

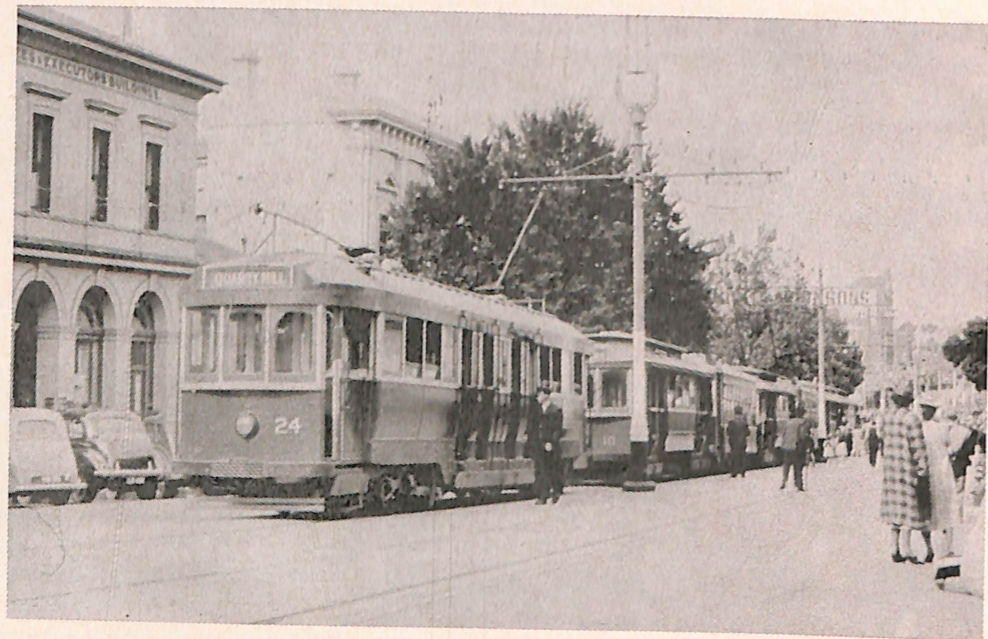
No. 29 descends the View Street hill in 1969, shortly before the original street lighting brackets were removed and replaced by modern fittings.

During the late 1950's, the rolling stock consisted of 11 bogie cars, six (one-man) single truck cars and five Birney cars, plus the track cleaner car. As Bendigo had a surplus of bogie cars and a shortage of four-wheel cars, and Ballarat the converse, it was decided to exchange one bogie car from Bendigo for two single truck cars from Ballarat. The movement took place early in October, 1960, when No. 1 left for Ballarat and Ballarat's Nos. 19 and 25 arrived. These two cars became Nos. 7 and 6 respectively. Birney No. 27 was badly damaged in an accident in 1956 and was scrapped two years later, No. 15 suffered likewise in 1959 and has since been cannibalised. Nos. 11 and 30 received moderate damage in collisions in 1968 and 1971 respectively, and will not be repaired.

The Golden Square double track terminus was removed about February, 1960, and replaced by a single line, while the similar facility at Quarry Hill (unused for many years, as the cars stopped at the points) was taken up in July, 1964. Later in the same year one set of points was removed from the only passing loop on the North Bendigo route. Subsequently, the other set of points was also removed. Decorated trams have been infrequent in Bendigo until the annual Myers "Santa trams" of the late 1960's. Crews were encouraged to decorate their cars in the early years of electric traction for special occasions. No. 21 was decorated and illuminated in 1937 for the Coronation of King George VI. No. 22 was decorated and illuminated in 1951 for the Centenary of the Discovery of Gold



Car No. 23 stops short of the points of the unused double track terminus at Quarry Hill.



Easter — “. . . everything out, . . .”. View Street, 1949.

and in 1954 for the Royal Visit, after which this car was scrapped.

