## In This Issue

## Merry Christmas



*Christmas in Ballarat 1969 – Photo by Mal Rowe*

The Committee and all office bearers of the Friends of Hawthorn Tram Depot wish all our members a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

It is only through the help of so many of our members who volunteer their valuable time that we are able to open the Museum to visitors on both our open days and special group openings.



*Christmas in Melbourne 2004 – Photo by Mal Rowe*

The Committee wishes a special thank you to all those volunteers who sacrifice their valuable time to staff the museum on both our regular open days and for our special openings for tour groups. Thank you for your support in 2010 – we really value your contribution.

## Member's BBQ

To get the new year off to a flying start a member's barbecue will be held on Saturday 15 January 2011 from 6.00pm at John Frost's home, located at 8 Tristania Street Doncaster East (Melway reference 47 J2). All members and spouses/partners are invited, so come along. Salads will be provided, but please bring your own meat and drink. RSVP by 10 January 2010 to (03)-9848-2236 or via e-mail to john.frost8@bigpond.com.

## Hawthorn News

The FOHTD committee is examining a number of areas relevant to our museum volunteers, among which is volunteer worker's insurance to protect our valuable volunteers from loss due to accident or injury while on site at Hawthorn Depot. More news in this space will come.

One of the many areas that the Committee must consider is legislative compliance – in this instance

'Working With Children'. The Committee has determined that regular volunteer workers will require 'Working With Children' cards, but at no cost to our workers.



*Christmas in Bendigo 2010 – Photo by Bendigo Trust*

As part of providing a professional image to the public, the Committee is also examining the acquisition of polo shirts for volunteer workers on a subsidised basis.

More on professional image - an order has been placed for a five metre long banner for display along the front fence in Wallen Road when the depot is open.

FOHTD is working with Yarra Trams on progressing the 'Bringing Hawthorn Depot Alive' project. Focus is on preparation of the documentation for supplying 600V DC power for tramcar lighting on open days together with supplying traction power for operation of the tramcar chassis.

Additional display cabinets have been acquired as part of the same project. Interim displays have been placed in them pending the development of an integrated display theme:

- Front Room - Tram models over the years displayed according to time line and livery colours.

- Main Room tall cabinet #1 - All things to do with conductors, fares, tickets, conductor bells and uniforms

- Main Room tall cabinet #2 - Tramway staff matters including welfare and social activities.

- Main Room long cabinets – All about trams, whether horse, cable or electric.

On a less exciting note, the revision of the letterhead to incorporate our trading name of 'Melbourne Tram Museum @ Hawthorn Depot' is under way, and archive boxes and materials to house our growing collection of ephemera have been ordered.

Finally, the long-awaited guide book to our tram collection is being prepared with the assistance of Norm Cross and Mal Rowe.

*Graph of website usage from October 2008 to November 2010. Brown = Number of visits, Blue = Number of Unique Visitors, Green = Mean visit duration in seconds. From this graph we can see that since June this year web surfers have been staying on our website on average over 500 seconds, or just over 8 minutes.*

## Website Update

The website continues to be well-patronised, with monthly unique visitor numbers hovering above 1000 visitors fairly consistently. Growth in patronage since the website debuted can be viewed in the attached graph.

A new website article has been published recently on Melbourne's recycled one man cars, and has been included in this issue of 'The Bellcord' for those of our members who do not have access to the Internet.

Aspiring authors are encouraged to send new articles for addition to our website to our webmaster Russell Jones, who can be contacted via e-mail to webmaster@hawthorntramdepot.org.au.

If you are struck for inspiration, Russell also has a list of potential subjects for new articles, and would dearly love other authors to take up the challenge.

The website excited some controversy at the Committee level recently due to a link on our home page which is entitled 'Buy Tram Stuff From Our Shop'. There was some thought that use of the word 'stuff' was somehow improper or uneducated.

However, the webmaster pointed out that downloads of the mail order form increased by over 50% after the addition of this link, with a commensurate increase in mail order sales. This was followed with a discussion on effective use of English in marketing. Never underestimate the power of statistics and plain language!

Needless to say, you can still 'Buy Tram Stuff From Our Shop'.

## Our Shop

Our Treasurer and Sales Officer Carolyn Cleak is continuing to source exciting new tram stuff for sale from our shop. If you wish to acquire some of this stuff for your collection, you can visit us at the depot on one of our open days to purchase the old fashioned way, or download a mail order form from our website.

EFTPOS and credit card facilities are available for your convenience. Note that an additional packaging and delivery charge is added for mail order purchases.

