



The Electric Telegraph

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

**Issue No 11
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This is the electronic publication of the ATR bringing the news of happenings on Heritage Rail within Victoria to our readers. These news items are compiled from the publications of our members and are published at regular intervals. We hope that you enjoy these issues, the publication is sent electronically to all members of the ATR and ATHRA. You can contact the ATR electronically by sending an email to secretary@atr.org.au or by mail to PO Box 545, Eltham Vic 3095. You can download further copies from the ATR website at www.atr.org.au

ATHRA - Association of Tourist and Heritage Rail Australia

AGM and ATHRA Awards

The ATHRA AGM was held on 15 October 2011 in Melbourne at the Hawthorn tram depot... The ATHRA awards were made at the meeting and it was noted that there were fewer applications this year than in the past.

The ATHRA Tourism Award went to Redwater Creek Steam and Heritage Group for the promotion of their SteamFest held annually at RedWater Creek in Northern Tasmania. Two nominations were received for the ATHRA Excellence Award - one from SteamRanger South Australia and the other from ARHS Western Australia. Both were excellent awards. However, the winner was Ian Carne from Boyanup Western Australia for his almost single handed attempt to rebuild the Boyanup Museum. Another personal award submitted was for the ATHRA ARA Graeme Breydon Rail Safety Award and this was presented to Warren Doubleday for his untiring work for the T&H sector especially his current work associated with the establishment of a single rail regulator for Australia with specific focus on the interests of the T&H sector.



Recipients of the ATHRA awards 2011 and the two presenters

ATHRA Alerts

The National Association has set up a system of "Alerts" to immediately draw members' attention to urgent changes which are taking place in the rail industry. Alerts No 52 - 53 have been issued in 2011. For details please see the ATHRA website. [Click Here](#)

International News

WATTRAIN

WATTRAIN has been established as an international rail heritage group with ATHRA as one of its members. They will be holding a Congress in York, England in early October 2012 with both pre and post tour program. Their web site is about to go live and will contain details of the Congress and tours associated with the Congress along with booking forms for accommodation etc.

Further details will be published in a future newsletter when they become available. This congress is to occur shortly before the International Rail Safety Conference to be held in 2012 in England.

Victorian News - ATR

General News

General meetings of the Association continue to be held at Hawthorn Tram depot.. Those members who operate under and order in Council are having these transferred to a formal lease and this work is progressing .

The ATR can be contacted by post at P.O. Box 193 Mornington Vic 3931.

Officers can be contacted through the ATR Discussion group.

News from our Members

Australian Railway Historical Society - Victorian Division.

The decision has been made to relocate the Museum from Newport Workshops to Moorooduc which is the base of the Mornington Railway Preservation Society. There is a large piece of land at this location which can be used to re-establish the museum under cover and this will benefit both organisations and allow for a synergy between both bodies. The society noted that the membership in 2011 in July has fallen to 651 people. The Society made a loss of \$31.000 for 2010-2011

Newsrail

The July edition showed operations at Junee in NSW and provided information on the Crew headquarters at Spencer Street Station the reopening of the cross country line from Toolamba to Echuca was also covered. The August issue started with an article on the North Eastern line examined the workings of the South Dynon Maintenance depot. The colour centre spread covers the return of Vline passenger trains to Albury. The September issue continued memories of the North Eastern line and an article covered trains on the Plains line. There is also extensive coverage of Heritage rail activities in the issue.

Ballarat Tramway Museum

The tramway reports:

Around the Museum

It was already dark at about 6:30pm on Monday evening 22nd August when the depot staff became aware of a myriad of flashing lights in Wendouree Parade. On investigation, it was discovered that a car had run into one of the Museum's poles on the hill towards Canton Street. The pole had been moved some distance in the ground and span wires were resting on the car. Fortunately, the trolley wire remained intact.

Power to the overhead was cut immediately and the museum's electrician, was called out to formally isolate the system and provide the appropriate paperwork to the police and Powercor who also arrived. Allan Snowball was also called in to light up the tower truck. Powercor summoned a pole lifting truck to straighten and relocate the pole and assisted in restoring the span wires.

By 9:15pm the job was finished allowing the next day's school visit to go ahead without disruption. Our thanks to all those who assisted and especially the Powercor linesmen.

Tram No 33

For some time tram No 33 has been the only tram which had not been repainted by the Museum. The superb lead based paint has stood up well for almost forty-five years but eventually started to look rather tired. The tram has now been taken out of service and sanding down has commenced. It will remain in the final SEC colour scheme.

