federation as we know it. Victoria was a separate British colony, and it was booming. It was the era of “Marvellous Melbourne”. Ballarat was “The Golden City”, which owed its existence to gold, and more mines were opening.

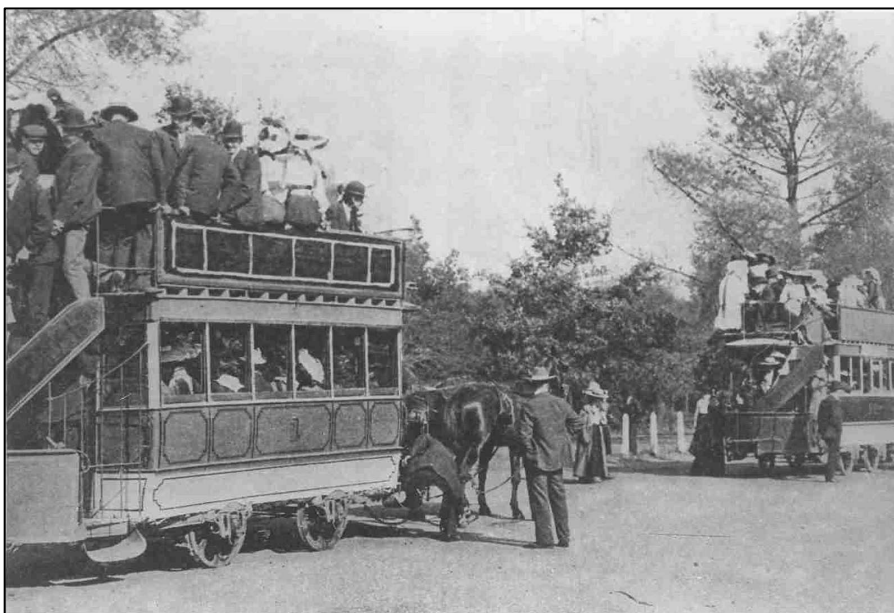
Ballarat had foundries to support mining, but other forms of industry as well. The Phoenix Foundry, located close to the Town Hall, was then at its peak. It specialized in building steam locomotives for the Victorian Railways. A railway line ran along Armstrong Street from the factory to allow newly-built locomotives to run direct to the nearest railway line.

Many of Ballarat’s iconic landmark buildings date from around that time, among them the Art Gallery and Mining Exchange in Lydiard Street North, and towers on the Post Office and Railway Station. Lake Wendouree was transformed from a swamp to a lake fit for boating and public rec-

reation. Statues were donated to the Botanical Gardens, and in 1887 a statue of the Scottish Poet Robert Burns was unveiled in Sturt Street.

Two years previously, in far-away Germany, Karl Benz developed what is now recognised as the first true automobile. But there was no knowledge of these developments, and there would be no reliable motor transport for many years into the future. A Golden City needed a modern public transport system – and this meant street tramways. Ballarat wasn’t big enough to warrant a cable tram system like Melbourne had. The Ballarat City Council decided instead to accept the tender of Edward Thompson and R. T. Moore for an Adelaide-style horse tram system.

