

RUNNING JOURNAL



The
Tramway
Museum
Society
Of Victoria
Incorporated

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Working Bees at Bylands

The next working bee at Bylands has been tentatively scheduled for Saturday 28th April 2007. Please note that this date may be subject to change, at short notice so please make contact with either Andrew or Graham on the phone numbers below beforehand. We would welcome all possible assistance from members on this day. It is intended to continue with the infrastructure rehabilitation works, which are necessary if we are to be able to continue tramcar operations into the future. 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 Andrew Hall on 9574 2665 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. **Please mark these dates in your diary now, your help would be greatly appreciated.**

Infrastructure Rehabilitation

Works on the main-line reconstruction continue with another 15 metre section of track, just to the south of the rear of No 2 shed totally rebuilt. This was undertaken at the working-bee on Saturday 6th January, and allowed tram No 427, which had been marooned at the south terminus, to be returned to the depot. Lifting and ballasting on this section was undertaken at the working bee on Saturday 17th February 2007, and it now brings the total length of track rebuilt over the last 5 months to approx 120 metres, a wonderful effort for our small workforce. It is expected that the last section to the current kiosk terminus will only require some sleeper replacement and not major reconstruction. We would like to thank the following members for their assistance over the last couple of months, Paul Constantinidis, Geoff Dean, Andrew Hall, Paul Greely, Russell Jones, Graham Jordan, David Kemp, Harry Twining and non members Tania Ireton and Lindsay Walker. Great job everybody.

Museum Works

Due to the current climatic conditions, major priority projects or the shortage of workers, it is mainly urgent or ongoing works that have been undertaken. While trackwork has consumed most of the workforce, tram maintenance and restoration has continued. Replacement buzzer units obtained from TransAdelaide have now been fitted to Adelaide H No 373 to replace those that went missing several months ago. This tram has now been returned to traffic. It is also intended to fit locks to the control panel boxes in each driver's compartments, to stop them being damaged or tampered with when the car not in use.

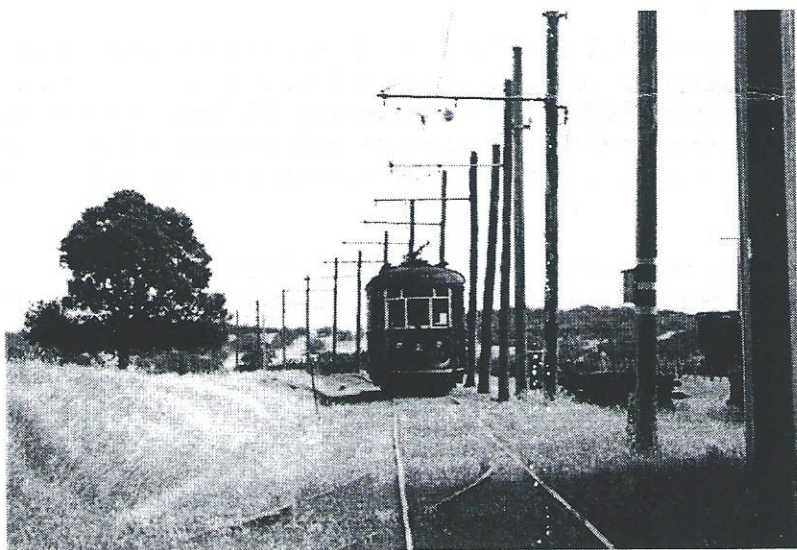
Work progresses on X2 No 680 with the roof now repainted and the final top coats of green and cream being applied. A MMTB monogram was placed on one side panel prior to the Trams in the Twilight night, to show just what the final result will be. Work on Q No 199 continues with new "D" moulding being fitted to the side panels. To give the desired visual effect, a base undercoat of brown and cream has been applied to one side. When complete this tram will be noticeably "something different" at Bylands.

