

# Association of Tourist Railway Inc.

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## The Electric Telegraph

**An Electronic publication of Heritage Railway and Tramway News  
from Victoria.**

**Issue No 2.  
July 2009**

This is a new initiative of the ATR to bring the news to our readers of happenings on Heritage Rail within Victoria. These news items are compiled from the publications of our members and are published at regular intervals. We hope that you enjoy our first issue. You can contact the ATR electronically by sending an email to [secretary@atr.org.au](mailto:secretary@atr.org.au) or by mail to PO Box 271, Queenscliff 3225

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### Comment

The year is slipping fast away from us now and it seems only yesterday when we were in the midst of the worst bushfire season since 1939. Yet the weather scientists are predicting that summer of 2009/10 will be even worse.

Once again we need to look at what preparations that we have made for bushfire precautions. Just being in an urban environment is no longer a guarantee that we will not be affected by fire. For example with no water in Lake Wendouree the "lake" burned. If the fire had broken out with a southerly wind it could have roared through the Botanic Gardens. Likewise in Bendigo the fires entered the urban area and were very close to the hospital complex in that city.

So we all need to look very carefully as to what precautions we have taken to safeguard our visitors and our assets. Right of way needs to be cleared of flammable debris if possible and fire hoses and plans put in place at terminals to safeguard visitors, our staff and assets alike.

Also should we operate our attractions on declared days of total fire danger? If so what precautions are we taking? This is the crux of the questions we must ask ourselves but we must be prepared for the coming fire season.

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## National News

### ATHRA - Association of Tourist and Heritage Rail Australia Meetings

The March meeting of ATHRA was held in Queenscliff

The next meeting will be held in conjunction with the *Railway Heritage: Opportunities & Challenges* conference organised by The Workshops Rail Museum. The conference will be held in Ipswich, Queensland, from Thursday 15th October through to Saturday 17th October 2009. The ATHRA meeting will be held on Sunday 18th October. Details of the *Railway Heritage: Opportunities & Challenges* conference are now available from [the Workshops Rail Museum web site](http://www.workshopsrailmuseum.com.au).

The programme for the annual meeting for ATHRA will be found on the ATHRA website. [www.athra.asn.au](http://www.athra.asn.au)

### Cinders and Ashes

This publication can be read online at the ATHRA website and you can subscribe to have it sent to your email address automatically. It contains news of National events and happenings throughout Australia on Heritage Rail. The address is [www.athra.asn.au](http://www.athra.asn.au)

### ATHRA Alerts

The National Association has set up a system of "Alerts" to immediately draw member's attention to urgent changes which are taking place in the rail industry. Alerts No's 1 to 13 were issued in 2005. No's 14 - 27 were issued in 2006 and No's 28 to 36 in 2007. The Alerts issued in 2008 are Alerts No 38-40. Alerts No 41- 43 have been issued so far in 2009. For details please see the ATHRA website

## Victorian News - ATR

### Bush Fires

Victoria suffered one of the worst bushfire seasons on record in February 2009. There were three days of excessive heat each day over 40 degrees C and it escalated on Saturday 7 February 2009. This day was 46 degrees and with the high winds it resulted in huge fires all across the State with great loss of life, property damage and destruction of the bush and wildlife.

Heritage Rail did not escape, as the Yarra Valley Tourist Railway lost track and a number of bridges and buildings and stores at Yarra Glen but the running section was spared from the flames which licked at the Yarra Glen Station building. The Tramway Museum was in great danger and flames were very close to the Museum. Puffing Billy at Belgrave was threatened by two fires and Alexandra Township was also in some danger. The Daylesford Spa Country railway lost about 2 miles of track which will have to be re-laid with new rail and sleepers.

At the present time both the Yarra Valley and Daylesford Spa Country railways are hoping to receive some State Government funds to allow them to restore their losses.

### Meetings

The next ATR meeting is the AGM and General Meeting to be held at Hawthorn Tram Depot on Thursday 20 August 2009 starting at 6.00 pm? The November General Meeting will be on Saturday 21 November 2009 at a location to be confirmed.

