

COLLECTION POLICIES

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The Ballarat Tramway Preservation Society has recently completed the preparation of a collection policy. This policy is to assist the Society in determining what it should be collecting in the future, and expressing, in a written form, a theme for our collection. The Society cannot accept everything that is offered, either free or at a price, or collect everything that is available.

A copy of the policy is attached to this paper. The first page sets out some points on the need to have a collection policy, and then discusses its aims. The policy addresses not only the major element of our collection, our trams, but equipment, spare parts, overhead, track materials, pictorial records, artefacts and Society materials. I will refer to these later, when I review the policy itself.

Many museums, not only railways and tramways, seem to be out to collect everything, and are then in a position of not being able to look after them or to house them. Many of the small country museums are often in this position, of having an item given to them, and then not knowing how to say "no thank you". All large museums have such a policy, while it may be more general than ours. They apply various tests to the item to see whether it should be collected, using pro-forma and various decision making processes. A copy of such a pro-forma used by the Museum of Victoria is included.

The Society had an idea of its collection policy expressed through its Memorandum of Association, the various thoughts of members, Board actions, and what it had, or was seeking. The need for a written policy was perceived following discussions with museum professionals, the possibility of museum accreditation within Victoria and the question, asked on Museum Grant applications forms, whether we did have a policy or not. You can only say "in preparation" for so long. The Society has also matured in its approach to itself, and now sees the tramway as a specialist museum. It is not trying to compete with other museums, but to carve a niche in Ballarat, and be a reminder of Ballarat's rich past street tramway history.

The major collectibles in all tramway museums are the tramcars themselves. This as expected caused the most problems in the formulation of the policy, given what we have, what we see as our gaps, and possible excesses. Reasoning why it is necessary for a small operational museum such as ours, to have duplicates is given. In the big museum field, the amount of duplicates we have would probably be seen as

excessive. As you will see on page 37, we have categorised our collection into three categories. This started off as five, and the various names have changed around a few times.

We have identified two major gaps in the collection, one of which we have a good possibility of filling in the future. The policy also considers trams from other systems, and other forms of Ballarat Transport. You will notice that the SEC tramcars are considered from the Ballarat viewpoint and not their originating class of tram, such as a Melbourne M, J or H class.

To assist in preparing the policy, the Board had a number of special meetings to consider the documents. It also received comments from the Museum of Victoria, which were very useful. The document will now be made available for member comment. After receipt of comments, it will then be finalised.

The Board did look at a point scoring system to try and formalise the various categories to which the trams were allocated. This attempted to allocate points on the basis of value to Ballarat, not necessarily that of Australian or Melbourne tramcar history, the tram's rarity, physical and operational condition, ownership, and value as a passenger carrying vehicle in order to earn money to enable upkeep. Such a scoring system is very hard to set up completely impartially, and is very subjective on viewpoints etc. The problems are; on what basis do you allocate points, score them, and then draw the various cut-off lines?

The Society has over the years collected a number of items which are not strictly relevant to our collection, and part of the policy is a de-acquisition section, outlining the process of disposal. You will note that for example tram No. 32 is considered as supplemental in our listing on page 37. At the time of its acquisition, the tram was acquired specifically for its mechanical equipment, for use in No. 12, which we knew was to be a future collectible.

Finally the Society would be interested in receiving comment about its policy, and hopes that it fosters other formally prepared policies within COTMA. The next policy to be prepared is a Heritage policy. This will attempt to put in writing the standards of upkeep, restoration, presentation of displays, operational aspects such as uniforms, methods of working to try and retain the cultural heritage that tramway has inherited from its past in Ballarat.

A COLLECTION POLICY FOR THE BALLARAT TRAMWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY LTD.

