



# The Bellcord

Journal of the Friends of Hawthorn Tram Depot



Looking south along Elizabeth St from north of the Franklin St intersection, circa 1950. W5 728 is on a route 18 short working to Brunswick. The office of 'The Argus' is the tallest building in view. Photo donated to FOHTD Collection by Ron Scholten.

## In This Issue

In This Issue	1	Open House - More People, More Fun	3
Then and Now	2	Annual General Meeting	3
		Website News	3



Looking south along Elizabeth St from north of the Franklin St intersection, September 2014. 5-unit Combino 5004 is outward bound to North Coburg on a route 19, while B2 2118 doesn't have far to go to the Elizabeth St terminus that is named for Sir Robert Risson. Photo by Warren Doubleday.

### Then and Now

Our two views of *Then and Now* date from about 1950 and September 2014, both looking south along Elizabeth Street from north of Franklin Street.

The most prominent building in 1950 was the office of the *The Argus* and *The Australasian* newspapers. In the current view it is dwarfed by the surrounding office towers and apartment buildings. These two papers ceased publication in 1957, although they form a valuable on-line resource in Trove for researchers interested in the history of Melbourne. After being vacant for many years, the Argus Building is now occupied by an education provider. Like our museum, it was also part of the Open House Melbourne program for 2014.

The buildings on the west side of Elizabeth St, shown in the photo are all still there, with only the building (not in original photo) on Franklin and Elizabeth being built since 1950. The building

immediately to the north of the Argus Building has had an additional three glazed floors built onto it.

W5 728 - rostered on a short working on route 18 to Brunswick - was modified in June 1985 to become a member of the SW5 class. During the 1990s, it was a regular on the City Circle route, and for a number of years until its withdrawal in 2011 was the oldest operational tram on the Melbourne system.

W class trams have long been supplanted on Elizabeth Street routes, as has route 18. Currently the closest equivalent would be a route 19d working to Brunswick Depot, which will usually be worked by a 5-unit Combino or a B2 class tram.

The tram stop 'protected' by the safety zone sign at Franklin Street has disappeared as part of the rationalisation program associated with the introduction of superstops, as the closest stops are now at Latrobe Street or Victoria Market.

Advertisements for Plume petrol - a brand of the Vacuum Oil Company - are prominent on the left. Its well-known Flying Pegasus trademark was introduced in 1939, which continued after the Plume brand was supplanted by Mobilgas in 1954.

### Open House - More People, More Fun

Our second [Open House Melbourne](#) - held on the 28th and 29th of July - was even better than the first. On Saturday some 646 visitors braved the cool and damp weather to visit our museum, while a beautiful Sunday brought out the crowds, with 1006 people passing through the doors. This was a 25% increase over last year's numbers.

Visitors were enthusiastic about their experience, many of the younger set expressing their approval by ringing the tram bells. Our loyal volunteers rose to the occasion, answering a constant flow of questions about our trams, the building and their place in Melbourne's history, while the new exhibits 'The Seven Ages of Melbourne Trams' and the 'Rogue's Gallery' proved to be popular.

One of the highlights of the weekend was the impromptu [demonstration](#) of W class tram lifeguard operation by FOHTD volunteer Mal Rowe.

### Annual General Meeting

The 2014 Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Hawthorn Tram Depot Incorporated will be held on Saturday 25 October at the museum premises at 8 Wallen Road, Hawthorn. The date of the meeting is the second of the regular monthly open days for October.

The meeting will commence at 5pm after the museum has closed for the day. After the formal portion of the meeting is completed, light refreshments will be served, followed by a slideshow presented by well-known Melbourne tram identity and enthusiast Ron Scholten.

The slideshow will cover Melbourne tramway scenes prior to the 1975 introduction of Z class trams. Members are encouraged to attend for what will be an interesting and entertaining evening.

### Website News

The website team have been rather busy since the last issue of *The Bellcord*. Taking the first small steps

### Open Days - 2014

11 October      25 October      8 November  
22 November    13 December

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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to implement our social media strategy has been something of an eye-opener. This has brought a clearer understanding of what is required to keep our content fresh and interesting to both current and potential followers.

Given that use of social media is a key plank in our marketing strategy, gaining this knowledge has been critical to developing our plans to increase the number of visitors to our museum.

We will keep you apprised regarding our progress in this important area.

The long-promised [article](#) on Melbourne tramway substation architecture has finally been published, only a brief two years after it was started. The article covers the changes in substation architectural form from the beginning of Melbourne's electric tramways in 1906.

The publication of this article brought an unexpected contact from Miles Pierce, from Engineering Heritage Victoria, which is part of the Institute of Engineers Australia. Miles wanted some assistance

related to the architectural importance of the former substation at Malvern Depot, in support of a proposed application to have the substation and its intact electrical equipment placed on the Victorian Heritage Register.

Although substations located at tram depots were not within the original scope of the article, we were able to provide Miles with the information he needed.

Now, having done the research on Malvern Depot substation, it seems a waste not to include it in the article. The only problem is figuring out exactly where the new material should fit.

One of the questions the webmaster is asked from time to time is 'how do you decide what to publish on the website?' The simple answer is - it depends.

There is a list of topics that we have been slowly working through. The subjects of many of the fifty articles now published have been sourced from this list, but others arise from circumstance, such as the recent article on Melbourne's [first tourist tram](#). This was triggered by finding online an image of a pamphlet advertising the service. The result was a short investigation across a number of sources, producing less than a week later the complete article.

Needless to say, this is considerably less than the average gestation time for a new article. However, the availability of internet resources such as Trove make the research of subjects of interest significantly easier than it was in the past.

This has been underlined by the research we have carried out in support of a forthcoming article on the life of T.P. Strickland, the Chief Engineer of the M&MTB from 1921 to 1938. Melbourne tram enthusiasts will be familiar with his signature on engineering drawings of W class trams, but there is a general lack of awareness of his importance in the expansion of Melbourne's tram system in the 1920s and 1930s. Hopefully, publishing of this article will to some degree address this deficiency.

Researching his background was surprisingly easy, unearthing a wealth of biographical detail, particularly about his early years.

Writing and editing of this article is almost complete. Only image selection, the development of captions and formatting of the article for publication

remain. It is expected that this short biography will be published before the end of the year.



*Tom Percival Strickland (1885-1955)*

*Chief Engineer of the M&MTB from 1921 to 1938.*

*Designer of the W class tram.*

*Photograph - P.W. Duckett Collection*

However, the recent discovery of a small photographic album donated by Robert Green has prompted the most recent content on our website. The album, which dates from around 1930, has the theme of the different types of tram passenger shelters in use by the M&MTB. Apparently, it was prepared for use by the Manager of the M&MTB at the time, A.D. Murdoch.

We immediately identified that the album could be a perfect subject for our first [slideshow](#) on the website, and encourage those who are interested in the variety of roadside furniture of the era to spend a few minutes viewing the show.

On a less positive note, the internet is not always a conducive place to inhabit. In the years since 2008 our website statistics have proved to be a useful source of information in assessing the popularity of new features. In recent months, automated robot attacks on our website have increased, in such quantity that they are distorting the statistics so much they are rendered useless as a guide for website development, and suck bandwidth from the allocation provided by our website hosting provider.

All, however, is not lost. Recently, we implemented Google Analytics for our website. It is hoped that this will provide a purer view of our website usage that will not suffer from the distortions created by hostile robots.

And we finish with the usual plea to our readers to consider writing your own article for the website. All you need is a subject about an aspect of tram history, a little time and a whole heap of passion.