

# RUNNING JOURNAL



The  
Tramway  
Museum  
Society  
of Victoria  
*Incorporated*

New Series No.165

December 2003

## Museum Work

Most work in recent times has been centred around upgrading and enhancing our exhibits. Many hours have been spent on tramcar maintenance and restorations, with work commenced on the external appearance of several vehicles. Work has commenced on repainting the cabin ends of Ballarat No 17, to return it to its 1950's appearance. The dash-canopy lighting and zebra stripes have been removed, and some sanding and priming has been undertaken. Undercoat has now been applied to the south end cabin. The green and cream paint colour has been perfectly matched with a commercially produced product.

After many years of storage in the open, both at South Melbourne depot and at Bylands, work has commenced on 7W to stop further deterioration and to make it more presentable to the public. This car requires considerable work as it is not just a case of slapping a coat of paint on it. It is interesting to note that whilst rubbing down the drivers apron on the north end, the numbers 356 re-appeared, indicating the origin of the cab frames.

Z class No 5 has also had its share of work. All the additional security grills and doors fitted to the drivers cab areas at both ends have been removed. This immediately made a big difference to the interior of the car. Two conductors consoles and chairs have been removed from storage, and one unit has now been installed in the north end of the car. The other will be fitted shortly. To fit these units is no easy task, it is necessary to remove or disconnect several fittings to gain access, but patience pays off. Servicing of controllers continues with W2 643, W4 673 and W2 509 being completed.

Trams have not been the only thing undergoing restoration. Work has continued on repairs and preparing MK VI bus No 759 for repainting. To date the vehicle has been rubbed back, and a number of panels both at the front and rear of the vehicle have been identified for replacement. New panels have now been fitted to the rear of the bus, but after removing the front panels, it was discovered that some of the supporting frame has badly rusted, and will require sectional repairs or replacement. Some rewiring of the external lighting circuits will be undertaken during this replacement program. Servicing and minor adjustments have also been carried out on the MK III 537 and Volvo No 850.

Minor repair works have been undertaken to the king points on the depot fan, which saw new spacer blocks inserted in the interlocking mechanisms. With the recent onslaught of spring weather, vegetation control around the site and along the tracks is paramount. Considerable effort has been put into mowing, slashing or weed spraying to reduce the fire risk and to keep the rails clear.

Due to inclement weather, it was necessary to organise indoor works for the working bee on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2003. A number of small, but important jobs were tackled, one of which saw a number of the service trams internally cleaned. In the kiosk building, a new door and architrave was installed in the wall at the rear of the stores section, and the floor was completed at the north end of the breezeway. A new piece of flooring incorporating a new step has been installed in the floor section under the door between the kiosk and stores section. A start was made on sorting, filing and rehousing the items stacked or stored in the large rear section of the building. It is hoped to shortly install the flooring and wall at the south end of the breezeway. This will finally complete this building to lock-up stage after 10 years.

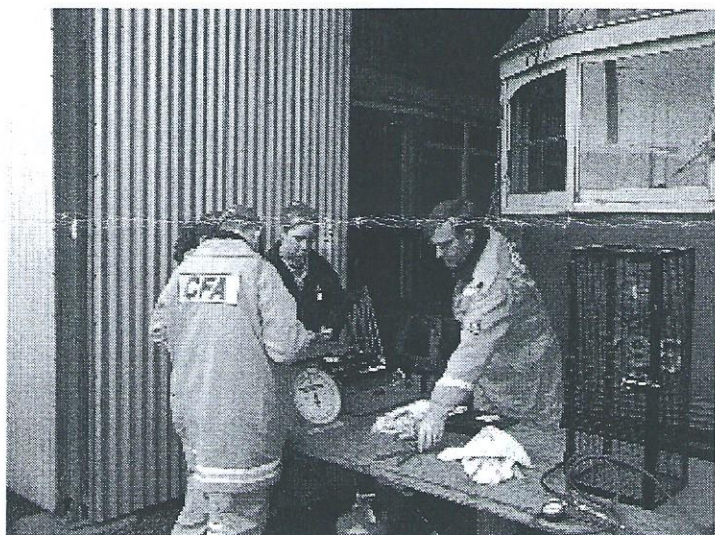
## Check out our Website.