## New DVDs

DVD – Back in Business – Wellington NZ Tramway Systems - $24.95

Shooting Through – Sydney and Newcastle Trams - $34.95

## New Books

Tasmania's Trolley Buses – Ian G Cooper - $69.95, soft cover book, 208 pages published by Transit Australia Publishing

Brisbane Tramways, the Last Decade, Howard Clark, David Keenan, Transit Press, 64pp, 2009 Reprinting - $17.95

The Sydney Tram – A Pictorial Review – edited by Howard Clark, Transit Press – 60pp, $14.95

Australia's Trams – 24 picture postcards to collect or mail – photos of trams from all of Australia's major cities. Topmill, $11.95.

Tracks by the Swan – The Electric Tram and Trolley bus era of Perth, hard cover, 312 pages, Tony Culpeffer-Cooke, Adrian Gunzburg and Ian Pleydell - $95.00
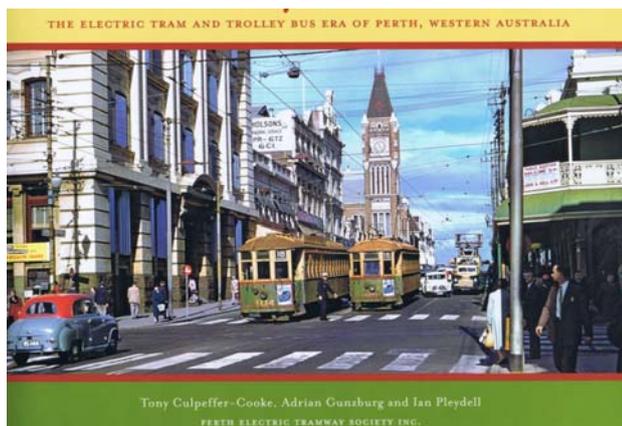


## Tram Badges

Our shop is now stocking new tram badges from Poulier + Poulier, the same company who produce the popular tram destination tea-towels and greeting cars. These are available from our shop for $9.00 for either three small badges, or one large and one small badge.
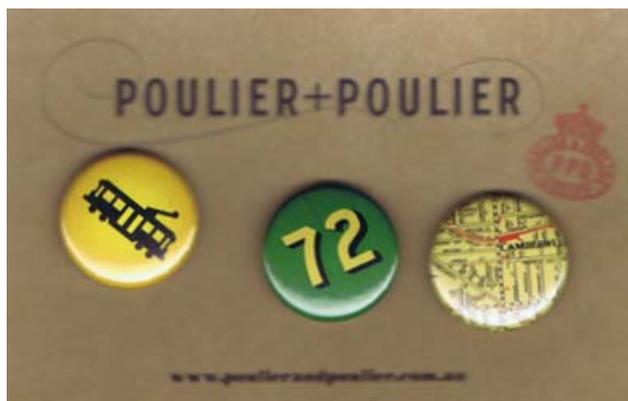


Images of some sample badges appear on this page.



Coming soon – the 2011 VicTrack rail heritage calendar – FREE!

## Recent Donations

Our thanks are made to the following people and organisations for the recent donation of tramway material for our collection.

- Bus and Coach Society for a large block mounted photograph of A1 237 when decorated in 1998 for the TAFE colleges in front of Parliament House.

- Kevin Tierney for tickets including blocks of "The Met" Tickets.

- Michael Sainsbury for the donation of "M Trams" uniforms and other tramway clothing.

- Pollard family for a 25 year service plate, a tramway cap and a frame photo of cable car 233 at the Victoria St terminus.

- John Bradley of Ivanhoe for MMTB materials and in particular the Victorian Tramway Bowling Association items.

- David Warne for various Tramway magazines.

- Vic Solomons of Sydney for photographs of the staff of the Melbourne Brunswick and Coburg Tramways Trust.

