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# The Antipodes Connection

By Richard Thompson



Wellington Corporation Tramways double saloon tram No. 159, seen here at the Wellington Tramway Museum on January 12, 2008, once belonged to the Oregon Electric Railway Historical Society. (Wikipedia photograph)

**T**he OERHS has always had a close connection to streetcars (trams) from the opposite end of the world. In fact, the first vehicle to operate at the old Trolley Park was our venerable No. 1187 from Sydney, Australia. The “Open Breezer” was delivered to Glenwood, on

November 7, 1959. A lack of rail and overhead delayed regular operation until June 18, 1963.

The second car to turn a wheel at the Trolley Park should have been New Zealand tram No. 159, but that was not to be.

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# Oregon Electric Railway Historical Society

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## Membership

Membership is based on a calendar year. All memberships expire on Dec. 31<sup>st</sup>, with renewal due by January 1st. The OERHS is a non-profit 501-C-3 corporation, so dues are tax deductible.

Categories			
Active	\$ 30	Sustaining	\$ 250
Family	\$ 60	Life	\$ 500
Contributing	\$ 75	Benefactor	\$ 1000
Supporting	\$100		

## Mission Statement

The mission of the Oregon Electric Railway Historical Society, Inc. is to preserve the regional heritage of electric railway transportation as a living resource for the benefit of the present and future generations.

To fulfill this mission the Society will promote:

- The study of electric railways, their physical equipment, properties, and operations, devoting special attention to the electric railways of western Oregon.
- The procurement and preservation of historic electric railway equipment, materials, and property.
- The display, interpretation, and operation of surviving historic equipment, materials and properties.

By Laws, Article II, 11/14/20

## Official Notice

The Transfer is published quarterly as the official publication of the OERHS, a state and federally recognized not-for-profit institution and operator of the Oregon Electric Railway Museum at Brooks, Oregon and the Willamette Shore Trolley between Lake Oswego and Portland.

The views expressed herein are solely those of the individual writers identified and of the editor only and may not represent the views or policies of the Society, its Board of Trustees, Officers, or Members.

Articles, photos, and letters for publication are always welcome. Please email to either [transfer@oerhs.org](mailto:transfer@oerhs.org) or [trolley503@frontier.com](mailto:trolley503@frontier.com)

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## Do you want to drive a trolley?

You can be a Motorman, Conductor, Tour Guide, help restore trolleys or participate in more great activities. Want to learn to operate a 100-year-old trolley or an electric locomotive? If you are interested in training to be a motorman, conductor, or station agent at the museum contact Mark Kavanagh at (480) 334-2352. If you wish to volunteer for the Willamette Shore Trolley, call David Harold or Jan Zweerts at (503) 697-7436. No experience is necessary just a passion for trolleys! We can train you in any volunteer position that meets your interest.

## How we deliver *The Transfer* and *The Monthly Pass*

Our quarterly newsletter *The Transfer* is published electronically in full high-resolution color. Members can view and download current and previous issues at the OERHS website: [oregontrolley.com/transfer](http://oregontrolley.com/transfer). You will also find an archive here of previous issues going back to the 1970s. It is easy to print copies on your personal color or black & white printer. By default, members receive email notification as soon as an issue is available. We believe you will appreciate the higher quality pictures that this process will provide to all the interesting photos that accompany our articles.

For those who prefer a printed copy of *The Transfer* a black and white version will be mailed to your home address by request. Please send this preference to Secretary Mark Kavanagh, Oregon Electric Railway Historical Society, 3995 Brooklake Rd. NE, Brooks, OR 97303 or send him an email at [mark@oerhs.org](mailto:mark@oerhs.org).

When needed, the OERHS also updates members on events at the Oregon Electric Museum and the Willamette Shore Trolley in a short email newsletter called *The Monthly Pass*. We must have your correct email address for distribution of both newsletters. We respect your privacy and will only use your email address to send a single notification when the latest issue of *The Transfer* is ready. We do not send promotional material or advertising.



