

Keep nuts on the right track

THE truth is I am fond of nuts. I like steam nuts. I like vintage car nuts. I like nuts who spend half their lives building and flying model aeroplanes.

Clock nuts are just marvelous. There's nothing like owning 150 clocks and having them all chiming in unison at three in the morning.

Shane Moore is a tram nut. You might say he has been a terminal tram nut for these past 10 years.

He is not employed by the tramways. He is a clerk, but three years ago he purchased his own W2 class tram.

He says it was the last quality W2 available. It was a steal at \$3000.

Shane is not married. His heart beats for his tram. It is a beautiful thing, "Weight 17 tons, length 48 feet, height 10 feet six inches with a carrying capacity of 52 seated and 93 standing fully squeezed."

Having a private W2 is not so strange. After all, Elton John bought one and took it home to England.

The remarkable thing is this. Shane's tram W2, number 568 is a goer. He uses it, takes it out for excursions, goes for special little runs.

He lets it for functions of all kinds. It is available for hire.

"How on earth do you get away with that?" one asked.

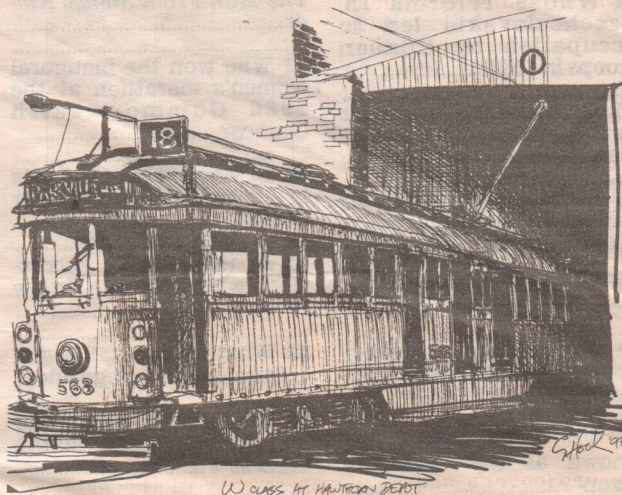
"Not easy," he replied. He just kept knocking on doors for about a year. He found some sympathetic officials who finally said 'yes'. "They have been very good really," he said.

So out goes number 568 with SPECIAL on its destination panel. For example, just two weeks ago, he used it for a wedding.

Now the wedding took place at the old St James Cathedral in King St. After the ceremony the happy couple, plus guests, walked through the Flagstaff Gardens to Dudley St and picked up the tram at a siding just off William St.

The tram was all decorated inside, there were all the proper white ribbons and it was more attractive than some inferior wedding vehicle like a Rolls-Royce.

Champagne and gorgeous nibbles were served. So number 568 proceeded on its way.



W2 CLASS AT HAWTHORN DEPOT



KEITH DUNSTAN

Shane says always he gets asked two questions.

(A) Why do you do it? "Well, why not?" he replies. "Some people go for fast cars, some go for race horses. I just like trams."

(B) Where do you keep your tram? "The Public Transport Corporation was very good to me. They built me a special little tram track and I keep it in my backyard at North Balwyn."

That second answer is his favorite gag. The truth is he keeps it at the Hawthorn Tram Depot, by the Yarra there in Riversdale Rd, just next to Leonda.

The Hawthorn Depot is a charming curio in itself. It was built in 1916 and was closed as a running depot in 1961.

Now it is used as a training centre for drivers and conductors and a storage place for all their off-beat trams. Horse-drawn trams operated from there in the old days and tram instructor, Nick Bongers, showed me where the old turn-table used to be.

He thinks the depot should

Olsen, and regular conductor Monica Campbell.

Both Olsen and Campbell are passionate about trams. Steve said his wife was also a tram lover and she often came on the excursions.

Monica said she met her husband when he was a driver and she was a conductor on the Sydney trams. When Sydney closed down its trams, there was only one thing for it, they moved south and got a job with the Melbourne trams.

She is desperate now that conductors are being abolished. She suffers from the occasional migraine so she cannot be a driver.

Where will the Campbells go? To another tram town, San Francisco? Moscow? Of course, 568 is perfect. The classic upright seats, designed to give you a back as straight as a regimental sergeant major, plus the old pull down canvas blinds designed almost to keep out the rain.

The two end compartments, of course, are for ladies "non smoking" and the brass plates announce "Penalty for unauthorised entry to driver's compartment five pounds" and "To stop car pull bell cord once."

Steve took us up Bridge Rd along Batman Ave to the city.

I stood beside him, unauthorised penalty five pounds, as he drove. It was fascinating.

A Porsche pulled out right in front of us. "Yuppy" he said.

"They don't know what peril they are in. If there is a spot of car oil on the tracks it can

feet six inches with a carrying capacity of 52 seated and 93 standing fully squeezed."

Having a private W2 is not so strange. After all, Elton John bought one and took it home to England.

The remarkable thing is this. Shane's tram W2, number 568 is a goer. He uses it, takes it out for excursions, goes for special little runs.

He lets it for functions of all kinds. It is available for hire.

"How on earth do you get away with that?" one asked.

