

RUNNING JOURNAL



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Restoration at Bendigo

Work on U Class tram No 4 at Bendigo have seen Stage One of the reconstruction works almost completed. This work consisted of repairs to the side pillars and replacement side panels, straightening and strengthening of the body, repair and replacement of the floors, complete re-wiring of the car and overhaul of all 600V electrical equipment. Once this work is complete the car will once again be operational.

Funding for this work has been covered by the reserves that remained unspent from the original grant received from the Victorian Government for the works as originally undertaken at North Fitzroy through BEST Inc. Funding must now be sourced to undertake Stage Two of the project, that is to fit-out the bodywork, including the re-manufacture of many missing or damaged components, final painting and detailing of the car, and Accreditation.

Approaches will be made to several sectors of the community to assist with the funding, and members are encouraged to also assist by making donations towards the overall cost. Long time Society member Ron Scholten has again led the charge with his welcome and much appreciated support. If appropriate funding is forthcoming, it is anticipated that the tram can be finished before the end of 2005 and available to celebrate its centenary and that of electric trams in Melbourne in 2006.

Museum Works

At the last working bee in November some mundane tasks were successfully completed. Member Harry Twining got plenty of exercise pushing a motor mower around various areas of the site. A concerted effort was made to clean out the ex-Mentone H class tram body and to remove any valuable fittings for safekeeping. Several surprise finds were made in amongst the junk. Other works saw a number of holes filled and levelled, the gravel over the drain at the front gate respread and the remains of some of the cypress trees and other rubbish added to the firewood pile.

Our small, energetic band of workers must be thanked for their hard work. Special mention must be made of a recently joined new member Wilhelmus Van Lammeren, who travelled from Portland to assist and stayed overnight locally. Will also came back on the following day to assist with other works. Thanks to Will and to everyone else who assisted

Trackwork outside the Exhibition Shed has continued at a steady pace. All of C road has been spiked, fishplated, lifted and packed. All that now remains is final spreading of ballast between the sleepers. The Malcolm tram was used to test the track as it resides inside the shed on C road. Work on D road has seen one rail spiked, with the other yet to be gauged and spiked. Planning is taking place for the construction of the remaining roads A and B as well as the associated pointwork and connecting track to the main-line.

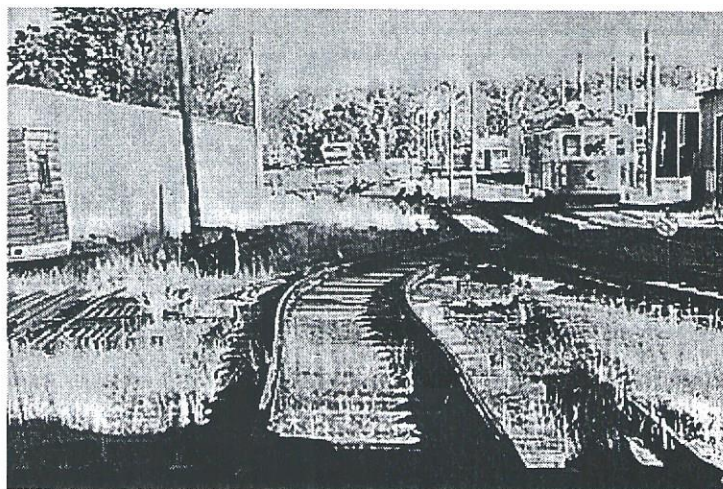
Restoration works continue on trams Ballarat No 17 and tank car 7W. It has been necessary to repaint all the cream paintwork on Ballarat No 17 due to its faded condition in several areas. A decision has also been taken which will see the saloon windows removed for repair and repainting in the near future. As with the work on 7W, these tasks continue as time permits between other jobs. With the recent reinstallation of the trolley bridges, poles and other associated fittings on 7W, this car is now operational once again and can be moved under its own power.

Regular servicing of the tram fleet continues, with W2 643 now back in traffic. At the start of December, Ballarat No 36 had its first full day back in passenger service after many years. MK VI bus No 776 has been transferred to Dysons Bus depot in Bundoora for some minor works to complete its mechanical rehabilitation. Work also continues on the repainting of MK VI bus No 759 in the Exhibition Shed.

Looking out of the front of the Vehicle Maintenance Building towards Union Lane. W5 782 has just crossed the Depot Junction on another journey heading north. The new track for this facility can be seen, the crossover from the main-line coming in from the right side of the photograph, and the shunt (future double track). The access track into the pit shed with its slight reverse curve is in the lower centre of the photograph.

Photo:

Graham Jordan



Working Bees at Bylands

The next working bee at Bylands has been scheduled for Saturday 19th February 2005. We would welcome all possible assistance from members on this day. Never fear that regardless of the weather conditions, there will always be something to do, so do not be deterred. To assist with catering on the day, please register your attendance with Keith Kings on 9808 0971 or Graham Jordan on 9798 6035. Please note that for safety purposes, it is advisable to wear appropriate clothing and footwear. A pair of work gloves would also be useful.