1. WHY HAVE A COLLECTION POLICY?

To assist the museum in determining what it should be collecting, and what it should be trying to do. It cannot accept everything that is offered, or collect everything that is available. This is due to:

1. Space limitations
2. Duplication with other museums
3. Appropriateness
4. Worth of the object being collected

2. AIM OF A COLLECTION POLICY

A collection policy is to identify the general aim or purpose of the museum. It should be written, so that it can be referred to in the future. This provides some continuity of purpose to the museum. Each museum should clearly understand its particular purpose, its reason for existence in a community. Often this purpose is revealed in the title of the museum. The aim of the collection policy will reflect this purpose. The aim will impose limitations on what is to be collected, and these should be clearly spelt out through the expression of defined or specific objectives. These objectives may comprise:

1. A distinctive theme of the collection, which is expressed in a formal statement, and communicated through the displays of the museum.
2. Variation in the displays, and flexibility of the presentation of the theme to the public.
3. Having conditions for an object's acceptability, based on space limitation, appropriateness, worth or historical significance to the museum, history of the object (its provenance).
4. Physical characteristics and physical condition given its worth, and the ability of the museum to care for the object.

Not all items are necessarily significant, although significance does not depend on monetary value. An object's significance is enhanced by:

1. Its documented history
2. Its place in the past
3. Its physical condition

Each museum should endeavour to make every effort to accept only those objects that fit the collection policy of the museum, and for which the museum is able to care.

Reference: Willis E, and Cook P. in *Handbook for Small Museums*, pp 10-15

3. "THE MUSEUM" OF THE BTPS

In the case of the BTPS, "The Museum" is defined as

the whole of the BTPS operation; its depot, the trams, track, overhead, method of operation, the display area within the depot and our collection of artefacts, drawings, photographs etc. We are an operating museum dependent largely upon visitors or tourists for our income. We are not just a tourist attraction.

4. BASIS OF BTPS COLLECTION POLICY

The basis of the collection policy for the BTPS is found in the statement of the objects for which the Society was established for, as stated in the Company Memorandum of Association:

1. To establish at Ballarat an authentic working tramway museum as a tourist, historical and educational attraction.
2. To acquire, restore, maintain, repair, preserve, exhibit and operate trams on the Ballarat tramway system and elsewhere.
3. To construct, manage, operate, maintain, alter, repair, extend and renew tramways together with all appurtenances works and conveniences necessary or desirable for any of such purposes.
4. To purchase, take under trust or otherwise acquire tramcars and any plant, machinery, rolling stock, equipment or parts to be used in connection with any such tramcars and with any tramway owned or operated by the Society.
5. To establish at Ballarat a transport museum and for that purpose to purchase, take under trust or otherwise acquire any item of transport equipment or of tramway historical significance and to maintain, repair, preserve, exhibit and operate the same.
6. To produce, edit, print, publish, issue, sell, circulate, and preserve such papers, periodicals, books, circulars, tickets, photographs and other items of literary or artistic worth as are conducive to the objects of the Society.

While these objectives have been set very wide by the authors of the Memorandum so as not to unduly limit the activities of the Society, these have been further defined in practice by the Society's past activities through its various actions. This is not to say that in the future the Society can not amend these objects, to extend or contract the activities of the organisation

5. SOCIETY HISTORY

As an operator of Ballarat Trams, the Society is forming its own history as an operator. As such it should collect and record its own history and that of its collection, particularly that of the tramcars.

COLLECTION OR ACQUISITION POLICY OF THE BTPS

1. AIM

To define the general purpose of the museum operated by the Ballarat Tramway Preservation Society Ltd. (BTPS) and by this identify a collection policy for the care of our current collection and future acquisitions.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of the policy is to assist the Board in fulfilling the aims of the Society in what it collects, maintains and disposes of in the future. It is not to detail the standard of upkeep, or presentation etc., this will be purpose of a separate Heritage Policy.

3. BASIS

The policy has been prepared on the following elements, given the history of the Society, its present aims and what is seen as its future.