### Address

The postal address for the ATR and the Records Officer has changed recently. Please make sure your records have the correct address as follows:

PO Box 271  
Queenscliff 3225

### Stolen:

#### The Daylesford station sign - Daylesford

This sign is a small black and white enamel sign. If any one who has any knowledge of the sign, could they contact the Daylesford Spa Country Railway. Also the finial from the top of the Bullarto home signal along with the No Road sign and the pickets that it was attached to at the down end of the platform at Bullarto have been stolen. If anyone may become aware of these please email [dscr@internode.on.net](mailto:dscr@internode.on.net).

## **Theft of Overhead Material - Bylands**

The T.M.S.V reported as follows:

I wish to inform you that we have had a serious situation that was discovered this morning, not long after opening up the museum and turning on the power. The tram driver for today, John Walker reported that the overhead wire at the north end of the line was, very saggy, and hanging. On closer inspection it was revealed that several pole length of trolley wire was missing, chopped down from pole 40 to the tie off on pole 44. The wire has been cut on the "down" side of the ear on pole 40, on both sides of the ear on pole 41, 42 and 43, and at the insulator on the tie-off on pole 44.

The wire has obviously been cut into about 6 foot lengths to remove it, as one length was left behind. Other evidence was also found such as a torch (with a name on it too!) and some new flexible strand wire, similar to fencing strainer wire. The police have been on-site and a report made and the evidence taken. I have also supplied the police with a small sample of the type of wire for use in their investigation. It seems that the perpetrators have either entered our property via Mc Kerchers Road, off one of the adjoining properties.

It is interesting to note that there is a large pile of ballast right under the bracket arms at pole 40 and 41, and there has been "someone" walking on the piles. The only fortunate part of this is that the remaining overhead wire has only sagged back to the yellow bug hut at the site of the loop. There is a wire joiner there and it is tensioned off with diagonal strainers, which is retaining the tension back to the museum site. I do not believe that this last piece of wire will fall or dislodge in the interim, nor needs tying off immediately. Tram services have again been truncated back to the gate.

## **News from our Members**

### **Australian Railway Historical Society - Victorian Division.**

#### ***MUSEUM NOTES***

The model railway has on display engine W217 made by Mr Frank Kelly and the diorama depicts a train on the Mansfield line. As usual work on the maintenance of the exhibits continues and the ARHS Council has appointed a Manager to try and raise sufficient funds and interest with the State Government to try and place the exhibits under cover. For over three decades requests have fallen on very deaf ears and this rare and important collection continues to deteriorate in the sea air. The ARHS has prepared a petition to the Parliament to try and achieve some preservation of what is part of the State of Victoria's heritage assets. A copy of the petition can be found on the ATR Web Site. [www.atr.org.au/specials/petition.pdf](http://www.atr.org.au/specials/petition.pdf) The petition must be forwarded to the ARHS by 31 August 2009.

Work on the restoration of the Norman car is underway and work has been done on Steam R704, Electric loco E1102, and steam Y108.

#### ***Newsrail***

Newsrail continues to highlight rail activities in the State and the March issue covered Puffing Billy between 1965 to 1970. Another article covered a day at Albury Wodonga since the closure of the broad gauge track. The May issue covered the type of steam locomotive tenders used by the Victorian Railways. An article in the June issue covered the destruction of track on the Yarra Valley Tourist railway in the fires of 7 February 2009.

As well as all this work the ARHS has a very active Publications Group and an Archival group.

## **Alexandra Timber Tramway & Museum**

The Easter Gala at the Alexandra Timber Tramway celebrated a welcome return of patronage. Visitor numbers and income were very healthy, especially on the Saturday when the market

drew extra patrons. John Fowler 11885 of 1909 ran trains on the Saturday, Sunday and Monday and performed faultlessly. This weekend was the locomotive's actual centenary, which will be officially celebrated on 25 October in combination with the centenary of the opening of the Victorian Railway's branch line to Alexandra. The locomotive was presented with a birthday card on the Sunday, and her spirits seemed to lift after that. (Or perhaps it was either finally finding the correct fitting tube-brush or the completion of a turned brass cap for the new smoke-stack!)

Other exhibits in steam included the Marshall 8nhp and 2nhp portables plus the Bartram vertical boiler and Tangye pump. A variety of vintage internal-combustion engines drove a number of historic farming implements on display. Hudswell Clarke 1098 of 1915 was also on display with the wheel-sets positioned underneath the frame preparatory to the imminent re-wheeling of the locomotive.