Tram 661 The discovery of a cracked motor support beam on No 661 has seen it taken out of service until the tram can be lifted and the cracking repaired. This

was a common problem with W3 class trams and lead to their withdrawal in 1969.

Display

The display panels in the display area have been completed and feature changing images and sound as well as the traditional photos. The major refit project is now almost complete.

Tram No 38

Bogie tram no 38 has returned to service after a number of years as the wheels had low flanges and the bogies and motors had never seen a major overhaul. This has now been completed and the museum now has two operational maximum traction bogie trams in service.

40 year Anniversary Celebrations continue

The museum held a Family day in September as part of the celebrations for the 40th anniversary. The day concentrated on the depot area and admission was by donation. The local press and TV covered the event and other local clubs took part - the day was a great success.

Bellarine Railway

The railway has announced the launch in service of newly restored locomotive Pozieres which was obtained from the Puffing Billy Railway. The railway has also completed discussions with the ARHS regarding the lease and relocation of the ASG locomotive which is on display at the Museum at Newport. It is expected that the engine is capable of restoration. It is believed that this engine is the only ASG left in the world.



Pozieres and the new Gang shed in the back ground

The railway has completed the transportation of 4 1/2 Kilometres of rail from the former Fyansford branch line. In a first the line's Thomas engine was taken by sea to docklands for the launch of a new ferry for the Queenscliff / Sorrento ferry service. It is anticipated that this rail will allow much of the line between Queenscliff and Lakers to be re-laid with 80lb rail in due course, more rail is being sought to relay the entire line.

The railway is examining the draft document to replace the present Order in Council with a lease from Victrack. While on leases the line has announced the renewal of the Blues Train lease for a further three years.

A new locomotive has been obtained from a private owner Queensland No 1604 from the ARHS line near Rosewood. The engine took three days to be transported to Victoria. An initial inspection has shown that very little work will be required to make it operational. This engine is more powerful than the Tasmanian X classes and is air braked.

The railway after discussions with Victrack has agreed to transfer all its workshop and locomotive activities to Lakers Siding. This will require the shed to be concreted, a raised pit built and the construction of a machine shop store rooms amenities and a mezzanine within the shed.

Station news

With the assistance of a grant a ride on mower has been obtained to help keep the station areas tidy and attractive. At Lakers the new gate posts for the east end of the platform have been installed and a new three bay gang shed erected.

At Drysdale the kiosk has been re-built creating a much larger area which allows the seating of 24 people at tables. In addition the kiosk in the station at Queenscliff has much more space in it and looks more inviting.

Bendigo Tramways

The tramway reports that the end is in sight for the rebuilding of the Bendigo Depot with the new amenities area and offices almost complete with an anticipated opening in December.

The decision has been made to reduce the frequency of the tram services to one an hour as the passenger demand is not there for a more frequent service.

The tramway has supplied on lease to Auckland a former Melbourne W2 class tram no 421 and a private collector Newstead Trams has supplied a former Melbourne X1 class tram No 466 which had been restored by the depot in 2004. Both trams are on lease for five years.

As part of the works to rebuild the depot the paint shop curve has been excavated, the top of the check rail has been top dressed to create an even surface across the yard. The Amenities Block is almost complete. Plaster has been installed and the brickwork has been cleaned.

As part of the Depot Upgrade, a new transformer has been installed. This required the power to be turned off all day on Sunday May 8, which in turn allowed us to undertake some minor overhead works while the trams couldn't run. These works included installing new type section insulators and improving the insulation at the Central Deborah Gold Mine.

Two new Transformer/Rectifier units have been commissioned and the trams are now operating from a healthy 620v. supply. Drivers are reporting that the trams go a little bit faster now. This step allowed the old substation to be disassembled to make way for the pedestrian pathway and doorway on No.1 road. New doors and frames for the offices and meeting room have been fitted. The back wall of the shed has been disassembled and the old substation has been demolished

The old wire mesh fence along Hargreaves Street has been removed and replaced by a more historic post and rail style.

The shed extension is also taking shape. Most of the tracks have been joined up and concreted, the old brick wall has come down, and the garage is coming together.