Easter is always a busy time for the Bendigo Tramways. The Easter Fair and sporting events reach a climax on the Monday with the grand parade. Passenger traffic has always been above average, but has declined considerably in recent years. The trailers helped carry the loads for two decades during the early part of this century. Trams ran in divisions on the Eaglehawk line, and “Car Following” discs have been used since the early days. These are metal plates, hung on the off-side front of the trams, issued to all except the last car in a convoy. They are to warn oncoming motormen of the size of the group of cars he is crossing.

The Easter Fair procession winds its way through the central streets about noon and tram services are cut at the perimeter of this area. Until about 1960 an extra bogie car ran in convoy with each scheduled bogie car from Charing Cross to Eaglehawk from about 9.00 a.m. until noon, while later runs had a single truck car added as far as Needle loop. The single truck car then reversed and preceded the inbound pair of bogie cars to the City. During the procession shuttle services were maintained by one car on each of the three short routes and two or three trams on the Eaglehawk line. “Wrong Road” return trip running was used on city area double track, where necessary, to enable these trams to come reasonably close to proceedings. Until the middle 1950’s the rule was “everything out”, and only a defective tram could languish in the Depot over Easter. Declining patronage in re-



Nos. 2 and 25 pause before rumbling over the 1903 concrete-based cobble stoned track of the central city area.



"... a pleasant scene to watch four Birney cars meet at Charing Cross on Sundays ..."

cent years has resulted in reduced frequencies and less use of trams in divisions.

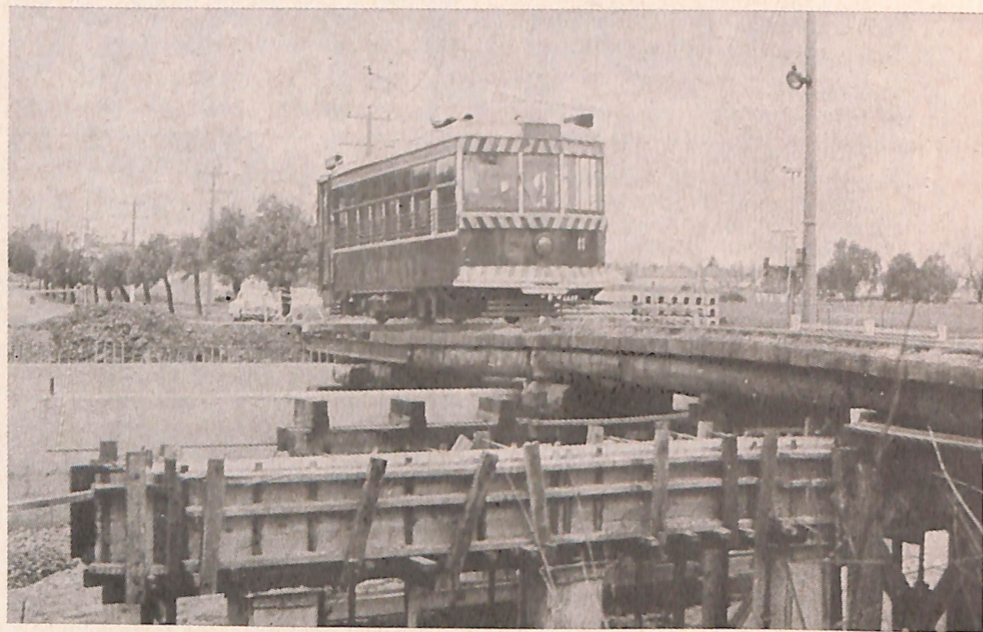
Until 1913 it was possible that any tram would work either through route (i.e., Eaglehawk-Quarry Hill or Golden Square-Lake Weeroona). Early photographs indicate that the three-window saloon cars were probably kept on the long route only. After conversion to one-man operation, an obvious restriction on use applied. When the bogie cars arrived after World War II, they were placed on the Eaglehawk-Quarry Hill route. As their numbers increased, the use of unconverted single truck cars decreased until the bogie cars ran all of the normal service. Single truck and Birney cars appeared only as extras, specials or at Easter. Bogie cars have worked the Golden Square-North Bendigo route occasionally as specials, on football days or at Easter in the late 1960's. Birney cars initially saw limited service due to their relatively small size and single entrance which slowed loading and unloading. They were hot cars in summer, having more glass and less window openings than the other trams. Subsequently, they ran evening services on the Golden Square-North Bendigo route and all Sunday trips for some time. It was indeed a pleasant scene to watch four Birney cars meet at Charing Cross on Sundays, knowing that the fifth was standing outside the Eaglehawk Town Hall, ready to return to this intersection for the next four-car meeting twenty-four minutes hence.

