



The Bellcord

Journal of the Friends of Hawthorn Tram Depot

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Museum News

Our committee representative from VicTrack, Mike Ryan, has been made redundant from his position in the Victorian Public Service. He has been associated with the development of the Melbourne Tram Museum @ Hawthorn Depot since its inception.

Fortunately, Mike is not ending his involvement with the museum. He will continue to sit on the management committee, and will remain actively involved in our operations. We look forward to maintaining a long and productive relationship with Mike, and thank him for his support while in his role at VicTrack.

This development offers the museum some challenges on a range of different fronts, as Mike has been our champion within VicTrack. One of the tasks that Mike undertook was the printing of 'The Bellcord'. We will now have to seek commercial printing services.

Our new point of liaison with VicTrack is Heritage Coordinator Carleen Chisholm-Harawira. We look forward to meeting with her.

Open Days – 2012

8 December

Open Days – 2013

12 January	26 January	9 February
23 February	9 March	23 March
13 April	27 April	11 May
25 May	8 June	22 June
13 July	27 July	10 August
24 August	14 September	28 September
12 October	26 October	9 November
23 November	14 December	

Hawthorn Depot is open on the second and fourth Saturdays from January to November, and the second Saturday of December.

Opening hours are 11 am–5 pm.

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Exterior filming for the new series of 'Underbelly – Squizzy Taylor' outside the depot. W1 class number 431 is on the left, with an actress in front of a 1920s Hudson, preparing for the next shot. Photograph by Rod Atkins.

Underbelly

On 21 November 2012, the latest addition to the Underbelly series saw filming occur at Hawthorn Depot. This new series focuses on notorious gangster, Squizzy Taylor, and will consist of eight episodes.

Through the magic of digital technology, W1 class tram number 431 will appear in a street scene direct from the 1920s, without ever venturing on the streets of Melbourne. Interior tram shots were taken inside the depot, and a dramatic street scene was enacted outside on the fan.

Filming was facilitated through the efforts of Yarra Trams and VicTrack.



Interior filming for Underbelly inside the depot. Photograph by Warren Doubleday.

Forward to the Past?

Funding expansion of rail-based forms of urban public transport has always been a challenge, whether light or heavy rail. This was and remains the case for Melbourne's tram system.

The glory pre-WWII days of the Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramways Board saw two basic methods of financing its extensive construction program. The primary method was the issuing by the M&MTB of government-backed fixed-term debentures, guaranteeing investors a fixed interest return. Given the expectation of the time that the tramways would run at a profit, this was a reasonable approach to the funding of the necessary infrastructure for the conversion of Melbourne's cable tram system to electric traction, and its expansion.

However, due to the economic fashion for abhorrence of government-backed debt, and the fact that public transport now operates at a loss rather than a profit, debt-based financing will be insufficient for any large expansion of Melbourne's train or tram networks.

The other method of financing used by the M&MTB was the imposition of municipal levies on rate-payers, linked to the construction and operation of individual tram lines in outlying areas, where it was expected that traffic would be insufficient to both operational costs and interest.

Given that the key beneficiaries of new tram lines were municipal ratepayers, through a combination of increased property values and delivery of a new public transport service, this was a logical approach to financing. Most city councils were in favour of this imposition, as the increase in property values had a beneficial effect on their bottom line.

However, this was not the case in all circumstances. Box Hill Council lost its appetite for this approach as a result of its experience of the 1928 Wattle Park extension. The onset of the Great Depression affected its income severely, and the requirement to fund operation of the loss-making Wattle Park extension was a heavy burden to bear. As a result, the Council refused to countenance the subsidising of any tram extensions through rate levies. This was the main reason why neither the Burwood nor Mont Albert tram lines were extended into the municipality of Box Hill for many years, waiting until

1978 and 2003 respectively, and funded through State Government debt – not municipal rate levies.

In an article printed in 'The Age' on 21 November 2012, journalist John Legge reported that the State Government is considering imposition of a levy on property rates to fund development of public transport infrastructure. To paraphrase a movie title, if this proposal is carried through to fruition, it will indeed be a case of 'Forward to the Past'.

John Frost

Stalwart member and regular volunteer at the museum John Frost suffered a minor stroke in November, and is currently recovering at home after a short stay at Box Hill Hospital. We wish him a speedy recovery, and hope to see him back at Hawthorn Depot early in the New Year.

HTT 32

Hawthorn Tramways Trust No 32 has returned to Bendigo. As many of you know, this tram has been on loan to the museum for many years, but has never been on display at Hawthorn due to the difficulties we have faced with transferring cars to and from Preston Workshops. This has been a continual frustration for the committee, which we have been unable to resolve to date.

A closely related issue has been the return of the Milan and Berlin cars to the Sydney Tramway Museum. It is hoped that with their construction of a new tram shed their storage issues will be resolved, facilitating the return of these two visiting cars. The consequent freeing up of space should enable the display of VR 53, which has been in the same position as HTT 32 for a number of years.

