



# The Bellcord

Journal of the Friends of Hawthorn Tram Depot

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## Hawthorn News

Firstly, our apologies for a late running Bellcord. Our Editor had assembled the material for an April issue just as he was heading to Europe for 8 weeks. Then our designer's workload went ballistic and included a trip to Europe as well, but we got there eventually.

Now that the pigeons seem to have vacated the building finally, we are able to keep the place a lot tidier and start to clean the trams etc. The trams have been given an external clean up and now work is underway on a internal cleaning of the trams and the depot as well. Further assistance with this task would be welcomed.

In particular the wood floor sections between the pits have been upgraded and given a stained finish. Norm Cross has touched up the bumpers of NMETL No. 13 and of some other minor damage that has occurred over time. Thanks Norm.

Our Open Days, the second and fourth Saturdays of each month during the daylight saving period have been going well. As expected the fourth Saturday is quieter than the second, which has been our long standing advertised open day, however numbers are building up and people are turning up at the opening time of 11am. Since the introduction of a ticket system, we are able to keep track of our visitor numbers better.



*Tram 13 with its touched up bumpers and the stained wood floor sections adjacent to the pits. Photo Warren Doubleday*

On site sales are often good, especially since we now offer EFTPOS facilities at the depot.

An analysis of the recent surveys shows that most of our visitors find us by the use of the web site, most arrive by tram and really enjoy being able to get aboard the trams and being showing around by our Guides. Thanks to all those members who undertake this task and in particular long standing Guide, David Frost.

The visitor surveys show that most spend over an hour visiting us, generally arrive around lunch time, appreciate the easy access and being able to visit without needing a car. While as expected most visitors are from Victoria, we also get a good number of visitors from interstate and the UK. We have opened the depot a couple of times in the last six months for overseas visitors who would otherwise have trouble visiting us on a specific day. We

cannot guarantee that we are always able to do this, but if we can have some alternative dates, it is normally possible to arrange a time.

Another small change we made was relocating the desk in the entry area to see if there are better positions rather than having it at the back of the room. This seems to be working, further trials will be taking place to find the best position and the relevant doorway.

### Website News

Recent articles added to the web site are:

- Birney Safety Cars in Melbourne
- The Remarkable PCC tramcar: why Melbourne missed out.

Other articles are in production and any assistance would be welcomed. Contact Russell Jones via e-

mail: [webmaster@hawthorntramdepot.org.au](mailto:webmaster@hawthorntramdepot.org.au)



*David Frost sitting at the desk with tickets being issued to visitors – 27/2/2010, photo Warren Doubleday*

### Opening Hours

At the March 2010, Committee Meeting it was determined that the depot would now open during Winters at 11am rather than 1pm on every second Saturday. We will continue with the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of the month during the Daylight Saving Period.

### Visitors

Rod Atkins hosted on 6 February, 43 Members from the Hawthorn Historical Society. They were given a tour of the depot and a presentation about the Depot's history and place in the history of the district. Following the visit, we hosted an afternoon tea for the group. The visit was well received with a follow up donation of materials, including some historical material about the redevelopment of the depot and the planning that went into it. Their February issue of the Society's newsletter featured the horse tram robbery story which is reproduced in this issue. A great story about the location where the depot is now – footpads and all those other undesirables being harboured here once! See page four for the article and associated photographs.

### Photo Shots

The depot has been used for a number of photo shoots over the past year or so. The most recent was one by *Beyond the Pixels* team using W7 1040 for a forthcoming advertising campaign. If you see an advert inside a tram with grass under a person's

### Open Days – 2010

12 June 2010  
10 July 2010  
14 August 2010  
13 September 2010

Hawthorn Depot is open the second Saturday of every month. Opening hours are 11am-5 pm

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feet, that's the one. It was some team who turned up with a sizeable amount of gear for the shoot that took about 3 hours to undertake. It certainly was not just one person with a camera and a model and some plastic grass.