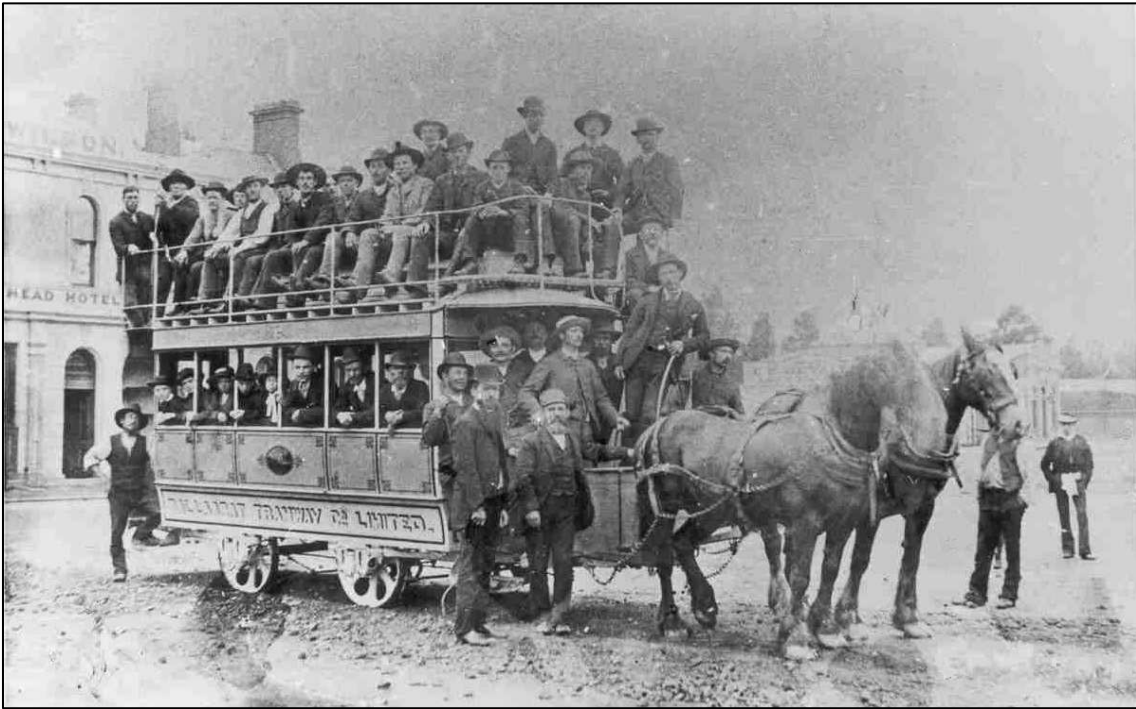
Fast progress was made after that. The Ballarat Tramway Co Ltd (BTCo) built the tram depot on the north side of the lake in May 1887. Soon afterwards the roof of the depot was blown off in a strong wind, but this was only a temporary setback.



Two horse trams (including No. 1) at the Gardens, packed with holiday travellers. The photo appears to have been ‘doctored’ with the advertising on the modesty panel on No 1 removed.

From the Alan Bradley collection

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An early photo of a horse tram at the City terminus. Note the lack of modesty panels on the upper deck.

BTM Collection

Trackwork from the corner of Sturt and Grenville Streets to the Botanical Gardens commenced on 7 November 1887. Six weeks later enough trackwork had been completed to allow an official opening ceremony – just in time to carry tourists to the Gardens during the Christmas-New Year holidays. The trams were ordered from the Adelaide firm Duncan & Fraser. The “Ballarat Courier” described them as follows:

“The cars of are of the Stevenson American pattern, and are formed principally of ash, elm, hickory, and Kauri pine, with spiral stairs back and front. The cars do not represent an altogether handsome appearance, but are certainly comfortable, the means of ascent especially being very convenient. Each car is constructed to seat forty-four passengers”¹.

The opening ceremony

On the afternoon of 21 December 1887, 300 official guests gathered at the Ballarat Town Hall. There were three separate councils in Greater Ballarat in those days, and the

Mayors of Ballarat, Ballarat East and Sebastopol were all present. The guests were taken from the Town Hall to the Gardens via Sturt Street West in six double-decker trams. In a sign of things to come, 50 people crammed on each tram. The trams crossed the Phoenix Foundry track, and then started the climb towards Drummond Street.

Not everyone in Ballarat was happy about the coming of the horse trams. Some of the cabmen showed their feelings about the new competition by demonstrating in front of the trams, with placards on their cab. A few derailments occurred along the way, attributed to newness of the track and inexperience of horses and drivers.

Upon arrival at the Gardens, to the accompaniment of the Militia Band, the 300 guests sat down to a banquet at the “Rotunda”. Typical for the time, loyal toasts were drunk to “The Queen”, “The Prince of Wales and the Royal Family”, and “The Governor”. Several speeches were made, and several more toasts were drunk to “The Ladies”, “The Ballaarat Tramway Company”, “The Press”, “The City Council”, “The City Mayor”, and “Our Host

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and Hostess”. Afterwards the guests ate, the Militia Band played, and then the 300 guests boarded the trams for the journey back to the Town Hall.