Tram restorations

While all this is going on restoration of trams for outside bodies is continuing W6 891 has arrived from Preston for restoration for "Pets in Perth" and tram W71036 has departed for Sydney and the Sydney Tram Museum. Work on the city circle tram No 957 is proceeding and has been disassembled to the frame to determine the full extent of the rebuild. The frame has been dry ice blasted, grit blasted, and crack tested. Local tram No 17 has had new motors and wheel sets installed and received attention to the safety rails which now operate smoothly. No 25 and No 44 have both received attention.

Friends of the North Australia Railway at Adelaide River

The railway reports:-

"For the past 9 months a contractor has been working on the \$2M section of the Rail Trail from the 13.5 mile to the 16 mile. At our strong suggestion the cuttings were not widened and the embankments were not widened. In fact they have left trees growing right up to the edge of the Trail which looks lovely but is nothing like it would have been when the original 1.5 chain wide corridor was cleared by hand.

Anyway the Grand Opening date arrived on 11 September and we received an urgent request to compile some interpretive signage. This we did and it was well received and will form a valuable archive for us. We may put it up on our website (when the webmaster returns from Bali).

Gerry was the man for the moment at the opening. He turned up in full bicycle trim and obviously knew everybody in his electorate. He made a great speech, entirely off the top of his head. At the start of his speech he made extensive comment about the work of the FNAR and our contribution to both this project and to our general raising of community awareness of our cultural heritage in terms of this piece of Victorian era infrastructure.

He has the nod from the government for the next section of the Trail through to Girraween Road, although it's a bit like the north-south railway promise in 1911 - there is no commitment to a start date.

Well Done Gerry!!!"

Trevor Horman

Melbourne Tramcar Preservation Association

The Tramway reports;

"The last of the tie rods of the curve relaying has been done with the outer rail being spiked down to complete the relay of the north west curve. W2 407 was then given the honour of being the first tram to traverse the new curve, being driven at very low speed by Tony Smith and stopping every few metres while Kym Smith monitored the interaction of the wheels and rails. No faults were detected and 407 was then given a second run around with Kym Smith at the controls to confirm the work.

Backfilling of the curve will now be undertaken using the fill that will be removed to allow work to commence on relaying the south west curve.

W3 663

The painting of 663 is now finished and only the numbers and monograms need to be applied to complete the exterior restoration.

Inside the car, the lighting circuits have been terminated along with the wiring for the compressor. A minor fault with the headlight changeover circuit was identified during testing and this has now been rectified.

All the straphanger brackets and rods have been fitted and work is now progressing on refitting the bell cord eyelets, saloon door handles and interior hand rails. This will basically complete the interior with the exception of the seats.

As reported in the March issue of Grand Union we were unable to commit to restoration of these seats until the outcome of our special fund raising appeal is known.

In the meantime we have raised sufficient funding from the sale of surplus parts to enable us to authorise the restoration and fitting of one complete set of saloon seats.

During May, these seats were completed and refitted to the No.1 end saloon. The finished result is most impressive and vindicates the decision to remove the upholstery in the first place."

Mornington Railway

The railway has been concentrating on trimming trees on the right of way and at Moorooduc Locomotive T334 has had a full brake overhaul. Following low patronage, the Ride and Dine train has been removed from the timetable. The work on the building of the Peninsula Link freeway is under way with the Abigroup building a huge bridge over the line between the Frankston Flinders Road and Eramosa Road. the road is a new approach as it will not be a toll road but is a different type of Public Private Partnership project. It is called an availability PPP project.

The space between walls allows for the railway line to be duplicated in the future if the line to Mornington is electrified in the future. It is at this location that the shared users path (SUP) leaves the freeway and joins the rail reserve. To allow this work to be done a 300 m section of track was removed by the road contractors and this will be reinstated with new sleepers once the bridge is completed. The SUP is new and is part of the around the bay bike trail. It is expected that the bike path will cross Moorooduc Highway at the present level crossing and this means that a set of traffic signals will need to be installed there, something which the railway has not been able to get the authorities to approve. All this work has revitalised the need to restore the line back to Baxter station and the right of way is being cleared of undergrowth back to Baxter. Approval is being sought to run a rail tractor on the section to help in the work

Guards Van 604 Z D has is having a full restoration which is being carried out. The railway is running a New Years Eve train.

Puffing Billy

Financial year 2010 - 21011 resulted in the line carrying approximately 269,000 passengers .an all time record. The same report showed that rising costs especially for coal is biting into the funds. The railway is seeking extra capital funding. The railway held a further working make over at Belgrave to improve the appearance of the station.