Whilst on the subject of tram maintenance, the Board has accepted a quote from the Melbourne Tramcar Preservation Association at Haddon to repair the door motors of Y1 No 612. It is expected that this job will be commenced shortly, so that the tram will be available for the winter service as our one-man car. Donations to offset the cost of the repairs would be greatly appreciated. If you wish to financially assist towards the cost of this project, the Secretary would be pleased to hear from you.

With the use of cattle to keep our vegetation down, it creates another problem. One of the more unpleasant jobs to be done has been the clean-up of the stock droppings, which happen to end up in the wrong places. Regular clearance by traffic staff in the public areas was carried out each Sunday prior to opening to the public. With the recent removal of the stock, another major clean-up was undertaken prior to the Trams in the Twilight night. If anyone wants some free cow or sheep manure, come and help yourself.

Due to age and wear it has been necessary to make repairs to the interlocking mechanisms of the points leading from the depot access track at the No 3 and 4 road turnout. Some attention has also been given to the No 1 road point springs.

Although not technically museum works, the Society has recently provided assistance to Victrack by loaning our tram pillar jacks to assist in the lifting of the body of the former Victorian Railways State Car "Victoria". This carriage, which was used by the Duke and Duchess of York on their 1901 visit to celebrate the Federation of Australia, was located behind a scout hall in Carnegie. Due to its fragile nature, it was decided that it was impracticable to use cranes to lift it. Therefore the contractors through Victrack approached the Society to assist. The carriage was transported to Newport workshops for storage, pending a future restoration project.



The changing scene at Bylands. A different type of tram and a different livery. Adelaide H class No 373 has ascended the grade from the northern terminus, past One Tree Hill and approaches the staff box. The SEC flavour of our operations can be seen with the ex-Ballarat bracket arms supporting the overhead, and the end-of-section tram stop painted on the pole. Except for the tram, one could be forgiven if they saw similarities between this and the side-of-the-road operations of the Sebastopol line in Ballarat!

Photo:

Troy Thomas

Moo'ving out

As reported in the last issue of Running Journal, the Society has been assisting a local farmer by allowing him to graze his cattle on our Bylands property. The need to reduce the ground fuel of grass around our property, combined with the current drought conditions being experienced around the country causing a lack of suitable feed for stock, created this more than satisfactory arrangement.

The results of grazing at Bylands, along with the cost saving benefits of not having to engage a contractor to slash the property has been highly successful. As part of the agreement, the farmer was also required to maintain the fence lines of our property to protect stock from wandering off-site. To this end an electric wire fence was erected along the external boundary fences. The cattle were removed from the property during February, having done their job, however the infrastructure has been retained in place and operation for security purposes, and for the future return of the stock on an as required basis.

Rail Safety Audit

The annual Public Transport Safety Victoria audit was conducted at Bylands on Sunday 4th February 2007. Three audit personnel from PTSV attended, the Society being represented by Chairman Russell Jones and Secretary Graham Jordan. The results of the audit revealed several observations and two non compliances. The observations basically relate to some minor inconsistencies or inaccuracies between our written procedures and our actual documentations. The non compliances were as a result of observations brought forward from last years audit, which although we had at that time sought, and initially received promises from an external source to assist in the necessary remedial action, they remained unresolved at the time of this audit. Other avenues are now being explored to resolve those issues now at hand.

Overall all, the Society fared very well, being advised that its compliance was satisfactory, and that its continued Accreditation be confirmed.

Whilst on the subject of Rail Safety, the Society held a seminar at Hawthorn depot for all traffic staff and ancillary workers on Saturday 24th February 2007. The purpose of the seminar was to refresh and update those who are responsible for carrying out the museums operations, or are required to work under the terms of our Accreditation, as a result of changes made to the Rail Safety Act 2006 by Government Legislation.

Trams in the Twilight

This event was held on Saturday 17th February 2007 and was not only a wonderful night for those who attended, but was successful both financially and as a public relations exercise. In contrast to last year's event, when the rain dampened the evening, (but not the enthusiasm – Ed), this year the weather was fine and warm. Approximately 50 people attended including a good number of members, some of whom had not been to Bylands for some years.