Proposed dates for the next working bees at Bylands are Saturday 14th May 2005, Saturday 20th August 2005 and Saturday 19th November 2005. **Please mark these dates in your diary.** Your help would be greatly appreciated.

Vale

We were recently saddened to hear the news of the passing of two supporters of the Society. In November 2004, David White passed away after a short illness. David joined as a member of the Society in 1991 and during the mid 1990's served as a Board Director. For a short while he also undertook the role of Membership Officer. David was well known in the railfan fraternity, this was apparent by the representations at his funeral.

In December Greg Dower passed away also after a short illness. Greg had a quite long career with the Tram and Bus division, rising through the ranks to finish his Government service as the last General Manager of Met Bus. He then took the same position as the first Manager of Melbourne Bus Link. Greg was always a good supporter of the Society, and through his involvement greatly assisted us in our acquisition of several of the heritage buses now at Bylands.

On a slightly different note, Bayside Employment and Skills Training (BEST), the organisation which in recent years undertook tram restoration programs at Malvern (Cable tram) and North Fitzroy (U Class No 4 and Q Class No 199) as part of work schemes on behalf of the Society, was recently placed in liquidation and is presently being wound up.

Members Meetings

Last year the Society Board adopted a proposal to hold regular members meetings. A request was made for a person or persons to undertake the role of Meetings Officer to arrange and co-ordinate these meetings. Subsequently, Doug Prosser accepted this role.

It had been anticipated to hold these meetings on a quarterly basis, commencing in November 2004, however we are still awaiting the Meetings Officer to advise dates and a program before they can be advertised, and also to make sure that they do not clash with other scheduled Society activities. When this is finalised, it is hoped that this can occur in the next issue of Running Journal.

Battery Tram Experiments in Ballarat – Historical Highlights.

In light of 2005 being the year we celebrate the Centenary of the electrification of the Ballarat Tramways, the following interesting references and article relates to the early experimental stages of electric transport in Ballarat, which dates as far back as 1888. Presented below is an account of these events as was made to Mr H P James in October 1938.

Early experiments with an electric battery tram were tried, but the running of same was discontinued on account of the expense and the frequency of derailments at curves. On enquiry as to why the tram left the rails, I learned that the whole of the tracks were laid flat, and whilst the horses drew or carried the (horse) trams around curves and towards the required direction into the loops, the forward drive of the motor on the electric trams took it straight ahead.

By courtesy of the "Ballarat Courier" newspaper, I have been permitted to peruse their files of the period and I have gleaned these particulars and details. The trial electric tram was one of the ordinary horse type, fitted up by Messrs Duncan & Fraser and adapted by considerable alteration. It was 12 feet long, single deck style. Julien's storage batteries were used. There were 96 cells, each 6" x 6" x 10" arranged in boxes and placed in trays of 12. Sufficient energy for from 50 to 80 miles of travel was claimed. Messrs Duncan & Fraser supplied an eight h.p. steam engine to drive a dynamo for battery recharging. The electrician in attendance was a Mr Bullimore.

The trays were pushed through bottom panels of the car body, and connected together by wiring which carried on to a motor installed between the wheels of the tram, where a shaft with two spur wheels and a chain gearing operated. A switch at either end controlled driving, whilst another platform switch reversed the tram. Two outside and two inside lamps were equipped with electric light, and two outside and six inside bell-pushes were also installed and worked by electricity.

On leaving the depot yard at Darling Street depot, the tram went off the rails. During the first trial a speed of nearly 12 mph was reached, a three quarter mile section being covered in four minutes. The first trial had taken place on the 12th October 1888 and three days later a second effort was made. The tram travelled from its Darling street depot down the south side of Sturt Street to the Buck's Head Hotel at the corner of Bridge and Grenville Streets, then the eastern terminus. It then proceeded up the north side of Sturt Street to Lake Wendouree. The trial was satisfactory but alterations to the track were deemed necessary – super elevation of the outer rail at curves as done on the railways would have to be effected.

Strangely during the next few weeks, no news of the electric tram was printed, but a development in another direction took place. The East Ballarat Town Council held a special meeting on the 2nd November 1888, and agreed to accept an offer from Booth, Ellson & Co., (the same Company who introduced the highly unsuccessful battery trams into Bendigo in 1890), who for a rental of one thousand pounds a year, undertook to put down tracks from the Grenville Street terminus to Mount pleasant and Victoria Street. The fares were not to exceed three pence (3d) per trip. This plan however was never brought to a satisfactory conclusion, and months and years rolled by leaving the horse trams in position until the electric tramway system evolved in 1905 displaced it.



It is believed that no photograph exists of the experimental electrical battery car in Ballarat. So a photograph from the same period would be appropriate. Seen here is Ballarat horse tram No 5 outside Vine's Hotel at the corner of Creswick Road and Macarthur Streets. The tram track in this part of Macarthur Street (between Drummond St Nth and Lydiard St Nth) was never electrified and was abandoned in 1905. The hotel building still stands, renamed the Canberra Hotel, but more recently as apartments.