Most members will be aware that the Society' now has its own official website. The site is regularly maintained and updated. We continue to receive some very positive feedback as to the site and its contents, and the ease to which you can navigate your way through. The site can be found at [www.tmsv.org.au](http://www.tmsv.org.au)



## Fire Services Upgrade

At the end of July, members of the Kangaroo Flat Secondary College CFA Youth Crew travelled to Bylands to assist in servicing the Museum's fire extinguishers. CFA Youth Crew is a leadership and community service program run in Government Schools with an emphasis on serving the community through volunteering with the CFA. With the students were teachers Richard Irvine and Andrew Howlett who are both members of the Maiden Gully Fire Brigade. Andrew is a long-standing Society member and Assistant Principal at KFSC. Over the day, over 60 extinguishers were serviced which would have cost the Museum over \$400 commercially. The students enjoyed a tram ride as well as exploring the technology that our Museum is preserving. This is the second visit of this type in recent years. The Society is pleased to be able, in conjunction with the CFA to assist our younger people gain worthwhile knowledge and experience that will benefit the whole community in future years.



*Members of the Kangaroo Flat Secondary College CFA Youth Crew undertook the mammoth task of checking and servicing all our fire extinguishers at Bylands, including those fitted to the tramcars. Seen here are some of the crew hard at work at the top of No 5 road, under the "supervision" of W5 795.*

**Photo:**

**Andrew Howlett.**

## Tramways Football

The Society has been approached by Peter Burke from RMIT who is researching the social history of workplace football in Melbourne between 1900-1940 for a doctorate. As part of this research, he is interested in examples of workplace football in the tramways. His research so far has indicated that workplace football was an important part of the workplace culture in the tramways in the first half of the 1900's.

For many years, a football competition was played between various suburban depots, which attracted great interest and spectator numbers. Peter would be interested in hearing from anyone who has knowledge, information or ephemera related to Tramways football in Victoria in the first half of the 1900's. He can be contacted on (03) 9568 9925 or e-mail [pburkel@vtown.com.au](mailto:pburkel@vtown.com.au)

## Coin Dispensers for Sale

We still have a limited quantity of Z class tram coin dispensers for sale. They are available from the kiosk at Bylands for \$20.00 for members or \$25.00 for non-members, however members will have the priority. They can also be purchased by mail-order by adding an extra \$10.00 for postage and handling. Contact the Secretary Graham Jordan C/- PO Box 27, Malvern 3144 or phone (03) 9798 6035 for more details.

## Working Bees at Bylands

Four Saturday working bees have been scheduled for 2004. We welcome all possible assistance from members on these days, and would appreciate seeing many extra faces to supplement the same few "regulars" that we see week in, week out. Works undertaken on these days (weather permitting) are those that cannot or are not usually possible to be undertaken on a normal operating day (Sunday). Never fear that regardless of the weather conditions, there will always be something to do, so do not be deterred. The working bees will be held on the following Saturday's in 2004 – 21<sup>st</sup> February, 15<sup>th</sup> May, 14<sup>th</sup> August and the 13<sup>th</sup> November. Please mark these dates in your diary now, your assistance on these days would be appreciated.



## New Members

We would like to welcome the following former members who have recently rejoined the Society.

No. 289                      Mr John Milne                      -                      Chilliwack, Canada.

We are pleased to welcome John back as a member of the Society after many years. John is a graphic artist and as such, designed our Society logo (the cable car) way back in 1970.

## 80 Years Young – A Tribute to the W2 Class Tram - Historical Highlights

The following article, written by long-time member Norm Cross, was first published in the March 1966 edition of the MMTB News. Subsequently the article was revised as more facts and some corrections came to hand and was reprinted in the June 1971 issue of Running Journal. This year (2003) sees the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first W class car entering passenger service, therefore it is appropriate that we relive the history of these wonderful icons. Some of the content has been edited to reduce space. Some recent additional material has been added. An expanded article will appear in the future on the website. A full and detailed history of the W2 class trams can be found in Destination City 5<sup>th</sup> Edition.

When the MMTB was constituted on the 1<sup>st</sup> November 1919, to take over all existing tramways in Melbourne (except the two VR lines), it was found that they inherited some 186 electric tramcars comprising 21 different types. It was decided therefore that a standard type of tramcar was needed. From the Board's drawing office emerged a design of the W class car. During 1923-25, cars No 219 to 248 were constructed at the Holden Street Fitzroy Workshops. Simultaneously other cars of the same type were being built by James Moore & Co in City Road, South Melbourne, and by Holden Body Builders in Woodville, South Australia. Tram No 219 commenced street running in August 1923 for driver's instruction purposes only, and for the first few weeks used the long trolley poles from Birney car No 218. No 220 went into running in September 1923, spending a little time on each route carrying passengers to introduce this new modern tramcar to the people of Melbourne. It was necessary to move 220 on a rubber-tired road trailer between some depots as at this time not all routes were inter-connected. This trailer was also used to transport new tram bodies from Moores' in South Melbourne or the Spencer Street railyards following shipment from Adelaide.