1. The objects expressed in the Memorandum of Association.
2. The Society's expressed aims in the early days of the Society formation which was to "preserve and operate a portion of the Ballarat system as it was done by the SECV, up to Sept. 1971".
3. The current collection of the Society.
4. The limitation on space available to house the Society's collection in the South Gardens Reserve. (The present building cannot be extended further.)
5. What is likely to become available in the future, and that is consistent with the theme of the collection.
6. What would be nice to have in our collection.
7. The history of the various Ballarat tramway operators.

4. COLLECTION THEME

The theme has been constructed from the relevant elements of the policy basis outlined above, the need to tell the story of an aspect of society in the way that it lived in the past, and the present BTPS Board's aims.

The collection theme for the museum functions of the BTPS is "the history of Ballarat's passenger tramways, its people, equipment, development and operation in relation to the history of Ballarat and the State Electricity Commission of Victoria".

"Ballarat Tramways are Ballarat History" would be a short form statement of this theme.

5. COLLECTION POLICY

The Society's collection comprises a large number of items, varying in size. To prepare a combined or summary policy for all of them would not be relevant. Thus the policy has been broken down into a number of headings:

1. Tramcars
2. Equipment /spare parts
3. Overhead and track materials,
4. Photographs
5. Artefacts and other collectibles
6. Society Archives

5.1 Tramcars

The tramcars are the primary collection items of the Society and form the operating section of the museum. While these form the largest single collection item in terms of physical size, they are the smallest in numerical number. The history of the individual trams are reasonably well documented. In the case of tramcars, it is the body number that is considered unique to that car, ie. its essence, not its trucks or mechanical equipment, which was often swapped between trams.

The collection has a number of duplications. This is necessary from an operational viewpoint, where restoration or maintenance of a tram to operating condition, can take a volunteer organisation such as ours, a number of years. It also allows the Society to represent the various colour schemes that were used on the various trams. This adds to the visual impact of the collection and enables better interpretation of the story of Ballarat's trams. To assist in the understanding of the importance of the individual trams to the collection, a classification is suggested. This is:

Essential

BTPS ownership, or under long term control and an essential tram in relation to the history of the tramways of Ballarat. They would not be loaned out, or only leave Ballarat on temporary transfer under the most stringent safeguards.

Reserve

Not necessarily owned by the BTPS, but completes history of the Ballarat Tramways or useful to maintain or have as an operational part of the collection.

Supplemental

Owned by the BTPS, but not needed to illustrate the history of the Ballarat Tramways, and/or in poor condition. The classification shown in the table below, is based on the above categories, though this is somewhat subjective.

The Present Collection

The present collection of trams and their interim classification is presented in the following table:

Tram	Description	Ownership	Status	Classification
1	BTC Horse tram	BTPS	Under Restoration	Essential
11	SEC Single Truck	BTPS	Not operational	Desirable
12	ESCo Single Truck	BTPS	To be restored	Essential
13	SEC Single Truck	Goldsmith	Operational	Desirable
14	SEC Single Truck	BCC	Operational	Desirable
18	SEC Single Truck	Sebastopol	Operational	Desirable
26	SEC Single Truck	BTPS	Operational	Essential
27	SEC Single Truck	BTPS	Operational	Essential
28	SEC Single Truck	BTPS	Operational	Desirable
32	SEC Single Truck	BTPS	Restoration required	Desirable
33	SEC Single Truck	BTPS	Operational	Essential
38	SEC Bogie	BTPS	Operational	Essential
39	SEC Bogie	BTPS	Not operational/display	Supplemental
40	SEC Bogie	BTPS	Operational	Essential
661	MMTB Bogie	BTPS	Operational	Supplemental
671	MMTB Bogie	BTPS	Operational	Supplemental

Legend

BTC	Ballaarat Tramway Company
ESCo	Electric Supply Co. of Victoria
SEC	State Electricity Commission of Vic.
MMTB	Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board
BCC	City of Ballaarat
Sebastopol	Borough of Sebastopol
Goldsmith	Lake Goldsmith Steam Preservation Co-Operative

Future Acquisitions

Missing from the BTPS collection are the following items:

ESCo Toastrack Car:

Built new for the Company in 1913 where its use predominated on the Sebastopol line.