Creeks and Concrete

Five bridges to be rebuilt. An aged tramway. A good reason for abandonment? Yes, but not in

Bendigo! This was the situation in 1964. The Bendigo Creek passes beneath the wide, open area known as Charing Cross at the centre of Bendigo, and the roadways and gardens were carried on timber decking over the course of the creek. The Eaglehawk and Golden Square tram lines were involved at this location, and the North Bendigo line at Nolan Street. The Eaglehawk line crossed other creeks at Long Gully and California Gully. Commencing in March, 1964, the Nolan Street bridge was the first to be reconstructed. The roadway was closed to motor traffic, but the tram service was maintained as far as practicable. The old timber structure was dismantled except for the piles and bearers which carried the tram rails. New concrete retaining walls and piles were built around and underneath the tramway, which was closed about three times during May and June while its supporting structure was renewed. On one occasion Birney No. 29 was isolated for a few days to run the service beyond the bridge, while at other times a mini-bus and taxis carried the passengers. Second hand rails from the dismantled Quarry Hill terminus were set in mass concrete to road surface on the new bridge.

Work was then concentrated at Charing Cross. The Bendigo track gang, supplemented by the men from Ballarat, had shortened the double track at Charing Cross on the Golden Square route by one pole length in December, 1963, to allow one Birney tramcar sufficient room to terminate and return to North Bendigo terminus when the roadway was open over the creek. This took place on 7th De-



The old and the new — Nolan Street bridge rebuilding.



"... the Eaglehawk 'Depot'".



The track gang stands aside to allow No. 19 to pass along High Street, near the Myrtle Street loop.

cember, 1964, and a private bus was hired to carry passengers on the Golden Square route, with an S.E.C. conductor collecting the fares. The tram track was re-connected late in January, 1965, with the new track set in mass concrete to road surface. The Eaglehawk route bridge was next, but provided complications. It was decided that private buses could not service this long line, so the unused track alongside the Eaglehawk Town Hall was re-commissioned, a small pit dug between the rails, a watchman's hut provided, so that a number of bogie cars could be stationed there as required. The crossover at Charing Cross was partly on the bridge and therefore had to be cut. It was replaced by two new crossovers, one further west and the other in Mitchell Street beyond Pall Mall. The former crossover allowed trams from Eaglehawk to shunt and return, while the latter similarly served the Quarry Hill route. They were installed during January and February, 1965. The bridge was cut on 15th March, 1965, isolating six bogie cars at the Eaglehawk "Depot." It is known that on two occasions a temporary track connection was made at the works site to allow trams to be exchanged with the main Depot. The new tram track was completed and the through service resumed on 20th April, while the adjoining roadway was completed.

The small bridge at Long Gully was almost an anti-climax in the series of rebuilt bridges. Work commenced on the roadway during August, and the tram track was cut on 1st September. Eaglehawk "Depot" was brought back into use for three bogie cars which ran from there to Long Gully.

Passengers walked around the excavation and joined city-bound cars, and vice versa. The tram bridge was quickly completed and the through service resumed on 13th September. The California Gully bridge proved to be an even faster job. The service was interrupted only from 13th to 15th October, 1965, with two bogie cars providing the shuttle service. One single truck car acted as the spare tram.

A sixth bridge was reconstructed during the latter portion of June, 1969. It had been estimated that two Birney cars would be isolated for up to some weeks while the McCrae Street bridge, north of Arnold Street, on the North Bendigo route, was rebuilt. The tramway section took only about one week and was completed by the end of the month.