Former ATT volunteer Rowan Millard (now carriage workshops manager with the Bluebell Railway in the UK) and his wife Kat were in attendance (much to the pleasant surprise of other volunteers), and made a welcome contribution to steam operations. A BBQ was held on the Sunday night to thank the volunteers for their efforts over the Easter period. This has been a trying time for the ATT members and their co-tenants of the site at Alexandra. Almost everyone knows someone who died or lost their homes in the tragic bushfires of 7 February.

The station coping is being restored to repair the station in time for the century of rail into Alexandra in October this year.

### **Market**

The last market of the season on Saturday 9 May was accompanied by clear skies and plenty of sun and, was well patronised with a wide variety of stalls present. Of particular interest was a display staged by the Australian Blacksmiths' Association (Victoria) as part of a memorial being created in remembrance of Black Saturday, 7 February 2009? To remember the people lost to the fires and the brave CFA and DSE men and women who battled the elements to protect our towns, the ABAV is inviting blacksmiths from across the country and around the world to contribute to *The Tree Project*. Blacksmiths worldwide are helping them create a tree from their forges and fires; creating gum leaves from stainless steel or copper to be added to a forged gumtree. This gumtree is to be erected in Strathewen as a memorial to Black Saturday, for the loss suffered and for the spirit of renewal.

### **Hudswell Clarke restoration**

Work continues towards re-wheeling Hudswell Clarke 1098 of 1915. New pins for the spring equalising beams have been made to go with the new spring hanger bolts which have been already completed. The pins are an interference fit in the new holes to prevent them turning and grease nipples will be inserted in the equalising beams to replace the old oil holes which were clearly inadequate, as the pins turning in the locomotive frames was the cause of the wear. The equalising beams have been re-fitted to the locomotive frame.

New support blocks have been fitted as re-enforcing to the existing support brackets, which looked a little inadequate (they support the full weight of the locomotive boiler and frames). Trial fitting was then made of the first of the springs.

## **Ballarat Tramway Museum**

### ***SCo Tram No 22***

As part of the Museum's aim to develop a representative collection of trams which operated in Ballarat it has always been keen to acquire ESCo Tram No 22, the exterior of which is the most unaltered of the three cars built in 1913. Recently, Brett Hayes, the current owner, donated the tram to the Museum. The workshops crew has constructed a simple truck on which to place the tram so that it can be mobile.

### ***Begonia Festival 2009***

The Festival contracted the Museum to provide free tram service through the Gardens so that the visitors could easily park some distance away and move more freely about.

Operations were similar to previous years with the two W class workhorses maintaining a through service and two single truck trams providing a shuttle from Gardens Loop to Carlton Street. This arrangement means that there is always a tram waiting at the loop and helps to

increase the Museum's profile in the Gardens. A total of 6311 people were carried over the three days of the festival.

As water is at a premium, the Festival enlisted primary school students to create painted flower displays alongside pathways leading to the Conservatorium.

Another initiative was to provide descriptive signage through the Gardens and a storyboard about trams in Ballarat and the Museum was placed at the beginning of the pathway to the Depot.

### ***Maintenance of Trams***

Routine work at the depot continues on tram No. 14. The motors have been tested for continuity and the wiring completed. The main jobs outstanding now are the completion of the armature bearings and the drilling of the appropriate holes in the new motor support beam.

The cream paintwork on No. 38 was renewed between January and March, while the opportunity was taken while the body was on blocks to completely clean down the underside and apply a sealing coat of paint. The armature from this car has been over to Bendigo to be baked and dipped.

A replacement gong has been fitted to the No. 1 end of Scrubber 8, replacing one which had become somewhat erratic in its behaviour. Work is in hand with this car to modify the floor area to allow greater access to the motors and the various oiling points.

### ***Overhead***

Some re-tensioning of the overhead at the Carlton Street end and around the depot fan was carried out during early March. A replacement insulator was installed at the bottom of the access track and three successive bracket arms in the street were painted in the traditional burnt orange colour. The specialist paint involved costs some \$67 per litre, but the result, particularly of the bracket arm with a full set of scrollwork, is extremely spectacular.

### ***Other works***

Hazards are being addressed as they are identified. One was around the rails in front of No 1 and the floor surface was ramped on each side. Another was the small entrance door at the front of the building. Until it is enlarged the low clearance has been highlighted in yellow.