Photo:

Ballarat Courier.

Request for Assistance

Recently we received a letter from Bob Lilburn of Bacchus Marsh requesting assistance to obtain photographs of a number of trams at locations after their withdrawal or scrapping. Bob has maintained a meticulous file on trams both during their service days and their afterlives.

Bob is particularly interested in photographs of the following trams at the locations given:- MMTB 78 & VR 42 at Lower Plenty, MMTB 72 at West Coburg, MMTB 194 also at West Coburg, MMTB 99 at Wonga Park, MMTB 665 at Wallan, MMTB 423 Cheltenham prior to 1968, MMTB 570 at Orbost, MMTB 410 at Mernda?

If anyone can assist Bob, please contact the Secretary who will pass on Bob's details to you.

In Retrospect

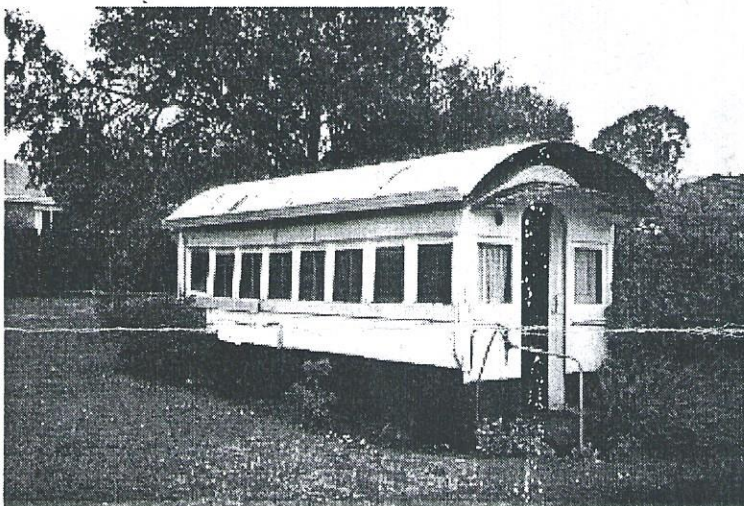
42 years ago:- "In Pursuit of the Cable Tram" by E W Russell. Melbourne's last cable tram ran in 1940 and soon the rolling stock was sold. Since that time many of these vehicles, now used as sleep-outs and fowlhouses, have been destroyed, but a considerable number of them are still in existence. This is an account of a few of that number.

The Mornington peninsular yielded seven vehicles. One of these was a trailer in use as a residence for an elderly gentleman. It was adjacent to the Frankston railway on the down side just near the Wells Road crossing. It was last observed in 1959 and has since been removed. At the rear of some tea-rooms in Frankston was another tram, but this was sent off to the Frankston tip and destroyed before an inspection could be carried out. In the "Melbourne Herald" of 23rd May 1959 appeared an article regarding a "Streetcar named Desire", in the bush at Rye. In excellent condition, a bus proprietor had made it into a fully equipped holiday house. At Dromana trailers 510 and 533 were located in the backyard of a house. They were in semi-derelict condition, 533 being the better of the two. Two other trailers I observe, but not inspected, one of these is on the east of the Nepean Highway near the Benton's Road intersection at Mornington and the other on the south side of the Nepean Highway near Bus Stop No 3 at Portsea. Both these vehicles are painted white and are semi-derelict.

In the Brighton area three dummies and three trailers existed. Unfortunately all the dummies have since been destroyed, one in Ludstone Street, Hampton was burned and bulldozed to make way for a block of flats, and two at "Windermere" the Brighton Orphanage were in the words of the Superintendent, "... destroyed", and the saleable parts disposed of. Another unfortunate loss was a bogie trailer, which was bulldozed and burned when Reg Hunt Motors in Elsternwick expanded rearwards. Two trailers however remain, one in the backyard of a house in Byron Street, North Brighton and the other near a house adjacent to the railway between Ripponlea and Balaclava on the down side.

In a paddock in Moores Road, Airport West lies trailer No 544. This perhaps is more original condition than most of the other vehicles, and retains on one side the old chocolate and cream colouring. Trailer No 532 with its roof caving in makes a sorry sight near the railway yard at Timboon, this vehicle once had many original fittings, but they have long since been purloined. Cable tram no 1 is preserved in excellent condition at the Public Library of Victoria.

(From the "Association of Railway Enthusiast" magazine March 1963)



The cable tram dummies and trailers were dispersed to many and varied locations around the State. Over the years most have succumbed to the elements, or property developers who saw them as just junk. A few were lucky enough to survive in preservation by one or more groups or dependant on their condition used as a source of spares for others. Seen here is trailer car No 228 at Warragul prior to acquisition by the Society in 1998. The car has subsequently been made available to the Portland Cable tram group and now at Portland.

Photo:

Graham Jordan

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/- 38 Piccadilly Crescent, Keysborough 3173 or by e-mail to graleen@hotmail.net.au preferably in Microsoft Word format. Typed or neat handwritten format is also acceptable.

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