



The Bellcord

Journal of the Melbourne Tram Museum Inc.



V 214 in Swanston St at Flinders St on Sunday 19 July 1981, closely followed by X2 676. On board are passengers in period costume for the filming of the movie, 'Squizzy Taylor'. V 214 had a varied life as a permanent way locomotive, freight car 17 then advertising/freight car 17 (pictured below). In 1978 V 214 was restored to near original condition. In 2006 it was repainted in its 1906 NMETL livery and given its original number 13. This heritage listed 'toast rack' tram is now housed at the museum.

Photo: David J Kemp

SEASON'S GREETINGS

A Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all museum members and supporters.

With growing visitor numbers and a regular stream of compliments, we look forward to a successful 2018.

A number of improvements are planned including an update to our colour scheme, logo, website and this newsletter. See page 2 for more details.



V 214 as advertising/freight car 17

Photo: Ron Scholten collection

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Museum Committee 2017-18

At the September AGM, the following members were appointed to the committee:

- Adam Chandler (elected for 2 years), *Chair*
- Russell Jones (1 year), *Deputy Chair*
- Mike Ryan (2 years), *Secretary*
- Carolyn Cleak (2 years), *Treasurer*
- Kevin Taig (1 year)
- Geoff Brown (1 year)
- Warren Doubleday (COTMA Rep)
- Rod Atkins (COTMA Rep)

Committee members can be contacted individually or by emailing info@trammuseum.org.au



New Logo for the Museum

Over the next few weeks we will be launching a new look for the museum. This rebranding exercise reflects our change of name to the Melbourne Tram Museum, together with our focus on preserving tramway heritage in a modern context.

Designed by Bellman, a Hawthorn-based branding agency, our new logo incorporates a simplified and stylised version of the tram tracks at St Vincent's Plaza and the soon to be demolished Domain Interchange. The red recalls our tramway past – it matches the colour of the old "Hail Cars Here" signs that used to mark every tram stop.

We are very excited by this development for the museum. Our new look will be rolled out progressively across our signage, website, social media and Bellcord.

Museum Shop News

Our model trams from German brands Dickie and Siku are proving to be a big hit with junior visitors. With prices of \$39.00 for the larger models (shown above) right down to \$7.50, there is something suitable for all budgets.

QUIZ ANSWERS from September Issue

Routes 58 & 75 both run along Toorak Rd and cross at Flinders St and Market St.

Route 58 travels along Flinders Lane.

The Melbourne Tram Museum Inc. is open on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of each month (except 4th Saturday of Dec) and during Melbourne Open House. Normal opening hours are 11am–5pm.

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Editor: Geoff Brown

FROM RON'S COLLECTION



St Kilda Junction (c1934) Photo: Ron Scholten collection

ABOUT THIS PHOTO: St Kilda Junction looking northward as tramway roadworks near completion. Workmen are dispersing gravel to cover recently applied bitumen, perhaps from the tanker (centre). Ballast Motor 11 pushes a ballast trailer ahead of W2 571 to St Kilda Beach and a second car to East Malvern. A horse drawn tower wagon (left), heavy roller (foreground) and private motor vehicles stand by. On the Punt Rd corner is a petrol station advertising a then popular brand, Atlantic Ethyl. Segments of the intricate junction overhead and trackwork are visible.

Editor

OUR COLLECTION

A reader of the museum’s website, Andrew Naylor, has donated a digital image (at right) taken by his father, F G Naylor. It shows the new M&MTB double decker bus 201 in Bourke St around Christmas 1940. In the background is the London Stores building with a sign advertising a Christmas Sale.

The museum has acquired the late Bob Lilburn’s large collection of photographic magazines and other materials. This collection contains a significant number of photographs of other tramway systems and some railway materials.



M&MTB Leyland Titan TD5c Gearless 201 in Bourke St (1940).