After over a month of continuous running over summer without one change over for defect, tram No 33 managed to disgrace itself on 22nd February. After performing rather strangely on a trip heading north, at St. Aidans Drive it steadfastly refused to move in the other direction even when driven from the wrong end. Of course it had to be one of those only one driver available days. In the end the tram had to be tied up while the driver walked back to the Depot. It was towed in when the maintenance crew became available later in the afternoon. No 33 has done some strange things in recent years and the cause was traced the same day.

## **The Bellarine Railway**

T251 is now in service and is on most weekend trains when the roster calls for a steam engine. Other achievements are the hosting of the ATHRA conference and a Rail Trail Family Day race with Thomas and Friends.

T251 is in effect a brand new engine having had a full overhaul lasting several years. Part of the work was fabricating a new tender, having a new smoke box tube plate made and other work done. The engine last saw service in 1991.

Recent works have seen the completion of the down platform face at Lakers Siding and the station is now a very useful island platform where trains can be crossed. At the new Lakers Siding shed the work of setting it up continues and two tracks are complete with work going on the third and fourth tracks. All stored rolling stock has now been placed in the shed. Carriage DB 46 has been converted to dual braking with only two carriages of the main carriage fleet to be converted. The Blues train season is steadily being extended due to demand. The railway was successful in obtaining from the Puffing Billy Museum the three foot six gauge engines and freight vehicles which were formerly on display at that Museum.



T251 at Queenscliff passing V1209 11 July 2009

All photos J.Frost

The Bellarine railway is now the proud owner of Thomas the Tank Engine. Klondyke has been transformed into Thomas partly due to the requirement by the owners of the events HIT who have introduced more stringent requirements to operate such an event. Only a few railways in Australia now offer Thomas the Tank events and only Puffing Billy and the Bellarine Railway in Victoria. One of the recent changes is that if you offer such an event you must have a Thomas engine. Hence the transformation of "Klondyke" into "Thomas".

After much work the turntable at Drysdale has been tested and proved successful.

The railway has been valuable to the town of Queenscliff when major events are held in the town as it has the means of providing a shuttle service from the outskirts where parking is available. The ingress to Queenscliff is restricted to one road owing to the town's topography. The railway was able to provide a shuttle service from Swan Bay Halt where there is adequate parking for the annual Queenscliff Seafood Festival at Easter. Trains ran every 15 minutes.

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## Daylesford Spa Country Railway

### ***Bushfire Damage***

The railway suffered badly in the 7 February bushfires with about 1.6km of track destroyed. About 2,000 sleepers were burnt out and the rails buckled. Such was the heat from the fire that the entire burnt section will have to be rebuilt. Consequently the railway is left with only a short section of operable track just beyond Daylesford station up to the beginning of the treed section. This means that the railway is restricted in its earning capacity.

At Easter intending passengers were offered a ride by trolley to the damaged area. The rolling stock was not damaged in the fire and is operational an application has been made for funds to repair the damaged track.

Just before the bushfires, the railway commenced a new wine and dines service called the "Degustation Train". This is a higher quality food and wine train with three courses and a talk on winemaking and wineries by staff from the Captains Creek organic winery at Bullarto station. The event was a great success.

### **91RM**

Walker railcar, 91RM has had some body repairs carried out and the roof fibreglass patched where necessary. DRC 40 is running well but the batteries need attention and a separate bank of 24 volt batteries will be fitted just for the diesel alternator set.

**32RM:**

Work is continuing steadily on the rebuild of this vehicle. Once again all work has been concentrated on the passenger car body. With the luggage racks fitted work turned to re-fitting the window blind runs. This included the manufacture of new vertical Masonite strips that cover the blind runs. Work has also progressed on the floor with the completion of the replacement of the floor boarding. New Masonite floor underlay is currently being cut for fitment. More painting has been completed on the interior particularly around the toilet.

On the outside of the car body the roof itself has been sanded, primed and painted in brilliant gloss yellow. Only the re-fitment of the ventilators is required to complete the roof. The steel window pressings have been returned from repair and have been painted and now await re-fitment. Finally the front driver and passenger window pressings have had the repair/replacement of the wooden framing completed, corrosion removed and have been finally re-fitted. The roof cowling above these pressings has also been removed and waits completing on sanding painting before it can be refitted.