## The Antipodes Connection

*continued from p. 1*

Wellington Corporation Tramways No. 159 was retired from regular public service in 1960 when it ceased operating on Wellington's tramway system. In 1962 the City Council donated it to the OERHS and it was kept in the barn while the fledgling OERHS worked to raise the money needed to transport it to the U.S.

The tram was temporarily added to the Trolley Park roster but it was fated to never leave New Zealand. In 1965, it was moved to the newly formed Wellington Tramway Museum for safe keeping. Volunteers restored it to operational status there and by 1974 the OERHS listed 159 as being "on permanent loan to the Elizabeth Park Tramway."

Although dual gauge rail was laid in the Trolley Park carbarn in 1976 the OERHS board decided to focus on standard gauge operation. Sydney car 1187, which had become an operation stalwart, had a lot to do with that. So, in 1984, 3 foot 6 inch gauge tram 159



*No. 159 is one of sixteen preserved Wellington trams. It is one of nine cars now at the Wellington Tramway Museum. (Alastair Cross photograph).*

was formally gifted to the Wellington Tramway Museum.

The Wellington Tramway Museum credits OERHS co-founder and museum General Manager Paul Class for sparing this historic car from

the wrecker's torch. They are also grateful to the OERHS for helping preserve it.

Paul became our "man on the ground" in New Zealand (and Australia) during the 1960s when he and his wife Sonja applied for citizenship. However, they returned to Glenwood instead, where Paul managed the fledgling Trolley Park (opened in 1959) for the OERHS. He also formed a business that turned his avocation into a livelihood.

Gales Creek Enterprises was founded in 1961 to import, repair, and build streetcars for museums and heritage operations. By 1974 Paul had become an internationally recognized "trolley broker" responsible for importing more than 70 streetcars from around the world (albeit with some conflicts of interest since GCE shared facilities with the OERHS at the Trolley Park).

Wellington Corporation Tramways No. 159 was built in Wellington's Newton Workshops in 1925 and entered service on February 28, 1925. The car is just under 40 feet in length and seven feet wide. It is equipped with two Brill Maximum Traction bogies (trucks) and two motors. Car



*Wellington double-saloon tram 159 is operating in Queen Elizabeth Park on August 21, 2008. The Wellington Tramway Museum is in this regional park north of Wellington (Wikipedia).*



*Wellington Corporation Tramways double saloon tram 159 is waiting on the Kent Terrace layby loop near 100 Willis Street during the last years of operation. (Wellington Tramway Museum)*

159 has a capacity of around 40 passengers seated on longitudinal wooden benches in each “saloon.”

No. 159 was part of a large fleet of Wellington Mark I trams known as “Double Saloons.” They featured three compartments; front and rear closed saloons and a dropped center section. The center saloon had two entrances for swift passenger flow. It featured two large windows and pull-down covers rather than doors. On the 1962 Glenwood Electric Railway roster tram 159 is described as a “reversed California” style car with an open center section.

The 1962 OERHS Annual Report portrayed car 159 as being “... in storage awaiting a passing ship.” When that vessel never sailed our relationship with New Zealand seems to have stopped. Yet the Trolley Park’s connection with Southern Hemisphere tramways was not over by a long shot. Other ships would sail to Oregon laden with historic trams, or tram parts.

In 1959, two years before tram 159 appeared on the Glenwood roster, a different trolley mysteriously showed up on the list. It would also prove to be a phantom streetcar that never

reached our shores. Well, it seems that part of it did.

Brisbane No. 136 was a boxy-looking “Dreadnaught” built in 1915 for the Brisbane Tramways Company. It operated on the Brisbane City Council’s tramway until the mid-1960s, by which time the system’s closure seemed imminent. That

occurred on April 13, 1969, making Brisbane the last Australian state capitol to abandon its streetcar system (Melbourne remained the sole operator).

A number of Brisbane trams had been for sale throughout the 1960s. So it is no surprise to learn that Paul Class, who was spending an inordinate amount of time travelling for his business, was negotiating with Brisbane to obtain one of their fleet for preservation.