Old Soldiers . . .

The State Electricity Commission of Victoria, being originally set up to generate and reticulate electricity, did not want to inherit tramways with its acquisition of private electricity companies, but found that it did "inherit" three systems, including that at Bendigo. It has repeatedly referred to the problems associated with running its tramways in various Annual Reports, and made the first firm move to divest itself of a route in 1953. It moved to close the Golden Square line as from 6th June, but the move did not succeed. A private motor bus ran along the tram route (on a restricted pick-up and set-down basis) and continued to Kangaroo Flat, and it would have been quite easy for the operator to supersede the trams by a slight revision of his procedures. The next move came on Friday,

2nd February, 1962, when the Commission announced its intention to petition State Parliament to abandon its tramways in Bendigo (and also at Ballarat). It was stated that passengers were declining steadily and that the financial results had deteriorated to the state where, in 1961, the revenue was £40,512 against expenditure of £125,322, resulting in a loss of £84,810. The trams, their equipment and track were largely worn out, and replacement would cost a prohibitively large amount of money. The trams would continue running until replacement bus services had been organised.

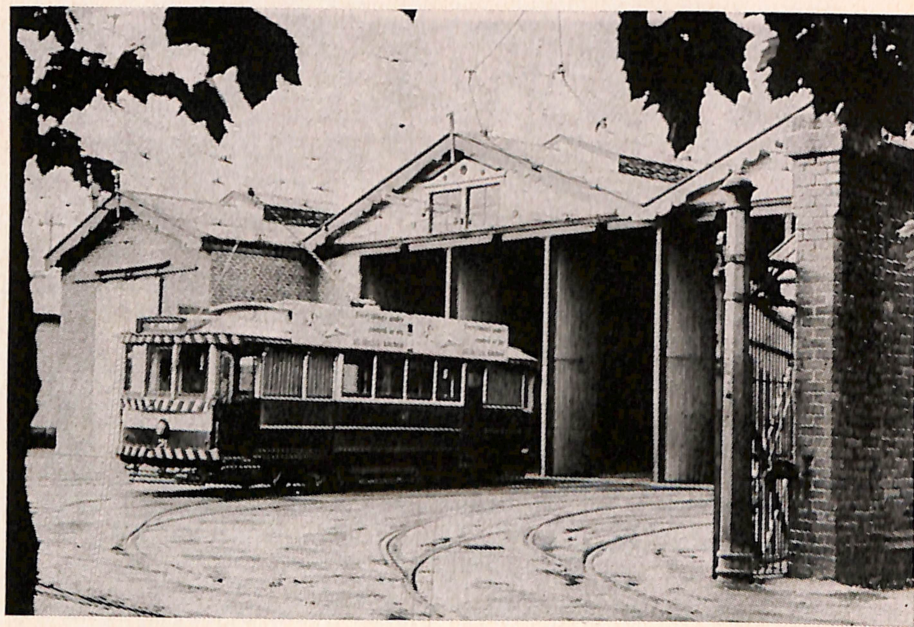
Local reaction was adverse, and opposition grew steadily and became organised. Protest meetings and deputations were arranged and the Bendigo City Council decided to support the retention of the trams. Several months went by with the matter being mentioned less frequently. The Notice to Abandon was not tabled in State Parliament and the issue eventually faded from public attention. Another move was made late in 1965 but little was heard about it. The next major move at abandonment came late in October, 1967, when the Minister for Transport announced that the Transport Regulation Board would investigate public transport facilities at Ballarat and Bendigo and report on whether the tram services could be adequately replaced by motor buses. The combined loss for Ballarat and Bendigo for the then current year was estimated at approximately \$500,000. The inquiry was eventually held in May, 1968, and heard evidence from several local Councils, Progress Associations, Businessmen's Association, Unions, bus pro-

prietors and the S.E.C. The Government announced in July of the same year that it had accepted the T.R.B. recommendation that the trams could be adequately replaced by buses. It was expected that the Notice would be tabled in Parliament quickly and that the tram service could close early in 1969. At this time, the Government had a majority in the Lower House of State Parliament, but the combined Opposition parties held a majority in the Upper House. The Notice to Abandon was duly tabled in Parliament and, when voted on by the Upper House on 2nd October, was defeated by the Opposition parties combining. The S.E.C. could submit the Notice again, but not before a lapse of twelve months.

