



# The Bellcord

Journal of the Friends of Hawthorn Tram Depot



One of the newest members of Melbourne's tram fleet - E class leader 6001 - greets the sculpture of W7 class number 1040 at the corner of Flinders and Spencer Street - photo by courtesy of Yarra Trams/Adam Chandler.

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### Sculpture 1040

During February 2012 we received a query about plans for a Melbourne W class tram from David Bell, a noted artist. David was completing a

submission for a commission from the City of Melbourne for a major piece of public artwork that would see the building of about 8 metres of a Melbourne tram in 1:1 scale; from the front of the tram to just past the rear doors. This tram would be finished to appear as if built from stone and be lit at night.

FOHTD was able to supply a set of plans to meet the artist's needs. Fortunately for both Melbourne and tramway enthusiasts, David won the commission. He chose to model W7 class number 1040 - the last Melbourne W class tram built.

After David won the commission, the FOHTD supplied more detailed plans of the W7 body and the under floor layout. The Ballarat Tramway Museum and the Melbourne Tramcar Preservation

Association also provided a number of small items such as bumper bars, steps, handrails and sand boxes. The sculpture was built at David's workshop in Foster, assembled on a rotating frame to allow the many workers to work on individual sections, in particular the underfloor. It is based on a steel frame, using plywood sheeting and fibreglass as key artistic materials.

The sculpture was installed on a concrete foundation at the corner of Flinders and Spencer St outside the Grand Hotel on Monday 28 October 2013. Our Secretary, Warren Doubleday, attended the formal launch of the tram sculpture on Thursday 14 November 2013 at the Grand Hotel by the Deputy Lord Mayor of the City of Melbourne

The spectacular tram sculpture will remain in place for five years. FOHTD recommends both tram enthusiast and art-lovers take the time to visit this notable artwork. It certainly gives passers-by a novel view of the underfloor area of a W class tram.

### Peter Watson Duckett Tramways Collection

FOHTD is proud to announce that it has been appointed the custodian of the Peter Watson Duckett Tramways Collection by the State Government.

This massive collection of material, which is concerned principally with the tramways of the world, was compiled by the late Peter Watson Duckett over a period of sixty years. It comprises many runs of Australian and international tramways journals. There are more than 2100 books, a number of them valuable nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century works, but also many foreign language books in mint condition. There are 65 videos, 40 cans of 16 mm film, microfiche, guides and research files. The collection of tramways material is of unparalleled richness and range in Australia.

Peter was an influential rail enthusiast over his entire life. He was one of the four foundation members of the Australian Electric Traction Association, as well as the proprietor of the Model Dockyard - Melbourne's most prominent model railway shop - until his retirement in 1984.



*The sculpture of W7 1040 by David Bell, showing the detailed workings of a tram from an unusual viewpoint. Photo courtesy of Warren Doubleday.*

The collection was bequeathed to the State Government after his death, being held in the Department of Transport library. The consolidation of government departments meant that the collection needed a new home. After long discussions, the Friends of Hawthorn Tram Depot was selected as the most appropriate custodian for this valuable and unique collection.

A substantial amount of shelving came with the collection, although much of the collection will not immediately available, due to its sheer size.

Minor building works are being carried out at the depot, converting and enlarging the two offices next to the shop into a library. Additionally, the training office will also house a substantial proportion of the collection.

Once the building work is complete, and we have had an opportunity to properly organise the

material, the Peter Watson Duckett Tramways Collection will be open to the public on a regular basis. Thanks to Mac Henshall of VicTrack and Jillian Hiscock of the Department of Transport, Planning

and Local Infrastructure for valuable assistance in adding this collection to the Melbourne Tram Museum @ Hawthorn Depot.



# THE PETER WATSON DUCKETT TRAMWAYS COLLECTION

OCTOBER 2010





*This pre-WW2 photograph of Flinders Street shows W2 239 on an outward-bound route 27 working to Hawthorn. This image from the Rose Series of postcards is from the collection of Ron Scholten.*

### Origin of Route Numbers

Visitors to our museum often ask about the rationale behind Melbourne's tram route numbers, and how they came to be allocated the way they are. To the average commuter, there seems to be neither rhyme nor reason to the allocation of numbers. To understand why they are what they are, we need to delve right back to the beginning of Melbourne's trams – in 1885.