SECV works car:

Used to maintain the tramway track and drainage system.

Policy Relevant to Trams from Other Systems

Trams from other systems are seen to have a low priority, particularly with respect to Ballarat History. They only should be acquired on merit. Each particular case having regard to storage space, historical relevance, condition and need.

Other forms of Ballarat transport

Other forms of transport used in Ballarat, e.g. horse drawn cabs, omnibuses, motor buses etc. are not directly relevant to the history of Ballarat Tramways. While these are relevant to the history of transport in Ballarat, it is considered that acquisition of these items is not part of the Society's aims, although the objects of the Society does allow it.

5.2 Equipment and Spare Parts

This area of collection management for an operating

museum is a difficult one. It can collect everything that may be useful or very little and hope that spares will not be unduly needed. The latter practice relies on the ability to repair equipment without resorting to the needs of spare parts. On the other hand, spares are also useful for rebuilding or restoring tramcars. The other limitation of gathering equipment and spare parts is the ability to store, manage them and keep them in good order.

The BTPS has currently a reasonable collection of spare parts for tramcars that it uses, however it is generally poorly stored and not catalogued. Most of the spares held are from SECV origin. The present source of spare parts is primarily from ex Melbourne trams. Most of these parts are not directly relevant to our trams, due to their later construction date and different type of vehicle.

With regard to equipment, e.g. machine tools, the BTPS has a reasonable range of modern hand tools, with some machine tools. Some old style ex tramway hand tools are held by the BTPS, but are seldom used due to their age, size or obsolescence. The need of the BTPS for large machine tools to undertake specialist work is limited due to the availability of the tramway workshops in Melbourne, other engineering shops in Ballarat, or other preservation operators facilities who have set up relevant machines to undertake their work.

The following priorities with respect to spare parts and equipment have been established.

1. Spare parts directly relevant to our single truck or maximum traction bogie trams and in short supply to be acquired.
2. Spare parts related to Melbourne trams to be acquired only where relevant to our Ballarat trams or our two ex Melbourne trams where stocks are not at present held, or are critical to the future operation of the trams themselves.
3. Small hand tools relevant to the SEC operations are to be considered for acquisition where historically relevant, and are suitable for display or could be useful in the conservation of our present fleet.
4. Machines and machine tools to be acquired where considered to be useful, not requiring large space or specialist qualifications for their use. Consideration is to be given to other holdings or abilities of other groups at the same time.
5. Spare parts related to non Ballarat trams or Melbourne trams which are not suited to our trams, will not be acquired.

5.3 Overhead and Track Materials

The BTPS has currently a large collection of overhead equipment for use in additional construction, or in maintaining its present system. Most of the material used in the construction of this equipment is brass, and thereby has a high scrap value. Equipment coming from Melbourne is limited because of its scrap value, however it has some usefulness for use in the maintenance of our overhead.

In the aspect of track materials, the Board has not stored any significant quantity of track materials due to the difficulty of doing this with regard to space, and the location of our depot within in the park. Materials if required for renewals would have to be done with railway type profile rails as grooved tramway rails are no longer manufactured. For points etc., second hand or reconstructed plant would be satisfactory for use in Ballarat.

The collection policy for this type of operational material has been formulated as follows:

1. Overhead materials where necessary for essential spare parts or for historical displays (includes all traction power supply equipment from the switchboard, to the actual trolley wire).
2. Track materials will not be acquired unless for direct use in the track or as essential material for the maintenance of existing material.
3. Samples of track materials, or equipment may be acquired where historically relevant and suitable for display.