These new tramcars were much more modern than any tramcar then existing. They were a drop-centre entrance car featuring 2 equal wheel bogies and 4 motor drive, similar to the then L class cars and VR bogie trams. These new cars differed from the conventional W2 style in that the 3 doorways in the drop-centre section were of equal dimensions. The seating in this section also faced inwards to the centre, unlike the later "back-to-back" style of later years. Another difference was the absence of left side drivers cab doors, with a weather shield being fitted to the windshield pillar. In all 200 W class trams were built between 1923 and 1927, 80 of them in the MMTB's Workshop.

*The intersection of William Street and Bourke Streets, Melbourne (looking south) in 1934. W class tram No 420 heads north bound for "Essendon". This car was not converted to a W2 until 1937, but had already been fitted with route number boxes. To the left of the photograph can be a cable tram waiting to cross the intersection. The ornate steel centre poles were removed in the early 1970's, a number of them are now used to support the overhead at Bylands.*

**Photo: G R Jordan Collection**



In 1927 No 364 appeared as a new design which featured an open centre section with outward facing back seat. This design allowed passengers to face the road, similar to the cable dummy. As a result a further 19 cars were built during 1927 to this design designated W1 being numbers 419 to 438. For classing and continuity purposes, the original W1 No 364 exchanged numbers with 422, as the original 422 was completed as a standard W class. The centre seats were then altered to a tip-over back style seat, which enabled passengers to face inwards during inclement weather. The entrances



were protected by canvas weather blinds. A further 10 cars were built in 1928 on a separate order, these cars being numbered 470-479. In late 1927 Preston Workshops produced the first group of W2 cars these being No 439 to 458. Apart from some modern improvements over the years, these cars remained basically unchanged throughout their lifetime.

Between 1928 and 1930 a further 130 cars Nos 480 to 609 were built, 100 at Preston and 30 by Moore's. All these cars were to supplement older single-truck cars or to replace cable cars following electrification of cable routes. Due to the success of the W2 class, the 200 W class cars were standardised to become W2 cars between 1928 and 1933. No 580 emerged in 1929 fitted with route number boxes and subsequent new or converted cars were so fitted as out-shopped. In 1929 car 433 became the first tram painted in green and cream in lieu of the former chocolate and cream livery. Car 381 was the last W class car to run in the chocolate livery, being repainted in October 1933.

Early in 1930 it appeared that the W2 period may have been over, when plans were announced to build 24 ultra-modern all-steel safety cars based on the 1927 design of the tourist car Y 469. Construction problems with the first 4 cars caused the cancellation of the last 10 trams classed as Y1 cars and the postponement of another 10. The conversion of the Collins Street lines from cable to electric traction resulted in a need for more trams. Subsequently a further 30 cars Nos 624-653 were constructed between 1930-31. The last W2 built No 653, went into traffic on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1931.

During 1930 a plan evolved to construct vehicles to the W2 design using all-steel construction as used on the Y1 cars. These cars became known as the W3, and of the projected 20 cars, only 16 were completed by 1934. The remaining 4 cars were built to an improved design and classified W4.

During 1936 work commenced on the conversion of the W1 cars to the W2 design. These 30 cars varied slightly by having a single pane of glass in the smokers quarters of the drop-centre section, in lieu of the two panes of glass in the other cars. In 1938 No 422 was experimentally fitted with dash canopy lighting. Eleven other W2 cars were so fitted by 1941, but all were removed by 1954. In 1938 saw car No 436 whilst being converted from a W1 car, fitted with air operated sliding doors as a prototype for a new type of car. The experiment was successful, therefore the last three unconverted W1 cars No 426, 432 and 478 were converted to the new SW2 design. The doorways in 436 were narrower and differed from the other cars.

Thus by the end of 1938 the W fleet was "standardised" with 406 W2 and 4 SW2 cars in service. It is worthy to note that these 410 trams were built in only eight years and some during the depression years, quite a feat. The W2's represented the second largest class of electric tramcars to be built in Australia, second only to Sydney which had 626 O and OP class cars.

The word "standard" can only be used loosely when referring to the trams of the W2 class. The range of body and mechanical differences defies reclassification. Many cars received various modifications over the years, including trolley bases, gutters and drip-rails, ventilators, controllers, seats and lights.

