

RUNNING JOURNAL



The
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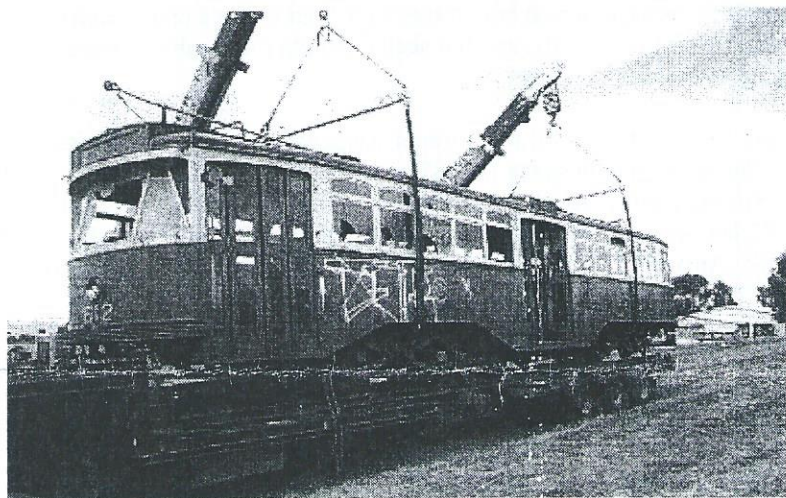
Something to "Yapper" about

As reported in the last issue of Running Journal, on the 8th March 2005, the Society took delivery of two trams made available by the Victorian Government. These trams being W2 646 and Y1 612. Both trams had been retained by the Government as part of the reserve heritage fleet, but over the influx of time have now become surplus to their needs.

As long as 30 years ago, the Society had indicated to the authorities of the day, a wish to preserve a Y1 class tram as part of our museum fleet. We always knew that due to the small number of cars in this class, and the other purposes for which these trams have been used over the years, we hoped that one day our long standing request would be realised.

History reveals that the original car selected all those years ago was 610 (transferred to Bendigo on the 9th May 2005), however as this car underwent minor refurbishment with more modern materials in latter years, further investigation some years ago indicated that 612 was by far in more original condition internally, and thus it became policy to pursue 612. The arrival of 612 at Bylands has finally made our dream come true.

W2 646 was selected due to the fact that it was the last W2 in regular passenger service in Melbourne, having been refurbished in the late 1980's.



"Yapper, Yapper, Doo". With the cranes in position Y1 612 is about to be lifted from the road transport vehicle onto rails at Bylands. The acquisition of this vehicle fulfils a long time dream to have one of these rare vehicles in our collection. Unfortunately the vehicle had suffered some vandalism prior to its departure from Melbourne, some of the broken windows and graffiti highly visible.

Photo:

John Walker

As both trams were delivered complete, once they were unloaded, and thoroughly checked, they were driven under power into No 1 tram shed. It was not long before work commenced on bringing the cars up to an acceptable standard. W2 646 needs a little work, including full servicing, the replacement of broken air gauges, some patch painting and a good clean both inside and out. On the other hand Y1 612 requires more substantial work and this is progressing.

Whilst stored initially at Hawthorn Depot in the 1990's and latter at Preston Workshops, 612 was subjected to vandalism. A number of windows including the three main windscreens at one end were smashed, several internal fittings either removed or damaged including the air gauges, and a good covering of graffiti placed over the external side panels. The graffiti was removed pretty quickly and the panels polished to restore the paint surface. The central windscreen was replaced with one found in our spares, originally from X2 677 (it fitted exactly – Ed), and pattens were made for the other side windscreens, the saloon windows and hopper windows. New glass of the required specifications was then ordered, and all have now been installed.

Other work undertaken includes the fitting of a replacement trolley pole, installation of trolley rope tie down hooks, similar to those originally fitted when new, overhaul of internal switches, checking and adjustment of internal light wiring, investigation into the door operations, servicing, new headlight lens and surround and a general clean-up. It is hoped that both trams will be available for traffic in the not too distant future.