5.4 Pictorial Records

The policy is to acquire pictorial records, which is inclusive of photographs, video and films of trams operating in Ballarat, and of the equipment used to maintain, operate construct the system, the personnel who worked on the system, or other photographs relevant to the history of Ballarat and its tramway system. The photographs should not be only of the trams themselves, but of life and street scape aspects of Ballarat's tramway history.

In this respect the following priorities have been established, particularly where a purchase, or where the cost of storage and display are involved.

1. Photographs of 1880-1920s, of all types, including those requiring restoration.
2. Photographs of 1930-1940s: poor or lower grade photographs acceptable.
3. Photographs of the 1950-1960s should be collected where of good quality.
4. Photographs of the last years of operation — Ballarat street scapes, life and activity with the trams. Photographs of trams standing for example would not form a prime priority for acquisition, especially where a cost was involved.

The location and knowledge of other museum's collections of relevant photographs should be incorporated into the collection files for reference purposes. Where possible copies of these photographs should be obtained.

5.5 Artefacts etc.

This area is quite extensive and includes such items as; drawings, tickets, fare tokens, timetables, rule books, personal records, operational paperwork, uniforms, conductors bags, safeworking equipment, tramway street furniture — e.g. stop signs, record books, references used in the operation and maintaining the system, ancillary equipment such as tower trucks.

The BTPS has a collection of such materials although not formally catalogued. The cataloguing of the material will allow for better implementation of this section of the policy in order to find "holes" or excessive holdings of a particular type of material in the collection.

Such material should be collected on the following basis:

1. Historically significant in understanding the operation of the Ballarat tramways over its life.
2. Size of the object/s, the ability to properly store it and its condition.

3. The number of similar items in our collection already.

Material not associated with the Ballarat tramways or the operation of a tramway system should not be acquired, but should be directed to organisations where it would be more appropriate.

Parts or materials removed from tramcars, such as defective structural members should be considered for acquisition. This is where the item's failure can be shown to a part of the tram's overall life history. Examples, are parts of the Horse Tram showing deterioration of the wooden members, and a sample of the steel bolster that failed on the W3's truck due to metal fatigue. It would not be necessary to keep all failed or removed material.

5.6 Society Materials

The Society itself has operated or cared for Ballarat Trams longer than the Ballarat Tramway Company. As such our pictorial and physical records, materials, equipment and operational paperwork should be sampled and collected on a rational basis for form a collection of Society activities and its history for future reference. This should be done as a matter of course. We are today setting up the basis of future historical research into our activities.

6. DE-ACQUISITION OF COLLECTED ITEMS

An important part of any collection policy, is a policy of de-acquisition, which outlines the process for determining the need of disposal, i.e. finding a suitable home for object in a caring manner. The Society has a number of trams which are either supplemental or surplus to our collection.

The pressure to de-acquisition a tramcar will be brought about by the pressure of space on the Society's collection, its inability to house the item, and its lower standing in the classification ranking, or a deliberate decision at the time of acquisition to acquire an item for a specific purpose and to later dispose of part of it.

The following should be taken into account when de-acquisitioning an item:

1. Its relevance to the history of Ballarat tramways.
2. The condition of the object.
3. Any determination made at the time of acquisition.
4. The need to dispose — i.e. pressure on space.
5. Any alternative use that could be made of the object by the Society.
6. Its relevance to other Museums' collections.
7. Statutory requirements.

When a item has been identified for de-acquisition, the item should be offered to other museums, either for sale, long term loan or as a donation, depending on the acquisition history of the object and its value on the open market.

For tramway items, these should be offered firstly through COTMA, and then other museums, followed by private bodies. In the case of items which are not directly related to tramways, e.g. equipment or tools which could have been used by any organisation, these should be offered firstly to museums affiliated with the Central Highland Historical Association, and then other museums, before being offered on the open market. An exception to this would be if the item was determined to be of national or state significance when priority should be given to the Museum of Victoria.