

Funeral Service for David John Macartney
08/07/1944 to 24/08/2026

Wednesday 2nd September 2026
F.W. Barnes & Son Funerals
Service held in the Ballarat Tramway Museum

Celebrant : Laurence Gibbs

Generic Music is played as Family and Friends are seated.

Introduction Celebrant....

On behalf of his sister Lois and his many friends, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you all to the Service for David John Macartney, more affectionately known as Dave or “McC”.

We have so many wonderful people here, to say goodbye to this special man and this will be the perfect chance for everyone to celebrate and pay suitable tribute to the life of this remarkable man.

The love and respect you showed to David throughout his life, was always returned back by him to each and every one of you, with sincerity and always good humour.

Even though I was told that David could be a bit stubborn and being a bachelor, did like to have things done his own way, I was also told they could never remember him ever losing his temper or truly getting upset with anyone.

And his good friend Paul, even admitted to me that he and his fellow volunteers did push his buttons on many occasions, but David would much rather walk away, instead of having an argument.

So here we are today at this service, which is a celebration of David’s life and what he meant to each and every one of us.

All I can ask of you, is to open your heart, allow your emotions to surface and be expressed in words, in tears, in reflection, or in whatever way is meaningful to each of you.

It is such a natural loving thing to do.

Let us all now take this time, to reflect on how knowing David and being a part of his life, touched our hearts, leaving us with so many great memories.

Family and friends, my name is Laurence Gibbs, I am a Civil Celebrant and I have the honour to perform this service today, for David.

I had the privilege of speaking with his close friends Paul, Jackie and Richard who shared with me some of the life David led and the achievements he was so proud of throughout his life.

His sister Lois sent through some stories about David’s early days, which I have incorporated into his life story. Thankyou Lois for sharing all your memories.

David was born on the 8th of July 1944 in Carnegie Victoria. He was one of three children born to John and Ina Macartney.

He had an older sister Miriam who has passed away and a younger sister Lois, who is here with us today.

It certainly would have been a turbulent and difficult time for his family and also for David to be born near the end of the Second World War and then to grow up as a young boy in the depression, with rationing and the hard times, which followed in the ensuing years.

Because his Dad John was overseas serving in the war, David didn't get to meet his Father until he was around a year old, which did not promote close bonding.

Their interests were very different, with his Dad loving cars and David having no time for them, not then or even now. Suffering from car sickness at times, didn't help either.

David never owned a car and would get around quite well on his bicycle. David even rode his bicycle from Melbourne to Ballarat, when he decided to move here.

He was still riding it even into his 70's, until it became a bit too difficult to pedal around. In hindsight, David probably should have looked into an electric one. In his later years he did try walking everywhere, but that also became too difficult.

Lois said David was always close to his Mum, and although all the kids were treated equally, she definitely had a soft spot for him.

As a pre-schooler, David developed itchy feet and would take off on his trike on very long rides, never seeming to get lost though.

All the children went to Glen Huntly Primary and when Lois started school, her Mum walked with her on the first day, but that was it – no helicopter parenting in those days.

David was then charged with keeping an eye on Lois and seeing she got to school in one piece.

Now they lived opposite the park, but they were not allowed to walk through it to school, as there might be undesirables. So while Lois walked the street on one side, David opted for the street on the other side, a few hundred feet away.

Lois was visible (apparently only just) so it seems that he fulfilled the task asked of him by his Mum.

When David first started school, Lois said he'd be over it by afternoon playtime, so he'd walk home. She said poor Mum had to take him back, by which time the bell was about to ring for home time anyway.

Because of the closeness in age of David and Lois and Lois being a definite tomboy, they got on really well.

What he did, she did. They both barracked for Geelong. They shared a bedroom until the family moved to Ormond in 1956, at which time David got his own room and Lois had to share with her sister. She was not impressed.