Regular services could not begin yet, as a shortage of rails delayed completion of the Gardens line until 23 December. On 22 December the BTCo ran special trips to the Gardens for the Orphan Asylum children. On 23 December a special trip was run for the touring English cricketers, who were soon to play against “22 of Ballarat” at the Eastern Oval.

Regular services commence

Regular passenger-carrying services commenced on 26 December 1887. The “Ballarat Star” recorded:

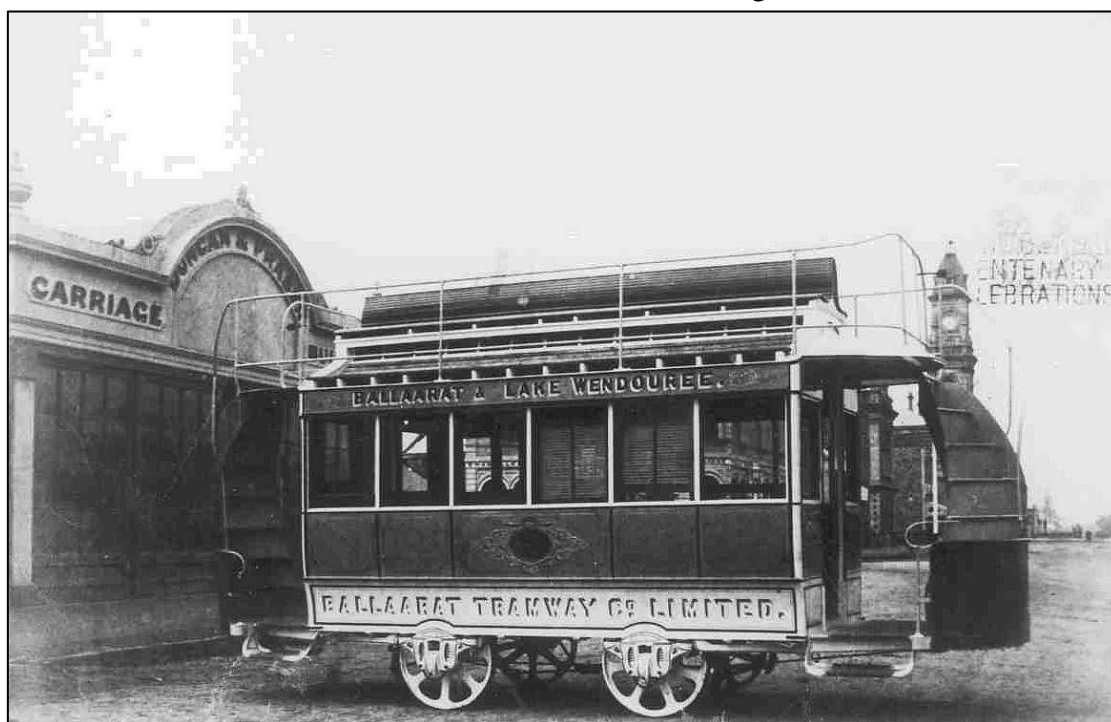
“The tramways to the lake commenced running regularly for the public yesterday morning. They were well patronized, and took large loads of persons to and from the Gardens. In several cases, owing to obstructions on the line the cars ran off, but were soon replaced on it. One car, however, came

to grief opposite the Adelphi Hotel, owing to the breaking of an axle. This damage was subsequently repaired, and the car removed during the evening”.²

On 27 December the tramway traffic was reported to have worked better than on the first day. Only four cars were on the lines, but they were packed every trip. No timetable was observed.³ On 28 December the trams were again well patronized, and there were fewer stoppages than on any day. Up to 80 passengers were carried in one car, and some had three horses attached, rather than the usual two.⁴

In retrospect

These first few days of horse tram service set the pattern for holiday services from the city to the Gardens. Patronage was heavy, but the horse cars were often overcrowded and unable to cope with the numbers wanting to ride them. The horses struggled to haul the cars, and even in those days people were concerned about cruelty to animals. These concerns, along with the slow speed of the trams, led to a search for something better.



A newly-assembled horse tram outside the Duncan & Fraser factory in Adelaide. This may have been the “pattern car”. The others were sent to Ballarat in pieces and re-assembled there.