A number of W2 trams were decorated at various times. In 1927 W1 421 was decorated for the Royal Visit of HRH The Duke of York (later to become King George VI). 421 did not carry passengers whilst in this guise. In 1938 to publicise Luna Park cars 225, 244, 303, 389, 454 and 568 were painted silver and blue. Several W2's were also used to advertise "War Loans" the last being 556, which reverted to green and cream livery about 1951. In 1955 car 475 received modification to carry masonite sheets on its side panels to display advertising. In latter years all trams were so fitted. Many W2's had a red "T" reflector on their left-hand rear dash panels, but these were removed by 1952.

In 1952 car 644 was badly damaged after being involved in a collision with MMTB bus No 315. In 1953 car 275 was hit by VR tram No 28. Both trams received heavy rebuilding and modernisation with metal sashes and steel smokers sections and air-operated sliding doors, a design resembling the modern W7 cars. These cars were to be the prototypes for the modernisation of the whole W2 class, but the lack of funds prevented the continuation of the project. An interesting fact is that car 275 is the only Melbourne tram to run in three different guises – as a W, a W2 and finally a SW2.

1959 was a black year for the W2 class cars. In March of that year, car 313 caught fire at Balaclava Junction and was scrapped several months later, the first of the 410 trams of this class to be deleted from the register. No 325 met a similar fate when it was burnt out following a collision at Malvern in November 1959. A further 30 cars were then temporarily withdrawn and stored in November 1960, most to never run again. Further withdrawals followed in 1961. The first W2 to log 1 million miles was car No 301 and by September 1968 also became the first to pass the 1.5 million mark.

Some of the withdrawn cars have been converted for other use or purposes. Cabin and frames from no 361 were used in building track cleaner No 6 (later 6W). The same sections of No 356 were used to rebuild flusher car No 7 (later 7W now at Bylands). Various sections of cars No 325 and 316 were utilised in constructing the former driver's instruction car at



Hawthorn Depot in 1963. Car No 419 was cut down to a bogie trailer car and renumbered No 20. No 485 was converted to use as a perway car by removing some of the smokers quarters from the drop-centre section to enable the car to carry sleepers. The complete body of no 475 was placed at the former Conductors training school in Fitzroy. The bodies of No 318 and 339 were initially placed as shelters at Wattle Park. They were subsequently replaced by other cars many years later.

W2 cars continued to operate in regular traffic until 1987 when the last cars were finally withdrawn. In their twilight years they continued to undergo several changes, the most notable being the fitting of the additional head and tail lights during the early 1970's. Towards the end of their service lives, a number of W2 class cars were painted in art liveries by artists commissioned under a program by the Victorian Government through its Ministry of Transport and Ministry of the Arts. Sixteen trams were painted between 1978 and 1982, all being withdrawn by 1986. Car No 441 was also decorated in an artistic colour scheme in 1984 to celebrate Victoria's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

These cars actively outlived younger cars of the X, Y and W3 and W4 classes, which superseded them. A large number of W2 cars live on. They must surely be the most represented class of preserved tramcar. Not only have many been retained by tramway museums across Australia, but also a huge number of cars have been exported overseas, where a large majority still operate. In addition quantities of parts, equipment or complete vehicles have been exported to form the basis of rebuilds, reconstructions or new vehicles for foreign operators.

This Society has a good representation of W series designs in its fleet at Bylands. This is represented by No 220 as a standard W class car in the chocolate and cream livery. No 427 has been reconverted back to its W1 configuration also in the chocolate and cream livery. Cars No 509 and 643 presently remain in their as withdrawn condition, with No 644 representing the conversion to SW2.



*Swanston Street, Melbourne in 1934. Two W class cars are seen passing the Melbourne Town Hall. The tram on the left (headed south) is W class No 374, built by James Moore & Co in 1925. It had by this time been fitted with route number boxes. The north bound tram is W2 650, built in 1930 by the MMTB. It had yet to be fitted with route number boxes. Note both cars have the driver's weather shields fitted. The tramway grooved rail, hectic traffic scenes and of course the W class trams in this location have long since disappeared.*

**Photo:**

**G R Jordan Collection**

## **Wanted – Don' just sit there, we need you.**

As you may have noticed, there has been a recent increase and enthusiasm in the amount of works being carried out around the museum at Bylands. Although these changes are welcome, many have been long overdue. But this does not mean there is a need to get complacent. We have, and continue to have an urgent need for assistance for both works around the museum and traffic roster duties at Bylands. Why not be part of the experience that is your museum, come and enjoy a relaxing day in the country with your fellow members. Our Roster Officer Keith Kings would appreciate more offers of assistance to fill the Traffic Roster. If you can help contact Keith on (03) 9836 4932.