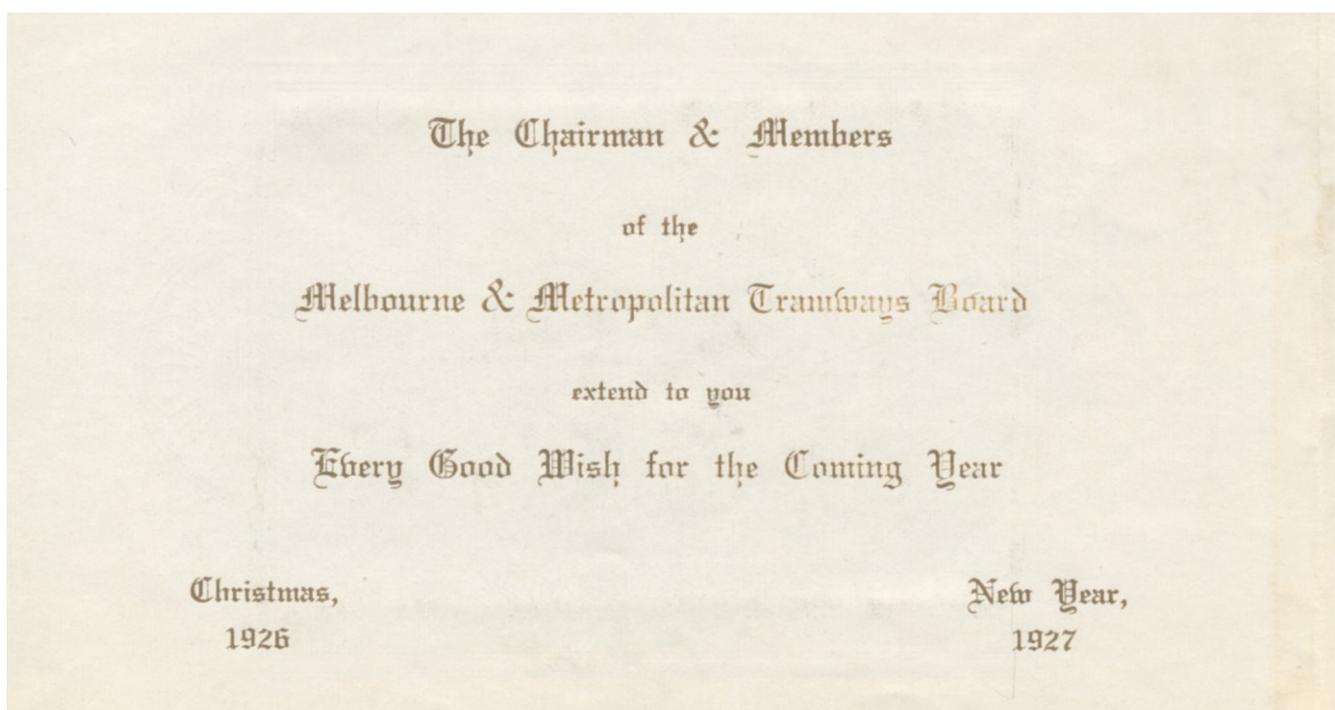
The forthcoming redevelopment of Preston Workshops is expected to drive resolution of these issues, as many cars stored there – including VR 53 – will have to find another home.

New Signs

We are trialling a new sign design in the tram barn, to provide a better visitor experience. These signs will display detailed information on each tramcar.

The first sign has been positioned with the cable tram set. One of the key design elements for the new signs will be a QR-code, to allow smartphone users to link directly to the relevant tram page on the website.

The committee is interested in receiving feedback on the new signage. Please share your opinion on the next open day, or drop us an e-mail.



Detail from the 1926 M&MTB Christmas card. From the FOHTD collection, photograph by Warren Doubleday. We would like to extend Seasons Greetings to all our members and hope to see you at the museum in the New Year.



Siemens D2 class tram model donated by Ron Scholten. Photograph by Warren Doubleday.

A Busy Day

The open day on 24 November was a particularly busy day at the museum. Matthew Crawford presented a lecture regarding the production of his recent Radio National documentary on Joyce Brown. A number of Joyce's relatives attended the lecture, adding to the enjoyment of the presentation.



Radio producer Matthew Crawford with relatives of Joyce Barry. Photograph by Russell Jones.

Also, a tram tour sponsored by the Tramway Museum Society of Victoria visited at the close of the day, resulting in a busy and productive day.

Shop

There has been an addition to the popular 'Poulier & Poulier' tram destination products stocked by our shop – linen cushion covers. For the price of \$65, now you can recline in comfort against your own tram destination cushions, available in six different

versions. Contact Carolyn for more details, either on an open day or through our mail order process.

Donations

Well known tram driver and enthusiast Ron Scholten has recently donated a number of items to the museum, including a beautiful model of a Siemens D2 class low floor tram. This model, in the 2006 '100 Years of Electric Trams' livery, is now on display in the museum's main room.

Website News

For the first time our website attracted over 1500 visitors in a month, in October 2012. This is something of a milestone, as we have been hovering just below this figure for more than a year.

As promised, the long-awaited article on ticketing and fare evasion was published shortly after the last issue of 'The Bellcord'.

Two more articles are currently under preparation, and should be published soon. The first is being written by Russell Jones, and is about Melbourne substation architecture. While this may seem a strange topic for a website article, it will join another two articles in the general area of architecture and design.

The second article will be on the drama of the Hawthorn Bridge, which was a saga that lasted over ten years. It is a joint production between Rod Atkins and Kevin Taig.