



The Bellcord

Journal of the Friends of Hawthorn Tram Depot

In This Issue

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Extra Open Days Over Summer</i> | 1 |
| <i>Annual Report</i> | 1 |
| <i>Financial Statement</i> | 2 |
| <i>Committee of Management</i> | 2 |
| <i>Website News</i> | 3 |
| <i>Visitor Update</i> | 6 |
| <i>Depot News</i> | 6 |
| <i>Shop Stuff</i> | 6 |
| <i>Hello and Good-bye</i> | 7 |

Extra Open Days Over Summer

Due to public demand, the Melbourne Tram Museum @ Hawthorn Depot will be open extra days over the daylight saving period.

Between October and March, in addition to the second Saturday of the month, the museum will be open on the fourth Saturday of the month with the exception of December, as the museum will not be open on Boxing Day.

Opening hours during this period are 11am to 5pm.

Annual Report

The Chairman reported to the Annual General Meeting held on 12 September 2009 that the last twelve months have seen steady progress on the development of the Hawthorn Tram Depot. There have been some major advances and the need to push harder in some other areas.

The major achievement for the year has been the launch of the Friends website and the constant work undertaken to add fresh content in new articles and news items. However, the website is somewhat advanced in development over the current museum facilities, although it does demonstrate the fundamental direction of the museum. It also provides a challenge and benchmark for the management committee to improve the depot's

physical facilities correspondingly, so that the depot provides the public with a first-class visitor experience by immersing them in the social and physical history of Melbourne's tramways. Like the website, the need to keep physical displays and exhibitions fresh and engaging to the public will also be a challenge. problem maybe that the website is further advanced than our other endeavours.

Sales of books and videos have increased greatly over the last year. We have noticed that the visitors on open days are from a broad range of ages and backgrounds, and this is reflected in their purchases. looking for a unique experience. We are looking to add to the success of our shop by broadening the range of items to cover actual tramway material such as ticket hole punches, as well as more up-market gift items.

The concept plan for the museum exhibition space is progressing with a draft presented to the friends committee for consideration. We are hopeful this will lead to initial exhibition material being commissioned in the near future. The development of the Chassis room has progressed with the painting of the floor and works to the tram and associated equipment having commenced, while there is an ongoing need to focus on documenting projects to be undertaken to enhance the depot presentation.

Progress has been made towards solving the ongoing pigeon problem, although we had another kind of unwanted visitor when a car attempted to enter the depot through the side of the building in Wallen Road. An area of focus has been the need to engage positively with our residential neighbours and the body corporate, particularly in the areas of odour control, supplying water to the eastern garden area and maintaining the depot exterior in a clean and tidy condition.

Open Days – 2009

12 December 2009

Open Days – 2010

9 + 23 January 2010

13 + 27 February 2010

13 + 27 March 2010

10 April 2010

8 May 2010

12 June 2010

10 July 2010

14 August 2010

11 September 2010

9 + 23 October 2010

13 + 27 November 2010

11 December 2010

Hawthorn Depot is open the second Saturday of every month. Opening hours are 1pm-5 pm (Apr-Sep) or 11am-5pm (Oct-Mar)

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Phone (open days only): (03) 9819 9522.

Editor: Warren Doubleday

Design: Russell Jones

The major action for the forthcoming year is the need to maintain progress on the design and implementation of our exhibition space, together with engaging new members to volunteer for work at the depot, particularly as tour guides, supporting restoration and conservation projects, and maintenance duties.

I would like to thank the dedicated core of people on the committee and those volunteers that present

themselves on open days and I'm sure this level of enthusiasm will pay off in the years to come.

Mike Ryan – Chairman FOHTD

Financial Statement

The Treasurer, Carolyn Cleak, presented the financial statement for Friends of Hawthorn Tram Depot Incorporated at the AGM on 12 September. The following is a summary of the results:

Receipts

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Open Days | \$743.10 |
| Sales | \$4,945.80 |
| Donations | \$69.95 |
| Group visits | \$144.00 |
| Membership | \$875.00 |
| Room Hire | \$200.00 |
| Non Members | \$50.00 |
| Total Receipts | \$7,027.85 |