"Not easy," he replied. He just kept knocking on doors for about a year. He found some sympathetic officials who finally said 'yes'. "They have been very good really," he said.

So out goes number 568 with SPECIAL on its destination panel. For example, just two weeks ago, he used it for a wedding.

Now the wedding took place at the old St James Cathedral in King St. After the ceremony the happy couple, plus guests, walked through the Flagstaff Gardens to Dudley St and picked up the tram at a siding just off William St.

The tram was all decorated inside, there were all the proper white ribbons and it was more attractive than some inferior wedding vehicle like a Rolls-Royce.

Champagne and gorgeous nibbles were served. So number 568 proceeded, an elderly creature really. She was born at Preston Workshops in 1929 and had a very distinguished career. She was used to celebrate the centenary of Luna Park in 1938.

That year she was covered in little lights. When finally she retired in 1978 she had a million miles on the clock.

The wedding tram and guests went on quite a tour. They trundled down Swanston St Walk, out to South Melbourne, returned to the city via Clarendon St, up Spencer St to Collins then through to the Hotel Regent where they dropped the guests for their wedding reception.



KEITH DUNSTAN

Shane says always he gets asked two questions.

(A) Why do you do it? "Well, why not?" he replies. "Some people go for fast cars, some go for race horses. I just like trams."

(B) Where do you keep your tram? "The Public Transport Corporation was very good to me. They built me a special little tram track and I keep it in my backyard at North Balwyn."

That second answer is his favorite gag. The truth is he keeps it at the Hawthorn Tram Depot, by the Yarra there in Riversdale Rd, just next to Leonda.

The Hawthorn Depot is a charming curio in itself. It was built in 1916 and was closed as a running depot in 1961.

Now it is used as a training centre for drivers and conductors and a storage place for all their off-beat trams. Horse-drawn trams operated from there in the old days and tram instructor, Nick Bongers, showed me where the old turn-table used to be.

He thinks the depot should be preserved and turned into a proper tram museum. Indeed the depot has some very nice old trams.

There is an S Class. Those used to trundle round Melbourne in 1916. There is a V class number 214.

This is known as a toast rack, exactly like the trams which used to run to Bondi. There was no passage down the middle.

The unfortunate conductor had to nick up and down on the running board. Shane had arranged a special excursion for Dunstan and Hook.

He explained he was not allowed to drive the tram himself. He had an experienced crew, regular driver, Steve

Both Olsen and Campbell are passionate about trams. Steve said his wife was also a tram lover and she often came on the excursions.

Monica said she met her husband when he was a driver and she was a conductor on the Sydney trams. When Sydney closed down its trams, there was only one thing for it, they moved south and got a job with the Melbourne trams.

She is desperate now that conductors are being abolished. She suffers from the occasional migraine so she cannot be a driver.

Where will the Campbells go? To another tram town, San Francisco? Moscow? Of course, 568 is perfect. The classic upright seats, designed to give you a back as straight as a regimental sergeant major, plus the old pull down canvas blinds designed almost to keep out the rain.

The two end compartments, of course, are for ladies "non smoking" and the brass plates announce "Penalty for unauthorised entry to driver's compartment five pounds" and "To stop car pull bell cord once."

Steve took us up Bridge Rd along Batman Ave to the city.

I stood beside him, unauthorised penalty five pounds, as he drove. It was fascinating.

A Porsche pulled out right in front of us. "Yuppy" he said.

"They don't know what peril they are in. If there is a spot of car oil on the tracks it can take 200 feet to stop one of these things."

The average speed for the old dear was about 40kmh, but flat out she could reach almost 80.

He showed marked spots on the road. If power was applied at the precise moment he could change the points.

If the system was working correctly, he could also do the same thing when approaching traffic lights, so that the tram could get preferred treatment.

Jeff said: "That's a revelation to me of the number of times I have driven to an intersection and received just one second on the green light."

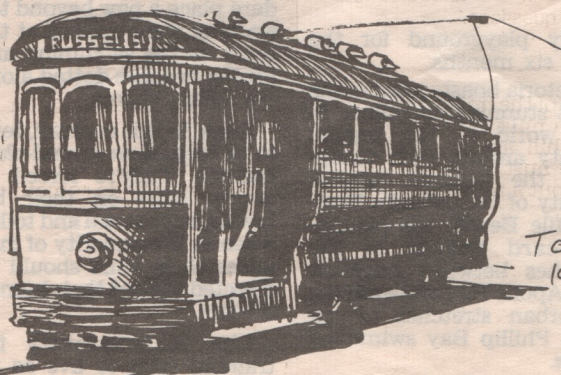
The run up Batman Ave was nice but for the true classic tram noises we had to trundle up Riversdale Rd to Glenferrie.

Here, Shane Moore explained, the line was not all welded and we could get the classic square-wheeled "KER-DUNK, KER-DUNK" W-class concerto.

Shane told us that this noise brought tears to the eyes of genuine tram lovers.

When he took them out on excursions they would get down on their hands and knees, ear to the floor, so that they could hear it in all its glory. Lovely.

That's what I call my kind of nut.



Tclass 1916