- Vicki Wilson for the donation of a ticket to support the World War II Most Popular Conductress Competition entrant issued to her mother, Mrs Winifred Gibson, together with a photo of a ball supporting the same
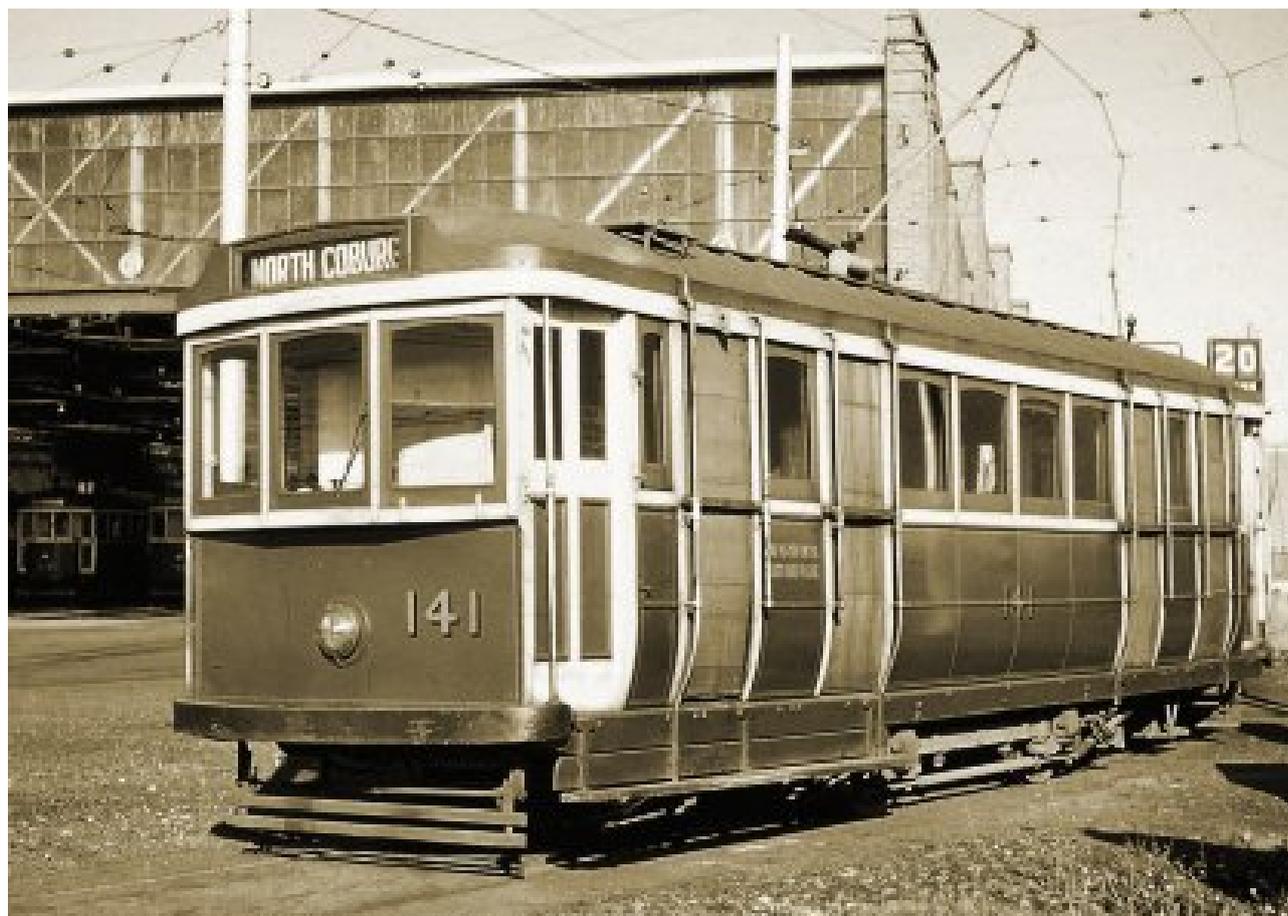
*Q class 141 resting at Brunswick Depot before its next all-night roster, 17 January 1954. Photograph courtesy Noel Reed.*

competition. This event was organised by the Australian Tramway & Motor Omnibus Employees' Association across all Victorian Tramway systems., and resulted in raising £15,000 for the Red Cross Prisoners of War Fund.

## All Night Long – Our Recycled One Man Cars

In 1935, as Melbourne was emerging from the hardship of the Great Depression, the M&MTB acquired a new Chairman, H.H. Bell. Conversion of remaining cable tram routes to electric traction recommenced, as well as construction of new routes. The improvement in passenger numbers driven by the recovering economy and the expansion of electric routes required the escalation of the W class tramcar construction program, through the placing of an order for 120 W5 class trams.

However, this left the M&MTB with a large stock of obsolescent single truck tramcars with at least ten more years of life in them. They were unsuitable for peak hour city traffic due to their limited capacity, and were substantially slower in these conditions as well. Bell was loathe to write off these tramcars at

scrap value – both his personal business experience through the Depression of the 1890s and the recent Great Depression led him to a natural desire to maximise the return on investment wherever possible – so he was looking for a cost-effective way to maximise the revenue potential of these underutilised assets.