Expenditure

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Bank Charges | \$6.25 |
| Purchase Sales Items | \$5,463.56 |
| Postage | \$307.20 |
| Repairs and Maintenance | \$479.30 |
| Web Hosting | \$105.35 |
| Admin | \$454.18 |
| Consumer Affairs | \$52.65 |
| Change Float | \$50.00 |
| Total Expenditure | \$6,918.49 |

| | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Surplus (Receipts - Expenditure) | \$109.36 |
| Cash at Bank (30 Jun 2009) | \$3,223.09 |
| Sales Stock (30 Jun 2009) | \$2,481.07 |
| Total Assets | \$5,706.16 |

Committee of Management

At the Annual General Meeting on 12 September 2009, in accordance with the Association's Constitution there was declared a vacancy on the Board for one ordinary member. A nomination of Kevin Taig, nominated by Warren Doubleday, Seconded Carolyn Cleak had been received. As no further nominations were receive Kevin Taig was declared elected.

Geoff Warburton retired from the Committee and it was moved Rod Atkins / Warren Doubleday that Geoff be thanked for his time on the Committee and for his assistance in our activities.

Since the AGM, Anne Cahir of Heritage Victoria has advised that she is not able to continue to serve on the committee. Again we thank Anne for her valuable assistance. The Committee will request Heritage Victoria to nominate another person to serve on the Friends management committee.

The Committee currently comprises:

- Chairman - Mike Ryan
- Deputy Chairman – Rod Atkins
- Secretary – Warren Doubleday
- Treasurer – Carolyn Cleak

The Ordinary Committee Members are Russell Jones, Craig Tooke and Kevin Taig.

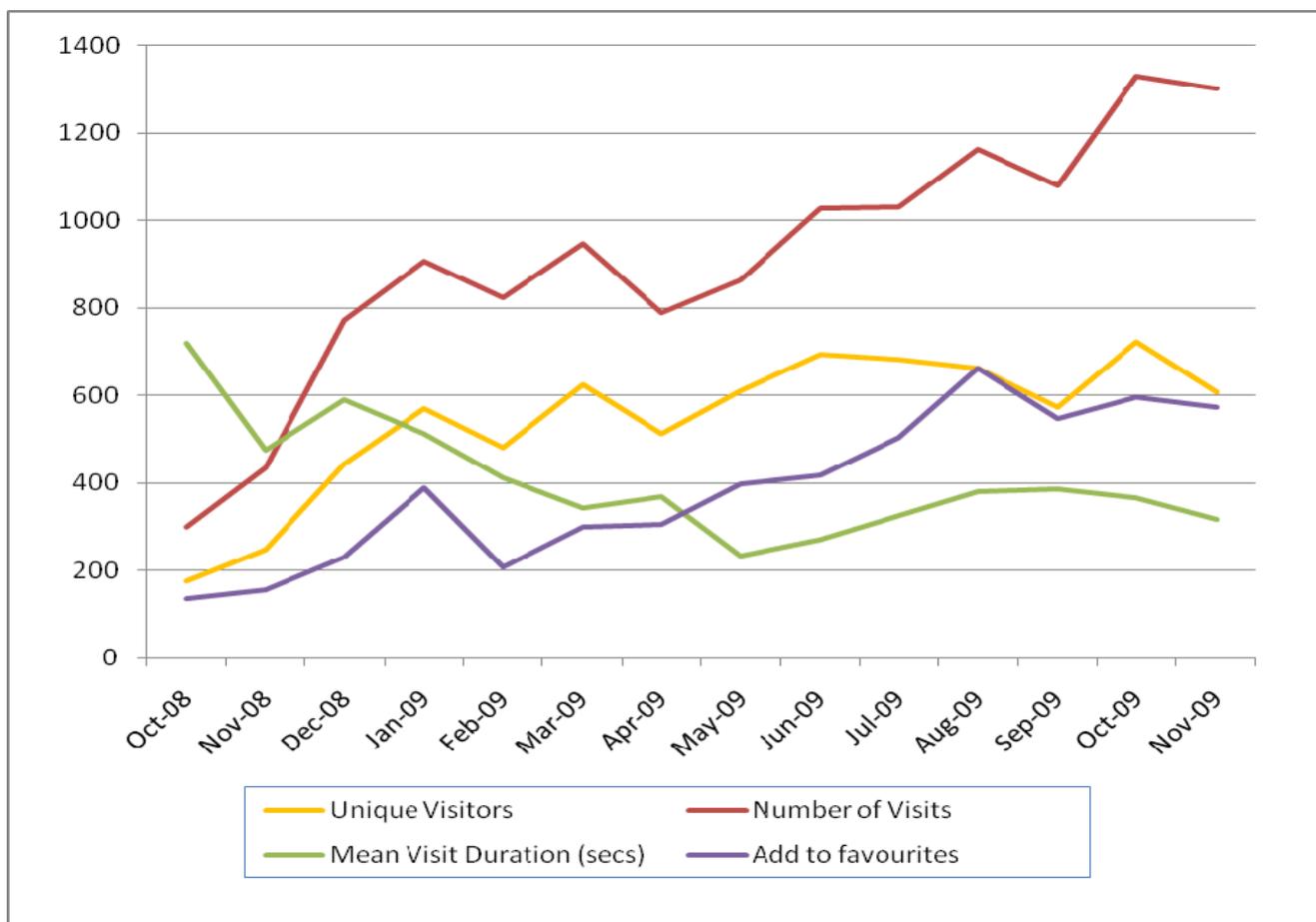
E-mail addresses of all committee members are located in the member’s zone of our website at <http://www.hawthorntramdepot.org.au/members/board.htm>.