We have also provided the depot for other occasions such as weddings, motor car clubs and filming. One of our members is currently undertaking a project using the trams for interview with former trammies etc. More details in a later issue of Bellcord.

### Christchurch Team Visit the Depot

On Sunday 31 January a group from the Tramway Historical Society, Christchurch Tramway and Tramways Heritage Trust visited the depot to look at in particular Birney 217. They were met by Kevin Taig and Rod Atkins. The Christchurch team are involved in the reconstruction of Invercargill Birney No. 15. They also visited Bendigo during the three days in Melbourne and included visits to Ballarat and Haddon to ascertain what parts were available. The primary purpose was to ascertain what went where, as 217 has not undergone alterations over time like the Bendigo Birney's have.



*From left Dave Hinman (with his hand on that Earl trolley retriever), Graeme Richardson (who headed up the restoration of the Christchurch double decker), Kevin Taig (a friend of the Hawthorn Depot), Andy Rowe (who is building a new Invercargill Birney based on the streaks of rust and adjacent artefacts that were available) and Steve Lea (Christchurch Tramways Limited). Fortunately they did not bring with them their container to pack the Birney into as they know how to dismantle them now. Photo Mal Rowe.*

While in Christchurch recently, our Secretary and COTMA Chairman, visited the workshops where the frame and sides are being completely rebuilt using the original parts as patterns. It is planned to have the tram operational on the Christchurch City Tramway by the end of the year in order to cater for the extended track that is now under construction. Since the photo was taken, work has advanced considerably and the tramcar is taking shape and starting to look like a Birney once again.



*The Birney frame taking shape on 4/2/2010 - Steve Lea photo – we are not sure what the clothes dryer does in the project.*

### Our Shop

Recent items received into the shop are more tea towels, (the Kew Depot ones are selling very well), biscuits tins and further tramway books. We are investigating making our own fridge magnets and some biscuit tins featuring some of the depot's trams. Sales through the web site are building to average two to three a month. As new tramway books and DVD's are produced we will stock them as they are released. Planned books to our knowledge are:

The history of the Prahran and Malvern Tramways Trust and the history of Perth Tramways.

<http://boroondara.spydus.com/cgi-bin/spydus.exe/FULL/OPAC/BIBENQ/39089444/236847,1?FMT=IMG>

## Armed and Masked Footpads at Hawthorn

By Ruth Dwyer, Hawthorn Historical Society

Reprinted from the Hawthorn Historical Society's Newsletter February 2010 with permission.

At half-past twelve o'clock on Sunday morning the 18 August 1901 the last Richmond cable tram arrived at the terminus. Eight passengers, all gentlemen for Hawthorn, crossed the bridge near Christ Church to continue their journey homewards aboard the horse-tram. The driver, Thomas Taylor, took their threepences, saw them aboard, and urged his horses to begin the long pull up the hill to Power Street, thence by way of this thoroughfare to Riversdale Road. The horse-tram then began to travel east, negotiating the curve in the rails near the thickly wooded bend in the riverbank, a notorious locality for cases of garrotting, murder, arson and burglary. The horses continued on in the gloom, the municipal fathers having decided on dousing the streetlights after midnight.

'Stop those horses!' cried a man, pushing the muzzle of a revolver against Taylor's cheek. 'Pull up your horses, you -----, or I'll spill your brains on the floor!' The slouch-hatted man with the long tweed overcoat and crepe veil then moved swiftly from the platform into the tramcar throwing Taylor before him. He was joined by a 'collector', similarly clad, a tall thin man with a deep voice. Another with black slouch hat appeared on the rear platform, his face covered with a mask falling to his chest obscuring vital features and characteristics. A fourth moved about in the gloom in front of the horse-tram keeping watch, his coat collar turned up.



Horse Tram No. 23. Photo courtesy of the City of Bundoora Library, web site.

