



The Bellcord

Journal of the Friends of Hawthorn Tram Depot

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Burke Road Level Crossing Removal

One of the unique characteristics of Melbourne's tramway system is the existence of four level crossings between our electric suburban railways and our tramways.

This number is to be reduced to three as a result of the State Government's level crossing removal program. Work on the Burke Road level crossing at Gardiner began in July 2015, and is expected to be completed in mid-2016.

This tramway level crossing with the Glen Waverly line was constructed by the Prahran & Malvern Tramways Trust in 1917. Initially, the safe-working arrangements were relatively simple, as the suburban railways operated by Victorian Railways were steam-hauled.

However, in 1922 the railway was electrified as part of the massive Melbourne suburban electrification program. This led to complicated switching arrangements between the 600V overhead of the tramway and the 1500V of the electric railway.

It is not difficult to imagine what would occur to the traction motors of a tram where they suddenly received current at two and a half times normal voltage, so rather elaborate measures were

Open Days - 2016

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

The Melbourne Tram Museum @ Hawthorn Depot is open on the second and fourth Saturdays from January to November, and the second Saturday of December.

Opening hours are 11am–5pm.

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implemented to ensure that the correct voltage is always supplied to the wires over the actual crossings.

The rail and tramway overhead wires are at the same level and are fixed to a rigid framework, known as the overhead square. This area of wiring is



Tramway level crossing at Burke Road Gardiner on 19 April 2012, looking north. A Z3 class tram is waiting at the traffic lights before proceeding to the city, while the tramway 'T' traffic lights that replaced the original disc signals are prominent on the left. Note the catch point in the foreground. This scene is now disappearing under the works of the level crossing replacement project. Photograph by Mal Rowe.

isolated and supplies current at either 1500V or 600V DC via a switch interlocked to the position of the level crossing gates through a lever frame in the adjoining signal box. When the gates are locked in the clear position for the railway, current at 1500V is provided to the overhead square. At all other times the overhead square is live with 600V DC. An indicator in the signal box confirms the strength of the current by showing either 'Railway' or 'Tramway'.

Tram movements were regulated by a disc signal (later replaced by tramway 'T' traffic light signals) interlocked with catch points (or derails, in American parlance) as well as the level crossing gates. The discs were normally turned through 90 degrees to the stop position and were identical to the disc shunting signals used on the railway network, these being manufactured by the firm of Mackenzie & Holland, the local subsidiary of a UK company. A compulsory stop for trams was indicated at the disc signal by a single white bar painted between the rails of the tram

track. On stopping a tram rings its bell to catch the attention of the signalman.

Providing that a train is not expected shortly, the signalman sets the disc signal and the catch points for the tram to proceed across the level crossing. Upon the tram proceeding across the level crossing, the disc signal and catch points are reset to prevent further tram movement.

On the completion of the Burke Road level crossing replacement in mid-2016, route 72 trams will no longer have this complication to deal with, nor suffer from delays created by Glen Waverley trains passing through the crossing.

We are sure that both tram and train passengers will regard the removal of the intricate safe-working arrangements as a vast improvement to their comfort, convenience and safety.

Vale David Frost

We regret to advise that long-standing member David Frost passed away on the evening of 25 October 2015, after a long battle with illness. Our wishes of sympathy go out to his family and friends in their time of loss.

Tramway Book Sale

Over the last several years the museum has acquired through donations a large collection of books and magazines covering a wide range of tramway subjects. Many of these volumes are duplicates of publications we already hold, competing for scarce storage space. Others are not central to the purpose of the museum.

We have decided deaccession these materials, and will sell our surplus magazines and books through our museum shop.

On 27 February 2016 we will be opening our shop at 10:00am exclusively for FOHTD members to purchase these books and magazines. A light morning tea will also be given to our members on this occasion.

Many of these volumes are out of print and are very difficult to obtain, and we commend this rare opportunity to our members. So come early, before the shop offers this rare opportunity to members of the general public.

Tragic Fire at Sydney Tramway Museum

In a fire at their original tram shed in Royal National Park late on the evening of 23 October 2015, Sydney Tramway Museum lost a number of trams and buses from their collection. The building was used to store vehicles awaiting restoration.

The lost vehicles were:

- Sydney C class tram 12 (1899).
- Sydney N class tram 710 (1906).
- Sydney K class tram 1295 (1913).
- Sydney R class trams 1741 (1933), 1819 (1934) and 1917 (1935).
- Melbourne SW2 class tram 432 (1928).
- Sydney buses AEC 2788 and 1477, Leyland 2086 and the chassis of Albion 1619.

The fire is thought to have been deliberately lit, and police are investigating. Fortunately, the fire did

not spread into the park, and the main collection of tramcars in the Loftus museum site was not affected.

As dedicated tramway enthusiasts we share the anguish of our friends and colleagues of the Sydney Tramway Museum at this tragic loss of historic tramcars and buses.

New Shop Products

A range of new stickers, pouches, posters, decorative items, and badges have been added to the shop. Why not visit next open day and stock up for Christmas? We have plenty of small tram souvenirs that make perfect gifts for the holiday season.

Demise of 'Mother Tram'

Members and frequent visitors to the museum will know of the Moomba float 'Mother Tram' that has resided in our museum for many years.

This float was constructed at Preston Workshops in 2001, and numbered 1042 – one number higher than the last tram built there. The passing of the years were not kind to the former float, which was not a core part of the museum collection.