Website News

The FOHTD website went live just over a year ago, on 14 October 2008, and has grown to be well over one hundred pages in size. In that time we have gone from 176 unique visitors in the first month to 724 in October 2009.

The website forms the core of the FOHTD marketing strategy, as it is our prime method of advertising. Detailed statistics are kept on a month by month basis, so we can identify the most popular types of content, and target new content to be attractive to the casual surfer.

The statistics show that a large number of people are repeat visitors, and the vast majority of visitors save our address to their favourite browser bookmarks. It also shows that a large proportion of visitors spend significant amounts of time in our website, although that statistic has been declining. This shows the importance of ensuring that new content is being added to our website in order to engage the casual browser, encourage them to visit



Above is a graph showing the growth in website visits from October 2008 to November 2009, detailing the number of unique visitors, the number of visits (many visitors make multiple return visits to our website), the mean duration of visits in seconds and the number of people who have added our site to their favourite bookmarks.

Hawthorn Depot and recruit them as members.

Recent additions to the website include articles on 'Melbourne Trams to the World' and the story of the Fitzroy, Northcote & Preston Tramways Trust, the tramway that never carried a paying passenger.

Recent focus has been on the development of the members' zone of the website, which has exclusive content not available to the general public. This zone has recently undergone some redesign to emphasize branding of its exclusivity to members, and make it more attractive and identifiable. Like the rest of the website, it too will require new content to ensure that it remains attractive to our members.

Items currently available in the members' zone include the Macmeikan Report on cable trams, financial and operational data from the MMTB, PMTT and HTT, and all back issues of 'The Bellcord'.

A large amount of effort goes into ensuring that our site works correctly for the vast majority of surfers. Currently, we test all new features and changes for the following internet browsers:

- Internet Explorer 6, 7 and 8;
- Safari 4.0;
- Firefox 3.0;
- Google Chrome 1.0;
- Opera 10.0.

This by no means covers all the browsers that are used to access our website – just the major ones that run on the Windows platform. We do not have the ability to test our website for browsers that run on, for example, Apple or Linux machines, nor do we test for obsolete browsers such as Netscape, or for browsers running on mobile phones.

However, if we do not perform this testing, then if users encounter errors in viewing our website they will not take the time to stay and look at our content, and then we will have failed in our marketing effort.

It can be difficult to determine the cause of errors, and ensure that the website performs the same way on all the browsers. This can create severe frustration for our website team.

One of the other things we do is to optimise the website content for search engines, particularly for Google which has the majority of the market share. This ensures that people searching for material on Melbourne tramway history or tram museums can actually find us.

Then, there is the development of new content. The major priority we are working on at the moment is the redevelopment of the shop page, so that we make it more attractive and show images of the sales stock available at the museum, with the objective of boosting sales through both available channels: mail order and directly at the museum gate. The acquisition of EFTPOS facilities at the museum has directly assisted our success in improving mail order sales.