The improving economy had highlighted a need for public transport during the early hours of the morning, and the Birney type tramcars of the X, X1 and X2 classes pointed the way forward – the answer was to modify twenty-four obsolescent single truck tramcars of the Q [1] and R [2] classes to make them suitable for one-man operation of lightly loaded all-night services on selected routes, where speed and capacity would not be an issue. Furthermore, they could be used on daytime routes with small passenger loadings, such as the Point Ormond and Holden Street shuttle services.

Bell was able to persuade the union of the merits of one-man crews on these services through the payment of higher wages to drivers on one-man rosters, also pointing out that these services were new and the extra responsibility of fare collection

was not onerous, particularly as plenty of allowance was made in the timetable for recovery time. No doubt, the final stringencies of the recent Great Depression were also uppermost in the union's mind, so the opportunity of additional shifts and higher wages for a number of its members was accepted.

The modifications to the tramcars were simple in nature, consisting of fixing the door weather blinds and barriers in the closed position for all doorways except for the leading doorway, together with cutting a doorway through the left side of the driver's bulkhead and an aisle through the left side of the crossbench seats on the end platforms. The conversion was completed with exterior sign-writing next to the entrance advising passengers 'Pay As You Enter' and 'Exact Fare Please'.
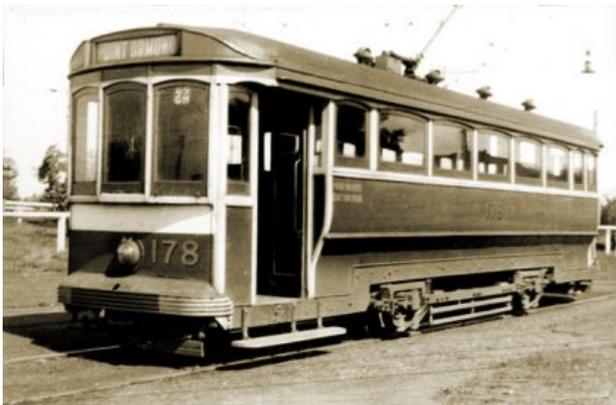


*T class 178 at Point Ormond terminus, circa 1947. Note the blackout panels on the apron and the run number can be seen in the front window showing allocation to Glenhuntly Depot.*

*Photographer unknown.*

One tramcar underwent a much greater degree of modification to make it suitable for all-night service. T class [3] number 178 was totally rebuilt into an enclosed design, which involved extension of the saloons over the end platforms, replacement of the longitudinal wooden seating with transverse upholstered seats, closing off the rear doorways and fitting air-operated doors in the front entrance of the car. The objective was to produce a car comparable to the Birney design at minimal cost.

However, the rebuilding of T class number 178 was not entirely successful, as removal of internal bulkheads to open up the car interior reduced the structural strength of the car body, resulting in a less than desirable amount of body flexing [4]. The remaining five T class cars were not modified.

These modified one man tramcars of the Q, R and T classes were used on all-night services and lightly loaded routes interchangeably with the eighteen Birney type tramcars of the X, X1 and X2 classes, the five Peter Witt Y and Y1 class cars, as well as the four remaining tramcars of the thirty-year old U [5] class still in passenger service.
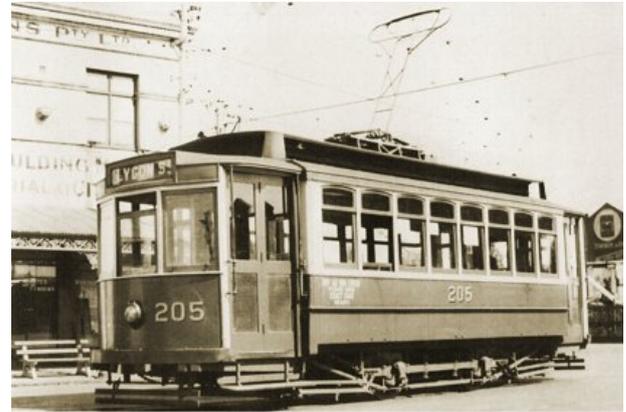


*Converted all-night car U class 205 on Holden Street shuttle service circa 1938. Note experimental bow-collector mounted on roof.*

*Photograph Ray Pearson.*

The action of Bell in introducing all-night services was prescient, as the onset of the Second World War in 1939 saw industry demand the provision of a greater level of public transport to support three-shift operation around the clock, particularly in the munitions factories located on the Footscray local routes. The existing one-man tramcar stock was insufficient to meet demand, so in 1941-42 fourteen S class [6] single truck tramcars were modified along the same lines as the Q and R class were five years previously.