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During the next decade, the merits or otherwise of an Australian Federation were debated. During the same period the alternatives to horsepower were debated in Ballarat. Battery and steam power was ruled out for a variety of reasons. Electric traction via overhead wires was adopted, and the services commenced in 1905. By then Queen Victoria had died, and Australia was a Federation of States.

The early days of the horse trams set the tone for Ballarat tramway operation in other ways too. The city terminus remained at the corner of Sturt and Grenville Streets for the next 50 years, leading to much congestion through shunting of trams. Through-routing of services between Ballarat East and West finally occurred in 1937. The location of the tracks on the side of the road in Sturt Street and Wendouree Parade, rather than the centre of the road, remained until closure of tram services in 1971.

Not much remains of the early days of the horse trams. Most of the track from the city to the Gardens was removed in the 1970s following closure of the electric service. A section of footpath near the Town Hall contains a section of tram and Phoenix Foundry rail, as a rather forlorn memorial to the past.

Horse tram No. 1, which was reconstructed by the Ballarat Tramway Museum, remains as a link to the beginning of services in 1887. It carries that same original yellow livery, and runs on a portion of the same track that those 300 guests rode to the Rotunda for the official launch, 125 years ago.

References:

1. Ballarat Courier 22 December 1887
2. Ballarat Star 27 December 1887
3. Ballarat Courier 28 December 1887
4. Ballarat Courier 29 December 1887



Newly assembled Tram No 1 at the Wendouree Depot This photo was very important during the reconstruction of the tram by the Museum. *BTM Collection*

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Rail Recovery Work Party

An exceptional amount of work by members of the museum allowed the Museum to gain a lot of 94lb rail donated by Public Transport Victoria for use by tourist railways and tramways. The rail became available with the rebuilding of the standard gauge mainline from Melbourne to Albury

The excellent arrangements in place between PTV and the various tourist rail operators have seen quite a bit of materials recycled to good use by these groups.

A working party of five of our members joined by five members of the Victorian Goldfields Railway worked extremely hard and diligently in heat and dust at the site of the former Bowser railway station, which is just north of Wangaratta.

The group worked from Monday, 19th to Thursday, 22nd November using the assistance of a paid contractor to operate a forklift and a mobile grab crane to see us load six semi-trailer loads of rail, which were dispatched to our property at Bungaree. The workers from the Victorian Goldfields Railway were also paid as part of the budget for this welcome acquisition of rail.

The work involved the grab crane pulling very long sections of welded rail into place where they could be jacked up and cut by the use of two rail cutting saws using rotary cutting discs. After being cut into 13 metre sections the rails were dropped off the jacks and the grab crane lifted them onto the ever growing rail stack. This operation ran for the four days and weather conditions were generally hot and on the Wednesday oppressive hot winds blew dust around the site.

The work effort commenced at 7am each day and ran until 5pm. Because of the magnitude of the works it was necessary to employ the workers from VGR along with the crane operator.

We are all getting older and finding enough volunteers for a project that has a time line, sees more use of paid labour for projects such as this.

Our accommodation was absolutely convenient and perfect for our use, being the North Wangaratta Motel which is a former petrol station roadhouse, directly opposite the Bowser station site. The main building of the former roadhouse is converted to a 'Lodge' for groups such as our as has a commercial kitchen, the Lounge being the former Restaurant area, and the residence being the bedrooms. The motel also has standard motel rooms. It is very country in its atmosphere and has chooks shuffling about, pets are welcome and the kitchen in our 'Lodge' had all the condiments and oils for cooking plus lots of utensils, plates, cups and lots more.

At night we had our home cooked meals, where Simon Green supplied a well presented Barbecue the first night and a Spaghetti Bolognese the second night and John Shaw from the Victorian Goldfields Railway supplied the roast lamb dinner the third night with the accompaniments cooked by Richard Gilbert.

Sitting down to good meals, having some beers and nice wines and great discussions made this the ideal 'Blokes week away'.

Richard Gilbert



Richard – A man of many talents

*Photo: Alastair Reither
21 November 2012*

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Vale Murray Byrne

Former Minister for State Development and Decentralisation, for Tourism and of Immigration in the Victorian Parliament, Murray Byrne passed away on Wednesday, 7th November, aged 84. Murray Byrne's Ministry portfolio included Tourism at the time our tramway was being set up in the early 1970's.