Photo: F G Naylor



Hawthorn Depot redevelopment (2001)
Photo: Steven Altham

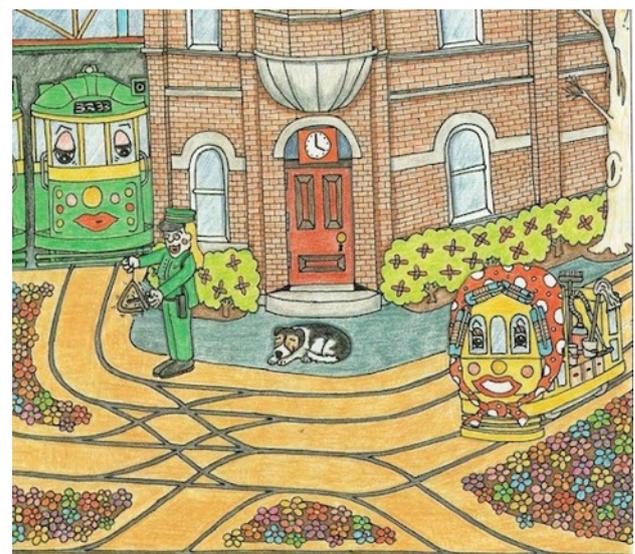
Timetables are no longer printed by the PTV and are only available on its website or at each stop. Once the timetable is revised, it has gone forever – unless it has been downloaded and saved by someone. The museum took the opportunity prior to the changes to Routes 8 and 55 to download and save the summary version of each of the Melbourne route timetables. This gives a snap shot in time. You may well ask why? Well

Member Steven Altham has donated a series of photographs that show the redevelopment of the Hawthorn Depot during 2001 and 2002. The photo above shows the scale of excavation and under pinning used for the car park and depot fan.

recently we had a query about Route 19 timetables over the years and we were able to help the person with about five different issues from the early 1960s.

Thanks to our donors. *Warren Doubleday*

Robert Green recently donated a number of books and other materials, including children’s books published during the early 1990s when the Melbourne’s tramway system was under threat. They are an interesting social snapshot of the tram system and life in our city at the time. *Sam the Tram* (1990) by Lowen Clarke (now out of print) has a great representation of Malvern Depot with sleeping trams and scrubber tram 8W. This author’s second book was *The Great Tram Race* (1992).



ABOVE: Segment of a page in Lowen Clarke’s wonderful book, “Sam the Tram” (1990), depicting the trams at Malvern Depot being woken as the scrubber tram returns.

Other recent donations include items from Ray Marginson of Hawthorn whose father was a M&MTB inspector, destination rolls and other tramway objects from member Keith Stodden and small items such as digital images from numerous other people.

BELOW: M&MTB poster c1950s/60s

A while ago member Norm Cross donated a poster (at right) featuring ‘Selfish Sue’ cluttering up a peak period tram. The poster was featured on our Facebook page and received great involvement and many comments. It has recently been formally added to our collection. Dating from the 1950s/60s, it would be considered clearly inappropriate these days. We have been told there was another poster featuring an unselfish lady.



The museum collects contemporary materials for future reference. In a donation from Ron Wilson was a series of M&MTB, Metropolitan Transit and The Met paper timetables from the 1970s and 1980s to add to our collection.

ECHOS IN THE NORTH:

Remnants of The Melbourne Brunswick and Coburg Tramways Trust

The Melbourne Brunswick and Coburg Tramways Trust (MBCTT) started operations in 1916, the same year as the Hawthorn Tramways Trust. An excellent summary of the establishment and history of the trust is published on our website at: www.hawthorntramdepot.org.au/papers/mbctt.htm

This short article sets out to note what survives from the enterprise of the Trust's engineer, Struan Robertson, and others of that era.

Routes

The largest surviving artefact of the MBCTT is the tramway itself.

The system was built as a double track tramway running from the northern fringe of the city (at Queensberry St) via Madeleine St (now Swanston St), Elgin St, Lygon St, Holmes St and Moreland Rd to the corner of Moreland Rd and Sydney Rd – where it met the terminus of the Brunswick cable trams.