Suddenly on his own, David probably got bored and one day he was chucking a ball around in his nice new room and smashed a giant hole in the vent. Ever inventive, he stuck a poster over the destruction and got away with it for a time, that was until the tape came adrift.

They all enjoyed a typical '50s childhood, with weekly visits to the Carnegie Theatre for Saturday matinee, followed by threepence worth of chips from the fish & chip shop on the way home. That threepence, equates to 3 cents worth today.

On Sunday they would walk to Sunday school. They would all be tarted up in their good clothes to sing songs and prance around, but unfortunately on the way home, they had to pass by multiple houses under construction, opposite the tram terminus.

The temptation to clamber all over them was irresistible and they'd arrive home grubby, bleeding and with splinters that needed removing, much to their Mum's dismay.

Some Sundays would be a road trip, which would take them out into the country to many different destinations.

Without fail, on arrival at each port of call, David for some reason, would promptly check out the local toilet block from curiosity, not necessity.

If he'd had a camera, he could have produced his own 'Dinkum Dunnies' book.

David was a bit of a picky eater and Lois couldn't remember him ever eating a piece of fruit, except maybe a banana.

But he ate weird things, like raw cabbage stalks and he used to make a concoction consisting of a four day old dried out crust of bread, topped with vegemite, peanut butter and tomato sauce, in that exact order.

Once a week, their Mum would give them Hypol, which was a nutritional supplement containing cod liver oil, which tasted like sour cream, laced with rotten fish. The sisters Miriam and Lois were always hoping she'd forget, but David liked it and made sure to remind her.

Lois thinks that Hypol is probably why he made it to 82, despite his poor diet.

The most memorable times in their childhood, were the Christmas holidays at Blairgowrie.

Their Mum's father was a timber merchant and he bought a block of land about half a mile back from the beach, where he built a holiday house for his three daughters and their families.

It was a two bedroom house with an outside toilet, no hot water service and an ice chest. There was an enclosed verandah across the front and down either side. This housed six adults and ten children. Stretchers and chamber pots were required.

While the cousins were all well reared kids, en masse they definitely became a feral mob. They were known to avail themselves of a rowboat that was left on the beach above the high tide mark.

They would pile in and row far out into the deep water.

The owner, whose first language was apparently not English would appear, wave his fist and bellow, "Get out of the boat", which made no sense at all.

Not being strong swimmers, they would have all drowned if they got out and his boat would have drifted out the heads.

So they would paddle their way back and patiently take his verbal abuse, because they were trained not to talk back to adults, then scuttle off to their next adventure.

After the family moved to Ormond in 1956, David started at Mckinnon High, which he left at the end of fifth form.

David got a job at McPhersons Hardware and Lois believes he stayed to qualify for long service leave after 15 years, then left to make his way outside in the traditional workforce.

David also worked for Windsor Publications in Melbourne for a few years.

The family moved to Springvale in 1963, but this never suited David, as it was too far out in the sticks at that time. Lois couldn't remember exactly when he left home, but she was pretty sure he was long gone, when she got married in 1968.

David did live by himself quite a lot of the time, although he bought a terrace house in Albert Park with a couple. His good friend Richard, did tell me that he shared that terrace house in Melbourne with David at one time.

I'm sure there are many stories Richard could share about their time together in the house. Perhaps at the refreshments afterwards, it could be a good time to have a chat with Richard and find out more about some of those stories.

David never married and never had a family of his own. I was told he did attend the local dances in Springvale sometimes and had the odd female acquaintance or two, but nothing romantic ever eventuated from it all.

David was an excellent journalist and had wonderful grammar skills when it came to putting stories and articles together, especially about his passion for trains and trams.

He was a wonderful historian and would often be sought out by people wanting to know much more about the history of trains and trams. He was a big part of The Australian Railway Enthusiasts, helping to write articles and putting historical books together.

This passion also extended to photography. David had many cameras over the years and took his own photos to add to his written articles and even had his own darkroom, in which he developed the photos as well.