If you are unable to physically assist, why not help by making a financial donation. This would be of considerable benefit by helping the museum continue with its works programs. Because of our small limited workforce, and the time required to do the many jobs around the place, as stated earlier in this newsletter it is now becoming necessary to employ contractors to undertake works for us that previously we could, or would have done ourselves. This unfortunately costs money. All donations over \$2.00 are tax deductible. If you can assist contact Graham Jordan on (03) 9798 6035 after 7.00pm most nights.

**Remember, this is your Society and Museum too, don' just rely on any other person, one day they just might not be there?**



## Around the traps

### Tram Blowout – Bendigo Tramways.

Changes to the planned tramline extension around Lake Weeroona will cost Bendigo ratepayers an extra \$1 million. It is believed project costs will balloon out to about \$5.6 million, with a State Government contribution of \$3.7 million. The City of Greater Bendigo will wear the extra cost, more than doubling its original \$920,000 contribution.

In April the Council released plans to extend the city's tram network around the lake, linking it to the heritage tramline and the dormant gas works. The plans included building a track near the playground on Napier Street, which raised the ire of residents. The revised plans take the track along Napier Street before diverting to the lake area beyond the playground.

Councillor and Bendigo Trust Chairman Greg Williams refused to confirm the figure, but said the money would be absorbed into the Council's capital works budget over "a couple of years". We have come up with a better proposal this time, albeit at a greater cost, Cr Williams said. He said changes were the result of strong community consultation. "It will go along Napier street, left into the lake gardens, around the back through the park near the rail reserve", he said. "We would have hoped to have started construction before Christmas, but because of the community concern that has changed".

The new line was the first stage in the Council's Discovering Bendigo program, a broad plan to make the city one of Australia's regional tourism capitals.

*From The Bendigo Advertiser 19<sup>th</sup> November 2003.*

*(Editors note) It is interesting to note that most of our kindred tramway museums interstate, more locally the Ballarat and Bendigo tramway museums and the Portland Cable Tramway have received generous, helpful and ongoing support from their respective local councils over many years. It is unfortunate however that there are other similar museum groups who do not receive, or have not received the same levels of financing, support, commitment or understanding from their local authorities. One must surely question the commitment or contempt they show to their local communities.*

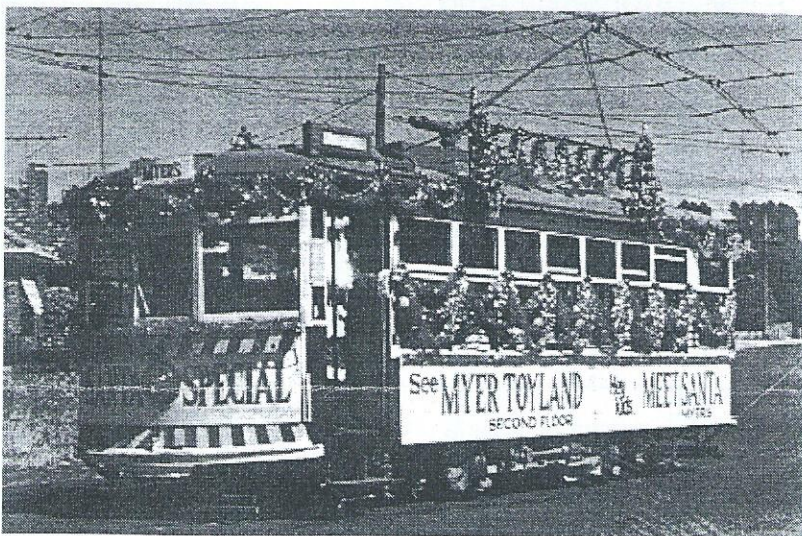
## Best Wishes for the Festive Season

As this is the last Running Journal for 2003, the Board of the Society would like to extend to all members and their families a very Merry Christmas, and all the best in 2004.

*Christmas provincial style. For many years the staff of the tramways operated in Ballarat and Bendigo by the State Electricity Commission of Victoria, decorated trams as part of their contribution to the festive spirit. Seen here on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> December 1968 is Bendigo Birney No 28 turning out of Caledonia Street, North Bendigo and headed for the City in its guise as the "Santa tram". The conductor standing in the doorway is wearing a rather non-standard tramway uniform, but it did match the colour of the roof of the tram.*

**Photo:**

**Malcolm Rowe**



**Running Journal** is your newsletter. Why not be part of it? We welcome your articles for inclusion. Articles can be sent to the Secretary c/- PO Box 27, Malvern 3144, or by e-mail to [graleen@hotkey.net.au](mailto:graleen@hotkey.net.au) preferably in Microsoft Word format. Typed or neat handwritten format is also acceptable.

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