Preliminary arrangements had been made to buy No. 136 when a change in plans resulted in only its bogies (trucks) being shipped to Portland. An explanation for this is contained in the 1960 Glenwood Electric Railway Progress Report, “Our deadline for shipping the car arrived and we had not obtained the money to pay the steamship line. We reluctantly relinquished (sic) the car after suggesting to the Brisbane Company that another museum be given the opportunity to acquire her. We did keep the trucks and they have been stored to await the sailing of a ship direct to Portland.”

All was not lost however. A fan trip aboard tram 136 on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July 1964 signaled the Brisbane City Council’s desire to preserve at least



*Car 159 is seen here on Barnard Street at the turn into Lennel Road on Jan 22, 1949. It was the last day of operation of the full route. (Wellington Tramway Museum)*



one example of each major tram type, including 136.

In 1968 the Brisbane Tramway Museum Society was established and when the tramway system ceased operation a number of retired trams were donated to them by the Brisbane City Council.

In 1968 No. 136 was the first tram operated under the auspices of the Society. This was before the Brisbane Tramway Museum opened to the public in June 1980.

More streetcars from the Southern Hemisphere arrived at Glenwood throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Unlike 136, 159, and 1187, they never appeared on the roster because they were intended for heritage operations or private collections elsewhere.

Paul Class and Gales Creek Enterprises imported at least 29 W2 class trams from the Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramways Board. Of these nine went to Memphis (MATA), six to Iowa (a heritage operation), two to San Francisco (Muni), two to Santa Clara (SCTVA), two to the Minnesota Discovery Center, and one to the Western Ry. Museum in Rio Vista, CA.

The most notable of these from a Pacific Northwest and OERHS perspective were the five cars



*Newly painted Brisbane Tramways No. 136 is seen at the Brisbane Tramway Museum ready to be placed back on its bogeys and rewired (Brisbane Tramway Museum).*

purchased for the late, lamented, Waterfront Streetcar in Seattle. While M&MTB 272, 482, 512, 518, and 605 were being made ready in the Glenwood shop they were occasionally used in regular Trolley Park service. This writer was among those members who had an opportunity to operate them there.

Since closure of the Seattle Waterfront line in 2005, cars 272 and 512 have gone to the St. Louis Loop Trolley. The rest remain in storage with one currently being considered for loan to the OERHS.

That is not quite the end of the story. Before he retired at the age of 90 Paul Class, who had relocated to Willits, CA when the Trolley Park closed, completed rebuilding former Ballarat tram No. 30 (originally M&MTB 183), which had burned down to its single truck in an arson fire in Northwest Portland in 1981.

The burned out tram was in storage for many years. Paul and his four person crew worked to restore it for at least a decade. When the rebuild was completed in 2015 the car was to go to a heritage operation in Petaluma, CA (along with a former Puget Sound Electric interurban). However, when that project fell through Paul sold the trolley to the Astoria Riverfront Trolley where it is intended for use as a backup car for their venerable No. 300 (also acquired for them by Paul Class). 🚃

*We are grateful to Wellington Tramway Museum member Alan Smith for sending us background material for this article.*