And we must also mention that he took many 8mm movies of the trains and trams, calling his little business "Keystone Movies". This visually added so much to the articles he wrote about and included many films in and around the Ballarat area.

David was also instrumental in helping Bob Buttrims, to put together a wonderful historical book about The Phoenix Factory in Ballarat.

This was a company that was at one time, the largest Steam Locomotive builder in Australia, as well as producing other types of machinery. It was established and began operations in 1857 and finally closed its doors in 1906.

In 1976 David sold his Melbourne terrace house and moved to Ballarat, renting for two years before purchasing a home in Armstrong Street, where he happily resided for the next 48 years.

David didn't even have a phone at home and would call down to the Tram Sheds to make a call if he needed too.

He and Richard often communicated by telegram.

Well we are now going back in time quite a few years, and the messages to each other would be in code, so there were fewer words said and therefore cost much less to send them, because back then you paid by the word, sometimes even by the letter.

If we have some younger folk in attendance, perhaps Richard will explain it all to them a little later today, over refreshments.

The Ballarat Tramway Preservation Society was formed in 1971 and the current site off Gillies Street, backing onto Wendouree Parade, was provided by The City of Ballarat in 1972 and then the next two years were spent getting the trams back on the short section of the track in between Lake Wendouree and The Botanical Gardens, with the first official Tram run taking place in December 1974.

The existing new Display Building Museum we are in, was opened in 2022.

It was here in Ballarat, David initially joined the Tram Museum Depot and so began a love affair of hard work, restoration and enjoyment spanning almost five decades.

David was a fantastic restorer of the trams, spending countless hours mending, fixing, maintaining and running them around the Lake Wendouree area.

He also prepared them to be used by the tourists, cleaned them including the never ending job of cleaning the finger smudged windows, answering the phone and taking any bookings.

It is David's dedication to the pastime he loves, which has seen him become a Life Member of not only The Ballarat Tramway Preservation Society, but also The Puffing Billy Preservation Society. Two volunteer organizations he has willingly devoted his skills and many decades of his life to.

David worked for West Coast Railways in The Ballarat East Depot for a while, where he restored a carriage called a "Tambo", which is now a fantastic example of an early First Class Carriage and is currently being used on The Maldon Tourist Railway.

David did also have a couple of pets over the years, which shared his solitary life. Two dogs called "Pup" and a border collie "Maggie" whom he very much cared about.

Then there was "Princess Margaret" the three legged cat, David's favourite, which thought the Tram Museum was her own personal palace and the place to have and raise her kittens. She was a longtime resident, until one unfortunate day, when she ventured out onto the road and was hit by a car.

As you can all tell, David's life revolved around his love of trains and trams, so there are no better person to talk more about him, then his good friend and work colleague, Paul Mong, and I invite him to come up now and share his story with us.

Paul shares his memories, see separate sheets at the end of the service.

Celebrant continues:

Thank you Paul for your sharing your story with us about David.

As you can plainly see, David was a man devoted to the things he loved most in life.

This extended beyond the trams and trains, as he was very community minded in the way he helped out wherever he could and enjoyed interacting with the many different people in his life.

However, at times he was a quiet, patient, private man, not very outgoing in his nature and kept most things close to his chest, rarely sharing too much of his thoughts and his life, with those around him.

I was told in the last two years, it was becoming more noticeable that David's health was deteriorating. He knew his time was coming and he graciously accepted it.

His body was slowing him down and letting him down, more and more.

He told his friends he was pleased that he lasted longer than his Dad, who passed away at 81 years of age, but didn't come close to beating his Mum, who was 100 when she passed.

He was in and out of hospital and really wanted to pass away in his home, but unfortunately that wasn't going to be the case.

While in The Base Hospital, David closed his eyes, took his last breath and lost his struggle with ill health, passing away on Monday the 24th of August.

He was just 82 years of age. Our world has most definitely lost a very special man.