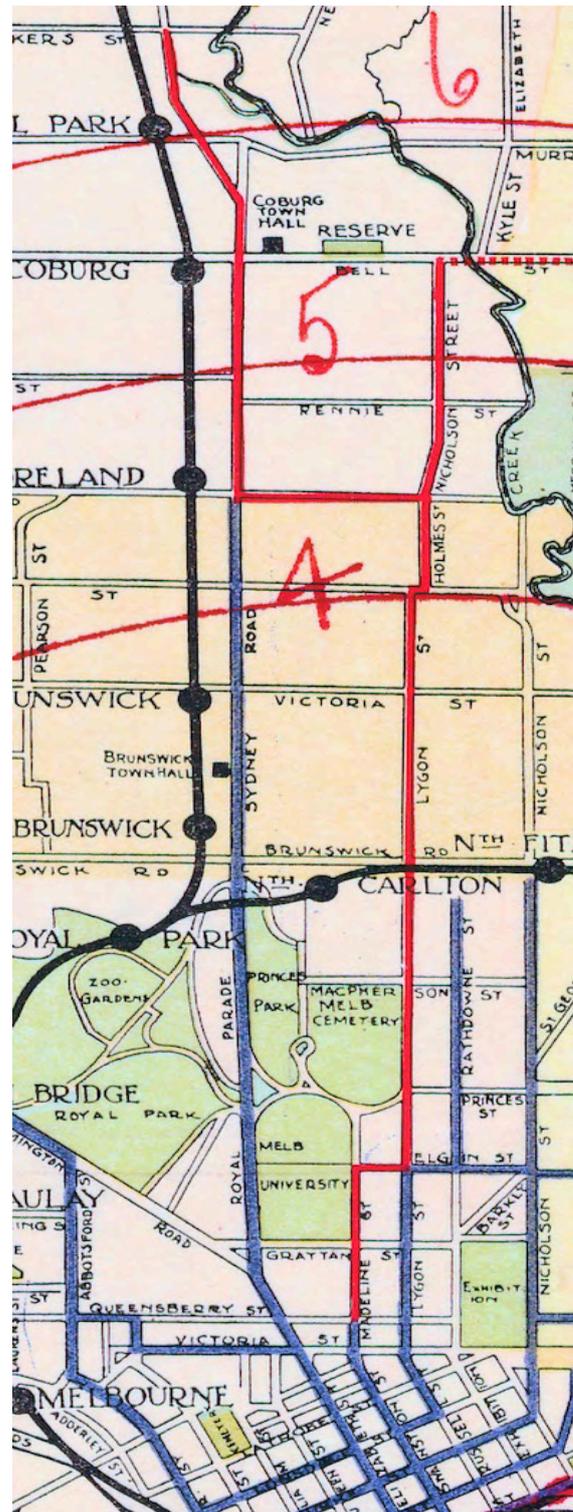
The route was determined by the need to avoid streets already occupied by cable tramways in the southern ends of Lygon St and Sydney Rd. From the end of the double track at Moreland Rd and Sydney Rd, the route continued as single track north up Sydney Rd to a terminus at Bakers Rd.

A single track branch line left the main line at the corner of Holmes St and Moreland Rd and travelled north up Nicholson St to another terminus at Bell St. The depot was just north of the junction on this line.

Those lines remain the same to this day – except that they are now all double track tramway. The main change is that the service to North Coburg now runs direct to the city via Sydney Rd following the conversion of the Brunswick cable tramway in the mid-1930s.

Particular features

The route is 'pegged out' with the distinctive steel tramway poles of the MBCTT. They are more slender than other tramway poles and many are capped with a distinctive finial that looks rather like a beret.



TOP: Red lines show the MBCTT electric tramway and blue lines show the cable tramways. The curved red lines show the distance in miles from the GPO.

Map: State Library Victoria

RIGHT: The top of a MBCTT pole capped with a distinctive finial. Two examples of these poles are in the photos on page 6.