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## Diamond Valley Railway

The railway has a number of projects underway and is building replacement single slip between the Inner Circle/Outer Circle and the east Yard point interchange. The loop on the PTL and Fork Tree Cutting is complete and waits signalling and point motors before it is brought into use. Meanwhile traffic is diverted onto the loop to assist its bedding down. New outside double slip crossover plus turnout to the up local line has been commissioned. The installation of the construction siding along 1A road alignment continues. The Coleman Bridge has had angled railings added at each end and the Chelsworth Bridge has had repairs done to the timber decking.

Being in such a heavily treed area the grounds need considerable attention but the drought and the high temperatures of the past summer took a significant toll on the plants.

Melbourne Water is to commence an upgrade of Blowfly Creek and this will not affect the railway but will mean that the Pine Creek picnic area is unavailable to the public while the work is done.

The railway is experimenting with railhead grinding and flange lubrication to try to reduce excessive rail and wheel wear. Some experimental flange greasing systems have been installed and these seem to be effective without reducing adhesion of trains.

A safety audit of trees has been undertaken and it was found that sugar gums in the Avenue of Honour have a beetle infestation due to the severe stressing of the trees due to the drought. Some are in danger of falling over and permission is being sought to do this and replace them with approved trees and shrubs.

(In 2008, over 101,000 passengers were carried by the railway. This makes the number of passengers carried by the Diamond Valley Railway the second highest number carried by a heritage railway in Australia after Puffing Billy.

With the bushfire season coming so close to the Yarra Valley, the group has looked at its fire precautions and is taking steps to remedy perceived threats including the removal of tree debris as it falls.

Immediately after the Bushfires, the railway took the initiative in raising Bushfire Relief donations on Sunday 15 February and together with the railways own donation to charitable causes, over \$10,000 was raised.

The railway has placed in service some new VR grain and gondola carriages. A lively debate is under way about wheel standards for 71/4 inch gauge lines. The consensus from operating the existing standards over the last 24 years at Diamond Valley is that the existing standards are essential for such an operation where carriages and locomotives run upwards of 2,000 km per annum over 22m radius curves.

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## Friends of the North Australia Railway at Adelaide River

As it has been the dry season in the NT Adelaide River has had many visitors calling in to view the site and the station.

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## Mornington Railway Preservation Society

On Friday 3 April, the MRPS held an evening to celebrate its 25th anniversary. This celebrates the work that has been done over those 25 years to progress the railway from the stage of just having a forlorn and lonely steam locomotive in Jubilee Park, Frankston.

IK163 has now been back in service and is performing well. In addition the two diesel locomotives T411 and T334 are now both back in active service following a rather grim period back in October and November last year when at times one or both required substantial repair work just to keep operating. With assistance from Downer EDI the problems were progressively solved and the maintenance regime now put in place under the rail safety accreditation program should reduce the chance of repeat problems.

Work continued on the top coat of enamel on 3ABL as well as the completion of the new canvas on the roof and three coats of Emerclad. It is now preserved but not restored on the inside.

### **Track work**

Following the Christmas break, the points at 3 & 4 roads in the yard have been levelled and repacked, and some worn bolts replaced. These points are made from 60lb. rail, compared to all our other sets at 80lb, and therefore need closer attention. They will be replaced in due course.

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## Melbourne Tramcar Preservation Society

New mirror brackets were cast and machined for fitting to trams 407 and 670. W4 class trams had unique mirror brackets which necessitated casting new brackets utilising a set off 670 as patterns.

New cab handrails were also fabricated for 670, being necessary as the original ones were too long... Both trams have now been fitted with the offside mirrors, which is in line with the Association's policy of providing vision of both running boards from the cab.

### **VR41**

During March the new drop centre storm curtains were fitted to VR 41. This project was not without its difficulties due to the fact that they were unable to source suitable new spring rollers of the same diameter as the originals. They eventually located replacement units that were slightly larger and this necessitated alterations to the end brackets and side runners.