There will never be another one like David.

His friends have asked me to thank the wonderful doctors and nursing staff in the hospital, who looked after David with care and compassion in his final days.

There will be the chance for you all to remember David and some of the special moments throughout his life, with a slide photo presentation put together by his friends, to be played a little later after the Service finishes, in the side room.

May I extend once more, a heartfelt thank you, for all the love and support you have given to David over many years and more recently over the past few weeks.

His great friend Richard has asked me to read a poem on his behalf, which sums up David quite nicely.

It is adapted from "That Man Is A Success" by Robert Louis Stevenson

***That man is a success, who lived well,
laughed often and loved much.***

*Who has gained the respect of intelligent men and women,
and the love of children.*

Who has filled his niche and accomplished his task.

Who leaves the world better than he found it.

*Who has never lacked appreciation of Earth's beauty,
or failed to express it.*

Who looked for the best in others, and gave the best he had.

Thankyou Richard, what a lovely selection.

Shortly I will be saying the Final Words of Farewell for David.

After the service concludes, David will be escorted out of the back of the shed to the waiting hearse. Two trams have been organized to follow the hearse as it makes its way out to Wendouree Parade and then turns left, following the tracks to the end of the tram line.

Everyone is welcome to either remain here in the museum, or hop on board a tram and join with the hearse and David, as he makes his final journey along Wendouree Parade, before heading to the Crematorium.

This will be such a fitting tribute, to a man who has given so much to the Tram Museum, for so long.

The trams will then bring you back to the museum, to share your own special stories about David with your friends, while enjoying some refreshments.

David will be privately cremated at a later date.

Let me now say the Final Words of Farewell for David.....

David, to say you will be missed, is truly an understatement of enormous proportions.

You will be missed by all the people that had the pleasure of meeting you and associating with you, throughout your life.

Your hard work, dedication and accomplishments in your life, were truly amazing and an inspiration to all those who knew you.

Although you are gone David, know with certainty you will forever be a loving eternal part of our memories. Working in the museum will never be the same again, now that you are gone.

We hope there are trains and trams in heaven and they call on your expertise to keep them in perfect condition, running true straight and on time across the clouds.

So in this difficult and sad time, as we say our final goodbyes to him, let us all remember David John Macartney for the incredible, special man that he truly was.

Goodbye our dear friend Dave, may you now rest in peace for eternity.

While Selected music "Time to Say Goodbye" is played.

The coffin is escorted out the rear door to the hearse. Then the hearse drives to the roadside followed by the two trams with the congregation on board.

Lead by the funeral director walking, the hearse drives slowly along the tram tracks, followed by the two trams, to the end of the line.

Here the hearse departs for The Crematorium and the trams return to the Museum where the photo display is playing, refreshments are served and stories about David shared.

This concludes the service.

Paul Mong's speech.....

Dave had the good fortune to be born and raised within a couple of blocks of the Carnegie tram terminus. He also pointed out that he had been born in the same year that the iconic NSW steam locomotive 3801 was built.

Dave said *"3801 continues to bring joy wherever it appears, but unfortunately I can make no such claims"*.

By the time he finished primary school he could rattle off the numbers of Glenhuntly's allotment of trams, but strangely none of his class mates seemed the least bit interested.

He started work in the city in 1961, with gainful employment he joined the A.E.T.A and realised the group had preserved some trams, so he spent his Sunday afternoons restoring them, which he really enjoyed.

McC joined the fledgling Association of Railway Enthusiasts (A.R.E) very soon after its formation in 1961. He soon became one of the 'Inner Circle' of Office-Bearers and Volunteers of that Association, and was Editor of its Magazine.

Being such a keen rail tour traveller, he also took on the role of Tour Booking Officer for 5 Tours between 1966 & 69. These were mostly long-weekend Tours to such locations as Port Pirie, Canberra and Broken Hill.

