

RUNNING JOURNAL



The
Tramway
Museum
Society
Of Victoria
Incorporated

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Adelaide H Class Trams

In late August 2005, the South Australian Government, through the current operator TransAdelaide, called tenders for the disposal and removal of 16 H class trams, soon to be redundant and replaced with new vehicles, as part of the upgrading of the Glenelg line. TransAdelaide held an official viewing and information session at Glengowrie depot in Adelaide soon after advertising the tender, the Society being represented on the day by Chairman Russell Jones, and Deputy Chairman Andrew Hall, both who specially travelled to Adelaide at their own expense for this event.

Many years ago, the Society amended its collection policy to allow it to incorporate (within reason) vehicles that were foreign to Victoria, but would not only still fit the criteria, but also provide a comparison to our own. An example of this was the acquisition of scrubber 10W, formerly a Sydney tramcar, but also used in Melbourne for over 40 years.

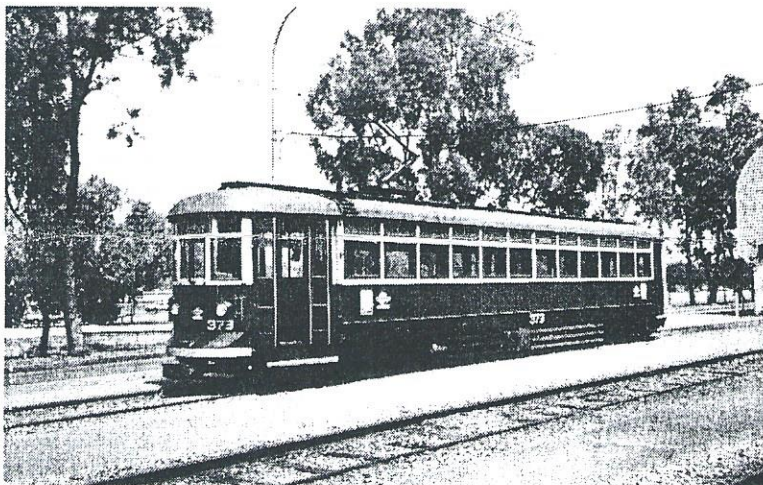
The Board was presented with a written proposal from a prominent member of the Society, who has also guaranteed to fund the acquisition and transport of the vehicle to Bylands. The commitment also covers the re-conversion of the vehicle from its current pantograph overhead current collection, back to trolley pole operation, which will then make it compatible with our operations at Bylands. The car selected and preferred is No 373, being one of the refurbished cars.

Society Chairman Russell Jones, with valuable input of several other Board Directors, drafted a very detailed and descriptive tender response which was forwarded to TransAdelaide well within the timeframe specified. Our tender response has also been fully supported by the Victorian Government, in particular the Minister for Transport Peter Batchelor, and a local MP Daniel Andrews (Member for Mulgrave). Further support has been received from COTMA and Kym Smith, Manager Bendigo Tramways, who has also been appointed as the Society's representative. Provision has been made in our submission to acquire limited spare parts to maintain the vehicle, a generous donation from another (interstate) member has been guaranteed to offset this cost.

The most well known and longest serving Adelaide trams, the H class are soon to be replaced with modern units. The H class has continued in regular passenger traffic for 76 years, outlasting Melbourne's W2's. The H class have undergone a number of modifications over the years, however their general appearances remain virtually unchanged. The Society has tendered for tram No 373, seen here at Glengowrie Depot on the 13th December 2004.

Photo:

Shane Moore



An acknowledgement of our tender has been received, but to date no other details are forthcoming. Should we be successful in our quest for an Adelaide H class tram, it is expected that the vehicle may be at Bylands as early as March 2006. TransAdelaide originally ordered 9 new trams, but with the recent approval by the SA Government for the construction of the long awaited extension of the line to the Adelaide Railway Station in North Terrace, due to commence during 2006, it has now increased the order to 11 units. The first of the new Adelaide trams are expected to arrive during December 2005. The Glenelg line was recently closed for a nine week period for total reconstruction, including use of concrete sleepers. Once this work was complete, tram No 373 became the first car to use the new line.

Museum Works

The last few months have seen some dramatic changes take place at Bylands. Tram restoration works continue on Q 199, Ballarat No 17 and tank car 7W, with good progress being made on all three. Tram maintenance also continues with 13 trams now being available for service. This includes W2 646 and Scrubber 10W, both have now been accredited and available for use. Work continues slowly on Y1 612, but hopefully it will not be long when it too is available for traffic. In the last Running Journal we appealed for assistance in preparing and detailing this car internally, unfortunately this request is still awaiting a response.

Our Caretaker Corey Robertson has undertaken further remedial external works on the house. The old weatherboards on the entire north wall and a large section of the south wall have been replaced with new timber cladding. Due to deterioration, the window in the north wall has been removed during the course of this work. This window was not an original fitting, but was put in during the early 1970's by the then caretaker George Wilcox to compensate for the loss of light from the front window under the veranda. The front fence and most of the overgrown shrubs have been removed, a new fence with gates will be built shortly.