With the decision to now undertake the fitting of storm curtains to the drop centre doorways of L 103 Alterations have had to be made to W class spring rollers as when this tram was acquired along with L 105 neither tram had a full set of fittings. Whilst the centre doorway is the same dimension as all blind equipped W2 class trams this is not the case with the large outer doorways, which are approximately 100mm wider on all L class trams. Suitable W2 class rollers were taken from store then dismantled and lengthened by welding extension pieces on to form the correct length. New intermediate slats and bottom bars have been fabricated from stainless steel for these blinds

### **W3 663**

This tram is stored in the workshop building on No 1 road and work will commence on this car once SW5 849 is completed. An investigation is being made into the best way to repair the water damaged sections of the plywood roof of this car.

### **Other Works**

The track work is receiving attention and the curve behind the car barn is to be rebuilt. The rails are to be re-rolled and it is hoped to relay the curve in August. Associated with the track is

the overhead and replacement poles 7 and 12 were connected to the overhead network with spans to the old poles removed.

At the entrance to the Museum a new information sign has been erected.

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## **Puffing Billy - Emerald Tourist Railway Board**

The annual Great Train Race was held in May and was very successful with a record number of runners taking part in the event.

### **Lakeside Station**

At Lakeside Station the ETRB is negotiating with the municipal council seeking access to additional land to build facilities there. The railway had to expend a vast amount of money to allow it to meet the new requirements of the Transport Safety Act. Two people were engaged to do this work. As a corollary to that is the training of our staff and the railway has purchased a second hand portable class room from the Education Department to allow us to do this most necessary task.

### **Marketing**

Marketing is slowly changing as the origin of passengers from overseas changes and the railway is concentrating on the Indian and Chinese markets as well as our other visitor sources, not forgetting our home market from whence the base patronage comes.

A new innovation is the "Murder Mystery train" similar to "Murder on the Orient Express" using characters similar to those in Sherlock Holmes. Most of the action takes place at the Packing Shed. The players are a local group, the "Gemco Players".

### **Workshops**

In the workshops we have 8A under a heavy "D" examination and 12A is under its 10 year overhaul. The Garrett G42 needs to have a "D" examination conducted. This work is most extensive and has been deferred with G42 being currently stored. Of the little engines, the Peckett is receiving attention to the axle's journals and brasses and these have been machined and the wheel sets installed. The Decauville has had its boiler lifted from the frame and is receiving a full overhaul. The Climax engine 1694 is under heavy overhaul and work is continuing on the boiler and it is ready for inspection. Work on the motion is proceeding and a design for the axles has been completed.



Climax Boiler from 1694 ready to steam Belgrave Workshops 10 July 2009

The two "new" second-hand DH class diesel engines were obtained from Queensland. The more complete one is now at Belgrave to be rebuilt. Its bogies are 3'6" gauge and need to be converted to 2'6" to allow it to run on our track. To deliver it from the Museum at Menzies Creek DH31 was robbed of its bogies to allow the engine to be transferred to Belgrave by rail. The other DH is for spare parts as it came without an engine.

Carriage 2NBC has had a full restoration and other carriages are receiving attention as needed.

## **Museum**

The PBPS has decided to award the 3'6" gauge equipment at the Museum at Menzies Creek to the Bellarine Railway. The engines being disposed of are the Garratt No2 from the Fyansford Quarry and Perry No 11 from the same location with several side tipping ore wagons. As well Pozieres from Port Pirie in South Australia, which is one of the few engines from World War 1 service, is part of the deal.

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## **Steamrail**

The group ran successful steam shuttle trips in March to Williamstown from Flinders Street station. The shuttles carried over 1250 passengers and four trips were run using K190 and K153 topping and tailing the train. On Mother's Day a Rail and Sail trip was run to Geelong behind K153 with the return trip to Melbourne on Port Phillip Bay on the Victoria Star.



Double headed trains at Castlemaine leaving for Maldon and for Melbourne

On Good Friday the display train was again placed at Southern Cross Station (Spencer Street) and attracted good crowds during the day. \$1,625 was donated to for the Royal Children's Hospital appeal.

Because of the dry state of Victoria in 2009 the fire season was extended until May when the first steam specials were able to operate beyond the suburban area. The first trip ran to Ballarat.

### **Locomotives**

Maintenance on the group's rolling stock has continued and T364 is continuing its overhaul and repainting. S301 is waiting on the delivery of crank shaft from the USA. B72 is still being restored. The steam engines are all serviceable.