The gates opened around 4.30pm in the afternoon, with tram operations starting just after 5.00pm. The star of the show being Adelaide H class No 373, which ran a number of return trips to the northern terminus. Other trams used during the evening included Y1 612, W3 667, W5 795 and Ballarat No 36. Two permanent floodlights, one at each end facing the main-line, were placed on No 2 tram shed, these being supplemented by several temporary floodlights placed elsewhere to illuminate the trams and the car park area. Lighting in the toilet block was by small portable fluorescent lights hung from the ceiling.

A free sausage sizzle was provided, this was well received by all those present. We must thank all the Society members, not forgetting the one or two non-member volunteers, who made themselves available to help prepare for the event, or made themselves available to assist on the night. A special mention must be made to a visitor, Cindi from Bendigo who offered her services to cook the sausage sizzle. Thanks Cindi.

It is expected that this event will now be held bi-annually, the next one is expected to be in February 2009.

Buses take over in Bendigo - Historical Highlights

On the 16th April 2007, it will be 35 years since the State Electricity Commission of Victoria closed the Bendigo tramway system, the last of the three provincial tramway systems it inherited (initially under franchise from 1931) and took full control over from 1934. The following item appeared in a special supplement on Bus Transportation in The Age newspaper of the 18th May 1972.

The State Electricity Commission lost about \$600,000 in the last financial year running trams in Ballarat and Bendigo. Sentiment had to give way to reality and with such an operating deficit, the SEC finally persuaded the State Government that both antiquated systems had to go. The last tram ran in Bendigo on April 16th this year, but according to the Transport Regulation Board, Regional Officer Ray Wood, it is a little early to say just how the bus services which have taken over are going to fit into the city.

“Strange as it may seem, we have had no rain in peak periods since then, and people are still walking the short distances they would normally have been travelling on the new buses” he said. The four former tram routes in Bendigo have virtually been replaced and extended by buses. Buses are now allowed to pick up passengers along old tram routes, where as previously they were not permitted to stop within a quarter of a mile of any tram termini. Buses are now going as far as nine miles out of the city and the Kangaroo Flat run is carrying more passengers than before.

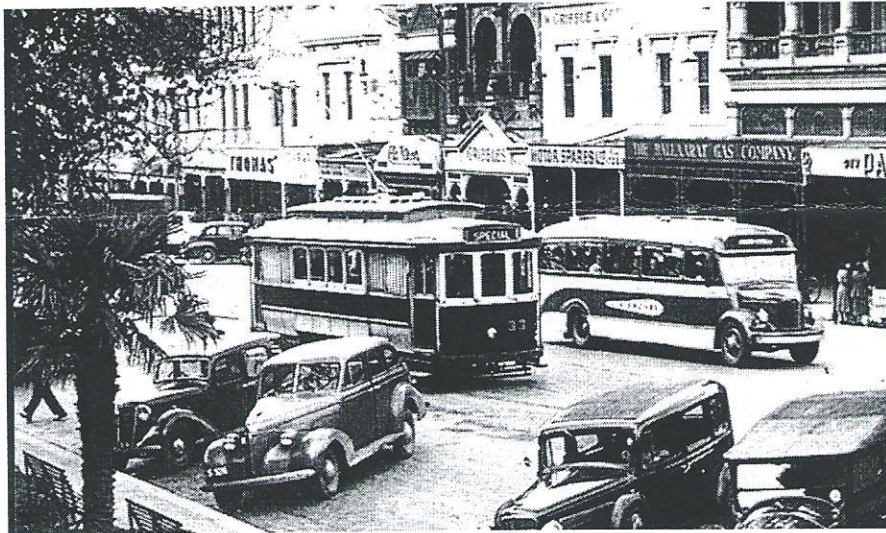
The tram tracks are already being ripped up, although a committee is investigating the possibility of retaining the line to the old Joss House as a tourist attraction. The TRB issued two of the larger operators with licences for the runs, at the same time abolishing some of the smaller bus lines and compensating them. Although still in its pilot stages, the plan appears to be working well. People using the buses are finding them more comfortable as well as quieter and warmer. They are also happy with the longer distances covered and the fact that they can be dropped right in the heart of the city.