Locomotive and Workshop News

Locomotives

7A has had a D examination carried out and the boiler is being retubed. 8A had a C examination done 12A has had its driving and coupled wheel sets work completed and these are ready to fit back in the frame. 1694 the "climax" has had the work on the main frame completed the cab and water tank fitted and work on the crank shaft underway. Little engine 86 has had 26 boiler tubes replaced and the other little engine 986 needs a new boiler and design work for a new all welded boiler have been prepared. Garratt no NGG 16 129 has had its engine units brought to Belgrave to have the wheel sets removed and for the cranks and wheel centres to be removed from the axles to enable 2'6" gauge axles to be fitted to the wheel sets and cranks.

Carriages

4 NAL has had a complete lift and rebuild and new seats and curtains have been fitted and other work done as well as a complete paint. Other carriages have had lifts.

29 NQR is being rebuilt

BOOK Sale

The PBPS held a giant book sale at Gembrook station of secondhand books that they have been given over the years

Steamrail

Locomotives

R 711 is again operational with a number of trips proving the repairs that have been made to the unit. The group is working with other heritage groups to find the best place to get Fire bricks made and locomotive grates manufactured. At least the grate patterns have been saved from the previous manufacturer unlike the brick patterns which were thrown out upon the works closure. This is an unfortunate commentary on the closure of manufacturing in Australia. Routine maintenance on carriages and locomotives continues.

The Museum reports

"A dedicated group of members has been having regular working days on Wednesdays. The Exhibition Goods Shed is looking good, thanks in large part to the donation of glass display cabinets, and a pleasant sitting area in the front of the shed. A new outdoor sitting area has also been set up at the front, and a staff table and chairs out the back, allowing volunteers to relax over a cup of coffee or soft-drink and enjoy the stunning views of the Great Dividing Range.

The restoration of North Melbourne Electric Tramway and Lighting Co No. 4 has also been restarted. The exterior is starting to look much better, with painting almost complete and work has started on reassembling the interior and fitting out the cabs. The decision has been made to restore it back to mid 1920's M.&M.T.B. condition as U class 205, chocolate and cream paintwork and the retention of the M.&M.T.B. cabs and destination boxes. The goal of full conversion back to NMETL 4 condition will be some time down the track, which involves repainting of the chocolate to burgundy and significant alteration to the cabs, removing the windows and destination boxes."

The Victorian Goldfields Railway

The station building at Maldon has re-opened after restoration from the fire which destroyed it in 2009. The restoration has resulted in a building that resembles the station as it would have been in the 19th century. The restoration work was funded by Victrack.



Restored station Maldon

Photo VGR website

The railway advises that it is fortunate that it is able to offer to a group from the Tarrengower Women's Prison some activities every Monday at both Maldon and Muckleford stations. They do lawn mowing and tidying up at both stations and give the carriage fleet a thorough cleaning. K Mart has helped the railway with the donation of a portable building, work shop equipment, a complete set of light fittings for the new carriage shed, a large quantity of office equipment including quality chairs for the waiting rooms and Muckleford and first aid materials and equipment all surplus to the company.

The railway has taken ownership of D3 619 which is at Bendigo. It is hoped to move the engine to Maldon to meet up with D3 646. It is planned to restore one of these engine out of the two crocks.

Diesel engine T333 on hire to El Zorro is now on the standard gauge. The railway has introduced a multi participant drivers' experience where up to four people can become the driver, fireman, guard and conductor for the day.

The railway now has first class service available on all trains. The new shed at Castlemaine is now finished with the exception of hanging the doors. The railway had a great day when the line was visited by a special steam train run by Steamrail, the Seymour Rail Heritage Centre and Operation 707 and they connected with a special branch line train to Maldon. The line also ran a mixed goods train to Muckleford.



New shed Castlemaine

Photo VGR Web site.

Yarra Valley Railway

The railway ran a heritage weekend in September attracting record crowds with steam rollers in attendance and other displays. Like most railways the lineside clearance has received a lot of attention and this has been done on the upside of the tunnel. The restoration of Carriage BW1 is proceeding as fast as it can. It looks now as though it has just been newly manufactured at Newport Work shops. Works at the Melba Highway level crossing are nearing completion. The railway is running a Ghost train on Halloween.



Near Donovan's Road

photo Yarra Valley railway.



No 66 The last Perth tram This tram has just completed a lengthy restoration and was launched at Whiteman Park on 9 October 2011

All photos by J.Frost unless otherwise attributed.