A quick and easy way to identify where a tram is going has always been required. Now it is achieved using route numbers, but it wasn't always the case.

The management of the Melbourne Tramway and Omnibus Company (MTOC) took a common sense approach, suitable for the low literacy levels of the Victorian era. Not only did they paint the sides and ends of their tramcars with the route names, they colour-coded their tramcars according to route as well as displaying a matching colour light for intending night-time passengers.

This was not as easy as it sounds, as there were seventeen cable tram routes in Melbourne, and there were a limited number of coloured glasses that matched readily available paint colours. Also,

there was no white light available – the kerosene lamps used to illuminate the glasses burned with a distinct yellowish flame.

Five colours were chosen, with each colour representing at least two different tram routes. Colours were assigned so that no trams of the same colour would share a city street, so intending passengers could always identify the correct tram, as long as they knew in which city street they were located.

In late 1913 the Prahran & Malvern Tramways Trust (P&MTT) introduced the concept of route numbers to Melbourne. Prior to this innovation, it used destination blinds of the Sydney type, displaying the text of the destination together with a symbol indicating the destination, although it soon replaced these displays with route numbers.

Initially, the P&MTT displayed large route numbers in the left hand driver's window. Later, it moved to hanging a metal route number sign below the driver's window directly above the central headlight.

By 1918, there were a total of sixteen routes operated by the P&MTT.

The Melbourne, Brunswick & Coburg Tramways Trust also used Sydney type destination blinds from its opening in 1916.

From 1916 the Hawthorn Tramways Trust (HTT) used destination boxes of the 'Malvern' type, displaying two coloured night lights to identify the tram route as well as an illuminated destination blind. The coloured light combinations were selected to avoid duplication with P&MTT route colours.

However, rather than using route numbers, the HTT identified its services by route letters, hanging a sign beneath the driver's window as was the practice of the P&MTT.

Contemporaneously, the North Melbourne Electric Tramways & Lighting Company (NMETL) operating out of Essendon Depot introduced route letters, but without going to the expense of implementing lighting codes. Instead, the large rectangular destination symbols mounted semi-permanently on the canopy rooves were illuminated.

Curiously enough, Essendon Depot was never in the suburb of Essendon. Instead, it has always been located in the suburb of Ascot Vale, but has always been known as such, due to it being located in the former municipality of Essendon.

The formation of the Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramways Board (M&MTB) in 1919 required new administrative arrangements. When the municipal tramways trusts were assimilated in February 1920, the M&MTB was divided into the administrative divisions:

Metropolitan – consisting of the cable tramways of MTOC and the single line of the Northcote City Council.

Eastern – consisting of the tramways of the former P&MTT and HTT.

Northern – consisting of the tramways of the Fitzroy, Northcote & Preston Tramways Trust, the Melbourne, Brunswick & Coburg Tramways Trust, and the Footscray Tramways. Two years later, the tramways of the North Melbourne Electric Tramways & Lighting Company were added to the Northern Division.

Each of these divisions was largely left to their own devices from an operational perspective. The Metropolitan Division repainted its colourful rolling

stock in the new standard chocolate and cream livery, replacing (not without protests from the public) the colour destination codes with destination blinds and boards.

#### Open Days - 2014

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

The Bellcord is published by the Friends of Hawthorn Tram Depot, registered under the Associations Incorporations Act (1981) No A00467102 & ABN 11 293 508 607.

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With regard to route indicators, the Northern Division made no changes, while the Eastern Division added the Hawthorn routes to the existing P&MTT route number scheme, although this scheme fell out of use with the introduction of the new W class tramcars, which introduced a standard style of removable illuminated destination box featuring only text destinations mounted above the driver's cabin. Existing tramcars of all classes were progressively modified to accept the new standard destination boxes.

Each depot had a standard destination roll, the lid of the roll being marked with the assigned depot. For example, Hawthorn destination boxes were painted with the letters 'HAW'.

In 1925, the forthcoming conversion of Swanston Street cable tramway to electric traction caused the Eastern and Northern Divisions to be merged, as it would enable the majority of the electric tram system to be operated as a single entity. However, the rapid conversion of cable tram routes did not allow for the introduction of a consistent route numbering system, and it was not until November 1929 that a new route numbering system was implemented, although it was only applied to electric tram routes. Cable trams continued with their original route names until the closure of the last two lines in 1940, never having any route numbers assigned.