Hawthorn Tramways Trust logo from original trust letterhead – from the PROV Archive

We hope to have the revamped shop pages completed in the next couple of months, and hopefully this will have a direct impact on our sales success.

The next cab off the rank will be completion of the Photo Gallery, which will only be available to financial members as an integral part of the members' zone.

Work on customising the selected software – 4images – to make it align with the FOHTD website look and feel is underway. This particular software was selected for a number of reasons:

- Software features;



Chevrolets to the left of them, Jowetts to the right: Members from FOHTD, the Jowett Car Club and the Chevrolet Car Club of Victoria on the depot fan on Saturday 21 November, during their special open day visit.

- Ease of administration;
- Ability to customise look and feel; and
- Cost.

One of the challenges we face in performing the customisation of 4images is that much of the documentation is not in English – it is in German. It is also by no means the perfect package for our purpose, but provides the best compromise given our limited resources.

Once we have the gallery up and running, one of the challenges we face is finding someone to administer it on an ongoing basis, with expertise in Melbourne and Australian tramway images, system administration skills, experience in cataloguing and information structuring and retrieval knowledge.

Then there are the usual administration tasks, such as looking after member logins, mailing lists, paying for site hosting and domain registration, and a whole host of technical bits and pieces.

Of course, most members are more interested in what new content will be coming available rather than hearing what is required to keep the website going.

The next major article will be on the Hawthorn Tramways Trust (HTT). Research on this fascinating subject is happening as you read – this story is of special interest to the museum as the HTT is responsible for our heritage listed building.

One of the any thankless tasks is the need to edit content for style and content, to make sure that it is consistent with our policy direction and ensure that it meets our quality standards – even down to the grammar and spelling.

To make it easy for regular surfers of our website, we also maintain a ‘What’s new’ feature on our home page, as well as providing an RSS news feed for subscribers. Information on new content is fed to surfers via both of these channels, as well as making occasional drops of notices about new content on forums such as Trams Down Under (TDU).

If you are interested in writing content for the website, or administering the photo gallery, please contact the website team via e-mail to webmaster@hawthorntramdepot.org.au. We have a list of suggested topics for new articles as long as your arm, and are always up for new ideas.

And who is our website team? The answer is:

Project Manager & Webmaster: Russell Jones

Design & Development: Noelle Jones

Content Editor: Mike Ryan

The following people have provided content or assisted in the development of the website over the last twelve months:

Carolyn Cleak, Warren Doubleday, Robert Green, Mal Rowe, Graeme Turnbull, Bob Merchant, David Langley and Geoff Warburton.

All these people are to be congratulated for their hard work in making the website a success.

Visitor Update

The depot has recently hosted two quite different of visitors. The first group consisted of fourteen visitors from Europe and Japan on their way to the October 2009 Railway Heritage Conference held at The Workshops Rail Museum, Ipswich Qld. As usual, the almost obligatory group photo using the cable grip tram was taken.

On the afternoon of Saturday 21 November 2009 over thirty members of the Jowett Car Club and the Chevrolet Car Club of Victoria visited our museum for a day out, admiring a different form of historic transport to the kind they experience on their normal weekend activities. Turnout from our membership to assist on this special opening day was gratifying, with ten members showing on the day, guiding our visitors through the museum and serving them a bracing afternoon tea.

A highlight of the afternoon was a photo shoot of a number of the concours standard motor cars on the depot fan, with our brilliantly restored Melbourne cable dummy number 28 serving as a backdrop.

Hawthorn Depot hosted the photographic shoot for the wedding of Andrew and Eleanor Burke on Saturday 3 October 2009. The wedding was based on a nineteen-thirties art deco theme, and the bride looked the very image of a Hollywood film star of that classic era.

Depot News

Attendances continue to be good, although the second Saturday of November was well below that usually experienced. The shop is doing well, with the EFTPOS machine kept busy ringing up purchases.

In the building itself, the pigeons appear to be very few and far between now. Arrangements are in hand to light up the interior of the trams using the tram car lighting circuits but with a 240V supply rather than 600V DC. Our Souvenir Tickets continue to be well received.

Member David Kemp has produced a handout brochure to visitors comprising a history of the building, a short history of Melbourne's trams and very brief details of the exhibits. These are handed to our visitors on arrival.