### **Carriages**

3ABE was overhauled in time for the 125th anniversary trip to Maldon. 7ABE has had treatment of its roof and clerestory side the same as the other BE cars. 61BW has had its batteries checked and had its roof repainted.

### **Other Works**

The group has completed its move from the old tarp Shop to West Block. A new temporary coal loading ramp has been built and the old Bond Store for many years the home of the group is cleared ready for demolition. The entire area will be used by the State government for a suburban train depot. Unfortunately not all the operational fleet of carriages will now be under shelter and more carriages will have to be repainted at a more frequent interval to maintain the rolling stock.

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## The Victorian Goldfields Railway



J 541 leading J515 at Maldon 13 June 2009

### **Events**

The railway had a most successful Steam Train day for Kids. With the new rules for running Thomas events the railway abandoned the previous format and developed its own April Steam Trains for kids' event. A further Steam Train for Kids was held in July.

The next successful event was the Muckleford Music day on the 17 May and this was held in the goods shed at Muckleford.

The railway celebrated its 125th anniversary on the 13 June and a special train was run by Steamrail and Operation 707 to Castlemaine and then on to Bendigo. The train was hauled by R761 and R707. At Castlemaine a band was playing, a choir sang and speeches made to note the event. Then passengers were taken by a train hauled by double headed J class engines to Maldon. Here the train was met by another band on the platform. J541 and J515 hauled the C&MR train. At Maldon a celebration parade headed by a steam roller ran down into the town centre. At the event the announcement was made that the railway was successful in attracting funding for new toilets at Maldon, an expanded retail area, a carriage shed and the Muckleford Shed loop.

Also on the day the railway officially launched its new guide book.

The day from a rail fans point of view, had a final highlight when the Melbourne bound train departed from Castlemaine simultaneously with the train returning to Maldon. The trains were departing in the twilight and the steam vapour made an evocative picture as both trains departed.

### **Tramway Museum Society**

Owing to the few volunteers that are available to regularly open the museum, commencing on the 1 January 2009 it has been decided to only open the museum on the 1st and 3rd Sundays in the month from 11.00am to 4.30pm. As the Museum was unable to complete the new Accreditation requirements for the time being it has become a static Museum.

The open day for members of the Mitchell Shire was most successful with many visitors from the municipality. There was great interest in South Australian tram H 373. The tramway ran a most successful "Trams at Twilight" event on 4 April 2009 and five different trams were used.



Tram at the terminus at Bylands 4 April 2009

To improve the electrical efficiency of the tramway the Bendigo Tramways have installed additional earth returns and pole bonds and repaired broken welded track joints. After this work was completed further electrical problems have occurred and it has been difficult to find the cause of the problems being experienced.

The fencing of the right of way has been replaced on the Northern side. A deliberate vandalism attack affected the museums water supply and most water was lost. After repairs were completed water had to be purchased to provide a supply.

### Yarra Valley Railway

On Saturday the 7<sup>th</sup> February the bushfires caused significant damage to the Lilydale - Healesville corridor and surrounding areas. 7 bridges were lost with 2 lost between Tarrowarra and Yarra Glen. The remaining 5 bridges were lost on the South side of the Yarra Glen Station in the section reserved for tourist railway use. Damage was also sustained to the track between Yarra Glen and Healesville with 1.6km of track destroyed with all the sleepers completely burnt to ashes. Track at Yarra Glen Station was also destroyed.

The damage is a great blow to the railway but while the whole town of Healesville was threatened by the fires the operational section of the railway was spared. Over the Labour Day weekend a model railway show was run in Healesville and the normal trolley trips were run. The people of Melbourne responded magnificently and the town was flooded with people coming out to assist the businesses in the district. The railway put equipment on display at Healesville station and J 516 had a fire put in to boil water for cleaning purposes preparatory to removing the tubes. The event brought many hundreds of people to Healesville which was suffering a down turn from the fires.

In the meantime work is continuing on the preparation of opening the existing trolley section for full scale rail operation and using the restored rail motor. In the workshop the first of the carriages are being rebuilt.

The railway has purchased a share of Steam locomotive J54. It is anticipated that this engine will be available to operate on the railway by mid 2010.

Considerable effort is being made to complete the track work to allow the railway to commence train operation on the running section. An additional GY wagon No 5651 has been obtained from the South Gippsland Tourist Railway. The line now has four GY wagons.