All bogie tramcars of the 'W' and 'L' classes were fitted with illuminated route number boxes, although single truck cars were never fitted with route number boxes. The 'Y' and 'Y1' class bogie blinds, cars were briefly fitted with route boxes in 1930, but they were soon removed.

Route number boxes contained two canvas roller blinds, each containing displaying a single digit or letter. The 'tens' blind showed the numbers '0' through '9', while the 'units' blind showed the numbers '0' through '9' and letters 'A', 'B', 'D' and 'E'. Both blinds also displayed a blank character.

Single number route numbers were always displayed in the 'tens' blind, a practice which would continue on 'W' class cars at least into the 1980s. This simplified the use of letter codes, which in most cases were used for short workings on single digit routes, although this was not consistently applied. Therefore, at termini, traffic staff on changing from a short working to a full length working or vice versa only had to change one route number at each end.

The number '3' was not initially used in standard route numbers due to avoid confusion with '8', particularly when wear of the canvas rolls resulted in obscuring of a digit. Similarly, the letter 'C' was omitted from the roll to avoid confusion with '0'. This was important as route numbers were used by signalmen at key locations in the network like St Kilda Junction and Franklin Street to identify which route should be selected for the next tram. The

initial allocation of some route numbers was chosen to make the plight of signalmen simpler.

For example, at Franklin Street northward bound Swanston Street trams on routes beginning with a '1' or '2' were switched through to Swanston Street north, while all other routes were switched to terminate in Victoria Street. However, subsequent reallocation of route numbers as well as through working of some trams to Melbourne University would undermine this logic.

Where switching at busy junctions was not an important consideration, route numbers were grouped by the primary tram depot responsible for operating a route, although some routes were shared between two or more depots – in particular, South Melbourne Depot had few dedicated routes, despite it being one of the largest depots on the Melbourne system.

Like the use of letter codes for single digit destinations, short workings were often differentiated from the full length workings by changing the number shown in the units' blind. For example, route 71 was a short working of route 70, as routes 75 and 76 were short workings of route 74. This practice would be a consistent feature of Melbourne's tramways for decades to come.

So, what is the oldest unchanged tram route in Melbourne? The answer is there is no oldest unchanged tram route. Instead, there are two:

78 : North Richmond – Prahran

79 : North Richmond – St Kilda Beach

These tram routes have remained unchanged both in the actual route travelled and their route number since their introduction of the M&MTB numbering scheme at the end of the nineteen-twenties.

### Computer Display

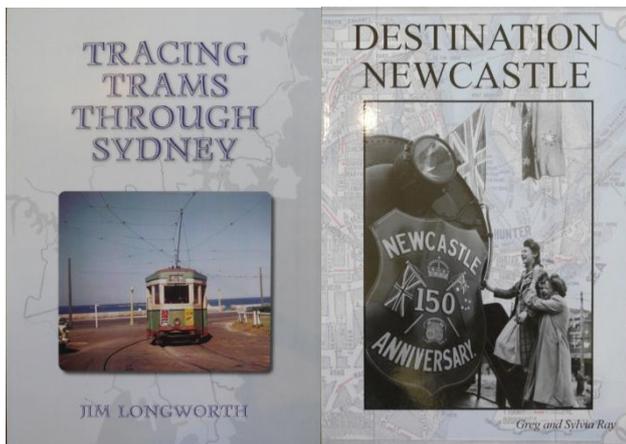
The museum has acquired a new netbook computer to drive the overhead projector in the main room. It is intended to use the machine to present an endless slideshow of historic pictures of Melbourne's tramway system, improving the museum experience for our visitors.

The new netbook provided an interesting but frustrating introduction for our IT gurus into the vagaries of Windows 8.1 - an experience which will

be repeated for all too many of the populace over the next year or so.

### New Tram Stuff At Our Shop

FOHTD is pleased to announce the availability of new items for the discerning tramway enthusiast from our shop. The following two books will make any trammie's day happier.



*Tracing Trams Through Sydney* – by Jim Longworth for \$49.95.

A fascinating view of the fading remains of Sydney's tramway system, which closed in 1961. This treatise on Sydney's industrial archaeology allows readers a window on the past by interpreting the traces trams and tramways have left on the fabric of the city.

*Destination Newcastle* – by Greg and Sylvia Ray for the price of \$39.95.