He lived at 217 Wendouree Parade, quite near our tramway, and took an interest in our development. He was the first Minister for Decentralisation in Australia and he played a pivotal role for those major regional rural centres, particularly Ballarat. He is credited with personally persuading large companies including McCain and Mars to set up in operations Ballarat. He was known as the 'Father of modern Ballarat'.

Murray interacted with people of all walks of life and had a passionate commitment to making their lives better. I remember a frantic phone call from Campbell Duncan, conducting on a tram, saying 'Murray Byrne's on the tram. You had better come down and have a chat'. Murray had decided to have a ride and see for himself how our operation was going.

Murray Byrne represented Ballarat Province from 1958 to 1976.

Richard Gilbert



Murray Byrne during his time as Minister for Public Works.

From an undated photo taken at Gardens Loop between June 1970 and the tramway closure in September 1971.

BTM collection

A Clash of Cultures

This one happened about four or five years ago - only now can the truth be told.

Apparently there is an entertainer, a chanteuse, who goes by the name of Pink. She is very popular with the fourteen year old female segment of the population, and was visiting Melbourne for a series of performances. One of the local radio stations had acquired a couple of tickets and had hidden them "somewhere in Ballarat" if you could follow the cryptic clues. The tramway was mentioned.

Dave was pottering around at the depot as usual that afternoon. Dave never listens to local radio, has never heard of Pink, and the last recording of popular music that he bought was "Singin' the Blues" by Guy Mitchell (which he still has). Circa 1956.

His work was interrupted by a young teenybopper, not the sort of person you normally see at a tramway museum, asking "Have youse got any pink tickets?" An odd request. Ever obliging, Dave took her around to the office, got out a conductor's outfit, and carefully explained the ticketing system in use, noting that none of the tickets were pink. An embarrassing silence ensued, Dave thinking "What does she want?" she thinking "Is this guy for real?" She left.

Five minutes later another two arrived with same request, followed by a couple more. By now Dave was starting to put together some idea of what was going on. The clues being given out were "You can see the tramway", then "you can see the lake", then "You can see the convent fence".

Now Dave has an intellectual capacity equal to a dozen teenyboppers, and figured out that the only place where you could see all three things at once was at the Church of the Little Flower, a closed and disestablished Catholic Church in Wendouree Parade, the perfect place to hide something.

Dave now had the choice of strolling down and claiming the prize or going home. He went home.

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Above: "Tram Pull" Sunday 4th November

Photo: Andrew Mitchell



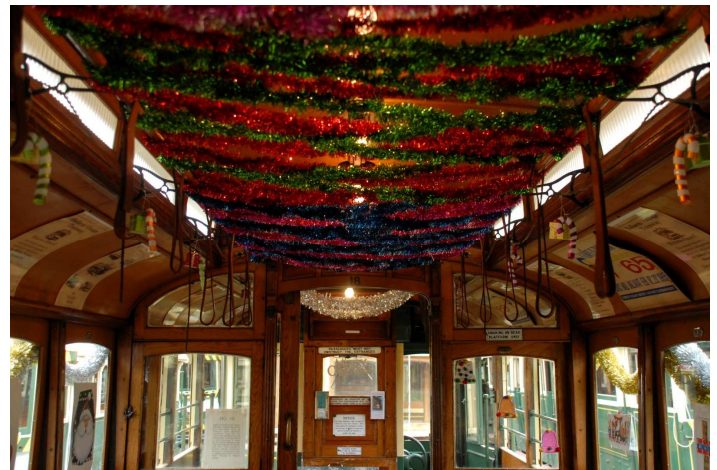
Above: Relaxing with a few beers after a hard day's work
Brad, Jake, Al, Mark, Harley, Andrew & Richard at Bowser

Photo: Peter Bruce 22/11/2012



Above: Concreting 5 Road 15/11/2012

Photo: BTM collection



Above: No 18 displays a riot of colour

Photo: Peter Winspur 8/12/2012

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Season's Greetings



Top: The *Begonia Princess* has returned to Lake Wendouree *Photo: Alastair Reither 6/5/2012*
Above: This year No 18 was chosen to celebrate Christmas *Photo: Peter Winspur 8/12/2012*



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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