As a result the Committee decided to deaccession 'Mother Tram' from our collection. After an extended period seeking expressions of interest from other bodies interested in receiving this unique item, we were unable to find a home for it.

We therefore have disassembled 'Mother Tram', disposing the majority of the remains, although we will be retaining the driver's cab as a part of a future display.

So visitors will have a little more space to admire our trams at the bottom end of '3' road.

Destination Preservation

In June as a part of the redevelopment of the Preston Workshops by Yarra Trams, several members of the committee visited the site to inspect cars Z1.81 and VR.53, prior to their transport to Hawthorn. While on site, we noticed that the old destination printing equipment was slated to be disposed of. After making enquiries and with the enthusiastic cooperation of Yarra Trams and the workshops redevelopment team, we were able to preserve a significant amount of this equipment.

Examples of all the different pieces of printing equipment have now been retained for preservation and are in the process of being catalogued. Of particular importance are the “master” artworks that have now been saved; these are excellent examples of the distinctive ‘font’ used in the destination blinds of Melbourne’s trams for over sixty years. With a unique visual flavour, these letterforms were an everyday sight on the streets of Melbourne, but have now been replaced by digital LED and dot-matrix type displays; modern blinds in the refurbished W class cars are typeset in modern international computer fonts and printed on vinyl rolls.

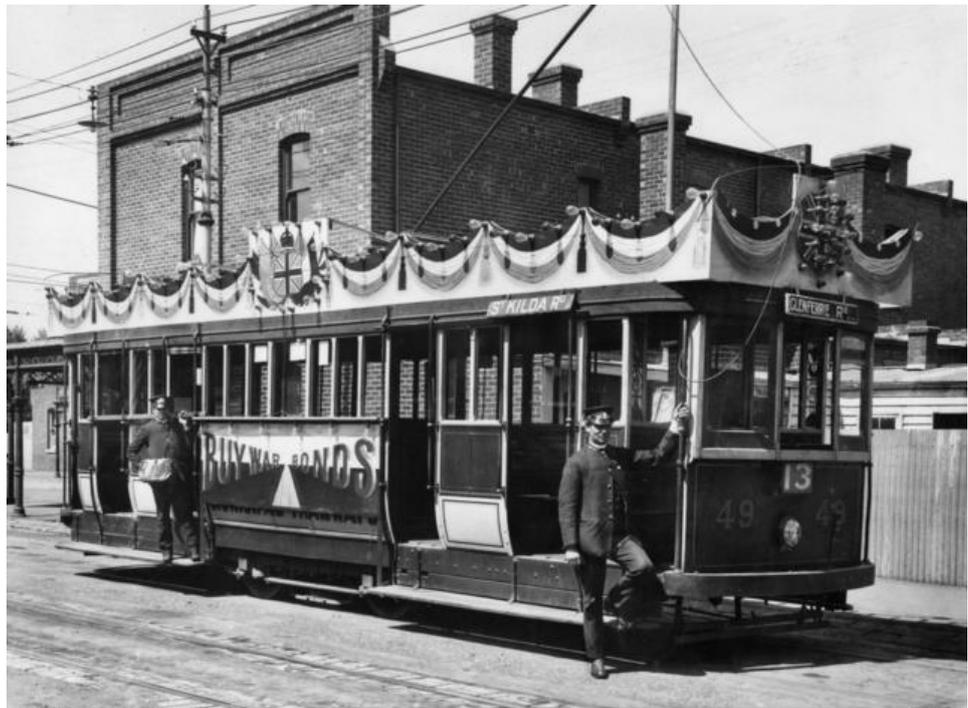
This acquisition offers the tempting prospect of producing modern reproductions of original Melbourne destination blinds, at some time in the future. Watch this space for more news.

Z Class Anniversary Tour

This year has been the fortieth anniversary of the introduction of the first Z class trams to Melbourne’s tramway system. This milestone was marked on Saturday 14 November by a celebratory tour by Z1 class number 22 and Z2 class number 101, organised by well-known enthusiasts John Whiting and Brenden Schonfeld.

The tour was an opportunity for enthusiasts to enjoy travelling on trams that will soon be part of history, as the Z1 and Z2 class are being progressively replaced by new E class trams. While a definitive withdrawal date has not been announced, the end for these historic cars cannot be far off.

The two Z class trams dropped ninety-one people at Riversdale Junction so they could break their journey at the Melbourne Tram Museum @ Hawthorn Depot, and partake of a light lunch while the crews took the trams to Camberwell Depot for a rest break. By all accounts, the tourists enjoyed their visit to the museum. The event was sponsored by Yarra Trams.



PMTT G class no 49 advertising WW1 War Bonds – Photo AWM H02357

Tramway Anzacs Funding

This year has been notable for our Tramway Anzacs exhibition, which was primarily funded by grants from VicTrack and Yarra Trams. This was oriented towards production of exhibition material – posters and audio-visual displays – focused on the centenary of the landing on Gallipoli on 25 April.

Preparation for the exhibition produced more material than we could display within the funding available – but this unseen material was largely oriented towards the events on the Western Front and Palestine.

We therefore decided to apply for funding from the Centenary of Anzac program operated by the Victorian Government Department of Premier and Cabinet, with the objective of mounting a second phase to the Tramway Anzacs exhibition.

FOHTD is proud to announce that we were successful in obtaining a grant for a total of \$6500 in round 6 of the Centenary of Anzac program, which will primarily be used to construct an additional frame for the display of posters.

Posters for display will include another four soldiers’ biographies, together with other subjects such as the conscription campaigns, and what life was like for soldiers on the Western Front.