

5. FARES PLEASE!

What Happened to Ballarat Tram No 30?

Ballarat Tram No 30 began its life in Melbourne as No 33. Ordered from by Duncan & Fraser in 1918 by Hawthorn Tramways Trust and purchased subsequently by the Footscray Tramways Trust it was one of seven cars which commenced service at Hawthorn in 1920 before moving to the isolated system at Footscray in 1921. In 1923-1924 the cars moved to Essendon and No 33 was renumbered 183 and classed 'M' by the current owner, the Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramways Board.¹

In 1935 the tram was one of four identical cars sold to the State Electricity Commission and it entered service in Ballarat in August 1935 as No 30. On the closure of the Ballarat SEC tramways in 1971 the tram was one of the few which did not find its way to a museum or a park in rural Victoria, but went to a property near Kaniva in the far west of the state.²

In 1974 it was rescued by a group of enthusiasts and brought back to Ballarat. The purchase of land at Haddon, not far west of Ballarat allowed it to be moved from a temporary home in the Council depot.

The Haddon Tramway Workshops, later to be known as the Melbourne Tramcar Preservation Association, was formed to rebuild the car. Over time the focus of the organisation changed and No 30 found itself travelling across the Pacific Ocean.

Several years ago the Museum received an email from Richard Holmes in California seeking information about the car. This is his story.

¹ Destination City 5th Edition (1993) p.58

² The Golden City and its Tramways (2005) p.93



No 30 at Kaniva with some of the recovery team in 1974

Photo: the late Bill Kingsley

Reconstruction of Car 183

By Richard Holmes

The history of car 183 has been quite exceptional from its origin in Australia, shipment to Oregon and the reconstruction in Willits, California.

The car was shipped to Portland Oregon in 1980 where it caught fire. The fire destroyed most of the original wood structure.

After the fire it was shipped to Willits California for rebuilding. The sequence of pictures on the following pages show 183, then

numbered 30, before shipment to the US, then the level of destruction due to the fire, and finally how the car looks today.



Right:

Before shipping to Oregon

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Remaining from the original car was the steel frame and running gear and many burned timbers that were used as patterns to reconstruct the wood frame and body.

The entire body has been rebuilt as close to original design as possible using traditional mortise and tenon joinery from the frame up. Considerable emphasis was placed on maintaining the original structural design and construction techniques. The following sequence of photos shows the beginning of construction in 2005 to the point where the body is near complete, now work on the interior was started.

The interior of the car has been finished in African mahogany with some red oak shown in the sequence of pictures below. The interior was finished in a similar fashion to SEC Ballarat tram numbers 26 and 33 with mirrored sash at both end bulkheads. All finished brasses have been polished and recoated with lacquer before installation.

Above:
After the fire in Portland
(As seen in 1987)

Right:
The extent of fire damage

The remains are protected
by a tent.



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(The lady in the top right hand photo is Esther Class)

The end benches are constructed of cherry and mahogany with tip-over backs that provide seating for approximately 10 at each end. The forward bulkhead behind the motorman was eliminated and the seating layout was changed in case it became necessary to allow for wheelchair access. All surfaces are finished with multiple coats of exterior varnish to provide for a lasting finish.. A sander is located under one of the seats at each end of the car operated by a foot button switch.

There is safety glass in all sashes in front of the motorman and tempered glass in all other sashes.

The roof carlines are made of laminated oak with two steel carlines (original parts) reinforcing the saloon roof. The roof boards are poplar and ash milled to a cross-section adopted from a Brill design optimized for streetcar roofs. All of the timbers supporting the roof and clerestory have been reinforced with feather bolts, angle irons and steel tension rods wherever applicable.



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Above: The detailed pictures of the saloon finish

Below: The finish details of the open ends



The truck was completely dismantled and components repaired as needed. Frame holes which were found to be badly worn were welded and re-bored. All axel bearings were replaced with new babbitt and line bored. Springs were also replaced as required.

Both motors were completely disassembled and the commutators turned and slotted. The brush holders were replaced with new maple units with new brushes. The armatures and fields

were re-insulated using a standard dip-and-bake process. All internal lead wiring were replaced and armature bearings were also replaced with new babbitt. Both motors underwent satisfactory bench testing before re-installation.

All that remains now is to get the car back on railroad tracks for debugging and adjustment.

Below:

Rehabilitating the wheels and motors



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The group responsible for the reconstruction of this car, shown above, are Paul Class, Richard Holmes Jim Begear and Bud Stanton with funding from the Kairos Family Trust.

Tram 183 today



Acknowledgement

We would like to gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Peter Winspur of the Ballarat Tramway Museum for all the detailed pictures of the sister cars there that were invaluable in reconstructing details of the interior finish of the car.

We would also like to thank Kym Smith of the Australian Electric Transport Museum for his assistance in replacing all the brass fixtures for the saloon.

We would also like to acknowledge the assistance of many others have also contributed to this project.