As a trial, the reception desk and sales items have been relocated in the entry foyer to try out different layouts as a prelude to fitting out an future exhibition area.

The timber footboards along the pit edge have been stained in a dark colour. Item cataloguing continues steadily in the backroom, in particular the extensive number of items donated by Norm Cross. To assist this effort we are examining the acquisition of a formal Collection Management systems to formally catalogue our growing collection.

Work on evaluating options for the development of interpretative displays is continuing, initially focusing around the development of a time line in the entry foyer, along with a small display of tramway ephemera from our collection.

Shop Stuff

Looking for the perfect Christmas gift for a tramway enthusiast? Or even your non-enthusiast friends? You can be sure of finding novel gifts for your nearest and dearest at our museum shop.



Kew and Toorak destination roll tea-towels

The latest additions to our shop are quality teal towels inspired by vintage tram destination blinds, from Poulier and Poulier Design. Ideal for framing. Made with 100% premium quality linen, they are an ideal seasonal gift. Interestingly enough, the most popular of the tea-towel range is based on the Kew roll. We will let you figure out why.



Fitzroy and St Kilda destination roll tea towels

Priced at \$26 each, these are sure to go down well in the kitchen – or for the real enthusiast, they can be framed for display. And if you don't want a Melbourne tea-towel, we have Sydney-based tea-towels as well – at a lower prices than any other outlet in town.



Sydney destination roll tea-towels from both sides of the Harbour – Bondi and Mosman.

For \$6 each you can send the same destination rolls as greeting cards – truly an original way to send Season's Greetings.

A wonderful illustrated children's book, titled "William – City Adventures" is available at only \$19.95. This book would make a wonderful present to a budding young tram enthusiast.

To celebrate the New Year we also have in stock the "Australian 2010 Tram Calendar" (\$11.95) ,

and by the same publisher, two excellent photo books - Australian Trams, Volumes 1 (\$9.95) and Vol 2 (\$11.95). We are advised that Vol 1 is in short supply, and may not be available soon. Buy now and beat the rush, or miss out.

For the hardcore enthusiast, we also have six new books on different lines of Adelaide Tramways, and another new book by Ric Francis, titled "Golden Lines" (\$49.50), the story of Kalgoorlie and Boulder Tramways.

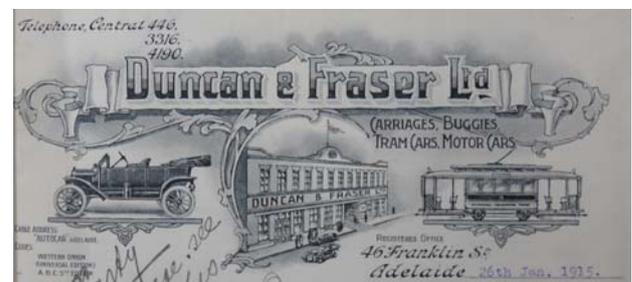
You can mail order your purchases to the shop using the form downloadable from the website at <http://www.hawthorntramdepot.org.au/downloads/mail%20order%20form.pdf>, or attached to this mailout of 'The Bellcord'. Remember, all mail order purchases include charges for postage and packaging.

Alternatively, you can call in to our museum shop in person on our next open day - Saturday 12 December, and inspect our merchandise personally.

Hello and Good-bye

Congratulations to the new franchisee of Yarra Trams – Keolis Downer EDI Rail – on taking control of the Melbourne tram system from 30 November 2009. We are sure that the relationship between the franchisee and Melbourne tram travellers will grow and flourish, and the world's greatest tram system will continue to be an integral part of our city.

It is with a little sadness that we bid the former franchisee good-bye, and wish departing staff all the best in their future careers.



Original letterhead from Duncan & Fraser Limited, tramcar body builders extraordinaire – from a letter written to the Hawthorn Tramways Trust dated 26 Jan 1915. Duncan & Fraser constructed many of the tramway trust cars for the PMTT, HTT and MBCTT. From the PROV Archives.



Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramways Board advertising tram W7 number 1024 decorated for the season at Bourke Street terminus – Christmas 1970. Photograph courtesy of Mal Rowe

Rather than identify what has changed from this view, can you identify what has remained the same?

A Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

From the Friends of Hawthorn Tram Depot