The most noticeable thing was the removal of the last remaining cypress trees. All 12 trees have now been removed, many of which to our surprise were still able to stand despite their age and advanced condition of deterioration. We are still trying to dispose of their remains as time and weather conditions dictate, however if you or someone you know wants free firewood, please let us know.

With the removal of the trees complete, it was time to make a start on the depot fan layout for the Exhibition Shed. Careful planning and design culminated in the initial earthworks being undertaken early October. The trackbed for A and B roads, as well as the ladder track to the east was excavated. A slight incline gradient to bring the ladder access track up to the level of the house access road and main-line was also built. Only some minor drainage work is all that is required to complete the earthworks.

An order was placed with a local garden supplies for 150 second hand railway sleepers. A good price was obtained which included delivery. The quality of the sleepers delivered far exceeded our expectations, we believe that they have been made surplus, replaced with concrete ones for the fast rail project. These sleepers have been spread out over the fan area, and the selected point castings, crossing pieces and lengths of 60lb railway rail then placed on top. Initial spiking and gauging has commenced. Countless old bolts and the remains of the fishplates on the 60lb rail have been oxy cut off, which will allow us to make new connecting rail joints with new bolts.

Once the major track layout is in position a large quantity of ballast will be needed to lift, pack and surface the whole area, similar to how C and D roads already look. To assist with the works, rail trolley T1 has been transferred to D road in the Exhibition Shed.

All this does not happen without manual input. This is by far the biggest rail infrastructure project we have undertaken for many years. It requires the construction of many metres of track and at least 6 sets of points. The completion of this project will give us flexibility with our tram fleet and access to undercover storage. It will also alleviate the need, as we had to do earlier this year, to spend thousands of dollars moving trams in and out of the Exhibition Shed by crane. It is far more viable to spend money on our project, than pay it to someone else? So why not come and give us a hand, the sooner we finish this, the more money we can ultimately save. Remember we may have a new exhibit from interstate arriving any time now, we need somewhere to put it?

Other minor works around the site include the resiting of the directional signage for the toilet block, weed spraying and containment, and the erection of temporary fencing and directional signage for public safety due to the new works

Working Bees at Bylands

The next working bee at Bylands has been scheduled for Saturday 19th November 2005. We would welcome all possible assistance from members on these days. Works to be undertaken on these days are those that cannot or are not usually possible to be undertaken on a normal public operating day (Sunday). Never fear that regardless of the weather conditions, there will always be something to do, so do not be deterred.

Please note that for safety purposes, it is advisable to wear appropriate clothing and footwear. A pair of work gloves would also be useful. To assist with catering on the days listed, please register your assistance with Keith Kings on 9808 0971 or Graham Jordan 9798 6035. The following next work party day will be Saturday 25th February 2006.

Please mark these dates in your diary. Many hands will make the work just that little easier for us all.

Batman Avenue tram shelter

Recently the Society was advised that it was a beneficiary to the estates of two longstanding members, being Brian Morrell and Kevin Murphy, both of whom had recently passed away. The intention by one of the deceased was to be able to assist the Society in providing for something of a long lasting and tangible benefit for the future in their memory.

For some years the Society Board has investigated ways of financing the re-erection of the Batman Avenue tram shelter, which has been stored at Bylands for nearly 8 years since its removal from the streets of Melbourne. The opportunity to utilise the bequest made available proved too good to refuse, and a decision has been made to initiate this project in memory of the member.

However the initial bequest will not cover the full costs of this project, and additional funding will be required to complete the project. It may be necessary to use some of the second bequest, which is earmarked for other purposes and improvements, to complete the project.

The Society Board would welcome financial assistance from the membership to assist complete this important project. If you can assist, please contact the Secretary. Plans and costings for the project are currently being prepared. It is intended to re-erect the shelter adjacent to the main-line, opposite the Exhibition Shed.

Forty years on the trams - Historical Highlights

In 1964 Les Organ retired after more than 40 years service with the Melbourne tramways, first as a conductor and then as a driver. Les was a firm believer that the tram was the best unit of public transport available, and that buses have their place, but cannot hold a candle to trams when it comes to moving large numbers of people efficiently.

Les joined the Tramways in 1923 and for many years he drove tram No 45, a maximum traction tram with two motors, one at each end. Just prior to his retirement, les visited Bendigo and renewed acquaintances with No 45, (now Bendigo No 18), and was thrilled it was still going strong. Taking a ride on her brought back many memories of the old days. *(Ironically Bendigo No 18 was re-numbered back to No 45 for its recent four year sojourn at the Ballarat Tramway Museum - Ed).*



Les with Tram No. 45.

These old trams were not open down the middle, and to reach the compartments the conductor had to "walk the plank" – footboard running along the outside of the tram. Many accidents were caused as a result, and Les has vivid memories of narrowly escaping a dangerous fall from the wet and slippery board one winter's night. Only for a quick thinking woman passenger, who grabbed his arm, he might have had a bad, and maybe fatal fall. The trams were all modified soon after and the dangerous requirement to 'walk the plank' no longer existed.