However, rather than leaving the doorways closed off with canvas blinds, the blinds were replaced by masonite panels. This flexible and cheap hardboard was well suited to matching the complex curves of the S class tramcar body with minimal shaping, matching the austerity requirements of wartime industry.

Seven of the modified S class cars were transferred to the isolated Footscray routes for munitions service, stretching tramcar accommodation at the small Footscray Depot to the limit – the last car run in at night projected over the footpath – while the remaining seven cars remained on the main system primarily for all-night service.
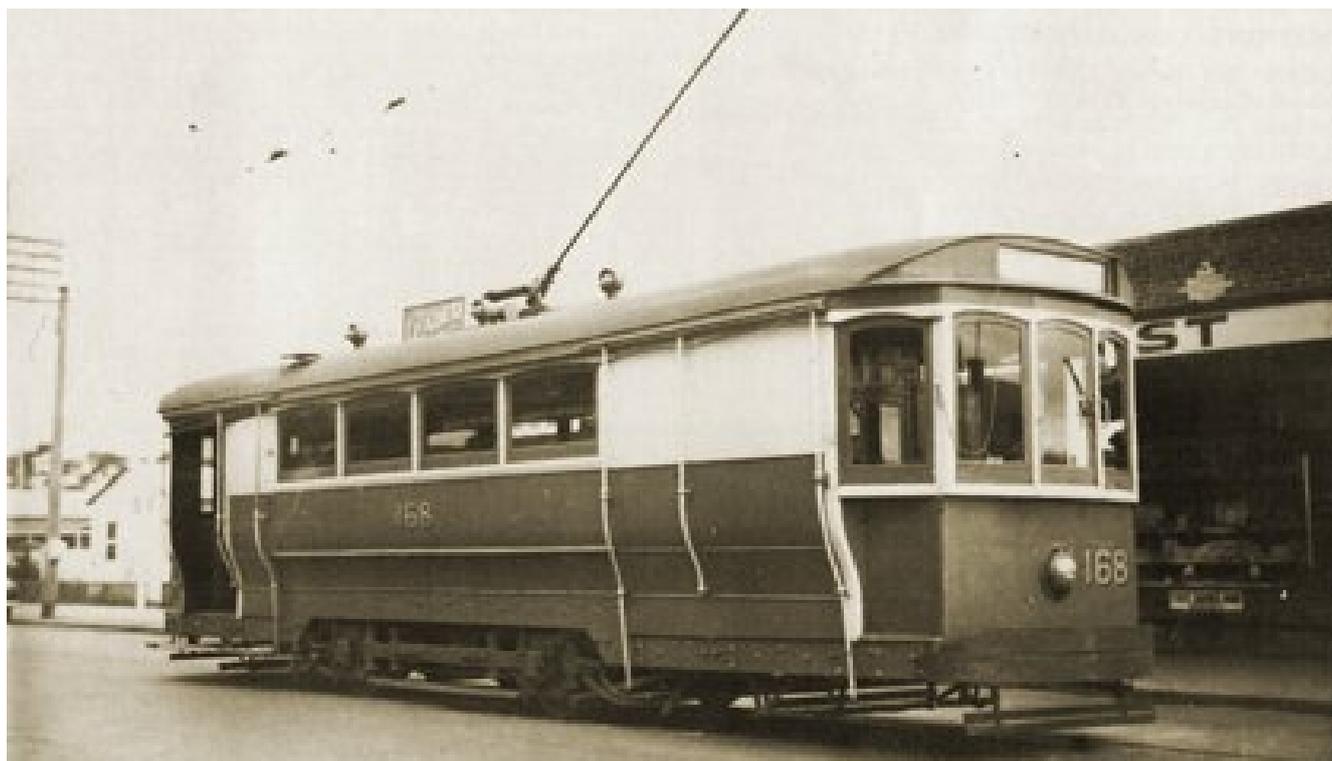
*War-time austerity all-night tram S class 168 in Footscray in September 1947, at Ballarat Road terminus ready to depart for Williamstown Road — note the use of masonite to close off drop ends of car.*

*Photograph courtesy Bob Lilburn.*

The all-night cars would see their greatest level of patronage during the Second World War, thanks to rationing and the demands of the wartime economy. Peacetime brought a growing level of militancy in the union, resulting in Footscray services reverting to two-man operation in 1947 after many years of successful one-man operation. Furthermore, the removal of fuel rationing and increasing level of private ownership of motor vehicles saw a declining requirement for all-night public transport. This led to a reduction of services, so all of the austerity S class one-man cars were withdrawn and scrapped between 1953 and 1955. The only surviving S class tramcar — number 164 — was never modified for one-man service.