More trams on the Move

With the sudden arrival of W2 646 and Y1 612, we were literally caught a little short of covered storage space. We had initially made arrangements which would have safely put one of these trams under cover on its arrival at Bylands, but with a second car also arriving at the same time, and with space at a premium, plan "B" had to be put into action.

To resolve the space issue, it was decided that the best way would be the relocation of non-operational vehicles to the Exhibition Shed. This in itself is no easy matter, due to the fact there is no physical rail connection to that facility, and necessitates the use of cranes and road transport vehicles. Until this could be arranged the short-term solution was to store two vehicles on the depot fan area, and out of sight from Union Lane. Trams SW6 887 and W6 902 were selected as both these vehicles are weatherproof with good sealed roofs, have sliding doors, and eventually require repaints. They were placed on No 2 and 5 roads respectively, which meant that they could be moved as required.

Unfortunately to our dismay, SW6 887 suffered damage, when a person or persons illegally entered our property during the early hours of Easter Saturday using a gun to shoot out several windows of the car and leaving pellets in the bodywork and roof. The matter was immediately reported to the Kilmore Police and investigations, along with other similar incidents in the area, are continuing.

This immediately made the problem of covered storage more urgent. A decision was made to relocate the Ballarat scrubber car (No 23) and X2 680 from No 1 road to C road in the Exhibition Shed. These two trams were immediately shunted and repositioned on the top of No 1 road, both seeing the light of day for the first time in over a decade. On Tuesday 12th April 2005 both were then placed on the main-line near the south-end terminus where they were washed down ready for moving the next day. However the crane company cancelled at the last minute, and the whole exercise was put back to the Thursday. In typical fashion after a generous helping of fine conditions, the weather broke and Thursday became a constant downpour, forcing the cancellation of our plans. The two trams were returned to the depot fan area and placed on No 3 road.

The move was rescheduled for Thursday 21st April 2005, prior to which both trams were then shunted and placed on the extension of No 2 road outside the substation. After several false starts, and the need to empty the scrubbers water tank, the task was successfully completed, and both trams now reside on C road.

In order to get 887 and 902 inside it was necessary to relocate several other trams. Tank car 7W swapped places with 15W and trolley T1 was placed in the Pit Shed. This gave enough space for 887 and 902 to take up residence on No 1 road, with 902 still being accessible for service. For the mathematical experts an interesting brain-teaser to solve – By removing two single truck trams, each at approx 32 feet long and one trolley at 5 feet long (total 69 feet), how did we fit in two bogie trams at 46 feet long (92 feet in total)? Answer – flat batteries in the calculator and sore fingers and toes!

For those who have not been to Bylands for sometime trams are now placed on each road as listed from the north end: -

No 1 road. W6 902, 15W, SW6 887, W4 673, VR 34* (* Indicates non-operational electric tram)