Photo: Mal Rowe





LEFT: An original slender MBCTT pole in Moreland Rd.

RIGHT: Recent works at the MBCTT junction at Moreland Rd and Nicholson St with the huge apartment block, 'The Nicholson', in the background occupying the site of the former depot. In the right midground among new M&MTB poles is a heavily laden MBCTT pole with the distinct lean that many of these slender poles have developed over the years. Photos: Mal Rowe

When the Brunswick cable tramway was converted and a large new depot built on the site of the old cable tram car shed in Sydney Rd, the MBCTT depot was closed to cut costs. However, it was used for other purposes for many years including tram storage and as the home of the M&MTB overhead branch. It was finally sold and demolished in the mid-2000s.

Another seldom recognised remnant of the MBCTT is the small park on the eastern side of the line at the East Coburg terminus. Quoting the article on our website: "Charles Bowden Reserve in Nicholson Street resulted from the compulsory acquisition from Elizabeth Bowden of a strip of land 360 feet long by 33 feet wide along the eastern side of Nicholson Street at Bell Street. The land was required to widen the roadway to allow traffic to get past the trams waiting at the terminus."



Rollingstock

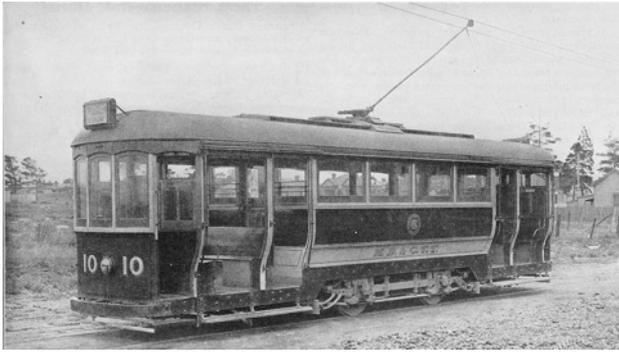
Perhaps the most significant remnants are two trams held at Hawthorn – numbers 164 and 180. These trams were built by Duncan & Fraser of Adelaide, like most of the electric trams of the Melbourne trusts. However, they were of a significantly different design in comparison with those of the Prahran & Malvern Tramway Trust (PMTT) or Hawthorn Tramway Trust (HTT). They had deeply curved sides and were substantially longer than their contemporaries being 35 ft long (10.67 m). At this length they were the same length as the Geelong Pengelely built cars of 1924 – which are frequently noted as the 'largest single truck trams in Australia'.

Shorter wheelbase

As built, 164 was placed on a truck with a 7 ft wheelbase (2.13m). The early picture of number 10 on the following page shows the appearance of these trams at that time. It was taken just outside the depot in Nicholson St. Note the rather rural nature of the area behind the tram. The website article mentioned above notes that the branch line had its heaviest traffic on Sundays – when traffic would have been to the cemetery and 'countryside' near the terminus of the branch

East Coburg terminus and Charles Bowden Reserve (2004) showing a Combino on a test run.

Photo: Mal Rowe



*MBCTT 10 (later S 163) outside Nicholson St depot.
Photo: Electric Railway Journal, 1917.
Duckett Collection*

The huge overhang on these trams would have made them quite unstable and the trucks were later extended to a 9 ft wheelbase (2.74m). These trams saw less use as the W class numbers increased. They were moved around the system, including being used intensively from 1941 on the small Footscray system, the munitions services from Essendon Depot and until 1953 on the one man operated all night services with most of the entrances closed off. They spent quite long periods in storage and all except 164 were sold in the early 1950s.

Number 164 went into storage in 1934 and saw very little if any regular service after that date. It was given to the Australian Electric Traction Association in 1953 who passed it to the Tramway Museum Society of Victoria in 1963 when the society established.