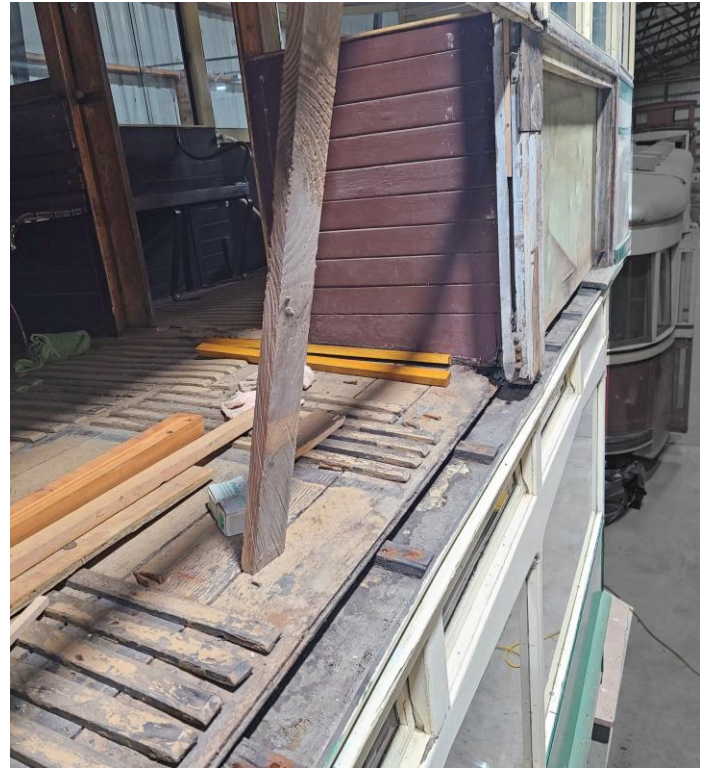


*Paul Class in rebuilt Ballarat No. 30 (former Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramways Board No. 183) in Willits, CA 2020.*





Work has begun on the upper deck of Blackpool No. 48. (Gene Fabryka photograph)



Trim pieces on tram 48 are being replaced and woodwork revarnished. (Gene Fabryka photograph)

## The Blackpool Tram Project

Gene Fabryka

**B**lackpool double decker No. 48 is undergoing some much needed repair and restoration. Work on this multi-year project is being done one section at a time so that the tram can still be used for operation.

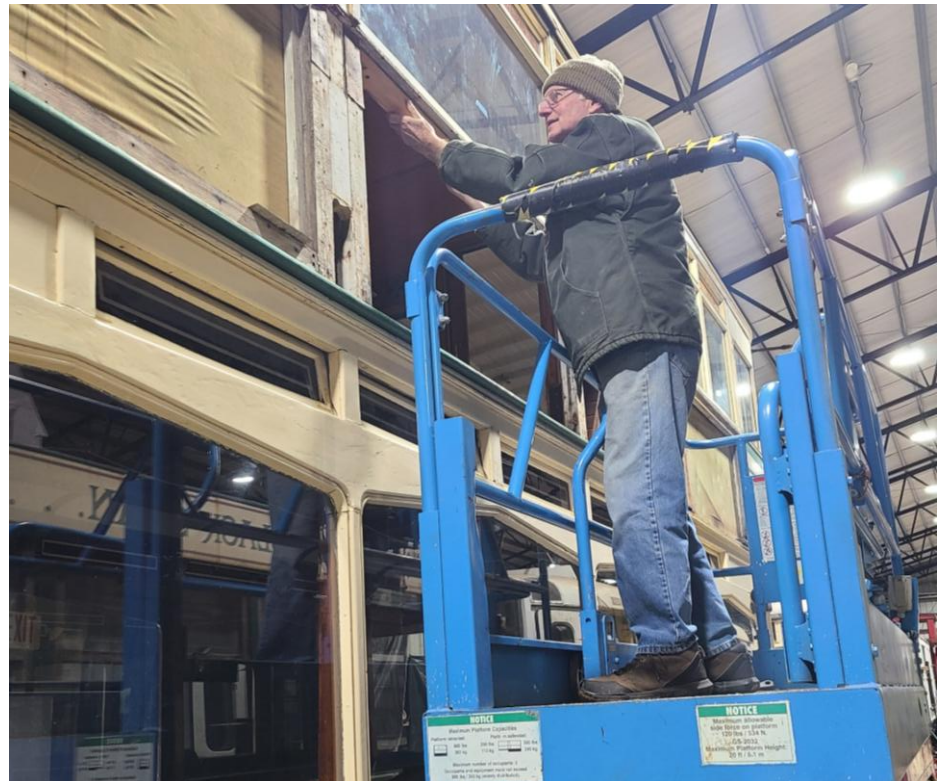
The upper east side (as the car now sits in the barn) is the first section being worked on. Currently the four outside and two center inside wall panels have been removed for replacement due to wood rot. Wood rot is also being repaired on support posts, floorboards, and pocket door walls.

The center section interior walls that are now painted brown are being refinished to their original varnished appearance.

Varnish on the seats is also being refurbished. When the car is in

operation, work will continue on replacing trim pieces and doing

needed paint touch up. 🚊



Gene Fabryka working on Blackpool Corporation No. 48 in the Powerland carbarn.