'Turn out your pockets if you don't want a funeral in your families!' Mr Park<sup>1</sup> had been thrown in from the rear platform where he had been smoking and pondering upon a legal problem. He was quickly relieved of 35 shillings, and his watch and chain, later returned, with the gold medal attached not so. Mr Jones<sup>2</sup> raised his umbrella striking the masked man about the shoulders, 'You ruffian, you took me down for £6!' The footpad turned, thrust his revolver with some force taking skin from Jones's nose and causing him to slump to the floor. Jones was then searched again; his gold watch and chain were removed. £7/10/- was taken from an inner pocket. Jones was ordered to remain on the floor. Mr Hill<sup>3</sup> was compelled to hand over €5 in notes and gold. His silver open-faced watch and chain were thrown back. The thieves discriminated, gold only. Mr Gillespi<sup>4</sup> lost only 5/-. Mr Remmington<sup>5</sup> asserted that he had parted with his last threepence to pay for his tram fare. The three youths aboard, Davie<sup>6</sup>, Williams<sup>7</sup> and Crutchfield<sup>8</sup>, lost 12/-, 12/-, and 5/- respectively. The 'collector' approached Taylor<sup>9</sup> last, roughly snatching the box containing the fares from around his neck. The haul amounted to £2/10/-. He missed the £5 in Taylor's pocket. The whole process was carried out with a professional air, reminiscent of the techniques of gaol warders and gleaned only £25 all told. The footpads disappeared in the direction of the Wallen Road Bridge.

The shaken Taylor urged his horses to the terminus at the Riversdale Hotel on the corner of Auburn Road where he reported the matter. His boss thought it was a joke until he saw that the box containing the fares was missing. The mailer was reported to the police who stationed six mounted troopers, too late, at the Wallen Road Bridge.

Taylor, the following day, searched the area near the wooded bend in the river to see if he could find the box. He strolled down to the bridge at Wallen Road. In the mud was threepence, a few steps further on was another coin, and still another yard or two further. There was no trace of the box; it had possibly been emptied of silver and thrown into the river. Taylor was informed that a hansom cab had been seen at the bridge early on the Sunday morning. For some evenings past several suspicious characters had been seen observing the locality. The police also informed him that the fourth footpad had probably travelled to the bend in the earlier horse-tram.

It would appear that the footpads were never apprehended, in spite of the reward of £200 offered by the government. 'Sticking up' a horse-tram was unique in Australia, perhaps in the world, and stood a good chance of winning the prize offered by an outrageous London scandal sheet for an account of a new crime!

### Sources

Argus, 19 August 1901, p15; 20 August 1901, p.5; 21 August 1901, p.8; 22 August 1901, p.6; 23 August 1901, p.5.

Australasian, 24 August 1901, p. 14.

Weekly Times, 24 August 1901, p.21.

Victoria Police Gazette, 22 August 1901, p. 321; 29 August 1901, p. 326; a search from 29 August 1901-31 December 1902 revealed that no arrests relating to the hold-up had been made.

1 Mr William Leslie Park, solicitor, of 22 Rathmines Road, Auburn.

2 Mr Charles H Jones, salesman, of 26 Currajong Road, Auburn.

3 Mr Ninian C Hill, dealer, of Prospect Hill Road, Camberwell.

4 Mr W D Gillespie of Glenferrie Road, Hawthorn.

5 Mr Walter Remington of 14 Hart's Parade, Hawthorn.

6 D Davie of 173 Riversdale Road, Auburn.

7 H J Williams of Falmouth Street, Auburn.

8 Phillip Crutchfield, student, of Prospect Hill Road, Camberwell.

9 Thomas Taylor, driver, of 12 Leslie Street, Hawthorn.

A **footpad** is a robber or thief specializing in pedestrian victims. The term was used widely throughout the 16th century until the 19th century, but gradually fell out of common use. A footpad was considered a low criminal, as opposed to the riding highwaymen, who in certain cases might gain fame as well as notoriety.

From Wikipedia accessed 15/2/2010.

*The Riversdale Hotel, which was the terminus of the horse tram line at the corner of Auburn Road. Photo courtesy of the Hawthorn Historical Society*