As a result of the long period in storage, 164 is largely unaltered from original condition and retains a tiny cab with no driver exit door in the bulkhead behind the cab and rattan seat backs in the saloon. The only significant changes are the truck lengthening, installation of a destination box, removal of the rattan from the lower seat swabs and being painted green and cream.

Longer wheelbase

Number 180 is an example of the second design by Struan Robertson. It has a longer saloon divided into two sections, only one bench in the open end and a much longer truck – with a wheelbase of 12 ft (3.66m). This was presumably to avoid the instability of the earlier design. The longer wheelbase was enabled by the use of a Brill 'Radiax' truck which allowed the axles to pivot slightly so that they could go around corners a bit like a bogie car. It also dispensed with the 'vent roof', using 'torpedo ventilators' instead. The photo below shows the two types of car together in Batman Ave in the 1990s.

This second design saw much more use, being in service on all night services and low traffic tramways at Footscray and Point Ormond until they closed in the early 1960s. 180 ended up at the back of Brunswick Depot – used as a stationary source of compressed air. It was pressed back into service in the later 1960s to run a few special tours, the first being one for the 50th anniversary of the MBCTT in 1966. Subsequently it was given to the TMSV for preservation.

Both of these trams are on display at Hawthorn.

It is quite clear that the M&MTB valued these trams – they kept them long after disposing of the shorter single truckers of the PMTT and HTT. Even after the demise of the all-night services, the second series (the T class) was retained in preference to the G class (aka Q and R class) trams which suffered badly from the 'long tram - short wheelbase' problems of the original MBCTT design.

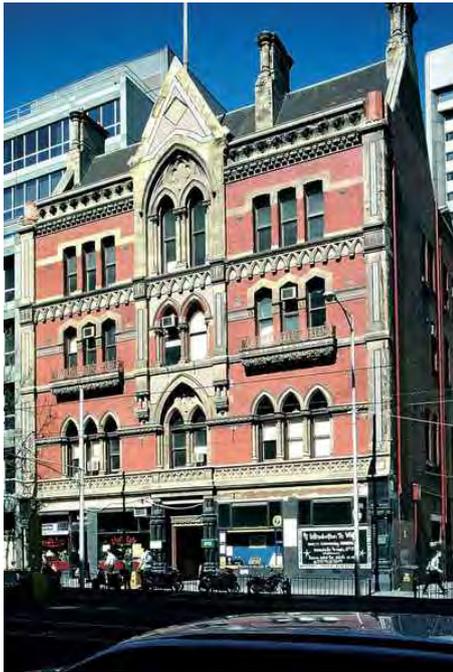
Struan Robertson did a good job.

Mal Rowe



T 180 and S 164 in Batman Ave (1990s). Photo: Mal Rowe

Tramway Head Office from 1891



CLOCKWISE: 669-675 Bourke St (c2008); managing director Francis Boardman Clapp (seated centre) with senior managers Roberts, Smith, Hodge, Spicer & Wilcox at rear entrance (c1899, State Library Victoria); upper level foyer with elevator (2017); female staff in upper level room (1912, State Library Victoria)

The Melbourne Tramway and Omnibus Company (MTOC) grew from a fledgling horse omnibus business to a dominant tramway and horse omnibus network that significantly influenced the development of Melbourne. In 1891 MTOC moved its head office operations into its newly built Gothic style building, now known as 669-675 Bourke St.

It was the company's financial and employment centre. It kept extensive records, received daily cash deliveries from car sheds and was the employment office for all of MTOC. Equipped with such records, managing director Francis Boardman Clapp satisfied his shareholders and defended his business against government enquiries and union demands.

For many years MTOC employed very few women, their sole role being to open and count the contents of conductors' bell punches. The 1912 photo above shows that this changed. The introduction of typewriters favoured female typists and may explain the increase in female staff.

In 1916, this four level building with basement passed to the Tramway Board and remained part of tramway head office for many decades. It is now privately owned and has been extensively renovated with the façade currently under restoration. The building is occupied by a number of small businesses and is listed on the Victorian Heritage Register.

Editor