The connection of the isolated Footscray lines to the main system in 1954 meant that the Birney type cars allocated to Footscray could undertake some of the all-night routes previously allocated to Essendon Depot, further reducing the need for all-night cars. This was one of the factors behind the withdrawal of most of the Q and R class cars between 1955 and 1957.

The final death knell for the all-night tramcar service was the introduction of television to Melbourne in 1956. Attendance at evening social events —

cinemas, theatres and dances — crashed, removing what had been a major source of late night tram patronage. The following year saw the end of all-night services, as well as the Holden Street shuttle service operated by one-man trams. The last one-man service, the Elsternwick to Point Ormond shuttle, closed in 1960, ending the need for the converted cars.

Only one of the non-Birney trams that provided Melbourne with all-night services still survives in something like its all-night form — Q 199, which is undergoing restoration to its 1936-37 condition at the time of writing by the Tramway Museum Society of Victoria (TMSV), after it survived into preservation as service tramcar 16W. Three other all-night non-Birney cars also survive — Q 198 as sleeper transport car 15W and U 205 as NMETL 4 (under restoration), both in the TMSV collection, and Q 197 as scrubber 9W at Bendigo Tramways.

### Bibliography

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Jones, R. (2005) Fares Please: An economic history of the M&MTB, Friends of Hawthorn Tram Depot

Jones, R. (2008) Hector Hercules Bell – ringing in the new, Friends of Hawthorn Depot

Jones, R. (2010) Birney Safety Cars In Melbourne, Friends of Hawthorn Depot

**Footnotes**

[1] The Q class was a single truck straight sill closed combination design of twenty-four cars built by the M&MTB at its Holden Street Workshops in 1922 and 1923. The cars were numbered in two blocks: 139-150 and 190-201. The twenty Q class cars converted for use as one-man cars were 139-150, 191-193 and 196-200.

[2] The R class was a single truck straight sill closed combination design of eight cars, very similar in appearance to the Q class, built for the Fitzroy, Northcote & Preston Tramways Trust by James Moore & Sons in 1920. In M&MTB service they were numbered 151-153 and 172-176. The four R class tramcars converted for use as one man cars were 151 and 174-176.

[3] The T class was a single truck drop-end open combination design of six cars built in 1917 by Duncan & Fraser for the Melbourne, Brunswick & Coburg Tramways Trust. The six T class tramcars were numbered 177-182 in M&MTB service.

[4] Inspection of the body of T 178 on a private property in the mid-1990s by the author confirmed the reduction in car body rigidity produced by the removal of internal bulkheads. This car was scrapped and the body sold in 1961.

[5] The U class was a single truck saloon design built by the J.G. Brill Company of Philadelphia for the North Melbourne Electric Tramway & Lighting Company. Numbered in the range 202-211 in M&MTB service, only four cars were still in passenger traffic in 1936-37 at the introduction of all-night services: numbers 205-206, 209 and 211. These cars would be progressively withdrawn from passenger service between 1938 and 1939, and either converted to service stock use or scrapped by 1945.

[6] The S class was a single truck drop end open California combination car design of eighteen cars, twelve of which were built for the Melbourne, Brunswick & Coburg Tramways Trust in 1916 (twelve cars numbered 154-165 in M&MTB service) and another six cars in 1920-22 (six cars numbered 166-171 in M&MTB service).



*S class 159 on wartime Holden Street shuttle service, at corner of St Georges Road and Barkly St, North Fitzroy North 23 July 1944. Note blackout panels on apron and bumpers. By the position of the canvas blinds on this car, it appears as though it is being operated with a single man crew, despite the lack of modifications as applied to the 'austerity' S class for one man service. Photo by Ron Fluck – Ballarat Tramway Museum Collection*



*T class 177 at Point Ormond terminus 23 February 1942, after swinging the trolley pole for the return to Elsternwick, but before resetting the destination blinds. Blackout panels are yet to be applied to this tram, despite introduction of blackout precautions in Melbourne on 12 December 1941 – Photo by Wal Jack – Ballarat Tramway Museum Collection*