The issue next came to public attention in July, 1970, after the Government had gained a majority in the Upper House. It was reported that plans were being made to replace the trams by private buses by the middle of 1971, and once again the local opponents of the scheme began rallying. Tuesday, 15th September, 1970, saw the S.E.C. lay before Parliament another Notice to Abandon its tramways. As the Government now controlled both Houses, this application succeeded and permission was granted. December 19 saw the Transport Regulation Board place advertisements in the local newspaper calling tenders for the operation of motor buses in Bendigo. Applications were to be lodged by 31st January, 1971, and a public hearing was to be held on the tenders submitted. The advertisements listed the future bus services in considerable detail as to routes and timetables. The public



The rustic character of parts of the Bendigo tramway system is typified by this area near the North Bendigo terminus.



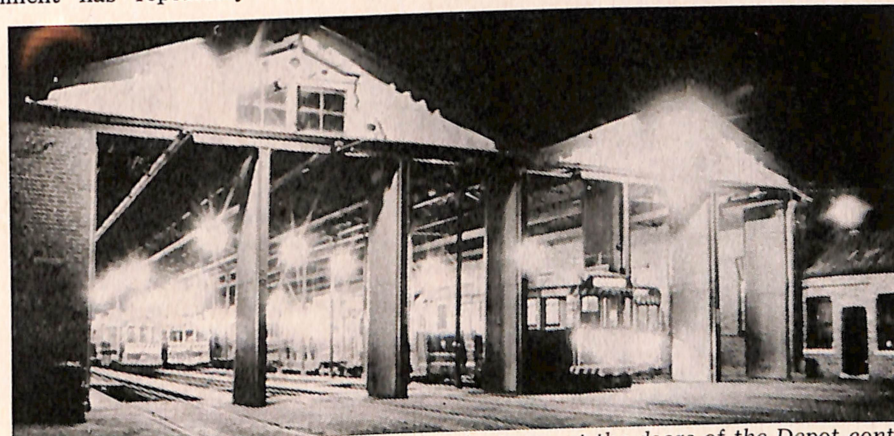
After passing the large iron gates at the Depot entrance, No. 21 eases its way into the shed.

hearing was duly held and the Board announced on 21st June that all bus routes in Bendigo (existing and tramway replacement) would be divided between two operators, and that the other five operators would be de-franchised. Two of the latter operators appealed against this decision at a Hearing on 15th September, but were not successful. The two surviving bus operators are Kangaroo Flat Bus Lines Pty. Ltd. and B. M. Walker Bus Services Pty. Ltd.

The Government has repeatedly stated that it

will ensure that the replacement services will be well run, using the best vehicles available, and the Transport Regulation Board has been given the task of supervising this promise. Each operator has now received the first of the additional new buses necessary, but conversion dates have yet to be announced. It is possible that the change-over could take place during March, 1972.

And so Bendigo's electric trams will cease to run over their old routes approximately 69 years after their inauguration, a little over 80 years after the



The brilliance of the frontal illumination on the trams at the doors of the Depot contrasts with the more subdued atmosphere inside the shed.

spectacular opening of the steam trams and nearly 82 years after the first battery tram "sparked" its way up to the railway station.