No 2 road. W3 667, W6 996, Ballarat 36, SW2 644, W5 795

No 4 road. Y1 612, W2 646, W2 643, 7W, Ballarat 17

No 5 road. W5 782, W1 427, 10W, W2 509, PCC 980*

No 6 road. Z 5, X1 467, SW5 739, W7 1001, L 101*, W 220*

Exhibition Shed. A road. Horse Car 253, Trailer 299, Grip Car 435, Trailer 290

B road. Malcolm tram, Trailer 586

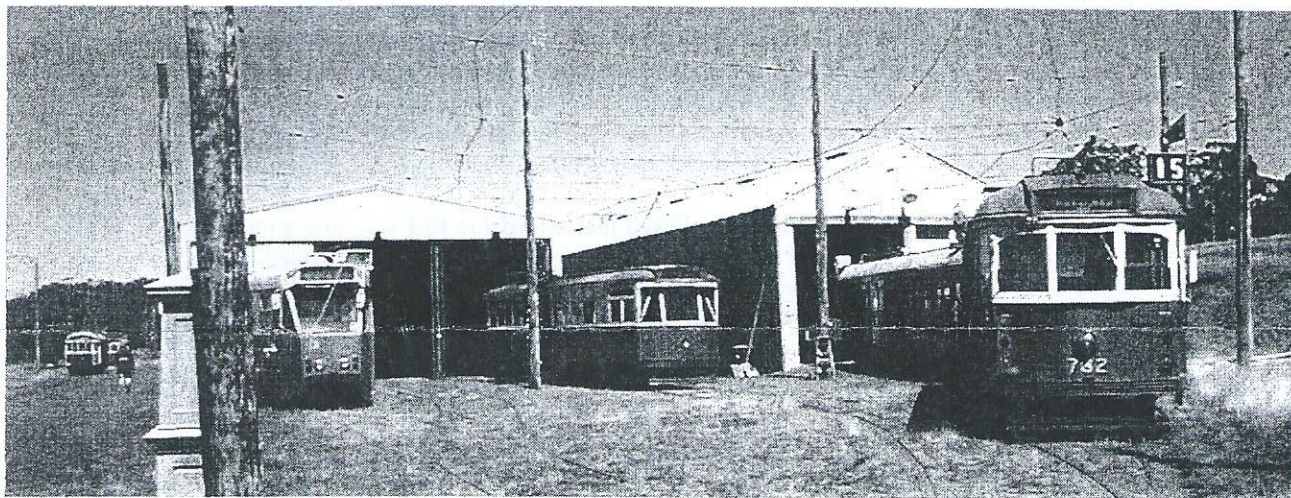
C road. Ballarat Scrubber (No 23)*, X2 680*, grinder trailer unit.

"Wanted" (please)

Not only would we appreciate additional financial assistance, especially in light of our current need for expenditure to move trams to and around our site as mentioned above, and our Public Liability Insurance (see later in newsletter), but also physically at Bylands to assist to undertake works around the site and on the traffic roster. However we are also still on the lookout for extra materials and equipment to make our jobs just a little easier. Sometime ago we placed a request of a motor mower, unfortunately no offers have yet been forthcoming. We are also in need of fencing materials to build or repair or boundary fences. If you can assist financially or know of someone who can assist us in either of the other matters, please contact the Secretary. All donations over \$2.00 are tax deductible.

Museum Works

Regular and periodic maintenance and servicing continues on the running fleet. Although a lot of activity has been undertaken on our two recent arrivals, this does not mean that everything else ceases. Work continues on repainting 7W and Ballarat 17 between other priorities. SW6 644 has returned to traffic following further repairs to its air system, repairs are also underway to repair damage to a lifeguard on W2 643. A small electrical fault in W5 795 defies all attempts to locate it, as does a similar problem with SW5 739. There are presently 8 passenger and 2 service trams available for use or service.



Just a typical active (and very sunny) Sunday at Bylands. Seen to the left are the two service trams on the main-line being W1 427 and W6 902. Z No 5 sits on No 6 road, with recently delivered Y1 612 on No 4 road. W5 782 and SW6 887 sit on no 2 road, with W3 667 lurking behind just inside the shed.

Photo:

John Walker

Upgrading of exhibits in the Exhibition Shed has seen work undertaken to spruce up the external appearances of cable trailer cars 586 and 290. Work also continues on MK VI bus No 759. In order to make space for the two single truck cars on C road, several of the display buses have been removed from this building and returned to the Bus Shed. The remaining vehicles have been repositioned as necessary. During the course of this activity, it was decided to collect and dispose of all the old or discharged batteries that have been gathering dust around the site. To our surprise we located 23 batteries, weighing a total of 480 kg, these being taken to Simsmetal resulting in a surprising refund for scrap value.

Improvements have also been made to some of our line-side structures. Recent works have seen the lower portions of the ex-William Street steel centre poles repainted and the red letter box and tramway electrical junction boxes on the depot fan area prepared for repainting. It is amazing how just a coat of paint lifts the area.

Other works around the site has seen the long wheelbase steel rail trolley relocated for storage on the Pit shed trackage, and the former power operated dual level steps from the B1 trams have also been relocated from near the house to allow further clearing of the adjacent area. The Malcolm tram was also manually manoeuvred from C road to B road.