One recollection that Graeme Cleak had showed Dave's droll sense of humour.

In Feb 1967, D McC and I, along with Jim Clarke & Graham Westwood spent around 10 days travelling on steam-hauled goods trains around South West WA.

Come Saturday night we were back in Perth, so being a really hot day & night it was decided to sleep on the Beach.

Being a hot night, there were plenty of others at the beach at 1am. Then a group of girls approached us and asked, 'Are you guys Rockers or Mods?'

DMcC in his true form, answered, 'No, we are Eastern Railfans'. The girls were so confused at this answer, they soon wandered off!

A fan trip to Ballarat in July 1961 had fuelled his interest in the system, and increasingly he was finding time to visit and ride the trams when the opportunity arose.

In 1977 he moved to Ballarat, something he had planned for some years, and got involved in museum activities.

When the Commonwealth Employment Scheme was adopted in 1985, the museum moved into paid employment for the first time. McC was appointed Supervisor with a number of unemployed people coming and going over the next seven months.

The first project was converting Tram 26 and then rebuilding the horse tram.

Dave wrote daily diary's entries of the work that was completed. Here are some of the entries he made.

"April 1st 1987. Dave fills Jackie's lunch box with rubbish, but finds the same rubbish in his bag at knock off time. Score Jackie 1, Dave nil"

"April 27 87, Jackie buys two expensive easter eggs for Dave and Garry, while they go halves in one chocolate bunny for her. One up for the boys"

In 1994 West Coast Railway set up a maintenance base at the Ballarat East Loco Depot. Not wishing to miss out on this, Dave offered his services to their management for a period of three months.

He arranged to work for them on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of each week, with the other four days given over to tramway work.

This meant a seven day a week commitment to work, but it was only to be for three months. In the end, this turned out to be eight years, as more rolling stock arrived.

He was to spend many hours fitting out BK sitting car and water proofing the roof of sleeping car Tambo, not to mention cleaning and other duties on an expanding fleet of steam and diesel locomotives.

In 2002 he wound up his commitment at the Loco Depot and returned to tramway matters once more. By now the discipline of the seven day week was well established, and he continued working every single day for the tramways for 14 years.

Dave became a Life member of Puffing Billy and the BTM.

Dave was very fortunate to meet a broad range of personalities over the years and soon developed names for them all. I was fortunate with Alastair to spend most of our younger years with Dave.

"The first time I met Dave was Al's 8th birthday, when his late mother Margaret decided to park where we stand now.

However this area was swamp in winter time. The family Tarago got bogged and in Dave's wisdom he decided to pull the car out using the tram, as the car got out, Dave yells out "next time park over there you silly woman".

As we got older, we spent a lot of time at the depot. After school one day Dave had to go and pick up his favourite Dan from school.

Al and I were left to move trams around the depot fan. I drove the tram down and Al drove it back. The only issue was the points were split, which caused the rear bogie to derail.

Al and I rushed around putting a plan together, to put it back on before Dave got back. However Dave was too quick and as he approached, we hear him yell out "Richter/

Mong you fools”, as he headed straight to the depot, to have afternoon tea leaving us to sort it out.

Afternoon tea was a special occasion for Dave, where you would see him get his loaf of bread out of the cupboard, slice it, then scrape of any mould, then toast it.

Every Monday we would take turns in providing afternoon tea. This time was McC’s turn. A couple of days earlier he picked up on special, a sponge cake.

As he could not smell very well, he opened the container and the smell was terrible, making us nearly dry retch, however not impacting Dave.

He scrapes off the cream, then starts eating the cake, then he looks at us as we vline the meal room.

Although Dave never had children, he was surrounded and admired from the younger generation.

Early days being Woody, Jackie, McDonald, Butler, Bradley and Rooster, to the later days being Richter, Mong, Dan, Boon, Jenkins, Carter and Deepthi.

We are all so fortunate to be have been part of Dave’s life, RIP McC