Is there a future for the trams? To a certain extent—yes. The Tramway Museum Society of Victoria Limited plan to save five trams, to be preserved at a Museum to be built at Bylands, south of Kilmore as part of their representative collection of tramcars which have served the people of Victoria since the 1880's. The Bendigo Trust have plans to retain a section of the system as a tourist line, and tramway museums in Sydney and Adelaide hope to add one or two trams to their present collections of local tramcars. It is likely that most of the remaining Bendigo trams will be preserved by other museums and historical societies, while one could be allocated to a tramway museum in U.S.A. So, some will continue their public service, others . . . will fade away.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The line drawings for the sketches and maps have again come from the pen of Alan Stempel, while the destination roll was draughted by Robert Green. Photographs have come from the cameras and/or collections of Messrs P. W. Duckett, R. Pearson, R. H. Prentice, R. W. Green, L. N. Millar, M. G. Rowe, B. W. Miller, G. Turnbull, R. Carlisle, K. S. Kings, The Tramway Museum Society of Victoria Limited Archives and the late J. Alfred. Printing and publication was arranged by Messrs. R. Alexander and R. K. Whitehead of the Australian Railway Historical Society Victorian Division Publications Committee. Mr. R. W. Green has again kindly read the manuscript. Information has been supplied by the late W. H. Jack and several past and present S.E.C. Tramway employees, including Messrs D. Irvin, K. Makepeace, B. W. Miller, T. Griffiths, W. Evans, H. Watkins and the late A. V. Mawby. Thanks are also due to Mr. R. G. Henderson, Editor of "Electric Traction". Other information has been gleaned from S.E.C. Annual Reports, "The Advertiser", "The Bendigonian" and "Destination Eaglehawk." Assistance in clarifying various points has been received over the years from Messrs P. W. Duckett, R. H. Prentice, K. McCarthy, M. Plummer, and the late Messrs J. Alfred and C. R. G. Field.

On an autumn evening in 1968 Birney No. 29 rests at the quiet Golden Square terminus.



Bogie car and crew await time for their last trip of the day from the deserted Eaglehawk terminus.

**APPENDIX A
ROLLING STOCK ROSTER**

Although Bendigo has a relatively small tramway system, the rolling stock movements have been moderately involved. There have been many instances of the multiple use of numbers, which can only be dealt with satisfactorily by listing each usage of each number separately. This would involve a total of 53 operations which, unfortunately, is beyond the capacity of this book. The roster which is printed here shows the cars grouped together to a reasonable degree of condensation.

Abbreviations used are:—

- D. & F. — Duncan & Fraser, Adelaide.
- Brush — Brush Engineering Co., U.K.
- Meadowbank — Meadowbank Manufacturing Co., Sydney.
- Moore — James Moore & Sons, Melbourne.
- S.E.C. — State Electricity Commission of Victoria.
- MMTB — Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramways Board.
- BECC — British Electric Car Company.

- Notes:—**
- (a) Scrapped. 1930's:— Nos. 2, 3, 4, 6 7, 10, 12. 1947:— Nos. 1, 5, 8, 9, 11.
 - (b) Nos. 1, 5, 8, 9, 11. 12 converted for one-man operation in 1913.
 - (c) Scrapped 1930's except No. 15 (1947).

- (d) Believed built new, but might have been converted from steam tram trailer of the Nos. 14 to 16 (?) group.
- (e) No. 17 converted to track cleaner in 1953.
- (f) Water Capacity: 2,510 gals. (approx.).
- (g) No. 3 donated to Australian Electric Traction Association in 1956 for preservation. Transferred to The Tramway Museum Society of Victoria Limited in 1963.
- (h) Nos. 12, 19, 20, 21 converted for one-man operation in 1930's; No. 13 in late 1940's. Seat 32 as converted. No. 12 renumbered ex No. 19 in 1935.
- (i) No. 16 converted for one-man operation in 1930's, seating 32.
- (j) Ex Ballarat No. 25.
- (k) Ex Ballarat No. 19.
- (l) Converted for one-man operation in Ballarat.
- (m) Nos. 1 to 4 ex Geelong Nos. 35, 34, 32, 33 in 1956. No. 1 to Ballarat (No. 37) in 1960.
- (n) No. 18 converted for one-man operation in 1952, seating 44. No. 5 ex Geelong No. 36 in 1956.
- (o) These two cars have longitudinal seats and motorman's bulkheads.
- (p) Originally Adelaide Nos. 303, 304, 302, 301. To Geelong 1936.
- (q) Water Capacity: 1,020 gals. (approx.).