In Ballarat, where a tram has not been sighted for more than six months, the advantages of the bus have been accepted. HA Davis Motor Services P/L, the largest bus operator in Ballarat, was appointed by the TRB to take over all the tram routes in that city. In 1970 there were 25 tramcars in Ballarat all between 50 and 60 years old. The age of the equipment and the increased operating costs were making it impossible for the SEC to run them profitably.

The old cars were carrying about 1,843,000 passengers a year on six routes, yet were still losing around \$250,000 a year. In fact the SEC had an accrued deficit of about \$4 million on tram operations in one city since taking them over in 1931. When the SEC announced its plan to relinquish the trams, the TRB formulated a method of replacements. This involved the substitution of buses on tram routes as well as re-routing some existing services. It decided that in Ballarat to let one bus company take over the whole task.

One reason was that the company could balance lightly trafficked services against those with higher traffic, thus maintaining services in areas which would otherwise not be economically justified. A single operator would also mean better utilisation of vehicles and manpower. The Davis company was eager to serve the public and one of the reasons for the smooth changeover was the comprehensive driver training carried out for a fortnight before the trams stopped.

New high-quality vehicles were bought for the operation. The actual transfer from steel wheels to tyres was carried out in such a way as to avoid confusion to passengers. "Traffic flows are smoother, roadways are built kerb to kerb and there's no longer any waiting at loops", said Mr Stan Davis, Managing Director of the firm now responsible for the city's public transport. But we must give the TRB credit for the planning and research it did in replacing the six tram routes. "The local councils and police have co-operated to aid the changeover, and all must be given credit for the smoothness of the switch.



Motor vehicles were fast becoming the more popular form of transport in the post war period in the late 1940's. However public transport was still very much in demand and there was healthy competition between the different modes. Sturt Street, Ballarat was no exception, seen here single trucker No 33 sits in the parking loop at Grenfell Street, and is overtaken by a bus, full of passengers heading in a westerly direction.

Photo: G Jordan Collection

50 Years for Tram Preservation in South Australia

May 2007 will be a special time for our friends at our kindred organisation in Adelaide the Australian Electric Transport Museum (AETM). They will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of the formation of their organisation and the subsequent establishment of their museum at St Kilda. A number of special events have been arranged over the weekend of the 26th/27th May 2007 as part of the celebrations. More information can be obtained by contacting the AETM direct, the e-mail address is aetm@bigpond.com

TMSV founding member Keith Kings has kindly assisted the AETM by providing some of his magnificent archival movie footage of the Adelaide tramways, taken in the late 1950's for inclusion on a DVD to be shown over the weekend.

In Retrospect

71 years ago:- The Electricity Commission has a plan under consideration for the relaying of the tramway tracks in Bridge Street and it may have the effect of substituting a two-line track for the present single line. The double track would enable cars to be run right through from either the Orphanage (Victoria Street) or Barkly Street terminus (Mount Pleasant), and do away with the present stacking of tram cars in Bridge Street or Prince of Wales Square.

61 years ago:- Arrears in maintenance work caused by war-time conditions are being tackled by Ballarat Tramways. Deterrence factors have been the shortage of plant for rolling stock and the lack of bitumen for preparing tracks. The latter difficulty was overcome by using tar which proved reasonably satisfactory. Painting of trams will have already been observed by tram travellers who may look forward to brighter journeys. *(From The Courier, 18th February 1986)*

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.

Running Journal is published by the Tramway Museum Society of Victoria Inc. For further information regarding the Society or museum contact The Secretary, 38 Piccadilly Crescent, Keysborough 3173. Phone/fax (03) 9798 6035 or our Website at www.tmsv.org.au. The Tramway Museum Society of Victoria Inc., is registered under the Associations Incorporation Act (1981). Registration No A-1864-E and Australian Business Number (ABN) 12 730 015 600.