The lifting, packing and final filling and levelling of C road outside the Exhibition shed has been completed, this being necessary to facilitate the transfer of the single truck trams. Work continues on D road, with more ballast being required before this can be completed. Vegetation control around the property continues.

Working Bees at Bylands

The next working bee at Bylands has been scheduled for Saturday 20th August 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 19th November 2005. **Please mark these dates in your diary.** Your help would be greatly appreciated.

Public Liability Insurance

For the last few years, the one issue that has been the cause of major concern has been Public liability Insurance, especially so in light of the events of September 11th 2001, which has also been a major contributor to the escalating costs of PLI. Heritage groups too have been caught up in this nightmare, and although most, like this Society are purely volunteer, not-for-profit organisations, they are seen by Insurers on the same level as big businesses. As such they seem to think that we can pay the same premiums as everyone else. Not true.

Several years ago when it became apparent that affordable PLI for Heritage groups in Victoria was no longer possible, and that there was the risk that some groups might have to close, the Victorian Government through the Department of Treasury and Finance, offered a lifeline in the form of an Insurance Indemnity. This being managed by the Victorian Managed Insurance Agency (VMIA) and also allowed groups to pay the premiums by regular instalments, interest free, rather than a one-off total amount. This arrangement has been in operation for several years now and has proved very effective and greatly appreciated by the Heritage rail sector in this State.

However late 2004, the Government indicated that it believed that affordable PLI was now within reach of groups and that the need for the Indemnity was no longer required. However the Government extended the cover until the 31st March 2005, to allow time for groups to arrange their own cover. Some uncertainty in the marketplace was still evident at that date, so the Government extended again to a final expiry date as at the 30th June 2005, with no further extensions.

The Society has undertaken investigations with Brokers to obtain PLI commencing from 1st July 2005, and the Board has now authorised the acceptance of a suitable policy from Lloyd's of London, through our Broker Stanley Plantzos in Adelaide, with whom we have other business. The one drawback is that we need to pay the total premium of \$4,400.00 in one amount, or we can pay it by 12 monthly instalments at an interest rate of 9%, thus increasing the total figure. The premium quoted is pleasantly less than that paid to the VMIA and competitive with quotes received from other Insurers. The policy offered is in no way restrictive or limiting and is on par with previous covers, including that of the VMIA we have had over the years past.

As we have to make payment at the worst possible time of the year, and understanding that we have recently had to make major cash outlays for other purposes already explained, we are seeking support from the Membership to assist us cover this large expenditure item. If we cannot pay our PLI premium we cannot open the gates at Bylands to the public, and any works on site will be severely restricted. Please help us by making a financial donation towards this very necessary and vital component. **The Society's survival and also that of the museum at Bylands are at stake.**

In Retrospect

38 years ago:- (*From MMTB News – January 1967*) The contract for Brisbane's new Victoria Bridge has been allocated. It was stated in September that the contract included "provision for tram tracks". However in the "Sunday-Mail" in October, claimed that the contractors had not received a decision whether "anchor blocks and holding down bolts" for tram tracks were to be ordered. The report forecast that tracks would be omitted.

Following this the Retailers Association asked the "Courier-Mail" to arrange for an expression of citizen's wishes in the matter of future street transport, as the association viewed with concern any move to replace trams with buses without consulting the travelling public. The retailers had already approached the State Government on the same matter, pointing out various disadvantages of an all-bus system. They contended that the more numerous buses required would create congestion, and that kerbside loading (praised in the Wilbur Smith report), actually created an impediment to traffic flow.

The "Courier-Mail" published letters on this subject under such headlines as "Runaway Lead for Trams" and the total letters received in three days (October 19-21) including 298 favouring trams and only 35 for buses. A typical letter suggested that Transport Officials and Aldermen who favoured buses should try travelling in them in summer.

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 Website at www.tmsv.org.au. The Tramway Museum Society of Victoria Inc., is registered under the Associations Incorporations Act (1981). Registration No A 1864 E and Australian Business Number (ABN) 12 739 015 600.