BENDIGO ELECTRIC TRAMWAYS — ROLLING STOCK ROSTER

Car Nos.	Body Builder	Date Built	Truck(s) (Wheel Base)	Motors (h.p.)	Seats	Length	Disposal	Previously	Notes
1-12	D. & F.	1903	21E	2 x 25	32	Approx. 30'0"	Scrapped	—	(a) (b)
13, 15, 16	Converted D. & F.	1903-1904	21E	2 x 30	34	Approx. 32'0"	Scrapped	Steam Tram Trailers (Probably Nos. 9-11)	(c)
14	D. & F.	1903-1904	21E	2 x 30	34	Approx. 32'0"	Scrapped 1930's	—	(d)
17, 18	D. & F.	1913	Brush	2 x 35	50	31'2"	Scrapped	—	(e)
(Sprinkler)	B.E.C.C.	1903	?	2 x 25	—	Approx. 23'3"	Scrapped 1954	—	(f)
2, 3, 10, 12 13, 19, 20 21	D. & F.	1916, 1920	21E 7'6"	2 x 45 or 2 x 50	36	31'10"	Scrapped, 1951-1960, Nos. 2, 10, 13, No. 3 — see Note (g)	MMTB 115, 114, 112, 107, 109, 185, 187, 188.	(g) (h)
4, 6	Meadowbank	1915	21E 6'6"	2 x 45	36	30'11"	Scrapped 1956.	1951, MMTB 83, 79	
7, 14, 16	Moore	1917-1918	21E 6'6"	2 x 45	36	30'11"	Nos. 7, 14 — Scrapped 1951, 1957.	MMTB 90, 86, 84	(i)
22	MMTB/Moore	1920	21E 7'6"	2 x 50	36	33'0"	Scrapped 1956	MMTB 153	
6	D. & F.	1916	21E 7'6"	2 x 45	32	31'0"	—	MMTB 110	(j) (l)
7	Meadowbank	1915	21E 6'6"	2 x 45	32	30'11"	—	MMTB 76	(k) (l)
23-26 1-4	D. & F.	1916-1918	22E 4'0"	2 x 65	48	44'4½" 45'4½"	—	MMTB 123, 138, 133, 135, 119, 126, 122, 120.	(m)
17, 18, 5	D. & F.	1913-1914	22E 4'0"	2 x 65	48	44'3½"	—	MMTB 44, 45, 26	(n)
11, 15	J. G. Brill	1924	79E1 8'0"	2 x 25	30	28'0"	—	Geelong 14, 15	(o)
27-30	J. G. Brill	1925	79E1 8'0"	2 x 25	32	28'0"	No. 27 Scraped, 1958.	Geelong 27-30	(p)
(Cleaner)	D. & F./S.E.C.	1953	Brush/S.E.C.	2 x 45	—	31'2"	—	Bendigo (1st) 17	(q)



APPENDIX B

In 1901, an unusual electric railway, with many tramway features, operated in Bendigo. The Victorian Gold Jubilee Exhibition occupied a large site in the centre of the city including part of Market Square and several buildings, including the Town Hall and the old market building. One of the highlights of the exhibition was the railway, which ran inside the boundary fence. It was of a narrow gauge with the motive power being an early type of mine locomotive. A 30 h.p. dynamo, driven by a 10 h.p. Tangye oil engine supplied current to typical tramway-type overhead, from which it was collected by a trolley pole mounted on the locomotive. The

rolling stock consisted of two 4-wheel flat cars fitted with garden seats, each car seating eight people. Apparently speeds were slow as curves were sharp. Only the locomotive was fitted with brakes, which were operated by a hand lever. The line was exhibited jointly by Bennie Teare & Co. Ltd. and G. Weymouth Pty. Ltd.

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