This impressive volume features photographs from the Ken Magor collection, focusing on the transport scene of Newcastle, New South Wales' second city, into the 1930s and 1940s. Exquisitely composed black and white photos present views of trams, trains, boats and motor vehicles from an almost forgotten era.

We also have two new DVDs in stock.

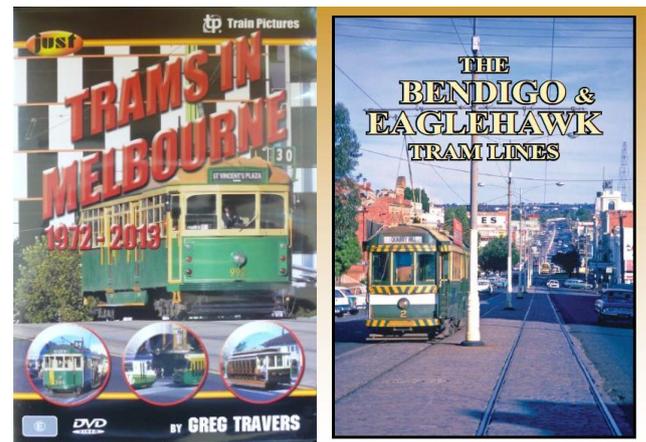
*The Bendigo and Eaglehawk Tramlines* for \$39.95.

Learn about the history of the Bendigo tramways from its beginnings in 1890 with primitive battery-powered trams, subsequently replaced with steam trams, followed by conversion to a conventional electric tramway in 1903 by the Electric Supply Company of Victoria. See classic footage of

operation by the State Electricity Commission from its takeover in 1934 until closure in 1972.

*Trams in Melbourne 1972-2013* for \$39.95

Observe the evolution of Melbourne trams from a traditional electric street tramway into a modern transport system. This DVD consists of enthusiast footage taken over four decades.



Remember, our shop accepts payment by Visa or MasterCard as well as cash. Why not drop in on an open day, or send us a mail order. The order form can be downloaded from our website.

### Recent Group Visits

The museum has hosted a number of groups over recent months. These have included groups of seniors from Werribee and Leopold, the latter fondly remembering the Geelong trams, though they closed over 55 years ago. Both groups arrived by coach which parked in the forecourt, one serving morning tea on the forecourt.

The first for the museum during early December was a tour for year 3 and 4 primary school students from Burwood. Two tours of about 25 students each were conducted in the same day. They were very well behaved, asking lots of questions about the trams and the depot.

The topic they were studying was "ONE important example of change and ONE important example of continuity over time in the local community, region or state/territory, in relation to the area of transport"

A short presentation was prepared on this topic, looking at the depot site including the time the horse tram was robbed by 'footpads' in 1901. What's a



*The big news item for 2013 was the entry into Melbourne service of the brand new E class trams. Here we see class leader E 6001 in service on a route 96 working at the top end of Bourke Street on 25 November. These trams are the longest ever to operate in regular service in Melbourne. Photo by Mal Rowe.*

footpad? (See Bellcord No. 9 for the answer). Another example of continuity over time is the corner of Gertrude and Nicholson St where the former winding house remains in use for transport purposes and today it is possible to photograph a new E class tram passing by, as well as show movies of cable trams passing it. The third tram change was one in passenger management – provision of doors on trams – no open doorways today!

We handed around a section of cable (actually from the Wellington cable tramway) and a conductor's bag and even more questions resulted.

Of course all the groups had their photo taken on the cable tram dummy.

Thanks to Kevin Taig, David Kemp, Frank McCulloch and Warren Doubleday for providing a valuable if exhausting experience for the commuters of tomorrow.

### Season's Greetings

The Committee of Friends of Hawthorn Tram Depot wishes a happy and healthy holiday season to all our members and friends, and best wishes for the new year.

This year has been a stellar one for FOHTD and the Melbourne Tram Museum @ Hawthorn Depot, the highlights being the build-up to the Open House Melbourne weekend, handling over fifteen hundred visitors, and becoming the custodian of the Peter Watson Duckett Tramways Collection.

The significant strides forward made this year have only been possible through the dedication of our volunteers. Thank you, and congratulations - your efforts are truly appreciated.

We look forward to the challenges of a new year, and hope that 2014 will even better than 2013.