## Gresham Freight Shelter Takes Shape

John Nagy

Progress is being made on the Freight Transfer Shelter being reconstructed behind the OERHS' shop at Powerland Heritage Park. Volunteers began erecting posts and cross beams for the shelter in November.

By January the bolts had been placed and tightened. Gene put in the last bolt so we are ready to begin the roofing phase.

The 1987 vintage shelter was donated to the OERHS by the City of Portland. It was part of a concrete loading platform at Linneman Junction on the old



*The posts and cross beams for the Linneman Freight Shelter are now in place on their concrete pads. (John Nagy photograph)*



*Gene Fabryka and Evan Burroughs are at work on the Gresham Freight Shelter. (John Nagy photograph)*

interurban line to Gresham (see snapshot below).

The steel shelter was built with an angled roof that allowed semi-trucks to back up along one side and freight be transferred to boxcars on the other side. The reconstructed shelter will be used to provide much needed protection for work equipment at the museum.

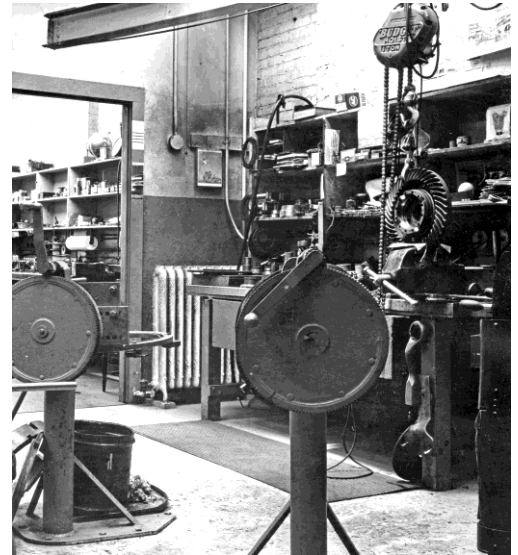
Gene Fabryka led this effort and carried out most of the preparation work. In addition to Gene and Vicki Fabryka the volunteer crew included: Evan Burroughs, Frank Cunningham, Rick Lucia, and Adam Samish. 🚂







Paul Nagy and Greg Bonn testing the controls on a vintage lathe. (John Nagy photograph)



A corner of the Center Street machine shop as it entered the 1950s bus era. (Francis McElroy)

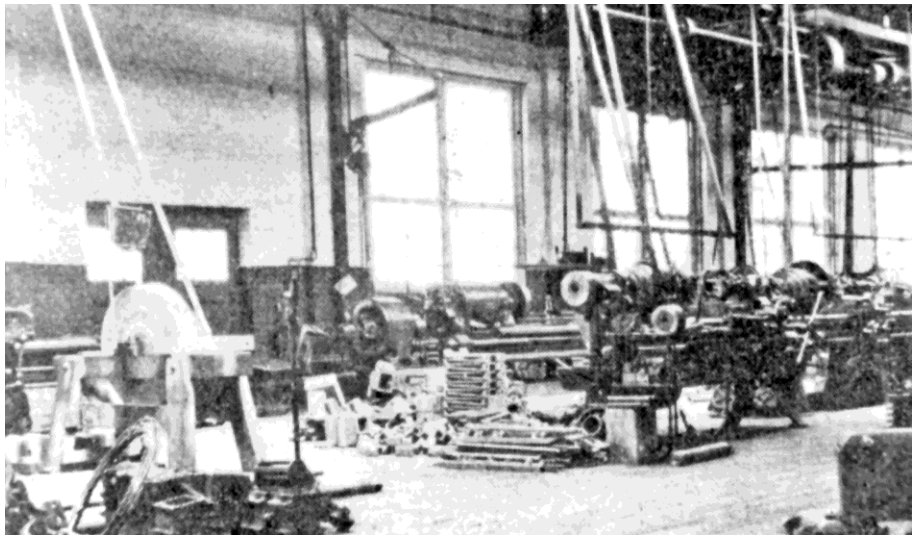
## Vintage Lathe Restoration

John Nagy.