Les also recalls the many accidents, some funny, some serious, which came about from the tendency these old trams had to "creep" because of the then unreliable manual lap hand brakes which leaked air and eased the brake pressure as a result.

Many a driver looked around to see his unattended tram careering off down an incline. One once hit a horse and cart carrying a load of manure, scooping up the greater parts of its load in the process. *(I wonder if the driver said "s—t?" – Ed).* Another unattended tram ran off down Cotham Road and hit a train which was crossing the road near Deepdene station.

Many cows that wandered about the roads in those semi-rural early days fell victim to the all-night trams and "cow watching" became a must for night drivers. The huge increase in motor car traffic has made the tram driver's task much harder. Les said the constant delays caused by encroaching vehicles on the tram lines have slowed tram travel. One of his pet aversions is the centre of the road turns. On hundreds of occasions with a tram full of passengers, he has had to wait and miss traffic lights, because one driver in one car is parked in his path,

waiting to turn right. (*not only tram drivers curse, but bus drivers too – Ed*). Les believed that 80 or more tram passengers should not be held up to meet the convenience of one car, and strongly advocates a return to the old method of making right hand turns from the left traffic lanes. Les was stationed at Kew Depot at the time of his retirement.

Why not mention us in your Will

As you would have already read above, you can continue to support the Society after your passing, if you decide to mention us in your Will. Mentioning clearly in your Will the bequest to the Society of artefacts, memorabilia and yes even a financial contribution will continue you memory for the future and assist the Society and its museum to prosper. Your Trustee or Legal Representative can be instructed to include such bequests simply and easily in your Will.

Trams in the Twilight

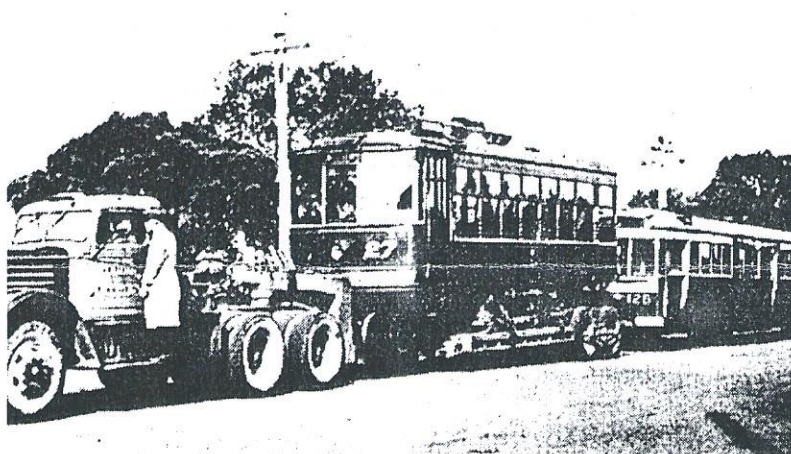
We are presently looking at planning a special after hours evening event at Bylands, tentatively planned for Saturday 25th February 2006 (the day of the working bee), and ironically the 45th anniversary of the closure of the Sydney tramway system. Trams will operate into the evening, providing a different perspective of our operations at Bylands, and also give the opportunity to get some night photography of our trams. With daylight saving still upon us at the time, we hope to make good use of the conditions. It is planned to use some vehicles that are not in regular use, with one or two other surprises possible. More details in the next Running Journal issued in January 2006.

In Retrospect

52 years ago. In late 1953 the Australian Cement Works at Fyansford near Geelong purchased from the MMTB former C class maximum traction tram No 30 (converted to the Dog Car 1937), for use as a storage facility. It was delivered to Fyansford by road truck in November of that year. On the approach to Geelong it followed Melbourne Road and the North Geelong tramline. Ironically Geelong bogie tram no 34 (later Bendigo No 2) was sitting at the North Geelong terminus as No 30 passed by on the drivers left hand side.

On arrival at the city centre in Moorabool Street, the driver of No 34 approached the Inspector on Duty the late Keith Atkins, and advised him that he had been passed by another maximum traction tram in Melbourne Road. A rather bemused Keith Atkins remarked to the driver "how much have you had to drink?" The story spread like wildfire around the entire system in less than 1 hour. (*Maybe the historians have got it wrong, maybe there were 11 bogie trams in Geelong at one time. Officially the Geelong bogie trams were numbered 31 to 40, so No 30 would have fitted into the sequence. – Ed*).

(Story courtesy Bob Lilburn)



In 1947 the SEC purchased a number of surplus maximum traction bogie trams from the M&MTB. These cars were originally ex P&MTT and HTT cars acquired by the Board in 1919. Seen here ex-Melbourne bogie car No 126 (later Geelong No 34/Bendigo No 2) after it has been unloaded in Corio Terrace, Geelong outside the depot. To make room for the new cars the Birney's were transferred to Bendigo. Birney No 27 has then been loaded for transport to Bendigo.

Photo: State Electricity Commission

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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