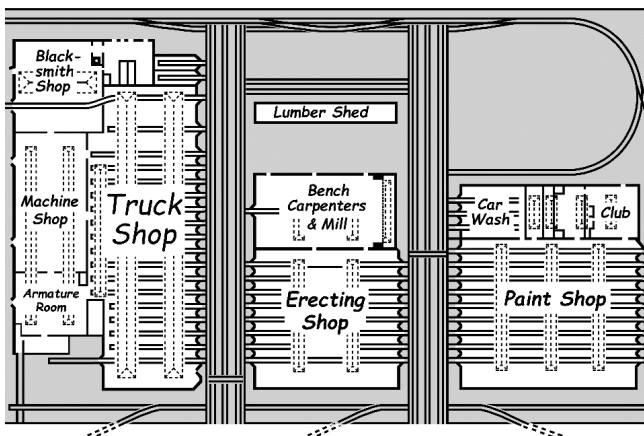
The museum collections include several wood and metal lathes that were acquired from the Portland Traction Company shops years ago. They were originally belt powered.

A few of these tools operated at the old Trolley Park. However, they have been in storage awaiting volunteer time to work on them since the OERHS moved to Powerland.

Not long ago Greg Bonn installed a phase converter for one of the two lathes we had placed in the metal shop. They can now be operated with electric power and new member Paul Nagy has volunteered to get them back in operation. He is well qualified since he was a journeyman machinist. 🚂



Equipment at the Center Street Shops was belt driven in 1913. (Electric Railway Journal)



Paul Nagy is cleaning the lathe's ways. (John Nagy photograph)





2025 Holiday celebrations included Tinsel Town Trolley rides on the Willamette Shore Line and Holiday Sparkles at Powerland Heritage Park.



## DONATION REQUEST (Tax deductible receipt will be mailed to you)

*Remember the OERHS in your Will or Trust. Even a small bequest can help the museum grow!*

### Did You Know?

Members 70.5 years or older can make tax free donations to the OERHS from their 401(k) that count towards the mandatory percentage 2.5% that they need to take out of their IRA anyway. Consider making a donation today!

### Donation Opportunities

	<u>Items</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
<b>Endowment Fund</b>	Endowment Fund	<i>Helps create an endowment fund to support operations, staff (future) and general projects</i>	\$ _____
<b>Board Fund</b>	Unrestricted Funds	<i>Allows Board to allocate funds as needed (Projects, events, car acquisition, etc.)</i>	\$ _____
<b>Capital Projects</b>	Phase 1 Yard Project	<i>Build a permanent switch yard (~11k)</i>	\$ _____
	Carbarn #2	<i>Build the 2<sup>nd</sup> carbarn (will also be the temporary restoration shop) – (~\$450k)</i>	\$ _____
	Mainline Loop	<i>Complete the loop for multiple car operation and operate single-ended cars. Adding ~ 2000 additional feet will complete the loop. (~\$45k)</i>	\$ _____
	Interpretive Center	<i>Flooring, archives, displays, and exterior landscaping (sidewalks, platforms, etc.)</i>	\$ _____
	Buy A Tie	<i>\$55 buys us a new fir tie to replace worn out ones (we need about 2000 of them so every single tie is a great help)</i>	\$ _____
<b>Restoration Projects</b>	Buy Concrete	<i>~\$120/yd<sup>3</sup> for track, curbs, platforms, etc.</i>	\$ _____
	PRL&P #1067	<i>Help refurbish the running gear we obtained from the NWRM to restore this car</i>	\$ _____
	Car Restoration	<i>All our cars need love &amp; care, and many are awaiting restoration. Donate to the car fund or specify a car. Some of the projects underway are: 813 (Broadway car), 1159 (PCC), 1455 (snow sweeper) &amp; locos 254 &amp; 401</i>	\$ _____ Car: _____
<b>Specific Items:</b> <i>(Donate items or \$)</i>	Uniform Parts	<i>Hats, pants, vests &amp; jackets for volunteers</i>	\$ _____
<b>Name Your Project</b>		<i>Do you have an idea you would like to see done? Tell us about it!</i>	\$ _____
<b>TOTAL</b>			\$ _____

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**THANK YOU!**